



California - Child and Family Services Review

County Self-Assessment

2023 - 2027



California – Child and Family Services Review Signature Sheet

For submittal of: CSA ☒ SIP ☐ Progress Report ☐

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SIP Period Dates	5/12/2024-5/12/2029
Outcome Data Period	Q3 2023
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INTRODUCTION

The California-Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) was designed to improve outcomes for children in out of home placement in the categories of child safety, permanency, and well-being. The C-CFSR process includes the Peer Review, County Self-Assessment (CSA), and 5-Year System Improvement Plan (SIP).

This 2023 Tuolumne County Self-Assessment (CSA) is a collaboration between Tuolumne County Child Welfare and the Tuolumne County Probation Department (Probation), in partnership with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). The Tuolumne County C-CFSR Team utilized the CSA process to identify ways to strengthen outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families.

To gather information for the CSA, Child Welfare, Probation and their partners conducted data analysis and case reviews, and held focus groups, a Stakeholder Meeting, and a Peer Review. Tuolumne County contracted with Social Change Partners, LLC (SCP) to help facilitate the development of the CSA, engage stakeholders, and conduct a Peer Review.

The Peer Review was held on April 30-May 2, 2024. The C-CFSR Team used the Q3, 2023 Berkeley CWS/CMS Dynamic Data Report to identify the outcome measures to review during the Peer Review. This baseline data was used to select the following focus areas of the Peer Review: Child Welfare Services (CWS) outcome measure S2: Recurrence of Maltreatment and Probation outcome measure P1: Permanency within 12 months for children entering care. Seven CWS Peer Counties participated: Amador, Colusa, Merced, Modoc, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Yuba. There were four Probation Peer Counties: Lake, Lassen, Nevada, and Siskiyou. Nine cases were reviewed, including 6 CWS cases and three Probation cases. The results of the Peer Review helped the C-CFSR Team to further explore needs and strengths and develop strategies for improvement.

SCP conducted a total of seven focus groups with required stakeholders between February 4, 2024, and April 23, 2024. These focus groups included CWS Social Workers and Probation Officer, CWS and Probation Supervisors and Leadership, Front End Support Staff, General Support Services Staff, Child Welfare and Probation Youth, Child Welfare and Probation Parents, and Resource Families and Caregivers.

A Stakeholder Meeting was held on March 12, 2024, hosted by the Chicken Ranch Rancheria Me-Wuk Indian of California, in Jamestown. The C-CFSR Team made every effort to ensure that County stakeholders who could provide critical insight into opportunities to strengthen outcomes for children and families in Tuolumne County were in attendance. The Stakeholder Meeting was a success; representatives from agencies across the County attended the meeting and contributed extensive feedback. The Meeting was attended by over 29 essential stakeholders.

With regards to data analysis, Tuolumne County's child welfare and probation systems are relatively small. The County's CWS/CMS reports from UC Berkeley include very few cases, requiring masking of certain data and meaning that changes for one or two children or a family group can dramatically change the data. Although the numbers are small, the required data analysis combined with subsequent Stakeholder and Peer feedback allowed the C-CFSR Team to gain a detailed understanding of the indicators and the factors influencing them.

The C-CFSR Team compiled data and findings from data analysis, focus groups, the Stakeholder Meeting, and the Peer Review to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities within Tuolumne County's child and family serving systems. These findings are detailed throughout this document.

C-CFSR PLANNING TEAM & CORE REPRESENTATIVES

A. C-CFSR TEAM

The C-CFSR Team are the leaders of the C-CFSR process. The Team is comprised of staff from Child Welfare, Probation, and CDSS, and key consultants. All required Core Representatives participated in the C-CFSR Team. The Team met at least weekly beginning in November 2023.

B. CORE REPRESENTATIVES

Agency	Name	Title
Health and Human Services Agency	Michelle Clark	Assistant HHSA Director
Department of Social Services	Tou Yang	Social Services Director
	Michie Anderson	Children's Agency Manager
	Reiko Craig	Children's Agency Manager
	Amy Arndt	General Services Unit Deputy Director
	Alex Parnell	General Services Unit Senior Staff Services Analyst
	Jennifer Lynch	General Services Unit Supervising Staff Services Analyst
Probation	Kevin Parr	Adult Division Manager
	Joelle Kewish	Juvenile Division Manager
California Department of Social Services	Erica Magee	Analyst, Children's Services System Improvement Section
	Freny Dessai	Analyst, Prevention Network Development Unit
Social Change Partners	Reed Connell	Consultant
	Jessica Haspel	Consultant
	Mitch Findley	Consultant
	Ashley De Alba	Consultant

C. PARTICIPATION OF CORE REPRESENTATIVES

All the required Core Representatives named above actively participated in planning and implementing the C-CFSR process. The C-CFSR Team met at least weekly, while scheduling additional ad hoc meetings as needed.

The Team developed and approved a workplan that included all elements detailed in the C-CFSR Instruction Manual and clarified through ongoing communication with CDSS staff. The Team reviewed the previous CSA, SIP, and Annual Progress Reports, and assigned Team members to lead the development of the sections of this report. It also planned the focus groups, Stakeholder Meeting, and Peer Review. It identified audiences,

potential forums, outreach strategies, developed scripts, and arranged logistics. The focus groups were conducted both during business hours and after hours. The focus groups were facilitated by SCP. The Stakeholder Meeting was held during the day at a central location. Child Welfare and Probation issued formal invitations to all required and recommended stakeholders and conducted additional outreach. The agenda included data presentations and a series of facilitated conversations. CDSS and SCP staff helped facilitate and document the Meeting.

Throughout the process of developing this CSA, the Core Representatives listed above contributed knowledge, time, and expertise to ensure that the process provided an up-to-date and actionable assessment of Tuolumne County's Child Welfare and Probation systems.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Tuolumne County conducted a large Stakeholder Meeting and seven focus groups to gather feedback and recommendations for the County Self-Assessment and System Improvement Plan.

The Stakeholder Meeting was held on Tuesday, March 12, 2024, at Chicken Ranch Casino in Jamestown, CA. The Meeting was attended by over 29 essential stakeholders, including:

- Child Welfare Services (CWS) Administrators, Supervisors and Social Workers
- The Chief Probation Officer, Assistant Chief Probation Officer, and Juvenile Probation Division Manager
- Tuolumne County Sheriff's Office
- Tuolumne County California Highway Patrol
- Tuolumne County Superior Court
- Tuolumne County Behavioral Health (TCBH)
- Tuolumne County Public Health (TCPH)
- Tribal Community Leaders
- Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools (TCSOS)
- Jamestown Family Resources Center (JFRC) Jamestown School District
- Child Abuse Prevention Council members
- Community-Based Organizations providing services to child welfare and probation-involved families
- Foster Family Agencies
- Community advocates and other service providers

The agenda included an overview of current CWS and Probation data and both large and small group discussions. Small group discussions focused on the following topics in which everyone rotated through each station:

- Probation
- Child Welfare
- Prevention
- Services and Resources
- Cross-Agency Collaboration and Partnership
- Cultural Supports and Training.

Large groups focused on the following topics in which each person selected one topic to have a focused conversation about:

- Placement Stability
- Permanency
- Reunification
- Resource Families

Social Change Partners and California Department of Social Services staff facilitated and documented the event, including all large and small group discussions.

Tuolumne County also conducted seven focus groups to collect stakeholder feedback. The following focus

groups were held between February 2, 2024, and April 23, 2024:

- CWS Social Workers and Probation Officer
- CWS and Probation Supervisors and Leadership
- Front End Support Staff
- General Support Services Staff
- Child Welfare and Probation Youth
- Child Welfare and Probation Parents
- Resource Families and Caregivers

Analysis of the feedback from the Stakeholder Meeting and focus groups identified the following key themes:

Prevention: Stakeholder elevated the County's increased focus on prevention as a strength. They highlighted initiatives like the Road to Resilience program, Differential Response, the new Integrated System of Care (ISOC), and RED teams as examples. Additionally, Probation's efforts to divert away from the juvenile court whenever possible were noted. While the increased focus on prevention was elevated as a strength, stakeholders also noted a need to increase awareness of prevention resources and ensure they are easily accessible.

Workforce challenges: Child Welfare has focused substantial attention on addressing turnover and improving recruitment and retention of staff as a focus of the current System Improvement Plan. However, stakeholders elevated that significant challenges related to child welfare staffing shortages and high turnover rates still remain. These challenges were noted to be the most pronounced with child welfare support staff and social workers. Staffing challenges can lead to high caseloads, difficulties reaching or hearing back from staff/social workers, inconsistent documentation of casework, delays in case handling, and more.

Variability in Child Welfare Case Management: Stakeholders noted inconsistencies in case management and case planning processes across different workers and cases. These inconsistencies can lead to unequal service delivery and may in part be impacted by workforce challenges. Case management inconsistencies likely resulted in stakeholders elevating some areas as both strengths and challenges.

Family Finding and Engagement: Stakeholders elevated strong initial engagement efforts as a strength while noting there is a need for more consistent and clear communication and engagement throughout the life of a case. The proactive approach of identifying and engaging natural supports through family finding techniques ensures that children have access to a broader network, which can enhance their stability and well-being. However, inconsistent follow-up with natural supports to assess their ongoing ability to contribute can lead to gaps in the child's support network.

Homes/placement matching: During focus groups and the stakeholder meeting, stakeholders noted that there are not enough homes, leading to children being placed outside the County. Out-of-county placements create challenges with visitation and connecting to resources. Stakeholders also elevated a need for more supports for and training of caregivers. A lack of homes for the probation-supervised children in foster care was specifically elevated as a challenge during the stakeholder meeting.

Cultural Sensitivity: Compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act and tailored services and supports for Native American communities were highlighted as major strengths during stakeholder engagement. However, stakeholders noted that other cultural groups do not consistently receive the same level of tailored services. Stakeholders recommended ensuring there are more bilingual staff, providing services in multiple languages,

and training staff in cultural sensitivity and staff biases based on race, family structure, or history within the system.

Child and Family Team Meetings: Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs) were noted for their role in fostering collaboration and ensuring that plans meet the specific needs of each family. Many stakeholders noted that CFTMs were highly effective but elevated that the scheduling and timeliness of CFTMs is a current challenge, which can undermine their effectiveness. The CFT facilitator position is currently vacant, which seems to be a contributing factor to this. Additionally, stakeholders noted a need for more follow up after meetings on actions or needs identified.

Additional feedback included, but was not limited to the following:

- There is a significant drop-in support once children are reunified with their families, leading to challenges in maintaining family stability. Enhanced follow-up and sustained support are recommended.
- Strong partnerships with law enforcement and educational entities underscore a collaborative approach to child welfare and probation services. Partnership with behavioral health services was also noted to be a strength for child welfare.
- Service gaps create challenges. Stakeholders noted gaps, for example, in mental health/counseling services, substance use treatment, transportation, and housing in the County.
- The bureaucratic nature of processes often leads to delays that can extend the time children and families spend in uncertainty. Additionally, parents reported sometimes feeling left in the dark about decisions affecting their families.
- Extensive outreach and educational initiatives help at-risk families gain an understanding of system processes and available support. These efforts are crucial in early prevention and in building a supportive community network around families.
- Some stakeholders elevated a need for increased support for staff in addressing and managing conflict or safety concerns that may arise with parents during parent/child visitation.
- Significant investment in staff training and development, particularly in areas like Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM) and safety organized practice (SOP) models, was elevated as a strength aimed at ensuring that staff are well-equipped to handle diverse and complex cases.
- Some case plans, particularly those from Drug Dependency Courts, are not tailored to the individual needs of the family or behaviorally based, potentially setting families up for failure rather than facilitating successful reunification.
- The family visitation center was highlighted as a model facility providing a conducive environment for family interactions.

While Tuolumne County Child Welfare and Probation demonstrate a range of strengths, addressing the challenges noted above will improve services and outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system. This feedback is further considered throughout this report and will be used to inform the development of the System Improvement Plan.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

A. GENERAL COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

Tuolumne County is located on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada mountain range. The County is located south of Calaveras County and Alpine County, north of Mariposa County and to the west of Mono County. Stanislaus County borders Tuolumne to the west. The northern half of Yosemite National Park is in the eastern part of the County. The County seat, and only incorporated city, is Sonora. Tuolumne County has a total area of 2,274 square miles of which 2,221 square miles is land and 54 square miles (2.4%) is water.

Population

Tuolumne County's population has shown modest fluctuations in recent years, reflecting the dynamic nature of the community. According to recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, the County's population stood at 55,205 residents in 2012, experienced a slight decrease to 53,899 by 2017, and then rebounded to 54,993 by 2022. This represents a percent growth of approximately -0.384% from 2012 to 2022. In contrast, California has undergone significant population growth over time, albeit with varying growth rates. While the State's population continues to expand, the rate of growth has moderated in recent years due to factors such as shifts in immigration patterns, declining birth rates, and outward migration to other states. Economic considerations, housing affordability, and quality of life factors have also influenced population dynamics in California. Tuolumne County, on the other hand, has displayed more stable and localized population trends, reflecting its unique demographic profile amidst the broader context of California's population dynamics. Additionally, Tuolumne County is home to two federally recognized Native American Tribes: the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians and the Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians of California.

Table 1: General Population of Tuolumne County

	2012	2017	2022
California	37,325,068	38,982,847	39,356,104
Tuolumne County	55,205	53,899	54,993

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 2017, and 2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. [Data.Census.gov](https://data.census.gov)

Table 2: Demographic of General Tuolumne County, by Age and Gender

Population by Gender	Estimate	Percent
Female	26,626	48.4%
Male	28,367	51.6%
Population by Age		
Under 5 years	2,383	4.3%
5 to 9 years	2,847	5.2%
10 to 14 years	2,438	4.4%
15 to 19 years	2,542	4.6%
20 to 24 years	2,705	4.9%
25 to 34 years	6,636	12.1%
35 to 44 years	6,102	11.1%
45 to 54 years	6,029	11.0%
55 to 59 years	3,780	6.9%
60 to 64 years	4,544	8.3%

65 to 74 years	8,886	16.2%
75 to 84 years	4,113	7.5%
85 years and over	1,988	3.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. DP05 ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates.

In comparing the findings of the previous Community Self-Assessment (CSA) report with the current data, significant changes in Tuolumne County's demographic landscape emerge. The median population age, previously reported at 48.2 years, has seen an increase to approximately 57 years, indicating a substantial shift in the age distribution within the County over the reporting period. Despite this, certain trends observed in the previous CSA remain, particularly regarding the challenging job market. Many younger adults continue to seek residency outside the County in pursuit of employment opportunities, a trend that has persisted and is reflected in the declining proportion of youth under the age of 19 (from 20.1% six years ago to 18.5% currently). Meanwhile, the proportion of individuals aged 60 years and older remains strong, comprising approximately 32.6% of the population, underscoring the area's appeal to those nearing retirement. Gender distribution has shown relative stability, with slightly more males than females in Tuolumne County, accounting for 51.6% and 48.4% of the population respectively. Youth under the age of 19 comprise 18.5% (n=10,210) of the overall population, while individuals aged 20 to 24 years represent 4.9%. Additionally, the new data highlights significant representation in older age brackets, with individuals aged 65 to 74 years constituting 16.2% of the population. Those aged 25 to 34 years and 35 to 44 years each represent 12.1% and 11.1%, respectively. These shifts emphasize the evolving demographic trends in Tuolumne County and underscore the importance of adapting community strategies to meet changing population needs.

Table 3: Demographics of General Tuolumne County Population, by Race 2022

Race	Total	Percent
White	50,210	91.3%
Black or African American	1,160	2.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native	2,380	4.3%
Asian	1,647	3.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	505	0.9%
Some Other Race	3,601	6.5%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	7,079	12.9%
Mexican	4,273	7.8%
Puerto Rican	438	0.8%
Cuban	19	0.0%
Other Hispanic or Latino	2,349	4.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. DP05 ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. Note: Please note that according to the ACS, individuals who identify their origin as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino may be of any race. Therefore, when interpreting the data, it's important to understand that the percentage of Hispanic/Latino population is not combined with racial categories.

Tuolumne County's population primarily identifies as being of one race, with 91.3% of the total population identifying as White according to the 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. This represents a slight decrease from the previous figure of 95.8%, indicating a growing diversity within the County. Individuals identifying as Black or African American make up 2.1% of the population, while those identifying as American Indian and Alaska Native comprise 4.3%. The Asian population accounts for 3.0% of the total, and the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population represents 0.9%. Furthermore, individuals identifying as Some Other Race constitute 6.5% of the population. The demographic data also reveals a significant Hispanic/Latino population, with nearly 12.9% of the population identifying as Hispanic or Latino (of any race). Among them, the majority identify as Mexican (7.8%).

Table 4: Languages Spoken at Home, Tuolumne County, 2022

	Total	Percent
Population 5 years and over	52,610	--
Speak only English	48,891	92.9%
Language other than English	3,719	7.1%
Spanish	2,365	4.5%
Other Indo-European languages	686	1.3%
Asian and Pacific Islander languages	564	1.1%
Other languages	104	0.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. DP02 ACS Social Characteristics in the United States

According to the US Census Bureau, 2018 - 2022 ACS 5-Year Narrative Profiles, approximately 7.1% of people at least five years old living in Tuolumne County spoke a language other than English at home. Of those who spoke other languages, 4.5% spoke Spanish, 1.3% spoke other Indo-European languages, 1.1% spoke Asian and Pacific Islander languages, and 1.1% spoke other languages. The California Department of Education provides educational demographics for K-12 students in California Counties, including enrollment reports that identify students who are English Learners (EL) and Fluent English Proficient (FEP). Table 5 shows the 10 most common languages spoken by EL and FEP students for the 2022-23 School Year.

Table 5: Most Commonly Enrolled Students who were EL and FEP

Language	Total Number of EL and FEP Students	Percent of Total Enrollment that is EL and FEP
Spanish	212	3.63%
Filipino (Pilipino or Tagalog)	14	0.24%
Mandarin (Putonghua)	8	0.14%
Other non-English languages*	5	0.09%
Russian	5	0.09%
Khmer (Cambodian)	5	0.09%
Portuguese	4	0.07%
Hmong	3	0.05%
Arabic	3	0.05%
Italian	2	0.03%

Source: California Department of Education, DataQuest (2024). Educational Demographics Office, Tuolumne County, Language Group Data - Countywide, County Code 31 — School Year 2022-23. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/lc/CountyLC.aspx?cYear=2022-23&TheCounty=55+TUOLUMNE>

*Other non-English languages category encompasses all languages spoken that are not included in the 65 languages reported by California Schools

Household Income, Employment, and Poverty

According to the Employment Development Department (EDD), the top five employment industries in 2021 were Service-Providing, Private Service-Providing, Government, Local Government, Trade Transportation and Utilities, and Private Education and Health Services.

Table 6: Income for Tuolumne County (Inflation-Adjusted Dollars), 2022

	California		Tuolumne County	
Total households		13,315,822	22,831	
Less than \$10,000	589,276	4.4%	644	2.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	427,356	3.2%	1,341	5.9%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	741,692	5.6%	1,765	7.7%

\$25,000 to \$34,999	799,511	6.0%	1,572	6.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1,153,474	8.7%	2,740	12.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,829,952	13.7%	3,876	17.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1,595,276	12.0%	2,976	13.0%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2,369,975	17.8%	4,224	18.5%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,429,049	10.7%	1,791	7.8%
\$200,000 or more	2,380,261	17.9%	1,902	8.3%
Median household income (dollars)	91,905	(X)	70,432	(X)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. DP03 ACS Selected Economic Characteristics.

The household income distribution within Tuolumne County showcases distinct socioeconomic characteristics. Of the 22,831 households surveyed, the median income was \$70,432, which is \$21,473 or 23.4 percent less than the median income in the state of California. This is a significant increase from the previously reported median household income of \$44,751 in the last CSA. This shift is accompanied by a notable change in the distribution of household incomes, with higher concentrations of households now earning between \$35,000 and \$149,999 compared to the previous range of \$25,000 to \$99,999. Additionally, while affluent households earning \$200,000 or more are fewer in comparison to California's overall distribution, Tuolumne County exhibits a relatively smaller income disparity, with a narrower range of income percentages across different brackets. Almost 35.3% of all households make less than \$50,000. Despite the County's median household income falling below the state average, these findings underscore the unique socioeconomic landscape of Tuolumne County, reflecting its economic diversity and the varying income levels within the community.

Based on data from the American Community Survey Narrative Profiles for 2018-2022, Tuolumne County faces significant challenges, especially for children and families. During this period, 11.2 percent of children under 18 years old were living below the poverty level. Overall, 11.4 percent of the population was living in poverty. Additionally, 13.6 percent of individuals aged 18 to 64 were also experiencing poverty, which directly affects families with working-age adults. Moreover, 10.4 percent of households in Tuolumne County received assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Within these households, 32.2 percent had children under 18, highlighting the reliance of families on government support to meet their nutritional needs. Additionally, 25.9 percent of all households receiving SNAP were headed by a female householder with no spouse present, underscoring the economic vulnerability of single-parent families. Furthermore, 27.7 percent of SNAP-receiving households had two or more workers in the past 12 months, suggesting that even families with multiple working members struggle to afford basic necessities. The data reveals the critical role of government assistance programs in alleviating poverty and underscores the importance of continued support for vulnerable populations, especially children and families facing economic challenges.

Table 7: Tuolumne County Subdivisions Population, Income, and Housing Estimates

Tuolumne Subdivisions	Population 2023	Growth Rate/Year 2020-2023	Median Household Income	Median Home Value	Average Household Size
Tuolumne County	55,584	-0.2%	\$68,952	\$385,178	2.27
East Sonora-Phoenix Lake	13,756	0.0%	\$76,853	\$404,631	2.34
Groveland	4,924	0.5%	\$73,812	\$428,514	2.18
Sonora	19,681	-0.1%	\$60,836	\$368,311	2.22
Twain Harte-Tuolumne City	17,223	-0.1%	\$69,549	\$380,067	2.27

Source: HomeTownLocator (2024). Tuolumne County CA Data & Demographics (As of July 1, 2023). Retrieved from <https://california.hometownlocator.com/ca/tuolumne/>

Table 7 provides an overview of Tuolumne County's population, household income, home value, and growth rates between 2020 and 2023. According to the latest estimates, Tuolumne County has a population of approximately 55,584 people, with an average household size of 2.27. The median household income in the county is \$68,952, and the median home value is \$385,178. The population growth rate has slightly declined at an annual rate of -0.2% from 2020 to 2023. This economic data reflects both the stability and the challenges within the region.

Within Tuolumne County, specific areas such as East Sonora-Phoenix Lake, Groveland, Sonora, and Twain Harte-Tuolumne City showcase varied economic profiles. East Sonora-Phoenix Lake has a stable population of 13,756 and boasts the highest median household income at \$76,853 and a median home value of \$404,631. Groveland, while smaller with a population of 4,924, has shown a positive growth rate of 0.5% per year, has a median household income of \$73,812, and has the highest median home value in the County at \$428,514. Conversely, Sonora, the largest subdivision with a population of 19,681, has a median household income of \$60,836 and a home value of \$368,311; it has a slight population decline of -0.1% per year. Twain Harte-Tuolumne City, with a population of 17,223, mirrors the overall County trends with a median income of \$69,549, a home value of \$380,067, and a minor annual decline of -0.1%. These statistics suggest that while certain areas within Tuolumne County, like Groveland and East Sonora-Phoenix Lake, are experiencing economic resilience and growth, other areas face stagnation or slight decline.

Housing and Homelessness

The median property value in Tuolumne County has increased by \$73,700 since the last CSA, rising from \$259,800 to \$333,500. The homeownership rate in Tuolumne County is 67.9%. Tuolumne County has a total of 31,447 housing units, with 72.6% (22,831 units) occupied, leaving a significant 27.4% (8,616 units) vacant, which is significantly higher than the state rate of 7.7% vacant units. This high vacancy rate indicates potential challenges in attracting or retaining residents. The homeowner vacancy rate is 1.4%, and the rental vacancy rate is 6.0%. This high vacancy rate is also likely due to the number of units that are private vacation homes or recreational rentals. The median rent is now \$1,129, which is \$193 higher than the last CSA, which reported a median rent of \$936 per month. Currently, there are a limited number of low-income housing complex options throughout the County; two in Columbia, three in Jamestown, one in Tuolumne, one in Groveland, and three in Sonora.

Homelessness and affordable housing have remained persistent challenges in Tuolumne County, as noted in the previous CSA. Additionally, during the development of this CSA, homelessness and housing were highlighted in focus groups and in the peer review as significant barriers for families involved in child welfare, potentially delaying family reunifications. Various stakeholders acknowledged that numerous programs have been implemented and recently enhanced to address homelessness, offering multiple referral options. However, relocating to more rural areas for affordable housing brings additional challenges such as transportation and less access to services, impacting reunification efforts. A lack of affordable housing and homelessness continue to be obstacles in case plans and programs that courts and social workers develop for families. As a result, Tuolumne County has prioritized efforts to address homelessness by creating a centralized Homeless Services Unit. This Unit, staffed with two social workers, consolidates all homeless programs providing emergency, transitional, and supportive housing. New facilities have been acquired and are being upgraded to support this initiative. The County's Housing Continuum of Care process involves providing case managers to connect individuals to services, addressing housing needs, and mitigating homelessness barriers. Department of Social Services initiated a triage or resource committee with community-based partners and Behavioral Health to aid in providing appropriate community resources to all received referrals and placement in County operated housing. The Homeless Outreach Support Team includes DSS homeless services, the Sheriff's Office, the Fire Department, the Police Department, and the Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency (ATCAA). They conduct outreach to those in the system and those seeking help.

A majority of occupied housing units in Tuolumne County are owner-occupied, at 74.4%, indicating a strong preference or capacity for homeownership. The median value of owner-occupied housing units is \$259,800, reflecting the County's relatively lower cost of living. Among owner-occupied units, 59.4% have a mortgage, while 40.6% are mortgage-free, showing a substantial portion of homeowners who have fully paid for their homes. The median monthly owner costs for housing units with a mortgage are \$2,149. For those without a mortgage, the costs are \$752. These figures suggest that mortgage holders in Tuolumne County face relatively affordable housing costs. Additionally, the median gross rent is \$1,129, which is lower than many other areas, contributing to the overall lower cost of living in the County.

To address transportation challenges, Tuolumne County has implemented various strategies over recent years, including providing bus passes and gas cards. In Child and Family Team meetings, transportation is often discussed to see if the parents' existing support system can assist. Foster parents are willing to help with transporting children, and social workers and support staff assist by picking up parents for visits with their children and for court appearances. These efforts aim to alleviate the impact of housing and transportation challenges on family stability and reunification.

Table 8: Housing Costs and Availability, 2022

	California		Tuolumne County	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Housing Occupancy				
Total housing units	14,424,442		31,447	
Occupied housing units	13,315,822	92.3%	22,831	72.6%
Vacant housing units	1,108,620	7.7%	8,616	27.4%
Homeowner vacancy rate	0.9	(X)	1.4	(X)
Rental vacancy rate	4.0	(X)	6.0	(X)
Housing Tenure, Value, Mortgage Status				
Occupied housing units	13,315,822		22,831	
Owner-occupied	7,407,361	55.6%	16,991	74.4%
Owner-occupied units - Median (dollars)	409,300	(X)	259,800	(X)
Housing units with a mortgage	5,067,173	68.4%	10,089	59.4%
Housing units without a mortgage	2,340,188	31.6%	6,902	40.6%
Renter-occupied	5,908,461	44.4%	5,840	25.6%
Selected Monthly Owner Costs (SMOC)				
Housing units with a mortgage	5,067,173	(X)	10,089	(X)
Median (dollars)	2,759	(X)	2,149	(X)
Housing units without a mortgage	2,340,188	(X)	6,902	(X)
Median (dollars)	732	(X)	752	(X)
Gross Rent				
Occupied units paying rent	5,719,244	(X)	5,360	(X)
Median (dollars)	1,856	(X)	1,129	(X)

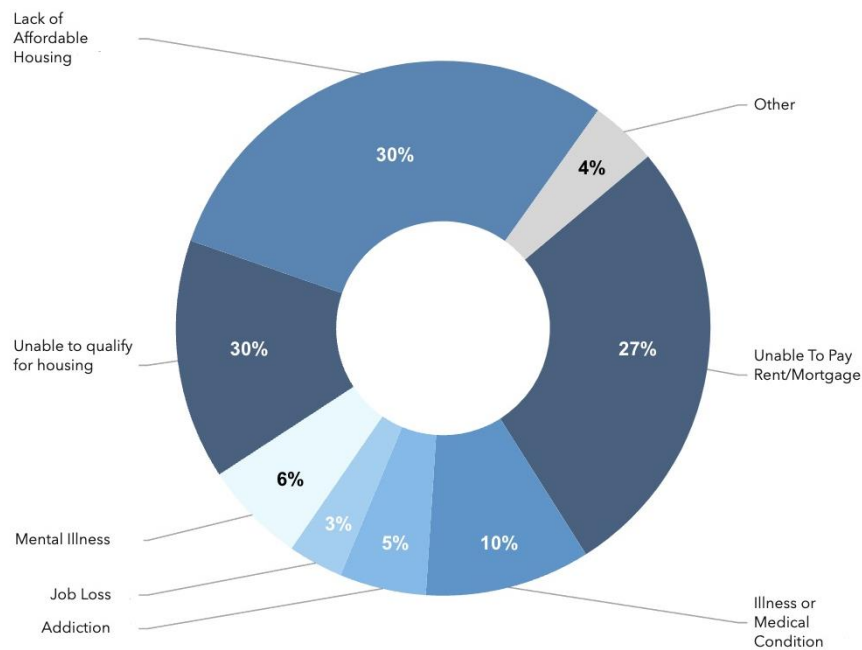
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. DP04 ACS Selected Housing Characteristics.

Homelessness in Tuolumne County data, derived from individuals receiving services from the Department of Social Services (DSS)¹, shows that the most recent Point-In-Time count from March 2024 identified 903

¹ Tuolumne County Homeless Services Virtual Bulletin Board. Homeless Statistic Dashboard - Data for Individuals receiving Services from Department of Social Services. URL: <https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1505/Homeless-Services-Virtual-Bulletin-Board>

homeless individuals in the County. DSS participates in various programs to support individuals experiencing homelessness, each with its own eligibility requirements. Once a client referral is received, they are assessed for eligibility and assigned to a case manager who matches them with an appropriate DSS program. If clients are not eligible for any DSS program, they are referred to a partner agency. In the timeframe of this report, DSS received 733 referrals. Of these, 325 were not eligible and were referred to other agencies, while 406 were assigned to DSS. Temporary housing was provided to 359 individuals, and 174 transitioned to permanent housing. However, 67 individuals were dismissed from the program or exited on their own.

Figure 1: Reasons for Homelessness, March 2024



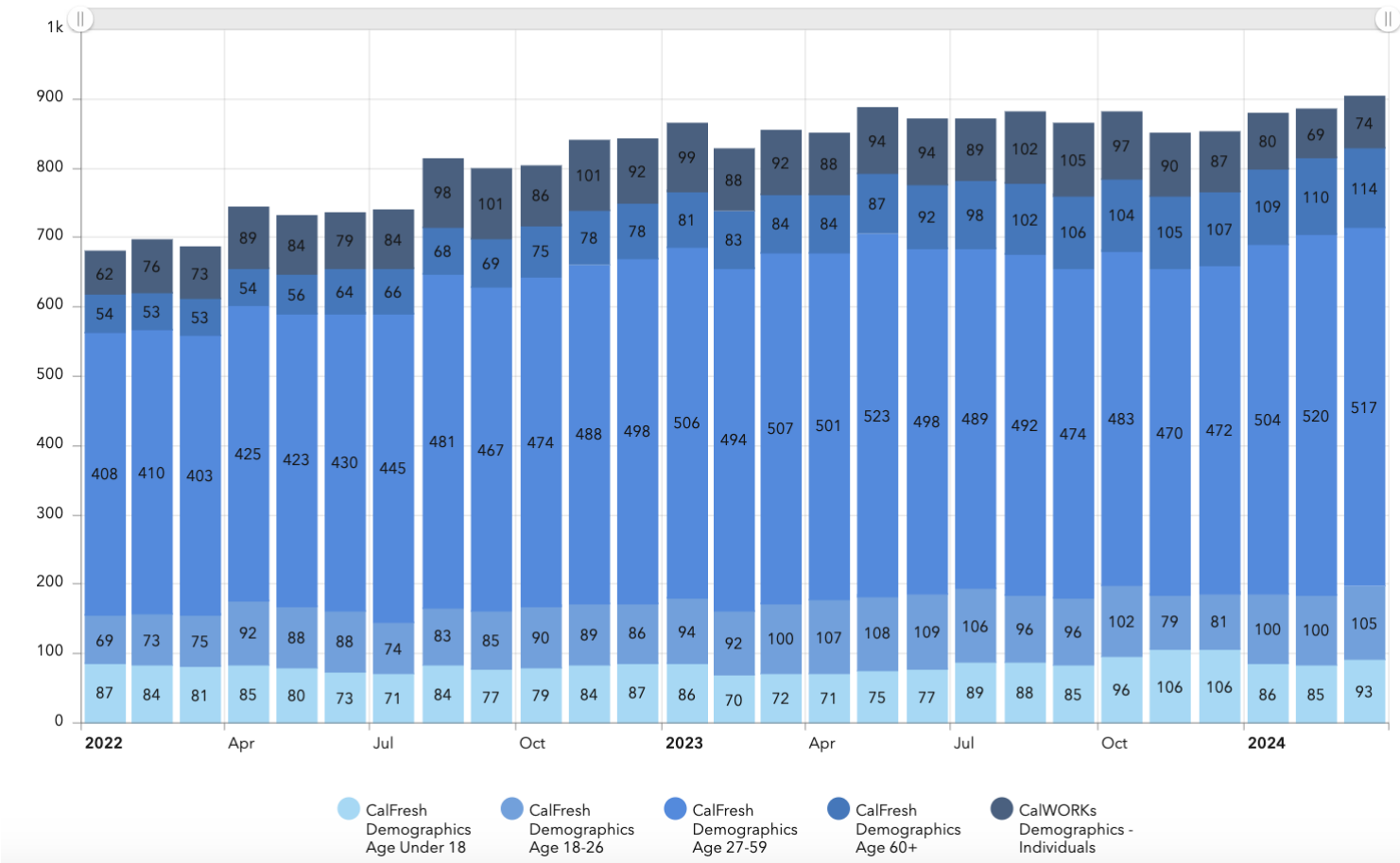
Source: Tuolumne County Homeless Services Virtual Bulletin Board. Homeless Statistic Dashboard - Data for Individuals receiving Services from Department of Social Services. URL: <https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1505/Homeless-Services-Virtual-Bulletin-Board>

People are homeless for many reasons in Tuolumne County. The most significant factor is the lack of affordable housing, cited by 30% of individuals experiencing homelessness. Additionally, 30% of people are unable to qualify for housing and 27% are unable to pay rent or mortgage, contributing significantly to homelessness. Employment issues, such as being unemployed or working but earning a low income, further exacerbate the problem. Addiction, disabilities, and mental illness together account for a smaller portion of homelessness cases, at 5% and 6% each respectively, but highlight the need for substance abuse support services and comprehensive mental health services. Other reasons, accounting for 4% of cases, could include probation or recent release from jail, as well as individuals who identify homelessness as a choice. These varied reasons underscore the complexity of homelessness and the necessity for comprehensive strategies to address it.

The data in Figure 2 reviews homelessness demographics by age from CalFresh/CalWORKs and covers the period from January 2022 to May 16, 2024. It reveals critical trends that highlight the challenges faced by young children and families. One of the most concerning trends is the significant presence of young children among the homeless population. The data consistently shows a notable number of children under 18 experiencing homelessness, which is alarming given the profound impact that instability can have on their development and well-being. The number of homeless children fluctuates monthly, with some periods showing significant spikes.

Families, particularly those with children, are significantly impacted by homelessness in Tuolumne County. The data indicates that many families rely on CalFresh and CalWORKs programs to meet their basic needs. Despite these supports, the number of homeless families has steadily increased over the years, with the most recent data showing peaks in 2023 and 2024. While the focus is on young children and families, it is also important to note the overall increase in homelessness in the County. The number of individuals experiencing homelessness has risen significantly since 2018, with recent counts often exceeding 100 individuals. Middle-aged adults (aged 27-59) represent the largest demographic among the homeless population, frequently showing numbers in the high 400s to 500s. Additionally, there is a consistent presence of elderly individuals (aged 60+), further emphasizing the widespread nature of the issue.

Figure 2: Number of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness Since 2022: Demographics from CalFresh/CalWorks Data



Tuolumne County Homeless Services Virtual Bulletin Board. Homeless Statistic Dashboard - Data for Individuals receiving Services from Department of Social Services.
URL: <https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1505/Homeless-Services-Virtual-Bulletin-Board>

Table 9: Employment Status 2022

Employment Status	California		Tuolumne County	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Population 16 years and over	31,601,862		46,547	
In labor force	20,168,662	63.8%	22,727	48.8%
Civilian labor force	20,011,853	63.3%	22,724	48.8%
Employed	18,729,798	59.3%	20,829	44.7%
Unemployed	1,282,055	4.1%	1,895	4.1%

Armed Forces	156,809	0.5%	3	0.0%
Not in labor force	11,433,200	36.2%	23,820	51.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. DP04 ACS Selected Housing Characteristics.

Table 9 above shows that 48.8% of the population 16 years and over are in the labor force, of which 4.1% are listed as unemployed. The unemployment figure is lower than that reported in the previous CSA of 5.6%, indicating an improvement in the County's employment situation. The current unemployment rate matches the State's rate of 4.1%, demonstrating parity with statewide employment trends.

There is a high percentage of residents who are listed as not in the labor force, with 51.2% of the population falling into this category, compared to 36.2% for the State. As noted earlier in the report, 16.2% of Tuolumne County's population is between the ages of 65 to 74, which is the highest percentage among all 10-year age groups. This demographic detail supports the assumption that a significant portion of those not in the labor force are likely retired individuals. Such an assumption would also be consistent with other data in this section. Additionally, 0.0% of the population is listed in the Armed Forces, compared to 0.5% for the state.

Table 10: Number of Recipients of CalWORKs Benefits: 2011 - 2015

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
California	955,581	883,625	838,277	755,317	722,241
Tuolumne County	846	749	738	602	523

Source: California Dept. of Social Services, CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report; California Dept. of Finance, Population Estimates and Projections (May 2020).

Both California and Tuolumne County have experienced a downward trend in the number of CalWORKs recipients over the five-year period from 2016 to 2020. While the overall State saw a decrease of approximately 24.4%, Tuolumne County experienced a more significant decline of about 38.2%. The number of CalWORKs recipients in 2020 was down to 523 from 846 cases in 2016 and 1,051 cases in 2014 as reported in the last CSA. This suggests that, relative to the State, Tuolumne County has seen a more substantial reduction in the number of individuals and families receiving CalWORKs assistance.

B. CHILD MALTREATMENT INDICATORS

Child welfare involvement is often influenced by various socio-economic factors that can impact a child's well-being and the likelihood of their family coming into contact with the child welfare system. Numerous individual, relational, community, and societal factors can contribute to the risk of child maltreatment in a community. The following data provides essential context for assessing child welfare and probation agency performance, identifying potential unmet needs, and evaluating the availability of resources in the County to meet those needs. It should be noted that Tuolumne County has not had a 2-1-1 call service. However, Tuolumne County will be launching one in fiscal year 24/25.

Child and Adolescent Health

The Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Division in the California Department of Public Health creates indicator-specific dashboards for pregnancy and birth outcomes. Poor birth outcomes such as low weight, inadequate prenatal care, higher rates of infant mortality, and higher rates of teen pregnancy may be linked to socioeconomic disparities, including low socioeconomic status of the parents and family systems, single parenthood, low educational achievement among parents, and age of the parents. Very young parents may be less likely to have the monetary and social independence afforded to older parents. Thus, younger parents are at an increased risk of pregnancy and birth complications. The maternal and child health indicators in Table 11 below for Tuolumne County show several critical points. The infant mortality rate is 8.38 per 1,000 live births,

which is significantly higher than the California average of 4.16. Adequate prenatal care was received by 85.9% of mothers, which is a positive indicator. There were 38 births to adolescent mothers aged 15 to 19. Additionally, 6.98% of infants were born with low birthweight.

Table 11: Child and Adolescent Health Data

Maternal and Child Health Indicators for Tuolumne County	
Infant Mortality Rate (2018-2020), Infant mortality rate is an important indicator of the overall health of a community because it is associated with many factors, including access to quality medical care, health status, and general living conditions.	Rate per 1,000 live births Tuolumne: 8.38 California: 4.16
Adequate Prenatal Care (2020-2022), Access to early, regular, and culturally appropriate prenatal care that takes into account the broader context of a patient's environment (i.e., where they work, live, and play), improves the chances of a healthy pregnancy and delivery and can help reduce health and health care inequalities.	85.9% of mothers received adequate prenatal care in Tuolumne County
Births to Adolescent Mothers, 15 to 19 years old (2020-2022) Many young parents endure complex structural constraints, public health programs work to provide young people and their communities with opportunities to improve health and well-being.	38 adolescent births
Low Birthweight (2020-2022), birth weight is critical to infant health. An average newborn usually weighs about 8 pounds. Infants born with abnormal birth weight are likely to experience short- and long-term health consequences.	6.98% of infants were born low birthweight

Source: California Department of Public Health (2024). Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Division - Birth Outcomes Dashboards. Retrieved from <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/surveillance/Pages/default.aspx#backtoTop>

Family Constellations

In Tuolumne County, the percentage of married individuals is relatively low, with 22.1% of females and 32.5% of males currently married. The County has a notably high percentage of widowed residents, comprising 49.1% of females and 46.1% of males. A significant portion of the population has never married, with 17.1% of females and 15.2% of males falling into this category. Additionally, the separation rates are higher in Tuolumne County, with 10.4% of females and 3.8% of males separated.

Table 12: Marital Status by Gender

	Female		Male	
	California	Tuolumne	California	Tuolumne
Population 15 years and over	16,116,648	22,894	15,999,954	24,431
Now married, except separated	34.5%	22.1%	41.0%	32.5%
Widowed	45.1%	49.1%	48.0%	46.1%
Divorced	2.2%	1.3%	1.6%	2.4%

Separated	7.5%	10.4%	2.1%	3.8%
Never married	10.7%	17.1%	7.4%	15.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. DP02 ACS Social Characteristics.

The data in Table 13 highlights significant trends regarding poverty levels among families and individuals in Tuolumne County. Overall, 6.7% of all families live below the poverty level. Among families with related children under 18 years, this rate increases to 10.0%, and for those with children under 5 years only, it is 7.8%.

Married couple families in Tuolumne County have relatively lower poverty rates, with 3.8% living below the poverty level. This rate is slightly lower for families with children under 18 years at 3.7% and drops to 2.5% for those with children under 5 years only. However, a critical area of concern is the high poverty rate among families with female householders and no spouse present. In Tuolumne County, 26.3% of these families live below the poverty level. This rate is even higher among those with related children under 18 years, at 32.3%, and reaches a striking 59.0% for families with children under 5 years only. These trends indicate a substantial economic challenge for single-parent households, particularly those led by females with young children.

