

# Marin County Child and Family Services System Improvement Plan (SIP)



Marin County Health and Human Services  
Social Service Division  
Children and Family Services Department  
June 2008

## California's Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan

<b>County:</b>	<b>Marin</b>
<b>Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:</b>	Marin County Health and Human Services- Social Service Division
<b>Period of Plan:</b>	<b>June 2007- June 2010</b>
<b>Period of Outcomes Data:</b>	Q3 2007
<b>Date Submitted:</b>	June 2008
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<b>Submitted by each agency for the children under its care</b>	
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<b>Name:</b>	<b>Charlene Reid-Director of Social Service</b>
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Submitted by:</b>	
	<b>Marin County Probation</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>William Burke- Chief Probation Officer</b>
<b>Signature:</b>	

## **I. SIP Narrative:**

Marin continues to utilize the opportunities offered by the Child Welfare Redesign to engage our community partners, philanthropic entities, and political leaders and ensure that a comprehensive continuum of services are offered to the children and families in our community. The goal of the current and future strategies is to provide services for children and families when early warning signs emerge, and to ensure that community systems, both public and private, focus their work to collaborate and streamline service provision throughout as a matter of best practice.

By continuing to build on successful programs already in place, Marin continues to improve its methods of practice and maximize the number of families in the community receiving services. Marin County Children and Family Services will be physically moving to the new Marin Health and Wellness Campus, located in Central San Rafael in October 2008. This move will allow CFS to join Community Mental Health and Public Health in expanding the array of integrated service provision available for families and children in Marin.

Marin continues to focus on ways to improve communication between agencies and the community, and to reach out and provide ongoing educational and networking opportunities. By working in this way Marin Children and Family Services will continue to build on the strength of its local partners. In this way, we can further enrich the current level of community involvement and service provision, and ensure that children and families are not only surviving, but thriving in our community.

Marin has expanded its programming over the past year to include the SB 163 WrapAround program- and has contracted with Seneca to provide services beginning March 1, 2008. Marin has also continued to implement a Differential Response program and collaborate with CalWORKS in the implementation of LINKAGES. Marin has also expanded the THP-plus services available to young adults. In addition, Marin is currently accepting proposals for programming to enhance Kinship services, funded through the state KSSP planning grant.

### **1. Identify Local Planning Bodies:**

Marin County has developed a Child Welfare Redesign Stakeholders Team in order to maximize the input from the Community. In addition, two committees, the Differential Response committee and the Transitional Age Youth Task Force have formed to provide input and policy in instrumental areas of the System Improvement Plan. Members of these teams have met regularly to direct the County Self-Assessment and System Improvement Plan (SIP), and develop planning around these two important areas. The groups include representation from a variety of Public and Private Providers, foster parents, community representatives, children's' advocates, health providers, funders, and youth.

In addition, Marin CFS and Juvenile Probation will begin planning for the second Peer Quality Case Review- (PQCR) in the fall of 2008- with the review to occur in April 2009.

The following is a partial listing of Child Welfare Redesign Stakeholders, who continue to work with Marin County CFS to improve our outcomes for children and families:

**County and Community Partners:**

- Marjorie Delgadillo- **Former Foster Youth**
- Rosie Hernandez- **Marin County Child Welfare Worker**
- Cyndy Doherty- **Marin Advocates for Children**
- Rocio Hernandez-**First Five Commission-Teen Health**
- Michelle Boyer- **Marin County Probation**
- Nicki Kuhn- **Marin County Probation**
- Dani Tarry- **School Linked Services**
- Paula Robertson- **Marin County Children and Family Services**
- Ann Pring- **Marin County Community Mental Health**
- Sandy Ponek- **Canal Alliance**
- Deanna Eurit- **Novato Human Needs Center**
- Sparkie Spaeth- **Community Health and Prevention-Marin County Health**
- Pamela Doerr- **Foster Care Nursing**
- Susan Quigley- **Huckleberry Youth Center**
- Heather Ravani- **Marin County Adult and Children Social Services**
- Alissa Ralston- **Bay Area Community Resources**
- Catherine Condon- **Marin County Alcohol and Drug Program**
- Berta Campos-Anicetti- **Novato Youth Center**
- Claudia Asprer-**Marin County Foster Parent**
- Deborah Hemphill-**Marin County Office of Education**
- Deborah Swett- **Sunny Hills Children Services**
- Racy Ming- **CalWORKs- Marin County Employment Services**
- Justin Donnelly- **Youth Representative**
- Kelly Reiter- **Family Law Center**
- Chris Kughn- **CMH- Youth Services**
- Matt Graham-Squire- **Youth Leadership Institute**
- Melissa Fike-**Novato Youth Center**
- Patty Cala- **Marin County Independent Living Program**
- Zara Babitzke- **Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity**
- Marcus Small- **Center for Restorative Practice**
- Betty Wood- **Family Service Center**
- Julie Lenhardt- **Marin County Children and Family Services**
- Linda Saunders- **CalWORKS- Linkages**

