

This is a SIP Progress Report.

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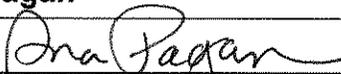
California's Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan

County:	Merced County
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	Merced County Human Services Agency
Period of Plan:	March 1, 2013 to February 28, 2015
Period of Outcomes Data:	October 2012. Data Extract Q2 2012
Date Submitted:	March 31, 2013

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Submitted by each agency for the children under its care

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Board of Supervisors (BOS) Approval

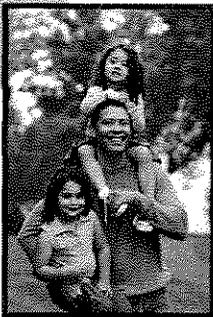
BOS Approval Date:	
Name:	
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Human Services Agency
and Probation Department

System Improvement Plan

March 1, 2013



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A. Introduction

Child Welfare Services

The Merced County System Improvement Plan (SIP) was approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 28, 2011. The Child Welfare Services (CWS) plan drew on the knowledge and expertise of the community, findings of the Peer Quality Care Review (PQCR), the County Self-Assessment (CSA), and guidance from the California Department of Social Services, and evidence based practice models to identify a plan to increase the capacity of Merced County to provide safety, permanency, and well-being to children. The planning process activities covered a 13-month time period that began with the PQCR in March 2010, included the CSA, and concluded with the development of the SIP in March through June 2011. Community partners were included in each step of the process and information gathered in each step was carried forward into the planning and execution of the next.

After reviewing the information and conclusions from the PQCR and the CSA, CWS leadership, in consultation with community partners, identified three measures for focus in the SIP. Those measures are:

- C2.1 Adoption within 24 Months, Exit Cohort
- C2.2 Median Time to Adoption (more than 24 months), Exit Cohort
- 4.B Foster Care in Least Restrictive Settings

B. Stakeholder Participation

The Blue Ribbon Commission, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Merced County Placement Council, and Merced's Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) are actively involved in monitoring and implementation of County's SIP strategies and action steps. The Blue Ribbon Commission is apprised of progress at its monthly meetings. Merced County was selected by the AOC to receive training in family finding through the Seneca Center. Both AOC and Seneca Center are aware that placement in relative homes and faster adoptions are priorities for the county and are kept aware of our progress. CASA of Merced is actively involved in the family finding process. Through a contract with CWS, CASA has hired family finding specialists who are currently participating in training through the Seneca Center.

FFAs are kept apprised of progress in both adoptions and family placement measures through regular monthly meetings with the Program Administrator in charge of adoptions.

Other stakeholders with which Merced County CWS meets regularly include:

- Merced County Probation
- Merced County Sheriff Office
- Family Resource Council
- Merced County Superior Courts

- Merced County Counsel
- Merced County Mental Health
- Merced County Drug and Alcohol
- Merced County Head Start
- Youth Representatives
- Parent Partner
- First 5 of Merced County
- Merced County Library
- California State University of Fresno
- Ace Overcomers
- Aspiranet

In regard to representation by the ethnic groups in Merced County, the county does not have a recognized Native American tribe. Merced has a majority-minority population with 54% of the population Hispanic. The organizations listed above have a diverse membership on their boards that is reflective of the ethnic make-up of the community.

C. Current Performance Towards SIP Improvement Goals

1. Merced County's current performance and discussion of obstacles, systemic issues, and environmental conditions that may be contributing to outcome improvement or decline.

C2.1 Adoption within 24 Months, Exit Cohort and C2.2 Median Time to Adoption, Exit Cohort

These two measures are discussed together because they are so closely related. At the time of the SIP, April 2011 quarterly report, Data Extract Q3 2010, Merced's rate of adoption within 24 months fell relative to the baseline, however, it was above the California average and the national goal. The SIP Team attributed this performance to changes in the configuration of the Adoption Team made prior to the SIP. However, given a history of inconsistent performance and the dramatic drop from the baseline period July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003, the SIP Team felt it important to continue the focus begun in the PQCR and ensure the improvements represent a permanent change to practice and are not merely the result of a "Hawthorne effect" in which improvements are generated for no reason other than the attention focused on the process and the people.

At the time of the SIP, the data available on measure C2.1 and C2.2 was:

Goal	Baseline Merced	October 1, 2009, to September 30, 2010 Merced	October 1, 2009, to September 30, 2010 California	Nation Standard or Goal
C2.1	69.0%	37.2%	32.0%	36.6%
C2.2	18.0 months	27.4 months	30.7 months	27.3 months

¹Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Glasser, T., Williams, D., Zimmerman, K., Simon, V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Frerer, K., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Winn, A., Lou, C., & Peng, C. (2009). Child Welfare Services Reports for California. Retrieved April, 14, 2011], from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

The goal set for performance on measure C2.1 is to continue to meet or exceed the national goal of 36.6% for each of the five years of the SIP plan. The goal set for performance on measure C2.2 is to continue to be at or near the national goal of 27.3 months.

The table below shows Merced County’s performance on the most recent data report, Q3 2012. As of the most recent data report, Merced County is exceeding its goal on both of these measures.

Goal	Baseline Merced	October 1, 2011, to September 30, 2012	National Standard or Goal
C2.1	69.0%	54.9%	36.6%
C2.2	18 months	21.4 months	27.3 months

¹Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Glasser, T., Williams, D., Zimmerman, K., Simon, V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Frerer, K., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Winn, A., Lou, C., & Peng, C. (2009). Child Welfare Services Reports for California. Retrieved October 30, 2012, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

The positive progress on these goals is attributable to the implementation of plans developed or the SIP. Primary among the interventions was the increase in the number of social workers in the Adoptions Team. Despite staffing challenges in CWS, the number of staff in the Adoptions Team has maintained consistently at five social workers and one social worker supervisor. Performance on the measures has improved consistently and was not impacted by a change in supervisors. Management focus and attention on the importance of timely adoptions has been consistent, and the policy change to move the assignment of an adoption worker to an earlier stage of the case contributes to the reduced time to adoption. Building awareness among the FFAs of the importance of concurrent placements has also been important. Finally, the commitment of the Adoption Team has played a key role in the successful achievement of the goals for these two measures. The team has shown a keen interest in how it is performing on the measures and has pride in the outcomes. While the team’s major concern has been and remains the children and the family, they understand and appreciate the importance of monitoring their data and promptly documenting case actions in Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS).

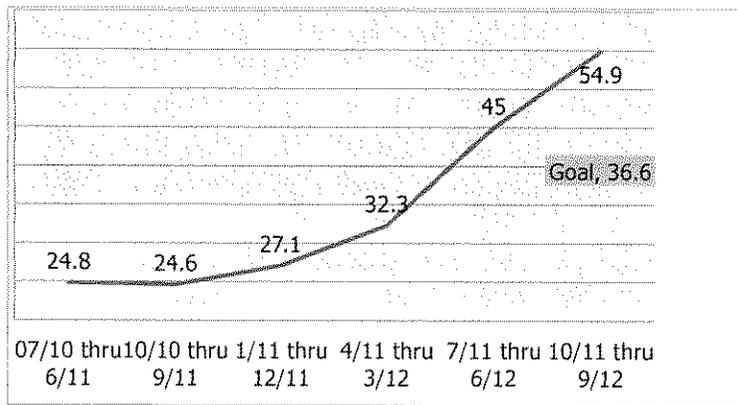
The number of adoptions in the county showed a considerable increase after implementation of the SIP strategies, and the number has remained high in the second year of the SIP.

SafeMeasures	October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009	October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010	October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011	October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012
Total Adoptions	67	43	118	102

²Children’s Research Center SafeMeasures® Data. Merced County, Full List, 1/01/10 to 12/31/10. Retrieved December 17, 2012 from Children’s Research Center website. URL: <https://www.safemeasures.org/ca/safemeasures.aspx>. (Note: data varies slightly between Berkeley data and SafeMeasures for the same time period.)

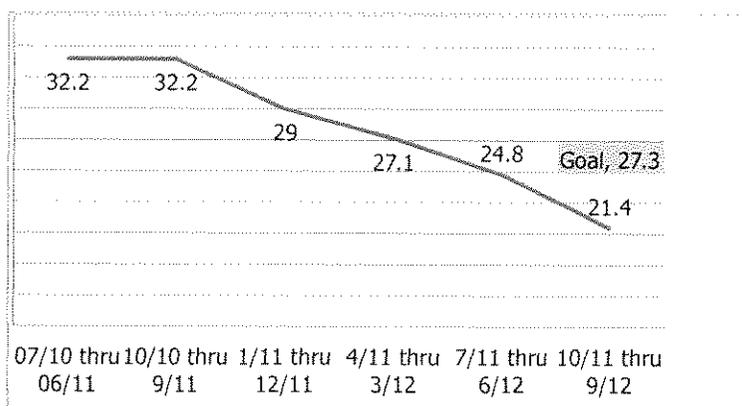
The tables below illustrate Merced County’s performance in relation to the national standard.

