

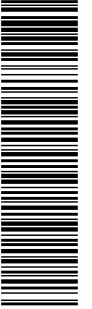
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An act to amend Section 16546.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code,
relating to child welfare.

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THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 16546.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

16546.5. (a) Subject to an appropriation of state funds, there is hereby established the Excellence in Family Finding, Engagement, and Support Program. This program shall be administered by the State Department of Social Services.

(b) In administering the program, the department shall do all of the following:

(1) Develop, in consultation with the County Welfare Directors Association of California and the Chief Probation Officers of California, an allocation methodology for counties that elect to receive funds under this section.

(2) On or before ~~than~~ March 1, 2023, make funds available to participating counties according to the allocation methodology developed pursuant to paragraph (1).

(c) (1) A county may elect to participate in the program by submitting a written notice to the department in accordance with instructions issued by the department.

(2) A county that elects to participate in the program shall provide a match of local funds, which may include in-kind contributions of services or other resources from the county or community-based organizations, equal to one-half of all state funds provided to the county under the program.

(d) (1) The department shall consult with Indian tribes to develop an allocation methodology and procedures for program participation for Indian tribes, consortia of tribes, or tribal organizations, as defined in Section 137.10 of Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

(2) An Indian tribe, consortia of tribes, or tribal organization, as defined in Section 137.10 of Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations, that enters into an agreement with the department pursuant to Section 10553.1 of this code or Section 1919 of Title 25 of the United States Code shall, in accordance with the agreement, be eligible to receive allocations of funds under this section.

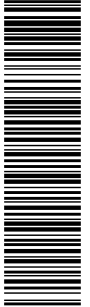
(e) Funds allocated under this section and the local match described in paragraph (2) of subdivision (c) shall be used for specialized permanency work, including culturally responsive, family-centered, and trauma-informed family finding and engagement services. Services shall focus on establishing and maintaining permanent connections for foster children. Funded activities shall include any or all of the following:

(1) Training of staff on family finding and engagement practices and models.

(2) Staffing and tools to identify, locate, and engage persons related to the child by blood or marriage, identification and engagement of other family-like relationships, and in the case of an Indian child, to make active efforts to engage with the tribe to determine the child's extended family members, as defined in Section 224.1. This may include use of internet and social media tools, genograms, database searches, and other technological tools to support family finding.

(3) Outreach and engagement of the child and family team members and all other current and prior service providers, case managers, and other connections to the foster child, to identify and engage possible family and family-like connections.

(4) Plan development and case management for the child, family, and family-like connections to identify and address any barriers to establishing or reestablishing positive, loving, and supportive relationships. Counties and participating tribes shall engage



children continuously in plan development, case planning, and services of importance to the child.

(5) Implementation of model programs, strategies, or promising practices identified by the department in consultation with tribes, the County Welfare Directors Association of California, the Chief Probation Officers of California, and child and youth advocacy organizations. The model programs, strategies, or promising practices include, but are not limited to, model programs, strategies, or promising practices that focus on up front family finding and engagement and that focus on family finding and engagement techniques to find permanent families and relationships for foster children who have been in out-of-home foster care for 24 months or longer, who are not living with a relative, for whom reunification is no longer in the case plan, and who have not been placed with a family who is in the process of adopting them or assuming guardianship over them.

(f) A participating county may elect to contract with a nonprofit community-based organization to provide the services described in this section.

(g) A participating county or contracted nonprofit community-based organization shall employ family-finding workers who have experience or training in family-finding strategies or practice, which may include lived experience.

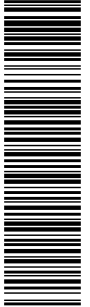
(h) (1) Family-finding workers shall be assigned to family-finding responsibilities full time but may be employed by either the participating county or a nonprofit community-based organization with which the participating county has contracted for this purpose.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a participating county or tribe without a family-finding worker assigned full time to family-finding responsibilities due to an insufficient caseload, as determined by the department, may submit a written request to the department for authorization to use funding to pay for the portion of a family-finding worker's time dedicated to family-finding activities. The request shall be submitted in a manner to be prescribed by the department and shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

(A) Caseload information to support the assertion of an insufficient caseload for the worker to be assigned full time to family-finding responsibilities.

(B) The proportion of the family-finding worker's time assigned to family-finding responsibilities.

(i) A county shall provide information to the department on which of the activities specified in paragraphs (1) to (5), inclusive, of subdivision (e) the participating county has performed.



LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

Bill No. _____
as introduced, _____.
General Subject: Excellence in Family Finding, Engagement, and Support Program

Existing law, subject to an appropriation of state funds, establishes the Excellence in Family Finding, Engagement, and Support Program, administered by the State Department of Social Services. Existing law requires the department, in consultation with specified entities, to develop an allocation methodology for counties that elect to receive funds under the program to be used to supplement, but not supplant, funds for existing family finding and engagement programs. Existing law requires family-finding workers be assigned to family-finding responsibilities full time, but authorizes those workers to be employed by either the county or a nonprofit community based organization with which the county has contracted for this purpose.

This bill would authorize a participating county or tribe without a family-finding worker assigned full time to family-finding responsibilities due to an insufficient caseload, as determined by the department, to submit a written request, including specified information, to the department for authorization to use funding to pay for the portion of a family-finding worker's time dedicated to family-finding activities.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

