

FAMILY SERVICES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY GOVERNMENT - VOLUME I

February 1989

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION

March 21, 1989

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REPORT ON FAMILY SERVICES

Dear Supervisors:

In September, 1987, Supervisor Antonovich advised us of a need for review of the various organizations created by Los Angeles County to address the social services needs of children. In his letter, the Supervisor pointed out that the existence of numerous agencies has created duplication, fragmentation, and confusion. He requested recommendations to best serve children and maximize County resources.

The enclosed report and recommendations are the result of fifteen months of study by our task force, chaired by Arthur J. Peever. The task force met with County officials and other authorities in the field of children's welfare, reviewed documentation of issues and alternatives based on staff research, and reviewed basic information on the current structure and finance of County systems affecting children. The task force published its initial recommendations in July, 1988, when they were approved by our Commission. Subsequently, the task force met with the Children's Planning Council, the Los Angeles County Roundtable for Children, and the Children's Services Commis-

sion. Thus, we have based the enclosed recommendations on considerable input from the community as well as on research of the field and analysis of issues and alternatives.

In formulating our recommendations, we sought to identify specific Board actions which would

- enhance the County's effectiveness in addressing family issues, and reduce duplication, fragmentation, and confusion;
- take into account the severe constraints on County finances, together with the influence of State and Federal agencies on County decisions;

We are proposing that the Board of Supervisors adopt five major groups of recommendations for implementation by County officials, working with our Commission. We have attached a copy of our report which lists the detailed recommendations on pages 10 to 14 and summarizes the reasoning that led us to them.

In the first group of recommendations, we propose that the Board of Supervisors commit to a redesign of the social services system and direct the Director of Children's Services, the Director of Community and Senior Citizens' Services, and the Director of Public Social Services to work with our task force on determining the most appropriate nature of that redesign. We are convinced that the services can be more effective and efficient, and we believe that restructuring may be part of that improvement. The point of our recommendation is that we seek authorization by the Board to continue the work.

In the second group of recommendations, we propose that the Board of Supervisors create a new multijurisdictional council. The purpose of the council would be to establish a common agenda and policy among public agencies on services for families in this region. It would be chaired by the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. We have modelled this new council on the County-wide Criminal Justice Coordination Council, which has been successful in unifying the diverse interests of multiple law enforcement jurisdictions. Based on our study, this kind of council is needed to provide for explicit recognition that the victimization of children is inextricably linked with the community problems of spousal abuse, elder abuse and neglect, substance abuse, school drop out, unemployment, and poverty.

In our third group of recommendations, we suggest that the Board of Supervisors continue the Children's Services Commission with a new ordinance that clarifies its advisory role, and specifies its mission as that of advising elected and appointed officials on the broad range of policy issues affecting families.

In the fourth group, we propose that the Board of Supervisors establish, as a means of improving accountability for the effectiveness of services, a system of formal, Board approved agreements between the Children's Services Department and the County departments from which it receives services, including

County Counsel, the Department of Health Services, the Department of Mental Health, and the County Superintendent of Schools. In the long range, we propose a system authorizing the Director of Children's Services to choose alternative providers of the services now produced exclusively by those departments.

In our fifth group of recommendations, we suggest specific steps that the Board of Supervisors should take to improve its methods of creating, continuing, and working with citizens' commissions and committees.

THEREFORE, WE RECOMMEND THAT the Board of Supervisors ADOPT the enclosed report and recommendations, and DIRECT County officials to collaborate in their implementation:

1. Direct County Counsel to prepare an ordinance establishing the coordinating council as outlined in the Commission's recommendation, and to submit it to the Board within 30 days.
2. Direct County Counsel to prepare an ordinance implementing the E & E Commission's recommendation to continue the Children's Services Commission, and to submit it to the Board within 30 days.
3. Direct the Director of Children's Services to continue implementing the Department's organizational development process, in accordance with the goals outlined in the Fulfillment Plan.
4. Direct the Director of Children's Services, the Director of Health Services, the Director of Mental Health, and the County Superintendent of Schools to work with the Chief Administrative Officer and County Counsel to report back within 60 days with a plan for establishing a system of interdepartmental agreements and with a report on what would be necessary to implement

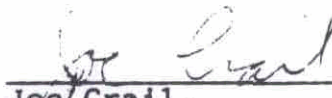
the program budgeting and management systems recommended by the Commission.

5. Instruct the Chief Administrative Officer, the Director of Children's Services, the Director of Community and Senior Citizens' Services, and the Director of Public Social Services to meet with the Commission's task force and to report back within 30 days on a plan to implement the remainder of the commission's recommendations.

Very truly yours,



Arthur J. Peever,
Task Force Chairman



Joe Crail,
Commission Chairman

Members of the Task Force

Louise Frankel
Lauro J. Neri

Robert J. Lowe
Dr. Alfred J. Freitag

Enclosures

FAMILY SERVICES
IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

February 1989

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PREFACE

In September, 1987, the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors advised us of the need for a review of the various organizations created by Los Angeles County to address the increasing needs of children. In his letter, the Chairman pointed out that the existence of numerous agencies has created duplication, fragmentation, and confusion, and called for our recommendations to "best serve children and maximize our resources."

In accordance with our usual practice, our chairman appointed a task force, chaired by Arthur J. Peever, to conduct a study and analysis of the issues. The subject is a continuation of our work, Decision-Making and Organization in Los Angeles County Government, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in September, 1983, as well as of earlier work on the County's system of commissions and on the intergovernmental structure. In the course of our work, we interviewed six County department heads and representatives of various commissions, councils and boards that have been working in the field of children's welfare. Under the direction of our task force, our staff

Conducted over 100 interviews of County employees and other authorities in the field, and conducted a broad literature search to

survey current and emerging developments. Our task force convened twelve formal meetings to review the results, discuss alternatives, and review draft reports.

Our task force first presented its recommendations to the Commission at its regular meeting on July 6, 1988. The Commission adopted the recommendations at that time. However, following testimony by interested parties, the Commission suggested that the task force seek additional input from community organizations regarding the issues and its recommendations. The task force therefore met again with representatives of the Children's planning Council, the Children's Roundtable, and the Children's Services Commission.

This report summarizes our recommendations and the reasoning that led to them. The first section of the report contains a summary and a list of the recommendations for Board action. The second section contains a detailed discussion of each recommendation.

FAMILY SERVICES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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I

SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

As the County establishes policy and plans its programs over the next five to fifteen years, the structure of the society to which the County must respond is changing as it relates to the needs of children and families and the need for governmental intervention in their lives.¹

According to the Hudson Institute,¹

"Most of the laws and policies that affect American jobs and workers were developed several decades ago. Many date from the 1930s and 1960s, when economic conditions were different, world trade was less important, manufacturing was more dominant, and women and minorities were a smaller share of the workforce. As the changes in the American economy and workforce unfold over the balance of the century, many of these policies will become increasingly outmoded."

The subject of our report is the structure for government services established by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to address the problems of children and their families. The structure has been designed to carry out the outmoded policies to which the Hudson Institute refers. Those policies and their current effects have a dominant effect on the jobs and workers of tomorrow, and therefore on the growth and economic health of the Los Angeles region.

An effective County strategy must also take cultural changes into account. For example, demographers² forecast that by

the year 2000, the population of children under fourteen in Los Angeles County will grow at about the same rate as the overall population. to 2.141.000, or 22% of the projected total of 9.7 million. The ethnic distribution will change radically the significance of the Latino and Asian populations of children will increase. while the significance of the Black population is likely to remain about the same and the significance of the white, non-Latino population of children is likely to decline. Virtually all population growth in Los Angeles and other urban regions is among minority groups - either from immigration, or from higher birth rates.

Thus, the labor force of tomorrow is likely to be composed principally of people whose backgrounds are from ethnic minorities or immigrant cultures. Family life and the assumptions underlying the structure of families differ among the cultures that have developed here and those of people immigrating here. Yet the structure of government. and the policy assumptions underlying it are slow to change.³

Social structures are already changing in measurable ways. Many of the children of today are being raised in family environments that differ completely from the traditional two parent family unit with one parent working outside the home. The traditional American concept of nuclear family is being replaced by a wide variety of different network forms of family relationships. The form depends on ethnic and economic groups, on location, on age, on religion, and on a host of other variables. Single parent families are expected to increase.

