

CALIFORNIA – CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW

Five-Year System Improvement Plan **June 10, 2025 – June 10, 2030**



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C-CFSR SIGNATURE SHEET

☐ County Self-Assessment (CSA) ☒ System Improvement Plan (SIP) ☐ Annual Progress Report

System Improvement Plan (SIP)

County San Luis Obispo

SIP Period 2025 - 2030

Baseline Data Period Q3 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The San Luis Obispo County System Improvement Plan (SIP) for the 2025–2030 cycle outlines the County’s strategic framework for improving outcomes for children and families involved in Child Welfare Services (CWS) and Probation. Developed as part of the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR), the SIP builds upon findings from the 2025 County Self-Assessment (CSA) and reflects extensive input from stakeholders, including families with lived experience, youth, resource families, community-based organizations, and cross-sector partners.

Overview of the C-CFSR Process

The SIP is the second phase of the five-year C-CFSR cycle, following completion of the CSA and peer review. It formalizes the County’s commitment to improving outcomes related to child safety, permanency, and well-being through actionable strategies, strengthened system capacity, and measurable goals. Oversight is provided by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), with support from the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) and technical assistance from the Central California Training Academy (CCTA).

San Luis Obispo County’s CSA, finalized on June 11, 2024, was grounded in quantitative data from Quarter 3 of 2023 and informed by engagement with more than 60 stakeholders. The process included virtual and in-person community forums, stakeholder surveys, focus groups, and a regional peer review with five participating counties. The CSA assessed local performance on federally monitored outcomes, identified disparities in access and service delivery, and highlighted strengths and opportunities across systemic factors.

Key Findings from the County Self-Assessment

The following findings from the CSA were foundational in determining the SIP’s priority outcome and areas for system improvement:

Child Welfare Services

- In Q3 2023, the County’s recurrence of maltreatment rate (S2) was 12.4%, exceeding the federal standard of $\leq 9.7\%$.
- 84.9% of substantiated allegations were due to general neglect, underscoring chronic family stressors and the need for early, supportive intervention.
- Children aged 0–1 and 6–10 were the most impacted by recurrence, with infants under age one showing a 68.1% entry to care rate after substantiation.
- White (42.1%) and Latino (36.9%) children made up the largest percentage of substantiated referrals, with Spanish-speaking households facing ongoing barriers due to staffing limitations—only 11 of 67 CWS social workers were bilingual as of October 2024.
- Geographic inequities were evident, with rural and unincorporated areas (e.g., North County and Nipomo) reporting limited access to behavioral health, parenting programs, and in-

person support.

- Systemic contributors to recurrence included inconsistent Structured Decision Making (SDM) tool use, variable case planning quality, and limited post-reunification services.

Probation

- In Q3 2023, the County's rate of youth who had been in care 12-23 months attaining permanency within 12 months (P2) was 100.00%, far exceeding the federal standard of >43.8%. However, the County's rate for youth attaining permanency within 12 months who were entering foster care (P1) and those youth who had been in care 24 months or more (P3) were both far below the federal standards.
 - The County's rate in P1 was 10.00%, which fell below the federal standard of >35.2%.
 - The County's rate in P3 was 0.00%, which fell below the federal standard of >37.3%.
- The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) performs masking to protect the privacy of individuals served by CDSS. Values of ten (10) or less and calculations based on values of ten (10) or less are masked.
- In all performance measures captured in Q3 2023, the County had ten (10) or fewer youth included in the measure.
- In most performance measures captured in Q3 2023, the County had zero (0) or one (1) youth included in the measure.
- The small sample size makes it difficult to identify any trends, with the exception that Probation involved youth in San Luis Obispo County are typically older than eleven (11) years of age, are of White or Latino heritage, and male at birth.
- Although the number of youth in care has continued to decrease over the past ten years, youth who have remained in care have had more complex and challenging needs including multigenerational trauma, involvement with Child Welfare Services and the criminal justice system, untreated mental health and substance use issues, reduced family income, family instability, unemployment, lack of transportation, and housing instability.
- Findings from the CSA Community Stakeholders Forums, Focus Groups, and Peer Review Events indicated an area of opportunity to improve efforts in assisting youth who had been in care for 12 to 23 months attain permanency within 12 months. Although the County was underperforming in other outcome measures, as indicated above, measure P2 was selected for this C-CFSR Cycle, as improvements made with performance in P2 would likely positively impact performance in P1: Permanency in 12 months (entering foster care) and P3: Permanency in 12 months (in care 24+ months).

These data, combined with community and staff feedback, informed the County's decision to prioritize Outcome S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment (Child Welfare Services) & Outcome P2 – Permanency in 12 months (in care 12-23 months) (Probation) for its 2025–2030 SIP.

SIP Purpose and Goals

The SIP outlines a set of targeted strategies designed to reduce the recurrence of maltreatment (S2) and increase the rate of youth who've been in care 12-23 months with attaining permanency in 12

months (P2) and strengthen the County's ability to meet the needs of children and families. In alignment with the CSA and stakeholder priorities, the County established the following goals:

Child Welfare Services

1. **Enhance workforce knowledge and confidence in assessing risk and safety** through targeted training on Structured Decision Making (SDM), family engagement, and motivational interviewing
2. **Institutionalize a continuous learning culture** by integrating ongoing coaching, supervision, and fidelity monitoring to reinforce consistent practice and sustain long-term improvements in safety and engagement outcomes.
3. **Expand access to prevention and family support services and resources** that address concrete needs and strengthen protective factors for families at risk of recurrence of maltreatment.
4. **Increase the availability and utilization of culturally responsive and bilingual services** – particularly in rural and Spanish-speaking communities – to promote equitable outcomes and reduce disparities in service delivery.

Probation

Increase the rate in which youth, who've been in care 12-23 months, attain permanency within 12 months (P2) by:

1. **Expand and diversify the array of supportive services** by strengthening Family Finding and Engagement (FFE) efforts, enhancing outreach and connection to American Indian Tribes for eligible youth (ICWA), connecting youth and their families with services, such as Wraparound, and connecting youth with services that can be provided in a home-based setting, such as sex-offender treatment provided via videoconferencing.
2. **Enhance outreach and engagement with current and potential foster parents to increase the availability of specialized placements for Justice Involved Foster** by attending local Foster Parent Network meetings to inform current and prospective foster parents with the need for additional supports for justice involved foster youth and how Probation is involved in the foster care system with the goal of Increasing the availability of therapeutic/specialized resource homes for youth with complex needs will stabilize them in their placement, which could help with developing/improving relationships and permanency planning.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Stakeholder voice played a central role in both the CSA and SIP development. On June 17, 2024, San Luis Obispo County hosted in-person and virtual community forums attended by families, youth, tribal representatives, educators, public health staff, and nonprofit providers. Additional focus groups and listening sessions were conducted in Fall 2024 with birth parents, resource families, youth with foster care experience, and frontline staff.

Key themes emerging from stakeholder engagement included:

- The need for culturally and linguistically responsive services, particularly for Latino and Spanish-speaking families.

- Calls for expanded behavioral health care access, housing support, and post-reunification services.
- The importance of staff continuity, trauma-informed engagement, and respectful communication with families.
- Support for community-based services delivered through trusted networks like Family Resource Centers and peer-led parenting groups.

Stakeholders input directly informed each SIP strategy and was used to prioritize family-centered, prevention-focused investments that address both systemic and service-level gaps.

Summary

San Luis Obispo County's 2025–2030 SIP represents a coordinated and collaborative effort to reduce recurrence of maltreatment, increase the rate which youth in care 12-23 months attain permanency, strengthen the child welfare and probation workforces, and improve equitable access to services for families across the County. Grounded in CSA data and shaped by meaningful community input, the SIP provides a clear path forward for systems change and service improvement. Through sustained investment in early intervention, cross-agency collaboration, and culturally responsive practice, the County aims to enhance child safety and rates of youth attaining permanency and promote long-term family well-being.

SIP NARRATIVE

C-CFSR Team and Core Representatives

San Luis Obispo County's C-CFSR team is composed of representatives from Child Welfare Services (CWS), Probation, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Central California Training Academy (CCTA), and a range of community stakeholders. The team was responsible for developing the County Self-Assessment (CSA), coordinating the Peer Review, and creating the 2025–2030 SIP.

The C-CFSR Core Planning Team includes Deputy Directors, Division Managers, Program Managers, and Social Work Specialists from CWS and Probation, as well as CDSS analysts and technical advisors from CCTA.

C-CFSR Core Planning Team

Child Welfare Services

- **Deputy Director:** Nancy Kuster
- **Division Manager:** Ben King
- **OCAP Program Manager / CAPIT-CBCAP-PSSF Liaison:** Sandra Jimenez
- **Program Managers:** Julie Kadis, Roxi Selck, Stephany Slade
- **Program Review Specialist:** Mikayla Anderson

Probation

- **Chief Probation Officer:** Thomas Milder
- **Chief Deputy Probation Officer:** Jeremiah Malzhan
- **Supervising Deputy Probation Officer:** Adam Chambers

California Department of Social Services (CDSS) – PPIB

- **Consultant (Performance and Program Improvement Bureau – PPIB):** Trang Do
- **Consultant (Office of Child Abuse Prevention – OCAP):** Elizabeth Johnson

Central California Training Academy (CCTA)

- **Workforce Development Specialist:** Sydney Matlock-Pettus, MSW
- **Workforce Development Training & Technical Lead:** Amanda Weeks
- **Implementation Project Manager:** Shanel K. Moore
- **Assistant Director:** Donna M. Lutz, MSW

Stakeholder Engagement Process

San Luis Obispo County conducted a robust stakeholder engagement process that included over 60 diverse voices from June through December 2024. Community forums were held both virtually and in-person on June 17, 2024, and gathered broad public feedback. Targeted focus groups with youth, parents, resource families, social workers, and supervisors took place in Fall 2024. Tribal representatives and service partners from education, public health, and housing sectors were also involved. These engagements focused on the accessibility and quality of services, community needs, and perceived gaps in the current system. Feedback emphasized the need for: culturally responsive and bilingual services, expanded mental health resources for children and caregivers, housing stability support, and improved service delivery in rural and unincorporated areas.

Role of PPIB in the C-CFSR Process

The Performance and Program Improvement Bureau (PPIB) provided oversight and expert guidance to support San Luis Obispo County in implementing the core phases of the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) process. PPIB's support was instrumental in ensuring the integrity, alignment, and strategic orientation of both the CSA and SIP.

PPIB's responsibilities included:

- Providing technical assistance and consultation throughout the CSA and SIP processes.
- Supporting the integration of qualitative and quantitative data into program assessment.
- Ensuring alignment with CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF requirements and relevant state initiatives such as the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR), Extended Foster Care, and Katie A. v. Bonta compliance.
- Facilitating use of tools and best practices, such as the CWS/CMS Outcome Data Reports and the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP).
- In addition, CDSS staff participated in planning meetings and reviewed all CSA content to confirm accuracy, completeness, and strategic alignment with statewide child welfare goals.

Outcome Measures Comparison Chart

To better align with the timing of our five-year SIP cycle (June 2025–June 2030), San Luis Obispo County is now using Quarter 1 (Q1) data for all outcome measure tracking and reporting. While our County Self-Assessment (CSA) was based on Q3 2023 data, this SIP utilizes Q1 2024 data to establish a more consistent and timely reference point for evaluating progress. The Q1 2024 data is only two quarters beyond the baseline, allowing for an early view of trends while ensuring alignment with the SIP implementation timeline. Moving forward, all Annual SIP Progress Reports will be based on Q1 data to maintain consistency and ensure that outcome measure comparisons reflect year-over-year performance within the same quarter.

Overview of CWS and Juvenile Probation Outcome Data for County of San Luis Obispo

Measure	National Compliance Standard	CWS Performance	CWS Performance	CWS Trending	Probation Performance	Probation Performance	Probation Trending
		Q3 2023	Q1 2024		Q3 2023	Q1 2024	
S1: Maltreatment in Foster Care	< 9.07%	1.38%	7.88%	↑	0.00%	0.00%	=
S2: Recurrence of Maltreatment	< 9.7%	12.40%	12.90%	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
P1: Permanency in 12 months (entering foster care)	> 35.2%	40.70%	37.00%	↓	10.00%	14.30%	↑
P2: Permanency in 12 months (in care 12-23 months)	> 43.8%	51.10%	53.10%	↑	100.00%	N/A	N/A
P3: Permanency in 12 months (in care 24 months or more)	> 37.3%	23.30%	20.50%	↓	0.00%	N/A	N/A
P4: Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	< 5.6%	8.50%	5.80%	↓	N/A	0.00%	N/A
P5: Placement Stability	< 4.48%	3.82%	3.48%	↓	0.00%	0.00%	N/A
2B: Timely Response (Immediate)	> 90%	96.00%	98.60%	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
2B: Timely Response (10-day)	> 90%	98.20%	99.70%	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
2D: Timely Response Completed (Immediate)	N/A	89.90%	95.00%	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
2D: Timely Response Completed (10-day)	N/A	79.30%	50.00%	↓	N/A	N/A	N/A
2F: Monthly Visits (Out-of-Home)	> 95%	97.00%	98.60%	↑	97.70%	97.70%	=
2F: Monthly Visits in Residence (Out-of-Home)	> 50%	84.70%	85.00%	↑	95.30%	95.20%	↓
2S: Monthly Visits (In Home)	N/A	93.20%	93.60%	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
2S: Monthly Visits in Residence (In Home)	N/A	78.60%	77.00%	↓	N/A	N/A	N/A
4A: Siblings (All)	N/A	63.60%	47.70%	↓	N/A	N/A	N/A

4A: Siblings (Some or All)	N/A	78.20%	71.60%	↓	N/A	N/A	N/A
4B: Least Restrictive Placement (Entries First Placement)	Relative	39.20%	30.80%	↓	0.00%	0.00%	=
	Resource Home	49.70%	60.00%	↑	0.00%	0.00%	=
	FFA	4.90%	7.70%	↑	50.00%	66.70%	↑
	Group/Shelter	1.40%	0.80%	↓	50.00%	33.30%	↓
	Other	4.90%	0.80%	↓	0.00%	0.00%	=
4B: Least Restrictive Placement (Entries Predominant)	Relative	32.80%	38.30%	↑	30.00%	42.90%	↑
	Resource Home	48.40%	48.40%	↓	0.00%	0.00%	=
	FFA	5.50%	3.10%	↓	40.00%	42.90%	↑
	Group/Shelter	1.60%	2.30%	↑	10.00%	14.30%	↑
	Other	11.70%	7.80%	↓	20.00%	0.00%	↓
4C: Congregate Care Placements (One year or more)	N/A	30.00%	41.70%	↑	0.00%	0.00%	=
4E(1): ICWA Eligible Placement Status	Relative	46.70%	44.40%	↓	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Non-Relative Non-Indian	46.70%	44.40%	↓	N/A	N/A	N/A
	SILP	6.70%	11.10%	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E(2): Multi-Ethnic Placement Status	Relative	66.70%	50.00%	↓	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Non-Relative Non-Indian	25.00%	12.50%	↓	N/A	N/A	N/A
	SILP	8.30%	12.50%	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
5B(1): Rate of Timely Health Exams	N/A	73.90%	78.00%	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
5B(2): Rate of Timely Dental Exams	N/A	61.50%	63.20%	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
5F: Authorized for Psychotropic Medication	N/A	10.60%	12.70%	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
6B: Individualized Education Plan	N/A	8.70%	7.40%	↓	N/A	N/A	N/A
8A: Completed High School Equivalency	N/A	66.70%	100.00%	↑	0.00%	100.00%	↑
8A: Obtained Employment	N/A	50.00%	100.00%	↑	100.00%	100.00%	=
8A: Have Housing Arrangements	N/A	100.00%	100.00%	↓	100.00%	100.00%	=
8A: Permanency Connection with an Adult	N/A	100.00%	100.00%	↓	100.00%	100.00%	=

Summarization of Outcome Measure Performance

Child Welfare Services

San Luis Obispo County's Child Welfare Services (CWS) program has demonstrated both strengths and areas of concern across key outcome measures when comparing Q1 2024 data to the Q3 2023 baseline, with several indicators trending positively and others reinforcing the importance of the County's SIP priorities.