C2.1 Adoption within 24 months (Exit Cohort) in Percent



Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Glasser, T., Williams, D., Zimmerman, K., Simon, V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Frerer, K., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Winn, A., Lou, C., & Peng, C. (2009). Child Welfare Services Reports for California. Retrieved November 15, 2012, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

C2.2 Median Time to Adoption (Exit Cohort) in months



Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Glasser, T., Williams, D., Zimmerman, K., Simon, V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Frerer, K., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Winn, A., Lou, C., & Peng, C. (2009). Child Welfare Services Reports for California. Retrieved November 15, 2012, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

D. Strategies Status

The status of all strategies and action steps scheduled to start and/or be completed within the past 12 months.

- Strategy 1.1 – Restructure the Adoptions Team to lower case loads.
 - Milestone A – *Restructure the work process for the Adoptions Team.*

The Adoptions Team was reconfigured to raise the total number of social workers from two to five. The location of the team was moved from another section of the Human Services Agency (HSA) building to a location within the Social Services Branch. Although not a part of the original plan, a new supervisor over the Adoptions Team has brought a new focus and energy to the team. Prior to reorganization, several people were involved in each case, leading to a lack of clear responsibility. One social worker is now responsible for the management of the case, resulting in greater accountability. This milestone is complete.

- Milestone B – *Identify changes to policy and procedure for revision and review.*

Changes to policy and procedure have been implemented in practice but not formalized in policy. The county recommends changing the due date on this milestone to March 2014.

- Milestone C – *Provide training to staff on policy changes and best practices.*

Changes in practice have been implemented through supervisor's direction and coaching, but no formal training has been conducted for social workers not assigned to the Adoptions Team. The county recommends changing the due date on this milestone to October 2014.

- Strategy 1.2 – At the time of termination of family reunification, assign one adoptions social worker to meet needs of entire case.

- Milestone A – *Review and revise policy and practice.*

Practice has been implemented without formal written policy change. Change date to March 2014.

- Milestone B – *Restructure work process to allow for assignment of adoptions social worker at termination of family reunification.*

Practice has been implemented without formal policy change. Complete.

- Milestone C – *Implement policy.*

Practice has been implemented without formal written policy change. Complete.

- Strategy 1.3 – Focus on permanency for all children entering care. One social worker and an office assistant have been assigned the family finding duties for CWS. Their focus is on each child that enters the CWS system. Social work staff continue to search for relatives using the limited tools available.

- Milestone A – *Identify training topics and a trainer appropriate for both technical and motivational aspects of professional development.*

“Signs of Safety” overview training was provided the summer of 2012. Family Finding overview training was provided for the social workers, supervisors, and managers by AOC in conjunction with the Seneca Center. Due to the length and complexity of the in-depth training, Merced County adopted a train-the-trainer strategy. Three staff members have been identified to participate in the training with Seneca Center and are implementing the procedures on selected cases. When these staff members have become comfortable and familiar with the procedures, they will teach other selected staff members. CASA and Probation staff are also participating in the training. A barrier that has arisen is the complexity of the procedures and the amount of time required to implement the process for each case. The issue of time is being addressed through the contract with CASA which will allow CASA to supply staff or volunteers to focus on family finding while the social worker attends to other aspects of the case. Additionally, when the first group of CASAs and social workers

are trained, they will work on simplifying the steps to family finding. Since this process is new, Merced County believes that CASAs and social workers will become more efficient as they continue in the practice and learn from their experiences.

CWS social workers and CASA staff are in the process of completing their training case. The training via monthly conference calls will be extended and train-the-trainer will begin in July 2013. Complete.

- Milestone B – *Schedule training for identified staff.*

Family Finding training was provided by Seneca Center in July 2011. Complete.

“Signs of Safety” overview was provided in summer 2012. Complete.

- Milestone C – *Conduct training and follow up on transfer of learning activities.*

Training for family finding is underway in the “train-the-trainer” mode described above. Completion date: July 2013, for train-the-trainer and July 2014, for remaining social workers and selected CASAs.

Improvement Goal 2.0 – Maintain the median length of time for adoption at 27.3 months for each year of the five year plan.

- Strategy 2.1 – Review all foster care cases for adoption possibility and concurrent planning.

- Milestone A – *Include placement review in Case Conference Group (CCG) meetings and case conference reviews.*

CCG form has been revised. Practice is implemented. Complete.

- Milestone B – *All court reports will address permanency and concurrent planning.*

Implemented in summer 2012. All children are assessed by an adoptions worker for permanency. Complete.

- Milestone C – *Train staff on new procedures and implement.*

Implemented. Complete.

- Strategy 2.2 – Increase the number of concurrent homes.
 - Milestone A – *Emergency Response (ER) staff will identify relatives as soon as case is opened and record in Relative Tracking Form in CWS/CMS.*

Social workers will update relative tracking form as needed. Relatives are documented in CMS/CWS. Supervisors monitor and review relative information prior to passing case to the court unit. Designated family finding social worker attends the detention hearing and meets with available family members to gather information about other family members. She and two part-time office assistants conduct research to locate family members. At this time and for the last year, Merced has been experiencing high rates of turnover and long periods of operating short staffed. In this environment, designating individual positions to conduct family finding is a better business process than assigning the task to all ER staff. When staff vacancies have been filled, the deputy and the program administrators will evaluate the effectiveness of the current arrangement and consider whether the family finding responsibilities should be extended to additional positions. Complete.

- Milestone B – *Refer county foster homes for adoption study as soon as they are licensed.*

County foster homes are referred to Promesa FFA as soon as licensed. The need for adoptive homes is emphasized in county foster home recruitment. Complete.

- Milestone C – *Identify FFA homes with a current adoption home study.* Complete.

- Strategy 2.3 – Increase the number of children in concurrent homes.

- Milestone A – *Ensure that each child under age five is in a concurrent home by disposition hearing.*

Management needs to identify all the steps necessary to identify a relative or concurrent home and document the process. Expectation and policy are in place. Management will request a special project to gather data and track achievement. The due date for this milestone will be extended to December 2014.

- Milestone B – *Review permanence for each child in care during Performance Management Conference.* Complete.

- Milestone C – *Review permanence for each child in care at case review and in court reports.*

CCG form has been revised. Instructions for court reports are revised to address permanence. Case reviews now include reviewing current placement, concurrent planning, and relative searches. This milestone is complete.

Improvement Goal 3.0 – Support adoptive families in completing requirements for adoption finalization to occur.

- Strategy 3.1 – Partner with home study providers to support families.

- Milestone A – *Articulate to staff and community partners, including home study providers, HSA’s vision for supporting families through the adoption process.*

The Adoptions Program Administrator held regular monthly meetings with FFAs to maintain open communication and review the status of pending home studies. After the initial series of meetings, the decision was made that quarterly meetings are sufficient. HSA’s vision for supporting families through the adoption process has been articulated verbally in discussions and the regular meetings. Complete.

- Milestone B – *Develop Memo of Understanding (MOU) with home study providers to articulate a shared vision.*

The agreement with FFAs is that a home is not considered a concurrent home unless it has completed the adoption home study. MOU has been drafted and is under legal review. Extend due date to March 2014.

- Milestone C – *Evaluate progress and effectiveness in monthly meetings with home study providers.*

Quarterly meetings have been determined to be sufficient. Complete.

- Strategy 3.2 – Seek feedback from families on perception of support with the adoption process.

- Milestone A – *Develop interview tool for use with families to elicit their perceptions of the adoption process and the support they received during the process.*

Move due date to September 2013.

- Milestone B – *Schedule interviews or focus groups.*

Move due date to January 2014.

- Milestone C – *Conduct interviews or focus groups.*

Move due date to February 2014.

- Strategy 3.3 – Seek feedback from social workers on perception of support with the adoption process.

- Milestone A – *Develop interview tool for use with social workers to elicit their perceptions of the adoption process and the support they received during the process.*

Move due date to September 2013.

- Milestone B – *Schedule interviews or focus groups.*

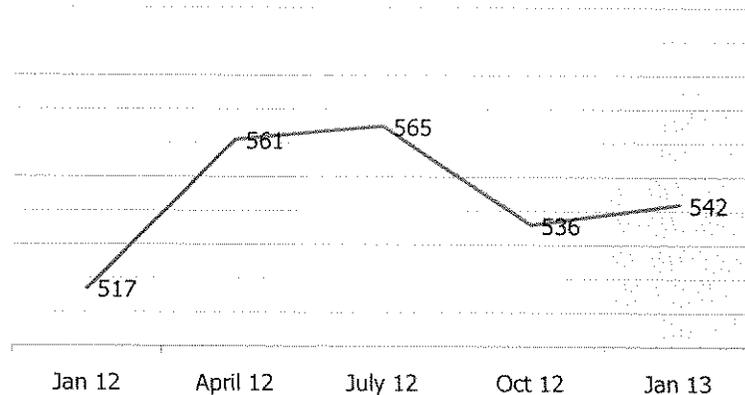
Move due date to March 2014.

