

FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND SUPPORT (FPRRS)

To enhance caregiver recruitment in anticipation of the implementation of the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) initiative, which emphasizes the placement of dependent children in family-based homes rather than group homes, funding was provided to county welfare and probation departments for the recruitment of new foster family home caregivers. This was necessary to accommodate the number of children that will shift from group care to foster family homes.

Allowable uses for the funding include:

- Staffing to provide and improve direct services and supports to caregivers, remove any barriers defined as priorities in the county implementation plan and developing reports on outcomes.
- Costs for exceptional child needs not covered by the caregiver-specific rate that would normalize the child's experience, stabilize the placement, or enhance the child's well-being.
- Intensive relative finding, engagement, and navigation efforts.
- Emerging technological, evidence-informed, or other nontraditional outreach approaches to potential caregivers.

Authorizing Statute:

- The Budget Act of 2015 (SB 97, Chapter 11, Statutes of 2015) included funding for foster and relative caregiver recruitment, retention and support.
- AB 403 (Chapter 773, Statutes of 2015), implemented the CCR initiative and enacted provisions governing the application and, award of funds, reporting outcomes associated with the expenditure of FPRRS funds.

Funding:

	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
Total	\$25.8 million	\$47.4 million
Federal	\$8.6 million	\$15.2 million
State	\$17.2 million	\$32.2 million
County	\$0	\$0

Implementation Update:

- Funding was requested for the following core activities: Wraparound; mental health services coordination; mobile LiveScan machines; initial placement support; concrete support; normalizing activities; respite care; placement support staff; caregiver support; caregiver training; family finding and other databases; family finding support and staff; Models for Engagement; step-down shelters; Quality Parenting Initiative; recruitment and outreach.
- Following are examples of award details for a large county, a medium-sized county, and a small county (based on child welfare caseload). However, there is little-to-no discernable correlation between the size of a county and the nature of activities proposed. Therefore, the examples cited below should not be viewed as necessarily representative of any other county of similar size.

Large – Los Angeles (rank in caseload: 1st)

Amount requested: \$57,375,302. Amount awarded: \$6,597,821 (\$4,453,529 GF).

Specific activities funded: Emergency Placement Stipend, Tangible Supports for Caregivers, Resource Family Recruitment Expo, Faith-based Community Support for Caregivers, Respite Care, Foster Parent Liaisons, Caregiver Support Groups, Specialized Staff to Improve Initial Placement and Replacement, Caregiver Training Academy.

Medium – San Luis Obispo (rank in caseload: 27th)

Amount requested: \$721,490. Amount awarded: \$176,132 (\$118,889 GF).

Specific activities funded: Expansion of Foster Support Unit Staff and Recruitment Tools, Additional Supports for Foster Families, Additional Recruitment Activities.

Small – Modoc (rank in caseload: 55th)

Amount requested: \$370,000. Amount awarded: \$44,000 (\$24,975 GF).

Specific activities funded: Foster Parenting Retention and Support, Outreach and Recruitment—Modoc County Cares for Kids, Relative Placement Enhancement Plan, Subsidize support for prospective and current foster parents, relative caregivers and the foster child.

To be eligible for funding, counties were required to submit plans, that outlined specific activities and strategies that would be used to recruit, retain or support foster and relative caregivers. County welfare and probation departments were invited to submit plans either separately or jointly. The CDSS reviewed and approved the plans and amount of funding to be awarded to each county child welfare or probation department (or both) based upon an evaluation of factors such as the scale of the individual county's recruiting efforts and the probable efficacy of each of the strategies proposed.

A total of 54 County welfare departments submitted plans, of which 10 submitted jointly with their probation department. Probation departments from 12 counties submitted separate plans. Counties submitted plans between October 30 and December 31, 2015. Each plan was evaluated upon receipt and awards were based on a flow basis. The CDSS set a goal of completing each evaluation within seven days of receipt; a majority of the awards were issued within this timeframe. Each plan was reviewed by a team of CDSS staff who discussed, in detail, each proposed activity. Criteria used to evaluate each activity included:

- Whether the activity closely related to the recruitment, retention or support of foster caregivers.
- The extent to which the activity was focused on caregivers for children and youth transitioning out of congregate care as a result of the CCR initiative.
- The extent to which the activity addressed an obstacle to foster caregiver recruitment, retention or support identified by the county.
- The likelihood that the activity would successful increase the number of available foster caregivers in the county.

Additionally, the general narrative of each plan was reviewed to gauge the county's ability to identify specific barriers to caregiver recruitment, retention and support, and to develop strategies to overcome those barriers.

Funding requested in county plans far exceeded the amount available (requests received by the CDSS totaled over \$130 million). Therefore, in making funding recommendations the CDSS adopted an approach which both prioritized those activities deemed most likely to have the greatest impact on increasing the number of available caregivers for those children and youth transitioning from congregate care, and for activities which were approved for funding, then prorating the amounts awarded. Typically, the CDSS would halve full-fiscal year requests, to account for the limited timeframe in which counties would be able to expend awarded funds, and then award a fraction of the resulting amount. However, some activities were deemed sufficiently promising to merit full funding for the remainder of the fiscal year.