

**Los Angeles County**  
**Department of Children and Family Services and Probation Department**  
**Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Capped Allocation Demonstration Project**  
**Progress/Activity Report**  
**January 1, 2009 through June 30, 2009**

**Project Overview and Status**

The Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Capped Allocation Demonstration Project (CADP) continues to provide Los Angeles County with the financial flexibility necessary to make strategic investments in structural and programmatic reforms needed to better serve children and families. As previously reported, these reforms build upon and complement ongoing systemic improvements underway among County Departments and their community partners in Los Angeles County. This progress report provides an update on the status of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation Department (Probation) implementation priorities between January 1, 2009 and June 30, 2009. Since the implementation of the CADP on July 1, 2007, the total DCFS AFDC-FC caseload has decreased by 16.6% through May 31, 2009 (from 18,304 to 15,274) and has decreased 5.1% since the last reporting period ending December 31, 2008 (from 16,099 to 15,274). The following table details AFDC-FC caseloads numbers by federal and non-federal and placement type:

**DCFS AFDC-FC Caseloads**

	Children in FFH			Children in FFA			Children in Group Home			Total		
	Non-Fed	Fed	Total	Non-Fed	Fed	Total	Non-Fed	Fed	Total	Non-Fed	Fed	Total
Jun-07	2,821	7,603	10,424	1,325	4,097	5,422	1,018	1,440	2,458	5,164	13,140	18,304
Dec-07	2,691	7,112	9,803	1,373	3,971	5,344	879	1,185	2,064	4,943	12,268	17,211
May-08	2,594	6,860	9,454	1,348	3,785	5,133	831	1,143	1,974	4,773	11,788	16,561
Dec-08	2,434	6,682	9,116	1,329	3,759	5,088	877	1,018	1,895	4,640	11,459	16,099
May-09	2,355	6,018	8,373	1,257	3,759	5,016	1,028	857	1,885	4,640	10,634	15,274
% of Change 6/07 to 5/09	-16.5%	-20.8%	-19.7%	-5.1%	-8.2%	-7.5%	1.0%	-40.5%	-23.3%	-10.1%	-19.1%	-16.6%
% of Change 12/08 to 5/09	-3.2%	-9.9%	-8.2%	-5.4%	0.0%	-1.4%	17.2%	-15.8%	-0.5%	0.0%	-7.2%	-5.1%

\*Actual data for June 2009 will not be available until the end of July 2009

**Probation Caseloads for Youth in Group Home Placements**

The reduction in placement caseloads realized by Probation during the CADP was maintained during this reporting period. Between January 1, 2009 and June 30, 2009, the number of youth residing in group homes closely mirrored what was reported in the July 2008 - December 2008 report, with monthly average group home populations ranging from 1,052 – 1,058.

**Department of Children and Family Services – First Sequence Priorities**

After considering the target populations, ease and speed of implementation efforts, and breadth of impact on the desired CADP outcomes, DCFS identified the following three first sequence priorities, which remained operational during the January 1, 2009 to June 30, 2009 reporting period: Expansion of Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) Conferences; Focused Family Finding and Engagement through Pilot Specialized Permanency Units at Three Regional Offices; and Up-front Assessments on High-Risk Cases for Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues.

## Progress Activity Report

July 15, 2009

Page 2 of 15

Expansion of Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) Conferences - As previously reported, DCFS increased the number of FTDM facilitators by fourteen so that regular multi-disciplinary team conferences could be held for children placed in group homes or in foster care for two years or longer with no identified permanency resource. These conferences ensure that a multi-disciplinary team of professionals, family members and caregivers meets regularly to focus on the urgent permanency needs of these youth, and the outcomes from the TDM expansion are encouraging. At the time Permanency Planning Conferences (PPC) were implemented, 1,050 youth who met the criteria for a PPC TDM resided in group home placement. This number of youth in group home placement has decreased to 862, with 94 youth returned to the home of a parent or placed with a relative. PPCs have also resulted in over 100 youth being identified for a lower level of care. Between January 1, 2009 and May 31, 2009, an additional 240 TDM PPCs were held; to date, over 90% of the youth in group home placement who meet PPC criteria have received an initial PPC. As a result, the 14 specialized facilitators will now begin expanding PPCs to include children placed in out of home care for two years or longer with no permanency resource.

Focused Family Finding and Engagement through Pilot Specialized Permanency Units at Three Regional Offices – As previously reported, specialized Youth Permanency (YP) Units were established to target DCFS' older high need youth most at risk of aging out of foster care with no permanent connections. As of June 2009, three regional offices, Metro North, Pomona, and Santa Clarita, were operational and fully staffed with six Children's Social Workers (CSW) and one Supervising Children's Social Worker (SCSW) per office. Due to reduced caseloads and expert training, YP Unit CSWs are better able to establish relationships with the youth and focus their energies on identifying and reconnecting the youth with family.

