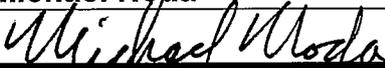


SIP Cover Sheet

California's Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan	
County:	Siskiyou
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	Siskiyou County Human Services Children's Protective Services
Period of Plan:	January 2008 to December 2010
Period of Outcomes Data:	July, August, September 2008, 3 rd quarter October, November, December 2008, 4 th quarter
Date Submitted:	June 19, 2009
County Contact Person for County System Improvement Plan	
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Submitted by each agency for the children under its care	
Submitted by:	Siskiyou County Director of Human Services
Name:	Michael Noda
Signature:	
Submitted by:	Siskiyou County Interim Chief Probation Officer
Name:	Todd Heie
Signature:	

SISKIYOU COUNTY SIP UPDATE

June 19, 2009

Introduction

The Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan update is a report of the progress our Child Welfare Program has made since the September 2008 adoption of our triennial California Child and Family Services Review Self Assessment and System Improvement Plan. Our Department has systematically addressed the implementation of our SIP despite the unanticipated change in our nation's economic condition. The current national economic depression has had a reverse multiplier effect on our California economy, our county's local economy and our community's well being. In a span of three months our local economy has experienced a dramatic crash with continuing aftershocks that have far reaching social consequences yet to be fully realized. For May 2009, Siskiyou County is ranked 47th out of the 58 California counties in unemployment with a rate of 15.7%. Public assistance applications and caseloads have increased by 30% since the October downturn and our County has had to initiate layoffs across every county department to address our reduced revenue. Our Workforce Investment center employment services activity has doubled since November 2008; previously we were serving 900 persons per month we are now serving over 2,000 per month. The clientele coming into our Department are now from the middle class economic segment of our community indicating the depth of our local economic recession. Siskiyou County is a designated demographic "frontier area" with its inherent economic and social barriers and the current national depression has only aggravated our deficiencies. It is well documented that poverty has a direct relationship to children's well being and our county will unfortunately experience the additional negative impacts of this factor.

Our Child Welfare program has been directly affected by the economic crisis by forcing us to implement a two position hiring freeze that began January 1, 2009. We have recently extended this freeze through the 2010 fiscal year due to continuing budget reductions. This amounts to a 15% cut to our Child Welfare program staff critically impacting our ability to manage case loads on top of the additional system changes we are addressing. In addition, we have two social worker staff vacancies that put our workforce down 30%, further exacerbating our problem. Given the small county staffing difficulties we have documented in our September 2008 Self Assessment our challenge is now even greater with this economic recession. We are forced to prioritize our work demands between families in crisis and administrative requirements.

The Probation Department is primarily funded with General Fund dollars and state allocations which continue to be unstable and subject to uncertain reductions. The state FY 09/10 significantly restructures the manner in which the state funds local public safety programs. We have already seen reductions upwards of 10% in our intervention program funds which currently provide juvenile drug court, intensive supervision, electronic monitoring and other services directly related to our re-entry programs for youth returning to the community from residential programs. On a positive note the department employs a dedicated licensed clinician at 24 hours per week to work with at-risk probation youth and wards before and after they complete a residential program. The funding for this position comes from the Youthful Offender Block Grant which is protected in statute. Due to the uncertainty of the budget it is possible the department, which has already given up one probation officer position and one juvenile correctional officer position this year, will be forced to eliminate another probation officer which will greatly affect the size of caseloads and subsequently the level of intervention and services

provided to at risk probation youth. The placement officer continues to meet with each ward in placement monthly and discuss their individual case plan. It is hoped that S.B. 933 funding will continue to allow this very important contact to occur.

All of the current reductions are in the context of California's continuing budget uncertainties and political difficulties. As this report is being written it is not clear how the ongoing state budget drama is going to unfold. It is with this uncertainty that we cautiously report on our current progress not knowing to what extent the looming reductions will have on our ability to complete our plan.

