

California - Child and Family Services Review

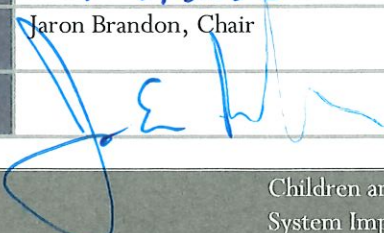
System Improvement Plan

April 10, 2025



California – Child and Family Services Review Signature Sheet

For submittal of: CSA ☐ SIP ☒ Progress Report ☐

County	Tuolumne County
SIP Period Dates	5/12/2024-5/12/2029
Outcome Data Period	Q3 2023
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BOS Approval Date	5/06/2025
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Signature*	

Mail the original Signature Sheet to:

*Signatures must be in blue ink

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
C-CFSR Team and Core Representatives.....	5
SIP Narrative.....	7
Child Welfare/Probation Placement Initiatives.....	35
Five-Year SIP Chart.....	42
Prioritization of Direct Service Needs.....	48
Service Provision for CAPT/CBCAP/PSSF Programs.....	49
Attachment 1: OCAP Expenditure Workbook	
Signed Notice of Intent	
Board of Supervisor Resolution	

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), 5-Year System Improvement Plan (SIP), and annual System Improvement Plan Progress Reports. This Tuolumne County 2024-2029 SIP is the third component of the C-CFSR. It is the operational agreement between the County Child Welfare Services (CWS) and Probation Departments and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and outlines how Tuolumne County will improve the system of care for children and families.

The Tuolumne County SIP Planning Team utilized information gathered through both the CSA and SIP planning processes to develop this SIP. Both processes were a collaboration between Tuolumne County Child Welfare Services (CWS) and the Tuolumne County Probation Department (Probation), in partnership with CDSS. Tuolumne County contracted with Social Change Partners, LLC (SCP) to help facilitate the development of both the CSA and SIP and to conduct the Peer Review.

During the CSA process, Tuolumne County analyzed data; conducted case reviews; held a Peer Review from April 30 to May 2, 2024; and conducted extensive community engagement. More specifically, Tuolumne County conducted seven focus groups with required stakeholders between February and April 2024 and organized a March 12, 2024, Stakeholder Meeting that was attended by over 29 community and partner agency representatives. During focus groups and the stakeholder meeting, stakeholders elevated a variety of areas for potential growth, such as improving consistency in child welfare case management practices and documentation of casework. Variability in practices and documentation can impact the quality of service delivery and engagement with parents and children. Additionally, peers specifically noted a need to improve child welfare guidance and processes for associating child abuse and neglect referrals as the absence of clear guidance has impacted data quality related to frequency of recurrence of maltreatment. Stakeholders further noted a lack of sufficient homes for Probation-supervised youth in care, as well as a need for more consistent and clear engagement of relatives throughout the life of a case.

Moreover, the CSA identified a range of unmet needs, service gaps, and other challenges. 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. Stakeholders also elevated gaps in mental health/counseling services in the County, and a need for more assistance to meet concrete needs.

In addition to reviewing CSA findings, Tuolumne County engaged in collaborative discussions with a SIP Planning Team that included relevant subject matter experts to develop each SIP

strategy. Ultimately, Tuolumne County Child Welfare developed two SIP strategies, and Probation developed one SIP strategy.

The SIP includes specific action steps, timeframes, and improvement targets that reflect Tuolumne's commitment to enhancing the quality of case management and family engagement processes. It also includes a plan for how the County will utilize prevention, early intervention, and treatment funds (CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF) to strengthen and preserve families as further described in the Prioritization of Direct Service Needs section of the SIP.

C-CFSR Team and Core Representatives

The C-CFSR Team includes the leaders of the C-CFSR process. The Team is comprised of staff from Child Welfare, Probation, CDSS, and key consultants. The Tuolumne County C-CFSR Team began meeting in November 2023 and continued meeting regularly to plan the C-CFSR process. The SIP Planning Committee included representatives from the CSA C-CFSR Team, as well as other relevant staff with specific expertise in strategy focus areas. This group met frequently beginning in August 2024 to identify the outcome measures and strategies to be implemented through the five-year SIP plan. The chart below includes individuals who participated in the SIP Planning Committee.

Agency	Name	Title
Health and Human Services Agency	Michelle Clark	Assistant HHSA Director
Social Services	Tou Yang	Social Services Director
	Michie Anderson	Deputy Director
	Brittney Benicki	Social Services Supervisor
	Houa Xiong	Social Services Supervisor
	Jenn Yendes	Social Services Supervisor
	Macejko DeLacy	Social Services Supervisor
	Rachel Sargent	Social Services Supervisor
	Shawn Nunn	Social Services Supervisor
	Aubrey Love	Social Worker III
	Danielle Maguire	Social Worker III
	Erika Imbesi	Social Worker III
	Christine Wolgamot	Social Worker II
	Jennifer Marcoccia	Social Worker II
	Mindy Campbell	Social Worker II
	Amanda Vanderheiden	Social Worker I

Agency	Name	Title
	Ashley Dunlap	Social Worker I
	Miranda Ayala	Social Worker I
	Stacey Sullivan	Social Worker I
	Zeke Toro	Social Worker I
	Jennifer Lynch	Supervising Staff Services Analyst
	Tyler Jackson	Supervising Staff Services Analyst
	Abraham McDonald	Senior Staff Services Analyst
	Alex Parnell	Senior Staff Services Analyst
	Andy Carter	Senior Staff Services Analyst
Juvenile Probation	Joelle Kewish	Juvenile Division Manager
	Rachel Stahl	Supervising Probation Officer
	Amber Hemphill	Senior Probation Officer
California Department of Social Services	Erica Magee	Analyst, Children's Services System Improvement Section
	George Gomez	OCAP, County Consultant
Social Change Partners	Reed Connell	Consultant
	Mitch Findley	Consultant
	Jessica Haspel	Consultant
	Ashley De Alba	Consultant

SIP Narrative

Summary of CWS/Probation Outcome Data Measures

For the following section, all data is based on the Quarter 3, 2023 Berkeley Data Extract.

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

	Measure Number	Measure Description	CWS Performance	National Performance	Performance Met/Not 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)	95.0%	At or above 90%	Met
	2B	Timely Response (10-Day Response Compliance)	92.3%	At or above 90%	Met
	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 Summary Table Probation, Q3 2023

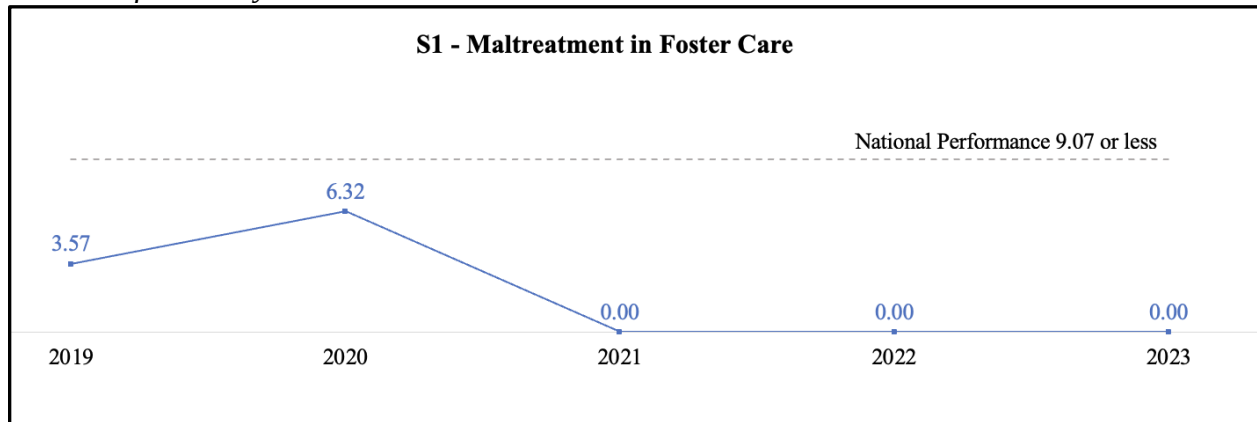
	Measure Number	Measure Description	Probation Performance	National Performance	Performance Met/Not Met
Safety	4-S1	Maltreatment In Foster Care	0.00	No more than 9.07 victimizations per 100,000 days in care	Met
Permanency	4-P1	Permanency In 12 Months (Entering Foster Care)	0.00%	At or above 35.2%	Not Met
	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

Tuolumne County used Quarter 3 Outcomes for the five-year trend analysis below. While Tuolumne County used the Q4 2023 report for this analysis, it should be noted that for some measures (S2, P1, and P4) the most recent year of data reflected in the narrative, tables, or graphs is from 2022 rather than 2023. This is because the data included in the quarterly reports for these measures is based on the cohort year rather than the reporting year. In the tables below, asterisks represent data masked for confidentiality purposes. Data is masked if the number is 10 or below. It's important to note that the relatively small number of Child Welfare and Probation cases means that one sibling set or one or two youth can impact Tuolumne County's ability to meet the national performance standard on some measures discussed below.

Measure 4-S1: Maltreatment in Foster Care

This is a Federal Outcome Measure reporting the rate of victimization per day of foster care for all children in foster care during a 12-month period. The national performance for this measure is less than or equal to 9.07 substantiated instances of maltreatment per 100,000 days in foster care. This measure includes all types of maltreatment by any perpetrator, accounts for all days in foster care during the year (across episodes), and considers multiple incidents of substantiated maltreatment for the same child in the numerator.

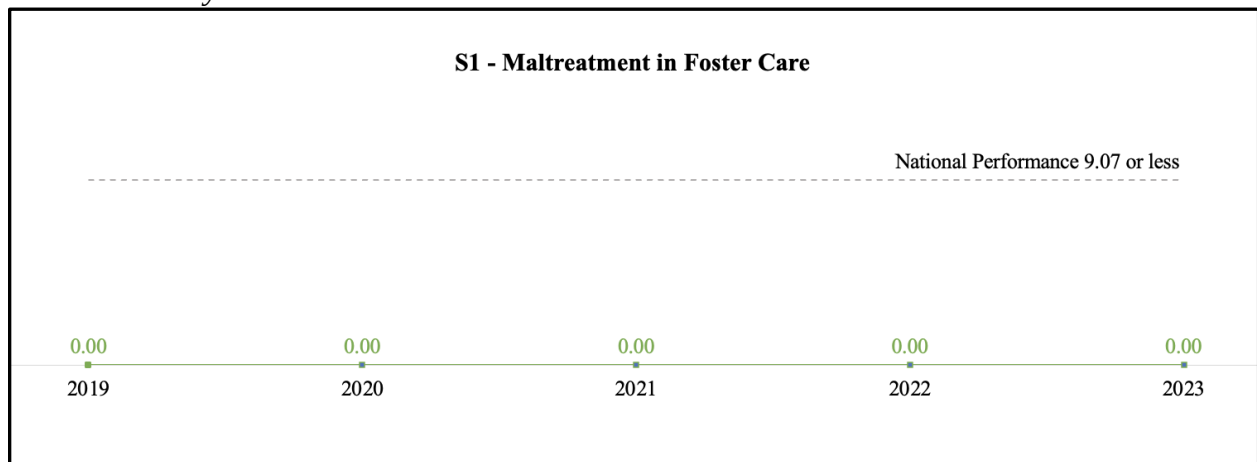
Child Welfare Analysis:



S1 Maltreatment in Foster Care (National Performance $\leq 9.07/100k$ Days)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Instances of substantiated maltreatment	*	*	*	*	*
Foster care days	*	*	*	*	*
Tuolumne CWS – Q3 Point-in-Time	3.57	6.32	0.00	0.00	0.00

Tuolumne County consistently performs well on this measure. The rate of victimization has consistently fallen below the national performance of 9.07 per 100,000 days.

