



A Tradition of Stewardship  
A Commitment to Service

Board of Supervisors

1195 Third St.  
Suite 310  
Napa, CA 94559  
www.countyofnapa.org

Main: (707) 253-4421  
Fax: (707) 253-4176

Bill Dodd  
Chairman

September 13, 2011

The Honorable Diane Price  
Presiding Judge  
Superior Court of California, County of Napa  
825 Brown Street  
Napa, CA 94559

**FILED**

SEP 19 2011

Clerk of the Napa Superior Court  
By: C. Brennan  
Deputy

Dear Judge Price:

As required by Penal Code Section 933(c), enclosed is the response to the 2010-2011 Final Reports on Child Welfare Services; Too Many Kids, Not Enough Help, Lake Berryessa Resort Improvement District and Napa Berryessa Resort Improvement.

Grand Jury activity takes place over the course of a number of months. As such, their findings and recommendations often address issues which county departments have already identified as problems and to which solutions are in the process of being developed.

The Board acknowledges the members of the 2010-2011 Grand Jury for the time they have devoted in preparing their report.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Bill Dodd in cursive.

Bill Dodd, Chairman  
Napa County Board of Supervisors

Enclosure

cc: Foreman, 2011-2012 Grand Jury  
The Honorable Mark Boessenecker

Received  
Napa Superior Court

SEP 16 2011

Court Executive Office

Brad Wagenknecht  
District 1

Mark Luce  
District 2

Diane Dillon  
District 3

Bill Dodd  
District 4

Keith Caldwell  
District 5

**NAPA COUNTY  
RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY REPORT  
FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011**

**NAPA COUNTY CHILD WELFARE SERVICES  
TOO MANY KIDS, NOT ENOUGH HELP**

**FINDING 1:** There are eight caseworkers employed by Napa County Health and Human Services carrying an average caseload of 25-30. This is approximately a 40% increase in caseload within the past two years.

***Response, Child Welfare Services Director:*** The Child Welfare Director agrees in part and disagrees in part with this finding. We agree that the number of eight caseworkers represents the number of staff in the division assigned ongoing case management responsibilities within the CWS division at the time the Grand Jury was deliberating. We further agree that the caseloads have increased as noted above. We disagree in that during the time the Grand Jury was deliberating, efforts were underway to fill vacant positions as well as to add Extra Help staff (2 FTEs) to assist with the increased workload and caseload. This has been accomplished so there are 10 FTEs doing this function at the present time. It is also helpful to note this number only represents the staff assigned responsibility for providing services to children and families after the Juvenile Court has taken jurisdiction of the children and made orders prescribing the ongoing services to be provided. Additional Child Welfare Services staff are assigned other activities intended to keep children with their families.

***Response, Board of Supervisors:*** The Board of Supervisors agrees in part and disagrees in part with this finding and incorporates by reference the response and explanation of the Child Welfare Services Director.

**FINDING 2:** The number of foster homes has declined by 40% since the 1980s.

***Response, Child Welfare Services Director:*** The Child Welfare Director agrees with this finding.

***Response, Board of Supervisors:*** The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.

**FINDING 3:** There are two caseworkers certified as bilingual.

***Response, Child Welfare Services Director:*** The Child Welfare Director agrees in part and disagrees in part with this finding. At the time the Grand Jury was deliberating, this was accurate. There was one caseworker providing ongoing case management (the group reflected in Finding 1) and one caseworker in Emergency Response services certified as bilingual. We thus

agree with the finding of two caseworkers providing core Child Welfare Services who were certified as bilingual. We disagree in part in that we have added another bilingual caseworker to ongoing services and another to Emergency Response since the deliberations of the Grand Jury, such that the total number of caseworkers in the division providing core Child Welfare Services has doubled to four.

***Response, Board of Supervisors:*** The Board of Supervisors agrees in part and disagrees in part with this finding and incorporates by reference the response and explanation of the Child Welfare Services Director.

**FINDING 4:** The recruiting and licensing process of new foster care homes and parents is assigned to one social worker.

***Response, Child Welfare Director:*** The Child Welfare Director agrees with this finding.

***Response, Board of Supervisors:*** The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.

**FINDING 5:** The Merit System Services, currently used by Napa County Health and Human Services for its hiring process, is outdated and rigid.

***Response, Child Welfare Services Director:*** The Child Welfare Director agrees with this finding. Although the Grand Jury did not direct a response from the HHSA Director, the HHSA Director joins in this response to concur with, and underscore, the CWS Director's response.

***Response, Human Resources Director:*** The Human Resources Director agrees with this finding.

***Response, Board of Supervisors:*** The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.

**FINDING 6:** A timeframe of three to six months is required to complete the hiring process for a new caseworker.

***Response, Child Welfare Services Director:*** The Child Welfare Director agrees with this finding.

***Response, Health and Human Services Director:*** The Health and Human Services Director agrees with this finding.

***Response, Board of Supervisors:*** The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.

**FINDING 7:** Although improved from previous years, communication and trust between caseworkers, their supervisors and management continues to be insufficient.

