

DSS DEPARTMENT RESPONSE TO KPMG REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME			
Client Service Delivery			
DSS appreciates KPMG's commendation for the Department's deep commitment to client service delivery and will undertake the following actions:			
#	Recommendation	Department Response	Fiscal Impact/Challenges/Opportunities
1.1	Conduct an analysis of high utilizers of services across the Department's programs to coordinate and improve service delivery to shared clients	DSS agrees with the intent of KPMG's recommendation as it pertains to coordinating services within the Department. DSS utilizes "No Wrong Door" and "Horizontal Integration" to ensure effective service delivery to shared clients within DSS programs. Because the vast majority of our clients are participating in legally mandated services or entitlement programs, our concern is related to our clients remaining connected to all of the services to which they are entitled and from which they would benefit. In this regard, a "high utilizer" within our department is not an indication of a problematic situation. DSS is also working closely with the CEO's Office who is leading the effort to identify "high utilizers" across departments to more proactively identify vulnerable clients with high needs and help ensure that such clients receive additional support in navigating services and are connected to all available services and programs, where necessary. DSS is therefore also working to identify individuals.	This is being accomplished within current budget and programmatic processes. Ongoing for DSS internal service delivery efforts. January 2024 for efforts across departments.

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1.2	Bolster technology solutions to increase client access to immediate services, minimize wait times, and reduce visitation workload across Economic Assistance and Employment Services	DSS agrees with KPMG's recommendation. Using technology enhancements to make our programs more efficient and effective is a strategic priority of the Department. The Department continues to improve our online portal, OCTOPUS, which allows clients to send any document or message to a worker across a variety of programs without the need for a phone call or in-person visit. We look forward to implementing CalSAWS in April 2023, which will further streamline and enhance our technology solutions.	As recognized by KPMG, implementation of CalSAWS has the potential to positively impact our service delivery. Post CalSAWS implementation, the Department will be better positioned to understand additional technological solutions to increase client access to immediate services, minimize wait times, and reduce visitation workload, where appropriate.	We are 6 months from CalSAWS implementation, and therefore are focused on preparation for a successful launch in April 2023. The actions related to this recommendation will be a strategic focus for the Department in FY 2023-24.
1.3	Evaluate eligibility criteria for the General Relief program on a regular basis to align assistance with environmental factors, such as changes in cost of living. Note, this may require a decision from the Board of Supervisors.	DSS will work with the CEO's Office to determine the path forward related to this recommendation, including identifying the timing and specifics of a potential evaluation.	The fiscal impact (100% County General Fund) of any recommended changes to the program would be identified at the time those options were presented to the Board of Supervisors.	No later than June 2024.
1.4	Employ differential shifts within Adult Protective Service (APS) and Child Welfare Services (CWS) through flex schedules to improve capacity to visit families, reduce overtime impacts, and improve staff retention	DSS agrees with KPMG's recommendation to further evaluate our current flexible scheduling model for any opportunities to reduce overtime, improve staff retention, and enhance client service delivery. In addition to 9/80 schedules available to staff, the Department currently allows APS and CWS social workers to determine their weekly schedules in conjunction with their supervisor. This allows them to meet the needs of their clients as well as their personal schedules and keeps the need for overtime at a minimum.	The Department consistently engages in dialogue with staff regarding the optimal ways in which services are delivered, including the need for flexibilities that enhance service delivery and increase staff morale. Any evaluation that leads to a significant departure from current scheduling practices will need to be addressed in labor negotiations.	Further evaluation will occur by the end of June 2023.

