

September 10, 2020

TO THE HONORABLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN: Your County Administration Committee respectfully recommends the adoption of the following

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, on July 29, 2020, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services issued a Memorandum inviting our court to apply for a renewal of the Title IV-E Child and Parent Legal Representation Grant that will allow the department to pass through Title IV-E administrative dollars to support high quality child and parent legal representation in child protective proceedings; and

WHEREAS the Berrien County Trial Court Family Division received this grant previously in January, 2020 for the October 1 – September 30, 2020 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, numerous national studies and reports have strongly correlated high quality legal representation for children and parents with an increase in party perceptions of fairness, increase in party engagement, more personally tailored and specific case service plans and services, increase in visits and parenting time, expedited permanency, and cost savings to state and county government due to reductions of time children spend in foster care; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that this grant would provide approximately \$133,000 in funding for projects related to quality legal representation; and

WHEREAS, the Berrien County Trial Court/Family Division is requesting authorization to submit an application for funding in the following areas: 1) contract with a provider to implement a parents as partners program; 2) contract with a Social Worker to work with the attorneys who represent parents in child protective proceedings; 3) pay for ancillary legal services to expedite closure of child dependency proceedings and 4) implement quality trainings for attorneys providing legal representation in child dependency proceedings; and

WHEREAS, both the Parent-Partner program and the addition of a Social Worker(s) to the team have been very successful programs implemented in jurisdictions in Michigan and across the country; and

WHEREAS, the grant is effective from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021 and there is no cash match requirement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Berrien County Board of Commissioners authorizes the Family Division to submit a grant application to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services for a renewal of the Title IV-E Child and Parent Legal Representation Grant.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED
BERRIEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

Jim Curran, Chair

Michael J. Majerek, Vice Chair

Don Meeks

Chris Heugel

RESOLUTION APPROVED AS TO FORM	
Administrator <i>[Signature]</i>	Date <i>8-27-20</i>
Comments Attached <i>ok JD/AC</i>	