- Milestone C – *Conduct interviews or focus groups.*

Move due date to April 2014.

Although not a formal part of the SIP plan, Merced County continues to closely monitor the number of children in foster care. Since implementation of the SIP, the number has consistently stayed between 500 and 550, down from a high of over 700.

Number of Children in Placement in Merced Co



²Children's Research Center SafeMeasures® Data. Merced County, Full List. Retrieved November 15, 2012 from Children's Research Center website. URL: <https://www.safemeasures.org/ca/safemeasures.aspx>

E. Barriers to Implementation

1. Obstacles and barriers to **future** implementation

In regard to Measures C2.1 and C2.2, the greatest threat to maintaining the current level of performance is potential staff turnover. The Adoptions Team has been relatively stable in personnel. The supervisor transferred to another team and was replaced by a promotion of a social worker from the Adoptions Team which provided continuity and maintained the motivation and enthusiasm of the team for their goals and mission. HSA has only limited control over the filling of social worker vacancies and the replacing of social workers who leave can be impacted by county wide human resource policies. During the months of October, November, and December, Merced County CWS has averaged a vacancy rate for social workers between 5 and 6 percent, or approximately one full team. When working below full staffing, priority must be given to answering the abuse and neglect reporting telephone lines and investigating allegations. In these circumstances, social workers can be taken off their adoption work assignments and reassigned to duties that are more urgent in terms of protecting children from risk.

Merced County recognizes that maintaining timeliness in adoptions is effective in reducing the caseload of foster care which results in savings of budget dollars and staff time. The county is committed to maintaining a staffing level and resources to keep the Adoptions Team performing at its current level of success.

2. Measure 4B: Foster Care in Least Restrictive Setting

This measure reflects the percent of children placed in each type of foster care setting. It is measured at two points, entry and point-in-time (PIT). Merced County has historically had lower rates of family/relative placements at both measures than the average for the state of California. There is no national standard or goal for this measure. While there may be many environmental issues such as high rates of poverty, high rates of illegal drug use, and a large percentage of undocumented residents, Merced County desires to maintain the connections with their families for children and increase the percentage of initial and PIT placements with relatives. The tables below describe the placement data at the time of the SIP and the most recent quarter.

Initial Placement	SIP	October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012 California
Relative	7.4%	12.9%
Foster Home	10.0%	8.2%
FFA	77.2%	74.1%
Group/Shelter	1.3%	0%
Other	4.1%	4.7%

¹Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Glasser, T., Williams, D., Zimmerman, K., Simon, V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Frerer, K., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Winn, A., Lou, C., & Peng, C. (2009). Child Welfare Services Reports for California. Retrieved November 15, 2012, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

PIT Placement	SIP	October 1, 2012
Relative	20.5%	27.4%
Foster Home	5.0%	4.0%
FFA	52.0%	43.6%
Group/Shelter	4.5%	3.6%
Other	18.0%	21.4%

¹Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Glasser, T., Williams, D., Zimmerman, K., Simon, V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Frerer, K., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Winn, A., Lou, C., & Peng, C. (2009). Child Welfare Services Reports for California. Retrieved November 15, 2012, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

Merced County's percentage of initial relative placements (7.4% at the time of the SIP) is substantially lower than the California performance of 21.6%. In order to achieve an initial relative placement that equals the PIT placement and approaches the state average of 21.6, Merced County must increase the percentage by a factor of .4 in each of the first three years of the SIP cycle and maintain that achievement for the last two years of the five year cycle. The annual goals are expressed in the tables below.

Year	Relative Placements Initial
1	10.4%
2	14.5%
3	20.5%
4	20.5%
5	20.5%

Year	Relative Placements PIT
1	23.6%
2	27.1%
3	31.2%
4	31.2%
5	31.2%

Merced County’s performance on initial placements does not meet the second year goal. The second year goal for initial placements was 14.5%, and the achievement as of Q3 12 was 12.9%. The second year goal for PIT placements was 27.1% and the achievement was 27.4%. Merced management interprets this data to mean that while our staff understands and appreciates the emphasis on relative placements, the time required to make the initial placement with family, combined with the less-than-full staffing, makes achieving the goal for initial placements challenging.

3. Progress on implementing strategies:

- Strategy 1.1 – Assign Social Worker positions to assist primary worker with emergency relatives by locating relatives.
 - Milestone A – *Identify staff positions to assist with locating relatives.*

One social services program worker and one office assistant have been assigned to family finding and locating relatives. The worker goes to the detention hearings to contact the family and ask about extended family members. The worker and the office assistant use internet searches and other tools to locate and contact relatives for possible placement. Although these contacts cannot always be made prior to placement, they are still useful and can be engaged if the child remains in placement. The case carrying social worker engages the child in conversation about potential relatives at detention and throughout the life of the case.

CASA has a full time person that has a desk at HSA and full access to CWS/CMS. A social worker is assigned as a Family Finding liaison and works with CASA and social workers to help identify family members. Complete.

- Milestone B – *Train identified social workers and other staff on locating relatives using family finding methods.*

Family Finding training overview was provided for the social workers, supervisors, and managers by AOC in conjunction with the Seneca Center. Due to the length and complexity of the in depth training, Merced County adopted a train-the-trainer strategy. Three staff members have been identified to participate in the training with Seneca Center and are implementing the procedures on pilot cases. When these staff members have become comfortable and familiar with the procedures, they will teach other selected staff members. The contract with Seneca Center was recently extended with permission of AOC. The anticipated date for finishing the pilot cases and beginning the train-the-trainer program is July 2013. CASA has a contract with HSA and additional external grant funding for staff to participate in family finding. A barrier that has arisen is the complexity of the procedures and the amount of time required to implement the process for each case. Management anticipates that additional experience and practice will improve the efficiency of staff in doing this work. Initially it appears that the social workers' background and experience facilitate learning and using the family finding activities, and the CASAs are having more difficulty mastering the skills. However, the CASAs show promise for developing the skills required for working with the population. Due dates: July 2013, for train-the-trainer and July 2014, for remainder of staff.

- Milestone C – *Develop schedule and implement assignments.*

While the county plans to assign additional social workers to assist with family finding and approving relative homes at the time of detention, the high vacancy rate continues to make completing this milestone impractical. This due date is moved forward to June 2014.

- Strategy 1.2 – Implement early identification of relatives by ER workers

- Milestone A – *Develop policy.*

ER workers have been instructed in early identification of relatives in staff meetings. No formal policy has been developed. This due date is moved to October 2013.

- Milestone B – *Train workers on policy.*

ER workers have received training on family finding and have implemented as best practice. No formal policy training has been provided. See above. This due date is moved to December 2013.

- Milestone C – *Implement policy.*

See above. This due date is moved to April 2014.

- Strategy 1.3 – Include family members in initial case conference.
 - Milestone A – *Identify any needed policy changes and revise if needed.*
 - Milestone B – *Train Social Workers on policy and best practices.*
 - Milestone C – *Implement policy.*

These three milestones which were due in summer 2012 have not been achieved. Merced County CWS leadership recognizes and acknowledges the importance of including families in CCG meetings. However, an issue was identified with the level of comfort and expertise of the workers in presenting cases in CCG. Also, it was recognized that some supervisors were more effective than others in conducting the meetings. Leadership has addressed these concerns with training for social workers and supervisors, revision of the forms for preparing a CCG presentation, and designating permanent members for the CCG team. However, recent promotions have resulted in changes to the permanent members of the CCG Team. When these changes have been implemented and leadership is convinced that the social workers and supervisors are prepared for the introduction of family members into the CCG process, implementation of this policy will be implemented. Anticipated date of implementation is July 2015.

- Strategy 2.1 – Increase ability to certify relative homes for emergency placement.
 - Milestone A – *Train all staff on licensing rules and regulations for relative home approval.*

Home Assessment Team (HAT) provided training for social workers on this process. Certifying a relative placement is being added to the in house training curriculum that new social workers have to attend prior to being assigned a caseload. Completion by March 2014.

- Milestone B – *Train home visitors on licensing rules and regulations for relative home approval.*

Merced County's home visitors are now all contract staff and are not appropriate for conducting relative home approvals. While this milestone was not implemented, it is considered complete and will not be dated for future implementation.

- Milestone C – *Develop rotational schedule and implement.*

A step-by-step list of requirements for certifying a home for emergency placement has been developed and provided to social workers. If a social worker is recommending denying certification to a relative home, the denial must be approved at the Program Administrator level. HAT has provided training for social work staff

on this process. See Milestone B above. While this milestone was not implemented, it is considered complete and will not be dated for future implementation.

- Strategy 2.2 – Review foster care placement for appropriateness to move to relative placement and/or concurrent placement.

