

MENDOCINO COUNTY FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
"The Broken Process at Family and Children's Services"

"The mission of the California Department of Social Services is to serve, aid, and protect needy and vulnerable children..." *California Department of Social Services Mission Statement.*

SUMMARY

Mendocino County's Family and Children Services (FCS) Unit under the Social Services Department (DSS) has struggled for years to provide required services to our children; there are several reasons FCS is challenged. The Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) investigated Family and Children's Services because of a complaint regarding reports filed late to the Superior Court and short-staffing due, in part, to unfilled positions and a four-day workweek which leaves the FCS offices closed to the public on Fridays.

When the Grand Jury began to investigate, it was discovered there had been several investigative reports produced by past grand juries regarding issues in FCS. This is of concern to our community and to the disenfranchised fostered children in Mendocino County. The lack of adequate staffing, staffing turnover and high caseloads for social workers complicates the timely filing of court reports.

Social workers are required to produce reports from the time the child/children are removed from their home until the resolution or permanent placement has been achieved. When vulnerable families are separated an anxiety-fueled frustration is created, and the longer the separation, the more toxic the stress. Everyone in the family is affected, not just the child/children. Late reports contribute to longer separation.

The Grand Jury found that not only was there no easy fix but there was more than one problem to solve. However, one of our findings produced a shining star: there are talented, dedicated people who work at FCS and who attempt to provide quality services to the children and families of Mendocino County.

A cross-section of issues must be addressed to help ensure Mendocino County children and youth in foster care find safety, stability and success. Together, the Federal, State and County governments, advocates, children in foster care, the educational system and other stakeholders must work to establish effective policies and programs.

Late report filing, short-staffing, added responsibilities, a short workweek and other roadblocks cause cases to be delayed. Getting families through the court process, into counseling and into family reunification or placement as soon as possible is crucial in order to minimize the trauma to children in foster care.

BACKGROUND

The Grand Jury received a complaint targeting FCS' late filings of mandated court reports, lack of accountability and problems because of the four-day workweek. During this investigation, it was noted that since 1999 there have been six Grand Jury reports about children's services.

FCS provides services including emergency response, family maintenance, family reunification, permanent placement, an Independent Living Skills Program and a Wraparound Services Program. They provide services for children and youth from birth to the age of 22. FCS is responsible for developing and overseeing an array of programs and services for high-risk children and families, as mandated by the California Department of Social Services.

When children are removed from their homes due to abuse and/or neglect, legal intervention is required. There is a deadline for the completion of the required first report regarding the removal of the child, "...within 30 days of the initial removal of the child or the in-person investigation, or by the date of the dispositional hearing whichever comes first." This starts the mandated court reporting cycle. *California Dept. of Social Services – CWS 31-210*

All court hearings involve the county child welfare agency, the child, the parents, the child's Tribe(s) in the case of Native American children and, in some cases, the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). Attorneys represent most of the parties during these hearings. For cases in which the child is removed from the home, throughout the court proceedings and by the final placement hearing, a decision is made about reunification or permanent placement, and if reunification is not achieved, there is a decision about adoption, long-term foster care or guardianship.

METHODOLOGY

When the Grand Jury receives a complaint, it is presented in a Plenary session where it is confidentially discussed, after which a vote is taken to reject, investigate or table the complaint. If rejected, no other action is taken. If tabled, the complaint may be considered in the following year with a new Grand Jury. If the vote is to investigate, a committee is chosen to begin the research and investigation. Interviews are conducted with complainants and other stakeholders.

The Grand Jury began an investigation by interviewing staff of FCS, county employees of other departments, community services agencies and others who regularly interact with FCS. The Grand Jury uncovered more details from policies and procedures of the California Welfare Services (CWS), California Department of Social Services (CDSS) the California Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC), the Federal Indian Child Welfare Act (FICWA) and numerous articles, reports, studies and papers related to childhood trauma. Other documents about staffing and court filings were provided by FCS. Additionally, information from surveys and studies done by the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) were also perused and ingested in order to write this report.

DEFINITIONS: Before proceeding to a discussion of conditions and procedures within FCS it is important to define some terms.

Adverse Childhood Experiences and Toxic Stress: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is defined as a traumatic event, child abuse and/or household dysfunction, a child experiences before the age of 18. Adults with a history of traumatic experiences are more likely to have risky behavior, lack of stability, serious health problems and/or serious mental illnesses, all of which can result in toxic stress. Toxic stress increases chances of children having mental health, physical health and substance abuse problems later in life. *cdc.gov/violenceprevention*

Moral Injuries: Moral injury happens when someone feels they have violated their own conscience or moral compass when they take part in, witness or fail to prevent an act that disobeys their own moral values or personal principles. Moral injuries occur when caseloads are too high, when finances rule the standard of care, when there are no resources for client referrals and when bureaucratic regulations and policies become barriers to services.

Welfare and Institutions Code § 300(a) (WIC): “A child who comes within any of the following descriptions is within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court which may adjudge that person to be a dependent child of the court:

“a) The child has suffered, or there is substantial risk that the child will suffer, serious physical harm inflicted non-accidentally upon the child by the child’s parents or guardian.

For purposes of this subdivision, a court may find there is substantial risk of serious future injury based on the manner in which a less serious injury was inflicted, a history of repeated inflictions of injuries on the child or the child’s siblings, or a combination of these and other actions of the parent or guardian that indicate the child is at risk of serious physical harm. For purposes of this subdivision, ‘serious physical harm’ does not include reasonable and age-appropriate spanking to the buttocks if there is no evidence of serious physical injury.” (See **Exhibit 1**)

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA): As excerpted from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs: The purpose of ICWA is “...to protect the best interest of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian Tribes and families by the establishment of minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children and placement of such children in homes which reflect the unique values of Indian culture...”.

ICWA provides guidance to States regarding the handling of child abuse and neglect and adoption cases involving Native children and sets minimum standards for the handling of these cases. *bia.gov/bia/ois/dhs/icwa* and *uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title25/chapter21*

Waivers: On March 6, 2020, the California Governor signed a proclamation that allows county social service departments to hire staff who do not possess the requisite education to be hired in social worker positions. The State encourages staff to obtain a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and/or Master of Social Work (MSW). (See **Exhibit 4, Exhibit 5**)

California staffing regulations state at least 50% of the professional staff providing emergency response services, and at least 50% of the professional staff providing maintenance services, shall possess an MSW in social work or its equivalent in education and/or experience, as certified by the State Personnel Board or a County civil service board. 100% of supervisors of staff providing emergency response and family maintenance services shall possess an MSW or its equivalent in

education and/or experience, as certified by the State Personnel Board or a county civil service board. *CA DSS § 31-070*

Stakeholders: There are many entities outside Family and Children's Services involved in the court process, all of them with the best interests of the child at heart. These include but are not limited to:

- The Juvenile Court,
- attorneys from County Counsel who represent FCS in court,
- private attorneys who represent the children and families,
- all the Tribes in Mendocino County,
- parents and/or guardians,
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA).

