

# SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

## Department of Children and Family Services Status Update on Findings from the Joint Committee on Legislative Audits

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*Guided by Collaboration, Continuous Quality  
Improvement, and Transparency*

*Presented by:*

**Andrea Ford**, Agency Director

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

Alameda County Board of Supervisors Special Meeting

**November 25, 2025**





# AGENDA

- Child Welfare External Assessments and Reviews 2022- 2024
- Review of the 2024-108 Audit Report Timeline
- Analysis of Data Utilized in the Audit (Timely Service Provision)
- Progress on Addressing Recommendations
- TeamFirst Assessment of Safety Culture
  - Survey Results and Next Steps
- Hiring and Recruitment Efforts
- Sibling Engagement in Placement
- Department Highlights and Opportunities
- Next Steps
- Appendix
  - Map of the Child Welfare System
  - Recommendations 1-15

# Child Welfare External Assessments and Reviews 2022-2024

Grand Jury Report on Timeliness of Child Abuse Investigations 2022-2023;

Board of Supervisors Joint Social Services and Health Care Services Committee Meeting held by Supervisor Nate Miley (Sept. 2023)

Review conducted by CDSS, completed in July 2024;

Request by State Senator Dr. Wahab on April 24, 2024, to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee;

Focus on coordination between Behavioral Health Care & Child Welfare

Request to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to audit the coordination of services

# Review of the 2024-108 Audit Report Timeline

Approved by Joint Legislative  
Audit Committee on May 14,  
2024

Preliminary presentation to the  
Board of Supervisors on  
October 7, 2025

Six-month progress due on  
March 23, 2026

14 May 2024

9 Sep. 2025

7 Oct. 2025

24 Nov. 2025

23 Mar. 2026

Audit by the California State  
Auditors began March 12, 2025,  
and concluded September 9,  
2025

Information provided to the  
State regarding 60-day  
progress on November 22,  
2025/ Uploaded November 24,  
2025

# Analysis of Data Utilized in the Audit (Timely Service Provision)

## Timely Service Provision

## Included Specific Sub Samples of Cases

Reviewed **36** child/youth cases & **125** services needed by those 36 youth.

Family Finding and Engagement:  
**5** cases of older foster youth ages 11 – 17 and  
**5** cases of youth in care 2+ years randomly selected.

Children dually involved with child welfare and regional center:  
**18** child/youth cases judgmentally selected.

Children who were referred to specialty and non- specialty mental health services:  
**20** child/youth cases randomly selected.

# 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.



**Recommendation 2 & 3:** Review the status of referrals & identify impediments to Emergency Response Unit timely referral investigations and completions; AND develop strategies to address impediments to timeliness in referrals and investigation completion.



