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CLICK HERE FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES' REPORT DATED DECEMBER 26, 2018

CLICK HERE FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES' REPORT DATED MAY 1, 2019

CLICK HERE FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES' REPORT DATED NOVEMBER 1, 2019

CLICK HERE FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES' REPORT DATED MAY 1, 2020



BOBBY D. CAGLE
Director

BRANDON T. NICHOLS
Chief Deputy Director

**County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020
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December 26, 2018

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

From: Bobby D. Cagle, Director
Department of Children and Family Services

RESPONSE TO THE SEPTEMBER 25, 2018 BOARD MOTION (ITEM NO. 25) REGARDING THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FAITH BASED MODEL

This communication is our initial report back in response to the September 25, 2018 Board motion authored by Supervisors Solis and Barger. The motion directs the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to report back to the Board in 90 days on the creation of a faith-based pilot, which builds on the *Child Welfare Practice: Creating a Climate for Successful Change* analysis and the African American Community Engagement (ACE) proposal to address the following directives:

1. Create an appropriately funded and formalized partnership with Pomona faith based organizations to provide services to families, including, but not limited to: cultural brokers, visitation support, respite care and other supportive services, such as parenting classes, substance abuse counseling, and other supportive services.
2. Include appropriate data collection methods to demonstrate the impact of this partnership.

The motion further instructs, following the creation of the pilot project, to report back to the Board every six months for a twelve-month period, to assess progress and make recommendations for the continuation and permanent expansion of the program.

CURRENT EFFORTS

DCFS has established an oversight committee, comprised of representatives from the Commission for Children and Families and the Center for Strategic Partnerships, internally identified the startup funding, and is in the process of formalizing a partnership with community and faith-based partners to implement the ACE Faith Based Model to provide services to children and families. A strategic planning meeting was held on October 30, 2018 to facilitate discussion and construct action items around the ACE model. The meeting included Pomona faith-based partners, and other key departmental staff, and centered on the engagement of faith-based communities and the development of a comprehensive catalog of faith-based services and providers in the Pomona region.

Moving forward, DCFS will continue to leverage partnerships with Pomona faith-based partners including Brown Memorial, whose network offers access to a far-reaching collection of faith-based institutions. DCFS is actively collaborating with a network of partners in the Pomona area in determining appropriate data collection methods to demonstrate the impact of these partnerships. These data elements will include both quantitative and qualitative measures that examine areas such as resiliency, levels of support, service delivery, and reduction in child abuse and neglect. In addition, DCFS will examine short-term and long-term outcomes and the development of best practices and sustainability efforts.

NEXT STEPS

The ACE Faith Based Model represents an undertaking that was created by the community and for the community. Faith communities in the greater Pomona area are strategically mobilizing and maintaining affirmative and collaborative relationships with DCFS to meet the needs of African American children and families. DCFS is hopeful that these faith-based partnerships will support and enhance the provision of child welfare services at various, key decision points. Equally important, implementation of the ACE model aligns with the Board's mission and vision, and the Department's Shared Core Practice Model and key investment areas. Over the next several months, DCFS will continue with their partners from the ACE program and other identified partners within the Pomona area to develop a sound implementation plan, which will include projected timelines, fundamental milestones and outcome measures. Our progress on these efforts will be provided in the next update to the Board.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please call me at (213) 351-5847, or your staff may contact Aldo Marin, Board Liaison, at (213) 351-5530.

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May 1, 2019

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

From: Bobby D. Cagle, Director
Department of Children and Family Services

PROGRESS REPORT BACK ON THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FAITH BASED MODEL

This is to provide your Board with a progress report on the implementation of the African American Community Engagement (ACE) Project as requested in the September 25, 2018 Board Motion. The ACE Project is a unique and promising faith-based model that is aimed at reducing racial disparity among African American children in the child welfare system by providing an individualized and culturally sensitive safety net for African American children and families within the Pomona community.

Your Board instructed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to report back to the Board in 90 days on the creation of a faith-based pilot, which builds on the *Child Welfare Practice: Creating a Climate for Successful Change* analysis and the African American Community Engagement (ACE) proposal to address the following directives:

1. Create an appropriately funded and formalized partnership with Pomona faith based organizations to provide services to families, including, but not limited to: cultural brokers, visitation support, respite care and other supportive services, such as parenting classes, substance abuse counseling, and other supportive services.
2. Include appropriate data collection methods to demonstrate the impact of this partnership.

