



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 17-442, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 8/9/2017

TITLE:

Albemarle County Department Social Services Request for New Positions

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Albemarle County Department Social Services request for new positions using new funding appropriated by the General Assembly

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Walker, Letteri, Savides

PRESENTER (S): Phyllis C. Savides

LEGAL REVIEW: Not Required

REVIEWED BY: Douglas C. Walker

BACKGROUND: In 2017, the General Assembly passed new legislation that will significantly affect the Child Protective Services' workload in two ways:

- first, local departments of social services are required to *"investigate all reports of children born exposed to controlled substances, regardless of whether the substance was prescribed for the mother, when she has sought or gained substance abuse counseling or treatment."*
- second, requires local departments of social services to respond within 24 hours to any valid complaint alleging abuse or neglect of a child less than two years old.

In order to address the burdens of meeting these mandates, the General Assembly appropriated in May 2017, additional administrative funding of \$5.4 million to assist with Family Services' increased workload. With the local match, the total allocated is approximately \$6.4 million for the equivalent for approximately 74 new Family Services Specialists positions statewide.

As stated in the Office of Health and Human Resources Governor's Budget Document, the new funding is intended to *"provide additional local staff to address an increase in child protective services assessments and investigations of substance-exposed infants as part of mandated reinvestment in child welfare services."* The budget document also states that the funding is to *"provide additional resources for local workers to handle increasing workloads for mandated activities such as child protective services, adult protective services, and adoption case management."* As Attachment A illustrates, ACDSS' most acute need is in the child protective services program (Investigations and Ongoing). The General Assembly also approved funding for a base salary increase of two percent for state-supported local staff. This new revenue funding has also been added to Albemarle County Department of Social Services' (ACDSS) base budget. Any new funding that is added to our base budget is considered permanent unless reduced through a General Assembly forced cut.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Quality Government Operations: Ensure County government's capacity to provide high quality service that achieves community priorities

DISCUSSION: ACDSS Child Protective Services (CPS) and Family Preservation Services (FPS) are requesting to hire a full time CPS Worker and a full time FPS Worker. Together, CPS and FPS provide the continuum of Protective Services to ensure child safety, strengthen and preserve the family. CPS primarily conducts Investigations and Family Assessments while FPS primarily provides Ongoing Child Protectives Services and Court Ordered Foster Care Prevention.

Changes to policy and practices, the number of CPS Referrals, number of FPS Cases and related number of clients requiring monthly visits has risen substantially in the past year resulting in workload measures that have ACDSS' staff working well beyond capacity. This has resulted in both units being unable to meet Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and federally required performance standards. Failure to provide effective protective and preventive services places children at risk of serious harm, at risk of further abuse and neglect, and increases the risk of children entering Foster Care. With increased capacity, the CPS and Family Preservation Units can respond in a more timely manner to new reports of child abuse and neglect, better ensure child safety, and more effectively engage customers in effective service planning that allow children to remain safe at home and avoid the economically and emotionally costly expense of Foster Care.

With increased capacity, CPS and FPS Workers can better engage with families and provide services that not only meet the minimum standards VDSS requires, but will allow for more in-depth assessments and enhanced protective caretaker capacity. Accomplishing these goals will enable staff effectively address the risks children face at the hands of uninformed and overwhelmed caregivers and will decrease the need for Foster Care placements. Overall, the CPS and FPS units will provide quality customer services to children, their parents, and the community.

The two new full time positions will not require any new local funding to fulfill the local match. The total new and ongoing state allocation added to the ACDSS's base budget is \$141,534 per year. This includes \$98,130, specifically targeted for Family Service Specialist funding; and, \$43,404 for a two-percent raise in FY 18. ACDSS plans to use new unrestricted Federal revenue for the local match. Federal Central Services Cost Allocation Plans (CSCAP) revenues are determined through a two-year process of auditing and VDSS review. CSCAP revenues have been coming in over budget for the past 5 years. Over the last 2 years, these funds have been over budget by approximately \$160,000 each year because of the new Medicaid match rate and the increasing costs to the County for supporting ACDSS operations. There is no current indication that these revenues will decrease. ACDSS budgeted \$320,000 for FY17 CSCAP revenues; however, the final amount was \$483,000 in May of this year. ACDSS has always budgeted CSCAP revenues conservatively and until five years ago, these revenues remained stable. The funds received in May 2017 are based on costs from the state year ending 2015. As in previous years, the remaining additional revenue will reduce the use of general funds for ACDSS' general operating budget. In FY17, the additional CSCAP revenue was used to provide the local match for the new eligibility worker funding appropriated by the General Assembly in 2016 in the same manner that ACDSS proposes with these two new positions.

BUDGET IMPACT: See Attachment B. No additional local monies are being requested.

RECOMMENDATION:
Approval of two DSS positions.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A - Justification of Need

Attachment B - Budgetary Impact