

## ***E. Local Systemic Factors:***

This section analyzes the systemic factors that impact County performance and practice. Child Welfare Services and Probation continue to build on the work identified in the prior County Self-Assessment to develop the prevention, intervention, and after care services, while making improvements within existing systems. The County has gathered information from its consumers via focus groups and from the County's most recent Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) process. Additional information was provided by community-based, prevention-focused groups such as the Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) and the Children's Services Network (CSN). The Child Protection Planning Committee (CPPC) was tasked with assessing the service needs continuum to develop short and long range goals and strategies by which to accomplish its overarching goal that all children in Tulare County live in safe and nurturing families.

The local systemic factors below will identify strengths, areas needing improvement, resource needs, and service gaps which have been identified during this self-assessment cycle. The systemic factors under review are the following:

- Relevant Management Information Systems (MIS)
- Case Review System
- Foster and Adoptive Licensing, Recruitment and Retention
- Quality Assurance System
- Service Array
- Staff / Provider Training
- Agency Collaboration
- Local Systemic Factors

### **1. Relevant Management Information Systems (MIS):**

Tulare County Child Welfare Services 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.

The goals of the CWS/CMS system are to:

- Provide social workers with immediate access to child, family, and case-specific information in order to make appropriate and timely case decisions;
- Provide social workers with current and accurate information to effectively and efficiently manage their caseloads and take appropriate and timely case management actions;

- Provide state and County administrators with the information needed to administer programs and monitor and evaluate the achievement of program goals and objectives;
- Provide state and County CWS agencies with a common database and definition of information from which to evaluate CWS;
- Consolidate the collection and reporting of CWS programs for state and federal requirements.

Tulare County is currently recruiting for a dedicated 1.0 FTE Statistical Research Analyst to analyze CWS outcome data. This employee will be drawing information from Business Objects, SafeMeasures®, and Structured Decision Making and working with Children's Research Center Ad Hoc Analytics. The objective is to produce information necessary to monitor and evaluate program goals and objectives in meeting state and federal outcomes, as well as facts vital to targeting resources for supporting families and improving practice.

Tulare County continues to improve the quality and usefulness of data and extracted reports with the use of data support programs such as SafeMeasures®, Business Objects Reports, and Structured Decision Making. The section below describes actions taken by the County to improve the usage, accuracy, and reporting ability of CWS/CMS.

The Probation Department in October 2010 began to input preliminary data into CWS/ CMS. An example is the required national youth transition database (NYTD) information and the placement notebook information. However, due to the limited time frame data is limited and therefore difficult to analyze. The only available way to analyze the data entered is the CDSS Child Welfare Dynamic Report. The Probation Department does not have access to SafeMeasures nor Business Objects Reports at this time. The cost of SafeMeasures is substantial and Probation receives no funding to assist with the assessment of service delivery therefore quality and usefulness of data is difficult to measure or assess. Probation does have an internal case management system called Caseload Explorer purchased from the Automon Corporation; from this system reports can be pulled on identified areas.

a. CWS/CMS New User Training:

To ensure that the data in the state database system is timely, accurate, relevant, and reliable to users, Tulare County Child Welfare offers two four-day CWS/CMS new user trainings each year. Tulare County has an agreement with the Central California Training Academy (CCTA) based at California State University Fresno (CSUF) to provide the new-user training. Seasoned staff, analysts, and management staff also attend this training so they can review skills and for case reviews / reporting.

The Probation Department Placement Unit officers received the four- day training from UC Davis through a contract with CDSS. The training is available on an ongoing basis should additional training be required or as new officers are assigned to the unit.

b. Ad-Hoc Analytics:

Child Welfare Services continues to contract with the Children's Research Center to assist the agency with analysis of data from CWS/CMS, SafeMeasures<sup>®</sup>, Business Objects, and Structured Decision Making (SDM), as well as other data sources that would provide valuable information to CWS about target population demographics, characteristics, and patterns. These data sources assist CWS with targeting resources and developing service priorities to address performance, and to track current performance on outcome measures.

Probation does not contract with an outside vendor to assess performance.

c. Business Objects and SafeMeasures<sup>®</sup>:

Business Objects is business intelligence software that is used to produce statistical reports based on queries of data stored in CWS/CMS. Unlike SafeMeasures<sup>®</sup>, which only offers limited and "canned" reports, Business Objects allows reports to be run based on designed queries, and it draws on up-to-date information in the CWS/CMS system. Business Objects reports are critical to maintaining compliance and assisting in monitoring efforts.

SafeMeasures<sup>®</sup> is a widely used system in California for monitoring compliance with federal and state case practice and outcome measures. SafeMeasures<sup>®</sup> permits users to monitor service delivery activity by navigating an extensive set of reports presented in graph and chart format. These reports permit counties to estimate current workload demand, plan more effective service interventions and monitor certain performance indicators established by state or federal regulatory requirements. SafeMeasures<sup>®</sup> includes case level quality control displays which agencies may employ to improve compliance with state or federal performance audits.

Probation does not contract with an outside vendor to assess performance.

d. Structured Decision Making (SDM):

Tulare County CWS completed implementation of Structured Decision Making (SDM) in March, 2008. The goals of the SDM

system are that investigation, case management, and services be improved through clearly defined and consistently applied decision making criteria. Greater reliability can be attained with a structured assessment procedure that guides decision making over specific criteria for every worker for every case. SDM interacts with CWS/CMS and provides the following key assessment tools for staff:

- Response Priority Tools: This tool focuses on factors to determine the urgency of referrals and is used by the Screening Unit staff for all referrals coming into the CWS Hotline. This screening tool allows staff to determine response priorities and assists in identifying families for prevention services such as Voluntary Family Maintenance, Differential Response – Path 1 and/or Path 2, SafeCare®, and Supporting Father Involvement.
- Safety Assessments: This tool detects factors that represent imminent danger to a child and is completed as part of the referral investigation by the Emergency Response Unit staff.
- Risk Assessments: This tool incorporates factors that represent the future likelihood of abuse and neglect. The results of this assessment are used at status review hearings and at the point of establishing that the case is ready for termination.
- Family Strengths and Needs Assessments: This tool highlights critical family issues and resources that can be used to plan services and interventions. It is conducted at the point of the first family intervention to help establish plans for reunification or other permanent plan living arrangement.
- Periodic Reassessments: This tool identifies changes in risks or service needs at established intervals or when there appears to be a change in a family situation. It is to be completed to provide information for each review hearing.

As discussed in the safety outcome measures earlier in this report, improving the consistency in the use of SDM tools can contribute by increasing safety for children, decreasing re-entry rates, increasing family engagement efforts, and increasing placement stability for children in foster care.

e. Hardware and Field Support:

Since the last self assessment, Tulare County Child Welfare Services has taken advantage of new technology, introduced through the CWS/CMS project that allows after-hours workers to access CWS/CMS through the internet via laptops. Child welfare staff is issued a specific access number or “token” to allow access to CWS/CMS while in the field. The new mobile technology has

allowed after-hours staff immediate access to CWS/CMS, timely recording of case information, and the ability to check prior family history, thus improving timeliness of data entry and worker safety. Technical support for CWS/CMS is now managed by the County's IT support system and the State Project site for CWS/CMS.

f. Description of County MIS and/or process for gathering storing and disseminating program information for CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF

The County OCAP liaison is responsible for gathering storing and disseminating program information for CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF funded programs. Documents and data collection utilize Microsoft Office software, primarily Word and Excel. Each funded program has an electronic and hard copy file to store correspondence, copies of contracts and corresponding Board Agenda Items, annual program budgets, mid-year and annual reporting narratives as well as monthly or quarterly invoices. Hard files are stored in a locked filing cabinet at the administration office of Child Welfare Services Agency. An annual 2011 listing of CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF services is created and dispersed to all staff for informational purposes.

OCAP-funded programs are monitored by the County OCAP liaison who reviews monthly invoices and bi-annual program reports submitted by contract providers. The provider bi-annual narrative examines both spending and program progress and/or challenges as well as how the provider will address these challenges. In the bi-annual narratives providers also attach a report which includes the data on the number of clients served by age group and types of service provided, as required by OCAP. Annually the OCAP liaison conducts a thorough on-site review of contract compliance for each provider. This includes both fiscal and programmatic reviews.

The County OCAP liaison prepares an annual comprehensive overview report of the monitoring findings (both program and fiscal) that is presented and reviewed by the Child Abuse Prevention Council and the Joint Allocation Committee. Each provider receives a copy of their own program's overview report.

g. Summary of Data Quality Issues:

Recent work within CWS by the Quality Improvement Unit and administrative support staff pulling reports from SafeMeasures® and Business Objects has revealed minor issues with data quality. The data errors, and data lag, account for issues discovered in reports of information extracted from the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS). These

included correcting addresses, updating school information, and tracking placement changes.

Analysis of CWS caseload data further identified that certain internal processes and a lack of training of new staff (the County has experienced some turnover in staff over the last couple of years) contributed to the findings. The County has identified these barriers and begun to engage managers, supervisors, and staff in correcting data entry errors and providing targeted training to new staff to assure reporting is as accurate as possible. Probation has recently been given access to the web-based version of Business Objects (Webi); the Probation Department hopes this level of access will provide opportunity to better assess the quality of its data.

2. Case Review System:

For CWS and Probation, 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. The purpose of the case review system is to ensure that every case has a written case plan developed with the family, and that notification of hearings have been issued. 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. Case planning is a process designed to encourage families to participate in resolving their own challenges and improve their futures. The following section describes how Tulare County has worked on improving their case review system.

a. Court Structure and Relationship:

The County continues to have a CWS Court Unit comprised of staff who works closely with County Counsel and court appointed attorneys. The CWS Court Unit and the Juvenile County Counsel attorneys meet monthly to discuss issues related to CWS and the Juvenile Court. In addition, the judicial officers of the court, court appointed attorneys; CASA, County Counsel and CWS meet quarterly to discuss Juvenile Court issues. The meetings are instrumental in maintaining a positive relationship between CWS and the court. The court structure remains the same since the last assessment. Annually, a representative from the Administrative Office of the Courts conducts a Title IV-E review and meets with the judicial officers, County Counsel, and CWS to advise them of the results of the Title IV-E review (see findings from the last review at section (e) found below).

The Probation Department court structure remains the same with one (1) Presiding Juvenile Court Judge and one (1) Commissioner of the Juvenile Court hearing the delinquency cases. The

courthouse is located at out Juvenile Justice Center in Visalia, CA and is in session daily as they hear all juvenile delinquency cases for the county. The department does not have a unit dedicated to foster care court related functions however probation representation is present at all delinquency hearings. The department has always maintained a positive relationship with the court and counsel and conducts regular meetings should issues arise. Annually, a representative from the Administrative Office of the Courts conducts a Title IV-E review and meets with the judicial officers, and probation to advise them of the results of the Title IV-E review.

i. Summary of Findings from the Administrative Office of the Courts Administrative Reviews:

The most recent review of Tulare County's CWS dependency cases was held in May 2010 (the next review will not be held until after the deadline for this report). Highlights of the findings in final report by the Administrative Office of the Courts dated August 18, 2010 include:

- The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) forms that were reviewed appeared to be mostly in order.
- A review of the Detention Hearing Findings and Orders were all in order.
- The parentage information in the files was thorough.
- A recommendation that more information is needed regarding the engagement of parents and children in case plan development.
- A recommendation that if a child is age 16 at the time of removal, that the Transitional Living Plan is to be completed at the time of the Dispositional Hearing.
- Suggestion that the County refer to the California Rules of Court and the new findings and orders forms (open for comment now) to make sure the correct findings and orders are based on the hearing type.

The most recent review of Tulare County's Delinquency cases was held in May 2010 (the next review will not be held until after the deadline for this report). Highlights of the findings in final report by the Administrative Office of the Courts dated August 18, 2010 include:

- Court Review Reports: Reports contained information on the custodial parent and progress made by the parent but at times lacked information on the non-custodial parent. Reports consistently contained educational

information such as attendance, progress, IEP information and minor's recent grades.

- Notice Requirements: Proof of notice was given however recommendation to use form JV-280
- Timeliness: All delinquency hearings were held on a timely basis.

ii. Court Structure:

Tulare County has a Juvenile Justice Facility that houses several court rooms, County Counsel-Juvenile Division, Juvenile Hall, and Juvenile Probation staff. The facility is located in a rural part of the county 15 miles north of Visalia at 11200 Ave. 368. The court is in session most business days and closed on weekends and holidays.

In Tulare County, the Juvenile Court has assigned one Presiding Judge. The Presiding Judge is supported by two (2) juvenile court commissioners, one who hears all CWS dependency hearings and the second who hears all Probation cases. The Presiding Judge has recently carved out one day a week to sit and hear CWS dependency system cases.

b. Process for Notification of Hearings:

Timely hearing notification continues to be a priority in Tulare County. The County has a Notice of Hearing Policy (Policy 100-11). To stay on top of changes in regulations and code, this policy has undergone numerous revisions since its original inception in 2003.

Since the last County Self-Assessment, Tulare County has consolidated notification of both status review hearings and permanency planning hearings to be completed out of the Court Unit. This was done to ensure that these notices were timely, correct, and consistently sent to all required parties.

Timely notification of hearings is a priority for the Probation Department; all notifications remain consistent with Division 31 requirements.

c. Process for Parent / Child Participation in Case Planning:

Since the initial self-assessment, the County has increased its use of formal and informal case staffing in development of case plans. The practice has been formalized into a policy and by providing training to staff. This policy emphasizes the participation of the

parent and child in the case plan development process. The County will utilize Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings and other family inclusive staffings to engage children, youth, and parents (or significant others) in developing individualized case plans. Because of implementing TDM, the County anticipates increased placements with relative care providers, improved placement stability, and an increased use of least restrictive placement outcome measurements. It is further predicted that the practice of TDM will provide improved concurrent planning efforts leading towards solid permanency plans.

