

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BUSINESS MEETING
ACTION ITEM**

SUBJECT: **FINANCE/GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:
FY 2020 Family Services Specialists Caseload Allocation,
Request for FTE Authority**

ELECTION DISTRICT: Countywide

CRITICAL ACTION DATE: June 20, 2019

STAFF CONTACTS: Glenda Blake, Director, Department of Family Services
Ina Fernandez, Deputy Director, Department of Family Services

PURPOSE: To review the memorandum from the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) dated April 10, 2019 regarding FY 2020 Family Services Specialist Caseload Allocations and authorize an additional 0.46 FTE for the Department of Family Services to support the new State mandated caseload standard.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee (FGOEDC): The FGOEDC is anticipated to make a recommendation at the June 17, 2019 meeting.

Staff: Staff recommends the Board of Supervisors: 1) authorize the addition of 0.46 FTE for the Department of Family Services and 2) estimate and appropriate \$63,135 in state revenue in the General Fund for the Department of Family Services.

BACKGROUND: In December 2018, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC)¹ released a report summarizing their study of foster care services provided by Virginia localities. The report identified deficiencies in practice and made recommendations for improvement. One of the recommendations from the report was for Virginia to mandate a caseload standard for foster care cases. In accordance with the recommendation, the Virginia Department of Social Services established a maximum caseload standard of 15 cases per Family Services Specialist. The General Assembly appropriated \$1.3 million in additional funding to establish a foster care caseload standard to improve the ratio of Family Services Specialists to

¹ <http://jlarc.virginia.gov/2018-foster-care.asp>

foster care cases statewide. Only those localities whose family services specialists with open and active foster care caseloads exceeded 15 as of January 2, 2019, were allocated additional funds. Loudoun County was identified as one of the 25 localities requiring additional funding to bring caseload ratios to a maximum of 15:1; the County has been allocated \$63,135 in additional state funding. On average, Loudoun maintains a caseload of 15 but does occasionally exceed that number. Adding an additional position will ensure that the caseload standard will consistently be met. Before receiving additional funds, localities are required to submit a plan detailing how the funds will be used to reduce caseloads to a maximum of 15 per family services specialist and maintain said rate.

ISSUES: VDSS has allocated \$63,135 in additional funding for Loudoun County to support the new State mandate of foster care caseload ratios to a maximum of 15:1. With the Board's approval, DFS would use this additional funding to convert two part-time vacant positions (0.54 FTE total) into one full-time Foster Care Family Services Specialist. In order to do this, DFS needs Board authorization for the additional 0.46 FTE. The costs of this position will be covered by the existing personnel funds budgeted for the part-time positions and the additional \$63,135 of state revenue. Future annual costs of this position will be supported by a combination of local and state funds; the typical match rate for these positions is 14.5 percent. With an estimated annual cost of \$90,000, the estimated local match would \$13,050.

FISCAL IMPACT: With the receipt of an additional \$63,135 from the State and funds that are already locally budgeted, it is anticipated that revenue will be sufficient to support the conversion of two part-time positions to one full-time position. The estimated annual cost (salary and benefits) for this position is \$90,000.

ALTERNATIVES: The Board of Supervisors could not approve the addition of 0.46 FTE. Should the additional staffing authority not be authorized, DFS will not have the resources to satisfy the mandate required by VDSS.

DRAFT MOTIONS:

1. I move the Board of Supervisors authorize the addition of 0.46 FTE for the Department of Family Services and estimate and appropriate \$63,135 in state revenue in the General Fund for the Department of Family Services.

OR

2. I move an alternate motion.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Memorandum dated April 10, 2019 Re: FY 2020 Family Services Specialists Caseload Allocations



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

MEMORANDUM

To: Local Directors/Superintendents
Local Office Managers

From: Carl Ayers, Director, Division of Family Services
Ida Witherspoon, Budget Director

Re: FY 2020 Family Services Specialists Caseload Allocations

Date: April 10, 2019

As indicated in the Preliminary Local Budget Guidance letter dated March 28, 2019, the 2019 General Assembly appropriated additional funding of \$1.3 million to establish a foster care case load standard to improve the ratio of family services specialists to foster care cases in accordance with the December 2018 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) report. With match, the total to be allocated in budget line 855, local staff and operations, is \$1.6 million for the equivalent of approximately 26 new Family Services Specialists (FSS) positions. Only those localities that have family services specialists with open and active foster care caseloads over 15 as of January 2, 2019 were included in the final appropriated funding. Based on the data as of January 2, 2019, 25 localities were identified as requiring additional funding to bring their case ratios to a maximum of 15:1. Each locality will receive funding for at least one half of a position.

Loudoun County's FY 2020 share of the total to be allocated is \$63,135.

Localities receiving funding will be required to develop an implementation plan for how they will use the additional funding to reduce foster care caseloads down to a maximum of a 15:1 ratio per family services specialist and maintain this ratio. Localities' plans must be reviewed and approved by Division of Family Services program management before these funds are made available in LASER. A broadcast will be issued in May 2019 providing guidance on the preparation and submission of foster care caseload plans. For those localities with approved plans, funds will be added to their budget line 855 allocation when LASER opens for the June period.

Localities will be held accountable for the implementation of their plans and their subsequent performance in maintaining the maximum 15:1 ratio as required in [SB 1339](#) (Reeves).

If additional information is needed, please contact Heather Cottrell at (804) 726-7488 or heather.cottrell@dss.virginia.gov or Kim Conner at (804) 726-7262 or kim.conner@dss.virginia.gov in the Budget Office.