

1 create stable foster placements. The system of care is to provide coordinated, timely, culturally
2 competent, integrated, community-based, strength-based, individualized and trauma informed
3 services to address systemic barriers to the traditional provision of interagency services.

4 Section 16521.6 subdivision (3) provides in pertinent part:

5 ... (B) Members of the interagency leadership team described in subparagraph (A) of
6 paragraph (2), *or its designees* (emph added), may, to the extent permitted by federal law,
7 and subject to the limitations described in subparagraph (C), disclose to, and exchange
8 with, one another information or a writing that may be designated as confidential under
9 state law if the member of the team having that information or writing reasonably believes
10 it is generally relevant to the identification, reduction, or elimination of barriers to services
11 for, or to placement of, children and youth in foster care or to improve provision of those
12 services or those placements.

13 (C) Members of the interagency leadership team, *or its designees* (emph. added), who
14 receive disclosed or exchanged information or a writing pursuant to subparagraph (B) shall
15 destroy or return that information or writing once the purposes for which it was disclosed
16 or exchanged are satisfied. The information or writing shall be used only for the purposes
17 described in subparagraph (B). Any information or writing disclosed or exchanged
18 pursuant to subparagraph (B) shall be confidential and shall not be open to public
19 inspection, unless the information or writing is aggregated and deidentified in a manner
20 that prevents the identification of an individual who is a subject of that information or
21 writing. Any discussion concerning the disclosed or exchanged information or writing
22 during a team meeting shall be confidential and shall not be open to public inspection.

23 Consistent with Section 16521.6 and to increase the placement stability and long-term
24 outcomes of youth in relative foster placements, the Riverside County Department of Public Social
25 Services, Children's Services Division (DPSS-CSD), has contracted with **CHAPIN HALL CENTER**
26 **FOR CHILDREN, D/B/A CHAPIN HALL** (hereinafter CHAPIN HALL) to evaluate the Virtual
27 Support Services (VSS) program.

28 Kinship care plays a crucial role in providing safe, stable, and nurturing environments for
children who cannot remain with their parents. Federal financial participation in state and local kinship

1 navigator programs is contingent on whether the programs being used are on the federal Title IV-E
2 Prevention Services Clearinghouse list of well-supported programs. To appear on the list of well-
3 supported programs, the programs must be rigorously studied using a randomized control trial (or
4 equivalent design) and show a positive effect. To meet this standard, randomized clinical trials require
5 knowledge about the program participants. Absent the well-supported imprimatur, federal funding for
6 kinship navigator programs is severely limited. (See US Dept. HHS, Children's Bureau, [Kinship Care](#)
7 [The Administration for Children and Families](#).) VSS is a virtual Kinship Navigator program offered by
8 Think of Us which is intended to provide resources and support to youth in relative placement. This
9 program will be offered on a pilot basis designed to support kinship caregivers and their families by
10 offering accessible, virtual assistance and resources tailored to meet their unique needs.
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13 This program will be offered to a sample of DPSS-CSD kin caregivers and the children and
14 youth in their custody, and the program will be evaluated by CHAPIN HALL. Notice and an opportunity
15 to opt out of this study will be provided to the identified sample of kin caregivers, to the parents or
16 guardians of those children in the care of the sample of kin caregivers, and to the children and youth in the
17 custody of the sample of kin caregivers who are above the age of 10 years old. Thereafter, participation is
18 voluntary, regardless of any prior decision. The individuals listed above will also be provided with
19 consent forms that will make it clear that the decision to participate can be withdrawn at any time
20 including after data collection has been concluded. Additionally, pursuant to the study protocol, data will
21 only be collected from kin caregivers. There will be no direct contact with foster children or youth.
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23 CHAPIN HALL is an independent policy research center that provides public and private
24 decision-makers with rigorous research and achievable solutions to support them in improving the lives of
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1 children, families, and communities. CHAPIN HALL partners with policymakers, practitioners, and
2 philanthropists at the forefront of applied research and policy development by applying a unique blend of
3 scientific research, real-world experience, and policy expertise to construct actionable information,
4 practical tools, and, ultimately, positive change for children and families.

