



**AMADOR COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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September 19, 2018

The Honorable Judge Renee C. Day, Presiding Judge
Amador County Superior Court
500 Argonaut Lane
Jackson, CA 95642

Your Honor,

Below, please find Amador County's response by the Amador County Board of Supervisors to the 2018 report of the Amador County Grand Jury Health and Human Services Committee.

FINDINGS

F1. Monthly contacts by CPS social workers to children in foster care, particularly in-home visits are not occurring as often as they should. Consistently visiting the children in their foster homes would allow problem areas to be spotted and addressed by CPS before they rise to the level where a child needs to be pulled from a home with no notice.

Respondent: Partially agree

The data provided in Appendix 2 is inaccurate. The data quoted is for children not in foster care/out of home placement (known as Measure 2S). The correct data is Measure 2F – Timely Monthly Visits for Children Placed in Out of Home Care. The standard is that a majority of these monthly visits occur in the child's residence. Data from California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) for calendar year 2017 indicates that Amador County was in compliance at 75.8%. The state average for that year was 78.9%.

It is, however, agreed that increasing monthly contacts with children and consistently visiting the children in their residence does increase the likelihood that problems will be identified and addressed and that communication with caregivers is increased. CPS is challenged in this area by not having a sufficient number of social workers for the workload.

California Department of Social Services, Child Welfare Data Analysis Bureau
 California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP)
 University of California at Berkeley
 Measure 2F By Year - Timely Monthly Caseworker Visits (Out of Home)
 Agency Type: Child Welfare
 JAN2017-DEC2017

California

Age Group	Children in Out-of-Home Placement	Placement Months	Months with Visits	Percent with Visits	Months with Visits in the Residence	Percent with Visits in the Residence
	n	n	n	%	n	%
Under 1	10,004	71,607	68,974	96.3	56,194	81.5
1-2	10,673	85,489	82,244	96.2	67,823	82.5
3-5	11,968	95,388	91,172	95.6	73,545	80.7
6-10	16,118	132,750	125,753	94.7	97,504	77.5
11-15	13,959	121,831	111,094	91.2	85,380	76.9
16-17	6,367	48,681	42,921	88.2	31,306	72.9
Total	69,089	555,746	522,158	94.0	411,752	78.9

Amador

Age Group	Children in Out-of-Home Placement	Placement Months	Months with Visits	Percent with Visits	Months with Visits in the Residence	Percent with Visits in the Residence
	n	n	n	%	n	%
Under 1	17	125	109	87.2	96	88.1
1-2	10	76	72	94.7	56	77.8
3-5	16	115	98	85.2	73	74.5
6-10	15	102	81	79.4	62	76.5

11-15	20	160	145	90.6	101	69.7
16-17	7	55	44	80.0	28	63.6
Total	85	633	549	86.7	416	75.8

Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Eyre, M., Chambers, J., Min, S., Randhawa, P., Sandoval, A., Yee, H., Tran, M., Benton, C., White, J., & Lee, H. (2018). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved 6/28/2018, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

F2. Foster parents are not aware of the complaint process when they have a problem with a CPS employee. Many are also reluctant to make a complaint, even if they wanted to, due to fear of repercussions.

Respondent: Partially agree

CPS agrees that the Department of Social Services' complaint procedure had not been provided to the county's foster parents or foster family agencies. On July 13, 2018, CPS sent the written complaint process to both local Foster Family Agencies for them to distribute to their foster parents. The complaint process indicates that the complainant should first attempt to resolve the matter with the assigned social worker. If not resolved at that level, the complainant is instructed to contact the social worker supervisor. If still unsatisfied, the policy states the complainant should contact the Program Manager or Director. It has been observed by CPS that foster parents and foster family agency social workers have historically followed this process.

F3. Increased sharing of information is needed between CPS and the Foster Family Agencies. In both directions.

Respondent: Agree

Increased communication will benefit the children and families we are working with. Efforts will continue to improve in this area. Over the last year, CPS has implemented the use of Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings as required by the California Department of Social Services. The child's current caregiver is required to be part of the family's team, although foster parent attendance has been inconsistent. CPS encourages both the foster parent and the foster family agency social worker to attend the team meetings. It is hoped that in the future foster parents will attend this very important meetings to voice their opinions about the ongoing care of children in their care.

