



# 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 1, 2023

9:00 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

Meeting held In-person with Teams option

### I. Call to order and introductions.

Wilma

Meeting called to order by Wilma Hashimoto at 9:05 AM with roll call by Elizabeth Bell.

### II. Approve minutes for *December 7, 2022*.

- Rosemary Alanis (District 4) motioned; Karina Perez (District 1) seconded to approve December 7, 2022 meeting minutes and February meeting agenda, with edits presented by Wilma.

### III. Updates.

#### A. Legislative Updates.

Elected Official Representative and DSS

- No updates

#### B. Department of Social Services Addressing Critical Areas.

Dalvin Baker

- Deputy Director Dalvin Baker provided DSS CWS data points as a continuation from 2022 that will continue into 2023. A handout was provided for the in-person attendees as well as an attachment added to the Teams invite for any virtual guests.
- Highlighting on additional data that was gathered from multiple questions/requests at the December meeting. The first question was for statistics to be provided regarding children who are removed from their parents compared to how many of those children are placed with relatives or mentors within the first 30 days of placement. In 2022, a total of 262 children were placed with relatives within the first 30 days of placement, with an additional child who was placed with a mentor.
- Another request from the December meeting was for information about the re-entry rate into the system within a 12-month timeframe. The most current information available is from the year 2020: of the 562 children that exited care, 31 (3.8%) of those children re-entered the system within a year of exiting.
  - Both data points will be added to the monthly data shared from the Department of Social Services Child Welfare moving forward.
- Karina Perez (District 1) asked what re-entry numbers might look like if the 12-month period was increased to 24 months. Dalvin referenced 2019 statistics shared from UC Berkley that show the re-entry rate more than doubles when extended to 24 months.
- Follow-up question: Is CWS tracking how many times a child enters the system within their lifetime (0 – 18). Dalvin will take to the Program Specialists and see if this can be tracked.
- Wilma asked for more information regarding Mod-C and the AWOL youth, asking if numbers for the length of time the youth was missing is available. Her concern being that human trafficking is a serious issue. Dalvin responded with information regarding the process Mod-C has in place starting with calling the Sheriff's Department as soon as a youth leaves to report them as AWOL. The average time they are gone is usually a few hours, although there are times when a youth will leave in the middle of the night and return the following morning.
- Staff at Mod-C are there 24 hours a day and make every effort to deescalate/prevent these situations from happening, to the point that they will follow the youth outside and down the street trying to talk them out of leaving. Ultimately, they must report it to the authorities by giving a detailed description of the youth and situation, i.e. any persons or vehicles they leave with/in.
- Social Worker I interview panels will begin soon. There are currently about 30 vacant SW positions.
- A Social Work Aide recruitment went out 1/31/2023. This is a position for someone who has an interest in becoming a Social Worker and who has enough educational credits, but does not yet possess a degree. There are 12 open vacancies for this position.
- Question asked: of the placements reported, how many of them are out-of-County placements? Dalvin shared that many of the placements that are out of County are non-minor dependents and it is due to them attending college outside of Fresno County. Dalvin will also look into getting additional information/data to share for the next meeting.
- Kevin Lisitsin (District 2) asked if there were any updates concerning the foster parents application (RFA) process and the concerns that were brought up last year about the turnover in the call center staff resulting in a high number of new hires and/or staff having minimal experience with RFA and if there have been any changes implemented by the County to address this. This is Deputy Director Kimberli Smith's branch. Dalvin shared that Kimberli has been working with staff to

redevelop the RFA process. She has been having regular meetings to ensure that at the customer service level, applicants will all be given the same information as well as the next steps to becoming an RFA-certified home.

- A request was made for data to be obtained regarding the RFA application process, specifically, if there has been an increase in applications received, for example from January 2019 vs. January 2023.
- Since the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020, children were out of school for almost two years, and a concern was expressed that abuse may not have been reported due to children not recognizing the trauma for what it was. Following that, a question about whether the County could open a conversation about dedicating a day or time frame to the mental health of the youth in Fresno County or possibly create a helpline/PSA for the same cause.
- Data was requested comparing the rates of reported abuse pre-COVID vs. present.
- Dalvin confirmed that the data on pre-COVID and present allegation rates can be collected. Regarding mental health concerns, the Department of Behavioral Health reported that children who have been isolated for long periods are -returning to school depressed, withdrawn, and with other potential mental health concerns. DBH has many outlets for youth to reach out and report abuse as well as PSA announcements. The DSS and DBH are partners who work together to address these types of concerns regularly and will continue to do so.

#### **IV. New Business**

##### **A. Recognition of Re-appointment of Committee Members.**

- Wilma congratulated Committee Members Karina Perez, Rosemary Alanis, Richard Baily, and Keving Lisitsin on their reappointment.
- Connie Waldrop has officially resigned. Jill Stepke has also resigned, pending Jill's submission of a resignation letter to the County Clerk's office.