Table 13: Percentage of Families and People Whose Income in the Past 12 Months in Below the Poverty Level

	California	Tuolumne
All families	8.5%	6.7%
With related children of the householder under 18 years	12.5%	10.0%
With related children of the householder under 5 years only	9.7%	7.8%
Married couple families	5.1%	3.8%
With related children of the householder under 18 years	6.7%	3.7%
With related children of the householder under 5 years only	4.3%	2.5%
Families with female householder, no spouse present	20.3%	26.3%
With related children of the householder under 18 years	29.2%	32.3%
With related children of the householder under 5 years only	30.3%	59.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. DP03 ACS Selected Economic Characteristics.

Education

The main trend in Tuolumne County's data on school enrollment shows that a significant proportion of students are enrolled in elementary and high school, with 38.0% in elementary school (grades 1-8) and 24.3% in high school (grades 9-12). Notably, there is a higher percentage of young children enrolled in nursery school or preschool (7.1%) and kindergarten (6.0%) compared to state averages. However, the percentage of students enrolled in college or graduate school is lower at 24.6%, indicating fewer older students pursuing higher education compared to the state's 30.7%.

Table 14: School Enrollment

	California		Tuolumne County	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Population 3 years and over enrolled in school	10,132,531	(X)	10,187	(X)
Nursery school, preschool	52,4401	5.2%	725	7.1%
Kindergarten	489,356	4.8%	608	6.0%
Elementary school (grades 1-8)	3,864,990	38.1%	3,874	38.0%
High school (grades 9-12)	2,144,625	21.2%	2,475	24.3%
College or graduate school	3,109,159	30.7%	2,505	24.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. DP02 ACS Social Characteristics in the United States

The school enrollment demographics for Tuolumne County for the most recent 2023-24 school year show a total of 5,803 public school students. This represents a decrease from the last CSA, which reported 6,076 students enrolled in school. The majority of students in Tuolumne County are White, accounting for 68.6% of the total student population. Hispanic or Latino students make up 19.9%, while American Indian or Alaska Native students represent 2.4%. Additionally, 5.6% of students identify as two or more races. Smaller percentages of the student population include African American (0.7%), Asian (0.6%), Filipino (0.6%), and Pacific Islander (0.2%). The data reflects a predominantly White student population with notable representation from Hispanic or Latino and multi-racial students.

Table 15: School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2023 - 2024 School Year

	African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Filipino	Hispanic or Latino	Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races, Not Hispanic	Not Reported	Total
Tuolumne	0.7%	2.4%	0.6%	0.6%	19.9%	0.2%	68.6%	5.6%	1.5%	5,803
State Total	4.9%	0.4%	9.9%	2.2%	56.1%	0.4%	20.3%	4.6%	1.1%	5,837,690

Source: DataQuest. The California Department of Education. County Enrollment by Ethnicity - Enrollment Data 2023-24. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthGrd.aspx?cds=55&agglevel=county&year=2023-24>

Table 16: Graduation Rate and School Climate Data, 2022-2023 Four Year Adjusted Cohort

	Cohort Students	Cohort Graduation Rate	Dropouts	College-Going Rate	Chronic Absenteeism Rate (23-24 SY)
Tuolumne	512	88.5%	48	50.0%	26.6%
Statewide	495,492	86.2%	40,823	62.2%	24.9%

Source: DataQuest. The California Department of Education. Graduation and Dropout Data, Post-Secondary Enrollment, School Climate Data. Retrieved URL: <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

The data for Tuolumne County from the 2022-2023 four-year adjusted cohort shows several important insights regarding graduation rates and school climate. The cohort included 512 students, with a high graduation rate of 88.5%. However, there were 48 dropouts. The college-going rate stands at 50.0%, indicating that half of the graduating students pursued higher education. Chronic absenteeism is determined by the total count of all students who were absent for 10% or more of the days they were expected to attend during the academic year. The chronic absenteeism rate for the 2023-2024 school year is relatively high at 26.6%.

Compared to the State, Tuolumne County residents have higher rates of high school graduation and obtaining an associate's degree. The largest college in Tuolumne County is Columbia Community College with 525 graduates in 2021.² There is no four-year university in Tuolumne County, with the nearest campus, California State University, Stanislaus, 65 miles away. The most common level of education among the population aged 25 years and over is "some college, no degree," which accounts for 32.3% of the population. This is followed by high school graduates (including equivalency) at 24.7%. Additionally, 11.0% of the population has an associate's degree, and 16.5% have a bachelor's degree.

Table 17: Educational Attainment

	California	Tuolumne County
Population 25 years and over	26,842,698	42,078
Less than 9th grade	8.7%	1.6%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	6.9%	5.9%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	20.4%	24.7%

² <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/tuolumne-county-ca/#education>

Some college, no degree	20.1%	32.3%
Associate's degree	8.0%	11.0%
Bachelor's degree	22.1%	16.5%
Graduate or professional degree	13.8%	7.9%
High school graduate or higher	84.4%	92.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	35.9%	24.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. DP02 ACS Social Characteristics.

Health and Disabilities

Most residents in Tuolumne County have health insurance, with a coverage rate of 94.0%. Of those insured, 63.6% have private insurance, and 49.8% are covered by public insurance. A small percentage, 6.0%, remain without health insurance.

Table 18: Health Insurance Coverage

	California		Tuolumne County	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Civilian non-institutionalized population	38,874,540		52,419	
With health insurance coverage	36,122,473	92.9%	49,273	94.0%
With private health insurance	24,955,091	64.2%	33,327	63.6%
With public coverage	14,947,518	38.5%	26,129	49.8%
No health insurance coverage	2,752,067	7.1%	3,146	6.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. DP02 ACS Social Characteristics.

Table 19: Disability Status of the Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population

	California		Tuolumne County	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population with a disability	4,275,158	11.0%	11,142	21.3%
Under 18 years with a disability	320,151	3.7%	539	5.8%
18 to 64 years with a disability	2,022,803	8.3%	4,795	16.9%
65 years and over with a disability	1,932,204	33.5%	5,808	39.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

There are higher rates of residents with disabilities (21.3%) in Tuolumne County than in the State (11.0%). Adults 18-64 years rank at 16.9% as compared to 8.3% for California. As shown in Table 19 above, 5.8% of children under 18, have a disability. Table 20 below shows that 904 school aged children are enrolled in Special Education and most of those students (59.3%) participate in regular general education classroom settings at least 80% of the school day.

Table 20: Special Education Enrollment

	Special Education Enrollment	Regular Class 80 Percent or More of the Day	Regular Class 40 to 79 Percent of the Day	Regular Class 39 Percent or Less of the Day
Tuolumne	904	59.3%	26.2%	10.5%
Statewide	793,985	58.1%	15.9%	17.4%

Note: The California Department of Education adjusted their special education enrollment data and the 2022-2023 SY was the only year available. Source: DataQuest. The California Department of Education. Graduation and Dropout Data, Post-Secondary Enrollment, School Climate Data. Retrieved URL: <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

Table 21 below shows that the most common disabilities among special education students are Specific Learning Disabilities (332), Other Health Impairment (161), Autism (163), and Speech or Language Impairment (158).

Table 21: Special Education by Disability, 2022-2023 SY

Disability Category	Special Education Enrollment	Regular Class 80 Percent or More of the Day	Regular Class 40 to 79 Percent of the Day	Regular Class 39 Percent or Less of the Day
Autism (AUT)	163	48.5%	27.0%	18.4%
Deaf (DF)/Hearing Impairment (HI)	*	*	*	*
Deaf-Blindness (DB)	*	*	*	*
Emotional Disturbance (ED)	45	51.1%	15.6%	20.0%
Established Medical Disability (EMD)	*	*	*	*
Hard of Hearing (HH)	*	*	*	*
Intellectual Disability (ID)	20	5.0%	20.0%	70.0%
Multiple Disabilities (MD)	*	*	*	*
Orthopedic Impairment (OI)	*	*	*	*
Other Health Impairment (OHI)	161	58.4%	31.1%	8.7%
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	332	58.1%	37.0%	4.8%
Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)	158	86.7%	2.5%	2.5%
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	*	*	*	*

Data Source: California Dept. of Education, Special Education Division custom tabulation (Dec. 2016).

Substance Use

Substance use disorders (SUDs) pose a significant challenge for child welfare in Tuolumne County. Understanding the scope, demographics, and impact of SUDs is crucial for developing effective interventions and improving the well-being of children and families.

Impact on Child Welfare:

- **Neglect and Abuse:** Children of parents with SUDs are at increased risk of neglect, abuse, and exposure to violence.
- **Family Instability:** SUDs can lead to family conflict, divorce, and housing insecurity, impacting children's emotional well-being and educational attainment.
- **Mental Health:** Children of parents with SUDs are more likely to experience mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and trauma.
- **Intergenerational Cycle:** Children exposed to SUDs in the home are more likely to develop them themselves.

Data on substance use and abuse at the county level is often scarce, with most information available only at the state level. According to the County Health Rankings website, the rate of drug poisoning (overdose) deaths per

100,000 in Tuolumne County was 24. Additionally, in 2021, 18% of adults in Tuolumne County reported binge or heavy drinking within 30 days of the survey³.

The California Department of Public Health publishes information on opioid prescriptions and opioid overdose deaths.⁴ Tuolumne County experienced 10 deaths due to all opioid-related overdoses in 2022; this has doubled since the last CSA reported 5 deaths in 2017. The annual crude mortality rate during that period was 21.71 per 100k residents. This represents a 6.24% decrease from 2021. There were 39,473 prescriptions for opioids in Tuolumne in 2022, excluding buprenorphine. The annual prescribing rate during that period was 512.28 per 1,000 residents. This represents an 11% decrease in prescribing from 2020. Buprenorphine prescriptions are used to gauge the expansion of medications for opioid use disorder; the annual crude buprenorphine prescribing rate for Tuolumne County in 2022 was 100.46 per 1,000 residents, which is much higher compared to the state average of 19.87 per 1,000.

The rate of opioid prescriptions has spiked since 2020. Various focus group participants identified substance use, not limited to opioids, as a key issue in child welfare cases. Historically, the prevalence of substance use disorders in child welfare cases led to the creation of the Dependency Drug Court (DDC). Since the last CSA, referrals to the DDC program have decreased, partly due to the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians Tribe starting its own substance use program called MEWU:YA. This program has expanded its efficiencies, allowing people to get in quickly. MEWU:YA was already working with some child welfare-involved families, so rather than switching these families to County Behavioral Health services, they were seamlessly integrated into the program. Additionally, the Chicken Ranch Rancheria Me-Wuk Indians opened the Mathiesen Memorial Red Feather Clinic, offering substance use treatment medications, behavioral health and substance use counseling, education, care coordination, resource referrals, and acupuncture therapy further expanding services for the county.

Mental Health

Due to the relatively small population in Tuolumne County, there is limited data available. Tuolumne County offers a range of mental health resources for children and families, but significant challenges remain in terms of accessibility and capacity. To effectively support the mental well-being of children involved in the child welfare system, the Health and Human Service Agency should collaborate with stakeholders to address these weaknesses and advocate for improvements in resource availability, cultural sensitivity, and service delivery. The ratio of the population to mental health providers in Tuolumne County is 410:1, indicating a potential shortage of mental health professionals relative to the population size. Adults in Tuolumne County reported experiencing an average of 5.6 mentally unhealthy days in the past 30 days. Additionally, 51% of children in the County are reported to have been exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), highlighting significant early-life stressors that could impact long-term mental health. The suicide rate in Tuolumne County from 2019-2021 was 21.6 deaths per 100,000 population, ranking 40th compared to all other counties in California.

³ County Health Ranking & Roadmaps 2024 <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/california/tuolumne?year=2024#health-outcomes>

⁴ California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard <https://skylab.cdph.ca.gov/ODdash/?tab=CTY>

Table 22: Mental Health Indicators

Mental Health Indicators for Tuolumne County	Performance for Adults/children	Source
Prenatal & postpartum depression	Prenatal Depression Symptoms: 10.3% Postpartum Depression Symptoms: 16.4%	<u>California Department of Public Health – Maternal Mental Health Dashboard</u>
Ratio of population to mental health providers	410:1	<u>County Health Rankings</u>
Adults reported poor mental health days	5.6 mentally unhealthy days in the past 30 days	<u>County Health Rankings</u>
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	51% of children who are exposed to ACEs (Parent Reported)	<u>Let's Get Healthy California</u>
Deaths due to suicide 2019-2021 (Total Population)	21.6 deaths per 100,000 populations	<u>California Department of Public Health – County Health Status Profiles</u>

Domestic and Other Violence-Related

There were 323 domestic violence-related calls for assistance in 2022. There were 272 calls where a weapon was reported, and 241 calls indicate no weapons were involved in the incident. During the COVID pandemic there was an increase in domestic violence instances and more immediate removals by law enforcement rather than mediation or discussions with families. The data from 2018 to 2022 shows a substantial increase in weapon-involved incidents in Tuolumne County, rising from 41 in 2018 to 272 in 2022. Notably, incidents involving personal weapons and other dangerous weapons have seen significant spikes. The number of cases involving strangulation or suffocation also increased dramatically, particularly between 2018 and 2020. Overall, the total number of calls peaked in 2021 at 348 before slightly declining to 323 in 2022. Focus groups noted that while services related to domestic violence are provided, they are often difficult to access due to capacity issues and the rural nature of Tuolumne County. Additionally, these services are not readily available when needed, highlighting areas for needed improvement in child welfare resources compared to larger counties.

Table 23: Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Weapon Involved*	41	40	54	80	272
Firearm	3	2	0	2	1
Knife or Cutting Instrument	2	1	1	5	3
Other Dangerous Weapon	9	8	10	19	104

Personal Weapon (Hands, feet, etc.)	27	29	43	54	164
Not Reported	0	0	0	0	0
Cases with Strangulation or Suffocation	3	18	38	30	32
TOTAL CALLS Tuolumne	244	285	297	348	323

Source: Domestic Violence-related calls for assistance. Tuolumne County 2013-2022. URL: <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/exploration/crime-statistics/domestic-violence-related-calls-assistance>

Visits to the Emergency Department can range from unintentional to intentional injuries. In 2015 (most recent data available), there were 5,665 total residents with unintentional injuries, 114 residents with self-inflicted injuries, 176 residents with assault injuries, and 52 with other undetermined causes.

Table 24: Non-Fatal Emergency Visit by Age and Cause 2014

Age	Unintentional injuries	Self-inflicted injuries	Assault injuries	Other- Undetermined Intent
< 1	29	0	0	0
1-4	268	0	0	0
5-9	247	1	0	1
10-14	309	3	2	0
15-19	384	35	17	2
20-24	336	13	29	6
25-44	1,351	41	78	17
45-64	1,348	20	45	21
65-84	1,033	1	4	4
85+	360	0	1	1
Total	5,665	114	176	52

Source: California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, Emergency Department Data. Prepared by: California Department of Public Health, Safe and Active Communities Branch. Report generated from <http://epicenter.cdph.ca.gov>

Child Fatalities and Near Fatalities

The County reviewed data on child fatalities and near fatalities for 2022, 2023, and Quarters 1 and 2 of 2024. This data review indicated that there were no child fatalities or near fatalities in Tuolumne County during these time periods.

C. CHILD WELFARE AND PROBATION POPULATION

The data tables in this section were produced from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) unless otherwise noted. The periods under review in the data tables below align with the CSA baseline data, specifically focusing on the year 2023. The following methodology may include references to report features not available on the public site version. On the public site, masking is performed to protect the privacy of individuals served by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and comply with CDSS data de-identification guidelines. Values of 1 to 10 and calculations based on values of 1 to 10 are masked ('M'). In stratified views of the data, additional values (the lowest available) are masked to prevent calculation of values 1 to 10. Entries without any reported value are marked with a dash ('-').

The child population in Tuolumne County from 2018 to 2023 has remained relatively stable, fluctuating slightly from a high of 10,277 in 2020 to a low of 10,096 in 2019, with the most recent count being 10,165 in 2023. The age group with the most children is the 6-10 years category, which has steadily increased from 2,240 in 2018 to 2,450 in 2023, indicating a growth in the number of children entering this age bracket. The 11-15 years age group has seen a slight decline, decreasing from 2,572 in 2018 to 2,359 in 2023. Overall, the total child population has seen a slight decline of 0.7% since 2018. In the last CSA, the population was shown to be declining at a higher rate of 6.39; current trends suggest a stable child population overall, with specific age groups experiencing slight growth or decline over the years

Child Welfare

Table 1: Tuolumne County Child Population by Age 2018-2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Under 1	476	450	411	467	424
1-2	927	941	925	871	882
3-5	1,322	1,457	1,503	1,518	1,483
6-10	2,212	2,337	2,376	2,406	2,450
11-15	2,528	2,464	2,408	2,391	2,359
16-17	1,001	1,042	1,106	1,017	990
18-20	1,630	1,586	1,501	1,503	1,577
Total	10,096	10,277	10,230	10,173	10,165

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

As of 2023, the child population in Tuolumne County is predominantly White, comprising 72.4% of the total child population. The Latino child population represents 17.8%, while multi-racial children account for 6.7%. Smaller percentages include Asian/Pacific Islanders at 1.5%, Native Americans at 1.1%, and Black children at 0.5%.

Table 2: Tuolumne County Child Population by Race/Ethnicity 2018-2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Black	152	57	47	49	47
White	7,405	7,473	7,418	7,361	7,359
Latino	1,725	1,876	1,850	1,830	1,814
Asian/P.I.	164	185	159	152	154
Nat Amer	140	139	133	123	112
Multi-Race	510	547	623	658	679
Total	10,096	10,277	10,230	10,173	10,165

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

Table 3 provides an overview of child maltreatment allegations, substantiations, and entries into foster care in Tuolumne County from 2019 to 2023. The number of child maltreatment allegations has generally increased over this period, from 846 in 2019 to 938 in 2023, with a slight dip to 733 in 2020, likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Substantiations of child maltreatment cases have fluctuated, decreasing from 167 in 2019

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to a low of 75 in 2021, and then slightly increasing to 79 in 2023. Entries into foster care have shown a declining trend, decreasing from 73 in 2019 to 49 in 2023, despite some yearly fluctuations.

This data suggests that while the number of child maltreatment allegations has increased, the rate of substantiations and foster care entries has not risen correspondingly. This indicates that the interventions and practices implemented, such as Child and Family Team Meetings, Safety Organized Practice, safety planning, Road to Resilience Program, Differential Response, and the Review, Evaluate, and Direct (RED) Team, may be effectively reducing foster care entries without a marked increase in the Recurrence of Maltreatment (Outcome Measure S-2 below).

Table 3: Child Maltreatment Allegations, Substantiations, and Entries, 2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Allegations	846	733	774	837	938
Substantiations	167	116	75	99	79
Entries to Foster Care	73	52	43	54	49

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

Table 4 below calculates children under age 18 years who were the subject of child maltreatment allegations in 2023. Children under one year old have the highest incidence rate of allegations at 148.6 per 1,000 children. This age group also has a significant substantiation rate of 35.4 per 1,000 children. Children aged 11-15 years follow with an allegation incidence rate of 122.5 per 1,000 children. Due to confidentiality, the specific number of foster care entries for some age groups is masked, but the overall foster care entry rate for the total child population is 5.1 per 1,000 children. This data shows that the youngest children have the highest rates of allegations and substantiations, similar to trends observed in the previous CSA.

Table 4: Children with Child Maltreatment Allegations, Substantiations, and Entries by Age, 2023

Age Group	Total Child Population	Children with Allegations	Incidence per 1,000 Children	Children with Substantiations	Incidence per 1,000 Children	Children with Entries	Incidence per 1,000 Children
Under 1	424	63	148.6	15	35.4	M	21.2
1-2	882	77	87.3	12	13.6	M	9.1
3-5	1,483	154	103.8	16	10.8	M	4.7
6-10	2,450	253	103.3	15	6.1	M	4.1
11-15	2,359	289	122.5	16	6.8	M	3.4
16-17	990	102	103.0	M	5.1	M	2.0
Total	8,588	938	109.2	79	9.2	44	5.1

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

Table 5 reports the incidence of child maltreatment allegations, substantiations, and entries by race/ethnicity in Tuolumne County for 2023. Although White children comprise the largest number of children with allegations, substantiations, and entries, other groups such as Black, Latino, and Native American children have higher incidence rates. For example, there were 58 Latino children with allegations, or 38.1 children per 1,000. Native American children had an incidence rate of 96.8 per 1,000 children, indicating a significantly higher risk

compared to other groups. Substantiation rates for Latino and White children were similar, at 5.3 and 7.1 per 1,000 children, respectively. However, Black children had the highest allegation incidence rate at 128.2 per 1,000, though no substantiations or entries were recorded for this group. These statistics suggest that while White children have the highest absolute numbers of cases, other racial and ethnic groups are disproportionately represented in the incidence rates.

Table 5: Children with Child Maltreatment Allegations, Substantiations, and Entries by Race/Ethnicity, 2023

Ethnic Group	Total Child Population	Children with Allegations	Incidence per 1,000 Children	Children with Substantiations	Incidence per 1,000 Children	Children with Entries	Incidence per 1,000 Children
Black	39	M	128.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
White	6,202	342	55.1	44	7.1	33	5.3
Latino	1,523	58	38.1	M	5.3	M	2.6
Asian/P.I.	130	M	38.5	M	15.4	M	7.7
Nat Amer	93	M	96.8	M	10.8	M	10.8
Multi-Race	601	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Missing	0	519	.	24	.	M	.
Total	8,588	938	109.2	79	9.2	44	5.1

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

As noted above, the allegations have generally increased since the last CSA. There were 851 child maltreatment allegations made in 2017 and 938 during the most recent reporting period. General Neglect made up the vast majority of allegations at 604. Of those, 60 were substantiated, and 365 were assessment only/evaluated out. Physical Abuse was the next highest number of allegations at 130, followed by Sexual Abuse at 104, and Emotional Abuse at 72. Compared to the prior CSA, all types of allegations have increased, but the pattern of the most common allegation types has remained the same. The Differential Response program, as described below, has likely played a role in diverting children from entering foster care. Additionally, most of the general neglect allegations involve substance use, which is why Tuolumne County has had a robust Dependency Drug Court (DDC).

Table 6: Children with One or More Allegations, 2023

Allegation Type	Substantiated	Inconclusive	Unfounded	Assessment Only/Evaluated Out	Not Yet Determined	Total
Sexual Abuse	M	M	M	80	M	104
Physical Abuse	M	24	14	78	10	130
Severe Neglect	10	M	M	M	M	24
General Neglect	60	99	55	365	25	604
Exploitation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Emotional Abuse	0	17	5	45	M	72
Caretaker Absence/Incapacity	M	0	M	0	0	M

At Risk, Sibling Abused	0	0	M	0	0	M
Substantial Risk	0	0	0	0	0	0
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	79	146	89	576	48	938

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

Figure 1: Disposition Type, 2023

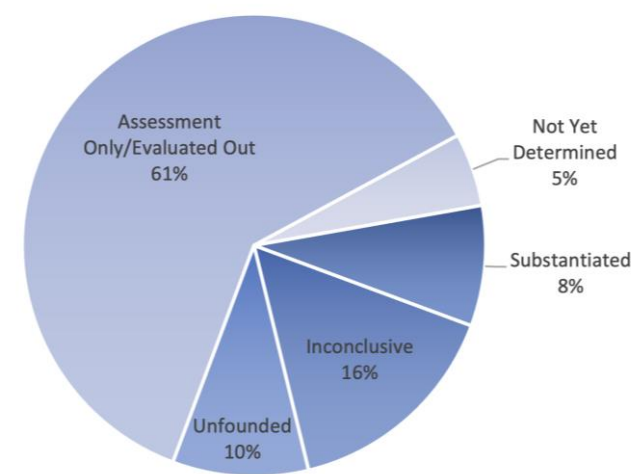


Figure 1 shows that 8% (79) of the allegations received in 2023 were substantiated, down from 21% in 2017. Sixteen percent were inconclusive, and 10% were unfounded. The majority of allegations were evaluated out, which means they did not meet the child welfare criteria.

Tuolumne County assigns many evaluated out referrals to its Differential Response or Road to Resilience programs for home visiting, case management, follow up safety assessment, and referral to appropriate resources.

Foster Care Entries and Subsequent Entries

Child Welfare

To maintain confidentiality, the specific number of foster care entries is masked, but the overall foster care entry rate for the total child population is 5.1 per 1,000 children. Based on available data, it is suggested that babies under one year enter foster care at the highest rate, and the entry rates generally decrease as children get older. There was a total of 44 children with first entries into foster care in 2023.

Table 7: Child Welfare-Children with First Entries by Age, 2023

Age Group	Total Child Population	Children with First Entries into Care	Incidence per 1,000 Children
Under 1	424	M	M
1-2	882	M	M
3-5	1,483	M	M
6-10	2,450	M	M
11-15	2,359	M	M
16-17	990	M	M
Total	8,588	44	5.1

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

The data in Table 8 highlights the incidence of first entries into foster care by race and ethnicity for 2023. Although specific numbers are masked for some groups to maintain confidentiality, several observations can be made. White children have the highest recorded number of entries, with 33 children entering foster care, resulting in an incidence rate of 5.3 per 1,000 children. Both Black and Multi-Race children had no recorded entries into foster care, with an incidence rate of 0.0 per 1,000 children for each group.

Table 8: Child Welfare-Children with First Entries by Race/Ethnicity, 2023

Ethnic Group	Total Child Population	Children with Entries	Incidence per 1,000 Children
Black	37	0	0.0
White	6,441	33	5.3
Latino	1,444	M	M
Asian/P.I.	112	M	M
Nat Amer	135	M	M
Multi-Race	481	0	0.0
Missing	.	M	.
Total	8,650	44	5.1

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

The data for re-entries into foster care in Tuolumne County in 2023 is masked, indicating that while re-entries occur across different age and ethnic groups, the numbers are not significant enough to report individually. The available data suggests that children re-entering foster care are more likely to be over the age of 10. Children can re-enter foster care for various reasons, typically related to their parents' capacity to safely care for them. This loss of capacity can stem from relapse into substance abuse, recurrence of a mental health condition, incarceration, or other issues. Focus groups have identified gaps in behavioral health services, including mental health and substance abuse treatment, for both children and parents.

Probation

There are very few probation youth in foster care placement in Tuolumne County. No children entered foster care for the first time between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023 (hence, no table is shown), and there were no youth who re-entered care between 2019 and 2023. A point-in-time count during October 1, 2023, shows that there were fewer than 11 youth in placement.

Table 9: Probation- Children in Foster Care, by Age and Race/Ethnicity, PIT October 1, 2023

Age Group	Ethnic Group						Total
	Black	White	Latino	Asian/P.I.	Nat Amer	Missing	
<1 mo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1-11 mo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1-2 yr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3-5 yr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6-10 yr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11-15 yr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16-17 yr	0	M	0	0	0	0	M
18-20 yr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Total	0	M	0	0	0	0	M
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Number in Care Foster Care Placements, Point-In-Time (PIT)

Child Welfare

Over the past five years, Point in Time (PIT) placement counts on October 1 each year have shown a general decrease, with the number of children in foster care ranging from a high of 89 in 2021 to a low of 65 in both 2022 and 2023. In 2019, there were 81 children in foster care, which increased slightly to 87 in 2020 and peaked at 89 in 2021. However, the numbers began to decline, with 65 children in foster care in both 2022 and 2023.

The age distribution also shows specific trends as noted in Table 10 below. The number of children aged 6-10 years consistently remained the highest across all years, though it decreased from 27 in 2019 to 19 in 2023. Children aged 1-2 years had fluctuations, starting at 12 in 2019, increasing to 21 in 2021, and then decreasing back to 12 in 2023. The 3-5 age group saw a reduction from 18 in 2019 to 11 in 2023. The number of children under 1-year-old and those aged 16-17 years old remains masked for confidentiality.

Table 10: Child Welfare Children in Foster Care by Age

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Under 1	M	M	M	M	M
1-2	12	13	21	13	12
3-5	18	16	16	12	11
6-10	27	23	27	20	19
11-15	11	21	15	11	12
16-17	M	M	M	M	M
Total	81	87	89	65	65

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

The data in Table 11 below indicates that White children represent the largest group of children in foster care in Tuolumne County, with numbers fluctuating slightly but generally decreasing from 68 in 2019 to 56 in 2023. The number of Latino children in foster care shows variability and includes masked data, suggesting small sample sizes for some years. Other racial and ethnic groups, including Black, Asian/P.I., and Native American children, either have masked data or report very low numbers, indicating their minimal representation in the foster care system in the County.

Table 11: Child Welfare Children in Foster Care, by Race/Ethnicity

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Black	M	M	M	M	0
White	68	67	66	46	56
Latino	M	M	17	15	M
Asian/P.I.	0	0	0	0	0
Nat Amer	M	M	M	M	M
Multi-Race	0	0	0	0	0

Missing	M	M	0	0	0
Total	81	87	89	65	65

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

Probation

The data provided on probation youth in foster care by age and race/ethnicity indicates that the number of probation children in foster care in Tuolumne County is minimal. Entries for ages 11-15 and 16-17 are mostly masked between 2020 and 2023, indicating that these numbers are between 1 and 10. Most youth placed in probation-supervised foster care are between 11 and 17 years old. Notably, there have been no probation children aged 18-21 in foster care during this period. Similarly, the data on race/ethnicity shows masked entries for White children from 2020 to 2023, suggesting very low numbers; no children of other ethnicities have been reported in foster care for the given years. This information reflects the rarity of probation youth placements in the County's foster care system.

As noted in the last CSA and continuing as a trend, Tuolumne County has minimized the number of youth in placement. This reflects the County's efforts to serve youth in their homes through an array of services. County Probation leadership as well as Probation Officers indicated in focus groups that they work to have Child Family Team Meetings to try to address issues while youth are still at home.

Table 12: Probation Children in Foster Care, by Age, October 1

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
11-15	0	M	M	M	0
16-17	0	0	0	M	M
18-21	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	M	M	M	M

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

Table 13: Probation Children in Foster Care, by Race/Ethnicity, October 1

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Black	0	0	0	0	0
White	0	M	M	M	M
Latino	0	0	0	0	0
Asian/P.I.	0	0	0	0	0
Nat Amer	0	0	0	0	0
Missing	0	0	0	M	0
Total	0	M	M	M	M

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

Children Served by Service Components

Child Welfare

Table 14 below displays the type of service component that children under Child Welfare supervision are receiving as of October 1, 2023. Of the 99 children served on this date, 34 were receiving Family Reunification, 36 were in Permanent Placement, and some children were receiving Supportive Transition. Additionally, 16 children were participating in Family Maintenance, which includes both No Placement and Post-Placement combined. The data shows a relatively even distribution of services among different age groups, with the highest numbers of children receiving services in the 6-10 and 11-15 age groups. Notably, the data for specific categories is masked to ensure confidentiality, indicating a small number of children in those categories.

Table 14: Child Welfare-Caseload by Services Component Type and Age, October 2023

	Under 1	1-2	3-5	6-10	11-15	16-17	18-20	Total
Emergency Response	M	M	M	M	0	M	0	M
No Placement FM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Post-Placement FM	0	M	M	M	M	M	0	16
Family Reunification	M	M	M	M	M	0	0	34
Permanent Placement	0	M	M	14	M	M	M	36
Supportive Transition	0	0	0	0	0	0	M	M
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	M	13	15	30	20	M	M	99

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

Table 15 provides updated data on children under Child Welfare supervision by race/ethnicity as of October 2023. White children continue to constitute the majority of those served, followed by Latino children. Specifically, White children represent a significant portion of those receiving services, with 28 in Family Reunification, 27 in Permanent Placement, and 12 in Post-Placement Family Maintenance. Latino children, while fewer in number, are also notably present across various service components. Most children are served in Family Reunification and Permanent Placement, with fewer in Emergency Response and Supportive Transition.

Table 15: Child Welfare - Caseload by Service Competency Type and Race/Ethnicity, October 2023

	Black	White	Latino	Asian/PI	Nat Amer	Missing	Total
Emergency Response	0	M	M	0	0	M	M
No Placement FM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Post-Placement FM	0	12	M	M	0	0	16
Family Reunification	0	28	M	0	M	0	34
Permanent Placement	0	27	M	M	M	0	36
Supportive Transition	0	M	M	0	0	0	M
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	74	16	M	M	M	99

Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 5/19/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

Probation

On October 1, 2023, Probation youth were served in the Family Reunification service component. No youth were served under Supportive Transition because youth in extended foster care are transferred to the supervision of Child Welfare.

Children with Tribal Affiliation or ICWA Eligibility

Child Welfare: On October 1, 2023, there were a few children who were eligible for ICWA, and a few children with primary or mixed (multi) ethnicity of American Indian. Focus groups revealed that Tuolumne County excels in ICWA compliance, having received recognition from the State for its solid adherence to ICWA requirements. ICWA compliance also arose as a strength in the peer review.

Probation: On October 1, 2023, there were no children supervised by probation that were eligible for ICWA or identified with primary or mixed (multi) ethnicity of American Indian.

PUBLIC AGENCY CHARACTERISTICS

A. POLITICAL JURISDICTIONS

Board of Supervisors

The Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors consists of representatives from five districts across the County. In its legislative duties, the Board adopts ordinances, resolutions, and minute orders within the limits prescribed by State law. As an executive body, the Board does the following: establishes policy; approves the annual budget; appoints the County Administrative Officer, County Counsel, and Clerk of the Board as administrative and legal staff to the Board; conducts public hearings on land use, committees, commissions, and certain special districts; and serves as the Joint Powers Authority Board for the Tuolumne Public Power Agency, the Air Pollution Control Board, and the Board of Equalization.

The Board of Supervisors is ultimately responsible for child welfare services and delegates the responsibility for it to the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) and its Integrated System of Care (ISOC). The HHSA is accountable to the Board for the quality and effectiveness of the services provided. The Board also establishes the HHSA's budget and staffing levels, both of which impact the continuum of services.

In October 2016, the Board of Supervisors assumed responsibility for appointment and tenure of the Chief Probation Officer. The Board of Supervisors allocates money from the General Fund for the operation of the Probation Department.

Federally Recognized Tribes

Tuolumne County has two federally recognized Tribes: the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians and the Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians of California.

The Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians' (Tribe) constitution was written during the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) period of Indian Policy. The present constitution and by-laws, originally approved on January 15, 1936, remains contemporary with amendments incorporated to address the changing times. The Tribe is governed by a legislative assembly, the Community Council. The Community Council is comprised of eligible voting members of the Tribe. The executive duties of the Tribe are carried out through the four Community Council Officers (Officers) who are elected annually from within the Community Council membership. Programs and services are provided to the tribal members. Tuolumne Me-Wuk Tribal Council Social Services Department provides services and programs to the Native community throughout the service area, which currently includes Tuolumne, Mariposa, Calaveras, and Stanislaus Counties. Services are intended to promote the health, safety, and welfare of all Native American/Alaskan Natives. They include, but are not limited to, the following: Tribal TANF; Indian Child Welfare Services; support to address Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Victims of Crime Advocacy; a Substance Use Program; health and mental health services; court services; mediation with Child Welfare Services; facilitation of legal services; crisis intervention; home visitation for families and adults; and emergency assistance.

The Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians of California is a federally recognized Indian Tribe located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in Tuolumne County. Although ancestors of the current tribal members have occupied lands in the area since long before the arrival of Europeans in North America, the Tribe's original reservation, as established on October 24, 1908, consisted of roughly 40 acres below the town of Jamestown. In 1958, the U.S. Congress passed the California Rancheria Act, which terminated the federally

recognized status of 41 rancherias within the State, including that of Chicken Ranch Rancheria. This Act was officially enforced against Chicken Ranch Rancheria in 1961 when their tribal status was terminated. In 1979, 17 rancherias united to file a class action lawsuit to restore their reservation status (*Hardwick v. United States*, Case No. 5:79-cv-01710-JF), asserting that the Trust relationship had been illegally terminated. In 1985, following the *Hardwick* judgment, Chicken Ranch Rancheria formally regained their federally recognized status. Unfortunately, in the 24 years between termination and re-establishment of the Tribe, only one Tribal member had their 3-acre parcel remaining and taken back into the Trust, representing roughly 7% of the original reservation. Since that time Chicken Ranch Rancheria has proven to be a strong and dedicated community leader working hard to increase economic prosperity, strengthen infrastructure, and advocate for well-paying and sustainable jobs for the local community. Chicken Ranch Rancheria is led by a Tribal Chairman and a Tribal Council with four additional members, including a Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and Sargent-At-Arms. Chicken Ranch Tribal Government supports a team that focuses on Government Operations, Natural Resources, Tribal Culture, Fire Safety, Economic Development, Community, and Social Services. Chicken Ranch's Mathiesen Memorial Health Clinic is a Rural Indian Health Clinic serving local and regional community members.

Child Welfare and the Probation Department have close working relationships with both local Tribes. This relationship enables tribal children in foster care to remain connected to their tribal communities. Tribal representatives attend Child and Family Team meetings and provide joint decision-making and case management as appropriate.

School Districts/Local Education Agencies

Tuolumne County has 11 different school districts, comprised of nine elementary schools, five high schools, and alternative education programs that include private, charter, and independent study school programs.

Tuolumne County Child Welfare Services (CWS) has a good working relationship with the different school districts and conducts annual mandated reporting training for all interested school staff. CWS and the Probation Department serve as core members of the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) and the countywide Student Support Team, a working group that ensures foster and homeless youth receive educational supports that target their unique needs. Each school site provides a foster youth liaison, and the Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools (TCSOS) provides a systemwide liaison to ensure continuity of education and care for foster children.

CWS has no staff co-located with local school programs. However, a TCSOS Foster Youth Coordinator has a dedicated desk at CWS with funding leveraged from Title IV-E. This position increases access to information on foster youth for the school and CWS systems. TCSOS and CWS presently share information through the Foster Focus database that pushes information between CWS/CMS and CalPADS, a state-level education database. Although Probation staff work closely with various county schools and the SARB, funding is not available to co-locate Probation Officers at school sites.

The TCSOS office is addressing student mental health through the Accessing Wellness and Resilience in Education (AWARE) program. Funding for AWARE has been secured through a four-year Mental Health Student Services Act grant designed to provide students and families of Tuolumne County school districts with reliable, equitable, and accessible mental health support. More specifically, through partnerships with local agencies and 11 schools in Tuolumne County, the program will effectively coordinate mental health services for school-aged students ages 4-22 (TK- Transition) throughout the County. The program will also provide support to students' families. The goals of AWARE are to establish additional mental health partnerships between behavioral health departments and local education entities; provide case management and referrals to private therapists and local community groups; increase connection to mental health services for students and their

families; provide outreach to high-risk youth; and assist education staff, families, and students with accessing primary health services, higher levels of mental health support, and other services in the County.

Law Enforcement Agencies

There are two law enforcement agencies in Tuolumne County: the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Office and the Sonora Police Department. CWS offers in-service training to both agencies, and the working relationships between CWS and local law enforcement remains strong. The most collaboration occurs with the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department due to the populations it serves.

The Tuolumne County Kids Interview Team (KIT) was established over two decades ago through a collaborative effort involving law enforcement, CWS, the District Attorney's office, the Victim Witness Assistance agency, and other key partners to address and prevent child sexual abuse in Tuolumne County. In November 2019, The Tuolumne County District Attorney's Office and Victims Witness Assistance Program opened the Sunshine Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in Sonora. This expansion enabled the KIT team to broaden its scope to encompass all cases of child abuse and neglect, irrespective of the form of abuse. In January 2023, the multidisciplinary team agreed to rebrand itself as the Tuolumne County Child Abuse Review Team (CART). Subsequently, a comprehensive CART Team protocol and memorandum of understanding were updated and ratified by all participating agencies. The executive leaders of the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department, CWS, the District Attorney's Office, Tuolumne County Victim Witness Assistance Agency, Tuolumne County Probation Department, and the Sonora Police Department all endorsed the protocol with their review and signatures.

The Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department Investigations team and CWS investigators collaboratively investigate child abuse, by conducting forensic interviews for criminal prosecutions. The CART steering committee serves as a platform for comprehensive child abuse case reviews, conducts peer reviews, and ensures quarterly training sessions for continuous quality improvement and professional development.

Additionally, Tuolumne County has finished drafting a memorandum of understanding aimed at reestablishing a local child death review team. The Tuolumne County Multi-Agency Child Death Review Team is comprised of representatives from various entities and divisions, including the following: Tuolumne County Sheriff's Office (includes representatives from the Coroner and Professional Standards Divisions); Sonora Police Department; California Highway Patrol; Probation Department; the District Attorney's Office; CWS; the Public Health Department; Adventist Health Sonora; Victim Witness Services Agency; and Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools. This multi-disciplinary team is tasked with reviewing all deaths that meet the criteria of Government Code §27491 with a primary goal of aiding in the identification and determination of the cause of suspicious child deaths. The overarching purpose of this review is to promote the thoroughness and efficiency of child welfare, public health, law enforcement, and legal processes in preventing and detecting unnatural causes of death in children.

Public Health

Tuolumne County Public Health Department's (Public Health) mission is to promote and protect the health and well-being of residents in the County. Public Health fulfills this mission through departmental programming, along with the support of robust and diverse community partnerships.

More specifically, Public Health provides the following adult and family health programs:

- Home visitation, including the California Home Visiting Program (CHVP). The CHVP uses the Parents as Teachers (PAT) model for families with young children. PAT is included in the County's Family First Prevention Services Program Comprehensive Prevention Plan, which was approved in 2023. In 2024, Public Health began using PAT as part of its prevention work; certified Parent Educators partner with parents to support, encourage, and empower them through play and reading time with the intent of increasing children's school readiness and success, parent knowledge, and family well-being.
- Immunizations.
- Local Indigent Care Needs (Health Links) mobile services.
- California Children's Services.
- Maternal Child Adolescent Health Program
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC).
- Education and Prevention Programs, including Child and Lead Poisoning Prevention, child passenger/traffic safety, Local Oral Health, and CalFresh Healthy Living and Tobacco Prevention and Education.

Additionally, Public Health provides information, education, and capacity-building through its Emergency Preparedness programming and through diverse forms of public communication. Public Health also facilitates the community's Opioid Safety Coalition and coordinates with various partners on programs for the unhoused in the County.

Moreover, the Foster Care Public Health Nurse regularly attends Review, Evaluate, and Decide (RED) Team meetings and participates in Child and Family Team Meetings focused on placement and case planning.

B. COUNTY CHILD WELFARE AND PROBATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Child Welfare

Tuolumne County Department of Social Services (DSS) is a department within the larger Tuolumne County Health and Human Services Agency. Child Welfare Services (CWS) is within the Integrated System of Care (ISOC) in DSS. The ISOC is comprised of all DSS social work programs including Adult Protective Services; Public Guardian; In- Home Support Services; the Engagement and Empowerment Unit; and Children's Services. The Engagement and Empowerment Unit includes Welfare to Work, and Prevention Services.. Children's Services includes Child Welfare Services (CWS), Adoptions, Resource Family Approval (RFA), The Family Visitation Center, and related minor programs. CWS addresses the safety, well-being, and permanency of children at risk of or suffering abuse or neglect by investigating allegations, intervening when needed, making placement decisions, and providing case management services to children and their families.

Children's Services consists of the following positions: the Department of Social Services Director, two Agency Managers, five Social Services Supervisors, 20.5 Social Worker positions, three Social Services Assistants, two legal clerks, two senior office assistants, one full-time community health worker, and a varying number of part-time relief staff. The qualifications for each position classification are based on experience and some level of educational attainment, such as college units or a college degree. More information on the qualifications of specific position classifications, demographic information on staff, and average years of experience is provided later in this section.

