

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF TULARE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

IN THE MATTER OF: )  
Submission of the Child Welfare )  
Services – System Improvement Plan.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2009-0273

UPON MOTION OF SUPERVISOR ENNIS, SECONDED BY SUPERVISOR ISHIDA, THE FOLLOWING WAS ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, AT AN OFFICIAL MEETING HELD APRIL 21, 2009, BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: SUPERVISORS ISHIDA, VANDER POEL, COX, WORTHLEY AND ENNIS  
NOES: NONE  
ABSTAIN: NONE  
ABSENT: NONE



ATTEST: JEAN M. ROUSSEAU  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/  
CLERK, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

BY: *Dennis A. Ybana*  
Deputy Clerk

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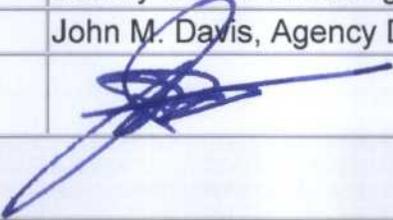
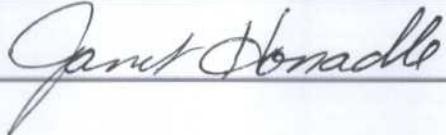
1. Approved the Tulare County System Improvement Plan (SIP), which is part of Assembly Bill 636, better known as California's Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act of 2001 to improve outcomes for children.
2. Authorized the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency and the Tulare County Probation Department to sign the System Improvement Plan and submit the proposed Tulare County SIP to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

HHSA  
Probation  
Co. Counsel

DAY  
4/22/09

# California's Child and Family Services Review

## System Improvement Plan

<b>County:</b>	Tulare
<b>Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:</b>	Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency
<b>Period of Plan:</b>	January 18, 2009 – January 18, 2012
<b>Period of Outcomes Data:</b>	Quarter ending June 30, 2008 (Q2 – 2008)
<b>Date Submitted:</b>	<b>April 24, 2009</b>
<b>County Contact Person for County System Improvement Plan</b>	
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<b>Submitted by each agency for the children under its care</b>	
<b>Submitted by:</b>	County Child Welfare Agency Director (Lead Agency)
<b>Name:</b>	John M. Davis, Agency Director
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Submitted by:</b>	County Chief Probation Officer
<b>Name:</b>	Janet Honadle, Chief Probation Officer
<b>Signature:</b>	

## **Acknowledgements:**

The County of Tulare Child Welfare Services Division would like to thank all of the County's System Improvement Planning Committee members for their hard work, commitment, and contributions to this effort. This report would not have been possible without their expertise and dedication.

### **I SIP Narrative**

#### **Introduction**

This System Improvement Plan (SIP) update follows the County Self-Assessment submitted to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) in September 2008. This SIP document is an agreement between Tulare County and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). The document describes the programs and initiatives to improve service delivery and performance measures as related to the delivery of services to children and families in Tulare County. This SIP is part of a system for reporting and reviewing progress towards outcomes and indicators as reported by the State and provided to counties in the County's Quarterly Outcomes Reports.

Tulare County would also like to take opportunity at this time to outline a number of challenges it has faced since the last System Improvement Plan (SIP) was submitted and approved. Two major events are worth mentioning here, the restructuring of the CWS Division and funding. The County will continue its partnerships with community service providers to help meet the needs of children and families in a collaborative manner.

A summary of the two major changes the county will encounter during this next review period are as follow:

- Since the last SIP, and resulting from the PQCR of January 2008, the CWS Division has changed from having staff carry integrated caseloads (staff carry all cases from Emergency Response to Permanency Planning) into two functions; Intake staff who are solely responsible for Early Intervention (EI) and Emergency Response (ER) cases and Continuing staff who are responsible for Family Maintenance (FM), Family Reunification (FR), and Permanency Planning (PP) cases. The county still operates a separate Adoption Unit.
- Tulare County, like most of the state, has had to adjust current and future year budgets due to decreasing revenues. The decreases in allocations and revenues have necessitated the reduction of 66 CWS Division positions in February and as of April 2009, Registered Nurses staff have been reduced from 12 to 5 (we lost a total of 7 nurses) who had worked within CWS. The prospects for next fiscal year's budget are not much brighter and may result in additional staff losses in the Division. The reductions of staff will undoubtedly have an

impact on service levels and outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being.

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors has reviewed Tulare County's SIP and provided approval for submission of this report to the CDSS for final approval.

- **Identify Local Planning Body:**

The membership list for the County System Improvement Plan (SIP) Planning Committee is included as Attachment 1 to this document.

- **Share Findings that Support Qualitative Change:**

Qualitative input has been gathered, presented and discussed since the implementation of the Outcomes Improvement process. The System Improvement Plan (SIP) Planning Committee, represented by partners listed in Attachment 1, provided important insights and contributed to the successes seen in some of the outcomes presented in the most recent County Self Assessment. The valuable suggestions from the community partners and from Child Welfare Services (CWS) staff have been incorporated into this System Improvement Plan (SIP) report.

In addition, Tulare County CWS gathered input from staff on child welfare strengths and challenges during management meetings, CWS Team Leader meetings, and at CWS Administrative meetings.

The SIP matrices, attached as exhibits to this report, were developed in design teams formed to address specific outcome areas. These design teams were charged with:

- Reviewing the current system;
- Reviewing outcome data;
- Evaluating the efficiency of the processes and structure currently in place; and,
- Developing a set of strategies and measurable milestones for each strategy.

Each design team, which included community partners from the SIP Planning Committee and staff, met to develop their recommendations for improving outcomes and practice. The materials were also presented to the SIP Planning Committee before being presented to the County Board of Supervisors for final approval to submit the plan to the State.

The development of the System Improvement Plan report does not signal the end of the responsibilities of the design teams. Design teams were composed of both line and supervisory staff from CWS as well as

community partners and were led by CWS Managers. They will continue to meet as design teams taking responsibility for implementing the strategies outlined in their area of focus. The design teams set milestones they have determined will lead to outcome improvements and efficiencies in the current system of care found in Tulare County. The collective work of the design teams will be shared at management meetings and with the SIP Planning Committee members as milestones are reached.

## **II SIP Plan Components**

### **Attachment 1: Identified Local Planning Body**

**Exhibit 1:** County Self Assessment Update 2008, Executive Summary

**Exhibit 2:** Safety Outcome 2B: Timely Response to 10-day Referrals

**Exhibit 3:** Safety Outcome 2C: Timely Child Contacts

**Exhibit 4:** Family Connections 4B: Least Restrictive Placement

**Exhibit 5:** Adoptions Composite C2.5: Adoption within 12 Months (Legally Free)

**Exhibit 5A:** Adoptions Composite C2.1: Adoption within 24 Months (Exit Cohort)

**Exhibit 6:** Permanency Outcome C4.1: Reduce Multiple Foster Care Placements

**Exhibit 7:** Systemic Factor: Improve Management Information Case Management System - **Probation**

**Exhibit 8:** Reunification Composite: C.1.1 – Reunification w/in 12 mo. - **Probation**

**Exhibit 9:** Permanency Composite: C.3.3 – In Care 3 Years or Longer - **Probation**

**Exhibit 10:** Safety Outcome S1.1: No Recurrence of Maltreatment

**Exhibit 11:** Permanency Composite C3.1: Exits to Permanency (24 Months in Care)

### **Outcome Improvement Fund Usage:**

Tulare County's System Improvement Plan outlines safety, permanency, and stability of children in foster care as its priorities. To accomplish these goals, the County has collaborated with its community partners to identify and access local resources to meet their needs. In doing so, Tulare County CWS has utilized its Outcome Improvement funds as outlined below. See the section on Probation's use of the OIP Funds later in this report:

#### **Fiscal Year 2007/2008:**

**CWS (Allocation - \$50,554):** Provision of direct services to youth with permanency plans of adoption and/or legal guardianship. Through a contracted provider (AspiraNet), Tulare County developed a program which targeted youth who had been in care for 12 months or more.

#### **Fiscal Year 2008/2009:**

**CWS (Allocation - \$50,554):** The current allocation is being utilized for the continued support of adoptive parents. Pre and Post-adoptive support will preserve adoptive placements by helping adoptive parents improve parenting skills with respect to matters such as child development and coping with stress, increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities, and afford children a safe, stable and supportive family environment. Services shall include, but not be limited to, parent education and support, information and referral services, individual, family, and group counseling, and health education for children and parents.

#### **Fiscal Years 2010-2012:**

**CWS:** Anticipating allocations in the future years of this plan, Tulare County proposes to utilize OIP funds to further efforts to support child permanency and well-being. Specifically, the use of funds to support Family Finding efforts, to implement Team Decision Making, and to explore other supportive strategies with community partners.

### **III TULARE COUNTY SELF-ASSESSMENT - SUMMARY**

In the Self Assessment, Tulare County CWS looked at prior SIP Plan outcomes and evaluated them to determine if further action is needed. There are three additional SIP areas selected for 2009-2012.

## Review of Prior SIP Plan Outcomes:

Many steps are currently underway, or are being explored, to address areas for continued review by Tulare County. Current efforts are listed below and serve as the recommended areas for continued focus for this new period of review.

- **Outcome Measure S1.1 – No Recurrence of Maltreatment:** Tulare County will review the outcome data and “drill down” to understand this population to review what practice and/or policy issues contribute to the outcome scores, and to develop strategies and milestones accordingly. Additionally, the county will review data from its Differential Response program and evaluate the effectiveness of that strategy for replication. Further, the county will work with community partners to identify supportive services that may be utilized with families who come to the attention of system partners as another vehicle to deterring abuse/neglect of children.
- **Outcome 2B: Response to 10-Day Referrals:** Tulare County has continued many of the same strategies proposed in the prior SIP because it intends to build a self review process for staff, team leaders and their managers. Since the last SIP, the county has separated the continuing case functions and centralized its Emergency Response system, as was recommended in the last PQCR. Tulare County also believes that providing SafeMeasures access to line staff will increase outcome performance. Team Leaders will monitor caseload information and CWS Managers will consistently track and report on data trends. Staff was trained in and provided with SafeMeasures as of March 25, 2009. Social workers will now have access to their own caseload information and will be required to discuss performance on this indicator and others with their team leaders on a monthly basis.
- **Outcome 2C: Social Worker Contacts With Child:** Similar strategies are being used for this outcome as were defined above with Team Leaders using SafeMeasures monthly to monitor child contacts. Additionally, team leaders will be reviewing CWS/CMS data to assure consistency in practice, will review SafeMeasures data with their social workers on a monthly basis, and will be available to social workers for additional coaching/training as needs arise. These data reports will be used to help CWS Managers and Team Leaders to track outcomes.
- **Outcomes C2.1 & C2.5: Adoptions Composite:** Tulare County will add this area to the current SIP. Specifically, the county proposes to review the areas listed below for this composite:
  - **Outcome C2.1 (Adoption within 24 Months (Entry Cohort)):** While data for this measure is not out of line with state standards Tulare County will review the data and analyze internal processes for efficiency. The county will also review the effectiveness of concurrent planning processes to discover ways to expedite the adoption process using Family Finding, relative

placement and/or other strategies like Team Decision Making (TDM) to improve scores for this area.

- **Outcome C2.5 (Adoption within 12 Months (Legally Free)):** Tulare County will further analyze the data for this outcome as well. Specific strategies include a closer review to identify issues behind current performance, to analyze why our score is what it is, explore whether the courts impact these scores, and whether concurrent planning can be accomplished more consistently and efficiently given the county's current program structure.
- **Outcome C3.1: Exits to Permanency (24 Months in Care):** The major strategies for this area will be exploratory in nature. The county will pull data for this outcome to better understand the methodology for this measure, will analyze current practice, and develop appropriate milestones. One important area for further exploration is Family Finding which may help increase the scores for this outcome. The county will also review whether concurrent planning is consistently applied to all children and explore whether Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings offer promising practices that could be employed locally to expedite permanency for children.
- **Outcome C4.1: Placement Stability Composite:** Tulare County has opted to focus on this area for the current SIP as a result of data reviews. As such, a design team will be asked to explore the data and analyze current practice. Secondly, the county wants to strengthen the "strategic" nature of its foster parent recruitment efforts to include the use of faith-based organizations as a resource for foster families, recruiting to meet the varying cultural needs of the children served, and recruitment strategies in rural communities where few resources exist. Other areas for exploration include: a review of the impact of concurrent planning on the placement stability outcomes, the further exploration of the Family-to-Family (F2F) initiative, especially the Team Decision Making (TDM) process, and the implementation of the Family Finding.
- **Outcome 4B: Least Restrictive Placements – Initial Placement:** The goal and purpose for selecting this area is based on the county's review of data for this area. In reviewing initial placement data, Tulare County, like most California counties, found that Foster Family Agencies tend to get used more often than relative homes and / or county foster homes. Related strategies include reviewing the relative placement process, especially for emergency placements, and the strengthening of the foster parent recruitment, training, and retention efforts. A design team will begin their work on the strategies and milestones identified here in the next 30 days.

The strategies and milestones for all of the above measures are outlined in the SIP Matrices found as Exhibits placed at the end of this report.

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

Tulare County CWS conducted its PQCR focus on Placement Stability in January 2008 while the Probation Department focused on Reunification. In doing so, the county focused on identifying a specific subset of children in care for its review. In developing the review strategies, Tulare County opted to hold a series of focus group sessions to which foster parents, parents/guardians, and youth were invited. A summary of the findings are presented below:

### Summary of the Data:

In deciding the focus areas, the county reviewed placement stability and reunification rates. In relation to placement stability, CWS analyzed outcome data and found:

- Children in CWS between the ages of 6 and 15 years had higher placement change rates than other populations.
- The most common reason for placement changes was “caregiver request” followed very closely by “child behavior” as the reason for the placement change.
- The county noted no differences for any one ethnic group or age group being over-represented in the placement stability rates.

The PQCR process has led to insights about how the current service delivery system can be adjusted to improve placement stability rates. The contributions of participants centered on three major themes:

- Getting better information early in the departments’ work with families.
- Providing support to the caregiver network.
- Engaging families and youth at key decision-making points throughout the life of the case.

### Recommendations:

The county sees an advantage to conducting the PQCR because staff working directly with the children and families is afforded an opportunity to share their experience. In doing so, they also identified the following recommendations:

### Documentation Trends:

- Counties need to advocate for the State to take the lead to streamline current relative placement regulations. The issue of the delayed placement with relatives was also raised by the courts in a focus group.
- The county needs to hold foster family agencies more accountable for the information reported on their quarterly reports submitted to the county through increased oversight from county staff.

### Practice Strengths:

- Formalizing a case staffing process that is more inclusive and takes into consideration of all participants when placement and / or reunification decisions are being made. The Family-to-Family (F2F) initiative and its components like Team Decision Making (TDM), is being explored for implementation in Tulare County as a strategy to improve outcomes for placement and family reunification. Implementing F2F will support the practice strengths noted by staff and broaden the use of engagement through the use of the TDM. The county has begun discussions with the Casey Programs to explore implementation of F2F during the next 12-18 months.
- Develop policies and training on child and family engagement practices that are culturally sensitive. In developing policies, assure that caregivers, parents and youth are engaged in the decision-making process to promote placement stability, to facilitate reunification, and to provide mentoring opportunities for youth and parents.
- Increase staff contacts with the children, their parents, and the caregivers to help build relationships and encourage engagement of the child, family, caregivers in services planning and delivery.
- Develop or adopt a comprehensive assessment tool that can be used for children and families. Structured Decision Making (SDM) safety and risk assessment tools may provide such an option.

### Training Needs:

- Develop and deliver training on family engagement strategies that includes a module on conflict resolution to caregivers (foster parents / relatives).
- Deliver training for youth about permanency options like adoption and guardianship to help them understand what these options mean legally / their benefits, and how to discuss these options with caregivers.

- Deliver training to all parties (staff & caregivers) on how to maintain stable placements. Because county data suggests that most placement disruptions occur at the request of the caregiver, the county should explore the reasons behind the requests and provide additional training and / or support to caregivers. This may increase placement stability for children in care and have a positive impact on this outcome measure.

Identify Systemic/Policy Changes:

- Implement the use of the “simple exemption” to speed up placement of children with their relatives. This will require current policy be reviewed and amended and that staff start identifying and locating all relatives early in the detention process. Further, that staff stay in touch with identified relatives to increase the number of relative placement options for children.
- Reinststitute the quarterly meetings with Foster Family Agencies for the defined purposes of improving communication, collaborating, and identifying training opportunities.

