

ALAMEDA COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY



Alameda County
Social Services Agency

A safety net. A way forward.

Department of Children and Family Services' (DCFS') Status Update #12

Alameda County Board of Supervisors'
Social Services Committee Meeting
September 28, 2026

Presented by:

Andrea Ford, Director, Social Services Agency

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

Agenda

- A Path Forward: How We Got Here, Progress, and What Comes Next
 - Child Welfare External Assessments and Reviews
 - 2024-108 Audit Report and California Department of Social Services Corrective Action Plan (CAP) Timeline
- Status of Implementation of Recommendations
 - Recommendations 1 – 3: Timely Emergency Response Investigations
 - Implementation of the Digital Assignment Board
 - Recommendation 4: Survey Staff
 - Safety Culture Survey Trends Over Time
 - Recommendation 5: Workforce

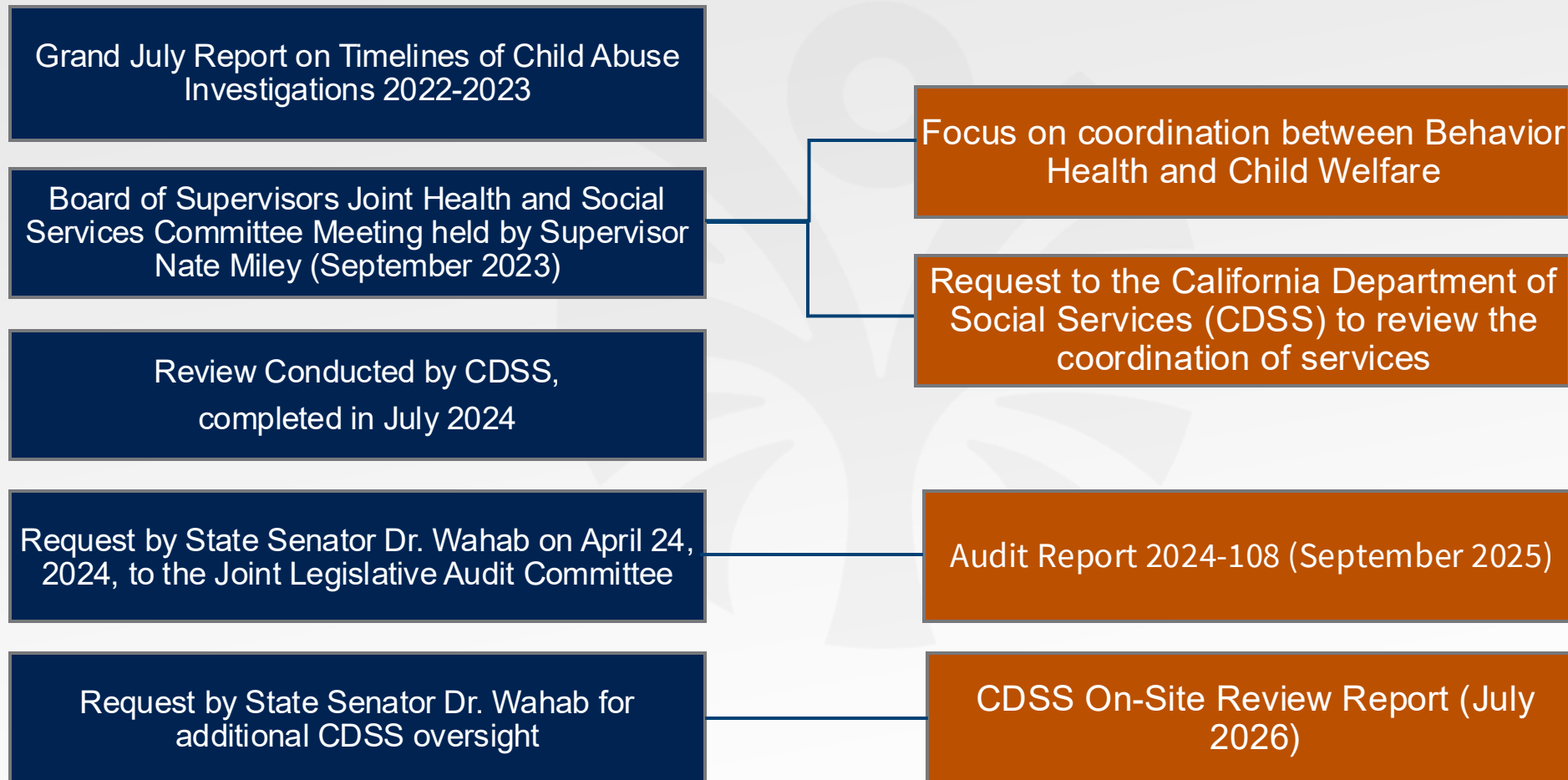


Agenda *Continued*

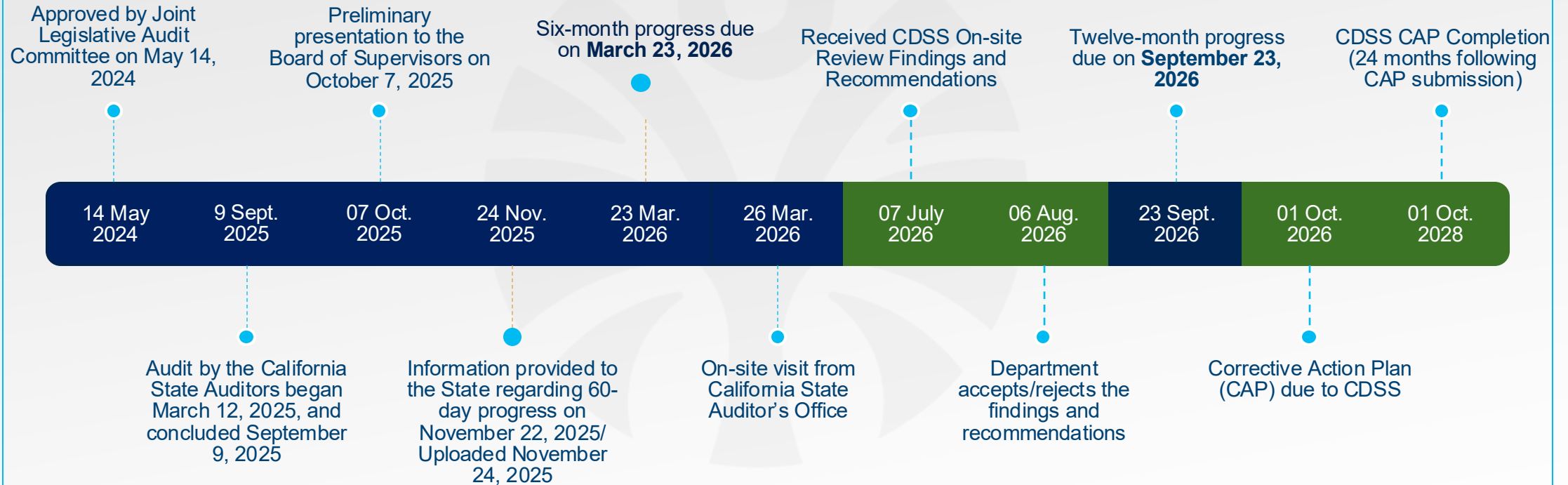
- Status of Implementation of Recommendations (continued)
 - Improvements in New Child Welfare Worker Training
 - Recommendation 8: AB 2083 MOU
 - Recommendation 10: Increased Family Finding
 - Recommendations 11-12: Transitional Shelter Care Facility
 - Recommendation 13: Training Completion
- Department Highlights and Opportunities
 - Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
 - Independent Living Program (ILP)
- Corrective Action Plan to California Department of Social Services (CDSS)
- Q & A



Child Welfare External Assessments and Reviews



2024-108 Audit Report and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Corrective Action Plan (CAP) Timeline



Recommendation Status after March 23, 2026 Update

State Auditor Assessment Status	Rec #	Recommendation (Short)
Fully implemented	6	Shadowing opportunities for new workers
	7	Improve documentation (court reports, contact notes, service dates)
	9	Relative identification process
	10	Update system improvement plan re: siblings; family finding
	13	Training accountability system (quarterly reports, 20-hr CE)
	14	Hold staff accountable for training hours / progressive discipline