These meetings are an efficient and effective way for all team members to communicate critical information and to support each other. Also, the court has consistently welcomed foster family agency staff and foster parents to attend court hearings. This is another efficient way to both give and receive information. Since the juvenile court judge is the final decision maker on children's cases it is the best opportunity to impact treatment decisions.

F4. When a child is removed from a foster home, the foster parent is unsure of their rights and not notified of the outcome of any investigation if the removal was due to an allegation against the foster parent.

Respondent: *Disagree*

When CPS removes a child from a foster home, it is by far most often due to the foster parent asking that the child be removed. When CPS chooses to move a child, it is frequently to move that child to placement with a relative. It is rare that it is in response to an allegation of maltreatment. However, there were several upsetting incidents of child maltreatment at the hands of foster parents over the past several months. Those situations required immediate removal of the child to protect the child. These situations do not require, nor even allow, the department to provide notice to the foster parent. CPS recognizes that there may have been isolated circumstances where foster parents were not given the Grievance Review Procedures document. This has been remedied. Allegations of maltreatment are cross reported to Community Care Licensing for their investigation. The foster family agency has the responsibility to report to their foster families the outcome of investigations.

Amador County CPS uses foster homes that are approved by foster family agencies. Those foster family agencies have an obligation to train their foster parents on their responsibilities and their rights.

F5. Foster parents often feel unappreciated or treated poorly by CPS. They are reluctant to recommend fostering to others. We need people willing to foster so that at-risk children can be properly placed.

Respondent: *Agree*

CPS agrees that some foster parents are feeling underappreciated. Foster parent recruitment and retention are very important to CPS. Efforts will continue to express the department's gratitude for the service they provide.

F6. By the very nature of the business, all involved in the CPS system are under extreme stress and constant tension. This increased stress is experienced by CPS staff, FFA staff, and foster parents.

Respondent: Agree

F7. CPS workers have a very high workload. There is frequent turnover among CPS social workers, resulting in higher workload for those remaining until a new social worker is hired and trained.

Respondent: Agree

Recommendations

R1. a. CPS social workers should increase the frequency of monthly in-home visits to foster children. (MPP 31-320).

b. CPS social workers should continue using the Template for Contact with Children consistently during their visits to foster children.

c. CPS should add a signature line for parents to the Template for Contact with Children to verify in-home visits by all parties.

a. Respondent: The recommendation has already been implemented but further efforts to increase visits will be made.

The data provided by the Grand Jury was inaccurate. Since the standard is 50% and Amador CPS achieved 75.8% it has already been implemented. However, CPS agrees that this is an area in which the goal is to achieve 100% compliance.

b. Respondent: The recommendation has already been implemented. The social workers will continue to use the templates provided to them for use during contacts.

c. Respondent: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. CPS disagrees with the idea of having the foster parent sign the template worksheet at visits to the foster home. This is the social worker's notes and the notes are later shredded once the information is entered into the case management computer system. The location of the visit and the foster parent's participation is entered there.

R2. CPS should ensure that all parties involved are made aware of the complaint protocol outlined in Amador County DSS Policy and Procedure on Handling Complaints / Grievances dated 8-29-17.

Respondent: This recommendation has been implemented.

This is not something that CPS can ensure as it is in the hands of the FFAs, however, On July 13, 2018, CPS sent the written complaint process to both local Foster Family Agencies for them to distribute to their foster parents.

R3. CPS should continue working closely with FFA's to sort out difficulties and improve information exchange.

Respondent: This recommendation has been partially implemented and will be further implemented in the coming year.

There is room for improvement in communication and CPS will continue to work with local FFA's to problem solve. The ideal opportunity for this is during the CFT (see F3 response). Foster parents are not only welcomed to these meetings it is expected that they will attend - though attendance has been inconsistent. These meetings include all parties involved in the child's placement including the FFA social worker, CPS, the child and the foster parent/s. CDSS has mandated these meetings to provide for the very communications improvements the grand jury has recommended. CPS is now holding the meetings and makes the foster parents and the FFA agencies aware of the date, time and location.

