

California - Child and Family Services Review

Annual SIP Progress Report

Year 3
June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025



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Introduction

In 2001, the California State Legislature passed the Assembly Bill (AB) 636, the Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act, to improve child welfare outcomes for children and families. AB 636 established the California Outcomes and Accountability Systems (COAS), which required all 58 counties to develop a System Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP requires approval by the county Board of Supervisors. The process allows Juvenile Probation and Child Welfare agencies to measure county performance in administering child welfare services, assessing needs and strengths to improve performance, and planning for continuous improvement. The SIP is updated every five years in collaboration with the local community, prevention, and early intervention partners.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) provides quarterly data reports, which include safety, permanency, and well-being outcome measures for each county. The quarterly reports include federal and state standards, the basis for the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) used to track each county's performance over time. Each county uses the data as a guide for assessment and planning processes and a tool to analyze what policies and procedures to implement. In 2023, Sacramento County submitted the 5 Year System Improvement Plan (SIP) for the period of June 2021 – May 2026. The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors approved the plan on January 23, 2024. The State officially approved the County's plan on March 27, 2024.

The Sacramento County Annual SIP Progress report for year 3 will evaluate performance toward the SIP improvement goals as compared to the Q1 2021 baseline data from the UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project. The report will analyze the status and progress of strategies and action steps. It will also include an analysis of obstacles, systemic issues, and environmental conditions that may contribute to the outcome improvement or decline. It will also describe other successes and promising practices that have led to consistent positive performance within specific Outcome Data Measures. Lastly, it will contain a SIP chart with necessary updates to reflect the County's performance, the status of implementation strategies, and any revision to the time frames.

SIP Progress Report Narrative

STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATION

Following the approval of the SIP on March 27, 2024, Sacramento County CWS and Probation hosted a joint SIP Stakeholder Kick-Off Meeting on May 29, 2024. The primary objective of the meeting was to engage key stakeholders in the ongoing implementation of the SIP, foster collaboration, solicit feedback, and share the county's child welfare and probation goals for the next five years. A diverse group of community partners attended, including representatives from local community-based organizations, educational institutions, mental health providers, foster care agencies, youth and family advocacy groups, oversight committees, and prevention and intervention partners. Sacramento County's consultants from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) were also in attendance.

The table below lists the stakeholders who attended the meeting:

Stakeholder Kick-Off Meeting Agency/Community Organizations

Alta California Regional Center	Gateway Residential Program STRTP
Behavior Health - Juvenile Justice Institutions	Kaiser Permanente Medical Group
Better Life Children Services	Mountain Valley Child and Family Services
California Department of Social Services- CFS/Office of Child Abuse Prevention	Pacific Clinics
California Department of Social Services System Improvement Section - Performance and Program Improvement Bureau	Sacramento County Probation Department
Capital Star Community Services	River Oak Center for Children
CAARE Department of Pediatrics	Sacramento County Counsel
CAARE Diagnostic and Treatment Center, Department of Pediatrics	Sacramento County Office of Education
Child Abuse Prevention Center	St. John's Program for Real Change
Court Appointed Special Advocates	Stanford Sierra Youth & Families
CPS Oversight Committee	Strategies Technical Assistance
Department of Child, Family and Adult Services - Child Protective Services	Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Services
Department of Child, Family and Adult Services - Quality Management and Administrative Services	Turning Point Community Program

Department of Health Service - Behavioral Health	UC Davis Continuing & Professional Education
Department of Human Assistance - Foster Care	Wayfinder Family Services
First 5 Sacramento	

During the meeting, the County introduced the approved 5-Year SIP, which outlined the federal outcome measures and strategies for achieving permanency, reducing re-entry to foster care, and improving placement stability. Stakeholders engaged in discussions on the strategies and action steps and explored how collaboration among partners could support the overarching goals of safety, permanency, and well-being for foster youth and families. The meeting provided participants with an understanding of the SIP's vision and goals and an opportunity to review specific actions to address the needs identified in the county's self-assessment.

Key components of the SIP meeting included objectives, performance measures, and strategies to improve the following measures:

- P1: Permanency in 12 Months
- P4: Re-entry to Foster Care
- and P5: Placement Stability

The agenda also included a review of the Child Family Services Review (CFSR) Process, Outcome Focus Areas, Strategy Breakout Sessions, and Next Steps.

To enhance stakeholder communication, the County released the first SIP quarterly newsletter in March 2025. The newsletter provided updates on the SIP process, highlighted key strategies, and featured a "Spotlight on Success" summarizing the Stakeholder Kick-Off Meeting. The newsletter was distributed to Child Welfare and Probation leadership, SIP stakeholders, CPS staff, the Children's Coalition, the Oversight Committee, Placement Partners, and local congregate care entities. It was also made available on the Department of Child, Family and Adult Services internet and intranet. Community stakeholders will continue to engage in ongoing strategy teams throughout the SIP process.

On February 14, 2025, Sacramento County CPS and Probation met with CDSS consultants to review progress on the identified outcome measures, assess current practices affecting performance, and evaluate the status of action steps within each strategy. The technical assistance received from the consultants will guide the monitoring and refinement of strategies and action steps as part of the ongoing SIP implementation.

Probation continues to team with Seneca Family Agencies to conduct intensive Family Finding for youth, being recommended to out-of-home care. The partnership has been instrumental in the strategy to increase the number of children placed in non-congregate care settings. A Senior Deputy Probation Officer has been tasked with locating family members and extended family members for youth being committed to placement to maintain a home-like setting while receiving court ordered treatment.

Probation collaborates and partners with Department of Child, Family and Adult Services (DCFAS), Behavioral Health Services (BHS), Community Based Organizations (CBO) and Foster Family Agencies (FFA). Probation also participates in multiple collaborative meetings, workgroups and committees such as Probation Advisory Committee, Families First Prevention Services Act Committee, Cross Systems Wraparound meetings, FFA and Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) director meetings, Foster Youth Partnership meetings, AB 2083 Interagency Leadership Team (ILT) and Advisory Team (AT) meetings, SIP workgroups and Therapeutic Foster Care workgroups designed to improve outcomes for youth and family. The partnerships and collaboration are instrumental in the strategy to improve the overall performance measures for outcome measure P1- Permanency within 12 months.

CURRENT PERFORMANCE TOWARDS SIP IMPROVEMENT GOALS

A critical element of Sacramento County's success has been engaging families as active partners and collaborating with community organizations to help families secure access to community services. State-level policy changes, including the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) and the Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) funding, have enhanced the County's ability to deliver more timely and effective services. While the transition to these new funding models has brought some implementation challenges, Sacramento County has proactively adapted to these changes.

The County has also made notable progress in achieving its SIP improvement goals, particularly in permanency and safety outcomes. However, challenges remain, especially for older youth and areas with limited resources. Continued collaboration, targeted training, and strategic resource allocation will be essential to overcoming these challenges and ensuring sustained progress in improving outcomes for all children and families within the child welfare system.

The County's official data source for outcomes is UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project (UCB CCWIP). The County's performance is measured as defined by the CFSR 4 outcomes and methodology. The baseline performance for each outcome measure is Quarter 1 2021. All current performance is based on Q3 2024 data.

All data for this section is pulled from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project's (CCWIP) website. (Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Prakash, A., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Flamson, T., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2022). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved 12/19/2022, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare)

PRIORITY OUTCOME MEASURE OR SYSTEMIC FACTOR – CHILD WELFARE

P1: Permanency in 12 Months

This measure is defined as: of all youth who entered foster care within a 12-month period, how many children subsequently achieved permanency within the next 12-months. The CFSR Round 4 national performance value is greater than or equal to 35.2%.

CSA Baseline [Q1 2021]: 41.3%

Year 3 [Q3 2024]: 43.7%

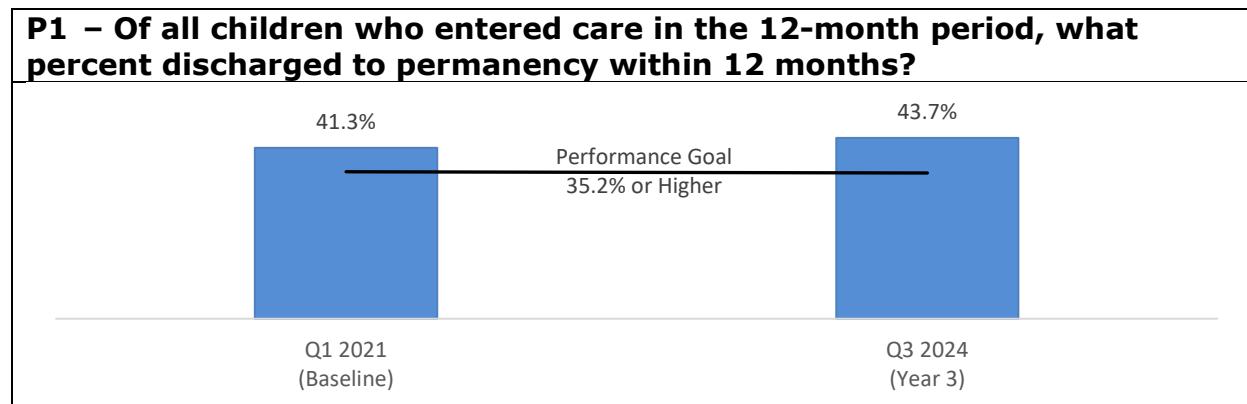
Year 3 Target Improvement Goal: 34.84%

While the CSA baseline initially exceeded the P1 performance goal, the County saw a

decline in securing timely placement for children in care in Year 1 at 34.3%. Several challenges delayed the foster care exits, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, school closures, increased self-harming behaviors among children and youth, and caregiver difficulties with homeschooling and balancing schedules likely contributed to these delays.

The 5-Year SIP outlined incremental annual improvements of 0.9% with the goal of reaching 35.2% by the end of the SIP cycle. The Year 3 target improvement goal was set at 34.84%. Despite the setbacks in Year 1, the County exceeded the goal in Year 2 and Year 3, demonstrating that pre-COVID interventions have been effective in overcoming the challenges and achieving positive outcomes.

The table below displays the percentage of Sacramento County's children who achieved permanency within 12 months of entering care. Performance measures are provided for two time periods: Baseline and Year 3.



The data below is further disaggregated by demographics and reveals which specific groups of children achieved permanency within 12 months of entering care. Demographic factors include age, ethnicity, and gender.

By Age	Performance	By Ethnicity	Performance	By Gender	Performance
Under 1	42.4% (70/165)	Black	40.2% (70/174)	Female	42.2% (127/301)
1 – 2	47.7% (37/78)	White	43.3% (81/187)		
3 – 5	39.2% (29/74)	Latino	42.5% (68/160)		
6 – 10	55.2% (53/96)	Asian / Pacific Islander	89.5% (17/19)	Male	45.6% (113/248)
11 – 15	44.4% (40/90)	Native American	37.5% (3/8)		
16 – 17	23.9% (11/46)	Missing	100% (1/1)		
Total			43.7% (240/549)		

Sacramento County has demonstrated improvement on the P1 measure and consistently meets or exceeds the performance goal. Most of the demographic categories, including age, race/ethnic, and gender surpass the established benchmark. However, youth aged 16-17 are the only group not meeting the goal. This year, less than one in four youth in the 16-17-year age group achieved permanency within 12 months of entering the foster care system.

Several contributing factors to the County's positive performance include:

- **Bringing Families Home (BFH) Program:** Provides housing stability and addresses housing needs. The program is designed to reduce the number of families in child welfare experiencing homelessness, to increase family reunification, and assist in the prevention foster care placements.
- **Resource Parent Training:** Required pre-certification training to align expectations and promote reunification support.
- **Early and ongoing planning, linkages, service referrals:** Discussions with parents and caregivers and families begin early and continue throughout the case, promoting consistent planning, timely service referrals, and strong linkages to support family stability and progress.
- **Cultural Support and Advocacy:** Cultural Brokers engage African American parents and caregivers, providing culturally responsive support and advocating for their unique needs and perspectives throughout the child welfare process.
- **PC-CARE Program:** Promotes placement stability and enhances child behavior, contributing to successful reunification efforts.
- **Appropriate Assessments at Hearings:** Social workers conduct thorough assessments to ensure legal standards are met before recommending continued reunification, helping to prevent delays in achieving permanency.
- **Appropriate Home Placement:** Emphasis is placed on matching children with homes that are best suited to meet their needs and support permanency.

P4: Re-entry to Foster Care

This measure is defined as: of all youth who exited foster care to either Permanency or Guardianship during a twelve-month period (regardless of how long they were in care), how many of them re-entered foster care in the next 12 months. The CFSR Round 4 national performance value is less than or equal to 5.6%.

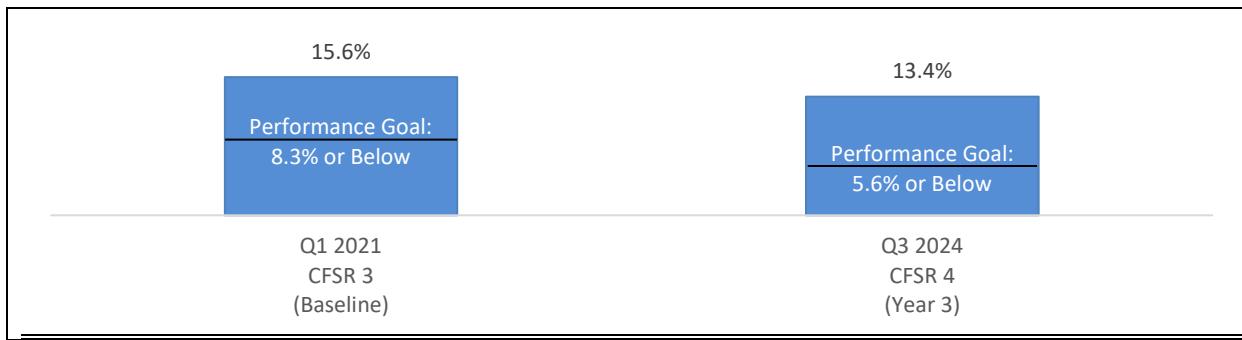
CSA Baseline [Q1 2021]: 15.6%

Year 3 [Q3 2024]: 13.4%

Year 3 Target Improvement Goal: 9.28%

The table presents data on the percentage of youth who leave foster care after achieving either permanency or guardianship in a twelve-month period and then returned to foster care within the following 12 months.

P4 – Of all children discharged from foster care to permanency (reunification or guardianship) during the year, what percent reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the date of the earliest discharge to reunification or guardianship during the year?



The breakdown below allows for a thorough analysis of re-entry trends among various demographic groups and provides insight into any disparities or patterns that may exist. Examining the demographic variations can inform targeted strategies to address specific needs and improve outcomes for vulnerable youth in foster care.

By Age	Performance	By Ethnicity	Performance	By Gender	Performance
Under 1	6.0% (3/50)	Black	14.6% (20/137)	Female	16.4% (37/226)
1 – 2	10.8% (9/83)	White	6.8% (7/103)		
3 – 5	16.2% (12/74)	Latino	17.9% (28/156)		
6 – 10	13.9% (16/115)	Asian / Pacific Islander	10.3% (4/39)	Male	10.3% (22/213)
11 – 15	16.9% (15/89)	Native American	0.0% (0/4)		
16 – 17	14.3% (4/28)	Missing	0.0% (0/0)		
Total			13.4% (59/439)		

Sacramento County continues to face challenges with this measure. The change in CFSR 4 methodology—shifting from counting only youth who entered care after 8 days and achieved permanency within 12 months through reunification or guardianship to counting all youth who achieved permanency starting from day 1 in care. The change resulted in a revised, lower performance goal while still emphasizing exits to reunification or guardianship. However, the County's performance is now further from the benchmark. In the baseline, the County's performance was 1.9 times the goal and now 2.4 times the goal. Among all groups, Native American youth were the only group to meet the benchmark, though only four Native American youth achieved permanency during this period. White youth and infants had the next lowest performance, but also did not meet the goal.

Sacramento CWS continues to effectively use Informal Supervision (IS) and Protective Emergency Placements (PEPs) as key strategies to stabilize households and prevent further involvement with the foster care system. The IS program helps to prevent children from entering care by allowing CPS to work with families voluntarily, addressing concerns that prompted CPS intervention. This collaborative

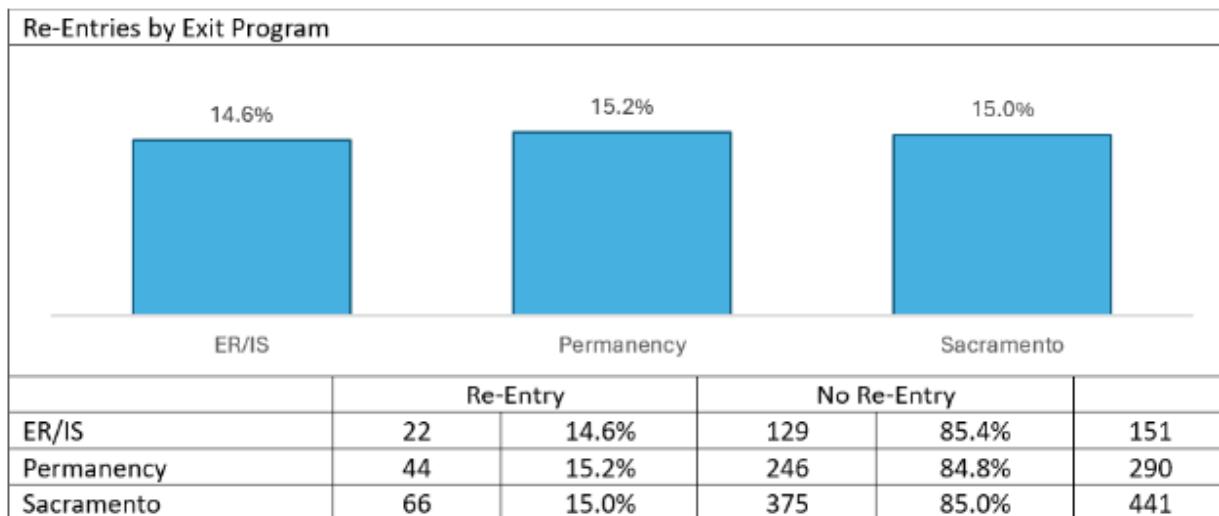
approach enables social workers and community partners to support families in keeping children safely at home while parents engage in services.

PEPs, which provide temporary, voluntary placements with licensed resource families or in Short-Term Residential Treatment Programs (STRTP), offer short-term care for children when parents or guardians face temporary challenges. These placements typically last between 14 to 28 days, with the written consent of the parent or guardian. While PEPs are effective in preventing foster care placements, they are classified as foster episodes, which can influence the County's performance metrics under the P4 measure if a child is later removed from the home.

