

SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

Department of Children and Family Services' (DCFS) Status Update #6 on the Findings of the State Auditor's Report to the Joint Committee on Legislative Audits

Guided by Collaboration, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Transparency

Alameda County Board of Supervisors' Special Meeting

March 10, 2026

Presented by:

Representative, Alameda County Behavioral Health Department

Andrea Ford, Agency Director, Alameda County Social Services Agency

Michelle Love, Assistant Agency Director, Department of Children and Family Services

Jennifer Uldricks, Sr. Management Analyst, Department of Children and Family Services



Alameda County
Social Services Agency
A safety net. A way forward.

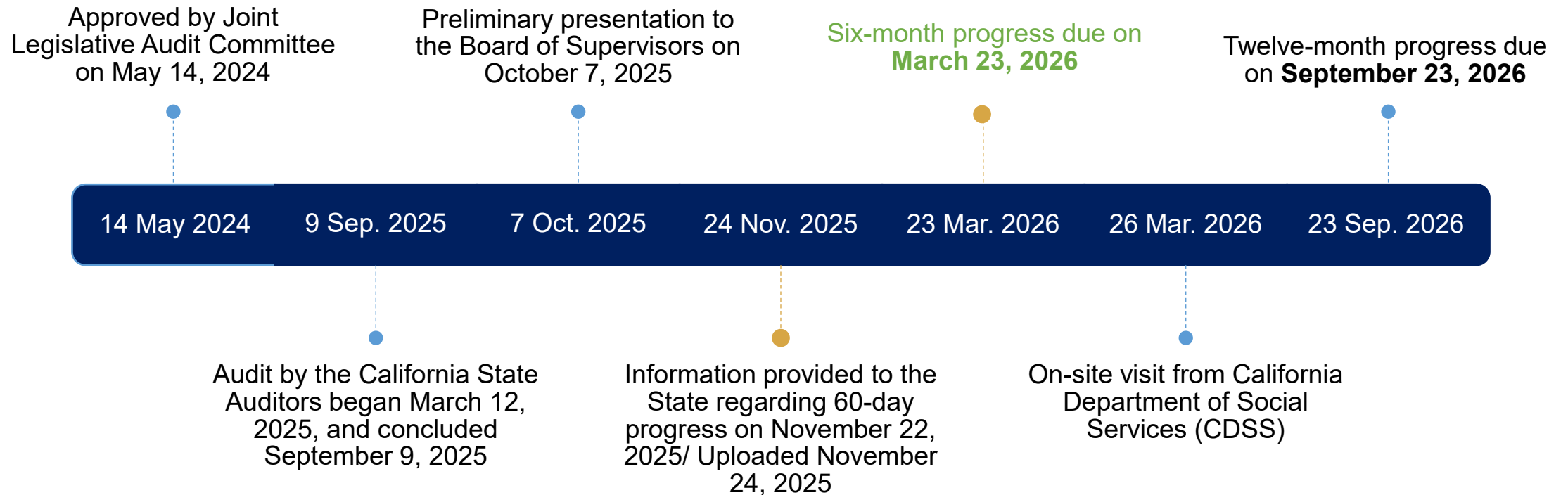


AGENDA



- Review of the 2024-108 Audit Report Timeline
 - California Department of Social Services (CDSS) On-site Visit
- Partnership with Alameda County's Behavioral Health Department
- Follow-up from Senator Dr. Wahab's 2.27.2026 Task Force Meeting
- Hiring and Recruitment Efforts
- Department Highlights and Opportunities
- Progress on Addressing Recommendations
- DCFS Legislative Opportunities

