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Los Angeles County Supervisor

HILDA L. SOLIS

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Los Angeles County to Continue Enriching Lives through Expansion of the Upfront Family Finding Pilot



LOS ANGELES, CA – The Board of Supervisors today approved a motion authored by Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda L. Solis, Supervisor to the First District, and co-authored by Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, enriching lives through the expansion of the Upfront Family Finding pilot.

“The findings are clear: Los Angeles County’s Upfront Family Finding pilot met its goal of increasing the number of children in foster care placed with kin and engaging relatives to serve as sources of support to our children,” said Chair Solis. “Expanding this successful pilot ~~is~~ aligns with the County’s long-standing commitment to integrate a strength-based, family-focused, and trauma-informed practice to better serve our families and communities.”

“I am proud to co-author this motion with Chair Solis and to know that with the expansion of the Upfront Family Finding program we will be helping to connect more youth with their loved ones. The initial impact of the Upfront Family Finding pilot is a positive indicator that we are on the right path for providing comprehensive care and services for some of our most vulnerable residents. We know that keeping a child with family members who are able to care for them positively changes the trajectory for their lives,” said Supervisor Mitchell.

“With an average of 35,000 children under jurisdiction of LA County DCFS, LA County’s Children’s Social Workers have heavy caseloads,” said David Green, a veteran Children’s Social Worker who also serves as Treasurer of SEIU 721. “CSWs have to juggle so many responsibilities in the first weeks after a child is removed from their parents, it can be a challenge for them also to search for and recruit relatives. With the UFF program, specialized teams focus on recruiting placement opportunities with kin and the results are impressive,” Green added.

On May 31, 2016, the Board of Supervisors approved a motion directing the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department, in conjunction with the Courts, to establish an Upfront Family Finding (UFF) program, to be coordinated with DCFS’s existing Permanency Partners Program (P3). In response to the 2016 motion, a single countywide UFF protocol was developed, enabling DCFS to help support placement with kin as soon as children enter the child welfare system. The UFF protocol was piloted in two DCFS regional offices (Glendora and Santa Fe Springs) in October 2016.

The County’s Office of Child Protection (OCP) secured the services of the nonprofit research organization Child Trends to evaluate the pilot, beginning in March 2017. By October 2017, the kinship placement rate for children served by these regional

offices was found to have increased to a whopping 80 percent. These successes led to an expansion of the UFF protocol to two more regional offices (Vermont Corridor and West Los Angeles) in January 2018.

The passage of today's motion instructs DCFS, working with the Chief Executive Officer, and other relevant departments, to report back with a timeline and funding plan for expansion of the UFF protocol to the remaining nine DCFS offices that are not currently implementing the UFF protocol.

The motion also seeks DCFS to report back to the Board, in writing, on a quarterly basis on the progress of the expansion plan and, ultimately, the expansion itself, including identification of funding and staff; DCFS and OCP to report back on the feasibility of entering into a Memorandum of Agreement with Child Trends to ensure they can access deidentified data on children placed with their non-offending parent, in order to more comprehensively evaluate outcomes for children placed with kin; and for the Chief Probation Officer to report back to the Board, in writing, within 180 days on the feasibility of implementing a separate UFF protocol or partnering with DCFS on the expansion of the UFF protocol.

To view the motion, visit

<http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/153214.pdf>.

CONTACT: Kimberly Ortega, Acting Communications Director, (213) 361-6435 or KOrtega@bos.lacounty.gov

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