



Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency
Children & Family System Of Care

"Creating a Community of Safe and Independent Families and Individuals"

Mary Elliott ♦ Branch Director

Social Services Division
Becky Wilson, Deputy Director

September 18, 2008

Cheron Laboissonniere, Program Consultant
Children & Families Services
Outcomes & Accountability Bureau
CDSS

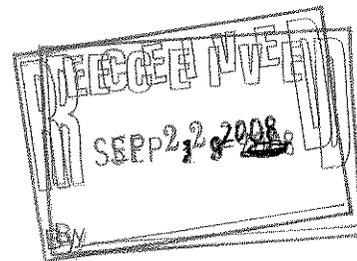
Dear Cheron Laboissonniere:

Herein you will find the System Improvement Plan for Mendocino County's Probation Department and the Health & Human Services Agency, Children & Family System of Care, Social Services Division (Child Welfare Services) for 2008-2011. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jill Singleton of my staff at (707) 463-7929.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Becky Wilson".

Becky Wilson
Deputy Director
Mendocino County HHSA, C&FSOC
Social Services Division



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California's Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan

In Collaboration With

County:	Mendocino
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency, Family & Children's System of Care Branch, Social Services Division
Period of Plan:	May 2008—May 2011
Period of Outcomes Data:	October 2007
Date Submitted:	

County Contact Person for County Self-Assessment

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Submitted by each agency for the children under its care

Submitted By:	County Child Welfare Agency Director (Lead Agency)
Name:	Mary Elliott, Director Family & Children's System of Care
Signature:	<i>Mary Elliott</i>
Submitted By:	County Chief Probation Officer
Name:	Wes Forman
Signature:	<i>Wes Forman</i>

Partners	Name(s)	Signature
Mendocino County's Policy Council on Children & Youth/Child Abuse Prevention Commission	Wes Forman, Chair See Attached Membership Listing.	<i>Wes Forman</i>

County Board of Supervisors

Approved by:	Name	<i>Jim R. [Signature]</i>
	Title	Chair
Signature:	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i> Kristi Furman, Clerk of the Board Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Approved as to form:
Jeanine B. Nadel, County Counsel

By: *[Signature]*
Date: Aug. 13, 08

Insurance Requirements:
Kristin McMernomey, Director

By: *[Signature]*
Date: 8-14-08

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MENDOCINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
ONLINE AGENDA SUMMARY

BOARD AGENDA # 5(11)

- Agenda Summaries must be submitted no later than *noon* Monday, 15 days prior to the meeting date
- Arrangements for timed presentations must be made in advance with the Clerk of the Board
- Send 14 complete sets (original, single-sided+13 copies) – Items must be cleared through appropriate departments and/or County Counsel
- Executed records will be returned to the department within one week. Arrangements for expedited processing must be made in advance
- Electronic Agenda Transmission Checklist: Agenda Summary Records If applicable, list other online information below

TO: Board of Supervisors DATE: August 14, 2008
 FROM: HHSA - Children & Family System of Care Branch MEETING DATE: September 9, 2008

DEPARTMENT RESOURCE/CONTACT: Carmel Angelo PHONE: 391-3570 Present On Call
 Board Item Author/Resource: Jill Singleton PHONE: 463-7929

Consent Agenda Regular Agenda Noticed Public Hearing Time Allocated for Item: _____

■ **AGENDA TITLE:** Approve the System Improvement Plan (SIP) for Mendocino County's Child Welfare Services and Probation Department for May 2008 through May 2011, and Sign the State-Required Cover Sheet Indicating Such Approval – Health and Human Services Agency, Children & Family System of Care.

■ **PREVIOUS BOARD/BOARD COMMITTEE ACTIONS:** The Board of Supervisors approved the first SIP in September of 2004. The Board approved the County Self-Assessment which is the basis for this SIP on June 24, 2008.

■ **SUMMARY OF REQUEST:** The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) requires counties to complete a comprehensive County Self-Assessment (CSA) and a System Improvement Plan (SIP) every three years. While the self-assessment requires the County's Probation Department and Child Welfare Services to address seventeen state-mandated outcome measures and broad issues impacting the children these agencies serve, the SIP requires a focus on the measures of most concern, and strategies for achieving significant related outcome improvements. Before submission to the Board of Supervisors for approval, the SIP must be reviewed by the Policy Council on Children and Youth/Child Abuse Prevention Commission (PCCY/CAPC). The PCCY/CAPC reviewed the SIP for 2008-2011 on July 19, 2008 and recommended that it be submitted to the Board of Supervisors for approval. If the Board approves, the SIP must then be submitted to CDSS for approval.

FISCAL IMPACT:			
Source of Funding	Current F/Y Cost	Annual Recurring Cost	Budgeted in Current F/Y
N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

■ **RECOMMENDED ACTION/MOTION:** Authorize and approve the System Improvement Plan (SIP) for Mendocino County's Child Welfare Services and Probation Department for May 2008 through May 2011, and sign the State-Required cover sheet indicating such approval – Health and Human Services Agency, Children & Family System of Care.

■ **ALTERNATIVES:** Do not approve the System Improvement Plan, require the Children & Family System of Care Branch to make changes to the plan, and resubmit it to the Board of Supervisors at a later date. This will delay implementation of the System Improvement Plan and improvements to outcome measures required by the State.

■ **CEO REVIEW (NAME):** Jennifer Wyatt PHONE: 463-4441

RECOMMENDATION: Agree Disagree No Opinion Alternate Staff Report Attached

BOARD ACTION (DATE: 9-9-08): Approved Referred to _____ Other _____

RECORDS EXECUTED: Agreement: _____ Resolution: _____ Ordinance: _____ Proclamation Other _____

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**MENDOCINO COUNTY
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
CHILDREN & FAMILY SYSTEM OF CARE
SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION
AND DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION
SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

MAY 31, 2008



The Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act (AB 636) of 2001 provides a framework for measuring and monitoring each county's child welfare services performance in ensuring the safety, permanence and well-being of children. The system established by AB 636 builds upon standards established by the federal government and adds outcome and accountability measures developed by California.

One component of the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CSFR) is the County System Improvement Plan (SIP). The County SIP outlines how the County will improve its system of care for children and youth and provides a method for reporting on progress toward meeting improvement goals using the C-CSFR outcomes and indicators.

This is Mendocino County's second System Improvement Plan. This document refreshes the last updated SIP of September 30, 2006 which *continued to address* the four outcome indicators identified for the original 2004 SIP: recurrence of maltreatment, rate of recurrence of abuse and neglect in homes where children were not removed, timely social worker and probation officer visits with children in foster care, and foster care placement in least restrictive settings. In addition, we addressed three permanence outcome indicators in response to the CDSS SIP Approval Document: length of time to exit foster care to adoption, multiple foster care placements, and rate of foster care re-entry.

Mendocino County System Improvement Plan

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Narrative

2008 SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1. Local Planning Bodies and SIP Team

In Mendocino County, the primary planning body that was used in development of the Self Assessment and System Improvement Plan (SIP) was the Policy Council on Children and Youth/Child Abuse Prevention Commission (PCCY/CAPC). The PCCY/CAPC has been in existence as a community and agency partnership for children since 1992. Key public and private agencies providing services to children are represented on this group, as well as community members and parents. The PCCY/CAPC serves as the Mendocino County Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council and is the advisory body for planning and allocating funds for a variety of child abuse prevention funds. The PCCY/CAPC publishes a Status Report on Children and Youth and has developed an interagency plan for children's services. Several other councils and cabinets are linked to PCCY/CAPC by having representatives seated on PCCY. These include the Children's System of Care (CSOC), First 5 Commission, the Alliance for Rural Community Health (ARCH), the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) Youth Council and the Child Care Planning Council:

- The **FIRST 5 Commission** is a partnership of representatives from County agencies and the community. The Commission has developed a multi-year plan with priorities for Parent Education and Access to Health Care and has funded programs throughout Mendocino County with tobacco tax funds. Regional grants have ensured that services are provided in all geographic areas. FIRST 5 has provided funding to most of the Family Resource Centers. FIRST 5 also brings together all the grantees in each area to share information about their projects and to coordinate services.
- **CSOC** is an established collaboration that is directed toward preventing high-level residential placements for youth with mental health issues or reducing the levels of placement, and bringing youth back into the county. It serves children and youth countywide and involves MCDSS, Mental Health, Public Health, Probation, and the County Office of Education.
- All of the Community Health Clinics countywide work together to serve the people of Mendocino County. The six organizations have clinic sites in Ukiah, Willits, Long Valley, Potter Valley, Anderson Valley, Fort Bragg, Gualala and Point Arena. All six are founders and members of the **ARCH** a non-profit providing clinics with advocacy, training, technical and other support services.

- The **WIB Youth Council** has oversight responsibility for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth employment funding. It also coordinates a Youth Summit every other year and provides mini grants for youth-driven projects, with funding from Social Services. The Policy Council on Children and Youth and the Youth Council have linked together to channel youth development planning and coordination through the Youth Council
- The **Child Care Planning Council** is focused on improving the availability, accessibility, and quality of childcare throughout Mendocino County. Community members, parents, and allied agencies are represented on this group.

The full list of agencies and organizations represented for the PCCY are listed on Attachment "A".

Children's Services and Probation Representatives

- Becky Wilson, Deputy Director
- Pat Atkinson, Senior Program Manager
- AJ Barrett, Senior Program Manager
- Jody Johnson, Senior Program Manager
- Deborah Moody, Senior Program Manager
- Jill Singleton, Senior Program Manager
- Jean Glentzer, Probation Department
- Trish Lammie, Probation Department
- Leadership Team (all managers and supervisors)
- Jerry Nicoletti, Consultant

2. Data Sources and Collection

For the **2008 SIP**, we used the AB 636 data summary report dated January 07, 2008 with a data extract from Q2-07, and the same report dated 4/4/08 with an extract date Q3-07, produced by the Center for Social Services Research at UC Berkeley. We also used Safe Measures and/or Business Objects reports as noted. For the **Self Assessment**, we used a broad array of State CWS outcome reports, our own Business Objects reports, Safe Measures and U.C. Berkeley reports due to the much denser grid of outcomes to be reported on. The summary section of the Self Assessment is included as Attachment "B".

From our latest Self Assessment (pages 163 & 164):

"In the process of conducting the Self-Assessment and PQCR, one theme surfaced over and over: that of relationships. Child Welfare Services and

Mendocino County System Improvement Plan: 2008

Probation, and all of our partner agencies consist of humans, dealing with other humans. Relationship is the basic ingredient, like flour to a cake.

In focus groups and panel discussions, we heard that positive change for the families we serve comes about through relationships—through people who see and treat them as human beings.

Clients said their turning points began with the receptionist who greeted them, the social work assistant who listened as he drove them to appointments, the group facilitator who encouraged them to try another tack, the parent sitting across from them in the parenting class who had the courage to tell the truth. Social workers said that the lives of even the most troubled clients turned around when someone, usually a social work assistant, was able to go into their homes regularly, help them with basic tasks, and relate to them genuinely, person to person. Public health nurses similarly cited their role as helpers and friendly visitors as the way they are able to make a difference for the parents and children they serve.

Interviews with foster children during our Peer Quality Case Review revealed that what they wanted most from their social workers was more of their time. They implied that they wanted the social workers to really know and understand them.

Child Welfare Services clients suggested that a way to improve the system would be to have parents who had experienced it, accompany social workers on emergency response investigations. Similarly, parent partners are seen as key to the success of families with troubled children in the Family Strengths and PACE programs, because their experience with the system allows them to help clients navigate the bureaucracy, at the same time they can relate to their feelings and circumstances.

Placement stability depends in great measure on our relationship with resource caregivers, whether foster parents, relatives or unrelated extended family members.

