

Analysis

Item 18: Department of Human Services

Child Welfare

Analyst: Laurie Byerly

Request: Allocate \$2,500,000 from the special purpose appropriation made to the Emergency Board for the Department of Human Services' child welfare program.

Analysis: HB 5201 (2018), the omnibus 2017-19 budget reconciliation bill passed during the 2018 legislative session, set aside \$2.5 million General Fund in a special purpose appropriation to the Emergency Board for Child Welfare (CW). Budget report language stated the program could access the funding for developing and implementing its action plan to improve child safety, stabilize the workforce, and help foster families. The Department of Human Services (DHS) is now requesting the funding; the agency's plan has two components:

Retiree Caseworker Relief Pool – Spend approximately \$1.5 million on a pilot project, running from January through June 2019, that would tap retired caseworkers to fill in behind caseworkers that are out on leave or fill other staffing gaps. The intent is to keep vital casework moving, reduce overtime costs, and hopefully alleviate some of the workload stressors that contribute to turnover.

The program has identified a potential pool of 96 caseworker retirees, along with another 47 retired managers and case aides that could also provide relief; the \$1.5 million would cover costs for 37,178 relief hours (about 6,200 hours per month), travel, and administrative costs. On average, the CW program has just under 17,000 hours of leave (various types) being used each month, which is equivalent to 98 full-time positions.

The agency plans to hire a 6-month limited duration employee to coordinate the program and track data around impacts on recruitment, onboarding, retention, and training to help evaluate the pilot program. DHS indicates it should have data on pilot status and expenditures after the first quarter of 2019; these should be provided to budget and policy committees during the 2019 legislative session.

Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH) – Spend the remainder of the funding, approximately \$1 million, on costs associated with implementing a new, centralized hotline for receiving and screening reports of child abuse. Challenges facing the hotline include ensuring adequate local coverage as districts transition; meeting an ambitious timeline; carrying out an aggressive training plan; and finding budget capacity for technology enhancements and building infrastructure. While the agency did not previously receive funding to explicitly support the hotline, it has used existing budget and staff to begin the transition. Hotline costs and staffing are also expected to be discussed during development of the agency's 2019-21 legislatively adopted budget.

Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation: Allocate \$2,500,000 from the special purpose appropriation made to the Emergency Board for the Department of Human Services' child welfare program.

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Department of Human Services
Connolly

Request: Allocate \$2.5 million from the Special Purpose Appropriation (SPA) made to the Emergency Board for the Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Welfare Program to create a floating pool of retired caseworkers in good standing, to be a relief pool for current staff; and to use to address cost overruns in the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline.

Recommendation: Approve the request, however allocate \$1,550,000 for a child welfare relief pool for current staff, and allocate \$950,000 to address the cost overruns in the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline.

Discussion: During the 2018 Legislative Session a SPA of \$2.5 million was established in the Emergency Fund for the Child Welfare program to use to develop and implement its action plan to improve child safety, stabilize the workforce and help foster families.

The Department proposes to use \$1,550,000 of the SPA to establish a pilot floating pool of retired caseworkers in good standing to be a relief pool for current staff. District managers would be able to request relief workers when staff is absent for two to six weeks due to FMLA/OFLA or vacation or other specific situations. The relief pool workers would have appropriate background check clearance, an Oregon employee number and security access so that they could work immediately when assigned to a location. Relief workers would agree to a geographic area in which they are willing to accept assignments. DHS also indicates the pilot will have protocols in place to prevent relief pool workers from exceeding the 1,039 hours limit on public employment.

Given the program is under significant pressures in the current biennium, the \$1,550,000 is recommended for approval as one-time funding. The Governor's Recommended Budget for 2019-21 supports current staffing and adds positions based on caseload needs. If the Department is unable to fill the available positions and this program provides anticipated relief, the Department should use funding from continued vacancies to support this program.

The Department is requesting one limited duration Operations and Policy Analyst 2 position to manage the pilot. It also estimates that it could use relief workers for 37,178 hours by June 30, 2018 for a total cost of \$1,550,030. The average wage would be around \$40 per hour. If staff was assigned in six-week increments, the Department would need 103 relief workers. If each relief worker maxed out at 1039 hours, that would be 36 workers. The Department has identified 96 potential relief workers.