Probation Analysis:



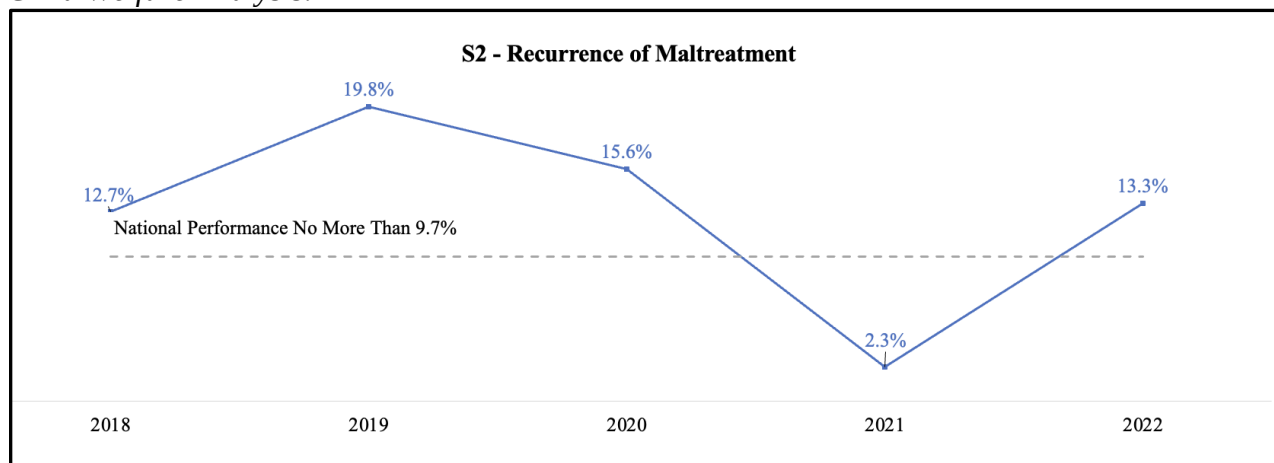
S1 Maltreatment in Foster Care (National Performance $\leq 9.07/100k$ Days)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Instances of substantiated maltreatment	*	*	*	*	*
Foster care days	*	*	*	*	*
Tuolumne Probation – Q3 Point-in-Time	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

The Probation Department consistently meets the national performance for the S1 measure. Since there are few probation youth in foster care, even one instance of maltreatment can significantly impact performance.

Measure 4-S2: Recurrence of Maltreatment (CWS Only)

This is a Federal Outcome Measure that reports of all children who were victims of a substantiated maltreatment allegation during a 12-month reporting period, what percent were victims of another substantiated maltreatment allegation within 12 months of their initial report. The national performance for this measure is less than or equal to 9.7%.

Child Welfare Analysis:



S2 Recurrence of Maltreatment - within 12 Months of Substantiation (National Performance $\leq 9.7\%$)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Children with recurrence	15	33	19	*	12
Children with substantiated allegations	118	167	122	*	90
Tuolumne CWS – Q3 Point-in-Time	12.7%	19.8%	15.6%	2.3%	13.3%

According to the Q3 2023 report, CWS did not meet the national performance for this measure during Q3 in four out of the last five years. However, performance on this measure was significantly impacted by data quality issues from improper associations of referrals, resulting in a substantial proportion of reports being incorrectly classified as a recurrence. In fact, based on a review and analysis of cases and SafeMeasures data for three quarters in which the measure was

not met, CWS determined that had referrals been properly associated, the measure would have been met for each year analyzed. More specifically, CWS found the following based on its analysis of cases utilizing SafeMeasures data to identify recurrences:

- Q3 2024 (10/1/2022-9/30/2023): There were 85 total children who fell with the S2 measure during this timeframe. Of the 13 children categorized as experiencing a recurrence, a case review found that 41.7% of referrals were not properly associated. Had referrals been properly associated, CWS' performance on this measure would have reflected a recurrence rate of 5.9% rather than of 15.3%.
- Q3 2023 (10/1/2021-9/30/2022): There were 92 total children who fell with the S2 measure during this timeframe. Of the 12 children categorized as experiencing a recurrence, a case review found that 61.5% of referrals were not properly associated. Had referrals been properly associated, CWS' performance on this measure would have reflected a recurrence rate of 7.6% rather than 13%.
- Q3 2022 (10/1/2020-9/30/21): CWS did not do a deep analysis of cases for this quarter as CWS met the national performance for this timeframe with a recurrence rate of 2.3%.
- Q3 2021 (10/1/2019-9/30/20): There were 122 total children who fell with the S2 measure during this timeframe. Of the 19 children categorized as experiencing a recurrence, a case review found that 42.1% of referrals were not properly associated. Had referrals been properly associated, CWS' performance on this measure would have reflected a recurrence rate of 9% rather than 15.6%.

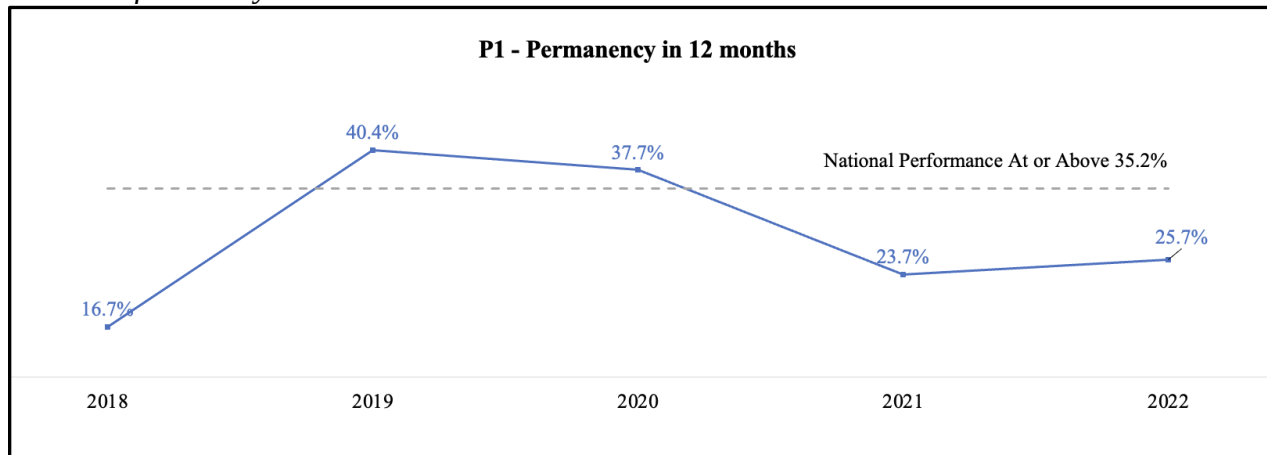
CWS identified S2 as a priority measure for the SIP and plans to focus on establishing and implementing clear procedures and processes for associating related child abuse and neglect referrals to improve data accuracy. CWS also plans to analyze cases to identify any other factors or trends that may be resulting in a recurrence of maltreatment and develop recommendations to address them.

Probation Analysis: This measure is not applicable to Probation.

Measure 4-P1: Permanency In 12 Months For Children Entering Foster Care

This is a Federal Outcomes Measure that reports on all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period and the percentage discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering foster care. The national performance for this measure is greater than or equal to 35.2%.

Child Welfare Analysis:



P1 Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Foster Care (National Performance $\geq 35.2\%$)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Children with exit to permanency	*	23	20	*	*
Children with entries	*	57	53	*	*
Tuolumne CWS – Q3 Point-in-Time	16.7%	40.4%	37.7%	23.7%	25.7%

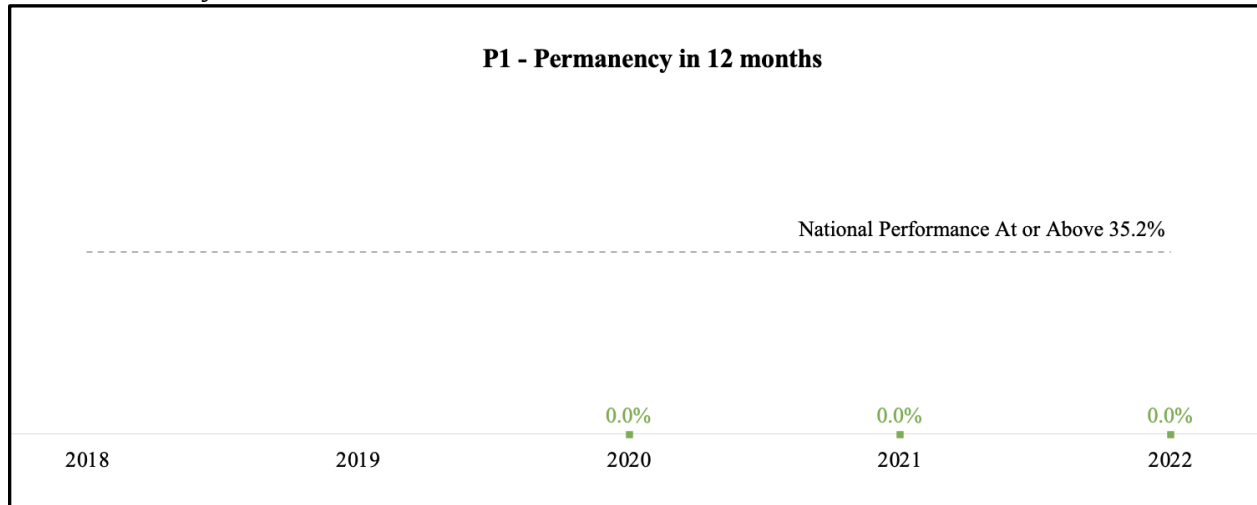
CWS performance during Q3 did not meet the national performance in the past two years. Trend analysis indicates fluctuations in CWS performance, with periods of meeting and falling below the national performance.

Some of the factors that have likely negatively impacted performance on P1 over time have included:

- Hearing delays due to continuances and contested hearings. In 2022, the Court began contracting with law firms to represent parents, leading to greater consistency with attorneys who are more familiar with child welfare cases. This shift has recently resulted in fewer contested hearings and has facilitated better engagement with parents.
- The Court's decision to extend reunification services beyond 12 months, contrary to CWS' recommendations in some cases. The Court remains committed to family success over meeting timelines.
- Challenges related to the Dependency Drug Court (DDC); 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.
- Barriers accessing substance abuse and mental health services.
- Workforce challenges, such as staffing shortages and social worker turnover. These challenges can lead to delays in case handling as new staff try to build relationships get up to speed on their case, especially when there has been inconsistent documentation of casework.
- Variability in case management practices and documentation of casework, which was elevated by stakeholders as a challenge during the CSA development process.

CWS has identified this as a priority measure for this SIP.

Probation Analysis:



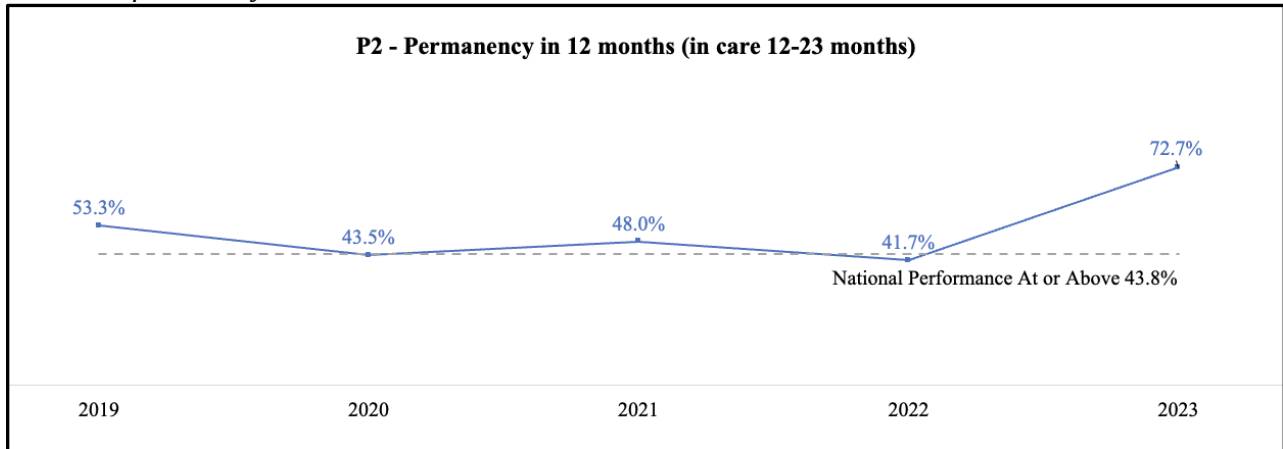
P1 Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Foster Care (National Performance $\geq 35.2\%$)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Children with exit to permanency	-	-	*	*	*
Children with entries	-	-	*	*	*
Tuolumne Probation – Q3 Point-in-Time	N/A	N/A	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Probation did not meet the national performance for this measure in three of the last five years that data was available. 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. While Probation’s small numbers make it difficult to assert causal factors for performance on P1, during their review of cases during the 2024 Peer Review, peers noted challenges achieving permanency within 12 months due to youth having treatment needs that exceeded 12 months, the nature of offenses, and/or having legal barriers to reunification (e.g. a restraining order).

