

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

941



FROM: Department of Public Social Services

SUBMITTAL DATE:
8/30/04

SUBJECT: Approval of Submission of the County System Improvement Plan to California
Department of Social Services

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

That the Board of Supervisors approves the submission of the County System Improvement Plan (SIP) to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) covering the period September 30, 2004 through December 31, 2006.

BACKGROUND:

Under the Board of Supervisors' leadership, Riverside County has emerged as a model statewide for our decade-long self-examination of the child protection system.

The Board has commissioned three major external reviews of the county system and DPSS has commissioned numerous smaller-scale reviews. We created an open culture of self-examination and have reported our progress publicly to the Board each quarter for the past three years.

Marie Whittington, Chief Probation Officer Dennis J. Boyle, Director DPSS

Craig A. Carr for

Dennis J. Boyle

FINANCIAL DATA

Current F.Y. Total Cost:	\$ N/A	In Current Year Budget:	N/A
Current F.Y. Net County Cost:	\$ N/A	Budget Adjustment:	N/A
Annual Net County Cost:	\$ N/A	For Fiscal Year:	FY 04/05

SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A	Positions To Be Deleted Per A-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Requires 4/5 Vote	<input type="checkbox"/>

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: **APPROVE**

County Executive Office Signature

Don Martiny

- Polity
- Polity
- Consent
- Consent
- Dept's Recomm.:
- Per Exec. Ofc.:

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
OFFICE EXECUTIVE
RECEIVED RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Prev. Agn. Ref.: **District:** All **Agenda Number:**

**ATTACHMENTS FILED
WITH THE CLERK OF THE BOARD**

3.45

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BACKGROUND (Cont.):

In 2001 the California Legislature passed AB 636, which created the Child Welfare Outcomes and Accountability Act. The Act's goal is to improve outcomes for children in all California counties by requiring a structured, public self-examination of each child protection system in the state. This will be a new experience for most California counties but it is simply a logical next step for Riverside.

In January, per the legislative requirement, Riverside County began its County Self Assessment of its child-welfare system's strengths and weaknesses. Staff from the University of California at Berkeley assembled existing data from various sources for each California County. The data measures safety, permanency and child/family well-being for families in the CPS system.

In response to our County Self Assessment, we will focus on – and have developed strategies targeting – three areas for improvement.

1. Rate of abuse or neglect in foster care: No matter how low the reported rate of abuse might be in this category, we will always focus on it as an important one for improvement. We have initiated many improvements over the years to keep children safe in the system, including developing a unique special unit that investigates all reports of suspected abuse or neglect in foster homes. We will continue to keep this item at the forefront of our efforts.

2. Recurring abuse or neglect when children are not removed from their homes: Too often, abuse occurs despite court orders that parents receive services while their children remain at home. We are working with community partners to add programs and increase support to families.

3. Children who re-enter foster care: We reunite children with their families as quickly as possible, consistent with safety. Unfortunately, families can revert to past problem behavior, such as drug use, and the children must re-enter foster care. In collaboration with our public and private partners, we will work to expand services to help these families reduce the number of children who re-enter foster care.

Despite these challenges, our data also demonstrate our successes. We exceed the state performance in many categories. We are better at keeping brothers and sisters together when they are removed from their homes; at placing children with relatives; at reuniting children with parents within 12 months; at responding rapidly to reports of child abuse; at getting social workers into clients' homes quickly; at finalizing adoptions if children cannot be reunified with parents; and at moving children as seldom as possible to stabilize their lives in foster care.

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BACKGROUND (Cont.):

We shared the County Self Assessment information at a landmark series of five meetings with community partners and key stakeholders, including parents, foster youth, the court, community-based service organizations, foster parents and law enforcement. The County Self Assessment identified strengths and opportunities for improvement throughout the county, not solely in DPSS. It also opened the closed CPS system to a wide audience. DPSS intends to continue these events and expand on the audience to a thrice-yearly gathering of the entire child-protection community.

This experience has been good for DPSS and the community. It will produce even better outcomes for children in our county as we continue to improve the system.

Therefore, the Chief Probation Officer and Director of DPSS request the Board approve the submission of the attached County System Improvement Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: N/A

CONCUR/EXECUTE: County Counsel

DB:SL:clh