Most children

live in families - but even now about 20% of all children are

living in a single parent family, and about half of all children will live in a single parent family during some period in their dependent years. Yet people living in families make up more than 85% of all households.

Thus, when today's children assume parental responsibility, it will probably be based largely on different assumptions about the basic unit of society than those that have led to the laws and governmental service structures operating today. Yet we are not necessarily doing well in preparing children for societal changes and their roles in the society. Within the next fifteen to twenty years, authorities believe that a number of current deficiencies will have major impact on our society because of actions or inaction of government now. For example.⁴

- We are producing youth who cannot function productively in the economy, because they lack fundamental skills of thinking, learning, reading, and arithmetic. At the same time, low skill jobs are declining, and the occupations of the future will require more education.
- Increasing stress on the young is increasing the possibility of intergenerational domestic violence - of young to their seniors and of adults to children.

All children are at risk in our society, although not all may need the intervention of government to address the risk. Latchkey children are at risk. Runaways are at risk. The lack of resources for day care - whether or not subsidized by government or employers - puts most children with working parents at risk, whether or not they are in a single parent environment. Exposure to violence, drugs, and other adverse community conditions puts all children at risk.

That all children are at risk means that County government should

consider families and the condition of families in the development of policy.

The children and their families at risk are not necessarily victims of child neglect or abuse. They may be, instead, children who must live with little parental supervision, little parental contact with the school, and few or no extended family resources to call on for support. The County social services system, on the other hand, is structured nearly exclusively for children who are victims of neglect or abuse. For example, although the Department of Children's Services wants to include prevention in its priorities, and all authorities believe it should, the primary resources available in the County structure for preventive work are in the Department of Public Social Services and the Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services. Not one of those three departments has a comprehensive family directed function.

Therefore, the scope of County policy should include all children - not just those children legally defined as at risk. The focus of County policy should include both correcting situations of neglect and abuse and preventing the need for future government intervention by reducing the levels of risk. We include in this the use of County resources which are not generally thought of as being included in the Children's Services System. We also include service and resources which have not yet been identified as a responsibility of government in its policy leadership role.

For these reasons, our study has led us to consider the entire system structured by the Board of Supervisors to address the problems

of children and families. We have formulated recommendations that have policy impact, rather than assess the performance of service delivery departments and their leadership. That is, we neither looked for, nor did we find, deficiencies in the County system that should be attributed to the performance of individuals or County departments. We found duplication, fragmentation, and confusion attributable to the way boards of supervisors and legislatures have structured the overall system of departments that addresses social problems of families.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors does not and cannot unilaterally establish social policy. It cannot even fully establish the County's own role in implementing policy. Almost everything the County does is dependent on the State; in fact, counsel consistently finds that the Board can take few actions unless they are explicitly authorized by the State law or by County Charter.

The Los Angeles County Board does, however, control the structure of its departmental organization, the size of its workforce, and the allocation of resources to their various functions. A central finding of our study is this;

The structure of the County social services system impedes progress in creating new and effective approaches to the problems of families and children.

The system of social services on which the County Board of Supervisors bases its organizational structure is designed for the society we had decades ago. Thirteen County departments and

thirty-five commissions committees¹ boards and councils directly affect the welfare of children and families in Los Angeles County. Over 200 independent governmental jurisdictions set policies and provide services which combine with the County's to create conditions affecting all children. The Board of Supervisors alone budgets costs approaching \$600 million for these operations, excluding the cost of direct financial aid to families with dependent children.

County officials make a case for the need for more resources. Little of the available funding is spent for preventive services. Almost none is spent to address problem areas that are only now being recognized: day care, latchkey children. enforcement of child support laws, the intimidating character of the courts and their facilities, teenage pregnancy, intervention for runaways, and substance abuse, including its perinatal effects.

Making the structure more efficient can release resources to relieve the financial pressure that is so clearly a source of stress in the current system. Making the structure more effective can create opportunities and release resources for new initiatives to address problems in areas in which the County government now has no efficacious programs. A more effective and efficient structure, with supporting and coordinated participation of citizens and the officials of multiple jurisdictions, is the primary goal of our recommendations.

The task force presents its recommendations in five major categories. The recommendations are listed on pages 10 to 14. We discuss each in more detail in separate sections of Chapter II.

In the first category, we recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt goals for structural change to integrate the various fragments of social casework and preventive services into a cohesive, well aligned unit working with families.

In the second, we recommend that the Board of Supervisors create a new multijurisdictional countywide council on family services. The council would be composed of the elected or appointed heads of city, County, State, federal, and educational agencies. Its charge would be to formulate and implement policy initiatives for families. It would be chaired by the Chairman of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, and its operations would be modeled after the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee.

In the third category, we recommend that the Board of Supervisors continue the Children's Services Commission with a new ordinance that clarifies its advisory role, and specifies its mission as that of advising elected and appointed officials on the broad range of policy issues affecting families.

Fourth, we recommend that the Board of Supervisors focus the accountability for the care of children in its charge in a single individual, by requiring formal interdepartmental agreements between departments providing services to children and their families. In the long term, the Director of Children's Services

would have the authority to choose the provider of health, mental health, legal, and schooling services to the children in his charge.

In the fifth category, we recommend that the Board of Supervisors establish processes to reduce the tendency to increase fragmentation and duplication by creating multiple citizens advisory commissions or interagency councils with overlapping roles. We do not claim that implementation of our recommendations would be a panacea to correct all the problems of children and families. While we believe that structural change in Los Angeles County government is a necessary condition for reform, it is by no means all that is needed. Innovation and improved services delivery are also required, but it is certain that they will not occur, even with vast infusions of new funding, without the local integration of services which is impossible under the current structure.

NOTES TO SUMMARY

1. Hudson Institute¹ Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century, Hudson Institute, Indianapolis, 105.

2. Los Angeles County, Population Estimate and Projection System, Department of Health Services. 1988 (for the Economy and Efficiency Commission).

3. Thomas E. Coleman, et. al., Task Force on Family Diversity of the City of Los Angeles, Strengthening Families: A Model for Community Action, Los Angeles, May, 1988.

4 See, for example, Berman, Weiler Associates, Restructuring California Education, (Recommendations to the California Business Roundtable), 1988. The Summary contains the following statement:

With over one-third of its students dropping out, California's school system now ranks 44th in the nation. Without great improvement, well over a million students will have left before graduation between now and the year 2000; another fifty thousand high school graduates per year will be barely literate, adding to California's five million functionally illiterate adults. But even these numbers understate the problem. Most of the future's enrollment increase will be students from poor, single-parent, and minority backgrounds - a population truly 'at risk' in the current system.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMENDATION 1: DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION/REALINGMENT

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors improve the structure of the departmental service delivery system for social services, retaining the strengths of the County's present functional principle of organization and building upon it.

- A. Instruct the Director of Children's Services to continue implementing the Department's organizational development process, in accordance with the goals outlined in its current "Fulfillment Plan".
- B. Adopt as a goal the separation of County social service functions from the income maintenance functions, without increasing the number of County departments.
- C. Adopt as a goal the restructuring of the County's social and community services to improve effectiveness and efficiency and reduce administrative costs, with savings to be utilized to improve service to all age groups and to initiate programs for prevention of family violence and child abuse.
- D. Instruct the directors of the Departments of Children's Services, Community and Senior Citizens' Services, and Public Social Services to assist the Economy and Efficiency Commission to produce a plan for the redesign of services and realignment of the functions of those departments, and to submit it to the Board of Supervisors within six months.

RECOMENDATION 2: COUNTYWIDE COORDINATING COUNCIL ON THE FAMILY

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors:

- A. Consolidate the staffing of the Child Sex Abuse Crisis Center Executive Board, the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee, the Domestic Violence Council, the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN), and the Task Force on Drug Abuse, into a unified staffing structure that reports within the Chief Administrative Office.