Relationship plays an important role between organizations in Mendocino County as well. In Child Welfare Services, to the extent we have been able to form respectful relationships with the people in our partner organizations—tribes, law enforcement, schools, foster family agencies, etc.—we do better by our clients. When the person-to-person relationship doesn't exist, or is strained, we make less effective decisions, and outcomes for our clients can be compromised.

It is the nature of Child Welfare Services that the strategies that promise to promote long term improvements are reduced or ended when we are short of funding or staff. In Mendocino County, we have worked to establish and sustain prevention programs such as Fast Track and Family Connections. We have made efforts to develop a family resource center network so that we can turn to our community-based organizations for prevention services as well. Unfortunately, they too require funding and trained staff to provide

Mendocino County System Improvement Plan: 2008

these services. Both can be hard to come by here. Internally we are exploring ways to address the tension between prevention and intervention more effectively. The HHSA director has made plans to aggressively seek additional funding to shore up prevention services in our county."

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

In keeping with the themes expressed above from the latest Self Assessment and last May's PQCR, this year's SIP represents continuity in some outcome areas and one new outcome measure. It is also the result of extensive discussions at management, supervision and staff level for purposes of inclusivity, creativity and buy-in to the culture change process envisioned. Each unit in the Division was met with individually for ideas and input which was then merged with input from the Self Assessment and PQCR as well as feedback via the PCCY/CAPC.

As a result, the 2008 SIP outlines a vision for the Division that is demanding and innovative at a time of continuing staffing deficits and extraordinary budgetary constraints. Rather than minimize our vision or expectations in these focus areas based on current vacancies and/or fiscal realities, we challenged ourselves to think and plan outside the box, as it were, reinventing ourselves in several key areas of operation while looking to enhance some current programs and services. We also closely examined outcome areas that were strongly interconnected and lent themselves to a few key strategies influencing more than one outcome, while creating new resources or enhancing existing ones at the same time. We proceeded with little expectation of increased total positions for social work staff or lessened budgetary pressures over the course of the next few years, so we had to look for economies of scale and ways to redirect resources from within an already beleaguered system. However, a certain degree of minimal staffing is an important predicate to this SIP. We currently have 10 vacant social work positions and seven additional social workers out on extended medical leave, out of 40 available slots. If we are unable to fill new vacancies, or even hold to our current social worker vacancy level, some implementation expectations may have to be reassessed, as plans and strategies assume a minimal level of staffing. Current staffing realities in Ft. Bragg and Willits, in particular, leave some initiatives to start in Ukiah and hopefully expand as time goes on. Ironically, those two outreach offices were ahead of the curve, so to speak, in use of voluntary services and interlinking programs before staff vacancies reduced their capabilities. On the plus side, the change of culture that will enable such ventures in Ukiah has already been seeded and productive in the other offices, so staffing is the main issue for rejuvenation in that regard.

These principal themes emerged from an amalgamation of all three processes (Self Assessment/PQCR/SIP):

1. Increase voluntary services (Path I and Path II clients) in lieu of what has historically been a primarily court driven system, to increase both staff and client empowerment and free up valuable social worker time from court pursuits while reducing risk and improving outcomes for children. This includes plans for much improved in-home parenting support to enhance an already robust Family Resource Center system. Principal to these efforts is the key

task of relationship-building with our families, and giving social workers the time to build and maintain such relationships, irrespective of program. It is our hope that as we divert appropriate families from court, we can dramatically increase the amount of time social workers have to do motivational engagement and relationship-building with families, as well as the amount of time social workers and social worker assistants have to do hands-on in-home support and training for families. For example, in a preliminary look at our staffing levels, we noted that the number of social worker assistants approaches the number of social workers in our Division. We noted that much of their time has been expended providing court-ordered visit supervision and transportation. Much of this time could be used for in-home support as fewer clients enter court cases. Supplementing these services will be our already existent fabric of Family Resource Centers providing a broad range of services countywide and inclusion of Family Group Conferencing in our standard practice. For Path II/Path III clients, continued use and maturation of our newly existent Family Dependency Drug Court services will hopefully positively affect reoccurrence of abuse while simultaneously affecting outcome areas not included in this SIP, such as rate of foster care reentry.

2. Improve staff morale and increase staff retention rates, with a renewed emphasis on our social work roots as activists for positive change in client's lives, versus relegating social work to mere "case management" and data entry. We are hopeful that providing a different look and less drastic options to families will empower them, as well as staff, to support positive changes on both ends of the equation and also yield risk reduction in families with less reoccurrence of abuse and neglect as an extended benefit.
3. Invigorate multi agency collaboration and integration into our service delivery system as we metamorphose from a singular Department to a member of a Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA). In keeping with this goal, this SIP also reflects input and participation from our HHSA partners. Plans are already in the works to involve AODP and Mental Health in assessing families very early in their involvement with child welfare services.
4. Increase commitment to ILP services. ILP-eligible youth represent a large number of our Permanency Planning children and are part of a virtual tsunami of children in our caseloads age 13.5 through 18. Trying to effectively deal with this increasing population via existing approaches and services seems ill-fated, particularly within mixed court FM/FR/PP caseloads where court FR and FM seem to perennially dominate social workers' time and energy. This led us to consider re-distributing cases to allow for reduced caseloads versus the state standard in PP (and court in general) whenever possible, and some degree of caseload specialization in

Permanency Planning. This adjustment of cases may well have to be implemented gradually, starting in the Ukiah main office as staffing in our two smaller offices is currently at critical mass. We hope to create a caseload or two of foster youth in Ukiah as an initial specialization effort. The actual structure of this PP specialization would include a Program Administrator providing coordination, program development and support, as well as direct services (workshops) to ILP and transition age/emancipated youth. Currently, a Social Worker V provides these services. Since we can't create a new position, we hope to convert the Social Worker V position into a Program Administrator position, which more closely matches the duties performed. At least one specialized PP caseload for youth would be developed in the existing special needs unit, with two social workers (one a part-time intern) and a full-time social worker assistant providing case management and support for youth, along with support for such programs as Transition Age Youth (TAY) and the Transitional Housing and Placement Program (THPP). Mendocino County currently has a robust array of I.L.P. services that will supplement these efforts. Please see Attachment "C" for a full listing of current and planned I.L.P. services.

5. Increase emphasis on Family Finding and Family Group Conferencing. To the extent that we are successful at reducing mandatory caseloads by increasing voluntary cases and creating other specialized caseloads (See #6, below), we will free staff time to expand current Family Finding Efforts. Through Family Finding, we can identify family or non-related extended family members for new entries prior to their exiting shelter care, and for other children who are currently without a permanent placement. We have been piloting a Family Finding Component, and hope to begin to expand it by focusing on two engagement points: 1) Up front as part of a Family Group Conference or similar model wherein we involve parents, relatives and friends in problem-solving about a variety of issues, including placement; and 2) in Permanency Planning for children who are between the ages of 13 and 17. One idea is to involve these youth actively in their own search for family and friends who could be lifelong connections for them. During our PQCR, we learned that once children were placed with a relative or extended family member, placement changes virtually ended. So, we anticipate that increased Family Finding will reduce placement changes and improve placement stability outcomes. Family Group Conferencing serves other functions in addition to providing a forum for identifying relatives and friends for placement and permanency. Several similar promising models for involving parents and community members with social services and other partner agencies at the very beginning of a family's involvement with child welfare services have come to our attention recently. In Mendocino County, we have employed multi-disciplinary case conferencing extensively throughout the child welfare services case. We haven't always involved families and friends as actively as we'd like,

however, and we haven't tried this process at the very beginning when we are making decisions about detaining children. We intend to utilize Family Group Conferencing, and perhaps Team Decision Making up front, as soon as we are able, and to include the families and friends as a standard procedure. Plans are already in the works to involve AODP and Mental Health in assessing families early in their involvement with child welfare services. They may make home visits along with social workers who are investigating referrals. These partners would be part of the Family Group Conference along with any other relevant community members and agency representatives. Family Group Conferencing is also a key strategy for addressing other issues and crises as they arise, and is a way of providing enhanced support to caregivers so that placement issues can be dealt with both in a timely, and supportive way. Hopefully, this will lessen placement changes for many of our children.

6. Develop specialized and/or reduced caseloads. It appears we currently have caseload growth potential in our Ukiah Voluntary Services unit that will support our plan for enhanced voluntary services. While initially not a county wide strategy due to constraints already cited, hope springs eternal that staffing for our outreach offices will improve over the next year. By establishing a specialized youth caseload, as noted in #4 above, we will create space in our existing "Continuing" units that serve FM, FR and PP cases, and allow social workers to engage in more relation-supporting work. In addition, we are currently assessing the potential for taking PP cases out of the mixed court caseload units, and specializing in that way as well. The goal is less scattering of energy and better social work practice by spreading the caseload differently and perhaps reducing it across the board. We also have several social workers in Ukiah who are moving from Social Worker I to II and so forth, and thus able to carry more cases than at present. This will have the eventual effect of reducing the caseloads in the "Continuing" units and enabling us to do more and better traditional social work.
7. Ensure timely visits for the full spectrum of children on our caseloads. Timely visits will support relationship- building, improve placement stability, expand and support relative/nrefm placements and improve safety.

PROBATION

The Probation Department's 2008 SIP goal is enhanced reunification services for Probation wards and their families, which was their main theme during last year's PQCR. This year Probation is focusing on placement stability as it relates to parental involvement, and utilizing the least restrictive environment. Probation's two selected measures within the Reunification Composite for this SIP are Reunification within 12 months, entry and exit cohorts, (C1.1 & C 1.3). Time to reunification varies considerably for Probation wards over time. However, the median number of months to reunification since April to March 05-06 exceeds the twelve month outcomes measurement by just over seven months⁴. Percentage wise, the number of Probation children reunified within 12 months has also dropped since April-March 04-05, from 57.1 % to 16.7% for the same months in 06-07⁵. We believe this is related to the increased treatment needs of the wards, specifically sex offenders, and 26.5 (emotionally disturbed) wards, and is often the result of extensive dependency history. The total children in out-of-home placement has stayed relatively stable from 24 in April 07, to 26 April 08. Despite an out-of-home care population generally presenting with criminogenic needs, drug abuse, sexual victimization and perpetration and gang affiliation, the Probation Department feels the following strategies will yield improved outcomes for the areas under consideration.

1. Increase the safety and positive change for wards and their families while improving their prospects for successful reunification via the purchase of new risk/needs assessment tool and case management software program. Among its capabilities are recording standardized risk/needs assessments and also transferring critical information to assist in case plan development. This new software program, PACT, is Title IVE compliant. By standardizing and documenting initial and ongoing risk and needs assessments, wards will be evaluated using the latest tools with reporting capabilities for in-depth analysis of trends and outcomes for data collection. Case plan documentation will be IVE compliant with enhanced quality of the case plans themselves, predicated on the safety, needs and services assessments, and reassessments, at key junctures, for their wards and their families.

⁴ Mendocino County Self Assessment, figure 67, page 66.

⁵ Mendocino County Self Assessment, figure 60, page 66.

2. Devote clerical support to improve the process of establishing eligibility, completing Title IVE mandated documents, developing parent manuals and resources, and communicating with agencies to gather needed documents.
3. Localize services, in alignment with the above strategy, to improve reunification efforts. Having the wards and their families in closer proximity to each other facilitates the availability of resources and case management activities. These services will include Children's System of Care (CSOC) and Inter Agency Children's Multidisciplinary Team (IACMT) partners including Social Services, Mental Health and Public Health, and improved utilization of Wrap Around/Family Strengths services. Establishing relationships with existent Foster Family Agencies in order to build up local placement potential, including Intensive Foster Care, is a key component of this localization strategy.
4. Recruit and develop foster homes specifically for probation wards. In keeping with the above, Probation and Redwood Children's Services is recruiting and developing foster homes specifically for probation wards. This program utilizes Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) focusing strongly on engagement and training of foster parents and biological family members. The average duration to reunification for these wards is 9 months, which will improve our time to reunification. Wards selected for these foster homes would have a history of severe and persistent problem behavior and multiple treatment or placement failures.
5. Seek funding for additional services. Yet another strategy is to work with the community and foundations for funding of services for parents and wards, including prevention, education and intervention services, when appropriate.
6. Continue and expand parent support and education. Probation will continue to utilize DSS parenting and empowerment groups. Additionally probation is developing a parent support and education group for families with wards in placement, which will be led by a placement probation officer.

