

December 23, 2016

To: FAASB membership

From: Elly du Pré, Executive Director, Florida Association of Agencies Serving the Blind

RE: 2017 State of Florida Legislative Session Request Information

SUMMARY OF REQUESTS:

A. Legislative Request for Seniors

Current DBS Budgeted Amount: \$3,912,300

FAASB Request: + 1,500,000

Proposed Total FY 2017-2018: \$5,412,300 Increase of 38%

B. Legislative Request for Babies and Children

Current DBS Budget for Blind Babies: \$1,759,914

FAASB Request: + 500,000

Proposed Total FY 2017-2018: \$2,259,914 Increase of 28%

Current DBS Budget for Children: \$ 750,000 (\$500,000 RECURRING)

FAASB Request: +1,000,000 (\$500,000 RECURRING)

Proposed Total FY 2017-2018: \$1,750,000 Increase of 233%

DISCUSSION:

A. Seniors

The current DBS budget for contracts with the full complement of 17 FAASB agencies is prepared at the rate of \$2,100 per client deliverable. Individual FAASB members' actual costs will vary but the average actual cost to deliver these services is about \$4,000 per client.

In FY 14-15, FAASB served 33% more clients than DBS contract covered (1874 contracted, 2498 delivered).

In FY 15-16, FAASB served 36% more clients (1879 contracted, 2563 delivered).

The increase requested is in line with the over-provision of service and does not take into account the actual cost which is almost 100% more than what the contract pays.

Also it should be noted that Prevent Blindness America made a presentation at the 2nd Annual Vision Summit in Tallahassee which was held in the Senate Chambers on January 8, 2008 which reported national costs of “approximately \$51.4 billion” and **estimates of the cost of blindness among older adults in Florida at \$3.9 billion**. There is evidence to suggest this cost is conservative. At the Envision ‘06 conference, Dr. Greg Goodrich, a research psychologist for the VA and past chair of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, estimated the national cost at \$80 billion across all age groups.

B. Blind Babies

The current DBS budget for contracts with 11 FAASB agencies is prepared at the rate of \$2,691 per client deliverable. Individual FAASB members’ actual costs will vary but the average actual cost to deliver these services is about \$5,000.

In FY 14-15, FAASB served 12% more clients than DBS contract covered (654 contracted, 730 delivered).

In FY 15-16, FAASB served 13% more clients (654 contracted, 738 delivered).

Three (3) FAASB agencies wish to start programs for blind babies and FAASB supports their goal because we believe any gaps in services throughout the State of Florida are unconscionable. The requested increase would cover this expansion and also some of the services above the contracted deliverables but does not take into account the actual cost which is at least 85% more than what the contract pays.

C. Children

The current DBS budget for FAASB is prepared at the rate of \$6,000 per client deliverable. Individual FAASB members’ actual costs will vary greatly as most programs for Children were brand new with this contract; only three agencies had a program in place before this new funding was approved by the State Legislature.

This contract pays for deliverables based on number of hours, not number of clients.

In the first year, FAASB contracted to serve 13,018 hours and actually provided 15,115 hours, or 16% more hours. As mentioned in my email to GrayRobinson of 12/3/2016, the Children’s Program Contract is new—and unique. The 2015 Legislature approved \$1,000,000. This was split \$500,000 recurring and \$500,000 non-recurring. DBS attorneys interpreted the intention of the award to have been for DBS to contract with FAASB, not the individual members of FAASB, unlike every other contract. Negotiating the primary contract, writing the subcontracts, and getting approval up the DBS/DOE chain took until January 2016. FAASB had to create infrastructure to manage a contract but also benefitted from being able to allocate \$40,000 to management expenses. Nonetheless the almost 12-month delay from Governor’s signature to implementation caused FAASB to have no success stories for the 2016 Legislature. We were cut to \$750,000 for 2016-2017 (\$500K recurring remained intact). Some FAASB agencies have long-established and successful Children’s programs, but many agencies struggled these first two years because they are new to providing these services and their DBS Districts also have been slow to coordinate/ collaborate.

The requested increase reflects statistics from the American Printing House, which conducts an annual survey of visually impaired children enrolled in public school, which show there is greater need in Florida and FAASB wishes to ensure that these children benefit from the evidence-based Expanded Core

Curriculum they require. The schools cannot provide this expanded curriculum; FAASB agencies can, and do. The agencies that have served children for years prior to the Childrens Program Contract can show that virtually 100% of participants go on to be successful in college or vocational school.