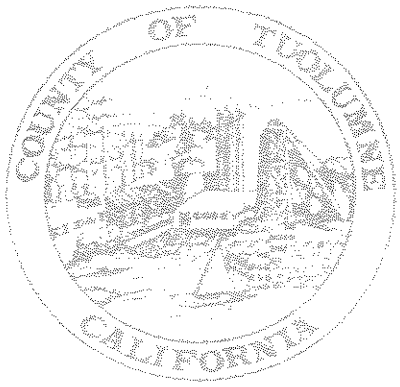
TUOLUMNE COUNTY

SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

California's Child and Family Services Review



October 2007

SIP Cover Sheet

California's Child and Family Services Review
System Improvement Plan

County:	**Tuolumne**
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	Child Welfare Services
Period of Plan:	**11/01/2007-10/31/10**
Period of Outcomes Data:	**Quarter ending July 31, 2007**
Date Submitted:	**October 23, 2007**
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Submitted by each agency for the children under its care	
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Submitted by:	**County Chief Probation Officer**
Name:	**Shirlee Juhl**
Signature:	Shirlee Juhl

Mark V. Thornton

Mark V. Thornton, Chair of the Board of Supervisors

December 20, 2007
Date

Alicia Jamar

Alicia L. Jamar, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

December 20, 2007
Date

I hereby certify that according to the provisions of Government Code Section 25103, delivery of this document has been made. 11/20/07

ALICIA L. JAMAR
Clerk of the Board

By: Alicia Jamar

CALIFORNIA CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW (C-CFSR)
TUOLUMNE COUNTY SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN
CHILD WELFARE SERVICES AND PROBATION

In 2001, California enacted AB636 as the Child Welfare Services Improvement and Accountability Act of 2001. As part of this Act and California's Program Improvement Plan (PIP), all 58 counties are required to participate in the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR). The C-CFSR was created to measure outcomes for safety, permanency and child/family well-being. This statewide accountability system, which went into effect January 1, 2004, is an enhanced version of the federal oversight system mandated by Congress and used to monitor states' performance while holding county and state agencies accountable for the outcomes achieved. Probation Departments are also required to participate in this process. Tuolumne County Probation Department and Child Welfare Services (CWS) continue to work closely and have chosen to complete joint assessments addressing the uniqueness of each agency.

The System Improvement Plan (SIP) is the third and final component of the C-CFSR. The SIP occurs on a three year cycle with annual updates due to the California State Department of Social Services (CDSS). The SIP is considered an operational agreement between the County and State outlining how the County will improve its system of care for children, youth and families; and forms an important part of the system for reporting on progress toward meeting agreed upon improvement goals using the C-CFSR outcomes and indicators. The C-CFSR consists of the County Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR), the County Self-Assessment, and the County System Improvement Plan (SIP).

Tuolumne County completed its first PQCR on October 25, 2006. As part of our PQCR process, Probation and CWS chose to include a parent focus group to ensure feedback from families who have been consumers of our services. In addition, on May 24, 2007, Probation and CWS held a forum for stakeholders to disseminate the PQCR findings and to allow for further input. Tuolumne County completed the County Self-Assessment in July, 2007, with input from public and private agencies that play a role in the lives of children and families, as well as from the families who were currently receiving services or had received services in the past.

The SIP focuses on outcomes. Data outcomes are provided by the State on a quarterly basis and are based on information entered into the statewide electronic case management system: Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS). Data from the Probation Department is also utilized. Each area identified by the County that will be addressed in the SIP, will have a plan which includes milestones, timeframes, assignment, and proposed improvement goals for the County to achieve.

Tuolumne County Probation and CWS have chosen to focus on four areas for improvement:

- Recurrence of Maltreatment (CWS)
- Placement Stability--Recruitment, Training, and Support of Foster Homes (CWS/Probation)
- Youth Emancipating from Foster Care are Prepared to Transition to Adulthood (CWS/Probation)
- Family Engagement and Family Input in Case Planning (Probation)

Participants in Development of SIP/Local Planning Bodies

To develop the Tuolumne County System Improvement Plan, Probation and CWS reviewed input received through the Peer Quality Case Review and the Self-Assessment process. Input from collaborating agencies is integrated into the SIP through Improvement Goals, Strategies, and Milestones. In addition, Prevent Child Abuse Tuolumne County (PCATC), the local child abuse council, met and participated in the development of the milestones and strategies of each identified improvement goal.

Child Welfare Services participates on an on-going basis in the following collaborations with public and private agencies: Child Abuse Prevention Council, Death Review Team, Kids Interview Team (KIT), Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC), Dependency Drug Court, Perinatal Multi-Disciplinary Team (PMDT), Caring Connections, Tuolumne County Community Enforcement Team (TCCET), Drug Endangered Children (DEC), Interagency Resource Committee (IRC), YES Partnership, and School Attendance Review Board (SARB).