2008 SIP FOCUS AREAS

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

- **Timely social worker visits (2C)** – a carryover from our last SIP as we wanted continuity in this safety measure and to emphasize compliance as an ongoing concern.
- **Recurrence of Maltreatment (S1.1)** – a carryover from our last SIP.
- **Placement Stability (C4.1-C4.3) with a subset of Least Restrictive Placement with Relatives (4B)** - These are also carryovers from our last SIP (including updates).
- **ILP (8A)** – This is a new measure for the 2008 SIP and reflects heightened concerns about the number of children who not only fit into the traditional CWS I.L.P. category (15.5 to 19) but also children on the cusp of I.L.P. eligibility. This area also has ties to Placement Stability and Least Restrictive Placement, so a certain amount of outcome synergy is developed between categories.

PROBATION

- **Reunification within 12 months (C1.1 & C 1.3)** - a carryover area from the Probation PQCR in May 2007.
- **Placement Stability (C4.2) with a subset of Least Restrictive Placement (4B)** – a carryover area from the Probation PQCR in May of 2007.

USE of CWSOIP FUNDS 2007/2008

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

Mendocino County Child Welfare Services received a Child Welfare Services Outcome Improvement Project (CWSOIP) allocation of \$50,544 for Fiscal Year 2007/2008. At this time, we have claimed only through the third quarter of the fiscal year, so final expenditures are unknown. However, at the end of the third quarter, we had spent \$43,476 from this allocation. The funds expended were in support of the following outcome goals from our previous SIP:

Recurrence of Maltreatment, Improvement Goal 1.0

"Improve the assessment of safety/risk in families where there has been a substantiated report of abuse and neglect."

Recurrence of Maltreatment, Improvement Goal 2.0

"Improve support system and develop comprehensive services for families identified as at high risk for recurrence of abuse/neglect."

Rate of Recurrence of Abuse and/or Neglect in Homes Where Children Were Not Removed, Improvement Goal 1.0

"Improve the assessment of safety/risk in families

Rate of Recurrence of Abuse and/or Neglect in Homes Where Children Were Not Removed, Improvement Goal 3.0

"Improve consistency in risk and safety assessments."

Rate of Foster Care Re-entry, Improvement Goal 1.0

"Reduce the number of children re-detained after reunification or guardianship."

Mendocino County System Improvement Plan: 2008

Expenditure	Amount	Outcomes/Goals Addressed
Automated Data Collection & Reporting System for Family Resource Centers	\$10,959	<p>Recurrence of Maltreatment, Improvement Goal 2.0 Strategy 2.2.3: "Continued support for FRCs for provision of services in remote areas—funds for software for tracking services provided and progress at all FRCs.</p>
Nuestra Alianza Family Resource Center, Latino Community, Willits	\$7,518	<p>Recurrence of Maltreatment, Improvement Goal 2.0 Strategy 2.2.1: "Continued support for FRCs for provision of services in remote areas—identify other communities that have interest in establishing an FRC.</p>
Sphere Institute—CAT Risk & Safety Assessment Tool	\$25,000	<p>Recurrence of Maltreatment, Improvement Goal 1.0 Strategy 1.1: "Establishment of a countywide protocol for use of risk and safety assessment" Rate of Recurrence of Abuse and/or Neglect in Homes Where Children Were Not Removed, Improvement Goal 1.0 and 3.0 Strategy 1.2: " Expand risk/safety assessment training to all County CWS staff" Strategy 3.1:" Case review of all recurrence cases" Rate of Foster Care Re-entry, Improvement Goal 1.0 Strategy 1.1: "Establishment of a countywide protocol for use of risk and safety assessment" Strategy 1.2: : " Expand risk/safety assessment training to all County CWS staff"</p>

PROBATION

The Mendocino County Probation Department is using its entire CWSOIP allocation to implement an assessment and case management tool called Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT). The tool will be used to assess wards at the time of disposition as to their risk for re-offending, and their criminogenic needs on 12 domains. Their risk for re-offending will drive objectives and case planning. A reassessment, done at a minimum of every six months, will evaluate changes to dynamic factors. The tool will enable the Probation Department to assess more consistently the potential for wards to reunify with parents successfully and to be placed in less restrictive settings.

Outcomes, Improvement Goals, Strategies & Milestones – Child Welfare Services

Outcome/Systemic Factor: (CWS)

Recurrence of Maltreatment (S1.1): This measure reflects the percent of children who were victims of child abuse/neglect with a subsequent substantiated report of abuse/neglect within specific time periods.

County's Current Performance: Per U.C. Berkeley's reports, this area shows *improvement* from the baseline of 01/02-12/02 versus 01/06-12/06, from 37.2 % to 27.7 % which is a 25.6 % positive change. However, for the most recent period reported (October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007) the rate of no recurrence for Mendocino County was 92.7 %, lower than the federal standard of 94.6 %.

Improvement Goal 1.0 Engage a greater number of families with prevention services using enhanced Path I/Path II strategies and resources. Expand CWS voluntary services (VFM/VFR) for Path II families and use court for Path III clients where risk cannot be reduced or where removal is the only prudent option at case inception. Services to an increased pool of clients will engage them prior to our ability to do so historically, and hopefully reduce re-substantiations.

Strategy 1.1 Analyze caseloads department wide, particularly in the voluntary unit and on-going court units, to determine actual active caseload size and projections of where overall caseload growth can be achieved to accommodate enhanced VFM/VFR services.

Strategy Rationale: Increased and consistent voluntary services will provide a healthier array of options for families and social workers. It will also enable relationship building as one predicate to better outcomes and reduced resubstantiations. Initial and on going risk and safety assessment tools will document voluntary efforts and measure reduction of risk over time.

<p>Milestone</p>	<p>1.1.1 We are currently assessing caseloads department wide. Staffing constraints are most pronounced in Ft. Bragg and Willits at this time, so Ukiah may be the proper place to start. We currently see caseload expansion capacity in our current Ukiah voluntary unit.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>To be Completed by June 15, 2008</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>Child Welfare Services (CWS) Program Managers for all programs, county wide</p>
<p>Strategy 1.2 Enhance our early efforts at Family Group Conferencing as an active component for all cases, including voluntary, and as an early intervention technique. Possibly start with VFM/VFR cases to “seed” this model and to help embrace the change of culture organizationally that it represents. Plan appropriate trainings to incorporate this approach into our services delivery. (See page 9, item 5)</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale Increased family inclusion into case planning and decision making supports our enhanced voluntary services approach and can also be used in court services once the model has taken hold in voluntary services. This would also work to build and maintain relationships that promote the family’s acceptance of services and identify resources that improve their chances for success.</p>		
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>1.2.1 Decision made by management to include Family Group Conferencing as a departmental policy and to incorporate it into our practice, starting in voluntary services, and then extending into court services. Discussions with U.C. Davis regarding Family Group Conferencing training will commence with state approval of our SIP.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>Training to be completed by September 2008, ongoing Training as implementation expands. <i>Ongoing</i></p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>CWS Deputy Director, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Program Managers for all programs, county wide.</p>
<p>Strategy 1.3 Enhance our multidisciplinary team approach to case conferencing and Family Group Conferencing to include all our HHSA partners, including AOD, & Mental Health. Jointly determine where and how this approach may best work. Examine co-location and efficiency options.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale Multidisciplinary approach to client assessment and services broadens our understanding of family needs and dynamics while promoting integration, consensus and cooperation between HHSA agencies.</p>		

Milestone	1.3.1 Coordination and discussion on implementing this model has begun at a high level in our HHSA and regular meetings have commenced on integration of services with HHSA Deputies and Managers.	Timeframe	2008-2009	Assigned to	CWS Deputy Director, Mental health Director, AOD Director, Children's System of Care Coordinator, Program Managers for all three Departments.
<p>Strategy 1.4 Expanded use of existent Family Connections Program for Path I clients and also referral to, and coordination of, services with community partners such as domestic violence programs, health related services by Public Health to engage families earlier with support services to reduce re-referrals and potential resubstantiations.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale: Broader family engagement strategies will intervene earlier in the abuse/neglect cycle before issues become deep seated and much more difficult to ameliorate without drastic action. More families and more children will receive prevention services.</p>		
Milestone	1.4.1 Family Connections programs now county wide. Ukiah also features services to Spanish speaking clients through "Nuestra Casa". Family Resource Centers are also county wide and provide an array of parenting and support services to clients.	Timeframe	October 2007-2008 <i>Completed and ongoing</i>	Assigned to	Program Administrator; CWS Program Manager.
<p>Improvement Goal 2.0 Improve support system and develop comprehensive services for families identified at higher risk for recurrence of abuse/neglect. (Path II / Path III clients)</p>					

<p>Strategy 2.1 Use of "Family Strengths" program/staff from Mental Health as part of a Path III enhanced engagement strategy for higher risk families integrated into VFM/VFR services, and for some Path III families as well. Integrate Family Strengths into our Family Case Conferencing model and include their use of parent partners and mentors into our Family Group Conferencing model</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale: Use of an strength based assessment and services provision model is an integral part of our culture change from a largely court driven system and supports our goals of both family, and social worker, empowerment. Changing our image and approach with families will inevitably change our self image and hopefully reduce burnout and increase retention of staff as well.</p>			
Milestone	<p>2.1.1 Integration of Family Strengths Program <i>Underway</i></p>	Timeframe	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	Assigned to	<p>CWS Deputy Director, Mental Health Director, AOD Director, Children's System of Care Coordinator, Program Managers for all three Departments</p>
<p>Strategy 2.2 Continued support for FRCs for provision of services county wide for enhanced early prevention and/or voluntary services (Path I/Path II). Progress: Support continues for FRCs including funding for software programs for recording of participation and success of families receiving services at FRCs and tracking whether re-referrals to CWS are abated by FRC usage.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale The continued support of these FRCs and support for establishing additional FRCs in other outlying communities and Native American communities will ensure support to families that might otherwise be isolated from services either because of geographic location or lack of services that are culturally sensitive.</p>			
Milestone	<p>Currently, six FRCs in Mendocino County that are independent non-profits or operated by school districts provide services to urban and outlying communities and to the Latino population in Ukiah.</p>	Timeframe	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	Assigned to	<p>CWS Deputy Director, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Program Managers for all programs, county wide.</p>
<p>Strategy 2.3 Using our pool of social worker assistants county wide</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale: Expanding in home services for voluntary clients</p>			

for hands-on in-home support and teaching/demonstrating services to VFM/VFR clients. This will buttress social worker efforts and supplement FRC services. Enhanced monitoring of child safety via increased presence in the home for VFM clients. Can also be used for court driven cases.		is in keeping with our early intervention/family empowerment model featuring Family Connections and Family Strengths efforts and expands our role of active engagement and reduction of re-abuse.			
Milestone	2.3.1 Plan for expanded use of social worker assistants as outlined above adopted and endorsed by CWS Management Team, including appropriate trainings to implement this strategy	Timeframe	Start September 2008 <i>Ongoing</i>	Assigned to	CWS Deputy Director, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Program Managers for all programs, county wide.
Improvement Goal 3.0 Standardized risk and safety assessment tools system wide which support strength based practice.					
Strategy 3.1 In concert with State guidance, decide on whether to continue use of the Comprehensive Assessment Tool (CAT) after July 1, 2008 or to use Structured Decision Making (SDM).			Strategy Rationale CAT was implemented in Mendocino County August 2007, but implementation has been inconsistent. A standardized empirically based tool is needed.		
Milestone	3.1.1 Decide on which tool to use.	Timeframe	To be Completed Sept 1, 2008	Assigned to	CWS/CMS Deputy Director and CWS Program Managers.
Milestone	3.1.2 Train staff to use the tools and monitor progress and usage system wide.	Timeframe	To be completed after September 2008 <i>Ongoing</i>	Assigned to	CWS/CMS Program Administrator
Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals. The following systemic factors will incur changes as a result of the strategies outlined above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Collaboration:</i> Collaborative efforts between CWS and our HHSA partners, as well as other public and community organizations will be critical, in keeping with Path I/Path II goals. 					
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.					

