

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

508



**FROM:** Department of Public Social Services

**SUBMITTAL DATE:**  
September 14, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Recommendations to Strengthen the Riverside County Child Welfare System, Districts, All.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive and file the attached report identifying recommendations to strengthen the Riverside County Child Welfare System.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Summary**

Beginning in March 2015, Riverside County Children's Services Division (CSD) conducted a comprehensive system review through an in-depth examination of referrals and cases spanning several years. CSD regularly conducts quality control and practice reviews, and in accordance with State requirements, created a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) unit in July of 2014, dedicated to this effort. In addition, cases are reviewed regularly by managers and executives to monitor specific practice issues. CSD is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and through this review, sought to identify opportunities to strengthen the system as a whole.

Departmental Concurrence

(continued)

*Susan von Zabern*

Susan von Zabern  
Director

FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost:	POLICY/CONSENT (per Exec. Office)
COST	\$ n/a	\$ n/a	\$ n/a	\$ n/a	Consent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/>
NET COUNTY COST	\$ n/a	\$ n/a	\$ n/a	\$ n/a	

<b>SOURCE OF FUNDS:</b> Federal Funding:	State Funding:	Budget Adjustment:
County Funding:	Other Funding:	
Realignment Funding:		For Fiscal Year:

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

APPROVE  
*Jennifer L. Sargent*  
BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer L. Sargent

County Executive Office Signature

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

- A-30
- 4/5 Vote
- Positions Added
- Change Order

Prev. Agn. Ref.:

District: All

Agenda Number:

2-6

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

**FORM 11: Recommendations to Strengthen the Riverside County Child Welfare System, Districts, All.**

**DATE:** September 14, 2015

**PAGE:** Page 2 of 2

**BACKGROUND:**

**Summary (continued)**

Riverside County's Child Welfare System has many facets and must adhere to numerous State and Federal regulations in the process of ensuring the safety and well-being of children. The system is comprised of many functions including: the investigation of allegations of abuse and neglect; the development and implementation of a case plan when abuse or neglect is substantiated and a case is opened; the support provided to parents and children to address the concerns that led to intervention; regular reports to the juvenile dependency court to determine whether children can safely reunify and/or remain with their parents/guardians; ongoing care and support for foster children while efforts are made to support reunification, adoption, legal guardianship or emancipation; and the adoption matching process, including all of the requirements associated with being approved as an adoptive parent. This list of functions contains most, but not all aspects of the child welfare system, and is described here to help illustrate the complexity of the system and the all-encompassing nature of the review process.

The system review included a holistic examination of every step in the process, including all documentation, the use of various tools and resources, and a review of policies and practice. Specific consideration was given to the adoptions process, including a thorough examination of the policies and procedures for prospective foster/adoptive parents, an evaluation of the adoptive home study review process, an analysis of Community Care Licensing oversight, and an audit of electronic and physical cases to assess adherence to all of those requirements. In addition to examining policy and practice, this review also evaluated various aspects of staffing and caseloads to determine the extent to which they may have impacted case management.

The system review found many areas of strength with staff following established policies and procedures. In addition, areas were identified in which policies and practice had changed over the years to strengthen the system, including the level of documentation required to ensure that a thorough assessment is completed at all stages of the process. In addition, areas of improvement were identified, from which recommendations have been developed and are in various stages of implementation.

In addition to these recommended changes, there are several other system changes that are in progress and/or expected in the near future. These are changes that stem from State workgroups that counties are actively participating in to develop improvements to the child welfare system that will be implemented in all counties. Among the initiatives that have been implemented and/or are being developed is a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program, a Core Practice Model (CPM), a Resource Family Approval (RFA) process, and Continuum of Care Reform (CCR), each of which is described further in the attached report.

**Impact on Residents and Businesses**

Through regular case reviews, DPSS seeks to continuously improve the child welfare system by changing policy, practice and the resources and services available in order to strengthen our ability to protect children and support families in their efforts to provide a safe, stable and loving home for their children.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Report: Recommendations to Strengthen the Riverside County Child Welfare System.