- Milestone A – *Develop criteria to identify children with potential to move to relative and/or concurrent placement.*

Potential for relative placement reviewed in CCG. Complete.

- Milestone B – *Develop a schedule or review in coordination with regular case staffing.*

Potential for relative placement reviewed in CCG. Complete.

- Milestone C – *Implement review schedule.*

The desirability of relative and/or concurrent placement has become widely understood and embraced among the CWS staff in Merced. The question of a relative and/or concurrent placement is routinely reviewed in supervisor/worker conferences and CCG meetings. Developing a separate schedule for these reviews has not been required. Complete.

- Strategy 2.3 – Evaluate effectiveness of Strategies.

- Milestone A – *Review quarterly reports.*

Format developed and reports are reviewed by managers and supervisors quarterly. Reports are reviewed in supervisor's meetings with social workers when appropriate, and reports relating to their units are shared with individual supervisors. Complete.

- Milestone B – *Review initial and PIT placements in social worker/supervisor conferences.* Complete.

Supervisors are asking social workers about relative placement during case conferences. Complete.

- Milestone C – *Revise procedures, provide training, or offer other interventions as required if initial and PIT placements with relatives are not increasing.*

Relative placements are improving, although not as quickly as management wishes. However, management believes that the major issue is staff turnover and the vacancy rate. Revision of procedures or additional training would not be helpful at this time. Complete.

In summary, the data shows progress is being made in placing children with relatives, both initially and at PIT. While Merced County's performance on these measures is still below California, it is trending in the desired direction and one measure is exceeding the goals set for the second year. Merced's demographics will continue to be a factor in relative placement. Wide spread poverty, drug abuse, gang membership and domestic violence means that finding a safe home among relatives can be challenging. The high percentage of undocumented residents means that some families cannot be certified because some members of the household have no identification to provide for required background checks. Anecdotal information indicates that some families are reluctant to give information about potential relative placements at the time of detention for a variety of reasons including distrust of the agency and a desire to keep relatives from knowing about the detention. Some parents are new to the area and have no relatives in the county. Although some environmental obstacles will always be present, Merced County will continue to work on the identified strategies, adjust as needed, and work towards continuing progress on achieving the goals.

The initial reaction to the training provided by the Seneca Center is that the family finding process in its entirety is very time consuming and may require more resources than CWS has available. Reaching out to CASA with a contract for staffing for family finding is an initial attempt to bridge this resource gap. The plan is to extend family finding to CASA volunteers as well as staff. A full-time CASA employee has been hired and trained to do Family Finding. She will train new CASAs on the family finding process. In 2013, another full-time person will be added to the contract with CASA.

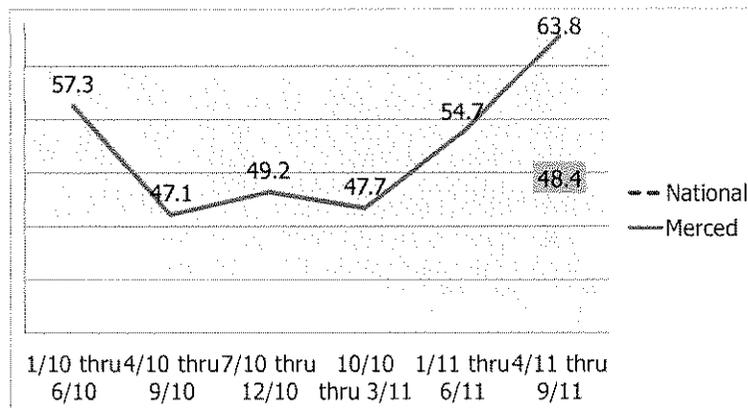
F. Other Successes/Promising Practices

Note: All measures in this section are taken from the website cited in the charts earlier sections of this report. The red line is Merced performance and the green rectangle is national standard or goal.

C1.3 Reunification within 12 months (Entry cohort)

Merced County exceeds the national standard or goal. Performance has been consistently high and trending upward for the most recent three reporting periods. Social workers complete thorough assessments prior to children returning home, making sure the parents are not minimally completing their service plans but are meeting their objectives and that they are really ready to take their children back home. CCG panels are used for review to confirm that nothing is overlooked before children are returned.

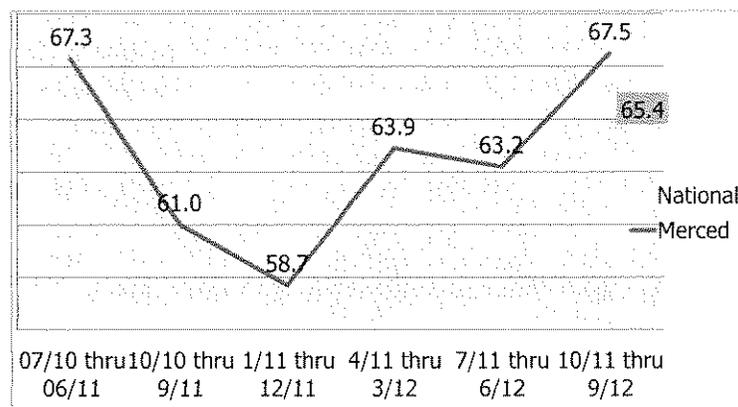
C1.3 Reunification within 12 months (Entry cohort)



C4.2 Placement Stability (12 to 24 months in care)

Family Reunification/Family Maintenance (FR/FM) social workers make regular visits to children in foster care and make sure the homes are a fit for the child. Supervisors do not permit placements of convenience (just because a home is the first to respond) and require that the home is concurrent and committed to those particular children. These practices result in stability and avoid moving children.

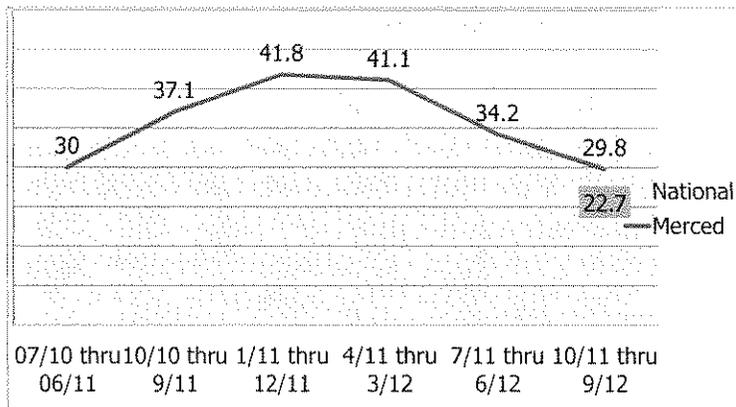
C4.2 Placement Stability (12 to 24 months in care)



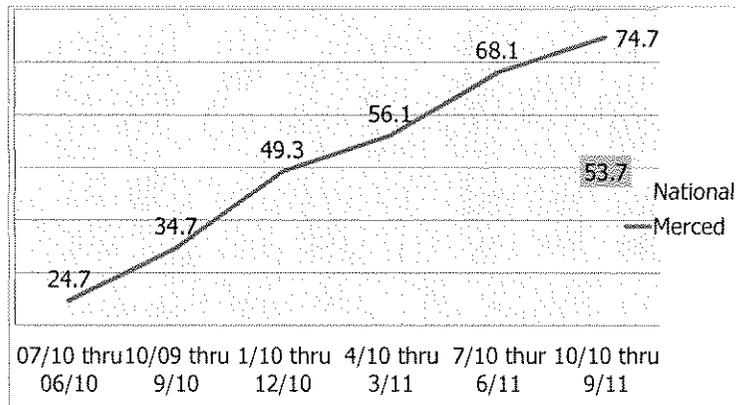
C2.3 Adoption within 12 months in Per Cent and C2.5 Adoption within 12 months Legally Free

Successful performance in these measures is a by-product of the changes made in the Adoptions Team to achieve the desired results in measures C2.1 and C2.2.

C2.3 Adoption within 12 months in Per Cent



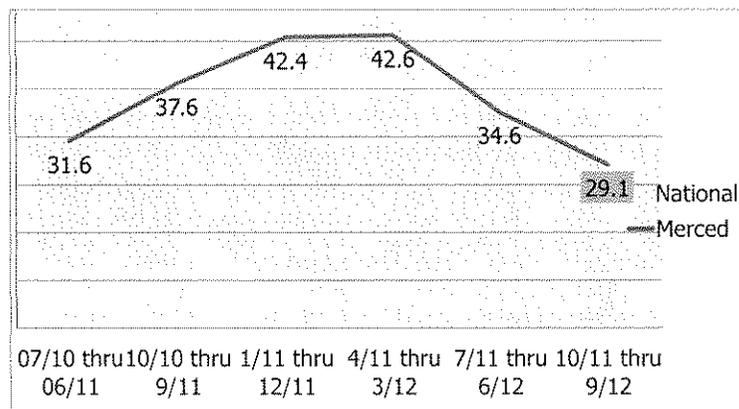
C2.5 Adoption within 12 Months Legally Free (per cent)



C3.1 Exits to Permanency (24 months in care)

Success in this measure may be partially due to the emphasis on timely adoptions. The percentage peaked during the time period that the Adoptions Team was actively working to finalize adoptions for children that had been in foster care for an extended period of time.

