

**County of Santa Clara**  
**Board of Supervisors**  
Supervisory District Four  
Supervisor James T. Beall, Jr.



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DATE: June 15, 2004

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: *James T. Beall, Jr.*  
James T. Beall, Jr.  
Supervisor, District 4

*Donald F. Gage*  
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Supervisor, District 1

SUBJECT: CHILDREN, SENIORS AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE  
RECOMMENDATION: FISCAL YEAR 2005 BUDGET

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

This year presents particular challenges for the entire County. As we face decreasing revenue, increasing welfare caseloads and an uncertain economic future, we must focus on preserving our safety net programs that benefit our most needy residents. The Committee used the Board adopted Budget Strategy Statement to aid our decision-making, focusing on creating cost savings through reductions in overhead expenses, policy changes and/or process efficiencies/improvements. The Committee recognizes that the State budget uncertainty in Sacramento creates opportunities for significant changes to the County budget. Programs such

as IHSS and Foster Care may be significantly modified during the legislative process in subsequent months. It may be necessary to address such changes during the June budget hearings. The Committee recommends the following modifications to the County Executive's Recommended Budget.

**CSFC Inventory Items:**

Department	Recommended Budget	Committee Recommendation	Change
Social Services Agency BU 503	County Executive's Recommended Budget did not fund alternative re-use programming at the Children's Shelter.	Add \$240,000 for implementation of two six-month pilot programming at the Children's Shelter. Fund from the Food Stamp Liability Reserve.	\$240,000
Social Services Agency BU 502	Reduce General Fund Contracts by \$900,462.	Add back \$90,462 for the General Fund Contracts. County Executive will define additional funding sources. These options, as well as the options presented by the Social Services Agency, will be presented to the full Board of Supervisors during the Budget Hearings.	\$900,462

## **BACKGROUND**

### **A. Shelter Reuse**

The Committee recommends allocating \$240,000 from the Food Stamp Liability Reserve to implement two six-month pilot programs, the Educational Support pilot and the Family Mental Health Services pilot, for alternative re-use programming at the Children's Shelter. The County Executive's Recommended Budget reduces the Children's Shelter Budget over three million dollars compared to last fiscal year. The Committee believes that a portion of the Children's Shelter savings should be reinvested to fund alternate supportive services dedicated to serve the children and families in the Child Welfare System.

The Shelter facility has six cottages. Beginning September 1, 2003, the Ford cottage was closed due to extremely low admissions of 7-12 year old boys needing intensive supervision. Valley, an additional cottage, was closed this past January 2004. The Children's Shelter has and will continue to be used as an assessment center and when immediate placement with relatives or foster parents is not available or not appropriate, as a short-term residential care facility. The Children's Shelter will continue to provide a stable, safe, temporary environment for abused and neglected children. Currently, the Social Services Agency is utilizing three cottages for the residential care program. A fourth cottage is being kept vacant to address any potential temporary population overflow.

The Board of Supervisors directed the Social Services Agency to develop alternative uses for the closed cottages. In response, Social Services Agency convened a community stakeholder group, the Santa Clara County Children's Shelter's Use Committee, to assess the needs of dependent children and families and identify potential gaps in services. The Children's Shelter Use Committee met from September 2003 to January 2004. The Social Services Agency provided periodic status reports to the Children, Seniors and Families Committee on February 18, 2004, May 5, 2004 and June 9, 2004. The Committee provided Board members shelter re-use updates during the December 17, 2004, February 18, 2004, May 5, 2004, and June 8, 2004 Board meetings.

Over 400 community representatives gave input to the Children's Shelter Use Committee through focus groups and community meetings. Two themes emerged regarding the needs of children and families: family and caregiver strengthening resources and educational support for children of all ages. Three recommended uses of available space at the Children's Shelter are: Educational Support for Foster Youth of All Ages, Family Mental Health Services, and Family Visitation. All three proposals reflect the repeated themes supported by community residents and research in the field. A strong synergy exists among the proposals such that not only are themes repeated, but some proposed strategies and desired outcomes are

interchangeable.

## B. General Fund Contracts

The Committee recommends restoring the General Fund Contracts by \$900,462. The Committee considered several funding options and requested the County Executive to define additional funding sources to fully restore the contracts. The funding options will be presented to the full Board of Supervisors for their consideration during the Budget Hearings.

The Committee believes that partnering with community non profits will enable the County to provide affordable direct services to clients on a long-term basis. On May 19, 2004, the Children, Seniors and Families Committee heard public testimony from several individuals representing the elderly, immigrants and youth regarding the adverse impacts of the County Executive's Recommended Budget proposal to reduce the General Fund Contracts by \$900,462. The Committee found these concerns compelling and directed the Social Services Agency to prepare options to restore the General Fund Contracts budget reductions. Services funded by General Fund contracts insulate the County service delivery system by diverting at-risk families from entering the system at a fraction of the cost and allow families to receive services in their own communities. The General Fund Contracts support preventative services and therefore address the Board of Supervisors' Budget Strategy goals. The Committee found the proposed reductions excessive and believes the reductions will have a negative fiscal impact on the County as families who could be served by non-profits turn to various County agencies for services. The suggested augmentations will enable further support at-risk families, and achieve the Board of Supervisors' goals to strengthen families.

The upcoming years will continue to challenge the County's ability to deliver core services. Over the next few months, the General Fund Contracts RFP process will be discussed by the Committee, and recommendations will presented to the full Board of Supervisors for consideration. The Committee plans to work with the County Executive to develop budget strategies early in the upcoming fiscal year and is confident that the County will continue to provide safety net services to our residents. The Committee recommends approval of the County Executive's Recommended Budget with the above mentioned modifications.