



Board Report

File #: A 20-261, **Version:** 1

- a. Approve and authorize the Director of the Department of Social Services to sign an agreement for \$1,032,000 with Aspiranet for operation of the CHERISH Receiving Center, retroactive to July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021; and
- b. Authorize the Director of the Department of Social Services to sign up to three (3) amendments to this agreement where the total amendments do not exceed 10% (\$103,200) of the original contract amount and do not significantly change the scope of work.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Approve and authorize the Director of the Department of Social Services to sign an agreement for \$1,032,000 with Aspiranet for operation of the CHERISH Receiving Center, retroactive to July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021; and
- b. Authorize the Director of the Department of Social Services to sign up to three (3) amendments to this agreement where the total amendments do not exceed 10% (\$103,200) of the original contract amount and do not significantly change the scope of work.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

Aspiranet operates the CHERISH Receiving Center (CHERISH) which provides a safe and nurturing environment for children 0-17 years of age who have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect, or a disruption in foster care placement. These children need a safe, comfortable place to stay until their home issues are resolved or until they can be placed with a foster family. CHERISH offers this nurturing and supportive environment for children when they are first placed in protective custody. Children stay at CHERISH while safety concerns are resolved or placements in foster care, or with relatives, is arranged.

CHERISH provides a child-friendly, safe, home-like environment through the successful collaboration of Aspiranet and Monterey County's Family & Children's Services (FCS). In order to ensure the safety of these children, Crisis Support, Family Finding and transitional beds in Emergency Shelter Foster Homes (ESFH) have been identified as ongoing needs. Currently, CHERISH is faced with growing numbers of youth who are accessing CHERISH with a wider array of complex behavioral and personal traumas; these complexities create a more involved effort to identify services and potential placements. This is further complicated by the ongoing change in the field of Child Welfare related to identifying and certifying resource parents, as well as navigating the State's effort to reform congregate care.

Due to circumstances beyond FCS's control related to increased challenges in securing placements consistent with current regulatory requirements, CHERISH has seen an increase in the numbers of stays, and lengths of those stays, for children who are admitted. Current changes require CHERISH to transition to a licensed 72-hour care facility with oversight by Community Care Licensing. It is anticipated this will help resolve some of these issues leading to overstays and help to manage CHERISH's services around Crisis Support, Family Finding, and ESFH service provision. This will ensure that we are able to maintain CHERISH's facility within its mandate, but transition youth who need more time in finding suitable placement into a 30-day foster home. With the reduced availability of licensed foster care/resource parents, it is becoming more difficult to match youth with suitable placements.

This agreement was delayed in being brought for Board consideration prior to the effective date due to complex negotiations between County and Contractor.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Auditor-Controller and Purchasing have reviewed and approved this Agreement. County Counsel has approved the Agreement as to form.

FINANCING:

Funding for this Agreement is provided with a combination of Federal revenues, Realignment, Wraparound-Flex, and Children's Trust Funds. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues in SOC005 are included in the FY2020-21 Adopted Budget.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

This Agreement correlates to the Health & Human Services Strategic Initiative adopted by the Board of Supervisors by allowing the Department to improve the quality of life for children at risk of abuse and neglect by expanding the Department's ability to work in collaboration with the community to address the services needed during the youth's temporary custody or removal.

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives

Economic Development

Administration

Health & Human Services

Infrastructure

Public Safety

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Approved by: Lori A. Medina, Director, Ext. 4430

Attachment: Agreement

Proposed agreement is on file with Clerk of the Board as an attachment to this Board Report