Probation participates on an on-going basis in the following collaborations with public and private agencies: Kids Interview Team (KIT), Interagency Resource Committee (IRC), YES Partnership, and School Attendance Review Board (SARB)

The Interagency Resource Committee is a Multi-Disciplinary Team comprised of members who represent public and private agencies and includes a representative from both Probation and CWS. This collaboration meets weekly and provides case management for families at risk, counseling, and home visits.

The Placement Oversight Committee is a partnership that allows CWS, Probation and Behavioral Health to problem-solve and make recommendations for services for children at risk of entering foster care or elevating to a higher level of care.

Findings that Support Qualitative Change

Through the results and findings from the Peer Quality Case Review and the Self Assessment process, input from collaborating agencies is integrated into the System Improvement Plan (SIP) through Improvement Goals, Strategies, and Milestones. Data from the Quarterly Outcome and Accountability County Data Reports provide the summary level Federal/State program measures and will be used to track county performance and progress on the goals outlined in the SIP.

Tuolumne County's Outcome Measures in the Data Reports for April, 2007 and July, 2007 indicate improvement in the area of "No Recurrence of Maltreatment". In the past year, Tuolumne County has implemented SDM, a risk and safety assessment tool, and Safe Measures, a case management tool. Utilization of the SDM tools by social workers should assist in ensuring families receive the services/resources they need to prevent recurrence of maltreatment. In addition, Tuolumne County is in the process of developing a formalized Differential Response Program that will allow an approach to ensuring child safety by expanding the ability of child welfare services to respond to reports of child abuse and neglect. Its focus will include a broader set of responses for working with families at the first signs of trouble, including innovative partnerships with community-based organizations that can help support families who are in need, before further problems develop. With Differential Response, social workers work with families to engage them in solutions and to provide focused services so that there is the best possible opportunity to make needed improvement and reduce the recurrence of maltreatment for the children in our community.

Another area of concern that affects permanency outcomes for foster children is recruitment, retention, training and support for foster parents and relative/approved homes. An improvement goal is to recruit and retain foster homes willing to take both probation and child welfare placements, and provide the necessary training and support for these homes. Tuolumne County has a shortage of foster homes willing to accept placement of all aged children, especially the ILP aged youth (16-18). Better communication and frequent interaction with foster parents to strengthen the "team" approach is another goal outlined in the SIP. In addition, obtaining a thorough assessment of needs for the child in out-of-home placement should assist in limiting the number of placements the child will experience.

Youth emancipating from foster care in Tuolumne County and prepared to transition to adulthood is an area of focus identified by both Probation and Child Welfare Services. Providing youth with a wide variety of experiences and opportunities, as well as providing intensive self-sufficiency training/classes are outlined in the strategies, milestones, and goals. The construction of the Emancipated Foster Youth Transitional House (anticipated to be completed in calendar year 2008) and implementing the State approved Transitional Housing Program for Emancipated Foster Youth (THP-Plus) is another improvement goal.

The THP-Plus is a transitional housing placement opportunity for emancipated foster youth, aged 18-24. The goal of the program is to provide a safe living environment while helping youth achieve self-sufficiency and life skills upon leaving the foster care support system. Support services include regular visits to the participant, educational/vocational guidance, employment counseling and assistance reaching emancipation goals outlined in the participant's case plan. Participants are eligible for up to 24 months of services in this program.

Tuolumne County Probation chose Family Engagement and Incorporating Family Input in Case Planning because this is an area relatively new to probation and the first step in ensuring children and families receive the appropriate services in order to reunify the family. The Probation Department is committed to working with the family to develop and provide services they see as beneficial. It is the department's belief that the family should be part of the decision making process and if they are involved in those decisions, they will "buy in" and be more successful.

Outcome/Systemic Factor:

Family Engagement and Incorporating Family Input in Case Planning (Probation)

County's Current Performance:
Tuolumne County Probation chose Family Engagement and Incorporating Family Input in Case Planning because this is an area relatively new to Probation and the first step in ensuring children and families receive the appropriate services in order to reunify the family. The Probation Department is committed to working with the family to develop and provide services they see as beneficial. It is the department's belief that the family should be part of the decision making process and if they are involved in those decisions, they will "buy in" and be more successful.

Improvement Goal 1.0
Case Plans are to be completed within 60 days with family input in case planning.

