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STAFF REPORT
BOARD MEETING DATE: May 9, 2017

DATE: April 17, 2017
TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Amber Howell Director, Department of Social Services
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THROUGH: Kevin Schiller, Assistant County Manager

SUBJECT: Authorize the creation 1.0 FTE Program Coordinator, pending Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) approval, to provide daily oversight of program and operations of the Family Engagement Center (Visitation Center), funded 100% by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) sub-grant accepted by the Board on July 26, 2016. Direct the Human Resources Department to make the necessary staffing adjustments and initiate the recruitment process. (All Commission Districts)

SUMMARY

The Department is requesting the Board Authorize the creation of 1.0 FTE Program Coordinator to provide daily oversight of program and operations of the Family Engagement Center, funded 100% by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) sub-grant accepted by the Board on July 26, 2016. Direct the Human Resources Department to make the necessary staffing adjustments and initiate the recruitment process.

The Family Engagement Center is scheduled to open in October 2017. The Center will allow families to visit with children removed from their homes due to abuse and/or neglect who are in the custody of the Department. The Center will provide a healthy, positive environment for parents to learn how to interact, parent and reinforce case plan goals. Research supports the significance of parent-child visitation as a predictor of family reunification. Foster parents are a critical piece of facilitating family reunification through both the mentoring of the birth parents and the support of their visitation. The development of a positive relationship between the foster and birth parents may allow children to avoid the stress of divided loyalties and position foster parents to play a supportive role after reunification. The Family Engagement Center, by design, assists the Department in achieving successful reunifications.

When a child is removed, often times, the parents only interaction with them is during their scheduled visitation. The most significant motivation for a parent to make the changes necessary to get their child home is to visit with their child frequently.

AGENDA ITEM # 11

Children who were visited frequently (once a week or once every two weeks) exhibit fewer behavioral problems than children who were visited infrequently (once a month or less), or not at all. Overall, children who had frequent contact with their parent(s) show less anxiety and depression than children whose parents' visits were either infrequent or nonexistent. The Family Engagement Center will allow birth parents and foster parents to interact in an open, natural environment with age-appropriate.

The Family Engagement Center will be open Monday-Saturday with hours extending past five O'clock to assist in working families and foster parent.

The Program Coordinator will be responsible for the oversight and day to day operations and visitation practices of the Engagement Center and will be a critical addition to ensure the program continued model fidelity ensures adherence to Department policies and relationships between the Department, birth parents, children and foster parents is maintained and preserved.

Strategic Objective supported by this item: Safe, Secure and Healthy Communities.

PREVIOUS ACTION

On December 13, 2016 the Board accepted two Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) sub-grant awards from the State of Nevada Division of Child and Family Services for the Crisis Stabilization Response Safety and Services Intervention Team in the amount [\$200,658; \$50,165 County match] for the period retroactive to July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017; for the Placement Services and Support Team in the amount of [\$120,923; \$30,231 County match] for the period retroactive to July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017; authorize the creation of 2.0 FTE Social Worker III, 1.0 FTE Human Services Support Specialist II, 1.0 FTE Mental Health Counselor, and 1.0 FTE Office Support Specialist funded 100% by the VOCA, direct the Human Resources Department to make the necessary staffing adjustments and initiate the recruitment process, authorize the Department to execute the Sub-Grant Award and direct the Comptroller's Office to make the necessary budget amendments

On July 26, 2016 the Board accepted a Sub-grant Award from the State of Nevada Division of Child and Family Services in the amount of \$1,765,819 (\$441,445 in-kind match required) for the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Program retroactively to July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017; authorize the creation of 1.0 FTE Victims Advocate, 1.0 FTE Human Services Program Supervisor, 1.0 FTE Program Assistant, and 1.0 FTE CPS Intake Screener funded 100% by the VOCA award in the approximate annual amount of \$440,686, direct the Human Resources Department to make the necessary staffing adjustments and initiate the recruitment process, authorize the Department to execute the Sub-Grant Award and direct the Comptroller's Office to make the necessary budget amendments. Request for Proposal for various services will be issued to select subcontractors in accordance with Federal and Washoe County purchasing guidelines.

