

## M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: June 12, 2001

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Diana F. Hutchens, Director of the Division of Social Services

SUBJECT: Adoption Recruitment and Training Program

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The James City County Division of Social Services has been awarded \$41,752 from the Federal Title IV-E Foster Care Pass through funding from the State Department of Social Services for the provision of adoption recruitment and training activities for Fiscal Year 2002. This funding source is not capped and staff expects that these funds will be provided each year in amounts sufficient to meet the program's needs. These funds were not included in the 2002 Budget because the award was made in late May, after a plan submitted by Social Services was approved by the State.

The 1996 Welfare Reform Act included significant changes for the foster care system nationally. One key reform was related to "permanency planning" for children in foster care. Before the reform, social service agencies had to wait at least 12 months before considering petitioning the court for termination of residual parental rights. The reform now requires this action at 12 months if parents have failed to remedy the problems that led to foster care. Basically, this places the children in a legal status that frees them for adoption soon after being in foster care for one year. This has resulted in a significant number of children freed for adoption, but for whom there are not enough adoptive parents.

This funding will provide for one full-time limited-term Social Worker to be hired by the Division. Additionally, the funding will support recruitment efforts which will focus on intensive work with foster parents and relatives who might consider becoming adoptive parents. It also promotes the recruitment and training of prospective adoptive parents who would consider our children.

Today, there are eight children who are freed for adoption and in need of these services. However, it is very difficult to find families who want them on a permanent basis. Many of these children have emotional problems or physical disabilities, some are in sibling groups, and some are older children. Staff anticipates four additional children will be freed for adoption or who are under appeal to the Circuit Court. These children require considerable staff resources.

A 25 percent (\$13,917) local match is needed for this program and is available in the approved 2002 Budget for Social Services in our Undesignated Local Match line item.

Staff recommends approval of the attached resolution which will appropriate the additional funding and establish the limited-term Social Worker position.

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Diana F. Hutchens

CONCUR:

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Anthony Conyers, Jr.

DFH/adw  
adopt.mem  
Attachment