

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
**COMMISSION FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

2025

EXECUTIVE OFFICE



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ROSTER

First Supervisorial District

Supervisor Hilda L. Solis

Gabriela Eddy
Michael Flowers
Jose Miguel Ruiz

Second Supervisorial District

Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell

Dr. Charity Chandler-Cole
Zaid Gayle
Franco Vega

Third Supervisorial District

Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath

Dr. Khush Cooper
Roman James
Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey

Fourth Supervisorial District

Supervisor Janice Hahn

Dora Jacildo
Eli Romero
Tiffany Boyd
(served through September 2025)
Dandy De Paula
(appointed in October 2025)

Fifth Supervisorial District

Supervisor Kathryn Barger

Shimica Gaskins
Lou Moore
Dr. Jeanette Mann
(served through October 2025)
Winnie Wechsler
(appointed in November 2025)

Commission Officers

Shimica Gaskins, Chair (2025)
Dr. Charity Chandler-Cole, Vice Chair (2025) and Chair (2026)
Franco Vega, Vice Chair (2025 and 2026)
Dora Jacildo, Vice Chair (2026)

Executive Director

Armand Montiel (2025)

Interim Executive Director

Shalesha Johnson (2026)

Commission for Children and Families Website:

<http://ccf.lacounty.gov/>

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

MISSION STATEMENT AND ORDINANCE

MISSION STATEMENT

The Commission for Children and Families advises the Board of Supervisors on strengthening service delivery systems and enhancing partnerships to create safer and more secure futures for Los Angeles County's at-risk children and their families.

ORDINANCE

The Commission was created by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) on May 8, 1984, and is charged by its ordinance to:

- ❖ Review all programs administered by County departments that provide services for at-risk children;
 - ❖ Receive input from appropriate community groups and individuals concerning administered children's services programs;
 - ❖ Review and make recommendations to the Board concerning legislation dealing with children's needs;
 - ❖ Make recommendations, as necessary, to various County department heads to improve children's services;
 - ❖ Make recommendations, as necessary, to the Board on action to be taken to improve children's services; and,
 - ❖ Provide an annual report to the Board concerning the status of children's services, along with recommendations for their improvement, to be utilized for broad community distribution and discussion.
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COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

2025 OVERVIEW AND PRIORITIES

As reflected by the Commission's meeting topics and presenters (shown later in this report), the Commission heard from agencies, advocates, and community members on several issues impacting children and families this year. These presentations informed the Commission of ongoing challenges and also provided opportunities to address the continuing and emerging needs for children in Los Angeles County, particularly foster children, children aged zero to five years, school-aged children, and transition-aged older youth.

The Commission began its year by approving its priorities for 2025 at its January 6 meeting. The discussion regarding these priorities included a stated intent to bring formal recommendations, as needed, regarding these priorities to the Board of Supervisors. The 2025 priorities included:

- Youth Life & Financial Readiness, particularly regarding foster and probation-involved youth;
- Mental Health of Youth (including addressing racial disparities);
- Issues affecting children aged zero to five years old;
- Family Court and its decision-making regarding child support and consideration of "survivor voice";
- Practices and policies of the Department of Children and Family Services, and other County departments, including Probation and Public Social Services, and adjacent agencies, such as family court; and,
- Emerging issues impacting County children and families (e.g., the escalating cost of insurance for foster family agencies).

The day following the Commission's January meeting, Los Angeles County experienced two of the most destructive wildfires in its history: the Altadena and Pacific Palisades fires. Like most Angelenos, these fires had a significant and devastating impact on the personal and professional lives of our Commissioners. The fires disrupted normal activities for an extended period, and, for many, life still has not returned to "normal." One immediate effect of these disruptions was the cancellation of the January meeting of the Commission's Racial Justice Committee.

Compounding the impact of the fires, in late January an increase in the scale and activities of federal immigration enforcement activities led to widespread civil demonstrations and protests. Due to the proximity of these protests to the Commission's meeting location, the Commission's

February meeting was canceled. At the Commission's March meeting, Brandon Nichols, the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), reported that 70 DCFS-served children were displaced from their homes (both foster and birth family homes) due to the fires, with 43 of those homes being total losses. DCFS worked with the philanthropic community to provide emergency housing for these families and secure funds to replace personal items. Commission Co-Chair Franco Vega secured a \$10,000 grant for gift cards for transition-aged foster youth (i.e., 18 years+) who lost everything in the fires.