SvZ

Recommendations to Strengthen  
Riverside County's Child Welfare System

**SECTION I: INTRODUCTION**

**BACKGROUND**

Beginning in March 2015, Riverside County Children's Services Division (CSD) conducted a comprehensive system review through an in-depth examination of referrals and cases spanning several years. CSD regularly conducts quality control and practice reviews, and in July of 2014, in accordance with State requirements, created a Continuous Quality Improvement unit dedicated to this effort. In addition, cases are reviewed regularly by managers and executives to monitor specific practice issues. CSD is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and through this review, sought to identify opportunities to strengthen the system as a whole.

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## SECTION II: STRENGTHS IN PRACTICE

The audits of referrals and cases identified several strengths in practice, which are highlighted below. Each of these practice areas is significant to the assessment of abuse, neglect and child well-being and the additional oversight provided to support the decision-making process.

1. When allegations of abuse or neglect are made against a foster care provider, CSD assigns referrals to a specialized Out of Home Investigations unit (OHI) for assessment and investigation. Additionally, CSD places a hold on the home until an assessment has been made and any necessary action is taken.
2. Children in open cases are consistently seen on a monthly basis, both in and outside of the home, and these visits are well documented in case notes.
3. CSD routinely completes the Structured Decision Making tool to guide risk and safety assessments.
4. CSD routinely conducts interviews with pertinent parties, documents contacts, and prepares thorough case notes.
5. CSD provides children in open cases with medical, dental, mental health, and other supportive services as needed. Information from health professionals and other service providers is well documented in case notes.
6. Home studies conducted in the adoption process are thorough and take into account relationship issues and levels of familial stress and discord.
7. Adoption records are thoroughly documented. Social workers regularly assess for abuse and neglect as well as child well-being throughout the adoption process.
8. Case concerns are often staffed beyond the social worker and supervisory level, engaging regional managers and deputy directors in decision-making. When appropriate, managers and deputy directors meet with families and/or caregivers to discuss issues or concerns.
9. Currently, we have a Case Quality Review (CQR) process where managers and supervisors complete monthly case reviews to verify adherence to policy and examine practice as to case assessment, interviews and documentation. From these reviews, managers and supervisors identify areas of strength, trends, and areas for improvement. In addition, CSD implemented a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) unit to examine our practice throughout the division, which includes further reviews based on the CQR results.

### SECTION III: SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS IMPLEMENTED OVER TIME

The audits of referrals and cases identified several system improvements that were implemented over time resulting in policy and practice changes, which are highlighted below.

1. The Central Intake Center (CIC), which is the point of entry for any referrals, cross-reports to Law Enforcement and Community Care Licensing when the allegations include physical and sexual abuse. Starting in November of 2013, CIC began to consistently cross report all incidents, criminal in nature, even when the allegations did not meet the legal definition of abuse and/or neglect per the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC 300) and a CSD investigation was not warranted. This change in policy and practice was intended to ensure that all criminal allegations are reported to law enforcement for their assessment.
2. With the creation of the Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force in 2014, all referrals alleging child pornography and commercial sexual exploitation are cross-reported to Law Enforcement as well as the Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force.
3. To ensure greater accuracy and thoroughness of case documentation, when a referral is “evaluated out” and CSD does not investigate, the action is discussed with a supervisor and documented by the supervisor or manager that makes the decision. A referral is “evaluated out” when the allegations do not meet the legal definition of abuse or neglect and/or the information provided is beyond the purview of CSD and has been cross-reported to another agency with responsibility for investigation.
4. Bi-monthly meetings are held with managers across the southern counties to address referrals and investigations involving foster care providers, foster family agencies and group homes that cross jurisdictions. This improves coordination, addresses challenges, and ensures a more comprehensive and integrated assessment of the ability of various caregivers to meet the specific needs of children in foster care.
5. The Home Study process has been revised to include more detailed documentation of case and criminal history and any other facts pertinent to the decision-making process, as well as increased consultations between staff, supervisors, and across programs. These changes to the process allow social workers and supervisors to make more informed decisions about potential placements and adoption matches.
6. All social workers involved in a case are informed when a new referral is received concerning a child on their caseload, whether assigned for investigation or evaluated out. Informing all staff enhances the review and assessment of the situation and ensures a coordinated response based on a global view of all aspects of the case.
7. As funding has become available, CSD has hired additional social workers and supervisors, which has resulted in lower caseloads and lower supervisor-to-staff