**Recommendation 4:** Survey Staff to identify impediments to retention and recruitment.



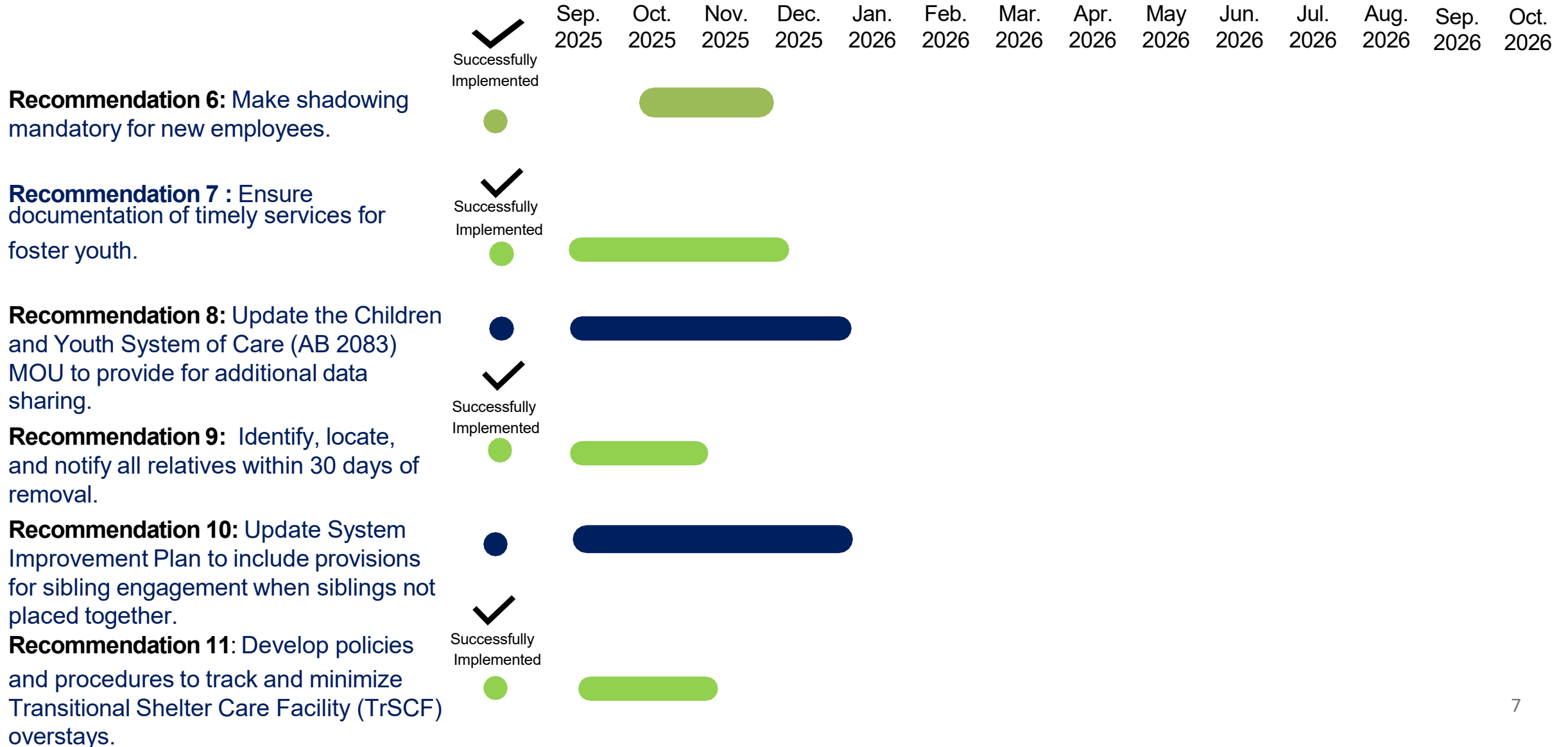
**Recommendation 5:** Hire additional Bachelor's Level Child Welfare Workers for the Emergency Response Program.



# Progress on Addressing Recommendations

## Continued

### Timeline



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



**Recommendations 13 & 14:** Develop and document a process to track core and continuing training. 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.



# Why the TeamFirst Assessment of Safety Culture (TASC)?

The National Partnership for Child Safety (NPCS) developed the TASC survey to support member jurisdictions in assessing various aspects of child welfare safety culture. The survey itself comprises scales that have been previously validated in other research studies.

- Alameda County DCFS became a member jurisdiction of the NPCS in 2024
- Presented NPCS to the Social Services Committee in January 2025
- The Center for Helping Professions, the research organization that supports NPCS, administers jurisdiction-specific versions of the safety culture survey to staff to ensure confidentiality of survey responses

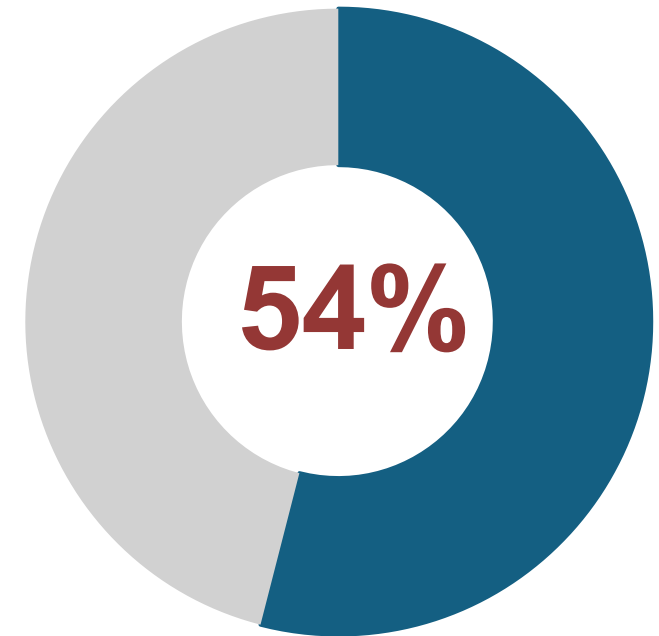
Developing ways to gather staff feedback regularly is an essential component of our internal continuous quality improvement effort to better understand employees' perceptions of safety culture within the agency and to track how these organizational metrics change over time.