The Department is requesting the balance of the SPA, \$950,000 to be used to address cost overruns during the 2017-19 biennium associated with the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline. DHS has submitted a Rebalance report to the December meeting of the Emergency Board identifying a total need for this project of \$3 million General Fund. The rebalance plan identifies \$2,050,000 with the remaining \$950,000 being requested from the SPA.

The new 24/7 Oregon Child Abuse Hotline is a significant change in how the program does business and is driven by the need to improve child safety, and to use child welfare staff in the most efficient and effective manner. It is important that this large project have the resources it

needs to be fully functioning statewide by April 2019. That includes hotline staff, phone and information technology infrastructure and facility capacity. The budget shortfall should be addressed with the remainder of the SPA and with \$2,050,000 million additional General Fund in the rebalance request. A successful Oregon Child Abuse Hotline will improve child safety across Oregon as directed in the SPA.

Legal Reference: Allocation of \$2,500,000 from the special purpose appropriation made to the Emergency Board by Chapter 99, section 179, (Oregon Laws 2018, to supplement the appropriation made by chapter 597, section 1(2), Oregon Laws 2017, for the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Program for the 2017-19 biennium.



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Human Services

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October 29, 2018

The Honorable Senator Peter Courtney, Co-Chair
The Honorable Tina Kotek, Co-Chair
State Emergency Board
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301-4048



Re: Request for funding from Special Purpose Appropriation of \$2,500,000 GF designated for the Child Welfare program

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of the Report

HB 5201(2018) established a new \$2.5 million Special Purpose Appropriation (SPA) for the Department of Human Services to access for the Child Welfare program as the agency continues to develop and implement its action plan to improve child safety, stabilize the workforce, and help foster families.

Over the past year Child Welfare has engaged in several initiatives to improve safety, stabilize the workforce, and help foster families through modification of existing practices, enhancement of accountability and investments with our current budget capacity. This SPA now gives us the opportunity to request funds to expand our ability to look at the Child Welfare system from a different perspective and to implement ideas that are not only out of the box, but also have not been carried out in our system before.

Agency Action

Retiree Caseworker Relief Pool

Child Welfare is requesting to utilize this SPA to create a pilot floating pool of retired caseworkers in good standing, to be a relief pool for current staff. It is no surprise that Child Welfare caseworkers are over worked, carrying cases more than double what the workload model would suggest is manageable and dealing with cases that are physically and emotionally demanding. Our workforce is also made up of some of the most dedicated staff, who feel that they can't take vacations, can't have a work-life balance, can't let their co-

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workers down and need to be there for the kids on their caseloads. These are the individuals we want in these jobs, but we need to not only help with workload relief but also to move the agency to shift the culture around work-life balance. Using retirees to fill staffing gaps will keep vital casework moving, reduce overtime costs, and alleviate the workload stressors that lead to costly staff turnover.

This workforce pool will be comprised of retirees, with a cap on hours, as a contractual agreement that at a minimum, these individuals will agree to work at non-standard locations (with an agreement as to where individuals are willing to work and how far they are willing to travel) and train on current processes. The work assigned will be caseload assistance due to caseworker absences for FMLA/OFLA, vacation leave and other types of leave, on boarding new employees, and other situations that a district can identify as needing coverage. To avoid having any retiree exceed the statutory 1,039 work-hour limitation on public employment, the agreements will be structured as 6 weeks on and 6 weeks off or “on call” according to the preference of each individual.

This pool will give Child Welfare a list of individuals willing to work, the vicinity in which they are willing and able to work, training elements that they may need and information on how many hours they can work. When a current case worker in a district submits a request for vacation/FMLA/OFLA etc., we can then retrieve the list of available coverage and call in an individual from the pool to preplan and account for needed coverage. This pool of relief workers will have CJIS clearance, an OR number and security access so that they can hit the ground running. This idea is similar to how the school system uses substitute teachers.

