

California – Child and Family Services Review Signature Sheet

For submittal of: CSA  SIP  Progress Report

County	MENDOCINO
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Outcome Data Period	CWS/CMS Data Extract Quarter 2, 2015
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# California - Child and Family Services Review

## County Self-Assessment



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## Introduction

Mendocino County Family & Children’s Services and Probation Department have completed this County Self-Assessment in accordance with the provisions of the Child Welfare Outcomes and Accountability System, referred to as the California –Child and Family Services Review (C-CSFR). The provisions of the C-CSFR require that Child Welfare and Probation Departments provide periodic reports to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). These reports include the County Self-Assessment (CSA), the System Improvement Plan (SIP), and the Peer Review (PR). Each of these reports is completed on a 5-year cycle, with annual SIP updates.

The Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) has been integrated into the C-CSFR process and fulfills some CAPIT, CBCAP and PSSF requirements for a needs assessment that identifies priority unmet needs in the CSA to justify the use of those funds in the SIP to targeted services throughout the continuum of care from prevention/early intervention to treatment and aftercare.

According to the California Department of Social Services, Children’s Services Outcomes and Accountability Bureau and the Office of Child Abuse Prevention:

The C-CSFR process operates on a philosophy of continuous quality improvement, interagency partnership, community involvement, priority service provision, and public reporting of program outcomes. In addition to this focus on priority needs and improved outcomes, the C-CSFR maximizes compliance with federal regulations for receipt of Title IV-E and Title IV-B funds, which include the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program. Requirements for expending the Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT), Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) and PSSF funds continue to be integrated into the CSA and SIP components of the C-CSFR process.

The report was completed with the assistance of a core team of staff from Mendocino County Family and Children's Services and Probation Department and with input from many of our community partners, stakeholders, consumers, court personnel, service providers, staff, and foster and kinship care providers.

### ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

We would like to thank the following groups and individuals for their thoughtful contributions:

- Buck Ganter, Chief Probation Officer,
- Kevin Kelley, Juvenile Probation Manager, Michaela Barlow and Brandy Noriega, Deputy Probation Officers,
- Jena Conner, Deputy Director, Family & Children's Services (FCS),
- Sue Norcross, FCS Sr. Program Manager, and Bobby Brumback, FCS Quality Assurance Program Administrator and his staff, for their contributions to this report, facilitating focus groups, creating and distributing surveys, conducting data analysis, and assistance with the entire process,
- Public Health Nurse, Carol Kelsey, RN.,
- FCS staff who participated in the community stakeholders focus group, peer review process and staff survey,
- Parents, Foster Parents, Foster Family Agencies, Group Homes and Youth who participated in focus groups or surveys,
- Tribal representatives who participated in the stakeholders focus group,
- Community Stakeholders who participated in the stakeholders focus group, and
- UC Davis Northern Region Training Academy staff for their assistance in the peer review and stakeholder process and in the preparation of this report.

We thank all the many, many recipients of our surveys: parents, foster parents, foster youth, and workers from many agencies across the county for taking the time to complete the surveys to share their experiences and priorities for this process.

We thank the clerical and program support staff of Mendocino County's Family and Children's Services, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to keep the Division organized and functioning. We thank the social workers, supervisors and managers who also took time to complete surveys and speak from their minds and hearts. That all of these people persist with energy and hope, day after day, is nothing short of extraordinary.

## C-CFSR Planning Team & Core Representatives

### C-CFSR TEAM

A planning committee was assembled to oversee the C-CFSR process. The team members included Social Services Consultants from CDSS Outcomes and Accountability Bureau and the Office of Child Abuse Prevention, Mendocino County Family and Children’s Services and Mendocino County Probation. The C-CFSR team members included a Deputy Director, one Manager and one Program Administrator. Representatives from Probation included a Juvenile Probation Manager and a Deputy Probation Officer. The team met periodically beginning in March 2015, reviewed data along with input from committee members, and set timelines for the completion of various sections of this report. Additionally, the team included staff that completed the Peer Review and facilitated focus groups that occurred during the course of the process.

### CORE REPRESENTATIVES

Name	Agency	Department
Henry Franklin	CDSS	Outcomes and Accountability
Anthony Bennett	CDSS	Office of Child Abuse Prevention
Jena Conner	HHSa/Social Services	Family & Children’s Services
Sue Norcross	HHSa/Social Services	Family & Children’s Services
Bobby Brumback	HHSa/Social Services	Family & Children’s Services
Kevin Kelley	Probation	Juvenile Division
Michaela Barlow	Probation	Juvenile Division
Various Support Staff	UC Davis	Northern Region Training Academy

## **THE CSA PLANNING PROCESS**

To complete the County Self-Assessment (CSA), input was obtained from stakeholders including community partners, tribal representatives, foster parents, current and former foster youth, probation youth, Mendocino County Health and Human Services divisions including Family and Children’s Services (FCS), and Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, relative and non-relative caregivers, Juvenile Court personnel, birth parents and Probation staff. FCS managers and other staff provided information regarding FCS policy and practice for each of the systemic factors. This information was evaluated to determine the impact of practice on outcome data. Staff from the Mendocino County FCS Quality Assurance unit analyzed the outcome data, identifying contributing factors such as data entry integrity and other systemic factors possibly impacting performance. Performance data was obtained from the UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, Safe Measures, KidsData, CWS/CMS and previous reports.

## **PARTICIPATION OF CORE REPRESENTATIVES**

The core representatives listed on page 6 participated in the self-assessment process and each participant represented their area of expertise. The data and research team members obtained and organized the data; others ran focus groups, gathered information, disseminated questionnaires and consolidated information.

## **STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK**

Mendocino County Family and Children’s Services and Probation solicited stakeholder feedback for the CSA through the Stakeholders Meeting held on June 1, 2015 and through focus groups and surveys with social worker supervisors, social workers, juvenile probation officers, parents, foster parents, and youth in foster care. Following are summaries of the information gleaned from the stakeholder meeting and the focus groups.

The stakeholders listed in Appendix A met on June 1, 2015, to discuss demographics, regional needs and resources, and individual areas of focus related to outcomes for children and families. A summary of their findings is presented throughout the content of the assessment.

Mendocino County FCS conducted five focus groups and two surveys in order to obtain important feedback regarding key participants' thoughts and feelings about county performance and needs. The focus groups and community meeting were well attended, included a broad cross-section of interested community partners and resulted in a great deal of quality feedback. All of the required core participants contributed to the 2015 Mendocino County Self-Assessment, along with a significant number of other recommended participants. The FCS management team and supervisors participated as did FCS case-carrying social workers, with few exceptions. The focus groups allowed for a sharing of information that enhanced knowledge of both FCS and Probation outcomes and more importantly, created an environment where both professionals and those with "life experience" shared resources and ideas, enhancing understanding of all that Mendocino County has to offer in the way of human services. Feedback has been incorporated throughout this document and has guided subsequent discussions which have been integrated into the following detailed analysis.

Focus groups were facilitated by Mendocino County Family and Children's Services and Probation staff in the weeks prior to the Peer Review. Food was provided for all focus group participants.

Focus groups included:

- Foster parents: 13 participants, March 3, 2015
- Biological parents: 11 participants, March 17, 2015 and May 18, 2015
- Social Worker Assistants: 8 participants; May 20, 2015
- Youth: 14 participants, July 8, 2015
- Probation officers: two participants, July 14, 2015
- Group home youth (PO youth) survey: sent to 14 group homes, six responses, July 2015
- PO youth currently in placement: 13 participants, August 2015
- All FCS line staff and management staff were sent a survey on July 23, 2015

Feedback from stakeholders has been collated by themes and is included throughout the report in appropriate sections. Additionally feedback per focus group is included in the Appendix.

# Demographic Profile

## GENERAL COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS



The County of Mendocino lies on the northern coast of the California border, approximately 100 miles north of San Francisco. The county consists of 2,245,940 acres and stretches across 3,510 square miles of vineyard-covered hillsides, deep fertile valleys and rugged, isolated Pacific Ocean frontage.

Mendocino County is largely rural, comprising just over two percent of the land area of California but only about one quarter of one percent of its population. There are ten (10) Federally Recognized Indian Tribes in Mendocino County that live on reservation lands (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2014).

The total population for Mendocino County has fluctuated from 2006 to 2015. In the prior County Self-Assessment, from 2006 to 2009, the population had increased by approximately 1.1% (from 89,961 to 90,206). The most recent available data (California Department of Finance, 2015) indicates that the estimated overall population for Mendocino County increased from 2014 to 2015 by 0.3% (from 88,615 to 88,863), but this is an overall decline from 2009. It should be noted that there is some discrepancy in population statistics, depending on the source: for example, the US Census reports total estimated population for 2014 as 87,869 versus the 88,615 figure provided by the California Department of Finance (US Census Bureau, 2015).

There continues to be discussion regarding the “underground economy” in Mendocino County—marijuana growing and selling. Although it is not feasible to precisely determine the impact of marijuana, a commonly cited estimate is that marijuana accounts for up to 30-40 percent of the local economy (The Press Democrat, 2015). Some officials have expressed concern that increased large-scale marijuana operations have encouraged an influx of crime and gang activity, threatened the environment, set poor examples for our children and youth, and discouraged teens from accepting legitimate, much lower-paying jobs. In an article in the

Ukiah Daily Journal dated November 17, 2013, former Mendocino Major Crimes Task Force Commander, Rich Russell, estimated, “more than half of Mendocino County’s population are growers, sellers, distributors, brokers or trimmers in the less than legal underground marijuana industry.”

***Ethnicity***

The following data provides a more detailed outline of the ethnicities of the residents of Mendocino County compared to the State of California (US Census Bureau, 2015).

**Table 1: Ethnicity (2013)**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Mendocino County (% of Population)</b>	<b>California (% of Population)</b>
<b>White alone</b>	86.6%	73.5%
<b>Black or African American alone</b>	1.0%	6.6%
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native alone</b>	6.3%	1.7%
<b>Asian alone</b>	2.1%	14.1%
<b>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone</b>	0.2%	0.5%
<b>Two or More Races</b>	3.9%	3.7%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	23.5%	38.4%

***Federally Recognized Tribes***

There are ten Federally Recognized Tribes in Mendocino County:

- Cahto Indian Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria
- Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians of California
- Guidiville Rancheria of California
- Hopland Band of Pomo Indians of the Hopland Rancheria
- Manchester Band of Pomo Indians of the Manchester/Point Arena Rancheria
- Pinoleville Pomo Nation
- Potter Valley Tribe
- Redwood Valley Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California
- Round Valley Indian Tribes of the Round Valley Reservation
- Sherwood Valley Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California

A closer look at the American Indian Population indicates there are 2,704 residents with Tribal affiliation (US Census Bureau, 2013).

**Table 2: Tribal Affiliation of Mendocino County Residents, 2013**

American Indian and Alaska Native Tribe/Tribal grouping	American Indian and Alaska Native Alone		American Indian and Alaska Native in combination with one or more other races		American Indian and Alaska Native alone or in any combination
	One tribe/tribal grouping reported	Two or more tribes/tribal groupings reported	One tribe/tribal grouping reported	Two or more tribes/tribal groupings reported	
Cahto Indian Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria	130	17	24	3	174
Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians	132	2	20	5	160
Guidiville Rancheria	55	9	13	0	77
Hopland Band of Pomo Indians	271	0	59	1	331
Manchester Band of Pomo Indians	252	10	112	4	378
Pinoleville Pomo Nation	96	0	32	1	129
Potter Valley Tribe	4	4	2	3	13
Redwood Valley Rancheria of Pomo Indians	72	0	11	0	83
Round Valley Indian Tribes	722	101	134	22	979
Sherwood Valley Rancheria of Pomo Indians	303	2	73	2	380

**Age Distribution**

Population estimates for 2013 indicate that 5.9% of the population is under the age of five (5) years old and 21.7% are under the age of 18 in Mendocino County (US Census Bureau, 2015). Table 3 provides a closer look at the child population of the county (Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015).

**Table 3: Mendocino County Child Population, 2014**

Age	Female	Male	Total
0-2 Years	1,477	1,555	3,032
3-5 Years	1,482	1,581	3,063
6-10 Years	2,581	2,741	5,322
11-13 Years	1,566	1,570	3,136
14-17 Years	2,110	2,179	4,289
<b>Total 0-17</b>	<b>9,216</b>	<b>9,626</b>	<b>18,842</b>

### **School Age Children**

Mendocino County has a total of 69 schools (overseen by 13 separate school districts) within its borders, educating approximately 13,009 students during the 2014-2015 school year. Please note that the 13,009 student figure reflects a point in time calculation and differs slightly from other sources.

**Table 4: Facts Regarding Children Attending School in Mendocino County**

(Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015)

<b>Children Attending School in Mendocino County</b>	
Mendocino County Child Population (n) (2015)	18,718
Public School Enrollment (n) (2015)	13,009
English Learners in Public School (n) (2015)	2,757
English Learners in Public School (%) (2015)	21.2 % (Spanish 20.8%; Other .4%)
Homeless Students (n) (2014)	647
Homeless Public School Students (%) (2014)	4.9%
Kindergartners With All Required Immunizations (n) (2015)	967
Kindergartners With All Required Immunizations (%) (2015)	81.2%
Children Enrolled in Special Education (n) (2014)	1,500
Children Enrolled in Special Education (%) (2014)	11.4%
Foster Youth With History of IEP (Jan-March 2015)(n) (UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015)	47

**Table 5: Public School Enrollment, by Race/Ethnicity, 2015**

(Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015)

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
African American/Black	0.9%
American Indian/Alaska Native	7.6%
Asian/Asian American	1.0%
Filipino	0.4%
Hispanic/Latino	40.9%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1%
White	46%
Multiracial	2.6%

### **Children Who Leave School Before Graduation**

The dropout rate is the percentage of students that leave the 9-12 instructional system without a high school diploma, GED, or special education certificate of completion and do not remain enrolled after the end of the fourth year (Education Data Partnership, 2014)

**Table 6: Mendocino County High School Dropouts, 2014**

(Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015)

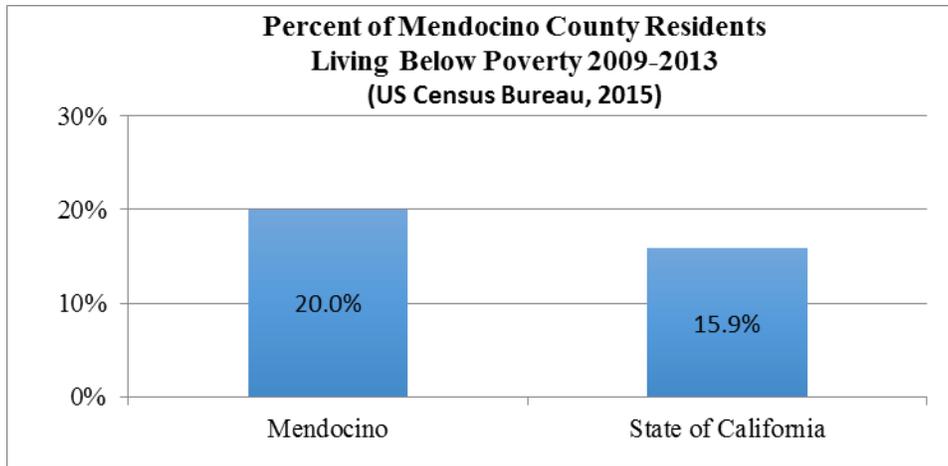
High School Dropouts (n)	150
High School Dropouts (%)	14.3%

***Languages Spoken***

According to US Census data, English is the primary language spoken at home in Mendocino County. The US Census Bureau reports that for the years 2009-2013, 21.2% of the Mendocino County residents aged five and older spoke a language other than English at home (US Census Bureau, 2015). In 2013, 19.5% of the children enrolled in school were English learners (Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015). The most common first language for English learners in public schools is Spanish; over 98% of students identified as “English learners” speak Spanish as their primary language (Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015). Family and Children’s Services and Juvenile Probation have bi-lingual Spanish speaking staff in order to serve children, youth and families who are primarily Spanish speaking. FCS also provides services in Spanish and/or uses translators.

***Median Household Income***

The median household income during 2009-2013 in Mendocino County was \$43,469 per year; this is approximately 28.8% lower than the median income for the State of California, which was \$61,094 (US Census Bureau, 2015). Not surprisingly, based on the lower median household income, 20% of the residents in Mendocino County are below the poverty level, compared to 15.9% throughout the state (US Census Bureau, 2015).



**Unemployment Data**

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate in Mendocino County, as of July 2014, was 6.9%, compared to the overall rate of 7.9% for the State of California (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Unemployment trends for Mendocino County appear to be declining overall since March 2011, with apparent seasonal fluctuations; the rate drops during the summer and increases during winter.

**Average Housing Costs**

The median value of an owner-occupied housing unit within the county during 2009-2013 was \$323,600; this is lower than the average value statewide, which was \$366,400 (US Census Bureau, 2015). During 2009-2013, the home ownership rate in Mendocino County was 58.2% compared with a statewide average of 55.3% (US Census Bureau, 2015).

The fair market prices for rent in Mendocino County have generally increased over the past five years (Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015). The estimated costs below (Table 7) include utilities, except for telephone services.

**Table 7: Mendocino County Fair Market Prices for Rent, 2011-2015**

(Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015)

Mendocino County Unit Size	Amount				
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Studio - 0 Bedrooms	\$663	\$648	\$700	\$656	\$811
1 Bedroom	\$818	\$799	\$749	\$702	\$869
2 Bedrooms	\$994	\$971	\$989	\$927	\$1,147

3 Bedrooms	\$1,357	\$1,325	\$1,363	\$1,277	\$1,580
4 Bedrooms	\$1,743	\$1,703	\$1,647	\$1,544	\$1,910

### ***Homelessness Data***

As of 2015, there were 1,032 identified homeless people in Mendocino County, of whom 106 were identified to be “chronically homeless” (Mendocino County, 2015). As of 2015, there were 42 Mendocino County families with minor children identified as being homeless, of which 16 families were identified as being in either “emergency” or “transitional” homelessness situations (Mendocino County, 2015). There were a total of 63 children identified as “homeless” in Mendocino County at the point-in-time count on January 22, 2015 (Mendocino County, 2015). As previously noted on page 12, there were 647 students in 2014 who were homeless at any point in the year (Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015).

**Table 8: 2015 Mendocino County Homeless Census** (Mendocino County, 2015)

Total Count	1,032
Sheltered Count	152
Unsheltered Count	880
Homeless Households with Children*	42
*Number of Persons in these Households	131
Number of Homeless Children	63
Chronically Homeless Individuals	106
Chronically Homeless Families	3

### ***Analysis of General Demographics***

The overall population of Mendocino County has declined slightly (about 2%) since the most recent Community Self-Assessment (CSA) in 2011 (90,206 to approximately 88,000 depending on the source, as noted in the introduction above). The child population, however, has declined 8% (20,440 to 18,784) during the same timeframe. Currently, children make up 21.1% of the population of Mendocino County.

The median annual household family income has declined from \$50,577 (from 2006-2008, as reported in the 2011 CSA) to \$43,469 (from 2009-2013). The unemployment rate in Mendocino County has maintained a historic pattern of seasonal fluctuations, but generally appears to be declining. Nonetheless, many people in this county continue to live in poverty,

some generational, and a significant number of school age children are homeless. The poverty level in Mendocino County has slightly decreased from our last CSA, from 22.7% to 20%, according to the Lucile Packard Foundation.

A significant number of children in Mendocino County face educational challenges: approximately five percent of children attending school are homeless at any point in the school year; approximately 11 percent of children have been identified as being in need of special education services; nearly 20 percent of children are learning English as a second language. These factors may be contributing to the high dropout rate (over 10 percent).

## **CHILD MALTREATMENT INDICATORS**

### **Number of Low Birth Weight Newborns**

Low birth weight is defined as an infant weighing less than 2500 grams (or approximately 5 pounds, 18 ounces) at the time of birth. Causes for low birth weight can include premature birth at less than 37 weeks gestation, intrauterine growth restriction due to issues with the placenta, maternal health, or birth defects. Some risk factors for low birth weight are race, age, multiple births, lack of prenatal care, and maternal health. Infants with a low birth weight have a greater risk for complications such as hypothermia, perinatal asphyxia, respiratory problems, anemia, feeding difficulties, infection, hearing deficits, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and other complications (UCSF Medical Center, 2004).

**Table 9: Infants Born at Low Birth Weight**

(Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015)

<b>Year</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Infants (n)</b>	72	68	53	65	66	62
<b>Infants (%)</b>	6.2%	6.2%	5.0%	6.1%	5.7%	6.1%

According to 2014 California Department of Health data, during 2011-2013, 6.0% of infants born in Mendocino County were low-birth weight, compared to a statewide rate of low-birth weight newborns of 6.8% for the same timeframe (California Department of Public Health, 2015). Of additional importance, 75.8% of all Mendocino County mothers who gave birth between 2011-2013 received adequate prenatal care, 68.4% within the first trimester -

compared to statewide averages of 74.6% and 68.3%, respectively (California Department of Public Health, 2015).

***Number of Children Born to Teen Parents***

Prevention of teenage pregnancy is important for several reasons, both socially and economically. Teenage mothers tend to have lower education levels and decreased income, increasing the cost to taxpayers for health care and sometimes foster care of the children. Further, children of teenage mothers are less likely to graduate high school, have more health issues, more likely to be incarcerated during adolescence, and become teenage parents themselves (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). We currently have six parenting or pregnant mothers in our AB 12 Extended Foster Care program.

**Table 10: Mendocino County Teen Births**  
(Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015)

<b>Year</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Teen Births (n)</b>	105	103	89	100	81
<b>Teen Births (per 1,000)</b>	40.2	3.91	33.7	37.2	30.4

Mendocino County’s three-year aggregated teen birth rate from 2009-2011 was significantly higher (38 per 1,000) than the statewide figure (31.6 per 1,000) (California Department of Public Health, 2013).

***Family Structure***

The average household size in Mendocino County was 2.5 in 2013 (US Census Bureau, 2015). Married-couple families comprise 44.2% of households, and married-couple families with children under the age of 18 comprise 15.6 % of households (US Census Bureau, 2015). There were 30.7% of households with one or more people over the age of 65, and 29% with one or more people under age 18 (US Census Bureau, 2015). The rates of grandparents responsible for their grandchildren during 2008-2012 were not available or too low to report with significant statistical confidence (US Census Bureau, 2015). The following was derived from 2010 Census results:

**Table 11: Household Types in Mendocino County**

(US Census Bureau, 2015)

	<b>Mendocino County Residents (n)</b>	<b>Mendocino County Residents (%)</b>	<b>California (%)</b>
<b>All Households</b>	39,945	100%	100%
<b>Married Couples with Children</b>	5,557	13.9%	23.4%
<b>Married Couples without Children</b>	9,899	28.3%	26.0%
<b>Single Parents with Children</b>	3,410	8.5%	9.6%
<b>Other Family</b>	2,725	6.8%	9.7%
<b>One Person</b>	10,382	26%	23.3%
<b>Other Nonfamily</b>	2,972	7.4%	8.0%

***Housing Costs and Availability***

As previously indicated, the median value of owner-occupied housing units in Mendocino County was approximately \$323,600 during 2009-2013 (Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015). In 2014, the price of a rental, ranging from a studio to a four-bedroom unit, is predicted to be between \$811-\$1,910 (Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015). According to US Census Bureau estimates, in 2010, 5,378 of the available 40,323 (13.3%) housing units throughout the county were vacant (US Census Bureau, 2010).

***2-1-1 Calls: Monthly Averages by Assistance Requests***

Mendocino County has a web-based and telephone 2-1-1 service through the California Alliance of Information & Referral Services (211 Mendocino, 2014). The service allows members of the community and service providers to access information about government and non-profit community health and social services in their area. The 211 resource is reflective of a total of 209 active agencies, 480 active programs and 325 active sites. For the month of July 2015 there were a total of 38 Information and Referral Calls and 384 non-information and referral calls. The majority of calls were regarding housing, legal, consumer and public safety services, utility assistance, health care and disaster services (for full report see: 211 Mendocino Report, July 2015).

### ***Substance Abuse Data***

The most recent available data report (2010) regarding substance abuse from the California Department of Health Care Services uses seven indicators to report community substance abuse (Community Prevention Initiative, 2010). Table 12 summarizes this data.

**Table 12: Community Substance Abuse Indicators**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Mendocino County</b>	<b>State Average</b>
Prevalence of Binge Drinking (2007) (residents 18+ years old)	36.1%	29.7%
Admissions to Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment (2008)	1,040.37 per 100,00	591.63 per 100,00
Arrests for Drug-Related Offenses (2008)	1,680.43 per 100,00	910.20 per 100,00
Arrests for Alcohol-Related Offenses (2008)	2,318.46 per 100,000	1203.37 per 100,000
Alcohol-Involved Motor Vehicle Accident Fatalities (2008)	18.52 per 100,000	3.54 per 100,000
Alcohol and Drug Use Hospitalization (2007)	220.54 per 100,000	205.44 per 100,000
Deaths Due to Alcohol and Drug Use (2007)	42.13 per 100,000	21.46 per 100,00

### ***Mental Health Data***

In 2012, there were 4,988 individuals estimated as needing mental health services in Mendocino County, including 1,529 youth ages 0-17 (California Department of Health Care Services, 2013). There were 18 youth 5-19 years of age in Mendocino County that were hospitalized for mental health services in 2012.

### ***Children with Disabilities***

In 2014, there were 1,500 children (11.4% of the total population) in Mendocino County enrolled in Special Education. This includes children attending public school in grades K-12. (Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015).

IDEA defines a child with a disability as any child who has: “mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism,

traumatic brain injury, other health impairments or specific learning disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.”

The tables below provide information about children with Special Education enrollment, stratified by disability type.

**Table 13: Special Education Enrollment, by Disability**

(Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2015)

<b>Disability</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Autism	62	71	72	86	115
Deaf	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7
Deaf-Blindness	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Emotional Disturbance	129	135	118	117	120
Hard of Hearing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8
Intellectual Disability	109	106	105	98	104
Learning Disability	637	634	591	584	614
Multiple Disability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10
Orthopedic Impairment	27	24	30	29	46
Other Health Impairment	65	69	77	81	92
Speech or Language Impairment	222	229	240	238	368
Traumatic Brain Injury	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3
Visual Impairment	11	N/A	N/A	11	12

***Rates of Law Enforcement Calls for Domestic Violence***

In 2014, there were 515 law enforcement calls for domestic violence in Mendocino County; nearly half (49.9%) of the calls involved use of a weapon (California Department of Justice, 2015).

**Table 14: Rates of Law Enforcement Calls for Domestic Violence**

(California Department of Justice, 2015)

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>TOTAL CALLS</b>	595	578	572	485	440	375	499	515	590	515
No Weapon Involved	214	294	266	212	259	313	359	244	299	258
Weapon Involved	381	284	306	273	181	62	140	271	291	257
Firearm	5	3	4	2	7	3	2	2	12	6
Knife or Cutting Instrument	6	11	5	10	4	5	6	7	11	7
Other Dangerous Weapon	43	19	18	22	18	16	25	32	43	20
Personal Weapon	327	251	279	239	152	38	107	230	225	224

### ***Emergency Room Visits for Child Victims of Avoidable Injuries***

During 2010 to 2013, there were 9,827 cases of children in Mendocino County presenting at the emergency room with non-fatal injuries, including 130 children with self-inflicted injuries and 169 children who were the victims of assault. During this timeframe, there were no children presented at the emergency room with injuries resulting from abuse or neglect. Although there were 40 cases in which the “intent” of the injury is not specified, the overwhelming majority of children presenting to the emergency room (9,488 of 9,827 incidents) were determined to be “unintentional” (California Department of Public Health, 2015).

### ***Child Fatalities and Near Fatalities***

There were thirteen child fatalities in Mendocino County since the most recent County Self-Assessment (2010-2013, the most recent data available); twelve of which were determined to be unintentional, and one (1) found to be self-inflicted (California Department of Public Health, 2015). Family and Children’s Services reports to the California Department of Social Services of fatalities and near fatalities as a result of abuse or neglect indicate one fatality in 2012, one near fatality in 2013 and two near fatalities in 2014.

### ***Analysis of Child Maltreatment Indicators***

Reviewing the child maltreatment indicators, there are some key areas to emphasize. Substance use and abuse, especially with regards to alcohol and alcohol related motor vehicle fatalities, appears to be a significant problem in Mendocino County. The rate of calls to law enforcement for domestic violence were at their lowest point in the past ten years in 2010, but have risen significantly during the past three years.

## **CHILD WELFARE AND PROBATION POPULATION**

### ***Children with Allegations (CWS)***

For the five-year period, 2010-2014, the annual average number of children with allegations of abuse in Mendocino County is 1,162. The most current data shows that 1,754

Mendocino County children were alleged to have been abused in 2014, a rate of 93.1 per 1,000 children as compared to the state rate of 54.7. The increase can be partially attributed to high prevalence of substance abuse and mental health issues, poverty and lack of resources.

Children with abuse allegations may be counted multiple times over a multi-year period (but only once per year); therefore, it is not possible to conclusively determine the total number of children with abuse allegations over the five-year timeframe (UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015). The tables below provide annual information about children with abuse allegations stratified by age and ethnicity.

**Table 15: Children with Allegations (by age)**

(UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015)

Age Group	Year				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Under 1</b>	127	128	152	157	136
<b>1-2</b>	191	185	210	204	200
<b>3-5</b>	283	279	323	339	342
<b>6-10</b>	405	415	456	498	528
<b>11-15</b>	433	413	382	407	417
<b>16-17</b>	130	138	157	144	131
<b>Total</b>	1,569	1,557	1,680	1,749	1,754

**Table 16: Children with Allegations (by ethnicity)**

(UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015)

Ethnic Group	YEAR				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Black</b>	27	31	12	29	40
<b>White</b>	1011	958	1079	1033	1041
<b>Latino</b>	277	298	294	363	365
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	8	13	0	16	10
<b>Native American</b>	211	190	210	215	212
<b>Multi-Race</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Missing</b>	35	69	76	93	86
<b>Total</b>	1,569	1,557	1,680	1,749	1,754

### **Children with Substantiated Allegations**

For the five-year period, 2010-2014, the annual average number of children with substantiated allegations of abuse in Mendocino County is 373. The most current data shows that 352 Mendocino County children had substantiated abuse allegations in 2014; a substantiation rate of 18.7 per 1,000 children as compared to the state rate of 9.0. It should be noted that, due to the manner in which data is collected for this statistic, children with abuse allegations may be counted multiple times over a multi-year period (but only once per year); therefore, it is not possible to conclusively determine the total number of children with substantiated abuse allegations over the five-year timeframe (UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015).

The tables below provide annual information about children with substantiated abuse allegations stratified by age and ethnicity.

**Table 17: Children with Substantiated Allegations (by age)**

(UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015)

Age Group	YEAR				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Under 1</b>	48	53	65	49	46
<b>1-2</b>	64	63	54	47	57
<b>3-5</b>	78	69	73	68	76
<b>6-10</b>	104	87	104	87	92
<b>11-15</b>	92	87	69	51	65
<b>16-17</b>	36	23	22	20	16
<b>Total</b>	422	382	387	322	352

**Table 18: Children with Substantiated Allegations (by ethnicity)**

(UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015)

Ethnic Group	YEAR				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Black</b>	7	13	1	4	7
<b>White</b>	289	245	240	185	223
<b>Latino</b>	71	63	74	89	54
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	1	2	0	6	4
<b>Native American</b>	49	56	65	35	61
<b>Multi-Race</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Missing</b>	5	3	7	3	3
<b>Total</b>	422	382	387	322	352

### ***Children with Allegations by Type***

For the five-year period, 2010-2014, General Neglect was consistently the most prevalent reason reported, followed by Physical Abuse. Emotional Abuse and Sexual Abuse are the next-most likely allegations of abuse, ranking third and fourth (depending on the year). In 2014, allegations of General Neglect, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, and Emotional Abuse made up 97.6% of all allegations (62%, 17%, 10%, and 8%, respectively).

**Table 19: Children with Allegation by Type**

(UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015)

Type	YEAR				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	148	139	192	173	176
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	277	257	318	349	301
<b>Severe Neglect</b>	19	14	12	15	11
<b>General Neglect</b>	998	987	948	952	1,089
<b>Exploitation</b>	2	0	1	1	0
<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	98	113	186	239	147
<b>Caretaker Absence/Incapacity</b>	22	44	18	18	20
<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	5	3	5	2	10
<b>Total</b>	1,569	1,557	1,680	1,749	1,754

### ***Children with Entries to Foster Care (CWS)***

For the five-year period, 2010-2014, the annual average number of youth with foster care entries in Mendocino County is 155. The most current data shows that 158 Mendocino County youth entered foster care in 2014. This number includes youths aged 18-20 who are choosing to voluntarily re-enter foster care via Extended Foster Care (AB 12). In 2014, 23 of the 158 youth entering foster care (14.5%) were aged 18-20. The most recent data indicates an entry rate of 7.2 per 1,000 for Mendocino County children aged 0-17 as compared to the state rate of 3.5 (UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015).

Children with entries into foster care may be counted multiple times over a multi-year period (but only once per year); therefore, it is not possible to conclusively determine the total number of children with entries into foster care over the five-year timeframe (UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015).

The table below provides information about Mendocino County children entering foster care during 2010-2014, stratified by removal reason.

**Table 20: Children with Entries to Foster Care (by removal reason)**

(UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015)

Removal Reason	YEAR				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Neglect</b>	140	113	143	132	94
<b>Physical</b>	4	4	0	7	7
<b>Sexual</b>	2	0	2	1	1
<b>Voluntary Reentry</b>	0	0	7	14	23
<b>Other</b>	13	2	8	25	33
<b>Missing</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	159	119	160	179	158

***Number of Children with First Entries (CWS)***

For the five-year period, 2009-2013, the annual average number of children with first entries into foster care in Mendocino County is 110. The most current data shows that 106 Mendocino County children made a first entry into foster care in 2014; an entry rate of 5.6 per 1,000 children as compared to the state rate of 2.9. It is possible to determine the aggregate number of children who have made first entries into foster care over this five-year timeframe: 550 children made first entries into foster care during 2010-2014, as compared to 588 children who made first entries in the previous five-year period (2005-2009). We believe the reduction in the total number of children entering care compared to the previous five-year time period can be attributed, in part, due to prevention services offered throughout the county at Family Resource Centers.

The tables below provide information about Mendocino County children making first entries into foster care between 2010-2014, stratified by age and ethnicity.

**Table 21: Children with First Entries to Foster Care (by age)**

(UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015)

Age Group	YEAR				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Under 1</b>	17	20	31	30	27
<b>1-2</b>	18	18	14	22	17
<b>3-5</b>	19	20	15	21	18
<b>6-10</b>	31	13	24	19	27

<b>11-15</b>	22	22	25	22	15
<b>16-17</b>	5	4	6	6	2
<b>Total</b>	112	97	115	120	106

**Table 22: Children with First Entries to Foster Care (by ethnicity)**

(UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015)

Ethnic Group	YEAR				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Black</b>	0	2	3	1	1
<b>White</b>	56	67	68	62	65
<b>Latino</b>	17	32	13	27	40
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	1	0	1	0	3
<b>Native American</b>	11	11	12	25	11
<b>Missing</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	85	112	97	115	120

***Number of Children Entering Placement with Suitable Placement Order (Probation)***

**Table 23: Children with First Entries to Foster Care (by age) (Probation)**

(Safe Measures and local data)

Age Group	YEAR				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>13 years</b>	0	0	0	1	0
<b>14 years</b>	3	0	1	0	0
<b>15 years</b>	1	1	1	4	2
<b>16 years</b>	1	5	5	3	6
<b>17 years</b>	1	2	0	3	1
<b>18 years</b>	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	6	7	8	11	9

**Table 24: Children with First Entries to Foster Care (by ethnicity) (Probation)**

Safe Measures and local data base

Ethnic Group	YEAR				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Black</b>	0	0	1	0	1
<b>White</b>	5	3	4	6	3
<b>Latino</b>	0	4	2	4	3
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Native American</b>	1	0	1	0	2

<b>Multi-Race</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Missing</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	6	7	8	11	9

### ***Children with Subsequent Entries***

The table below measures the incidence of re-entry into foster care within 12 and 24-month timeframes after a successful discharge to reunification. Statistics for children who reunified in 2013 are not complete, as not enough time has yet elapsed (UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015).

**Table 25: Children with Re-Entries to Foster Care**  
(UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015)

	Interval			
	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Reentered in less than 12 months</b>	17	17	12	20
<b>No reentry within 12 months</b>	67	67	65	78
<b>Reentered in less than 24 months</b>	18	22	21	20*
<b>No reentry within 24 months</b>	66	62	69	N/A*

\*Insufficient time has elapsed for full reporting

### ***Children in Care (CWS)***

For the five-year period, 2010-2014, the annual average number of children in care on a specified day during the year (July 1st) in Mendocino County is 211.4. The most current data shows that 236 Mendocino County children were in foster care on July 1, 2014; an in-care rate of 12.5 per 1,000 children as compared to the state rate of 6.0. It should be noted that, due to the manner in which data is collected for this statistic, children in foster care may be counted multiple times over a multi-year period (but only once per year); therefore, it is not possible to conclusively determine the total number of children who were in care over the five-year timeframe (UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015).

The tables below provide information about Mendocino County children in foster care between 2010-2014, stratified by age and ethnicity.

**Table 26: Children in Care (by age)**

(UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015)

Age Group	Point In Time				
	7/1/2010	7/1/2011	7/1/2012	7/1/2013	7/1/2014
Under 1	9	9	13	17	22
1-2	25	19	27	28	27
3-5	24	28	22	30	39
6-10	41	47	38	49	68
11-15	71	68	51	54	47
16-17	30	36	39	46	33
<b>Total</b>	200	207	190	224	236

**Table 27: Children in Care (by ethnicity)**

(UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015)

Ethnic Group	Point In Time				
	7/1/2010	7/1/2011	7/1/2012	7/1/2013	7/1/2014
Black	10	10	5	4	5
White	112	126	126	133	138
Latino	47	46	34	53	70
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	1	1	3	3
Native American	28	24	24	31	20
Multi-Race	0	0	0	0	0
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	200	207	190	224	236

**Children in Care (Probation)**

267 youth were booked into Juvenile Hall during the year, 206 (77%) boys and 61 (23%) girls. Out of this number 245 (92%) were Mendocino County residents, and 22 (8%) youth were from other counties, states or countries. Of the 267 youth admitted, 75 (28%) were released prior to a court hearing, i.e., released at intake.

**Table 28: Reasons for Admission to Probation**

REASONS FOR ADMISSION	N	%
Property Crimes	37	14%
Crimes Against People	45	17%
VOP, Court Commitments, Court Orders, Courtesy Hold	138	51%
Drugs/Alcohol	24	9%
Other (Conspiracy, Gang Activity, Traffic, Weapons)	23	9%

**Table 29: 2014 Mendocino County Juvenile Hall**

ADMISSION INFORMATION	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
ADMISSIONS	206	61	267
RELEASES	212	62	274
LENGTH OF STAY	3,788	706	4,494
AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY	17.87	11.39	16.40
HIGH POPULATION	18	7	23
LOW POPULATION	2	0	3
CHILD CARE DAYS	3,484	683	4,167
AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION	9.55	1.87	11.42

**Table 30: 2014 Mendocino County Release Information**

RELEASE INFORMATION	MALES	DAYS DETAINED	FEMALES	DAYS DETAINED	TOTAL	DAYS DETAINED
RELEASES W/O PETITION (A)	54	157	21	53	75	210
DETAINED (D)	46	494	11	76	57	570
STRAIGHT COMMITMENT (S)	88	2,219	22	346	110	2,565
CHANGE OF PLACEMENT (C)	19	878	7	206	26	1,084
COURTESY HOLD (H)	1	3			1	3
CYA COMMITMENT AWOL						
TRANSFERRED OUT OF COUNTY (T)	4	37	1	25	5	62
CERTIFIED ADULT COURT						
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>3,788</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>4,494</b>

**Table 31: Probation: Intakes From Group Homes**

	MALE		FEMALE	
	In	Out	In	Out
BAR-O-RANCH	1			
OPEN LINE	1			
REDWOOD CHILDREN'S SERVICES	1			
UNICORN	1	3		
YUKI TRAILS		5		
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

### ***Children in Care with Tribal Affiliations (CWS)***

As of April 1, 2015, there are currently 48 Mendocino County youth in foster care placements that are identified as having primary or mixed Indian heritage, including 46 who are eligible through the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Eight (8) of these youth are aged 18-20. Of youth aged 0-17, the majority (22 of 40, or 55%) are placed with relatives (UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015).

The table below provides information about Mendocino County children in foster care with Indian heritage between 2010-2014, stratified by age and placement type.

**Table 32: Youth with Tribal Affiliations (Primary or mixed/multi-ethnicity of American Indian)**  
(UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2015)

Placement Status	Age Group							Total
	<1	1-2	3-5	6-10	11-15	16-17	18-20	
<b>Relatives</b>	2	2	7	6	4	1	0	22
<b>Non Relatives, Indian SCPs</b>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Non Relatives, Non-Indian SCPs</b>	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	5
<b>Non Relatives, SCP Ethnic Missing</b>	0	0	2	0	3	3	0	8
<b>Group Homes</b>	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	4
<b>Other</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Missing</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	8
<b>Total</b>	3	3	10	9	11	4	8	48

### ***Changes in Allegations Rates Analysis***

Child Welfare: The number of children with an allegation in 2010 was 1,569; in 2014 that number increased to 1,754. Our incidence rate per 1,000 increased from 80.5 in 2010 to 93.1 in 2014. This trend is similar to some other northern region counties. Substance abuse, mental health and poverty continue to contribute to increasing rates of abuse and neglect.

Per the UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project allegations rates by zip codes, our highest number of allegations are found in and around the cities of Ukiah, Willits and Fort Bragg, as those are the most populated and concentrated areas of the county.

Probation: Types of substantiated allegations have remained level since 2010; however, the percentage of allegations has been trending down. This downward trend is most likely the result of less youth being arrested for petty crimes; Mendocino Probation is diverting lower level crimes to educational programs rather than the court process.

In the past three decades, schools have become a major source of referrals to the juvenile justice system. A number of innovations have been developed to reverse this trend and keep youth from getting to the front door of the juvenile justice system. The schools have implemented school-based restorative conflict resolution programs. These programs bring together the people who have had a conflict to work toward a resolution. A number of community-based, early intervention programs for youth have been developed by the schools such as community services and referrals to counseling and The Arbor, a youth drop in center, and Teen Peer Court.

The probation department is utilizing evidence based practices and assessment tools in order to make better decisions when a youth is arrested for an offense. Probation Officers have discretion to divert youth with infraction and some misdemeanor offense to prevention type programs in order to keep them from appearing before the Judge and potentially being declared a Ward of the Court.

***Types of Substantiated Allegations over Time***

**Table 33: Substantiated Allegations (2010-2014)**  
(Kidsdata.org, 2015)

Types of Abuse	PERCENT BY YEAR				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
At Risk/Sibling Abuse	1.2%	.5%	1.3%	0%	2.4%
Caretaker Absence/ Incapacity	4%	8.3%	3.4%	4%	5.3%
Emotional Abuse	4.5%	6.8%	11.6%	9.6%	5.3%
Exploitation	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
General Neglect	78%	72.7%	76.7%	72.7%	76.3%
Physical Abuse	7.3%	9.1%	4.7%	9.9%	5.9%
Severe Neglect	2.6%	1.8%	.8%	2.8%	1.2%
Sexual Abuse	2.4%	.8%	1.6%	.9%	3.6%
Substantial Risk	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

As noted in the above chart, the percentage of substantiated allegations by type has remained generally consistent from 2010 to 2014 with some increase and decrease fluctuations during the time period.

## **Ethnic/Cultural Disparities**

### ***Ethnic/Cultural Disparities (CWS)***

Although the ethnic makeup of children in the child welfare system has not significantly changed since the last county self-assessment, the child population has, in fact, changed in composition which warrants a look at the ethnic breakdown by rates per 1,000 children in each ethnic population. For example, although the overall child population has declined from 2009-2012, the Native American population has increased 1.24% during the last five years. The other ethnic groups have remained stable or have slightly decreased.

The ethnic group that experiences the largest amount of disproportionality is Native American but with small numbers, the fluctuations and rates are somewhat distorted. Per the UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, in 2014, Native American children constituted 5.61% of the child population in Mendocino County but represented 14.07% of the first entries and 8.47% of the in-care rate.

A possible reason for the higher proportionality in Native American children in care can be contributed to substance abuse. Mendocino County Family and Children's Services works very closely with our tribal partners in addressing child abuse and neglect and connecting families to culturally appropriate services to address the issues. In September 2009 Mendocino County FCS and the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding how the Tribe and Agency work together with mutual families in both referrals and cases. The MOU continues to be in effect and staff are trained annually on both the specific MOU with the Hopland Tribe, as well as the Indian Child Welfare Act requirements in general.