Application and Case Management			
DSS appreciates KPMG's numerous commendations for the Department's initiatives to improve the areas of application and case management and will undertake the following actions:			
#	Recommendation	Department Response	Fiscal Impact/Challenges/ Opportunities
2.1	Update current standard operating procedures, communication response time standards, and regular supervision across the Department to alleviate inconsistent interpretations and implementation of internal policies and standards.	DSS agrees with the need to have consistent interpretation and implementation of internal policies and standards. We achieve this through multiple means including regular communications from DBS staff on policy and practice changes; Department Manual Monthly Training Topics; Administrative Directives; Policy and Procedures; and the Department Manual.	<p>161 DSS staff graduated from the InnovateSBC Green Belt by June 30, 2022.</p> <p>17 members of the IT, DSS Management and Executive Operations team recently graduated from the InnovateSBC Black Belt program.</p> <p>All of these staff are identifying innovations and working collaboratively to implement those innovations in a clear and consistent manner and will continue to focus on opportunities to standardize procedures across the Department whenever appropriate.</p>
2.2	Strengthen the lead worker model within the Economic Assistance and Employment Division's Santa Maria Office to enhance accountability and quality of work as well as reduce communication burden between employees	<p>DSS utilizes a hybrid approach where some clients are assigned to a caseload and some are assigned to the call center depending on the level of client need.</p> <p>DSS has expanded the multi-program model beyond Santa Barbara and Lompoc to the Santa Maria offices, which enhances accountability, improves customer service, and reduces the communication burden between employees.</p>	<p>Some planned standardization efforts were implemented after KPMG's interviews. We recently implemented new and updated communication standards in Eligibility Intake and CWS and will continue in FY 2022-23 and beyond. We also implemented the utilization of the Task Management Tool (TMT) for Eligibility Intake staff in June 2022.</p> <p>Additional efforts currently underway include a new document imaging system in December 2022.</p>
			As of September 2022, all district offices have a multi-program intake unit to strengthen the lead worker model by providing one worker to an applicant regardless of the number of programs that they are applying for, thereby eliminating handoffs.

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2.3	Develop specialized units within the Benefits Services Center (BSC) to align staff to demand and enhance the efficiency of application processing	DSS agrees that specialized units make sense at the BSC. We consistently utilize specialized units which are created and adapted in response to client and programmatic needs. Determining what specialized units are needed is an ongoing process. The BSC utilizes the One-and-Done model, completing all associated tasks and client needs at the time of the specialized interaction, minimizing hand-offs to eligibility workers and reducing the number of client interactions needed.	This is being accomplished within current budget and programmatic processes.	This will be reviewed annually during the BSC strategic planning process or more often as business needs arise.
2.4	Develop case prioritization and triaging methods in the Benefits Service Center to allow the Department to improve processing times and manage changes in demand	DSS agrees with the importance of strong task prioritization and triaging methods to ensure that the most critical work is achieved in a timely manner. Further evaluation of our current triaging methods and task prioritization was thoughtfully reviewed and recalibrated over the last year in preparation for CalSAWS implementation.	This is being accomplished within current budget and programmatic processes. Ongoing communication and collaboration with other counties as they transition to CalSAWS provides us with insight into opportunities we have during the implementation process.	Ongoing, with CalSAWS related improvements occurring during FY 2022-23.

Workload and Demand Management				
DSS appreciates KPMG's numerous commendations for the Department's initiatives to improve the areas of workload and demand management and will undertake the following actions:				
#	Recommendation	Department Response	Fiscal Impact/Challenges/ Opportunities	Implementation Timeframe
3.1	Perform an activity-based and demand-driven workload analysis and a process assessment to help ensure efficient staffing structure aligned to demand across APS, CWS, and Economic Assistance and Employment Services	DSS agrees with the intent of KPMG's recommendation to have a staffing structure aligned with demand and the department already utilizes programmatic and staffing data to ensure this alignment within the constraints of our operations. The fluid nature of staffing resources and client demand requires constant assessment and adjustment by the supervisors to account for frequent changes in demand as well as staffing vacancies due to illness, leaves of absence, vacations, and position vacancies.	This is being accomplished within current budget and programmatic processes.	Ongoing assessment and adjustment of our multiple processes to keep our staffing structure aligned to demand in real time, within our resources.
3.2	Evaluate current scheduling methods and staffing levels in the BSC to develop an automated scheduling system that aligns to demand and enhance client service accessibility	DSS agrees with the intent of KPMG's recommendation and will be adopting new scheduling technology with the implementation of CalSAWS in April 2023. The Department added 10 Eligibility positions for the BSC in FY 2022-23.	It is not feasible to replace our existing automated scheduling systems ahead of CalSAWS implementation. There is no fiscal impact as the cost is part of CalSAWS.	CalSAWS is being implemented in April 2023. Ten new positions were added in July 2022.