Strategy 1. 1	**Strategy Rationale**[1]
Within sixty calendar days of the initial removal of the child, or by the date of disposition.	Intake Probation Officers will implement a case plan based on the needs of the family, with their input, to guide the participants within a specified time frame to achieve a stable, secure and healthy environment.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.1.1 Within thirty calendar days of the initial removal of the child, the Intake Deputy Probation Officer shall complete an assessment and incorporate a case plan designed for that child and family.	11-01-07 and ongoing	Intake Deputy Probation Officer
1.1.2 The assigned Intake Officer shall meet with all family members within ten days to gather information for the case plan.	11-01-07 and ongoing	Intake Deputy Probation Officer
1.1.3 The Intake Officer will complete a case plan and family assessment for each child and parent for whom probation services are to be provided. This will include gathering and evaluating information relevant to the case situation and appraising case services needs.	11-01-07 and ongoing	Intake Deputy Probation Officer

[1] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

Strategy 1. 2 Intake Probation Officers will have knowledge of services available within the community to meet the needs of juvenile offenders and their families.	**Strategy Rationale** The Intake Probation Officer will be able to assist in decision making with the family to solve the issues behind the juvenile delinquent behavior in a supportive and stable manner.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.2.1. Intake officers will become familiar with local services by attending in-services training.	11-01-07 and ongoing	Division Manager Training Manager
1.2.2 Deputy Probation Officers will participate in forty hours of State mandated training in order to be aware of the needs of delinquent juveniles and their families.	11-01-07 and ongoing	Training Manager
1.2.3 Supervisors will monitor caseloads and review the services provided to the juvenile and their family to ensure their needs are being met.	11-01-07 and ongoing	Division Manager

Strategy 1. 3 Participate in Inter Agency Review Committee (IARC).	**Strategy Rationale** Method to obtain and share information, build relationships, network in order to provide the most effective services available in the community.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.3.1 Attend all IARC meetings.	11-01-7 and ongoing	Division Manager Deputy Probation Officers
1.3.2 Identify and refer at risk families through the Division Manager to IARC.	11-01-07 and ongoing	Deputy Probation Officer

Notes:

Improvement Goal 2.0
Complete the YLS/CMI Risk Assessment.

Strategy 2.1 Analyze assessment tool results to determine level of risk of juvenile.	**Strategy Rationale** The completion of an assessment will assist Deputy Probation Officers in determining the level of risk presented by each juvenile offender. By determining the risk, the safety of the community and the needs of the offender can be met.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
2.1.1 Receive specialized training in administering the YLS/CMI tool.	11-01-07 and ongoing	Training Manager
2.1.2 Assess all new intake cases and all existing supervision cases.	11-01-07 and ongoing	Intake Deputy Probation Officer
2.1.3 Review cases to ensure assessment compliance.	01-01-08 and ongoing	Division Manager

Strategy 2. 2	**Strategy Rationale**
Incorporate Family Decision Making into the initial case planning stage.	The combination of family strengths and community support can keep juvenile offenders from escalating within the system as well as providing a family-centered focus with the family and community support members in a non-adversarial environment.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
2.2.1 Family Decision Making Training will focus on Deputy Probation Officers incorporating the philosophy of families creating their own objectives and responsibilities of their case plan and possible placement options that are family-focused, culturally competent and safe.	11-01-07 and ongoing	Juvenile Family Services Therapist
2.2.2 Assigned Deputy Probation Officers, along with the Juvenile Family Services Therapist will facilitate Family Group Decision Making meetings.	11-01-07	Deputy Probation Officers Juvenile Family Services Therapist
2.2.3 Create policy and procedures and implement into department practice, as well as a plan created to document statistical measures of success.	11-01-07 – 06-01-08	Assistant Chief Probation Officer Juvenile Family Services Therapist

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.

The systemic changes will consist of a philosophical shift, from administration to line staff, in the emphasis on locating and maintaining contact with parents, family members, and friends of the juveniles we have in out of home placement. Far too often, juveniles who emancipate from the system at age eighteen, without a support system in place find themselves in the criminal justice system. This philosophical shift will ensure case plans are completed with accurate, up to date, support system information.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

There are a number of educational/training experiences already set up to meet improvement goals. They range from local community agencies, to State required annual Probation Officer training. Additionally, UC Davis continues to provide training in preparing case plans, family reunification, and placement issues.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. Community partners include Child Welfare, the Education System, and Kings View Behavioral Health. They continue to work with the Probation Officers in providing history, information, and services to the juvenile delinquent population.
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. Funding for services and staffing.

Outcome/Systemic Factor:

Safety Outcome, No Recurrence Of Maltreatment (S1.1) **(CWS)**

County's Current Performance:
This safety measure reflects the percentage of children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated child maltreatment allegation within the first 6 months of a specified time period for whom there was *no additional substantiated maltreatment allegation* during the subsequent 6 months. The denominator is the total number of children with a substantiated allegation during the first 6 months of the period; the numerator is the number of these children who had no other substantiated allegation in the following 6 months. Both the April, 2007, and July, 2007, Data Reports indicate Tuolumne County continues to improve in this area, but remains a focus and will be addressed in our SIP.

Improvement Goal 1.0
To improve performance for subsequent substantiated allegations and provide increased and early services to families.