On July 28, 2015 the Board accepted a VOCA grant in the amount of \$115,000 (\$28,750 County match required) effective July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 and authorized an agreement with the Committee to Aid Abused Women to perform services outlined in the VOCA grant in the amount of \$68,750 annually.

On June 26, 2012, the Board accepted a VOCA grant in the amount of \$272,400 (\$68,100 County match required) effective July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015 and authorized an agreement with the Committee to Aid Abused Women to perform services outlined in the VOCA grant in the amount of \$68,750 annually.

The Board has routinely accepted VOCA funds since October, 2005.

BACKGROUND

A Federal Child and Family Services Review in 2004 found a lack of understanding of the impact of violence on children and families. In response to this critical area of need, the Department received permission from Finance in 2005 to apply for VOCA grant funds to provide direct services to children, adolescents, and their non-offending parents and siblings.

The primary purpose of VOCA is to support the provision of services to victims of crime throughout the nation. According to the VOCA Program Guidelines, services are defined as those efforts that (1) respond to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims; (2) assist primary and secondary victims of crime to stabilize their lives after victimization; (3) help victims understand and participate in the criminal justice system; and (4) provide victims of crime with a measure of safety and security. For the purpose of the VOCA crime victim assistance grant program, a crime victim is a person who has suffered physical, sexual, financial, or emotional harm as a result of a crime.

In prior years the Department contracted with the Committee to Aid Abused Women (CAAW) to provide a full-time domestic violence advocate to work with the Department in providing services to victims of child abuse and/or domestic violence. Department staff have worked with the domestic violence advocate to develop and implement a joint response service model for child abuse and domestic violence cases to enhance the safety and wellbeing of children and their non-offending parents. Previous grant awards also supported assistance to victims with crisis intervention services, temporary housing, utilities, transportation, childcare and emergency food and personal items.

Due to the increase of funding available, the current grant award will provide services and assistance to any type of crime victim and is not limited to those victims of domestic violence as previous awards have been. Primary goals include:

- Provide a safety and security measure for victimized children who were removed from their homes and placed into the custody of WCDSS due to abuse and/or neglect. Having a safe, neutral, nurturing place for victimized children who are placed outside of the parental home with biological parents, extended family members, and foster parents is essential to maintaining stability in the child victims lives.

- Improve permanency for child victims in foster care by decreasing the amount of time it takes for child victims in foster care to achieve permanency and find permanent caregivers or connections for child victims where reunification is not possible, by providing Safety Intervention Services.
- Provide safety, security and stability for children, adult males and females and elders, including underserved populations who are victims of: child abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, elder abuse, financial crimes, robbery, assault, adult victims of molestation, economic exploitation, fraud, federal crimes, survivors of homicide, hate and bias crimes and gang violence. The primary focus will be on the Federal Priority Victim Populations.
- Provide professional personalized assistance to victims of crime.
- Respond to the immediate emotional and physical needs and safety of victims.

With the addition of appropriately designed indoor visitation space, including an outdoor playground, birth parents and foster parents would be able to interact in an open, natural environment with age-appropriate activities throughout the building. Families will have an open area to explore and have positive experiences with their children. The center, equipped with necessary furnishings, both indoors and outdoors, will allow visits to be family centered and individualized, where parents will have positive experiences with visitation and be more engaged in their case plan activities for reunification.

FISCAL IMPACT

This position will be funded through the VOCA grant that was accepted by the Board on July 26, 2016. Position costs will be tracked in IO 11318. An amended scope of work and budget has been submitted to the Division of Child and Family Services for review and approval.

If the grant award is discontinued or not renewed, the department will seek to fund the position in the FY19 budget or eliminate the position.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department is requesting the Board Authorize the creation of 1.0 FTE Program Coordinator to provide daily oversight of program and operations of the visitation center funded 100% by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) sub-grant accepted by the Board on July 26, 2016. Direct the Human Resources Department to make the necessary staffing adjustments and initiate the recruitment process

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: *“Move to Authorize the creation 1.0 FTE Program Coordinator, pending Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) approval, to provide daily oversight of program and operations of the Family Engagement Center (Visitation Center), funded 100% by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)*

sub-grant accepted by the Board on July 26, 2016. Direct the Human Resources Department to make the necessary staffing adjustments and initiate the recruitment process.”