	15	Add timeliness measures to all contracts (results-based accountability)
7 of 15		
47%		

Pending	1	Ensure timely supervisory review / approval of investigation reports
	2	Periodically review status of all referrals to determine # days to initiate and close referrals; identify impediments to initiating and completing referrals timely
	3	Strategies to address impediments to initiating and completing referrals timely
	4	Survey staff on retention/recruitment impediments; develop action plan
	5	Ensure that it has sufficient staff to provide timely investigations and provision of foster care services
	8	Amend MOUs with interagency partners to include timeliness measures for service provision
	11	Policies for transitional shelter care facility
	12	Quarterly evaluation of transitional shelter care facility performance
8 of 15		
53%		

Recommendations 1 – 3: Timely Emergency Response Investigations

To ensure timely initiation and closure of referrals

Recommendation 1:

Ensure timely supervisory review / approval of investigation reports.

Recommendation 2:

Periodically review status of all referrals to determine # days to initiate and close referrals; identify impediments to initiating and completing referrals timely.



Multi-prong approach: Training, Oversight, and Additional Supports

- Refresher training for supervisors on utilizing SafeMeasures to monitor staff progress on referral investigations.
- Refresher training for supervisors on referral closure procedures and expectations:
 - Meet and confer with the Professional Association of County Employees (PACE) labor union regarding time frames for case closure began on January 12, 2026.
- Strengthened ongoing oversight process during regularly supervision at multiple levels:
 - Program Manager reviews status of referrals open to workers in the unit with supervisors.
 - Division Director reviews status of referrals open to workers across units with Program Managers.
 - Division Director provides summary to Assistant Agency Director of open referrals and number of staff who have 40 or more open referrals.
- Hired project Child Welfare Supervisor to assist with reviewing and closing referrals.