Staff Training: Staff will receive ongoing training to support all the above strategies – ongoing. This includes training’s that enhance change of organizational culture. Discussion of training and support needs, with State and U.C.Davis staff to commence upon approval of SIP

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

Other partners that will play a role in achieving the improvement goals above include:

AODP – providing staff time for case-conferencing for cases where they are providing substance abuse treatment.

Public Health, Mental Health, Redwood Coast Regional Center, and the Mendocino County Office of Education – providing staff time for conferencing and service coordination.

Nuestra Casa in Ukiah for Spanish speaking clients.

Family Resource Centers (FRC) – existing FRCs in continuing to work with MCDSS to provide the family empowerment program to outlying and minority communities and Native American tribes and other outlying communities in identifying potential new FRCs

Outcome/Systemic Factor: (CWS)

2C Timely Social Worker Visits With Child: This measure reflects whether social workers visit with the children in their care as required.

County’s Current Performance: The CWS Systems Outcomes Summary dated 01/08/08 shows continued Mendocino progress with a +23.4 % *improvement* compared to baseline data with 56.9% compliance in 6/03 versus 78.6% in 6/07 (month 3). Measures for month 1 and month 2 also increased significantly from 63.7% to 86% and 59.6 % to 86.1 %. Our latest internal Business Objects report for March 08 (Attachment “D”) shows 94.53% compliance for that month. This positive trend is testament to systems and protocols regarding this focus area established via our previous SIP (including updates) and Self Assessment processes, despite staffing/retention issues being a major concern over the last few years. This is an area of our SIP that involves central themes and concepts we discussed earlier in this document, such as forming specialized caseloads, reducing overall caseloads, and enabling social workers to spend more time building and maintaining relationships with their clients. All of these are key ingredients for improvement overall. They will, in turn, contribute to reduced burnout, and increased staff retention, and promote timely social worker visits as well. Assessing our current and future caseload capacity is key to our success in diverting resources into specialization and into new/enhanced program development in the voluntary area. Close monitoring of the results by supervisors and management will go hand in hand with an emphasis on timely visits in this new SIP.

Improvement Goal 4.0 Improvement of Social Worker visits to *all Mendocino County dependents or children of voluntary clients*. **Expanded**

from previous goal specifying out of county placements only.			
Strategy 4.1 Monthly monitoring reports (Business Objects/Safe Measure) on Social Worker visits will continue to be provided to Social Worker Supervisors		Strategy Rationale Social Worker Supervisors will be better able to monitor the work of Social Workers and to identify problem areas and facilitate timely visits more effectively for all children in our caseloads to ensure that children receive the required monthly visits.	
Milestone	4.1.1 Completed for out of county children per last SIP, now implemented for all children in CWS caseloads.	Timeframe	<i>Ongoing</i> Assigned to CWS Deputy Director, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Program Managers for all programs, county wide.
Strategy 4.1. 2 Assess current caseloads department wide, to determine active caseload size and projections of where overall caseload growth can be achieved in some areas in order to reduce caseloads in court services. Emphasis on consideration of specialized P.P. caseload(s) to reduce current mixed court caseloads (FM/FR/PP). We are currently assessing caseloads department wide. Staffing constraints are most pronounced in Ft. Bragg and Willits at this time, so Ukiah may be the proper place to start.		Strategy Rationale: Even minor reductions on court FM/FR caseloads should improve social workers ability to make timely contacts in those programs, supplemented by enhanced voluntary services and specialized P.P. caseloads (cases exiting mixed caseloads). All these efforts should enhance the amount and quality of contacts with children, which hopefully will also enhance permanency, placement stability and relative placements. This will also improve social worker morale/retention as they will have more time for relationship building with all clients.	
Milestone	4.1.3 Currently being done.	Timeframe	To be Completed by June 15, 2008 Assigned to CWS Deputy Director, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Program Managers for all programs, county wide.
Strategy 4.2 Establish Administrative Reviews for Permanency		Strategy Rationale: Reduce social worker court activity time while	

Planning cases.		improving outcomes for children in areas of contacts, ILP, Family Finding, relationship building, placement stability, improved social worker morale and retention via reduced court stress.	
Milestone	4.2.1 Decision made to conduct Administrative reviews	Timeframe	2008-2009
Assigned to	CWS Deputy Director, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Program Managers for all programs, county wide.		
<p>Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals. The following systemic factors will incur changes as a result of the strategies outlined above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Quality Assurance</i>: Quality assurance efforts will be expanded and formalized. • Change from generic mixed caseloads to some degree of specialized caseloads. • Implementation of new program (Administrative Reviews). 			
<p>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting Administrative Reviews. • Enhanced use of Safe Measures and Business Objects reports by Managers, Supervisors and Staff. • Training and support regarding the agency culture and practice changes outlined in this SIP. 			
<p>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juvenile Court – Approval for Administrative Reviews and coordination of implementation. • County Counsel – Training for Administrative Reviews. • U.C. Davis – Safe Measures training 			
<p>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</p> <p>None</p>			

Outcome/Systemic Factor: (CWS)

Placement Stability (C 4.1 – C 4.3): This measure reflects the number of children with multiple placements.

Subset for this factor :

Foster Care Placement in Least Restrictive Setting (increase in number placed with relatives – 4B)

Improvement Goal 5.0 Increase the number of children who are experiencing fewer than 2 placements in their first year in foster care and increase relative/NREFM placements.

Strategy 5.1 Increase number of children exiting from Shelter Care into relative/NREFM placements as well for children in out-of-home placement in general. (See page 9, item 5)

Strategy Rationale: Increasing relative/NREFM placements has been demonstrated (PQCR) to increase placement stability for children in out of home care.

Milestone	5.1.1 Define roles and responsibilities regarding relative/NREFM placements upon exit from Shelter Care . Include supervision and staff in centralized placement unit , ER-Court units and ongoing units (FR/PP) in discussions and implementation.	Timeframe	<i>July 2008 and ongoing</i>	Assigned to	CWS Deputy Director, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Program Managers for Path III programs , county wide.
Milestone	5.1.2 Conduct research about regulations and funding impacts concerning relative/nrefm placements pending clearances, and before and after detention. Consult with County Counsel, & CDSS to ensure that applicable State & federal funds can be used to cover foster care costs.	Timeframe	<i>June & July 2008</i>	Assigned To	AJ Barrett & Deborah Moody, CWS Program Managers

<p>Strategy 5.2 Reduced and/or specialized caseloads to increase social worker time and availability to do Family Finding in addition to currently assigned staff.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale : Increasing relative/NREFM placements has been demonstrated (PQCR) to increase placement stability for children in out of home care.</p>			
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>5.2.1. We are currently assessing caseloads department wide. Staffing constraints are most pronounced in Ft. Bragg and Willits at this time, so Ukiah may be the best place to start.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p><i>June 15, 2008 and Ongoing</i></p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>CWS Deputy Director, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Program Managers for all programs, county wide</p>
<p>Strategy 5.2.2 Use of Family Group Conferencing to assist in identifying relative and NREFM options for children.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale : Bringing additional resources to the family finding effort will likely increase relative/NREFM placements and enhance placement stability. This will also enhance family participation, cooperation and general buy-in to case planning activities.</p>			
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>Has started but will be broadly implemented under this SIP.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>2008-2009</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>CWS Deputy Director, Mental Health Director, Children's System of Care Coordinator, Program Managers.</p>
<p>Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HHS and CWS culture and practice changes outlined in this SIP focus area 					

- Improve support and training to caregivers, particularly relative/nrefm placements.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

- Training and support regarding the agency culture and practice changes outlined in this SIP area, particularly Family Finding and ,Family Group Conferencing.
- Verification of funding options for relative/NREFM placements when all background clearances have not been received, and for post-detention placements.

<p>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HHSA and FFA partners supporting our increased emphasis on relative/nrefm placement options for children
<p>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</p> <p>None</p>

<p>Outcome/Systemic Factor: (CWS)I.L.P. Services (8A) – Improve outcomes for youth to emancipate successfully and increase availability of post emancipation mentors .</p>	
<p>County’s Current Performance: This is a new outcome area for the 2008 SIP, but ties into placement stability, lifelong connections and least restrictive placement as well. The total number of ILP youth has grown consistently in Mendocino County. For 2001-2002, 54 clients received services, in 05-06, 68 clients and for 06-07, 82 received services. Other 8A outcome measurements for 06-07 remain somewhat consistent over time, with 8 of 54 Mendocino ILP clients attending college for 06-07, 18 of 54 completing High School, 10 of 54 receiving or completed vocational training and 29 of 54 obtaining either part or full time employment.</p>	
<p>Improvement Goal 6.0 Increase relative/nrefm placements for ILP youth.</p>	
<p>Strategy 6. 1 Reduced and/or specialized caseloads to increase social worker time and availability to do Family Finding in addition to currently assigned staff.</p>	<p>Strategy Rationale⁶ It has been demonstrated that relative/nrefm placements enhance placement stability while lessening multiple placements. We also believe that emphasizing emancipation programs/resources will increase likelihood of mentors and employment being found for ILP youth.</p>

⁶ Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor

<p>Milestone</p>	<p>6.1.1 We are currently assessing caseloads department wide. Staffing constraints are most pronounced in Ft. Bragg and Willits at this time, so Ukiah may be the best place to start.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>June 15, 2008 and on going</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>CWS Deputy Director, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Program Managers for all programs, county wide</p>
<p>Strategy 6.1. 2 New Program Administrator to provide coordination, program development and support, as well as direct services (workshops), to I.L.P. and transition age/emancipated youth. A second “specialized” P.P. caseload would be included in the existing special needs unit, with two social workers and a full time social worker assistant providing case management and support for I.L.P. youth and support for such programs as Transition Age Youth (TAY) and Transitional Housing Program (T.H.P.) and other services/programs as noted on Attachment “C”. .</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale: Administrative support and another social worker position focusing on ILP youth, along with a full time social worker assistant versus the current half-time position, should improve services and outcomes for I.L.P. youth while expanding programs that serve them. Also should improve relationship building.</p>		
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>6.2.1.Administrator position budgeted and I.L.P. program structure endorsed by CWS Management Team.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>Current and ongoing</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>CWS Deputy Director, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Program Managers for all programs, county wide</p>
<p>Strategy 6. 1. 3 Assess potential for expanding traditional I.L.P. services in specialized P.P. caseloads to include some youth age 13 ½ to 15.5</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale: Identifying special needs youth that need I.L.P. services prior to 15.5, and that are at higher risk for unsuccessful emancipation, should improve long term emancipation goals and outcomes per area 8A.</p>		