ratios, especially in the units responsible for investigating allegations of abuse and neglect. Fewer referrals per worker allows more time for evaluation and more thorough investigations. The Division continues to fill positions, but is also cognizant of the challenges associated with having so many new staff at one time. CSD is expanding training and mentorship support to assist new staff in becoming proficient in all of the duties and responsibilities associated with their positions.

## SECTION IV: STAFFING AND CASELOAD IMPLICATIONS

In addition to examining policy and practice, this review also evaluated various aspects of staffing and caseloads to determine the extent to which they may have impacted case management.

From 2007 through 2012, the recession resulted in a reduction in State and local funding for Child Welfare Services while at the same time programmatic changes were implemented that increased job duties and caseloads. In 2011, the State realigned Child Welfare Services to counties and allocated a portion of sales tax revenues to financially support the program. Beginning in 2012, sales tax revenues began to grow and new funding became available allowing CSD to begin filling positions.

Based on the analysis of staffing and caseload, it was confirmed that staffing levels declined beginning in 2008/09 and only began to increase again in 2013/14. During this period, CSD not only lost approximately 25% of seasoned staff through attrition, but cases per worker increased by 10.5%. Since January 2012, CSD has hired 309 new case carrying social workers, but CSD continued to experience staff turnover resulting in a net gain of 127 workers. Along with attrition, CSD has experienced an average caseload growth of approximately 10% per year.

According to a State Legislative Study (SB 2030) in 2000, the number of Riverside County caseworkers falls below the recommended minimum staffing levels as indicated in the chart below.

SB 2030 FTE v. Average FTE Allocation (SW III-Vs Only)										
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Children's Casework Staff	392	387	404	458	454	445	406	390	393	432
SB 2030 Minimal	639	685	698	625	562	562	584	518	534	597
SB 2030 Optimal	866	928	945	847	761	759	788	700	721	805

Overall, actual staffing levels have been consistently below the minimum staffing targets established by SB 2030 since 2005, but since 2008 the largest variance between the target staffing levels and actual staffing was in 2011 and 2014, where the shortfall was 118 and 111 positions, respectively.

From January 2012 to present, the number of open cases requiring case management has ranged from 5620 in January 2012 to a high of 6402 in December of 2014. Currently, the number of open cases is approximately 6194. Over the last few years, CSD has experienced a 14% caseload growth from 2012 to 2013 and a 10% growth from 2012 to present. CSD has been engaged in an aggressive hiring plan that has subsequently increased our caseworker staffing levels by 9.7% from 2012 to 2014. Unfortunately, due to the previous economic downturn, there were a number of years caseload growth exceeded staffing growth, leading to high caseloads. In addition, approximately 43% of our caseworkers have been employed two years or less resulting in a relatively new workforce.

When caseloads increase, as we have experienced, it limits the time to support each investigation and open case. The most significant impact is reduced documentation in case files, less frequent consultation with supervisors and collateral contacts, shorter interviews with children and families, and less time to identify specialized services and supports.

To help staff prioritize their work, they were advised that no matter how high caseloads rose, they must see their children monthly and document contacts, submit timely court reports, ensure placements are appropriate and processed timely, and complete timely investigations.

Several of the recommendations to strengthen the system that are identified in the next section are dependent upon achieving and maintaining target staffing levels and having an experienced workforce at all levels.



## SECTION V: RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN RIVERSIDE COUNTY'S CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

The audits of referral and case reviews identified some inconsistencies in practice, training needs, and other areas in need of improvement.

Highlighted below are recommendations to strengthen the child welfare system as a whole:

### 1. Supervisory Review of History Alerts

When a family comes to the attention of the Department frequently or with recurring concerns, the policy is for new referrals to be reviewed by the worker and the supervisor together to conduct a global assessment of the most recent issue, as well as taking into consideration the prior history. These History Alert Staffings have not been conducted consistently. This is likely attributable to staffing and caseload issues; however, with additional staff on board and more hiring underway, this policy will be re-established and reinforced through additional tracking and training.