- B. Establish by ordinance a multijurisdictional coordinating council on family services¹ chaired by the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors and staffed by the Chief Administrative Office.
- C. Define the duties of this council as follows:
- improve the social services system through greater local cooperation, including new multijurisdictional social policies and services;
 - develop systemwide strategies and funding priorities;
 - secure needed State legislation and action;
 - facilitate the development of public-private partnerships and prevention programs, and promote the development of standardized information systems and training programs;
 - recommend criteria for the distribution of grant funding among political subdivisions or districts.
- D. Specify by ordinance:
- that the council consists of a core voting membership to include elected and appointed officials of the County, the City of Los Angeles, the contract and independent cities, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the County Superintendent of Schools, the Superior Court, the Municipal Courts, and State and federal agencies.
 - that operating procedures will provide for augmentation of the voting membership from time to time, and for establishment of working task forces which may include subordinates and non-members, to consider specialized subjects, when approved by the core voting membership.

RECOMMENDATION 3: CHILDREN'S ADVISORY COMMISSION

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors specify by ordinance the scope and role of the Commission, in order to:

- include all children and their families in the scope of Board policy on which the Commission advises,
- increase the cohesiveness of the advice which the Board receives from its citizen advisors on children and their families,

- clarify that the Commission is advisory to the Board and is not a supervisory, managerial or appeal body.

The ordinance should specify the following:

A. The Commission's roles are:

- to recommend cohesive Board policy regarding matters which affect children and their families,
- to recommend Board sponsorship of legislation and Board positions on proposed legislation,
- to monitor, and report to the Board of Supervisors, the implementation status of recommendations adopted by the Board related to children and their families, including currently relevant recommendations of the Task Force on Children's Services (1984),
- to provide leadership by recommending to the Board of Supervisors new programs and methods of implementation.

B. The Commission's name is the Commission for Children.

C. The Commission is self-governing, authorized to appoint its own staff, and staffed by such positions as are designated in the current Salary Ordinance or employed by the County by contract.

The Board of Supervisors should also explicitly:

D. Direct each County citizens' advisory commission and interagency or multijurisdictional council to notify the Commission for Children of any significant matters that come before it which have an impact on Board policy affecting children and their families.

E. Direct each County official appointed by the Board, and request all County, city, and school officials, to supply the Commission with all information that the Commission formally requests with a bearing on the welfare of children and families, unless the release of the information to such a body is prohibited by law.

RECOMMENDATION 4: PURCHASE OF SERVICES

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors focus accountability for the results of County social services for children and families in a single individual.

Phase One: Interdepartmental Agreements

- A. Instruct the Department of Children's Services to enter into annual formal agreements with the Departments of Mental Health, Health Services, County Counsel, and the County Superintendent of Schools.
- Instruct the directors of the identified departments to cooperate in negotiating such agreements, to execute them, and to present them to the Board of Supervisors for adoption before June 30, 1989.
 - Direct that the agreements shall specify the nature, quantity, quality, and other relevant terms and conditions for services to children and families who are the clients of the Department of Children's Services.

Phase Two: Program Management

- B. Instruct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to implement a complete program budgeting system effective July 1, 1990 for all programs managed by the Department of Children's Services, which includes services provided to its clients by other county departments and which incorporates the following policies:
- That the full costs of services provided to children in the care of the Department by County Counsel, the Department of Health Services, and the Department of Mental Health are to be reflected as expense in the accounts of the Department of Children's Services.
 -
 - That the Director of Children's Services is solely responsible for all financial and programmatic decisions to secure the care of children in his or her charge, including the choice of provider, whether another county department, another governmental agency, or a private provider.
 -
- C. Seek legislative authority to implement the recommended changes, as necessary.

RECOMMENDATION 5: ADVISORY COMMISSIONS AND INTERAGENCY COUNCILS

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors curtail the potential for future actions which might tend to increase fragmentation and duplication.

- A. Enforce the procedure requiring the CAO to minimize the creation of additional commissions by a) reviewing the roles of any new commission to determine whether its intended functions could be performed by an existing group, b) recommending assignment of the functions to an existing group whenever feasible, and c) recommending the detailed functions, composition, and method of operation of a new commission.
- B. Direct the CAO to brief all newly appointed citizen commissioners on the County's overall structure, programs, legal responsibilities, budget, operations. commission system, and other relevant information.
- C. Direct the CAO to brief all citizen commissions annually on the state of the County and in particular on the major actions attributable to commissions' recommendations.
- D. Direct the CAO to implement the recommendations of the 1986-87 Grand Jury to enforce reporting requirements for the costs and accomplishments of citizen commissions and to establish a sunset date for each when appropriate.
- E. Direct the CAO to enforce reporting requirements for the costs and accomplishments of interagencymultijurisdictional councils.

II.

DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT SYSTEM

The Board of Supervisors delivers a broad range of services to fulfill the County's missions supporting families, including protecting children, preventing the conditions that lead to victimization of spouses, children, and others, and supporting the correction of environmental situations that foster violence in families.

Figure 1 depicts the current structure of the entire system designed by the Board of Supervisors, within the framework of the County Charter and the laws of the State, to provide services intended to fulfill this mission. The key departments¹ in the Board's structure are those marked in Figure 1 as "area of proposed change":

- Department of Children's Services
- Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services
- Department of Public Social Services.

The Department of Children's Services receives reports of suspected child abuse or neglect from individuals and from public or private agencies. Department officials decide whether to remove the child from the home, request concurrence of the Superior Court with a removal, obtain medical or psychological care for the child as needed, place the child outside the home if

FIGURE 1 AVAILABLE IN GRAPHIC FORM

Warranted, and arrange adoption or legal guardianship when necessary and possible. The Department operates MacLaren's Children's Center, a shelter for children awaiting placement.

The Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services funds city government and private agencies which provide job training, employment assistance, housing assistance, emergency food and shelter, and truancy counseling. Department officials administer the County's domestic violence program, which provides shelter, counseling, arrangements for schooling, and liaison with law enforcement for children and parents who are victims of domestic violence. The department operates community service centers, mediates civil disputes, and provides senior citizens with a variety of programs including congregate and home delivered meals, transportation, and in-home assistance. The Department of Public Social Services determines eligibility for financial assistance for families with children and for individuals. The department funds INFOLINE, which is the primary resource and referral service in the Los Angeles region for social services and other community resources. The department provides social services which include:

- response to reports of elder abuse and protective services for victims
- in-home supportive services for disabled or elderly
- sheltered workshops
- refugee schooling
- Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN), which includes training and counseling for AFDC recipients, and day care for their children.

Table I contains summaries of the size of workforce and budgets of these departments' social services programs. The total amount, \$601 million, includes the amounts spent by Los Angeles County for social services to children and families, but excludes the aid grants and welfare payments administered through the Department of Public Social Services. Similarly, the 4,500 budgeted positions includes those allocated to social services, but excludes those allocated to welfare eligibility work.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors improve the Structure of the departmental service delivery system for social services, retaining the strengths of the County's present functional principle of organization and building upon it.

This is the most significant of our recommendations in its potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of County social services. The first specific point of our recommendation would affect the Department of Children's Services. The remaining three points suggest goals for modifying the Board's structure which would affect the entire system of social services provided by the three departments.

Department of Children's Services

1A. Instruct the Director of Children's Services to continue implementing the Department's organizational development process, in accordance with the goals outlined in its current "Fulfillment Plan."

Since its creation, the department has made considerable progress in developing itself to support the objective of

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increasing the priority attention focused on children. For example, the Department has successfully increased the resources for children's protective services operations by 47% since its creation, from \$101.9 million budgeted in fiscal year 1984-85 to \$149.5 million budgeted in 1987-88². In the same period, the total County budget has increased by 27%. The overall on hand caseload has decreased from 47 children per social worker to 27 per social worker³.

The task force supports the Department's planning efforts. Shortly after his appointment, the present Director of Children's Services undertook an organizational development process, supported by a consulting specialist, to improve the internal structure of the department. The department has documented the results of the process to date in its "Fulfillment Report" which contains a discussion of the external and internal difficulties the department is facing, a diagnosis of potential organizational and operational improvements that should be useful in correcting its problems, a statement of mission, and a plan of goals and activities for the future. The department is well into the implementation of this plan.

We believe that the plan is sound and that the process incorporated in it is likely to be effective for implementation. The process provides for modification where necessary. Therefore, we propose that the Board of Supervisors reaffirm its commitment to the organizational development program chosen by the Director of Children's Services, and encourage its prompt completion. (Point A.)