- The Metro North YP Unit currently serves 79 youth. Of these 79 youth, one returned home, one is under legal guardianship, 10 were placed with relatives, 6 were placed in lower levels of care, 11 have plans of adoption, and 11 have plans of guardianship. Forty-six of the youth currently being served who were previously identified as having no or limited connections with family now have ongoing visits with siblings or other family members, and 16 youth have been placed with siblings with whom they were not previously placed.
- The Pomona YP Unit currently serves 85 youth. Of these 85 youth, 12 youth moved into lower levels of care; in addition, 5 youth were placed with relatives, 3 were reunified with parents, 10 have a plan of adoption, and 14 have a plan of guardianship. Seventy-nine youth who are currently served by the Pomona YP Unit and were previously identified as having no or limited connections with family now have ongoing visits with siblings and other family members.
- The Santa Clarita YP Unit currently serves 55 youth. During the reporting period, one youth has reunified with parents, one successfully exited the system through adoption, 2 have adoption plans, 12 have legal guardianship plans, 2 were placed with relatives, and 12 have moved to lower levels of care. In addition, 37 youth who are currently served by the Santa Clarita Unit and were previously identified as having no or limited connections with family now have ongoing visits with siblings and other family members.

Up-Front Assessments on High-Risk Cases for Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues - Up-Front Assessments continue to be conducted on the target population of families with high-risk Hotline referrals; experts in substance abuse, domestic

## Progress Activity Report

July 15, 2009

Page 3 of 15

violence and mental health services provide immediate, comprehensive assessments, and connect families to treatment and ancillary services in the community. These services allow Emergency Response (ER) CSWs to make more informed case decisions, and in many cases, permit children to remain safely in their homes.

As previously reported, DCFS has contracted with SHIELDS for Families to provide up-front assessments for the Compton Office since October 1, 2007. In May 2008, two additional regional offices, Metro North and Wateridge, and the Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP), which handles referrals of child abuse and neglect at night, on weekends and holidays, began implementing and utilizing up-front assessments in a limited fashion, with additional contracted agencies in their Service Planning Areas (SPA). Between November 2008 and April 2009, up-front assessments expanded to the remaining DCFS regional offices; as of April 13, 2009, 40 Family Preservation Agencies have been contracted to conduct up-front assessments and assessments are available to all DCFS regional offices and ERCP. Between October 1, 2007 and June 30, 2009, up-front assessments have been provided to 1,160 families with 4,230 children. These assessments resulted in removals (voluntary and court) for just 131 families.

### **Probation Department - First Sequence Priorities**

Based on Probation foster care trend data, initiative impact on targeted populations, and feedback from stakeholders, Probation is committed to the continuation of the first sequence priorities: Cross-Systems Case Assessment and Case Planning, and Expansion of Functional Family Therapy (FFT). Probation also maintained on-going efforts for two additional CADP initiatives that were identified in Probation's five-year plan: the Restructure of Placement Services and Utilization of Aftercare Support Services.

Cross-Systems Case Assessment and Case Planning (CSA) - was designed to pair mental health clinicians and therapists with Placement Deputy Probation Officers (DPO) to provide integrated and coordinated assessments of delinquency risk and protective factors and mental health functioning of youth ordered Suitable Placement by the Court. CSAs are used to identify treatment service needs and match probationers with appropriate group home providers. During the January 2009 - June 2009 period, it was determined that Probation had no CSA tracking tool in place and was relying on DMH to track CSA data. A review of Probation and Department of Mental Health (DMH) CSA documentation revealed discrepancies in the total number of CSAs conducted prior to this reporting period. Factors related to the discrepancies included:

- Total numbers of CSAs reported by Probation staff, at any given time, relied on the staff's understanding of what numbers/totals they were to report on, calendar year or fiscal year CSA totals.
- At one point, Probation staff confused a DMH CSA sample population number as the total CSAs conducted when reporting out. DMH staff conducted an internal outcomes analysis on the target populations (Placement youth and Placement youth who had received a CSA) and the study consisted of a sample of the total population served. The outcomes study was referenced in the previous progress report. In that report, the total number of youth that received a CSA that was provided was inaccurate due to the confusion between actual served and the sample study.
- Gaps in communication resulted in CSAs conducted primarily on replacements as opposed to "new" Suitable Placement cases, as originally designed. The available

## Progress Activity Report

July 15, 2009

Page 4 of 15

resources are insufficient to support CSAs for every Placement case, both “new” and “replacement.” It is believe that if the CSAs are conducted on “new” cases, the impact will reduce the number of replacements needed and reduce the timelines to reunification. Reducing timelines to reunification will increase the amount of reinvestment realized. The additional resources will support increasing the CSA population to include replacement cases.

To address these issues, Probation implemented a CSA Steering Committee comprised of DMH staff and impacted Probation managers from Title IV-E Management, Placement Administrative Services, Placement Residential Based Services and Placement Quality Assurance. In addition, impacted Supervising DPOs (SDPO) and DPOs are invited to attend Steering Committee meetings to provide input and feedback on all components of the CSA. The Steering Committee is charged with identifying and memorializing all agreements made to increase service delivery, including developing appropriate processes, procedures and policies for the implementation of the daily activities of the CSA program; developing and implementing an MOU between DMH and Probation that outlines roles and responsibilities; developing and/or modifying data tracking tools and developing enhancements to the existing CSA reporting out tool. This effort has enhanced communication between all impacted stakeholders, at every level. Communication improves planning efforts needed to enhance service delivery by identifying gaps in services and needed program modifications and/or enhancements. Additionally, a formalized process supports increasing productivity and efficiency.