Tulare County recognizes the importance of consistent, quality communication between the child/parent/care provider and the social worker in the ongoing development of the case plan. The County is using SafeMeasures® to closely monitor monthly child contacts and ensure these visits are taking place.

The Probation Department has provided extensive training to its officers in the areas of family engagement, effective case planning, concurrent planning and family finding. It is hoped with the addition of Team Decision Making (TDM) improvements will continue with the partnerships between the youth, families and community we serve.

The Probation Department believes in a collaborative approach to develop specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time specific case plan goals (SMART). Effective partnerships must be established with the youth and family early in the process to work toward the common goal of reunification.

d. General Case Planning and Review:

The CWS Quality Improvement (QI) unit is currently implementing changes in case planning and review to ensure parent-child participation in developing their case plans. Changes include a case plan survey to be distributed to caretakers, parents, and children inquiring as to whether they were informed of their basic rights, how to meet case plan needs, and how to obtain records. These surveys will be the basis of working with supervisors to identify areas where parent-child participation in case planning can be improved.

This process will set a baseline for clearly defined and consistently applied practice standards; set expectations of staff that will be clearly identified and reinforced by supervisors, and provide feedback that directly affects case planning policy and review to improve outcomes for all clients with case plans.

3. Foster / Adoptive Parent Licensing:

The *Annie E. Casey Foundation's Family to Family* initiative stresses the importance of matching child demographics and needs, to appropriate community outlets. It further stresses the importance of seeking specific friends, relatives, or individuals capable of meeting a child's special needs.

a. General Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention:

i. *Implementation of Family-to-Family Initiative:*

Tulare County is not a Family-to-Family Initiative site. Although not an official Family to Family site, Tulare County follows many of the principals of this initiative.

ii. *Recruiting, Training, and Support for Resource Families:*

Foster parent / caregiver recruitment and retention continue to be a focus area for Tulare County. The County has conducted campaigns to recruit more foster parents in all areas of the County. These recruitment efforts were implemented at community-based organizations and through local marketing venues to target specific neighborhoods, organizations, and individuals to assist in developing a more comprehensive recruitment strategy consistent with targeted based research.

Tulare County Licensing routinely assists the Tulare County Foster Parent Association by providing staff support and the location for their monthly meetings. As part of the ongoing collaboration between CWS and foster parents, regular meetings are held to discuss common issues, to identify resources and or training needs, and to continue to explore ways to strengthen the partnership between the County, foster, and biological families.

In addition, Tulare County continues to hold an annual Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner. This year's event included dinner, entertainment and childcare. There is also a CWS social worker in the Licensing Unit who has specific responsibility for working with families interested in adoption, or who are having challenges with the adoption process.

Since the last self assessment the County has implemented the Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE) a model curriculum for developing and supporting foster families and adoptive

families. The PRIDE program is designed to strengthen the quality of family foster care and adoption services by providing a standardized, consistent, structured framework for the competency-based recruitment, preparation, and selection of foster and adoptive parents, and for foster parent in-service training and ongoing professional development.

iii. *Building Community Partnerships:*

As discussed previously, the County developed a major strategic recruitment and support plan for foster and adoptive families. To support those efforts, a Foster Parent Association Executive Committee regularly meets with CWS to review and discuss the building of the partnerships needed to provide training and support for foster parents. One example includes developing a respite care system for foster parents. To better support and retain foster parents, a contract was developed with local Family Resource Centers to supply respite care services. This support service is funded under Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) funds and is designed to assist in stabilizing foster placements therefore improving the County's outcomes for placement stability.

A second highlight of the partnerships was the work to bring the "Lisa Project" to Tulare County last fall. The Lisa Project is a traveling exhibit designed to provide the public a glimpse of child abuse and neglect that each community faces. This exhibit was the result of collaborative efforts of the prevention community (CAPC and CSN), CWS, mental health, and community volunteers. The success of the event, drawing over five thousand (>5,000) community members during its stay in October 2010, resulted in an increased awareness in the community of the presence of child abuse/neglect and an increase in people looking to become foster parents. The County continues to look for opportunities locally to grow and nurture the community partnerships that are so important to helping embrace a goal of raising children in safe homes and communities.

In Fiscal Year 2007-2008, the County began a contract with a community-based service provider to offer pre and post-adoptive support services called the REACH program (Resources, Education, Advocacy, Crisis Intervention and Hope). This program is funded through Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) funds. Pre-adoptive support services consist of a number of recruitment strategies including conducting monthly community meetings,

distribution of a newsletter to the community, and other marketing campaigns. Post-adoptive services include parenting education and support, information and referral services, individual, family, and group counseling, and health education to parents and children. The overall objective of this effort is to increase awareness of the need for adoptive families, increase the number of families willing and able to adopt foster children, and to lend support to existing adoptive families.

iv. *Evaluation of Current System:*

The County continues to meet with the Foster Parent Association members to review and discuss program, services, and support needs. Last year Tulare County completed a strategic plan that supported recruitment, training, and retention of foster parents. Included in this effort was the developed a recruitment campaign that has proven successful. The staff of the Licensing Unit continues to provide training at a variety of events and to various groups and has implemented a Satisfaction Survey that sought feedback from foster parents; the results of which are being evaluated for potential system improvements.

v. *Support Services and Resources Available to Caregivers:*

Since the last assessment, the County has implemented a couple of added supports to foster parents. These include the development of respite care that is available to foster parents (as discussed in Building Community Partners above); the implementation of Wraparound which in a few Adoption Assistance Payment (AAP) cases has provided additional case management and behavioral support for high needs children in their homes, and the increased availability of Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS). The County continues its monthly meetings with the Foster Parent Association to identify issues and continues to publish a Foster Parent Newsletter which includes helpful information about available services, training opportunities, and resources.

b. *Placement Resources:*

Increased placement resources assist the County in the steps towards increasing stability and permanency for foster youth. These services can make fragile families stronger in that they can safely care for their children and the minors can receive the emotional support and interventions in the safe and stable

environment of their own homes. Tulare County is aware of the need and continues to emphasize the development of increased placement opportunities for older children and children with special needs. Below are placement resources available to CWS:

i. Emergency Placement:

Tulare County CWS continues to contract with a Foster Family Agency (FFA) (Koinonia) to provide bed slots on an emergency basis for minors with behavioral problems. The FFA is staffed to provide stabilization services to these minors. Tulare County has four (4) contract beds available. These are for short-term use with the intent that the bed can be used for up to 30 days to allow social workers to find more permanent placement setting for the child. The County has had this contract for the short-term beds since fiscal year 2009/2010.

In prior years, the County contracted with individual foster parents, however, in some instances the foster parents were not trained to work with the minor or their behavioral problems, and the minor would experience multiple placements. The County continues to contract with individual foster parents, but only in emergencies and only when no other placement can be found and when support services can be provided from local service providers.

Although Probation does not have emergency placement beds/homes, youth are typically in custody at the juvenile hall when a placement/removal order is made by the court and will remain there receiving services from education, mental health and medical providers pending placement.

ii. Intensive Treatment Foster Care:

The Intensive Treatment Foster Care (ITFC) Program is a family-based treatment program with enriched support services that provides a stable alternative to institutional care for severely emotionally disturbed children that was implemented in Tulare County CWS in fiscal year 2006. To be eligible for this program, participants must meet both of the following criteria:

(1) Behavioral history (lying, stealing, verbal or physical aggression, unacceptable sexual behavior, attempts at self-harmful behaviors, and/or defiant and oppositional behavior), and

(2) Placement history (Children must fit one of these four categories: placed in a group home with a Rate Classification Level (RCL) of nine or higher; assessed by the county placing agency to be at imminent risk of psychiatric hospitalization or placement in a group home with a RCL of nine or higher; previously in a group home program, except children in probation; or, otherwise in the custody of the juvenile court for any violent felony, and / or voluntarily placed in a group home with a RCL of nine or higher).

Intensive Treatment Foster Care provides effective therapeutic intervention. Foster parents are trained to provide care to children with special needs. Each child's treatment is goal directed, outcome specific, and behaviorally oriented. Tulare County CWS currently contracts with two FFAs (AspiraNet, Inc. and Family Builders Foster Family Agency) to provide this service and will be adding a third contractor in the near future. The County has recently revised ITFC contracts and procedures to ensure compliance with new ITFC regulations. Annual reviews of the providers are conducted to ensure that all standards of ITFC placements are met. The following table accounts for the number of children served by ITFC since the program began in 2006:

<b><i>Intensive Treatment Foster Care (ITFC) Placements by Fiscal Year (FY)</i></b>	
FY 2006/2007	1
FY 2007/2008	8
FY 2008/2009	14
FY 2009/2010	14
FY 2010/2011	18

The Probation Department has recently been added to the contract to utilize the ITFC Program although it has yet to use this level of service to address the needs of a specific foster youth.

iii. Wraparound:

Since the last County Self-Assessment, Tulare County implemented Wraparound in April 2008 with a contracted provider (EMQ FamiliesFirst, Inc.). The program is designed to provide support to help maintain the child's placement in the least restrictive setting possible. Wraparound was used in Tulare County to lower the

number of high needs youth placed in group home care with an alternative placement with family (when family connections were still available and appropriate). This program served CWS, Probation, Adoption Assistance Program (AAP), and AB 3632 (educational/mental health) referred children. Under the original contract, Tulare County contracted to serve up to 20 children. By June 2009, 18 youth had been enrolled (5 from CWS, 10 from Probation, and 3 from Mental Health (AB 3632)). The original contract with EMQ FamiliesFirst, Inc., ended on June 30, 2011. During the term of the original agreement, Probation served 27 children. The children served by probation were those youth in a group home level ten (10) or above.

Tulare County put out a Request for Proposal in December 2010. Starting with the new fiscal year (2011/2012), Tulare County awarded its contract to a new provider, Family Preservation Community Services. Under the current contract, Family Preservation Community Services anticipates it will serve up to 20 youth during the year of the current contract which expires June 30, 2012. The remaining two (2) youth who were being served by the previous provider at the end of June 2011 were transitioned to Family Preservation Community Services.

The new provider will be delivering services under a "Social" (vs. Mental Health) model. This shift in philosophy is more closely related to the overall Wraparound philosophy – family-centered and family-driven services. Tulare County is working diligently to expand its definition of at-risk youth to increase the enrollment of eligible youth into Wraparound. The new provider will continue to serve CWS, Probation, and AAP populations. Tulare County expects to provide Wraparound services to approximately 20 youth in the new fiscal year 2011/2012.

4. Quality Assurance System:

a. *Oversight of CAPIT / CBCAP / PSSF Activities:*

i. *Oversight/monitoring of effective fiscal and program accountability of the CAPIT, CBCAP, and PSSF vendor / contractor activities.*

Tulare County has a staff person/County liaison assigned to manage the prevention services contracts and to provide

staff support to the Children's Services Network (CSN) and Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC).

The County liaison is responsible for monitoring all contracts with CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF contracted vendors. The County's liaison maintains contract folders for each funded program. These prevention-funded contract folders contain all supporting documents necessary to account for the contracts. The contract folders contain correspondence, the current contract, the Board of Supervisor's Resolution granting the contract, a copy of the vendor's program budget, mid-year and annual reporting narratives, as well as monthly or quarterly invoices. These files are stored at the CWS administration office.

The annual monitoring process requires a list of items from the providers described below;

- OCAP Matrix identifying clients by demographic and services offered
- A one or two page program narrative including a program review, outcome summary, expenditure report, and an explanation on how challenges were addressed
- A facility tour and interview with the program director and bookkeeper
- A review of client progress and program measurement tools
  - Pre and Post -Test Evaluations
  - Customer Service Satisfaction Surveys
  - Program Evaluations
- A budget review
- A review of the scope of work to ensure program fidelity

A comprehensive overview report is written of the annual monitoring findings and submitted to the Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) and the Joint Allocation Committee (JAC). Each provider then receives their individual report(s) that provide a summation of the monitoring results for each of their CAPIT, CBCAP, and PSSF-funded programs.

In addition to the annual monitoring, the OCAP liaison provides monthly oversight. Monthly invoices are submitted by providers and are compared to their annual line item budget. Should a provider under spend in any line item category, it may be an indicator goals are not being met. In these incidences, the OCAP liaison requests a

corrective action plan from the provider that addresses what changes/improvements will be made by the provider to meet the goals outlined in their the scope of work as included in their contract. The OCAP liaison works with providers to address these items and monitors progress. If progress is not made the results of the corrective action plan are reported to the CAPC and the JAC.

At the beginning of the fiscal year each vendor is provided a copy of their signed contract with the County, their budget narrative identifying their fiscal year spending including the required 10% matching funding, and a goal and summary outcome report with an identified number of clients to be served.

A mid-year narrative is collected from each vendor describing service success and challenges, clients served, and a plan to spend down their annually allocated funds or identifying if the program is under spent. If the vendor is unable to spend the full amount of their allocated funds, the County's prevention services liaison reports to the Joint Allocation Committee (JAC – see County Government Structure section for description.) and presents recommendations for reallocating unspent funds before the end of the fiscal year.

An in-depth oversight process is conducted at the end of each fiscal year for CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF funded contracts. The County's prevention services liaison conducts on-site visits and conducts one-on-one interviews with the program directors as well as the program's fiscal agents. A review of evaluation tools is completed including an analysis of successes and/or challenges. The outcomes measured by each program are reviewed. At the conclusion of all the oversight visits the County liaison creates an overview report of all CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF funded programs and provides this report to the Joint Allocation Committee (the JAC includes CSN and CAPC members). The OCAP matrix is collected identifying the number of clients served along with client demographics and those with special needs. Each program evaluates the progress of their clients as well as the progress or challenges of their programs.

