

California's Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan

County:	Sonoma
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	Family Youth & Children's Division Sonoma County Human Services Department
Period of Plan:	July 2008-June 2009
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County Contact Person for County System Improvement Plan

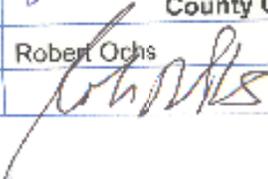
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California Child and Family Services Review

Sonoma County System Improvement Plan (SIP) Update June 2008

There has been a review of each of the SIP items from the plan submitted in 2007. SIP updates have been noted as well as new improvement goals for the next year. Local stakeholders and agency partners have continued to be involved in Sonoma County SIP activities since it was completed in June 2007. Within the Child Welfare agency there are regular management meetings to review SIP items and the progress in meeting goals. Here is a sampling of the progress made toward meeting Sonoma County SIP goals:

- There has been significant improvement in the SIP goals of *Outcomes for Emancipating Youth*. The improvements are directly related to ongoing dialogue and partnerships among child welfare, local foundations and community-based organizations. These partnerships have positively impacted our Lifelong Connections work as well as the ability of emancipating youth to access new resources. These partnerships have also begun an exciting new endeavor to improve and streamline service delivery to emancipating and emancipated youth.
- Since March 2008, SafeMeasures has been increasingly used as a case management and monitoring tool by social workers, supervisors and managers.
- The 2007-2008 Child Welfare Outcome Improvement Planning (CWOIP) funding was used to fund several programs related to safety (Differential Response), and well-being (education liaison for foster and probation youth and schools). The Differential Response program was targeted at a particular geographical area of the county from which a high number of calls come into the child abuse hotline. The area has historically experienced higher levels of poverty, unemployment, drug use and other risk factors than other areas in the county. The DR program served nearly 100 families during 2007-2008. The Education Liaison is an experienced educator and education advocate who works with the courts, probation, child welfare and education to ensure that dependents of the court are connected to educational resources that enhance their well-being.
- Sonoma County is scheduled for the next Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) in June 2009.

All outcome data reported in the 2008 SIP Update are from the UC Berkeley site reporting on Quarter 3 2007 which was released in April 2008.

SIP OUTCOME TEMPLATES

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Outcome/Systemic Factor: Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Adoption (Transitional Data Indicator C2.1)					
County's Current Performance: At the last reporting period (10/1/05-9/30/06) the County was at 28.5 %, with the Federal target being at least 36.6% ; however, the county's performance in this area has fluctuated during the past several years with ranges between 27.0% and a high of 33.3 %. The data continues to be refreshed and the new composite outcome measures may show different trends. A current trend in Sonoma County is an increase in relative placements; children in these placements might possibly have been freed for adoption otherwise. UPDATE: The County's performance in this area during the reporting period 10/1/2006 – 9/30/2007 improved from 28.5% to 36.2% which is only .4% below the national standard.					
Improvement Goal 1.0 UPDATE: To decrease the time to adoptions to ensure that on a consistent basis at least 36.6% of children who are adopted complete the process within 24 months of coming into custody.					
Strategy 1. 1 Improve data input to capture accurate information. UPDATE: Data integrity, in general, has come into greater focus during 2007-2008. Business Objects, Safe Measures and other tools are routinely used to monitor and validate data.		Strategy Rationale Accurate information, utilizing the new composite measures, will move the county closer to the target and will help extrapolate specific data that can assist the county in making future improvements.			
Milestone	1.1.1 Establish data entry guidelines for Adoptions staff. UPDATE: Completed	Timeframe	Completed Spring 2007	Assigned to	State Adoptions Staff
	1.1.2 Train new and existing staff as needed. UPDATE: Ongoing.		Ongoing 2007-2009		State Adoptions Manager and FYC Division Director
	1.1.3 Add date of removal to data records, the outside of case files and home study files in order to better track deadlines. UPDATE: Completed		Completed		State Adoptions Manager
Strategy 1. 2 Enhance communication between HSD and State Adoptions staff. UPDATE: The State Adoptions Manager is a permanent member of the SIP workgroup that is focused solely on carrying out the SIP activities related to Timely Adoptions.		Strategy Rationale Adoptions for Sonoma County are arranged through the State Department of Social Services (CDSS), which administers local programs. The HSD also has two Pre-Adoption Services Social Workers who are responsible for case management for all dependent children awaiting adoption. Communication is essential to make the process flow between both agencies in order to improve services to children and adoptive families and to meet the Federal standards. The Concurrent Planning process has enabled staff from both agencies to engage in effective early decision making for possible adoptions. Concurrent Planning was also identified as an issue for Family Reunification Social Workers during the Peer Quality Case Review process. FR social workers are committed to reunifying the families that they serve and it is sometimes difficult for them to reconcile the different aims of the two programs. Training and support are critical for enabling staff to serve the best interests of the child, when it appears reunification is unlikely.			

Milestone	<p>1.2.1. Include proposed findings in court reports at the time of the .26 hearing. UPDATE: This activity is being implemented for appropriate cases.</p>	Timeframe	Ongoing 2007-2009	Assigned to	FY&C Clerical
	<p>1.2.2 Strengthen communication between State Adoptions and the Concurrent Planning Social Worker by capitalizing on current efforts to bring staff together to discuss successes and challenges. UPDATE: This activity is being implemented on an ongoing basis. Expertise and knowledge are being communicated more effectively.</p>		Ongoing 2007-2009		Section Manager and State Adoptions Manager
	<p>1.2.3 State Adoptions will submit information with court reports as a status update to the court. UPDATE: State adoptions has incorporated the 24 month to adoption timeline as part of their case management. Removal dates and FR timelines are being tracked more efficiently by both State Adoptions and child welfare.</p>		Initiated July 2007 and ongoing 2007-2009		State Adoptions Staff
<p>Strategy 1. 3 Increase staffing levels at State Adoptions and Child Welfare. UPDATE: Staffing levels are based on a combination of federal, state and county funding. This strategy is reliant upon systemic issues affecting the county's CWS allocations.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale Staffing levels have a direct affect on the quantity and quality of work that can be completed, which ultimately affects meeting outcome standards. State Adoptions and Child Welfare Social Workers have large caseloads, which directly impact their ability to adequately serve both adoptive families and children freed for adoption.</p>			
Milestone	<p>1.3.1 State Adoptions will add 3 positions for FY 07/08.</p>	Timeframe	July 2007	Assigned to	State Adoptions Manager
	<p>1.3.2 HSD will advocate for additional staff, including Pre-Adoption Social Workers. UPDATE: Although no positions have been added, advocacy is ongoing.</p>		Ongoing 2007-2009		County Executives and Administrators
	<p>1.3.3 State Adoptions and Child Welfare will continue to advocate for increased staffing for adoption services. UPDATE: Although no positions have been added, advocacy is ongoing.</p>		Ongoing 2007-2009		State Adoptions and Child Welfare Executives and Administrators.

