

County of Santa Clara
Social Services Agency



353 West Julian Street
San Jose, California 95110-2335

DATE: February 6, 2024
TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors
FROM: Damion Wright, Director, Department of Family and Children's Services
SUBJECT: E.3 – Children of Color Workgroup

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At the December 19, 2023 Special Meeting of the Board of Supervisors, the Board requested a report relating to how the Office of the County Executive and the Board of Supervisors will be incorporated into the Children of Color Workgroup discussions.

The Children of Color (COC) workgroup was established in 2003 as a County and community partnership to support goals aimed at reducing the over representation of children of color in the child welfare system. The vision of the COC, per its charter adopted in 2021, is to both reduce the over-representation of children of color as well as pioneer a systematic platform of change in how African Ancestry and Latino communities are engaged and served by DFCS. The mission of the workgroup is to apply the principles of racial equity and justice for all and assure that every child and family coming into contact or entering the Child Welfare System receives what they need to be safe, healthy and successful in life.

The COC workgroup is co-chaired by a DFCS staff member and a community-based agency or community member. The meetings are currently chaired by DFCS prevention manager Rocio Abundis and community member Elizabeth Stewart. This is an open group to all, including DFCS staff, community members, County Administration, and the Board of Supervisors. There is an active membership of 24 individuals who are currently involved in COC. Membership is currently comprised of DFCS staff, SSA staff, community-based agencies (CBO) involved in prevention services such as Differential Response, FIRST 5 Santa Clara County, and Juvenile Welfare Organization Ombuds (JWOO). Efforts continue to be made to ensure diverse representation of members with regard to culture, positions, and agencies.

The current goals for the COC workgroup include a review of quarterly tracking for disproportionality that focuses on trust, systemic racism and trauma. The workgroup is working on root causes and development of SMART goals.

DFCS is aligning the work within COC to support system improvement goals to increase engagement and the ways social workers partner with parents around community-based supports such as Differential Response. This particular effort is key to addressing disparity

and disproportionality, as the earlier prevention efforts are provided to low and moderate risk families, the greater the chance for better outcomes for children and families.

Per the Board's request, the Office of the County Executive plans to have representation in this workgroup.

Any Board of Supervisors members interested in participating in the COC workgroup are invited to contact Frank Motta, Program Manager III, Social Services Agency, to receive information on COC meeting dates and times.