Structural Change

- 1B. Adopt as a goal the separation of social services functions from the income maintenance functions, without increasing the number of county departments.**

Separating the children's protective services programs from the Department of Public Social Services and creating a new department by combining them with adoptions programs was a first step toward implementing the strategy of realignment we have recommended in the past. The change separated the dissimilar functions of social services for children from eligibility determination, and joined under a unified management the similar and strongly related functions of adoption and protective services. It strengthened the basic structure of the County system by realigning functions into departments which can internalize a unified mission and integrated goals.

In a sound functional structure, the Board would avoid placing functions with competing values and potentially conflicting goals in the same organization. Social services and welfare eligibility determination are dissimilar and competing functions. The effectiveness of eligibility determination is measured in terms of error rates, the occurrence of fraud, and other measures of cost that are to be minimized. The effectiveness of social work is measured in terms of the success in finding sufficient support for clients to enable them to function independently. The people performing the functions cannot always be expected to cooperate, and management is faced with a continuing balancing act and the occasional need to choose sides. Eligibility determination requires highly systematized

processes and uniformity in application of rules. Social services require application of individual employee judgment and skills to deal with each situation in an individualized manner. Each requires different attitudes, skills, management style, and organizational culture.

Thus, by creating the Children's Services Department, the Board partially corrected one misalignment in the County's overall functional structure. It separated income maintenance functions, where the primary issue is to ensure error-free compliance with eligibility rules governing financial aid, from social work, where the issues are to find as many effective ways as possible to provide support to distressed individuals and families. We believe that the functions of eligibility determination and associated functions of income maintenance should be managed separately from social case work. In fact, that is one of the reasons why forming the Children's Services Department was beneficial. It permits each department executive to concentrate on a single function. The Board should continue this improvement by separating the remaining social work functions from the County's income maintenance functions. Our recommendation would complete the job, by separating the remaining social casework functions from DPSS. (POINT B.)

- 1C. ***Adopt as a goal the restructuring of the county's Social and community services to improve effectiveness and efficiency and reduce administrative costs, with savings to be utilized to improve service to all age groups and to initiate programs for prevention of family violence and child abuse.***

Despite the Board's progress in restructuring the County system. the County's structure remains fragmentary. It is severely fragmented in the case of social casework and protective services for families. Domestic violence cases, which often affect children, are managed from the Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services. County intervention in violence against seniors is managed from the Department of Public Social Services, while support services for seniors are managed by the Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services. The basic structural problem remains: to unify all County functions, to intervene in and reduce the occurrence of violence in families. We include among families households with minor children and households without children.

The present structure through which the Board of Supervisors delivers County services to children and families mixes two principles of organization, which we term the constituency principle and the functional principle.

Constituency Principle. When the Board of Supervisors created the Department of Children's Services, its purpose was to increase the priority and political attention toward children. The action implemented an organizational principle - unifying programs around a clientele or a constituency rather than a function or system - as a means of increasing the impact of advocacy for that constituency or clientele. It is based on the political judgment that influence resulting from the visibility and access available to a Board level department is more important than operating efficiency.

The Department of Children's Services is an example of the Board's application of the constituency principle. The Board created the Department of Children's Services in 1984 in order to increase the priority on protective services to children by creating a department at the Board level.

Functional Principle. The Board's overall departmental structure is based on function. Most departments have missions that are based on what they produce, rather than for whom they produce it. For example, the departments of Health Services and Mental Health provide a full range of health care services to all clients, regardless of age. Within that framework, they include specialized services for various groups, including children. Thus, the hospitals have pediatric wards; the Medical Center has a Pediatric Pavilion; the Department of Mental Health has a division specializing in children. Application of the functional principle of organization emphasizes efficiency over advocacy. Functional structures have less duplication of similar functions for different constituencies.

The current structure implements neither the constituency principle nor the functional principle consistently.

Duplication and Fragmentation. We believe the basic structure is unnecessarily fragmentary and duplicative. The County's social services to intervene in the various forms of domestic violence - against children, against spouses, or against the elderly - are performed by three separate departments. Similarly, such services as job training, designed to correct some of the root causes of violent environments, are performed by separate departments. Each department needs its own managerial,

supervisory and administrative bureaucracy to coordinate with the others and to manage the administrative details of the services.

All three departments provide similar protective or social casework functions. The client populations overlap; a violent living arrangement is violent for such other potential victims who live in it as spouses and elders, not just the children. Thus, victims of domestic violence often have children with them when seeking a shelter, and may receive services from the Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services, rather than from the Department of Children's Services.⁴ Similarly, 30% of the homes visited by in-home supportive services workers from the Department of Public Social Services have children in them.

The work performed by social workers employed in different departments is also similar enough to be duplicative. The work of a person responsible for managing the protection of an abused spouse or elderly person is similar to the work of a person managing the protection of a child. The details of what is provided, and the legal status and source of funds, may differ, but most of the workers do similar things nonetheless. The management issues are the same for all of them.

Table II summarizes the populations served for the major programs of the three key departments, except for eligibility determination. Table III summarizes the goals of those programs.

TABLE II IS AVAILABLE IN HARD COPY

TABLE III IS AVAILABLE IN HARD COPY

The system of social services has become fragmented partly because different agencies are responsible to serve the particular household member who is the current victim. In reality, victimization is a symptom of deeper social and community problems, including family dysfunction. Changes in the structure of the family as the basic unit of society and changes in the economy create the conditions leading to child, elder, and spousal abuse, substance abuse, exploitation, delinquency, crime,

violence, homelessness and the other ills which threaten society and strain public resources. Government policies and the service structures that result from them fail to recognize that all of these problems are strongly related to one another.

The most effective non-duplicative County strategy to address the changing social structures that underlie all of these problems is a unified, cohesive effort to develop a family-based policy and strategy, and to implement it in local communities. Only this can prevent continual growth in the magnitude of these problems and in the public's expenditures for them. An integrated effort with significant preventive as well as curative effect is impossible when different autonomous departments are responsible to provide case management to mutually interacting members of the same household or to respond to mutually interacting social problems within the same families or neighborhoods.

Effectiveness. The goals we propose would increase both the efficacy and the service effectiveness of the Board's family service programs. What is needed at the County level is a family policy that integrates all of the services intended to assist children and the adults who care for them. Children are so dependent, and child neglect or abuse so repulsive, that most people, including social service professionals and advocates, tend to focus exclusively on the child. Yet the fundamental reality is that a child cannot be separated from the context of at least the family, the school, and the neighborhood. Indeed, current California law specifies that the primary objective of County protective services is to reunify the family from which

the child is taken; or, when unification is proven undesirable, to plan either for permanent placement of the child in a family setting or for emancipation as an independent, functioning member of the society.

In the tables in this section, we have listed major programs of the County departments of Children's Services, Community and Senior Citizens' Services, and Public Social Services. In Tables II and III, an "X" signifies that the program managers of the department work with a population at risk (Table I) or deliver a specific service intended to meet a goal (Table II). The tables illustrate severe fragmentation both of populations and of functions.

We condensed the information in the tables from detailed budgetary data. For example, two departments provide different services to older populations. The Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services provides such supportive services as transportation and meals to senior citizens. The Department of Public Social Services provides protective services for elderly persons who are neglected or abused. The populations are not necessarily identical, but they overlap. If the passage of time is taken into account, we think the degree of overlap is likely to become more significant. The reason we propose integration of these services, however, is not simply that they appear to be duplicative. What is more important is that both populations would benefit from the attention of each department's specialists on aging. In the current system, frail, isolated at-risk elderly persons might never come to the attention of those

managing the transportation and nutritional services of the other department. or of the County in general, until conditions have deteriorated severely enough to warrant intervention by the protective services specialists. Yet the very stress resulting from the lack of transportation and nutritional services is among the conditions leading to the need for protection.

Both the services themselves and the service delivery systems differ between the two departments. The Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services contracts most of its programs to city governments and local community groups. The Department of Public Social Services employs specialists to deliver the protective case work function. Our point is that integrating them will permit the development of new initiatives with fewer resources.