Identify Resource Issues

- Develop a comprehensive caregiver recruitment and support strategy that includes recruitment of specialized homes to serve special needs children, sibling groups, and child behavior management, that are recruited from areas where children are removed. Recruitment efforts to be targeted to meet the varied cultural needs of children in the county's caseload.
- Increase access to and the availability of in-home mental health services (i.e., wraparound) as an intervention for children with difficult behaviors.

CWS will take the recommendations and use managers and social workers in workgroups to outline strategies for addressing each of the points. The task for these workgroups will be to review recommendations, review existing practice and policies (as applicable), research available information on the topic, and develop a set of recommendations for achieving these. Finally, their task will be to outline how the area is monitored for progress, and for evaluating the successful implementation of actions / steps.

The Probation Department will review the recommendations and begin to address areas they identified. Staff will be included in developing the recommendations while other areas will require their administrative staff to advocate on behalf of staff and participants of the Peer Quality Case Review process. In doing so, it is anticipated that the outcome measure for family reunification will reflect improvements.

## V Child Welfare Services & Community-Based Prevention Strategies

A number of systemic reform efforts have been undertaken to positively impact the current service system and make it more responsive to child and family needs. As our community partners have agreed, child abuse is a community problem and there are better ways to help preserve families and to help children remain safely in their home than through the complex system that Child Welfare presents. Among the steps that can be taken to prepare the platform for more systematized services include:

- **The Family-to-Family Initiative:** The County continues to explore the implementation of this approach to positively impact referral and recidivism rates. Tulare County has keen interest in utilizing the Team Decision Making (TDM) strategy to improve on several outcomes and to provide a platform from increased family engagement.
- **Structured Decision Making:** The County implemented this risk assessment model and will utilize the tools to help staff make informed case decisions at various stages of the case.
- **Wraparound Services:** This service delivery option was implemented in 2008. To date, twelve families have been enrolled. The county's partners, CWS, Mental Health, and Probation, are working with a contractor (EMQ FamiliesFirst) to implement this service process.
- **Differential Response:** In fiscal year 2007/2008, Tulare County implemented a demonstration project in three rural communities (Lindsay, Woodlake, and Goshen). In 2008, Differential Response has been expanded to two additional sites, Visalia and Cutler/Orosi. Tulare County continues strengthening its collaboration and relationships, both formal and informal, with its community partners.
- **Early intervention Unit:** Child Welfare Services has developed Early Intervention is an internal program targeted at high-risk families that may benefit from early intervention services, and whose problems have not yet resulted in CWS intervention. The goal is to help families' correct problems at an early stage, before they escalate and require formal intervention.
- **Post-Adoption Services:** Tulare County contracts with a community-based provider (AspiraNet) to provide post-adoption support services. The service provider was selected via a competitive bid process. Services to post-adoptive parents are designed to improve parenting skills with respect to matters such as child development and coping with stress, increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities and afford children a safe, stable and supportive family environment.
- **Foster Parent Recruitment, Training, and Retention:** Consistent with the *Annie E. Casey Foundations Family-to-Family* initiative, the county will focus efforts to

increase placement resources to match child demographics. Increasing efforts to find a child's relatives, friends, or other individuals will support efforts to stabilize placements for children. Therefore, the county will continue to develop a comprehensive recruitment strategy and to engage more foster parents in the county.

- **Respite Care Services:** Tulare County contracts with a community-based provider (Parenting Network, Inc.) to offer respite care services to CWS families in Family Maintenance or Voluntary Family Maintenance. This service is designed to provide respite care to families in need of temporary relief and healthcare education and instruction for parents and other caregivers that would allow a child to safely return to a family or otherwise remain safely in the home.
- **Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP Plus):** In March 2008, the first Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP Plus) became operational in Tulare County. AspiraNet was selected to be the service provider by a competitive bid process. By June 2008, ten (10) former foster youth had entered into THP Plus housing and were receiving supportive services to work towards self-sufficiency. By July 2008, the County's THP Plus program had twelve (12) participants and a waiting list of youth needing the services.
- **Supporting Father Involvement:** Tulare County is one of five (5) pilot counties selected by the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) to implement this program. The Lindsay Unified School District was selected as a Tulare County HHSA subcontractor for this grant and began the study on July 1, 2003. The study/program was scheduled to end in June 30, 2009. OCAP has communicated to the county that they intend to extend this contract through June 30, 2012. The study is changing during these additional three years to serve CWS families. The Supporting Father Involvement Study is an intervention designed to increase the positive involvement of father's with their children based on a risk-outcome model that suggests that positive father involvement is a protective factor for children's well being. Positive relationships with fathers can reduce a child's risk of poor school performance, teen pregnancy rates, substance abuse, welfare dependency, delinquency, truancy, and the likelihood of incarceration. Enhancing the quality of father involvement in a family context significantly benefits children, families, and society.
- **Family Finding:** Tulare County, in collaboration with community partners, will add Family Finding in 2009. Family Finding will be utilized to promote permanence for youth in care, for newly detained children, and to expand the natural supports of families and youth who come to the attention of the CWS system.
- **Home-Based Visitation and Parent Education Program:** Tulare County contracts with a community-based provider (Family Services of Tulare County) to provide these services. This program delivers services for CWS families who are in Family Maintenance or Voluntary Family Maintenance providing parenting

education & life skills training utilizing the "Parenting Wisely" curriculum. Trained Home Visitors meet with parents or primary caregivers of a child for eight (8) to twelve (12) weeks with the goal of preventing a child's removal from their family by providing one-on-one parent education. This intensive service both teaches and then allows the parent to practice parenting skills with their child under the supervision of a trained home visitor.

- Linkages: The Linkages project is a process to enhance service coordination between TulareWORKs and Child Welfare Services to help families achieve economic stability and ensure child safety and well-being. The Tulare County Linkages Planning Committee is in the process of writing a plan to be submitted to the state to implement linkages in the county. Policy and procedure is being developed. The county is planning on piloting linkages offering services to Voluntary Family Maintenance families in fiscal year 2008/2009.

## **VI Plan for Current System Improvement Plan (SIP) - CWS**

Tulare County continues to focus on current strategies for program improvement in Child Welfare Services. The increasing demands for engaging children and families, for meeting improved best-practice standards, expanding family engagement strategies, and improving outcomes present unique challenges to Tulare County.

Central to the anticipated success on outcome improvements are the 130 case-carrying social workers who face the daily challenge of high caseloads and increased complexities in meeting the needs of children and families. Tulare County implemented a number of strategic reforms since the last SIP by identifying court report writers, assigning Quality Improvement staff, and implementing a Relative Assessment Team. Having remained staff-neutral, the changes have provided no measurable form of relief to these front-line staff. Tulare County continues to struggle with a social work staff turnover rate of approximately 20% annually that can add to the casework for these same social workers.

Nonetheless, Child Welfare Services continues to evolve with the implementation of Wraparound, Structured Decision Making, and Differential Response. One major lesson to come from the implementation of these specific strategies is the benefit of expanding community partnerships. In the period since the last SIP, Tulare County's social services network of provider agencies has come together to strategically address system improvement issues, including CWS outcomes for children and families. We as a "team" recognize that to effect positive change we must work together starting with strengthening and supporting families to prevent the occurrence of child abuse. To that end, these forged partnerships are slowly translating into program and process efficiencies that are starting to lead to workload relief for overburdened staff.

The SIP Planning Committee (see Attachment 1 for a list of members) continues to meet quarterly and discuss the County's performance on the outcome indicators and to discuss methods for improvement. In doing so, the SIP Planning Committee has

prioritized the preceding outcomes and systemic factors for the upcoming three-year period for review. The SIP document will become the County's roadmap for reforming its child welfare system which will lead to continued program improvements.

## **Probation Department Data**

### **SIP Narrative**

Please see combined section I above.

### **SIP Plan Components**

Exhibit 7: Systemic Factor: Improve Management Information Case Management System

Exhibit 8: Reunification Composite: C.1.1 – Reunification w/in 12 mo.

Exhibit 9: Permanency Composite: C.3.3 – In Care 3 Years or Longer

### **Outcome Improvement Fund Usage (Probation):**

Tulare County's System Improvement Plan outlines safety, permanency, and stability of children in foster care as its priorities. To accomplish these goals, the County has collaborated with its community partners to identify and access local resources to meet their needs. In doing so, Tulare County has utilized its Outcome Improvement funds as outlined below:

**Fiscal Year 2007-2008: (Probation- Allocation \$ 26, 422)** The allocation was used to better equip probation officers with the tools necessary to access the case management system. It was also utilized to provide Family Finding training to the unit's officers so they may better understand the importance of establishing life-long connections for youth in foster care. The allocation was also utilized to assist parents/families to remain connected with their child while they are in out-of-home placement by providing the parents/families with gas vouchers, train/bus tickets and when necessary hotel vouchers to allow the parent/families to visit their child while in placement. In addition, web-cams were also purchased to assist parent/families involvement in complying with their case plan goals and treatment when they were unavailable for face-face visits with their children.

**Fiscal Year 2008-2009: (Probation- Allocation \$26, 422)** This year's allocation is being utilized to better equip the probation officers with the tools necessary to access the case management system during visits, this technology will allow the officers to develop case plans and TILP with the youth/parents/families. To assist parents/families remain connected to their children who are in out-of-home placement, the department is providing parents/families with gas vouchers, train/bus tickets, and when necessary

hotel vouchers. This effort will allow parents/families to visit their child. In addition, the funds were used to purchase Family Finding software to assist in the identification of life-long connections for our youth in care. These efforts will help with reunification and a resultant decreased stay in out of home care for the youth.

### **Fiscal Year 2010-2012:**

Probation: Anticipating allocations in the future years of this plan, Tulare County proposes to utilize OIP funds to further efforts to support child permanency and well-being. Specifically, Probation will use funds to support Family Finding efforts, Family Engagement Training, and to explore other supportive strategies with community partners.

### **Review of Prior SIP Plan Outcomes:**

Many steps are currently underway, or are being explored, to address areas for continued review by the Tulare County Probation Department. Current efforts are listed below and serve as the recommended areas for continued focus over the next two-year period of this review cycle.

### **Improve Management Information System (MIS) (a Systemic factor):**

Since the last SIP in 2006, the Probation Department identified the need for a new case management system to provide timely and accurate data relating to the outcome measures as they pertain to minors in out-of-home placement.

The Department went through a selection process of potential vendors to provide a case management system and chose Automon's Caseload Explorer system which will meet the growing needs of the Department. The Board of Supervisors approved the proposal of Probation's new case management system on July 25, 2006.

Since that time, the juvenile portion of the new case management system went live in March of 2008. This system has drastically improved our ability to gather and monitor data in the areas of case compliance and the provision of services. It allows staff, in a matter of minutes, to access real-time Court information, all case-related documents, as well as case management and contact notes. It was designed to evaluate best practices and assist in the development of new and innovative ways to improve service delivery. We are also in the process of establishing secure systems to allow staff to access the system during field contacts with the youth, caregiver and family, which will enable those listed to be a true partner in the development of their individual case plans. In addition, we are working with our Information Technology (IT) Department to ensure the system collects necessary foster care data to remain in compliance with Division 31 requirements.

### **Additional SIP Areas for Period 2009-2012:**

The two following areas are added to the County SIP by Probation for focus over the next two-year period. These were selected based on a review of outcome data and resulting from the county's desire to strengthen child/family involvement and reduce the time of removal.

- **Reunification Composite C.1.1:** Reunification w/in 12 month period: This area was chosen as a result of the department's vision to work toward returning the youth to their homes and providing supportive services necessary to sustain youth in the homes of their families. In addition, in evaluating data from the Berkeley Website, it appeared growth in this area was necessary. Strategies have been developed to address this area.
- **Permanency Composite C.3.3:** In Care 3 Years or Longer: This area was chosen as the department strives to work toward returning youth to their families in a timely manner or when this is not a viable option to diligently work toward establishing permanency for the child. In addition, as a result of evaluating data from the Berkeley Website, it appeared focus should be placed on this area. Upon closer review, it was discovered that due to the nature of specific law violations a percentage of minors in this group have long term special needs. Strategies have been developed to address this area.

For all of these specific measures, strategies for improvement are outlined in the respective SIP Matrices found as Exhibits placed at the end of this report.

### **Probation's PQCR Findings**

Please see combined section IV above.

### **Probation & Community-Based Prevention Strategies**

Tulare County has significantly improved County Wide Prevention activities since the last self-assessment was written. Community partnerships have formed and subsequently strengthened over the last two years. The county works collaboratively with community-based agencies and public agencies in a variety of committees. The Prevention Activities cited by CWS in an earlier section of this report are also involved with the Probation Department therefore those will not be reiterated.

### **Plan for Current System Improvement Plan (SIP) – Probation**

Tulare County continues to focus on current strategies for program improvement in Probation. The increasing demands for engaging children and families, for meeting improved best-practice standards, expanding family engagement strategies, and improving outcomes present unique challenges to Tulare County.

Central to the anticipated success on outcome improvements are the five case-carrying probation officers who face the daily challenge of high caseloads and increased complexities in meeting the needs of children and families. Tulare County implemented a number of strategic reforms since the last SIP.

Nonetheless, Probation continues to evolve with the implementation of Wraparound, Family Finding, and Family Engagement Training. A few lessons to come from the implementation of these specific strategies is identifying the need to engage family and youth in the development of their case plans, the importance of assisting youth in the establishment of life-long connections, the necessity of adequately obtaining independent living skills and the importance of dual-case planning in the event reunification efforts fail. In addition, the benefit of expanding community partnerships. We recognize that to effect positive change we must work together starting with strengthening and supporting families to prevent the occurrence of removal of the child from their family.

The SIP document will become the County's roadmap for reforming its Probation Placement Unit, which will lead to continued program improvements.

**Tulare County  
System Improvement Planning Committee  
Attachment 1**

Aspira Foster Family Services	Parenting Network/ Visalia Family Resource Center
Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC)	Synchrony of Visalia
Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)	Tulare County Office of Education
Central California Training Academy (CCTA)	Tulare Youth Services Bureau
City of Porterville	TulareWORKS
City of Woodlake	Tulare Youth Advisory Council
College of the Sequoia's	Tule River Tribal Council
Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC)	Turning Point
Dinuba Mennonite Church	Woodlake Family Resource Center
Family Healthcare Network	Tulare County Alcohol & Other Drugs
Family Services of Tulare County	Tulare County Child Welfare Services
First 5 – Tulare County	Tulare County Counsel
Goshen Family Resource Center	Tulare County Health Department
Kaweah Delta District Hospital	Tulare County Health & Human Services
Lindsay Family Resource Center	Tulare County Juvenile Court
Tulare County Licensed Foster Parents	Tulare County Mental Health
Tulare County Prevention Services	Tulare County Probation
Children's Services Network	Lindsay Healthy Start (FRC)
Visalia Unified School District (Goshen FRC)	

## Exhibit 1

### Tulare County Self-Assessment Executive Summary

Assembly Bill 636 (AB 636) requires the State of California and its counties measure outcomes and ensure accountability for its Child Welfare Services (CWS) program. Tulare County completed its current System Improvement Plan (SIP) in August 2006 and its most recent Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) in January 2008. The following report is Tulare County's Self-Assessment for the next three year period.

### County Demographic Profile and Outcomes Data

**General Population Data:** In July of 2006 the county's general population was 419,909, reflecting an increase of 5.82% over the census figures reported for the year 2004. Using US Census Bureau data estimates for 2007, the county's current population has grown to 421,553 persons and this past year the county's population grew by 7,798 people and currently ranks 18<sup>th</sup> out of 58 counties based on population size. As of July 2006, data reflected that 32% of the population, or 134,299 persons, were younger than 18 years of age and the county's population had a median age of 28.7 years.

**Race/ Ethnicity:** Reviewing US Census Bureau data for 2006, of people reporting one race alone, fifty six (56%) of the people in Tulare County were Hispanic, a four percent (4%) increase over the previous period of review. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the population reported themselves as White.

**Demographic Projections:** The population and age demographics for Tulare County are changing. Projections by the US Census Bureau show that by year 2025 the total population for the county will have a median age of 27.5 years, younger than the median age of 28.7 years posted for 2006. Tulare County's population is projected to increase by 63 percent over the 2006 population of 419,909 to an estimated 669,452 persons by 2025.

**Household Data:** Tulare County shows a significant increase in Female households with children under 18 years of age, where no husband is present, as well as a 10.5% decrease the number of households with persons age 65 and over living alone. Of note, approximately one-half of county's families are comprised of children younger than 18 years of age. In the last two years the county has seen significant decrease in its veteran's population and an increase in the disabled population.