***Response, Child Welfare Services Director:*** The Child Welfare Director agrees with this finding.

***Response, Health and Human Services Director:*** The Health and Human Services Director agrees with this finding.

***Response, Board of Supervisors:*** The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.

**FINDING 8:** There is no formal respite program to provide intervals of relief for foster care parents.

***Response, Child Welfare Services Director:*** The Child Welfare Director agrees in part and disagrees in part with this finding. We agree there is no “formal” or systematic respite program for foster care providers. However, we disagree in that respite services can be provided on a case by case basis. There are funds available for respite up to 72 hours at a time that can be authorized as the need arises.

***Response, Health and Human Services Director:*** The Health and Human Services Director agrees in part and disagrees in part with this finding and incorporates by reference the response and explanation of the Child Welfare Services Director.

***Response, Board of Supervisors:*** The Board of Supervisors agrees in part and disagrees in part with this finding and incorporates by reference the response and explanation of the Child Welfare Services Director.

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** The Health and Human Services continue their efforts to hire qualified bilingual caseworkers.

***Response, Child Welfare Services Director:*** This recommendation has been implemented. We recognize the importance of continuing to increase the number of bilingual, bicultural staff available in child welfare services to serve the families and children of our community. This applies not only to caseworkers, but to all of the classifications in the Division and across the Agency. We now advertise key vacancies as “bilingual preferred” which has assisted us in recently adding two additional bilingual staff.

**Response, Health and Human Services Director:** The recommendation has been implemented. The Health and Human Services Director concurs with the response of the Child Welfare Director.

**Response, Board of Supervisors:** The recommendation has been implemented. The Board of Supervisors concurs with the response and explanation of the Child Welfare Services Director.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** The Child Welfare Services explore how community groups can help promote awareness of the need for foster homes and develop programs to reach out to these groups.

**Response, Child Welfare Services Director:** This recommendation will be implemented. We appreciate the support of the Grand Jury in recognizing this critical need. A significant barrier to effective recruitment of foster parents has been the shamefully inadequate compensation to foster parents to support the children in their care. We are pleased to note that as of May 1, 2011, in response to a lawsuit, the state agency responsible for setting foster care compensation rates raised the rates from between 18 % and 27% depending upon the age of the children. We have had an initial meeting to discuss a community awareness campaign regarding the need and the new compensation levels. Efforts to date have included a front-page article in the Napa Register appearing earlier this month.

**Response, Health and Human Services Director:** The recommendation will be implemented. The Health and Human Services Director concurs with the response of the Child Welfare Director.

**Response, Human Resources Director:** The recommendation will not be implemented by the Human Resources Director because it is not reasonable. This recommendation does not fall within the professional expertise of human resources management and as such the Human Resources Director is not in a position to comment on the recommendation and defers to the Child Welfare Services Director's response to this recommendation.

**Response, Board of Supervisors:** The recommendation will be implemented. The Board of Supervisors concurs with the response and explanation of the Child Welfare Services Director.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** A program be made available to foster parents providing intervals of respite in conjunction with Child Welfare Services.

**Response, Child Welfare Services Director:** This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. While we agree that a more structured and formal program of respite would be helpful for our foster care providers, there is no federal or state funding to develop such a service. We will continue to make this service available when specific needs arise on a case-by-case basis but are not in a position to implement a full "program" of respite given our fiscal realities. Should funding become available in the future, either through an allocation or a competitive grant process, we would pursue developing a formal respite program.

**Response, Health and Human Services Director:** The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. The Health and Human Services Director concurs with the response from the Child Welfare Director.

**Response, Board of Supervisors:** The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. The Board of Supervisors concurs with the response and explanation of the Child Welfare Services Director

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** The Health and Human Services Agency work with the Napa County Human Resources Department to replace Merit System Services with the Napa County Human Resources Department.

**Response, Child Welfare Services Director:** This recommendation will be implemented. Napa County has joined into formal discussions with other counties currently using Merit System Services, statewide associations of counties, and legislative advocates to explore strategies to move from Merit System Services to a county based personnel system that meets federal requirements for personnel hiring and personnel management.

**Response, Human Resources Director:** The recommendation will be implemented. The Human Resources Director concurs with the response from the Child Welfare Director. The Human Resources Division is working closely with the Health and Human Services Agency in exploring options for replacing Merit System Services with the Human Resources Division for personnel related services and functions. The Human Resources Division is very supportive of any efforts to develop a more responsive and effective approach to managing personnel related functions for Child Welfare Services and other Napa County programs that are required to use State Merit System Services for their personnel functions. *There are a number of outstanding issues that will need to be resolved in order to move forward.*

**Response, Board of Supervisors:** The recommendation will be implemented. The Board of Supervisors concurs with the response and explanation of the Child Welfare Services Director and Human Resources Director.