- R4. a. CPS should inform the foster parent of what is happening, allow them input, and inform them of the outcome of an investigation when allegations of maltreatment are made against them. (Appendix 4).**
- b. When a child is removed from a foster home, CPS should ensure that the foster parent receives a copy of the Review Request Procedure for Foster Care document.**

Respondent:

- a. This recommendation is already partially implemented. CPS will share what information they are allowed to share, when maltreatment is alleged CPS may not be the only entity looking into the events law enforcement may be involved and CCL is also involved. The requirements of these agencies may prevent sharing information until investigations are concluded. Also as previously stated, Community Care Licensing conducts its own investigations and is responsible for sharing its investigations and findings with the foster family agency. The FFA is primarily responsible for sharing information with the foster parent.
- b. This recommendation is already partially implemented. If a child is removed from a foster home due to the results of a maltreatment investigation, CPS will provide written notice when and as required by law. Immediate removals due to safety threats do not require seven day notice and not all removals permit a grievance review.

- R5. CPS should carry through on plans to increase their support for foster families.**

Respondent: This recommendation is non specific - but implementation will continue to be a priority ongoing.

CPS agrees that foster parents are doing important and valuable work. CPS wants them to feel appreciated and will endeavor to show that appreciation.

It is important to understand how foster care is set up in Amador County - in some counties the CPS department supervises foster families directly – that is not how it is in Amador. **The FFA has the responsibility of training, certifying, supporting, monitoring and communicating about investigations.** In somewhat oversimplified terms – CPS is responsible for the children and the FFA is responsible for the foster family.

R6. CPS should institute a scheduled roundtable discussion (perhaps quarterly) to include FFA social workers, CPS social workers and foster parents, bringing in experts on the subjects of stress, relaxation , communication, etc.

Respondent: This recommendation will not be implemented.

Various formats for communication and shared training already exist. Another format is not needed. CPS puts on trainings on various topics and has invited the FFAs. Behavioral Health also provides relevant trainings and invites the FFA social workers. The topics listed are ones that are generally part of the ongoing training that FFAs provide to their foster parents.

CFTs are held regularly and these are the perfect opportunity for case specific discussions to occur. Foster parents are required by state regulation to attend regular training on these and other topics – usually provided by their FFA. CPS workers are mandated to receive many hours of training. FFAs are also invited to the bi-annual Foster Kinship Care Education Program meetings where plans are developed to provide training and support for foster parents in the community.

R7. The Board of Supervisors should work with CPS to see where additional funding can be most appropriately allocated to increase retention and reduce the workload of CPS social workers.

Respondent: This recommendation will not be implemented.

The Board of Supervisors is already aware of the funding limitations. These limitations are due to revenue allocations determined by the state. No additional funds are allocated by the state. If additional funds were to become available the department head would move quickly to utilize them to achieve these goals.

R8. CPS should report quarterly to the Board of Supervisors the progress made towards improving the issues in the Grand Jury's findings.

Respondent: This recommendation will be partially implemented. Since the data referenced by the Grand Jury did not reflect the measurements that the Grand Jury believed that it did, there

is no need to demonstrate that improvement is being made on that front, since the County significantly exceeds the measures being called for. Nevertheless, staff will continue to appear before the Board and discuss ongoing issues and performance measures to the extent that they can as permitted by law.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Lynn A. Morgan
Chair, Amador County Board of Supervisors



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Your Honor,

Below, please find Amador County's response by the Amador County Board of Supervisors to the 2018 report of the Amador County Grand Jury County Administration Committee.

FACILITY MAINTENANCE:

F1. Landscape maintenance at many county owned and/or operated buildings, including the County Administration Center and Health and Human Services building, is not performed on a regular basis. As of 2016, it is no longer listed as an Amador County budgetary line item.

The County agrees with the finding. The cuts were necessitated due to diminishing revenues during the recession. The County's revenues are just reaching the same point that they were in 2007, marking a full decade with minor revenue increases. Costs have increased during that time, mandating a cut in services.

