



System Improvement Plan

Roadmap for Superior Service

Children and Family Services and Probation

DRIVING TO:

- IMPROVE SAFETY
 - IMPROVE PERMANENCY
 - IMPROVE WELL-BEING

*THE CALIFORNIA CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
REVIEW FOR SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY*

The Mission of Child Welfare Services

The County lead agencies for the California Children and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) are Children and Family Services (CFS) and the Probation Department

The **Probation Department** protects the community through assessment, treatment and control of adult and juvenile offenders by providing a range of effective services based on legal requirements and recognized professional standards.

Children and Family Services protects endangered children, preserves and strengthens their families, and develops alternative family settings. Services mandated by law and regulation will be provided in the least intrusive manner with a family centered focus. This mission is accomplished in collaboration with the family, a wide variety of public and private agencies and members of the community.

Families in need of help

Child abuse and neglect are serious problems facing our society today. In San Bernardino County (2015) there were over 40,000 children subject to reports of abuse or neglect, more than 5,000 of which were substantiated. San Bernardino County's rates are higher than most California counties. Nevertheless, child maltreatment is a statewide and national problem. Unfortunately, it is also a long standing problem with deep historical, social and cultural roots. Child abuse and neglect are the symptoms of a family in crisis.

In 2015, Probation placed over 120 wards in out of home facilities. These juvenile offenders receive treatment for behaviors which led to their involvement with the juvenile system. Many of these families engaged by Probation are also in crisis.



Finding a Path

For years, **child abuse and juvenile delinquency** have been problems that were difficult to solve. All over the country agencies followed different paths with varying degrees of success. It was decided at the national level that there should be uniform standards established to enhance the ability to determine child welfare goals and assess progress.

The Child and Family Services Review

In 2001 the Federal Government passed the Child and Family Services Review.

California established their own version: the **California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR)**.

The C-CFSR is a way for county child welfare agencies (CFS and Probation) to establish practical goals and develop the means to achieve them.

The C-CFSR allows county Child Welfare Agencies to draw a map to follow over five years. That map is called the:

System Improvement Plan (SIP)



The C-CFSR Team

The **SIP Oversight Committee**, also known as the **C-CFSR Team**, directs and oversees the SIP by creating:

- Workgroups to implement and monitor strategies, or
- Ad Hoc committees to:
 - Plan important events, or
 - Address specific problems.

The **SIP Oversight Committee** includes representatives of:

- CFS and Probation,
- Human Services (HS), Research, Outcomes and Quality Support (ROQS),
- HS Program Development Division,
- Department of Behavioral Health, and
- California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

Other stakeholders are also invited to attend the Committee's monthly meetings.

The Committee is chaired by the Director of Children and Family Services or her designee. The SIP Oversight Committee employs Data Driven Decision Making to review progress and reassess goals.



Continuous Quality Improvement

The **System Improvement Plan** is not a fixed set of goals. After reaching one goal, another must be selected. This is called **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)**. The SIP can adjust its goals:

- The 2009-12 SIP achieved goals: Placement Stability and Emancipating Youth,
- The 2013-18 SIP added a goal to reduce recorded incidents of maltreatment in foster care.

Every five years the County renews the cycle of improvement by:

- Conducting a thorough **County Self-Assessment** and **Peer Review**,
- Developing a new 5-year SIP, building on gains of the prior SIP, and
- Providing regular updates.



Continuum of Care Reforms (CCR) is a family centered approach to providing Child Welfare Services

Continuum of Care Reforms (CCR)

San Bernardino County has embraced the CCR

CCR matches the goals of the **C-CFSR System Improvement Plan (SIP)** which include:

- Improving the well-being of children and youth in care,
- Reducing the number of children in congregate care,
- Enhancing recruitment and training of Resource Parents, and
- Expanding family-centered placements and family finding.

CCR strategies include:

- Child and Family Teams (CFTs),
- Recruiting, training and supporting resource families,
- Building community partnerships, connecting to the child's community and being sensitive to cultural differences, and
- Responsiveness to the individualized needs of children and their families.

