

County of Sonoma

Agenda Item Summary Report

Clerk of the Board Use Only

Meeting Date

___/___/___

Agenda Item No:

Department: Human Services Department

4/5 Vote Required

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Board Date:
April 21, 2009

Deadline for Board Action:
April 21, 2009

Agenda Short Title:

Unanticipated Food Stamps revenue

Requested Board Action:

Resolution authorizing budgetary adjustments to the 2008/09 Final Budget for the Human Services Department in the amount of \$449,877.

CURRENT FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT

EXPENDITURES

ADD'L FUNDS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|----|------------|------------------------|----|------------|
| Estimated Cost | \$ | 449,877.00 | Contingencies | \$ | 000.00 |
| | | | (Fund Name:) | | |
| Amount Budgeted | \$ | 000.00 | Unanticipated Revenue | \$ | 449,877.00 |
| | | | (Source:) | | |
| Other Available Approp. | \$ | 000.00 | Other Transfer(s) | | 000.00 |
| (Explain Below) | | | (Source:) | \$ | |
| | | | | | |
| Additional Requested: | \$ | 449,877.00 | Total Source of Funds: | \$ | 449,877.00 |

Explanation (if required): Funds are from State and Federal revenues. There is no additional cost to the County.

Prior Board Action(s):

Alternatives – Results of Non-Approval:

The Human Services Department would forfeit available State and Federal revenues that would allow for overtime, and make systemic and physical changes that enhance client flow in the Paulin building lobby and address safety and confidentiality needs.

Background:

The Board of Supervisors is requested to approve a resolution authorizing budgetary adjustments to the Human Services Department's 2008-09 Final Budget in the amount of \$449,877.

Background:

The Food Stamps allocation was increased mid-year due to caseload growth for the 2008-09 fiscal year. This additional revenue was insufficient to add additional regular positions because it will be needed to mitigate the consequences of reduced funding in next year's budget. We would not be able to maintain additional positions beyond the current fiscal year. The Department proposes to expend the money to deal with several pressing needs related to Food Stamps caseloads.

Overtime and Extra Help thru FY 2008/2009 (\$266,724):

Food Stamps applications have increased by 24% over last year. Requests for Expedited Service Food Stamps, which state regulations require must be processed within 3 days of application, have increased by 42% over the last year. Currently the department is processing 83% of these applications within the 3-day timeframe. Food Stamps applications continue to increase while staffing has reduced by 8% over the last fiscal year. These combined factors affect our ability to meet the public's needs in a timely manner and fully comply with regulations. People applying for Food Stamps who do not qualify for Expedited Services may wait as much as two weeks to be interviewed. At the service center, the increased workload can mean delays in re-determining eligibility quarterly from client change reports, and completing an annual review as the program requires for most participants. This can mean that families who are still eligible for the program may have benefits ended or delayed in error.

To address these pressing issues, we propose to use overtime for the 4th quarter of this Fiscal Year to:

- Reduce the waiting period for Food Stamp interviews by taking more applications daily
- Process the additional applications that will be taken
- Improve our processing of Expedited Services applications
- Process quarterly change reports and annual renewals timely

Attachments: Resolution

On File With Clerk:

CLERK OF THE BOARD USE ONLY

Board Action (If other than "Requested")

Vote:

Background: (continued)

Changes to the Paulin Facility (\$81,000):

The Paulin building is the place where initial eligibility interviews for all public assistance programs are held. Its lobby has seen a steady increase in traffic and has become severely crowded, with standing room only on most mornings and people standing in the walkways. Daily entries into the building have increased from an average of 880 in July, 2008 thru September, 2008, to 1,247 in January 2009 thru March, 2009. The number of available interview rooms is insufficient to handle all the interviews for applicants. The number of available rooms was reduced even further when five were dedicated to the new 211 Information and Referral program. In the lobby itself, crowding has made it more difficult to maintain client confidentiality or minimum comfort.

Remodeling the northwest corner of the lobby would allow for additional space to be used as a waiting area. In the new space, an additional counter would allow us to supervise clients and handle part of the lobby traffic. We will also create work space for the 211 Information and Referral staff, who would move out of the five interview rooms they now occupy. With additional interview rooms made available more applicants could be interviewed in a day, reducing wait times. In addition, the doors leading from the lobby to the interview area would be secured with a proximity card reader and locking doors to provide better client confidentiality and worker security in the interview area. These changes would ease lobby crowding, make more interview rooms available, and provide for better client confidentiality.

Equipment and Software (\$102,153):

Much of our computer equipment at Paulin has reached their manufacturer's "end-of-life" support and needs to be replaced. We have 8 network printers, 18 local interview room printers and 3 PCs that must be replaced due to age and unreliability.

The Human Services Department uses digital imaging to record and store documents, reducing storage needs and making case information accessible to workers in both the intake building and the service center. The division plans to purchase dual monitors for the intake workers at Paulin. This will allow them to view an imaged document while making entries into our automated eligibility system (CalWIN), thus saving staff time now spent toggling between screens. We will also purchase a software support tool, Altruras, which will allow our IT staff to better support technical and computer needs in all of the HSD sites where Food Stamps are processed. This application allows for faster downloading of program upgrades to all locations and better application management.

Recommendation:

Resolution authorizing budgetary adjustments to the 2008/09 Final Budget for the Human Services Department in the amount of \$449,877.