The motion further instructed, following the creation of the pilot project, a report back to the Board every six months for a twelve-month period to assess progress and make recommendations for the continuation and permanent expansion of the project.

Update on Efforts to Create an Appropriately Funded and Formalized Partnership

Since our initial report back, we have worked closely with the ACE Project to ensure that our partnership has been formalized and that the project has been fully funded for the first year of the pilot. The ACE Project is being funded through DCFS' Prevention and Aftercare Program (P&A) as part of DCFS' contract with Prototypes HealthRight 360 (Prototypes). Project Caring and Sharing (PCS) is a subcontractor under Prototypes' P&A contract and has been instrumental in implementing the ACE Program. A meeting was held in early February 2019 with PCS, Prototypes, and DCFS' P&A Program Manager to discuss the funding stream for the pilot. Beginning July 1, 2018, additional funding was allocated to all 10 P&A contractors through the Mental Health Services Act-Prevention and Early Intervention expansion dollars. Given this increased funding and the fact that Prototypes had underutilized funds in excess of nearly \$524,000, it was mutually understood and agreed upon that this was a great opportunity to utilize some of the available unspent funding to support the ACE Project. As such, PCS has received full funding for the ACE Project for its first year of the pilot.

The projected costs for the first year of the project was \$397,000, which included start-up fees, recruitment and outreach efforts, administrative costs, and other program expenses. PCS has received the requested \$90,000 in start-up funds through Prototypes to get the ACE Project off the ground, which includes the onboarding of staff and conducting recruitment and outreach activities in the faith community. The remaining \$307,000 has been allocated to PCS for Calendar Year 2019 and the contract for these funds is signed and in effect.

Update on Pilot Implementation

DCFS Pomona regional office, Prototypes, Casey Family Programs and PCS, in partnership, are employing a variety of efforts to implement the ACE Project. Since January of 2019, this collaborative has been participating in bi-weekly meetings and conference calls to discuss the progress made towards recruitment, outreach, the provision of services to African American children and families from the community and those served by DCFS, and data collection methods to demonstrate the impact of the project on the identified populations. This section provides a summary of these efforts.

Outreach and Recruitment of Anchor Churches

The foundation of the ACE Project is the recruitment of anchor churches. Key points in history have noted that the black church has been a primary gathering place and remains today a

central institution that fosters both social change and personal spiritual growth among African Americans. The ACE Project aims to recruit a minimum of 20 anchor churches that will serve as a focal point for referred children and families by linking them to resources and enhancing family strengths and functioning. These anchor churches will identify at least one (1) member from their congregation to serve as a Community Cultural Broker and the liaison for that particular church. As of late April 2019, the ACE Project has identified a total of 36 faith organizations/churches in the Pomona area. Of these churches, seven (7) have confirmed their commitment to the project by way of a written and signed Memorandum of Agreement; of the remaining 29, 15 are pending confirmation and 14 are being explored further as a potential partner.

The Cultural Brokers are fundamental to the ACE Project and provide case management services, crisis intervention, as well as linkage and advocacy services to children and families in a culturally sensitive manner. A total of 13 community members have been engaged in becoming a Community Cultural Broker as part of the ACE Project. As of late April 2019, five (5) have completed the formal Cultural Broker Training and four (4) of these five (5) have been live scanned and cleared as a volunteer for DCFS. The remaining eight (8) are in the process of completing the live scan and training processes.

Community Referrals

The ACE Project employs both prevention and intervention methods for working with African American children and families and utilizes the anchor churches as a hub for referrals and linkage to services within the community. As of late April 2019, a total 48 families were referred to the ACE Project. As a result, 21 of these families, or 44%, have been linked to one of the aforementioned church partners. These families are engaged in services such as employment, housing, transportation needs, mentoring, counseling, and substance abuse.

DCFS Family Referrals

Children and families who have come to the attention of the department for abuse or neglect are referred to the ACE Project through Prototypes, the community-based P&A provider for the Pomona area. As of late April 2019, a total of 27 DCFS families, or 56%, were referred to the ACE Project; 15 of these families have accepted the services offered and are being assessed to determine their needs. They will be linked to services and resources such as employment, housing assistance, life skills, child care, counseling and food banks; of the remaining 12 families, four (4) have either not responded or declined services at this time; seven (7) are pending follow up, and one (1) was transferred to another agency due to the family relocating. It is noteworthy to mention that while some families have declined services at this time, it is clear that there still exists a need and the team will be following up with these families to re-engage them in services.

