

States Courthouse, 1130 'O' Street in Fresno.

POINT OF CONTACT: Mr. Javad Soltani, Asset Manager, United States General Services Administration, The Pacific Rim Region, at (415) 744-5255.

Dated: June 6, 1995.

Aki K. Nakao,

Deputy Regional Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Administration for Children and Families

Child Welfare Waiver Demonstrations Pursuant to Section 1130 of the Social Security Act (the Act); Titles IV-E and IV-B of the Act; Public Law 103-432

AGENCY: Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), ACF, DHHS.

ACTION: Public notice.

SUMMARY: This public notice announces that the Department of Health and Human Services (Department) is seeking proposals on child welfare demonstration projects and informs interested parties of (1) the principles the Department will consider in exercising its discretion to approve or disapprove demonstration projects under the authority in section 1130 (b) (of Part A of title XI) of the Social Security Act, added by Pub. L. 103-432; (2) the procedures the Department expects States to employ in involving the public in the development of proposed demonstration projects under section 1130; and (3) the procedures the Department will follow in receiving demonstration proposals. The principles and procedures described in the public notice are being provided for the information of interested parties and are not legally binding on the Department. This notice does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity, by any person or entity, against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, the States, or any other person.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael W. Ambrose, Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, HHS at (202) 205-8740.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Introduction

Demonstration Proposals Pursuant to Section 1130 of the Social Security Act—General Policies and Procedures

Under section 1130, the Department of Health and Human Services is given authority to permit as many as ten States to conduct demonstration projects which involve the waiver of certain requirements of titles IV-B and IV-E, the sections of the Social Security Act which govern foster care, adoption assistance, independent living, child welfare services, family preservation and support, and related expenses for program administration, training, and automated systems.

The Department desires to facilitate the testing of new approaches to the delivery of a broad range of child welfare services. Such demonstrations can provide valuable knowledge that will help lead to improvements in the delivery, effectiveness and efficiency of services. The Department is committed to both a thorough and an expeditious review of State requests to conduct such demonstrations.

In exercising her discretionary authority, the Secretary has developed a number of policies and procedures for reviewing proposals. In order to ensure a sound, expeditious and open decision-making process, the Department will be guided by the policies and procedures described in this statement in accepting and reviewing proposals submitted pursuant to Section 1130.

II. Background

The child welfare system is in a period of great crisis and great challenge. Current social and economic forces are placing enormous pressures and stresses on children and families and on the professionals and agencies that serve them. Rising rates of child and family poverty, a greater number of teen pregnancies, the substance abuse and AIDS epidemics and the increasing levels of interpersonal and community violence have resulted in a loss of family strength and unity and increasing multiple challenges to very fragile families. These issues have resulted in increasing caseloads, consisting of much more complex family problems. Community and State agencies with limited resources are struggling to address these issues.

New, creative efforts are needed to stimulate meaningful changes in the delivery of child welfare services and foster more effective methods of service delivery to children and families. Throughout the country, local and State

child welfare agency administrators are developing innovative responses to these circumstances. Knowledgeable child welfare professionals are developing new solutions to these challenges even when faced with insufficient resources. In order to meet the existing service needs of families with diminishing resources, more flexibility is needed in devising service programs.

In addition, a wide range of efforts is underway to foster more effective working relationships among Federal, State and local governments which will strengthen Federal-State partnerships in developing a responsive child welfare service delivery system. This new partnership is an integral part of several programs administered by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). For example, the Family Preservation and Support Services program (Subpart 2 of title IV-B of the Social Security Act) provides funds to assist States in assessing the needs of children and families, re-examining the States' systems for meeting such needs, and developing a five-year plan for the implementation of family preservation and support services and for the accomplishment of systems change. The Family Preservation and Support planning process is designed to involve all the stakeholders and other appropriate parties in an effort to improve services for children and families.

Another aspect of the Family Preservation and Support effort provides funds for State Courts to assess their role in responding to the needs of children and families, and develop improvement plans based on these self-assessments. The Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) provides funds, at the rate of 75 percent Federal share, for the development or expansion of child welfare information systems which will help States link child welfare program data and operations with other programs, especially AFDC and child abuse and neglect programs.

Another key example of the Department's efforts to foster more effective working relationships is the development of a new outcomes-based approach to child welfare monitoring. Several States have agreed to participate with ACF in the conduct of monitoring pilot tests during fiscal year 1995.

General Considerations

Principles

The implementation of the Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Project will be guided by the principles