Review of the 2024-108 Audit Report Timeline



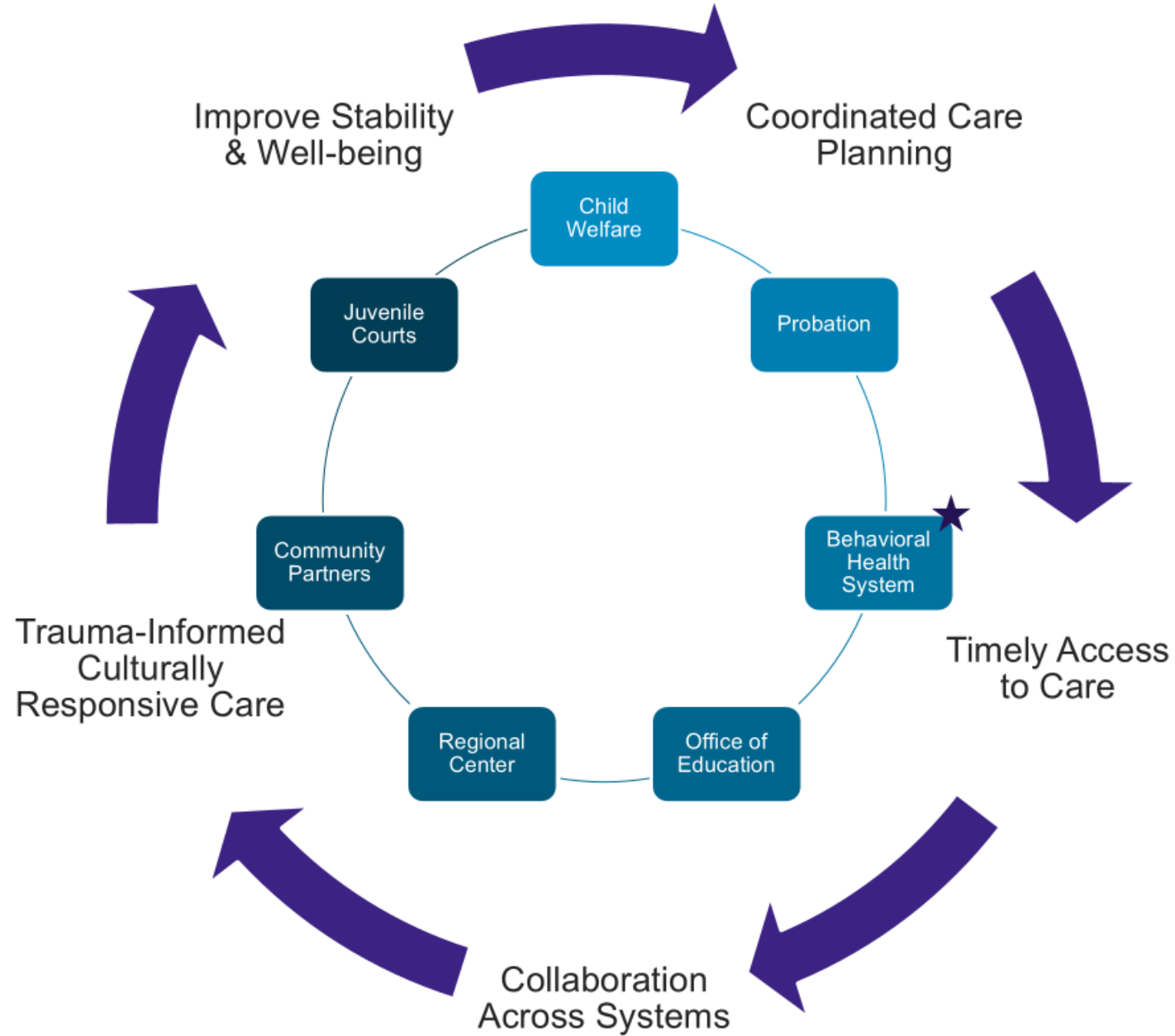
California Department of Social Services (CDSS) On-site Visit

- Purpose is to review operations of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
- On-site visit will consist of:
 - Opening and Exit Conference with department leadership
 - Two focus groups with Child Welfare Workers (CWWs) from multiple programs
 - One focus group with Child Welfare Supervisors (CWSs) from multiple programs
 - Fifteen individual interviews with various classifications of child welfare staff from multiple programs
 - Review of case and referrals
- Following completion of the review, the Department will receive a corrective action plan with next steps, if any.