DISCUSSION

The State of California contracts with the 58 counties in California to provide family and children's services through the Department of Social Services (DSS). This allows each county to develop and implement its own child protective services based on the county's own culture and needs within the framework of the State and Federal regulations.

Everyone in FCS interviewed by the Grand Jury demonstrated a genuine passion for improving the lives of children. They all confirmed some challenges need to be addressed in the FCS units serving children at risk. The Grand Jury would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication that brought about changes and improvements such as the use of waivers and the new DSS Unity Team in Social Services. A staff member in Social Services explained the Unity Team is solely an internal entity at this time, with team members sharing through an internal Facebook group. Their intention is to announce improvements publicly at a later date. The Grand Jury believes this is a good effort toward addressing current challenges.

Existing law provides for the placement of foster youth in various placement settings and governs the provision of child welfare services. These include protecting and promoting the welfare of all children, preventing the unnecessary separation of children from their families, and restoring to their families the children who have been removed. *45CFR 1356.21*

An ACEs score for adults, used to determine the fitness of the child's home situation and the level of the child's vulnerability to and level of stress, is evaluated by using a survey tool with 8-10 questions. People with a score of 4 or more are:

- 4 times more likely to become an alcoholic,
- 3 times more likely to suffer from chronic depression,
- 2 times more likely to have serious financial problems, and
- 2 times more likely to have heart disease.

Mendocino County's ACE score is in the top three counties in California. **(See Exhibit 2)**
California Department of Public Health, Center for Healthy Communities.
CDC.gov/violenceprevention

Toxic stress is experienced when some form of trauma as described by the WIC § 300 code has been introduced into a life. Children and families entering the court system and trying to wend their way through the maze of lawyers, social workers, judges, etc., are experiencing toxic stress

on top of the ACEs that have been complicating their existence. Some of the consequences of these experiences are:

- The children are more likely to fall behind in school.
- The children are more likely to be homeless as adults.
- The children are more likely to be incarcerated as adults.
- The children are more likely to need substance abuse services as adults.
- The children are more likely to suffer from mental illness.

A quick and speedy resolution of the court process can reduce their stress and make their lives more manageable.

As of January 2024 there were 205 children in foster care in Mendocino County which is home to 11 Federally recognized Native American Tribes. According to the most recent U.S. Census, 6.6% of the Mendocino County population reports being “American Indian and Alaska Native alone.” By contrast, 24% of children in foster care in Mendocino County are Native children. The question arises: is Mendocino County FCS providing services in “...the best interest of Indian Children...” when there are so many Native American children in foster care? The unfilled positions, a four-day workweek, heavy caseloads and over worked FCS employees are barriers in providing “...minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children ...” as written in ICWA. (See **Exhibit 3**)

Congress passed ICWA in 1978 in response to two factors: the steady and often unwarranted removal of Native youth from their families and tribes, and studies showing that such removal leaves the children with identity issues: growing up not knowing who they are, who they’re connected to and where they belong.

The California Indian Child Welfare Act (Cal-ICWA) works with the Federal ICWA plan to better serve California Native tribes.

cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Additional-Resources/ICWA/ICWA%20Desk%20Reference_whb_9-30-20.pdf?ver=2020-10-01-113414-850

Despite their small population size, in Mendocino County 19% of FCS court cases, as of January 2024, involve Native children. Communication between tribal contacts and schools and social workers continues to be a problematic issue. Not all involved in ICWA are supportive of the established Round Tables, therefore a more active role in them would go a long way to improve care for Indian children. According to the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP), a collaborative venture between the University of California at Berkeley and the California Department of Social Services, by a significant degree, ICWA cases have the largest percentage of court cases in California with late filings. *California Child Welfare Indicators Project – Berkeley, October 2023* (See **Exhibit 3**)

Because of short-staffing and lack of the requisite number of certified staff, Mendocino County has a current waiver from the State of California, allowing current workers to provide services above their educational levels. This waiver system is designed to include staff who usually start at an entry-level position and then progress with acquired knowledge and experience to higher positions. Mendocino County positions have lower salaries than competing counties, which stymies recruitment efforts. (*CDSS letters of March 30, 2023 and April 24, 2023*) (See **Exhibit 4, Exhibit 5**)

When a child within the jurisdiction of the Mendocino County juvenile court is placed outside Mendocino County, FCS is still responsible for supervision and services or arranging for supervision and services in the receiving county, which is referred to as “courtesy supervision.” Generally, most counties will provide courtesy supervision (making the monthly contacts) for non-contiguous counties or counties outside their region on a case-by-case basis, but each county determines their own requirements for providing courtesy supervision for another county
CA DSS Division 31-505, 31-320

Social workers who are absent for travel out-of-county and out-of-state decrease the work pool. For example, if a social worker travels to do a monthly visit, which may take up to two full days, that worker’s duties will not be covered by another worker. Upon returning to Mendocino County, the social worker is expected to return phone calls, meet court report deadlines and continue to perform all duties of their position. This necessary catch-up work contributes to late reports and missed deadlines.

When WIC § 300 applies to a case mandating the removal of a child from their home, the case cannot proceed until the court reports are written and presented. This presentation is considered “timely filing”, and the case may go forward as all involved work to place the child/children into a safe and nurturing home. If the reports are late or require continuation, the child/children are in “limbo,” not knowing what is going to happen to them while they wait for a decision on where they will live.

The right to due process may be violated when FCS requests continuances because reports are not ready, which take as long as 120 days. Living in a temporary home for extended periods of time, with no clear resolution, is a recipe for toxic stress and frustration. The court has the right to impose consequences for late filing or failing to comply with mandated deadlines, and FCS has the option to provide incentives for meeting deadlines; at this time, however, neither consequences nor incentives are practiced.

In a plan to specifically address problems and issues within the FCS unit, the management of FCS developed and implemented a System Improvement Plan (SIP). While the current SIP has been out of date since 2021, an updated version is apparently in the approval process. The SIP was born in 2001 through California AB 636, the Child Welfare Improvement System and Accountability Act. It was designed to improve outcomes for children services in California and includes county self-assessment and peer review, leading to a five-year improvement plan.

“Quality Assurance (QA) is a widely accepted management function intended to ensure the services provided to consumers meet agreed-upon standards. Standards come from professional organizations, evidence-based practices and public policies that specify outcomes for consumers. The QA systems consist of measurement, comparison of findings to standards and feedback to practitioners and managers. There is emerging, but limited, research that indicates QA can be an effective strategy for improving outcomes for consumers.” *Encyclopedia of Social Work, April 20, 2022, Rutgers University.*

QA needs to be done on a monthly basis by reviewing case files, agency performance on state outcomes, staff selections and complaints.