<p>1.3.4 Lifelong Connections staff will assess all LLC youth for possible adoption and discuss adoption issues with youth. UPDATE: Ongoing. Child welfare has one dedicated position to assist youth in planning lifelong connections.</p>	<p>Ongoing 2007-2009</p>	<p>LLC Specialist, LLC Supervisor</p>
<p>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. Additional positions for State Adoptions and Child Welfare Pre-Adoptions Services.</p>		
<p>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Concurrent Planning issues identified in the PQCR to be addressed. Additional training for foster parents, fost-adopt parents and staff at both agencies. UPDATE: Training of state adoptions and child welfare to enhance mutual understanding of federal goals for adoptions timelines.</p>		
<p>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. Group home staff need to be engaged in planning for older youth; fost-adopt placements to support reunification, if appropriate.</p>		
<p>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. Federal and state funding policies that support all adoption services.</p>		

Outcome/Systemic Factor:

Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Reunification (Transitional Data Indicator C1.1)

County's Current Performance:

Performance in this area is below the Federal Standard and the State average. During the most recent reporting period of 10/1/05-9/30/06, the county's performance in this area was at 45.2%, below the Federal Standard of 75.2%. Timely Reunification was a focus area for the county's Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) and issues that emerged suggested that this outcome measure should be a focus of the SIP. The 12-month time frame for reunification tends to be unrealistic in terms of what some parents can successfully accomplish, especially if there are serious substance abuse or mental health issues, while many families can be successfully reunified after the 12-month timeframe. The new composite measures may help 'drill down' to isolate factors that contribute to reunification or non-reunification, notwithstanding timelines. It should be noted that the state's timeframes are inconsistent with the federal timelines, since the state begins counting down the period of reunification after the first 24-30 days, placing the county at a deficit from the beginning of the court process. It should also be noted that Sonoma County has a historically low reentry rate, suggesting that the longer times to reunification are ensuring that these families do not come back into the system. Sonoma County also plans to analyze the placement types regarding exits from foster care. An issue would be if certain placements, such as with relatives, contribute to a trend of earlier or later reunifications.

UPDATE: The County's performance in this area during the reporting period 10/1/2006 – 9/30/2007 declined slightly to 44.2%. All of the related factors that act as barriers to improving our reunification rate, listed in our 2007 SIP, continue to apply. Sonoma County has a low reentry rate after reunification. Thus, we take longer to reunify families but when we do reunification is successful; fewer families come back to the attention of child welfare in Sonoma County than in most other California counties. The new composite scores reflect the interplay between these two measures.

Improvement Goal 1.0

Re-evaluate parent/child visitation policy and practice to develop a model that would positively affect reunification.

Strategy 1. 1

Develop a Visitation Taskforce, to include social workers, supervisors and managers, to assess and review current visitation policy and procedure.

UPDATE: A visitation taskforce was convened and resulted in a training of visit supervisors and social workers on effective visitation techniques. Over the next year, visitation will continue to take center stage in recognition of the association between visitation and successful reunification. The goal is to implement the techniques and strategies believed to affect probability of reunification.

Strategy Rationale

The frequency and quality of visits between parents and children can contribute to successful reunification. Current practice is thought to encourage, in an abundance of caution, prolonged and unnecessary supervision of visits, as well as limits on frequency, duration, purpose, and location of visits between parents and children. These practices may delay reunification.

Milestone		Timeframe		Assigned to	
	1.1.1 Convene the first meeting of the Visitation Taskforce. UPDATE: Completed		June 18, 2007		Section Manager
	1.1.2 Develop revised policy and practice guidelines. UPDATE: Policy and practice guidelines are currently being developed.		December 1, 2007 UPDATE: September 2008		Visitation Taskforce

<p>1.1.3 Train staff on revised visitation guidelines. UPDATE: Will commence when guidelines are completed and approved.</p>		<p>March 2008 UPDATE: October 2008</p>	<p>Section Manager</p>
<p>Strategy 1.2 Analyze data on placement exits to determine if trends emerge regarding earlier or later reunifications. UPDATE: A SIP workgroup focused solely on analyzing the factors involved in reunification timelines has been convened and is currently evaluating the data on placement exits.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale ¹ Looking at hard data concerning the types of placements that children are exiting may suggest certain trends. For example, if children are exiting relative placements to reunification, are relatives contributing to parents completing case plans and maintaining visitation more quickly, or are relatives inhibiting the process.</p>	
<p>Mile stone</p>	<p>1.2.1. Determine time frames for data analysis. UPDATE: Time frames for data analysis were chosen: 1/1/2006 – 12/31/2007.</p>	<p>September 2007 UPDATE: April 2008</p>	<p>Analyst UPDATE: Section Manager, Analyst, Supervisors</p>
	<p>1.2.2 Extract placement data from CWS, Safe Measures and Child and Family Social Services Review (CFSS) site. UPDATE: This activity is currently underway.</p>	<p>2007-2008 UPDATE: August 2008</p>	<p>Analyst</p>
	<p>1.2.3 Analyze data for reunification trends. UPDATE: This activity will begin immediately following the data extract.</p>	<p>2007-2008 UPDATE: October 2008</p>	<p>Analyst UPDATE: Section Manager, Analyst, Supervisors</p>
<p>Improvement Goal 2.0 Improve data quality and attention to federal timeframes for Timely Reunification. UPDATE: Federal measures, timeframes and the Sonoma County SIP have been increasingly incorporated into the daily agenda for the department.</p>			
<p>Strategy 2.1 Continue to review and communicate policy and procedures on trial home visits with particular attention to timing of trial home visits and obtaining trial home visit authorization from the Juvenile Court at six-month review hearings. UPDATE: The SIP workgroup looking at reunification is exploring the need and ability to pre-plan for trial home visits to expedite reunification timelines.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale The previous System Improvement Plan identified this measure as a primary focus. The improvement made thus far is directly influenced by data refinement and closer attention to documentation in CWS/CMS. This new strategy focuses on better tracking of federal timelines and seeking at the six-month review, where safe and appropriate to do so, authorization to begin Trial Home Visits during the next review period.</p>	

Milestone	2.1.1 Family Reunification Supervisors will review federal reunification timelines and train social workers on those timelines. UPDATE: Ongoing	Timeframe	Ongoing 2007-2008	Assigned to	FR Supervisors
	2.1.2 FR supervisors will monitor cases before six month review to determine if appropriate for Trial Home Visits. UPDATE: Ongoing		Ongoing 2007-2009		FR Supervisors and Managers
Strategy 2. 2 Continue to review and communicate policy on closing of placements and placement episodes on CWS/CMS. UPDATE: Data integrity, in general, has come into greater focus during 2007-2008. Safe Measure is routinely used to monitor placement data entry for accuracy.			Strategy Rationale This strategy was identified in the previous System Improvement Plan and although progress has been made, continued review and monitoring is necessary.		
Milestone	2.2.1 Supervisors and managers will continue to monitor placement and placement episode closures following reunification, via Safe Measures, to ensure compliance. UPDATE: Ongoing	Timeframe	Ongoing 2007-2008 UPDATE: 2007-2009	Assigned to	FR Supervisors, Managers
	2.2.2 Placement episode closures will be a topic of discussion at individual conferences and unit meetings. UPDATE: Ongoing		Ongoing 2007-2008 UPDATE: 2007-2009		FR Supervisors
	2.2.3 Additional training on CWS/CMS as needed. UPDATE: CWS/CMS training has been informally provided to social workers, as needed, on data entry related to placement episodes.		Ongoing 2007-2008 UPDATE: 2007-2009		CWS Trainer, Section Manager

Improvement Goal 3.0

Enhance existing service array for reunification families.

Strategy 3.1

Research existing services, advocate for continuation of successful programs and develop new options for reunification families. **UPDATE: A SIP workgroup, focused solely on the issue of service array, has been exploring the need for and availability of additional services to enhance families' capacity to complete case plan objectives without having to wait for services to become available. While this workgroup has been looking largely at bilingual services and hasn't focused on reunifying families per se, the additional service providers procured through that process will benefit FR families and ideally expedite their reunification process.**

Strategy Rationale

During the PQCR process, reunification social workers identified service array as an issue contributing to lack of early reunification in some cases. Services tend to be clustered in urban areas and many families have transportation problems that may inhibit them from making all the appointments required for their case plans. Families that need substance abuse or mental health treatment or bilingual services have difficulty accessing them if they live in rural areas of the county. The county also needs to develop and enhance programs such as the Dependency Drug Court, which can centralize services and provide more intensive supervision than other treatment options. Local providers such as Community Action Partnership can provide a model for one-stop, bilingual neighborhood services.

