

## California's Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan

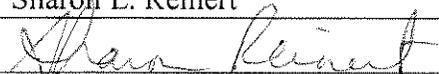
<b>County:</b>	Plumas County
<b>Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:</b>	Plumas County Department of Social Services
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# Plumas County System Improvement Plan

## Local Planning Bodies

The Self-Assessment utilized input from the Self-Assessment Team, Plumas County Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC), Differential Response Collaborative, and Plumas County Department of Social Services (DSS) Children's Services staff. The System Improvement Plan (SIP) utilized input from DSS, the SIP team, and the Differential Response Collaborative.

**The Self-Assessment Team** included representation from Child Welfare Services, including the Director, Program Manager, and Child Welfare Supervisor; and the Probation Department including the Chief Probation Officer and the Supervising Juvenile Probation Officer.

**The Differential Response Collaborative** is comprised of more than 17 people representing partners across many organizations committed to prevention, intervention, and reunification including: Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC); Plumas Crisis Intervention & Resource Center (PCIRC); Roundhouse Council; CalWORKS; Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA); Child Welfare Services; Domestic Violence Services; Family Focus Network (FFN); Plumas Rural Services (PRS); ABC Family Resource Center (FRC); Indian Valley Resource Center; Portola Resource Center.

**Plumas County Child Abuse Prevention Council** is comprised of more than 25 people representing a broad range of partners across many organizations and sectors of the community including: PC Probation Department, PC Social Services, Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center (PCIRC), PC Child Care and Development Planning Council, Roundhouse Council, Plumas Rural Services (PRS) CHAT, PC Children's System of Care (SOC), PRS Family Focus Network, Family Resource Centers, parents, PC Public Health Agency (PCPHA), Head Start, and Almanor Basin Community Resource Center.

**The System Improvement Plan Team** included representatives from PCDSS Child Welfare Services and the Probation Department.

## Findings That Support Qualitative Change

### Child Abuse Prevention Council Data Review

As part of the self-assessment process, members of the Plumas County Child Abuse Prevention Council analyzed the CWS Outcomes and C-CFSR Data Indicators. They identified factors that currently impact this data and factors that would lead to improvement in the lives of families and children. They prioritized these needs into arenas for future activity.

Alcohol and Drug Issues appeared repeatedly as an ongoing and increasing problem for Plumas County families which has a direct negative impact on children's safety and placement. They identified addressing the methamphetamine issue and an increase in alcohol and drug issues as key to improving conditions.

Youth Transition is an ongoing concern. Under-prepared youth find it difficult to move into adulthood. Concerns for transition age youth include needs for additional life skills training,

career counseling, and vocational training opportunities. Ongoing support from adults, mentors, and peers is an important factor in helping youth transition to adulthood.

Strong Families and Parental Buy-In are critical components of child abuse prevention and intervention. Additional parent education opportunities would strengthen families.

Placements that Meet Children's Needs are limited in Plumas County. An insufficient number of foster families have an understanding of children with special needs. Additional recruitment and training was seen as important.

Relationships with the Rancheria emerged as an area that everyone agreed needs improvement.

Funding remains a concern among CAPC members as they look to an uncertain financial future and growing child welfare needs.

### **Differential Response Collaborative**

The Differential Response Collaborative identified areas of improvement in case review and planning and the overall service array. They saw a need for an initial treatment MDT/Family Team Meeting to ensure that the family and collaborating agencies all understand the case plan and their roles in it. The increasing need for alcohol and drug prevention and intervention services impacts the ability of agencies to provide effective services and needs to be addressed. The large spread-out mountainous geography coupled with a small population affects the accessibility of services, as does the high turnover of staff in several agencies. Improved access and continuity of service was identified as needed.

### **Staff Input**

Child Welfare Services staff were asked about their current technology, training, and relationships with other agencies. While they are mostly satisfied with all three, there were several areas of possible improvement. In technology CMS has cumbersome features that take multiple entries of the same data; within the department aides and the PHN have CMS access only through other people's computers; the SDM and CWS/CMS linkage is slow. Training is very satisfactory and staff would like more, especially in ICWA and court reporting. They would like a staff retreat. While relationships with the court are good, there are systemic issues that are frustrating, such as congestion in the court building, and the increase of requests from the court that social workers address needs outside their caseloads.

### **Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR)**

PQCR focus areas were re-entries for foster care within 12 months of reunification for PCDSS and family reunification for Probation. Recommendations addressed areas of practice, training needs, system and policy changes, technical assistance, and resource issues.

Child Welfare Practice Recommendations included family meetings for case planning on all cases; additional pre-reunification transitional planning and parental supports coupled with supportive in-home services when children are reunified; team meetings for placement moves; ongoing petition and case plan updates; use of victims-of-crime funds for victim/witness money to pay for counseling; and encouragement of court appointed attorneys to talk to their clients.

Child Welfare Training Needs Recommendations: ICWA and local tribal culture; social worker self-care and stress management; juggling multiple placements; and additional SDM training.

Child Welfare System and Policy Changes Recommendations focused on areas that would increase service availability in a small, resource-limited county. Internal system and policy recommendations included improvement of staff recruitment and retention; exploration of providing an in-house alcohol and drug counselor/coordinator; exploration of increased alcohol and drug testing; consideration of how to provide more social worker aides and transporters; and consideration of how to reduce ICWA eligibility determination time. Recommendations for working with partners and community agencies included considerations of how to team with other resources to increase services; increase accountability of services provided by the community; partner with other agencies/counties to offer more alcohol and drug treatment; bring Parent-Child Interaction Training program to Plumas County; improve communication with county counsel, and work with Mental Health to provide more services.

Child Welfare State Technical Assistance Recommendations included access of mental health services for children placed out of county; ICWA training; SDM training; social worker self-care training; and transportation needs.

Child Welfare Resource Issues Recommendations included the development of youth resources, including alcohol and drug services, anger management, and additional ILP services. Additional resource recommendations: develop transportation services for families, offer meeting space and services to incarcerated parents, develop residential treatment for parents, and find a new cell phone provider with better coverage for social workers. Additionally, PQCR recommended creating a housing shortage community taskforce.

Probation Practice Recommendations included monthly meetings with collaterals and community partners; a shift to a strengths-based approach; adoption of a family group decision-making model; additional reunification options for children such as extended family members and connected community members; individualized new case plans; and an adjusted agency attitude towards family. The family is seen as a hindrance to reunification. Therefore, the agency actively makes decisions to minimize contact within families.

Probation Training Needs Recommendations: require new staff to attend UC Davis Core Training; cross-train between the legal community, the Judge and Probation; how to work with families on conflict resolution; mediation for families; case plan development with families; family group decision and team decision making models; and Title IV-E training.

Probation System and Policy Changes Recommendations included internal changes to address the rapid turnover and staff shortages and shifts in partnerships and community relationships. Internal recommendations included exploration of ways to improve staff recruitment and retention through improved work conditions; increase staffing so that the supervisor does not have to carry a caseload; adopt a family group decision-making model; develop effective alcohol and drug programs particularly for teens; offer probation officers flexible schedules to facilitate seeing families in the evening. Because staff shortages and leadership changes have resulted in

high anxiety among staff, PQCR recommended work on team building and communication strategies that will resolve department turmoil and employee conflict. Recommendations for partnership improvements include work with Mental Health to extend the hours of Wraparound services and to offer services tailored to the Probation family population; remove conflict of interest when a pre-placement worker is contracted with an FFA, who may later be paid to place the child; and locate funding source for transportation (e.g., gas reimbursement).

Probation State Technical Assistance Recommendations: develop a computerized database/case management system for Probation; assist the County with developing and funding effective alcohol and drug services; provide funding for training; assist the County with employee recruitment and funding; Title IV-E training to clarify the parameters of funding; and assist the County with developing local group homes.

Probation Resource Issues Recommendations included the development of more transportation options for families; effective alcohol and drug services or counselor; parenting classes for teens; family counseling options; NA/AA meetings for teens; after school and extracurricular activities for teens such as a Boys/Girls Club; more resources for people who live out of the city area; and local group homes.

## **Use of Findings in the System Improvement Plan**

The SIP includes plans to improve five areas of concern that came from the self-assessment findings.

