



LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Celebrating 26 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

COMMISSIONERS

Patricia Curry
Chair

Susan F. Friedman
Vice Chair

Steven M. Olivas, Esq.
Vice Chair

Stacey Savelle
Vice Chair

Carol O. Biondi
Ann Franzen
Dr. Sunny Kang
Helen A. Kleinberg
Dr. La-Doris McClaney
Rev. Cecil L. Murray
Sandra Rudnick
Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW
Martha Trevino Powell
Dr. Harriette F. Williams

APPROVED MINUTES

The Special Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **December 13, 2010**, in Room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim accounting or transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Patricia Curry	Steven M. Olivas, Esq.
Ann Franzen	Martha Trevino Powell
Dr. Sunny Kang	Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW
Helen A. Kleinberg	Dr. Harriette F. Williams
Dr. La-Doris McClaney	

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Carol O. Biondi	Sandra Rudnick
Susan F. Friedman	Stacey Savelle
Rev. Cecil L. Murray	

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:08 a.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made.

III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

- **December 13, 2010**

Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner Sorkin, seconded by Commissioner McClaney (Commissioners Biondi, Friedman, Murray, Rudnick, and Savelle being absent), the agenda for December 13, 2010, was unanimously approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- **November 15, 2010**

Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner Kang, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg (Commissioners Biondi, Friedman, Murray, Rudnick, and Savelle being absent), the November 15, 2010 minutes ([copy on file](#)) were unanimously approved, as submitted.

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Curry reported the following:

- Effective today, December 13, 2010, Trish Ploehn resigned as the Director for the Department of Children and Family Services. Ms. Ploehn was reassigned to the Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council under the Chief Executive Office.
- Ms. Carrie Miller was promoted to Acting Assistant Director of the CEO's Service Integration Branch effective January 1, 2011, and will work on the Countywide Data Sharing Initiative, the Self-Sufficiency Initiative and the Gang Intervention Strategy.
- The Commission's 2010 Holiday Luncheon is after the Commission meeting today.

Chair Curry extended a special thanks to Commissioner Williams for organizing the luncheon and wished all in attendance Happy Holidays.

Action Taken:

After discussion, Chair Curry's verbal report was received and filed.

VI. PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS

- **Update by the Youth Self-Sufficiency Committee headed by the Chief Executive Office (CEO) in response to a Board of Supervisors' Motion (Agn. 6 of 3/2/10) by Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich**

Board of Supervisors

Helen Berberian, Deputy
5th Supervisorial District

CEO

Kathy House, Assistant CEO
Carrie Miller, Director
Los Angeles County
Education Coordinating Council

Probation Department

Michael Verner, Director
Youth Development Services ILP/TILP

DCFS

Harvey Kawasaki, Division Chief
Youth Development Services

Ms. Berberian reported the following:

- At the beginning of 2003, DCFS embarked on a systematic process of planning child welfare service delivery by focusing on improving outcomes for children and families. The first step identified three main outcome goals; safety, permanency and a reduced reliance on detentions.
- The second step identified and realigned departmental resources to the three aforementioned outcomes. Departmental resources that were outside of the three outcomes were immediately, or in a reasonable time thereafter, redirected to support one of the outcomes. Additionally, DCFS redeployed staff and refigured contracts to be performance based in a manner that would support the three outcomes.
- During this time period, Los Angeles County (County) joined the State in negotiating the Title IV-E Waiver (Waiver) with the Federal government to secure the necessary funding flexibility for services and programs to:
 - keep children safely in their birth home;
 - strengthen families;
 - reunify children safely with their birth families in a timely manner; and
 - secure alternative timely permanency through adoption or legal guardianship.
- On March 31, 2006, the Federal government accepted the State's Waiver application, while earlier in the day Supervisor Antonovich placed a call to Washington D.C. in support of the Waiver. The Probation Department (Probation) was not a part of the initial Waiver application; however, in view of the ten percent Waiver eligible youth within the County's juvenile justice system, the federal government required Probation's inclusion.
- The third step involved the engagement of County Departments and child welfare stakeholders in the process of planning innovative service delivery to improve outcomes in each of the three areas. Noteworthy were the recommendations in the workgroup reports issued jointly by the Commission for Children and Families, DCFS and Probation on Prevention, Family Reunification, Permanency (three reports were issued), youth 14 and older, children and relative caregivers, and implementation of Assembly Bill (AB) 408.
- By the end of 2009, DCFS had achieved an 18 percent reduction in caseloads, a 32 percent improvement in timelines to permanency, and a 36 percent reduction in children residing in out-of-home placement. At the same time, Probation's service delivery reforms resulted in a 19 percent reduction in the number of youth in congregate care, a 32 percent reduction in the number of reentries, and 15 percent reduction in the median length of stay. However, 1,800 youth continued to annually age out of the system.