Director Nichols also informed the Commission that 2025 would be a particularly challenging year for both the County and DCFS' budgets. Many factors contributed to these budgetary challenges, including, but not limited to, cuts in government funding for health and human services and a \$4 billion settlement for lawsuits resulting from AB 218 (the California law that lifted the statute of limitations for filing a lawsuit related to childhood sexual abuse). Director Nichols affirmed that, despite the budgetary challenges, "prevention" remains DCFS' priority, and he noted that the number of children in foster care has been reduced by 32% in the last three years.

Further making 2025 a notable year, in late April the members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which includes DCFS social workers, participated in a three-day strike as part of their efforts to negotiate an improved contract (or Memorandum of Understanding) with the County. At the May Commission meeting, DCFS Chief of Staff Lisa Mandel reported that DCFS services were not adversely affected during the strike.

In June, the Commission meeting again had to be canceled due to demonstrations protesting federal immigration enforcement activities. On the June 9 Commission meeting day, the meeting room was inaccessible due to a demonstration taking place at Grand Park, which is right outside the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration (HOA) (i.e., the Commission's meeting location). Then in November, the Commission meeting was canceled for an unprecedented third time as there was no access to the HOA due to road closures for the Dodgers' World Series victory parade.

Despite the cancelations, disruptions, and other challenges throughout the year, the Commission convened eight meetings and received presentations in support of their 2025 priorities. These presentations covered topics such as the impact of dependency court hearings on parents, a review of mental health services available for Los Angeles County youth, and "financial readiness" services for older foster youth. A complete list of these presentations is included later in this report.

Following the initial cancelation of its January meeting due to the wildfires, the Commission's Racial Justice Committee (RJC) held its regularly scheduled meetings throughout the remainder of the year, except for the October meeting (when the meeting could not proceed due to a lack of quorum). The RJC is a "standing" committee that, like the Commission, meets

monthly and adheres to the open meeting requirements of California's Ralph M. Brown Act. With six members, the RJC needs four members to be present in-person to create a quorum.

At its January meeting, the RJC agreed on the following priorities for 2025:

- Explore how Black families are affected by court systems, and determine for which specific issues the RJC should advocate;
- Focus on the reunification process for children removed from their home by child protection services, and review which areas within the County's Child Support Services Department (CSSD) could be addressed to help mitigate poverty in Black families;
- Invite representatives from CSSD to provide an overview of the demographics of child support recipients and the processes used by CSSD; and,
- Continue to focus on the "zero to five" child population.

To support these priorities and help determine how best to advocate for racial justice, the RJC received presentations from CSSD managers, the Reimaging Child Safety Coalition, and DCFS' Eliminating Racial Disproportionality and Disparity section, among others. A complete list of the RJC presentations is included later in this report.

At the Commission's December meeting, there was agreement that the Commissioners were experiencing a sense of disconnect caused by the disruptions and tumult experienced throughout 2025, and it was decided that a day-long retreat was needed to allow for an extended discussion regarding the Commission's 2026 priorities. Prior to the retreat, selected Commissioners met with their respective Board Offices to receive feedback on what Board priorities should be considered when developing Commission priorities. The Commission held their retreat in February 2026 and developed priorities for a two-year (2026-2027) cycle. Those priorities will be the focus of the next annual report.

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

2025 MEETING PRESENTATIONS AND TOPICS

DATE OF MEETING	PRESENTATION TOPIC ¹	PRESENTER
January 6	2025 CCF Priority Planning Meeting – No Presentations	
February 3	Meeting was canceled as the meeting location was inaccessible due to local demonstrations and road closures	
March 3	Dependency Hearings and the Impact on Parents	Emily Berger, Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers, and Maria Gonzales (a parent with lived experience)
April 7	Navigating Child Welfare and Family Court: How Preventive Legal Services and Civil Legal Aid Can Keep Families Together	Sharon Balmer Cartagena, Directing Attorney, Child Youth & Family Advocacy Project, Public Counsel, and Minyong Lee, Supervising Attorney, Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County
May 5	Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Flexible Family Supports Funds	Kym Renner, Deputy Director, DCFS
June 9	Meeting was canceled as the meeting location was inaccessible due to local demonstrations and road closures	
July 7	Mental Health Services for Los Angeles County Children and Youth	Mary R. Barraza, LCSW, Prevention and Child Well Being Administration Sr. Deputy Director, Department of Mental Health, Edward Liao, MD, Medical Director, DCFS
	Probation Department's Response to the AB 218 Settlement	Wendelyn Julien, J.D., Executive Director, Probation Oversight Commission
August	No meeting scheduled	

¹ Note: The DCFS Director or designee provides a DCFS report/update at every Commission meeting.