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## **2. Share Findings that Support Qualitative Change:**

The Child Welfare Redesign process provides a framework for measuring and monitoring of specific Child Welfare Outcomes. Counties are provided with quarterly data to assist them in assessing their progress. The ongoing County Self-Assessment process, System Improvement Plan and Peer Quality Case Review has allowed Marin County Children and Family Services to review many aspects of program operations and identify areas of strength, along with areas requiring improvement.

The Redesign efforts in Marin are focused in five basic content areas:

- **Internal Organizational Development**
- **Service delivery practices**
- **Foster care**
- **Policy and procedure analysis and advocacy**
- **Resource development**

In addition, the following values have been utilized to guide this process:

- **Maximum stakeholder participation in planning and implementation;**
- **Maximum flexibility in allowable practices and policy interpretations;**
- **Full partnership relations between staff, families, foster parents and service providers;**
- **Integrated approaches to system planning, design and implementation;**
- **Innovation and pro-activity**
- **Comprehensive service delivery**

- **Methodology**

In June 2006, Marin conducted a tri-county PQCR with Sonoma and Napa Counties. The purpose of the PQCR is to learn, through intensive examination of local child welfare and probation experiences, how to improve current services and practices. The PQCR is not an audit, but rather it is an opportunity to learn how to strengthen services and practices through an examination of a specific focus area. The PQCR learns from the experiences of social workers and probation officers through a discussion of cases that illustrate resources and barriers that affect best practice with children and families.

Individual case review tools were developed for Children and Family Services and Probation. These tools included sections on:

- Case Background
- Safety and Risk Assessment
- Assessment and Case Planning
- Assessment of Family Strengths and Needs
- Delivery of Services
- Placement
- Family Visitation and Caretaker contact
- Decision to Reunify
- Observations/Reflections

Once the PQCR interviews were completed, information was compiled and analyzed. This information resulted in recommendations for improvement in selected focus areas. Strengths and Areas of practice improvement were identified, and this information has been combined with current data outcome measures, and community input, to identify the current SIP strategies.

In April 2009 Marin CFS and Juvenile Probation will conduct their second PQCR process in order to identify and integrate new recommendations and strategies into their next 3yr SIP cycle.

## **I. Summary Assessment**

### **A. Discussion of System Strengths and Areas Needing Improvement:**

#### **County Profile**

Marin County is a place of amazing environmental beauty and incredible financial prosperity. A 520 square mile area, boasting miles of coastline on the Pacific and San Francisco Bay, Marin's population of approximately 250,000 enjoy mild weather and countless opportunities for outdoor recreation. The quality of life is further enhanced by a low crime rate, and highly educated, involved citizenry who promote health and environmental issues and protect their landscape from uncontrolled growth.

Marin enjoys one of the highest standards of living in the nation, and the unemployment rate continues to be the lowest in the Bay Area. The most significant trends include a rapidly growing Hispanic population, one of the highest housing costs in the nation, and the fact that poverty disproportionately affects minority households in Marin.

Marin is a small county and collaboration among the service providers allows many opportunities for both government agencies and community partners to develop and implement innovative programs. The Marin Health and Wellness Campus will be at full capacity in October 2008- with CFS moving into their new location at that time. This will provide an opportunity to expand the integrated and collaborative work currently being done, and provide additional opportunities for coordination of service provision with CMH, Health Services and community non-profits.

#### **Self-Assessment Process**

The development of the County Self-Assessment allowed Children and Family Services to review all aspects of program operations and identified many areas of strength, along with areas requiring improvement. Ongoing work with community stakeholders included regular review of quarterly outcome data, program planning and development, community outreach regarding program changes and service provision, and defined focus groups with providers. This information and process has defined the goals and objectives listed in the System Improvement Plan. These areas were further refined following the Peer Quality Case Review in 2006.

Additional information reviewed included comprehensive community service provision reports from First 5 Marin, and the Healthier Community Task Force of Marin, as well as the School Accountability Report Card produced by the Marin County Office of Education and Building a Better Future, a Report Card for the North Bay completed by the Healthy Marin Partnership.