Key Areas of Improvement Since Q3 2023

- **P2: Permanency in 12 Months (12-23 Months in Care)** increased from 51.1% to 53.1%, exceeding the national standard of 43.8%. This reflects effective case planning and sustained permanency efforts for children in mid-term foster care.
- **P5: Placement Stability** improved from 3.82% to 3.48%, continuing to perform under the national benchmark of 4.48%. This suggests progress in placement matching and support for caregivers to minimize disruption.
- **2B & 2D: Timely Response to Referrals (Immediate and 10-Day)** all improved, with Q1 2024 results well above the 90% compliance threshold, demonstrating efficient front-end response and prioritization of child safety.
- **2F & 2S: Monthly Caseworker Visits (Out-of-Home and In-Home)** remained high, with out-of-home visits at 98.6% and in-home visits improving slightly. High visit compliance reflects strong worker-family engagement and case monitoring.
- **Health and Dental Exams (5B1 & 5B2)** both showed gains, moving from 73.9% to 78.0% and 61.5% to 63.2%, respectively. These increases demonstrate improved coordination with care providers and attention to child well-being.
- **Older Youth Outcomes (8A)** significantly improved. High school equivalency completion and employment outcomes for youth rose to 100%, indicating effective extended foster care services and transition planning.

Outcome Measures Requiring Continued Attention

- **S1: Maltreatment in Foster Care** rose from 1.38% to 7.88%. While the current performance is still below the federal standard of 9.07%, the upward trend is concerning and warrants ongoing attention. Continued efforts to support resource families, improve oversight, and strengthen trauma-informed caregiving practices will be critical to reversing this trajectory.
- **S2: Recurrence of Maltreatment** increased slightly from 12.4% to 12.9%, remaining well above the national standard of 9.7%. This measure is the County's SIP priority and underscores the need for improved risk identification, engagement, and post-reunification support.
- **P1: Permanency in 12 Months (Children Entering Foster Care)** declined from 40.7% to 37.0%, though still above the national benchmark of 35.2%. The downward trend indicates potential delays in achieving early permanency for new entries.
- **P3: Permanency in 12 Months (24+ Months in Care)** fell from 23.3% to 20.5%, below the federal goal of 37.3%. This reflects the continued challenge of securing permanency for long-term youth and highlights the importance of targeted permanency planning and legal

advocacy.

- **P4: Reentry to Foster Care** declined from 8.5% to 5.8%, nearing the federal standard of 5.6%. Although trending in the right direction, this measure still requires attention—particularly through enhanced aftercare services.
- **Sibling Placement (4A)** and **Relative Placement (4B)** decreased in some areas, indicating challenges in maintaining sibling bonds and supporting kin caregivers, especially in rural regions.

Probation

Identifying any trends when comparing Q1 2024 data to the Q3 2023 baseline is difficult given that in all performance measures captured in Q1 2024 and Q3 2023, probation had ten (10) or fewer youth included in each measure.

- The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) performs masking to protect the privacy of individuals served by CDSS. Values of ten (10) or less and calculations based on values of ten (10) or less are masked.

Outcome Measure Performances that Met and/or Exceeded the Federal Standard

- **S1: Maltreatment in Foster Care** remained at 0.00%, which is typical for probation involved foster youth.
- **P2: Permanency in 12 Months (in care 12–23 months)** saw a change from 100.00% to N/A. Indicating that 100% of youth who had been in care between 12 and 23 months in the Q3 2023 data attained permanency within 12 months and that there were no eligible youth in the Q1 2024 data.
- **P3: Permanency in 12 Months (in care 24+ months)** saw a change from 0.00% to N/A. Meaning of all eligible youth in the Q3 2023 data, none attained permanency within 12 months and there were no eligible youth in the Q1 2024 data.
- **P4: Reentry to Foster Care** saw a change from N/A to 0.00%. Meaning that there were no eligible youths in the Q3 2023 data and of all eligible youth in the Q1 2024 data, none reentered foster care within 12 months.
- **P5: Placement Stability** remained at 0.00%.

Outcome Measures Requiring Continued Attention

- **P1: Permanency in 12 Months (entering care)** increased from 10.00% to 14.30%, however, Probation failed to meet the federal standard of >35.2%. It's difficult to identify a trend other than continuing to fall below the federal standard. It's worth noting that probation involved foster youth are typically older than non-probation involved youth, which can present some challenges with attaining permanency. Specifically, some probation involved youth have victimized family members in their home and returning there could be detrimental to the youth or family members' well-being. Probation involved youth's older age often results in them not being considered by potential adoptive parent(s) looking to adopt a youth. Finally, some probation involved youth are nearing the age of majority and focused on transitioning to independence and attaining their own living arrangement. Agreeing to reside in a home-based foster setting often feels too restrictive and thus in conflict with their personal goals.

Prioritization of Outcome Data Measures, Systemic Factors, and Strategy Rationale

Child Welfare Services

Following completion of the 2024 County Self-Assessment (CSA), San Luis Obispo County prioritized Outcome Measure S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment for the 2025–2030 System Improvement Plan (SIP). The selection process was informed by stakeholder engagement, peer review analysis, and data trends observed in the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) for Quarter 3 of 2023.

While multiple outcome measures were identified as areas for improvement, the County's performance on S2 raised significant concerns regarding the consistency and effectiveness of safety interventions. Despite these concerns, S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment was prioritized because it reflects the County's core mission of ensuring long-term child safety. This measure directly evaluates whether children who were victims of substantiated abuse or neglect experience a subsequent substantiation within 12 months, which is a critical indicator of the effectiveness of child welfare interventions. Through feedback from social workers, community partners, and peer reviewers, the County identified key systemic factors contributing to repeat maltreatment, including Staff, Caregiver & Service Provider Training, Service Array, Agency Collaboration and Quality Assurance. By focusing on S2, the County aims to reduce system re-entry, improve case management practices, and expand evidence-based services that promote child safety and family resilience.

CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF funds may be leveraged to support these strategies, particularly in enhancing services post-investigation, strengthening family engagement, and addressing underlying risk conditions contributing to recurrence.

Demographics Most Impacted by Recurrence of Maltreatment (S2)

San Luis Obispo County's analysis of Outcome Measure S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment reveals distinct demographic patterns among the children most impacted. These findings, derived from the County Self-Assessment and Q3 2023 CCWIP data, highlight both numerical trends and disproportionality across age, ethnicity, and geographic and linguistic access. Addressing these demographic disparities through targeted interventions, equitable resource distribution, and culturally competent practice will be essential to improving child safety and reducing recurrence of maltreatment across the county.

Age:

Children ages 0–1, 6–10, and 11–15 are the most significantly impacted by recurrence of maltreatment. Infants under the age of one had the highest vulnerability, with 68.1% of substantiated cases resulting in entry to care, indicating a severe risk when maltreatment recurs in this group. Children ages 6–10 followed with a 45.9% entry rate following substantiation, and children ages 11–15 also reflected elevated rates of both allegations and substantiations. These age groups will be a priority for early identification and intensive intervention strategies.

Ethnicity:

Children who identify as White or Latino represent the majority of the child welfare population involved in recurrence. In 2023:

- White children accounted for 42.1% of substantiations and 49.7% of entries to care.
- Latino children comprised 36.9% of substantiations and 34.9% of entries. Together, these groups represent the highest volume of recurrence involvement and will be central to targeted prevention efforts.

These data suggest an overrepresentation of certain racial and ethnic groups in substantiated maltreatment and highlight the need for culturally responsive engagement and equity-focused strategies.

Geography and Language Access:

Families residing in rural or unincorporated regions and Spanish-speaking households face systemic access barriers that may contribute to recurrence. The CSA noted a shortage of bilingual staff and limited availability of culturally and linguistically appropriate services, particularly in remote areas of the county. These access issues can delay or prevent effective service delivery following substantiation and increase the risk of repeated involvement.

Probation

Following completion of the 2024 County Self-Assessment (CSA), San Luis Obispo County Probation selected Outcome Measure P2 – Permanency in 12 Months (In Care 12-23 Months) for the 2025–2030 System Improvement Plan (SIP). Outcome Measure P2 was selected based on information gained from findings from the CSA Community Stakeholder Forums, Focus Groups, and Peer Review Events, as well as historical information that showed the typical time in care for Probation involved foster youth has been longer than 12 months. This can be attributed in part to the fact that probation involved foster youth tends to have complex and challenging needs, including multigenerational trauma, involvement with CWS and the criminal justice system, untreated mental health and substance use issues, reduced family income, family instability, unemployment, lack of transportation, and housing instability. Additionally, probation involved youth are typically older than non-probation involved youth, which can present some challenges with attaining permanency. Specifically, some probation involved youth have victimized family members in their home and returning there could be detrimental to the youth or family members' well-being. Probation involved youth's older age often results in them not being considered by potential adoptive parent(s) looking to adopt a youth. Finally, some probation involved youth are nearing the age of majority and focused on transitioning to independence and attaining their own living arrangement. Agreeing to reside in a home-based foster setting often feels too restrictive and thus in conflict with their personal goals. Probation's goal is to improve youth's ability to attain permanency regardless of their time in care; however, P2 was selected, as improvements made with performance in P2 would be likely to positively impact performance in P1: Permanency in 12 months (entering foster care) and P3: Permanency in 12 months (in care 24+ months).

Demographics Related to Permanency in 12 Months (in care 12-23 months)

As noted elsewhere in this report, The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) performs masking to protect the privacy of individuals served by CDSS. Values of ten (10) or less and calculations based on values of ten (10) or less are masked. In all performance measures captured in Q1 2024, Probation had ten (10) or fewer youth included in the measure. As such, one youth's experience in attaining permanency can have a significant impact on Probation performance.

This is reflected in Probation's performance in this measure which has fluctuated over the past five

years; at times having 100% of youth who'd been in care between 12- and 23-months attaining permanency within 12 months followed by having no eligible youth to be counted in this measure. These fluctuations and small sample sizes make it difficult to identify any trends, with the exception that probation involved youth in San Luis Obispo County are typically older than 11 years of age, are of White or Latino heritage, and male at birth. These trends are reflected in the general make-up of youth referred to Probation.

Age:

Probation involved foster youth are typically between the ages of 11-17; however, Probation is rarely involved with youth under the age of 13, and those that do enter the Juvenile Justice Court at a young age, between 11-15, are rarely removed by Probation.

Race/Ethnicity:

Probation involved foster youth are typically of either White or Latino descent, which is consistent with the general heritage make-up of San Luis Obispo County's demographics.

Gender:

Probation involved youth are typically identified as being male at birth.

Systemic Factors – Child Welfare Services

San Luis Obispo County identified four key systemic factors that contribute to performance on Outcome Measure S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment: Staff, Caregiver, and Provider Training, Service Array and Accessibility, Quality Assurance and Supervision, and Agency Collaboration. The County Self-Assessment (CSA) revealed gaps in culturally responsive engagement, inconsistent use of decision-support tools, supervision practices lacking rigor, and barriers in rural service access—each contributing to recurrence risk. These findings were echoed across stakeholder forums, peer reviews, and demographic analyses showing disproportionate recurrence among children ages 0–10, Spanish-speaking families, and those in unincorporated areas.

To address these systemic barriers, the County's SIP strategies focus on strengthening workforce capacity in trauma-informed engagement, improving risk monitoring through data systems, and diversifying service delivery methods to reach underserved communities. Each strategy incorporates stakeholder priorities and aligns with best practices to proactively address underlying family needs, increase protective factors, and reduce reentry into the child welfare system.

Staff, Caregiver, and Service Provider Training

CSA Findings

- CSA highlighted inconsistent use of Structured Decision-Making (SDM) tools and gaps in recognizing chronic neglect patterns.
- There was limited understanding of trauma-informed engagement strategies, particularly for high-risk families with multiple prior referrals.
- Chronic neglect made up 84.9% of substantiated allegations in the county, showing a need for deeper engagement strategies.

Connection to S2

- Inadequate staff training on chronic neglect and trauma-informed approaches leads to missed opportunities for early intervention, contributing to repeat maltreatment.
- Lack of consistent engagement with caregivers can delay or prevent behavior change and safety planning.