**Employment Data:** For 2006, US Census data reflects a total of 301,192 persons in Tulare County over the age of 16 were employable. Of that number, 182,061 were included in the labor force data which means that 40% of the employable population is not in the 2006 labor force. The median household income is \$41,933 annually.

**Education:** In 2006, 68 percent of people 25 years and over had graduated from high school and 12 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. Thirty-two percent of the population were not enrolled in school and had not graduated high school.

**Poverty and Participation in Government Programs:** In 2006, 22 percent of the county's population lived in poverty. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of children under the age of 18 lived below the poverty level. The greatest level of poverty shows to be in families where the head of household is female and there is no husband present. Child poverty and family income are inextricably linked. Children in poverty frequently live in stressful environments without the necessities most children have, including adequate nutrition to enable physical and cognitive development. Children from low-income families are more likely to go hungry, reside in overcrowded or unstable housing, live in unsafe neighborhoods, and experience fewer educational opportunities. They also tend to have less access to health care, childcare, and other community resources.

**Teen Pregnancy Rates:** The rate of births in teenagers has decreased in Tulare County from 77.7 per 1000 young women ages 15-19 in 2000 to 62.5 in 2005. This is a difference of 15.2, however, the birthrate in Tulare County remains above the California birthrate and has never dropped below those rates during the five years.

**Infant Mortality/Child Deaths:** Infant Mortality is correlated with several factors including poor prenatal care and low birth weight. Access to care and well-baby preventative care after birth provide opportunities to identify and ameliorate risk factors for infant mortality. Tulare County has averaged 46-48 infant deaths per year for the last seven years. In 2006 alone, Tulare County had 8,284 births and 46 Infant deaths.

## County Data Reports

Quarterly Outcome and Accountability County Data reports published by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) provide summary level federal and state program outcome measures that serve as the basis of the county self assessment reviews and are used to track state and county performance measures over time.

**Child Welfare Services Participation Rates:** County data reports reveal that during the period of 2004 through 2007:

- There have been steady increases in the number of children under the age of 18 in Tulare County from 130,352 reported for 2004 to a total of 136,637 reported for 2007. Statewide, in 2004 there were 9,575, 520 of the population were children under the age of 18. As of 2007, the total population of persons under the age of 18 in California had grown to 10,007,507.
- The number and rate of referrals for the population of children <18 years has dropped from a total of 79.4 per 1000 reported in 2004 to 69.4 reported for 2007;
- The number of children with substantiated referrals has dropped from a total of 14.8 children per 1000 reported for 2004 to a total of 9.9 per 1000 as of 2007. Statewide, for 2007, 10.7 children per 1000 had a substantiated referral;

- The number and rate of first entries changes slightly from 3.7 children per 1000 reported in 2004 to 3.5 children per 1000 who entered the system. The state's score as of 2007 is 3.9 children per 1000;
- The number and rate of children in care dropped slightly from 8.4 per 1000 reported for July 2004 to a total of 7.9 per 1000 reported as of July 2007. The state's score for 2007 is 7.3 children per 1000 are in care.

**Safety Outcomes:** County data reports reveal that during the period of 2004 through 2007:

- **Measure S1.1:** Tulare County's performance for this measure is almost equal to the State's scores (91% Tulare and 92.9% State) for this period but below the national standard/goal of 94.6%. This area is being added to the system improvement plan for further review. Among the potential strategies to include are a review of data from the Differential Response project, working with community partners to identify local resources for families, and coordinating efforts to identify/develop supportive services for families leaving the dependency system.
- **Measure S2.1:** Tulare County's performance for this measure is within the statewide and the national target, with a score of 99.79% (the national standard is 99.68%). The county began correctly inputting incidences of abuse in foster care during early 2006. There are no plans to continue SIP strategies for this outcome area other than to continue to track and evaluate data on a quarterly basis for this measure and others.
- **Measure 2B [State]:** Timely Response to Immediate Referrals: The county continues to meet compliance for this measure. Outcomes data reflects steady improvement in response rates posting a compliance rate of 99.2% as of December 2007. The statewide score for this measure was 96.5% for the same period.
- **Measure 2B [State]:** Timely Response to 10-day Referrals. County performance for this measure continues to be below the statewide average. As of December 2007, Tulare County's outcome score for this measure was 84.9% while the state performance level for the same period was 90.4%. The compliance threshold for this measure is >90%. Tulare County will continue to track performance for this outcome and keep monitoring progress via the SIP matrix attached to address this area.
- **Measure 2C [State]:** Timely Social Worker Visits with the Child: This outcome measure was added to the current SIP. This area is also chosen in support of the county's focus on engaging children in families in making case decisions. As

well, inconsistent outcome data has led the county to evaluate its current system. Strategies have been developed to help address inconsistent outcome data in the current SIP report. Outcome Report data reflects that Tulare County's compliance rate for this measure as of December 2007 was 85.2% versus the state's average rate of 90.6%. The compliance threshold for this measure is >90%.

- **Adoptions Composite:** The following two outcomes for this composite are being included in the system improvement plan. The two areas are:
  - **Outcome C2.1 (Adoption within 24 Months (Entry Cohort)):** Areas of focus for this area will be to review the data, analyze case processing, and explore the effectiveness of Concurrent Planning to discover ways to improve scores for this area. Outcome data for this measure, as of December 2007, reflects that Tulare County's score was 36.9% while the national goal is 36.6%.
  - **Outcome C2.5 (Adoption within 12 Months (Legally Free)):** For this outcome, Tulare County will explore and analyze the data. Among the projected strategies being developed will be the identification of issues behind current performance, analyzing practice/process issues, reviewing whether court actions impact these scores, and reviewing concurrent planning practice for consistency and efficiency. Outcome data for this measure, as of December 2007, reflects that Tulare County's score was 36.3% while the national goal is 55.7%. California's average rate for this outcome area, as of December 2007, was 55.3%.

**Permanency and Stability Outcomes:** These measures are designed to reflect the number of foster care placements for each child, the length of time a child is in foster care and the rate children re-enter foster care after they have returned home or other permanent arrangements have been made. Tulare County will continue to track performance on the following two outcomes for the SIP review period covered by this report.

- **Exits to Permanency (24 Months in Care) (Measure C3.1):** Current data reflects that the county is below State scores warranting a closer look at this population. Data from the December 2007 Quarterly Outcome Report reflects that Tulare County's score for this measure was 23.9%, the California average was 20.4%, and the national average is posted at 29.1%. A review of the data will allow the county to better target effective strategies to positively impact scores for this outcome. Among the strategies to be explored are; a review of current practice on exiting youth from the dependency system, exploring/developing/implementing Family Finding to help connect youth to families, and the review and possible implementation of the Team Decision Making strategy. Together these strategies are viewed as offering the potential to increase the number of children exiting dependency sooner than later.

- **Multiple Foster Care Placements (Measure C4.1):** The data reflects fluctuations in promoting child placement stability that is below the statewide average performance for this measure. As of December 2007, scores for this outcome were 73.7% for Tulare County, 81.7% for the California average, and a national standard of 86% for this measure. Increasing social worker support to caregivers and children may help increase these outcome scores.

#### **Child and Family Connections Outcomes (Outcome 4)**

- **4B. Foster Care Placement in Least Restrictive Settings:** This measure reflects the percent of children placed in various types of care setting. It is a state outcome measure. Tulare County will focus on placement practices following detention to improve outcomes for this area. Specifically, Tulare County will focus on Initial Placement preferences. Data suggests that Tulare County uses Foster Family Agency placements as the initial placement option for children. As of December 2007, 58.1% of newly detained children were placed in Foster Family Agency (FFA) homes, 8% of the children went to relative care, and 28.7% went to foster homes. Tulare County's experience varies from the California averages posted for the same period which reflected that 40.5% of children are placed in FFA homes, 22.4% were placed into relative homes, and 19.3% were placed in foster homes. The county will explore options for streamlining the emergency placement procedures and to strengthen support to county foster care homes and relatives to improve performance on this outcome.

#### **Size and Structure of Agency: Child Welfare Services**

Child Welfare Services (CWS) is a Division within Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA). HHSA is a super agency comprised of Social Services (public assistance programs, child welfare services, and adult services), Public Health, and Mental Health.

The Child Welfare Services Division includes Emergency Response (ER), Family Maintenance (FM), Family Reunification (FR), Permanent Placement (PP), Voluntary Family Maintenance (VFM), Guardianship, Early Intervention (EI), Relative Assessment (RA), Licensing, Quality Improvement (QI), Adoptions, Independent Living Program (ILP), Restorative Justice, Court Unit, and a Group Home Unit.

#### **County Governance Structure**

There are no changes to the county's governance structure.

**Systemic Improvement Efforts – Child Welfare Services:** Tulare County continues to retain status as a "dedicated" county in partnership with the State of California and has certified with the State that it fully utilizes the Child Welfare Services / Case Management System (CWS/CMS). CWS/CMS is the statewide computer system to

automate the case management, services planning and information gathering functions of Child Welfare Services.

**CWS/CMS New User Training:** Tulare County has recently dedicated 1.0 FTE Staff Analyst to analyzing CWS outcome data from Business Objects, SafeMeasures and Structured Decision-Making, and for working with Children's Research Center Ad Hoc Analytics Report staff.

**Case Review System:** The case plan forms the framework for a dependent child's care and treatment during foster care placement including the services to be provided to the family. For a child who is 16 years of age or older, case plans contain a description of the programs and services that will help the child transition to adulthood. The following section describes how Tulare County has worked on improving their case review system.

**Parent / Child Participation in Case Planning:** For a child who is 16 years or older, case plans contain a description of the programs and services that will help the child transition to independent living.

**Process for Parent / Child Participation in Case Planning:** The County continues its use of formal and informal case staffing for developing case plans. Youth and parents are encouraged to participate in making service and placement decisions.

**Case Planning and Review:** The CWS Quality Improvement (QI) unit is currently implementing changes in case planning and review to ensure parent-child participation and equitable outcomes for all clients with case plans.

#### **Foster/Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention (CWS):**

**Foster Parent Recruitment Efforts:** The County has conducted recruitment campaigns to engage more Foster Parents. Post-adoptive services include parenting education and support, information and referral services, individual, family, and group counseling, and health education to the parents and children.

**Retention of Foster Parents/Adoptive Parents:** Foster parent retention continues to be a focus area for Tulare County. Tulare County Licensing continues to assist the Tulare County Foster Parent Association by providing the location for their monthly meetings.

**Relative Assessment:** Since the last assessment, CWS has enlarged Relative Assessment staff by 3.0 FTE as relative placements have become an increasingly important source of placements for children.

**Placement Resources:** Increased placement resources assist the county in the steps towards stability and permanency for foster youth. Targeted at children with high needs,

this program will bring children back to their families, or keep these high needs children from being placed in higher level group home settings.

### **Service Array and Resource Development:**

**Service delivery programs added to the service array:** The County continues to work with and develop community partners to assist with implementing services for minors and their families. Community partners include the Children's Services Network, the Child Abuse Prevention Council, Mental Health, Probation, Children's Mental Health, and Family Resource Centers to name a few.

**Services To Help Children Safely Return To The Family From Which They Were Removed:** This program delivers services for CWS families who are in Family Maintenance or Voluntary Family Maintenance providing parenting education & life skills training utilizing the "Parenting Wisely" curriculum.

**Pre-placement Prevention Service:** The result is a more responsive child welfare system with community resources and improved family and child well-being to strengthen the family to keep them from entering the child protection system.

**SB 163 Wraparound:** Tulare County enrolled its first child/family into its Wraparound program in April 2008. It is currently serving fourteen (14) families and is on its way to enrolling up to thirty (30) families by December 31, 2009. Wraparound services are delivered through a contracted lead agency (EMQ FamiliesFirst, Inc.).

### **Assessment of Needs and Provision of Services to Children, Parents, and Foster Parents:**

The county is moving towards providing improved services to children, parents, and foster parents through the Family-to-Family (F2F) Initiative. Family-to-Family is an initiative for long-term reform in CWS.

In March 20, 2008 the *Annie E. Casey Foundation* and *Child & Family Policy Institute of California* came to Tulare County to conduct a "Family to Family Orientation Meeting". The county is committed to exploring opportunities to implement the Family-to-Family Initiative over the next two year period.

**Services to Indian Children:** Tulare County provides services to children covered under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The Tulare River Indian Tribe is represented at the Children's Services Network (CSN) and the Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) meetings. The county provides training on the Indian Child Welfare Act to CWS staff. Competitive bid processes have occurred and services for families within the CWS system and child abuse prevention services are contracted to community-based agencies. These services are linked to outcomes being identified through a county-wide needs assessment process.

**Children's Steering Committee (CSC):** Those represented on the committee include: CWS, Probation, Mental Health, Department of Education, and Children's Providers-- both County operated Mental Health clinics and contracted providers, and Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) staff.

**Children's Services Network (CSN):** The Children's Services Network (CSN) was organized as a countywide association composed of a multidisciplinary membership including county departments, representatives of community-based organizations, family resource centers, law enforcement, education, and community advocates who have an interest in the well-being of children and families. The mission of the CSN is to strengthen services and support systems for children and families in Tulare County through advocacy, increased service collaboration, and coordinated funding processes.

**Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC):** CAPC is the Board of Supervisor's appointed independent agency responsible for reviewing funding recommendations for the County's annual Community Based Child Abuse Prevention Grant, Children's Trust Fund, and Child Abuse Intervention and Treatment grants. The CAPC oversees the Child Abuse Prevention grant, Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT) grant, the County Children's Trust Fund (CTF) and the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grant. The CAPC provides Mandated Reporter training throughout the County. The Children's Service Network (CSN) and the Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) have formed a Joint Allocations Committee to conduct a shared planning process.

**Foster Youth Transitions Committee:** The Tulare County's THP-PLUS Committee began meeting in 2006. The vision of this group is to work towards creating a system of multiple housing and service options for former foster youth ages 18 to 24. The committee envisioned a comprehensive system that would tie together housing while emphasizing key supportive services to afford youth the tools they need to succeed as adults. This Transitional Housing System would draw on the strengths of the community and collaborative partnerships to assist former foster youth to secure stable housing and progress with his or her life goals including educational attainment, employment, physical and mental well-being, and connections to the community.

**Tulare County Linkages Planning Committee:** The Tulare County Linkages Planning Committee has formed and began meeting in fiscal year 2006/2007. The goal of this committee is to achieve a community of self-sufficient families while treating and preventing child abuse and neglect. On July 15, 2008 the committee presented its policies and protocol to the Child and Family Policy Institute of California. Linkages Committee is planned on finalizing and submitting the county's plan to the state and subsequently began implementation in fiscal year 2008/2009.

**Wraparound Executive Team and Community Team:** The purpose of the Wraparound Executive Team is to provide guidance and oversight in regards to compliance with the SB163 standards for strength-base service delivery, allocation of staff time and flexible funding. This team is composed of a Deputy Director-Managed

Care, Chief Probation Officer, Administrator-Tulare County Office of Education, CWS Director, and a Parent Partner, or their designee.

The Wraparound Community Team is comprised of staff from the community based provider, parent and youth consumer representatives, probation, education, child welfare services, and mental health. Their primary purposes of this Team are ensuring the continuity and consistency of program management (model fidelity) and staff development in support of Wraparound.

### **Child Welfare Services Training**

The CWS Training Unit is tasked with the responsibility of providing training to ensure that an excellent workforce serves children and families. This systemic factor examines county progress toward providing initial and continuing training from child welfare staff and foster and adoptive parents. CWS training consists of:

- Core / Induction Training of New Child Welfare Social Service employees through the Central California Training Academy at Cal-State Fresno:
- Training for Child Welfare Service Managers and Supervisors:
- Induction Training: Training that is developed, coordinated and conducted by county staff and specifically designed for new CWS staff.
- UC Davis Training: Specialized training, identified annual via a staff survey of training needs, is provided for both new and experienced staff (including professional staff development).
- Foster Parent Training:

Since the last assessment, Tulare County has contracted with the California State University Fresno, Specialized Foster Parent Training Project, to provide foster parent training. Tulare County currently contracts with Central California Training Academy for two Field-Based Trainers / Mentors.

Tulare County has significantly improved countywide prevention activities since the last self-assessment was written. Competitive bid processes have occurred and child abuse prevention services are contracted to community-based agencies. Services are linked to outcomes being identified through a county-wide needs assessment process. This process was incorporated into the County Self-Assessment and will align services and funding with prevention services.