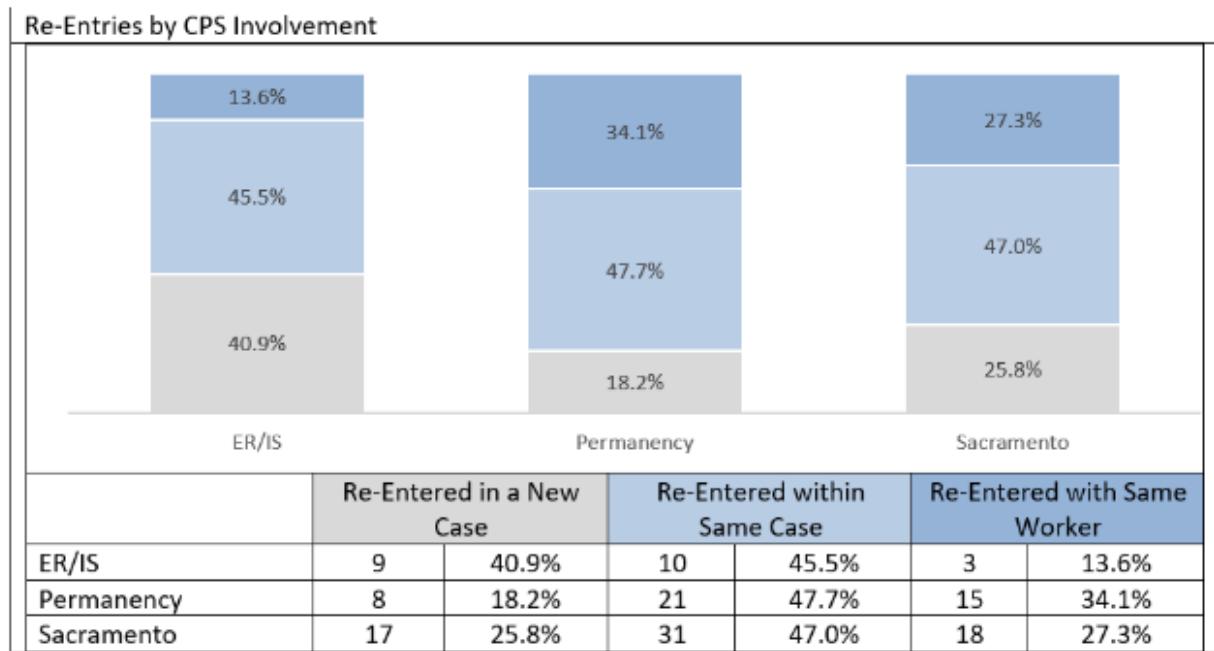
To strengthen P4 outcomes, the County may explore deeper learning and system refinement to include:

- Clarifying whether return recommendations are primarily staff directed or outlined by court order, to enhance understanding of current decision-making practices.
- Considering a Quality Assurance (QA) review to affirm alignment between practice and recommendations
- Assessing how structured decision-making tools, such as the Family Reunification SDM assessments, are informing practice.

P4 – Breakdown of Youth who exited between 10/01/22 and 09/30/23



Unlike in previous years, the courtside (permanency) program has experienced a slightly higher rate of re-entries compared to ER/IS. Neither ER/IS nor Permanency met the P4 performance goal. Most re-entries continue to occur while families remain active with CPS.



Approximately three out of four re-entries in the system occurred while the youth were still involved with CPS. In the ER/IS program, three out of five re-entries took place while the youth remained involved with CPS. Similarly, in the Permanency program, four out of five re-entries occurred while the youth were still engaged with CPS.

Child Welfare Services recognizes that both PEPs and IS are essential voluntary services designed to prevent formal entry into the foster care system, ultimately supporting family stability and child well-being. During CPS involvement, families benefit from a range of supports designed to stabilize and strengthen family functioning. Key services include:

- **Cultural Brokers:** Providing culturally relevant advocacy and liaison services for African American families, supporting reunification efforts and reducing disparities in child welfare.
- **Family Engagement Social Workers:** Facilitating family finding and relative placements to ensure children are connected with their family support systems.
- **Prevention Wraparound Services:** Offering strength-based, family-centered intensive support to help high-needs youth return home or secure permanent placements, promoting family stability.
- **PCFT Meetings:** Connecting families with community-based services after CPS involvement for ongoing support.
- **Referrals to Family Resource Centers:** Helping families access resources that strengthen their ability to care for their children.
- **Connection to Community Incubator Lead Sites:** Strengthening community partnerships to provide families with resources that prevent re-entry.

Despite the robust support, several factors may contribute to re-entry into the child welfare system, following case closures. These challenges may include:

- **Service continuity after case closure:** While referrals to post-exit support services are in place, some families may still experience gaps once formal CPS involvement ends. Enhancing follow-up efforts and ensuring sustained engagement can strengthen long-term stability and reduce the risk of re-entry.
- **Preventive Resources – Gaps and Barriers:** During CPS involvement, transportation support helps families access essential services. Post-exit, however, families may face barriers due to limited access to resources or the cessation of transportation services, making sustained engagement more challenging.
- **Service Navigation:** Some families may not fully understand how to access available services or may face difficulty navigating complex systems without support.

P5: Placement Stability

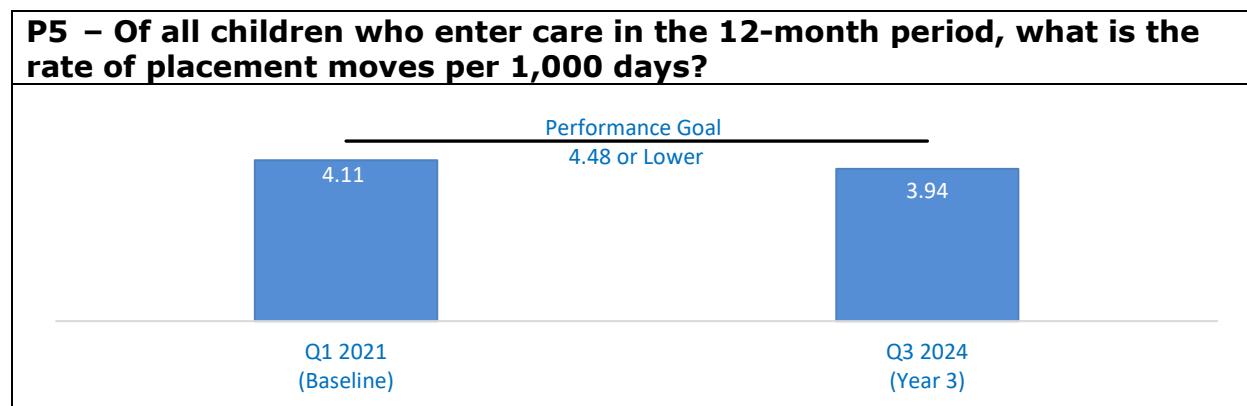
This measure is defined as *"Of all children who enter care in the 12-month period, what is the rate of placement moves per 1,000 days?* The national performance goal is less than or equal to 4.48.

CSA Baseline [Q1 2021]: 4.11

Year 3 [Q3 2024]: 3.94

Year 3 Target Improvement Goal: Maintain performance at or below the national goal 4.48

The subsequent tables below offer a comprehensive analysis of the rate of placement moves per 1,000 days for children in care. Sacramento County continues to perform well in measure P5.



By Age	Performance	By Ethnicity	Performance	By Gender	Performance
Under 1	2.31 (56/24,287)	Black	4.65 (116/24,973)	Female	4.61 (187/40,546)
1 – 2	2.57 (21/8,159)	White	3.25 (74/22,757)		
3 – 5	3.49 (37/10,597)	Latino	4.09 (96/23,460)		
6 – 10	4.47 (60/13,417)	Asian / Pacific Islander	3.06 (12/3,927)	Male	3.20 (116/36,266)
11 – 15	6.56 (98/14,944)	Native American	4.48 (5/1,116)		
16 – 17	5.73 (31/5,408)	Missing	0.0% (0/579)		
Total		3.94 moves per 1,000 Days in Care (303/76,812)			

Sacramento has improved from baseline performance and continues to meet the performance goal for this measure. While the overall performance of the County meets the goal, not all demographic groups meet the performance goal. Females, Black youth, and older youth (pre-teens and teens) have the highest rate of moves, failing to meet the performance goal. These groups often align with the Welcome Home population and as those youth move in and out of the Welcome Homes, that counts as two additional moves each time. While the Welcome Home population is small, even a few moves can impact the County's performance on this measure.

Ongoing efforts to improve placement stability and outcomes for children and families include increased family engagement, expanded funding for high-acuity cases, and a focus on relative placements. Key strategies include:

- **Policy Impact:** The 2021 legislative change extended the notice period from 7 to 14 days, allowing more time for support before placement changes occur.
- **Targeted Case Collaboration:** Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings address immediate needs, with coordination between social workers, Resource Family Approval, Centralized Placement Support Unit (CPSU), and County Counsel to ensure timely responses. Family Engagement Specialists (FES) facilitate early placements and court approval for relative placements.
- **Caregiver Engagement:** Safety Organized Practice (SOP) and Core Practice Model (CPM) strategies enhance caregiver involvement, which are further supported by Cultural Brokers and concrete resources.
- **Family and Placement Support:** Early family identification and CPSU's use of video chats to improve placement matches, with varying WRAP support.

PRIORITY OUTCOME MEASURE OR SYSTEMIC FACTOR – PROBATION

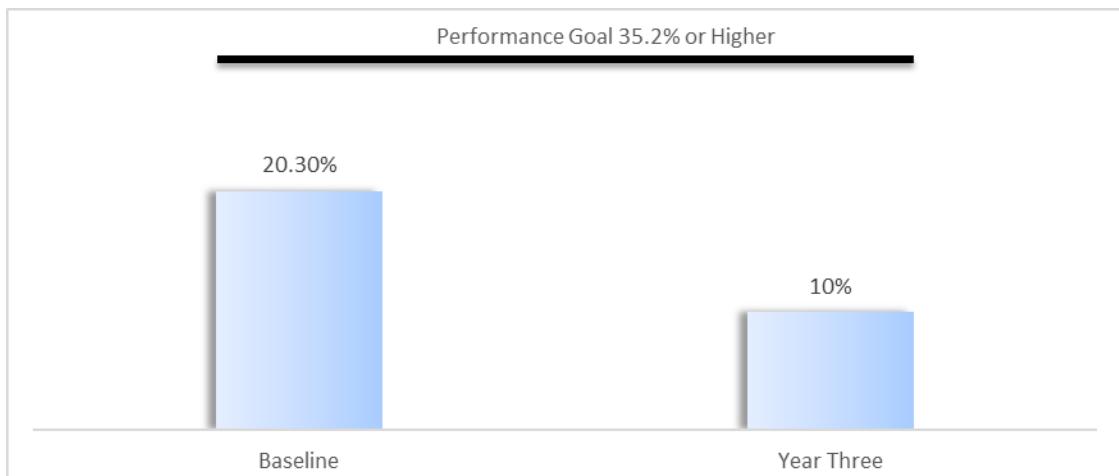
P1: Permanency in 12 Months

This measure is defined as of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period,

what percentage are discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering foster care. The CFSR Round 4 national performance value is greater than or equal to 35.2%.

CSA Baseline Q1 2021: 20.3%
Year 3 [Q3 2024]: 10.0%
Year 3 Target Improvement Goal: 21.0%

The table below displays the percentage of Sacramento County's children who achieved permanency within 12 months of entering care. Performance measures are provided for the time periods of Baseline in comparison to Year 3. Of significance to note, the number of youth entering into foster care significantly decreased from the baseline of 59 youth in Q3 2021 to 20 youth in Q3 2024, which greatly affected our permanency rate for Q3 2024.



Baseline to Year Three

The number of entries into foster care decreased from 21 to 20 from Q3 2023 to Q3 2024, which is a decrease from the baseline of 59 in Q3 2021. This is due to Probation's commitment to circumvent foster care by utilizing community-based interventions including Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Hi-fidelity Wraparound, trauma and mental health focused programming to improve stability and support treatment needs while maintaining youth in their home and community. Probation's use of Juvenile Justice Intervention Services and Juvenile Justice Diversion and Treatment Program (JJDTP) epitomizes Probation's approach of using a trauma informed lens. The main components include transition planning and partnerships, cross-system collaboration, targeted and customized case planning, teaming with youth and families, and coordinated service delivery, such as Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDTs) and Child and Family Teaming (CFTs).

Probation's permanency rate declined 10.3% from baseline to year three for several reasons during the reporting period. The Courts continued the trend of placing youth into Non-Minor Dependent (NMD) status for support purposes which impacted the number of youth returning home to meet the definition of permanency. The

increased number of youth with NMD status is excluded from consideration for achieving permanency status. Youth who remained in placements for 12-23 months had various reasons for not achieving permanency during the reporting period, including being part of the juvenile sex offender population, which are difficult to reunify with their families due to issues of victims often being in the residence or a hesitancy on the part of the parents to accept the youth home. Other reasons included youth not completing an STRTP program, youth receiving new charges, the Courts terminating the placement order outside of the 12-month removal timeframe, and the Courts committing youth to other probation. A small number of youth also passed away during the reporting period. Many of these reasons are outside of the Department's control; however, with a focus on our strategies, the Department hopes to see upward movement toward the Target Improvement Goal and toward the National Performance goal of 35.2% or higher.

STATUS OF STRATEGIES

CHILD WELFARE

STRATEGY 1 (Child Welfare): Implement Family Time Coaching (FTC) to enhance visitation and communication as part of the reunification process.

Outcome Measures P1: Permanency in 12 Months and P4: Re-entry to Foster Care

ANALYSIS

Family Time Coaching (FTC) is a comprehensive program specifically designed to provide support to parents through individualized coaching strategies. Its primary objective is to facilitate family reunification while addressing the family dynamics. The program prioritizes the needs and safety of children, emphasizing the importance of secure attachments between children and their caregivers. FTC offers action plans tailored to the distinct circumstances of each family to expedite the reunification process. The program's structured approach improves parental preparedness and promotes effective collaboration among family members and service providers.

Currently, FTC is in the implementation phase and has not yet demonstrated measurable impacts on reunification or re-entry rates. However, it holds strong potential to provide valuable support to families by enhancing relationships and fostering family cohesion.

ACTION STEP STATUS

Action Step A, to establish and onboard a team that will develop an implementation plan and monitor the Family Time Coaching (FTC) model is complete and was reported on in the prior Progress Report.

Action Step B, identify needs to pilot FTC including training, transportation contracts, and developing tools to support the implementation of Family Time Coaching is complete and will be replicated for the remainder of the SIP cycle. The FTC tools have been finalized and will serve as the foundation to launch the pilot program. All

permanency staff will participate in a 2-hour FTC Overview training following the launch of the pilot program. Coordination with UCD will be necessary to schedule the training. Additionally, all Family Service Workers (FSWs) who initially completed training in June 2024 will undergo retraining. In September 2023, the County partnered with Hop, Skip, Drive to enhance transportation services for Family Service Workers (FSWs). The County will also explore expanding the contract to better support FSWs in delivering family time coaching.

As part of the assessment on parent progress, the Family Services Worker (FSW) coach will monitor the parents' progress through regular check-ins and ongoing communication. During visits, the coach will assess the parent's readiness to move to unsupervised visits and will ask for the parents' input on their goals and focus areas for the next visit. Gathering parent feedback is essential to ensure that their goals and areas for improvement are considered in the FTC planning. The coaches will also offer guidance on specific skills that the parent can work on before the next visit. At the end of each visit, the coach will check in with the parents to collect feedback and document their progress. Additionally, the coach will regularly review and update case notes to track the parents' ongoing development and any changes in their progress. This documentation provides a comprehensive view and understanding of the parent's journey and informs future decisions concerning their case.

While there is no standardized readiness tool, data will be captured regarding the quality of interactions, including emotional regulation strategies used by the parent, limit-setting approaches, and the observed effectiveness of those strategies. Additionally, parent engagement will be rated on a 1 to 5 scale, alongside goal identification and whether goals are being met.

All information will be recorded in CWS/CMS and shared with the case-carrying social worker. For continuous quality improvement (CQI), the consistency and quality of documentation will be monitored through regular supervision and case record reviews.

Action Step C, which involves identifying staffing and external partners for FTC, is complete and remains ongoing through the end of the SIP cycle. Due to the number of Family Service Worker (FSW) vacancies, the County delayed the completion of Action Step C. Efforts to negotiate wage increases and fill current FSW vacancies are ongoing. Despite these challenges, the County has identified one FSW unit and one Permanency Unit to participate in the FTC pilot program. These units consist of six FSWs and six Permanency social workers who have volunteered to support FTC implementation.

Action Step D, implemented in August 2023, involves the ongoing process to establish an internal continuous quality improvement evaluation method to determine the effectiveness of FTC and adjust the process as needed. This action step is partially complete. With the planned launch of the FTC pilot, staff will actively monitor and refine the evaluation method to meet the program's needs.

The County captures key data indicators, including participant engagement, the

effectiveness of interventions, and progress toward identified goals. This data is reviewed monthly to assess trends, identify patterns, and pinpoint areas requiring refinement or adjustment. Regular reviews ensure that the program remains responsive to the needs of families and continues to evolve, thereby improving outcomes over time. This continuous evaluation process is designed to foster long-term program success and ensure that objectives are met efficiently and effectively.

Action Step E, train the CPS FTC implementation team and Family Service Workers (FSW) participating in the pilot on the FTC models for FSWs to deliver coaching to families, began in September 2023, is complete and will continue through the end of the SIP. The Family Time Coaching planning team continues to prepare the FSWs and social workers to administer family time coaching services. Additionally, FSWs who have previously participated in the two-day training will receive FTC overview sessions.

The County will periodically offer refresher training to maintain competency and skill development. The Workforce Development Unit (WDU) will notify the County of upcoming FTC training sessions and track staff participation. This system allows the county to identify staff who need refresher courses based on attendance and performance evaluations, ensuring they remain equipped with the skills and knowledge to effectively deliver FTC services.

In November 2024, a second cohort of seven FSWs participated in the two-day FTC training session, followed by five social workers who attended the FTC Overview Training in January 2025. All permanency social workers will be required to complete the FTC Overview Training to gain understanding of the FTC framework. This sustained training initiative helps develop the essential skills and knowledge needed for both the implementation team and FSW staff to successfully carry out the FTC pilot program.

Action Step F, which involves providing an FTC overview to resource parents, Foster Family Agencies, attorneys, courts, and support staff, is currently underway. The delay in completing this action step was attributed to the extended timeline associated with Action Step G, which focuses on piloting one FTC model. As the first FTC pilot is set for implementation, the RFA training is being reviewed and updated to include information about Family Time Coaching (FTC). Since visitation training is already covered in the pre-approval classes for resource parents, this update will seamlessly incorporate the FTC model. This strategic incorporation provides key stakeholders, including resource parents and support staff, with a foundational understanding of the FTC model, facilitating smoother implementation and stronger support for families involved in the program.

Action Step G, which focuses on piloting the FTC model with one unit, has been rescheduled for launch at the end of March 2025. The delay from the original February 2025 timeline was primarily due to staffing constraints, including challenges in finalizing contracts for Family Services Workers (FSWs). Despite these challenges, the Family Time Coaching planning team has been diligently preparing for the pilot's launch.

The pilot program is anticipated to last approximately three months, though it may be extended depending on referral volumes. Furthermore, the training through UCD will influence the timeline for a department-wide rollout. Currently, the Permanency unit is reviewing its cases to identify families who could benefit from FTC and is referring them to the FSW team.

The criteria for selecting families for FTC will focus on those requiring additional support, such as coaching on developmental needs, behavior management, and other areas where families need guidance. The goal is to provide these families with the appropriate resources and support to improve their outcomes.

As of the writing of this report, one FSW unit and one Permanency Unit have been identified for the pilot. Both teams are collaborating closely to finalize processes and develop seamless integration of the FTC model.

Action Steps H to J, involve expanding the pilot model to two units, conducting data analysis, and developing the Family Time Coaching policy and procedure, are projected to begin between July 2025 and June 2026.