Utilizing this Special Purpose Appropriation to its full extent would allow us to cover an estimated 60,724 hours of work. We have conservatively estimated our ability to organize and assign relief workers at 37,178 hours, but we will strive to exceed this estimate. We believe this will be a great relief to our staff, and without requiring additional expenditures for computers, phones, larger facilities, or other accoutrements. For more details see Attachment A.

Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH)

Given that the retiree workload relief pool is estimated to provide 37,178 hours of relief at a cost of \$1,550,029.56 GF, the additional \$949,970.44 GF

from the SPA, or a lesser amount if more is used for relief workers, would be used to support implementing the new 24/7 statewide Oregon Child Abuse Hotline.

Action Requested

Acknowledge receipt of report and approve the request of the \$2,500,000 Special Purpose Appropriation for the Child Welfare program.

Legislation Affected

Chapter 597, section 1, subsection 2

If you have any questions, please contact Marilyn Jones at 503-945-6627.

Sincerely,



Eric Luther Moore
DHS Chief Financial Officer

cc: Ken Rocco, Legislative Fiscal Office
Laurie Byerly, Legislative Fiscal Office
George Naughton, Department of Administrative Services
Cathleen Connolly, Department of Administrative Services
Tamara Brickman, Department of Administrative Services

Attachment A
 Additional Information Regarding \$2.5 million Special Purpose Appropriation

1. The number of people that might be in the Pool and how many of those are in each district.

96 potential relief pool workers, shown below by district:

District	Counties	Number of potential pool members
1	Clatsop/Columbia/Tillamook	2
2	Multnomah	17
3	Marion/Polk/Yamhill	18
4	Benton/Linn	9
5	Lane	10
6	Douglas	6
7	Coos/Curry	3
8	Jackson/Josephine	11
9	Gilliam/Hood River/Sherman/ Wasco/Wheeler	2
10	Crook/Deschutes/Jefferson	2
11	Klamath/Lake	2
12	Morrow/Umatilla	2
13	Baker/Union/Wallowa	0
14	Grant/Harney/Malheur	1
15	Clackamas	6
16	Washington	2
ICPC	Central Office/Salem	3

2. What a rough protocol would look like and number of hours we think we will use before June 30, 2019.

Description of Program and Rough Protocol

A full-time OPA2 LD Coordinator will be hired to recruit, coordinate and track data related to the use of the relief worker pool. This position will be maintained through June 30, 2019.

To facilitate assignment of Relief workers, the Coordinator will establish and maintain a data system to track the Relief pool's availability, and the

deployment of Relief workers (location, duration, role) when they are active. Other data to be tracked will include recruitment, onboarding, training, retention and impact. Final data analysis and reporting will be transitioned to a permanent employee before the Relief worker position terminates.

The Coordinator will be responsible for contacting the potential pool and recruiting for the Relief work. Recruitment will be informed by input from local managers from the districts of retirement regarding the advisability of rehire for this effort (this has been completed). The Coordinator will be primarily responsible for the onboarding of those identified for rehire. Directly or in partnership with field office managers, this position will ensure that they are supported to expeditiously complete:

- Paperwork necessary for rehire
- Forms related to CJIS clearance
- Required training, if needed
- Local onboarding processes to achieve computer, OR-Kids and other necessary access, clearance and access will stay with the relief workers for the duration of the project.

When a field office is in need of Relief worker support, the Program Manager will contact the Coordinator who will serve in a dispatcher role, seeking Relief work resources who are available, assigning them, notifying the requester and providing support related to travel as needed.

Field managers and the members of the Relief pool may contact the Coordinator should they have concerns about the work of the Relief worker that are not resolved directly in the field office. The Coordinator will document concerns for tracking purposes and involve the designated central office manager responsible to seek resolution. After seeking resolution, the designated manager will notify the Coordinator of the outcomes to inform the ongoing use of that individual relief worker.

It is anticipated that the Coordinator will assign Relief workers for periods of 2-6 weeks, although local managers may request other durations, which will be handled case by case.

For most candidates, CJIS clearance is now being accomplished within about 10 days. CJIS clearance, reassignment of OR#s and etc. may take a longer with the influx of these Relief worker positions, since the intent is to bring them all on board as quickly as possible, so they are prepared to be assigned in the field as needed.

Estimated number of hours to be used: 37,178.