Recommendations 1 – 3: Timely Emergency Response Investigations

Key Identified Strategies to Address Identified Impediments

Recommendation 3:

Strategies to address impediments to initiating and completing referrals timely

Staffing

Recruitment: Increase staffing in Emergency Response
(see Recommendation 5)

Retention: Ensure staff have ongoing mechanisms to provide feedback and suggestions about Emergency Response operations

Engage additional supports as needed: Utilize Case Assistant Program (CAP)

Review and Improve Processes

Dedicated Time Implemented in July 2025

Digital Assignment Board implemented August 3, 2026

Implementation of the Digital Assignment Board (DAB)

Manual assignment process that made it difficult to track daily staffing availability to accept assignments



Diverse Ideas Workgroup Identified Pain Point in Assignment Process



Pain Point re-iterated in staff focus groups during CDSS On-Site Visit



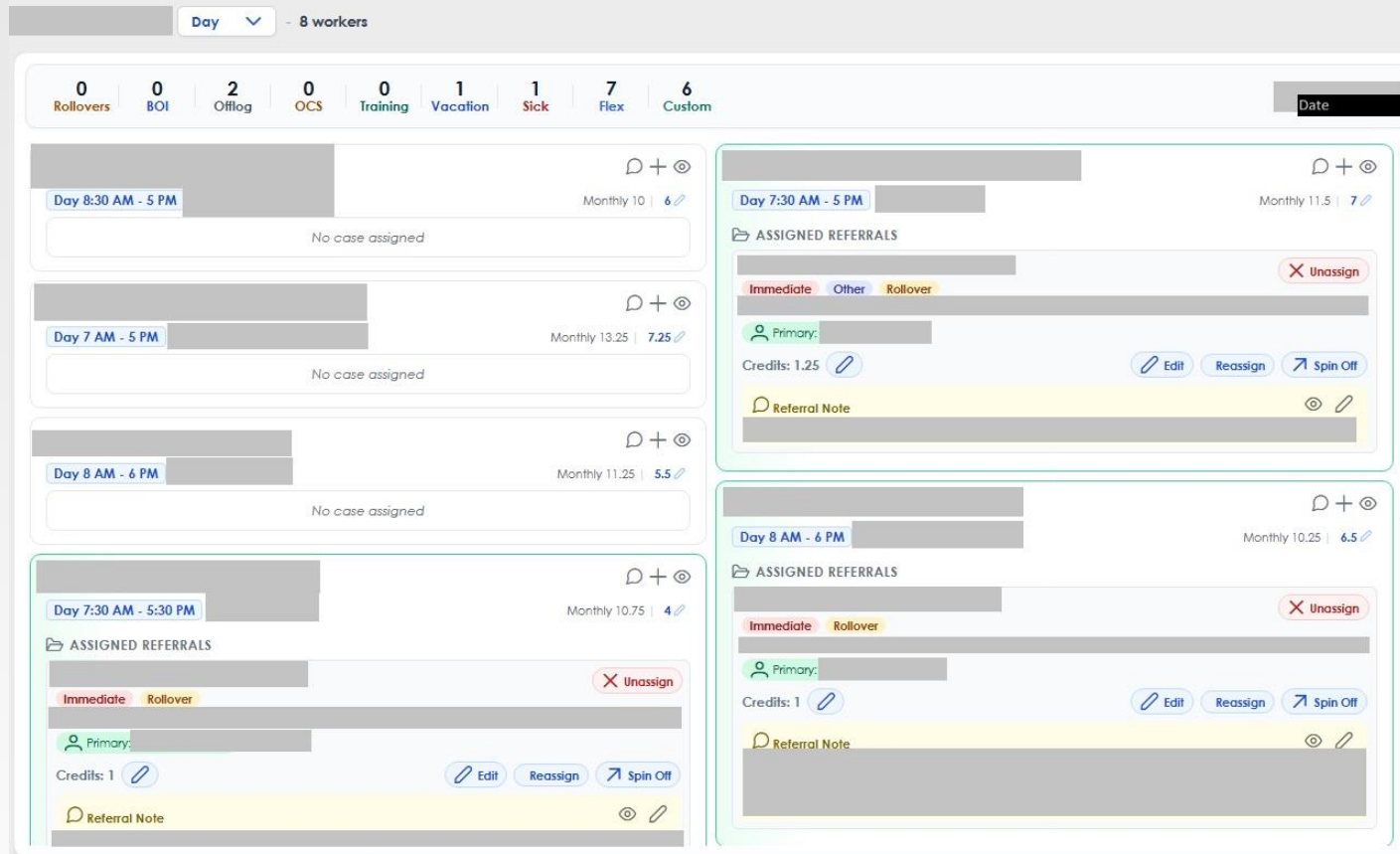
Digital
Assignment
Board
Implemented
8/3/2026

Addresses impediments to initiating timely:

- Adds transparency to the referral assignment process for staff, supervisors and managers
- Ensure that supervisors have accurate info about staff availability to accept assignments to account for scheduled flex days, vacation time and/or training
- Will enable more detailed tracking of referral assignments

Implementation of the Digital Assignment Board (DAB)

Worker Availability Dashboard



Early implementation feedback:

- Intake supervisors are more easily able to determine which Emergency Response staff are available.
- Emergency Response staff are able to see their spot in the rotation.
- Maintains assignment history.