DMH reviewed all CSAs conducted and reported that between July 2007 and June 2009, Probation and DMH conducted 901 CSAs; 209 were conducted during the current reporting period. As of June 15, 2009, the CSA team has only conducted CSAs on Placement youth that have a “new” Suitable Placement order.

Expansion Functional Family Therapy - Probation adopted FFT as a first line treatment approach to serve the CADP target populations. As previously reported, research on maintaining and supporting behavior change for troubled adolescents indicates intervention is most effective if promoted within a family context. FFT services are delivered in the home rather than in a clinic or residential treatment setting. Five FFT teams serve our target population; two teams are Probation in-house FFT interventionists, and the remaining three teams are provided by County contracted vendors, Shields for Families and Starview Treatment Center. Probation’s two FFT teams began their second year of program implementation in June 2009. Two FFT DPOs (FFT interventionists) were recommended by the FFT National Organization and California Institute of Mental Health to be FFT Site Supervisors, one for each team. Probation management concurred and the two staff were enrolled in FFT mandated Site Supervisor Training. Staff completed the first of three trainings in June 2009. Probation has continued to use a blended funding strategy to cover program costs, utilizing IV-E reinvestment dollars and Medi-Cal. During the CADP project period, Probation has provided FFT services to 414 youth and families. Of these, 90 youth and families began receiving FFT services during the January 2009 – June 2009 project period. Youth identified for program participation were Probation Placement youth previously residing in congregate care who were released to the care and custody of their parents with FFT services.

In the July 1, 2008 - December 31, 2008 Progress/Activity report submitted to CDSS, Probation provided FFT program effectiveness findings experienced in the first year of the CADP. The findings reported were the result of two sets of analyses. The first set of analyses compared all

## Progress Activity Report

July 15, 2009

Page 5 of 15

youth who were discharged from FFT, and the second set of analyses compared all youth who successfully completed FFT. Both groups were measured against a comparison group. For purposes of program evaluation, the comparison groups consisted of Probation youth who closely resembled/matched the FFT groups on demographics and Suitable Placement involvement. In June 2009, Probation began a second year, two-pronged analyses; one analysis will provide an update on the status of the treatment and comparison groups in the initial study, and the second analysis will be completed on youth and families that meet the original study criteria that received services in the second year of the CADP. Probation will provide these outcome findings in the next report to CDSS.

Restructure of Placement Services - At the onset of the CADP, Probation began to restructure the Placement Services Bureau in an effort to enhance service delivery to youth and families and meet program goals. The Department has made numerous changes in the way business is conducted. While some changes represent incremental reforms to the system, others represent a sizable attempt to improve the overall system. Changing the culture of the workforce and impacted stakeholders is complex, requiring change on many different levels as well as up-front planning.

Three efforts that have supported restructure efforts: the development and implementation of a Placement Restructuring Steering Committee, a Probation Placement Practice Model, and weekly Placement Services Bureau Management meetings. The Steering Committee is charged with assisting in the identification of needed system improvements and administrative infrastructure needs. Due to the time required to implement some of the identified internal system improvements coupled with a Department wide reorganization of executive administrators in April 2009, the Placement Restructuring Committee was placed on a temporary hiatus. It is anticipated that this committee will reconvene in late 2009.

Casey Family Programs continues to support the Department's restructuring efforts by providing consultant services focused on the development and implementation of the Department's Placement Practice Model initially developed in 2008, with most recent revisions made in June 2009 (Attachment I). The Practice Model is a day-to-day work guide that: describes practice from case opening to case closure; and outlines practice principles, practice sequences and techniques. Further, the Practice Model is an organizational ideology that includes definitions and explanations regarding how staff is to partner with stakeholders in the delivery of services to achieve positive outcomes for youth and their families. This is a living document in that processes, procedures and protocols will require constant change resulting from a number of factors, including local, state and federal child welfare reform efforts; modifications to existing Title IV-E regulations and fluctuations in the economy.

Weekly Placement Management Meetings focus on the development of an assignment matrix that helps assess efficiency, re-deploy resources, define roles and ensure the synergistic effort of the entire team with a view towards meeting our stated goals. These meetings are also geared to strengthen strategic planning efforts, identify the most effective approaches to deliver outreach services, and ensure that youth and families are being served in an effective, productive and appropriate manner.

Utilization of Aftercare Support Services - Placement Aftercare Community Transition Services (PACTS) is responsible for two units of operation, an in-house FFT Unit and a Functional Family Probation/Parole (FFPP) Unit. The PACTS operation continued to provide critical overall

## Progress Activity Report

July 15, 2009

Page 6 of 15

support to the youth and families that enrolled in FFT and ensured that youth experienced a seamless transition from the group home to community. In June, 2009, two DPOs completed the first of three trainings required to become FFT site supervisors. It is anticipated that they will complete all three mandatory trainings by the end of August 2009.