- First survey administered **July 1 – August 15, 2025**, **238** responses from **442** staff
- Next survey release planned Summer 2026

**Presenter Notes**  
2025-11-25 03:25:06

Thank you to everyone who participated in our first Safety Culture Survey. 238 staff, or 54% of staff, responded to the survey. We just received a high level

## 2025 Response Rate



# TeamFirst Assessment of Safety Culture (TASC)

## Team and Individual Scales: Summary Results

73%

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

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

71%

MINDFUL ORGANIZING

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

77%

WORKPLACE CONNECTEDNESS

How connected employees feel to coworkers within the agency

34%

EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

Team's emotional reserves - higher scores indicate more burnout

63%

STRESS RECOGNITION

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

66%

PHYSICAL SAFETY

How safe team members feel in the office/work setting

67%

INTENT TO REMAIN

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

\*Represents an average across all questions within the same scale. Percentages reflect the number of survey respondents, not inclusive of total ACSSA CFS Staff

# TeamFirst Assessment of Safety Culture (TASC)

## Safety Culture Survey Next Steps



# Hiring and Recruitment Efforts

## In Progress

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

- Registered Agency for the 2026 California Title IV-E Job Fair (February 20th, 2026)
- Social Media Recruitment Campaign 12/5/2025 - 1/5/2026
- Comcast Recruitment Advertisement 12/5/2025 – 1/5/2026



Alameda County Social Services Agency

**WE ARE HIRING!**

**JOB POSITION:**  
Child Welfare Worker I (#6740)

Salary: \$92,371.50 - \$110,584.50 annually

Make a real impact supporting children and families through assessment, case management, and crisis intervention.

**Requirements:**  
Possession of a master's degree from an accredited college or university in Counseling, Clinical Psychology, Sociology, Education, or an equivalent field (Vocational Rehabilitation majors not acceptable), or Bachelor's degree with coursework in psychology, sociology, social work, child development, or equivalent, AND 2 years of full-time post-bachelor direct services experience to families or children (child welfare, family counselling, school social work, etc.).

**Benefits:**  
Excellent medical, retirement, paid leave, and wellness programs.

[Apply Now!](#)

[Click Here to Apply!](#)

Build a career that changes lives. Apply today!



Alameda County Social Services Agency

**WE ARE HIRING!**

**JOB POSITION:**  
Child Welfare Worker II (#6745)

Salary: \$105,534 - \$121,114 annually

Make a real impact supporting children and families through assessment, case management, and crisis intervention.

**Requirements:**  
Valid CA driver's license + 1 year as a Child Welfare Worker I in Alameda County + a recommendation for promotion, or; MSW with supervised field placement in social casework and counseling, or; A master's degree in Counseling, Clinical Psychology, Sociology, Education, or a related field (excluding Vocational Rehabilitation), plus two semesters of supervised fieldwork or 6 months of relevant post-baccalaureate experience providing direct services to children or families.

**Benefits:**  
Excellent medical, retirement, paid leave, and wellness programs.

[Apply Now!](#)

[Click Here to Apply!](#)

Build a career that changes lives. Apply today!

# Child Welfare Worker I Exam

1/30/2023 to 10/24/25 (5 Recruitment Events)



### Project

- ✓ **568 total applications received** for the CWW I program, with 202 candidates (36%) advancing to scheduled interviews.
- ✓ **Significant early attrition:** 395 candidates (70%) did not meet minimum qualifications, representing the largest drop-off.



### Planning

- ✓ **Interview performance:** 132 candidates passed oral interviews, with 11 failing and 30 no-shows (15% non-attendance rate).
- ✓ **Final hiring outcomes:** 49 candidates successfully hired, achieving a 9% conversion rate from total applications to hires.



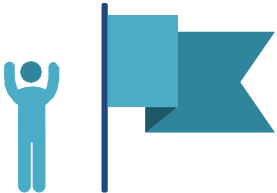
### Execution

- ✓ **Current candidate status:** 24 on waitlist, 14 on withhold, 16 withdrew, and 29 have exams not yet completed.
- ✓ **Process efficiency opportunity:** The high disqualification rate at the MQ screening stage suggests potential for improved upfront candidate targeting or clearer qualification communication.