### **Office of Child Abuse Prevention, Three-Year Child Abuse Prevention Plan**

The State has provided counties with direction for the incorporation of the OCAP Three-Year Plan with the County's Self Assessment. These instructions are found in All

County Information Notice (ACIN) No. 1-41-08, Integration of the Child Abuse Prevention Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT), Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP), and Promoting Safe and Stable Families (OSSF) Three-year plan into the California Children and Family Service Review Process. The OCAP Three-Year Plan will be rolled over this year to continue programs already in place. A planning body comprised of members of the community-based prevention partners and CWS met to assure planned services/activities support the County's CWS System Improvement Plan goals for the current review period. It is anticipated that a fully integrated Plan will be developed during the next cycle which starts in January 2012.

The County of Tulare Three-Year Child Abuse Prevention Plan describes the primary prevention and early intervention strategies for the county. The Tulare County Child Protection Coordinating Council is the Tulare County's Board designated Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC). Countywide child abuse prevention services are contracted to non-profit agencies via a competitive bid process.

#### **Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Efforts:**

**Promoting Safe & Stable Families (PSSF):** PSSF legislation has the goal of keeping families together by funding services designed to keep children in their homes. Prevention services are designed to support alternative placements for children who cannot remain safely in the home and to provide services to enable children to return to their homes, if appropriate.

**Post-Adoptions Services:** Tulare County contracts with a community-based provider to provide post-adoption services to adoptive parents.

**Respite Care Services:** Tulare County contracts with a community-based provider to offer respite care services to CWS families in Family Maintenance or Voluntary Family Maintenance.

#### **Child Abuse Prevention Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT), Children's Trust Fund (CTF), and Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Grant:**

The Child Abuse Prevention grant, Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT) grant, the County Children's Trust Fund (CTF) and the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grant are competitive, community-based funds that are flexible and preventive in nature. Funds are typically used for parent education, domestic violence services, Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Programs (C.A.N.), individual, family and group counseling, and Parent Leadership Programs.

#### **Summary Assessment – CWS**

Tulare County continues to focus on current strategies for program improvement in Child Welfare Services. The increasing demands for engaging children and families, for

meeting improved best-practice standards, expanding family engagement strategies, and improving outcomes present unique challenges to Tulare County.

Central to the anticipated success on outcome improvements are the case-carrying social workers who face the daily challenge of high caseloads and increased complexities in meeting the needs of children and families. Tulare County implemented a number of strategic reforms since the last SIP by identifying court report writers, developing an Early Intervention Team, assigning Quality Improvement staff, and implementing a Relative Assessment Team. Having remained staff-neutral, the changes have provided no measurable form of relief to front-line staff. Tulare County continues to struggle with a social work staff turnover that can add to the casework for these same social workers.

Nonetheless, the county's CWS Division continues to evolve with the implementation of Wraparound, Structured Decision Making, and Differential Response. One major lesson to come from the implementation of these specific strategies is the benefit of expanding community partnerships. In the period since the last SIP, Tulare County's social services network of provider agencies has come together to strategically address system improvement issues that includes a focus on outcomes for children and families we all work with. To that end, these forged partnerships are slowly translating into program and process efficiencies that are starting to lead to workload relief for overburdened staff.

The SIP Planning Committee (see Attachment 1 for a list of members) continues to meet quarterly and discuss the County's performance on the outcome indicators and methods for improvement. In doing so, the SIP Planning Committee has prioritized the preceding outcomes and systemic factors for the upcoming three-year period for review. The SIP document will become the County's roadmap for reforming its child welfare system which will lead to continued program improvements.

### **Demographic Profile and Outcomes Data - Probation**

The demographics data for Tulare County is not being reiterated here for the Probation Department's portion of this report.

#### **Outcomes Data:**

In January 2005, the Probation Department began submitting a Probation Foster Care Placement Monthly Caseload Statistical Report (FC23) to the State pursuant to ACL 04-57. Under the Child Welfare Services Outcome and Accountability System (AB636), the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) was required to publish county data reports that would provide summary level Federal and State program measures that would serve as the basis for county self assessment reviews and track state and county performance over time.

**Initial Placement Type Data:** This data represents the initial placement by type, per year, of those youth who entered the foster care system through probation. The department's foster care population has decreased by 85% over the last three years.

Additional services/programs have also been developed within the department/community to assist youth in addressing their specific needs including: Juvenile Drug Court, Youth Treatment Correctional Unit (YTCU), Youth Facility, and the Youth Correctional Center Unit (YCCU).

### **Permanency and Stability Outcomes**

These measures are designed to reflect the number of foster care placements for each child, the length of time a child is in foster care, and the rate children re-enter foster care after they have returned home or other permanent arrangements have been made.

The Probation Department's focus on early intervention and diversion has resulted in a decrease of foster care placements by 85%. The data reflects the need for continued focus in the areas of family engagement and family reunification. In contrast, the child welfare service average age for youth in foster care is 6-10; for probation it is 16-17 years of age. Although youth enter foster care with probation at an advanced age, the Department diligently works to identify the specific needs of every foster youth and to meet those needs. The department will remain focused on transitioning youth out of foster care in a timely manner.

#### **Composite 4: PLACEMENT STABILITY**

##### **Multiple Foster Care Placements**

These measures reflect the number of children with multiple placements within 12 months of placement. The data exceeds the state standard reflective of the department's ability to assist youth in stabilizing in their placement. The Probation Department will continue to involve the youth/family in the development of the case plan and will further encourage the youth's family to remain involved throughout the youth's placement.

### **Size and Structure of the Agency: Probation**

#### **Staffing Characteristics:**

A Chief Probation Officer, appointed by the Tulare County Superior Court Judges, heads the Probation Department. The department consists of an administrative section, fiscal services, adult services, juvenile services, and juvenile institutions. A Supervising Probation Officer supervises these six officers.

The Placement Unit is responsible for the placement and care of youth in foster care who are also on formal probation. Officer caseloads consist of group home placements,

rate classification letter (RCL) 8-14; foster care; and suitable relative/non-relative placements, throughout the State.

Probation officers have been assigned to perform the Suitable Relative/Non-Relative Extended Family Member home assessments and, resulting from an agreement, a Public Health nurse was assigned to the Placement Unit to gather information from CWS/CMS, local health records, and/or the probation file for the purposes of completing Health and Education Passports (HEP) for probation youth in out-of-home care.

**Department Turnover Ratio:**

The Probation Department's turnover ratio for institutional staff, comprised of Probation Correctional Officers and Institution Supervisors, falls within the normal bounds for probation departments throughout the state. The vacancy rate for Probation Officers is extremely low, providing a stable workforce for the department.

**Probation Collective Bargaining Issues:**

There are no collective bargaining issues that negatively affect the provision of services by Probation.

**Systemic Factors – Probation:**

**Relevant Management Information Systems:**

In fiscal year 2006/2007 the Tulare County Board of Supervisors recognized the need for a new case management system for the Probation Department and allocated funding in excess of \$1 million to address those needs. In July, 2006 the Tulare County Board of Supervisors approved the purchase of a new Probation case management system and accounting system from Automon, Inc. The new system is called Caseload Explorer (CE). The Adult CE system went live on June 23, 2007. The Juvenile system went live in March 2008; the Accounting System is anticipated later in 2008.

Additionally the county allocated funds to the Probation Department for the purchase of licensing from Assessments.com. The provision of this valuable software allows the department to make detention determinations based upon a validated risk assessment tool. The Board's commitment to the department recognizes our integral role in the criminal justice system and our significant community partnerships. We thank the Board for their recognition and support. Importantly, this action also supported one of our most significant strategic goals.

The Probation Department's, fiscal services unit continues to utilize the JALAN System as the accounting portion in CE has yet to be completed. The department continues to utilize JALAN and COGNOS which allows information retrieval and limited reports. The Placement Unit prior to the implementation of CE in March of 2008 utilized a stand-alone Microsoft Access database, which was updated on a weekly basis. As currently configured it does not have archival capabilities; therefore, historical information was

derived by hand, with reference to weekly reports, officer monthly reports, and yearly summary reports.

The following informational systems are utilized by the Probation Department (either direct or indirect access) to complete home assessments and court reports.

CLETS – California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System: The Probation Department is an authorized California Law Enforcement Telecommunications Systems agency, with one terminal located within the confines of Central Records at the Juvenile Justice Center.

LiveScan: The Probation Department is an authorized LiveScan agency, with one LiveScan machine located within the confines of Central Records at the Juvenile Justice Center and one at our Adult Services Office.

CWS/CMS – Child Welfare Services/Case Management System: The Probation Department has no direct access to the Child Welfare System/Case Management System and must make requests for information through CWS. Since the last County Self Assessment, Probation has continued to work with CWS in an effort to obtain access to CWS/CMS. Probation and CWS continue to work out the details, nearing completion of an MOU between the agencies which will set the parameters of access and use by Probation of the system.

CACI – Child Abuse Central Index: The Probation Department has access to CACI and The California Department of Justice.

### **Case Review System:**

The case plan forms the framework for a foster youth's care and treatment during foster care placement and for the services to be provided to the family. The following section describes how probation has worked on improving their case review system.

#### **Parent / Child Participation in Case Planning:**

Since the previous self-assessment Probation has increased the use of formal and informal case staffing as a result of more defined and additional strength-based training for staff. There are ongoing efforts to standardize this practice throughout the unit. Efforts are being made to increase opportunities to work with the family in developing a case plan and tailor services to ameliorate the issues that brought them to the attention of foster care and Probation. These multi-disciplinary case staffing includes the participation of the case carrying probation officer, supervisor, parent/child, and the substitute care providers.

### **General Case Planning and Review:**

The Probation Department develops a case plan for all minors who are identified as a reasonable candidate pursuant to Title IV-E. All reasonable candidates have six-month case plan reviews and updates until leaving the system. Case plans are generally developed after the minor and the family's needs are assessed, during the juvenile investigation process. For the Placement Unit, the case plan is updated every six-months when writing the six-month review report by the Placement Officer, taking into consideration the minors' progress with treatment efforts and current level of functioning, as well as the parents' progress.

Concurrent planning begins once the minor enters out-of-home placement, with the primary focus being reunification with family. Many factors are reviewed and discussed keeping what is in the minors' best interest in the forefront.

### **Placement Resources:**

The Probation Department utilizes group homes, foster homes and suitable relative/non-relative placements. A challenge for probation when attempting to place minors in a foster home setting is the lack of county foster homes willing to work with delinquent minors.

### **Quality Assurance - Probation:**

The Judicial Council conducts an annual review of randomly selected Probation Placement cases.

### **Service Array and Resource Development- Probation:**

**Availability of services:** Probation works with care providers to provide transportation for visitation or family sessions. With the Outcomes Improvement (OIP) Allocation, probation was able to purchase gas vouchers to assist families with transportation to see their children while placed in foster care. Probation continues to participate in the Children's Resource/Intensive Service Committee (RISC) whenever placement of a minor into a Level 13/14 group home is necessary.

**Services to Indian Children:** The Probation Department provides services for children covered under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) who are in need of out-of-home placement.

### **Agency Responsiveness to the Community – Probation:**

The Agency Responsiveness systemic factor examines the ability to work with other public and private community partners to develop and coordinate case planning for children receiving services through the probation system.

## **Staff / Provider Training - Probation**

### **Placement Probation Officer Core Curriculum:**

Per California Department of Social Services (CDSS) All County Letter (ACL) number 08-23 dated May 19, 2008 new requirements have been established for probation officers assigned to the placement unit. Probation Officers are required to participate in 40 hours of ongoing probation specific training each fiscal calendar year.

### **Training for Probation Managers and Supervisors:**

**Probation Manager Training:** Tulare County Supervisory Academy: This is a county approved training program offered to all county supervisory/management staff.

**Additional Annual-Ongoing Training for Probation Officers:** Probation Officers are required to receive continuing training by the State of California in both Probation related work and foster care for those officers assigned to the care and custody of foster youth.

### **Probation Training Projections:**

The goal of the county's training plan is to provide a structure for the delivery of training to Probation staff. Provide skills, knowledge, and awareness for staff to ensure the delivery of quality services to children and their families.

## **County-Wide Prevention Activities and Strategies – Probation**

Tulare County has significantly improved County Wide Prevention activities since the last self-assessment was written. See the previous section as cited by Child Welfare for a listing of the collaborative partners working on prevention activities and strategies.

### **Summary Assessment - Probation**

Tulare County Probation is committed to improving outcomes for families and children. Focus is being placed on increasing family engagement, involvement of the child and family in the assessment and case planning process, family finding, and assisting youth in identifying lifelong connections. The latter will assist youth with their adjustment to foster care and as preparation for transition from foster care.

Exhibit 2

<p><b>Safety Outcome: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect.</b></p> <p><b>Safety: 2B Child Abuse and Neglect Referrals by Time-to-Investigation</b></p> <p>Percent of child abuse and neglect referrals that require an investigation in the study quarter that have resulted in an in-person investigation stratified by immediate response and ten-day referrals, for both planned and actual visits.</p>				
<p><b>County's Current Performance:</b></p> <p>10-Day Responses: As of June 30, 2008, Tulare County's score for this area was 85.10% while it was 84.60% as of June 30, 2007; a slight improvement in the 12 month period being reviewed. Tulare County expects to improve performance for this measure and surpass the state's compliance rate of 90%.</p>				
<p><b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b></p> <p>Tulare County will continue to identify and implement practices that enable timely 10-day referral responses from social workers. Modifying existing policies and procedures to add language which specifies timelines and procedures for the transition of referrals from the Screener to the Emergency Response worker, and incorporate a more systematic method of tracking, reporting, and responding to 10-day referrals.</p>				
<p><b>Strategy 1.1 -</b> To review existing practices and procedures to ensure that staff continues to improve their response rate to 10-day referrals.</p>			<p><b>Strategy Rationale:</b> A more defined procedure with timelines will better ensure compliance with referral response rates.</p>	
<p><b>Milestone</b></p>	<p><b>1.1.2</b></p> <p>Applicable staff will be trained on the revised policies.</p>	<p><b>Timeframe</b></p>	<p>Target July 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team Policies &amp; Procedures Comm. CWS Training Team</p>
	<p><b>1.1.1</b></p> <p>CWS Managers and Team Leaders will use Safe Measures monthly to review the results with staff to ensure compliance in making timely assessments for all 10-day referrals.</p>		<p>Target July 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team Team Leaders Social Workers Analyst</p>
	<p><b>1.1.2</b></p> <p>Team Leaders will review data entry procedures for 10-day referrals into the CWS/CMS data system with their staff, as needed.</p>		<p>Target July 15, 2009</p>	<p>Team Leaders Social Workers Field Based Trainers</p>

	<b>1.1.3</b> Team Leaders will provide each ER Social Worker with a monthly report of their individual compliance and any identified training needs. The Unit CWS Manager will also be provided a copy monthly.		Target July 15, 2009		Design Team Policies & Procedures Comm. CWS Training Team
	<b>1.1.4</b> Evaluate the results of the policy modification and training to staff on the timeliness and accuracy of inputting of 10-day referrals.		Target December 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Managers QI Team
<b>Strategy 1.2</b> – Require all employee performance evaluations to include composite data collected for 10-day referrals.			<b>Strategy Rationale:</b> Providing feedback to staff regarding performance compliance to existing policy will better ensure that staff responds to referrals as required.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.2.1</b> Team Leaders will include composite data collected for 10-day referrals to their staff on a monthly basis.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target September 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	CWS Managers Team Leaders
	<b>1.2.2</b> Team Leaders will use SafeMeasures to collect and track data on a monthly basis for their staff and provide staff with feedback during monthly meetings.		Target October 15, 2009 & Monthly Thereafter		CWS Managers Team Leaders Social Workers
	<b>1.2.3</b> Team Leaders will utilize results of the SafeMeasures data for inclusion in their employee’s annual performance evaluations.		Target January 15, 2010		CWS Managers Team Leaders Social Workers
<b>Improvement Goal 2.0:</b>  To increase community awareness of what constitutes child abuse / neglect by providing ongoing training opportunities.					
<b>Strategy 2.1</b> - Develop a system for CWS presentations to the community about child abuse/neglect.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> - Educating the public about child abuse/neglect issues will assist the community in identifying child abuse/neglect situations and providing pertinent abuse/neglect information.		