Strategy 1. 1	**Strategy Rationale**[1]
Expand and Formalize Differential Response (DR) to Community Partners.	Currently CWS assigns Path 1 referrals to an Emergency Response worker who responds to the family offering services and explaining the visit is not an investigation. It is anticipated once Path 1 referrals are moved to a community based organization families will be more receptive to accepting services.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.1.1 Explore DR by visiting other counties who have successful programs and by researching variations of the program. Present findings of research and information gathered from other counties Program Manager.	9 months (06/01/07-03/31/08)	Social Workers Social Services Supervisors
1.1.2 Develop and advertise RFP for the Differential Response Program.	3 months (04/01/08 -06/30/08)	Social Services Supervisors CWS Program Manager Director, HSA County Counsel Analyst
1.1.3 Select DR provider(s), develop policy and procedures, and begin implementing program.	12 Months (07/01/08-06/31/09)	Social Services Supervisors CWS Program Manager Director, HSA

[1] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

Strategy 1. 2 Supervise the use of Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools for risk and safety assessments.	**Strategy Rationale** SDM was implemented in Tuolumne County in April, 2007. A process to assess social worker utilization of the SDM tools should help ensure social workers appropriately utilize SDM tools in an effort to reduce recurrence of maltreatment; and ensure families receive the services/resources they may need to prevent recurrence of maltreatment.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.2.1. Supervisors assess and monitor worker utilization of SDM tools.	05/01/07 – on-going	Social Services Supervisors Program Manager
1.2.2 Supervisors verify/review all referrals receiving a "high" or "very high" SDM score are offered services and/or referrals to appropriate community providers.	10/01/07 – on-going	Social Services Supervisors Program Manager
1.2.3 Supervisors communicate regularly to units and Program Manager regarding progress and successes with recurrence rates.	10/01/07 – on-going	Social Services Supervisors

Strategy 1. 3 Hold an "open house" for various community based organization/groups (i.e., schools, faith based, etc.) to explain SDM and DR.	**Strategy Rationale** SDM and DR are relatively new to our community. Providing information to the community will allow for a better understanding of the direction, goals, and services of CWS. It is hoped the community will begin to understand their role in keeping children safe and how their support will assist families in providing a safe and nurturing environment.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.3.1 Identify and compile list of community based organizations.	3 months (01/01/08 - 03/31/08)	Social Workers Social Services Supervisors
1.3.2 Prepare handouts and presentations tailored to each group (i.e., school stats).	3 months (04/01/08 – 06/30/08)	Social Workers Social Services Supervisors
1.3.3 Schedule a number of open houses and invite identified community based organizations, groups and partners to attend.	12 months (07/01/08 – 6/30/09)	Social Workers Social Services Supervisors

Notes:
Allowing the public a chance to tour Child Welfare Services and get a better understanding of SDM and DR should help alleviate the mystery of

what happens once a referral is made and how we serve the families of Tuolumne County. This should open further dialog with community members and make the protection of children a community effort.

Improvement Goal 2.0
Expand and Incorporate Family Group Decision Making.

Strategy 2.1 Receive specialized training in Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Conferencing.	**Strategy Rationale** Tuolumne County received CWSOIP funding in fiscal year 2006/2007 to implement a Family Group Decision Making program. The program was implemented and approximately ten FGDM meetings were held. These meetings were reported as successful and well received. Unfortunately, the coordinator left the agency and a new staff person will be taking over this role. All social workers who previously received training in FGDM are no longer with CWS.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
2.1.1 Research and attend training on the FGDM model which will incorporate the philosophy of families creating their own objectives and responsibilities of their case plan and possible placement options that are family-focused, culturally competent and safe.	6 months (11/01/07 – 05/31/08)	Social Workers Social Services Supervisors Program Manager
2.1.2 Identify a social worker(s) who will coordinate FGDM. The FGDM social worker will assess the social, cultural, economy and traditions of each family and arrange and invite members to attend the FGDM meeting.	12 months (11/01/07 – 10/31/08)	Social Workers Social Services Supervisors Program Manager
2.1.3 Create a document to capture statistical data to assess the impact of FGDM on recurrence of maltreatment.	12 months (11/01/07 – 10/31/08)	Social Workers Social Services Supervisors Program Manager

Strategy 2. 2 Provide follow-up to ensure families' needs are being met and FGDM case plans are being honored/followed.	**Strategy Rationale** It is important to provide follow-up to "at risk" families who have participated in the FGDM process to ensure their needs are being met; and to determine if further referrals and/or assistance is needed to ensure the safety and well-being of children in the home.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
2.2.1 Create a policy/practice to provide follow-up for families that participate in FGDM.	12 months (11/01/07 – 10/31/08)	Social Services Supervisors