FFPP is an evidence based case management practice for juvenile justice workers who are charged with supervision of youth in a community setting. Traditional supervision models are commonly set up to monitor only adjudicated youth. FFPP's primary strength is in employing the support of family and/or community members. By strengthening the family support system, the FFPP practice model greatly increases the likelihood for long term success for the youth and families Probation serves. FFPP is a supervision model based on the principles of FFT. FFPP DPOs work with families to address the role each member has in generating, and ultimately resolving, "problem behavior." Early interventions reduce blame and negativity among family members and instill hope for change. FFPP works through the following phases: engage and motivate; support and monitor; and generalize.

All FFPP unit staff completed the required FFPP training in January 2009. To be FFPP model adherent, Probation FFPP staff must participate in mandated scheduled interactions with a certified FFPP contracted consultant, including: weekly conference calls, SDPO conference calls and in-person trainings. Additionally, FFPP maintains a program requirement that each SDPO accompany the DPOs of record to weekly home visits to observe the DPOs implementation of FFPP. This helps familiarize the SDPO with individual cases and each DPO's style to better supervise staff utilizing the FFP model.

All DPOs completed the initial FFPP training in January 2009. On the recommendation of the FFPP consultant, cases assigned prior to the FFPP training will not be supervised using the FFPP case management model, as it would not be effective to change modalities in the middle of working with a case. All new cases assigned after January 2009 are supervised using the FFPP case management model. In June 2009, FFPP DPOs carried caseloads between approximately 16 to 24 cases, and during this reporting period, the FFPP DPOs provided FFPP supervision to approximately 58 youth and families. An effort has been made to terminate or transfer eligible non-FFP cases to make space for new cases with the goal of caseloads comprised exclusively of FFP cases. Percentages of FFP cases per caseload vary greatly from unit to unit, as some DPOs have received more new cases due to being fairly new to PACTS.

### **Second Sequence Priorities**

Based on the success of first sequence priorities and input from our community partners and stakeholders, the Departments established their plans for FY 2008-2009 and FY 2009-2010, as detailed in the, *Title IV-E Capped Allocation Demonstration Project (CADP) Implementation Plan, Edition 2, February 3, 2009* attached (Attachment II). The Board of Supervisors approved this second sequence plan and the authority to hire staff positions to support the expansion and/or implementation of Waiver strategies on February 3, 2009.

### **Department of Children and Family Services - Second Sequence Priorities**

As per the plan, in addition to the three first-sequence initiatives detailed above, DCFS expanded and/or implemented the following second sequence initiatives:

## Progress Activity Report

July 15, 2009

Page 7 of 15

Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) – For FY 2008-2009, DCFS utilized approximately \$970,000 in Waiver funds to restore federal cuts made to Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) Programs, including Family Support, Family Preservation, Time-Limited Family Reunification Services, and Adoption Promotion Services and Support (APSS). Utilizing these funds has allowed the contract providers to continue to provide the full array of contracted services in the period from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. Without these funds, DCFS would have had to reduce contracts for these services in the middle of the contract year.

Countywide Prevention Efforts, Such as Differential Response – DCFS earmarked \$6 million for prevention strategies starting in FY 2009-2010. One of the funded strategies for which \$3.76 million has been allocated is a second year of the DCFS Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) which was approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 9, 2009 (see PIDP section below for information on the first and upcoming second year of PIDP). The second funded prevention strategy, currently under development and for which \$1.5 million has been allocated, is Los Angeles County's implementation of Differential Response Path One. Differential Response Path One will connect Child Protection Hotline "evaluated out" referrals/families to voluntary services and resources. The goal of this initiative is to reduce the Hotline re-referral rate for these families and to prevent them from becoming open referrals due to child abuse and neglect. The earliest projected implementation date for the effort is October 2009.

Regional Office Community Partnering – Waiver funding will be provided to DCFS regional offices to promote collaboration via events to deepen the work with community partners on key reform issues and expanding prevention services, such as eliminating racial disproportionality and disparity, increasing child safety and reducing timelines to permanency. DCFS has identified a Program Manager for this effort and prepared draft policy instructing regional offices on the protocol to access Community Partnering funds.

### **Probation – Second Sequence Priorities**

Probation received approval from the Board of Supervisors to implement a program enhancement for the existing program priority, Expansion of FFT, and establishment of a third program priority, Prospective Authorization and Utilization Review.

Expansion of FFT Program Enhancement - Probation received CEO approval to hire staff responsible for the implementation of FFT program enhancement, Parent Daily Reviews (PDR). PDRs are a component of the evidence-based Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care program. Community Workers will conduct PDRs for all youth that have transitioned from group home care to the community. They support supervision by providing crucial information on a family's progress during the first 60 days of family reunification. The PDRs will allow the DPO of record and the treatment teams to make appropriate interventions, if needed, to support reunification. It is anticipated that this effort will improve response time to youth and family needs while reducing the percentage of youth that re-enter the foster care system and/or fall deeper into the juvenile justice system due to antisocial behaviors that could lead to high levels of care such as Camp Community Placement.

