



California Citizen Review Panel

2020–2021 Annual Report



California Citizen Review Panel

2020–2021 Annual Report to the California Department of Social Services

SUBMITTED TO THE OFFICE OF CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION, CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

This report was developed by Child and Family Policy Institute of California and RDA Consulting.



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Glossary of Terms

| | |
|--------|--|
| AB | Assembly Bill |
| ACES | Adverse Child Experiences |
| ACL | All County Letter |
| CANS | Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths |
| CAPC | Child Abuse Prevention Council |
| CASA | Court Appointed Special Advocates |
| CBCAP | Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention |
| CDPH | California Department of Public Health |
| CDRT's | Child Death Review Teams |
| CDSS | California Department of Social Services |
| CFPIC | Child and Family Policy Institute of California |
| CFS | Children & Family Services |
| CFSR | Child & Family Services Review |
| CFT | Child & Family Teams |
| CI | Critical Incidents |
| CPM | Child Welfare Core Practice Model |
| CRP | Citizen Review Panel |
| CSAC | California Student Aid Commission |
| CWC | Child Welfare Council |
| CWDA | County Welfare Directors Association of California |
| DDS | Department of Developmental Services |
| DHCS | Department of Health Care Services |
| DOJ | Department of Justice |
| EBP | Evidence Based Practice |
| FFA | Foster Family Agencies |
| FFPSA | The Family First Prevention Services Act |
| FRC | Family Resource Centers |
| ICWA | Indian Child Welfare Act |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| OCAP | Office of Child Abuse Prevention |
| OVP | Office of Violence Prevention |
| PIP | Performance Improvement Plan |
| RDA | Resource Development Associates |
| STRTP | Short-Term Residential Treatment Programs |
| UBI | Universal Basic Income |



Introduction

In 2017, three statewide committees were empaneled to focus on different aspects of the Child Welfare System in California. Prior to 2017, California's Citizen Review Panels (CRP) consisted of two county-level CRPs and one subcommittee of the Child Welfare Council. Moving to the statewide committee structure allowed for broader statewide membership and perspectives, increased access to state government agencies and strengthened the focus on continuous quality improvement in child welfare systems. The three statewide committees are organized on the continuum of child and family well-being and are charged with the following:

- ❖ **The Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect CRP** makes recommendations to strengthen child abuse prevention efforts in California.
- ❖ **The Children and Families Services CRP** makes recommendations to better serve children and families involved in the child welfare system.
- ❖ **The Critical Incidents CRP** makes recommendations to help reduce the incidence of child fatalities as a result of abuse or neglect.

Background

In October 2020, the Child and Family Policy Institute of California (CFPIC) was awarded a three-year contract by the California Department of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention (CDSS/OCAP), to coordinate and facilitate California's three CRPs. For this contract, CFPIC elected to partner with RDA Consulting (RDA), as the organization has extensive capacity for data collection and analysis to further benefit CRP efforts. While a new contractor for CRP coordination, CFPIC has well-established relationships with CDSS, having worked with CDSS colleagues in virtually all of California's 58 counties and innumerable allied organizations since 2004 to identify and spread "what works" to achieve improved outcomes for families and individuals that come into contact with county welfare agencies. Additionally, the executive staff at CFPIC are all former California County Child Welfare Directors, with vast knowledge of child welfare systems, programs, and reform efforts. CFPIC's work with the CRPs is guided by the California Child Welfare Core Practice Model (CPM), which is grounded in the key elements and behaviors of engagement, inquiry and exploration, teaming, advocacy, and accountability.

New Approach

As the new contractor for California's CRP, CFPIC engaged early with both OCAP and CRP members to ensure a smooth transition from the prior coordinators. Before the contract start date, CFPIC engaged both OCAP and current CRP members in "meet and greet" sessions, providing opportunities to explore current CRP work processes and inquire about what was working well and what needed improvement. One identified need was recruitment of new members to the CRP to fill vacancies and broaden the representation on the panels. OCAP and CFPIC worked together to recruit several new panelists in the fall of 2020 and conducted an orientation event to ensure new panelists understood the history and purpose of California's CRPs.

Another suggestion from the CRPs, which had been meeting monthly on their own initiative during the contractor transition, was to increase the frequency of meetings to help build and keep momentum for the panels’ work. In November, the first monthly meeting of each CRP was held with CFPIC and RDA focusing on establishing and/or revisiting each panel’s vision and mission, as well as setting panel goals, objectives, and member expectations. Each panel’s resulting guidance document is attached to this report (See Appendix A).

In addition to the new monthly meeting schedule, CFPIC recognized an opportunity to strengthen connections across the CRPs. In January 2021, the first annual “All-CRP” meeting brought together panelists across all three CRPs. This meeting also included state organization partners from CDSS and the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), Office of Violence Prevention (OVP), as the panels and the departments both expressed a wish to work more closely to create and foster relationships between the entities. The “All-CRP” meeting included time for panel and department presentations and information sharing as well as time for reflection and planning for next steps by each of the panels.

Engaging across panels and with OCAP and other state partners continues to be a cornerstone of the strategy to coordinate the efforts of California’s CRPs. More information on each panel’s work, observations and recommendations is included in the pages that follow.

Timeline of CRP 2020–2021 Activities

| Activity | 2020 | | | 2021 | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|
| | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | July | Aug | Sep |
| Start Up | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| New Member Recruitment | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Orientation of New Members | | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| Presentation to CDSS Branch Chiefs | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | |
| CRP Monthly Meeting Schedule Initiated | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| All-CRP Meeting | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| Recommendations: Research and Development | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Development and refinement of CRP work plans | | | | | ■ | ■ | | | | | | |
| Research, Formulation, Tool Development | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | |
| Recommendations Development | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | |
| Review & Finalization of Annual Report with CRP members | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ |
| National CRP Committee Engagement/Activities | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Presentation on California CRP’s at Nat’l CRP conference | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | |
| California featured in quarterly National CRP newsletter | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | |
| Planning Meeting w/ Nat’l CRP Advisory Committee* | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | |
| Awarded Grant for planning of 2022 Nat’l CRP Conference** | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | |

*California has been selected to host the 2022 National CRP conference

**Award from Casey Family Programs



Prevention of Abuse and Neglect Citizen Review Panel



Overview of This Year's Work

California's Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Citizen Review Panel (Prevention CRP) began its 2020-2021 work cycle by reviewing the status of the previous year's work and establishing a process for determining the panel's priorities moving forward. The Prevention CRP spent the first few months refining its governing charter document based on review of best practices and examples of outside states' CRP guidance documents. The Panel also focused initial efforts toward enhancing its membership through extensive recruitment and outreach efforts to ensure that a diversity of experience was represented on the panel.

In preparation for the "All-CRP" meeting that took place in January 2021, the Panel members reviewed and generated a summary of the last two Prevention CRP reports submitted to CDSS, as well as its understanding of the State's previous response to the CRP's recommendations. The Prevention CRP held multiple reflective discussions informed by the "All-CRP" meeting and decided to delve deeper into the following focus areas:

- Examining best practices for authentic community and grassroots engagement in prevention planning
- Establishing measurements of success in county prevention plans

- Reviewing race, equity, and inclusion practices in primary prevention practices or programs including the movement to redesign mandated reporting

The Prevention CRP developed multiple questions that were posed to CDSS/OCAP to develop a deeper understanding of the bureau’s priorities and current efforts related to the following areas:

- The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)
- Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Funds
- OCAP Slide Deck & 2015–2020 Strategic Plan
- Implementation of CRP recommendations
- Authentic Community Engagement
- Racial Inequities in Child Welfare Mandated Reporting

This year yielded more than one opportunity for the Prevention CRP to provide timely input to CDSS. In early 2021, California began preparing its statewide plan for the implementation of the FFPSA. The Prevention CRP was given the opportunity to make specific recommendations after reviewing the State’s first draft of the plan. The Panel put forth recommendations and feedback covering the document’s strengths, areas for improvement, service array, and partnerships (see Appendix B for FFPSA Plan recommendations document). CDSS acknowledged the Panel’s thoughtful input and the next draft of the plan incorporated some of the CRP’s recommendations. Additionally, President Biden’s American Rescue Plan provided a large increase of one-time funding for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) requiring California to develop a funding allocation plan. The Panel submitted recommendations to OCAP that focused on using some of this one-time funding to expand and support authentic community partnerships (see Appendix C for CBCAP recommendations). As the CBCAP planning timeline had a very quick turnaround, the Panel did not receive feedback from the Department on whether its recommendations would be considered in the State’s funding plan. Therefore, the Panel decided to integrate its recommendations on community engagement as part of its overall 2020–2021 recommendations to CDSS.

In addition to exploring authentic community engagement, the Panel decided to focus on mandated reporting as a priority issue. Review of the latest mandated reporting statistics received from CDSS, and other relevant literature led to a brainstorming session on the different components of mandated reporting that the panel wished to explore and understand further. Later in the year the Panel also revisited and revised its governance document through a member survey effort to ensure that it was reflective of the CRP’s priorities and representative of its members’ diverse experiences.