Honorable Board of Supervisors
May 1, 2019
Page 4

Conclusion

While much has been accomplished to date, we are still in the early stages of implementing the ACE Project and gathering appropriate data to examine the impact of the project on the outcomes for African American children and families being served and lessons learned. We will continue to monitor and track the successful implementation of the project and look forward to providing your Board with another update in the months to come.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me directly at (213) 351-5847, or your staff may contact Aldo Marin, Board Liaison, at (213) 351-5530.

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Director

BRANDON T. NICHOLS
Chief Deputy Director

November 1, 2019

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

From: 
Bobby D. Cagle
Director

**THIRD PROGRESS REPORT BACK ON THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT FAITH BASED MODEL**

This is to provide your Board with a status report on the implementation of the African-American Community Engagement (ACE) Project as requested in the September 25, 2018, Board Motion. The ACE Project is a unique and promising faith-based model that aims to reduce racial disparity among African-American children in the child welfare system by providing an individualized and culturally sensitive safety net for African-American children and families within the Pomona community.

Your Board instructed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to report back in 90 days on the creation of a faith-based pilot, which builds on the *Child Welfare Practice: Creating a Climate for Successful Change* analysis and the ACE proposal to address the following directives:

1. Create an appropriately funded and formalized partnership with Pomona faith based organizations to provide services to families, including, but not limited to: cultural brokers, visitation support, respite care and other supportive services, such as parenting classes and substance abuse counseling.
2. Include appropriate data collection methods to demonstrate the impact of this partnership.

The Motion further instructed a report back to the Board every six months for a twelve-month period following the creation of the pilot project, to assess progress and make recommendations for the continuation and permanent expansion of the project.

Update on Efforts to Appropriately Fund and Formalize Partnership

Since our last report to the Board on May 1, 2019, we have continued to work closely with ACE to formalize our partnership and ensure that the project was fully funded through its first year.

ACE is able to provide the technical assistance needed to effectively execute the project and to onboard and sustain additional Cultural Brokers, who are pivotal to the achievement of favorable outcomes for African American children and families now that it has been appropriately funded.

DCFS is currently exploring possible future funding streams and reviewing the project design to ensure that the ACE Project continues, is sustainable, expands to other regional service areas, and is able to provide essential components of the faith-based model, including, but not limited to, Father Engagement, Effective Black Parenting, and the Cultural Broker Program.

Update on Project Implementation

DCFS, in partnership with Prototypes, Project Caring and Sharing, the Pomona Regional Office, and Casey Family Programs, continues to employ a variety of efforts to implement the ACE Project. Since May 2019, this collaborative has convened regularly to discuss the progress made toward recruitment, outreach, provision of services to African American children and families from the community in addition to those served by DCFS, and data collection methods to demonstrate the impact of the project on the identified populations. Below is a summary of these efforts.

Outreach and Recruitment of Anchor Churches

As of October 2019, the ACE Project has identified 36 faith organizations and churches in the Pomona area. Of the 36 faith organizations and churches, 14 have confirmed their commitment to the project by way of a written and signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). At least two churches have expressed a commitment to the project but have not yet been able to sign the MOA. The remaining churches are pending confirmation and/or are being explored further as potential partners.

Community Cultural Brokers

Cultural Brokers are fundamental to the ACE Project and provide culturally sensitive case management services, crisis intervention, linkages, and advocacy services to

children and families. To date, the ACE Project has engaged 18 community members in becoming Community Cultural Brokers. As of October 2019, seven volunteers have completed the formal Cultural Broker Training, and were live scanned and cleared to serve in this capacity. One volunteer has live scanned but has not completed the formal training. The remaining 10 volunteers are pending the completion of live scan and training. The Cultural Brokers who presently work with families have specialized knowledge in the areas of Special Education, Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse Counseling, and engaging adults with disabilities.

Community Referrals

The ACE Project utilizes both prevention and intervention methods for working with African American children and families, and leverages the anchor churches as hubs for referrals and linkages to services within the community. As of October 2019, the ACE Project has served 71 families referred by way of the community (not DCFS-involved). Many of these families are linked to church partners in the Pomona area and are engaged in such services as employment, housing, transportation, mentoring, individual counseling, and substance abuse counseling.

