

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

957



FROM: Executive Office

SUBMITTAL DATE:
September 1, 2009

**SUBJECT: Response to the Grand Jury Report: Department of Public Social Services –
Adult Protective Services – In-Home Support Services**

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

- 1) Approve with or without modifications, the attached response to the Grand Jury's recommendations regarding Department of Public Social Services – Adult Protective Services – In-Home Support Services.
- 2) Direct the Clerk of the Board to immediately forward the Board's finalized response to the Grand Jury, to the Presiding Judge, and the County Clerk-Recorder (for mandatory filing with the State).

BACKGROUND: On July 14, 2009, the Board directed staff to prepare a draft of the Board's response to the Grand Jury's report regarding Department of Public Social Services – Adult Protective Services – In-Home Support Services.

Section 933 (c) of the Penal Code requires that the Board of Supervisors comment on the Grand Jury's recommendations pertaining to the matters under the control of the Board, and that a response be provided to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court within 90 days.


DEBRA COURNOYER
Principal Management Analyst

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FINANCIAL DATA	Current F.Y. Total Cost:	\$ N/A	In Current Year Budget:
	Current F.Y. Net County Cost:	\$	Budget Adjustment:
	Annual Net County Cost:	\$	For Fiscal Year:

SOURCE OF FUNDS:	Positions To Be Deleted Per A-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Requires 4/5 Vote	<input type="checkbox"/>

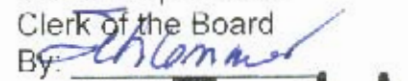
C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

County Executive Office Signature BY: 
Dean Deines

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Ashley, seconded by Supervisor Tavaglione and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

Ayes: Buster, Tavaglione, Stone and Ashley
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: September 1, 2009
xc: E.O., DPSS, IHSS, Grand Jury, Presiding Judge, ACR(2)

Kecia Harper-Ihem
Clerk of the Board
By: 
Deputy **3.14**

Prev. Agn. Ref.: 3.8 – 07/14/09 | District: | Agenda Number:

Dept Recomm: Consent
Per Exec. Cfo.: Consent
Policy: Policy

**Grand Jury Response
Department of Public Social Services – Adult
Protective Services – In-Home Support Services**

FINDINGS:

Number 1:

The aging population in Riverside County is increasing faster than the force of social workers qualified to service their needs. According to the 2000 census, 16.11 percent of the populations is age 60 plus. At present there are over 15,000 clients receiving IHSS assistance in Riverside County. In an effort to handle the increasing workload, DPSS authorized APS to utilize caseworkers from Child Protective Services (CPS).

Response:

Respondent agrees with the finding.

Earlier this year, Adult Services Program experienced several vacancies, many related to retirement. At the same time due to budget concerns, the County imposed a hiring freeze and there were related concerns about budget cuts that could be forthcoming from the State and the County. In order to sustain services in this program while sorting through the department's ability to fill vacant positions, several social workers from Child Protective Services were reassigned to Adult Protective Services since the skill set is largely transferable. This is a temporary assignment until new staff is hired. With a State budget now in place, the department is evaluating its ability to proceed with filling those positions.

Number 2:

IHSS presently has 30 caseworkers, each with a minimum caseload of 420 clients. Their case burden increases at a five to seven percent growth rate yearly. There is no established maximum on the number of clients assigned to caseworkers.

Response:

Respondent agrees with the finding.

The Department agrees that the current caseload per worker is growing rapidly and it is accurate that the State has not established a maximum caseload standard for this program.

Number 3:

In order to be approved for IHSS services, applicants must qualify for Medi-Cal. IHSS caseworkers are presently assessing 1,000 plus applicants per month. (This figure does not account for projected increases.) Of these applicants, 40 percent do not qualify and are eventually denied Medi-Cal benefits. The average assessment time by a caseworker is approximately six hours per applicant. These six man-hours times the approximately 400 Medi-Cal denials per month represent a sizeable un-reimbursed county expense.

Response:

Respondent disagrees partially with the finding.

A customer does not have to qualify for Medi-Cal to be eligible for IHSS. However, with the complexity of this program, it is understandable that there may be some confusion surrounding that specific element. Nonetheless, it is accurate that the program receives more than 1,000 new applications per month and that approximately 40% of applications are denied for several reasons, predominantly related to IHSS eligibility, rather than Medi-Cal eligibility. The primary concern is that the State's funding formula is based on approved cases and does not take into account the tremendous workload associated with the application review and approval process. With 40% of our applications being denied, there is a significant workload that the State doesn't consider in determining the funding needed to truly administer this program.