Measure 4-P2: Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12-23 months

This is a Federal Outcomes Measure that reports the percentage of all children in foster care on the first day of the 12-month period, who had been in foster care (in that episode) for 12 to 23 months and were 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 at or above 43.8%.

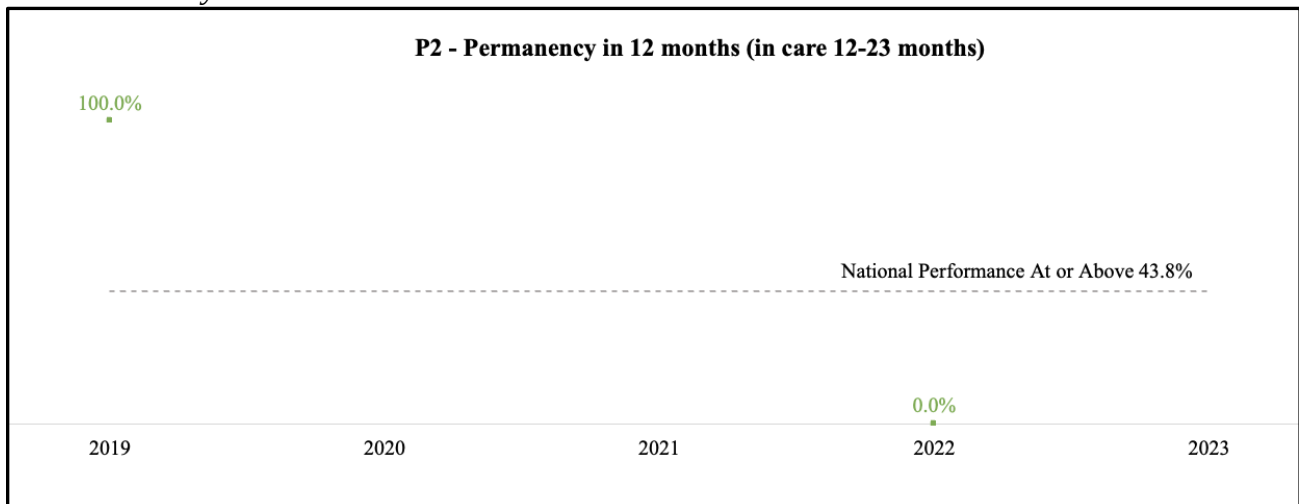
Child Welfare Analysis:



P2 Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 12-23 Months (National Performance $\geq$43.8%)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Children with exit to permanency	*	*	12	*	16
In care 12-23 months	*	*	25	*	22
Tuolumne CWS – Q3 Point-in-Time	53.3%	43.5%	48.0%	41.7%	72.7%

CWS has met the national performance of 43.8% for the P2 measure in three of the last five years, well exceeding it in 2023. In 2020 and 2022, performance only dipped slightly below 43.8%—by 0.05% in 2020 and by 2.1% in 2022. These small dips may have been influenced by factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Probation Analysis:



P2 Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 12-23 Months (National Performance $\geq 43.8\%$)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Children with exit to permanency	*	-	-	*	-
In care 12-23 months	*	-	-	*	-
Tuolumne Probation – Q3 Point-in-Time	100.0%	N/A	N/A	0.0%	N/A

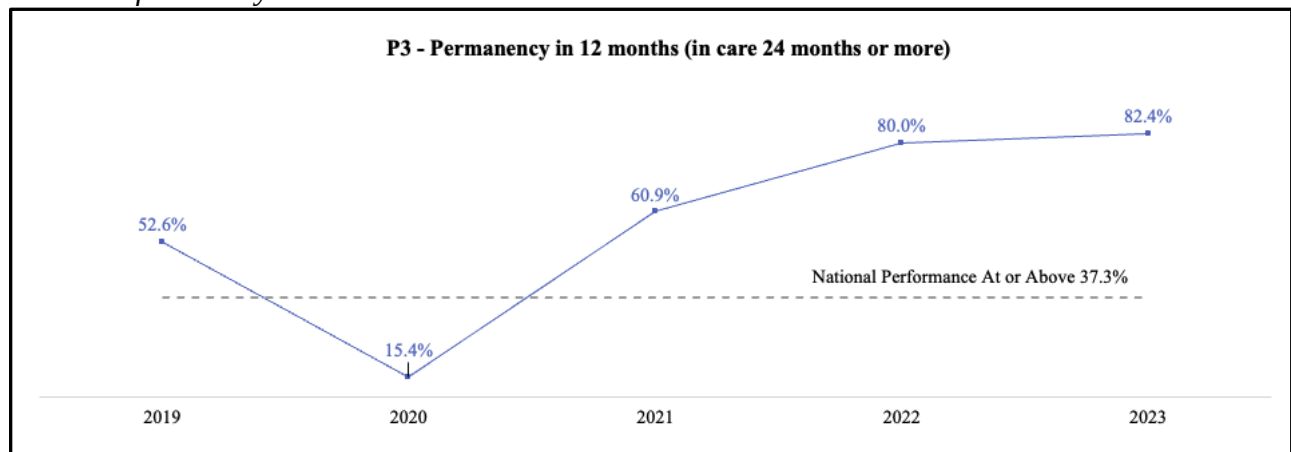
This measure was not applicable for three years reflected in the Q3 2023 report, including 2019, 2020, and 2023. Within the two years where data was available in this five-year trend analysis, Probation's performance fluctuated between 0.0% and 100.0%. This variation is due to the relatively small number of youth overseen by the Probation Department, where even a single case can have a substantial impact on the percentage of this measure.

Probation has chosen to prioritize P2 for this SIP for the reasons further described in the Prioritization of Outcome Factors section below.

Measure 4-P3: Permanency in 12 months for children in Foster care 24 months or more

This Federal Outcomes Measure reports the percentage of 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, and were 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:

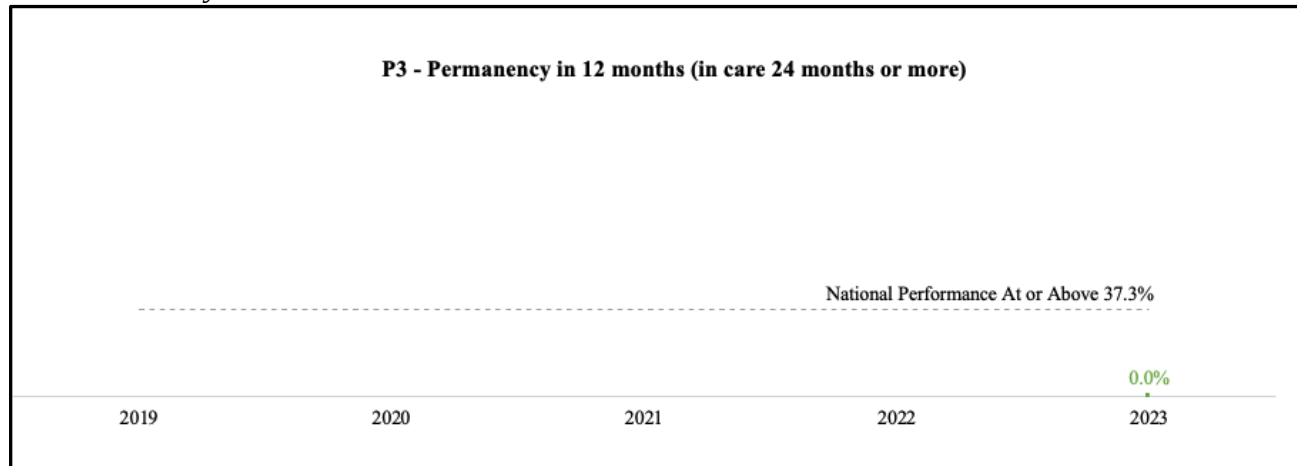


P3 Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 24 Months or More (National Performance $\geq 37.3\%$)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Children with exit to permanency	*	*	14	16	14
In care 24 months or more	*	*	23	20	17

Tuolumne CWS – Q3 Point-in-Time	52.6%	15.4%	60.9%	80.0%	82.4%
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CWS has exceeded the national performance of 37.3% in four out of five most recent Q3 periods. CWS did not meet the national performance in 2020. Factors that negatively impacted performance in 2020 included the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the process of bringing adoptions in-house in 2020, which involved a significant initial learning curve.

Probation Analysis:



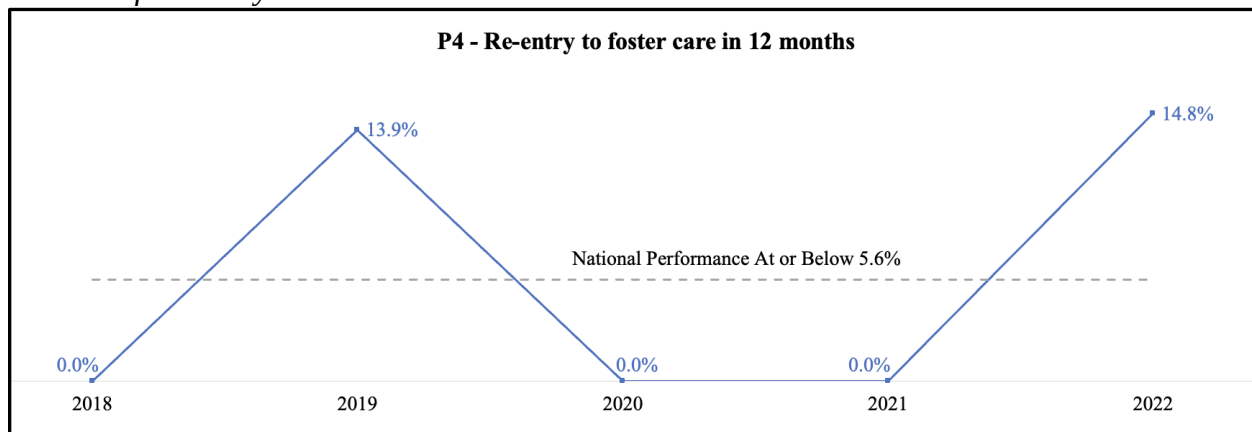
P3 Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 24 Months or More (National Performance $\geq$ 37.3%)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Children with exit to permanency	-	-	-	-	*
In care 24 months or more	-	-	-	-	*
Tuolumne Probation – Q3 Point-in-Time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.0%

This measure was not applicable during the Q3 reporting years 2019 through 2022, meaning that no qualifying data was available for those periods. For the data that was available in Q3 2023 (the most recent reporting period), Probation did not meet the national performance. The number of youth in care for 24 months or more has consistently been low, making performance on this measure highly susceptible to the experiences of just one or two youth.

Measure 4-P4: Re-entry to foster care

This Federal Outcomes Measure reports the percentage of children discharged from foster care to permanency (reunification or guardianship) during the year who reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the date of the earliest discharge to reunification or guardianship during the year. The national performance for this measure is less than or equal to 5.6%.

Child Welfare Analysis:

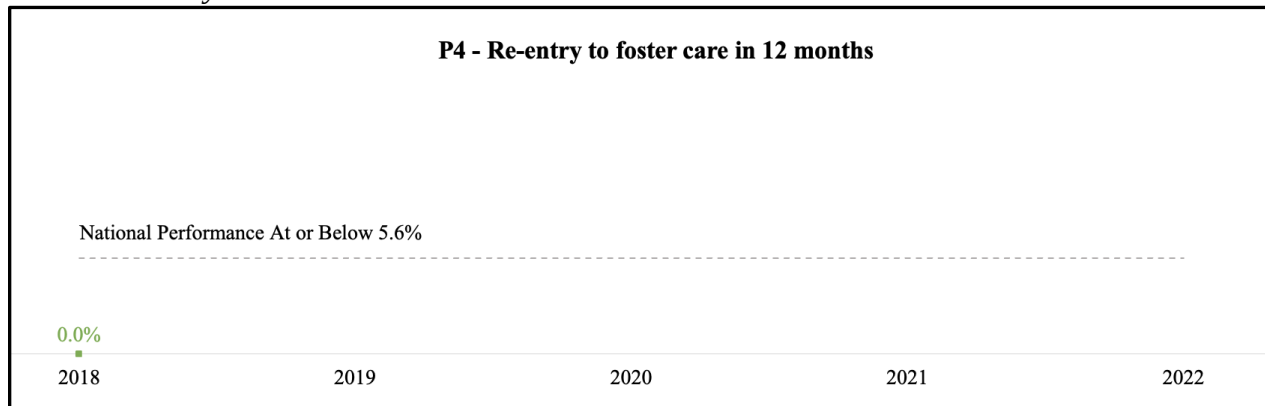


P4 Re-Entry to Foster Care in 12 Months (National Performance $\leq 5.6\%$)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Children with re-entries	*	*	*	*	*
Children with exits to reunification or guardianship	*	*	*	*	*
Tuolumne CWS – Q3 Point-in-Time	0.0%	13.9%	0.0%	0.0%	14.8%

Reviewing the five-year trend analysis, Tuolumne’s performance on this measure has fluctuated, with periods of both meeting and not meeting the national performance. In the most recent reporting period for Q3 2022, Tuolumne CWS did not meet the national performance.

