

May 14, 2024

Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject: Approval of, and Authorization for the Human Services Agency Director to Submit, the California Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan to the California Department of Social Services; and Approval of, and Authorization for the Chair of the Board to Sign, the Notice of Intent to Meet Assurances for the Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment, Community Based Child Abuse Prevention, and Promoting Safe and Stable Families Programs.

Recommendations:

1. Approve, and authorize the Human Services Agency (HSA) Director to submit, the California Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) in compliance with State legislative requirements (Exhibit 1).
2. Approve, and authorize the Chair of the Board to sign, the Notice of Intent to Meet Assurances for the Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT), Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP), and Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) programs (Exhibit 2).

Fiscal/Mandates Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

Discussion:

The California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) is an evaluation and planning process that was formed as a result of the passage of the Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act (AB 636) in 2001 and provides a process by which counties can plan, analyze and conduct continuous quality improvement activities to support systemic changes that promote positive outcomes for children and families involved with the child welfare system. The C-CFSR is a cyclical process that involves several components, including completion of a Self-Assessment, development of a System Improvement Plan (SIP), submission of annual SIP Progress Reports, and quarterly monitoring of SIP strategies and the effects on child welfare outcomes. This active process is repeated on a continuous basis every five years.

The SIP is the operational agreement between CDSS, HSA Children & Family Services (CFS), and Ventura County Probation Agency (Probation), and provides an outline for how Ventura County will improve and strengthen its system of care for children and families. The SIP was developed in collaboration with local community, prevention and early intervention partners, and incorporates findings from the 2023 self-assessment—a comprehensive evaluation of both CFS and Probation, as well as their partnerships with one another and the community at large—along with feedback and information gleaned from focus groups, stakeholder meetings and peer reviews. Of utmost importance, the SIP codifies commitments aimed at promoting trauma-informed practices, mitigating family upheaval, improving reunification outcomes, and enhancing policies that improve care and safety, enabling the children, youth and families in the child welfare system to be safe, healthy, educated and well, with a sense of belonging, purpose and opportunity to achieve their aspirations.

The SIP focuses on three overarching goals for outcome improvement:

- Decrease the occurrence of family separations and youth removal.
- Safely reunite families when possible.
- Ensure children and youth who cannot return home establish a forever-family and preserve lifelong connections.

Strategies to be implemented to achieve these goals include:

- Increase engagement and input from youth and families on how the County and community partners can better collaborate to provide enhanced services and supports.
- Increase engagement and input from stakeholders and community partners on how to best collaborate to provide enhanced services and supports.
- Increase culturally relevant services.
- Probation:
 - Increase layers of support for parents.
- CFS:
 - Expand targeted engagement efforts to improve reunification outcomes.
 - Expand targeted permanency efforts for older youth.

The SIP goals and strategies were presented to your Board on December 19, 2023, by the Wellness System Interagency Leadership Team during an overview of the C-CFSR 2022-2027 SIP and update to the Child, Youth and Family Wellness System. At that time, the SIP was still in development and we committed to return to your Board for formal approval once the SIP was complete. The SIP is now complete and is being submitted today for your review and approval.

We ask that your Board approve, and authorize the HSA Director to submit, the System Improvement Plan to CDSS. Additionally, because CDSS requires a notification of the County's intent to meet assurances for the CAPIT, CBCAP, and PSSF programs, we also ask your Board to approve and authorize the Chair to sign the Notice of Intent to Meet Assurances, confirming that CAPIT, CBCAP and PSSF funds described in the SIP will be used as outlined in state and federal statutes.

Strategic Plan:

The C-CFSR System Improvement Plan contributes to the County's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan priority to 'Address Homelessness and Lift Up the Most Vulnerable', Goal (2) Meet/sustain basic needs and be a reliable safety net for our vulnerable populations.

This item has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's Office and County Counsel. If you have any questions, please contact me at 805-477-5301, or David Swanson Hollinger, Deputy Director, Children & Family Services, at 805-477-5311.



Melissa Livingston
Director, Human Services Agency



Gina Johnson
Chief Probation Officer

Attachments:

Exhibit 1 – C-CFSR System Improvement Plan

Exhibit 2 – Notice of Intent to Meet Assurances for the CAPIT, CBCAP, PSSF Programs