



County of Monterey

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Sonia M. De La Rosa

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

168 West Alisal St. 3rd Floor

Salinas, CA 93901

831 755 5115

cao-admin@countyofmonterey.gov

May 28, 2024

The Honorable Scott Wiener
Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review
1021 O Street, Room 8620
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Budget
1021 O Street, Room 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Caroline Menjivar
Chair, Senate Budget Sub #3
1021 O Street, Room 6720
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Corey Jackson
Chair, Assembly Budget Sub #2
1021 O Street, Room 6120
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: May Revision Human Services Proposals (CalWORKs, Child Welfare Services, and Adult Protective Services)

Dear Senator Weiner, Senator Menjivar, Assembly Member Gabriel and Assemblymember Jackson:

The County of Monterey recognizes that the state is facing unprecedented financial challenges and that difficult choices are needed to address the multi-year budget deficit. However, we urge you to avoid balancing the budget on the backs of children, families and older adults already experiencing deep poverty and for the most vulnerable who are victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. We strongly oppose the proposed cuts across the human services programs that the County of Monterey oversees.

The Administration has proposed a total of over \$1.3 billion in budget cuts in human service programs, with approximately \$850 million of that to be ongoing. No human services program area is spared – the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), Child Welfare Services, In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), CalFresh, and Adult Protective Services (APS) programs, as well as housing programs, including Bringing Families Home, Home Safe, and the Housing and Disability Advocacy (HDAP) programs are all impacted.

While all the proposed program cuts and eliminations are deeply troubling, our county has notable concerns and strongly objects to the proposed cuts in CalWORKs, child welfare services, and Adult Protective Services. The following are details of the impacts of the proposed cuts.

CalWORKs Single Allocation

We object to the proposed cuts to the Single Allocation totaling \$355.3 million in FY 2024-25, which is a 21.2% cut compared to 2023-24 amount. This cut will have a devastating impact to each component in the Single Allocation. The actual eligibility costs incurred by counties will be underfunded by over 50% under the May Revision proposal, a shortfall of over \$400 million. This means that counties will have to shift \$400 million from the employment services component of the Single Allocation to cover workload associated with state and federally mandated eligibility work to ensure clients receive timely access to CalWORKs benefits. This shift of funding from the employment services component to the eligibility component will in turn result in a reduction of over 50% of the funding available for employment services in FY 2024-25. Overall, a cut this deep to the Single Allocation, especially when combined with the other approximately \$400 million in permanent cuts to CalWORKs services, including 1) the proposed elimination of the Expanded Subsidized Employment, Family Stabilization, and WINS programs, 2) the proposed ongoing reduction to the Home Visiting Program, and 3) the proposed complete elimination of the Mental Health and Substance Abuse funding, will completely undermine counties' ability to provide services and support to CalWORKs



families and meet performance outcomes. Statewide, we estimate over 1,700 CalWORKs positions would have to be held vacant or eliminated to absorb this cut to the Single Allocation.

In Monterey County, proposed cuts to the Single Allocation will directly impact 500 vulnerable families in need of critical services for housing, mental health including substance abuse and domestic violence trauma, childcare, transportation, clothing, and employment. It is estimated these families will lose access to nearly \$11 million in CalWORKs direct assistance as a direct result of the proposed reduction of staff and services.

Child Welfare Services

We strongly object to the cuts proposed to Caregiver Approvals and the Family Urgent Response System (FURS). The May Revision proposes to eliminate the entire funding of \$50 million General Fund for caregiver approvals beginning in FY 2024-25 and annually ongoing. This funding was finally implemented on an ongoing basis beginning in FY 2022-23 to support state-mandated case management activities to perform timely approval of relative caregivers through the Resource Family Approval (RFA) process. Caregiver approval requirements were enhanced and expanded for all counties and caregivers as part of the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) enacted in 2016. The one-time and eventually ongoing funding never fully funded the costs to counties of the new mandated workload, which is over \$100 million annually. County human services agencies have funded the difference from local realignment funding, even though they are not required to do so, because we recognize the foundational importance of this work to the child welfare system. However, the loss of this \$50 million will eliminate funding for over 200 child welfare social workers statewide and will diminish county capacity to perform caregiver approvals.