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, which may contribute to performance on this measure at times. However, it’s important to note that the small number of youth encompassed by this measure, as indicated by the masked data of the table above, makes performance on this measure highly susceptible to the experiences of a few youth or a sibling set.

Probation Analysis:



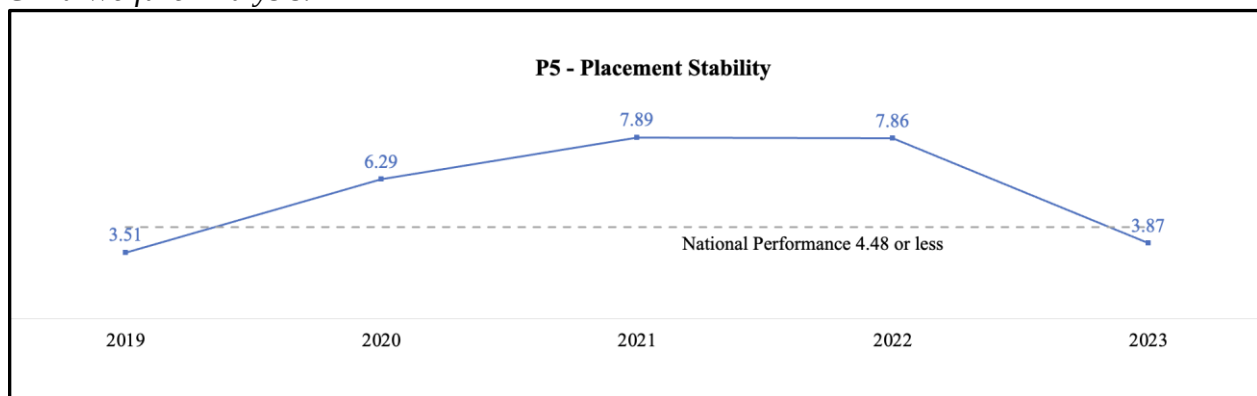
P4 Re-Entry to Foster Care in 12 Months (National Performance $\leq 5.6\%$)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Children with re-entries	*	-	-	-	-
Children with exits to reunification or guardianship	*	-	-	-	-
Tuolumne Probation – Q3 Point-in-Time	0.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

This measure was not applicable during the Q3 reporting years 2019 through 2022, meaning that no qualifying data was available for those periods. For 2018, the one year that data was available, Probation met the national performance. Given the small numbers of youth encompassed within this measure, Probation's performance can be significantly influenced by the experiences of one or two youth.

Measure 4-P5: Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days)

This Federal Outcomes Measure reports the rate of placement moves per day of foster care for all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period. The national performance for this measure is less than or equal to 4.48 per 1,000 days.

Child Welfare Analysis:

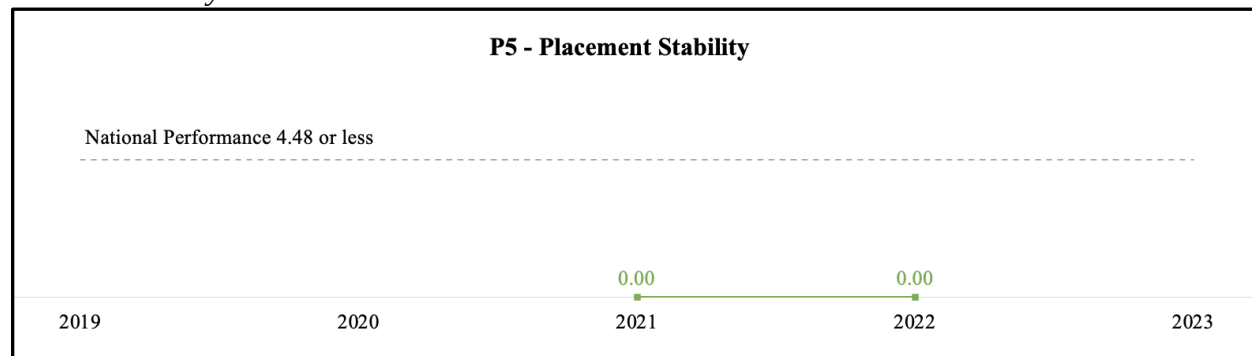


P5 Placement Stability (National Performance ≤ 4.48 Rate of Placement Moves per 1,000 Days)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Placement moves	32	57	58	37	26
Foster care days	9,126	9,065	7,352	4,710	6,715
Tuolumne CWS – Q3 Point-in-Time	3.51	6.29	7.89	7.86	3.87

CWS has met the national performance on this measure in Q3 in two of the past five years, including in the most recent reporting period of 2023.

Factors negatively impacting performance on this measure 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. Moreover, children in foster care overall often experience delays in accessing mental health services, exacerbating challenges. 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.

Probation Analysis:



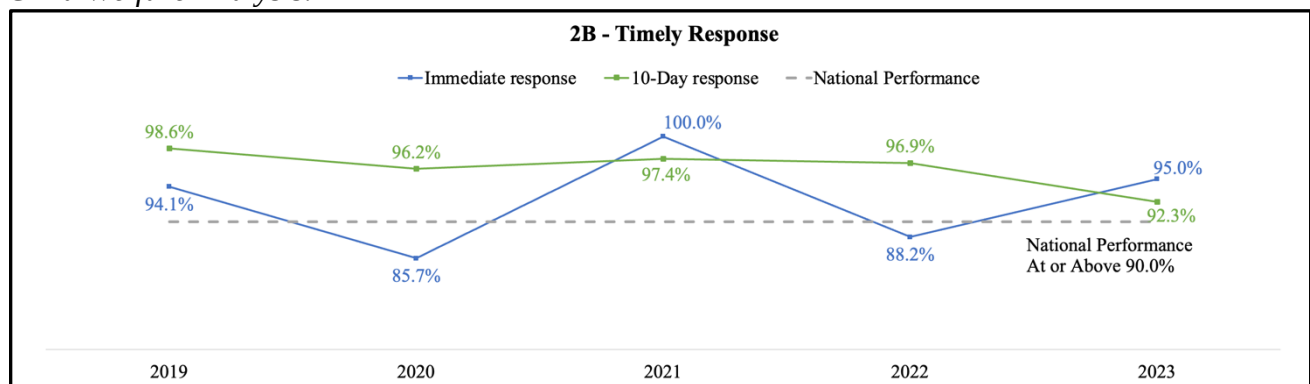
P5 Placement Stability (National Performance ≤ 4.48 Rate of Placement Moves per 1,000 Days)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Placement moves	-	-	*	*	-
Foster care days	-	-	*	*	-
Tuolumne Probation – Q3 Point-in-Time	N/A	N/A	0.00	0.00	N/A

Probation effectively minimizes the number of placement moves for youth who do enter care. This measure was not applicable for three of the five most recent years. When data is available, performance shows that Probation meets the national performance.

Measure 2B: Percent of Child Abuse/Neglect Referrals with a Timely Response (CWS Only)

These reports count both the number of child abuse and neglect referrals that require, and then receive, an in-person investigation within the time frame specified by the referral response type. Referrals with status “attempted” or “completed” are included in the numerator. Referrals are classified as either immediate response (within 24 hours) or 10-day response. The national performance for this measure is at or above 90.0%.

Child Welfare Analysis:



2B Referrals by Time to Investigation - Immediate (Compliance Rate: 90%)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Seen by social worker within 24 hrs.	16	12	13	15	16
Immediate response cases	17	14	13	17	20
Tuolumne CWS – Q3 Point-in-Time	94.1%	85.7%	100.0%	88.2%	95.0%

2B Referrals by Time to Investigation - 10-Day (Compliance Rate: 90%)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Seen by social worker within 10 days	68	51	76	63	42
10 days or less response cases	69	53	78	65	53
Tuolumne CWS – Q3 Point-in-Time	98.6%	96.2%	97.4%	96.9%	92.3%

CWS met the national performance on the immediate timely response measure in three of the past five years. Performance was slightly under 90% in 2022 and 2020. Given the small numbers of youth encompassed within this measure, CWS’ performance can be influenced by the experience of one youth. In fact, CWS would have met the national performance in both years had one more youth had a timely immediate response. In 2020, performance was likely impacted by COVID. In 2022, performance may have dipped under 90% due to social worker vacancies. When staffing is particularly low, logging case details often occurs much later than

when staffing levels are higher. Staffing is no longer an issue as CWS has recently hired multiple new social workers for the Emergency Response Unit.

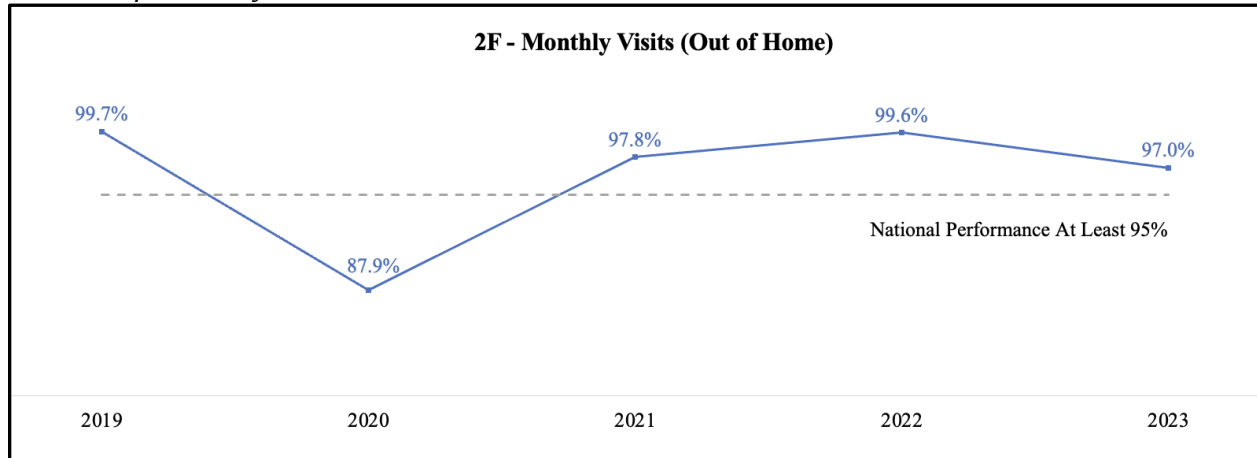
CWS consistently exceeded the national performance for addressing referrals within a 10-day response window over the past five years, performing above 90% each year.

Probation Analysis: This measure is not applicable to Probation.