### ***Ethnic/Cultural Disparities (Probation)***

African American, Native American and LGBTQ identifying youth encounter significant barriers to permanency. Probation has adopted a family finding tool that is used at the time of detention that identifies the youth's family members or NREFM that could be a potential placement and/or could be utilized as someone to maintain connections while the youth is placed out of the home.

Under the California Foster Care Nondiscrimination Act, all group home administrators, foster parents, and department licensing personnel must receive initial and ongoing training on the rights of a foster child to have fair and equal access to all available services and the right to not be subjected to harassment or discrimination based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. In addition, Probation Placement Officers have been trained in the same manner.

Probation has developed and adopted assessment tools to help Probation Officers make structured decisions about when to detain newly arrested youth and those who violate probation. These assessment tools provide risk scores based on standard, objective criteria such as current charges, previous failures to appear in court, and previous violations of the conditions of release. Because they reduce the impact of individual discretion and unconscious bias, they are key tools in reducing racial and ethnic disparities.

With our growing Latino populations, Probation has recognized the value of increasing the cultural competence of Probation and Court personnel to help translate court forms and information, ensuring that the translations are understandable. Probation has invested time in hiring staff to build the Spanish language proficiency of our staff. Probation is expanding current practices. For example, where probation officers with special language or cultural competence skills were ending up with higher caseloads and extra translation responsibilities, Probation has adjusted assignments to distribute responsibilities more equitably. Probation utilizes support staff to help translate information passed between the minor's parent and the Probation Officer.

## Changes/Trends since Last CSA

### *CWS Analysis*

Since our last CSA, these are new or enhanced services and programs that have been implemented to address the continued needs of children, youth and families in Mendocino County:

- In January 2015, Mendocino County FCS instituted the RED (Review, Evaluate, Direct) Team which reviews and prioritizes referrals for response. The number of Emergency Response social workers has increased in the past two years; from 8 in July 2013 to 14 in July 2015 and additional Emergency Response social workers will be hired in the next year. Structured Decision Making (SDM) training was provided to all social workers in May and June 2015 to ensure the correct determination of response for referrals as well as risk and safety assessments. Family Team Meetings are frequently held to assist families in developing a support network and utilizing community resources.
- The number of parenting classes and groups has increased to serve families at Family Resource Centers. This has resulted in a larger number of participants in all classes offered. Breaking the Cycle, Communication, Discipline with Confidence, Child Development, Intake Support and Family Empowerment Groups are valuable and help develop necessary skills regarding parenting. Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) is an evidence based program which is provided through collaboration with our community-based partners.
- Family Findings efforts have increased. More relative placements are occurring due to the connections being made with children's relatives. In July 2015, the Integrated Services Unit staff began utilizing Seneca Family of Agencies to conduct family finding searches to help establish connections for children. Seneca Family Finding offers methods and strategies to locate and engage the relatives of children who are living in out-of-home care. The goal of Family Finding is to provide each child with the life-long connections that only a family can offer and hopefully relative placement options. Our Family & Children's Services family connection staff meets with families to help them identify their support systems within their family and community to help ensure child safety.
- Mendocino County FCS continued the Family Dependency Drug Court program after the federal grant ended on September 30, 2014. This valuable program serves parents in open child welfare court cases with substance abuse related issues. This program is successful and is recognized in the community and courts as a mechanism to help parents successfully address their substance abuse issues and reunify with their children.

- Social Worker Core training is a priority focus for social worker staff. Since 2011, 22 social workers have completed Core within the required timeframe. Core Phase II is another high priority. Mendocino County has committed time and resources to have all social worker staff be compliant by the end of 2016. Core training sessions by UC Davis have been held in Mendocino County during the last two years and will be offered again in Ukiah in March, 2016. In addition, social workers receive ongoing monthly in-house training on program-related topics provided by staff, attorneys, community providers, and partner agencies. Further, a Training Unit was created in September 2015 to train all newly hired social workers.
- Continuous Quality Improvement has been implemented through an awareness campaign and focus groups. Mendocino County has begun the process of identifying focus areas for practice improvement and implementing changes. Staff are encouraged to submit suggestions regarding Continuous Quality Improvement. These suggestions are reviewed by the management team and responses are provided to all staff regularly. An example of this is a focus group was held with foster parents in March 2015 and a number of issues were identified regarding their working relationship with social workers. Their feedback was reviewed and a training was prepared for staff to address the feedback from foster parents. Staff were trained in July 2015. Follow up focus groups and/or surveys will be done with foster parents to monitor for improvements.
- Two Mendocino County FCS staff were recently certified as Federal Case Reviewers and one additional staff person is in the process. 70 cases per year from FCS and Probation will be reviewed using the Federal Review Case process. The data collected will be invaluable in our continuous quality improvement efforts.
- In December 2015, Mendocino County will be implementing a Residentially Based Services (RBS) program. This two-year pilot program will transform how we work with youth in high-level group home care and transition them back to their families and communities in a shorter period of time, as well as provide continued intensive treatment and supports in the community once the youth no longer needs the residential setting. RBS will be available for both FCS and Probation youth.
- In Mendocino County, qualified youth, ages 18-21, may participate in the Extended Foster Care program. Through collaboration with FCS and a community partner, Mendocino County Youth Project (MCYP), Levine House, a six-bed facility, was established in 2014 to provide clean, safe emergency housing for up to six months for our extended foster care young adults who might have found themselves in jail or on the streets.
- Safety Organized Practice (SOP) has become part of the culture of our agency. We utilize the Three Houses when interviewing children involved in a referral. We also have established the use of SOP tools such as “mapping” at our Family Team Meetings and even during our unit meetings. SOP helps our families develop a “safety net” of support

using people in their lives. This helps our families be successful during their time with us and afterwards when they are on their own.

- One noticeable trend is changes in our Hispanic/Latino population since our last CSA. The Lucile Packard Foundation notes that between 2011 and 2015, our Hispanic/Latino population of children in public schools has increased by 3.9%, and the white population has decreased by the same percentage. Noting that Children in Care among our Hispanic/Latino population has increased from 46 in 2011 to 70 in 2014, and 1<sup>st</sup> entries into Foster Care among the same group has risen from 13 in 2011 to 40 in 2013, this population will require focus and attention during the next cycle to assure appropriate services are increased to reduce this increasing trend.

### ***Probation Analysis***

- As caseload numbers have decreased significantly, however challenges with individualized services remain. Probation has had a successful implementation of evidence based Probation strategies utilizing an assessment tools for identifying static risk and protective factors for our youth. The assessment tool is then directly linked to the development of an individualized comprehensive case plan. These case plans are developed at the time the minor is declared a ward and placed on formal probation in accordance with Evidence Based Practice; Case Plans are completed on all youth. The case plan is a living document that follows the minor throughout their grant of probation. The same case plan is updated when significant changes occur and when the minor is ordered into foster care.
- Probation has increased Family Finding efforts. The probation officer begins family finding at intake. Probation has partnered with Lexus Nexus software and has trained staff how to access family finding within the system. This allows the probation officer to begin concurrent planning earlier to ensure that each child has a positive adult role model. All probation officers have had formal training on Family Findings.
- One major concern for Probation in the 2011 CSA was the lack of access to CWS/CMS information and the accompanying lack of placement history, assessments, and psychological testing. Probation hired support staff to work directly with the placement probation officer in the CWS/CMS system. The support staff is dedicated to the placement unit 20 hours per week. Additionally, placement probation officers have been trained to input data and retrieve information in the CWS/CMS data base. Because of this there is an increase in quality assurance and collaboration between Probation and CWS.
- Probation has partnered with New Dawn/Just Ware and has implemented an improved Law Enforcement data base that probation officers and support staff input data and

retrieve information from. The system is linked to the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Court, the County Jail and County Juvenile Hall. The sharing of information has improved access to essential documents for foster youth so that if they lose them, the documents can be recovered as needed.

- Another change since the 2011 CSA is increased School-Based Services.
- New Beginnings offers Mental Health services at one school site for minors who are both on formal probation and for those who are not. New Beginnings is a collaboration between Mendocino County Office of Education, Mendocino County Youth Project and AODP and funded with Wraparound reinvestment funds. The Mendocino County Office of Education's SELPA program offers services for children with developmental delays and special education needs.
- There is a probation officer and a probation officer supervisor dedicated to the New Beginnings school campus to provide supervision, drug testing, service referrals and coordination of treatment services. In addition, FCS and Probation work together to provide students services through Wraparound. The probation officer plays a significant and positive role in the Wrap team. The Wrap meetings occur on campus and at the minor's home during the evening hours so not to disrupt the minor's education and the parents' work schedules.
- The probation placement unit utilizes the evidence-based Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) that is provided by Redwood Community Services. The program offers probation youth a foster home in their community. The program provides intensive individual and family services. MTFC is often used for a probation youth who are transitioning back into the community from an out of county group home setting.
- Parent transportation continues to be a barrier. Probation now provides the families of youth in foster care gas vouchers. These vouchers come in the form of a pre-paid gas card so the family can drive to and from the minor's placement for visits and family therapy sessions.
- The 90-day transition plan has been implemented where the placement probation officer assesses the youth for transition home or into Extended Foster Care. Casey Life Skills assessment tool is used to assess the minor's needs prior to the transition.

# Public Agency Characteristics

## POLITICAL JURISDICTIONS

### *Board of Supervisors*

The Board of Supervisors, with representatives elected from five districts, serves as the legislative and executive body of County government and several special districts. The County has four incorporated cities, Fort Bragg, Point Arena, Ukiah and Willits, ranging in size from 449 to 16,075 persons. About 67% of the County's residents live in unincorporated areas of the county.

### *Cities*

Mendocino County is a rural community of towns of varying sizes:

Region	Population
Fort Bragg	7,273
Point Arena	449
Ukiah	16,075
Unincorporated Areas of Mendocino County	59,156
Willits	4,888
<b>TOTAL POPULATION (2014)</b>	<b>87,841</b>

Data Source: *Suburban Stats* Accessed online at <http://www.suburbanstats.org> (August 2015).

### *Public Health*

The Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) is an integrated Health and Human Services agency. HHSA includes three service areas: Public Health, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, and Social Services. The Mendocino County Family and Children's Services (FCS) is embedded in the Social Services service area of the Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency. There is one HHSA Director, Stacey Cryer, and two Assistant HHSA Directors. Bryan Lowery is the Assistant HHSA Director of Human Services and Tom Pinizzotto is the Assistant HHSA Director of Health Services. The HHSA Director reports to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

### ***Child Welfare***

The programs that comprise FCS are located in three offices throughout the county; Ukiah, Willits and Fort Bragg. Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment staff is co-located at all three locations with FCS staff. In addition, the Foster Care Nursing Unit is co-located at the Public Health office in Ukiah.

### ***Probation Department***

The Probation Department is operated by the County and staffed with county employees. The Probation Department is overseen by Chief Probation Officer, Albert “Buck” Ganter, who took over in May 2013 when former Chief Jim O. Brown retired. Chief Ganter is appointed through the local presiding judge in conjunction with the County Board of Supervisors. Probation caseloads are largely dependent upon the sentencing decisions of the court, and it is through its compliance with the mandates of the Welfare and Institutions Code, that the Probation Department works to keep communities safe and youth directed toward a productive future.

### ***Tribes***

Mendocino County has ten federally recognized tribes: Cahto Tribe, Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Guidiville Rancheria, Hopland Band of Pomo Indians, Manchester Band of Pomo Indians, Pinoleville Pomo Nation, Potter Valley Tribe, Redwood Valley Rancheria, Round Valley Indian Tribes and the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians.

As previously noted, in 2009, FCS and the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians entered into a Memorandum of Understanding which identifies how the Agency and Tribe work together concerning mutual families regarding the investigations of child abuse and neglect referrals, voluntary and dependency court cases and out-of-home placements. In addition, FCS has an Indian Child Welfare Act Protocol that addresses all aspects of ICWA requirements and how the Agency is to work collaboratively with tribes. This protocol is reviewed regularly by the ICWA

Roundtable and updated as needed or as new legislation or regulations are passed. FCS hosts the ICWA Roundtable which meets quarterly and is attend by a County Counsel representative, tribal ICWA workers, FCS staff and Juvenile Probation staff. Several tribal representatives participated in the Stakeholders meeting and their feedback is included within the body of this report. Focus group notes are provided in Appendix A.

### ***Education***

Family and Children’s Services enjoys a good relationship with our local school districts as well as the Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE). Some of our staff members serve on School Attendance Review Boards (SARB). We have a close working relationship with the MCOE foster youth liaison who participates regularly in case conferences for foster children and helps to resolve any problems that arise concerning school enrollment and special education services for children in our care.

Since 2013, FCS has had a designated a program specialist to be our Educational Success Coordinator. This staff person works in our Placement Unit and therefore, is immediately aware of any changes of placement that may impact where the child attends school. This staff person is in regular communication with the attendance staff at each school attended by a Mendocino County foster youth. She ensures the school is aware the child is a foster youth, who the child’s social worker and attorney are, and asks to be kept informed at the earliest sign of any attendance, behavioral or educational concerns so the social worker can be alerted to work with the school and foster family to discuss what services or supports may be needed to address the concerns.

We share a mutual concern for and commitment to children and their families. Our relationship with the schools can vary somewhat from school to school and district to district. Sometimes school staff become frustrated with Family and Children’s Services because they may see our agency as failing to take action on some cases, or failing to take the action they think is warranted. In general, we all recognize that maintaining a healthy relationship with the schools involves tending to it by creating opportunities to exchange information about the

limits and capabilities of our two systems through collaborative meetings such as Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) and Policy Council on Children and Youth (PCCY).

### ***Law Enforcement***

Likewise, our relationship with the various law enforcement agencies in our county has been positive. In addition to the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, there are three police departments in the county: Fort Bragg Police Department, Ukiah Police Department, and the Willits Police Department. Also, several of the tribes in the county have tribal police departments. Law enforcement agencies in Mendocino County coordinate with FCS and Probation in certain circumstances. FCS makes every attempt to cross-report appropriately and timely with law enforcement and law enforcement makes joint responses with FCS when appropriate.

We work well with the police departments in all areas of the County, the Probation Department, and the County Sheriff's office. In general, as with schools, we each respect each other's distinct role. Regular communication about the protocols, limits and capabilities of each of our agencies is essential. To the extent we do that, we work exceptionally well together.

## **COUNTY CHILD WELFARE AND PROBATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Child Welfare**

The Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency, Family and Children's Services, is the agency responsible for complying with legal mandates regarding the abuse and neglect of children in Mendocino County. FCS provides a full spectrum of prevention, intervention and case management services to families and children who come to the attention of the child welfare system including: mandated reporter training, intake and screening (child abuse hotline), emergency response investigations, safety and risk assessment, voluntary family maintenance and family reunification, formal supervision (high risk voluntary cases), court dependency investigations (petition through disposition), court ordered family maintenance and family reunification services and case management, Safety Organized Practice family

mappings, Family Finding, concurrent planning, referrals to prevention and treatment services, permanency planning services and case management, supportive transition services and case management for AB 12 non minor dependents, supervised and monitored family visitation, foster care and AAP eligibility, Wraparound, non-related guardianship assessments for the Probate Court and step-parent adoption assessments for the Family Law Court. Adoption and post-adoption services are provided through our contract with the California Department of Social Services, Adoptions Bureau. In addition, many services for children and families are provided through contracts with community partners. FCS believes that child protection is a community responsibility and will only be achieved through effective collaboration and service delivery.

**a. Staffing Characteristics/Issues**

***Family and Children's Services***

As of September 28, 2015, Family and Children's Services has 115 staff members, including 3 Mental Health Rehabilitation Specialists who are assigned to the Katie A/Wrap unit and are not reflected on the FCS organizational chart, as they are supervised by a Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Mental Health Clinical Supervisor although they are FCS employees. There is one Deputy Director who reports to the Assistant HHSA Director, Human Services. Under the Deputy Director, there are four Senior Program Managers, each of whom are responsible for four to six units. One manager oversees the Willits and Fort Bragg offices. The other three managers are housed in the Ukiah office. One of those managers oversees the two Emergency Response/Court (initial hearing through disposition) units, two Continuing Services units (post-disposition FM/FR/PP), one Court Liaison unit and the newly developed Training Unit. Another manager oversees the Independent Living Program/AB 12 unit, the Quality Assurance unit, the Ukiah Administrative (clerical support) unit and the Foster Care Eligibility unit. The third manager oversees the Foster Care Nursing unit, the Ukiah Family Center, the Wraparound/Katie A unit and the Integrated Services Unit. An organizational chart for the Family & Children's Services is included in this report as Appendix B.

Family and Children's Services consists of the following classifications as of September 28, 2015:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Number</b>
Deputy Director	1 (MSW with 15 years child welfare experience)
Sr. Program Manager	4 (1 has MSW, 1 has bachelor's degree; 2 have some college; each have over 10 years experience in child welfare)
Program Administrators	3
Staff Services Administrator	1
Mental Health Rehab Specialists	3 (on the Behavioral Health & Recovery Services org chart)
Social Work Supervisor I	6 (Bachelor's degrees or some college, plus experience) 1 has 3 years experience in child welfare; 1 has 5 years experience; 1 has 7 years experience; 1 has 9 years experience; 1 has 10 years experience and 1 has 12 years experience.
Social Worker Supervisor II	4 (MSW/MFT) 2 have 2 years experience in child welfare; 1 has 5 or more years experience in child welfare. 1 is a new hire beginning on 9/28/15 with 5 or more years experience working with children and/or families in mental health.
Social Worker I	13 (Bachelor's degrees or some college, plus experience working with children/families) All have 1 year or less experience as child welfare social workers but 1 or more years previous experience working with children and/or families.
Social Worker II	4- (Bachelor's degrees or some college plus experience) 1 is a new hire starting 9/28/15 and 3 have 2 years experience as child welfare social workers.
Social Worker III	12 (1 is currently in a temporary acting supervisor position) (Bachelor's degrees or some college plus experience) 1 is a new hire who started 9/15/15; 1 has 1 year experience as a child welfare social worker; 3 have 3 years experience; 2 have 7 years experience; 3 have 8 years experience; 1 has 10 years experience and 1 has 14 years experience.
Social Worker IV	2 (MSW/MFT) 1 has 1 year experience as a child welfare social worker; 1 has 11 years experience.
Social Worker V	6 (MSW/MFT) 1 has 1 year experience as a child welfare social worker; 1 has 3 years experience; 1 has 5 years experience; 3 have 15 or more years experience.  (8 additional social worker positions are currently vacant and are in the hiring process to fill for a total of 45 social workers I/II/III/IV/V)
Vocational Assistant	3
Social Work Assistant II	23 (4 more positions are in the hiring process to be filled)
Sr. Program Specialist	3 (1 additional position is in the recruitment process)
Program Specialist I/II	6 (1 more position is in the hiring process to be filled)

<b>Position</b>	<b>Number</b>
Nurse Case Manager Supervisor	0 (hard to fill position that has been in the recruitment process for over 2 years)
Nurse Case Manager	1 (RN)
Nurse Case Assistant	1
Secretary	1
Office Assistant Supervisor II	2
Office Assistant II	1 (1 more position is in the recruitment process)
Office Assistant III	11 (2 more positions are in the hiring process)
Legal Clerk II	3 (1 more position is in the recruitment process)
Legal Clerk III	1
Eligibility Supervisor (Foster Care)	1
Eligibility Worker (Foster Care)	2 (1 more position is in the recruitment process)

### ***Probation Department***

The Probation Department consisted of the following classifications as of September 28, 2015:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Number</b>
Chief Probation Officer	1
Division Managers	4
Probation Officer Supervisors Adult Division	3
Probation Officer Supervisors Juvenile Division	2
Deputy Probation Officers	27
Deputy Probation Officers Juvenile Division	7
Deputy Probation Officers Funded and Not Filled	4
Deputy Probation Officers Unfunded	3
Part Time Extra Help Deputy Probation Officers	4

Mendocino County Probation Department is headed by Chief Probation Officer, Albert R “Buck” Ganter who took over in July 2013 when former Chief Jim O. Brown retired.

The Mendocino County Probation Department currently has a total of five deputy probation officer III supervisors with two assigned to the Juvenile Division. Due to the reduction in juvenile probation caseloads, former juvenile probation officer III supervisor was reassigned

to an adult position. Due to this reassignment, a specialized placement supervisor was eliminated. One juvenile supervisor oversees the field probation officers, the intake probation officer and the Court officer. This requires monitoring all staff, both armed and unarmed, who are assigned to work in the field along with monitoring staff in the Court and intake unit who all have diverse work loads. The supervisor also corrects all disposition reports and new intake investigations and assessments when a youth is booked into the juvenile hall. In addition this supervisor oversees the out of custody intakes, disposition reports and citations. There is a second probation officer III supervisor who is assigned to the New Beginnings School program. This supervisor oversees a probation officer who is assigned to the New Beginnings School program.

The Probation Department has 27 Deputy Probation officers I and II. Three positions are unfunded and four are funded, however they are not filled at this time. Seven deputy probation officer I and II positions are assigned to the juvenile division. With recent movement of staff, the transitions have impacted the juvenile division as a whole due to training new staff in new duty assignments. There has been a recent trend toward the movement of senior officers to the adult division to accommodate the needs for AB 109. The juvenile division placement unit was reduced from a dedicated deputy probation officer III supervisor, two senior deputy probation officers and a clerk to only a senior deputy probation officer and a part time clerk for CWS/CMS data support. Probation organizational chart is provided as Appendix C.

## **b. Staff Turnover**

### ***Family and Children's Services***

Staff turnover is an ongoing issue. From July 2013 through July 2015, approximately 44 staff (in various classifications including office assistants, program specialists, social worker assistants, social workers, social worker supervisors, legal clerks, a program administrator and a foster care eligibility supervisor) left FCS, although we have had a slight net increase in our full time positions. 17 of the 44 staff members were social workers; 10 left or were let go in fiscal year 2013-2014 and 7 left or were let go in fiscal year 2014-2015. Reasons for staff (all staff

members) leaving include retirement, not passing probation, termination, transfers or promotions to other departments, relocation out of Mendocino County, lack of affordable housing in the county, and higher paying jobs in the county or in neighboring counties.

Due to being a rural county without a university and pay and/or benefits that are not competitive with neighboring counties, we have a difficult time recruiting master level social workers. We currently have a waiver from the California Department of Social Services in effect through January 2018 due to our inability to meet the State requirements for social workers with a master's degree or equivalent in experience. On November 1, 2015, hiring for Family and Children's Services changed from Merit System Services, which was administered by CPS HR Consulting for the California Department of Human Resources, to Mendocino County Civil Service, an Approved Local Merit System (ALMS). Unfortunately, Merit Systems did not count any experience as being equivalent to a master's degree. This change gave our county's Civil Service Commission the flexibility to review job classifications and allow experience to count in lieu of having a master's degree, which will assist us in meeting or being closer to the state staffing regulations.

We have been more successful with recruiting lower level social workers who then pursue an MSW through the Title IV-E distance learning programs with Humboldt or Chico State, although once they obtain an MSW, many of them pursue jobs with counties that offer higher rates of pay or take jobs with mental health providers in order to gain clinical hours towards becoming Licensed Clinical Social Workers. Many of our Social Worker I positions are filled by staff promoting up from the Social Worker Assistant, Eligibility Worker or Employment Services Representative classifications from our Employment and Family Assistance Services division.

In 2014, FCS began contracting with two Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) in the community to provide clinical supervision for our MSW level social workers, Social Worker IVs and Vs, who are registered with the Board of Behavioral Sciences as Associate Clinical Social Workers (ASWs) to help them meet some of their supervision requirements in working towards becoming Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs). Last year we had three staff take advantage of this opportunity, and four additional staff will begin participating in January 2016. We are

also beginning a collaboration with the Mendocino County Youth Project, a community based mental health provider, for ASW staff to gain the required clinical hours completing mental health assessments, diagnosing and/or providing treatment while maintaining their full time employment with FCS. We anticipate having this opportunity in place beginning February 1, 2016.

We also work with our local community college, Mendocino College, to recruit interns in their Human Services certificate program, as well as with the BSW and MSW programs at Humboldt and Chico State Universities.

### ***Probation Department***

Over the last four years, the department has hired eight new Probation Officers and promoted three new probation officers from both the Juvenile Hall and clerical positions within the department.

Staff turnover and transfers are an ongoing issue. Of the eight probation officers hired, four left the department for employment with other law enforcement agencies. In addition, four probation officers retired including the former Chief, Jim O Brown.

Due to state and local budget cuts, the Department has several vacant, unfunded positions. Having unfilled positions sometimes makes it difficult to provide the level of services we prefer, however with our experienced and dedicated staff, we believe we are providing effective and meaningful services to both juvenile probationers and their families. Additionally, we have hired former Mendocino County Probation Officers as part time extra help.

Additionally, due to several factors such as being a rural county without a university, low pay and/or benefits that are not competitive with neighboring counties, and higher cost of living, the Probation Department finds retention to be a challenge. The Department does not currently have a functioning field training officer and program. The Probation Department is utilizing retired Mendocino County probation officers as part time extra help to fill in the gaps with supervision and report writing.

The department continues our work with our local community college, Mendocino College and Sonoma State University to recruit interns in their Criminal Justice certificate program.

**c. Caseload Size & Distribution**

***Family and Children’s Services***

<b>Program</b>	<b>Case Activity July 2015</b>	<b>Average Monthly Case Activity January 2014-December 2014</b>
<b>Emergency Response Intake &amp; Court</b>	209	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Response referrals evaluated out: 105</li> <li>• Emergency Response referrals investigated: 120</li> <li>• Emergency Response cases transferred to FR, FM or PP: 8</li> </ul>
<b>Family Maintenance (FM)</b>	83 (includes voluntary)	84
<b>Family Reunification (FR)</b>	111 (includes voluntary)	124
<b>Permanent Placement (PP)</b>	117	116
<b>Supportive Transition (ST)</b>	42	43

Family and Children’s Services is dedicated to providing quality services in all programs. In Mendocino County, we have two experienced Intake Social Workers who staff the child abuse reporting hotline. Emergency Response Social Workers investigate child abuse/neglect referrals, provide early preventative services to families, remove children as needed, (when appropriate, in coordination with law enforcement). For the past two years, they also filed petitions in Juvenile Court and provide case management, post-removal through the detention, jurisdictional and dispositional hearings. Currently we have nine social workers countywide who handle investigations and court work with other social workers providing back up as needed for overflow referrals.

Designated Social Workers provide family maintenance and family reunification case management services including referrals to services for families who agree to engage with child

welfare services on a voluntary basis for six to twelve months. Currently, we have four social workers countywide who handle voluntary and formal supervision (high risk voluntary) cases. Two of the four social workers are in our outlying offices in Willits and Fort Bragg. In addition to voluntary cases, they also manage court dependency cases as needed.

Continuing Services Social Workers provide ongoing case management services to families whose children have been removed and/or are court-ordered to receive child welfare services. These social workers are assigned cases following the dispositional hearing. These social workers oversee the care and welfare of foster children and provide family reunification and/or family maintenance services to families who are in need of agency and court supervision. These social workers also handle permanency planning cases when the child is unable to successfully reunify with a parent, until permanency is achieved for the child, or the child turns 18. When foster youth turn 18 and they wish to voluntarily stay in the child welfare system, their case transfers to social workers in our Independent Living Program/AB 12 unit who manage their case until age 21.

Caseload sizes may vary during the year as vacancies occur and new social worker recruitments are initiated. As of July 31, 2015, social workers with FM/FR/PP/ST mixed caseloads carry on average 15-20 cases; with the highest caseload currently being 23.

Social Worker staffing in the Emergency Response/Court and Continuing Services has been and down over the past several years. In the past two years, we have been able to get the continuing services units more staffed up and stabilized. However, staffing in Emergency Response and Court units declined and social workers were not cross-trained between the functions. As a result, in 2013, we combined the Emergency Response and Court functions so that when an investigation needed to become a court case, that same Emergency Response investigating social worker would handle the case, writing all court reports and providing case management, through disposition. At the same time, we were hiring quite a number of new social workers to staff up Emergency Response/Court. This enabled us to cross train social workers in both emergency response and court functions, but this has proved to be a very significant challenge for social workers to complete timely data entry into CWS/CMS and complete court reports timely. Therefore, we have re-evaluated the best way to handle

investigations and front end court work and are separating the functions again as we hire more social workers. Social Workers have expressed relief and appreciation for the duties being separated. During the last three months, we have seen an increase in the number of referral investigation narratives being entered timely into CWS/CMS.

### ***Probation Department***

Caseload size for deputy probation officers (DPOs) range from 24 to 30. However, there are no State or Federal limitations on the size of caseloads for Probation wards. The average caseload size for a juvenile court investigations officer is 10 cases. The average caseload size for a field supervision officer is 24 to 30 cases. Specialty service caseloads (which include New Beginnings and the High Risk/Gang Caseload) average 18 youth and families. The Placement Case Load average is 15. Probation Officers are required to comply with all provisions of Title IV-E and Division 31. Each year, new laws and regulations are enacted which increase the responsibilities of probation officers toward meeting those provisions and create a more and more complex system to navigate. The increase in regulations negatively impacts the amount of time officers can spend with a youth and family.

Average case load per probation officer is 20 but there has been a recent upswing in caseload number, due to staff turn over a vacant position and coverage for paternity leave. Probation officers are covering caseloads temporarily, which impacts the youth's permanent connections, case planning field supervision and timely reports.

Even though the placement numbers have been reduced, additional data required and duplicate entry into CWS system has a significant impact on the placement probation officer. Family finding court reports gathering mandatory docs and delivery group homes falls to the duty of one Probation Officer

#### **d. Bargaining Unit Issues**

##### ***Family and Children's Services***

Family and Children's Services staff are represented by Service Employees' International Union (SEIU), Local 1021. Recently, a new two year contract was approved by the Board of Supervisors which provides for a 3% salary increase in year 1 and a 2% salary increase in year 2. In addition, year 1 includes a \$1,200 stipend and year 2 includes a \$1,000 stipend. Further, the standby pay for on-call was increased. Lastly, \$200,000 a year for a total of \$400,000 was set aside to address recruitment and retention for hard to fill positions including social workers and nurses.

##### ***Probation Department***

Probation is represented by a separate bargaining unit - Mendocino County Probation Employee Association (MCPEA). The Probation Officers belong to Teamsters. In addition Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is in place.

The Probation Department is currently entering negotiations and is hoping to restore 5% salary of the 10% reduction in 2011. Uniform allowance incentives instead of salary increase and bonus checks have been implemented over the past 3 years.

#### **FINANCIAL/MATERIAL RESOURCES**

##### ***Family and Children's Services***

In addition to the Child Welfare Services allocation, we utilize Wraparound reinvestment funds to fund additional child welfare programs for Family and Children's Services, Juvenile Probation and prevention services in the community. Examples include additional supports and services needed to maintain our highest needs youth in safe and secure placements beyond what is covered through foster care and Medi-Cal funds; New Beginnings- a clean and sober classroom for Juvenile Probation youth who are at risk of out-of-home placement; Levine House- 6 bed emergency housing for up to 6 months for our AB 12 young adults who are in

need of emergency housing while we work with them to find safe and appropriate long term housing; Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) provided throughout the county for parents/caregivers of children ages 0 to 18 free of charge to participants; The ARC (Alex Rorabaugh Center) Family Resource Center- funds were provided to help this new family resource center in its first two years of start-up; Music for Motivation- a summer music program for at risk youth ages 12 to 18 with a local community partner, Mendocino County Youth Project; and our Family Dependency Drug Court (FDDC). In addition, we also utilize State Family Preservation funding to help support FDDC. FDDC is also financially supported by First Five Mendocino, which covers the cost of three parent peer mentors in the FDDC program.

Funds received from the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (CAPIT/PSSF/CBCAP blended funds) are passed on to the non-profit family resource centers located throughout the county to provide parent education and family support services to help prevent the occurrence or recurrence of child abuse in our county.

### ***Probation Department***

During the past three years the probation department incurred reduced or loss of funding in particular areas which supported several programs including the Ukiah Teen Peer Court, Foundations, and New Beginnings after school activities. The funding sources came primarily from the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Court Fund, the Youthful Offender Block Grant and from additional funding provided by the Family and Children's Services. Wraparound reinvestment funds are used to support New Beginnings. Due to the reduction in the probation case load and redirected funds, there has been a reduction in afterschool services and activities at New Beginnings such as staff support for community service, sports programs and summer arts and recreation programs along with a reduction in funding for school field trips. The Probation Department is hoping to be able to find funding to bring some of these programs back in the future in order to serve our at risk youth.

Probation uses a combination of County General Fund, Federal Title IV-E, Juvenile Probation and Camps Funding, to cover placement-related activities.

Probation is fortunate to be part of a county that supports collaboration regarding services and resources. While the majority of our department's funding comes from the County General Fund, we certainly benefit from Federal Title IV-E funding. Without Title IV-E funding, Probation would not be able to provide the level of service we currently offer. Over the past several years, the State has allocated Child Welfare Services Outcome Improvement Project (CWSOIP) funding in the amount of \$10,000 annually to our Probation Department. We have used these funds to partially fund a dedicated Legal Secretary to the Placement Unit.

## **CHILD WELFARE/PROBATION OPERATED SERVICES**

### ***Juvenile Hall (Probation Department)***

Juvenile Hall provides for physical and emotional care to incarcerated youth in Mendocino County pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 15 and Title 24 standards. As mandated, it is operated with as homelike an environment as possible. This includes providing food, clothing, and personal hygiene items, as well as medical, psychiatric, and dental services. Juvenile Hall has a bed capacity of 40 and is broken down into three units for the purpose of housing males, females and high-risk offenders separately. Operations are overseen by the Probation Division Manager/Juvenile Hall Superintendent, who reports to the Chief Probation Officer.

#### Major Accomplishments in FY 2014-15

- Completed annual staff training in CPR and first aid.
- Completed perishable skills training to all staff, in compliance with State standards.
- CORE training completed for one Juvenile Corrections Counselor.
- All staff continued compliance with Federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) mandates.
- Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) bi-annual inspection completed with findings of total compliance. Next inspection cycle FY2016-17.
- Introduced a Zumba program for detained youth as a tool to assist in managing daily stress.
- Continued the garden project, with community contributions of materials, to provide additional activities for youth, as a source of healthful vegetables for the Juvenile Hall kitchen, and the ability for youth to earn school credits.
- Completed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) construction to comply with State and Federal requirements.

## Goals/Objectives for FY 2015-16

- Remain responsive in adapting to changes in mental health services to ensure that adequate levels of service are being provided.
- Continuation of curriculum for garden project for detained youth as future vocational training and to qualify as elective high school credits in gardening and/or landscaping.
- Upgrade where necessary security cameras and video equipment.
- Restructuring the staffing schedules to reflect lower average daily populations while remaining compliance with State and Federal mandates.

### ***County-Operated Shelters (Child Welfare)***

Mendocino County does not have county-operated emergency shelters. However, we do have two emergency shelter options, both operated by Foster Family Agencies under contract with the County. One of these shelters, Mendocino County Children's Center (MC3) opened in 2006 and provides emergency shelter care for high-needs children at risk of level 10 or higher group home placement. This is a six bed facility and the average length of stay is up to 30 days. However, due to the significant shortage of foster placement options, some of our highest needs children/youth have had to remain at MC3 longer than 30 days while an appropriate placement is being located.

The second shelter program is operated by TLC Child and Family Services who is under contract with the County to provide a minimum of ten beds a night. Currently, these ten beds are in three different foster homes. Most of the beds are two beds to a bedroom which presents significant challenges in having sufficient emergency shelter beds available. For example, we may have an open bed, but the bed is in a room with a female child. If a male child is detained, that bed is not able to be used for the male child. Further, a few of the beds are only for infants in a crib in the foster parent's bedroom, therefore those beds are not available for general use. Most children placed in a TLC shelter are there for 30 days or less. However, as with our difficult to place youth at MC3, some children have remained in a TLC shelter placement beyond 30 days while an appropriate placement is being located. We are providing additional funding to TLC in Fiscal Year 2015-16 to recruit and retain additional emergency shelter homes as well as homes for their regular FFA program.

Both MC3 and TLC provide assessments of the children in their care and recommendations for what type of placement or supports that may be needed for the child in the child's next placement. In addition, MC3 also provides mental health services while youth are placed there.

We have worked closely with the other Foster Family Agencies serving Mendocino County as well as the few remaining State licensed foster homes to secure emergency placements when both of our shelter programs are full or are unable to accommodate a newly detained child. However, given the significant shortage of foster homes, this is becoming more and more difficult.

### ***County-Operated Shelters (Probation Department)***

No emergency shelter is available for Wards of the Court (602) and there are few foster homes available for Probation youth. However, the Probation Department does utilize the Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) program, now called Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO).

### ***County Licensing***

Mendocino County does not license its own foster homes or family day care homes. These functions are provided by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division.

### ***County Adoptions***

Mendocino County is not a licensed adoption agency. These services are provided through contract with the California Department of Social Services, Adoptions Bureau, Arcata District Office. Mendocino County's adoption services are provided by three State employees, one of whom frequently works out of the Mendocino County FCS office in Ukiah.

## **OTHER COUNTY PROGRAMS**

### ***Family and Children's Services***

Family and Children's Services enjoys a close working relationship with CalWORKS, Public Health and Alcohol and Drug Treatment. All of these agencies are under the Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency umbrella. In Ukiah and Fort Bragg, CalWORKS staff is in the buildings next to FCS. In Willits, staff is co-located in the same building. The FCS nursing unit is co-located in the Public Health office about 1 mile away from the main FCS office in Ukiah. Three Alcohol and Drug Treatment counselors are dedicated solely to serving FCS clients and are co-located with FCS staff in the Ukiah and Willits offices. In Fort Bragg, there is one Alcohol and Drug Treatment counselor who serves the general population, including FCS clients, and is co-located in the same building as FCS.

In 2013, county mental health services were contracted out to two administrative services organizations; Redwood Quality Management Company (RQMC) for persons 24 and under and Ortnier Management Group (OMG) for persons 25 years and older. RQMC subcontracts with three primary mental health providers (Redwood Community Services, Mendocino County Youth Project and Tapestry Family Services) and then other service providers as needed. With the implementation of the requirements of the Katie A. vs. Bonta lawsuit, we have forged a closer, collaborative working relationship with RQMC and the three primary mental health providers through weekly meetings to ensure the mental health needs of our children and youth are being met.

When county mental health services were contracted out in 2013, HHS Behavioral Health and Recovery mental health clinicians and rehabilitation specialists were reassigned to Family and Children's Services to our Katie A/Wraparound unit. They are co-located with FCS staff in all three of our offices. They provide mental health screenings for all children/youth in an open FCS case at the start of the case and annually thereafter. They also assist with referring children/youth to mental health providers for assessment and services. In addition, through our Wraparound program, they provide Intensive Care Coordination (ICC) and Intensive Home Based Services (IHBS) for children/youth who are Katie A. subclass members and are at home

with a parent or are in a relative or non-related extended family member placement or are in a state licensed or non-treatment foster care placement. Redwood Community Services and Tapestry Family Services provide ICC and IHBS for Katie A. subclass children/youth who are placed in their foster homes.

Our working relationship with adult mental health services is not as close. There is a significant gap in mental health services for our parents, most of whom do not meet the “chronic and persistent” definition for specialty mental health services through Ortnier Management Group, yet they need much more than what is provided to the “mild” to “moderate” clients who receive a minimal number of brief therapy sessions a year with a therapist at the federally qualified health care centers in the county. Although the Affordable Care Act (ACA) enabled our parents to maintain their Medi-Cal and/or obtain Medi-Cal even when their children have been removed from their care and the ACA expanded mental health services, we have not found those services to be sufficient to address the mental health needs of our parents involved in child welfare cases. Therefore, FCS contracts with private therapists in the community to provide mental health counseling as needed to parents participating in a voluntary or court-ordered case plan.

### ***Probation Department***

The Probation Department utilizes local services, programs and practices to improve service performance and outcome measures for youth and their family in safety, well-being and permanency, and to meet or exceed the standard in some of the measures discussed previously.

Alcohol and Other Drug (AODP) programs are available to all probation youth. They provide therapeutic services in the schools with a full time drug counselor dedicated to the New Beginnings School. Additionally, Redwood Quality Management provides Mental Health services to probation youth and their families. The Mendocino County Youth Project provides therapeutic services to probation youth and their families. In addition a probation officer works closely with the Mendocino County Youth Project to provide gang education in the schools.

## State and Federally Mandated Child Welfare/Probation Initiatives

### **Family and Children's Services**

Family and Children's Services has implemented or is beginning to implement several federal and state initiatives. See above for a discussion about our implementation of the Katie A. vs Bonta lawsuit. We are not involved in the Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project or the California Partners for Permanency Grant. However, we have fully implemented the Fostering Connections After 18 Program and are working towards implementing the requirements of the Continuum of Care Reform.

Since 2012 when the Fostering Connections After 18 Program began, we have had a dedicated unit and social workers assigned to handle those cases. This has helped those social workers be able to dedicate their attention solely to these young adults and help them successfully transition to adulthood.

Mendocino County also opted into the Approved Relative Caregiver Program in March 2015, which provides base foster care funding to relatives of non-Title IV-E eligible children and youth who have been removed from their parents and placed in relative care. We have a very low number of these cases (currently: 10) but this additional funding makes a difference to the relatives caring for the children.

Mendocino County is also beginning a Residentially Based Services (RBS) two year pilot program with one of our community partners, Redwood Community Services. This program will serve both FCS and Probation youth and began on December 1, 2015. During the planning of this program, we were already anticipating Continuum of Care reform requirements and the need for group homes to transition to Short Term Residential Treatment Centers (STRTCs). With that in mind, we designed the RBS program to be a short term, intentional residential treatment program, that will provide our high needs children and youth with the support and services they need while simultaneously working intensively with their family or a lower level of

care option to transition the child out of residential as quickly as safely possible for the child. In addition, we are transforming the way we consider residential treatment for a child and not waiting for them to “fail up” to be able to get the level of treatment they need.

### ***Probation Department***

Since 2012 when the Fostering Connections After 18 Program began, the probation department has adopted a protocol to work with the high risk youth and juvenile sex offenders who transition to Extended Foster Care. The Family and Children’s Services department works with the probation youth that either are low level offenders or have been a previous dependent child who transition to Extended Foster Care. The Probation Officer meets with the youth and the newly assigned social worker in an informal setting during the transition process. This way the former probation youth becomes familiar with the social worker. In addition, the probation officer then works closely with the social workers assigned to handle those cases. This has helped those social workers be able to work with former probation youth and help them successfully transition to adulthood.

Mendocino County is also beginning a Residentially Based Services (RBS) two year pilot program with one of our community partners, Redwood Community Services. This program will serve both FCS and Probation youth. Probation youth have been identified as youth who will benefit from these services. The Residentially Based Services (RBS) program will also assist the probation youth who are transitioning back into the community after being in an out of county group home setting in order to work more closely with the parent and community prior to their transition home.

## Board of Supervisors (BOS) Designated Commission, Board of Bodies

### **THE BOS-DESIGNATED PUBLIC AGENCY**

Mendocino County Family and Children’s Services is the Board of Supervisors’ designated public agency to administer CAPIT and CBCAP funds.

### **CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION COUNCIL (CAPC)**

The Mendocino County Policy Council on Children and Youth (PCCY) is a collaborative group of agency and community representatives, who are appointed by the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, that are working together to improve the quality of services provided to children, youth, and their families in Mendocino County. PCCY also serves as the Mendocino County Child Abuse Prevention Commission (CAPC). The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors designated the CAPC as the child abuse prevention coordinating council for all of Mendocino County. The goals of PCCY/CAPC 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 prevention, intervention and treatment;
- Encouraging and facilitating training of professionals in the detection, treatment, and prevention of child abuse and neglect;
- Recommending improvements in services to families and victims; and
- Encouraging and facilitating community support for child abuse and neglect programs.

### **COUNTY CHILDREN’S TRUST FUND COMMISSION, BOARD OR COUNCIL**

The Policy Council on Children and Youth/Child Abuse Prevention Council is designated by the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors to carry out the function of the County Children’s Trust Fund (CCTF) with Mendocino County HHS Family and Children’s Services being responsible for the contracts for the allocation. Pursuant to its bylaws, PCCY/CAPC solicits applications each year from interested community non-profits to receive some of the CCTF allocation, while the majority of the allocation is provided to the PCCY/CAPC and the

Mendocino Coast Child Abuse Prevention Council. PCCY/CAPC directs its funding to the Children's Action Committee, a subcommittee of PCCY, which carries out child abuse prevention and awareness activities throughout the year and in April. In addition, the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program has been the recipient of some of the CCTF allocation in the past several years to conduct mandated reporter training throughout the county.