METHOD OF EVALUATION AND/OR MONITORING

The evaluation and monitoring of the FTC strategy entails continuous collaboration among workgroups and partners from the UC Davis Northern Regional Training Academy. The workgroups address action steps, seek guidance from the Academy and utilize feedback from DCFAS staff as needed.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED FROM CDSS

Currently, no additional assistance is needed from CDSS to successfully implement the FTC strategy and its action steps.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

At this time, Sacramento Child Welfare has not identified additional strategies or action steps to assist with implementing the Family Time Coaching program.

PROGRAM REDUCTION

The County does not anticipate any significant reduction in program spending.

STRATEGY 2 (Child Welfare): Increase staff retention utilizing Core Practice Model (CPM)

Outcome Measures P1: Permanency in 12 Months and P4: Re-entry to Foster Care

ANALYSIS

Sacramento County recognizes the critical importance of addressing staffing shortages to maintain permanency for children in foster care. Several action steps have been implemented to address the issue:

ACTION STEP STATUS

Action Step A, focused on engaging staff and gathering feedback through stay and exit surveys to identify recruitment and retention strategies and was initially set for implementation in June 2024. In March 2025, the DCFAS Employee Retention & Satisfaction Survey was distributed to all staff.

The Retention Survey is designed to collect insights from staff regarding several aspects of their work experience. The survey explores the manageability of their workloads, allowing employees to articulate the challenges they face and whether they feel their tasks are reasonable and achievable. It also asks about the underlying motivations that drive staff performance, helping to uncover what inspires them in their roles and how these motivations align with their career aspirations.

Furthermore, the survey provides a platform for staff to evaluate the level of support they receive from their supervisors and managers. Participants can share their thoughts on the communication style, availability, and effectiveness of leadership fostering a positive work environment,

Additionally, the survey invites employees to suggest potential improvements within the Department, encouraging innovative ideas that could enhance workflows, processes, or overall job satisfaction. Lastly, respondents will be asked to assess the Department's adherence to the County's PRIDE (Principled. Respect. Innovation. Diversity & Inclusion. Excellence) values. This anonymous survey seeks candid feedback to strengthen workplace culture and improve employee satisfaction. The survey will remain open from March 18, 2025 to May 17, 2025.

The Post-Employment Survey will be implemented in April 2025 to identify trends related to employee departures within the department. The survey will ask about various aspects including: the specific reasons behind employees' decisions to leave, any conversations they may have had with their supervisors or managers prior to their departure, and any workplace challenges encountered during their tenure.

The Post-Employment Survey will also provide an opportunity for feedback on areas where supervisors or managers offered support and areas for improvement. An essential component of the survey will address whether employees would recommend DCFAS as a workplace to peers and potential candidates, therefore giving insight into the department's reputation as an employer.

Action Step B, the staffing data analysis, will begin after the DCFAS Employee Retention & Satisfaction Survey closes on May 17, 2025 and has a projected start date of June 2025. Once the survey period has ended, the data will be reviewed to identify key trends and insights related to staff retention, satisfaction, and feedback. The analysis will help inform the development of targeted strategies to improve recruitment, retention, and workplace culture moving forward. The findings will guide implementation efforts.

Action Step C involves addressing retention issues by discussing feedback from stay/exit surveys and advocating for staff during Executive Management Team (EMT) meetings. This step was initiated in June 2023 and remains ongoing. A work group within the Executive Management Team has been established to execute this action.

A team also includes program specialists and clerical support staff from QMAS to gather insights from various classifications.

The team has diligently worked to update the stay and exit surveys to better capture employee engagement, satisfaction, and motivation. As part of the process, the surveys were rebranded for clarity and alignment with their purpose. The "Stay Survey" has been renamed the "DCFAS Employee Retention and Satisfaction Survey," while the "Exit Survey" is now referred to as the "Post Employment Survey." These updated surveys have undergone extensive review by the Executive Leadership Team and a manager from the County of Sacramento Department of Personnel to align the survey with the county's PRIDE (Principled. Respect. Innovation. Diversity & Inclusion. Excellence) values.

In addition to the survey work, the team has actively engaged in ongoing recruitment efforts through participation in job fairs. These events serve as a platform to connect with potential candidates, promote the department as an employer of choice, and highlight career opportunities. The team may explore and implement additional strategies to support both retention and recruitment, guided by feedback from the employee surveys.

The survey details in Action Step A were designed to collect candid feedback from employees, regardless of their decision to remain in or depart from the child welfare sector. The data will be analyzed to identify trends and concerns, and strategies will align with the Core Practice Model to enhance staff engagement, retention, and job satisfaction.

Action Step D was implemented in March 2024 to enhance the Peer Training Program to support new staff learning and job/field readiness. In January 2023, the County initiated a formalized peer training program to enhance the skills of new Child Protective Services (CPS) staff. The program's objective was to engage experienced staff within the child welfare system to mentor, support, and advocate for new employees as they navigate their roles within the organization.

The program consisted of several components, including recruitment and selection, a comprehensive Peer Training Guide, mentorship and support, and supervision and evaluation. Individuals with direct experience in the child welfare system, who have successfully completed probationary periods, serve as peer trainers. They will provide personalized one-on-one support to new staff and offer guidance and advocate to foster a sense of belonging and support among new employees, thereby increasing retention rates and promoting long-term commitments to the agency. Regular meetings between peer trainers, new staff, and supervisors were conducted to assess the effectiveness of the guidance provided and identify any training gaps requiring attention.

In response to staff feedback, the County modified and enhanced the Peer Training Program and developed a Peer Training Guide. The Guide is a universal tool for all peer trainers to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively support and inform new staff. It covers various topics, including office orientation, logistical setup, shadowing opportunities, documentation and paperwork protocols,

and report-writing assistance. Ongoing staff feedback has emphasized the need to further improve the effectiveness of the Peer Training Guide. Efforts are currently focused on enhancing the introduction of court-driven programs and adjusting caseload assignments to better support new staff during the peer training period. While these improvements are expected to strengthen staff retention, supporting data is not yet available.

The Peer Training Program has been improved through the addition of a Peer Training Guide. The Guide is a universal tool for all peer trainers to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively support and inform new staff. It covers various topics, including office orientation, logistical setup, shadowing opportunities, documentation and paperwork protocols, and report-writing assistance.

The rollout of the Peer Training Guide began in June 2023, with full implementation now scheduled for May 2025. Initially shared with peer trainers in the Emergency Response program, the guide was updated to include guidelines on when and how many referrals a new staff member can handle while being mentored by a peer trainer. This structure ensures that new workers receive quality peer training while also applying their skills through active referrals with the support of a peer trainer. As their skills develop, the new worker gradually reduces their time with the peer trainer while taking on additional referrals. Peer trainers in Emergency Response also receive a workload reduction as an incentive for their participation.

The Peer Training Program is a valuable resource when an employee transitions to a different program within the CPS division. Qualitative feedback from new social workers has highlighted the importance of peer training in facilitating the transfer of learning from the classroom to fieldwork. Peer training provides real-life engagement opportunities and immediate feedback and coaching, which equips new workers with the skills needed for success. The approach has been a valuable tool for retention as workers have reported they feel supported, and it helps them create connections in the workplace. Throughout the process, the Workforce Development Unit has maintained close collaboration with programs across the CPS Division to identify essential job functions that necessitate support from peer trainers and new employees. The collaborative effort ensures that the Peer Training Program remains responsive to the dynamic requirements of the organization, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and excellence.

Action Step E, enhance leadership engagement and facilitate dialogue with staff via meet and greet sessions has been implemented and is an ongoing effort. Strategies to enhance staff engagement include leadership presence at key events such as social worker cohort training, supervisor training, and staff celebrations. The visibility builds trust and encourages staff participation. Transparent communication about goals and challenges also fosters trust, while recognizing staff achievements creates a culture of appreciation. Leadership also follows up on staff concerns and implements solutions when possible.

In 2024, three new social worker cohort trainings were held, with leadership and management in attendance. Additionally, there were intern onboarding, mid-year check-in, and graduation events, providing opportunities for new staff and interns to engage with higher-level management. These events allowed staff to ask questions

about career paths and receive guidance as they began their careers with CPS. In March 2025, the Supervisor Training Series concluded with a graduation ceremony, where multiple members of management were present to celebrate the completion of the series by their staff.

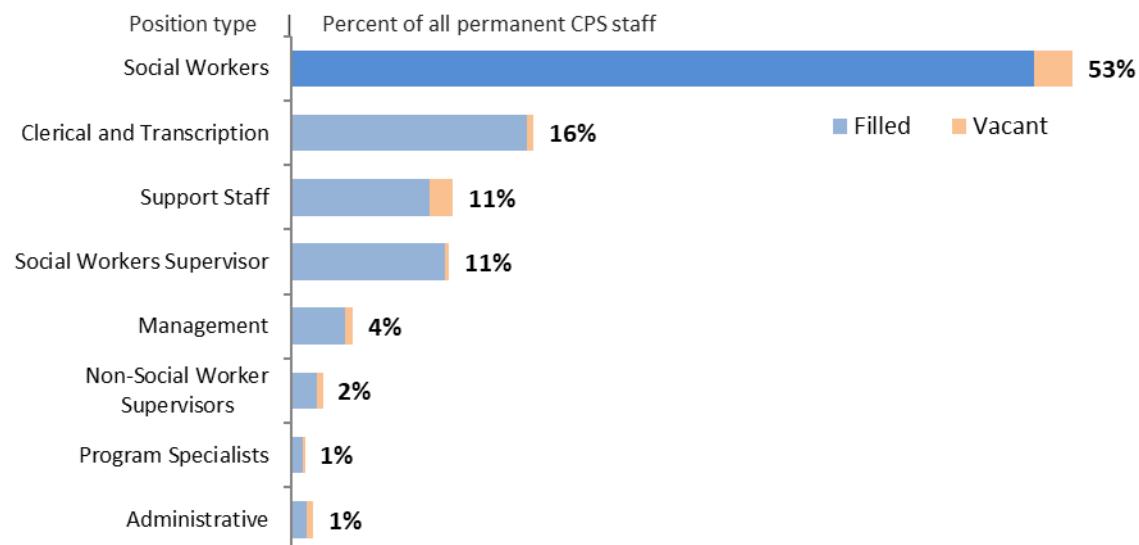
In April 2025, Child Protective Services (CPS) and Quality Management and Administrative Services (QMAS) leadership began hosting optional lunch and brown bag meetings to offer staff the chance to engage with leadership in a relaxed setting. These informal gatherings are designed to strengthen relationships and promote open communication. While attendance is not mandatory, the meetings have featured activities such as origami lessons, allowing staff to connect with leaders, reconnect with colleagues across the bureau, and enjoy a casual atmosphere.

Action Step F, to foster collaboration and teamwork across all CPS Programs through ongoing Bureau/Joint Supervisor and Unit Meetings, began in July 2023. Expectations regarding the frequency of unit meetings were conveyed to supervisors during the Supervisor Training Series, which began in August 2022. The expectations were reiterated in Executive Management Team meetings. The agency holds regular meetings, including Joint Emergency Response Supervisor meetings, Permanency Supervisor meetings, Power Hour, and Bureau/Unit meetings, typically on a monthly or quarterly basis. Regular unit meetings are expected to support staff retention, offer professional development, address secondary trauma, and foster relationships.

The goal of the joint supervisor meetings is to strengthen communication among teams and ensure updates, expectations, and policies are shared consistently. These meetings also provide a platform for supervisors to seek support, share strategies, and celebrate accomplishments. When supervisors are equipped with confidence, comprehensive information, and adequate support, they are more adept to model and transfer these strengths to their teams. This positively influences employee satisfaction and cultivates a long-term commitment to the organization. Feedback from staff shows that the quality of supervision is a key factor in staff retention—often, determining whether employees stay with the agency or choose to leave.

Action Step G seeks to increase staff retention by monitoring progress and modeling accountability to adjust as needed. Implementation started in July 2023 and is still ongoing. By closely monitoring data, such as in various staffing reports, the County can identify trends and patterns related to staff retention, which can inform targeted interventions and adjustments to improve retention rates. In 2024, the average social worker vacancy rate was 12.01%, which has increased to 13.56% currently. Of the vacancies, 11 supervisor positions were filled, with 11 social workers promoted into these roles.

CPS Staffing by Position – March 5, 2025



Workforce Information Services Ecosystem

The County launched the Workforce Information Services Ecosystem (WISE), a centralized web-based platform to streamline workforce management and administrative services for DCFAS employees. WISE improves daily operations by centralizing workforce data and managing staff schedules, leave requests, and absences in one system. Key features include:

- Employee Directory: A search tool for accessing employee profiles, including customizable reporting options
- Real-Time Floor Space Management: Enables users to view and edit office space assignments, ensuring current information on desk availability and layouts.
- Employee Contact Information: Allows for easy editing and viewing of employee contact details for better communication.
- Pending Change Report: Nightly reports for tracking pending workforce changes, aiding in hiring and scheduling
- Vacancy Reports: Lists pending and available positions to inform management on staffing needs.
- Role-Based Access to Reports: Grants authorized users access to specific reports for data-driven staffing decisions.

Overall, WISE focuses on enhancing operational efficiency, communication, and empowering decision-making with timely data.

Leadership Development Academy

The Leadership Development Academy (LDA) is a dynamic opportunity for county leaders to enhance leadership skills, learn global trends impacting leadership, and create cross-department networking relationships. This program provides application plans, and coaching and reflection opportunities to assist with sustaining positive changes. There are 14 courses over a five-month period that address a range of concepts as leaders such as creating cultures of accountability, becoming empathetic and effective communicators, being emotionally intelligent, and creating pipelines of successors.

The Leadership Development Academy (LDA) graduates continue growing through Alumni Field Trips and Alumni Learning Sessions. This program is fundamental to our employees feeling valued and foundational to the transformation of the County's culture. Staff interested in the Leadership Development Academy must first obtain supervisor approval and confirm they have the time and resources to fully participate in the five-month training program.

Promoting Staff Well-being Podcast

In March 2024, the Emergency Response (ER) Promoting Staff Well-being Team launched a monthly internal podcast to foster a stronger connection between leadership and staff. The goal of the podcast is to bridge the gap between management and staff by allowing employees to get to know leaders on a more personal level. The podcast, hosted by a Program Specialist, features conversations with various leadership team members, including the Emergency Response (ER) Division Manager, all Program Managers, Program Planners, the division manager Secretary, and the Administrative Services Officer II for ER.

In addition to regular leadership interviews, the podcast has included special episodes featuring CPS leadership beyond ER. Notable guests included the CPS Deputy Director, Melissa Lloyd, who shared her journey in child welfare. Other episodes featured an LGBTQ+ Resource Specialist and Program Planner, as well as a Kin First Program Planner. The special episodes were shared with all CPS staff. The podcast's growing popularity has sparked significant interest in distributing it beyond the ER division, reflecting its positive reception across the agency.

The initiative was created to provide staff with a convenient way to connect with leadership. The concept was based on the idea that staff could listen to episodes during commutes or downtime, offering an engaging way to build relationships. Prior to the launch, staff expressed interest in hearing directly from leadership, which validated the initiative. Additionally, a survey is available for staff to submit feedback, requests, and suggestions. The feedback received so far has been positive, indicating the podcast's success in achieving its goals.

The ER Frontline team, also known as the Promoting Staff Well-being Team, manages an intranet site where event information and podcast episodes are shared. The team, which includes Planners, Specialists, Social Workers, and clerical staff collaborates effectively to support and promote staff well-being.

In February 2025, the Promoting Staff Well-being Team expanded its reach to serve all CPS staff, regardless of classification. This expansion reflects the team's ongoing commitment to supporting and engaging all staff members.

In March 2025, the team further demonstrated its appreciation for staff by distributing wildflower seed kits to all CPS Social Workers in honor of Social Worker Appreciation Month. Additionally, the team hosted its first-ever Social Worker Appreciation event, which featured a local teen author, poet, and spoken word artist. The event was attended by Social Workers, Supervisors, and Managers, and provided an opportunity for staff to engage in meaningful conversations while enjoying refreshments.

In April 2025, the team will celebrate Administrative Professionals by giving gifts to recognize their valuable contributions to the agency.

These initiatives reflect the team's dedication to enhancing staff well-being, fostering stronger connections between leadership and staff, and showing appreciation for the vital work done by all CPS employees.

METHOD OF EVALUATION AND/OR MONITORING

Staff retention is tracked through the County's Social Worker Analysis Report, which provides data on social worker staffing, including the number of Full-Time Employees (FTE) and vacancies. The report calculates the average monthly vacancy percentage and provides an annual average. The Workforce Development Unit analyzes the data to identify regional trends and determine areas needing additional support. The analysis may lead to increased recruitment efforts, such as career fairs, outreach collaboration with organizations to spread awareness about job opportunities, and host additional hiring events to reduce vacancy rates.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED FROM CDSS

There are no additional needs from the State.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

There are no additional strategies needed to achieve staff retention.

PROGRAM REDUCTION

The County does not anticipate any significant reductions in spending on programs identified in the Sacramento County System Improvement Plan.

STRATEGY 3 (Child Welfare): Implement placement of youth with complex care needs using trauma informed Welcome Homes

Outcome Measures P5: Placement Stability

ANALYSIS

Sacramento County remains committed to ensuring placement stability and permanency for children in foster care. While the county exceeds the national performance benchmark for Placement Stability (P5) with a rate of 3.94, challenges persist, especially for youth with complex needs. Adolescents aged 13 to 17 often struggle with trauma-related behaviors which further complicate placement stability. In light of ongoing shortages of Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTP) and resource homes, Sacramento child welfare demonstrated resilience and innovation in 2023 by establishing Welcome Homes (WH) to provide enhanced support for youth entering care.

Significant milestones include:

- June 2023: The establishment of three Sacramento Welcome Homes, with efforts to contract community providers to become licensed as Temporary Shelter Care Facility (TSCF) providers.
- February 2024: The first contracted TSCF received licensure.

- May 2024: TSCF licenses were approved for three Sacramento Welcome Homes.

ACTION STEP STATUS

Action Step A is to research best practices and develop a plan to implement a family-friendly environment for youth awaiting placement. The Welcome Homes (WH) initiative integrates several best practices for a nurturing, secure, and supportive atmosphere that addresses youth's emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs. Key practices include scheduling meetings within 48-72 hours of youth entry, tracking service linkages, and initiating family-finding processes. The WH staff will also refer youth to Behavioral Health for mental health services if needed. In May 2024, Sacramento Welcome Homes received licensure from Community Care Licensing (CCL). The staff has undergone comprehensive training to meet CCL requirements, ensuring full compliance and the ability to provide high-quality care.

To ensure a structured environment that promotes positive behavior and growth, youth are encouraged to adhere to house rules, attend school, and follow the established schedule. The Welcome Homes environment promotes a sense of belonging, stability, and emotional well-being, with compassionate, well-trained staff providing individualized support. The Child Development Specialists lead group activities, and Engagement Support Workers (ESWs) provide continuous supervision and engagement. This comprehensive approach creates a supportive, structured environment that meets the diverse needs of the youth. The implementation of Action Step A is complete and ongoing.

While there are few county-run Temporary Shelter Care Facilities (TSCFs) in California, the County has taken intentional steps to ensure the Welcome Homes program reflects best practices and meets the required standards outlined in the program statement. The County partnered with Frank Kros, founder of the Kros Learning Group—an organization nationally recognized for its expertise in trauma-informed practices, child development, and systems-level reform. Mr. Kros provided consultation and guidance to help develop the comprehensive program statement that aligns with the State's expectations and incorporates evidence-based approaches.

