

REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER
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JANUARY 25, 2022

REIMAGINING ASSESSING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (DCFS)

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is embarking on a new phase. They are experiencing change in senior leadership while simultaneously implementing the new fundamental fiscal and programmatic changes that are required for the federal Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), which places more focus on prevention and community engagement so that children do not enter the child protection system. Given these vast changes underway, it is an opportune time for the Board of Supervisors (Board) to assess DCFS and provide an inventory and landscape in this new phase to provide the tools to adjust and improve as needed. Over the years, the Board has used outside consultants to review how departments are structured and to provide holistic recommendations taking into consideration existing models, best practices, previous audits and reports, and fiscal responsibilities.

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On February 5, 2019, the Board adopted the “Optimization Motion” directing the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to engage a consultant to study the current structure of the Los Angeles County (County) departments and offices that administer economic and workforce development services and programs. The motion specified that these efforts should connect with a previously approved “Alignment Motion” and analysis on the progress on achieving workforce development alignment across the County. Currently a review and assessment of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) is underway by the CEO’s office in response to the “Deployment and Integration of Information Technology Motion.”

DCFS has been the subject of evaluations on specific issues. In November 2020, the Board approved a consultant to assess how the County’s current child abuse prevention efforts can more effectively address racial inequities and systemic racism. That report, titled “Recommendations for Reimagining Child Welfare & Safety in Los Angeles County” spoke to persistent hinderances and the County’s inability to implement a recurrent list of recommendations, which underscores that while the County has invested in several prevention efforts, it is not clear that these efforts have been set up to be successfully integrated and coordinated across departments. In addition, the report urges the County to consider the use of a centralized leadership structure to streamline, align, and proliferate equitable prevention programming across departments.

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As the recruitment of a new DCFS Director takes place amid FFPSA being implemented, it is a critical time to conduct a thorough evaluation and assessment of DCFS including its programs, services, financial status, organizational structure, and the impact being felt for social workers throughout DCFS.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors (Board) direct the Chief Executive Office (CEO) and Auditor-Controller (A-C) to engage a consultant to perform a programmatic and management audit of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to review recent analyses and recommendations that may have been conducted as part of other efforts, among other things, evaluate the current programs as well as leadership/management structure and provide a comprehensive analysis with recommendations. The analysis and recommendations should be provided to the Board of Supervisors in writing in 90 days and include input from the Youth Commission, the Office of Child Protection, the Children and Families' Commission, and pertinent County Departments' that work closely with DCFS such as DMH, DPSS, and Probation. The audit and analysis should include, but not be limited to:

- a. Current inventory and list that indexes and helps define the stated short-term and long-term purpose of each program, including number of employees, hierarchy of reporting structure, number of children and families served, community engagement, budget implications, and how outcome data is collected for the following:

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- i. Pilot and demonstration initiatives directed by the Board of Supervisors.
 - ii. Programs and divisions/units/sections.
 - iii. How program effectiveness is determined including but not limited to whether programs are evidence-based and how they are developed in a culturally competent and community focused way (i.e., such as conducting any needs assessments).
 - iv. Whether staffing levels of programs are appropriate or need to be enhanced, particularly with respect to the Adoptions Bureau, Medical Case Management Unit, the Dependency Investigation Unit, and the Multi-Agency Response Team Unit.
- b. Management/structure:
- i. Management structure, succession planning efforts, staff training (where appropriate in comparison to other county departments).
 - ii. Procurement processes, especially for nonprofit organizations, and opportunities to streamline for efficiency and cost savings.
 - iii. Use of leased and/or owned office/facilities.
 - iv. A review of how data and information technologies is used within the department to help inform and address the needs of the whole child and whole family.

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