Data, Performance, and Outcomes Measurement DSS appreciates KPMG's commendations for implementing the CalWIN Business Intelligence data warehouse and will undertake the following actions:			
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4.1	Develop outcome-based measures, in addition to state-mandated measures, to assess the effectiveness of programs within the Department and increase identification of high utilizers	DSS agrees with the need to have strong outcome based measures to inform our work and communicate how we measure success. DSS currently has a significant array of outcome-based measures that we utilize in addition to those mandated by the State and Federal government, such as the CalFresh Utilization Project, BSC Dashboard, Eligibility Data Report, and OCTOPUS monthly report, among others. Additionally, monthly program reports feature significant performance and outcome data in key areas beyond state mandates. DSS continues to look towards meaningful outcomes based on key performance metrics and will work with the other Health and Human Services (HHS) partners to reflect these measures as the HHS departments collectively identify and assess the needs of high utilizers.	<p>In its pursuit of information, perspective, data, and opportunities for improvement, DSS has a strong history of developing measurement tools and performance reports and will continue to do so. With the implementation of CalSAWS we will have access to a significant amount of data that we can draw on to further inform our work.</p> <p>The creation and refinement of our measurement tools is an ongoing practice that occurs in support of program development and regularly scheduled program reviews.</p> <p>We will refine our reporting metrics with the FY 2023-24 budget development cycle.</p>

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4.2	<p>Develop performance measures to accurately demonstrate staff utilization and capability to enhance client outcomes through effective service delivery</p>	<p>DSS highly values staff being as efficient and effective as possible and works towards that goal in many ways on an ongoing basis. For example, in CWS, Social Services Supervisors are expected to use Safe Measures, in APS, Social Services Supervisors utilize the LEAPS case management system, and in Public Assistance programs, Eligibility Supervisors and Administrative Office Professional Supervisors are expected to utilize CalWIN and TMT to determine work assigned and completed by staff.</p> <p>The engagement of a family during a family reunification contact in their home, the taking of an application for CalFresh and Medi-Cal, and the engagement with a client over the phone at the BSC regarding an ongoing case are all activities that take the time they need to take based upon the needs of the client in that moment and the complexity of the person's situation. The nature of our encounters with our clients and the time needed to deliver quality services to the residents of Santa Barbara County is not able to be standardized as suggested.</p> <p>When changes in technology, processes or program regulations occur, we recalibrate what is expected of staff by assessing what staff individually and collectively are able to do in the new environment beyond any mandated outcomes associated with the new regulations.</p>	<p>Because of the dynamic nature of our external environment, the impacts of natural disasters including COVID, and the impact on staff by position vacancies and extended leaves of absences, we constantly have to adjust performance expectations as a matter of fairness to our staff.</p> <p>DSS is collaborating with all departments on the development of the HHS Community Wellbeing Dashboard. Key measures to assess overall well-being are in development and that process is anticipated to be complete and the dashboard launched in January 2023.</p> <p>DSS appreciates the opportunity to refine our performance metrics to ensure we have outcome measures that enhance service delivery and provide us the opportunity to identify and alleviate any potential barriers or bottlenecks in our processes.</p>	<p>Our attention to the tools that allow us to measure performance and the assessment of what the performance is being achieved is a constant matter of attention for Supervisors and Managers due to the dynamic nature of our environment as previously described.</p> <p>January 2023 – launch of HHS Community Wellbeing Dashboard</p> <p>We will refine our reporting metrics with the FY 2023-24 budget development cycle.</p>