**9%**  
Conversion Efficiency

**395**  
Filtered out

**29**  
Pending Exams



**85.7%**  
Retention Rate

# Child Welfare Worker II Exam

1/10/2017 to 10/7/25 (18 Recruitment Events)



## Project

- ✓ **1,215 applications received** for the CWW II program, with 718 candidates (59%) advancing to scheduled interviews.
- ✓ **Initial screening:** 528 candidates (43%) did not meet minimum qualifications and were filtered out early in the process.



## Planning

- ✓ **Strong interview conversion:** 537 candidates passed oral interviews out of 718 scheduled, with 55 failing and 95 no-shows (13% non-attendance rate).
- ✓ **Hiring success:** 218 candidates hired from the qualified pool, representing 18% conversion rate from total applications.



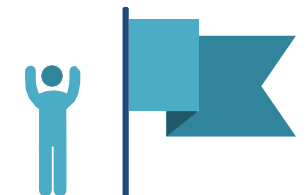
## Execution

- ✓ **Active pipeline:** 163 candidates on waitlist, 89 on withhold, and 31 with exams not yet completed, totaling 283 potential future hires.
- ✓ **Minimal attrition:** Only 34 candidates withdrew voluntarily and 2 were disqualified after hire, indicating strong candidate engagement throughout the process.