Next Phase of Implementation:

- Add functionality for workers to be able to see the Digital Assignment Board on their phones.

Recommendations 4: Survey Staff

Recommendation
4:

Survey staff on
retention/
recruitment
impediments;
develop action plan

Survey of staff utilizing the TeamFirst Assessment of Safety Culture (TASC) administered July – August 2025

- Presentations of results to staff: November 2025 – February 2026
- Focus groups with staff: February – April 2026

Summary of initial action plan shared with staff in e-mail about the 2026 survey

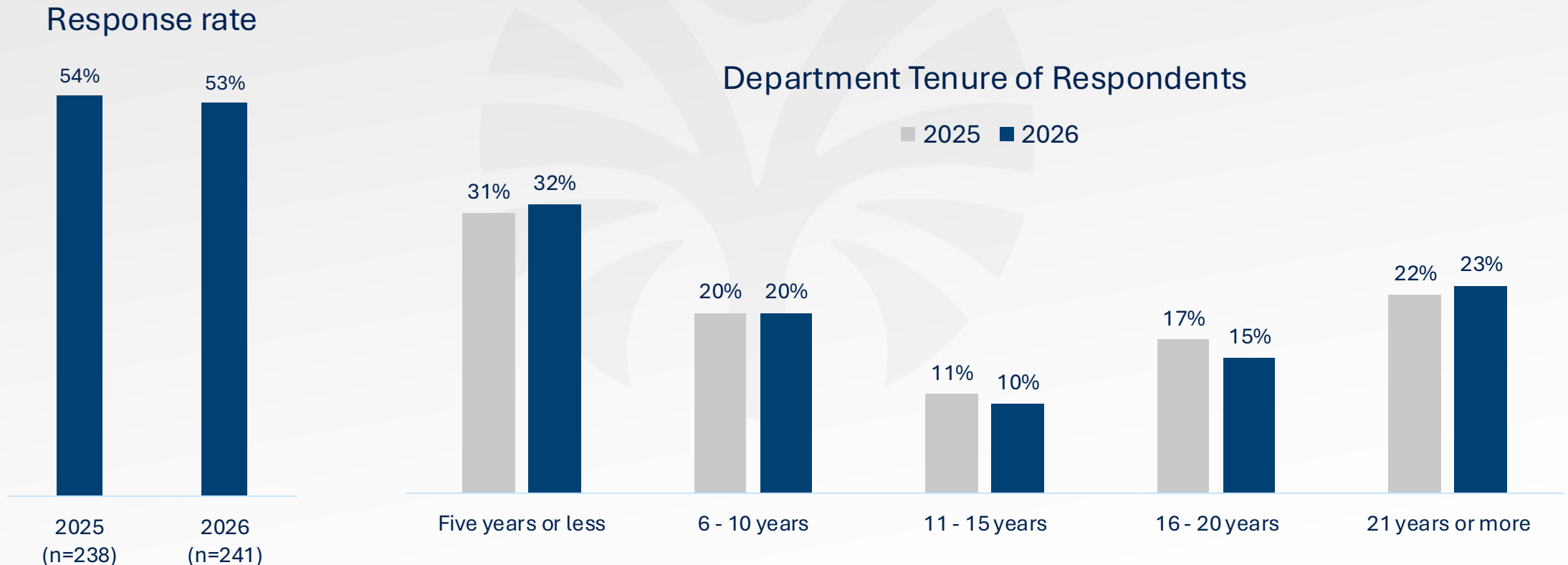
Initial action plan developed June 2026

- Will amend action plan to incorporate additional feedback relevant to retention as it becomes available, including:
 - Focus group feedback provided to CDSS during March 2026 On-site Visit
 - Feedback from staff during Assistant Agency Director Floor Meetings in July/August
 - Listening sessions with staff and supervisors about department recruitment and retention efforts held in August

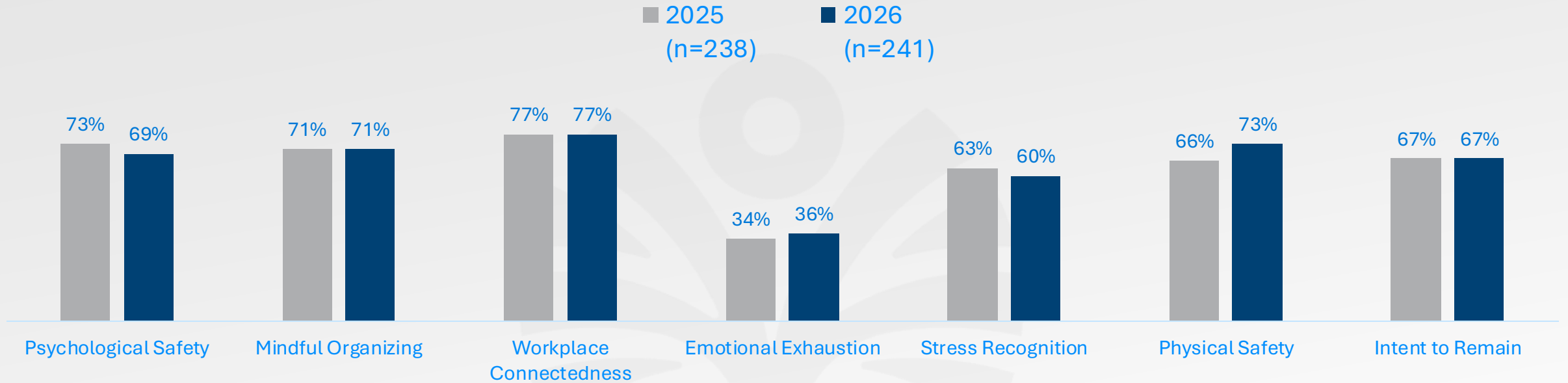
2026 survey administered: July 14 – August 28, 2026