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4.3	<p>Identify an employee(s) who can be trained as a data professional, in conjunction with CEO's Office, and develop written guidance to improve and standardize the collection, reporting, and analysis of data to foster data-driven decision-making</p>	<p>DSS agrees with the intent of KPMG's recommendation as it pertains to a collective HHS departments' effort on data collection and assessment.</p> <p>The County recently hired a Chief Data Officer who will be assisting all departments in the refinement and advancement of their data collection and reporting systems. DSS looks forward to collaborating with this individual and will make internal staffing decisions related to data collections after those collaborations have begun.</p>	<p>DSS has the internal resources from the program and technology perspectives to contribute to a collaborative effort.</p>	<p>To be developed in conjunction with the CEO's office, Chief Data Officer and other HHS departments.</p>

Administrative Services DSS is fully engaged with the County's ERP project to address improved efficiencies in these areas:				
#	Recommendation	Department Response	Fiscal Impact/Challenges/Opportunities	Implementation Timeframe
5.1	Develop an automated leave management system within the current Human Resources system to enhance understanding of high leave of absence rates	DSS agrees that we are in need of an automated leave management system to eliminate manual monitoring and management of leaves of absence within our department. Our current method of tracking is sufficient until the County's ERP solution materializes.	The County's implementation of a comprehensive ERP system over the next several years provides an opportunity for DSS to adopt an automated leave management system that will be integrated with other systems and allow consistency across the County. Given these circumstances, it would not be a prudent use of resources to invest in any modification to our current HR system.	Continue work on Countywide Leave of Absence Committee and collaboration on ERP implementation. The ERP Human Resources module has an expected go-live date of March 2024.
5.2	Develop a fund utilization dashboard to track the performance and usage of funding and streamline reporting processes	DSS agrees that we will benefit from more robust financial tracking and reporting. We will be moving to a new fiscal management system as part of the county's overall ERP. We already use FIN tools to track funding performance and usage. Our quarterly state claiming process also provides a statement of fund utilization and revenue drawdown by program. In addition, DSS internal budget monitoring reports provide analysis of financial performance and trends.	We look forward to fully utilizing the more robust tracking and reporting capabilities in the ERP system. In preparation for the ERP financial module implementation, we will work with the countywide implementation team to create reporting tools and templates that will enhance our data visualization.	The ERP Financial module has an expected go-live date of August 2023.

Learning and Development DSS appreciates KPMG's commendation on the Department establishing cross trained teams and will undertake the following actions:			
#	Recommendation	Department Response	Fiscal Impact/Challenges/ Opportunities
6.1	Enhance training for AOPs to better prepare staff for administrative responsibilities and Department processes	DSS agrees with the intent of KPMG's recommendation. The Department sees the value in further exploring the need in this area. However, due to current Staff Development limitations regarding existing work and the upcoming CalSAWS implementation, which will include significant training of many AOP staff, this further exploration and development of additional training would be anticipated to take 2-3 years to be complete.	Additional training needs will be identified when Staff Development has the capacity to conduct that assessment.
6.2	Expand cross-training efforts across District Offices for Economic Assistance and Employment Services programs to flex resources around unanticipated fluctuations in demand	DSS agrees with KPMG's recommendation and is currently undertaking these efforts. Cross-training has been a priority of the Department since 2007 when we pioneered dual-training for the Medi-Cal and CalFresh programs. In 2017, the Department furthered this model by adding CalWORKs to create a multi-program worker approach to services. In 2022 our final region, Santa Maria, joined Lompoc and Santa Barbara in having a multi-program intake unit in each district office. This has created efficiencies regarding eliminating handoffs during the application determination process and being able to shift staffing resources to whichever program might be experiencing peak applications at any given time.	This is being accomplished within current budget and programmatic processes.
			Implementation Timeframe July 2023 - June 2025.
			First round of cross-training completed in August 2022.

