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July 25, 2018

To: Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Sachi A. Hamai
Chief Executive Officer

ANALYSIS OF THE CENTER FOR STRATEGIC PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

On October 6, 2015, the Board directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Director of the Office of Child Protection (OCP) to establish the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships (Center) as a pilot within the OCP. Further, the Board directed the CEO to work closely with Southern California Grantmakers (SCG) to conduct an analysis to determine whether the Center's initiatives and efforts are supportive of vulnerable children and families and the effectiveness of its efforts. If the analysis determines that the Center meets the needs of the County and philanthropy, a funding sustainability plan is to be developed where the County's portion of the Center's costs is shared among County departments identified in the Board's June 16, 2015 motion. These departments include: Public Health, Mental Health, Health Services, Children and Family Services, Public Social Services, Sheriff, and Probation, as well as the Los Angeles Office of Education, First 5 LA, and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. With the Center becoming operational on April 1, 2016, this report reviews the Center's work during the first two years of a three-year pilot phase ending on March 31, 2019.

Methodology

To assess the effectiveness of the Center and to determine whether efforts are supportive of vulnerable children and families, the CEO reviewed information about the Center's joint initiatives through March 2018, including Center publications, financial reports, and progress updates to the Board. We also met with Center staff to develop a framework to

categorize and describe three broad types of the Center's joint initiatives: Direct Service Innovations, Knowledge Transfer and Technical Assistance, and Research/Evaluation/Analysis. Then, on March 29, 2018, the CEO and SCG convened a focus group discussion with over 50 representatives from philanthropic partners, County departments, and public agencies. Finally, the CEO conducted follow-up interviews with several County departments to gain further perspective on partnering with the Center.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Overall, the Center's philanthropic and public agency partners find value in the Center's joint initiatives and recommend permanent placement within the County structure. Based on the finding that the Center's efforts are supportive of children and families and effective in meeting the goals of both County and philanthropy, the attached report, *Analysis of the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships and Recommendations Going Forward*, presents recommendations on the Center's: 1) Scope and Placement; 2) Planning and Communication; and 3) Sustainability and Funding. Below is a summary of these recommendations:

1. Scope and Placement

- Expand the scope of the Center's work from one Board Directed Priority (e.g., Child Protection) to include the other five Board Directed Priorities (e.g., Homelessness, Health Integration, Sheriff's/Jail Reform, Environmental Oversight and Monitoring, and Immigration); and
- Place the Center within the CEO.

2. Planning and Communication

- Continue ongoing work related to the Child Protection Board Directed Priority and identify specific objectives for the County and SCG to accomplish in the short-term relative to one or more of the other Board Directed Priorities;
- Establish longer-term goals by adopting a jointly-developed strategic plan, framed by the Board Directed Priorities, by March 31, 2019;
- Develop a plan to measure progress and outcomes in achieving the goals outlined in the strategic plan, by June 30, 2019;
- Upon conclusion of the strategic planning process, assess the need for any additional resources and address the need through the County's budget process, in conjunction with the County-SCG fiscal sponsor agreement, as appropriate; and
- Develop a communications strategy to engage stakeholders and the general public about the Center's work and create opportunities for partnerships.

3. Sustainability and Funding Model

- Maintain a shared funding model among SCG and the County to jointly fund the Center's staff and operations up to a set amount each fiscal year; and
- Identify appropriate and necessary internal controls to ensure accountability and transparency.

Our assessment finds that the Center's efforts support children and families by effectively meeting the goals of both County and philanthropy. In response to the Board motion, this report: 1) reviews the Center's work to date; 2) summarizes findings from our analysis and makes recommendations; 3) presents a funding model and cost options; and 4) provides next steps to operationalize these recommendations should the Board act to make the Center a permanent part of County government.

If you have any questions, please contact Fesia Davenport, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, at (213) 974-1186 or FDavenport@ceo.lacounty.gov.

SAH:JJ:FAD
VD:ma

Attachments

- c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Sheriff
Children and Family Services
Health Agency
Health Services
LA County Library
Mental Health
Office of Education
Parks and Recreation
Probation
Public Social Services
First 5 LA
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
Southern California Grantmakers

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BACKGROUND

In April 2014, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection (Commission) issued a final report that recommended that the County “reach out to the philanthropic community and build strategic public-private partnerships to help improve the child protection system.” The report further noted that, “the power of public-private partnerships is under-utilized by the County to date and should be an important strategy for improving services.”

On October 6, 2015, in response to the Commission’s final report, the Board established the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships (Center) within the Executive Office of the Board/Office of Child Protection (OCP). The Center became operational on April 1, 2016, with the hiring of its Director. In December 2016, the Center was fully staffed with the addition of the Associate Center Director and a project consultant.

Currently, the County has an agreement with Southern California Grantmakers (SCG) to jointly fund the cost of Center staff. Moreover, the County has a fiscal sponsor agreement with SCG. At the request of the County, SCG accepts and deposits funds donated to support the County’s initiatives, and serves as fiscal sponsor in disbursing the funds. Without Board action, the three-year pilot phase for the Center ends on March 31, 2019.

BOARD DIRECTIVE

Once practical to do so, the October 2015 motion directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and OCP, working closely with SCG, to conduct an analysis to:

- Determine whether the Center’s initiatives and efforts are supportive of vulnerable children and families, and the effectiveness of its efforts.
- Develop a funding sustainability plan, if the analysis indicates that the Center meets the needs of the County and philanthropy.

OVERVIEW

To determine whether the Center’s initiatives and efforts have been effective, the CEO and SCG reviewed existing projects and reports for work completed during the Center’s first two years, held a focus group with partners, and conducted follow-up interviews with County departments.

This report reviews the activities of the Center’s first two years through March 2018, includes an assessment of its effectiveness, and provides recommendations for next steps.

I. REVIEW OF THE CENTER’S WORK: JOINT INITIATIVES AND CONVENINGS

During the first two years of the pilot, the Center considered 49 joint initiative ideas. A total of 22 (45%) joint initiatives were funded. The 22 funded joint initiatives received \$2.8 million from 20 philanthropic organizations, the City of West Hollywood, the County of Los Angeles, and First 5 LA. Figure 1 shows 57% of funding for joint initiatives came from philanthropy, followed by 25% from Los Angeles County, and 18% from First 5 LA.

Partnering with the Center and philanthropy, a total of 11 public agencies worked closely on the joint initiatives: CEO (Homeless Initiative), Executive Office (OCP), Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Health Services (DHS), Mental Health (DMH), Public Health (DPH), Public Social Services (DPSS), Parks and Recreation (DPR), Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), First 5 LA, and Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA).

The Center’s joint initiatives fall into three broad categories, with a focus on programs and services for children and families:

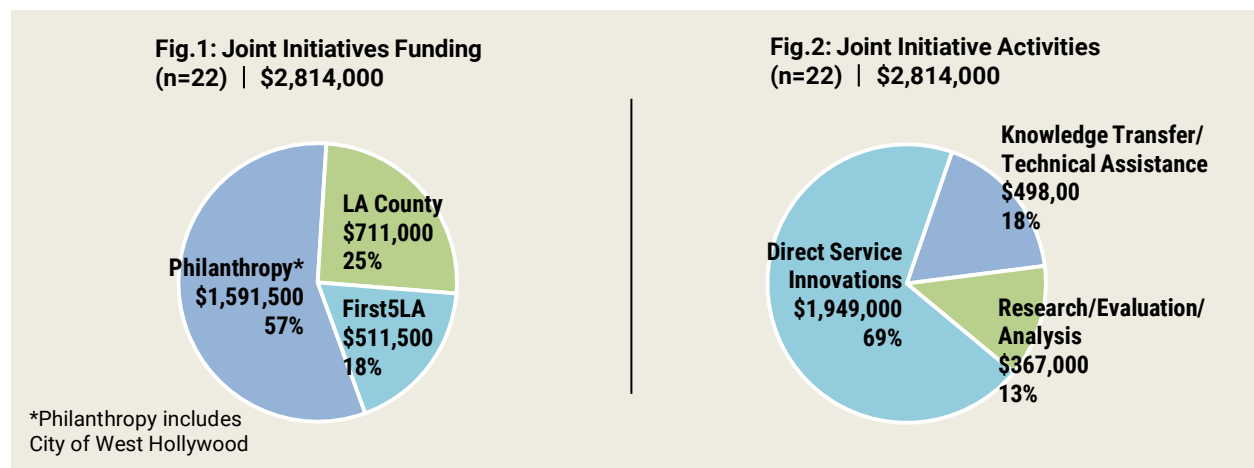
- Direct Service Innovations;
- Knowledge Transfer/Technical Assistance; and
- Research/Evaluation/Analysis.

For many joint initiatives there is cross-over between initiative categories. Although these initiatives are treated separately for reporting purposes, all are part of a greater whole. Some are directly connected to others, some build upon the work of others, and all are designed to drive systems change.

Figure 2 shows a total of \$2,814,000 in funding allocated for 22 joint initiatives categorized by four activities. As of March 2018, 69% of total funding supported projects that directly serve children and families.

Direct Service Innovations

This category describes the set of initiatives where the public and private sectors seek to innovate on-the-ground services to the community. Each represents efforts at systems change through more effective, more efficient, and/or enhanced service delivery. There are 12 joint initiatives in this area, as shown in Figure 3. For example, the Youth Housing Pilots help to integrate the child welfare system and the housing system, in part, through funding two nonprofits, to test integration strategies that could be rolled out Countywide.



As another example, the SPA 6 Prevention Pilot funds evidence-based home visiting services for DPSS clients in one regional office to test the proposition that these services will help to strengthen those families and prevent them from entering the child welfare system. If the pilot proves successful, DPSS may consider expanding the services to other parts of the County.

Knowledge Transfer and Technical Assistance

This category describes those initiatives where the Center has brought in hands-on support or training to help a department design and/or

implement challenging or new initiatives or to transmit best practices. The Center has six joint initiatives in this area. *A Second Chance* and the *One Roof Institute* are examples of transmitting best practices. For instance, *A Second Chance*, trained DCFS staff on how best to support relative caregivers. In the example of the *One Roof Institute*, the Corporation for Supportive Housing is leading a 6-9 month process involving multiple County departments to transmit best practices from around the country in integrating child welfare and supportive housing systems.

Research/Evaluation/Analysis

These initiatives increase our knowledge base about the areas we are trying to impact or our understanding of the effectiveness of new efforts. The Center has four joint initiatives in this area. The Expanded LGBTQ Scan is an example - this effort allowed the County to better understand what it was doing right, and what it needed to improve, in serving our LGBTQ youth. The Family Finding Initiative is an example of the latter – it allowed DCFS to secure services of an outside evaluator for its Family Finding pilot. Attachments II and III provide a description of each of the 22 joint initiatives and 12 convenings (described below), respectively.

Center Convenings

In addition to these joint initiatives, the Center also regularly convenes its partners. Much of the success of partnerships between the County and philanthropy depends on building trust and relationships. Participants from both sectors often comment that they met one another for the first time at a Center convening. The Center hosts or co-hosts five on-going convenings, including a Semi-Annual Funders Briefing, and, as of March 2018, had hosted seven initiative-specific convenings. For more detail about the Center’s history and work, refer to Attachment II, initiative summary, and Attachment V, *We’re*

Fig. 3: Joint Initiatives (n=22)	Funding
Direct Service Innovations	
1. Trauma Informed Emer. Child Care	793,000
2. SPA 6 Prevention Pilot - Direct Svcs	366,500
3. Domestic Violence Prevention	225,000
4. Youth Housing Pilots	146,000
5. Youth Diversion Summit	108,000
6. Teen Clinic Expansion	100,000
7. Convening; Recruit Resource Families	60,000
8. Every Student Succeeds Act Pilot	60,000
9. Foster Care Ministry South LA	50,000
10. Parks After Dark (PAD) Pilot	38,000
11. DHS Mama’s Neighborhood	2,500
12. Legal Services for Homeless Youth*	Pro bono
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$1,949,000
Knowledge Transfer/Technical Assistance	
1. Visitation	198,000
2. Resource Family Approval	105,000
3. Prevention Early Intervention (PEI)	75,000
4. Second Chance Values Training	55,000
5. SPA 6 Prevention Pilot – Guide	20,000
6. One Roof Institute	45,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$498,000
Research/Evaluation/Analysis	
1. Portrait of Los Angeles	125,000
2. Family Finding Pilot Evaluation	167,000
3. Expanded LGBTQ Scan	50,000
4. Collective Impact Recruitment & Rtn.	25,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$367,000
Total	\$2,814,000

in it Together: The Story of the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships’ First Year.

Fig. 4: A word cloud depicts the focus group participants’ one-word descriptors of the Center. Dependent upon their responses, words are arranged by size and frequency.

II. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On March 29, 2018, the CEO and SCG convened a focus group on the Center at the California Wellness Foundation. Over 50 individuals attended, including representatives from the County, philanthropy, and Center staff. A facilitator was hired to gather: 1) feedback on the Center’s work to date; and 2) recommendations to ensure the Center’s impact going forward. This section presents a synopsis of the focus group discussion which includes highlighted themes from the facilitator’s summary (Attachment IV). The facilitator opened the discussion by inviting focus group participants to describe the Center with one word, and the *word cloud* shown in Figure 4 illustrates their responses.



Overall, attendees indicated a sense of enthusiasm and valued their experience with the Center. They agreed that the Center should continue to operate within the County.

This section summarizes five main points raised by focus group participants within three areas: I) Scope and Placement, II) Planning and Communication, and III) Sustainability and Funding. Based upon the feedback received, recommendations follow for each area, if the Board acts to make the Center permanent.

Participants acknowledged the Center’s unique position as a bridge to help connect various County efforts through partnerships with philanthropy. Participants noted the flexibility of philanthropy, the steadiness of government, and the Center’s role in connecting both to achieve an innovative approach to solving challenging issues facing County residents. Through these connections, the Center helps both sectors achieve greater focus and cohesion by working to identify shared agendas and accomplish change.

Area I: Scope and Placement

In valuing the work of the Center, attendees were supportive of an expanded scope beyond child welfare – though not an unlimited scope.

Moreover, regardless of focus area, attendees cautioned the County to avoid duplicating efforts and to leverage the existing work, innovations, and relationships of community and government. Participants pointed to the establishment of the L.A. Justice Fund as an example of the County and philanthropy leveraging each other’s strengths to meet the urgent needs of County resident immigrants at

risk of removal, by establishing and/or expanding access to legal representation services for eligible County residents.

With an expanded scope, the focus group discussed the placement of the Center, and attendees were supportive of moving the Center into the County Chief Executive Office.

The County Chief Executive Office is well positioned to house the Center since it plays a major role in implementing, coordinating the work of, or otherwise supporting all six Board Directed Priorities. Attendees acknowledged that many of the most vulnerable residents have needs that span these areas, and an integrated approach to holistically meet these comprehensive needs is essential for making progress.

Recommendations for Scope and Placement

- Establish the Center within the County Chief Executive Office.
- Expand the scope of the Center to develop joint initiatives that support any of the Board Directed Priorities.

Area II: Planning and Communication

Attendees emphasized the need for a time-limited process to identify initiatives within the expanded scope and related metrics for success. They added that a strategic planning process should include a mechanism for ongoing stakeholder input. Once goals and objectives are identified, members also discussed the need to measure outcomes of the Center's joint initiatives and related efforts. An evaluation of the Center's efforts should include both qualitative and quantitative data to show progress and achievement of results.

Attendees noted the need to enhance communication with both stakeholders and the greater public. Through a communication strategy, more members of the public would know about the Center's work and progress. Building on such momentum, they believed stakeholders would learn about opportunities to engage and form new partnerships with the Center.