The County collects the information about the programs, services and/or activities funded with the CCTF via the contracts done through Family and Children's Services after PCCY/CAPC and the Board of Supervisors have approved the plan for the use of the funds for the fiscal year. The County publishes the information on the HHSA website under PCCY/CAPC.

Mendocino County FCS does deposit a portion of the CBCAP allocation into the CCTF depending on the allocation of the County Children's Trust Fund to ensure the CCTF is at \$20,000.

## **PSSF COLLABORATIVE**

Mendocino County Family and Children's Services currently distributes PSSF funds to the Family Resource Center Network of Mendocino County which then distributes the funds to family resource centers located throughout Mendocino County who provide allowable services and activities. The County Board of Supervisors oversees the distribution of the PSSF funds through the annual budget process as well as through the approval of the Family Resource Center Network annual contract. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is generally done on a three year cycle and was last awarded to the Family Resource Center Network. Representatives from each of the Family Resource Center meets monthly and prior to the adoption of the annual OCAP (Office of Child Abuse Prevention) funds contract, the representatives review what services they are able to provide that meet the requirements of the various OCAP funding categories and funding is distributed accordingly. The Family Resource Center contract and annual expenditure report submitted to the State shows the distribution of these funds.

## Systemic Factors

The Probation Department and Family and Children's Services recognize that in order for a systematic change to occur, the needs of the family as a whole must be addressed. Prevention and early intervention programs, services and activities focusing on the family's strengths, challenges, and needs are the catalyst for promoting safety, well-being and permanency along with community safety. In summary the departments will continue to promote long-term systemic change based on evidence based principles such as:

- Developing and enhancing partnerships with community-based service providers
- Engaging and motivating families to participate by identifying youth/family strengths, challenges, and needs as well as identifying family supports, such as extended family members, faith-based/support groups, and community resources
- Providing an effective service referral process to ensure youth and families have access to and receive needed services
- Regularly meeting with families
- Promoting multi-agency and multi-disciplinary team meetings (MDT) to provide integrated services
- Offering evidence-based practices and comprehensive assessments
- Promoting community safety and security
- Hiring qualified Probation Officers and Social Workers and maintaining a well-trained workforce that are skilled in working with the complexities of child welfare and probation youth and families with key risk factors.

### **MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

#### **Family and Children's Services**

CWS/CMS continues to be the primary system used by Family & Children's Services. Social workers, social worker assistants, supervisors, foster care nursing staff and clerical staff use CWS/CMS routinely through desktop computers. CWS/CMS training is provided internally to all new social work staff, and additional training is offered as needed either one-on-one or in small groups by our CWS/CMS trainers. We rely upon this technology, and most staff members understand the need to collect data. The complicated nature of this system continues to present some challenges. The time it takes to learn the system thoroughly can be problematic.

Workarounds have been necessary to make the system accommodate our needs. We are fortunate to have staff capable of managing those workarounds.

One significant barrier we have experienced with CWS/CMS in times of being understaffed is lack of timely input of information into CWS/CMS by social workers. This has been primarily evident with our Emergency Response/Court social workers. It is not uncommon to have a large backlog of open referrals, which have been investigated, but social workers have not had time to enter data into CWS/CMS in order to close out the referrals. This significantly impacts our outcome data measures.

Due to understaffing, particularly in the Emergency Response and Court units, the functions were combined regarding referral investigation, petition through disposition court work and case management. Now that we have been able to fill positions and train new social workers, we are separating the functions again to have social workers that solely handle emergency response investigations and other social workers that solely handle court work from petition to disposition and case management. It is expected this will help our Emergency Response social workers focus on timely data entry into CWS/CMS as well as improving actual in-person contacts, not just attempts, on our 10-day referrals, as well as close out referrals within 30 days. This will also help them complete the SDM Safety Assessments in the computer within 2 business days. Currently, social workers complete a paper copy at the initial contact with the family, but are not getting the information completed in the SDM web application timely.

We recently completed our pilot project with two social workers regarding the use of computer tablets for Emergency Response social workers to assist them in accessing and entering information into CWS/CMS while in the field as well as completing SDM tools from the field. Prior to the pilot project, social workers only used desktop computers at the office. The tablets help with timely entry of information into CWS/CMS and timely completion of the SDM tools in the web application. In addition, our Emergency Response social workers and supervisors now carry smart phones. We are now implementing a roll-out plan to equip all social worker supervisors, social workers and social worker assistants with smart phones as well

as providing computer tablets to all social workers and social worker supervisors. We believe using advanced technology will enable staff to do their jobs more efficiently.

Social workers primarily use Microsoft Word for completing all court reports which are then entered into CWS/CMS and formatted by legal clerks.

Many of our support units use Microsoft Excel software for data tracking. For example, one of our Senior Program Specialists created a comprehensive Excel spreadsheet to enable us to track our children and youth in regards to compliance with the Katie A. vs. Bonta lawsuit requirements. This spreadsheet tracks initial and annual mental health screenings for every child, as well as track subclass members. This spreadsheet is used in weekly meetings with our mental health providers to ensure a seamless referral process for mental health assessments and services and up-to-date identification of subclass members.

Mendocino County has additional computer-based applications to provide Family and Children's Services staff with efficient and research-based assistance to document their work relative to case management. These applications are also used for supervision, management and quality assurance as well as to measure our county performance regarding outcome data. These systems include:

- Safe Measures- Safe Measures is a web-based data reporting system that allows social workers, supervisors and administration to monitor numerous aspects of a case based on data extracted from CWS/CMS every few days. Safe Measures provides information to determine compliance with federal, state and local requirements, track agency/unit/worker performance over time, monitor workload, and identify the status of cases. This tool enables social workers to manage their caseload requirements and upcoming deadlines. Supervisors, Managers and the Deputy Director use Safe Measures for quality assurance and compliance purposes.
- Business Objects- Business Objects is an administrative tool that allows queries to be run on data that is originated in the CWS/CMS application. Two staff in our Quality Assurance unit are proficient in Business Objects, pulling information

from CWS/CMS extracts, which enables us to create reports and drill down to evaluate our performance at a real-life case level.

- Structured Decision Making (SDM)- SDM is a family of assessment tools used at key decision points during the life of a case covering response time, safety, risk, family/child strengths and needs, reunification and case closure. Staff have been routinely trained on SDM and most recently, social workers and supervisors received in depth SDM training in 2015 by the UC Davis Northern Region Training Academy. They were trained for assessments along the life of a case.

There is another web-based database system that we utilize called MendoFRC, designed and created for us and maintained using CWS Outcome Improvement funds (CWSOIP). It is used to record demographic and attendance information on clients who attend classes and groups at our two county operated Family Resource Centers, one in Willits and one in Ukiah. Among other uses, the information is used to track compliance of our court-ordered clients and their required participation in services. This system is also used by our OCAP-contracted Family Resource Centers to track compliance with their contracts, which also includes providing information and referral services to their local populations.

## **Probation**

CWS/CMS and Just Ware continues to be the two primary system used by the placement probation officer. The placement officer uses both CWS/CMS and Just Ware exclusively through a desktop computer. The part time clerical staff also uses both CWS/CMS and Just Ware exclusively through a desktop computer. CWS/CMS training is provided internally. Additional training is offered as needed either one-on-one or in small groups by Family and Children's Services CWS/CMS trainers upon request. The CWS/CMS system presents many challenges for probation staff. Lack of CWS/CMS training is a challenge. Probation departments only use a fraction of the CWS/CMS data base. This leaves many of the data entry fields blank and unused which causes confusion. Learning the system thoroughly can be time

consuming problematic as the probation staff are required to use an encrypted “token” in order to access the system.

One significant barrier the probation department has experienced is the duplication of data entry into the different systems, CWS/CMS and Just Ware. The probation officer is required to enter field notes, contacts in Just Ware, CWS/CMS and the in the JBI data base, which is a time study for Title IV funding. In addition all court related documents are to be produced and entered in Just Ware. These applications used for case management, supervision, and quality assurance as well as to measure our county performance regarding outcome data.

The placement probation officer also utilizes Safe Measures a web-based data reporting system that extracts data from CWS/CMS for monitoring compliance with federal, state and local requirements. Safe Measures tracks performance over time and monitors workloads. The application also allows the officer to stay up to date on the status of cases and to manage caseload requirements and upcoming deadlines. Unfortunately, probation data and measures are often missing due to CWS/CMS not supporting Probation’s data collection needs. Supervisors and Managers can use Safe Measures for quality assurance and compliance purposes.

The idea around implementing a new case management system (Just Ware) was to streamline the amount of work and data input the officers and clerical are required to enter in order to not duplicate work. However, with the addition of JBI software tools used for Title IV-E and the CWS/CMS system the one placement officer is finding they are forced to duplicate much of their work. In addition the probation departments use the PACT risk/needs assessment tool which is yet another duplication of work for the officers. The probation officer enters contacts with the youth, the parent and various service providers, case plan goals and interventions, education and medical data into all of the applications which are not supported by one another. This causes the probation officer to have to open multiple applications and enter duplicate information using a desk top exclusively. This does not allow the probation officer to work remotely. Laptops, tablets and smart phones are not provided to the placement unit by the department. Although the use of these programs has greatly enhanced service delivery, it has not streamlined the extensive amount of data input. In addition, the probation

officers have access to a program called Legal Solutions which helps us prepare legal documents in a less repetitive manner. Historically, the placement unit kept track of their own data outcomes and much is still true even with these systems in place.

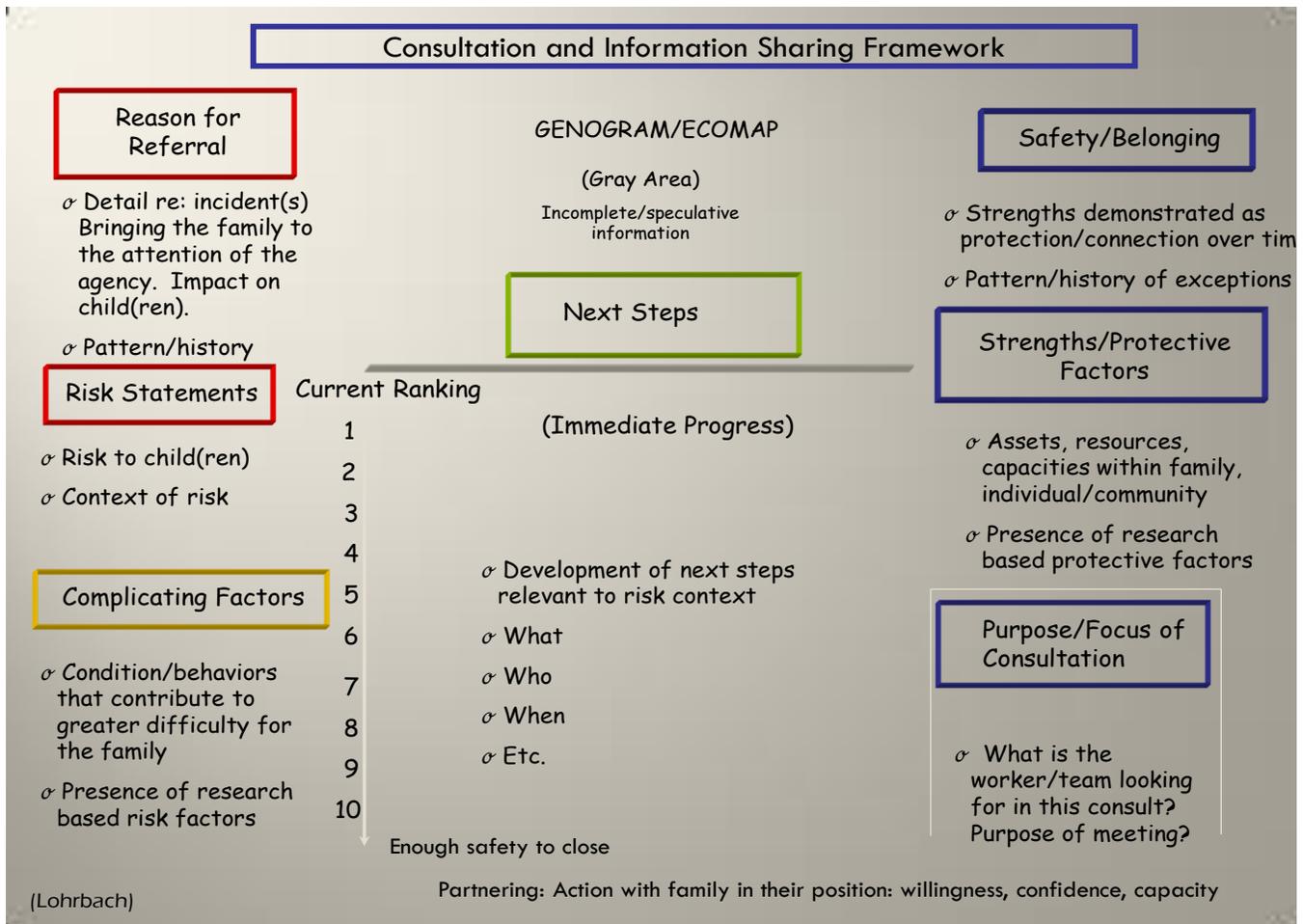
## **CASE REVIEW SYSTEM**

### **Family and Children's Services**

#### RED Team

In January 2015, Mendocino County Family and Children's Services implemented the RED Team. The RED (Review, Evaluate, Direct) team process is a group of social workers, supervisors, managers and collaborative staff who are charged with making sound group decisions regarding how referrals alleging abuse or neglect will be handled. All non-immediate referrals coming into the agency through the phone screeners are reviewed four days a week by the team and either assigned as a 10-day investigation or evaluated out. A Safety Organized Practice format of mapping is done on each referral, with questions about harm and danger, risk, safety, contributing factors, strengths and next steps.

The team process is a shift from a single social worker supervisor making a decision on the action that will be taken on a referral, to a Family and Children's Services team. The RED team provides both structure and process in the review of alleged reports of child maltreatment, evaluation of the available information, and direction regarding the Agency's response, as well as helps promote countywide consistency regarding referral determinations.



## Court Structure/Relationship

### Family and Children's Services

The Mendocino County Juvenile Court has one judge who presides over both dependency and delinquency hearings. Currently, the Juvenile Court Judge is the Honorable Cindee F. Mayfield. However, Judge David Riemenschneider will be the Juvenile Court Judge beginning mid-January 2016. All hearings are conducted at the Superior Court in Ukiah.

Attorneys are appointed for all parties entitled to representation. The parties in dependency court are appointed an attorney selected by the court from a panel of attorneys who are contracted with the Judicial Council. The court does have additional panel attorneys who are contracted with the Superior Court who are used when needed. For those families who can afford to hire an attorney, there are a few local attorneys available who are familiar with

the dependency system. Mendocino County also has a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program with appointed volunteer advocates for children and youth involved in the Mendocino County Juvenile Court system. FCS is represented by County Counsel and three Deputy County Counsels are currently assigned to handle dependency matters. A Deputy County Counsel appears at every court hearing.

Dependency court hearings are held every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and our Family Dependency Drug Court hearings are held Wednesday mornings before the start of the regular dependency calendar. Monday and Friday mornings are also available for detention hearings and special set hearings, such as contested matters that are likely to take an hour or more. Telephonic appearances are generally available to clients, AB 12 young adults and out-of-county tribal representatives who are unable to travel to Ukiah for hearings. The court is also exploring using technology such as video conferencing and possibly Skype to assist clients and AB 12 young adults who are unable to travel to Ukiah for the hearings.

The Juvenile Court Judge hosts a monthly dependency judge's meeting with FCS, County Counsel, attorneys, CASA and ICWA workers to discuss issues that affect the overall case process and procedures. This meeting helps to improve the working relationship between FCS, the attorneys and CASA. In addition, the FCS management team meets quarterly with the attorneys and Deputy County Counsels handling dependency cases to further address and work on issues regarding the court process and the working relationship with attorneys involved in FCS cases.

FCS has one full time Social Worker Supervisor who serves as our court officer. He is the FCS representative for all hearings, which eliminates the need for the case carrying social worker to attend court hearings unless the matter is contested. This Social Worker Supervisor provides a report each week of each hearing, results, next hearing dates and any issues that came up. This supervisor along with the other social worker supervisors meet once a week with the three Deputy County Counsels to review hearings scheduled for the following week and ensure the court reports are ready to go, anticipate issues that may come up and determine if a particular social worker may need to be on stand-by to come to court if issues comes up.

## **Probation**

Probation has one court officer designated for the job; however the juvenile probation officers have gone to court to present their own cases. The juvenile court judge has requested the placement officers attend court for all of their cases as they have the most current information regarding the youth who are in placement. The probation officers testify in court hearings and also testify as experts i.e., gang. The Juvenile Probation Division has a good working relationship with the Court including the juvenile court judge, the district attorney, and the public defender and alternate defender. The Juvenile Court holds monthly meetings with probation, the district attorney, the public defender and the alternate defender; also included is the court clerk supervisor. The monthly meetings address issues as they arise. This helps streamline the court process and address policies and procedures. The meetings enhance Probation's working relationship with all parties.

## **Timely Notification of Hearings**

### **Family and Children's Services**

Parents are provided information both orally and in writing at the time of detention. Family and Children's Services social workers provide parents with a pre-made "Detention Packet" at the time of detention or when informing them of an initial court hearing. The parents' packet has several easy-to-read documents that explain the court process. Caregivers and youth over 10 years of age are also provided verbal notice of the detention hearing.

Tribes are notified, when applicable, verbally within 24 hours after the detention, and potential tribes and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are noticed by mail with the ICWA-030 form of every hearing until the Juvenile Court makes a determination of ICWA applicability. When a tribe has been confirmed for a child, that tribe continues to receive notice of every hearing until the conclusion of the case. FCS has an established ICWA protocol that was developed in collaboration with local tribes through our ICWA Roundtable, which identifies a step-by-step process for social workers and support staff to follow regarding the gathering of information needed for ICWA notices, when notices must be sent and who must be noticed.

Following the detention hearing, parties in the case and caregivers receive notice of hearings in the following manner:

- Jurisdiction Hearing- parties are given verbal notice of the date of this hearing from the Court at the conclusion of the Detention Hearing. Parties not present are sent written notice through the mail by FCS staff. However, tribes are always sent written notice.
- Disposition Hearing- parties are given verbal notice of the date of this hearing from the Court at the conclusion of the Jurisdiction Hearing. Parties not present are sent written notice through the mail by FCS staff. However, tribes are always sent written notice.
- Review Hearings- all parties and caregivers are sent written notice by mail 30 days prior to the date of the hearing by FCS staff.
- Welfare and Institutions Code Section 366.26 hearings- parties are provided verbal notice from the Court at the prior hearing in which the WIC 366.26 hearing is set, with follow up noticing by FCS staff through first class mail, process server, in-person, by certified mail, by publication, or by noticing parents' attorneys depending upon the FCS recommendation and in accordance with the requirements of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

Caregivers receive a JV-290, "Caregiver Information Form", with every notice of hearing which they can use to provide information directly to the Court or to the Social Worker to attach the court report. In the alternative, caregivers are welcome to attend court hearings and address the Court verbally. The JV-290 notifies the caregiver that they have the right to attend the hearing and provide either verbal or written input regarding the child's health, education, adjustment to his/her current living arrangement, social skills, peer relationships, special interests and activities and any other information the caregiver feels would be helpful.

The Juvenile Court hears all dependency matters. FCS does not hold administrative review hearings for post-permanency cases. All hearings are scheduled according to the Welfare and Institutions Code timeline requirements. To assist with meeting the required

timelines for hearings, the court report templates used by FCS social workers to prepare court reports and proposed findings and orders include instructions as to how to determine the next hearing date. These instructions include a two week buffer before the next hearing deadline to ensure that if a continuance was needed for that next hearing, there is some time to continue the matter and still hold the hearing by the statutory deadline. All post-dispositional hearings, including permanency hearings, are held on a six month schedule with the exception of hearings that must be held in a shorter amount of time. For permanency hearings, the court report templates which are used by the social workers to prepare their court reports include instructions for them to provide an analysis as to whether termination of parental rights should occur or whether there is a compelling reason why terminating parental rights is not in the child's best interest. When there is a compelling reason not to terminate parental rights, the reason is included in the written findings made at the hearing by the Juvenile Court Judge.

Filing court reports timely helps contribute to foster care permanency and stability. Monthly court report calendars are created by staff in the Court Liaison/Legal Clerks Unit and provided two to three months in advance to social workers, supervisors and managers. These calendars reflect all post-disposition hearings and indicate the case name, assigned social worker, hearing date, date court report is due to the legal clerks and date the report must be filed to comply with Welfare and Institutions Code filing requirements. Social Workers prepare court reports in court report templates we have created in Microsoft Word. Once the court reports are reviewed and approved by the supervisor, our legal clerks put the reports into CWS/CMS, format the reports and exhibits/attachments, prepare and mail copies of the reports, serve the attorneys with copies and file the reports with the court. Ongoing review of timely court reports is conducted by supervisors and managers at supervision meetings. In addition, tracking of timely court report filings is done by the Court Liaison/Legal Clerks Unit.

## **Probation**

Parents and the youth are provided information both orally and in writing (copy of the detention form and petition) at the time of detention. The probation officer also provides the

youth and the parents with the date and time of the initial court hearing. The process is as follows:

- Jurisdiction Hearing- parties are given verbal notice of the date of this hearing from the Court at the conclusion of the Detention Hearing. Parties not present are notified by the youth’s attorney and/or the Probation Officer. However, parents are also sent written notice by the Court Clerk.
- Disposition Hearing- parties are given verbal notice of the date of this hearing from the Court at the conclusion of the Jurisdiction Hearing. Parties not present are notified by the youth’s attorney and/or the Probation Officer. However, parents are also sent written notice by the Court Clerk.
- Review Hearings- all parties and caregivers are sent written notice by mail 30 days prior to the date of the hearing by the Probation Department Legal Clerk.

Additionally, for placement youth, the Probation Placement Legal Clerk mails out notification of the hearings to the ward, the caregiver, and the parents. The form letter identifies the type of hearing, date of the hearing, and the time.

The last page of the case plan (which is attached to the court report) shows the date the notices were sent and the address to which notices were sent. They are accompanied by a Legal Solutions “Proof of Service” form. The notices are sent no sooner than 30 days before the hearing, and no later than 15 days before the court date. Group homes are asked to provide a current quarterly report as well as school information.

## **Case plans**

### **Family and Children’s Services**

FCS social workers are required to have initial case plans completed within 60 days of opening a voluntary case or by the disposition hearing for court cases. Social workers are required to engage with family and youth, and tribes if applicable, in the development of initial and subsequent case plans. Social workers assess the family’s strengths and needs using the

SDM Family Strengths and Needs Assessment Tool. In addition, Safety Organized Practice Family Team Meetings are held prior to initial and subsequent case plan development to map with the family the worries, strengths and what needs to happen next to address the harm or danger that resulted in child welfare involvement and the family's safety goal. The family, ICWA workers, service providers and the family's natural supports are invited to the family mapping meetings and these meetings are facilitated by program specialists in our Integrated Services Unit who have been through extensive training regarding Safety Organized Practices, Motivational Interviewing and Appreciative Inquiry. The focus of the initial family mapping meeting is the development of behaviorally based goals and objectives and the identification of appropriate services and/or strategies to help meet the behavioral objective. Subsequent family mapping meetings review the initial case plan and progress and determine if adjustments are needed to the case plan or the direction of the case. Input from service providers on the client's progress is obtained by the social worker for these meetings if the service provider is unable to be present at the meeting.

The case plan is discussed and reviewed with the child, parents and if applicable, ICWA worker. Social workers endeavor to obtain the parents' signatures on the case plans prior the case plan being filed with the court report. However, if the signature is not obtained before the hearing, the social worker is to have the parents sign the case plan promptly after the hearing. All disposition, family reunification, family maintenance and permanency planning court reports include a discussion by the social worker regarding how the case plan was developed and who was involved in the development of the case plan. Further, the Juvenile Court Judge makes written findings regarding whether each parent and child was involved in case planning.

Case plans are included with the court reports beginning with the dispositional hearing report. Case plans are updated a minimum of every six months. However, case plans for children who are in group homes are updated more frequently according to the requirements in the Welfare and Institutions Code. Updated case plans include specific information about the current progress of the child and family as well as any changes to the case plan. Case plans also include the schedule of planned social worker contacts with the child, parents and caregivers and the visitation schedule between the parents, children, siblings and other family members.

Please refer to the section entitled County Child Welfare and Probation Infrastructure for discussion on how children and youth are screened and assessed for mental health services and the coordination efforts between Family and Children’s Services and Mental Health.

## **Probation**

Implementation of a comprehensive case management system, Just Ware was implemented and is used by the adult and juvenile probation officers. This new system replaced the JLAN system and will significantly enhanced data collection and evaluation activities. It does, however, require duplicate efforts for those probation officers with placement cases who currently enter case information into CWS/CMS.

Juvenile probation officers complete assessments on all juvenile offenders utilizing the web-based Software, Assessments.com which includes a feature to compile aggregate data on all offenders assessed. This has improved probation’s ability to identify service gaps and advocate for appropriate evidence-based community services. This will also allow the department to use evidence-based practices program grant funds to build a sustainable quality assurance program and monitor the effectiveness of evidence-based practices delivered by the officers.

For Probation cases, the department utilizes a Title IV-E compliant case plan generated by the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) assessment by Assessments.com. The assessment identifies the youth’s top three criminogenic needs, which are then populated to the case plan. The parent, youth, and Probation Officer (PO) review the case plan and reach agreement about the identified goals and objectives. While the plan generated is focused on the youth’s criminogenic needs, “custom goals” for the parents are also included when appropriate to address parental child welfare needs. The parent, youth, PO and Supervising PO are all required to sign the case plan. When a child in foster care becomes 15½ years old, the case worker begins the process to create a Transitional Independent Living Plan, or TILP, which the youth helps create. This plan, developed along with the Probation Officer and the ILP worker, guides the youth through their time in foster care and helps to move them to

independence, if they are not returned home before they are 15.5 years of age. CWS and Probation inform parents or guardians of their rights and responsibilities by providing them a brochure at the initial home visit or court appearance. A copy of caregivers' rights and responsibilities is also included in the court petition. In Court, the judge orally advises them of their rights.

Mendocino County is able to meet Division 31 requirements that every child in placement is to be seen monthly by the probation officer (with a majority of contacts to occur in the child's residence), and also to have a written case plan that is reviewed/updated no less than every six months by the probation officer with family involvement through case plan meetings. Case plan compliance is overseen by the Juvenile Court, and monitored by the supervisor, court dates tracked by legal office assistants and the placement probation officer. The placement officer also reviews reports generated from CWS/CMS and SafeMeasures. The probation department meets the timeframes required for Permanency Hearings by following these procedures. The probation officer and the supervisor sign the case plan after signature is obtained from the youth and parent(s) (if FR case). A case plan includes provisions for:

- Establishing case plan goals, health and other service needs, placement and visitation decisions, family engagement, and action plans for the family to achieve the case plan goals,
- Placing the youth in the least-restrictive setting appropriate for the youth's needs and in close proximity to the parent's home,
- Ensuring that court review hearings are held every six months,
- Family finding efforts by probation officers to seek and maintain extended family connections that benefit the youth's safety, well-being and permanency,
- Ensuring education-related rights for school-aged youth in foster care, such as keeping the youth in the school of origin that they are attending, unless there is a compelling reason to change schools, in accordance with federal and state education legislation and procedures.

Concurrent Planning occurs for every Family Reunification case, which involves planning for both family reunification and identifying another permanent living situation if the youth will not be able to reunify with parents. On a weekly basis, Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings are held to review specific priority cases (Family Reunification and Permanency Planning) to assist with case planning and integrated service delivery responsibilities, such case plan goals, placement and needed services (visitation, health, behavioral and social services), and required services (e.g. child/family screening and assessments and case worker/probation officer contacts). The MDT is comprised of program managers from CWS, Public Health, and Mental Health, the Mendocino County Office of Education including SELPA as well as a Placement Probation Officer and a Probation supervisor, representing the specific case being reviewed.

## **FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

### **Family and Children's Services**

Mendocino County does not license foster homes. However, we do approve relative and non-relative extended family members for foster care placements. All requirements regarding home inspections, child abuse/neglect history check, criminal records check and assessment of the prospective caregiver's ability to care for the child are completed by the case carrying social worker and staff within our Quality Assurance Unit. Our Quality Assurance Program Administrator is the identified Department of Justice custodian of records and is responsible for completing simple exemptions. Possible exemptions that require more analysis and review beyond simple exemptions must be brought to the Deputy Director to review.

Social workers must comply with our Family and Children's Services ICWA Protocol which has extensive discussion and instructions on collaboration with the child's tribe regarding placement. This includes working with the ICWA worker at the time of detention and thereafter to determine whether the child's tribe has a tribally approved home for the child. If not, the social worker must work with the ICWA worker to identify a placement that is agreeable to the tribe that can meet the child's needs.

Mendocino County contracts with the California Department of Social Services Adoptions Bureau to locate adoptive placements for children who have been found to be adoptable. However, concurrent planning and joint work with Adoptions begins pre-disposition and continues through the life of the case until conventional adoption or tribal customary adoption are no longer necessary or deemed appropriate for the child.

### **Probation**

Mendocino County does not license foster homes. However, we do approve relative and non-relative extended family members for foster care placements. All requirements regarding home inspections, child abuse/neglect history check, criminal records check and assessment of the prospective caregiver's ability to care for the child are completed by the case carrying Probation Officer.

### **General Licensing, Recruitment & Retention**

Mendocino County does not license foster homes. We rely on the California Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division and our local Foster Family Agencies to license foster homes. Mendocino County, like most counties throughout the state and nation, is experiencing a significant shortage of foster homes. To address this serious problem, FCS has also been working with our local foster family agencies and one of our local tribes by providing additional funding to help them enhance and expand their efforts to recruit and retain foster families, particularly families who can take sibling groups and special needs children and Native American and Latino homes. We just began this enhanced funding in 2015 and will be evaluating the effectiveness through the number of additional homes that have completed the licensing process and are able to take foster placements.

In addition, our Placement Unit Supervisor has been meeting with several local service clubs and faith based organizations to discuss the need for foster placements and providing informational brochures on foster care options. Further, Placement Unit staff set up booths at local fairs and town events to promote the need for foster parents. Foster care informational

brochures have been provided to local law enforcement agencies and local family resource centers to help spread the word regarding the need for foster parents. Lastly, our Placement Unit Supervisor has been writing a regular newsletter that is mailed to all foster parents.

Every possible effort is made to find relatives that meet the requirements for placement and as early in the placement process as possible, particularly given the limited number of licensed foster placements available in county. Beginning with Fiscal Year 2015-2016, FCS has entered into a contract with Seneca Family Services to assist with enhanced and expanded family finding. We anticipate this will help us locate more potential placement options for our children and youth. Relative and non-relative extended family member (NREFM) placements have the support of FCS staff and services to help support them in the care of the foster child. In addition, they are referred to and encouraged to utilize the support of the Mendocino College Foster and Kin Care Education Program (MCFKCE). Also, Triple P (Positive Parenting Program), PCIT (Parent Child Interactive Therapy) and Wraparound services are available to relative/NREFM placements with eligible children/youth. Foster Family Agency (FFA) certified homes are provided training and support through their FFAs and the MCFKCE.

As part of FCS' Continuous Quality Improvement, focus groups were held earlier this year with foster parents. A number of issues were identified regarding their working relationship with social workers impacting the retention of foster parents. As a result, a training was prepared and conducted by our Placement Unit Supervisor, a Placement Unit Social Worker and the Mendocino College Foster and Kin Care Education Program Coordinator in July 2015 to educate social workers and help improve how they interact with foster parents. Follow up surveys and/or focus groups will be held with foster parents to monitor improvements in their experiences with FCS social workers.

Foster homes in general, even for babies or children with no special needs, are very scarce. Redwood Community Services has been the one local Foster Family Agency to be a significant support to FCS in meeting the needs of our high needs children who we had been unable to find any other high level placement for them, who would be in a more restrictive residential facility or who would likely to go through multiple placements. As a result of this collaboration, we have been working with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS)

and RCS to develop a Residentially Based Services (RBS) two year pilot program. We began in December 2015.

Another newly developed placement resource in Mendocino County is Levine House in Ukiah. The initial pilot project during fiscal year 2014-2015 was a six bed housing unit that was jointly split (3 beds each) between FCS for AB 12 young adults and RCS for young adults ages 18 to 24 who were being seen through RCS' mental health crisis program and were in need of a safe and stable place to stay short term. For Fiscal Year 2015-2016, AB 12 young adults are able to stay at Levine House up to six months while working with their FCS social worker on locating more permanent housing such as through the THP Plus Foster Care (THP+FC) program or a Supportive Independent Living Placement (SILP).

Mendocino County Family and Children's Services has been working with local Foster Family Agencies and tribes to provide them with additional funding to enhance their foster home recruitment efforts beyond what they generally do including the following:

- a) Mendocino County Family & Children's Services did a four month contract (March 2015-June 2015) with a local FFA, Redwood Community Services, to significantly expand and enhance recruitment efforts for foster and foster-adopt homes in general for Mendocino County, but also specifically for Latino foster homes, Native American homes and homes for sibling groups or special needs children.

RCS did nine community foster care information presentations throughout the county and 25 families attended. Current foster parents representing varying backgrounds and types of children fostered participated in the presentations to share their stories. The presentations included a 1 ½ hour overview of the FFA, certification requirements and process, foster and foster to adopt options and dialogue with current foster parents regarding the court process, relationship with birth families, supporting reunification and saying goodbye to children who reunify.

RCS also did advertising on Facebook, social media paid advertising, print advertising including in publications specific to the Latino community and radio advertising. During the four months prior to the contract, RCS certified one home for Mendocino County. During the contract period, three new homes were certified. Although RCS has had an ongoing recruitment effort, these efforts were beyond what they have generally done historically.

- b) Mendocino County Family & Children's Services did a contract with the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians to host a one day event in October 2015 in order to expand

outreach and awareness of the need for foster care families which will hopefully lead to increased Native American foster homes in Mendocino County. The event will include speakers discussing foster care education, foster home checklists, foster care options, preparing for the home assessment and foster care paperwork, supportive services and resources available to foster families and a Hopland foster/adoptive parent sharing their personal experience and story. Hopland has invited the other nine Mendocino County tribes to participate as well as the local FFAs.

The Hopland Tribe will record the number of attendees at the one day event, the number of families who are beginning the process to become a tribally approved foster home or become a certified foster home as a result of this event, and the number of homes who completed the tribal home approval process or foster care certification process and are open for placements as a result of this effort. This will help us determine if these types of events are useful.

- c) Mendocino County Family & Children's Services has done a contract through June 30, 2016 with TLC Child and Family Services FFA to enhance foster parent recruitment for homes in Mendocino County. Their contract includes the following:
- Posting billboard(s) in prominent location(s) to help inform the community of the need for foster homes. This may be done in partnership with other foster family agencies.
  - Identifying local businesses in Ukiah, Willits, Fort Bragg, Mendocino, and the Anderson Valley (at least one local business in each community) to partner in an effort such as the following:
    - Setting up a display that includes information outlining the need for foster homes with a place to put business cards. TLC will follow up with each entered business card to offer more information about how they can become more involved in foster care.
  - Placing smaller signs in outlying communities providing a visual prompt for people who have been considering opening their families to foster children.
  - Designing and printing flyers with tear-off information regarding foster care needs and opportunities to post on bulletin boards throughout the county.
  - Developing public service announcements for local radio stations regarding the need for foster homes and/or conduct presentations to local associations such as churches, Rotary, 20/30 clubs, etc.
  - Holding one additional orientation meeting per month in Mendocino County beyond what TLC currently does for those interested in becoming foster parents.

At the end of the contract period, TLC must provide the County with a report comparing baseline data with the number of responses obtained from this enhanced recruitment effort, the number of additional homes beginning the foster care certification process as a result of this effort, and the number of additional homes

completing the foster care certification process and being open for placements as a result of this effort. This will help us determine if these strategies are useful.

## **Probation**

Mendocino County does not license foster homes. Every effort is made to find relatives that meet the requirements for placement and as early in the placement process as possible, particularly given the limited number of licensed foster placements available in county and the lack of placement foster homes that will take probation youth. The Placement Probation officer regularly meets with group homes that are in close proximity to Mendocino County to establish and maintain a close working relationship in order to ensure they will provide care for probation placement youth. Redwood Community Services (RCS) Residentially Based Services (RBS) two year pilot program has agreed to serve probation placement youth. The start date is December 1, 2015.

The Probation Department is also working in collaboration with Family and Children's Services, the Mendocino County Youth Project and RCS in order to utilize the emergency housing placement resource for AB 12 young adults, ages 18 to 21, who were participating in the Extended Foster Care program, but did not have housing.

## **STAFF, CAREGIVER AND SERVICE PROVIDER TRAINING**

### **Family and Children's Services**

California Common Core Training: Family & Children's Services is committed to ensuring that social worker staff complete CORE Phase I and II within the required timeframes. The UC Davis Northern Region Training Academy has been very helpful in providing Core Phase I in Ukiah which has helped us to achieve compliance. Common locations for Core trainings are often in Davis or Redding which are several hours away from Mendocino County one-way which makes it difficult to send a large group of new social workers at the same time. We are actively working with social workers and UC Davis to ensure social workers also complete Core Phase II timely including having Core Phase II classes held in Ukiah that a large group of our social

workers need to complete. An example of this is the two day Introduction to Mental Health class that is being held in Ukiah in October 2015.

Social Worker Supervisors are expected to complete the Supervisor Core training program through the Northern Region Training Academy within their first year of hire or promotion to supervisor. However, due to turnover in some supervisor positions, not all current supervisors have fully completed Supervisor Core. However, we are diligently working to ensure they complete this training within the next year.

On-going and/or new training needs are identified through issues that have been expressed by the Court, attorneys, County Counsel, service providers, foster parents or FCS supervisors or management, or needs identified by staff, or new or updated policies and procedures, or new federal or legislation or requirements. The FCS management team reviews the training plan on an annual basis and schedules relevant training throughout the year. Training topics and training opportunities are discussed each week during the management meeting. For the past five plus years, FCS has held regular in-service trainings for three hours on the fourth Monday of each month and other in-house trainings are scheduled as needed. A designated FCS manager officially coordinates and tracks all staff training. There is ample opportunity for FCS social workers to receive necessary and adequate training. Unfortunately, high caseloads or case emergencies sometimes prevent individuals from participating in training they might need or choose to attend.

Training for staff and other providers in the identification and treatment of emotional trauma, including emotional trauma associated with a child's maltreatment and removal from their home is an area in which additional focus is needed.

The skill development of new and experienced staff is measured by their supervisor during regular supervision as well through regular performance evaluations. All staff in FCS are evaluated using a Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency performance evaluation developed for each general classification which measures Agency expectations and specific knowledge, skills and abilities. The evaluations highlight attendance at training in the previous year and identify training needs for the upcoming year, as appropriate.

To best serve underserved populations, FCS endeavors to ensure staff participate in available trainings regarding children’s cultural and/or special needs. When possible, Spanish-speaking families are assigned to Spanish-speaking social workers and service providers.

Newly hired staff are assigned to a unit and that unit supervisor is responsible for training the new staff. However, this has been a struggle for the Social Worker Supervisors and we have identified the need to develop a training unit. Our Training Unit began on September 28, 2015 and all newly hired social workers will initially be assigned to the training unit. Upon completion of initial training, they will then be assigned to another unit. We have not had a training unit in about 13 years. Therefore, this will be a work in-progress, but we expect it will help better prepare new social workers for the job and will alleviate much of the basic training that each unit supervisor has had to do with new staff. In addition, this Training Unit Social Worker Supervisor will be responsible for providing on-going training to staff even after completion of their initial training, as well as be available to work one-on-one with staff that may need additional training support.

Providers who facilitate our court-ordered classes and groups through our county operated Family Resource Centers receive training by FCS staff. The non-county operated Family Resource Centers FRC instructors receive training as appropriate for groups and classes they provide, including evidence-based programs funded by CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF funds. A Senior Program Specialist is assigned to monitor and promote consistency and quality in these classes and groups wherever they take place within the county. These programs include tutoring, teen after school drop-in programs and parental education among others, including evidence-based Triple P (Positive Parenting Program).

## **Probation**

Probation Officers are required to attend and complete 179.5 hours of Probation Officer Core training within their first year of employment. In addition, all DPOs assigned to placement caseloads attend Placement Core training through UC Davis as early as is convenient from the date of their assignment. Each subsequent year, DPOs are required to attend and complete an

additional 40 hours of STC certified training. Most of this training pertains to the law enforcement aspects of their job. The balance of the training is elective, and very specific to their assignments.

New staff also receive a 10-day, in-house orientation which includes visiting a placement, being assigned a mentor, and shadowing a more senior probation officer.

Probation placement officers are required to attend an additional nine-day training, placement specific, through the University of California at Davis.

## **AGENCY COLLABORATION**

### **Family and Children's Services**

**Collaboration between FCS and Juvenile Probation** occurs in several ways to deliver foster care services to children and families. Both FCS and Probation have representatives on the Multi-Disciplinary Team which reviews children/youth who need Intensive Treatment Foster Care or group home level care. FCS and Probation are both involved in the planning and implementation of our Residentially Based Services program that began in December 2015. FCS Wraparound staff also serve probation youth in addition to FCS youth. Wraparound reinvestment funds are used to support New Beginnings, a clean and sober class room program specifically for probation youth. The Wraparound funds support designated probation officers for the program as well as substance abuse treatment and mental health counseling. In addition, Juvenile Probation is able to refer their families to parenting education programs offered at the county operated Family Resource Centers as well as Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) classes that are provided throughout the community by First Five Mendocino and funded by FCS.

**Collaboration between FCS and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) workers and tribal service providers** occurs on a case-by-case for applicable clients. In addition, FCS hosts a regular ICWA roundtable with representatives from Mendocino County tribes to discuss existing services, new or changed services, trainings and special events/opportunities for Native American children, youth and families to help improve outcomes for Native American children and youth. Several of the tribes have social services programs and Indian Health Centers on or

near the tribe. Social workers work closely with these programs to refer eligible clients and monitor their progress in services. In addition, one tribe regularly has dependency cases transferred to the jurisdiction of the tribe to be handled by their Tribal Council or their Tribal Court.

**The Linkages Program-** FCS is one service area within the Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency, which is comprised of Social Services, Public Health and Behavioral Health and Recovery Services. The integration of these service areas has allowed us to work closely together in serving our mutual clients. The Deputy Directors of FCS and Employment and Family Assistance Services (EFAS) have been working together to re-establish our Linkages program for FCS clients that receive CalWORKs assistance. The Linkages program will allow relevant information to be shared on cases in common so that families can work toward reunification and self-sufficiency. Working collaboratively, the Social Worker and Welfare to Work Employment and Training Worker will develop a combined case plan that guides service delivery to promote reunification of the family and move toward self-sufficiency. We have already begun conducting data matches to identify common clients and we anticipate having the program running by January 2016. Despite not having the Linkages program formally in place, FCS and EFAS have worked closely together on a case-by-case basis to coordinate services and supports for mutual clients through the new EFAS Family Stabilization program.

**Mental Health providers-** As previously noted, FCS enjoys a close working relationship with mental health providers for our children and youth. In 2013, county mental health services were contracted out to two administrative services organizations; Redwood Quality Management Company which subcontracts with Redwood Community Services, Mendocino County Youth Project and Tapestry Family Services and then other service providers as needed for children, youth and young adults under age 25, and Ortnier Management Group (OMG) for individuals 25 and older.

With the implementation of the requirements of the Katie A. vs. Bonta lawsuit, we have forged a closer, collaborative working relationship with RQMC and the three primary mental health providers for children and youth through weekly meetings to ensure the mental health

needs of our children and youth are being met. RQMC is responsible for assuring the delivery of community based mental health services including crisis intervention and stabilization, hospitalization, medication management, individual and family therapy, individual and group rehabilitation services, intensive care coordination and intensive home based services. FCS has memorandums of understanding with both the county Behavioral Health and Recovery Services and RQMC regarding data sharing for the purposes of tracking for the requirements of the Katie A. vs. Bonta lawsuit.