Observations

- Need for OCAP/CDSS to provide a clearer distinction on the continuum of prevention efforts as some secondary or tertiary prevention efforts are being misunderstood as primary prevention
- Need to adopt a race and equity lens for all prevention planning efforts and advance the notion of social connections

- Lack of a focus on what authentic community engagement looks like beyond a checkbox put forth in County prevention plans, for instance,
 - Emphasis needs to be placed on incorporating community voice/participation/partnership in prevention planning
 - Communities need to be the primary driver for change
- Need to examine what “neglect” means in the context of poverty, especially in communities of color that have a disproportionate involvement with the Child Welfare system
- Need to shift from being a “mandated reporter” to being a “mandated supporter”:
 - Prevent over-surveillance of communities of color and offer culturally appropriate community resources and supports to families in need
 - Build a culture of supporting and generate pathways for support
 - The Panel might consider collaborating with other groups having timely conversations surrounding mandated reporting
- CRP recommendations incorporate timelines to support CDSS accountability for demonstrating action towards recommendations as well as providing baseline data

Recommendations

To ensure communities are authentically engaged in the identification of what would best serve their needs, the panel recommends that CDSS adopt the following strategies:

1. Require counties receiving prevention funding (FFPSA, CBCAP, etc.) to take specific actions to engage the communities they serve in identifying what the communities most need to help strengthen families and prevent child abuse. This engagement strategy would include actively listening to the voices of community members to identify their needs as well as the strengths and assets that their communities can build upon. Additionally, counties would include specific strategies to keep community members engaged in helping to design, implement and evaluate efforts to strengthen their communities and prevent child abuse and neglect. These actions should include undertaking grassroots efforts to gather neighborhood-level voices and grow new partnerships *as well as* build upon connections with established community-resource partners and networks (such as Family Resource Centers).
2. Provide state-level grants of prevention funds to support community-engagement efforts that reach beyond the recipients of traditional county funding. These grants would allow non-traditional partners, organizations, and community members themselves to apply for funds that support grassroot engagement with their localities to identify community needs and design, implement, and evaluate efforts to strengthen families and prevent child abuse in their communities.

3. Require all recipients of prevention funding to provide annual reports to the State detailing their engagement and ongoing involvement of community members in the identification, planning, implementation and evaluation efforts of programs and services to strengthen child and family well-being.

Additional Areas of Exploration in 2021-2022

- **Community and Citizen Engagement Best Practices**
 - What's working? What's not working?
 - Study specific models more closely, such as the 90/30 model adoption at Butte County.
 - How to bring "priority populations" to the table?
 - How to define and align authentic community engagement from needs assessment through program design, implementation, and evaluation?
 - Invest in capacity building for organizations to be successful at engaging with communities.
 - How to reduce barriers to community member engagement and participation (i.e., being mindful of needed resources such as childcare, transportation, etc.)
- **Mandated Reporting**
 - Rethink the way we define and approach child abuse & neglect.
 - Look at the issue of neglect or child abuse reporting outside of California to learn from other states.
 - Bring alternate voices forward such as family empowerment groups
 - Understand relationship between mandated reporting and historical trauma as it relates to training.
 - Remove teachers from being mandated reporters and create a special resource (local FRCs) for teachers to call to offer volunteer support to families
 - Deepen understanding of the Mandated Reporter's perspective and their challenges (especially educators).
 - Shift the focus to "Mandated Supporters" by setting up a system that will enable them to become supporters of family's needs, especially since:
 - The system is set up to put fear in the mandated reporter for not reporting anything suspected, but there is nothing to train them on how to support the family or intervene appropriately.
 - Training needs to incorporate how mandated reporting impacts families, disproportionality amongst communities.



Children and Family Citizen Review Panel



Overview of This Year's Work

The Children and Family Citizen Review Panel (CFS-CRP) began its work by reviewing the status of the previous work carried out by the CFS-CRP and establishing a process for determining the panel's priorities for 2020–2021. The CFS-CRP panel spent the first few months refining its governing charter document as well as increasing membership through recruitment and outreach efforts to ensure a diversity of experiences were represented at the panel. Following the onboarding of new members, the Panel developed a shared google drive repository for members to identify their affiliations and areas of expertise as well as to share meeting materials and research documents.

Following the "All-CRP" meeting in January 2021, the Panel first engaged in brainstorming and prioritization activities to collectively identify areas of interest and then establish consensus on the selection of two to three areas of focus for further exploration and research. Once the Panel identified its priority areas, the following research framework was used to guide further brainstorming and exploration:

| What is current state? | What is desired state? | How do we get there? |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define problem • Existing conditions, practices, outcomes that related and or influence the problem • (Primary/Secondary Data Collection/Analysis) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (reference CRP vision) • What are solutions? • Identify best and/or emerging practices • Identify evidence base • Benchmarking activities • Primary/Secondary/Data collection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define recommendations and intended outcomes • Cite evidence base • Identify/develop theory of change |

The two broad research areas that were initially selected were:

- Family Voice and Choice in Case Planning

- Keeping Families together with services

Through facilitated discussion, Panel members then developed key research questions and sub-questions under each of these research areas as well as corresponding lists of potential sources of information, research, and data. In addition, members also identified the following cross-cutting themes that would be addressed in both broad categories of research:

- Accountability
- Trauma-informed training/awareness
- Lessons learned from COVID
- Equity especially as it pertains to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
- Father engagement

Following the identification of focus areas and cross-cutting themes, the CFS-CRP Panel invited two CDSS representatives to its meeting to speak to the Panel's areas of focus as part of an information gathering phase. Julie Cockerton, Manager, Performance and Program Improvement Bureau, Case Review Section, attended and discussed California's Child and Family Service Review process as the "federal-state collaborative effort designed to help ensure quality services are provided to children and families through the child welfare systems." Rebecca Buchmiller, Manager, Integrated Services Unit, also attended and provided information on Children and Family Teams (CFTs) as it relates to voice and choice in case planning. The Panel had an opportunity to send out follow-up questions to each of the CDSS representatives for their input and continue the dialogue. At this time the Panel also had an opportunity to provide recommendations and feedback to CDSS on the draft of the All-County Letter (ACL) for Assembly Bill (AB) 1068 (see Appendix-D). The ACL's basic intent is furthering legal mandates and practice guidance of the CFT process for child welfare social workers and juvenile probation officers.

Following initial information gathering activities and Panel discussion, additional background research was collected on the following relevant topics for Panel review:

- AB 1068
- AB 2083
- Program Improvement Plans All County Letters (PIP ACLs)
- Child Family Services Review (CFSR) Case Review Process
- Child Welfare Training Guides
- CFTs and Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)
- California Linkages
- Link between Poverty and Child Welfare
- Universal Basic Income (UBI)
- Research on Case Planning
- Safety Organized Practice and the Child Welfare Core Practice Model

Based on discussions with CDSS and the review of key materials and resources, the Panel ultimately decided to focus on three areas of recommendations for 2020-2021 found below. The Panel has also included a list of areas for further exploration for the upcoming year, 2021-2022.

Observations & Recommendations

The following three topic areas arose from the CFS CRP's brainstorming of areas of interest and subsequent consensus-driven decision-making process. All observations and recommendations were developed through Panel discussion and informed by the lived experience of its members. Key observations and their corresponding recommendation(s) are stated below:

A) Increased Behavioral Health Services for Families in the Child Welfare System

- **Observation**

- Members feel strongly that there are inadequate behavioral health support services for families, especially mothers, fathers, and caregivers who have experienced trauma themselves, with high scores on the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) scale, and, who struggle to meet the needs of their children and families.
- All children in child welfare services ought to automatically qualify for behavioral health and developmental services.
- Distance to the closest private behavioral health facilities and the prognosis for dual diagnosis is proving to be a challenge in many tribal communities.
- Members feel that some social workers or child welfare staff do not understand the need for Infant Mental Health Services and often overlook this need when conducting assessments, since infants are non-verbal and not included in CFT's.
- Members recognize the wide range of counties' abilities to provide families the mental health services they need, either due to a lack of access or lack of capacity.

- **Recommendations**

- CDSS develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with other State agencies including Department of Developmental Services (DDS), similar to the MOU between child welfare, probation and behavioral health required for counties under AB 2083 with a focus on addressing barriers to mental health treatment and developmental services for children, youth, mothers, father, and caregivers.
- CDSS ensure that each county's CFSR include a review of the mental health services available for child welfare system involved (and at risk for involvement) children, youth and families in the county and determine with their Behavioral Health Services partners (through the State's 2083 MOU), if there are state-level activities that can support addressing identified gaps in services at the local level including innovative approaches such as teletherapy.

B) Basic Income, Housing and Concrete Services

- **Observation**

- Panel members have reviewed the research pertaining to the link between poverty and child welfare intervention and recognize the need for basic income, housing, and

concrete services and supports that can prevent the need for children, youth, mothers, fathers, and caregivers to enter the child welfare system in order to receive services.

- People of color are disproportionately impacted by poverty and disproportionately overrepresented in the child welfare system. However, the evidence base on what is required to improve outcomes when poverty and inequity are factors is unclear.