Milestone	1.3.1 We are currently assessing caseloads department wide in order to staff a second P.P. specialized caseload in addition to other support and services structure noted in this category.. Staffing constraints are most pronounced in Ft. Bragg and Willits at this time, so Ukiah may be the best place to start.	Timeframe	Current and ongoing	Assigned to	CWS Deputy Director, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Program Managers for all programs, county wide
<p>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. Structural changes as noted above.</p>					
<p>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Focus on emancipation services in a specialized P.P. caseload.</p>					
<p>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. Please see Attachment "C" for all I.L.P. partner agencies</p>					
<p>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. None</p>					

Outcomes, Improvements Goals, Strategies & Milestones - Probation

Improvement Goal 1.0 (Probation) Reunification within 12 months (C1.1 & C 1.3) – Number of children that reunify within 12 months as an entry and exit cohort.					
County's Current Performance: Time to reunification varies considerably for Probation wards over time. However, the median number of months to reunification since April to March 05-06 exceeds the twelve month outcomes measurement by just over seven months as previously noted. Percentage wise, the number of Probation children reunified within 12 months has also dropped since April-March 04-05, from 57.1 % to 16.7% for the same months in 06-07, likewise previously noted. Meanwhile, total children in out-of-home placement has stayed relatively stable from 24 in April 07 to 26 April 08 per the latest stats available from Probation directly.					
Strategy 1.1 Increase the safety and needs assessments for wards and their families while improving their prospects for successful reunification via the purchase of new data management and reporting software. Among its capabilities are recording standardized risk/needs assessments and also transferring critical information to assist in case plan development. This new software program, PACT, is Title IVE compliant.			Strategy Rationale By standardizing and documenting initial and ongoing risk and needs assessments, wards will be uniformly evaluated using the latest tools with reporting capabilities providing in-depth analysis of trends and outcomes for this SIP. Case plan documentation will be IVE compliant with enhanced quality of the case plans themselves, predicated on the safety, needs and services assessments, and reassessments, at key junctures, for wards and their families		
Milestone	1.1.1 Purchase agreement is signed and program training has begun.	Timeframe	Current and ongoing	Assigned to	Chief Probation Officer
	1.1.2 Software will be installed and available for training and use.		September 2008		Assessment.com
	1.1.3 Majority of staff will be trained for full implementation.		January 2009		Juvenile Probation Division Manager

Strategy 1. 2 Devote new clerical support to improve the process of establishing eligibility, completing Title IV E documents, developing parent manuals and resources, and communicating with agencies to gather needed documents.		Strategy Rationale Improve the speed and accuracy of document preparation and receipt.	
Milestone	1.2.1 Clerical staff has been assigned to placement unit and is currently training on eligibility procedures and court process.	Timeframe	Ongoing
		Assigned to	Placement Supervising DPOIII
Strategy 1.2 Work with the community and foundations for funding services for parents and wards, including prevention, education and intervention services, when appropriate.		2.3.1 Strategy Rationale: Funding for new resources for treatment will be needed. The MTFC program will augment present services and is funded by CSOC (Children's System of Care) agreement.	
Milestone	1.2.1 To be explored upon SIP approval.	Timeframe	On going
		Assigned To	Juvenile Division Manager, Placement Supervising DPO III and placement probation officers
Strategy 2.3 Probation and Redwood Children's Services is recruiting and developing intensive foster homes for wards. Utilizing Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC).		Strategy Rationale: MTFC model is a local less restrictive foster care program with shorter duration.	

Milestone		Timeframe	Assigned to
	<p>1.3.1 Conference calls with RCS, TFC consultant and probation.</p>	<p>Currently and ongoing</p>	<p>RCS and Chief Probation Officer, Juvenile Division Manger and Placement Supervising DPO III</p>
	<p>1.3.2 Training for RCS staff and probation placement staff and implementation of program.</p>	<p>Training set for July 2008 with program implementation scheduled for Fall of 2008.</p>	<p>RCS staff, Placement Staff and TCF Consultant.</p>

<p>Strategy 1. 4 Probation will utilize DSS parenting and empowerment groups. Additionally probation is developing a parent support and education group for families with wards in placement, led by probation staff.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale: Enhanced services and support for parents of children in placements, improving coping skills, learning effective parenting techniques, understanding the dynamics of wards behaviors thereby improving chances for successful reunification.</p>	
Milestone	<p>1.4.1 First class initiated June 10, 2008. (6 week program)</p>	Timeframe	<p>On going</p>
		Assigned to	<p>Supervising Placement DPOIII and Deputy Probation Officers</p>
<p>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of new resources such as parenting education support services, improved transportation services, increased placement options. • Juvenile court ordering mandated services for parents of probation wards to optimize reunification efforts. 			
<p>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in provision of parenting program • Utilization of DSS Family Finding services and training • Grant writing for foundations and governmental entities 			
<p>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap around services for an increased number of Probation youth and their families from CSOC. • Local Mental Health services for Probation wards and parents • Access to Family Resource Centers county wide housed within or aligned with CWS • Substance abuse services from A.O.D. for Probation wards and parents in Mendocino County 			
<p>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</p> <p>Ability to enforce the existing Welfare and Institution codes mandating parents participating in treatment as their needs are identified. The child breaking the law is often only one symptom of a dysfunctional family dynamic and the approach must include the entire family system.</p>			

<p>Improvement Goal 2.0 (Probation) Placement Stability (C 4.2): This measure reflects the number of children with multiple placements. Subset for this factor : Foster Care Placement in Least Restrictive Setting (4B)</p>					
<p>Improvement Goal 2.0 Increase the number of children who are experiencing fewer than 2 placements in their first to second year in placement and utilize the lowest level of care possible.</p>					
<p>Strategy 2.1 Increase the number of wards moving from higher level to lower level (less restrictive) facilities while continuing to meet their needs.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale: Develop local intensive foster care MTFC program able to meet the needs of probation wards.</p>		
Milestone	<p>2.1.1 Utilizing result of PACT risk/needs assessment (at least every 4 months) to determine wards that are ready to move to a lower level of care.</p>	Timeframe	<p><i>Anticipate tool will be available and staff will be trained by January of 2009.</i></p>	Assigned to	<p>Supervising Placement DPO III and Placement Probation Officers</p>
<p>Strategy 2.2 Utilize local Mendocino House Program to prepare appropriate youth to move to transitional housing.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale : Although this could temporarily increase the level of care (as this is a level 12) ultimately it will produce the desired outcome of moving the ward to transitional housing which is the least restrictive environment available.</p>		

<p>Milestone</p>	<p>2.2.1 Mendocino House is already available. This would require staffing appropriate wards and transitioning to the program as space is available.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>Placement Probation Officers</p>
<p>Strategy 2.3 Probation and Redwood Children's Services is recruiting and developing intensive foster homes for wards. Utilizing Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC)</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale : By utilizing MTFC foster care program wards will be moved or placed in MTFC foster care homes, which is a lower level of care. Parental involvement and participation is intensive and will prepare and assist the parents and the ward for rapid reunification.</p>		
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>2.3.1 Conference calls with RCS, TFC consultant and probation are currently underway. Training for RCS staff and probation placement staff and implementation of this program.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>Training set for July 2008 with program implementation scheduled for Fall of 2008.</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>RCS staff, placement staff and TCF Consultant.</p>
<p>Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals. Recruitment of foster families. Training and support to Foster families. Training and support to wards family members.</p>					
<p>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilization of the PACT to assess risk and needs to identify appropriate candidates for movement to less restrictive environments at the appropriate times. 					

**ATTACHMENT A: Policy Council on Youth/Child Abuse Prevention
Commission Membership**

MEMBER NAMES AND ADDRESSES		Interagency Children's Coordination Council Membership	PHONE	FAX	E-Mail Address
1	Patricia Guntly Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency Public Health Department Branch-AODP 1120 S. Dora Street Ukiah, CA 95482	Representative of Alcohol and Other Drug Programs	472-2607	472-2658	guntlyp@co.mendocino.ca.us
2	A.J. Barrett Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency Social Services Department Branch 727 S. State St. Ukiah, CA 95482	Family and Children's Services Representative	463-7925	463-7960	barrea@cws.state.ca.us
3	Todd Crabtree Community Development Commission of Mendocino County 1076 N. State Street Ukiah, CA 95482	Person Responsible for Management of Housing and Redevelopment	463-5462 x112	463-4188	crabtret@cdchousing.org or director@cdchousing.org
4	Mary Elliott Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency Mental Health Department Branch 860 Bush Street Ukiah, CA 95482	Person Responsible For Management Of Mental Health Services	463-4346	463-4043	elliottm@co.mendocino.ca.us
5	Wesley Forman Mendocino County Probation Department 280 E. Standley Street Ukiah, CA 95482	Chief Probation Officer	463-5750	463-5461	formanw@co.mendocino.ca.us
6	Linda Bouskill Nagel, PHN Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency Public Health Branch 1120 South Dora Street Ukiah, CA 95482	Public Health Services	472-2720	472-2735	nagell@co.mendocino.ca.us
7	Susana Wilson Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency Social Services Branch P.O. Box 1060 Ukiah, CA 95482	Welfare or public social services	463-7731	463-7804	wilsons@mcdss.org
8	Judge Leonard LaCasse Courthouse 100 North State Street, Room 108 Ukiah, CA 95482	Judge Of The County Juvenile Court	468-3498	468-3459	luv2fish@mendocino.courts.ca.gov

Mendocino County System Improvement Plan: 2008

MEMBER NAMES AND ADDRESSES		Interagency Children's Coordination Council Membership	PHONE	FAX	E-Mail Address
9	Dennis Ivey Mendocino County Office of Education 2240 Old River Road Ukiah, CA 95482	Representative for Superintendent of county office of education	983-6171		divey@mcoe.k12.ca.us
10	Steve Lund Fort Bragg Unified School Dist. 312 Lincoln Street Fort Bragg, CA 95437	Superintendent of a unified school district	961-2850 ext. 3525	964-5002	slund@mcoe.us
11	Meredith Lintott Mendocino County District Attorney 100 N. State St., G-10 Ukiah, CA 95482	Prosecuting Attorney of the County	463-4211	463-4687	lintottm@co.mendocino.ca.us
12	Karin Wandrei Mendocino County Youth Project 776 S. State Street, #107 Ukiah, CA 95482	Private non-profit corporation Mendocino Youth Project	463-4915	463-4917	kwandrei@mcyp.org
13	Supervisor John Pinches Board of Supervisors 501 Low Gap Road/room 1090 Ukiah, CA 95482	Member of County Board of Supervisors	463-4221	463-4245	bos@co.mendocino.ca.us
14	Gary Hudson Mendocino County Sheriff's Department 951 Low Gap Road Ukiah, CA 95482	Law enforcement	463-4411	463-4517	hudsong@co.mendocino.ca.us
15	Camille Schraeder Redwood Children's Services 780 S. Dora Street Ukiah, CA 95482	Representative of the Local Child Abuse Council	467-2000	467-2002	camille@pacific.net or camille@rcs4kids.org
16	Damon Dickinson Mendocino County Office of Education 2240 Old River Road Ukiah, CA 95482	Local planning agency in Early Intervention Program	467-5166	463-4898	damon@mcoe.us
17	Denise Gorny North Coast Opportunities 413 N. State Street Ukiah, CA 95482	Local child care resource and referral agency	462-1954 ext. 210	467-3216	dgorny@ncoinc.org
18	Vacant	Community organization tied to ethnic communities -Latino Coalition			
19	Julie Vedolla-Fuentes Hopland Band of Pomo Indians 3000 Shanel Road Hopland, CA 95449	Community Organization Tied To Ethnic Communities – Native American	744-1647, ext. 1105	744-2110	jvedolla@hoplandtribe.com
20	Vacant	Representative for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission			
21	Mary Nevarez	Representative of an	485-0361	485-5726	maryjnevarez@yahoo.com