When county mental health services were contracted out in 2013, HHS Behavioral Health and Recovery mental health clinicians and rehabilitation specialists were reassigned to Family and Children's Services to our Katie A/Wraparound unit. They are co-located with FCS staff in all three of our offices. They provide mental health screenings for all children/youth in an open FCS case at the start of the case and annually thereafter. They also assist with referring children/youth to mental health providers for assessment and services. In addition, through our Wraparound program, they provide Intensive Care Coordination (ICC) and Intensive Home Based Services (IHBS) for children/youth who are Katie A. subclass members and are at home with a parent or are in a relative or non-related extended family member placement or are in a state licensed or non-treatment foster care placement. Redwood Community Services and Tapestry Family Services provide ICC and IHBS for Katie A. subclass children/youth who are placed in their foster homes.

For our adult clients over the age of 25 in need of mental health services who are the parents of children placed in foster care and are in family reunification services or of children who remain at home and are in family maintenance services, we have a number of private therapists throughout the county with whom we contract to provide individual therapeutic mental health services and/or family therapy or couples therapy. We have found these clients are often not eligible to receive adult specialty mental health services and need more than the brief mental health services provided by local health centers.

**Law Enforcement-** FCS works closely with the local law enforcement agencies and tribal law enforcement agencies as needed regarding joint investigations or when FCS needs law enforcement assistance.

**Community Agencies-** By both necessity and desire, FCS has a long history of successful collaborations with agencies and organizations that serve children, youth and families in our county. Mendocino County is small enough for all of these agencies to have intimate knowledge of the families we mutually serve, and large enough to have sufficient infrastructure to meet many of their needs. We know that their chances for success improve to the extent we can work together on their behalf. FCS has a variety of key partnerships as follows:

- **Family Resource Center Network and its member Family Resource Centers (FRCs)-** Our FRC Network is comprised of our two county operated FRCs and ten non-profit FRCs strategically located throughout the county. Many clients of these FRCs are potentially at risk of child abuse or neglect of their children. These FRCs provide prevention and intervention services including parenting education and healthy activities for children, youth and families. Following is a listing of the ten non-profit FRCs, although two are currently closed, and the services they provide:

- Action Network Family Resource Centers in Point Arena and Gualala

Services provided include: parenting education classes and support groups, application assistance, information and referral, life coaching, mentoring and tutoring, anger management, family-friendly and sober events and substance abuse support groups.

- Anderson Valley Family Resource Center in Booneville

Services provided include: school based teen parenting group, Young Mom group, AODP –early prevention and treatment of alcohol abuse. *This FRC is currently closed as of June, 2015.*

- Laytonville Healthy Start

Services provided include: CalFresh, Medi-Cal and Covered California application assistance, information and referral, parenting groups, teen drop in after-school program, children's summer program, emergency food pantry, youth drug and alcohol prevention programs.

- Nuestra Alianza de Willits

Services provided include: Mental Health consultations in Spanish, CalFresh applications, gang prevention, child supervision, after school program, information and referral and parenting classes.

- Nuestra Casa

Services provided include: translation, tutoring, parenting classes and immigration forms assistance. *This FRC is currently closed as of June, 2015.*

- Potter Valley Youth and Community Center

Services provided include: translations, application assistance, information and referral, school health support, free afterschool program, community events, free clothing closet, preschool enrichment program, Latina Comunidad parent club, behavioral counseling for children and English as a Second Language (ESL) class.

- Safe Passage Family Resource Center in Fort Bragg

Services provided include: parenting classes, support groups and community events.

- The Alex Rorabaugh Center (ARC) Family Resource Center in South Ukiah

Services provided include: information and referral, Positive Parenting Program, Mama y Yo playgroup, Estambre en Accion, knitting, Zumba, Mom's Time, An-Anon, Sol de Esperanza, car seat program, application assistance, immigration services collaboration and education about AB 60 driver's license requirements.

- The Arbor in Central Ukiah (for individuals ages 15 to 24)

Services provided include: information and referral, life skills, peer support counseling, workforce development, teen peer court, substance abuse support, relationship workshops, anger management, Positive Parenting Program and personal development groups.

- Round Valley Family Resource Center, located on the Round Valley Indian Tribes reservation in Covelo

Services provided include: workshops, Mendocino diaper depot, food pantry, information and referrals, CalFresh and Medi-Cal application assistance, community access to computers and free Wi-Fi, cultural classes, exercise classes, healthy nutrition for kids and high school equivalency class.

- **Project Sanctuary-** offers a wide array of free services for Mendocino County victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. Funding sources include domestic violence programs from the State. FCS provides funding when our foster children spend overnights at the domestic violence shelter with a parent for visitation. Project Sanctuary provides 2,000 shelter beds on a yearly basis.
- **Substance Abuse Treatment Services-** FCS works closely with Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, which is another service area within the Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency, including having three designated Substance Use Disorder Treatment counselors assigned solely to FCS and housed with FCS. These counselors provide outpatient treatment to FCS clients including, primarily, FCS clients in the Family Dependency Drug Court program. FCS also has a close collaboration with the Ford Street Project, a local non-profit substance abuse treatment program. FCS contracts with the Ford Street Project to provide detox and residential substance abuse treatment services to FCS clients, as well as random weekend drug testing for FCS clients.
- **Family Dependency Drug Court (FDDC)-** FDDC is a collaboration between FCS, the Juvenile Court, First Five Mendocino, HHSA/Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, the Ford Street Project and dependency attorneys. FDDC was established eight years

ago with a federal Administration of Children and Families grant. That grant concluded on September 30, 2014 after seven years. FCS has continued to fund the bulk of the program using our Child Welfare allocation, State Family Preservation funds and Wraparound reinvestment funds. In addition, First Five Mendocino funds parent peer mentors for the program. Meetings are held once a month with the steering committee and operations team to collaborate and address issues and discuss sustainability.

- **Foster Youth Services-** FCS works closely with the Mendocino County Office of Education's Foster Youth Services program to ensure our foster youth's educational rights and needs are being met. The Foster Youth Services program manager is part of the development and implementation of our Residentially Based Services program. In addition, she sits on our Multi-Disciplinary Team to review children/youth who are in need of Intensive Treatment Foster Care or group home level care.
- **Policy Council on Children and Youth/Child Abuse Prevention Council-** The FCS Deputy Director is a commissioner on the Policy Council on Children and Youth/Child Abuse Prevention Council, which meets monthly to address the needs of children and youth in Mendocino County. PCCY/CAPC is a broad-based non-profit advocacy organization that works to eliminate child abuse and neglect in the community through coordinated services and outreach for the prevention, intervention and treatment of child abuse among agencies and organizations, actively promoting and supporting high-quality education and service programs that successfully reduce child abuse and neglect, and increasing public awareness through media and newsletters about resources to help prevent child abuse and neglect. PCCY/CAPC has representatives from the faith based community as well as foster family agencies and group home providers. Information is shared among commissioners regarding programs and activities in order to align activities, and share funding and resources.
- **First Five Mendocino-**The Assistant Director of Health and Human Services Agency, Human Services is a commissioner on the First Five Mendocino commission, which meets monthly to address the needs of children ages 0 to 5 in Mendocino County. FCS has provided funding to First Five Mendocino for the past three years to provide Triple P

(Positive Parenting Program) education countywide to families with children ages 0 to 18. In addition, FCS collaborated with First Five Mendocino to provide start-up funding for the Alex Rorabaugh Center (ARC) Family Resource Center.

- **Sexual Abuse Response Team (SART)**- FCS participates in this interagency multi-disciplinary team which is a collaboration of law enforcement, the District Attorneys' office, FCS, Victim Witness Services and medical professionals.
- **Levine House**- Levine House is a newly developed placement resource in Ukiah. FCS worked in collaboration with the Mendocino County Youth Project and Redwood Community Services to develop an emergency, temporary housing placement resource for AB 12 young adults, ages 18 to 21 participating in the Extended Foster Care program, but who did not have housing. The initial pilot project during fiscal year 2014-2015 was a six bed housing unit that was jointly split (3 beds each) between FCS for AB 12 young adults and Redwood Community Services (RCS) for young adults ages 18 to 24 who were being seen through RCS' mental health crisis program and were in need of a safe and stable place to stay short term. For Fiscal Year 2015-2016, FCS is funding all six beds for AB 12 young adults, although community based organizations may refer other transition age homeless young adults, ages 18 to 21, who are appropriate and compatible for the house. The community based organizations pay a daily bed rate if they are in need of a bed and one is available. AB 12 young adults are able to stay at Levine House up to six months while working with their FCS social worker on locating more permanent housing such as through the THP Plus Foster Care (THP+FC) program or a Supportive Independent Living Placement (SILP).

## **Probation**

Probation utilizes the following:

**Mental health providers:** As previously noted, the Probation Department has a close working relationship with mental health providers for our youth. The Probation Department utilizes services of the Redwood Quality Management Company (RQMC). RQMC subcontracts

with three primary mental health providers (Redwood Community Services, Mendocino County Youth Project and Tapestry Family Services). Mendocino County Youth Project provides services to New Beginnings. RQMC provides quality assurance oversight of their subcontractors to ensure assessments and treatment plans meet all Medi-Cal requirements.

**Law Enforcement:** Probation works closely with the local law enforcement agencies and tribal law enforcement agencies as needed regarding joint investigations and assistance including assistance with the Drug Task Force. The Probation Department is also involved with the local Mendocino County Gang Suppression Unit.

**The Arbor:** The Probation Department refers youth to services provided by The Arbor which include all the services available to Family and Children's Services youth as listed above.

**New Beginnings:** is an intensive supervision school based program that results from the collaboration between Mendocino County Office of Education, Mendocino Youth Project and AODP. Youth are assessed for substance abuse treatment needs using the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) evidence based assessment tool within the school setting. There is an on-site probation officer to provide supervision, testing and coordination of treatment. Assessments and treatment services are provided during the school day in one-on-one, group, and family counseling settings. Wraparound services provided by the Family and Children's Services are also utilized in order to prevent out of home placement for the youth that attend the program.

**Teen Peer Court:** The Probation Department works collaboratively with the Court and has developed a Teen Peer Court. The objective of the Teen Peer Court program is to interrupt the developing pattern of criminal behavior in referred juveniles by promoting self-esteem, motivation for self-improvement, forming a healthy attitude toward authority, and increasing education. Teen offenders between the ages of 13 and 17 who have committed a misdemeanor crime have their cases heard by a jury of their peers. Additional peers perform the roles of prosecuting and defense attorneys. The offenders assume responsibility for their behavior and accept the consequences of their actions through community service work, serving as future

Teen Peer Court jury members, and fulfilling any other creative sentence sanctioned by their Teen Peer Court (TPC) jury.

Cases referred by the Probation Department Citation Hearing Officer and heard in Teen Peer Court are crimes such as shoplifting, possession of alcohol and/or marijuana, disturbing the peace, and many other low level misdemeanor offenses. Sources of referral are law enforcement, Juvenile Probation, and the District Attorney's Office. Once the teen offender completes the sentence they have received from the teen jury, the referring agency is notified and the offender's record is dismissed. If the offender does not complete their sentence, their case is returned to the appropriate referral source for prosecution. The Teen Peer Court (TPC) has a very low recidivism rate of 7-8%. The Probation Department refers approximately 10-12 cases to Teen Peer Court per calendar year.

Teen Peer Court provides an educational experience for the offender and teen volunteers. The teens are given "hands-on" experience with legal processes, become familiar with the court system, and have an opportunity to learn about various career options the court system has to offer. The offenders also learn about various career opportunities through the community service they perform. Teen Peer Court provides young people with a unique challenge and opportunity to demonstrate their capacity for self-government and responsible citizenship.

Like Family and Children's Services, Probation utilizes extensive collaboration with many agencies. Due to our limited fiscal resources, local agencies cannot afford to duplicate services and are willing to work together to provide services.

Some of these efforts are formalized through MOUs, such as those with Family and Children's Services and CASA, while others remain informal

## **SERVICE ARRAY**

### **Family and Children's Services**

Mendocino County continues to provide mandated and traditional services for its children and families and also strives to implement new and innovative programs that will lead

to improved child welfare outcomes. Families in our county have a range of services available to them. Agencies serving our community work hard to provide culturally competent services that meet the needs of non-native English speakers and members of specific ethnic or cultural groups. FCS employs staff in all three offices who speak Spanish in order to serve our Spanish-speaking community members. Several of the non-profit Family Resource Centers in the county are targeted primarily for serving the Latino population, especially the mono-lingual Spanish speakers. All of these services combine to provide a continuum of family-centered holistic care. However, due to the rural nature of Mendocino County, not all areas of the county have all services available, particularly the more remote areas of the county.

FCS contracts with approximately 55 service providers for Family Reunification, Family Maintenance, Permanency Placement and Supportive Transition services including psychological evaluations, therapy, residential substance abuse treatment, detox services, prevention services, summer work program for the Independent Living Skills program, adoption services, Title IV-E training programs, Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) parenting education, drug/alcohol testing, parenting support groups, emergency housing for AB 12 young adults, domestic violence and anger management services, emergency shelter care, respite care, Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THPP) program and Family Findings. We have also contracted with other counties to provide Wraparound services for children/youth placed outside of Mendocino County as needed; most recently, Sonoma and Lake Counties. Services are provided for families involved with FCS based on an assessment of families' and children's needs. When families are referred for services through FCS, the goal is to address the issues that brought them to the attention of FCS. Case plans detail the services offered to families and identify the individualized goals for each parent and/or child/youth.

### ***Community-Based and Prevention-Focused Services and Collaborations***

- a) Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF): FCS partners with nine non-profit Family Resource Centers to provide early intervention and prevention services to families where the children are at risk of abuse or neglect. These programs are: 1) Community-

Based Family Support including case management, financial literacy and parent education; 2) Adoption Promotion and Support through community outreach; 3) Time-Limited Family Reunification Services including anger management, healthy cooking classes, healthy relationship education, sexual education, peer support groups and parenting education; and 4) Family Preservation including grandparents raising grandchildren classes.

- b) Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP): FCS partners with two non-profit Family Resource Centers to provide Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) classes. Triple P is an evidence-based program.
- c) Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT): FCS partners with six non-profit Family Resource Centers to provide tutoring, after school programs, summer programs and parent education and support.
- d) County Children’s Trust Fund (CCTF): The Policy Council on Children and Youth/Child Abuse Prevention Council (PCCY/CAPC) directs the use of CCTF funds to three non-profit groups to provide countywide child abuse prevention awareness activities and mandated reporter training. Recent child abuse prevention awareness activities include gun safety and community awareness campaigns and speakers regarding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and their impact on long term health and wellbeing.
- e) School Attendance Review Board (SARB): SARBs are held in the various school districts in Mendocino County and are comprised of representatives from various youth-serving agencies including FCS. The goal of SARB is to help students and their families solve school attendance and behavior problems.
- f) Head Start and Early Head Start programs: Head Start and Early Head Start programs are located throughout the county and provide education and child development services including to children who are at risk of or are in foster care. Head Start and Early Head Start provides needs and strengths assessments with families, in-home parenting and education and referral for needs that cannot be met by Early Head Start/Head Start.

- g) County-Operated Family Resource Centers: FCS has two county-operated family resource centers in Ukiah and Willits which provide Intake Support Groups and Family Empowerment Groups for FCS clients as well as space for monitored visitation. In addition, these two family resource centers offer parenting education classes that are open to the public including Basic Communication, Breaking the Cycle, Discipline with Confidence and three child development classes- Baby's Playhouse, Toddling Toddlers and Child's Play. These family resource centers also provide space for Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) classes taught by First Five Mendocino.
- h) Family Dependency Drug Court (FDDC): Mendocino County's FDDC program offers clients who are in Family Maintenance (FM) or Family Reunification (FR) dependency court cases with intensive services for drug/alcohol abuse/addiction while they are progressing through their FR or FM case plan. Clients meet regularly with substance abuse treatment counselors assigned solely to FCS, attend treatment groups and attend frequent FDDC court hearings for close monitoring of their progress. As noted earlier, FDDC is a collaboration between FCS, the Juvenile Court, First Five Mendocino, HHS/Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, the Ford Street Project and dependency attorneys. Funding is provided by FCS using our CWS allocation, State Family Preservation funds and Wraparound reinvestment funds. In addition, First Five Mendocino provides funding for the program's parent peer mentors.
- i) Substance abuse treatment services: Mendocino County Health and Human Services/Behavioral Health and Recovery Services provide outpatient substance abuse treatment services, including to clients in the Adult Drug Court and the Family Dependency Drug Court and to clients who are receiving CalWORKs. They also provide adolescent substance abuse treatment at several school sites. Several health clinics in the county provide outpatient treatment including but not limited to, Consolidated Tribal Health Project in Redwood Valley, Round Valley Indian Health Center/Yuki Trails in Covelo and the Long Valley Health Center in Laytonville. Ford Street Project, a community based organization in Ukiah, provides detox and residential substance abuse

treatment services. The Pinoleville Pomo Nation in Ukiah also provides outpatient substance abuse treatment for eligible tribal members.

- j) Voluntary and Formal Supervision Services: FCS provides time-limited voluntary family maintenance or family reunification services for the low to moderate risk families that need support or services to prevent child abuse and neglect. In addition, we also provide another form of voluntary family maintenance services which we call “Formal Supervision”. We use this type of service for families that are at higher risk of future child maltreatment, but who are willing to work with FCS on a voluntary basis. These cases receive intensive oversight by designated FCS social workers and receive intensive support from social worker assistants. Should a family receiving formal supervision services not comply with their case plan and the child remains at risk, a dependency petition is filed to initiate dependency proceedings.
- k) Wraparound Services: FCS provides Wraparound services to eligible FCS and Juvenile Probation youth who are at risk of RCL level 10 or higher group home placement. The Wraparound team includes a mental health clinician who serves as the lead for the team (and for Katie A. subclass eligible children, this clinician is also the Intensive Care Coordinator); a parent partner; and as medically necessary, a mental health rehabilitation specialist (and for Katie A. subclass eligible children, this rehab specialist provides the Intensive Home Based Services). In addition to these FCS staff, the Wraparound team also includes service providers from the community such as the child’s therapist, and other supports identified by the family. Wraparound is a promising practice.
- l) Mental Health Services: Mental health services for children and youth through age 25 are provided through Redwood Quality Management Company (RQMC) who subcontracts with Redwood Community Services (RCS), Mendocino County Youth Project (MCYP) and Tapestry Family Services (TFS) and other service providers as needed. These agencies provide a variety of types of mental health services including crisis stabilization, hospitalization, crisis follow up and outpatient mental health services such as individual and family therapy, Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) which

teaches parents the skills necessary to manage their children's behavioral problems and Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TFCBT) for children with emotional disturbance and trauma history. PCIT and TFCBT are evidence-based practices.

Mental health services for adults over age 25 are provided in a number of ways in Mendocino County. Specialty mental health services are provided through Ortnier Management Group for the individuals with chronic and persistent mental health conditions. Individuals with mild to moderate mental health conditions can receive services through the local federally qualified health clinics or private therapists in the community. FCS contracts with a number of private therapists throughout the county to provide individual, family and couples counseling for FCS clients who are in need of mental health services.

- m) Developmental disability services: Redwood Coast Regional Center (RCRC) offers services and supports for children and families with developmental disabilities who live in Mendocino County. They are a private, non-profit corporation providing services through contract with the California Department of Developmental Services. They provide Early Start Services to infants and toddlers, ages birth through three, who are at substantial risk for a developmental disability or who are showing a delay in their development, as well as children and adults throughout their lives. Some of the services provided by RCRC include diagnosis and eligibility assessment, information and referral, individualized planning and service coordination, purchase of necessary services included in a person's individual plan, advocacy for the protection of legal, civil and service rights, and family support.

The Mendocino County Office of Education's Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA) program offers services for children with developmental disabilities and special education needs.

- n) Public Health services: The Health and Human Services Agency's Public Health division offers a variety of services to promote the health and wellbeing of children and families in the county. Among these are Women Infants and Children (WIC) operating in Ukiah,

Willits and Fort Bragg, grant-funded general health promotion services, Maternal Child and Adolescent Health, California Children's Services, Communicable Disease/Immunization services and Field Nursing. Field nursing is reduced considerably due to the difficulty attracting Public Health Nurses due to the salary.

- o) Domestic Violence services: Project Sanctuary is the non-profit community based agency that provides domestic violence services to victims including counseling, peer education groups, emergency shelter and assistance with obtaining restraining orders. Project Sanctuary offers services in Ukiah, Willits and Fort Bragg. Two individuals offer 52-week domestic violence perpetrators' groups, one in Fort Bragg and one in Ukiah. Both groups serve men and women.
- p) Services for children ages 0 to 5: First Five Mendocino has actively advocated for and helped to fund a variety of services for children ages 0 to 5 and families in Mendocino County. It has collaborated with virtually all of the agencies and organizations in the county that serve young children and their families. It has helped fund programs such as insurance coverage for otherwise uncovered children, evidence-based mental health services for children with emotional and behavioral issues, family resource centers that provide parent education and family support services.
- q) Housing: Low income subsidized housing services are coordinated through the Community Development Commission. Designated FCS staff participate in the regular housing roundtables to advocate for FCS clients to obtain housing. In addition, FCS staff provide assistance to FCS clients in completing housing applications and conducting housing searches. Unfortunately, much of the housing that is available in Mendocino County is costly related to the median income in the county so securing adequate and affordable housing is a challenge.

### ***Reunification and Permanency Planning Services***

- a) In-Home Support: In addition to providing parenting education and support groups as noted above, FCS also provides provide time-limited home visiting at crucial points in

the cases. Most commonly, this service is provided at the point that families reunify, and addresses specific concerns the parent(s) and social workers have about the success of the reunification. Social worker assistants are used to provide this service and may be asked to help with parenting issues, housekeeping, budgeting, establishing healthy routines etc. The home visiting service may also be used at other crisis points for the families served by FCS.

- b) Family Finding: Family Finding is a promising practice to develop lifelong connections for foster youth. Beginning with Fiscal Year 2015-2016, FCS has contracted with Seneca Family Services to conduct comprehensive family findings for referred children/youth. We believe this will help us expand the number of family members identified and located in order to pursue placement options and/or connections and supports for foster children/youth.
- c) Foster Youth Education Services: Mendocino County Office of Education has a foster youth services liaison who supports the continuity of education for foster youth. The foster youth liaison coordinates with youth, foster families, group homes, county agencies, CASA and the schools to promote educational success for foster youth.

In addition, FCS has a designated Senior Program Specialist who is our School Success Coordinator. She ensures each school is informed when a foster child is enrolled at their school, who the child's FCS social worker is and who the child's dependency attorney is. This staff person maintains close contact with the attendance staff at each of the schools in Mendocino County to ensure we are notified right away when a foster child begins to show any sign of truancy. This early notification allows the FCS social worker to contact the care provider to assess the situation and determine if additional supports or services are needed to ensure the foster youth continues to attend school.

- d) Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP): FCS has a designated Program Administrator who oversees the ILSP program, which helps eligible youth in foster care transition to self-sufficiency when they age out of the system through training in independent living

skills and supportive case management. This program serves both FCS and Juvenile Probation youth.

- e) Transitional Housing Placement Program Plus (THP-Plus): FCS contracts with Redwood Community Services to provide independent living situations for former foster youth ages 18 to 24. This program provides housing, educational and employment assistance to program participants as well as supportive services to help develop independent living skills.
- f) Transitional Housing Placement Plus Foster Care (THP+FC): FCS contracts with Redwood Community Services to provide independent living situations for eligible young adults ages 18 to 21 who have voluntarily chosen to remain in the foster care system under the AB 12 Extended Foster Care program. This program provides housing, educational and employment assistance to program participants as well as supportive services to help develop independent living skills.
- g) Mendocino College Foster and Kin Care Education Program: This program provides free education, training and support to foster parents, kinship caregivers and adoptive parents. It enhances parenting skills, dispenses knowledge about the foster care system, and develops strong, on-going support systems.
- h) Foster Care Nursing Services: FCS has a Foster Care Nursing Unit that is staffed with a Registered Nurse, a Nurse Case Assistant and an Office Assistant III. This unit is tasked with tracking all medical and dental appointments for foster children to ensure they are obtained timely, obtaining psychotropic medication information from doctors and processing JV-220s for court orders, entering all health information into the CWS/CMS database and ensuring each foster parent has an up-to-date Health and Education Passport, instructions and health care forms. The staff also consult with medical providers to obtain timely information regarding foster children, schedule urgent appointments, explain medical conditions and treatment plans, educate caregivers about children's medical and dental needs and attend case conferences with FCS staff as requested. When requested, the RN can also accompany Social Workers in the field to

help assess a child's health and safety when there are concerns regarding a child's medical condition. This unit is housed with the Health and Human Services Agency/Public Health division and work closely with the Public Health Nursing staff and California Children's Services.

- i) **Residentially Based Services (RBS):** Our RBS program started on December 1, 2015. This is in collaboration with Redwood Community Services and will serve both FCS and Juvenile Probation children and youth. RBS services seek to improve permanency outcomes for youth in group home care by enhancing the quality and scope of care and services through the integration and coordination of the services and efforts of families, the placing agencies, providers and other key stakeholders. RBS services will be tailored to the strengths and needs of each child in the program and will include family engagement and empowerment, family finding, comprehensive care coordination, intensive short-term residential stabilization and treatment, intensive home support and coordination of services when the child is able to transition into the community and crisis stabilization.
- j) **Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA):** The Mendocino County Superior Court CASA program recruits, trains and supervises volunteers who are appointed by the Juvenile Court to advocate for the best interests of their assigned youth.
- k) **Levine House:** As previously noted, Levine House is a collaboration between FCS and the Mendocino County Youth Project to provide emergency housing for AB 12 young adults, ages 18 to 21 who are participating in the Extended Foster Care program, but do not have housing. Refer to pages 91-92 for a full description of Levine House.

### ***Adoption Services***

Adoption services for foster youth in Mendocino County are provided through the California Department of Social Services Adoptions Bureau. In addition, two foster family agencies, Redwood Community Services and TLC Child and Family Services, provide adoption services in coordination with CDSS. Recently, CDSS contracted with Lilliput Children's Services

to provide post adoption services in Mendocino County. This includes a monthly support group in Ukiah, warm line support Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, crisis intervention and therapeutic support, linkage to local resources, workshops and trainings for adoptive families and professionals, resource library and family networking activities and events.

In addition, as noted above, nine non-profit family resource centers located throughout Mendocino County use Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) funds to provide adoption promotion and support outreach events in their local communities.

Lastly, FCS has worked closely with tribes to support tribal customary adoptions for Native American children.

### ***Service Gaps***

The following are areas where there are gaps in services as identified by FCS and through the community stakeholders' meeting.

- a) Lack of adequate social worker staffing at FCS which impacts services provided to FCS clients. Vacancies have persisted, despite on-going recruitments, due to non-competitive salaries.
- b) Lack of foster homes
  - Foster homes in general are in short supply in the county.
  - Lack of well as lack of well-trained and experienced foster parents that can understand and work with the needs of children and youth who have experienced trauma.
  - Lack of Latino and Native American foster homes.
  - Lack of foster homes that can take sibling groups and/or special needs children/youth.
  - Lack of intensive treatment foster care homes.
  - Lack of foster homes who can take minor parents with babies.
- c) Lack of sufficient transportation services. Due to the geography of the county, many areas outside the three main cities of Ukiah, Willits and Fort Bragg had limited to no public transportation. In addition, some areas of the county are remote and traveling to areas with more services is difficult, even for individuals with vehicles.

- d) Lack of sober living environments for families.
- e) Lack of affordable housing.
- f) Lack of sufficient substance abuse treatment services throughout the county.

## **Probation**

Mendocino County Probation utilizes the same services offered to their Family and Children's Services counterparts. Probation provides an array of services including formal and informal supervision. The probation department has a citation hearing officer that can divert lower level offices to Teen Peer Court or community service programs. School Attendance Review Board (SARB) are preventative services the department is a part of and one that is offered at school sites.

Probation youth are provided additional services through New Beginnings. Other services utilized include AODP, AA/NA, Mental Health, and classes offered through Family and Children's Services. The families of probation youth are encouraged to utilize local family resource centers and the parenting classes.

To determine the need for foster care, Probation utilizes the PACT. As mentioned above, the PACT determines the criminogenic factors for risks and needs. When the wards enter placement, the placement facility completes an additional needs and services plan. Educational assessments are done by the school districts. Mental Health referrals are made for assessments by therapists, and for medication evaluations. Assessments are also done when New Beginnings is utilized. The Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) is also utilized as a resource.

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM**

### **Family and Children's Services**

Mendocino County Family and Children's Services (FCS) has made significant strides in expanding our quality assurance system since the last County Self-Assessment including the creating of a Quality Assurance Unit. There has been a focused and comprehensive effort to

improve the quality of data, to expand reporting of compliance and outcome measures and to improve the quality of child welfare practice. Major milestones include:

- Increased use of Safe Measures as a tool to track program compliance.
- Increased communication to supervisors and line staff regarding program compliance.
- Training for key staff and informational campaign for all staff on Continuous Quality Improvement.
- Conducting focus groups and surveys to gather on-going input as to what is working and what needs improvement from staff, clients and providers.
- Conducting internal case review audits to identify baseline performance and monitor progress on identified areas of concern.
- Training for key staff on advanced analytics.
- Two staff members have been certified to conduct federal case reviews.

Mendocino County FCS utilizes several tools and methods to monitor service quality and compliance with requirements including:

- Safe Measures - Safe Measures is a web-based data reporting system that allows social workers, supervisors and administration to monitor numerous aspects of a case based on data extracted from CWS/CMS every few days. Safe Measures provides information to determine compliance with federal, state and local requirements, track agency/unit/worker performance over time, monitor workload, and identify the status of cases. This tool enables social workers to manage their caseload requirements and upcoming deadlines. Supervisors, Managers and the Deputy Director use Safe Measures for quality assurance and compliance purposes. We utilize Safe Measures so that managers, supervisors and line staff can see a current view of the status of the caseload at various levels. We regularly utilize Safe Measures to zero in on due dates and data entry issues including but not limited to:
  - Referral contacts, attempts and actual contacts
  - Monthly contacts, including contact in preferred location (placement/residence)
  - Case plan due dates
  - Timely completion of Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools

- Business Objects- Business Objects is an administrative tool that allows queries to be run on data that is originated in the CWS/CMS application. Two staff in our Quality Assurance unit are proficient in Business Objects, pulling information from CWS/CMS extracts, which enables us to create reports and drill down to evaluate our performance at a real-life case level.
- Structured Decision Making (SDM) - SDM is a family of assessment tools used at key decision points during the life of a case covering response time, safety, risk, family/child strengths and needs, reunification and case closure. Staff members have been routinely trained on SDM and most recently, social workers and supervisors received in depth SDM training in 2015 by the UC Davis Northern Region Training Academy. They were trained for assessments along the life of a case.
- MendoFRC database - This database is used to record demographic and attendance information on clients who attend classes and groups at our two county operated Family Resource Centers, one in Willits and one in Ukiah. Among other uses, the information is used to track compliance of our court-ordered clients and their required participation in services. This system is also used by our OCAP-contracted Family Resource Centers to track compliance with their contracts, which also includes providing information and referral services to their local populations.

FCS has an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Protocol that was developed in collaboration with ICWA representatives from Mendocino County tribes. FCS social workers and supervisors all receive regular training on the protocol and supervisors are responsible for ensuring staff are complying with the requirements. FCS works closely with tribes on identifying and realizing culturally appropriate services and placements. The regular ICWA roundtable meetings hosted by FCS help identify trends or issues so that additional training can be provided to staff on specific areas of concern.

As previously noted, FCS uses mental health rehabilitation specialists co-located with FCS staff to conduct mental health screenings at the initial opening of FCS cases and annually thereafter. The rehab specialists also complete referrals to Redwood Quality Management Company (RQMC) for any child whose screening indicates any concern. RQMC assigns the referral to a subcontractor agency to provide a comprehensive mental health assessment. Katie A. subclass eligible children/youth are to receive the assessment within 14 days of the date of the referral. Once the assessment is completed, the mental health provider prepares a treatment plan. RQMC provides quality assurance oversight of their subcontractors to ensure assessments and treatment plans meet all Medi-Cal requirements. Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency/Behavioral Health and Recovery Services also has a Quality Assurance Unit which conducts regular audits of assessments, treatment plans and services prepared and provided by RQMC's subcontractors.

FCS and RQMC work closely with the two child psychiatrists in the county to evaluate children/youth who may need psychotropic medication. The FCS Foster Care Nursing Unit reviews all requests for psychotropic medications for foster children/youth. These requests completed by doctors or psychiatrists are then sent to a psychiatrist contracted by the Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency/Behavioral Health and Recovery Services who provides a secondary review and will alert the FCS Nursing Unit of any concerns or red flags to follow up on or monitor. All requests for psychotropic medication for foster youth are provided to the parties in the case and the Juvenile Court judge for approval prior to a foster child beginning psychotropic medication, barring emergency administration of the medication as determined by the prescribing doctor or psychiatrist. We have been receiving and closely reviewing Psychotropic Medication Authorization reports from Safe Measures and the quarterly Psychotropic Medication Reconciliation reports from CDSS and DHCS to ensure information in CWS/CMS is correct and that prescriptions are not filled until the court order has been received. Lastly, the global data sharing agreement which counties may sign on to regarding data sharing between the County and the Department of Health Care Services is currently being reviewed by our county.

The FCS Foster Care Nursing Unit helps monitor foster children's physical health. Safe Measures is used to help monitor compliance with required well-child medical exams and dental exams. Children with special needs and their families receive effective services through referral to the agency that is best suited to meet the child's special needs, which may vary depending on the nature of the special needs.

Concurrent planning begins prior to the disposition hearing for children in out-of-home placement. We continue to work closely with the California Department of Social Services Adoptions Bureau to make early referrals on children under 5 and children for whom the prognosis for successful reunification is poor. Each court report for a child in out-of-home placement must contain a discussion about what the concurrent plan is for the child. CDSS meets monthly with our Emergency Response Court Unit staff to accept new referrals. CDSS also meets monthly with our continuing services units to review the status on referrals that have been accepted, discuss progress towards a concurrent plan and discuss any changes in case direction.

Each reunification review court report must include an update on the concurrent plan. For each report prepared for a family reunification review hearing in which the recommendation is to terminate services, the court report template provides the social worker with instructions to discuss the alternative plan for the child. If the recommendation is not to set a Welfare and Institutions Code Section 366.26 hearing to pursue termination of parental rights, the reasons why must be discussed in the report. The Juvenile Court Judge also makes written findings as to the reasons a WIC 366.26 hearing is not set. The same applies to court reports prepared for permanency placement hearings when the recommendation is not to set a WIC 366.26 hearing to terminate parental rights.

When a WIC 366.26 hearing is held and the recommendation is not to terminate parental rights, the social worker must discuss the specific reasons why not in the court report prepared for the hearing. The Juvenile Court Judge also makes written findings as to the reasons parental rights are not terminated.

The court will not terminate parental rights unless an adoptive home is identified for the child or the child is very likely to be adopted with minimal delays or issues. Some reasons why timelines are not always met for terminating parental rights include unresolved paternity issues, ICWA issues, difficulties executing proper notice to parents, and contested hearings by parents who oppose their parental rights being terminated.

FCS social workers must complete Transitional Independent Living Plans for all youth in foster care ages 16 and older and these TILPs must be updated every six months and attached to the youth's court reports. In addition to completing the TILP with the youth, the FCS social worker must discuss the TILP services in the youth's court report. Further, the Juvenile Court Judge makes written findings regarding the adequacy of the TILP at each review hearing.

As noted above, FCS now has two staff who have been certified to conduct federal case reviews. Currently, the staff are the Quality Assurance Unit Program Administrator and the Senior Program Manager who oversees the Quality Assurance Unit, but we will be recruiting two more Program Administrators to assist with case reviews. These staff will be conducting case reviews of both FCS and Juvenile Probation cases. We believe this will help us identify issues and trends in the quality of our case work, in addition to issues and trends reflected in data, in order to make adjustments and course correct as needed to improve our work with children, youth and families and improve our outcomes.

### **Quality Assurance for CBCAP/CAPIT/PSSF Services**

Mendocino County Family and Children's Services (FCS) is responsible for maintaining contracts, monitoring specific contract requirements and for collecting and reviewing data submitted from each contractor as well as all invoices for services provided using CBCAP/CAPIT/PSSF funds.

FCS contracts with nine non-profit Family Resource Centers (FRCs), all members of the Family Resource Center Network of Mendocino County, to provide services under CBCAP/CAPIT/PSSF. The FRC Network contract separates out each individual FRC and each individual funding source and clearly identifies what each individual FRC will provide, utilizing

one or more of the funding categories. The proposed contract is reviewed by FCS to ensure it complies with the requirements of each of the funding sources regarding allowable services and populations before the contract is enacted.

Invoices are monitored monthly by a Senior Program Specialist, as is data entry required by the contracts into our common database, MendoFRC. If a contracted provider is not meeting minimum requirements as outlined in their contract's scope of work, the assigned FCS Senior Program Specialist is responsible for communicating and working through all barriers to ensure appropriate service delivery. Any problems of contract compliance are reported to the Executive Committee of the FRC Network of Mendocino County. The FRC Network Executive Committee works with the member FRCs to help them remain in compliance with the CBCAP/CAPIT/PSSF requirements by providing support, training and technical assistance as needed. If the issue is not immediately resolved, FCS staff informs the provider in writing of the concern and meets or communicates with the provider to resolve the issue. FRCs that are unable to meet the requirements do not receive the funding and face termination from the contract.

As part of their contracts, the FRCs are required to utilize our database, MendoFRC, developed specifically for tracking the clients and activities at the FRCs. Each client who attends groups or classes completes an intake form that includes all their contact information and demographic information and their participation in groups and classes, or any other contacts, are attached to the client in MendoFRC.

The designated FCS Senior Program Specialist makes quarterly site visits to each FRC and sends out client satisfaction surveys quarterly to the FRCs to obtain responses from everyone who visits their centers during a specified week. Responses are reviewed and considered, though virtually all indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the services they receive at the FRCs. During the site visits, she tries to sit in on any classes or groups that OCAP funding pays for to monitor the quality of services being offered.

## Probation

There is one placement unit in the Probation Department. Quality Assurance (QA) activities involve data collection, analysis, monitoring, and communication. These are essential to improving the quality of service delivery. CWS utilizes Quarterly County Data Reports. Safe Measures is used to track agency, unit, and worker performance over time, trend data and identify out-of-compliance cases. The Probation department does not have a designated quality assurance officer or data analysis for juvenile placement.

## Critical Incident Review Process

Mendocino County has a multidisciplinary Child Death Review Team which investigates the death of every child in the County from birth to age 18. This team is led by the Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency Public Health division and has representatives from Public Health, Social Services/Family and Children's Services, Coroner/Sheriff, Mental Health, the District Attorney and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). The team reviews the cause of each death and makes recommendations for programs and strategies to prevent these types of deaths in the future.

Since the last County Self-Assessment, there has only been one death determined to be the result of abuse in which the child/family was known to receive child welfare services. When this occurred, the agency conducted a thorough examination of the facts of the case to ensure the case was handled properly.

A designated Family and Children's Services Senior Program Specialist receives a quarterly report from the California Department of Social Services to reconcile and confirm FCS has submitted all SOC 826 notification forms for the quarter and that all incidents reported were confirmed to be the result of child abuse or neglect. The Senior Program Specialist confirms data with the FCS Emergency Response Social Worker Supervisors as well as with Mendocino County Public Health vital statistics staff.

## National Resource Center (NRC) Training and Technical Assistance

Mendocino County does not receive any technical assistance from the NCR, Western Pacific Implementation Center, or Quality Improvement Centers and does not intend to pursue such at this time.

## Peer Review Results

### **FOCUS AREA AND METHODOLOGY**

A Peer Review was conducted in Ukiah, California, July 14-16, 2015. Child Welfare Social Workers from Sonoma, Fresno, Yolo, and San Benito counties and Probation Officers from El Dorado, Butte, and Placer counties participated as peer reviewers.

The Peer Review process is used in California as an avenue for each county's child welfare and probation to conduct an in-depth qualitative analysis on one specific focus area, or outcome measure. This process requires both agencies to conduct a quantitative analysis of each state report outcome measure and, in partnership with the California Department of Social Services, select the outcome measure which requires a closer look. Mendocino County Family and Children's Services elected to examine re-entry; specifically measure C1.4, Re-entry Following Reunification (exit cohort). Probation elected to examine reunification; specifically measure C1.3, Reunification within 12 months (Entry Cohort). For the in-depth quantitative analysis of this measure, please see the subsequent section titled Outcome Data Measures. Peer counties were selected to conduct the review based on a review of data statewide showing counties which consistently perform well on the selected outcome measures.

The Peer Review opened on the morning of July 14, 2015 with introductions and a training which included an overview of the C-CFSR, a description of Mendocino County, identification of the outcome area which would be the focus of the review, and a discussion of

County performance and progress towards these outcomes. Participating were California Department of Social Services consultants, Northern Training Academy staff (facilitators for the review), and child welfare and probation staff and administrators. The presentation was followed by training on the interview process and tools for the peer reviewers.

During the three-day review, a total twelve (15) interview sessions were conducted; ten of which were child welfare cases and five probation. Cases were selected for which the peer review planning team believed would elucidate both strengths and challenges existing in the system which contribute to the county performance on the appropriate outcome measure.

The California Department of Social Services provided standardized tools for use during the Peer Review which were based on a review of the literature for best practices relating to each focus area.

Once the cases were identified, social workers and probation officers who were the primary practitioners on the case were notified and given the appropriate interview tool to review so they could prepare. A total of eight (8) social workers and two (2) probation officers were interviewed; it is important to note that Mendocino Probation has only two officer in its juvenile placement program.

Following the completion of interviews peers were provided time to debrief, during which they analyzed the interview information to identify common themes regarding strengths and challenges of the Mendocino County child welfare and probation systems. They were also asked to provide recommendations for improvement. The summary of these themes are outlined in the Summary of Findings section that follows.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

In the course of their individual case review and debrief, peer reviewers were asked to identify and assess promising practices, barriers/challenges and to make recommendations for improvement and share promising practices from their own counties. The following sections outline those findings:

## Family and Children's Services

### *Strengths*

Peer reviewers identified several best practices utilized by Mendocino County Family and Children's Services which successfully impacts Reentry, both systemically and individually.

Identified strengths include:

- Stakeholders found the social workers of Mendocino County to have desire to be quality social workers and engage families. Social workers demonstrated a strong practice around quality assessment of the client's needs and used that to guide the development of case plans with clients. The agency uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) for young children coming into care, and the Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools for other points requiring assessment in the case. Once the assessment is complete, social workers include families in the case planning process and include their feedback into the case plan presented to the court. By engaging families, there are greater levels of participation and buy in from the families in the services in the case plan. Social worker dedication and being "hands on," such as driving clients to and from services and actively supporting clients demonstrated their dedication to their clients.
- Social workers are resourceful and utilize available resources and collaborate well with service providers, community partners and families natural support systems. When the agency used of these supports, there were positive outcomes and this helped to support successful reunification and prevent reentry.
- The agency has an 8 week Intake Support Group that is offered immediately after detention. This group is used to help support parents and minimize the trauma of removal for both the parent and child, as well as helping the parents learn how to navigate the process and get engaged. This practice has been in place for many years and is fully integrated into the child welfare practice.
- The agency has a strong and effective Parent Partner Program to support families in navigating the child welfare system after completing the initial Intake Support Group. There is also a Family Empowerment Group offered to families as an additional support resource.
- The local foster family agencies offer quality placements and supports to youth. Whenever possible, youth are placed with siblings and any services that can be offered to support successful placements or transition home are utilized.
- The agency uses Wraparound services to maintain youth in the home or to transition youth home. In some cases, the agency was able to pair up unique resources, such as VA services for a parent who was a veteran.

- Mental health providers are able to offer quality services to clients, especially to children under Katie A. There was excellent communication with MH providers, social workers and families to provide the best possible services to families.
- Social workers saw their clients as often as possible, often more than once a month (the required mandate as per the state). When case transitions were to occur, the social workers had a “warm hand off” to help ease transitions and promote good communication.
- Mendocino County Family Dependency Drug Court was effective in promoting better participation in services, offering increased levels of accountability and encouragement, and has better outcomes for families with substance abuse issues. Families that participated in the Family Dependency Drug Court and successfully completed services were more likely to reunify successfully.

### ***Challenges***

Peer reviewers identified specific challenges Mendocino County Family and Children’s Services faces which are tied to the reentry of children into care. These barriers and challenges include:

- There is a challenge in recruiting and retaining social workers. It is difficult to attract quality workers or retain staff who can take positions in surrounding counties and earn a higher wage. Also tied to the turnover in staff, is the challenge of frequent case assignment changes. This is difficult in that youth and families must go through changes in workers and have to build trust and rapport over and over, diminishing family engagement. Additionally, the more worker changes a case experiences, the more likely it is that there will be placement changes and less likely that a family will reunify. Social workers also may experience higher caseload sizes due to this challenge and subsequently do not have time to perform high quality, hands on social work.
- There is a lack of education of new workers, outside service providers and families of the services available within the county, presenting a challenge in families being able to access meaningful services.
- There are limited resources for adult mental health and substance abuse treatment. There is also a delay in accessing services, which is crucial to families having successful reunification with the court timelines. Much of this is attributed to the recent transition from use of county mental health providers to private providers.