**Recommendation:** Establish a workgroup to develop a History Alert tracking mechanism to ensure consistency across the division. In addition, this workgroup will be tasked with creating a communication plan designed to ensure policy compliance as it relates to History Alerts. The workgroup will also evaluate adding History Alerts to the existing System of Supervision, a comprehensive system of checks and balances to ensure supervisors are tracking and monitoring key outcome measures for social workers within their unit.

### 2. Expansion of Manager Case Quality Reviews (CQRs)

The CSD Managers conduct case quality reviews of investigations, documentation and decision-making to identify practice issues or concerns and to develop corrective action plans that can apply to an individual, unit, or across the division. History Alerts will be incorporated into these reviews to verify that the tracking system developed above is working and that decisions are appropriately considering prior history. Based on the outcome of the Managers' CQRs, the Continuous Quality Improvement unit will conduct further reviews of History Alerts to ensure consistency across the division and identify any trends that need to be highlighted and/or corrected through training.

**Recommendation:** Incorporate History Alerts into the monthly Managers' CQR process. Use the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) unit to further review the consistency of History Alert staffings to assess practice trends and highlight best practices as well as training needs.

### **3. Proposed Change to Structured Decisions Making (SDM) Tool**

Structured Decision Making (SDM) is an evidence-based tool that assists workers with objectively assessing the safety and risk of a referral. Through this review, it has come to light that SDM does not include referrals that have been evaluated out. Even if a specific referral does not meet the criteria for CSD investigation, the issues presented could prove to be valuable to the overall assessment.

**Recommendation:** Advise the Children’s Research Center (CRC), who developed and maintains SDM, of this discrepancy for their review and assessment regarding possible modification of the tool.

### **4. Case History Documentation**

As part of the case review and documentation, staff is required to review any prior case history and incorporate aspects of the prior history into the assessment of the current referral. An accurate review and documentation of history reduces the likelihood that major issues or trends will be missed during an investigation and allows for a more thorough global assessment. Through this system review, some inconsistencies and inaccuracies were identified in the documentation of the prior history, which impacted the assessment of immediate and subsequent referrals. The potential ramifications of such mistakes reinforce the significance of accuracy and thoroughness in all aspects of documenting the details of the case.

**Recommendation:** Provide refresher training to staff to further their skills regarding documentation of case history. In addition, history documentation will continue to be part of the Supervisors and Managers’ case quality reviews.

### **5. Training on Advanced Interviewing Techniques**

A critical component of the evaluation and assessment of a situation is gathering essential information from all pertinent parties. While our reviews reveal that interviews are occurring with all pertinent parties, in some instances we were unable to yield the information necessary to clearly assess the situation. There are techniques staff can use to improve the chances of obtaining critical information. Staff receives training on interviewing as part of the core child welfare training program. In addition, there is a newly implemented simulation-training site that allows staff to role-play different scenarios to further enhance their skills. Newly hired staff is currently using the simulation-training environment with very positive results.

**Recommendation:** Provide additional training to staff to enhance their interviewing skills and work with the Public Child Welfare Training Academy to expand the use of the simulation-site to practice the use of these techniques.

### **6. Information Sharing Between Adoptions and Child Welfare Programs**

In accordance with State and Federal regulations regarding the privacy of records, the adoption process is administered independent of the child protective service functions. However, there is valuable information known within each program area,

and sharing this information between these programs increases awareness and assists with early identification of potential concerns consistent with the requirement to conduct a global assessment. This information is currently shared, but not in a systematic manner that is formalized in policy or practice.

**Recommendation:** Develop a communication protocol to ensure that there is a systematic process for sharing information between programs to encourage a broader review, assessment and documentation of issues as they arise.

## **7. Enhancement of the Placement Tracking Database**

Currently, we do not have a single tracking system where information can be readily accessed to give a clear picture of the status, history and specialization of all placement resources. The information is available through different sources and reviews occur at the time of placement; however, it is a very time intensive process.

