



DeAnna Avey-Motikeit
Director

Mission Statement

Children's Services protects endangered children, preserves and strengthens their families, and develops alternative family settings. Services as mandated by law and regulation, will be provided in the least intrusive manner with a family centered focus. This mission is accomplished in collaboration with the family, a wide variety of public and private agencies and members of the community.



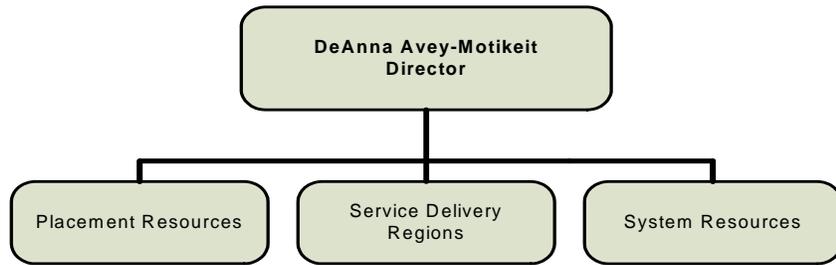
GOALS

REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO ENTER FOSTER CARE EACH YEAR

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FOSTER YOUTH GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL OR EQUIVALENCY

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR SERVICES

The Department of Children's Services (DCS) is a collection of programs aimed at reducing the occurrence of child abuse and neglect in San Bernardino County. The primary goal of these programs is maintaining families whenever possible. When not possible, the secondary goal is to provide the best permanent plan for the child removed from his or her caretaker. To accomplish the mission of DCS, a wide variety of services are offered. Child Protective Services is the program with the highest visibility, with the goal of prevention of abuse to minors and the protection of those abused.

Other DCS programs include:

- Emergency Response (ER): investigates allegations of child abuse and neglect and makes immediate plans to ensure the safety of endangered children. This is often the "front door" for clients entering the Child Welfare System.
- Family Maintenance (FM): builds on families' strengths and helps to remove barriers so children can remain safely at home.
- Family Reunification (FR): works to make the family environment a safe one so children can return home.
- Permanency Planning (PP): ensures that children who are unable to live safely with their birth families can grow up in a safe and secure permanent living arrangement.
- Foster Parent Recruitment and Training, along with Foster Home Licensing: maintains and creates out-of-home placement resource options throughout the county.
- Adoptions: performs assessments of adoptive families and matches children with permanent families when their birth families are no longer an option.
- Independent Living Program: assists youth in successfully transitioning out of the foster care system.

2007-08 SUMMARY OF BUDGET UNITS

	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Local Cost</u>	<u>Staffing</u>
Children's Services	96,079,026	83,282,479	12,796,547	816.0

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

GOAL 1: REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO ENTER FOSTER CARE EACH YEAR

Objective A: Continue implementation of Family-to-Family and other practices that reduce the number of children who must enter foster care.

MEASUREMENT	2005-06 Actual	2006-07 Actual	2007-08 Target	2007-08 Estimate	2008-09 Target
1A. Annual percentage reduction in the number of children entering foster care.	N/A	1.5%	1%	1%	1%

Status

Until recently, the department's child welfare services practice could be described as "traditional". In those situations where allegations alleging abuse or neglect were found to be substantiated, a significant number of the children involved were placed in the foster care system. As part of the recent adoption of a "best practices" service delivery approach that values a family centered, strength-based and community-based approach to protecting children and strengthening families, the department became the 14th Family to Family (F2F) County in California in 2004. F2F encourages the reduction of the number and rate of children placed away from their birth families and seeks to keep children in close proximity to their birth family, school, friends, community activities, and church if placement is required. Team Decision Making (TDM) is one of the F2F processes that encourages a reduction in the placement of children out of their home by bringing together family members, community people, and the social worker to look at alternatives to out of home placement and ensure a network of support for children and the people who support them. This shift in service delivery philosophy has begun to show tangible results. For example, the number of children who entered foster care has begun to decrease, reflecting the department's efforts to encourage alternative plans to protect children other than placement in a foster home. This decline is anticipated to continue as the tenets of the new initiatives such as F2F become more in-grained in the department's culture and practices.