5 The following information is needed to effectively evaluate the benefits of the VSS Program:

- 6 • **Demographic Information:** Age, race/ethnicity, gender for both formal kinship caregivers and
7 children they serve and relationship between the formal kinship caregiver and child.
- 8 • **Kinship Caregiver Contact:** Phone number and email address.
- 9 • **Maltreatment Information:** Start/end dates for intake, investigation, allegations, and
10 disposition., and types of events (if applicable) such as different allegations and dispositions.
- 11 • **Placement Information:** Placement start/end dates, types of placements, and exit destinations.
- 12 • **Service Utilization:** Start/end dates and types of services received (e.g., concrete support,
behavioral health, mental health) by caregivers and children (to the extent available).
- 13 • **Risk and Trauma Assessments:** Dates and results of assessments like CANS, FAST, or similar
14 tools (if available).

15 Although Section 16521.6 authorizes the disclosure and exchange of confidential case information
16 as permitted by federal law, other statutory disclosure restrictions preclude DPSS-CSD from
17 disseminating certain information unless authorized by court order. (See Blanket Order No. 32, including
18 but not limited to Welf. & Inst. Code § 827; and Health & Safety Code § 1536.)

19 In order to facilitate evaluation of the VSS program, good cause supports the release and exchange
20 of confidential information with CHAPIN HALL as a designee to DPSS-CSD, since a limited release of
21 juvenile case file information is in the best interest of the children engaged in the child welfare foster care
22 system. The Juvenile Court hereby issues a standing order authorizing CHAPIN HALL to access juvenile
23 court files and/or electronic records described at page 4 of this Blanket Order, lines 6 through 14. Such
24 access is limited to information necessary to assist CHAPIN HALL in evaluating the VSS program to
25 promote the stability of relative foster placement for children, youth and families engaged in the child


1 welfare foster care system. This order shall remain in effect only so long as CHAPIN HALL performs
2 relevant duties under the contract with Think of Us, DPSS-CSD to provide the services as described
3 above. DPSS-CSD can rescind the access to the data at its discretion.

4 Access, viewing, discussion and/or use of any records or confidential information obtained under
5 this order is solely limited to use in connection and application of the program evaluation objectives
6 described herein. Confidential information released, exchanged, or discussed pursuant to this Blanket
7 Order shall not be open to public inspection in any instance. The records and information disclosed under
8 this order shall not be further disseminated or released to any other entity or individual not directly
9 connected with CHAPIN HALL for the VSS program evaluation. No records or information obtained
10 under this order shall be made any part of any other court file that is open to the public unless by further
11 court order or as allowed by law. Research results may be published provided such publication does not
12 disclose any personally identifiable and confidential case information. DPSS-CDS must review any
13 proposed publication to ensure the material is aggregated and deidentified in a manner that prevents the
14 identification of an individual who is a subject of that information or writing prior to publication. (Section
15 16521.6 subd. (3)(C).)

16 Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records, 42 CFR Part 2, and Health Insurance
17 Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), 45 CFR Parts 160 & 164, cannot be disclosed
18 without written consent unless otherwise provided by law or regulation.

19 The purpose of this order is to authorize the release of information; this is not an order requiring
20 the release of information. This blanket order applies to all children in DPSS-CSD custody and is not a
21 required document maintained in each child's juvenile case file.

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23 Dated, *MARCH 6, 2025*


24 THE HONORABLE MARK E. PETERSEN
25 Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court
Riverside Superior Court

26 ORDER FOR THE RELEASE AND EXCHANGE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION BETWEEN THE RIVERSIDE
27 COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES-CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIVISION AND CHAPIN HALL CENTER
FOR CHILDREN

28 BLANKET ORDER NO. XX