In addition, the County engaged in learning exchanges with several existing TSCFs throughout the state. These collaborative discussions provided valuable insights into effective practices and common challenges, informing the design and operation of the Welcome Homes model.

Action Step B, implemented in May 2023, focuses on addressing the needs of youth in the Welcome Homes through trauma-informed, temporary placements. The process remains flexible, adapting to the needs of the youth, including preferences for meals, activities, and outings. Direct feedback from the youth is essential in meeting their needs. The care provided prioritizes the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of the children, with continuous supervision and wraparound support services. Efforts also include relationship building, adherence to house rules, and ensuring school attendance. The implementation of Action Step B is ongoing.

During the initial implementation phase, the County faced the challenge of relocating youth from the Warran E. Thornton Youth Center into the Welcome Homes before the formal program statement was finalized. This required concurrent development of the program model, staff training, and care for high-acuity youth. Despite these demands, the County prioritized youth voice as a key component in shaping the program.

Youth feedback has directly informed the County's efforts to create a more family-friendly and responsive environment. Examples include:

- **Personalization and Comfort:** Youth select their bedding and participate in decorating shared spaces, fostering a sense of ownership and belonging.
- **Choice in Meals and Activities:** Monthly planning integrates youth preferences for meals, snacks, and recreational activities.
- **Points System Adaptation:** The incentive system was modified to include gift cards, offering greater flexibility based on youth input.

These changes reflect the county's commitment to trauma-informed care by promoting youth choice, voice, and engagement. Ongoing incorporation of youth feedback will continue to guide improvements and ensure alignment with the program's values of safety, dignity, and family-centered care.

Action Step C began in May 2023 and is underway to identify and train staff and external partners at the Welcome Homes to provide 24-hour onsite support for youth.

The Welcome Home is a licensed Temporary Shelter Care Facility (TSCF) designed for short-term placement, primarily for youth who need additional time to find a suitable long-term placement. While most youth may be immediately placed into a stable living situation, some, especially siblings or older youth, may require more time to establish suitable placement. Youth returning to the Welcome Home from other placements often have complex needs and may require extra resources, particularly if a Qualified Individual (QI) assessment is necessary.

Staff assigned to the Welcome Homes—including Engagement Social Workers, Supervisors, and Child Development Specialists—receive specialized training to provide consistent, 24-hour onsite care and support to youth. The training is designed to align with the responsibilities of those engaged in daily caregiving, ensuring a trauma-responsive, supportive environment. While social workers and support staff do not require the same level of training, they are provided with general program information to support coordination and continuity of care. This approach leverages the strengths of each team member while promoting collaboration across roles to best meet the needs of youth.

The County has offered numerous training sessions, including trauma-informed care, crisis intervention, secondary trauma, and CPR/First Aid, to equip staff and external partners at the Welcome Homes with the necessary skills to provide 24-hour onsite support for youth. These trainings will continue regularly to ensure ongoing professional development and enhance staff expertise in caring for children under the County's care.

Training Requirements and Timelines:

- First 90 Days of Hire:
 - Part 1 Training: 8-hour assessment
 - Part 2 Training: 16-hour assessment
- After 90 Days/Within the First to Second Year of Hire:
 - Part 3 & Part 4 Training: Total of 40 hours for the first year and/or 20 hours for annual training requirements.

The County utilizes a comprehensive tracking spreadsheet housed on Microsoft Teams to monitor training completion for all Welcome Homes staff. The Workforce Development Unit (WDU) supports the maintenance and accuracy of this log. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring their team members complete the required trainings in accordance with regulatory guidelines, allowing for coordinated oversight and compliance.

Action Step D, establish an internal evaluation method to measure the success of the model, was implemented in May 2023 and is partially complete. The County has developed a comprehensive data collection process that includes youth demographics, entry and exit dates from Welcome Homes (WH), assigned workers, Technical Assistance calls, and timely Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings. Data is also gathered and provided to the State regarding the reasons for placement and other key details. Incident Reports are monitored to identify trends and inform targeted staff training or support, analyze implementation, and make necessary improvements to ensure the success of the strategy.

The County identified early trends in incident reports, notably a high number related to power struggles between staff and youth. In response, targeted training was provided on de-escalation and managing power dynamics. As a result, there has been a significant decrease in such incidents, with only a few reported over the past several months.

The County also noted recurring incidents involving contraband. In collaboration with County Counsel and Community Care Licensing (CCL), the county established clear procedures outlining when searches are appropriate. A new policy was implemented that requires supervisor approval for searches and incorporates the Care and Goal Plan to ensure a trauma-informed, youth-centered approach.

These efforts demonstrate the county's commitment to continuous quality improvement and maintaining responsive, effective practices that support the safety and well-being of youth.

Action Step E is the dissemination of Welcome Home information to partners and support staff, began in June 2023 and is ongoing. This action step involves sharing information through collaborative meetings with community partners and staff. Partners include the Sacramento County Office of Education, Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS), The Source, Capital Stars, When Everyone Acts Violence Ends (WEAVE), Engagement Social Workers (ESW), and support staff who have access to accurate and up-to-date information. Youth records and appointments are centralized and confidentially managed on the county network. Staff and partners utilize the

Child Welfare Services/Case Management System and BINTI to handle case information and placement efforts. There are also monthly meetings with Behavioral Health Services (BHS), and active participation in Welcome Homes meetings which occur within 48 hours of a youth's entry into the home.

Meetings with Behavioral Health partners (WRAP, FIT, TBS) occur every other month to address any emerging challenges. In addition, weekly meetings are held with case-carrying staff, supervisors, and managers to discuss strategies for supporting youth at Welcome Homes. Topics covered include placement agreements, placement options, relative connections, available services, and school attendance. For those unable to attend these collaborative meetings, alternative methods for obtaining information include direct communication with the relevant staff or reviewing meeting notes and updates shared through internal channels.

Action Step F implemented on June 1, 2023, involves the ongoing development of policies and procedures for the broader implementation and expansion of the Welcome Homes. The original completion date of June 30, 2023, was delayed due to awaiting CDSS approval of the program statement, which was granted in February 2024. As mentioned in the previous report, the completion date was postponed to December 2024. Currently, eight Welcome Home policies and procedures have been drafted and are under review, including:

- Engagement Social Worker Standards
- Unauthorized Absence Intervention Plan
- Emergency Intervention Plan
- House Rules for the SWH
- Incentivizing Behaviors for the SWH
- Complaint and Grievance Process at the SWH
- Searches for Prohibited Items at the SWH
- Engagement Supervisor Standards

Of these, three policies and procedures have been approved, while five are at various stages of review and approval process. The new projected completion date is December 2025 to allow time for the county's policy and procedure review process.

METHOD OF EVALUATION AND/OR MONITORING

Daily reports track the number of youth entering the Welcome Homes, and weekly collaborative staffing sessions occur with the child welfare placement and case-carrying teams. The teams include Emergency Response Social Workers, Court Services, Permanency and Adoption Social Workers, Engagement Social Workers, Placement Social Workers, Supervisors, and Program Managers. These teams prioritize youth well-being by evaluating the family situation and safety planning. The teams also review placement options, identify kinship resources, and ensure the support and services for the youth. Upon the arrival of new youth, the County may contact CDSS for technical assistance to address any placement barriers.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED FROM CDSS

At this time, there are no additional needs from the State. CDSS remains available to offer support and provide technical assistance (TA) calls as needed.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

There are no additional strategies or action steps needed, at this time, to achieve the goal.

PROGRAM REDUCTION

Considerable funding has been allocated to establish the Welcome Homes, including county funding, Complex Care Funding, and Innovative Model of Care (IMC) rates for designated placements.

PROBATION

STRATEGY 1 (Probation): Develop an intensive Family Finding efforts process to increase family and/or non-related extended family member (NREFM) placements or build lifelong connections to decrease the frequency of absconded youth. The focus will then be on building an intensive Family Finding model.

Outcome Measures P1: Permanency in 12 Months

CSA Baseline Q1 2021: 20.3%

Year 3 [Q3 2024]: 10.0%

Year 3 Target Improvement Goal: 21.0%

ANALYSIS: Probation has assigned a Senior Deputy Probation Officer to conduct intensive family finding starting at the Juvenile Court level. The Senior Deputy Probation Officer also assists Placement officers in locating potential family members and Resource Families as a step-down. The family finding process has resulted in an increase in options to be utilized by the Juvenile Court to release youth from our Youth Detention Facility while pending a placement order or into a home-like environment for their placement. Beginning the process at the Juvenile Court level allows for youth to have natural supports or family members identified at the first point of contact with Probation giving them the ability to be released as soon as their detention hearing and while out-of-home placement is being decided in the Court. The Department utilizes harm reduction strategies to ensure the youth and families are met at a point where they are at and can effectively be involved in the placement process. An example of these processes would be actively engaging the youth and family in Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings. In these meetings families and youth share their voice and choice about the process while sharing issues facing the family system with all the parties involved, which includes a probation representative.

The Department faces several challenges that affect the permanency rate, particularly among the juvenile sex offender population, these youth are often difficult to reunify with their families. Additionally, there is a trend in the courts to assign youth to Non-Minor Dependent (NMD) status for support purposes. Other challenges include, youth committing new crimes and being committed to a higher level of Probation, having multiple absconds, youth reunifying with their families outside of the 12 month

timeframe due to new charges, youth fatalities, and cases being transferred to the Department of Children, Family and Adult Services (DCFAS) jurisdiction.

As a result of these challenges, the effectiveness of our strategies on permanency outcomes over the next 12 months remains uncertain. However, the Department is hopeful that by continuing to develop our processes and action steps, we can increase permanency rates for the youth we serve.

Systemic challenges continue to make home-based care an initial placement or step-down option for Probation foster youth an ongoing challenge. Additional systemic factors include the rigorous requirements to be approved as a Resource Family, particularly for prospective parents who feel it is intrusive and invasive especially for youth nearing the age of majority.

An additional barrier relates to the complex needs of Probation foster youth and the challenges with our ability to place youth with a Resource Family without first addressing their treatment needs through therapeutic interventions in a Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP).

ACTION STEP STATUS:

Action Step A: Opt into UC Davis Center for Excellence to develop an intensive Family Finding efforts process. The Center for Excellence will offer culturally appropriate training and technical assistance to enhance practices, policies, and efforts for family finding, support, and engagement. Probation has sent staff to training focusing on Family Finding and permanency. This action step has an implementation date of 5/2023 and was completed the following month in 6/2023; however, the process is constantly being revised with changes in Department structure and procedures at the Court level. The Courts have shifted family finding orders at various stages in the court case process. In some instances, the family finding request is prior to adjudication even when the recommendation will not be an out of home placement.

During the reporting period, the Department also experienced significant staff turnover, which resulted in structural changes. As a result, family finding requirements now occur at earlier stages of the court case process. To ensure the process is effective in identifying home-based, kin-first options for care in each case, senior management from Juvenile Court and Juvenile Field/Placement Services along with the officers conducting the family finding review process roughly every three months. Efforts to refine the process remain ongoing and will be reflected in future SIP progress reports.

Action Step B: The Seneca contract and internal resources to conduct intensive Family Finding will be used throughout the life of the case. If a family member can be located for support and permanent connection, there is a greater opportunity for placement success and achievement of permanency. A Senior Deputy Probation Officer has been assigned to conduct intensive family findings in collaboration with the assigned Placement officer to locate family members in the area. This officer also works with the assigned Juvenile Court officer to locate potential family members. This action step has an implementation date of 6/2023 and was completed at implementation.

In addition, the Seneca contract is renewed yearly when searches are exhausted. The contract and officer efforts are ongoing, and any changes or successes will be reflected in future SIP progress reports.

Action Step C: Placement officers will receive training in CFT facilitation, with a strength-based focus on permanency. All Placement officers attend CFT Facilitator training as offered by the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC). Probation officers will be able to lead CFTs while youth are in detention, in STRTPs/RFAs and in Transitional Housing. This action step has an implementation date of 5/2023 and as of 12/2024, all placement officers were trained in CFT facilitation. Due to transfers and turnover from promotions, moves, and vacancies, this will be an ongoing process as new staff are rotated through and onboarded.

Action Step D: Increase in the frequency of CFT's, especially for CFT's intended to stabilize and preserve placement, will be encouraged. This will empower youth voices, increase communication between all parties, and support the youth and family in successful reunification. It will also assist in decreasing absconds. Probation works in collaboration with STRTPs and RFAs to increase the amount of CFTs being conducted, often during monthly visits. The case carrying Probation Officers encourage STRTPs and RFAs to request CFTs through various means of correspondence (email, phone, or face to face conversations) as needs arise. Emergency and Placement preservation CFTs are also being conducted as necessary. This action step had an implementation date of 5/2023 and was completed as of 6/2024. This step is ongoing due to the nature of youth placed in an STRTP program and the needs which would require CFT intervention. Placement officers encourage an increase in the frequency of CFT's based on youth and family needs.

Action Step E: Action steps will be disseminated to CFT members following a CFT to summarize what was discussed and assign tasks or goals as necessary. This will increase family participation, provide transparency, and clear communication to all parties, and empower the youth with the goal of getting the youth to engage in the process. This action step has an implementation date of 7/2023 and was completed as of 12/2024.

All Placement Probation Officers who conduct or participate in CFTs ensure the action steps are disseminated out to members of the CFT following the meeting. If the CFT is run by a provider, the format in which they distribute the meeting information, action steps, and summary of the meeting are dependent on the CFT training that provider received. Based off their CFT training, this dictates the format and timelines of meeting notes and information distribution. The Probation Officer will follow up with the CFT facilitator to ensure meeting information, action steps, and summary are sent out in a timely manner.

Action Step F: Implement a post-CFT satisfaction survey.

A post-CFT satisfaction survey following each CFT in which Probation participates has yet to be developed due to changing caseloads and shifts in responsibilities. Probation understands the importance of identifying strengths and areas of improvement for better outcomes. Placement staff are trained as CFT facilitators, and the goal is to assign a Deputy Probation Officer to draft a post-CFT satisfaction survey to gain

valuable feedback. Placement will collaborate with other counties to determine best practices when developing a post-CFT satisfaction survey. A post-CFT satisfaction survey will be provided following each CFT in which Probation participates. This will ensure probation receives feedback in a timely manner, in an effort to implement any necessary changes to improve permanency in "real time." Placement staff are evaluating satisfaction survey models. Once selected, the Department will implement this CFT survey in June 2025 after each CFT.

Action Step G: A "warm hand-off" will occur prior to a change in probation officer. This will decrease the concern in the frequency of changes in probation officers, which will help establish trust and rapport between the youth and the officer. Staff members who are changing caseloads due to promotion or transfer provide the incoming officer with vital information about cases. Officers will travel with the new officer to meet with the youth and provider. This "warm hand-off" allows for a seamless transition between officers while maintaining the treatment and supervision goals of the youth in our care. This step had an implementation date of 7/2023 and was completed at the same time. Placement Officers continue to ensure a "warm hand-off" as it is essential to maintain/build rapport and connection with youth in our care.

Action Step H: Armed officers will supervise Placement caseloads. Doing so will alleviate staffing concerns when attempting to arrange placement operations. There is a team of Supervising Probation Officers, Senior Deputy Probation Officers and Probation Officers who are armed and who are currently supervising wards and non-wards in STRTPs, Resource Families and transitional housing. Officers will receive the same training as unarmed officers in the Placement unit and are considered Placement officers. The training is designed specifically to acclimate officers to issues such as STRTPs, RFAs, Quality Caseworker Visits, Child and Family Team Facilitation, and CWS/CMS data entry. This action step had an initial implementation date of 10/2021 and was completed and made a part of operations in 10/2023. Although complete, this step is also considered ongoing.

Action Step I: Armed placement officers will conduct operations for warrant execution, with the goal of decreasing absconds and re-engaging youth to probation services. Re-engaging youth with probation services will decrease the length of time it takes to achieve permanency. Armed officers conduct operations to be able to monitor caseloads and effectively re-engage youth in court-ordered services once they are located and returned under supervision of the probation officer.

Implementing warrant execution allows probation to get the youth back under supervision and re-engaged in services to address their needs. It also allows for communication amongst the youth and officer to identify what worked and didn't work at an STRTP or RFA home. This open discussion gives the youth a voice in the process empowering the youth to take responsibility for their own needs ensuring enhanced services are identified to better suit the youth and reduce future absconds. This step was implemented on 3/2023 and was completed as of 12/2024.

Action Step J: Placement officers will receive continuous quality improvement (CQI) training, after which probation will develop a CQI tool to evaluate and monitor

progress toward achieving an increase in permanency in 12 months. The CQI tool will evaluate data and ongoing stakeholder feedback. This will assist in determining whether the strategy and action steps selected are successful in achieving increased permanency in 12 months and, if not, what the data trends or feedback suggests may be more successful. This step has not been implemented as a continuous quality improvement (CQI) tool has not been implemented in the Placement Division. Probation's goal is to develop a CQI evaluation tool and monitor youth progress to achieve permanency in 12 months. Officers will continue to attend a minimum of 40 hours of relevant training. Although the initial implementation date was 3/2023, the Department evaluated the status of the action step and realized the development of the tool and training had not fully begun until 4/2024 and made adjustments to the SIP chart. The development of a CQI evaluation tool will be an intensive process to evaluate outcome measures and build a reporting functionality into our data systems. Placement staff will actively seek out models and have discussions with CQI trainers for the best tools to evaluate and monitor progress toward achieving an increase in permanency rates. The expected completion date of the CQI tool is 12/2025.

METHOD OF EVALUATION AND/OR MONITORING

Probation administration will monitor the above strategy and action steps to ensure forward progress. Action steps will be regularly reviewed and monitored by the Division Assistant Chief Deputy in monthly meetings with supervisors and staff to adjust timelines and assess barriers to implementing the steps. The Division's Placement Monitor will engage with STRTP management on how to better conduct CFTs and receive their feedback on the development of a post CFT survey. The goal is for CFTs to help preserve placement and avoid absconds. The post CFT surveys will be deployed after each CFT Probation participates in to receive valuable feedback from the participants, including the voice of the youth and family. Feedback received from the post CFT surveys will be utilized to enhance the effectiveness of the CFTs Probation participates in, with the goal to decrease the number of youth absconding and increasing the rate of permanency within 12 months of removal. A more effective CFT will allow for the youth voice and choice to make improvements to their placement care and treatment. The monthly meetings will allow all staff to provide input from their assigned programs relative to issues with permanency. Placement Officers will continuously engage with youth, the youth's family, and STRTP to locate relatives for effective step-down care.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED FROM CDSS

There are no additional needs from the State.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

There are no additional strategies or action steps at this time needed to achieve the goal.

PROGRAM REDUCTION

The County does not anticipate any significant reduction to funding the strategy.

Options are being explored to enhance funding through State Grants and other revenue streams.

OBSTACLES AND BARRIERS TO FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

CHILD WELFARE

There are no anticipated obstacles or barriers to future implementation of strategies or action steps.

PROBATION

There are no anticipated obstacles or barriers for future implementation of strategies or action steps.

PROMISING PRACTICES/ OTHER SUCCESSES

CHILD WELFARE

S1: Maltreatment in Foster Care

The national performance benchmark for S1 Maltreatment in Foster Care is 9.07 or lower. Ongoing efforts to address S1 data include the revised handling of Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) referrals and the use of CWS/CMS occurrence fields to accurately capture maltreatment dates. While the County recently experienced an increase in its maltreatment rate, a case review process identified that most of the increase was due to data entry issues, particularly incorrect removal dates. In response, the data entry team has implemented a proactive approach, generating monthly reports on the first of each month to identify discrepancies in cases with large gaps between removal and placement dates. The team will cross-check the information with the Child Data Removal Sheet and Placement Changes. At the time the data was originally pulled for the SIP, the S1 data for year 3 was 8.63. Since then, discrepancies in the data were identified and corrected. As of the most recent extract of data (Quarter 4 2024), the year 3 data is now 5.83.