In addition to the above data collection/oversight process, there are additional local expectations placed on the PSSF-funded Differential Response program which is contracted to four Family Resource Centers (FRCs). Each FRC is required to submit a tracking log twice a year recording

number of clients served, the demographics of clients, and types of services offered by the program. The tracking log is collected and then analyzed for outcomes measures and the results are reported back to the PSSF vendors for quality assurance. Family Resource Center staff is required to attend bi-monthly meetings with the County to obtain referrals from a Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) meeting and to discuss program implementation issues (if any).

CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF-funded providers are required to seek parent-consumer participation through customer satisfaction evaluations. A majority of the funded agencies incorporate *Needs Surveys* with the customer satisfaction questionnaires reflective of the client progress and program successes and/or challenges. This information is integrated in the end-of-the-year Oversight Report. Some agencies also engage parent-consumers in focus groups. Other reported involvement of families that utilize service and provide evaluation include *Agency Departure Evaluations*, *Program Exit Surveys* and *Shelter House Meetings*. The data collected through the satisfactions forms, needs surveys and focus groups are used to refine programming and improve customer services. All funded agencies are required to submit the results of their customer satisfaction surveys with their year-end oversight report.

ii. *Assessment of the system used to ensure service delivery for children who are at risk of abuse/neglect.*

Findings from the prior needs assessment conducted by the prevention partners was used to develop a request for proposal (RFP) process aimed at addressing identified needs. The RFP process allows the County to identify a variety of services needed for children at risk of abuse and/or neglect. Each RFP is targeted to avoid the duplication of services, to specifically address identified needs, and to be subsequently written into the scope of work of each awarded contract. The scope of work becomes the basis for future oversight visits conducted by the County's prevention services liaison. Providers are required to submit monthly program invoices and reports to support activities and to monitor the effectiveness of the program. Providers are also required to further assess their service programs by conducting regular client satisfaction surveys and reporting these results to the County's prevention services liaison.

In the event a program fails to meet contractual expectations a meeting is called with the Joint Allocation Committee (JAC). The JAC reports to the respective committee (Child Abuse Prevention Council representing CAPIT, CBCAP, and CTF funds, and Children's Services Network representing PSSF funds) to deliver their recommended corrective action plan. The County's prevention liaison often works with providers to mitigate any program or fiscal deficiencies to assure that the services are delivered in accordance with contractual obligations. When/if a provider does not / cannot comply (e.g., loss of other funding/staff, etc.) with recommended corrective action, the lack of compliance can result in the provider's contract being revoked or a reduction in funds.

The Child Protection Planning Committee (CPPC) [See County Government Structure section for description.] is in the process of developing the child abuse prevention priorities for fiscal year 2012 through 2015. These priorities will be included in the next County System Improvement Plan (SIP).

iii. *Assessment of system used to ensure children with special needs and their families receive effective services.*

The service delivery for children with special needs and their families are conducted in the same manner as children at risk of abuse and/or neglect described above.

b. Probation:

i. *Detail the Quality Assurance system that Probation utilizes and evaluate the adequacy and quality of the system.*

The goal of Probation is to develop and implement standards to ensure that children receiving care are provided quality services.

It is the responsibility of the Supervising Probation Officer (SPO) of the Placement Unit to conduct Quality Improvement audits to essentially improve service, practice, and accountability. The SPO conducts case reviews to ensure compliance with Division 31 regulations, applicable code sections, and with the agency's own policies and procedures.

- ii. *Describe and assess the system used to ensure children with special needs and their families receive the effective services.*

The probation department makes a diligent effort to ensure all the needs of children are met by conducting regular one-on-one case staffings with the probation officer, coordination of services between providers, regular case file reviews and collaborative efforts between partners

- c. Child Welfare Services:

- i. Describe the quality assurance system that Child Welfare utilizes and evaluate the adequacy and quality of the system.

The goal of the CWS Quality Improvement (QI) system is to develop and implement standards to ensure that children and families in CWS are provided quality services. The QI Team must maintain standards throughout the division to ensure that outcomes for all families are fair and equitable, and that all families experience positive results through their involvement with CWS.

The County has implemented a Quality Improvement Team (QI) to essentially improve service, practice, and accountability within the CWS Division while focusing on safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families. QI does case reviews to ensure compliance with Division 31 regulations, applicable code sections, and the agency's own policies and procedures. The QI Unit is responsible for internal reviews of performance, for evaluating current business processes, and for coordinating policy and training to effect change, as needed. The QI Unit staff will also conduct on-line and hard case reviews, review outcome data from surveys, and business object reports, and evaluate other tools as they are developed.

The QI Team has implemented an effective feedback instrument for identifying client needs through a screening and needs assessment process. This compliance-based instrument is utilized to monitor current practices and identify strengths and weaknesses of existing operations. QI staff work closely with CWS Administration to communicate the results of the data analysis and for the development of a corrective action plans as necessary. This practice will help ensure that identified improvement opportunities are planned, implemented, and evaluated on

a periodic basis thus providing continuous quality improvement.

ii. Outline the county's policies for evaluating achievement of positive outcomes including the performance measures identified in the Quarterly Data Reports

Tulare County CWS has a system in place where an analyst with the administrative unit is responsible for receiving and tracking Quarterly Outcome Data. In the period since the last County Self-Assessment, the administrative support staff has been developing a reporting structure that is distributed to management staff on a quarterly basis to track performance on each of the Outcome indicators which are included in this report.

The internal quarterly outcome reports have been used to look at trends over time for the major indicators; safety, permanency, child and family well-being, as well as the systemic factors. These data have also been provided to the service partners in the Children's Services Network and in the new Child Protection Planning Committee (CPPC). And, this data is used to identify areas of review for the County's Peer Quality Case Review and System Improvement Plan.

Tulare County CWS will continue tracking data and is in the process of developing a new Data Unit. The Data Unit will use data from the Quarterly Outcomes Reports, SafeMeasures®, and Business Objects to analyze performance on specific indicators. This Unit's work will also work with the Quality Improvement Unit to drill down into data for issues to measure participation and representation rates.

iii. Indicate the county policies for monitoring ICWA and MEPA compliance.

While the County does not have a specific policy to address ICWA or MEPA, staff adheres to current California's Department of Social Services Manual of Policies and Procedures, Division 31, and pertinent California Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) regulations. The County is hoping to strengthen its ongoing relationship with the Tule River Indian Tribe to address any concerns they have and develop a relationship that will help the County and the Tribe meet the challenges of preserving the Indian heritage, culture, and familial connections for

children who are being served by the juvenile dependency systems.

- iv. Describe the county's policies for monitoring how mental health needs have been assessed and effectiveness of services provided. Assess the efficacy of the monitoring system.

For a number of years, Tulare County CWS has had clinicians working with staff on the front line. Clinicians have helped to address immediate mental health/behavioral needs of children at the point of detention, to liaison between CWS and the County's mental health providers, and to better address the needs of the children being served by CWS. Under the current structure, a clinician serves as the gate-keeper and main liaison to County mental health providers. This system has been in place since the last assessment and seems to be meeting the needs. The clinician who is the liaison is supervised by an experienced CWS Manager. There are currently six (6) CWS Clinicians in the CWS Division.

- v. Briefly describe and assess the system used to ensure children with special needs and their families receive effective services.

Tulare County has three mechanisms to ensure that children with special needs receive effective services; the CWS Registered Nurses, the Special Rates Committee, and referrals for services provided by Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC)

Tulare County has had a number of professional CWS nurses placed with CWS Units for a number of years. CWS nurses, supervised by a Public Health Nurse, perform two major activities that help the County keep children safe and healthy.

One team, Health Care Program for children in Foster Care (HCPCFC), assists in case management of children in foster care. The HCPCFC nurses document all available health information and create the Health & Education Passport (HEP). The HEP is updated documenting the chronological health history of the child's growth and development. This same team of nurses is responsible for reviewing and completing the JV 220 (Authorization for Psychotropic Medication) that is processed by the court.

The second team is the CWS Registered Nurse Consultants. The Nurse Consultants assist with referral investigations and the case management of medically fragile infants by providing competent health related consultative services. These Nurse Consultants represent the health care needs of children receiving CWS services to the court via the regularly scheduled dependency case status review hearings and / or with any change in the medical circumstance experienced by dependent children.

Tulare County CWS also has a state-approved Specialized Foster Care Rate system. The County developed a policy several years ago that outlines the processes, assessment criteria, rates, Review Team, and approval periods. The current specialized foster care rates are used to provide additional funds for children with special needs not covered by Medi-Cal and which are determined to be necessary to preserve children in lower level care. On average, Tulare County CWS processes 20 requests each month for Specialized Care Rate with an average breakdown of 40% new requests and 60% renewal and/or adjustment to existing specialized care rates.

vi. Summarize the county's policies and procedures for documenting and monitoring compliance with the child and family involvement in the case planning process, including:

- a) Concurrent planning in every case receiving reunification services.

Tulare County CWS has a concurrent planning policy that was developed previously. It has adhered to requirements to do concurrent planning for each child in foster care. In the last two years, staff reductions and the restructuring of division activities have necessitated a review of the protocol. Tulare County's last PQCR findings reinforce the need and commitment to assure that parents and children (of appropriate age) participate in making case decisions including placement preferences and permanency. The County has been using a case staffing process and is moving to a more formalized and consistent process by implementing Team Decision Making (TDM). As discussed in an earlier section of the report, the CWS Division has approval to add new social workers, some of whom will be assigned to the Permanency Planning Assessment Unit (PPAU). The County believes that TDMs will

assure participation of parents (or other adult) and that children will have a voice in developing permanency options.

- b) Meeting Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) timelines and documentation of compelling reasons.

The County has not previously developed policies related to meeting TPR timelines; however, these are monitored by the monthly tracking of court hearings and their timelines. In accordance with current regulatory requirements, the County continues to follow requirements and assure that a child's permanency is not delayed and that documentation of such is made part of case records. The juvenile court has also played a role in assuring that timelines are followed. The court remains sensitive to finding permanent connections for children with no hope of reunifying with their parents. The Adoptions Unit, described earlier in this report, works towards matching children to families as soon as rights have been terminated.

- c) *Development of a Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) for each child age 16 and over.*

Tulare County CWS has developed a mechanism to help identify youth who are becoming eligible for ILP services. On a monthly basis, staff from the CWS Administrative Unit runs a monthly report that is provided to the Supervisor for the ILP program. The report is used to identify children coming into the program and those for whom the TILP is needed.

A second method for tracking the development of the TILP for each youth is SafeMeasures®. As previously reported, the County's CWS staff has access to this software and a policy in place that requires CWS staff to use SafeMeasures® as a case management tool. This has proven successful to local efforts to comply with the TILP requirement.

One item that the County will address in the next year is the development of a system to track non-minor dependents who will receive services resulting from the recent passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 12. Pending regulations will require that youth to age 21 receive expanded support and services. The

County will be addressing the implications of the new legislation in the next System Improvement Plan.

- vii. Briefly describe the extent to which the county has implemented the Family to Family Self Evaluation initiative and assess the success of the implementation.

Tulare County CWS is not a Family-to-Family Initiative site and therefore has not conducted the Family-to-Family Self Evaluation. However, Tulare County CWS does use Quarterly Outcome Reports, the UC Berkeley site, and Business Objects queries to evaluate performance improvement. Between the data and the work of the Quality Improvement Unit's work on qualitative driven indicators, Tulare County continues to evaluate services to its clients. The Quality Improvement Unit also reviews business practice, process, and client satisfaction surveys.

5. Service Array:

- a. *Analyze the efficacy and availability of current community-based and prevention-focused programs and activities provided by public agencies and private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based programs and how they fit in to an overall continuum of family-centered, holistic care.*

Tulare County has been and continues to be an active participant and advocate for children and families. Efforts include the active participation of CWS staff on various committees and councils developed to address the issue of child abuse/neglect prevention and community education. For the last few years CWS has taken the lead to unite representatives from the community to provide input into its County System Improvement Planning, Self Assessment and Peer Quality Case Reviews.

As noted earlier in the report, over the last couple of years a new county-wide focused body, the Child Protection Planning Committee (CPPC) has evolved from the System Improvement Plan (SIP) Planning Committee and the two prevention-focused bodies; CSN and CAPC. The CPPC has been focused on conducting a county-wide assessment of services and gaps with the goal of defining goals and strategies along a service continuum (prevention, early intervention, intervention, and aftercare). The work on this major undertaking is being facilitated by a contracted provider (Harder + Company). At the time of this report, the members of the CPPC have been developing information that will be used to inform the development of an

integrated System Improvement Plan that is due January 2012. The integrated plan provides opportunity for the County to review its current system of services, the delivery of these services, their alignment to best practice, and how to best support its goal of nurturing communities of healthy children and families. To that end, several program / services currently operate in Tulare County resulting from the partnerships discussed below. These include the following, each of which is addressed later in this report:

- Tulare County Blue Ribbon Commission
- Tulare County Linkages Project
- Wraparound Executive and Community Teams
- Transitional Housing Program – Plus (THP Plus) Committee

b. *Provide a brief description and analysis of services offered, including:*

i. Services available to meet the needs of ethnic/minority populations including an assessment of the availability of culturally appropriate services.