Recommendations for Planning and Communication

- Establish a shared agenda to continue ongoing work and identify specific objectives for the County and philanthropy to accomplish in the short term (next 6-9 months).
- Establish longer-term goals by adopting a strategic plan, in partnership with the Center, philanthropy and the County, by March 31, 2019.
- Establish metrics and a plan to measure progress and outcomes in achieving the goals outlined in the shared agenda and strategic plan, during FY 2018-19.
- Develop a communication strategy to engage stakeholders and the general public about the Center's work and create opportunities for partnerships.

Area III: Sustainability and Funding

Participants suggested that as the Center's scope expands, the Center's capacity should be expanded. With the potential for more work outside of child protection, attendees believed there would be a need for more staff to take on new areas of focus. Attendees agreed that the Center should continue to be jointly funded by the County and philanthropy, through SCG. They suggested that County funding support infrastructure, including salaries; and SCG fund operational support consultants, convenings, and other core costs.

Recommendation for Sustainability and Funding

- Maintain a shared funding model among SCG and the County to jointly fund the Center’s staffing and operations up to a set amount per fiscal year.

Assessing Effectiveness

After the focus group discussion, the CEO conducted one-on-one interviews with several departments to verify and gather additional insight. Overall, departments felt the Center adds value to their work by leveraging new connections and resources. Moreover, the departments commented positively on the ability to more efficiently use funding in shorter time frames. As the Center continues its work, it will be important to continue to engage with departments to incorporate their feedback.

The following section reviews the existing funding model between SCG and the County and provides cost options and recommendations for ongoing Center funding.

III. FUNDING OPTIONS AND COST

Existing Core Budget Explained

The Center’s three-year pilot launched in April 2016, when the director was hired as a

Figure 5: Center Staffing

Staff	Role
Center Pilot Consultants (<i>Center Staff</i>)	Develops joint initiatives with partners; these positions will become permanent County positions after the pilot.
Operational Support Consultants	Engages on a short-term, non-recurrent basis to assist Center staff.
Joint Initiative Consultants	Works on a specific departmental project for a defined time period.

consultant. During the pilot, core staff of the Center are referred to as Center Pilot Consultants. As stated in the funding agreement between the County and SCG, the County and philanthropy each contributes one-half of each core position’s base salary. For purposes of the pilot, the County provided office space, computer equipment, and other necessary support as deemed appropriate for the Center Pilot Consultants.

In addition to personnel, operating expenses to support the Center include: Operational Support Consultants, travel, supplies, convenings, and design and print materials. Philanthropy covered most of the Operational Support Consultants and other operating costs. Together, the personnel and operating budget form the Center’s core budget. Figure 5 describes three types of staffing in support of the Center’s operations and joint initiatives.

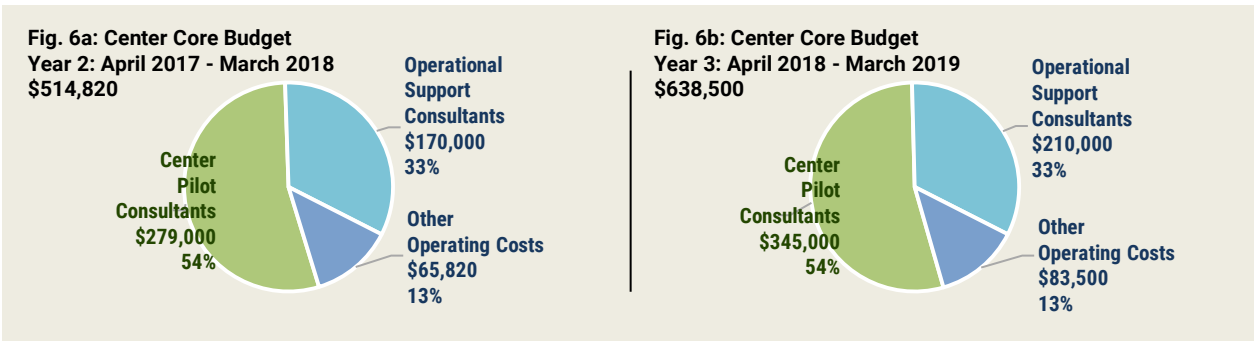


Figure 7: Proposed Center Core Budget and Cost Sharing Ratios Between the County and Philanthropy

Personnel Costs to be Covered by the County		
Working Titles	Salary & EB ²	Percent
Center Director	\$258,000	
Associate Center Director	215,000	
Administrative Assistant	101,000	
Personnel Subtotal³	\$574,000	55%
Operating Costs to be Covered by Philanthropy		
Operations (includes: Center Operational Support Consultants ⁴ , supplies, convenings, conference/travel, design and printing, & SCG support)	469,636	
Operating Subtotal	\$469,636	45%
Total Proposed Cost	\$1,043,636	

¹May increase due to General Salary Adjustment, often referred to as Cost of Living Adjustment, which may be implemented only by specific action of the Board.

²EB = Employee Benefits

³S&EB for the three Center staff positions does not reflect the County and CEO overhead rate for office space, computers, phones, and other services and supplies, etc.

⁴Consultants are hired for a short-term, non-recurrent basis to assist Center staff.

In March 2018, the Center had a staffing and operating budget totaling \$514,820 [Figure 6a]. Fifty-four percent of the budget funded the Center Pilot Consultants (Director and Associate Director) positions. Moreover, one-third of the budget funds Operational Support Consultants, and 13% fund other operating costs, including supplies and convenings.

Core Center Staffing in Year Three of the Pilot

For the current and third year of the pilot beginning in April 2018, Figure 6b shows a cost increase in each of the three budget categories, while maintaining the same ratios across categories as the second year.

Timeline and Proposal to Move the Center to the CEO

During the existing and final year of the pilot, we recommend that the Center Pilot Consultants (Director and the Assistant Director) move to the CEO and continue as consultants through June 30, 2019. These two positions, along with the third position (Administrative Assistant), would be added as permanent positions in the

CEO using the County budget process. Figure 7 shows total cost for the three staff as County employees. These salary levels are based on responsibilities and desired characteristics of the Center Director, Associate Center Director, and Administrative Assistant.

The hiring of County employees would require inclusion of salary and employee benefits. Estimated overhead would also be included for such expenses as office space and utilities. Beginning on July 1, 2019, as shown in Figure 7, the County would cover all personnel costs, and philanthropy would cover all operating costs. Figure 7 presents an aspirational County-SCG cost sharing ratio of 55:45 for personnel and operating costs.

Once the positions are added to the budget, the County requires potential candidates for a position to complete an examination and be placed on an eligible list for employment. The recruitment and examination process would require time to interview qualified candidates and make a final selection prior to July 1, 2019.

IV. NEXT STEPS

If the Board acts to make the Center a permanent part of County government housed in the CEO, the following steps are recommended:

- **September 2018:** During the FY 2018-19 Supplemental Budget, the CEO will:
 - 1) Identify funding for the Center for the fourth quarter of FY 2018-19;
 - 2) Amend the OCP consultant agreements with the Center's Director and Associate Director to transfer the project manager to the CEO and extend the agreements to June 30, 2019.
- **January 2019:** During the FY 2019-20 Recommended Budget, the CEO will:
 - 1) Recommend adding three positions to the CEO's budget effective July 1, 2019;
 - 2) Identify participating departments' share for funding the staffing costs; and
 - 3) Establish a new agreement with SCG to, among other things: define roles and responsibilities for the ongoing partnership, include division of Center costs amongst the County and SCG, and establish internal control mechanisms, including a tri-annual review of the shared funding model for the Center.
- **March 2019:** The Center will:
 - 1) Complete the strategic planning process with stakeholders to determine expanded scope, establish a strategic plan, and outline staffing needs;
 - 2) Determine how joint initiatives will be developed, approved, implemented, and evaluated; and
 - 3) Based on the strategic plan, identify the need for additional resources, including staff.
- **June 2019:** The CEO will address any need for additional resources through the County budget process as appropriate.

Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships • Joint Initiatives • March 2018

Research/Evaluation/Analysis**1. *Expanded LGBTQ Scan***

The Center brought together funders—a diverse group whose members do not typically invest in the child welfare arena—and secured \$50,000 in funding to expand a County-commissioned scan of LGBTQ youth services in Los Angeles County. With this increased scope, the scan provided an unprecedented opportunity to gain a fuller understanding of services that are available to—or lacking for—LGBTQ youth. The report was submitted to the Board of Supervisors on February 28, 2017. Following the submission, the Center reconvened its funders to allow the private and public sectors to continue working together to address any disparities or other issues identified by the scan. The Teen Clinic Expansions (discussed below) also resulted from the Scan.

We are grateful to the David Bohnett Foundation, the California Community Foundation, The California Wellness Foundation, the Weingart Foundation, the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation, the City of West Hollywood, and The Palette Fund for their generous investment.

2. *Family Finding*

The Center secured \$167,000 in funding for an evaluation of the Department of Children and Family Services' family-finding pilot. Through a motion passed on May 31, 2016, the Board of Supervisors called on DCFS to work with the Office of Child Protection (OCP) to build a robust and consistent system of finding and engaging family members when a child is taken into the child welfare system. DCFS and the OCP together designed a pilot for two DCFS offices (Santa Fe Springs and Glendora), and approached the Center seeking a philanthropic partner to fund an outside evaluator and technical assistance for the pilot. The Center engaged potential partners, secured the funding, and helped to select an outside entity to perform the work: Child Trends, a national expert on family finding. We are grateful to The Ahmanson Foundation for funding this project.

3. *Portrait of Los Angeles*

The Center supported the Office of Child Protection (OCP) in submitting a grant proposal to the County's Productivity Investment Fund (PIF) for a consultant to be on-the-ground support for an advisory board in developing the *Portrait of Los Angeles*. This consultant is also charged with aligning and integrating related data efforts into this work. The PIF grant was unanimously approved on March 13, 2017. The Center is grateful to the many private sector partners who provided the initial funding for the report and to Southern California Grantmakers for convening them.

4. *Collective Impact Recruitment and Retention Landscape*

Using a collective-impact model, the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation convenes a group of diverse stakeholders (with support from the Center) to tackle obstacles to the effective recruitment and retention of resource families. In 2017, stakeholders requested a Landscape analysis of the current efforts in Los Angeles County. We are grateful to First5LA for funding that analysis. The group has since divided into workgroups to focus on a deeper understanding of the recruitment landscape, what data we have and what data we need to do this work, and what "backbone support" is necessary to move the work forward.

The Center continues to engage in both the smaller workgroups and the larger discussion, providing backbone support, and looks forward to continued work on this important initiative.

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Knowledge Transfer/Technical Assistance

1. ***A Second Chance***

DCFS reached out to the Center in late 2016 to ask us to explore private funding to train its staff and its contractors on how best to support relative caregivers for children detained out of home. We connected DCFS with a national expert in kin care, A Second Chance. A Second Chance provided “Values Training” to staff trainings and additional support to DCFS in 2017. It was able to do this through support from the Casey Family Programs. We continue to explore how A Second Chance can assist DCFS with the ongoing challenges they face with the new RFA process.

2. ***Department of Mental Health TA for Prevention and Early Intervention Funding***

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) asked the Center to help identify private-sector support for a team of consultants to enhance connections between DMH’s Prevention and Early Intervention funding and the OCP’s prevention efforts. The Blue Shield Foundation generously funded this effort at \$75,000.

3. ***One Roof/ Family Housing Connections***

The Center, working in partnership with LAHSA and the Department of Children and Family Services, along with the CDC and the CEO’s Homelessness Initiative, applied to and was selected to be one of seven cohort jurisdictions around the country working with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to advance innovations supporting homeless families and families at risk of homelessness, who are also either in the child welfare system or at risk of entering the child welfare system. CSH is providing technical assistance to each of the cohort jurisdictions on best practices and connecting us with each other so that we can learn from each other’s experiences. Each of the partner organizations in Los Angeles has committed to working together with CSH over the next nine months to come up with a Strategic Plan better integrating the housing and child welfare systems.

Realizing that this team would need additional backbone support to achieve our potential, the Center reached out to the California Community Foundation and to First5LA for funding to bring on a subject-matter expert to help support the work. We are grateful to both. Together they have invested \$45,000 for this initial 6-month planning process.

4. ***Visitation Support***

To optimize its system for arranging visits between birth families and resource families, DCFS is working with private-sector partners to develop a mobile app grounded in sophisticated geospatial analysis—the science that determines optimal locations for services—provided by Chapin Hall. These activities are in response to a motion from the Board of Supervisors and to ideas generated at the Hack Foster Care LA event that the Pritzker Foundation brought together in April 2017. The Pritzker Foster Care Initiative, First 5LA, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, and the Bowen H. & Janice Arthur McCoy Charitable Foundation have invested in this effort, and the Center is seeking additional partners to support this work.

5. ***SPA6 Prevention Pilot -- Implementation Guide***

This implementation guide, which complements the SPA 6 pilot launched in November 2017 (discussed below), was funded by the Reissa Foundation. It was developed in conjunction with Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and SHIELDS for Families, Inc., and has helped the on-the-ground team to better understand each other’s processes and procedures. In fact, the very

Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships • Joint Initiatives • March 2018

work of putting the guide together helped these two entities to coalesce more quickly. The guide also informs continuous quality improvement (CQI) efforts with the pilot team. Additionally, this guide will help other areas of the county to replicate this work.

6. ***Consultant for DCFS***

As DCFS began implementing Continuum of Care Reform (CCR), they asked for the Center's help for guidance and additional capacity. The Center was able to bring on a consultant to work with the Department and assist with the myriad of challenges CCR has raised. This position is funded by Casey Family Programs.

Direct Service Innovations

1. ***Domestic Violence Prevention and Home Visiting***

Van Nuys Charities awarded the Center a grant for \$225,000 over three years, allowing us to partner with Peace Over Violence, one of the premier domestic violence prevention and support providers in Los Angeles County to bring domestic violence prevention training and support to County-funded and other home-visiting programs. In year one, Peace Over Violence will train and support home visitors within Partnerships for Families, the Department of Children and Family Services' (DCFS) home-visiting program. In years two and three, Peace Over Violence will expand to other intense home-visiting programs in the county. In all of this work, the Center will coordinate with the newly re-formed domestic violence council to be housed in the Department of Public Health to explore additional opportunities for sustaining and expanding these programs.

2. ***One-Day Convening to Recruit Resource Families in South Los Angeles***

The first *Fostering Home* resource-family recruitment fair took place on Saturday, June 3, 2017, at the Center of Hope Church in Inglewood. The event—a partnership among the Center, DCFS, the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, and the Pritzker Foster Care Initiative—offered families a “one-stop shop” with opportunities to attend an orientation session, get health and TB screenings, complete Live Scans, receive paperwork assistance, and ask DCFS and participating foster family agencies (FFAs) questions about the approval process. The event attracted 142 families; 65 individuals completed the join on-site orientation and 40 families submitted Resource Family Approval applications.

The event strengthened the collaboration between DCFS and participating FFAs, resulting in deeper collaboration and more willingness on DCFS's part to refer families to FFAs, in the spirit of “It doesn't matter which door families enter, we want them to be families for our children.” The department has also committed to hiring new staff to meet the needs of potential resource families going through the County approval process.

Fostering Home was intended as a model to roll out to other areas in the County, and DCFS plans another event in the First Supervisorial District in fall 2018.

3. ***South Los Angeles Foster-Care Ministry***

After engaging in conversation with leaders from five large predominantly African American churches and DCFS following the *Fostering Home* event, it became clear that the community wanted to build a network of support beyond a single recruitment event. Leaders of the coalition, the Center, and DCFS are exploring public-private partnership to build a foster-care ministry in South Los Angeles.

Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships • Joint Initiatives • March 2018

In January 2018, in partnership with faith leaders from five churches in South Los Angeles, the Center successfully submitted an application to the Nonprofit Sustainability Initiative (NSI) to explore building a foster-care ministry in South Los Angeles. The NSI awarded us a \$50,000 grant to retain the consultant firm of Hudson and Holland Advisors, LLC, to work with these faith leaders as they formalize a partnership and collaborate moving forward. Once built, the foster-care ministry hopes to partner with DCFS and the private sector to support families in or at risk of entering the child-welfare system, and to recruit and support resource families to care for children in the community. The grant also allows the Center to continue working with Nancy Harris, the consultant who spearheaded our *successful Fostering Home* event last June and has been instrumental in bringing these faith leaders together.

4. ***Parks After Dark Pilot Partnership with City of Los Angeles's Gang Reduction Youth Diversion Program***

The Center successfully brokered a partnership between Parks After Dark, the Department of Public Health (DPH), and the City of Los Angeles's Gang Reduction and Youth Diversion (GRYD) program to bring GRYD's evidence-based infrastructure to two County parks (Jesse Owens and Ted Watkins) during the summer of 2017. The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks), DPH, and the GRYD office were pleased with the program and found the partnerships a resounding success.

Last Fall, the Center brought funders together to discuss the potential for bringing "lessons learned" from this experience to create more intentional partnerships in the future. We continue to work with Parks, DPH, and the Mayor's Fund of Los Angeles to explore these opportunities for future PAD programming.

5. ***Teen Clinic Expansion***

The OCP and the County's departments of Health Services and Mental Health see the County Medical Hubs as an area of potential improved services for our LGBTQ youth. The Teen Center in the LAC + USC Medical Hub operated by the Violence Intervention Program (VIP) is an innovative model that has created a welcoming and safe space for LGBTQ youth. County partners would like to see this model replicated in other Hubs. The Center successfully sought \$100,000 for a Program Manager working with VIP to document their best practices to standardize practices to support this replication. We are grateful to the Reissa Foundation for their support of this initiative.

6. ***Trauma-Informed Emergency Child Care Pilot***

A group of funders—First 5 LA, the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation and the W.M. Keck Foundation— together with DCFS, created an initiative to bring trauma-informed emergency child care slots to resource families who are asked to care for young children. The pilot provided priority access for children taken into the foster care system and also trains child care providers in how to respond to the trauma needs of children who have been abused or neglected. This pilot was a model that has now inspired funding from the state to support and sustain the work.

7. ***Undocumented Homeless Youth Legal Connections***

This initiative focused on connecting immigrant homeless and former foster youth with legal support and assistance. The Center hopes to offer much-needed support both for youth facing possible deportation and for the homeless and housing staff they turn to for help. The Center successfully connected both DCFS' Special Immigration Status Unit and Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), ensuring that homeless and former

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foster transition-age youth fearing deportation have access to immigration legal services and attorneys. The Center also secured the commitment of two private firms, Munger, Tolles & Olson, LLP, and O'Melveny & Meyers, LLP, to offer *pro bono* legal aid to these youth. KIND also agreed to convene "know your rights" workshops in the community (also available via webinar) to ensure that youth are informed and have an opportunity to ask questions. On May 24, 2017, KIND and DCFS participated in an immigration briefing for L.A. County's youth coordinated entry system (YCES) regional coordinators and staff to provide background information and context so they can best serve these youth. This work will continue as long as there is a need in the community.

8. **DHS Mama's Neighborhood Focus Groups**

As part of the Department of Health Services' (DHS) response to the Board motion of December 20, 2016, DHS expanded its *Mama's Neighborhood* program to include home visiting. In designing that program and curriculum, DHS pulled together a series of focus groups composed of clients and potential clients. It had the necessary funding for the focus groups themselves, but lacked the ability to provide important participant supports such as child care, transportation, and food. The Center turned to the Carl and Roberta Deutsch Foundation, which quickly agreed to provide funding for these supports in the amount of \$2,500.

9. **Foster Care Education Transportation Pilot**

Youth in foster care change schools far more often than other students do, making it harder for them to succeed in school. Improving school stability for these youth is crucial to improving their education outcomes. To this end, President Barack Obama in 2015 signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which imposes requirements on local education agencies (LEAs) and child welfare agencies to collaborate to ensure increased school stability for foster youth

The Board of Supervisors directed the County to develop a plan to increase school stability. In September 2017, LACOE, DCFS, and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for a pilot. The ESSA transportation workgroup identified a need for short-term capacity to help respond to higher-than-expected notifications. The Reissa Foundation has invested \$60,000 to fund short-term education consultants to assist DCFS and Los Angeles County school districts in adopting long-term ESSA transportation plans.

10. **Youth Diversion Summit**

The Los Angeles County Youth Diversion and Development Summit launched the County's youth-diversion initiative with a day-long gathering of law enforcement, community organizations, philanthropy, County Departments, and community members on March 1, 2018. This convening provided a unique opportunity for the County's recently established Office of Youth Diversion and Development (OYDD) to build a shared understanding of the County's new youth diversion and development infrastructure, and to mobilize a diverse group of stakeholders to transform the way young people are connected services in lieu of justice-system involvement. OYDD and the Center have been working closely together to involve philanthropy in the County's diversion efforts. OYDD asked the Center to both help secure funding for this summit. The Center worked with the Department of Mental Health (DMH), which funded the majority of summit costs, then connected with The California Endowment, California Wellness, and the Liberty Hill Foundation to cover essential items (catering and youth stipends, for example) that County funding cannot provide. Following the summit, the Center partnered with Liberty Hill to host a funder's briefing on March 9 to update the philanthropic community on this work. We continue to engaged with the YDD team to explore opportunities for additional philanthropic involvement and support.

11. SPA6 Prevention Pilot - Direct Services

As a result of the “listening tour” that member from the OCP’s prevention workgroup embarked on with some of the Prevention and Aftercare (P&A) network providers, a pilot was developed to bring together DPSS, First 5 LA, the OCP, the Children’s Data Network, and SHIELDS for Families, Inc., in South Los Angeles to strengthen prevention efforts in the SPA 6 community. The pilot increases connections between DPSS and SHIELDS (a P&A network provider), and provides evidence-based home visiting services to DPSS clients. The Center helped to coordinate the partners in the initial stages of the pilot development and is grateful to First5LA for the funding, \$386,500, to support the direct services. The implementation guide, discussed above, was funded by the Reissa Foundation.

12. Youth Housing Pilots

The Center worked with United Way’s Home For Good Funders Collaborative and LAHSA to obtain private-sector funding for two pilots—one in SPA 2 and the other in SPA 3—serving system-involved transition-age youth under the supervision of both DCFS and the Probation Department. These two grants represent the first time that the Home for Good Funders Collaborative has supported programs for youth, and also embody a new way of doing business. Both pilots build stronger pathways between LAHSA’s newly created Youth Coordinated Entry System and DCFS. They also explore whether, and to what extent, providing wrap-around services such as flexible funding, transition planning, and housing navigation helps youth thrive. The pilots also contain an evaluation component to measure housing stability as well as other outcomes like income, education, and employment. DCFS has been supportive of these efforts and is engaging with the providers (Village Family Services in SPA 2 and Hathaway-Sycamores in SPA 3) as this important work begins. Additionally, the Center worked with the Chief Executive Office’s Homelessness Initiative to support co-locating Youth Coordinated Entry System (CES) housing navigators in one DCFS regional office per SPA. The SPA 2 pilot was funded for \$75,000 and the SPA 3 pilot was funded for \$71,000. We are grateful to the Pritzker Foster Care Initiative and the Reissa Foundation and to the Home for Good Funders Collaborative for their support.

To promote these three initiatives and help the housing, child-welfare, and juvenile justice systems better understand each other, the Center—along with LAHSA and United Way of Greater Los Angeles—convened a “design day” on November 30, 2017, during which attendees brainstormed more intentionally about how their systems could be better integrated and aligned to support our youth. Systems leaders reconvened on February 22, 2018, for a 90-day check-in, and plan to come together in October for a final celebration and reflection.

Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships • Convenings • March 2018

General Convenings

1. ***Semi-Annual Funders' Breakfast Briefings*** – In conjunction with Southern California Grantmakers, the Center brings the leaders of its public and private funders together to discuss the Center's work, the Joint initiatives, and to lift up the work of its partners. Directors of the seven County departments originally named as Center supporters in the Board motion establishing the Center and the heads of the foundations that fund the Center's core operations are invited to attend or to send representatives. It is designed to be a convening that allows the public and private leaders to meet and get to know one another and each other's work.
2. ***Child Welfare Funders Collaborative*** – In conjunction with Southern California Grantmakers, this collaborative brings together representatives from the County and philanthropy around issues related to child welfare. The Director of DCFS is invited to give an update and Deputies from each supervisorial district are invited to come and present on issues they are working on related to child welfare. Each meeting then focuses on a different topic bringing in speakers on that topic. The Collaborative both creates a learning environment and a space for cross-sector discussion and problem solving. The collaborative meets quarterly and intentionally alternates between meeting in County space and private sector space.
3. ***Home for Good Funders Collaborative Youth Subgroup*** – In conjunction with LAHSA and the Home for Good Funders Collaborative, the Center co-convenes a youth subgroup focused on solving youth homelessness and on bringing private- and public-sector funders together to tackle specific areas such as education, parenting teens, and crossover youth. The group meets approximately every other month.
4. ***Home Visiting Ad-Hoc Funders Workgroup*** – On December 20, 2016, the Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a motion calling on the County, led to develop a robust system of perinatal and early childhood home visiting. The Department of Public Health, which was leading this effort, invited the Center to participate in helping to develop this plan. The Center, in addition to participating in the County workgroup, brought together a group of committed funders to obtain input and solicit feedback around potential public-private partnerships. The Center brings this Workgroup together on an as-needed basis sometimes on its own and then, as the County has progressed in its work, together with County leaders to enable them to think and plan together.
5. ***Collective-Impact Model for Recruitment and Retention*** – The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation has been bringing together, with support from the Center, a group of diverse stakeholders to tackle obstacles to the effective recruitment and retention of resource families. The group first met in April of 2017. Leaders from philanthropy and the Department of Children and Family Services convene quarterly and have now divided into subgroups to delve more deeply into the work.

Initiative-Specific Convenings

1. ***Parks After Dark Funders' Tours*** – In conjunction with the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Center co-hosted a series of tours in the summer of 2016 of funders to learn more about the County's Parks After Dark program. We had three different tours on different nights showcasing parks from across the County.

Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships • Convenings • March 2018

2. ***LGBTQ Expansion Briefing*** – Hosted in conjunction with the David Bohnett Foundation, the Center convened a group of non-traditional funders in late summer of 2016 to present the opportunity to help the County expand the scope of a scan of LGBTQ services for youth in the County. The Broad Museum donated space in its famous Oculus room for the briefing.
3. ***Nonprofit Sustainability Initiative Briefing for Foster Family Agencies and Group Homes*** – In conjunction with the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Children and Family Services, the Center hosted a convening on December 5, 2016 to connect Foster Family Agencies and Group Homes to the Nonprofit Sustainability Initiative, a philanthropic resource that facilitates the exploration and pursuit of strategic restructuring opportunities for the nonprofit sector.
4. ***Youth Diversion and Development Funders Briefing*** – In conjunction with Liberty Hill and the California Endowment, the Center convened a briefing on June 28, 2017 for philanthropic partners to learn about the County’s efforts to divert youth from entering the juvenile justice system. The Center has also supported additional convenings hosted by Liberty Hill and others related to diversion efforts.
5. ***“Design Day” for Transition-Age Youth Housing*** – In conjunction with LAHSA and the Home for Good Funders Collaborative of the United Way, with space donated by Munger, Tolles, and Olson, LLP, the Center convened a “Design Day” on November 30, 2017, bringing together leaders from the County’s Youth Coordinated Entry System Housing Providers and leaders from each of DCFS’s regional offices along with advocates to brainstorm about how their systems could be better integrated and aligned to support our youth. System leaders reconvened on February 22, 2018 for a 90-day check in and will reconvene again in the fall of 2018.
6. ***Foster Care Education Transportation Pilot Briefing*** – The Center hosted a conference call with child-welfare and education funders in December of 2017 about the need for private-sector support for the Foster Care Education Transportation Pilot designed by LACOE, DCFS, and LAUSD. As the pilot was rolling out, a need was identified for immediate additional capacity to help in processing the hundreds of notifications that were coming in weekly. Funders were educated about the pilot and the potential to support the needed capacity.
7. ***Resource Family Approval Opportunity with A Second Chance Briefing*** – In conjunction with Casey Family Programs, the Center hosted a conference call with child-welfare funders in March of 2018 to present an opportunity to support the Department of Children and Family Services’ need to process an immense backlog of families in the resource family approval process by allowing a recognized expert in the field who has already done work with the County, A Second Chance, to help increase capacity and provide technical assistance with this urgent need.

MEMO

April 9, 2018

To Fesia Davenport, Assistant Chief Executive Officer

From Chris Essel, Executive Director, Southern California Grantmakers
Abbe Land, Consultant

Re: March 29, 2018 Focus Group

Over 50 people attended the focus group regarding the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships, held on March 29th at the California Wellness offices. Representatives from the County, philanthropy and the Center staff were represented at this important focus group discussion. (see attached for list of attendees)

Below are the key takeaways from the focus group discussion, which we hope will be helpful as you prepare your report regarding the future of the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships.

Key Takeaways from the 3/29 Focus Group:

1. Overall there is a sense of enthusiasm about the Center and this initiative; attendees felt the Center had been valuable and would like to see it continue to operate within the County.
 - a. Attendees appreciated the entrepreneurial spirit noting that it allowed both the public and private sectors to be more innovative, that it helped the County to take creative approaches and allowed the private sector to be engaged in solving public problems.
 - b. They noted that the Center helped to knit the different County efforts together through private partnerships and that it was unlocking hope for those who felt constrained thus creating a virtuous cycle of innovation.
2. Attendees were supportive of moving the Center into the CEO's office and expanding the scope beyond child welfare, though they did not want an unlimited scope.
 - a. They saw value in the Center's work and want to open the opportunity to work on new initiatives and projects beyond the Center's initial focus.
 - b. Expanding the scope creates an opportunity to both build an expanded table and to leverage existing tables as well as to bring new partners to the work while not duplicating existing efforts.
 - c. Attendees also expressed that the Center created a unique leveraging opportunity for the public sector to more flexibly and nimbly contract for services like the LA Justice Fund.

3. There should be a time-limited process, involving both sectors, to determine the Center's expanded scope, metrics of success, and mechanisms for on-going stakeholder input.
 - a. Attendees wanted clear guardrails for the expanded scope; some expressed support for the Board of Supervisor strategic priorities; and others for keeping a focus on children and families. There was discussion that a process was needed to determine the scope.
 - b. Attendees also wanted outcome goals, so we know how to define success for philanthropy and the County.
 - c. Attendees also wanted to see mechanisms put in place to deepen cross-sector guidance and input into the Center's work going forward.
4. There is a need for enhanced communication with both stakeholders and the greater public.
 - a. Attendees shared that there is a challenge around messaging about the Center's accomplishments and that more effective communications would build on momentum.
 - b. There needs to be a communications strategy for both stakeholders and the broader public. The Center has not successfully communicated its work and initiatives with the public; people do not know about its success and opportunities to engage.
5. Attendees believed that the Center should continue to have a foot in both sectors and that the Center's capacity should be expanded as the scope expands.
 - a. Attendees expressed concern that the Center is at or even beyond capacity with its current scope and that it would need additional capacity to take on new areas of focus.
 - b. The Center should continue to be jointly funded with the County funding infrastructure (i.e. salaries) and Philanthropy, through SCG, funding consultants, convenings, innovations and other core costs.