Number 4:

The submission of IHSS and Medi-Cal applications simultaneously creates an untenable situation. Many IHSS applications are not being completed within the 30-day state mandated time frame, per California-DSS-Manual-SS 30-759 Application Process. DPSS cannot approve an IHSS claim until the client has been approved for Medi-Cal. The time frame for Medi-Cal to process a claim is 45 days pursuant to Regulations Manual Medi-Cal Eligibility 50177(1).

Response:

Respondent agrees with the finding.

The County has been working with the County Welfare Directors Association and the State to align these time frame requirements as well as address the funding allocation issues addressed in Finding Number 3. Without adequate funding that takes into consideration the full workload associated with administering this

program, the department will continue to experience delays in processing cases due to staffing limitation.

Number 5:

Due to a pay increase, previously established to attract more caseworkers, CPS pays caseworkers at a 5.5 percent higher rate of pay than APS. Consequently, when an opening arises, APS caseworkers are inclined to request a transfer to CPS.

Response:

Respondent disagrees partially with the finding.

While there have been instances where staff in APS have requested to transfer to CPS, the reasons for seeking such a change are rarely about the rate of pay.

The primary reason why staff request transfers from APS to CPS is due to the individual's career preference to serve children and families. Staff has also requested to transfer from CPS to APS based on their passion to serve the elderly.

In addition, Children Services is a much larger division, which has resulted in the availability of more promotional opportunities compared to Adult Services. As a result, staff from Adult Services applies where the openings are.

Historically, the department has actually experienced more transfers from CPS to APS than the reverse.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Number 1:

Revise the IHSS budget plan to reflect realistic projected needs created by the increasing growth in the senior population.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

DPSS concurs with the recommendation and has been pursuing a revision to the IHSS budget; however, a revision to the budget plan is not possible until the State agrees to increase funding for the program.

Adult Service Programs are mandated by the State and funded with a combination of State, Federal and local funding. For many years, the department has experienced significant increases in eligibility for the IHSS program and also noted that incidence of elder abuse and neglect are becoming more complex and requiring more investigation.

In recognition of these changes, the County, in coordination with the California State Association of Counties and the County Welfare Directors Association, has been seeking additional funding to support Adult Protective Services and IHSS. Due to the current economic climate, the opportunities to increase funding have been very limited. Nonetheless, it is a recognized area of need and will continue to be a focal point for discussion at the State level.

Number 2:

Be proactive in convincing the state to establish a caseload standard for IHSS caseworkers.

The recommendation has been implemented.

The current budget and staffing formula used by the State is based on antiquated standards and practices that do not take into account the tremendous increase in both assessment and eligibility requirements. As mentioned previously, the County, in coordination with the California State Association of Counties and the County Welfare Directors Association, has been actively working with the State to update these workload standards and funding formulas. This continues to be a priority area and we intend to continue current discussions with the State on these issues.

Number 3:

Prescreen clients for Medi-Cal eligibility before doing the IHSS assessment.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

This recommendation is based on an assumption that most applications are denied due to a lack of Medi-Cal eligibility, which is not the case. In fact, the primary reason for application denial is due to IHSS eligibility. There are some limited opportunities to restructure the eligibility and assessment process to ensure that we are as efficient as possible, and we continue to pursue legislative and regulatory changes with the State in those areas. The bigger concern is the State's methodology for funding the program, which is an issue that the department is actively seeking to resolve and was referenced in responses to the prior recommendations.

Number 4:

Coordinate with the state to revise the application processing time for Medi-Cal and IHSS assistance to have realistically compatible deadlines. Establish a policy whereby caseworkers invest no more than one unreimbursed hour on any application other than those that are pre-approved for Medi-Cal benefits.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

The County is working with the County Welfare Directors Association and the State to revise the application processing timelines. Discussions are ongoing and implementation of the recommendation is contingent upon State approval of these changes.

Number 5:

Standardize the salaries for DPSS caseworkers.

The Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

Riverside County has an established salary standard for the various social worker classifications.

Rather than gaps in salary, staffing levels for the two divisions are differentiated by each program's budget patterns. Despite funding availability, Children Services has historically had difficulties filling available position, thereby

necessitating the "hard to recruit" incentive for experienced caseworkers. Conversely, Adult Services has had limited hiring opportunities due to budget constraints, but has not had difficulty filling the limited positions that become available. As a result, the classification did not meet the criteria for "hard to recruit" status.

County Human Resources conducts periodic analysis of pay rates by classification and the application of the "hard to recruit" status of positions. The Department will continue to monitor this situation and will work closely with HR to address changes as they are needed.

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