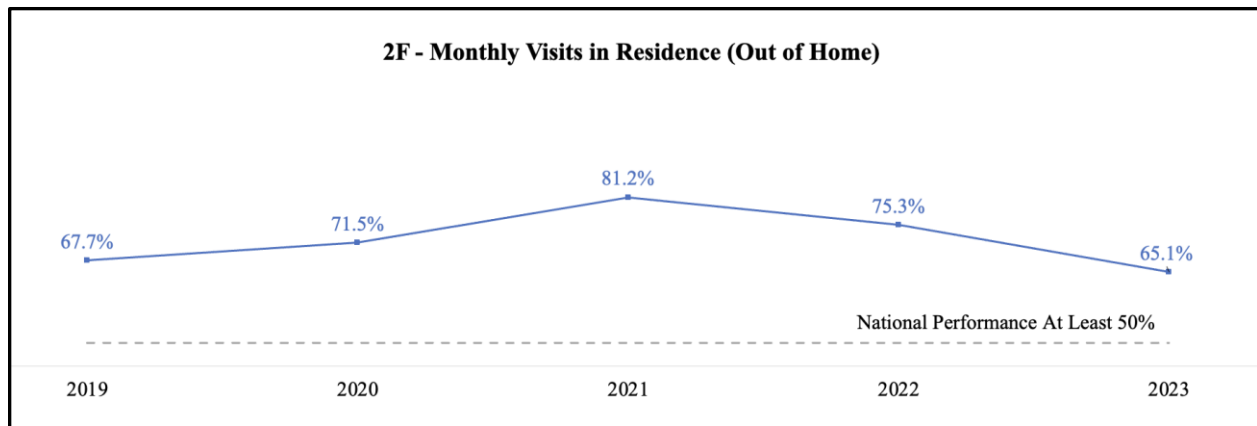
Measure 2F: Timely Caseworker Visits with Children

This Federal Outcomes Measure reports the percentage of children in foster care for an entire specific month who received an in-person visit from a child welfare worker during that month. It also examines the percentage of these in-person visits that occurred at the child's residence. The national performance for timely monthly caseworker visits is set at 95.0%, where higher percentages reflect better success in meeting this measure. The national performance for timely monthly caseworker visits within the residence is set at 50%.

Child Welfare Analysis:



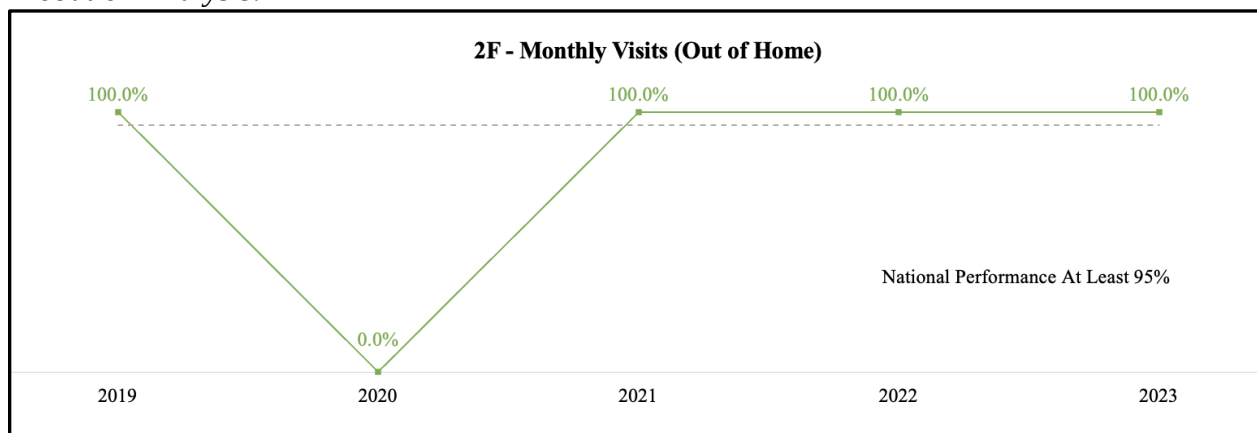
2F Timely Monthly Caseworker Out-of-Home Visits (Compliance Rate: 95%)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Months with visits	866	875	984	750	704
Months open	869	996	1006	753	726
Tuolumne CWS – Q3 Point-in-Time	99.7%	87.9%	97.8%	99.6%	97.0%



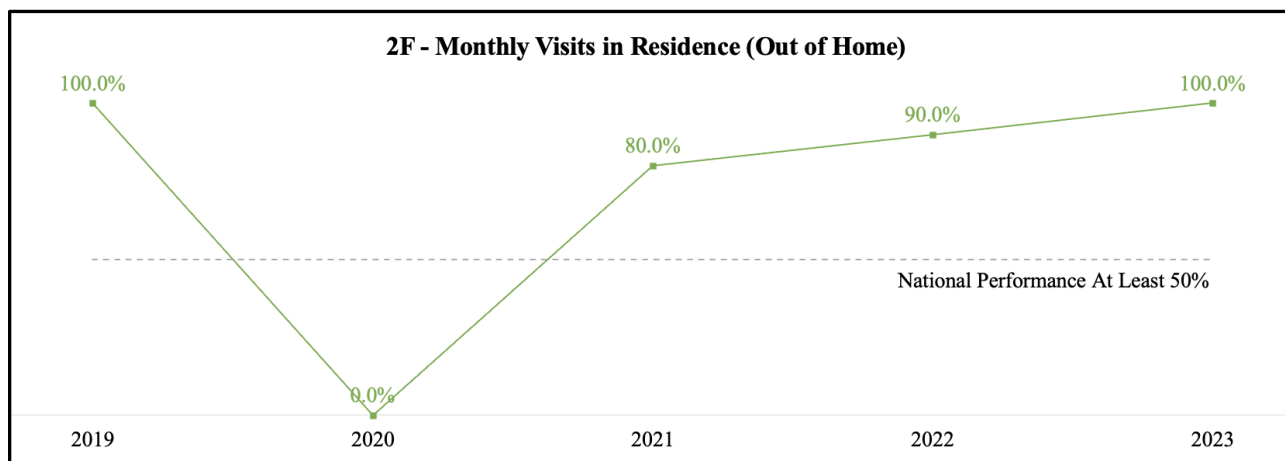
2F Timely Monthly Caseworker Out-of-Home Visits in Residence (Compliance Rate: 50%)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Months with visits in residence	586	626	799	565	458
Months with visits	866	875	984	750	704
Tuolumne CWS – Q3 Point-in-Time	67.7%	71.5%	81.2%	75.3%	65.1%

CWS met the national performance of 95% for timely monthly caseworker visits out of home in four out of the past five years. Performance was below the national performance in 2020 due to challenges attributed to the COVID pandemic, but quickly improved by 2021. CWS has also consistently exceeded the national performance of 50% for timely monthly visits in residence. Monthly visits and contacts have always been a priority for CWS.

Probation Analysis:



2F Timely Monthly Caseworker Out-of-Home Visits (Compliance Rate: 95%)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Months with visits	*	*	*	*	*
Months open	*	*	*	*	*
Tuolumne Probation – Q3 Point-in-Time	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



2F Timely Monthly Caseworker Out-of-Home Visits in Residence (Compliance Rate: 50%)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Months with visits in residence	*	*	*	*	*
Months with visits	*	*	*	*	*
Tuolumne Probation – Q3 Point-in-Time	100.0%	0.0%	80.0%	90.0%	100.0%

Probation consistently exceeds the national performance for monthly and in-residence visits, achieving 100% compliance in multiple years. In 2020, during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Probation did not meet the national performance, but performance quickly recovered in 2021.

Prioritization of Outcome Data Measures/Systemic Factors and Strategy Rationale

Based on an analysis of data collected through stakeholder meetings, Peer Review, Focus Groups and the CSA during the C-CFSR process, Tuolumne County has identified the following outcomes as the focus for this next five-Year SIP. These outcomes were selected through a collaborative effort between Child Welfare, Probation, and CDSS:

Focus Area	CWS	Probation
4-P1: Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Foster Care	√	
4-S2: Recurrence of Maltreatment	√	
4-P2: Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 12-23 Months		√

More specifically, Child Welfare has chosen to prioritize P1 during this SIP cycle as the County's performance has continued to fluctuate on this measure over time, as further described in the Summary of Outcome Data Measures section above. Additionally, this measure aligns with Child Welfare's focus on enhancing the quality of social worker contacts with parents and

children and documentation of those contacts as further described in the narrative for Child Welfare Strategy #1. Additionally, Child Welfare has chosen to prioritize S2 during this SIP cycle, which was also the Priority Measure chosen for the Peer Review, as the County has generally not met the national performance for this measure. As further described in the Summary of Outcome Data Measures Section above, data quality issues due to referrals not being properly associated has been identified as a root cause of Child Welfare’s high recurrence rates in many recent years.

As noted in the Summary of Data Outcomes Section above, the small population of probation youth in care makes analysis of performance on Outcome Data Measures difficult; often times, Probation may have zero or only one or two youth in care at a time. These small numbers make it more difficult to rely solely on data on outcome measure performance when choosing a measure to prioritize. As the probation foster care population has declined over time, Probation staff have noted that the few youth entering care often had complex treatment needs that exceed 12 months and/or legal barriers to reunification (e.g., a restraining order). As result, Probation has chosen to prioritize P2 during this SIP cycle to reduce the time youth spend in care and achieve permanency as quickly as possible while recognizing that legal barriers and complex treatment needs may still prevent youth in care from achieving permanency within 12 months specifically (P1).

Strategies

Below, Tuolumne County Child Welfare and Probation describe their respective improvement strategies, including their justification rationales, action steps, systemic changes, training needs, roles of other partners, and evaluating and monitoring techniques for each strategy chosen.

Child Welfare Strategy #1
Outcome Measure: 4-P1: Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Foster Care (Child Welfare)
Strategy: Enhance the quality of social worker visits through the Integrated Core Practice Model.
Justification Rationale: Child Welfare has prioritized this strategy based on stakeholder feedback gathered during the CSA and SIP development processes and information gleaned from case reviews. For example, during the CSA development process, stakeholders described inconsistencies in case management functions and processes that can lead to unequal service delivery. While social workers are consistently conducting timely visits with children as required (Measure 2F), the quality of social worker visits with both children and parents can vary case by case, as evidenced by federal case review ratings. More specifically, of 20 cases included in Tuolumne’s federal case reviews between April 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023, 40% received a needs improvement rating related to caseworker visits with child (case review item 14) and 45% received a needs improvement rating related to caseworker visits with parents (case review item 15). An analysis of commonalities and differences between the “Strengths” and “Areas Needing

Improvement” ratings from the April 2022 to December 2023 federal case reviews indicated variability in case work practice or documentation. For example, the depth and substance of visits was noted to be a strength in some cases reviewed and an area needing improvement in others. According to the federal case review, some case notes omitted critical details about what was discussed during visits. However, case reviewers who participated in SIP brainstorm sessions reported that in some cases social workers were able to provide additional details when interviewed, at times indicating a documentation gap rather than an issue with the quality of the visit itself. Two of the recommendations for improvement that came from the federal case review analysis included (1) enhancing visit quality to focus on meaningful conversations about safety, well-being, and case goals rather than just surface-level observations, and (2) improving documentation by providing more detailed case notes about discussions, observations, and outcomes of visits. Enhancing the quality of documentation of social worker contacts is also important to ensure critical case information is not lost when staff turnover occurs. Social worker changes can lead to delays in case handling as new staff work to build relationships with families and get up to speed on the case history. When there are gaps in casework documentation this further delays case progress and can negatively impact permanency timeliness. These recent case review results, coupled with feedback from stakeholders, strongly support Child Welfare’s decision to prioritize this strategy.

Moreover, Child Welfare has chosen this strategy because of its potential to positively impact performance on P1. More specifically, enhancing the quality of visits with both parents and children has the potential to increase reunification within 12 months through improved engagement and identification of strengths and needs. Additionally, improving the quality of documentation can help reduce disruptions in case progress when social worker transitions occur.

When developing action steps to advance this strategy, Child Welfare leadership relied heavily on feedback from staff gathered during SIP strategy brainstorming meetings. During these meetings, staff identified challenges related to keeping abreast of changing rules, regulations, and best practices; time management and documentation practices; and staffing turnover and high caseloads, among others that may negatively impact the quality of social worker visits and/or documentation.

To enhance the quality of social worker visits with parents and children during this SIP cycle, Child Welfare plans to take steps to:

- Develop policies and procedures that set clear expectations for conducting and documenting quality social worker visits with children and parents.
- Create templates and other tools to support quality visits with both parents and children.
- Provide training and coaching to support effective implementation of templates and policies and procedures.
- Create best practices on time management and establish feedback loops to address any ongoing barriers to conducting and documenting quality visits; and
- Continuously monitor and evaluate the quality of social worker visits.

Early in the SIP cycle, Child Welfare will develop two separate templates for social workers to

utilize to ensure meaningful visits; one template will be tailored to social worker visits with parents and the other will focus on social worker visits with children. The templates will be structured to help guide conversations and ensure critical information needed for case planning and assessing safety and well-being is gathered during each contact, thereby ensuring a quality contact occurs. The templates will be informed by the Integrated Core Practice Model, Division 31 rules and regulations, All County Letter 19-87, and other best practices for quality social worker visits. Social workers will be actively involved in the process of developing the templates to ensure they meet their needs in the field. Child Welfare also intends to also gather input from Tuolumne County staff responsible for conducting federal case reviews to help inform the template development.

