



Board Agenda Item 10

DATE: March 25, 2025

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Nerland, County Administrative Officer
Rosemary Alanis, Chair, Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee

SUBJECT: Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee FY 2023-24 Annual Report

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Accept the Fresno County Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee annual report for activities from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

The recommended action will present the Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee (FCSOC) Annual Report to your Board, in compliance with Management Directive 2700, section 2714.4. The FCSOC was created by the Board in 2001. The committee's goal is to support the Child Welfare System (CWS) to be more efficient and effective through providing adequate resources, better communication with agency partners and making recommendations for continuous and lasting system improvements for the betterment of the foster children and youth served in the County. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

There are no viable alternative actions.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended action.

DISCUSSION:

In accordance with its bylaws, the FCSOC (1) advises and makes recommendations for continuous and lasting system improvements and (2) provides a forum for community input related to the committee's purpose.

The FCSOC's key responsibilities include participation in lawfully constituted multi-disciplinary reviews when system issues and improvements are appropriate. This is done by focusing on the structures and functions of the local CWS and representing the public interest in the delivery of services.

The FCSOC has evolved from its 2001 stated purpose to offering resources at regular subcommittee meetings that were deemed valuable interagency/organization communication forums. In the Fall of 2021, in response to the public spotlighting the challenge of hard-to-place children and youth in the child welfare system, FCSOC hosted a community forum consisting of elected officials, community partners and interested parties to offer insight and suggestions. In 2022 and 2023, FCSOC held an annual strategic planning session. As a result, the committee recalibrated and continued to work closely with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide support and oversight to the systemic changes identified in the Critical

Needs established in 2022 and a recent survey in 2023 to employees implemented by the FCSOC ad hoc committee. Analysis of the survey results are currently being reviewed.

The FCSOC's goals for FY 2023-24: as established in 2002, the Committee will continue to advise and make recommendations for continuous and lasting system improvement and provide a forum for community input related to the FCSOC purpose. A key responsibility is to improve communication through outreach and coordination with the work of other community groups including the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools Foster Care and Homeless Education Subcommittee and the Fresno County Behavioral Health - Children's Mental Health subcommittee.

The FCSOC will continue to focus on the wellbeing of children in the CWS including but not limited to services and resources for families who are preparing to become resource parents; services and resources being provided to the youth, resource parents and biological parents; stable placement of school when transitions occur and educational support; and social/emotional support.

Through the annual report, the FCSOC identifies issues and processes that require review and examination with the goal of presenting recommendations for foster care system improvement to your Board.

FCSOC recommends that your Board:

Continue to prioritize support for youth in the Fresno County Child Welfare System to achieve positive outcomes and prepare them for successful adulthood. It is recognized that more social workers are needed to be hired, more resource families are needed to safely place families, and as a community place the best interest of the child as a priority and communicate much needed resources to support them and to their caregivers. With 2,848 children in foster care as of August 2023, this is a community concern as the Committee's desire is positive outcomes and trajectory for these children.

The FCSOC recommends a countywide campaign to strengthen the CWS infrastructure through commercials, billboards, social media, and other opportunities to promote the following:

- Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers, which may include partnerships with local high schools, higher education, elected officials, and community leaders.
- Recruitment of Resource Families and Promotion of Kinship Care, which may include partnership with local agencies; however, the community is to be aware of the dire need for more Emergency Placements and long-term placements for the stability of the youth and to mitigate the prolonged trauma. In addition, priority should be given to locating placement with kin and prevention of removal from families with Quality Parent Initiative implementation.

The annual report details updates from the education subcommittee, which includes its purpose, focus activities, education outcomes for 2023-24, the foster literacy networked improvement community project, child welfare and school foster notification process, early education, the leadership academy offered by the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, and financial aid. The report also details the role the Department of Social Services serves as part of the oversight function.

Consistent with the FCSOC's mission, the goal is to support the Child Welfare System to be more efficient and effective through providing adequate resources, better communication with agency partners and making recommendations for continuous and lasting system improvements for the betterment of the foster children and youth served in the County.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #4, December 12, 2023

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

FY 2023-24 Annual Report

CAO ANALYST:

Ron Alexander