We have also attached the raw notes from the day, as well as a word cloud that captured the enthusiastic feelings of the group regarding the Center. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Center for
Strategic
Public Private
Partnerships

WE'RE IN IT TOGETHER

The Story of the Center
for Strategic Public-Private
Partnerships' First Year



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
GRANTMAKERS

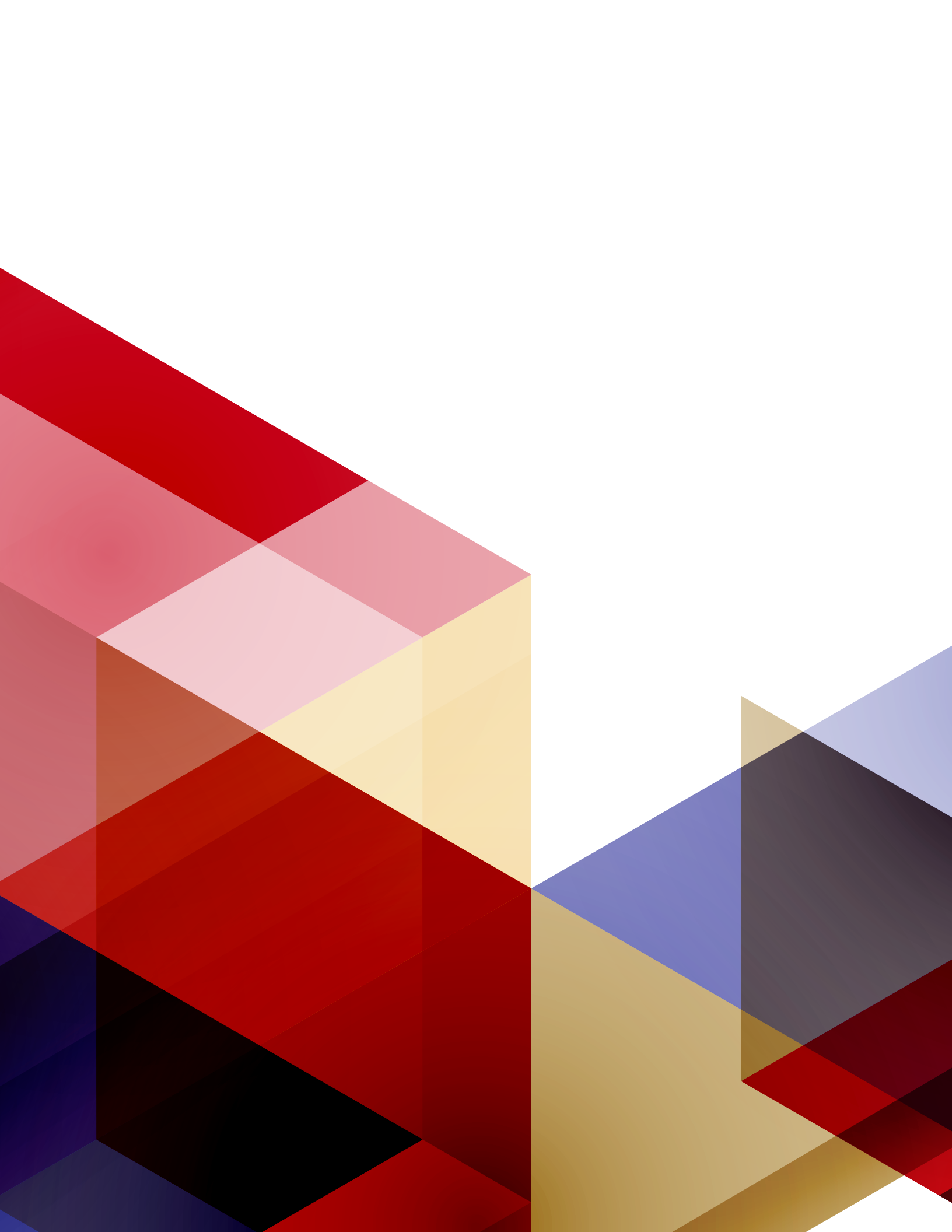


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Introduction

*Possibilities.
Multiplier.
Leverage.
Inclusiveness.
Innovation.*

Key stakeholders of the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships (CSPPP), located within the Office of Child Protection in Los Angeles County, were recently asked to describe public-private partnership in just one word. The variety of responses reflected the wide array of perspectives and personalities that had gathered for the Center’s June 7 briefing, which included several County department administrators, as well as a number of key local foundation leaders. But they had one thing in common. They were unfailingly hopeful.

Conspicuously absent were other words: *Difficult. Transactional. Risky.*

James Ferris, Director of the Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy at the University of Southern California, observes that in recent years, public and private partners are generating promising new models of working together. This certainly seems to be the case in LA County, where the Center was created in 2016 with the goal of supporting innovation and systems change within the County’s child protective services (CPS) system.

This is no small feat in Los Angeles County, which is not only the largest county in the United States, but is—with 10 million people

living in more than 4,000 square miles—itsself larger than 42 states. The County’s CPS system serves more than 30,000 children each year and faces a host of challenges, including high caseloads and a dire shortage of foster families.

Despite these concerns, at meetings like the Center’s recent stakeholder briefing, there is a general spirit of optimism that positive change is on the horizon. Kate Anderson, the Center’s director, credits several factors—including a supportive Board of Supervisors, a spirit of openness among County administrators, a high level of interest and enthusiasm among philanthropic partners, and the creation of the County’s new Office of Child Protection—as providing a unique moment of opportunity for improving outcomes for children and families.

This report chronicles that moment of opportunity, and how government and philanthropy in LA County are coming together to capitalize on it through the Center’s creation and the efforts of its first year.

Origins: How the Center Came to Be

A SCATTERING OF SEEDS

The answer to the question of how the Center began depends on who you ask. Different stakeholders describe the sowing of a variety of seeds, which speaks to the community’s broad sense of shared ownership around

the effort. It also reflects the number of supportive forces that came together at once to create what Christine (Chris) Essel, President and CEO of Southern California Grantmakers (SCG), a regional association of philanthropists working to make a difference in their communities, describes as “one of those moments you look for.”

One seed can be found in the groundwork laid by the City of Los Angeles Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP), a precursor to the County’s Center, which had been established in 2009 under former Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. Several of the philanthropic partners who now support CSPPP, including the California Endowment and the Weingart and Ahmanson Foundations, had also supported the City’s earlier public-private initiative; others quickly recognized its value. When Mayor Eric Garcetti was elected in 2013, he did not continue this office (opting instead to create his Mayor’s Fund). This was viewed by some in the philanthropic community as a natural opportunity to turn their attention to the County.

Everything is about timing. Had all this not played out as it had, [the Center] might not have happened. It had to do with a lot of people who were, for different reasons, sharing a similar vision and looking opportunistically at how to execute it.

WINNIE WECHSLER
Executive Director, Anthony and Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation

The success of the City’s venture made some foundations more amenable to investing in a County office. “We really reaped the benefits from the investments of our colleagues [in the OSP],” notes Peter Long, President and CEO of Blue Shield of California Foundation. And creating a similar office to work with the County in some ways made even more sense,

because many philanthropic interests, particularly in the area of health and human services, were more closely related to work at the County than the City level.

Another seed was planted when the Executive Director of the Anthony and Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation, Winnie Wechsler, began a quest to better understand how foundations like Pritzker could support the strategic priorities of the County’s Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). In 2013, along with Casey Family Programs and a small group of child advocates, she was engaged in a series of conversations with DCFS representatives to explore this question, ultimately resulting in the presentation of a short list of potential joint projects to then-DCFS director Philip Browning in the spring of 2014.

Also at this time, LA County was experiencing widespread community outrage around child safety, precipitated in part by the tragic death of an 8-year-old boy at the hands of his mother and her boyfriend. The County Board of Supervisors established a Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection on June 25, 2013, and charged it with investigating the issue and releasing a report and recommendations for child protection reform.

After almost a year of stakeholder interviews and in-depth study, the Commission released its recommendations. Chief among them was a call for the creation of a countywide Office of Child Protection to plan and implement a more comprehensive approach to child safety in Los Angeles County. The director of this new Office was encouraged to “reach out to the philanthropic community and build strategic partnerships to help improve the child protection system.” In making this recommendation, the Commission’s final report recognized, “the power of public-private partnerships has been under-utilized by the County to date and should be an important strategy for improving services.”



Fertile Ground

SCG provided the fertile ground where all of these seeds came together.

In May 2014, when the Blue Ribbon Commission report was issued, SCG immediately recognized the document's significance for its members with an interest in child welfare. Essel invited the Commission's chair, David Sanders (Executive Vice President of Casey Family Programs), along with Aileen Adams (Co-Executive Director of the Blue Ribbon Commission and former director of the City's OSP) to present at a forum to advise SCG members about the findings. Wechsler also was invited to speak, offering her perspective as a foundation director widely recognized as being knowledgeable about DCFS.

During a Q&A session following the presentations, Wendy Garen, President and CEO of The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation and then-President of SCG's board of directors, wondered aloud how to move the assembled group from knowledge to action. A letter of support was proposed. In the end, 17 foundation leaders joined Essel in signing SCG's letter endorsing the Commission's recommendations.

In addition to signing the letter, several SCG members testified at the hearing, including Garen, Wechsler and James Herr of the California Community Foundation. Such a move was unprecedented for SCG, which had never involved itself in local government, but Essel and those who testified agreed that such a critical opportunity for reform warranted bold, new action. The letter of support and testimony of key community investors are recognized by several close observers as playing a key role in achieving a 4-1 Board vote in support of the Commission's report.

For LA County—meaning everyone in the County, including philanthropy—this is the moment. This is the moment to do something big and grand, because these problems need to be addressed.

BEATRIZ SOLÍS
Program Director, The California Endowment;
SCG Board Chair

Not wanting to lose the momentum created by the Blue Ribbon Commission and other efforts, in September of that year SCG formed a collaborative of funders interested in child welfare, co-led by Garen and Wechsler. Approximately 40 funders attended the first meeting, along with key DCFS staff. It was the first time that the majority of funders had met with DCFS leaders, and the excitement about this new connection was palpable.

However, it quickly became clear that the group was going to require dedicated leadership to be truly effective in connecting funders in a meaningful way to the County's strategic interests. DCFS, meanwhile, was acknowledging the need for someone to help the agency work more effectively with the foundation world—a world that was still largely mysterious to County staff—and capitalize on this new level of private sector interest and engagement.



Key Decision Points

Fesia Davenport, who was at this time serving as DCFS Chief Deputy, was named acting executive director of the new Office of Child Protection (OCP) at the end of 2014. She soon engaged a small group of key players in discussions about how to operationalize the idea of a liaison between the County and the private sector. The group included Essel, Garen and Adams; as well as Torie Osborn, who had been a founder of Mayor Villaraigosa's OSP; and Fred Ali, President and CEO of the Weingart Foundation, who also had been deeply involved in the creation of the OSP. Together, this powerful think tank began working through the critical questions of how the Center should be formed, spurred on by a June 2015 Board motion instructing the County CEO to collaborate with SCG to develop options for establishing such a position with the OCP and identify funding for the initiative.

They began with the question of positioning: Would the Center be most effective as an "insider" to County government, or a neutral third party? One advantage of placing the Center outside of the County hierarchy was thought to be the greater ability to position the Center as a true "change agent," free of the government bureaucracy. In the end, however, that was seen to be less important than the advantages offered by a County address. Davenport notes, "If you want them to be seen as a trusted, County internal entity, then they need to be housed in the County. When you make a phone call, it's, 'Oh, they're calling from the CEO's office downtown, they must be important.'"

The next question was where exactly within County government the Center should be housed. There was less agreement on this point, with some stakeholders feeling strongly that the Center would be best positioned reporting directly to the Board of Supervisors. Ultimately, it was decided that the Center needed to be housed in an organizational unit

that could provide administrative support to help the Center hit the ground running, without spending as much time on start-up. Because the Center focused on child welfare, the newly formed OCP seemed to founders to be the Center's most logical home. If, after the three-year pilot period, the Board of Supervisors determines it would like to expand the Center's scope, its placement within the OCP can be reconsidered.

It's really important, where [the Center] sits. It has to not be able to be buffeted by the political winds, by term limits, by one politician's whims being supplanted by another's. It has to be embedded in the bureaucracy but it also has to be connected enough to foundation land to usher in innovation and fresh air.

TORIE OSBORN

Senior Strategist, Office of Supervisor Sheila Kuehl

Finally, there was the question of funding. Early philanthropic investors conducted outreach among their peers to bring others to the table. In the end, a subset of members of SCG's Child Welfare Funders Collaborative, together with a few philanthropists interested in public-private partnership for more general capacity building, came together to support the proposed Center. In a June letter signed by Essel and Ali, SCG proposed that a group of 12 foundations would provide half of the needed funds for the operation of a public-private partnership center within the OCP for three years, if the County would provide the other half. (The number of investors has since grown to 15, not counting those who fund specific Center projects.) On October 6, 2015, the Board of Supervisors passed a motion instructing the CEO to establish the Center and hire a director.

Building the Center's Backbone

Around the time of the first board motion, SCG received a large operating grant to build capacity and enhance its work in social justice and public policy. A portion of that grant was used to fund a consultant, Gita Murthy Cugley, to manage the nascent child welfare funders collaborative and its steering committee, begin brokering relationships between foundations and the County, and help to operationalize the Center.

"It required a lot of consensus building before [a Director] even came on board," Cugley says, "to get folks to see the value of what the Center could bring and to agree on ways to move forward in an inclusive way."

It takes an organization like SCG to have the capacity, the strength, the desire, the drive to see something like this come into being and be willing to assume the requisite responsibilities of managing it on the philanthropic side.

CHRIS ESSEL
President and CEO, Southern California Grantmakers

To that end, in the six months between the Board motion and when the Center's Director was named, Cugley laid essential groundwork for the Center's incoming staff. A veteran of the County for nearly 20 years, Cugley focused first on learning the philanthropic landscape, by conducting a survey of SCG's members and talking with foundation leaders one on one about their interests and values. She also delved deeply into the world of public-private partnership, researching successful models in other jurisdictions, including New York City and Michigan. Drawing on this information, she helped the County develop job

Even though there are some people who clearly are the subject matter experts from the philanthropic side, I got the sense that people felt this was very much a level playing field, that everyone's voice was really valued at the table. I think that has enormous ramifications, both for this project and for how folks interact with one another in philanthropic LA moving forward.

MICHAEL FLEMING
Executive Director, David Bohnett Foundation

descriptions and an operational structure that would be suited to the local environment.

SCG also led the search, on the County's behalf, for the right person to lead the Center going forward. The CEO's letter to the Board of Supervisors proposed a director charged with facilitating communication among stakeholders, working collaboratively with philanthropy and government to plan and develop initiatives aligning with the goals of both, and otherwise supporting the goals of the OCP.

Cugley and Essel worked closely with a search firm and a small group of philanthropic partners to conduct outreach and identify and screen applicants. Top candidates were then vetted by the Board of Supervisors' Children's Deputies, and the final decision was made by Judge Michael Nash (ret.), the new Executive Director of the Office of Child Protection, with input from all. Judge Nash underscores the collaborative nature of the process, "No single individual or entity made that decision."

SCG also took the lead in developing language for the dozen individual foundation grants needed to support the Center's work, each of which involved a different set of application (and reporting) requirements. This kind of fiscal agency is part of the package of ongoing support that SCG has provided throughout the Center's first year. Its finance staff continues to play a critical role in managing and tracking budgets, receiving and disbursing funds, and working directly with vendors.