Child Welfare will also develop written policies and procedures on both conducting and documenting quality social worker visits. This action step was identified based on staff feedback that elevated a need for more user-friendly guidance around expectations for social worker visits that brings together complex information from a variety of sources, such as Division 31 regulations, the Welfare and Institutions and Code, and All-County letters. These written policies and procedures will provide more accessible guidance that draws on regulatory and statutory requirements, as well as best practices on engagement. While the templates described above will not be programmed into CWS/CMS, their use is intended to also help improve the quality of documentation by ensuring critical information is being gathered and is available for inclusion in contact logs. Child Welfare plans to provide guidance in the written policies and procedures to help ensure that information gathered using the template is included in documentation added to CWS/CMS in a timely manner.

Once developed, the written policies and procedures will also be integrated into a Child Welfare Orientation packet that will be part of Tuolumne's staff onboarding template. The staff onboarding template is already in development but not yet finalized. The onboarding template will include and highlight existing department and agency policies and procedures. The beginning section of the onboarding packet will be generic to all Department of Social Services staff so that all teams can use it as a base. Each program team will then add their respective program unit's policies, procedures, and guidance. Child Welfare supervisors will review the Child Welfare orientation packet with new Child Welfare staff on their first or second day of employment. Additionally, all new social worker staff will be registered to participate in the UC Davis Northern California Training Academy training on Quality Caseworker Visits. All current staff have attended the training in the past 18 months.

During this SIP cycle, Child Welfare will also create job aids and tools to help with strategy implementation and/or evaluation and monitoring of this strategy. For example, Child Welfare may create samples of quality case documentation to share with social workers, a checklist for social workers and supervisors to use to enhance and document ongoing engagement efforts with parents, and/or a tool to assist supervisors or leadership in reviewing documentation to assess if a quality visit occurred and support coaching efforts. While these are examples of possible job aides or tools, Child Welfare will further determine during the SIP cycle which job aides/tool will be the most beneficial to develop.

During the SIP development process, social workers elevated challenges with taking good

notes in the field and finding the time to document quality visits, especially amidst staffing shortages and/or high caseloads. When documentation was not completed quickly after the visit, social workers reported they sometimes had difficulty recalling details from the visits to add into documentation later. To address these challenges, Child Welfare leadership, in collaboration with social workers, will develop best practices for time management, building off lessons learned from current or prior efforts (e.g., soft closures, use of protected time, using talk to text to capture notes, remote work opportunities, utilization of a Zen room, piloting technology tools, etc.). Additionally, to ensure feedback from staff is continually gathered to make ongoing adjustments to practices, Child Welfare leadership will convene staff quarterly to discuss ongoing challenges to conducting and documenting quality social worker visits and recommendations for adjustments and/or new solutions to overcome barriers.

As described below in the section entitled “Educational/Training Needs to Achieve this Strategy,” staff will receive training on the social worker visit templates and new policies and procedures once developed. They will also receive coaching focused on conducting and documenting quality social worker contacts to ensure successful implementation of this strategy. As described in further detail in the Evaluation and Monitoring section below, Child Welfare plans to monitor and evaluate the quality of social worker visits through case reviews, supervision, and staff feedback.

Action Steps:

- A. Create templates for quality social worker visits.
 - i. with parents.
 - ii. with children.
- B. Develop policies and procedures on conducting and documenting quality social worker visits.
- C. Create best practices for time management.
- D. Create job aids/tools on quality social worker visits.
- E. Train child welfare staff on the templates, policies, and procedures and begin implementation.
- F. Provide coaching to social workers around quality social worker visits.
- G. Convene staff quarterly to provide feedback on challenges conducting and documenting quality social worker visits.
- H. Monitor and evaluate the quality of social worker visits, including through case reviews and supervision.

Systemic Changes:

Development of policies and procedures on conducting and documenting quality social worker contacts with parents and children.

Educational/Training Needs to Achieve this Strategy:

Social workers will need and receive training on the new templates and policies and procedures that will be developed. To ensure successful implementation of the new templates and policies and procedures, supervisors will also provide ongoing coaching to social workers

around quality social worker contacts and contact logs at least once monthly during individual and/or group supervision meetings.

Roles of Other Partners in Achieving this Strategy:

Child Welfare plans to engage staff from the General Services Unit (GSU) who are responsible for conducting federal case reviews to get their input on templates to be developed or any job aides or tools that supervisors may use in monitoring and assessing the quality of visits. Child Welfare also plans to partner with GSU staff around federal case review outcomes.

Evaluation and Monitoring:

- Monitoring of Measure 4-P1
- Findings from federal case reviews: Each quarter Child Welfare will review performance on Items 14 and 15 of the Onsite Review Instrument and Instructions (OSRI) used during the Child and Family Services case reviews. Child Welfare will review an analysis of commonalities and differences in ratings and rating rationales to track trends over time and evaluate progress.
- Targeted internal case reviews: Supervisors will pick a small sample of case logs to review and discuss in supervision at least quarterly.
- Child Welfare leadership plan to explore other opportunities for evaluation and monitoring through supervision and staff coaching.
- Quarterly meeting with staff to gather feedback on challenges conducting and documenting quality social worker visits.

Child Welfare Strategy #2

Outcome Measure: 4-S2: Recurrence of Maltreatment

Strategy: Establish and implement clear procedures and processes for associating related child abuse and neglect referrals to improve data accuracy and quality around recurrence of maltreatment.

Justification Rationale:

Peer review recommendations and findings, staff feedback gathered when developing both the CSA and SIP, and the results from an analysis of recurrence cases from three recent quarters [in which CWS did not meet the national performance for S2] all support Child Welfare's decision to prioritize this strategy.

In the process of selecting cases for the Peer Review, Child Welfare identified that many of the cases that were categorized as a recurrence of maltreatment involved referrals that had not been properly associated rather than true recurrences of maltreatment. During the Peer Review, peers elevated data management issues that made it unclear if recurrence of maltreatment had actually occurred. Moreover, they recommended establishing improved processes for handling multiple open referrals and criteria for associating referrals.

During the SIP development process, Child Welfare staff participated in a brainstorming

session that provided further support for this strategy and informed the development of action steps. Staff noted that associating referrals can be a really complicated process, especially when there are more than two referrals that needed to be associated. They elevated a lack of written procedures, step-by-step guides, and dedicated training on this topic as a challenges that made them uncertain if they were properly associating referrals. These challenges were exacerbated by workforce challenges, such as staff turnover or vacancies.

Furthermore, Child Welfare found that data quality issues from not properly associating referrals was a root cause of it not meeting the national performance for this measure in three quarters in which recurrence cases were reviewed and analyzed. During its review and analysis, leadership identified that sometimes there had been no attempt to associate referrals that should have been associated, and other times efforts had been made to associate the referrals but had not been done correctly. More details regarding Child Welfare's analysis and resulting findings are described in the Summary of Outcomes Data Measures section of the report above.

Findings from Child Welfare's data analysis and feedback from Emergency Response staff gathered during the SIP development process led Child Welfare to identify a need for both clear written procedures on associating referrals and step-by-step guides for how to associate referrals in the required data systems. Early in the SIP cycle, Child Welfare will create written procedures with definitions and criteria for when referrals should be associated, as well as procedures for how to properly close referrals that have been associated. Next, Child Welfare will develop a step-by-step written guide for social workers on how to associate referrals within CWS/CMS that provides screenshots and other visuals to walk staff through the steps within the system. As counties are anticipated to shift from CWS/CMS to the CARES system during this five-year cycle, Child Welfare will also develop a subsequent step-by-step written guide specific to CARES as the CARES transition approaches.

Social workers, social worker aides, and supervisors will receive training on the written procedures and guides for associating referrals in CWS/CMS once developed. This training will incorporate guidance contained in any relevant CDSS All County Information Notices. While broader CWS/CMS training available to social workers may contain some information on associating referrals, not all staff are able to attend this larger training. Moreover, Tuolumne County identified the need for dedicated training and materials on this topic apart from a broader training on CWS/CMS that covers many aspects of the system.

Child Welfare will develop and implement a process for monitoring and evaluating whether referrals are being appropriately associated that involves internal case reviews. More specifically, Child Welfare leadership will determine the frequency of internal case reviews, person(s) responsible for review, number of sample cases to be reviewed, and the methodology for identifying whether procedures are being effectively implemented. Developing this process will be particularly important as no items from the federal case review process relate to this topic specifically. Child Welfare plans to conduct internal case reviews of all cases with a recurrence of maltreatment, as well as pick a sample of cases with no recurrence of maltreatment. When conducting reviews, Child Welfare will assess whether referrals were properly associated if applicable.

Moreover, during this SIP cycle, Child Welfare will analyze cases with a true recurrence of maltreatment to identify root causes of recurrence. Conducting a deep analysis of a sufficient number of cases over time will be critical to helping Child Welfare identify trends, especially given the small number of cases with a true recurrence in any given quarter. While varied factors such as failed safety plans, court-ordered visitation against recommendations, and out-of-county case transfers contributed to some recurrence cases reviewed during the CSA development process, no systemic pattern was evident at that time (CSA p. 122). This finding underscores the need for deeper case analysis so efforts to reduce recurrence can be appropriately tailored to the appropriate root causes. More specifically, a Child Welfare agency manager will review and analyze true recurrence cases at least semiannually (every six months) to identify factors underlying recurrence in individual cases. To ensure generalizability of any individual findings and identify trends, the agency manager will then annually collate and synthesize findings on trends from all cases analyzed over the course of a 12-month period to share out with Child Welfare leadership and staff. Child Welfare plans to create a consistent structure and process for capturing case review findings that ensures that the information gathered at least every six months can easily be collated and synthesized annually. Child Welfare then plans to share out annual findings via existing meetings and/or structures, such as CWS management meetings, Integrated System of Care (ISOC) Unit Meetings, and/or a Data Integrity Group report. To supplement information gathered from analyzing case notes and files, the agency manager will also solicit feedback from supervisors at least every six months on factors they believe are driving recurrence based on their on-the-ground observations.

On an annual basis, Child Welfare leadership will then use findings on any trends from its case analysis to collaboratively develop and/or refine recommendations for addressing the root causes identified to help reduce recurrence of maltreatment.

Action Steps:

- A. Develop a process for monitoring whether referrals are being appropriately associated.
- B. Create written procedures on associating referrals and properly closing associated referrals.
- C. Develop a step-by-step guide for social workers on how to associate referrals within CWS/CMS.
- D. Analyze cases with a recurrence of maltreatment to identify root causes of recurrence. Any referrals that should have been associated (but were not) will be excluded from this root cause analysis.
- E. Train social workers, social work aides, and supervisors on procedures and guides for associating referrals in CWS/CMS.
- F. Develop a step-by-step guide for social workers on how to associate referrals post transition to CARES.
Implement written procedures and utilize guide for associating referrals within CWS/CMS.
- G. Monitor and evaluate implementation of this strategy through internal case reviews.
- H. Based on trends from the analysis of cases, develop recommendations to address root causes of recurrence [excluding data quality issues].

Systemic Changes:

Development of written procedures and step-by-step guides for associating referrals.
Development of a process for ongoing monitoring to ensure proper association of referrals.

Educational/Training Needs to Achieve this Strategy:

Staff (social workers, social work aides, and supervisors) will need to be trained on procedures and step-by-step guides for associating referrals in CWS/CMS and subsequently CARES.

Roles of Other Partners in Achieving this Strategy:

Child Welfare may consult with peer counties and UC Davis when creating procedures, guides, and/or training.

Evaluation and Monitoring:

As described above, Child Welfare will develop and implement a process for monitoring and evaluating whether referrals are being appropriately associated that involves internal case reviews. More specifically, Child Welfare leadership will determine the frequency of internal case reviews, person(s) responsible for review, number of sample cases to be reviewed, and the methodology for identifying whether procedures are being effectively implemented. Developing this process will be particularly important as no items from the federal case review process relate to this topic specifically. Child Welfare plans to conduct internal case reviews of all cases with a recurrence of maltreatment, as well as pick a sample of cases with no recurrence of maltreatment. When conducting reviews, Child Welfare will assess whether referrals were probably associated if applicable, as well as analyze cases with a true recurrence of maltreatment to identify root causes and trends in recurrence cases. Child Welfare will then be able to use this information to develop recommendations for further actions to help reduce recurrence of maltreatment.