1. Development of initial family team meetings is addressed in the SIP as a way to increase family and partner agencies early in the case planning process which will improve supports for families, enhance collaboration with other agencies, and empower families to take control of their lives. This is a focus of Child Protective Services
2. Greater collaboration and coordination is addressed in the SIP as a way to enhance the Differential Response Collaborative, provide more effective services, address needs for alcohol and drug services, and increase supports for families. This is a focus of Child Protective Services
3. Independent Living Program services for youth transitioning out of foster care is addressed in the SIP as a way to improve outcomes for youth and support their development into adulthood. This is a focus of both Probation and Child Protective Services.
4. Improved knowledge of the Indian Child Welfare Act and relationships with the Native American community will lead to improved outcomes for Native American families and children. This is a focus of both Probation and Child Protective Services.
5. Improved recruitment and retention of experienced social workers and MSW social workers is addressed in the SIP as a way to provide continuity of services; increase service availability and effectiveness; and enhance the professionalism of the department. This is a focus of Child Protective Services

These five areas are included in four plan components:

1. Measure C1.4: Reentry following reunification. Reentries will decrease as a result of increased parent education and enhanced alcohol and drug services.
2. Measures 8A: Youth emancipating from foster care are prepared to transition to adulthood. Youth will be better prepared for adulthood through increased ILP services. Their involvement in comprehensive case planning will lead to an increased sense of efficacy, self-sufficiency and empowerment.
3. Systemic Factor: Collaboration. Increased child safety and supports for at-risk families and more effective services will result from an increase in children's services coordination and collaboration. The development and implementation of initial family team meetings will ensure that families and providers develop a case plan with a clear understanding of their roles. A strengthened and expanded Differential Response Collaborative will increase inter-agency understanding and lead to an increased ability to provide improved and collaborative services for families and children.
4. Systemic Factor: Service Availability. Increased child safety and stability will result from an improvement in relationships with the Native American community and the development of a full and stable PCDSS Children's Services staff.

## V. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

### Child Welfare Outcomes

#### **Safety 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.**

##### **S1.1 No recurrence of Maltreatment & S2.1 No maltreatment in Foster Care**

The trend from 2003 to 2006 has been a decrease in the number of children who were victims of another substantiated maltreatment allegation, exceeding the state performance and the national standard in two of the four years for which data is available. This reflects an increased focus on earlier treatment MDT team meetings, collaborative work with other agencies and parents, and continuing provision of services.

Plumas County has no reported maltreatment in foster care. We continue to be aware of the need for data entry of any reports that might be received.

**2009 Update:** No children were victims of another maltreatment allegation from July 2007 through June 2008. There was no reported maltreatment in foster care.

#### **Safety 2: Children are maintained safely in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.**

##### **2B – Percent of Child Abuse/Neglect Referrals with a Timely Response &**

##### **2C- Timely Social Worker Visits with Child**

The data shows an increase on timely social worker visits. In actuality, social worker visits have been timely, but did not always get recorded into the state data system. Data entry is now more timely, due to internal procedural changes. DSS ensures that visits are taking place through a series of policies and procedures.

**2009 Update:** Plumas County continues to show a rise in timely social work visits, with Quarter 2, 2008 immediate response compliance rate of 100% and 10-day response compliance rate of 85.7%.

**Permanency 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations without increasing reentry to foster care.**

**Permanency Composite 1:**

- Measure 1: C1.1 – Reunification within 12 Months (exit cohort)**
- Measure 2: C1.2 – Median Time to Reunification**
- Measure 3: C1.3: - Reunification within 12 Months (entry cohort)**
- Measure 4: C1.4 – Reentry Following Reunification**

PCDSS has an excellent reunification record; few adoptions; and reasonable stability for children in foster care. While there are high rates of reunification, there are also high rates of reentry. This pattern suggests that, over time, there are increasing numbers of difficult family situations that require ongoing rather than short-term services. Substance abuse and mental health issues are difficult issues to address and often require intensive long-term interventions.

**2009 Update:** Reunification rates fell to 70% in Jan-June 2007 compared to the baseline rate of 76.2% in Jan-June 2002. Reunification rates are still substantially above the state rate of 43.4%. Reentry rates were a concern for Plumas County and those rates fell from baseline of 24.1% for July 2001-June 2002 to 19.0% in July 2006-June 2007. This was the second lowest July-June reentry rate since 2001-2002. The reentry rates have fluctuated since baseline from a high of 50% for Jan-Dec 2005 to a low of 4.8% for Jan-Dec 2004. The following tables summarize the reentry rates for each 12-month reporting period. The statistical information was obtained from the CWS Outcomes System for Plumas County.

	Twelve-Month Periods			
	JAN- DEC	APR- MAR	JUL- JUN	OCT- SEP
Most Recent:				
2006, 2006-2007	13.8	12.5	19	27.3
2005, 2005-06	50	36.4	30	16.7
2004, 2004-05	4.8	20.8	16.7	29.2
2003, 2003-04	21.2	25.9	33.3	15.8
2002, 2002-03	30.4	25	21.3	28.6
Baseline:				
2001, 2001-02	5.6	23	24.1	23.1

**Permanency Component 2:**

- Measure 1: C2.1 – Adoption within 24 Months (exit cohort)**
- Measure 2: C2.2 – Median Time to Adoption**
- Measure 3: C2.3 – Adoption within 12 Months (17 months in care)**

**Measure 4: C2.4 – Legally Free within Six Months (17 months in care)**

**Measure 5: C2.5 – Adoption within 12 Months (legally free)**

**2009 Update:** There have been children adopted in Plumas County; however, they were not adopted within 24 months of placement. The Plumas County Department of Social Services contracts with the California State Department of Social Services/Adoptions Bureau in Chico, California, to facilitate and complete adoptions. The Department is therefore unable to oversee the timeliness of adoption completions. There is also a reluctance of foster parents in Plumas County to adopt, since their payment for care is substantially reduced. Plumas County had no county homes, and foster parents are certified through the Foster Family Agencies who provide a higher rate of payment. There is also a perception by foster parents that there will be fewer opportunities for the children if they are adopted in terms of the ILP Programs and college grants.

Completed adoptions are as follows:

2006: 4

2007: 7

2008: 6

### **Permanency Composite 3:**

**Measure 1: C3.1 – Exits to Permanency (24 months in care)**

**Measure 2: C3.2 – Exits to Permanency (legally free at exit)**

**Measure 3: C3.3 – In Care Three Years or Longer (emancipation/age 18)**

**2009 Update:** Measure C3.1 showed no change from baseline to 2007-08. At baseline and from Jul 2007 to Jun 2008, there were 8 children ages 0-17 in care for 24 months, none of whom exited care during that time. Measure C3.2 showed 3 children in care and all three exited in the baseline year. From Jul 2007 to June 2008 there were no children in this category. Measure C3.3 showed that 60% or 3 of the 5 children/youth in care for 3 years or longer, exited care at emancipation/age 18. From July 2007 to June 2008, 50 % or 2 of the 4 children/youth exited care at emancipation/age 18. While children in permanency may not be adopted or benefit from a plan of guardianship, children are placed in a permanent planned living arrangement with an adult that provides an ongoing relationship with a caring adult who services as a life long connection.

### **Permanency Composite 4:**

**Measure 1: C4.1 – Placement Stability (8 days to 12 months in care)**

**Measure 2: C4.2 – Placement Stability (12 to 24 months in care)**

**Measure 3: C4.3- Placement Stability (at least 24 months in care)**

**2009: Update:** Plumas County has dropped below the National Standard of stability for children in foster care. Compared to baseline of 88.9%, the most recent data shows a drop to 83.8% in placement stability for 8 days to 12 months of care. There is a rise of baseline of 20% to the most current date of 30.0% in placement stability of at least 24 months of care. Children are placed in emergency shelters then to a foster home. Often the child is ultimately placed with a relative of Non-related Extended Family Member, often creating three different placements within a short time after detention. It is critical that a good match between caregiver and child occur, to ensure placement stability. Unfortunately, there is often a move in care so this “match” can occur. There continues to be a need for accountability by the foster family agencies in ensuring foster parents are committed in providing consistent and ongoing care.