Mendocino County System Improvement Plan: 2008

MEMBER NAMES AND ADDRESSES		Interagency Children's Coordination Council Membership	PHONE	FAX	E-Mail Address
	3250 Road I Redwood Valley, CA 95470	Indian Child Welfare Act Agency			
22	Laura Welter Safe Passage FRC 208 Dana St. Fort Bragg, CA	WIB Youth Council Representative	964-3077	964-3087	Safepass@mcn.org
23	Moises Soria Nuestra Casa 487 North State Street Ukiah, CA 95482	Representative Of A Private Non-Profit Corporation Serving Children & Youth	463-7834 or 463-8181	463-8188	moises@nuestracasafrc.org
24	Cathy Frey Alliance for Rural Community Health 367 S. State St. Ste. 201 Ukiah, CA 95482	Rural Health Clinics	462-1477 ex. 101	462-1503	cfrey@ruralcommunityhealth.org
25	Sheryn Hildebrand CASA P.O.Box 1434 327 N. State Street, Suite 204 Ukiah, CA 95482	Community At-Large Member	463-6503	463-4624	casamc@pacific.net
26	Anne Molgaard FIRST 5 Mendocino 166 East Gobbi St. Ste A Ukiah, CA 95482	Community At-Large Member	462-4453	462-5570	acmolgaard@mendochildren.org
27	Morgaine Colston North Coast Opportunities 413 North State Street Ukiah, Calif. 95482	Community At-Large Member	467-3236	462-0191	mcolston@ncoinc.org
28	Lisa Vance 190 H Washington Court Ukiah, CA 95482-6331	Community At-Large Member, Parent Volunteer	468-8281		lisavance1964@yahoo.com

ATTACHMENT B: SUMMARY ASSESSMENT FROM 2007 SELF ASSESSMENT

Areas of Improvement

- **Referral Rates:** Referral rates have been dropping steadily since 2002. However, a drop in the referral rate doesn't always mean that the rate of child abuse and neglect has actually declined.
- **First-Time Entries:** The number and rate of first time entries into foster care has been generally declining over the last three years.
- **The Number & Rate of Children in Foster Care:** The *number* of children in foster care at a given point in time, has been generally declining since 2000. Our foster care *rate*, while still substantially higher than California as a whole, has improved over our baseline, and has been generally declining since 2000.
- **Per Cent of Children with No Recurrence of Maltreatment:** Since 2000/2001, the per cent of children with *no recurrence* of maltreatment has increased.
- **Timely Investigations & Timely Social Worker Visits with Children:** Although we've experienced some months in which we did poorer than others, the percents of timely investigations and timely social worker visits with children have improved dramatically over our baseline, and some offices have consistently exceeded the national goal.
- **Reunification Within 12 Months—First-Time Entries:** Over all, we have exceeded the goal in the past few years, and are once again approaching the goal of reunification within 12 months for children who are *first time entries into foster care*.
- **Adoption:** We have improved in four out of five adoption measures.
- **Placement With Siblings:** We have improved in the per cent of children placed with siblings (when sibling placement is applicable) from 56.7% in 2004 to 66.5% in 2007.
- **Placement with Kin:** We have shown a significant and welcome trend in placements with kin.

Areas of Most Concern

- **Rate of Substantiated Child Abuse & Neglect:** Of course, we would like to see the rate of substantiated child abuse and neglect allegations decrease dramatically. It is our mission. We've done better in some years than others, but have not succeeded in making this mission a reality.
- **Recurrence of Maltreatment:** Though we've shown improvement, we have not yet reached the goal. We are especially concerned about finding better ways to intervene in the families in which maltreatment recurs repeatedly.
- **Re-entry after Reunification:** Our performance related to "timely reunification" has worsened according to most measures in recent years. However, given the high correlation of alcohol and drug abuse in our Child Welfare Services cases, and the fairly lengthy time frames expected to stabilize sobriety, we are less concerned about achieving the goals for these measures than we are for re-entry after reunification. Here our statistics can be deceiving. The percentage of children re-entering is based on the number who reunified with their families in a specific period. The number leaving

foster care for reunification has declined since 2002/2003. Therefore, though the actual number of children re-entering foster care has only increased by two children since 2003/2004, and has *declined by 7 children* from 2004/2005 to 2005/2006, the percentage of children re-entering is higher. However, we are committed to avoiding re-entry whenever possible because of the terrible toll it takes on the lives of children.

- **Placement Stability:** Placement stability continues to be an area of great concern. We have yet to improve in any of the outcome measures in this arena, and according to one measure, both we and California as a whole are doing steadily worse. It is generally known that multiple placements further injure already wounded children. This concept is borne out by our evaluation of the sudden spike in the number of children who came to the attention of both Probation and Child Welfare Services in 2007-- some of whom have bounced between our two systems. The average number of placements for the children we evaluated was 8.6. One child had experienced 18 placements. It's a cycle that portends a poor long-term outcome for these children. During our PQCR in May (**Exhibit A**), which focused on placement stability, caregivers expressed frustration about what they considered to be too little communication from social workers, too little assistance from our system to help them with difficult issues that arise, and too little respect and consideration for their role in the lives of the children placed with them. This circumstance causes caregivers to burn out with the children in their care and with the notion of providing foster care at all. Similar statements have been made by County foster parents whenever we've inquired. Mendocino County CWS has made efforts over the years to address this problem. We continue our commitment to addressing this problem and pursuing solutions. The specific solutions planned by both CWS and Probation regarding placement stability are listed on pages 28 and 29 of the Peer Quality Case Review Report (**Exhibit A**).
- **The Foster Care Entry Rate of Native American Children:** We found that Native American children represent a higher percentage of foster care entries than should be expected by the population size of this ethnic group in our community. We think that the solution to their disproportionate representation in foster care is closely linked to our relationship with local tribes. We need each other to ensure culturally appropriate services and tribal placement options for the Native American children who come into our care. We plan to work together to improve the problematic socio-economic circumstances that impede this and cause the children to enter foster care in the first place.
- **Self-Sufficiency for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood:** It is no secret that the outlook for children who "age out" of foster care is less than rosy. Many improvements are underway for youth in our county, including foster youth. Resources are growing, but we still have too few housing and employment options for our foster youth, and too few reliable, committed adults to mentor them through the risky business of entering the adult world. As of July 1, 2007 there were 158 foster children between the ages of 11 and 17 in Mendocino County. This means that more than half of the total foster care caseload is moving rapidly toward this transition point. The urgency of this issue has come to the attention of virtually every agency and organization that deals with youth in our community. We are committed to working with

our HHS colleagues and community partners to gear up and address this issue without delay.

- **Children Falling Through the Cracks of the Probation and Child Welfare Systems:** A sudden spike in the number of children meeting the description of both Juvenile Probation and Child Welfare Services is perplexing and disturbing. Neither of our systems is currently capable of serving these children appropriately, and they are at risk. This issue is tied to several others, such as the youth issues cited above, and placement stability. It reflects, in fact, most child welfare issues, and requires a multi-agency response. Again, we see hope in the formation of the Health and Human Services Agency, and the closer collaboration among disciplines that it promises to afford. Solutions also may reside in resource-sharing and collaboration with the Court, with the Probation Department and other agencies outside of the HHS.

As of July 1, 2007, there were 158 foster children between the ages of 11 and 17 in Mendocino County...more than half of the total foster care caseload is moving rapidly toward [the} transition point.

What Should We Conclude?

Statistics—Handle With Care

It is tempting and easy to find a set of statistics, even those supplied by the State of California and UC Berkeley, and leap to the wrong conclusion about how well or how badly we are performing. The statistics concerning re-entry into foster care are an example (p148). Similarly, "Recurrence of Maltreatment" statistics are tricky, as discussed on page 44. They hinge on the number of children maltreated in the first six months of a given year, so that if fewer are maltreated, even a lower *number* of recurrences can result in a higher *percentage* of recurrences. Also, one must be careful to look at the size of the population contributing to the statistical results in all areas measured. In some cases, tiny numbers of children form the statistical end product. This can skew the trends dramatically. For example, the *per cent* of Probation Children reunified within 12 months is 25.0 % in 2005/2006 and 16.7% in 2006/07. In both years, just one child was reunified. With regard to the measure "Median Time to Reunification", one lone Probation teenager accounted for the very lengthy 115.5 median months to reunification in 2000/2001(p. 65).

Issues Affecting Child Abuse & Neglect Are Intertwined & Beyond Child Welfare Services Alone

It is no surprise that through our self-assessment, we confirmed that the major issues affecting child abuse and neglect in Mendocino County families, causing recurrence of maltreatment, re-entry into foster care, and other undesirable outcomes are:

- alcohol and drug abuse
- poverty
- domestic violence
- mental health problems

The fact that in many of these cases the issues are multi-generational, means that we must add poor parenting models and coping strategies to the mix of problems affecting the families who become involved with Child Welfare Services. It is also no surprise that all of these issues are intertwined. The bad news is that for many families, the problems are multiple. The good news is that sometimes by addressing one or a few of the issues, other issues may be resolved or ameliorated. Finally, it is apparent by merely reviewing the major factors in child abuse and neglect, that they cannot be addressed by Child Welfare Services alone. Collaboration is mandatory. That puts us in a uniquely fortunate position. *We think that the emerging Health and Human Services Agency, the manageable population size of our county, and our history of working together give us the capacity and capability of resolving the issues effectively .*

The Influence of the "Underground Economy"?

Alcohol and drugs such as methamphetamine are the substances that seem to play most heavily into child abuse and neglect in this county. However, during this self-assessment, staff people from Social Services, Probation and Public Health/AODP all expressed opinions about the effect of what they called Mendocino County's ambivalence about substance use, and the well-known underground Marijuana-related enterprises here. Many felt that the overall economy is compromised since the revenues from this crop are not taxed and therefore not contributing to our infrastructure or our

services. At the same time they believed that the “underground economy” has invited criminal activity and created environmental issues that must be responded to through County and City resources. In addition, some felt that the secrecy and criminal activity associated with this “economy” has put children in danger, and, at the very least, sent a poor message about substance use, community responsibility, meaningful work, and personal integrity to our youth.

The Role of Relationship—Pointing Toward Solutions?

Person to Person

In the process of conducting this self-assessment, one theme surfaced over and over: the theme of relationship. Child Welfare Services and Probation, and all of our partner agencies consist of humans, dealing with other humans. Relationship is the basic ingredient, like flour to a cake.

In focus groups and panel discussions, we heard that positive change for the families we serve comes about through relationships—through people who see and treat them as human beings: “Eloy talked to me like a man, not a clinician.” (p.145).

Clients said their turning points began with the receptionist who greeted them, the social work assistant who listened as he drove them to appointments, the group facilitator who encouraged them to try another tack, the parent sitting across from them in the parenting class who had the courage to tell the truth. Social workers said that the lives of even the most troubled clients turned around when someone, usually a social work assistant, was able to go into their homes regularly, help them with basic tasks, and relate to them genuinely, person to person. Public health nurses similarly cited their role as helpers and friendly visitors as the way they are able to make a difference for the parents and children they serve.

Interviews with foster children during our Peer Quality Case Review revealed that what they wanted most from their social workers was more of their time. They implied that they wanted the social workers to really know and understand them.

Child Welfare Services clients suggested that a way to improve the system would be to have parents who had experienced it, accompany social workers on emergency response investigations. Similarly, parent partners are seen as key to the success of families with troubled children in the Family Strengths and PACE programs, because their experience with the system allows them to help clients navigate the bureaucracy, at the same time they can *relate* to their feelings and circumstances.

Placement stability depends in great measure on our relationship with resource caregivers, whether foster parents, relatives or unrelated extended family members.