While Mendocino County does not have a QA department in FCS, there are counties in California that have incorporated QA with Child Welfare Services and SIP to provide quality services and correct systems that can lead to problems. If Mendocino County implemented a QA program at FCS it would lead to improved outcomes.

THE STAFFING CRISIS

The Grand Jury's investigation indicated workload management in Mendocino County FCS is neither simply defined nor simply addressed. The measurement of the tasks required to meet minimal standards of practice is only one part of a larger puzzle. Staff turnover, absences and vacancies are compounding factors that contribute to the problem. Improvement in morale is needed. Even if all the pieces of the workload management puzzle can be put in place, the attempts of managers and leaders to mobilize resources and act on key strategies often fall short.

FCS is not prevented by policy or regulation from using a wide variety of proactive, in-house recruiting techniques. Presently, there are attractive charts and career ladders posted on the DSS Facebook page, encouraging applications. The County continues to request waivers from the State of California to fill Social Worker positions due to insufficient numbers of qualified candidates. These requests for waivers are also referenced in prior Civil Grand Jury reports.

The Grand Jury interviewed several FCS supervisors about their budgets. From these sources, the Grand Jury learned that for fiscal year 2023-24, as updated December 5, 2023, the total adopted budget for all Mendocino County government was \$416 million. FCS was allocated \$21,751,776 million, Extended Foster Care \$1,530,900, Aid to Adoption services \$7,788,420, and Foster Care \$12,432,456. This is a combined FCS budget of over \$96.4 million, or 23.2% of the total County budget. It was difficult for the Grand Jury to find specific line items in the published budget since there is a lack of transparency in the structure of the published document. Based on funding from the State of California and Mendocino County to FCS, from these numbers the Grand Jury believes the County could increase staff positions and/or salaries in FCS, thus boosting morale and better serving families and children at risk. *Mendocino County Resolution 23-108 (See Exhibit 6)*

In conducting interviews, several themes emerged; they are difficult to quantify but were repeated often enough that they cannot be ignored.

FCS staff who were interviewed explained it can take up to six months from the time the Human Resources Department receives an application for a social worker position, to the time that the County Department of Social Services hires the social worker. This time lapse has been cited by those interviewed as a factor in losing interested and qualified candidates for social worker positions. The County maintains no pool of qualified candidates from which FCS can draw.

FCS has a 29.3% employee vacancy rate, and at the beginning of the year 2024, the FCS website was advertising several open positions in the Social Worker classifications I, II, III and IV. At the time of this report, of the 150 full-time and 3 part-time positions allocated, there are 45 vacant positions. Because of reduced staffing and a four-day workweek the caseload for individual workers is increased. In a nationwide study November 30, 2023, the Mayo Clinic cites excessive overtime as a classic recipe for burnout. Social Workers at FCS work extra hours in order to keep up with deadlines. For example, the overtime information for the week ending February 3, 2023

shows a staff of 58 worked 507 hours of overtime. Burnout is: “A state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity.” This was also referenced in the 2014-15 Civil Grand Jury Report. mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642. F10

Grand Jury interviews with FCS employees found that employees report a toxic work environment because of overwork caused by understaffing. This, in turn, causes difficulties in recruitment and retention and unfilled positions stress existing employees as they work to fulfill needs. For example, the department doesn’t have a Vocational Assistant—an individual who drives children to court-ordered visits or to and from school—so existing employees must step in to do it. There are three allocated Vocational Assistant positions, but they are unfilled. Staff noted, “When we don’t have staff to do that, we pull our Social Worker Assistants or even our Social Workers to provide transportation...who would otherwise be doing higher level work such as doing supervised visits or other supportive services,” including reports.

The culture at FCS was described by interviewed employees as “toxic,” with leadership that isn’t in touch with the work of those they are leading. Stress-related absenteeism, high employee turnover and medical leave are common, and multiple people describe FCS leadership as taking a “defensive posture” when faced with questions and criticism. The FCS approach to hiring social workers was described as “churn them out and burn them out.” Staffing needs are addressed by allowing and encouraging overtime for current workers rather than hiring additional staff. In many cases, hiring for job positions is on hold.

The Grand Jury recently became aware of the new Unity Team, formed in January 2024. This team is comprised of administrative and clerical representatives throughout DSS and has a mission to identify ways to increase efficiencies, explore training opportunities and build a stronger administrative team.

OMBUDS PROGRAM

Wikipedia defines an ombudsman, ombudswoman, ombudsperson or public advocate as a government employee who investigates and tries to resolve complaints, usually through recommendations or mediation. They are usually appointed by government.

Mendocino County’s Ombudsman provides only Aging and Adult Services, with no services for children. However, California DSS has an Ombudsperson for Family and Children’s Services that can provide independent investigation and advocacy. This fact is not generally shared with complainants and therefore remains an unused resource. fosteryoouthhelp.ca.gov

The Grand Jury Report of 2022-23, in addressing workplace culture, recommended studying the feasibility of an Ombuds program that would “include training of all management staff on the process of appropriate handling of reported issues, underlining program principles of impartiality, confidentiality, independence, and informality to build trust that those raising concerns are legally protected.” The office would track issues and complaints from the public, documenting and reporting actions taken to remedy problems. It would provide staff training and improve communication, awareness and leadership in all departments. The recommendation was to implement that program by March 2024, and the Board of Supervisors responded with agreement for study and implementation within the timeframe requested. To date and to our knowledge, this

program, or any part of it, has not been implemented as recommended. *Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury Report 2022-23*

CONCLUSION

Family and Children's Services is essential for children in need of protection. The people who work in FCS demonstrate knowledge of their jobs and passion for their mission; they know the health and welfare of our children is important now and in the future.

FCS is a "living tool" in a constant state of improvement to accommodate mandated statutory and regulatory changes, program and service practices. For example, in 1983, California SB 370 authorized a state-wide computer system called CWS/CMS, the California version of the Federal Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), to help social workers in recording and updating assessments, create and maintain case plans and manage the placement of children. In our investigation, the Grand Jury discovered the computer system was under-utilized in Mendocino County. *California SB 370 (Chapter 1294, Statutes of 1989)*

There are many internal efficiencies FCS can implement to improve current issues and situations if the agency can accept constructive criticism from and collaborate with primary stakeholders. Proper staffing is the single most critical item needed to create better outcomes.

FCS is attempting to do the entire job with just two-thirds of the workforce allocated, within a four-day workweek. A short, four-day workweek presents additional problems to the already stressed social workers who, because of short-staffing, are unable to complete mandated reports as required. As the FCS office is closed to the public and unresponsive on Friday to anything other than a true emergency, any situation needing attention and arising late Thursday or Friday is deferred until Monday. Delays are both possible and probable in that time, putting more children and families at risk.