### **Process Measure:**

#### **8A – children Transitioning to Self Sufficient Adulthood**

Plumas County contracts with Plumas Crisis Intervention Resource Center (PCIRC) for Independent Living Services. Other agencies such as Mental Health and the Alliance for Workshop Development provide some services. The Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) was initiated in 2004.

This is an area that requires focus and improvements. Housing and available mentoring remains a serious problem. Once children age out of the foster care system there are very few supports available to them. During the past year, ILP has faltered somewhat due to staff illness and turnover. There is need for a fulltime ILP coordinator. This is a funding issue as Plumas County receives minimal funds for this program. Plumas County has received approval to implement the THP+ program to provide support to transitioned foster youth. However, initially the Department was approved for only two slots.

**2009 Update:** In 2007-08, 40 transition age youth received ILP Services; 3 received a high school diploma or GED; 4 enrolled in college; 2 completed vocational training; and 3 were employed. This is a slight drop from previous years in all categories, except for the number receiving ILP services. The drop is due to ILP services being offered to younger youth; many of the youth are still in high school.

### **Permanency 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.**

#### **4A – Siblings Placed Together in Foster Care**

#### **4B – Foster Care Placement in Least Restrictive Settings Least Restrictive Entries (First Placement) and (Point in Placement)**

Plumas County dropped from having over 80 percent of children in foster care placed with all siblings to slightly less than two-thirds of children in foster care placed with some or all siblings. Between 2003 and 2006 there has been a shift to almost exclusively placing children initially in FFAs, and an increase in point of time placements with FFAs instead of relatives. Compared to baseline, Plumas County is more likely to place children initially in a FFA home. For point-in-time placements, over three quarters of the children are with an FFA. The downward shift in sibling placement is due to large sibling groups who were difficult to place as Plumas County does not have sufficient foster homes willing to take on large families. In addition, increased use of FFAs over relative placement reflects PCDSS's current policy of initially placing children only in homes that have been properly reviewed and approved as suitable foster family placements. Many of these children are initially placed with FFAs and then moved to a relative placement as soon as that placement is approved.

**2009 Update:** The percentage of children in foster care placed with all siblings rose to over half in 2008 with two-thirds of children in foster care placed with some or all siblings. In 2008, the percentage of children initially placed in FFAs dropped to 86.1% and the percentage of children placed with relatives rose to 13.9% from the 2006 figures of 95.2% and 3.2% respectively. Point in time placement indicated a similar trend with 67.4% in FFAs and 18.6% in relative placement compared to 2006 figures of 77% and 11.5% respectively.

#### **4E – Rate of ICWA Placement Preferences**

There were very few children identified as American Indian who were placed in foster care from 2003 through 2006, which may be a result of, among other things, families not trusting the system or staying within their own community. PCDSS needs to have greater communication with the Rancheria.

**2009 Update:** There continues to be very few children identified as American Indian who are placed in foster care.

#### **Well-being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.**

Plumas County has a variety of services available to families, including family advocates located at family resource centers in each community; home visitation through a variety of home visitors, including the newborn house call program, public health nurses, and Family Focus Network in-home educators; and parenting classes. Child welfare continues to explore with the community partners the means to improve and implement services needed by families to enhance their capacity to provide for their children's needs.

**Well-being 2: Children receive services appropriate to their educational needs.**

PCDSS works with the Plumas Unified School District and the foster youth educational liaison, who are responsible for assessing each child’s educational needs and to ensure appropriate educational placement and services as defined by their IEP.

**Well-being 3: Children receive services adequate to their physical, emotional, and mental health needs.**

**5F – Authorization for Psychotropic Medication**

PCDSS has an excellent relationship with the Plumas County Department of Mental Health, Plumas County Health Department and community partners who can address the needs of children. Staff has received training in the use of SDM and Safe Measures and uses both tools. Staff needs additional training on how to better utilize tools and work in conjunction with the Differential Response Model.

**A. Discussion of System Strengths and Areas Needing Improvements**

**1. Strengths of System**

The combination of the commitment of DSS and other agencies to improving conditions for children and family, and conditions inherent in a small rural community provide a number of strengths.

Small County Advantage. People know each other in small communities. This facilitates formal and informal access to the child welfare system by community-based organizations. Professionals in the community have often worked at more than one agency during their careers, which facilitates collaboration and coordination of services.

DSS social workers provide close support. Often with this close support, families are able to make remarkable progress that tends to lead to high reunification rates. Once reunification takes place these same factors can lead to a high reentry rate as the worker is in the same community often and therefore becomes aware of incidents that would easily be lost in a larger community.

Differential Response Collaboration. The development of the Differential Response Collaboration across agencies has created a team focus that allows for better coordination of services to families. This collaboration has demonstrated the willingness of diverse agencies to work together to improve outcomes for children and families.

Cross Agency Discussion and Access at the Managerial Level. People who come together to make decisions about families in community forums have the authority to commit resources to problem solving. Program Managers and Directors of county agencies are involved in a number of cross agency collaborations such as the Children’s System of Care and Management Council.

Additional Strengths

- Accountability by professionals to parents, system, staff, and resources. Agencies are not large bureaucracies in Plumas County. Directors know where the resources are going.

Oversight and communication are easy to maintain due to smallness of the agencies and the communication between the agencies.

- Open communication and access among departments at the managerial level and at the line staff level.
- Staff across agencies who are dedicated to improving the lives of their clients and willing to work together to develop creative solutions in a county with limited resources.
- A large number of diverse services given the small size of the county.
- A therapist from mental health attends child welfare staffings on a bi-monthly basis, which allows for a clearer understanding of the needs of the client and closer coordination of services.

## 2. Areas Needing Improvement

Treatment Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings. Plumas County now has a standardized, comprehensive assessment approach to safety through the use of Structured Decision-Making. Referrals are made in accordance with family need and through the procedures developed by the Differential Response Collaborative. An initial treatment MDT meeting is essential to help families quickly connect with the necessary services and provide the family and service providers with common goals and a realistic family plan to reach those goals. Currently, treatment MDT meetings are held, but not consistently, and not all meetings are early enough in the treatment process to provide the best care for families.

**2009 Update:** The Differential Response Collaborative is in the process of researching and developing an initial family team conferencing protocol. The Shasta County protocol is being evaluated as a model for Plumas County.

The after disposition treatment MDT meetings are now being held on a consistent basis. Treatment MDT team meetings are held on a monthly or quarterly basis according to the needs of the family. When the hearing comes up everyone is aware of the issues and the progress. The regular meetings have led to family success:

1. Service providers are working in coordination with the family in support of reunification. Such coordination facilitates reunification and helps to ensure the children are returning to a safe and stable environment.
2. The families are able to voice their concerns and needs amongst providers in an environment where they feel supported, which in turn, facilitates cooperation and follow through with case objectives.
3. Interval goals are made at the meetings, which ultimately lead to compliance with the case plan, i.e., supervised visitation, can go to unsupervised, overnights, and then ultimately weekends, if goals are being met.

Service Fragmentation and Coordination. While Plumas County has made great strides in developing good working relationships across agencies, there is always a need for continued focus on coordination of services. The Differential Response Collaborative is developing a

system that can be in place prior to the emergence of a crisis situation. The gap between formal/professional systems and informal/community systems must be bridged by integrating community services into the care plan and enabling the community to be more responsible for the care of families/children.

The Differential Response Collaborative needs to continue to expand its work to build teams across agencies to increase services. Additionally, PCDSS and the Collaborative need to find ways to increase accountability for services such as sharing progress reports on services, outcome evaluations, and updates on availability of services for referrals. Consistent data entry is slowly being implemented.

**2009 Update:** The Differential Response Collaborative (DRC) continues to meet on a monthly basis. The Collaborative uses part of each month's meeting to educate its members on the services each agency can provide. For example, staff from the Family Resource Centers listed specific services they offer such as helping people with Medi-Cal applications.

Families who can use local resources are more likely to follow-through and to have more successful outcomes. By sharing the information about services, the DRC members are able to work together to create a tailored set of locally based services for each family. The relationships created through the DRC monthly meetings has allowed CWS to better coordinate case plans and services that families receive.