Siskiyou County Child Welfare SIP

In addition to our CCSFR requirements and plan, our Department fully supports implementing the principles and recommendations of the California Blue Ribbon Commission and our local Juvenile Court system directives. These influences are an integral part of our SIP plan and Child Welfare system evolution. It cannot be emphasized enough though, how significant the economic climate has complicated the operation of our program and implementation of our SIP plan. With this overall perspective as a context to our SIP implementation it is our strategy to reprioritize our plan given our economic environment. Early on we began addressing Plan #1 as our top priority, timely social worker visits and timely response to referrals. Plan #2, youth emancipating from foster care and transitioning into adulthood, was strongly supported by our stakeholders and had significant community energy behind it for implementation. Plan #3, ensure children receive adequate services, is driven by our community stakeholders and our court system partners. Plan #4, is additionally a goal of both our local Blue Ribbon Commission and our Juvenile Court system. Many aspects of both Plan #1 and Plan #2 have already been completed, and Plan #3 has been an ongoing challenge that our program stakeholders are continually addressing. Plan #4 has taken on a priority for our Department in that we have tied its goals to several grant opportunities we have identified. The capture of these grants will have a two fold impact for our program, not only will it address our concurrent planning development, but it will also fund our two vacant frozen positions and address the impacts of our county economic deficits.

The grant we are applying for is a Department of Health and Human Services grant offered under the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. Its purpose is to provide support to implement family finding and family conferencing programs. We have applied for this grant to enable us to fully fund these two activities which are key to our Plan #4 concurrent planning goal. It will also allow us to fill our two vacancies to implement the grant. In addressing this strategy we have arranged for grant writing training for our staff and stakeholders, community collaborative meetings to develop the grant plan, and a funding plan to support the grant. This strategy has become a priority because of the instability of the funding that we are experiencing in our Child Welfare programs, its importance in our SIP, and how it compliments our commitment to the Blue Ribbon Commission goals and our Juvenile Court partners.

As the rest of this update will identify, significant progress has been made in addressing each of our SIP goals. Our commitment is that despite our current economic crisis and the operational barriers we are dealing with we will continue to progress in the completion of our SIP plan and most importantly in improving our system services to our community.

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June 19, 2009

System Improvement Plan #1
Protect Children From Abuse and Neglect:

Outcome/Systemic Factor:	Improvement Goals:	Strategy:	Milestones:	Update:
Protect Children From Abuse and Neglect – Timely Social Worker Visits with Child.	Increase the percentage of timely social worker visits with child within 6 months.	Improve the data entry process for accurate face to face visitation documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop protocols for data entry. • Provide staff training. • Monitor data entry related to timely social worker visit. 	<i>In September 2008 our CWS staff was trained in the use of the Safe Measures data tracking tool and received consultant assistance in fully implementing its utilization. Our CWS/CMS input practices were evaluated and recommendations made to correct errors and improve input accuracy.</i>
		Provide tools and processes to proactively address barriers to data entry and practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design reports capable of assisting workers in achieving compliance. • Develop protocols for supervisor monitoring of monthly visit status. 	<i>See above comments. Supervisors now use Safe Measures in their individual staff conferences to track casework activities.</i>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and track to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement. • Develop management resources and evaluation processes to increase accountability throughout the system. 	<p><i>A procedure was developed for Supervisor review of Social Worker case work activity using the Safe Measures tool.</i></p> <p><i>The Program Manager has Safe Measures access and monitors program performance.</i></p>
	Develop Family Visitation Center	Develop onsite parenting and family support services. Use visitation center for transitioning youth services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research appropriate parenting programs and curriculum for the visitation center. • Implement parenting program for visitation center. • Research appropriate curriculum and life skills programs for youth. • Implement life skills programs for youth 	<p><i>In March 2009 we met with a local FFA, Remi Vista, Inc., and discussed the potential to develop a Family Visitation Center. Although Remi Vista expressed interest in the project the Visitation Center is not a high priority at this time. Our Department is still planning to obtain community support for this project.</i></p>