Probation Strategy #1

Outcome Measure: 4-P2: Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 12-23 Months

Strategy: Strengthen Probation family finding and engagement efforts throughout the life of a case to improve permanency outcomes through increased connection to kin.

Justification Rationale:

Probation prioritized this strategy based on stakeholder feedback from the CSA and SIP development processes and an understanding of the unique needs of the relatively small number of youth in probation-supervised foster care at any given time.

For example, during the CSA and SIP development processes, stakeholders elevated:

- A need for more consistent and clear engagement of relatives throughout the life of a case. Inconsistent follow-up with natural supports to assess their ongoing ability to

contribute can lead to gaps in the child's support network. In contrast, a 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.

- A lack of homes for probation-supervised children in foster care.
- Program/treatment needs often do not match permanency timelines. During the Peer Review, peers noted that youth's complex treatment needs can exceed 12 months. Moreover, during the SIP development process, Probation staff elevated that youth with specific offenses, such as sex offenses, often require extended programming. These offenses can present considerable challenges to achieving timely reunification or locating appropriate step-down supportive environments
- Legal and custodial barriers, such as restraining/no contact orders, pose challenges to reunification/permanency within 12 months. This challenge was elevated by peers during the Peer Review and by Probation leadership during the SIP development process.

To address the challenges described above and improve permanency outcomes, Probation is committed to enhancing family finding and engagement (FFE) efforts throughout the life of a case. Probation expects to facilitate timely permanency by building stronger connections between youth and their kin and communities, leading to an increase in the number of homes for probation-youth in care.

More specifically, during the SIP development process, Probation identified the need to clarify roles and responsibilities related to Probation and Child Welfare collaboration on FFE, as well as strengthen Probation's internal capacity for conducting FFE throughout the life of a case. Historically, Probation has relied on Child Welfare to support its FFE efforts, including by leveraging Child Welfare's contract with an outside vendor (Seneca Family of Agencies) to conduct initial searches for relatives using electronic search engines. At times, Child Welfare has also assisted Probation in other FFE activities, including by creating genograms based on the initial search results. However, the lack of any guidelines around collaboration have led to confusion at times, especially when there is staff turnover or staffing shortages, both in terms of what Child Welfare staff can assist with and the processes for requesting support. To address this challenge, leadership with Probation and Child Welfare will meet early in the SIP cycle and work together to develop agreed written guidelines that define roles and responsibilities around collaboration.

Additional action steps will focus on strengthening Probation's internal FFE efforts both initially and ongoing. As Probation does not currently have any written policies and procedures related to initial and ongoing FFE, creating this guidance is a critical action step. The written policies and procedures will include both requirements and best practices related to FFE. Thus, early in the SIP cycle, Probation leadership will reach out to peers in other counties to identify best practices they are using to strengthen ongoing FFE efforts specifically. These research findings will inform and be integrated into Probation's written policies and procedures.

Moreover, Probation placement staff will receive training on FFE on an ongoing basis

throughout this SIP cycle. Further details on training are described in the section below entitled “Educational/Training Needs to Achieve this Strategy.”

As Probation does not currently have formal processes for tracking and evaluating FFE efforts on an individual or systemic basis, this strategy includes several actions steps to build Probation’s monitoring capacity. For example, Probation will build functionality within the Tyler Probation Case Management System, which is the case management system used by Juvenile Probation staff, to assist in tracking and monitoring FFE efforts at a systems level. More specifically, Probation plans to create a field for a FFE contact note. Once this functionality is added, Probation will be able to generate periodic reports that pull out information on FFE efforts for all cases to monitor implementation of enhanced FFE efforts. Additional details on evaluation and monitoring are included in the evaluation and monitoring section below.

Action Steps:

- A. Research best practices used by county probation agencies for ongoing Family Finding and Engagement.
- B. Develop written guidelines that define roles and responsibilities related to Probation and Child Welfare collaboration on Family Finding and Engagement.
- C. Train Probation placement staff on family finding and engagement initially and ongoing, including on written policies and procedures once finalized.
- D. Create Probation written policies and procedures for Family Finding and Engagement initially and ongoing.
- E. Build functionality within the Tyler Probation Case Management System to track family finding efforts.
- F. Develop a process for tracking family finding efforts utilizing the Tyler tracking functionality.
- G. Implement enhanced family finding and engagement efforts.
- H. Monitor and evaluate family finding and engagement efforts through Tyler reports and internal case reviews.

Systemic Changes:

- Development of written guidelines for Probation and Child Welfare collaboration.
- Creation of written policies and procedures for Family Finding and Engagement.
- Functionality added into the Tyler Probation Case Management System for data tracking.

Educational/Training Needs to Achieve this Strategy:

Probation placement staff will receive training on an ongoing basis on family finding and engagement. It is expected that Probation placement staff will participate in multiple trainings over the course of this SIP cycle. For example, early in the cycle, Probation placement staff may participate in an initial training focused on family finding and engagement generally. Once finalized, Probation placement staff will also be trained on the written family finding and

engagement policies and procedures and guidelines for Probation and Child Welfare collaboration. Additional trainings during the cycle will be identified based on staff needs and available training resources.

Roles of Other Partners in Achieving this Strategy:

- Probation will partner with Child Welfare leadership and staff to develop written guidelines that define roles and responsibilities related to interagency collaboration on Family Finding and Engagement. Probation will then partner with Child Welfare staff consistent with those written guidelines. For example, Probation may partner with Child Welfare to leverage its contract with Seneca Family of Services for its initial search for relatives.
- Probation plans to research best practices used by other county probation agencies.
- Probation may partner with Child Welfare or other entities, such as the Chief Probation Officers of California or UC Davis, to leverage existing FFE training resources.

Evaluation and Monitoring:

Due to there being very few Probation youth in care at any given time – usually 0 to 2 youth – Probation historically has not had cases reviewed through the federal case review process. Thus, Probation will rely on internal case reviews to evaluate and monitor this strategy. More specifically, Probation leadership plans to evaluate and monitor this strategy by conducting internal case reviews every six months to identify and assess family finding and engagement efforts as documented in individual case files. After the functionality to track family finding and engagement efforts is built into the Tyler Probation Case Management System, the Divisions will generate and review reports at least quarterly to evaluate family finding and engagement efforts on a systemic basis.

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 Integrated 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, Professional Assault Crisis Training, and Interagency Resource Collaborative Structure and Facilitation. 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 (FURS)

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

Five-Year SIP Chart

Child Welfare: Priority Outcome Measure: 4-P1: Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Foster Care

National Performance: At or above 35.2%

CSA Baseline Performance: 25.7% (Q3 2023)

Current Performance: 25.7% (Q3 2023)

Target Improvement Goal:

Year 2: Increase P1 to 28.7%

Year 3: Increase P1 to 31.7%

Year 4: Increase P1 to 35.7%

Child Welfare: Priority Outcome Measure: 4-S2: Recurrence of Maltreatment

National Performance: No more than 9.7%

CSA Baseline Performance: 13.3% (Q3 2023)

Current Performance: 13.3% (Q3 2023)

Target Improvement Goal:

Year 2: Decrease S2 to 12.1%

Year 3: Decrease S2 to 10.9%

Year 4: Decrease S2 to 9.7%

Probation: Priority Outcome Measure: 4-P2: Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 12-23 Months

National Performance: At or above 43.8%

CSA Baseline Performance: N/A (Q3 2023)

Current Performance: N/A (Q3 2023). Probation's performance in Q3 2022, the most recent year in which this measure was applicable, was 0%.

Target Improvement Goal:

Year 2: Increase P1 to 3%

Year 3: Increase P1 to 6%

Year 4: Increase P1 to 10%

Child Welfare Strategy 1: Enhance the quality of social worker visits through the Integrated Core Practice Model.	☐ CAPIT	Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): 4-P1: Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Foster Care OSRI Case Review Items 14 (Caseworker Visits with Child) and 15 (Caseworker Visits with Parents).	
	☐ CBCAP		
	☐ PSSF		
	☒ N/A	☐ Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project	
Action Steps	Implementation Date	Completion Date	Person Responsible
A. Create templates for quality social worker visits. i. with parents ii. with children.	May 2025	November 2025	Social Services Director Agency Manager(s) Social Services Supervisors General Services Unit CQI Analyst
B. Develop policies and procedures on conducting and documenting quality social worker visits.	May 2025	May 2026	Social Services Director Agency Manager(s)
C. Create best practices for time management.	May 2026	November 2026	Social Services Director Social Services Supervisors
D. Create job aids/tools on quality social worker visits.	May 2026	May 2027	Social Services Director Social Services Supervisors General Services Unit CQI Analyst
E. Train child welfare staff on templates, policies, and procedures and begin implementation.	July 2026	October 2026	Social Services Director Agency Manager(s) Social Services Supervisors
F. Provide coaching to social workers around quality social worker visits.	January 2027	May 2029	All management staff

G. Convene staff quarterly to provide feedback on challenges conducting and documenting quality social worker visits.	January 2027	May 2029	All management staff
H. Monitor and evaluate the quality of social worker visits, including through case reviews and supervision.	January 2027	May 2029	Social Services Director Agency Manager(s) General Services Unit CQI Analyst Social Services Supervisors

Child Welfare Strategy 2: Establish and implement clear procedures and processes for associating related child abuse and neglect referrals to improve data accuracy and quality around recurrence of maltreatment.	☐ CAPIT	Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): 4-S2: Recurrence of Maltreatment Staff, Caregiver, and Service Provider Training (Emphasis on Staff Training)	
	☐ CBCAP		
	☐ PSSF		
	☒ N/A	☐ Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project	
Action Steps	Implementation Date	Completion Date	Person Responsible
A. Develop a process for monitoring whether referrals are being appropriately associated.	May 2025	August 2025	Social Services Director Agency Manager(s) Social Services Supervisor
B. Create written procedures on associating referrals and properly closing associated referrals.	September 2025	February 2026	Social Services Director Agency Manager(s) Social Services Supervisor
C. Develop a step-by-step guide for social workers on how to associate referrals within CWS/CMS.	November 2025	February 2026	Social Services Director Agency Manager(s) Social Services Supervisors

D. Analyze cases with a recurrence of maltreatment to identify root causes of recurrence. Any referrals that should have been associated (but were not) will be excluded from this root cause analysis.	November 2025	May 2029	Agency Manager(s) Social Services Supervisor Child Welfare Analyst
E. Train social workers, social work aides, and supervisors on procedures and guides for associating referrals in CWS/CMS.	March 2026	May 2026	Social Services Director Agency Manager(s) Social Services Supervisor
F. Develop a step-by-step guide for social workers on how to associate referrals post transition to CARES.	May 2026	November 2026	Social Services Director Agency Manager(s) Social Services Supervisor
G. Implement written procedures and utilize guide for associating referrals within CWS/CMS.	June 2026	May 2029	Social Services Director Agency Manager(s) Social Services Supervisor
H. Monitor and evaluate implementation of this strategy through internal case reviews.	December 2026	May 2029	Social Services Director Agency Manager(s) Social Services Supervisor
I. Based on trends from the analysis of cases, develop recommendations to address root causes of recurrence [excluding data quality issues].	December 2026	May 2029	Social Services Director Agency Manager(s) Social Services Supervisor

Probation Strategy 1: Strengthen Probation family finding and engagement efforts throughout the life of a case to improve permanency outcomes through increased connection to kin.	☐ CAPIT	Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): 4-P2: Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 12-23 Months
	☐ CBCAP	
	☐ PSSF	
	☒ N/A	☐ Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project

Action Steps	Implementation Date	Completion Date	Person Responsible
A. Research best practices used by county probation agencies for ongoing Family Finding and Engagement.	May 2025	July 2025	Placement Officer Division Manager
B. Develop written guidelines that define roles and responsibilities related to Probation and Child Welfare collaboration on Family Finding and Engagement.	May 2025	November 2025	Division Manager
C. Train Probation placement staff on family finding and engagement initially and ongoing, including on written policies and procedures once finalized.	May 2025	May 2029	Division Manager
D. Create Probation written policies and procedures for Family Finding and Engagement initially and ongoing.	November 2025	April 2026	Division Manager
E. Build functionality within the Tyler Probation Case Management System to track family finding efforts.	March 2026	July 2026	Division Manager
F. Develop a process for tracking family finding efforts utilizing the Tyler tracking functionality.	March 2026	July 2026	Division Manager
G. Implement enhanced family finding and engagement efforts.	August 2026	May 2026	Division Manager
H. Monitor and evaluate family finding and engagement efforts through Tyler reports and internal case reviews.	August 2026	May 2029	Division Manager

Prioritization of Direct Service Needs

To select priority direct service needs to fund with CAPIT, CBCAP, and PSSF, Tuolumne County considered CSA findings on service gaps and populations at greatest risk of maltreatment, as well as CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF requirements. Additionally, the County considered how to maximize the reach of its allocations given that its overall CAPIT, CBCAP, and PSSF funding allocations are relatively small, which creates constraints on what to fund. More specifically, Tuolumne County has chosen to prioritize Differential Response, parenting education, and concrete supports (e.g. transportation needs, health needs, housing needs, mental health needs etc.). Data supporting the decision to prioritize these direct service needs is further detailed below.

