



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

May 4, 2022

9:00 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

Meeting held via Zoom

I. Call to order and introductions.

Wilma

Meeting was called to order by Wilma Hashimoto at 9:00 am with roll call of members, introductions, and introductions of elected official representatives

II. Approve minutes for April 6, 2022, and the current meeting's agenda.

Wilma Hashimoto motioned to approve minutes for April 6, 2022, and the current meeting's agenda, Rosemary Alanis seconded the motion to approve the minutes and agenda.

III. Updates.

A. Legislative Updates.

Elected Official Representative

- Ari Martinez informed the committee that on May 3, 2022, Supervisor Brian Pacheco and Chief of Staff Mark Benjamin sponsored a Proclamation declaring May Foster Care Month in Fresno County.

B. Department of Social Services Addressing Critical Areas.

Tricia

- Tricia Gonzalez announced that Sanja Bugay began as the new Director of DSS on April 25, 2022.
- The upcoming move to Building 5 on May 16, 2022, is moving along. There will be 100 people a day moving into Building 5 and the move could take approximately 6 days total.
- Shelter Application is moving forward, getting key personnel assistance from organizations such as Focus Forward. Through the contract that DSS has with them, Focus Forward has been helping supervise the children awaiting placement who are in the office after hours.
- In the month of March, there were 110 kids who entered foster care that were moved, 212 with placement changes, and 180 kids spent time in one DSS office or another. Of those children, 111 were placed within 24 hours, 20 were in the office between 24 and 72 hours, and only 3 that stayed over 72 hrs. in the office.
- ILP Graduation drive-thru event is on May 5, 2022.

C. Judicial Updates

Judge Mary Dolas

- Judge Mary Dolas reported that monthly meetings will resume for the new committee called the Court Improvement Collision Committee, the goal of which is to improve court calendar management to resolve cases more efficiently.
- Family First Prevention Act was mentioned as Judge Mary Dolas responded that the Courts are now taking a broader look at the possibility of placing minors with family members who have a criminal history. Some limitations are being removed and doors are being opened to this as an option. When removal is necessary, more efforts are being made to place with a family member when possible.

D. DSS Update from the Director.

Sanja

- Staff feedback has been addressed for vacancies and turnover rates. Sanja shared that DSS has 329 current Social Workers, 27 new Social Workers, and 29 Social Worker vacancies. That leaves a 17% vacancy rate and after new hires it is down to a 9% vacancy rate.
- In the past year DSS has lost 89 positions which resulted in a 29% loss of overall staff.
- Staff has shown concern for sufficient coaching and training needs with the turnover rate. A plan will be set in motion to look further into this.
- Sanja shared data of relative placements and County RFA placement statistics for Fresno, Kings, Kern, Madera, Tulare, Sacramento, and Stanislaus Counties.
- Sanja shared that the number one goal is the safety and wellbeing of the children, which is achieved through reunification and permanent placement.
- Sanja shared information for Fresno County DSS on placement entries, safety outcomes, challenges to permanency, face to face contacts and case plan completion, stating that the goal is to reduce group home placements.
- Numbers were given showing that 2,366 children are in placement and 277 children are in Family Maintenance.
- Pam Hancock asked if the difference between Family Maintenance and Court ordered versus voluntary can be identified in the stats in the future. Sanja agreed that can be done in the future.

- Sanja was asked to give background on herself and responded by sharing that she has been a Fresno County resident for the last 30 years and came to the US as a foreign exchange student in 1992. She completed her schooling here and became a permanent resident soon after. She began working with the County of Fresno in 2001 as a Staff Analyst. She was an employee of Fresno County for over 15 years, mostly in Finance, but also in Child Welfare and other various roles. She left Fresno County DSS in 2016 as Deputy Director and moved to Kings County, where she was the Director of their DSS for 6 years. She returned to the County of Fresno in April 2022 as Director of DSS.

IV. Review of Action Items.

Wilma

A. Vote on June 1 being a hybrid meeting with virtual and in-person options

- Maisie made a motion for a hybrid meeting; Pam seconded the motion.

V. Subcommittee Updates.

A. Children’s Mental Health

- Wilma shared that there was a meeting held on Thursday, April 24, 2022, and the feature speaker was Dr. Amy Parks, who spoke about the Fresno County Initiative training local Community-Based Organizations about being a “trauma-informed county” and about working with non-profits such as MMC, CASA, and The Resiliency Center in the context of working with children and adults with trauma.

VI. Education.

Pam

- Pam mentioned that the event at Staff Island went well with close to 30 students and good committee member support.
- Pam reported that this is the tail end of FASFA being completed with over 90% for Fresno County.

VII. Round Table Discussion by members.

All

- No Updates.

VIII. Public Comments.

- Elizabeth Thomas asked if DSS Director Sanja Bugay would be available to speak at the next Foster Parent Association meeting. Sanja welcomed the opportunity.
- Karel Gonzalez from Focus Forward asked about what tools are being used to structure treatment plans for families with current CWS cases. Tricia Gonzalez responded that the CANS Assessment is currently being used but is still in the implementation phase. No other official tools are being used at this time.
- Brian Van Anne asks about the process for the CANS Assessment and if duplicate assessments should be done. Tricia responded by saying that only 1 assessment should be completed for each client/case.
- Ed Avila asked about the backlog of investigations status in DSS. Director Sanja Bugay responded by assuring that the new hires will help with this issue.

IX. Adjourn.

Wilma

Next meeting will be on June 1, 2022. This will be a hybrid meeting, with both virtual and in-person attendance options. Meeting adjourned by Wilma at 10:25 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 type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> James Martinez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rosemary Alanis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamela Hancock
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wendy Yribarren	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maisie Young	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth Thomas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Bailey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ed Avila
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jill Stepke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracy Kashian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patricia Miller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Connie Waldrop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wilma Hashimoto

Attending Staff and Guests

Tricia Gonzalez, Rocky Vang, Catherine Huerta, Rebekah Rodriguez, Judge Mary Dolas, Karel Gonzalez, Marilyn Bamford, Paul Nerland, Sonia De La Rosa, Sonja Dosti, Sanja Bugay, David Rodriguez, Miriam Flores, Ryan Townsend, Chad Valarosi, Cheryl Whittle, Danielle M NSFC, Lorraine Ramirez, Marc Salazar, Maya Daugherty, Edward Avila, Katherine Martindale, Robert Jeffers, Brian Van Anne, Michelle McGaughy, Marilyn Lambert, Laurie Lopez, Patricia Miller, Joanna Litchenburg, Cherie Morales, Mark Benjamin, Hillary Bolger, Dan Moreno, Lorena Gutierrez, Bryan Correa, Elizabeth Bell