Milestone		Time Frame		Assigned To	
	3.1.1 Ensure that Dependency Drug Court continues to function and advocate for additional funding. UPDATE: A MSW intern is currently researching Dependency Drug Court to quantify the benefits of the program which will facilitate advocacy for its continuation.		Ongoing 2007-2009 UPDATE: Summer 2008		Division Director, Section Manager
	3.1.2 Maintain and enhance community links for bilingual services. UPDATE: Additional bilingual community resource workers have entered into contract with the County.		Ongoing 2007-2009 UPDATE: June 2008		Division Manager, Section Manager, Bilingual Unit Supervisor
	3.1.3 Assist clients in overcoming barriers to services access.		Ongoing 2007-2008		FR Social Workers

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.

1. Lack of continuity between federal and state FR timelines.
2. Lack of ability to regulate courts in setting review hearings within federal timelines.

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

1. Training of staff on federal timelines and inconsistency with California Family Reunification timelines.
2. Education of Court and attorneys on federal timelines.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

Buy-in of Court and attorneys in improving outcomes.

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

Alignment of all reunification timeframes.

Outcome/Systemic Factor:

Outcomes for Emancipating Youth (Outcome Measure 8A)

County's Current Performance:

Sonoma County currently has a number of programs for emancipating youth. At age 15 ½, all youth in foster care, through the Human Services or Juvenile Probation Departments, are referred to the Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP), which helps prepare youth for successful transition to adulthood. Through training, support and a focus on education, youth are given the skills needed to move successfully into adulthood. Youth aged 17 and older are eligible for the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP), which provides supervised housing in apartments or host homes, as well as employment services, guidance on day to day living challenges, financial and emotional support and mentoring. These services are provided by ILP staff, CASA mentors and a community provider, True to Life Children's Services, all of whom have an investment in successful transitions for youth. At the same time, Sonoma County's social workers, supervisors, and managers are cognizant of the obstacles facing young people who emancipate from foster care. For this reason, Sonoma County has joined a consortium of 13 counties in the California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP), which offers technical assistance, education and resources for counties working toward improving outcomes for older foster and emancipating youth. The county has formed a Life Long Connections (LLC) steering committee to strategize for the future and to oversee program development. The committee is comprised of representatives from group homes, FSA's, the Mental Health Department, minors' attorneys, CASA mentors, State Adoptions, and the Kinship and Foster Parent Education Program from the local college, as well as managers and supervisors from HSD. Sonoma County will continue to pursue finding lifelong connections for children and youth in foster care with the appointment of a full-time social work position dedicated to this initiative. The LLC Specialist will work closely with youth, relatives and others interested in maintaining permanent family ties with young people who are currently or were formerly in foster care. Using the tools and techniques provided by CPYP, the county is committed to finding relatives and/or to reconnecting youth with family members or non-related extended family. Sonoma County is currently working with community partners, such as the Valley of the Moon Children's Foundation, to identify and develop new community resources that can provide additional support for emancipating youth. Within the year, the Valley of the Moon Foundation will be expanding their focus to new program areas for emancipating youth, especially in regards to their educational needs.

Improvement Goal 1.0

Increase the number of foster youth who participate in all programs designed to assist them with their transition to adulthood.

Strategy 1. 1

Identify and assess the barriers preventing youth from participation in the ILSP, including logistics (e.g. transportation and timing of classes) perceptions of program usefulness and program curriculum.

UPDATE: Placement social workers were surveyed on what they feel the barriers are for youth participation in ILP. Social workers were also asked to approximate the perspective of the youth themselves.

Strategy Rationale

A number of youth do not participate in ILP services. Assessment of barriers will help to identify causes of non-participation. This information will be used to develop solutions and to increase youth involvement in ILP services. For example, if transportation is a problem, ILP staff and supervisors will look for resources to provide transportation.

Milestone	<p>1.1.1 ILP staff will meet with group home staff to identify barriers that prevent them from sending youth to ILP. UPDATE: This activity is completed.</p>	Timeframe	6 months—1/08	Assigned to	ILP Social Workers
	<p>1.1.2 ILP staff will identify youth who have not enrolled in ILP to discover reasons for non-participation. UPDATE: Due to staffing shortage, this strategy has been postponed.</p>		6 months—1/08 UPDATE: January 2009		ILP Social Workers
	<p>1.1.3 Supervisors, social workers and ILP staff will develop strategies for involving hard-to-serve youth in ILP. UPDATE: ILP Coordinators outreach to homeless youth and have added drop-in advise hours immediately prior to ILP classes at the Junior College.</p>		6 months-1/08 UPDATE: ongoing		Section Managers, PP Supervisors, ILP Social Workers
	<p>1.1.4 The ILP Social Workers will make contacts with all youth in Sonoma County who do not respond to the initial request to participate in the ILP program. UPDATE: Due to the limited staff in the ILP program, placement social workers follow up with the youth on their caseloads who do not participate in the ILP program to determine if there are barriers to their participation and if they can be resolved.</p>		1 year—6/08 UPDATE: ongoing		ILP Social Workers UPDATE: Placement workers

Strategy 1. 2
Collaborate with True to Life Children’s Services and CDSS to increase the number of THPP and THP Plus funded beds.
UPDATE: At the moment, THPP beds are not fully utilized. Outreach methods are continually being evaluated and revised to maximize bed utilization. THP Plus grew from zero beds to 15 during the 2007-2008 fiscal year. The program boasts stable bed utilization and has capacity to grow over time.

Strategy Rationale
Although there has been an increase in the number of authorized THPP beds, they are still insufficient to provide services to all youth that might benefit from the program. THPP slots are limited due to funding restrictions that need to be relaxed. As more youth are identified as appropriate for THPP services, in order for them to practice living independently, the program needs to expand to meet all county emancipating foster youths’ needs. THP Plus is designed to serve former foster youth aged 18-24 in their transition to fully independent adulthood. Currently only 5 counties have fully supported THP Plus programs. 40 other counties, including Sonoma, have CDSS approved plans for FY 2007-2008. Funding has been

		delayed due to political issues at the state level.			
Milestone	1.2.1. Social workers and supervisors will identify youth that would benefit from THPP but are not able to access the program due to limitations in available beds. UPDATE: Ongoing.	Timeframe	6 months—1/08 UPDATE: Ongoing.	Assigned to	ILP workers and case-carrying social workers

Milestone	1.2.2 The county will pursue additional funding for THPP and THP Plus. UPDATE: County submitted Letters of Intent to the State to increase the number of THP Plus beds.	Timeframe	12 months—6/08 UPDATE: Completed October 2007.	Assigned to	Division Director, Section Managers, Analysts
Milestone	1.2.3 The county will support statewide efforts to amend legislation limiting THPP and THP Plus funding. UPDATE: This activity is ongoing.	Timeframe	12 months—6/08 UPDATE: Ongoing.	Assigned to	County Executives and Administrators

Strategy 1.3 Engage all social workers in Lifelong Connections planning for foster youth. UPDATE: Social workers are engaged in LLC during individual supervision and in LLC trainings.		Strategy Rationale The Lifelong Connections Specialist needs the support and engagement of case-carrying social workers in planning for youth. A team approach can accelerate and improve planning for youth needing permanent family or family-like connections.			
Milestone	1.3.1 Supervisors will staff LLC youth in unit meetings and individual conferences. UPDATE: Ongoing.	Timeframe	Ongoing 2007-2009	Assigned to	Supervisors, Section Manager
Milestone	1.3.2 Case-carrying social workers will be strongly encouraged to attend case staffings for LLC youth. UPDATE: This activity has been successful implemented.	Timeframe	Ongoing 2007-2009	Assigned to	Supervisors, Section Manager