The Children's Services Unit within the Integrated System of Care oversees several child welfare programs. The Children's Services Unit is comprised of five distinct units: (1) Intake/Emergency Response (ER) Investigations, (2) Emergency Response (ER) Court, (3) Ongoing Case Management (Family Maintenance

(FM)/Family Reunification (FR)), (4) Permanent Placement/Non-Minor Dependents (PP/NMD)/Adoptions, and (5) Resource Family Approval/Family Time. These units provide services as described below.

- **Intake/Emergency Response (ER) Unit:** The ER Unit conducts intake assessments, investigates allegations of abuse/neglect, conducts risk and safety assessments, monitors safety plans, works with families to identify strengths and needs, initiates voluntary or Juvenile Court intervention, initiates Child and Family Teams, and develops and case plans in collaboration with families and service providers for voluntary cases. The ER team carries a case until one of the following events occurs: case closure; a transfer to the Prevention Unit within the Engagement and Empowerment Unit (for Voluntary Family Maintenance), transfer to the Ongoing unit (for Voluntary Family Reunification) or a transfer to the ER Court Unit after the Detention Hearing for cases with Court intervention. The ER Unit is responsible for completing the Petition and Detention Report. The average investigations caseload in the ER Unit is approximately 23 per investigator, but this varies according to staffing levels. One full-time position is dedicated to screening referrals and four full-time positions are dedicated to investigating referrals, monitoring safety plans, and initiating voluntary or Juvenile Court Cases. The ER Unit has struggled to maintain more than one consistent investigator at any given time. The Unit Supervisor, other peer supervisors, managers, and social workers from other units often provide direct services to support this unit.
- **Emergency Response (ER) Court Unit:** The ER Court Unit assumes responsibility for case management either after the Detention Hearing or at the time the non-detained petition is filed in the case of Court-ordered Family Maintenance. This team is responsible for continuing to investigate and conduct assessments, ensuring the initial Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) is completed, making initial referrals for services and screenings, and scheduling placement and case planning Child and Family Team Meetings. This team also develops the initial behaviorally based case plan and carries the case through the Disposition Hearing, at which time the case transfers to the Ongoing or Permanent Placement Unit. The average caseload in the ER Court Unit is between 4-8 children or 3-6 families per social worker. This Unit has two dedicated social workers for case management and court work, one aide who also supports the other children's units as needed, and the Child and Family Team Facilitator. This Unit has struggled to maintain more than one dedicated court worker at any given time. As a result, the Unit Supervisor often provides direct services to support unit operations.
- **Ongoing Case Management Unit:** The Ongoing Unit provides intensive case management services and conducts ongoing assessments on children and families receiving court-ordered Family Reunification and Family Maintenance services. This team initiates regular Child and Family Team Meetings, ensures all CANS assessments and screenings are conducted, makes placement decisions, monitors placement safety, writes comprehensive court reports, updates case plans, and assesses and connects families to new services they may need throughout the life of the case. The average caseload for Family Maintenance/Family Reunification cases is 12-15 children or 9-15 families per social worker. One unit supervisor and four social worker positions are dedicated to this Unit; however, this Unit has struggled to maintain more than two staff at any given time.
- **Permanent Placement/Non-Minor Dependents (PP/NMD) Unit:** The PP/NMD Unit manages the case once Family Reunification services are terminated, or services are by-passed at the Dispositional Hearing. The PP/NMD Unit continues to provide case management, collaborates with the Adoptions Unit to identify prospective adoptive homes, completes the WIC 366.26 permanent plan process, stabilizes placements, and matches children and youth with new placements when necessary. Within this Unit, there is a high-risk caseload specific to youth who are at risk of entering a Short-Term Residential Treatment Program (STRTP) or who are placed in an STRTP. This caseload is capped at

eight children. Any child in an STRTP is required to have monthly Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs). The PP/NMD Unit holds the bulk of CFTMs based on the increased behavioral needs of children who are served by this Unit and struggle to meet their permanency goals because of complex behaviors. This Unit also manages all NMD cases, including any Probation cases involving youth that reach the age of majority and complete the terms of their probation. Probation youth are often transferred at age 17 ½. The PP/NMD Unit will complete CANS assessments in collaboration with the Child and Family Team. The average caseload for PP/NMD cases is 8-14 children. This Unit has one supervisor, three designated social worker positions, and an aide position that also provides services to other Children's Services units; however, the number of staff at any time is dependent upon caseload size and other unit needs as staff may be deployed accordingly. Currently only one social worker position is filled.

- Resource Family Approval/Family Time Unit:** The Resource Family Approval (RFA) Unit conducts assessments and approvals of matched and unmatched Resource Families according to the State Written Directives. In 2022, Tuolumne County was successful in adding a third social worker position to the RFA unit; however, this unit is currently understaffed due to a vacancy. The RFA unit shares a unit supervisor with the Family Visitation Center. The Family Visitation Center fosters a warm and supportive atmosphere for families on the path toward reunification. When families are prepared to transition from supervised family time to a more flexible visitation model, the case-managing social worker facilitates the referral process to the coordinator for an intake assessment. At the Center, families take an active role in shaping their own Family Time plans, guided by a dedicated social worker who serves as the visit center coordinator. With the assistance of family time coaching, families receive tailored support to enhance the quality of their visits, strengthen parenting skills, and engage in open dialogue about their progress and areas of improvement. Following family time coaching sessions, families and their coach debrief to ensure transparency in reporting progress to the social worker, empowering families to have a voice in their own reunification plans. A half-time social worker acts as the visitation center coordinator; this social worker also completes court-ordered investigations related to Probate Court guardianships and Family Court Stepparent Adoptions. A full-time social worker aid supports family time coaching. One full-time Community Health Worker (CHW) and other part-time CHWs support a variety of operational needs, including but not limited to, drug testing, transportation, monitoring and supervising family time, and other office needs.
- Adoptions Unit:** The Adoptions Unit receives a referral for concurrent planning at the time the Disposition Hearing is completed, and the case is transferred to the Ongoing Unit for Family Reunification services or PP/NMD Unit for Permanent Placement. The team provides limited services while families are receiving Family Reunification services. Once the hearing to determine the permanent plan is completed, the Adoptions team assumes a case management role for those children whose permanent plan is adoption and who are currently in an adoptive home. The Adoptions team shares a unit supervisor with the PP/NMD unit due to reduced active caseloads and similar workloads. The Permanent Placement/Adoptions Supervisor manages Adoptions Assistance Payments (AAP) needs unrelated to monthly payments. There are two designated social worker positions for the Adoptions unit and one legal clerk. Only one Adoptions Unit position is currently filled; it has an average caseload of 6 to 15 cases. Currently, the Adoptions Worker is lead worker for the Permanent Placement Unit due to caseload size. As caseloads and staff increase in this unit, caseloads will be reorganized.
- Engagement and Empowerment Unit:** This Unit within the ISOC oversees several programs, including the Independent Living Program (ILP), Differential Response, Voluntary Family Maintenance, AmeriCorps volunteers, and the Road to Resilience Program. The Road to Resilience Program provides case management and supportive services to perinatal families struggling with

substance abuse, as well as case management to Child Welfare Voluntary Family Maintenance cases. Additionally, this Unit manages the employment and training components of CalWORKs Welfare to Work and partners with CWS for Linkages.. Moreover, this team conducts monthly parent orientations for parents involved in the Juvenile Court. These parent orientations take place after the Detention Hearing and prior to the Disposition Hearing and signing of the case plan. One social services supervisor and team of social workers manage these programs. In June 2024, the Road to Resilience grant expires. Tuolumne County plans to sustain program operations and expand prevention services as outlined in the County's Family First Prevention Services Comprehensive Prevention Plan. More specifically, the County intends to target pregnant women and at-risk families of children up to age 18 when substance addiction is a factor. The County continues to seek grant opportunities to sustain prevention programming pending the ability to draw down federal funds.

As noted above, the qualifications for each position classification within Children's Services are based on experience and some level of educational attainment, such as college units or a college degree. The Social Worker IV and Social Services Supervisor II positions require a Master's Degree. Recruitment for Master's level positions can be challenging so professional development typically occurs after employment, with internal promotions along the career ladder. Social Workers in Children's Services may qualify based on experience and education in related fields, although some may have unrelated degrees.

Currently, those who hold leadership positions (supervisor through director) have approximately 7 to 22 years of tenure. Among seven individuals in leadership positions, three have field experience and required college units, one holds a Bachelor's Degree, and three hold Master's Degrees.

In the Social Worker classification, there is one Social Worker IV with around 23 years of experience and a half-time Social Worker III with over 25 years of experience. Additionally, there are five Social Worker IIIs with 3.5 to 6.5 years of experience, two Social Worker IIs with 1.5 to 3 years of experience, and five Social Worker Is with one month to 3 years of experience. The workforce in Children's Services predominantly consists of White females. However, efforts over the years have been made to enhance diversity and recruit individuals from various genders and racial backgrounds, including Black, Asian, and Hispanic.

Employees are selected through a comprehensive assessment process, which includes a review of their job application and responses to behaviorally based interview questions.

To recruit staff, leaders in CWS continue to partner with California State University (CSU) Sacramento and CSU Stanislaus through regular participation in MSW development activities and outreach to open doors to future graduates interested in the rural social work path. Efforts include providing MSW and BSW internships within CWS. Tuolumne County enthusiastically accepts MSW graduates who are supported through the IV-E program to repay their college expenses through employment in a county CWS agency. Moreover, to expand avenues for employment opportunities, Tuolumne County has implemented a system with an outside vendor to support MSW and BSW internship field supervision; this same entity provides Reflective Supervision/Consultation to support staff retention, job resilience, and prevent burnout.

The Integrated System Of Care (ISOC), which includes Children's Services, comprises a total of 34.5 positions ranging from Social Worker I to Social Worker IV. The County has experienced difficulties recruiting staff across all social worker positions within ISOC. To address these recruitment difficulties, Tuolumne County developed various job flyers. These materials provide detailed information about each ISOC Unit, ISOC core values, and appealing attributes of working in Tuolumne County. These along with the CalHR Job description are posted on various online job search sites. Additionally, in 2023, the County introduced a new tiered hiring incentive program aimed at attracting and retaining employees, particularly during periods when the County has trouble recruiting or retaining staff with critical skill sets. This program considers the vacancy rate and recruitment challenges. It offers incentives ranging from \$9,000 to \$12,000 for employees who meet job

expectations by their fifth year of employment. To assist with recruitment, the County also offers its employees education incentives to support educational endeavors beyond that of the IV-E loan waiver program.

In November 2023, the County initiated a continuous recruitment process for Social Worker I and Social Worker IV classifications to ensure that opportunities for prospective candidates are not missed during open and closed recruitment periods. Since implementing this process, Tuolumne County has conducted four rounds of interviews for Social Worker I and Social Worker IV positions, resulting in 13 interviews and the successful hiring of five applicants. Notably, three of these hires were internal employees from other classifications. Candidates may be placed in any of the units containing social worker positions based on fit (i.e. Engagement and Empowerment, Adult Protective Services, Public Guardian, Homeless Services, Children's Services). Despite generating a consistent pool of applicants, hiring has remained challenging and the vacancy rate for all social worker positions within the ISOC unit has remained high, reaching 31.88% with 11 vacancies at the end of April 2024.

Children's Services continues to request staffing waivers from the California Department of Social Services due to ongoing difficulty filling Social Worker IV positions for required programs. As part of a corrective plan, a Social Worker IV position is opened each time a Social Worker I position is advertised. Of the 13 candidates interviewed as part of the continuous recruitment strategy described above, three were from the Social Worker IV list, one of which was offered a job; this individual ultimately chose employment with another county, declining the offer from Tuolumne County.

The Tuolumne County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) is collaborating with a seasoned consultant and trainer in the development of a comprehensive charter aimed at initiating a culture shift towards Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), encompassing vital areas such as hiring practices. To ensure the holistic integration of DEI principles in HHSA, a steering committee has been convened, comprising team members from diverse sectors. Together with the County's Human Resources department, this committee is tasked with finalizing the charter's components, creating a logic model, and executing DEI goals.

Children's Services continues to experience staffing limitations including attrition and an inability to identify, recruit, and maintain competent social workers as described above and seen in the vacancy rates in 2023. Table 1 below shows the turnover rate based on the number of staff who left employment voluntarily or who were discharged, as well as the vacancy rate based on positions the County has been unsuccessful in staffing.

Table 1: CWS Staff Turnover and Vacancy Rates

CWS/Children's Services* Staff Turnover (CY 2014 to Current)		
<u>CY</u>	<u>Turnover Rate</u>	<u>Vacancy Rate</u>
2014	51.1%	20.2%
2015	35.6%	21.4%
2016	43.5%	22.1%
2017	40.8%	18.1%
2018	50%	16.9%
2019	13.79%	3.75%
2020	23.3%	16.6%
2021	14%	13.4%
2022	21.7%	14.8%
2023	27%	32.5%
National Average**	30%	Unknown

*CWS/Children’s Services: In 2021, CWS integrated into Children’s Services, placing Resource Family Approval and Adoptions under Children’s Services.

** Casey Family Programs (2017) *How does turnover affect outcomes and what can be done to address retention?* Retrieved from: https://caseyfamilypro-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/media/HO_Turnover-Costs_and_Retention_Strategies-1.pdf

To bolster CWS capacity, Tuolumne County successfully added three new Social Worker positions in fiscal year 2022-2023. These positions were specifically earmarked to support Emergency Response Enhancement, Adoptions, and Resource Family Approval. Despite these successful additions, the ISOC unit overall has struggled to fill social worker positions, maintaining a vacancy rate above 30 percent. The Children’s Services team, in particular, has faced consistent staffing challenges since approximately 2019. For example, a recent supervisor vacancy prompted recruitment for both Social Services Supervisor I and II positions. After a three-week recruitment period, there was only one applicant for Social Services Supervisor II and two for Social Services Supervisor I.

The management team frequently shifts staff among units to cover basic operations and prevent burnout. Notably, the Emergency Response Court Unit and Ongoing Unit (Family Maintenance and Family Reunification caseloads) are both challenging to staff and maintain staffing longevity. This shifting causes serious disruption to the families accessing services and inevitably leads to challenges with service delivery, consumer engagement, and outcome performance. Vacancies also negatively impacts supervisory staff; they are tasked with ensuring new hires receive adequate training and must provide more supervision to them. Additionally, vacancies often require supervisors to carry cases or support direct case management activities. Departments continue to meet and confer regularly with their respective leaders to triage priority needs and allocate resources in a manner focusing on youth safety, permanency, and well-being.

In Fiscal Year 2021-2022, during employee contract negotiations social workers were successful in bargaining for an 8% increase, creating salary compaction for several other positions and an increase in pay for much of the workforce.. While the Tuolumne County Employees Bargaining Unit or OE3 Union was successful in bargaining for pay increases, health insurance costs for employees substantially increased during this same time. As a result of negotiations, employees in all bargaining units also received 96 hours of “flex hours” to be used annually to cover any personal time off needs. These hours are in addition to vacation days, floating holidays, and sick accruals.

The following table describes the positions that make up Children’s Services along with their starting salary and capped hourly wage.

Salary Ranges in Tuolumne County Effective April 10, 2024: Salary ranges can be found at https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11761/Classification-Listing		
Community Health Worker	16.32	19.84
Senior Office Assistant	17.50	21.27
Social Worker Assistant	18.77	22.81
Legal Assistant I	18.40	22.36
Legal Assistant II	20.33	24.71
Social Worker I	21.54	26.18

Social Worker II	23.80	28.93
Social Worker III	26.30	31.96
Social Worker IV	29.06	35.32
Social Services Supervisor I	34.87	42.38
Social Services Supervisor II	38.35	46.62
Agency Manager/Program Manager	42.19	51.28
Social Services Director	56.50	68.68

All social workers and management staff in the Protective Services Department receive a 5% pay differential. Since 2013, education and certification incentives (capped at 5%) have been provided for staff holding a special license or certification related but not required for their position, Bachelor's degree receive an additional 2.5%, and staff with a Master's degree receive an additional 5%, provided that the position's minimum requirement does not require that degree. Additionally, Tuolumne County offers longevity pay on top of regular pay, starting at 2.5% at five years of employment and another 2.5% at ten years of employment; after ten years of employment incremental 5% increases occur at 15, 20, 25, and 30 years of service.

New team members undergo digital training to orient them to child welfare services in the County, with a one-month period for job shadowing and assuming case management tasks gradually. In approximately 2020, an unwritten policy was established to refrain from assigning a new social worker a caseload for at least one month to support their training needs. Social workers complete all required core training within their first year of employment. Ongoing training occurs through RED Team meetings, Case Consultations, Group Supervision, and Reflective Supervision/Consultation with an outside vendor that employs licensed social workers with child welfare experience. Additionally, social workers receive ongoing trainings through the regional training academy and participate in other customized trainings brought to the County. Feedback on job performance occurs regularly and aligns with specific competencies in sync with the Core Practice Model. Evaluations occur at three months, six months, and annually for new positions, and then annually for positions held longer than a year.

The following staff are responsible for entering data in CWS/CMS: Community Health Workers (visitation notes, drug test information); Office Assistants (visitation no-shows and drug test information); Legal Clerks (adoptions, court findings and orders, CACI grievance, notices, importing documents, ICWA tabs); Social Service Aides (case notes/logs, importing documents, updating screens); Social Workers and Supervisors/Managers (case notes/logs, importing documents, updating screens, case plans, etc.); and Public Health Nurses (case notes/logs, updating screens). Staff turnover, vacancies, and resulting high caseloads can create impact data entry capacity and timeliness. CWS anticipates focusing on data entry/data quality in specific focus areas (e.g., association of child abuse and neglect referrals) in the upcoming five-year SIP cycle.

Probation

In the past, the Presiding Judge of the Tuolumne County Superior Court has made the appointment of the Tuolumne County Chief Probation Officer. This was a function of State law and practice in Tuolumne County that went back to the days when the Court system was still part of County government. In October 2016, the Board of Supervisors assumed responsibility for appointment and tenure of the Chief Probation Officer. Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) setting forth a process of collaboration between the Court and County in all aspects of employment of the Chief Probation Officer was proclaimed.

The Board of Supervisors allocates money from the General Fund for the operation of the Probation Department. Sworn staff at the Department are deputized by the Chief Probation Officer and work as his or her agents. Tuolumne County Probation Department Juvenile Division provides case management services to youth and their families specific to child safety. The Probation Department is the receiving agency for all juvenile referrals from city, county, State, and federal law enforcement involving minors who commit law violations.

The Juvenile Division is staffed with a Division Manager, a Supervising Probation Officer, four Deputy Probation Officers, one Legal Assistant, and one Behavioral Health Clinician (MSW). The Supervising Probation Officer and one Deputy Probation Officer are assigned to intake, which includes Court Officer duties. Two Deputy Probation Officers maintain supervision caseloads and one Deputy Probation Officer is assigned to the Juvenile Detention Facility to help facilitate and monitor services for detained youth. The Supervising Probation Officer is currently managing placement cases. The Behavioral Health Clinician position is currently vacant; there is an ongoing recruitment to fill the position. When filled, the clinician provides services to youth supervised on probation and youth detained in the juvenile hall. The clinician also works with placement youth and their families to help support reunification efforts.

In the past, the Division Manager, Supervising Probation Officer and the Legal Assistant have received training regarding the CWS/CMS system and were all able to enter and retrieve information in that system. All Title IV-E placement cases are entered into the CWS/CMS system and secondary assignment is given to the CWS Independent Living Program (ILP) Coordinator. However, the prior Legal Assistant who was trained to enter data has since left the department. The current Legal Assistant is not trained on CWS/CMS. The Division Manager has access to CWS but has not received updated training on data entry into this system. The Supervising Probation Officer, who is also the Placement Officer, is the only one currently trained to enter probation data. While this Placement Officer is extremely experienced and has been in the same role for many years, only having one person responsible for entering data can create time constraints/challenges due to other competing job responsibilities. To help address this challenge, Probation will soon be training a new placement officer in data entry into the CWS/CMS system.

Probation Department staff are predominately White and Hispanic. The Department has bilingual staff in both the juvenile and adult units who serve the relatively small Spanish-speaking population. The Department has access to additional translation services as needed. Additionally, the Department also has a close working relationship with local Tribes. This relationship enables tribal children in the Department’s care to remain connected to their communities. Tribal representatives usually attend Child and Family Team meetings as appropriate.

Deputy Probation Officers are Peace Officers pursuant to Section 830.5 of the Penal Code. In Tuolumne County, Deputy Probation Officers are required to have a bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice, Sociology, Psychology, or other closely related field. Deputy Probation Officer candidates must also pass a standardized state test and an intensive law enforcement background investigation, which includes a medical and psychological examination. While not required, there is one Deputy Probation Officer, two Probation Managers, and one administrator with Master’s degrees in Criminal Justice, Social Work, and Public Administration; sworn staff with Master’s degrees are eligible for a 5% pay incentive. Salaries for all Probation Officer classifications are noted below.

Salary Ranges for Probation in Tuolumne County Effective January 10, 2024		
Deputy Probation Officer I	\$26.57	\$32.29

Deputy Probation Officer II	\$29.35	\$35.68
Senior Probation Officer	\$32.43	\$39.42
Supervising Probation Officer	\$38.92	\$47.31
Probation Division Manager	\$44.25	\$53.78
Asst. Chief Probation Officer	\$50.37	\$61.23
Chief Probation Officer	\$58.51	\$71.12

Deputy Probation Officers are required to successfully complete various state mandated training courses during their first year of employment including PC 832 Powers of Arrest and a six-week Probation Officer Core Course. Newly promoted supervisors must complete an 80-hour Supervisor Core Course, and newly promoted managers/administrators must complete an 80-hour Manager Administrator Core Course. Deputy Probation Officers and Supervisors newly assigned to placement caseloads must complete Placement Core within one year of assignment. Placement Supervisors must also complete Placement Supervisor Core within one year of assignment. Three of the Deputy Probation Officers in the Juvenile Division have been trained to facilitate Child and Family Teams Meetings.

Deputy Probation Officers are represented by the Deputy Sheriff's Association bargaining unit. Supervisors and Managers are represented by the County of Tuolumne Management Association bargaining unit. These associations do not determine officer assignments, nor do they regulate the number or type of cases assigned to officers.

At the time of this writing, the Juvenile Division is fully staffed, except for the Behavioral Health Clinician. However, retention of trained Deputy Probation Officers continues to be a challenge. It is not uncommon for Deputy Probation Officers to leave the Department for law enforcement agencies offering better pay and benefits. Vacancies and lack of trained officers can create an overload on existing staff in maintaining high levels of services to youth. Given the demands of the juvenile probation workload it is imperative vacant positions be filled as quickly as possible as new officers need to be trained in the complexities of juvenile probation, including trauma-informed and evidence-based practices necessary to meet the needs of youth served by the Department.

Recruitment for Deputy Probation Officer positions typically only occur when there are open positions. No experience is necessary for new Deputy Probation Officer, but it is always helpful if they have some sort of experience in addition to having their BA or BS degree. The Probation Department usually just posts positions on the County website. However, if the Department is having difficulty getting applicants, it may expand recruitment notices to professional organizations like the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) or the California Association of Probation Service Administrators (CAPSA). When recruiting officers for placement positions, the Probation Department usually looks for someone with experience as a probation officer (not new officers) who wants to work with youth, is detail oriented, works well under pressure, can handle deadlines, is willing and able to collaborate with other agencies, and does not have a singular "law enforcement" mindset since working with youth is very different than working with adult criminal offenders; the Probation Department wants to recruit and select an individual who understands this difference.

The current placement officer has been doing placement for ten years. The previous placement officer handled placement for nearly 10 years also.

C. FINANCIAL/MATERIAL RESOURCES

Child Welfare

In addition to the CWS basic/realignment allocation and routine funding sources that support CWS programming, CWS has been the recipient of a number of grants and State Allocations that have allowed new programs to be implemented. A variety of separate Allocations have been either provided to counties with the addition of new mandates or have been available for counties to opt in to receive. The following list identifies examples of funding allocations separate from realignment and other federal dollars:

- Bringing Families Home Program to support child welfare families experiencing homelessness or at risk of being homeless.
- Complex Care Child Specific Funding
- Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Program (SB 855)
- Emergency Child Care Bridge funding to support child care needs for caregivers
- Emergency Response Enhancement funds
- Family Urgent Response System (FURS) Program funding
- Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF)
- Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP)
- Title IV-E Specialized Training Dollars
- Transitional Housing Program and Housing Navigator Program for Transitional Aged Youth population to support housing needs
- Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Round 1 funding specific for youth to support housing needs.
- Flexible Family Support funding
- Family Finding
- Level of Care Rate Determination allocation
- Child and Family Teams and Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths allocation
- CWS-CARES

In addition, for the past five years, the Department of Social Services has been awarded a California Office of Emergency Services Victims of Crime Act (CalOES VOCA) grant that expires December 2024. This grant has been instrumental in funding services and support for victims of crime served by Children's Services, including Family Time Coaching and the County's short-term resource family approved Emergency Children's Shelter.

Additionally, Tuolumne County was granted the Road to Resilience grant through the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP), which has facilitated the implementation of a robust prevention program targeting women with a prior or current substance use addiction who are pregnant or have children under 12 months old. This five-year grant is scheduled to end in June 2024. Despite the impending expiration of the Road to Resilience grant, Tuolumne County remains committed to providing prevention services to this vulnerable demographic. The County even plans to expand services and support to all at-risk families in which parents are grappling with substance abuse addiction. This expansion aligns with the County's Family First Prevention Services Program Comprehensive Prevention Plan, with the ultimate objective of integrating all prevention activities into the Engagement and Empowerment Unit.

To ensure the sustainability of these initiatives, Tuolumne County has devised a comprehensive funding strategy leveraging various sources, including CalWORKs funding, the Family First Prevention Services Block Grant, Family First Transition Act Grant, CBCAP-ARPA funds, and Opioid Settlement funds. Moreover, the County anticipates tapping into Title IV-E Funding once able, as well as pursuing additional grants. Tuolumne County has taken a collaborative approach to develop this funding strategy by partnering with multiple community-based organizations including the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians Tribal Social Services Department, Red Feather Mathieson Memorial Clinic, Infant Child Enrichment Services, the Probation Department, the Behavioral Health Department, and the Public Health Department.

Probation

The Probation Department, including the Mother Lode Regional Juvenile Detention Facility, receives funding from the County General Fund. However, a large share of the Department's overall funding for the Juvenile Division came from state and federal sources; most notably, the state's 2011 Realignment-funded Youthful Offender Block Grant (\$402,329) and Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (\$207,338) allocations. These allocations supported the following: sworn peace officer staffing and training to supervise probation youth in and out of custody; individual and group behavioral health clinical services; evidence-based screening tools and programing; and supplies/equipment for various educational and recreational opportunities for participating youth. The Juvenile Probation Division also received state and federal reimbursement pursuant to Title IV-E (\$21,774) and SB 933 (\$3,399) through the Department of Social Services for activities working with children involved in the delinquency system. (22-23 budget data).

D. CHILD WELFARE/ PROBATION OPERATED SERVICES

County Operated Shelters

The Emergency Children's Shelter has been in operation since January 2004. The shelter is a County-owned and maintained building on land leased from the County. The shelter is staffed by an approved resource parent who resides at the shelter and provides full time quality parenting and caregiving responsibilities for up to ten children ages 0-18. Although the shelter is licensed for up to ten children at a time, it is a practice to place no more than six children at a time, depending on age and ability.

Children reside in the shelter for up to 30 days, not to exceed 90 days in extenuating circumstances, and receive comprehensive assessments while social workers search for placement and complete family finding. Children continue to attend their school of origin during their stay at the shelter. This initial shelter stay allows ample time to thoroughly assess the child and conduct better placement matching. It also allows time for family finding efforts to take place.

Through a County developed contract, the resource family agrees to be available to take new placements at any time except for designated respite weekends and vacation periods. During these periods, team members identify outside respite care providers to support short-term placement of children or manage placements in alignment with scheduled time off. In the past, the County had success in contracting with resource families to provide respite care at the shelter. While recruitment for this purpose continues, the County has been unsuccessful recruiting for respite care providers for the shelter for several years which has resulted in periods of time without emergency shelter. The Emergency Children's Shelter aids in placement stability and prevents children from living in County offices while social workers search for placements.

County Licensing / Resource Family Approval

Department of Social Services provides this service. Detailed information is included in the Systemic Factors - Resource Family and Adoption Approval, Recruitment, and Retention section of the CSA.

Adoptions

Tuolumne County brought Adoptions in house from the California Department of Social Services State Adoptions Division in October 2020. The Adoptions Unit description is included in the Child Welfare Infrastructure section above.

Juvenile Hall

The mission of the Mother Lode Regional Juvenile Detention Facility is to provide for the safe and supportive detention of youth requiring secure rehabilitative services. It is guided by the belief that high risk youth can change negative patterns of conduct through active participation in evidence-based and best practices programs empirically proven to promote positive change. In furtherance of this mission, youth detained at the Mother Lode Regional Juvenile Detention Facility have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, to reside in a safe and secure environment, to receive fair and consistent treatment, and to participate in all available programs intended to foster physical, moral, emotional, and intellectual growth. Furthermore, the Mother Lode Regional Juvenile Detention Facility is committed to providing a safe work environment for staff, abiding by case and statutory law, and meeting all standards set forth within the California Code of Regulations, Title 15, for the care of youth in secure detention. The Mother Lode Regional Juvenile Detention Facility is an equal opportunity provider.

Summary of services

Core Programs Offered

- Physical Education
- Religious Program
- Life and Vocation Skills
- Truth About Drugs Education
- Sex and Parenting Education
- Work Program

Education Services

- Gold Ridge Education Center Provides:
- English/Language Arts and Social Sciences
- Math, Science, and Health
- Fine Arts/Foreign Language and Electives
- Specialized educational services
- Credit recovery services
- Emphasis on project-based learning
- Academic Tutoring
- Donated Library and Book Club

Health Services

- Medical Services
- Dental Services

- Behavioral Health Services

Evidenced-Based Programs Offered

- Boy's Council
- Girl's Circle
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Aggression Replacement Training (ART)
- Motivational Interviewing
- Interactive Journaling
- Seeking Safety (treatment for youth with PTSD and co-occurring substance use disorder)
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DTB)

GEO Reentry Services

- Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT)
- Anger Management
- Group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Substance Abuse Treatment
- Trauma Informed Programming
- Restorative Justice Programming

E. OTHER COUNTY PROGRAMS

CalWORKs

In 2022, the Tuolumne County Department of Social Services (DSS) initiated an infrastructure reorganization aimed at enhancing capacity to expand prevention and early intervention services and to incorporate homeless services. As noted above in the section on Child Welfare Infrastructure, the Integrated System Of Care (ISOC) unit encompasses all programs for which social workers are accountable. With upstream initiatives expanding and the State shifting towards prevention over protection, an opportunity arose to align these endeavors with the CalWORKs Welfare to Work (WTW) Program. There are a variety of upstream services already integrated into the CalWORKs program to strengthen families and increase protective factors. The goal of the reorganization was to integrate prevention efforts by reaching at-risk families earlier through a referral system, as well as by identifying those families in WTW for whom risk factors are barriers to employment. The new Engagement and Empowerment Unit within ISOC is in the process of implementing specialized caseloads comprised of families who will receive home visiting and Motivational Interviewing as specified in the County's Family First Prevention Services Program Comprehensive Prevention Plan. During the WTW intake process, an ACES screening and Protective Factors assessment is completed for each family to aid in developing a plan to mitigate barriers to employment; this plan may include home visiting and connection to resources.

Moreover, the County aims to serve families collaboratively when they are involved in both the child welfare system and WTW. Caseworkers from both WTW and Children's Services develop a unified case plan modeled after the Juvenile Court-ordered CWS plan with components specifically aimed at assisting families to achieve self-sufficiency. WTW and Children's Services collaboration has been further enhanced by having WTW staff participate in Review, Evaluate, and Decide (RED) Team meetings three times per week, as well as co-locating WTW staff with Children's Services during Children's Services staff shortages, including to cover emergency response Screening. This allows WTW staff to develop competencies in child protective services while increasing communication across systems to ensure all prospective families receive access to supports in both programs when eligible.

Public Health

Tuolumne County CWS and Public Health recognize the importance of providing collaborative support services to families in Emergency Response, Family Maintenance, and Family Reunification. Collaboration increases the depth of support available to parents who are learning to parent, protect, and nurture healthy, well-adjusted youth.

The Foster Care Public Health Nurse (PHN) regularly attends RED Team meetings and participates in placement and case planning Child and Family Team Meetings. Additionally, Public Health supports early childhood developmental needs through conducting ASQ-Social Emotional Assessments for children under the age of three who have entered foster care. As noted above, in 2024, Public Health began utilizing the evidence-based Parents as Teachers (PAT) home visiting model as part of its prevention work. PAT partners certified parent educators with parents to support, encourage, and empower families through play and reading time with the intent of increasing children's school readiness and success, parent knowledge, and family well-being. Although Public Health received a separate grant to implement PAT, this program has also been incorporated into Tuolumne County's Family First Prevention Services Program Comprehensive Prevention Plan to support community pathways and integrate efforts. Furthermore, the Department of Social Services contracts with Public Health to conduct home visiting in partnership with the CalWORKs home visiting program.

Behavioral Health (Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services)

Behavioral Health Mission Statement: "The mission of Behavioral Health in Tuolumne County is to provide respectful, culturally sensitive and strength based behavioral health services which provide wellness, self-sufficiency and recovery from mental illness and/ or addiction."

Crisis, Assessment & Intervention Program (CAIP)

Walk-in crisis services are available Monday– Sunday 8:00 am—7:00 pm, closed holidays. Crisis phone services and access are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (209) 533-7000 or toll free (800) 630-1130.

Tuolumne County Behavioral Health (TCBH) responds to mental health and substance use disorder crises and performs psychiatric hospitalization evaluations within the community when needed. More specifically, TCBH provides the following through CAIP:

- Telephone and face-to-face support
- Help with access to community resources
- Psychiatric hospitalization evaluations
- Psychiatric hospitalization placement and discharge
- On site, emergency department, "field" and in-home crisis intervention
- Safety cell crisis services at the Tuolumne County Jail and Juvenile Detention Facility

Specialized Children's Services

TCBH provides outpatient specialty services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries, including pursuant to the Early and Periodic Screenings, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit. Types of EPSDT Services include:

- Individual and group therapy
- Rehabilitation services (skill building) in group and individual services
- Family therapy
- Crisis services
- Case management

- Full Service Partnership offering intensive case management
- Medication Services

Behavioral health services may be provided in the home or in the community. Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS) or in-home behavioral health interventions are provided for children or youth and their families who meet criteria for the service. TBS helps children and young adults who struggle with the following issues:

- Have severe emotional problems;
- Live in a mental health placement or are at risk of placement; or
- Have been hospitalized recently for mental health problems or are at risk for psychiatric hospitalization.

Additionally, an Intensive Care Coordinator (ICC) is designated by TCBH to participate in Child and Family Team Meetings for foster youth who meet *Pathways to Well Being* eligibility criteria and collaborate with Children's Services and other involved Agencies. The ICC is an integral part of a child's Child Family Team, provides coordination of services specific to a child's treatment plan, and provides face-to face contact and support.

Outpatient Mental Health Services

Services available for children, youth, adults, and older adults include:

- Assessment and Treatment Planning
- Medication Services
- Individual and Family Therapy
- Individual and Group Therapy
- Case Management
- Rehabilitation Skill Services (individual and groups)
- Full Service Partnership program (with wrap-around services, including intensive case management and field-based services)
- Crisis Intervention
- Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS)
- Peer Support Services
- Drop-in Center Services

Services are provided to Medi-Cal beneficiaries who meet State criteria guidelines. Services are provided in the office, by tele-health, in the home, and in school settings. Parents who have Medi-Cal coverage and meet medical necessity requirements can also access services through TCBH. TCBH will refer parents who are unable to access services through TCBH to the appropriate community provider, such as a Medi-Cal managed care plan, local Indian health clinics, or private providers.

As stated above, the ICC can participate in Child and Family Team Meetings for foster youth meeting *Pathways to Well Being* eligibility in collaboration with Children's Services, Behavioral Health, and/or other involved agencies. The ICC is an integral part of a child's Child and Family Team, provides coordination of services specific to a child's treatment plan, and provides face-to face contact and support.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Services

Outpatient Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Services are provided through Behavioral Health Services on a voluntary basis. Services are billable to Medi-Cal, and there is a sliding fee scale for uninsured. Services available for youth, adults, and older adults include:

- Assessment and treatment planning

- Individual and group counseling
- Dual diagnosis group services
- Perinatal Treatment Program
- Adolescent Brief Intervention Program
- Drug Dependency Court
- Adolescent Youth Treatment (AYT)
- Prevention education in school settings and the Juvenile Detention Facility

Dependency Drug Court (DDC)

Most families involved with Children's Services have substance abuse identified as a maltreatment factor. The DDC involves the use of a multidisciplinary treatment team that meets monthly in preparation for a monthly DDC Hearing to check in with DDC Participants. Treatment team members include case carrying social workers, the Ongoing Unit Supervisor, County Counsel, mental health substance abuse counselors, a court manager, and the Superior Court Judge. DDC services are court-ordered and highly structured to support substance addiction. They may include substance abuse group sessions twice per week, individual substance abuse counseling sessions with an SUD counselor once per month, 12-Step meetings three times per week, and random drug testing three times per week. Additionally, when necessary, services may include inpatient substance abuse treatment. Other case plan components are addressed through a Child and Family Team Meeting and included as determined by the support team.

Homelessness

In early 2022, the Tuolumne County Department of Social Services (DSS) established a specialized unit dedicated to addressing homelessness in collaboration with the County Homeless Services Coordinator. This involved integrating all homeless programs into a cohesive homeless/housing unit aimed at enhancing case management support for individuals facing housing barriers. These programs cater to the needs of families and individuals enrolled in various social services programs. The following programs fall under the purview of homeless services:

- Bringing Families Home, which is specific to families involved with CWS
- Home Safe, which is specific to elderly and dependent adults involved with Adult Protective Services
- Housing Support Program, which is specific to families receiving CalWORKs
- Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program
- Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP)
- Encampment Resolution Grant program

Additionally, during fiscal year 24/25, Tuolumne County will onboard an Interim Housing facility, the initial housing initiative in a step-up housing continuum. Transitional Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing facilities will be established in the next two to three years. These facilities will be managed by DSS and supported operationally with case management and other staffing.

CHILD WELFARE/PROBATION PLACEMENT INITIATIVES

The County continues to participate fully in current Federal and State initiatives, including the following:

Children's System of Care (AB 2083)

In 2021, Tuolumne County Department of Social Services (DSS) began developing a Children's System of Care (CSOC) to integrate children's services across multiple agencies pursuant to Assembly Bill AB 2083. CSOC incorporates a partnership of child serving agencies and organizations, which share a similar vision, mission, values, and principles. The goal of the CSOC is to deliver effective and seamless community-based, strength-based, trauma-informed, culturally competent, and needs-driven services to all Tuolumne County children, youth, and families. In July 2021, the Tuolumne County's CSOC Memorandum of Understanding was finalized. It was approved by the Board of Supervisors in September 2021. The goal of the MOU is to address systemic barriers to the traditional provision of interagency services. The CSOC Interagency Leadership Team (ILT) and Advisory Committee each meet monthly. The following are key achievements of the CSOC since its development:

- Creation of a data dashboard to monitor system wide outcomes. The CSOC Dashboard was developed in collaboration with CSOC partner agencies as a commitment to shared outcomes and collective quality management. The data dashboard is currently active, and the document is updated quarterly. As more information is input into the dashboard, trends, correlations, and other focus areas could possibly be identified. More information on the CSOC Dashboard is included in the Systemic Factors – Agency Collaboration section of the CSA.
- Training staff and senior management about Systems of Care principles and practices. Trainings provided to partner agencies so far has included the following focuses: Integrated Core Practice Model, Motivational Interviewing, trauma-informed de-escalation, and Professional Assault Crisis Training. Other appropriate trainings will be provided as the need arises.
- Analysis of meeting redundancy to streamline decision-making processes and better connection of interagency processes.
- The CSOC developed and finalized a universal Release of Information (ROI) to improve efficiency in information sharing amongst partner agencies, including child welfare and behavioral health.

Interagency Resource Collaborative

With the work on the CSOC, Tuolumne County re-established an Interagency Resource Collaborative (IRC) from the Interagency Placement Committee (IPC). IRC meetings identify, develop, coordinate, and monitor the care of at-risk children, youth, and families across programs and within the County. The IRC includes local school districts, the County Office of Education, Behavioral Health, Juvenile Probation, Child Welfare Services (CWS), and Valley Mountain Regional Center representation.

The IRC, when acting as the IPC, serves both a consultative role and, in some cases, a decision-making or authoritative role. The IRC takes referrals from the community through the CSOC partnering agencies and provides a format for children and family members to contribute meaningful input toward meeting the needs of children through strength-based approaches. The IRC uses a collaborative strength-based framework to review the care and services for children, youth, and families with complex needs, and discuss and recommend strategies to address their identified needs while utilizing CSOC resources and coordinating services to support

positive outcomes. This aims to prevent children and youth from becoming system-involved and ensures children in out-of-home care receive the most appropriate level of services available to meet their physical, educational, social, cultural, and psychological needs. More information on the IRC is contained throughout this CSA, including in the Systemic Factors – Agency Collaboration and Systemic Factors – Service Array sections of the report.

Resource Family Approval

Tuolumne County has fully implemented Resource Family Approval (RFA). The RFA Program is a family-friendly and child-centered caregiver approval process. It combines and replaces elements of the old foster parent licensing, relative approval, and adoption and guardianship approval processes. Resource families provide placement for children, youth, and young adults (non-minor dependents from 18-21 years old) who are under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, or otherwise in the care of a county child welfare agency or probation department. The RFA Unit provides ongoing case management for these families.

The mission of Tuolumne County Foster Care is simple: “Our Kids, Our Community, Our Team.” Tuolumne County resource families are given the unique opportunity to support the children and families in their communities. By allowing children to stay locally, each child is given the opportunity to continue attending their school of origin, maintain social and familial relationships, and thrive in familiar surroundings at a time when their life is uncertain.

Caregivers approved through RFA are provided with an overview of the California Partnership Agreement and asked to sign it; this agreement outlines expectations for both the caregiver and Children’s Services staff during the time a child is placed in their home. It emphasizes shared responsibility among caregivers, agencies, and stakeholders in providing nurturing environments for children in the custody of child welfare agencies. It also stresses respectful partnership between caregivers and agency staff, ensuring children's healthy development and success. Commitments include active involvement in planning and implementing care, honoring caregivers' rights to breaks, and maintaining records. Excellent parenting practices, understanding trauma's impact, and supporting cultural and religious connections are critical aspects of nurturing children. The agreement further advocates for smooth transitions between caregivers, respecting the child's needs, and maintaining ties to biological families. The County trains new resource families on the details of the California Partnership Agreement and continues to advocate for respite for resource families; smooth transitions between resource families and biological families at visitations, medical appointments, and education meetings; and ongoing training for resource families. Additionally, matched and unmatched resource parents are supported by training and guidance from a licensed therapist who provides Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) and utilizes the Nurtured Heart curriculum.

Children’s Services has identified the need for Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) homes in the County, and prospective resource families have been polled on their desire and ability to support this model. However, Children’s Services has not yet identified families interested in being trained to support children who have been determined to need this level of care.