- **Recommendations**

- CDSS Office of Equity conduct research (original research or meta-analysis) to bring forward the evidence base of how basic income supports could produce better outcomes and reduce child welfare intervention as well as support successful family-reunification (and reentry) of children, youth, mothers, fathers, and caregivers.
- Research and information should be presented and disseminated to the legislature/advocacy groups/Child Welfare Council/County Welfare Directors Association /California Student Aid Commission/Tribal Leaders/ Caregiver Associations with the goal of developing a shared understanding of the interplay between poverty and child welfare intervention.
- In opting into the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), CDSS provide leadership in promoting a true continuum of care for children, youth, mothers, fathers, and caregivers by developing guidance around how prevention and early intervention fits into child welfare programs.

C) Family Focus in Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTs)

- **Observation**

- Panel members understand that CDSS supports the CFT meetings as the way to ensure that the voices of children, youth and mothers, fathers, and caregivers are incorporated in the case planning process. However, members are concerned that individuals who might attend to support parents are often not invited to CFTs because the mothers, fathers, and caregivers are unaware that they can ask for this help. In addition, the data shows that fathers are not often included in the CFT process where the voice and choice of families is to be lifted up for case planning.
- Members have observed that the Assessment (CANS) used in the CFT to support the development of the case plan is very child-centric and that it fails to address the needs of the children, youth, mothers, fathers, and caregivers.
- Members believe that many CFTs do not take the social-cultural experiences of families into consideration and without that the tool being used fails to consider the mother, father, and caregivers' unique needs in developing a case plan to preserve or reunify the family.

- **Recommendations**

- CDSS require the county to give youth or parents a choice of having a peer partner or other individual that can act as an advocate or emotional support or cultural coach for the children, youth, mothers, fathers, and caregivers as part of the CFT.
- CDSS review the assessment tool being used by CFTs to inform the case plan and ensure that the tool being used includes the assessment of the mothers', fathers', and caregivers' strengths and social and cultural needs to inform the case plan.

Additional Areas for Further Exploration in 2021/2022

Inter-departmental collaboration

- Explore guidelines and information that counties receive on information sharing across departments or agencies working to address barriers faced by families.
- Develop a deeper understanding of how counties chose to adopt specific evidence-based practices (for example, looking at the Evidence Based Clearinghouse, being a part of the broader movement towards producing replicable results like Evidence Based Practices).

Basic Income, Housing, and Concrete Services

- Explore using the information gathered from the CDSS Office of Equity to support the development of a legislative proposal that will expand the Guaranteed Income program (currently limited to expectant mothers and young adults leaving foster care), including a cost-benefit analysis for the State and for children, youth, mothers, fathers, and caregivers.
- Explore how CDSS might partner with Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other private partnerships such as the Real Estate Association, to promote local or county partnerships that will ensure that the state is, and counties are, meeting its requirement around the development of affordable livable, and supportive housing in mixed-income neighborhoods and provide guidance to children, youth, mothers, fathers, and caregivers.
- Dig deeper into this state agency's role (e.g., the CA Dept of Housing and Community Development Services, <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/>)
 - What is the impact of housing people in the same neighborhoods as before?
 - Parental education on how to keep housing in mixed-income communities to make positive choices.
 - Buy-in from local developers is important.
 - How might CDSS and HUD promote local partnerships (like fiscal incentives) given how fragmented the system is?
 - What are existing supports in this area and what is working and what are the challenges? Important to determine gaps at the local level and fill in the gaps.



Critical Incidents Citizen Review Panel



Overview of This Year's Work

The Critical Incidents Citizen Review Panel (CI CRP) began this year's work by revisiting its prior years' work and previous recommendations. In all of its reports since 2017, the CI CRP has offered recommendations targeted to the establishment of a complete, accurate, reliable, and consistent statewide accounting of child fatalities and near-fatalities resulting from child maltreatment. In addition, it has recommended the reestablishment of a state child death review team (CDRT), as required by federal law. Little progress has been made in response to these recommendations for state-level solutions. Part of the difficulty is due to the distribution of responsibilities among three different state departments—Department of Social Services (CDSS), Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Department of Justice (DOJ). Understanding that the primary responsibility for reviewing and documenting child abuse fatalities and near-fatalities begins at the county level with county CDRTs, the CI CRP has made its primary target for its current cycle (2021/2022, 2022/2023) the improvement of practice at the local level.

In addressing local efforts, the Panel is focusing on augmenting and supporting local CDRTs to optimize identification and evaluation of child fatalities and near fatalities that result from child maltreatment. The Panel members believe that if they can provide guidance that will help CDRTs conduct reviews that lead to a better understanding of the circumstances and causes of child fatalities and near fatalities, this will in turn help the CDRTs ensure that this information results in systems improvements and actions that will prevent future maltreatment deaths and serious injuries.

Although much of the Panel's work during this two-year cycle is focusing on supporting local CDRTs the Panel members believe that this work can only be successful if it is in partnership with the three

state-level Departments (CDSS, CDPH, DOJ) that have responsibilities in this area. The Panel members will continue to reach out to those Departments to invite their participation in their work and will continue to assess how the Panel can provide constructive recommendations for state-level work.

The CI CRP has developed a comprehensive work plan for this year and next year (see Appendix E for more details). The first element of the work plan is to conduct a survey of all CDRTs to assess the status of their current activities (this action step is still in process). The second element is the creation of a Best Practices CDRT Toolkit for all county CDRT's. The CI CRP understands that this is a major undertaking that will require more than one year's work and therefore anticipates that the Toolkit will not be completed until August 2022. Preliminary activities that the Panel has undertaken this year are the following:

- Meetings with representatives of CDSS Critical Incidents Unit (including their management) and the DPH Injury Violence Prevention Section to review the elements of the CI CRP work plan to ensure alignment of efforts.
- Compilation of a comprehensive up to date CDRT point-of-contact roster for all 58 California counties, with information included about overall population and child population, in addition to contact information for CDRT coordinators in all counties.
- Presentation to the CI CRP on Best Practices from National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention
- Development and distribution of a 30-question comprehensive survey to the 58 county CDRT's in order to determine how best to support and augment their functionality and adherence to best practices. To date over 34 counties have responded to the survey.
- Review of the initial survey findings in order to guide the development of the CDRT Toolkit and to identify questions for key-informant interviews that will supplement the findings of the survey.
- Outreach to the three state departments (CDSS, CDPH, DOJ) to encourage and support coordination of efforts at the state level.

Observations

The CI CRP Panel is making preliminary observations, with the understanding that it is mid-way through its two-year work plan and therefore has not completed its full needs assessment.

- **There are incomplete, inconsistent, and unreliable statewide data on child maltreatment fatalities and near fatalities**

From the 2017/2018 CRP Report: The State does not know how many child abuse and neglect fatalities and near fatalities, in which child abuse or neglect was a material cause, occur each year.

From the 2018/2019 CRP Report: Without accurate data, it is impossible to get a complete picture of child abuse and neglect fatalities in the state, identify trends, or utilize information to prevent further fatalities

From the 2019/2020 Report: The panel focused its discussions this year on the fact that there is no standardized timely fatality and near-fatality data collection and reporting process in California

The Panel members continue to be concerned that inconsistencies persist through multiple reporting systems that do not provide reliable, consistent, and complete data about child fatalities and near-fatalities that might inform child abuse prevention efforts across California.

Despite prior Reports' repeated emphasis on the establishment of a reliable and accurate data collection process for child maltreatment fatalities and near-fatalities and their recommendations for state-level actions to address this situation, there has not been resolution to this problem. The Panel recognizes that there is a cost to ensuring that data is collected, stored, and shared with all interested parties, and that this should be taken into consideration in state-level actions in response to the need for accurate, reliable, and consistent data.

- **There is inconsistent local understanding of laws, requirements, and best practices in the review of child maltreatment fatalities and near fatalities.**

The CI CRP facilitation team conducted a survey of all known CDRTs in California. The goal of this effort is to understand CDRT practices and trends across the State as well as where there are gaps in practices and procedures related to reviewing child fatalities. The responses thus far on behalf of 34 CDRT's revealed a wide range and variability of practices, which supports the CI CRP goal of developing a Best Practices Toolkit. A thorough analysis of the findings is included in Appendix E; some of the relevant findings are:

- Among the respondents 23 (65.7%) CDRTs responded that they meet regularly, ten (28.6%) counties do not meet regularly, and two (5.7%) respondents were not sure. Of the ten counties that do not meet regularly, four do have a CDRT, three do not, and three respondents were not sure.
- Survey responses suggest shared understanding among CDRTs that it is their responsibility to convene, collect and review data, report on child fatalities, and coordinate activities among agencies when a child fatality or near fatality occurs. However, there is less consistency in how CDRTs understand their role in responding to a child fatality in terms of whether they serve in the role of an investigative, deliberative, or administrative agency.
- Only about two-thirds have by-laws, policy and procedures or an operating agreement that governs how the CDRT operates and coordinates among agencies.