The Office of Child Abuse Prevention Programs (OCAP)

The needs assessment and plan for **OCAP** services has been integrated into the SIP since 2008

Promoting Safe and Stable Families (**PSSF**) and Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (**CAPIT**) programs are planned under the **SIP**. The services supported by the **OCAP programs** include:

- Individual, Family and Group Counseling,
- Parenting Education, life skills classes and in-home services,
- Anger Management, Domestic violence services and support groups, and
- Adoption Promotion and Support programs.

Fundamental Principles of the C-CFSR

- **Continuous Quality Improvement**—The Five-year Cycle: CSA, SIP and Updates
- **Data Driven Policy:**
 - Outcome Measures and Systemic Factors: Defining the problem
 - County Self-Assessment: What is working and what can be improved
 - System Improvement Plan: Goals and Strategies to direct policy
 - Updates and Self Reassessment continuously evaluate results using available information, including CFSR Case Reviews.
- **The C-CFSR Team:** CFS, Probation and their Partners

Outcome Measures

How do we know when something works well?

When Outcome Measures, specific data elements, demonstrate improvement in the following areas:

- **Safety**—How responsive is the agency, are children protected in care, and is further maltreatment prevented?
- **Permanency**—
 - Is Permanency completed timely, safely and for the long-term?
 - Are placements stable, in the least restrictive setting and leading to long-term permanent connections with caring adults?
 - Are those leaving or transitioning from the Child Welfare System well-equipped for self-sufficiency?
 - Are the continuity of family relations—with siblings or caring relatives—being maintained?
- **Well-Being**—
 - Are the educational, physical, emotional and mental health needs of children in care being met?
 - Are Health and Dental exams being performed regularly and timely?
 - Are prescribed medications, especially for those affecting behavior, being monitored properly?



A five year journey begins with the first step: clearly defining the problem helps to determine which way to go.



*Review of **Outcome Measures and Systemic Factors**
guides us on the road to improvement.*

Systemic Factors

Seven Systemic Factors are the “nuts and bolts” of how a Child Welfare Agency works. They are the essential tools, resources and partnerships of Child Welfare:

- **Statewide Information Systems** — The tools used to collect information and make information useful.
- **Case Review Systems** — Oversight of individual case files meant to ensure the needs of families are being met.
- **Foster and Adoptive Licensing, Recruitment and Retention** — County standards for Foster and Adoptive Family Homes.
- **Staff, Caregiver and Service Provider Training** — County training of those who directly serve our children and families.
- **Agency Responsiveness to the Community** — The extent and degree to which CFS and Probation partner with other agencies to provide services and resources for children and families.
- **Service Array** — The County’s capacity to provide service and how those services are delivered.
- **Quality Assurance** — The identifiable process in the County that evaluates ongoing practice, policies, and procedures.

County Self-assessment (CSA), Reassessment and Updates

- The **CSA** is a comprehensive evaluation of how the County is performing on all the outcome measures and systemic factors and includes:
 - The **Peer Review process** where partners from other counties are invited to review cases and practices and to make recommendations for improvement;
 - **Reassessment**, which is an evaluation of the prior SIP to determine whether identified goals were achieved and whether progress was made on previous strategies; and,
 - Demographic, economic and program specific data for San Bernardino County and service populations.
- Annual updates are provided to the California Department of Social Services and help to gauge our progress.
- Qualitative Case Reviews (CFSR Case Reviews) are completed on 100 cases every year and serve to inform the CQI process.

THE FOLLOWING AREAS FROM THE **2012 COUNTY SELF-REASSESSMENT** IDENTIFY WHERE THE COUNTY IS DOING WELL **OR** WHERE ADDITIONAL EFFORT IS INDICATED.