The RFA program obtained a waiver from the California Department of Social Services for the separation of RFA and the Adoptions Unit supervision. With the recent creation of the Integrated System of Care within the Tuolumne County Department of Social Services, supervision of RFA has moved to a supervisor who does not supervise child welfare placement programs.

Integrated Core Practice Model

The County has restructured its previous Interagency Placement Committee and all processes to align with the Continuum of Care Reform and the California Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM) vision and structure. This has included ensuring comprehensive mental health screenings and Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs) for all children entering care. CFTMs have been structured to ensure a family-driven and youth-centered process. The County is seeing caregivers involved and providing input more frequently in CFTMs, as well as partnering with children's support networks. After a pause due to staffing change and shortages, Satisfaction surveys were revised and have been used over the last five months at each CFTM with all participants to ensure family voice remains the priority and to create feedback looks that allow staff to adjust and adapt practice. Implementation of the ICPM, CFTMs, and the CANS (as discussed below) is moving forward, thereby furthering implementation of *Pathways to Well Being* (the Katie A. Lawsuit) requirements.

The County has also implemented Safety Organized Practice, which is embedded in the ICPM framework. This includes implementation of a RED Team, case consultation using the ICPM framework, and Safety Planning. The County has also implemented the use of the San Francisco County Performance Anchors, modifying them to Tuolumne County, consistent with ICPM. Moreover, CSOC partners mutually agreed in the CSOC MOU to use the principles, values, and practice behaviors of the ICPM in their interactions with youth and families, with one another, and with contractors and county partners. Consistent use of the ICPM principles and behaviors supports partners' efforts to deliver services that are trauma-informed and culturally competent. In September and November 2022, two half-day trainings on ICPM were offered to all Tuolumne County Child Welfare staff, Behavioral Health, Probation, the Juvenile Court, the County Office of Education, local foster youth, school mental health staff, and Valley Mountain Regional Services. These trainings provided staff and partners with essential principles and professional behaviors to foster effective relationships with each other and youth and families, supporting efficient and effective care and outcomes. County staff have also participated in trainings on engaging fathers, integrating CANS into CFTMs, motivational interviewing, and quality caseworker visits.

Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment (CANS)

Tuolumne County staff have attended CANS training and ER court staff attended a follow up training to ensure CANS use during Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs). Similarly, all staff have been trained in the Level of Care Protocol and continue to practice its use individually and in teams. Children's Services and Behavioral Health have agreed to share their respective versions of the CANS and CANS-50, as these are the primary communication and service planning tools for youth in foster care and youth receiving behavioral health services; this agreement is included in the CSOC MOU.

The CANS serves as the required screening tool for foster youth. CWS initiates the Integrated CANS for all children entering child welfare. It must be completed within 30 days of placement to align with the placement and/or case planning CFTM. CWS then shares the CANS, along with screening referral demographics, with Behavioral Health for further clinical assessment and eligibility determination.

The CANS results are used in the CFTM to identify strengths and needs for case plan development and care coordination throughout the child's time in care. For foster children and youth receiving ongoing Behavioral Health Services, the clinician completes a CANS-50 every six months and shares it with the child welfare social worker and the Child and Family Team during the CFTM.

Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI)

During the previous SIP cycle, Tuolumne County was diligently working to incorporate practices stemming from QPI into daily practices when engaging and teaming with caregivers. The County continues efforts to recruit a Foster Care Liaison to support relationships between resource families and Children's Services staff. The County has had to forgo participation in quarterly, state-level QPI meetings due to the loss of the liaison and staffing levels in both CWS and RFA. However, Tuolumne County remains committed to QPI values, theories, and techniques, and many components of QPI have been implemented, such as use of the California Partnership Agreement for quality care (described above in the RFA section) and connecting biological parents and foster parents with each other so that they establish relationships early on.

Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC)

A Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) protocol has been developed and accepted by the CART team to ensure early intervention and that all youth who are identified as having been exploited or at risk of exploitation are appropriately investigated, and provided the needed services and supports. Tuolumne County Child Welfare trains new and existing social workers on how to use the Commercially Sexually Exploited-Identification Tool (CSE-IT), which is a tool used to identify and assess the risk of commercial sexual exploitation among children and youth. More specifically, it is designed to help professionals, such as social workers, law enforcement officers, and healthcare providers, recognize signs and behaviors indicative of commercial sexual exploitation through a series of questions or indicators. By identifying those at risk, authorities can intervene and provide support to protect vulnerable children, as well as prevent further exploitation. In 2023, Tuolumne County trained local law enforcement, education providers, local Tribes, and other community partners on how to use the CSE-IT. Tuolumne County also participates in Preventing and Addressing Child Trafficking (PACT) with its regional cohort. PACT offers trainings on identification of CSEC, harm reduction, and survivor resources.

CFSR Case Reviews

With the implementation of the CFSR Case Review mandates, Tuolumne County continues to implement a structured Quality Assurance (QA) program. The case reviews, in conjunction with regular quantitative data analysis, have formed the basis of Continuous Quality Improvement in Tuolumne CWS programs and practices. More information is provided in the Systemic Factors - Quality Assurance section of the CSA.

Emergency Child Care Bridge (ECCB) Program

Tuolumne County has partnered with the local Resource and Referral Network and Alternative Payment Program provider, Infant Child Enrichment Services (ICES), since 2018-2019 to administer the ECCB Program. ICES works with Children's Services to receive referrals for the voucher program, which provides funding for six or more months of child care for caregivers as they work to obtain long term child care funding options. ICES also provides navigation services to assist resource parents in locating and making informed decisions about childcare; help applying for subsidies and planning for long-term child care needs; trauma-informed training to address child development and best care practices for children and youth in the child welfare system; and coaching to assist caregivers in applying the training curriculum and strategies for working with children in foster care.

Family Urgent Response System

In July 2021, Tuolumne County successfully implemented its Family Urgent Response System. Two member teams integrated across multiple systems respond to calls referred from the state hotline as necessary. Multiple behavioral health staff, probation staff, and social workers across multiple programs have been trained to respond to children and caregivers who need immediate support to help support placements, promote stability, and prevent re-entries into foster care.

Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA Part I) / California Family First Prevention Services (FFPS) Program

Tuolumne County submitted its FFPS Program Comprehensive Prevention Plan (CPP) to CDSS in July 2023. The Tuolumne Resiliency Coalition (TRC), Tuolumne's Child Abuse Prevention Council, was the Planning Body for the CPP; it oversaw workgroups established to evaluate Tuolumne's resources, data, community needs, program development, and sustainability plans to create the CPP. Tuolumne County's CPP was approved by CDSS on September 26, 2023. The CSOC Interagency Leadership Team has assumed responsibility for approving and monitoring ongoing implementation of the CPP.

The CPP includes a multi-faceted approach to enhance community support and engagement; it aims to improve community health and well-being through strategic training, resource coordination, program support, and extensive screening efforts. Motivational interviewing training will be provided to County and community partners, with additional access points identified to facilitate better support services. In addition to conducting training sessions, the County will provide ongoing skill reinforcement and evaluate the effectiveness of the training. The County plans to leverage the California Home Visiting Program Grant and involve an AmeriCorps member from the Engagement and Empowerment Unit to bolster its delivery of Parents as Teachers and engagement with families. Family engagement strategies include personalized support, community events, and a feedback mechanism to continuously improve the program.

The Unite Us Platform will support community outreach and assessment, ensuring efficient linkage to necessary resources and services. It will also be used to implement comprehensive participant and outcome tracking. Staff will be trained to use the platform effectively, and the referral process will be streamlined. Additionally, the CPP includes a plan to expand Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) screenings for all parenting patients at Adventist Health Sonora and for parents involved in Engagement and Empowerment Unit programs. More specifically, the plan includes training healthcare providers, integrating screenings into routine check-ups, and providing follow-up support based on screening results. To ensure the effectiveness of these initiatives, the CSOC Interagency Leadership Team will conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation, including through quarterly reviews of data collected and performance metrics. Feedback from stakeholders will be gathered and used to make continuous improvements, with regular updates and reports provided to ensure transparency and accountability.

Flexible Family Supports

The overarching goal of the Flexible Family Supports and Home-Based Foster Care program is to increase the availability of high-quality, local home-based care with relatives, non-relative extended family members, and non-related resource families. Using funding from the Flexible Family Supports program, the County plans to expand its Certified Respite Care Provider Program, which recruits and certifies individuals solely for respite care. Funds are used to subsidize respite care costs at approximately \$38.00 per day and to create marketing materials for recruitment events. Additionally, the Flexible Family Supports program supports enrichment activities that strengthen relationships between biological families and resource families and help children

maintain social and cultural connections. These activities may include sports, summer camps, hobbies, music, dance, drama, family bonding activities, and tribal cultural events. Concrete supports are also provided to address specific needs of children, such as transportation costs for out-of-county events or family visits. The concrete supports can also be used to address housing limitations, thereby facilitating resource family approval and placement. Additionally, funding supports recruitment and respite care provider events, marketing materials, professional advertisements, and family finding and engagement efforts tailored to each child's case.

Staffing Waiver

Tuolumne County submitted a Staffing Waiver Request on December 20, 2022, to address critical staffing shortages within Child Welfare Services (CWS) that have impacted the County's ability to meet mandated service levels. Specifically, there was a need for a waiver for Master of Social Work (MSW) qualifications in critical roles, recognizing the difficulty in hiring enough qualified MSWs and the necessity to fill these roles with available staff to maintain service levels. The request was part of a broader strategic plan to tackle long-term staffing issues, including initiatives to improve recruitment and retention, enhance staff training and support, and optimize workload distribution. The waiver highlighted ongoing staffing challenges, such as difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified personnel, exacerbated by increased workloads and caseloads per worker, leading to burnout and turnover. These shortages directly impacted the quality and timeliness of services provided to children and families, jeopardizing Children's Services capacity to fulfill its obligations, including those related to timely investigations management, case management, and support services. The waiver sought flexibility in staffing requirements to allow CWS to adjust its staffing model temporarily, including modifications to staff-to-case ratios, hiring criteria, and other regulatory requirements to provide immediate relief and stabilize its workforce. Additionally, the request emphasized the need for support and resources from the State and other stakeholders to implement these changes effectively and sustainably. The waiver was presented as a necessary measure to ensure that CWS could continue to provide essential services to vulnerable populations while addressing its internal staffing crises. The staffing waiver request was approved by the Family Centered Safety and Support Bureau on March 23, 2023 and remains in effect until March 23, 2026.

CWS Lawsuits

There are three pending lawsuits in which Tuolumne County has been listed as a defendant in matters related to personal injuries and damages stemming from childhood sexual abuse in foster care; all are alleged to have occurred several years ago. The County has contracted with an outside law firm to manage the litigation aspects of these lawsuits with County Counsel oversight.

Opioid Settlement

Tuolumne County joined a consortium of other public entities across the nation to pursue litigation against manufacturers, distributors, and retailers for engaging in marketing schemes conducted to persuade doctors to prescribe and patients to use opioids.

In July 2021, the first three defendants reached a nationwide settlement. The Settlement Agreements directed counties on how the funds are to be spent; counties can only use the funds as allowed by the Settlement Agreements. The California Department of Healthcare Services (DHCS) issued guidance on the use of the funds.

Settlement payments in California are expected over an 18-year period. Tuolumne County engaged the community to help inform and guide how the funds would be best spent in accordance with the DHCS

guidelines, to which recommendations were made to the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors. Opioid Settlement funds will support the following:

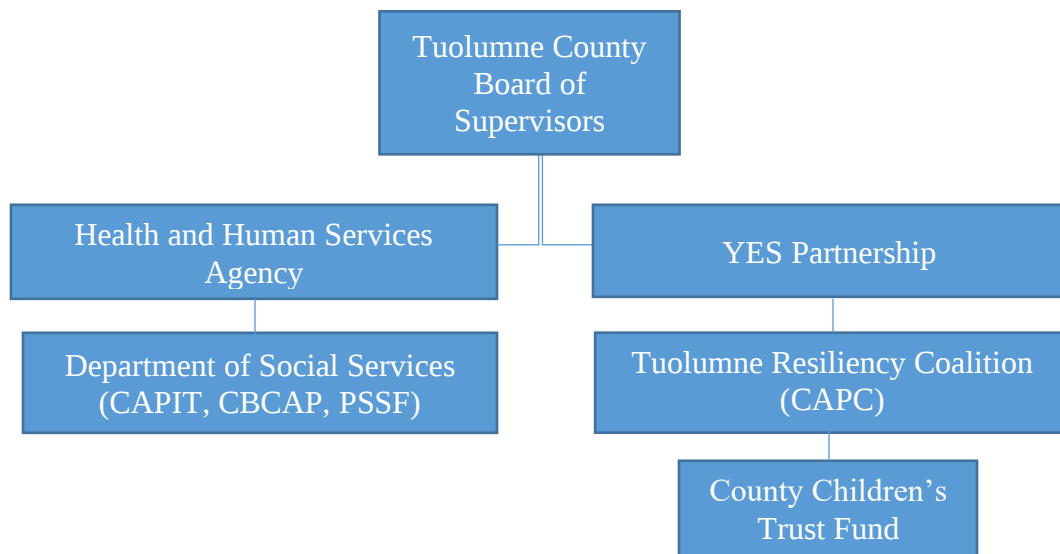
- Sustain Operating costs for the Behavioral Health Mobile Crisis Program
- Create and/or secure beds for Board and Care, Sober Living, and Medical Detox
- Transitional Housing
- School presentations by Behavioral Health and Public Health educating students on opioids and their risks
- Expanded Naloxone Distribution
- Sustain Road to Resilience Program for women who are pregnant and are experiencing substance addiction or who have a history of substance addiction
- Support Child Welfare Services, targeting foster care placement prevention
- Media campaign targeting schools and medical providers
- Sustain Public Health mobile van
- Wrap-around Behavioral Health Services
- Support 2-1-1 centralized call center

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS (BOS) DESIGNATED COMMISSION, BODIES

THE BOS-DESIGNATED PUBLIC AGENCY

The Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors has designated Tuolumne County Department of Social Services (DSS) as the public agency to administer CAPIT, CBCAP and PSSF funding.

The visual below shows the entities that are involved in decision-making regarding CAPIT, CBCAP, PSSF, and the County Children's Trust Fund. The role of various entities is further described within the sections that follow.



A. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION COUNCIL (CAPC)

The YES Partnership was designated in 2002 by Board Resolution (No. 19-02) as the community's coordinated council to prevent child abuse. The YES Partnership is dedicated to preventing suicide, substance abuse, and child abuse.

The community gathers its child abuse prevention partners under the auspices of Tuolumne Resiliency Coalition (TRC), formally known as Prevent Child Abuse Tuolumne County (PCATC). TRC was established as an independent organization within county government to provide community input into the County's services for children with a special emphasis on child abuse/neglect prevention and intervention services. TRC is a standing committee of the YES Partnership and is authorized to administer the Children's Trust Fund.

TRC assists in the County's prevention and early intervention efforts by:

- Screening, selecting, and evaluating grantees receiving Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) dollars;

- Delivering funds to community organizations by providing mini grants to prevent child abuse;
- Taking an active role in building public awareness around child abuse prevention and Adverse Childhood Experiences;
- Providing opportunities for professional development, including through trainings on trauma-informed approaches, crisis intervention and de-escalation, and other topics based on the needs of professionals in the community serving at-risk children and families.

Furthermore, TRC was the planning committee that developed the County's Family First Prevention Services Program Comprehensive Prevention Plan, which was approved in 2023.

B. COUNTY CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND COMMISSION, BOARD OR COUNCIL

The County Children's Trust Fund (CCTF) is overseen by the local Child Abuse Prevention Council, Tuolumne Resiliency Coalition (TRC). As noted above, TRC is a standing committee of the YES Partnership. Information on programs, services, and/or activities funded with the CCTF is made available through open meetings of TRC and is published in the annual TRC newsletter. All budgeting for TRC is managed through the County's Office of the Auditor/Controller.

Tuolumne County receives Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) dollars, which are spent through contracts with community-based organizations selected through a competitive bidding process. As delivery of the CBCAP allocation is delayed until February each year (8 months into the fiscal year), the grant is already two-thirds spent by the time it is received. It is pre-paid using County funds, and the grant simply passes through the County's Human Services budget. To ensure that the fund reaches a \$20,000 minimum, effective December 2013, all CBCAP dollars allocated to Tuolumne County are placed in the Tuolumne County CCTF and then invoiced to the service provider under contract to provide community-based prevention activities.

C. PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES (PSSF) COLLABORATIVE

Tuolumne County DSS is currently identified as the local planning body for the PSSF program. Activities are coordinated and tracked by the Children's Services Agency/Program Manager. These funds are used to fill gaps in services such as private therapy, adoption support services, concrete supports, Dependency Drug Court completion incentives, etc.

SYSTEMIC FACTORS

A. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Tuolumne County Child Welfare Services (CWS) and Probation staff are required to use the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) to document all case-related information. CWS/CMS is the data system used by the California State Department of Social Services (CDSS) to determine overall compliance with the identified outcome measures. CDSS contracts with the University of California at Berkeley's (UC Berkeley) Center for Social Services Research to compile the quarterly summary reports for all 58 counties. These data reports are referenced throughout this County Self-Assessment (CSA).

Currently, Resource Family Approval (RFA) staff utilize Binti to manage applications through approval for matched and unmatched foster parents.

Tuolumne County formed a CWS-CARES Implementation Team to collaborate with Child Welfare Digital Services on the anticipated transition to the new CARES system in 2025. CARES is intended to replace CWS/CMS and Binti. Although CARES is not fully functional yet, staff are already utilizing it to enter Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) results and to view information on homes, including any licensing complaints.

Children's Services and Probation also use the SafeMeasures® data tool when evaluating programmatic components, data quality, and overall case compliance. This tool is used by all staff levels to review individual worker performance and overall department effectiveness. More specifically, supervisors are utilizing data obtained from SafeMeasures® to conduct employee evaluations, and social workers use this tool to monitor their own performance. Data obtained from SafeMeasures® can often offer a more current picture than the UC Berkeley data offers. Therefore, it is frequently used to provide current data trends for community stakeholder events.

Children's Services also utilizes the Structured Decision Making (SDM) tool to conduct assessments and assist in case decision-making processes. Social Workers are required to utilize a variety of SDM tools for intake, investigation, safety and risk assessment, reunification, and case closure. All SDM tools are reviewed and ultimately approved by a Social Services Supervisor. Tuolumne County utilizes the CANS assessment tool in place of the SDM Family Strengths and Needs tool.

Social workers and aides utilize the California State Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS) to search data on date of birth, locate absent parents and other family, identify individuals within a home, and conduct other related tasks. Tuolumne County staff currently do not use field tablets. Only one Supervising Staff Services Analyst is trained on the Business Objects program, which is available for dynamic report development.

Some staff have been trained to use the Foster Focus database, which integrates data from CWS/CMS and the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). This effort supports the educational needs of all foster youth and increases communication between CWS and school partners, including the foster youth liaisons placed at each school site and the two foster youth managers at the Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Office.

Through sunseting California Governor's Office of Emergency Services Victims of Crime Act (CalOES VOCA) funds, staff have been assigned County-owned smart phones, which are used for field work. These smart phones provide access to available online resources such as the SDM tool and other useful digital sources.

The Probation Department also uses Enterprise Solutions, a web-based case management system (formerly called CaseloadPRO). This system supports all adult and juvenile case activity, including probationer profiles, juvenile booking information, victim information, addresses, charge dispositions, biographical information, court hearings, and probation orders. Additionally, the system can extract detailed data to help provide the most accurate state-mandated data outputs, measure outcomes and determine program efficacy in reducing recidivism, and streamline monitoring of probation programs. Moreover, Enterprise Solutions integrates data and shares information between the juvenile/adult units and the juvenile hall. Currently, there is no system in place to share data, reports, or documents among all criminal justice partners, including law enforcement, the District Attorney/Victim Witness Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Courts, and the jail.

In addition to Enterprise Solutions, Probation Officers have been trained by staff from Evident Change on the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS). JAIS is a gender-responsive, evidence-based approach to the supervision of youth that offers staff an effective, easy-to-use interface to assess the gender-specific risks and needs of youth. JAIS provides specific supervision strategies based on a youth's underlying motivation for illegal behavior. For administration, JAIS provides the ability to easily monitor data and needs through data reports that summarize the risk and needs profiles of youth served, as well as helps to identify staff training or resource needs.

B. COUNTY CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Juvenile Court Structure

The Juvenile Court in Tuolumne County is convened by the Superior Court, which oversees the juvenile court process for both dependency and delinquency cases. Dependency and delinquency cases are heard in the courthouse located in Sonora.

Two judges preside over the Juvenile Court. One judge hears dependency cases, and the other judge hears juvenile delinquency cases. These judges conduct all detention, jurisdiction, disposition, and permanency hearings on their respective calendars.

In dependency matters, Child Welfare Services (CWS) is represented by County Counsel attorneys. Attorneys are provided to children and parents through a court contract with the Law Office of Kelly Bentley and a pool of contract attorneys. County Counsel ensures full adherence to CWS legal timeframes and service responsibilities and supports CWS in court, including preparing for and providing testimony.

In delinquency matters, the District Attorney is the prosecutor. Youth are represented by a Court-appointed Public Defender, or a private attorney may be retained by the youth's parents. Parents are typically not appointed counsel but may retain counsel if they so choose. The assigned Probation Officer serves as a neutral party and provides unbiased information to the Court in all delinquency matters.

Tuolumne County CWS and the Behavioral Health Department have been partnering with the Superior Court since 2001 to operate a Dependency Drug Court (DDC) program. The DDC program serves families when a parent/guardian is experiencing addiction and court intervention is needed due to abuse or neglect. The DDC uses a multidisciplinary treatment team that includes case-carrying social workers, the CWS Ongoing Unit Supervisor, County Counsel, mental health and substance abuse counselors, a court manager, and the Superior Court Judge. DDC services are highly structured outpatient substance use disorder treatment services that are court ordered; they include weekly substance abuse group sessions, once monthly individual sessions with a substance use disorder clinician, weekly 12-Step meetings or other similar meetings, and random drug testing. These services are incorporated into a family's case plan.

By statute, CWS is responsible for notifying all parties with a recognized statutory interest in a dependency court case, and their attorneys, of the date, time, and location of hearings. As required by law, all caregivers receive notice of juvenile court hearings and may attend them. The assigned Children's Services social worker, with oversight by a supervisor, monitors timeframes and provides case-specific information to the legal clerk who then completes the notice processes using state Judicial Council forms. Caregivers receive the Caregiver Information Form (JV-290) when they receive notification of a hearing; they can use this form to provide written information to the Court about the child in their care. Caregivers also participate in Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM), which provide further opportunities to provide input, receive information, and discuss ways to support the family. Similarly, Juvenile Probation sends out notices of court hearings within the mandated time frame. Notices are sent to the minor, the parent/guardian, caregiver, counsel, and the minor's Tribe, if applicable.

Tuolumne County adheres to state and federal law and regulations related to Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) inquiry and notification starting at the time of intake. Children's Services takes steps to determine if there is reason to know or believe that a child has Native American Indian heritage to ensure court compliance with ICWA, which requires Children's Services to engage Tribes at the earliest possible time, including during the report and early in the investigation stage. Once a child is determined to either have or potentially have Native American Indian heritage, the caseworker refers the case to a legal clerk. The legal clerk meets with the parents or other relatives to conduct further inquiry and complete the appropriate California Judicial Council ICWA forms. Throughout the case, Children's Services continues to conduct an inquiry of Native American heritage with children, parents, and relatives, including new relatives identified through family finding. Results from this ongoing inquiry are documented.

Children's Services and Probation both have close working relationships with the two local Tribes in the County; they work collaboratively with the Tribes on any referrals or cases that involve tribal members or those eligible for membership and tribal services. Collaboration with Children's Services begins at the time of intake. At the time of a child abuse report, when an individual reporting abuse or neglect indicates a tribal affiliation, the screener will send a text message to identified staff with the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians and Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians Tribes to invite them to join the screening call. Tribal social services representatives continue to be involved in all aspects of a case and included in all decision-making processes moving forward.

As mentioned above, it is the role of County Counsel to ensure Children's Services fully adheres to legal timeframes and service responsibilities for all dependency court matters. To ensure adherence, County Counsel prepares appropriate findings and orders for the Court's review, approval and/or modification, and signature. Children's Services uses California Judicial Council forms for all Juvenile Court matters, except for Detention and Jurisdiction Hearings. Probation also uses California Judicial Council forms for Juvenile Court orders in placement cases. The forms for various hearings when a child or youth is in placement (e.g., 12-month Permanency Hearing, Status Review Hearing, etc.) include language and space for the date and time of the next hearing, thereby ensuring these hearings in both dependency and delinquency cases are set within the required six-month timeframes. The Court may also set hearings earlier than six months for both dependency and delinquency cases. For the Detention and Jurisdiction hearings in dependency cases, the County utilizes forms created by County Counsel; these forms also include a recommendation for the date and time of the next hearing to ensure adherence to required timeframes.

The findings and orders form used by Children's Services and Probation for the 12-month Permanency Hearing and subsequent hearings contains a list of possible compelling reasons why Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) is not in the best interest of the child, so such findings are routinely made. When appropriate in a

Tuolumne County 2023 CSA

dependency case, a hearing pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 366.26 is set to establish a permanent plan, including TPR. Tuolumne County Children's Services social workers work with adoptions social workers to conduct concurrent planning and identify permanent homes. Children's Services does not recommend TPR if there is no prospective adoptive home for the child. In Probation cases, a hearing pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 727.31 is set for TPR unless there is a compelling reason why TPR is not in the best interest of the child.

Children's Services and Probation do not use Administrative Reviews in lieu of court hearings

Case planning and case plan adjustments

Child Welfare

Behavioral Health partners are a part of Tuolumne County's Children's System of Care. Their participation in Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs), which is further described below, provides a collaborative opportunity to assess a family's trauma and need for behavioral health services, as well as discuss needs already identified.

Through the Children's System of Care (CSOC), Tuolumne County recently updated its mental health screening process for children entering foster care. To prevent duplication of services, Children's Services completes the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment when a child first enters foster care and uses it as the mental health screening and referral to the Tuolumne County Behavioral Health Department (Behavioral Health). Should the child be determined eligible for behavioral health services through the County, Behavioral Health may complete subsequent CANS assessment with the support of Children's Services staff. When a youth is assigned a clinician, the youth's clinician will work with CWS to complete ongoing CANS Assessments and may participate with the Intensive Care Coordinator (ICC) in the child's CFTM, providing coordination of services specific to a child's treatment plan. Behavioral Health combined its Intensive Care Coordinator (ICC) and Qualified Individual roles, which are both performed by the Crisis Manager.

When children are determined to not meet the criteria for Specialty Mental Health Services through the County, Behavioral Health staff link them to Managed Care Plan providers or other resources through a "warm handoff." CWS staff may complete ongoing CANS assessments for all children and completes them for children not receiving services through Behavioral Health. Additionally, Children's Services ensures CANS assessments are completed for children placed out of county. Moreover, Children's Services refers children under age three to the Public Health Department for completion of an Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE) Assessment and then ensures they are connected to resources accordingly (e.g. regional center, healthcare providers, etc.).

Recognizing that effective case planning requires family engagement, Tuolumne County employs numerous strategies and practices to engage families in the case planning process from the inception of the case, including through Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs). More specifically, Tuolumne County has developed policies and procedures regarding the utilization of CFTMs to conduct intensive safety planning, inform placement decision-making, and develop behaviorally based case plans, visitation plans, and treatment plans tailored to the specific needs of individual children and parents. CFTMs occur for all children in placement.

During the CFTM, the team discusses the roles, rights, and responsibilities of participants. Caregiver(s) are invited to attend CFTMs and often included as part of a parent's support network. During certain CFTMs, such as those with a focus on the child's placement, the team also discusses the needs of the child's caregiver.

Children's Services and Behavioral Health aim to utilize the completed CANS assessment to inform a child's CFTM and case plan development, including to select appropriate services and ensure trauma-informed services are provided as needed. Services selected might include, but are not limited to, a Full Service Partnership

Program, caregiver specific training to support a child's placement needs, Intensive Services Foster Care through a Foster Family Agency, and more. It should be noted that integrating the CANS Assessment into the CFTM continues to be challenging due to staffing and vacancies.

In addition to utilizing CFTMs and the CANS assessment, Children's Services uses the Structured Decision Making (SDM) Tool to inform safety plans and family visitation, as well as to assess a family's progress and inform the Court about it. SDM assessments help guide and inform decision-making on opening cases, continuing services, and dismissing dependency. When the SDM identifies safety needs, a CFTM often may be used to develop and/or monitor a safety plan, build a network of support, and prevent court intervention. This may entail a warm hand-off to the Integrated System Of Care prevention unit, which might develop a service plan with the family.

Some additional strategies used by Children's Services to engage children, youth, and families in the case planning process include the following:

- Motivational Interviewing (MI) techniques to help people commit to the difficult process of change. While MI is a therapeutic strategy often used to address addiction and physical health management, most Children's Services staff have received training in utilizing MI techniques. These techniques aid in engaging families and supporting their motivation to change behaviors that are preventing them from making healthier choices. MI is one of the core trainings regularly brought to Tuolumne County for staff and partners. Additionally, the County included MI-Case Management as an evidence-based practice in its Family First Prevention Services Program Comprehensive Prevention Plan; as a result, all social workers across sectors will benefit from receiving MI training.
- Safety Organized Practice (SOP) is a collaborative practice approach that emphasizes the importance of teamwork in child welfare. It seeks to build and strengthen partnerships with the agency and within families by involving their informal support network of friends and family. During the current System Improvement Plan (SIP), CWS has focused on implementing and integrating SOP techniques into Children and Family Team Meetings. For example, during year four of the SIP, strong emphasis was placed on ensuring behaviorally based case plans were being developed within the context of the CFTMs. As noted above, Children's Services has also been working on integrating CANS into CFTMs, which is another SOP technique.
- Parent Orientations: In February 2017, CWS staff facilitated the first collaborative orientation for parents involved in the dependency court. The Parent Orientation presentation, as revised in March 2023, includes the following topics: goals and values of Tuolumne County Children's Services; what parents need to know about the courtroom; the court process; the case plan and services; Dependency Drug Court program; Child and Family Team Meetings; Family Time (Visitation); and Service Provider introductions. During the orientation, parents' rights and responsibilities in case planning are discussed. Moreover, the Orientation presentation emphasizes the importance of family time and sets expectations related to it. These orientations are offered monthly at the Family Visitation Center and agency partners, such as parenting instructors and domestic violence advocates, are invited to attend and meet parents. Through early teaming, engagement, and connection to services, Parent Orientations help parents understand the Juvenile Dependency System and change the negative perceptions associated with CWS by building mutual trust and respect.
- Parent-Child Visitation: Visitation plans are usually started immediately upon removal with visits usually occurring at the Children's Services office initially. As the need for supervision decreases, a social worker conducts an intake and works with the family to develop goals and an initial plan for their family time. Once the case plan is ordered by the Court, the visitation frequency and duration are included in it and ordered by the Court. The office assistant at the Visitation Center usually handles the

details of the visitation arrangements, including transportation, location, and time. Depending on the individual case, the parent may be assigned a visit coach. For more information on Visit Coaching, see the description in the Service Array section.

CWS case plans are updated at least every six months and can be modified earlier if appropriate.

Probation

A Probation case plan is developed in collaboration with the parent(s) and their child based on the specific identified needs of the child and family. After adjudication, the youth and parent(s) are required to meet with the assigned probation officer for reporting instructions and review of the terms and conditions of probation and case plan objectives. The case plan is typically developed with the family and child during the intake process; then immediately following the Dispositional Hearing, it is reviewed and signed by the parent(s) and child. Within thirty days of Disposition, a Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System risk assessment (JAIS) is completed with the minor. Results of the assessment are gender-specific and incorporate a risk/strength needs assessment. The completed JAIS assessment guides case management strategies and alerts supervising probation officers to behaviors, attitudes, and problems they may encounter with a specific youth. A revised case plan may be completed with a youth if needs are identified that are different from the original case plan. All probation officers are also trained in Motivational Interviewing skills, which are crucial to the validity of the JAIS assessment tool. Additionally, the tool is designed to assist the officer in building rapport with youth as they work together to reduce recidivism and strengthen the family.

Like CWS, Probation also uses CFTMs for engagement and case planning. Probation Officers have been trained in the CFT process and they facilitate CFTMs for probation youth. Caregiver needs are identified and addressed in the CFT, but not necessarily included in the formal case plan. Caregiver support could include respite, training, and support from the Foster Care Liaison (when the position is filled), among other supports. Probation case plans are reviewed a minimum of every six months and updated with the family. Case plans are also updated when a need is identified that was not previously addressed. Should a family struggle with maintaining a youth appropriately in the home, either due to the youth's behavior or safety issues present within the home, a CFTM is held. The focus of such a CFTM is to address barriers that may exist to keeping the youth in the home and identify support systems to assist in doing so. When safety issues become prevalent or behaviors are such that out-of-home care is unavoidable, CFTMs take place regularly in accordance with state mandated time lines and County-specific protocols. As noted above, all probation officers have received training in CFT facilitation and regularly assist each other with it. The assigned case manager plays a critical guiding role in the CFT process.

Probation also has behavioral health support. Historically, an in-house therapeutic position has been instrumental in providing support and services to those families who are in the reunification process, preventing the need for removal of a youth from the home, and maintaining youth in their placements. Currently, this therapeutic position is vacant and the subject of an ongoing recruitment by Probation. In the absence of this position, referrals are made to Tuolumne County Behavioral Health and a local contracted therapeutic provider.

Dual Jurisdiction Youth

Welfare and Institutions Code (W & I Code) Section 241.1 requires that when a minor appears to come within the description of both Section 300 and Section 602, the County Probation Department and the County Child Welfare Department shall jointly determine which status will serve the best interest of the minor and the protection of society. California Rules of Court, Rule 5.512, specifies many of the procedures and guidelines to be used to arrive at a joint recommendation as to the child's status (Wardship, Dependency or Dual Status).

The Probation Department and CWS completed a 241.1 Protocol, which was signed on August 16, 2004, by the Chief Probation Officer and the Director of Health and Human Services. This Protocol outlines the steps to be followed if at any time while providing services to a child, the Court, CWS, or the Probation Department becomes aware that a child appears to come within the description of both Sections 300 and 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

Currently, there are no Dual Status youth in Tuolumne County.

C. FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The information below on Resource Family and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention applies to both Child Welfare Services (CWS) and the Probation Department. Tuolumne County Probation does not approve resource family homes, kin or non-related. For probation homes, all requirements regarding home inspections, child abuse/neglect history check, criminal records checks and clearances, and assessment of the prospective caregiver's ability to care for the child are completed by the Resource Family Approval (RFA) team in collaboration with Probation.

Maintaining Standards

Resource families are approved, monitored, and reassessed in accordance with the RFA Written Directives authorized by California law and established by the California Department of Social Services. The RFA team consists of a supervisor and 3 FTE case managers/social workers. Support staff are available to assist case managers and provide resource family training. The supervisor meets weekly with social workers to review pending applications with a focus on those nearing 90 days to improve timeframes.

RFA staff conduct biennial reassessments using the RFA Update Report (RFA 06) form to ensure continued compliance with the Written Directives. Biennial reassessments are tracked by the RFA social worker through the Binti database. All internal forms are routinely revised to reflect the current RFA requirements and language. The RFA Update Report includes the following: a biennial home visit; verification of background clearance; interviews of all individuals living in the home or documentation of why an individual in the home was not available; a determination as to whether training is current; a discussion of changes to the home, modifications within the family, or other relevant changes to the family's circumstances over the last two years; and a review of placement preferences and motivation. The resource family receives a copy of the update.

Complaints

Upon receipt of a complaint, the RFA supervisor logs the complaint in the tracking log and assigns it to an RFA social worker to investigate. The RFA social worker who initially approved the family will not be assigned to do the investigation. In most cases, the RFA social worker is accompanied by the CWS case-managing social worker. In situations where the complaints and incidents involve abuse and/or neglect, an emergency response social worker also conducts the investigation with RFA staff. However, findings from each are separate.

When deficiencies are found, the RFA social worker will engage and guide the resource family in developing a corrective action plan (CAP); the development of the CAP is a team effort. The RFA Supervisor will review and approve the CAP. The RFA Social Worker will then monitor the CAP and ensure the corrections are done within the timelines established in it.

If the deficiency is severe enough that it could result in rescinding the home's approval, the RFA Social Worker will consult with the RFA Supervisor and RFA Agency Manager and/or Social Services Director to determine the final action. The County will inform the resource family in writing of the action taken and appeal rights. The County must ensure the safety of the child(ren) placed in the home. Additionally, placement moves must be done in accordance with the County's business practice.

If the complaint investigation results in a substantiated finding, the resource family will receive information on how to file a Fair Hearing request. After a Fair Hearing, notices will be sent to the resource family and the RFA Unit. The RFA Unit files the notice in the resource family's case file. For serious complaints/incidents and/or any incidents that fall within the definition of Penal Code section 11165.5, the RFA Supervisor notifies appropriate agencies as required.

Criminal Record Checks

All RFA applicants must complete a criminal background check and receive either a criminal background clearance or an exemption from the clearance requirement prior to approval for placement. To complete the check, applicants must submit their fingerprints to Live Scan, at which time the Subsequent Arrest Notification for the Record of Arrest and Prosecution (RAP Back) is established. The online application, www.Binti.com is used to create and track Live Scan forms and results.

When a relative/Non-Related Extended Family Member (NREFM) has been approved for emergency placement, the CWS worker completes initial checks with the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS), the emergency Child Abuse Central Index, and the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS). A criminal record clearance is not issued until Live Scan clearances have been completed and, if applicable, criminal record exemption(s) have been approved. The caregiver is not eligible to receive Title IV-E funds until all adults in the home have completed the approval process. However, when emergency placements are made, Emergency Caregiver funding is paid to the relative/NREFM until Title IV-E funds can be issued.

If a RAP Back is received later, the RFA case manager investigates the arrest or CACI hit to determine if the caregiver remains appropriate for placement until a final disposition is available. The RFA staff consult with the California Department of Social Services as necessary for technical assistance. RFA staff are trained on completing criminal record exemptions and can assist families in obtaining any necessary documents to complete the exemption process.

RFA case managers attend Child and Family Team Meetings to inform families about the RFA process, including the criminal record requirements and the exemption process. This helps families make more informed choices about which family members might be most appropriate for placement of the child in foster care. The RFA case managers also help identify placement resources for children while relatives/NREFMs are considering placement or participating in the RFA process pending approval or emergency placement.

Collaboration with Tribes

The Tuolumne County Health and Human Services Agency has a close working relationship with the local Tribes and collaborates regarding placement of tribal children. Early on, the County can work with the tribal social worker to identify extended family that the Tribe believes would be a suitable match for placement and permanency of a tribal child. The local Tribes then complete the approval process and notify the County in

writing. Staff are very clear that the Tribe must be included in all placement decisions and issues. Distinct from tribally approved homes, tribally specified homes are approved through the County RFA process.

Cross-jurisdictional placements

When a child is placed or may be placed with a relative/NREFM in a contiguous county, Tuolumne County RFA staff conduct the approval process. If the relative/NREFM is further away, the other County is asked to undertake a courtesy approval by following Out-of-County procedures and policies. At the request of other counties, Tuolumne County conducts courtesy approvals for children placed in Tuolumne County from another County; these requests have increased the workload for RFA staff. If a relative/NREFM is out of state, the child's caseworker makes a request through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children for the other state to approve the home.

Applicants are referred to pre-approval training in their county of residence. They can use Foster Parent College to meet training requirements when they are not able to attend classes in person.

Recruitment and Retention

The RFA team utilizes an online application portal, www.binti.com, to receive new applications and maintain existing RFA families for Children's Services and Probation homes. This is a user-friendly system that allows potential applicants to initiate the application process online. Applicants are required to participate in 12 hours of pre-approval training and 16 hours of training biennially after approval. Additionally, RFA social workers will identify specific trainings tailored to the identified target needs of an individual family. RFA social workers refer resource parents to community training events and conduct an annual resource family appreciation event, which includes a training component. Resource families are encouraged to utilize trainings offered through FosterParentCollege.com. Recently, the County established a contract using Title-IV funding with Denise Combs, MFT, to provide in-person and virtual training, education, and support to caregivers. Ms. Combs has extensive knowledge on working with foster youth who demonstrate challenging behaviors. More specifically, Ms. Combs provides trauma-informed training, including using the Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) and Nurtured Heart Approach, and individual instruction to families to maintain and enhance placement stability and quality care.

The RFA team asks current homes to help recruit friends and families that may want to foster as word of mouth has been shown to be the most effective recruitment strategy. Recruitment efforts have been limited due to low staffing levels within the RFA Unit. Once staffing levels improve, RFA staff will resume recruitment efforts, such as attending community events to encourage families interested in fostering youth to apply to become a resource family.

As appropriate, the County may inquire if a matched caregiver, such as a relative/NREFM who is approved for a specific child in care, would consider taking community placements for other children even after the specific child they were approved for has returned home.

The County has a Foster Care Liaison position that is currently vacant. When this position was previously staffed, resource families and social workers benefited from the increased support, communication, and collaboration that the liaison provided. Therefore, the County maintains a continuous recruitment process to hire a social worker on a relief basis to act in this capacity to enhance support for caregivers.

Quality Parenting Initiative

Tuolumne County engaged fully in all phases of the Quality Parent Initiative (QPI). Within the first phase, the QPI team developed the brand: “Tuolumne County is a special place to live. We have phenomenal foster parents. Our kids need you. Will you be part of our team? Our Kids. Our Community. Our Team.” To ultimately begin living the brand, the QPI Team implemented essential program improvements; it is currently working through these as a team, including adapting to changing priorities and community needs. Tuolumne County representatives continue to participate in the State initiative through regional meetings, and attend trainings and conferences as able. QPI values, theories, and techniques have been integrated into practice and placement decision-making processes. Marketing and recruitment efforts have been delayed due to vacancies and the inability to fill the Foster Care Liaison position mentioned above. In the past, the liaison acted as a bridge for the resource family and case-managing social worker, facilitating discussions and informal team building meetings, attended QPI trainings and reinforced to Children’s Services team members the benefits of utilizing QPI techniques, such as comfort calls and a warm handoff between caregivers and case-managing social workers, coordinated and facilitated recruitment efforts, supported training needs of caregivers, and acted as a mediator when necessary. Tuolumne County has prioritized filling permanent vacant positions over relief positions, such as the Foster Care Liaison role. However, when interviewing candidates for open social worker positions, the County will ask applicants if they would be interested in the Foster Care Liaison relief position if they state they are interested in part-time employment and seem as though they may be a good fit.

Placement Resources

It has been challenging for the County to recruit and retain quality foster homes and maintain youth in their local communities, especially given staff vacancies. Challenges maintaining children and youth locally can negatively impact social workers’ ability to facilitate frequent visitation with youth and their families and/or provide intensive reunification services, such as family counseling. This is especially true for older youth and larger sibling sets.

Tuolumne County is committed to identifying and engaging relatives/NREFMs early in the case, including to enable emergency placements with them. The County continues to make diligent efforts through Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs) and the family finding process to engage family members/NREFMs to maintain children in their communities and at their school of origin, thereby keeping them connected to their natural supports, family, and cultures. Placing children and youth with relatives/NREFMs can increase permanency timeliness and lead to more stable placements because youth are more likely to engage in services and maintain contact with their family. Moreover, as mentioned in the Child Welfare Infrastructure section of the CSA, the County’s emergency resource family home/shelter provides social workers with time to engage in family finding, vet relatives/NREFMs, and ultimately identify placements that are a good fit for the child.