Relationship plays an important role between organizations in Mendocino County as well. In Child Welfare Services, to the extent we have been able to form respectful relationships with the *people* in our partner organizations—tribes, law enforcement, schools, foster family agencies, etc.—we do better by our clients. When the person-

to-person relationship doesn't exist, or is strained, we make less effective decisions, and outcomes for our clients can be compromised.

Relationship, the Court, and the Child Welfare Services/Probation Systems

The role of the Court is, of course, essential. Child Welfare Services managers, supervisors, social workers, and probation officers recognize that it ensures a more balanced, just, and considered approach than might occur otherwise. The bedrock issues of parenthood, and the safety and wellbeing of children certainly deserve great care on all sides. At the same time, the nature of the legal system contributes to the staff turnover that ultimately undermines our capacity to provide the very services the Court demands. System-wide, Child Welfare services and Probation are regulation and document-laden. Increasing demands from the legal system translate into mounds of additional tasks and documents that pull social workers and probation officers away from direct client services, and make it difficult for them to form the relationships that staff and clients alike identify as most central to positive change.

The Struggle Between Prevention and Intervention in Child Welfare Services

It is the nature of Child Welfare Services that the strategies that promise to promote long term improvements are reduced or ended when we are short of funding or staff. In Mendocino County, we have worked to establish and sustain prevention programs such as Fast Track and Family Connections. We have made efforts to develop a family resource center network so that we can turn to our community-based organizations for prevention services as well. Unfortunately, they too require funding and trained staff to provide these services. Both can be hard to come by here. Internally we are exploring ways to address the tension between prevention and intervention more effectively. The HHSA director has made plans to aggressively seek additional funding to shore up prevention services in our county.

Many of the suggested resource needs and strategies, and recent improvements discussed below link to goals and objectives in the Child Welfare Services section of the Strategic Plan for the Health and Human Services Agency (**Exhibit D**). We have cited the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan that relate to each of the suggested resource needs and strategies, and recent improvements, for reference.

Suggested Resource Needs

Alcohol and Drug Prevention Services: Goal 2, Objective C; Goal 3, Objective F; Goal 5, Objectives B, C, E, G, H; Goal 6, Objectives H, I

Mendocino County has made recent and substantial improvements in the alcohol and drug abuse prevention resources for some CWS clients. The addition of AODP treatment specialists in Intake Support Groups and the launching of the Family Dependency Drug Court both hold tremendous promise for these clients, and for reducing the great damage that alcohol and drug abuse has done to our county's children, families, and resources.

There remain some missing pieces:

- We lack “clean and sober” housing for graduates of residential treatment programs. This means that those clients who have no homes, families, or friends to return to, are homeless when they complete treatment.
- There are no residential treatment programs for teens here.
- Transportation issues in our county make it difficult for many clients to get to treatment.
- The lack of well-paying, legal employment in our county can prevent recovering substance abusers from establishing and maintaining the stability that helps them maintain sobriety as well.
- We have too few Spanish-speaking providers of AODP services, and no provider who is fluent enough in Spanish to provide the prevention services for youth and their parents in this language, though the interest and need are there. Recently Charlie Seltzer of AODP’s Prevention Program made a presentation at which almost the entire audience consisted of parents wearing earphones to hear the translation in Spanish.
- There are staff people interested in providing AOD prevention services at our family resource centers. The family resource centers have expressed interest consistently in hosting this service. However, the cost of providing one full-time staff equivalent to circulate among the family resource centers to offer classes and groups is about \$81,000 including salary and benefits. Currently AODP has insufficient funding to provide this FTE, and it is unlikely that the family resource centers will be able to fund the person either without securing additional grant money.

**Domestic Violence Services: Goal 5, Objectives B, C, E, G;
Goal 6, Objectives B, H, I**

In focus groups and meetings of clients and professionals alike, there was a call for expanded and more strongly enforced domestic violence services.

Project Sanctuary is the main provider of domestic violence services in the county. Project Sanctuary's shelter in Ukiah, *is the only shelter available in the county*. Domestic violence services do exist in several other regions of the county, but shelter services consist of motel vouchers in all other areas, and even this is unavailable in Covelo.

Classes for Domestic Violence Offenders through Men's Alternatives to Violence (MAV) Groups (certificated by the Probation Dept), the Batterers' Intervention Program and the People's Alternative to Violence exist in many regions of the County, but concern has been expressed by agency staff as well as clients who admit to being offenders, about how strongly attendance has been enforced up to now. The services are offered in Spanish in Ukiah and Ft Bragg only.

No domestic violence program exists here for men who are victims. Services for male victims of Domestic Violence consist of referrals for shelter or groups or one-on-one counseling.

Finally, concern was expressed about the reluctance of victims to report domestic violence specifically. Victims may express other concerns, while masking the presence of domestic violence in their lives and homes. In recent years, we have learned that simply witnessing or living in homes where violence is occurring has a deleterious effect on the emotional, social and cognitive development of children. Therefore, domestic violence is a child abuse issue. Several individuals suggested looking at more effective ways to determine whether or not domestic violence is occurring and to address it.

**Treatment For Sexual Abuse Victims & Offenders: Goal 6,
Objective C, D**

Though sexual abuse is not the issue in most Child Welfare Services cases, it is one which seems to recur through generations in some of our families. We do not currently offer, nor do we know of a training program for victimized children or their siblings about how to protect themselves against sexual abuse. We know of no program that might include non-offending parents and their sexually abused children concerning how to stop the cycle of sexual abuse. Either or both of such services might be helpful. Finally, there are no longer any services in this county for sexual abusers, and there is uncertainty about whether an effective model exists.

Services For Teens and Parents Of Teens: Goal 1, Objective K; Goal 3, Objectives A-L

In a high percentage of cases in which maltreatment recurred again and again, the children involved were teens. Most parents have difficulty parenting teens, and when the parents have poor parenting skills, mental health or substance issues, and live in poverty, parenting their teens appropriately is especially challenging. In addition, the issue of gang involvement has become more prevalent in our county in recent years. Many parents are terrified for their children, and at a loss about how to intervene. The gang-involved teens have great difficulty escaping from gangs when they wish to, for fear of retaliation. They often live in neighborhoods in which they are surrounded by gang members, or have family members who are involved in gangs.

In addition to the residential substance abuse treatment facility mentioned under alcohol and drug prevention services above, the need for parenting education and support for parents of teens was mentioned in meetings and focus groups almost across the board. Some individuals felt that a program such as Parent-Child Interactive Therapy for parents and teens is needed for Child Welfare Service and Probation cases. They felt that services to help teens in Child Welfare Services and Probation cope with strong emotions is another significant need. Some suggested a transitional housing program for gang members who are trying to exit their gangs and change the direction of their lives.

Finally, continuing and expanding services for transition-age foster youth is clearly needed. More than half of the children currently in foster care are either in this age group or fast-approaching it. We aim to find ways to ensure that fewer foster children age-out of the system ill-equipped for the adult world, and lacking adequate adult guidance. We and our community partners are committed to helping transition-age foster children avoid behaviors that can lead to negative outcomes for them as individuals, and that can produce another generation of child abuse and neglect.

Drop-In, Odd-Hours Child Care: Goal 1, Objective H

The need for drop-in and odd-hours child care was noted in the Status Report on Children and Youth published by the Mendocino County Policy Council on Children and Youth/Child Abuse Prevention Commission (PCCY/CAPC) as a general need in this county. During the focus group with Child Welfare Services parents, this need was reiterated. They need odd-hours and drop in child care to accommodate the classes and groups they attend, and also because, like many Mendocino County families, they need more than one job to cover their living costs.

Affordable Housing & Better-Paying Jobs:

Information about the poverty rate in Mendocino County is found on page 6 of this report. As in most of California, housing costs soared here over the last several years. At the same time, disagreements about building additional housing have left our community with few affordable housing options related to income levels. Subsidized housing is hard to come by, and unavailable to families in which there is an undocumented member. Poverty is a persistent factor in child abuse and neglect cases. Job training and job-finding resources are available here, but jobs that pay well

enough to support a family are still beyond the reach of many of the families in Child Welfare Services.

Services For Men Only: Goal 1, Objective D, E, H

In our focus group of Child Welfare Services clients, two fathers made eloquent cases for support groups and other services for fathers. They expressed a need for encouragement and role-modeling from other men, help with appropriate fathering methods, and help with the pressures of single-parenting.

Suggested Strategies

Parent Partners: Goal 5, Objective F; Goal 6, Objective F

Child Welfare Services staff and the clients who participated in our focus group talked about the benefits of having parents who have experience with the Child Welfare Services system as co-facilitators in Family Empowerment groups and as assistants in emergency response investigations. Their presence offers hope to parents who are new to the system, softens the effect of the bureaucracy, and helps new clients navigate through it.

Multi-Agency Response Teams: Goal 5, Objective G; Goal 6, Objectives H, I

In case reviews with staff members, and in meetings with our partners, the desire for interagency and multi-agency response teams surfaced frequently. We have enjoyed effective collaborations in Mendocino County, and many would like to see this approach work even more quickly and smoothly. For example, there are times when crises could be avoided or dealt with more effectively if Social Services, Public Health and Mental Health staff could operate in rapid response teams to assess the issues and bring the appropriate services to bear immediately. This is especially needed for our most troubled and challenged families. A similar approach would be beneficial in many Probation cases with clients served by Social Services and Mental Health, or with clients that bounce from one system to the other. Often there is a need for a social worker, a mental health professional and a deputy probation officer to work together, and expeditiously, in order to help the family make the changes needed.

In addition to dealing with crises, the concept of working in teams on an ongoing basis was seen as a way to work better with the most multi-faceted and high-risk cases as a general rule.

More Early & Ongoing Collaboration Among Agencies to Provide Services: Goal 1, Objective I; Goal 4, Objective C; Goal 5, Objectives B, C, G; Goal 6, Objectives G, H, I

Another recurring opinion was that outcomes would improve dramatically for our most problematic clients if we were able to provide more voluntary services—especially multi-agency services—earlier. Most also felt that the “revolving door” that some of our families are stuck in, would stop if we were able to continue collaborative services after the Child Welfare Services case ended. They saw that the expertise, and sometimes the pressure, of agencies remaining active with these particular families could eventually make all the difference. Community-based organizations such as family resource centers were also seen as candidates for providing early and ongoing in-home

services if they had adequate staffing and defined protocols for their interface with the Health and Human Services Agency.

Re-evaluate Dual Jurisdiction for Children Meeting Description of Both Juvenile Probation & Child Welfare Systems. Goal 3, Objective K

In 2007, we experienced a dramatic increase in the number of children matching the description of both the 601/602 codes for Juvenile Probation, and the 300 code for Child Welfare Services. Currently, these children are falling between the cracks of two systems. Both Probation and Child Welfare service staff suggest that we re-evaluate the option of dual jurisdiction in this county. At the very least, there is a need for more effective joint efforts by Child Welfare Services, Probation, and Mental Health concerning such cases.

Recent Improvements

- **“Growing Our Own”**

Since our PQCR, Mendocino County Child Welfare Services, under the leadership of our former Deputy Director, Mary Elliott, has committed to ending staff turnover by “growing our own”. We have a policy of promoting from within as much as possible. In addition we support staff members who are working toward advanced degrees in the health and human services field, by arranging for internship hours on county time, and by paying for their clinical supervision. We encourage and support training that can lead to mastery of the jobs our staff currently hold, as well as promotion into other jobs within our Division and agency. In 2007, we succeeded in bringing UC Davis Core Training to Ukiah, and enabled all new and recently hired social workers to attend. We are hoping to send our social work assistants to UC Davis’s “Certificate Program” so that they can earn college credits while they learn skills that help them do their current work better. This will enable some of them to qualify for social work positions as these come open. We also sent managers and supervisor’s to UC Davis’s Leadership training, and created a management position dedicated to developing and providing ongoing in-house training to our staff. The feedback on all these efforts has been positive. Finally, our Staff Resources Division has made a commitment to work with Child Welfare Services to develop additional methods for reducing staff turnover.