S1 Maltreatment in Foster Care

Baseline (Q1 2021)	Year Three (Q3 2024)	Most Recent State Performance	National Performance Value
5.53	8.63	7.27 per 100,000 days	≤ 9.07 per 100,000 days

S2: Recurrence of Maltreatment

Sacramento County's current performance in Outcome Measure S2, Recurrence of Maltreatment, has improved since the baseline. As reported by UCB CCWIP, the

baseline performance from Q1 2021 was 8.5%. According to the UCB CCWIP, the current performance in Q3 2024 is 7.0%.

In Year 2, the County's performance was 9.9%. Several factors contributed to the underperformance in the recurrence of maltreatment, including the lingering effects of service disruptions caused by COVID-19, difficulties in fully restoring staff levels, and the ongoing process of rebuilding community support. The staff shortage also impeded the capacity to conduct PCFT meetings. It delayed efforts to address the needs of children and families. Further, the lack of suitable community resources for older youth with high acuity led to an increase in child welfare referrals. The County has worked to resume pre-COVID operations, with recovery efforts focused on strengthening services, leading to performance improvement. During this reporting period, the County exceeded its goal by ensuring that 41 additional youths did not experience a recurrence of maltreatment.

S2 Recurrence of Maltreatment

Baseline (Q1 2021)	Year Three (Q3 2024)	Most Recent State Performance	National Performance Value
8.5%	7.0%	7.8%	≤ 9.7%

Families First Prevention Services/Families First Prevention Services Act

The second annual prevention convening occurred in February 2025, during which Sacramento County participated with local stakeholders, tribes, and individuals with lived experience to discuss the status of the plan and outline the next steps.

Sacramento County implemented Family First Prevention Services (FFPS) in 2022, locally known as Family First Sacramento. The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), enacted on February 9, 2018, marked a significant shift for public agencies, including Child Welfare and Probation, emphasizing proactive prevention strategies rather than crisis response. The primary objective is to preserve family unity, reduce interactions with the child welfare system, and strengthen communities. FFPSA funding supports the use of approved Evidence-Based Practices to prevent foster care placements and juvenile justice involvement. It additionally promotes collaboration and the use of trauma-informed, evidence-based practices to maintain family cohesion.

Simultaneously, California introduced a time-limited block grant to help counties plan and implement primary-level prevention programs. The block grant encourages counties to develop prevention plans aligned with the State's vision of creating "an integrated state-wide system that supports families to provide safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for children and youth." Participating counties must create a Comprehensive Prevention Plan (CPP) that includes collaboration among child welfare, probation, behavioral health, local education offices, community-based service providers, family resource centers, Child Abuse Prevention Council, and those with lived experience (parents and youth), and tribes.

The strategy addresses social determinants of child and family health and well-being to proactively support families before their involvement with child welfare and juvenile justice agencies. In Sacramento, various partners such as Child Protective Services (CPS), Probation, Health Services (Behavioral Health Services which includes Mental Health & Substance Use Prevention and Treatment (SUPT) and Public Health Services), Human Assistance, First 5 Sacramento Commission, Sacramento County Office of Education, Wilton Rancheria's Tribal Office and Casey Family Programs have collaborated to collect and analyze relevant data. The inclusive process engaged the community and incorporated input from service providers and individuals with lived experiences, such as parents and youth, to develop Sacramento's CPP, known as Family First Sacramento.

CPS Data:

- African American and American Indian/Alaska Native populations show disproportionate representation in the child welfare system, exceeding their community representation at most decision points.
- Native American children are overrepresented 2-3 times their population in 5 of 9 CPS decision points.
- African American children are overrepresented 3-4 times their population in all 9 CPS decision points.
- Most investigated and substantiated referrals, as well as new cases and entries into foster care, involve families with children aged 0-5.
- The top six (6) zip codes with the highest percentage of African American children (age 0-5) in CPS involvement are 95821, 95825, 95823, 95828, 95815, and 95838 (communities of Arden Arcade, Florin/Valley Hi, and North Sacramento/Del Paso Heights).

Family First Sacramento will prioritize efforts on African American children (ages 0-5) and their families in designated zip codes as the initial focus for child welfare. Additionally, Sacramento will concentrate on Native American children (ages 0-5) and their families due to their overrepresentation in the child welfare system. While these populations are the primary focus, the continuous effort are aimed on addressing the needs of all overrepresented groups.

On April 20, 2023, CDSS approved the Sacramento County CPP. The CPP strategies include:

- Increase Accessibility to Multiple Social Services

During the development of the Sacramento County Prevention Plan, feedback revealed a lack of service accessibility in some communities. While some areas had resources, they were not universally accessible. Sacramento County explored the option of a mobile unit as a potential solution. However, after consulting with partners and assessing feasibility, it was determined that a mobile unit was not viable. The Family First Team regrouped with partners and the community to explore alternative methods of creating accessibility within each community. The initial shift focused on a similar model, however without "wheels". Efforts were put forth to move in this direction, and a date was solidified; however, agency resources necessitated a pause. In the interim,

community voice was lifted which articulated an ongoing need for additional supports and funding for essential services. The demand for additional concrete resources, along with the requirement of having a child between the ages of 0-5, has created a barrier to fully supporting families. As one participant stated, "I have six-year-old, and this is the only avenue I have for help. By one year I will fall into being homeless." Based on community input and the growing needs identified by both providers and recipients, discussions are underway to allocate funds to address the challenges and better support families. Additionally, age criteria adjustments are being explored as a key engagement approach is listening to community and valuing their feedback regarding their assessment of community needs.

- Guaranteed Income Pilot & Evaluation

Family First Sacramento dedicated \$2,500,000 to two contractors to provide implementation and fund distribution services. The monies additionally included an evaluation of a guaranteed income pilot project referred to as the Family First Economic Support Pilot (FFESP). Contracts were finalized in 2024, and an application period was open from September 30 to October 13, 2024. The initial goal was to start distributing funds to 200 families in December 2024. However, while the eligibility criteria was revisited, the pilot experienced delays due to some contract amendments, which are still in the process of final negotiations. There will likely be some additional funds added to both contracts to support implementation and evaluation of the pilot. The final amount is still pending.

The FFESP eligible population was expanded from the initial application period, to include families caring for children ages 0-5 from all ethnicities who live in one of the identified zip code communities and have a household income under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Once the contract and budget amendments are finalized, a second application period will be opened to allow families who meet the expanded eligibility criteria to apply. After the second application period closes, families will be randomly selected and enrolled into the pilot. After officially enrolling in the pilot, families will participate in an individualized benefit review process to understand any possible impacts the guaranteed income may have on existing benefits. Families enrolled into the treatment group will receive 12 months of unrestricted monthly cash payments of \$725 starting approximately 6-8 weeks after the second application period closes. To ensure the FFESP is accessible to the community, child welfare services collaborated with Wilton Rancheria and local community-based entities like the Community Incubator Leads (CILs), the Neighborhood Wellness Foundation and Family Resource Centers (FRCs) to raise awareness, build trust, and support families throughout the application process. Families will also continue to be connected to community-based organizations as needed throughout the pilot period, to address any identified needs. The evaluation component of the pilot will utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, interviews, administrative data review and a collaborative filmmaking opportunity. Prior research has shown that

Guaranteed Income and direct cash transfer programs lead to positive outcomes, including increased employment rates, increased stability and quality of housing, positive educational outcomes, improved food security, enhanced parent-child interactions, and positive impacts on mental health. Some research has also shown that basic income also reduces referrals for child neglect and physical abuse. The FFESP is committed to honoring families' agency to make decisions that are best for their family to meet their individualized needs. The FFESP is based upon the assumption that if families can meet their basic needs, they can go beyond surviving and begin thriving.

- Immediate Funding for Concrete Needs in Times of Crisis with Evaluation Component

Addressing concrete needs during times of crisis, also known as basic needs or flexible funds, is a crucial aspect of support. This funding assists with various expenses, including housing, transportation, employment, education, children's needs, safety, and more. The intended process involves contracted community-based organizations who collaborate with families to determine specific needs. Subsequently, funding is provided directly to the family to address the family's financial challenges.

Identified as a primary child abuse prevention strategy in the Comprehensive Prevention Plan (CPP), funded by the California State FFPS Block Grant, Family First Sacramento (FFS) will dedicate \$2,520,000 to three contracted providers—Community Incubator Leads (CILs), Family Resource Centers (FRCs), and the Neighborhood Wellness Foundation, in focus communities. The investment seeks to strengthen families and communities by providing concrete supports to enhance the family's ability to keep their family together while receiving support.

Providers will identify and fund families in need, whether they have been referred by CPS, are receiving services from other agencies, or self-referred from the community. The funds, addressing immediate needs, will be provided through various methods, including checks, credit cards, electronic payments, or vendor gift cards. In partnership with contracted providers, FFS has developed a data tracking system and initiated support to families within identified neighborhoods.

The goal is to support families and decrease CPS referrals, substantiated referrals, and entries/re-entries into foster care. To evaluate this strategy's impact, FFS is expanding a County contract with Applied Survey Research (ASR), focusing on decreasing CPS referrals, substantiations, and foster care entries. The qualitative research explores how the resources contribute to families' well-being, stability, or self-sufficiency.

Community organizations reported that, as of February 2025, a total of \$877,029, out of the allotted \$2,621,347 has been distributed into the community by the three contracted agencies, The highest requested category has been for rental and mortgage assistance. The agencies involved continue

to advocate for the community members and hope to receive continued funding to meet the ongoing needs of families within the community. It is important to note that there continues to be a request for additional funds, along with concerns regarding limitations with the 0-5 age criteria. Several sites have exhausted their allocated funds and have reported that the financial support provided has made a significant impact on families, preventing further hardship and involvement with Child Welfare. At the 2025 Statewide Prevention Convening, a single father shared how the funds changed the trajectory of his life with his daughter, preventing them from becoming homeless and/or involved with CPS. He indicated that had his daughter barely missed the age cutoff, the outcome would have been different. The ability to provide upfront support, not only offers direct relief to families, but also results in potential cost savings for the agency, including staff resources, placement funds, service dollars, transportation, visitation, and more. However, the most crucial impact is maintaining family unity and reducing further trauma.

- Mandated Child Abuse Reporter Training (Diversity Equity Inclusion added to MCART)

In reviewing our data, families of color are more often reported to child welfare by Mandated Reporters, than are white families. Bias and over-vigilance can play a role in families of color being over-reported and yet does not always provide opportunity for referrals to services and supports to help strengthen families. It is key for mandated reporters to understand diversity, equity and inclusion and the impact of race/ethnicity and poverty when they are making reports of abuse or neglect. It is additionally important to understand the resources available in the community that can be of help to families. Collaborative efforts with the Child Abuse Prevention Center (CAPC) to enhance the Mandated Child Abuse Reporter Training (MCART) have been made to introduce a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) lens and provide community information support. On September 26, 2023, the Board of Supervisors approved updating the training to include equity-focused curriculums, addressing implicit bias, and educating reporters on how to distinguish neglect from poverty which will foster a more informed and equitable reporting approach. The contract for updating the training materials with Sacramento's Child Abuse Prevention Center has been executed and the contract end date is December 31, 2026.

Child Abuse Prevention Center has contracted with an outside consultant, Romero Davis. Collaborative meetings with CAPC, the Department and Mr. Davis have occurred to outline the shared vision and desired outcome of a Race Equity Impact Analysis. This vision also includes contributing to updating the curriculum with the gained knowledge and data from the Race Equity Impact Analysis. A partnership between CAPC and the Department resulted in a list of key internal and external partners to include in the analysis.

- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Institutional Analysis

The DEIB initiative was designed to evaluate the department's policies, procedures, hiring practices, and organizational culture to improve its culturally responsive approach to family interactions and decision-making.

Since the last report period, the County has successfully completed the competitive procurement process for the DEIB Organizational Assessment and selected Equity and Wellness Institute LLC as the contracted vendor. The selection was based on the vendor's strong regional expertise, their tailored approach to Sacramento County's child welfare needs, and a proven commitment to community engagement.

The Board of Supervisors is scheduled to approve the expenditure agreement on May 13, 2025. The contract will authorize \$350,000 in FFPS State Block Grant funds to support the DEIB Organizational Assessment, covering the period from contract execution through June 30, 2026. Department staff are currently working with the contractor to finalize the agreement. The draft Scope of Services has already been completed.

The DEIB Organizational Assessment will focus on evaluating the integration of DEIB principles within the policies, workforce training, and service delivery of the Child Protective Services Division. The key components of the assessment include:

- Analysis of racial disparities in child welfare outcomes, particularly concerning Black/African American and American Indian/Alaska Native families.
- Stakeholder engagement through listening sessions and focus groups with County staff, community partners, and families.
- Evaluation of workforce policies and training, assessing DEIB integration to identify strengths and gaps.
- Assessment of data collection systems to identify barriers in tracking racial disparities.
- Development of evidence-based recommendations to improve racial equity, workforce training, and service delivery.

The following outlines the next steps and timeline for implementation of the DEIB Organizational Assessment:

- May 13, 2025: Board of Supervisors approval.
- June 2025: Contract execution and kickoff meeting with Equity and Wellness Institute LLC.
- July - September 2025: Stakeholder engagement, data collection, and initial assessment activities.
- October - December 2025: Development of preliminary findings and recommendations.
- January - June 2026: Implementation planning and final report submission.

- **Increase Childcare Capacity**
The SIP Year 1 and 2 report highlighted significant concerns from parents in targeted zip codes about the shortage of childcare slots and long waiting lists for subsidy assistance at Child Action. Additionally, data reveals that there was a clear need for childcare services during evenings and weekends. In response

to these issues, the Board of Supervisors approved a contract with Child Action, Inc. in November 2023 which was formalized in December 2023. The contract expanded childcare availability during both traditional and non-traditional hours. Funds were allocated directly to the childcare community to efficiently support providers with time-limited Family First Prevention funding. This approach addressed immediate needs while enhancing both capacity and quality. The strategy included two key components:

- Fiscal incentives were provided to childcare providers in six targeted zip code areas to cover basic childcare costs and encourage extended hours (after 6:00 p.m. and before 7:00 a.m.). Additional incentives were offered for attending trauma-informed care workshops.
- The trauma-informed care curriculum was offered to providers who might not have otherwise participated in such training.

As of December 2024, the Building Childcare Capacity strategy issued 1,214 fiscal incentives totaling \$899,600. It also provided trauma-informed care and related childcare classes to 865 attendees (duplicated total, as providers were required to attend at least two classes to receive additional incentives). The classes included:

- Family First - Nurturing Children's Development through Trauma Informed Care Practices (Virtual)
- Family First - Calming Hour (Virtual)
- Family First - Introduction to Trauma Informed Care Part 1 (Virtual)
- Family First - Introduction to Trauma Informed Care Part 2 (Virtual)
- Family First - Self-Care Toolkit (Virtual)
- Family First - Self-Care Begins with You (Virtual)
- Family First - Revealing Culture to Children with Books (Virtual)
- Family First - Safe Sleep Part 1 (Virtual)
- Family First - Safe Sleep Part 2 (Virtual)
- Family First - Vital Role of Play in Early Childhood (Virtual)

From January to December 2024, the number of Family Childcare Homes increased from 592 to 723. The total childcare capacity in the six targeted zip code areas grew from 5,266 to 6,231 available spots. By December 20, 2024, 723 Family Childcare Homes offered extended childcare hours.

Black Child Legacy Campaign

The Black Child Legacy Campaign's Community Incubator Lead (CIL) initiative in Sacramento actively addresses the concern of disproportionate African American child deaths. Sacramento County supports this effort by providing an out-stationed Informal Supervision social workers at each CIL site to provide guidance on the child welfare practices aimed at fostering transparency and building trust within the community. Through the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) approach, the CILs provide comprehensive, ongoing support and preventive services to families. The model consistently enhances community visibility and ensures continued access to essential services.

Sacramento Cultural Broker Program (SCCB)

Sacramento County Cultural Broker Program (SCCB) addresses the disproportionate representation of African American (AA) children in the child welfare system. Cultural Brokers serve as liaisons to engage AA families who are involved CPS provide support to navigate the system. Sacramento County leans on training and mentorship from Margaret Jackson, founder of Cultural Brokers, Inc., a promising practice featured in the Child Welfare Clearinghouse to facilitate program development. Since its inception in 2018, the program has expanded to support reunification, prevent entries into foster care, increase relative placements and address various challenges faced by AA families.

The program contracts with three community agencies to provide Cultural Broker services to Sacramento County children, youth, and families. Through consistent trainings and implementation team meetings, Sacramento County collaborates with providers to ensure that the County maintains the fidelity of the model and monitor program effectiveness. As of February 2025, SCCB has served 932 families impacting 2,263 children, demonstrating positive outcomes in reunification, improved communication with CPS, and enhanced understanding of safety risks. A sample data review of 518 families who received Cultural Broker services from 2018 (program inception) to February 2023 and had their Child Welfare case closed revealed that 96% (499) had a successful closure (emergency response referral closed, reunification or permanency achieved). Sacramento County is committed to ongoing evaluation efforts aimed at capturing the program's impact and, to this end, has recently contracted with a research agency to conduct an evaluability assessment of the program to determine if the program is ready for evaluation.

PROBATION

The Probation Department has implemented other promising practices to help reduce the number of youth in need of out-of-home placement. We have several existing service contracts with community-based organizations to provide services to youth and families in their homes through the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Intervention Services. This allows providers to be onsite with our internal programming officer in order to better assess and target specific needs with a wide array of services to meet the varying needs of youth versus only having one or two intervention options. With this model, youth have access to an array of family-based intervention services such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TFCBT), Seeking Safety, Seven Challenges for AOD, youth and family advocates, and life skills. The providers also assist in connecting to other services if assessed as needing additional care, for example, mental health or Medi-Cal services such as Flexible Integrated Treatment (FIT). We also operate the Juvenile Justice Diversion and Treatment Program (JJDTP), which provides a variety of mental health services and support to juvenile justice youth and youth displaying at-risk behaviors. Through the use of such services, we have been able to support positive change in the family setting and in the community thereby allowing the youth

we supervise to remain in their home.

The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) helps coordinate services for foster youth and their family through evidence-based mental health programs. The program's focus is a preventative measure to ensure youth and their families receive the most appropriate treatment and support. In addition, while initiating services early, the hope is to keep more youth away from the need for an out-of-home placement. FFPSA offers the Department the opportunity to embed evidence-based and promising practices such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and High Fidelity Wraparound upstream to impact youth and their families before formal justice system involvement. These treatment interventions will be the foundation for further preventative and crisis intervention services in the near future in collaboration with system partners, providers, and the community.

An additional preventative measure is the Ending Girls' Incarceration (EGI) initiative, in partnership with Vera and Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR), dedicated to eliminating the incarceration of girls and gender-expansive youth in the country's juvenile justice system. Based on EGI's technical assistance approach and experience, EGI has developed a curriculum for how jurisdictions can disrupt the drivers of girls' incarceration through court-based policy, practice changes, and investments in community-based services.