- About two-thirds responded that they review all instances of child fatalities in their County. Only three CDRTs said they initiate inquiries about deaths that are not referred to them but they may have knowledge of.
- The survey data also indicated that CDRTs have difficulty in collecting and monitoring data on child fatalities. While a large portion of CDRTs (20, 83%) responded that they collect or maintain data on child fatalities, there was notable variation in the kinds of data they keep.
- In open responses, respondents most commonly wrote in suggestions for improving CDRT practices such as training or skill development that would contribute to the prevention of future child fatalities and create greater awareness of certain types of preventable deaths.
- Respondents also listed a need for statewide guidance on CDRT policies and procedures and better access to useful data on child deaths.
- More access to funding to support prevention campaigns and build public awareness was also a commonly listed need.
- A little less than half (42%) felt operating agreements such as MOUs and data sharing agreements were needed as well as policies and procedures to support collaboration and communication across agencies.
- A need for team building and group formation was also identified by a third of respondents.
- Other group practices such as creating a group mission and vision, having formalized meeting agendas, and defining roles and responsibilities were also commonly selected.

Recommendations

In support of the CI CRP's two-year plan, the Panel is making preliminary recommendations, with the understanding that its full needs assessment is not complete.

- **Observation:** *There are incomplete, inconsistent, and unreliable statewide data on child maltreatment fatalities and near fatalities*

The CI CRP respectfully requests that the three state Departments (CDSS, CDPH, DOJ) that have responsibility for addressing child maltreatment fatalities and near-fatalities review together the specific recommendations from prior years' reports and assess the feasibility of adopting one or more of these recommendations, including, but not limited to, the re-establishment of a statewide CDRT. The Departments' efforts should also focus on the establishment of complete, consistent, and reliable statewide collection, storage, and

distribution of data to bolster child fatality and near-fatality prevention efforts across the state. The three state departments should also coordinate to produce a document that identifies the governing laws, policies and procedures regarding the collection, storage and reporting of child fatalities and near fatalities resulting from child maltreatment. In addition, information about oversight agencies with responsibilities related to child fatality and near fatality reporting should be included in that document.

- **Observation:** *There is inconsistent local understanding of laws, requirements, and best practices in the review of child maltreatment fatalities and near fatalities.*

The CI CRP believes that the creation of a Best Practices CDRT Toolkit to codify best practices in the review of child maltreatment fatalities and near-fatalities will assist counties in the local collection of consistent, reliable, and complete information that will support their efforts to prevent future fatalities and near-fatalities. The CI CRP respectfully requests support in its efforts to create and distribute its Best Practices CDRT Toolkit.

We believe that the participation of CDSS, CDPH and DOJ in the development and distribution of the Toolkit is critical to its success and we invite their representatives to join in the panel's efforts.

Additional Areas for Further Exploration in 2021/2022

As noted above, the CI CRP has developed a two-year work plan that is included in the Appendix to this report (Appendix E). The accomplishments noted above have been carried out in accordance with that plan, and the following activities will be undertaken in the months between now and September 2023:

- Continued outreach to counties that have not yet completed the CDRT survey
- Updated assessment of survey results
- Development of key informant interview questions
- Key Informant interviews
- Development of the Draft Best Practices CDRT Toolkit
- Review of Draft Toolkit with state and county Partners
- Finalization of Toolkit
- Development of Distribution Strategy for Toolkit in consultation with state Departments
- Work with state Departments to support effective coordination at the statewide level
- Work with state Departments to integrate the work of local CDRT's and to coordinate the work of the local CDRT's
- Develop a workflow that describes how child fatality and near fatality data is collected for the purpose of making recommendations about how reliable, consistent, and accurate data should be collected, stored, and distributed
- Work with state Departments to promote consistent, reliable and accurate statewide data on child maltreatment fatalities and near-fatalities.

- Work with the other two CRP's to create a continuum of care approach to the CRP work in California

Appendix A: California Citizen Review Panels' Guidance Documents

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Citizen Review Panel Guidance Document 2021

Vision

All children in California and their families have equitable access to resources and prevention services and opportunities to ensure the health and well-being of families and allow children to live in safe, stable, nurturing, and permanent homes in strong and supportive communities.

Mission

The Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Citizen Review Panel's mission is to engage in dialogue and partnership with California's Department of Social Services (CDSS) in order to make recommendations to expand and transform California's prevention systems to improve child and family well-being, strengthen communities and reduce the number of children who are abused, neglected, and/or placed in foster care.

Objectives & Strategies

In order to accomplish its mission, the Citizen Review Panel will do the following:

- Adopt a race and equity lens to identify and influence statewide policies and practices with the populations most affected by institutionalized racism, disproportionality and a lack of cultural competency that perpetuate disparate outcomes for all children and families of color, particularly Black/African American and Native families
- Review policies, practices and data, including demographic, economics and social factors related to child abuse and neglect to identify where and how prevention efforts can be most effective
- Increase community engagement by learning from individuals, organizations with lived experiences and sharing individual panel member expertise and knowledge
- Advocate for increased investment in primary prevention to help stabilize families, strengthen communities, protect children and maintain children safely in their homes/communities.
- Foster a relationship with CDSS/OCAP that will support information sharing, thought partnership, transparency and responsiveness to panel recommendations.

Panel Composition

The Citizen Review Panel (CRP) should have no less than five and no more than twenty members, and should strive for the following membership composition:

- All CRP members should have an interest in preventing child abuse and strengthening families and communities

- All CRP members should be volunteers
- CRP members should be geographically and ethnically representative of the state
- CRP membership should include those with expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect
- CRP membership should include those with lived experience in the child welfare system (e.g., former foster youth, parents who have reunified with their children, legal representatives etc.)
- CRP membership should include citizens at large who offer a love for the welfare and safety of children

Expectations for Panel Members

The Citizen Review Panel Members shall:

- Serve for terms of three years. There is no limit to the length of time an individual can serve
- Make a good faith effort to attend all CRP meetings, either virtually or in-person. Panel members missing more than three consecutive CRP meetings may be asked to step down
- Maintain confidentiality of any case information reviewed
- Access their individual networks to increase stakeholder input to the panel's efforts, including review of public documents produced by the panel
- Panel members should participate in panel voting striving for a decision by consensus. When it is not possible to reach consensus and reasonable exploration has been conducted, the panel will default to decision by majority
- Serve in a rotational leadership capacity to help with agenda setting and planning for productive discussions during panel meetings
- Engage with CDSS stakeholders to ensure alignment of recommendations with purview of State, while still maintaining independence
- Provide perspectives, expertise, and life experience for the development of the CRP's annual report and/or recommendations.

Expectations for CRP Staff Support

The Citizen Review Panel shall be provided with staff support to assist with panel business. This support organization(s) shall provide the following:

- Plan and host CRP meetings (either virtually or in-person). Meetings should be hosted at least monthly; and must be held no less than quarterly
- Plan and host an annual all-CRP meeting (either virtually or in-person)
- Prepare agendas and other meeting materials and send to all panel members prior to each meeting
- Conduct research necessary for CRP business in a timely manner
- Assist with recruitment of new CRP members
- Serve as a liaison to the California Department of Social Services on the CRP's behalf
- Gather stakeholder input and public comment on behalf of the CRP
- Prepare annual report of CRP recommendations in collaboration with the Panel

**California Children and Family
Citizen Review Panel
Guidance Document
2021**

Vision

Every child in California will live in a safe, stable, permanent home nurtured by healthy families and strong communities.

Mission

The Children and Family Services Citizen Review Panel's mission is to provide opportunities for citizens to assess the child welfare system and make informed recommendations for continuous improvement that ensures the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, youth, families, within the State.

Panel Objectives & Strategies

- Increase the opportunities for citizens to assess the child welfare system by participation on the Children & Family Services Citizen Review Panel.
- Increase our knowledge of child protection practices in California by examining specific practices and policies in State and local child welfare systems.
- Improving child welfare systems by examining identified practices and policies and making recommendations for improvement.
- Secondary role: Advisory role to CDSS re specific cases or policies at the request of CDSS.

Panel Member Composition and Requirements

- All CRP members should have an interest in protecting the best interest and wellbeing of children.
- All CRP members should be volunteers.
- CRP members should be geographically representative of the State.
- The CRP should include members with expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.
- The CRP should include members with lived experience in the child welfare system (e.g., former foster youth, parents who have reunified with their children, etc.)
- CRP members reflect to the extent possible the various diversities, and socio- economic backgrounds of families and communities that are served by child and family services in California.

Panel Member Duties and Expectations

- Members shall serve for terms of three years arranged so the terms of one-third of the members shall expire each year.
- Panel members can reapply after their term expires.
- There is no limit to the number of terms an individual can serve.
- Panel members should make a good faith effort to attend all CRP meetings, either virtually or in-person
- Panel members missing more than three consecutive CRP meetings may be asked to step down. Circumstances will be considered.
- Panel members should maintain confidentiality of any case information reviewed.
- Panel members should participate in panel voting striving for decision by consensus. When it is not possible to reach consensus and reasonable exploration has been conducted, the panel will default to decision by majority.
- The Panel will engage with CDSS stakeholders to ensure alignment of recommendations with purview of State while maintaining independence.
- To the extent possible the CRP will engage with families and other stakeholders to inform priorities and recommendations.
- When unable to attend a meeting, to the extent possible provide advance notice and make a good faith effort to review agenda items and provide any feedback
- Provide perspectives, expertise, and life experience for the development of the CRP's annual report and/or recommendations.

