

**Agenda Item 4**  
**April 1, 2015**

**DATE:** March 22, 2015

**TO:** Children and Families Commission of Orange County

**FROM:** Christina Altmayer, Executive Director 

**SUBJECT:** Request for Proposal for Prevention and Early Intervention Services to Families with Children 0-5

**ACTION:** Authorize Commission Staff to Proceed with a Request for Response for Prevention and Early Intervention Services.

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**SUMMARY:**

At the October meeting, the Children and Families Commission confirmed the catalytic funding allocation of \$460,000 to support early intervention prevention services. Commission staff and representatives from the Orange County Social Services Agency have been meeting to discuss opportunities to use these funds to substantially increase prevention services offered to families that have had an initial contact with the child protective services, but whose situation does not meet minimum thresholds for further mandated intervention from the Social Service Agency (SSA). Through voluntary support services to families, the intent is to reduce the likelihood of concerns of abuse or neglect and providing stabilizing support to families. This report provides a summary of the progress made in designing these targeted services and a request for Commission authorization to proceed with a Request for Response.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Commission has been exploring how to develop a program to address the percentage of children at risk for abuse or neglect in their first five years of life. The research by Dr. Emily Putnam-Hornstein of the Children's Data Network, presented to the Commission last May, has informed the Commission's planning efforts. Dr. Hornstein's analysis of Orange County data found that while "*official cross-sectional data from 2013 indicate that 3.6% of children under age 5 were reported for maltreatment, when we longitudinally follow children from birth through age 5—data from the present report indicate that 11.5% of children were reported—significantly more children than previously appreciated.*"

A recent report by Dr. Hornstein, on statewide data using the same 2006 and 2007 birth cohort indicates that a report to Child Protective Services (CPS) is a strong indicator of significant risk to children:

- A previous report to CPS (regardless of disposition) emerged as the strongest predictor of injury or death during a child's first five years of life; significantly associated with a child's risk of either unintentional and intentional injury or death.
- For infants, the most vulnerable population, regardless of the initial determination of substantiation, approximately 60% of infants will have a second report within their first year of life.

In sum, the research found that “*maltreatment that begins during infancy is not only likely to be chronic in duration but also developmentally consequential.*” In light of these findings, Commission staff has been working with representatives from the Social Services Agency (SSA) to determine additional ways voluntary services can be provided to the families whose reports to the Child Abuse Registry did not meet criteria for further mandated intervention from SSA and reduce risk for subsequent concerns.

### **Proposed Contracting Process**

In December of 2014, the Commission approved the release of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a three year pilot program that targets families, with at least one child age 0-5, which had an initial Child Abuse Registry report. Key elements to the success of other similar programs in the state included; strong collaboration with the Social Service Agency and having a variety of program services offered to the family that vary based on specific need and built on evidence based curriculum. Consistent with the action taken by the Commission at the December 2015 meeting, the preliminary scope for these services include:

- The use of standardized evidence based assessment that can be used as a pre and post measurement for participant families.
- A network of community services providers that can leverage existing community resources including evidence based intervention models such as Triple P (Positive Parenting Program).
- A backbone agency that can be accountable for data collection and quality assurance among the community service providers and does not provide direct services to the targeted families.
- Commitment of all agencies to a rigorous evaluation that identifies the benefit to the individual family for having participated in program, reduction in the number of 0-5 children whose families have subsequent and or substantiated child abuse reports, and the potential cost savings to the system because of the voluntary intervention.
- Payment structure based on achievement of targeted milestones including engagement of families in voluntary programs and completion of services.

Since December, Commission staff and SSA staff have continued to work and refine the understanding of the target population of families, voluntary prevention and early intervention services to be offered, opportunities to leverage other programs within the county and the evaluation of the program. Commission staff requests authority to move forward with the application process with recommended adjustments including;

- Reducing Timeframe- Transition from three year pilot to a two year pilot that incorporates initial evaluation results to make program design adjustments, and
- Application Process- Employing a Request for Response process, which includes a process to negotiate a refined program design and performance payment structure with a selected collaborative respondent. Once the most qualified collaborative is identified, Commission staff will enter into negotiations for approximately 60-90 days to finalize all aspects of the scope and payment structure.

Staff anticipates releasing the RFR during the month of April with response due 60 days later. The process will include a bidders conference to discuss the proposed program design, evaluation, and RFR process. The estimated timeline has Commission staff return at the September 2015 meeting to authorize contract(s) and initiate services.

### **Proposed Partnership with Social Services Agency**

The County Social Services Agency is the mandated agency for all child welfare programs for Orange County and will be a critical partner in the program implementation. The day to day operation, as well as the long term evaluation of this project, will be heavily dependent on a partnership with SSA. SSA in-kind support will include executive, management and line staff that will provide technical assistance and leadership to:

- Assist in the identification and management of targeted family referrals.
- Participate in and potentially lead Multi Disciplinary Teams to review client level data and assist in determining the appropriate referral; these meetings are anticipated to be conducted on a twice weekly basis.
- Support data collection and evaluation; SSA has committed to making any necessary upgrades to the software used to collect information on CAR reports for the targeted families, and the ongoing analyzing of the eligible families.

As a necessary part of the evaluation, all eligible families, including those that voluntarily participated in services, as well as those that did not, will be compared to the inventory of CAR reports at six month intervals to determine the effectiveness of the program. SSA has continued to express interest in exploring opportunities to support and potentially expand the program based on initial evaluation results. This program will be implemented with the intent to eventually structure as a Pay for Success project. The Commission has received a technical assistance grant from the Institute for Child Success which include attendance at an invitation only national training session in San Diego in April. Commission staff and SSA representatives will attend the three-day conference.

Commission approval is requested to authorize implementation of the Request for Responses and the process as outlined above. If approved, staff will work to return with a proposed lead agency and contract terms by September 2015.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN & FISCAL SUMMARY:**

The proposed project has been specifically reviewed in relation to the Strategic Plan and is consistent with the Commission Strong Families goal area. The Round 2 Catalytic Funding has \$460,000 allocated to support early intervention and prevention services.

### **PRIOR COMMISSION ACTIONS:**

- December 2014- Approval to release Request for Proposal
- October 2014- Released contingency on Title 4E waiver and confirmation of prevention early intervention scope
- January 2013- Programmatic update and funding set aside
- March 2012- Funding Allocation as part of the Round 2 Catalytic Investment

### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

1. Provide direction to staff, and approve the release of a Request for Response, for a two year pilot program for prevention and early intervention program for maximum funding amount of \$460,000, consistent with previously approved catalytic funding.

**Contact:** Kim Goll