The existing contract with the Seneca Family of Agencies allows resource families to be located and utilized in the place of a congregate care setting. Exhaustive search results are obtained by the Court and Placement officers and shared with other officers to begin the process of locating potential family members. Additionally, a Senior Deputy Probation Officer is assigned to fill this role. Keeping youth and families together and engaged in services tailored to address the needs of youth and families through a trauma informed and strength-based approach is best practice. Targeted services and support received will transition the youth and family in order to maintain and hopefully enhance the gains achieved during the youth's treatment period.

CDSS and Daley Solutions support agencies in their efforts to identify interested families in the community using hyper-targeted digital ads. The goal of this effort is to focus on youth with specific needs for placement without compromising the confidentiality of the youth. From May 2021 to November 2022, Probation utilized Daley Solutions to locate potential Resource Families for the youth committed to placement. Advertisements were sent to several social media platforms with vital information concerning probation youth. The campaigns lead to several hundred potential leads for resource families. This pilot program led to probation youth being taken in by resource families as a result of the social media campaigns. Daley Solutions continues to provide support for foster youth by locating able and willing resource families.

OUTCOME MEASURES NOT MEETING STATE/NATIONAL STANDARDS

CHILD WELFARE

Sacramento County Child Welfare chose to prioritize federal outcome measures P1, P4, and P5 for the SIP strategies. Analyses for the measures can be found in the prior section "Current Performance Towards SIP Improvement Goals".

For the remaining national and state outcomes, the table below shows Year 3 performance with CFSR Round 4 national performance values. The blue highlights indicate that Child Welfare performed equal to or better than the national values, and the red highlights indicate that Child Welfare performed below the national values, for their respective years.

SUMMARY OF CHILD WELFARE DATA FOR PERFORMING AND UNDERPERFORMING MEASURES

*** These measures indicate areas of focus for this SIP Report.

** Most Recent State Performance is the combined total for all counties in California.

Measures highlighted in blue indicate areas that are meeting the Federal or State performance goal.

Measures highlighted in red indicate areas that are not meeting the Federal or State performance goal.

Baseline Quarter vs. Current Performance Quarter

Measure	Baseline (Q1 2021)	Year Three (Q3 2024)	Desired Direction	Most Recent State Performance**	CFSR Round 4 National Performance Value
S1 Maltreatment in Foster Care	5.53 (04/20-03/21)	8.63 (10/23-09/24)	↓	7.27 per 100,000 days	≤ 9.07 per 100,000 days
S2 Recurrence of Maltreatment	8.5% (04/19-03/20)	7.0% (10/22-09/23)	↓	7.8%	≤ 9.7%
P1 Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Care ***	41.3% (04/19-03/20)	43.7% (10/22-09/23)	↑	34.2%	≥ 35.2%
P2 Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Care 12 – 23 Months	44.0% (04/20-03/21)	54.4% (10/23-09/24)	↑	46.1%	≥ 43.8%
P3 Permanency In 12 Months for Children in Care 24 Months or More	22.5% (04/20-03/21)	30.3% (10/23-09/24)	↑	36.9%	≥ 37.3%
P4 Reentry to Foster Care ***	15.6% (04/19-03/20)	13.4% (10/22-09/23)	↓	8.2%	≤ 5.6%
P5 Placement Stability ***	4.11 (04/20-03/21)	3.94 (10/23-09/24)	↓	3.79 per 1,000 days	≤ 4.48 per 1,000 days

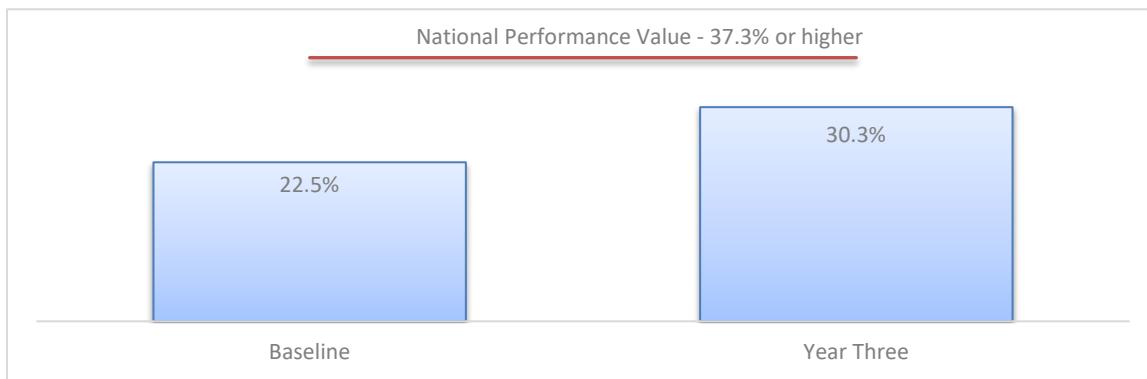
Data Source: UCB CCWIP Q3 2024

Measure	Baseline (Q1 2021)	Year Three (Q3 2024)	Desired Direction	Most Recent State Performance**	National Standard or Goal
2B Timely Response (Immediate Response)	94.8% (01/21-03/21)	93.9% (07/23-09/23)	↑	95.8%	≥ 90.0%
2B Timely Response (10 Days)	92.6% (01/21-03/21)	88.0% (07/23-09/23)	↑	89.3%	≥ 90.0%
2F – Timely Visits (Out of Home)	66.8% (04/20-03/21)	87.6% (10/22-09/23)	↑	93.7%	≥ 95.0%
2F – Timely Visits (Out of Home) – In Residence	92.7% (04/20-03/21)	86.7% (10/22-09/23)	↑	83.2%	≥ 50.0%

Data Source: UCB CCWIP Q3 2024

P3 – Permanency in 12 months (24+ months in care)

This measure is defined as “*Of all children in care on the first day of the 12-month period who had been in care for 24 months or more, what percent discharged to permanency within 12 months?*” The national performance value is greater than or equal to 37.3%.



Sacramento County is currently experiencing challenges in meeting the P3 measure, primarily due to a combination of factors impacting youth with high needs entering care. Pre-teens and teens, who make up more than half of the P3 population, exhibit the lowest performance on this measure. These youth, including those who were previously adopted, often present complex behavioral and emotional needs that exceed the capacity of existing placements. In many cases, adoptive parents and

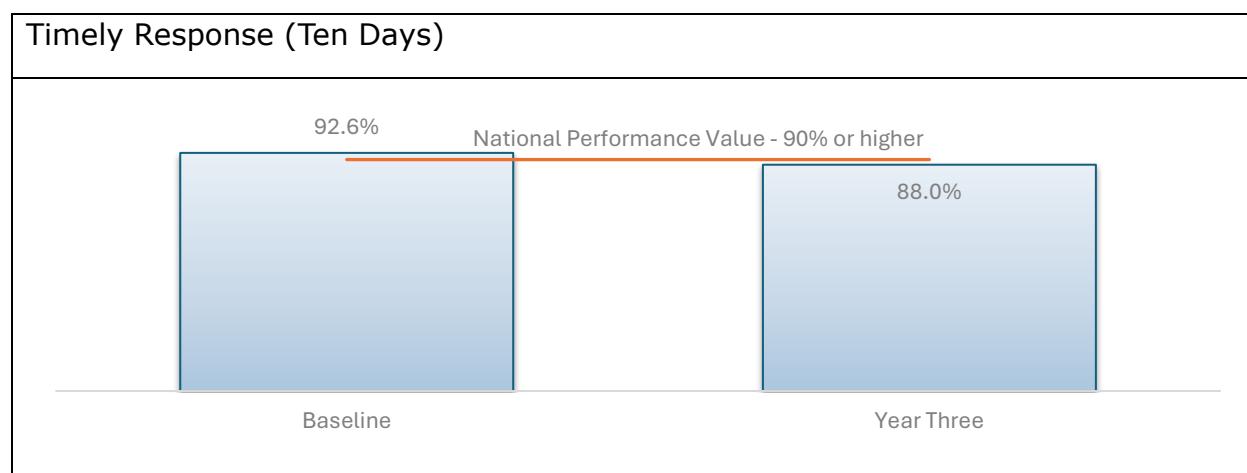
caregivers are seeking support but find themselves overwhelmed and unable to adequately address these needs, leading to a need for further intervention.

Moreover, the lack of specialized services and support for these youth present challenges and highlights the opportunity for growth and improvement in strengthening the resources available to both staff and caregivers. The difficulty in finding appropriate placements further compounds the challenge, with some youth remaining in care but not in actual placements, including those who are AWOL (absent without leave). This creates a reliance on defaulting to CPS care, which can strain resources and limit the availability of timely, appropriate placements for these youth.

The existing shelter system is not always equipped to meet the specific needs of these youth, and there are ongoing challenges both statewide and nationwide. Additionally, the mismatch between Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) rates and the actual needs of youth in care presents a significant barrier to achieving placement stability and permanency. These interconnected factors contribute to the county's underperformance in the P3 measure.

2B - Timely Response (10-Day Compliance)

This measure is defined as: "Of all referrals received each quarter (10 day or IR), what percent had a qualified first contact in the designated time frame?"



Sacramento County's performance in Outcome 2B (10-day response) has declined since the baseline. According to UCB CCWIP, the baseline performance in Q1 2021 was 92.6% for timely 10-day responses. As of Q3 2024, there was 5% decrease in performance now with 88% of 10-day responses being timely.

Several factors contribute to the current performance challenges, including decreased workforce, high caseloads, and high staff turnover. The county is addressing this by hosting ongoing recruitment and hiring events to reduce vacancies and ensure a steady pool of qualified candidates for workforce retention.

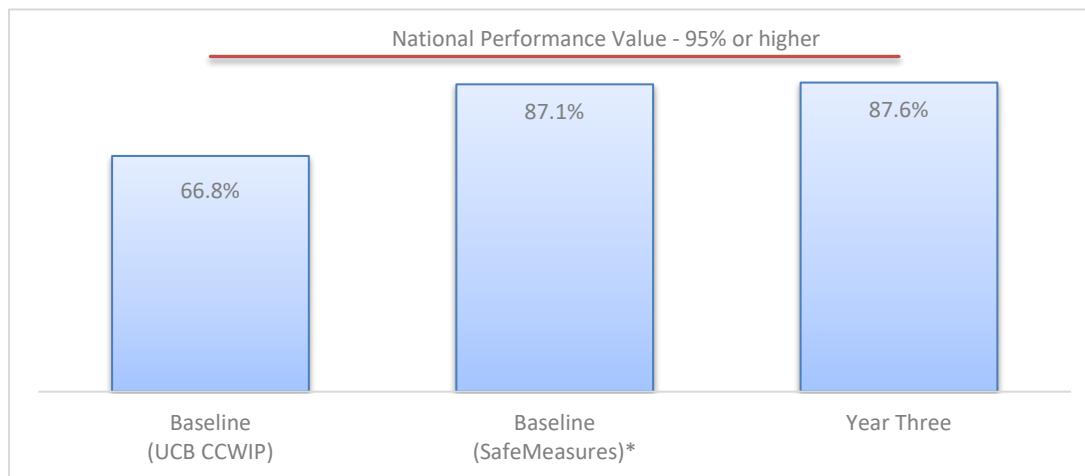
Additionally, managers are reviewing Emergency Response (ER) staff availability

weekly, with access to real-time caseload trends through weekly reports. The ER system determines staff availability for case assignments. When staff members are temporarily unavailable due to leave, health issues, or personal stressors, the system helps fill staffing gaps by assigning investigations to the next available team member. While this approach ensures continuous case management, it may lead to an increased caseload for the available staff, which can impact workload and overall performance.

To support ER during periods of high demand—when referral assignments exceed 16 per full-time employee—social workers and supervisors from other CPS programs have been asked to assist with overtime/compensatory time off investigations. Staffing efforts have also prioritized filling ER vacancies, resulting in longer vacancies in other CPS programs and a smaller pool of available staff for ER support.

2F – Timely Monthly Caseworker Visits (Out of Home)

This measure is defined as *"the percentage of children in placement who are visited by caseworkers. Each child in placement for an entire month must be visited at least once"*.



*The following data is based on UCB CCWIP data which does not include virtual visits that were allowed under the ACL 21-18

during COVID. The Baseline period from SafeMeasures, which included virtual visits in the count, is included as reference.

The following table displays the performance analysis of Outcome Measure 2F for October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024. The performance is categorized by age, CSEC status, and CYPM status. The data suggests that older youth and those identified as CSEC and/or CYPM youth involved in juvenile justice have lower 2F performance due to frequent runaway episodes. However, the 2F data from January 2024 shows an upward trend towards meeting the 95% standard.

The County has identified that youth who are absent without leave (AWOL) for extended periods, such as a full month, hinder the ability to conduct regular monthly visits. To address this, the County is exploring implementing measures to track youth

who have been AWOL for over 30 days and new strategies to improve case oversight. Additionally, youth who experience multiple AWOL episodes within a month present further challenge, as their fluctuating status complicates the consistency of visits.

Age	All		CSEC		CYPM		Both CSEC and CYPM	
	Youth #	2F %	Youth #	2F %	Youth #	2F %	Youth #	2F %
Under 1	107	97.9%						
1 – 2 Years old	266	96.0%						
3 – 5 Years Old	211	94.7%						
6 – 10 Years Old	278	89.1%						
11 – 15 Years Old	284	83.9%	17	79.6%	19	80.5%	6	80.6%
16 – 17 Years Old	252	78.2%	49	86.6%	54	73.7%	21	87.2%
Total	1,398	88.3%	66	84.5%	73	75.4%	27	85.5%

PROBATION

P1-Permanency in 12 Months (Entering Foster Care)

This has been discussed in previous sections of this report.

SUMMARY OF PROBATION DATA FOR PERFORMING AND UNDERPERFORMING MEASURES

*** These measures indicate areas of focus for this SIP Report.

** Most Recent State Performance is the combined total for all counties in California.

Measures highlighted in blue indicate areas that are meeting the Federal or State standard.

Measures highlighted in red indicate areas that are not meeting the Federal or State standard.

Baseline Quarter vs. Current Performance Quarter

Measure	Baseline (2021 Q1)	Year Two (2024 Q3)	Desired Direction	Most Recent State Performance**	CFSR Round 4 National Performance Value
S1 Maltreatment in Foster Care	9.35 (04/20-03/21)	0 (10/23-09/24)	↓	9.18 per 100,000 days	≤ 9.07 per 100,000 days
P1 Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Care ***	20.3% (04/19-03/20)	10.0% (10/22-09/23)	↑	14.7%	≥ 35.2%
P2 Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Care 12 – 23 Months	48.1% (04/20-03/21)	0.0% (10/23-09/24)	↑	13.0%	≥ 43.8%
P3 Permanency In 12 Months for Children in Care 24 Months or More	23.5% (04/20-03/21)	0.0% (10/23-09/24)	↑	7.7%	≥ 37.3%
P4 Reentry to Foster Care	83.3% (04/19-03/20)	33.3% (10/22-09/23)	↓	18.3%	≤ 5.6%
P5 Placement Stability	1.22 (04/20-03/21)	1.74 (10/23-09/24)	↓	.95 per 1,000 days	≤ 4.48 per 1,000 days

Data Source: UCB CCWIP Q3 2024

Measure	Baseline (2021 Q1)	Year Two (2023 Q3)	Desired Direction	Most Recent State Performance**	National Standard or Goal
2F – Timely Visits (Out of Home)	43.5% (04/20-03/21)	79.5% (10/22-09/23)	↑	75.4%	≥ 95.0%
2F – Timely Visits (Out of Home) – In Residence	73.7% (04/20-03/21)	70.7% (10/22-09/23)	↑	86.7%	≥ 50.0%

Data Source: UCB CCWIP Q3 2024

The above graph shows the summary of measures that apply to the Department included in the CSA report. An analysis of our Priority Outcome Measure for the System Improvement Plan is included in previous sections of this report.

Outcome Measures Not Meeting National Standard

P2- Permanency in 12 months for Children in Care 12-23 months

Outcome measures for the P2-Permanency in 12 months for Children in Care 12-23 months do not meet the national standard of $\geq 43.8\%$. During this period, youth were placed in care at locations with a six-month targeted program time frame. The Courts continue to place youth into Non-Minor Dependent (NMD) status for support purposes impacting the number of youths returning home to meet the definition of permanency. The youth who remained in placements for 12-23 months are among the juvenile sex offender population. This population in placement continues to be difficult to reunify with their families due to issues of victims often being in the residence or a hesitancy on the part of the parents/guardians to accept the youth home.

P3 – Permanency in 12 months for Children in Care 24 months or more

Outcome measures for the P3-Permanency in 12 months for Children in Care 24 months or more do not meet the national standard $\geq 37.3\%$. The same challenges impacting permanency existed for the P2 measure during the reporting period. The time in care challenge is exacerbated as most youth did not remain in care for the 24-month period and beyond. The juvenile sex offender population are often unable to reunify with parents/guardians due to victims remaining in the home and hesitancy to have the youth return to the home.

P4- Reentry to Foster Care

Outcome measures for the P4-Reentry to Foster Care do not meet the national standard $\geq 5.6\%$. Due to the juvenile sex offender population and youth opting for AB12 services, the number remained low for youth achieving permanency. This in turn impacted the number of youth in the evaluation sample which shows a higher

percentage than the national standard.

During this timeframe, only one youth had reentered foster care within 12 months of reunification. The reentry was outside of the department's control as the parent ultimately made the decision to relinquish custody of the minor.

2F- Timely Visits (Out of Home and Out of Home In-Residence)

Outcome measures for the 2F-Timely Visits (Out of Home and Out of Home In-Residence) do not meet the national standard $\geq 95.0\%$ and $\geq 50.0\%$. The Probation Department fell short of these standards primarily due to youth being absent from care during the reporting period, making them unavailable for supervision. When youth are absent, officers make diligent efforts to locate them by maintaining communication with parents and guardians; however, face-to-face contact cannot occur when a youth cannot be located. To address this challenge, the department will analyze data to develop strategies aimed at preventing youth from absconding and improving overall supervision compliance.

Additionally, an internal audit revealed that multiple visits were not entered into the CWS/CMS system. Although these visits did occur, the department did not receive credit for them due to clerical entry errors. Moving forward, the Probation Department will strengthen its internal auditing processes to ensure that all face-to-face contacts are accurately documented in the system, preventing similar issues from impacting compliance in the future.

WELFARE/PROBATION PLACEMENT INITIATIVES

CHILD WELFARE

Safety Organized Practice (SOP)

SOP improves outcomes for children and families by strengthening critical thinking, building safety networks, promoting collaborative planning and teaming, and creating well-informed goals and clear, behaviorally based, case and safety plans. SOP practices in Sacramento County continue to be emphasized through ongoing training and coaching of social workers, supervisors, and managers.

In 2024, the Foundational Practice Team (FPT), which helps guide SOP implementation across the division, focused on SOP specific tools through a series of quarterly workshops held in each region. The FPT also provided readiness-building support for new hires and promoting staff. CPM-SOP integration and training will continue to be a focus aimed at improving and enhancing practices throughout the agency. Sacramento County remains dedicated to seeking ways to continually review and evaluate the use of CPM-SOP across the agency.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)

Sacramento County continues to maintain a strong collaboration with key partners in addressing concerns related to Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC). The U.C. Davis Child and Adolescent Abuse Resource and Evaluation (CAARE) Center provides training, upon request, to further develop staff skills.. Additionally, the CAARE Center offers ongoing group case consultations and, when needed, individual case consultations.

