

Citizens Review Panel 2013-2014 Annual and Recommendations Report

County: **Ventura**

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Date and Person Submitted to at the local County Agency:

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Notes Available:

CRP Meeting Minutes: July 24, 2013; September 25, 2013; March 26, 2014; June 8, 2014

1. County Profile (OCAP will provide current data from current annual report)
2. Panel Activities

Work Plan Goal #1: Membership

Goal #1: A) Maintain a diverse panel of private and private stakeholders that broadly represent the community in which the panel is established, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. B) Participate in a self-evaluation process.

Strategies:

- Ventura County will maintain a professionally and organizationally diverse Citizen's Review Panel/Children's Oversight Committee of 15-20 members. Committee will participate in a self-evaluation.
- Provide CRP panel members with feedback work activities.

Implementation Activities

- Ventura CRP/CSOC will continually recruit members to support the diversity of the group and provide new member orientations.
- Schedule reports regarding status of review activities.

The current panel is comprised of diverse public and private organizations with expertise and knowledge of the child welfare system (see attached panel membership roster).

Members for the 2013-2014 year included representatives from parent advocacy groups, Ventura County Child Abuse Prevention Council, and local community based organizations that served families in the child welfare system. Representatives also were drawn from county organizations including the Ventura County School District, Ventura County Behavioral Health, Ventura County Probation Agency, and the Ventura County Human Services Agency. Throughout the reporting period, the CRP continued to seek diversity of membership and provided new member orientations. CRP panel members participated in self-evaluations of CRP activities and were provided with feedback regarding work activities, including periodic status reports on CRP activities.

Several members of the CRP participated in the Agency 101 and Cape Diem trainings in early 2014. The conferences were sponsored by the Department of Children and Family Services (CFS), Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) and the local Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA). These day long conferences focused on providing information and resources available to families of at risk children and youth. Presentations from agencies that focused on prevention, employment education, mental health, and child care were also included.

Work Plan Goal #2: Panel Activities

Goal #2: To develop a work plan that will guide the panel's review activities of the State and Local Child Welfare System.

Strategies:

- Research barriers to permanency for teen and special needs populations placed in out of home care.
- Evaluate length of stay in Group Homes, and mechanisms to track and reduce.
- Monitor 2012-2013 Recommendations.
- Review Outcome Measures data.
- Review current Group Home practices as related to school violence responses.

Implementation Activities

- Review current foster parent recruitment and adoption programs as to targeted recruitment activities for teen and special need populations, as they relate to "step down" program systems and increased permanency.
- Study current ACL regarding Length of Stay review mandates. Review services staffing continuum process. Review data regarding length of stay with Ventura County placements.
- Quarterly schedule updates presentations from CFS.
- Quarterly schedule updates on Outcomes Measure Surveys.

The 2013-2014 CRP Workgroup activities were targeted on developing a system to guide the Ventura County Child Welfare out-of-home care and residential or group home placement. In particular, CRP inquiries focused on developing ways to monitor length of stay and in-county placement systems for children who are at risk or victimized by abuse or neglect, or who have other special needs that require accommodations. Work activities this year also included data reviews of "step down" program systems and CFS Outcome Measure Surveys. In addition, a

work plan was developed for ongoing data reviews to examine the permanency of foster youth using the Ventura County Length of Stay reports.

The Interagency Planning Expansion Review Committee (IPERC) partnered with the CRP to carry out the system monitoring activities outlined above. IPERC is comprised of representatives from the Human Services Agency/Department of Children and Family Services, Ventura County Behavioral Health, Ventura County Probation Agency and Ventura County Schools. IPERC's focus is to provide ongoing oversight of the Ventura County group home care programs and the THPP service providers. The IPERC and CRP partnership will create an efficiency in ongoing monitoring of group home and residential care practices. Through partnership with the CRP, IPERC developed communication strategies, assessment, and feedback strategies to build the capacity of the placement programs to be monitored ongoing.

Program specifics are as follows:

A. Review current foster parent and recruitment and adoption programs as to targeted recruitment activities for teen and special needs populations, as they relate to “step down” programs and increased permanency.

CRP reviewed current foster parent and recruitment and adoption programs as they relate to the “step down” model to increase permanency for foster youth. A CRP Workgroup, conducted in partnership with IPERC, continued and completed work begun last fiscal year to increase foster parents' involvement in training (Foster Care Recruitment and Retention programs). IPERC reviewed and addressed outcomes in relation to Outcome Measures Surveys.

B. Study current ACL regarding Length of Stay review mandates, services staffing continuum process and length of stay in Ventura County placements.

IPERC reported that an MOU was established and has been signed by all group homes providers. A monitoring tool to track foster youth data is in progress with the goal to be completed and utilized by group homes within the year.