The Grand Jury calculates that if one workday is removed from each week, in one month one week will have been lost. In light of the staff's present critical need for time, removing a week from the day-to-day operations of a department already short-staffed denies face-to-face public access to FCS services.

Grand Jury recommendations are realistic and achievable. They will result in better outcomes now and in the future. Past Grand Juries have addressed these issues; it appears to be time to act. The Grand Jury urges Family and Children's Services leadership and the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors to adopt the recommendations and thanks all involved for their cooperation in this investigation.

FINDINGS

The Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury finds that:

F1. No matter what efficiencies are put in place, the most effective measure by far is addressing low staffing issues. Low staffing leads to late reports, late filings, and extended time in the system that indisputably causes trauma and harms children.

F2. FCS employees demonstrate a genuine passion for the work of improving the lives of children. Short-staffing, missed deadlines and excessive overtime means they are unable to provide the quality of services desired. Consequently, staff suffers from moral injuries and burnout.

F3. 24% of children in foster care in Mendocino County are Native children. Since communication and attention to Native children and tribal issues is crucial, increasing attendance and participation in the established Round Tables could be productive.

F4. Out-of-county placement of dependent children negatively impacts the availability of social workers to perform work for children placed in-County because of the additional travel time needed to complete mandated visits.

F5. When a social worker is absent or the position is unfilled, there is no regular provision to fill the open position. This consistently contributes to a backlog of court reports to be filed with the court.

F6. Usually there are no consequences for or incentives to prevent FCS from filing late court reports.

F7. FCS regularly fails to meet the legally mandated timelines for the filing of court reports. This results in some court proceedings having to be continued, to the detriment of children, families, and the court.

F8. When FCS fails to meet legally mandated timelines for the filing of court reports they are not providing the children and families with due process, possibly creating a civil rights violation liability for Mendocino County.

F9. The System Improvement Plan has been out of date since 2021, contributing to a lack of accountability.

F10. Mendocino County does not have a QA department in FCS to provide quality services and correct systems that can lead to problems.

F11. Reducing overtime requires filling open staff positions and increasing salaries to boost morale and reduce burnout.

F12. It is difficult to decipher the FCS budget. Lack of specific line items causes lack of transparency and understanding of how the money is used.

F13. Based on funding from the State of California and Mendocino County to FCS, it appears that the County could increase staff positions and/or salaries in FCS, thus boosting morale and reducing burnout.

F14. Mendocino County Human Resources continues to struggle with recruiting new workers for FCS.

F15. Applications for new county employees within FCS can take up to six months to process, resulting in some interested and capable workers choosing to abandon the process and seek employment elsewhere. Advertised positions consistently have a short deadline for application.

F16. Contributing to short-staffing, there is lack of a pool of applicants who have expressed interest in positions.

F17. Understaffing at FCS leads to high caseloads and low worker morale, frequently contributing to high worker turnover and a lack of experienced workers.

F18. The current four-day workweek and Friday office closure within Mendocino County FCS are detrimental to public access to services.

F19. Social Worker Assistants regularly do field work rather than the Social Worker, who uses that time to complete mandated reports.

F20. Vocational Assistant positions could be used for transportation duty, but positions are unfilled.

F21. Currently, Mendocino County’s Office of the Ombudsman does not offer services to provide immediate advocacy for children prior to approaching FCS but offers only Aging and Adult Services.

F22. There is an underutilized state-wide computer system, CWS/CMS, developed to help social workers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury expects the following recommendations be completed by the dates indicated.

Therefore, the Civil Grand Jury recommends:

R1. FCS work with Human Resources to address and increase staffing. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F1**

R2. FCS management provide increased and ongoing therapy for staff desiring it. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F2**

R3. Since 24% of children in foster care are Native American, further attention be given by FCS to improve relations and communication with ICWA representatives. Involvement in established Round Tables needs to increase in order to assure adequate attention to Native children. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F3**

R4. Rather than sending Mendocino County social workers to make routine monthly visits to foster children in other states and counties, Mendocino County should explore arrangements for visits by

the Social Services agencies where Mendocino County foster children are placed. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F4**

R5. FCS management find ways to provide coverage for absent Social Workers to alleviate heavy caseloads for other staff members. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F5**

R6. FCS management develop incentives for staff members' timely reports. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F6**

R7. FCS management and social workers develop a strategic plan that will eliminate late court reports. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F7, F8**

R8. FCS expand their attractive and informative Face Book advertising to other websites, including Mendocino County's, for all job openings. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F14**

R9. FCS management be required to encourage immediate approval of a new SIP plan that addresses FCS staffing issues. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F9**

R10. Mendocino County implement a QA department in FCS. *(To be completed by May 2025)* **F10**

R11. FCS immediately fill vacant staff positions. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F11**

R12. Prior to the beginning of Fiscal Year 2025-26, the County budget provide more transparency concerning decoding and identifying line items and specifics of distribution and allocation of funds for FCS. *(To be completed by January 2025)* **F12**

R13. Mendocino County use monies in the FCS budget for staffing, reducing overtime and salary adjustments. *(To be completed by January 2025)* **F13**

R14. FCS work with County Human Resources to streamline the hiring process so it takes no more than two months between a candidate's application and a decision by the County. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F15, F16**

R15. Advertised positions should not have an application deadline. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F15**

R16. There be a permanent open application process to create a pool of qualified people for all FCS Vocational Assistants, Social Services Assistants, Social Worker, and Social Worker Supervisor positions *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F14, F15, F16**

R17. FCS address understaffing which leads to high caseloads and low worker morale, frequently contributing to high worker turnover, a toxic culture and lack of experienced workers. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F15, F16, F17**

R18. Mendocino County and FCS explore ways to keep the FCS offices open 5 days a week while allowing employees to maintain their four-day/ten-hour shifts by implementing staggered schedules. *(To be completed by January 2025)* **F18**

R19. Increase staffing, including the three unfilled Vocational Assistant positions, to alleviate the problem of using Social Workers and Social Worker Assistants for transportation of children. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F16, F19, F20**

R20. The Office of the Ombudsman be expanded to include services for children, allowing for immediate advocacy prior to approaching FCS. *(To be completed by May 2025)* **F21**

R21. FCS use all possible means to reference the California DSS Ombudsperson for information and assistance. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F21**

R22. FCS management provide training for the use of the California state-wide computer system, CWS/CMS case management system, and assure the system is used to its fullest advantage. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F22**

R23. The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors create a committee whose sole mission is to independently and accurately evaluate the status of timely court filings by FCS. They will report their findings quarterly to the Board of Supervisors. *(To be completed by October 2024)* **F7, F9, F10**

NOTE: The Civil Grand Jury has the expectation that each Recommendation will be addressed and implemented by the date indicated.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to California Penal Code §§ 933 and 933.05, the Civil Grand Jury requests each entity or individual named below to respond to the enumerated Findings and Recommendations within specific statutory guidelines.