Since the last reporting period, Sacramento County has successfully strengthened its partnership within the collaborative CSEC court, now located in Department 92. This achievement resulted from a multi-pronged approach. Beyond reinforcing the collaborative CSEC court, Sacramento County Child Protective Services (CPS), Juvenile Probation, and County Counsel worked together to develop a guide outlining the structure of the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meeting connected to the CSEC court, along with an information-sharing flowchart. On a broader scale, the team has developed a supportive framework for continued collaboration, with the new Cross Systems Steering Committee serving as the governing body. Additionally, a Cross Systems CSEC/Collaborative Courts Subcommittee and various Cross Systems workgroups support efforts related to data gathering, placements, and WIC 241.1 Assessments. Additional workgroups may be established as needed.

The CSEC Subcommittee has held several meetings that are valuable for information sharing, problem-solving, and ensuring the sustainability of this work. The Cross Systems structure was designed to support collaborative efforts for all youth involved in both child welfare and the juvenile justice system. This structure was inspired by the work undertaken in Sacramento County through AB 2083, the Sacramento County Child, Youth, & Family Systems of Care initiative.

The Children's Law Center (CLC) continues to leverage its CSEC Advocates—funded through a contract with CPS—to provide direct support to young people who have experienced sexual exploitation. WEAVE remains committed to supporting youth in the Extended Foster Care (EFC) program. Additionally, Capital Specialized Treatment and Recovery Specialists (STARS) and When Everyone Acts Violence Ends (WEAVE) continue to provide an advocate in the Welcome Homes program to assist exploited youth. The partnerships also include active participation in the Department 92 MDT meetings.

The CSEC Program Planner team meets regularly to address challenges, review programming, and identify the best ways to support both youth and social workers. This collaborative effort has streamlined practices, enhanced problem-solving, assessed trends in youth and CPS referrals, and provided essential training and support to social workers. During this reporting period, the team worked closely with the Policy Development Unit (PDU) to update the CSEC Policy and Procedure. Notably, labor trafficking information was added, prompting a renaming of the policy to the *Child Trafficking Policy and Procedure* to reflect the expanded scope. The PDU, led by a Program Planner who recently joined the CSEC Planner Team, finalized the updated

policy in February 2025. Currently, the unit is collaborating with the Workforce Development Unit to develop and implement staff training on the new policy.

Partnerships established through the 2015 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the 2017 CSEC policy and procedure continue to be a driving force behind Sacramento County's success in serving CSEC youth. The County remains committed to harm reduction practices, as well as increasing awareness of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression (SOGIE) considerations. Ongoing training, including but not limited to CSEC 101 for all social workers, CSEC 102, the Becoming Me Curriculum, and The Cool Aunt Series, reinforce this commitment. Additionally, the County has 20 dedicated Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, or Questioning (LGBTQ) Resource Specialists who work directly with families when SOGIE-related needs are identified.

Between 2015 and 2023, the number of child abuse and neglect reports related to the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in Sacramento County fluctuated. The highest number of reports, 283, was recorded in 2018, followed by a decline in subsequent years. By 2022, reports had decreased to 109. The agency is currently analyzing the data and potential reasons for this decline in reported exploitation cases. It is hypothesized that over time, there has been a shift in the understanding of legal reporting requirements among community members and mandated reporters regarding child exploitation as a form of child abuse. Additionally, in recent years, there has been an increase in mental health and behavioral health providers offering services specifically for victims of exploitation. According to the Child Trafficking Response Unit with the California Department of Social Services, Sacramento County is not the only jurisdiction experiencing a decrease in reports of child sexual exploitation. The following factors have resulted in the number of reports of alleged Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children increasing to 146 in year 2024:

- Work done by the CSEC Program Planner Team
- Reviewing data to determine errors in identifying some CSEC referrals in CWS with the appropriate special projects code
- Working with local law enforcement on reporting identified or suspected CSEC

Participation in the CSEC Lighthouse Stakeholder meetings

The total number of CSEC referrals from October 16, 2015, to January 28, 2025, is 1,475. The following is a breakdown of referrals received by response type:

Response Time	Count	Percentages
Immediate Response	893	60.5%
10-Day	269	18.2%
Evaluate Out	298	20.2%
N/A Secondary	15	1.0%
Sum	1,475	

Child Abuse and Neglect referrals are typically designated to one of three categories: Immediate Response (IR), 10-Day Response, or Evaluate Out. IR referrals require a response of 24 hours, 10-Day referrals require a response within 10 days and Evaluate Out referrals do not meet the criteria for an in-person response and investigation.

Since July 2018, the ER Program has reviewed open CSEC referrals. As of January 1, 2025, 253 referrals, initially opened for investigation, involved dependent children in placement already identified as CSEC victims. These referrals were evaluated out and are included in the 298 Evaluated Out referrals listed above.

Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs)

Sacramento County CPS has conducted Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs) since July 2018, with full implementation in January 2019. The meetings bring together professional interdisciplinary teams with family-centered care principles to make informed decisions. Permanency CFTMs, facilitated by Pacific Clinics (a contracted agency), utilize the Safety Organized Practice (SOP) framework. As part of the CFT process, the social worker works closely with the family to engage and identify potential professional or natural supports such as extended family members or community members who can be invited to be a part of the families CFT.

Permanency CFTMs are held before developing the initial case plan and at least every 60 days thereafter, with more frequent meetings for youth with additional needs/support. Sacramento County CPS collaborates with Sacramento County Behavioral Health to use Mental Health Clinicians to complete the mental health assessments for children and youth who are not linked to mental health services. Co-located in three CPS offices, the CPS Mental Health Team completes the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessments and collaborates with social workers to incorporate assessment findings into CFTMs, which helps inform the family's case plan.

Sacramento County emphasizes Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) efforts using various reporting mechanisms to track trends, program data and opportunities for improvement. Efforts to Outcome (ETO) is a database used to monitor meeting outcomes and track recommendations as CWS/CMS is unable to track this type of data. ETO reveals themes and patterns regarding meeting types and recommendations, participant key roles, and meeting times and other logistic information. To monitor the County's performance in ensuring CFT meetings are being held, the Quality Management and Administrative Services (QMAS) division provides a CFT Meeting Monthly Report to assist program staff in identifying cases for which a CFT meeting is needed. Additionally, in an ongoing effort to correct data, a CFT Meeting Data Clean-Up report was generated for youth with CFT meetings completed after January 1, 2018 that were incorrectly documented in the contact notebook of CWS/CMS.

Pacific Clinics utilizes satisfaction surveys for Permanency CFTM participants. The survey asks about the participant's experience with the facilitator and the CFT meeting, in general, using a Likert scale score ranging from 1 to 5. The survey also includes questions requesting additional comments and feedback. Both Pacific

Clinics and Sacramento County CPS use this data to monitor participant experiences and identify opportunities to improve the process. An overall success is that feedback from Permanency CFTM participants has been primarily positive. The shift to virtual CFTMs during the COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased engagement and family feedback has contributed to the decision to continue offering virtual meetings alongside in-person options.

In January 2025, Sacramento County contracted with Victor Community Support Services to facilitate Prevention and Priority CFTMs for children, youth, and families with an open Emergency Response referral, Informal Supervision case or for a child who is in a temporary shelter care facility. With the contract being newly executed, Sacramento County is early in its implementation phase and anticipates providing updates on the process in a future report.

Family Finding and Kinship Support

Sacramento County continues to focus on identifying relatives and nonrelated extended family members (NREFM) when a child requires placement in out-of-home care. Sacramento County CPS currently collaborates with Wayfinder to refine and enhance the Family Finding and Navigation Contract. Wayfinder seeks out and engages as many relatives as possible to keep children and youth connected to their families and ultimately place them into kin homes, when possible. Services can include support for both formal (Court) and informal family finding and engagement, case management, kinship trainings, support groups, group activities and aftercare support.

Further, Sacramento County is actively establishing and expanding their Kin First culture. The leadership from the Child Protective Services (CPS) and Quality Management and Administrative Services (QMAS) divisions have partnered with the CDSS Permanency Policy Bureau and Permanency Family Supportive Services Bureau, Casey Family Programs, UCD Northern Academy, Think of Us, and Implematix consultants to develop a comprehensive plan. The plan analyzes the root causes of barriers to placement with relatives/non-related extended family members and then seeks to implement recommended changes aimed at increasing placement and connections with relatives for all youth. The partnership includes ongoing large meetings to discuss Sacramento County's current efforts and to continue quality improvement initiatives.

As part of the ongoing work, the following activities have taken place:

May 2024: A qualitative analysis of Adoption Social Worker practice was conducted. The analysis included one-on-one interviews with approximately 24 Adoption Social Workers and reviews of 48 cases involving kinship connections. The findings revealed that Sacramento County Adoption Social Workers are committed to placement stability, which did not always align with kin engagement or placement. There was also variation in Social Workers perception regarding kinship placements, with some advocating strongly for kin placements, while others viewed kin as more of a challenge than a strength. Some Social Workers actively worked to engage kin and identify barriers to placement, taking steps to mitigate those challenges. In contrast,

others adopted a different approach, discouraging kin by emphasizing their perceived shortcomings—such as inadequate income or space—and suggesting that they may be unlikely to succeed in the placement process.

July 2024: Kinship Sprints, sponsored by CDSS and conducted by Think of Us, were held to complete data collection and analysis on the agency's view regarding kinship placements and existing supports. The findings were valuable and aligned with the agencies' existing knowledge of strengths and barriers.

Key insights included:

- Delays in kinship approval often result in youth bonding with non-related caregivers, which hinders placement with approved kin.
- Families expressed frustration with having to repeatedly share their personal stories.
- Kinship caregivers highlighted the need for more information on available resources, particularly financial support. They reported feeling judged if they raised concerns about financial security, fearing it would be perceived as if they were seeking placement for monetary gain, which is not the case.
- Kin caregivers also expressed the need for assistance in facilitating relationships with biological parents and other involved kin, some of whom they may not know or are unrelated to.
- Youth shared that at least one social worker told them they should be grateful for simply having a roof over their head, which contributed to feeling devalued

August 2024: Quality Management and Administrative Services staff collaborated with UC Berkley data expert Wendy Wiegmann, to refine their Continuous Quality Improvement process and data collection efforts. This included vetting a tool to be utilized for an upcoming case review project focused on kinship practices.

September 2024: Under the Excellence in Family Finding Engagement and Support (EFFES) ACL 23-12, Sacramento County secured a Human Services Program Specialist position dedicated to conducting ongoing case reviews specific to the emerging Kin First culture. The program specialist began work in September of 2024, and a baseline study commenced, reviewing a cohort of 50 cases where a child had been removed and placed into foster care in August 2023. The process reviewed examined case documentation from the time of case removal in August 2023 through August 2024. This baseline data collection project was conducted to determine current practices and validate the fidelity of the tool which was created to convert qualitative data into quantitative data. To assess the efficacy and fidelity of the baseline case reviews conducted between September 2024 and January 2025, a Program Planner reviewed 10% of the cases for quality assurance. It was determined that the tool will benefit from further adjustments to be best used for in future case reviews. As of the writing of this report, the findings from the case review are being finalized.

November 2024: As part of the transition to embrace a Kin First Culture, the CPS and Quality Management and Administrative Services Executive Management Teams received a presentation on the importance of Kin First Culture, featuring internal data and the findings from the Kin First Sprints. The presentation, led by internal Kin First

Program Planners, was supported by CDSS, Casey Families, UCD, and the Center for Excellence.

December 2024: To increase Family Finding Supports, an updated Family Finding contract was initiated with a review of proposals resulting in the selection of Wayfinder for their Kin First Navigator Program. Ongoing discussions are taking place to finalize the scope of the contract with implementation planned for 2025.

January 2025: To advance the Sacramento County's Kin First Culture and raise awareness among staff, two Town Hall events were held. These events included external partners and internal staff (excluding clerical due to logistics, budget and business needs). A clerical-specific Town Hall is tentatively scheduled for May 2025. The Town Halls were held in two five-hour sessions to accommodate staff and business needs. They featured inspirational speakers with lived experience, data presentation, food, networking opportunities and giveaways. Attendance surveys indicated the events were well received and have sparked continued conversations about the ongoing Kin First efforts and culture.

March 2025: The Kin First Accelerator Launch, hosted by CDSS, UCD, and CFE, was a successful event focused on accelerating kin placements in Sacramento County. The event brought together CPS and QM Executive Management teams, along with external partners, including the presiding judge, court partners, and contracted service providers. During the session, participants reviewed Sacramento County's data and practices and identified strengths and areas for improvement. Group discussions were held to address challenges and brainstorm potential interventions to accelerate kin placements. The next step is for CDSS, UCD, and CFE to analyze the data and present actionable recommendations and strategies to the County to help drive progress.

Next Steps:

- **Town Hall Debriefs:** Staff who attended the Town Hall will revisit the points discussed, rewatch the presentation video, and work through the study guide within their teams. Key takeaways will be submitted by April 2025.
- **Ongoing Case Reviews:** As part of the EFFES matched funds, case reviews will continue. The findings will be shared with programs to support enhanced staff practice.

Sacramento County has addressed challenges in implementing a Kin First Culture, building on past practices and committing to fully prioritize kin placements. Contributing challenges have historically included workload demands and limited awareness of the long-term impact of not placing youth with kin. Despite the challenges, the Executive Leadership Team and Executive Management Team have shown strong commitment to enhancing kin placement practices aimed at improving the lives and well-being of the youths and families served.

The initiatives above have been successful, and the agency is beginning to embrace a shift in practice. A key lesson learned is the importance of sustaining long-term

efforts to ensure positive outcomes and continuous data improvement. Sacramento County has emerged as a leader in implementing CDSS guidance, influencing other agencies and jurisdictions in their kin placement and data collection approaches. These efforts align with the broader state goals of expanding Kin First practices.

Expectant and Parenting Youth (EPY)

Sacramento County remains committed to supporting Expectant Parenting Youth (EPY) as they navigate the complexities of the foster care system. Building on previous initiatives, the County continues to implement programs designed to empower EPY with the essential resources necessary for successful parenting. This includes the ongoing EPY team meetings and the development of an EPY policy framework that encourages collaborative decision-making and ensures the distribution of critical tools and resources. These efforts highlight the County's continued dedication to addressing the unique challenges faced by young parents in foster care.

As referenced in the previous SIP report, a trauma-informed curriculum was developed for Whole Family Foster Homes (WFFH) to improve the quality of care for foster youth. The Bridge Program continues to facilitate access to quality childcare services for parenting foster youth and ensures they receive the necessary support while they pursue their education or employment. Mentoring remains a key strategy and provides parenting foster youth with a supportive adult to offer guidance and support. The support system may also include Court Appointed Special Advocates and, when appropriate, Cultural Brokers to enhance the assistance provided.

Sacramento County developed an EPY dashboard to improve accountability, gain insights into disparities, and promote continuous improvement in supporting young parents in foster care. The tool will enable better-informed decision-making for future strategies.

The County remains committed to providing ongoing support to young parents in foster care and will continue to work through strategic partnerships, innovative approaches, and a focus on accountability.

CYPM-CYFSOC - Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM)/Crossover Youth and Family System of Care (CYFSOC)

The Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) continues to play a central role in the ongoing implementation of Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) legislation in Sacramento County, which involves CPS, Juvenile Probation, and the Juvenile Court. Since late 2020, county leaders have collaborated on AB 2083 and established the CYFSOC Leadership and Advisory Teams and developed an MOU to support ongoing initiatives to enhance services for Sacramento's children and families, with a focus on youth, parent, and tribal involvement.

Juvenile Justice and Collaborative Courts

Sacramento County Juvenile Justice Courts operate Department 92, which serves youth involved in Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and the Juvenile Trauma Response Court (JTRC). These courts utilize a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) approach, bringing together various departments and community agencies to support youth in successfully completing probation while reducing their risk of re-entering the juvenile justice system. These dually involved youth are the focus of CYPM efforts.

In 2023, staff turnover in Sacramento County's dedicated CSEC Court (Department 90), prompted measures to prevent practice drift and maintain a trauma-informed approach in MDT meetings and court proceedings. UC Davis CAARE conducted observations of MDT and court sessions, providing feedback and written recommendations to the Department 90 staff and MDT participants. Additionally, UC Davis CAARE delivered Harm Reduction training, complemented by Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) training from Sacramento County Behavioral Health. The sessions were well received and further strengthened collaboration within the CSEC and JTRC Courts.

In addition to reinforcing the CSEC court, Sacramento County CPS, Juvenile Probation, and County Counsel developed an MDT meeting guide and an information-sharing flowchart for CSEC court processes. They established a Cross-Systems Steering Committee to oversee continued collaboration, along with a Cross-Systems CSEC/Collaborative Courts Subcommittee and workgroups focused on data gathering, placements, and WIC 241.1 Assessments. Additional work groups will be formed as needed.

Sustaining Cross-Systems Collaboration

The CSEC Subcommittee held multiple meetings, facilitating information sharing, problem-solving, and ensuring sustainability. The Cross-Systems structure was designed to support all youth involved in both child welfare and juvenile justice, inspired by Sacramento County's work under AB 2083 and the Child, Youth, & Family Systems of Care initiative. In alignment with California Department of Social Services (CDSS) guidelines for 2023-2024, Sacramento County's CYFSOC is conducting a comprehensive MOU review. Any necessary revisions will be made by the CYFSOC Advisory Team, approved by the CYFSOC Interagency Leadership Team, and submitted to the state.

Family Urgent Response System

The Family Urgent Response System (FURS) is a statewide initiative designed to provide trauma-informed support to current and former foster youth and their caregivers. The program offers 24/7 telephone and in-person assistance to preserve caregiver-youth relationships, manage conflicts, stabilize living situations, and prevent law enforcement or psychiatric interventions. Recent updates to FURS eligibility include youth in voluntary placements, those under Section 300, and individuals placed through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. The initiative extends services to individuals who have exited foster care up to age 21. FURS reinforces county-level assistance for both foster youth and their caregivers,

ensuring they receive the resources they need.

Between June 1, 2024, and February 23, 2025, the FURS program successfully facilitated 143 eligible face-to-face contacts. These crucial interactions addressed the needs of foster youth, caregivers, and families in crisis with a primarily focus to prevent placement disruptions and promote permanency and stability. Eligible youth and caregivers received phone, text, chat, and in-person services to address crises and challenging situations. FURS also contributed to stabilizing youth during their transitions between placements by maintaining a presence at the Welcome Homes.

The table below shows the number of calls received by FURS, highlighting the various communication channels utilized to support eligible youth and caregivers during crisis situations and transitions between placements.

Information - Type of Caller	Percentage
Foster Youth	39%
Caregiver	27%
Former Foster Youth	14%
CPS Staff	4%
Other	16%

Reasons Requesting Support	Percentage
Behavioral Health/Emotional Needs	66%
Behavioral Health/Emotional Needs; Conflict Resolution	12%
Other	22%

Some challenges encountered during this time including marketing, promotion and utilization of 988 hotline by community due to experiencing impacted overall call volume. FURS pursued meetings to coordinate with 988 and create guidance on how to refer to FURS when appropriate for specific foster child/family needs and requests for in-person support.

The 988 Hotline, part of the nationwide Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, provides free, confidential support for individuals experiencing emotional distress, including mental health crises, suicidal thoughts, and substance use issues. Callers are connected with trained crisis counselors who offer immediate assistance, resources, and referrals to emergency services when needed. Youth in crisis who call 988 may be redirected to FURS services for additional support.

Dedicated FURS staff have increased outreach to foster families and agencies to promote program utilization. However, another challenge was the resistance from some foster youth to engage with staff during mobile response services. To overcome this, creative engagement strategies, including rapport-building through practical methods, were implemented. Peer mentors and family partners, who offer lived experience, were found to be particularly effective in helping foster youth and caregivers understand the foster system and set realistic expectations.