What is working

- Safety measures are stable or improving
- Adoption measures are largely moving in the right direction
- Two measures targeted on the previous SIP for improvement have met their goals:
 - Placement Stability and
 - Emancipation for Children in Long Term Care
- High School graduation rates for transition age youth
- Teaming and Parent Partners are promising practices that contribute to positive results

Where can we improve

- Timeliness to Reunification
- Permanency for children and youth that have been in care more than two years
- The referral and feedback processes for OCAP programs
- Family Engagement for Probation youths
- Resource Family development by the County
- Additional Mentoring services for parents, caregivers and children
- Transitioning youth from Group Homes to less restrictive settings
- Continual Reassessment of placement needs



The SIP is created by working together with partners concerned about children and families.

System Improvement Plan Development

At **California State University, San Bernardino** on March 26, 2013 CFS and Probation hosted the extended C-CFSR team to develop the SIP.

Representatives from Community and Faith Based Organizations, Service Providers, Healthcare agencies, Mental Health agencies, Parent and Peer partners, Law Enforcement, Juvenile Court, Education, Foster Care and Group Homes, Tribes and County Departments participated in the presentations, focus groups and ensuing workgroups that subsequently met to review particular topics.

The 135 individuals present were first provided with background information then participated in focus groups. The information from those groups was then used to develop the 2013 SIP.

2013 SIP Goals and Strategies

The Two Initial Goals were:

- Improve Timely Permanency (P1)
- Increase Permanent Placements for children in care more than two years (P3)

A Third Goal was added in 2016:

- Reduce reported maltreatment in foster care (S1)

To achieve these goals the SIP includes **20 specific strategies:**

- Five Timely Permanency (**Permanency 1**) Strategies
- Six Long-term Permanency (**Permanency 3**) Strategies
- Two Safety (**Safety 1**) Strategies
- Four Probation Strategies
- Three OCAP program Strategies

For each strategy there are specific time limited milestones that need to be achieved. Strategies also seek to improve on related systemic factors. For example, the third OCAP strategy seeks to improve Quality Assurance.



Permanency 1, Strategy 1:

Increase **Teaming efforts (Team Decisionmaking Meetings (TDMs) and CFTs)** to enhance early engagement of parents

Collaborative meetings are designed to produce the best joint decisions concerning a child's safety and placement and includes parents, family members, Community Partners, service providers and the family's support network.

Permanency 1, Strategy 2:

Increase and enhance the role of **Parent Partners** in early engagement.

Parent partners have had children in foster care and have successfully resolved their case. They are familiar with the court process and the foster care system and provide guidance and support to reunifying parents.



PERMANENCY 1 STRATEGIES

Permanency1, Strategy 3:

Safety Organized Practice (SOP)

SOP is a best practice approach to casework designed to encourage all involved with the child to focus on assessing and enhancing child safety.

SOP emphasizes developing good working relationships, working as a team with the family, use of critical thinking with decision support tools, and creating detailed plans for enhancing child safety.

Permanency 1, Strategy 4:

Increase training and support to parents, relatives and caregivers.

Use Visitation Centers, training for relative caregivers and support groups to promote safe reunification. Foster parents are encouraged to be mentors to reunifying parents.

Permanency 1, Strategy 5:

Emphasize reunification planning to facilitate early transition of children to parents' home.

Help reunifying parents understand court timelines and increase their awareness of community resources.



Permanency 3, Strategy 1: Expand and optimize mentoring programs for children/youth in care over 24 months.

Programs to mentor children and youth are essential to their ability to achieve permanency and success in their lives. Both well-established programs and new initiatives can be accessed to provide mentoring services.



Permanency 3, Strategy 2: Expand and optimize mentoring programs for parents and caregivers of children/youth in care over 24 months.

Wraparound, Kinship Centers and Visitation Centers are examples of programs currently in place that can be used to further provide opportunities to mentor reunifying parents.

Permanency 3, Strategy 3: Increase and enhance transition from group homes to less restrictive settings.

CFS will also apply the principles of the Core Practice Model to engagement of mental health services, partnering extensively with the Department of Behavioral Health to ensure children are provided high quality, integrated services as an alternative to group homes.

