County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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September 28, 2012

Dear Stakeholder:

I am pleased to provide you with the attached Strategic Plan, which will guide the efforts of the Department of Children and Family Services over the next three to five years. This plan has been developed over a period of time and has included extensive input from our community partners and other stakeholders as well as staff throughout the Department. As the Department moves forward, it is important to understand that the Strategic Plan is a living document; it will be revised as objectives are completed, and new objectives will be added when appropriate.

I hope that you will take the time to review our plan and see that the Department will be working towards our Vision that "Children thrive in safe families and supportive communities," with three overarching Goals (Emphasize Child Centered Practices, Pursue Workforce Excellence and Strengthen Organizational Operations), 12 strategies and 50 objectives. In the very near future, I will be soliciting participation from across the Department for small teams, under Executive Team sponsorship, to develop action plans to implement each of our 50 objectives. Our Office of Strategy Management will be tracking the implementation of our plan as we move forward.

I would like to thank our Department's partners for assisting us as we move forward. I am confident that with your support, we will successfully implement our Strategic Plan and improve the lives of children and families in Los Angeles County.

Sincerely,

Philip L. Browning
Director

Attachment

PLB:pwd

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
STRATEGIC PLAN

Vision:

Children thrive in safe families and supportive communities.

Mission:

By 2015, DCFS will practice a uniform service delivery model that measurably improves:

- Child safety
- Permanency
- Access to effective and caring services

Values:

Cultural Sensitivity: We acknowledge, respect, value, and understand the importance of cultural diversity in all aspects of child welfare practice.

Leadership: We engage, motivate, and inspire others to collaboratively achieve common goals through example, vision, and commitment.

Accountability: We accept responsibility for our actions, behavior, and results.

Integrity: We are honest, forthcoming, and transparent, always acting in accordance with the highest ethical standards and values.

Responsiveness: We take needed action in a timely manner.

GOAL I: EMPHASIZE CHILD CENTERED PRACTICES

Provide children with both integrated assessments and planning that promote the safety, permanency and well-being of children under our supervision.

GOAL II: PURSUE WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE

Ensure and support a well-trained, high performing workforce capable of quality decision making.

GOAL III: STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS AND SYSTEMS

Ensure an organization where all components operate as an integrative and supportive system.

GOAL I: EMPHASIZE CHILD CENTERED PRACTICES: Provide children with both integrated assessments and planning that promote the safety, permanency and well-being of children under our supervision.

STRATEGY I.1, DCFS Practice Model: Implement one model of practice to better integrate services for children and families throughout our communities.

OBJECTIVES

I.1.1 By December 2014, implement the Core Practice Model department-wide.

I.1.2 By December 2014, implement coaching and mentoring department-wide.

I.1.3 By December 2013, expand and enhance existing prevention/aftercare services to reduce the number of children and youth entering, re-entering and/or experiencing extended associations with the County's health and human services systems.

I.1.4 By September 2013, implement department-wide plan to reduce racial disparity and disproportionality for African American children.

I.1.5 By July 2013, increase "Reunification within 12 Months" from 64.5% to 70%.

I.1.6 By July 2013, reduce "ER Over 30" rate to 5% over the State average rate.

I.1.7 By December 2013, implement the countywide self sufficiency plan, coordinating DCFS efforts to better serve Transitional Age Youth (TAY) with the wide array of programs and initiatives run by allied departments.

I.1.8 By September 2013, reduce the number of youth crossing over from DCFS to Probation by 15%.

I.1.9 By July 2013, reduce court ordered sanctions by 50% through use of improved report writing and automation.

STRATEGY I.2, Placement Service Capacity: Develop high quality and responsive placement resources for children in out-of-home care.

OBJECTIVES

I.2.1 By July 2014, have a comprehensive, real-time database system for placement resource openings that staff can easily navigate.

I.2.2 By December 2013, recruit an additional 10% of qualified, committed and dedicated foster homes in proportion to the needs of each community; and provide these caregivers with training designed to promote child safety and address the needs of abused and neglected children.

I.2.3 By September 2013, enhance monitoring/oversight of Foster Family Agencies (FFA), licensed foster homes and other out-of-home providers by coordination with CSWs.

I.2.4 By July 2013, establish 300 certified Treatment Foster Care (TFC) beds and place children in these beds.

I.2.5 By December 2013, modify group home and FFA contracts to make them time and resource responsive to all levels of child care and placement of DCFS children.

I.2.6 By December 2012, create 30-day assessment beds with currently contracted group home providers.

I.2.7 By July 2013, for those youth requiring out of home care, increase initial placements with relatives by 20%.

STRATEGY I.3, Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP): Return ERCP to its core mission of providing comprehensive and responsive after hours operations that effectively provide protective services to children.

OBJECTIVES

I.3.1 By December 2012, develop a feasibility report regarding decentralizing ERCP into regional operations through equitable distribution of staff among each office and execute the delivery of services through each regional office.

I.3.2 By July 2013, determine and implement operational and resource efficiencies by completing a business process re-engineering of Hotline, Emergency Response Command Post and Emergency Response Operations.

STRATEGY I.4, Concurrent Planning: Shorten timelines to permanency for children by simultaneously planning both safe family reunification and alternative legal permanence.

OBJECTIVES

I.4.1 By July 2014, Child and Family teams (CFT) will create a plan that addresses permanency options for every child/family by the 3rd month of case opening.

I.4.2 By December 2013, ensure relevant contracted services include outcomes which assist and support shortened timelines to permanence.

