



MEMORANDUM
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CHILDREN'S SYSTEM OF CARE
County of Placer

TO: Board of Supervisors

DATE: June 7, 2016

FROM: Jeffrey S. Brown, M.P.H., M.S.W., Director of Health and Human Services

SUBJECT: Specialized Legal Services for Child Welfare Appeals

ACTION REQUESTED

1. Approve a contract with James R. Yeo, Esq. to provide legal services for appeals in child protective services cases, in an amount not to exceed \$30,000 (\$4,500 net County cost), for the period of July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017, and authorize the Director of Health and Human Services to sign the contract and subsequent amendments up to 10 percent of the total contract amount, consistent with the current agreement's subject matter and scope of work.

BACKGROUND

The Children's System of Care is mandated to deliver protective services to minors at risk of abuse or neglect in Placer County. In the course of this mandate, it is sometimes necessary to file legal actions against parents or other caregivers relative to their rights. Of an estimated 330 court cases pertaining to child abuse and neglect filed annually in Placer County, a limited number of cases (less than 3 percent) result in the court's decision being appealed.

James Yeo provides specialized legal services to the Children's System of Care, in cases involving appeals of Child Welfare decisions. These services include consultation, research, preparation, discovery, motions, and court appearances. Mr. Yeo possesses specific knowledge and skills relative to this unique area of the law including the specific timelines, documents, and relevant legal history necessary to be successful in these often contentious cases, allowing assigned County Counsel to more effectively use their expertise in ongoing and other court cases. County Counsel is fully supportive of this approach, and does intend to assume this work in-house within the next fiscal year. However, given that there is a transition in attorneys representing parents and children to a private law firm in child welfare services, it is anticipated there may be an initial increase in appeals through this transition.

The rate of compensation for these services has been unchanged since 1999. This agreement is for the purchase of professional services and is exempt from competitive solicitation in accordance with Purchasing Policy Section 1.3(a).

FISCAL IMPACT

Funding for the contract is provided by Child Welfare Services, which includes Federal funds and State Realignment in the amount of \$25,500 and County General Funds of \$4,500. This expenditure is included in the Department's FY 2016-17 Requested Budget.

A copy of the contract is on file with the Clerk of the Board for review.