Strengthening Partnerships with Alameda County's Behavioral Health System

Collaboration between Foster & Behavioral Health Systems of Care

Children's System of Care Ecosystem



Collaboration with the Broader Behavioral Health System



Interagency
Coordinating
Council
(ICC)



Interagency
Leadership
Team (ILT)



PROBLEM SOLVING



ILT Sub-
Committee

COORDINATION

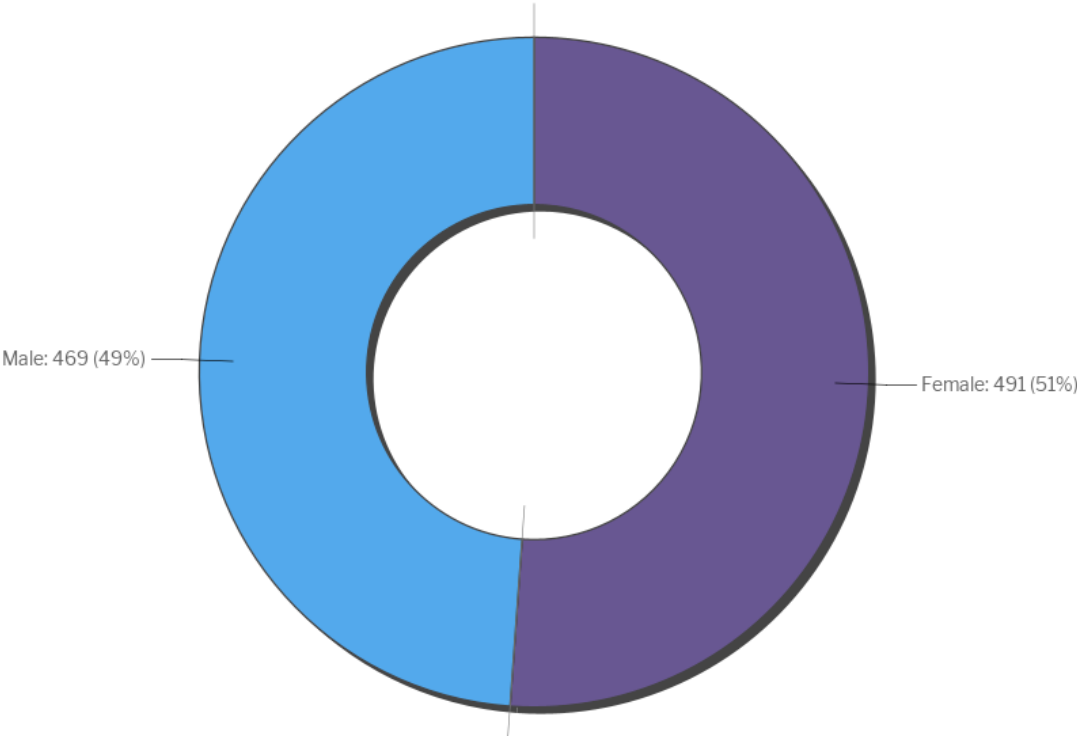


2024/2025 Demographics of Foster Youth Served

Age of CYASOC Client

| Fiscal Year | Age Group | Clients | % of Clients |
|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| FY 2024-2025 | Ages 0-5 | 174 | 18% |
| | Ages 6-12 | 244 | 25% |
| | Ages 13-17 | 340 | 35% |
| | Ages 18-25 | 202 | 21% |
| | | 960 | 100% |