- National research reveals that soon after leaving care, half of these youth are unemployed, one third are dependent on public assistance, a quarter are incarcerated, and one fifth are homeless which reflects a failure in the system to provide youth with permanency.
- Supervisor Antonovich has always championed permanency either through safe reunification or timely adoption. Permanency will always remain the primary goal for youth who cannot safely reunify with their birth families, but those youth who age out without safe reunification or without a forever family must be effectively prepared for self-sufficiency by their County family.
- According to Supervisor Antonovich, to assume that most 18 year olds with a history of abuse and/or no family ties can enter adulthood and take care of themselves, is government sanctioned child abuse. On a Supervisor Antonovich's 2007 motion, Los Angeles County supported AB 713 authored by Assemblyman Bill Mays and Karen Bass. AB 713, if adopted would have enhanced services and financial support to youth between the ages of 18 and 21 statewide. However, due to fiscal concerns AB 713 failed in the State Legislature.
- In October 2008, President Bush signed into law H.R. 6893 – Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. H.R. 6893 gave states the option to assist youth up to the age of 21 to transition successfully into adulthood. Supervisor Antonovich placed several calls to Washington D.C. in support of H.R. 6893.
- On Supervisor Antonovich's March 2010 motion, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously adopted the fourth countywide outcome goal of Transition Age Youth Self-Sufficiency. In September 2010, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law AB 12, authored by Assembly member Beall and Speaker Bass to ensure California opted into the foster care extension provisions of H.R. 6893. Supervisor Antonovich placed a call to Governor Schwarzenegger in support of AB 12 the night before it was signed.
- Through collaboration with County Departments, Commissions, and child advocates, non-profit providers, philanthropist and former foster youth, a sound foundation has been developed for implementing a countywide integrated Transition Age Youth Self-Sufficiency protocol for both DCFS and Probation youth.
- Most recently on Supervisor Antonovich's December 2010 motion, the Board declared Transition Age Youth Self-Sufficiency as a countywide goal. The Board directed the Chief Executive Officer to report back in 60 days with workgroup's conceptual plan, recommended pilots, the planning process for AB 12 protocols, and a blending of existing and new revenues to rollout integrated service delivery for 10,000 DCFS and Probation involved youth ages 14-21. Supervisor Antonovich remains dedicated to following through on this highly important issue.

Ms. Berberian extended special thanks to the individuals who worked tirelessly on planning Transition Age Youth Self-Sufficiency, and the nine co-sponsors of AB 12 (The California Alliance for Child and Family Services, Children's Law Center of Los Angeles, the John Burton Foundation, the SCIU State Council, California Youth Connection, the County Welfare Directors Association of California, the Judicial Council of California, the Alliance your Children's Rights, and the Youth Law Center) for their profound efforts.

Members of the Self-Sufficiency Committee (Ms. Miller, Mr. Kawasaki and Mr. Verner), discussed and provided handouts related to "Self-Sufficiency ([copy on file](#)), adding the following:

- To date, two quarterly reports from the Chief Executive Officer dated July, 6, 2010 and October 19, 2010, in response to Supervisor Antonovich's Board Motion approved in March 2010 (Agenda 6 of March 2, 2010) have been completed. The next quarterly report will be completed in January 2011.
- During a Workgroup retreat hosted by Chair Curry, one of the questions discussed was how to prepare youth to be self-sufficient. From that discussion, the Workgroup developed the Self-Sufficiency Triangle ([copy on file](#)) which identifies the following four critical areas that youth must achieve in order to be self-sufficient: Permanency/Housing, Social and Emotional Well-Being, Education and Career/Workforce Readiness.
- Approximately 10,000 youth ages 14-20 are served by DCFS and Probation.
- Moving forward, the Self-Sufficiency Committee will develop a plan on how to pull County departments together through policy changes or leveraging resources and changing the way we do business. The Committee has also created several workgroups to ensure that every aspect associated with making Self-Sufficiency a countywide goal is covered; Workgroups created thus far include Housing, Life Skills and AB 12.
- Once AB 12 is implemented in January 1, 2012, DCFS Kin-Gap youth will have the opportunity have placement costs covered while they continue to enhance their self-sufficiency needs. Successful implementation of AB 12 will require the outreach to the Kin-Gap community.
- Probation has begun to phase in the use of the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) through its Independent Living Program (ILP), and it anticipates full implementation of CWS/CMS in early 2011. The use of CWS/CMS will increase accountability of Probation staff while allowing staff to identify any trends.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, representatives from the Self Sufficiency Committee added the following:

- Housing experts have been included in the Housing workgroup. Additionally, Mr. Kawasaki and Mr. Verner recently met with Terri Boykins from the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to revisit their Housing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and MHSA funding. The consensus is that the MOU must be refined to provide mental health housing slots for youth in the system. It is also very important to ensure that those involved with the Housing workgroup are knowledgeable with the diverse population of Los Angeles County.
- Discussions are taking place between DCFS, Probation and the Chief Information Office to address concerns of dual entries to the various County data systems.

Mr. Mitchell from the Probation Department noted that there are some structural issues around migrating data from the various systems, but there are certain areas where dual entries must be made. He also stated that Chief Blevins recently informed them that there will be a State Committee with The Defense Security Service regarding CWS/CMS implementation. The Committee will discuss the possibility of a new web-based CWS/CMS system and how to best deal with the current issues.

- The Workgroup defined Self-Sufficiency very broadly, and are aware that youth may not be completely self-sufficient by the age of 21. However, youth must acquire the building blocks to eventually achieve self-sufficiency, and the County must begin building life skills for youth as soon as they enter the system regardless of their age.

Ms. Janis Spire, Alliance for Children's Rights, noted the importance of encouraging caregiver involvement in the Self-Sufficiency process. Mr. Kawasaki announced an AB 12 conversion meeting taking place in the evening of December 13, 2010, to which stakeholders and relative caregivers were invited.

Action Taken:

After discussion, reports by the Self-Sufficiency Committee were received and filed.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There was none.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. William L. Dean addressed the Commission.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There was none.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Curry at 11:13 a.m.