

PROGRAMMATIC AUDIT OF LA COUNTY DCFS

Chapin Hall Final Report Summary to the Commission for
Children and Families

APRIL 17, 2023

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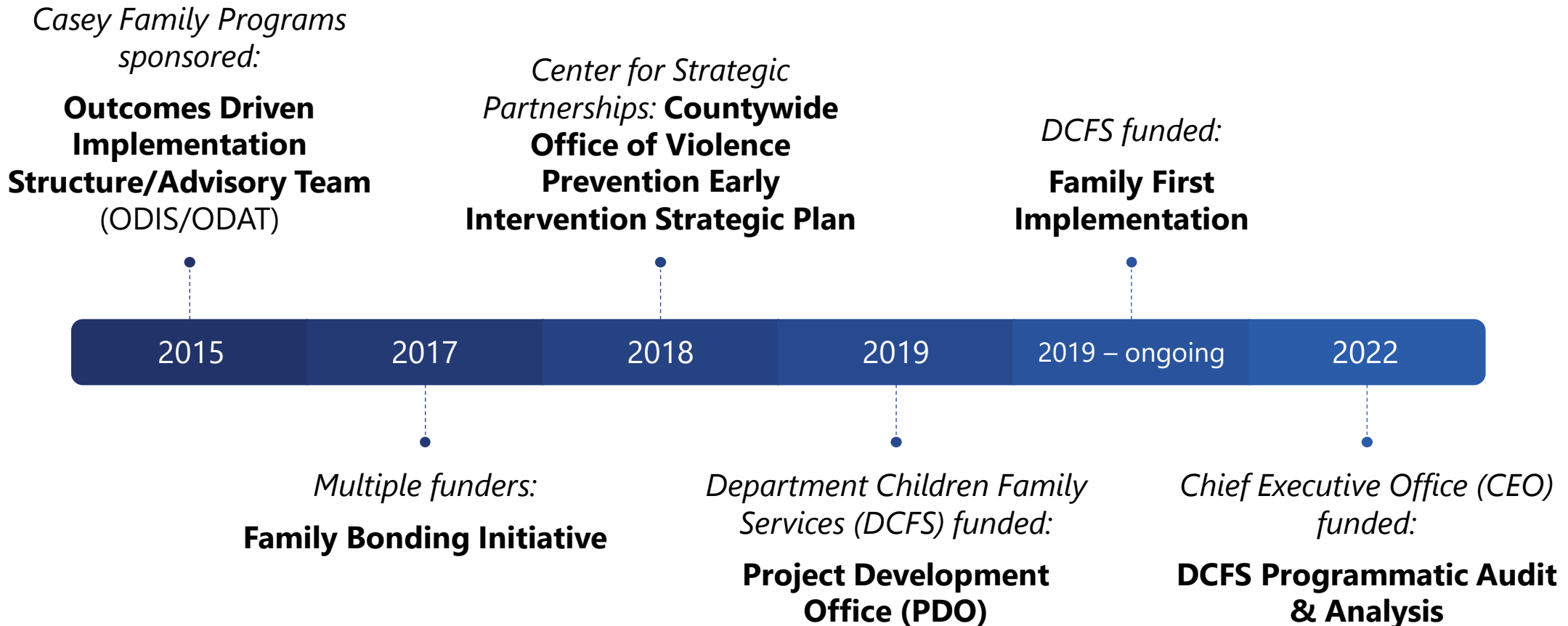


Connecting Research to Action

Chapin Hall provides rigorous research and achievable solutions to improve the lives of children, youth, and families.