The DRC has developed and is using a referral process form. There is a consistently kept paper log of referrals. There is a feedback loop included in the referral process so that CWS and its partners know when a family has received services.

Transitioning Youth. This is an area that requires additional attention. The Transitional Housing Placement Program currently exists, and PCDSS's THP Plus program is expected to be implemented in 2008. However, transitional youth require additional ILP services such as consistent support, educational opportunities, and mentoring.

**2009 Update:** The THP Plus program was implemented in January 2009. The program provides service to two youth and anticipates serving an additional 2 youths starting in July 2009.

Environmental Alternatives Foster Family Agency and Mountain Circle, Foster Family Agency, have contracted with the Department to provide THPP and THPP Plus services, including Independent Living Skills, housing, and case management. Mountain Circle Foster Family Agency worked with the local resource center and Lassen College to provide a large home where transition age youth can live for up to two years and attend Lassen College. The home includes on-site mentors.

An ILP coordinator has been hired on a full-time basis. She has been coordinating and tracking youth plans. She develops individualized plans in collaboration with youth and relevant adults and services; provides consistent support and mentoring for youth; and provides and teaches

classes to help youth transition to adulthood. She is tracking progress and data in greater detail than was available previously. CWS has seen the difference she is making in the lives of youth who are now getting the services they need. The Probation Department also utilizes the ILP coordinator and she has assisted in placement of several probation youth who reached the age of majority and were transitioning into independent living.

Additionally, transition age youth have maintained relationships with former foster parents, FFA social workers, and other relevant adults. These ongoing relationships help youth to transition more successfully to adulthood.

ICWA Process. PCDSS recognizes the need for additional training in the ICWA process and in understanding local tribal culture. Both staff and the PQCR recommended additional training in this area. The relationship with the Roundhouse Council is good, but PCDSS would like to see improved working relationships with the Native American community.

**2009 Update:** ICWA Training has continued. PCDSS renewed the contract with Chris LaMarr for ongoing consultation with ICWA questions. CWS social workers are scheduled to attend the UCD online ICWA training in May 2009. The Judicial Council will be offering an ICWA training this year which will be open to community professionals including social workers, probation workers, attorneys, judges, and other court staff. CWS staff will attend. Probation Officers are registered to attend ICWA training on June 3, 2009, through the AOC.

Two children living in Plumas County and receiving DSS services are members of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, whose Rancheria is located in San Diego. CWS staff has had good relationships with the contact person, Michelle Carr, and other tribal representatives whenever their children have required services. They are available to discuss treatment concerns and have flown to Plumas County for hearings.

Relationships with the Greenville Rancheria continue to be challenging. CWS will continue to seek out leaders.

Foster Homes. The overall number of foster homes is inadequate (at times) to place all children from a family unit together. Sometimes children are placed outside of Plumas County because there no homes available to meet the needs of the children.

There is an increase in the number of special needs children and there are insufficient families for them, especially for children with behavioral problems or mental illness.

**2009 Update:** CWS has increased relative placements and the Foster Family Agencies have recruited new foster parents which has resulted in fewer out of county placements. The numbers of special needs children has not increased. Current foster families are committed to their special needs foster children and have sought out appropriate services to help them help the children in

their care.

CWS has successfully met the challenge of keeping siblings together. When sibling separation cannot be avoided, placement is typically within a few blocks of each other.

Support for Families. At-risk families need additional supports to prevent abuse and neglect. Parents need services so they can work with difficult children – such as Parent Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT). Additional supports, such as mentors, are needed for teens, young mothers, families, and children.

Families need earlier and more intensive interventions at the time of referral. Additional long-term supports, such as additional wraparound services, strength-based family-centered supportive services are also needed.

Families also need economic supports including employment, affordable housing, transportation, and affordable day care.

**2009 Update:** Several family support services are available: Funding for Parent-Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT) was committed before the current economic crisis and that program will be up and running soon; THP-Plus Program is currently serving a young mother and her baby; the visiting nurse program is in place for new parents; First 5 and Healthy Smiles provide special dental and medical needs.

Parenting classes in the county are now conducted on a regular schedule. This allows social workers and probation officers to work with families around ongoing specified dates. The parenting classes also provide notification to the social workers and probation officers of parent attendance and completion.

Due to funding cuts, there will be no new services, and agencies are concerned about being able to hold onto the programs they currently have. Service delivery has become more efficient due to the collaborative efforts and referral system of the Differential Response Collaborative. Plumas County Probation Department will be seeking grant opportunities to enhance the services provided to probation youth and their families, such as substance abuse counseling and a youth mentoring program.

The economic downturn has hit Plumas County hard. Unemployment continues to rise, and the saw mill closing in May affected approximately 200 families. This will have a major negative impact on the community. Additionally, Plumas County residents can no longer receive Section 8 housing vouchers, as the number of vouchers dispersed, has already exceeded financial expectations. Because of financial restrictions, the Housing Authority does not have the funds to continue to provide new vouchers.

Staff Recruitment and Retention. Over the past three years, CWS has experienced a complete turnover in staff. PCDSS is currently 60% understaffed. When CWS is not fully staffed, everyone works more hours and experiences greater stress. When the staff does increase, there is a substantial amount of training and acclimation time before new staff is ready to take on a full caseload. The PQR recommended consideration of ways to improve staff recruitment and retention; self-care and stress management training for social workers; increased number of aides and transporters; and increased coordination with other agencies to provide services.

**2009 Update:** CWS is currently 20% understaffed. One social worker and one program manager position are unfilled. Plumas County currently has a hiring freeze, and when that defrosts, the position will be filled.

The CWS staff continues to commit a portion of staff meeting time to self-care and stress management concerns. They meet twice a month with Mental Health and use part of that time to process issues as needed.

The Probation Department restructured at the end of FY 2007-08 to provide additional juvenile probation staffing. One of its officers was promoted to the previously vacant Supervising Juvenile Probation Officer position. Probation currently has 2 vacancies, one of them being the juvenile placement officer position. Probation currently provides one position to the Prop 36 and Drug Court programs. The Court will provide funding through the Prop 36/Drug Court grants to fund a probation officer, leaving two open juvenile positions. The filling of those positions will be submitted to the Critical Staffing Committee, to be presented to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

The Differential Response Collaborative has increased the level of inter-agency coordination throughout the county.

Drug and Alcohol Services. In FY 2006, over 49% of this Department's referrals involved drug and alcohol issues such as the availability and use of illicit drugs such as methamphetamine or continued alcohol abuse. The small community precludes persons in recovery from severing ties with old acquaintances, drug involved family members and friends. There are very limited drug and alcohol services available. Until Plumas County develops better drug and alcohol services, the incidence of relapse and concomitant incidences of child abuse and neglect will continue to rise. The community has formed the Drug Abuse Prevention Coalition and has developed the Plumas County Strategic Plan for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention to begin to address this concern.

**2009 Update:** The Plumas County Alcohol and Drug Program closed in October 2008. Mental Health is providing some of these services, but there continues to be a need for individualized services for substance abuse in the county. The Department sends parents with substance abuse problems to the Mental Health ten week course. The curriculum uses a strength-based, solution-focused model and can be repeated as needed. Mental Health is also exploring the possibility of a

support group for those completing the course as a means of after care.

There are extremely limited substance abuse counseling options for juveniles on probation. Juveniles that are referred to the two Mental Health therapists provided for juvenile offenders per a Probation Department grant, also address substance abuse issues to those clients referred to them by the Probation Officers.

Due to funding cuts, the Probation Department had to close their random drug testing program; however, Probation Officers continue to drug test clients at various locations within the community and at the Probation Department. CWS has contracted with Plumas County Crisis Intervention Resource Center to provide drug testing services to their clients, but clients may still be tested at the Probation Department if needed.

CWS continues to track client meth involvement.

Funding. Additional funding is needed to address differential response and to develop most of the areas that need improvement.

**2009 Update:** There has been no additional funding due to the economic downturn and the state budget crisis. Plumas County Probation Department is applying for grant funds to support services for juveniles and their families.

