

# 1.0 Executive Summary

## Project Background

### San Bernardino Children and Family Services Priorities

San Bernardino Children and Family Services (CFS) is dedicated to the safety, protection and permanency of children in San Bernardino County and the promotion of child and family well-being. CFS is focused on providing family-centered programs and services designed to support safe, permanent, nurturing families for San Bernardino County's children. CFS is also focused on strengthening families in order to preserve the family unit. CFS aims to prevent further harm to children from intentional physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, exploitation, or neglect by a person responsible for a child's health or welfare. Finally, CFS provides support for families and strives to reduce risks to children, improve parenting skills, and strengthen social support networks for families.

In assuming this responsibility, CFS seeks to preserve families and enable children to remain at home while providing services to stabilize the family. If a child cannot live safely at home, CFS looks for an appropriate relative to care for the child for as long as necessary. If a relative is not available, the child will go into foster care or other placement. In every case, the safety and well-being of the child is their main concern. In order to strengthen children and families and the overall San Bernardino community, CFS focuses on providing the following:

- Assessing suspected cases of abuse and neglect
- Assisting the family in diagnosing the problem
- Providing supportive services to help children stay at home with their families
- Coordinating community and agency services for the family
- Providing public information about child abuse, neglect, and dependency
- Petitioning the court for removal of the child, if necessary
- Developing alternative permanent family settings for children who cannot safely return to their family of origin<sup>1</sup>

CFS employs approximately 800 people in ten offices and six regions who work collaboratively and are dedicated to the mission of the organization. As the nation's largest county, geographically speaking, San Bernardino encompasses 20,057 miles and is home to over 2 million people who live in rural and urban communities. CFS provides a wide variety of services and is one of eight county Departments within Department of Human Services.

### A Shifting Child Welfare Practice, Country and County

At a national level, the practice of child welfare has matured over the years such that approaches, philosophies and leading practices have advanced as have the services provided. At the same time, the United States has experienced a significant increase and shift in population, causing demographics and citizen's needs to change. Technology has dramatically advanced over the years; the meaning and method of doing work in 2012 is markedly different than it was just a few short years ago. All of this, coupled with citizen's increased level of expectations from government, have created a need for government agencies to examine service delivery to determine if services are being delivered to a changing client population efficiently and effectively while making use of the best available practices and meeting the needs of a changing and increasingly mobile workforce. Myriad forces will demand organizations, and the people that define them, be flexible and develop new and cutting edge skills in order to leverage leading practices, mobility, technology and innovation. In a time of challenged

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<sup>1</sup> San Bernardino Children and Family Services 'About Us' Website Page [http://hss.sbcounty.gov/dcs/who\\_are\\_we/default.htm](http://hss.sbcounty.gov/dcs/who_are_we/default.htm)

budgets, particularly in California, organizations will continue to be required to do more – and change - with access to fewer resources and tools.

### Background and Objectives of the CFS Business Redesign Project

CFS has experienced these challenges like most agencies in the State of California. As a leader in child welfare, CFS has continued to advance the child welfare practice while incorporating new ideas and approaches to improve service delivery to families. With a clear objective to further enhance service delivery and overall operations, paired with a strong emphasis on collaboration and continuous improvement, CFS issued an RFP to procure a vendor to complete an assessment of CFS' Business Processes and Core Services in 2011. In February 2012, the project kicked off and was centered on examining services and suggesting recommendations in the following five key areas:

- **Optimal Unit Configuration** - Review unit design to determine if it is designed in a streamlined manner that promotes optimum operations and efficiencies
- **Simplified Organizational Structure** – Evaluate the current supervisory and administrative structures to optimize staff classifications, duties, support and overall performance of CFS
- **Optimized Operational Scheduling** - Define the ideal operational schedule to maximize staffing coverage while increasing CFS' ability to be responsive to client needs while focusing on cost improvements
- **Optimized Staff Classifications, Duties Assignments and Support** - Define the effectiveness of current staff classifications and determine if they are an appropriate means to address the duties associated with case management and workload and explore if geo-staffing is an effective approach
- **Efficient Use of Technological Tools** - Define the best use of current technologies to maximize job performance, time management, overall efficiency and comprehensive service delivery to families and children

In order to remain true to the CFS mission and vision of the project, the CFS Executive Team established a mission for the Business Redesign Project:

*“Identify opportunities for improvement which will enable Children and Family Services to deliver improved services that promote safety, permanency and well-being for all children, youth and families in San Bernardino County.”*

The CFS Business Redesign Project is of paramount importance to CFS in order to continue to deliver the best services and strengthen CFS' people, processes, technology, policy and governance. This mission served as a focusing point for staff and the Business Redesign Project Team and formed the foundation for extensive teamwork and collaboration that enabled the Business Redesign Project Team to perform analysis and define the recommendations included in the following report.