Responses to Findings shall be either:

- The respondent agrees with the finding.
- The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.

Responses to Recommendations shall be one of the following:

- The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
- The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation.
- The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or

reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency where applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of the publication of the Civil Grand Jury report.

- The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.

REQUIRED RESPONSES - Within 90 days

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
(R10, R12, R13, R21, R23)

INVITED RESPONSES - Within 60 days

Mendocino County Executive Officer
(All findings, all recommendations)

Director of the Mendocino County Department of Social Services
(All findings, all recommendations)

Responses are to be sent to:

The Honorable Judge Ann Moorman
Mendocino County Superior Court
100 North State Street, Dept. E
Ukiah CA 95482

Office of the County Counsel
County of Mendocino
501 Low Gap Road, Room 1030
Ukiah CA 95482

Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury
County of Mendocino
501 Low Gap Road, Room 1030
Ukiah CA 95482

This report was issued by the Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury 2023-24.

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT CIVIL GRAND JURY FINDINGS

The Civil Grand Jury derives Findings from testimony and evidence. All testimony and evidence given to the Civil Grand Jury remains confidential by law, and it is the Civil Grand Jury's responsibility to maintain it. California Penal Code § 929 provides "... the name of any person, or facts that lead to the identity of any person who provided information to the Civil Grand Jury, shall not be released." Further, 86 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 101 (2003) prohibits Civil Grand Jury witnesses from disclosing anything learned during their appearance including testimony given. This is to ensure the anonymity of witnesses and to encourage open and honest testimony.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

California Department of Social Services Child Welfare Policies
<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-welfare-protection/policies>

California Department of Social Services Policies and Procedures
<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/ord/entres/getinfo/pdf/ssman1.pdf>

Welfare and Institutions Code §§ 10553, 10554, Reference: Sections 16501(c)
<https://law.justia.com/codes/california/code-wic/division-9/part-4/chapter-5/section-16501>

Welfare and Institutions Code and 45 CFR 1356.21(d).
<https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/45/1356.21>

California Welfare and Institutions Code § 300 inclusive
<https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/welfare-and-institutions-code/wic-sect-300/>

Resources for CASA advocates
<https://voicesforcasachildren.org/casa-advocate-resources/>

Mendocino County FCS
<https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/departments/social-services/children-s-services>

Child Welfare System
<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/pdf/AB636.pdf>

United States Bureau of Indian Affairs
<https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/dhs/icwa>
United States Code 25 USC Ch.21
<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title25/chapter21&edition=prelim>
[https://cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Additional-Resources/ICWA/ICWA%20Desk%20Reference whb 9-30-20.pdf?ver=2020-10-01-113414-850](https://cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Additional-Resources/ICWA/ICWA%20Desk%20Reference%20whb%209-30-20.pdf?ver=2020-10-01-113414-850)

California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) – Berkeley, October 2023
<https://ccwip.berkeley.edu/>

ACES
<https://CDC.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.htm>

Public Health Chronic Disease
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/CDSRB/Pages/Program-Landing2.aspx>

CA CDSS Manual
<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/letters-regulations/legislation-and-regulations/child-welfare-services-regulations> § 31-070
www.cdss.ca.gov - §§ 31-505, 31-320

California Welfare and Institutions code § 16501
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=WIC§ionNum=16501.

Encyclopedia of Social Work, published April 20, 2022 by Karun K. Singh, Rutgers University.
<https://socialwork.rutgers.edu/karun-k-singh>

American Journal of Preventive Health (146 4(245-255), Vincent J Felitti, Robert F Anda, Dale Nordenberg, David F Williamson, James S Marks

California Department of Social Services *Mission Statement*.

Mendocino County Resolution 23-108 Adopting the FY 2023-2024 Budget

“Job Burnout and How to Spot it and Take Action” November 30, 2023

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642>

Moral Injury Project

<https://moralinjuryproject.syr.edu/about-moral-injury/>

CWS/CMS computer system

SB 370 (Chapter 1294, Statutes of 1989)

Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury Report 1999-00 (*staff shortages*)

Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury Report 2001-02 (*staffing and training needed*)

Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury Report 2008-09 (*ICWA*)

Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury Report 2014-15 (*short-staffing, management*)

Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury Report 2016-17 (*review of 2014-15 Report on low staff morale*)

Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury Report 2022-23 (*children in peril*)

EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT 1 – CA WIC §§ 300(a), 366(a)

EXHIBIT 2 – Summary Data: Demographics by Ethnicity

EXHIBIT 3 – Children in Foster Care

EXHIBIT 4– Request for Waiver letter March 2023

EXHIBIT 5 – Request for Waiver letter April 2023

EXHIBIT 6 – County Budget FY 2023-24

CALIFORNIA WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

Section 300, Child Abuse and Neglect. Any child who comes within any of the following descriptions is within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court which may adjudge that person to be a dependent child of the court:

- (a) the child has suffered, or there is a substantial risk that the child will suffer, serious physical harm inflicted non-accidentally by the child's parent or guardian
- (b) the child has suffered, or there is a substantial risk that the child will suffer, serious physical harm or illness, as a result of the failure or inability of the child's parent or guardian to adequately supervise or protect the child
- (c) the child is suffering from serious emotional damage as a result of the conduct of the parent or guardian
- (d) sexual abuse
- (e) serious physical injury or abuse to a child under the age of 5
- (f) the child's parent or guardian caused the death of another child through abuse or neglect
- (g) child abandonment
- (h) the child has been freed for adoption
- (i) the child has been subjected to an act or acts of cruelty by the parent or guardian or a member of the child's household
- (j) the child's sibling has been abused or neglected and there is a substantial risk that the child will be abused or neglected.” *CA Welfare & Institution Code §300(a)*

Section 366(a) Delinquents and Wards of the Court

“(a) The status of every dependent child in foster care shall be reviewed periodically as determined by the court but no less frequently than once every six months, as calculated from the date of the original disposition hearing...the court shall determine the continuing necessity for and appropriateness of the placement, the extent of compliance with the case plan and the extent of progress which has been made toward alleviating or mitigating the causes necessitating placement in foster care and shall project a likely date by which the child may be returned to the home or placed for adoption or legal guardianship. *CA Welfare & Institution Code §366(a)*

2023 Demographics

Summary Data for County: Mendocino

Population

Population
 County: Mendocino
91,603 Persons
State: California 39,455,491 Persons