##### **B. Discussion to extend FCSOC meeting**

**Wilma**

- The possibility of extending the meeting's end time to 11:00am rather than the current end time of 10:30am was discussed. This would not require every meet to last until 11:00am, but rather provide flexibility for a longer meeting, as the meetings often run over time or are rushed at the end due to time constraints.
- Committee members were advised to review the information/data points ahead of time in preparation for each meeting to avoid meetings running long. Questions and/or concerns can be submitted to DSS Staff Support, Elizabeth Bell or Julia Perez prior to the meeting to aid in effective use of meeting time.

#### **V. Review of Action Items.**

**Wilma**

##### **A. Vote on Attendance Options for March 1, 2023 Meeting**

- Karina Perez (District 1) motioned; Rosemary Alanis (District 4) seconded the motion regarding the March 1, 2023 attendance options: in-person attendance is strongly encouraged for Committee members but may attend virtually via Microsoft Teams if the Committee is given prior notice of the physical location of the Member's virtual attendance. Additionally, the Committee will now vote to allow Committee Members to join virtually. Members of the public will continue to have the option to attend in-person or virtually via Microsoft Teams.

##### **B. Vote to Extend FCSOC Meeting Length from 1.5 hours to 2 hours.**

**Wilma**

- Kevin Lisitsin (District 2) motioned; Rosemary Alanis (District 4) seconded the motion to extend the FCSOC meeting to 2 hours (9:00am to 11:00am).

#### **VI. Subcommittee Updates.**

##### **A. Education**

**Pam**

- Effective January 1, 2023: regarding the discipline notification process, AB 740 amends sections 47605, 47605.6, 48432.5, 48853.5 48911, 48911.1, 48915.5 and 48918.1 of the Education Code and now requires a Local Education Agency (LEA) to send a notification to the pupil's parent or guardian, or, if the pupil is a foster child, the foster child's educational rights holder, attorney, tribal social worker, or if applicable, County social worker. Types of discipline requiring notification are any suspension, expulsion, expulsion hearing notice, manifestation determination, or an involuntary transfer. There will be a link on the Foster Youth Services Coordination Program website with instructions for each county on how to contact the required persons.

##### **B. Children's Mental Health**

**Wilma**

- Effective December 2022, Wilma has stepped down as Co-Chair of the Children's Mental Health meeting and is asking if any FCSOC Member has an interest in filling the role or would like to attend meetings as a representative of the FCSOC. Meetings are held every other month.
- The next meeting is being held February 23, 2023 from 9:00-10:30am via Zoom. The link is as follows:

[https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Furldefense.com%2Fv3%2F\\_https%3A%2F%2Ffresnocountyca.webex.com%2Ffresnocountyca%2Fj.php%3FMTID%3Dm33de268a65ae8f8835e0da724a0b0595\\_%3B!!HRg2s0N7wg4sn4Q!poOyXJjHlyTIGZ3P-tH0CDDBYJ7FbNsuckdKtoWGX9KrVNUdICnA2degUH59yOXk9nb\\_YJxwqcgOVn5Y3sGvo8hsMi-2A%24&data=05%7C01%7Cebell%40fresnocountyca.gov%7C25286ca042134b74a1ce08db04824737%7C3ccce0182cd74123960d6cc1d47e3550%7C1%7C0%7C638108729847742678%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C&sdata=Z9PGKAqtXMqfVLzZLYgsxo3DBdDYA%2Fxfj0UCrUWmmpyl%3D&reserved=0](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Furldefense.com%2Fv3%2F_https%3A%2F%2Ffresnocountyca.webex.com%2Ffresnocountyca%2Fj.php%3FMTID%3Dm33de268a65ae8f8835e0da724a0b0595_%3B!!HRg2s0N7wg4sn4Q!poOyXJjHlyTIGZ3P-tH0CDDBYJ7FbNsuckdKtoWGX9KrVNUdICnA2degUH59yOXk9nb_YJxwqcgOVn5Y3sGvo8hsMi-2A%24&data=05%7C01%7Cebell%40fresnocountyca.gov%7C25286ca042134b74a1ce08db04824737%7C3ccce0182cd74123960d6cc1d47e3550%7C1%7C0%7C638108729847742678%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C&sdata=Z9PGKAqtXMqfVLzZLYgsxo3DBdDYA%2Fxfj0UCrUWmmpyl%3D&reserved=0)