SISKIYOU COUNTY SIP UDATE
June 19, 2009

System Improvement Plan #2
Prepare Youth Emancipating From Foster Care and Transitioning Into Adulthood:

Outcome/Systemic Factor:	Improvement Goals:	Strategy:	Milestones:	Update:
<p>Prepare youth emancipating from foster care and transitioning into adulthood</p>	<p>Provide a system of services to assist youth in transitioning out of foster care.</p>	<p>Implement the THP and THP Plus Program for minimum of 6 youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist vendors in program development. • Certify homes for THP & THP Plus. • Implement Program and begin placing youth. 	<p><i>In December 2008 we contracted for consulting services to complete our Department plan to implement the THP Plus program. In implementing this plan we selected to contract with a community based organization to provide the THP Plus services for foster youth. A bidder's conference was held, an RFP issued, and in May 2009 selection was made for Remi Vista, Inc. to provide our THP Plus program. They have subsequently been certified as our provider and have begun the youth selection and</i></p>

				<i>placement process. As of June 1, 2009 our THP Plus program is operational.</i>
		Coordinate Enhanced ILP Services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select curriculum • Collaborate with community partners. • Implement Programs. 	<i>Our ILP program works in collaboration with our Siskiyou County Office of Education and our local California Youth Connection Chapter. In cooperation they have developed an enhanced program using two youth conferences and additional youth activities. We have decided our curriculum is sufficient and have added activity enhancements along with a connection to our Employment Services One Stop and our THP Plus provider. (Refer to comments on our Youth Summit goal).</i>
		Coordinate with community Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with other youth 	<i>June 2009, Workforce Investment Center one</i>

		<p>Employment programs to provide a work services program for foster youth as part of the THP & THP Plus Programs.</p>	<p>employment programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Job Coaching support services are available. • Ensure job sites for youth with community collaborators and foster youth are placed in jobs. 	<p><i>stop employment services has used ARRA stimulus funding to implement a summer youth employment program that our ILP youth are participating in.</i></p>
		<p>Plan a Youth Summit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with other youth programs by attending the statewide CYC Conference. • Plan summit with help from State CYC, local CYC chapter, ILP social worker, and UC Davis. • Hold Youth Summit. 	<p><i>In August 2008 we sent three foster youth and two staff sponsors to the CYC conference in San Diego, CA. Our local CYC chapter has been an active participant in the SIP process and planning the youth conferences we have developed. We hold two annual youth conferences, one a lunch that our Juvenile Court Judge sponsors in the fall and one that the Human Services Department sponsors in the spring. This past</i></p>

			<p><i>year both were highly successful. The Court sponsored youth lunch was held in October 2008 and the youth conference was held in April 2009. A highlight of the April conference was a concert by the rock band "Transfer" of San Diego. They worked individually with the youth in a workshop then performed a private concert for the group at a local coffee house.</i></p>
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SISKIYOU COUNTY SIP UPDATE

June 19, 2009

System Improvement Plan #3

Ensure Children Receive Adequate Services to Meet Physical and Mental Health Needs:

Outcome/Systemic Factor:	Improvement Goals:	Strategy:	Milestones:	Update:
<p>Families and children will be provided with appropriate intensive mental health and drug and alcohol services to ameliorate the effects of abuse and neglect. Reduce reoccurrence of mal treatment</p>	<p>Provide an enhanced system of family therapy treatment services for children and families in the CWS system.</p>	<p>Work collaboratively with community in assessing and developing enhanced family treatment services for children and families in the child welfare system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Juvenile Court Judge's work group to address the development of enhanced family treatment services. • Implement the product of the workgroup to provide enhanced family treatment services 	<p><i>In December 2008 the Department attended both the Blue Ribbon Commission's 1st Annual meeting and the Beyond the Bench Conference. Subsequently the county has initiated a local Blue Ribbon Commission and implemented a service strategy recommendation developed out of the local work. As a result a procedure was implemented for referrals to Behavioral Health to be made immediately after the Juvenile court hearing thus facilitating the engagement of families into the service system.</i></p>

