



24-5543

DATE: May 7, 2024 (Item No. 21)

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Daniel Little, Director, Social Services Agency

SUBJECT: Semi-Annual Update Report relating to the Joint Foster Youth Task Force Recommendations

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Consider recommendations relating to the Joint Foster Youth Task Force semi-annual report.

Possible action:

- a. Receive report from the Social Services Agency, Department of Family and Children's Services, relating to Joint Foster Youth Task Force recommendations.
- b. Approve identified actions for each recommendation and end semi-annual reporting of Joint Foster Youth Task Force recommendations.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no fiscal implications associated with the recommended action.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND

In 2016, the County of Santa Clara's (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) formed the Joint Foster Youth Task Force (JFYTF) to improve coordination of services across public agencies and community-based organizations while grounding the work in evidence-informed and data-driven practices. The purpose of these efforts is to identify ways to improve outcomes for youth in foster care.

On December 18, 2018, the Board approved recommendations offered by JFYTF that endeavored to transform a "crisis-focused service structure to a flourishing system of care using a proactive, coordinated, preventative, and wellbeing-focused framework" (Item no. 12). Since then, County departments and partners have worked together to implement programs and resources to address each recommendation.

At its December 13, 2022 meeting, the Board approved ending report out of the JFYTF recommendations that were completed or imbedded into practice (Item no. 26). For those recommendations not fully implemented, the Social Services Agency (SSA) was directed to continue to report out quarterly to the Children, Seniors, and Families Committee (CSFC).

On September 28, 2023, CSFC approved the frequency of the report to move to a semi-annual basis (Item no. 6).

On December 12, 2023, the Board approved the removal of all Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) items from CSFC and to present DFCS reports to the Board (Item no. 18).

DFCS recommends to end reporting on the JFYTF recommendations as all recommendations except Recommendation #1 have been completed. Recommendation #1 regarding the Strengthening All Families Equitably (SAFE) program continues to be implemented and it is recommended that the Board continue to receive semi-annual updates on the implementation of the program.

Recommendation 1: *A partnership with the Child Abuse and Neglect Center (CANC) and non-profit agencies to provide an immediate and warm hand-off for families in need.*

From June 2021 to June 2022, the Neighbor-2-Neighbor (N2N) program was in place to connect families with reports of child abuse and neglect, which did not rise to the level of an investigation (non-reports) or are "evaluated out" to community-based supports, to prevent child welfare system entry. N2N was an early intervention strategy meant to connect families early on with community providers to engage and help them address the needs that may place them at risk of entering child welfare. N2N was sunset and lessons learned from this program were used to inform and develop the new Strengthening All Families Equitably (SAFE) program.

- Last Step Completed: On July 11, 2023, three agencies were selected (Pacific Clinics, Rebekah Children's Services, and Gardner Health Network). The contract was approved by the Board of Supervisors on February 6, 2024, and the SAFE program was launched on March 1, 2024.
- Next Step: In partnership with the three community providers, DFCS will address any implementation issues, challenges, or barriers to connecting referred families to the services and supports needed to address concerns that may place the children at risk. DFCS will collaborate with the three community based organizations to align the program to the Families First Prevention Community Pathway.
- Timeline: Summer 2024
- Partners for Recommendation: DFCS, Pacific Clinics, Rebekah Children's Services, Gardner Health Network
- Action: Continue report out on a semi-annual basis in a separate report.

Recommendation 3: *Conduct an impact research study to quantitatively define the fiscal implications attached to system-involvement at each stage of the child welfare process in Santa Clara County.*

The primary goal was to create benchmarks of the fiscal and staffing resources required to provide services to children requiring out-of-home care. Undertaken in partnership with Chapin Hall, the study was intended to provide a foundation for comparative cost/benefit analysis of prevention and diversion services utilizing a fiscal model tool and a Time Use Survey.

The Chapin Hall team administered time use surveys to frontline case-carrying staff, select non-case-carrying staff, and their supervisors. This study includes the time use survey analysis and its companion fiscal analysis. Hourly rates were applied to the time use analysis as a way to establish the unit costs of essential activities, organized by the type of worker, by the type of task being conducted, and by the type of case for which the task is being conducted. Unit costs are also connected to the typical experiences of children in out-of-home placements as a way to generalize the typical cost of an out-of-home placement. See Attachment A – Out-of-Home Time Use Survey and Cost Analysis for the full study.