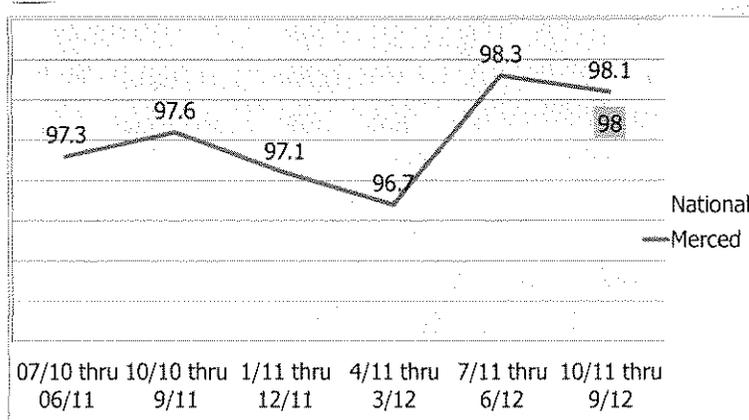
**C3.1 Exits to Permanency
(24 months in care)**



C3.2 Exits to Permanency (Legally free at exit)

Success in this measure is likely due to emphasis on both family finding and timely adoptions.

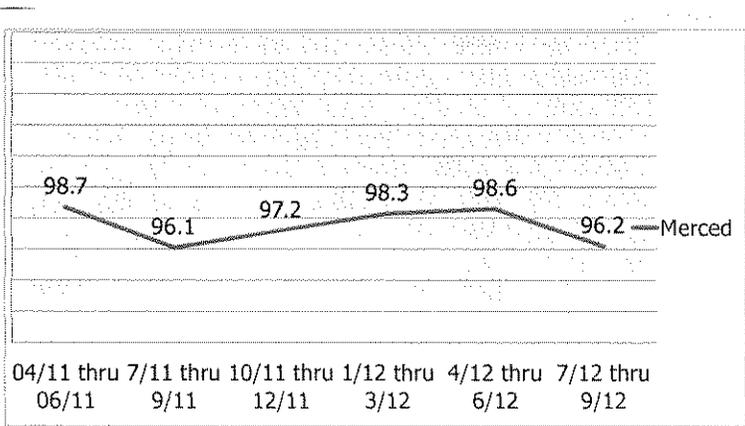
**C3.2 Exits to Permanency
(Legally free at exit)**



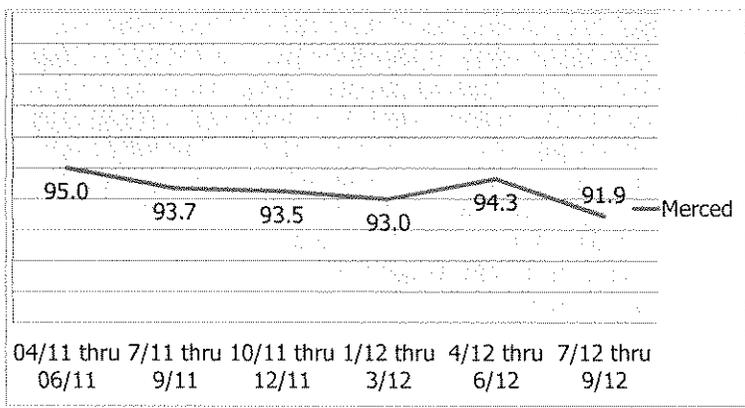
2B Timely Response (Immediate) and 2B Timely Response (10 Day)

Both of these measures have changed direction since the previous quarter. The ER Program Administrator is researching the specific cases that were late and will formulate a corrective action plan. However, both remain above 90%.

2B Timely Response (Immediate)



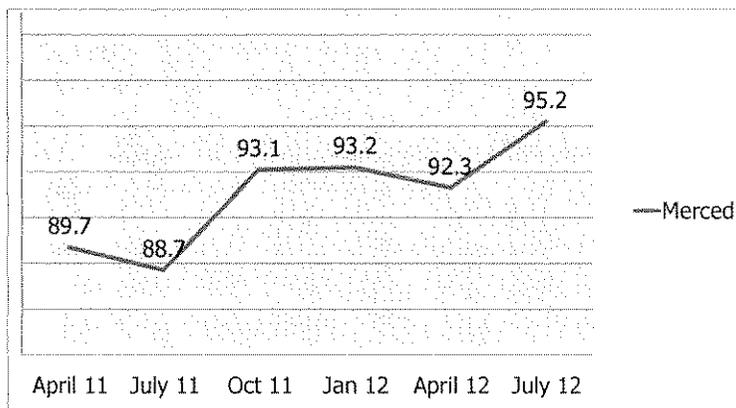
2B Timely Response (10 Day)



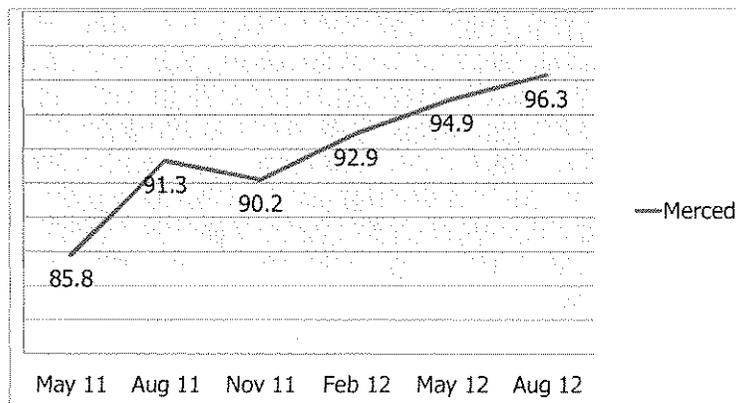
Timely Social Worker Visits (Month 1, 2, and 3)

Earlier 2011 quarters on these measures reflected documentation errors. Improved performance reflects management’s attention to improved documentation and emphasis on the importance of timely visits. The management team has really focused on this goal and ensuring they are working with each of the staff to improve our numbers. The ER program administrator receives a weekly report of referrals that have been open 15 days with no contact. The list is shared with supervisors who work with their staff to make sure that documentation is correct. This procedure has been successful in keeping ER staff focused on the importance of both timely visits and accurate documentation.

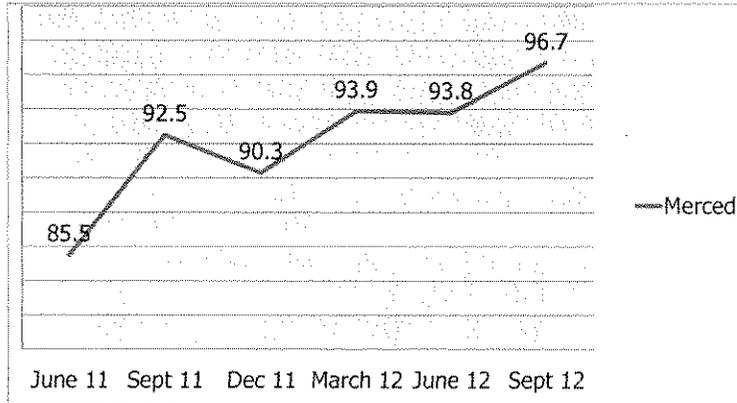
2C Timely Social Worker Visits (Month 1)



2C Timely Social Worker Visits (Month 2)



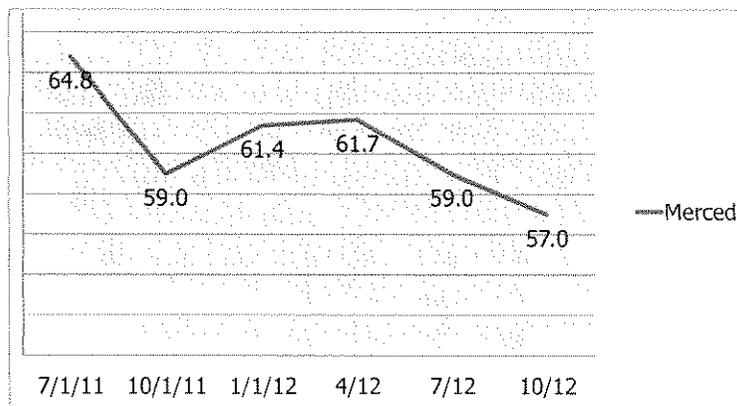
2C Timely Social Worker Visits (Month 3)



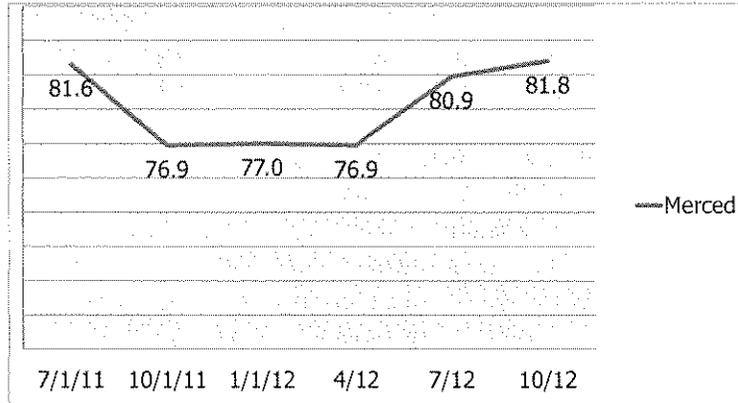
4A Siblings All and Some

Keeping siblings together has been a long-held value in Merced. In fact, it may be a barrier to placing children with relatives if the relative cannot take all the siblings. Leadership attributes success in these measures to the standard of practice among social workers and careful review of placement decisions in CCG.