## Method of Analysis

### Project Approach

The Business Redesign Team completed the project in four phases comprised of several key activities in each phase. The phases and associated deliverables are broken down below:

- **Phase 1 – Project Initiation.** This phase contained three core activities that were focused on setting the stage for the project. This included defining project vision and structure, establishing project planning and logistics, and defining the data gathering approach.
- **Phase 2 – Data Gathering.** This phase centered on gaining an understanding of the current and future state of CFS operations. This included conducting current and future state assessments, conducting leading practices research, and identifying potential opportunities for improvement.
- **Phase 3 – Data Analysis.** Using the information gathered in Phase 2, this phase focused on the comprehensive analysis of CFS's business processes and core services while bearing in mind the mission, vision and goals for the

Business Redesign Project. This included performing a gap analysis, performing a cost benefit analysis and developing the preliminary report.

- **Phase 4 – Recommendations.** This phase was the culmination of Phases 1 to 3 and centered on defining the recommendations and next steps CFS can undertake to achieve the future state. This included prioritizing opportunities for improvement, finalizing recommendations, and developing a final report.



**Figure 1: San Bernardino Business Redesign Project Approach**

**Data Gathering Approach**

The Data Gathering Approach focused on collecting information from a variety of key CFS stakeholders and constituents in order to promote transparency and obtain a cross section of information. Approximately 400 CFS staff were engaged during the Data Gathering Phase through a series of data gathering sessions, job shadows, ride-alongs, interviews and ad-hoc meetings. Stakeholders and community members were also engaged and provided with the opportunity to share their perspectives through a series of focus groups. Agency stakeholders participated in a Visioing Session aimed at defining the long term view of CFS. Over 437 staff responded to a staff wide survey that was distributed to gather feedback about key areas of focus for the project. Additionally, 33 parents responded to the parent survey which was distributed to parents to gather feedback about their experiences with CFS across the key areas of focus. Additional and comprehensive information on each area of the Data Gathering Approach can be found in the Background, Scope and Approach Section of this document.

	DISCOVERY SESSIONS	JOB SHADOWS, RIDE ALONGS & FIELD OBSERVATIONS	FOCUS GROUPS/ INTERVIEWS	VALIDATION SESSIONS	STAFF & PARENT SURVEY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate 25 sessions organized around each key subject matter area</li> <li>Ask a series of questions and facilitate discussion around business processes, core service, and 'wish lists' for the future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in a "Day in the Life" of a social worker</li> <li>Shadow during hot-line calls and typical daily activities with people throughout regions and job classifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews and focus groups were conducted with external stakeholders to round out our data gathering and provide a "customer service" viewpoint for the assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Validation sessions were conducted in order to validate the information collected in the Discovery Sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A survey was distributed to gather confidential feedback from staff on the five key focus areas</li> <li>A parent survey was distributed to gain feedback from clients</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deconstruct core processes and begin to identify opportunities for improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relate the policy findings gained during discovery sessions to the real world work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Round out our data gathering by obtaining feedback and opinions from the County's clientele</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff from a variety of levels in all regions were brought together to workshop and validate information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain candid feedback on focus areas and enable all staff and randomly selected parents the opportunity to provide feedback</li> </ul>

Figure 2: San Bernardino Business Redesign Project Data Gathering Approach

### Project Timeline

The Business Redesign Project Team worked collaboratively with the CFS Executive Team to define a robust 5.5 month project schedule which was shared organization wide in order to promote transparency and communication. The following timeline was calibrated and tracked throughout the course of the project.