Similarly. we believe that integrating in-home supportive services with children's protection and employment training will improve the effectiveness of the Board of Supervisors in creating a family policy and delivering services to execute it. Stress in all forms of families is implicated in the incidence of child abuse and neglect. Unemployment is one of the most frequent causes of such stress; the lack of respite for parents, particularly single parents, is another. The programs funded by the Job Training and Partnership Act (Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services) and the in-home support functions (managed by the Department of Public Social Services) are existing and available resources for the Board to use in meeting the goals of prevention that are not now funded in the Department of Children's Services.

The effects of fragmentation can be tragic. Children have been killed by a parent despite contact with the child protective system. In a recent such case in Los Angeles, the Department of Children's Services assessed the case as a spouse abuse situation and closed the case because the Department is not responsible for spouse abuse. The Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services is responsible for spouse abuse but not authorized or organized to intervene. In cases classified as child or elder abuse, the State can intervene because of the dependency of the victim. In cases of spousal abuse, the State can intervene in an incident of violence, but the adult victim is generally the person responsible for seeking shelter or protection. The County's effectiveness in this arena depends on a narrow legal distinction. The structure incorporates no provision to protect other children from a similar fate, because the management accountable for spouse abuse is separated from the management accountable for child abuse.⁵

The unification of management is a necessary condition for significantly greater effectiveness in social services. Major improvement may depend on other factors as well, but it is certain that it cannot occur without the integration of services on the local level which is impossible under the current structures.

Integration of current functions is not the only reason to consider the goal for restructuring that we propose. We believe that the community networks and other community resources linked to the Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Affairs will

provide significant opportunities for new and innovative approaches to children's welfare, and to the emancipation of Seniors, the frail elderly, and youth from dependency of all kinds. New kinds of families may emerge - mutually supportive households created by supportive community networks, and released from costly and oppressive government control.

Efficiency. One of the dangers of organizational change is that new organizations might be designed poorly, and the result as weak and uncoordinated as the fragmented predecessor departments. This can result, for example, from the "Agency" concept that was popular in local government in the 1970's. The problem occurs when the size of the organization alone, or the span of control of the Board of Supervisors, is viewed as the central issue. In fact, particularly in organizations designed like Los Angeles County, size can be a major liability. Functions are misaligned and fragmented into systems of awesome complexity. Controlling them and coordinating their various pieces requires large and complex administrative and staff infrastructure. They soon become top-heavy organizations with major communications difficulties and sometimes dangerously high risks of communication and coordination failures.

Rather, the central issue is to determine whether functions can be aligned in a mission-oriented structure that unifies similar programs and also reduces the span of control of the Board of Supervisors. This kind of realignment can increase the Board's managerial effectiveness, improve efficiency, and leads to lower administrative costs. If properly designed, the new

structure will reduce the costs of coordinating multiple units. For example, intervention in child abuse, spousal abuse. and elder abuse in the same family can be handled by the same workers.

Efficiency improvements that result from redesign of service systems can be expected to become significant in the long term. To attain them, training programs must be changed so that workers are prepared to intervene in all kinds of cases. Similarly, case diagnosis and planning would eventually change. Some of the basic curricula used in the Universities to prepare people for case work might also change.

The structural change we recommend should also lead to short term efficiency improvements. in the form of reduced administrative costs. We believe the Board can have some confidence in the expectation that administrative costs will be reduced by unifying and restructuring the functions of the three departments into fewer departments, because that has been the record of the County's consolidation efforts so far.

Prior reorganization accomplished by the Board of Supervisors and implemented by the County departments have produced savings in management and administration, both reducing departmental expenditures and increasing capabilities. The Chief Administrative Officer has reported consolidation savings to the Board. On July 9, 1985, for example, he reported that six consolidated departments had already eliminated approximately \$700,000 from their budgets and had identified additional savings of almost \$14 million attributable to the reorganization.

Our Commission has reviewed two of the new departments, and documented increased capabilities as well as reduced costs. Similar opportunities to improve management and service delivery can be expected from unification of social and community services.

Using budget documents, we computed ratios for support services to direct services for the Departments of Community and Senior Citizens' Services and Children's Services. According to our estimates, as many as one of every three positions allocated to these departments provides managerial, administrative, or support services. rather than direct services. The common allegation that government services tend to be slightly top heavy appears justified. Much more detailed analysis would be needed to determine how much reduction is possible. What is clear, however, is that the likelihood of any reduction at all would be increased by structural change. A consolidated department with a well-integrated mission needs fewer top managers, accountants, clerks, secretaries, staff analysts, and the like, proportional to the direct services.

Thus, we believe that the effort to restructure the social services of the three departments should be undertaken, in order to increase effectiveness and efficiency.

In addition to the goals discussed above - to redesign the services themselves, to increase effectiveness through local service integration, and to increase efficiency through reduction of administrative and overhead costs - the design of the new agency should take the following resources issues into account.

Community Based Services. Integration and realignment of social services programs is needed not only at the administrative level of County government, but also at the neighborhood level where local culture can be effectively recognized in the designs of these programs. County officials have long recognized the need for one-stop centers to integrate services tailored for each client, in the clients own community. The Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services manages Neighborhood Service Centers. These centers were, in the 1970's, viewed as the focal point for one-stop services and local integration of multi-departmental services. They did not succeed, principally because the centers were viewed only as facilities to be occupied by outstationed personnel from various programs, with little attention to the fragmentation of policies and resources resulting from separate and autonomous administrative structures.

Community Based Resources. In addition, some communities have highly developed local networks of residents who share in providing support to one another. These networks, allied with County services, would provide a powerful combination for the prevention of child neglect and abuse, for the local care of victims of all forms of domestic violence, and for a wide variety of existing and newly invented efforts to strengthen families and communities. Such programs and services need not be provided by or funded by County government. The role of government may be to facilitate the effective use of resources that are available or could be made available in the community.

Through leadership and the provision of common ground such as Neighborhood Service Centers and other group facilities, county social service management could facilitate local integration of public and private social service functions. The primary point of contact Los Angeles County has with such networks is in the Department of Community and Senior Citizens Services.

An example of effective innovation in local communities was implemented in the early 1980's in England. A city was divided geographically into "patches" of 8,000 or fewer inhabitants. A small team of workers was assigned to each patch to deliver a full range of social services. Community involvement has led the patch teams to emphasize prevention rather than reaction and to find ways to strengthen the community as a whole as well as to serve individual clients. They have made extensive use of groups, both natural and formed by patch workers, and have become heavily engaged in community activities with formal and informal support groups and networks. Thus they expanded their service delivery capabilities by utilizing already available local human resources.⁶ This kind of program would be possible with the kinds of resources for community organization that Los Angeles County now has in the Department of Community and Senior Citizens Services.

Functional Realignment. What is needed is a structure that reduces the duplication of administrations and fragmentation of services, while preserving within it the necessary professional specialties. That is a County strategy to provide for unified family-oriented services should include:

- a common hotline and 24-hour emergency response;
- one stop intake with unified needs assessment and case management;
- common policy direction, administrative support, case tracking and statistical system, and outcome evaluation;
- special public awareness and service programs devoted to children, adults, seniors, and the frail elderly, in order to recognize differing needs of those populations;
- resources such as job preparation, shelters, day care, transportation, community centers (youth, senior, and age-neutral), self-help groups, home visitors and an intergenerational volunteer program.

With a realigned structure, the Board would also be capable of providing services to entire family units, and of developing preventive strategies which address the similar causes of seemingly diverse social problems. The system would be more efficient, since it would permit both unification and specialization by realigning all of the County's social services in a single functional agency. Overhead costs would be lower, since each of the participating units would share a common administration. It would be more effective, since it would facilitate explicit focus on family-centered in addition to individual (child, adult, elder) centered prevention and treatment. It could employ intergenerational service strategies to develop volunteer and paraprofessional human resources, benefiting the givers as well as the receivers of service. It would take advantage of the strengths of both the functional and constituency principles of government organization.

All of the issues we have identified in this section are goal related. Based on our study, including our review of current research in the field, we believe that the County structure for delivering social services can and should be redesigned. Restructuring the three departments would be a key element in effecting the necessary redesign. We have not, however, specified in detail the exact nature of the redesign, or of the structure that would emerge if the Board adopts the goals we recommend. (Point C.)