				<i>This plan was implemented in January 2009.</i>
	Provide an enhanced system of drug and alcohol treatment services for children and families in the CWS system.	Work collaboratively with community in assessing and developing countywide drug and alcohol services.		<i>The Siskiyou County Community Services Council has formulated a community stakeholder workgroup to develop a strategic plan to address the enhancement of drug and alcohol services in the county. The group has been meeting for 12 months and a plan has been developed. The Human Services Department has been a key participant in this process. The stakeholder planning meetings are monthly. Two community training conferences have been provided to assist in the planning process, one by Dr. Alex Stalcup on integrated intensive treatment, and one on youth asset development.</i>
		Participate in community stakeholder process to develop a strategic plan to enhance the drug and alcohol treatment system.		
		Implement the product of the workgroup to		<i>Workgroups have been established out of the</i>

		<p>provide enhanced drug and alcohol treatment services</p>	<p><i>Community Services Council and four key areas of planning have been initiated: prevention, intervention, integrated community based systems, and treatment. The stakeholders' meeting is also used as a forum to discuss and formulate community policy around emerging issues. Topics addressed have been: a social host drinking ordinance, licensing local medical marijuana dispensaries, drug testing of youth at the local high school, and a medical pain medication drug protocol.</i></p>
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System Improvement Plan #4
Provide Children Permanency and Stability In Their Living Situation:

Outcome/Systemic Factor:	Improvement Goals:	Strategy:	Milestones:	Update:
Provide children permanency and stability in their living situation.	Develop and implement concurrent planning program that is amenable and workable for all parties in the dependency system	Develop and implement concurrent planning for children in foster care that is amenable and workable for all parties in the dependency system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with the Dependency Court Judge to discuss the process needed to complete the implementation of the concurrent planning program. • Arrange for training. • Implement process. • Review for challenges and successful operation of process. • Implement changes if needed. 	<p><i>Our Department hired a consultant to assist in the concurrent planning component of our SIP. The consultant met with our Juvenile Court Judge and developed a plan to provide an extensive one day workshop on concurrent planning to all of our child welfare community stakeholders. UC Davis was contacted to facilitate the training and with the courts support all child welfare attorneys and stakeholders were requested to attend and a juvenile court “dark day” was declared. The training was held on</i></p>

				<p><i>October 27, 2008; Honorable Len Edwards of the Center for Families, Children & the Courts was one of the esteemed trainers. As a result of the concurrent planning training, the Blue Ribbon Commission, Beyond the Bench, and our Dependency Court Stakeholders group, we began the process to evolve our system into utilizing family finding and family conferencing as a standard of practice. The implementation has been difficult due to our lack of staffing so the opportunity to pursue grant funding to support this activity is critical.</i></p>
	<p>Evaluate the feasibility of implementing programs to facilitate the effective establishment of permanency for</p>	<p>Examine and evaluate best practices for assisting placement of foster children in permanent placements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will research and evaluate programs such as Family Finding and Designated 	<p><i>After a research and review process that included the concurrent planning training, the Department has</i></p>

	children.		<p>Relinquishments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a program is selected it may be implemented within the current year utilizing Child Welfare Services Outcome Improvement Project Funds. 	<p><i>developed a strategy to pursue grant funding opportunities to augment our CWS program and complement our concurrent planning activities. To implement this strategy we are in the process of applying for a federal grant to develop a family finding component and a family conferencing component into our CWS program. Our initial effort will be to apply for the Department of Health and Human Services grant offered under the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. Its purpose is to provide support to implement family finding and family conferencing programs. These two components will assist us in addressing our concurrent planning goals.</i></p>
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Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan Update Signoff:

Michael Noda

Michael Noda, Director of Human Services

Date *July 9, 2009*

Todd Heie

Todd Heie, Interim Chief Probation Officer

Date *7/9/09*