<p>1.3.3 Case-carrying social workers will be included in all CPYP trainings. UPDATE: Case carrying social workers have been invited to the CPYP trainings offered locally. Attendance by social workers at these trainings has been good.</p>	Ongoing 2007-2009	Supervisors, Section Manager
<p>1.3.4 LLC Specialist and LLC Supervisor will attend unit meetings to educate on LLC. UPDATE: This activity has been successfully implemented.</p>	Ongoing 2007-2009	LLC Specialist, LLC Supervisor

<p>Improvement Goal 2.0 Sonoma County will identify and provide new resources to prepare emancipating foster youth for self-sufficiency.</p>					
<p>Strategy 2.1 Each emancipating youth will receive a binder with their individual information, a Sonoma County Youth Services Guide, and information on services they are eligible to receive until age 22. UPDATE: UPDATE: This activity has been successfully implemented and continues on an ongoing basis.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale Provide youth with the information, both personal and general, that they will need during their transition to adulthood and that will enable them to more easily access needed resources.</p>			
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>2.1.1 Identify youth who will be emancipating each year. UPDATE: This activity has been successfully implemented for 2007-2008.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>By April 1st each year.</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	PP Supervisors
	<p>2.1.2 Each emancipating youth will be given a binder of information on services and a guide to resources. UPDATE: This activity has been successfully implemented for 2007-2008.</p>		<p>At graduation annually. UPDATE: June 2008</p>		PP Supervisors
	<p>2.1.3 Information on resources will be updated annually. UPDATE: This activity has been successfully implemented for 2007-2008.</p>		<p>By April 1st each year.</p>		Clerical staff, Office Support Supervisor
<p>Strategy 2.2 Sonoma County will collaborate with the Valley of the Moon Children’s Foundation, The Medical Alliance and Junior League of Napa/Sonoma to provide post-secondary education scholarships,</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale Foster children do not always have the educational background to compete for some scholarships. Scholarships with more relaxed criteria would be available, and assistance with the application and submission</p>			

<p>computer equipment and other resources for emancipating foster youth. Scholarships will support both college and vocational education.</p> <p>UPDATE: This activity has been successfully implemented for 2007-2008. Nine scholarships were awarded in 2008, 6 for \$5,000 each and 3 for \$2,500. This represents significant growth in the scholarship program over the previous year in which six \$1,500 scholarships were awarded.</p>		<p>process would allow them to practice skills needed for further higher education. Laptops and other electronic learning aids will help youth be competitive.</p>			
Milestone	<p>2.2.1 Develop scholarship application and guidelines. UPDATE: This activity has been successfully implemented for 2007-2008.</p>	Timeframe	<p>Completed. UPDATE: Annual, by March of each year.</p>	Assigned to	Section Managers
	<p>2.2.2 Distribute application materials to eligible foster youth. UPDATE: This activity has been successfully implemented for 2007-2008.</p>		<p>By March 1st each year.</p>		ILP and case-carrying social workers
	<p>2.2.3 Assist youth in preparing submission materials. UPDATE: This activity has been successfully implemented for 2007-2008.</p>		<p>By April 1st annually.</p>		ILP and case-carrying social workers

<p>Strategy 2.3 Develop at least one Lifelong Connection for every child before they leave foster care. UPDATE: This activity remains an priority for our department.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale Foster children often have no connections once they leave the foster care system. Everyone needs at least one person who acts as mentor, friend, confidant, substitute parent-a person who can assist in a crisis and is there at all important events in a youth's life.</p>			
Milestone	<p>2.3.1 Continue to work with CPYP to identify ways to incorporate the concept of Lifelong Connections at every point in the foster care process. UPDATE: Held several CPYP trainings and consultations that were well attended. Have incorporated CPYP training materials into local practice.</p>	Timeframe	<p>Ongoing 2007-2008</p>	Assigned to	<p>Program Analyst, Lifelong Connections Supervisor, Division Director</p>

<p>2.3.2 Develop a streamlined flow of information on relatives and significant others when files are transferred or updated. UPDATE: A form was developed to track persons of interest during the life of the case. A dedicated section now exists in the case files.</p>	<p>Ongoing 2007-2008</p>	<p>Joint Labor Management Committee, Section Managers, Division Director</p>
<p>2.3.3 Develop a standardized tool for transferring information on relatives or significant others. UPDATE: A form was developed to track persons of interest during the life of the case. A dedicated section now exists in the case files.</p>	<p>June 2008</p>	<p>JLMC, Section Managers, Division Director</p>

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.

The limited availability of funding for THPP and THP Plus programs that provide transitional housing and supportive services for emancipated youth further challenges efforts to provide other supportive programming such as education and employment.

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

Technical training of pilot staff, eventual training of all social work staff.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

The CPYP and State Adoptions for technical assistance; CASA mentors and the Redwood Empire Foster Parent Association for possible connections; collaborative partners for LLC steering committee; SRJC for training.

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

Review and amend policies that impede placing or reconnecting children with parents whose rights have been terminated, if the parents later make the changes needed to adequately support their children or to reestablish parental ties.

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Parent/Youth Involvement in Case Planning (Systemic Factor)			
County's Current Performance: Although Sonoma County places a high value on family engagement, there has not been a consistent manner of documenting child and family engagement and input into the case planning process. Case plans are signed by the family and social workers include them in all phases of planning, but there has been no consistent description of what form that involvement took, or when case plans were discussed and signed. On the other hand, the county has been successful with engaging youth in case planning, and youth-centered practice is the cornerstone of the Lifelong Connections program. Documentation of discussions with youth is included in case files and in the Comprehensive Assessment Tool (CAT), which is used in several stages during the life of a case. CAT modules include Determine Response, Emergency Response, Continuing Services, Placement and Case Closure.			
Improvement Goal 1.0 Consistent documentation of case planning discussions with each family and child(ren).			
Strategy 1. 1 Develop a consistent manner for documentation of discussions of case plan components with families and children. UPDATE: An internal review was conducted to evaluation documentation methods. The review found that documentation on family involvement in case planning is recorded consistently among social workers and programs into CWS/CMS under "contacts" as a narrative. However, this does not allow for a routine evaluation of this expectation. An alternative data entry point has been identified which would facilitate easy, ongoing monitoring of family involvement in case planning.		Strategy Rationale Until there is a consistent method of documentation it cannot be determined if there are additional changes that need to be considered.	
Milestone	1.1.1 Review CWS/CMS for places to document discussions on the case plan. UPDATE: An internal review of current methods to document family involvement in case planning resulted in the identification of a data entry point which would enable an ongoing evaluation of success in engaging families in case planning. The data entry point is the "Case Plan Notebook, ID page."	Timeframe	Fall 2007 UPDATE: April 2008
		Assigned to	Section Manager, Court Services, PP/Adoptions and FR Supervisors UPDATE: SIP Workgroup including Division Director, Supervisors, Analyst and social worker.