Safety Culture Survey Trends Over Time

Stable response rate and in characteristics of respondents from 2025 – 2026



Safety Culture Survey Trends Over Time



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Whether team members feel accepted, respected, and free to speak up and take interpersonal risks

MINDFUL ORGANIZING

How teams monitor, plan, innovate, learn, and support each other

WORKPLACE CONNECTEDNESS

How connected employees feel to coworkers within the agency

EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

Team's emotional reserves - feeling depleted, drained, and used up at day's end

STRESS RECOGNITION

How well individuals identify stress and its impact on decision-making

PHYSICAL SAFETY

How safe team members feel in the office/work setting

INTENT TO REMAIN

Personal and professional factors that contribute to employees' intention to stay with child welfare work

Recommendation 5: Workforce

Recommendation 5: Ensure that it has sufficient staff to provide timely investigations of child abuse and neglect referrals and the timely provision of foster care services

Recruitment and retention efforts have resulted in a substantial increase in staffing

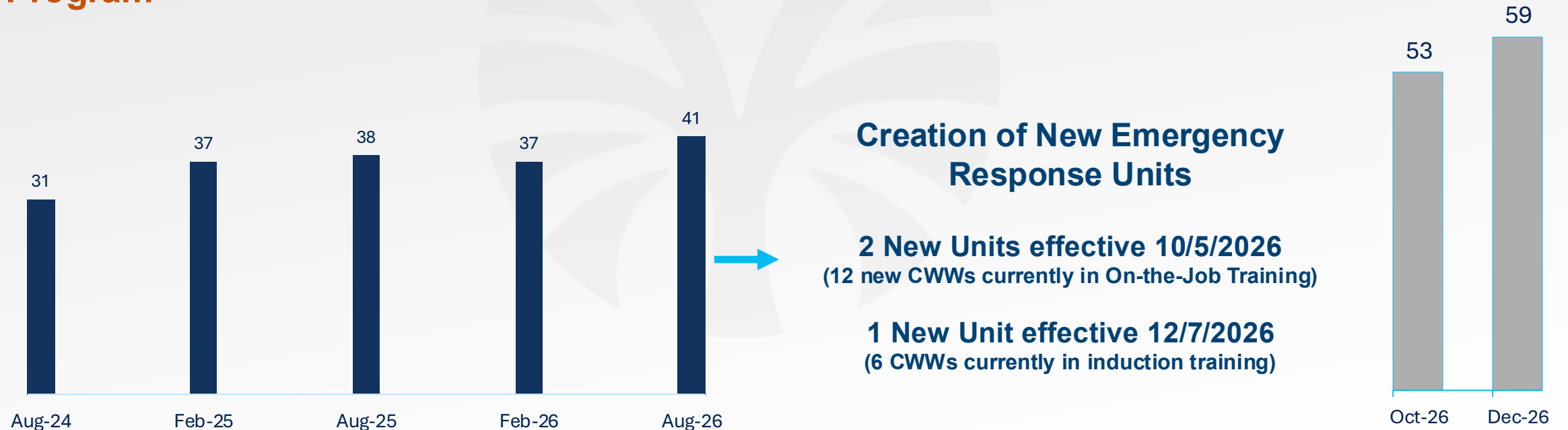
Vacancy rate decreased by 83.9% in the last 2 years, and 79% since September 2025