Implementation. The final point of our recommendation proposes an implementation process for developing a detailed plan of redesigning and restructuring the services.

- 1D. Instruct the directors of the Departments of Children's Services, Community and Senior Citizens' Services, and Public Social Services to work with the Economy and Efficiency Commission to produce a plan for the redesign of services and realignment of the functions of those departments, and to submit it to the Board of Supervisors within six months.

When our task force initially developed its recommendations, it proposed that the Board of Supervisors

restructure the three departments into two - one department specializing in social casework services for families, and the other specializing in the eligibility work for income maintenance programs.

When task force members presented this proposal to various interest groups (professionals and others interested in children's welfare), three points emerged from the discussions:

- the community would potentially strongly support the creation of a new functional agency at the County level to execute the family oriented mission we have described, and to integrate the various social case-work services that are now fragmented in the several departments;
- the task force did not specify the design of the new agency in enough detail to satisfy the various community interests that the proposed changes would be in the interest of children and families;
- the usual fear of change in government - that the interests of one group might be subordinated to the interests of another - would generate enough opposition to the proposal to preclude the development of any policy or structure focusing on families.

Our task force concurs with the view that more detailed review will be necessary to ensure that a new family agency is designed properly, and that adequate safeguards are built-in to protect the interests of the children, families, seniors, frail elders, and others whose welfare depends in varying degrees on County functions. Therefore, instead of proposing a structure, we are proposing a process - that the three department heads work with our task force to create the kind of agency we have described.

Figure 1 on Page 16 illustrates the current structure and summarizes the major functions of the three departments. Figure 2 on Page 41 depicts a possible alternative structure. The social services programs we propose to include in the design process we recommend include the entire Departments of Children's Services and of Community and Senior Citizens Services, and the following programs of the Department of Public Social Services: Information and Referral, Adult Protective Services, and In-Home Supportive Services. The realignment might also

include Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN). It would not include the eligibility determination for the financial assistance programs. The management issues for effective financial aid programs, and the work performed, differ materially from those of the other forms of social and protective services case management. It would not include law enforcement programs, law enforcement agencies' investigations, probation, mental health, schooling, or the courts.⁷

The GAIN program is so closely linked to the financial relief programs (AFDC) that unbundling it could create serious disruption unless the careful planning process we recommend shows clearly that it should be included. We believe the Commission should examine it as part of the planning process because it incorporates counseling, job training and child care. (Point D.)

FIGURE 2
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
FEASIBLE ORGANIZATION OF PROTECTIVE AND RELATED SERVICES

This Figure is available in hard copy from the Commission

NOTES TO RECOMMENDATION 1

¹In Figure 1, the Departments labeled "These four departments provide services to the case-carrying departments or their clients." Are the subject of Recommendation 4. Other County Departments are shown in Figure 1 because they are part of the system. However, the District Attorney and Sheriff are independent elected officials not subject to policy direction by the Board of Supervisors. The Superior Court and the Municipal Courts are an independent branch of government. Under current board policy, the Probation Department does not provide social services as a primary mission, although its supervision of adults and youth has dramatic impact on families in some instances. The need for cooperation and coordination among these and other County, City, and Schooling agencies is the subject of recommendation 2. The Chief Administrative Office is part of this and every delivery system of County government, because of the CAO's central role in policy and budget formulation.

²CAO's recommended budgets and County final budgets, various years.

³Department of Public Social Services, Children's Services Task Force Presentation, September 22, 1983, and Department of Children's Services, Statistical Report, September, 1987. These data are averages. As such, they conceal the effects of the internal structure of the department on the specific caseloads of individual field workers. Our conclusion, that creating a separate department was a successful strategy toward increasing resources for children, in no way implies that these data are adequate for budgeting purposes, or for case assignments, or that the department has the numbers of caseworkers that may be needed.

⁴A "Domestic Violence Fact Sheet" distributed by the Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect states that in 60% of the homes in which the female partner is beaten the children are also, that more children are served in battered women's shelters than are adults, that over 70% of all wife batterers grew up in violent homes, and that 90% of all men in prison came from violent homes.

⁵In situations like this, it is easy to scapegoat the social worker we think it is more appropriate to blame the fragmentary structure.

⁶Hadley, Roger and McGrath, Morag, When Social Services Are Local: The Normanton Experience, London, Allen and Urwin, 1984.

⁷The Director Of the State Attorney General's Crime prevention Office has stated that, as a result of the work Of the child victim witness judicial advisory committee, a proposal will be made to pilot unification of all civil and criminal issues regarding a child's case in a single court, in lieu of fragmenting them among criminal, family, and dependency courts.

2. MULTIJURISDICTIONAL FAMILY POLICY COORDINATION

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT SYSTEM

Local government services in the Los Angeles region are delivered by a multijurisdictional system. Over 200 governments in Los Angeles County, with independent elected boards, set policies with an impact on children and families. They control services and resources which affect the same people as County social and children's services, in the same communities. They influence priorities at the local, State and Federal level which strongly affect the performance of County services, and they support active and influential lobbies which affect legislative action.

For example, numerous agencies are involved in prevention of child abuse and neglect through education and information, financial assistance, the reduction of unemployment, in-home supportive services, day care, mental health treatment, or recreation. Additional agencies are involved in intervention on behalf of abused and neglected children through reporting suspected incidents, removing children from danger, placing them in safe facilities, treating them medically or psychologically, counseling or prosecuting the offenders, and taking judicial action. The range of agencies includes Board-supervised departments (such as

Children's Services, Community and Senior Citizens Services, County Counsel, Health Services, Mental Health, Parks and Recreation, Probation, and Public Social Services), County-level elected officials (District Attorney, Sheriff), other levels of government (city attorneys and police, Federal and State prosecutors), education (school districts and the County Superintendent of Schools), and the courts (juvenile and criminal).

The local service delivery system is multijurisdictional not just for protective services, but for all problem areas which plague the population, including homelessness, unemployment, gang violence, and substance abuse. These problems are strongly related to one another, and they all affect children.

In the absence of metropolitan government, city-county consolidation, or other organic means of unifying these governments, the method of choice to create system-wide changes has been the creation of voluntary interagency councils.

Multijurisdictional Council System. A multijurisdictional council is a committee composed of the chief executives of the relevant departments of the various jurisdictions, formed for the explicit purpose of developing and implementing joint programs, including standardized approaches to the operational policies of each member agency. The membership of some multijurisdictional councils includes private service providers whose functions support those of the agencies. Sometimes the membership includes private individuals who serve as advisors to the Board and other officials, including representatives of citizens' advisory commissions with a potential to contribute to the proceedings.

Our task force identified five Board-created multijurisdictional councils with direct impact on the welfare of children in Los Angeles County. They are:

- the Child Sex Abuse Crisis Center Executive Board.
- the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC).
- the Domestic Violence Council,
- the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN), and
- the Task Force on Drug Abuse.

The Child Sex Abuse Crisis Center is an integrated program for intervention in sex abuse managed and staffed jointly by several County departments. It is funded by a grant from the Office of Criminal Justice Planning. The Crisis Center itself is an operating, service-producing organization. It is jointly managed by member agencies. The Executive Board establishes policy for the Center and manages the funding. The Board is chaired by the Director of the Department of Children's Services.

The Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee(CCJCC) was formed to coordinate criminal justice programs, including especially programs to reduce court congestion, jail overcrowding, and other crises in the justice system. It is chaired by the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

The Domestic Violence Council studies problems of family violence, recommends programs to coordinate education, training, program development, legislation, and information sharing. The

Domestic Violence Council elects its own chairperson, who is currently Cheryl Ward Smith, of the City Attorney's Office.

The Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) was formed as a forum for interagency communications and coordination related to the protection of children, training of professionals, development of new services, promotion of community awareness and support, and assistance to the Board in allocating certain categorical State funds. ICAN elects its chairman, who is currently Sheriff Sherman Block.

The Task Force on Drug Abuse provides interagency coordination regarding drug abuse programs. The Task force elects its chairman, who is currently the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Division of the Superior Court.

Role. These bodies share a strong commonality of role, functions, and tasks, in different subject areas. In all cases, they were formed by the leadership of the region to coordinate and attempt to integrate the activities of the member jurisdictions in a priority problem area.