**Recommendation:** CSD is working with Riverside County Information Technology (RCIT) and DPSS Purchasing to develop a scope of work to be released through an RFP to solicit proposals to develop this application. This new placement database would provide a more robust tool with the capacity to capture specializations, limitations, and history of placement resources thereby facilitating the appropriate and timely placement of children.

## **8. Expanded Documentation of Child Welfare History for Background Checks**

All adults considered for foster and/or adoptive placement are required to complete a Federal background check, which includes all criminal history and substantiated child abuse that is reported to the Department of Justice. Additionally, this background check includes a review of child welfare history in California as well as other States that respond to our requests for this information. While the results of these background checks are included in the case notes, it is recommended that the documentation of the child welfare history be expanded to clearly identify the attempts made to obtain information as well as include more detail about the history obtained to facilitate the global assessment for placement and adoption matching.

**Recommendation:** Expand the documentation of child welfare history in the case files to clearly identify the actions taken and to facilitate the global assessment for placement and adoption matching.

## **9. Review & Documentation of Child Welfare History**

Currently, the CSD receives automatic notification from the Department of Justice when any new criminal activity is connected to an individual who has previously completed a fingerprint check, also known as a Livescan. However, there isn't an automated notification process for allegations of child abuse or neglect. Depending on the nature of the referral, the review of those allegations is conducted by different units within CSD and/or by Community Care Licensing. As noted above, CSD's existing practice is to notify all staff involved when a new referral is received regarding a child on their caseload, regardless of whether it is investigated or

evaluated out. Furthermore, it is common practice to review the history in the Child Welfare Services Case Management System prior to finalizing any placement decisions. This recommendation formalizes this practice in policy and will include a requirement that the most recent review of child welfare history, including referrals that are unsubstantiated or evaluated out, will be documented. This will ensure that a global review occurs prior to placement, approval of the home study, and prior to adoption finalization and that the information is considered by the supervisor and any others that are involved in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation:** Prior to a placement match, approval of the home study, and adoption finalization, the Adoptions unit shall recheck the Child Welfare Services Case Management System for any new referrals received concerning the prospective adoptive parents and ensure that this is documented in the case file.

#### 10. Joint Investigations

All assigned social workers are informed of any new referrals and keep in close contact with the Out of Home Investigations (OHI) unit regarding the outcome of their review. The OHI unit is responsible for documenting the outcome of their review and the primary social worker considers placement changes in consideration of those findings. In light of the fact that a child placed with an adoptive parent is progressing towards permanency, without any further oversight by CSD, it is recommended that there be a joint investigation with the Permanency social workers and OHI social workers. This will allow for greater awareness of the issues and earlier assessment of whether the adoption should proceed as planned and/or whether to consider any change in placement.

**Recommendation:** Permanency social workers accompany OHI social workers on investigations regarding potential adoptive placements.

#### 11. Expanded Supervisor Reviews & Documentation

Currently, in the adoption approval process there are defined points of review between the social worker and the supervisor, which are documented in the case file. Additionally, social workers consult with their supervisors as needed, based on the circumstances arising in each case; however, it isn't a requirement that these informal consultations be documented in the case file. It is recommended that the formal review process between the social worker and the supervisor be expanded to include additional reviews when issues or concerns arise, which would also be documented in the case file. This will ensure that issues are not only addressed as early as possible, but that the case file clearly outlines the status of the case throughout the approval process.

**Recommendation:** Develop a communication protocol between the social worker conducting the home study and his/her supervisor to expressly identify any areas of concern at the earliest opportunity and to record the outcome of the reviews in the case file.

## **12. Continued Hiring**

In conjunction with implementing the recommendations above, CSD needs to continue hiring, as funding permits, in order to further reduce caseloads and realize staffing-to-supervisor ratios that are in line with the SB 2030 staffing targets. This will enable staff and supervisors to have more time to complete a global assessment at every stage of the process and to comprehensively document the findings and actions taken.