	<p>1.1.2 Evaluate case plan reviews in all Family Reunification cases. Ensure family or youth involvement in case planning is properly documented in CWS/CMS prior to approving case plan updates. UPDATE: This milestone has been revised to ensure that all case plan reviews include family and youth involvement and that documentation is complete in CWS/CMS.</p>		<p>By next scheduled court hearing in each case UPDATE: Ongoing</p>		<p>FR Supervisors</p>
	<p>1.1.3 Train staff on consistent usage of 'periwinkle' fields in CWS/CMS. UPDATE: Planned for Fall 2008.</p>		<p>By June 2008 UPDATE: Fall 2008</p>		<p>FR Supervisors, Managers UPDATE:</p>
<p>Improvement Goal 2.0 Actively involve children and families in the case planning process, including development of the service array.</p>					
<p>Strategy 2.1 Develop policy and procedure on family engagement expectations. UPDATE: A workgroup is currently revising the policy and procedure on completing case plans and case plan updates, which will address protocol for engaging families and youth in case planning.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale Clear standards for documentation in specified fields in CWS/CMS will allow social workers to efficiently record case planning contacts and will allow supervisors to more easily review documentation of family and youth engagement.</p>		
Milestone	<p>2.1.1 Convene a taskforce to develop policy and procedure on family engagement expectations. UPDATE: This activity is currently underway.</p>	Timeframe	<p>December 2007 UPDATE: Expected completion date: August 15, 2008.</p>	Assigned to	<p>Section Manager UPDATE: Supervisors, social workers, analysts, section managers</p>
	<p>2.1.2 Update relevant manual sections and train to the new policy and procedure. UPDATE: This activity is currently underway.</p>		<p>Spring 2008 UPDATE: Training to commence in August, 2008.</p>		<p>Section Manager UPDATE: Supervisors, social workers, analysts, section managers, CWS/CMS trainer</p>
	<p>2.1.3 Supervisors will review cases in CWS/CMS to ensure timely documentation of case planning contacts. UPDATE: A workgroup is currently revising the policy and procedure on completing case plans and case plan updates, which will address protocol for engaging families and youth in case planning. The case plan workgroup will address this milestone prior to disbanding but has not covered this topic yet.</p>		<p>Ongoing 2007-2009</p>		<p>Court Services, PP/Adoptions and FR Supervisors UPDATE: Supervisors, social workers, analysts, section managers:</p>

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.

Review of CWS/CMS for fields to include documentation of parent/child involvement.

UPDATE: Identified a potential field to document parent or youth approval of case plan. Until a better measure can be found, this will be used as a proxy measure for family involvement in case planning.

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

Reassess current practice for family involvement in case planning.

UPDATE: New policy and procedure being developed on case plans. Training for the new policy will occur in August 2008.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

Information technology and state CWS/CMS project.

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

N/A.

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Foster Care Recruitment, Retention and Training (Systemic Factor)				
County's Current Performance: In 1997, the Sonoma County Human Services Department licensed 176 foster homes. In just the last three years, the number of licensed foster homes accepting placements has declined by 54%, to 62. Foster parents were consulted for the County Self Assessment (CSA) and expressed a desire for closer connections with social workers and increased knowledge of and input into the case plans of children placed with them. The one area where the county has historically been able to retain foster parents is in the Emergency Foster Home (EFH) program, and these numbers are declining, as well. The EFH program provides an excellent model for providing the additional supports and compensation that would help the county recruit and retain foster parents for longer term placements and placements for older children. Systemic factors like the high cost of housing and the relatively small compensation for regular foster care also contribute to the decline in foster homes. UPDATE: The decline in the number of licensed foster homes accepting placements has stabilized and currently rests at 65. As described in our 2007 SIP, the Emergency Foster Home Program has historically been our most stable source of foster homes willing to accept emergency placements. This trend continues into 2008 with the increasing use of FFA homes as well for emergency placements. The county has contracted with a research firm to conduct a needs assessment on foster care recruitment and retention. The assessment is slated to be complete by the end of June 2008 and will contain recommended strategies to enhance the capacity of our non-emergency foster care system and a possible restructuring of our relationships with local FFAs.				
Improvement Goal 1.0 Improve retention by providing additional support for foster parents by expanding their inclusion in team decisions about the children in their care and by providing additional support for meeting the needs and services for children in their care.				
Strategy 1. 1 Develop a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) approach to review the needs and services of all children that have been in placement in EFH for over 30 days. Assess placement resources for children in EFH. UPDATE: MDTs are in place to review the needs of children placed at VMCH or in EFH for over 30 days. A critical component to this process is the identification of appropriate placement resources for children in emergency placements. An ongoing barrier to moving children into non-emergency placements remains a lack of appropriate placement options.		Strategy Rationale¹ A team approach to identifying and providing for the needs and services of foster children shares responsibility for seeking out resources for children in foster care. It also includes the foster parents in developing case plans for the children in their care. The team will consist of the Emergency Foster Home Social Worker, the foster parent(s), a Concurrent Planning Social Worker, a Public Health Nurse, State Adoptions staff, the case carrying social worker and others, as appropriate.		
Milestone	1.1.1 Develop methods and goals for the MDT. Invite attendees and convene first MDT. UPDATE: Methods and goals are currently being developed for MDT meetings. MDT has begun meeting.	Timeframe	3 Months--October 2007 UPDATE: ongoing	Assigned to EFH Social Worker, EFH Supervisor and Section Manager

	<p>1.1.2 Assess the effectiveness of the MDT by informally surveying all participants and modify the format as suggested by the survey. UPDATE: This activity has not been done in a formal way. Informal feedback on the MDT process is ongoing resulting in periodic adjustments to process.</p>	<p>6 Months—December 2007 UPDATE: ongoing</p>	<p>EFT Social Worker, EFH Supervisor and Section Manager, MDT participants</p>
	<p>1.1.3 Assess the impact of the MDT on placement decisions and time spent in EFH. Develop reporting tool for EFH placement stays. UPDATE: Assessment methodology on the impact of MDT on placement decisions is being developed. The length of placement in EFH is currently reported via the VMCH/EFH daily roster report.</p>	<p>1 year—July 2008 UPDATE: reporting tool developed; assessment methodology to be selected by September 2008 with assessment done by December 2008.</p>	<p>EFH Social Worker</p>
<p>Strategy 1. 2 Increase training opportunities in early developmental issues. Develop behavioral interventions and assist in obtaining funding for respite care. UPDATE: Our department recently received a grant from the Sonoma County First 5 Commission to obtain training in the use of the Ages & Stages Questionnaire. The Emergency Foster Home Coordinator will be trained to provide training to all county foster homes on the screening process for children ages 0-5 who are placed with them. It is expected that the use of the ASQ will more quickly identify children who require a formal developmental assessment.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale ¹ Children coming into EFH care are often affected by <i>in utero</i> drug exposure, are medically fragile, or come from chaotic home environments. Providing care for these children can be time consuming and emotionally taxing. This strategy will focus on early identification of physical, emotional and developmental issues, in order to expedite services and behavioral interventions.</p>	
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>1.2.1. Apply for Foster Youth grants that support universal development screenings for all EFH children. Train foster parents in developmental issues for early identification and intervention of special needs. UPDATE: First 5 grant received.</p>	<p>Timeframe July 2007 (1 year grant) UPDATE: applied for First 5 grant in January 2008. July 2008 (3 year grant) UPDATE: Training will begin in July 2008.</p>	<p>Assigned to EFH Social Worker, EFH Supervisor and Section Manager</p>