SIP Strategy 1 - Enhance workforce knowledge and confidence in assessing risk and safety through targeted training on Structured Decision Making (SDM), family engagement, and motivational interviewing

Action Items: Implement Motivational Interviewing; Improve SDM usage; Provide training on chronic neglect; and Enhance workforce retention through structured support and recognition initiatives

- These efforts aim to build worker confidence and consistency in assessing and intervening with families, reducing repeated maltreatment.

Supporting Data

- CSA and stakeholder feedback emphasized the need for increased training around engagement and risk identification.
- SDM tools not consistently guiding practice led to variable case decisions.
- Stakeholder feedback identified staff burnout and turnover as barriers to consistent case management and trauma-informed engagement.

Service Array

CSA Findings

- Stakeholders and staff noted limited access to behavioral health, parenting programs, and culturally responsive services in rural/unincorporated areas.
- Shortage of bilingual staff: Only 11 CWS Social Workers were bilingual as of October 2024.
- Transportation and geographic distance limit service access for families in areas like North County.

Connection to S2

- Inaccessible or underdeveloped services result in delayed intervention and increased stress on families, raising the risk for recurrence of maltreatment.
- Spanish-speaking and rural families face structural barriers, leading to disengagement from services post-substantiation.

Strategy 2 - Expand access to prevention and family support services and resources that address concrete needs and strengthen protective factors for families at risk of recurrence of maltreatment.

Action Items: Expand Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) and Positive Opportunities for Parenting Success (POPS) programs (positive parenting programs), increase bilingual and trauma-informed parenting classes, improve website resources (including bilingual).

- These efforts aim to increase the availability and equity of prevention-focused support, reducing recurrence.

Supporting Data

- High percentages of S2 cases involved Spanish-speaking and rural families.
- Stakeholders consistently cite lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate services as a barrier to sustained family engagement.

Quality Assurance Systems

CSA Findings

- Identified inconsistencies in how staff assess and document safety threats and risk factors
- Noted variation in the application and interpretation of SDM tools across units
- Found gaps in ongoing fidelity monitoring for SDM, safety planning, and family engagement practices
- Highlighted limited integration of QA findings into supervision, coaching, and training plans

Connection to S2

- Recurrence cases often reflected missed or inconsistently identified safety threats and risk indicators
- Strengthening QA processes supports more accurate and timely risk identification, reducing the likelihood of recurrence
- Improved fidelity to SDM and safety assessment tools help ensure early detection of escalating concerns
- Enhanced training and coaching help staff intervene more effectively, contributing to lower rates of recurrence

SIP Strategy 1 - Enhance workforce knowledge and confidence in assessing risk and safety through targeted training on Structured Decision Making (SDM), family engagement, and motivational interviewing

- Action Items: Develop a structured SDM and engagement training plan and standardize practice expectations across units.
- Provides consistent, evidence-based training and clear practice expectations, ensuring staff apply SDM and engagement skills reliably and with fidelity across all units.

Supporting Data

- CSA data showed variation in SDM completion and accuracy, with inconsistent alignment between assessed risk levels and case decisions
- QA case reviews identified recurring gaps in safety assessment documentation, safety planning quality, and follow-through on identified risk factors

Agency Collaboration

CSA Findings

- Families involved with multiple systems—particularly CWS, Behavioral Health, and Housing—often experienced fragmented care due to inconsistent interagency communication and planning.
- Peer Review, focus groups, and stakeholders cited a lack of coordinated service planning,

referrals, and follow-through.

- There were no structured mechanisms to ensure shared participation in CFTs, Intensive Safe Meetings, or housing-related staffing.
- These gaps led to service delays, duplicative efforts, and unmet needs for families with complex cases.
- Stakeholders emphasized the need for clearer expectations around joint staffing and co-case management responsibilities.

Connection to S2

- Poor interagency collaboration leads to service gaps, delays in support delivery, unmet needs, and increased risk of maltreatment recurrence, particularly during reunification or after substantiation.
- Families with complex needs often disengage or fall through the cracks when services are siloed or uncoordinated.
- A formalized, multi-agency approach ensures timely, integrated support and increases the likelihood of sustained family stability and safety.

SIP Strategy 2 - Expand access to prevention and family support services and resources that address concrete needs and strengthen protective factors for families at risk of recurrence of maltreatment.

- Action Items: Create bilingual and culturally responsive resource materials jointly with partner agencies, expand partnerships with rural and culturally specific providers.
- Expand bilingual and culturally responsive services that require close coordination with community partners, strengthen shared service pathways and ensuring families receive equitable, aligned support across agencies.

Supporting Data

- CSA service mapping showed limited availability of bilingual and culturally responsive services in rural areas
- Case review trends indicated delayed access to behavioral health and concrete support in S2 cases
- Partner agencies reported inconsistent communication about available services and referral processes
- Family feedback identified barriers to accessing services due to location, language, and system navigation challenges

Systemic Factors - Probation

San Luis Obispo County Probation identified three key systemic factors that contribute to performance on Outcome Measure P2 – Permanency in 12 Months: The challenging and complex process of accessing foster care services, the level of support provided to both foster parents and the biological families youth are removed from, and potential racial and ethnic disparities.

The County Self-Assessment (CSA), peer review, and community forums revealed other factors that often led to placement disruptions, which in turn created additional challenges for attaining permanency, included limited placement options and/or placement instability for probation involved foster youth, poor family engagement, and gaps in coordination and communication with service providers.

To address these systemic factors and other barriers, Probation's SIP strategies include strengthening Family Finding and Engagement (FFE) efforts, including enhancing outreach and connection to American Indian Tribes for eligible youth under The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Additionally, connecting youth and families with services, such as Wraparound, or other in-home services, such as sex-offender treatment for youth provided via videoconferencing, may prevent the need to removal.

Lack of Support for Biological Families

CSA Findings

- Limited engagement with paternal connections was identified as a missed opportunity to strengthen family support and highlights the systemic issues with the level of support provided to biological families after a youth is removed.

Connection to P2

- Lack of consistent engagement with parents or caregivers can delay or prevent youth from attaining permanency.

SIP Strategy 1 – Expand and Diversify the Array of Supportive Services

Action Items:

- Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) will initiate FFE efforts whenever a youth is:
 - a) referred to the Juvenile Justice Court; or
 - b) being considered for, or is ordered into foster care, the Coastal Valley Academy (CVA), or a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF).
- DPOs shall locate as many relatives and supportive adults as possible who could provide the youth with a permanent placement option and/or with creating a support network for the youth and their parent(s)/guardian(s). This includes engaging those identified relatives and supportive adults even when legal permanency is not an option, to help youth maintain meaningful relationships and with sharing a Resource Guide on how they can be involved with supporting the youth.
 - a) The Supervising Deputy Probation Officer (SDPO) assigned to Juvenile Placement to create a Resource Guide to be shared with identified relatives and supportive adults.
- DPOs will inquire about each youth's Indian Status by having each youth's parent/guardian (when available) complete a Parental Notification of Indian Status ([ICWA-020](#)) form.
 - a) Whenever a youth appears to have or appears to be eligible for membership in a Federally recognized or Local Indian Tribe, the DPO shall provide youth's parent(s)/guardian(s) with the Judicial Council of California's [‘The Indian Child Welfare Act & Qualified Expert Witness’](#) brochure and shall contact the ICWA Representative via

phone and/or email as listed on the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) website www.bia.gov

Supporting Data

- CSA and stakeholder feedback highlighted the benefits of helping youth maintain meaningful relationships with supportive individuals.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

CSA Findings

- Youth with sexual offenses or other complex needs face significant barriers in accessing appropriate placements.
- Youth leaving placements without permission disrupted permanency planning and hindered the development of consistent relationships.
- Youth reoffending and being detained often led to placement disruptions, creating additional challenges for permanency planning.

Connection to P2

- Increasing the availability of therapeutic/specialized resource homes for youth with complex needs will stabilize them in their placement, which could help with developing/improving relationships and permanency planning.
 - Currently, Probation has one Wrap Professional Parent (WPP) home in San Luis Obispo County with two beds.

SIP Strategy 2 – Enhance Outreach and Engagement with Current and Potential Foster Parents to Increase the Availability of Specialized Placements for Justice Involved Foster Youth

Action Items:

- CDPO will communicate at Interagency Placement Committee (IPC) of the need for additional beds for justice involved foster youth.
- SDPO or their designee will attend local Foster Parent Network meetings to inform current and prospective foster parents with the need for additional support for justice involved foster youth and how Probation is involved in the foster care system.
- CDPO to discuss expanding current Wraparound Professional Parent (WPP) foster home contract to increase the capacity of available beds for justice involved youth in therapeutic/specialized resource homes.

Supporting Data

- CSA and stakeholder feedback emphasized the limited housing options for justice involved youth as a barrier to permanency planning and reunification.

Strategies to Improve Outcome Measures - CWS

To address the high rate of recurrence of maltreatment (Outcome Measure S2), San Luis Obispo County will focus on targeted strategies aimed at strengthening early intervention, increasing family stability, and ensuring equitable access to services across all regions of the county. The County Self-Assessment identified that while many families receive support following a substantiated allegation, the recurrence rate indicates gaps in engagement, follow-up, and the availability of culturally and geographically accessible services. These issues are particularly pronounced for families living in rural regions and for Spanish-speaking households, who face systemic barriers in accessing prevention and treatment services.

Strategy 1: Enhance workforce knowledge and confidence in assessing risk and safety through targeted training on Structured Decision Making (SDM), family engagement, and motivational interviewing

Outcome Measure: Recurrence of Maltreatment (S2)

Systemic Factor: Staff, Caregiver, and Service Provider Training

To improve early identification of safety and risk factors, San Luis Obispo County will strengthen staff training, engagement, and quality assurance practices. This strategy includes three core action items: Motivational Interviewing, enhanced use of Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools, and targeted training on Chronic Neglect. For purposes of this strategy, chronic neglect is defined as a pattern of persistent neglect-related concerns over time, characterized by multiple referrals and/or the continued presence of underlying conditions such as parental mental health challenges, substance use, housing instability, domestic violence, chronic poverty, or limited protective capacity, rather than isolated incidents or short-term crises. These efforts are designed to build the capacity of social workers and supervisors to more effectively assess, engage, and intervene with families, ultimately improving outcomes related to S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment.

Currently, the county conducts targeted case reviews to assess SDM applications and engagement practices. While supervisors are expected to review and approve SDM Safety and Risk Assessments as part of routine casework, this practice has not been implemented consistently across units. As part of this strategy, the county will strengthen supervisory expectations and oversight to ensure consistent review and approval of SDM tools, supported by structured guidance, training, and integration into the developing Quality Assurance framework.

Motivational Interviewing will support all case carrying social workers in developing stronger, more trusting relationships with families by utilizing a client-centered, collaborative communication style that enhances motivation for change. This approach is particularly critical when working with families experiencing chronic neglect, where ambivalence, resistance to services, and prior system involvement often create engagement challenges. Enhanced use of SDM tools, including the Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, and Case Plan components, will reinforce consistent, objective decision-making across referral and case phases. In practice, this includes the development of clear harm and danger statements, alignment of SDM assessments with observed family conditions, and use of reassessment tools to guide ongoing case decisions. Emphasis will be placed on early and accurate identification of risk factors, alignment of interventions to assessed risk, and supervisory

consultation to ensure appropriate application of SDM guidance and fidelity to the model.

Specialized training on chronic neglect will be facilitated by Evident Change and the Central Coast Training Academy and will focus on strengthening staff understanding of chronic neglect as a cumulative pattern of harm. Training content will include identification of chronic neglect indicators, differentiation between episodic and chronic neglect, application of SDM tools in neglect-driven cases, engagement strategies informed by motivational interviewing, and case-based learning using county-specific scenarios. These trainings directly address CSA-identified gaps related to inconsistent risk assessment practices, challenges engaging families affected by chronic neglect, and variability in application of trauma-informed approaches.

As part of this strategy, San Luis Obispo County is developing and implementing a revised Quality Assurance (QA) system designed to more systematically evaluate practice, support continuous learning, and strengthen accountability. Case reviews will be formally integrated into this QA structure and aligned with the training and practice improvements outlined above. As part of the County's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process, findings from recurrence case reviews will be used to inform ongoing training, coaching, supervision, and policy updates. Practice improvement will be monitored through defined metrics, including: (1) frequency and quality of harm and danger statements, (2) fidelity to SDM tool completion and alignment with case circumstances, and (3) evidence of family engagement strategies such as safety network involvement and use of motivational interviewing techniques (e.g., scaling questions and collaborative case planning). Trends in recurrence of maltreatment (S2) will also be reviewed over time to assess the broader impact of these efforts.

This strategy will be led by a Program Manager and Program Review Specialist, in close collaboration with the QA Social Worker, Human Resources, and Social Work Supervisors. Through strengthened training, consistent application of assessment tools, and an integrated QA framework, the county aims to improve early and accurate identification of chronic neglect, enhance engagement with families, increase staff confidence and consistency in practice, and ultimately reduce recurrence of maltreatment in alignment with Outcome S2.

Strategy 2: Expand access to prevention and family support services and resources that address concrete needs and strengthen protective factors for families at risk of recurrence of maltreatment.

Outcome Measure: Recurrence of Maltreatment (S2)

Systemic Factor: Service Array

San Luis Obispo County recognizes that access to timely, culturally responsive, and geographically appropriate support services is essential to preventing recurrence of maltreatment (S2). The County Self-Assessment identified that many families—particularly those in rural or unincorporated areas and monolingual Spanish-speaking households—face persistent barriers to accessing parenting education, behavioral health treatment, housing support, and post-reunification services. These structural barriers, coupled with limited-service capacity and waitlists, leave families without the tools they need to stabilize after child welfare involvement.

