

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
M I N U T E S  
January 23, 2020 Regular Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, January 23, 2020 in the Ronald H. Born Auditorium at 170 Otis Street, San Francisco.

- MEMBERS PRESENT     SCOTT KAHN, President  
                                 JAMES MCCRAY, JR., Vice President  
                                 RITA SEMEL  
                                 DARSHAN SINGH  
                                 GEORGE YAMASAKI, JR.
- OTHERS PRESENT     Trent Rhorer, Executive Director  
                                 Elizabeth LaBarre, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director / Secretary – Human Services Commission  
                                 Noelle Simmons, Deputy Director – Economic Support and Self-Sufficiency  
                                 Susie Smith, Deputy Director – Policy and Planning  
                                 Dan Kaplan, Deputy Director – Finance and Administration  
                                 Other department staff and interested citizens
- ROLL CALL             President Kahn called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m., noting that all Commission members were present.
- AGENDA                 On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the agenda as posted.
- MINUTES                On motion of Commissioner Yamasaki, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the minutes of the December 19, 2019 Regular Meeting as circulated.
- EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR'S REPORT     Executive Director Trent Rhorer furnished an update regarding federal, state, and local activities.

**FEDERAL UPDATES**

The federal government's focus is on impeachment hearings.

**STATE**

The governor released the state budget on January 10, 2020. The state is still in a robust economic cycle. State general revenues are expected to grow \$5.8B. The governor took a conservative approach by proposing putting most of this growth into one-time uses and reserves. There are some increases and augmentations that would affect us a bit, the largest of which is the piece of the budget that also received the most press—a one-time spending of \$750M to establish the California Access to Housing and Services Fund, which is a one-time fund with flexible uses to address homelessness in California. Flexible uses would include rent subsidies, housing development, and money to stabilize board and care facilities so that they can stay open. The fund will be managed by the state department of social services (CDSS), which is our oversight agency, not through housing community development or other departments. It has a tighter link to the Human Services Agencies. As the legislative cycle rolls out, it will be clearer how the dollars are allocated. The governor had mentioned the money being allocated by nonprofits not local governments. Another budget item is a 3.1% grant increase in CalWORKs effective October 1, 2020. Because of our local ordinance, our CAAP participants will also receive the same increase. There continues to be a cost of living increase, tracking the CPI for the MediCal administration budget, \$68 million statewide of which we will receive a percentage. CalFresh administrative funding is flat from prior year, which is puzzling since our caseload greatly increased, more than projected, due to the SSI expansion. The budget includes language for a new budgeting methodology; the governor's office, the legislature, the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) and state department of social services (CDSS) will all work together to fix the CalFresh budget. Currently, some counties overspend their dollars while other counties do not need as much funding as they receive. The new methodology would most likely lead to an expansion of funds because the caseload is growing, and it will attempt to better align state funding with actual need in counties. This will most likely be reflected in the May revise. For child welfare, state tax revenue is realigned to counties. However, there are pots of money that are beyond the realigned funds. The first pot of money--\$11M in state funds along with leveraging federal dollars—is for social worker training along with the establishment of an educational academy. Counties throughout the state are having trouble attracting social workers with a Master of Social Work (MSW) into child welfare. The idea is that the pipeline of social workers will be increased through these academies. The funding that was reduced in the budget was for Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) programs: resource family approval process and foster parent recruitment, retention and support. The assumption is that we have already done the heavy lift so we do not need any more funding. However, the reality is that resource families come and go. We would like to maximize the number of resource families that we have irrespective of the need. Currently, there is a resource family shortage in San Francisco that requires moving kids out of county. We will be proposing to the legislature that, while we do not need all of the funding, it should not be completely terminated given the ongoing need. There is \$30 million in the budget for the Family Urgent Response System (FURS) for the budget year. Our two big priorities are broadening CalWORKs eligibility and increasing CalFresh participation. We will provide funding progress updates throughout the year.

**LOCAL**

The Mayor's Office announced the opening of a navigation center at 33 Gough, which is a block away from 170 Otis. This new 200 bed navigation center, largely indoors, moves the City closer to Mayor Breed's goal of adding 1,000 new beds for the

homeless by the end of 2020. Like at all navigation centers, our staff will be at 33 Gough, on site, assisting with benefits. I will work closely with the Departments of Homelessness and Supportive Housing and Public Works to ensure this new community resource will improve the surrounding street conditions without compromising safety and access for our employees and clients to HSA offices. I will keep you apprised of the progress. The navigation center is anticipated to be open by the end of 2020.