Permanency 3, Strategy 4: Improve accuracy of data entry regarding Non-Related Legal Guardians (NRLG).

Permanency 3, Strategy 5: Improve matching of children/youth to foster homes which increases the likelihood of permanency.

CFS will redeploy resources for foster parent recruitment and training. This will include:

- *A shift from general to targeted recruitment*
- *Emphasizing that CFS is seeking to find appropriate parents for children in care, first and foremost*
- *Facilitate foster care licensing and improve retention efforts*
- *Cultivate community relations to enhance recruitment*

Permanency 3, Strategy 6: Continually reassess parents, relatives and supports for return and/or placement of children in care.

Reassessment of placements needs to be a regular process that includes:

- *Use of Case Assessment Forums*
- *Improved Search and Engagement efforts meant to locate caring family members*
- *Trauma informed approaches (treatment addresses posttraumatic stress and related emotional/behavioral problems)*



PERMANENCY 3 STRATEGIES

For Years, San Bernardino County fared well in its measures regarding Safety, particularly for Safety in Out-of-Home care. The County consistently reported being at or below state levels. In October 2015, the way those figures were defined was changed significantly and the County's figures were now well above the state averages.

In consultation with our CDSS partners, the **S1 Measure** was formally added to the SIP in the Annual Report dated February 1, 2016.



In keeping with the philosophy of the SIP being a “**living document**” informed by a process of **CQI**, work done on **Safety Strategy #1** directly led to recommendations for **Safety Strategy #2: Improve the Accuracy of Out-of-Home Maltreatment Reporting. Revise and Clarify Policy as Appropriate.**

This Strategy adjusts policy to reduce redundant substantiation of reports when there is no new safety issue. For example, Service Providers would report the very incident that caused the child's removal after the child was already in care. This was not a new incident, only a second report of a previous incident.

Safety 1 (S1) - Of all children in care during the 12-month period, the rate of victimization per day.



When one unexpectedly encounters a problem, a very natural initial response is to define the problem and investigate its causes. **Strategy #1** was then:

Assess the Causes for the High Rate of Maltreatment in Foster Care, initially focusing on data entry for Substantiated or Indicated Reports of Maltreatment and Make Recommendations for New or Refined Approaches.

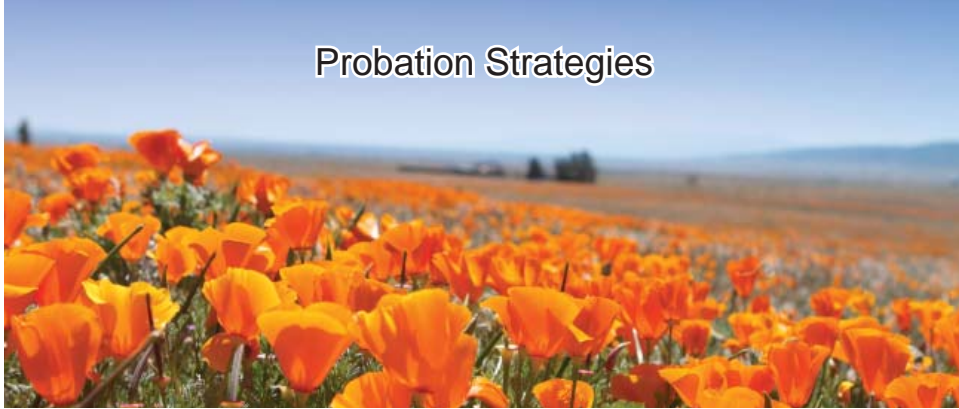
A safety workgroup looked at relevant factors to identify changes for improvement. The safety workgroup identified root causes and possible solutions to any noted safety issues. A comprehensive case read was conducted for all recent and relevant cases.

It will be the task of six regional workgroups to build on the work of the safety workgroup and further examine issues related to improving on this measure. The regional workgroups will continue to review current policy and procedure and make additional recommendations. In addition, the workgroups are following a Nine-step Logic Model to identify, evaluate, assess and address issues related to improving performance.