Sparking Innovation: Government + Philanthropy

A Cultural Divide

Pointing out that the cultures of government and philanthropy are vastly different is stating the obvious; the differences are glaring, at least in LA County, even in a brief visit to the physical spaces where each sector does its work.

The County building is solid, stable and reflects the gravitas of a long history of public service. Its eighth-floor balcony offers a broad view of its surroundings and the people it serves. Still, no one would argue with the fact that it could benefit from some updating, and its maze of hallways and locked doors can be difficult for an outsider to navigate. In this way, it stands in stark contrast to modern, well-appointed foundation offices, where sleek interiors and walls of windows are more the norm.

The combination of what government can bring to the table and philanthropy can bring to the table, to me, is the magic spark that makes these changes take shape.

JOHN WAGNER
Executive Vice President, First 5 LA

It's hard to gamble on an idea with public money, to show that an innovative idea works. We'd like to do that, but it goes against traditional government's structure. Philanthropy has more capacity to try things, to see if it's a good investment or not.

BRANDON NICHOLS
Acting Director, Department of Children and Family Services

Philanthropy has the unique luxury of stepping back from the daily grind of need that County employees face each day. Foundations also can be highly selective in their focus—both in the issues they choose to tackle and the ways they choose to engage. This may at times result in a “pie in the sky” idealism that can feel quite foreign to employees of the County, where immediate service delivery is the priority.

This necessary focus on citizens' urgent, immediate needs, in turn, results in a culture that can be averse to risk and slow to integrate new ideas. Of course there are plenty of exceptions on both sides—innovators in government, philanthropists with a deep understanding of the realities of work in the trenches. However, these cultural divides are generally acknowledged and sometimes result in misunderstandings, missteps and false starts, even with the best intentions.

Bridging the Gap

In LA County today, there is a more ready appreciation among government and philanthropic partners alike of the advantages of working together and what each brings to the table. Bridging this cultural gap, by helping everyone more fully understand each other's goals and strengths, has been a critical focus of the Center's first year. Brandon Nichols, acting director of DCFS, says, "My understanding of philanthropy's goals has changed over time, in part because of the Center. They've helped educate me about what philanthropy wants and doesn't want to do. Their goals are to magnify their impact into systemic change. To make a small investment that serves as an example or a catalyst for a larger reform or improvement."

The County's funding, scope and ability to bring new solutions to scale make it a desirable partner for philanthropists who want to magnify their impact. Garen observes, "Philanthropy can help test ideas, but we're not going to support them long-term. We're secret sauce; we're not dinner."

The County also has an unparalleled view of the problems that need to be addressed, including access to vast amounts of data and frontline staff who are intimately familiar with the challenges facing the County's most vulnerable families.

With this tremendous scope of responsibility come certain challenges. The County is a massive bureaucracy, in which very little happens quickly. Granted, responsibility for public funds is critical. As Davenport notes, "When you have a government process, people complain about the bureaucracy—but a lot of the bureaucracy is accountability." Still, some have likened change-making within such a system to trying to turn around a big ship. It can be done, but it requires time and effort.

The funders that join an organization like ours, or that support the Center or its projects, are ones that are collaborative; they are strategic; and in the end they want to make the world a better place.

CHRIS ESSEL
President and CEO, SCG

This is where philanthropy comes in. "Philanthropy is perceived as the bureaucracy antidote," says Davenport. Although still accountable to their own stakeholders, including boards of directors and other community members, philanthropic partners generally bring flexibility and speed to pilot projects, research and evaluations. They can do in a matter of weeks or months what can take the County literally years to achieve under current contracting guidelines. According to Garen, "The County has the money. But what we have is freedom. We can act, we can execute."

Much like light streaming in the windows of foundation offices, philanthropic partners can bring new ideas and perspectives to illuminate longstanding County challenges. Nichols, for one, welcomes their insight: "I personally like outside entities that drive the department forward. The more people we have joining the dialogue, the better. Just the fact that there are more people at the table is better for the system."

Davenport agrees: "Philanthropy has to be embraced and engaged as a true partner, not an ATM." This is an aspect of philanthropy that others in the public sector sometimes fail to appreciate, if they take a narrow view of foundations as sources of funding only. "People have to begin to grasp the [true] value of working with philanthropy: the intellectual capital, the work on the ground," adds Essel.

Wendy Garen sums up the present state of things in LA County: "The County clearly has the willingness, and [philanthropy] is anxious to help. So it's a matter of figuring out the places where it could matter. There's so much willingness to make a difference, we should be able to convert that into something that matters."



Center Staffing

The decision to hire Center Director Kate Anderson was announced in April 2016. Anderson was not a County “insider,” nor did she come directly from the philanthropic community. Instead she brought a wealth of experience in both the public and private sectors. She had begun her career working for Congressman Henry Waxman in Washington, DC, and had served briefly as Deputy Chief of Staff to Congresswoman Jane Harman. Yet she also brought experience as an attorney in a private law firm and serving as the Los Angeles Director of Children Now, a statewide child advocacy organization.

I like bringing people together. It’s what brings me joy.

KATE ANDERSON
CSPPP Director

Many feel that this combination of public and private experience has been critical to Anderson’s success during her first year. Having a “foot in both camps” may be key to building trust among stakeholders with disparate perspectives and interests, particularly in areas where historic distrust may muddy the waters. This is not strictly a matter of experience—it’s also a question of perspective, having an orientation that is truly bicultural, and the ability to “translate” the perspectives of different groups, helping them to meet in the middle.

Stakeholders agree that the position requires

a broad skill set, and relational skills are at the top of that list. “You have to be an ambassador, first and foremost,” says Dr. Jonathan E. Sherin, who himself brings a variety of public and private experience to his role as director of LA County’s Department of Mental Health. Those skills include frequent and forthright communication, ranging from the most informal check-in phone calls to presentations, proposals and reports.

In the Center’s first year, the position has required a balance of deep listening one-on-one with stakeholders and bringing people together, which is a skill in and of itself. Osborn notes, “[Convening] is not just about ordering the lunch and getting a nice venue and flowers for the tables. It’s a lot about follow-up, it’s about making sure people show up, it’s about creative programming that elicits thoughtful input, digging a little deeper and getting to the real issues.”

Along with these softer skills, the position requires some knowledge and understanding of the challenges of child protection, as well as a more general understanding of how human service systems work, how to measure outcomes and impact, and how to tell a compelling story. You need someone “almost like a systems engineer,” says SCG Board Chair Beatriz Solís.

The Center’s work also calls for a fair amount of practical rolling-up of sleeves: from writing proposals to providing the thoughtful project management necessary to move collaborative efforts from Point A to Point B. “While this of-

You need somebody who is ... humble enough to understand how big the task is, and at the same time, bold enough to convene stakeholders and be very communicative.

BEATRIZ SOLÍS
SCG Board Chair

office is about building relationships, that is only the beginning,” says Anderson. “Once we’ve done that work, we are the ones that take it the next step, too. We don’t hand that off to someone else.”

Anderson is now supported in her work by Associate Center Director Lizzie Cohen, who brings her own impressive combination of private sector and political experience (formerly serving in the Office of Scheduling and Advance for President Barack Obama and working at a major educational nonprofit organization). Since joining the Center in December, Cohen has proven to be a valuable addition, adding subject matter capacity and providing expertise in events, convenings, fundraising and working with philanthropy.

Anderson and Cohen are currently the only two official Center staff members. But they do share some administrative support with the OCP, and they are supported behind the scenes by a number of SCG staff members. “We clearly feel more ownership of our funders’ investment in this project than we do our typical fiscal agent role,” says Essel.

In addition to the considerable effort involved in handling the Center’s ongoing fiscal and grant management needs, SCG’s program staff offer subject matter expertise, programmatic thought-partnership and a deep understanding of what matters to funders. Administrative staff coordinate the logistics for Center convenings. Essel herself remains involved with the Center in an advisory role, providing leadership support and coaching.

SCG’s public policy arm also plays an important role, both keeping the Center informed about the political landscape at the local, state and national levels, and providing an outside voice to advocate for change when needed. In a recent example, SCG was able to help rally widespread private-sector support for a state bill that provides for priority childcare slots for young children in the CPS system. SCG Board Chair Solís comments, “Having SCG as a backbone to help educate and inform the Center on what’s working and not working is really critical for philanthropy to be more impactful.”

The efforts of the Center’s two full-time staff have been further enhanced by the continued involvement of Cugley, the consultant who has supported SCG since the Center’s conception. Cugley brings a much-needed “insider” perspective—she worked for LA County for nearly 20 years and has a deep understanding of its inner workings that, were she not involved, could have taken the Center staff years to develop. There is broad agreement among stakeholders that Cugley’s involvement has supercharged the Center’s efforts and has been key to enabling the Center to achieve some concrete successes in addition to the relationship-building and agenda-setting that would otherwise have defined much of its first year.





Setting Priorities

Upon assuming her role on April 1, 2016, one of Anderson's first steps was to engage in an intensive listening tour, to deeply understand the concerns of stakeholders in both government and the private sector, and to identify shared priorities to guide the Center's work.

Finding the Way: A Listening Tour

In her first three months, Anderson met with more than 100 people and participated in over a dozen conferences with representatives of all of the following groups:

- Board deputies from each supervisorial district
- Philanthropic leaders
- County personnel
- Community-based organizations
- Union representatives
- Local child-serving commissions
- Business representatives

The outcome of this process was an interim report to the Board of Supervisors detailing the primary areas of importance to all stakeholders and proposing these as a focus for the Center's efforts. This process was important to develop buy-in, as well as to ensure that Center initiatives addressed the most critical issues affecting the lives of children and families in LA County.

Anderson says, "[The Center] came into being through the discussions and the listening that came from that tour. I honestly can't imagine I would have started any other way."

A Shared Agenda

From the listening tour emerged the Center's shared agenda—three priority areas where local foundations' interests aligned most closely with the OCP's goals and priorities:

- Preventing children from entering the child protection system
- Recruiting and retaining resource families for children in foster care, including placing them with relatives whenever possible
- Supporting transition-age youth moving from foster care to independent adulthood

I think prevention is the most important thing that we do. If we can find ways to safely keep people out of the system, that's better for everybody.

BRANDON NICHOLS
Acting Director, DCFS

PREVENTION

For families in crisis, it is essential that an agency like DCFS have the resources and ability to step in and provide immediate protection. However, removing children from their homes—and often their neighborhoods, schools, extended family and friends—is a drastic step, and one that no community should take lightly. Much better, most experts agree, to provide supports that enable children to stay with their own families whenever possible, ensuring their safety and well-being while avoiding further trauma.

According to the Blue Ribbon Commission’s findings, prevention also makes financial sense: “The most cost-effective way to reduce the rippling costs of child welfare is to prevent abuse in the first place.” For these reasons, prevention is a primary focus of the OCP and the Center.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF RESOURCE FAMILIES

LA County currently faces a critical shortage of families willing and able to care for foster children. In fact, since 1999, the County’s number of available out-of-home care providers has dropped by more than half. County representatives and those in the philanthropic community agree that the County’s efforts to recruit families to fill the gap have not kept pace with the need.

This means that children in crisis, who have already experienced trauma and loss well out of proportion for their young ages, often experience longer stays in temporary, emergency and congregate care (“group homes”), while caseworkers scramble to find them the safe and supportive family environments that all children deserve and require to heal. It also means that children in neighborhoods where resource families are particularly scarce may be placed further and further from their homes, schools and communities, compounding their losses and making visits with family members even more difficult.

TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

On a given day, more than 5,000 of the youth in LA County’s foster care system are “transition age,” meaning they are 16 or older and are preparing for the transition from foster care to independent adulthood.

These youth are a particularly vulnerable group. Unlike many young adults, who can ease their way into adulthood while still relying on their family as a “safety net,” many former foster youth lack a connection to any caring adults to whom they can turn for advice or assistance during a difficult time. CSPPP Associate Director Cohen points out, “We don’t expect an 18-year-old to be able to find their own apartment and pay for it and be totally independent ... unless they’re in the foster care system.” Without focused intervention, far too many of these youth face futures that include homelessness, incarceration or young parenthood themselves, at risk of repeating the cycle of abuse or neglect with their own children.





The Center's Work

Since the Center's launch, it has engaged in 21 joint initiatives in its three priority areas, with 22 public and private partners, and has brought more than \$500,000 in private sector investments to County systems. (For more information about select initiatives, see Appendix B.)

That's a lot of activity. According to Anderson, the common thread throughout each of these initiatives is systems change. She notes, "Our partners did not create this Center for small fixes. They created this Center to make real change... So we shape joint initiatives that have a through-line to transformation and ask our partners to join in with us when we believe the work will move the ball down the field. Some of the initiatives are small and the ball is only moved a little; others are more ambitious and we hope to move it further."

Systems change is a long journey, though, and like any journey, it is made up of small steps. The significance of each step may only become clear when viewed with a broad lens, over time. Most Center initiatives involve one or more of these components:

- **BROKER.** Sometimes, Center initiatives may look as simple as introducing the right people to each other and letting the sparks fly. But orchestrating that "simple" handshake can involve weeks (or more) of behind-the-scenes work: listening carefully to determine who needs to meet, lifting up each partner's stories in a way that will attract others, and then having the dogged persistence to get busy

people in the same room at the same time and facilitate productive engagement. It's clear that the Center's benefits have already extended beyond the expected introductions between County and foundation staff. Some of the most promising developments have come from people being introduced to others within their own sectors—linking County departments to each other in new ways, for example, or connecting philanthropists with similar interests.

EXAMPLE: The Center has been particularly well-positioned to bring stakeholders together around the expansion of home visiting services, a key element of the OCP Prevention Plan. Anderson has a deep background in home visiting and family strengthening, so in December of 2016, when the Board of Supervisors passed a motion directing the County's Department of Public Health (DPH) to coordinate with other departments and partners to develop a plan to expand the County's home visiting network, she quickly volunteered the Center's assistance. Anderson has convened and facilitates several ongoing workgroups of interested private partners, as well as providing education and technical assistance to key County departments to support their engagement. At the same time, the Center has been helping to broker a pilot project among the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), nonprofit SHIELDS for Families and First 5 LA to expand access to evidence-based home

visiting services for DPSS families in one high-need neighborhood.

- **TRANSLATOR.** When people are coming from worlds as different as government and philanthropy, the potential for misunderstandings is great. Many stakeholders in LA can recall missed opportunities in the past—funding requests that didn't meet a foundation's guidelines, or offers of help that failed to address the County's most urgent priorities. "If you don't have the Rosetta Stone, a full translation, you're often going to miss each other. Even when there is a funding relationship, even when you try things, they're going to be sub-optimal," says Peter Long, President and CEO of Blue Shield of California Foundation. Because of their deep relationships in both sectors, Center staff are able to provide the kind of translation that prevents breakdowns and keeps discussions moving forward in a productive way.

EXAMPLE: DCFS and a small group of funders wanted to create a pilot project to address the lack of emergency access to child care for foster children, one of the top barriers to foster parent recruitment and timely placement of very young children. However, the workgroup ran into a snag when it became clear that the pilot

project they were planning would have to risk paying for empty child care slots in order to "hold" those slots until a priority family could be identified. The Center is credited with helping both parties understand the other's concerns and constraints and ultimately agree to share the risk. In the end, this was a nonissue, with all slots filled within the program's first month. Without the Center's assistance at a delicate point in the negotiation, however, the project—which may ultimately provide data to support a case for funding similar programs statewide—might have been over before it began.

- **BACKBONE.** When partners come together and agree on a direction, it's exciting—and it's just the beginning. Sometimes, the partners have the capacity to take it from there, and there's nothing further needed from the Center. More often, the Center is finding, partners need continued support to do the "boots on the ground" work to move a project forward. Center staff often step in to fill the gaps—drafting a proposal, hosting a training, or providing project management support, depending on each project's unique needs. This kind of support does not mean the Center is taking ownership of the initiative. "They're not imposing their ideas," says Jackie Mizell-Burt, a Program Director with DPSS, of the Center's work with her agency. "They're just supporting the structure and development of the process as we move along."