	<p>1.2.2 Provide support for foster parents through provision of behavioral and early intervention services. Include a service provider in the new MDT. UPDATE: The EFH Coordinator will be trained in how to train foster parents in the use of the ASQ and will provide ongoing support to foster parents in the screening process.</p>		<p>August 2007 UPDATE: August 2008</p>		<p>EFH Social Worker, EFH Supervisor, Section Manager</p>
	<p>1.2.3 Support the efforts of the Redwood Empire Foster Parent Association to raise funds for respite care by assisting in grant writing or by providing financial assistance through Child Welfare programs. UPDATE: The Redwood Empire Foster Parent Association was provided with \$12,000 in child welfare funding to support respite care for its member foster parents.</p>		<p>September 2007 and ongoing 2007-2009 UPDATE: September 2008 and ongoing through 2009</p>		<p>EFH Social Worker, EFH Supervisor, Section Managers and Division Director.</p>
<p>Strategy 1.3 Increase the number of foster homes that will accept longer term placements and placements for older children UPDATE: The county has contracted with a research firm to conduct a needs assessment on foster care recruitment and retention. The assessment is slated to be complete by the end of June 2008 and will contain recommended strategies to enhance the capacity of our non-emergency foster care system and a possible restructuring of our relationships with local FFAs. The latter element is may positively impact our placements of older children.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale¹ Sonoma County needs more options for children who remain in foster care for longer periods, who do not have relative placements as a resource and who do not require a group home setting.</p>		
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>1.3.1 Survey existing foster parents regarding issues that enhance or inhibit longer-term placements. UPDATE: Consultant interviewed existing foster parents about issues that affect retention, including issues that enhance or inhibit longer-term placements.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>Fall 2007 UPDATE: May 2008</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>Supervisors, Managers</p>
	<p>1.3.2 Using information from the survey tool develop strategies to augment current recruitment efforts. UPDATE: The needs assessment currently being conducted by a local researcher is expected to include recommended strategies that would positively affect recruitment of foster parents.</p>		<p>Spring 2008 UPDATE: Summer 2008</p>		<p>Supervisors, Managers</p>

	<p>1.3.3 Include continuing discussion of issues in all meetings with foster parents. UPDATE: Issues identified through the needs assessment process will be incorporated into meetings with foster parents on an ongoing basis.</p>		<p>Ongoing 2007-2009 UPDATE: ongoing</p>		<p>All staff</p>
<p>Improvement Goal 2.0 Enhance relationships between case carrying social workers and foster parents. UPDATE: Social workers have been increasingly included in placement MDT meetings. The EFH Coordinator (social worker) acts as a primary support person to the county licensed emergency foster homes, our largest group of foster parents. She liaises with case social worker and foster parent to enhance communication between foster parents and social worker.</p>					
<p>Strategy 2.1 Engage case carrying social workers in all activities that support foster parents. UPDATE: Case carrying social workers attend MDT meetings involving children on their caseloads. Social workers are encouraged to attend the annual foster care appreciation picnic and foster parent luncheon which offers opportunities to connect social workers with foster families in a more personal way.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale ¹ Sonoma County has a core group of dedicated and active foster parents. HSD remains committed to enhancing interactions with foster parents and includes them in trainings offered through U.C. Davis Extension and Santa Rosa Junior College. Although respite care and a frozen monthly base rate for foster care continue to be important issues for foster parents, they have also expressed a need for closer communication between foster parents and case-carrying social workers. Representatives of the Redwood Empire Foster Parents Association also meet with HSD staff regularly, to brainstorm ideas for recruitment and retention of foster homes, and the president of the association meets with the Child Welfare Director on a quarterly basis. Foster parents feel supported by these activities, which can mitigate the effects of limited county resources.</p>		
Milestone	<p>2.1.1 Include social workers in meetings with foster parents. UPDATE: Social workers are increasingly attending meetings with foster parents about children placed in foster homes.</p>	Timeframe	Ongoing 2007-2009	Assigned to	FR Supervisors, Section Manager
	<p>2.1.2 Strongly encourage social workers to attend all trainings offered to foster parents. UPDATE: We have held several trainings open to both social workers and foster parents which have been well attended by both parties.</p>		Ongoing 2007-2009		FR Supervisors, Section Manager

<p>2.1.3 Social workers will have supervisory support to stay in active communication with foster parents. UPDATE: The department has emphasized the importance of active communication between social workers and foster parents. From the director to managers and supervisors, this priority is agencywide.</p>	<p>Ongoing 2007-2009</p>	<p>FR Supervisors</p>
<p>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. An increase in the base rate for foster parents. There has been no increase since 2001. UPDATE: We are exploring the plausibility of restructuring our local rate system to enhance our recruitment and retention efforts.</p>		
<p>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Foster care recruitment and retention using best practices; training for social work staff on the importance of foster parents as a valuable resource, and development of ways to work collaboratively with foster parents. UPDATE: Training will be offered during summer 2008 to foster parents on the use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. Developmental screenings will take place of all children ages 0-3 entering foster care.</p>		
<p>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. Inter-agency and community collaboration: partnering with the Redwood Empire Foster Parent Association and other community organizations is a central component of improving foster parent recruitment and retention. Leaders and members of the Redwood Empire Foster Parents' Association will be working with social work staff in implementing and evaluating SIP strategies.</p>		
<p>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. Increasing foster care rates is crucial for recruitment and retention of long-term foster care homes. The foster care rates should reflect the actual cost of living, in one of the most expensive counties in the country, while providing for all the needs of children in foster care.</p>		

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Service Array (Systemic Factor)					
County's Current Performance: The County has over 150 contracted service providers. However, some are more frequently utilized than others. More efficient use of the resources that are already developed is a goal for the System Improvement Plan. Improving culturally-sensitive services to the Native American, African American and Hispanic communities is essential. The County is raising the rates for therapy for the second year in a row to be more competitive in the market. The county PQCR process identified culturally appropriate and physically accessible services as a major issue in terms of successfully reuniting families.					
Improvement Goal 1.0 Increase the number of contracts with bilingual service providers.					
Strategy 1. 1 Conduct outreach through a structured recruitment process. UPDATE: A SIP workgroup, focused solely on the issue of service array, has been exploring the need for and availability of additional services to enhance families' capacity to complete case plan objectives without having to wait for services to become available. This workgroup has been looking at increasing the availability of services with cultural competencies to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking families.		Strategy Rationale Developing a pool of bilingual therapists and parent educators is essential if the county is to meet its goal of providing culturally responsive services to all families. There is a growing population of monolingual and mono-cultural families in Sonoma County who are in need of family services. There are also underserved populations of Native American and African American families within the county, which is spread out geographically. Many services tend to be clustered in urban areas, while many people live in the more rural areas with inconsistent transportation systems.			
Milestone	1.1.1 Determine new outreach methods of identifying and engaging possible providers in all geographic areas of the county. UPDATE: A needs assessment has been conducted to determine the gaps in service provision both geographically, linguistically, and in terms of capacity to accept referrals. The findings of the needs assessment highlighted the need for additional services in the north county. Additional and alternative outreach methods are currently being explored.	Timeframe	August 2007 UPDATE: To be completed by September 2008.	Assigned to	Section Managers, Analysts, Supervisors and Social Workers
	1.1.2 Elicit input by survey of providers, and summarize options. UPDATE: A survey will be designed to elicit input from service providers. The survey results will be analyzed and alternative options will be explored.		October 2007 UPDATE: October 2008		Section Managers, Analysts