Recommendation 5: Workforce

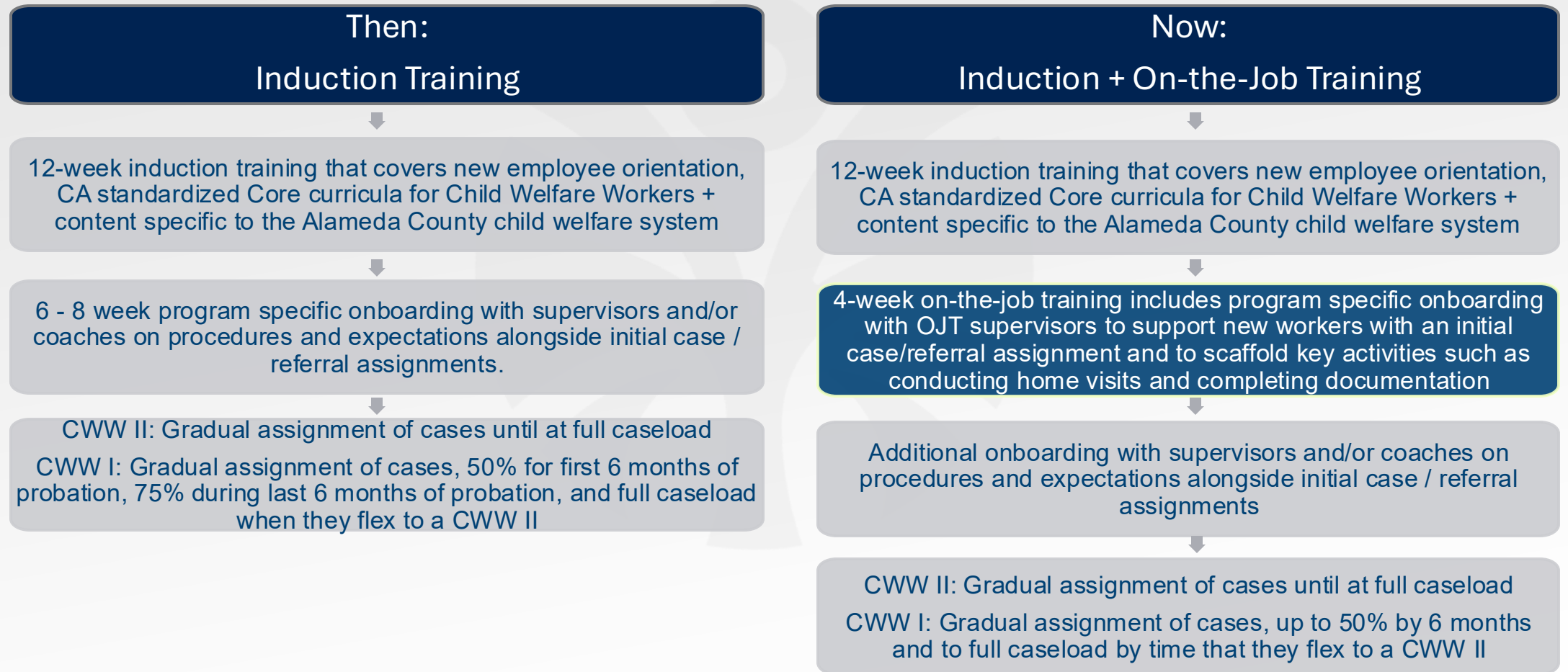
Recommendation 5: Ensure that it has sufficient staff to provide timely investigations of child abuse and neglect referrals and the timely provision of foster care services

Continued Prioritization and Planned Expansion of Staffing in Emergency Response Program



7 Emergency Response Units: 5 Day shift, 2 swing shift

Improvements in New Child Welfare Worker Training



Recommendation 8: AB 2083 MOU

Recommendation 8:

Amend MOUs with interagency partners to include timeliness measures for service provision.

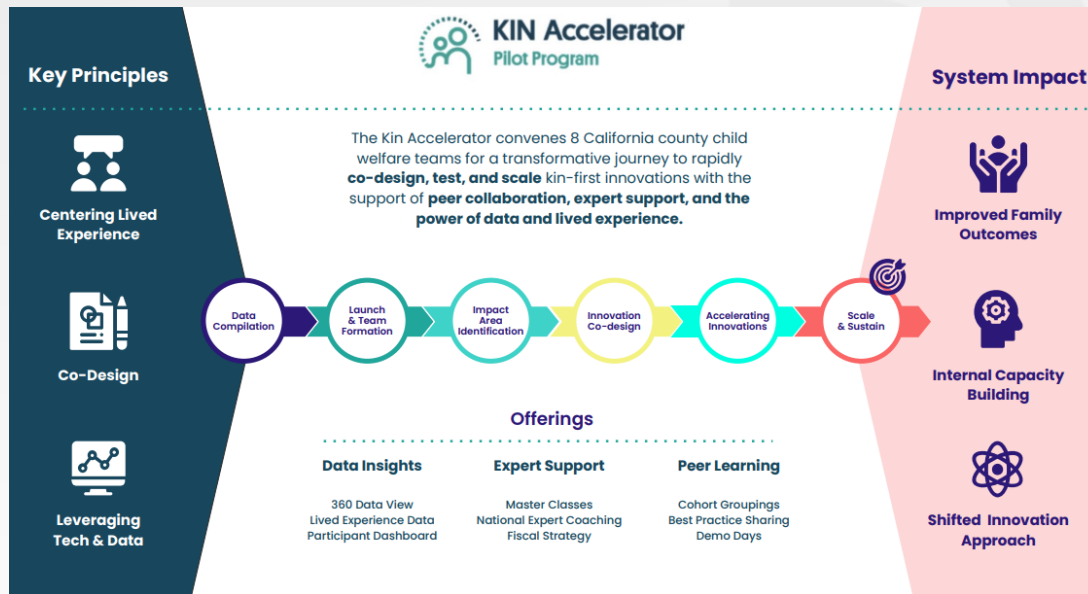
Submitted to the Board of Supervisors for approval at the September 15, 2026, Regular Meeting.

