

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

April 22, 2021 Regular Meeting

The regular meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, April 22, 2021 virtually & telephonically pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20 and the Twelfth Supplement to Mayoral Proclamation Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency dated February 25, 2020.

MEMBERS PRESENT REMOTELY (VIA ZOOM)	SCOTT KAHN, President JAMES MCCRAY, JR., Vice President RITA SEMEL DARSHAN SINGH GEORGE YAMASAKI, JR.
OTHERS PRESENT REMOTELY (VIA ZOOM)	Trent Rhorer, Executive Director Elizabeth LaBarre, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director / Secretary – Human Services Commission Dan Kaplan, Deputy Director – Finance and Administration Joan Miller, Deputy Director – Family & Children's Services Noelle Simmons, Deputy Director – Economic Support & Self-sufficiency Other department staff and interested citizens
ROLL CALL	President Kahn called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m., noting all commissioners present.
AGENDA	On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the agenda as posted.
MINUTES	On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the minutes of the March 25, 2021 Regular Meeting as circulated.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT	Executive Director Trent Rhorer furnished an update regarding federal, state and local activities, including COVID-19 information.

FEDERAL

There has not been a lot of movement on the President's \$2 trillion American Jobs Plan since last mentioned during the March commission meeting. This is the President's infrastructure plan and it includes human infrastructure, which the Republicans are balking at and so it is in a holding pattern.

The American Rescue Plan is moving along. The big piece that concerns San Francisco families is the Federal Child Tax Credit of \$3600 per child under age five doled out monthly for six months total beginning July 1 on top of the \$1,400 federal stimulus payments. As mentioned in last month's report, this Plan will have a great impact on low income and working poor families. Biden released \$39 billion for childcare from the Plan of which California will receive \$1.4 billion for childcare subsidies, \$2.3 billion for current and former childcare facilities, and \$2.3 billion for operational costs, mortgage/rent and paying childcare workers.

The President released a "skinny budget" with the full budget expected in May. The initial skinny budget includes a \$100 million program to address disproportionality in child welfare, homeless assistance grants, workforce development, and child care.

STATE

State revenues continue to come in higher than projected. The California Department of Finance announced that the state has \$14.3 billion more revenue than initially projected. Then Biden's American Rescue Plan will bring another \$26 billion to the

state. Lobbyists are jockeying to figure out how to spend the additional dollars. We will know more in the May Revise as to budget priorities.

Golden State Stimulus Payments of \$600 have gone out to households.

State budget priorities for HSA include a \$100 million one-time General Fund augmentation for housing and homelessness to create a flexible funding pool for county human services departments. We are hoping for targeted housing investment for low-income families, child-welfare involved families, older adults who have been abused, neglected or exploited, and single adults with disabilities to ensure that they are not left out of the general, statewide solutions on homelessness and COVID-19. Another budget priority is to invest \$50 million of General Fund dollars to build a prevention infrastructure in order to implement the Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). This is especially significant because it is the first time federal dollars can be used for prevention services prior to a child entering the foster care system. Prevention services with state General Fund dollars would include training, partnering with community organizations, and additional partnerships between child welfare and CalWORKs. Another budget priority mentioned in last month's report is to provide cash assistance for CalWORKs families whose children are in foster care. We are partnering with other counties and CWDA to get \$9.5 million in funding.

LOCAL

COVID-19

The COVID update is positive. Cases have plateaued even after the City continues to open more with each tier. On March 2, San Francisco went from purple to red, then on March 24 we went from red to orange. Previously when SF started to reopen the economy and go from tier to tier, we saw an uptick in virus cases, which is not happening this time. San Francisco continues to remain below four cases per 100,000 so we should be able to move to the yellow tier by May 5. The repeat factor, meaning how often the virus is transmitted to others, should be below one, and SF is at .98. This means the virus should not multiply if we remain below one.

San Francisco is a leader in vaccinations in terms of volume and equity. The Chronicle did a piece on how San Francisco is leading the way in terms of equitable vaccine distribution, both racial and income equity. The Department of Public Health (DPH), the Human Services Agency (HSA), the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) and many nonprofit partners focused on getting neighborhoods with high COVID infection rates vaccinated and they succeeded.