Expectations for CRP Staff Support

- Plan and host CRP meetings (either virtually or in-person). Meetings should be hosted for each CRP monthly; and must be held no less than quarterly
- Plan and host an annual all-CRP meeting (either virtually or in-person)
- Prepare agendas and other meeting materials and send to all panel members prior to each meeting
- Conduct research necessary for CRP business in a timely manner
- Assist with recruitment of new CRP members
- Serve as a liaison to the California Department of Social Services on the CRP's behalf
- Gather stakeholder input and public comment on behalf of the CRP
- Prepare annual report of CRP recommendations in collaboration with the Panel.

**Critical Incidents
Citizen Review Panel
Guidance Document
2021**

Vision

Child abuse and neglect fatalities and near fatalities will not occur in California

Mission

Promote cross-systems investigations at the state and local level of the causes of child abuse and neglect fatalities and near-fatalities in order to identify and recommend the adoption of actions that will reduce the occurrence of preventable child fatalities and near-fatalities.

Objectives & Strategies

- Ensure accurate, consistent, valid, and complete data collection and classification of child abuse and neglect fatalities and near-fatalities by improving the process, data collection, and reporting of fatalities at the state and local level by:
 - Identifying successful approaches **to completely enumerating all cases of deaths due** to child abuse and neglect fatalities and near-fatalities in all counties in California.
 - Identifying **gaps and complexities in the systematic identification** of child abuse and neglect fatalities and near fatalities **from among all cases of child mortality.**
 - **Identifying all parties which participate in identifying** child abuse and neglect fatalities and near fatalities at the state and local level
 - Promoting actions that will result in improved coordination of the investigation of the causes of child abuse and neglect fatalities and near fatalities among state and local agencies
- Identify actions at the state and local level that will create a valid and reliable roster of all cases of child abuse and neglect fatalities and near-fatalities
- Promote the creation of an interdisciplinary, interagency state child death review team.
- Ensure accurate, consistent, valid, and complete data collection and classification of child abuse and neglect fatalities and near-fatalities by improving the process, data collection, and reporting of fatalities at the state and local level by:
 - Identifying successful approaches to understanding the causes of child abuse and neglect fatalities and near-fatalities
 - Identifying gaps in the systematic approach to understanding the causes of child abuse and neglect fatalities and near fatalities
 - Promoting processes that will improve the understanding of the causes of child abuse and neglect fatalities and near fatalities at the state and local level
- Identify actions at the state and local level that will promote the prevention of child abuse and neglect fatalities and near-fatalities

Panel Composition

The Citizen Review Panel (CRP) should have no less than five and no more than twenty members, and should strive for the following membership composition:

- All CRP members should have an interest in Elimination of child abuse and neglect fatalities and near fatalities in California
- Participation on the CRP should be voluntary
- CRP members should be geographically representative of the state
- CRP membership should include those with expertise in the elimination of child abuse and neglect fatalities and near fatalities in California
- CRP membership should include those with lived experience in the child welfare system
- CRP membership should include citizens at large who offer a love for the welfare and safety of children

Expectations for Panel Members

The Citizen Review Panel Members shall:

- Serve for terms of three years. There is no limit to the length of time an individual can serve
- Make a good faith effort to attend all CRP meetings, either virtually or in-person. Panel members missing more than three consecutive CRP meetings may be asked to step down
- Maintain confidentiality of any case information reviewed
- Access their individual networks to increase stakeholder input to the panel's efforts, including review of public documents produced by the panel

Expectations for CRP Staff Support

The Citizen Review Panel shall be provided with staff support to assist with panel business. This support organization(s) shall provide the following:

- Plan and host CRP meetings (either virtually or in-person). Meetings should be hosted at least monthly; and must be held no less than quarterly
- Plan and host an annual all-CRP meeting (either virtually or in-person)
- Prepare agendas and other meeting materials and send to all panel members prior to each meeting
- Provide support as needed for the travel expenses of Panel members
- Accommodate the schedules of Panel members in planning meetings
- Conduct research necessary for CRP business in a timely manner
- Assist with recruitment of new CRP members
- Serve as a liaison to the California Department of Social Services on the CRP's behalf
- Gather stakeholder input and public comment on behalf of the CRP
- Prepare annual report of CRP recommendations

Appendix B: Prevention Panel: FFPSA CDSS Recommendations

April 23, 2021

To: California Department of Social Services

From: California's Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Citizen Review Panel

Panel Recommendations and Feedback on Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Draft One

California's Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Citizen Review Panel appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations to improve *California's Five-Year State Prevention Plan: Implementing the Family First Prevention Services Act*. After reading draft one and reflecting on what is/is not included, the panel submits the following recommendations for the California Department of Social Services to consider:

1. We agree with the need for "system reform" mentioned in the FFPSA plan draft. However, the panel recommends the plan include a clearly-articulated strategy as to how families with lived experience will be included at every step in helping this reform: in needs assessment, project design, implementation and evaluation.
2. The draft plan's list of evidence-based practices (EBP's) is too narrow and restrictive. The panel recommends CDSS expand the list to include more of the EBP's counties already use to serve children and families, including the Nurturing Parenting Program, Incredible Years and Safe Care.
3. We agree with the need to "identify programs and services that align with the State's prevention strategy and have the potential to meet the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse criteria with additional evidence." The panel recommends CDSS invest adequate resources to specifically focus on establishing evidence for culturally-relevant services that have shown promise for those communities most adversely effected by the child welfare system.
4. The draft speaks to "California's vision for prevention" and FFPSA's limitations in funding the services needed to meet this vision. The panel recommends the plan include how CDSS is committed to increasing their investment in meeting this larger vision, to include primary and secondary prevention programs and services.

Again, the panel thanks CDSS for the opportunity to be a thought partner in this important work. If further information/clarification is needed on any of the panel recommendations for the plan, please let us know. The panel looks forward to reviewing draft two of California's FFPSA plan and providing further feedback to help strengthen California's prevention efforts.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of California's Prevention Citizen Review Panel,

Juliet Webb, Deputy Executive Director
Child and Family Policy Institute of California

The following pages capture all of the feedback from the Prevention Citizen Review Panel on FFPSA Part 1 Draft, from the panel meeting with CDSS on 4/13/21 and panel discussions

Strengths of draft:

- The pool to be served is specific and intentional
- Inequities are called out in the plan
- Including the broader vision for prevention is helpful
- Highlights Black Child Legacy campaign and other successful prevention strategies
- Like the focus on “well-being”
- Appreciate the focus on Native Americans
- Speaks to the need for “systems change”
- Comprehensive
- Like having a prevention plan for families that is inclusive (Family Group Meetings)
- Focus on preventing re-entry into foster care – FRC’s/communities/connections are integral
- Focus on equity, particularly tribes
- Highlights FRCs as part of the prevention system
- Focus on Sacramento's Black Legacy Campaign
- Emphasis on Trauma-Informed Approaches
- Understanding that prevention is a community issue, not an individual one

What could be improved:

- If California has this ‘broad plan for prevention’ – what is it, specifically?
- Shouldn't black children/families be more specifically called out as a target population for FFPSA services? Need to not lose sight of who is suffering in the system, the need for justice
- Seems like ‘business as usual’
- Re: equity. Need to focus how system captures people of color inappropriately; not just targeting services to these populations
- Other CA successes in prevention should be highlighted/included in plan (e.g. Essentials for Childhood, Child Welfare Council emphasis on prevention)
- Use more visuals – would be nice to see a graphic on CA’s prevention plan, from well-being through tertiary prevention. Visual on the opt-in process/time line would also be helpful
- More emphasis should be placed on the importance of community voice/participation/partnership in prevention. Community needs to be primary driver for change
- While “systems change” is mentioned, draft does not illustrate what that looks like
- Not enough to just engage communities in planning; need to ensure there are feedback loops to check-in at all stages. How are we doing? Did we get it right?
- We cannot overemphasize the need to bring families in not just for services, but for meaningful contribution. What are the levers/tools in the plan to trigger this engagement and how do we ensure these efforts are maximized?