- Reflects agreement between all departments on language to address this recommendation.

Recommendation 10: Increased Family Finding

Recommendation 10: Update system improvement plan re: relatives/siblings; increase family finding

Alameda is one of 8 counties selected to participate in the KIN Accelerator pilot to support county efforts to further increase first placement with relatives. Partners supporting the pilot include CDSS, the Center for Excellence, Casey Family Programs, and Think of Us.



Recommendation 10: Increased Family Finding

Recommendation 10: Update system improvement plan re: relatives/siblings; family finding

Family Finding and Engagement Contract

Leveraged funding match available through the state's Excellence in Family Finding, Engagement and Support (EFFES) Program.

Victor Community Support Services

- Contract with Victor Community Support Services effective June 1, 2026
- Capacity to serve 25 – 27 children/youth at any given time
- Goal: Identify, locate, and engage relatives, kin, and support networks to support the permanent placement and lifelong connection needs of children and youth placed in out-of-home care.

June 1 - September 1, 2026

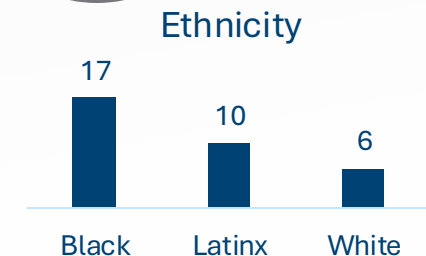
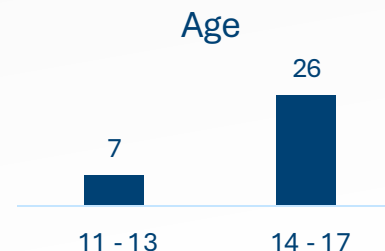


Relative connections

- Identified a total of 394 relative connections
- Average of 13.13 identified per youth

Youth served

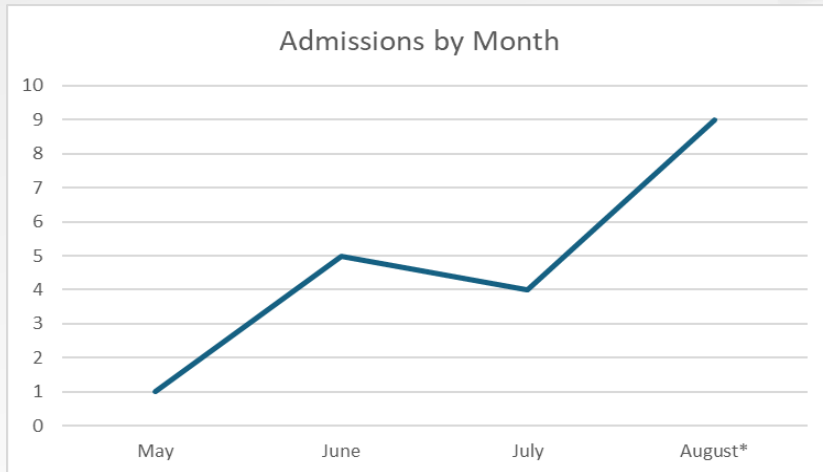
- 91 youth served
- 33 youth completed services
- All youth placed in STRTP



Recommendations 11-12: Transitional Shelter Care Facility

Recommendation 11:
Policies for transitional shelter care facility

Recommendation 12:
Quarter evaluation of transitional shelter care facility performance



The Transitional Shelter Care Facility (TrSCF) had a “soft” opening on **March 27, 2026**, and reopened to law enforcement on **April 3, 2026**

- The first intake to the facility was in May 2026 and there have **19** intakes as DCFS continues to explore and utilize all other placement options in accordance with CDSS guidelines

