



January 29, 2021

To: The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1

Honorable Members
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1

The Honorable Susan Talamantes-Eggman
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3

Honorable Members
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3

From: Cathy Senderling-McDonald, Executive Director

**RE: HUMAN SERVICES GLOBAL TELEPHONIC
SIGNATURE SOLUTION**

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) respectfully requests \$5 million General Fund (GF) (\$4 million one-time and \$1 million ongoing) to support implementation of a global telephonic signature solution for human services programs.

The COVID pandemic spurred the provision of temporary flexibilities in county-administered programs. Some key flexibilities included allowing for certain signatures to be attested to by phone and waiving the usual requirement of recording and storing these telephonic signatures when that functionality was not available, for many of our human services programs. When the pandemic ends, many counties would like to continue to provide customers with the flexibility of using telephonic signatures, yet not all counties have access to the necessary technology to record and store these signatures. This proposal would ensure all counties, across all programs, have the ability to record and store telephonic signatures, allowing counties to continue to offer this option to their customers after the end of these pandemic-related flexibilities.

We propose to provide a simple, global telephonic signature solution that could be used for any county human services program that does not otherwise have access to a method of recording and storing telephonic signatures, so long as the program policy allows use of telephonic signature. This solution would be managed by the CalSAWS project, leveraging

their existing technical infrastructure, federal approvals to use cloud storage, and vendor contracts to stand up a simple telephonic signature solution. For ease of use and faster implementation, this proposal is for a standalone solution, which will not be integrated with other IT systems (such as CalWIN, CMIPS, CWS/CMS, CWS-CARES, CalHEERS, and so forth) at this time. While we anticipate many of these systems will offer integrated support in the future, at this time, our goal is to bridge the gap until such integrated functionality becomes available.

We respectfully request \$5 million GF in the budget year and \$1 million GF annually ongoing for maintenance to allow for the development and maintenance of this solution. This budget request would enable counties to offer this convenient option to customers. The cloud-based solution will result in operating costs that are flexible and based on actual utilization, rather than requiring a large up-front investment in storage capacity as with other systems of this nature. Note that CalSAWS will offer an integrated solution for eligibility programs, so we anticipate that counties will use that once they have migrated to CalSAWS for the programs supported by that system. As the use of telephonic signatures becomes more widespread, and support is built into other automated systems, such as CWS-CARES (for child welfare) and CMIPS (for In-Home Supportive Services), we anticipate counties using the standalone solution for those programs would migrate to those integrated solutions, and the solution built as a result of this proposal could be scaled back and/or eventually incorporated into one of those systems over time.

Providing counties with a simple infrastructure to support telephonic signatures will allow Californians in need to more quickly and seamlessly access services through the variety of programs counties operate. The proposed solution will simplify interactions with those applying for and receiving human services benefits and services, and increase the ability to complete an interaction in real time, rather than requiring follow up by mail or in person to sign documents and forms. We anticipate this solution will be particularly beneficial for recipients who are unable to utilize existing electronic signature options due to lack of regular internet access, discomfort with technology, and/or literacy barriers, providing them with an additional mechanism to receive services more quickly, without requiring an in-person trip to the county office or waiting for mail to be received.

For these reasons, we urge your support for this request.

cc: Chris Woods, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
Mareva Brown, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
Jason Sisney, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly
Gail Gronert, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly
Renita Polk, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3
Nicole Vazquez, Assembly Committee on Budget Subcommittee No. 1
Rebecca Hamilton, Senate Republican Fiscal Office
Joe Shinstock, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
Eric Dietz, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
David Stammerjohan, Office of Senator Talamantes-Eggman
Ana Melendez, Office of Assemblymember Arambula
Jessica Bartholow, Office of Senator Skinner
Ginni Bella Navarre, Legislative Analyst's Office
Richard Figueroa, Office of the Governor
Tam Ma, Office of the Governor
Marko Mijic, Health and Human Services Agency
Paula Villescaz, Health and Human Services Agency
Kim Johnson, California Department of Social Services
Jennifer Troia, California Department of Social Services
Salena Chow, California Department of Social Services
Robert Smith, California Department of Social Services
Adam Dorsey, HHS, Department of Finance
Jennifer Lopez, HHS, Department of Finance
Justin Garrett, California Association of Counties
County Caucus