The Prospective Authorization and Utilization Review Unit (PAUR) - Probation received CEO approval to hire staff responsible for the implementation and daily operations of the PAUR program. PAUR will be established to assist in the decision making process to match youth and

families with appropriate services, improving consistency in service utilization, as referrals to services will be pre-approved, based on whether or not a youth and family meet the specified focus for each service. This unit will be responsible for reviewing the use of each of these services at designated intervals to ensure that there is a systematic rationale that allows for extended services that may be required to obtain desired outcomes on a case-by-case basis. This will improve Probation's ability to strategically manage and maximize available resources. In April 2009, a Probation Director was identified to implement the unit and begin working with Department managers to identify and develop the implementation strategies required so that operations could run smoothly once staff was identified. Staff recruitment efforts are underway.

### **Project Administration/Fiscal Management/Implementation Activities**

**Planning/Oversight Efforts** – DCFS and Probation Waiver Teams continue to work in concert and participate in regular Waiver Management Team meetings to provide project coordination and updates and discuss next steps. Both Departments attend bi-monthly implementation meetings with Casey Family Programs and monthly County Steering Committee meetings with the CEO and have made numerous presentations to the Board of Supervisors, Justice and Children's Deputies, Children's Commission and CEO.

**DCFS** - Based on feedback and requests from DCFS regional staff, community partners and other stakeholders, rather than sponsoring one large, centralized community stakeholder meeting as in years past, DCFS convened five regional "Strengthening Community Partnership" events in May. Over 1,000 individuals participated, discussing partnership successes and challenges and planning next steps to keep the partnership momentum going. In addition to the convenings, DCFS continues to be involved in the following planning/oversight efforts specific to its project priorities:

- **Monthly Waiver Coordinator Check-In Call with CDSS** – The DCFS Waiver Coordinator participates in monthly conference calls with Alameda County's Waiver Coordinator and CDSS Waiver Managers.
- **DCFS Executive Team**, led by the Director, meets weekly; the Waiver Coordinator provides updates, and upper level administrators discuss CADP activities, status and challenges.
- **DCFS Waiver Team** meets on a regular basis to discuss progress of CADP initiatives and day-to-day operations.
- **State/County IV-E Fiscal Workgroup** - Periodic conference calls led by CDSS with Los Angeles and Alameda Counties are held to discuss fiscal issues.
- **State/County IV-E Evaluation Workgroup** - Periodic conference calls led by CDSS with Los Angeles and Alameda Counties, and stakeholders, are held to discuss evaluation issues.
- **Family Team Decision Making Roundtable** – The TDM Manager meets on a monthly basis with TDM facilitators countywide to address policy, practice and operational issues and often provides training and implementation of new initiatives related to TDM.
- **PPC/TDM Facilitators** – The PPC Manager meets monthly with the PPC facilitators to address implementation of PPCs and outcomes related to PPCs held for youth in out of home care with no identified permanent plan.
- **Youth Permanency Implementation Workgroup** met bi-weekly to address policy and practice issues and expedite implementation of the YP Units. Effective July 10, 2009, this Workgroup will be folded into a newly formed "Permanency Committee," which will address permanency issues across the Department while continuing to support the YP Units.

- Centralized **Up-front Assessment meetings** occur monthly to address up-front assessment implementation, data collection and outcomes evaluation. As up-front assessments have rolled out to the regional offices and ERCP, localized meetings have also been established. Meetings also take place with contracted up-front assessment providers on a monthly basis.
- **Residentially-Based Services (RBS) Collaborative** continues to meet regarding a redesign proposal for residential care for DCFS youth. Once the RBS plan is implemented, the RBS Workgroup will reconvene to continue its oversight of RBS reform
- **Other Meetings** are ongoing with the Children's Commissioners, Board Offices, and CEO budget analysts specific to DCFS project components.

**Probation** - In April 2009, Probation began a significant executive reorganization due to the retirement of two of three Probation Deputy Directors in early 2009. This prompted inter-department promotions and a shift in management at various management levels including Deputy Director, Bureau Chief, Director, and Supervising Deputy Probation Officer. The CADP program priorities and Title IV-E related support efforts primarily fall under the jurisdiction of the Placement Services Bureau, and during the current reporting period, the reorganization had a sizable impact on this Bureau.

