



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\***

## Los Angeles County to Take Part in National Effort to Reimagine Child Welfare

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services announced today that it has been selected among three other jurisdictions – Denver, Nebraska and South Carolina – to take part in a national effort intended to revolutionize child welfare systems.

The architects of the endeavor – the U.S. Children’s Bureau, Casey Family Programs, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Prevent Child Abuse America – envision an evolution of current systems, often characterized as reactive, to future models focused on preventing abuse and neglect, strengthening families and building resiliency.

Known as “Thriving Families, Safer Children,” the effort will unify the public, private and philanthropic sectors to assist jurisdictions in creating organizations that advance justice and equity for children and families. Los Angeles County’s participation is in partnership with the California Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Social Services.

DCFS Director Bobby D. Cagle thanked the selection committee and said the timing of “Thriving Families” coincides with DCFS’ roll out of [Invest LA](#), a five-year strategic plan unveiled earlier this year. Invest LA – an organizational framework that upholds a culture of safety, equity and community – prioritizes superior service delivery, workforce excellence, and community and cross-sector partnerships in order to strengthen families and optimize outcomes for children.

“I am thrilled that DCFS has been selected to be among the agencies leading the charge to transform child welfare as we know it,” Director Cagle said. “This paradigm shift is long overdue. As children’s social workers, most of us have spent our entire careers working to cultivate a child well-being community where families connect, heal and become whole. This effort is paving the way for just that and we are wholeheartedly committed.”



“Thriving Families” is a multi-year effort that will help participating jurisdictions move from traditional, reactive child protection systems to models designed to proactively support child and family well-being and prevent child maltreatment and unnecessary family separation.

The effort is comprised of three tiers of action:

- Tier One – Select jurisdictions will serve as demonstration sites, collaborating with “Thriving Families” partners for intensive technical support and resources to help realize their goal of creating child and family well-being systems.
- Tier Two – The effort will partner with jurisdictions to focus on policy and systemic reforms at the state, tribal or territorial level.
- Tier Three – “Thriving Families” partners will share lessons learned to help inform and inspire other jurisdictions in launching their own journeys in building child well-being systems.

Tier One work will soon begin in California (Los Angeles County), Colorado, Nebraska and South Carolina. Tier Two jurisdictions will subsequently be identified and invited to participate.

“Thriving Families” seeks to demonstrate that intentional, coordinated investment in a full continuum of prevention and robust community-based networks of support promotes overall child and family well-being, equity and other positive outcomes for children and families. The effort is rooted in the recognition that all families need help sometimes and that seeking help is a sign of strength and resiliency. The challenges of the global coronavirus pandemic have underscored the urgency to create new child well-being systems.

Participating jurisdictions will partner with diverse community stakeholders – most importantly families with lived expertise – to discern and develop the supports, resources, culturally-relevant services and approaches to meet the unique needs of their families and promote the conditions to help them thrive.

“Every child deserves a safe, stable and permanent family and all families deserve the opportunities and supports to raise their children safely and successfully in their own homes, communities and cultures,” said Dr. William C. Bell, president and CEO of Casey Family Programs. “This important effort will demonstrate how all sectors of a community can work together to reallocate resources into equitable, hope-inspiring services and supports that reduce the need for foster care and improve the well-being of children and families across the nation.”

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### About the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

The Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) promotes child safety and well-being by partnering with communities to strengthen families, keeping children at home whenever possible, and connecting them with stable, loving homes in times of need. As the largest child protective services agency in the nation, DCFS is responsible for ensuring the safety of more than two million children across 88 diverse cities in Los Angeles County. Established in 1984 to keep children safe and support families in crisis, it is one of the 35 Los Angeles County Departments governed by the five-member Board of Supervisors with nearly 9,000 staff across 20 regional offices, specialized bureaus, and administration that cover a broad array of services and programs. The department is led by Director Bobby D. Cagle - a former foster child and longtime social worker. For more information, visit <http://dcfs.lacounty.gov>.