PARTNERSHIP WITH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

2015-2022



BOARD MOTION

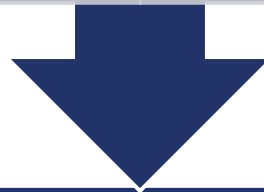
January 25, 2022

BOARD MOTION

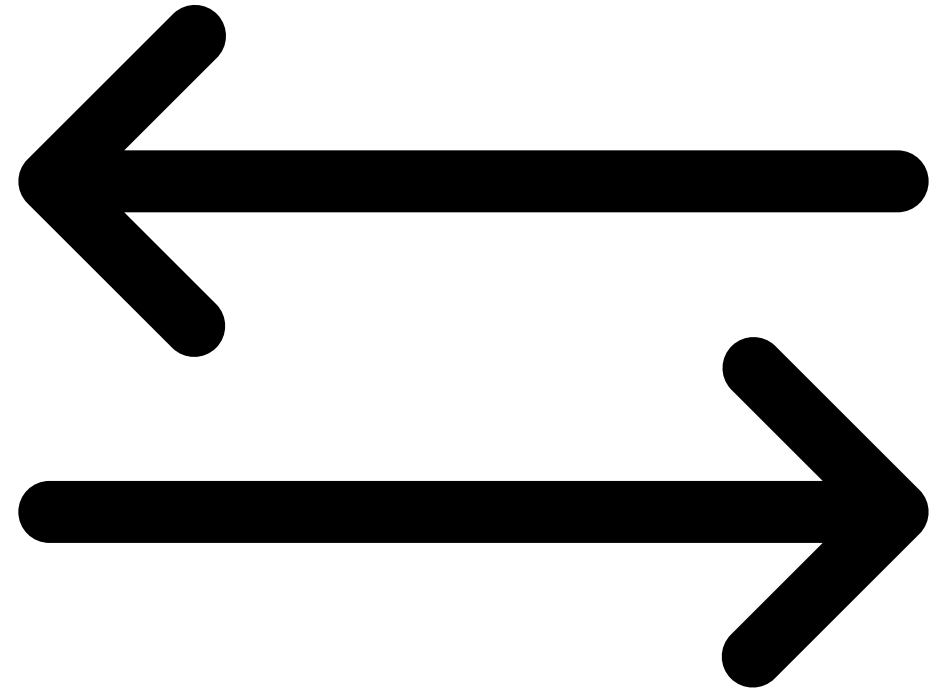
DCFS is embarking on a new phase:

Change in senior leadership

Implementing Family First, new fiscal opportunity and greater emphasis on prevention programming



Given these changes, opportune time for Board of Supervisors (Board) to **assess DCFS and provide an inventory and landscape in this new phase**



REQUIREMENTS & METHODOLOGY

PROGRAMMATIC AUDIT METHODOLOGY

KEY ACTIVITIES



In-person meeting to identify strategic priorities & outcomes with TurningWest and CEO



**Chief
Executive
Office.**

PROGRAMMATIC AUDIT METHODOLOGY

KEY ACTIVITIES



Review Relevant Reports and Previous Audit Recommendations

Reports and Audits Analyzed

1. *Final Report of the Los Angeles County Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection 2014*
2. *California State Auditor Report 2018*
3. *Department of Children and Families Review 2010*
4. *2012 DCFS Strategic Plan and Proposed Reorganization*
5. *Examining County Organizational Structures to Improve the Lives of Angelenos 2019*
6. *Optimization of Los Angeles County's Workforce and Economic Development Systems 2019*
7. *Reimagining Safety, Health, and Human Services for the County's Children and Families 2021*
8. *Office of Child Protection Strategic Plan 2016-2026*
9. *Office of Child Protection Progress Update 2022*
10. *Office of Child Protection Submission of Early Care and Education Landscape Analysis 2019*
11. *Paving the Road to Safety for Our Children: A Prevention Plan for Los Angeles County 2017*
12. *Strengthening Families Approach in Los Angeles County*

PROGRAMMATIC AUDIT METHODOLOGY

KEY ACTIVITIES



Review Relevant Prevention Best Practice Literature

Child Welfare Best Practices for Prevention

1. Congregate Care Reductions & Prioritization of Family-like Placements
2. Prioritization of Relative Care
3. Equity-Driven Practice
4. Lived Expertise & Youth Empowerment
5. Workforce Investment
6. Research, Data, & Best Practice
7. Partnership & Collaboration

PROGRAMMATIC AUDIT METHODOLOGY

KEY ACTIVITIES



Conduct Listening Sessions with key DCFS Partners

Listening Session Participants

1. *Youth Commission*
2. *The Office of Child Protection*
3. *The Children and Families' Commission*
4. *The Department of Mental Health*
5. *The Department of Public Social Services*
6. *Probation*
7. *The Prevention Services Taskforce*
8. *The Department of Child Support Services*



PROGRAMMATIC AUDIT METHODOLOGY

KEY ACTIVITIES



Facilitate Staffing Interviews with DCFS Units, Sections, and Divisions

Interview with Identified Unit/Division/Section

DI Regional Unit Completion of REDCap Survey

Review of Reports or Program Requests

Staffing Interviews

1. Adoptions Division
2. Medical Case Management Section
3. Dependency Investigations Unit
4. Multi-Agency Response Team Unit