Probation facilitates and participates in the following project planning/oversight meetings specific to its project priorities:

- **Weekly Expansion of Functional Family Program Priority Steering Committee meetings** are held to enhance service delivery, ensure appropriate data is shared in a timely manner, identify capacity needs and strategically plan for outlying years.
- **Weekly Cross-Systems Assessment and Case Plan Program Priority Steering Committee meetings** are held to identify gaps in service and identify program needs to fill gaps, ensure appropriate processes and procedures are in place to meet outcomes, identify needs of all impacted stakeholders to ensure that the program is addressing critical needs, and to strategically plan for outlying years.
- **Weekly Probation Management Meetings** to help guide implementation of the Placement Service Bureau's Initiatives. The CADP is a bureau initiative and compliance to all Title IV-E rules and regulations are mandated and monitored by the bureau.
- **Monthly Group Home Provider Meetings** are held to address communication needs under the Waiver environment, facilitate communication of the CADP Plan to Probation's group home providers and provide feedback on barriers, successes and opportunities.
- **Quarterly Group Homes Administrators Meetings** are held to increase communication during the Waiver project period.
- **Bench Officers Meetings** are convened to inform Delinquency Bench Officers of the progress of Probation Waiver efforts and to receive feedback from the bench that could be included in ongoing efforts to improve services and move system improvements forward.
- **Monthly conference calls** are held with the CEO and DMH regarding Title IV-E administrative and operational needs of all Probation Waiver initiatives.
- **Monthly conference calls** or formal meetings are held with a Casey Family Programs consultant for Probation's Practice Model that impacts Waiver efforts.
- **Monthly conference calls** are held with Casey Family Programs regarding Probation Waiver efforts and/or needs.
- **Other Meetings** are ongoing with the Children's and Probation Commissioners, Board Offices, and CEO budget analysts specific to the Probation project components.

Specific Program and Policy Changes – **DCFS** policy has been revised to address the use of Permanency Planning Conferences in each of the Department's regional offices; the implementation of up-front assessments in all DCFS regional offices and the Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP); and the operation of YP Units in three DCFS offices. As previously stated, draft policy addressing the use of Regional Office Community Partner funds has been written as well.

**Probation** has made the following significant program and policy changes aimed at supporting CADP and enhancing service delivery to CADP target populations:

- Historically, youth on a Suitable Placement order were detained in one of three Department-operated Juvenile Halls. As of April 2009, detained youth on a Suitable Placement order are housed in one Department-operated juvenile hall, Central Juvenile Hall. This action required numerous program and policy changes Department-wide as the change impacts the daily operations of institutions, Placement Services and transportation. The change expedites service delivery in areas including, but not limited to: meeting with youth face-to-face, accessing case records, completing case process requirements, coordinating placements, and expediting outside agency process mandates for group home providers, DMH and Health Services.
- As of June 2009, the Department agreed that Placement Services Bureau staff would be moved in an effort to increase service delivery. Staff slated to relocate include the Placement Unit comprised of twelve staff responsible for Cross-System Assessments and youth movement coordination (detained youth to be moved to group home care). As of May 2009, one staff was co-located to work with the DCFS Revenue Enhancement Section responsible for various components of eligibility processing and financial reconciliation.

### **Challenges and/or Technical Assistance Needs**

**DCFS** has experienced the following challenges in implementing CADP priorities during this reporting period:

- Shortage of staff required to monitor and oversee all aspects of up-front assessment implementation.
- Lack of an automated system to track expenditures and revenue in more detail, requiring DCFS to create manual spreadsheets to accurately identify and track data and funding sources.

**Probation** has experienced the following challenges in implementing the CADP during this reporting period:

- Inability to obtain additional required CADP expenditure information, specifically funds used for Wraparound Services. Probation, through its collaboration with DCFS, has obtained detailed expenditure reports for Wraparound and Placement, and an exhaustive interdepartmental DCFS/Probation data reconciliation is currently underway. This reconciliation will allow for the tracking and monitoring of accurate expenditure data beginning in FY 2009-2010. In an effort to ensure optimal data accuracy, DCFS and Probation continue to work together to continuously improve their information-sharing and data reconciliation methods.

- Difficulty reconciling Probation records and accessing Child Welfare Services/Case Management Systems (CWS/CMS) data, requiring a significant workforce effort for Probation.
- Lack of an automated system to track Probation Placement expenditures, requiring Probation to create separate spreadsheets to accurately identify and manually track data for each Placement case and all case activity to identify projected assistance payment costs and/or reductions as well as numerous trend data.

### **New Initiatives and/or State Waiver Related Program Activities - DCFS**

Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) – As previously reported, on February 26, 2008, DCFS' \$5 million PIDP was approved by the Board of Supervisors through June 30, 2009. Eight contracts were approved to establish lead agencies in each of the Service Planning Areas (SPA). The PIDP was initially a 12-month project, but DCFS obtained an additional four months of time for the lead agencies and their DCFS regional partners to fully develop and implement their prevention strategies and initiatives. All lead agencies implemented their plans in July 2008. The evaluation of PIDP is conducted through a collaborative of Casey Family Programs, First 5 LA, and Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey of the University of Southern California. The goals of the evaluation are threefold: identify best practices which can be replicated countywide; identify successful leveraging strategies between and within the Community Based Organizations, County agencies and private business; and provide DCFS with results to be used to restructure current contracting processes to become more client delivery focused. A mid-year evaluation of the Project was completed in January 2009, to look at initial promising best practices that were emerging from the first six months of implementation, and the final evaluation is expected to be available no later than August 2009. On June 9, 2009, the Board of Supervisors approved a second year of the PIDP, with a start date of July 1, 2009. Second year funding comes from two sources: \$1.24 million from the Los Angeles CEO's Services Integration Branch (SIB) and \$3.76 million from Waiver reinvestment funds.

