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Children & Family Services Division Office of Child Abuse Prevention

THE LINKAGES PROJECT

CalWORKs and Child Welfare collaborate to improve outcomes

The Linkages Project (Linkages) was implemented in 2000 and developed and directed by the California Center for Research on Women and Children, in partnership with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). The Stuart Foundation provided funding for the initial four-year initiative to develop a coordinated services approach between CalWORKs (California's version of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families-TANF) and Child Welfare Services programs. In California, most counties include a significant number of children and families involved in both the CalWORKs and Child Welfare Services systems. Parents or caretakers must navigate between two different systems, which often have conflicting requirements and timeframes. Linkages improves the services coordination and case planning, prevents duplication of efforts, and maximizes funding and resources to better serve clients accessing both systems.

In 2006, California was awarded a five year federal grant to continue, further enhance, and evaluate Linkages in the existing counties and to expand it to other counties. The CDSS contracted with the Child and Family Policy Institute of California (CFPIC) to provide coordination, training, and technical assistance. As part of the federal grant, a formal statewide evaluation of the Linkages demonstration project was conducted by Harder + Co. The evaluation team designed and conducted a longitudinal prospective study using surveys with county staff, case studies in three counties, and analysis of secondary indicator data collected by Linkages counties serving TANF and child welfare clients. Also during this grant period, an on-line toolkit was created that serves as the main sustainability tool for expanding the Linkages practice in the existing Linkages counties, and is available for counties and other states interested in duplicating the practice.

The federal grant funding Linkages ended on September 30, 2011. However, a request to the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to carry over unused federal funds was approved, extending funding through September 30, 2012. The CDSS is continuing to contract with the CFPIC to support the Linkages practice with the goal of embedding it as part of practice statewide.

For further information, please visit the Linkages web site at
http://www.cfpic.org/linkages/linkages_001.htm.

LINKAGE COUNTIES

(April, 2012)

Pioneer Counties 2002 (Phase I)	Came on board in 2004 & 2005 (Phase II)	New counties under federal grant 2007 (Phase III)
Alameda Del Norte Merced Orange San Luis Obispo Santa Barbara Sonoma Stanislaus Tehama Yolo	Contra Costa Fresno Humboldt Kern Los Angeles Madera Siskiyou Sutter Trinity	El Dorado Imperial Santa Clara Shasta Tulare