As written in the demographic section of this report, Tulare County spans 4,863 square miles. A good portion of the County is appropriated to agriculture with a percentage of the population who migrates with seasonal crops. In 2009 Hispanics and/or Latinos made up 68% of the County's population and from 2005 to 2009 there were 41.40% residents who spoke Spanish in the home. Because of the unique demographics of Tulare County it is important that the majority of contractors who provide prevention, intervention, and treatment services to clients are prepared with Spanish literature and Spanish speaking staff as well as intake assessments which identify ethnicity and language preference. Services available to Spanish-speaking consumers include counseling, parenting classes, Differential Response, SafeCare<sup>®</sup>, Linkages, child development skills program, and child abuse and neglect prevention education classes. Tulare County additionally places priority on providing services in rural locations.

ii. Services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families assisted by the agency and that are used to determine other service needs.

There are four (4) local Family Resource Centers (FRCs) whose Differential Response (DR) programs are funded by (PSSF). These programs receive referrals from the Screening Unit of Child Welfare Services for families

displaying symptoms of general neglect, referrals categorized as Path I. The FRC meets with families to identify their individual needs and strengths to determine appropriate support and referral(s) to address the presenting issues.

In many instances, families referred for DR services have several underlying issues that need to be addressed. The FRC's work primarily on the DR issues (child neglect) and then will work with the family on the individualized case plans for secondary issues. Some resources families need referrals to counseling, anger management classes, food banks, attorneys, Central Valley Regional Center for services to the developmentally delayed, and many others.

iii. Services that address the needs of family, as well as the individual child, in order to create a safe home environment.

A contracted service provided to children and their families in Tulare County that creates a safe environment for the child is the SafeCare® in-home parenting program. SafeCare® is an evidence-based training program for parents who are at-risk or have been reported for child abuse and neglect. The primary target population is families with children ages 0-7. The service is typically four to six months in length. For the fiscal year 2009/2010, 40 parents were served by SafeCare®. The Probation Department does not utilize this program as the target population is below the age of youth Probation serves.

Parenting Wisely is another contracted evidence-based in-home parenting program that serves parents and children ages 7-18. Parenting Wisely is a self-administered, highly interactive computer-based program that teaches parents and children skills to improve their relationships and decrease conflict through support and behavior management. This program is a minimum eight weeks. For the fiscal year 2009/2010, approximately 39 parents were served by Parenting Wisely.

In fiscal years 2009-2010 through 2010-2011 both the SafeCare® and Parenting Wisely programs were funded out of CWS's Supportive and Therapeutic Options Program (STOP) allocation. The target population was CWS families either reunifying with their children or in Family Maintenance or Voluntary Family Maintenance Program. The funding will be changing to draw from the Mental Health Services Act, Prevention and Early Intervention

funds (MHSA PEI). Also beginning in fiscal year 2011-2012, the services will be expanding to provide preventative services for families served through five Family Resource Centers (FRCs) in Tulare County.

iv. Services and the delivery of services for children with disabilities and their families.

Tulare County does not have a specific contract for prevention services for the exclusive benefit of children with special needs; however, several prevention contracts do identify working with families of children with special needs. Some of these services include (along with their funding source):

- REACH: Pre and post adoption services (PSSF)
- Differential Response services (PSSF)
- Parenting classes (CAPIT & CBCAP)
- Family reunification counseling services (CAPIT)
- Respite for foster parents (PSSF)

v. Services and the delivery of services targeted to children at risk for abuse or neglect.

Children at risk for abuse and/or neglect are served by several prevention-focused providers throughout Tulare County in a number of facilities. Contractors that serve children directly are the: Boys and Girls Clubs, Tulare County Office of Education, Tulare Youth Service Bureau, Family Resource Centers, and CASA (see contract/service matrix below). Tulare County does not have a record of the number of court-dependent children (WIC Section 300/600) served by these providers.

vi. Services designed to enable children at risk of foster care placement to remain with families when their safety and well-being can be reasonably assured.

SafeCare<sup>®</sup>, Parenting Wisely (both discussed above), and Resources, Education, Advocacy, Crisis Intervention, and Hope (REACH – detailed below), are services designed to enable children to remain with their families.

vii. Services designed to help children achieve permanency by returning to families from which they have been removed, where appropriate, be placed for adoption or with a legal guardian or some other planned, permanent living arrangement and through post-legal adoption services.

The REACH program (Resources, Education, Advocacy, Crisis Intervention, and Hope) is a pre and post-adoption service designed to support adoptive parents, children and youth through group meetings, newsletters and a lending library. The REACH program also offers crisis counseling to all adoptive families throughout Tulare County to help sustain the adoption so children and youth will not be relinquished and placed back into the foster care system.

Parenting Wisely and SafeCare® are two additional services that are provided to families who have reunified with their children. Both services are described above.

- viii. Services accessible to families and children in all geographical locations including isolated areas of the county.

Many of the services provided are provided in all or most geographical locations in Tulare County. SafeCare® and Parenting Wisely services are provided in the home in all geographical locations. Differential Response is provided out of four Family Resource Centers (FRCs). These FRCs are primarily located in rural, underserved locations. Parenting classes supported by CTF, CAPIT, and CBCAP funds are available throughout Tulare County in multitude locations including isolated communities. Because Tulare County's rural communities have a high level of families who are monolingual in Spanish, the above services are provided in English and Spanish. Verbal assistance is provided to parents who are unable to read and write.

- ix. Services that can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

SafeCare®, Parenting Wisely, Differential Response, and REACH can all be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency. Each of the four programs listed above provides individualized case management services.

- x. Availability of services/current gaps in continuum of care.

As described above, the Child Protection Planning Committee (CPPC) is currently in the process of conducting a county-wide assessment of services and gaps with the goal of defining goals and strategies along a service continuum (prevention, early intervention, intervention, and

aftercare). A request for proposal (RFP) for CAPIT, CBCAP, and PSSF funds for fiscal year 2012-2016 will be released addressing the identified gaps in service.

xi. Services to Native American children.

Currently there are no prevention contracts between Tulare County and a private organization or non-profit to serve Native American children exclusively. Native American children are served by prevention services offered throughout the County with contractors funded by CTF, CAPIT, CBCAP, PSSF, STOP, and MHSA PEI. Some of these services are provided in the home (as described above). When clients complete a survey or evaluation for prevention services, their ethnicities are tracked and these tools are viewed by the County liaison during the contract monitoring visits.

xii. Availability of child abuse prevention education.

Child abuse prevention education is a priority in Tulare County. One provider teaches child abuse and/or neglect awareness in public and private schools throughout Tulare County. The program teaches kindergarten, first and fifth grade students to be assertive and to seek help for abuse and neglect by providing valuable information and protective skills. There is also a parent education component to help increase parent involvement with their child/student. This program purchases literature and materials to support the message and to be a resource for kids. Reaching students through this venue is reflective of a strong collaboration between schools and social services.

The Child Abuse Prevention Council has a committee that focuses on child abuse prevention education. Educational events they have organized include their annual Child Abuse Blue Ribbon March on Main Street and the Lisa Project (described in the Foster/Adoptive Parent Licensing, Building Community Partnerships section).

xiii. Availability of child and family health and well-being resources.

Services already described that address child and family health and well being include: SafeCare®, Parenting Wisely, Differential Response, and REACH. In addition, a CBCAP funded contract provides age appropriate car seats and installation education.

- xiv. Existence of established networks of community services and resources, such as family resource centers or other comprehensive service centers.

Four family resource centers are contracted to provide Differential Response services and five are contracted to provide the SafeCare program as described in number ii and iii above. These FRCs are located in Woodlake, Cutler-Orosi, Earlimart, Lindsay, and the north side of Visalia. The FRC Network was formed a few years ago and meets monthly.

- c. *Identify outreach activities that maximize participation of parents as well as racial and ethnic populations, children, and adults with disabilities, and members of other underserved or underrepresented groups.*

As previously discussed, the Child Abuse Prevention Council presented the Lisa Project which was open to all residents in Tulare County. The Lisa Project is a child abuse awareness exhibit sharing stories of five children who endured child abuse including a little girl named Lisa who six years old at the time of her abuse. This exhibit was a module replicating a home with five rooms where the abuse occurred. Groups of 5 – 7 people toured the five rooms listening to the stories of abuse through headphones. This exhibit reached over 5,000 residents of Tulare County. The guests were residents from all over the County. There were high school students, court ordered parents, alcohol and drug clients, clients on probation, parents and their kids, city officials, and anyone else who walked through the door, provided they were over 13. This exhibit was free to the public, and opened 40 hours during one week during the month of October 2010 and funded in part by CBCAP.

The Parent Leadership Institute provided by Synchrony of Visalia was supported by braided funding from CAPIT, CBCAP, CTF, and First 5. This program provided parent leadership classes, parent workshops, and parenting skills classes. Participating parents in these programs were both recruited from the communities throughout Tulare County and by direct referrals from Child Welfare Services. Many of the parents who graduated from these programs became mentors to other parents, community leaders, and parent advocates for various community councils. Annual parent surveys collected from participating parents were used to develop and improve this program.

During fiscal year 2010 – 2011 Synchrony of Visalia lost their First 5 funding. OCAP funds alone could not keep program staff

employed, curriculum on stock, support traveling expenses, and pay for facility rent and Synchrony closed the program.

Synchrony's OCAP funds were reallocated to another provider, Family Services of Tulare County, for fiscal year 2011 – 2012. Family Services is currently serving parents with parenting classes and the reallocated OCAP funds will increase classes through this provider and therefore help fill a service gap for county-wide parenting classes.

- d. *Describe how underrepresented groups participated in the assessment process.*

As described above, the CPPC has been conducting a County-wide assessment of services and gaps with the goal of defining goals and strategies along a service continuum (prevention, early intervention, intervention, and aftercare). This assessment will be used to inform the development of an integrated System Improvement Plan that is due January 2012. Information has been gathered from a variety of unrepresented groups via the Tulare County Community Survey that was conducted earlier this year. The survey asked questions to determine resources and activities both available and lacking in the community to prevent child abuse.

- e. *Indicate which services are funded by CBCAP, CAPIT, PSSF funds.*

The following matrix lists all the currently funded services by CBCAP, CAPIT, and PSSF:

CBCAP	
Contractor	Program Description
Synchrony	Parent Leadership Institute – Leadership skills in the community for parents
Children Health & Safety	Car seat and installation education
CAPIT	
Contractor	Program Description
Boys & Girls Club	You Matter – Childhood stressors and resiliency builders SMART Moves – Leadership building / alcohol and drug abuse awareness Kids & Company – Community, school and home safety awareness NetSmartz – Online safety awareness
Central California Family Crisis Center	Tertiary prevention treatment; counseling services
Family Services	Parent education, information and referral services
Synchrony	Parenting and child development skills workshop in Spanish

	and English
Tulare County Office of Education	Child abuse and neglect prevention for Kindergarten, first and fifth graders & parents
Tulare Youth Service Bureau	Child sexual abuse treatment program in English and Spanish
<b>PSSF</b>	
<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Program Description</b>
AspiraNet	Resources, Education, Advocacy, Crisis Intervention, and Hope (REACH) - Pre and post adoption services
Court Appointed Special Advocate	Child advocacy services for dependents of Tulare County Juvenile Court
Cutler / Orosi Family Resource Center	Differential Response for Path I and Path II. Direct services and referrals for services.
Lindsay Health Start Family Resource Center	Differential Response for Path I and Path II. Direct services and referrals for services.
Parenting Network Respite	In home respite care for CWS County foster families
Parenting Network Family Resource Center	Differential Response for Path I and Path II. Direct services and referrals for services.
Woodlake Family Resource Center	Differential Response for Path I and Path II. Direct services and referrals for services.

- f. *Discuss the county's current efforts on the development and implementation of Evidence-based and Evidence-informed prevention programs and practices.*

Tulare County has been working towards bringing more evidence-based programs into the County. Two evidence-based programs now offered county wide to families is the SafeCare® and Parenting Wisely programs (as described above). Future prevention RFPs will include evidence-based or evidence-informed expectations.

6. Staff / Provider Training:

- a. *Briefly describe and analyze the county infrastructure to provide training to social workers, including capacity to:*
- i. Ensure completion of the Common Core training mandated within the first two years of employment.

Child Welfare Services meets quarterly with Central California Training Academy (CCTA) representatives to ensure the completion of the Common Core training within the designated period for recently hired CWS staff.

- ii. Provide ongoing training for all staff that provides family preservation and support services, child protective services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services that includes the skills and knowledge require for their position.

During spring of each year, CWS meets with CCTA and proposes a list of trainings needed by CWS staff for the next fiscal year. Tulare County CWS meets quarterly with CCTA to review and discuss training needs as may be discovered through ongoing case reviews or Quality Improvement reviews.

- b. Briefly describe and analyze the county infrastructure to provide training to Probation Officers, including capacity to:

- i. Ensure the completion of the Core Placement Officer training.

Every probation officer shall, within their first year of employment, complete successfully specific training authorized by Standards and Training for Corrections (STC). These include: Probation Officer Core and PC 832 Laws of Arrest/Firearms.

This law enforcement STC Certified training curriculum, the probation officer core course consists of a minimum of 170 hours of instruction in specific performance/instructional objectives. Entry-level staff must successfully complete these course objectives as demonstrated by a satisfactory level of proficiency on relevant achievement tests. Entry-level core training shall be completed in the first year of employment.

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. This STC Certified training curriculum is taught by the Center for Human Services U.C. Davis Extension meets this requirement, this

training is to occur within the first two years an officer is assigned to the placement unit.

Training for Probation Managers and Supervisors:

Probation Supervisors will have completed all of the above noted trainings with the addition of the STC Certified Supervisory Academy and the Tulare County Supervisory Academy within one (1) year from promotion. In addition, supervisors assigned to the Placement Unit within two (2) years of assignment shall complete the U.C. Davis Placement Supervisor Academy.

- ii. Provide initial and ongoing training for all Officers that are hired to provide them with the skills and knowledge required for their position.