Unfortunately, the Grand Jury, in both this report and the CPS report, identify areas that the County should allocate more funding. The Grand Jury does not identify where those funds should come from. In order for funds to go to one place, they must come from another, and the question is always: what should the County stop doing?

F2. Exterior maintenance at the District Attorney's building has been deferred for several years. Wooden surfaces are peeled and decking has not been maintained. The structure is plagued with structural, code compliance and mechanical problems.

The County agrees with the finding. Again, this work has been deferred due to a reduction in revenues over the years and the requirement to have a balanced budget. There has also been significant work done to the interior of the building, with repairs to the elevator and elevator shaft.

F3. Many Amador County buildings do not meet all current ADA accessibility standards. Several priority one projects are not funded. The Grand Jury was not able to find the definition of "Priority One". It appears on CIP list but is not explained there. Online research did not locate an explanation.

The County agrees with the finding. There is a definite need to complete this work, but there is not enough funding to do so. "Priority One" projects have been identified by staff as having a greater need than a "Priority Two" project. This is not defined, but has been utilized by staff to indicate the severity of the need, and the rankings have been created based on the professional judgement of staff and the potential consequences of doing nothing.

F4. A list of deferred facility maintenance capital needs items totals in excess of \$6 million. Many items on the lists provided continue to grow in costs due to continued deterioration.

The County agrees with the finding. Facility Maintenance is not the only area within the County that has needs that have not been addressed. The county prioritizes its capital maintenance projects annually, and GSA presents an update to the BOS on the progress of the projects no less than quarterly. At that time, updates are given on emergency repairs or other projects that have taken precedent for whatever reason.

F5. The "Capital Improvement Projects" list, last updated in 2015-16, has over 140 projects identified, and less than three dozen have been approved.

The County agrees with the finding. The projects will be addressed as funds become available.

F6. One Building Maintenance Worker III, a Senior Maintenance Worker and the Facilities and Project Manager participate in the voluntary furlough program.

The County agrees with the finding. The voluntary furloughs result in savings that allow additional resources to be allocated to projects or other County spending. Eliminating these furloughs would necessitate further cuts in order to balance the budget.

F7. The Jackson library has many badly needed interior and exterior capital improvements, including removal of asbestos and Priority-One ADA access compliance issues.

The County agrees with the finding. The project has been identified and funding has been allocated and the project is in the queue to be completed.

PUBLIC WORKS-ROAD MAINTENANCE

F8. The 2016 Amador Pavement Condition Index (56) was the 13th lowest in California.

The County agrees with the finding. The county has received additional funding with the passage of SB1, and that funding is restricted solely to road maintenance projects, although it falls well short of the funds needed on an annual basis to help resolve the shortfall. However, there is a proposal to repeal SB1, which would leave the county with an even greater funding shortfall.

F9. Amador County's June 2017 Pavement Condition Index dropped to 51.

The County agrees with the finding.

F10. Continuance of voluntary furloughs reduces road maintenance staff by five (5), level II or III workers and one equipment mechanic by 10% for the 2017/18 fiscal year.

The County agrees with the finding. These furloughs also increase the available funding. Having more staff but less material to work with is not necessarily a benefit.

F11. Planning and funding for road replacement as opposed to repair is minimal.

The County agrees with the finding. The County is in dire need of a dedicated funding source for maintenance of the roads. SB 1 offers some funding, and the funding increases significantly over the first few years, but its future is uncertain.

F12. Plans for 2018/2019 (SB) 1 funds include more dig outs and partial repair, rather than replacement of roads.

The County agrees with the finding. The dig outs allow much more road to be addressed with the same funds. It does not yield the nicest end result, but it does allow more problems to be corrected. In order to address the deficiencies in the system, we are going to have to focus on particular problems and not spend funds replacing an entire road if an entire roadway is not failing.**GENERAL COUNTY BUDGET**

F13. Over \$577,000 of the FY2017/18 budgeted line item expenses are not directly spent on county functions.

The County agrees with the finding.

F14. Amador County maintains a dozen separate buildings and complexes other than the County Administration Center and the Health and Human Services building.

The County agrees with the finding.