**Recommendation:** To the extent that funding permits, CSD will continue to hire additional staffing to achieve caseload standards and supervisory ratios that align with the SB 2030 study.

## SECTION VI: ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS & UPCOMING INITIATIVES

In addition to implementing these recommendations, CSD will be taking the added step of having a Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) by another county. The PQCR is a practice in regular use, whereby child welfare staff from other counties conducts an independent case review and provide recommendations. Results of their assessment may be used to further refine our recommendations and to improve our review processes as needed.

In addition to these recommended changes, there are several other system changes that have been implemented or are on the horizon. These changes stem from State initiatives that counties are actively participating in to improve the child welfare system in California. Among these changes is the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system. Riverside County implemented CQI in July 2014, which is a specialized unit responsible for conducting in-depth case reviews, independent of and in addition to CQRs conducted by the managers and supervisors. The findings from the CQI case audits are used for individual worker development and to identify training needs across the Division.

In addition, State legislation is being enacted, which will lead to all counties implementing a new **Core Practice Model (CPM)** that identifies specific behaviors and values demonstrated by social workers as they interact with families. The CPM's goal is to operationalize specific casework skills and practices that child welfare workers must perform through all stages and aspects of child welfare casework in order to optimize safety, permanence, and well-being of children who enter, move through, and exit the child welfare system. The State is also implementing changes to the approval process for licensing and certification of foster homes, relative homes, and adoptive homes. **Resource Family Approval (RFA)** will require foster homes, relative homes and adoptive homes to complete the same approval process, including training, background checks, and environmental and psychosocial assessments. For children in foster care, there are planned changes that the **Continuum of Care Reform (CCR)** will address to increase services and support for foster youth, streamline the path to adoption or legal guardianship, and strengthen the ability to meet the needs of foster youth in the least restrictive, home-like environment.

There are many changes that come with these new initiatives. We are actively participating in various State workgroups and are developing local implementation plans as we receive direction from the State. Each initiative has its own timeline and there are some funding considerations that will affect the timing and implementation process.

## SECTION VII: ACTION PLAN

The following actions have been taken to implement the recommendations listed above.

<b>Recommendation 1 Review of History Alerts</b>	<b>Staff Responsible</b>	<b>Purpose/Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
Establish a workgroup to develop a History Alert tracking mechanism to ensure consistency across regions. In addition, this workgroup will be tasked with creating a communication plan designed to ensure policy compliance as it relates to History Alerts. The workgroup will consider adding History Alerts to the existing System of Supervision.	Deputy Directors and identified Managers	For families who have come to the attention of the Department on a recurring basis, ensure a comprehensive assessment and review of referral and case history.	Workgroup establish by October 1, 2015.  Implementation by November 1, 2015
<b>Recommendation 2 Expanded CQR/CQI</b>	<b>Staff Responsible</b>	<b>Purpose/Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. Managers and supervisors continue monthly CQR's to identify practice issues and concerns. 2. Incorporate History Alerts into the CQR process. 3. Continue to use the State-wide Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) initiative to oversee and guide the overall case review process and identify division-wide themes.	Regional Managers and Supervisors	Ensure Quality Assurance, Practice Improvement, and identify training needs.	Ongoing with input from workgroup above.
<b>Recommendation 3 Modification to SDM</b>	<b>Staff Responsible</b>	<b>Purpose/Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
Advise the Children's Research Center (CRC) that referrals which are "evaluated out" are not considered in the overall assessment. Advise CRC of this discrepancy for their review and assessment regarding the possible need for modification of the tool.	Crystal Shackelford	Enhance the SDM tool.	Effective October 1, 2015.

