

County of Santa Clara

Social Services Agency

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DATE: June 15, 2020

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

FROM: Robert Menicocci, Social Services Agency Director *RM*

SUBJECT: **Off-Agenda Report on the Continuum of Care Evaluation**

In 2019, the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors (Board) and the Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) acknowledged growing challenges in the existing system of care resulting from Continuum of Care Reform and a shortage of appropriate placements for children within the County's care. From November 2019 to March 2020, DFCS worked with other County agencies and stakeholders to develop a roadmap for transitioning the existing system into a more collaborative, robust, and effective continuum of care (CoC) that can address the unique needs of each child and their family.

At the February 25, 2020 Board meeting, President Chavez and Supervisor Simitian requested that DFCS consider entering into an agreement with the Annie E. Casey Foundation (Foundation) for review and analysis of DFCS's CoC and to invite its staff to attend a Board meeting to discuss its evaluation of the programs (Item No. 9). Staff contacted the Foundation and was informed that it is not able to work with DFCS at this time.

Moving forward with implementation of this new model in 2020, DFCS, in partnership with the Social Services Agency's (SSA) Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE), sought an external and independent contractor, Resource Development Associates (RDA), to guide and ensure oversight for the CoC transitional placement services evaluation. Additionally, to ensure contract providers meet the CoC outcomes of the CoC, DFCS, along with SSA's Office of Contract Management will enact a modified contract monitoring system including on-site reviews of program elements.

Evaluation objectives

RDA's evaluation has four overarching objectives:

1. To understand how successfully the CoC model was implemented as planned
2. To measure the extent to which the CoC has had an impact on the outcomes of children, youth, and their families involved in the County child welfare system
3. To identify strengths and challenges within the CoC programs, services, and staffing
4. To develop recommendations and strategies for system-wide improvements.

Preliminary metrics

Additionally, the following preliminary metrics have been identified. As the evaluation plan is further developed and implemented, these metrics can be modified, as needed.

1. Where children are placed (placement type) post Welcoming Center

2. Placement stability: Create a measure for children who move to less restrictive/family placements from children who move to more restrictive environments.
3. Ensure appropriate educational services are provided, such as documenting attendance, grades, and enrollment
4. For older youth not enrolled in school, ensure youth are connected to an Independent Living Program or the Educational Services Unit to ensure programming focusing on the development of life skills, basic academic skills, General Education Development (GED) testing preparation, and/or vocational skills are available
5. Timely mental health services/evaluations
6. CANS assessment for youth serviced by the continuum of care
7. Length of time to place a child/youth into a care home upon first contact with the Welcoming Center
8. Timely medical/dental for youth serviced by the continuum of care
9. Permanency within 12 months
10. Permanency within 24 months
11. Rates of re-entry into foster care

The 27-month service agreement between the County and RDA includes the following phases, activities, and deliverables:

Phase	Activities	Deliverables
Phase 1: Project Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kickoff meeting with relevant stakeholders • Document review • Update project scope of work 	Updated work plan
Phase 2: Evaluation Planning (4 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-weekly evaluation workgroup planning calls • Key leadership interviews: DFCS and BHSD (3); CoC programs (5); Juvenile Probation (1); data (1) • Stakeholder input sessions • Literature review: child welfare system evaluations; system of care evaluation • Evaluation plan and logic/process model development • Data collection tool development • Presentation of evaluation plan and logic/process model to DFCS and stakeholders 	CoC evaluation plan completed Draft data collection tools
Phase 3: Evaluation Data Collection Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection tool refinement • Year 1 focus groups data collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus participant outreach and scheduling ○ CoC program staff focus groups by program ○ Older youth focus groups ○ Case worker focus groups ○ Caretaker focus groups (Each foster care level + parent/guardian) • Year 1 focus groups data analysis and reporting 	Focus group scheduling, facilitation, and documentation Focus group thematic report
Phase 4: Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly presentation of progress reports to the Board 	Bi-monthly workgroup

Technical Assistance	<p>and stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly workgroup meetings • Evaluation technical assistance 	facilitation and notes
Phase 5: Project Management and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management 	Monthly project management and communication

Contract Monitoring

Alongside this formal program evaluation, increased contract monitoring will be utilized for the continuum. DFCS, in partnership with ORE and Office of Contract Management, will pilot a modified contract monitoring system that will include on-site reviews of program elements. The program evaluation, which includes specific outcomes measures, along with the modified contract monitoring will allow for unique and total oversight of contracted programs and services.

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