Coordination Role. In practice, coordinating councils do little to coordinate current functions. They can effectively coordinate new programs and initiatives, when each of the member agencies agrees to make the investment. In addition, since their mode of operation is collegial, they can obtain the concurrence of member agencies in the standardization of policy and programs. It is this implementation role that we believe to be the most significant accomplishment of such councils. The councils themselves do not set policy, and the members themselves

may not, since most are appointed officials accountable to elected officials. When they concur in policy, however, the members can obtain the authoritative approval of their elected officials, thereby making effective changes to the entire system. ICAN, for example, has promulgated standardized assessment procedures which are recognized by each member jurisdiction; it has also supported the development of new protocols for death review in children's cases.

Implementation Role. The Councils are an effective resource for implementation because the member agencies have the authority, power and influence to implement. Acting independently, each agency lacks sufficient power and authority to implement; for example, neither the District Attorney nor the Board of Supervisors can direct the Sheriff. When the Board or another government adopts policy, an interagency council is an ideal forum to provide the details for implementation.

Project Facilitation Role. Each of the councils has structured a work program that includes

- training.
- identification of new service needs.
- information sharing or data processing.
- funding.
- legislation.
- grant fund distribution.

Structure. Table IV below summarizes the agency membership of these five councils. The councils function at three levels:

- a permanent committee of elected and appointed officials,
- permanent or temporary working subcommittees for various issues or projects,
- staff, sometimes including ad hoc project subcommittees composed of departmental specialists.

TABLE IV

MEMBERSHIP OF MULTIJURISDICTIONAL COUNCILS

This table is available in hard copy from the Commission

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The councils function at these three levels whether or not the Agency heads actually attend council meetings. In the case of CCJCC, the rule at the beginning of the work was that attendance of the head was a condition of membership of the agency. In the case of ICAN, the agency heads attend two meetings per year intended to address policy issues. In the other cases, agency heads are not necessarily active consistently as part of the meeting processes. Nevertheless, in order for the council to accomplish anything, it is necessary to obtain the unified action of the agency heads. While it is true that in some cases departmental executives send delegates to council meetings, the effectiveness of the council depends on their direct collaboration. Without it, no decisions can be made, and the priority on the issue is eventually reduced.

Similarly, not all the councils recognize an explicit structure of working subcommittees. Nevertheless, each of the agencies employs specialists in the field of interest of the council. Effective action by the agency heads, or the council itself, would be precluded without the professional networking and consent of those professionals. Our recommendation would not affect the activities of these networks or subcommittees. Like most networks, they will function most effectively with minimal structure.

On the other hand, all of the councils recognize an explicit need for staff support. The Child Sex Abuse Crisis Center Executive Board and the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee share the same staff. It is budgeted, physically located and supervised in the Chief Administrative Office.

The staff of the Domestic Violence Council is budgeted, located and supervised in the Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services.

The ICAN staff is budgeted in the Department of Children's Services and is physically located at MacLaren Shelter for Children. The staff is supervised by the chairperson of ICAN, who approves the staff's discretionary expenditures. These are then charged to Children's Services unless another department volunteers to cover them. The chairperson is elected by the department heads who comprise the ICAN Policy Committee; he is not at present the Director of Children's Services.

No staff is budgeted for the Task Force on Drug Abuse. During development of recommendations, CAO staff who had other duties provided staff support. During implementation of the recommendations, the Sheriff will provide staff support.

Cost. The total annual direct County appropriation for these bodies amounts to at least \$660,000 for staffing, services, and supplies. Assuming average departmental overhead rates, the budgeted costs amount to at least \$1 million. We estimate the total actual cost to be in excess of \$2 million, including the salaries and benefits of the member agencies' representatives attending meetings and the cost of others who attend because of a compelling business interest in the proceedings. This cost excludes the amounts appropriated for such programs initiated by the councils as training seminars and data processing systems, and it excludes the cost of staff work performed to support the activities of the officials in serving as members of the councils.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors:

- 2A. Consolidate the staffing of the child Sex Abuse Crisis Center Executive Board, the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination committee, the Domestic Violence Council, the Inter-Agency Council on child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN), and the Task Force on Drug Abuse, into a unified staffing structure that Reports within the Chief Administrative Office.**

The task force is convinced that the County and other governments should continue to support multijurisdictional councils. However, we also believe that it is timely to recognize that further integration is needed, because of the strong linkages among the various problem areas. Domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, criminal justice, and substance abuse are part of the same problem, affecting significantly overlapping populations. The service systems of the governments intervening in these problem areas also overlap. More important, as long as the councils working on these areas lack integration, it is unlikely that the resources needed for coordinated efforts will become available.

Program Overlap. The issues and problems the councils are formed to address are strongly correlated. Domestic violence is distinguished by statute from child abuse and neglect, but many victims of domestic violence have children with them when they seek shelter. Drug abuse is increasingly associated with both domestic violence and child abuse. All three create demands on law enforcement and on the justice system, as well as on social services agencies. Regardless of the specific problem. the

designated functions of the various agencies do not change and all of the problem areas overlap. That is the reason why the degree of commonality is so high in the membership of the councils.

Task Overlap. The work performed by each of the councils, principally through their staffs, reflects the same set of interrelated agency needs. Many councils have already formed subcommittees intended to address those needs: information systems, training, legislation, technology, and funding. Those assigned the responsibility to assist the Board with inter-district allocation of grant funds have also formed committees to establish the required formulas and criteria for recommendation to the Board.

It is in the work involved in the tasks of these subcommittees that we see the greatest opportunity for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of all the councils. The staff of each council has developed particular expertise in one or more areas. For example, the CCJCC has developed highly effective means of implementing joint information systems, using the County's Systems planning Unit method as adopted by the Board of supervisors, while ICAN has been struggling for some time to develop a data sharing and standardization program. Both ICAN and the Domestic Violence Council have implemented successful training programs, but ICAN has specialized in focused efforts in prevention of child abuse and neglect and has found successful methods of accessing and using the public media and communications technology. Thus, the consolidation and sharing of

staff resources will make available to all of them a more efficient structure, and a broader range of skills, than any of them presently has operating independently. Consolidated staffing will also improve efficiency, since each of the councils can operate with unified administrative and support staff.

We considered several alternative organizational placements for a joint staffing unit, including the Departments of Children's Services and Community and Senior Citizens' Services. We are convinced that the Chief Administrative Office is the most appropriate placement for the staff responsibility. According to the County Code, the Board assigns the CAO the duty to "assist the Board of Supervisors in coordinating the functions and operations of the several such departments, services, institutions or departments of the county" (2.08.050). and 'to plan, coordinate, set priorities, and monitor all data processing the functions in the county' (2.08.080). As Director of Personnel, the CAO commands the County's training resources. As the budget officer, the GAO has the influence necessary to effect the implementation of any initiative that the councils adopt. (Point A.)

2B. Establish by ordinance a multijurisdictional coordinating council on family services, chaired by the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors and staffed by the Chief Administrative Office.

In our view, County and other governments in this region must continue to recognize the need for multijurisdictional approaches to social problems. In the current system of government, the only feasible approach to coordinating these needs is to form an interagency council. Except in the case of the Board

of the Child Sex Abuse Crisis Center, such councils do not usually manage the delivery systems. Each department head of each jurisdiction is responsible for managing the delivery of services produced by that department.

Nevertheless, the Councils have accomplished much in implementing new initiatives that help standardize the approaches of the various jurisdictions. For example, CCJCC has developed a highly successful approach to information systems, using the County's Systems' Planning methodology, and both ICAN and the Domestic Violence Council have developed successful multijurisdictional training programs.

The content of the work, the details of the membership, and the scope of the various councils differ from one another. They have been successful. Consolidating their staff units should increase the success, by making available to each of them the special capabilities of the others.

However, the reason why the degree of commonality is so high in the membership of the existing councils is that all of the agencies perform functions which are needed in addressing any given problem area. Most governments organize the provision of services according to function - police, schools, health, community development, and so forth. That is the most efficient organization for the maintenance of ongoing programs. Local governments do not organize to serve specific subpopulations or to solve specific emerging problems. They form councils of the existing functional agencies to provide a collegial approach to the problems.