Intensive Treatment Foster Care (ITFC)/Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) – DCFS continues to make efforts to expand the number of ITFC and MTFC beds available for appropriate youth. However, due to the behavioral and emotional problem of youth served by these programs, recruiting interested, appropriate foster parents continues to be challenging. Three agencies each have been contracted to provide ITFC and MTFC beds, and DCFS intends to conduct Procurement by Negotiation to expand both programs. As of June 25, 2009, 30 beds are available, and 18 youth are placed in these ITFC and MTFC homes. Between the two programs, 17 additional beds are in development in various stages of certification.

Residentially-Based Services (RBS) Reform - The RBS Collaborative has finished working with its RBS consultants, DMH, Community Care Licensing (CCL), and provider agencies on an implementation plan, which was submitted to CDSS in June 2009 and includes the Voluntary Agreement, Funding Model and Waiver Request. Three provider agencies (Five Acres, Hathaway-Sycamores and Hillside) have been selected to implement the RBS Project, which will initially target any RCL 12-14 eligible DCFS youth already placed in the three providers' residential campuses. These agencies will complete their RBS unit conversion and identify potential unit conversion youth in August 2009. The Los Angeles County Evaluation Subcommittee and the CWS/CMS Workgroup continue to develop a baseline data methodology

to compare youth before and after RBS. The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths – Child Welfare (CANS-CW), Youth Services Survey and Youth Services Survey-Families were discussed and reviewed and will be used to collect data to measure RBS Project outcomes (permanency, child safety and child well-being) for evaluation and quality improvement. Division Chief Dr. Michael Rauso will begin discussions regarding implementation of the RBS Project with DCFS 18 office Regional Administrators in July 2009. In addition, RBS Project training curriculum will be finalized, and conjoint training will be provided to DCFS and the three provider agencies staff in July 2009.

### **Additional County Effort that Supports the Outcomes of the CADP – DCFS and Probation**

Increased attention has been focused on court-involved youth in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. This population, commonly known as “crossover youth,” is the focus of a Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) sponsored by Georgetown University and Casey Family Programs. This BSC involves seven jurisdictions, including Los Angeles County, and utilizes a quality improvement methodology designed to enable participating teams to make dramatic improvements in a focused practice area (crossover youth) over a short period of time. The intention of a BSC is not to create an entire new body of knowledge, but to fill the gap between what has been identified as best practice and what is actually practiced in the field.

The Los Angeles team is headed by our Senior Leaders Team: Judge Michael Nash, Juvenile Court; Chief Robert Taylor, Probation Department; and Director Trish Ploehn, DCFS. Over the past nine months, the Senior Leaders, along with our Core Team comprised of a parent, youth and representatives from DCFS, Probation and DMH, have been engaged in learning the BSC methodology. The methodology is designed to help participating jurisdictions quickly test and fully implement best practices that are designed to drive system integration efforts which can be sustainable over time. The BSC method for attaining system improvement for crossover youth is achieved through learning sessions conducted by faculty members of the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University. Learning is also achieved through participation in monthly “All Collaborative Conference” calls involving the seven jurisdictions, and the sharing of information through an Extranet website. These learning opportunities provide a platform for the jurisdictions to design and implement precise “small tests of change” that are tested, studied and retested for spread within the target area.

The BSC is grounded in a “Change Package.” The Change Package identifies six broad system components necessary for improving child welfare and juvenile justice agencies’ practices. The goal is to achieve system change through “small tests of change” driven by rapid Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles. PDSA cycles are the foundation of the rapid changes that are witnessed in a BSC. Instead of spending weeks, months, or years planning for massive system reform efforts, teams are encouraged to test ideas rapidly. The Los Angeles team has centered its effort and PDSAs around active engagement of family and youth in the planning, decision-making, and treatment/recovery process. Some of the small tests of change conducted around our PDSAs include: improved school/home connection through the Team Decision Making (TDM) process, transition of a dual status youth to camp through the multidisciplinary team (MDT) process, parent and youth satisfaction surveys, and a community forum on improving outcomes for crossover youth.

Our greatest reform efforts have resulted from the community forum PDSA small test of change. This forum generated other PDSAs, one of which has resulted in the establishment of a dedicated unit for crossover youth in detention located at Central Juvenile Hall. The crossover youth selected the unit name and participated in the unit's program design. Future small tests of change will address the pressing issue of disproportionate minority confinement (DMC). We are presently preparing PDSAs to address DMC that will involve a "cultural broker" in the MDT assessment in order to improve our decision-making outcomes. DCFS and Probation will also be mapping, identifying, and evaluating decision-making points to impact DMC.