- Connect the dots between all the strategies listed and the outcomes hoped for/expected
- Assume a broader audience is reading this (too many acronyms and 'child-welfare speak') – maybe including a glossary would be helpful. Plan is very technical, not consumer friendly
- Parents of children with physical or developmental disabilities, parents with disabilities, families who are English-language learners also need greater support and are not specifically mentioned in the plan
- The need to look at 'neglect' in the context of poverty, what's going on in communities (Kelly liked this idea and talks about this possibly being included in the workforce development/training aspect of the plan)
- The waiver – all of investment that occurred and the big hole that is left in its absence
- "Parents" aren't mentioned anywhere in the document
- There needs to be more emphasis on technical assistance and blended funding
- Need to focus on neglect cases more, including domestic violence and substance abuse

Service Array (EBP's):

- EBP's are not best practices for everyone. By limiting practices, you cannot effectively serve all populations. Need to focus on practices that will help those who are most adversely affected by the CW system
- Having ONE home-visitation model in FFPSA plan is too limited. Many counties have invested significant time and funding into other home visitation models in recent years due to expansion of these services to broader population; it is difficult to shift/undo in favor of another model. Knowing this, could there be consideration for more than one HV model allowed in the plan?
- Incredible Years is an EBP that has shown promise for families dealing with physical/developmental disabilities
- EBP list is just too slim overall – more options are needed
- Paraprofessional models should be included in the list of programs to support families; for example, Nurturing Parenting Program work well in Contra Costa County
- Investment in "building the evidence" should be focused on culturally-relevant practices
- Cultural brokers program is not included and has shown promise
- The listed programs are limited and don't include programs like Safe Care. This is true for other counties that have funded other EBPs with general fund.
- No EBPs for out-patient substance use

Partnerships:

- It is good to see CAPC listed throughout the document as a lead partner. CAPC has a strong peer support program that provides Parent Partners and Youth Partners with lived experience to support families and youth in the child welfare system. It's a way to not only support parents and youth but also provides the voice of the parent and youth in their individual reunification plans and beyond. It also serves as a support to break child abuse cycles and lower recidivism rates. Navigation support is critical.
- Investment in collaboratives is important to support successful prevention planning/services. Example: Healthy Start model of partnership some years back. Takes a lot of effort and

attention to ensure partners come to the table, understand their roles, see the value. Counties that are able to invest in a support structure (coordinator, etc.) will have greater success in moving this forward

- Could including the focus on secondary/tertiary prevention present challenges, confusion to CAPC's? Angela sees it as an opportunity to focus on the continuum of prevention and is happy to engage in that conversation to provide clarity, as needed

Appendix C: Prevention Panel CBCAP Funding CDSS Recommendations

June 1, 2021

To: Angela Ponivas, Chief, Office of Child Abuse Prevention

From: California's Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Citizen Review Panel

Re: Panel Recommendations and Feedback on Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Increased Funding to California as a result of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

Dear Ms. Ponivas:

California's Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Citizen Review Panel appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations on potential ways to 'target' increased CBCAP funding for additional impact. The panel's perspective is informed by the purpose of the CBCAP Program, which are:

- To support community-based efforts to develop, operate, expand, enhance, and coordinate initiatives, programs, and activities to prevent child abuse and neglect;
- To support the coordination of resources and activities to better strengthen and support families to reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect; and
- To foster understanding, appreciation and knowledge of diverse populations in order to effectively prevent and treat child abuse and neglect

During its May meeting, the Panel held a vigorous discussion during which the members identified many initiatives, programs and activities that could benefit from additional investment in communities including, but not limited to:

- Supporting/expanding county-level prevention planning team efforts
- Increasing support for Family Resource Centers
- Funding programs and services to increase father engagement/involvement
- Expanding the availability of mental health services to children and families experiencing trauma, including to those who are undocumented
- Expanding the availability of co-parenting resources
- Providing critical assistance to unaccompanied minors

The Panel members acknowledged that the above list of programs and activities could continue; however, the Panel members believe that such investments need to be directed by community members themselves. Some communities may benefit from an expansion of current community-based programs and services; other communities that lack the basic requirements needed to deliver services at all may benefit from investments in community-based service infrastructure.

In order to ensure communities are authentically engaged in the identification of what would best serve their needs, the panel respectfully recommends the CDSS adopt the following two strategies:

1. Require counties receiving CBCAP funding to take specific actions to engage the communities they serve in identifying what the communities most need to help strengthen families and prevent child abuse. This engagement strategy would include active listening to the voices of community members to identify their needs as well as the strengths and assets that their communities can build upon. Additionally, counties would include specific strategies to keep community members engaged in helping to design, implement and evaluate efforts to strengthen their communities and prevent child abuse and neglect. These actions should include undertaking grassroots efforts to gather neighborhood-level voices and grow new partnerships *as well as* build upon connections with established community-resource partners and networks (such as Family Resource Centers).
2. Provide state-level grants of CBCAP to allow for this same community-engagement effort to reach beyond the recipients of traditional county CBCAP funding. These grants would focus on allowing non-traditional partners, organizations and community members themselves to apply for funding to engage their localities in identifying what they need as well helping to design, implement and evaluate efforts to strengthen families and prevent child abuse in their communities.

The Panel hopes this guidance will assist in strengthening California's plans for allocating these one-time increased CBCAP resources to the greatest benefit of communities. Please reach out with any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of California's Prevention Citizen Review Panel,

Juliet Webb, Deputy Executive Director
Child and Family Policy Institute of California
Juliet.webb@cfpic.org

Appendix D: CFS–CRP Panel ACL 1068 CDSS Recommendations

July 1, 2021

To: California Department of Social Services

From: California’s Children & Family Services Citizen Review Panel

Panel Recommendations and Feedback on Draft ACL for AB 1068

California’s Children & Family Services Citizen Review Panel appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations on Draft ACL with SUBJECT: FURTHERING LEGAL MANDATES (1068) AND PRACTICE GUIDANCE OF THE CHILD AND FAMILY TEAM (CFT) PROCESS FOR CHILD WELFARE SOCIAL WORKERS AND JUVENILE PROBATION OFFICERS.

OVERVIEW OF CHILD AND FAMILY TEAMS

Panel Members appreciated the statement that the CFT process is intended to give youth and families an opportunity to provide meaningful input in their case plans as that is one of the priority focus areas for the panel. However, while the paragraph mentions input into services and supports, they felt that the emphasis in that paragraph is about placement options for youth. It is the Panel Members perspective that poverty and adverse childhood experience are important to understand when assessing a family’s situation and its importance should be underscored when completing assessments and developing a Case Plan.

- Recommendation: That CDSS infuse more discussion about services that would promote reunification to their biological family.
- Recommendation: That CDSS also includes the importance of the CFT to gather information about the Parent’s Adverse Child Experience (ACEs) that could support the assessment and the services in the Case Plan.
- Recommendation: That CDSS ensure that the CFT process considers the strengths and needs of the family as they seek to complete their case plan

NOTIFICATION TO THE YOUTH, PARENT(S), AND CAREGIVER(S) OF THE CFT MEETING

Panel Members felt that a timeline for notification should be included in the guidance. Panel Members with lived experience and who had interactions with others with lived experience were concerned that the guidance document did not explicitly state that parents are being informed of their right to invite natural supports such as friends, extended family, trusted professionals, etc. to the CFT process.

Panel Members pointed to the letter which states that in addition to those mentioned, the educational rights holder, representatives of the youth’s Tribe, Indian Custodian, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), representatives from Foster Family Agencies (FFA) or Short- Term Residential Treatment Programs (STRTP), County Mental/Behavioral Health Representatives, Regional

Center staff, and school must also be notified when applicable. They felt the language was not strong enough.

- Recommendation: The notification needs to be sent out no less than 72 hours before the CFT is scheduled to happen unless mitigating circumstances such as not being able to locate the family occur.
- Recommendation: That the notification letter should advise the child, youth or parent that they can invite others that are part of their support system.
- Recommendation: Alter the language of notification as being a more collaborative process and schedule a place and time that is most convenient for families for better engagement since historically families have been summoned to meetings and these have had deleterious effects on their lives such as financial/job loss.
- Recommendation: As per 2018 SB 925 updated Section 16501, Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) participation, unless the child or youth object is statutorily required.
- Recommendation: Adopt lessons learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic such as offering more versatile and responsive strategies to engage families such as video and phone calls whilst ensuring that clients have received digital literacy and accessibility to such options.
- Recommendation: Recommend the use of stronger language for inviting other entities to the CFT process, that is, replacing “must invite” to “shall invite”
- Recommendation: Beyond ensuring that the educational rights holder is invited to the CFT, a representative from the school that the child/youth attends should be invited to the CFT as they are more likely to observe child/youth’s behavior at school.

Appendix E: Critical Incidents Panel Workplan

CRITICAL INCIDENTS CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

2021 WORK PLAN

| | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| Work Plan Topic Area 1: | County-Level Child Death Review Teams Toolkit | |
| Implementation Objective: <i>At the end of the project year, what has been accomplished in this topic area?</i> | Create a Best Practices CDRT Tool Kit for County CDRTs | |
| Target Date: <i>to complete the Implementation Objective</i> | August, 2022 | |
| What are the Action Steps to be taken? List below | Who is Assigned? | Due Date |
| 1. Develop a Current County CDRT Roster Coordinating agency, lead contact person and contact information (email) | Panel Members | 3/19/21 |
| 2. Conduct a Needs Assessment of local County CDRTs to inform Tool Kit (include gaps and acknowledge rural county needs) | | |
| a. Design Preliminary Survey | RDA/CFPIC | 3/19/21 |
| b. Conduct Survey | RDA/CFPIC | 4/21 |
| c. Review Survey Results | CRP | 7/21 |
| d. Survey Outreach to Unresponsive Counties | Panel Members | 8/21 |
| e. Identify Counties for Key Informant Interviews | RDA & Panel Members | 9/21 |
| f. Conduct Key Informant Interviews | RDA/CFPIC | 9/21-10/21 |
| 3. Presentation on Best Practices from National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention | | 5/19/21 |
| 4. Review Workplan with CDSS and CDPH | CRP | 6/16/21 |
| 5. Identify Contents of the Tool Kit | CRP | 9/21, 10/21 |
| 6. Review Table of Contents with Sample of Counties | CRP/CFPIC/RDA | 11/ 21 |
| 7. Develop Draft Annual Report for OCAP | CRP/CFPIC/RDA | 8/21 |

| | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|-----------|
| 8. | Review and Provide Input to Draft Annual Report | Panel Members | 9/21 |
| 9. | Finalize Annual Report | CFPIC/RDA | 9/21 |
| 10. | Develop contents of the Toolkit | CRP/CFPIC/RDA | 9/21-1/22 |
| 11. | Seek Feedback from Sample of CDRT's on Toolkit Draft | CRP/CFPIC/RDA | 2/22-3/22 |
| 12. | Work Collaboratively with CDSS, CDPH, DOJ to Ensure Toolkit Meets their Needs | CRP/CFPIC/RDA | 4/22-5/22 |
| 13. | Format and Copy Edit Tool Kit | CRP/CFPIC/RDA | 5/22-6/22 |
| 14. | Finalize Toolkit | CRP/CFPIC/RDA | 7/22-8/22 |
| 15. | Submit to CDSS as Recommendation for a CDRT Best Practices Model | | 8/22 |
| 16. | Identify Resources Necessary for Toolkit Distribution | | 9/22 |
| 17. | Develop Recommendations for CRP Annual Report | | 8/23-9/23 |

| | | |
|--|--|-----------------|
| Work Plan Topic Area 2: | County-Level Child Death Review Teams Toolkit | |
| Implementation Objective: <i>A year from now, what has been accomplished in this topic area?</i> | Development of a Toolkit Dissemination Plan | |
| Target Date: <i>to complete the Implementation Objective</i> | August, 2023 | |
| What are the Action Steps to be taken? <i>List below</i> | Who is Assigned? | Due Date |
| 1. Develop On-Line Format, Print Toolkit and PDF— analog and digital | CFPIC/RDA | 10/22-1/23 |
| 2. Partner with Public and Private Agencies statewide, funded by OCAP (e.g. Strategies 2.0 and Innovative Partnership Program) to promote Tool Kit at County level | CRP/CFPIC/RDA | 1/23- 4/23 |
| 3. Distribute Tool Kit to County CDRT's and Child Abuse Prevention Councils (see Work Plan Topic Area: Dissemination Plan) | CRP/CFPIC/RDA | 4/23-6/23 |
| 4. Webinars with County CDRT's | CRP/CFPIC/RDA | 6/23-8/23 |
| 5. Develop Recommendations for CRP Annual Report | CRP/CFPIC/RDA | 8/23-9/23 |

| | | |
|--|---|-----------------|
| Work Plan Topic Area 3: | State-Level Coordination of Monitoring of Child Fatalities | |
| Implementation Objective: <i>A year from now, what has been accomplished in this topic area?</i> | Recommendation for effective coordination among CDSS, DHCS, and DOJ to establish structure for statewide oversight of Child Fatalities | |
| Target Date: <i>to complete the Implementation Objective</i> | August 2021 | |
| What are the Action Steps to be taken? List below | Who is Assigned? | Due Date |
| 1. Research current roles of CDSS, DHCS, DOJ | CRP | 6/21 |
| 2. Identify primary liaison within each Department | CRP | 6/21 |
| 3. Review Matrix of Departmental Responsibilities (to be provided by CDPH, CDSS, DOJ) | CRP | 8/21 |
| 4. Review prior year recommendations and update for current year report | CRP | 8/21 |
| 5. Develop Preliminary Recommendations for Annual Report to OCAP | CFPIC/RDA/CRP | 9/21 |

| | | |
|--|--|-----------------|
| Work Plan Topic Area 4: | Documentation of All Child Fatalities and Near Fatalities | |
| Implementation Objective: <i>A year from now, what has been accomplished in this topic area?</i> | Promote a unitary, valid, reliable and complete roster of all child fatalities and near fatalities due to abuse. | |
| Target Date: <i>to complete the Implementation Objective</i> | June, 2022 | |
| What are the Action Steps to be taken? List below | Who is Assigned? | Due Date |
| 1. Obtain list of all County death review teams | Panel Members/CFPIC | 5/19/21 |
| 2. Conduct survey of and focus groups with CDRTs | Include in Work Plan Topic Area #1 | 8/21 |
| 3. Reach out to counties that have not completed survey | Panel members | 9/21 |
| 4. Create spreadsheet of survey answers arrayed by county | RDA | ? |
| 5. Display counties by the following criteria | RDA | ? |

| | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|------|
| a. | Which counties review all child fatalities | | |
| b. | Which counties autopsy all child fatalities | | |
| c. | Which counties review all near fatalities | | |
| 6. | Document fatalities not reported to CDSS or DPH/OVP | ? | ? |
| 7. | Compare CDRT data to California Vital Statistics | ? | ? |
| 8. | Examine reports of child fatalities to CDSS and DPN/OVP (FCANDS) and explore how these are reconciled | ? | ? |
| 9. | Explore anomalies in CDSS and OVP reporting | ? | ? |
| 10. | Survey county's medical examiner and/or coroner to document the policy of each county in compiling statistics | ? | ? |
| 11. | Survey key informants about the existence of child fatalities of undetermined cause | ? | ? |
| 12. | Develop recommendations for establishing a unitary, valid, reliable and complete roster of all child fatalities and near fatalities due to abuse. | Panel Members | 8/22 |

Appendix F: Critical Incidents Panel Survey Analysis

Introduction

The CI CRP facilitation team conducted a survey of all known County Child Death Review Teams (CDRT) in California. The goal of this effort is to understand CDRT practices and trends across the State as well as where there are gaps in practices and procedures related to reviewing child fatalities. The CI CRP's objective was to use the survey data to inform the design of a CDRT tool to support CDRTs in using consistent and validated practices to monitor and review child fatalities.

CDRT Survey Outreach and Responses

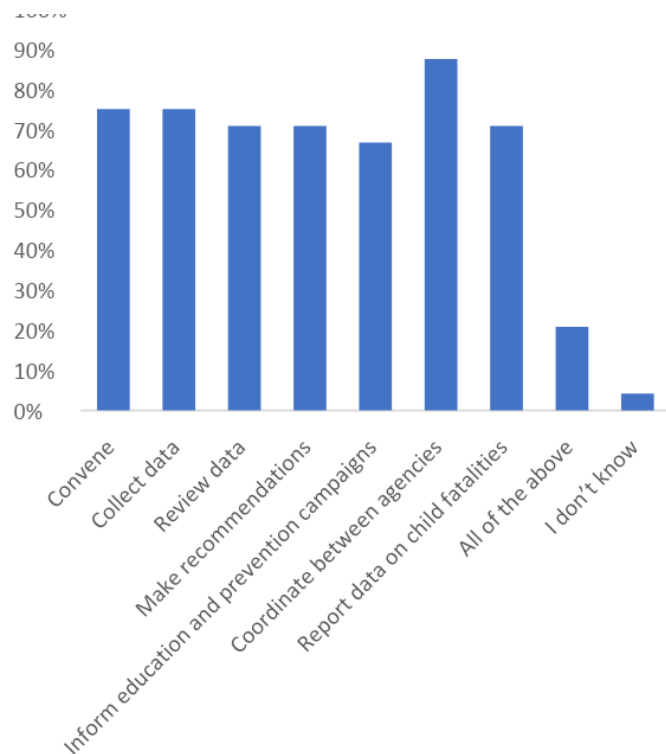
The CI CRP conducted outreach and sent a survey requests to 55 CDRTs and received 34 (61.8%) valid responses. 10 CDRTs respondents indicated they do not have a CDRT that regularly convenes. These respondents were asked additional questions to explain why their CDRT does not regularly convene and then exited from the survey based on their response. This left a total of 24 CDRTs to answer the remaining questions.

CDRT Roles and Responsibilities

Among the respondents 23 (65.7%) CDRTs responded that they meet regularly, while 10 (28.6%) counties do not meet regularly, and 2 (5.7%) were not sure. Of the 10 Counties that do not meet regularly, four do have a CDRT, three do not, and three were not sure. Most CRPs are made up of a mix of representatives from various county agencies and community-based organizations that included the Child Welfare Services, Public Health, County Sheriff's Office, Coroner, Attorney General, Healthcare services and the Child Abuse Prevention Council. Most CDRTs that convene regularly have a shared sense of what their responsibilities are as depicted in Figure 1.

Survey responses suggest shared understanding among CDRTs that it is their responsibility to convene, collect and review data, report on child fatalities, and coordinate activities between agencies when a child fatality or near fatality occurs. However, there is less consistency in how CDRTs understand their role in responding to a child fatality in terms of whether they serve in the role

Figure 1 SEQ Figure | * ARABIC 1. CDRT Responsibilities identified by Respondents. (n = 24)



of an investigative, deliberative, or administrative. The table below provides a breakdown of how CDRTs view their role.