**18%**  
Conversion Efficiency

**528**  
Filtered out

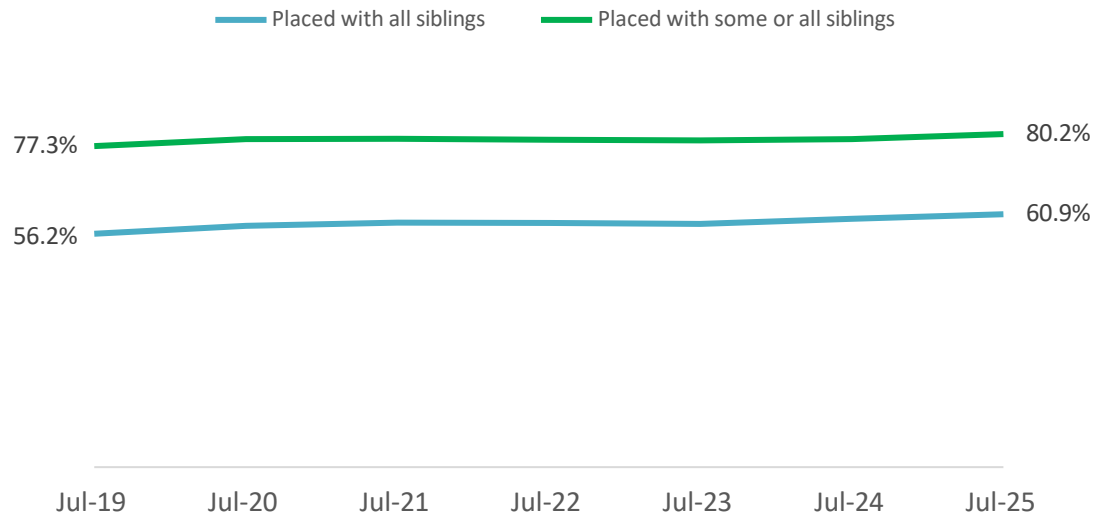
**31**  
Pending Exams



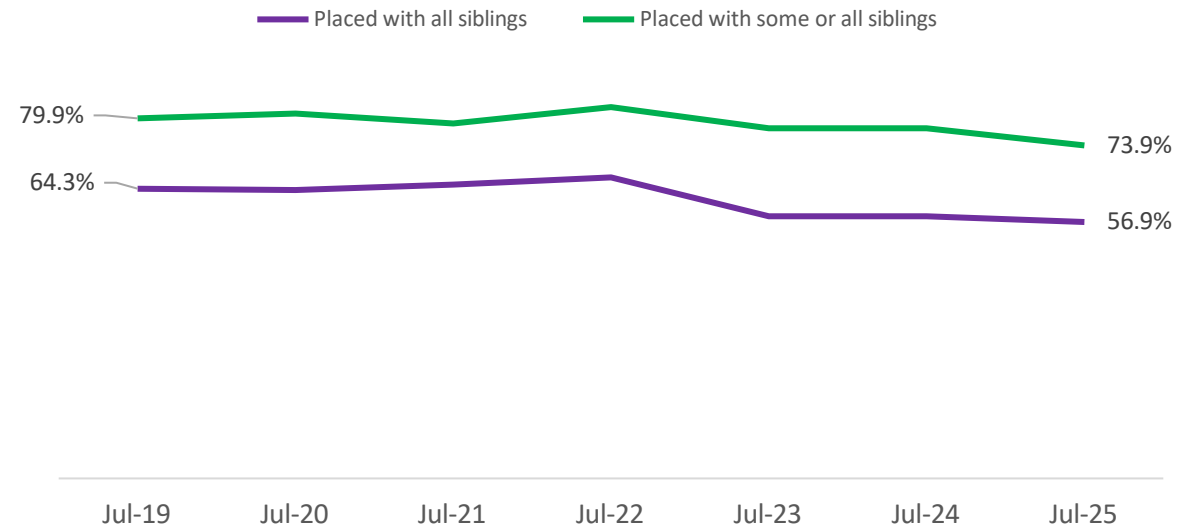
**50.8%**  
Retention Rate

# Sibling Engagement in Placement

## California Foster Youth Placed with Siblings



## Alameda County Foster Youth Placed with Siblings



**Nearly 3 of 4 foster youth in Alameda County with siblings is placed with all or some of their siblings**

# Department Highlights & Opportunities

## Celebrating successful client outcomes

- Reunification breakfast
- Permanency celebration

## Collaboration

- Comprehensive Prevention Plan (FFPS)
- Began serving community pathway referrals to prevent child welfare involvement through Another Road to Safety
- National Partnership for Child Safety (2024)
- Kinship Accelerator (2025)
- Special Juvenile Immigration 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

- Share presentation materials and reports on audit updates on agency website

# Next Steps

- Sixty-day response letter submitted about progress on recommendations.
- A six-month response letter will be submitted on March 23, 2026.
- A twelve-month response letter will be submitted on September 23, 2026.
- Additional presentations to BOS on items not yet completed.

# Questions?

**Andrea Ford**, Agency Director

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



# Thank you.

# Appendix

# Recommendation 1: Timely Supervisory approval of Emergency Response Investigations

## *Partially Completed:*

- Emergency Response Supervisors underwent refresher training on the referral closure procedures.
  - Completed initial refresher in September 2025; Ongoing annual refresher training
- Emergency Response Supervisors received additional training and instruction on referrals that needed modification to be closed.
  - Completed in October 2025; Ongoing annual refresher training
- Utilizing retired annuitants to close referrals. Currently closing 30 referrals a week.
  - Ongoing
- Meet and discuss with the labor union regarding time frames for case closure.
  - Pending

## ***Recommendations 2 & 3:***

**Review the status of referrals & identify impediments to Emergency Response Unit timely referral investigations and completions; AND develop strategies to address impediments to timeliness in referrals and investigation completion**

### ***In Progress***

#### *Dedicated Time*

- Implemented in **July 2025**. Now closing 200 referrals per month. **Ongoing**

#### *Case Assistant Support*

- Utilizing to set up Investigation Narratives for Child Welfare Workers' time when closing a referral. **Ongoing**

#### *Diverse Ideas Workgroup*

- Comprised of staff at all levels, including Child Welfare workers. The group is currently exploring "pain points when cases are assigned." **Ongoing**

#### *Safe Measures Utilization*

- Trained Emergency Response Supervisors on the utilization of Safe Measures (a specialized dashboard to monitor their caseloads and track deadlines) to monitor the status of referrals in their unit. **Completed September 2025**
- Program Managers are now monitoring utilization of Safe Measures by their staff and offering support as needed. **Completed October 2025**

#### *New Ideas*

- Exploring a contract with San Diego State University for a review and recommendations to improve the Emergency Response Program.

## **Recommendation 4: Survey staff to identify impediments to retention and recruitment**

### ***In Progress***

- All Agency staff engagement survey in progress (November 13<sup>th</sup> – December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025).
- CFS focused survey-Team First Assessment of Safety Culture. **Completed August 2025.** Will be administered annually.
- Disseminate survey results. Survey results were shared in **September 2025** via all staff meetings, email, and the Department newsletter.
- Present results to staff. Initial presentations will take place from **November 20 to December 8.** Additional presentations will continue in January 2026.
- Conduct follow-up focus groups. Gather additional information and ideas from staff.
- Identify and implement improvement plans.