	2.2.2 Train social workers and service providers on policy/procedure to provide follow-up for families that participate in FGDM.		3 months (11/01/08 - 02/28/09)		Social Services Supervisors
Strategy 2.3 Provide a parent "mentor" to work with families who have entered the Juvenile Court process.			**Strategy Rationale** Families who are experiencing Juvenile Court intervention may be more willing to listen to a parent who has successfully completed reunification. Often parents are too angry at the time of removal to hear what the social worker is telling them about the upcoming Court process.		
Milestone	**2.3.1** Explore and research counties who currently have successful parent partner or parent mentoring programs.	**Timeframe**	3 years (11/01/07 – 10/31/10)	**Assigned to**	Social Services Supervisors Program Manager Parents
	2.3.2 Identify and develop a Parent Partner/Mentor Program that meets the needs of the families served in Tuolumne County.		3 years (11/01/07-10/31/10)		Social Services Supervisors Program Manager Parents

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.
Achieving these goals will require strong collaboration between the county and service providers, broader community involvement, and shared responsibility for the protection of children.

The use of SDM assessment tools will identify those cases that are at risk for re-referral. Supervisors will need to assure these cases/referrals receive referrals to community services when appropriate and a Child Welfare Services intervention when warranted. Early intervention should assist families in obtaining services they need to prevent escalation of child abuse/neglect issues and further assist in strengthening the family unit.

The community and staff will need to recognize that often times parents who have gone through the Juvenile Court process are the best experts on what families need to provide a healthy, nurturing and safe environment for children. Opening the lines of communications with past consumers of services should allow CWS to tailor services to meet the needs of the families we serve in Tuolumne County.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.
UC Davis training "Understanding the Role of Foster Parents in Reunification".
Confidentiality training provided by County Counsel.
On-going training as identified by foster parents, child welfare services and probation staff.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.
It will be important to have all community partners that provide services to our families be included in our goals and processes. Common trainings will need to take place so all partners share the same goals and understanding of the work being done to assist the families we serve.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

- Increased funding to sustain Differential Response in the community.
- Funding to develop and maintain a Parent Partner Program.

Outcome/Systemic Factor:

Youth Emancipating from Foster Care are Prepared to Transition to Adulthood **(CWS and Probation)**

County's Current Performance:

Tuolumne County is fortunate to have a small number of youth in the Independent Living Program (ILP) which allows for one-on-one attention by the ILP Coordinator. The ILP Coordinator works closely with the foster youth of ILP age and occasionally younger youth, as well as providing an after care component for those youth who have exited the foster care system.

Presently CWS/Probation foster youth experience limited exposure to experiences outside of Tuolumne County including visiting college campuses, Job Corp, vocational schools, and the annual Teen Conference. ILP youth have access to monthly classes beginning in October and continuing through May. These classes usually cover topics such as job skills (i.e., resume writing, how to complete an application, etc), budgeting, cooking, housing, transportation, health and legal issues, etc.

Tuolumne County utilizes the Casey Life Skills Assessment to determine levels of need for each youth upon entrance into the Independent Living Program. Youth are again assessed at the time of emancipation to determine the knowledge and skills gained while participating in ILP.

During the 12-month reporting period of 10/01/2005-09/30/2006, 24 youth in our county were offered ILP services. Fifteen youth participated in services.

Tuolumne County has a shortage of housing that will accept young adults, especially without a co-signer. Housing costs are high and public transportation remains limited and cumbersome. Because of a lack of an identified support system emancipated youth experience even more difficulty finding suitable housing and transportation which can result in homelessness.

Improvement Goal 1.0

Enhance Independent Living Program Services for foster youth in Tuolumne County that include exposure to a variety of possible opportunities to gain skills/knowledge to be successful following emancipation from the foster care system.

Strategy 1. 1	**Strategy Rationale**[1]
Encourage and coach foster care youth to take advantage of grant and scholarships and other resources that are available for youth in foster care.	Foster youth are encouraged to reach their full potential and to be aware of resources that are available to them.

[1] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.1.1 ILP Coordinator and Probation Placement Officer will attend Northern California ILP Coordinators' Council meetings to network with other ILP providers and seek knowledge from other counties.	11/01/07 – on-going	ILP Coordinator Probation Placement Officer
1.1.2 ILP Coordinator will develop an ILP Guide detailing services available to ILP youth.	2 years	ILP Coordinator Foster Youth
1.1.3 ILP Coordinator will include youth, foster parents/care provider, and social worker/probation officer in the development of the TILP and conducting one-on-one orientations for those youth who fail to attend the group orientation.	11/01/07 – on-going	ILP Coordinator Care Provider Social Worker Probation Officer Foster Youth