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. These three areas of training include:

- Probation Officers: Probation Officers are required to participate in 40 hours of ongoing probation specific training each fiscal calendar year.
- Placement Probation Officers: In addition to the above training areas placement officers are also required to complete additional trainings specific to concurrent planning, visitation requirements and termination of parental rights practices.
- Probation Supervisors: Probation Supervisors are required to participate in 40 hours of ongoing probation specific training each fiscal calendar year. In addition, they are encouraged to complete supervisor specific Alumni Modules upon completion of Tulare County Supervisory Academy.
- Placement Probation Supervisors: In addition, to the above noted training required for Probation Supervisors those assigned to supervise the Placement Unit are required to complete additional training in the areas of concurrent planning, visitation requirements and termination, parental rights practices, case planning practices, comprehensive assessment of wards who are receiving Title IV-E placement services including screening for educational and mental health needs, understanding the significance of state and federal reporting requirements such as the Adoption and Foster

Care Analysis and Reporting System and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System.

#### Probation Training Projections:

Progress has been made toward facilitating teamwork, working more efficiently, integrating service delivery, developing critical thinking skills, working with children and families, and in developing a "learning organization". The framework is effective in meeting the needs of new employees in the development of core competencies. It also serves to enhance the skills and service delivery of seasoned employees.

The goal of the County's training plan is to provide a structure for the delivery of training to Probation staff. These goals more specifically include:

- Provide skills, knowledge, and awareness for staff to ensure the delivery of quality services to children and their families.
- Provide specialized training for the continuing development of all staff.
- Cross-train probation officers using an integrated methodology which focuses on increasing knowledge and communication while working on the goal of self reliance for children and their families.
- Provide opportunities for continuing professional growth and development for all Probation staff.
- Provide training and support to County staff during technological and/or organizational change.
- Provide opportunities to staff for learning and skills enhancement through multidisciplinary collaboration.
- Incorporate the State's Standardized Core Curriculum into the County-specific training provided to new Probation staff.

c. *Briefly describe and analyze the county infrastructure to provide training to providers, including capacity to:*

i. Provide training and technical assistance to subcontractors.

The County's prevention services liaison attends and at times facilitates a variety of meetings to provide technical assistance to subcontractors. These meetings include:

- Child Abuse Prevention Council monthly meeting (for CAPIT and CBCAP funded services)

- REACH (a PSSF funded service) monthly meeting
- Differential Response (PSSF funded services) bi-monthly meetings
- Parenting Classes (CAPIT and CBCAP funded service) monthly meeting
- Annual site visits to each subcontractor's facility
- Technical assistance, provided via phone calls and emails

ii. Allocate CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF funds for county liaisons and parent consumers to attend required meetings, conferences, and training events.

Currently all CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF funds are allocated to community-based agencies to provide prevention, intervention, and aftercare services to families and/or provide child abuse prevention training to the community. The CAPC is provided support through the Children's Trust Fund (CTF) annually. Part of these funds is budgeted for parent consumers and the CAPC representatives to attend meetings, conferences, and training events. The County's prevention services liaison's time to attend required meetings, conferences, and training events is paid through CWS funds.

d. *Describe additional training and technical assistance specifically for CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF county liaisons, vendors/contractors, and parent liaisons/consumers.*

Additional training and technical assistance has been provided to CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF County liaisons, vendors/contractors, and parent liaisons/consumers. The following is a list of the child abuse prevention training and technical assistance that has been provided:

- Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) training
- Differential Response (DR) annual convention
- The Lisa Project – the CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF County liaisons, vendors/contractors, and parent liaisons/consumers were encouraged to attend
- Healthy Boundaries for In-Home Providers
- ROOTS Conference – increasing student academic performance and success in school and life
- Shedding Love and Light on the Elephant in the room – Intervening in Child Neglect
- Legal and Ethical Issues

7. Agency Collaborations:

a. *Assess the county's engagement and ongoing consultation with a broad array of individuals and stakeholders representing agencies responsible for CWS including:*

i. Tribal representatives.

The County is working towards strengthening its ongoing relationship with the Tule River Indian Tribe to address any concerns they have and to develop a relationship that will help the County and the Tribe meet the challenges of preserving the Indian heritage, culture, and familial connections for children who are being served by the juvenile dependency systems. The County is working to strengthen its relationship with the Tule River Indian Reservation and will discuss plans to initiate semi-annual meetings to share information, discuss program needs, and to identify common areas that will enhance mutual work.

ii. Consumers:

Tulare County has a long history of engaging individuals, stakeholders, community service providers, and partnering with County agencies. Much of this work is accomplished through the collaborative efforts of the Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC), Children's Services Network (CSN), Joint Allocation Committee (JAC), and the Child Protection Planning Committee (CPPC) (a description of each is provided in the County Government Structure under Financial/Material Resources section). The membership from these committees/councils includes a wide variety of stakeholders, including community members, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, law enforcement and probation, domestic violence, AOD and Mental Health services, and child abuse prevention service providers.

In addition to the collaborative partnerships listed above, the County has conducted focus groups with community stakeholders to gather input and insight into the Peer Quality Case Review, County Self-Assessment and upcoming System Improvement Plan. These stakeholders include:

- Emancipated and older foster youth
- Foster youth ages 11-15
- Parents

- County foster parents
- Relative care providers
- Juvenile Court system
- Mental Health providers
- Foster Family Agency homes

iii. Caregivers

Tulare County has been seeking to engage foster parent caregivers since the last system improvement plan. These engagement strategies are part of the foster parent recruitment and retention plan. As discussed earlier in this report, County staff routinely supports the Tulare County Foster Parent Association and other regular ongoing collaboration meetings between CWS and foster parents. Regular meetings are held to discuss issues such as resources, training needs, and strengthening the partnership between the County, foster, and biological families. An annual Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner is held. Foster parents and relative care providers have also been invited to participate in various focus groups (discussed above).

iv. Public agencies:

Representatives from public agencies attend and are members of the CAPC, CSN, JAC and the CPPC (as described in earlier sections). The agencies represented in these committees are:

- County Probation
- County Mental Health (including Alcohol and Drug services)
- County Health Department
- County Sheriff's Department
- Tulare County Office of Education
- College of the Sequoias
- Central Valley Regional Center
- Juvenile Court
- County Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
- County Child Welfare Services

- b. *Discuss how the county develops, in consultation with these or similar representatives, annual reports of progress and services.*

Annual progress reports are developed using data extracted from Quarterly Data Reports that are prepared in a partnership between the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and

the Center for Social Service Research (CSSR) – UC Berkeley, Business Objects Reports, SafeMeasures, and Ad Hoc Reports. Tulare County CWS and Probation, as representatives on the Children's Services Network and the Child Abuse Prevention Council contribute to the County's Children's Report Card. This collaborative has informed the County's reporting efforts which will remain a vehicle by which the County continues to track performance and to develop strategies to address identified needs as addressed in this report.

Tulare County CWS has developed internal reports that are shared with broad array of individuals and stakeholders. Examples of these progress and service reports include:

- Tulare County CWS – Annual Statistics Report
- Tulare County CWS – Monthly Countywide Fact Sheet
- Tulare County CWS – Outcome and Accountability Data Report Summary

- c. *Discuss the process used by the county to ensure that the agency's goals and objectives as well as concerns of major stakeholders are taken into account when developing services.*

Tulare County CWS uses the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CSFR) process as a means to ensure that the agency's goals and objectives as well as concerns of major stakeholders are taken into account when developing services. Service gaps discovered during the Peer Quality Case Review and County Self Assessment become the priority when developing services. Goals and strategies set out in the System Improvement Plan are followed. The CAPC, CSN, and CPPC remain involved year round and provide feedback to the agency's goals and objectives (as previously described).

Tulare County CWS also submits an annual report to the County Board of Supervisors. One goal identified in the current report to the Board of Supervisors is that CWS will increase the number of Foster Family Homes by 10% in the next fiscal year.

- d. *Discuss how the agency's services are coordinated with other services or benefits under federal, federally-assisted, state, or state-assisted programs serving the same populations to achieve goals and objectives of CWS.*

CWS coordinates multiple services with community-based organizations and other public agencies that serve common clients to achieve goals and objectives of CWS. This is achieved through close partnerships that have developed in part through

the collaborative efforts the CAPC, CSN, and CPPC. Additional committees that have facilitated collaboration and partnership include the Blue Ribbon Commission, the Tulare County Linkages Planning Committee, the Wraparound Executive and Community Team, and the Transitional Housing Program-Plus Community Team (discussed below). These gatherings provide a venue to share and coordinate services provided by Tulare County CWS, consumers, partnering agencies and community-based organizations.

- e. *Describe county/community partnerships that create a comprehensive response to the prevention of child maltreatment, and how such partnerships remove barriers thus improving child welfare outcomes and child and family well-being. Include the systems/organizations involved, and the extent of shared responsibility, risks, development of resources, supports, blending/braiding of multiple funding streams. Partners to consider include:*
- i. County interagency partners (CWS, Probation, CAPC, health, mental health, education, alcohol and drugs, law enforcement, WIC, etc.).

Tulare County CWS has many County interagency partnerships. The CSN, CAPC, and CPPC committees have been discussed in multiple sections of this report. These three groups work directly to remove barriers and improve child welfare outcomes and child and family well-being.

The following is a description of additional collaborations not previously described in this report:

The Tulare County Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on Children in Foster Care is a multidisciplinary commission with the goal of improving safety, permanency, well-being, and fairness outcomes for families. The commission is additionally charged with improving court collaboration with partner organizations and agencies, and seeking funding and resource options for child welfare services and the courts. The Tulare County BRC's current focus is improving educational outcomes for foster youth and ensuring compliance with Assembly Bill 490 (California legislation that addresses many of the barriers to equal educational opportunity for foster children and youth). Membership in this commission include representatives from the Juvenile Court, Probation, CWS, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Tulare County Office of Education

(TCOE), District Attorney, Dependency Counsel, Public Defender, and foster youth consumers.

The **Tulare County Linkages Project** was implemented in September 2008. This project is a collaboration of services and case management that incorporates a holistic approach to working with families in both the TulareWORKs and Tulare County CWS system. Keeping children safe while working with families to help them gain and sustain self sufficiency is the purpose of this project. The families qualified for this collaboration are screened for the following criteria:

- Voluntary Family Maintenance case,
- Open CalWORKs case, and,
- Eligible for the Welfare to Work program.

In 2010 there were 27 families identified as Linkages clients. Included in these families were 38 parents and 87 children. Tulare County expects to increase the number of participating families over the next fiscal year as it begins to serve Family Reunification cases. At the time of this report, Linkages is being expanded to one additional pilot site before expanding it to the other CWS office sites.

Tulare County Linkages has been partnering with the Child & Family Policy Institute of California (CFPIC) and a federal demonstration grant from the Administration on Children & Families, Children's Bureau.

The purpose of the **Wraparound Executive Team** is to provide guidance and oversight in regards to compliance with the SB163 standards for strength-based 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, Deputy Director-CWS, 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 and mental health. The primary purpose of this team is ensuring the continuity and consistency of program management (model fidelity) and staff development in support of Wraparound. This team meets bi-monthly.

The Tulare County's **Transitional Housing Program-Plus (THP Plus)** Committee began meeting in 2006. The vision

of this group is to develop 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 draws on the strengths of the community and collaborative partnerships to assist former foster youth to secure stable housing and progress with life goals including educational attainment, employment, physical and mental well-being, and connections to the community. Braided funding streams for the THP Plus program include housing vouchers provided by The Housing Authority of Tulare County, donations from the community, and the Tulare County's THP-Plus allocation from the state. For the fiscal year 2010/2011, twelve (12) beds in six (six) apartment units were available for youth and completely occupied by both former foster and probation youth. For the same fiscal year a total of 25 youth were served by THP Plus,

The THP Plus program previously had ten (10) homes until the County requested an increase to address a growing demand for housing for youth aging out of the CWS and Probation systems. At the time of this report, Tulare County has petitioned the state to increase the THP Plus program housing allocation to 24 homes/units. Tulare County expects that demand for housing by emancipating, homeless, and/or single young parents will reach capacity quickly.

ii. Community-based organizations (such as CBCAP funded programs).

A Differential Response Multi-Disciplinary Team was formed in Tulare County to both guide the implementation of Differential Response and to be the vehicle for the County to share information and refer clients to community-based providers for services such as counseling and parenting classes funded by CAPIT, CBCAP and CTF. This Differential Response MDT meets twice a month. It is attended by CWS staff and Family Resource Centers contracted to provide Differential Response (DR) services in Tulare County.

Four Family Resource Centers (FRCs) operate the DR program in Tulare County. FRCs use braided funding streams to provide services for the prevention of child maltreatment. These funds include: Promoting Safe and Stable Families (for DR services), First 5 (for FRC

infrastructure and staffing), and Mental Health Services Act – Prevention and Early Intervention (for SafeCare and Parenting Wisely – both in-home parenting programs).

The Children’s Service Network (CSN) and the Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) have formed a Joint Allocations Committee (JAC) to conduct a shared planning process. The JAC is responsible for child abuse prevention requests for proposals (RFP) and grant funding recommendations. The committee submits their recommendations for review with CSN and CAPC. CSN is the group designated by the Board of Supervisors to review the funding recommendations for Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) programs. 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 (CBCAP), Children’s Trust Fund (CTF), and Child Abuse Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT) grants.

iii. County’s First 5 Commission.