	<p>1.1.3 Determine best option(s) to implement. UPDATE: This activity will commence following the completion of the needs assessment.</p>		<p>November 2007 UPDATE: November 2008</p>		<p>Section Managers, Analysts</p>
<p>Strategy 1. 2 Strengthen current and develop new collaborations with colleges and universities.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale Supporting colleges and universities in the education of linguistically and culturally appropriate therapists and social workers is essential.</p>		
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>1.2.1. Enhance communication with established networks to identify potential providers. UPDATE: HSD Trainer networks with colleges and universities to identify potential student interns and therapists to receive training hours in child welfare. It is believed that this strategy ultimately results in building community capacity to serve child welfare clients.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>December 2007 UPDATE: Ongoing</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>Analyst, Section Manager UPDATE:HSD Trainer</p>
	<p>1.2.2 Enhance and expand contacts with MSW and MFT intern programs at colleges and universities. UPDATE: Hosted 4 MSW interns during 2007-2008 year.</p>		<p>December 2007 UPDATE: 2007-2008</p>		<p>Division Director, Department Director, County Administrators</p>
	<p>1.2.3 Increase opportunities for bilingual MSW internships at HSD, and for bilingual MFT's to have supervision hours signed off. UPDATE: Hosted 5 social work interns during 2007-2008 year, of which 1 was bilingual. In the 2008-2009 year, 2 of the 9 anticipated interns are bilingual (Spanish/English).</p>		<p>June 2009 UPDATE: 2007-2008</p>		<p>Division Director, Department Director, Section Manager</p>
<p>Strategy 1. 3 Replicate the successful strategies for recruiting and retaining bilingual parent educators that Community Action Partnership (CAP) uses. UPDATE: The department has initiated dialogue with Community Action Partnership about the potential for CAP to subcontract for bilingual community resource workers to provide parent education.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale CAP has had success in developing bilingual family advocacy programs and in hiring and retaining bilingual staff. CAP is in a central location that is home to a heavily Hispanic population. An understanding of the reasons for their success in this area would enable HSD to assist other organizations within the community in their recruitment of bilingual MSW and MFT interns and staff.</p>		
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>1.3.1 Research CAP methods for bilingual parent educator and family advocate retention. UPDATE: Dialogue in process.</p>	<p>Timefram</p>	<p>August 2007 UPDATE: Recommendations expected October 2008.</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>Section Manager, Analysts</p>

	<p>1.3.2 Determine if methods are applicable and can be utilized at HSD. UPDATE: Dialogue in process.</p>		<p>September 2007 UPDATE: Recommendations expected October 2008.</p>		Section Managers, Analysts
	<p>1.3.3 Share CAP model and lessons learned with other community organizations and individual providers. UPDATE: Dialogue in process.</p>		<p>October 2007 UPDATE: Recommendations expected October 2008.</p>		Section Managers, Analysts
<p>Improvement Goal 2.0 Analyze service array to determine additional gaps or barriers.</p>					
<p>Strategy 2.1 Review contract list of service providers. UPDATE: A needs assessment has been conducted to determine the gaps in service provision both geographically, linguistically, and in terms of capacity to accept referrals. The findings of the needs assessment highlighted the need for additional services in the north county, the need for bilingual community resource workers, and the need for culturally appropriate services for African-American clients.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale ¹ Other than those already identified, other service deficits may exist. During the PQCR process, social workers identified lack of transportation for clients as a major issue. Limited availability of services in other than centralized urban areas was also identified as a challenge to providing appropriate services for clients.</p>		
Milestone	<p>2.1.1 Raise rates to be more competitive. UPDATE: Completed.</p>	Timeframe	<p>Completed July 2007</p>	Assigned to	Department Director, Division Director
	<p>2.1.2 Analyze needs of clients by getting feedback from social workers who refer to community services. UPDATE: A survey was conducted of the bilingual unit to determine what their clients' service needs are and how additional services should be designed.</p>		<p>October 2007 UPDATE: April 2008</p>		Section Managers
	<p>2.1.3 Strengthen communication with HSD Administration Division to provide better services to contractors: e.g., more streamlined contract process and faster payments. UPDATE: Completed.</p>		<p>December 2007 UPDATE: Completed.</p>		Division Director, Fiscal Analyst
<p>Strategy 2. 2 Devise strategy for better utilization of the existing contractors. UPDATE: Exploring benefits and drawback to implementing performance based contracting procedures.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale ¹ There may be options for utilization that are being overlooked. Social workers may have first hand knowledge about why some service providers are utilized more frequently. Providers may have input regarding the referral process and interactions with social workers.</p>		

Milestone	2.2.1 Update list of contractors frequently and make available to staff. UPDATE: Ongoing	Timeframe	Ongoing-every 6 months.	Assigned to	Analyst
	2.2.2 Include more specific details of services provided by each provider on contractor list. UPDATE: Completed/Ongoing		October 2007		Analyst, Section Managers
	2.2.3 Engage social workers to obtain knowledge of providers and reasons for utilizing/not utilizing them. UPDATE: This activity has not been implemented yet.		November 2007 UPDATE: Implementation date unknown.		Analysts, Section Managers
Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. Strong collaborations between community organizations, funders and other stakeholders.					
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Some training will likely be needed in streamlining the contract request process and in utilizing the current contract list.					
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. Partners will include HSD Administration Division, contractors who provide services					
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. None identified at this point.					
Improvement Goal 3.0 Improve culturally sensitive services for Native Americans and African Americans.					
Strategy 3.1 Engage tribes in HSD sponsored activities. UPDATE: This department coordinates an ICWA Roundtable discussion once per quarter. Starting in July 2008, the ICWA Roundtable will begin meeting once per month. ER workers, placement workers, social work supervisors, managers, tribal representatives, attorneys and service providers are all invited to participate in the ICWA Roundtable meetings.			Strategy Rationale ¹ To target potential services for Native American families that are culturally and linguistically sensitive and physically accessible.		
Milestone	3.1.1 Update ICWA handbook. UPDATE: This activity is currently underway.	Timeframe	December 2007 UPDATE: December 2008	Assigned to	Supervisors, Section Managers
	3.1.2 Sponsor an Indian Family Resource Fair. UPDATE: HSD Trainer is currently in the planning stage for this event. It is expected to take place in the Fall 2008.		Completed June 2007; sponsor annually UPDATE: Fall 2008		Division Director, Section Managers, Supervisors UPDATE: HSD Trainer

<p>3.1.3 Invite tribal members to participate in planning and strategizing for change. UPDATE: This department coordinates an ICWA Roundtable discussion once per month.</p>	<p>Ongoing 2007-2008</p>	<p>Section Managers, Division Director</p>
<p>Strategy 3. 2 Develop contacts in the African American and Native American communities. UPDATE: This department coordinates an ICWA Roundtable discussion once per month.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale ¹ The county needs to engage leaders in the African American and Native American communities to identify potential services for these underserved populations.</p>
<p>Milestone</p> <p>3.2.1 Re-establish Fairness and Equity Committee. UPDATE: This committee is currently being developed.</p> <p>3.2.2 Invite tribal representatives and members of the Native American and African American communities. UPDATE: This department coordinates an ICWA Roundtable discussion once per month.</p> <p>3.2.3 Follow up on lessons learned from the Fairness and Equity survey, in 2006, on developing community services and on enhancing interactions between HSD and stakeholders. UPDATE: This department is actively evaluating disproportionality and will devise recommendations to address identified issues.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p> <p>December 2007 UPDATE: December 2008</p> <p>2007-2008 UPDATE: Ongoing</p> <p>2007-2009 UPDATE: 2008-2009</p>	<p>Assigned to</p> <p>Division Director</p> <p>Section Managers</p> <p>Division Director, Section Managers</p>
<p>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. Strong community collaboration in developing comprehensive services for underserved populations..</p>		
<p>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Training for community stakeholders on CPS services; training and education of staff on culturally appropriate services and outcome measures.</p>		
<p>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. Stakeholders, funders, CBO's, tribal leaders, educators.</p>		
<p>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. None identified at this point.</p>		