To address these disparities, this strategy focuses on expanding and diversifying the array of family support services, particularly in communities with limited resources. The County will scale implementation of evidence-based parenting programs such as Triple P and POPS by increasing the

number of trainings and class cohorts offered each year. Services will be available in both English and Spanish and delivered through trusted community-based partners such as SAFE, The LINK, and Family Resource Centers (FRCs). All families will have full access to these programs regardless of where they are in the continuum of their case, including families involved in Emergency Response, Family Maintenance, Family Reunification, post-reunification, or following case closure. In partnership with service providers, the County will also develop additional service options, including trauma-informed parenting classes and hybrid (virtual and in-person) delivery formats to reach families with limited transportation, rural residence, or non-traditional work schedules.

As part of this strategy, the County will launch a bilingual, public-facing online resource hub specifically designed for birth parents navigating the child welfare system. This website will centralize information on parenting programs, behavioral health resources, and frequently asked questions about the child welfare process. It will serve as a key outreach and education tool for families in underserved areas and support voluntary engagement in services outside of formal case planning. In addition to posting bilingual resources online for public access, the County will also make these materials available on the internal DSS intranet, allowing staff to easily print and share them with families who may have limited internet access or technology literacy.

Efforts under this strategy will also focus on reaching families during critical transitions, especially post-reunification or following case closure - when risk of recurrence may be elevated. In partnership with FRCs, the County will explore formal aftercare protocols to ensure families have access to short-term support that promotes stability and prevents reentry.

This strategy directly supports the development of protective factors, including increased parental resilience, social support, and knowledge of parenting and child development. By ensuring equitable access to meaningful, prevention-focused services, the County aims to reduce service deserts, improve family functioning, and drive measurable reductions in recurrence over the five-year SIP cycle.

This strategy will be implemented through strengthened, intentional partnerships with a defined group of community-based and system partners, including Family Resource Centers such as Services Affirming Family Empowerment (SAFE) and The Link, County Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County (CAPSLO), the Promotores Collaborative, and behavioral health providers. Strengthening partnerships under this strategy involves increasing coordination around outreach and service delivery and engaging trusted community partners to ensure services are culturally responsive and accessible to families in rural and underserved communities.

The Program Manager and Program Review Specialist will lead the development and execution of the County's bilingual, public-facing online resource hub, including content design, translation, and promotion. They will work closely with CWS staff, Family Resource Centers, behavioral health partners, and contracted service providers to expand service availability, improve awareness of existing programs, and reduce access barriers for rural and Spanish-speaking families. The success of this strategy will not rely solely on the availability of community-based organization capacity. The County will leverage existing contracts, partnerships, and infrastructure; utilize hybrid service delivery models; strengthen referral coordination; and maximize current provider capacity to ensure timely access to services even when expansion is limited.

The QA Social Worker will monitor service utilization, access trends, and client feedback through quarterly reports and stakeholder input. In addition to tracking participation and availability of

services, the County will evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of parenting programs and trainings to ensure they meet the needs of parents and caregivers. This will include the use of participant feedback, satisfaction surveys, and/or follow-up discussions to assess whether training content is understandable, culturally responsive, and applicable to families' real-life circumstances.

Findings will be reviewed by the Program Manager and Division Manager as part of the County's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process to assess progress, identify service gaps, and guide continuous improvement. This includes making adjustments to training content, delivery methods (e.g., virtual, in-person, hybrid), language access, and outreach strategies to better meet the needs of families, particularly those in rural and underserved communities. The County will also monitor whether services are contributing to increased caregiver engagement, improved understanding of parenting strategies, and strengthened protective factors over time. These findings will be incorporated into SIP progress reports and quarterly reviews to assess whether this approach is achieving intended outcomes related to the reduction of recurrence of maltreatment (S2).

Strategies to Improve Outcome Measures - Probation

To assist justice involved youth with attaining permanency, San Luis Obispo County Probation will focus on targeted strategies aimed at strengthening family engagement, increasing placement options for justice involved foster youth, and enhancing collaboration and coordination with service providers. While the County Self-Assessment and peer review found that Probation was dedicated to assisting youth with achieving permanency in 12 months (in care 12 – 23 months) (Outcome Measure P2), barriers such as placement instability, limited housing options, and gaps in communication with service providers hindered justice involved youth's ability to attain permanency.

Strategy 1: Expand and Diversify the Array of Supportive Services **Outcome Measure: P2 – Permanency in 12 months (in care 12 – 23 months)**

Justice involved youth typically lack a support network and connections with extended family members and/or supportive adults. By strengthening family finding and engagement efforts, Probation hopes to increase placement and support options for justice involved youth referred to Juvenile Justice Court.

FFE efforts are initiated when a youth is referred to Juvenile Justice Court, is being considered for, or is ordered into, foster care, the Coastal Valley Academy (CVA), or a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF). FFE efforts assist youth by identifying, locating, and engaging all appropriate adult relatives to the fifth degree or other caring adults in a youth's life who can engage with the youth by participating in Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings, writing or calling the youth, or being a permanent placement option. FFE efforts continue until a stable permanent plan is in place for the youth, or until at least one lifelong permanent connection has been established

Action Items:

Ensuring Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) locate as many relatives and supportive individuals as possible who could provide a permanent placement option and/or with creating a support network for the youth and their parent(s)/guardian(s).

This strategy will begin July 1, 2025 and be led by the Chief Deputy Probation Officer (CDPO) assigned to the Juvenile Division and carried out by DPOs whenever a youth is referred to Juvenile Justice Court, is being considered for, or is ordered into, foster care, the Coastal Valley Academy (CVA), or a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF). Supervising Deputy Probation Officers (SDPOs) will provide quality assurance to ensure FFE efforts are being carried out for all justice involved youth.

Additionally, in January 2026 the Supervising Deputy Probation Officer (SDPO) assigned to Juvenile Placement will create a Resource Guide that will be shared with identified relatives and supportive adults with suggestions on how they might support the youth, such as attending Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings, writing or calling the youth, or celebrating a birthday and/or holiday together.

By June 10, 2026, DPOs will be expected to inquire about each youth's Indian Status by having each youth's parent/guardian (when available) complete a Parental Notification of Indian Status (ICWA-020) form. Whenever a youth appears to have or appears to be eligible for membership in a Federally recognized or Local Indian Tribe, the DPO shall provide youth's parent(s)/guardian(s) with the Judicial Council of California's 'The Indian Child Welfare Act & Qualified Expert Witness' brochure and shall contact the ICWA Representative via phone and/or email as listed on the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) website www.bia.gov

Strategy 2: Enhance Outreach and Engagement with Current and Potential Foster Parents to Increase the Availability of Specialized Placements for Justice Involved Foster Youth

Outcome Measure: P2 – Permanency in 12 months (in care 12 – 23 months)

Systemic Factor: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Justice involved foster youth typically have more complex needs than non-justice involved foster youth which can pose significant barriers when finding appropriate placements and create additional challenges for permanency planning.

Action Items:

Increasing the availability of therapeutic/specialized resource homes for youth with complex needs will stabilize them in their placement, which could help with developing/improving relationships and permanency planning. Working with Child Welfare Services (CWS), local Foster Family Agencies (FFAs), and the local Foster Parent Network to expand capacity of available beds for justice involved youth in therapeutic/specialized resource homes. Currently, Probation has one Wraparound Professional Parent (WPP) home with two beds operating in San Luis Obispo County. By performing outreaching and engagement, Probation hopes to increase the number of homes as well as beds to more adequately serve the number of justice involved foster youth in San Luis Obispo County.

This strategy will begin June 10, 2026, and be led by the CDPO assigned to the Juvenile Division by communicating at the local Interagency Placement Committee (IPC) of the need for additional beds for justice involved youth. Additionally, by June 10, 2027, the SDPO assigned to Juvenile Placement will

attend local Foster Parent Network meetings to inform current and prospective foster parents with the need for additional support for justice involved youth and how Probation is involved with the foster care system. Finally, by June 10, 2028, the CDPO and SDPO will explore options for expanding our current contract for a specialized/therapeutic foster home.

Systemic Changes Needed to Support Improvement Efforts

Child Welfare Services

1. Enhance Workforce Stability and Capacity

High turnover and limited staffing capacity within Child Welfare Services directly impact the continuity and quality of engagement with families. Staff shortages reduce the time available for thorough assessments, follow-up, and service coordination - especially in rural regions. Strengthening retention strategies, improving caseload ratios, and ensuring consistent supervision are critical to ensuring that the training and tools provided under Strategy #1 can be fully implemented and sustained.

2. Increase Bilingual and Bicultural Representation in the Workforce

The CSA identifies a clear gap in the availability of bilingual (particularly Spanish speaking) staff and culturally competent providers. To support Strategy #3, the county must increase recruitment and retention of bilingual staff across all service areas—social workers, administrative staff, and contracted providers. This change will improve family engagement, enhance service quality, and reduce disparities in access and outcomes for Spanish-speaking families.

3. Integrate Data Systems and Improve Interdepartmental Collaboration

To support Strategy #2, systemic improvements are needed in how data is shared across departments and providers. Improved integration of CWS/CMS, SafeMeasures, and community partner data systems would allow for real-time identification of high-risk families and gaps in service delivery. Stronger interdepartmental communication, particularly between CWS, Behavioral Health, and Family Resource Centers, will support more coordinated and responsive case management.

4. Expand Flexible Funding Streams for Service Delivery

The county currently relies on limited, categorical funding (e.g., CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF) to implement new services. To fully support Strategy #3, the county must identify and pursue flexible funding sources that can be used to pilot innovative approaches, expand provider networks, and reduce service deserts in rural areas. This could include exploring public-private partnerships or targeted grant opportunities.

5. Improve Access to Post-Reunification and Aftercare Services

The CSA highlights a gap in short-term services following case closure or reunification. Without structured aftercare, families often lose access to support precisely when they are most vulnerable to recurrence. Establishing protocols and funding mechanisms for voluntary aftercare and follow-up services would significantly strengthen the safety net for high-risk families and align with all three strategies.

The CSA highlights a gap in short-term services following case closure or reunification; however, SLO

County does refer families to community-based organizations (CBOs) as part of its existing aftercare approach. During Family Maintenance, staff connect families with CBOs to ensure they have a safety net of community support. Behavioral Health and Drug & Alcohol services may also continue after closure, providing ongoing stability for families who need longer-term support. Strengthening and formalizing these referral pathways will further align with SIP strategies and help reduce vulnerability to recurrence.

6. Formalize Ongoing CQI Processes Around S2

To ensure continuous learning and accountability, the county should formalize a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process focused specifically on S2. This would include regular case reviews of recurrence incidents, tracking of performance indicators, and stakeholder feedback loops to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies. Embedding S2 improvement in regular management reviews will help the county adapt and sustain progress over time.

Probation

1. Workforce Stability

Juvenile Probation typically has one dedicated DPO assigned to oversee youth under an order of foster care, who is supported by a Senior DPO and a SDPO. However, the DPO position has been vacant for nearly six months, and other officers have been tasked with overseeing these cases. The DPO position and the role of the supervisor have now shifted to a new unit and while having the DPO position filled will help with consistency, the turnover and shift in staffing over the past twelve months has had an impact on the continuity and quality of engagement with youth and their families. Prioritizing consistent supervision is critical to ensuring that the youth and their families are supported and the Family Finding and Engagement efforts outlined in Strategy #1 can be fully implemented and sustained.

2. Increase Awareness of the Need for Therapeutic/Specialized Resource Homes for Justice Involved Foster Youth

Justice involved foster youth typically have more complex needs than non-justice involved foster youth which can pose significant barriers when finding appropriate placements and create additional challenges for permanency planning. Increasing awareness of the need for therapeutic/specialized resource homes for youth with complex needs will assist in helping them stabilize them in their placement, which could help with developing/improving relationships and permanency planning.

To effectively implement Strategy #2, Probation will work with our local Child Welfare Services (CWS) Department and local Foster Family Agencies (FFAs), and with attending the local Foster Parent Network meetings, to raise awareness of the need to expand capacity of available beds for justice involved youth in therapeutic/specialized resource homes.

3. Improve Interagency Communication and Collaboration

The CSA identified gaps in coordination and communication between Probation and service providers has had a negative impact on justice involved youth foster with entering and remaining in placement. Strategy #3 aims to improve this by having the SDPO assigned to Juvenile Placement by conducting monthly case conferences with the DPO assigned to oversee the justice involved foster youth caseload

to review the youth's engagement and access to services. Additionally, the SDPO assigned to Juvenile Placement will have monthly meetings with the Supervisor at County Behavioral Health assigned with Juvenile Programs to ensure youth in foster care are receiving adequate services.

Disparity Reduction Strategies

Child Welfare Services

San Luis Obispo County is committed to reducing disparities in child welfare outcomes, with a focus on improving performance in Outcome Measure S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment. The County Self-Assessment (CSA) and stakeholder engagement process identified that Latino and White children represent the highest percentage of substantiated allegations and entries into care. Latino families, in particular, face disproportionate barriers in accessing culturally and linguistically responsive services. Additionally, families living in rural and unincorporated areas experience geographic isolation, limited transportation, and a lack of nearby service providers—all of which elevate risk for recurrence of maltreatment.

Key Disparity Issues Identified:

- **Language Access:** Only 11 bilingual CWS staff countywide (as of October 2024), limiting engagement with monolingual Spanish-speaking families.
- **Geographic Barriers:** Families in regions like North County and Nipomo experience reduced access to parenting programs, behavioral health services, and in-person support.
- **Cultural Relevance:** Stakeholders highlighted the need for parenting education and case planning that is tailored to the cultural values, beliefs, and lived experiences of diverse families.

Disparity Reduction Activities (2025–2030):

To address these disparities, the following actions will be implemented across all three SIP strategies:

1. **Recruit and retain bilingual and bicultural staff** across CWS, Family Resource Centers, and contracted parenting programs to improve communication and build trust with Latino families.
2. **Expand culturally responsive parenting services** (e.g., POPS, Triple P) in underserved zip codes and offer programming in both English and Spanish.
3. **Leverage Strategy 4 tracking tools to monitor equity** by embedding race, ethnicity, language, and geography indicators into WRAP, Intensive Safe Meetings, and BFH/HSP tracking spreadsheets. Use this data in monthly reviews to identify disparities in service engagement and response.
4. **Develop a bilingual online parent resource hub** to support access to information and services, especially in isolated areas.
5. **Engage cultural brokers and community leaders** in service delivery and family engagement to strengthen cultural congruence and reduce system mistrust.

