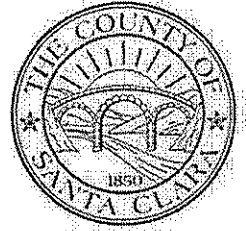


# County of Santa Clara

Social Services Agency

333 West Julian Street  
San Jose, California 95110-2335

THIS RELATES TO:  
6-17-09 Item No. 80  
Supplemental Information No. 1



June 17, 2009

TO: Gary A. Graves, Acting County Executive

FROM: Will Lightbourne, SSA Director *Will Lightbourne*

SUBJECT: Revised proposal for Reorganizing Staffing and Work of the SSI Benefits Advocacy Unit

## RECOMMENDED ACTION

Restore three (3) Social Worker II (Y3B) positions within the Social Services Agency (SSA), and increase SSA expenditure appropriations for salaries and benefits in the amount of \$325,980 and increase SSA revenue in the amount of \$156,796. Recognize additional revenue in the Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System (HHS) of \$169,184.

## FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The Recommended Action has no negative impact to the County General Fund. The expenditure reimbursement process will be negotiated between SSA and VMC to ensure no net increase to the County General Fund.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND

The original budget recommendation for the Department of Employment and Benefit Services (BU 504) proposed deletion of 5.0 of the existing 10.0 FTE Social Worker II codes in the SSI Benefits Advocacy Unit for a net General Fund savings of \$261,327. This recommendation was predicated on an analysis of the SSI applications actually handled by the unit over the past two years and the belief that by adopting the more streamlined SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) model, the caseload of potential SSI applicants associated with the General Assistance program and those non-GA clients being served through Destination: Home could be served by the remaining 5.0 social workers.

During the FY 2010 budget hearing on this budget unit on June 16, 2009, there was discussion as to the possibility of serving additional clients beyond the GA and Destination: Home programs by utilizing the SOAR approach and retaining additional social work positions.

Following discussion with the Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System, the two agencies see the opportunity to collaborate to deploy 3.0 SSI Advocacy Workers to the Mental Health Department and in the SCVMC Homeless Program, with specific assignments to be determined. By incorporating the expertise of these workers, the County should be able to expedite SSI applications for clients associated with that department who are not otherwise eligible for General Assistance, and maximize revenue reimbursement for health and social services on behalf of consumers who are currently served in the system but do not have SSI or Medi-Cal benefits, despite their apparent eligibility for such benefits due to their psychiatric disability. SCVHHS supports the creation of a program to undertake this effort.

The Mental Health Department has put in place a new specialized assessment center that currently sees all clients as they enter the mental health system to enroll them concurrently in Valley Medical Center and Mental Health. Given the lengthy application process, and the high rate of application rejections on first-time applications for psychiatric disabilities, there is a particular need to coalesce expertise in the areas of clinical assessment, administrative tracking, and case management in order to achieve successful SSI eligibility.

The discussion to date had focused on the County's portion of the work needed to enroll individuals into SSI or Medi-Cal; however, the State's Medi-Cal staff must still approve the applicant's disability before benefits are obtained. To help ensure the success of this effort, it is hoped that the Legislative Committee could assist in securing a more expedited process through the State.

The Social Services Agency and Mental Health Departments will track the productivity and effectiveness of this model and configuration on an ongoing basis to determine whether client service and revenue recovery outcomes support investment of additional resources. In that event, SSA will recommend funding the remaining two positions as appropriate.