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

### ***In Progress***

- Continuous hiring of the Bachelor's Level Child Welfare Worker classification;
- Continuous hiring of the Master's Level Child Welfare Worker classification;
- Filing Exam Deadlines for both classifications:
  - January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026
  - March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026
  - May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026
  - July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026
  - September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026
  - November 16, 2026
- Joined the California Workforce Study to review whether the Child Welfare Worker duties can be split. The study is showing positive results. Discussion with the Project Leaders is scheduled for December 5th, 2025.

## **Recommendation 6: Make shadowing mandatory for new employees**

### ***Successfully Implemented***

- ✓ New workers can shadow a volunteer pool of seasoned workers.
- ✓ New workers can shadow seasoned workers in the Case Assistant Programs while they complete home visits.

## **Recommendation 7: Ensure documentation of timely services for foster youth**

### ***Successfully Implemented***

- ✓ Court report template enhanced for all reports to include the referral date of services to youth. Improves documentation of the service referral date. **Completed November 24, 2025.**
- ✓ Supervisors trained on the new template and provided additional tools/checklists to share with staff. **Completed November 6, 2025**
- ✓ Revised policy on completion of contact notes. **Completed October 2025.**
- ✓ Supervisors trained on the new contact note policy on **November 6, 2025.**
- ✓ Staff informed of new policies and provided templates, tools to support improved documentation. **Completed on November 24, 2025.**

## **Recommendation 8: Update AB 2083 MOU to provide for additional data sharing**

### ***In Progress***

- Language has been drafted to update the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to include timelines for the provision of services by mental health and Regional Center Providers. There is agreement in principle, and it is anticipated that the updated will occur by **December 31, 2025**.
- Discussions have begun for an independent MOU with the Regional Center of the East Bay for timely provision of services.

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

***Successfully Implemented***

- Child Welfare Workers and Clerical staff have been trained on the new relative notification process. Implementation began on **September 29, 2025**.

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

***In Progress***

- New System Improvement Strategy approved by California Department of Social Services (CDSS) on **November 17, 2025**.
- New System Improvement Strategy scheduled for **December 16, 2025** for approval.
- Family Finding & Engagement RFP currently in process

## **Recommendation 11: Develop policies and procedures to track and minimize Transitional Shelter Care Facility overstays**

### ***Successfully Implemented***

- ✓ Improve documentation by creating written protocols for all procedures at the Transitional Shelter Care Facility (TrSCF). **Complete.**
- ✓ Explore placements with relatives/Nonrelative Extended Family Members (NREFM) as a first option, starting the process before child/youth arrival at the facility, whenever possible, and complete Emergency Resource Family Approval (RFA) placement within 72 hours. **Complete.**
- ✓ Provide a quarterly summary report of intake and overstay data to the TrSCF Steering Committee and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. (Not applicable until the new TrSCF is opened).

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

### ***In Progress***

- Refresher training on reporting requirements for contracted partners, Administrator, and Facility manager. **Complete.**
- Create a cheat sheet for incident reporting timelines. **In progress.**
- Create a system to track late Critical Incident/Illness and Run Away Incident reports. **Complete.**
- Share reports, data, trends, strategies, deficiencies, corrective action plans, and recommendations for practice and policy changes with the AC Steering Committee on a quarterly basis and at the AC Board meeting, which includes the Agency Director.
- Resume Health and Safety Facility Meetings once new facility is licensed.

**Recommendations  
13 & 14: Develop and  
document a process  
to track core and  
continuing training.  
Establish a Process  
to hold supervisors  
and workers  
accountable for  
completing training  
hours.**

***Completed and In progress***

- Social Services Agency Training and Consulting Team providing quarterly reports on continuing training hours. **Ongoing beginning October 2025.**
- Supervisors trained on how to utilize the training report and document staff progress towards continuing training hours. **Completed November 6, 2025.**
- Supervisors trained on how to document continuing training hours in conference memos and performance evaluations. **Completed November 6, 2025.**
- Finalize written policy on failure to complete continuing training hours. **In progress.**

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

*In progress*

- Reviewed all 60 contracts in the Department for Results-Based Accountability Measures and timeliness measures. 40 of the contracts lack a timeliness measure.
- Side letters for contracts without a timeliness measure will be completed by **February 2026**.