PROGRAMMATIC AUDIT METHODOLOGY

KEY ACTIVITIES



Develop a Comprehensive Programmatic Audit for ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-TWO DCFS Programs, Pilots, and Initiatives

Obtained and Combine Existing Programmatic Inventories

Refined/Updated Programmatic Inventory

Designed and Disseminated Qualtrics Survey

Analyzed Survey Results

Motion Required Data Elements

- Short- and Long-Term Purpose
- # of Employees
- Hierarchy of Reporting Structure
- # of Children/Families Served
- Community Engagement
- Budget Implications
- Detail on Outcome Data

Sorted Categories

- Elevate
- Sustain
- Consider Streamlining
- Need More Information
- Unable to Assess



FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION #1

DEVELOP A WELL-BEING CONTINUUM THAT ALIGNS WITH THE FAMILY FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFORM DCFS

FINDING: To successfully prevent maltreatment and cultivate positive community outcomes, Los Angeles County DCFS must **work with partners across the county** to **promote** the health and well-being of its children and families.



FINDING/RECOMMENDATION #2

EFFECTIVELY MANAGE THE WELL-BEING CONTINUUM

FINDING: To better prioritize and effectively implement these efforts, DCFS should reinvigorate the Outcomes Driven Advisory Team (ODAT) and Project Development Office (PDO) to manage and sustain the well-being continuum.

Outcomes Driven Advisory Team (ODAT)

- DCFS managers tasked with reviewing and recommending initiatives/programs/pilots for inclusion into the project management portfolio

Project Development Office (PDO)

- PDO ensures alignment of initiatives and implements project management best practices across the department's programs

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION #3

CREATE AN OFFICE OF PREVENTION SERVICES



FINDING: The Department should create an **Office of Prevention Services** to house all promotion and prevention-related programs, pilots, and initiatives to inform a coherent strategic direction in partnership with the Director. Currently they are spread out across multiple deputies.

This Office should be charged with:

- Implementing the state required Comprehensive Prevention Plan (CPP),
- Building collaborations with cross-system partners,
- Streamlining programs,
- Securing needed funding investments, and
- Creating and enhancing data management systems, CQI and other needed infrastructure support.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS BY FRAMEWORK

#4

FRAMEWORKS FOR ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. Child Welfare Best Practice Framework
- II. Staffing Framework
- III. Programmatic Framework
- IV. Time-oriented Framework

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION #4

I. CHILD WELFARE BEST PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

FINDING: Key Child Welfare Prevention Trends	Recommendations
Congregate Care Reduction & Prioritization of Relative Care and Family-Like Placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure an equitable number of staff are assigned to Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) case decisions relative to out-of-home residential placement decisions• Expand Upfront Family Finding (UFF) countywide
Equity-Driven Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better leverage the Office of Equity (OOE)• Develop clear outcomes and metrics for the Eliminating Racial Disproportionalities and Disparities (ERDD) Initiative
Lived-Expertise & Youth Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand opportunities within case planning for youth to have enhanced decision-making• Provide intentional DCFS mentorship to Youth Commissioners
Workforce Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure programs are adequately staffed with multilingual CSWs• Comprehensive review of Integrated Core Practice Model for alignment with prevention-oriented system• Build DCFS staff understanding of trauma-informed practice

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION #4

I. CHILD WELFARE BEST PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

<u>FINDING:</u> Key Child Welfare Prevention Trend	Recommendations
Research, Data, & Best Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invest in building the evidence of the 'Culture Brokers' program• Seek additional information regarding DCFS role in the administration of the 'Effective Black Parenting' intervention• Improve project management capacity• Improve data collection and utilizations• Improve IT and tracking systems across programs (specifically for Dependency Investigations Unit and Adoption Division)• Ensure new initiatives align with data and demonstrated need• Leverage the Project Development Office (PDO) and the Outcomes Driven Advisory Team (ODAT) to track DCFS programs, pilots, and initiatives• Follow all implementation stages for priority initiatives before investing in new initiatives