**What Have We Learned** - Through the BSC learning sessions, ongoing information sharing by participating jurisdictions, and learning from the PDSAs, we have begun to develop a more effective practice model and continuum for the care and treatment for crossover youth. The following four lessons now inform our practice:

- Having youth involvement is essential for identifying areas of concern to drive system improvement efforts. Therefore, we must embrace the concept and practice of youth participation within our administrative and programmatic planning efforts.
- Having parents with previous experience in the child welfare and juvenile justice system to mentor and match with current parents of court-involved youth facilitates and enhances parental engagement and motivation to change.
- Having the opportunity to hear our youth's stories through their voices provides us with empathic insight into their past and a greater understanding of what is important to help change their futures.
- With evidence-based principles and practices as our foundation and with youth voices guiding our implementation, we now have a more rounded and focused system of treatment and care to drive improved outcomes for crossover youth.

The BSC started in July of 2008 and will conclude in September of 2009. Over the next four months we will concentrate our efforts on continued development of our Elite Family Crossover Unit and in replicating the best practices that have resulted from the studies of our PDSAs and learning sessions. We anticipate integrating the work of the core team with the AB 129 Pilot. By integrating our efforts, we will be better able to sustain the practice model that has emerged from our involvement with the BSC and leverage resources and expertise, thereby increasing the likelihood of achieving system improvement for crossover youth.

### **Direct Services Activities**

As detailed in earlier sections of this report, during the past six months **DCFS** has continued to provide direct services to children and families under its priority initiatives. FTDM has been expanded to provide PPCs to youth in group home care in an effort to expedite permanency for these youth; 922 PPCs have been conducted for identified group home youth during the Waiver period. YP Units have been staffed, and social workers in these units are carrying reduced caseloads in an effort to locate and connect high need youth with permanency resources. These units currently serve over 200 youth. Since 2008, 1,160 families with 4,230 children have been provided with up-front assessments of substance abuse, domestic violence and/or mental health issues in DCFS regional offices and the ERCP. The PSSF programs, with their full

## Progress Activity Report

July 15, 2009

Page 14 of 15

allocation intact, have been allowed to provide the same level of services to their intended target populations as in the previous year. Actual fiscal year ending counts of numbers served for each program will not be available until the next reporting period.

As detailed in earlier sections of this report, during the past six months **Probation** has continued to provide direct services to children and families under its priority initiatives. Probation and DMH have conducted a total of 901 Cross-System Assessments; 209 were completed between January and June 2009. Probation and contracted vendors provided FFT services to 414 youth and families; of this number, 90 youth and families began receiving services during this reporting period. Fifty eight youth and families successfully completed the FFT program during this reporting period. The Probation FFPP DPOs provided FFPP case management services to 56 youth and families; of these, six have completed the FFPP supervision program requirements.

### **Evaluation Activities**

During May 2009, Charlie Ferguson, Ph.D., conducted the third in a series of focus groups and key participants interviews with all levels of DCFS staff. The purpose of the interviews was to determine whether changes in the funding structure for foster care will result in changes in the functioning of County child welfare systems that lead to improved outcomes for dependent and delinquent children and their families.

As stated in previous Waiver Progress Reports, DCFS, in conjunction with Casey Family Programs and Dr. McCroskey, are evaluating the Los Angeles Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) and Point of Engagement (POE). The evaluations of POE and PIDP are similar enough that many data collection tasks can be merged – especially since the prevention evaluation built on the original POE evaluation. On April 20, 2009, DCFS held its second PIDP-POE Learning Session with over 150 attendees from a diverse group of public and private sector agencies and communities. Representatives from the different Service Planning Areas (SPA) convened during afternoon breakout learning sessions to discuss, compare and contrast their experiences in implementing new strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect in the different regions of Los Angeles County. The final PIDP Evaluation Report is scheduled to be completed by August 2009.

As a result of Probation's inability to access CWS/CMS data and because juvenile justice systems have not historically warehoused needed project evaluation data, technological system enhancements are necessary and will promote the ability to draw down baseline and outcome data. Probation has incorporated many of the Waiver data needs into a "new" department automated system that was implemented in March 2009. However, due to the complexities of the new system, several issues were identified that must be addressed in order for the system to deliver data in an accurate and appropriate manner. IT and the Placement Services Bureau are working together and addressing the issues that have been identified. It is anticipated that the new system will be able to capture the number of active placement youth, number of closed placement cases, average length of stay in out-of-home care, number of placement episodes, number and type of outreach services provided for each case, and assistance payment costs for all Probation Placement youth once all IT issues are resolved. Additionally, Probation has continued to work with DCFS and the State Evaluator in identifying data that are currently available and needed data enhancements. Probation has been working with the State

Evaluator in conducting both internal focus groups and surveys to identify baseline data for the evaluation.

**Expenditure Narrative Based on Claiming Submissions**

DCFS expanded the following initiatives/strategies utilizing available flexible funds under the Waiver: Family Team Decision Making, Up-front Assessments, and Family Finding and Engagement. For the period of January 2009 to June 2009, the total amount of expenditures incurred for these initiatives/strategies is \$2,022,829. This amount includes salaries and employee benefits in the amount of \$1,560,303, Indirect Costs in the amount of \$390,076, and Contract Services of Upfront Assessment/Family Preservation Expansion in the amount of \$72,450. These expenditures will be reflected in our third and fourth quarter's claims for Fiscal Year 2008-09.