The purpose of the First 5 Commission is to develop a strategic plan to implement the improvement of early childhood development for all children from zero to five years. The Commission provides local funding for the development of child care and early childhood education programs, health care, and other childhood services; and provides advocacy at the local, state and federal levels of government. Local community-based organizations apply for First 5 funding to strengthen child abuse prevention services offered at their sites.

iv. Foundations

Tulare County CWS has not worked directly with any foundation. However, with the continued emphasis on broadening collaborative efforts with the service provider community, as service needs are identified, it is possible the County would explore joint funding opportunities to augment existing services or to create new services / programs not currently available to county children and families.

v. Community Development Corporation

Tulare County CWS had not had opportunity to partner with the local Community Development Corporation but may explore that possibility in future endeavors along with community partners to help meet unmet needs.

vi. Public Housing Authority

As discussed above, the Tulare County's THP-Plus Committee is a partnership that includes the Housing Authority of Tulare County (HATC). Tulare County has partnered with the HATC to provide housing vouchers to CWS clients including emancipated foster youth and CWS families in need of housing to maintain their children in the home.

vii. Redevelopment Agencies

Tulare County CWS had not had opportunity to partner with the local Redevelopment Agencies but may explore that possibility in future endeavors with community partners to help meet unmet needs.

viii. Workforce Investment Boards

The Youth Transitions program is a partnership between CWS, TulareWORKs, the Tulare County Workforce Investment Board, and Community Services & Employment Training (a community-based organization). This program is designed to serve youth ages 16-21. Emancipated foster youth and youth currently in foster care are a primary focus of this program. The Transitions collaborative offers training, job placement, mentoring, and support services. Through this program, young people gain the skills and confidence necessary for successful transitioning to adulthood, employment, and self-sufficient lives. According to records kept by TulareWORKs, since April 2010, Tulare County has served 15 CWS clients and one youth from Probation in the Youth Transitions Program.

- f. *Describe the extent to which the county consults and coordinates with local tribes in child welfare planning efforts including shared expectations, responsibilities, the exchange of information, aligning of activities, sharing of resources and enhancing capacity of all involved.*

- i. The extent to which there is shared involvement in evaluating and reporting progress on the goals for Native children.

Tulare County continues strengthening its collaboration with the local Tribe and consistently includes the Tulare River Indian Reservation Tribal ICWA Director in the CWS redesign work. Due to workload and the remoteness of the Tribal offices, this has been a challenge. Nonetheless, on occasions when CWS and the ICWA Director have met, CWS has provided copies of the County Self Assessment, System Improvement Plan, and Peer Quality Case Review Reports to the Tribe. The County continues to look for opportunities to address the evaluation of information as a vehicle to improving services to Native children. The County does note that the ICWA Director keeps busy addressing CWS issues and is often called in to consult on individual cases and to find appropriate case solutions that are sensitive to tribal culture.

- ii. Any lessons learned during the CSA focus groups, interviews, and/or consultations with County partners and others about the County's effectiveness in involving tribes in County planning efforts and service provision.

The County attempted to conduct a focus group with the Tule River Indian Reservation's Tribal Council for this Self Assessment. Despite being scheduled on two separate occasions, Tribal business took priority and the focus group meetings were canceled. At the time of this report, the County continues to look for opportunities to better engage the Tribal Council to find opportunities to share information, collaborate on programs, review program evaluation information, and discuss service needs.

- iii. The extent to which the collaborations support positive outcomes for children, youth, and families.

See the response on the items above for a discussion of the outcomes from the collaborations with the Tule River Indian Tribe and Council. The County intends to have a series of discussions with the ICWA Director about this County Self Assessment and the subsequent System Improvement Plan Report that is due in January 2012 so that the input of the Native American population in Tulare County is taken into consideration in program reviews and strategies that may result.

- iv. Any outreach and/or action plan developed as a result of focus groups/interviews and client surveys to engage a broader community in sharing responsibility for the protection of children.

As mentioned previously, the action plan developed by the County and the ICWA Director is to hold a series of meetings to review and discuss findings, take into account the unique needs of Native children, and strengthen the collaborative partnership between CWS and the Tribe. The meetings are being scheduled in the next few months and will include, at key points, the Tribal Council who understands the importance of the review processes outlined here. The County is hopeful that a focus group/town hall-type meeting can occur following the submission of the County Self Assessment and before the submission of the first draft of the System Improvement Plan.

- g. *Describe the extent of consultation and coordination between CWS and Probation agencies in the child welfare planning efforts including shared expectations, responsibilities, the exchange of information, aligning of activities, sharing of resources, and enhancing capacity of all involved. This may include:*

- i. Any lessons learned during the CSA focus groups, interviews, and/or consultations with County partners and others about the County's effectiveness in working together to improve outcomes.

Tulare County CWS conducted three focus groups for this self assessment process. The groups that the County selected were the Juvenile Court which included County Counsel and CASA, Independent Living Program youth and emancipated youth (ages 16-21), and the Tulare County Foster Parent Association.

The focus groups were facilitated by the California Department of Social Services. Findings from the three groups provided insights which have been incorporated in various sections of this report. The following are a few highlights of the strengths and opportunities shared by these groups. :

- a) Communication was a big theme voiced by all three groups. Youth want a voice in the decisions that are made on their behalf, they want to stay connected to their families and siblings (as possible), and they

want to have a connection to someone they can talk to when there is a need. They cited frequent changes in assigned social workers decreases the likelihood that they can have lasting relationships and is diminishing to their sense of worth. They also shared stories of their favorite foster home (parents) in which they cited engaging in conversations, showing of respect, and feeling accepted by the family as being key to their sense of belonging. This resulted in the ability to communicate openly with their foster parents. Conversely, stories were shared of least favorite foster homes where youth did not feel welcomed and engaged.

- b) Building and sustaining relationships was a second major theme that emerged from the focus group findings. Among the strengths of the system has been the use of family conferencing (case staffing) meetings which have helped keep children connected to relatives and others important to them. The focus group participants identified the need for more stability in the assignment of social workers citing that frequent changes in social worker make it hard to develop or sustain relationships. When youth have established and maintained a relationship with their social worker they have more stability in their placements and feel connected.
  - c) The need for focused training and support was the third major theme to come from the focus groups. Youth talked about being lectured in classes and at times found classes to be ineffective in preparing them for emancipation. Often cited was the need for training that was useful and interactive. Caregivers said they have much support from the County. However, caregivers admit that they are not given the opportunity to meet the child before a placement. Secondly, some of the children placed in their care present behavioral challenges that are difficult to handle, thus the need for training targeted to help them learn to handle difficult behaviors and/or mental health issues.
- ii. The extent to which the collaboration supports positive outcomes for children, youth, and families.

The County's CWS and Probation Department have a collaborative partnership that has focused on positive

outcomes for children. Working in concert with community members and through the System Improvement Planning Committee (now the Child Protection Planning Committee (CPPC)), both agencies have implemented a number of activities that focus on positive outcomes that have been addressed in prior sections of this report.

- iii. Any outreach and/or action plan developed as a result of focus groups/interviews and client surveys to engage a broader community in sharing responsibility for the protection of children.

Tulare County CWS and Probation will continue to work with partners of the CPPC to define the service continuum, to outline priorities for the larger community/county-wide service populations, and to identify strategies that are informed by the partnerships. Both CWS and Probation understand their primary roles to be intervention. The work with the CPPC will address prevention and early intervention strategies that can provide community education and services as well as define an after-care system that will continue to support vulnerable families and children after they exit the "system". The work of the CPPC will inform the integrated System Improvement Plan (SIP) that is due in January 2012.

8. *Local Systemic Factors: Discuss any unique local systemic factors which were not discussed elsewhere.*

The County has not identified any other systemic factors not already addressed in this report.

#### ***F. Summary Assessment***

This following is a summary of overall findings of the County Self Assessment. Two areas are outlined below – System Strengths/Areas Needing Improvement and Strategies for the Future.

1. Discussion of the System Strengths and Areas Needing Improvements

*Summarize the county's performance on each of the C-CFSR outcomes considering the analysis of its performance on the related outcome indicators as well as the impact on any systemic factors. Include discussion of any pertinent prevention efforts. Identify priority improvement outcomes. This section should be derived from the conclusions drawn from the previous sections.*

- a. Safety: Below are highlights of the strengths and opportunities found for safety outcomes that impact performance:

Tulare County uses Structured Decision Making (SDM) to determine the level of risk and safety for the child and family. The use of SDM is noted as a strength that has helped the County improve performance for the safety outcomes noted earlier by providing a tool that provides consistency in the safety assessments conducted during referral screening and investigation.

A second strength is the use of SafeMeasures® by staff and supervisors to track caseload level information that can prompt them to respond to referrals and child contacts in a timely manner.

Thirdly, Tulare County's foster care licensing staff have committed to auditing foster family homes on an annual basis (versus every five years) to increase oversight. This provides the County a means to provide an up to date evaluation of the physical and/or environmental conditions of the homes and to note changes to the household composition that might affect a child's safety.

Challenges to the sustained or improved, performance in safety measures include funding reductions in the last couple of years and staff turnover rates. The reduction in funding has resulted in two major staff layoff events in the last two years. Staff turnover rates in the range of 20-25 percent also present challenges to sustaining current performance. Consequently, social workers may carry larger caseloads leaving less time to dedicate to each case. These challenges can also be viewed as opportunities to explore alternate ways to support staff and utilize scarce resources to meet a primary mandate – keeping abused and neglected children safe.

Probation does not have data in the safety measure.

- b. Reunification: Below are highlights of the strengths and opportunities noted for the reunification outcomes that impact performance of both CWS and Probation.

Tulare County has developed partnerships with community-based providers to offer parents the needed services that help facilitate reunification. These collaborative efforts maximize available services that are accessible to families in the communities that they live.

The timeliness of completing initial service and needs assessments is noted as a strength. The County implemented a "case staffing" process following the last PQCR. The case

staffings are used to bring social workers, parents, and service providers to the table to develop plans that can support reunification. Among the recommendations from staff and focus group participants is the desire to adopt the more consistent case staffing process as a way to institutionalize the practice of engaging children, families, and others in developing service plans and strategies that will more quickly reunify children with their families.

The implementation of Wraparound in the last two years provides intensive services to children and families in the home. The target population for Wraparound has been youth who are in group home care, sometimes for a number of years. Coupled with family finding efforts, the County has been able to bring youth from residential care back to their communities and to their families with intensive "whatever it takes" service options. This has resulted in a number of successful cases where the children have left the dependency system.

Tulare County has identified the challenge of getting parents into needed services timely. While the initial service assessment process is completed timely, it may take some time for parents to actually receive services. These delays result in longer reunification periods which negatively impact these outcome measures. Strategies have been outlined in prior sections of this report and will be better defined in the subsequent System Improvement Plan (SIP) report the County will prepare for January 2012.

Probation noted the following strengths in the Reunification Measure:

It has been determined that consistent case staffings between the supervisor and case carrying probation officer assess service delivery and the need for modifications has benefited the reunification outcome.

The development of the case plan with the youth and family has also proven to assist in the collaborative process thus reunification. This approach to the development of the case plan has proven beneficial in the youth and family taking ownership of the case plan and working toward the goals identified.

Probation also consistently utilizes multi-interagency case staffings to address challenges as they arise. This process is similar to the Team Decision Making (TDM) process and has assisted with services received by our youth and families.

The implementation of wraparound has also proven to be a positive resource, it has presented the ability to work not just with the youth and family but to partner with the family as a whole in a family driven strength based approach.

- c. Adoptions: Below are highlights of the strengths and opportunities noted for the adoptions outcomes that impact performance.

Greater efficiencies within Child Welfare Services have resulted in a reduction in the unnecessary delays in getting cases to adoptions once reunification efforts have failed. Some of these improvements include the systematic tracking of timely court submission, the development of adoption case notes, and a reduction in case continuance reports.

A second strength is the recent development of the Permanency Planning Assessment Unit (PPAU). The PPAU was developed to improve permanency for a growing number of cases in the Permanency Planning (PP) caseload. The anticipated roles of the PPAU to directly impact performance for the Adoptions outcomes includes child assessments (for better placement matching), implementing Team Decision Making (TDM) coupled with Family Finding, and conducting concurrent planning to strengthen practice. It is anticipated the PPAU will have a very positive impact for the group of children in the PP caseload.

One other strength is that of the County's Juvenile Court system's partnership with CWS to keep from creating a pool of "legal orphans". This is accomplished by not freeing children in foster care without first identifying strong prospective adoptive families. This has become a standard practice locally and one that is seen as a practice that will result in better permanency for children.

With the strengths of the system also come challenges. One challenge is the large number of sibling group cases. This issue impacts performance because it is harder to get larger sibling groups adopted by one family. Another challenge is that families are not being prepared for the behavioral/mental health challenges children present at the point of finalization. To address this challenge, the County has partnered with a local Foster Family Agency to provide pre and post-adoption support services using Promoting Safe and Stable Family (PSSF) funds. The Foster Family Agency offers the Resources, Education, Advocacy, Crisis Intervention and Hope (REACH) program to the County's adoptive parents and children.

Finally, as discussed previously, the Adoptions Unit was impacted by recent staff reductions. While some of the team of staff who remained in adoptions are highly skilled and experienced, the unit

also includes new staff that are still training and building their skills. Other strategies to improve adoption outcomes have been outlined in prior sections of this report.

Probation does not have a process to support adoptions.

- d. Long Term Care: Below are highlights of the strengths and opportunities for the long term care outcomes that impact performance.

A key strength noted for this outcome area is the development of the PPAU discussed above. The County's literature review for the PQCR and findings from focus groups discussed earlier, support that the longer children remain in foster care the harder it is to obtain permanency. The County proposes that the development of the PPAU will improve the outcome measurements in the reunification composites.

Improvement opportunities for CWS and probation come in more consistent use of concurrent planning, holding case staffings, and family finding that will lead to identification of family members for placement and help improve scores for this area.