Strategy	Strategy Rationale
Strategy 1. 2 Expose ILP participants to a variety of experiences regarding cultural, educational, social, economic and population diversities.	**Strategy Rationale** Often foster youth have had little exposure to the opportunities available to them in Tuolumne County as well as beyond the county line. Foster youth tend to have limited experiences which may influence their perceptions of the opportunities in employment, lifestyle choices, and participation in social activities that are available to them.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.2.1. Identify possible barriers that prevent youth from being active in ILP and create strategies to remove barriers.	6 months (12/01/07 – 06/30/08)	ILP Coordinator Foster Youth
1.2.2 Attend annual Teen Conference Participate in Leadership Tuolumne County.	Calendar year 2008 – on-going	ILP Coordinator Placement Probation Officer Foster Youth
1.2.3 Have youth develop list of possible field trips to explore future opportunities and coordinate/plan a minimum of 2 per year.	Calendar year 2008 – on-going	ILP Coordinator Foster Youth

Strategy	Strategy Rationale
Strategy 1. 3 Identify and increase the number of support people and life long connections for each youth.	**Strategy Rationale** Isolation increases risk factors to crime, suicide, victimization and substance abuse. Creating a support system will provide the youth with people they can turn to in a time of need and/or support.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.3.1 Begin Initial Emancipation Conference when youth first enter the Independent Living Program. Identify support people for the youth and conduct at least two conferences the year the youth is scheduled to emancipate out of the foster care system.	11/01/07 – on-going	ILP Coordinator Probation Officer Social Worker
1.3.2 Hold meetings with currently licensed foster parents to encourage them to take ILP aged youth and support the youth to reach their TILP goals.	Quarterly beginning November, 2007	CWS Program Manager Probation Division Manager Social Services Supervisor
1.3.3 Review cases to connect youth with appropriate relatives	11/01/07 – on-going	Social Services Supervisors Social Worker Probation Officer

Notes:
Youth who have been in foster care for a number of years are not at the same risk level as they might have been at the time of removal. Also, family members who may have declined placement or involvement with the youth at the time of removal may be in a better position to provide support, now that the youth is older. Therefore, periodic review of the youth's case for family members and support people will only enhance the youth's chances of developing a circle of support people in his/her life.

Improvement Goal 2.0
Complete and implement the Transitional Housing Program for Emancipated Foster Youth providing intensive services.

Strategy 2.1	Strategy Rationale
Provide intensive services for up to 6 emancipated foster youth in the Transitional House.	Tuolumne County received a forgivable loan to construct an Emancipation Foster Youth Transitional House. Once this house is completed, emancipated youth will have an opportunity to reside in the house and receive intensive services to prepare them for self-sufficiency.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
2.1.1 Monitor the construction of the Emancipated Foster Youth Transitional House.	1 year November 2008	CWS Program Manager Director, HSA Chief Probation Officer
2.1.2 Contact service providers as outlined in the THP-P Plan to begin implementation of services.	1 year November 2008	CWS Program Manager ILP Coordinator
2.1.3 Interview and hire house manager, and case manager.	1 year November 2008	CWS Program Manager Chief Probation Officer Behavioral Health Director Director, HSA

Strategy 2. 2 Hold Emancipation Conferences for all youth emancipating out of the foster care system to determine the after-care plan for each youth. This strategy is geared more for the transitional age youth.	Strategy Rationale The Casey Life Skills Assessment will be completed with the ILP youth and care provider within two months prior to the final Emancipation Conference being held. This assessment will measure the skills gained by the youth from ILP services and identify any continued needs of such youth. The Emancipation Conference will include anyone identified by the youth as being important to the youth's future plans and goals, including but not limited to service providers, school personnel, Social Services, Probation, guidance counselors, family members, Workforce Investment Board (WIB), and church/spiritual representatives. A plan will be drafted, using input from individuals present at the conference, to help guide the youth into adulthood, and identify a support system for the youth to rely on for continued assistance.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
2.2.1 Train Social Workers, Probation Officers, foster parents, and community members on the importance of Emancipation Conferences.	6 months (07/01/08-12/31/08)	ILP Coordinator Permanent Placement Social Worker
2.2.2 Explore other counties use of the Emancipation Conference and develop a structure that meets the needs of the youth in Tuolumne County.	6 months (01/01/08-06/30/08)	ILP Coordinator Social Services Supervisor CWS Program Manager
2.2.3 Formalize final Emancipation Conference process and Step-TILPs for all emancipating youth.	1 year (07/01/09-06/30/09)	ILP Coordinator Social Services Supervisor CWS Program Manager

Strategy 2.3 Create collaboration between ILP and Workforce Investment Board (WIB).	Strategy Rationale The WIB offers additional resources to foster youth in regards to employment and self-sufficiency.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
2.3.1 Meet with WIB staff to identify available resources and develop a plan of action.	6 months (01/01/08-06/30/08)	CWS Program Manager Social Services Supervisor ILP Coordinator
2.3.2 Educate Social Workers and Probation Officers on the resources available through WIB.	6 months (07/01/08-12/31/08)	ILP Coordinator
2.3.3 Educate youth on the resources available through WIB.	6 months (07/01/08-12/31/08)	ILP Coordinator