Outcome Alignment:

These disparity reduction activities directly support improvements in Outcome S2 by increasing equitable access to services, strengthening cultural responsiveness, and ensuring that high-risk families, especially those affected by language or geographic barriers, receive timely and coordinated support. Disaggregated data from Strategy 4 will be reviewed quarterly through the County's CQI process to evaluate progress, inform adjustments, and ensure equitable outcomes for all families.

Probation

Probation's small sample sizes year after year make it challenging to identify trends. However, data suggests that justice involved foster youth in San Luis Obispo County are typically of White or Latino heritage, which is consistent with the demographic makeup of the county as a whole.

Key Disparity Issues Identified:

- **Language Access:** While a number (9 of 13) of DPOs assigned to the Juvenile Division (as of September 2025) are bilingual, the Cognitive Based Intervention (CBI) curriculum offered to justice involved youth in the Coastal Valley Academy (CVA) is currently only available in English. While not every justice involved foster youth goes through the CVA program, several do. Being able to offer the curriculum, which is provided by the University of Cincinnati's Corrections Institute (UCCI), in both English and Spanish would expand the number of youth served by CVA and could reduce the number of youth requiring out of home placement.
- **Cultural Resources:** Although there are currently (as of September 2024) no Federally recognized Tribes in San Luis Obispo County, according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs website (<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/20ad1b9c9f4a40a586f3a4c72abe30bf>), there are members of the yak tit'yu tit'yu yak tiłhini Northern Chumash Tribe and Salinan Tribe in San Luis Obispo County. Having resources and information related to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and Qualified Expert Witness (QEW) may support youth and families with tribal enrollment, access to services, placement options, and advocacy.

Disparity Reeducation Activities (2025-2030):

To address the disparities noted about, Probation will:

1. Continue to recruit and retain bilingual and bicultural staff.
2. Have the UCCI CVA Curriculum available in English and Spanish.
3. Partner with Child Welfare Services in providing parents with a bilingual online parent resource hub.
4. Post informational posters related to ICWA in our Courtroom Lobby and have brochures available to youth and families, such as "[The Indian Child Welfare Act & Qualified Expert Witness – Families & Caregivers](#)" brochure provided by the Judicial Council of California

Outcome Alignment:

Addressing these disparities will expand the services available to justice involved youth and their families with the goal of reducing the number of youth being ordered into foster care, thus eliminating the need for reunification. However, expanding these services may also strengthen family connections

thereby reducing the period of time a youth is in foster care.

Prioritization of Direct Service Needs

Child Welfare Services

As part of San Luis Obispo County's 2025 County Self-Assessment (CSA), the Department identified critical direct service needs contributing to the outcome of S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment. Through comprehensive data analysis, stakeholder focus groups, and peer review results, it became evident that gaps in behavioral health access, geographic equity, post-reunification support, and culturally responsive services significantly impact families' ability to remain safely intact following CWS involvement.

Families continue to face structural barriers in accessing timely, targeted, and sustainable support—particularly in rural areas or after reunification—resulting in elevated risk for repeat maltreatment. In alignment with C-CFSR requirements, the following direct service needs have been prioritized in the SIP to reduce recurrence, improve family stability, and address underlying systemic inequities.

Post-Reunification Support Services

Why It Is Needed:

- Families often exit the child welfare system without adequate follow-up services to support long-term stability and address residual risk factors.

How It Connects to S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment:

- Families who reunify without continued support may struggle to maintain safety, resulting in re-referrals and repeated maltreatment.

Supporting CSA Evidence:

- "The County lacks comprehensive post-reunification support programs to ensure sustained family stability and reduce the risk of reentry into the system."

Access to Mental Health and Substance Use Services

Why It Is Needed:

- Families face long waitlists, limited provider availability, and a lack of local inpatient options, especially for substance abuse treatment.

How It Connects to S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment:

- Untreated behavioral health issues, particularly substance use, are a leading cause of maltreatment recurrence in San Luis Obispo County.

Supporting CSA Evidence:

- "Long waitlists for mental health providers and the lack of inpatient treatment facilities for substance abuse create barriers to timely and effective intervention."

Services for Rural and Underserved Communities

Why It Is Needed:

- Geographic isolation, lack of transportation, and limited-service hubs hinder families in rural regions from accessing preventative and reunification services.

How It Connects to S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment:

- Inaccessible services lead to unaddressed family stressors and delayed intervention, increasing risk of recurrence.

Supporting CSA Evidence:

- "The geographic distribution of services, combined with limited transportation options, creates systemic barriers to accessing critical support for families in rural areas."

Targeted Father and Paternal Relative Engagement

Why It Is Needed:

- Fathers and paternal relatives are frequently excluded from service planning and engagement efforts, reducing protective support for children.

How It Connects to S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment:

- Engaging both sides of a child's family enhances stability, increases placement options, and supports reunification efforts.

Supporting CSA Evidence:

- "Efforts were primarily focused on mothers, with limited outreach to fathers and paternal relatives, resulting in missed opportunities."

Integration of Evidence-Based Practices (e.g., Motivational Interviewing)

Why It Is Needed:

- Staff receive initial training in best practices but lack ongoing support or coaching to fully integrate them into casework.

How It Connects to S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment:

- Motivational Interviewing and similar approaches improve family engagement, assessment quality, and case planning effectiveness, directly reducing repeat maltreatment.

Supporting CSA Evidence:

- "While workers attended relevant trainings, they struggled to integrate concepts like SOP and MI into their practice to mitigate recurrence."

Probation

In the CSA, Probation identified the need to increase the number of home-based care options as a critical direct service need that had been contributing to Probation's performance in Outcome Measure P2 – Permanency in 12 months (in care 12-23 months). Stakeholder focus groups, peer review results, and reviewing past performance in this measure have made it clear, that justice involved youth generally have more intensive needs than non-probation foster youth and often need more time in specialized residential treatment programs and are generally more challenging to place. However, youth placed in home-based care appeared to have higher rates of attaining permanency within 12-23 months of being in care.

In alignment with C-CFSR requirements, the following direct service needs have been prioritized in the SIP to improve rates of youth attaining permanency and address underlying systemic inequities.

Strengthening Family Connections

Why It Is Needed:

- Youth who have meaningful connections with relatives and extended family members have greater placement stability, are able to maintain connections to their biological family which helps them to have an increased sense of belonging, and they often have reduced emotional and behavioral problems in placement.

How It Connects to P2 – Permanency in 12 Months:

- Youth who remain in care are typically more engaged in services, thus reducing their risk of reoffending and increasing the possibility of returning home, when appropriate.

Supporting CSA Evidence:

- "Limited engagement with paternal connections was identified as a missed opportunity to strengthen family support."

Availability Therapeutic/Specialized Resource Homes

Why It Is Needed:

- Justice involved foster youth typically have more complex needs than non-justice involved foster youth which can pose significant barriers when finding appropriate placements and creates additional challenges for permanency planning.

How It Connects to P2 – Permanency in 12 Months:

- Increasing awareness of the need for more therapeutic/specialized resource homes for justice involved foster youth will assist them with stabilizing them in their placements, which could help with developing/improving their relationships with the families and with permanency planning.

Supporting CSA Evidence:

- "Limited housing options for high-needs youth, specifically youth with sexual offenses or other complex needs who faced significant barriers in accessing appropriate placements..."

Improve Interagency Communication and Collaboration

Why It Is Needed:

- Agency coordination and collaboration is essential for adequately addressing the complex needs of justice involved foster youth in a timely manner and ensuring the youth are meeting their case plan goals with the appropriate level of support without duplication of efforts.

How It Connects to P2 – Permanency in 12 Months:

- Gaps in coordination and communication between Probation and service providers has been shown to have had a negative impact on justice involved youth foster with entering and remaining in placement.

Supporting CSA Evidence:

- "Gaps in coordination and communication between probation and behavioral health providers were noted as areas needing improvement."

Evidence-Based and Evidence-Informed Services

Child Welfare Services

The county prioritizes the implementation and expansion of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs due to their proven effectiveness and alignment with federal funding expectations. Services considered include:

- **Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)** – is an evidence-based parenting intervention used in San Luis Obispo County to promote healthy child development and strengthen family functioning. Designed to prevent and reduce behavioral, emotional, and developmental problems in children, Triple P provides parents and caregivers with practical strategies to build strong, nurturing relationships and manage everyday parenting challenges.
- **Positive Opportunities for Parenting Success (POPS2) – Father Involvement Program** empowers dads with the skills and confidence they need to be effective, positive fathers and co-parents. This program provides groups designed to enhance father involvement and effectiveness in parenting.
- **CAPSLO Family Preservation and Parent Education** is a community-based program designed to provide parent education services in the home to help support families at risk of child abuse and neglect, with the goal of keeping children safe, healthy, and at home.
- **Parenting Learning Pods** is a collaborative effort between South County Youth Coalition (SCYC), First 5 SLO and CAPSLO which provides parent-child learning pods designed for families with children ages 0-5. These sessions aim to improve bonding and healthy development for young children while providing parents with a supportive community. The programs are structured as a 7-week series, with sessions focusing on topics such as nutrition, imaginative play, healthy relationships, emotional safety, social media, bonding and resilience.

Probation

Probation uses a variety of evidence based / evidence informed family centered/engagement models and practices, such as SAFE (Services Affirming Family Empowerment) meetings, Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings, and Safety Organized Practices (SOP), as well as:

- Wraparound services
- Parent Partners
- Family Finding Efforts (FFE)
- Resource Family Approval (RFA)
- The curriculum presented to youth in the Coastal Valley Academy (CVA)
- Family Group Counseling
- Forward Thinking Journaling (FTJ)

SIP Funding Strategy

Successful implementation of San Luis Obispo County's 2025–2030 System Improvement Plan (SIP) requires a coordinated approach to funding, leveraging both existing and supplemental resources to support identified strategies and action items. The SIP outlines targeted interventions aimed at reducing the recurrence of maltreatment (Outcome S2) and strengthening systemic supports across the child welfare continuum. To achieve these goals, the following funding considerations and resources are essential:

Funding Needs

- **Personnel and Staff Development:** Additional funding is needed to support staff training, recruitment, and retention efforts – including implementation of Structured Decision Making (SDM), Motivational Interviewing, and trauma-informed practices. Staff capacity is a critical component in executing casework strategies with fidelity.
- **Program Expansion and Contracted Services:** Investment in contracted services will support action items related to aftercare, parent education, culturally responsive services, and community-based supports, particularly for families post-reunification and youth transitioning out of foster care.
- **Technology and Data Infrastructure:** Enhancements to data tracking systems are needed to improve case review processes, support continuous quality improvement (CQI), and evaluate progress toward SIP goals.
- **Family Support Resources:** Tangible goods and services—including Flexible Family Support (FFS) funding for housing stability, transportation, and basic needs—are essential to maintain child safety and placement stability.
- **Community Outreach and Engagement:** Resources are needed to support awareness campaigns, parent mentorship efforts, and bilingual materials that ensure equitable access to services.

Available Resources

- **CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Allocations:** These funding streams are aligned with the SIP's prevention and permanency goals, supporting evidence-based services for in-home family maintenance, reunification support, and child abuse prevention.
- **Title IV-E and State General Funds:** These are leveraged for case management, foster care maintenance payments, and approved training activities.
- **Flexible Family Support (FFS) Funds:** FFS funds provide a responsive, family-centered resource for case-specific needs that support safety and stability outside of traditional placement settings.
- **Local Partnerships and Grants:** Collaborations with community-based organizations, foundations, and schools offer both in-kind and grant-based resources that supplement county efforts, especially in high-need geographic areas.
- **County General Fund and Realignment:** These provide the backbone for staffing and core service delivery, particularly for initiatives that are not otherwise federally reimbursable.

Summary

The implementation of SIP strategies is dependent on a balanced blend of federal, state, and local resources, with an emphasis on strategic reinvestment in frontline staff, family-focused services, and community partnerships. Ongoing monitoring of funding availability, service utilization, and emerging needs will be essential to adjust resource allocations and ensure sustainability throughout the five-year plan cycle.

CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Funding

Overview

San Luis Obispo County administers and oversees Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP), Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT), and Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) funding in alignment with the county's System Improvement Plan (SIP). These funding streams support a coordinated array of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention programs aimed at reducing risk and recurrence of child maltreatment, with a particular focus on the SIP's priority outcome measure, S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment.

Funding decisions are informed by the County Self-Assessment (CSA), stakeholder engagement, and commitment to evidence-based and evidence-informed practices. Each funding stream is linked to specific SIP strategies and service categories, ensuring a targeted and integrated approach to family support, early intervention, and post-reunification services.

CAPIT-Funded Programs

The Department of Social Services (DSS) contracts with Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO) to operate Family Resource Centers (FRCs) using CAPIT funding. These centers are the county's primary strategy for delivering prevention and early intervention services to families at risk of child maltreatment.

FRC services are provided by two regional partners:

- SAFE System of Care, operated by CAPSLO in South County
- The LINK, subcontracted by CAPSLO to serve North County

The CAPIT-funded FRC model plays a key role in primary and secondary prevention, particularly in rural and underserved communities. All FRCs employ bilingual, bicultural family advocates who reflect the communities they serve. These family advocates are trained in trauma-informed engagement and work collaboratively with schools, clinics, and local agencies to address family stressors early and connect families to vital support. The help reduce barriers and connect families to appropriate services before situations escalate to require formal child welfare intervention.

Family Resource Center Services (CAPIT)

- **Target population:** Families experiencing or at risk of general neglect due to stressors such as poverty, housing instability, or limited access to services.
- **Delivery method:** Three-tiered model offering Community Service, Information & Referral, and Case Management.

- **SIP Link:** Strategy 1 – Enhance workforce knowledge and confidence in assessing risk and safety through targeted training on Structured Decision Making (SDM), family engagement, and motivational interviewing
- **Evaluation:** Use of the Self-Sufficiency Matrix, 90-day case reviews, service tracking, and family feedback mechanisms.

The CAPIT-funded FRC network ensures geographic and cultural equity, especially in rural, monolingual Spanish-speaking, and underserved communities.