4A Siblings All



4A Siblings Some



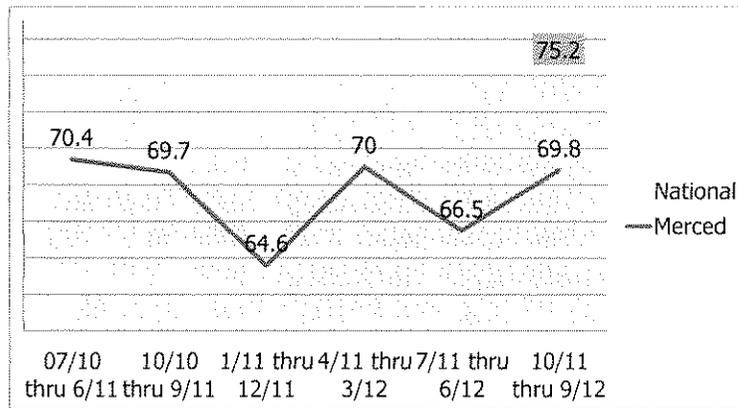
G. Outcome Measures Not Meeting State/National Standards

C1.1 Reunification within 12 months – exit cohort

Merced County is not meeting the national standard for this measure. Leadership will closely monitor this standard for a downward trend, but the data has been relatively stable over the last six reporting periods.

Management recently assigned a very experienced supervisor to the FR/FM team. She is assisting in training new staff and the two new supervisors that are assigned to the FR/FM team. There are now three supervisors doing FR/FM Court ordered. Management reorganized and combined the FR/FM teams so that families will not have to transition to a new social worker when FR ends and FM begins. This change should save work hours as the next social worker does not have to spend hours becoming familiar and engaging a new family and families do not have to get another new social worker. Merced is also working toward increased visitation for families. The number of staff in FR/FM has increased and caseloads are decreasing as new staff is trained. This change should allow social workers to spend more time with their families and complete court hearings more timely.

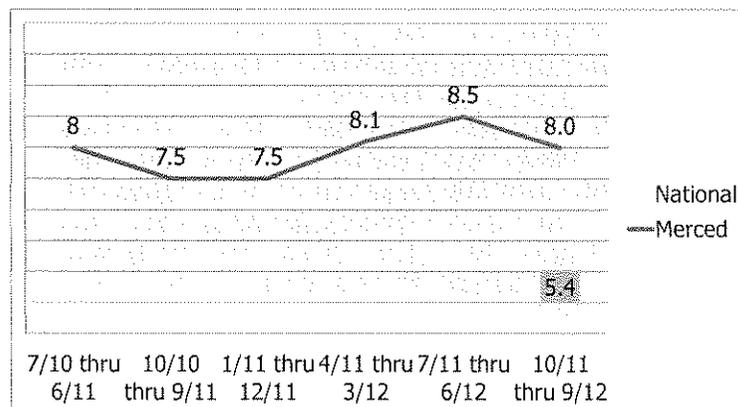
C1.1 Reunification within 12 months – exit cohort



C1.2 Median Time to Reunification Exit Cohort

Merced’s performance is higher than (not as good as) the national goal/standard. After two quarters trending in the wrong direction, the most recent report shows improvement.

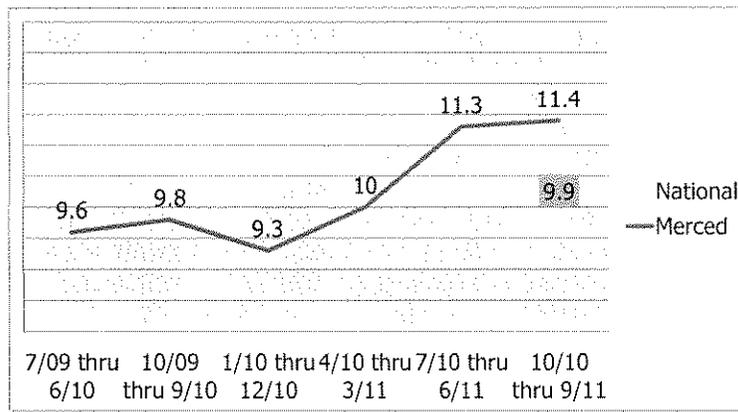
C1.2 Median Time to Reunification Exit Cohort



C1.4 Re-entry following reunification

Merced's performance is above the national standard/goal. Because this measure is trending in the wrong direction for the last three quarters, management will monitor in future quarterly reports.

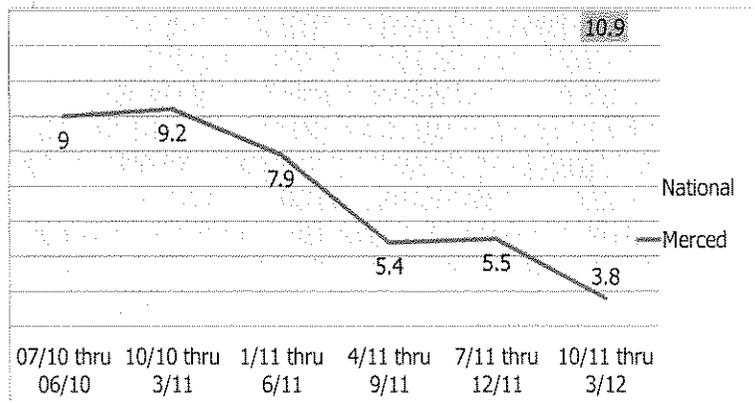
C1.4 Re-entry following reunification (Exit cohort)



C2.4 Legally free within 6 Months (Per Cent)

Merced is underperforming the national goal/standard. Out of 104 children who were not legally free within six months, 77 of those were 11 to 17. The removal dates are all during or before 2010. This is the group of older children whose plan is PP and for whom there is no reason to terminate parental rights.

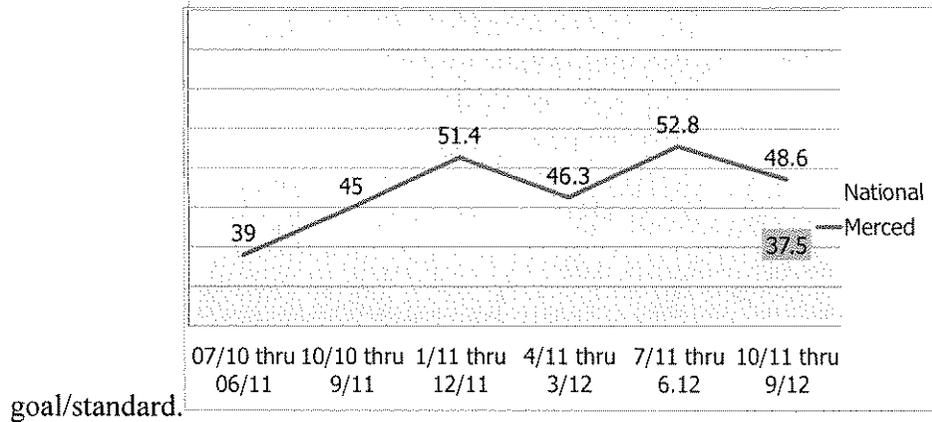
C2.4 Legally free within 6 Months (Per Cent)