Gender Identity

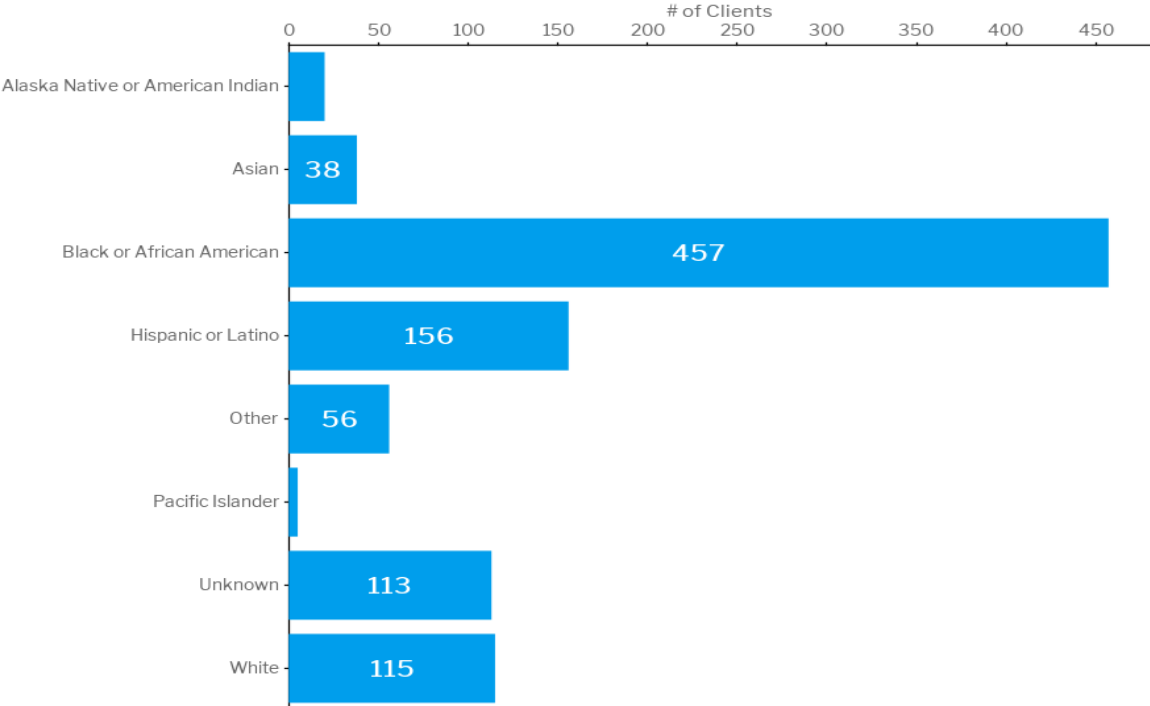


2024/2025 Demographics of Foster Youth Served

Region of the County

| Fiscal Year | Region | Clients | % of Clients |
|--------------|------------------|------------|--------------|
| FY 2024-2025 | 1. North | 392 | 41% |
| | 2. Central | 180 | 19% |
| | 3. South | 45 | 5% |
| | 4. East | 38 | 4% |
| | 5. Out of County | 305 | 32% |
| | | 960 | 100% |

Ethnicity



High Needs Youth Committee: Behavioral Health's Focus

- Focuses system efforts on supporting individuals with **complex behavioral health needs**, usually involving youth with placement instability and multi-system involvement.
- General wellness, trauma-related supports, community resources designed to stabilize or ensure ongoing wellness.
- ***Coordinated care and referral access points *increased*** over past three (3) years:
 - Direct referrals to School Based Providers in network with ACBHD;
 - Direct referrals to Community Based network providers; and
 - Referrals to ACCESS Division for referral and system connection.