In September of 2016 the Out-of-Home Abuse (OOHA) Desk Guide was published to provide clarifying examples of when it is not necessary for social workers to submit or substantiate a referral. In addition, policy changes were made to the CFS and Child and Adult Abuse Hotline (CAAHL) handbooks.



Probation Strategies



Probation Strategy 1: Provide parents and the youth, at the onset, with training and resources

- Refer parents of youth on formal probation and first time offenders, at the earliest entry into the juvenile justice system, to Parent Project
- Refer an increased number of youth on formal probation to mentoring or similar programs
- Develop and improve data components and tracking methods or utilize established tracking methods and databases to determine outcomes and generate reports as needed.

Probation Strategy 2: Increase use of the **Wraparound** program

- Assign and train Wraparound screeners
- Develop procedures and guidelines for Wraparound screening
- Screen existing medium supervision wardship cases for the Wraparound program
- Utilize established tracking methods and databases to determine outcomes; Provide reports as needed



Probation

Probation Strategy 3: Increase family participation at **Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs)** for all minors in custody over 45 days

- Assign therapist to conduct family therapy/reunification for all youth detained longer than 45 days awaiting placement and deemed difficult to place.
- Allow clergy, extended family members and other family support systems to attend therapy/reunification/MDT's
- Develop and improve data components and tracking methods



Probation Strategy 4: Utilize **family finding** to locate extended family members for potential placement

- Train all juvenile services Probation Officers in family finding
- Conduct family finding on youth entering the juvenile justice system and at risk for out of home placement or removal from parent's home
- Develop guidelines and protocol for family finding
- Develop and improve data components and tracking methods



Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment — the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) programs

Every year San Bernardino County helps provide Therapeutic Services, Parenting classes, Anger Management and other family supports to thousands of families using Federal, State and Local funding. San Bernardino County changed the way these services are coordinated and delivered. The service model is called **CAPTS**, Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Services, and went into effect on January 1, 2014.

OCAP Strategy 1: Expand the number and variety of contracted service providers supported by Promoting Safe and Stable Families (**PSSF**) and Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (**CAPIT**).

OCAP Strategy 2: Use in-house Service Coordinators to engage and track referrals and attendance.

OCAP Strategy 3: Revise the Quality Assurance/Case Review protocols and upgrade the database.

The Goals of the new service model are to:

- Increase the Timeliness of services being delivered to children and their families.
- Produce accurate documentation of referrals and appointments and timely client engagement.
- Ensure maximum Engagement of clients in the process of obtaining services.
- Improve tracking instances where clients are not engaged.
- Improve Quality Assurance and Case Review processes.
- Develop Service Coordinators and optimize existing staff and processes.



CAPTS provides important counseling services in a more timely and responsive manner.



Children and Family Services

CFS and **Probation** would like to thank all our partners who have contributed to the development of the **System Improvement Plan**. Partners include representatives from the following agencies and organizations:

2-1-1
ASPIRAnet
Bear Valley Community Healthcare District
Bilingual Family Counseling Service, Inc.
California Department of Social Services (CDSS)
CASA
Catholic Charities
Children's Network
County Counsel
Court
CSUSB – School of Social Work
CSUSB – Sociology
CYCS-CCIMS
DBH Administration – Children's Services
DBH Alcohol & Drug Services
District Attorney
DPH Administration
Education County Schools
EMQ Families First
Family Assistance Program / Our House
First 5
Hearts and Lives
HS – Performance Education Resource Center
HS Legislation Research Unit
HSS Auditing
Inland Empire Residential Centers, Inc.
Knotts FFA

Lutheran Social Services
Mental Health Systems, Inc.
Morongo Basin Counseling and Recovery Center
Morongo Basin Family Resource Center
Preschool Services
Program Development Division
Public Defender

San Diego State University
Sheriff's Department
Tlingit Tribe
Tribal Star
Yaqui Tribe
Victor Valley Community Support Services
Walden Family Services