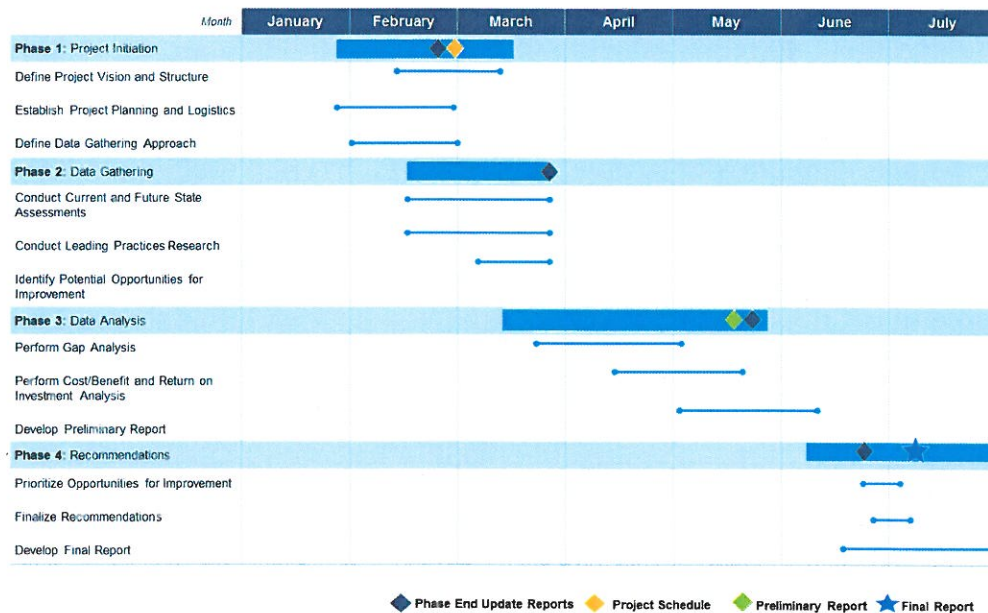


Figure 3: San Bernardino Business Redesign Project Timeline

### Summary of Recommendations

The following report discusses the current CFS business landscape and focuses on proposed recommendations in the five key project focus areas as defined above. It also identifies suggested opportunities for improvement in nine additional areas. Suggestions in these additional areas are intended to potentially support and enable the overall proposed recommendations. Below is a summary of the 43 proposed recommendations which are further detailed in the Future State Recommendations section.

### **Area 1: Unit Configuration and Caseload Management**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: Consider moving toward sibling and permanency units which include Intake, Court/JD, Carrier and Permanency workers and support staff growth, teaming and strong case management
- Proposed Recommendation 2: Continue to employ geo-staffing for case distribution in the regions where it is currently utilized and introduce an overflow model
- Proposed Recommendation 3: Consider introducing a rotation program that supports the growth of intake, carrier and court workers and other staff
- Proposed Recommendation 4: Reconsider approach to the training unit to promote improved professional development and training delivery

### **Area 2: Supervision and Organizational Structure**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: Enable supervisors to focus on their area of expertise in order to promote strong supervision and leadership and enhance relationships with workers
- Proposed Recommendation 2: Centralize the court supervisor at the court and reassign JD/Court staff to the regions in order to deliver court services
- Proposed Recommendation 3: Increase support to clerical teams from supervisors in order to promote teaming and a customer service focus
- Proposed Recommendation 4: Adopt a project management approach in order to manage core projects, facilitate communication and support the flow of information

### **Area 3: Operational Scheduling**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: Consider updating CFS' operational and staff schedules to meet the needs of children and families and enable additional flexibility

### **Area 4: Staff Classifications, Duties, Assignments and Support**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: In order to implement recommended caseloads and unit configuration for redesign, consider hiring more social workers. Re-evaluate the need for additional clerical staff after transitioning the new unit configuration and adjusting processes and workflow
- Proposed Recommendation 2: Consider creating career development opportunities for entry level professionals in order to further promote career trajectory and advancement opportunities
- Proposed Recommendation 3: Reconfigure the training unit so that it further supports agency goals, program development, improvement initiatives and advanced knowledge and skill development for staff
- Proposed Recommendation 4: Explore a lead worker position/classification or support existing classifications by confirming roles and responsibilities and promoting the acquisition of additional expertise and competencies
- Proposed Recommendation 5: Consider expanding the Parent Partner program by enhancing roles and responsibilities of Parent Partners and adding up to six additional Parent Partners CFS-wide to expand support to families throughout the County
- Proposed Recommendation 6: Consider adding up to four Education Liaisons to extend services to children under 10 years of age
- Proposed Recommendation 7: Consider ways to increase the capacity of PFAs, bilingual workers and PHNs and evaluate if additional hiring is required in the future
- Proposed Recommendation 8: Consider utilizing time study for all professionals to maximize resources

## **Area 5: Efficient Use of Technological Tools**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: Identify currently available technologies, programs, databases and tools that are high priority. Provide key users with appropriate access, additional training and support in order to enhance usability, increase efficiency and support day to day work
- Proposed Recommendation 2: Identify core technologies to enhance mobility, enable staff to perform their jobs with additional ease and reduce time spent in the field while enhancing CFS' focus on staff safety
- Proposed Recommendation 3: Formalize an IT helpdesk so staff have access to enhanced IT support and learning opportunities

## **Additional Area 1: Enhance comprehensive risk assessment approach in order to enable a robust program that includes ongoing training of staff in assessment, critical thinking skills and consistent decision making across the continuum of child welfare services while helping to reduce caseloads and workload**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: Consider providing additional training on current risk and safety assessment tools and continue to emphasize their importance in support of risk assessment, decision making and caseload management
- Proposed Recommendation 2: Consider implementing and training staff on a supplemental risk and safety tool that supports risk assessment, decision making and caseload management
- Proposed Recommendation 3: Review the Evaluate-Out (EVO) process in order to promote continued support for overall risk assessment
- Proposed Recommendation 4: Introduce additional structure to Risk Assessment Meetings (RAM) to support continued strong decision making, accountability and objectivity and to provide opportunities for staff development and team building
- Proposed Recommendation 5: Prioritize and increase the number of TDMs being performed as a way to help support families
- Proposed Recommendation 6: Consider introducing differential response to the child welfare practice to promote growth and development of families