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>2.1.1</b> Identify opportunities for community outreach that are in the same geographic areas as each district office.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target July 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders
	<b>2.1.2</b> Identify materials that are available to present to community members.		Target June 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders CWS Training Team
	<b>2.1.3</b> Identify potential new areas/venues for outreach to community members.		Target June 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders
<b>Strategy 2. 2</b> – Develop a key personnel contact list at each CWS Unit and provide the contact list to the various community partners.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> - When community partners are able to identify key personnel in each CWS Unit, it helps them to know who they can call whenever questions arise about potential child abuse/neglect issues. This has the potential for decreasing the volume of inappropriate referrals to CWS.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>2.2.1</b> Develop a list, by geographic area, that identifies key CWS personnel by name, title, phone number and fax number.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target June 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders
	<b>2.2.2</b> Make the list available to members of the community – schools, health care, Head Start, Family Resource Centers.		Target June 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders
	<b>2.2.3</b> Update the key contacts listing on a semi-annual basis.		Target December 15, 2009		CWS Managers Team Leaders

	<b>2.2.4</b> Outreach efforts are evaluated.		Target June 15, 2010		Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders
<b>Improvement Goal 3.0:</b> Tulare County will evaluate the Differential Response Pilot.					
<b>Strategy 3.1</b> — Tulare County will study the results of the Differential Response pilot.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> – Having implemented Differential Response was intended to result in a lower number of referrals to CWS. Since the pilot was implemented and phased in across the Division, there is need to study the results and to refine as necessary.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>3.1.1</b> Review, collect, and compare the Emergency Response data for periods prior to Differential Response and post implementation.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target July 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team CWS Managers QI Team
	<b>3.1.2</b> Measure recurrence of referrals for families that have received Differential Response intervention compared to those that have not over a 6-month to one year time period.		Target September 15, 2009 and Annually Thereafter		Design Team CWS Managers QI Team
	<b>3.1.3</b> Develop an exit survey tool for use with families who have been served by Differential Response.		Target December 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Managers QI Team
	<b>3.1.4</b> Conduct and use exit surveys for families that have received Differential Response intervention as a means for determining the effectiveness of the program.		Target March 15, 2010 and Semi-Annually Thereafter		Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders QI Team

	<p><b>3.1.5</b></p> <p>Evaluate the results of the surveys and develop a set of recommendations, with implementation strategies, as necessary, for approval by management staff.</p>	<p>Target June 15, 2010 and Semi-Annually Thereafter</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders QI Team</p>
<p><b>Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Increase current staff's knowledge of available community and agency resources and provide a systemic practice shift to a more strength-based, community oriented, and family centered practice.</li> <li>o Increase staffing levels to help meet the increasing demands for improved social work with children and families, improved best-practice standards, family engagement strategies, and better outcome goals present unique challenges to Tulare County.</li> <li>o Increase team leader and CWS Manager oversight to ensure even workload distribution of Emergency Response cases among offices and staff throughout the yearly caseload fluctuations.</li> <li>o Review and modify current policies to provide a systematic method of tracking, recording, and reporting of 10-day referrals.</li> <li>o Increase staff accountability to comply with existing policy.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b></p> <p>Education: Teaching Mandated Reporters and other community members about how to recognize and make valid child abuse/neglect referrals.</p> <p>Training: Review of existing policies and procedures 10-day referrals, CWS/CMS training, SDM training, training for staff and community partners for Differential Response protocols and practices. Continue to provide training to staff on SDM</p>			
<p><b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b></p> <p>Educators, other professionals, and family members account for nearly half of all Child Abuse/Neglect referrals to Tulare County since 2003. The community has asked for training in 1) learning how to recognize child abuse/neglect based upon the legal definition that CWS is required to follow, and 2) what information is needed for making a referral. CWS is partnering with five Family Resource Centers in Tulare County to provide Differential Response services.</p>			
<p><b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regulatory changes regarding confidentiality.</li> <li>2. Updates to CWS/CMS to accommodate addition of SDM procedures and identifying differential response dispositions.</li> </ol>			

Exhibit 3

<p><b>Safety Outcome: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect.</b></p> <p><b>Safety: 2C - Timely Social Worker Contacts With Child:</b></p> <p>This measure computes the percentage of children who received a monthly visit, out of all those children for whom a visit was required. Children for whom a determination is made that monthly visits are not necessary (e.g. valid visit exception).</p>					
<p><b>County's Current Performance:</b></p> <p>For the quarterly period ending June 30, 2008, Tulare County's monthly scores for this outcome were: April 2008 – 90.30%; May 2008 – 91.20%; and for June 2008 - 89.70%. During the same period, State's monthly scores for this measure were: April 2008 – 92.30%; May 2008 – 92.2%; and for June 2008 – 92.00%. Tulare County was below the State's compliance threshold of &gt;90% during one month of the quarterly period under review.</p>					
<p><b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b></p> <p>Increase the consistency of compliance scores for monthly child contacts to &gt;90% over the next 24 months.</p>					
<p><b>Strategy 1.1:</b> Review current caseload data and explore options to restructure the Division's Continuing caseloads.</p>			<p><b>Strategy Rationale:</b> The specialization of continuing functions may provide efficiencies in case management and may result in staff retention.</p>		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.1.1</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target July 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team CWS Managers Analyst
	Collect and evaluate Continuing caseload information for each of the components (FM, FR and PP).				

	<p><b>1.1.2</b></p> <p>Evaluate program-specific functional assignments in Units and Teams within the Division (e.g., Permanency Team, Group Homes Unit, Court, ILP, etc.).</p>		Target September 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Managers Analyst
	<p><b>1.1.3</b></p> <p>Develop efficiency model outlining options for aligning functional units that may result in work efficiencies and/or reduced caseloads.</p>		Target November 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Managers Analyst
	<p><b>1.1.4</b></p> <p>Present findings and recommendations for implementing program efficiencies and develop a plan for implementing changes to caseloads/functions.</p>		Target December 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Managers Analyst
<p><b>Improvement Goal 2.0:</b></p> <p>Increase the accuracy, timeliness, and consistency of entering the child contact information in CWS/CMS.</p>					
<p><b>Strategy 2.1:</b> Utilize a training needs assessment to determine individual worker training needs.</p>			<p><b>Strategy Rationale:</b> To increase the efficiency of work products, staff skill levels need periodic assessment/evaluation to respond to changing job demands and requirements.</p>		
<b>Milestone</b>	<p><b>2.1.1</b></p> <p>Review current policies and training information regarding the documentation of child contacts in CWS/CMS.</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target June 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team CWS Training Team Policies & Procedures Comm. CCTA – Field Based Trainers Analyst

	<b>2.1.2</b> Develop training modules and aids for staff to use for documenting child contact information in CWS/CMS.		Target October 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Training Team Analyst
	<b>2.1.3</b> Assess staff training needs regarding inputting of child contacts in CWS/CMS via training needs assessment tool.		Target August 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders CWS Training Team
	<b>2.1.4</b> Provide training module for staff at least semi-annually.		Target March 15, 2010		Design Team CWS Training Team
<b>Strategy 2. 2:</b> Review existing practice to ensure that scores on monthly child contacts improve for the Division.			<b>Strategy Rationale:</b> CWS Managers, Team Leaders and Social workers have access to SafeMeasures, a case management tool, which is available for monitoring team and individual staff member performance. Standardizing the consistent use of SafeMeasures will improve compliance scores.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>2.2.1</b> Perform ongoing assessments of SW workload responsibilities and redistribute work as needed to maximize individual and/or team performance.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target June 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	CWS Managers Team leaders
	<b>2.2.2</b> Perform ongoing assessments of SW ability to efficiently manage their assigned duties in a timely manner.		Target July 15, 2009		CWS Managers Team Leaders

	<p><b>2.2.3</b></p> <p>Based on the findings of the staff assessment, identify and deliver needed training to improve time management and/or case management training to staff.</p>	<p>Target December 15, 2009</p>	<p>CWS Managers Team Leaders Training Team</p>
	<p><b>2.2.4</b></p> <p>Conduct a division-wide assessment of caseloads. Use the review of caseload/functions and implement program efficiencies.</p>	<p>Target December 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Administration CWS Managers QI Team</p>
	<p><b>2.2.5</b></p> <p>Team Leaders will utilize individual social worker's compliance with timely visits as a measure on annual performance reviews (PAF).</p>	<p>December 15, 2009</p>	<p>CWS Manager Team Leaders Social Workers</p>
	<p><b>2.2.6</b></p> <p>To maximize timely social worker contacts, social workers will attempt all mandated visits the first week of the calendar month.</p>	<p>Target June 15, 2009</p>	<p>CWS Manager Team Leaders Social Workers</p>
	<p><b>2.2.7</b></p> <p>The QI Team will conduct semi-annual reviews of the child contact data for the Division to monitor performance improvement on outcome scores, to evaluate the efficiency of the processes in place, and to evaluate the proposed strategies for effectiveness in improving child contact scores.</p>	<p>Target June 15, 2010</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers QI Team</p>
<p><b>Strategy 2.3</b> – Team Leaders will engage their staff to provide ongoing support.</p>		<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b> – Social workers have difficult jobs and need ongoing and consistent support from their team leaders to be successful.</p>	

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>2.3.1</b> Team Leaders will use SafeMeasures data on a monthly basis to monitor individual staff and team performance on a monthly basis.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target June 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Team Leaders Social Workers
	<b>2.3.2</b> Team Leaders will review individual staff member and team performance data with their CWS Managers on a monthly basis.		Target July 15, 2009		CWS Managers Team Leaders Social Workers
	<b>2.3.3</b> On a monthly basis, Team Leaders will provide individual staff with performance feedback and monitor progress, coach, support, and identify any individual or team training needs.		Target July 15, 2009		Team Leaders Social Workers
	<b>2.3.4</b> Team Leaders will be available to their staff for ongoing communication, training, coaching, and support as needed or required.		Target March 15, 2009		CWS Managers Team Leaders

**Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.**

None identified at this time.

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

The county will assess utilization of the SafeMeasures tools by CWS Managers, Team Leaders, and staff and request refresher courses as needed. This may include a review of the training curriculum used by the CWS Training Team and the Central California Training Academy.

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

1. The work of the Child Contacts Design Team will be shared with other Design Teams addressing separate outcome measures. Through the sharing of the work by distinct Design Teams work will be coordinated so goals are consistent.
2. The CWS Training Team will work with Subject Matter Experts (SME) to design or revise curriculum as necessary resulting from the current review process.

3. The Field Based Trainer (from the Central California Training Academy at CSUF) will help with the transfer of learning for new staff.
4. Reinstating the use of the "ATM" at each office site will help CWS Managers and Team Leaders address data questions related to this outcome measure and others being reviewed currently by partner Design Teams.

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

No changes to current regulation or statute have been identified for this outcome measure.

<p><b>Child and Family Well-Being Outcome: The continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved for children.</b></p> <p><b>Family Relations Outcome 4B:</b></p> <p>For all children who entered child welfare supervised foster care for the first time (and stayed at least five days) during the 12-month study period, what percent were in kin, foster, FFA, group home, or other placement (first placement type, predominant placement type)? What percent of children in child welfare supervised foster care were in kin, foster, FFA, group home, and any other placement type at the point-in-time?</p>	
<p><b>County's Current Performance:</b></p> <p>As of June 30, 2008, Tulare County's outcome score for initial child placement type preferences were as follow: 9.7% with Kin, 28.80% in Foster Care Homes, and 55.30% in FFA homes. Comparatively, the State's data for the same period reflects child placement preferences as follows: 20.80% with Kin, 19.30% in Foster Care Homes, and 42.10% in FFA homes. The Point-in-Time (PIT) outcome data as of June 30, 2008, for Tulare County reflects that child placement preferences were as follow: 31.30% with Kin, 7.90% in Foster Care Homes, and 36.10% in FFA homes. Comparative data for the State reflects child placement preferences as follow: 34.90% with Kin, 9.40% in Foster Care Home, and 26.80% in FFA homes. Tulare County proposes to increase the initial placement data for children into less restrictive placements (relative/NREFM care or foster care) by 5% within 24 months.</p>	
<p><b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b></p> <p>Outcome data for this measure indicates the predominant use of Foster Family Agencies (FFA) for the placement of children initially detained by CWS and a decreasing number of children being placed in foster homes and/or kin placements. Tulare County proposes to increase the relative placement rate by 5% [using the initial placement data outcome].</p>	
<p><b>Strategy 1.1:</b> Develop an internal incentives program (non-financial) as determined by each CWS Manager and their staff that rewards and recognizes individual staff or teams who do the best job of finding and placing children with relatives/NREFMs.</p>	<p><b>Strategy Rationale –</b> Placing children with relatives is the goal of the Division and communicating that expectation to staff allows the county to place children into the least restrictive placements possible.</p>

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.1.1</b> CWS Managers and Team Leaders will collect placement performance data from SafeMeasures on a monthly basis and enter the data on charts created by Team Leaders/CWS CWS Managers. The statistics may include referrals response data, child/family contacts, and placement data.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target June 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team CWS Managers Team Leader
	<b>1.1.2</b> The chart listing the statistics will be posted in the lobby of every CWS office in full view of the public to reflect progress by staff to place with relatives/NREFM.		Target July 15, 2009		CWS Managers Team Leader
	<b>1.1.3</b> CWS Offices will recognize and celebrate individual staff or team performance each month.		Target July 15, 2009		CWS Managers Team Leader
<b>Strategy 1.2</b> – The CWS Division will explore the implementation of the simplified exemption process for relative placements.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> – Simplified exemptions for minor criminal violations currently require the county to follow a tedious process of requesting relative criminal record exemptions. Adopting the simplified exemption process will allow for the quicker processing of the relative placement process reducing dependency on temporary care beds or FFA placement.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.2.1</b> Research Licensing regulations and Division 31 related to the simplified relative exemption process.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target June 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team Relative Assessment Team
	<b>1.2.2</b> Develop a proposal and related policy for adopting the simplified exemption process for consideration by the Deputy Director.		Target August 15, 2009		Design Team Policy & Procedure Committee Relative Assessment Team

	<p><b>1.2.3</b></p> <p>Prepare and deliver training to all staff on the new simplified relative exemption process.</p>		Target September 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Training Team CWS Staff
	<p><b>1.2.4</b></p> <p>Implement the new simplified relative exemption process.</p>		Target October 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders Relative Assessment Team
	<p><b>1.2.5</b></p> <p>Monitor data and work practice to evaluate improvements in making and completing the simplified relative placement exemption process. Evaluate whether new practice has resulted in placing children in less restrictive placements.</p>		Target March 15, 2010		Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders Quality Improvement Team
<p><b>Strategy 1.3</b> – The CWS Division will implement the emergency placement process for relative placement.</p>			<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b> – Making emergency placement with relatives needs to be better defined to allow for broader use in Tulare County. Adopting the emergency placement provisions of current regulation will allow staff to place children in the least restrictive placement possible at the time of detention.</p>		
Milestone	<p><b>1.3.1</b></p> <p>Implement the emergency placement procedures.</p>	Timeframe	Target October 15, 2009	Assigned To	Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders Relative Assessment Team
	<p><b>1.3.2</b></p> <p>Monitor data and work practice to evaluate improvements in making emergency placements with relatives. Evaluate whether new practice has resulted in placing children in less restrictive placements.</p>		Target March 15, 2010		Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders Quality Improvement Team

<p><b>Strategy 1.4</b> – Develop and promote the utilization of staff position(s) as a “key” community worker(s) to work with Family Resource Centers and other community partners for finding and supporting relatives/NREFMs through the Family Finding strategy.</p>		<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b> - Children are better served when placed with relatives in the communities they come from. Working with community partners like the FRC helps develop partnerships that will support children and families. Utilizing new tools, like Family Finding, the county believes children may benefit from maintaining contacts with kin thus supporting the “least restrictive placement option.”</p>			
<b>Milestone</b>	<p><b>1.4.1</b></p> <p>Collaborate with community partners to deliver training on “Family Finding”.</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<p>Target May 15, 2009</p>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<p>CWS Division CWS Managers Community Partners CWS Training Team</p>
	<p><b>1.4.2</b></p> <p>Develop the Division’s plan and communicate the agency’s goal of placing children in the least restrictive placement possible to community partners and request their participation and support.</p>		<p>Target June 15, 2009</p>		<p>Design Team SIP Planning Committee Community Partners CWS Staff</p>
	<p><b>1.4.3</b></p> <p>Present the Division’s plan for developing a collaborative approach to implementing family finding. (geographic location for services, financial cost, service population, funding, and resources)</p>		<p>Target July 15, 2009</p>		<p>Design Team SIP Planning Committee Community Partners CWS Staff</p>
	<p><b>1.4.4</b></p> <p>Research and identify potential funding sources to support a Family Finding project in Tulare County.</p>		<p>Target December 15, 2009</p>		<p>Design Team SIP Planning Committee Community Partners</p>

