



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
Inter-Departmental Correspondence  
Human Services Agency



**Date:** November 25, 2013  
**Board Meeting Date:** January 7, 2014  
**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**From:** Beverly Beasley Johnson, JD, Director, Human Services Agency

**Subject:** Agreement with Court Appointed Special Advocates of San Mateo County (CASA)

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a Resolution authorizing an agreement with CASA to train additional mentors and advocates to increase the number of foster children served for the term of October 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015, in the amount of \$200,000.

**BACKGROUND:**

Foster children are among the most vulnerable population in the County, are isolated and at-risk, and are concentrated in the most impoverished areas of the County. The research demonstrates that foster children are more likely to have developmental delays, lower cognitive functioning, behavioral and emotional problems, and mental illness. All of these are factors that lead to poor juvenile and adult outcomes in the form of increased rates of incarceration, homelessness, school dropout, and unemployment, all of which impose enormous costs on the County. National research demonstrates that successful adults from severely challenging childhoods had at least one stable, positive adult supporter during their childhood. CASA currently trains community volunteers who provide each child with one-on-one mentoring and advocacy on an ongoing basis. CASA works closely with the Juvenile Court, Children and Family Services (HSA), Probation, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (Health System), schools, and numerous other community partners.

**DISCUSSION:**

Less than one half of foster children in San Mateo County have the benefit of a CASA volunteer. The number of dependent children in the County is increasing, from 525 cases in FY 2010 to over 634 in FY 2013. These children come from all regions of the County, but are concentrated in the lower socio-economic cities.

CASA of San Mateo County’s approach to mentoring is evidence-based. Research on mentoring that incorporates evidence-based best practices has repeatedly shown that a consistent, positive adult in the life of a child is associated with improved self-esteem, improved relationships with peers and adults, greater school connectedness and academic performance, and reduced substance abuse and violence. CASA of San Mateo County exceeds national standards for mentoring best practices with rigorous screening, 30 hours of training, a structured program, professional supervision and support of CASAs, frequency of meetings between CASAs and their children, and duration of the relationship.

To address the growing need to support more foster children, CASA will hire a .75 FTE Recruitment and Training professional who can assist in the recruitment, background screening, and training needed to increase the number of new CASA volunteer trainings from two annually to five in FY 2014 and five in FY2015 (8 English, 2 Spanish).

The Contractor has assured compliance with the County's Contractor Employee Jury Service Ordinance, as well as all other contract provisions that are required by County ordinance and administrative memoranda including, but not limited to, insurance, hold harmless, non-discrimination, and equal benefits. County Counsel has reviewed and approved the agreement and Resolution as to form and the Contractor meets the insurance certification requirement. It is requested that the Director of the Human Services Agency or the Director’s Designee is authorized to execute contract amendments which modify the County’s maximum fiscal obligation by no more than \$25,000 (in aggregate), and/or modify the contract term and/or services so long as the modified term or services is/are within the current or revised fiscal provisions.

Approval of this agreement contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a Prosperous Community by providing foster care children with a consistent, positive adult who provides mentoring, and emotional and academic support. It is anticipated that there will be a 60 child increase in the number of foster children served by September 30, 2015.

**PERFORMANCE MEASURE(S):**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>FY 2013-14 Projected</b>	<b>FY 2014-15 Projected</b>
Number of children who will be assigned to work with a CASA volunteer	300	360

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The term of this agreement is October 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015. The total obligation under this Agreement is \$200,000 and is 100% funded by Measure A Revenue; there is no Net County Cost. Funds have been included in the FY2013-14 and FY2014-15 Adopted Budgets.