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6.3	Develop consistent staff training across all regions within APS to allow for staff performance improvement and skills development	<p>DSS agrees with the intent of KPMG's recommendation, and is in the process of developing standardized induction training for APS staff. APS staff will continue to partner with Staff Development to coordinate ongoing training as needed and as resources allow.</p> <p>Induction and ongoing training are not provided to APS by Staff Development. However, they are provided through other means. The APS program is staffed by 9 social workers and typically on-boards 0-1 new staff each year. The 2 APS supervisors are currently developing a short standardized training schedule and materials to utilize for this purpose. In terms of ongoing training, the majority of trainings offered are through the Central Coast Training Academy (CCTA), which mirrors the process for CWS ongoing training. CCTA develops core, fundamental training in APS geared towards new and relatively new workers to ensure best practices and adherence to various requirements and mandates. Core training utilizes both distance learning and onsite workshop offerings to build critical knowledge, skills and competencies in APS. The training is intended to promote statewide uniformity and consistency, in addition to best practices, in the administration and delivery of services under the APS program.</p>	<p>In the FY 2022-23 budget the state is planning to allocate less than \$180,000 state wide for APS training.</p> <p>Due to the infrequent nature of hiring new staff, an induction class model is not feasible and new staff are on-boarded and trained by the APS supervisor.</p>	This will be piloted in FY 2022-23

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6.3		<p>CCTA offers a training certificate presented by the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) to APS professionals who complete the required 23 training modules identified as critical to maximizing professional and effective job performance. There are currently 48 courses offered through the NAPSA program. Of the existing APS social workers, over 80% have completed this certificate program and the rest are in process. In addition, CCTA offers ongoing advanced trainings which are available to all staff including Consistency in Determining Findings in APS, offered in January 2022 and Motivational Interviewing in February 2022.</p>		

Succession Planning DSS appreciates KPMG's commendation for the Department's efforts training cohorts and will undertake the following actions:			
#	Recommendation	Department Response	Fiscal Impact/Challenges/ Opportunities
7.1	<p>Help ensure annual training is evaluated and deemed part of employee expectations to foster consistency in staff development in consultation with County HR and Labor Unions</p>	<p>DSS agrees with the intent of KPMG's recommendation. Addressing employee training is something that routinely occurs in performance evaluations currently even though it isn't specifically addressed in the templates provided. DSS's HCM system controls the flow of performance evaluations including the employee feedback questionnaire where training is specifically addressed.</p> <p>DSS social workers are not licensed.</p>	<p>Formalizing the method by which training is documented and the impact of that training is evaluated and addressed in EPRs (other than the AOP/FOP classifications, which currently has this format) will require collaboration and cooperation from County HR and the Unions.</p> <p>The ERP Human Resources module has an expected go-live date of March 2024. The implementation of a countywide learning management system within the ERP will facilitate DSS being able to better establish, track, and evaluate training requirements.</p> <p>Pending implementation, effective October 1, 2022, DSS will formalize its current practice and require supervisors to create an annual training plan during the employee performance review process and then track progress through monthly conferences.</p>
7.2	<p>Continue to pilot the reduced timeline for eligibility worker induction training within Economic Assistance and Employment Services and assess feasibility of further shortening training to help alleviate staffing shortages</p>	<p>DSS agrees with the intent of KPMG's recommendation. However, recent efforts are not a pilot. We did shorten classroom training from six months to four months and made that a combination of theory and practice. No further modifications to the training program are currently planned pending CalSAWS implementation.</p>	<p>Reducing classroom training time allows us to complete three induction training classes per year versus two, allowing us to address staffing demands more frequently throughout the year.</p> <p>Completed in July 2021.</p>

