



CWDA

Advancing Human Services
for the Welfare of All Californians

FACT SHEET:

Building Diversity and Workforce Support in County Human Services Programs

Summary

This proposal would provide funding and resources, as well as reduce barriers, to address significant workforce shortages in county human services programs.

Background

County human service agencies are facing critical staffing shortages across all program areas. Competition for staff is fierce both within the county (across programs and services as well as the private sector) and across county lines. Rapid turnover of county staff undermines the quality of services provided to consumers of county programs, impedes progress for improving county practices, and potentially can result in fiscal sanctions in some situations (i.e. federal Child and Family Service Reviews in CWS).

Last year, after strong advocacy by CWDA and our co-sponsor NASW, the State Budget provided \$30 million General Fund to expand slots in schools of social work to increase the pool of Master's level social workers. While this is a necessary first step, there will be several years before the new MSW's enter the workforce, and this aspect of staffing needs only accounts for part of the county-level staffing shortages.

Solutions

- For counties that use the state-administered Merit System for job applicants, require that Merit use alternate minimum qualifications for any county that has a 20% or greater vacancy rate.
- Establish a "Building Diversity in Human Service Workforce Program" as an opt-in grant program administered by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). This would be a two-

year program and priority would be given to counties that demonstrate a commitment to building diversity in their programs by recruiting and supporting persons from underserved and/or over-represented communities. The grant program will help fund county programs for three potential tracks:

- High school to career track
- College to career track
- Community to career track

Estimated costs: \$30 million

- Require CDSS to work with counties and the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC), to establish a Title IV-E stipend program in rural counties for community college students who have an interest in public child welfare work. This will allow the state and counties to leverage the 75 percent federal match for training leading to state or local agency employment, which is not limited to pursuit of a bachelor's or master's level education. *Estimated costs: \$5 million*

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