Table 1. Characterization of CDRT roles based on survey responses

| Investigator Role (45% - 65%) | Deliberative Role (75% - 88%) | Administrative Role (50%) |
|---|--|--|
| Complete a thorough investigation of the circumstance surrounding the death (46%) | Determine if the incident was preventable (88%) | Complete the Fatal Child Abuse and Neglect Surveillance (FCANs) report (50%) |
| Determine if the death was... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncomplicated accident (46%) • Natural causes (67%) • Due to gaps in the child welfare system (58%) | Make recommendations on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could have been done to prevent the incident (79%) • If other children are at risk (75%) • What can be learned to prevent future incidents (79%) • Improvements to the child welfare system (54%) | |

Trends in CDRT Operational Practices

Survey responses also suggest a wide range of variation in how CDRT operate. Only about two-thirds have by-laws, policy and procedures or an operating agreement that governs how the CDRT operates and coordinates between agencies. About two-thirds responded they review all instances of child fatalities in their County. Only three CDRTs said they inquire about deaths that are not referred to them but they may have knowledge of. Of the CDRTs that don't review all deaths, they listed various standards that trigger a CDRT review:

- Non-medical deaths
- Homicides, suicide, and undetermined cause of death
- Pediatric death reported to the Coroner's Office
- Any child where an autopsy is performed

Similarly, County policy for investigate of child fatalities and referral to the CDRTs varies widely. The table below shows the responses to several questions about standards and processes in the event of a child fatality.

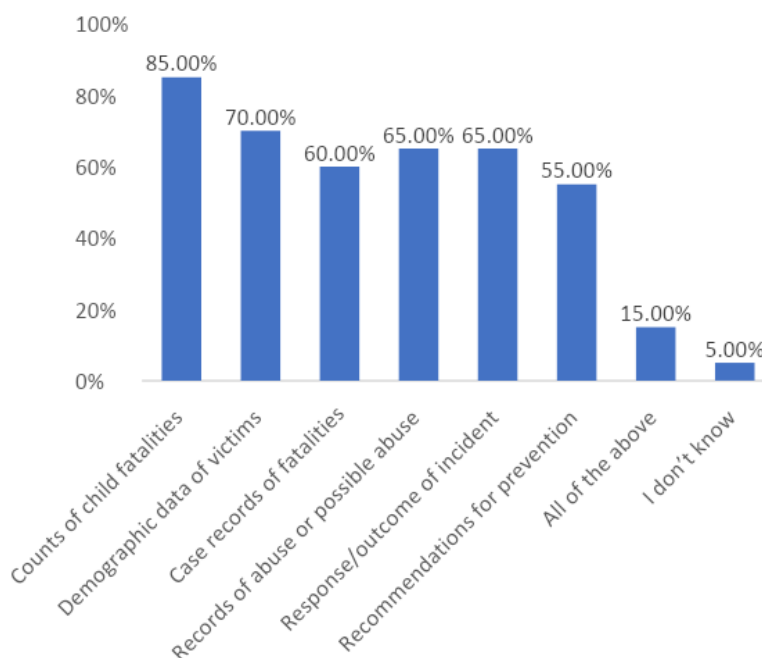
Table 2. Variation of CDRT Review Standards and Practices Among Respondents

| CDRT Review Standards and Processes | Yes | No | Sometimes | I don't know | Other |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| Conducts Autopsies on all child fatalities (n = 25) | 7 (28%) | 11 (44%) | | 7 (28%) | |
| Conducts a CDRT review when child dies in county, but resides in another county (n = 24) | 8 (33%) | 4 (17%) | 9 (38%) | 1 (4%) | 2 (8%) |
| Provides courtesy review to county of residency (n = 8) | 3 (37%) | 2 (25%) | 1 (13%) | 2 (25%) | |
| Conducts a CDRT review fatalities of foster children placed out of county (n = 24) | 13 (54%) | 3 (13%) | 5 (21%) | 3 (13%) | |
| Reviews cases of Fetal Demise (n = 24) | 10 (42%) | 2 (8%) | 6 (25%) | 4 (17%) | 2 (8%) |
| Receives notification of near-fatalities (n = 24) | 2 (8%) | 17 (71%) | | 5 (21%) | |

CDRT Practices for Maintaining Data on Child Fatalities

The survey data also indicated that CDRTs experience difficulty in collecting and monitoring data on child fatalities. While a large portion of CDRTs (20, 83%) responded that they collect or maintain data on child fatalities, there was notable variation in the kinds of data they keep. As shown in Figure 2, It is more common that CDRTs maintain counts of child fatalities and information on the demographics of the victim. It appears less common for CDRTs to maintain case records of the incident, information on previous abuse, or the outcome or response of the incident as well as if recommendations were made. These findings are consistent with previous observations and recommendations made by the CI CRP on the need consistent statewide data practices for monitoring child fatalities beyond a local level.

Figure 2 SEQ Figure | * ARABIC 1. CDRT Responsibilities identified by Respondents. (n = 24)



Training and Capacity Building Needs

In open responses, respondents most commonly wrote in suggestions for CDRT best practices as training or skill development that would benefit their CDRT. In particular they listed CDRT practices that would contribute to the prevention of future child fatalities and create greater awareness of certain types of preventable deaths. Respondents also listed a need for statewide guidance on CDRT policies and procedures and better access to useful data on child deaths. More access to funding to support prevention campaigns and build public awareness was also a commonly listed need.

Lastly, some respondents also indicated a need for guidance in meeting norms and procedures. A little less than half (42%) felt operating agreements such as MOUs and data sharing agreement needed as well as practices to support collaboration and communication across agencies. Team building and group formation was also identified by a third of respondents. Other group norms practices such as creating a group mission and vision, having formalized meeting agendas, and defining roles and responsibilities were also commonly selected.

Appendix G: Panel Members

Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect Citizen Review Panel Members

Katie Albright
Executive Director, Safe and Sound
City and County of San Francisco

Yvette Baptiste
Executive Director, Eastern Los Angeles Family
Resource Center,
Statewide Representation of FRCs that serve
individuals and families who use
developmental disability services
Los Angeles County

Lori Schumacher
Program Director, Center for Human Services
Stanislaus County

Colette Katuala
Child Abuse Prevention Services Coordinator
Alameda County

Jan Bramlett
Board Member, Child Abuse Prevention
Council, Humboldt County

Antoinette Manual
Executive Director, Kids First,
Placer County

Lisa Korb
Program Officer, First Five
Contra Costa County

Patricia Bevelyn
Retired Child Welfare Manager
San Diego County

Marilyn English
African American Wellness Center for Children
and Families
San Diego County

Wendy Brown
Executive Director, Child Abuse Prevention
Council
Butte County

Aimee Zeitz
YMCA Regional Director
San Diego County

Dana Blackwell
Senior Director, California Strategic
Consultation, Casey Family Programs
Los Angeles County

Sheila Boxley
President & CEO
Child Abuse Prevention Center
Sacramento County

Alex Morales
Retired CEO of Child's Bureau, Southern
California, Board of Directors at Child Welfare
League of America
Los Angeles County

Marni Parsons
Vice President of Student and Family Services,
Bright Star Schools
Los Angeles County

Jose Ramos
Senior Program Director, Children's Bureau,
Board Member, NASW, Value Charter Schools
in Los Angeles, Los Angeles County

Judi Sherman
Consultant, Judi Sherman & Associates
Santa Cruz County

**Children and Family Services Citizen Review
Panel Members**

Cheryl Barrett
Parent Partner CFS/CAPC
Contra Costa County

Dorothy Lewis
Parent Partner CFS/CAPC
Contra Costa County

Lori Clarke
Co-Director of Social Policy Institute,
San Diego State University
San Diego County

Ann Wrixon
Executive Director for Contra Costa CASA
Contra Costa County

Simone Hidds-Monroe
Associate Director, Advocacy & Community
Empowerment
Just in Time for Foster Youth
San Diego County

Deutron Kebebew
Executive Director of MENTors
Santa Cruz County

Ruth Salady
Sacramento County

Emily Bahne
Pediatric Nurse Practitioner
Fresno County

Alice Langton-Sloan
Indian Child Welfare Director
Cahto Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria
Mendocino County

**Critical Incidents Citizen Review Panel
Members**

Minerva Tico
Director, Partner Strategy & Programs at Cisco
City & County of San Francisco

Jeoffry Gordon, MD, MPH
Retired Family Physician
San Diego County

Sheryn Hildebrand
Executive Director
Court Appointed Special Advocates of Lake
and Mendocino County

Cathy Long
Coordinator, CSCC/LCCPC/CDRT
San Joaquin County

Deborah Moriarty
School Counselor PPS/Medical Social Worker
LCSW
Orange County

Justian O’Ryan
Supervisor CQI Special Projects
San Joaquin County Child Welfare
San Joaquin County

Ana Santana
Healthy Start Director, Lake County Office of
Education
Lake County

Stephanie Biegler
Chief Program Officer, Child Abuse Prevention
Center
Sacramento County

Ruby Guillen
NASW/CA Technology Council, Co-Chair
Interagency Council on Child Abuse and
Neglect (ICAN) Associate
Los Angeles County

Appendix H: Consultant Team

Child and Family Policy Institute of California (CFPIC)

Stuart Oppenheim, MSW
Executive Director

Juliet Webb, MPA
Deputy Executive Director

Danna Fabella, MSW
Associate Director

RDA Consulting

John Cervetto, MSW
Consulting Director

David Klauber, MSW
Senior Consultant

Aditi Das, MSW, PhD
Consultant