## **B. Areas for further exploration through the Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR)**

PCDSS participates in the regional meetings because sharing information and hearing how others are conducting business provides more ways that improvements can always be made. As a small county, PCDSS does not have the resources such as staff analysts available to research and write policies and procedures. Therefore PCDSS is open to a Peer Quality Case Review. The first PQCR detailed the improvements made and the areas requiring more work. The next PQCR will be in 2009 and the issues to be explored at that time will be determined by the progress made, and issues discovered, through the next three years.

**Measure/Systemic Factor** (Child Welfare and Probation) C1.4 Reentry Following Reunification (Exit Cohort): percentage of children reentering foster care within 12 months of a reunification discharge.

**County's Current Performance:**

While Plumas County has an excellent reunification record, it exceeds the national standard and statewide percentages in children reentering foster care within 12 months of a reunification discharge. Compared to the baseline, the county has a slight (3.1%) increase in reunification for the most recent data. Compared to the baseline, there is a 55.4% increase in reentry to foster care. In 2002, 7 out of 29 children reentered; in 2005, 6 out of 16 children reentered care.

**2009 Update:** Reunification rates for the entry cohort fell to 70% in Jan-Jun 2007 compared to the baseline rate of 76.2% in Jan-June 2002. Reunification rates are still substantially above the state rate of 43.4%. Reentry rates for the exit cohort were a concern for Plumas County and those rates fell to 19.0% in Jul 2006-Jun 2007. This was the second lowest July-Jun annual reentry rate since 2002.

The reentry rates have fluctuated since baseline from a high of 50% for Jan-Dec 2005, to a low of 4.8% for Jan-Dec 2004. The following table summarizes the reentry rates for each 12-month reporting period, which was obtained from the CWS Outcomes Systems Summary for Plumas County:

	Twelve-Month Periods					
	JAN- DEC	APR- MAR	JUL- JUN	OCT- SEP		
More Recent:						
2006, 2006-2007	13.8	12.5	19	27.3		
2005, 2005-06	50	36.4	30	16.7		
2004, 2004-05	4.8	20.8	16.7	29.2		
2003, 2003-04	21.2	25.9	33.3	15.8		
2002, 2002-03	30.4	25	21.3	28.6		
Baseline:						
2001, 2001-02	5.6	23	24.1	23.1		

The Blue Ribbon Commission was implemented in December. The commission focuses on current services and what services are needed. Through services, placement stability is enhanced, and reunification facilitated. The commission includes the Judge, dependency attorneys, and representatives from Social Services. Meetings occur on a monthly basis.

**Improvement Goal 1.0**

Social workers and agency partners provide increased supports to families and children to reduce reentries to foster care.

**Strategy 1.1**

PCDSS supports additional parent education efforts in the community

**Strategy Rationale**

Provision of parenting education has been fragmented and inconsistent. It has, therefore, been difficult to maintain a high level of participation by

<p>the parents. Knowledge of appropriate discipline techniques and methods of evidence based parenting models will assist parents in raising their children in a safe and stable manner.</p>		<p>Child Welfare Program Manager</p>	
		<p>Assigned to</p>	
<p><b>Milestone</b></p>	<p>1.1.1 Maintain a contract with local non-profit to provide consistent, evidence-based parenting classes.  <b>2009 Update:</b> Started in January due to state budget delays. PCDS received funds in 12/08; paid provider starting in 1/09</p>	<p>Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep-2008)  Quarter 3 (Jan-Mar 2009)</p>	<p>Child Welfare Supervisor  Supervising Juvenile Probation Officer</p>
	<p>1.1.2 Ensure that Social Workers and Probation Officers refer clients to the parenting classes and follow-up to ensure attendance.  <b>2009 Update:</b> Classes are now on a set schedule in Chester, Quincy, Portola, and Greenville. Clients are notified of the beginning dates and there is follow-up with clients and with the parenting classes which provide information on attendance and completion</p>	<p>Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep-2008)  Quarter 3 (Jan-Mar 2009)</p>	
<p><b>Strategy 1. 2</b>  Additional drug and alcohol services are provided for children and families. Social Services and the Probation Department will work with the Drug and Alcohol Department, local nonprofits and District Attorney to obtain and increase services.</p>		<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b>  Substance abuse is involved in almost half of the Department's referrals. Providing additional alcohol and drug services will increase the likelihood that parents become clean and sober. They will then be better able to effectively parent their children.</p>	
<p><b>2009 Update:</b> The Plumas County Alcohol and Drug Program closed in October 2008. Mental Health provides some of these services for DSS clients. Probation juveniles currently receive only court-ordered services. Probation is seeking grant funding to provide juveniles with alcohol and drug services.</p>		<p>Assigned to</p>	
		<p>Child Welfare Supervisor  Chief Probation Officer</p>	
<p><b>Milestone</b></p>	<p>1.2.1. Probation Department and Social Services Department will participate in planning activities for a Unified Family Court so that families who are involved in several court proceedings usually due to drug abuse can be seen in one unified proceeding. These planning activities will include exploration of expanded drug and alcohol services</p>	<p>Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008)</p>	<p>Child Welfare Supervisor  Chief Probation Officer</p>
	<p><b>2009 Update:</b> The Unified Family Court started</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	

	<p>in Quarter 1, met twice a month during this period, then the funding ended and the project was dropped.</p> <p><b>1.2.2</b> Participation in the Unified Family Court</p> <p><b>1.2.3</b> Contract with nonprofit to provide expanded services.</p> <p><b>2009 Update:</b> This was done through Quarter 2 and then dropped due to end of funding</p>	<p>Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008)</p> <p>Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008)</p>	<p>Child Welfare Supervisor Chief Probation Officer</p> <p>Chief Probation Officer</p>
<p><b>Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.</b> Continued support of families who have been reunified has been identified as needed. Family Maintenance Services should be extended even longer than the usual six-twelve month period. There is a lack of supportive services for reunified families. Also, increased emphasis should be placed on ensuring that families are made aware of the resources that are available.</p>			
<p><b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b> We have a number of new services staff. They must be educated regarding recidivism rates, supportive resources in the community, and Differential Response.</p>			
<p><b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b> Our community partners must be willing to commit to supporting aftercare plans for families. They must maintain tracking and reporting systems in order to follow the aftercare progress of those who are referred to them and they must continue to participate in case conferencing.</p>			
<p><b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b> Funding for our community partners is always an issue.</p>			

<b>Measure/Systemic Factor (Child Welfare and Probation) Measure 8A: Youth emancipating from foster care are prepared to transition to adulthood.</b>			
<b>County's Current Performance:</b> Plumas County is committed to working towards improving services for youth currently in foster care and those who are transitioning out of foster care. Services for transitional age youth have expanded to include the Transitional Housing Placement Program. Plumas County has not implemented the Transitional Housing-Plus Program. The Independent Living Program (ILP) provides a coordinator who works with transitional age youth and emancipated foster youth; however this position has had to be part-time due to the limited funding received by our small, rural county. Effective February 2008, the ILP Coordinator position was elevated to a full-time position through a joint effort of Social Services and Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center			
<b>2009 Update:</b> Plumas County has implemented the Transitional Housing-Plus Program, provided service to two youth, and anticipates serving an additional 2 youth starting July 2009. The ILP Coordinator position has been as full-time.			
<b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b> Provide additional structural supports for the Independent Living Program.			
<b>Strategy 1. 1</b> The Independent Living Program Coordinator receives training and support.		<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Plumas County Social Services/Probation Department has an average of 24 ILP eligible foster youth per month. Providing the ILP coordinator with additional training and supports will ensure enhanced support and service coordination required for youth to make a successful transition to adulthood.	
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.1.1</b> ILP Coordinator, Child Welfare Supervisor, Supervising Juvenile Probation will establish and maintain a quarterly meeting schedule. <b>2009 Update:</b> Started Jan 2009	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>
	<b>1.1.2</b> ILP Coordinator has opportunity to attend the UC-Davis ILP Institute. <b>2009 Update:</b> Kelly Holland, the ILP Coordinator will attend in May 2009.		
<b>1.1.1</b> ILP Coordinator, Child Welfare Supervisor, Supervising Juvenile Probation Officer	Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep-2008) and ongoing Quarter 3 (Jan-Mar 2009) and ongoing		ILP Coordinator Child Welfare Supervisor Supervising Juvenile Probation Officer
<b>1.1.2</b> ILP Coordinator has opportunity to attend the UC-Davis ILP Institute. <b>2009 Update:</b> Kelly Holland, the ILP Coordinator will attend in May 2009.	Quarter 5 (Jun-Sep-2009) Quarter 4 (Apr-Jun 2009)		Child Welfare Training Coordinator
<b>Strategy 1. 2</b> Coordinate process and outcome data tracking for ILP services. <b>2009 Update:</b> This is not part of the standard ILP services: Kelly tracks progress and data, on both 602 Wards and 300 Dependents and meets with the Social Worker, Probation Officer, and youth to develop the ILP plan.		<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Currently data on ILP youth is in a variety of sources, including foster family agencies, transitional housing programs, and the nonprofit contracted to provide ILP services. Development of a coordinated data tracking system will provide information for better outcomes for youth.	
<b>1.2.1</b> Develop spreadsheet for tracking THPP participants.	Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008)		Social Services Fiscal Manager