The time use survey was distributed to a combined total of 355 supervisors and child welfare workers. Of those 355, 176 responded and 168 were eligible and consenting, with 149 complete responses. Response counts and rates by staff are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Survey Distribution and Responses by Staff Type

	Total Eligible Respondents	# and % of Total Eligible Respondents, by Role		
Santa Clara County	168	Case-carrying	121	72%
		Non-case-carrying	16	10%
		Supervisor	31	18%

The survey respondents were asked to generate time use estimates for a reference case involving a school-age child in which the decision is made to place into out-of-home care with a relative. Survey respondents were later asked to consider different case complexities to determine if time estimates changed. Utilizing data from the Child Welfare Data’s Multistate Foster Care Data Archive from 2017 through 2019, Chapin Hall determined the average school aged child had a median time in care of 18.9 months and an average of 1.4 placement changes (for babies, 20.8 months and 0.9 placement changes). These duration and placement stability outcomes were combined with cost data to calculate the average cost for a typical case, given the average costs per category of casework.

The study found that the estimated county personnel cost of a case investigation and placement into out-of-home care for a school-age child is \$140,050. The study also looked at cost and outcome variances for an out-of-home placement of a baby, and found the estimated cost to be \$149,840. It should be noted that these estimated costs only account for County personnel time use and do not take into consideration placement, service, or County-property related costs.

- Last Step Completed: The Time Use Survey was completed by Chapin Hall in December of 2023.
- Next Step: Not applicable
- Timeline: Not applicable
- Partners for Recommendation: DFCS (lead), SSA Agency Office, Chapin Hall
- Action: End report out and sunset this recommendation.

Recommendations 20 and 23: *Former foster youth should be provided with Extremely Low Income (ELI) permanent housing.*

The goal for these recommendations is to provide affordable housing opportunities with school, community college, and hospital districts, and to assist foster youth with finding housing. OSH has worked with affordable housing developers to increase the supply of affordable housing designated for transition age youth (TAY) and engaged with multiple school districts to explore the feasibility of developing affordable housing on district property.

- Last Step Completed: Four projects with TAY units continued in the development process and are closer to opening (see Table 1).
- Next Step: There are multiple projects underway in housing development that include supportive housing units set aside for TAY who are currently or were formerly in foster care. SSA Administration and DFCS will continue to engage in a collaborative manner with OSH in support of housing developments that provide permanent supportive and affordable housing opportunities for TAY, foster youth, and high-entry populations using the Housing Bond, Homekey, and other funding programs.
- Timeline: See Table 1 for timelines of ongoing TAY housing projects.
- Partners for Recommendation: OSH (lead agency)
- Action: End report out and sunset this recommendation.

Table 1: County Funded Housing Developments with TAY Units

Project Name	Total Units	No. of Permanent TAY Units	Anticipated Opening
Mesa Terrace	46	23	Open
Pavilion Inn	42	21	June 2024
The Heartwood Apartments (formerly the Crestview)	49	13	July 2024
The Roosevelt (formerly Roosevelt Park Apts.)	80	9	September 2024
Parkmoor Housing (Hub)	81	40	Summer 2025
<u>Total</u>	298	106	

Recommendation 24: *Collaborate with OSH to provide a continuum of housing supports and coordinated supportive services to high-entry populations and families who are "evaluated out" at the CANC and/or referred to Differential Response (DR) for engagement into services.*

This recommendation aims to rapidly identify and connect vulnerable families to housing resources. OSH’s Community Plan to End Homelessness 2020 included a strategy to adopt housing screening and referral processes for individuals and families accessing safety net

services and expand housing programs for families involved in the child welfare system. This report provides information on families who were “evaluated out” at the CANC and referred to the DR pathways that allow families to access services in the front end of the child welfare services continuum (Prevention, Early Intervention, and Diversion). For families whose referrals were “non-reports and evaluated out” at the CANC, also refer to recommendation #1 above for information about Strengthening All Families Equitability (SAFE program, formerly N2N), which is also a process for individuals and families to access supportive services, including housing supports options.

DR providers play a pivotal role in assisting families in connecting with services and support in their community, rather than providing them a referral to navigate services on their own. Additionally, DR providers may assist families in accessing Flex Funding from DFCS intended to address issues related to safety or risk, or to remove barriers to clients participating in services or programs.

- Last Step: Since June 2023, DR providers reported the most common needs families were linked to were:
 - Emergency Services - food, clothing, utilities, and basic needs (n=202 families)
 - Housing (n=69 families)
 - Recreational Resources (n=43 families)
 - Mental Health Referrals (n=37 families)
- Next Step: Continue to work with OSH to evaluate opportunities for families receiving DR services to access housing and other supports to minimize risk and prevent homelessness. DFCS and OSH will assess further opportunities to partner and leverage shared resources to better support the housing needs of the families that come to the attention of DFCS.
- Timeline: Not applicable.
- Partners for Recommendation: DFCS (lead), OSH, and CalWORKS Family Support Team
- Action: End report out and sunset this recommendation

Recommendation 27: *The County, school districts and other agencies should align their contracts with providers to require common data collection and sharing, compatible with DataZone and FosterVision.*

The goal of this recommendation was to increase collaboration between DFCS, Juvenile Probation (JPD), the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) and partner agencies and to pave the way for increased data sharing between all agencies to have a more significant impact in supporting youth. The agreements for common data sharing have emerged through the FosterVision Steering Committee, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), and collaboration amongst the partners. This level of collaboration has led to a number of accomplishments beyond what was originally anticipated via the recommendation to align contracts. The current contracts between partner agencies provides for common data collection and sharing without any further need for contract alignments. Data sharing agreements are used via MOUs and as addendums to contracts when necessary.