Previous DCS business plans included a different Goal #1: Percentage increase in the number of adoptions. The previous goal was selected during the initial Business Plan process because adoption is one of the permanency options available to children who are not able to safely reunify with their families of origin. It was also consistent with the department's Self-Improvement Plan approved by the Board of Supervisors in June 2006. Over the past two years the number of adoption finalizations has remained relatively stable. During the same time period the number of children in placement (and thus potentially adoptable) has decreased. Because of this continuing shift in practice that began a few years ago with implementation of the Family-to-Family approach and other "front end" strategies, the department anticipates the decrease in the number of children in placement to continue. While locating an adoptive family for every child who has been permanently removed from their birth family will always remain a critical goal by the department, continuing to include this goal in the Business Plan would not be a fair measurement of the department's effectiveness and efficiency.

2006-07 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ❖ Received and assessed child abuse referrals on 54,079 children
- ❖ Received NACo awards for Educational Supportive Services & court orientation videos
- ❖ Implemented a pilot transitional housing-plus program
- ❖ Finalized 434 adoptions and recruited 48 foster/resource family homes to reflect Family to Family
- ❖ Retrieved over 200 educational records for foster youth
- ❖ Provided Wraparound services to 186 children countywide to decrease group home placements
- ❖ Opened a Kinship Center in Fontana and expanded services in Adelanto for Desert region
- ❖ Arranged for 1,198 children to attend summer camp
- ❖ Provided college scholarships to 56 youth in excess of \$96,000
- ❖ Licensed 147 new foster family homes



GOAL 2: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FOSTER CHILDREN IN THE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM THAT EARN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR G.E.D.

Objective A: Continue implementation of a system to identify and track the performance of child welfare dependents on the High School Equivalency (Exit) exam.

Objective B: Secure/implement customized tutoring programs designed to address needs of exiting youth.

Objective C: Refer and ensure linkage to tutoring services for Juniors and Seniors experiencing difficulty passing the Proficiency exam.

MEASUREMENT	2005-06 Actual	2006-07 Actual	2007-08 Target	2007-08 Estimate	2008-09 Target
2A. Percentage increase in foster youth graduating with a high school diploma or G.E.D.	N/A	3%	3%	3%	3%

Status

Foster children exiting the Child Welfare System have received greater attention at the national, state and county levels. Statistics indicate 46% of foster youth do not complete high school, compared to 16% in the general population. Of these exiting out, 33% are below grade level in reading, writing and math; 26% have a history of repeating a grade in Middle or high school. Obviously, concern also exists as to how foster youth will perform on a structured high school exit exam. Therefore, the department continues to focus on taking steps to provide maximum support to foster youth to enhance their chances of succeeding on the examination and improving the likelihood of further successful endeavors in the Business Plan.

The department remains committed to improving outcomes for youth who exit the Child Welfare Services System. As proof, Educational Liaisons were hired in December 2006. They are responsible for assisting foster youth in successfully navigating their educational experience by working with both the student and the student's teachers to achieve improved academic performance. Additionally, the department's Director has either recently visited or has scheduled a visit to each regional office to inform staff of her personal commitment to the Independent Living Program and of her expectation that staff must also share her value that youth exiting the system must have a real opportunity to experience a successful adulthood. At a minimum, either a high school diploma or a G.E.D. enhances their opportunities to achieve success.

The department has chosen "engaging transitional age youth" as its focus topic for the upcoming Peer Quality Case Review occurring in March 2008. This review will capture promising practices, which enhance a youth's success in the transition to adulthood.

The department determined during the current Business Plan process the data supplied by the State of California and used the past few years to determine the number of youth who graduated from High School or obtained a G.E.D. is faulty. The department continues to pursue the purchase of a reliable identification and tracking system to help provide increased Independent Living Program services to eligible youth and reliable data for reporting and planning purposes. Without waiting for the completion of this purchase, the department in cooperation with the HS Legislative and Research Division has embarked on a full audit of cases involving youth who have transitioned out of the Child Welfare System. The purpose of this audit is to provide accurate data, which cannot be obtained by any other source. This audit will be ongoing until a reliable and adequate monitoring system is purchased.

2008-09 REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL GENERAL FUND FINANCING (POLICY ITEMS), INCLUDING NEW CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) PROJECTS, OR BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT (BPI) RESERVE FUNDS

The department is not requesting any additional general fund financing for 2008-09.

2008-09 PROPOSED FEE ADJUSTMENTS

The department is not requesting any proposed fee adjustments for 2008-09.

If there are questions about this business plan, please contact Chuck Bruington, Program Specialist II, at (909) 388-0242.