I.4.3 By December 2013, reduce the percentage of youth in care three years or longer by 10%.

I.4.4 By July 2013, increase the percentage of children adopted within 24 months from 24.2% to 28%.

STRATEGY I.5, Partnerships & Collaborations: Foster effective and caring community service programs on behalf of children and families.

OBJECTIVES

I.5.1 By July 2013, each office will develop and implement community visitation centers, including those provided through faith-based organizations, that offer a safe, supportive and family-friendly environment for families to maintain a family bond.

I.5.2 By December 2012, explore the use of Resource Centers appropriate to each geographical area to support families and prevent entry into the system.

I.5.3 By December 2012, each regional office will have a community advisory body, including representatives of involved faith-based organizations, to develop a resource matrix and network to provide differential response services, teenage socialization, parenting, and visitation centers for DCFS children and families.

I.5.4 By July 2013, implement the Parents in Partnership Program in each office to offer support and mentoring to parents whose children have been placed in out-of-home care and assist with reunification.

I.5.5 By July 2013, develop an outreach and training model for communities and partners that increases their ability to provide services that improve safety, permanency and well-being of children and families and monitor the provision of these services to assure efficacy.

I.5.6 By December 2013, develop an outreach, training and performance measurement model for all DCFS-contracted community based services. This will include a monitoring system, quality improvement strategies, and learning communities among contracted providers and regional staff to improve safety, permanency and well-being.

I.5.7 By December 2012, expand the Foster Youth Education Program to all five Supervisorial Districts.

GOAL II: PURSUE WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE Ensure and support a well-trained, high performing workforce capable of quality decision making.

STRATEGY II.1, Caseload/Workload Management: Establish equitable caseloads and manageable workloads that permit quality social work.

OBJECTIVES

II.1.1 By December 2012, complete a Caseload Equity Analysis and seek approval from the Board of Supervisors, Union and Chief Executive Office.

II.1.2 By July 2013, achieve a 3% reduction in the number of employees on Leaves of Absence (LOA) by implementing enhancements to the Department's Return to Work (RTW) programs such as quarterly RTW Coordinators' Meetings and an educational campaign about the RTW program.

II.1.3 By December 2013, develop a plan for targeted hiring of staff with a 3-year commitment for offices which are understaffed and provide incentives for current staff.

STRATEGY II.2, Job/Role Expectations: Develop, maintain, and monitor clear expectations for each job at every staffing level.

OBJECTIVES

II.2.1 By July 2014, develop a personnel handbook which clearly describes job responsibilities for all field personnel.

II.2.2 By December 2013, develop expectations for job performance by establishing clear standards for all staff.

STRATEGY II.3, Human Resource Management: Formulate and implement a comprehensive approach for the recruitment, selection, development, and performance evaluation of employees.

OBJECTIVES

II.3.1 By December 2012, conduct an organizational and training needs assessment to identify an initial set of training programs for helping employees develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet current and future job expectations.

II.3.2 By July 2013, working with the Inter-University Consortium, establish an educational program that delivers a foundational experience for each new hire.

II.3.3 By December 2013, develop ongoing training curriculum for front line workers; programmatic and administrative staff; supervisors and managers; and providers.

II.3.4 By July 2014, revise the performance evaluation system so that it includes clear standards for employees, accountability, and performance metrics

II.3.5 By December 2012, implement Internal Affairs/Performance Management Process Coordination.

GOAL III: STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS AND SYSTEMS: Ensure an organization where all components operate as an integrative and supportive system.

STRATEGY III.1, Data-driven Strategic Plan Management: Use objective data to measure, provide feedback, publicize, and continuously improve performance.

OBJECTIVES

III.1.1 By December 2014, consolidate all current data reports (dashboard, the SITE, SafeMeasures, etc.) to one comprehensive report that allows for drill down to CSW level.
III.1.2 By December 2014, streamline how existing data reports are accessed (i.e., COGNOS, the SITE, SafeMeasures, UR) into one congruent, comprehensive, user friendly location that can be accessed by ONE password.

STRATEGY III.2, Technology Integration: Invest in technology to increase the entire organization's efficiency.

OBJECTIVES

III.2.1 By December 2012, conduct an organization-wide technology needs assessment and identify funding required to implement its recommendations.

III.2.2 By July 2013, ensure that all case carrying/line staff and their supervisors have the technology tools needed to do their job efficiently.

STRATEGY III.3, Policy Review and Consolidation: Adopt a body of policy which meets legal and operational requirements and is easy to access and understand.

OBJECTIVES

III.3.1 By July 2014, develop and implement a new Policy Manual that both distinguishes policy from procedure and best practice, and also reduces the current volume of policies.

III.3.2 By July 2014, ensure revised policy manual is in compliance with all federal and state regulations.
III.3.3 By September 2013, establish an accessible, online, web- based system that makes it simple and easy to retrieve policy, search for key words, and allow policy to be reviewed.

STRATEGY III.4, Departmental Structure: Establish an organizational design and accompanying work systems highly capable of meeting the needs of children and families.

OBJECTIVES

III.4.1 By December 2012, develop and begin implementing a new DCFS Re-Organized Management Structure to maximize performance.
III.4.2 By December 2012, as part of the Re-Organized Management Structure's implementation, redeploy resources to meet caseload equity goals.
III.4.3 By September 2013, establish effective coordination and teaming with Public Health Nurses.
III.4.4 By July 2013, secure a Title IV-E Waiver for Los Angeles County with favorable conditions.