- Due to the geographic makeup of the county, there are challenges in clients getting to and from services, workers traveling to see families and youth in placement, and supporting visitation for families.
- There is a lack of affordable and safe housing for families, which is a key component for families in preparing to bring youth home. Without safe housing, workers cannot return children, and families are competing for the same limited housing options.
- There are limited local placements, resulting in youth needing to be placed out of county or needing to use a relative or extended family placement, which may not be available in every case. Although there was family finding initially, there could be more done through the life of the case to support family placement of bringing in family supports.
- There is a challenge engaging ambivalent or resistive parents, and workers need more training and tools to help them engage these parents. Workers would like more Motivational Interviewing training to support this need.
- There was not an identified clear or consistent visitation progression plan to support reunification. Each case had a different visitation plan or style, and peers felt that this was a challenge in knowing when to implement progressive visitation, limited visitation hours, knowing what levels of supervision were available, etc. Specifically, there was no identified use of third party visitation supervision, even when there were appropriate individuals available to help supervise visits.
- In several cases there was inconsistent inclusion of families, support networks and service providers in making decisions in the case. Peers thought that this was something that could be improved or refined.
- Beyond the Wraparound offered during reunification, there were no other identified after care services within the county. Without this resource, there is a higher risk of reentry.
- The agency can benefit from having more bilingual workers and bilingual service providers to reach families that might otherwise have barriers in communicating and engaging. Also, there needs to be increased training around cultural sensitivity/awareness.
- There are challenges in the court either dismissing cases against the Agency's recommendation, which can increase reentry, or there were extensive delays and reunification went on longer than standard timeline (i.e., 18 months of FR, 18 months FM, etc.).

## ***Recommendations***

Peer reviewers were asked to make recommendations to improve outcomes for child welfare regarding reentry. Recommendations identified during the peer review for Family and Children's Services included:

- Provide ongoing training to workers on topics that will help support practice and improve engagement and client outcomes. Specifically, provide information on how to navigate and access local resources, quality and progressive visitation, motivational interviewing, and other family engagement trainings. Consider creating a resource guide for use by workers or introducing a monthly resource fair for families and staff to connect to providers.
- Have administration work with county leadership to look at what can be done to return staffing levels to full time and adjust wages to make the county more competitive. Look at what other changes can be implemented to improve competitiveness for recruitment and retention. Also, look for strategies for improving worker morale and job satisfaction, including helping to maintain reasonable caseload sizes, adding support staff and self-care or enrichment activities.
- Consider implementing the use of Team Decision Making Meetings for all placement changes to involve all natural supports and service providers in case planning/placement moves.
- Develop a plan or process for implementing Aftercare Services or for use of stronger safety networks at the time of case closure, helping to ensure family stability and reducing reentry. Implement Wraparound for whole family, not just the focus child, at the time of reunification. Expand bilingual services and offer additional cultural awareness trainings.
- Build more specific elements into case plans, including danger and safety statements, and increasing the time spent with families in engaging them in case planning.
- Develop mental health referral process and training staff on this process to ensure that all staff have this information and there are not delays in families being able to access services.

## ***Juvenile Probation Services***

Juvenile probation practice is a difficult area to examine in small counties where there are small numbers of cases to review for practice. Mendocino County Probation chose to examine their rate of reunification for their peer review. Though several of their cases reviewed

did not result in successful reunification for youth, the youth did have good outcomes that were in their best interest. For some youth, though they successfully completed their treatment and were ready to reunify, their family circumstances were unstable and returning them home would have resulted in a likelihood of their reoffending and returning into probation supervision. Instead, these youth were exited to extended foster care where they could live in a more supportive environment and be successful, but still maintain their connections with family and their extended support system. What cannot be examined is whether the measure needs to be reconsidered as to how it is applied to probation youth versus child welfare youth. The following section breaks down the themes that were identified around the practice of the officers and the needs to improve practice in the future.

### ***Strengths***

Peer reviewers identified several best practices for probation impacting reunification, including:

- Probation officers are passionate, motivated and thorough, demonstrating strong follow through on service delivery and aftercare. The officers show a commitment to work from a strength based perspective, striving to focus on ways to build on the families' strengths and natural supports.
- The department collaborates well with service providers and child welfare. By carefully selecting treatment facilities, officers are able to find programs that support offering mental health services directly to the youth, ensuring there is no delay in accessing services. Probation ensures that all ICWA eligible cases are able to access native and tribal supports and have tribal involvement.
- Probation officers emphasize engaging youth in case planning, as well as including families in the case planning process. The use of assessment tools and client focused services based on needs and indicators in their assessment help to ensure that services are appropriate and meaningful. Officers also try to include youth in making placement decisions and finding the best fit for youth, minimizing the risk of placement moves and providing stability. Even when placement out of county is in the best interest of the youth, the officer will advocate for the youth's needs with the court, etc. For example, if the youth needs to be moved to a placement out of the area to provide space from poor associations, then the officer will find a program out of the area that is a good fit.

- Officers work with youth to develop their Transitional Independent Living Plan, focused on seeking independence for the youth and the best possible plan to support that transition. These plans are well developed and case specific, ensuring that youth are engaged in ILP classes and supports. When appropriate, officers will also support youth in entering extended foster care.
- Officers are dedicated to the planning for and ensuring there were adequate step-down services after placing youth in out of county programs. At the return home, they are integrated back home with supportive services to help them be successful in transition and reduce the risk to reoffend or return to placement.
- Officers strive to have good communication with family, service providers, school staff and group home staff. Also, as part of maintaining communication and consistency, there is an emphasis put on maintaining the same officer, minimizing challenges in transitioning cases to new PO's.
- In both probation cases, in spite of the difficult nature of the cases and the fact that the youth were not reunited within a year of removal, the officers were able to prioritize the safety of the family and the minor in making reunification decisions. Overall, this resulted in successful outcomes for the minors.

### ***Challenges***

Peer reviewers identified specific challenges Mendocino County Probation faces which are tied to the timely reunification of youth in care. These barriers and challenges include:

- Though there is good collaboration with Family and Children's Services, it occurs on a limited basis.
- Beyond what is offered to youth while in placement, there are a lack of other mental health services, especially for the parents and families of the probation youth.
- There is a general lack of knowledge about what resources are available to families, youth upon return, and for prevention. Officers need additional training and support from management to develop or receive training on the resources, as well as trainings on motivational interviewing to better support building rapport with families and increase collaboration for case planning with resistive clients or parents.
- Increased training on family finding, along with software or resources and a policy on their use to ensure consistent efforts are made through the life of the case to find family for placement and to be part of the support system for youth.

- There is a lack of local placements and placement that can be used to step youth down in care. Though this is sometimes in a youth's best interest, this does present a challenge in travel for officers to visit youth each month and for families to have visitation, both parental and siblings. The department has limited to no resources to support families who need assistance with travel costs.
- When placement changes do occur, there could be a better hand off between officers to support the youth and family in transitioning.

### ***Recommendations***

Peer reviewers were asked to make recommendations to improve outcomes for Probation regarding reunification. Recommendations identified during the peer review included:

- Provide Motivational Interviewing training and ongoing support to officers to increase and improve practices around family engagement. This includes support from leadership on time and resources to support this practice.
- Utilize the case plan more fully as a tool in motivating youth and their families in making changes. Though a challenging task, the structure of the case plan can be used to leverage families and help them implement positive changes to help youth reunify or prevent entry.
- Look at exhaustive use of outside resources to prevent placement of youth. Consider all early intervention practices that can help, including WRAP prior to placement to support families.
- Provide training on Family Finding and develop a process for this to occur within the department. Train staff on how this is to occur and provide support staff to support this area of practice.
- Develop training for available resources and how to access them for officers and clients, as well as look at missing needs and how they can be addressed by building up new resources. This could include partnerships with other agencies or Family and Children's Services to share existing resources. This could include co-sponsoring a county wide family and child resource fair to help connect clients and families to existing resources within the county and building rapport in the county for more families to get connected to services.

## Outcome Data Measures

Data for both child welfare and probation is presented in this section. All data presented was pulled from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., King, B., Sandoval, A., Yee, H., Mason, F., Benton, C., & Hoerl, C., 2015).

Because of the small numbers of children on probation in out of home placement, the data is presented as counts, rather than percentages. This data makes it difficult, if not impossible to make inferences regarding Mendocino County Probation.

### **CFSR3: SAFETY PERFORMANCE AREA 1: MALTREATMENT IN FOSTER CARE**

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**Measure:** Federal/CWS Outcomes Measure: Of all children in foster care during a 12-month period, what is the rate of victimization per day of foster care?

**Methodology:** The denominator is, of children in foster care during the 12-month period, the total number of days these children were in foster care as of the end of the 12-month period. Records with an incident date occurring outside of the removal episode are excluded, even if report dates fall within the episode. Complete foster care episodes lasting <8 days are excluded. Any report that occurs within the first 7 days of removal is excluded. Youth age 18 or more are excluded, as well as youth in foster care at 18 or more. For youth who start out as 17 years of age and turn 18 during the period, any time in foster care beyond his/her 18th birthday is not counted in the denominator. The numerator is, of the children in the denominator, the total number of substantiated or indicated reports of maltreatment (by any perpetrator) during a foster care episode within the 12-month period.

**Performance:** Performance for this measure is the numerator divided by the denominator, expressed as a rate per 100,000 days. The rate is multiplied by 100,000 to produce a whole number which is easier to interpret. These rates differ slightly from federal numbers reported

by the Children's Bureau due to limitations resulting from the construction of the NCANDS and AFCARS files.

**National Standard:** The national standard for this measure is performance less than or equal to 8.50 per 100,000.

### Child Welfare

Table 5.1: Instances of Maltreatment per age group and per 100,000 days for the range July 2014 – June 2015

AGE GROUP	INTERVAL					
	JUL2009- JUN2010	JUL2010- JUN2011	JUL2011- JUN2012	JUL2012- JUN2013	JUL2013- JUN2014	JUL2014- JUN2015
	N	n	n	N	n	n
<b>UNDER 1</b>	.	.	1	1	.	2 (20.59 per 100,000 days)
<b>1-2</b>	.	.	1	.	.	.
<b>3-5</b>	1	.	.	.	.	1 (7.94 per 100,000 days)
<b>6-10</b>	.	.	.	.	.	1 (5.14 per 100,000 days)
<b>11-15</b>	1	.	.	.	1	.
<b>16-17</b>	1	.	.	.	1	.
<b>TOTAL</b>	3	.	2	1	2	4 (5.24 per 100,000 days)

### Analysis

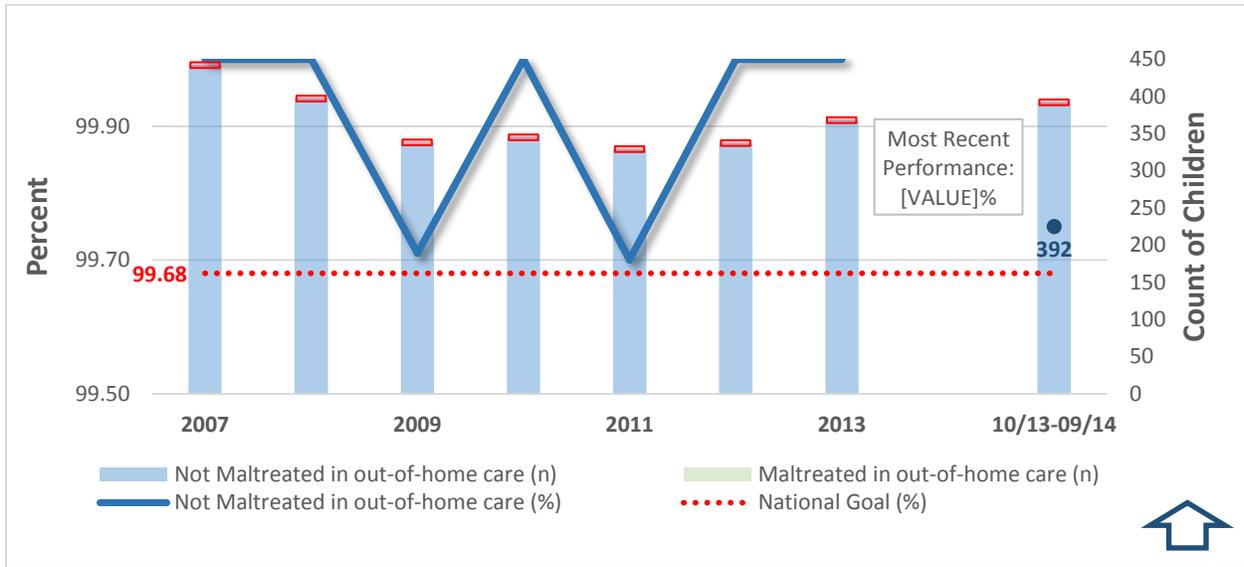
Mendocino County is in compliance with this measure overall (5.24 instances of maltreatment per 100,000 days as compared to the national average of 8.5 instances). Mendocino County was also in compliance with the previous measure and methodology regarding maltreatment in foster care.

The previous measure and methodology was as follows:

#### **S2.1 No MALTREATMENT IN FOSTER CARE (FEDERAL STANDARD ≥ 99.68%)**

**Measure:** Of all the children served in foster during a specified year, what percent were not victims of substantiated maltreatment allegation by a foster parent or facility while in out-of-home care?

**Methodology:** Inconclusive and Substantiated allegations of abuse or neglect that occur in a foster care setting are counted.



**Analysis**

Each point in the set represents a one-year period; data on this measure is reported in “rolling quarters” (of overlapping, twelve-month timeframes), but is being presented as annual data for clarity. (It should be noted that annual data should not imply compliance/non-compliance for all four quarters of any given year, but rather as a composite of all cases during that year). The arrow at the bottom right-hand corner of the graph indicates desired goal direction; in this case *higher* percentages correspond with successful outcomes. Please note the scale of the graph, as data is presented in both percentage (line graph) and numerical (stacked bars) formats.

Mendocino County is currently in compliance with this Measure, and has been since January 1, 2007. The last time Mendocino County was out of compliance with this Measure was 2006. The most recent documented incidence of abuse in a foster care setting involving a

Mendocino County child occurred in during the one-year period covering the timeframe of October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014.

***Probation***

There are no children who meet the criteria of this report from 2010 to present. There is only one known incidence of a Mendocino County youth supervised by Probation being abused in out-of-home care since 2007; the incident occurred in 2009.

**CFSR3: SAFETY PERFORMANCE AREA 2; RECURRENCE OF MALTREATMENT**

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**Measure:** Federal/CWS Outcomes Measure: Of all children who were victims of a substantiated maltreatment allegation during a 12-month reporting period, what percent were victims of another substantiated maltreatment allegation within 12 months of their initial report?

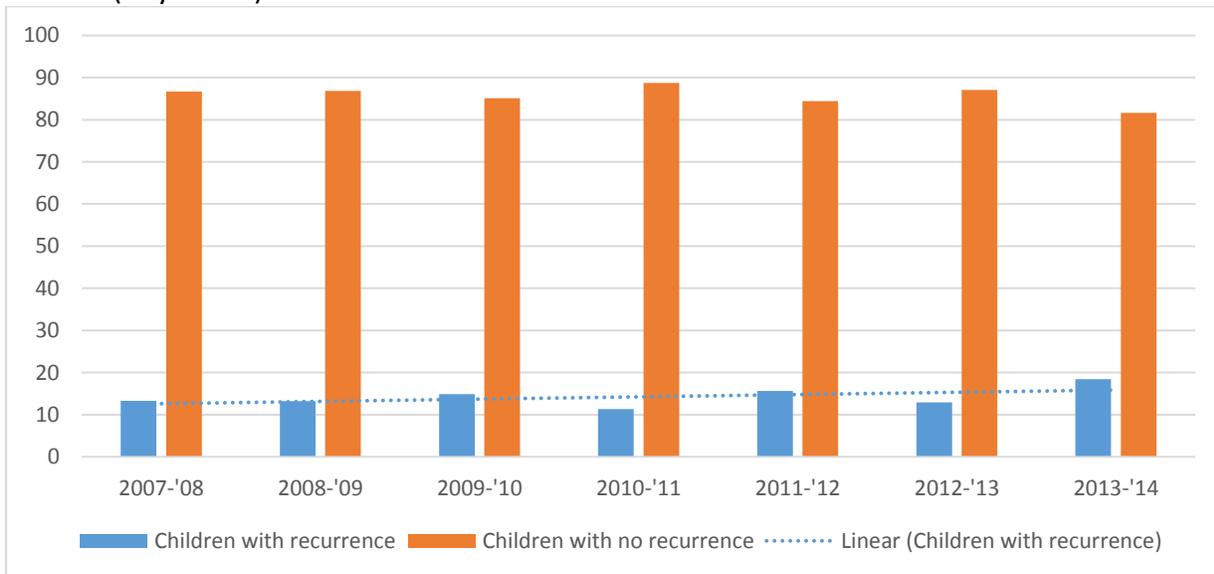
**Methodology:** The denominator is the number of children with at least one substantiated maltreatment allegation in a 12-month period. The numerator is the number of children in the denominator that had another substantiated maltreatment allegation within 12 months of their initial report. If there is a subsequent report of maltreatment within 14 days of the earlier report, it is not counted as recurrent maltreatment. Youth who are age 18 or more are excluded from the calculation of the indicator.

**Performance:** Performance for this measure is the numerator divided by the denominator, expressed as a percentage.

**National Standard:** The national standard for this measure is performance less than or equal to 9.1%.

## Child Welfare

Table 5.2: Children with substantiated allegation during 12-month period- Recurrence within 12 months (July - June).



### Analysis

The data reflects that Mendocino County is currently out of compliance (and has been over time) on this measure (18.4% of children experience recurrence while the national standard is 9.1%). The number of children with recurrences has been increasing over time, with a demonstrated dip in the time frame July 2012 through June 2013. In comparison, the state of California's average since 2007 has remained consistent with an average of 10.2% of children experiencing recurrence of maltreatment.

Stakeholders provided the following feedback regarding this outcome measure and Family and Children's Services agrees with these insights:

- Substance abuse is one of the largest factors leading to recurrence of maltreatment. Most, if not all, are struggling with polysubstance abuse and due to the prevalence of substance abuse in the community, parents that get clean have a hard time maintaining sobriety when living amongst multi-generational abuse. Substance abuse increases the risk of involvement in domestic violence, other neglect or maltreatment of children, unemployment, lack of monitoring children's school attendance and likelihood of

engaging in criminal activity. All of these factors necessitate the county increasing the amount of treatment and support programs that are available to help service this need, as well as workers with the skill to help walk clients through engagement in the early stages, when their abuse makes it difficult for them to see their own need. The community is so impacted by the marijuana industry, that there are a lot of transient people coming into the county to work seasonally that may have no local support system in place, and they bring their families with them in some cases. Youth come to school reeking of it and the lifestyle is normalized.

- Mental health is difficult to address with parents as they often do not recognize how their mental health concerns impact their ability to parent. When they are assessed for services, they often will report that they have no problem and then are turned away from services. When they do meet criteria, there is a need to develop better support networks around families to ensure they participate in services, are given support from their network, and are provided support and education from their social worker on how their specific concerns are impacting their parenting. There needs to be a system to help prioritize adults with higher need, such as individuals coming off of a 5150 hold.
- Recurrence of maltreatment occurs due to a variety of issues, including:
  - Drug or alcohol relapse,
  - Prior interventions/services did not meet the family's need or the changes in behavior were not integrated into practice,
  - Family law or custody issues,
  - Parents not identifying or accepting risk factors, or not being able to see that they are able to be the solution to their own problem,
  - Families do not leave their environment and they relapse or slip into old behaviors under the influence of others; peer pressure and environmental triggers,
  - Additional information is provided to the department in subsequent referrals that provide more information to substantiate allegations,
  - If the intervention is not enough to meet the family's needs, the family's risk or safety issue may elevate to require a stronger intervention. Once these families are identified, they also have more mandated reporters in their lives who can make future reports if there are subsequent risk or safety issues.

- Once a referral is received, there is strong communication with community partners and there is excellent communication and collaboration to ensure that the families need are met. Partners ask how they can help support the family to prevent future issues.
- When a family continues to have escalation of risk and safety issues, this could be due to not properly identifying all risk and safety issues, lack of full disclosure by children of all abuse experienced, retaliation from family members against children who disclose, lack of belief in child's disclosure leading to failure to protect or engage in safety plan, or the family not addressing the issue. Another common stressor is difficult behavior's exhibited by teenagers that parents struggle to deal with when they have limited or impaired parenting.
- Some of the interventions that have been identified as most effective for preventing recurrence are:
  - Safety Organized Practice family team meetings, involving support networks, getting kids involved in safety planning and follow up after meeting to ensure stable; transparent process; family needs to have support network (but could be co-dependency which is not good).
  - For children under 5, Head Start does in-house parenting, does needs and strengths assessment and goal setting with families and refers out for things that cannot be handled in-house such as to First Five, Tapestry, or parenting classes. Head Start also works with families on the goals the family may have with Family and Children's Services or other providers to incorporate those goals into Head Start plan.
  - Sometimes getting a wakeup call from authorities helps to prevent recurrence.
  - RED (Review, Evaluate, Direct) Team process reviewing every non-immediate referral that comes into Family and Children's Services countywide with a group decision making process to critically assess referrals.
- Of the areas identified as gaps or missing services that could help with prevention of recurrence, the following were recommendations of the stakeholders to address or develop:
  - Develop a Differential Response system for incoming ER referrals
  - Adult mental health services
  - Access to mental health services for teenagers
  - Sober living environments
  - Foster parents who can take minor parents with babies
  - Mentors- Big Brothers/Big Sisters

- Medical providers- getting their assistance in coordinating health/mental health services for clients
  - Getting families connected to resources (CalWORKs/Medi-Cal) when they have limited transportation resources to get into office to apply
  - Consolidated Tribal Health has two staff to help get clients enrolled with Medi-Cal
- For families in isolated geographical areas of the county, there are limited services, but school based services seem to be the only ones that are accessible. Consider other methods of service delivery that make it easier for families to access services in their area.

### **PERMANENCY PERFORMANCE AREA 1: PERMANENCY IN 12 MONTHS FOR CHILDREN ENTERING FOSTER CARE**

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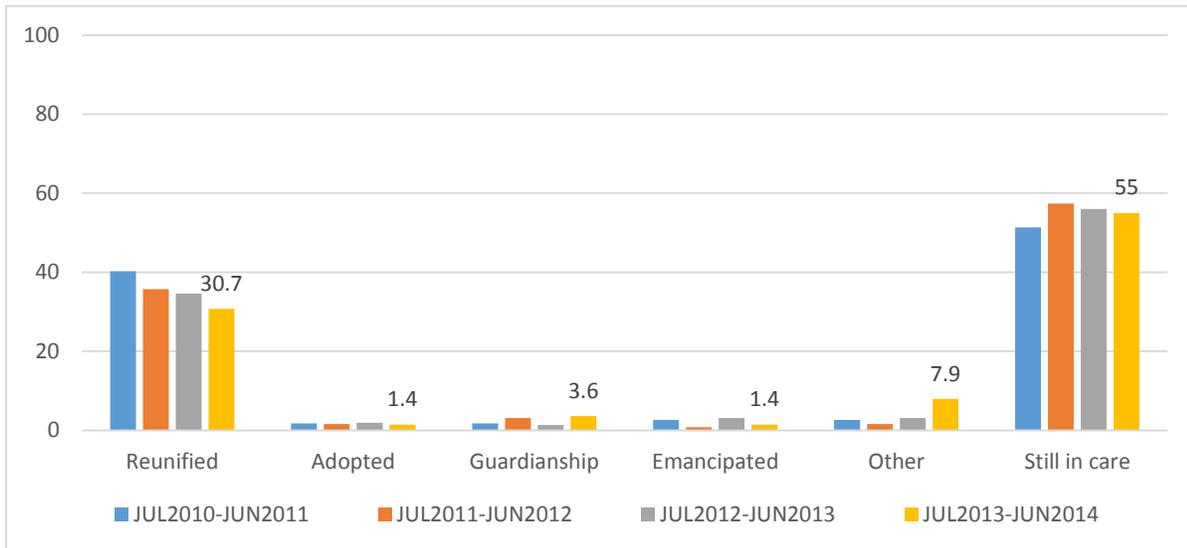
**Measure:** Federal/CWS: Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period, what percent discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering foster care?

**Methodology:** The denominator is the number of children who enter foster care in a 12-month period. Children who are in foster care for less than 8 days are excluded. Children who enter foster care at age 18 or more are excluded. For children with multiple episodes during the same 12-month period, this measure only evaluates the first episode within the period. The numerator is the number of children in the denominator who discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering foster care. For the purposes of this measure, permanency includes exit status of ‘reunified’, ‘adopted’ or ‘guardianship’. Children with a current placement of ‘trial home visit’ are included in the count of children reunified if that visit lasted at least 30 days, its start date fell within 11 months of the latest removal date, and it was the final placement before the child was discharged from foster care to reunification. For details, please see Exit Status.

**National Standard:** The national standard for this measure is performance greater than or equal to 40.5%.

## Child Welfare

Table 5.3: Percent of children finding permanency in 12 months



### Analysis

Mendocino County is currently out of compliance with this measure; that is, in the most recent period of time July 2013 – June 2014, only 35.7% of children found permanent placements (reunification, adoption or guardianship), as compared to the national standard of 40.5%. The children who 1) emancipated, or 2) fall under the category of “other”, or 3) are still in care do not have permanent placements (64.3%). We have seen a decline of 7.3% in performance in this measure since 2010. From July 2010—June 2011, 43% of children found permanent placement; July 2011—June 2012, 40.4% found permanent placement and July 2012—June 2013, 37.6% found permanent placement.

In Mendocino County, reunification services in many of our dependency cases are extended to 12 months and at times 18 and 24 months. Therefore, it is challenging to achieve permanency options for children other than reunification with a parent within 12 months when reunification efforts are still in effect. Our reunification percentage has declined about 10% from 2010-11 (40.2%) to 2013-14 (30.7%). Several factors could be contributing to our decline in number of children reunified with a parent within 12 months. FCS, the Juvenile Court and attorneys are cautious about returning children home too early or too quickly, particularly when substance abuse and or mental health issues have been a factor in causing the child

abuse or neglect. Often return to a parent is prolonged to help ensure the best success for the child and parents rather than return to quickly only to have the child re-enter care.

**Probation**

Table 5.4: **Count** of children finding permanency in 12 months

COUNT	INTERVAL			
	JUL2010-JUN2011	JUL2011-JUN2012	JUL2012-JUN2013	JUL2013-JUN2014
	N	N	n	N
REUNIFIED	1	3	4	3
ADOPTED	.	.	.	.
GUARDIANSHIP	.	.	.	.
EMANCIPATED	.	.	1	.
OTHER	1	.	.	4
STILL IN CARE	2	4	6	4
TOTAL	4	7	11	11

Mendocino County Probation’s performance on this measure has fluctuated greatly over time. The small size of the data set contributes to what appears to be aberrant performance, as each individual case contributes significantly to percentage calculations. Probation selected to the topic of timely reunification for their peer review, please see section “Peer Review” for a thorough analysis of this topic.

**CF SR3: PERMANENCY PERFORMANCE AREA 2, PERMANENCY IN 12 MONTHS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE 12-23 MONTHS**

**Measure:** Of all children in foster care on the first day of the 12-month period who had been in foster care (in that episode) between 12 and 23 months, what percent discharged from foster care to permanency within 12 months of the first day of the 12-month period?

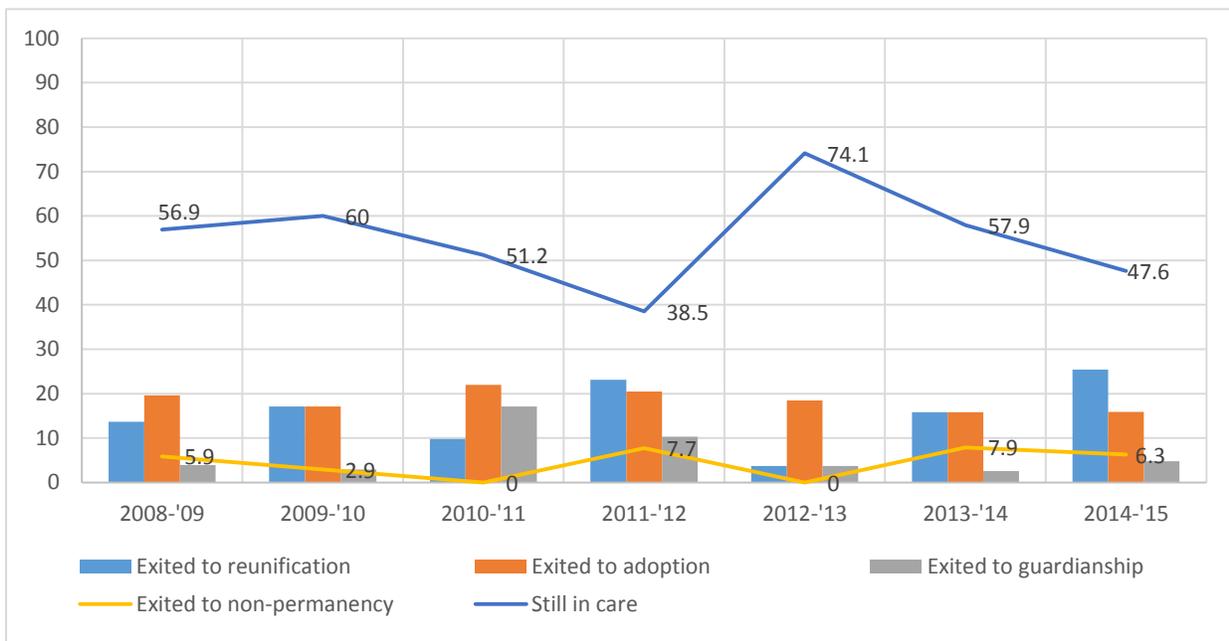
**Methodology:** The denominator consists of the number of children in foster care on the first day of the 12-month period who had been in foster care (in that episode) between 12 and 23 months. Children age 18 or more on the first day of the 12-month period are excluded. The numerator includes those children with a placement episode termination date that occurred within 12 months of the first day of the 12-month period, and a placement episode termination

reason coded as exited to reunification with parents or primary caretakers, exited to guardianship, or exited to adoption. The category, 'exited to non-permanency', includes those who exited care before 12 months, but not to one of the permanent exit types that make up the numerator. The category 'Still in Care' is those children and youth who remained in care at the end of 12 months.

**National Standard:** The national standard for this measure is performance greater than or equal to 43.6%.

### Child Welfare

Table 5.5: Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12-23 months (July – June)



### Analysis

Mendocino County is in compliance with this measure at 46.1%. The graph depicts the percentages of children in permanent and non-permanent placements. Both line charts display the number of children who have not achieved permanency (still in care or exited to non-permanency). Mendocino County’s performance has fluctuated in this measure. Looking back to 2008, Mendocino County has been in compliance with this measure just three of the last seven years; 2014—2015 46.1%, 2011—2012 53.9% and 2010—2011 48.9%. A more in depth

discussion of all permanency measures is provided following the data for permanency measure 3.

### Probation

Table 5.6: Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12-23 months (July – June)

	INTERVAL						
	JUL2008- JUN2009	JUL2009- JUN2010	JUL2010- JUN2011	JUL2011- JUN2012	JUL2012- JUN2013	JUL2013- JUN2014	JUL2014- JUN2015
	N	n	n	n	N	n	N
EXITED TO REUNIFICATION	.	1	.	1	2	.	1
EXITED TO ADOPTION	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
EXITED TO GUARDIANSHIP	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
EXITED TO NON-PERMANENCY	2	3	.	2	.	1	.
STILL IN CARE	3	4	2	4	.	.	1
TOTAL	5	8	2	7	2	1	2

As shown in the table above, one youth reunified and one youth remained in care during the last reporting year (July 2013 – June 2014). Probation selected to the topic of timely reunification for their peer review, please see section “Peer Review” for a thorough analysis of this topic.

### CFSR3: PERMANENCY PERFORMANCE AREA 3; PERMANENCY IN 12 MONTHS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE 24 MONTHS OR MORE

**Measure:** Of all children in foster care on the first day of the 12-month period who had been in foster care (in that episode) more than 24 months, what percent discharged from foster care to permanency within 12 months of the first day of the 12-month period?

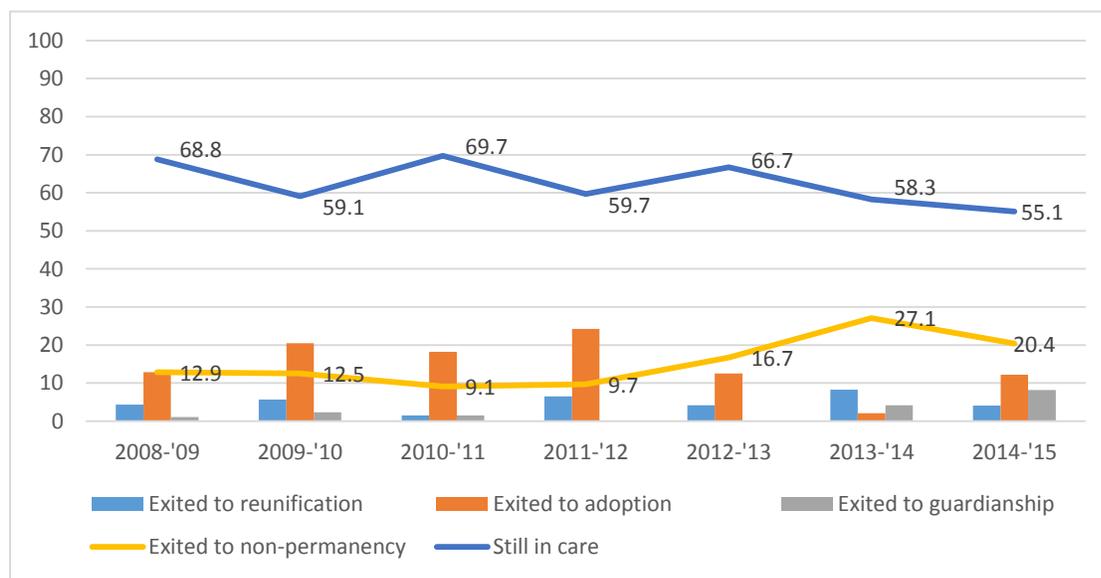
**Methodology:** The denominator consists of the number of children in foster care on the first day of the 12-month period who had been in foster care (in that episode) more than 24

months. Children age 18 or more on the first day of the 12-month period are excluded. The numerator includes those children with a placement episode termination date that occurred within 12 months of the first day of the 12-month period, and a placement episode termination reason coded as exited to reunification with parents or primary caretakers, exited to guardianship, or exited to adoption. The category, 'Exited to non-permanency', includes those who exited care before 12 months, but not to one of the permanent exit types that make up the numerator. The category 'Still in Care' is those children and youth who remained in care at the end of 12 months.

**National Standard:** The national standard for this measure is performance greater than or equal to 30.3%. For details, please see Risk Adjustment and National Standards.

### Child Welfare

Table 5.7: Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care more than 24 months



### Analysis

Mendocino County is currently out of compliance with this measure. The national standard is 30.3% of children will have permanency whereas as of the most current period, 2014—2015, only 24.5% of Mendocino youth in this statistic who had been in foster care 24 or more months found permanency by the end of the 12 months. This is another measure where

Mendocino County's performance has fluctuated. Looking back to 2008, Mendocino County has only been in compliance one of the past seven periods; 2011—2012 at 30.7% due to a large percentage of adoptions in that period. A more in depth discussion of all permanency measures is provided below.

### ***Analysis for permanency measures 1, 2 and 3***

Mendocino County Family and Children's Services sought the input of stakeholders regarding the topic of permanency.

Regarding reunification, stakeholders offered the following input:

- Several key indicators of success or best practice that support reunification include: early engagement with parents in case planning and accessing services, gaining early tribal involvement for ICWA cases, and accessing mental health services for families whenever applicable.
- There are several key areas that have been identified by stakeholders as impacting the success rate of reunifying children and their families. These include:
  - Ability to engage families and help them get into services that meet their needs.
  - Addressing mental health and ensuring medication management when necessary.
  - Identifying and treating addiction and substance abuse issues, ineffective/insufficient treatment services or tools, the cycle of relapse.
  - Domestic violence.
  - Apathy and lack of engagement in services by parents.
  - Excessive delays in accessing services.
  - Getting services on board at the inception of the case and getting the client to buy into the services.
  - Children who do not want to return home.
  - Actively working with the social worker to follow case plan.
  - Keeping active communication open between attorney, social worker and family.
  - Getting parents to buy in to why they are involved with the agency; accepting their responsibility as to why this is happening and learning in a healthy way to move forward.
  - Having minimal changes in social worker assignment.
  - Having the right social worker assigned that can partner with the family.
  - Good placement matching in a supportive home.

- Parenting education for issues like cultural differences; for example, the use of corporal punishment in the past and being taught why it should not be used in the future or what alternatives are available.
  - Good relationship between bio-parent and foster parent, working together and not creating a division between them.
  - Communication challenges between agencies- there is communication by phone, email or written, and though face to face meetings. This collaboration is vital to agencies being able to meet a family's needs, but there is room for improvement in the means of communication. For example, when working with any service providers that are under HIPPA regulation, there needs to be clear definitions of what can be shared and what the process for sharing looks like without violating client confidentiality, or what workarounds can be put in place with client consent.
  - Social worker retention can also impact successful and timely reunification and/or movement of a child to permanency. Every time there is a social worker change, there can be information lost, providers and family must be involved in bringing the new social worker up to speed, and new trust must be built with everyone involved in the case. Further, monthly client contacts, as well as other relevant contact narratives, need to be entered into CWS/CMS in greater detail to help new social workers or other staff be able to thoroughly understand the case.
  - Ineffective communication between social workers and clients can also impact successful and timely reunification and/or movement of a child to permanency. When social workers meet with families, there needs to be clear, concise communication that does not use too much professional terminology. The use of layman's terms and having very transparent conversations with parents and children to ensure that they understand is key to engagement and building trust. Also, if there are language barriers, having more bilingual workers, or specialized workers, to help with communication barriers can help bring improvement in this area.
  - Placement, specifically, the youth's perception of their foster parents' attitudes can impact how they in turn feel about their parents and reunification. After visits home, children often act out upon returning to placement and foster parents who do not understand this can interpret this as a sign that youth are "harmed" by contact with their parents. Youth can also sabotage their visits due to their own fears. There is a need to train and support foster parents and youth on how to handle this process and support the youth during this transition.
- Several services and programs have been identified by stakeholders as having a positive impact on reunification. Though these services are powerful in supporting behavioral change, they require the client to buy into them to be most effective. They include:
    - Parenting education, including Discipline with Confidence

- Anger Management
- Substance abuse treatment services
- Family therapy
- Parent Child Interactive Therapy
- Safety Organized Practice tools
- Support groups

- Other elements that support families being successful include quality visitation, transportation and minimizing the number of placement moves to promote child stability. Once reunification is going to occur, it can be best supported with a strong transition plan to ensure success.
- Stakeholders identified a need to review and look at updating policies regarding drug treatment programs, which are currently outdated and may not be as effective in supporting long term internal change. They also indicated that there are resource needs around expanded treatment options for clients with drug and alcohol abuse issues, such as in county treatment programs for clients.
- Stakeholders identified several areas that could be improved to support the morale of social workers. They include: support staff with morale building activities and increasing the pay scale to improve retention and recruitment efforts and to help prevent burnout. Stakeholders also suggested that Family and Children’s Services support workers by helping them develop practical skills for social work, learning how to leave bias outside of social work practice, how to speak with and build rapport with parents, communicate with honest sincerity, and more training around work with tribal clients and how to partner with local tribes.
- Stakeholders expressed that services to youth could be improved by maintaining communication and trust through open communication, making it a priority to return their calls and address their concerns, looking at more sites for youth to be able to come to and adding to local Family Resource Centers to provide youth access to services and supports. Currently, there is an increase in youth who are in extended foster care and it is crucial that they be able to connect to services and build trust with social workers to be successful. Many of these older youth do not want to reunify with their birth parents and are electing to stay in care for stability and support.

- Some of the barriers to youth and families accessing and utilizing services and being able to successfully reunify were identified by stakeholders, including:
  - Transportation is a challenge due to the remote nature and geography of the county
  - Mental health is a primary concern for many families and there can be access or engagement challenges for adult clients
  - Medical treatment within the county
  - Income/financial barriers, including finding adequate work with a legal means
  - Criminal behavior
  - Human trafficking

Stakeholders offered the following input regarding adoptions in Mendocino County:

Process:

- Family and Children’s Services makes a referral to CDSS Adoptions Bureau to assess for concurrent planning regarding adoption. From that point, an adoptions worker is assigned to the case to assess the child for adoptability, and to help with placement searches. These workers collaborate with the county social worker and jointly serve the family and child. Reentry into the system generates a new referral for assessment.
- When there is tribal affiliation or the child is ICWA eligible, there is an option for Tribal Customary Adoption.
- In order to ensure timely adoption, stakeholders identified that social workers need to carefully monitor the progress of the birth family and communicate that progress with the adoptions worker. This allows for the coordination of both agencies to support timely adoptions in the event reunification is unsuccessful. Also, if there are any concerns with the potential adoptive placement, those need to be identified and addressed as soon as possible to prevent delays in adoption.

Assessment/Placement Matching:

- Children in intensive treatment foster care or with special needs are more difficult to achieve permanency through adoption due to higher service needs and the concern that adoption will mean the loss of, or perceived loss of, services or reimbursement after

adoption finalization. When recruiting for possible adoptive placements for these youth, Family and Children's Services relies on State Adoptions to perform intensive screening and training for families. Once identified, a specialized care rate is developed, as appropriate, to be able to adequately provide care for the child.

- Stakeholders also identified older children, those in sibling sets, and children with behavioral problems as more difficult populations to place for adoption. These youth have unique placement needs that require additional support to find appropriate placements.
- Stakeholders identified key characteristics of prospective adoptive parents that would make them suitable for adopting from the foster care system. They felt that any adoptive applicant should be able to clearly demonstrate that they understand the role of trauma in the development of children and how this impacts parenting. This understanding is key in being able to support a child who has experienced trauma long term.
- Adoption workers looking for adoptive homes consider the needs of the child, their personality, the family make up, but also cultural considerations, language, geographic location and spiritual practice in finding the right place for a child.

#### Aftercare:

- Stakeholders identified several resources or supports that are available to children who have been adopted from the foster care system. They include: post adoptive services offered locally, ongoing support through the Adoptions Assistance Program with financial support, Medi-Cal coverage, and possible respite or support services arranged through State Adoptions and ongoing communication with the State Adoptions worker as needed. Therapy is a key component for the child and family. It is difficult however, to find providers that specialize in adoptions and attachment issues.

In order to prevent failed adoptions or placement moves between adoptive homes, Stakeholders identified the need to prepare and train foster families for the individual child

being placed in their care. These families also need ongoing support to have reasonable expectations of the child.

### Probation

Table 5.8: Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care more than 24 months (July – June)

	INTERVAL						
	JUL2008- JUN2009	JUL2009- JUN2010	JUL2010- JUN2011	JUL2011- JUN2012	JUL2012- JUN2013	JUL2013- JUN2014	JUL2014- JUN2015
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
<b>EXITED TO REUNIFICATION</b>	.	1	.	1	.	1	1
<b>EXITED TO ADOPTION</b>	.	.	.	.	1	.	.
<b>EXITED TO GUARDIANSHIP</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<b>EXITED TO NON-PERMANENCY</b>	2	1	1	2	1	1	.
<b>STILL IN CARE</b>	1	2	5	3	5	.	.
<b>TOTAL</b>	3	4	6	6	7	2	1

The small and extremely limited data set complicates performance analysis of this measure. Probation selected to the topic of timely reunification for their peer review, please see section “Peer Review” for a thorough analysis of this topic. In addition, stakeholders engaged in a conversation regarding best practices, strengths and challenges during the July 2015 stakeholder meeting.

- General best practices that have lent to reunification, include:
  - Probation has tried to find placements that treat youth, but are able to return them home or step down in placement as soon as possible. This focus on minimizing the time in care is to support the youth not lingering in care longer than necessary.
  - Including the youth in case planning.
  - Needs assessments – identifying main needs of child and treating those specific needs.
  - Youth have a better idea of when they will be done (level system) and can maintain their motivation to finish their program.
  - There is collaboration with families for services, but can still improve on this.
  - Keeping youth in the same house within the group home and maintaining the same counselor within the group home promotes trust and stability.