This proposed cut, along with the proposed elimination of the Family Urgent Response System (FURS) program, undermines the foundation of our child welfare system and will remove vital services proven to stabilize youth and families. In Monterey County, the elimination of FURS will leave our former and current foster youth, who depend on additional support via access to the hotline, without a point of contact or streamlined connection to mental health services. FURS funding currently ensures that our mental health mobile response team has sufficient bandwidth to respond to all calls in a timely manner.

The cut to caregiver approvals would require us to ensure that our social workers complete the expanded mandated assessments with less funding causing us to dismantle the support we have established through our community Service Providers. This will increase the workload of our social workers and require them to spend more time completing the full assessments. The work they do in our Resource Family Approval Programs homes will take longer, resulting in delays in approvals. This will most likely result in delays in payment to our Resource Families, which include relatives, near kin, and community members who are stepping in to provide a safe placement for our children entering Foster Care. This impact will be felt most keenly by relatives and near kin who are often called upon with little notice to step in for their relative's children who are in desperate need of placement.

Adult Protective Services (APS)

We strongly oppose the May Revision proposal to significantly cut the APS expansion by \$40 million General Fund beginning in FY 2024-25 and annually ongoing, reducing the annual funding amount from \$70 million to \$30 million. The APS program provides 24/7 response to reports of abuse and neglect for individuals over 60 and dependent adults ages 18-59. In Monterey County, since the implementation of the APS expansion, APS clients aged 60-64 have almost tripled from about 6 to 7 cases per month to an average of roughly 20 cases per month. Overall, we have seen a 209% increase in APS clients aged 60-64 and a 44% increase in APS clients experiencing homelessness since the expansion.

The proposed cut will result in the immediate loss of 200 social worker staff statewide who provide critical and often life-saving response and services to victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, leaving older and dependent adults more vulnerable to hospitalization, institutionalization in nursing homes and premature death. Monterey County has been able to hire two (2) new APS Social Workers, one (1) APS Intake Social Worker, and one (1) APS Supervisor with expansion funds, and that new staffing will be jeopardized by this proposed funding reduction. This cut will greatly limit our ability to respond timely on a 24/7 basis to the more than 2,800 reports of abuse, neglect and financial exploitation that our county receives annually. Meanwhile, reports to our APS hotline continue to increase year over year, increasing by 38% in the last 3 years since the APS expansion funding was approved by the Legislature.

The May Revision also proposes to eliminate all funding (\$4.8 million) associated with training of APS social workers beginning in FY 2024-25 and annually ongoing. The statewide training is essential in supporting our social worker staff to meet the needs of vulnerable older and dependent adults and supports consistent practices across counties. Our county relies upon this training to provide core, standardized response and services in alignment with national and statewide standards. APS social workers are required to complete intensive investigations, must coordinate with other professionals in their investigations and service delivery, and need to receive regular training in order to adopt to the ever-changing nature of abuse, neglect and financial exploitation of older adults. Additionally, this training enables our Public Guardians to access mandated state training, allowing us to better coordinate our response to protect this population. These training programs are essential for supporting the County of Monterey's 14 APS Social Workers in their role providing critical services to vulnerable adults. They also support our APS intake staff, support staff, supervisors, and managers, and promote consistency across APS programs statewide. Trainings such as the intensive multi-week APS Induction Series are especially important for developing new workers' knowledge and skill sets and have been invaluable to several of our new APS staff in their onboarding process.

We are grateful that the benefit levels themselves have been preserved in this budget, but the proposed cuts will negatively impact eligible Californians' ability to access those benefits and are cuts to core services. While we understand that tough decisions must be made, the ongoing nature of the reductions and eliminations will have detrimental impacts to families and county workers.

For these reasons, the County of Monterey urges your rejection of these cuts to CalWORKs, child welfare services, and APS. Should you have any questions regarding the County of Monterey's positions, please feel free to contact the County's Public Policy Advisor, Ashley Walker of Nossaman LLP at 916-442-8888.

Sincerely,



Sonia M. De La Rosa
County Administrative Officer

cc: Members and Staff of the Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
Members and Staff of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2
The Honorable Anna Caballero, 14th Senate District
The Honorable John Laird, 17th Senate District
The Honorable Robert Rivas, 29th Assembly District
The Honorable Dawn Addis, 30th Assembly District
Traci Metcalf, County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA)
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)