DCFS Family Referrals

One of the primary goals of the ACE Project is to serve at least 60 DCFS-referred families during calendar year (CY) 2019. It is also worth mentioning that the ACE Project is on target with serving the projected 60 families. Children and families who have come to the attention of DCFS due to abuse and/or neglect are referred to the ACE Project through Prototypes. As of October 2019, Prototypes referred 64 DCFS-involved families to the ACE Project, 50 of whom accepted services. All participating families complete a needs assessment and are linked to identified services and resources such as employment, housing assistance, life skills, childcare, counseling, and food banks. The remaining 14 families either declined services, did not respond to contact efforts, were not residing in the Pomona area at the time of intake, or transferred to other agencies after relocating outside the service area. The ACE Project makes intermittent efforts to re-engage families who initially decline services. Families who previously participated in the ACE Project are welcome to return for additional supportive services if their prior needs are not resolved or if additional needs arise.

Conclusion

We appreciate the Board's continued commitment to, and expressed interest in, the ACE Project. Over the next several months, we will continue to monitor and track the implementation of the project and look forward to providing your Board with a final report that will include quantitative data and outcomes for CY 2019, as well as lessons learned.

Honorable Board of Supervisors
November 1, 2019
Page 4

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me, or your staff may contact Aldo Marin, Board Liaison, at (213) 351-5530.

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May 1, 2020

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

From: Bobby D. Cagle
Director

**FINAL PROGRESS REPORT ON THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT FAITH-BASED PROJECT**

This is to provide your Board with a final progress report on the implementation of the African-American Community Engagement (ACE) Project as requested in the September 25, 2018, Board Motion. The ACE Project is a unique and promising faith-based model that aims to reduce racial disproportionality and disparity among African-American children in the child welfare system by providing an individualized and culturally sensitive safety net for African-American children and families in the Pomona community.

Your Board instructed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to report back on the creation of a faith-based pilot that builds on the *Child Welfare Practice: Creating a Climate for Successful Change* analysis and the ACE proposal to address the following directives:

1. Create an appropriately funded and formalized partnership with Pomona faith-based organizations to provide families with services including, but not limited to, cultural brokers, visitation support, respite care, and other supportive services such as parenting classes and substance abuse counseling.
2. Include appropriate data collection methods to demonstrate the impact of this partnership.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

To assess progress and make recommendations for the continuation and permanent expansion of the project, the Motion further instructed DCFS to provide an initial 90-day report and to report back to the Board every six months for a 12-month period following the creation of the pilot project. Accordingly, DCFS submitted reports to your Board on December 26, 2018; May 1, 2019; and November 1, 2019. This report serves as the final update on the ACE Project's overall progress.

Update on Efforts to Appropriately Fund and Formalize Partnerships

HealthRight 360 (Prototypes) is the primary contractor, and Project Caring and Sharing (PCS) is the subcontractor. Prototypes continues to support PCS in administering the ACE Project and providing technical and fiscal support to ensure the essential components of the faith-based model are seamlessly provided to African-American families. These components include, but are not limited to, Father Engagement, Effective Black Parenting, and Community Cultural Brokers.

Since our last report to the Board on November 1, 2019, we continued to work closely with the ACE Project to formalize a partnership and ensure the project is fully funded through its second year, 2020. As previously reported, the Department of Mental Health (DMH) expansion dollars enabled DCFS to fully fund the ACE Project through year one, in 2019; however, your Board was advised that the DMH funds would be unavailable in 2020. Following the loss of DMH expansion dollars, DCFS secured the Director's maximum delegated authority to increase Prototypes' Prevention and Aftercare (P&A) contract amount by 10 percent. It was determined that the costs to continue the ACE Project into 2020 exceeded the Director's maximum delegated authority; therefore, DCFS is in the process of securing your Board's approval to increase the P&A contract by an additional \$18,113.70 to ensure the ACE Project is fully funded and can continue to engage and serve African-American children and families in the Pomona community in 2020.

Update on Project Implementation

The DCFS Office of Equity in partnership with Prototypes, PCS, the Pomona Regional office, and Casey Family Programs, continues to employ a variety of efforts to implement the ACE Project. Since November 2019, this collaborative has continued to participate in biweekly meetings and conference calls to discuss the progress made toward recruitment, outreach, provision of services to African-American children and families from the community (including those served by DCFS), and data collection methods to demonstrate the project's impact on these identified populations. This section provides a summary of these efforts.