	<b>1.4.5</b> Develop the plan and submit the proposal for collaborative delivery of Family Finding and family/youth supportive services.		Target December 15, 2009		Design Team SIP Planning Committee Community Partners
	<b>1.4.6</b> Implement Family Finding services for specified targeted population.		Target January 15, 2010		Design Team SIP Planning Committee Community Partners
	<b>1.4.7</b> Monitor and evaluate project performance for success in finding family connections for youth and for developing and providing supportive services.		Target June 15, 2010		Design Team Community Partners SIP Planning Committee CWS Staff
<b>Improvement Goal 2.0</b>					
Tulare County will strengthen the relationship between the CWS Division staff and foster parents					
<b>Strategy 2.1</b> – Supporting existing foster parents by increasing contacts by CWS Division staff.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> – Support of caregivers by CWS staff is effective in helping the child remain in least restrictive placement possible.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>2.1.1</b> Continue the monthly Foster Parent Association Meetings with CWS staff for the purpose of team building, discussing concerns, and identifying training resources	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target January 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders Foster Parents CWS Social Workers

<p><b>2.1.2</b></p> <p>Explore and develop a revised case staffing process that includes children, parents, and the foster parents in case staffings at Dispo, case plan development, and for placement changes.</p>	<p>Target June 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders</p>
<p><b>2.1.3</b></p> <p>Develop appropriate policies and training for the adopted case staffing process.</p>	<p>Target June 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders CWS Training Team Policies &amp; Procedures Committee</p>
<p><b>2.1.4</b></p> <p>Implement the revised staffing process.</p>	<p>Target July 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders</p>
<p><b>2.1.5</b></p> <p>Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the revised case staffing process for impact on the outcomes for children in care.</p>	<p>Target January 15, 2010</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders Foster Parents Quality Improvement Team</p>

**Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.**

1. Foster parents and relatives/NREFMs are integral partners in maintaining the child's connection to family. The county's proposed strategies will help develop stronger ties to foster parents and relative/NREFM caregivers.
2. CWS staff need training on collaboration and working with community providers and families in a supportive role.
3. Increase current staff's knowledge of available community and agency resources and provide a systemic practice shift to a more strength-based, community oriented, and family-centered practice.
4. Increase staffing levels to help meet the increasing demands for improved social worker contacts with children and families, improved best-practice standards, family engagement strategies, and better outcome goals.
5. Through collaborative efforts the county and community partners will arrange for the Family Finding training in early 2009.
6. Develop and implement the Family Finding strategy and support relatives/NREFMs to be the first placement choice at initial detention.
7. Identify and develop a simplified exemption process and an emergency placement process to support relatives/NREFMs for placement of the child.

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

1. Develop and deliver training for CWS staff to place first with relatives/NREFMs at initial detention.
2. Develop and deliver training for CWS staff of adopting the revised case staffing process, the emergency placement process, and the simplified relative exemption process.
3. Deliver Family Finding training and prepare for implementing this strategy within Tulare County to ensure increasing success with placing children in stable and permanent homes.

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

1. Community partners will collaborate with CWS to explore and develop a Family Finding project in Tulare County.
2. Collaborating with schools and community partners to identify and help families' access local resources to meet their needs, including parenting education, family recreation, job search, transportation, child care and basic needs. Schools and community partners are also important as providers of additional services ranging from mentoring programs to food pantries.
3. Community partners will educate CWS staff about the services available from their programs so CWS can notify families to access them.
4. Foster Parents will become partners in supporting finding permanent homes for children in foster care by supporting the family engagement process.

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

1. Continue to advocate for changes that can best support foster parents and relative/NREFM caregivers through the use of incentives, increases to the current foster care rate structure, and a formalized and financially supported respite care system.
2. Regulatory changes regarding confidentiality.
3. Identify potential funding sources to support ongoing efforts to promote family finding not only within the CWS Division but also in partnership with community partners.

<p><b>Permanency Outcome: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.</b></p> <p><b>Adoptions Composite:</b></p> <p><b>C2.5 Adoption within 12 Months (Legally Free)</b> Of all children in foster care who became legally free for adoption during the selected 12-month review period, what percent were then discharged to a finalized adoption within the following 12 months? This measure contains children who became legally free for adoption within the 12-month study period between 07/01/06 and 06/30/07 (Q2 – 2008).</p>					
<p><b>County's Current Performance:</b> As of June 30, 2007 (Quarterly Outcome Report for Q2-2008) reflects that 55.60% of the children in this cohort were adopted within the review period. In contrast, the national goal for this particular measure is 53.7%. This would indicate that the county outcomes for children in this cohort are above the standard by 1.90%. Comparatively, the County's trend data for this outcome between the period of December 2006 (34.6%) and the June 2007 score of 55.60% showed improvement of 21%.</p>					
<p><b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b></p> <p>Maintain and/or improve the current rate of children who are discharged to finalized adoption within 12 months.</p>					
<p><b>Strategy 1.1</b></p> <p>Collect and analyze case information for children who are included in this outcome (methodology).</p>		<p><b>Strategy Rationale -</b></p> <p>Analyzing case information will provide an understanding of the children included for this outcome area so that appropriate strategies can be developed for the group (e.g., age group, gender, and ethnicity).</p>			
<p><b>Milestone</b></p>	<p><b>1.1.1</b></p> <p>Using SafeMeasures and Business Objects reporting software, pull the listing of children identified for the review period.</p>	<p><b>Timeframe</b></p>	<p>Target June 15, 2009</p>	<p><b>Assigned to</b></p>	<p>Design Team CWS Manager Analyst</p>
	<p><b>1.1.2</b></p> <p>Review and evaluate the reports generated to identify those children for this outcome measure and prepare a report on the findings.</p>		<p>Target October 15, 2009</p>		<p>Design Team CWS Manager Analyst</p>

	<b>1.1.3</b> Prepare and submit recommendations to Management for consideration.		Target December 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Manager Analyst
	<b>1.1.4</b> Share the findings of the Design Team with other Design Team and management staff for evaluation and adoption of recommended strategies.		Target December 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Manager Analyst
<b>Strategy 1.2 –</b> Review current practice and policies to evaluate for their potential to impact this outcome area.			<b>Strategy Rationale –</b> Reviewing the present structure and organization of the Adoptions Unit allows for the review of current practice for efficiencies. This will allow for the adjustment/refinement of best practices in place, for the identification of additional barriers, and for the development of appropriate strategies to increase the number of children who are discharged to a finalized adoption within 12 months of discharge from foster care.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.2.1.</b> Review current policies for the transition of children to adoptions.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target June 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team CWS Manager Analyst Policy & Procedures Comm.
	<b>1.2.2</b> Review and revise the current concurrent planning process (policy and ongoing staff training).		Target June 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Manager Analyst Policy & Procedures Comm. CWS Training Team
	<b>1.2.3</b> Identify training needs, implement and evaluate their effectiveness.		Target July 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Manager Analyst CWS Training Team

<p><b>1.2.4</b></p> <p>Conduct an evaluation of the effects of concurrent planning and other strategies on decreasing the number of children waiting for a finalized adoption.</p>	<p>Target June 15, 2010</p>	<p>Design Team Analyst CWS QI Team</p>
<p><b>Describe systematic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</b></p> <p>None identified for this outcome area.</p>		
<p><b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b></p> <p>Two potential areas for staff training to address this outcome area (as well as for others of focus this review period) include assuring that appropriate staff can use SafeMeasures to help manage caseload performance and the review and revision of current practice on Concurrent Planning.</p>		
<p><b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b></p> <p>Key to the success for this measure is the ability of CWS Managers and Team Leaders to consistently monitor caseloads and target services, training, etc., to meet these. Other partners in the process are the engagement of foster parents and relatives in achieving permanence for youth found in the caseloads represented by this outcome measure.</p>		
<p><b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b></p> <p>None identified for this review.</p>		

**Permanency Outcome: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.**

**Adoptions Composite:**

**C2.1 Adoption within 24 Months (Exit Cohort)** Of all children who were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the selected 12-month review period, what percent were discharged in less than 24-months from the date of the latest removal from the home? This measure includes all children exiting foster care to adoption during the 12 month period of 07/01/07 and 06/30/08 (January 2009 Quarterly Outcome Report – Q2 – 2008).

**County's Current Performance:**

Increase rate of children who are discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption in less than 24 months from the date of their latest removal from the home. Review of Quarterly Outcome data ending 06/30/08 reflects that Tulare County's score for this outcome was 32.50%. The national standard for the same reporting period is 36.60%.

**Improvement Goal 1.0**

Increase the current levels of efficiency in getting children into permanent placements within 24 months of their latest removal from home and improve outcome scores by two percent (2%) over the next three years.

**Strategy 1.1** – Collect and track data for the composite data on a monthly basis.

**Strategy Rationale** – Implementing a consistent review of data for this outcome (and others highlighted in this report) allows staff to maintain current performance. This area is added to help identify areas for continued focus in light of current fiscal constraints that have resulted in staff losses.

<b>Milestone</b>	<p><b>1.1.1</b></p> <p>The Adoptions Unit Team Leader will use SafeMeasures to track monthly performance for this outcome.</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<p>Target June 15, 2009</p>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<p>CWS Manager Team Leader</p>
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	<b>1.1.2</b> The Adoptions Unit CWS Manager will review outcome data and meet with assigned workers to discuss cases nearing the 24 month and develop a plan of action for those cases.		Target July 15, 2009		CWS Manager Team Leader
	<b>1.1.3</b> The Adoptions Unit CWS Manager will prepare and submit recommendations for improvements for this measure.		Target December 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Manager Analyst
	<b>1.1.4</b> Share the findings of the Design Team with other Design Team and management staff for evaluation and adoption of recommended strategies.		Target December 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Manager Analyst
<b>Strategy 1. 2</b> - Review current practice and policies related to Concurrent Planning and evaluate for their potential to impact this outcome area.			<b>Strategy Rationale:</b> Reviewing the present structure and organization of the Adoptions Unit allows for the review of current practice for efficiencies. This will allow for the adjustment/refinement of best practices in place, for the identification of additional barriers, and for the development of appropriate strategies to increase the number of children who are discharged to a finalized adoption within 12 months of discharge from foster care.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.2.1.</b> Review current policies for the transition of children to adoptions.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target June 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team CWS Manager Analyst Policy & Procedures Comm.

<p><b>1.2.2</b></p> <p>Review and revise the current concurrent planning process (policy and ongoing staff training).</p>	<p>Target June 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Manager Analyst Policy &amp; Procedures Comm. CWS Training Team</p>
<p><b>1.2.3</b></p> <p>Identify training needs, implement and evaluate their effectiveness.</p>	<p>Target July 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Manager Analyst CWS Training Team</p>
<p><b>1.2.4</b></p> <p>Conduct an evaluation of the effects of concurrent planning and other strategies on decreasing the time spent by children awaiting a finalized adoption.</p>	<p>Target June 15, 2010</p>	<p>Design Team Analyst CWS QI Team</p>
<p><b>Strategy 1.3</b></p> <p>Evaluate and improve current practice of concurrent planning, prioritizing home studies, and address ICWA cases through monitoring of case information.</p>		<p><b>Strategy Rationale:</b></p> <p>Children are matched to committed caregivers who understand the adoption process and are willing to comply with the process.</p>

<b>Milestone</b>	<p><b>1.3.1.</b></p> <p><b><u>Concurrent Planning</u></b></p> <p>Adoption Staff will complete quarterly presentations at the ER and Continuing Units to discuss concurrent planning and placement resources that are available.</p> <p>Agency to continue to develop Concurrent Planning Policy</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target September 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team CWS Manager CWS Training Team Policy & Procedures Comm. Adoptions Team Leader
	<p><b>1.3.2.</b></p> <p><b><u>Prioritizing Updated Home Studies</u></b></p> <p>Adoption Team Leader will review incoming cases to determine if the family has a prior Home Study that is less than one year old</p> <p>Develop standards for the timely completion of or completion of the Home Studies (prior to the documents expiring)</p> <p>Adoptions Team Leader will review the updated Home Studies with Adoption Social Workers during monthly meetings (one-on-one)</p>		Target September 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Manager Analyst Adoptions Team Leader

	<p><b>1.3.3.</b></p> <p><b><u>Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)</u></b></p> <p>Provide refresher training to CWS Team Leaders on the importance of ICWA findings and follow through with court orders</p> <p>Court representatives will develop, track, and report cases where there is pending ICWA status</p> <p>Court representatives will send reminder emails to CWS Managers, Team Leaders, and social workers when ICWA cases have been identified so this may be included in at the next hearing</p>	<p>Target June 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders CWS Training Team Policy &amp; Procedures Comm. Adoptions Team Leader Court Reps Team Leader</p>
<p><b>Describe systematic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</b></p> <p>None identified for this outcome area.</p>			
<p><b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b></p> <p>Two potential areas for staff training to address this outcome area (as well as for others of focus this review period) include assuring that appropriate staff can use SafeMeasures to help manage caseload performance and the review and revision of current practice on Concurrent Planning.</p>			
<p><b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b></p> <p>Key to the success for this measure is the ability of CWS Managers and Team Leaders to consistently monitor caseloads and target services, training, etc., to meet these. Other partners in the process are the engagement of foster parents and relatives in achieving permanence for youth found in the caseloads represented by this outcome measure.</p>			
<p><b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b></p> <p>None identified for this review.</p>			

<p><b>Outcome: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.</b></p> <p><b>Permanency and Stability: C4.1 – Multiple Foster Care Placements</b></p> <p>For all children in child welfare supervised foster care for less than 12 months during the 12-month study period, what percent had no more than two placements?</p>					
<p><b>County's Current Performance:</b></p> <p>As of June 30, 2008, Tulare County's outcome score was 76.2%, down from the June 30, 2007 rate of 77.4% on this Federal Measure. The Statewide average for this measure as of June 30, 2008 was 82.4%. The national standard is 86%. Tulare County proposes to increase the rate for this outcome by 5% by December 31, 2010.</p>					
<p><b>Improvement Goal 1.0:</b></p> <p>Tulare County will increase the number of foster caregivers by 20% and retain the number and type of resource families to include foster parents and kin placements.</p>					
<p><b>Strategy 1.1 - Continue to recruit more foster caregivers.</b></p>				<p><b>Strategy Rationale - More foster caregiver's means more options for the best, stable placements.</b></p>	
<b>Milestone</b>	<p><b>1.1.1</b></p> <p>Sustain and augment the current levels county licensed foster homes by 20% from 84 homes to 100 homes.</p>		<b>Timeframe</b>	<p>Target December 15, 2010</p>	
			<b>Assigned to</b>	<p>Design Team Foster Care Licensing Foster Parent Association</p>	

	<p><b>1.1.2</b></p> <p>Develop a strategic recruitment plan that includes the continuation of the providing presentations to community groups, at events, and support groups.</p>		Target June 15, 2009		Foster Care Licensing Foster Parent Association Design Team HHSA Media Staff
	<p><b>1.1.3</b></p> <p>Implement strategic recruitment plan that includes continued use of multi-media campaigns to include radio, newspaper, and television, that includes outreach to the faith-based community for purposes of recruiting foster caregivers, and recruitment efforts that are culturally responsive to the needs of children needing placement in substitute care.</p>		Target September 15, 2009		HHSA Media Staff Foster Care Licensing
	<p><b>1.1.4</b></p> <p>Conduct an internal evaluation of recruitment efforts after the first 12 months, review performance indicators, and present findings/recommendations to CWS Administration. Update the strategic recruitment plan as necessary.</p>		Target June 15, 2010 and Annually Thereafter		Design Team Foster Care Licensing Team CWS QI Team
<p><b>Strategy 1. 2 – Retain existing caregivers (foster parents, relatives, and non-relative extended family members (NREFM)) by providing more training opportunities, respite care, and support.</b></p>			<p><b>Strategy Rationale -</b> The loss of experienced foster caregivers in Tulare County has necessitated the use of temporary care solutions. Retention and support of caregivers will lessen the use of temporary care situations for children and improve placement stability.</p>		
<b>Milestone</b>	<p><b>1.2.1</b></p> <p>Strengthen the relationship between the CWS Division staff and licensed foster parents through quarterly meetings.</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target July 15, 2009 and Quarterly Thereafter	<b>Assigned to</b>	Foster Care Licensing Foster Parent Association Design Team

