

**5COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
September 13, 2007

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Countywide Services Agency

Subject: Report Back On Funding For The Truancy Program

Contact: Bruce Wagstaff, Director Department of Human Assistance, 875-3611

BACKGROUND

The Board has requested information to clarify if funding for the Truancy Program is for the existing program at Luther Burbank High School or an expansion of the Truancy Program.

DISCUSSION

The department submitted an additional growth request to fund two social workers for the expansion of the Truancy Program to additional truancy centers in the City of Sacramento. This request would be fully funded from the General Fund – a total of \$231,312.

The department has joined in the city's efforts to pilot a truancy center at Luther Burbank High School, by providing at no cost one social worker. The department has diverted CalWORKs funding for Welfare to Work (WTW) to pay for this important effort. The department has also participated in the preparation of a grant for federal funding for additional social workers at other truancy centers, and has agreed to provide the employees, supervision, and training to social workers that might be funded by that grant.

However, the department is not currently in a position to divert additional CalWORKs funds for the expansion of the Truancy Program to additional truancy centers. The department, along with the State of California, is under great pressure to increase work participation rates among clients receiving CalWORKs grants. Our mission is to assist these families in achieving self-sufficiency and getting off of welfare. Social workers are a critical component for helping them overcome barriers and learn the life skills they need to reach these goals. We are required to engage 50 percent of our families in work-related activities. Like virtually every other county in the state, we are currently short of that goal and are working hard to attain it.

At present, we have 64 social workers in WTW. Social workers carry approximately 40 cases at any one time, with an average estimated time period of 3 months, although some may go up to 6 months. This means they work between 80 and 160 cases per year, with an average of about 120. With our current capacity, at most we have enough for social workers to work about 10,000 cases per year. With 15,000 WTW clients at any given time, we are at two-thirds capacity now.

Diverting social work resources to truancy centers would decrease that capacity and take us further away from accomplishing our core mission and achieving our 50 percent goal.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

We are not in a position to divert additional funding to this program because of the need to focus our efforts on WTW. We submitted a growth request for general funds for these positions. This growth request was not recommended for approval by the CEO's office given the county's current budget situation in that it would have required a growth in the general fund.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED:
TERRY SCHUTTEN
County Executive

BRUCE WAGSTAFF, Director
Department of Human Assistance

By: _____
PENELOPE CLARKE, Administrator
Countywide Services Agency