



# County of Monterey

Item No.

## Board Report

Board of Supervisors  
Chambers  
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor  
Salinas, CA 93901

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Matter Type: Budget Committee

Receive and accept the semi-annual report of expenditures and caseload data for the Department of Social Services for the period of July through December 2024.

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Budget Committee:

Receive and accept the semi-annual report of expenditures and caseload data for the Department of Social Services for the period of July through December 2024.

### SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The attached report represents actual caseload and expenditure data through December 2024. The report compares data month-to-month and year-to-year against last year and against FY 2019-20 where majority of the year was pre-pandemic for the following programs:

**General Assistance (GA)** caseload is holding steady over the last six months and from a year-to-year perspective, there is an average increase of 22.43% and caseload is back to “pre-pandemic” level. Assistance costs reflect an increase of 19.35% from prior year which correlates to the percentage caseload increase of 22.43%. The current expenditures are slightly higher than the pre-pandemic year due to monthly costs fluctuating due to Social Security reimbursement. (See attached chart, Page 1).

Based upon the Mid-Year and 3-Year Forecast, the budget will exceed current appropriation levels by \$406,417 and will be short \$505,799 next year. For FY 2025-26, this entitlement program was issued a pro-rated General Fund Contribution reduction of \$6,125.

**CalWORKS** caseload reflecting higher numbers when looking back month-to-month, but overall year-to-date average caseload and expenditures are reflecting a reduction of 4.5%. However, CalWORKs caseloads generally continue to increase during the winter months of December through March which is reflected in the Departments’ Forecast. Additionally, The Department notes that current caseload and expenditures surpasses the “pre-pandemic” levels. (See Attached chart, page 2).

Based upon the Mid-Year Estimates, the budget will exceed current appropriation levels by \$2.1 million (4% increase) which is fully funded. For next year, it is forecasted that the expenditures will increase another \$2.9 million (6% increase), driving the county share of cost up by \$511,611. For FY 2025-26, this entitlement program was issued a pro-rated General Fund Contribution reduction of \$4,874.

**CalFresh** caseload has increased 1,195 cases over the last six months. From a year-to-year perspective, there is a slight increase in caseload of 3.82% which tends to increase during the winter months (December to March) and current year is much higher than prior to the pandemic. (See Attached chart, page 3). Caseload sizes for the programs will be monitored with the recent immigration policies at the national level.

**Medi-Cal** caseload continues to decline resulting in 3,159 reduction to caseload over the last six months. From a year-to-year perspective, there is a slight decrease of 2.01%. During the pandemic, customers were able to stay on Medi-Cal, but now caseload is declining which is a direct result of conducting customer's benefit redeterminations which was restarted by the State on April 01, 2023. (See Attached chart, page 3). Caseload sizes for the programs will be monitored with the recent immigration policies at the national level.

**IHSS** paid hours continues to increase by 85,784 over the 6-month period in comparison to June 2024. From a year-to-date perspective, there is a 7.38% average increase to hours. As the population ages and lives longer, those on IHSS have increased needs the longer they stay in the program, so hours will fluctuate and increase as caseload grows. Additionally, undocumented community members became qualified for Medi-Cal which allowed access to IHSS and is contributing to increased caseload counts. IHSS program rules also changed in 2024 to significantly expand eligibility for parent providers of minor recipients.

Expenditures have increased 10.69 % from prior year due to the increase in hours worked for this reporting period which drives the costs for wages and benefits. In this report period, a negotiated wage increase of \$0.35 went into effect on July 1, 2024, increasing the wage to \$18.74. Beginning January 1, 2025, a State minimum wage increase of \$0.50 went into effect, increasing the IHSS Provider wage to \$19.24. There is a caregiver waitlist for health benefits of 119. (See Attached chart, page 4).

Based upon the Mid-Year Estimates, the budget will exceed current appropriation levels by \$251,958 which is covered fully by revenues and realignment. For next year, it is forecasted that the expenditures will increase \$1.4 million which will be covered by federal, state, and realignment revenues. Note: County share of cost increased \$852,448 approximately and will be covered by realignment. For FY 2025-26, this entitlement program was issued a pro-rated General Fund Contribution reduction of \$60,652.

**Out of Home Care** includes cases in Foster Care (including youth opting to stay in Foster Care to age 21), Probation, and Adoption Assistance. The caseload has mostly remained steady over the last 6 months, only increasing 4 cases. However, the average caseload year-to-year decreased 2.58%, and the caseload is still considerably lower than pre-pandemic times mainly due to programs implemented that reduce the number of children coming into care. The children that are coming into care have more acute needs, such as substance abuse, suicidal ideation, aggression as a trauma response where they hit others. The attached chart, page 5, reflects caseload and expenditure information.

Although there are less children in care, our costs have increased 8.18% in comparison to prior year, but less than what was paid in the pre-pandemic years. The Department is seeing a large shift of costs to the County because of the high number of children in our care have very high-acute needs which is very costly. Based upon the Mid-Year Estimates, the budget will exceed current appropriation levels by \$2.1 million which will be covered fully by revenues and

a reduction in realignment fund balance of \$1.9 million. For next year, it is forecasted that the expenditures will increase \$2.7 million from current adopted budget, which will have some increased revenues but will require an increase use of \$2.3 million in realignment revenues for county increased share. For FY 2025-26, this entitlement program was issued a pro-rated General Fund Contribution reduction of \$13,018.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Probation placement costs are included in Foster Care.

FINANCING:

All the entitlement programs, based upon the Mid-Year Estimates, will require an increase in appropriations and revenues as detailed above in each program section. All the program areas will be covered by revenue and realignment, with the exception of the General Assistance Program. It is the Department's intent to try and cover as much of the General Assistance overage, which is a County-funded program, by diverting any unused general fund contribution dollars from other budget units. The Department will continue to closely monitor the costs of these entitlement programs in comparison to the current operating budget. The Department will return to the Budget Committee in March to request an increase in appropriations and revenues for all the entitlement programs.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives:

- ☐ Economic Development
- ☐ Administration
- ☒ Health & Human Services
- ☐ Infrastructure
- ☐ Public Safety

Prepared by: Becky Cromer, Finance Manager III, x4404

Approved by: Roderick Franks, Department of Social Services Director, x4430

Attachments: July - December 2024 Caseload and Expenditure Report