As noted in the CSA, while the child population of Tuolumne County has declined in recent years, rates of maltreatment allegations and substantiations have increased slightly. At the same time, the overall rate at which children are entering foster care has continued to decline. These data suggest that Child Welfare has continued to improve its ability to keep children safe at home despite an increased concentration of challenges in some County families, including through interventions such as Differential Response. (p. 28) These findings support Tuolumne County's decision to continue funding Differential Response, a strength-based practice that offers options for engaging families and communities before requiring child welfare intervention, using its CAPIT allocation.

Additionally, to address service gaps identified in the CSA, Tuolumne County has prioritized using PSSF funding to meet basic and concrete needs of families. More specifically, the CSA consistently identified substance abuse and mental health needs, poverty, limited transportation services, and housing instability as challenges facing families that become involved with the child welfare system. (CSA p. 141)

When choosing what to fund with CBCAP dollars, Tuolumne County considered data from the CSA related to re-entry into foster care and feedback from community-based providers. More specifically, the CSA noted that available data suggests that children re-entering foster care are more likely to be over the age of 10. (CSA p. 131). Through a Request For Proposal (RFP) process, Tuolumne County reached out to community-based providers to identify potential parenting support programs to fund using CBCAP dollars. When choosing a program to fund using CBCAP dollars, Tuolumne County also considered whether the program was evidence-based. As a result of its RFP process, Tuolumne County has chosen to use CBCAP funds to fund Active Parenting of Teens, which is rated as promising by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC). Moreover, this program is well-suited to meet the parenting education needs of parents with children 10 and older, who may be more likely to re-enter foster care.

Service Provision for CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Programs

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM NAME

Line 1 Expenditure Workbook: Differential Response (DR)

SERVICE PROVIDER

Tuolumne County Department of Social Services

Tuolumne County Department of Social Services provides Differential Response to support CAPIT requirements. 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. 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. Voluntary Family Maintenance, Differential Response, AmeriCorps volunteers, the Independent Living Program, and the Family First Prevention Services (FFPS) program are all administered by the Engagement and Empowerment team.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Differential Response (DR) is a strategy that allows child welfare services (CWS) agencies to respond more flexibly to reports of child abuse or neglect. DR offers a tailored approach based on an assessment of safety, risk, and protective capacity, recognizing each family's unique strengths and needs.

The hallmark of DR is its flexibility and emphasis on family engagement. These two principles guide the response and services provided to families. By offering earlier interventions, DR addresses emerging family issues before they escalate and lead to child removal. Under DR, child safety remains the highest priority, allowing more children and families to receive the support they need to safely remain in their homes.

There are three referral paths, which are assigned by CWS based on information gathered during the initial report, intake, or hotline call: Path 1, Path 2, and Path 3.

Path 1: Community Response

- Selected when a family is referred to CWS for child maltreatment, but the hotline/pre-contact assessment indicates the allegations do not meet statutory definitions of abuse or neglect .
- Indications are present that the family is experiencing problems.
- Families are linked to voluntary services such as counseling, parenting classes or other supportive options to strengthen the family.

Path 2: Child Welfare Services and Agency Partners Response

- Involves families in which the allegations meet statutory definitions of abuse and neglect at low to moderate risk.
- Assessments indicate that with targeted services a family is likely to make needed progress to improve child safety and mitigate risk.
- Emphasizes teamwork between CWS and interagency or community partners, providing a multidisciplinary approach in working with families.

Path 3: Child Welfare Service Response

DR is implemented through the Engagement and Empowerment Unit within the Department of Social Services. This unit was created to strengthen child abuse prevention services and provide more upstream interventions. The goal is to support and increase protective capacities for at-risk children and families earlier, preventing out-of-home placement and court intervention.

FUNDING SOURCES

SOURCE	LIST FUNDED ACTIVITIES
CAPIT	Differential Response
CBCAP	
PSSF Family Preservation	
PSSF Family Support	
PSSF Time-Limited Family Reunification	
PSSF Adoption Promotion and Support	
OTHER Source(s): AB 2994 (Children's Trust Fund)	

IDENTIFY PRIORITY NEED OUTLINED IN CSA

Data suggests that while the number of child maltreatment allegations has increased from 2019 to 2023, the rate of substantiations and foster care entries has not risen correspondingly. This indicates that the interventions and practices implemented, including Differential Response, may be effectively reducing foster care entries (p. 28).

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. (p. 85)

TARGET POPULATION

Families referred to Child Welfare Services.

TARGET GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Countywide

TIMELINE

5/12/24-5/12/29

EVALUATION**PROGRAM OUTCOME(S) AND MEASUREMENT & QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA) MONITORING**

Desired Outcome	Indicator	Source of Measure	Frequency
Prevent future referrals to child welfare	70% of families referred will not have subsequent referral to child welfare services within 12 months of receiving DR services.	CWS/CMS system	Annually
Quality Assurance (QA) Monitoring			
Families identified as Path 1 referrals engage w/ DR social worker	60% of families accept resources and services	Clarity System	Annually
Families identified as Path II referrals engage w/ DR social worker	70% of families accept resources and services	Clarity System	Annually
CLIENT SATISFACTION			
Method or Tool	Frequency	Utilization	Action
Satisfaction survey	Completed at case closing	Reviewed upon survey completion	Used to ensure continuous quality improvement by DR team

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM NAME

Line 2 Expenditure Workbook: Active Parenting of Teens

SERVICE PROVIDER

Infant/Child Enrichment Services, Inc. (I.C.E.S.)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Active Parenting of Teens is an evidence-based parenting education program designed for parents of teens that aims to strengthen parenting skills and prevent adolescent risk-taking behaviors, including drug use, violence, and early sexual activity. The program offers monthly facilitated education and support groups covering topics of communication, discipline, redirection of misbehavior and building courage, and reducing risks associated with drugs, sexuality and violence. It is rated as promising by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse.

Active Parenting of Teens helps parents of adolescents by focusing on building mutual, open relationships based on empathy and validation. This approach empowers parents to effectively guide their children in navigating life's challenges.

Recognizing the growing need in the community for a parenting curriculum that supports parents of adolescents with complex discipline issues and risky behaviors, such as habitual truancy, disengagement from school and community, and experimentation with drug use, I.C.E.S, a community-based organization specializing in parenting education identified Active Parenting of Teens as an evidence-based curriculum.

FUNDING SOURCES

SOURCE	LIST FUNDED ACTIVITIES
CAPIT	
CBCAP	Parenting education
PSSF Family Preservation	
PSSF Family Support	
PSSF Time-Limited Family Reunification	
PSSF Adoption Promotion and Support	
OTHER Source(s):	

IDENTIFY PRIORITY NEED OUTLINED IN CSA

The available data suggests that children re-entering foster care are more likely to be over the age of 10. (p. 131)

TARGET POPULATION

Parents and caregivers of preteens and teens ages 10 to 17 with a wide range of problems including oppositional behavior, poor self-esteem, lack of general life skills.

TARGET GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Countywide.

TIMELINE

7/1/24-5/12/29

Infant/Child Enrichment Services, Inc. (I.C.E.S.) was awarded the CBCAP allocation following a Request for Proposals (RFP) issued in fiscal year 2023/24. I.C.E.S. is a community-based organization that is a public benefit, non-profit corporation that provides a variety of childcare and parenting support services to families. The contract is July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, with the option to extend the program for three years. Outcomes are reported annually to OCAP.

EVALUATION

Desired Outcome	Indicator	Source of Measure	Frequency
Participants improve parenting and communication skills. Participants improve the relationship with their teen/adolescent	80% of participants improve by three or more points on “About My Teen” survey score.	“About My Teen” Survey	Pre/Post test
Quality Assurance (QA) Monitoring			
Services are delivered according to the Active Parenting model of implementation	“About my Teen” survey and Active Parenting Class Evaluation form	“About my Teen” survey and Active Parenting Class Evaluation form	Once at the end of the program

CLIENT SATISFACTION

Method or Tool	Frequency	Utilization	Action
Active Parenting Class Evaluation Form	Once at the end of the program	Evaluation form provided with Active Parenting curriculum. Instructor provides to participants.	Instructor will assess how to improve implementation for subsequent parent groups.
Spreadsheet provided by contractor to the County staff.	Once per year	Agency Manager reviews spreadsheet for completeness of information and to ensure fidelity.	Agency Manager will assess if any changes are needed to the contract and the scope of work is still sufficient.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM NAME

Line 3 Expenditure Workbook: Concrete supports

SERVICE PROVIDER

Tuolumne County Department of Social Services

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Tuolumne County receives a limited allocation to support Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) activities. This funding must be equally distributed across four key categories: family preservation, family support, family reunification, and adoption promotion and support services. The County uses these funds to address the concrete needs of clients on a case-by-case basis, such as, transportation, mental health services, domestic violence perpetrator education, groceries, housing assistance, and more. In some instances, PSSF funds may also be used to cover staff time dedicated to supporting families who are eligible for the program.

FUNDING SOURCES

SOURCE	LIST FUNDED ACTIVITIES
CAPIT	
CBCAP	
PSSF Family Preservation	Concrete supports (e.g. transportation needs, health needs, housing needs, mental health needs etc.)
PSSF Family Support	Concrete supports (e.g. transportation needs, health needs, housing needs, mental health needs etc.)
PSSF Time-Limited Family Reunification	Concrete supports (e.g. transportation needs, health needs, housing needs, mental health needs etc.)
PSSF Adoption Promotion and Support	Concrete supports (e.g. transportation needs, health needs, housing needs, mental health needs etc.)
OTHER Source(s): AB 2994 (Children's Trust Fund)	

IDENTIFY PRIORITY NEED OUTLINED IN CSA

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. (CSA p. 17)

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. (CSA p. 31)

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. 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. (CSA p. 97)

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. (CSA p. 125)

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. (CSA p. 141)

TARGET POPULATION

PSSF: Family Preservation and Family Support Services: Vulnerable families with children that are at risk of abuse or neglect; families that have one or more risk factors; and families that have already demonstrated the need for intervention and have an open child welfare case.

Family Reunification: Families whose children have been placed in foster care and offered reunification; families who have reunified and continue to receive support through family maintenance services.

Adoption Promotion and Support Services: Current foster children with a case plan goal of adoption; families exploring adoption of children from the foster care system; families that have adopted a child/children.

TARGET GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Countywide.

TIMELINE

5/12/24-5/12/29

The current method of supporting concrete needs for families receiving services through Child Welfare Services will continue indefinitely, given the limited amount of the allocation. Data is tracked and accounted for at the end of each fiscal year.

EVALUATION

PROGRAM OUTCOME(S) AND MEASUREMENT & QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA) MONITORING

Desired Outcome	Indicator	Source of Measure	Frequency
Parents/caregivers will have concrete supports to meet basic needs and support family well-being.	70% of Parents/caregivers report having their basic needs met and concrete supports in time of need.	Client survey	Post receipt of concrete support funded by PSSF
Quality Assurance (QA) Monitoring			
Desired Outcome	Indicator	Source of Measure	Frequency
Parents have opportunity to participate in survey about services	15% of parents complete survey	Survey	Quarterly

CLIENT SATISFACTION

Method or Tool	Frequency	Utilization	Action
Satisfaction Survey	Every quarter for the fiscal year	Survey	Results shared with leadership quarterly to ensure continuous quality improvement