The tax filing season officially launches on January 27. Every year we have a campaign that targets our lower income clients for tax filing assistance. This year, we have two new initiatives. In partnership with United Way, Arriba Juntos and Mission Economic Development Agency, HSA will provide free tax preparation at our client service centers and 30 neighborhood locations throughout the City. In addition to the free tax services, we help eligible residents apply for up to \$9,600 in local, state, and federal tax credits. Residents who qualify for the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit are encouraged to apply for the San Francisco Work Families Credit. For the 2019 tax year, we have removed the one-time lifetime benefit requirement. Families who have received the credit before are invited to apply again. This year we received additional funding from the Board of Supervisors and Mayor's Office to offer annual incentives instead of a one-time payment of \$250. To inform the public about these services, HSA will launch an awareness campaign in February. The campaign will kick off with a media announcement from Mayor Breed and include social media, transit advertisements, client mailings, and coordination with our community partners. More information is available at [FreeTaxHelpSF.org](http://FreeTaxHelpSF.org). We have been offering tax assistance for 12 years. We held our first staff town hall on our racial equity work yesterday (1/22). 300 employees attended. We had a panel discussion with Trent, Shireen McSpadden (DAS Executive Director), and two guest speakers: Sheryl Davis, Director of the SF Human Rights Commission and Leslie Zeitler, the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) California Project Manager. The town hall covered topics such as what is government's role in racial equity work, why is it important, Agency intentions for the next year and how staff can be involved. This was an opportune event to introduce our new Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging ("DEIB") Manager, Asa King. Asa was a senior analyst for the City's Office of Civil Rights before accepting the DEIB Manager position. Some of Asa's past work includes being a public defender in North Carolina, a staff attorney for the Transgender Law Center, and an EEO investigator for the USPS. We are grateful and lucky that Asa joined the Agency.

Mayor Breed and Speaker Nancy Pelosi hosted an event last Friday in City Hall to celebrate the official launch of SF Counts, San Francisco's Census 2020 Campaign. The Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA) is the lead agency and has asked departments to help with outreach. The biggest change this year is that the census will be almost entirely online. This can be a challenge for lower-income households, immigrant communities, elderly residents and others who are less connected to the internet. Therefore, a cross-departmental Working Group along with OCEIA will use HSA's various touchpoints, such as in-person service centers, mail, social media and CBO partners to encourage and assist our clients to fill out the form. Commissioner Semel asked about Census 2020 employment opportunities. Executive Director Rhorer mentioned part-time employment opportunities with outreach. The workforce development office is offering clients these positions. We are also partnering with CBOs in our JobsNow! program to hire full-time positions for peer-to-peer outreach. It will be a challenge, especially with the White House rhetoric against immigrant families. The concern is that certain immigrant families will want to hide instead of be counted in the census. The number of seats California has in the House is dependent on the census numbers. We are grateful that the Mayor & Speaker are prioritizing the census and supporting our hard work. It will be a heavy lift.

## **PROGRAMS**

### **ESSS**

#### **CAAP**

There has been a noticeable increase in online CAAP referrals. As mentioned previously, we launched the portal late last year. In November, we had around 50 referrals a month then in December, we had 128 referrals. This upsurge is mainly due to better outreach on the HSA website and expanded outreach to the new Embarcadero Navigation Center. Starting in February, the outreach unit will expand from 3 to 6 eligibility workers. We are doubling our work with shelters and navigation centers to bring cash assistance and other benefits directly to those who need it most.

#### **CalWORKs**

CalWORKs has worked with City College for decades to ensure our CalWORKs families have access to education and training so that they have a path toward higher employment. We are strengthening this partnership by having a CCSF educational counselor on-site here at 170 Otis to help clients enroll at City College and maintain their enrollment. Education is the best path to higher wages, so we are doing everything that we can to provide that opportunity. We will also have an educational counselor at our 3120 Mission employment center.

