



May 18, 2016

The Honorable Tony Thurmond, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support to Children who are Commercially Sexually Exploited: \$19.7 million

Dear Assemblyman Thurmond:

Community Action Partnership of Madera County urges your support to provide an additional \$19.7 million General Funds in fiscal year 2016-17 to protect and serve child victims of commercial sexual exploitation through California's child welfare services system. The commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a national and statewide epidemic that deserves our highest attention. Additional support is needed to enable child welfare agencies to effectively meet federal and state mandates and serve the needs of this unique population.

CSEC victims suffer from horrific and severe forms of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. This results in severe trauma to the victim that requires intensive services to protect the victim from their perpetrators and help them in their long journey to recovery. Effectively serving the CSEC population requires that services are delivered through a targeted and multi-disciplinary approach that involves both public and private agencies working collaboratively. Our organization has strived to serve the unique needs of this population, working in concert with our local child welfare agency, but recognizes that effective services must be leveraged across multiple systems.

Child welfare agencies are mandated by State law to provide services to child victims of commercial sex trafficking. In addition, new federal law – The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 – requires state child welfare agencies to identify and serve child sex trafficking victims. These agencies are also uniquely positioned to leverage needed resources across public and private agencies and tap into federal funding sources. Our county child welfare agency has developed local CSEC protocols that include the juvenile court, public health, mental health, probation, service providers and other entities. However, additional resources are needed to implement our local response protocols and deliver effective services to CSEC victims.

CSEC have intensive needs for services that require multi-agency response. Once identified, victims need crisis stabilization and often have physical health needs that require immediate attention. They need safe housing with enhanced supervision and support to protect them from their perpetrator. Their perpetrators controlled everything and their victims often were left with nothing of their own, requiring emergency clothing, toiletries, and basic living supplies. These complex cases also require multi-disciplinary teams to meet frequently and quickly to coordinate services, and specially-trained social work staff in the child welfare agency to facilitate this process.

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Administration/Community Services (559) 673-9173 • Fax (559) 673-3223 • Child Care Resource & Referral (559) 875-8469 • Fax (559) 875-1497

Alternative Payment Program (559) 661-0779 • Fax (559) 661-0764 • Child Development Services (559) 873-0012 • Fax (559) 661-8459 • Victim Services (559) 661-1000/ (800) 355-8989 • Fax (559) 661-8389
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We greatly appreciate the Legislature's and Administration's investment of \$14 million in the 2015-16 budget year to begin to build capacity in local child welfare systems. An increase of \$19.7 million will enable all counties to meet their existing mandates and effectively serve CSEC victims.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Mattie Mendez
Executive Director

- C: The Honorable Rob Bonta, CA State Assembly
 The Honorable David Chiu, CA State Assembly
 The Honorable Shannon Grove, CA State Assembly
 The Honorable Matthew Harper, CA State Assembly
 County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA)



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES COUNTY OF MADERA

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KELLY WOODARD, Director

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Dear Assemblyman Thurmond:

The County of Madera urges your support to provide an additional \$19.7 million General Funds in fiscal year 2016-17 to protect and serve child victims of commercial sexual exploitation through California's child welfare services system. Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a national and statewide epidemic that deserves our highest attention. Additional support is needed to enable child welfare agencies to effectively meet new federal mandates and serve the needs of this unique population.

While our county child welfare agency has made strides to serve this population, we have found that CSEC victims suffer from horrific and severe forms of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. This results in severe trauma to the victim that requires intensive services to protect the victim from their perpetrators and help them in their long journey to recovery. Effectively serving the CSEC population requires that services are delivered through a targeted and multi-disciplinary approach.

In our County, we have been working collaboratively with other systems including law enforcement, probation, education, mental health, public health, victim services and others to leverage resources to serve this population.

New federal and state mandates require child welfare agencies to develop and implement local protocols to identify foster youth who are victims of CSEC and link these youth to appropriate services. While our county has taken steps to begin to serve CSEC victims through the development of local interagency response protocols, additional resources are needed to implement our protocols and effectively serve youth. We are in need of services such as specialized mental health to work with the youth regarding the trauma they have experienced, housing, educational services to support their academic growth based on not being in school, as well as other resources that youth may identify as needing to support him/her.

Once identified, victims need crisis stabilization and often have physical health needs that require immediate attention. They need safe housing with enhanced supervision and support to protect them from their perpetrator. Their perpetrators controlled everything and their victims

often were left with nothing of their own, requiring emergency clothing, toiletries, and basic living supplies. Some victims will be saved with their own young children who also need supports and services. These complex cases also require multi-disciplinary teams to meet frequently and quickly to leverage resources and coordinate services, and specially-trained social work staff in the child welfare agency to facilitate this process.

We greatly appreciate the Legislature's and Administration's investment of \$14 million in the 2015-16 budget year to begin to build capacity in local child welfare systems. An increase of \$19.7 million will enable our county to more effectively serve CSEC victims and ensure other counties can join in this important effort.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Kelly Woodard
Director

C: The Honorable Rob Bonta, CA State Assembly
The Honorable David Chiu, CA State Assembly
The Honorable Shannon Grove, CA State Assembly
The Honorable Matthew Harper, CA State Assembly
County Delegation, CA State Assembly
County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA)