

County of Santa Clara

Social Services Agency



333 West Julian Street
San Jose, California 95110-2335

DATE: April 16, 2019

TO: Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

FROM: Robert Menicocci, Agency Director

SUBJECT: Off-Agenda Report relating to the Department of Family and Children's Services response to the Juvenile Welfare Office of the Ombudsman

BACKGROUND

On February 20, 2019, the Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) presented to the Children, Seniors, and Families Committee (CSFC) responses to the October 10, 2018 Juvenile Welfare Office of the Ombudsman (JWOO) Annual Report recommendations. The CSFC requested an off-agenda report addressing the best way to look at the cumulative recommendations set forth by the JWOO and the time taken for the DFCS to address them.

HOW DOES THE DFCS PLAN TO ADDRESS JWOO RECOMMENDATIONS:

The DFCS is committed to working with the JWOO collaboratively to serve children, youth, and families. In the past, the DFCS has offered remedies to concerns brought forth by the JWOO without a plan for follow-up or evaluation. Now, the DFCS has assigned staff to evaluate action items to assure that they are addressing the concerns they were developed to alleviate. Furthermore, staff ensures that action items are integrated into policies and procedures.

The DFCS has also taken steps to increase communication with the JWOO. Since November 2018, the DFCS has engaged in efforts to increase communication with the JWOO in the following ways:

- The JWOO and the DFCS staff meet monthly to discuss concerns brought by visitors to the JWOO;
- The DFCS Assistant Director meets with the JWOO to address case-specific concerns that arise; and
- The DFCS Director meets with the JWOO's Program Manager II on a monthly basis.

To proactively address the concerns brought forth by the JWOO, trends are shared with the DFCS management at the weekly DFCS Operations Meeting. Following the Operations Meeting, the JWOO presents current issues and themes at the Partners Meeting, which is run by the DFCS Department Director. Managers then share the trends brought forth by the JWOO with

supervisors and social workers. The DFCS believes the enhanced collaboration with the JWOO will serve the families better.

The DFCS has taken steps in becoming a learning organization while incorporating practices of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). This ongoing learning focus provides an opportunity to improve policies, procedures, and practices. The two direct services bureaus, North/South (NoSo) Regional Bureau and Central Regional Bureau, have Social Services Program Manager Is (SSPMIs) whose role includes assessing and reassessing concerns brought forth by the JWOO and monitoring implementation of action items. Such items for assessment are staff trainings and efficacy of informational resources provided to families. This evaluation process is a gap recognized by the DFCS that was previously missing from change implementation. These efforts to assess and evaluate action items will provide a feedback loop to both the DFCS and the JWOO regarding the implementation of action items while identifying ongoing areas for system improvement.

In response to the JWOO Identified Trends Raised to the DFCS Administration, the DFCS has identified Action Steps in both matrixes presented to the CSFC in February 2019 and April 2019. The Action Steps below provide implementation dates for this as well as CQI implementation regarding JWOO concerns.

ACTION STEPS TO RECENT JWOO RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Finalize and distribute a brochure on the Visitation Step-Down Model by the end of April 2019;
- Finalize and distribute Child and Family Teams (CFTs) brochures and FAQs by April 30, 2019;
- Develop a formalized CQI process by utilizing the SSPMIs to evaluate concerns brought forth by the JWOO by June 1, 2019; and
- Continue the ongoing communication between the DFCS and the JWOO as the DFCS finds this to be an effective mechanism for addressing JWOO trends.

c: Chief Board Aides
Miguel Marquez, Chief Operating Officer
James R. Williams, County Counsel
Megan Doyle, Clerk of the Board