



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
**Inter-Departmental Correspondence**

Office of the County Counsel

**DATE:** June 10, 2004

**BOARD MEETING DATE:** June 29, 2004

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** County Counsel

**SUBJECT:** Resolution Authorizing the Execution of a Second Amendment to the Agreement Between Tammy Dawson, Esq., and the Human Services Agency for the Provision of Legal Services to Children in Foster Care.

**Recommendation**

Adopt a resolution authorizing the execution of a second amendment to the agreement between Tammy Dawson, Esq., and the County of San Mateo, for the provision of legal services to undocumented children in foster care who are eligible for legal residence under the provisions of the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status Act, and extend the term to June 30, 2006.

**Background**

Beginning in 1990, the federal government permitted petitions for legal residence to be filed on behalf of children in foster care who are not likely to return to their parents' custody. Prior to this, states and counties were not reimbursed for the cost of care for these children. In addition, children who emancipated from foster care in undocumented status could not benefit from the emancipation services offered to other children in foster care because they were not eligible for work or financial assistance due to their immigration status. With the creation of the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status by the federal government, counties and states can receive reimbursement for services provided to undocumented children and these children can begin working to become productive members of society and working towards citizenship.

Soon after the creation of the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, the County entered into an Agreement with Tammy Dawson, Esq., an attorney in San Mateo County, to assist foster care children, under the supervision of the San Mateo County's Juvenile Court, to achieve legal residence through the process of obtaining Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.

On June 25, 2002, The Board of Supervisors approved an Amendment to the Agreement to add funds and extend the term for the continuation of services. There are currently approximately ten children under the supervision of the Probation Department and the Human Services Agency that could benefit from specialized legal services. Children who benefit from these services will be allowed legal residence in the United States and be eligible for a wide range of public services including financial aid for college and can remain in the U.S. legally while working towards obtaining citizenship once they have emancipated from foster care.

### **Discussion**

This Second Amendment to the Agreement is to further amend the agreement to add funds and extend the term. Since Ms. Dawson began working with the Human Services Agency, efforts have been initiated on behalf of fourteen undocumented youth under the supervision of the Human Services Agency and the Probation Department. Success in achieving Special Immigrant Juvenile Status for these youth will enable the County to claim from the State and Federal government up to 70% of the cost of out of home placements. Since group care for these youth can cost as much as \$6,000 per month, achievement of this status will represent a significant savings to the County's General Fund. Ms. Dawson has established effective relationships with staff of the Human Services Agency and Juvenile Probation, as well as the Juvenile Court Bench Officers, and she has participated in training these agencies in the principles of the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.

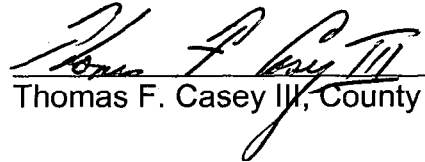
During this contract period, Ms. Dawson has demonstrated an ability to expedite the Immigration process. Ms. Dawson gathers the information and documentation to file the application. The time between filing the application and the final interview hours decreased substantially. Ms. Dawson also assists the older children in getting their work permits and keeps track of the renewal dates for those permits. The children benefit as they become legal residences of the United States. The Agency and County benefit, because once the children are here legally, they become eligible for state and federal funds and therefore limiting the use of County funds.

### **Vision Alignment**

The Agreement with Tammy Dawson, Esq., keeps the commitment of Ensuring basic health and safety for all and goal number 6: Children grow up healthy in safe and supportive homes and neighborhoods. The contract contributes to this commitment and goal by providing specialized legal services to children in the Foster Care system affording them eligibility to a wide range of public services they are otherwise denied.

**Fiscal Impact**

This amendment will add an additional \$50,000 to the contract for the two-year period from July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2006, of which \$35,000 is funded through State and Federal revenues and \$15,000 is Net County Cost. Appropriations have been included in the Children and Family Services FY 2004-05 and FY 2005-06 Recommended Budget.

  
Thomas F. Casey III, County Counsel