C3.3 In Care 3 years or longer, emancipated/age 18

Merced is above (not as good as) the national

**C3.3 In Care 3 years or longer,
emancipated /age 18**



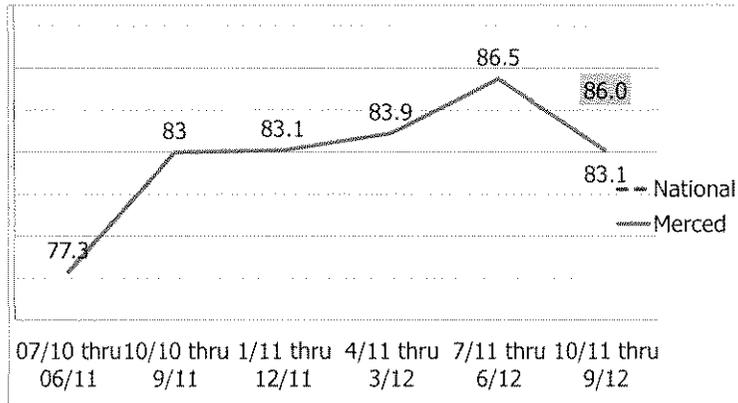
C1.4 Placement Stability (8 Days to 12 months in care)

C4.2 Placement Stability (12 to 24 months in care)

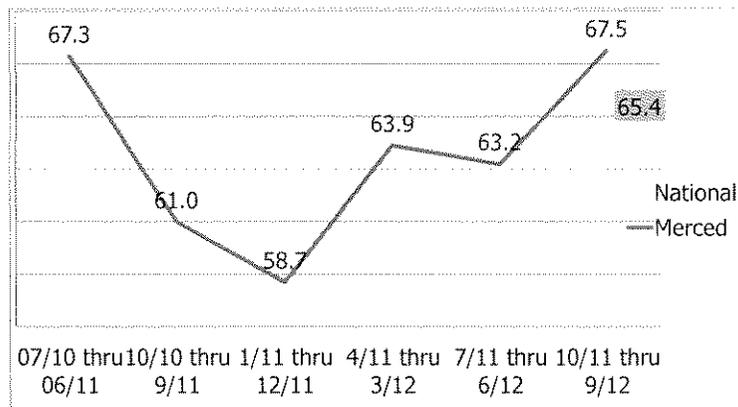
C4.3 Placement Stability (at least 24 months in care)

Placement stability has been erratic for these measures. Stability could be affected by the emphasis on relative placements and concurrent placements. The gap between initial relative placements and PIT relative placements indicates at least one placement change attributable to moving a child into a relative placement. Management will monitor these measures and consider if they should be targets for the next SIP cycle.

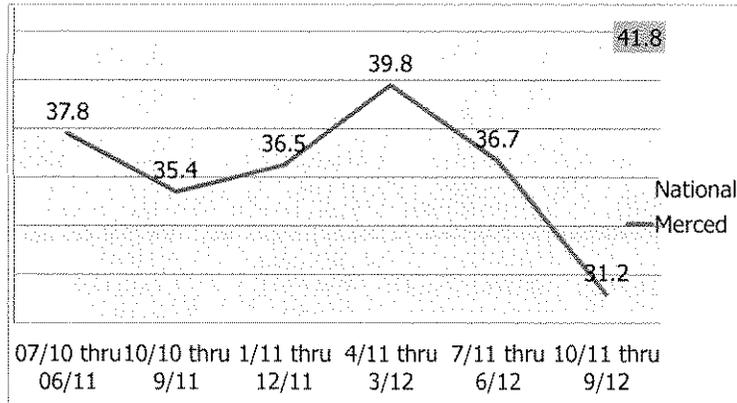
C4.1 Placement Stability (8 days to 12 months in care)



C4.2 Placement Stability (12 to 24 months in care)



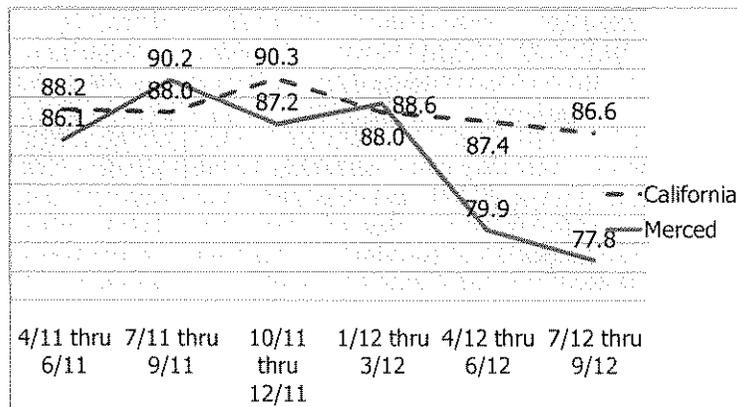
C4.3 Placement Stability (At least 24 months in care)



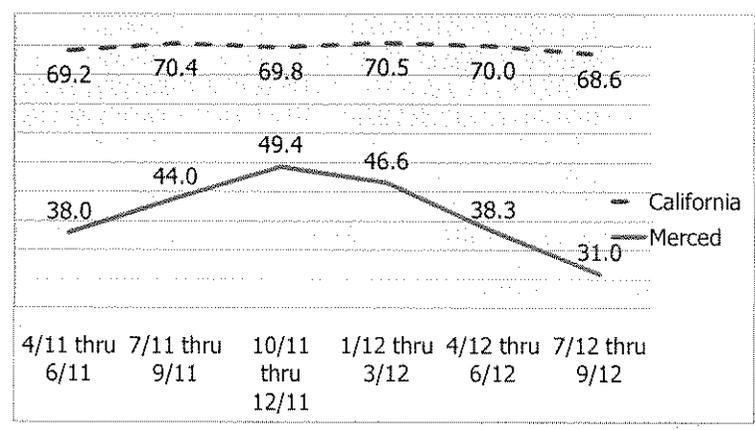
5B (1) Timely Rate of Health Exams and 5B (2) Timely Rate of Dental Exams

Management believes that the underperformance on these measures reflects a documentation problem rather than an actual lack of timely exams. The documentation issue will be addressed with the Health Department.

5B (1) Timely Rate of Health Exams



5B (2) Timely Rate of Dental Exams



H. Link to the Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

Strategies

- Expand use of participatory case planning strategies.

Merced County's Strategy 1.3, **Include families in initial case conference**, addresses this PIP strategy.
- Sustain and enhance permanency efforts across the life of the case.

Merced County's focus on the timely measures addresses permanency efforts.
- Enhance and expand caregiver recruitment, training, and support efforts.

Merced County's focus on family placements and family finding address caregiver recruitment, training, and support.
- Expand options and create flexibility for services and supports to meet the needs of children and families.

Merced County's SIP does not specifically address this strategy.
- Sustain and expand staff/supervisor training.

Merced County's SIP does not specifically address this strategy.

- Strengthen implementation of the statewide safety, risk and needs assessment system.

Merced County's SIP does not specifically address this strategy.

The outcome scores below are taken from Q3 2012.

Safety Outcome 1: Absence of Maltreatment Recurrence

National Standard: 94.6%

California: 93.1%

Merced: 94.1%

Safety Outcome 1: Absence of Maltreatment of Children in Foster Care

National Standard: 99.68%

California: 99.69%

Merced: 99.66%

Permanency Outcome 1: Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification

National Standard: 122.6 (scaled score)

California: 112.3

Merced: 127.2

Permanency Outcome 1: Timeliness of Adoptions (Permanency Composite 2)

National Standard: 106.4 (scaled score)

California: 114.2

Merced: 145.7

Permanency Outcome 3: Permanency for Children in Foster Care for Extended Time Periods
(Permanency Composite 3)

National Standard: 121.7 (scaled score)

California: 111.5

Merced: 121.2

Permanency Outcome 1: Placement Stability (Permanency Composite 4)

National Standard: 101.5 (scaled score)

California: 99.1

Merced: 96.0

Outcome: Safety 1 Item: 1 Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child
maltreatment

National Standard: 95.0%

California: 97%

Merced: 97%

I. SIP Chart

<p>Priority Outcome Measure or Systemic Factor: Measure 4B: Initial Placement National Standard: none Current Performance: 12.9% relative placements Target Improvement Goal: 14.5% relative placements for 2012</p>		
<p>Priority Outcome Measure or Systemic Factor: Measure 4B: PIT Placement National Standard: none Current Performance: 27.4% relative placements Target Improvement Goal: 27.1% relative placements for 201</p>		
<p>Strategy 1.1 – Assign Social Worker positions to assist primary worker with emergency placements by locating relatives. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): 4B Initial and 4B PIT</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Action Steps	Time Frame	Person Responsible
A. Identify staff positions to assist with locating relatives. One social worker and one office assistant have been assigned to family finding.	August to December 2011 Complete	Program Administrator for ER and Deputy Director
B. Train identified Social Workers and other staff on locating relatives using family finding methods.	January to February 2012 Family Finding training provided in summer 2011 Complete	Deputy Director, Program Administrators, Courts, and Seneca Center
C. Develop schedule and implement assignments.	June 2012 Complete	Program Administrator for ER
<p>Strategy 1.2 – Implement early identification of relative information by ER workers. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): 4B Initial and 4B PIT</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. Develop policy	October 2013	Program Administrator for ER
B. Train ER workers on policy.	January 2014	Program Administrator for ER
C. Implement policy.	April 2014	Program Administrator for ER
<p>Strategy 1.3 – Include families in initial case conference. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): 4B Initial and 4B PIT</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. Identify any needed policy changes and revise if needed.	May 2015	Program Administrator for ER and Deputy Director
B. Train Social Workers on policy and best practices.	June 2015	Program Administrator for ER, Seneca Center, and Staff Development
C. Implement policy.	July 2015	Program Administrator for ER