- **Family Finding: Goal 4, Objective F**

We learned during our PQCR that staff turnover is at the root of many of the areas of our poorest performance. Placement stability is one of these areas. We think that by reducing staff turnover, we’ll improve in this area as well. We have an additional and promising strategy—Family Finding. At the same time we were working on our PQCR, we purchased and conducted Family Finding Training for our staff. Since that time, we have launched a Family Finding pilot program and dedicated two senior program specialists to it. Eventually, social workers, social work assistants and clerical staff will be an integral part of the team. Each of our offices is now graced with a “family tree”. The first names of children with whom we are working in this pilot program are placed on its branches. Every time a permanent connection is found for the child, a new leaf is added to the branch.

In this way, each office will have a visual representation of the purpose of our work and our achievements in that regard.

- **Building Networks and Collaborative Efforts: Goal 1, Objective I; Goal 2, Objective D; Goal 3, Objectives H, I; Goal 4; Goal 5, Objectives A, G**

We have discussed our collaborative partnerships in several areas of this report. We continue to see collaboration as the best way to do business. In recent years we have expanded our collaborations and/or increased our participation in them. Examples of achievements are:

- Children's System of Care CSOC
- Family Connections
- The Family Resource Center Network
- The Family Dependency Drug Court Pilot (FDDC)
- Two Emergency Shelters
- Mendocino House Group Home
- THP and THPP + Programs for transition-age youth

- **Family Dependency Drug Court: Goal 6, Objective A**

The Family Dependency Drug Court, as shown above is a collaborative effort. Its importance bears additional discussion. It is a model that has worked successfully elsewhere and has a built-in evaluation component to assess how well it works in our county. The program combines enforcement with a strength-based approach that promotes relationship, and holds great hope for impacting the problem of substance abuse among Child Welfare Services clients. It is brand new in Mendocino County and getting rave reviews from all participants. It does not yet, however, serve people outside of the CWS system.

In a Nutshell: What More Can We Do to Reduce Child Abuse and Neglect in Mendocino County?

Conducting this County Self-Assessment has been a valuable process. It gave us the incentive to consult with our staff, our clients and our colleagues more deeply than we usually have the opportunity to do. It was a reason to look both objectively and subjectively at the way we do business and think about ways we might do it better.

The County Self-Assessment will be the basis for the Child Welfare Services System Improvement Plan (SIP) which will identify the specific tasks that Mendocino County Child Welfare Services and the Probation Department will take to effect a reduction in child abuse and neglect here. Some of the forces that affect us locally are outside of our control. Surprisingly huge issues, like the sub-prime mortgage debacle, affect the State budget, which in turn impacts the local funding that determines what we can and cannot afford to do. We believe there are ways, however, to influence child abuse and neglect on the local level. Nearly all require collaboration with sectors inside and outside the Health and Human Services Agency. Looking toward our SIP, specific tasks are likely to revolve around the following goals:

- **Reduce staff turnover rate;**
- **Find ways to provide more AODP prevention and domestic violence services;**
- **Explore ways to provide more voluntary and preventive services across the board;**
- **Improve communication and relationship with resource caregivers;**
- **Expand our Family Finding program;**
- **Improve resources and services for transition-age foster youth;**
- **Retool our strategies to allow more in-home and relationship-building opportunities with our clients—at the very least with our most troubled, high risk families;**
- **Attend to our intra and inter-organizational relationships;**
- **Enhance collaborative efforts.**

Our programs and collaborations work through people. They depend on individuals who are up to the task of working together. In addition, smart, lean, collaborative efforts may be our best hope in the face of the reduced funding that is expected this year and next. The formation of the Health and Human Services Agency offers the potential for vast improvements in outcomes for our children in both lush and lean years. Our other existing partnerships provide firm ground to build on.

We share an overarching goal. Our future success could depend on how much we honor each other as people, how successfully we collaborate, how effectively we utilize and transcend our disciplines and funding streams, and, in the face of budget shortages, how focused we remain on that goal.

The self-assessment process has made clear that relationship is a key element in our outcomes, and that its importance is both internal and inter-organizational. The answer to reducing child abuse and neglect in Mendocino County may well turn on this basic human factor.

ATTACHMENT C:

ILSP Programs/Services/Tasks

Member of Youth Council. Meetings once a month, plus we are involved in putting on two youth summits this spring, one in conjunction with AODP in Ukiah, one for county wide youth in Willits (city life workshop). I am involved in helping with prep for both and will be on site for at least one of them.

Youth Embracing Transition Toward Independence. (YETTI). the goal is to ensure that each case-managed youth in our county has a viable transition plan—one which is specific to his needs, and utilizes local resources. A second goal of the group is to encourage student-led Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Transition Plan Pilot Project. Plan meeting with every youth during their senior year of high school.

"The Arbor on Main" youth resource center. This is an ongoing project that will probably start this spring as the formal plan takes shape. (money should start coming from grants this spring) We are going to have to design this space and develop a working plan. The site will provide a large variety of services for youth age 16-24.

Rural Murals Project Redwood Children's Services (RCS) and Mendocino County Department of Social Services (MCDSS) worked on writing a grant from AODP to paint mural on the side of our building. Now funded, project begun in December. Eight youth involved, with one artist. Mural meetings with the group every week. Mural painting begins end of February, done in May.

THPP/THPP+.

In collaboration with the Probation Department and Redwood Children's Services (RCS—a private non-profit foster family agency), we have operated a Transitional Housing and Placement Program (THPP) for 16-18-year old foster children since 1998. The program can accommodate up to six youth at a time, and provides a variety of intense services, in addition to transitional housing, to help the teens master the basic life skills needed to function successfully in the adult world. In June of 2007, again in collaboration with Redwood Children's Services and the Probation Department, we implemented the **THP Plus Program** which can serve up to 12 youth ages 18-24, for up to 24 months. In this program the youth live independently, but get help with rent and utilities. Each meets regularly with a case manager who can assist them with a variety of issues. Youth in both the THPP and THP Plus programs participate in the Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP).

Mendocino County Youth Project (MCYP) provides housing for up to seven (7) homeless youth in its Transitional Living Program. The program serves 18-21 year-olds and emancipated minors aged 16 and 17. The Mendocino County Youth Project also provides limited services on the South coast—general youth work and alcohol and drug abuse prevention counseling

Mendocino County System Improvement Plan: 2008
Mental Health Transition Age Youth (TAY) housing.

This is a Mental Health program that is just in the development stage. RCS is working with Mental Health to provide 8 full-service partnership housing to transition age youth (some of who also are ILSP youth).

Trinity ILSP class.

Working with FYS (Foster Youth Services) staff to organize on-site ILSP class at Trinity School in the MCOE classroom there during school hours.
ILSP classes at MC. Coordinate delivery of classes with MC counselor Jean Stirling. Process incentive payments, help with planning curriculum as needed. (we have a new teacher this semester, so I imagine more assistance needed this semester).

Youth Project TLP (Transitional Living Program).

ILP social worker on the advisory board.

Foster Youth Services Advisory Board.

Quarterly meetings.

Northern Regional ILSP Coordinators Council:

The meetings are bimonthly in Solano County. Track legislation and regulations, get ideas from other counties and network on issues.

Yearly statistical reports: Due October (numbers) and March (narrative) to the state.

Summer Work Program:

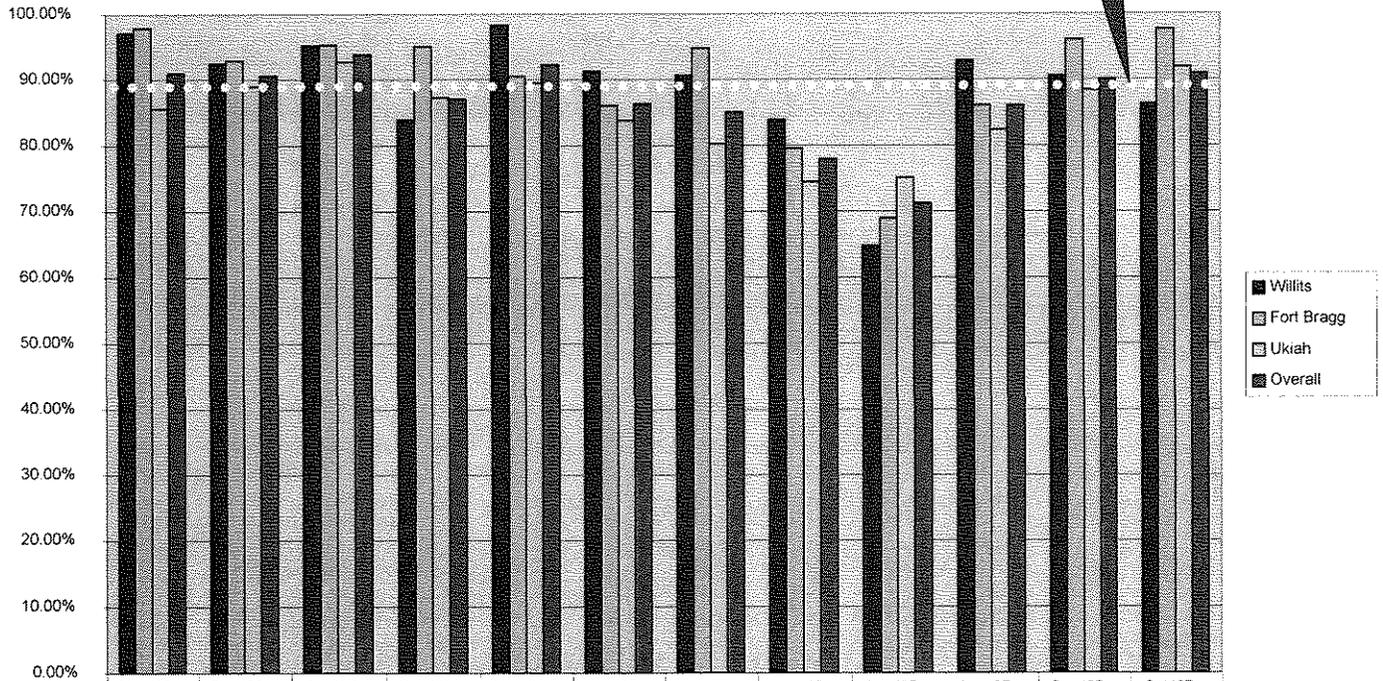
Coordinate services, create schedule, payment with MCOE. Applications, youth interviews, work with job developer, assist in class as needed. Ongoing issues once class begins.

California Youth Connection (CYC)

On hold presently because of staffing constraints but possibly reinvigorated with improved program structure and support for ILP..

Attachment D: Business Objects Report: Timely Visits: (Page 59 of Self Assessment)

FIGURE 56
SW/Child Contacts Compliance



	Nov '06	Dec '06	Jan '07	Feb '07	Mar '07	Apr '07	May '07	June '07	July '07	Aug '07	Sep '07	Oct '07
Willits	97.14%	92.45%	95.19%	83.90%	98.21%	91.23%	90.55%	83.87%	64.75%	92.80%	90.52%	86.24%
Fort Bragg	97.87%	92.86%	95.24%	95.00%	90.48%	86.05%	94.74%	79.49%	68.89%	86.05%	96.00%	97.56%
Ukiah	85.56%	88.95%	92.71%	87.20%	89.40%	83.71%	80.18%	74.35%	75.00%	82.33%	88.34%	91.81%
Overall	90.96%	90.53%	93.79%	86.99%	92.18%	86.24%	84.95%	77.86%	71.18%	86.00%	89.97%	90.84%