Coordinated Care & Timely Access Strategies

- **Systemwide Referral Pathways:**
 - Streamline referrals, improve service access, strengthen coordination directly with social services to facilitate more access through direct referrals (in progress for three years) and **strengthened by CalAIM.**
 - **NO WRONG DOOR**
- **Objective Arts Platform: Shared Assessment Tools**
 - Target completion date Q1 Fiscal Year 2026-2027
 - Goals: improve coordination of assessments, integrated case planning, alignment of treatment and service planning.
- **Strengthening System Navigation: ACBHD Behavioral Health Liaison Role developed**
- **Data Infrastructure (Joint Effort between, ACBHD, DCFS, & ACPD)**
 - Shared Referral Tracking System *under development*
 - Track Behavioral Health Referrals
 - Monitor Timely Access
 - Identify Service Gaps
 - Support Data-Informed System Improvements
 - Monitor Referral Trends

Behavioral Health System Provider Networks

- 153 Behavioral Health Service Contracts, with 84 Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
- Providers located throughout Alameda County, and across California to support out of county placements.
- Community Clinics, ***School-Based Programs**, & Out-Of-County placements, when necessary.
- School Based Programs:
 - 180 School campuses across twelve (12) Alameda County school districts

Follow-up from Senator Dr. Wahab's 2.27.2026 Task Force Meeting

- **Backlog of Open Referrals**

- The Department currently has 1,497 open referrals.
- The backlog peaked at ~3,500 in March 2024 and has been reduced by approximately 57% through active effort.
- The oldest referral has been open since 2021.

- **Emergency Response (ER) Daily Staffing Averages**

- Daily ER capacity fluctuates between ~10–14 active workers across shifts.
- December 2025 (9.7), January 2026 (15.6), and February 2026 (11.3)
- Bachelor's-level workers (CWW-Is) have shown higher retention success in ongoing case management programs.

Follow-up from Senator Dr. Wahab's 2.27.2026 Task Force Meeting - *Continued*

- **Dashboard Transparency and Data Integrity**
 - The dashboard is primarily powered by data that has been extracted from CWS/CMS via one of three tools.
 - SafeMeasures reports developed by Evident Change
 - Internally developed reports querying CWS/CMS utilizing Business Objects
 - Reports developed by the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP)
 - Data is refreshed monthly for most metrics.
 - Public Dashboard verbiage has been updated.

Follow-up from Senator Dr. Wahab's 2.27.2026 Task Force Meeting - *Continued*

- **Documentation, Court Reports, and Quality of Notes**
 - Templates were developed to include service referral dates, monthly child visits, mental health service tracking, and interagency collaboration (completed November 2024).
 - Supervisors were trained on the new template and a revised contact note policy on November 6, 2025.
 - An 'investigation narrative setup' process (takes 45 mins in system) is now being pre-populated by case assistant support staff.

Follow-up from Senator Dr. Wahab's 2.27.2026 Task Force Meeting - *Continued*

- **Accountability Mechanisms**
 - Meet and Confer began January 12, 2026.
 - Supervisors accompany staff on home visits, with the goal of formalizing this more systematically.
- **MOUs and External Partnerships**
 - Family finding contract with Victor Community Services expected to launch April 1, 2026.

Hiring and Recruitment Efforts

Recruitment Efforts for Bachelor's and Master's Level Child Welfare Workers

- The UC Berkeley Social Welfare Career Fair Tuesday, March 17, 2026
- The Alameda County Social Services Annual Fair Chance Job Fair, Friday, April 24, 2026
- County of Alameda Job Fair, Friday, April 24, 2026



Department Highlights & Opportunities

Celebrating successful client outcomes

- Reunification breakfast on April 22, 2026
- Foster Care Month & Caregiver Appreciation Dinner on May 15, 2026
- Bringing Families Home (BFH) is currently serving 69 families with ongoing rental subsidies and case management support. Since July 2024, DCFS has also approved 104 requests totaling \$280K for additional housing-related supports for one-time rental assistance, security deposits, and furniture.