### **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES (FCS)**

We are launching a robust foster family recruitment campaign in February. HSA Communications is working with FCS and a creative ad agency for a multi-phased campaign. The first phase is to promote on billboards, Muni shelters and on social media platforms. Our communications team will present campaign updates at the next commission meeting. The purpose of the campaign is to build awareness of the critical need for resource homes in the City, and the importance of keeping kids in their own community instead of going out of county. Our goal is 100 new resource families in San Francisco. The hook of the campaign is not necessarily to be a resource parent, but to get involved in any way possible, whether it be through mentoring, fostering, adopting, or simply donating to the SF Foster Youth Fund. The hope is that what might start as a monthly mentoring commitment could lead to much more.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Every year, SPUR (San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association) sponsors The Good Government Awards, an event at which several managers or management teams from across city departments are recognized for excellence in public management. This is the most prestigious management award in the City. This year, HSA nominated a team of four managers who helped lead implementation of the CalFresh expansion to SSI recipients, and they won. The winners are Jeimil Belamide (CalFresh Section Manager), Phillip Mau (Program Support Operations Section Manager), Chandra Johnson (PIO) and Krista Blyth Gaeta (IHSS Program Director). They will be honored at a ceremony at City Hall in early March. Upon completion of Mr. Rhorer's updates, Vice President McCray requested clarity around the housing and services money that is coming out of the state social services department. Executive Director Rhorer replied that the California Access to Housing and Services Fund is the governor's biggest investment in this budget and is part of his homeless plan. It is modeled after a fund in Los Angeles, seeded by public dollars, then augmented by private dollars, notably the Hilton Foundation. The idea is a flexible fund where local communities can define their needs and where the dollars can be most useful. LA has done housing subsidies, move-in deposits and preserved housing developments, board & care homes which are chronically underfunded, and residences for individuals with disabilities. In the budget, there is not a lot of language defining the fund. As it moves through the legislature, more specific language will be attached to define how that money can be used and how it will be allocated, whether it is competitive grant process or allocated based on population or based on outcome. The concern is that it is a one-time offering of \$750M. This is concerning when you think about rent subsidies that are needed year over year. In response, the governor's office says the private sector will augment the fund—the Googles and Apples. Commissioner Semel wanted to understand our role with the navigation center around the corner. Executive Director Rhorer responded that it is the same role as with any navigation center—eligibility workers on site to make sure that the 200 people know our benefits & sign up for them if they haven't already. It will be the same service model as the other navigation centers, operated by a nonprofit; one has yet to be chosen.

**EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH** President Kahn announced JOSE HAROLD A. ACOSTA, 2913 Program Specialist, SFBN Operations Workforce Management Unit, as the January 2020 Employee of the Month. Harold began his career with the Department of Human Services as a clerk. He was promoted to the role of eligibility worker and then to program specialist. Executive Director Rhorer emphasized the importance of internal promotions. He also mentioned that employees in the SFBN operations unit are behind the scenes; they may not be recognized for their essential contributions as often as client-facing employees. This was an opportune moment to honor Harold for his important role. Harold was very grateful for the award, thanking his supervisor, leadership and the commissioners.

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES PROPOSED BUDGET** Finance and Administration Deputy Director Dan Kaplan presented on the process for the development of the Department of Human Services' proposed budget for fiscal years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. No action was requested of the Commission at this time. Presentation of the final proposed budget to the Commission will occur at the February 12, 2020 Special Meeting.

**CONSENT CALENDAR** On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved and ratified actions taken by the Executive Director since the December 19, 2019 Regular Meeting in accordance with Commission authorization of January 23, 2020:

1. Submission of requests to encumber funds in the total amount of \$1,212,817 for purchase of services or supplies and contingency amounts.
2. Submission of 2 temporary positions for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period of 12/07/19 to 01/10/20.
3. Submission of 61 temporary appointments made during the period of 12/07/19 to 01/10/20.

**MISSION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (MEDA)** Doris Barone, Disaster Manager, presented the request to enter into a new grant agreement with MISSION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (MEDA).

Vice President McCray inquired how many people have been assisted with the housing locator services to date, to which Doris responded 11 cases, which adds up to 50 people served.

On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new grant agreement with MISSION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (MEDA) for the provision of housing locator services to displaced tenants who were ordered to vacate by the Department of Building Inspection and/or the Fire Department due to hazardous, life-threatening housing conditions; for the period of January 1, 2020 to June 30, 2022; in the amount of \$250,000 plus a 10% contingency for a total grant amount not to exceed \$275,000.

**211 SAN DIEGO** Ana Marie Lara, SF BenefitsNet Program Support Analyst, presented the request to modify an existing grant agreement with 211 SAN DIEGO.

Commissioner Semel wanted to know why we chose a nonprofit based in San Diego and not a local firm. President Kahn asked if any Bay Area companies bid for the work. Executive Director Rhorer responded that 211 San Diego a vendor that provides this service to many other counties, not just San Francisco. Also, Executive Director Rhorer respectfully informed the Commissioners that this request is not for approval on a new contract, but for a modification to extend an existing contract.

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to modify the existing grant agreement with 211 SAN DIEGO for the provision of CalFresh Telephone Outreach; for the period of March 1, 2017 to June 20, 2020; for an additional amount of \$109,470 plus a 10% contingency for a revised total grant amount not to exceed \$1,002,002.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

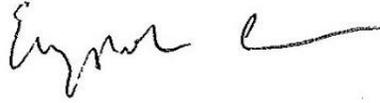
On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission elected Scott Kahn as Human Services Commission President, commencing February 1, 2020. On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission elected James McCray, Jr. as Human Services Commission Vice President, commencing February 1, 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENT

President Kahn's call for public comment yielded no responses.

ADJOURNMENT

President Kahn adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.



Elizabeth LaBarre, Commission Secretary  
Human Services Commission

Posted: 2.4.20