- To support parents to have higher success in reunification, stakeholders found that educating parents, gauging their willingness to change and offering accountability were key to seeing change within the home. Also, a parent’s substance abuse and mental health issues, poverty, cultural barriers and geographic location all played into the family success in reunification.
- Stakeholders found that parents who were successful in reunifying exhibited some of the following behaviors:
  - Parents were actively involved in the case, followed the case plan, invested, followed therapist’s recommendations and got therapy for themselves (marital counseling and family therapy for the victim and minor)
  - There was frequently family contact (every meeting, every visit)
  - They overcame barriers (if minor earned home pass they would get a hotel so he could have his pass, as victim was in the home).
- Mendocino County Probation does not normally work on adoptions. Minors are typically older and not usually candidates for adoption based on age and criminal status. However, the department does look closely at family and works hard to ensure the youth reunifies with or has a lasting connection with the family if reunification is not possible.

### **CFSR3: PERMANENCY PERFORMANCE AREA 4: RE-ENTRY TO FOSTER CARE**

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This measure was the topic of the child welfare peer review. This issue is discussed in great detail in the section “Peer Review”.

**Measure:** Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period who discharged within 12 months to reunification, living with a relative(s), or guardianship, what percent re-enter foster care within 12 months of their discharge?

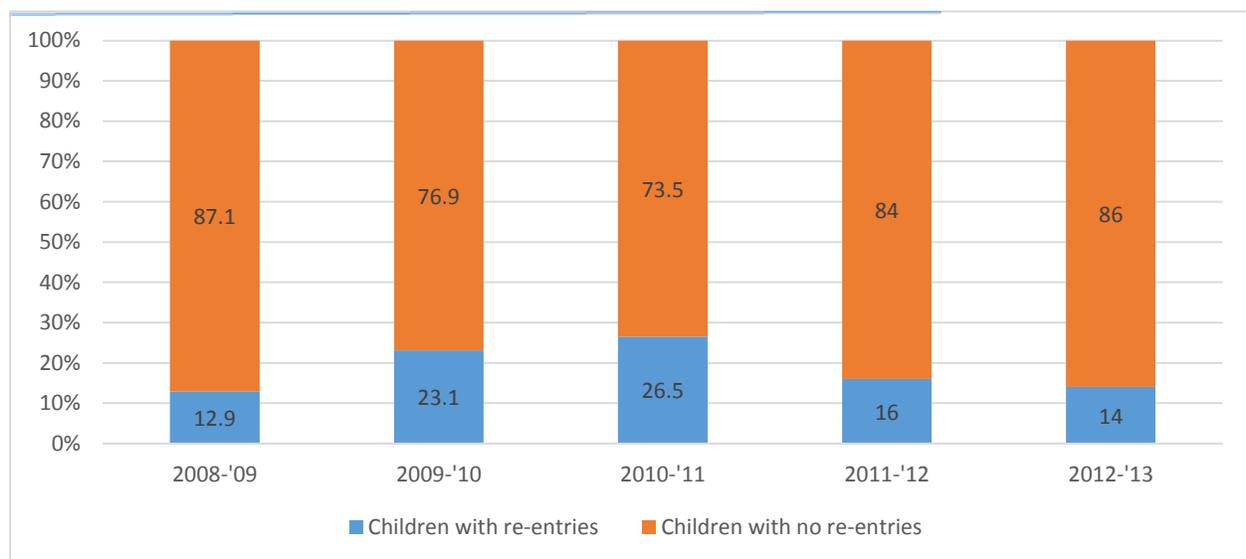
**Methodology:** The denominator is the number of children who entered foster care in a 12-month period who discharged within 12 months to reunification, or guardianship. Please note that this denominator does not include children discharged to adoption, who re-enter within 12 months. Children in foster care for less than 8 days or who enter or exit foster care at age 18 or

more are excluded from the denominator. The numerator is the number of children in the denominator who re-entered foster care within 12 months of their discharge from foster care. If a child re-enters foster care multiple times within 12 months of when they left, only the first re-entry into foster care is selected.

**National Standard:** The national standard for this measure is performance less than or equal to 8.3%.

### Child Welfare

Table 5.8: Permanency Performance Area 4- Re-entry to foster care (July–June)



### Analysis

The data indicates that Mendocino County is currently out of compliance with this measure, at 14% compared to the national standard of 8.3%, and has not achieved compliance on this measure over time. However, the current trend is downward, indicating less re-entries into foster care. Families reenter the system due to a variety of issues, including:

- Drug or alcohol relapse.
- Prior interventions/services did not meet the family’s need or the changes in behavior were not integrated into practice.
- Family law or custody issues.
- Parents not identifying or accepting risk factors, or not being able to see that they are able to be the solution to their own problem.

- Families do not leave their environment and they relapse or slip into old behaviors under the influence of others; peer pressure and environmental triggers.
- Additional information is provided to the department in subsequent referrals that provide more information to substantiate allegations.
- If the intervention is not enough to meet the family's needs, the family's risk or safety issue may elevate to require a stronger intervention. Once these families are identified, they also have more mandated reporters in their lives who can make future reports if there are subsequent risk or safety issues.

For a full analysis, please see Peer Review section.

### Probation

Table 5.9: Permanency Performance Area 4- Re-entry to foster care

COUNT	INTERVAL						
	JUL2006- JUN2007	JUL2007- JUN2008	JUL2008- JUN2009	JUL2009- JUN2010	JUL2010- JUN2011	JUL2011- JUN2012	JUL2012- JUN2013
	n	n	N	n	n	n	n
<b>CHILDREN WITH RE-ENTRIES</b>	.	.	.	.	1	.	1
<b>CHILDREN WITH NO RE-ENTRIES</b>	1	1	2	1	.	3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	1	1	2	1	1	3	4

Mendocino County Probation is currently out of compliance with this measure.

Performance on this measure has fluctuated since 2007. Please note the scale of this graph; there have been only two episodes of Probation youth reentering care following reunification since 2007. Because of the small data set, any single incidence of reentry in a given year will cause Probation to be out of compliance with this measure.

Stakeholders identified several areas that impact youth reentering placement from probation, including:

- There are not enough substance abuse treatment services for youth
- Not being able to hold parents accountable (no change within the home/only minor changes)

- Lack of services due to geography, poverty, cultural background, parent substance abuse and domestic violence
- Lack of education
- Marijuana Cultivation – Do not want services because they are growing marijuana and don't want attention on "their grow".
- When prevention efforts are not able to meet the youths' needs and they are ordered into placement, officers strive to match youth with the placement that will best suit their needs. Probation utilizes a resource management team to choose the best placement for the youth and reviews possible placement, conducts interviews, and then makes a recommendation to the judge, who orders the final placement. Options might include RBS model group home, MTFC, ITFC, level 12 group home, foster care, NREFM, Transitional Housing, JSO group home or other treatment program. In each case, the team strives to find the best treatment program while attempting to maintain the youth in the lowest level of care.

Stakeholders found that the primary factors that lead to placement stability, or instability, are:

- Violations of probation
- Mental health and substance abuse issues
- Aging out of care and their choice to participate in extended foster care or not
- Youth running away
- Youth hits a plateau and makes no further program progress, becomes discouraged
- Stepping youth down and providing supports in this process

Stakeholders found that there is room to improve probation practice by having open communication with the group homes about keeping youth in placement even if they have "slipped up", offering better placement matching and good communication with the therapist.

### **CFSR3: PERMANENCY PERFORMANCE AREA 5: PLACEMENT STABILITY (MOVES PER 1,000 DAYS)**

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**Federal/CWS Outcomes Measure:** Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period, what is the rate of placement moves per day of foster care?

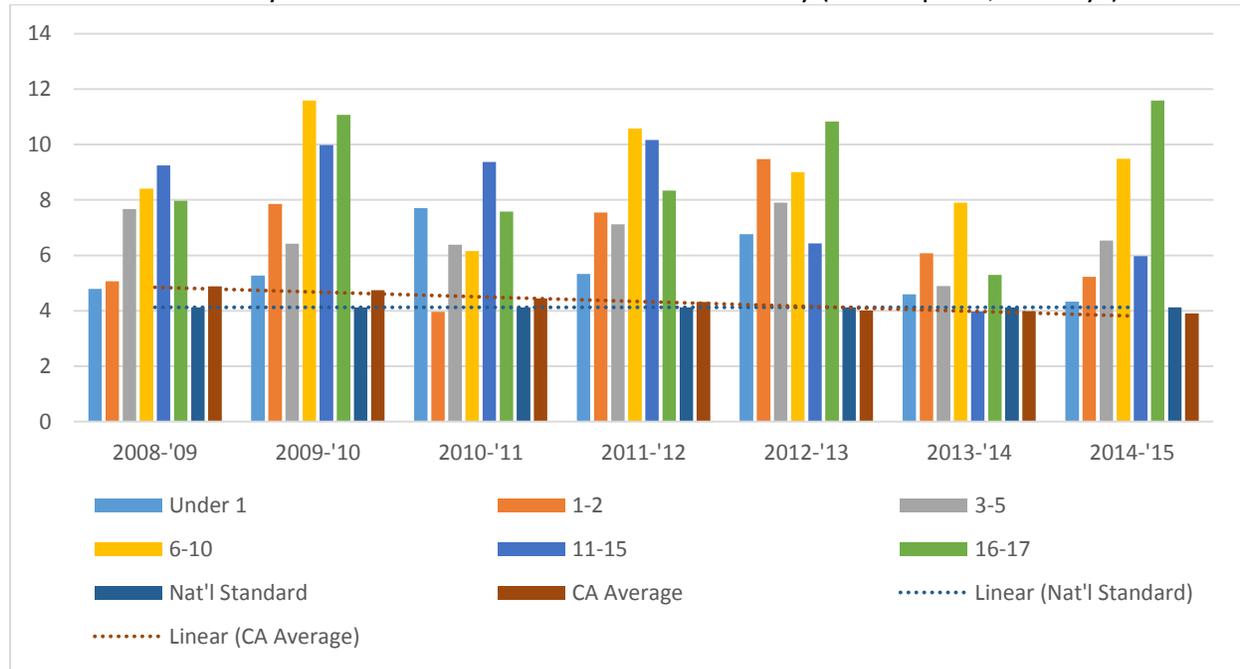
**Methodology:** The denominator is, of children who enter foster care in a 12-month period, the total number of days these children were in foster care as of the end of the 12-month period. Children in care less than 8 days or who enter care at age 18 or more are excluded from the denominator. The days in care during the placement episodes are cumulative across episodes reported in the same year. Youth who turn 18 during the 12-month period do not have time in care beyond their 18th birthday counted. The numerator is, among children in the denominator, the total number of placement moves during the 12-month period. The initial placement in foster care (removal from home) is not counted, but all subsequent moves occurring within the 12-month period are included in the calculation. The moves during the placement episodes are cumulative across episodes reported in the same year. Entries to care and exits from care--including exits to trial home visits, runaway episodes, and respite care--are not counted as moves. Youth who turn 18 during the 12-month period do not have moves after their 18th birthday counted.

**Performance:** Performance for this measure is the numerator divided by the denominator, expressed as a rate per 1,000 days. The rate is multiplied by 1,000 to produce a whole number which is easier to interpret. A decrease in the rate per 1,000 days indicates an improvement in performance. The days in care and moves during the placement episodes are cumulative across episodes reported in the same year. Youth who turn 18 during the 12-month period do not have time in care beyond their 18th birthday or moves after their 18th birthday counted.

**National Standard:** The national standard for this measure is performance less than or equal to 4.12 per 1,000. For details, please see Risk Adjustment and National Standards.

## Child Welfare

Table 6: Permanency Performance Area 5- Placement Stability (moves per 1,000 days)



### Analysis

As noted in the above table, Mendocino County is not in compliance with the national standard, and is also moving placements at a rate higher than the state average. Mendocino County's most recent performance in this measure is 6.37 from July 2014-June 2015.

Stakeholders provided significant feedback regarding the strengths and challenges for finding permanent placements in Mendocino County. Their feedback is listed below and can be categorized by general issues, mental health issues and services.

#### General issues:

- There is a lack of well-trained and experienced foster homes. These placements are needed to be able to deal with youth that have behaviors or have experienced trauma, or who may need additional services to support them in placement. Experienced foster parents have developed skills to help with these youth and know how to work with them, their families, and work with the system and local resources to help the youth meet their needs.

- When recruiting homes to offer better placement matching, there needs to be more ethnic diversity of placement options to support cultural needs of youth whenever possible.
- Need to recruit more homes in the geographic regions that the youth are being detained from. This will allow children to stay in their school of origin and have fewer classroom changes and stay on track with school, as well as maintaining their relationships.
- Better define placement types and how placement decisions are made. For example, when is a placement respite versus a new placement, what is the standard for extended visit versus a return home, etc. Ensure that staff understand these policies and enter this correctly into the CWS/CMS system for better data accuracy.

#### Mental health:

- Of all the mental health issues faced by children in placement, the most disruptive include: suicidal ideations or threat of self-harm, attachment issues and sexualized behaviors. These behaviors require additional services or supports to help youth work through their needs and for the placement providers to be able to support the youth.
- There is a reduced use of mental health services by Hispanic or Latino clients; there is a need for more bilingual or culturally sensitive workers to work with this population and perhaps outreach to the community to break down barriers or stigma around using these services.
- Soon after entering the foster care system, for either probation or child welfare, each child is assessed for and mental health needs. These assessments are collaborative and when needs are identified, an immediate referral to services is initiated for the youth. This referral process can be cumbersome, requiring extensive documentation to be provided, and sometimes there is a challenge in getting information from the Ukiah Valley Medical Center or Hillside Health providers. In addition, there are limitations on services to youth in the outlying areas of the community, with most services centered in the larger towns. There is an additional barrier of a limited number of qualified child therapists in the area. If a JV-220 is needed to get youth psychotropic medications,

there is also a delay in accessing permission through the court due to the statutory time frames.

#### Collaboration/Service Providers:

- Family and Children’s Services works with placement and service providers to assess and determine needs of youth for the purposes of concurrent planning. This process begins at the jurisdiction/disposition hearing, and the department is careful to ensure that family finding is also occurring at this time to identify possible relative placements.
- There is a need for more special education classrooms or school and more resources to meet the unique needs of the students.
- Improve working relationships with schools to help develop more support services that would allow students to remain in their school of origin and address behavioral issues that may arise.
- Currently, Family and Children’s Services regularly practices collaboration, but should continue to improve collaboration. Work collaboratively at administrative level within agencies to develop a better understanding of not only the child’s needs for stability, but what agencies need to support stable placements such as better training, better information exchange, more financial resources, etc.
- Redefine what placement stability looks like and when to move a child to a lower level of care. Look at developing criteria or a process for making these decisions that will make these decisions more collaborative to ensure that children are in the lowest level of care appropriate.

## Probation

Table 7: Permanency Performance Area 5- Placement Stability (moves per 1,000 days)

	TIME PERIOD						
	JUL2008- JUN2009 per 1,000 days	JUL2009- JUN2010 per 1,000 days	JUL2010- JUN2011 per 1,000 days	JUL2011- JUN2012 per 1,000 days	JUL2012- JUN2013 per 1,000 days	JUL2013- JUN2014 per 1,000 days	JUL2014- JUN2015 per 1,000 days
<b>UNDER 1</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<b>1-2</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<b>3-5</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<b>6-10</b>	3.12	.	0	.	.	1.92	0
<b>11-15</b>	1.81	1.64	1.44	1.81	2.08	2.21	2.22
<b>16-17</b>	1.58	1.24	1.17	1.56	1.65	1.67	1.62
<b>TOTAL</b>	1.69	1.43	1.3	1.68	1.83	1.89	1.87

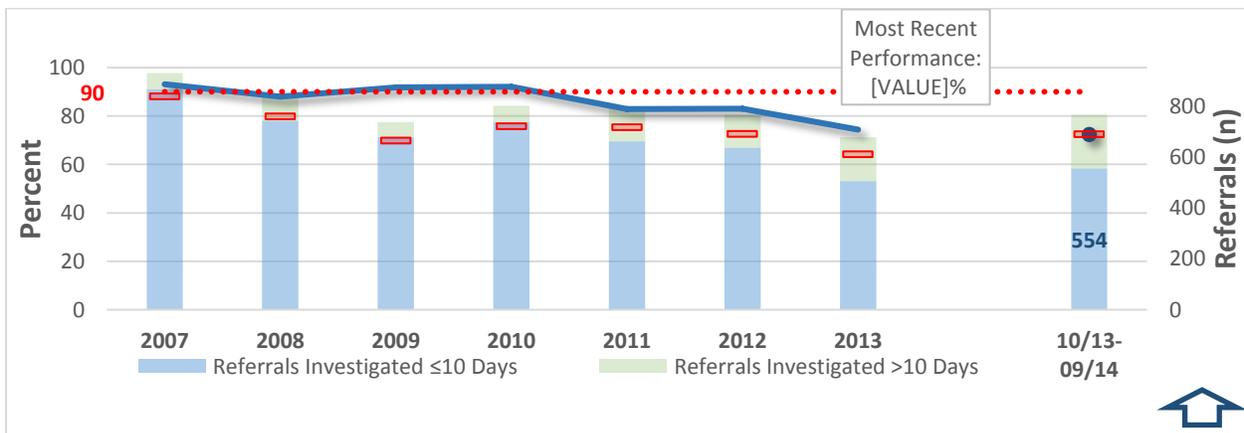
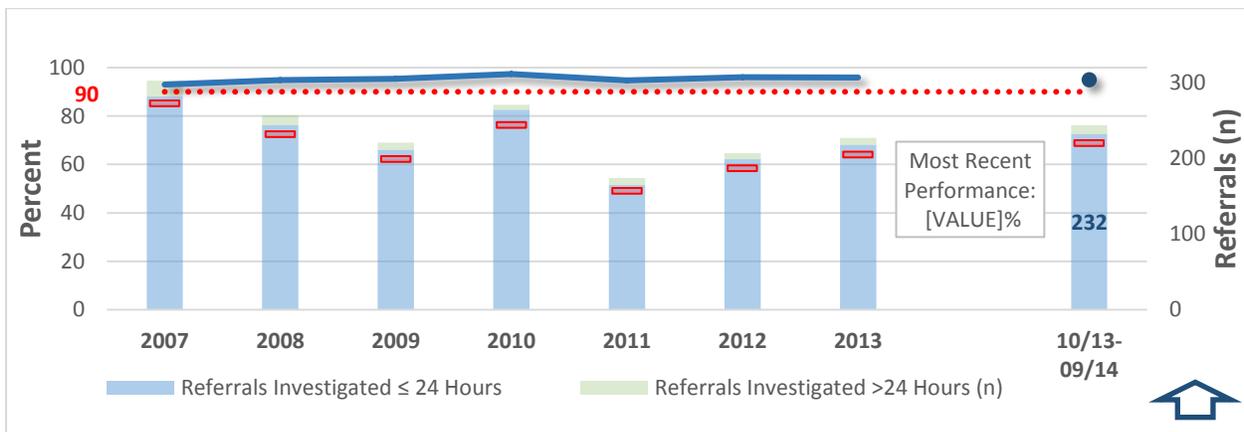
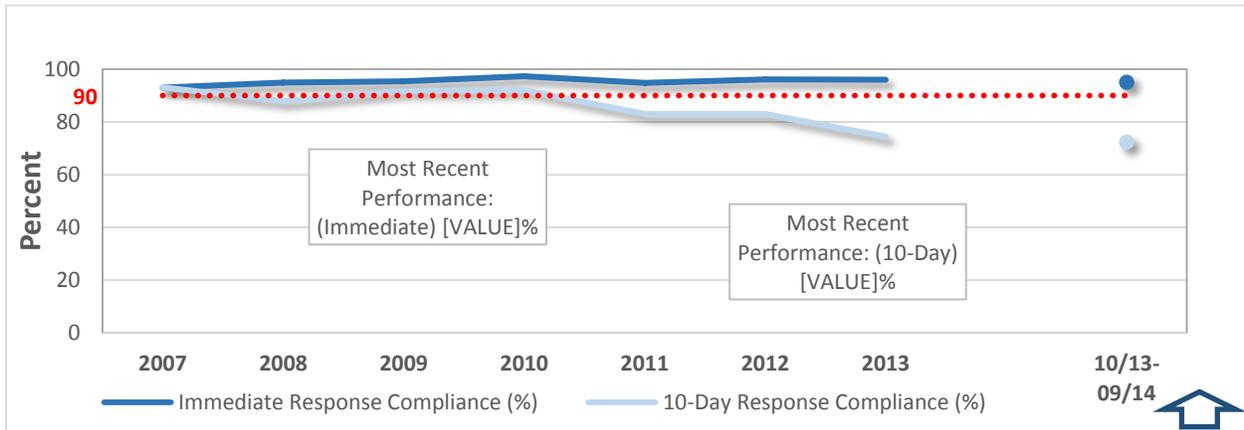
Probation is in compliance with this measure, however, as is the case with all of the data, their numbers of youth on probation are low enough to make the data inappropriate to analyze.

## 2B PERCENT OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT REFERRALS WITH A TIMELY RESPONSE

**Measure:** Of the referrals received during a specific period of time requiring immediate or ten-day responses, what percentage of referrals were responded to timely?

**Methodology:** For this measure, in order for a referral which has been assigned as an immediate response to be investigated timely, documentation of the visit or attempted visit must occur within twenty-four hours of receipt of referral; in order for a referral which has been assigned as a ten-day response to be investigated timely, documentation of the visit or attempted visit must occur within 10 days of receipt of referral.

## Child Welfare



### ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)

Each point on the set represents a one-year period; data on this measure is reported in “rolling quarters” (of overlapping, twelve-month timeframes), but is being presented as annual

data for clarity. (It should be noted that annual data should not imply compliance/non-compliance for all four quarters of any given year, but rather as a composite of all cases during that year). The arrow at the bottom right-hand corner of the graph indicates desired goal direction; in this case *higher* percentages correspond with successful outcomes. Please note the scale of the graphs, as data are presented in both percentage (line graph) and numerical (stacked bars) formats.

Mendocino County is currently in compliance with the 2B measures regarding Immediate Response (24-Hour) investigations, but is out of compliance with 10-Day investigations. Mendocino County has been in compliance with Immediate Response investigations for 27 consecutive quarters (a period of time spanning January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2014) and has only six (6) quarters (out of 60) that were out of compliance with this aspect of the Measure (since data collection began in 1999). Mendocino County has been out of compliance with 10-Day Response investigations for the past eight (8) quarters and for 14 of the 15 most recent quarters (a period of time spanning January 1, 2011 to September 30, 2014). This is an area for needed improvement. However, this is mostly a function of staffing and work is being done to be able to recruit and retain an adequate number of staff to achieve the state goal, as well as testing mobile technology to assist social workers with rapid entry of data into CWS/CMS from the field.

#### **ANALYSIS (PROBATION)**

No data exists to evaluate probation on this measure.

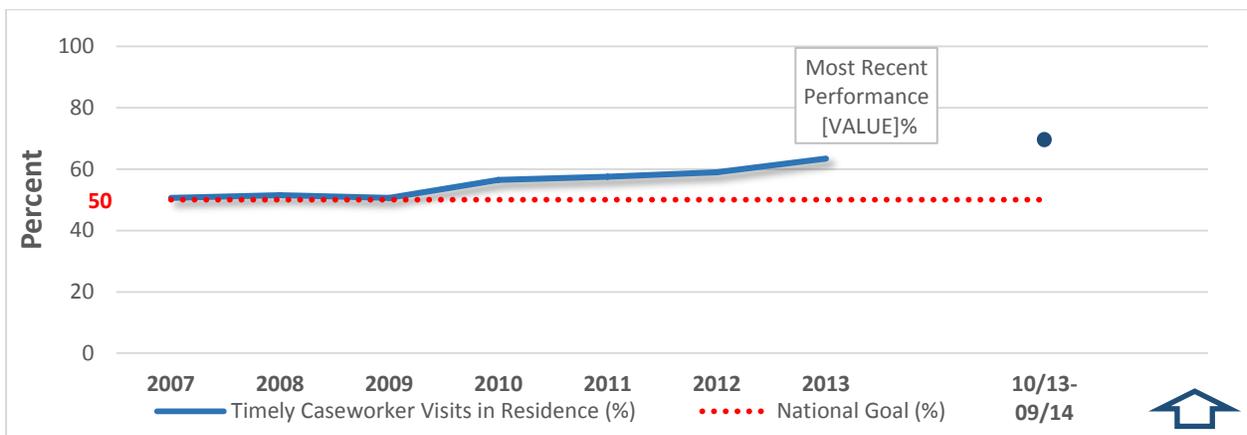
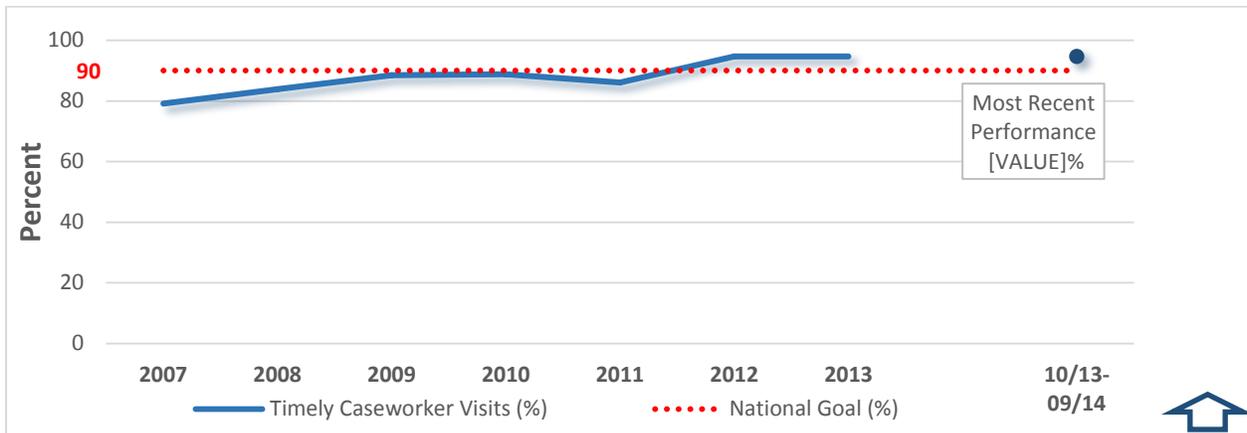
#### **2F TIMELY CASEWORKER VISITS WITH CHILDREN**

**Measure:** Of the children in foster care for an entire specific month, what percentage of children received an in-person visit from a child welfare worker during that month? What percentage of these in-person visits occurred at the child's residence?

**Methodology:** All children under age eighteen, who are in care for the entire calendar month are counted in this measure. Age is calculated at the beginning of the specified time period.

Children who are not court dependents who are placed with non-relative legal guardians are not included. The first aspect of this measure determines the percentage of children in care who received timely in-person social worker visits during any given month; the second aspect of the measure determines what percentage of those children counted in the first aspect of the measure received such a visit in the child’s residence that month.

### Child Welfare



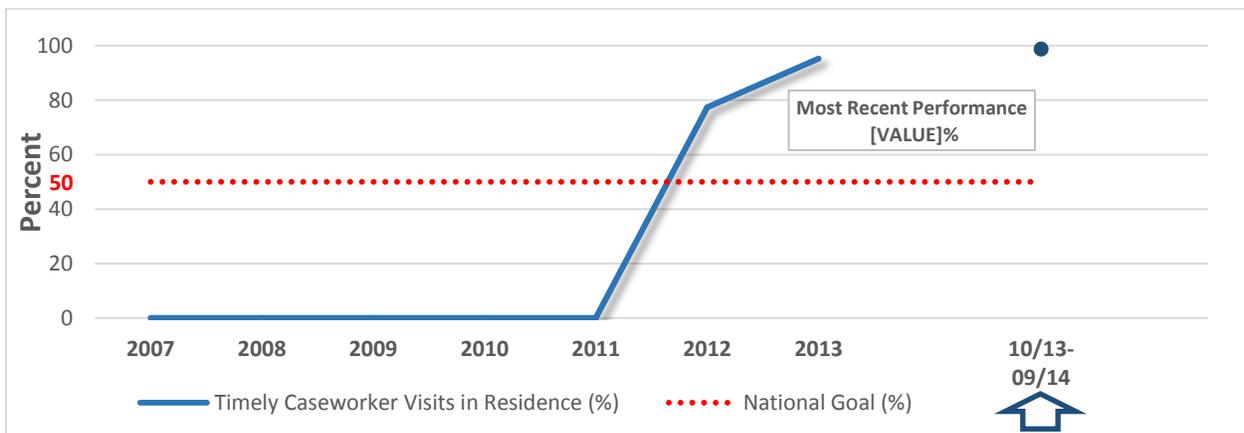
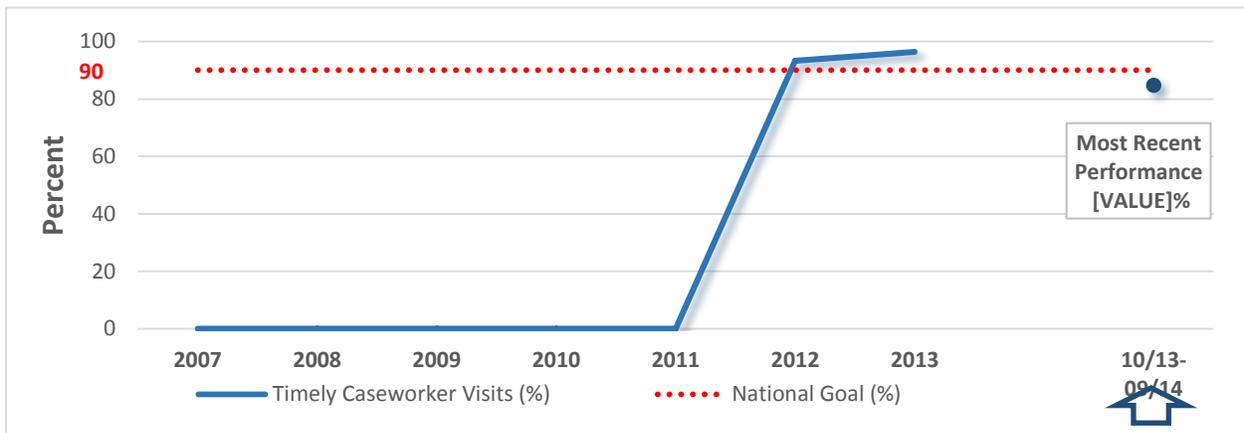
### ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)

The arrow at the bottom right-hand corner of the graph indicates desired goal direction; in this case *higher* percentages correspond with successful outcomes. Please note the scale of the graph.

The data indicates that Mendocino County is currently in compliance with both aspects of this measure. With regards to the overall incidence of timely caseworker visits, Mendocino County has been in compliance (based on aggregate annual data) since 2012, and for the nine

(9) most recent, consecutive quarters. With regards to the incidence of timely caseworker visits at the child’s residence, Mendocino County has been in compliance (based on aggregate annual data) since 2006, and for the 32 most recent, consecutive quarters.

**Probation**



**ANALYSIS (PROBATION)**

Mendocino County is currently out of compliance with overall monthly caseworker visits to youth, but in compliance with monthly caseworker visits to youth that occur at the placement residence. It is unclear as to how the percentage of compliant monthly caseworker visits with youth at the placement residence could possibly exceed the overall percentage of compliant monthly visits with youth, but likely is connected to the manner in which this

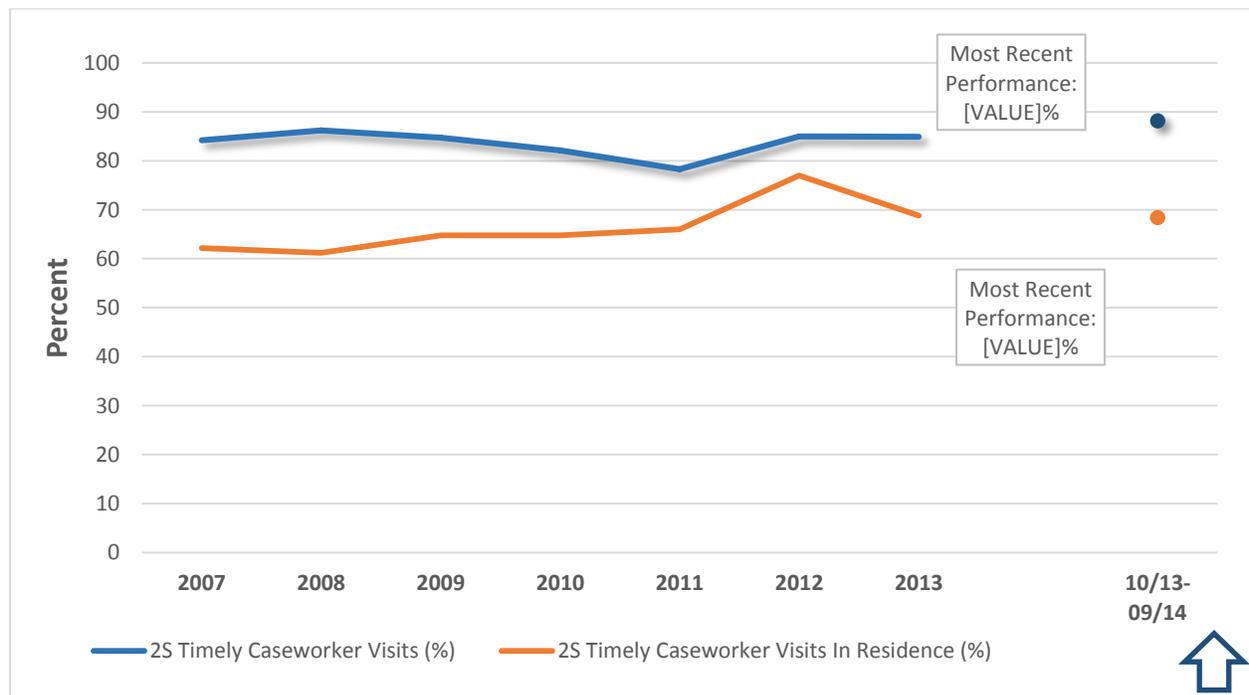
measure is calculated; it should be noted UC Berkeley is reporting different denominators for both aspects of this measure.

## 2S TIMELY CASEWORKER VISITS WITH CHILDREN RECEIVING IN-HOME SERVICES

**Measure:** Of the children receiving in-home services for an entire specific month, what percentage of children received an in-person visit from a child welfare worker during that month? What percentage of these in-person visits occurred at the child’s residence?

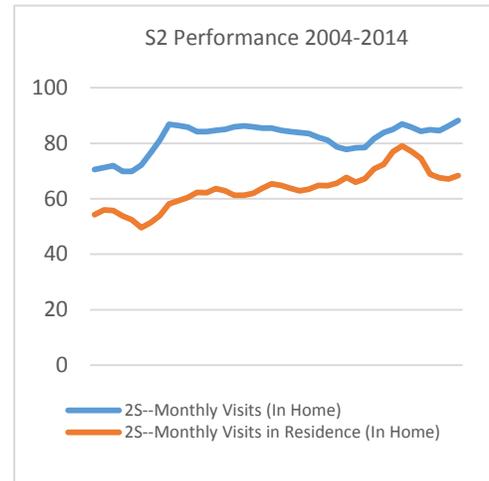
**Methodology:** All children under age eighteen, who have an open child-welfare case (but who do not have an open placement episode) for the entire calendar month are counted in this measure. Age is calculated at the beginning of the specified time period. The first aspect of this measure determines the percentage of children in child-welfare supervised cases who are not in out-of-home placements received timely in-person social worker visits during any given month; the second aspect of the measure determines what percentage of those children counted in the first aspect of the measure received such a visit in the child’s residence that month.

### Child Welfare



## ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)

Each point on the set represents a one-year period; data on this measure is reported in “rolling quarters” (of overlapping, twelve-month timeframes), but is being presented as annual data for clarity. There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. The arrow at the bottom right-hand corner of the graph indicates desired goal direction; in this case *higher* percentages correspond with successful outcomes. Please note the scale of the graph.



There are no Federal or State standards for this measure. It should be noted that historical performance on this measure has demonstrated improvement on both aspects of this measure (see inset).

## ANALYSIS (PROBATION)

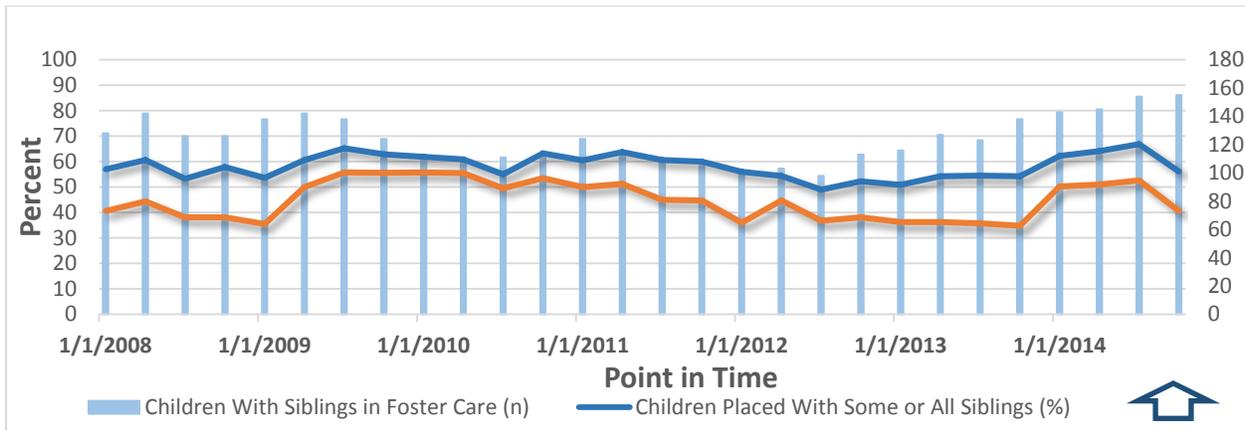
No data exists to evaluate Probation on this measure.

## 4A SIBLINGS PLACED TOGETHER IN FOSTER CARE

**Measure:** Of the children placed in care during a specific “point in time”, what percentage of children were placed with all of their siblings? (There is no federal or state standard at this time for this measure)

**Methodology:** This measure reports on a “point of time” instead of a period of time. Sibling groups are identified at the County level, not the state level. A sibling group size of “one” is used to signify a single child with no known siblings. When children are not in an active out of home placement, the last known placement home is used to determine whether siblings were placed together.

## Child Welfare



### ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)

Each point on the set represents a specific point in time that is referenced on the horizontal (x) axis. There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure; however, research indicates that children in foster care have better outcomes if placed with siblings. There is no available data set that provides information about children that are only placed with “some siblings” (the data sets identify either “all” or “some or all,” but not “some”). It appears that approximately half of Mendocino County children in foster placement are placed with some or all siblings.

### ANALYSIS (PROBATION)

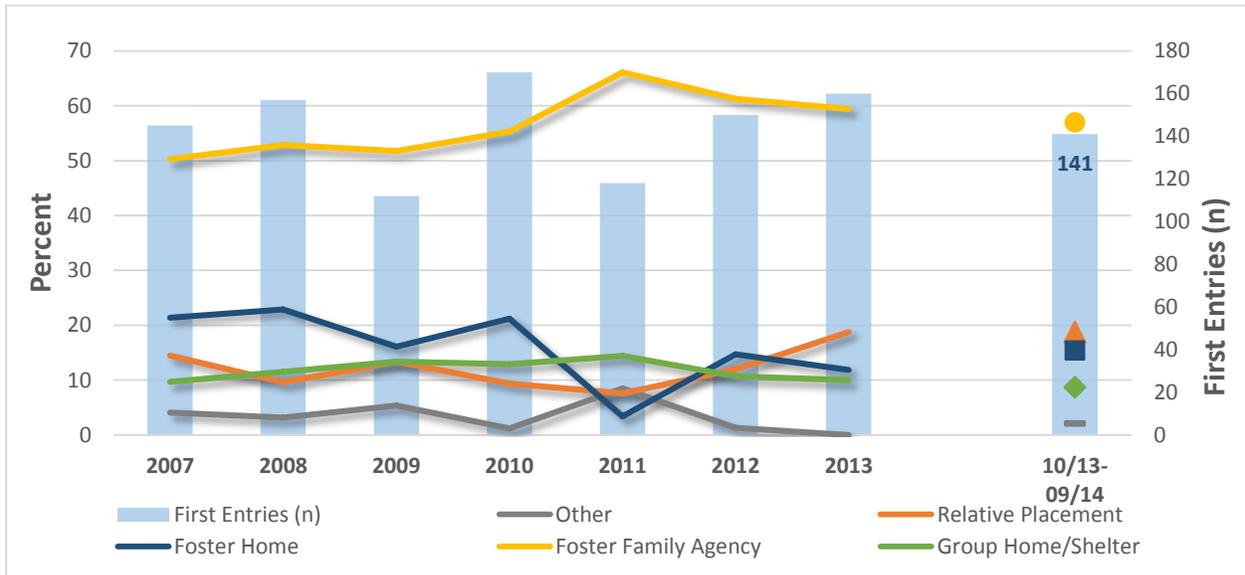
No data exists to evaluate Probation on this measure.

## 4B LEAST RESTRICTIVE PLACEMENT (ENTRIES FIRST PLACEMENT)

**Measure:** Of the children making first entries to foster care during a specified timeframe, what percentage are placed in the least restrictive settings? (There is no federal or state standard at this time for this measure).

**Methodology:** These reports are derived from a longitudinal database and provide information on all entries to out-of-home care during the time period specified.

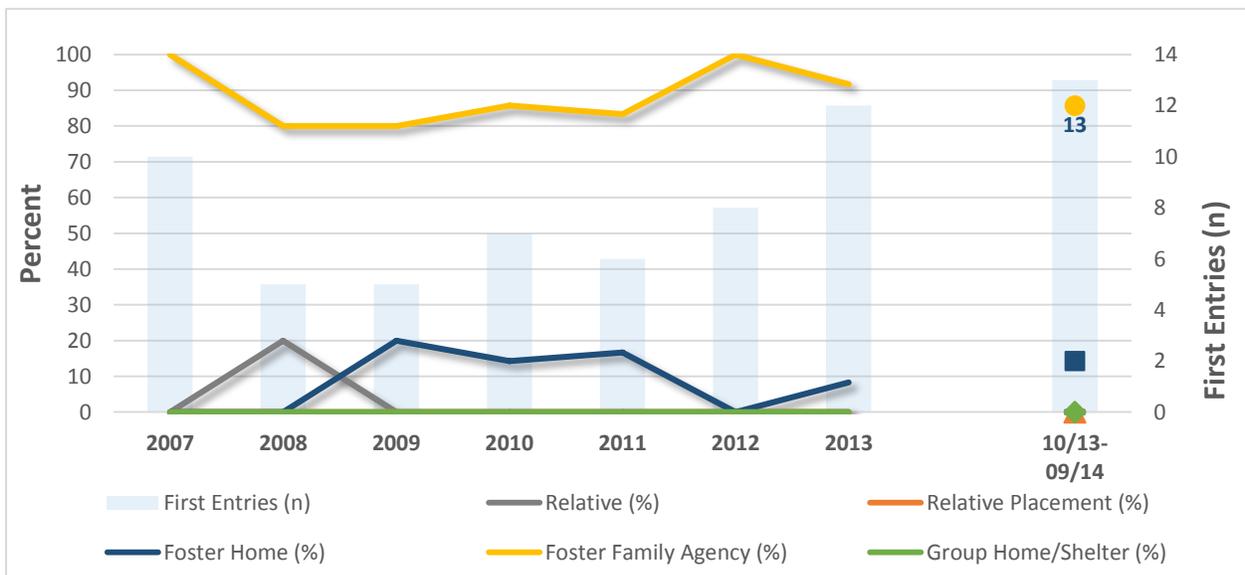
## Child Welfare



### ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)

Each point on the set represents a one-year period; data on this measure is reported in “rolling quarters,” (of overlapping, twelve-month timeframes), but is being presented as annual data for clarity. There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. The data indicates that the overwhelming majority of children who enter foster care for the first time in Mendocino County will be placed via a foster family agency.