The FosterVision Steering Committee was established to oversee system enhancements, strategize direction, provide for collaboration, and improve communication. The committee meets quarterly and includes representatives from SCCOE, JPD, DFCS, the County's Office of the District Attorney and Public Defender Office, community-based organizations (CBOs), and school districts.

Accomplishments from the increased collaboration and established oversight structure include:

- Enhancements to FosterVision by including a simulated transcript, displaying student attendance percentage by school and year, and adding the Foster Youth Education Manager contact information.
- Launched DataZone 3.0 as an independent analytics and data warehousing platform to enable greater flexibility in connecting systems and enabling sharing of data from systems that are not in direct alignment.
- Launched a comprehensive Data Governance framework with policies, procedures, and training to support increased data sharing.
- Aligned criteria for identifying foster youth within FosterVision to capture children not represented in the system due to coding differences between FosterVision and the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System database. This alignment increased the number of foster youth visible in FosterVision by 200-300 youth.
- Defined a notifications structure and thresholds for attendance, behavior, and academics to alert support team members of specific needs.
- Implemented the Foster Youth Education Managers Program to case manage the education needs of foster youth.
- Planned the AB740 notification process in collaboration with Legal Advocates for Children and Youth (LACY), the County's Public Defender's Office, and school districts for implementation in the 2023/2024 school year.
- Authorized the build-out of FosterVision Plus, which will bring in meaningful data from the Foster Youth Education Managers program for schools and agencies serving the youth.

SCCOE, DFCS, JPD, and partner organizations have significantly progressed in collaboration by sourcing additional data, increasing the use of FosterVision, and improving communication through the application. All organizations have examined the capacity of their systems to source and hold data from external agencies and are expanding where possible. Commonalities have been identified in data needs, enhancements have been implemented, and access to FosterVision has expanded while growing a robust Data Governance program and training for cyber security and data privacy. Partners are making continuous progress via the FosterVision Steering Committee and its connections.

At the September 28, 2023 CSFC, Supervisor Arenas inquired if school districts are able to collect information on a child's housing status. School districts are accountable for collecting and reporting information to the California Department of Education (CDE) on students who

qualify for McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance (McKinney Vento) services. The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children and youth as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Students experiencing homelessness are also part of the state accountability system for school districts. Data on students experiencing homelessness are not authorized by the districts for sharing at a Personally Identifiable (PII) or aggregate level due to the highly sensitive nature of the data.

By building on the work that the SCCOE Educational Managers are doing to connect families and schools to services through expanded partnerships between SCCOE, DFCS, and OSH, more seamless pathways to county-level supports could be created. Those efforts are recommended to ensure timely, coordinated, and expanded supports to families with children who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

- Last Step Completed: SCCOE has filled the Web Development position to develop FosterVision+ by summer of 2025 and provide ongoing support for the platform. SCCOE, JPD, and DFCS signed an updated 5-year MOU in June of 2023 for the continued partnership on FosterVision.
- Next Steps: SCCOE, DFCS, JPD, and partner organizations have significantly progressed in collaboration by sourcing additional data, increasing the use of FosterVision, and improving communication through the application. The partners are making continuous progress and will continue to do so through ongoing collaboration.
- Timeline: The overall work on FosterVision is ongoing and iterative. The original intent of the recommendation was to increase data sharing between all agencies to have a more significant impact in supporting youth. The work has surpassed the alignment of common data collection and is now integrating the data and using technology across agencies and organizations. Based on this, it is recommended that recommendation 27 be considered complete.
- Partners for Recommendation: SCCOE, JPD, DFCS, 32 Santa Clara County school districts, Pivotal, LACY, the Public Defender's Office, and the District Attorney's Office.
- Action: End report out and sunset this recommendation.

CHILD IMPACT

The recommended action impacts the **Safe and Stable Families** indicator because the prioritization and implementation of the JFTYF recommendations allow Santa Clara County to support and strengthen families.

SENIOR IMPACT

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on seniors.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The report will not be received.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The Clerk of the Board will follow the usual process for this type of legislative file.

ATTACHMENTS:

- JFYTF Semi-Annual Report Presentation