CBCAP-Funded Programs

The Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Program in San Luis Obispo County is administered through the Center for Family Strengthening (CFS), designated by the Board of Supervisors as the Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC). CBCAP funding supports primary and secondary prevention efforts for families who may be isolated, underserved, or at increased risk of abuse or neglect.

Programs emphasize parent voice, cultural responsiveness, and evidence-informed practices, particularly within Latinx and rural communities. Services focus on increasing protective factors, supporting family resilience, and addressing social determinants of health.

Promotores Collaborative

A bilingual, bicultural leadership and engagement program for Latinx families. Promotores facilitate parent leadership development, civic participation, and family advocacy through trusted community-based outreach.

- **Target population:** Latinx parents and families in underserved communities
- **Delivery method:** Leadership development, civic engagement, and community outreach through bicultural Promotores
- **SIP Link:** Strategy 2 – Expand access to prevention and family support services and resources that address concrete needs and strengthen protective factors for families at risk of recurrence of maltreatment.
- **Evaluation:** Program participation data, leadership outcomes, and community impact indicators

These programs are aligned with Strategy 2 in the SIP and reflect CBCAP's statutory intent to enhance public awareness, early parenting support, and access to universal family-strengthening resources.

PSSF-Funded Programs

PSSF funds support a wide continuum of prevention services, including primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies. These services promote family stability, safety, permanency, and prevention of recurrence following child welfare involvement. PSSF-funded services are delivered through the countywide Family Resource Center (FRC) network, ensuring regional access and alignment with the SIP.

Regional service partners include:

- SAFE (CAPSLO) – South County
- The LINK – North County

Bilingual, bicultural Family Advocates play a central role in PSSF implementation. They provide flexible, trauma-informed services tailored to the needs and risk levels of families. Advocates serve as navigators and connectors - building trust, identifying needs, and providing direct support or appropriate referrals to stabilize family functioning and reduce recurrence.

Family Resource Center Services (PSSF)

- **Target population:** Families post-reunification, or receiving voluntary/informal support to prevent future child welfare involvement
- **Delivery method:** Trauma-informed Family Advocates offer tiered services based on assessed needs: one-time assistance, referrals, or intensive case management
- **Staffing:** All Advocates are bilingual and bicultural, ensuring culturally responsive support that builds trust and accessibility
- **Evaluation:** Service utilization metrics, case transitions, and qualitative data from family progress and satisfaction surveys

POPS2 (Positive Opportunities for Parenting Success)

- **Target population:** Families with young children at risk of CWS involvement
- **Delivery method:** Peer-led parent groups in English and Spanish
- **SIP Link:** Strategy 2 – Expand access to prevention and family support services and resources that address concrete needs and strengthen protective factors for families at risk of recurrence of maltreatment.
- **Evaluation:** Participation rates, self-efficacy scales, and reduction in hotline referrals

Parent Cafés

- **Target population:** Parents seeking connection and skill-building in a supportive setting
- **Delivery method:** Structured peer discussion model guided by Strengthening Families™ protective factors
- **SIP Link:** Strategy 2 – Expand access to prevention and family support services and resources that address concrete needs and strengthen protective factors for families at risk of recurrence of maltreatment.
- **Evaluation:** Qualitative feedback, pre/post reflection tools, and facilitator observations

Parenting Learning Pods

A dynamic, interactive parenting education series designed to strengthen the parent-child relationship through themed learning sessions tailored to specific child age groups. Topics include nutrition, imaginative play, healthy relationships, emotional safety, social media awareness, bonding through art, resilience, sensory play, yoga, music, and more.

- **Target population:** Parents and caregivers with children ages 0–5, including teen parents
- **Delivery method:** Age-specific parent-child participation Learning Pod series, including:
 - Babies (0–12 months)
 - Toddlers (12–24 months)
 - Toddlers (24–36 months)
 - Preschool-age children (3–5 years)
 Includes specialized modules to strengthen parent-teen relationships
- **SIP Link:** Strategy 2 – Expand access to prevention and family support services and resources that address concrete needs and strengthen protective factors for families at risk of recurrence of maltreatment.
- **Evaluation:** Session participation records, pre/post-parenting knowledge assessments, and qualitative feedback from caregivers

This approach allows the county to deliver equitable, community-based prevention and stabilization services, tailored to the linguistic, cultural, and geographic needs of the families being served.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and CQI Plan

Child Welfare Services

San Luis Obispo County is committed to an intentional, data-informed approach to evaluating progress toward the goals outlined in its 2025–2030 System Improvement Plan (SIP). This section outlines how the County will monitor implementation fidelity, assess impact, and continuously refine practice across all SIP strategies, systemic factor improvements, and supporting initiatives.

Evaluation efforts will be grounded in principles of transparency, collaboration, and equity, ensuring that decision-makers, stakeholders, and families benefit from a responsive system that adapts to changing needs and emerging data.

1. Countywide CQI Infrastructure and Oversight

The County maintains a dedicated Quality Assurance (QA) Social Worker responsible for managing SIP-related evaluation activities. This role is embedded in a larger Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system that includes:

- Monthly case reviews, including targeted reviews of S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment cases
- Supervisory coaching to improve SDM fidelity and trauma-informed practice
- QA involvement in implementation teams and feedback loops for SIP-related training
- Integration of CQI into leadership-level program meetings and staff development planning

In addition, the Core Planning Team—composed of DSS leadership, program managers, supervisors, and fiscal staff—will convene quarterly to review SIP progress, analyze evaluation findings, and approve adjustments as needed. This team will also review progress toward systemic factor targets, such as service array expansion, workforce development, and interagency collaboration.

2. SIP Strategy Monitoring

Each of the four SIP strategies include measurable action steps and implementation timelines. Progress will be monitored through:

- Quarterly progress tracking of strategy implementation milestones
- Collection of quantitative indicators (e.g., % of staff trained, number of families served, time to service connection)
- Qualitative feedback from staff, partners, and families regarding perceived impact
- Fidelity assessments for implementation of tools like SDM, Motivational Interviewing (MI), and high-risk case monitoring

Evaluation results will inform decisions about scaling strategies, adjusting timelines, and aligning resources. Particular attention will be paid to whether strategies are successfully reaching priority populations, including rural families, Spanish-speaking caregivers, and those previously affected by recurrence.

3. Outcome Measure Evaluation – Focus on S2

The County's priority outcome, S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment, will be monitored quarterly using data from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) and internal SafeMeasures dashboards. The QA Social Worker and Program Review Specialist will:

- Track trends in recurrence by age, race/ethnicity, region, and allegation type
- Identify recurrence-related case errors through targeted QA reviews
- Convene case debriefs with supervisors when new recurrence cases occur
- Provide real-time feedback to leadership on emerging patterns

Annual SIP progress reports submitted to CDSS will summarize changes in the S2 rate and link observed progress (or lack thereof) to strategy implementation milestones.

4. Systemic Factor Evaluation

Each systemic factor area – Staff Training, Service Array, Quality Assurance, and Agency Collaboration – includes a five-year improvement plan with clear targets. Evaluation will include:

- Staff surveys and SDM fidelity scoring to assess Training outcomes
- Geographic and demographic mapping of service access for the Service Array
- CMS data and high-risk case monitoring to assess QA and supervision systems
- Interagency coordination tracking (e.g., shared case plans, joint meetings) to evaluate Collaboration

These findings will be reported annually in the SIP update and used to refine the County's improvement priorities.

5. CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Program Oversight

San Luis Obispo County utilizes a structured CQI process to monitor CAPIT, CBCAP, and PSSF-funded programs, ensuring alignment with SIP strategies and Outcome S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment. The QA Social Worker, CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Liaison, and program managers collaborate to assess impact, promote fidelity to evidence-based practices, and ensure services are responsive to family needs.

Each program submits quarterly and annual reports, with the following key metrics used to monitor performance:

- **CAPIT – Family Resource Centers (SAFE and The LINK):**
 - Number of families served through case management and referrals
 - Use of the Self-Sufficiency Matrix to assess family progress
 - 90-day case reviews and documentation of risk reduction
- **CBCAP – Promotores Collaborative (Center for Family Strengthening):**
 - Number of Latinx parents engaged in leadership and outreach activities
 - Increases in parent leadership skills and civic participation
 - Qualitative data on trust-building and cultural connection
- **PSSF – POPS, Parent Cafés, and Family Advocates:**
 - Participation rates in parenting groups (POPS and Cafés)
 - Pre/post self-efficacy scores for parenting confidence
 - Reductions in hotline calls for families previously served
 - Percent of families receiving post-reunification support through FRCs

Evaluation also includes satisfaction surveys, focus group input, and fidelity monitoring to ensure that services meet OCAP standards and are culturally appropriate. Findings are reviewed quarterly and used to guide real-time adjustments, training needs, and funding priorities. Progress is shared annually through SIP updates and with the Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC).

6. Stakeholder Feedback and Family Voice

San Luis Obispo County will continue to embed family and community voice into its evaluation efforts through:

- Ongoing focus groups and listening sessions with youth, birth parents, and resource families
- Feedback surveys tied to services funded through the SIP
- Participation of community stakeholders in CQI and program review meetings
- Engagement with the Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) to review evaluation findings

Stakeholder input will be used to inform mid-cycle course corrections and ensure that services remain responsive to local needs.

7. Public Reporting and Accountability

To promote transparency and community accountability, San Luis Obispo County will:

- Submit Annual SIP Progress Reports to CDSS
- Present SIP updates to the Board of Supervisors and CAPC
- Share select findings with public and provider partners through newsletters and briefings
- Incorporate SIP progress into broader countywide strategic planning efforts

Conclusion

The County's continuous improvement process is designed to be adaptive, inclusive, and driven by outcomes. Through systematic evaluation of SIP strategies, systemic changes, and service investments, San Luis Obispo County will ensure its efforts remain focused on reducing recurrence of maltreatment and improving long-term outcomes for children and families.

Probation

Over the next five years (2025-2030), Probation will be monitoring its progress by achieving the goals outlined in this System Improvement Plan (SIP). This section outlines how the County will monitor implementation fidelity, assess impact, and continuously refine practice across all SIP strategies, systemic factor improvements, and supporting initiatives.

Evaluation efforts will be grounded in principles of transparency, collaboration, and equity, ensuring that decision-makers, stakeholders, and families benefit from a responsive system that adapts to changing needs and emerging data.

1. Quality Assurance and Oversight

Beginning in July of 2025, the Chief Deputy Probation Officer (CDPO) assigned to the Juvenile Division will work with the Supervising Deputy Probation Officer (SDPO) assigned to Juvenile Placement to ensure SIP-related activities are being attended to. The CDPO will meet with the SDPO on a monthly basis to review the SIP strategies and ensure they are being addressed.

2. SIP Strategy Monitoring

By June 2028, the CDPO and SDPO will work with local agencies to expand the availability of specialized/therapeutic foster homes for justice involved youth.

Beginning in July 2025, the SDPO will begin meeting monthly with the Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) assigned with foster care cases to:

- Conduct monthly case reviews, including targeted reviews of P2 – Permanency in 12 months
- Ensure the DPOs are carrying out high quality and continuous Family Finding & Engagement (FFE) efforts (Strategy #1)
- Ensure the DPOs are attending Resource Parent meetings to highlight the need for placement options for justice involved foster youth (Strategy #2)
- Ensure the DPOs are engaging with service providers (Strategy #3)

3. Outcome Measure Evaluation – Focus on P2

Probation's focus Outcome Measure, P2 – Permanency in 12 months, will be monitored quarterly by the CDPO assigned to the Juvenile Division, who will task the SDPO assigned to Juvenile Placement along with the Program Manager assigned to the Juvenile Division with reviewing data obtained from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) and SafeMeasures to:

- Track trends in permanency by age, race/ethnicity, gender, and placement type
- Ensure DPOs are making their monthly contacts
- Provide real-time feedback on emerging patterns

Annual SIP progress reports submitted to CDSS will summarize changes in P2 rates and link observed progress (or lack thereof) to strategy implementation milestones.

4. Systemic Factor Evaluation

Probation's three systemic factors, Family Engagement, Access to Placement Options, and Agency

Collaboration, include targeted improvement plans that will be evaluated and reported on annually in annual SIP updates.

Family Engagement

- Beginning in July 2025, the Chief Deputy Probation Officer (CDPO) assigned to the Juvenile Division will work with DPOs to ensure the following steps are completed whenever a youth is:
 - Referred to Juvenile Justice Court
 - Being considered for, or is ordered into, foster care, the Coastal Valley Academy (CVA), or a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF).
- Beginning in January 2026, Supervising Deputy Probation Officers (SDPOs) will provide quality assurance to ensure FFE efforts are being carried out for all justice involved youth.
- Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) will locate as many relatives and supportive individuals as possible who could provide a permanent placement option and/or with creating a support network for the youth and their parent(s)/guardian(s).
- DPOs will also provide identified adult relatives and supportive adults with suggestions on how they might support the youth, such as attending Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings, writing or calling the youth, or celebrating a birthday and/or holiday together.

Access to Placement Options

- Led by the CDPO assigned to the Juvenile Division and carried out by SDPO assigned to Juvenile Placement.
- Probation will communicate at the local Interagency Placement Committee (IPC) of the need for additional beds for justice involved youth
- The SDPO assigned to Juvenile Placement or their designee will attend local Foster Parent Network meetings to inform current and prospective foster parents with the need for additional support for justice involved youth and how Probation is involved with the foster care system
- The CDPO and SDPO will work with Child Welfare Services (CWS), local Foster Family Agencies (FFAs), and the local Foster Parent Network to expand capacity of available beds for justice involved youth in therapeutic/specialized resource homes.

Agency Collaboration

- Led by the CDPO assigned to the Juvenile Division and carried out by SDPO assigned to Juvenile Placement.
- The SDPO will conduct monthly case conferencing with the DPOs assigned with foster care cases to assess the youth's engagement and access to services.
- Probation will ensure we have the correct/updated referral forms for service providers.
- The SDPO will have monthly meetings with the Supervisor at County Behavioral Health assigned with Juvenile Programs to ensure that justice involved foster youth are receiving services.