## **Additional Area 2: Assess approach to caseload management in order to distribute workload with increasing effectiveness**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: Consider formalizing recommended caseloads and introducing additional social workers as needed to support CFS caseload
- Proposed Recommendation 2: Develop method to support workload balancing and recommended caseloads

## **Additional Area 3: Strengthen approach to CFS-wide communication and define a clear strategy for engaging staff while continuing to support accountability**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: Strengthen and formalize CFS-wide communications
- Proposed Recommendation 2: Simplify communication related to process and policy

## **Additional Area 4: Enhance approach to training and professional development for the CFS workforce**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: Provide ongoing CWS/CMS training to staff who utilize the system and provide a CWS/CMS help desk for every day support and troubleshooting
- Proposed Recommendation 2: Develop a training plan focused on providing staff with training on the core technologies required

- Proposed Recommendation 3: Enhance management and supervisory training so that staff in leadership roles are provided with enhanced coaching, mentoring and leadership skills and opportunities
- Proposed Recommendation 4: Provide training on changing and relevant policies so staff have the information they need to continue to meet the needs of the children and families
- Proposed Recommendation 5: Consider providing cross functional training in key areas
- Proposed Recommendation 6: Enhance training in evidence based practices to social workers, train staff on additional innovative practice methods and consider addressing unique training needs in each region
- Proposed Recommendation 7: Provide on-going training on Safe Measures to be used as a supervision and case management tool by all levels of staff

#### **Additional Area 5: Continue to utilize data for strategic planning**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: Enhance data analysis to continue to drive decisions and strategic planning

#### **Additional Area 6: Consider joint response with law enforcement and providing additional guidance to staff with respect to the warrants process**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: Consider joint response with law enforcement and continue to train on warrants process and provide ongoing training, education and communication to staff on objectives, policies and procedures

#### **Additional Area 7: Consider enhancing the visitation experience for families, staff and others involved in the process**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: Consider opening a visitation resource center(s) leveraging current contracts or a new service provider while simultaneously continuing to use current space to meet the needs of children and families

#### **Additional Area 8: Continue to encourage a supportive culture rooted in modeling and innovation**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: Continue to foster a culture that promotes positive re-enforcement, encourages modeling, coaching and training and supports innovation
- Proposed Recommendation 2: Continue to heighten executive and management level engagement in day to day activities to support CFS' focus on ongoing operations improvement, staff collaboration and morale

#### **Additional Area 9: Review approach to hiring and staff retention**

- Proposed Recommendation 1: Leverage approaches to hiring that have yielded positive results and create incentives that enhance retention

### **Summary of Next Steps**

While this report provides a series of proposed recommendations, CFS will have to consider if, when and how to implement the selected recommendations based on a variety of complex factors, for example, the level of effort required, organizational readiness, anticipated costs and benefits, economic and political environment as well as how a recommendation fits into the holistic CFS strategy. In an effort to support the next steps for CFS, the Business Redesign Team worked with the Executive Team to review the recommendations and group them into short-, mid- and long-term goals. As CFS moves forward, this prioritization is intended to support ongoing decision making and planning and support the continued movement toward the future state of CFS.

## Report Limitations

The following summarizes items that should be noted related to the limitations in the research and analysis documented in this report:

- **Staff and Stakeholder Engagement:** During the course of the Business Redesign Project, the team had the opportunity to interface with many people and entities outside of CFS to gather data, for example; County Counsel, Law Enforcement and service providers however exhaustive data collection, interviews and research focused on CFS and CFS staff to arrive at a set of observations about the current state of operations and proposed recommendations for the future state.
- **Task Analysis and Business Process Flows:** This report contains a series of task analyses for the key roles within CFS. The report also contains a series of business process flows and supporting narratives that guide the processes and document the team's understanding of service delivery in each region. These documents are intended to capture the current state of service delivery. This information was collected from staff across several sessions and validated during validation sessions. For the purposes of this report and to gain an accurate understanding of child welfare service delivery in San Bernardino, the team mapped the business process flows at a very detailed level and completed a task analysis to support the business process flow however, an additional level of detail for all process flows may be possible, particularly as CFS moves forward with implementing changes.
- **Other Considerations:** During the course of the Business Redesign Project, the team arrived at observations that fell outside the scope of work. We have captured this information as Additional Areas of Suggestions so that CFS can consider it in support of the Proposed Recommendations in the Five Project Focus Areas.
- **Next Steps:** While this report provides proposed recommendations and suggested next steps, the decision and execution of the recommendations in this report will be made by CFS.