We have a county that is so willing and interested in partnering with the private sector, and we have a private sector that wants to better serve these kids and recognizes that this \$2 billion child welfare system is the place where real and lasting difference can be made ... The story of the Center is in helping both of them realize that vision.

KATE ANDERSON
Director, CSPPP

Did collaboration happen in Los Angeles before the Center? Yes, there were already relationships out there. But this formalized it, made it a specific, ongoing goal to bring these two communities together. This way, it becomes an ongoing practice.

JUDGE MICHAEL NASH (RET.)
Executive Director of the LA County Office of Child Protection

EXAMPLE: “Fostering Home” is a new project focused on testing strategies to end the foster parent recruitment crisis in LA County by transforming the application process and making support more accessible to interested families. From the beginning, the Center has served as a backbone for this partnership between DCFS and foundation, community and faith partners. To ensure the success of its first event, a faith-based “one-stop shop” for prospective resource families that was held in June, the Center wrote proposals to secure \$60,000 in philanthropic and County-matched funds. Center consultant Gita Murthy Cugley was intimately involved in advising on the program concept and design. She and Associate Director Lizzie Cohen also worked closely with the consultant hired to conduct outreach to local churches and other event planning services. Although the recruitment outcomes won’t be known for several months, hundreds of families participated and the County now has a turn-key plan it can use to create similar recruitment events in other parts of the County. “The one-day convening brought private organizations, philanthropic groups, other County departments and faith institutions together in a way that told the prospective foster parents that a large and diverse community was there to help them and watch out for them—it was not just DCFS alone,” says Nichols.

Perhaps most importantly, the Center institutionalizes partnership as a way of doing business. Edmund Cain, Vice President of Grant Programs at the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, calls entities like the Center “collaborative mechanisms,” and he considers investing in these mechanisms to be a core element of the Hilton Foundation’s strategy. “We don’t like to fund an individual grantee or promote a particular program of our own, without making concurrent investments in collaborative mechanisms, making sure that all the interested parties are engaged in solving a particular issue or problem.”

Osborn agrees that the Center’s very existence at the County changes everything. “Once you have a bridge-building office, building bridges becomes the way you do things.”

Already, the County seems to be finding some additional room for flexibility and innovation—as can be seen in its ability to provide funds for the one-day convening or to share the risk of funding reserved child care slots for the emergency child care pilot.





Challenges Ahead

Despite all that the Center has been able to accomplish in its first year, staff and stakeholders are frank about the challenges that still lie ahead.

The Size and Complexity of LA County

When it comes to creating systems change, LA County's size and complexity are daunting at every level. The County's geography itself is a formidable barrier, both to the optimal operation of the child protection system—children must sometimes be placed hours from their communities and families, making critical visits difficult if not impossible for some families—and in the Center's day-to-day work. As Cohen points out, "Traveling to a meeting across town can take half a day. It's a lot of running around and trying to meet people where they are."

Within County government, departments often are not co-located, which can contribute to a tendency to work in silos. Each agency is divided into regional offices, and even these do not correspond from agency to agency. Just finding the right person to talk to can be a challenge.

The bureaucracy accompanying such a large and complex governmental structure can be equally challenging. The County's procurement process is mentioned often as a barrier to making change—getting a new contract in place can take 2 years from start to completion. This could inhibit the County's capacity

The message is not to give up, to continue to work together and know that, on the County side, there's a very strong commitment to developing more efficient ways of doing our work that would allow us to be more nimble and more flexible ... We're still the government and sometimes we do take a little bit longer to get things done. But, we will get there.

LINDA ARAGON
Division of Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health, DPH

to scale up better solutions, even those proven through a successful pilot. Similarly, County staffing guidelines, including union rules, may hamper its ability to staff up quickly for pilot projects or move personnel among roles nimbly to accommodate changes in focus or approach.

Placed within the County, but bringing an "outsider" perspective, the Center is making some inroads. By varying the location of meetings, they are successfully piercing the "bubbles" that have been described as surrounding both the County and philanthropy, bringing County officials out into the community, and bringing fresh perspectives—quite literally—into the halls of County buildings.

The bottom line is that LA County's size, while formidable, is not insurmountable. According to Helen Berberian, Deputy Director, Bureau of Clinical Resources and Services at DCF, "We had heard of other jurisdictions where they

had worked successfully with private funders and made a difference and solved issues. I used to think, ‘Well, LA’s different from everybody else.’ But there happens to be a way to do it, no matter what your size is.”

“Multiple Masters”: The Need to Focus

At the time of this report, the Center is just beginning the second year of its own three-year pilot phase. Having so many stakeholders engaged—and the optimism and high hopes that the Center’s early efforts have engendered across sectors—mean that there are currently a vast array of expectations, and many eyes watching to see what it will accomplish.

The Center’s task is a big one, and the staff’s ability to identify and pursue focused goals over the next two years will be critical to its success.

One thing I tried to do [at the City’s OSP] from the beginning was to limit the focus. Otherwise you get pulled in so many different directions, you can’t get anything accomplished. You can’t go in every direction where there’s a need.

AILEEN ADAMS
Former Director of the City of Los Angeles Office
of Strategic Partnerships (OSP)

John Wagner of First 5 LA says, “If there’s a cautionary flag, I think it’s typical of what we all face, and that is how do you maintain your focus so you can have that impact without getting overly stretched and involved in so many different issues of the day, or crises, or things that people want to improve, that it dissipates your impact. I think that’s something to be watching.”

Although a vast array of stakeholders agree on the need to focus in principle, finding consensus around what exactly that focus should be may prove to be more difficult. Some stakeholders have expressed the belief that the goal of the Center should be nothing short of systems change within child welfare. This might mean taking a look at the system as a whole and systematically infusing research and evaluation at each decision point to see how children and families can be more effectively prevented from moving toward deeper-end engagement. At the least, it’s a matter of saying no to smaller, more opportunistic projects in the interest of pursuing only those that will promote true innovation and catalytic change.

At the other end of the spectrum are those who see the Center’s greatest value in establishing the structures and mechanisms for future partnerships between the County and the philanthropic community. For this group, the “what” of individual projects may be less important than establishing “how” this work gets done. For these stakeholders, any successful projects at this point may be viewed as productive, laying important groundwork for future expansions of the Center’s scope and impact.

Innovation is not just about finding a new solution to a problem or discovering something new—innovation is also finding ways to collaborate around problems for which we already know the solution ... in other words, discovering innovative ways to foster effective collaboration.

EDMUND CAIN
Vice President, Grant Programs, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

Peter Lynn, Executive Director of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), notes, “You need to hold people accountable, but you need to do it within a community. So you have to build the community first, and then you can talk through the systemic barriers to change.”

The Center has been successful in building critical relationships. It remains to be seen to what extent the Center will be able to get its stakeholders on the same page and moving toward a common goal and impact during the remaining two years of its current funding cycle.

The Ongoing Work of Engagement

Getting people’s attention is one thing. Keeping it is another matter.

Although the majority of stakeholders seem to agree that the Center’s work is valuable and shows promise, they are realistic about the community’s attention span and the Center’s need to stay relevant. Peter Lynn observes, “One challenge that folks can have is that campaigns can burn out, and you don’t want that.”

Keeping the right people at the right level engaged is a critical step. This means ensuring

Relationships have to be institutionalized. You have to tend to them and support them just like you would a plant. People in the County move on, they get promoted. You have shifts in policy when you have new management coming in. So it’s not a one-off.

FESIA DAVENPORT
Assistant Chief Executive Officer, LA County

that people at the executive level are informed and bought-in to the Center’s work. “If we get the CEOs bought into this, that raises the level of the game,” says Essel.

The Center’s twice-annual CEO briefings are an important piece of that work, as are Anderson’s ongoing efforts to make less formal one-on-one contact. How that is accomplished depends on individual needs and preferences, whether that means regular breakfast meetings with one key funder who wants to stay apprised of happenings within the County more generally, or picking up the phone to share a piece of news only when it’s specifically relevant to another.

However, it also means knowing when the CEOs are not the most important people to have in the room. For specific project planning, program staff are often more informed about the details. “In the early days ... you do need high-level buy-in,” says Cain. “But when you get on to the work itself, you need to take it to a level that is actually doing the work.”

Some stakeholders also would want the Center staff to keep in mind that staying relevant means staying close to the needs of children and families and making sure those community voices are heard and represented. Denise Tom, a Program Officer at the California Community Foundation points out, “Who knows best what they need? It’s the community. I don’t think you can ever go wrong, seeking out their voice.”

External Forces

It would be naïve to ignore the fact that external forces also will shape the Center’s work over the next several years.

Within the County, turnover in key positions is always a concern. Currently the Center is bolstered by a very supportive Board of Supervisors. However, changes at the time of the next election (November 2018) could upset the balance and affect the Center’s future beyond its initial three-year term.

Likewise, LA County is currently engaged in the search for a new director of DCFS, since the long-term former director, Philip Browning, retired in January of this year. There is always the possibility that an agency as large and influential as DCFS may be reluctant to go too far in any direction without a permanent leader in place. Similarly, any new directions established in the interim period are at risk of not being continued under a new director, who will bring his or her own priorities.

Reforms at the state level already impact the Center’s work, for example, the state’s Congregate Care Reform mandate and settlement of the Katie A. lawsuit, which affects the delivery of mental health and other supportive services to children and youth in or at risk of involvement with CPS.

Finally, the current national political landscape may be a particularly uncertain one for human services, and it will be important for the Center to stay apprised of changes. SCG Board Chair Beatriz Solís predicts, “There are large, looming national changes that will impact the work ... How that will hit, I’m not really clear. But assuming that certain policies are enacted at the federal level that pull back public benefits or dollars for social services for low-income people and vulnerable children, that has a direct impact on the services and addressing the need. So the Center will have to think about what that will mean in terms of real lives.”





Conclusion

Just over one year into its journey, the Center has proven itself to be an effective and essential partner in conceiving and developing joint initiatives between LA County government and the private sector.

Keys to Success

A number of factors appear to have contributed to the Center's success to date, including the following:

- **PUBLIC WILL.** The choice of child protection as a topical focus, building on the public attention surrounding the Blue Ribbon Commission report, has helped to ensure that the Center has the political backing it needs to be effective. Continued engagement on behalf of the Board of Supervisors is evidenced by the appearance of the Center's name in several recent Board motions. Both County and private sector stakeholders are eager to work together to make a difference for LA County children and families.
- **BICULTURAL ORIENTATION.** The current team of Center staff has worked diligently to gain a deep understanding of the County's culture and needs, and the concerns and interests of local foundation leaders. Stakeholders generally feel that the Center has been effective in highlighting the strengths that each sector brings to the table and improving communication between the two. The staff have been aided in this by Cugley, a seasoned County employee turned consul-

This is a signature project. It fulfills the possibility of what philanthropy working together with government could be, on a transformational scale.

CHRIS ESSEL
President and CEO, SCG

tant for SCG, who laid early groundwork.

- **JOINT OWNERSHIP.** Joint funding of the Center means that public and private partners both have a stake in the Center's success, and it helps to avoid the perception that the Center is merely a fundraising arm for the County. Center staff have facilitated the sense of joint ownership by bringing public and private partners together frequently and holding meetings in a variety of public and private spaces.
- **EARLY WINS.** It has been important for the Center to establish trust among stakeholders by facilitating some shorter-term projects that provide an immediate sense of success, in addition to working toward longer-term systems change.
- **COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT.** Center staff have worked hard to engage the right players, attracting attention and support from leaders in both philanthropy and the County. Although executives at this level are not needed at every meeting, their buy-in has been critical to the Center's initial success. Frequent, personalized communica-

tion from Anderson, in particular, is cited by many foundation leaders as a factor in their continued engagement.

- **BACKBONE SUPPORT.** SCG and OCP provide a number of functions that enhance the capacity of Center staff. It would not have been possible for the current staff alone to accomplish what they have without additional support from SCG in the areas of fiscal agency, management and reporting; convening; public policy; and programs.

You have to be willing to disappoint people. It is a little risky, but more risky is somehow trying to please everyone and then having no time to focus. That's worse.

WENDY GAREN
President and CEO, Ralph M. Parsons Foundation

Next Steps

In its start-up year, the Center cast a wide net—seeking to deeply understand stakeholder needs and concerns, establishing a shared agenda, and building trust with and among key partners. With this groundwork laid, and almost two dozen initiatives under its belt, the Center is now poised to enter a new phase of development, requiring more focused pursuit of its purpose—bringing public and private partners together to catalyze change within the LA County child protection system.

To be successful in this, the Center will need the continued engagement and support of its stakeholders. In addition, stakeholders and observers have suggested that supplemental capacity may be needed in the following areas to address and overcome identified challenges:

[The Center] has to be entirely mission focused. Any misalignment ... is going to ultimately lead to a problem, because decisions will be made based on different agendas. And that can be disastrous.

DR. JONATHAN E. SHERIN
Director, LA County Department of Mental Health

- **STRATEGIC CONSULTATION.** Determining how the Center's success will be defined—and securing key stakeholder agreement—will be critical to the Center's ability to make a strong case for continued support. A neutral consultant may be useful in helping the Center staff build clarity and consensus around key priorities, create strategic plans with concrete steps to move the needle in each key area, say “no” to requests that do not align with the Center's core mission, and create and pursue a viable sustainability plan.
- **EVALUATION.** Once success is defined, it must be measured. Most likely, for the Center, this will require a combination of outcome and process measures. In a system as large and complex as LA County, the Center cannot be wholly responsible for preventing child abuse and neglect or eliminating the foster parent recruitment crisis. On the other hand, tracking activities completed or even dollars raised will not be enough. Measures must be carefully selected to demonstrate impact in areas that matter to stakeholders. Judge Nash notes, “Some people view [the Center] as a fundraiser. ‘How much money did you raise in the last year?’ That's not the point ... It's not a matter of dollars and cents. It's ultimately, what have we been able to accomplish by creating public-private partnerships?”



- **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION.** The Center must continue to enhance its ability to communicate effectively, with impact and in ways that are more accessible to its target audience. “It’s not enough to do it without being able to say it and show it,” says Peter Lynn of LAHSA. That involves building a communication plan that builds on the Center’s strategic plan to keep stakeholders informed and engaged around priorities, goals and impact—rather than activities. One key way to do that is to keep the focus on the children and families who ultimately benefit, by telling their stories. Aileen Adams advises, “For somebody who isn’t intimately involved in the Center’s work, and this would include a lot of people, it’s the stories that bring it to life. ... A lot of this work is revolutionary—it has huge significance—but you don’t understand that until you hear the stories.”
- **PROJECT MANAGEMENT.** As this chronicle has shown, partnerships require significant nuts and bolts support. Stakeholders generally agree that the Center’s charge and goals are ambitious given the size of its staff. Additional project management support, particularly from staff with intimate knowledge of the County administration and relevant subject matter expertise, will help the Center be successful in continuing to move critical initiatives forward.

When CSPPP stakeholders are asked what advice they would offer another jurisdiction interested in starting a public-private partnership initiative like this one, they commonly reply with an enthusiastic, “Do it!” For a County and philanthropic community that have historically struggled to connect, that might be the strongest endorsement for the Center’s work thus far. “I don’t see a down side,” says Nichols.

There is still plenty of work ahead to live up to the Center’s vision and potential. But, as Essel summed up, one thing is now clear: “We’re in it together; it’s not us and them. We are partners.”