The team has learned to spend significant time to build rapport through support groups and fun events. During the in-person crisis responses, purchasing food/drinks for youth in an attempt to build rapport quickly seemed to disarm resistance. Recognizing that the families may have little reason to trust FURS staff, efforts also focused on becoming a familiar face and offering incentives to build trust. This trauma-informed approach has been the most practical and effective trust-building practice observed and implemented.

Additionally, FURS noted that schools rarely used crisis teams or hotlines, opting instead to complete their own assessments and make referrals independently. As a result, outreach to schools were reduced with increased outreach to all mental health providers serving foster youth in Sacramento County.

Sacramento County has leveraged the insights gained through FURS to enhance outreach efforts and engage with youth more effectively. The initiative has also contributed to preventative work through collaboration with Child and Family Teams (CFTs) and multi-system partners, to ensure youth and families are supported and placement disruptions are minimized. Through testimonials and data, FURS has demonstrated its success in providing a crisis response alternative to law enforcement, hospitals, and the Department of Child, Family and Adult Services (DCFAS).

Bringing Families Home (BFH)

Sacramento County's Bringing Families Home (BFH) program provides prevention and housing intervention services to families facing homelessness or housing instability during family reunification and maintenance. The program has successfully housed 424 families, impacting 1,102 children.

CPS maintains an ongoing partnership with the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) and Sacramento Steps Forward to secure housing for families in the BFH program. In October 2024, BFH applied for 70 Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers. CPS also collaborates with Sacramento Steps Forward to provide Housing Vouchers and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), with support from Behavioral Health Services for families with mental health needs. Additional efforts focus on refining services, addressing housing barriers, engaging families in housing assessments, and providing educational sessions for staff and partners.

Over the last 18 months, BFH introduced an "Aftercare" model to reduce the likelihood of families re-entering the program after their housing referral closes. In fiscal year 2023-2024, only 2 out of 65 families (3%) required BFH services within a year of their housing referral closing, a significant improvement from the previous fiscal year. In fiscal year 2022-2023, 12 out of 70 families (17%) returned for services, reflecting a 14% decrease. Connecting families to community-based support helps them become better equipped to pay rent, parent, and address other challenges while they receive continued support from their CPS worker and housing case management staff.

Resource Family Approval (RFA)

During the current reporting period, the Sacramento County Resource Family Approval (RFA) Program has continued efforts to retain and support resource families and to promote connection and networking between families to expand natural support networks. This has primarily been accomplished through events opened to all approved resource families. Several activities were organized to show appreciation and provide resources for families

In early 2023, Sacramento County launched a pilot project with Teddy, a puppy designated as the first DCFAS Facility Dog. The pilot project was built around two main goals: reduce trauma for children/youth awaiting foster placements and to enhance the work experience for DCFAS staff. Teddy's lead handler, the RFA Program Manager, has guided him through various community events and resource family functions over the past two years.

While recruitment for resource families wasn't an initial goal of the pilot, Teddy's presence at community events has created opportunities to educate the public about the need for resource families, particularly for older youth and children of color. Although a single encounter with Teddy is unlikely to directly lead to a new resource family, business cards featuring Teddy's information were created to serve as a reminder of the interaction and message. Sacramento County will continue to explore innovative ways to leverage Teddy as a foster care ambassador.



August 2024: An appreciation event was held at a local ice creamery. Families were treated to ice cream and received appreciation t-shirts, free tickets to the Sacramento Zoo and various local theme parks. Each child in attendance received a backpack filled with school supplies and educational resources. The event featured a professional photographer who provided free family portraits. Approximately 60 families attended, and all feedback received was positive.

December 2024: An appreciation event was held at a county building, where families enjoyed cookies, hot chocolate, and coffee. Each child received holiday gifts, while the resource parents selected school backpacks and appreciation gift cards for their families. A holiday backdrop, complete with a snow machine, was set up for families to take capture festive photos, including opportunities to pose with an RFA Social Worker dressed as Santa Claus. Approximately 45 resource families attended the

event, and the feedback collected was overwhelmingly positive.

May 2025: A training/appreciation event will be held at American River College. The planning for the event is in progress. The event will be a collaborative effort between Sacramento County RFA and the American River College Foster & Kinship Care Education (FKCE) program. It will feature new trainings based on resource parent feedback, lunch, and activities. On-site play care will be available, and families will receive credits toward their annual training requirements for attending.

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

Sacramento County Child Welfare continues to participate in the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) qualitative case reviews, with the case review process now in its ninth year. The County has a team of three certified case reviewers with full caseloads. In February 2025, one case reviewer promoted to Human Services Program Planner with the Department of Health Services and the position remains vacant. Once filled, the new CFSR team member will be required to complete an extensive training and onboarding process, which includes online training, a four-day in-person training, and testing for permanent certification.

As part of the review process, Sacramento County tracks case review outcomes of each area of review to identify areas needing improvement. The CFSR unit created a quarterly data dashboard and newsletter to enhance Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) efforts which is available to all staff on the intranet. This information highlights the items from the CFSR Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI), focusing on both the County's improvement efforts outlined in the SIP and areas of positive change. Sacramento County Child Welfare will continue engaging with staff to determine the most effective ways to use data to inform practice changes.

In 2024, the unit introduced a time study process to streamline workflows and identify efficiencies. The goal was to better understand the time spent on the case review process and pinpoint areas for improvement. The results have led to increased productivity and more consistent outcomes. Additionally, a comprehensive repository of summary reports on each item in the OSRI tool has been created. These reports, which include annual and quarterly data as well as case stories, are now accessible to all staff via the county intranet, providing insight into the real-world impact of the work and keeping everyone informed and engaged.

Child Abuse Central Index (CACI) Reconciliation

In October 2022, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) instructed counties to reconcile approximately 27,000 missing substantiated child abuse reports from the Child Abuse Central Index (CACI), as well as 36,000 reports with missing dates of birth, with a deadline of May 31, 2023. Sacramento County was responsible to reconcile approximately 3,100 reports. In August 2023, CDSS extended the reconciliation deadline to February 15, 2025. By January 2024, the DCFAS Quality Management and Administrative Services (QMAS) team had reviewed 1,514 reports with missing suspect dates of birth, resolving 142 cases, while 1,338 remained

unresolved. The date of birth project was completed on January 25, 2024, and the necessary documents were submitted to the Department of Justice.

QMAs and Child Protective Services (CPS) have continued to collaborate on the CACI reconciliation plan to address the outstanding reviews. In October 2024, a team working on document scanning joined the audit efforts and scanned the identified 2017-2021 Emergency Response hard file records for the qualitative case reviews and converted them to digital records. Digitizing the hard files will expedite the case review process as the reviewer will have immediate access to the records, as opposed to having to order them from closed files. In November 2024, the team determined it would take approximately two months to complete the scanning of the 3,082 hard files. In February 2025, all of the available ER hard file records were digitized and accessible for immediate use.

An analysis of 3,082 referrals involving 3,320 perpetrators revealed that approximately 6,640 hours would be required to complete the qualitative case reviews. Due to limited resources, on February 20, 2025, DCFAS requested an extension from CDSS to finalize these qualitative case reviews. A response from CDSS is currently pending.

A lesson learned during this reporting period based on the CACI audits, was the need to conduct Division-wide CACI Refresher Trainings for child welfare staff, partnering with Child Protective Services (CPS), County Counsel's Office and QMAs. In November 2024, the planning and development of the CACI Refresher Training began, with the projected rollout to be mid-2025. The training will provide opportunities for staff to be emersed in child abuse and neglect investigation requirements and be refreshed on what constitutes an active investigation per CACI requirements. The training will include transfer of learning activities, reinforcing the investigation and documentation requirements

The QMAS Team distributes the CACI Clean-Up Report to CPS Emergency Response monthly. This approach has been utilized to improve program consistency and compliance about cross-reporting to the DOJ. The Clean Up reports are also used as a learning tool for staff and a way to identify additional areas of training that need to occur. The CACI Coordinator has also attended a joint supervisor's meeting to discuss the importance of the data cleanup process.

PROBATION

As mentioned in the 2021-2026 SIP, Probation Placement Initiatives were: Foster Youth Trauma-Informed System of Care, Child Family Team Meetings, Family First Prevention Services Act, Qualified Individual, Federal Case Review, Resource Family Approval and Reentry Development for Youth (REDY—GO!)

AB 2083 Foster Youth Trauma-Informed System of Care:

AB 2083 requires each county to develop and implement a Memorandum of

Understanding (MOU) setting forth roles and responsibilities of agencies and other entities that serve children and youth in foster care who have experienced severe trauma. The purpose of the MOU is to ensure that children and youth in foster care receive coordinated, timely, and trauma-informed services. The MOU for Sacramento County is completed. Additionally, it aims to offer upstream preventative and early intervention services to decrease the impact the impact of trauma on infants, children, and youth in foster care and their caregivers.

Child and Family Team Meetings:

Child and Family Teams (CFT) are comprised of the probation officer, youth, the probation youth's family, and other people important to the family or youth. The CFT include representatives who provide formal supports to the probation youth and family when appropriate, including the caregiver, placing agency caseworker, representative from the Foster Family Agency (FFA), Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP), or Resource Family Approval, where the probation youth is placed, as well as a mental health clinician. Members of the CFT work together to identify the strengths and needs of a probation foster youth to develop a youth and family centered plan.

Procedurally, Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) are convened at various intervals of the Probation foster youth's case to inform the decisions made during case management. Initially, the CFT is convened by the Placement Intake Officer to determine placement needs and services, including the decision of presumptive transfer of specialty mental health services. Information gathered from the CFTM informs the Interagency Placement Committee in their approval of placement into a STRTP. Upon the youth's placement in an STRTP, or with a Resource Family or Foster Family Agency, the Placement Officer providing supervision and case management convenes the CFT to develop a strength-based, family centered case plan. The case plan addresses rehabilitative and permanency goals. The Placement Officer also convenes the CFT to stabilize placement when the youth is at risk of termination, whenever there is a triggering event, or as requested by the youth and family. CFT Facilitator training is given to Placement Officers in order for CFTs to focus on a permanency goal, safety, well-being, and is strength based.

Ending Girls' Incarceration:

Ending Girls' Incarceration (EGI) is a national initiative, in partnership with Vera and Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR), dedicated to eliminating the incarceration of girls and gender-expansive youth in the country's juvenile justice system. Based on EGI's technical assistance approach and experience, EGI has developed a curriculum for how jurisdictions can disrupt the drivers of girls' incarceration through court-based policy, practice changes, and investments in community-based services. The EGI has also developed an Ending Girls' Incarceration Action Network model (Action Network) to provide technical assistance to multiple counties in a one-year, collaborative process using the EGI curriculum.

Family First Prevention Services Act:

The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) signed into law on February 9, 2018, includes reforms to help keep children safely remaining with families and avoid traumatic experience of entering the foster care system. It is comprised of eight parts, but the primary provisions are Part I and Part IV. FFPSA Part I includes several provisions to enhance prevention and support services for families which will help children remain at home, reduce the unnecessary use of congregate care, and build capacity of communities to support children and families. Part IV seeks to limit reliance on congregate care for serving children in foster care, consistent with the objectives of California's Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) that were implemented pursuant to AB 403 and subsequent legislation. Through the Continuum of Care Reform and other legislation, California has already enacted some of the FFPSA Part IV requirements for placements into STRTPS. However, additional requirements for placements into STRTPs on or after October 1, 2021, include:

The Qualified Individual (QI):

An assessment by a QI is required prior to any placement of a foster child into an STRTP made on or after October 1, 2021, other than an emergency placement, as a condition of Title IV-E funding eligibility. Sacramento County Probation Department's current QI is a Senior Mental Health Clinician from Behavioral Health. The QI will conduct an assessment to determine the child's behavioral health needs and goals and make certain determinations regarding whether the child's needs can be met with family members or in a family setting and, if not, the most appropriate level of care, interventions, and treatment for the child. (All-County Letter (ACL) NO. ACL 21-113).

Due to this requirement, Probation's STRTP referral process has changed. Once the Placement Intake Officers are notified that a placement recommendation is being considered based on an administrative staffing, they will initiate a Pre-Dispositional CFT Meeting with the QI having the choice to participate. A CFT can also be convened for youth returning to custody on a Motion to Modify Custody Status (MMCS) and returned to Placement. The Court Officer will complete the disposition report and recommend placement. If the Court agrees, they will order out of home removal. The Placement Intake Officer will at this time submit a QI Assessment referral on the youth's behalf. Once the QI assessment report returns, if the recommendation is an STRTP, the placement Intake Officer makes referrals to the appropriate STRTP's. When an appropriate STRTP is identified, the case is referred to the Interagency Placement Committee to make the determination of STRTP approval; only then is the youth placed in an STRTP. Within five calendar days of the youth's placement, the case carrying officer will request a hearing to review the placement.

The remaining FFPSA IV requirements are:

Court Reporting & Case Planning:

Court hearings occur within 45-60 days of the start of each STRTP placement, including change in STRTP placements. For each new placement and/or placement change, a new court hearing is required to approve the level of care based on an assessment by the Qualified Individual (QI). At each court hearing, the court of jurisdiction must take into consideration the QI's assessment when determining

whether the STRTP is the most effective and appropriate level of care.

The FFPSA also requires additional documentation in the case plan for youth placed in an STRTP. Within 30 days of a child's placement into an STRTP, documentation in the case plan is to include information that demonstrates permanency planning, which is inclusive of the child and family. Information should reflect the Child and Family Team's (CFT) efforts and collaboration with the QI.

Aftercare:

Each county child welfare agency, probation department, and mental health provider jointly provide, arrange for, or ensure the provision of at least six months of aftercare services through wraparound services for a child or non-minor dependent (NMD) in the placement and care responsibility of the child welfare or probation agency transitioning from an STRTP to a family-based setting. Sacramento County Probation utilizes quality assurance processes to evaluate ongoing practice, policies and procedures to ensure youth in the probation placement system are receiving quality services.

Family Urgent Response System:

The Family Urgent Response System's (FURS) goal is to build upon the Continuum of Care Reform and provide current and former foster youth and their caregivers with immediate, trauma-informed support when needed. FURS is a coordinated statewide, regional, and county-level system designed to provide collaborative and timely state-level phone-based response and county-level in-home, in-person mobile response during situations of instability, and to preserve the relationship of the caregiver and the child or youth. Probation in collaboration with the Department of Child, Family and Adult Services (DCFAS) and Behavioral Health Services, are working to create a robust county-level response system, which will:

- Provide telephone and/or in-person support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week,
- Aid in preserving relationships between caregivers and youth,
- Provide developmentally appropriate conflict management and resolution skills,
- Stabilize the living situation in an effort to reduce placement disruptions,
- Prevent the need for intervention by law enforcement, psychiatric hospitalization, or placement of youth in congregate care, and
- Connect the caregiver and youth to community-based services.

Federal Case Reviews (FCR):

Federal Case Reviews are conducted for the purpose of examining practices and ensuring conformity with Title IV-E and Title IV-B requirements. Cases are reviewed on a continuous quarterly basis by a Supervising Probation Officer. This allows direct feedback to the Probation Placement unit from the parent, youth, and substitute care provider. The information gleaned from this review process is extremely valuable in how we meet the needs of our youth.

Juvenile Justice Diversion and Treatment Program:

The Juvenile Justice Diversion and Treatment Program (JJDTP) is a Full-Service

Partnership (FSP) of the Mental Health Services Act. The program is a contracted FSP between BHS, Probation and River Oak Center for Children and was established to deliver integrated services to a population of youth involved with juvenile justice that have multiple complex needs across service areas. Presently, there is capacity for up to 128 youth, with 36 of these spaces reserved for diversion. Diversion youth have not been adjudicated but there is a nexus between exhibited behavior and criminal conduct. To be eligible, youth must meet serious emotional disturbance criteria and be between the ages of 13-19 at the time of enrollment. Through the JJDTP, eligible youth and their families are provided with mental health screenings, assessments, intensive mental health services and FSP support. Family and youth advocates complement clinical services. Eligible youth referred to the program are provided the opportunity to voluntarily receive intensive, evidence-based services delivered in coordination with a specialized probation officer. Youth referred to the program can voluntarily participate as long as clinically necessary or up to their 26th birthday. Program outcomes for youth include reduced psychiatric hospitalization, increased engagement in educational programs as well as reduced arrests and incarcerations.

JJDTP seeks to achieve the following five goals:

1. Stabilize housing placements and reduce homelessness;
2. Increase school attendance and achievement;
3. Increase vocational training and employment;
4. Reduce psychiatric hospitalizations; and
5. Reduce juvenile detention and/or young adult incarceration.

Resource Family Approval (RFA):

As part of California Assembly Bill 403 "Foster Youth: Continuum of Care Reform", Sacramento County Probation has created a position for one Senior Deputy Probation Officer to assist in recruiting families to provide care to probation youth (Resource Family Liaison). This position is also tasked with working in partnership with Children's Protective Services Resource Family Approval process. This process requires the family to attend an orientation, complete an application, complete a health screening, obtain a First Aid and CPR certification and attend 12 hours of training. The Probation Officer will assist the Social Worker with the background check, home environment check, and psycho-social assessment, and face to face interviews with the family. It is anticipated this initiative will assist in meeting the needs of the population we serve and assist us with our goal of reducing the use of congregate care as an initial placement.

Roadmap for Success-Candidacy Assessment:

Through a structured interview to engage and motivate the youth and the family, officers meet with youth subject to a WIC §602 petition to determine reasonable candidacy (imminent risk of removal into foster care as defined by CA Title IV-E guidelines) and update their risk-and-needs assessment, in collaboration with the youth's family/legal guardian, to determine their risk to recidivate and to identify strengths and areas of need. The assessment results drive the dynamic and individualized case planning process with an emphasis on criminogenic risk and protective factors. Through this guided process, evidence-based programs within the

community are discussed and explored with the youth and family. Referrals to community-based providers are made onsite and connection to service is timely. Supervision and support are provided by case managing officers who further collaborate with service providers, youth, families and natural support.

Re-Entry Development for Youth (R.E.D.Y.--GO):

The target population for Reentry Development for Youth (R.E.D.Y.-GO) is comprised of youth returning to our community as a result of an episode in detention or placement. Best practices recognize that reentry planning and services begin at the time of admission to detention and continue beyond the youth's release and reintegration into the community. This reentry continuum consists of three overlapping phases: 1) in the facility 2) the transition out of the facility and into the community and 3) in the community. Sacramento County's reentry process utilizes collaborative teaming to assess strengths and needs, develop transition and case plans, and make connections to services, education, housing, and employment prior to release from custody. The R.E.D.Y. Program provides intentional coordination for community transition and stabilization prior to release through a comprehensive assessment based on strength and need, the development of an individualized case plan, referrals to community-based services and family engagement. Through a collaborative teaming process with representatives from Probation, Behavioral Health Services (BHS), Primary Health, Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE), service providers and, most importantly, the youth and family, a transition plan is developed. Prior to community reentry, connections to services related to treatment, education, housing, employment/vocational opportunities, and positive youth development are made. The collaborative process and plan implementation continue as case managing officers provide supervision and support within the community.

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER (NRC) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Currently, Sacramento County Child Welfare and Probation do not utilize the services of the National Resource Center, Western Pacific Implementation Center, or Quality Improvement Centers. Additionally, the resources allocated for training or technical assistance for the Child Welfare Workforce Development Unit are not being utilized, and there is no anticipated need for such assistance at this time.