



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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SACHI A. HAMAI
Interim Chief Executive Officer

March 16, 2015

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Sachi A. Hamai 
Interim Chief Executive Officer

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RESPONSE TO BOARD MOTION ON DEVELOPING A PROPOSED MISSION STATEMENT ON CHILD SAFETY

On April 18, 2014, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection (BRC) issued its final report – *The Road to Safety for Our Children*. The Board adopted the recommendations on June 10, 2014. The BRC report included recommendations on preventing child abuse, protecting abused children from further abuse, and on child well-being. One of the BRC recommendations spoke to the need to articulate a countywide mission to prioritize and improve child safety. The rationale behind articulating this mission is to serve as a guiding principle for County department heads and other top level managers and as a critical message to everyone working in the child protection system that child protection is a priority. Articulating a mission to prioritize and improve child safety involves three milestones: 1) Establish and operationalize the Office of Child Protection; 2) Adopt a County mission statement on child safety; and 3) Adopt, implement and monitor a data driven, child-centered strategic plan. The Board has established and operationalized the Office of Child Protection (OCP). On January 13, 2015, this Board unanimously passed a motion introduced by Supervisor Kuehl directing the development of a County mission statement on child safety consistent with the BRC recommendations.

The County already has a strong mission statement that serves as the foundation of its work - *To enrich lives through effective and caring service*. A mission statement specific to child safety flows from the County's foundational mission statement and emphasizes the Board's commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of its children. We also developed a mission statement for the OCP illustrating how the County mission on child safety will be fulfilled. The illustration below depicts the relationship of these three mission statements to each other.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

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Stakeholder Input Process: Department Heads and Essential Partners

The OCP engaged a variety of stakeholders to help develop the proposed County mission statement on child safety. Before conducting stakeholder meetings, the OCP compiled and reviewed the mission statements of 36 County departments and one commission, paying particular attention to those Departments that impact child safety and well-being. Within five weeks, the OCP held five separate stakeholder meetings to seek input on what a County mission statement should include. The first three stakeholder meetings were held with County department heads and/or their designees. Participating departments included: Chief Executive Office, Child Support, Children and Family Services, District Attorney, Health Services, Library, Office of Education, Mental Health, Parks and Recreation, Probation, Public Health, Public Social Services, and Sheriff. One-hour meetings were held on February 3, 10, and 24, 2015. Several departments sent multiple representatives so that as many as 24 County representatives participated in the three meetings.

During the department head meetings, we discussed the meaning of child safety and whether any proposed statement on child safety should begin and end with child safety. This group readily agreed that the proposed mission statement must emphasize child safety, but not focus on child safety alone. This sentiment is consistent with the BRC's final report.

During the meetings, each attendee developed a proposed mission statement on child safety and then worked within a small group to reach consensus on a group mission statement. The group statements were shared with all other groups and a discussion

ensued about the attributes of each statement. After the discussion, participants identified those statements that resonated most strongly with them. There was broad support for the idea that after a child's safety needs are addressed, the County must do more. Broadly supported themes that emerged from these three sessions included: "protect," "well-being," "leadership," "partnership," and "champion."

Recognizing that the work of child protection and child welfare involves numerous private partners, the OCP held two meetings to seek input from private stakeholders also vested in the safety of our children. Each meeting lasted approximately two-and-a-half hours. The first meeting was held in the City of Lancaster on March 6, 2015 and the second meeting was held in South Los Angeles on March 9, 2015. Through these meetings, we were able to secure input from 81 additional stakeholders, including community-based organizations, County-contracted service providers, school districts, relative caregivers, advocates, and the health care and faith-based communities. We followed the same statement development and discussion process used during the department head meetings. Again, there was broad support for the idea that after a child's safety needs are addressed, the County must do more. Broadly supported themes that emerged from these meetings included: "children," "support families," "safety," "collaboration," "effective," and "partnership."

The OCP paid close attention to the nuanced differences in tone, and themes reflected in the statements produced during each of the stakeholder meetings. Certain proposals for a County mission on child safety seemed more appropriate for the OCP mission statement and vice-versa. Other proposals included important concepts and themes which would be too limiting if included in a mission statement, and, therefore, far more appropriate as a stand-alone value. Yet, other statements were very specific and would be better suited as a strategy under the joint strategic plan that the OCP will be developing. In order to provide a broad view of the how each piece works together, below you will find: 1) a proposed County mission statement on child safety, 2) a proposed mission statement for the OCP, and 3) value statements for the OCP.

Proposed Mission Statements: County Safety Statement and OCP Statement

Preamble to the County Mission Statement on Child Safety:

The safety and well-being of all of our children is of highest priority in the County. Consequently, County departments and agencies will work together as a team to provide the highest quality services to children and families. Broad community input and support is also critical to this mission. The County has established the Office of Child Protection to ensure the County achieves its child safety mission.

Proposed Countywide Mission Statement on Child Safety:

***Protect our children, support our families and
champion their success***

Proposed Office of Child Protection Mission Statement:

The proposed OCP mission statement was designed to complement the countywide safety mission statement by explaining how it would be accomplished.

***Leading a broad partnership that implements
meaningful solutions to improve the lives of our
children and families***

In this context, a “broad partnership” is defined as County departments working together, as well as with other diverse stakeholders within the community.

Proposed Values for the County Mission on Child Safety:

Value	Value Statement
Integrity	We do the right thing for our children and families, listening to their voices, and placing their needs at the center of our policies and actions.
Data Driven Planning	We strategically use data to inform planning, activities, and decision making.
Integrated Service Delivery	We facilitate inter-agency collaboration to ensure that County departments both work together and with other diverse stakeholders. Towards this end, joint planning and budgeting is a necessary part of this collaborative process.
Child Centered and Family Focused	We consider the impact of policy implementation through the eyes of our children and families, and are committed to supporting a continuum of care that is both preventative and provides long-term support.
Transparency	We readily share information about our processes, activities, and decision making.
Community Engagement	We actively engage the community as real partners about the best ways to protect children and support their families in the cultural context of each community.
Advocacy	We seek to influence national, State, and local policy decisions, program development, and resource allocation to promote continuous improvement of the child protection system and better child protection outcomes.
Innovation	We constantly challenge ourselves and partners to advance best practices and seek new solutions for improving child protection, establishing Los Angeles County as a national model.

Conclusion

The OCP submits for your consideration the proposed mission and value statements listed above. Although this Board requested a single statement, the stakeholder process also enabled us to secure input on a mission statement for the OCP. In addition, the OCP mission and values statements are the pre-cursor to the joint strategic planning process – another BRC recommendation. Upon adoption of the proposed mission statements, the OCP will next turn its attention to the joint strategic planning process. Stakeholder groups will be involved in this process, as OCP seeks to build a “new partnership” moving forward. Survey results from the stakeholder meetings held in Lancaster and South Los Angeles reflect general satisfaction with the mission statement input process and a desire to participate in a future joint strategic planning process.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Fesia Davenport at (213) 974-1186, or via email at fdavenport@ceo.lacounty.gov.

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