Probation noted the following strengths in the Long-Term-Care Measure:

Within this measure it appears probation officers (PO) have developed the skills necessary to foster a collaborative relationship with the youth. The officers meet with and speak with the youth on their caseloads on a constant basis to ensure youth are following through with the goals they with the PO have identified.

Regular case staffings and multi-interagency case staffing have provided supportive services to youth and assisted them in meeting their case plan goals.

Family finding efforts has also shown to assist with motivation of youth and their follow through in meeting their own needs.

- e. Placement Stability: Below are highlights of the strengths and opportunities for the placement stability outcomes that impact performance.

Placement stability has been the focus of the last two PQCR reviews. The first review in 2008 focused on the stability rates for children in care between 12 and 24 months. The second review in 2011 focused on stability rates for children in care from eight days to 12 months. Since the reviews, the County has

implemented a number of strategies that included the development of a strategic plan to recruit and retain foster parents and a review and streamlining of the relative home assessment process.

Other strengths of the current system include the development of the PPAU and the continuation of the joint meetings between CWS and care providers (both foster parents and foster family agency (FFA) operators). These joint meetings strengthen communication, identify training items that help support placement stability, and addressed other program challenges as they arise and finding joint solutions.

A finding from the last PQCR that was noted by visiting peers, and echoed in part by participants of the focus groups held for this assessment, was that social workers exhibit much passion in working with children in their caseloads. Caregivers expressed a desire to do better meeting the needs of children in their care. While compassion in and of itself is not quantifiable, these characteristics and values of the people responsible for children can only serve to improve outcomes for children and family.

A challenge for placement stability is the practice of placing children in an FFA home upon initial detention of the child. This practice is driven by three related factors: the low number of County foster homes, larger sibling sets encountered in recent years (presumed because of the growing ethnic groups in Tulare County which tend to have larger families), and the lengthy process for assessing and approving relative homes for placement.

The following opportunities to improve placement stability rates were suggestions for both the County's child welfare services and probation during the last PQCR and have been articulated in earlier portions of this report. These improvements include: use of case staffings; targeted training for caregivers to prepare them to meet the needs of children in their care; developing a mechanism that allows staff to access Criminal Law Enforcement Telecommunications (CLETS) information after hours so they can make emergency placements with relatives; and the expansion of family finding to broaden the pool of family members who can take children into their care. Strategies have been outlined in prior sections of this report and will be better defined in the subsequent System Improvement Plan (SIP) report the County will submit in January 2012.

Probation noted the following strengths in the Placement Stability Measure:

The collaborative approach by the probation officer to work with the youth and family in locating placement options appears to have supported placement stability. Parents and youth are asked immediately if there is an important person in their life they would like to be considered for placement and care. If relative or non-relative care is not an instant option youth then will meet the prospective foster parent to ensure they are part of decision making process. If neither of the two options appear available the youth is also part of the group home process it that the youth will meet with the provider prior to placement. In addition, throughout the placement the minor and family are constantly asked about people in their lives they would like involved in their case plan or placement options they would like to be explored.

- f. Children Transitioning to Adulthood: Below are highlights of the strengths and opportunities for ILP/Emancipation outcomes that impact performance for both child welfare and probation.

Bright spots for the outcomes for this area are the Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP-Plus) program for emancipating youth and a positive trend in the Permanency Connections to Adults outcome measure.

Under the THP-Plus program, a partnership with the Tulare County Housing Authority, Section 8 Housing Subsidy Vouchers are made available to help emancipating youth find housing on exit from foster care. Tulare County's partnership with community-based agencies has been successful and the County is currently advocating for additional housing units to better meet demand.

Among the challenges for youth who emancipate, educational pursuits and employment can be difficult to achieve. As discussed in various areas of this report, the impact of a depressed economy, the agrarian-focused County economy, and the lack of state colleges or universities present real barriers for youth. This is an opportunity for the County to seek collaborative opportunities that will enhance the youth's ability to explore creative educational, training, or employment pursuits both locally and where the prospects may be more favorable.

Probation does not have data in this measure.

- g. Child / Family Connections and Well-Being: Below are highlights of the strengths and opportunities for the well-being outcomes that impact performance.

A strength already discussed in the report is the passion of staff for the work with children and their desire to keep sibling groups

intact whenever possible. The work of the PPAU may well enhance and support efforts to keep children connected to families through family finding efforts, the use of case staffing and/or Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings, and the assessment of children's needs to make better placement matches that will lead to permanency for the child.

Broadening foster parent recruitment, training, and retention will provide Tulare County more opportunity to place children in the most family like settings possible, therefore improving least restrictive outcomes. Through its collaborative meetings with care providers, Tulare County CWS is building strong working relationships and identifying additional supports. This effort will ensure that care providers are full partners in caring for abused and neglected children.

Tulare County continues to perform at or above standards in the Health and Dental Exam measures. Tulare County's placement of CWS Nurses in CWS offices has been very positive for staff and families. The CWS Supervising Nurse has been able to focus on streamlining the work of the nurse support personnel to meet the health care needs of children in foster care as well as bridging connections between health providers and social workers.

Probation does not have data in this measure.

## 2. Strategies for the Future

*Briefly describe initial strategies to build on identified strengths and address areas needing improvement. Include service challenges particularly how they align with outcomes that the county is working to improve. Further planning and development of the initial strategies will take place in the development of the SIP.*

Over the last CFSR cycle, Tulare County has faced a number of challenges in serving children and families. At the same time, the County has implemented a number of strategies and initiatives to help meet the growing need for service and supports. The work of addressing these needs has been informed by a larger group of community members that represent a variety of agencies, service providers, community-based and civic organization, and interested volunteers. One example of this type of collaboration is "The Lisa Project" endeavor during October 2010. That monthly event brought recognition that child abuse and neglect is a community-wide concern and not just the problem of child welfare services alone.

The County's child welfare system has made great strides in improving compliance measures by implementing case review and quality

improvement efforts. These efforts, which began in 2007, are demonstrated by the work of the Quality Improvement Unit and around focused reviews of case data and outcomes by managers and administrative support staff using SafeMeasures® and Business Objects software programs.

Tulare County has been active in developing and strengthening a number of collaborative efforts outlined in this report. The County has recognized the need for continuing partnerships to ensure that children and families become successful. These same partnerships are needed if the County is to address the needs of children exiting foster care when connections to families may have been lost. Providing such support will increase the likelihood that emancipating youth will become contributing members of the communities in which they live.

The County finds that a couple of strategies that will become the vehicles for the work outlined here are the implementation of Team Decision Making (TDM) and the creation of a Permanency Planning Assessment Unit (PPAU).

The County believes TDM will help make improvements in a number of outcome measures. TDM's will serve to:

- Engage children of appropriate age, their parents, the care providers, and others involved with the family to keep the child safe in the least restrictive placement setting possible.
- Be a forum to explore family connections for the child and identify other relatives who can provide safe and stable placement for the child, and his/her siblings, while parents complete services.
- Result in positive trending on placement stability rates as children will remain connected to friends and families, the communities they came from (when appropriate), and in their same schools.
- Can result in an increase in the number of children placed with relatives which increase the likelihood of successful reunification.
- Provide opportunity for social workers to meet with and develop relationships with the child, family, and caregivers through frequent meetings to define services and track progress towards reunification.

The PPAU is one of the County's responses to addressing the needs of a growing population of children who have lost connections to their family. The staff for this new unit will lead efforts that will benefit not only children in foster care but also social workers carrying large caseloads. The tasks to be undertaken by this new unit include:

- The exploration of a foster parent mentor program for new foster parents who can become overwhelmed when new or unexpected circumstances arise.

- Assessment of foster parents and children that will make available all information to help staff make better placement matches. One strategy identified during focus groups with foster parents and youth was the “ice breaker” visits where a foster parent and child would meet before the placement to assure a “good fit” and ensure more stable placements.
- The use of Family Finding to conduct ongoing searches for family members who can be placement resources for children awaiting reunification.
- Coordination and facilitation of Team Decision Making meetings;
- Strengthening concurrent planning practice and ensuring that children find permanent connections when reunification with their families is not likely to occur.

Child Welfare Services believes this County Self-Assessment Report presents the context in which the current system operates. Opportunities are outlined here to increase support to children, their families, and their caregivers. There are also strategies that recognize the fact that Child Welfare Services alone cannot meet the preventative or aftercare needs of children and families and that it must rely on building and sustaining partnerships with agencies, organizations, and informal networks of providers to deliver services in all areas of Tulare County. Finally, there is recognition that front line staff (social workers) needs training, support and recognition for the work they perform. The hiring and training of new staff, the development of the PPAU, and a call to review current caseloads and other systemic factors that impact workload are seen as opportunities to improve the current system. Tulare County will continue its work with its partners so that the subsequent System Improvement Plan will be focused on improving the lives of children and families in Tulare County.

Probation has made great strides and continues to assess services to ensure the needs of our youth and families are met.

Probation intends to build on identified strengths to better serve the youth and families we serve.

Strengths identified include the ability of the probation officer to work collaboratively with the youth and family to develop a case plan that meets their individual needs, the collaborative approach to engage the youth in the placement selection process, the continual discussion with the youth and family to identify life long connections or possible placement options and the multi-interagency team (MIT) approach to case planning to meet the needs of the youth and family.

Areas of focus include the formalization of the case staffing process and team decision making (TDM), the refocus of probation officers to utilize and initiate family finding techniques, the development of procedure to

utilize mobility mapping, increase visitation between youth and family, and formalize procedures for exit planning.

## IV. Glossary

Term	Definition
AB 636	The Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act of 2001 (AB 636, Steinberg). Identifies and replicates best practices to improve child welfare service (CWS) outcomes through county-level review processes. Also referred to as California-Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR).
Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)	Non-adversarial and confidential process conducted by a neutral third party to assist two or more disputing parties reach a mutually acceptable and voluntary agreement as an alternative to litigation or contested hearing.
C-CFSR	California Child and Family Services Review: See AB 636
CalWORKs Child Welfare Service Integration Project	Families who are recipients of both CalWORKs and CWS receive coordinated services to leverage maximum effectiveness from each program.
Children	Under 18 years of age.
Child Well-Being	A primary outcome for CWS focuses on how effectively the developmental, behavioral, cultural and physical needs of children are met.
Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention	W&I Code Section 18951 (e) defines "child abuse." Therefore we may define "child abuse and neglect prevention" as: The prevention of (1) serious physical injury inflicted upon a child by other than accidental means; (2) harm by reason of intentional neglect, malnutrition, or sexual abuse; (3) lack of basic physical care; (4) willful mental injury; and (5) any condition which results in the violation of the rights or physical, mental, or moral welfare of a child.
Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment Program (CAPIT)	The Child Abuse Prevention Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT) program was established with the intent to address needs of children at high risk of abuse and neglect and their families by providing funding for child abuse and neglect prevention, intervention, and treatment programs.
Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Councils (CAPC)	Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Councils (CAPC) of California are community councils appointed by the county Board of Supervisors whose primary purpose is to coordinate the community's efforts to prevent and respond to child abuse. Their activities include: providing a forum for interagency cooperation and coordination in the prevention, detection, treatment, and legal processing of child abuse cases, promoting public awareness of the abuse and neglect of children, and the resources available for intervention and treatment, encouraging and facilitating training of professionals in the detection, treatment, and prevention of child abuse and neglect, and recommending improvements in services to families and victims.
Child Abuse	CAPC's work in collaboration with representatives from disciplines, including: public child welfare, the criminal justice system, and the prevention and treatment services communities. Council participation may include the County Welfare or Children's Services Department, the Probation Department, licensing agencies, law enforcement, the office of the District Attorney, the courts, the coroner, and community-based social services, community volunteers, civic organizations, and religious community.
Children with Disabilities	The term "children with disabilities" has the same meaning given the term "child with a disability" in section 602 (3) or "infant or toddler with a disability" in section 632 (5) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), (42 U.S.C. 5116h)
Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP)	The Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) program supports community based efforts to develop, operate, expand, enhance and network initiatives aimed at the prevention of child abuse and neglect. CBCAP supports networks of coordinated community resources and activities in an effort to strengthen and support families and reduce the occurrence of child abuse and neglect. CBCAP is intended to foster an understanding and appreciation of diverse populations to increase effectiveness in prevention and

	treatment of child abuse and neglect.
Community Response ( <i>see also Differential Response</i> )	A proactive response for assessment of situations involving families under stress who come to the attention of the CWS but who do not present an immediate risk for child maltreatment. Provides families with access to services to address identified issues without formal entry into the system.
Concurrent Planning	The process of coupling aggressive efforts to reunify the family with careful planning for the possibility of adoption or other permanency options should the circumstances prevent the child from returning home.
Consolidated Homestudy	Our current system licenses foster parents, and if a foster parent decides they wish to adopt a foster child they have in their home, a separate process called an adoptive Homestudy is completed. The consolidated Homestudy is a one-time study that would approve families for foster care and/or adoption and would facilitate concurrent planning.
County Data Report	The County Data Report is a compilation of data provided by CDSS and is the basis of the County Self-Assessment. The report includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Child Welfare Participation Rates</li> <li>➤ Outcome Indicators</li> <li>➤ Process Measures</li> <li>➤ Caseload Demographics</li> </ul>
Differential Response (DR)	A graduated system for addressing referrals to the Child Abuse Hotline/intake involving an initial assessment designed to identify immediate steps necessary to assure child safety and family engagement in such services as may be required to support them in performance of their parenting responsibilities.
Early Reunification	Efforts directed at enhancing parental protective capacity in order to permit the child to return to his or her family within 30 to 60 days of placement.
Entry Cohorts	A group of children who entered out of home care for the first time during a designated time period (e.g., what are the characteristics of children who entered care for the first time during the given year?) Entry cohorts represent <i>all</i> children taken into care along with their entire histories in out of home care. Thus, information based on entry cohorts is the most accurate approach to tracking outcomes (e.g., of all children entering during a given year, what proportion had reunified by 12 months after coming into care?)
Evidence-Based Programs and Practice	Evidence-based programs and practices (EBP) is an approach to social work practice that includes the process of combining research knowledge; professional/clinical expertise; and client and community values, preference, and circumstances. It is a dynamic process whereby practitioners continually seek, interpret, use, and evaluate the best available information in an effort to make the best practice decisions in social work. Valuable evidence may be derived from many sources – ranging from systematic reviews and meta-analysis (highest level of evidence) to less rigorous research designs (lower level of evidence).
Exit Cohorts	A group of children who left out of home care during a designated time period (e.g., what are the characteristics of children reunified with families during the past 12 months?) Exit cohort-based data (e.g., time in care for those children who reunified during a given year) are misleading, since this cohort only captures children who did actually exit.
Fairness and Equity	Modification of policies, procedures, and practices and expansion of the availability of community resources and supports to ensure that all children and families (including those of diverse backgrounds and those with special needs) will obtain similar benefit from child welfare interventions and attain equally positive outcomes regardless of the community in which they live.
Family Preservation	The term “family preservation services” means services for children and