The economic impact of COVID for San Franciscans is in large part determined by the new number of unemployment claims. We seem to have plateaued with the number of claims. The economy opening is helping.

Citywide happenings not specifically related to COVID that concern our Agency and/or our clients include the opening of a sobering center for people who are experiencing the effects of fentanyl, methamphetamine, and other substances. The building is located at 1076 Howard Street. This pilot program is a key component of Mental Health SF and is one of several innovative efforts underway to help people experiencing homelessness and behavioral health issues get off the streets, into housing, and connected with services. We are partnering with Treasurer José Cisneros in a Guaranteed Income Advisory Group to help develop best practices in piloting and expanding Guaranteed Income programs. Guaranteed Income is a cash payment each month from the government to a recipient with no conditions or strings attached. Mayor Tubbs from the city of Stockton was one of the first mayors to launch a Guaranteed Income program. In the Stockton program, about 1,000 families received \$500 per month to help them manage their lives with no eligibility requirements.

ADMIN/FINANCE

There are several updates from the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB). DEIB hosted a virtual Racial Equity Town Hall on March 30 that was attended by nearly 400 staff. The event featured remarks from Executive Director Rhorer, the Department of Disability and Aging Services (DAS) Executive Director McSpadden, Acting Director of Human Resources Dr. Williams and members of the Racial Equity Work Group. The first installment of the quarterly Racial Equity Newsletter was distributed to all staff on April 9. The Newsletter provides staff with regular updates about progress made implementing the Racial Equity Action Plan and ways to get involved in racial equity work such as participating in the Champions of Racial Equity Program, joining employee resource groups and attending diversity and cultural awareness events. The Champions of Racial Equity Program was launched in April and provides staff with 21 days of continuous micro-learning on racial equity—one email per day. The Racial Equity Work Group continues to meet monthly and is assisting with the development of an Agency-wide policy on the formation of employee resource (or affinity) groups, diversity and cultural awareness events, and diversity recruitment efforts for internal promotions and external hiring.

The local city budget is in good shape largely due to the American Rescue Plan Act. The projected shortfall, thought to be over \$650 million in January, is now \$22.9 million. Given the good news, the deficit projection assumes no recession triggers meaning employees will receive their wage increases and the growth of the Dignity Fund won't be delayed. We remain cautiously optimistic about long-term growth as there is still a structural deficit beginning in FY23-24 when federal support is exhausted. HSA is working closely with the Mayor's Office on our budget proposal due June 1 to the Board. The focus continues to be the COVID response with food support and hotel operations for housing support.

COVID has made it necessary for the Agency to continuously work on staff and workplace plans, led by IT, Facilities and Human Resources. They meet to plan for equipment updates and maintenance of telecommute processes. The Facilities department with RE Walsh's leadership continues to follow CDC, Department of Human Resources and Department of Public Health guidance related to reopening and return to work planning such as maximizing fresh air intake and maintaining HEPA filters throughout all HSA facilities. Administration continues to monitor daily occupancy levels in HSA offices and recommends modifications when necessary. IT is responsible for preparing the HSA workforce for 100% remote work capabilities if need be. IT continues to purchase and transition all staff to laptops in spite of a global laptop shortage. The transition should be completed by end of summer. IT is assessing technologies needed to support hybrid meetings for employees working both in the office and remotely. Telecommuting is beneficial for many reasons including less cars on the road and enhanced work/life balance for employees. HSA needs to keep in mind continuity of service to clients when determining what part of the workforce can work remotely as the economy opens.

ESSS

SFBN

The CalFresh and Medi-Cal teams are planning for the end of waivers that were enacted during COVID to allow for continuity of services during a pandemic. This means that proof of eligibility requirements will become mandatory again which will increase employee workloads. SFBN is moving to a one-stop model for CalFresh and Medi-Cal recipients in the carrying portion of the process. Currently SFBN offers intakes for CalFresh and Medi-Cal at one time and we want this replicated for carrying. This will improve the client experience and disperse the work load more equitably among staff.

WDD

As is the case with all departments, CalWORKs and WDD are conducting an analysis to determine what staffing looks like post-pandemic. The CalWORKs program requires onsite staff more than other departments because of the in-person nature of the work such as job fairs and the effectiveness of certain interventions face-to-face.