	<p><b>2009 Update: done</b></p> <p><b>1.2.2</b> Develop questionnaire to obtain participant information from ILP youth.  <b>2009 Update: done</b></p> <p><b>1.2.3</b> Pilot, evaluate, and revise questionnaire and spreadsheet.  <b>2009 Update: in process</b></p> <p><b>1.2.4</b> Track all THPP participants  <b>2009 Update:</b> Started tracking in Jul 2008</p>	<p>Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008)</p> <p>Quarter 3 (Jan-Mar 2009)</p> <p>Quarter 4 (Apr-Jun 2009) and ongoing  Quarter 3 (Jan-Mar 2009) and ongoing</p>	<p>Child Welfare Program Manager</p> <p>Social Services Fiscal Manager  Child Welfare Program Manager</p> <p>Child Welfare Program Manager</p>
<p><b>Improvement Goal 2.0</b>  Transitional age youth and adult partners will develop comprehensive case plans and, at the time of emancipation, will have a plan of action identifying goals, needs, and activities for the future, as well as a list of community services and a support system, in order to assist them in becoming self-sufficient.</p>	<p><b>2009 Update:</b> Started in July 2008</p>		
<p><b>Strategy 2.1</b>  Develop an ILP/Emancipation Conference Protocol and host Emancipation Conferences for all eligible youth emancipating out of foster care.</p>		<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b>  The Emancipation Conference will assist foster youth to make lasting connections with people in the community who will be supportive of them. It will help them to set up goals to achieve while they are in foster care and will give others involved with each foster youth a chance to see those goals and help the youth achieve them.</p>	
<p><b>Milestone</b></p>	<p><b>2.1.1</b> Develop protocol procedures.</p> <p><b>2.1.2</b> PCDSS and PCIRC agree on protocol.</p> <p><b>2.1.3</b> Pilot the Emancipation Conference protocol with 5 foster youth.</p> <p><b>2.1.4</b> Evaluate pilot conferences and revise protocols as needed.</p> <p><b>2.1.5</b> At least 70% of foster youth, 15½ and older will have participated in an Emancipation Conference.</p>	<p>Quarter 4 (Apr-Jun 2009)</p> <p>Quarter 5 (Jul-Sep 2009)</p> <p>Quarter 6 (Oct-Dec 2009)</p> <p>Quarter 8 (Apr-Jun 2010)</p> <p>Quarter 12 (Apr-Jun 2011)</p>	<p>Child Welfare Program Manager</p> <p>Child Welfare Program Manager  PCIRC Executive Director  Social Services Director  Probation Department</p> <p>Child Welfare Social Workers</p> <p>ILP Coordinator  Child Welfare Supervisor</p> <p>Child Welfare Supervisor  Supervising Juvenile Probation Officer</p>

<p><b>Strategy 2.2</b> ILP coordinator and service partners will work together to maintain case plans. <b>2009 Update:</b> This is being accomplished through the treatment MDT team meetings</p>	<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b> Transitional age youth often require the supports of multiple agencies to effectively transition to adulthood. Coordination among these agencies ensures more effective services.</p>	
<p><b>Milestone</b></p> <p><b>2.2.1</b> Social Services, Probation, and ILP meet quarterly to share program information and strategies. <b>2009 Update:</b> Meetings are held quarterly and as needed</p> <p><b>2.2.2</b> Maintain and update transitional independent living plans as needed. <b>2009 Update:</b> Started in Quarter 2.</p>	<p><b>Timeframe</b></p> <p>Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008) and ongoing</p> <p>Quarter 3 (Jan-Mar 2009) and ongoing</p> <p>Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008) and ongoing</p>	<p><b>Assigned to</b></p> <p>Child Welfare Supervisor Supervising Juvenile Probation Officer</p> <p>Child Welfare Supervisor Juvenile Probation Officer</p>
<p><b>Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.</b> Education, Mental Health, Social Services, Probation, CASA, families, and other youth oriented agencies will need to work together with the transitional foster youth to ensure that adequate preparation has been made to provide them with all the necessary skills and supports necessary for a successful transition to adulthood.</p> <p><b>2009 Update:</b> The Children’s Council, Differential Response Collaborative, and team meetings have improved the collaboration among the agencies needed to ensure adequate preparation for a successful transition to adulthood. CVS has also developed a good working relationship with the Sheriff’s Department and the District Attorney’s Office</p>		
<p><b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b> Continued emphasis and education is needed within the agencies, community, and society as to how difficult it is for foster youth to successfully transition from foster care into adulthood and to achieve an education, reach satisfactory employment goals, and be a productive member of society.</p>		
<p><b>2009 Update:</b> Education for agencies and the public continues through presentations and discussions at the Children’s Council and the Differential Response Collaborative, and through newspaper articles CWS process, services, and differential response.</p> <p><b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b> Due to funding constraints, it will be imperative that other funding sources continue to be identified to maintain at least one full-time ILP Coordinator for ILP youth in Plumas County. We have only recently been able to elevate the position to full-time using Child Welfare Outcome Improvement funds, the ILP allocation, and a donation from a corporate source.</p>		
<p><b>2009 Update:</b> See the table at the end of the document (page 27) for a summary of the use of Child Welfare Outcome funds for FY 2007-08, and FY 2008-09 projections.</p>		
<p><b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b> With greater emphasis on this issue, regulatory or statutory changes may be identified.</p>		

**Measure/Systemic Factor:** Service Availability

PCDSS struggles to maintain a stable and full staff. Staff continuity and experience is essential to providing effective services to families.

**County's Current Performance:**

The SA identified several key areas of need. PCDSS staff turnover has been an ongoing concern, with 100% turnover in the past three years and a current social work staff vacancy rate of 60%. A more stable and full staff will be better able to provide needed services. Social workers are often offered higher pay by neighboring counties. Recruitment has been limited to local efforts and a broader approach is needed.

Additional ICWA training is needed.

**2009 Update:** Due to budget restraints, Plumas County has mandated a hiring freeze. PCDSS currently has a 20% social work staff vacancy rate.

**Improvement Goal 1.0**

PCDSS will develop a stable and full staff.

**Strategy 1.1**

Research and develop a broad recruitment process to attract social workers to the county.

**Strategy Rationale**

A full and stable staff will be able to carry full caseloads and more effectively provide services to families. This will increase the service availability for families in need.

Milestone	Timeframe		Child Welfare Supervisor
1.1.1 Establish recruitment/retention team.	Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008)		Child Welfare Supervisor
1.1.2 Research what other counties are doing to recruit and retain staff.	Quarter 4 (Apr-Jun 2009)		Child Welfare Supervisor
1.1.3. Develop recruitment materials	Quarter 6 (Jul-Sep 2009)		Child Welfare Supervisor Child Welfare Program Manager
1.1.4 Expand recruitment to include job announcement placement in major Northern California and Nevada newspapers, online, and through NASW; attend job fairs.	Quarter 7 (Oct-Dec 2009)		Child Welfare Program Manager

**Strategy 1.2**

PCDSS will work with Merit Systems and Title IV-E to enhance recruitment and retention opportunities

**Strategy Rationale**

PCDSS is not competitive with neighboring counties or with other areas of Northern California for staff. Being able to provide competitive pay and status will increase the attractiveness of working and living in Plumas County.

