



# WASHOE COUNTY

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## STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: July 28, 2015

**DATE:** June 30, 2015  
**TO:** Board of County Commissioners  
**FROM:** Pamela Fine, Division Director, Department of Social Services  
[pfine@washoecounty.us](mailto:pfine@washoecounty.us) 775.785.8600  
**THROUGH:** Kevin Schiller, Assistant County Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Accept Child Welfare Enhancement Funding from the State of Nevada General Fund, approved in the 2015 Legislative Session following completion of a pilot program, in the amount of \$1,111,699.00 for FY16 to fully implement the Specialized Foster Care Program; and authorize the creation of 2.0 FTE fully benefited Mental Health Counselor positions, 1.0 FTE fully benefited Social Worker III position and 1.0 FTE fully benefited Office Support Specialist position as affirmed by the Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) and direct the Comptroller's Office and Human Resources Departments to make the appropriate adjustments.  
(All Commission Districts)

### SUMMARY

The Department is requesting approval to accept enhancement funding from the State of Nevada to fully implement the Specialized Foster Care Program and authorize the creation of four new, fully funded full-time positions.

Strategic Objective supported by this item: Safe, Secure and Healthy Communities.

### PREVIOUS ACTION

On September 9, 2014, the Board authorized the Department to accept a work program funding in the amount of \$286,264 to support the Specialized Foster Care pilot program for FY15.

### BACKGROUND

During the 2015 Legislative session, funding was approved to expand and fully implement the Specialized Foster Care Program, a major budget enhancement initiative for the State of Nevada, Division of Child and Family Services.

As defined in NRS424.018, a Specialized Foster Home means a family home which provides full-time care and services for one to six children who:

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- Require special care for physical, mental or emotional issues;
- Are under 21 year for age;
- Are not related within the first degree of consanguinity or affinity to any natural person maintaining or operating the home;
- Are received, cared for and maintained for compensation; and
- Are in the custody of and placed in the home by an agency which provides child welfare services.

Child welfare agencies have further defined quality aspects of Specialized Foster Care as a family-based, service delivery approach providing individualized mental health and other targeted treatment for a child and their family. Treatment is delivered through integrated services with key interventions and supports provided by foster parents who are trained, supervised and supported by qualified mental health and other program staff.

The placement and case management of foster children in Specialized Foster Care presents significant challenges to achieving successful outcomes, both clinically and fiscally in addition to the following gaps:

- Quality Assurance and Program Evaluation efforts are fragmented, making it difficult to monitor the effectiveness of Specialized Foster Care.
- A significant percentage of youth placed in Specialized Foster Care stay for over 2 years with many failing to achieve a permanent placement before aging out of the system.
- Most treatment home providers lack a coherent practice model, systematic staff training, outcome based practice and the use of evidence based practices.
- The assessment and treatment quality in Specialized Foster Care settings vary widely across providers and is often fragmented and uncoordinated. Youth often move from placement to placement after multiple “placement failures.”
- The current fiscal system has moved from a bundled to an unbundled rate that has been plagued with wide variability in cost at similar levels of care, fraud allegations, drastic changes in medical necessity criteria, and frequent denials of care that result in placement delays and disruptions.

In order to obtain better outcomes and address the mental health issues of youth in Specialized Foster Care in Washoe County who are in the custody of Social Services, the Department worked with the State of Nevada Division of Child and Family Services and Clark County Department of Family Services to seek and obtain approval from the State Interim Finance Committee to carve out funding from the current Division of Health Care Financing and Policy’s Medicaid budget to fund a Pilot program to provide a redesigned specialized foster care system for approximately 30 foster children in Washoe County, 30 in Clark County and 10 in the Rural Region, for a total of 70 statewide. Significant savings in Medicaid costs were realized during the pilot in Washoe County, and included significant decreases in hospitalizations, psychotropic medications, and care placement disruptions; and a significant increase in permanency of placements was realized.

On August 23, 2012 the Legislative Interim Finance Committee (IFC) approved this request. This approval included the initial transfer of \$227,313 of State General Funds and

\$150,290 of additional Title IV-E authority to support the additional cost of the Pilot program for Washoe County Social Services. On December 9, 2013 the Legislative IFC approved funding in the amount of \$300,518 for fiscal year 2014 and on August 27, 2014 the Legislative IFC approved funding in the amount of \$286,264 for fiscal year 2015.

Washoe County was approved for this Child Welfare Enhancement Funding from the State of Nevada general fund, in the 2015 Legislative Session, following completion of the pilot program, in the amount of \$1,111,699.00 for FY16 to fully implement the Specialized Foster Care Program.

Funding for the Specialized Foster Care placements promote the achievement of permanent placements, clinical recovery, and habilitative care for the child as well as a stable and sufficient reimbursement for specialized providers.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Should the board accept this enhancement funding, the Department's FY16 adopted budget will be increased in both revenues and expenditures in the following accounts:

IO# TBD	432100 – State Grant Revenue	\$ 1,111,699.00
IO# TBD	701110 – Base Salaries	\$ 278,573.00
IO# TBD	701200 – Incentive Longevity	\$ 3,500.00
IO# TBD	701300 – Overtime	\$ 12,143.00
IO# TBD	705110 – Group Insurance	\$ 38,687.00
IO# TBD	705210 – Retirement	\$ 71,733.00
IO# TBD	705230 – Medicare April 1986	\$ 4,039.00
IO# TBD	710563 – Home Recruitment	\$ 12,500.00
IO# TBD	710715 – Higher Level of Care	\$ 673,024.00
IO# TBD	710726 – Home Studies	\$ 17,500.00

Continuation, including an increase, of the Enhancement funding through FY 17 was also approved during the 2015 Legislative Session, covering anticipated increases in operating expenditures as well as adding 4 additional fully funded, fully benefited full time positions, including two additional Mental Health Counselors and two additional Social Worker IIIs. This funding and the additional positions are anticipated to be added into the department's adopted FY 17 County budget during the Spring 2016 planning process. It is anticipated that Specialized Foster Care Enhancement funding from the State of Nevada will continue into the future in support of these positions.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Accept Child Welfare Enhancement Funding from the State of Nevada General Fund, approved in the 2015 Legislative Session following completion of a pilot program, in the amount of \$1,111,699.00 for FY16 to fully implement the Specialized Foster Care Program; and authorize the creation of 2.0 FTE fully benefited Mental Health Counselor positions, 1.0 FTE fully benefited Social Worker III position and 1.0 FTE fully benefited Office Support Specialist position as affirmed by the Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) and direct the Comptroller's Office and Human Resources Departments to make the appropriate adjustments.

**POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be, "move to accept Child Welfare Enhancement Funding from the State of Nevada General Fund, approved in the 2015 Legislative Session following completion of a pilot program, in the amount of \$1,111,699.00 for FY16 to fully implement the Specialized Foster Care Program; and authorize the creation of 2.0 FTE fully benefited Mental Health Counselor positions, 1.0 FTE fully benefited Social Worker III position and 1.0 FTE fully benefited Office Support Specialist position as affirmed by the Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) and direct the Comptroller's Office and Human Resources Departments to make the appropriate adjustments".