CAAP

In keeping with the theme of preparing for the gradual reopening of the Agency lobbies, CAAP is currently strategizing how to return to pre-pandemic offerings. CAAP will continue to offer phone and online services as a preferred contact method but will expand in-person services for intakes and case carrying appointments. CAAP is planning for a ramp up of Workfare, Light Duty and counseling services with the reopening of lobby face-to-face services.

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES (FCS)

Resource families were able to get vaccinated and are grateful.

Last year, FCS was able to finalize 69 adoptions. This year we have already finalized 63 adoptions.

As mentioned in past meetings, FCS has been engaged in a resource family recruitment campaign since the end of January to increase the number of foster homes in San Francisco. One of the important initiatives of FCS is to have more resource families in the City. This campaign will help us reach our goal of keeping children who need to go into the foster care system in their home town. We are starting to see the results of the campaign with 22 community applicants going through the approval process now and 21 other applicants currently going through the vetting process. While 43 new resource homes may not sound like a lot, it is 20% of our out of county caseload.

May is Foster Care Month. The proclamation is going to be presented later in the meeting and read by FCS Deputy Director Joan Miller.

There are a couple of staffing changes that you may have read about, Commissioners. The Mayor has appointed Shireen McSpadden, our DAS Executive Director, as the Executive Director of the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH). Shireen and Trent have worked together for 18 years. Mr. Rhorer is very sorry to see her go but very happy for the City as she will be a fantastic leader for HSH. Noelle Simmons, our Deputy Director of Economic Support and Self-Sufficiency (ESSS), was appointed by Shireen to be her Deputy Director at HSH. Dan Kaplan, Deputy Director of Finance and Administration, will continue in his existing role but he will also oversee ESSS. The four program directors under Noelle will be reporting to Mr. Kaplan while we conduct a recruitment campaign. Thank you to Mr. Kaplan for taking on this additional work and role. It is an especially busy time for ESSS with the CalSAWs initiative and universal intake process rollout. Dan is familiar with these huge projects and will make continuity possible during the change in staff. We are really lucky to have someone so knowledgeable leading the department in the interim.

Executive Director Rhorer then thanked Noelle Simmons for her service to the Agency for 14 years. She began with the Agency as the Deputy Director for Policy & Planning before becoming the Deputy Director of ESSS. "Commissioners, you know Noelle when she steps in for me at commission meetings, but what you probably don't know is the impact of her leadership on our programs and staff," stated Mr. Rhorer. He listed her numerous accomplishments and mentioned her relationships with local, county and state officials, all who greatly admire her work; many have offered jobs to her throughout the years. Mr. Rhorer was grateful that she stayed at HSA. But now Noelle was leaving the Agency for HSH, a partner agency for HSA, meaning she won't be going too far and we will be working closely with her and Shireen on many initiatives. Mr. Rhorer wanted to use this opportunity in a public forum to thank Noelle for her great work for hundreds of thousands of low income San Franciscans.

Commissioner McCray then added that he celebrated and lamented the change of leadership. The Commissioner and Ms. McSpadden’s father partnered many years ago. He wished Noelle and Shireen success in their new roles. He then offered a comment about the administrative changes in Mr. Rhorer’s report as we build back up services in the Agency. Commissioner McCray hopes that we are categorizing the learnings that are coming from this work, to take an agency this size through a pandemic then back to business as usual. He wanted to underscore the administrative goldmine. Commissioner McCray then finished with a thank you to Mr. Kaplan for stepping up.

Then Executive Director Rhorer realized he had accidentally omitted one part of his report. He called on Susie Smith, Deputy Director of Policy & Planning. Susie then admitted that she had a surprise for Noelle and introduced a presentation of Noelle’s achievements along with photos during her tenure. Noelle was very grateful for the well wishes.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD

President Kahn announced AUNG “OSCAR” ZIN, SENIOR PERSONNEL CLERK, HUMAN RESOURCES, as the April 2021 Employee of the Month. The Commission recognized Oscar for his excellent customer service skills and commitment to the Agency. Oscar was awarded an engraved desk clock.