Milestone	Timeframe		Assigned to
1.2.1. PCDSS will work with Merit Systems to ensure that Plumas County is on the transfer list. <b>2009 Update:</b> Plumas County is on the transfer list.	Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008)		Social Services Director
1.2.2 PCDSS will work with Merit Systems and	Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008)		Social Services Director

	<p>the county human resources department to develop implementation of Senior Social Worker A and Senior Social Worker B.  <b>2009 Update:</b> The Director continues to work with the Board of Supervisors on this issue.  <b>1.2.3</b> PCDSS will meet with Title IV-E representative to explore increased educational incentives.  <b>2009 Update:</b> CWS met with Patty Hunter from CSU, Chico to explore the possibilities of an intern. While an intern has not yet been available, CWS will continue to work with CSU, Chico on this issue.</p>		<p>Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008)</p>	<p>Social Services Director  Child Welfare Supervisor</p>
<p><b>Strategy 1.3</b>  Social workers will learn self-care in relation to the secondary trauma they experience due to the high stress of CWS work.  <b>2009 Update:</b> Staff continues to process concerns within staff meetings. Staff meets twice a month with Mental Health and does some processing as needed.</p>	<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b>  CWS work entails high levels of stress given the increasing caseloads and the traumatic nature of the work. These high stress levels can lead to burnout, which leads to a loss of staff. To stabilize the workforce it is important to provide staff with the tools they need to effectively deal with the inherent difficulties of working with abused and neglected children and their families.</p>			
<p><b>Milestone</b></p>	<p><b>1.3.1.</b> First Thursday self-care lunches will continue  <b>2009 Update:</b> Lunch continues.  <b>1.3.2.</b> A staff retreat will be planned and held  <b>2009 Update:</b> Staff retreat was held June 2008 and another is scheduled for July 2009.  <b>1.3.3</b> Self-care team will be established to identify trends and patterns to be addressed through staff retreats and self-care meetings.</p>	<p><b>Timeframe</b></p>	<p>Quarter 1 (Jul-Sep 08) and ongoing    Quarter 5 (Jul-Sep 2009)  Quarter 1 (Jul-Sep 08)    Quarter 8 (Apr-Jun 2010)</p>	<p><b>Assigned to</b></p> <p>Social Services Aide    Child Welfare Supervisor    Child Welfare Supervisor</p>

<p><b>Improvement Goal 2.0</b> PCDSS staff and Probation staff improve relationships with Plumas County Native American community.</p>		<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b> An understanding of the ICWA rules and regulations is essential to providing appropriate supports to families and children of the Rancheria.</p>	
<p><b>Strategy 2.1</b> All staff Social Workers and Juvenile Probation Officers will receive ICWA training</p>		<p><b>2009 Update:</b> PCDSS renewed the contract with Chris LaMarr for ongoing consultation with ICWA questions. CWS Social Workers are scheduled and Probation Officers are planning to attend the UCD online ICWA training in May 2009. The Judicial Council will be offering an ICWA training this year which will be open to community professionals including Social Workers, Probation Officers, attorneys, judges, and other court staff. CWS staff and Probation staff will attend. The Supervising Probation Officer is scheduled to attend ICWA Training on June 3, 2009, through the AOC.</p>	
<p><b>Milestone</b></p>	<p><b>2.1.1</b> Contact Chris LaMarr for ICWA consultation and training.</p>	<p>Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008)</p>	<p>Child Welfare Supervisor</p>
	<p><b>2.1.2</b> Explore online ICWA training options with UCD <b>2009 Update:</b> Staff will do online training in May 2009</p>	<p>Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008)</p>	<p>Child Welfare Program Manager</p>
	<p><b>2.1.3</b> Train all staff in ICWA. <b>2009 Update:</b> The PCDSS Staff participated in on-line training through the U.C. Davis Training Academy in May. Probation is scheduled to attend the ICWA Judicial Council training.</p>	<p>Quarter 4 (Apr-Jun 2009) and Quarter 5 (Jul-Sep 2009)</p>	<p>Child Welfare Program Manager</p>
<p><b>Strategy 2.2</b> PCDSS and Probation will reach out to the Rancheria leaders and community. <b>2009 Update:</b> PCDSS and Probation will continue its efforts to reach out to the Greenville Rancheria. To date, these efforts have remained challenging.</p>		<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b> The Rancheria has a long history of distrust of government agencies. PCDSS will create opportunities for dialogue and support of the Rancheria community. This beginning will lead to an increased ability to work together to support families and children.</p>	
<p><b>Milestone</b></p>	<p><b>2.2.1</b> PCDSS leadership will seek out the leaders of the Rancheria community.</p>	<p>Quarter 4 (Apr-Jun 2009)</p>	<p>Child Welfare Program Manager Supervising Probation Officer</p>
	<p><b>2.2.2</b> PCDSS will invite Rancheria leaders to help social workers understand Rancheria programs and culture.</p>	<p>Quarter 5 (Jul-Sep 2009) and as needed</p>	<p>Child Welfare Program Manager Supervising Probation Officer</p>

	<p><b>2.2.3</b> PCDSS will invite members of the Rancheria community to participate in trainings, initial family meetings, and other processes.</p>		<p>Quarter 5 (Jul-Sep 2009) and ongoing</p>		<p>Child Welfare Supervisor Supervising Probation Officer</p>
<p><b>Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.</b> Staff recruitment and retention is vital to the ongoing efforts to meet the ever expanding state and federal requirements and to somehow carve out enough time to do actual social work and probation work for our children and families. The child welfare system and the probation system is veering towards more and greater data collection, data input, and monitoring of this data to increase enough social worker time to work directly with children and families to ensure safety and stability.</p>					
<p><b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b> Due to staff turnover (due largely to the overwhelming demands we place on them), we have or hopefully will have new Social Workers and Probation Officers who need initial and ongoing training regarding the Indian Child Welfare Act and the roles played by Social Services, Probation, and the local Rancheria. Trainings will be provided by both contracting with UC-Davis and a local Indian Specialist. Other educational needs include secondary trauma work with our Social Services staff.</p>					
<p><b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b> We will work collaboratively with our treatment MDT teams and the Differential Response Collaborative to improve services and relationships with our Native American community.</p>					
<p><b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b> None identified at this time but as we work on our improvement goals, we may encounter a need for regulatory or statutory changes.</p>					

**Measure/Systemic Factor: Collaboration**

Child safety, increased supports for at-risk families, and more effective services will result from an increase in children's services coordination and collaboration. The Differential Response Collaborative will work towards increasing its member population, referrals, and effectiveness. The Plumas County Department of Social Services will work to develop a protocol to ensure implementation of timely family team meetings. Social Services will include their community partners in the planning and implementation efforts.

**2009 Update:** The Differential Response Collaborative has developed referral procedures. The PCDSS continues to work on protocol development and implementation through the DRC and the Children's Council. Additionally PCDSS has met with PCIRC, the oversight agency for the FRCs in each community.

**County's Current Performance:**

Plumas County developed the Differential Response Collaborative which has strengthened the collaborative relationships within the child services community. These improved relationships have positively impacted the overall feel of collaboration in the county. Plumas County Social Services and the Differential Response Collaborative work towards decreased fragmentation and increased interagency coordination. The SA identified time constraints, transportation, and workload as barriers to collaboration. In addition, families and their support systems have not been sufficiently involved in initial case planning.

**Improvement Goal 1.0**

The Plumas County Departments of Social Services will work with providers to develop and implement initial family team conferences for all families with a child in care. Team conferences will be held after detention and before the jurisdiction hearing using a standardized agenda. Probation will hold conferences after the jurisdiction hearing and before disposition.

**Strategy 1.1**

Development of initial family team conferencing protocol.

**2009 Update:** DSS in collaboration with its partners has researched protocol from Shasta County and are in the process of devising one for Plumas County. The protocol will be finalized by June 2009

**Strategy Rationale**

The development of a protocol ensures that all staff and partners have a clear understanding of their roles, the meeting process, and the standardized agenda.

