

STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE:	December 10, 2024
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CATEGORY: Consent Calendar 15

SUBJECT: Approve a retroactive renewal agreement with the Shasta County Office of Education for the Child Care Bridge Program.

DEPARTMENT: Health and Human Services Agency-Behavioral Health and Social Services

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT #: All

DEPARTMENT CONTACT: Bailey Cogger, HHSA Deputy Branch Director - Behavioral Health and Social Services, (530) 225-5900

STAFF REPORT APPROVED BY: Bailey Cogger, HHSA Deputy Branch Director - Behavioral Health and Social Services

<u>Vote Required?</u>	<u>General Fund Impact?</u>
Simple Majority Vote	No General Fund Impact

RECOMMENDATION

Approve a retroactive renewal agreement with the Shasta County Office of Education (SCOE) in an amount not to exceed \$1,857,306.00 to administer the Child Care Bridge Program for the three-year period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027; and (2) designate authority to the CEO, or their designee, to terminate this agreement, provided County Counsel concurs, and all other conditions are met.

DISCUSSION

A barrier for potential families seeking to take in a foster child is the lack of access to childcare for the child being placed with the resource family. With the passage of Senate Bill 89, resource families that have a child placed with them in an emergency or for a compelling reason, licensed foster family homes or certified family homes, approved homes of relatives or nonrelative extended family members, and parents under the jurisdiction of juvenile court are eligible to receive a time-limited monthly voucher for childcare and the support of a childcare navigator. The Child Care Bridge Program “bridges the gap” and allows eligible families to accept a child in their home and to continue to work or attend school.

The Child Care Bridge Program aims to increase the number of foster children successfully placed in home-based family care settings, increase capacity of childcare programs to meet the needs of foster children in their care, and maximize funding to support the childcare needs of eligible families. In addition, childcare providers serving children in the Child Care Bridge Program will be provided with trauma-informed care training and coaching.

The Child Care Bridge Program consists of three components:

- Emergency childcare voucher: Eligible families may receive a time-limited childcare voucher to help pay for childcare costs for foster children birth through age 12, children with exceptional needs, and severely disabled children up to age 21.
- Childcare navigator: The local Child Care Resource and Referral Program, operated by SCOE, will provide a childcare navigator to eligible families. The navigator will assist with finding a childcare provider, securing a subsidized childcare placement if eligible, completing childcare program applications, and developing a plan for long-term childcare appropriate to the child’s age and needs.
- Trauma-informed care training and coaching: Childcare programs participating in the Child Care Bridge Program will receive access to trauma-informed care training. The training includes, but is not limited to, infant and toddler development and research-based, trauma-informed care practices. Childcare providers will also receive access to coaching to assist them in applying training curriculum and learned strategies for working with children in foster care.

Since August 1998, SCOE has been consistently providing quality services to Shasta County families. As a sole source, SCOE currently operates the only State recognized local Child Care Resource and Referral Program and maintains a well-established network of childcare providers. SCOE has been providing the Child Care Bridge Program since 2018 and serves approximately 20 to 30 children per month.

The agreement is retroactive to allow contract negotiations to be completed.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board may choose not to approve this agreement, defer consideration to a future date, provide alternate direction to staff, or approve one or only part of the recommended actions. If deferred or denied, Health and Human Services Agency, Behavioral Health and Social Services will be required to assume responsibility and supply the staffing to administer the Childcare Bridge Program. This would consist of administering the Emergency Childcare Vouchers, supplying staff to perform the duties of the Childcare Navigator Program, the Trauma-Informed Care training and coaching to childcare providers. Behavioral Health and Social Services would also need increased staffing to process, pay, and track all childcare voucher payments being made to participating childcare providers.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

County Counsel has approved the agreement as to form. Risk Management has approved the agreement. The recommendation has been reviewed by the County Administrative Office.

FISCAL IMPACT

These services are funded through the Child Welfare Services allocation (BU 501), which requires a County share of cost met largely through Realignment. The department's FY 2024-25 Budget will include sufficient appropriate authority for the activities described in this agreement and will be included in future budget year requests.

ATTACHMENTS:

1: SCOE Bridge Renewal Agreement