CONSENT CALENDAR

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved and ratified actions taken by the Executive Director since the March 25, 2021 Regular Meeting in accordance with Commission authorization of April 22, 2021:

1. Submission of request to encumber funds in the total amount of \$9,233,480 for purchase of services or supplies and contingency amounts.
2. Submission of 1 temporary position for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period 3/13/21 to 4/12/21.
3. Submission of 43 temporary appointments for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period 3/13/21 to 4/12/21.

PROCLAIMING MAY 2021 AS FOSTER CARE MONTH, to include RESOURCE FAMILIES APPRECIATION

Deputy Director of Family and Children’s Services (FCS) Joan Miller requested that the Commission adopt the resolution proclaiming May 2021 as Foster Care Month.

On motion of Commissioner Yamasaki, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the resolution proclaiming April 2021 as Child Abuse Prevention Month as follows:

WHEREAS, the family is the foundation of a strong and healthy community; and WHEREAS, in San Francisco there are 511 children and youth in foster care; and WHEREAS, in San Francisco there are 159 foster youth in Non-Minor Dependent Status; and WHEREAS, foster parents, including relative and non-related extended family members, provide an essential service to the community in caring for children and youth in foster care; and WHEREAS, the importance of the family structure is best served in foster homes that model family living, as opposed to group care; and WHEREAS, the stability and permanency for children and foster children is of the utmost importance; and WHEREAS, permanency is defined as both a process and result that includes the active involvement of the child or youth, and WHEREAS, permanency is defined as a permanent connection with at least one committed adult, which may include the biological parents through reunification, or with another adult family member, fictive kin, adult siblings, or other important individuals in the child or youth’s life who commit to the child through adoption or guardianship; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the entire community to make sure that each youth who leaves the foster care system in California has a permanent lifelong connection with a caring adult; and
WHEREAS, San Francisco is in need of dedicated care providers who will strive in partnership with the Human Services Agency to identify and connect children and youth in foster care to permanent lifelong relationships; and
WHEREAS, dedicated care providers model strength-based and solution-focused engagement with the children and youth in their care and with the community-based and government entities providing services and support; and
WHEREAS, community-based organizations within San Francisco partner with the Human Services Agency to provide accessible and culturally relevant family-centered services that meet the unique needs of the families and children we serve; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Human Services Commission proclaims May 2021 FOSTER CARE MONTH and urges all community members to volunteer their talents and energies to honor children and youth in foster care and those who have exited the foster care system during this month.

PROCLAIMING MAY
2021 AS CALFRESH
AWARENESS AND
ACTION MONTH

Tiana Wertheim, Program Director, requested that the Commission adopt the resolution proclaiming May 2021 as CalFresh Awareness and Action Month.

On motion of Commissioner Yamasaki, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the resolution proclaiming April 2021 as CalFresh Awareness Month as follows:

WHEREAS, this is a Resolution declaring May 2021 as CalFresh Awareness and Action Month in the City and County of San Francisco, and urging all community members to support efforts to increase awareness of, and participation in, the CalFresh program; and
and
WHEREAS, food insecurity in San Francisco has risen to historic proportions during the Pandemic, CalFresh has played a critical role in filling the gap; and
WHEREAS, from January 2019 to April 2021, the number of San Francisco households receiving CalFresh more than doubled, surging from 30,750 to 64,345 households; this is due both to the expansion of CalFresh eligibility starting in 2019 to allow persons on SSI to receive CalFresh, and due to the surge in applications during the early months of the COVID Pandemic. During that same period, calls from the public to our call center jumped from an average of 9,938 calls per month for active cases to 19,817 calls. Additionally, the number of calls regarding new CalFresh applications surged. Total calls regarding CalFresh grew by 99% in two years; and
WHEREAS, all households during the Public Health Emergency receive the maximum allotment for their household size. For example, households of one that received \$16 in February 2020 are now receiving \$234 monthly. This supplemental allotment is approved monthly by the State; and
WHEREAS, San Francisco has expanded the ways that applicants can apply for benefits, making it easier for those who are homebound or avoiding in-person interaction with the public. Through the telephonic signature waiver, the public can apply for CalFresh on the phone without having to come to our office in person or applying online; and
WHEREAS, during the Health Emergency, the federal government has allowed states to waive the requirement that clients participate in an interview as part of the CalFresh application process. In the past, a complete application could be denied for missing a required interview; that is not currently the case; and
WHEREAS, in recognition of many students who are struggling with food insecurity, the federal government instituted a waiver during the Pandemic easing the access of students to SNAP. As such, the nation has expanded student eligibility to include more

who qualify via work study or using expected family contribution as an income indicator; and