<b>Milestone</b>	1.1.1 PCDSS staff discuss and draft protocol	Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008)	<b>Assigned to</b>	Child Welfare Supervisor
	1.1.2 PCDSS consults with legal counsel regarding legal parameters	Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008) Quarter 4 (Apr-Jun 2009)		Child Welfare Supervisor
	1.1.3 Initial family team conference protocol finalized	Quarter 4 (Apr-Jun 2009)		Child Welfare Supervisor Supervising Probation Officer

**Strategy 1.2**

Initial family team conference structures are developed and Social Workers and partners are trained to use them.

**Strategy Rationale**

Social Workers and partners need to understand the meeting protocol to be effective participants in the process.

<b>Milestone</b>	<p><b>1.2.1</b> Training by UC Davis will focus on 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</p> <p><b>2009 Update:</b> Probation uses training through the Standards Training for Corrections (STC).</p> <p><b>1.2.2</b> Social Workers and Probation Officers receive training in family team conferencing protocol</p> <p><b>1.2.3</b> Funding is allocated to search for and identify extended family members</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<p>Quarter 6 (Oct-Dec 2009)</p> <p>Quarter 6 (Oct-Dec 2009)</p> <p>Quarter 6 (Oct-Dec 2009)</p>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<p>Child Welfare Program Manager Supervising Probation Officer</p> <p>Child Welfare Supervisor Chief Probation Officer</p> <p>Social Services Director</p>
<b>Strategy 1.3</b>	<p>Social Workers, Probation Officers, providers, families, and identified family supports (relatives/community members) participate in initial family team conference</p> <p><b>2009 Update:</b> This project is on track.</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<p>Quarter 7 (Jan-Mar 2010)</p> <p>Quarter 8 (Apr-Jun 2010)</p> <p>Quarter 9 (Jul-Sep 2010)</p> <p>Quarter 12 (Apr-Jun 2011)</p>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<p>Child Welfare Supervisor Supervising Probation Officer</p>
<b>Milestone</b>	<p><b>1.3.1</b> Initial family team conferences are held with selected families within 14 days of detention and/or jurisdiction.</p> <p><b>1.3.2</b> Evaluation of initial family team conference structure and process</p> <p><b>1.3.3</b> Revision of initial family team conference protocol as needed</p> <p><b>1.3.4</b> Initial family team meetings held with all new families who have children in care</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>			
<b>Improvement Goal 2.0</b>	<p>Increase coordination of services to children and families in the child welfare and probation systems and identification of further services that can be provided through the Differential Response Collaborative (DRC).</p>				
<b>Strategy 2.1</b>	<p>Plumas County Department of Social Services and Probation Department will hold regularly scheduled meetings</p> <p><b>2009 Update:</b> Regularly scheduled meetings are held.</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<p>Quarter 1 (Jul-Sep 2008)</p>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<p>Child Welfare Supervisor</p>

	<p>Services and the Plumas County Probation Department shall determine a time and location to meet</p> <p><b>2.1.2</b> PCDSS and Probation meet quarterly</p>			<p>Supervising Juvenile Probation Officer</p> <p>Child Welfare Supervisor Supervising Juvenile Probation Officer</p>
<p><b>Strategy 2.2</b> The Differential Response Collaborative (DRC) will increase its membership, resource knowledge, and training. <b>2009 Update:</b> The Differential Response Collaborative (DRC) continues to meet on a monthly basis. The Collaborative uses part of each month's meeting to educate its members on the services each agency can provide. For example, Family Resource Center staff listed specific services they offer such as helping people with Medi-Cal applications.</p>		<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b> A strong Differential Response Collaborative with increased representation from Plumas County agencies will provide a forum for mutual understanding of agency services and service limitations. This will lead to an increased ability to provide collaborative services and to improved services for families and children.</p>		
<p><b>Milestone</b></p> <p><b>2.2.1</b> Invite additional participants to join the DRC. <b>2009 Update:</b> Additional caseworkers and Probation Officers attend the DRC. <b>2.2.2</b> Create a flexible DRC agenda <b>2009 Update:</b> Each meeting begins with input for the agenda. <b>2.2.3</b> Train new PCDSS Social Workers and Probation Officers in differential response <b>2009 Update:</b> New Social Workers and Probation Officers receive ongoing training through staff meetings and supervisor consultation as needed. <b>2.2.4</b> Add resource sharing to the DRC agenda <b>2009 Update:</b> This is done on an ongoing basis, e.g. FRCs presented information recently on each center's specific services. <b>2.2.5</b> Cross train members of the DRC as trainings become available</p>	<p><b>Timeline</b></p> <p>Quarter 1 (Jul-Sep 2008)</p> <p>Quarter 1 (Jul-Sep 2008)</p> <p>Quarter 3 (Jan-Mar 2009)</p> <p>Quarter 3 (Jan-Mar 2009)</p> <p>Quarter 6 (Jul-Sep 2009) and ongoing</p>	<p><b>Assigned to</b></p> <p>DRC Members</p> <p>Child Welfare Program Manager</p> <p>Child Welfare Supervisor Supervising Probation Officer</p> <p>Child Welfare Program Manager</p> <p>Child Welfare Program Manager DRC Members</p>		
<p><b>Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.</b> Service Array:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SA identified the need for better and increased communication between agencies, especially feedback among agencies about family participation in services.</li> </ul>				

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

- Families, community providers, PCDSS Social Workers, and Probation Officers need training in how to use the family team conference protocol to effectively develop service plans.
- New Social Workers, Probation Officers, and DRC members need training in differential response.

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

- MOUs with community providers will be developed and in place during the planning process.
- DRC members will provide services to families and children.
- DRC members will encourage additional participation in differential response by community agencies.

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

None identified at this time

Plumas County Department of Social Services SIP Strategies and CWSIOP Funds 2007-2008		CWSOIP Funds FY 07-08
SIP Strategy		
Differential Response – Contracted through Plumas Rural Services and Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center		\$40,000.00
Independent Living Skills Programs – Contracted through Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center		\$16,000.00
Parenting Education – Contracted through Plumas Rural Services		\$47,000.00

The Differential Response funds were distributed equally (\$8,000.00 each) to the five regional resource centers located throughout the County. Offices are located in Chester, Quincy, Greenville, Portola, and the Indian Valley Roundhouse Council. Four Resource centers are provided through Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center with the Resource Center in Chester being under the umbrella of Plumas Rural Services. All Resource Centers are integral to the Differential Response Process.

The Independent Living Skills Program Funds were used to help fund a full-time Program Manager contracted through Plumas County Resource Intervention Center. The Program Manager provides a wide range of ILP services.

Parenting Education Funds were used for Parenting Classes in Chester, Greenville, Quincy, and Portola in the amount of \$30,000.00. Parent Training Interaction Therapy was funded at \$7,500.00, and \$9,500.00 was spent on in-home parenting and training. All Parent education was contracted through Plumas Rural Services.

Plumas County Department of Social Services SIP Strategies and CWSIOP Funds 2008-2009	
SIP Strategy	CWSOIP Funds FY 08-09
Differential Response – Contracted through Plumas Rural Services and Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center	\$42,500.00
Independent Living Skills Programs – Contracted through Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center	\$20,000.00
Parenting Education – Contracted through Plumas Rural Services	\$43,500.00

The Differential Response funds were distributed equally (\$8,500.00 each) to the five regional resource centers located throughout the County. Offices are located in Chester, Quincy, Greenville, Portola, and the Indian Valley Roundhouse Council. Four Resource centers are provided through Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center with the Resource Center in Chester being under the umbrella of Plumas Rural Services. All Resource Centers are integral to the Differential Response Process.

The Independent Living Skills Program Funds were used to continue funding a full-time Program Manager contracted through Plumas County Resource Intervention Center. The Program Manager provides a wide range of ILP services.

Parenting Education Funds were used for Parenting Classes in Chester, Greenville, Quincy, and Portola in the amount of \$33,500.00; with in-home parenting education funded at \$10,000.00. All Parent education was contracted through Plumas Rural Services.

Plumas County Probation Department SIP Strategies and CWSIOP Funds 2008-2009	
SIP Strategy	CWSOIP Funds FY 08-09
Drug and Alcohol Education	\$10,000.00

The Drug and Alcohol Education funds were used to purchase 200 certificates through 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium Classrooms, an online substance abuse education program. The certificates are valid through June 2011. Additionally, as part of the purchase agreement, parents whose children are required to take the class will be eligible to take the Parent-Wise course free of charge.