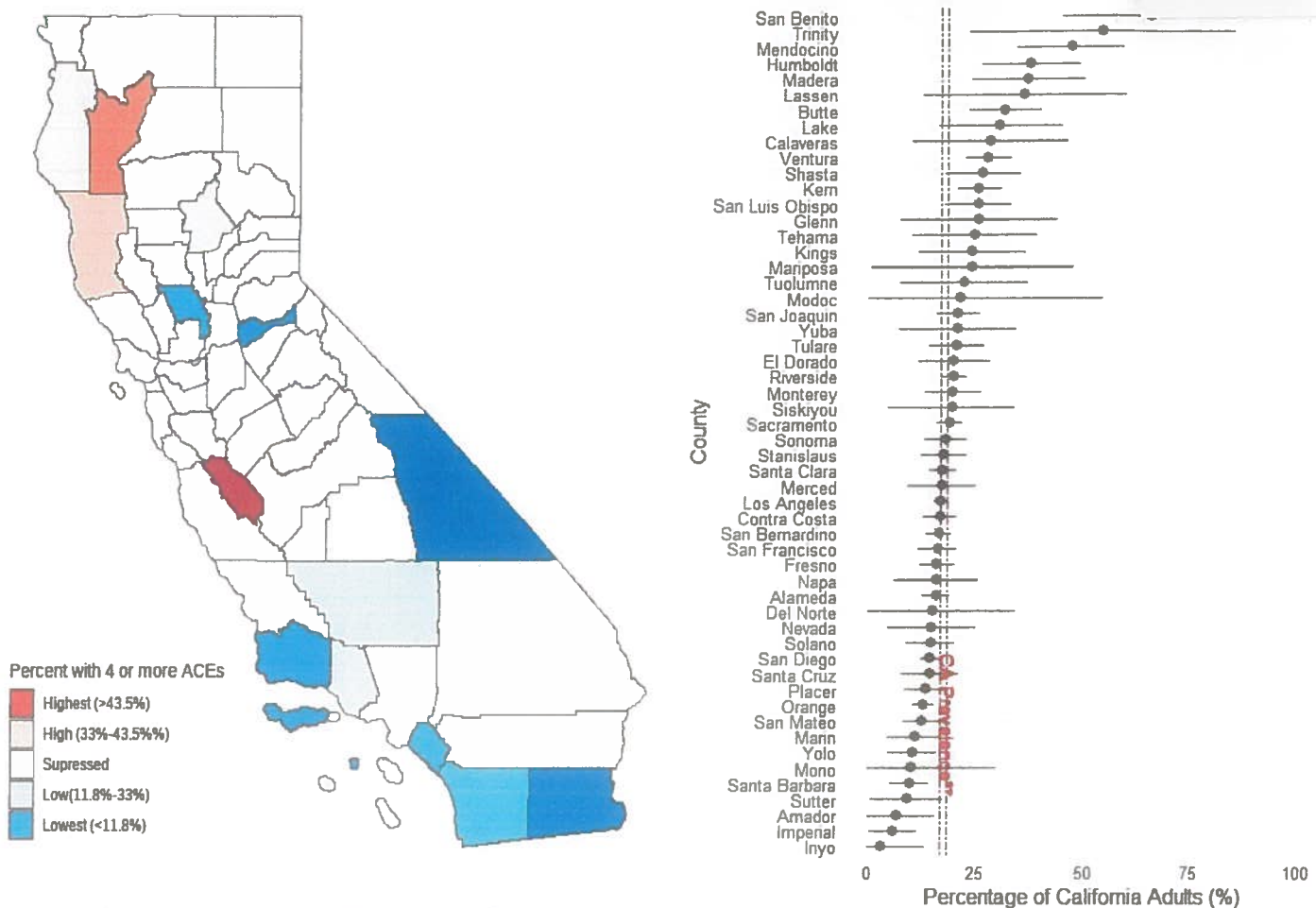
Percent Population Change: 2020 to 2023
 County: Mendocino
0.00%
State: California -0.21%

Race

Population by Race
 County: Mendocino

Population by Race	County: Mendocino		State: California	
	Persons	% of Population	Persons	% of Population
White	56,970	62.19%	15,620,692	39.59%
Black/African American	924	1.01%	2,223,654	5.64%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	6,217	6.79%	666,603	1.69%
Asian	2,565	2.80%	6,169,631	15.64%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	124	0.14%	159,396	0.40%
Some Other Race	13,127	14.33%	8,687,315	22.02%
2+ Races	11,676	12.75%	5,928,200	15.03%

Figure 6. Prevalence of Californian Adults with four or more ACEs by County, BRFSS 2015-2019



*Prepared by the California Department of Public Health, Chronic Disease Surveillance and Research Branch
 Suppressed Counties have prevalence estimates within overall California prevalence range

*Horizontal Lines represent 95% Confidence Intervals
 **CA Prevalence: 17.6% (16.9-18.3% 95% Confidence Interval)

Summary

Using the most recent BRFSS data in California to date, this report examines the burden of ACEs among the adult California population. The information underscores the patterns of association between ACEs, general health, specific chronic health problems encountered later in life, and the need to engage the challenge of ACEs through a broader understanding the demographic and geographic associations. CDC and CDPH have developed and made available resources to address ACEs through informed prevention and mitigation strategies that could reduce the occurrence of chronic illnesses and improve population health and safety^{3, 4, 5}.

References

- ¹ CDC Violence Prevention: Risk and Protective Factors. (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/riskprotectivefactors.html>)
- ² Cronholm, P.F., Forke, C.M., Wade, R., Bair-Merritt, M. H., Davis, M., Harkins-Schwarz, M., Pachter, L. M., & Fein, J. A. (2015). Adverse Childhood Experiences: Expanding the Concept of Adversity. *Am J Prev Med*, 49(3):354-361. doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2015.02.001
- ³ Injury and Violence Prevention (IVP) Branch. Essentials for Childhood (<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/SACB/Pages/EssentialsforChildhood.aspx>)
- ⁴ Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences. CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/aces/>)
- ⁵ ACEs Aware. About ACEs Aware. California Department of Health Care Services, 2020. (<https://www.acesaware.org/>)

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

California Department of Public Health
 Center for Healthy Communities
 Chronic Disease Surveillance and Research Branch

E-mail ✉: BRFSShelp@cdph.ca.gov | Web 🌐: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/CDSRB/Pages/BRFSS.aspx>

American Indian Youth Placed in Emergency Transitional Care in Mendocino County Compared to Other Races/Ethnicities		
Race/Ethnicity	Percent of Youth Placed in Emergency Transitional Care, 2020 - 2022*	Percent of Mendocino County Population
Hispanic or Latino	12.5%	27.2%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	29.2%	6.6%
Black or African American	4.2%	1.1%
White (Not Hispanic or Latino)	54.2%	62.9%
Other	0.0%	2.7%
total	100%	100%
Source: Mendocino County case management and child welfare data and 2021 U.S. Census data population estimates. Percentages rounded to the nearest tenth of a percentage point.		
*Data as of October 22, 2022		