Appendix A: Acknowledgments

Casey Family Programs engaged Jill Rivera Greene to chronicle the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnership's first year. Ms. Greene and Casey Family Programs are grateful to the following individuals who agreed to be interviewed for this report:

- Aileen Adams, Former Los Angeles Deputy Mayor, Office of Strategic Partnerships
- William H. Ahmanson, President, The Ahmanson Foundation
- Fred Ali, President and CEO, Weingart Foundation
- Kate Anderson, Director, Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships
- Linda Aragon, Director, Division of Maternal, Child, Adolescent Health, LA County Department of Public Health
- Helen Berberian, Deputy Director, Bureau of Clinical Resources and Services, LA County Department of Children and Family Services
- Edmund J. Cain, Vice President, Grant Programs, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
- Lizzie Cohen, Associate Director, Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships
- Gita Murthy Cugley, Consultant, Southern California Grantmakers
- Fesia Davenport, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, LA County
- Taylor Dudley, Children's Deputy, Office of Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
- Christine Essel, President and CEO, Southern California Grantmakers
- Dorothy Fleisher, Ph.D., Program Director, W. M. Keck Foundation
- Michael Fleming, Executive Director, David Bohnett Foundation
- Wendy Garen, President and CEO, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
- Daniel Heimpel, Founder and Executive Director, Fostering Media Connections
- Peter Long, Ph.D., President and CEO, Blue Shield of California Foundation
- Peter Lynn, Executive Director, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
- Jackie Mizell-Burt, Program Director, LA County Department of Public Social Services
- Judge Michael Nash (ret.), Executive Director, Office of Child Protection
- Brandon T. Nichols, Acting Director, LA County Department of Children and Family Services
- Torie Osborn, Senior Strategist, Office of Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
- Jonathan E. Sherin, M.D., Ph.D., Director, LA County Department of Mental Health
- Anneli Stone, Senior Program Officer, W. M. Keck Foundation
- Beatriz Solís, Program Director, The California Endowment; Chair, Southern California Grantmakers
- Denise Tom, Program Officer, Health, Transition Aged Youth and Nonprofit Sustainability, California Community Foundation
- John Wagner, Executive Vice President, First 5 LA
- Winnie Wechsler, Executive Director, Anthony & Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation



Appendix B: Center Initiatives

The following sections provide highlights of the Center’s work to date in each of its priority areas.

Prevention: Planning for Stronger Families

Prevention is a top priority of both the OCP and the Center, as it was a strong focus of the Blue Ribbon Commission that sparked the creation of both. “Prevention saves the County money, addresses the recruitment and retention problem, and is simply what’s best for these families,” Anderson says. “It’s not rocket science.”

Seeing that prevention is the right thing to do may be simple. But creating a robust family-strengthening system in a County as large and complex as Los Angeles is not.

In its first year, the Center has been deeply engaged with helping the OCP develop its draft prevention plan, released on June 30, 2017, a process that the team has taken to calling a “gorilla initiative” because of its size and complexity. The Center’s role has been to help shape what the OCP is developing and, in Anderson’s words, “help them think big,” with an eye toward joint initiatives with the private sector.

The Center has done this in part through deep engagement with the LA Partnership for Early Childhood Investment, a group of funders that has been focused for the past

decade on public-private partnerships in this arena. It also has worked closely with First 5 LA in this effort. The Partnership and First 5 LA have committed to working collaboratively with the Center to approach philanthropy, both locally and nationally, to support the Prevention Plan. In addition, the Center has engaged the business community through many meetings with the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. Finally, the Center’s innovative work has attracted attention from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ACF’s Region IX staff is interested in engaging with the County to explore how it might support public-private innovations in implementing the Prevention Plan.

“Our prevention plan is, at its core, a family strengthening plan,” Anderson says. “Fully realized, it will be the basis for an early childhood system that truly supports our vulnerable families with quality early childhood education, universal home visiting, housing and food security, and connections to community resources both for times of need and for decreasing isolation. The vision is large and exciting and somewhat daunting. But you can’t get what you don’t ask for, and we’re working toward it.”

Even while the OCP’s plan has been in development, the Center has worked on several smaller initiatives building toward this larger vision.

FEATURED INITIATIVE: EXPANDING ACCESS TO HOME VISITING

Having a baby is wonderful ... and stressful. Anyone who has brought home a newborn, or potty-trained a toddler, can probably remember a time when they needed a little help.

When families face additional stressors—such as a job loss, mental health concern, or simply a lack of friends and family nearby to provide encouragement—their ability to bond with and nurture their child may be affected in ways that can have long-term consequences. A well-timed visit from a friendly face, providing reassurance, information about child development and a connection to community resources, can make all the difference in a young family's ability to cope with difficulties and begin to thrive.

Home visiting is an effective prevention strategy that improves an array of child and family outcomes, while saving money that would otherwise be spent on more costly interventions. In LA County, however, these programs currently reach only a fraction of the families who could benefit.

In December of 2016, the Board of Supervisors passed a motion directing the County's Department of Public Health to coordinate with other County departments and partners to develop a plan to enhance and expand the network of home visiting programs in LA County.

This type of charge was right up Anderson's alley, and she went straight to work. With the blessing of Linda Aragon, Director of DPH's Division of Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health, Anderson pulled together a small ad hoc committee of philanthropy representatives to be thought-partners for planning and ambassadors for future funding opportunities. She also helped to gather a small workgroup of core partners to support the plan's development and helped to secure funding for a consultant to provide additional backbone support for the effort. The Center also helped build sup-

This is absolutely a new era in public-private partnership ... I'm excited that folks want to hear from us, and there's a true commitment and interest in engaging and looking at opportunities.

LINDA ARAGON
LA County Dept. of Public Health

port in key County departments, including the Department of Mental Health and Department of Public Social Services, through technical assistance and education of key leaders.

A comprehensive Interim Report was delivered to the Board of Supervisors on June 21, 2017, laying out a vision for a robust system of home visiting throughout the County. County departments that were named in the Board motion made preliminary commitments about how they hope to support this vision, and through the Center's efforts, the private sector was also at the table. Throughout the process, the ad hoc committee was engaged in helping to explore how private-sector investments could be catalytic to the County's efforts. Various components for potential investment—technology, capacity building, evaluation—were identified to track the commitments of various County departments. As the County continues its work, the Center will bring the private sector along to help fully realize the potential. A follow-up report is scheduled for September 26, 2017.

In the meantime, connections being made through the development of both the OCP's plan and the home visiting plan are already resulting in the fabric of home visiting services being woven a little more tightly, at least in one community.

At a November 2016 meeting between the OCP and the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) to discuss an early draft of the prevention plan, DPSS director Sheryl Spiller reportedly made an observation about the number of families receiving DPSS services who also wind up in the child protection

system. “We should be able to do something about this. How do we stop it?”

Jackie Mizell-Burt, a Program Director within DPSS, had already been thinking along these lines. “People don’t really see us as doing prevention,” she says. “But it’s a natural fit—some of the basic needs are some of the [families’] biggest problems. That’s where we come in ... That’s my side of the house.”

As it turned out, all she needed was the right partner—Kathy Icenhower, Executive Director of the private nonprofit organization SHIELDS for Families, operating in some of South Los Angeles’ most disadvantaged neighborhoods. Jacquelyn McCroskey, a member of the County’s Commission on Children and Families, arranged that meeting, invited the Center, and sparks began to fly. “[Icenhower] and I hit it off right away. We’re a dangerous duo,” jokes Mizell-Burt.

SHIELDS was already providing home visiting services using the evidence-based Healthy Families America (HFA) model, funded by First 5 LA. However, due to funding and program limitations, only families giving birth in certain hospitals were eligible to participate in these voluntary services. These eligibility requirements left many other families with young children, including many who were reliant on DPSS services such as CalWORKS (TANF), without access to home visiting services as their children grew or when they experienced stressful changes in their family situation. The goal is to connect families to home visiting services when they need them the most—before their family reaches a crisis that brings them to the attention of DCFS.

Although 26 states support home visiting with their TANF dollars, Los Angeles County does not. The Center recognized and helped to realize the potential of connecting DPSS families to this evidence-based home visiting program, and Anderson knew that First 5 LA needed to be at the table to make that possible. She

called the next meeting, bringing the OCP, DPSS, First 5 LA and SHIELDS into one room to brainstorm the possibilities.

The Center then provided backbone support to keep planning and implementation on track. It brought the parties together, helped to develop the concept and framework for a pilot, and grounded the work in the OCP’s Prevention Plan. First 5 LA has agreed to fund a two-year pilot project that will allow DPSS, for the first time ever, to refer clients to SHIELDS’ evidence-based home visiting services. To ensure the formation and details of the pilot are documented, the Center also sought and obtained funding from the Reissa Foundation to develop a report.

If this pilot can successfully demonstrate results—and from past evidence of home visiting, there’s every reason to believe it will—the hope is that DPSS will fund home visiting services for more of their families in the future.

Anderson points out, “This has never happened in LA County before. If we’re successful in this, it could change the game for family strengthening and open up services to tens of thousands of families who could benefit tremendously.”

Recruiting and Retaining Foster Families: Harnessing Collective Wisdom

Addressing the foster parent crisis has long been a priority for many of the Center’s philanthropic partners. This is one area where the County and philanthropy agree: The current crisis is severe, and just continuing to do what the County has always done will not be enough to solve it.

Some have suggested a media campaign, but many believe the problem goes deeper than simply raising awareness. Judge Nash ob-

serves, “We don’t have a user-friendly system when it comes to recruiting or allowing people to apply to become a part of the system. Many people get frustrated and walk away.” Until the internal barriers are addressed, some stakeholders suggest, a media campaign may have the unwanted effect of simply generating more frustration, rather than attracting new foster families.

Nichols is hopeful that the Center can help. “There’s an opportunity here for the Center to bring in experts or demonstrate better approaches that the County could then adopt on a big scale... if we could learn from someone else how to do it better, then we could take that and scale it up.” He admits that, on its own, the County has sometimes been slow to change. “I think we are kind of stuck in the old ... We need to cast off some of our old bad habits and learn newer habits. The Center can help guide us there... I am optimistic about it.”

Garen agrees that fresh perspectives are needed. “We just can’t wait,” she says. “Nothing will change until we start looking at it, collectively, from a systems-thinking perspective, and see what we can do to make change happen.” The Center’s formation seems to have provided just that kind of opportunity.

That’s why the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation recently approached the Center for support in creating a Collective Impact initiative that would address the recruitment crisis by drawing on the wisdom of stakeholders from various sectors. Although this effort is in its very beginning stages, the collective impact approach has shown promise in tackling other complex social problems.

Early meetings have been positive, with stakeholders eager to engage, and a general interest in developing a landscape of the issue as a first step, which First5LA has funded. So far, the Center has been instrumental as a thought partner, providing some backbone support and helping to bring the right County partners

to the table. They will continue to be involved going forward, working in close partnership with the County and the Parsons team.

Daniel Heimpel, Founder and Executive Director of Fostering Media Connections, believes this is one of the Center’s most promising initiatives, and he urges the Center to continue to take a leadership role. “You’ve got all of the heavy hitters already engaged. So you have a real opportunity to do something and communicate about that in a way that really inspires other jurisdictions. It’s a huge opportunity for the kids in LA, and for kids across the country, and for people who care about kids.”

FEATURED INITIATIVE: FOSTERING HOME

The plight of foster children needing homes touches the hearts of many. But a desire to help often comes with a host of questions: What does it take to become a foster parent? Will I qualify? What would it really be like to have a child in my home? What support is available? Interested families need answers, help and guidance to successfully complete the approval process and become foster parents.

To address this need, the Center brought together DCFS with foundation, community and faith partners to create “Fostering Home”—a unique partnership focused on easing the process of becoming a resource family and making support more accessible to interested families. The project held its first event, a “one-stop shop” for prospective resource families, on June 3, 2017. The Center secured \$30,000 in philanthropic funding from the Parsons Foundation and the Pritzker Foster Care Initiative to develop and test this new approach to recruitment. DCFS demonstrated its commitment by matching the philanthropic contribution. The event’s design accelerates the Resource Family Approval (RFA) process by bringing together key resources such as an orientation, Live Scan (fingerprinting) and health screenings and hands-on application assistance from

qualified social workers. Refreshments and child care are provided, and each participant receives personalized follow-up and support throughout the approval process, should they choose to continue. This first event was held at the Center of Hope in Inglewood, an area with a large African American population. If successful, however, the event can be easily replicated in other areas and with other target populations.

“This model has the ability to transform the way the County approaches recruitment,” says Gita Murthy Cugley, consultant to SCG and the Center. “It capitalizes on the untapped resources and support of the faith community, which can translate across to other communities.”

Judge Nash, Executive Director of the OCP, hopes the approach will have a ripple effect. “The first step you need to take is refine the process to make it more user-friendly, and then invite people in. If they participate in a user-friendly process, you will recruit people who will then, by word of mouth, help recruit other people over the longer term.”

Other event goals were to raise awareness about the needs of foster youth and highlight other ways, in addition to becoming foster parents themselves, that families and communities can help children in need. This is especially relevant for faith communities, who have a history of providing emotional and concrete support for member families who foster. It is hoped that events like these can help DCFS establish and strengthen relationships with churches in key areas.

To this end, the planning team conducted outreach to South L.A. faith communities for three months prior to the event, including meeting individually with community leaders, hosting faith leader luncheons and conducting personal visits to churches to appeal directly to congregations. This personal approach is credited with generating interest and attendance at the event, and it is igniting hope for

more collaboration in the future.

“What’s exciting about the faith initiative is not just the foster parent recruitment, it’s establishing the relationship. Everyone knows that they [churches] are a critical partner ... I think the response that [the Center is] getting for this convening, that’s going to have a collateral effect,” says Fesia Davenport, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, LA County.

Obviously, the effort’s primary goal is to bring new resource families into the system—and those results won’t be available for many weeks or months, because the approval process takes time. However, initial feedback has been positive. Hundreds of families attended the event, and survey results indicate that most were interested in becoming foster parents or, at minimum, learning more about the process.

One prospective foster parent who attended summed up his experience: “It’s a great place to start. It really jump-starts you and gets you a lot farther, right up front, than if you were trying to ping-pong yourself through a whole bunch of different individual places ... It just really helps speed it up overall.”

FEATURED INITIATIVE: EMERGENCY CHILD CARE FOR YOUNG FOSTER CHILDREN

Imagine being a young child, removed suddenly from your home and family under traumatic circumstances. Now imagine that, instead of being taken immediately to the home of a relative who already knows and loves you, or a welcoming foster family in a familiar neighborhood, you wind up spending hours or even days in a busy office, while a caseworker scrambles to find you a bed.

This has been the fate of too many infants and young children removed from their homes in LA County, where the shortage of available foster families sometimes leaves caseworkers

When you have people in the Center who understand both public and private and are able to navigate both, you have a very valuable asset.

HELEN BERBERIAN
Deputy Director, Bureau of Clinical Resources and Services DCFS

scrambling for emergency placements.

Now, in part through the Center's efforts, the County is working with The W.M. Keck Foundation, the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, and First 5 LA to address one of the top barriers to timely placement for very young children: access to child care for working relatives and foster parents. A small pilot project, launched in April of this year, provides priority access to care for children in need. It also trains child care providers in how to respond to the trauma needs of children who have been abused or neglected. Finally, it provides for a child care systems navigator, co-located in a DCFS office, to connect children benefiting from the emergency stipend to permanently funded child care that will help keep the family stable long-term.

Many partners, public and private, worked tirelessly for nearly two years to develop this project. The combination of public and private entities working together made it possible to overcome any barriers that arose—most notably, when foundations and the County agreed to share the risk of paying for reserved but (potentially) unused child care slots that neither could justify paying for alone. (In the end, this became a nonissue, because all five slots were filled within the program's first month.)