5. Stakeholder Feedback and Family Voice

Probation will continue to embed family and community voice into its evaluation efforts through:

- Ongoing focus groups and listening sessions with youth, parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s), and resource families
- Participation of community stakeholder events

Updated information will be used to inform mid-cycle changes to ensure services remain responsive.

6. Public Reporting and Accountability

To promote transparency and community accountability, Probation will:

- Submit Annual SIP Progress Reports to CDSS
- Present SIP updates to the Board of Supervisors
- Share select findings with public and provider partners in annual reports
- Incorporate SIP progress into broader countywide strategic planning efforts

Conclusion

Probation's strategies for improving outcomes for youth in care are designed to be targeted, but adaptive. Through systematic evaluation of SIP strategies, systemic changes, and action items, Probation is focused on assisting youth with achieving permanency and with building meaningful lifelong connections.

Child Welfare and Probation Placement Initiatives

San Luis Obispo County Child Welfare Services (CWS) has prioritized the reduction of recurrence of maltreatment (S2) as the central focus of its System Improvement Plan. Through an in-depth County Self-Assessment (CSA) process and comprehensive stakeholder engagement, the County identified key gaps contributing to repeat maltreatment—such as limited family engagement, service accessibility barriers, and inconsistent application of risk assessment tools. In response, CWS has implemented a coordinated set of initiatives that directly target the underlying conditions contributing to recurrence.

These initiatives emphasize early risk identification, culturally responsive service delivery, and family-centered interventions designed to build protective capacity and strengthen parental resilience. Programs such as in-home parenting support, Family Treatment Court, and the Family Finding (EFFES) initiative ensure families receive tailored services that address core safety concerns while fostering long-term stability. The integration of Motivational Interviewing into staff practice enhances parent engagement and supports meaningful case planning, a known protective factor against recurrence.

CWS has also strengthened system-level support by enhancing emergency placement options for high-risk situations and improving cross-agency coordination for vulnerable populations such as youth at risk of exploitation or those with complex medical needs. These efforts are complemented by a robust training framework that promotes trauma-informed practice, consistent use of Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools, and ongoing clinical support for social workers.

Collectively, these initiatives reflect a strategic and data-driven approach to preventing repeat maltreatment, ensuring that families not only achieve reunification but are equipped with the tools and support needed to maintain safety and well-being over time.

Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Compliance

San Luis Obispo County Child Welfare Services continues to implement the mandates of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) to ensure that congregate care is used only when necessary and that youth placed in Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs) receive the appropriate level of care. As part of this implementation, the County partners with Behavioral Health to conduct Qualified Individual (QI) assessments that are both culturally responsive and trauma informed. These

assessments guide placement decisions and ensure alignment with each youth's treatment needs and permanency goals. The use of QI evaluations enhances oversight and supports the federal goals of minimizing time in congregate care while prioritizing family-based placements.

Family Preservation and In-Home Parenting Programs

To prevent entry and reentry into foster care, San Luis Obispo County contracts with the Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO) to provide evidence-informed parenting support and education through in-home visits. This service targets families at risk of removal or in reunification and complements services available through local Family Resource Centers. These programs emphasize culturally relevant, strengths-based approaches to parenting and help address risk factors associated with recurrence of maltreatment. The collaboration ensures families receive wraparound support tailored to their unique needs, including rural and Spanish-speaking populations.

Family Treatment Court (FTC)

San Luis Obispo County supports a collaborative Family Treatment Court (FTC) model that serves families with substance use disorders whose children have entered or are at risk of entering foster care. FTC brings together Child Welfare Services, Behavioral Health, and the Court to provide integrated, non-adversarial support to parents in recovery. This initiative focuses on early intervention, structured accountability, and frequent court monitoring. Through FTC, parents have access to substance use treatment, parenting classes, and intensive case management—key services that reduce the likelihood of recurrence and promote safe family reunification.

Family Finding and Engagement (EFFES Program)

The County utilizes a dedicated Family Finding and Engagement Social Worker through the Engaging Families for Foster Youth Success (EFFES) program. This initiative enhances relational permanency by identifying and reconnecting youth with extended family and culturally significant adults. The FFE social worker collaborates closely with case-carrying social workers to incorporate meaningful adult connections into the child's case plan, with an emphasis on supporting cultural identity and reducing isolation. This initiative strengthens legal and relational permanency efforts, especially for older youth and youth of color who are at higher risk of long-term foster care.

Emergency Shelter and Placement Resources

To ensure placement stability and prevent inappropriate placements, Child Welfare Services partners with Family Care Network and Seneca to maintain a pool of emergency foster homes. These homes are available 24/7 and include specialized homes for medically fragile children. Placement staff prioritize kinship care and utilize a collaborative decision-making model when emergency placements are needed. The County also engages in cross-agency planning with hospitals to ensure timely discharges into safe, appropriate settings. This initiative supports the system's ability to prevent recurrence by ensuring immediate safety and stability for children in crisis.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) and Staff Training

San Luis Obispo County has adopted Motivational Interviewing (MI) as a foundational engagement approach across all Child Welfare programs. Ongoing MI training is provided to social workers and supervisors to enhance skills in building rapport, eliciting parent motivation for change, and reducing resistance. The County also plans to offer refresher training and MI coaching of supervision to promote fidelity. This initiative is directly aligned with efforts to reduce the recurrence of maltreatment by improving caseworker-parent communication and encouraging behavior change that supports child safety and permanency.

Anti-Human Trafficking / CSEC Response

The County's CSEC Collaborative Response Team, formalized through a multi-agency MOU, provides a coordinated approach to preventing and responding to child exploitation. The team includes CWS, Probation, Behavioral Health, the District Attorney's Office, and community-based agencies. Additionally, San Luis Obispo has launched an Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force with focused workgroups on prevention, intervention, and survivor support. CWS staff receive training on trauma-informed engagement with CSEC youth, and cross-training efforts ensure that providers understand signs of exploitation. These coordinated initiatives help protect vulnerable youth from further harm and strengthen the County's ability to respond effectively to complex trauma cases.

Continuum of Care Reform (CCR), Katie A., and Extended Foster Care

The County's implementation of CCR, Katie A. mandates, and Extended Foster Care supports directly enhances its ability to reduce recurrence of maltreatment (S2) and promote long-term child safety. CCR's emphasis on family-based placements and individualized case planning ensures children remain connected to supportive adults to reducing placement disruptions that increase risk of recurrence.

Under Katie A., the Department partners with Behavioral Health to provide timely mental health screenings and ICC/IHBS services for eligible children, ensuring underlying behavioral health needs are addressed early, thus mitigating the risk factors contributing to reentry.

Extended Foster Care services further support youth by offering transitional support, preventing abrupt discharge and homelessness, which are known precursors to maltreatment among young parents. These initiatives create safety nets that directly align with the County's SIP goal to improve long-term outcomes and reduce re-involvement in the child welfare system.

Coastal Valley Academy (CVA)

In 2017, Juvenile Probation opened a custody commitment program committed to influencing positive change in the lives of youthful offenders by engaging them in comprehensive residential treatment and education services in a safe and supportive environment. The CVA provides residential treatment programming for wards of the juvenile delinquency court who have been removed from the homes of their parent(s)/guardian(s). CVA serves female and male youth ranging in age from fourteen to seventeen years old who previously would likely have been sent to Group Home placements. Implementation of this program was included in the previous SIP and has been Juvenile Probation's most significant achievement towards improving goals and outcomes for youth in need of residential care.

The CVA program adheres to the tenets of the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) and Integrated Core Practices Model (ICPM) in that the CVA provides youth with a local alternative to congregate care that includes team engagement, intensive case management, evidence-based treatment programming, individual and family counseling, and substance abuse treatment services. The CVA program also adheres to the guiding principles outlined in the California Fostering Connections to Success Act (AB12) by connecting youth who are exiting the program with vocational, educational, and housing services needed to assist them with transitioning to responsible adulthood. Program length varies based upon the individual needs and circumstances of each youth as well as progress in treatment and overall behavior.

The goal of the CVA is to safely return youth to the community after reducing their risk of future delinquent behavior by improving their reasoning and avoidance skills and providing them with

positive pro-social replacement activities.

Specialized Foster Home

Developed as strategy in our previous County Self-Assessment (CSA) Cycle (2020-2025), Probation created a specialized foster home for high needs justice involved youth and youth transitioning from the CVA. A small work group was created to determine the home's capacity, treatment components, funding resources, etc., and with developing a program description. A Request for Proposal was released and a local Foster Family Agency (FFA), Family Care Network (FCN), was selected as the provider. Probation then worked with FCN on the planning process, foster parent selection, and the home's start date. The home opened with one bed in 2023 and was expanded to two beds in August of that year. The goal of this Wraparound Professional Parent (WPP) foster home is to reduce the use of secure detention and achieve positive outcomes for justice involving youth in need of home based foster care. By incorporating intensive oversight, services, and supports by a professional foster parent who is specifically trained in working with justice involved youth with high needs, we've successfully met that goal. Since opening, Probation was placed six justice involved foster youth there, which represents a significant number of justice involved foster youth for San Luis Obispo County Probation.

SIP CHART

Child Welfare Services

CWS S2 RECURRENCE OF MALTREATMENT

This measure reflects the percentage of children who had a substantiated report of maltreatment during a 12-month period and also had another substantiated report within 12 months of the initial report.

Compliance Standard: $\leq 9.7\%$

CSA Baseline Performance (Q3, 2023): In Q3 2023, San Luis Obispo County's S2 Recurrence of Maltreatment rate was 12.4%. The County Self-Assessment identified elevated recurrence rates among children aged 0–1 and 6–10, as well as barriers for Spanish-speaking and rural families. Chronic neglect accounted for 84.9% of substantiations, and gaps in trauma-informed engagement and post-reunification supports were contributing risk factors.

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 1 (Q1, 2025): (To be completed after Year 1)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 2 (Q1, 2026): (To be completed after Year 2)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 3 (Q1, 2027): (To be completed after Year 3)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 4 (Q1, 2028): (To be completed after Year 4)

Target Improvement Goal: Reduce the recurrence of maltreatment rate from **12.4%** to **9.5% or below** by June 2030, in alignment with the federal standard and through implementation of trauma-informed staff training, expanded parenting supports, and improved case monitoring systems.

5-Year Plan:

Year 1 (June 11, 2026 – June 10, 2027): **11.7 %** ~ Launch MI training, enhance SDM usage, and begin high-risk case monitoring via SafeMeasures. Expand access to Triple P and POPS programs.

Year 2 (June 10, 2027 – June 9, 2028): **10.9 %** ~ Deliver chronic neglect training. Launch and promote bilingual online resource hub

Year 3 (June 10, 2028 – June 9, 2029): **10.0 %** ~ Partner with Family Resource Centers and bilingual providers to deliver parenting services in underserved areas. Integrate monthly case tracking into CQI. Begin post-reunification aftercare pilot.

Year 4 (June 10, 2029 – June 9, 2030): **9.5 %** ~ Evaluate program effectiveness using recurrence trends. Sustain high-impact services and embed equity tracking into CQI reviews. Prepare next SIP cycle.

CWS SYSTEMIC FACTOR: Staff, Caregiver and Provider Training

CSA Baseline Performance (Q3, 2023): CSA findings indicated inconsistent SDM use, lack of trauma-informed training, and gaps in staff engagement strategies. There was no standardized onboarding curriculum linked to recurrence prevention.

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 1 (Q1, 2025): (To be completed after Year 1)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 2 (Q1, 2026): (To be completed after Year 2)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 3 (Q1, 2027): (To be completed after Year 3)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 4 (Q1, 2028): (To be completed after Year 4)

Target Improvement Goal: Achieve 100% completion rate for new staff in core risk/safety training within 120 days of hire. Deliver trauma-informed care and chronic neglect training to 90% of frontline staff. Demonstrate 15% improvement in SDM fidelity scores and a measurable decline in recurrence-related case errors based on QA reviews.

5-year Plan:

Year 1 (June 10, 2026 – June 9, 2027): Launch Motivational Interview training; begin SDM refresher and coaching; conduct staff surveys

Year 2 (June 10, 2027 – June 9, 2028): Implement chronic neglect training; monitor MI and SDM usage, expand wellness resources

Year 3 (June 10, 2028 – June 9, 2029): Evaluate training effectiveness; improve staff recognition program

Year 4 (June 10, 2029 – June 9, 2030): Reassess training needs; formalize coaching; sustain retention tracking

CWS SYSTEMIC FACTOR: Quality Assurance

CSA Baseline Performance (Q3, 2023): The CSA identified inconsistencies in the use of SDM tools, variability in the quality of safety and risk assessments, and uneven application of family engagement practices across units. Supervisors reported limited structured coaching and no formal fidelity monitoring process to assess whether staff were applying SDM and engagement practices correctly. QA findings were not systematically used to inform training or supervision, resulting in a reactive rather than data-driven approach to staff development.

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 1 (Q1, 2025): (To be completed after Year 1)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 2 (Q1, 2026): (To be completed after Year 2)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 3 (Q1, 2027): (To be completed after Year 3)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 4 (Q1, 2028): (To be completed after Year 4)

Target Improvement Goal: Implement a structured, countywide training and coaching framework informed by QA findings to ensure consistent practice in SDM, safety assessment, and family engagement. Achieve 100% completion of annual SDM fidelity reviews, integrate QA results into monthly supervision, and demonstrate measurable improvement in documentation quality and alignment between assessed risk and case decisions.

5-year plan:

Year 1 (June 10, 2026 – June 9, 2027): Develop a structured SDM and engagement training plan based on QA case review findings and pilot fidelity tools to assess baseline practice.

Year 2 (June 10, 2027 – June 9, 2028): Train supervisors and staff on SDM fidelity expectations; implement monthly supervision protocols that incorporate QA-identified themes.

Year 3 (June 10, 2028 – June 9, 2029): Integrate fidelity monitoring and QA-informed coaching into ongoing supervision; use QA data to guide corrective action and targeted training.

Year 4 (June 10, 2029 – June 9, 2030): Embed SDM fidelity monitoring and engagement practice review into quarterly CQI cycles; calibrate countywide practice expectations using QA trend data.

