

CSAC INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
*Protecting Children in Our Communities*

# Conversation Notes

September 10, 2015 ♦ Sacramento, California



## INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

- \* Population in juvenile halls is decreasing
  - ⇒ Interventions in community before they get to juvenile hall working
  - ⇒ Impact of First 5 programs
- \* No flexibility to use extra space in juvenile halls
  - ⇒ Creates incentives to put more kids in JH
  - ⇒ Creates challenges to staff and operate underused facilities
- \* Difficulty in recruitment of foster families, especially for probation youth and any child associated with trafficking
- \* Initiative fatigue

## OBSERVATIONS ON TRENDS AND EFFORTS

- \* There are best practices and studies that can help educate local stakeholders to address problems
- \* There may need to be different solutions because not all counties have adequate resources (rural counties)
- \* Counties need to experiment with activities and engagement/approaches and interaction to catch and keep kids out of criminal justice/foster care systems
- \* Counties need to work on silos
- \* Need to examine the way services are tailored for our local youth and their needs
- \* We need to think about outcomes and results
- \* Recognize the importance of local partnerships and collaborations formed in a county

Highlighted boxes indicate full group discussion

## PARTICIPANTS

### **Facilitators**

Supervisor Kathy Long, Ventura County  
Supervisor Matt Rexroad, Yolo County

### **Presenters**

Cathy Senderling, California Welfare Directors Association  
Karen Pank, Chief Probation Officers of California  
Karen Gunderson, California Department of Social Services  
Helen Parrott, San Bernardino Children and Family Services  
Tracy McCuskey, San Bernardino Children and Family Services  
Natascha Root, Stanislaus County Probation

### **Participants**

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Supervisor Candy Carlson, Tehama County  
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Christine Williams, Sonoma County  
Supervisor Tom Woodhouse, Mendocino County

### **Documentation**

Bill Chiat, CSAC Institute

### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

#### ***Small Group Discussion Notes***

- \* Clarifying mental health services
- \* Data sharing: law, infrastructure
- \* Capacity/resource issues: programs, initiatives, staffing
- \* Public communications: reactive vs. proactive
- \* Youth engagement in programs and services
- \* Identify funding sources for best practices
- \* How to deal with trauma
- \* Human trafficking
- \* Lack of foster parents
- \* Absent parents (fathers)
- \* Establish goals for children across departments
- \* Regulatory issues
- \* Group homes and impacts of AB 403
- \* Homelessness
- \* Small steps
- \* City/county/other partnerships
- \* Educational forums
- \* Drug free/substance free shelters
- \* Mentally ill – homeless court
- \* Broad spectrum of services
- \* Housing First success
- \* Dealing with community opposition and perceptions
- \* Programs for youth in juvenile hall
- \* Population includes foster care
- \* Sharing/combining resources
- \* Addressing needs and identifying kids in sex trafficking
- \* Kids caught in the drug culture
- \* Poverty issues

### **THINGS COUNTIES CAN INFLUENCE**

#### ***Small Group Discussion Notes***

- \* Collaboration with other counties
- \* Proactive prevention solutions
- \* Communications (counties with state)
  - ⇒ Homelessness
  - ⇒ Restrictions/inhibitions
  - ⇒ Politics
- \* Breaking down silos
- \* Provider involvement in policy
  - ⇒ Local
  - ⇒ State
- \* Education of public
- \* Gathering good data
- \* Share information/public awareness
- \* Coordinate efforts across agencies and CBOs
- \* Tell success stories
- \* CSAC legislative changes: CWDA, CPOC, CBHDA

### **WHAT CAN WE TAKE BACK?**

#### ***Small Group Discussion Notes***

- \* Youth advocates
- \* Open communication/forums
- \* Ideas – bottom up
- \* Broader community awareness of CSEC issues
- \* Access to behavioral health services (substance abuse and mental health)
- \* Stable, affordable housing
- \* Capacity and resources
- \* Foster families
- \* Housing
- \* Coordination

### **GROUP TAKEAWAYS ON WHAT COUNTIES NEED TO DO**

- \* Community education – how it affects me
  - ⇒ Nature of situation – problem may change education
  - ⇒ Partnerships with judiciary
  - ⇒ County counsel part of education
- \* More communication from youth and employees upwards
- \* Move past silos: link not separate
  - ⇒ Create more opportunities for people to share data and information (legally)

### **WEBSITE RESOURCES**

Alameda County

<http://www.heatwatch.org/>

Orange County

<http://www.egovlink.com/ochumantrafficking/>

San Bernardino County

[http://www.sbcountyda.org/ServicesInformation/ProsecutingCriminals/HumanTraffickingProsecutionUnit/CoalitionAgainstSexualExploitation\(CASE\).aspx](http://www.sbcountyda.org/ServicesInformation/ProsecutingCriminals/HumanTraffickingProsecutionUnit/CoalitionAgainstSexualExploitation(CASE).aspx)

### **DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS**

#### ***Notes from Group Conversations***

- ♦ Differences in definitions: i.e. homelessness – county vs. school district definitions
- ♦ Juvenile hall and other children issues are rarely at podium and most political leaders don't have kids, yet counties collectively spend billions on them
- ♦ There remain many silos to sharing – often unintentional – legal, technology, location
- ♦ We get too focused on critical incidents versus proactive on positions: *Building policy based on bad behavior*
- ♦ Human trafficking has existed for some time, but we are just now acknowledging and reporting it ... similar to the pattern with recognizing child abuse years ago
- ♦ There is considerable difficulty in collecting data and documenting human trafficking. Requires a major paradigm shift for particularly law enforcement: from perpetrator to victim
- ♦ Silos are killing the identification of the human trafficking problem: need to create cross-disciplinary tasks forces
- ♦ There is an increasing shortage of foster parents and we are not sure why, but appears to be statewide
- ♦ Need to have group homes as an option for probation kids, but requires better management. Trying to get more youth into foster homes, but so difficult to find families who will take probation or trafficking victims
- ♦ Need to do more to work collaboratively without pointing fingers: social services, behavioral health, probation. Needs to be collaboration between the social worker, probation officer and behavioral health provider.
- ♦ Need to remember balance of services and treatment: not just mental health, but equally substance abuse and many times, medication abuse.
- ♦ Make sure we are looking at data at kid level not just mega-level. Otherwise may be identifying and solving wrong problem.