



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC GUARDIAN

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DEBORAH WINGATE
ACTING DIRECTOR

June 25, 2024

Dear Debra Lucero and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

Pursuant to Debra's request for input and ideas at the June 18th open Budget Hearing, we would offer the following information and respectfully ask the Board of Supervisors to make a decision to put into action their commitment a plan for retention and recruitment of the dedicated employees at Social Services. Our department has been in crisis for the past year or more with staff who are overworked and underpaid. Many of our staff have appeared before you previously regarding low salaries. Further, it is our understanding that a consultant was hired to do a comparison of 10 counties and the recommendation was to bring the pay into alignment as soon as possible.

As we are sure you have been made aware previously, Social Services is a purely state and federally funded agency and has the responsibility to do many things such as ensure that our citizens are signed up on MediCal benefits, CalFresh benefits, and CalWORKs to name a few. Further, Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services are mandated State and Federal entities. We have so few staff working currently that we have been unable to meet these state mandates and many of our citizens are waiting to get signed up on their MediCal – to get insurance, to get a doctor's appointment, or to even get medication. Without more employees, our citizens cannot access the benefits they desperately need and they are languishing while they wait.

It can take one of our staff members anywhere from two (2) hours to several days to process one MediCal application. Last month we had 3373 MediCal cases. Our department had 1443 CalFresh Cases and 139 CalWORKs cases. There is no conceptual way they can keep up with the workload, it is IMPOSSIBLE. An understaffed Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services places the

most vulnerable in this county in potentially dangerous situations. We must develop an incentive to retain and recruit employees for Social Services or we will continue to lose valuable employees. We implore you as Board Members to allow Social Services the authority to implement the budgeted 20% raises effective July 1, 2024, and that in an effort to attract any new staff that are so desperately needed, the Board allow the Acting Director to offer a one (1) time hiring bonus of \$1000.00 to new hires and a one (1) year anniversary bonus of \$1500.00 to those new hires when they reach one (1) year of employment; which would encourage retention and encourage them to reach their probationary period. (Please see the Attached Budget Sheet)

In fiscal years 22/23, Social Services returned more than \$2.5 million dollars because we could not meet our state mandates. Again in 23/24, we are expecting to return approximately \$2 million and amount similar to the prior year. The state may reallocate these monies to other counties if not used.

Paying our staff their 20% budgeted raises will cost \$383,186.00. If ALL of our positions are filled and staff are provided with the one-time hiring bonus, the cost would be \$674,659.20. After one year with the longevity pay of the \$1500 bonus, the cost would be \$685,159.20. This is FAR less than what we would be returning to the state.

It only makes good sense to allow us to follow the recommendation of the MRG report and allow Social Services to raise the salaries on July 1, 2024, before more individuals leave the agency and initiate a recruitment strategy that will stop the immediate crisis at Social Services.

More importantly we must do something to meet the needs of our county's most vulnerable citizens which meets our mandates.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Melissa Smith

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa Smith".

20%	TITLE	CURRENT WAGE	PROPOSED WAGE	YEARLY IMPACT TO BUDGET	Hiring Incentive	Longevity - 1 Year
	Debbie Wingate	\$ 49.82	\$ 59.78	\$ 20,725.12		
	Pamela McKinnon	\$ 52.21	\$ 62.65	\$ 21,719.36		
	Jennifer Bromby	\$ 39.27	\$ 47.12	\$ 16,336.32		
		\$	-			
	Fraud Investigator I/II	\$ 24.15		\$ 50,232.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,500.00
		\$	-			
	Tiffany Anderson	\$ 32.48	\$ 38.98	\$ 13,511.68		
	Sara Bishop	\$ 26.95	\$ 32.34	\$ 11,211.20		
	Ana Marmolejo Sanchez	\$ 35.81	\$ 42.97	\$ 14,896.96		
	Krystina Oravetz	\$ 25.65	\$ 30.78	\$ 10,670.40		
	Jennifer Merrill	\$ 25.65	\$ 30.78	\$ 10,670.40		
	Heidi Hysmith	\$ 35.27	\$ 42.32	\$ 14,672.32		
	Sr. Social Worker (A)	\$ 27.84		\$ 57,907.20	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,500.00
	Ashley Achter	\$ 43.10	\$ 51.72	\$ 17,929.60		
	Melissa Smith	\$ 37.23	\$ 44.68	\$ 15,487.68		
	Yolanda Underwood	\$ 34.10	\$ 40.92	\$ 14,185.60		
	Sarah LaGrille	\$ 18.01	\$ 21.61	\$ 7,492.16		
	Faye Sims	\$ 18.01	\$ 21.61	\$ 7,492.16		
	Suzan Mah	\$ 28.96	\$ 34.75	\$ 12,047.36		
	Berith Allen	\$ 26.13	\$ 31.36	\$ 10,870.08		
		\$	-			
	ELIGIBILITY SPECIALIST I	\$ 16.96		\$ 35,276.80	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,500.00
	ELIGIBILITY SPECIALIST I	\$ 16.96		\$ 35,276.80	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,500.00
	ELIGIBILITY SPECIALIST I	\$ 16.96		\$ 35,276.80	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,500.00
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	Aaron Mangino	\$ 17.81	\$ 21.37	\$ 7,408.96		
	Jennifer Fleming	\$ 23.86	\$ 28.63	\$ 9,925.76		
	Ryan Powers	\$ 17.81	\$ 21.37	\$ 7,408.96		
	Tina Perez	\$ 27.92	\$ 33.50	\$ 11,614.72		
		\$	-			
	Melanie Cragg	\$ 22.23	\$ 26.68	\$ 9,247.68		
	Daisy Kreth	\$ 22.21	\$ 26.65	\$ 9,239.36		
	Cynthia Leland	\$ 22.21	\$ 26.65	\$ 9,239.36		
	Idette Halverson	\$ 36.42	\$ 43.70	\$ 15,150.72		
		\$	-			
	Janell Sommer	\$ 33.98	\$ 40.78	\$ 14,135.68		
	Jessica Bennett	\$ 31.95	\$ 38.34	\$ 13,291.20		
	Lynda Nolan	\$ 20.45	\$ 24.54	\$ 8,507.20		
	Breanna Rice	\$ 18.12	\$ 21.74	\$ 7,537.92		
	Savanah Bridges	\$ 17.26	\$ 20.71	\$ 7,180.16		
	Brenda Kemp	\$ 29.57	\$ 35.48	\$ 12,301.12		
	Levi Wightman	\$ 23.13	\$ 27.76	\$ 9,622.08		
	Christine Renteria	\$ 27.42	\$ 32.90	\$ 11,406.72		
				\$ 667,659.20	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 10,500.00
				TOTAL	\$ 674,659.20	\$ 685,159.20