IPERC developed and distributed a Mental Health Survey, which also went out to the County's Katie A. Committee. The Group Home Mental Health Survey findings report a spike in children ages 12-18 entering care in Ventura County. CFS reported that the impact of these findings are compounded by the lack of sufficient space for the number of children. The Group Mental Health Survey findings report an 11.4 month average length of stay for a child in a group home in the County. This year the CRP/IPERC Workgroup conducted a survey to gather more specific information from the local group home providers to assist in an assessment of programmatic components currently implemented. This information was used by IPERC to plan monitoring of group home services for children in care.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that IPERC, in cooperation with Ventura County group homes, continue to monitor group home practices so that this information can be utilized to provide appropriate services for children in care. With this information, IPERC will refine the Group Home MOU as needed. The survey results will be reported to and reviewed by the CRP ongoing.

C. Schedule update presentations from Children Family Services.

This year, the CRP reviewed presentations by CFS. CFS reported on Katie A service delivery, CBO focus group questions and answers, CSOC work plan, and the group home mental survey analysis.

CFS also provided a presentation on Long Term Care Data. In this presentation, CFS noted a drastic increase in FR cases since 2009. However, it was reported that FM and PP cases have leveled out recently in the County. CFS also reported that Ventura County is above the national standard regarding child exits to permanent homes before the age of 18. However, the survey also determined a downward trend regarding children in care for 3 years or longer as children are linking with permanent homes faster. CFS reinforced Ventura County's reliance on group homes and residential care.

CFS also provided a presentation around the Time in Care Review Process and the Core Practice Model for case management in the child welfare system.

A presentation highlighting AB12, California Fostering Connections to Success Act, and implementation strategies for the County was provided. The presentation was facilitated by the AB12 workgroup and representatives from the CFS. Presentation topics highlighted various implementation strategies including a comprehensive overview of the variety of housing and support resources available to this population.

CRP reviewed the Independent Living Program, an eleven week session covering the five domains of the foster youth in placement process. At the request of the CRP, a presentation was made by the Ventura County Behavioral Health on various Drug and Alcohol programs provided by VCBH.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that CRP continue to schedule ongoing presentations in areas that support the CRP goals and work plan.

D. Quarterly Updates on Outcome Measure Survey.

The CRP reviewed outcomes measures quarterly in partnership IPERC. As part of this process, IPERC reviewed quarterly summaries of the group home surveys and presented the findings to the CRP. CFS continued to chair and provide administrative support to IPERC regarding the monitoring of Ventura County Child Welfare Outcome Measures Survey.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that IPERC take over responsibility for the administration and facilitation of the Outcome Measures Surveys to all local Ventura County Group Home providers and utilize the information gleaned to refine the MOUs for group homes. It is also recommended that the CRP continue to review IPERC's monitoring process and outcomes a minimum of annually.

Review current Group Home practices as related to School Violence responses.

CRP reviewed the data available to monitor school violence responses and noted gaps in information sharing between Ventura County Probation Agency (VCPA), school districts, and CFS. Specifically for the focus on foster youth, CFS must work closely with VCPA to determine the number of foster youth committing crimes as criminal activity imposes barriers to housing.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that CRP continue to monitor CFS progress in reporting gaps specific to school violence reports. While sometimes difficult to implement, shared data can lead to better information to enhance efficiency and useful services for children in care. In addition, improved data sharing between VCPA, school districts and CFS regarding youth committing crimes will better ensure appropriate recommendations are made during court.

Work Plan Goal #3: Public Input

Goal #3: To develop the means by which recommendations will be disseminated to the public. Discuss how the panel will handle any comments on its recommendations from the public.

Strategies:

- Obtain input from local community on recommendations made by the CRP, in order to obtain information, comments, etc.
- Response to comments submitted by the public regarding the annual reports recommendations.

Implementation Activities:

- Annual report sent to and posted on community organizations websites: United Parents, Ventura County Partnerships for Safe Families, California Youth Connection.
- Emails specific to certain workgroups will be forwarded to workgroup chairs for evaluation and incorporation.

CRP continues to disseminate information to the public and continues to discuss the process to handle any comments and recommendations from the public. The meeting minutes are available to the public for the July 2013-June 2014 fiscal year, including a roster of Citizen’s Review Panel Members and their affiliations.

The CRP 2013-2014 report will be posted on the website for Ventura County Partnership for Safe Families and Communities, which serves as the regional Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC). In addition, the CRP 2013-2014 report will be posted on the Ventura County Human Services Agency website.

All comments regarding the report will be reviewed by the CRP and will be taken into consideration when determining future activities and recommendations.