



Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee

The mission of the Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee is to provide oversight for and promote communication between the Board of Supervisors, the Department of Social Services and its related agencies, and the community, with emphasis on providing information and recommendations that make the system more effective and efficient.

MINUTES

February 7, 2024

9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Meeting held in-person for Committee Members and public.

Virtual option via Microsoft Teams for public only

I. Call to order and introductions.

Rosemary Alanis

- Meeting called to order by Committee Chair, Rosemary Alanis, at 9:07 AM with roll call by DSS Staff Support, Julia Perez.

II. Approve Minutes for January 3, 2023 and February 7, 2024 Agenda.

- Wilma Hashimoto (District 5) motioned; Elizabeth Thomas (District 3) seconded to approve the February 2024 Agenda & Wilma Motioned; Karina Perez (District 1) seconded to approve the January 2024 Minutes.

III. Updates

A. Receive Report From Department of Social Services Addressing Critical Areas

Sanja Bugay

- Department of Social Services (DSS) Director, Sanja Bugay, provided updates for Child Welfare.
 - The Board of Supervisors approved MOUs that address worker retention and salaries for social workers and support staff, which include a 6th salary step and a 3% salary increase next year.
 - Turnover rates in 2023 were in the single-digits for the first time in several years.
- All staff who work at Mod C will now have the differentials added to their pay. Previously, social workers with case management responsibility had differentials added to their pay; however, this was not available to all CWS staff, which resulted in some difficulty in staff willingness to volunteer to work at Mod C.
- Mod C Licensing item went to the Board. Getting Mod C licensed has been a challenge. No shelters have been licensed in the past decade because the State aims to eliminate congregate care facilities/shelters, a philosophy Sanja agrees with. The Department wants to operate in such a way that congregate care and shelters will not be needed, however those facilities are needed today, and they need to be licensed. DSS requested Board approval to apply for State licensing, with the caveat that Mod C will cease to exist as of January 2026.
- On February 6, 2024, the Board of Supervisors became the governing board of the Mod-C shelter. because it is County-run. The Board appointed Sanja and DSS to run the day-to-day operations. The BOS approved the item, which included requirement for Mod-C to get licensed.
 - State requires monthly and quarterly reports for their licensed facilities.
- The BOS approved 20 new positions for DSS, 17 of which are for Child Welfare.
 - 8 of these will be Social Worker positions that will target intensive training and secondary workers (Social Work Aides). The secondary workers will assist with the Permanency Planning unit and high needs youth.
 - Social Work Aides will assist with improving the adoption finalization process by reducing the length of the process from 10 months to 3 months.
- Kevin Lisitsin (District 2) requested caseload stats for CWS Social Workers. CWS Deputy Director Dalvin Baker said this data can be added to the monthly CWS data report-out..

B. Mod C Data Presentation

Megan Lambert

- Social Work Supervisor, Megan Lambert, is a Program Specialist that focuses on complex needs youth. She oversees the policies and data specifically regarding Mod C. Megan presented 2023 Mod C-Transitional Shelter Care Facility (TrSCF)/Building 5 Data to the Committee. *Document was sent to Committee in advance, available on FCSOC Website and hard copies were provided at the meeting. Below are key points that were discussed from the Mod C Data presentation.*
 - Megan was asked to elaborate on why youth released from Juvenile Justice Campus (JJC) are not being released back to their parent/legal guardian