<p><b>1.2.2</b></p> <p>Map the current foster parent/relative/NREFM recruitment process, review existing policy, and identify training needed to support the implementation of intervention strategies (parent partners, mentors, etc.) to improve placement stability of children in foster care.</p>	<p>Target July 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team Foster Care Licensing CWS Training Team Foster Care Committee</p>
<p><b>1.2.3</b></p> <p>Engage caregivers (to include FFA, relatives, and guardians) in focus groups to identify training needs.</p>	<p>Target July 15, 2009 &amp; Semi-annually Thereafter</p>	<p>Design Team Foster Care Licensing CWS QI Team Foster Care Committee</p>
<p><b>1.2.4</b></p> <p>Survey caregivers (to include FFA, relatives, and guardians) for training sessions that will help them meet the needs of children placed with them and identify training resources.</p>	<p>Target December 15, 2009 &amp; Annually Thereafter</p>	<p>Foster Care Licensing CWS Training Team Analyst Foster Care Committee</p>
<p><b>1.2.5</b></p> <p>Support the expansion of the informal system for respite care for relatives and foster parents.</p>	<p>Target September 15, 2009</p>	<p>Foster Care Licensing Foster Parent Association</p>
<p><b>1.2.6</b></p> <p>Explore and develop a revised case staffing process that includes children, parents, and the foster parents in case staffings at Dispo, case plan development, and for placement changes.</p>	<p>Target June 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders Foster Care Licensing</p>

	<p><b>1.2.7</b></p> <p>Develop appropriate policies and training for the case staffings that will be held at Dispo, during case plan development, and for discussion of placement changes.</p>		Target July 15, 2009		<p>Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders CWS Training Team Policies &amp; Procedures Committee</p>
	<p><b>1.2.8</b></p> <p>Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the revised case staffing process for impact on the outcomes for children in care.</p>		Target July 15, 2009		<p>Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders Foster Parents Quality Improvement Team</p>
<p><b>Strategy 1.3 –</b> Explore the implementation of Team Decision Making (TDM) to bring permanency to youth who have been in care for long periods.</p>			<p><b>Strategy Rationale –</b> Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings are successfully used to address permanency option goals development and for engaging youth and their families in a process of joint planning. Several activities in CWS have utilized “case staffing” or “conferences” to help shift current practice which results in increased engagement.</p>		
<b>Milestone</b>	<p><b>1.3.1</b></p> <p>Identify possible training on Team Decision Making that will complement the client engagement and case staffing training delivered in 2008 to county staff.</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target January 15, 2010	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team
	<p><b>1.3.2</b></p> <p>Develop appropriate policies and training for the adopted case staffing process (TDM).</p>		Target March 15, 2010		<p>Design Team CWS Managers CWS Training Team Policies &amp; Procedures Comm.</p>

	<p><b>1.3.3</b></p> <p>Implement the revised staffing (TDM) process.</p>		<p>Target July 15, 2010</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders</p>
	<p><b>1.3.4</b></p> <p>Monitor and evaluate the implementation of TDM case staffing process to shorten a child's stay in foster care.</p>		<p>Target December 15, 2010</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders Quality Improvement Team</p>
<p><b>Improvement Goal 2.0</b></p> <p>Increase the stability of child placements by 8% over the next 24 month period.</p>				
<p><b>Strategy 2.1</b> - Increase the child's stability through placing with relatives to maintain family ties.</p>			<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b> - Relative placements offer stability to children being removed from their home. Remaining close to the communities, neighborhoods and schools they are familiar with reduces the trauma of being removed from their home and placed in a different environment.</p>	
<b>Milestone</b>	<p><b>2.1.1</b></p> <p>Review and update the current emergency relative assessment / placement process to streamline operations.</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<p>Target June 15, 2009</p>	<b>Assigned to</b>
	<p><b>2.1.2</b></p> <p>Implement the emergency placement process.</p>		<p>Target September 15, 2009</p>	

	<b>2.1.3</b> Add relatives and non-relative extended family members (NREFM) to the existing system of training and support available to foster parents.		Target December 15, 2009		Relative Assessment Team Design Team CWS Training Team
	<b>2.1.4</b> Monitor data and work practice to evaluate improvements in making emergency placements with relatives and prepare a report to CWS Management on findings.		Target December 15, 2009 and Ongoing		Relative Assessment Team Foster Care Committee Design Team CWS QI Team
<b>Strategy 2. 2</b> – Based on the results of the relative assessment process review and as needed, train staff on the thorough and timely completion of the relative assessment process, to include the emergency placement process.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> - A uniform process for assessing relatives will help social workers expedite the placement of children and minimize the use of alternate temporary placement options.		
	<b>2.2.1</b> Review the current policy for relative home placements and update as necessary.		Target June 15, 2009		Design Team Relative Assessment Team Policies & Procedures Team
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>2.2.2</b> Identify training curriculum adjustments necessitated by the policy revisions for emergency placements and deliver new training to all staff.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target June 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team Relative Assessment Team CWS Training Team

	<p><b>2.2.3</b></p> <p>Review a sample of newly made emergency placements with relatives to assure policy and training are being consistently placed into practice across the Division.</p>		Target January 15, 2010		Design Team Relative Assessment Team CWS QI Team
	<p><b>2.2.4</b></p> <p>Conduct an internal evaluation of the relative assessment process for making emergency placements with relatives for improvements on the scores for this outcome measure.</p>		Target July 15, 2010 & Ongoing		Design Team CWS Managers Relative Assessment Team Design Team QI Team
<p><b>Strategy 2.3</b> – Further explore approaches that speed the proper evaluation of children using new initiative models and best practice (e.g., Family-to Family, Family Finding, Parent Partners) to support placement stability for children in foster care.</p>			<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b> – Children are better off when placed with their families in the communities they were raised in. Tulare County, working with an expanding network of community partners, has been developing the infrastructure to support new initiatives as Family-to-Family. Tied with Family Finders, the County believes children who lost connections to families may benefit by having the county explore Family Finders to help reconnect them to families and communities.</p>		
<b>Milestone</b>	<p><b>2.3.1</b></p> <p>Train staff on “Family Finding” strategy so they understand purpose and use of this tool.</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target February 28, 2009	<b>Assigned To</b>	Design Team CWS Training Team Community Partners
	<p><b>2.3.2</b></p> <p>Develop internal policies and procedures for the implementation of Family Finding within the CWS Division.</p>		Target June 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Managers Policies & Procedures Comm.

<p><b>2.3.3</b></p> <p>Implement a pilot of the Family Finding strategies for the Permanency Placement (PP) population in group home care and ILP. This will be accomplished by developing a form or modifying existing tools to capture family information consistently throughout the life of the case.</p>	<p>Target July 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers Policy &amp; Procedures Team</p>
<p><b>2.3.4</b></p> <p>Implement Family Finding strategies for all other cases. This may be phased one team at a time. Lessons from the Pilot will suggest roles and responsibilities for staff assigned to implementing Family Finding.</p>	<p>Target December 15, 2009 and Ongoing</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders</p>
<p><b>2.3.5</b></p> <p>Monitor and evaluate the implementation of Family Finding strategies and modify as needed.</p>	<p>Target June 15, 2010</p>	<p>CWS Managers Team Leaders Design Team</p>
<p><b>2.3.6</b></p> <p>Evaluate the success of Family Finding on reducing the number of placement changes for children resulting from being placed with family.</p>	<p>Target December 15, 2010 and Ongoing</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers CWS QI Team</p>

**Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.**

No systemic changes identified.

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

Through collaborative efforts the county and community partners will arrange for the Family Finders training in February and April 2009. This will be the second such collaboration with the hope that more CWS staff and community partners can attend to ensure the successful implementation of the strategy in Tulare County.

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

- Community partners will provide support for the training being planned in Tulare County. Community partners like the Family Resource Centers may present unique opportunities to build a supportive environment for families so the transition of youth to families once considered long lost may be realized.
- Work with community partners to explore parent partner practice models that can be implemented to support families and caregivers who take care of dependent children. Providing support, based on evidence-based practice models, leads to placement stability for children in out-of-home care. A partnership to explore such a strategy conjoins the county system and community partners to improve outcomes for children.

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

Continue to advocate for changes that can best support foster parents and relative caregivers through the use of incentives, increases to the current foster care rate structure, and a formalized and financially supported respite care system.

<b>Systemic Factor:</b>					
Improve Management Information Case Management System for <u>Probation</u> .					
<b>County's Current Performance:</b>					
Tulare County's Probation Department implemented in March 2008 the Juvenile Portion of the Caseload Explorer Case Management System developed by the Automon Corporation. The system will assist with accurate record keeping, case management and statistical data.					
<b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b>					
To continue to implement the County approved Tulare County Probation Department case management system.					
<b>Strategy 1. 1</b> – Finalize the implementation of the case management system.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> – Probation will now move forward in collecting accurate, current and timely data. This data will help Probation with making better-informed decisions.		
<b>Milestone</b>	1.1.1 Refinement of internal reporting needs identified.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target May 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Probation Administration with input from line staff
	1.1.2 Management reporting needs identified.		Target May 15, 2009		Probation Administration
	1.1.3 Develop and refine internal reporting tools.		Target August 15, 2009		Supervising Probation Officer
	1.1.4 Evaluate internal tools and the case management system and revise as necessary.		Target May 15, 2010		Supervising Probation Officer
<b>Strategy 1. 2</b> - Identify and develop training for Probation Staff.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> - Training will provide Probation with the necessary information to navigate through the case management system to accurately input collected data and run reports.		

<b>Milestone</b>	1.2.1. Identify training needs.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Completed- March 2008	<b>Assigned to</b>	Probation Administration and Probation Staff
	1.2.2 Provide training to staff.		Completed- March 2008		Outside agency (Automon) to train Probation Staff to be trainers
	1.2.3 Evaluate results of training to ensure a transfer of learning		Target December 15, 2009		Supervising Probation Officer and Probation Administration

**Improvement Goal 2.0**

Provide Probation read-only access to CWS/CMS for minors crossing over into the Juvenile Justice System.

**Strategy 2.1** - Determine the required data essential for Probation from CWS/CMS to make informed management decisions through the development of a formal memorandum of understanding between Probation and CWS.

**Strategy Rationale** - The ability to collect and gather historical information relating to the minors and their families is necessary to case plan management.

<b>Milestone</b>	2.1.1 Develop Memorandum of Understanding between Probation and CWS	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target May 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Probation Chief and HHSA Director
	2.1.2 Seek local and State approval for providing CWS/CMS access to Probation		Target August 15, 2009		Probation and HHSA Staff
	2.1.3 Identify location, authorized users and training needs		Target August 15, 2009		Probation and CWS collaboration
	2.1.4 Install CWS/CMS work station at Probation site as approved by the MOU		Target August 15, 2009		Probation and CWS collaboration
	2.1.5 Train authorized CWS/CMS users		Target August 15, 2009		Probation and CWS collaboration

2.1.6 Develop and implement quality assurance and monitoring capabilities	Target March 15, 2010	Supervising Probation Officer
<p><b>Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.</b> Probations capacity to collect and report accurate statistical data is important for establishing performance measures. With the new Caseload Explorer system probation is on its way to establishing baseline data and performance measures for this and other outcomes.</p>		
<p><b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b> Improvement Goal 2.0 could be more easily accomplished by inclusion of Probation into the CWS/CMS.</p>		
<p><b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b> The State needs to continue to work with Probation to develop an accurate method of collecting data on wards in out of home placement, establish baseline levels of performance, so that measuring improvement is possible. Also, there needs to be continued efforts to education CDSS regarding the similarities between dependents and wards, as well as the unique differences, so that there is a good understanding. As well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to work with Child Welfare Services regarding access to CWS/CMS</li> <li>• Continue to work with community organizations to identify services/resources to support prevention and aftercare services to youth and families in the community</li> <li>• Continue to work in the partnership implementing wraparound in Tulare County</li> <li>• Continue to monitor state level activity on developing new or additional outcome measures for probation and the mechanisms to capture the data</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b> None Identified</p>		

<p><b>Outcome Factor:</b></p> <p><b>Reunification Composite: C.1.1 – Reunification within 12 months for <u>Probation</u></b></p> <p>Of all children who were reunified from probation supervised foster care during the most recent 12-month study period, what percent had been in care for less than 12 months?</p>					
<p><b>County's Current Performance:</b></p> <p>As of December 31, 2007, Tulare County Probation score for this measure was 44.45% and the statewide average for the same reporting period is at 52.4%. Tulare County Probation Department proposes to increase outcomes for this measure by 5% within 24 months.</p>					
<p><b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b></p> <p>Increase the number of monthly parental visits by 5% to improve and support reunification efforts by January 2011.</p>					
<p><b>Strategy 1.1 –</b> Develop mechanisms to track the data to allow for monitoring of parental visits.</p>			<p><b>Strategy Rationale –</b> Previously Probation relied on manual data collection system to monitor monthly contacts that Probation made with children and their families. Presently, Probation has implemented a case management information system that will now track performance for this outcome.</p>		
<p><b>Milestone</b></p>	<p><b>1.1.1</b> Develop baseline data from the manual data collection system as of December 2007</p>	<p><b>Timeframe</b></p>	<p>Target May 15, 2009</p>	<p><b>Assigned to</b></p>	<p>Supervising Probation Officer</p>
	<p><b>1.1.2</b> Track new automated system data for completeness, accuracy and reliability</p>		<p>Target December 15, 2009</p>		<p>Supervising Probation Officer</p>
	<p><b>1.1.3</b> Conduct a comparative analysis between the baseline data and the new point in time measure and present findings to administration</p>		<p>Target June 15, 2010 and Quarterly Thereafter</p>		<p>Supervising Probation Officer</p>

<b>Strategy 1.2</b> – Improve the quantity and quality of visits between probation staff, parents and youth.		<b>Strategy Rationale</b> – Probation is making a philosophical shift from a compliance driven system to engaging youth and families in the development of their case plan and services. The shift will allow Probation to positively impact parental visits.			
<b>Milestone</b>	1.2.1 Develop a system as necessary to facilitate parental visits during non-traditional work hours and present for consideration/approval	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target August 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Supervising Probation Officer and Probation Administration
	1.2.2 Identify and provide training for staff on family engagement, family finding and wraparound		Target October 15, 2009		Supervising Probation Officer
	1.2.3 Develop and implement quality assurance and monitoring capabilities		Target April 15, 2010		Supervising Probation Officer
<p><b>Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.</b>  Continue interagency collaboration and cooperation in developing family and youth support systems. Accomplish this through the active participation of departmental staff on various organizations delivering both preventative and supportive services to the community. As an example Probation implemented the wraparound process in April of 2008, which assists families and youth in the identification of natural supports. This strategy coupled with family finding efforts and family engagement training will assist the department in accomplishing their goals.</p>					
<p><b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide CWS/CMS Training to Probation Staff</li> <li>• Continue to provide Caseload Explorer Case Management System training</li> <li>• Identify and provide staff will family engagement training</li> <li>• Provide continued Family Finding training</li> <li>• Provide continued Wraparound Training</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to work with Child Welfare Services regarding access to CWS/CMS</li> <li>• Continue to work with community organizations to identify services/resources to support prevention and aftercare services to youth and families in the community</li> <li>• Continue to work in the partnership implementing wraparound in Tulare County</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b>  None identified.</p>					

<b>Outcome Factor:</b>					
<b>Permanency Composite: C.3.3 – In Care 3 Years or Longer (Emancipated or age 18 in care) for <u>Probation</u></b>					
Of all children in foster care during the year who were either discharged to emancipation or turned 18 while still in care, what percent had been in foster care for 3 years or longer?					
<b>County's Current Performance:</b>					
As of December 31, 2007, Tulare County Probation score for this measure was 45.5% and the statewide average for the same reporting period is at 12.6%. Tulare County Probation Department proposes to increase outcomes for this measure by 5% within 24 months.					
<b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b>					
Decrease the number of youth in care 3 years or longer (emancipated or age 18 in care) by 5% by January 2011.					
<b>Strategy 1.1</b> – Collect and analyze data for this population as a result of new data collection methodology.		<b>Strategy Rationale</b> – In review of current data we noticed that county data tracked State performance warranting a closer look at this population. Closer review of the data represents youth with long term special needs.			
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.1.1</b> Develop baseline data from the manual data collection system and from the Berkeley website of December 2007	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target September 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Supervising Probation Officer
	<b>1.1.2</b> Track new automated system data for completeness, accuracy and reliability		Target December 15, 2009		Supervising Probation Officer
	<b>1.1.3</b> Conduct a comparative analysis between the baseline data.		Target March 15, 2010 and Quarterly Thereafter		Supervising Probation Officer