### Probation



**ANALYSIS (PROBATION)**

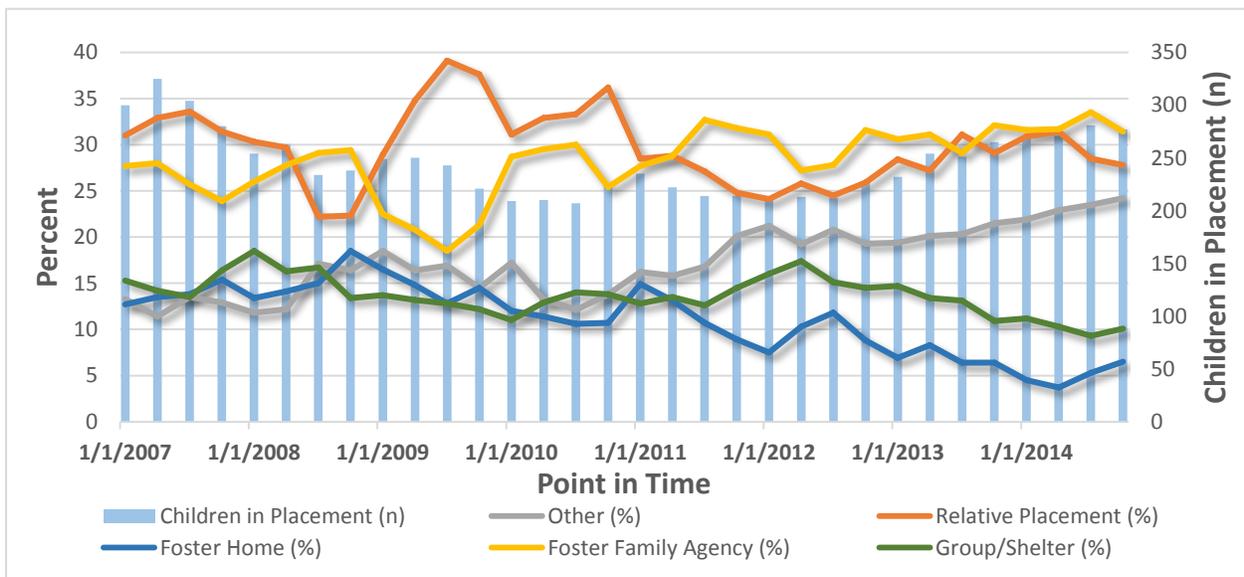
There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. The data indicates that all youth who entered foster care for the first time in Mendocino County via Probation since 2009 were placed in foster care, and overwhelmingly through a Foster Family Agency.

**4B LEAST RESTRICTIVE PLACEMENT (POINT IN TIME)**

**Measure:** Of the children currently placed in foster care during a specific “point in time”, what percentage of children were placed in least restrictive environment?

**Methodology:** Includes all children who have an open placement episode in the CWS/CMS system (excluding children who have an agency type of “Mental Health,” “Private Adoption,” or “KinGAP” on a user-specified count day (e.g., January 1, April 1, July 1, October 1) and year.

**Child Welfare**

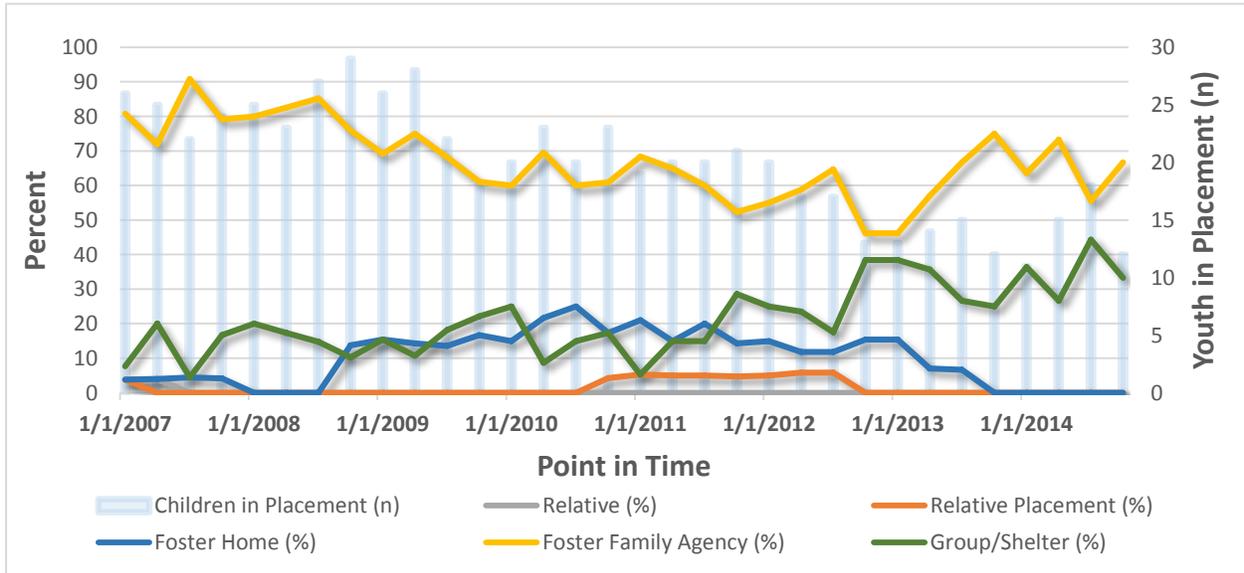


**ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)**

Each point on the set represents a specific point in time that is referenced on the horizontal (x) axis. There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. The data indicates relatively stable use of relative and foster family agency placements, declining

use of state foster homes and group home/shelter placements, and an increase in “other” placements.

### Probation



### ANALYSIS (PROBATION)

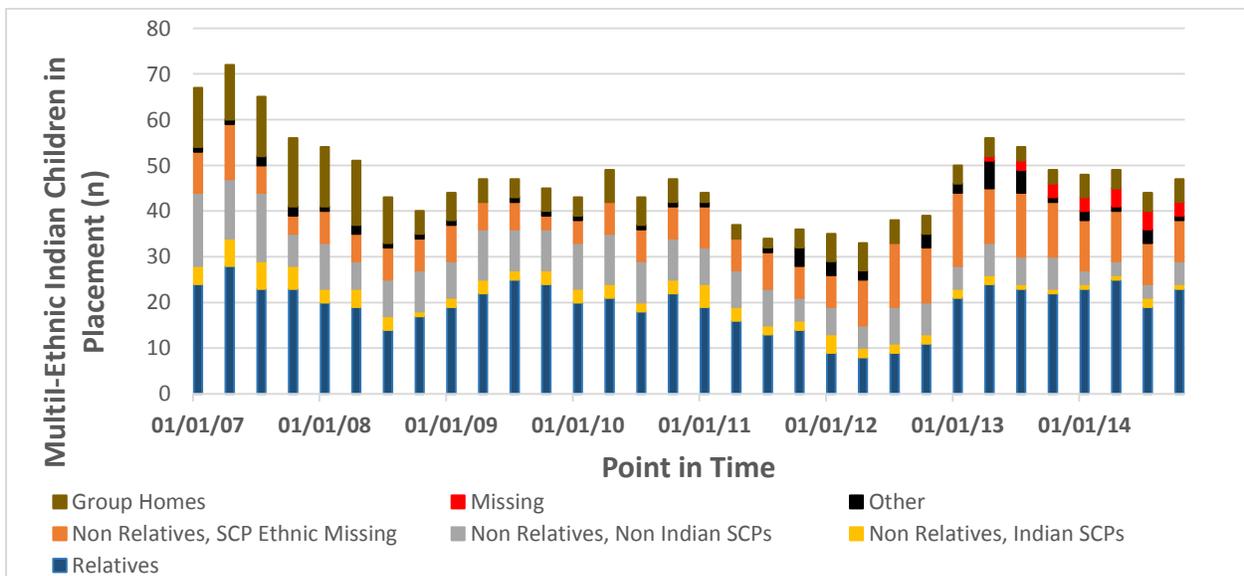
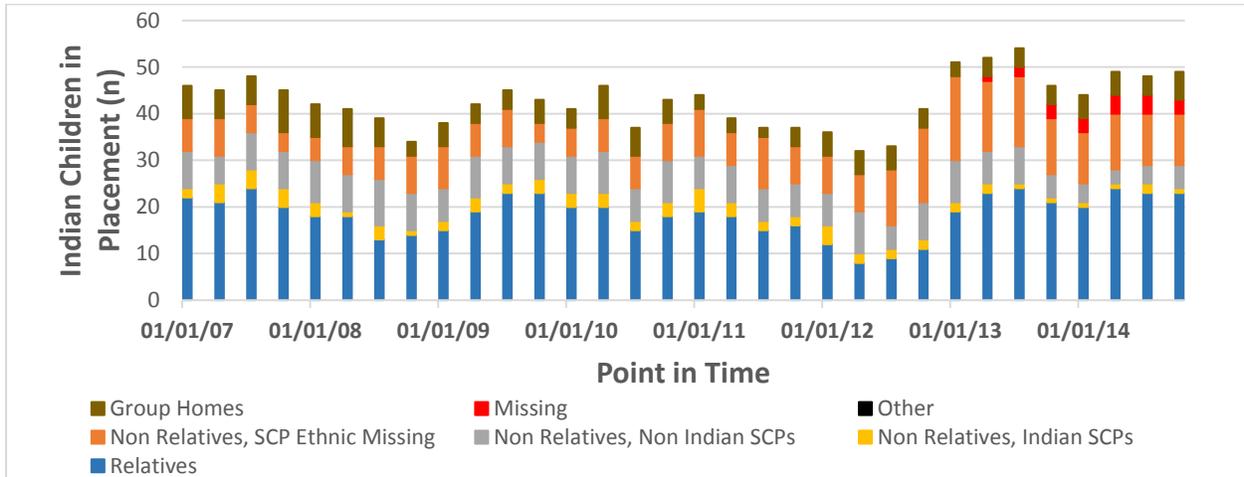
There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. The data indicates that youth placed out of home via Probation are more likely to be placed in foster care via a Foster Family Agency than any other setting, with group/shelter care being the next most likely option. The most current data indicates that two-thirds of Mendocino County youth placed via Probation are placed in a Foster Family Agency setting, and that the remaining one-third of youth are placed in group/shelter care.

### 4E ICWA & MULTI-ETHNIC PLACEMENT STATUS

**Measure:** Of the children whom are ICWA eligible, during a “point in time” in placement, how many children were placed with relatives, non-relative American Indian substitute care providers (SCP’s), non-relative and non-American Indian SCP’s, and group homes.

**Methodology:** Placement status takes placement type, child relationship to substitute care provider and substitute care provider ethnicity into account.

### Child Welfare

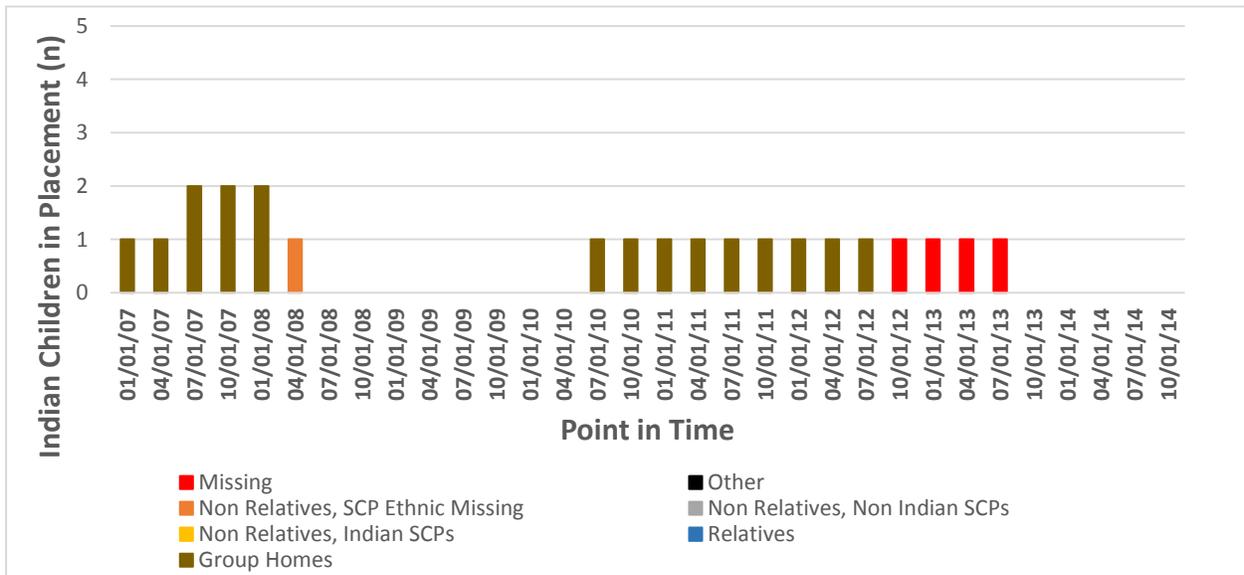
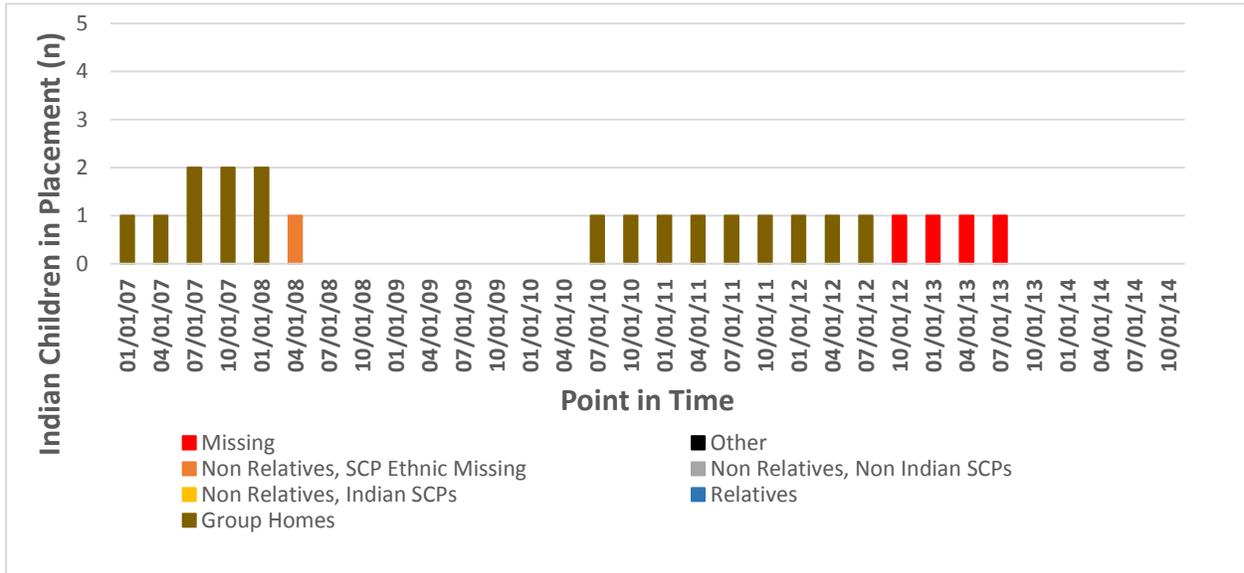


### ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)

Each point on the set represents a specific point in time that is referenced on the horizontal (x) axis. Note the scale of the graph, as the data is presented numerically, and not as percentages. There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. The data indicates a shift towards relative placement for children with Indian heritage; although the majority of ICWA children and half of the Indian children with Mixed (Multi) Ethnicity Indian

Heritage are placed with non-relatives and/or substitute care providers who do not identify as Indian.

### Probation



### ANALYSIS (PROBATION)

There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. The Most recent available data indicates that there are currently no Mendocino County Probation youth that meet ICWA eligibility. There is currently one Probation youth with Indian ancestry who is placed

in group/shelter care. The data suggests that the overall number of Indian youth in Probation supervised care has declined since 2007.

## WELL BEING OUTCOME MEASURES

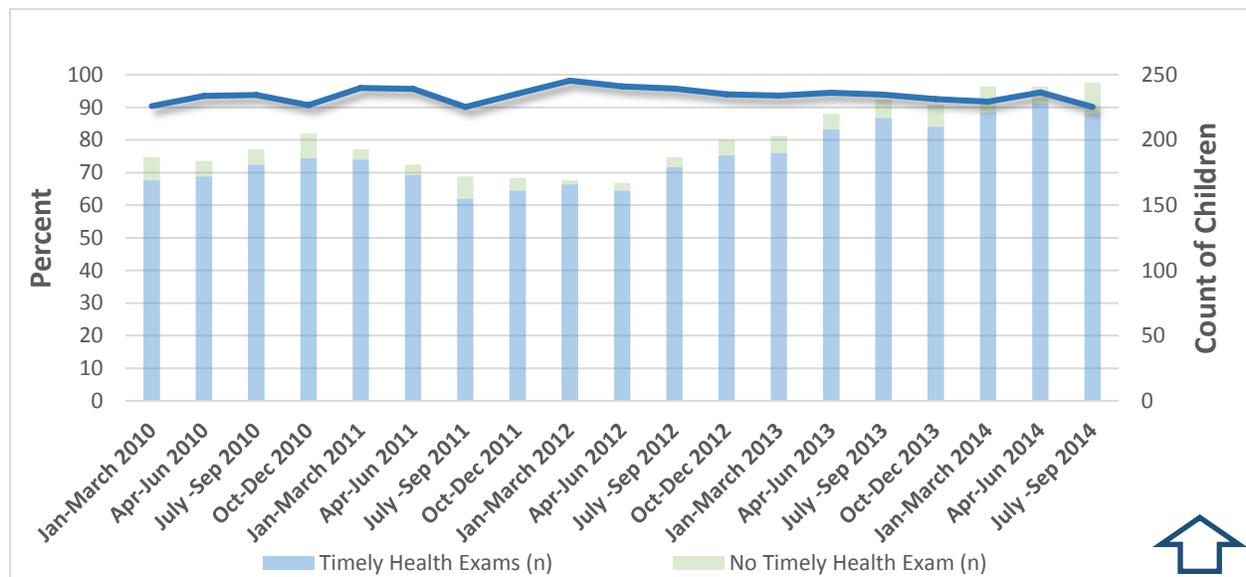
The well-being outcome measures are analyzed together at the end of this section following outcome measure 8a.

### 5B (1) RATE OF TIMELY HEALTH EXAMS

**Measure:** Of the children in foster care during a specific time period, what percent has received a timely CHDP exam?

**Methodology:** Children in open out-of-home placements are counted in this measure. Children that are excluded are children in placement for less than thirty-one days, children residing outside of California and non-child welfare placements.

#### Child Welfare



#### ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)

Each point on the set represents a three-month (quarterly) timeframe. There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. Please note the scale of the graph, as data is presented in both percentage (line graph) and numerical (stacked bars) formats. The data demonstrates that performance on this measure from January 1, 2010 to

September 30, 2014 has never dropped below 90%. It should also be noted that, although the number of children who meet criteria for inclusion in this measure increased by approximately 46% between April-June of 2012 and July-September of 2014, performance on the measure remained favorable.

**ANALYSIS (PROBATION)**

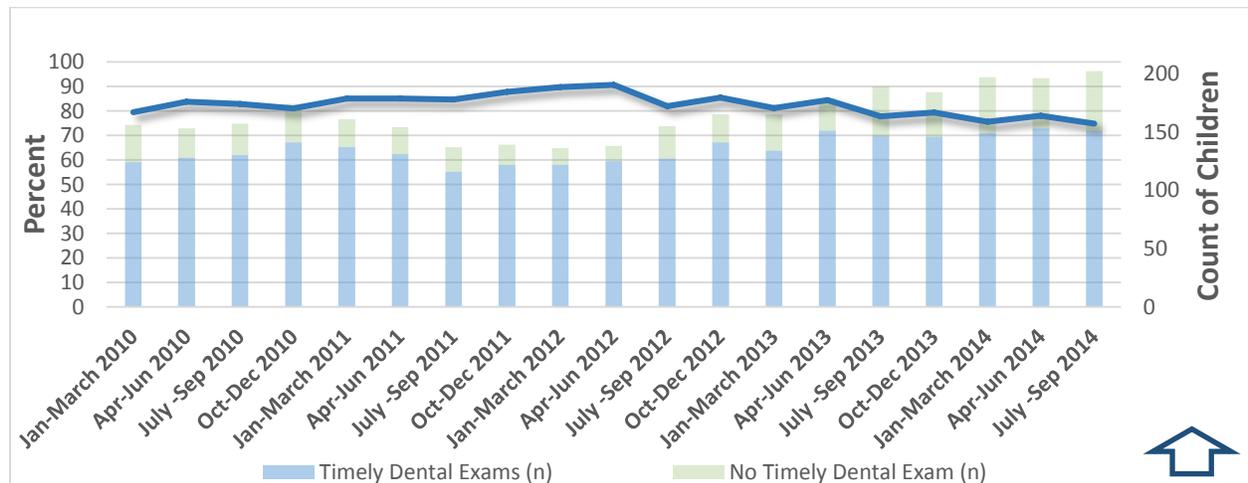
No data exists to evaluate Probation performance on this measure.

**5B (2) RATE OF TIMELY DENTAL EXAMS**

**Measure:** Of the children in foster care during a specific time period, what percentage of children have received a dental exam?

**Methodology:** All children in out-of-home placements are counted in this measure. Children that are excluded are children in placement for less than 31 days, children residing outside of California, and non-child welfare placements.

**Child Welfare**



**ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)**

Each point on the set represents a three-month (quarterly) timeframe. There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. Please note the scale of the graph, as data is presented in both percentage (line graph) and numerical (stacked bars) formats. The data demonstrates that performance on this measure was stable and favorable



(>94%) from January 1, 2010 to April-June of 2012, but has been declining since that time. It should also be noted that the number of children who meet criteria for inclusion in this measure increased by approximately 46% between April-June of 2012 and July-September of 2014. The data suggests that there have been some recent delays to children receiving timely dental examinations.

**ANALYSIS (PROBATION)**

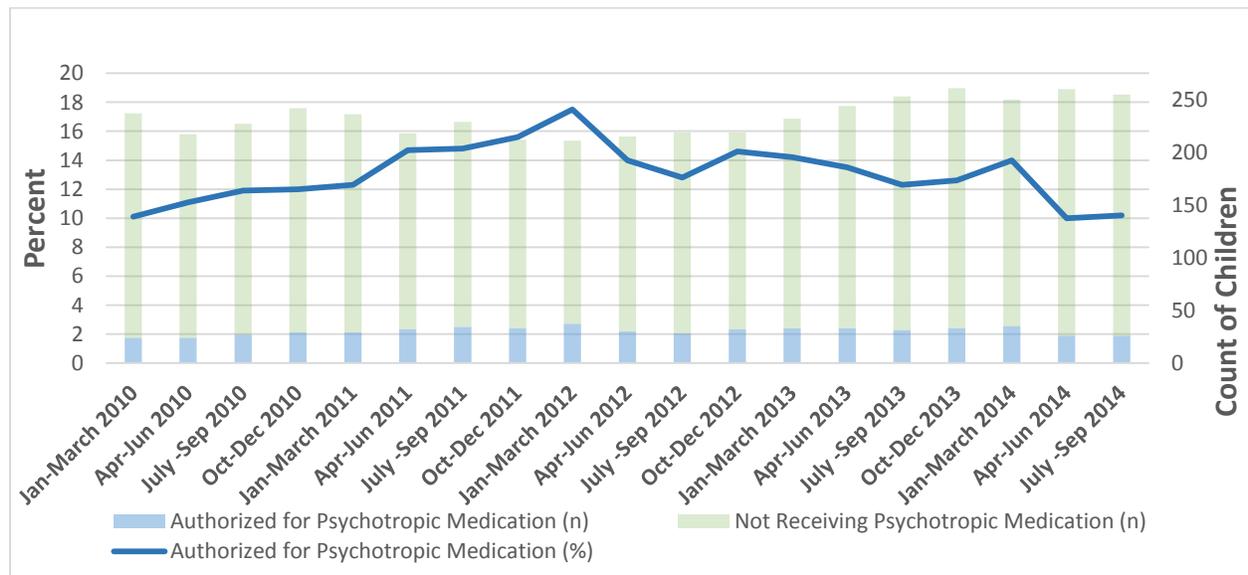
No data exists to evaluate Probation performance on this measure.

**5F PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATIONS**

**Measure:** Of the children in foster care during a specific time period, what percentage of children have a court order or parental consent that authorizes the child to receive psychotropic medication?

**Methodology:** All children under age nineteen as of the last day of the quarter are counted in this measure, except for children that are non-child welfare placements, incoming ICPC placements, and non-dependent/legal guardians.

**Child Welfare**



**ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)**

Each point on the set represents a one-year period; data on this measure is reported in “rolling quarters,” but is being presented as annual data for clarity. There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. The data indicates that psychotropic medication use by Mendocino foster children has been declining since 2012 (17.5% of foster children) to 2014 (10.2% of foster children).

**ANALYSIS (PROBATION)**

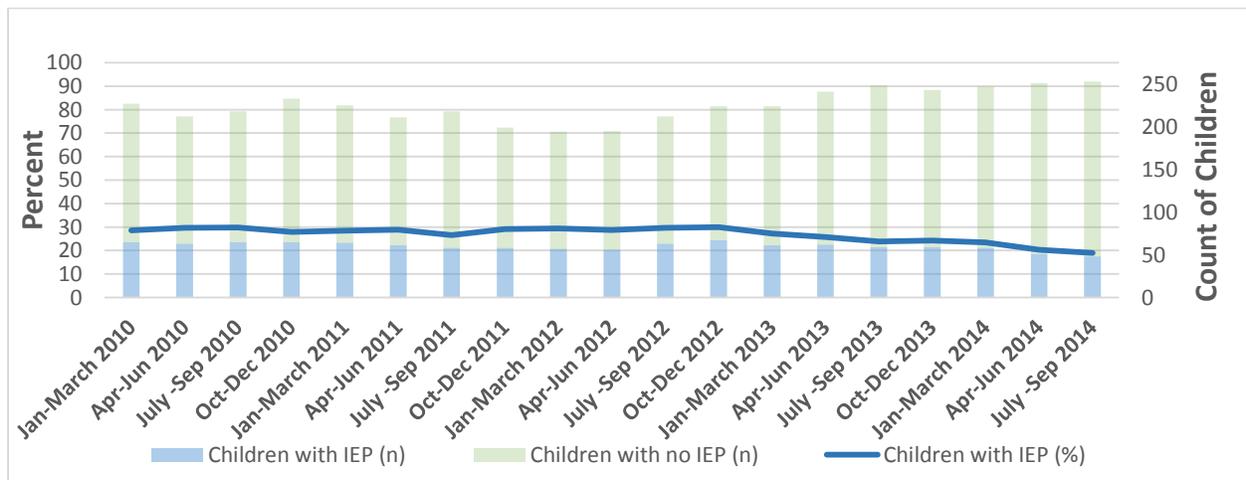
Data may exist to evaluate probation on this measure, but may have been suppressed due to the small population size. UC Berkeley notes that “values of 10 or less and calculations based on values of 10 or less are masked.”

**6B INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN**

**Measure:** Of the children in foster care during a specific time period, what percentage of children have ever had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?

**Methodology:** This report provides the number of children under age nineteen in out-of-home placements who have ever had an IEP.

**Child Welfare**



## ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)

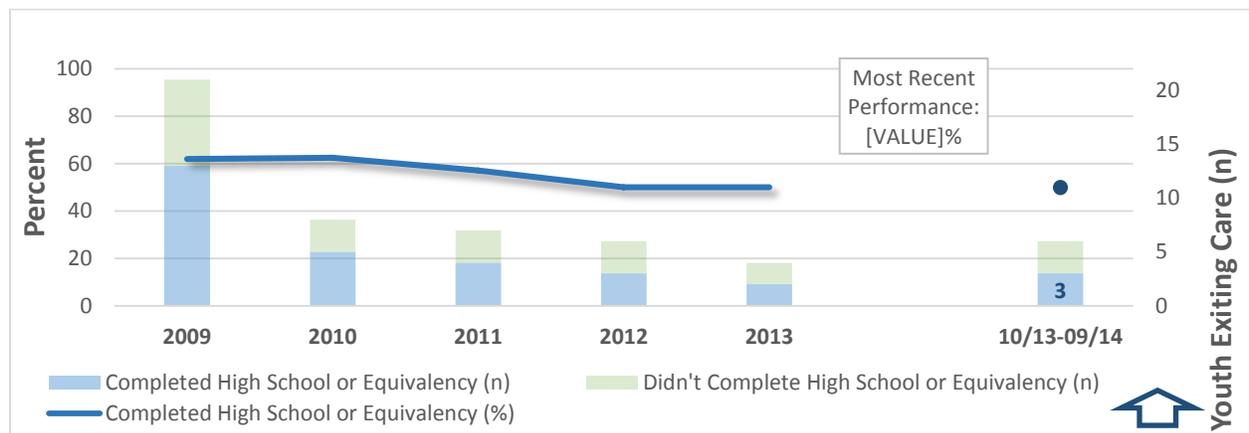
Each point on the set represents a one-year period; data on this measure is reported in “rolling quarters,” but is being presented as annual data for clarity. There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. The data indicates that the percentage of Mendocino County children in foster care who have ever received Individualized Education Plans has steadily declined since 2013.

## ANALYSIS (PROBATION)

No data exists to evaluate Probation performance on this measure.

## A COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY

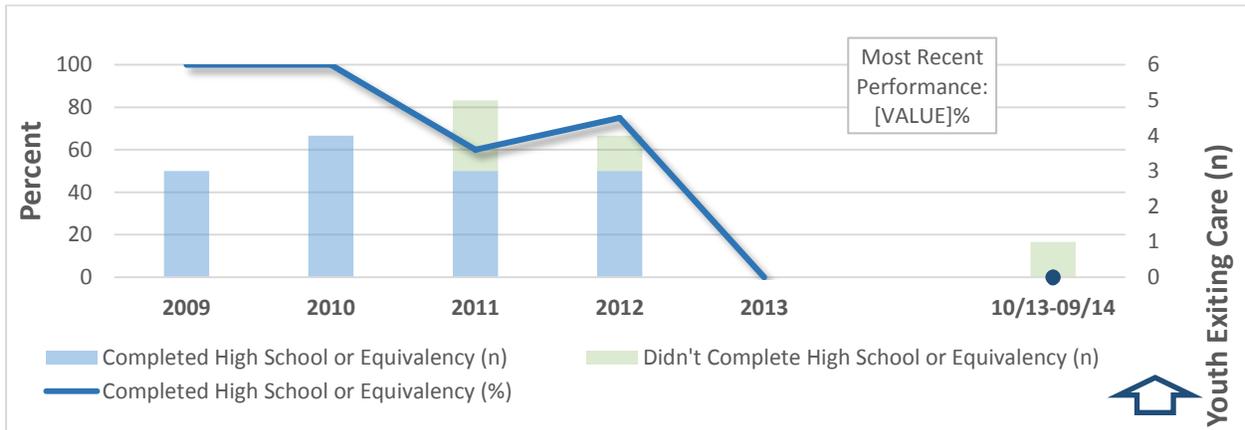
### Child Welfare



## ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)

Each point on the set represents a one-year period; data on this measure is reported in “rolling quarters,” but is being presented as annual data for clarity. There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. There are currently no cases that meet criteria for review of this measure (however, this may be a data integrity issue, as there are other 8A indicators that have cases for the same time frame). The small and limited data set complicates performance analysis of this measure. It should be noted that the number of cases that meet criteria for this measure has decreased significantly since 2009; there are currently only 6 cases that meet criteria for inclusion in measure 8A.

### Probation

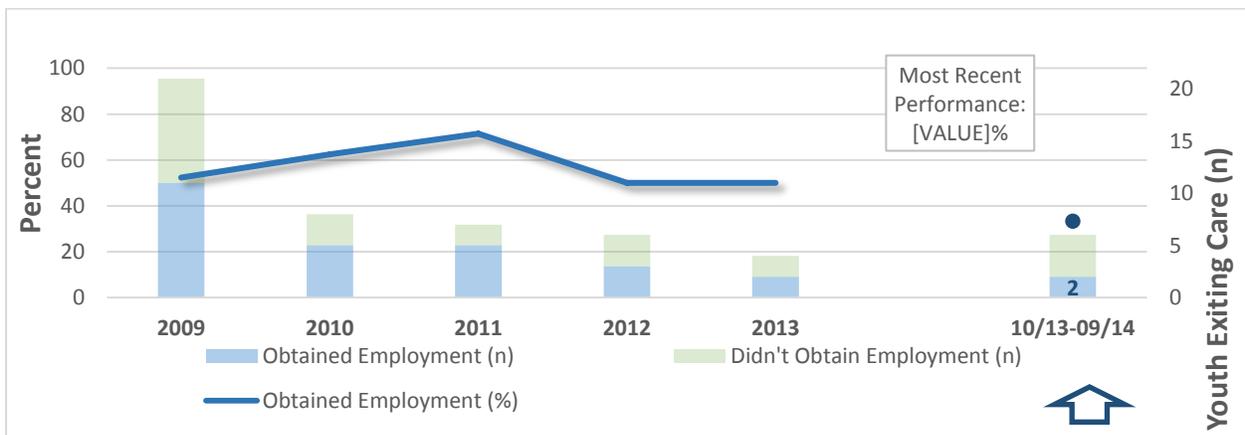


#### ANALYSIS (PROBATION)

There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. Mendocino County Probation’s current performance on this measure is zero (0) percent. Please note that there is only one youth who met criteria for inclusion in this measure during the most recent reporting period.

### 8A OBTAINED EMPLOYMENT

#### Child Welfare

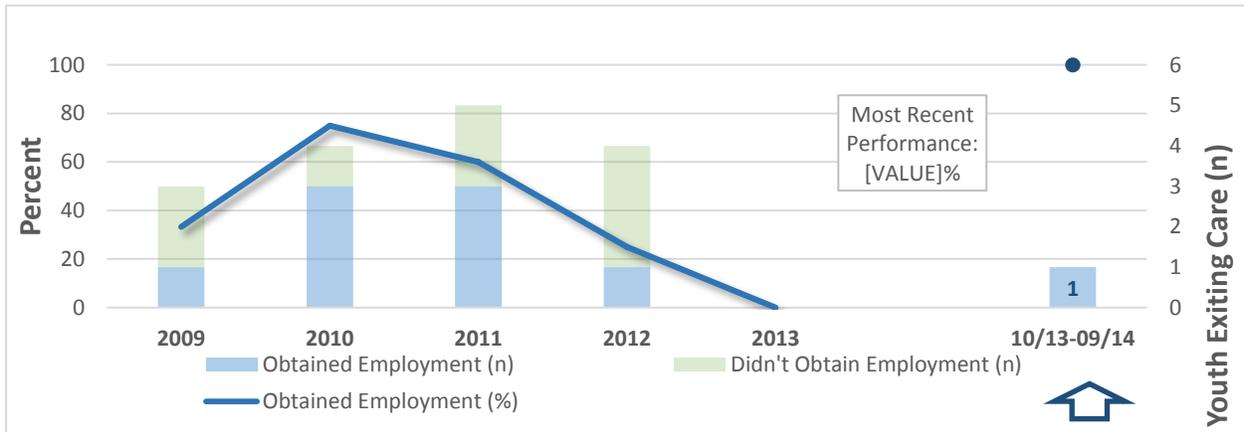


#### ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)

Each point on the set represents a one-year period; data on this measure is reported in “rolling quarters,” but is being presented as annual data for clarity. There are currently no

federal or state data indicators for this measure. The small and limited data set complicates performance analysis of this measure.

### Probation

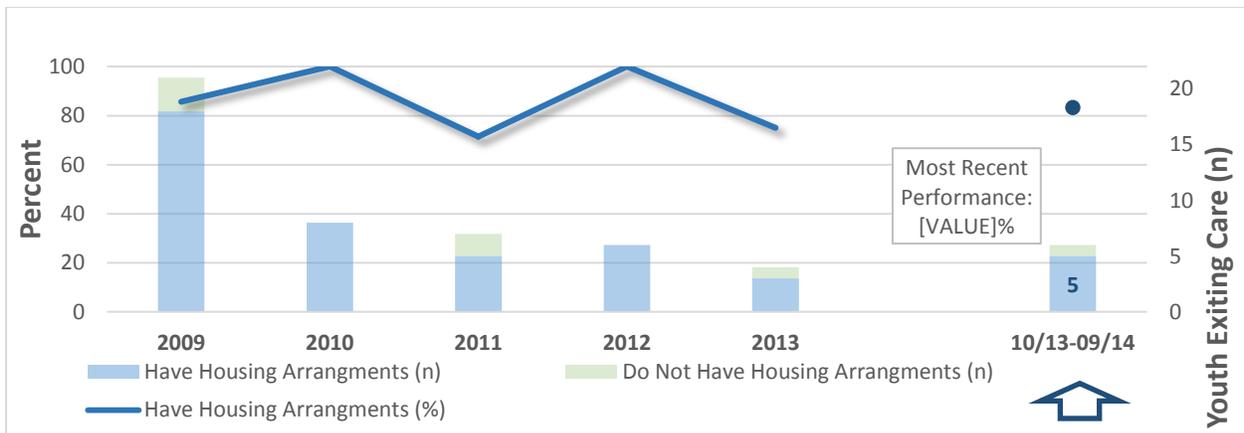


### ANALYSIS (PROBATION)

There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. Mendocino County Probation’s current performance on this measure is 100 percent. Please note that there is only one youth who met criteria for inclusion in this measure during the most recent reporting period.

## 8A HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS

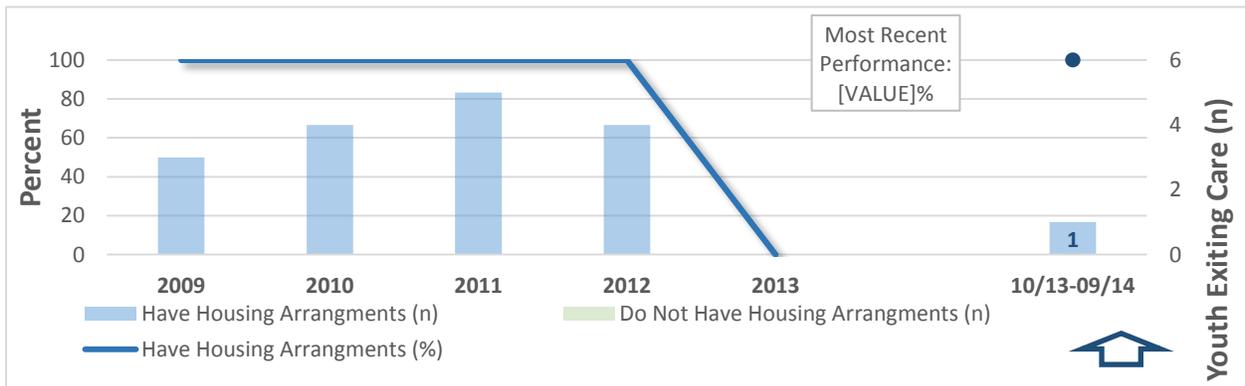
### Child Welfare



## ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)

Each point on the set represents a one-year period; data on this measure is reported in “rolling quarters,” but is being presented as annual data for clarity. There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. The small and limited data set complicates performance analysis of this measure.

### Probation

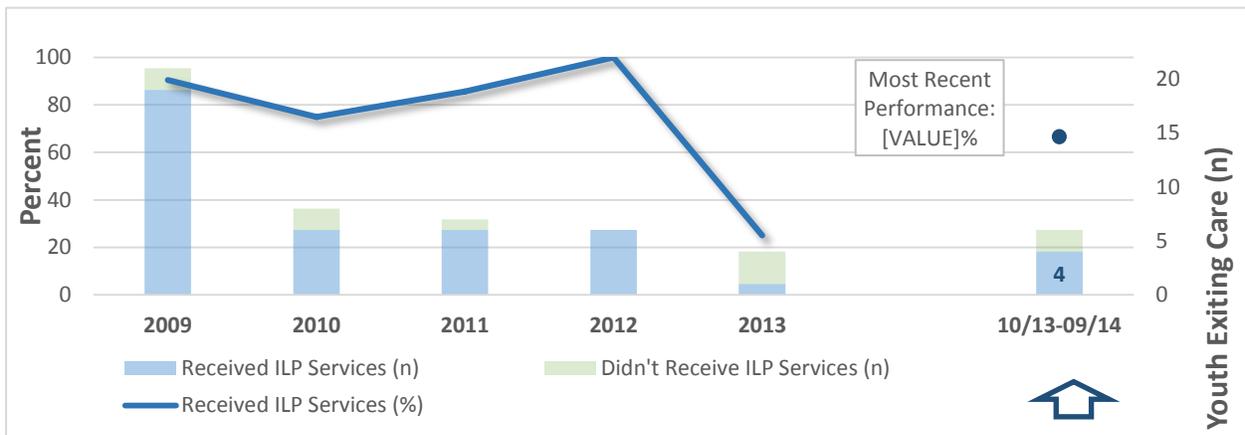


## ANALYSIS (PROBATION)

There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. Mendocino County Probation’s current performance on this measure is 100 percent. Please note that there is only one youth who met criteria for inclusion in this measure during the most recent reporting period.

## 8A RECEIVED ILP SERVICES

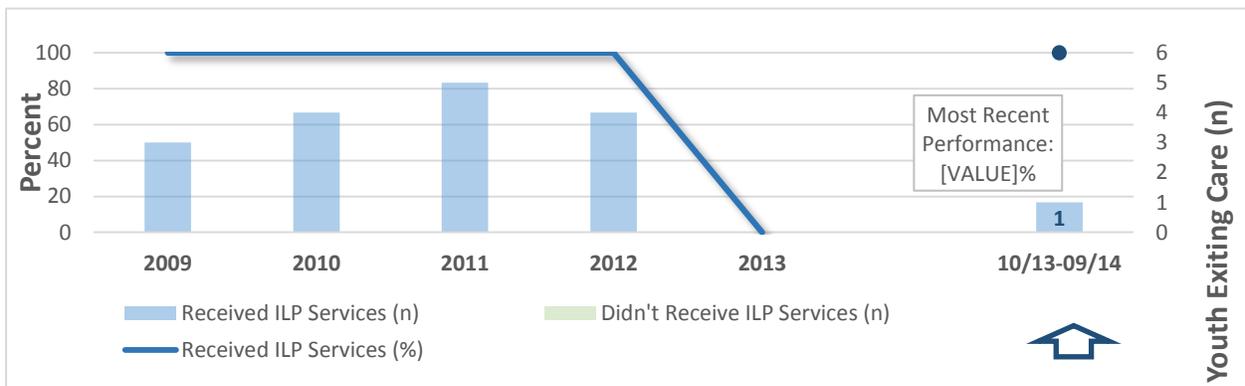
### Child Welfare



### ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)

Each point on the set represents a one-year period; data on this measure is reported in “rolling quarters,” but is being presented as annual data for clarity. There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. The small and limited data set complicates performance analysis of this measure.

### Probation



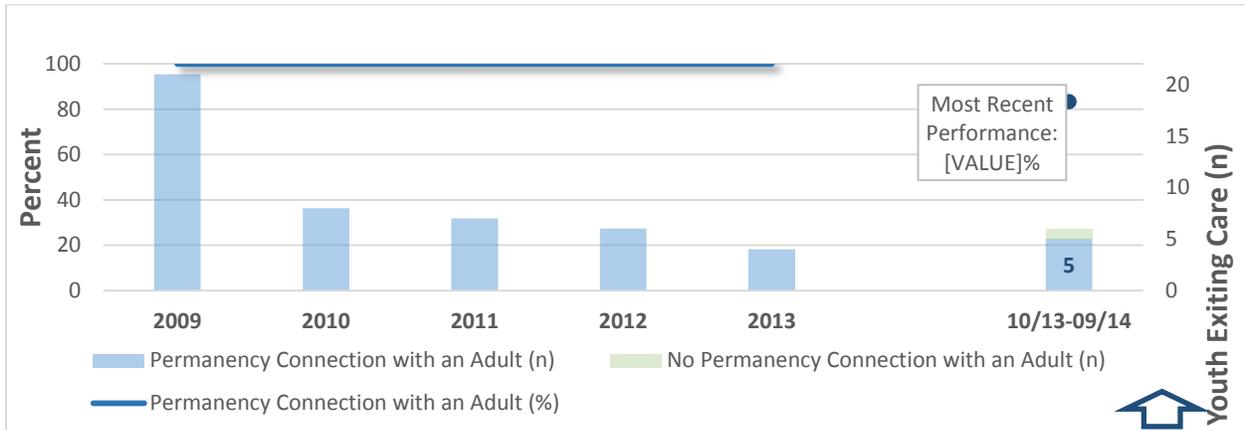
### ANALYSIS (PROBATION)

There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. Mendocino County Probation’s current performance on this measure is 100 percent. Please note that there

is only one youth who met criteria for inclusion in this measure during the most recent reporting period.

## 8A PERMANENCY CONNECTION WITH AN ADULT

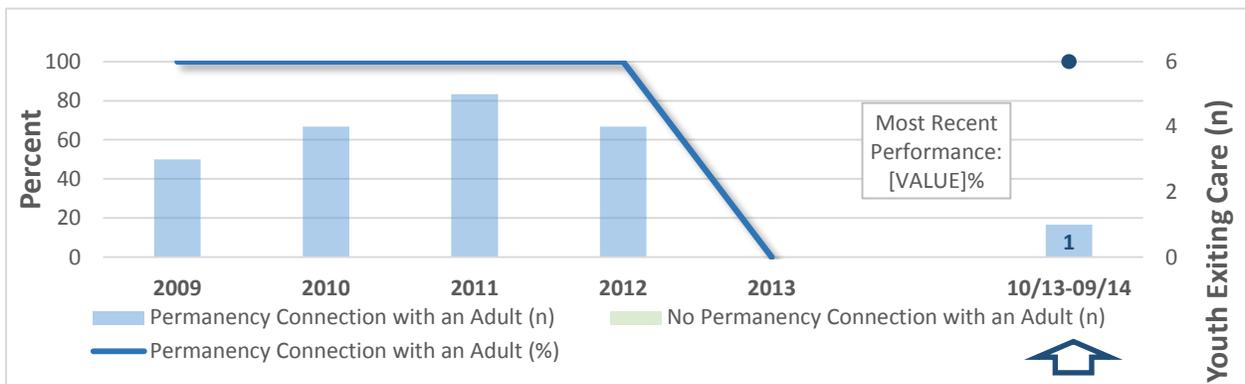
### Child Welfare



### ANALYSIS (CHILD WELFARE)

Each point on the set represents a one-year period; data on this measure is reported in “rolling quarters,” but is being presented as annual data for clarity. There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. The small and limited data set complicates performance analysis of this measure.

### Probation



## **ANALYSIS (PROBATION)**

There are currently no federal or state data indicators for this measure. Mendocino County Probation's current performance on this measure is 100 percent. Please note that there is only one youth who met criteria for inclusion in this measure during the most recent reporting period.

## **OVERALL ANALYSIS OF CHILD WELFARE WELL-BEING MEASURES**

### ***STAKEHOLDER INPUT***

#### **Child Welfare**

Stakeholders provided the following feedback regarding adolescent, transitional aged youth:

- Stakeholders identified services that support the long term well-being of youth within the county. This includes:
  - Medical and dental assessments and well child checkups with expanded access to affordable care and clinics
  - Mental health services (for children requiring them) and access to therapy, access to psychiatry and medication management, school based mental health services
  - Screenings offered in school for educational/developmental needs
  - Special education assessments and Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
  - Wraparound services
  - Food stability/food pantry
  - After-School programs
  - Family Resource Centers
  - Foster Youth Services: After-school support from Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE) are offered in many schools throughout the county. Foster Youth program through MCOE provides tutoring and after-school programs through Tapestry Family Services. After-school services are funded through the OCAP contract to Family Resource Centers.

- Stakeholders identified some barriers or areas that could be improved in accessing services to improve well-being, including:
  - School stability
  - Placement stability
  - Mental health treatment/substance abuse treatment, both in and out patient
  - Transportation throughout the county; from geographically isolated areas
  - Housing that is safe and affordable
  - Missing visual health needs/providers and it is difficult to get appointments
  - Affordable Care Act caps mental health services offered in county (up to age 24)
  - A court order is required to provide psychotropic medications to foster kids, sometimes causing a delay in getting them needed medications
  - Schools are shifting to preventative services (early intervention) and have support for youth with IEPs, but how are we addressing the needs of crowded classrooms and best serving the kids?
  - Funding for programs that serve children in outlying areas
  - Housing for pregnant/young mothers
  - There is a need for an ILP office (with a county worker) to be located at Arbor Youth Resource Center
- Stakeholders identified supportive services that help youth acquire independent living skills from:
  - Youth Project, which offer housing programs in partnership with “Levine House” for 18-21 year olds and a Crisis Line
  - RCS-Gibson Street House and the Washington Street Apartment, through the Transitional Age Youth (TAY) program
  - ILP program offered directly from Family and Children’s Services for eligible foster and former foster youth
  - MCOE Summer Work Program- paid summer job placements for school aged junior and senior foster youth
  - Youth can continue to receive regular medical checkups and care

- Workforce Investment Act program to offer job training and support at the Arbor Resource Center
- Some of the strengths and best practices identified by stakeholder in providing services to transitional aged youth include:
  - Well-coordinated services between social workers and other agencies prior to youth turning 18
  - Better understanding of extended foster care
  - Schools including social workers in the transitional IEP process
  - Service providers, like Youth Project and local FFAs are taking on supportive roles with youth
  - Expanded mental health counseling
  - The use of SOP that include the family and help to identify the youth's support system
  - Use of safety mapping and mapping support networks, looking at a prevention model of how to prevent issues and support youth success
  - Youth can be enrolled in the local junior college and high school simultaneously, earning dual credits
  - Transitional Housing Program Plus Foster Care for youth up to age 21 or Supervised Independent Living Program for youth in other placement settings
- There were identified needs, including:
  - Developing resources for general homeless youth and young adults within the community
  - Develop more employment opportunities, or vocational opportunities
  - More youth engagement in educational supports, helping them to stay in school or pursue higher education
  - Additional housing programs
  - Substance abuse treatment programs for youth and aftercare supports
  - Transportation support or more locations for services

- Some of the challenges identified for youth to be successful in transitioning to adulthood include youth's lack of maturity, being "institutionalized" by living in the foster care system, difficulty forming relational attachments, difficulty adjusting to freedom from structured environments and lack of community of family supports.
- Youth are often in need of support from many sources. Stakeholder found that social workers were often relied upon to act in a parenting or mentoring role to foster youth and helping the child directly get connected to community resources. Families and foster families have an opportunity to take an active role in supporting youth. Some of these supports take a strength based approach and build the youth up and provide strong ties. An additional resource in the community is the Arbor Youth Resource Center, which supports youth when in crisis and can also help families with supports.
- In order to serve youth, Family and Children's Services coordinates services with key agencies. Social workers partner with youth at every step to coordinate services. For youth 15 and older, they prepare Transitional Independent Living Plans to guide the services and goals to help youth become independent. When they are over 18, workers help develop these plans to support their maintaining successful participation in extended foster care. Workers track these services and plans, record data into the case management system, report progress to the court, and work with outside providers to ensure referrals to services are made and that services are being offered to youth. Social workers communicate with service providers, families, and placement to support the youth's success.
- There is an ongoing challenge in supporting youth remaining connected to their siblings. Some youth have siblings that are adopted or take a different permanency track and there are challenges in offering them a place to meet. Currently, the Arbor offers a neutral place for connecting that is less institutional. Stakeholders found that there was a need for the county to ensure how these connections are being maintained and offer more opportunities for youth to become empowered in pursuing their own connections.

## **STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

### **Probation**

Stakeholders provided the following feedback regarding probation adolescent, transitional aged youth:

- Probation officers are responsible for working with the youth to develop the case plan and TILP, assist the youth in making the transition into extended foster care and helping to prepare them for after care services. This means helping the with their medical coverage, college preparation, job searches, referrals to transitional housing programs, performing a life skill assessment, family finding and inspecting prospective homes for Supervised Independent Living Placements. All of these support help youth make the successful transition to adulthood.
- There are several factors that negatively impact the transition to adulthood. Continued criminal activity, substance abuse and untreated mental health, return to a family home that is not supportive and a lack of education all contribute to failure to transition. One of the biggest factors is the family support. In many cases, stakeholders reported that parents enable youth and have an expectation that Probation fixes the problem but are not willing to be an active participant in addressing the situation. Parents also may not support youth entering extended foster care, even when it is in their best interest, to have closure and end probation involvement in their lives.
- Probation officers ensure communication with partners to ensure successful transitions to adulthood. The following list was identified by stakeholders:
  - Court – Officers report progress to the court through court reports and oral reports in court.
  - Probation officers – document youth progress in their chronological case notes and through staffing, especially in preparation for any case transitions.
  - Youth – Probation officers work with youth on their case plan, have regular discussions, counseling them through difficult situations and assessing their needs.

- Parents – Probation officers coach, counsel and assess the parent and family needs, especially counseling and visitation. They use any means possible to engage the parent in the case.
- Relatives/extended family of the youth- Probation officers help to assess and develop additional support for minor from relatives or NREFMs, whether for placement or for a long term support system.
- ILP coordinators – Refer minors to services, ensure that goal sheets are being completed and that youth are in attendance at services.
- Social workers – Probation officers work with social workers and utilize Multi-Disciplinary Teams and Wraparound to ensure service delivery for youth. Wraparound is often used to prevent placement or to support the youth after their transition home.
- Stakeholders suggested that there is room to improve supports for probation youth by adding the following services to the county: mentoring, Big Brother/Big Sisters, CASA, more use of extended foster care, developing a program to encourage taking college classes while in high school, additional education on what resources are available for college and how to apply for grants and assistance and access to foster youth services.

## Summary of Findings

### **FAMILY AND CHILDREN’S SERVICES**

Despite the daunting challenges of high rates of poverty, substance abuse and child abuse and neglect, geographical limitations as well as continued staff shortages, Mendocino County Family and Children’s Services is working diligently to meet these challenges. We are able to boldly look at our challenges and deficits and celebrate and expand upon our strengths.

The populations most at risk of maltreatment and in need of effective and timely interventions are those impacted by poverty and/or substance abuse and mental health. In

addition, children ages 0 to 5 represent the largest percentage of our substantiated allegations, first entries into care and in-care rates. While we enjoy a broad range of services, services are concentrated in the cities of Ukiah, Willits and Fort Bragg and therefore, challenging for clients residing in outlying areas to access much needed services. Public transportation throughout the county is limited. Although we have substance abuse treatment and mental health services, the available services are not enough to meet the need and more options are needed in Mendocino County.

Our strengths include the following:

- Being an integrated Health and Human Services Agency has allowed Social Services, Public Health and Behavioral Health and Recovery Services to work closely together to deliver coordinated and timely services that promote the safety, well-being and stability of children and families.
- Ability to be innovative in the funding and development of needed programs and services such as Levine House for AB 12 non minor dependents in need of emergency housing, funding the provision of Triple P parenting countywide, and providing start-up funding for a new Family Resource Center.
- Good communication and coordination with community-based providers regarding the development of and delivery of services.
- Close working relationship and collaboration with local tribes.
- Collaborative case planning with families using Safety Organized Practice philosophy and techniques such as family mappings.
- Outcome data measures where we are doing well include- no maltreatment in foster care, timely adoptions, immediate referral response and timely entry into CWS/CMS, monthly caseworker visits, timely health exams and reducing the number of foster youth on psychotropic medication.

Our areas needing improvement, lessons learned from our previous System Improvement Plan (SIP) and strategies we will be looking at in the development of our next SIP include the following:

- Recurrence of maltreatment-
  - Possible strategies include developing Differential Response, connecting families to community based services even when not opening a child welfare case and focusing more on behavior changes needed in parents during the course of their child welfare case rather than primarily focusing on attendance at services.
- Reunification within 12 months. We struggled with this measure during the whole period of the previous SIP, decreasing in the number of children/youth reunifying in less than 12 months and increasing in the number reunifying in more than 12 months.
  - Possible new/enhanced strategies include continued use of family mappings, building the family's safety network early on in the case, actively practicing the safety plan early on to be confident in the ability to recommend return of a child within 12 months and consistent use of SDM post-disposition to help guide decision making.
- Re-entry to foster care within 12 months following reunification-
  - Possible strategies include continued use of family mappings, building the family's safety network early on in the case, actively practicing the safety plan early on in the case, focusing on the behavior changes needed in parents during the course of their case rather than primarily focusing on attendance at services, and increasing aftercare services.
- Placement stability. This has been another challenging area, compounded by lack of placement resources which leads to less than optimal placement matching.
  - Possible strategies include looking at supports needed to maintain children in current placements, enhancing Trauma Informed training for social workers and foster parents and better assessing the level of care a child needs from the start rather than having the child "fail up" to get the level of care and services needed. Further, recruitment of the right type of foster homes and recruitment of foster

homes for special needs children, Latino families and Native Americans. In addition, we anticipate the RBS program, increased Family Findings efforts and actively focusing on doing more emergency relative/NREFM placements at the time of initial removal rather than relying primarily on our emergency shelter programs for the first placement will all help improve our placement stability performance.

- Timely investigations and data entry into CWS/CMS of non-immediate (10 day) referrals. As the method of that measurement changes from an initiation of a contact (which counted attempts as meeting compliance standards) to the expectation of a successful face to face contact work to improve in this area is even more essential. The hoped for increase in staffing is the first layer of responding to this need, but the effective use of and guidance to staff is just as important. In addition, the use of mobile technology should assist social workers in timely entry of referral contacts into CMS/CWS.

For all of the above areas needing improvement, social worker recruitment and retention is absolutely necessary, which will help ensure timely and thorough documentation of case management activities and will help provide case management stability for children/youth and families.

Our next five year SIP will be guided and informed by all the work that our department has been doing and continues to do, as well as the valuable feedback and input from our stakeholders and focus groups and the peer review process.

### **Probation**

Mendocino County has a high poverty rate with numerous small communities, many in isolated areas. In these isolated areas, there are few or no resources. Limited transportation options create challenges for people living in outlying areas, making them even more isolated from major centers for employment and resources.

The high incidence rate of neglect, abuse and criminal activity is in large part due to the prevalence of drug and alcohol abuse and high poverty rates. Mendocino County has experienced a long history of substance abuse issues from having increased use and the

cultivation of marijuana; and the new rise in the manufacturing of honey oil, a form of concentrated cannabis and the widespread use of methamphetamine. Parental substance abuse can disrupt the parent-child attachment, and the parents' positive parenting, therefore, law abiding modeling may be weakened.

The Mendocino County Probation Department, in attempting to measure progress for the outcome measures, is confronted with the impact of small numbers of youth in out of home placement. These small numbers may skew outcome data, at times making it difficult to accurately assess system wide strengths and weaknesses. The applications used to collect the data does not take into account probation youth who are out to warrant or those participating in intensive court ordered Juvenile Sex Offender Specific Treatment. This specific treatment can take over a year to complete and as a result, reunification outcomes are below the national standards. Improving reunification related outcome data measures may not be feasible without implementing more juvenile sex offender treatment services locally.

Probation's efforts to increase community support services with additional services within the schools allows for group home placements to be limited to the most serious offenders and for those youth who's needs cannot be met in the community. The needs for youth in probation placements often require longer treatment programming resulting in longer stays in group homes to address their unique treatment issues.

The Probation Department has significantly reduced the number of youth in out of home placement. Utilization of assessment tools and case planning early in the Court and Probation process has greatly contributed to the lower number of youth in out of home placement. By implementing early interventions and services, probation officers have developed a close working relationship with the youth, their families, the service providers and the Court which has assisted in keeping probation youth with their families. Additionally, the use of comprehensive psychological evaluations contributes significantly to decision making in probation placement matters. Ensuring school attendance has become a chief concern of the probation department. Probation maintains relationships with the schools by playing a key role as representative on the county wide Student Attendance Review Board (SARB). Very positive outcomes have come from the implementation of the Positive Achievement Change Tool, the

comprehensive risk assessment tool used by the probation department. Training and use of the assessment tool has proven to minimize bias in judgments about youths' risk to public safety and their case management needs. It has provided a common language between agencies. Assessing our probation youth and family needs has reduced costs by decreasing use of more intensive supervision, over-use of expensive incarceration, and provision of services for youth who do not need them. By targeting of services/interventions that adequately address youths' identified risk factors, Probation has greatly improved resource development by providing a means for objective data tracking of the primary problem-areas of youth.

Probation areas needing improvement, lessons learned from our previous System Improvement Plan (SIP) and strategies we will be looking at in the development of our next SIP include the following:

The Probation Department will focus on reunification within 12 months due to the majority of youth placed in foster care through delinquency proceedings return to the home upon program completion. The strategies that need to be developed by the Probation Department directly coincide with the larger evidence-based practice efforts already established by the department and it is hoped that these strategies will further strengthen the youth and families and help the department reach identified system improvement goals.

There are several strategies that need to be implemented in order to achieve the probation reunification within 12 months goal. One strategy is to conduct a standard and thorough assessment of youth and family to determine level of readiness to transition home. In addition, the probation officer will need to increase monthly contact with custodial and non-custodial parent/guardian for reunification cases, increase concurrent planning activities and increase home visitations. Stakeholders ranked home visits among the top effective strategies to increase both reunification and prevention. Probation should continue to support these programs as well as look for opportunities to expand these services, as well as increased access to financial assistance and basic needs. Whether children are placed with foster parents or kinship caregivers, access to financial assistance, and basic needs (e.g., food, transportation) are service gaps. Reunification may be jeopardized without sufficient, timely access to support services.

Streamline computer applications so duplication of data entered by the probation officer is reduced. This will enable probation officer to spend time with the youth, service providers and the families. The Probation Department will explore new and more user friendly computer programs and applications and will provide additional training when necessary.

Mendocino County Probation is committed to providing the highest quality of services to children, youth and families. The Probation Department and the Mendocino County Family and Children's Services will continue to work together with Behavioral Health in order to deliver coordinated and timely services for the overall safety, well-being and stability of children and families.

The Mendocino County Probation Department, along with Family and Children Services, will continue to make improvements to their policies, processes, practices and services that will result in positive outcomes for children, youth and families in Mendocino County. Both departments are committed to transparency and accountability in the implementation of the SIP.

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## Appendix

### APPENDIX A: MENDOCINO STAKEHOLDERS MEETING, JUNE 1, 2015

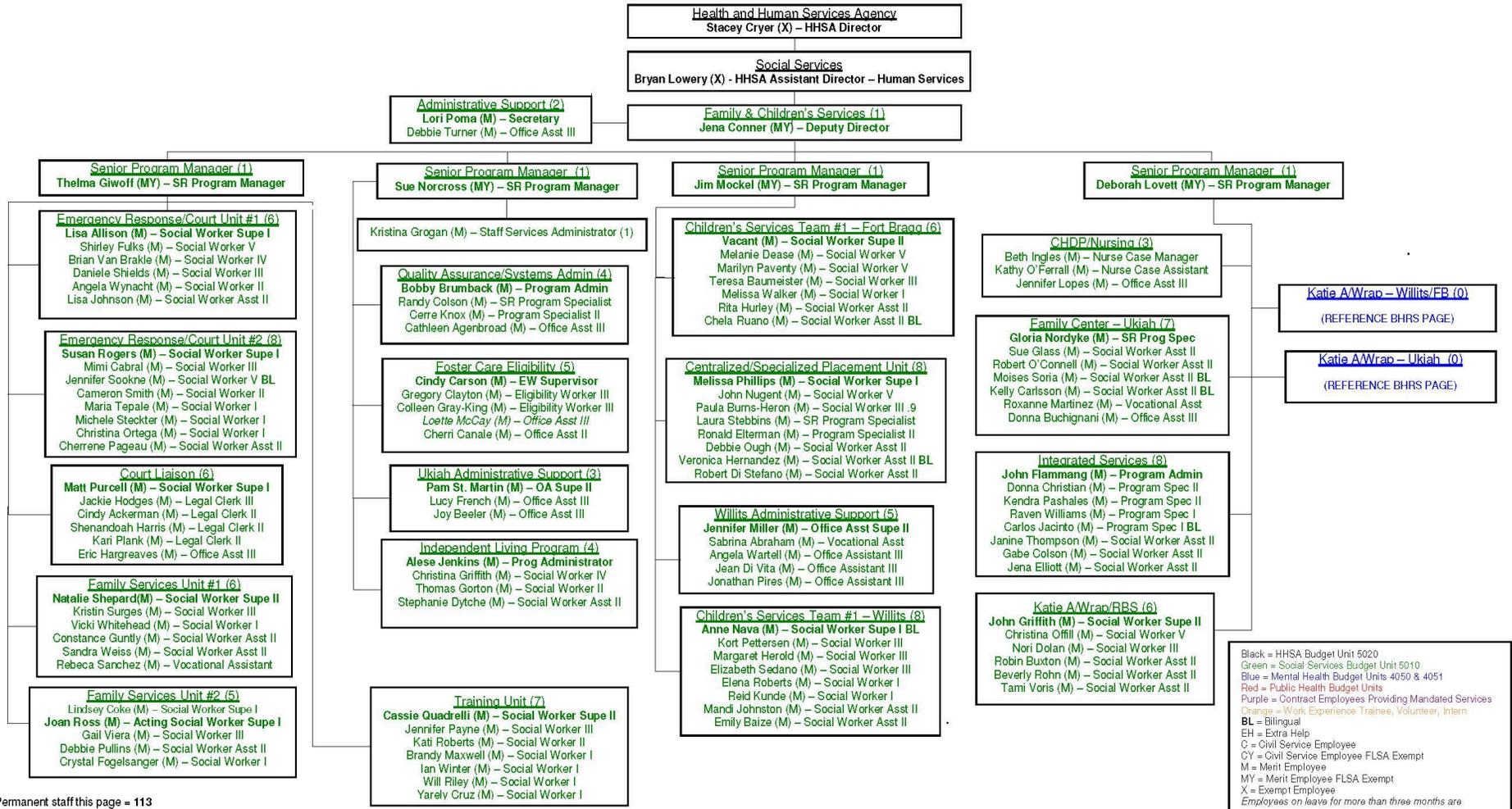
<b>PARTICIPANT NAME</b>	<b>DEPARTMENT</b>
REBECCA CHENOWETH	Deputy County Counsel
JACK WANN	Mendocino Probation
WARREN GALLETTI	MENDOCINO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
DEBRA RAMIREZ	Redwood Valley Rancheria Tribal Chair
SUSAN ROGERS	Social Worker Supervisor, ER Court
LORRAINE MONTANO	Redwood Community Services
ANITA TOSTE	Hopland Tribe ICWA worker
ANNE MOLGAARD	First 5 Mendocino
RONALD QUILT	Round Valley Tribe
TOM GORTON	Social Worker- HHSA/Family & Children's Services
KAREN JASON	Mendocino College FKCE Program
KORT PETTERSEN	Social Worker- HHSA/Family & Children's Services
BEKKIE EMERY	HHSA-EFAS & Adults Deputy Director
THELMA GIWOFF	Senior Program Manager- HHSA/Family & Children's Services
MIMINE AMBROIS	Tapestry Family Services
JENNIFER SOOKNE	Social Worker- HHSA/Family & Children's Services
TIM SCHRAEDER	Redwood Quality Management Company
KATE BUXBAUM	Redwood Community Services
TOM ALLMAN	Mendocino County Sheriff
HENRY FRANKLIN	CDSS
ANTHONY BENNETT	CDSS
SUSAN FETTE	TLC Child & Family Services
MICHAELA BARLOW	Probation
BOBBY BRUMBACK	Program Administrator- HHSA/Family & Children's Services
SUE NORCROSS	Sr. Program Manager- HHSA/Family & Children's Services
BUCK GANTER	Chief Probation Officer
PAULA MARTIN	MENDOCINO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION, SELPA Director
BRANDY NORIEGA	Probation Officer
GARY LEVENSON- PALMER	Juvenile Justice Commission
TERESA BAUMEISTER	Social Worker- HHSA/Family & Children's Services
CAROL KELSEY	HHSA/Public Health- Foster Care Nursing Program
DEBORAH LOVETT	Sr. Program Manager- HHSA/Family & Children's Services
JASON IVERSEN	UUSD
JOAN ROSS	Social Worker-HHSA/Family & Children's Services
NADIA PADILLA	NCO HSCDP

<b>SHERYN HILDEBRAND</b>	CASA
<b>JENA CONNER</b>	Deputy Director- HHSA/Family & Children's Services
<b>JOANNE OLSON</b>	Mendocino County Youth Project
<b>FABIAN LIZARRAGA</b>	Fort Bragg Police Department Chief
<b>BRYAN LOWERY</b>	HHSA Assistant Director, Health & Human Services Agency
<b>HOLLY RAULINS</b>	Point Arena Schools
<b>MATT PURCELL</b>	Social Worker Supervisor- HHSA/Family & Children's Services
<b>JAYMA SPENCE</b>	Family Resource Center Network of Mendocino
<b>JEFF KILLEBREW</b>	TLC Child and Family Services
<b>RICK TRAVIS</b>	North Coast Opportunities, Head Start
<b>BLYTHE POST</b>	MENDOCINO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION, FOSTER YOUTH LIAISON
<b>DOLLY RILEY</b>	Social Worker Supervisor- HHSA/Family & Children's Services
<b>GEORGE VALENZUELA</b>	Deputy County Counsel

# APPENDIX B, CHILD WELFARE ORGANIZATION CHART



## Social Services Family & Children's Services



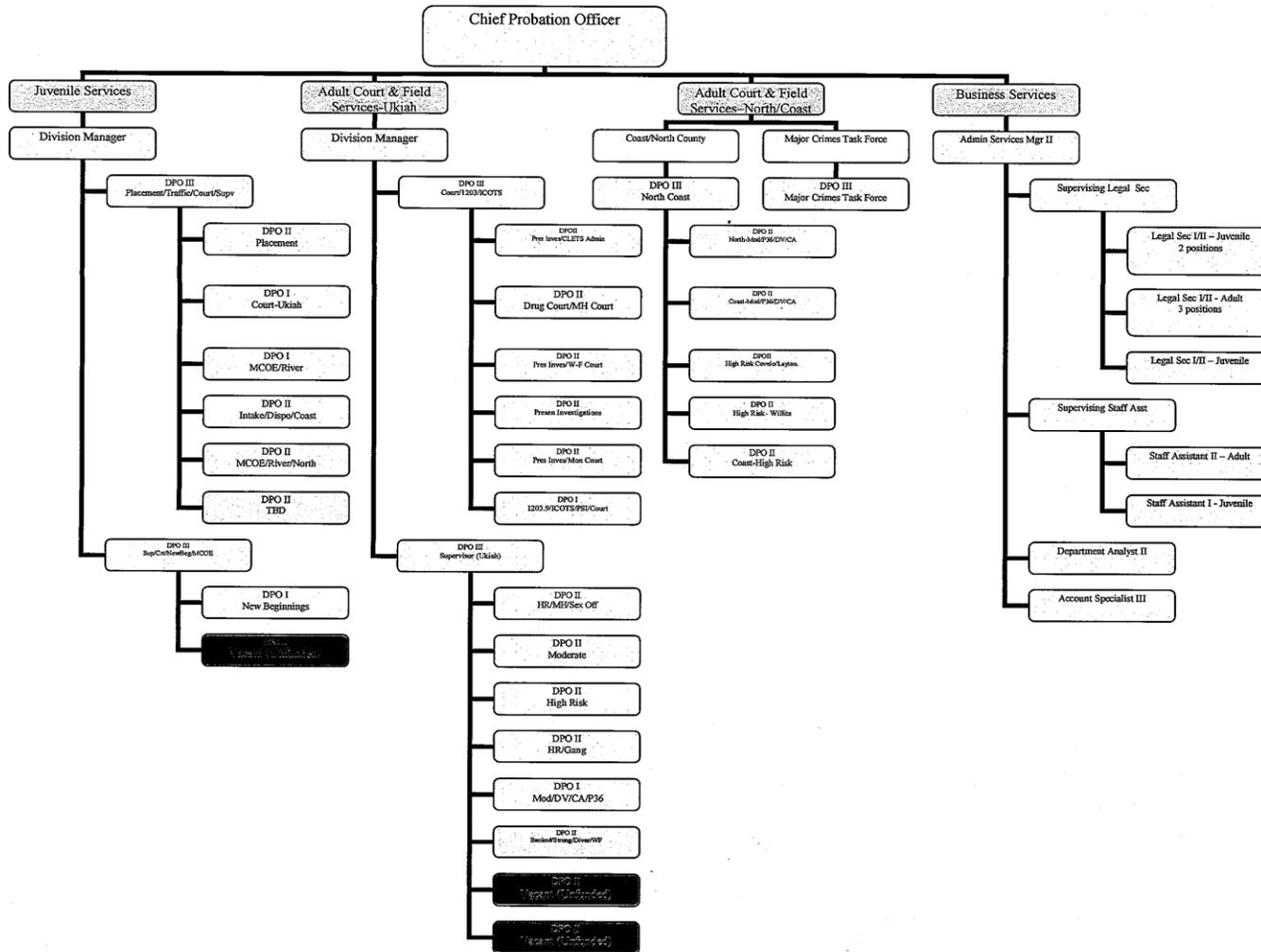
Permanent staff this page = 113  
Extra help staff this page = 0  
Effective through 9/27/15 according to Staffing Announcement updates.

Revised 9/22/15  
SS Page 2

Black = HHSA Budget Unit 5020  
Green = Social Services Budget Unit 5010  
Blue = Mental Health Budget Units 4050 & 4051  
Red = Public Health Budget Units  
Purple = Contract Employees Providing Mandated Services  
Orange = Work Experience Trainee, Volunteer, Intern  
BL = Bilingual  
EH = Extra Help  
C = Civil Service Employee  
CY = Civil Service Employee FLSA Exempt  
M = Merit Employee  
MY = Merit Employee FLSA Exempt  
X = Exempt Employee  
Employees on leave for more than three months are

APPENDIX C, PROBATION ORGANIZATION CHART

Probation Department Org Chart  
August 19, 2015



## **APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP NOTES: SOCIAL WORKER ASSISTANTS**

May 20, 2015

Number of participants: 5

### **What's Working?**

- Teamwork – assuring coverage of work and support of peers

### **What's Not Working?**

- Short on staff
- Rate of pay
- Size of workload; trying to arrange workload to assure coverage; scheduling family visits, child care, transports – work piling up due to covering for staff shortage
- Training with unqualified trainers – some trainers lack skills or are just not good teachers – not their forte
- Source materials are outdated
- “Breaking the Cycle” is sexist – geared toward males
- “Discipline With Confidence” materials are very antiquated and need updated
- Lack of diversity – too few males and Spanish speaking bi-lingual staff
- Lack of training on working with children with severe disabilities (autism, etc.)
- Lack of communication from social workers about “problem children” – SW’s need to give SWA’s a “heads up” about children that have disabilities and or/behavioral issues so SWA’s are aware of what they can expect
- Not enough dissemination of information from management about why changes occur
- Hiring and lateral transfers seem unfair – it seems choices are already made about who they want to fill positions, so why put staff through the process of applying, etc. Movement of staff happens in some cases – all should be done the same way, and communication from the top needs improved.

### **Ideas for Improvement:**

- Better communication from management about changes and more time before reassigning duties
- More visitation at the Family Center from leadership – support, visibility, acknowledgement, approachability
- Cross-train all SWA’s so there is more ability to rotate duties and prevent burn out
- Update source materials
- Hire more male SWA’s and SW’s, also Spanish bi-lingual

- Speed up the process of SWA's getting authorization to drive – should be tested and authorized immediately upon hiring
- Car seat training should also be taught early on for new SWA's and SW's
- Car seat video on proper seat installation for reference
- Reference material in cars for proper restraint procedures
- Suggested that Lily Caravello was an excellent car seat trainer – could we get her certified to teach?

## APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP NOTES: YOUTH FROM ARBOR

July 8, 2015

Number of participants: 14

### What is working?

- Being in the system
- AB 12 and additional programs
- Summer job program
- Training
- Free food
- Rehab Specialist
  - Able to talk about feelings
- Summer Camp
  - Dances
- College classes
- Privileges
- Able to go to friends or stay overnight with friends (only a very few have these privileges – See what’s not working)

### What is not working?

- Friends cannot come over
- Change SW multiple times
  - 4 - 8 times – sometimes multiple times in one year
- Request new SW – cannot get one
- SW, Foster Parents, Group Homes too controlling
- No freedom
- Not able to do normal age activities, parties, etc
- Not able to hang out with friends
- Required to return receipts and documentation for everything they buy with their own money (that is given to them) General complaint that they “aren’t treated like non-system kids.”
  - Food
  - Need to account for all money (given to them by the county)
- Isolation
- Not allowed cell phones, but are required to stay in contact with group home or foster parent
  - Cell phones are a privilege
  - But they can be taken away or not allowed

- Foster Parents treat them differently than biological children, also differences between foster children
- Other foster or respite children do not have same consequences
- Personal property stolen, no safe place to keep things
- Not allowed to have bedroom doors closed unless they are sleeping
- 17 years old and not allowed cell phone
  - In some cases they may have a cell phone if they are employed and pay for it and they must allow caretakers to look through it at any time

### **What needs to improve?**

- Go back to parents, or guardians
- Be allowed to earn privileges
- Let us be normal teenagers
- Lead a normal teenage life
- Can request a different SW and actually be allowed to make change happen
- Receive more empathy from SW's
- Check out sports activities and be allowed to go, or participate
- Want to change Court requirements for:
  - Hair dye
  - Piercing
- Court reports notices
  - Delivery of notices are inconsistent
  - Or not received at all
- Need regular contact with attorney
  - Problem:
    - ❖ Do not know who their attorney is
    - ❖ Not able to talk to attorney
    - ❖ Did not know they could talk to their attorney
- Need conflicts with SW or group home to change regarding:
  - Piercing
  - Hair color, etc.
- Didn't get their birth certificate would like to get it
- Would like confiscated items returned, some haven't received them even when they move placements. (from Group Homes)
- Confiscated items include:
  - Red, blue clothing
  - Any items thought as weapons even if they are not

## **APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUPS, BIOLOGICAL PARENTS**

March 17, 2015 (Ukiah)

Number of participants: 6

### **What is not working?**

- Before detention, intervention
- Kids should be left in home more at the beginning
- Family circumstances need to be looked at closely
- Respectful communication
- Court reports judging – not true, misleading
- Not bringing up the past
- Not listening to parents at detention
- They made mistakes, but they are still human and still care for their children
- Misjudged
- Be respected & be heard!
- History shouldn't make a difference
- More regulation on SW power
- Social workers inaccuracies
- Accusations still held against even when they are dropped
- Have had social workers lie to them
- Allegations are not fact, made to get detention justified
- Social workers sharing too much with foster parents or relatives
- Equity – some get their children back sooner – charges seem worse
- SOP – didn't invite all parties. Not enough time for parents to invite people to SOP
- SOP – Parent partner didn't have same reasons for detention
- Be transparent
- Parents part of the team
- Allow parents to assist in medical decisions
- Would have liked children placed with a family more quickly If there is family already approved place with them
- Listen to parents
- Visits – inconsistent messages on how to act during visits & what classes teach
- Foster SW need to take the classes clients take; they need to know what they are being taught to be on the same page
- More support to parents
- Personality match with SW – change when necessary
- Sensitive to child's feelings
- Way children were detained was brutal on children and parents
- Too much police presence
- More case workers

- More time with Social Workers
- Timely response to allegation
- Too much turnover of SW – no consistency
- Don't support parents equally
- Both parents should have equal opportunities
- Some parents not getting any services
- More & better foster homes
- Separating children – not always happy with placement – feel have been told they were we placed where there was room
- parents not seeing red flags of things going on in their care

### **What is working?**

- FEG (Family Empowerment Group), which is a:
  - Safe haven
  - Able to share
  - Helps with stress

### **3/17/15 FEG Individual Written Feedback:**

When a parent/addict repeatedly or over time relapses they take your kid, or try to, although your child is safe. When that traumatizes your child more instead of helping parents find new ways to deal. Never give up on the parent because there is no law saying a parent can't relapse. Parents should be respected and heard. Equality for both parents (to have services). Allowing medical decisions to be made with parents. Making decisions on case with parents, not for them.

- What works? FEG, Honesty, Law. What doesn't work? Deception, Intolerance.
- What works? Positive feedback – Positive reinforcements. I loved the foster parents. Still have a relationship with the first pair. They had my girls the whole time. My son was transferred.
- What doesn't work? Negativity – accusations that are just believed and not unfounded when said unfounded. Negative judgements/holding past against PPI.
- Ideas for improvement? More positive help – parents have more interaction with medical and schooling. Should be allowed to attend school functions if appropriate.
- Feedback? When a report is being written, it needs to be the truth with no words being twisted, taken out or added. Parents need to be respected and HEARD.

Be more honest and upfront. Before my children were detained Angela and her supervisor called me into their office and talked about me going back to school and other services. After the weekend, the day my children came back from a family reunion, they were detained.

July 15, 2015 (Fort Bragg)

Number of Participants: 3

**What is working:**

- I got a good start in Ukiah before moving to Ft. Bragg. Addressed issues and stabilized in 9 months in Ukiah
- In Ukiah had adequate staffing - parent partners, AOD, FDDC, SW had time to answer phone, had a support team, and FDDC gave a manual that really helped understand
- FEG group works - can ask questions
- Laura is great
- Goal orientated
- Therapy
- Anger management classes
- Program helps reach goals and sobriety

**What isn't working:**

- CPS system works better in other areas
- AOD not adequately staffed - call back time at AOD is very slow – days and days
- Anger Management classes - have to take them even when anger isn't one of their problems. Case plans need to be adjusted to meet needs
- Not enough workers
- Not friendly
- Not enough males - the security guard does the UA's for the males
- Sometimes they just sit in the front lobby waiting because there is no one at the front desk
- Workers have no time to work with them
- Not given the time they need
- Ft. Bragg is a compromised community
- If they can get to Ukiah they should, they should defer people to Ukiah
- Just get case plans to sign, no input
- "B" one of the clients is basically playing the role of parent partner - They need parent partners
- need more SWAs
- UA's are degrading - embarrassing there is no privacy - not professional, they use the public restroom, call in the security guard to watch, and anyone in the lobby knows what is happening.
- SWs nag and interrupt visits with children to get UA's - demeans them in front of their children - not professional

- SWs talk about inappropriate things in front of their kids during visits, taints child's view of parent
- Small town rumors are heard by SWs and sometime SW believe them to be true without questioning
- Communication gaps between CPS and clients
- If you are going to be in our lives make a difference
- Not literate about court procedures, need more information, would be better if attorneys were in the same town
- Has only seen SW once in 6 months
- Multiple SWs
- No SOPs - NEED THEM
- SWs change their minds a lot
- Level of honesty in Ukiah not in Ft. Bragg
- Generation gaps

**Ideas for Improvement:**

- More Social Workers
- Refer to agencies that can handle needs
- Web site to leave feedback and ask questions
- Parent-to-parent support
- Web site to logon to get case information / case plans

## APPENDIX G: FOSTER PARENT FOCUS GROUP

March 3, 2015

Number of participants: 13 foster parents

The group of foster parents could not readily identify what changes they have noticed which would improve outcomes in CWS. However, they were able to identify four areas where CQI could benefit both the agency and outcomes of families.

- **Consideration for Building Foster Attachments with Children and Families**
  - The group noted that they would like to see more consideration for foster attachments in that they do not feel like they are a part of the team for the child. There are times that foster parents have insight around particular issues with the child and some social workers shut them down not want to hear the specific problems. One FP reported that she was having behavioral issues with the child and was trying to convey information to the SW and was deferred to report to her FFA. They never received any support or resolution to the issue. When this is happening the FP feels that an accurate picture is not being presented to the team (MDT specifically). FP voiced that they would like to be a part of these meetings in order to ensure that the child is being properly represented and getting the help he/she needs.
  - FPs also feel that when placements end that there is no transition for the child into their new home. FPs feel that they have no closure with children. One FP noted that she had a child for 5 years and when she gave notice the child was moved within hours with no communication between the FP and the Agency. In addition they were not able to say good-bye.
  - FPs would like to continue relationships with the child, if the child wants, when they returned home or if they are moved to a new placement.
  - FPs would like to interact with more with families acting as a support for parents as their children transition home.
- **Feedback on Social Worker Performance and Flexibility in Meeting the Child's Needs**
  - Additionally this led into a conversation about holding SW accountable. FPs feel that when there is an FFA involved that they are given mixed messages on who they should report to and when. FPs who have FFAs seem to feel lost between the two systems and note either over management by the FFA or lack of involvement by the SW.
  - SWs are inconsistent with coming into the home and do not follow agency policy of monthly contact guidelines. One FP reported that since a child's SW changed 6 months ago they have only seen the SW in an agency setting with the child. The SW has not come to their home or been flexible in setting a time to come into the home.
  - Monthly contacts are being done with little to no coordination (the last week of the month). FP reported that they are afraid to report compliance issues in fear of retaliation (having children yanked from their homes, no further placements,

and ostracized by other SWs). FPs report that SWs are just fitting them in instead of really making an effort to see the child monthly.

- SW visits do not seem personal; there is a “Have to do it” attitude.
- FPs claim that SW is lack of the drawl. SWs seem to be set in their ways and are not flexible with the child’s needs in conjunction with the FPs needs. FPs are tired of being told that this is their job and they agreed to the rules, if they cannot comply the child will be moved.
- FPs would also like to see an outlet for feedback other than filing a grievance or complaint. FPs see their relationship as a collaborative approach in ensuring that children’s needs are met. However, when a problem is noted or reported the FP feels that there is no follow through on the behalf of the SWS to correct problems as they continue to happen.
- FPs would like to be able to communicate via email with the SWs and very few SWs have allowed or encouraged this process.
- **Foster Parent Support Group and Networking**
  - FPs noted that they would like to see a mentoring process with other newer FPs to help navigate working with the system.
  - They would like to share information on children as a way to get support/feedback from other FPs that may have experienced similar situations.
  - FPs identified that they would like to be included in recommendations for placement changes, as they are the ones most intimately tied to the child.
  - FPs would like to have or know what their Bill of Rights are not just the foster child’s.
  - FPs would like more information about defacto parent status after having the child for one year so that they can be included in the CWS process more so than filing the JV-290 during court reporting times.
  - Several FPs noted that they would like to see the Foster Parent Association back in use or a FP liaison.
- **Recruiting and Retaining Foster Parents**
  - FPs identified that using FFA’s is three times more costly for the agency than using state licensed homes.
  - FPs feel that they are the least important person when making decisions for the children in their care. FPs would like to feel more valued in the work that they do provide.
  - FPs would like to have an Ombudsman/advocate that is not a social worker to represent them for fear of making complaints would result in retaliation from the SW/agency.
  - FPs identified that more foster homes are needed. There has been a dramatic decline in foster recruitment. One FP noted that when she called the State to become a FP she was referred to an FFA. The State is not recruiting FPs.
  - FPs would like to see more training and recruitment on ITFC to help with behavioral issues in children that has a more intensive WRAP approach. This would minimize notices being given on children due to severe behavioral problems..

## **APPENDIX H: RESULTS FROM SURVEY MONKEY TO ALL STAFF - SUMMARY:**

Questions asked: “What is working and what is not working regarding helping families successfully reunify and not re-enter the system?”

Responses: 41

There are common themes to *both* sides of this question.

### **Things working are:**

- FDDC
- Parent Partners
- FTMs/SOP/WRAP
- Services
- Family/NREFM placements

These programs/practices would be expected to have positive outcomes, and they do. They receive high marks toward successful reunification. A very positive trend is the Family Team Meetings, SOP and Wrap services. Increasing FTMs can only lead to further successful reunification when combined with support services.

Also, more focus in identifying family and friends at detention for placement options needs to happen. We’re aware of the severe lack of licensed homes for placement – focusing on identification of family and friends for placement options is not only better for the child, but creates less “system involvement” for the family.

### **Things identified as “not working” include:**

- Lack of resources
- Parents reluctant to change
- Staffing, specifically Social Worker’s being changed

Again, these problems are known. Key among the problem area are the parents being reluctant to changing their lifestyle. New methods to reason with them need looked into for successful, timely reunification. Building resources in our communities needs continual attention.

Of interest are items that are *both* on the “working” and “not-working” lists:

- Communication
- Burnout/workload
- Resources
- Trust

So many areas tie into each other with anticipated, unfortunate results. Lack of communication between the Social Worker and client is often due to the paperwork and computer input they have to do. Short cuts are taken in ways such as client contact entries lacking depth and lack of time spent with the family in order to complete court reports, prepare for court and make monthly contacts. Shortened family visits create a lack of fully explaining the process to their clients, resulting in a lack of trust because the client doesn't feel informed and is often confused. This in turn causes them to "give up" and progress is thwarted. Social Workers in turn become burned out and too often leave – causing more upheaval in their clients lives due to a new Social Worker yet being assigned, and staff morale declines for remaining Social Workers who have to pick up the slack.

We must identify ways to help social workers control internal systems, processes and tools for documentation and paperwork. More and more, statistical information gathering is resulting in Social Workers being requested to update their computers timely, complete more paperwork and this takes away from their ability to do quality Social Work with their clients. Better systems and easier paperwork processes will help reduce turnover and allow the social worker to spend more time with their clients to develop that important trust factor.

Resources, and *lack* of resources are on both lists. Identified as a positive factor in reducing re-entry rates, they are also listed as lacking. Creation of client resources is crucial to their successful reunification, both up-front and at reunification.