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Strategy 2.1 – Increase ability to certify relative homes for emergency placement. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): 4B Initial and 4B PIT		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. Train all staff on licensing rules and regulations for relative home approval. HAT Team provided training for social workers on this process.	January 2012 Complete	Program Administrators, and HAT Supervisor
B. Train home visitors on licensing rules and regulations for relative home approval.	This milestone is no longer appropriate.	Program Administrators and HAT Supervisor
C. Develop rotational schedule and implement.	This milestone is no longer appropriate.	Program Administrators
Strategy 2.2 – Review foster care placements for appropriateness to move to relative placement and/or concurrent placement. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): 4B Initial and 4B PIT		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. Develop criteria to identify children with potential to move to relative and/or concurrent placement.	Complete	Program Administrator for Permanency Planning
B. Develop a schedule or review in coordination with regular case staffing.	Complete	Program Administrator for Permanency Planning
C. Implement review schedule.	Complete	Program Administrator for Permanency Planning
Strategy 2.3 – Evaluate effectiveness of Strategies. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): 4B Initial and 4B PIT		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. Review quarterly reports.	Complete	Program Administrator for Permanency Planning
B. Review initial and PIT placements in social worker/supervisor conferences.	Complete	Program Administrator for Permanency Planning
C. Revise procedures, provide training, or offer other interventions as required if initial and PIT placements with relatives are not increasing.	Complete	Program Administrator for Permanency Planning

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Priority Outcome Measure or Systemic Factor: C2.1 Adoption in less than 24 months National Standard: 36.6% Current Performance: 54.9% Target Improvement Goal: 36.6%		
Priority Outcome Measure or Systemic Factor: C2.2 Median time to adoption National Standard: 27.3% Current Performance: 21.4% (note: for this measure, lower is better) Target Improvement Goal: 27.3%		
Strategy 1.1 – Restructure Adoptions Team to lower case loads. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): Measure C2.1 Adoption less than 24 months Measure C2.2 Median time to adoption		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. Restructure the work process for the Adoptions Team.	April to October 2011 Complete	Program Administrator for Adoptions
B. Identified changes to policy and procedure for revision and revise.	March 2014	Program Administrator for Adoptions
C. Provide training to staff on policy changes and best practices.	October 2014	Program Administrator for Adoptions and Staff Development
Strategy 1.2 – At the termination of reunification services, assign one Adoptions Social Worker to meet the needs of the entire case. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): Measure C2.1 Adoption less than 24 months Measure C2.2 Median time to adoption		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. Review and revise policy and practice.	March 2014	Program Administrators and Deputy Director
B. Restructure work process to allow for assignment of case to Adoptions worker at termination of parental rights.	Complete	Program Administrators and Deputy Director
C. Implement policy.	Complete	Program Administrators, Deputy Director, and CWS Supervisor

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Strategy 1.3 – Focus on permanence for all children entering care. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): Measure C2.1 Adoption less than 24 months Measure C2.2 Median time to adoption		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. Identify training topics and a trainer appropriate for both technical and motivational aspects of professional development.	April 2011 to October 2012 Safety Organized Practice overview provided. Family Finding training provided to CWS staff and CASA volunteers in summer 2011. Complete	Program Administrators, Deputy, and Staff Development
B. Schedule training for identified staff.	January to June 2012 Complete	Program Administrators, Deputy, and Staff Development
C. Conduct training and follow-up on transfer of learning activities.	July 2014	Program Administrators and Deputy
Strategy 2.1 – Review all foster care cases for adoption possibility and concurrent planning. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): Measure C2.1 Adoption less than 24 months Measure C2.2 Median time to adoption		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. Include placement review in CCG meetings and case conference reviews.	August 2012 and forward Complete	Program Administrators and CWS Supervisors
B. All court reports will address permanency and concurrent planning.	Complete	Program Administrators and CWS Supervisor
C. Train staff on new procedures and implement.	Complete	Program Administrators, Staff Development, and CWS Supervisors

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Strategy 2.2 – Increase the number of concurrent homes. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): Measure C2.1 Adoption less than 24 months Measure C2.2 Median time to adoption		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. ER staff will identify relatives as soon as case is opened and record in Relative Tracking Form in CWS. Social Workers will update form as needed. Supervisors will monitor. Designated Family Finding social worker attends detention hearing and gathers family information.	September 2012 Complete	Program Administrators, CWS Supervisors, ER Social Workers
B. Refer foster homes for adoption study as soon as they are certified.	September 2011 and forward Complete	Program Administrators and Licensing Analyst for County homes
C. Identify FFA homes with a current adoption home study.	September 2012 Complete	Program Administrator and Licensing Analyst
Strategy 2.3 – Increase the number of children in concurrent homes. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): Measure C2.1 Adoption less than 24 months Measure C2.2 Median time to adoption		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. Ensure that each child under age 5 is in a concurrent home by disposition hearing. Identify the steps required.	December 2014	Program Administrators, Court Team Supervisor, and Home Visitors
B. Review permanence for each child in care during staff performance conferences.	December 2012 and on-going Complete	Program Administrators and CWS Supervisors
C. Review permanence for each child in care as case review and in court reports.	December 2012 and on-going Complete	Program Administrators, CWS Supervisor, CWS Social Workers, and Home Visitors
Strategy 3.1 – Partner with home study providers to support families. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): Measure C2.1 Adoption less than 24 months Measure C2.2 Median time to adoption		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. Articulate to staff and community partners, including home study providers HSA's vision for supporting families through the adoption process. Vision has been discussed but not put into writing.	January to March 2012 Complete	Program Administrators and Deputy Director
B. Develop MOU with home study providers to articulate a shared vision.	March 2014	Program Administrator for the Adoptions Team
C. Evaluate progress and effectiveness in monthly meetings with home study providers.	Complete	Program Administrator, Placement Specialist

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Strategy 3.2 – Seek feedback from families on perception of support with the adoption process. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): Measure C2.1 Adoption less than 24 months Measure C2.2 Median time to adoption		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. Develop interview tool for use with families to elicit their perceptions of the adoption process and the support they received during the process.	September 2013	Program Administrators and Management Consultant
B. Schedule interviews or focus groups.	January 2014	Program Administrators and Management Consultant
C. Conduct interviews or focus groups.	February 2014	Program Administrators and Management Consultant
Strategy 3.3 – Seek feedback from Social Workers on perception of support with the adoption process. Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): Measure C2.1 Adoption less than 24 months Measure C2.2 Median time to adoption		<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
A. Develop interview tool for use with Social Workers.	September 2013	Program Administrators and Management Consultant
B. Schedule interviews or focus groups.	March 2014	Program Administrators and Management Consultant
C. Conduct interviews or focus groups.	April 2014	Program Administrators and Management Consultant

J. Probation Narrative

After reviewing the findings of the PQCR and CSA and consulting with agency partners, Probation identified the following measure to target: Improving Permanency Outcomes. Identifying and developing life-long connections. This measure will reflect the number of children who age out of foster care with an established life-long connection.

Automated outcome data is not available on this measure. Since probation would be entering data into CWS/CMS, it was anticipated specific information regarding this measure could be extracted and analyzed. Unfortunately, other than tracking non-minor dependent (NMD) status, probation is unable to extract specific life-long connection data from CWS/CMS. Fortunately, given the overall number of probation placement cases, this data is not difficult to track at this time.

As a result of recommendations from the PQCR, the Probation Department has implemented a process for notifying potential relatives of minors suitable for and/or ordered into out-of-home placement. In addition, Deputy Probation Officers are now encouraged to ask about potential family members and/or caring adults in these minors' lives at every level of contact (intake to supervision). It is anticipated that increased family engagement at every level of probation may increase the number of potential life-long connections for minors in out of home placement. A Deputy Probation Officer is participating in a train-the-trainer strategy adopted by Merced County. The Seneca Center is providing the training and assisting selected staff in implementing the procedures on selected cases. It is anticipated this officer will teach other selected officers the family finding process in the future. A barrier that has arisen is the complexity of the procedures and the amount of time required to implement the process for each case. Given the time constraints in Juvenile Delinquency Court, it is anticipated the family finding process may be best suited for finding relatives/life-long connections of probation minors already in out-of-home placement or those at risk of out-of-home placement who are participating in the wraparound programs. The training via monthly conference calls will be extended and train-the-trainer will begin in July 2013.

It is anticipated that with the implementation of the listed strategies the Probation Department can increase the number of life-long connections for each minor exiting foster care and reach or surpass the targeted improvement goal.