California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP)		University of California at Berkeley		California Department of Social Services, Research and Data Insights Branch		Children in Foster Care		Agency Type: Child Welfare		Mendocino							
Point In Time																	
Jan 1, 2022		Apr 1, 2022		Jul 1, 2022		Oct 1, 2022		Jan 1, 2023		Apr 1, 2023		Jul 1, 2023		Oct 1, 2023		Jan 1, 2024	
Ethnic Group		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Black	M																
White	M	44.8	44.8	45.8	46.2	44.0	45.9	44.9	46.9	45.9	44.9	44.9	46.9	45.9	44.9	45.9	45.9
Latino	M	24.6	23.1	21.8	23.6	26.3	25.0	26.4	26.3	25.0	26.4	26.4	26.3	25.0	26.4	32.2	32.2
Asian/P.I.	M				0.0												0.0
Nat Amer	M	27.1	28.3	29.3	26.9	25.8	24.1	23.6	21.1	24.1	23.6	23.6	21.1	24.1	23.6	19.0	19.0
Missing	M																
Total	M	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Data Source: CWS/CMS 2023 Quarter 4 Extract																	
Program version: 2.00 Database version: 789366ED																	
Please consult the methodology for detailed placement type definitions.																	

Point In Time																	
Jan 1, 2022		Apr 1, 2022		Jul 1, 2022		Oct 1, 2022		Jan 1, 2023		Apr 1, 2023		Jul 1, 2023		Oct 1, 2023		Jan 1, 2024	
Ethnic Group		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Black	M																
White	M	91	95	103	98	92	101	97	100	101	97	97	100	100	94	94	94
Latino	M	50	49	49	50	55	55	57	56	55	57	57	56	56	66	66	66
Asian/P.I.	M				0										0	0	0
Nat Amer	M	55	60	66	57	54	53	51	45	53	51	51	45	45	39	39	39
Missing	M																
Total	M	203	212	225	212	209	220	216	213	220	216	216	213	213	205	205	205
Data Source: CWS/CMS 2023 Quarter 4 Extract																	
Program version: 2.00 Database version: 789366ED																	
Please consult the methodology for detailed placement type definitions.																	



Mendocino County
Department of Social Services
Healthy People, Healthy Communities
Bekkie F. Emery, Director
Kelsey Rivera, Assistant Director
Family & Children's Services
Jena Conner, Deputy Director

MENDOCINO COUNTY
social
services

March 30, 2023

Kelly Winston, Bureau Chief
 Child Welfare Policy & Program Development Bureau
 744 P Street, M.S. 8-11-87
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Request for Exemption of Staff Regulatory Educational and Experience Requirements for Emergency Response and Family Maintenance Social Workers and Supervisors

Dear Ms. Winston,

In reviewing our current Family & Children's Services emergency response and family maintenance services staffing against Division 31-070.11 and 31-070.12 Regulations, we are not yet in compliance with the requirements that 1) 50% of the professional staff providing emergency response and family maintenance services shall possess a master's degree in social work, or its equivalent in education and/or experience as certified by the county civil service commission and 2) 100% of the supervisors of staff providing emergency response and family maintenance services shall possess a master's degree in social work, or its equivalent in education and/or experience as certified by the county civil service commission. Therefore, we are requesting an additional three-year waiver through April 30, 2026 as our current exemption expires April 30, 2023.

Social Workers: As of March 8, 2023, we have 33 of our 51 full time social worker positions filled. All 33 of our social workers provide emergency response services, either as their full-time assignment or after business hours, weekends and holidays and/or carry mixed caseloads which include family maintenance cases. However, only 9 of the 33 social workers (27%) have master's degrees in social work or its equivalent in education and/or experience as certified by our County Civil Service Commission. These positions are classified as Social Worker IV A/B/C/D. The remaining 24 social workers who provide emergency response services, either as their full-time assignment or after business hours, weekends and holidays and family maintenance services are classified as Social Worker I, II or IIIs. The entry level Social Worker I position requires a bachelor's degree in social work or related social or behavioral science field or its equivalent in education and/or experience as certified by our County Civil Service Commission; Social Worker IIs and IIIs have additional experience. As of March 8, 2023, the 24 Social Workers I/II/III are as follows: 8 SW Is, 3 SW IIs and 13 SW IIIs. One of our SW IIIs is in an MSW programs.

Supervisors: All our social work supervisors supervise staff providing emergency response services, either as their full-time assignment or after business hours, weekends and holidays and/or mixed caseloads which include family maintenance cases. As of March 8, 2023, we have 7 of our 12 social work supervisor positions filled. Only one of the current supervisors (14%) has a master's degree in social work and is classified as a Social Worker Supervisor II A. This

supervisor oversees Family Maintenance (FM), Family Reunification (FR) and Permanency Placement (PP) caseloads and provides after-hours emergency response supervision. Our Senior Program Manager who oversees our emergency response services countywide has an MSW and the deputy director also has an MSW.

Since our last waiver request in 2020, we have continued to work with our County Human Resources Department and Board of Supervisors to increase the salaries for the social worker and social worker supervisor positions. This includes adoption of a 10% higher pay premium for Social Workers and Social Worker Supervisors whose regular full-time assignment is in Family and Children's Services, above the pay for Social Workers and Social Worker Supervisors employed in other departments, in the 2022-2023 labor agreement between the County and Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which represents social workers and social worker supervisors. In addition, our Board of Supervisors has approved, in concept, use of the time-limited Emergency Response state general funding to pay an additional differential to social workers and social workers assigned to emergency response investigations and after-hours on-call response. However, implementation of the Emergency Response funding plan has not yet been agreed to by SEIU and therefore, not yet implemented. Unfortunately, we continue to have difficulty recruiting and retaining higher level social workers and social worker supervisors to do difficult, complex and very stressful work when there are other less stressful and less complex professional social work job options available in the county and with community agencies.

As a retention strategy, we have continued to provide paid clinical supervision for our master's level social workers and social worker supervisors who are pursuing clinical licensure. We also continue to provide clinical opportunities for these staff to gain therapy hours with a community-based organization. We also support and provide field placements for staff who are pursuing their MSW. We currently have one Emergency Response social worker in an MSW program and is in a field placement carrying a small FM/FR/PP caseload.

