



DeAnna Avey-Motikeit
Director

Mission Statement

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



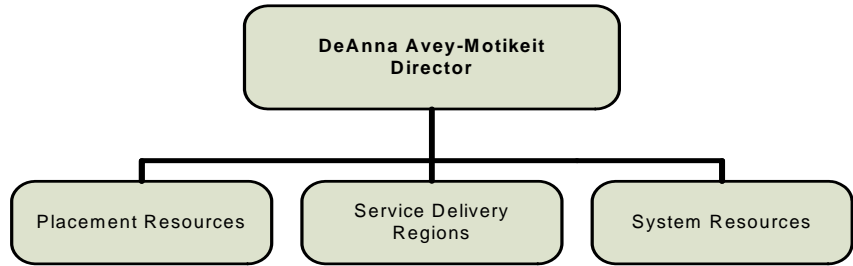
GOALS

REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO ENTER FOSTER CARE EACH YEAR.

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FOSTER YOUTH GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL OR EQUIVALENCY

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR SERVICES

The Department of Children's Services (DCS) provides a coordinated agency and community effort aimed at reducing the occurrence of child abuse and neglect in San Bernardino County. The primary goal of these programs is maintaining families whenever possible. When not possible, the secondary goal is to provide the best permanent plan for the child removed from his or her caretaker. To accomplish the mission of DCS, a wide variety of services are offered. Child Protective Services is the program with the highest visibility, with the goal of prevention of abuse to minors and the protection of those abused.

Other DCS programs include:

- Emergency Response (ER): investigates allegations of child abuse and neglect and makes immediate plans to ensure the safety of endangered children. This is often the "front door" for clients entering the Child Welfare System.
- Family Maintenance (FM): builds on families' strengths and helps to remove barriers so children can remain safely at home.
- Family Reunification (FR): works to make the family environment a safe one so children can return home.
- Permanency Planning (PP): ensures that children who are unable to live safely with their birth families can grow up in a safe and secure permanent living arrangement.
- Foster Parent Recruitment and Training, along with Foster Home Licensing: maintains and creates out-of-home placement resource options throughout the county.
- Adoptions: performs assessments of adoptive families and matches children with permanent families when their birth families are no longer an option.
- Independent Living Program: assists youth in successfully transitioning out of the foster care system.

2008-09 SUMMARY OF BUDGET UNITS

	Appropriation	Revenue	Local Cost	Staffing
Children's Services	94,164,051	81,632,721	12,531,330	807.0

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

GOAL 1: REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO ENTER FOSTER CARE EACH YEAR.

Objective A: Continue implementation of Family-to-Family and other practices that reduce the number of children who must enter foster care.

MEASUREMENT	2006-07 Actual	2007-08 Actual	2008-09 Target	2008-09 Estimate	2009-10 Target
1A. Annual percentage reduction in the number of children entering foster care.	2%	6%	1%	7%	8%

Status

Until recently, the department's child welfare services practice could be described as "traditional". A significant number of the children involved were placed in the foster care system in those situations where allegations alleging abuse or neglect were found to be substantiated. As part of the adoption of a "best practices" service delivery approach that values a family centered, strength-based and community-based approach to protecting children and strengthening families, the department became the 14th Family to Family (F2F) County in California. F2F encourages the reduction of the number and rate of children placed away from their birth families and seeks to keep children in close proximity to their birth family, school, friends, community activities, and church if placement is required. Team Decision Making (TDM) is one of the F2F processes that encourages a reduction in the placement of children out of their home by bringing together family members, community people, and the social worker to look at alternatives to out of home placement and ensure a network of support for children and the people who support them. This shift in service delivery philosophy has begun to show tangible results. For example, the number of children who entered foster care has begun to decrease, reflecting the department's efforts to encourage alternative plans to protect children other than placement in a foster home. The reduction of children placed out of their own home was greater than anticipated during 2007-08. This declining rate of out of home placement is anticipated to continue as the tenets of the new initiatives such as F2F become more in-grained in the department's culture and practices. However, the uncertainties of the state budget could impact this best practice. Staffing reductions, due to decreases in the state budget, would likely result in a resumption of the tendency by staff to file more Court petitions which could result in out of home placement, instead of working with the family to locate resources enabling children to remain safely at home. As workers handle more referrals time consuming best practices fall victim to the necessity of seeing more children and families in distress and following the more expedient approach to protect them.