Locating and identifying quality resource families to accommodate children with higher level of care needs based on their behaviors has become increasingly difficult; there tends to be few homes with the level of training needed to meet higher level of care needs. Additionally, Tuolumne County does not have the in-home mental health and/or behavioral health support services needed to recruit and approve Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) homes, resulting in children being placed out of county when they require this level of care. Moreover, children in foster care overall often experience delays in accessing outpatient mental health services. Current data reflects it takes an average of 7 days to receive an assessment, this average is met 90% of the time, the longest appointment for assessment taking up to 15 days.

Despite challenges, Children’s Services staff have continued to prioritize engagement efforts that connect resource parents with families of origin and other practices that promote child well-being. CFTMs have been a

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positive practice, producing thoughtful and comprehensive plans to ensure children's well-being and stability. However, the County often must explore multiple placement options for a child in case the most appropriate option fails. To support placement stability and increase caregivers' parenting skills, the County recently established a contract with a private therapist to provide individual trauma-informed training for caregivers. As noted above, this training includes Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) and the Nurtured Heart Approach. The High-Risk social worker also may be engaged for more intensive case management as the child's social worker.

When a local family has not been identified for a child, Tuolumne County often partners with Foster Family Agencies located in nearby counties for assistance in matching a child with an appropriate home. However, finding a placement through a nearby Foster Family Agency is not always possible due to the complex nature of some children or youth's behaviors, resulting in a statewide search for placement options.

D. STAFF, CAREGIVER AND SERVICE PROVIDER TRAINING

Children's Services Staff

Tuolumne County Child Welfare Services (CWS) works closely with the UC Davis Northern California Training Academy, which provides most staff training to social workers, service providers, and county management staff. Social workers are required to complete the California Common Core training within their first 24 months of employment, and new supervisory staff are required to complete the Supervisor Core training within the first year of their employment. Each year, the CWS management team identifies a training plan for staff. Staff also may request training to meet self-identified training and development needs.

In addition to the required trainings offered by UC Davis, Tuolumne County has implemented various supports and professional development opportunities aimed at promoting staff resiliency and mitigating secondary trauma and burnout; these include group and on-demand individual Reflective Consultation provided through a contract with Alyssa Najera and Associates; the Science of Self Mastery Six-Month Series; and participation in Dare to Lead workgroups.

Tuolumne County is using Performance Anchors associated with the California Child Welfare Core Practice Model and the Common Core social worker training to evaluate staff performance. New staff have performance evaluations at three, six, and 12 months during their first year of employment. Ongoing staff have annual performance reviews unless they are promoted, in which case reviews are more frequent. The performance anchors were originally developed by San Francisco County and include organizational and job function competencies established for supervisors and social workers (both case carrying workers and non-case carrying workers). Competency definitions and detailed examples of the competencies at various proficiency levels, (e.g., emerging, developing, acquired, accomplished and mastery levels) help staff to understand what is expected of them and how to reach more proficient levels of competency. They also assist in identifying/self-identifying when staff could benefit from additional training or coaching in a certain area.

Probation Staff

New probation officers attend a six-week Probation Officer Core Course as required by the State of California Standards and Training for Corrections. Placement officers attend a 50-hour Probation Placement Officer Core Course, as well as other placement related training. The Juvenile Division Manager and/or Supervising Probation Officer, whoever acts as the placement supervisor, also attends a 24-hour Probation Supervisor Core Course. The Division Manager regularly attends Probation Advisory Committee meetings, which are facilitated

by UC Davis and The Chief Probation Officers of California; at these meetings, new policies, training resources, and best practices are discussed.

Ongoing training is usually driven by new legal mandates to ensure protocols and practice are current. The Probation Department Training Manager tracks and identifies training to best address the needs of the Department. Staff may also request training to meet self-identified training and development needs. Management and leadership receive similar training as appropriate. Moreover, as noted in the Management Information Systems section of the CSA, the Probation Department uses the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System, which helps to identify staff training or resource needs.

New probation staff have performance evaluations at three, six, and 12 months, and then annually thereafter. Ongoing staff have annual performance reviews using a county-wide format that addresses 21 different areas such as job knowledge, work habits, public and customer assistance, safety, etc.

Caregivers

The Foster and Kinship Care Education (FKCE) Program provides quality education and support opportunities to caregivers so that they may meet the educational, emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs of the children in their care. The Tuolumne County Health and Human Services Agency, in collaboration with Columbia Junior College Foster/Kinship Education Program, provides preapproval training for resource families. In 2018, the Resource Family Approval (RFA) Unit, in collaboration with Columbia College, revamped the pre-approval training that resource families receive to incorporate Quality Parenting Initiative philosophies, such as the expectation that resource families are fully engaged in family reunification efforts and encouraged to transport children for visitation.

As discussed above in the section on Foster and Adoptive Parent, Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention, RFA applicants are required to participate in 12 hours of pre-approval training and 16 hours of training biennially after approval. Additionally, RFA social workers will identify specific trainings tailored to the identified target needs of an individual family. RFA social workers refer resource parents to community training events and conduct an annual resource family appreciation event, which includes a training component. Resource families are also encouraged to utilize trainings offered through Foster Parent College. Recently, the County established a contract using Title-IV funding with Denise Combs, MFT, to provide in-person and virtual training, education, and support to caregivers. Ms. Combs has extensive knowledge on working with foster youth who demonstrate challenging behaviors. She provides trauma-informed training, including using the Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) and Nurtured Heart Approach, and individual instruction to caregivers to maintain and enhance placement stability. At the 2023 annual resource family appreciation event, Ms. Combs conducted trainings focused on trauma-informed approaches for children with a high level of needs.

Service Providers

Tuolumne County Department of Social Services established a contract with Chabot Las Positas College District in December 2020 to support Title IV-E Specialized Training for all partners serving children in foster care. Through this contract, a variety of trainings have been offered to Children's Systems of Care Partners and other service providers supporting this population. Examples of trainings offered include, but are not limited to, the following: Motivational Interviewing; Trauma Informed De-escalation; Professional Assault Crisis Training (Pro-ACT); Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM); Interagency Resource Collaborative (IRC) facilitation training (like CFT facilitation); Child Forensic Interview training; Diversity Equity, and Inclusion; and the Science of Self-Mastery.

As noted above, the UC Davis Northern California Regional Training Academy provides vital trainings for child welfare staff and other social services staff. As part of its contract with UC Davis, Tuolumne County pays to customize trainings that can be provided to both staff and partners; service providers and Children's System of Care partners are invited to attend specific trainings depending on the topic and its relevance to them. For example, UC Davis Northern California Regional Training Academy trainings available to staff and service providers cover topics such as developing behaviorally based case plans, the Family First Prevention Services Program, quality caseworker visits, and Safety Organized Practice. Additionally, CWS team members provide Mandated Reporting training on an annual basis to schools, and upon request by other organizations, including Tribes, law enforcement, and other community-based organizations.

Moreover, the Tuolumne Resiliency Coalition (TRC), Tuolumne County's Child Abuse Prevention Council, aims to integrate trauma-informed and resilience-building practices into work, family, community, and individual lives through the following activities: building public awareness of child abuse and neglect; providing resources; facilitating professional development in the detection, treatment, and prevention of child abuse and neglect; and promoting trauma-informed systems for prevention and responsive intervention. The TRC is comprised of representatives from a variety of community-based organizations and service providers. The TRC has helped train professionals on Adverse Childhood Experiences, Trauma-Informed Care, a Trauma Toolkit (crisis intervention, safely planning, self-care), the Core Practice Model, and the Family First Prevention Services Act. It also plans and supports a variety of events each April in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Trainings are offered to service providers and other partners throughout the year. A set number of trainings is not formalized each year; rather trainings are provided on an as needed basis. Moreover, the County uses a variety of methods to decide what trainings to provide. For example, training decisions may be informed by input from the TRC and/or CSOC; special requests; and needs identified to support implementation of initiatives, grants, and County plans, such as the County's Family First Prevention Services Program Comprehensive Prevention Plan.

E. AGENCY COLLABORATION

Agency Collaboration through the Children's System of Care

Pursuant to Assembly Bill AB 2083, Tuolumne County established a Children's System of Care (CSOC) to integrate children's services across multiple agencies with the goal of addressing systemic barriers to the traditional provision of interagency services. In July 2021, the CSOC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was finalized. The CSOC MOU is now in the process of being updated to embed content from and references to other MOUs, such as from MOUs created pursuant to the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) initiative related to required collaboration and coordination with Behavioral Health, Child Welfare Services (CWS), and Managed Care Plans. As further discussed below, the MOU governs collaboration between the Child Welfare and Probation Placement Agencies, as well as with other county agencies. Efforts have been made to engage Public Health, and CSOC will continue to seek engagement. More specifically, the CSOC includes the Department of Social Services for prevention and child welfare services, the Probation Department, Valley Mountain Regional Center, the Behavioral Health Department, and the Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools (TCSOS). Previously, a Superior Court Judge was a member but has since retired. Recently, members have re-engaged with the current Presiding Judge overseeing juvenile dependency and delinquency. Additionally, Managed Care Plan providers, Health Net and Anthem, have been brought onboard. Both Tribes in Tuolumne County have been briefed on the CSOC, its objectives, and the MOU, although they have yet to decide on formal engagement. Nonetheless, collaboration and partnership with the Tribes remain robust and is further described below.

It is the intent of the CSOC to create a uniform service approach regardless of the agency door by which children and families enter. The MOU guides the CSOC's vision, mission, and principles, including providing guidance on the following topics: implementing Integrated Core Practice Model practice behaviors, information and data sharing, quality management, oversight and outcomes monitoring, referral, screening, assessment, entry to care, teaming, engagement and service planning, alignment, coordination, transitional services, staff recruitment, training and coaching, financial resources/management, and dispute resolution mechanisms. CSOC's vision statement is as follows, "The Child, Youth and Family System of Care (CSOC) in Tuolumne County will promote and facilitate inter-departmental and interagency cooperation and collaboration in the establishment and enhancement of a community based, comprehensive System of Care, which seeks to ensure that all children, adults and families will be self-sufficient in keeping themselves, their children and their families safe, healthy, at home, in school/employed, and economically stable, regardless of the agency door by which children and families enter."

CSOC partners value Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs) and the local Interagency Resource Collaborative (IRC) as essential tools for coordinating care and case planning for children and families. These tools are used to serve families involved with CWS and/or the Probation Department, as well as those at risk of involvement. To enhance efficiency and accessibility of services, the CSOC has introduced a Universal Release of Information for all partners to use. This aims to secure client confidentiality and streamline information sharing, minimizing redundancy for clients and enhancing their access to services and support. Moreover, a CSOC Data Dashboard was developed in collaboration with CSOC partner agencies as a commitment to shared outcomes and collective quality management. The dashboard includes data elements for each partnering agency/department, including Behavioral Health, Regional Center, County Office of Education, Probation, and Social Services. Information in the dashboard includes, but not limited to, the number of youth in residential care, number of youth in counseling, number of youth in Full Service Partnerships, and number of Family Urgent Response System calls. Probation-specific data in the dashboard also includes the number of probation youth receiving mental health care through private providers, the number of probation youth receiving mental health care through the County Behavioral Health Department, and the number of probation youth in residential care.

While the CSOC MOU governs collaboration between the various county agencies and partners described above, including Behavioral Health, some additional details are provided below relative to several of these agencies.

Child Welfare and Probation Collaboration around Dual Jurisdiction and ILP

CWS and Probation work jointly to assess and serve families that require Dual Jurisdiction services. If a potential Dual Jurisdiction situation is identified, CWS and Probation decide together which agency should be the lead agency and hold a CFTM to collaboratively develop a case plan. The assigned social worker and probation officer then co-provide case management services and work closely to meet the needs of the family, while simultaneously avoiding duplication of services. Probation and CWS also work jointly to provide Independent Living Program services to youth served by both agencies and in frequent communication on cases involving non-minor dependents who were previously wards of the Court.

School Districts/Local Educational Agencies

CWS and the Probation Department serve as core members of the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) and the countywide Student Support Team, a working group that ensures foster and homeless youth receive educational supports that target their unique needs.

The SARB is a multidisciplinary team that meets monthly to discuss families who have a child or children experiencing difficulties with school truancy. Families meet with this team of professionals to discuss what is causing the attendance challenges and to receive support and guidance on how the situation could be resolved. A social worker/CWS supervisor and probation officer attend each SARB meeting to provide input, support, and suggestions. SARB participants have been fully trained in trauma-informed care; they approach each family and situation with a trauma lens to maximize the SARB's impact in helping families succeed in and out of school. In May 2024, Tuolumne County received the Model SARB award from the State Student Attendance Review Board and the California Department of Education.

A TCSOS Special Projects Coordinator is co-located at CWS with funding leveraged from Title IV-E. This position increases access to information on foster youth for both the education and CWS systems. Additionally, TCSOS and CWS share information through the Foster Focus database that pushes information between CWS/CMS and CalPADS, a state-level education database.

Probation staff work very closely with the local educational systems beyond just participating in the SARB and Student Support Team. For example, probation staff attends Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) meetings, 504 meetings, Manifestation Hearings, and parent/teacher conferences, when appropriate, for probation youth. Probation staff visit school campuses regularly and maintain solid communication with education staff and administrators regarding the activities (both positive and negative) of probation youth.

CalWORKs/Linkages

The County aims to serve families collaboratively and coordinate services across programs when parents are involved with the child welfare system and eligible for the Welfare to Work (WTW) program. The Engagement and Empowerment Unit, formerly known as the WTW Unit, is part of a new Integrated Systems of Care Division of the Department of Social Services. This Unit now includes prevention and early intervention responsibilities and is tasked with implementing the County's Family First Prevention Services Program Comprehensive Prevention Plan (CPP). The Engagement and Empowerment Unit functions as a vital member of the CSOC team and must follow the CSOC MOU and its guiding principles around care coordination and collaboration. When families are involved with CWS and eligible for the WTW program, an Engagement and Empowerment caseworker attends the family's Child and Family Team Meeting to support a unified case plan with components specifically aimed at assisting families to reach self-sufficiency. Additionally, collaboration between CWS and the Engagement and Empowerment Unit has been enhanced through Engagement and Empowerment staff participation in weekly RED Team meetings. This overlap allows Engagement and Empowerment team members to develop competencies in CWS protective services while increasing communication across programs to ensure all prospective families receive access to supports in both programs when eligible. In addition, through Linkages and CalWORKs, the County may coordinate and pay for in-patient substance abuse treatment for parents. This is a significant support for families as in-patient treatment is difficult to find and costly.

Interagency Resource Collaborative, formerly Interagency Placement Committee

The Interagency Resource Collaborative (IRC) is a collaborative partnership of child-serving agencies and organizations. It is comprised of management-level staff from CWS, Probation, Behavioral Health, Tuolumne County Superintendent Of Schools, Valley Mountain Regional Center, and CalAIM. The IRC also can include the Child and Family Team (CFT) Facilitator and Intensive Care Coordinator/Qualified Individual, as well as a Tribal Social Services Social Worker as applicable. It convenes to identify, develop, coordinate, and monitor

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the care of children, youth, and families with complex needs being served across various programs within the County, including those involved with or at risk of involvement with CWS and/or Probation.

More specifically, IRC meetings are conducted to review children's cases with the aim of providing recommendations and resources to the CFT, striving to maintain children at the lowest level of care possible or transition them to home-based family care. The IRC addresses cases of children in out-of-home care who require residential care or are at risk of such placements due to behavioral challenges. Additionally, children and families at risk of entering foster care or the juvenile justice system are referred to the IRC to identify preventative community resources and supports; this includes youth at risk of entering residential care who are not in out-of-home care currently. Functioning as the County's Interagency Placement Committee (IPC) and Intensive Care Coordination process, the IRC serves as a resource for establishing a community pathway for prevention. This approach aims to strengthen protective factors within the family and prevent the need for further intervention. When necessary, the IRC may recommend or authorize residential care.

Collaboration between Tribes/Tribal Representative and/or Tribal Service Provider

Tuolumne County has two federally recognized Tribes: the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians and the Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians of California. Tuolumne Me-Wuk Tribal Council Social Services Department provides services and programs to the Native community throughout the service area, which currently includes Tuolumne, Mariposa, Calaveras, and Stanislaus Counties. Services are intended to promote the health, safety, and welfare of all Native American/Alaskan Natives. They include, but are not limited to, the following: Tribal TANF; Indian Child Welfare Services; support to address Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault; Victims of Crime Advocacy; a Substance Use Program; health and mental health services; court services; mediation with CWS; facilitation of legal services; crisis intervention; home visitation for families and adults; and emergency assistance. Chicken Ranch's Mathiesen Memorial Medical Center is a Rural Indian Health Clinic serving local and regional community members. Additional information on the services provided by Tribes is contained in the Political Jurisdictions and Service Array sections of the CSA.

CWS and Probation have close working relationships with the local Tribes in the County; they work collaboratively with the Tribes on any referrals or cases that involve tribal members or those eligible for membership and tribal services. Collaboration with CWS begins at the time of intake/investigation. When there is an indication that the child has a Tribal affiliation, the Child Protective Services screener will send a text message to identified staff with the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians and Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians Tribes to invite them to join the screening call. Tribal social services representatives continue to be involved in all aspects of a case and included in all decision-making processes moving forward. For example, early on the County can work with the tribal social worker to identify extended family members that the Tribe believes would be a suitable match for placement and permanency of a tribal child. The local Tribes then complete the approval process and notify the County in writing. Staff are very clear that the Tribe must be included in all placement decisions and issues.

Collaboration with Public Health

Tuolumne County Child Welfare and Public Health recognize the importance of providing collaborative support services to families receiving Emergency Response, Family Maintenance, and Family Reunification services. Collaboration increases the depth of support to families that are learning to parent, protect, and nurture healthy, well-adjusted youth.

As further described in the Public Agency Characteristics section of the CSA, the Foster Care Public Health Nurse regularly attends RED Team meetings and participates in placement and case planning Child and Family Tuolumne County 2023 CSA

Team meetings. Additionally, Public Health supports early childhood developmental needs through conducting ASQ-Social Emotional Assessments for children under the age of three who have entered foster care. In 2024, Public Health began utilizing the evidence-based Parents as Teachers (PAT) home visiting model as part of its prevention work. Although Public Health received a separate grant to implement PAT, this program has been incorporated into the County's Family First Prevention Services Program Comprehensive Prevention Plan to support community pathways and integrate efforts. Furthermore, the Department of Social Services contracts with Public Health to conduct home visiting in partnership with the CalWORKs home visiting program.

Collaboration with Law Enforcement Agencies

As further described in the Public Agency Characteristics section of the CSA, Tuolumne County CWS and Probation collaborate with law enforcement agencies in a variety of ways, including through their participation on the Child Abuse Review Team (CART). The CART Team operates as a formal Multi-Disciplinary Interview Team, specializing in assisting children and youth who have experienced child abuse/neglect related crimes. The CART team is comprised of members from various agencies including the Tuolumne County District Attorney's Office (lead), Victim Witness Agency, Sheriff's Department, CWS, Probation, Behavioral Health, Sonora Police Department, and Tuolumne Me-Wuk Tribal Council Social Services Department. It is dedicated to reducing the trauma of criminal investigations on children by establishing the least traumatic, most coordinated, and effective system for interviewing child abuse and neglect victims and witnesses. Its core objectives include ensuring continuity and support for victims, witnesses, and their families, as well as facilitating timely resolution of criminal cases. Additionally, the team addresses any physical or mental health needs of the victims, witnesses, and their families.

Moreover, Tuolumne County recently finished drafting a Memorandum of Understanding to reestablish a local child death review team. The Tuolumne County Multi-Agency Child Death Review Team is comprised of representatives from various entities and divisions, including the following: Sheriff's Office (includes staff from the Coroner and Professional Standards Divisions); Sonora Police Department; California Highway Patrol; Probation Department; the District Attorney's Office; CWS; the Public Health Department; Adventist Health Sonora; Behavioral Health Department; Victim Witness Services Agency; and Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools. This multi-disciplinary team is tasked with reviewing all deaths that meet the criteria of Government Code §27491, with a primary goal of aiding in the identification and determination of the cause of suspicious child deaths. The overarching purpose of this review is to promote the thoroughness and efficiency of child welfare, public health, law enforcement, and legal processes in preventing and detecting unnatural causes of death in children.

Collaboration with Community-Based Organizations

CWS and Probation participate in numerous community partnerships and collaboratives. Many of these partnerships and collaboratives are discussed above (e.g., Child Death Review Team, CART, IRC, and SARB) given the participation of multiple county agencies in them. However, as noted above, there are various community-based organizations that also participate in these collaboratives. Additionally, collaboration with community-based organization occurs through agency participation in the Tuolumne Resiliency Coalition, YES Partnership, and Maternal, Child and Adolescent Coalition, which are described below. Further details regarding collaboration are also contained in the Public Agency Characteristics section of the CSA.

Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) – Tuolumne Resiliency Coalition (TRC)

This committee meets monthly with the goals of: 1) promoting public awareness of child abuse and neglect and the resources available for intervention and treatment; 2) encouraging and facilitating the training of

professionals in the detection, treatment, and prevention of child abuse and neglect; 3) providing education on trauma-informed practices and Adverse Childhood Experiences; and, 4) providing recommendations on funding priorities for local child abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment programs. Representatives from CWS and Probation are active and voting members of this Council. Moreover, TRC was the planning committee that informed the County's Family First Prevention Services Program Comprehensive Prevention Plan.

YES Partnership

The YES Partnership is a community collaborative dedicated to preventing substance abuse, child abuse, and suicide in Tuolumne County. It is also the Board of Supervisor's commission tasked with ensuring child abuse prevention funds are allocated in a way that meets community needs under the advisement of the local CAPC, Tuolumne Resiliency Coalition. CWS and Probation are represented at YES Partnership meetings.

First 5 Commission

First 5 California's mission is to convene, partner, support, and help lead the movement to create and implement a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated system for California's children, prenatal through age five, and their families. First 5 Tuolumne County serves as the local commission to achieve this mission. In its tenure, First 5 Tuolumne County strives to maintain strong collaboration among community partners who serve young children and their families. It has financially supported the Emergency Children's Shelter, ensured the use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire-III (ASQ-III) in every service contract, and funded parenting education for at-risk families. Additionally, First 5 Tuolumne onboarded Unite Us, an online closed loop referral platform to support adequate developmental screenings in various community entities. The Unite Us platform has been identified as the online mechanism to support the Family First Prevention Services Program community pathways.

Maternal Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Coalition

The MCAH Coalition is a multidisciplinary group of service providers who meet to discuss community-wide health and well-being by focusing on substance use and abuse, mental health, and preventative treatment (e.g. STDS, flu shots, immunizations). The service providers identify community wide needs and trends to develop educational materials and facilitate cooperative outreach.

Center for a Non-Violent Community (CNVC)

Tuolumne County has one service provider, the Center for A Non-Violent Community (CNVC), dedicated to providing services to parents and children who have been exposed to domestic violence. This non-profit organization offers individual peer counseling, support groups, and community education. The CNVC operates a 24-hour crisis line, responds alongside assists local law enforcement to provide advocacy for victims, provides temporary restraining order assistance, and court accompaniment. The organization also operates a family crisis shelter and offers limited transitional housing. When domestic/family violence has been identified in a family, CWS social workers refer the survivors to a range of services with CNVC that may include immediate on-site crisis intervention, counseling services, and/or emergency shelter. CNVC advocates working with parents involved with CWS often contribute to CFTMs as a support for their clients.

Caregivers

Caregivers play a vital role caring for children placed in foster care and supporting family reunification. During the Resource Family Approval process, CWS staff orient caregivers to the dependency process. Additionally, Tuolumne County 2023 CSA

caregivers approved locally are provided with an overview of the California Partnership Agreement and asked to sign it; this agreement outlines expectations for both the caregiver and CWS during the time a child is placed in their home. It emphasizes respecting each other as partners, nurturing children in their care, supporting families, and strengthening communities. Because the caregiver's knowledge and input are crucial, at each Status Review Hearing, caregivers are provided with the Caregiver Information Form or JV-290 Judicial Council Form to provide information to the Juvenile Court regarding the child they are caring for. Caregivers are also educated on Child and Family Team Meetings and encouraged to participate to inform a child's Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment, support family case planning, aid in placement decision-making, and inform the placement needs of a child in their care. Case-managing social workers are trained to conduct monthly face-to-face contacts in the home of the child and meet with a child's caregivers. CWS has also created a specialized caseload to support children with the most complex behaviors and their caregivers. No more than eight children can be assigned to this caseload as the assigned social worker is expected to provide more intensive case management and be available for caregivers to ensure care coordination and support placement stability.

Short Term Residential Treatment Programs (STRTPs)

Tuolumne County currently lacks any local Short Term Residential Treatment Programs (STRTPs). Utilization of such programs is minimal; typically, one or fewer Tuolumne County youth are placed in a STRTP each year as the County's goal is to maintain children in the least restrictive, most family-oriented care setting whenever feasible. To support this goal, Tuolumne County relies on the Interagency Resource Collaborative (IRC), described above, to support children, families, and caregivers and makes efforts to ensure Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs) are regularly held to support the needs of a child.

In instances when an STRTP is deemed necessary to support a child with complex behaviors, the County engages the QI/ICC and the IRC for suggestions and refers to the State STRTP listing to research and interview various programs, aiming to identify the most suitable fit to address the child's needs. However, locating appropriate STRTPs remains challenging. Once a child is placed in an STRTP, especially for those with severe trauma and complex behaviors, the placement is typically not short-term.

Tuolumne County endeavors to conduct monthly CFTMs following placement in an STRTP, providing a forum to discuss the child's progress and needs. The case-managing social worker maintains regular communication with the designated point of contact at the STRTP and the child's treatment team to ensure continuity of care. While STRTPs are equipped to provide care and treatment for children with the most complex trauma and behaviors, the County continues to face challenges with children's behaviors not improving in these extremely costly placements that are intended to provide intensive treatment programming. Moreover, despite STRTPs being licensed to manage children's most difficult behaviors stemming from trauma, the County is often pressured through notifications to relocate a child from a facility if they exhibit unsafe behavior.

Foster Family Agencies (FFA)

CWS typically relies on a select few Foster Family Agencies to provide care and supervision for children in foster care when relatives or local resource families are not available. While no FFAs are located in Tuolumne County, FFAs in nearby counties can approve and serve homes within the County. CWS commonly collaborates with Sierra Family and Child Services, Environmental Alternatives, and Lilliput/Wayfinder, among other agencies, because of the quality of their partnership and the level of support they offer to children. However, the percentage of children placed with FFAs has decreased to only 5.2% currently, largely due to initiatives such as Resource Family Approval and enhanced family finding and engagement efforts. FFA

caregivers, along with the child's identified support team within the FFA, are engaged in a similar manner as described above in the sections on caregivers and STRTPs.

Information from the CSA process on the County's ability to engage stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement efforts during the CSA development process provided valuable insights into Tuolumne County's capacity to unite a diverse array of individuals, including child welfare and probation professionals, Native American Tribes, service recipients, and various county agency partners. Through targeted outreach strategies, such as focus groups and a comprehensive stakeholder event, the County effectively facilitated meaningful discussions and gathered essential feedback. However, the process also brought attention to logistical challenges, including transportation, scheduling, and childcare, which at times reduced the number of individuals able to participate. These experiences highlight both the strengths and areas for improvement in stakeholder engagement, underscoring the opportunity to provide additional support and participation options in the future to ensure inclusive and comprehensive participation.

F. SERVICE ARRAY

CHILD WELFARE

Child Welfare Services (CWS) works collaboratively with other County agencies, Tribes, and community-based organizations to provide a wide variety of services to the population it is dedicated to serve. Below is a listing of services and programs within this service array. As is noted below and within the dedicated Probation section further down, many of the services listed under this Child Welfare header are all available to the population that Probation serves.

Prevention Focused Services

Many of the primary prevention services in Tuolumne County are school-based and include:

- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- Tobacco Prevention Program
- Girls' Circle
- Boys' Council
- EPIC Youth Coalition
- Shifting Boundaries/Rape Prevention Education

Additional community-based primary prevention services include:

- Local Oral Health Program
- Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention
- Keep Baby Safe (car seat usage and installation coaching)
- Tobacco Control Program
- Nurturing Parenting/Early Childhood Education
- Me-Wuk Indian Health Center Outreach and Engagement
- Suicide Prevention Task Force
- Keeping Kids Safe
- Blue Zones
- YES Partnership
- Friday Night Live

Secondary and tertiary prevention services are provided by multiple agencies throughout the community.

- Adventist Health Sonora completes ACEs screening and referral, where a navigator follows up with individuals who scored four or higher and develops personalized plans to support children and their families.
- The Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools supports the Accessing Wellness and Resilience in Education (AWARE) Program through an MHSA grant, providing a mental health navigator and individual and group therapy in the schools. They also support Girls' Circle, Boys' Council, and the SEED program (Supports Early Education and Development for children from birth to five years of age).
- The Public Health Department supports the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program to provide breastfeeding education and general nutrition supports for pregnant women and their children up to age five; California Children's Services; Parents as Teachers; CalFresh Healthy Living; Maternal, Children and Adolescent Health Program; the Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care; and the Immunization Program.
- Tuolumne County Behavioral Health supports both the Youth Substance Use Disorder Prevention program and Club Live. It also supports mental health screening and youth mentoring, as well as the EPIC Youth Coalition.
- Resiliency Village supports housing and case management needs.
- Infant Child Enrichment Services (ICES) delivers the Raising Healthy Families Program.
- Tuolumne County Social Services either provides or coordinates the Road to Resilience/Seeking Safety program, Differential Response, CalWORKs Home Visiting Program, the Housing Support Program, CalWORKs Family Stabilization, Voluntary Family Maintenance, Child and Family Teaming, Welfare to Work, and CalFresh Employment & Training.
- The Probation Department facilitates Girls' Circle, Boys' Council, Aggression Replacement Training, Interactive Journaling, ACEs screening, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support.
- Tuolumne County has also begun to build referral and connection resources through Unite Us. Any community agency can make the referral on the Unite Us platform and then Unite Us links the family to the needed service. This system has inherent tracking capabilities to help with reporting requirements and allows for organizations the ability to follow up on the outcomes of the referrals made as well. Of continued need is more support around concrete goods, which is an ongoing and fundamental struggle for many of Tuolumne County's families.

Additional details on many of the prevention programs listed above, as well as others, and further detailed below.

Engagement and Empowerment Unit

In 2022, the Department of Social Services (DSS) initiated an infrastructure reorganization aimed at enhancing capacity to expand prevention and early intervention services in Tuolumne County, as well as to incorporate homeless services. Through this reorganization, the County has been building more prevention services and enhanced case management into its services delivery to families participating in CalWORKs and other at-risk families in the community. More specifically, DSS converted its Welfare to Work unit into the Engagement and Empowerment Unit with a focus on prevention and early intervention. This restructuring included changing the classification of all eligibility workers to integrated caseworkers with the goal of augmenting prevention efforts of Welfare to Work social work staff who were already providing services to these vulnerable families.

Voluntary Family Maintenance, Differential Response, AmeriCorps volunteers, the Independent Living Program, and the Road to Resilience program are all administered by the Engagement and Empowerment team. The Road to Resilience Program provides case management and supportive services to perinatal families struggling with substance abuse, as well as case management to Child Welfare Voluntary Family Maintenance cases. In June 2024, the Road to Resilience grant expires. Tuolumne County plans to sustain program

operations and expand prevention services as outlined in the County's Family First Prevention Services Program Comprehensive Prevention Plan. The County intends to target pregnant women and at-risk families of children up to age 18 when substance addiction is a factor. Tuolumne County continues to seek grant opportunities to sustain prevention programming pending the ability to draw on federal funds. This team has begun evaluation of family needs by completing an ACEs screen and the Protective Factors Survey.

Home visiting

Tuolumne County Public Health and the Amador Tuolumne Community Action Agency (ATCAA) currently contract with the County Department of Social Services to provide the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program (CHVP). The CalWORKs HVP is available for CalWORKs recipients with children under the age of three to support positive health, developmental, and wellbeing outcomes for pregnant and parenting individuals, families, and infants born into poverty. By helping families achieve stability while participating in the CHVP, the program hopes to lay the foundation for other long-term goals such as future educational opportunities, economic progress, and greater financial opportunities. This two-generational, whole family approach to service delivery will improve family engagement practices, support healthy development of young children living in poverty, and prepare parents for robust engagement in Welfare-to-Work activities and employment. The model for the CHVP is Growing Great Kids, which is listed as a Research Based Program on the Healthy Start EPIC Center.

Tuolumne County Public Health applied for and was recently awarded a grant through the CHVP; the County has chosen to deliver Parents As Teachers (PAT) as the EBP for the program. The grant will support service delivery through 2026. The target population for this grant is prenatal and postpartum women and caregivers of children ages 0-6; PAT will also help with education for other family members not in those groups. This strategy has been shown to be effective in Black and Latinx populations, as well as White communities. Populations will be prioritized based on income, with priority given to those in low-income populations. Families in underserved, more remote areas will also be prioritized.

Differential Response

Tuolumne County has implemented a Differential Response (DR) Program, which is funded in part with CAPIT funding. Differential Response is a secondary prevention strategy that establishes pathways to respond to reports of child maltreatment. This strength-based practice offers options for engaging families and communities before requiring child welfare intervention. Path 1 is a community response in which the reported allegations do not meet statutory definitions of child abuse or neglect, but it is clear from the report that the family is experiencing problems that might, if unaddressed, lead to future CWS interventions, family disruption, or system involvement. Path 2 is usually reserved for referrals that contain reports that are low to moderate risk in nature; referral details typically suggest that the family could benefit from a connection to services and a warm hand off to case management from an entity other than CWS. Path 3 is the traditional CWS response, alone or with law enforcement; it is usually reserved for referrals of a more immediate nature.

The guiding principles of DR are:

- Children are safer, and families are stronger when communities work together;
- The earlier family issues are identified and addressed, the better children and families do; and,
- Families can resolve issues more successfully when they voluntarily engage in services, supports, and solutions.⁵

⁵ Breakthrough Series Collaborative, Implementing Differential Response in California (February 2007)

Tuolumne County provides DR in house using County staff; the DR team has experience in CWS but is separate from CWS. As noted above, DR is overseen by the Engagement and Empowerment Unit.

Once a DR referral has been made to the Engagement and Empowerment Unit, the DR specialist contacts the family to meet and complete the Protective Factors Survey and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Questionnaire. The specialist and family then begin to work towards agreed upon goals to help stabilize the family unit. The DR team will work with families to establish a connection to services such as counseling, parenting, substance abuse services, etc., and provide time-limited case management services if necessary. While CWS will often respond to Path 2 referral investigations with the Engagement and Empowerment DR team, CWS will also respond with service providers in the community who provide parenting education, public health services, or home visiting programming.

Additional details on the above-mentioned services and/or additional services aimed at prevention and intervention may also be discussed within the sections below.

Community-based family support services

Tuolumne County has a variety of community-based family support services, including multiple resources for parenting education. Infant Child Enrichment Services (ICES) is one of the main community-based organizations that provides parenting services in the County. Another commonly used parenting education program is provided by Foothill Pregnancy Center.

As noted above, the Tuolumne County Public Health Department received a grant in 2024 for the Parents as Teachers (PAT) programming, an evidence-based practice. Additional parenting education supports are derived from Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT) programs and AmeriCorps Child Abuse Prevention/Child Welfare Services programs hosted onsite at the Child and Family Visit Center. However, in recent years Tuolumne County has been unable to recruit interested applicants in AmeriCorps to participate in this program.

More details on these and other community-based family support services are provided below.

Infant Child Enrichment Services (ICES)

- Specialized Parenting Education and Support
ICES is a leading source of parenting education and support for Tuolumne County. Its Raising Healthy Families Program classes and workshops are virtual, free, and open to the public. These courses utilize an evidence-based curriculum to address parenting infants to teens and help parents develop empathy for their child, develop nurturing routines, and know age-appropriate expectations and positive and effective discipline methods. Courses include but are not limited to the following: Raising Children in a Changing World, Parenting Your Spirited Child, Parenting Your Baby Through Touch, Nurturing Parent, and Trauma Informed Parenting. ICES also partners with Summerville Parent Nursery to provide in-person workshops, such as Effective Discipline.
- Intensive Home-Based Visitation Programs
Some families need individualized one-on-one education and support. Families identified as high needs are referred to the In-Home-Parenting Support program. Topics covered may include the following: managing stressful times, learning to have developmentally appropriate expectations of your child, creating a safe and secure environment in the home, creating empathetic and trusting relationships within the family, and understanding why you parent the way you do.

- Nurturing Parenting Education and Training

The Nurturing Parenting Curriculum is an evidence-based, family-centered curriculum that strives to decrease negative patterns that pose risks to children and intervene in the cycles of intergenerational child abuse and neglect by focusing on teaching positive parenting behaviors. This curriculum is specifically designed for parents with a history of drug and alcohol addiction. Pre and post-test assessments are completed with participants to provide an objective measure of each participant's progress in gaining new parenting skills.

Foothill Pregnancy Center

In addition to prenatal parenting instruction, Foothill Pregnancy Center has expanded to offer parenting classes to caregivers of children and youth. Foothill Pregnancy Center offers 10-minute to one-hour instruction regarding pregnancy and birth, labor and delivery, and parenting topics that cover the first year and beyond. Classes can be taken virtually or in person, and many are part of a series, such as Parenting Without Shame, Fatherhood Lessons, or Single Parenting that Works. Others covers special topics, such as healing from abuse, coparenting, and relationship loss. Additionally, Foothill Pregnancy Center offers Bright Course Lessons, Love Lessons relationship course, and bible studies.

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps members provide Parents as Teachers (PAT) home visiting services. The Parents as Teachers curriculum is an evidence-based, home visiting model that promotes the optimal early development, learning, and health of children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers. The program model can be offered perinatally through kindergarten and offers a cohesive package of services for families with young children. It is framed around four dynamic components: Personal visits, group connections, child screenings, and resource network. During visits, parent educators assess family needs and partner with parents to set family goals. Each personal visit includes a focus on parent-child interaction, development centered parenting, and family well-being.

Tuolumne County Behavioral Health, Dependency Drug Court

For parents who are ordered to participate in Dependency Drug Court through the Tuolumne County Juvenile Court, the Behavioral Health AOD program offers in-person group parenting classes on site utilizing the Nurturing Parenting Program curriculum.

Parent Leadership

Tuolumne County community-based partners continue to network and place high importance on engaging, empowering, supporting, and educating parents in the community. This is accomplished in part by Parent Leadership Training, which provides a series of structured workshops specifically designed to prepare parents and caregivers to work collaboratively with County and private non-profit organization staff towards the goal of improving the lives of families in Tuolumne County. This training targets parents/caregivers who have no previous involvement with CWS as well as those who have been impacted by the CWS system and now want to support other parents who are receiving such services. Parent Leadership is an activity prompted and supported by the local CAPC, Tuolumne Resiliency Coalition, and receives CBCAP funding.

Jamestown Family Resource Center (JFRC)

The Jamestown Family Resource Center is dedicated to increasing the chances of school success for students enrolled at Jamestown School and improving the lives of their families and other community members. While located on the outskirts of the campus and affiliated with the Office of Education, JFRC serves any Tuolumne County resident seeking assistance. JFRC works with families, school staff, and community agencies to identify and serve children and families at risk due to economic hardship, abuse, neglect, school failure, substance abuse, and other potential barriers to a healthy life.

JFRC has strong partnerships with the California Department of Education, the Tuolumne County Departments of Public Health, Child Welfare, and Behavioral Health, as well as community-based agencies such as Infant Child Enrichment Services, Center for Non-Violent Community, The Tuolumne Me-Wuk Indian Health Center, Mathiesen Clinic, Blue Zones, and the Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency.

The center offers multiple programs and services including service referrals for homeless families; emergency food and clothing, school supplies; resource referrals and connections, and other health referrals and classes focusing on topics such as nutrition, parenting, health, ESL, and basic life skills. JFRC is also key in educating community schools in providing trauma-informed education.

Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency (ATCAA)

ATCAA hosts a wide variety of community services including Head Start/State Preschool and Early Head Start, a Cal SAFE Family Learning Center, energy/weatherization, a food bank, housing resources, adult life skills classes, and mentoring. ATCAA provides on-site parenting classes at the Cal-SAFE Family Learning Center. Parents may participate in Adult Basic Education, life skills, and job skills. ATCAA also has instruction for ESL and provides transportation for its participants.

ATCAA's Homeless and Transitional Shelters provide emergency shelter to homeless children and families, along with case management support for job training and housing searches, as well as social, physical health, and mental health services. Additionally, rent and utility assistance is provided through the Homeless Prevention program when available, as well as Housing and Budget Counseling. This service does have a waiting list at times yet is a critical need. Other specific resources for CWS families and at-risk families include assistance with electric or propane bills and employment workshops.

Mental Health Services

Parents who have Medi-Cal coverage and meet medical necessity requirements can access services through Tuolumne County Behavioral Health. For those parents who are unable to access these services, Tuolumne County CWS connects these individuals to a listing of mental health providers.

Domestic Violence Services

Tuolumne County has one service provider, the Center for a Non-Violent Community (CNVC), that provides in-person services to parents and children who have been exposed to domestic violence. This non-profit organization offers individual and group therapy, support groups, and community education targeting youth. CNVC also operates a 24-hour crisis line, assists local law enforcement with transportation of victims, provides temporary restraining order assistance and court accompaniment, operates a family crisis shelter, and offers limited transitional housing.

For domestic violence batterer intervention services, Tuolumne County CWS and Probation will often work with the Streets2Schools online program, which has 16-, 24-, 36-, and 52-week courses and weekly anger management classes.

Family preservation services aimed at preserving families via reunification, guardianship, or adoption

CWS works diligently to preserve families and respond in the least intrusive ways appropriate, including offering voluntary family reunification and maintenance services when appropriate. CWS plans to enhance the Emergency Response process by convening a Child and Family Team meeting (CFTM) with the Engagement and Empowerment Unit's social worker team or a Family Group Conference during the Emergency Response investigation stages. It also plans to conduct the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment, including the caregiver assessment, to provide prevention services; these services may include better safety planning with more consistent monitoring and voluntary interventions, among others. Although the County has struggled with filling positions to provide these enhanced Emergency Response services, the County always considers these services, particularly in voluntary cases. Child and Family Team Meetings are also offered with a hybrid virtual/in-person platform as participants are available.

The County contracts with Wayfinder Family Services to provide family preservation services to adoptive families after adoption completion. These services are grounded in evidence-informed frameworks, including a trauma-focused/adoption-competent approach that incorporates the Strengthening Families protective factors and Nurturing Parenting Program framework to support the stability and well-being of adopted youth and their families. Wayfinder provides referral services, respite, family activities, support groups, mentoring, psycho-educational groups and workshops, education and training, and limited case management to support families and alleviate crisis.

Interagency Placement Committee/Resource Collaborative

The Interagency Resource Collaborative (IRC) is a collaborative partnership of child-serving agencies and organizations. It is comprised of a trained facilitator and management-level staff from CWS, Probation, Behavioral Health, TCSOS, and Valley Mountain Regional Center. The IRC also can include the Child and Family Team (CFT) Facilitator and Intensive Care Coordinator/Qualified Individual, as well as a Tribal Social Services Social Worker when applicable.