## **Child Welfare Outcomes and Data Indicators:**

### **Safety Outcomes:**

Throughout the 3 year period of this System Improvement Plan, Marin data has continued to reflect a percentage which is comparable and slightly below the statewide performance average in the area of **Recurrence of Maltreatment**. This data appears to support the community goal of involving CFS earlier and offering preventive services to families in order to alleviate future incidences of abuse and neglect. Marin has continued to address this outcome through implementation of its Differential Response Program, continued integration with CalWORKS through the LINKAGES program and total implementation of the Structured Decision Making (SDM) safety and risk assessment model.

Marin continues to work closely with its community partners, in order to identify and develop sustainable community resources, and focus on areas of community prevention. These collaborative efforts will be supported and increased throughout Health and Human Services and the community through the upcoming move to the integrated Health and Wellness Campus.

Data indicates Marin falls within the state approved standards for **monthly social worker visits** with a child. Marin continues to work with staff to improve contact and data entry issues.

### **Permanency and Stability Outcomes:**

The outcomes in this area are particularly difficult to address, as the factors that guide these outcomes for children are challenging and complex. Marin is confident that continued efforts such as the implementation of SDM, Differential Response, LINKAGES and WrapAround Services will expand the array of services currently available to families in need.

Ongoing work with Juvenile Court personnel will continue to further improve collaborations, benefit families and improve outcomes in this area. Marin has been active in collaborative activities through the Administrative Office of the Courts which are aimed at dependency court. Marin County's family court mediation program is currently being expanded to include a component for Dependency Mediation to occur.

Marin would like to improve its outcomes in the area of **Re-entry or return to Foster Care**. By placing an emphasis on strength based, research based practice, and developing sustainable community resources that can provide ongoing services to families in the county, Marin continues to focus resources to improve our outcomes in this area, and recent programmatic additions include

WrapAround and increased collaboration with CalWORKS through the LINKAGES model. Marin data for **placement stability** remains consistent with state and national goals. Children and Family Staff continue to develop strategies designed to improve collaborative relationships and enhance the ability of staff to work closer with foster parents and caregivers in order to recruit and sustain viable temporary and permanent homes for children. Marin will continue to further explore this outcome in our SIP, as we believe it will assist us in further enhancing our foster care recruitment and retention.

### **Family Relationships and Community Connectedness:**

Despite the difficulty in obtaining and maintaining foster homes capable of handling large sibling groups, Marin outcomes remain high in this area. Marin does see a need to work more closely with the foster care community, and to increase our recruitment and retention efforts. With assistance from the Bay Area Academy, Marin CFS has conducted focus groups with foster parents, caregivers and staff over the past year, and has developed a working collaborative of staff and caregivers which will meet on a regular basis to address the most widely identified issues.

Marin has been committed to maintaining children in the least restrictive placements, and performs well in this indicator. This success reflects the efforts of the Youth Pilot Program, WrapAround program, and Foster Care Collaborative. Additionally Marin has made efforts to increase the number of relative/non relative extended family member placements, and will be initiating a KSSP grant through a local community based organization to increase resources and assistance to these providers.

### **Well Being Outcomes:**

Marin outcomes remain positive in the areas aimed at **Youth Successfully Transitioning into Self-Sufficient Adulthood**. Marin credits its performance in this area to its energetic and inclusive Independent Living Program, and its new Transitional Housing Program-Plus. Marin County remains committed, with the ongoing involvement of community partners, to continue to improve these outcomes and is expanding our THP-Plus program as well as implementing the Lifelong connections program to ensure permanency and family connectedness. Marin is continuing to explore new programs, collaborations and funding opportunities and will be including this outcome measure in our current System Improvement Plan.

**Conclusion:**

Marin County Children and Family Services view this System Improvement Plan as an ongoing step in improving the County's goal to provide culturally sensitive and individually focused services to children and families. It is the goal of this Division to not only ensure the safety, protection and health of Marin's children, but to strengthen and empower families. The strong collaborative foundation which already exists in Marin can continue to be built upon and expanded, and as a community we can move towards improving the outcomes for all of our children.

Marin CFS has integrated a number of new programs into the county over the past year, including Wrap-Around, THP-plus, Lifelong Connections and KSSP. Efforts to expand the work in Differential Response and LINKAGES continue to address the issues of prevention and community collaboration, and ongoing development on programs aimed at increasing collaboration with our foster care providers have begun. The Self-Assessment, and the System Improvement Plan, along with the new integrated service provision which will be available at the Marin Health and Wellness Campus in the fall of 2008 will continue to offer a road map for Marin to achieve the goals outlined in this SIP. With the support of our community based providers, educators, and community foundations we will continue our partnership together to develop a strong future for Marin children and families.