GOAL 2: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FOSTER CHILDREN IN THE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (ILP) THAT EARN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR G.E.D.

Objective A: Continue implementation of a system to identify and track the performance of child welfare dependents on the High School Equivalency (Exit) exam.

Objective B: Secure/implement customized tutoring programs designed to address needs of exiting youth.

Objective C: Refer and ensure linkage to tutoring services for Juniors and Seniors experiencing difficulty passing the Proficiency exam.

2007-08 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ❖ Received and assessed child abuse referrals on 51,628 children
- ❖ Hired 6 former foster youth to encourage foster youth and caregivers to participate in ILP
- ❖ Implemented Family 2 Family throughout the county to maintain children in their communities: Completed 826 Team Decision Making meetings during 2007-08, an 89% increase from the previous year. Of this number, 300 TDMs had community partners present
- ❖ Organized and hosted 136 foster and kinship youth at the 2nd Annual DCS Sportsfaire
- ❖ Increased transitional housing-plus program to serve 36 youth



MEASUREMENT	2006-07 Actual	2007-08 Actual	2008-09 Target	2008-09 Estimate	2009-10 Target
2A. Percentage increase in foster youth graduating with a high school diploma or G.E.D.	3%	18%	3%	5%	6%

Status

Foster children exiting the Child Welfare System have received greater attention at the national, state and county levels. Statistics indicate a larger percentage of foster youth do not complete High school when compared to the general population. Of these exiting out, significant percentages are below grade level in reading, writing and math and have a history of repeating a grade in middle or high school. Obviously, concern also exists as to how foster youth will perform on a structured High School Exit Exam. Therefore, the department continues to focus on steps to provide maximum support to foster youth to enhance their chances of succeeding on the examination and improving the likelihood of further successful endeavors. For example, the department chose “engaging transitional age youth” as its focus topic for the Peer Quality Case Review completed during 2008. This review captured promising practices, which enhance a youth’s success in the transition to adulthood.

The department determined during last year’s Business Plan process that the data supplied by the State of California and used to determine the number of youth who graduated from high school or obtained a G.E.D. was faulty. The department continues to pursue the purchase of a reliable identification and tracking system to help provide increased Independent Living Program services to eligible youth and reliable data for reporting and planning purposes. Without waiting for the completion of this purchase, in cooperation with the Human Services (HS) Legislative and Research Division, the department embarked on a full audit of cases involving youth who have transitioned out of the Child Welfare System. The purpose of this audit was to provide accurate data, which cannot be obtained by any other source. HS Legislation and Research provided the first “Exit Outcomes” report to the state, reflecting the newly established data collection and analysis process to track outcomes of youth who exit the child welfare system.

DCS remains committed to improving outcomes for youth who exit the Child Welfare Services System. Educational Liaisons, hired in December 2006, are responsible for assisting foster youth in successfully navigating their educational experience by working with both the student and the student’s teachers to achieve improved academic performance. Also, six former foster youth were hired during 2007-08 to enhance the ILP program and encourage foster youth and caregiver participation. Additionally, the department Director personally visited each regional office during the year and conducted meetings with supervisory staff. One purpose of the meetings was to inform staff of her personal commitment to the Independent Living Program and of her expectation that staff must also share this value that youth exiting the system must have a real opportunity to experience a successful adulthood. All of these efforts contributed to the greater than expected increase in the percentage of youth who exited the system with a high school diploma or its equivalency. However, budget uncertainties preclude the department from projecting similar percentage increases in youth graduating in 2008-09 and 2009-10. Instead, a more modest 5 % increase is estimated for 2008-09 and 6 % increase is projected for 2009-10. This is attributable to potential decreases in program funding that would necessarily result in the loss of Educational Liaison contract employees and the Peer/Youth Advocate Public Service Employee positions. These are the positions that have directly contributed to the higher than foreseen percentage increases in positive outcomes by foster youth. Any losses in their number will negatively affect the rate of graduation or equivalency.



2007 Adoption Finalization Event

2009-10 REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL GENERAL FUND FINANCING

The department is not requesting any additional general fund financing for 2009-10.

2009-10 PROPOSED FEE ADJUSTMENTS

The department is not requesting any proposed fee adjustments for 2009-10.

If there are questions about this business plan, please contact DeAnna Avey-Motikeit, Director, at (909) 388 -0242.