<b>Recommendation 4 Case History Documentation</b>	<b>Staff Responsible</b>	<b>Purpose/Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
Provide refresher training to staff to further their skills regarding documentation of case history. In addition, history documentation will continue to be part of the Supervisors' and Managers' CQR's.	Staff Development and Managers	Enhance staff's global assessment skills.	<p>Managers and Supervisors are providing guidance to staff about documentation as a result of case reviews.</p> <p>Training will be developed with the Public Child Welfare Training Academy (PCWTA) to provide a refresher on global assessment and case documentation.</p>
<b>Recommendation 5 Training on Advanced Interviewing Techniques</b>	<b>Staff Responsible</b>	<b>Purpose/Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
Provide additional training to staff to enhance interviewing skills, possibly to include the use of the simulation-site training to practice the use of these techniques.	Staff Development, PCWTA, Supervisors	Since interviewing skills are such a critical component to the investigation, we will be providing additional training to staff to possible include the use of the simulation-training site to practice the use of these techniques.	<p>Currently in place for new staff.</p> <p>January 2016 for existing staff.</p>



<b>Recommendation 6 Communication Protocol</b>	<b>Staff Responsible</b>	<b>Purpose/Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
Develop a communication protocol to ensure that there is a systematic process for sharing information between regions and programs to encourage a broader review and assessment of issues as they arise.	Managers, Line Staff, Policy	Enhance communication across regions and programs.	Effective August 14, 2015
<b>Recommendation 7 Enhancement of Placement Tracking Database</b>	<b>Staff Responsible</b>	<b>Purpose/Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
CSD continue to work with Riverside County Information Technology (RCIT) and DPSS Purchasing to develop a scope of work to be released through an RFP to solicit proposals to develop a more robust Placement application.	Program Development, Placement, RCIT, Contracts	The new placement database would provide a more robust tool with the capacity to capture specializations, limitations, and history of placement resources allowing appropriate and timely placement of children.	Pending release of RFP.
<p>* In the following section, there are multiple references to “Permanency” staff and supervisors. This refers to the unit that handles adoptions and legal guardianship, which are the paths that are pursued to achieve a <u>permanent, life-long</u> family connection for a foster child.</p>			
<b>Recommendation 8 Expanded Documentation of Child Welfare History</b>	<b>Staff Responsible</b>	<b>Purpose/Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
In addition to documenting the results of Federal background checks, it is recommended that the documentation of child welfare history be expanded to clearly identify the actions taken and the details of any history obtained.	Policy, Permanency & Placement Staff	The inclusion of Child Welfare history in case files will facilitate the global assessment for placement and adoption matching.	Effective June of 2015 for Permanency staff.  Effective November 1, 2015 for Placement staff.

<b>Recommendation 9 Ongoing Child Welfare Searches</b>	<b>Staff Responsible</b>	<b>Purpose/Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
Prior to adoptive placement, approval of the home study and/or an adoption finalization, Permanency* staff shall review CWS/CMS for any referrals received concerning the prospective adoptive parents.	OHI and Permanency* social workers, Supervisors	To determine if any changes that have occurred would be relevant to proceeding with the adoption. This review will be documented in the adoptions case.	Effective August 14, 2015.
<b>Recommendation 10 Joint Investigation</b>	<b>Staff Responsibilities</b>	<b>Purpose/Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
In light of the fact that a child placed with an adoptive parent is progressing towards permanency, without any further oversight by CSD, it is recommended that there be a joint investigation with the Permanency social workers and OHI social workers with any new referrals.	Permanency* social workers and Out of Home Investigations social workers	A joint investigation will allow for greater awareness of the issues and earlier assessment of whether the adoption should proceed as planned and/or whether to consider any change in placement.	Effective August 14, 2015
<b>Recommendation 11 Ongoing Consultations</b>	<b>Staff Responsibilities</b>	<b>Purpose/Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
Develop a communication protocol between the social worker conducting the home study and his/her supervisor to expressly identify any areas of concern at the earliest opportunity and document.	Permanency* social workers and Supervisors	Ensure all information is shared, included and discussed in the decision making process.	Effective August 14, 2015

<b>Recommendation 12 Continuous Hiring and Support</b>	<b>Staff Responsible</b>	<b>Purpose/Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
<p>Continuous review of staffing/workload levels to determine hiring needs in all programs, as well as continuous monitoring of caseload distribution to ensure resources are properly allocated. Provide staff with mentoring and training as needed and implement recommendations from the Recruitment and Retention Workgroup.</p>	<p>All levels of staff</p>	<p>Recruit, retain and support a well-trained workforce.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>