	<p>families designed to help families (including adoptive and extended families) at risk or in crisis to remain intact. These services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Service programs designed to help children, where safe and appropriate, return to families from which they have been removed; or be placed for adoption, with a legal guardian, or, if adoption or legal guardianship is determined not to be safe and appropriate for the child, in some other planned permanent living arrangement</li> <li>➤ Pre-placement preventative services programs, such as intensive family preservation programs, designed to help children at risk of foster care placement remain safely with their families;</li> <li>➤ Service programs designed to provide follow-up care to families to whom a child has been returned after a foster care placement;</li> <li>➤ Respite care of children to provide temporary relief for parents and other caregivers (including foster parents);</li> <li>➤ Services designed to improve parenting skills (by reinforcing parents' confidence in their strengths, and helping them to identify where improvement is needed and to obtain assistance in improving those skills) with respect to matters such as child development, family budgeting, coping with stress, health, and nutrition; and</li> <li>➤ Infant safe haven programs to provide a way for a parent to safely relinquish a newborn infant at a safe haven designated pursuant to a State law. (42 U.S.C. 629a)</li> </ul>
The Family-to-Family Initiative	This initiative was developed in 1992 by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. It was field tested in communities across the country and was shown to effectively incorporate a number of strategies consistent with the values and objectives of the redesign of child welfare services. Currently, 25 counties are participating in the initiative.
Family Well-Being	A primary outcome for California's CWS whereby families demonstrate self-sufficiency and the ability to adequately meet basic family needs (e.g., safety, food, clothing, housing, health care, financial, emotional, and social support) and provide age-appropriate supervision and nurturing of their children.
Initial Assessment	The intake function, the focus of which is to learn more about the immediate safety issues for the child, as well as obtain background information about the parent through collateral contacts.
Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) Program	The Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program provides grants to states and Indian tribes to help vulnerable families stay together. The PSSF is 100% federally funded. In an effort to reduce child abuse and neglect, the PSSF program supports services to help strengthen and build healthy marriages, improve parenting skills and promote timely family reunification in situations where children must be separated from their parents for their own safety. The program works with state child welfare agencies to remove barriers that stand in the way of adoption when children cannot be safely reunited with their families. The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) specifies that PSSF funds be allocated at a minimum of 20 percent to each of the following service components: Family Reunification, Family Support, Time-Limited Family Reunification, and Adoption Promotion and Support. Strong rationale must be presented if allocations fall below the 20% funding level.
Maltreatment	An act of omission or commission by a parent or any person who exercises care, custody, and ongoing control of a child which results in, or places the child at risk of, developmental, physical, or psychological harm.
Non-Adversarial Approaches	Practices, including dependency mediation, permanency planning mediation, family group conferencing, or decision-making and settlement conferences, designed to engage family members as respected participants in the search for viable solutions to issues that have brought them into contact with CWS. (See also <i>Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)</i> ).

Outcome Indicators	To show <i>whether</i> or <i>how much</i> the client has improved, or was otherwise affected by what we have done.
Peer Quality Case Reviews (PQCR)	A key component of the C-CFSR designed to enrich and deepen understanding of a county's actual practices in the field by bringing peers from neighboring counties to assess and help shed light on the subject county's strengths and areas in need of improvement within the Probation and CWS delivery systems and social work practice.
Performance Indicators	Specific, measurable data points used in combination to gauge progress in relation to established outcomes.
Permanence	A primary outcome for CWS whereby all children and youth have stable and nurturing legal relationships with adult caregivers that create a shared sense of belonging and emotional security enduring over time.
Process Indicators	To show <i>how</i> we will achieve the outcome. [Many Division 31 regulations measure <i>process</i> indicators.
Program Improvement Plan (PIP) (federal)	A comprehensive response to findings of the CSFR establishing specific strategies and benchmarks for upgrading performance in California in all areas of nonconformity with established indicators.
Prevention	Service delivery and family engagement processes designed to mitigate circumstances leading to child maltreatment before it occurs.
Resource Families	Relative caregivers, licensed foster parents, and adoptive parents who meet the needs of children who cannot safely remain at home. Resource families participate as members of the multidisciplinary team.
Risk, Safety, and Needs Assessment	<p>After the initial face-to-face assessment, there are subsequent meetings with the family to do a comprehensive assessment of strengths and needs, parental protective capacity, ongoing risk, and continued review of safety plans. If safety is continuing concern, and the case is being handled by the community network, the agency will re-refer the case to CWS. The nature of the case plan that emerges from the comprehensive assessment will differ based on what had to be done to assure safety, what the goals are for the case, and who should be involved in promoting the necessary changes within the family.</p> <p>Safety assessments will be done at multiple times during the life of a case. The first face-t-face assessment will be done when direct information is gathered as to the current safety and risk. Based on this initial assessment, safety plans will be put into place immediately as needed. By gathering information as to the concerns about the protection of the child, by exploring the protective capacity of the parents, and by preliminarily identifying needs for services, the worker will assess risk. As the case moves forward to comprehensive assessment and service planning, a more thorough understanding will be obtained of family strengths and needs, as well as changes that must be made to assure the ongoing safety and protection of the child. Decisions on case closure will also address safety, risk, and whether necessary changes to assure child safety have been made.</p>
Safety	A primary outcome for CWS whereby all children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
Shared Family Care	Temporary placement of children and parents in the home of trained community members who, with the support of professional teams, mentor the families to the point that they develop the necessary skills, supports, and protective capacity to care for their children independently.
Shared Responsibility	The concept encourages community residents to get involved in child protection. It offers opportunities for participation and stresses the importance and impact of the whole community's responsibility for child safety and well-being. This does not negate the ultimate accountability for the CWS agency for child protection – rather, it engenders a community mind-set to develop the necessary capacity to protect children and to strengthen and preserve families.
Standardized Safety Approach	A uniform approach to the safety, risk, and protective capacity of the adult caretaker to assure basic levels of protective responses statewide and to assure that fairness and equity is embedded in criteria used for case

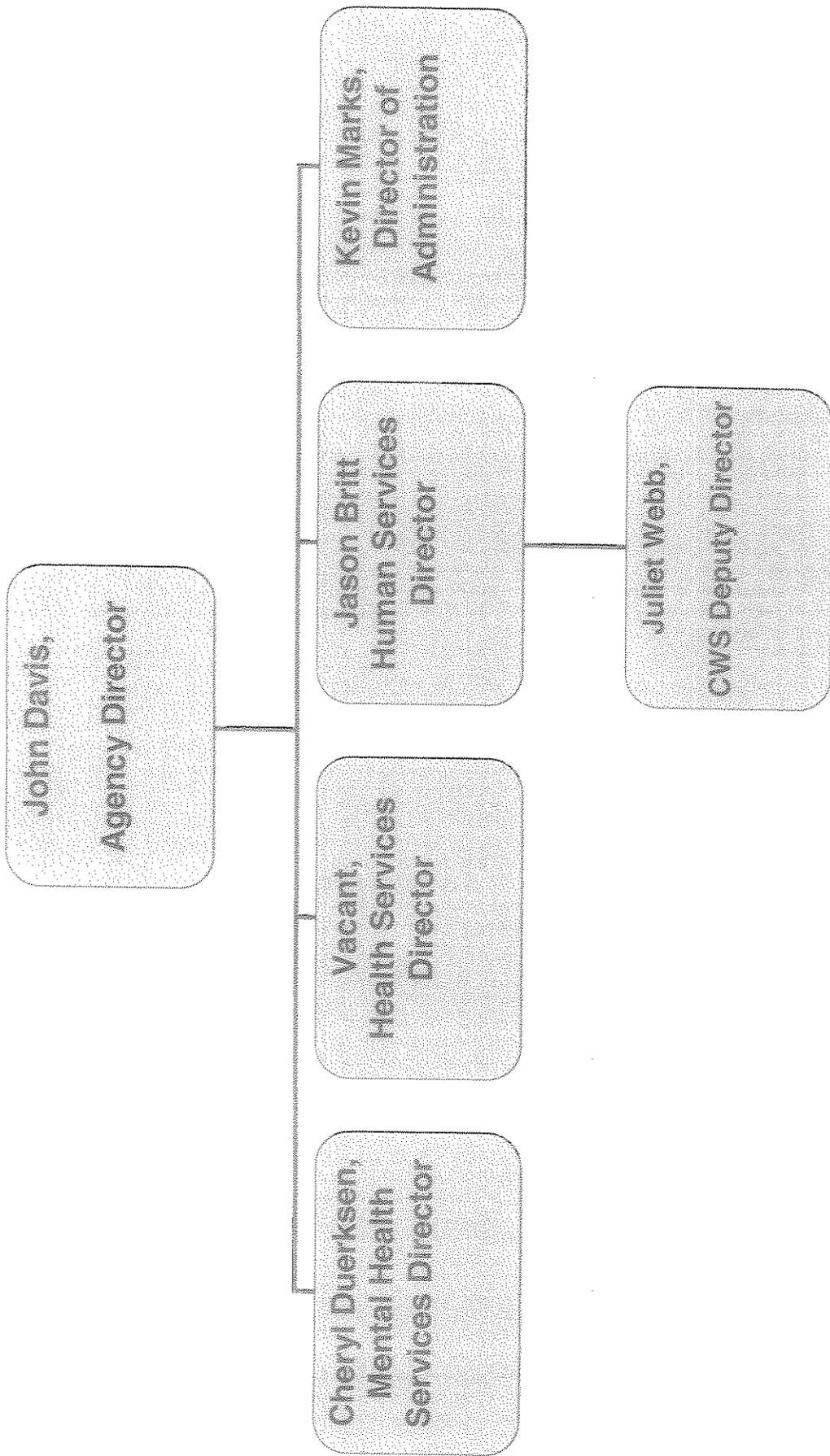
	decisions.
Successful Youth Transition	The desired outcome for youth who experience extended stays in foster care, achieved by the effective provision of a variety of services (e.g., health and mental health, education, employment, housing, etc.) continuing through early adulthood, while simultaneously helping youth to maintain, establish or re-establish strong and enduring ties to one or more nurturing adults.
System Improvement Plan (SIP)	A key component of the C-CFSR, this operational agreement between the county and the state outlines a county's strategy and action to improve outcomes for children and families.
Time-Limited Family Reunification	<p>In general the term "time-limited family reunification services" means the services and activities described below that are provided to a child that is removed from the child's home and placed in a foster family home or a child care institution. The services and activities are also provided to the parents or primary caregiver of such a child in order to facilitate the reunification of the child, but only during the 15-month period that begins on the date that the child, pursuant to section 475(5)(F), is considered to have entered foster care.</p> <p>The services and activities described for time-limited family reunification include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Individual, group, and family counseling.</li> <li>➤ Inpatient, residential, or outpatient substance abuse treatment services.</li> <li>➤ Mental health services.</li> <li>➤ Assistance to address domestic violence.</li> <li>➤ Services designed to provide temporary child care and therapeutic services for families, including crisis nurseries.</li> <li>➤ Transportation to or from any of the services and activities described in this subparagraph. (42 U.S.C. 629a)</li> </ul>
Uniform Practice Framework	<p>A fully articulated approach to all aspects of child welfare practice that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Uses evidence-based guidelines for the start-up phase and on-going incorporation of known well-supported, best, or promising practices.</li> <li>➤ Aligns with sound child and family policy.</li> <li>➤ Is responsive to unique needs of diverse California counties.</li> <li>➤ Can be integrated with a Differential Response System.</li> <li>➤ Addresses shared responsibility with the community.</li> <li>➤ Emphasizes non-adversarial engagement with caregivers.</li> <li>➤ Integrates practice work products from the Full Stakeholders Group and the Statewide Regional Workgroups.</li> </ul>
Vulnerable Families	Families who face challenges in providing safe, nurturing environments for children, including those demonstrating patterns of chronic neglect, those with young children (ages 0-5), those impacted by alcohol and drug abuse, homeless/poverty families, victims of domestic violence, and those with members whose mental health is compromised.
Workforce	A broad array of professionals and paraprofessionals who must come together to ensure the protection, permanence and well-being of children and families, including CWS at the county and state level along with such partners as resource families, community agencies, other public systems (e.g., mental health, education, public welfare, the court) and other service providers.

**V. Appendix**

**Organizational Charts**

**Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency**

**Tulare County Probation Department – Juvenile Placement Unit**



**Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency**

# Tulare County Probation Department

