

GRANT REQUEST PONY

**Department of Human Services
Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in Foster Care**

(Reported out of Subcommittee on 5/15/2013)

The Human Services Subcommittee recommends that the Joint Committee on Ways and Means approve the submission of a federal grant application to the Department of Health and Human Services in the amount of up to \$400,000 per year for five years (\$2 million total), to help recruit families for children in foster care.

The Department of Human Services plans to organize the project into one year of planning (Phase 1) and four years of implementation (Phase 2). Phase 1 includes data collection and analysis, assessment of current system characteristics, partner identification, exploration of barriers, and development of a Phase 2 plan. The federal agency has to approve the Phase 2 plan, which must cover several minimum criteria. These range from using a specific customer service model to activities expediting permanency, such as dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes.

The grant does not have any cost sharing or matching requirements; the application is due June 10, 2013.

If the grant is awarded, the Subcommittee requests the agency report back on its Phase 2 plan. That report, and a request for any necessary expenditure limitation or position authority, can be made during either the 2014 Legislative Session or the interim.

The Human Services Subcommittee recommends approval of the request.

Federal Grant Application Request

Department of Human Services

Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in Foster Care

Analyst: Laurie Byerly

Request: Approve the submission of a federal grant application to the Department of Health and Human Services in the amount of up to \$400,000 per year for five years (\$2 million total), to help recruit resource families for children in foster care.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Analysis: The Administration for Children and Families – Children’s Bureau, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, plans to award eight grants for demonstration projects to develop programs to recruit resource families for children in foster care. Proposed projects are to focus on comprehensive programs that recruit, train, and support foster and adoptive families that reflect the characteristics of the children in foster care awaiting placement. The Department of Human Services (DHS) is requesting permission to apply for the grant in the full amount of \$400,000 per year for five years (\$2 million total); the grant application is due June 10, 2013.

If awarded, work under the grant would likely begin by September 30, 2013. The grant does not have any cost sharing or matching requirements. While applicants must propose a plan for project sustainability after the grant ends, there is no specific level of state spending to be maintained.

DHS is still refining details and budget, but consistent with the grant announcement, envisions the five-year project being organized into a 12-month planning phase (Phase 1) and a 48-month implementation phase (Phase 2). Phase 1 would include data collection and analysis, assessment of current system characteristics, collaborator identification, exploration of barriers, and development of a Phase 2 plan. The federal agency has to approve the Phase 2 plan, which must cover several minimum criteria. These range from using a specific customer service model to activities expediting permanency, such as dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes.

DHS has already identified a potential partner, Susan Quash-Mah, who has experience working on a similar demonstration project specific to Native American children. Along with supporting her contract, grant funds would be used to pay for a limited duration position (grant coordinator). DHS also expects to have costs for technical assistance, data gathering, geo-mapping, travel, training, project evaluation, and support to the local communities.

If the grant is awarded and additional expenditure limitation or position authority is necessary, a budget adjustment can be made in the 2014 Legislative Session or during the interim.

The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends approval of the request.