September 8	Transition-Aged Youth Services and Financial Readiness	Dr. Patrisha Taylor, DCFS Children's Services Administrator III, Youth Engagement Section, Kimberly Davis, Children's Services Administrator II, Angela Parks-Pyles, DCFS Deputy Director, and Ronique Ross, Executive Assistant to DCFS Director Brandon T. Nichols
October 6	DREAM Court: Dedication to Restoration through Empowerment, Advocacy, and Mentoring (a specialized courtroom to address exploitation) and other Juvenile Dependency specialty courtrooms	Shelly Caterino, Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers
November 3	Meeting was canceled as the meeting location was inaccessible due to nearby road closures for Dodgers championship parade	
December 8	No outside presentations, 2026 CCF Priority Planning discussion; presentation by Commissioners Khushnuma Cooper and Lou Moore on creating an Ad Hoc Committee for Complex Care Foster Placements	

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES RACIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE 2025 MEETING PRESENTATIONS AND TOPICS

DATE OF MEETING	PRESENTATION TOPIC	PRESENTER
January 13	Meeting canceled due to County wildfire incidents	
February 10	2025 RJC Priority Planning Meeting (no presentations)	
March 10	2025 RJC Priority Planning Meeting (no presentations)	
April 14	Overview of County's Child Support Services Department (CSSD) PART I	Genie Chough, CSSD Chief Deputy Director, and Eric Lee, Lead Attorney
May 12	Overview of CSSD PART II	Genie Chough, CSSD Chief Deputy Director, and Eric Lee, Lead Attorney
June 16	Discussion re: CSSD (no presentations)	Committee Members
July 14	Presentation on the Domestic Violence Council (DVC), Los Angeles County Department of Public Health	Lan Pham, Executive Director, DVC
	Reimagining Child Safety Coalition	Minouche Kandel, Senior Staff Attorney, Gender, Sexuality, & Reproductive Justice Project, ACLU of Southern California Leah Zeidler-Ordaz, Community Lawyering Manager, Urban Peace Institute and Reimagining Child Safety
August	No meeting scheduled	

September 15	Eliminating Racial Disproportionality and Disparity	Kimala Lewis, Children's Services Administrator (CSA) III, A'isha Davison, CSA I, La NeShae Norwood, CSA I, DCFS Office of Equity Arena Turner, Division Chief, DCFS Office of Equity Dr. Wendy Wiegmann, UC Berkeley, California Child Welfare Indicators
September 15 (continued)	Update on Board Motion "Implementing an Innovative Specialized Child Welfare Program for Young Children in Care" (June 10, 2025, Board Agenda Item 5).	Commissioner Jacquelyn McCroskey
October 20	Meeting canceled due to lack of quorum	
November 17	Discussion: CSSD Regarding Customer Service Survey; Impact of Recent Legislation SB 1055; Other Updates	Genie Chough, Chief Deputy, CSSD Eric Lee, Head Attorney, CSSD
December 15	RJC 2026 Priority Planning Meeting	

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES IN 2025

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services -Eliminating Racial Disproportionality and Disparity Advisory Committee	Dr. Charity Chandler-Cole
LA County Family First Prevention Services Advisory Committee -Planning and Implementation Work Groups	Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey Lou Moore
First 5 LA Board of Commissioners	Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey
Los Angeles County -Faith-Based Collaborative	Dr. Jeanette Mann Lou Moore
Los Angeles County Mandated Supporting Initiative -Subcommittee: AB 2085 Training Supplement Workgroup	Dr. Charity Chandler-Cole
Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection -Permanency Work Group	Lou Moore
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education -Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development	Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey Dora Jacildo (alternate)
Office of Violence Prevention Community Partnership Council and Co-Chair of the Domestic Violence Council's DV-LEAP Subcommittee	Roman James

System of Care Work Group (a state-funded initiative)	Tiffany Boyd
Thriving Families, Safer Children Los Angeles Team (a national public/private initiative)	Tiffany Boyd Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey

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