	1.1.4 Prepare and Present findings and recommendations to Administration for review		Target June 15, 2010 and Semiannually Thereafter		Supervising Probation Officer
<b>Strategy 1.2</b> – Identify and deliver training to for current staff to serve youth with long term special needs.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> – Probation is making a philosophical shift from a compliance driven system to engaging youth and families in the development of their case plan and services. The shift will allow Probation to positively impact youth with long term special needs.		
<b>Milestone</b>	1.2.1 Identify and schedule training for staff	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target September 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Supervising Probation Officer
	1.2.2 Deliver the training		Target January 15, 2010		Supervising Probation Officer and Community partners
	1.2.3 Develop and implement quality assurance and monitoring capabilities		Target April 15, 2010		Supervising Probation Officer
<b>Strategy 1.3</b> – Educate our service providers regarding our new philosophy			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> – Probation is making a philosophical shift from a compliance driven system to engaging youth and families in the development of their case plan and services. The shift will allow Probation to positively impact youth with long term special needs.		
<b>Milestone</b>	1.3.1 Develop information to be shared with service providers regarding Probations new practice for long term special needs youth	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target January 15, 2010	<b>Assigned to</b>	Supervising Probation Officer
	1.3.2 Deliver information with service providers		Target March 15, 2010		Supervising Probation Officer and Probation Staff

	1.3.3 Evaluate the information received from service providers and refine as necessary		Target June 15, 2010		Supervising Probation Officer
	1.3.4 Evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy in reducing the length of time these special needs youth remain in care.		Target December 15, 2010		Supervising Probation Officer
<p><b>Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration to support and authorize philosophical change</li> <li>• Shift in case management system to support philosophical change</li> <li>• Continuing the current collaboration with system partners to address the needs of youth with long term special needs</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and provide staff with training regarding long term special needs youth</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with community organizations to identify services/resources to support prevention and aftercare services to youth and families in the community</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b></p> <p>None identified.</p>					

<p><b>Safety Outcome: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.</b></p> <p><b>Safety - S1.1 – No Recurrence of Maltreatment</b></p> <p>This safety measure reflects the percentage of children who were victims of a substantiated child maltreatment allegation within a specified 6 month period for whom there was no additional substantiated maltreatment allegation during the subsequent 6 months. Only allegations with a disposition are included.</p>					
<p><b>County's Current Performance:</b></p> <p>The latest Quarterly Outcome Report for the period ending June 30, 2008 (Q2-2008) reflects a score of 92.90% for this outcome measure. This is up from the 91% posted as of December 31, 2007 and slightly below the score of 93% posted for December 31, 2006. The Statewide average for this measure, as of June 30, 2008, was 92.80%. The Federal (national) target is 94.60%. Tulare County proposes to improve this rate for this outcome by 1.50% by January 2012.</p>					
<p><b>Improvement Goal 1.0:</b></p> <p>Decrease rate of recurrence of maltreatment.</p>					
<p><b>Strategy 1.1</b></p> <p>Identify the nature and outcome of nature of subsequent substantiated reports of abuse or maltreatment during a specified period.</p>			<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b></p> <p>It is more practical to develop a realistic plan for improving rates of recurrence of maltreatment if the nature of the recurring abuse is understood.</p>		
<b>Milestone</b>	<p><b>1.1.1</b> Develop and conduct a case review process to identify cases for the two subsets below: Children not removed from the home who experience a subsequent substantiated allegation of abuse within 12 months of exit; and, Children with a first substantiated allegation who have a subsequent referral within 6 or 12 months.</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target December 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team ER CWS Manager/Team Leaders QI Team

	<p><b>1.1.2</b></p> <p>Analyze the findings from the case reviews for the sample to establish:  Demographic information about the children who were found in the sample (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity).  Review sample findings for geographic locations from where re-referrals are coming.  Review of staff-specific findings within the review sample to identify training needs and or performance issues.</p>		Target June 15, 2010		Design Team ER CWS Manager/Team Leaders QI Team
	<p><b>1.1.3</b></p> <p>Analyze the findings from the case reviews to develop a strategic approach to reducing the recurrence of maltreatment</p>		Target July 15, 2010		Design Team ER CWS Manager/Team Leaders QI Team Training Team
<p><b>Strategy 1. 2</b></p> <p>Monitor the Differential Response program for families likely to re-enter the CWS system within 12 months.</p>			<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b></p> <p>Evidence from the Differential Response pilots will provide evidence of successful practice that can be expanded and continued.</p>		
<b>Milestone</b>	<p><b>1.2.1</b></p> <p>Collect reports from the Differential Response Pilots.</p>	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target December 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team ER CWS Manager/Team Leaders QI Team
	<p><b>1.1.2</b></p> <p>Analyze reports from the Differential Response pilot program and develop a report to CWS management regarding findings.</p>		Target March 15, 2010		Design Team ER CWS Manager/Team Leaders QI Team

<b>Improvement Goal 2.0</b>					
Increase community access to information regarding recurrence of maltreatment.					
<b>Strategy 2.1</b>			<b>Strategy Rationale</b>		
Provide updated outcome and accountability reports quarterly to the System Improvement Planning Committee and its prevention partners.			Community partners who provide prevention services to children and families are crucial partners in reducing the recurrence of maltreatment. The sharing of that information and increasing understanding on the part of system partners is an important part of affecting this outcome positively.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>2.1.1</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target June 15, 2009	<b>Assigned to</b>	
	Develop, provide, and discuss updated outcome data reports to the System Improvement Planning Committee on a semi-annual basis.				Design Team Analyst
	<b>2.1.2</b>				Target June 15, 2009
	Develop, provide, and discuss updated reports to the Differential Response partners at least semi-annually.				
	<b>2.1.3</b>		Target June 15, 2009	Design Team Deputy Director Analyst	
	Develop and provide reports to prevention partners of the Children's Services Network and the Child Abuse Prevention Council on a semi-annual basis.				
<b>Improvement Goal 3.0</b>					
Explore and identify where services to support families can be made more available.					

<b>Strategy 3.1</b>		<b>Strategy Rationale</b>			
Work with community partners to explore and identify supportive services to families and identify service area gaps.		The county and its partners recognize that the recurrence of maltreatment will require well positioned services and service strategies. Working in concert to address these through the coordinated delivery of prevention and aftercare services may positively affect this outcome.			
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>3.1.1</b> Work with community partners to develop a list of available services by geographic area.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target September 15, 2009	<b>Assigned To</b>	Design Team Community Partners Analyst
	<b>3.1.2</b> Together with community partners, analyze the service array and identify prevention and aftercare service gaps.		Target January 15, 2010		Design Team Community Partners Analyst
	<b>3.1.3</b> Together with community partners, identify potential funding sources and develop a strategic plan for the development and or expansion of prevention and aftercare services.		Target July 15, 2010		Design Team Community Partners Analyst
<b>Strategy 3.2</b>		<b>Strategy Rationale</b>			
Explore the development of a Parent-Partnership Program as an extension to the family engagement strategies Child Welfare Services will use when families are no longer formally involved with the dependency system as mentors and support to families currently part of or as risk of being in the dependency system.		The Parent-Partnership strategy will build a supportive network utilizing parents who successfully completed Child Welfare Services and whose cases were dismissed from court. These parent partners will act as support persons and mentors to further link families to community resources and prevent foster-care reentry.			

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>3.2.1</b> Research sources for Parent Partnership Models for replication in Tulare County by exploring potential funding sources and development of a proposal.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target January 15, 2010	<b>Assigned To</b>	Design Team Community Partners Analyst
	<b>3.2.2</b> Develop policy / protocol for facilitating the parent-partnership program between families and parent partner.		Target June 15, 2010		Design Team Community Partners Policy & Procedures Comm.
	<b>3.2.3</b> Identify training needs for the implementation of parent-partnership program.		Target September 15, 2010		Design Team Community Partners CWS Training Team
	<b>3.2.4</b> Provide training to staff, parents and caregivers on the parent-partnership strategy.		Target January 15, 2011		Design Team Community Partners CWS Training Team
	<b>3.2.5</b> Formalize the Parent Partnership Model and implement it in Tulare County with community partners.		Target July 15, 2011		Design Team Community Partners CWS Training Team
	<b>3.2.6</b> Review progress and make recommendations for improvements to parent-partnership practices.	Target December 15, 2011	Design Team CWS QI Team Community Partners		

**Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.**

No systemic factors identified at this point absent the data review and analysis.

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

Training needs for both staff and system partners may become evident following closer examination of the data. The county, and system partners, will work to address internal and external training needs as identified. There are no technical assistance needs yet identified though the county and system partners have access to technical assistance from several sources that can be contacted as needed.

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

Community partners from the Children's Services Network, the Children's Steering Committee, the Child Abuse Prevention Council, and the System Improvement Planning Committee already work together to review and identify services and service gaps. Members from each of these groups, and others, already work collaboratively to address the needs of children, youth, and families in the communities they serve. This work shall continue as they address this particular outcome and others the County has identified for the current review period.

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

None identified for this review.

<p><b>Permanency Outcome: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.</b></p> <p><b>Permanency Composite: C.3.1 Exits to Permanency (24 Months In Care)</b></p> <p>Of all children in foster care 24 months or longer on the first day of the selected 12 month period, what percent were discharged to a permanent home by the end of the 12-month period and prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This outcome includes all children who have been in foster care for two years or more on the first day of the review period.</p>					
<p><b>County's Current Performance:</b></p> <p>As of June 30, 2008, Tulare County score for this measure was 32.7% while the national standard is 29.1% for the same review period. Tulare County proposes to maintain and/or increase performance for this outcome measure over the next 36 month period. Tulare County's score for this outcome have grown from 23% posted for the period ending December 31, 2006 to 32.7% posted as of June 30, 2008 for an increase of 9.7%.</p>					
<p><b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b></p> <p>Decrease the number of youth in care 3 years or longer (emancipated or age 18 in care) by 3% by January 2012.</p>					
<p><b>Strategy 1.1 – Collect and analyze data for this population (methodology).</b></p>			<p><b>Strategy Rationale –</b> In review of current data we noticed that county data tracked State performance warranting a closer look at this population. A closer review of the data this population will allow the county to better target effective strategies to positively impact scores for this outcome.</p>		
<p><b>Milestone</b></p>	<p><b>1.1.1</b></p> <p>Collect data from the Berkeley website for the 12 month period ending June 2008</p>	<p><b>Timeframe</b></p>	<p>Target June 15, 2009</p>	<p><b>Assigned to</b></p>	<p>Design Team</p>
	<p><b>1.1.2</b></p> <p>Analyze data for this outcome and drill down to discover characteristics of the population of children included for this outcome area.</p>		<p>Target September 15, 2009</p>		<p>Design Team</p>

	<b>1.1.3</b> Conduct an internal review of current systems to include practice standards, policies, training, and tracking of data for this population of youth.		Target December 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders Training Team
	<b>1.1.4</b> Prepare and present findings and recommendations to Administration for review		Target June 15, 2010		Design Team CWS Managers
<b>Strategy 1.2</b> – Explore the implementation of the Family Finding initiative to bring permanency to youth who have been in care for long periods.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> – Children are better off when placed with their families in the communities they were raised in. Tulare County, working with an expanding network of community partners, has been developing the infrastructure to support new initiatives such as Family Finding. The County believes children who lost connections to families may benefit by having the county explore Family Finders to help reconnect them to families and communities.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.2.1</b> Complete training to staff on “Family Finding” strategy so they understand purpose and use of this tool.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target May 15, 2009	<b>Assigned To</b>	Design Team CWS Training Team CWS Staff Community Partners
	<b>1.2.2</b> Identify a targeted population for a pilot of the Family Finding initiative. This will begin with a review of current caseload data that will be analyzed to help define a target population for the pilot.		Target June 15, 2009		Design Team CWS Managers Policies & Procedures Comm.

<p><b>1.2.3</b></p> <p>Implement a pilot of the Family Finding strategy for a six month period. This pilot phase will identify initial protocols, staff, and the target population for ongoing activities within the Division. The pilot will help develop tools and protocols to capture and document family information consistently throughout the life of the case.</p>	<p>Target July 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers Policy &amp; Procedures Team</p>
<p><b>1.2.4</b></p> <p>Develop the Family Finding Protocol for Tulare County. This will outline forms, procedures, training, target population, and staffing for the implementing Family Finding strategies for all other cases. The roll out of Family Finding may be phased one team at a time. Lessons from the Pilot will suggest roles and responsibilities for staff assigned to implementing Family Finding.</p>	<p>Target December 15, 2009</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders</p>
<p><b>1.2.5</b></p> <p>Monitor and evaluate the implementation of Family Finding strategies and modify as needed.</p>	<p>Target June 15, 2010</p>	<p>CWS Managers Team Leaders Design Team</p>
<p><b>1.2.6</b></p> <p>Evaluate the success of Family Finding on reducing the number of months children are in placement resulting from being placed with family.</p>	<p>Target December 15, 2010</p>	<p>Design Team CWS Managers CWS QI Team</p>
<p><b>Strategy 1.3</b> – Review current practice and policies related to Concurrent Planning and evaluate for their potential to impact this outcome area.</p>		<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b> – Reviewing the present structure and organization of the Adoptions Unit allows for the review of current practice for efficiencies. This will allow for the adjustment/refinement of best practices in place, for the identification of additional barriers, and for the development of appropriate strategies to increase the number of children who are discharged from foster care to Permanency within 24 months or less.</p>

Milestone		Timeframe		Assigned to
1.3.1	Review current policies for the transition of children to adoptions.		Target June 15, 2009	Design Team CWS Manager Analyst Policy & Procedures Comm.
1.3.2	Review and revise the current concurrent planning process (policy and ongoing staff training).		Target June 15, 2009	Design Team CWS Manager Analyst Policy & Procedures Comm. CWS Training Team
1.3.3	Identify training needs, implement and evaluate their effectiveness.		Target July 15, 2009	Design Team CWS Manager Analyst CWS Training Team
1.3.4	Conduct an evaluation of the effects of concurrent planning and other strategies on decreasing the time spent by children awaiting a finalized adoption.		Target June 15, 2010	Design Team Analyst CWS QI Team
<b>Strategy 1.4</b> – Explore the implementation of Team Decision Making (TDM) to bring permanency to youth who have been in care for long periods.		<b>Strategy Rationale</b> – Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings are successfully used to address permanency option goals development and for engaging youth and their families in a process of joint planning. Several activities in CWS have utilized “case staffing” or “conferences” to help shift current practice which results in increased engagement.		

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.4.1</b> Identify possible training on Team Decision Making that will complement the client engagement and case staffing training delivered in 2008 to county staff.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Target January 15, 2010	<b>Assigned to</b>	Design Team
	<b>1.4.2</b> Develop appropriate policies and training for the adopted case staffing process (TDM).		Target March 15, 2010		Design Team CWS Managers CWS Training Team Policies & Procedures Comm.
	<b>1.4.3</b> Implement the revised staffing (TDM) process.		Target July 15, 2010		Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders
	<b>1.4.4</b> Monitor and evaluate the implementation of TDM case staffing process to shorten a child's stay in foster care.	Target December 15, 2010	Design Team CWS Managers Team Leaders Quality Improvement Team		

**Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.**

Tulare County has a number of strategic challenges as it is implementing SDM, Wraparound, and Differential Response. In the current cycle, Tulare County will focus on increasing the engagement of families in the case planning process. The county has implemented Wraparound in the last fiscal year and had identified Family-to-Family as an initiative it wants to implement in the next couple of years. In the last two years the county has been building the infrastructure (building the community supports) that are critical to the successful implementation of these last two initiatives. Tulare County believes the practice will be improved and that outcome measures will be positively impacted as a result.

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

Educational/Training: At this point Tulare County will expand training to all staff on Wraparound. It has just completed a second round of Family Finding training with a third session planned in May 2009. The Family Finding training has come about resulting from the collaborative work between the county and community partners. We will find the success of the Family Finding practice useful in supporting efforts to look for the least restrictive placements for youth. As well, in looking to implement Team Decision Making (TDM), we understand it is one of the tools that come with Family-to-Family, however, it is critical to sound case work as evidenced by the series of training to staff over the last two years on engaging families in youth in case planning.

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

Community partners, including mental health, probation, CASA, the courts, and community-based organizations are represented in the System Improvement Plan Planning Committee. They have been partners for several years now and have fully participated in the development of the SIP strategies outlined here.

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

None identified at this time.