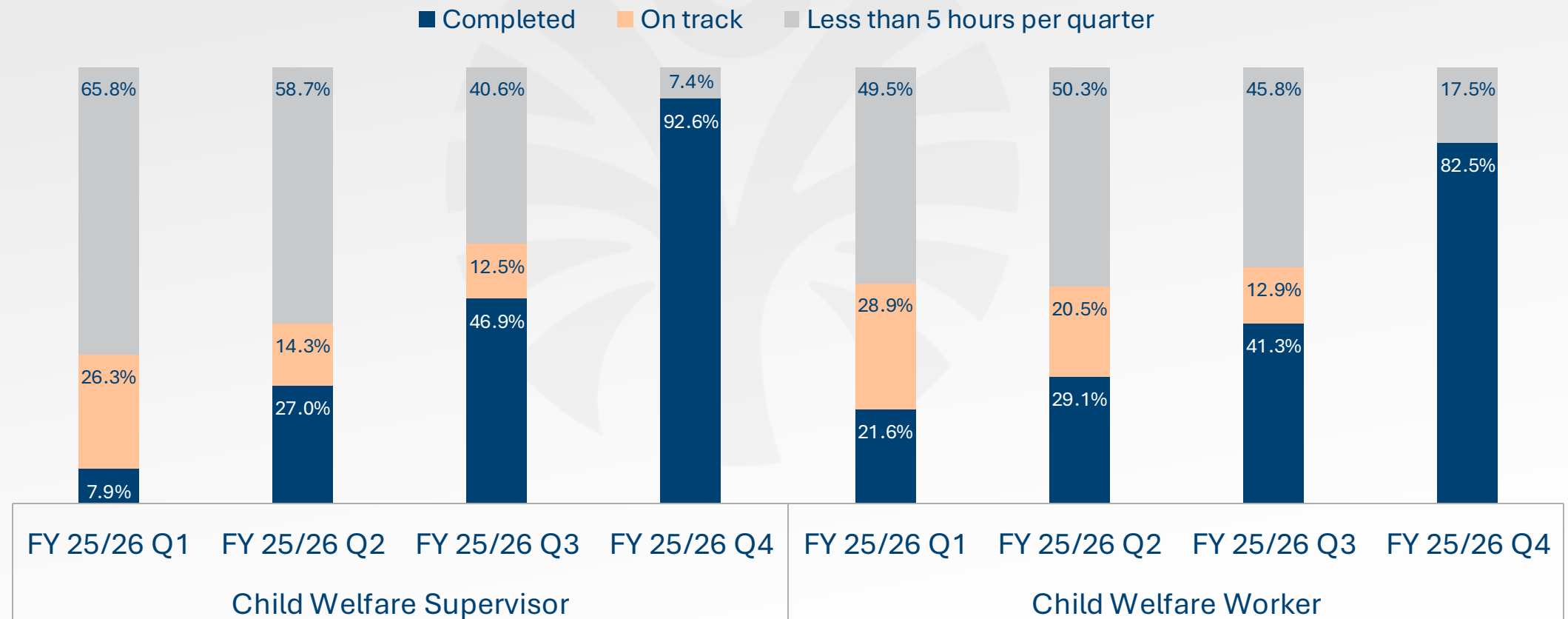
The TrSCF team meets twice per month and debriefs any incidents and reviews applicable policies/procedures on an ongoing basis.

The TrSCF held a Board meeting on August 26, 2026 and reviewed intake data and critical incident review.

The TrSCF held an Operations/Health and Safety Meeting on September 1, 2026 and intake data for May 27 – August 28, 2026, was also reviewed.

Recommendation 13: Training Completion

Training Hour Completion as of June 30, 2026



Department Highlights & Opportunities

Celebrating successful client outcomes

- Caregiver Appreciation Dinner on May 15, 2026
- Independent Living Program Graduation on June 11, 2026
- Independent Living Program College Tours in July 2026

Collaboration

- Planning next Border Network Human Rights Training (Immigration rights training for foster parents, community, staff)
- Safety Convening (Training on Safety Science for Community, staff, and relevant stakeholders) on June 30, 2026
- Becoming Me (CSEC Training for community, staff) on May 27, 2026
- First 5 Alameda's Help Me Grow (HMG) Pilot Proposal, November 2025
- AB 2083 Renewal

Continuous Quality Improvement

- Statewide implementation of CWS-CARES has been delayed until December 7, 2026
- 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. Have integrated additional metrics relevant to audit recommendations into this process

Transparency

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

Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

A few years ago, I signed up to be a Court Appointed Special Advocate, a person appointed by a judge to advocate for a foster child's best interests and provide consistent support throughout the case.

I had just been newly assigned to a young woman. I was told that it would likely be a short assignment as she was aging out of the foster care program. I had only met with her a couple of times when her housing fell into crisis. From the moment I indicated that my husband and I were willing to take her in, the Alameda Social Services team sprung into action. Her emergency placement was approved in hours. We went from surfacing the idea to her moving in within 36 hours.

The Alameda team didn't stop there. From the home visits and placement in the Independent Living Program, we were able to circle her as a team. When she first moved in with us, she didn't expect to finish high school. Now, she's in her second year of community college and thriving.

It took a whole team: county social services staff who showed up, programs like ILP and CASA that continue to provide support, the extended foster care funding in CA, and the program support at community college. We are proud and happy foster parents (And sure, we had our challenging moments, but it was worth it). We're excited to watch the incredible growth and trajectory of this incredible young woman. So many other young people need help and support. Consider it. It has been one of the most rewarding things we've ever done. The need is enormous and the outcomes can be remarkable.

- CASA Volunteer

Independent Living Program (ILP)

On June 11, 2026, Alameda County Side by Side proudly celebrated the outstanding achievements of our foster youth at the annual Independent Living Program (ILP) Graduation and ILP awarded educational scholarships to youth entering college in Fall 2026.



In July 2026, the ILP team conducted a college tour, visiting UC Santa Cruz, CSU Monterey Bay, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. The youth also had the opportunity to visit the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to California Department of Social Services (CDSS)

- CDSS providing oversight of the Corrective Action Plan implementation.
- CFS is currently meeting with CDSS weekly to develop the Corrective Action Plan; meeting cadence will adjust during implementation.
- CDSS is providing resources and technical support to CFS.
- Draft Corrective Action Plan reviewed at in-person meeting with CDSS on September 26, 2026.

Questions

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



Thank you.