The purpose of IRC meetings is to identify, develop, coordinate, and monitor the care of at-risk children, youth, and families across programs and within the County, and when necessary, to recommend or authorize a level of care up to residential care.

The IRC serves both a consultative role and, in some cases, a decision-making or authoritative role. Depending on the jurisdictional or Special Education status of the youth, this process may serve solely as an expanded teaming and consultation process in support of court mandated or educationally required procedures; in this scenario, the IRC is purely intended to advise the planning process and does not obligate providers, schools, or decision-makers. In other cases, the IRC will be an authoritative and decision-making entity that authorizes the actions of the system/department in support of their family-centered decision-making; decisions by the IRC will become the recommendations of CWS or Probation.

Members of the integrated Children's System Of Care, which is further described in the Systemic Factors - Agency Collaboration section of the CSA, can work with their respective departments and the community to refer families with children who are at risk of becoming system involved to the IRC. The IRC reviews the care and services for children, youth, and families with complex needs, and then discusses and recommends

strategies for addressing their identified needs while utilizing CSOC resources and coordinating services to support positive outcomes.

Reunification Services

Visit Coaching

Tuolumne County began piloting Visit Coaching in January 2017 as a promising new practice. This child-centered model uses one coach for one family, pre- and post- visit meetings with parents, coaching during the visit and trauma-informed visit notes. Tuolumne has one full-time visit coach. Visit coaching goals include: (1) Partnerships with families will be strengthened, (2) Parents will learn to engage and interact with their children, (3) Parents will be empowered to plan for the needs of their children during visits, and (4) Parents will be encouraged to address the needs of their children in a meaningful and consequential way for more successful family reunification.

The Tuolumne County Child and Family Visitation Center

Tuolumne County opened a Family Visitation Center in November 2016. Each family referred to the Child and Family Visitation Center is engaged in the development of an individualized visitation plan to accommodate the family's specific needs. In addition, community service agencies can bring strength-based resources and services to the center. This includes, but is not limited to, Nurturing Parenting education groups, nutrition education, public health outreach, meal preparation, and Child and Family Teams.

Adoption Services

Tuolumne County brought Adoptions in house in October 2020 from the California Department of Social Services State Adoptions Division. The Adoptions Unit receives a referral for concurrent planning at the time the Disposition Hearing is completed, and the case is transferred to the Ongoing Unit for Family Reunification services or Permanent Placement/Non-Minor Dependent Unit for Permanent Placement. Adoption Unit social workers reach out to biological families when the referral is made by the case managing social worker for concurrent planning. The Adoption Unit social worker will regularly meet with the child. Engagement with the family occurs at a level of contact comfortable to them. The team provides limited services while families are receiving Family Reunification services. When more involvement is requested by the case-carrying social worker or if reunification efforts fail, the Adoptions social workers increase their involvement and begin working to assess a permanent plan; they locate prospective adoptive families as appropriate, develop relationships with children and biological and adoptive families, discuss post-adoption issues and supports, and meet all mandates to ensure a smooth transition to a permanent plan. Once the hearing to determine the permanent plan is completed, the Adoptions team assumes a case management role for those children whose permanent plan is adoption and who are currently in an adoptive home.

Adoption Assistance Program and Post-Adoption Services

The Adoptions Unit completes and manages all Adoption Assistance Payment applications and changes. Post-Adoption Services in Tuolumne County are provided by Wayfinder Family Services, a satellite office of Lilliput Post-Adoption Services. As noted above, Wayfinder staff provide services grounded in evidence-informed frameworks, including a trauma-focused/adoption-competent approach that incorporates the Strengthening Families protective factors and Nurturing Parenting Program framework to support the stability and well-being of adopted youth and their families. Wayfinder provides outreach and family support through welcome packets and information and referral services for a variety of family needs. Local adoptive families can participate in

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discussion groups, counseling, access resource libraries, and complete training. Lilliput also provides social events and respite to support adoptive placements and includes CWS in its outreach.

Lilliput has partnered with Tuolumne County for about 10 years for Adoptions Day; this has become a highly anticipated event resulting in numerous finalized adoptions held in an open court setting adorned by teddy bears, balloons, and photographed hugs from the Presiding Judge. After court, the County hosts a luncheon for local adoptive families and social workers to celebrate the creation of loving forever families.

Kinship Care/Support Services

Tuolumne County Children's Services works with the Foster and Kinship Care Education (FKCE) Program through Columbia Junior College located in Sonora. The mission of the FKCE program is to provide quality education and support opportunities to caregivers of children and youth in out-of-home care so that these they can meet foster children's educational, emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs. FKCE serves prospective and licensed foster parents, kinship providers, and non-relative providers in Tuolumne, Mariposa, and Calaveras Counties. In addition to providing the mandatory curriculum for licensing resource parents, FKCE also sponsors training on The Nurtured Heart approach, Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, and internet safety.

Independent Living Services

The Independent Living Program (ILP) is dedicated to empowering foster youth as they transition out of the foster care system towards self-sufficiency. Services provided include creation of comprehensive Transitional Independent Living Plans (TILP), education coaching, career planning, resume building, and assistance in obtaining vital documents, such as birth certificates and social security cards. Additionally, daily living skills classes are held monthly. These classes cover essential topics such as resource utilization, problem-solving, healthy relationship maintenance, decision-making, job search and retention skills, college or vocational program selection, and securing housing upon emancipation.

To incentivize participation, youth earn cash incentives for their engagement in ILP activities. The ILP coordinator regularly meets with eligible youth to discuss current and future planning and collaborates with case-managing social workers to create a TILP. They oversee compliance with TILP timelines and ensure active youth participation in the plan's development.

ILP services are also available to non-minor dependent (NMD) foster youth participating in the Extended Foster Care program, ensuring continued support for those who remain in care beyond the age of 18.

Permanency planning services

CWS begins discussing family supports during the referral/investigation phase of the case to locate relatives appropriate for placement. CWS contracts with Seneca to conduct family finding searches and then sends out family finding letters, along with an ICWA 020, to any potential relatives found through the search or identified by the family directly. CWS staff then reach out to any relatives who respond to the letters to ask if they would be interested in being involved with the child/family, up to providing a permanent home. The County discusses permanency at the placement Child and Family Team Meeting, briefly addresses concurrent planning, and assesses relatives who come forward pursuant to WIC 361.3. The social worker refers the case to the Adoptions Unit for concurrent planning at the time of Disposition Hearing and meets with the child and family. The social worker then engages any family members found appropriate. Permanency planning services are provided to all children in care, including to find a permanent home for children 0-5 in care.

Programs and services that address the unique characteristics of the populations previously identified in the demographic section to be at greatest risk of maltreatment

As noted in the Demographic section of the CSA, children under the age of 2, especially those 0-1 enter foster care in Tuolumne County at the highest rates. Additionally, a large proportion of children in foster care have parents experiencing substance abuse issues. Programs and services aimed at addressing the unique characteristics of these populations is contained in the narrative above and below. For example, the Nurturing Parenting Program, Parents as Teachers, CalWORKs Home Visiting Program, WIC, SEED program, and Road to Resilience Program, among others, all address the needs of parents of young children. The County's substance abuse treatment services are also discussed above and in the Service Gaps section below.

Culturally Relevant Services

Although the population of Tuolumne County is predominately White, other races and ethnicities, including Native American and Latino children and families, are represented in the child welfare population. CWS typically has access to one or two certified Spanish-speaking employees within the Public Services and Integrated System Of Care Units within the Department of Social Services. For families requiring interpretation in the Juvenile Court, the Court can provide certified interpreters. Jamestown Family Resource Center and the Center for a Non-Violent Community, discussed above, each have Spanish-speaking staff and advocates. If translation of a language other than Spanish is needed, interpreters can be accessed through a contract with a language telephone line.

The County works closely with the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians Tribe and the Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians of California Tribe to ensure tribally affiliated children and family receive culturally relevant services. The Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians has a social services department that aims to provide culturally specific prevention and treatment services to its eligible members. Services include mental health, substance abuse, preschool, and family counseling, as well as services to address anger management, sexual assault, and domestic violence. The Tribe offers primary care and behavioral health services in Tuolumne City and Sonora; a dental center is also adjacent to the health center. Substance use disorder services are provided through MEWU:YA, including medicated assisted treatment, group and one-on-one counseling, and a Native Circle 12-step recovery program.

During a previous SIP cycle, The Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians created a strong social services department, as well as developed and expanded services to provide services to both their eligible members and the public. The Tribe's Mathiesen Memorial Health Clinic offers primary care and a wellness center to support a healthy body, mind, and spirit through a bio-psychosocial approach to therapy. The wellness center offers individual and family therapy, including hypnosis, EMDR, art therapy, yoga, and a Hepatitis C support group. Recently, the clinic expanded to offer a walk-in clinic in downtown Jamestown; there are plans to open a dental clinic in Jamestown also. In 2021, the Tribe created the Red Feather Opioid Coalition and the Red Feather Clinic to support individuals struggling with substance use disorders. This clinic offers medicated assisted treatment, counseling, care coordination, and acupuncture.

Tuolumne County CWS and Probation have close working relationships with the Tribes and work collaboratively with them on any referrals and cases that involve tribal members or those eligible for membership and services. Staff from both Tribes are actively involved in the Tuolumne Resiliency Coalition and prevention efforts. The Tribes also coordinate and participate in cross-training with CWS and Probation teams.

Programs that target underserved populations

Many of the service providers and/or programs described above, such as the Jamestown Family Resource Center, the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, the Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, the Differential Response Program, and all parenting services target underserved populations.

Services which address the developmental needs of infants, toddlers, and children

Tuolumne County is served by the Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC), which ensures that individuals with developmental disabilities are provided opportunities and services to enable them to achieve their maximum potential. Children under age 5 who enter out-of-home care are screened using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire – III (ASQ-III) to identify if potential social, developmental, or learning delays may exist. If a child scores in a particular zone on this pre-screening tool, they are referred to VMRC for a more formal screening. If a foster child is eligible for services, they receive enhanced supports and are deemed a ‘dual agency’ child with increased and targeted services.

First 5 Tuolumne County strives to maintain strong collaboration among community partners who serve young children and their families. It has financially supported the Emergency Children’s Shelter, ensured the use of Ages and Stages Questionnaire-III (ASQ-III) in every service contract, and funded parenting education for at-risk families. Additionally, First 5 Tuolumne onboarded Unite Us, an online closed loop referral platform to support adequate developmental screenings in various community entities.

Services available to children and/or caregivers with physical, mental, or other disabilities

VMRC, described above, provides case management and services for child and adult populations. Representatives from VMRC sit on the Interagency Resource Collaborative. Additionally, the Disability Resource Agency for Independent Living (DRAIL) provides services to youth and caregivers with physical, mental, or other disabilities. DRAIL serves six counties in the foothill and valley region, including Tuolumne County. Services provided by DRAIL include, but are not limited to, housing referrals, peer support, personal assistant services, assistive technology, disability income advocacy/ benefits advising, information and referral services, emergency preparedness services, independent living skills training, individual and systems advocacy, transition youth services, and work incentives planning assistance. Additionally, services are available to children and caregivers with disabilities through the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program. In Tuolumne County, the Department of Social Services administers the IHSS program.

Services available for Native American children and those children qualifying under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

Services available for Native American children and those children qualifying under ICWA are described in the section above on culturally relevant services. Additionally, as described throughout this CSA, CWS and Probation have close working relatives with both federally recognized Tribes in the County and work collaboratively with them to jointly serve children and youth beginning during the referral screening stage.

Prevention education provided to the public and outreach activities to maximize services

As described above, Tuolumne County community-based partners continue to network and place high importance on engaging, empowering, supporting, and educating parents in the community. This is accomplished in part by Parent Leadership Training, which provides a series of structured workshops specifically designed to prepare parents and caregivers to work collaboratively with County and private non-Tuolumne County 2023 CSA

profit organization staff towards the goal of improving the lives of families in Tuolumne County. This training targets parents/caregivers who have no previous involvement with CWS, as well as those who have been impacted by the CWS system and now want to support other parents who are receiving such services. Parent Leadership is an activity prompted and supported by the local CAPC, Tuolumne Resiliency Coalition, and receives CBCAP funding. Additionally, the Tuolumne Resiliency Coalition, takes an active role in building public awareness around child abuse prevention and Adverse Childhood Experiences.

PROBATION

The Probation Department provides multiple evidence-based programs, as well as programs identified as best or promising practices. These groups are facilitated or coordinated and monitored by a Behavioral Health Clinician and/or probation staff. Additionally, the Probation Department works collaboratively with other county departments and local non-profit agencies to provide services to probation youth.

Behavioral Health Clinician

The Juvenile Division currently has one full-time Behavioral Health Clinician position to provide therapeutic services to youth both in custody and out of custody. This position is currently vacant. When filled, the clinician provides cognitive behavioral interventions such as Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) and Seeking Safety, along with other programming like the Matrix Model and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). In addition, the Probation Department contracts with a private therapist who provides therapeutic services to specific out-of-custody probation youth through a grant. Probation youth are also regularly referred to the Behavioral Health Department for individual counseling services, Therapeutic Behavioral Services, and DBT group programming. Some probation youth nearing age 18 have been referred to the Full-Service Partnership (FSP). FSP provides services designed to stabilize youth in need of comprehensive community-based mental health services who are at risk of homelessness due to a lack of natural supports and mental health challenges.

Girls Circle

Girls Circle is a gender specific skills-building support group that examines thoughts, beliefs, and actions about friendships, trust, authority figures, mother/daughter relationships, sexuality, dating violence, HIV, drug abuse, stress, and goal setting. This group encourages exploration regarding girls' choices and behaviors and examines ways to promote self-care and healthy decision-making.

Boys Council

This is a group for boys that challenges myths about what it means to be a "real man," rejects violence and defines power from multiple perspectives, provides an experience of belonging and connection with adults and peers, helps boys make safe and healthy decisions and find motivation and courage to act on their principles, and teaches how to become allies with girls and women.

Interactive Journaling

This class goes through the activities individually, then as a group, using evidence-based strategies to assist the participants in making positive changes to their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Applying the information presented in the Interactive Journals to their own lives helps participants achieve their goals of responsible living. Some of the journals used are Victim Awareness, Abuse or Addiction, Responsible Behavior, Handling Difficult Feelings, and Relationships and Communication.

Aggression Replacement Training (ART)

This is an intensive class built on the idea that every aggressive act has multiple causes, both external (parents, peers, etc.) and internal (multiple compound deficiencies – pro-social behavior, anger control, primitive level of moral reasoning). ART addresses each of these concerns in its three coordinated components: Skill streaming, Anger Control Training, and Moral Reasoning Training. Skill streaming, the behavioral component of ART, teaches youth what to do instead of aggression. Anger Control Training, the emotion-oriented component, teaches kids what not to do. Moral Reasoning Training, the values component, seeks to advance the levels of moral development. Together these three elements combine to yield more reliable and longer-term positive outcomes than each component on its own.

Drug and Alcohol Services

Youth affected by substance abuse issues are referred to the Behavioral Health Department for services. This population typically includes current Wards of the Juvenile Court (or some other type of probation involvement), referrals from Traffic Court (for various marijuana citations falling under the provisions of the Prop. 64 marijuana initiative), self-referred youth (often by a parent in need of assistance for their child), or those referred to the Probation Department by school staff. Wards of the Juvenile Court struggling with this issue are referred for intake at Behavioral Health and typically participate in an Early Tools and Recovery Intervention Program facilitated by a Recovery Counselor. Some wards with significant drug addiction issues have participated in an out-of-county residential treatment center, with the assistance of the Full-Service Partnership Program (FSP), supported by the Behavioral Health Department.

Concerned parents, whose child has not yet risen to the level of law enforcement involvement, may contact probation staff requesting resources specifically to address substance use by their child. Those families are referred to the Behavioral Health Department, and Probation staff typically communicates the referral to the Recovery Counselor. Educators and school administrators make referrals to the Probation Department (acting as a liaison between the schools and the Behavioral Health Department) when they are concerned about a student with suspected or documented substance abuse issues. Probation staff contacts the family and meets with the parent(s) and child to gather information and referral documents, which are later sent to Behavioral Health staff for processing enrollment to participate in the Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Brief Intervention Program.

Education

Probation staff work very closely with the local educational systems. Probation staff attends Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) meetings, 504 meetings, Manifestation Hearings, and parent/teacher conferences, when appropriate, for probation youth. Probation staff visit school campuses regularly and maintain solid communication with educational staff and administrators regarding the activities (both positive and negative) of probation youth. Probation Officers also sit on the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) and take a supportive role, along with representatives from community-based organizations, for Tuolumne County families and children who struggle with truancy issues.

Law Enforcement

Local law enforcement agencies investigate juvenile law offenses and submit new referrals regarding all juvenile matters to the Juvenile Division. It is not uncommon for Probation Officers to consult with local law enforcement regarding alleged crimes committed by juveniles at schools and in the community. Additionally, a

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Probation Officer sits on the Child Abuse Response Team (CART) Steering Committee where sex crimes against children are discussed. The committee consists of representatives from the District Attorney's Office, Child Welfare Services, the Probation Department, Behavioral Health, Sonora Police Department, and Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department. When a juvenile is suspected to be the perpetrator of a sex crime against a child, a Probation Officer is present during forensic interviews of victims.

Public Health

Non-placement youth have been referred to the Public Health Department for smoking cessation online programs to educate about and prevent tobacco use.

Culturally Relevant Services

While the population of Tuolumne County is predominately White, Native American and Latino children and families are represented in the foster care population. For youth or parents that are primarily Spanish-speaking, the Probation Department has bilingual staff. If other languages are needed, they can access external interpreter services.

When tribally affiliated youth and families need probation services, the County has two Federally Recognized tribes they work closely with: the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians and the Chicken Ranch Rancheria Me-Wuk Indians Tribe. As described above, the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians Tribe has a social services department that aims to provide culturally specific prevention and treatment services to their eligible members. Specific services include mental health, substance abuse, and family counseling, as well as anger management, sexual assault, and domestic violence services. Tuolumne County Probation has close working relationships with both Tribes and works collaboratively with these organizations on cases that involve tribal members or those eligible for membership and services. See the CWS section on Culturally Relevant Services above and the Public Agency Characteristics section of the CSA for further details on the services provided by both Tribes.

GEO Reentry Services

GEO Reentry Services is a provider of evidence-based cognitive behavioral programming services; these services align with individual assessment outcomes targeting specific criminogenic needs. Research has shown evidence-based cognitive behavioral interventions are effective in changing the way participants think, positively impact behavior, and reduce recidivism. GEO uses a Cognitive Behavioral Approach to programming which includes two effective psychotherapy practices: Cognitive Theory, which encourages individuals to change faulty thinking patterns, and Social Learning Theory, which focuses on the effects that specific actions, environments, and reinforcements have on behavior. GEO has committed to providing their services in a collaborative, multidisciplinary fashion and is committed to participating in weekly, multidisciplinary team meetings to discuss treatment progress, issues, and supportive needs with Juvenile Probation Officers, Juvenile Correctional Officers, behavioral health clinicians, educators, health care providers, and other key supports. Interventions to be provided by GEO include the following: Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT), Anger Management, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Groups, Substance Abuse Treatment, and Trauma-Informed and Restorative Justice Programming.

Other Youth Services

Youth services and resources that specifically target at-risk juveniles, juvenile offenders, and their families are encompassed in a variety of programming that the Probation Department has provided directly as well as

through collaboration with and referral to community-based service providers. Those services are listed below and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Infant/Child Enrichment Services (ICES): Provides multiple services to the community. Specific to probation youth and families in the Raising Healthy Families (RHF) program, ICES staff provides in-home parent education and parent/teen group programming to increase stability within the home and strengthen the relationship between the parent/child, as well as with other members of the family.
- Center for a Non-Violent Community (CNVC): Provides domestic violence services and teen/youth resources for teen/dating violence and/or sexual violence.
- Tuolumne County District Attorney's Office Victim/Witness Division: The Probation Department works with Victim/Witness advocates collaboratively to support youth and families who have been victims of crime.
- Amador/Tuolumne Community Action Agency (ATCAA): ATCAA has provided interventions to probation youth in the form of financial literacy courses and Casey Life Skills surveys. Additionally, ATCAA staff have co-facilitated both Boys Council/Girls Circle group programming specifically for probation youth.
- Mother Lode Job Training: Assists youth in the preparation of entering the workforce such as interview skills development, resume building, and local job opportunities.
- TeenWorks Mentoring Program: A faith-based program that provides mentors for at-risk youth and offers positive role modeling and provision of a positive, supportive, and appropriate adult for struggling youth.
- Teen NA/AA: Narcotics and Alcoholics Anonymous is available in the community. It is a group facilitated by NA and AA members who share their stories and how they recovered and continue to maintain sobriety.

SERVICE GAPS

With the small population overall and rural nature of Tuolumne County, there are limited comprehensive community-based services. There are few providers overall, and those operating in the County fill a very particular service niche. Access to funding has also often been sporadic. When grants are awarded, services are developed. However, when grants end there have been historical challenges to coordinating a fiscal structure that maintains the services. More specifically, limited transportation services, a lack of safe and affordable housing, and scarce substance abuse recovery services represent some of the largest service gaps and create significant challenges.

Transportation

The County has free dial-a-ride with county buses, but arrangements must be made in advance, which is often difficult for families. Moreover, there are often long waits for pickups on bus routes. The lack of transportation makes it difficult for parents to hold down a job and meet requirements for the Welfare to Work program or comply with child welfare requirements while relying on public transportation. The County has implemented various strategies over recent years to tackle transportation issues, including providing bus passes and gas cards. In Child and Family Team Meetings, transportation is often discussed to see if the parents' existing support system can assist. Foster parents are sometimes willing to help with transporting children, and social workers and support staff assist by picking up parents for visits with their children and for court appearances. These efforts aim to alleviate the impact of transportation challenges on family stability and reunification.

Lack of Affordable Housing

Gaps in affordable housing, leading to homelessness, are described in depth in the Demographics section of the CSA.

To address gaps in housing, in early 2022, the Department of Social Services (DSS) established a specialized unit dedicated to addressing homelessness in collaboration with the County Homeless Services Coordinator. This involved integrating all homeless programs into a cohesive homeless/housing unit aimed at enhancing case management support for individuals facing housing barriers. These programs cater to the needs of families and individuals enrolled in various social services programs.

The following programs fall under the purview of homeless services:

- Bringing Families Home, which is specific to families involved with Child Welfare Services
- Home Safe, which is specific to elderly and dependent adults involved with Adult Protective Services
- Housing Support Program, which is specific to families receiving CalWORKs
- Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program
- Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP)
- Encampment Resolution Grant program

Additionally, within the next year, Tuolumne County is in the process of onboarding an Interim Housing facility, the initial housing initiative in a step-up housing continuum. Transitional Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing facilities will be established in the next two to three years. These facilities will be managed by DSS and supported operationally with case management and other staffing.

The County's Housing Continuum of Care process involves providing case managers to connect individuals to services, address housing needs, and mitigate homelessness barriers. CWS becomes part of the support team for these families, involving a triage or resource committee with community-based partners and Behavioral Health. The Homeless Outreach Support Team includes CWS, the sheriff's office, the fire department, the police department, and the Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency. They conduct outreach to those in the system and those seeking help.

Substance Abuse Recovery Services

Both Child Welfare and Probation staff and stakeholders have noted the scarcity of recovery services for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) available for youth and adults. While the Dependency Drug Court anchors the County's efforts to address SUD in child welfare cases, recovery services are very limited in the County. The services available are further described above and in the Public Agency section of the CSA. For example, services are provided by the County's Behavioral Health Department, which has limited capacity; Mathieson Memorial Clinic; and the Red Feather Clinic and Wellness Center, among others.

G. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

California Case Review

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) implemented the Case Review program in August 2015. Case Reviews continue to be conducted in every California county and are viewed by the CDSS as an essential component to county and state Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) processes. California is currently using the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI) for review of all cases. County Case Review staff conduct a qualitative review of a set number of cases each quarter as determined by the overall caseload inclusive of probation. Qualitative case reviews are an important way to gather data about

the “how” and the “why” questions associated with CQI. These case level data complement the quantitative data obtained through systems such as the California Child Welfare Indicators Project, SafeMeasures®, and Business Objects reports.

Pursuant to the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) process, Tuolumne County is responsible for five case reviews each quarter. The County has been completing an average of three cases per quarter. Currently there are three Case Reviewers: one Supervising Staff Services Analyst and two Senior Staff Services Analysts. There is also one Supervising Staff Services Analyst who conducts second level reviews/Quality Assurance (QA). These staff are not dedicated solely to case review; rather they also hold other job responsibilities. The two Senior Staff Services Analysts currently have their temporary online certification and are going through the process to get permanent certification. The County is also recruiting for one more Case Reviewer, a Senior Staff Services Analyst. With this increase in Case Reviewers from previous years, the County is now on track to meet the requirement for five case reviews each quarter.

Reporting tools have allowed the Case Review team to quickly identify similarities in cases with challenges, as well as to see the department’s strengths. For example, while case reviews indicate that the County consistently demonstrates consideration of placement with relatives and keeping siblings together, it also appears to struggle with involving parents who do not readily avail themselves to the agency, and who are subsequently somewhat left out of the process. Foster youth’s needs are typically well attended to and well documented, with some exceptions. In contrast, resource families indicate they don’t usually recall anyone asking about their needs, but state they managed well without the help.

In the past year, the County’s certified case review team has achieved significant milestones. The case review team expanded from one reviewer to three, enabling the formation of a dedicated Data Integrity Group. This group focuses on delivering high-quality data to Child Welfare Services (CWS). Additionally, team members have actively participated in the CQI conference, which integrates CWS programming with data and offers training on best practices for implementation. These accomplishments underscore the County’s commitment to enhancing data integrity and implementing effective data-driven strategies.

Probation does not have a process established for case reviews; they have so few cases that reviews are happening as cases come up for review in court. Probation does participate in Biennial Data Quality Reviews with CWS. Additionally, while reviewing cases prior to court, Probation does try and check SafeMeasures® for missing data and make corrections/additions when needed.

Supervisory Monitoring

Additional quality assurance is accomplished through supervisory review of referrals and cases at opening, closing, transferring, and other milestones. At intake, a team of staff consisting of CWS supervisors, Public Health Nurses, Behavioral Health, probate family court representatives, the prevention team, County Counsel, CQI analysts, differential response program representatives, welfare to work staff, and representatives of other local agencies, including Tribes, if applicable, attend a Review, Evaluate, and Direct (RED) Team meeting. During this meeting, results from the Structured Decision Making (SDM) hotline tool are reviewed and evaluated for referral applicability. If a referral becomes a case, the assigned social worker begins an extensive checklist that is intended to ensure data quality and provides an at-a-glance summary of case details. The checklist allows the assigned social worker and supervisor to know that all required steps have been completed and ensures that County and State policies and regulations, as well as rules of court, have been followed. There is another checklist that staff utilize to ensure compliance before closing a case as well.

SafeMeasures® is an important tool for supervisors in monitoring case activities and outcome measures in quarterly data reports. Supervisors also review court documents, including case plans and Transitional Independent Living Plans (TILPs) for quality, accuracy, and timeliness. Supervisors review referrals before they are closed, new cases when they are opened, and the transfer of cases from Emergency Response to Family Maintenance/Family Reunification/Permanent Placement.

Supervisors and social workers regularly staff cases and referrals during weekly group supervision and individual meetings, and as needed throughout the week. During these meetings, staff and supervisors often review policies and discuss procedure. There are also routinely scheduled group supervision staffings that involve social workers, supervisors, and managers from multiple programs, representing all staff levels and a range of expertise. In addition to supervisory review, Unit meetings also play a role in quality assurance as practice and policies are discussed at these meetings. In 2024, Child Welfare has made the foster care eligibility division a regular part of Unit meetings.

To facilitate concurrent planning, supervisors and social workers meet regularly, formally and informally, with the Adoptions Social Workers to review ongoing cases in Family Reunification and to identify and discuss reunification and alternate permanent plans.

Likewise, Probation supervisors review reports and cases for accuracy and timeliness. Supervisors also regularly review information in CWS/CMS, SafeMeasures®, and Structured Decision Making to monitor staff and unit compliance, as well as outcome measures. Because there are so few children in placement (1-3) supervised by Probation, the utility of the outcome measures in monitoring performance is lessened. The Probation Division Manager knows each youth in placement by name as well as the status of their case.

Through the above-described supervisory monitoring and case staffings, the County monitors and addresses the differing needs of infants, toddlers, children, and youth.

Ensuring Screening, Assessment, and Treatment Planning and Monitoring Behavioral and Physical Health

CWS works closely with a Foster Care Public Health Nurses (PHN) to ensure all foster youth's physical health needs are met and monitored on an ongoing basis. The PHN monitors children's access to and timeliness of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment examinations. The PHN then enters the results of these exams into CWS/CMS to contribute to the Health and Education Passport. Should follow-up or specialty care be required, the PHN works collaboratively with the case-managing social worker and care provider to ensure timely care is received. The PHN also interprets health care reports for the social worker; participates in Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs); provides health education for youth, parents, and social workers; and acts as a consultant to the social worker on health-related issues or questions.

Public Health nursing staff also assist with developmental screenings for foster youth utilizing the Ages and Stages (ASQ) tool. This screening identifies potential developmental delays in children ages 0-5. If a concern is noted by an ASQ screening, the PHN recommends the caregiver schedule a visit with the child's pediatrician to review the results of the ASQ and receive additional screening and a referral to a local regional center for further assessment and potential services. The PHN also provides the caregiver with a list of recommended intervention activities to address areas of concern.

Additionally, CWS has a policy for the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR), which includes use of CFTMs, utilizing the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool as an early screening and referral method

for behavioral health services for children and youth, and utilizing the CANS in placement and case planning CFTMs for children and their parents.

As noted earlier in the County Case Review System section of the CSA, Probation uses the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS) assessment tool to identify risks and needs. Results of the assessment can be shared with youth and their parents; this tool helps guide Probation in developing case plans. Additionally, Probation asks the Court for psychological evaluations on youth, when necessary; usually a request would be made because of the crimes a youth has committed (sex crimes or violent crimes) and if a youth deteriorates after Probation has been working with them for a long time. Probation also works with the Behavioral Health Department on determining mental health needs for their youth.

Psychotropic Medication Monitoring

Foster Youth who require psychotropic medication services receive additional oversight and monitoring by the Foster Care PHN and the prescribing medical provider. Barring an emergency mental health situation, the Tuolumne County Superior Court Judge must review and approve an application for administration of medication for any child receiving medication prior to medication being administered. Prior to an application being submitted to the Court, the PHN reviews the physician's application, if provided to the PHN, and recommended medication to provide input to the assigned social worker. The PHN utilizes the Department of Health Care Services Prescribing Standards and the Parameters for Use of Psychotropic Medication in Children and Adolescents and identifies any deviations from these standards.

ICWA and MEPA compliance

Both CWS and Probation follow the direction and/or guidance related to ICWA in Welfare in Institutions Code, CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures Division 31 regulations, Rules of Court, and All County Letters. Staff are all trained on ICWA requirements.

The County does not have a formal written policy related to the Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) but there is a means for making a complaint, including a civil rights complaint. CWS provide the brochure on your rights/publication 13 when making first contact. It explains rights under the program and what the family can do if they feel their rights have been violated.

Monitoring to Ensure Educational Needs Met

CWS works with the County Office of Education and partially funds a foster youth manager position through Title IV-E. This position acts as a liaison between CWS and the individual school district homeless and foster youth liaisons, passing information from CWS to the school districts when children enter care. This position also works in the Foster Focus database to enter school information, including documenting Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for foster youth. Pursuant to an agreement, which is also included in the Children's System Of Care MOU as an attachment, the foster youth manager is responsible for coordinating transportation for youth who are placed outside of their school district. The position is stationed in the CWS main office twice per week to ensure children's educational needs are met and communication flows well between schools and CWS. Additionally, the foster youth manager is invited to CFTMs and will begin attending CSOC Advisory meetings.

Compliance with Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning Process

As described above, there is ongoing supervisory monitoring and staffing of cases to ensure compliance related to the case planning process, including policies related to the use of CANS, CFTMs, and TILPs. Parents participate in a psychosocial assessment and case planning CFTM prior to the disposition hearing in dependency cases. CFTMs occur at least on a six-month schedule, coinciding with the court hearings, and more often for children in a STRTP or ISFC placement. However, a vacancy in the CFT Facilitator has recently been impacting the timeliness of CFTMs.

As also described in the Infrastructure section of the CSA, the Adoptions Unit receives a referral for concurrent planning at the time the Disposition Hearing is completed for a dependent child in care, and the case is transferred to the Ongoing Unit for Family Reunification services or Permanent Placement/Non-Minor Dependent Unit for Permanent Placement. Adoption Unit social workers reach out to biological families when the referral is made by the case managing social worker for concurrent planning. The Adoption Unit social worker will regularly meet with the child, and engagement with the family occurs at a level of contact comfortable to them. The Adoptions team provides limited services while families are receiving Family Reunification services. When more involvement is requested by the case-carrying social worker or if reunification efforts fail, the Adoptions social workers increase their involvement and begin working to assess a permanent plan; they locate prospective adoptive families as appropriate, develop relationships with children and biological and adoptive families, discuss post-adoption issues and supports, and meet all mandates to ensure a smooth transition to a permanent plan. Once the hearing to determine the permanent plan is completed, the Adoptions team assumes a case management role for those children whose permanent plan is adoption and who are currently in an adoptive home. Concurrent planning for probation youth is handled by the placement officer with input from others, including the Division Manager, schools, Behavioral Health, the youth, family members, and anyone else who may have knowledge of the case in accordance with Division 31 regulations.

As described in the County Case Review System section of the CSA, both CWS and Probation use the California Judicial Council findings and orders form for the 12-month Permanency Hearing and subsequent hearings; this form contains a list of possible compelling reasons why Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) is not in the best interest of the child. Use of this form ensures required findings are routinely made. When appropriate in a dependency case, a hearing pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 366.26 is set to establish a permanent plan, including TPR. Tuolumne County CWS social workers work with adoptions social workers to conduct concurrent planning and identify permanent homes. Tuolumne County does not recommend TPR if there is no prospective adoptive home for the child. In Probation cases, if there is not a compelling reason why TPR is not in the best of the child, a hearing pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 727.31 is set for TPR.

CWS follows the direction in the CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures Division 31 regulations for developing a TILP with the foster youth. The TILP and a referral are sent to the Independent Living Program. If the youth is placed out of county, Tuolumne County ILP staff sends the referral to ILP staff in the county of residence. The TILP and ILP are incorporated into the youth's court-ordered case plan. The case managing social worker and/or ILP social worker work together to discuss activities to prepare the youth or NMD for adulthood monthly.

Similarly, in accordance with Division 31 regulations, the Probation placement officer ensures a TILP is developed for each probation-supervised youth in foster care who is age 16 or older with the assistance of the County ILP coordinator and youth. The TILP is reviewed by a supervisor or manager once created and each time it is updated.

Because there are so few children in placement who are supervised by Probation and the placement team is small, free flowing case staffing to ensure compliance naturally occurs with the placement officer, supervisor, and manager as they work the case. As noted above, the Division Manager knows each youth in placement by name as well as the status of their case.

CAPIT AND CBCAP

Quality assurance measures in place for CAPIT and CBCAP projects include site visits from the local Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC). These site visits aim to identify if program objectives are being met. The evaluator reports back to the CAPC and submits a written report on their observations. Quarterly reports are submitted to the County Liaison from those agencies receiving CAPIT and CBCAP funding, apprising the liaison of monthly statistics and activities. Should corrective action be necessary, the vendor is expected to make necessary program adjustments with follow up by the evaluator within a designated period. If the vendor does not complete the services outlined in the scope of work, the County would have the right to terminate the contract. Due to the small, rural nature of Tuolumne County, the CBCAP vendor meets regularly with the County Liaison to address child abuse prevention, parent leadership development, parenting education, and CWS system improvement issues.

Parent involvement in the oversight of CAPIT and CBCAP programs is critical to ensuring a program's responsiveness to consumers' needs. Those vendors receiving CBCAP funding have encouraged this involvement by having parents review curriculum, contribute to newsletters, attend staff meetings, and act as co-facilitators at parenting classes. Contractors provide quality assurance reports to the Department including statistics on numbers and type of contacts, rating of client improvements, and satisfaction data. At the end of the fiscal year, the CBCAP vendor provides a summary of information, including success stories, that are then incorporated into the OCAP report.

CAPIT is provided in-house by the Tuolumne County Department of Social Services. As such, the Differential Response Supervisor and staff review the data through an internal spreadsheet and pull data into the OCAP report. Common trends identified through the data analysis help in setting target areas of focus for the year. CAPIT providers also use protective factor surveys and ACES scores to determine if additional services are needed and to provide more targeted assistance. PSSF is used to assist clients to complete case plans or prevent children from entering care in a family preservation service.

The DSS also ensures effective fiscal accountability for the CBCAP contractor activities by reviewing invoices and communicating regularly with the vendor to discuss service provision. The contractor provides detailed invoices to DSS within 15 calendar days after the conclusion of each month. DSS audits the invoice within 15 days and issues a warrant payable to the service provider for the services rendered in the prior month. The Health and Human Services Agency fiscal department utilizes a spreadsheet for PSSF fiscal oversight, and trains new staff on the spread of PSSF dollars across each program unit. To ensure the funds are spent correctly, staff are required to seek preapproval from a manager to expend PSSF funds; Supervisors and managers review PSSF purchases and staff time studies to ensure proper use of spending.

Process to Ensure Service Providers Track Participation Rates

Providers who contract with the County are required to submit invoices to the County on a schedule agreed upon by their contract, which is most often monthly or quarterly. The invoices identify clients served and in what capacity/what services were provided (secondary and tertiary programs), or in some cases provide specific information on services provided and the general number of participants (primary and secondary programs). For some programs, such as the Emergency Child Care Bridge for foster youth (ECCB), contract agency staff meet

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formally with CWS staff monthly to ensure program integrity, clients' needs are met, and continued program eligibility. Often spreadsheets are utilized to monitor this and other expenditures. Furthermore, programs such as ECCB are audited by CDSS on a schedule, approximately annually, for compliance and success.

CRITICAL INCIDENT REVIEW PROCESS

Tuolumne County periodically is faced with a critical incident such as a fatality or near fatality. In these rare instances, Child Welfare Services (CWS) reports the incident to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). On a quarterly basis, CWS reconciles the data on such cases with CDSS to ensure accuracy. Internally, the case is identified as 'sensitive.' The case is then reviewed by the local Child Death Review Team (CDRT) to determine if the child death/near death could be the result of abuse and/or neglect.

The Tuolumne County Child Death Review Team recently developed an updated Memorandum of Understanding between the various agencies involved in its operation. The purpose of the CDRT is to review suspicious child deaths and facilitate communication and collaboration among those who perform child abuse investigations. The Team encompasses representatives from the Sheriff's Office, including representatives from the Coroner and the Professional Standards Divisions; Sonora Police Department; California Highway Patrol; Probation Department; District Attorney's Office; CWS; Public Health Department; Adventist Health Sonora; Behavioral Health Department; Victim Witness Advocacy; and Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools. The CDRT is responsible for reviewing all suspicious child deaths in a standardized matter and collecting data on all cases reviewed. As CWS is a member of the CDRT, reconciling child death information occurs through the CDRT.

PEER REVIEW RESULTS

Method

The Peer Review process in California allows each county's child welfare and probation departments to perform an in-depth qualitative analysis on a specific focus area or outcome measure. This involves both agencies conducting a quantitative analysis of each federal and state outcome measure and, in partnership with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), selecting the outcome measure requiring closer examination. The Tuolumne County Peer Review was conducted virtually via Zoom from April 30 to May 2, 2024.

Child Welfare chose the Federal Measure S2 (Recurrence of Maltreatment), while Probation selected the Federal Measure P1 (Permanency in 12 months). Peer counties were selected in collaboration with CDSS to conduct the review, based on statewide data identifying counties that consistently perform well on the chosen outcome measure and/or have best practices to share related to the measure.

County	Child Welfare	Probation
Amador	Shannon Diener	-
Colusa	Guadalupe Tinoco	-
Lake	-	Sonia Segoviano
Lassen	-	Brandon Trau
Merced	Bert Navarro	-
Modoc	Camille Young	-
Nevada	-	Karyn Mueller
Siskiyou	Michael Werder	Elizabeth Campanero
Tehama	Michelle Hale	-
Yuba	Slavena Donnahoe	-

The Peer Review opened on the morning of April 30, 2024, with introductions and training. The training included an overview of the C-CFSR process, a description of Tuolumne County, identification of the outcome areas for review, and a discussion of county performance and progress on various outcomes. Participants included CDSS consultants, staff from Social Change Partners (facilitators for the review), and Child Welfare Services (CWS) and Probation staff and administrators. The presentation was followed by training on the interview process and tools for the peer reviewers.

During the three-day review, nine interviews were conducted. Cases were selected by the peer review planning team to highlight both strengths and challenges within the system that contribute to county performance on the outcome measure. CDSS consulted with Tuolumne County before finalizing the cases for peer review.

CDSS provided standardized tools based on a literature review of best practices related to the focus area. Once cases were identified, the primary practitioners (social workers and probation officers) were notified and given the appropriate interview tools to review and prepare. A total of four social workers and one probation officer were interviewed.

After the interviews, peers were given time to debrief. During this debriefing session, they analyzed the interview data to identify common themes regarding the strengths and challenges of the Tuolumne County child
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welfare and probation systems. The top themes were categorized according to the CDSS O&A Debrief form for each measure. Peers collaborated to identify the top themes, which were minimally edited for spelling, identity protection, and grammatical improvement.

Peers were also asked to provide recommendations for improvement. These are summarized in the "Summary of Findings" section that follows.

Focus Areas

Child Welfare: Please see county performance in the Outcomes section of this report for Recurrence of Maltreatment.

Probation: Please see county performance in the Outcomes section of this report for Permanency in 12 months.

Summary of Findings

Peers gathered information and presented their top strengths, challenges, and promising practices to the County. The findings are presented below, aligned with the corresponding debrief domain.