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION #4

I. CHILD WELFARE BEST PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

FINDING: Key Child Welfare Prevention Trend	Recommendations
Partnership and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve partnerships with community-based organizations• Share responsibility for child and family well-being with partners and the community• Increase external awareness of DCFS services and programs• Better utilization of the DCFS-DPSS Linkages Program• Include the Child Support Services Department in the Risk Stratification Pilot• Partner with the Department of Youth Development (DYD) for promotion and prevention efforts• Streamline contracting process• Enhance economic and concrete supports for the Family Preservation (FP) Program• Explore and embrace a community pathway for prevention services• Utilize the DCFS Helpline for Family First community pathway implementation

STAFFING FRAMEWORK

- Adoptions Division
- Medical Case Management Section (MCMS)
- Dependency Investigations Unit (DI)
- Multi-Agency Response Team (MART)

FINDINGS #4

II. STAFFING FRAMEWORK

Cross-Cutting Needs

- Build support staff into Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Yardstick and union negotiations
- Differentiate CSW titles to allow for variation in MOU Yardstick
- Develop Incentives for staff serving as primary role on case
- Allocate primary and secondary staff positions for Regional Administrators (RAs)
- Ensure all units have effective data management systems

RECOMMENDATION #4

II. STAFFING FRAMEWORK

Adoptions Division

- Assign Additional BIS Staff to Adoptions Division to Finalize AIMS System
- Differentiate All Positions within Adoptions Division for More Accurate Union Negotiation
- Increase Adoptions Division Staffing
- Increase Central Clerical Staff Section



RECOMMENDATION #4

II. STAFFING FRAMEWORK

Medical Case Management Section (MCMS)

- Differentiate MCMS CSWs from other CSWs
- Incentives to Remain CSWs and SCSWs for MCMS
- Expand Role of Public Health Nurses
- Assign Visitation Administrator to MCMS



RECOMMENDATION #4

II. STAFFING FRAMEWORK

Dependency Investigations Unit (DI)

- Allocate BIS Resources to Improve DI Tracking Report (SITE)
- Allocate Support Staff to all Dependency Investigations Units
- Allocate one DI CSW to Each Specialized Unit



RECOMMENDATION #4

II. STAFFING FRAMEWORK

Multi-Agency Response Team (MART)

- Hire Vacant CSA2 Position to Support ARA
- Develop Swing Shift to Facilitate Enhanced Scheduling Regularity
- Differentiate MART Unit CSWs from other CSWs
- Monitor MART Unit Staffing



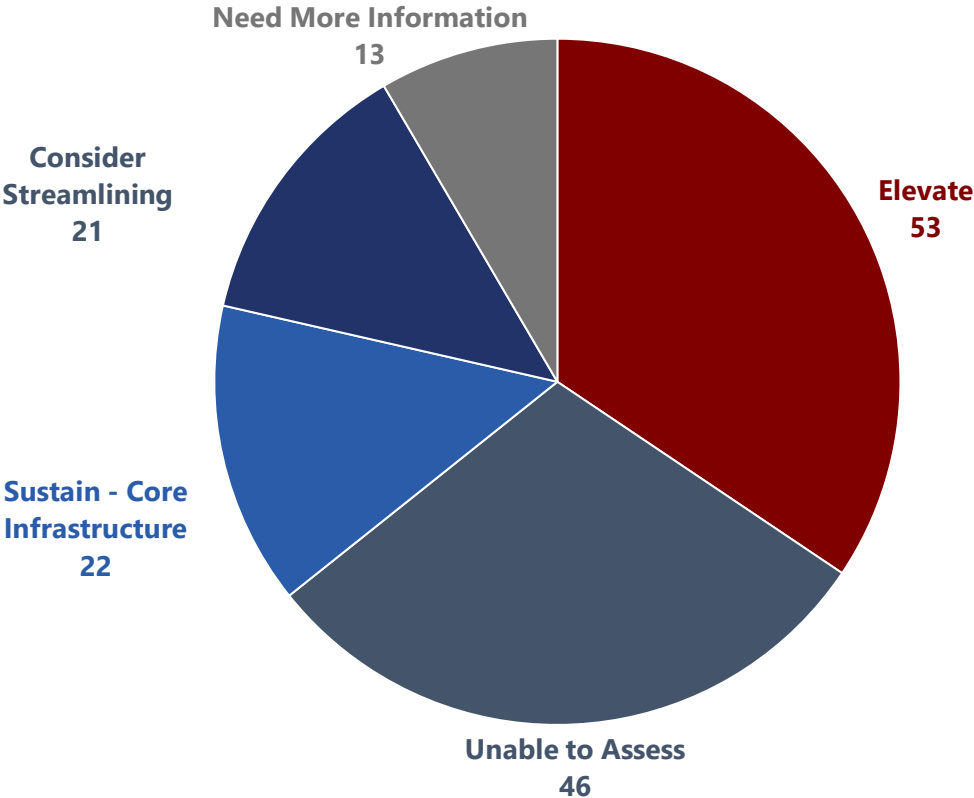
PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK

- Elevate
- Sustain
- Consider Streamlining
- Need More Information
- Unable to Assess

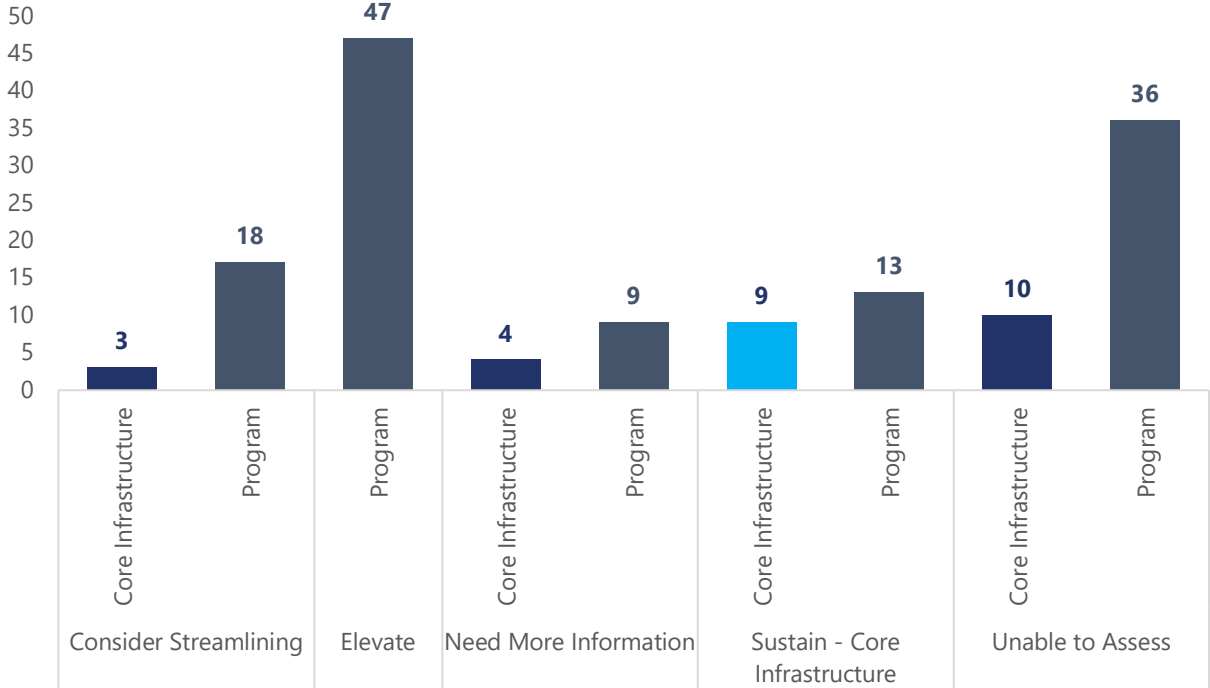
FINDINGS #4

III. PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK

Total Programs, Pilots, and Initiatives



Program vs. Core Infrastructure



RECOMMENDATION #4

III. PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK - PROGRAMS TO ELEVATE

Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention (CAPIT)	Community Prevention Linkages (CPL)	Countywide Youth Bridges Program also known as Philip L. Browning Youth Worker Program	CPH and DMH Partnership for Prevention	Cultural Brokers/ERDD Champions	DMH Expansion Program	Family Preservation Program
Joe Torre Safe at Home (Margaret's Place)	Medical Hubs	Multidisciplinary Assessment Teams (MAT)	Partnership for Families (PFF)	Prevention and Aftercare Services	Campership Program	Child Family Team Meeting - SB1, 2, 3, & 4
Coordinated Services Action Teams (CSAT)	DCFS Child Care Program	Education Specialist Services Program	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) School Transportation Pilot Program	Family Bonding Program	Family First Prevention Services Act	LGBTQ+ Tailored Services to Youth Program
Linkages	Mentoring Leadership Project/New Worker Mentoring Program	Parents in Partnerships (PIPs)	Psychiatric Hospital Discharge Planning	Qualified Individual Assessments/Interagency Placement Committee Screenings	Special Immigrant Status Unit	Substance Use Disorder-Trauma-Informed Parent Support (SUD-TIPS) Program
			Supportive Therapeutic Options Program (STOP)	Faith-Based Program		

