



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES OFFICE OF CHILD PROTECTION

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July 1, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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From: Judge Michael Nash (Ret.) 
Executive Director, Office of Child Protection

PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE CENTER FOR STRATEGIC PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The Board of Supervisors established the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships (Center) within the Office of Child Protection (OCP)¹ on October 6, 2015, following a recommendation made by the Los Angeles County Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection. The Center is charged with “develop(ing) a collaborative relationship between the County and philanthropic community” and “a shared agenda for joint initiatives to ensure the health and well-being of children within Los Angeles County.”² On April 1, 2016, Kate Anderson commenced her work as the Center’s Director. This memorandum provides an update on the Center’s progress over the last 90 days, and identifies preliminary areas of shared interest and emerging joint initiatives.³

The Center exists because of the vision and generous support of Philanthropy, through Southern California Grantmakers,⁴ and the County of Los Angeles. These partners have provided not only the financial assistance needed to make the Center possible, but also staff support that has been instrumental in the Center’s successful launch.

¹ October 6, 2015 Motion by Supervisors Hilda L. Solis and Sheila Kuehl

² June 16, 2015 and October 6, 2015 Motions by Supervisor Hilda L. Solis and Sheila Kuehl

³ September 23, 2015 Interim CEO Letter “Options for Establishing a Philanthropy Liaison in the Office of Child Protection”

⁴ The Ahmanson Foundation, Annenberg Foundation, Blue Shield of California Foundation, California Community Foundation, The California Endowment, Community Partners, David Bohnett Foundation, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, Liberty Hill Foundation, Pritzker Foster Care Initiative, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, and Weingart Foundation

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP SHARED AGENDA

Given the goal of developing a shared agenda, the Center Director engaged in an intensive listening tour of over 70 in-person meetings and participated in over a dozen conferences with the following stakeholders:

- Board Deputies from Each of the Five Supervisorial Districts
- Philanthropic Leaders
- County Department Personnel
- Community-Based Organizations
- Union Representatives
- Commissioners from Child-Serving Commissions
- Business Community

The resounding message from all stakeholders was that the Center was important and needed. The County, Philanthropy, and Community-Based Organizations see the value and strength of working closely together. They want more than episodic projects; they want a formalized structure to help them forge on-going collaboration and partnership.⁵

To do this, the Center will employ multiple strategies. Fundamentally, it will be a translator helping to span the different cultures of each sector, demystifying each to the other and developing a common language. It will facilitate conversations that spark collaboration and help broker joint initiatives. It will identify resources in each sector that can catalyze projects or initiatives. Ultimately, the Center is a place to build relationships so that together we can better achieve our shared vision of improving the lives of Los Angeles County's children and families.

PRELIMINARY SHARED AGENDA AND JOINT INITIATIVES

From this process, three areas emerged as priorities for both the County and Philanthropy: Prevention; Recruitment and Retention of Resource Families; and Transition-Age Youth. In addition, some of the Center's joint initiatives cut across multiple areas.

1. Prevention Efforts

Preventing children and families from entering the child welfare system is a strong area of alignment identified by Philanthropy and the County. As the Blue Ribbon

⁵ We would like to acknowledge the significant contributions of The Center on Philanthropy & Public Policy, University of Southern California and in particular, its publication, "*Philanthropy and Government Working Together: The Role of Offices of Strategic Partnerships in Public Problem Solving*", in building the knowledge base of this emerging area.

Commission noted, “[t]he most cost-effective way to reduce the rippling costs of child welfare is to prevent abuse in the first place.”⁶

The OCP is convening a monthly multi-departmental prevention workgroup to develop a Countywide Prevention Plan. The Center is working closely with child welfare and early childhood funders to support this effort. Opportunities for joint initiatives thus far include: 1) supporting an in-depth qualitative inventory of the many networks that serve this population (i.e., Best Start, Health Neighborhoods, Promise Zones, etc.) to better ensure connections between them; 2) expanding and sustaining access to high quality home visitation programs; 3) working with County Departments, the Prevention and Aftercare Networks, and other community based organizations to determine what services should be expanded and/or created; and 4) working with the newly created Office of Financial Empowerment to expand economic opportunities for families, which is a key prevention strategy.⁷

Engaging families and strengthening social networks is another key element of successful prevention and the Center is helping with this by supporting the County’s successful Parks After Dark program. An evaluation conducted by the Department of Public Health found that families felt safe and more socially connected when they participated in Parks After Dark.⁸ The County has expanded the Program from nine to twenty-one parks this year, and the Center is engaging the Philanthropic Community to facilitate support for future summer programs.

2. Recruitment and Retention of Resource Families

There is also strong alignment around strengthening efforts to place children with relative caregivers, as well as recruiting and retaining non-related resource families. Los Angeles County and Philanthropy are concerned about the critical shortage of families needed to meet existing demand. As Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) is implemented, and congregate care capacity diminishes, the demand for resource families, including those willing to accept children with specialized mental health needs, will rise even further.