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. Social Workers, Probation Officers and the ILP Coordinator will need to be more involved with the ILP youth with multiple contacts. By involving as many family members, community service providers and support persons in the life of the ILP age youth, the circle of support for the youth is widened and his/her chances of success is increased.
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Educating community service providers, foster parents, CWS and Probation staff of the importance of emancipation planning is a must and is directly related to the success of the youth in reaching self-sufficiency. UC Davis training opportunities will be explored as will various training used by other counties to increase the awareness and importance of preparing our youth for life outside of the foster care system.
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. Tuolumne County Probation Department and the Department of Social Services are partnering in the Transitional Housing for emancipated youth project. Both agencies will be involved in the selection of service providers, staff, and participating youth. Service providers will need to become familiar with Tuolumne County's THP-P Plan and understand the goals of the program in order to provide appropriate services to the youth.
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. • Increase funding to provide stipend for foster parents who agree to take ILP age youth

Outcome/Systemic Factor:

Placement Stability C4.1 **(CWS and Probation)**

County's Current Performance:
This measure reflects the number of children with multiple placements within 12 months of placement. Of all children served in foster care during the year that were in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings during the most recent study period (01/01/2006-12/31/2006-JUL2007 Data extract: Q4 2006). **Federal Measure-All agency types, 67.0%. California CWS Outcomes System-Child Welfare only, 65.9%, NATIONAL GOAL = 86%**

Improvement Goal 1.0
Increase the percentage of children experiencing no more than two foster care placements within a 12-month period

Strategy 1. 1	**Strategy Rationale**[1]
Place and maintain children in a local foster home best suited to meet the child's unique needs and to maintain family and community connections when appropriate.	Foster homes with the training and experience to care for the particular needs being presented by a child will be more likely to maintain the child. Some families are better suited to care for younger children, while other families prefer to care for adolescents. Likewise, some families are particularly skilled with medically fragile children while other families excel with children with emotional disturbances. Children are more likely to remain stable in placement if the foster parents have the experience, training and support necessary to provide the best support for the child.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.1.1 Place children entering foster care for the first time at the Children's Shelter (CWS) or Probation Crisis Home (Probation), if an appropriate family member is not identified, to provide a period for physical, social, educational and emotional assessment.	11/01/2007 - ongoing	Children's Shelter Manager CWS Social Workers Probation Officers
1.1.2 Provide prospective foster care placements with all relevant physical, social, educational and emotional information regarding the child requiring placement.	11/01/2007 – ongoing	CWS Social Workers CWS Social Services Aides Probation Officers

[1] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

	1.1.3 Within 60 days of Dispositional Hearing in which foster care placement is Ordered, meet with foster parent and child (if appropriate) to update Appraisals/Needs and Services Plan to ensure identified needs and services are met and provided.		11/01/2007 – ongoing		CWS Social Workers Probation Officers
Strategy 1. 2 Provide additional support and services to foster parents and understand they are part of the "team" when decisions are being considered and/or made for current placements in their homes.			**Strategy Rationale** Foster parents often do not feel they are part of the "team" when it comes to the children placed in their home. At times, foster parents believe Social Workers and Probation Officers do not listen to their concerns and/or their needs or the needs of their placements. If foster parents receive the support they need it is anticipated they will be more willing to work with the placing agency to maintain a child in their home.		
Milestone	**1.2.1.** Refer all children at risk of losing a foster care placement to the Inter-Agency Resource Committee (IRC). Through IRC, identify and provide any supportive services available in order to maintain the foster care placement. Foster Parents will be invited to attend the meeting to provide input.	**Timeframe**	11/01/07 – on-going	**Assigned to**	CWS Social Workers Probation Officers CSOC, IRC
	1.2.2 Explore an after hours hotline in which foster parents can call for assistance when experiencing difficult behaviors with a placement.		To be completed by 12/31/07		Social Services Supervisor CSOC Behavioral Health Staff Probation Division Manager
	1.2.3 Explore options to offer/provide respite care for foster parents who take placement of children with difficult behaviors.		11/01/07 On- going		CWS Program Manager Director, Human Services Agency Probation Division Manager
Strategy 1. 3 Retain currently licensed foster family homes.			**Strategy Rationale** [1] Once homes become licensed, foster parents often choose not to take placements for a variety of reasons. Participating in Foster Parenting activities should assist management to become aware of issues as they arise and work towards resolution as quickly as possible.		