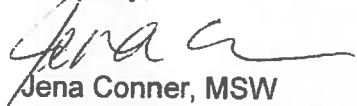
Pursuant to Division 31-070.212, Mendocino County submits the following plan to meet the requirements and time frame by which we expect to obtain compliance:

- Continue to encourage current social worker employees to apply for BSW and MSW programs.
 - We continue to do this through collaboration with Schools of Social Work in our region including Humboldt State University and California State University Long Beach which has a distance learning program in Sonoma County. Representatives from these programs provide informational meetings. However, due to limited Title IV-E slots in the MSW programs, not all staff who wish to pursue an MSW have been able to secure spots in Title IV-E MSW programs.
- Continue to support current social worker employees who are in MSW programs by providing opportunities for them to complete their required field work internships in-house.
 - We currently have one social worker in an MSW program.
- Continue to provide field work internship opportunities to students pursuing their MSWs but are not currently employed by Mendocino County Family & Children's Services as appropriate.
 - During school year 2022-2023, we have an Extra Help Social Worker I employed with our department two days a week as a field placement while they complete their MSW.

- Continue to actively recruit MSWs through advertising. Our County Human Resources and Social Services Staff Resources departments have been extensively advertising for our vacant positions through print ads, various social media platforms and hosting booths at many community events and career fairs, but this has not yet produced many social worker or social worker supervisor applicants at this time.

We continue to strive to be compliant with the staffing requirements within the next 3 years, by 2026. Please advise if you need additional information to approve our waiver request.

Sincerely,



Jena Conner, MSW
Deputy Director, Family & Children's Services
(707) 463-7971
connerj@mendocinocounty.org



Bekkie Emery
Social Services Director
(707) 463-7761
emeryb@mendocinocounty.org



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

CALIFORNIA HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

April 24, 2023

Jena Conner, MSW
Deputy Director, Family & Children's Services
(707) 463-7971

Bekkie Emery
Social Services Director
(707) 463-7761

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR DEFERRAL OF STAFF REGULATORY EDUCATIONAL
AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS**

Dear Ms. Conner and Ms. Emery,

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has reviewed your letter dated March 30, 2023, requesting deferral of the requirements of the Child Welfare Services Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Division 31, Sections 31-070.11 through 31-070.13 staffing regulations. These are the applicable requirements:

- 50 percent of the professional staff providing emergency response services and family maintenance services shall possess a master's degree in social work (MSW);
- 100 percent of the supervisors of staff providing emergency response and family maintenance services shall possess an MSW; and
- Any emergency response or family maintenance services staff not having an MSW shall possess a bachelor's degree in social work.

After reviewing your letter regarding the qualifications of your staff, we agree that Mendocino County does not currently meet the educational requirements as defined in regulations.

The CDSS supports the objectives you have identified in your conversation with CDSS detailed below:

- Mendocino will continue to encourage current social worker employees to apply for BSW and MSW programs with collaboration amongst Schools of SW in the

regions including Humboldt State and CSU Long Beach. Sonoma County also has a distance learning program for folks that are interested.

- Mendocino will continue to support current social worker employees who are in MSW programs by providing opportunities for them to complete their required field work internships in-house.
- Continue to provide field work internship opportunities to students pursuing their MSWs but are not currently employed by Mendocino County Family and Children Services as appropriate.
- Continue to actively recruit MSWs through advertising. They have been extensively advertising for vacant positions in many ways.

The CDSS recognizes the challenge to recruit MSW and BSW positions in a rural area and is granting your request in accordance with the Child Welfare Services MPP Division 31 Sections 31-070.11 and 31-070.13. This deferment is for a three-year period ending on **April 24, 2026**. During your deferment period, the Department will periodically check in with the county for progress and/or updates and to provide technical assistance when needed. Please contact the Family Centered Safety and Support Bureau at (916) 651-6160, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



KELLY WINSTON, Chief
Child Welfare Policy and Program Development Bureau

COUNTY OVERVIEW

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE FY 2023-24 BUDGET

RESOLUTION NO. 23-108

RESOLUTION OF THE MENDOCINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ADOPTING THE FINAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-24

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Mendocino conducted budget hearings in compliance with Sections 29080 and 29081 of the Government Code; and

WHEREAS, said hearings have been completed, during which time all additions and deletions to the County of Mendocino Fiscal Year 2023-24 Final Budget were made as authorized by Section 29088 of the Government Code; and

WHEREAS, at this time, it is the desire of the Board of Supervisors to adopt a Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget by reference for all government entities within its jurisdiction.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED in accordance with Sections 29088 through 29092 of the Government Code, the Final Budget of the County of Mendocino for Fiscal Year 2023-24 is hereby adopted as follows:

GENERAL COUNTY BUDGET

1. Salaries and Employee Benefits	\$163,978,812
2. Services and Supplies	93,341,935
3. Other Charges	90,220,240
4. Fixed Assets	
a. Land	0
b. Structure and Improvements	34,271,508
c. Equipment	462,996
5. Expenditure Reimbursement and Operating Transfer Out	19,699,442
6. Provisions for Contingencies – General Fund	0

Subtotal General County Operating Budget **\$401,974,933**

DEBT SERVICE

1. Salaries and Benefits	\$ 0
2. Services and Supplies	72,228
3. Other Charges	10,519,665
4. Fixed Assets	
d. Land	0
e. Structure and Improvements	0
f. Equipment	0
5. Expenditure Reimbursement and Operating Transfer Out	3,552,022
6. Provisions for Contingencies – General Fund	0

Subtotal Debt Service **\$ 14,143,915**

Total Final Budget **\$416,118,848**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the appropriations for each budget unit which constitutes the respective totals for each of the objects and sub-objects of the expenditures listed in the proposed budget and, as altered through additions or subtractions, are hereby adopted by reference.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the means of financing the expenditure program will be by monies derived from revenue to accrue, Fund Balance Available, Reserves, Certificates of Participation proceeds, and ad valorem taxes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that once the Auditor-Controller has closed the actual year end for FY 2022-23, differences between the actual and estimated fund balance shall be placed into the Fund Balance Available account.

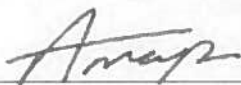
RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE FY 2023-24 BUDGET

The foregoing Resolution introduced by Supervisor Williams, seconded by Supervisor Mulheren, and carried this 20th day of June, 2023, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors McGourty, Mulheren, Haschak, Gjerde, and Williams
NOES: None
ABSENT: None

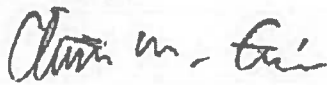
WHEREUPON, the Chair declared said Resolution adopted and SO ORDERED.


ATTEST: DARCIE ANTLE
Clerk of the Board



Deputy

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
CHRISTIAN M. CURTIS
County Counsel

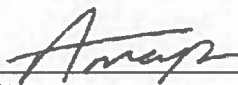




GLENN MCGOURTY, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

I hereby certify that according to the provisions of Government Code Section 25103, delivery of this document has been made.

BY: DARCIE ANTLE
Clerk of the Board



Deputy