## VII. Round Table Discussion by members.

All

- Richard Bailey asked Dalvin for additional data regarding the number of trials that are set vs. the number of trials that go to hearing. He acknowledged that this information may be getting shared during the monthly Judicial Executive meetings, however those meetings are not open to the public. Wilma gave Richard Judge Leann Le Moñ's name as a contact overseeing the Dependency court.
- Elizabeth Thomas asked if the Family Urgent Response System (FURS) was being utilized at Mod-C for the AWOL youth and if not, what type of mental health resource is being used on site? Dalvin answered that Mod-C has attempted to utilize FURS when a situation warranted and there is no clinician on site. Although the average stay at Mod-C isn't more than a day or two, if or when they have a youth there for a longer stay, and the youth is experiencing mental health issues, they do have a clinician to on-call to work with the youth.
- Elizabeth is curious to know how FURS responds and works through crisis situations due to her own experiences with using hotlines as a Resource Parent. Pam shared about a situation in which she was able to see firsthand how effective FURS was when called to an incident at Scout Island while attending a leadership program with several students in 2022. She stated that the FURS Mobile Response Team immediately showed up with the foster parent and did an outstanding job with crisis control.
- Dalvin added that the FURS program has done great work advertising to the youth and have also included a QR code on their flyers that, when scanned, immediately places the youth or caregiver into a chat where they can get help.
- Responding to the topic of mental health, Wilma shared the CalFURS hotline number(833-939-3877), as well as The National Prevention Lifeline: 988, or the Central Valley Suicide Prevention website. The Suicide Crisis Lifeline is run by the Department of Behavioral Health. There will be a collaborative meeting starting in February 2023 that meets every other month. To get more information about the meeting, contact [SolVang@fresnocountyca.gov](mailto:SolVang@fresnocountyca.gov)
- Elizabeth expressed an interest in getting updates about FURS to see if the volume of calls has increased since the FURS presentation in November 2022.
- Pam asked if Dalvin could expand on AB 2083 . He shared that it is an opportunity for Department leads such as Probation, Child Welfare, Mental Health Regional Center, and Education to get together and discuss some of the concerns that are being seen in the community and how they can address them.
- Dalvin shared about an upcoming training for CWS by the Child Welfare Directors Association on February 15, 2023. The training is centered around new and more effective language to talk about trauma.
- Department of Social Services Director Sanja Bugay shared on Mod-C and the term "complex-needs youth" not always being accurate. Sanja stated that some of the youth there are not necessarily dealing with extreme mental health issues; rather, they just don't care for their placement, which results in placement challenges and ending up at Mod-C.
- Sanja shared that the Fresno County Department of Social Services, (along with DBH and Probation, has partnered with Madera County's DBH, DSS, and Probation and have applied for State funding for future processes. Fresno and Madera Counties DSS are 1 of 8 groups of counties that have applied for these additional funds, which would give resources at the county level to build on the Continuum of Care and provide additional wrap-around services to offer more placement options.
- The State budget was released in mid-January. California Welfare's Director's Association has made an ask for Child Welfare to use what are typically "one-time dollars", for complex needs youth and to make them ongoing or recurring funds. DSS is hopeful that these funds can be used for Child Welfare. Updates to come.
- Regarding placements with relatives, Sanja reported that during 2022, the numbers increased from 12% to 19%. This will continue to be one of DSS' focus areas, to increase placements with relatives and resource parents. Moving forward, resource parents will begin having a SW assigned to them in addition to SW assigned to the foster youth, to give those parents and foster youth more places to go for information to better support the resource families.

**VIII. Public Comments.**

- Brian Van Anne asked about FURS and a possible orientation for Children’s Transitional Services to get a better understanding of what resources are offered. Guest speaker, Rebecca Reynolds from Kings View, the County-contracted provider of FURS services, who attended the November FCSOC meeting was suggested as a good contact to get that scheduled.
- Patti Scovill (Former CASA Advocate & Foster Youth Advocate) brought up a suggestion that was made in previous months to call CASA when a high needs youth enters Mod-C, so that the youth can be matched with an advocate. Her question was whether that resource was in place. Wilma stated that it is not currently in place, but that it will be in the future when CASA is ready. CASA has recently increased their advocate trainings and now offers 4 classes. They have 22 active advocates with another 23 expected to enter in February. Wilma has put the word out to various agencies to have the current advocates matched with children or youth.
- Patti Scovil suggested that the One Fresno Youth Jobs Corps Program, a city program, could be a good potential resource for foster youth. This program provides training and opportunities for entry-level employment to youth ranging from 16 to 30 years old, while providing a living wage for fellows throughout the duration of the program. To apply or for more information visit: [fresno.gov/mayor/youth-leadership/](http://fresno.gov/mayor/youth-leadership/) email: [interns@fresno.gov](mailto:interns@fresno.gov) or call: (559) 621-6555.
- Rocky Vang shared a story and expressed his concern about Child Protective Services (CPS) protocols not being followed when placing an infant with relatives from the hospital after birth, bringing awareness to the effects this could have on a child if placed without all protocols being followed.

**IX. Adjourn**

**Wilma**

Next meeting will be on March 1, 2023, in-person (Committee members and the public) and virtually via Microsoft Teams (camera access required for Committee members). Meeting adjourned by Wilma at 10:36 AM.

**Committee Attendance**

District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
		<input 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"/> James Martinez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rosemary Alanis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamela Hancock
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Maisie Young	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth Thomas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Bailey	<input type="checkbox"/> Ed Avila
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracy Kashian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patricia Miller	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wilma Hashimoto

**Attending Staff and Guests**

In Person: Dalvin Baker, Elizabeth Bell, Julia Perez, Sonia Dosti, Pat Scovill, Brian Van Anne, Chad Valorosi, Hillary Bolger, Dustin Ragsdale, Rocky Vang, | Microsoft Teams: Rebekah Rodriguez, Ronald Alexander, Christie Lee, Miriam Flores, Sanja Bugay