According to Helen Berberian, Deputy Director, Bureau of Clinical Resources and Services at DCFS, the Center's role in the negotiations was critical. "The role that the Center played was ... making sure that breakdowns were reduced or minimized through the process of building the pilot. And there was a lot of inter-

pretation that needed to happen. The Center was uniquely positioned to do that."

Private funders have picked up the tab for an evaluation component, already under way, to measure the impact of immediate access to child care on child safety, permanency and well-being, as well as on the recruitment and retention of in-home caregivers. Data from this evaluation may support other jurisdictions looking to implement similar programs, including counties that opt-in on a new emergency child care bridge program, recently enacted (AB-1164), that provides funding to replicate the model statewide.

In the meantime, at least five children have already been placed, presumably faster than would otherwise have been possible, and all of them with relatives. And the Center has earned valuable trust among its partners.

Berberian says, "In the beginning, when the Center was established, I thought, 'Oh, well what are they going to be able to do?' Oh boy did I learn. I learned what they're able to do, because they did it for me."

FEATURED INITIATIVE: FAMILY FINDING PILOT EVALUATION

"If we don't have to remove a child, that's our first choice," explains Berberian. "But if we have to remove a child, our next choice is to place with a relative." Only if a family member can't be found should the Department explore other options, such as placement with a foster family. But too often, efforts to locate family members for children in out-of-home care focus on youth at the back end of the system, after they have already spent years in foster care and are facing the transition to independent living.

In May 2016, the Board of Supervisors called on DCFS to work with the Office of Child Protection to build a robust and consistent

system of finding and engaging family members when a child is first taken into the child protection system. DCFS and the OCP together designed a pilot for two DCFS offices (Santa Fe Springs and Glendora), to substantially increase the number of identified family supports for each child entering the child protection system, and thereby improve outcomes for youth.

Aware that rigorous documentation is necessary for pilots with good results to be brought to scale and implemented with fidelity, they approached the Center for help in ensuring that this work would be sustainable.

The Center agreed to seek a philanthropic partner willing to fund an outside evaluator for the pilot. Anderson did the legwork of engaging potential partners and helped to select an outside entity to perform the work—Child Trends, a national expert on family finding. If the model shows positive results initially, Child Trends will provide technical assistance to help the County replicate the success in additional offices.

The Ahmanson Foundation stepped up with \$100,000 in funding. “What caught my eye [about this project] is that you’ve got a vulnerable population that ends up with strangers at a very traumatic point in their lives. The County is trying to do something that is a new way of doing business,” says President William Ahmanson. “If we can put kids into a better situation that’s less stressful and get them to a sense of normalcy faster, that’s a positive.”

He notes that the project structure was also appealing to how his Foundation likes to do business. “Kids’ lives are on the line. If the County is good enough to fund the pilot, then we are happy to help with the analysis.”

The value that this kind of support adds cannot be overestimated. Anderson notes, “By being able to tell the story, it helps to ensure that this initiative has the muscle to have the resources it will take to roll this out.”

Transition-Age Youth

Center staff are frank about the fact that Transition-Age Youth is currently the least developed of the Center’s three priority areas. This is a factor of limited staff capacity and the fact that Cohen, who is taking the lead in this area, had just 6 months under her belt when this report was being developed.

That said, even though her time has been spent familiarizing herself with the issues and stakeholders, the Center is already experiencing success through Cohen’s efforts. The Center now co-convenes, along with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) and United Way, a Youth Housing Subcommittee of the Home for Good Funders Collaborative. Home for Good is a long-standing public-private collaborative that until recently had focused on chronic and veteran homeless issues. The Youth Subcommittee brings together the powerful framework of this existing collaborative with the Center’s connections to the County’s child-serving departments and the housing know-how of LAHSA.

FEATURED INITIATIVE: SUPERVISED INDEPENDENT LIVING PLACEMENT (SILP) PILOT

Youth who reach adulthood while in the LA County foster care system have a unique option available to help ease their transition to self-sufficiency. A Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) provides youth ages 18 – 21 with monthly financial assistance while they get a taste of independence in their own apartment, dorm room, or room in a shared home.

Unfortunately, this support comes with challenges, making it an unrealistic choice for many of the youth who need it. A lack of affordable housing options, high application and move-in fees, and the need for resources to pay for furniture and utilities can serve as barriers to accessing this funding, which can

only be provided once the youth has gotten him- or herself moved in. Like other 18-year-olds, many foster youth need a little more hands-on support when moving from a family environment to living independently. Histories of trauma can make this leap even more challenging.

At Home for Good's invitation, the Center and LAHSA recently teamed up to develop two pilot projects to address the needs of this vulnerable group. Two nonprofit organizations, The Village Family Services and Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services, will each support a small group of 25-30 transitioning foster youth, to determine whether wrap-around services such as flexible funding, transition planning, and housing navigation help the youth thrive. In doing so, they will consider housing stability as well as other outcomes, such as income, education, or employment.

Recognizing that DCFS is an essential partner, both in the pilots themselves and in any future efforts to bring new services to scale, the Center has worked diligently to keep County staff informed and involved throughout the pilots' development. Center staff also were successful in bringing new funders to the collaborative, bolstering these and future efforts on behalf of transition-age youth.

"This isn't about filling gaps or paying for things the County can't afford," Cohen is quick to point out. "It's about finding spaces where there's a disconnect in the system that we're trying to solve. The pilots themselves are only going to serve a small number of youth. But what we learn from these projects could inform how DCFS thinks overall about transition planning and the SILP program in the future."

FEATURED INITIATIVE: LEGAL SUPPORT FOR UNDOCUMENTED YOUTH

Systems change takes time, and the issues that the Center is taking on—preventing children from entering the child protection system and resolving the County's longstanding foster parent recruitment crisis—are certainly no exception.

But at the Center's December 2016 funders briefing, staff members also were urged to look for opportunities to be nimble and responsive to needs emerging from the current political environment. At the time, Anderson wasn't sure how that applied to the Center's work. "But I kept it in my head," she says, that a funder had made the request.

An opportunity soon presented itself, at an April meeting of the coordinated entry system collaborative that Cohen attends. A provider spoke up at the meeting, saying that in light of recently heightened tensions around immigration, an unprecedented number of youth were coming to her staff with questions about their legal status. Anxiety about deportation was high, she said, but her staff were experts in housing, not immigration. What should they do?

Cohen responded: "I don't know what to do either. But it's my job to help find resources, so let me look into it."

It's really nice to know that we are able to do something to help these kids during such a challenging time, when there is so much uncertainty and fear. It's been great to be able to see a problem and jump in and offer a solution right away. [This initiative] is unique in that way.

LIZZIE COHEN
Associate Center Director

Together, Cohen and Anderson began the search for help. Within just a few weeks, they had reached out to a network that includes the L.A. Justice Fund, private attorneys, Mungler, Tolles & Olson, LLP and O'Melveny & Meyers, LLP, and a local nonprofit, KIND (Kids in Need of Defense). KIND agreed to provide training and serve as a "quarterback" for warm hand-offs to legal assistance. Several private attorneys agreed to prioritize requests coming from KIND for pro bono legal services. The LA Justice Fund will provide additional capacity, if the need winds up being greater than what these private resources can address.

Meanwhile, the Center also reached out to its contacts within DCFS, to keep them apprised of what they were hearing and explore any overlap. They learned (and were able to inform LAHSA providers) that the County has public resources available to help youth connected to the child protection system—which could include some, but not all, of those served by the homeless providers.

In addition to making providers aware of the resources available, the Center also helped connect them with a series of "Know Your Rights" workshops and an immigration law briefing, so that their staff will be more confident and better equipped to serve these vulnerable youth.

Agreements were in place quickly, within about a month of the initial meeting. Although the need for actual legal assistance is anticipated to be small, service providers can now rest easier, knowing that expert help is available to the youth in their care. Reducing the stress and anxiety around immigration helps lighten the load for workers and youth alike, allowing everyone to get back to the business at hand: helping youth find stable housing that will enable them to achieve other goals (such as education or employment) on their way to productive adulthood.

In this case, at least, LA County had a wealth

of resources to help. People just needed to be connected, and making those connections is what the Center does best. According to Anderson, "The value we brought was in knowing who to ask, having the relationships that made the ask easier, making the ask, and connecting the players and getting the commitments."

Cohen agrees. "People could have figured it out on their own," she says, "but we made it easy. We connected them."

Cross-Priority Activities

In addition to activities within the priority areas, the Center has been engaged in several initiatives that, although they do not fit neatly into any one category, touch on all.

LGBTQ SCAN EXPANSION

LGBTQ youth experience disproportionate risk in a number of areas, including being twice as likely to be involved with the CPS system. In 2016, LA County engaged expert Khush Cooper to conduct a scan of the county's youth services, to determine how well these vulnerable youth are being served, including areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. The study was even more fruitful than expected; however, that meant that in order to produce the most robust results, it needed to be expanded.

That's where the Center came in. Anderson engaged the David Bohnett Foundation to be a seed funder and quickly pulled together an educational briefing for more than a dozen additional foundations to discuss the work. The briefing was a success: Together, funders committed an additional \$50,000 to support the study.

Even more importantly, attendees asked to be reconvened when the report was released, to hear about the results and discuss how they could be applied to improve county services for youth in the future.

There's a subtle shift in the culture of the county when you bring in philanthropy to fund something and then you keep them engaged. It creates more accountability, more eyes, more stakeholders, more sunlight. More kids are going to be saved, period. There's just no way around it.

TORIE OSBORN
on the LGBTQ Scan Expansion

The Center also brought an immediate opportunity to the group: The County Health “Hub” at Los Angeles County’s USC Medical Center has a teen clinic that is already engaging in the best practices identified in the study for serving LGBTQ teens. The County funds other Health hubs in other communities, but none have a teen clinic. The County was interested in replicating this clinic, but it needed private sector support to standardize the model so that it could be re-created effectively. The Reissa Foundation stepped up to fund a program manager position, and the Center will continue working with the County to build support for replication of this model in other hubs.

In addition to critical funding support, the County now has a new cadre of thought-partners, supporting and holding them accountable as they move forward in making public services more welcoming for vulnerable youth.

PORTRAIT OF LOS ANGELES

Public-private partnership isn’t always about bringing private funding to support government initiatives. Sometimes, it’s just the opposite.

The Portrait of Los Angeles began as a philanthropic effort. Supported by 14 philanthropic funders and the County, this initiative promotes the development of a common, countywide set of analytics (produced by Measure of America, a program of the Social Science Research Council) to benchmark well-being, identify areas for improvement and ultimately measure progress. Several foundations were already on board before the Center became involved. However, previous efforts by philanthropy to engage the County had not been successful.

Experience from other communities had shown that the involvement of key government decision-makers would be critical to ensuring that this work would not just become another report on a shelf, but would be actively used to inform policy decisions and target services to families most in need. So the Center worked with the OCP to draft a grant proposal to LA County’s Productivity Investment Fund. These County funds would support a consultant to lead a local advisory board and deepen stakeholder engagement.

Approval of this grant in April brings more than the County’s significant monetary investment of \$125,000. It brings the promise of engagement by multiple departments, including DCFS, DPH and DPSS, among others. And it has expanded the capacity to connect and integrate this effort with other County data initiatives, multiplying its relevance and reach.

ENDNOTES

¹ Los Angeles County Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection. (2014). *The road to safety for our children*. http://ceo.lacounty.gov/pdf/brc/BRCCP_Final_Report_April_18_2014.pdf

² Essel, C. (2014, June 13). A major step forward in protecting LA County children. Southern California Grantmakers. <https://www.socalgrantmakers.org/news/major-step-forward-protecting-la-county-children>

³ Los Angeles County Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection. *The road to safety for our children*. p. 26.

Thank you to those organizations
that have supported the
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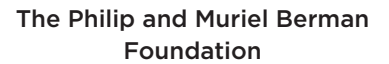


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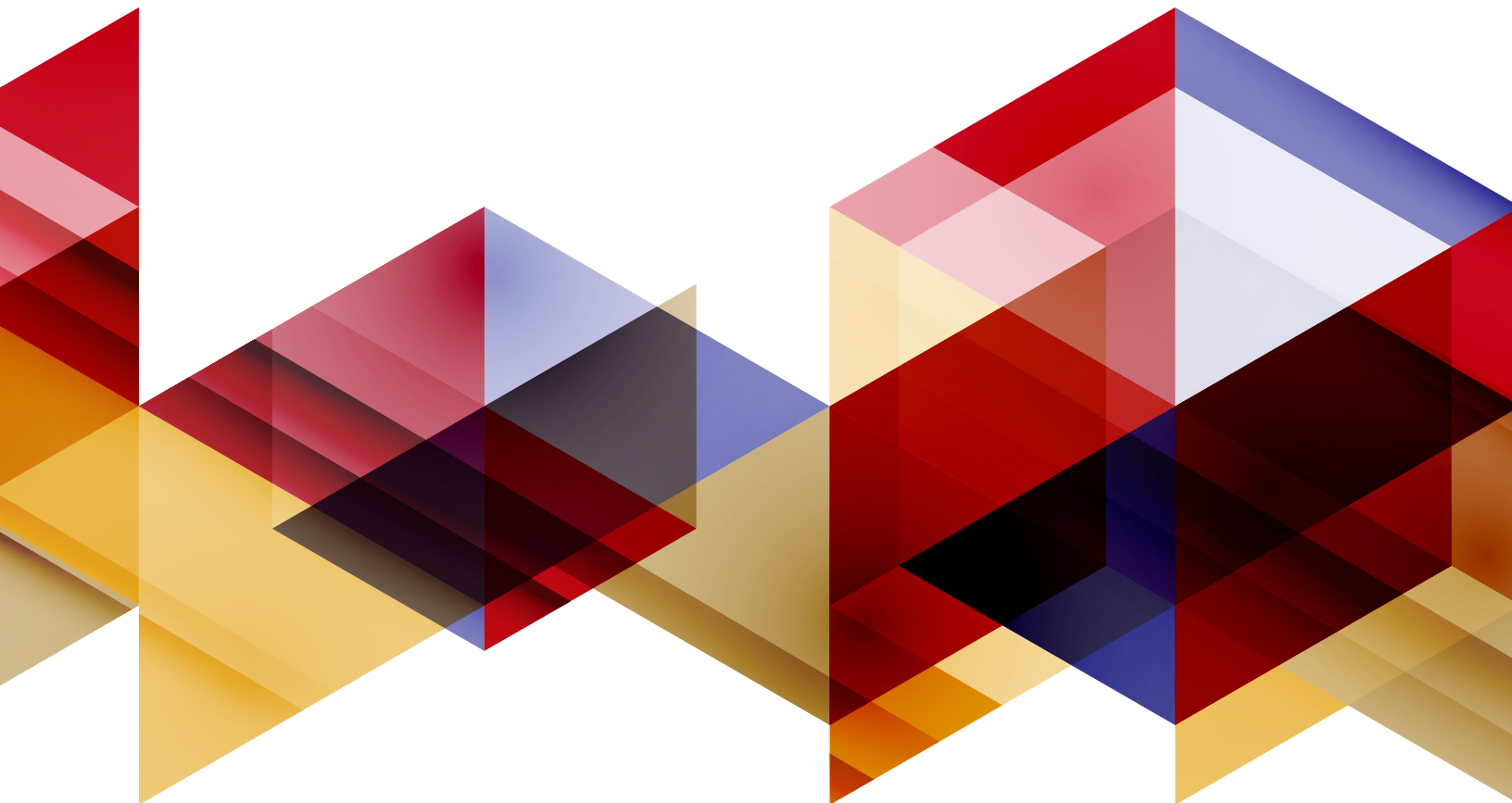


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