RECOMMENDATION #4

III. PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK - CORE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUSTAIN

Child Abuse Career
Development Programs

Child and Adolescent
Needs and Strengths
Tool (CANS)

Commercial Sexual
Exploitation of Children
(CSEC) - First Responders
Protocol (FRP)

Contract Monitoring
Reporting System
(CMRS)

Faith-Based Community
Visitation Centers -
Metro North

Faith-Based Community
Visitation Centers - SB3
Lancaster

Faith-Based Community
Visitation Centers - SB3
Palmdale

Faith-Based Community
Visitation Centers - SB4
Glendora

New Incident Tracking
system (iTrack) and
Application

Urine Sample Collection
for Drug and Alcohol
Testing Services

Weekly Emergency
Placement Meeting

Academic Interns
Program

County Welfare
Directors' Association of
California (CWDA)

Regional Community
Alliance - SB1, 2, 3, & 4

Southern California CA
CWDA

Veteran's Intern Program

Volunteer Program

RECOMMENDATION #4

III. PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK - PROGRAMS TO CONSIDER STREAMLINING

Programs focused on permanency, stability, and meeting the needs of children and resource parents whether traditional or relative

Permanency Partners Program (P3) - Up Front Family Finding (UFF);
Connect our Kids;
Level of Care;
Relative Support Services;
Foster Together Network;
Raise A Child;
UCLA TIES for Families;
Family Urgent Response System for Caregivers or Children and Youth (FURS);
Adoption Promotion and Support Services Program (APSS);
Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children

Oversight: 5 Deputy Directors oversee these 10 programs

Opportunities: The combined budget for five of these programs is over \$41M, the rest reportedly have no budget, three are underspent, one is overspent. Only three programs identified a data management system supporting decision-making and four programs identified a need for additional staff.

Recommendation: Streamlining and housing all of these programs under one deputy director could optimize funds, staff, and address infrastructure needs of these programs allowing DCFS to better attend to the stability of placements for youth in care.

RECOMMENDATION #4

III. PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK - PROGRAMS TO CONSIDER STREAMLINING

Programs to reduce Black children from entering foster care

ERDD Emergency Response Panel Reviews/ER Referral Reviews;
Four Disciplines of Execution (4DX);
Blind Removal Pilot Program

Description: All three of these programs are focused on reducing Black children from entering foster care. This is vital endeavor for the Department to commit to, but it may be more successful with a more targeted effort.

Opportunities: Two of the three programs are pilots. Only one pilot has a data management system and outcomes measures. All three programs are understaffed considering the number of children/families being engaged.

Recommendation: Review the outcomes data for the three separate initiatives and consider sunsetting two of them. Staff could be redistributed to the sustained program to potentially address the staffing needs.

RECOMMENDATION #4

III. PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK - PROGRAMS TO CONSIDER STREAMLINING

Programs seeking placements for youth

Placement Support Division;
Youth Permanency Units - SB2 Santa Clarita, SB2 Metro North, & SB4 Pomona;
Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) for Youth with Serious Emotional and Behavioral Needs;
Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) for Children with Special Health Care Needs (SHCN) Program;
Community Treatment Facility

Opportunity: The Community Treatment Facilities budget is underspent and could be leveraged to help monitor the placement array and outcomes.

Recommendation: The Placement Support Division's focus is to locate placements and works seven days a week. Consider collapsing the five remaining programs responsible for locating placements for youth as additional needs arise (e.g., three Youth Permanency Units, the two Intensive Services Foster Care programs, and Community Treatment Facilities) under the Placement Support Division.

