

CHILD WELFARE SAFETY NET TASK FORCE

Department of Social Services
April 14, 2015

The Child Welfare System

The Child Welfare System in Santa Barbara County is comprised of at least 25 public and community based organizations, including but not limited to:

- The Department of Social Services, Child Welfare Services
- Juvenile Probation
- Child Abuse Listening and Mediation (CALM)
- Family Care Network, Inc. (FCNI)
- Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services (ADMHS)
- Superior Court

These organizations all play a role in preventing, identifying, reporting, investigating, or responding to reports and findings of abuse or neglect.

The Need for Child Welfare System Assessment

While organizations frequently assess their own systems, to date there has never been an in depth analysis of the overall Child Welfare System in Santa Barbara County.




The newly created Bureau of Children's Justice will use the criminal and civil law enforcement powers of the California Department of Justice to identify and pursue much-needed improvements to policies impacting children, and work with local, state, and national stakeholders to enhance supports available for children in need.



As part of our shared commitment to our children, it is important to evaluate the current policies and procedures that have an impact on our outcomes.

Task Force Charter

The charter of the Task Force is to conduct a holistic assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and gaps of the Child Welfare System in Santa Barbara County and produce a report for the Board of Supervisors which:

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- Acknowledges what parts of the system are currently working well and why.
 - Identifies and makes recommendations regarding areas of the system that could be improved.
 - Identifies and makes recommendations regarding existing needs not currently addressed by the system and what could be done to fill those gaps.

Task Force Structure

Five individuals (each Supervisor recommending one from his or her District) who have knowledge of:

- Child welfare
- Child development
- Family systems issues

Deputy Directors from the Department of Social Services and Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services, participate in all Task Force meetings to:

- Help members be better informed in real time about laws, regulations, policies and best practices.
- Explain the interconnectedness of parts of the system.
- Facilitate data inquiries.

Task Force Structure Cont'd

Task Force members appointed by the Board of Supervisors:

Should have a demonstrated passion for the well being of children and their families.

Should not have any conflicts of interest related to the services currently provided within the Child Welfare System or possible recommendations for service that could be part of the final report.

Should commit to participating on the Task Force during its 9-12 month life-span. It is anticipated that as much as 20 hours a month will be required in the first two months of the life of the Task Force to allow for orientations to the Child Welfare System and planning activities.

Task Force Activities

Orientation to the Child Welfare System which includes:

- Relationships between various parts of the system.
- Financing and funding streams.
- Nature of the children and families served.
- System mandates and practices.
- State and Federal outcome measures.

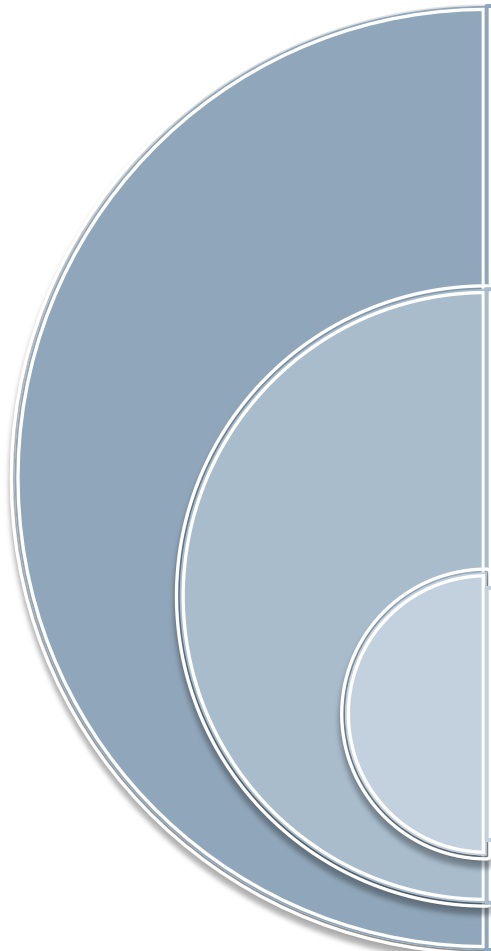
Additional proposed activities include but are not limited to:

- Ride-alongs and court observations.
- Mini-orientations to ADMHS, Public Health, Probation, CASA and the Superior Court.
- Introduction to contracted community based organizations and service providers.
- Discussions with a variety of public and community based organizations.

Task Force Financing

- Department of Social Services and other County departments will absorb costs associated with the commission as relates to management time participating in meeting and providing orientations.
- Costs for mileage for the commissioners, refreshments for meetings, clerical support, and production of the final report have no appropriate funding source within the Department of Social Services or other County Departments.
- Total estimated cost is approximately \$25,000 including production of the final report.

Recommendations



Approve and authorize the convening of a Child Welfare Safety Net Task Force for the purpose of assessing the overall system of public and community based child welfare services in Santa Barbara County.

Select target date to return to Board of Supervisors with names of Task Force Members.

Produce a report with findings and recommendations for the Board of Supervisors by April 14, 2016.

Questions??

Thank You