F15. Board of Supervisor monthly salaries rose from \$3,139.50 in 2006/07 to \$5,214.68 in 2008/09 to \$5,834.56 in 2017/18, an increase of 85.8% since 2006/07.

The County agrees with the finding. The increase was done to create a liveable wage for the Supervisors. The job of a County Supervisor is no longer a part-time job with all of the obligations requiring participation at the local, state, and federal levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. Contract professional landscape maintenance services, and transition to “hard scape” to lessen maintenance efforts and to conserve water usage.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted, or is not reasonable. A professional landscaping service would be very expensive and the County believes that the funds are better used in addressing many of the significant projects identified by the Grand Jury, and beautification is not a high priority given those deficiencies. Conversion to xeriscape would allow for savings, and will be considered as funds are available.

R2. Sell Wicklow, Carbondale and other real properties to provide enhanced funding for other purposes and to increase property tax revenues.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted, or is not reasonable. The Wicklow Way property was purchased using funds from the Capital Facility Fee, which would be paid back with any funds generated by that sale. If the amount originally paid were not received, then the County’s General Fund would be required to reimburse the owed amount to the CFF Fund.

R3. The County should strongly consider ending voluntary furloughs to bring our work force up to full strength.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted, or is not reasonable. The furloughs do result in cost savings to the County, and the terms of those furloughs are flexible enough that management can work with those employees that elect to take the reduced hours. The elimination of this program would result in additional costs that would need to be addressed through cuts to other spending.

R4. The County should consider commissioning road replacement studies and commence long term replacement strategies in order to replace roadways rather than continue dig out spot repairs which fail to offer a long-term solution.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted, or is not reasonable. As part of the numerous tasks that the new Public Works Director has in front of him, the creation of a long-term road maintenance plan sits on his desk with high priority. The bigger challenge that he has is how to create a plan with minimal resources, as gas tax revenues continue to shrink, and SB 1 may very well be repealed, leaving the County with minimal resources to address a project deficit that is roughly calculated at \$6 million per year. The intent is to keep the creation of that plan in-house to minimize the costs associated with that work, allowing more funds to be utilized on the roadways.

R5. Consolidate county operations out of leased properties into space available in the CAC and/or Health and Human Services buildings.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted, or is not reasonable. This is a good idea conceptually, but bringing it to fruition is a definite challenge. The county does not have many leased properties besides the HHS building. There are areas of the HHS building that are underutilized, and the county is keenly aware of that and will try to that area as possible. The nature of those spaces reduces the demand for such an area, making the implementation of such a strategy difficult, although the county will continue its efforts to implement as feasible.

R6. Relocate District Attorney's offices to space available at other county facilities, such as the Health and Human Services building. Consider gifting the existing building to a health care or charitable organization.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted, or is not reasonable. We have thought of this idea and investigated it, but there are no county-owned buildings that would be suitable to house the DA and all of its functions. It is a good idea, and we will implement if it should ever become feasible.

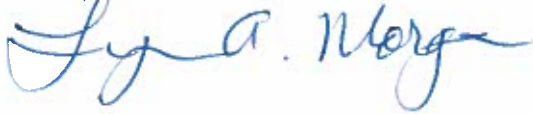
R7. If the Board of Supervisors currently has a resolution regarding pay increases, they should consider amending this resolution so that their pay raises reflect the Sacramento Region COLA amounts for the next five years.

The recommendation required further analysis, and action will be taken within six months. The Board will discuss their salaries in the near term, and a new salary ordinance will be passed to memorialize any decisions made to change that structure. The new ordinance should be in place well within six months.

R8. Charge fees to outside agencies for use of county facilities.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted, or is not reasonable. Most of the entities that utilize the county buildings are subsidized by the county itself. Examples of this are ACRA and UCCE, where a charge to those entities would simply be passed back to the County through increased member fees. The county has shored up its building use policies, and does not allow additional uses for non-county uses (i.e. Fly Fishermen), although those pre-existing uses are being allowed to continue until the Board decides to formally end that relationship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynn A. Morgan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lynn" being the most prominent.

Supervisor Lynn A. Morgan
Chair, Amador County Board of Supervisors