Collaboration

- Retreat between the Interagency Leadership Team and the Interagency Coordinating Council on March 5, 2026
- Eight \$25k Microgrants given to providers for the prevention and intervention of human trafficking in Alameda County.
- Established a MOU with the Consulate General of Mexico to support child welfare cases involving Mexican minors
- Contract continues partnership with Catholic Charities to help foster youth with Special Immigrant Juvenile Status

Continuous Quality Improvement

- Existing System Improvement Plan (SIP) included action plans to address: timely investigation of referrals, workforce retention, and expanding family finding and engagement
- Existing quarterly management dashboard process in place since 2017. Suite of dashboard revised in 2024 to track emergency response metrics, workforce retention, youth with complex care needs/overstays at the TrSCF, timely child welfare services, and permanency for youth in care 24 months or longer
- Will integrate additional metrics relevant to audit recommendations into this process

Transparency

- Relevant information (e.g. presentation materials) and audit dashboard/updates are available on the agency website

Progress on Addressing Recommendations

Timeline

Sep. 2025 Oct. 2025 Nov. 2025 Dec. 2025 Jan. 2026 Feb. 2026 Mar. 2026 Apr. 2026 May 2026 Jun. 2026 Jul. 2026 Aug. 2026 Sep. 2026 Oct. 2026

Recommendation 1: Timely Supervisory review and approval of Emergency Response Investigations.



Recommendations 2: Review the status of referrals & identify impediments to Emergency Response Unit timely referral investigations and completions.



Recommendations 3: Develop strategies to address impediments to timeliness in referrals and investigation completion.



Recommendation 4: Survey staff to identify impediments to retention and recruitment.



Progress on Addressing Recommendations

Continued

Timeline

Sep. 2025 Oct. 2025 Nov. 2025 Dec. 2025 Jan. 2026 Feb. 2026 Mar. 2026 Apr. 2026 May 2026 Jun. 2026 Jul. 2026 Aug. 2026 Sep. 2026 Oct. 2026

Recommendation 5: Hire additional Bachelor’s Level Child Welfare Workers for the Emergency Response Program

 In Progress



Recommendation 6: Make shadowing mandatory for new employees.

Successfully Implemented




Recommendation 7 : Ensure documentation of timely services for foster youth.

Successfully Implemented




Recommendation 8: Update the Children and Youth System of Care (AB 2083) MOU to provide for additional data sharing.

 In Progress



Recommendation 9: Identify, locate, and notify all relatives within 30 days of removal.

Successfully Implemented




Progress on Addressing Recommendations *Continued*

Timeline

Sep. 2025 Oct. 2025 Nov. 2025 Dec. 2025 Jan. 2026 Feb. 2026 Mar. 2026 Apr. 2026 May 2026 Jun. 2026 Jul. 2026 Aug. 2026 Sep. 2026 Oct. 2026

Recommendation 10: Update System Improvement Plan to include provisions for sibling engagement when siblings not placed together.

Successfully Implemented
✓



Recommendation 11: Develop policies and procedures to track and minimize Transitional Shelter Care Facility (TrSCF) overstays.

Successfully Implemented
✓



Recommendation 12: Implement policies & procedures to ensure quarterly evaluation of Transitional Shelter Care Facility performance.

In Progress
●



Progress on Addressing Recommendations Continued

Timeline

Sep. 2025 Oct. 2025 Nov. 2025 Dec. 2025 Jan. 2026 Feb. 2026 Mar. 2026 Apr. 2026 May 2026 Jun. 2026 Jul. 2026 Aug. 2026 Sep. 2026 Oct. 2026

Recommendations 13: Develop and document a process to track core and continuing training



Recommendations 14: Establish a process to hold supervisors and workers accountable for completing training hours



Recommendation 15: Ensure all contracts include Results Based Accountability (RBA) measures, including a timeliness performance metric for service provision.



Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Legislative Opportunities

- Explore alignment with the federal One Child, One Placement philosophy. This will require expanding specialized placement capacity and treatment resources for youth with complex needs. By building a continuum that prevents unnecessary placement changes and supports youth in the least restrictive, most stable environment possible, we can ensure that young people experience continuity, stabilize more effectively, and exit the system with stronger long-term outcomes.
- **AB 1846:** Strengthen ability to place with relatives throughout the dependency process.

Questions?

Andrea Ford, Agency Director, Alameda County Social Services Agency

Michelle Love, Assistant Agency Director,
Department of Children & Family Services