Technology				
DSS appreciates KPMG's numerous commendation on the Department's efforts to leverage technology and will undertake the following actions:				
#	Recommendation	Department Response	Fiscal Impact/Challenges/ Opportunities	Implementation Timeframe
8.1	Integrate technology systems to create an integrated data hub to obtain a 360-degree view of the client to enable coordinated service delivery	DSS agrees with the intent and desired outcomes of KPMG's recommendation. The CEO's office is working with the HHS departments to create a coordinated entry system as well as an HHS dashboard. DSS will be participating as a stakeholder in the activities of both projects but will not be the lead. The creation of the coordinated entry technology will allow the needs of new clients to be identified holistically and referrals made to the appropriate governmental and nonprofit agencies.	DSS looks forward to collaborating with the new County Chief Data Officer and the other HHS departments on the refinement and advancement of data collection and reporting systems.	FY 2022-23 for HHS data system and dashboard. FY 2023-24 for coordinated entry.
8.2	Develop a service level agreement (SLA) for communication standards between Central IT and Department IT to enhance coordination and formalize update processes and timelines	DSS agrees with KPMG's recommendation. DSS IT meets with Central ICT on a quarterly basis, which meets our communication needs. However, we agree that a more formal agreement regarding communication standards would enhance coordination, processes, and timelines.	This will be accomplished within the current budget and programmatic processes. However, this requires the cooperation and collaboration of ICT.	FY 2022-23
8.3	Develop written procedures for enabling mobile access to internal systems for APS and CWS to enable staff to enter notes while out in the field	DSS agrees with KPMG's recommendation to develop written procedures for enabling mobile access. Additionally, DSS is planning to pilot docking stations for social workers to enhance their ability to work more efficiently and utilize technology while in the field.	No additional fiscal impact as this is budgeted for FY 2022-23 and can be accomplished with internal staff.	FY 2022-23

Interagency Collaboration of County Services			
DSS appreciates KPMG's commendation for the Department's deep commitment to client service delivery and will undertake the following actions:			
#	Recommendation	Department Response	Fiscal Impact/Challenges/Opportunities
9.1	Conduct an analysis of high utilizers of services across County programs to identify shared clients and gaps in existing service and collaboration efforts	<p>DSS agrees with the intent of KPMG's recommendation. The CEO's Office is working with the HHS departments to develop technology to identify high utilizers within the HHS departments individually and collectively. The data gathered on an ongoing basis will assist individual departments and the HHS departments collectively to better address the needs of high utilizers.</p> <p>Additionally, the HHS departments are working with the CEO's office to create a coordinated entry system which will be piloted in FY 2023-24 to make sure that all new clients are assessed to understand the totality of their needs and are served fully by the relevant departments and community-based organizations.</p> <p>It is important to note that high utilizers are not necessarily problematic by virtue of being a high utilizer. Some people have significant needs and high utilization of services can be an indicator that those needs are being met. The above stated analysis will assist us in further examining why certain people are high utilizers and addressing their unmet needs.</p>	<p>Fiscal impact will be evaluated as collaborative work across the HHS departments continues.</p>
			<p>Continue work with CEO and other HHS departments with specific timeline for the achievement of technological and service delivery goals to be established collectively.</p>

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9.2	<p>Enhance collaboration and communication across Behavioral Wellness, Community Services Department, and criminal justice agencies to improve client service delivery</p>	<p>DSS agrees with the intent of KPMG's recommendation.</p> <p>The ACEO convenes the Interagency Policy Council (IAPC) on a monthly basis and more frequently, as needed, on special projects such as COVID Recovery actions, in which all HHS directors communicate and collaborate to resolve client services needs and address issues. A key factor to strengthen problem solving data will be the ability to link and share data which is a process now underway with the High Utilizers Project facilitated by the CEO's Office.</p> <p>As stated in previous sections, DSS will be a full participant in the development of additional data sharing and data communication activities with the other HHS departments, Community Services Department, and Criminal Justice agencies and will augment our extensive interagency communication processes as needed. In addition, DSS will ensure standardized collaboration with Behavioral Wellness and CSD through developing monthly meetings focused on discussing shared clients, enhancing warm handoffs between agencies, operationalizing policies and procedures outlined within current MOUs, and strengthening a cross-departmental multi-disciplinary team of case workers with expertise across service offerings to enhance care coordination for high needs clients. DSS is an active participant with the MDT teams developed to serve the homeless encampment clients and other high utilizers.</p>	<p>Fiscal impact will be evaluated as collaborative work continues.</p>	<p>Continue work with CEO and other agencies with specific timeline for the achievement of technological and service delivery goals to be established collectively.</p> <p>October 2022 - Facilitate standardized communication (below the director level) among departments to discuss the recommendations of the report to enhance collaborative service delivery.</p>