Child Welfare Strengths	
Background	• Worker experience and training ○ Longevity, level of training, experience in different units • Effective Family and Community Engagement ○ Family members, RFAs, community resources
Investigation	• Collaboration and Interagency Coordination ○ Positive relationships with other agencies, including law enforcement, DV ○ ICWA compliance • Resource Accessibility and Staff Skills ○ Bilingual Case Worker ○ Emergency Children's Shelter ○ Knowledge of hotline tool
Maintaining Connections	• Proactive Family Finding ○ Active from the start ○ Support of Seneca ○ Relative engagement
Engagement	• Rapport and Relationship Building ○ Frequent contact, intentional focus on building relationships • Child/Youth Involvement ○ Consult, inform, engage
Assessments and Services	• Effective Service Utilization ○ Knowledge of resources available ○ Accessibility of services ○ Open communication with providers ○ Timeliness of referrals • Addressing Needs of Parents ○ Housing, employment, AOD, transportation ○ Mental/Behavioral Health

	○ Services related to safety plan
Recurrence of Maltreatment	● Effective Safety Planning and Monitoring ○ Plan put in place by family ○ Understanding of triggers and ongoing challenges to look for ● Parental Engagement/Compliance ○ Parental willingness to accept help and participate in services ○ Willingness and ability to protect child
Child Welfare Challenges	
Background	● Staffing and Training Issues ○ Staff turnover, low consistency in staff ○ Lack of fully trained staff, taking on cases prior to training being completed ○ Not a lot of training above the minimum due to time constraints ● Family Engagement and Support ○ Parents refusing to participate or engage ○ Lack of housing and transportation for parents
Investigation	● Data Management and Case Management ○ Not having accurate contact information ○ Unclear about steps for documentation, referral process ● Risk Assessment ○ Agency overriding the SDM recommendation to open a case ○ Unclear about practices to engage parents and encourage participation
Maintaining Connections	● Lack of Effective Engagement ○ No connection/visitation between siblings ○ Lack of follow up after initial contact ● Placement Barriers ○ Unaware of ICPC process – missed placement opportunities ○ Not following parents’ recommendation for placement with family member of choice ○ No family identified as placement option
Engagement	● Procedural Issues ○ Multiple safety plans created ○ Only meeting family at office – never in their home ○ No follow up on housing situation – never confirmed safety of home ○ Caseworker thought parenting classes would be helpful but didn’t recommend them or add them into plan
Assessments and Services	● Untimely Service Delivery and Gaps ○ Gaps between assessment and services provided ○ Medical and dental not up to date, IEP not up to date ○ Assessments not completed – CANS, etc. ● Engagement and Communication Issues ○ Minimal contact with parents, parents’ refusal to sign ROI ○ Not confirming information received, no digging deeper

	○ Lack of knowledge related to the concrete needs of the family ● Policy Non-Compliance ○ SDM being completed at the end of the case in order to close out but not officially completed within 48 hours
Recurrence of Maltreatment	● Data Management and Information Gaps ○ Unclear if recurrence of maltreatment happened ○ No knowledge of family demographics ○ No knowledge of safety risk factors was addressed ○ Open referrals at time of second referral being received
Probation Strengths	
Background	● Consistency and Continuity ○ Single PO involved from start to finish ● Manageable Caseload Size ○ Able to be attentive to each case ● Office and Juvenile Hall are connected ○ Allows for greater opportunity to engage and support youth with increased access/availability
Maintaining Connections	● Proactive Family Finding ○ Done at start of case and throughout ● Youth Voice and Choice ○ Youth included in decision making, opportunities to self advocate
Engagement	● Youth-centered decision making ○ Involvement, awareness, inclusion ● Effective service delivery ○ No gaps in services ○ Case planning starting immediately ○ CFT Meeting utilization ● Communication and Interaction ○ Age appropriate conversations with youth ○ Use of motivational interviewing
Assessments and Services	● Comprehensive Service Provision ○ Local services ○ Continuation of services, no gaps ○ Accessibility ○ Wide variety of services ● Community Engagement ○ Youth has opportunities for employment, volunteering, recreational activities, ILP ● Relationship/Rapport
Placement Matching	● Stability in Local Placement ○ Placement in the community ○ Multiple options for placement ○ Low number of total placements ● Supportive Programs and Transition Planning ○ Transition to SILP ○ CFTs every 3 months

	○ Alternative Juvenile Hall Program
Permanency	● Youth Empowerment and Inclusion ○ Appropriate discussions ○ Youth offered permanency choices ○ Provided understanding of circumstances and limitations ● Active Case Management ○ Monthly contact ○ Placement reassessments ○ Permanency conversations
Probation Challenges	
Background	● Lack of understanding about what services were provided by Child Welfare prior to Probation status ● Program/Treatment Timelines often do not match permanency Timelines ○ Treatment can be 18 months, permanency goal of 12 months, etc.
Maintaining Connections	● Legal and Custodial Barriers ○ Includes instances where restraining/no contact orders are present ○ Parent incarceration
Engagement	● Engagement challenges – Youth and Parents ○ Unwillingness to participate ○ Negative feedback from parents about the process and/or decisions made ○ Lack of communication after multiple attempts to reach out by Probation Officer
Assessments and Services	● Timing of Support Services ○ Medical and Dental services - timeliness ○ ILP offered late in case rather than at time of placement
Placement Matching	● Behavioral Issues and Placement Stability ○ Disruptions in placement ○ Parents lack training and experience to support youth with high needs – resulted in removal notice ● Educational Disruptions ○ High number of placements lead to frequent change of schools
Permanency	● Youth was kept on Probation after 18 years old despite not reoffending

Child Welfare – Promising Practices from Peers

Amador County

- Utilize SDM early and often and follow recommendations
- Ensure that when entering referrals, the date of occurrence is entered, as accurately as possible
- Associate referrals
- Utilize a RED Team style staffing
- Engage families even on Evaluate Out referrals; send a letter with resources
- Utilize community partners to provide in-home services

- Provide safety tools to families to help reduce risk (lock boxes, trigger locks, etc.)
- Refer families to services and help them get engaged
- Reach out to extended family members to engage relatives in early safety planning

Colusa County

- Training
 - With vertical case management, all staff members are trained in all areas. New workers typically begin by shadowing an experienced social worker for about five weeks. They complete Core Training and gradually transition into case handling and investigations. Supervisors respond to on-call cases with new employees for the first few months. The supervisor has 20 years of experience.
- Community Engagement
 - Monthly interdisciplinary meetings involve school representatives, law enforcement agencies, community partners, behavioral health, and child welfare. A list of minors at risk is discussed, and agencies collaborate to develop a prevention plan prior to CPS involvement.
- Retention
 - County is supportive of employees pursuing Master's degree and licensing hours
 - Supervision constantly available
 - Flexible schedule
 - Caseloads are manageable
 - Social services assistants are able to provide a good amount help

Merced County

- Immediate Referrals
 - All Immediate referrals are staffed with the supervisor while the social worker is out in the field prior to leaving the investigation
- Induction Training:
 - 2-weeks of class room training
 - 5-weeks of Emergency Response mentorship training
 - 5-weeks of specific unit mentorship training
- Engaging Fathers
 - Father Engagement Training: All Dad's Matter Support Group- In-house program established by our Employment and Training Dept- Help with Case Plans, connecting to community services, 1st time Dad Boot Camp, help with restraining orders, child support, and criminal history. Also offer support group in our local jail.
- Social Worker 1's
 - Utilized for Case Management
 - Family Finding Worker
 - Placement Specialist

Modoc County

- Staff Training & On Boarding
 - Six-month training checklist with shadowing; social workers complete Core Training before acquiring any caseload
 - Monthly staffing reviews sections of Division 31 regulations, All County Letters, and mandatory components
 - Prevention services training ensures all staff are introduced to and trained in all resources within the county, and provided with information and resources that can be used outside the county

- Supervision
 - Weekly individual staffing between social workers and supervisors
 - Group staffing sessions once a week, allowing social workers to glean information from each other
 - Subrecipient monitoring of differential response helps determine if contracted services are providing adequate services to decrease the recurrence of maltreatment
 - Supervisor checklist for critical review, including Safe Measures components
 - Program manager reviews three closed referrals each month to identify strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement
 - All "evaluate out" referrals are reviewed by both the supervisor and the program manager to ensure appropriate decisions and to identify any missed opportunities for offering prevention services

Siskiyou County

- Recurrence of Maltreatment
 - Voluntary Family Maintenance (VFM)
 - Utilizing Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings
 - Teaching families about safety and risk
 - Demonstrating how to implement strategies to prevent a removal
 - Community Collaboration
 - Referrals to Behavioral Health Services, Substance Use Services and Housing Services
 - Connecting with Siskiyou County Office of Education
 - Referrals to post-adoption services
 - Utilizing Safety Planning
 - Utilizing Interagency Placement Committee
 - MOU with Behavioral Health Services, Office of Education, Juvenile Probation, Child Welfare and Regional Center
- Immediate Family Finding
 - Inviting extended families to meetings
 - Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings
 - Behavioral Health Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings
- Youth engagement
 - Who they would want support from
 - How they would achieve that support
- In house team staffing's
- Transparent conversations with family

Tehama County

- Referral Entry and Association
 - Department established process for handling multiple open referrals and criteria for when this process should be applied.
 - Substantiate one on the totality of all referral and investigation information; disposition other as inconclusive.
 - Same perp, victim, and allegation
 - Received within 30-days
- Trained/Re-Trained on Screening
 - All SWs trained/retrained on the hotline tool
 - Collateral contact when non-mandated reporters make reports on open referrals as opposed to

creating a new referral and associating.

- Staffing
 - New Hire Training and Onboarding
 - Created Training Supervisor position
 - Created Robust Internal Training Program (4-6 months)
- Retention
 - Flexibility in position or job duties to allow people to go through the Title IV-E Masters program
 - Encouraged existing Bachelors level staff to go through the Masters program (existing staff within CWS as well as other county programs)
 - Deep Dive into Morale and Culture

Yuba County

- Onboarding for new hires:
 - Training supervisor position (+other duties assigned)
 - Training binder with required/mandatory trainings
 - 2-3 months of training including CORE before getting a full caseload
 - CWS/CMS training
 - Continue to shadow when possible
- Documentation:
 - Notes taking – talk to type, dictation, etc.
 - Develop templates/guides for home visits and/or child interviews
- Morale boost:
 - Monthly/Holiday Potlucks
 - Secondary trauma

Probation - Promising Practices from Peers

Lake County

- Early Intervention
- Service Referrals
 - Family Wrap
 - Family Wrap Pro
 - Monthly check-ins with Family WRAP team
- Facilitate CFT meetings
 - Assist youth and family with services
 - Maintain connections weekly with youth
 - Bi-weekly check ins with WRAP around team
- Maintaining Connections
 - Monthly in person visits (more if needed)
 - Zoom calls or phone calls between minor and PO
 - Phone calls or texts with minor's parent/guardian
 - CFT's monthly or bi-weekly (depending on if there are concerns)

Nevada County

- Ongoing case management:
 - Initial Risk Assessment which provides their risk of recidivism
 - Comprehensive assessment to determine minor's strengths and weaknesses?
 - Follow up on family findings.

- Revisit people who were once not in a position to take the minor.
- Foster Care Services
 - Submit referral for ILP services to Nevada County Superintendent's Office Foster Youth Services. They are one of my greatest resources.
- Incentives for engagement
 - Dinner gift cards, movie tickets, local gift cards, etc.
- Resources
 - Join the Northern California Placement Committee (NCPC), connect with other Probation Officers at trainings. Instructors frequently give their contact information out.
- Have an open line of communication with Child Welfare for dual jurisdiction cases. Do some background research on case
- Opening and Closing a Case
 - Criteria? Try to get youth off probation as soon as possible. The average time of a probationer is 11 months (320 days). Median is 9 months (259 days). 85% of the juvenile probationers do not reoffend (meaning, once case is closed, they do not return)

Lassen County

- Foster Youth Services
 - ILP Program: Assisting foster youth with services and skills needed for success.
 - AB 12: Providing extended support to eligible youth transitioning into adulthood.
- Truancy
 - Parent, student, and school engagement.
 - Educating parents and students of the effects of absenteeism and the correlation to deviant behavior.
 - Behavioral interventions.
 - Home visits
 - Referring families in need to community services
- Lassen Intervention (Stronger Families Program)
 - Family support through education in emotion/anger management and social emotional learning. Empowers parent/youth with productive communication skills, life building tools and supports justice impacted families.
- Wraparound
 - Strength based planning team engaging with youth and their families.
 - Building on individual and family strengths, identifying needs, and creating individual family plans to achieve safe and stable family unit.
 - Promoted family involvement and voice in goals.
 - Community Agency involvement; schools, Probation CWS, Public Health, Behavioral Health

Siskiyou County

- Staff Support
 - Ongoing case planning between the placement officer and the supervising placement officer.
 - The youth and family interact with both the placement officer and the supervising placement officer.
- On Going Case Management
 - Frequent contacts with the youth via text, facetime, calls, in person visits, and community events.
 - Multiple ILP services available
- Educational Support

- Use of Interagency Placement Committee
- Involving the Foster and Homeless Youth Program Director and Office of Education representative.
- Developing relationships with local schools
- Use of truancy officer.
- Face to face meetings with principal and support staff on youth's goals.
- Engagement With Youth And Family
 - Use of community partners to encourage the family to remain engaged and feel supported. (First Five Siskiyou and tribe)
 - Use of incentives such as gift cards

OUTCOME DATA MEASURES

The Outcome Data Measures are state and federal standards used to assess the performance of Child Welfare and Probation agencies at both county and state levels. They address the topics that concern the public as well as the Child Welfare and Probation Agencies.

To evaluate Tuolumne County's performance against national performance, Tuolumne County relies on reports generated by the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP). This project is a collaboration between the University of California at Berkeley (UCB) and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). The necessary data for these reports is directly sourced from the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS).

The charts provided for the Federal measures with standards depict the performance of Tuolumne County Child Welfare Services (CWS) and Probation from the baseline of the last County Self-Assessment (CSA) in Quarter 3, 2013, up to Quarter 3, 2023, which is the designated time frame for this CSA. County-specific reports, compiled and issued quarterly by the CCWIP, serve as official resources for assessing performance. Tuolumne County maintains a robust quality improvement program and disseminates monthly reports to all managers and supervisors to continually monitor performance. These reports cover federal measures as well as other indicators like the timeliness of response to reports and caseworker visits.

For this section, data is derived from the Quarter 3 (Q3) 2023 Interval Berkeley Data Extract dated January 2024. The quarterly reports scrutinize year-over-year trends from October to September and provide insights into specific yearly intervals. The following tables offer an overview of the measures and their respective performance for both Tuolumne County CWS and Probation. Each measure is analyzed, presenting a clear definition and performance assessment for both CWS and Probation when applicable.

When analyzing data from smaller counties, like Tuolumne, it is important to note that small numbers of individuals can significantly impact percentages causing data to swing dramatically. Additionally, in relatively small populations, such as children in foster care, breaking data out by age or ethnicity may not be useful because the number of individuals in the various “cells” may be 0, 1, or 2. Therefore, no meaningful trends or conclusions can be drawn. For some of the Outcome Measures below, the data is not broken out further for such reasons.

There are very few Probation-supervised youth in foster care, and this results in small sample sizes, making much of the data not meaningful for evaluating the overall program. The number of children in foster care under the supervision of the Probation agency has declined over recent years, which is a positive reflection of the County’s efforts to serve youth in their homes and to achieve permanency through an array of services. However, the small sample sizes and instances where data is not applicable present limitations in drawing broad conclusions from the available data. This section will discuss the available data with these limitations in mind.

Tuolumne County C-CFSR Outcome Measures National Performance Summary Table CWS, Q3 2023

	Measure Number	Measure Description	CWS Performance	National Performance	Performance Met
Safety	4-S1	Maltreatment In Foster Care	0.00	No more than 9.07 victimizations per 100,000 days in care	Met
	4-S2	Recurrence Of Maltreatment	13.3%	No more than 9.7%	Not Met
Permanency	4-P1	Permanency In 12 Months (Entering Foster Care)	25.7%	At or above 35.2%	Not Met
	4-P2	Permanency In 12 Months (In Care 12-23 Months)	72.7%	At or above 43.8%	Met
	4-P3	Permanency In 12 Months (In Care 24 Months Or More)	82.4%	At or above 37.3%	Met
	4-P4	Re-Entry To Foster Care In 12 Months	14.8%	At or below 5.6%	Not Met
	4-P5	Placement Stability	3.87	No more than 4.48 moves per 1,000 days in foster care	Met
Timely Response	2B	Timely Response (Immediate Response Compliance)	80.0%	At or above 90%	Not Met
	2B	Timely Response (10-Day Response Compliance)	79.2%	At or above 90%	Not Met
Monthly Visits	2F	Monthly Visits (Out of Home)	97.0%	At least 95%	Met
	2F	Monthly Visits in Residence (Out of Home)	65.1%	At least 50%	Met

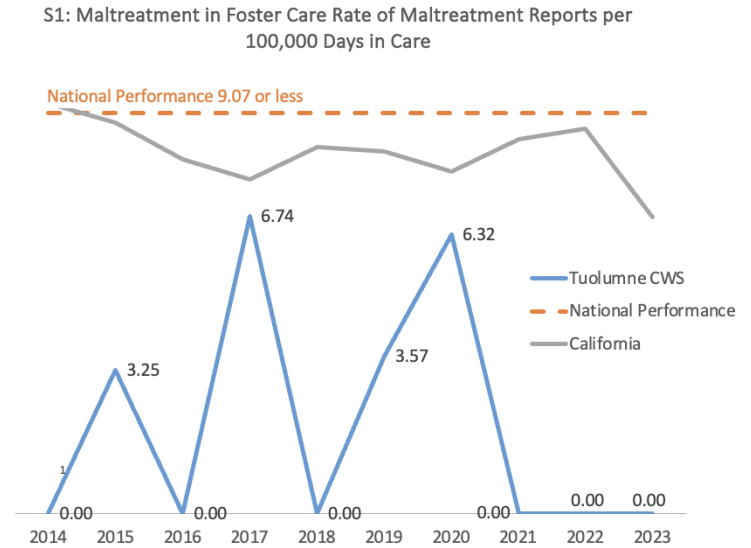
Tuolumne County C-CFSR Outcome Measures National Performance Summary Table Probation, Q3 2023

	Measure Number	Measure Description	Probation Performance	National Performance	Performance Met
Safety	4-S1	Maltreatment In Foster Care	0.00	No more than 9.07 victimizations per 100,000 days in care	Met
Permanency	4-P1	Permanency In 12 Months (Entering Foster Care)	0.00%	At or above 35.2%	Not Met
	4-P2	Permanency In 12 Months (In Care 12-23 Months)	--	At or above 43.8%	--
	4-P3	Permanency In 12 Months (In Care 24 Months Or More)	0.00%	At or above 37.3%	Not Met
	4-P4	Re-Entry To Foster Care In 12 Months	--	At or below 5.6%	--
	4-P5	Placement Stability	--	No more than 4.48 moves per 1,000 days in foster care	--
Monthly Visits	2F	Monthly Visits (Out of Home)	100%	At least 95%	Met
	2F	Monthly Visits in Residence (Out of Home)	100%	At least 50%	Met

S1 – Maltreatment in Foster Care

This measure is defined as “Of all children in care during the 12-month period, what is the rate of victimization per day of foster care?” It is expressed as a rate per 100,000 days of foster care combined for all the children considered in foster care during the reporting period. The national performance for this measure is 9.07 per 100,000 days.

Child Welfare Analysis: Available data indicates that Tuolumne County has consistently met the national performance for Q3 over the past ten years. In 2023, Tuolumne County had 0.00 reports per 100,000 days in foster care, falling well below the national performance of 9.07 per 100,000 days. The last CSA reported that Tuolumne County has continually outperformed the national performance. The trend has fluctuated since 2014 from a high of 6.74 and a low of 0.00, but the County consistently meets the national performance. While Tuolumne County is currently meeting the national performance of 9.07 or less, CWS will continue to monitor for maltreatment in foster care.



Ethnic Group	Maltreatment Reports per 100,000 days	
	2019	2023
Black	0.00	0.00
White	M	0.00
Latino	M	0.00
Asian/PI	0.00	0.00
Native Amer	0.00	0.00
Missing	0.00	0.00
Total	M	0.00

Age Group	Maltreatment Reports per 100,000 days	
	2019	2023
Under 1	0.00	0.00
1 - 2	M	0.00
3 - 5	M	0.00
6 - 10	M	0.00
11 - 15	0.00	0.00
16 - 17	0.00	0.00
Total	M	0.00

Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved 4/29/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

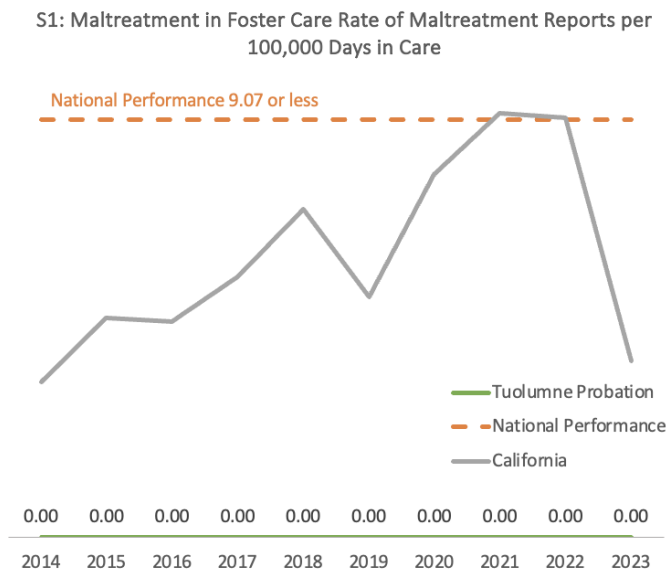
In examining the data by ethnicity and age group, there have been minimal changes between 2019, which was the period during the last CSA, and 2023. Most ethnic and age categories show no maltreatment reports recorded for both years. However, some data points are indicated as "M," signifying masked data due to confidentiality measures. Because there are so few incidents and children involved in this measure, there is no discernable pattern, age group, or child characteristic that would inform a policy or practice change.

The County is performing better than the national performance and attributes this to several key factors. First, Tuolumne County has an emphasis on placing children with relatives and providing comprehensive education and support to foster parents. The Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) and continued use of an emergency resource shelter have improved matching processes and ensured that only high-quality caregivers are selected. Additionally, through IV-E training dollars, the County has contracted with a therapist to offer specialized

training for caregivers, especially those dealing with complex behaviors. Furthermore, the use of Child and Family Team Meetings to match children with the right placements, helps reduce maltreatment and contributes to the County's strong performance.

Probation Analysis: Tuolumne County Probation met the national performance for the Q3 2023 reporting period. Trend analysis indicates that Tuolumne County is consistently meeting the national performance. The number of children experiencing maltreatment by any perpetrator while in foster care over the past ten years has remained flat, with no children experiencing maltreatment. During this reporting period, the rate was 0 children per 100,000 days, which is below than the National Performance of 9.07. The relatively few children in care and the relative infrequency of maltreatment in care, makes it unlikely there will be an occurrence in any given year.

Appropriate placements focus on the safety, stability, and well-being of the probation youth, while satisfying the expectations of existing laws and the Court and providing for community safety. Due to there being only one instance of maltreatment for one youth over the most recent five-year span, it is not possible to analyze trends or assess disproportionality based on age or race.

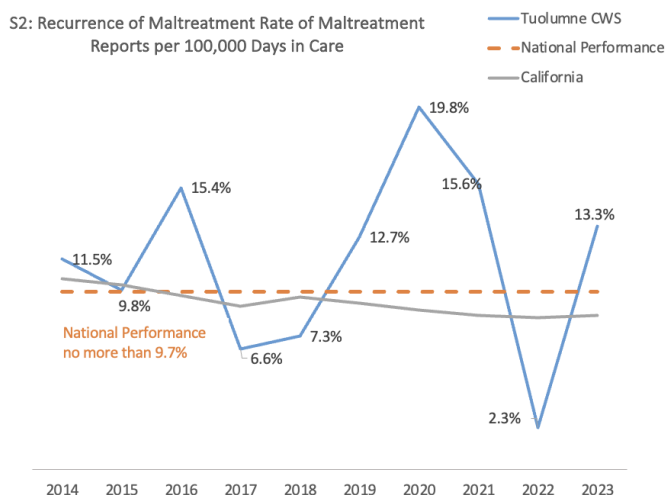


S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment (CWS Only)

This measure is defined as “Of all children with a substantiated allegation during the 12-month period, what percent had another substantiated allegation within 12 months?” The national performance rate for 4-S2 is less than or equal to 9.7%.

In Q3 2023, Tuolumne County did not meet the national performance for Measure S2, with 13.3% of children experiencing a recurrence of maltreatment. Over the past decade, Tuolumne County has frequently had recurrence rates that exceed 9.7%, though there have been fluctuations. Specifically, in 2017, 2018, and 2022, the County met the national performance with recurrence rates below 9.7%. This measure influences entry and in-care rates, as shown by trends over the years.

As noted above, the recurrence of maltreatment in Tuolumne County has fluctuated significantly, with a notable decline of 17.5% from its highest point in 2020 (19.8%) to the lowest in 2022 (2.3%). The small population of children in care means that a single case or a sibling group can significantly impact the data. For



example, one or two cases can swing the data by multiple percentage points, influencing whether the County meets the national performance. The data shows that the high figures in 2020 and 2021 could be attributed to COVID-19 increased stressors, which could increase the likelihood of recurrence. The 1-year percent change shows a significant negative trend of -486.7%, and the 5-year percent change is -81.5%.

Improper association of referrals has inflated the numbers for S2, as two reports for the same incident were logged as a recurrence rather than an association. This misclassification has impacted the County's performance metrics, contributing to its numbers being above the national indicator. Data entry problems related to high staff turnover also impacted the performance metrics. Additionally, drug abuse and homelessness among parents are often confounding issues that families face, leading to children re-entering care when parents struggle with these challenges.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Children with recurrence	15	33	19	M	12
Children with no recurrence	103	134	103	86	78

Oct – Sept 2022	Black	White	Latino	Asian/PI	Native Amer	Missing
Children with recurrence	0	M	M	.	M	M
Children with no recurrence	M	37	16	.	M	23

Oct – Sept 2022	Under 1 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 17
Children with recurrence	M	M	M	M	0
Children with no recurrence	18	18	27	14	1

Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved 4/29/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

The data for the most recent year broken down by age shows that the highest recurrence rates are among children under 1 year and those aged 6-10. Proportionally, children under one year are most at risk. Although more children in the 6-10 age range experienced repeat maltreatment, these six children span five different ages, compared to three children all under 1 year. A review of recurrence cases showed no systemic pattern, with varied factors such as failed safety plans, court-ordered visitation against recommendations, and out-of-county case transfers.

Between 2018 and 2022, the number of children with recurrence of maltreatment has varied, with 15 in 2018, 33 in 2019, 19 in 2020, data masked (M) in 2021, and 12 in 2022. Ethnic breakdowns for the period of January 2022 to December 2022 show that Black and Asian/PI children had no reported recurrences, and data for Native Americans and some other groups is masked. Among White and Latino children, the recurrence data is partially masked, with a noted higher recurrence among White children. Age breakdowns show that children 11-15 years and those aged 16-17 had the highest non-recurrence rates, while the recurrence data is largely masked for other age groups.

Given the small number of cases, caution must be exercised when interpreting these trends. The small sample size can cause significant fluctuations in the data, making it challenging to identify definitive patterns. Despite these challenges, Tuolumne County has taken steps to address recurrence through enhanced support services. Programs like the Foster Parent Liaison (currently vacant) provide additional resources and support to foster parents, while efforts to match children with appropriate placements through Child and Family Teams and

consultation aim to reduce the risk of recurrence. Continued monitoring and targeted interventions will be essential in maintaining and improving these outcomes.

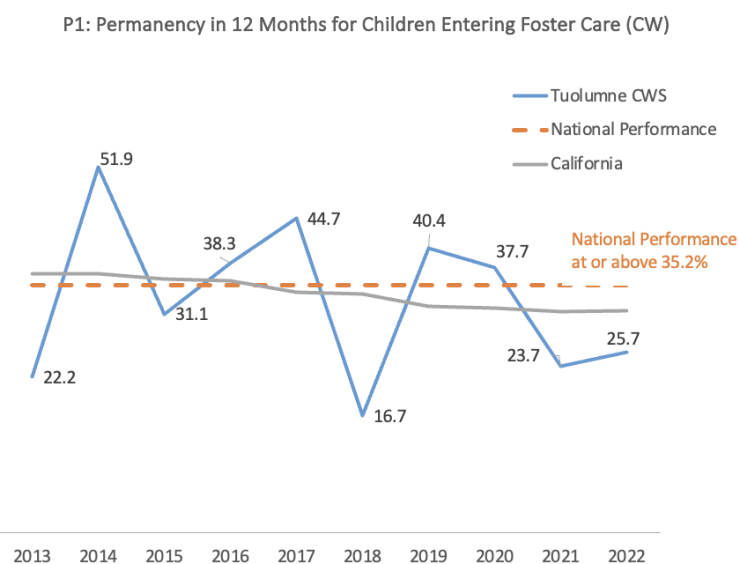
Tuolumne County's increased focus on prevention efforts, described throughout this CSA, was elevated as a strength during stakeholder engagement. Expanded prevention efforts are likely to have a positive impact on the S2 measure.

P1 – Permanency in 12 months for Children Entering Foster Care

This measure is defined as “Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period, what percent discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering foster care?” The national performance for this measure is set at or above 35.2%.

Child Welfare Analysis: Tuolumne County did not meet the national performance during the current Q3 reporting period, and it remains a persistent challenge. Over the last ten years performance on P1 has fluctuated.

The indicator showed significant fluctuations, ranging from a low of 16.7% in 2018 to a peak of 51.9% in 2014, with recent performance levels between 23.7% in 2021 and 25.7% in 2022. There were 35 children with entries during this Q3 time period. Children are more likely to remain in care at 12 months than to achieve permanency. When interpreting the results, it's important to exercise caution and make comparisons with care, particularly due to the presence of "M" or masked data, which may limit the depth of analysis and affect the accuracy of conclusions drawn.



Permanency Type by Age Group	Age Group/Year (#)									
	Under 1 - 2		3 - 5		6 - 10		11 - 15		16 - 17	
	18	22	18	22	18	22	18	22	18	22
Reunified	M	M	M	M	0	M	M	M	0	M
Adopted	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guardianship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aged out/Emancipated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Still in care	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	0

Permanency Type by Ethnic Group	Ethnic Group/Year (#)											
	Black		White		Latino		Asian/PI		Native Amer		Missing	
	18	22	18	22	18	22	18	22	18	22	18	22
Reunified	0	0	M	M	M	M	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adopted	0	0	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guardianship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aged out/ Emancipated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Still in care	M	0	25	20	M	M	0	0	0	0	0	0

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Breaking out the data by exit type shows that reunification is the most common type of Permanency achieved within 12 months and, in some instances, adoption. The last two years indicate that proportionally fewer children are reunifying than in prior years. One issue identified was that the Court often extends reunification beyond 12 months, and most hearings are contested, causing further delays. However, Tuolumne County has seen some positive changes since 2022. The Court began contracting with law firms that represent parents, leading to greater consistency with attorneys who are more familiar with child welfare cases. This shift has resulted in fewer contested hearings and has facilitated better engagement with parents. During the case review, it was found that not contesting hearings actively and having consistent attorneys make it easier for parents to engage constructively. Parents have been more bought in and ready to make changes, recognizing that the child welfare system is able to provide constructive and positive support, which has been crucial to making improvements. As a result, Tuolumne County is starting to see better outcomes and improvements in achieving permanency within 12 months.

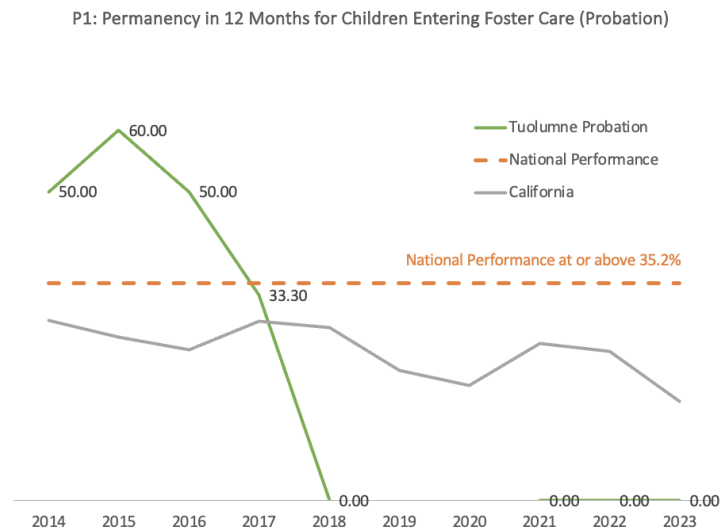
The improvement in performance since the baseline could also be attributed to several other key factors. Tuolumne County has benefited from the Continuum of Care Reform efforts, including the new Short-Term Residential Treatment Program (STRTP) license accreditation to meet mental health standards and implement trauma-informed care. The Family First Prevention Services Act Part IV, which requires a Qualified Individual (QI) to approve of any placements in a STRTP, and the overall decrease in the number of youths in placement have positively impacted performance. Additionally, the County's increased use of Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs) and training of social workers on family-finding processes has improved the matching and quality of caregivers. The QI's approval of STRTP placements and the support from relatives caring for children with high needs have also been beneficial.

The prior CSA and recent process updates identified hearing delays due to continuances and contested hearings as negatively impacting P1 performance. These delays have hindered the ability to achieve reunification within 12 months. However, as stated above, recent improvements have been noted due to increased consistency with attorneys, resulting in fewer contested hearings. The Court's decision to extend reunification services beyond 12 months, contrary to the CWS' recommendations in some cases, remains a challenge, although the Court remains committed to family success over meeting timelines.

Additionally, challenges related to the Dependency Drug Court can impact permanency; while CWS has shifted towards developing behaviorally based case plans, DDC case plans often require a prescribed set of services that are not tailored to individual parents' needs. There is a need for more trauma-informed services and

training, as less effective services can negatively impact a parent's ability to reunify and maintain the family without relapsing. Various stakeholders have mentioned the need for better and more timely access to substance abuse treatment and mental health services; delays in appointments and/or establishing eligibility, as well as a lack of psychiatric services were noted as barriers.

The CFTMs are valuable for helping families, allowing their voices to be heard, and ensuring case plans align with CFT discussions. However, stakeholders raised concerns about the consistency and frequency of these meetings. Tuolumne County has a dedicated CFT Facilitator position that is currently vacant. Not currently having a CFT facilitator seems to be a contributing factor to challenges with CFTM scheduling and consistency. Despite these challenges, feedback indicates that when CFTMs do happen, they are highly effective. Participants appreciated the structured format, respect shown during meetings, and the opportunity for everyone to speak their minds. The peer review identified several potential improvements to CFTMs, such as utilizing them more effectively to teach families about safety and risk and demonstrating strategies to prevent removal.



Probation Analysis: During the Q3 2023 timeframe, Tuolumne County did not meet the national performance of 35.2% as no youth achieved permanency within 12 months of entering foster care. The Probation Department has not met the national performance since 2017. Since 2018, there have been no children who exited to permanency within 12 months. However, this measure was not applicable in 2019 and 2020. Moreover, it is important to note that Tuolumne County’s Probation Department oversees a relatively small number of youth in care, and juvenile crime rates have decreased over time.

Given the small number of cases, any single instance can significantly impact performance on this measure. Additionally, Extended Foster Care (EFC) affects performance on permanency measures since EFC is not considered permanency. Often, older youths who enter foster care choose to remain in care rather than pursue timely reunification to achieve their goals and benefit from EFC services. Additionally, many of the youth in care have complex needs that require treatment for longer than 12 months and/or have legal barriers to reunification (e.g. a restraining order). As a result, achieving permanency in 12 months continues to be a challenge for the Probation Department

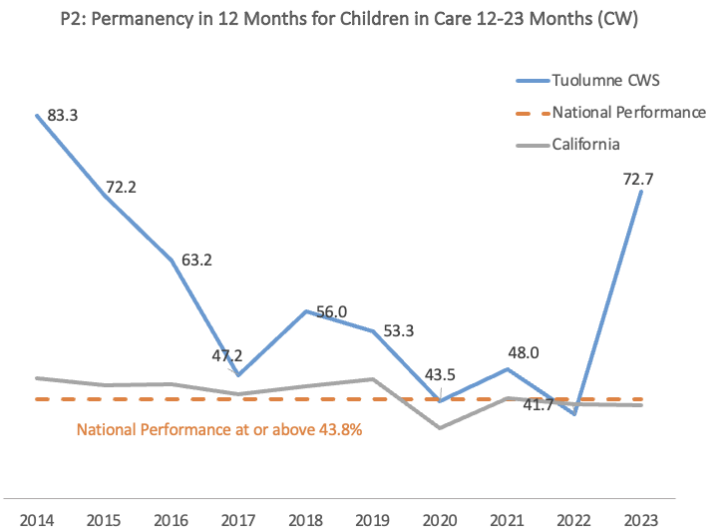
Due to the relatively low number of children entering foster care during a 12-month period over the span of five years—consistently under 10—it remains challenging to analyze trends or make meaningful comparisons regarding disproportionality based on age or race. The low rate of youth in foster care reflects Probation’s effective use of strategies and services to reduce entries, as discussed throughout this CSA.

P2 – Permanency in 12 months for children in Foster Care 12-23 months

This measure is defined as “Of all children in foster care on the first day of the 12-month period who had been in foster care (in that episode) between 12 and 23 months, what percent discharged from foster care to

permanency within 12 months of the first day of the 12-month period?” The national performance for this measure is greater than or equal to 43.8%.

Child Welfare Analysis: During the most recent reporting period, 22 children were in care for 12-23 months. While Tuolumne County has historically performed well on this measure, consistently exceeding the national performance of 43.8%, there was a recent decline in 2022, with performance dropping to 41.7%, which is 2.1% below the national performance. However, Tuolumne County’s performance significantly improved in 2023, reaching 72.7%, well above the national performance and even surpassing pre-2017 rates. In 2014, Tuolumne County's performance was 83.3%, significantly above the national performance of 43.8% and the California average of 46.7%. This performance declined to 72.2% in 2015 and continued to decrease to 47.2% in 2017. There was a slight recovery to 56.0% in 2018, but the performance fluctuated slightly before dropping to its lowest point of 41.7% in 2022. The most recent data from 2023 shows a substantial recovery to 72.7%.



Overall trends show that children are less likely to remain in care and more likely to enter adoption or guardianship. This data overall raises two issues: the decline in exits to permanency for children over 12 months in the last two years and more specifically, the lack of reunifications after 12 months in the last two years. In a review of some of the children still in care, the County identified that it tends to be children with behavioral and mental health challenges that are less likely to achieve permanency.

The tables below contain data broken out by age and/or ethnic group. When interpreting the results, it's important to exercise caution and make comparisons with care, particularly due to the presence of "M" or masked data, which may limit the depth of analysis and affect the accuracy of conclusions drawn. Due to the small numbers in each cell when breaking out the data by age or ethnicity, it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions.

Age Group	Age Group/Year (#)									
	Under 1 - 2		3 - 5		6 - 10		11 - 15		16 - 17	
	18	23	18	23	18	23	18	23	18	23
Reunified	M	0	0	0	M	0	0	0	0	0
Adopted	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Guardianship	0	0	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aged out/Emancipated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Still in care	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M

Ethnic Group	Ethnic Group/Year (#)											
	Black		White		Latino		Asian/PI		Native Amer		Missing	
	18	23	18	23	18	23	18	23	18	23	18	23
Reunified	0	M	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adopted	0	0	M	14	M	M	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guardianship	0	0	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aged out/ Emancipated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Still in care	M	M	M	M	M	M	0	0	0	M	0	0

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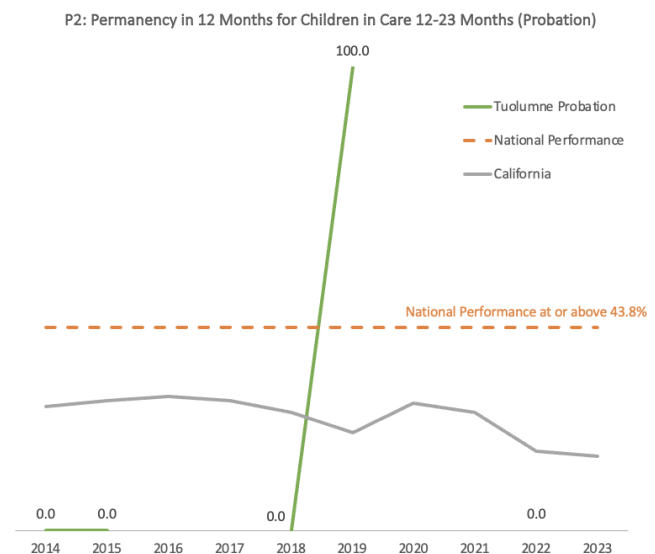
Tuolumne County Child Welfare Services has consistently met or performed just below the national performance demonstrating a strong commitment to permanency. However, a slight decline in Measure 4-P2 performance was observed from 2020-2022, which might have been influenced by factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the exact cause remains under investigation, the additional workload associated with the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) may also be a contributing factor impacting this performance. The requirements of CFTMs, securing home-based placements for children with complex mental health needs, and aligning RFA with adoption processes could be impacting social workers' ability to achieve permanency for children and youth.

Several factors may contribute to the success of Measure 4-P2. First, the revision of the CFT policy, including to incorporate pre-placement CFT meetings, has brought about increased organization and structure within CWS. Additionally, the enactment of AB 2083 has played a pivotal role by facilitating the establishment of the Children's System of Care (CSOC) Memorandum of Understanding and the Interagency Leadership Team, fostering collaborative efforts among various agencies.

The Court's approach to extending services for families plays a significant role in meeting this measure. The Court tends to avoid terminating services at Family Reunification (FR) or other stages unless absolutely necessary. If cases progress to FR, the measure is met. The Court often extends the timeline to 18 months for families demonstrating effort and making progress, allowing them additional time to show improvement and achieve reunification.

Probation Analysis: This measure was applicable in 2014, 2015, 2018, 2019, and 2022, but was not applicable during the Q3 2023, 2021, 2020, 2017, and 2016 reporting periods. When there is performance data, Probation does not meet the national performance for this measure. However, this measure has consistently had only one youth each year who met the definition of this population (denominator), making the data not meaningful because the resulting percentage of youth exiting within 12 months is either 0% or 100%. The only trend that can be identified is that few youth who enter care stay longer than 12 months.

Children did not exit to adoption or guardianship during the most recent 5-year period and only exited to reunification during one reporting period. The children still in care often require more prolonged treatment due to the nature of the offense.

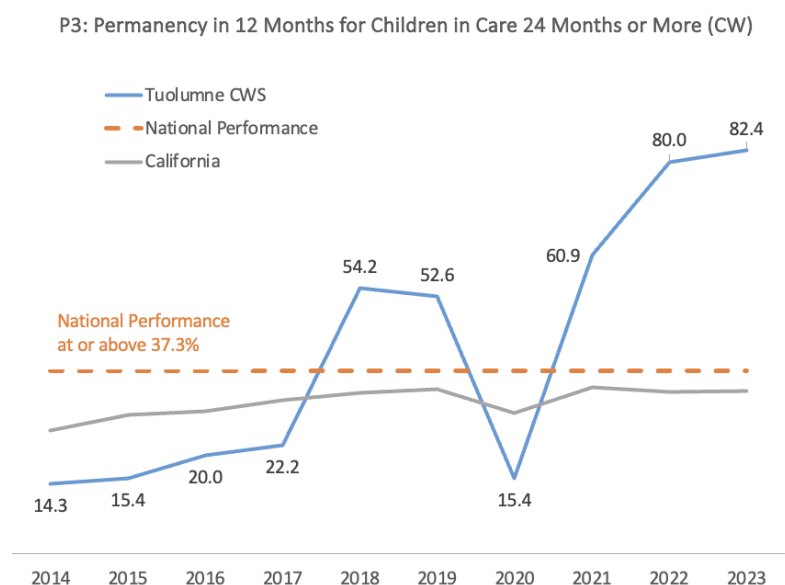


P3 – Permanency in 12 months for Children in Foster Care 24 months or more

This measure is defined as “Of all children in foster care on the first day of a 12- month period, who had been in foster care (in that episode) for 24 months or more, what percent discharged to permanency within 12 months of the first day of the 12-month period?” The national performance for this measure is greater than or equal to 37.3%.