The Center is pursuing multiple avenues to help address this challenge. One promising path is to develop a structure for innovative public-private partnership pilots. Examples of areas for such pilots include: 1) culturally-specific recruitment efforts; 2) alternatives to traditional group home settings; 3) well-coordinated engagement of the faith-based community; and 4) effective support of relative caregivers.

⁶ *The Road to Safety for Our Children*. Final Report of the Los Angeles County Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection (Apr. 18, 2014, pg. 26)

⁷ Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) Year Two Evaluation Report: Executive Summary Vol. 1 pg. 6 (noting that economic empowerment is a key prevention strategy).

⁸ Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. *The Potential Costs and Health Benefits of Parks After Dark Rapid Health Impact Assessment*, Executive Summary; September 2014.

Additionally, the Center is exploring the idea of facilitating a national review of best practices in recruitment and retention (including Allegheny County), supporting the Department of Children and Family Services's (DCFS) request for cost data on recruitment efforts, and supplementing resources to strengthen the capacity of DCFS to address the implementation of CCR. The County and Philanthropy also recognize that marketing is a strength of the private sector; accordingly, the Center will work with private-sector partners to develop marketing strategies to recruit resource families.

The Center has also connected group homes and foster family agencies, which will be impacted by CCR, to the Nonprofit Sustainability Initiative (NSI), which facilitates the exploration and pursuit of partnerships, as well as strategic restructuring opportunities, in the non-profit sector. As a result of CCR, a number of group homes are likely to consider changing and/or expanding their models and services. The Center will continue to link Community-Based Organizations impacted by the reforms of CCR with the NSI.

3. Support of Transition-Age Youth (TAY)

There is also great enthusiasm and alignment to support our TAY population. These youth are particularly vulnerable as they transition into adulthood. They often lack a network of supportive adults, and have limited access to career, education, and other resources. The County and Philanthropy are committed to providing the foundation and support necessary to strengthen the resiliency of these youth.

An emerging initiative in this area involves preventing homelessness. The County has undertaken an unprecedented effort to address this issue, and the Center will partner in that effort to support TAY. Another area of existing public-private initiatives is in addressing TAY educational and workforce challenges, which the Center will also support. Additionally, the Center will work with Philanthropy to help the newly created Center for Financial Empowerment meet needs of these youth.

The County and the private sector are also jointly working on supporting TAY reproductive health needs, as well as needs for expectant and parenting youth. Together, the County and the private sector have already implemented truly groundbreaking models of support teams and curriculum that have been emulated by other counties. The Center is partnering to strengthen and enhance these services.

Finally, the Center will devote attention to Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) and crossover youth. Our system-involved youth are disproportionately more likely to be CSEC. The Center is working with the CSEC Integrated Leadership Team to explore federal and other funding opportunities to combat this problem. Likewise, high-need foster children risk crossing over into our juvenile justice system. Strong supports and interventions can reduce this risk and initiatives already underway, such

as the Shared Core Practice Model, hold promise to better serve these children by addressing their underlying needs early on.

4. Cross-Area Initiatives

There are also some promising joint initiatives that cut across these focus areas.

In October of 2015, the County commissioned a scan of available County services for LGBTQ youth. County Departments welcomed the scan, and requested more interviews than contemplated in the initial scope. This is an unprecedented opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of how we are serving, or failing to serve, our LGBTQ youth. The Center is working with philanthropy to fund the expanded scope so that the additional interviews can be completed.

The Center is also actively engaging with a group of foundations that have embarked on an initiative to make Los Angeles a trauma-informed County. The Center is excited to work with these philanthropic partners and the County in helping to infuse a trauma-informed lens throughout the work with our children and families.

Finally, an initiative still very much in the early stages of development would use cross-sector measurements of the health and well-being of Los Angeles communities to ensure that our services align with the most pressing needs of our children and families. This work is at the heart of the OCP's charge, and the Center is exploring ways to support it.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps for the Center will include:

1. Finalizing a "Shared Agenda for Joint Initiatives"

The Center will take the input and feedback from this preliminary Shared Agenda and work with stakeholders to finalize a "Shared Agenda for Joint Initiatives" by the end of the calendar year.

2. Formalizing Advisory Structures for the Center's Work

The collaborative nature of the Center's work involves partnering with a multitude of stakeholders. The Center will develop formal advisory structures and forums to guide the Center's ongoing work by the end of the calendar year.

One such forum already in place is the Child Welfare Funder's Collaborative, originally formed by Southern California Grantmakers (SCG). The Center, in partnership with SCG, will now convene this Collaborative.

3. Move Forward on Identified Joint Initiatives

Because of the urgency of the needs of the children entrusted to the County's care, some of the initiatives described above will move forward before the formal Advisory Structures and Shared Agenda are finalized. The Center will proceed with initiatives that meet these criteria:

- Builds upon priorities defined in the Office of Child Protection's Strategic Plan
- Is a shared priority held by both the County and Philanthropy

If you have any questions, please contact me at 213-893-1152 or by email at mnash@ocp.lacounty.gov, or your staff may contact Kate Anderson at 213-893-2538 or by email at kkanderson@ocp.lacounty.gov.

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