



24-5600

DATE: May 7, 2024 (Item No. 34)

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Daniel Little, Director, Social Services Agency

SUBJECT: Renewing Delegation of Authority to Continue Pending Applications for a Transitional Shelter Care Facility License

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve delegation of authority to the County Executive, or designee, to negotiate, execute, amend, or terminate application documents relating to Transitional Shelter Care Facility licenses with the California Department of Social Services, including but not limited to Attachment A – Facts You Need to Know and Attachment B – Board of Director Statement (LIC 9165), following approval by County Counsel as to form and legality, and approval by the Office of the County Executive. Delegation of authority shall expire on June 30, 2026.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action will have no negative impact to the County General Fund.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND

Since December 2019, the Department of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS) has worked with the County’s partners, including Behavioral Health Services Department and Juvenile Probation Department, and community stakeholders to develop a new continuum of care system. Continuum of care is a concept involving an integrated system of care that makes available a comprehensive array of services and programs spanning all levels of intensity of care and treatment for children served by the foster care system. The overall goal of the improved continuum is to ensure every child under the County’s care is safe, cared for, and grows up in a stable, loving family.

California has led the nation in significantly reducing the use of congregate care (sometimes called “group homes”) for foster youth, including the passage of Continuum of Care Reform (“CCR”) in 2015, which was designed to phase out the use of group homes for youth in care and to reduce the use of other forms of congregate care. While these reform efforts drove important changes, they also decreased the number of placement options available for children and reduced the number of viable placements for children with the highest needs. As a result, counties across the state, including the County of Santa Clara (County), have since experienced severe shortages in foster placements and providers.

In response to this issue, in late 2019, Administration accelerated plans to enact a new continuum of care services model it had begun to develop after CCR was enacted. Consistent with the requirements of CCR, the focus with the new continuum of care is to move away from placing children in congregate care to a home-based settings service model, creating more individualized placements and supportive services for children who might otherwise be placed in a residential setting, and ensuring children remain in county, in their communities, and close to family to support reunification efforts.

The intention of building on the continuum of care for individualized therapeutic home-based settings is to best meet the needs of children and youth that enter the County's receiving center, the Welcoming Center, and/or are not able to stay in their current living situation for a variety of reasons, such as behavioral challenges. To that end, the County began searching for several homes to be used as "scattered sites" to provide additional space for staff to provide individualized care for high-needs children while appropriate placement could be secured and Administration partnered with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) on licensing options for the scattered site homes.

Currently, DFCS has three scattered site homes available to care for children, including children with high acuity needs. DFCS continues to work with Community Care Licensing (CCL), the licensing division for state facilities within CDSS, and has submitted several applications for Transitional Shelter Care Facilities, which will transition the current scattered site homes into licensed programs.

Reason for request of Delegation of Authority

Although delegations of authority are discouraged except under certain circumstances, this delegation of authority is necessary due to the continuous and lengthy nature of the TrSCF application process, and the need to efficiently submit the required documentation to prevent delays to the implementation of the program.

While the TrSCF applications have been submitted and DFCS is actively engaged with CDSS, the license application requires a number of documents to be completed, and CDSS permits the County Executive or designee to sign and execute the documents should the Board of Supervisors delegate this authority. These documents include but are not limited to Attachment A – Facts You Need to Know and Attachment B – Board of Director Statement (LIC 9165). This delegation of authority would allow the County to be responsive and nimble while working through the application process with CDSS and expedite the execution of the TrSCF application process to receive licensing as quickly as possible. This advances DFCS's mission to establish safe environments and to keep children safe by providing more emergency assessment and temporary care options for youth with high acuity needs.

This delegation of authority was previously approved by the Board on June 28, 2022 with an expiration date of June 30, 2024. Approval of this delegation of authority would expand the expiration date to June 30, 2026, to allow DFCS time to complete the approval process of the TrSCFs with CDSS.

CHILD IMPACT

The actions described will have a positive impact on children and youth through the **Safe and**

Stable Families indicator by facilitating the development of a system that will provide individualized care for every child with a goal of planned permanency, family engagement, and connections.

SENIOR IMPACT

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on seniors.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

Negative action will result in Administration requesting the Board to review and sign every document that is a part of the licensure process, which will result in Administration not being able to complete the licensure process in an efficient and timely manner.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

Upon approval, the Clerk of the Board is requested to send e-mail notifications to Damion Wright, Jessica Castillo, and Brian Hawkinson at SSA.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A – Facts You Need to Know
- Attachment B – Board of Directors Statement