RECOMMENDATION #4

III. PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK - PROGRAMS TO CONSIDER STREAMLINING

Programs addressing need of vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls

Expectant and Parenting Youth (EPY) Conferences;
CSEC Advocacy Services Program Contracts;
Women and Girls Program

Opportunity: The EPY program and CSEC program both address needs of vulnerable populations. While young men and boys will also benefit from the services and should remain a priority for EPY and CSEC, the primary population served is young women. The Women and Girls Program is about promoting well-being of young woman and reducing risk factors that make girls vulnerable to trafficking and reduce the number of pregnant and parent

Recommendation: Consider placing all three programs under one deputy director and streamlining efforts. Currently the three programs are spread across three deputies.

RECOMMENDATION #4

III. PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK - NEED MORE INFORMATION & UNABLE TO ASSESS

Need More Information

There were **13** total programs or core infrastructure for which additional information is required to complete an assessment. Nine of these 13 are programs, and 4 are core infrastructure (two learning collaboratives and two workgroups).

Unable to Assess

There were **46** total programs or core infrastructure for which no survey was completed, and no further assessment was possible. 29 of those are programs, 7 are pilot programs, 10 are core infrastructure (seven workgroups, two committees, and one multi-disciplinary team).

Recommendation: Chapin Hall recommends that the PDO collect all missing data elements and categorize each program or core infrastructure into the following categories: elevate, sustain, streamline or sunset.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY TIMEFRAME

- 90 Days
- One Year
- Five Years

RECOMMENDATION #4

IV. TIME-ORIENTED FRAMEWORK

90 Days Timeframe Recommendations

- PDO should partner with program leads to gather missing information for 'needs more information' and 'unable to assess' categories, identify measures and outcomes, and refine recommendations as needed
- Leadership must re-convene Outcomes Driven Advisory Team (ODAT); review updated inventory; discuss all future proposed initiatives/pilots/programs; ensure measures and outcomes are clearly articulated; and make recommendations to Executive Team



RECOMMENDATION #4

IV. TIME-ORIENTED FRAMEWORK

1 Year Timeframe Recommendations

- DCFS should convene all Deputy Directors and Program Leads for each program identified in “streamlined category”, determine which programs can be combined and/or sunset, and consider re-assigning all to one Deputy Director.
- DCFS should establish an Office of Prevention Services (OPS) and align all “promotion and prevention” programs under one Deputy Director.

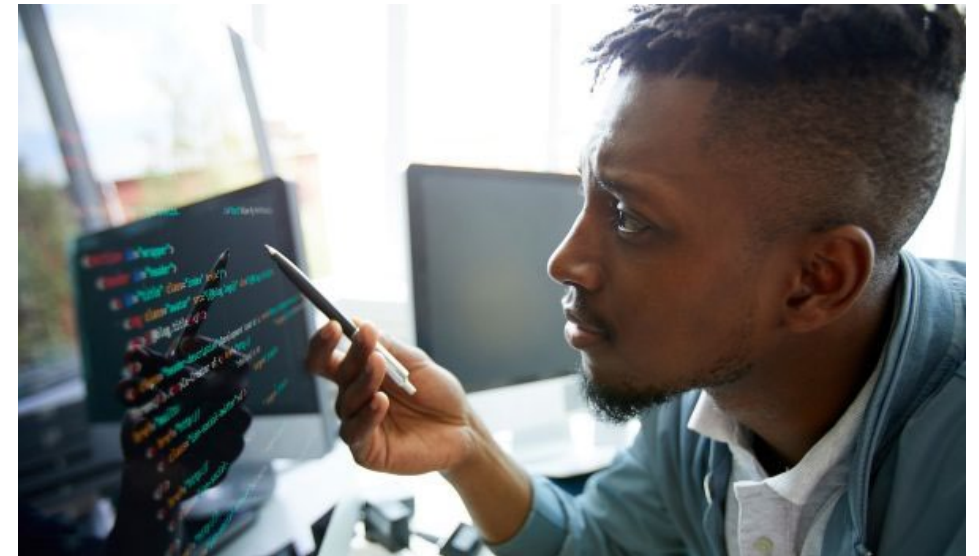


RECOMMENDATION #4

IV. TIME-ORIENTED FRAMEWORK

5 Years Timeframe Recommendations

- PDO and ODAT must partner with BIS to develop or enhance an existing data management system to capture all program measures and outcomes to inform decision-making to sustain or sunset overtime.



Questions/Discussion

THANK YOU

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