Child Welfare Analysis: From 2014 to 2023, Tuolumne County's performance on the P3 measure has experienced significant fluctuations. Initially, the performance was consistently below the national performance of 37.3%, with notable lows in 2014, 2015, and 2017. However, there was a substantial improvement in 2018 and 2019, during which time the County's performance significantly exceeded the national performance.

Despite a sharp decline in 2020 during the COVID pandemic, when County performance dropped below the national performance, the County has shown a remarkable recovery in subsequent years. In 2020, Tuolumne County brought the adoption process in-house, which involved a significant learning curve and greatly impacted performance. By 2021, performance improved dramatically, and in 2022 (80.0%) and 2023 (82.4%), Tuolumne CWS achieved its highest rates of permanency within 12 months. The County's performance was 42.7 points above the national performance in 2022 and 45.1 points above it in 2023. The County's performance also far surpassed Tuolumne County 2023 CSA



California's performance and, in 2023, represented the highest performance in this quarter. These trends suggest that while Tuolumne County has faced challenges in maintaining consistent performance, recent years have seen significant improvements.

In 2023, there were 17 children in care for 24 months or more. Most of the children who exited foster care exited to permanency through adoption; no children reunified. This trend is consistent across both 2018 and 2023, although much of the data is masked due to confidentiality or small sample sizes. These same trends were seen in the last CSA.

Age Group	Under 1 - 2		3 - 5		6 - 10		11 - 15		16 - 17	
	18	23	18	23	18	23	18	23	18	23
Exited to reunification	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Exited to adoption	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	0	M
Excited to guardianship	0	0	0	0	0	0	M	0	0	0
Excited to non-permanency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Still in care	0	0	M	0	M	M	M	M	M	M

Ethnic Group	Black		White		Latino		Asian/PI		Native Amer		Missing	
	18	23	18	23	18	23	18	23	19	23	18	23
Exited to reunification	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Exited to adoption	0	M	M	M	M	M	0	0	M	0	0	0
Excited to guardianship	0	0	0	0	M	0	0	0	M	0	0	0
Excited to non-permanency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Still in care	0	0	M	M	M	M	M	0	M	0	0	0

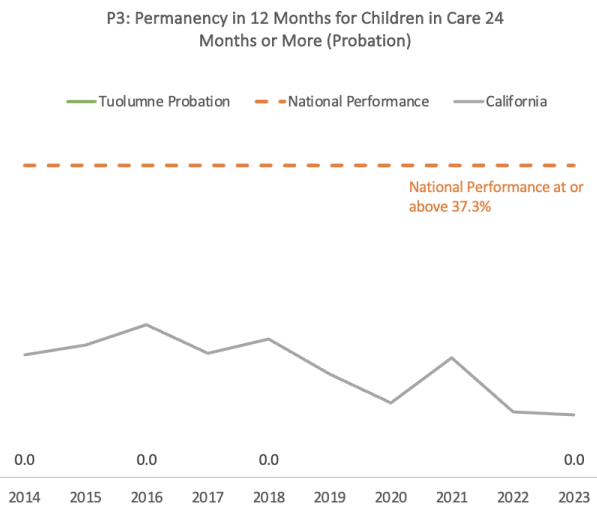
Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved 4/29/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

Many children, particularly in older age groups and certain ethnic groups, remain in care, highlighting ongoing challenges in achieving timely permanency outcomes. However, it is crucial to approach these trends with caution due to the limited number of cases and the presence of masked data, potentially impacting the accuracy of our analysis.

Despite a decline in the number of children coming into care, the number of children remaining in care at 24 months has remained stable. This further emphasizes that children in care often have complex cases marked by multifaceted family issues, high-risk situations, and prolonged involvement. In addition to dealing with complex cases, the finalization of adoptions can be a lengthy process, particularly if parents contest the adoption. Tuolumne County has established a high-risk caseload to dedicate more resources to complex cases; the dedicated child welfare worker who carries the high-risk caseload has fewer cases to allow for more attention on each case. The Intensive Care Coordinator can meet weekly and see children out of county, allowing the social worker to focus solely on high-risk caseloads. Many of the children on the high-risk caseload were formerly placed in group homes, and some of them have been adopted successfully.

Probation Analysis: This measure was not applicable for 6 out of the last 10 Q3 reporting periods due to the low numbers of youth meeting the criteria. When performance data is available, Probation does not meet the national performance. The measure consistently involved only one youth each year, making the data not meaningful, as the percentage of youth exiting within 12 months is either 0% or 100%.

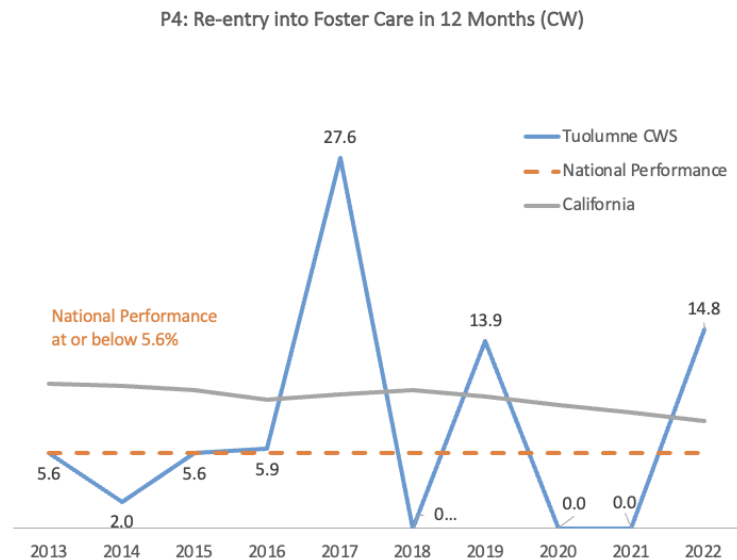
Children who exit to non-permanency are not captured in this measure. Additionally, this measure excludes youth who are 18 years or older at the beginning of the period. Youth in P3 tend to present the most challenging cases, often with complex needs or requiring longer treatment due to the nature of their offenses.



P4 – Re-entry to Foster Care

This measure is defined as “Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period who discharged within 12 months to reunification, living with a relative(s), or guardianship, what percent re-enter foster care within 12 months of their discharge?” The national performance for this measure is less than or equal to 5.6%.

Child Welfare Analysis: During the most recent reporting period, 14.8% of children re-entered foster care after achieving permanency. Due to the small sample size, breaking out this data by age and ethnicity is not meaningful. Over the past ten years, Tuolumne County typically performs better than the national performance. Performance fluctuation in P4 is common in smaller counties like Tuolumne, where a single re-entry can significantly affect the percentage due to the low number of children in care. The County's historical performance shows better outcomes than the national performance, but the small sample size makes trend analysis challenging.



Age Group	Age Group/Year (#)										Total
	Under 1 - 2		3 - 5		6 - 10		11 - 15		16 - 17		
	18	22	18	22	18	22	18	22	18	22	
Children with re-entries	0	M	0	M	0	M	0	M	0	M	4
Children with no re-entries	11	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	0	M	23

Ethnic Group	Ethnic Group/Year (#)											
	Black		White		Latino		Asian/PI		Native Amer		Missing	
	18	22	18	22	18	22	18	22	18	22	18	22
Children with re-entries	0	0	0	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children with no re-entries	0	M	23	17	M	M	0	0	M	0	0	M

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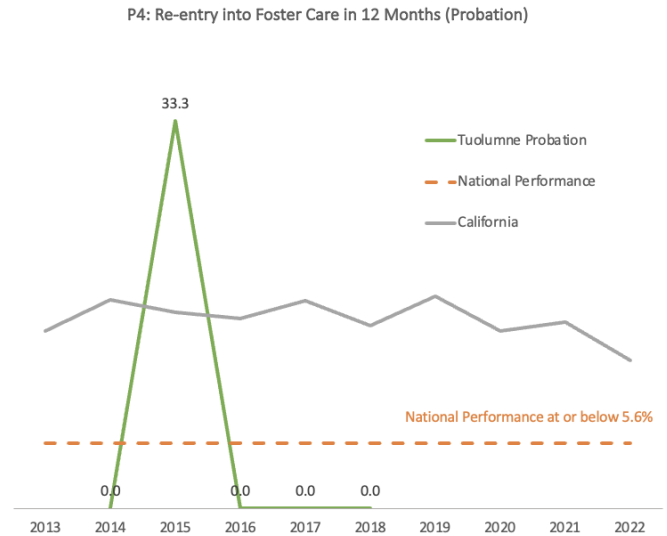
The data indicates that children in Tuolumne County are more likely to not re-enter foster care than to re-enter. Across different age groups and ethnicities, most children do not re-enter care. The analysis is limited due to the presence of masked data, which makes it difficult to draw comprehensive conclusions. This trend, though incomplete, suggests a higher likelihood of children remaining out of the foster care system once they achieve permanency.

Children re-enter foster care for various reasons, often related to their parents' capacity to safely care for them. This can include relapse into substance abuse, recurrence of a mental health condition, incarceration, or other issues. When children return to environments where issues like substance abuse or mental health conditions are not fully addressed, the risk of subsequent maltreatment and re-entry increases. Focus groups conducted during this CSA process, identified that service gaps exist for mental health and substance abuse treatment for both parents and children. During the prior CSA, a survey of resource families reinforced this perception and emphasized the importance of timely services being available when needed. In Tuolumne County, the complexity of cases involving recurrence of maltreatment may also contribute to higher re-entry rates. Tuolumne County's inconsistent performance on both P4 (re-entry to foster care) and S2 (recurrence of maltreatment), which was discussed above, highlights the need for comprehensive support for families post-reunification to mitigate risks and improve outcomes for children. During focus groups, stakeholders elevated a need for continued support after reunification to avoid a cliff of services and supports, which can impact re-entry rates.

The performance on Measure P4 has been influenced by several strategic initiatives and programs implemented by Tuolumne County to support families and prevent the need for more intensive child welfare interventions. Referrals to the prevention unit and the management of voluntary family maintenance ensure that parents receive the necessary support before their situations escalate. This approach includes Emergency Response (ER) services and voluntary programs, where significant parental buy-in and strong support systems can make a substantial difference. Parents who opt for voluntary services are more likely to engage with the provided support, which can prevent the need for formal child welfare intervention.

The Full Service Partnership program, which offers comprehensive wraparound services, has been particularly impactful in helping families manage their challenges holistically. Additionally, the Road to Resilience program focuses on parental substance use treatment, allowing for direct referrals from OBGYNs and child welfare when substance use is identified. This program's cooperative strategy helps address substance use issues proactively, which is crucial in managing drug relapse situations. When parents resume use, they are referred back to the necessary services rather than being bypassed based on presumptions of use.

Probation Analysis: The P4 measure was not applicable in Q3 for 2013 and 2019-2022. The data from 2014 to 2018 shows that there have been minimal instances of re-entry, with several years reflecting a 0.0% re-entry rate. This indicates that no children re-entered foster care within the specified timeframe for most of the reporting periods. The national performance for this measure is set at 5.6%, and Probation has only exceeded this once in 2015, when the re-entry rate was 33.3%. Given that there are very few children in the sample, Probation cannot achieve compliance except by having no re-entries, which it has achieved in several reporting years.



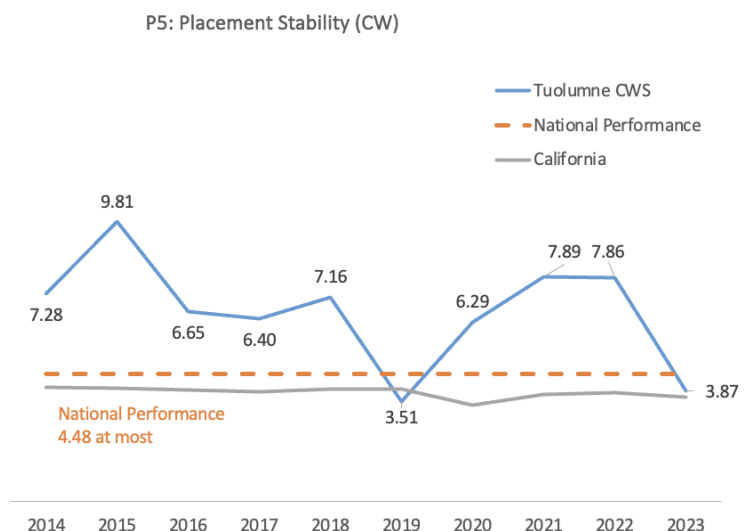
Probation officers and leadership regularly use Child and Family Team Meetings with probation youth, both for those placed in foster care and as a prevention strategy. While efforts are made to prevent entry into foster care, the youth that do enter are likely those with higher levels of needs. This impacts performance on some measures, particularly permanency and placement stability.

P5 – Placement Stability

This measure is defined as “Of all children who enter care in the 12-month period, what is the rate of placement moves per day of foster care?” The national performance for this measure is less than or equal to 4.48 per 1,000.

Child Welfare Analysis: Tuolumne County's performance on the P5 measure, shows a persistent challenge in meeting the national performance of 4.48 placement moves per 1,000 days in care. Over the past decade, Tuolumne CWS has consistently exceeded this standard, indicating higher rates of placement moves compared to the national performance.

From 2014 to 2023, CWS placement stability rates have fluctuated significantly. The highest instability was observed in 2015, with 9.81 placement moves per 1,000 days, which is more than double the national performance. The lowest rate during this period was in 2019, with 3.51 moves, temporarily meeting the national performance. However, in most other years, Tuolumne's rates have been substantially higher than the national performance. For instance, in 2021 and 2022, the rates were 7.89 and 7.86 moves, respectively, nearly double the national performance.



Age Group	Foster Care Days for Children with Entries	Placement moves	Placement moves per 1,000 days
Under 1	1,515	4	2.64
1-2	803	10	12.45
3-5	784	3	3.83
6-10	1,947	7	3.60
11-15	1,186	2	1.69
16-17	450	0	0.00
Total	6,685	26	3.89

Ethnic Group	Foster Care Days for Children with Entries	Placement moves	Placement moves per 1,000 days
Black	0	0	.
White	6,137	22	3.58
Latino	436	4	9.17
Asian/P.I.	18	0	0.00
Nat Amer	94	0	0.00
Missing	0	0	.
Total	6,685	26	3.89

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The analysis of the placement moves data indicates notable trends in placement stability based on age and ethnicity. For age groups, children aged 1-2 years old experience the highest rate of placement moves at 12.45 moves per 1,000 days, suggesting significant instability for this age group. In contrast, children aged 11-15 years and those aged 16-17 years have lower rates of placement moves, with the 11-15 group at 1.69 moves per 1,000 days and the 16-17 group showing no moves, indicating greater placement stability. This trend for 16-17 year olds might be due to staff having older youth participate in their placements by asking if there are adults they are close to who could meet placement criteria. When older youth are placed with someone they already have an established bond with, they are less likely to change placements.

When examining the data by ethnicity, Latino children have a high rate of placement moves at 9.17 per 1,000 days, indicating higher instability compared to White children, who have a rate of 3.58 moves per 1,000 days. Other ethnic groups, such as Asian/P.I. and Native American children, show no placement moves, but the small sample sizes should be considered when interpreting these results. This analysis suggests targeted interventions are necessary for specific age groups and ethnicities to improve placement stability and reduce the number of moves experienced by children in foster care.

The fluctuation in Tuolumne's performance indicates ongoing issues in maintaining stable placements for children in foster care. Factors contributing to these high rates of placement moves may include the complexity of cases, the availability of suitable placements, and the effectiveness of support services provided to resource families and children. Locating and identifying quality resource families to accommodate children with higher level of care needs based on their behaviors has become increasingly difficult; there tends to be few homes with the level of training needed to meet the needs of these children. Additionally, Tuolumne County does not have the in-home mental health and/or behavioral health support services needed to recruit and approve Intensive

Services Foster Care (ISFC) homes, resulting in children being placed out of county when they require this level of care. Moreover, children in foster care overall often experience delays in accessing mental health services, exacerbating challenges. During focus groups and the stakeholder meeting, stakeholders noted that there are not enough homes, leading to children being placed outside the County. Stakeholders also elevated a need for more supports for and training of caregivers. Addressing these issues is crucial for improving placement stability and ensuring better outcomes for children in care.

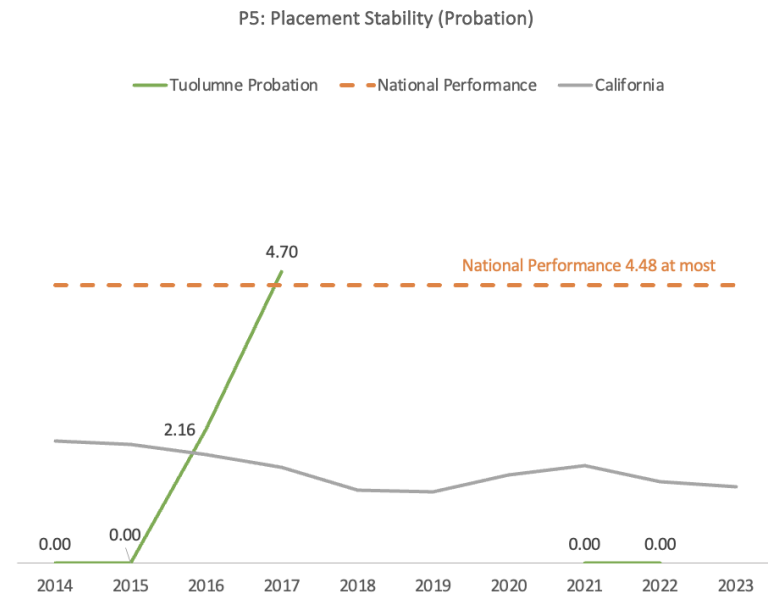
Additionally, Tuolumne County's performance on the P5 measure could be positively impacted by strengthening the consistency of Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs). During focus groups, stakeholders noted that when they occur, CFTMs are effective in fostering collaboration and ensuring that plans meet the specific needs of the family. However, they also noted that scheduling and timeliness of CFTMs was a challenge, which can undermine their effectiveness. Tuolumne County has a dedicated CFT Facilitator position that is currently vacant. Not currently having a CFT facilitator seems to be a contributing factor to challenges with CFTM scheduling and consistency; increasing the consistency of CFTMs could enhance the decision-making process and lead to better placement stability.

The Resource Family Approval (RFA) process and the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) are also essential for preparing and supporting resource families. However, there are gaps and areas for improvement that need to be addressed. When families are not well-matched, children may enter homes with issues that the families are unprepared for, particularly if they lack trauma-informed care training. This gap highlights the need for a more intimate and supportive approach to trauma-informed care. To support placement stability and increase caregivers' parenting skills, especially related to children who have experienced trauma, Tuolumne County recently established a contract with a private therapist to provide individual trauma-informed training for caregivers. This training includes Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) and the Nurtured Heart Approach.

Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) and behavioral relationships are critical, but the absence of a consistent CFT facilitator, as discussed above, and the inability of the Intensive Care Coordinator (ICC) to secure behavioral health supports for caregivers exacerbate the challenges. The last CSA noted that a Resource Family survey revealed respondents' need for more support for resource families and their biological children, as well as additional assistance in parenting high-need children. Addressing these challenges by evaluating and improving the RFA and QPI processes could significantly enhance the support system for resource families.

Probation Analysis: Tuolumne County Probation effectively minimizes the number of placement moves for youth in care, generally performing above the national performance. In several reporting periods, the measure was not applicable to Probation due to the small number of cases. The only instance in which Probation performed worse than the national performance was in 2017, with a rate of placement moves at 4.70, which was 0.22 above the performance.

Generally, placement changes are often necessitated by youth with significant mental health needs, requiring a move to access appropriate services. Probation officers identified youth with violent behavior towards their care provider or group home staff, as well as those who run away, as having the most challenges for stability. As mentioned previously, Probation has been holding Child Family Team Meetings every three months or more frequently if needed, for youth in group homes and those with challenging behavior to address these issues and improve placement stability. The limited data for analysis hinders trend analysis based on age and race, with only a few instances available.



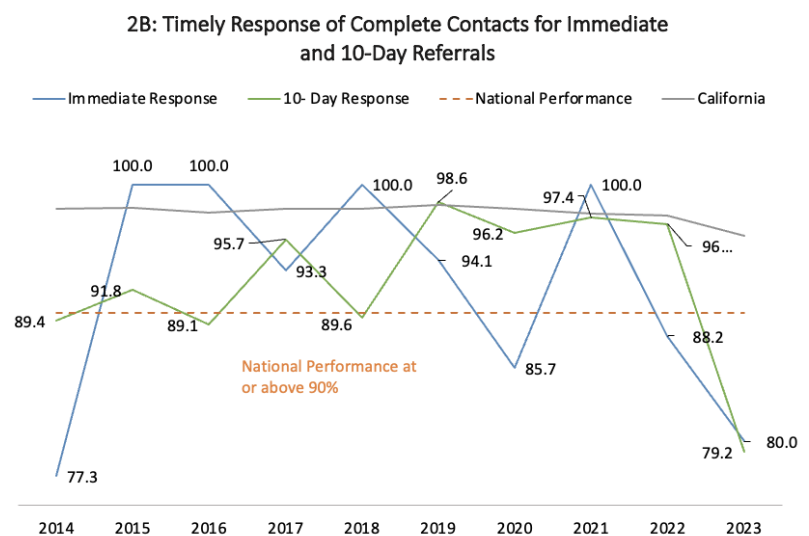
2B and 2D: Referrals by Time to Investigation (CWS Only)

2B Timely Response: These reports provide the percentage of child abuse and neglect referrals that require an in-person investigation where a contact was **attempted or completed** within the specified time frame. There are two reports, one for immediate response (withing 24 hours), and the other for 10-day response. Referrals entered as requiring a 3-, 5-, or 10-day response are included in the 10-day response type.

National Performance:

- Timely Response (Immediate Response Compliance): At or above 90%
- Timely Response (10-Day Response Compliance): At or above 90%

The compliance standard for 2B is 90% of referrals receiving a timely in-person investigation. Over a ten-year period, Tuolumne County's performance on immediate response and 10-day response compliance has fluctuated compared to the national performance of 90%. In 2014, the immediate response rate was significantly below the national performance at 77.3%, but it improved to 100% in 2015, 2016, and 2018, showing strong



compliance in those years. However, the immediate response rate dropped again in recent years, falling to 85.7% in 2020 and further to 80.0% in 2023, indicating a decline in performance.

The 10-day response rates have generally been more stable and closer to the national performance, with rates consistently above 89%, reaching a peak of 98.6% in 2019. Despite this, there was a notable decline in 2023 to 79.2%, which is significantly below the national performance. This overall drop in compliance, especially in the most recent years, is likely affected by social worker vacancies, which continue to be a challenge for the County. When staffing is particularly low, logging case details often occurs much later than when staffing levels are higher. These numbers could be lower due to the system pulling the data prior to staff logging case details.

Percent of Timely Response for 10-day Referrals by Age

Percent	Under 1	1-2	3-5	6-10	11-15	16-17	18-20
Timely Response	91.1	89.4	87.7	86.2	86.4	86.2	18.8
No Timely Response	8.9	10.6	12.3	13.8	13.6	13.8	81.3

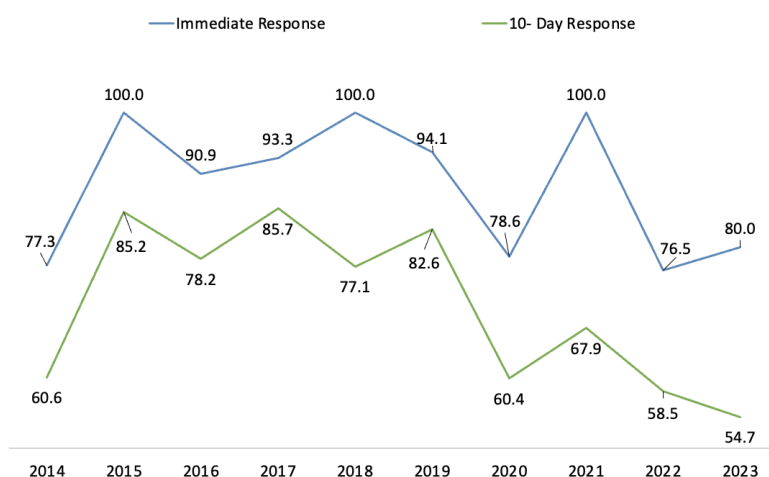
Regarding ethnic groups, 10-day response referrals were investigated slightly below the compliance standard for White children (not pictured). The table above breaks out completed contacts for a 10-day response by age group for the most recent reporting period. Younger children, particularly those under 1 year old, have the highest percentage of timely responses at 91.1%. This age also experiences the most immediate case investigations and the most juvenile court interventions, both of which require a higher priority of logging. This trend slightly decreases with age, with children aged 1-2 receiving timely responses 89.4% of the time, and those aged 3-5 receiving timely responses 87.7% of the time. The percentages continue to decline marginally for older children, with those aged 6-10 and 11-15 both having timely response rates around 86.2% to 86.4%.

2D – Referrals by Time to Investigation – Completed Contacts

These reports provide the percentage of child abuse and neglect referrals that require an in-person investigation where a contact was **completed** within the specified time frame. There are two reports, one for immediate response, and the other for 10-day response. Referrals entered as requiring a 3-, 5-, or 10-day response are included in the 10-day response type.

For 2D, there is no compliance standard for the measure of referrals by time to investigation - completed contacts. The data from 2014 to 2023 shows significant fluctuations in both Immediate Response and 10-Day Response rates. In 2014, Immediate Response was at 77.3%. However, in 2015, it peaked at 100%, indicating full compliance. The following years showed variability, with the lowest point being 76.5% in 2022, and a slight recovery to 80.0% in 2023. The 10-Day Response rates also fluctuated, with a low of 58.5% in 2022 and a high of 85.7% in 2017. The performance in 2023 was 54.7%, indicating significant challenges in meeting timely investigation standards.

2D: Timely Response of Completed Contacts for Immediate and 10-Day Referrals



A nationwide shortage of social workers has significantly impacted staffing levels, posing challenges in maintaining consistent and effective service delivery. Increased instances of burnout and leaves of absence among staff further strain CWS' capacity to effectively meet the needs of children and families. However, CWS is actively addressing these challenges by prioritizing efforts to mitigate the impact of staffing shortages and burnout, ensuring that CWS can continue to provide high-quality services to the community. Additionally, Tuolumne County is making efforts to be more competitive in attracting and retaining social workers.

The challenges related to the time taken for referrals to be investigated in Tuolumne County are primarily due to staffing shortages and logistical issues. Currently, there are four Emergency Response (ER) positions available, but only one is filled. Immediate needs are often addressed by backfilling with available staff, but this is a temporary solution. Staff turnover has led to difficulties in maintaining timely documentation. When staff members are frequently required to go out into the field, they can fall behind on logging case details. This can result in incomplete or delayed documentation.

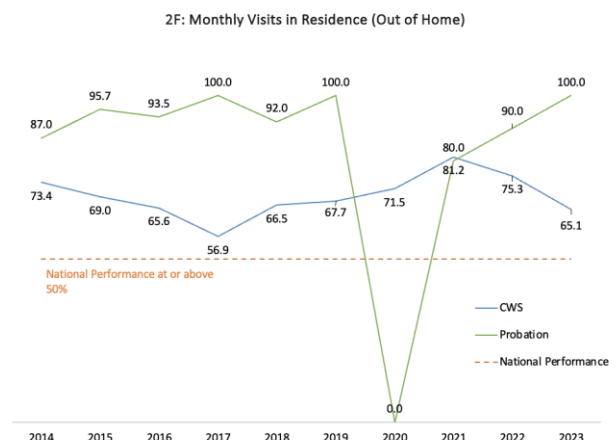
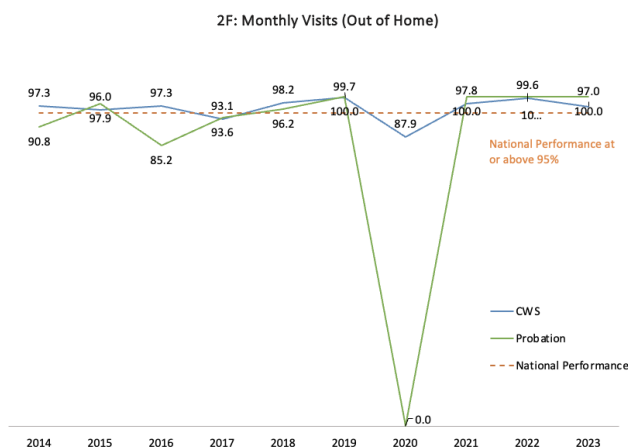
Historically, the situation was more manageable in 2017 and 2018 when there were two dedicated ER workers. Over the past three to four years, with only one ER worker, the team has had to rely more on supplemental work. Consequently, while most referrals are closed, logging and documentation have sometimes been less consistent. In the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process, it was noted that logs were not always completed promptly due to time constraints. This can lead to challenges in case management, as proper documentation is crucial for tracking and follow-up.

2F: Monthly Visits Out of Home and In Home

2F Monthly Visits (Out of home): These reports calculate the percentage of youth in placement who are visited by caseworkers. Each youth in placement for an entire month must be visited at least once. The graphs summarize monthly data by year.

National Performance:

- Monthly Visits (Out of Home): At or above 95%
- Monthly Visits in Residence (Out of Home): At or above 50%



Child Welfare Analysis: For timely visits out of home, CWS consistently met or exceeded the national performance of 95% from 2014 to 2019, with performance dropping to 87.9% in 2020. This drop may be

attributed to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Performance improved in 2021 to 97.8% and 99.6% in 2022 but slightly declined to 97.0% in 2023.

For timely visits in residence, CWS' performance has varied over the years, often falling below the national benchmark of 50%. The highest recorded performance was 81.2% in 2021, while the lowest was 56.9% in 2017. In 2023, the rate improved to 65.1%, though it remained under the national standard. This inconsistency underscores the need for targeted strategies to address the issues causing delays in meeting visitation timelines. Factors such as staffing shortages, caseload management, and logistical challenges significantly impact the ability to conduct timely visits.

Moreover, changes in logging procedures in 2020 added complexity. An All County Letter (ACL) required staff to log virtual contacts in a specific manner, which was not initially followed, leading to compliance issues. CWS had to retrospectively correct these logs to bring them back into compliance. Despite these challenges, Tuolumne County has always prioritized monthly visits and contacts. However, data entry issues and other contributing factors, such as high caseloads and staffing shortages, continue to affect performance.

Probation Analysis: For timely visits out of home, Probation met or exceeded the national performance of 95% from 2019 to 2023, except for 2020, where no visits were reported. Probation achieved 100% compliance in multiple years, demonstrating a strong commitment to timely visitations.

For timely visits in residence, Probation's performance has been stable and generally above the national performance of 50%. The Department achieved 100% in multiple years (2017, 2019, 2023) except for a significant drop to 0% in 2020. This suggests that Probation has maintained a strong focus on meeting visit requirements, indicating effective strategies and processes in place, despite the drop in 2020 due to COVID.

Timely Monthly Visits by Age, October 2023

Age Group	Children in Placement Entire Month	Children Visited	Percent Visited	Children Visited in Residence	Percent Visited in Residence
Under 1	M	M	85.7	M	66.7
1-2	12	12	100.0	M	66.7
3-5	M	M	88.9	M	37.5
6-10	18	16	88.9	12	75.0
11-15	11	11	100.0	M	45.5
16-17	M	M	100.0	M	100.0
Total	58	54	93.1	33	61.1

4A: Siblings (CWS Only)

This report is defined as “point-in-time counts of sibling groups placed in Child Welfare supervised foster care.” There is no National or Compliance Standard.

Siblings (All)

	July 2019	July 2020	July 2021	July 2022	July 2023
Placed with all siblings (%)	75.0	84.1	67.9	61.5	78.7
Children with siblings in foster care (n)	52	63	56	52	47
Placer with all siblings (n)	39	53	38	32	37

Siblings (Some or All)

	July 2019	July 2020	July 2021	July 2022	July 2023
Placed with some or all siblings (%)	90.4	90.5	82.1	80.8	91.5
Children with siblings in foster care (n)	52	63	56	52	47
Placed with some or all siblings (n)	47	57	46	42	43

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Tuolumne County CWS often receives sibling groups with three or more siblings. The County recognizes the importance of keeping siblings together when placed in out-of-home care and has set a goal of placing sibling groups together whenever possible. This can be complicated by siblings having different fathers, resulting in multiple paternal relatives or the fathers themselves being willing to take placement only of their biological children or grandchildren. Tuolumne County excels in family finding, making strong efforts to connect with family members and willing to go long distances to keep families together. Resource parents, who are often teachers, extend their outreach by talking to school teachers and other key figures, ensuring a comprehensive support network for the children.

4B: Least Restrictive Placement

Least Restrictive (Entries First Placement) (Q3 2023)

	Child Welfare	Probation
Relative Near-Kin	25.5	Not Applicable
Foster/RFA Home	61.7	
Foster Family Agency	8.5	
Group Home Shelter	0.0	
Other	4.3	

Least Restrictive (Entries Predominant Placement) (Q3 2023)

	Child Welfare	Probation
Relative Near-Kin	42.5	0.0
Foster/RFA Home	32.5	0.0
Foster Family Agency	17.5	0.0
Group Home Shelter	0.0	100.0
Other	7.5	0.0

Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez, A., Gomez Hernandez, F., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Agarwal, A., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2024). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 4/29/2024, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

Child Welfare Analysis: For Q3 2023, Child Welfare data indicates a strong preference for placing children in the least restrictive environments. The predominant first placement for entries was in Foster/RFA Homes, with 61.7% of children being placed in these settings. This suggests a significant emphasis on placing children in family-like environments from the onset. Additionally, 25.5% of children were placed with relatives or near-kin, underscoring efforts to maintain familial connections. Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) accounted for 8.5% of first placements, while no children were placed in group homes or shelters as their first placement. "Other" placements constituted 4.3%.

When considering the predominant placement for Q3 2023, there is a noticeable shift. Relative or near-kin placements increased to 42.5%, highlighting an ongoing effort to place children within their extended families or familiar environments. Foster/RFA Homes decreased to 32.5%, indicating some movement of children to more permanent familial settings. The use of FFAs increased to 17.5%, suggesting that while initial placements are often in Foster/RFA Homes, longer-term placements might transition to FFAs. No placements were reported in group homes or shelters, reinforcing the County's strategy to avoid these settings. "Other" placements were at 7.5%.

When placing children with family members, relatives often provide a more supportive environment. They are typically more willing to work with children who have experienced trauma, offering stability and understanding. Relatives demonstrate a strong commitment to the child's well-being by taking significant steps, such as adding the children to their insurance policies and providing necessary resources like transportation.

Probation Analysis: It's important to note that the total number of youths in care is small as reflected in the data presented. Tuolumne Probation identifies an ongoing need for suitable Resource Family Homes. However, in many cases, the youths' needs, coupled with their sustained criminal offenses, exceed what a Resource Family placement can adequately address.

5B: Timely Medical and Dental Exams (CWS Only)

This measure asks what percentage, or the number of children in care, placed in state with a placement episode of 31 or more days, have received timely medical and dental exams as recommended by age. The measure of dental exams excludes children under 1 year, while the measures for medical exams include this population. The tables below show the percentage of children who did receive timely dental and medical exams.

Timely Exams

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Rate of timely health exams (%)	78.7	69.1	66.7	70.1	42.4
Rate of timely dental exams (%)	84.5	67.9	60.3	58.5	33.3

Child Welfare Analysis: The analysis of timely medical and dental exams for Tuolumne County reveals a declining trend in the rates of timely exams over the past five years. In 2019, the rate of timely health exams was at 78.7%, which decreased to 42.4% by 2023. Similarly, timely dental exams dropped from 84.5% in 2019 to 33.3% in 2023. These figures indicate a significant decrease in the timely provision of health and dental care for children in foster care.

During the pandemic in 2020, regular medical and dental care was difficult to access. Since the worst of the pandemic has ended access is easier. However, in geographically small counties, such as Tuolumne, caregivers can struggle to find a provider that accepts Medi-Cal and is near to their home, which can lead to delays in seeing a doctor or dentist. In the context of focus group discussions, it was noted that timely medical and dental exams were generally being conducted, suggesting some discrepancy between reported data and experiences on the ground. This feedback aligns with the periods where the data reflected better performance, indicating that efforts to ensure timely exams were more effective during those times.

Frequent staff changes and understaffing have significantly impacted the ability to maintain consistent and timely examinations. Additionally, providers often find the required forms, such as the California Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) Program forms, to be cumbersome and time-consuming, which contributes to

delays. Changes in policy have also played a role, as the transition from CHDP to new requirements has led to confusion and poor communication. Consequently, children might not be seen on time because the new requirements and forms are not well understood or communicated. When children are seen by providers, they sometimes lack the correct forms, leading to further delays in documentation and service. Lastly, late entries of medical and dental examinations into the system often occur because documentation sits with the Foster Care Public Health Nurse for extended periods before being processed.

6B: Individualized Education Plan (CWS Only)

This outcome measures the percentage of school aged children in placement who currently have, or have ever had, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Individualized Education Plan	3.3	5.1	2.5	1.5	1.4

Child Welfare Analysis: These outcomes show that at the time of this extract, 1.4% of children in care had in place, or had ever had in place, an IEP. Tuolumne CWS has seen fewer and fewer children entering care with an IEP. Establishing a first IEP for a child or youth in care has declined as well. With fewer numbers of children in care, it may be that IEPs are less needed and instead other support services are provided, like tutoring in challenging subjects. The case review indicated that the number of IEPs might be lower than expected, suggesting potential documentation issues that need to be addressed.

SUMMARY

Tuolumne County derived tremendous value from the 2023 – 2024 C-CFSR Community Self-Assessment (CSA) process documented in this report. Both the systematic review of the structure and performance of the child welfare and juvenile probation systems and the sustained, authentic engagement with the community helped Child Welfare Services (CWS) and the Probation Department (Probation) identify strengths, challenges, recommendations, and strategies. These outcomes will directly inform the development of the System Improvement Plan (SIP).

Because Tuolumne County has small total numbers of child welfare and probation involved families and children in out-of-home care, individual cases, especially sibling sets, can significantly impact performance measures and metrics. This is true whether outcomes are impacted by family and community challenges or systemic factors, or both. Through the CSA process, CWS and Probation directed significant attention to specific cases to understand their performance on the C-CFSR Outcomes Measures, and to identify potential strategies and action steps that can improve case- and system-level outcomes.

The success of this CSA process was facilitated by the excellent work of CWS and Probation staff, deep and authentic engagement with a broad range of community members and valued partners, and the focused attention and support of staff from peer counties and CDSS.

The following insights from the CSA process provide the foundation for the County's next SIP:

Populations at Greatest Risk of Maltreatment

Staff and community members consistently identified substance abuse and mental health needs, poverty and housing instability as challenges facing families that become involved with the child welfare and probation systems. Staff noted that these issues often persist over time, complicating reunification efforts and undermining lasting safety in the home. While the child population of Tuolumne County has declined in recent years, rates of maltreatment allegations and substantiations have increased slightly. Still, the overall rate at which children are entering foster care has continued to decline. These data suggest that CWS has continued to improve its ability to keep children safe at home despite an increased concentration of challenges in some County families.

Strengths

Community partners, staff, and peers identified several key strengths of the CWS and Probation systems, including a focus on prevention, strong initial engagement efforts and the identification of natural supports, engagement and services tailored to the needs of Native American communities, relationship building and ongoing engagement with parents, and effective Child and Family Team Meetings. Community members and peers also noted strong, effective collaborations among CWS, Probation, Behavioral Health, and Law Enforcement as well as continual, productive engagement with community resources.

Areas for Improvement

Peers, staff, and community partners agreed that case- and systems-level outcomes are undermined by ongoing workforce challenges including staffing shortages and high turnover. Largely because of this underlying issue, CSA participants described inconsistencies in the implementation of administrative, case planning, and case management functions and processes. Additional identified challenges included a shortage of in-county placements, a need for additional post-reunification supports, and a need for additional capacity to support timely and effective CFTMs and provide adequate support for follow through

Service Array Gaps and Needs

As noted, staff, community members, and peers noted a need for increased availability of substance abuse and mental/behavioral health services for parents, as well as for more housing and basic needs assistance for families. For those children in out-of-home care, CSA participants noted a need for more in-county placement options, more homes for probation-supervised youth, and more training for caregivers. Participants also noted a need and opportunity to continue to invest in family finding and supports for family and kin, including post-permanency supports.

Summary of Outcome Data Measures, Relevant Data Trends, and Effect of Systemic Factors

Child Welfare Services (CWS):

As mentioned in the Outcome Data Measures section of this CSA, Tuolumne County CWS is performing above the national performance benchmark for the following outcomes:

- S1 – Maltreatment in Foster Care
- P2 – Permanency in 12 Months (children in foster care 12-23 months)
- P3 – Permanency in 12 Months (children in foster care 24 months or more)
- P5 - Placement Stability
- 2F – By Year, Timely Monthly Caseworker Visit (out of home)

The data indicate a need for improvement on the following Outcome Data Measures:

- S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment
- P1 – Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Foster Care
- P4 – Re-Entry into Foster Care
- 2B – Referrals by Time to Investigation (Immediate and 10-day Response)

As noted above and throughout this report, Systemic Factors including workforce challenges may contribute to performance on these measures, particularly P1 and 2B, while the need for additional post-reunification and/or post-permanency services likely contributes to S2 and P4. As discussed in the Outcomes Data Measures section above, improving guidance and processes for associating referrals and increasing consistency in case management practices are known areas in need of improvement and may be considered as strategies for the SIP.

Probation:

In general, the small population of probation youth in foster care makes analysis of performance on Outcome Data Measures difficult, and the identification and themes impossible. The primary observation made above is that the overall probation foster care population has declined over recent years in what seems to be a trend.

The data indicate that Probation is performing above the national performance benchmark for the following Outcome Data Measures:

- S1 – Maltreatment in Foster Care
- 2F – By Year, Timely Monthly Caseworker Visit (out of home)

The data indicate that the following outcomes need improvement:

- P1 – Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Foster Care
- P3 – Permanency in 12 Months (children in foster care 24 months or more)

Given the very small numbers, it is difficult to assert causal factors for performance on these measures. However, as described in the Peer Review process, consistency in case planning and case management and continued efforts to improve communication and engagement with Probation youth and families may positively improve case outcomes in general.

Summary of Progress, Challenges, and Overall Lessons Learned from the Previous SIP

While Tuolumne County CWS and Probation made significant progress in implementing the strategies and action steps of the previous SIP despite the difficulties presented by the Coronavirus pandemic and other major disruptions, other areas of focus merit continued focus and attention, particularly CWS workforce recruitment, retention, and training. Some strategies and action steps were complicated or delayed by these several factors.

Primary lessons of the previous SIP included the significant impact that individual cases, particularly sibling sets, can have on performance on Outcome Data Measures; the key role of administrative process in determining performance on timelines, particularly those that depend on Court action; the importance of expanding local programming and cross-sector collaboration; and the benefits of continual investment in staff training to optimize the use of structured tools including Child and Family Team Meetings and Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment. Also under the previous SIP, the County gained significant, foundational experience in family finding and engagement, strategies which are continued priorities for CWS and Probation, and may be considered for inclusion in the next SIP.

Next Steps

The C-CFSR Team continues to meet weekly to review the information gained through this CSA process and to plan the development of the SIP. The Team looks forward to collaborating with CDSS to craft a five-year SIP that effectively supports CWS and Probation in their continued efforts to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families.