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Increase parent contact with the Juvenile Probation Division					
County's Current Performance: Although the probation department values parent engagement and support for the youth in out of home care, there has not been a method of assertively soliciting parental contacts with the probation officers. UPDATE: Methods implemented to improve the county's performance in this area include probation officers actively soliciting parental involvement with their child in placement through increased monthly telephone calls to parents, letters from the supervising probation officer in addition to the Parent Letter sent by the placement unit clerk; flexing work schedules to accommodate working parents and encouraging non-custodial parents and other significant adults in the minor's life participating in the case planning process. Some of these strategies were not targeted as goals within this SIP; however, probation officers have incorporated these additional methods in attempting to increase parent contacts.					
Improvement Goal 1.0 Increase and enhance parent meetings between probation officers and families.					
Strategy 1. 1 Revise contact letter and procedure. UPDATE: An initial parent contact letter is currently sent by the placement clerk. Placement officers send additional letters to the parents on a monthly basis, scheduling appointments to meet with the probation officer and reminding parents of the crucial role they play through the participation in the family counseling component of their child's program.		Strategy Rationale Efficient methods of contact with the parents are necessary to gain their support and enlist participation with their youth in placement.			
Milestone	1.1.1 Revise procedure. UPDATE: Revising the procedure is in process.	Timeframe	Quarter 1 2008/2009	Assigned to	Placement Supervisor
	1.1.2 Revise contact letter. UPDATE: Revising the contact letter is in process; procedure regarding additional letter from probation office in process.		Quarter 2 2008/2009		Placement Supervisor
	1.1.3 Train staff on new procedure. UPDATE: Training to commence when procedure revision is completed and memorialized.		Quarter 3 2008/2009		Placement Supervisor
Strategy 1. 2 Incorporate case plan review with parents. UPDATE: Probation officers have increased engagement with parents in the case planning process as evidenced by case plan goals being developed with the parents and minor. Case plan goals are then memorialized by parents and minor's signatures on the document. Case plan goals and objectives are reviewed and revised every six months or when circumstances change necessitating development of new goals.		Strategy Rationale Parental participation in the case planning and goal setting for the family is crucial in facilitating family reunification.			

Milestone	<p>1.2.1. Develop Case Plan in first meeting with parents. UPDATE: As per the requirement of Title IV-E, case plans are generated from the Investigations officers and then review of the case plan is incorporated at the initial meeting with the parents and minor.</p>	Timeframe	Quarter 2 2008/2009	Assigned to	Placement Supervisor; Probation Officers
	<p>1.2.2 Train staff on involving parents in case planning. UPDATE: Probation officers were trained at a Division meeting on how to incorporate parents' and minors' involvement in the case plan process, procuring mandated signatures, and adherence to timelines.</p>		Quarter 2 2008/2009		Placement Supervisor
	1.2.3				
<p>Strategy 1. 3 Increase number of contacts with parents. UPDATE: Probation officers increased their contacts with parents through additional letters to the parents informing them of their child's progress in placement and encouraging them to participate with the program. Follow up phone calls were also increased to strengthen relationships among parents, child, probation officer and the placement staff.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale Encourage parents to develop a solid working relationship with the probation officer in order t to keep apprised of the minor's progress in placement, as well as to stay focused on the case plan and the achievement of goals.</p>		
Milestone	<p>1.3.1 Analyze current contacts. UPDATE: Analyzing number of current contacts is in process.</p>	Timeframe	Quarter 1 2008/2009	Assigned to	Placement Supervisor
	<p>1.3.2 Increase number of contacts between parents and probation officers. UPDATE: Parent contacts have increased by 30% through additional letters soliciting their participation in their child's program. Phone contact with parents has increased by 10%.</p>		Quarter 4 2008/2009		Placement Supervisor; Probation Officers

1.3.3		
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Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.
 N/A

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

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.
 N/A

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

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Timely social worker visits with child (Outcome Measure 2C)					
County's Current Performance: Performance in this area is below the State identified target of 90% or higher. Sonoma County has hovered in the high eighty percent for a couple years, after having been recalibrated based on the new methodology identified in ACIN 1-34-07. As this methodology was adopted after our PQCR, Self Assessment and 2007 SIP, Measure 2C was not a focus of our most recent SIP. Based on our conversations with CDSS about the decline in performance resulting from the change in methodology, Sonoma County has taken steps to address the social work practices that are believed to affect our performance in this area.					
Improvement Goal 1.0 Increase the rate of timely social worker visits with children.					
Strategy 1. 1 Convene a workgroup to study the problem, understand the methodology and propose changes to practice. UPDATE: A workgroup was convened in mid-2007 with the goal of studying the problem (weak performance), understanding the calculation methodology as described in ACIN 1-34-07, and proposing changes to practice. After completing initial analyses, the workgroup concluded that the visits themselves are occurring timely but the change in the state's methodology requiring an approved case plan for the visits to count has affected our performance in Measure 2C.			Strategy Rationale Social worker practice has been based on an outdated understanding of how visits are counted in the quarterly audits. Only when the new calculation methodology is understood, relative to current practice, can practice changes be explored and recommended.		
Milestone	1.1.3 Convene workgroup. UPDATE: Workgroup convened.	Timeframe	Completed in February 2008.	Assigned to	Workgroup
	1.1.4 Study the nature of the problem. UPDATE: Workgroup performed initial evaluation and concluded that the visits themselves are occurring timely but the change in the state's methodology requiring an approved case plan for the visits to count has affected Sonoma County's performance in Measure 2C.		Completed in April 2008.		Workgroup
	1.1.3 Identify barriers to entering new/updated case plans. UPDATE: Workgroup analyzed the scope of the problem related to expired/missing case plans.		Completed in May 2008.		Workgroup
Strategy 1. 2 Revise policy and procedure to reflect new practices related to entering case plans in CWS/CMS. UPDATE: Workgroup reviewed existing policy on developing new and updating existing case plans, and reviewed Division 31 regulations related to case plans. Workgroup identified steps in the existing policy that required a change in order to result in case plans being entered and			Strategy Rationale For practice to become institutionalized, it must be accurately reflected in Policies & Procedures.		

approved timely. Policy was revised, reviewed, approved by Division Director, and put into effect.					
Milestone	<p>1.2.1. Review existing policy on developing and updating case plans. UPDATE: Workgroup reviewed existing policy on developing new and updating existing case plans and process for supervisor approval.</p>	Timeframe	Completed May 2008.	Assigned to	Workgroup
	<p>1.2.2 Review Division 31 regulations related to case plans. UPDATE: Workgroup reviewed Division 31 regulations related to case plans.</p>		Completed June 2008.		Workgroup
	<p>1.2.3 Identify and make changes to existing policy and procedure to affect desired outcome. UPDATE: Workgroup identified steps in the existing policy that required a change in order to result in case plans being entered timely. Policy was revised, reviewed, approved by Division Director, and put into effect.</p>		Completed July 2008.		Workgroup
<p>Strategy 1. 3 Provide training to social work staff on new policy. UPDATE: All units were trained on the new policy via Unit Meeting and CWS/CMS classes were offered.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale A new policy cannot be effective unless staff are aware of it and understand how to make changes called for.</p>		
Milestone	<p>1.3.1 New policy given to CWS/CMS trainer to study and devise training. UPDATE: CWS/CMS training was offered to social work staff.</p>	Timeframe	Completed July 2008.	Assigned to	CWS/CMS Trainer
	<p>1.3.2 Unit meetings covered the new policy in unit meetings with social work staff. UPDATE: All units included the new case plan policy on at least one unit meeting agenda.</p>		Completed August 2008.		Unit Supervisors
	1.3.3				
<p><u>Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.</u> N/A</p>					

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

N/A

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

N/A

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

N/A