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.3.1 Regularly attend Foster Parent Association Meetings to ensure foster parent needs are being met.	Begin 10/01/07 - On-going, monthly	Social Services Supervisors CWS Program Manager Probation Staff
1.3.2 Hold quarterly meetings with foster parents, CWS and Probation staff to share information.	08/07 – Continuing	CWS staff Probation Staff Foster Parents
1.3.3 Conduct exit interviews for foster homes that relinquish their foster care license to identify any problem areas.	05/07 – Continuing	Licensing Program Analyst

Notes:
Foster Parents, Probation Officers, and Social Workers do not understand the role each other plays in the life of a foster child. It is hoped with frequent contact and joint trainings, staff and foster parents will begin to understand the importance and limitations of each others involvement with the foster youth, and the need to work as a "team".

Improvement Goal 2.0
Increase the number of licensed foster homes in Tuolumne County and retain currently licensed foster homes.

Strategy 2.1	Strategy Rationale
CWS and Probation will partner and develop an outreach plan for recruitment that involves community organizations such as churches, civic organizations, schools, and neighborhoods.	There is a great need for foster parents in Tuolumne County willing to accept placements of both CWS and Probation children as well as placements of all ages and both genders. Currently, there are insufficient homes available in the county willing to accept placement, thus placements are often made out-of-county and/or in foster homes based strictly on availability, rather than homes specially chosen to meet the needs of a particular child. It is expected children placed in homes most capable of meeting their needs, and within their own communities, will be more stable in placement, requiring less placement moves.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
2.1.1 Identify a recruitment "team" which shall consist of the Licensing Program Analyst, a Probation staff and a CWS Social Worker.	3 months (11/01/07-02/28/08)	Chief Probation Officer CWS Program Manager
2.1.2 Develop a foster care presentation geared toward a variety of community organizations.	6 months (11/01/07-05/31/08)	Licensing Program Analyst Probation Staff CWS Social Worker
2.1.3 Identify churches, civic organizations, schools, neighborhoods for presentations. Identify staff,	7 months (11/01/07-06/30/08)	Licensing Program Analyst Probation Staff CWS Social Worker

	and community members to contact and schedule presentation.				
Strategy 2. 2 Assist potential foster parents with the licensing process. Maintain contact with foster homes newly licensed to address training needs. Coordinate with Columbia College, CSOC, CWS, and Probation to discuss placement needs and training.			**Strategy Rationale** The licensing process can be cumbersome and daunting. It has been noted interested people may begin the licensing process, but never become licensed. It is hoped support during the process will result in the completion of the licensing process. Providing support and relevant training to currently license foster parents should assist in retention of already licensed homes.		
Milestone	**2.2.1** Offer and provide one-on-one assistance when completing application process to address questions as they arise.	**Timeframe**	Begin 01/01/08	**Assigned to**	Licensing Program Analyst
	2.2.2 Identify a foster parent "liaison" to communicate with, and provide support for the foster parent in addition to the assigned Social Worker/Probation Officer.		By 12/31/07		CWS Program Manager
Strategy 2.3 Include Foster Parents, Probation Officers, and Social Workers in trainings involving foster care related topics.			**Strategy Rationale** It is anticipated Social Workers, Probation Officers, and Foster Parents will be better equipped to work together towards goals identified for children and families when all involved have received the same information.		
Milestone	**2.3.1** Schedule and complete training with UC Davis regarding the "Role of Foster Parents in Reunification".	**Timeframe**	Calendar Year 2008	**Assigned to**	Social Workers Probation Officers Foster Parents
	2.3.2 Schedule and complete training by County Counsel regarding confidentiality issues.		By 12/31/08		Social Workers Probation Officers Foster Parents County Counsel
	2.3.3 Develop a list of future trainings identified by Foster Parents, Probation and CWS staff. Schedule a minimum of 2 trainings per year.		3 years (11/01/07-10/31/10)		Social Workers Probation Officers Foster Parents

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.
Foster Parents, Probation and CWS staff will need to work together as a "team" to achieve case plan goals for children and families. This will involve all parties gaining a better understanding of each others role in the reunification process.

There is limited money budgeted for the recruitment of foster parents. Both the Probation Department and Social Services will need to make a commitment to identify staff to provide recruitment, and to further explore creative ways in which to reach potential community members willing to complete the foster care licensing process.
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Topics will need to be identified, and scheduled, as we work through obtaining a better understanding of the roles of the Foster Parent, Court, and the Social Worker or Probation Officer in regards to the reunification process and the success for the families we serve. Training provided by UC Davis and/or County Counsel will be utilized as appropriate and as the budget allows.
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. It is crucial to have all participants committed to changing the approach, and understanding, of how reunification case plan goals are developed and the role each "team member" plays in the reunification process.
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. • Increase funding to provide specialized training in placement and family strength areas. • Increase foster care recruitment and retention funding. • Increase foster care rates to enable Foster Parents to better meet the needs of the children placed in their care.