CWS SYSTEMIC FACTOR: Service Array

CSA Baseline Performance (Q3, 2023): Significant gaps in rural and Spanish-speaking areas. Only 11 bilingual social workers served the county, with long waitlists for parenting programs and limited aftercare access for reunified families.

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 1 (Q1, 2025): (To be completed after Year 1)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 2 (Q1, 2026): (To be completed after Year 2)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 3 (Q1, 2027): (To be completed after Year 3)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 4 (Q1, 2028): (To be completed after Year 4)

Target Improvement Goal: By the end of FY 2030, launch a publicly accessible webpage with at least 15 resources tailored to birth parents, with 100% of the content available in both English and Spanish.

5-year plan:

Year 1 (June 10, 2026 – June 9, 2027): Assess gaps in Triple P and POPS availability; expand services via CBOs; conduct a parent and provider focus group to gather input on resource topics; begin design of website pages for resources

Year 2 (June 10, 2027 – June 9, 2028): Evaluate service reach in rural areas; translate webpages into Spanish;

Year 3 (June 10, 2028 – June 9, 2029): Partner with bilingual providers; launch hybrid parenting classes; address post-reunification gaps; promote website and track usage

Year 4 (June 10, 2029 – June 9, 2030): Maintain regional service map; adjust outreach to underserved populations

CWS SYSTEMIC FACTOR: Agency Collaboration

CSA Baseline Performance (Q3, 2023): The CSA identified gaps in coordination between CWS, Behavioral Health, Education, and community-based organizations, resulting in inconsistent referral pathways and limited shared understanding of available services. Families—particularly those in rural areas or monolingual Spanish-speaking households—often faced barriers accessing culturally responsive supports due to uneven collaboration and communication across agencies. Service linkages varied by unit and worker, and aftercare referrals were not applied consistently, highlighting the need for more structured cross-agency processes to ensure families receive timely, equitable support.

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 1 (Q1, 2025): (To be completed after Year 1)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 2 (Q1, 2026): (To be completed after Year 2)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 3 (Q1, 2027): (To be completed after Year 3)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 4 (Q1, 2028): (To be completed after Year 4)

Target Improvement Goal: Strengthen cross-agency collaboration to expand access to culturally responsive, bilingual, and geographically accessible family support services. Establish consistent referral pathways with partner agencies and increase the use of community-based services—particularly for rural and Spanish-speaking families—to improve service equity and reduce barriers that contribute to recurrence of maltreatment.

5-year plan:

Year 1 (June 10, 2026 – June 9, 2027): Map existing community-based services and develop shared, bilingual referral pathways with partner agencies.

Year 2 (June 10, 2027 – June 9, 2028): Train staff and partner agencies on referral processes; expand partnerships with culturally responsive providers in rural regions.

Year 3 (June 10, 2028 – June 9, 2029): Integrate community-based service planning into supervision and case consultations; increase CFTs.

Year 4 (June 10, 2029 – June 9, 2030): Embed cross-agency service coordination into quarterly CQI reviews; monitor utilization of bilingual and culturally responsive services and adjust partnerships as needed.

Probation

PROBATION P2 PERMANENCY IN 12 MONTHS (IN CARE 12 – 23 MONTHS)

This measure reflects the number of youth who had been in care between 12 and 23 months who were discharged to permanency within 12 months.

Federal Standard: $\geq 43.8\%$

CSA Baseline Performance (Q3, 2023): Although Probation's performance in this measure in Q3 2023 was 100%, Probation's overall performance trend in this measure has consistently fallen below the Federal Standard over the past five years. While small sample sizes make it challenging to identify trends, we do know that in general, justice involved foster youth generally have more intensive needs than non-probation foster youth and often need more time in specialized residential treatment programs and are generally more challenging to place. However, youth placed in home-based care appear to have a high rate of attaining permanency. Increasing efforts to meet, or exceed, the Federal Standard in this measure by focusing on strengthening family connections and placing youth in home-based care will likely have a positive impact on youth attaining permanency in this measure and others, such as P1 and P3.

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 1 (Q1, 2025): (To be completed after Year 1)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 2 (Q1, 2026): (To be completed after Year 2)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 3 (Q1, 2027): (To be completed after Year 3)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 4 (Q1, 2028): (To be completed after Year 4)

Target Improvement Goal: Consistently meet or exceed the Federal Standard of 43.8% for justice involved youth who have been in care between 12 and 23 months attaining permanency within 12 months.

5-year plan:

Year 1 (June 10, 2026 – June 9, 2027): $\geq 43.8\%$ ~ Initiated Family Finding and Engagement (FFE) efforts whenever a youth is referred to the Juvenile Justice Court or being considered for, or is ordered into, foster care, the Coastal Valley Academy, or a Secure Youth Treatment Facility.

Year 2 (June 10, 2027 – June 9, 2028): $\geq 43.8\%$ ~ Strengthening FFE efforts and initiate outreach and engagement with current and potential specialized placements for justice involved foster youth.

Year 3 (June 10, 2028 – June 9, 2029): $\geq 43.8\%$ ~ Expand capacity of existing specialized foster homes for justice involved youth.

Year 4 (June 10, 2029 – June 9, 2030): $\geq 43.8\%$ ~ Evaluate performance in all Permanency Outcome measure (P1, P2, and P3) to identify any potential trends and begin preparing for the next CSA.

PROBATION SYSTEMIC FACTOR: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

CSA Baseline Performance (Q3, 2023): Probation's performance in this measure in Q3 2023 was 100%; however, Probation's overall performance trend in this measure has consistently fallen below the Federal Standard over the past five years.

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 1 (Q1, 2025): (To be completed after Year 1)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 2 (Q1, 2026): (To be completed after Year 2)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 3 (Q1, 2027): (To be completed after Year 3)

Annual SIP Progress Report, Year 4 (Q1, 2028): (To be completed after Year 4)

Target Improvement Goal: Increase Awareness of the Need for Therapeutic / Specialized Resource Homes for Justice Involved Youth

5-year plan:

Year 1 (June 10, 2026 – June 9, 2027): The CDPO assigned to the Juvenile Division will communicate at Interagency Placement Committee (IPC) of the need for additional resource foster home beds for justice involved foster youth, in lieu of placing youth in congregate care settings.

Year 2 (June 10, 2027 – June 9, 2028): SDPO or their designee will attend local Foster Parent Network meetings to inform current and prospective foster parents with the need for additional supports for justice involved foster youth and how Probation is involved in the foster care system.

Year 3 (June 10, 2028 – June 9, 2029): CDPO to discuss expanding current Wraparound Professional Parent (WPP) foster home contract to increase the capacity of available beds for justice involved youth in therapeutic/specialized resource homes.

Year 4 (June 10, 2029 – June 9, 2030): Evaluate performance in P2 to identify any potential trends and begin preparing for the next CSA.

CWS Strategy 1: Enhance workforce knowledge and confidence in assessing risk and safety through targeted training on Structured Decision Making (SDM), family engagement, and motivational interviewing

Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factors:

Recurrence of Maltreatment (S2), Staff, Caregiver and Service Provider Training, and Quality Assurance

- ☐ CAPIT
 ☐ PSSF
 ☐ CBCAP
 ☒ N/A
- ☐ Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project

Action Steps:	Start Date:	Projected Completion Date:	Status:	Responsible Person(s):
A. Implement Motivational Interviewing training for all case carrying staff	July 2026	June 2028	☐ Completed (MM/YY) ☐ On/ahead of schedule ☐ Behind schedule ☐ No longer applicable ☐ Ongoing ☐ Postponed	Program Manager Program Review Specialist
B. Strengthen the use of Structured Decision-Making (SDM) tools (Hotline Intake, Safety Assessment, Risk Reassessment, and Reunification Reassessment) with fidelity, including integration with Motivational Interviewing and development of clear harm and danger statements.	July 2026	June 2028	☐ Completed (MM/YY) ☐ On/ahead of schedule ☐ Behind schedule ☐ No longer applicable ☐ Ongoing ☐ Postponed	Program Manager Program Review Specialist Social Worker Supervisors QA Social Worker
C. Provide specialized training on chronic neglect	July 2027	June 2029	☐ Completed (MM/YY) ☐ On/ahead of	Program Manager Program

			☐ Behind schedule ☐ No longer applicable ☐ Ongoing ☐ Postponed	Review Specialist Social Worker Supervisors
D. Integrate recurrence case reviews into quarterly QA and use CQI feedback to inform training, supervision, and policy updates. Monitor and evaluate impact through the following practice metrics:	July 2027	June 2029	☐ Completed (MM/YY) ☐ On/ahead of schedule ☐ Behind schedule ☐ No longer applicable ☐ Ongoing ☐ Postponed	Program Manager Program Review Specialist Social Worker Supervisors Social Workers QA Social Worker
i. Frequency and quality of harm and danger statements documented in case reviews				
ii. Use of SDM tools with fidelity (e.g., completion and alignment with case circumstances)				
iii. Evidence of family engagement practices (e.g., use of safety networks, scaling questions, and caregiver participation)				

CWS Strategy 2: Expand access to prevention and family support services and resources that address concrete needs and strengthen protective factors for families at risk of recurrence of maltreatment.

Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factors:

Recurrence of Maltreatment (S2), Service Array

☒ CAPIT ☒ PSSF ☒ CBCAP ☐ N/A

☐ Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project

Action Steps:	Start Date:	Projected Completion Date:	Status:	Responsible Person(s):
A. Expand availability of evidence-based parenting programs (POPS, Triple P, and POPS2), including evaluation of caregiver feedback and program effectiveness to ensure services meet the needs of families.	September 2026	August 2029	☐ Completed ☐ On/ahead of schedule ☐ Behind schedule ☐ No longer applicable ☐ Ongoing ☐ Postponed	Program Manager Program Review Specialist Community Partners
B. Strengthening partnerships with bilingual/bicultural family resource centers and community-based providers including culturally responsive service delivery and feedback from families.	September 2027	August 2029	☐ Completed ☐ On/ahead of schedule ☐ Behind schedule ☐ No longer applicable ☐ Ongoing ☐ Postponed	Program Manager Program Review Specialist Community Partners
C. Expand resource section on website with a focus on bilingual resources for birth parents	January 2026	June 2029	☐ Completed ☐ On/ahead of schedule ☐ Behind schedule ☐ No longer applicable ☐ Ongoing ☐ Postponed	Program Manager Program Review Specialist CWS Staff

Probation Strategy 1: Strengthening Family Finding and Engagement (FFE) efforts, enhancing outreach and connection for youth and their families with services, and connecting youth with services that can be provided in a home-based setting

Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factors:

Recurrence of Maltreatment (S2), Service Array

☐ CAPIT ☐ PSSF ☐ CBCAP ☐ N/A

☐ Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project

Action Steps:	Start Date:	Projected Completion Date:	Status:	Responsible Person(s):
A. DPOs initiate FFE efforts whenever a youth is:	July 2025	June 2027	☐ Completed ☐ On/ahead of schedule ☐ Behind schedule ☐ No longer applicable ☐ Ongoing ☐ Postponed	Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) with Supervisor (SDPO) oversight
i. Referred to the Juvenile Justice Court; or ii. Being considered for, or is ordered into, foster care, the Coastal Valley Academy, or a Secure Youth treatment Facility				
B. DPOs shall locate as many relatives and supportive adults as possible who could provide the youth with a permanent placement option and/or with creating a support network for the youth and their parent(s)/guardian(s).	January 2026	June 2028	☐ Completed ☐ On/ahead of schedule ☐ Behind schedule ☐ No longer applicable ☐ Ongoing ☐ Postponed	SDPOs with Chief Deputy Probation Officer (CDPO) oversight
i. This includes engaging those identified relatives and supportive adults even when legal permanency is not an option, to help youth maintain meaningful				

- relationships and with sharing a Resource Guide on how they can be involved with supporting the youth.
- ii. The Supervising Deputy Probation Officer (SDPO) assigned to Juvenile Placement to create a Resource Guide to be shared with identified relatives and supportive adults.
- C. DPOs will inquire about each youth's Indian Status by having each youth's parent/guardian (when available) complete a Parental Notification of Indian Status (ICWA-020) form.
- June 2026 August 2029
- ☐ Completed DPO and SDPO with CDPO oversight
- ☐ On/ahead of schedule
- ☐ Behind schedule
- ☐ No longer applicable
- ☐ Ongoing
- ☐ Postponed
- i. Whenever a youth appears to have or appears to be eligible for membership in a Federally recognized or Local Indian Tribe, the DPO shall provide youth's parent(s)/guardian(s) with the Judicial Council of California's.
- ii. The Indian Child Welfare Act & Qualified Expert Witness' brochure and shall contact the ICWA Representative via phone and/or email as listed on

the Bureau of Indian
Affairs (BIA) website
www.bia.gov

Probation Strategy 2: Enhance Outreach and Engagement with Current and Potential Foster Parents to Increase the Availability of Specialized Placements for Justice Involved Foster Youth

Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factors:

Recurrence of Maltreatment (S2), Service Array

☐ CAPIT ☐ PSSF ☐ CBCAP ☐ N/A

☐ Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project

Action Steps:	Start Date:	Projected Completion Date:	Status:	Responsible Person(s):
A. CDPO will communicate at Interagency Placement Committee (IPC) of the need for additional resource foster home beds for justice involved foster youth, in lieu of placing youth in congregate care settings	June 2026	June 2027	☐ Completed ☐ On/ahead of schedule ☐ Behind schedule ☐ No longer applicable ☐ Ongoing ☐ Postponed	CDPO
B. SDPO or their designee will attend local Foster Parent Network meetings to inform current and prospective foster parents with the need for additional supports for justice involved foster youth and how Probation is involved in the foster care system	June 2027	June 2028	☐ Completed ☐ On/ahead of schedule ☐ Behind schedule ☐ No longer applicable ☐ Ongoing ☐ Postponed	SDPO or their designee with CDPO oversight
C. CDPO to discuss expanding current Wraparound Professional Parent (WPP) foster home	June 2028	June 2029	☐ Completed ☐ On/ahead of schedule ☐ Behind schedule	CDPO

contract to increase the capacity of available beds for justice involved youth in therapeutic/specialized resource homes.

- ☐ No longer applicable
- ☐ Ongoing
- ☐ Postponed