- Minors often can only be released to a legal guardian per their release court order, so if there isn't a parent or caregiver that is willing to care for them, they are sent to Mod C. If a youth was under DSS care before going to JJC, they would be released back to DSS. Sanja added that the court usually does not release youth to DSS; they are usually released to the parent or guardian.
- Megan was asked why the number of entries into Mod C/B5 were higher during the second quarter of 2023. Megan speculates it may be because students are on spring and summer breaks during that time.
- During 2021 and 2022, the Department was facing a lot of immediate and 14-day notices for high-level placements. Sanja would like to find out why the Department receives notice from staff that work in Foster Family Agencies Intensive Services Foster Care Program (FFA ISFC) or Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP). She would like to identify the issues and solutions, since these placements are supposed to be the highest level of care the child receives.
- Efforts are being made to come up with solutions to avoid AWOL.
 - Question regarding the process when a child becomes AWOL: A notification is sent to all pertinent parties, including the parent(s), attorneys, and the court. Law Enforcement is contacted to become involved with the search.
- Pam (District 5) believes A comment was made about the amount of effort that went into collecting data on only a small percentage of foster youth, as opposed to gathering data for all youth in the foster care system. The Department was asked to focus on maintaining youths' school placements and improving graduation rates. Megan agreed and assured efforts are made to ensure youth do have stability wherever possible.
 - The Director agreed about the amount of energy that was dedicated to 5% of the children in care, but explained that in order to shut down a shelter, the stories and behaviors of each child need to be understood. Questions to consider when handling foster youth cases are: What is the trajectory of this child's life when they are with the Department? Are there things we can prevent to ensure the child's safety? Are there different supports that can be placed upfront?
 - The 5% that is mentioned do not have anyone stable that can offer support. The only support they receive is from the Social Worker and the Mod C staff.
 - The data is kept current and as relevant as possible, with the information that the Department finds significant to all parties involved with foster care.

IV. New Business

A. Discuss Details for 2024 FCSOC Retreat

Rosemary

- Rosemary requested retreat date availability from the Committee. A poll will be sent out to gather Committee's availability for April 2024.

V. Subcommittee Update

A. Education

Pam Hancock

- Continued work on court process and potential school change form.
- There is ongoing work for an immunization project. Students need their immunization records to apply for the dorms.

B. Children's Mental Health

Kevin Lisitsin

- Discussion topics have been specific groups struggling with income and creating a survey for employees.
- Subcommittee membership has grown and activity has increased.
- Kevin asked the Committee if there are any specific topics to provide updates about at FCSOC meetings. Responses received were anything pertaining to foster youth, and information regarding how many people are utilizing the Family Urgent Response System (FURS) hotline.
 - Sanja told the Committee that it has been announced that FURS funding will likely be eliminated in the near future due to the State budget deficit and underutilization of the hotline.
 - Brian Van Anne (Transitions Children's Services) mentioned there are various FFAs that support FURS and there will also be an advocacy campaign held by the California Alliance to keep the system in place.

VI. Public Comments

- Patti Scovill believes congregate care will always be needed and said one of the most important things foster youth could have is a mentor. Patti mentioned she is willing to become a mentor for foster youth and could also recruit individuals from churches.

VII. Announcements

- Karina Perez provided fliers for foster care scholarship resources.
- Wilma Hashimoto thanked everyone who attended the CASA Strategic Planning meetings. She also provided fliers for a Chef Cook-off Event in support of CASA.

VIII. Adjourn

- Next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at 9:00am in-person for Committee members and the public. Virtual option via Microsoft Teams, for members of the public only. Please note: FCSOC meetings require in-person attendance in order to participate. Virtual option is view-only. Meeting adjourned by Rosemary at 10:21 AM.

Committee Attendance

District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sal Quintero <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ari Martinez (Proxy)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Karina Perez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kevin Lisitsin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth Thomas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rosemary Alanis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamela Hancock
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maisie Young	Vacant	Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Ed Avila
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracy Kashian	Vacant	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wilma Hashimoto

* Marked Boxes Indicate Committee Member Attended

Attending Staff and Guests

In Person: Sanja Bugay, Megan Lambert, Dalvin Baker, Cathi Huerta, Kimberli Smith, Julia Perez, Hillary Bolger, J’Lyne Montejano, Taylor Chavez, Brian Van Anne, Amina Flores-Becker, Rocky Vang, Chad Valorosi, Linda Miramontes, Patti Scovill, Victoria Klassen, Maya Daugherty