Outreach and Recruitment of Anchor Churches

In Calendar Year (CY) 2019, the ACE Project recruited and partnered with 16 anchor churches in the Pomona area. To assist with outreach and recruitment of anchor churches, the ACE Project created a Faith Resource Directory for the churches located in the Pomona regional office's service area to increase awareness of services available.

Community Cultural Brokers

Each anchor church identified members from its congregation to serve as Community Cultural Brokers and liaisons for its particular church. Community Cultural Brokers are fundamental to the ACE Project and provide culturally sensitive case management services, crisis intervention, linkages, and advocacy services to children and families. To date, the ACE Project has engaged 18 community members in becoming Community Cultural Brokers. In CY 2019, nine community members were live-scanned and cleared by DCFS to serve in this volunteer capacity. The remaining nine did not complete the approval process. The Community Cultural Brokers who currently work with families have expertise in the areas of special education, domestic violence and substance abuse counseling, and engagement with adults with disabilities.

Community Referrals

The ACE Project employs both prevention and intervention methods for working with African-American children and families and uses the anchor churches as hubs for referrals and linkages to services within the community. Upon careful review and reconciliation of PCS client records, it was determined that the ACE Project served 56 community-referred families who were not involved with DCFS in CY 2019. Many of these families were linked to faith partners in the Pomona area and received assistance with employment, housing, transportation, mentoring, anger management, individual counseling, and substance abuse counseling.

DCFS Family Referrals

One of the ACE Project's primary goals was to serve 60 DCFS-referred families during CY 2019. Children and families who came to the attention of DCFS because of abuse or neglect and who met program criteria were referred to ACE through Prototypes. According to documentation PCS provided to DCFS, the ACE Project engaged and served 62 families in CY 2019, exceeding the projected goal. All participating families completed a needs assessment and were linked to services and resources to address their specific needs. These services included, but were not limited to, employment, housing, family bonding assistance (visitation), life-skills training, childcare, transportation, counseling, and food bank referrals. The ACE Project made every effort to reengage families who had initially declined services. DCFS-referred families who had previously participated in the program were welcome to return for additional supportive services if their identified needs were unresolved or additional needs arose.

Assessment and Lessons Learned

During CY 2019, DCFS instituted measures to evaluate contract compliance, data tracking methodology, and execution of best practices in serving the African-American community. Based on a review of deliverables for CY 2019, the ACE Project performed to the contract standards. The ACE Project was supported through the DCFS Office of Equity to ensure performance standards were met. Additionally, technical assistance was provided to cultivate the ACE Project's growth and increase the performance level in meeting operational needs and desired contract outcomes.

Successful family engagement required the servicing agency to be flexible in certain areas, such as identifying meeting locations most convenient for the families, establishing rapport from a culturally sensitive perspective for African-American families, and providing creative strategies to nurture meaningful interaction among involved partners.

As a collaborative, we continue to look at systemic processes to ensure the live scan clearances and appeals are not barriers to success. We continue to assess for timeliness and community accessibility in the onboarding of Community Cultural Brokers.

Lessons learned include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Strength-based collaboration among DCFS, Prototypes, and PCS contributed to the progress and overall satisfaction of participating families with service delivery.
- The P&A Family Centered Services Portal improved the flow of service delivery to African-American families by streamlining the timeframe for receiving referrals from DCFS, Prototypes, and PCS.
- Designating staff as primary contacts for the ACE Project helped increase pathways to permanency and family reunification for African-American families.
- Routine communication among DCFS, Prototypes, and PCS contributed to contract compliance.
- Focused outreach helped better engage African-American families, ensure adequate services were delivered, and improve family functioning.
- Community Cultural Brokers are essential to the ACE Project's success and remain a vital part of the deliverables. The process of recruiting, engaging, and maintaining Community Cultural Brokers is a focused priority for this project.

DCFS will continue to monitor the ACE Project's progress and ensure necessary adjustments are made based on lessons learned from CY 2019.

Conclusion and Recommendation

DCFS is committed to this promising faith-based model and looks forward to continuing

Each Supervisor
May 1, 2020
Page 5

these crucial services into the next calendar year and beyond. In addition, DCFS recommends an evaluation of the ACE faith-based model for expansion into underserved communities in other supervisorial districts.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me directly at (213) 351-5600 or your staff may contact Aldo Marin, Board Liaison, at (213) 351-5530.

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