WHEREAS, during the Pandemic, California has received a federal waiver to allow qualified vendors to accept payment via EBT; this is allowing clients to safely buy groceries online, without leaving their homes; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of staff continue to administer the CalFresh program remotely, answering phones and processing cases, despite the challenges of remote work, new business process requirements, technological challenges, and household disruptions; and

WHEREAS, our CalFresh lobbies remain open, primarily for those without access to a phone or internet; and

WHEREAS, in response to the homeless crisis during the Pandemic, the San Francisco Human Services Agency ("SFHSA") has engaged in in-person CalFresh outreach to homeless persons temporarily staying in Shelter in Place hotels. From September 15, 2020 to April 16, 2021, four SFBN eligibility workers have been door knocking at the hotels, interviewing clients and assisting them in submitting applications. So far, they have submitted 1,107 CalFresh applications. Additionally, they have submitted 713 Medi-Cal and 572 CAAP applications. This is one of the most integrated outreach efforts ever embarked upon by the Division of Economic Support & Self Sufficiency (ESSS) Programs; and

WHEREAS, SFHSA continued its contract with 211 San Diego to expand CalFresh access and increase food security. When staff from the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program go to clients' homes and identify them as candidates for CalFresh, they are now referring them to our contractor 211 San Diego. 211 San Diego then does phone outreach and assists the client in submitting CalFresh applications; and

WHEREAS, our key partner the San Francisco Marin Food Bank has launched an in-reach phone campaign through which they are reaching out to up to 40,000 households that use food pantries in the City to assist with CalFresh applications by phone; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco continues to promote Code for America's www.GetCalFresh.org platform as a fast, secure way for people to apply and submit forms and documents online; and

WHEREAS, SNAP programs throughout the nation are currently waiving all work requirements due to the public health emergency and high unemployment; and

WHEREAS, Market Match allows a CalFresh household to extend the value of its benefits; farmers markets will double the value of purchases made using CalFresh EBT. This promotes healthy food options, supports farmers and extends the clients' CalFresh budget; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco continues to offer a Restaurant Meals Program, allowing homeless, seniors and the federally disabled to use their CalFresh allotment to pay for meals in designated restaurants. This increases the access to hot meals for those without easy access to kitchens; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Human Services Commission proclaims May 2021 to be CalFresh Awareness and Action Month, and urge all community members to support efforts to increase awareness of and participation in the CalFresh program.

ARRIBA JUNTOS

Marlen Sanchez, Community Services Program Specialist, presented the request to enter into a new grant agreement with ARRIBA JUNTOS.

On motion of Commissioner Yamasaki, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new grant agreement with ARRIBA JUNTOS for provision of digital services program; for the period of May 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022; in the amount of \$345,000, plus a 10% contingency, for a total amount not to exceed \$379,500.

FIVE KEYS
SCHOOLS AND
PROGRAMS

Marlen Sanchez, Community Services Program Specialist, presented the request to enter into a new grant agreement with FIVE KEYS SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS.

On motion of Commissioner McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new grant agreement with FIVE KEYS SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS for provision of digital services program; for the period of May 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022; in the amount of \$210,000, plus a 10% contingency, for a total amount not to exceed \$231,000.

SELF HELP FOR
THE ELDERLY

Marlen Sanchez, Community Services Program Specialist, presented the request to enter into a new contract agreement with SELF HELP FOR THE ELDERLY.

On motion of Commissioner McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new grant agreement with SELF HELP FOR THE ELDERLY for provision of digital services program; for the period of May 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022; in the amount of \$345,000, plus a 10% contingency, for a total amount not to exceed \$379,500.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

ADJOURNMENT

President Kahn adjourned the Human Services Commission April 22, 2021 Regular Meeting at 11:18 a.m.



Elizabeth LaBarre, Commission Secretary
Human Services Commission

Posted:
5.11.2021