Regardless of the laws, all the problems addressed by these various councils are related. What is needed is a structure which integrates the various specialties in a systems approach to all of the problem areas, but still permits enough flexibility of membership to include the variation of participation of the present independent councils when it is needed.

Therefore, we propose creation of a new council, structured and staffed in the same way as CCJCC, to integrate the coordination functions in the social services field. (Point B.)

2C. Define the duties of this council as follows:

- improve the social services system through greater local cooperation, including new multijurisdictional social policies and services;
- develop systemwide strategies and funding priorities;
- secure needed State legislation and action;
- facilitate the development of public-private partnerships and prevention programs, and promote the development of standardized information systems and training programs;
- recommend criteria for the distribution of grant funding among political subdivisions or districts.

The functions we recommend for the new council parallel those of the others, except that the field of interest is broader. The field of interest would include all social services.

2D. Specify by ordinance:

- that the council consists of a core voting membership to include elected and appointed officials of the County, the city of Los Angeles, the contract and independent cities, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the county Superintendent of Schools, the Superior Court, the Municipal Courts, and State and Federal agencies.

- *that operating procedures will provide for augmentation of the voting membership from time to time, and for establishment of working task forces which may include subordinates and non-members, to consider specialized subjects, and when approved by the core voting membership.*

The ordinance would be modeled after the ordinance that created CCJCC. It provides for some flexibility of membership as the group develops knowledge about the problems and methods of addressing them.

The recommended coordinating council would be defined as, and should remain as, a council of heads of public agencies. The membership should not include people representing private service providers or people serving as individuals. At least at the beginning, participation of the agency head should be a condition of membership of the agency.

3. CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMISSION

DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM

During the course of our project, the task force reviewed the activities of over 80 citizens' advisory commissions, in-house working committees, inter-agency boards and councils, philanthropic organizations, and professional associations, all of which are active in the fields of children's welfare, family and community services, senior citizen services, and social welfare.

In our review, we included groups whose missions are not necessarily focused on family policy or social casework, but which could nevertheless be considered as resources the Board can use constructively in developing policy and structure to address those issues. A substantial proportion of the collection of formally organized committees, commissions and boards make contributions we believe are relevant to the family welfare issues the Board and other governments in the region are facing.

Within this framework, one commission in particular - the Children's Services Commission - has been a subject of our review. This Commission was created by the Board of Supervisors at the same time as it created the Department of Children's Services, to monitor and evaluate progress in the implementation

of task force recommendations¹ adopted by the Board for improving the delivery of children's services. The recommendation in this section, Recommendation 3, incorporates our suggestions for Board action on this Commission. Recommendation 5 incorporates our suggestions for Board actions regarding the entire system of commissions and committees.

The Children's Services Commission has been highly active and highly visible since its creation in 1984. It has accomplished much. It has increased Board and community attention on children and their welfare. It has developed new initiatives of the County on behalf of children. For example, the Commission was instrumental in implementing the day care program for the children of County employees, and in developing priority and initiative for new dependency court facilities. In addition, it has fulfilled its defined role, to monitor and evaluate the County's progress in implementing the 1984 recommendations adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

Role and Duties. The Commission's specific duties, as defined by the Board in the ordinance creating it (County Code 3.68) are as follows:

- Review all programs administered by County departments which provide children's services for all children at risk.
- Receive input from appropriate community groups and individuals concerning County administered children's services programs.
- Review and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors concerning legislation dealing with children's services.
- Make recommendations, as necessary, to various department heads to improve children's services.

- Make recommendations¹ as necessary, to the Board of Supervisors to improve children's services.
- Provide an annual report to the Board of Supervisors concerning the status of children's services, along with recommendations for their improvement, to be utilized for broad community distribution and discussion.

Composition. The Commission has fifteen members, appointed by the Board of Supervisors. Each Supervisor nominates three members. Commissioners serve for two-year terms. They serve and are appointed or re-appointed at the pleasure of the Board. Commissioners receive a stipend of \$25 per meeting, most of which is donated back to the County.

Staffing and Cost. The County provides a small staff. The appropriation for the Commission for fiscal year 1987-88 amounted to \$114,000. The additional costs, of meeting attendance by County employees and others funded by the government, and of responding to Commission requests for information, are not accounted for by the County. We estimate such costs to amount to \$200,000.

Scope. The scope of the Commission's activity as defined in the ordinance is to advise the Board of Supervisors on all programs administered by County departments which provide children's services for all children at risk. *At risk* is a term of art in social services. It refers to children who are, or who should be, under the protection of the County, and to children whose circumstances lead public officials to believe that they will soon be under the protection of the County.

RECOMMENDATION

We believe the ordinance on this Commission should be modified. It should be updated to reflect the roles the Commission actually performs today, which differ from its initial primary role of monitoring the implementation of task force recommendations. In addition, we believe that the intent of the ordinance should be clarified, to reduce the misinterpretation of its duties that we found common among County officials and others.

The point is not that we found defects in the ordinance, or that we believe that the Commission's performance has been in any way compromised by its formally defined role. We found considerable confusion about the Commission and its role, among County officials, observers, and Commissioners. Some people propose that the behavior and methods of operation of individual Commissioners should change. We believe that the best way to clear up the confusion is to modify the formal ordinance. The Commission can then create its own internal disciplines to ensure that it adheres to the defined functions.

Thus, our recommendation suggests detailed provisions for a new ordinance to continue this Commission.

We recommend that the board of Supervisors specify by Ordinance the scope and role of the Commission, in Order to:

- ***include all children and their families in the scope of Board policy on which the Commission advises.***
- ***increase the cohesiveness of the advice which the Board receives from its citizen advisors on children And their families.***
- ***clarify that the Commission is advisory to the Board and is not a supervisory, managerial or appeal body.***

Scope of Subject Matter. The current ordinance limits the scope of the Commission's work to children 'at risk'. The term is open to two interpretations. As was noted in the "Fulfillment Report" of the Children's Services Department, it is a term used in the profession to refer to specific subpopulations of children, namely those who lack a functional parent.

All children in our society are 'at risk'. They are not all necessarily at risk of neglect or abuse by the people they are living with, but they are at risk of being lured by alcohol and drugs, and at risk of being exploited or victimized by adults or other children. Local government provides little or no services to many children who could benefit from its resources; the issues are not limited to the operations of departments which currently provide services. Furthermore, as we mentioned above, the central societal issue affecting children is not just about children. It is about families, and how children can be raised effectively in the new kinds of family and social structures we are developing today.

We believe strongly that the Commission's concern should extend to all children and their families, whether or not served by some agency of local government. The ordinance should make that explicit, by including all children and their families in the scope of Board policy on which the Commission advises.

Unification Role. During our review, several people suggested that the Commission should be dissolved, that it should be merged with others working in the field of children's welfare, or that the scope of its activity should be limited exclusively to the operations of the Department of Children's Services.

Their suggestions were based on the finding, which is correct, that the primary role of the Commission - monitoring the implementation of the 1984 recommendations - is no longer necessary, since most of those recommendations have either been implemented or are no longer relevant. Those who suggest merging commissions do so because they assume that the multiplicity of commissions is itself a problem.

We do not agree, Most of the other commissions function in narrow areas of focus. We found little duplication. and no conflict. In fact, we view the Children's Services Commission, as a potential resource to begin unifying the work of all the citizens' advisory commissions in the field. That is, it can increase the cohesiveness of the advice which the Board receives from its citizen advisors on children and their families. At least seven citizens' advisory commissions are directly relevant to children and families. Another 21 commissions work in fields that are so closely related to children's and family welfare that they should be a focus of this role for the Children's Services Commission. Finally, we identified seven commissions that could be considered as a resource for children, should the Children's Services Commission seek to organize the effort.

Advisory Function. In Los Angeles County, the Board of Supervisors is solely accountable to the electorate for appointing County department heads, excepting only those directly elected by the voters and those who may be appointed by the judiciary as an independent branch of government. The County has multiple responsibilities assigned by Charter, by the laws of the State

of California and by funding agencies of the Federal government. Elected and appointed department heads discharge these responsibilities. Citizens are active in local government, in addition to exercising their voting franchise, to increase the participation and the influence of the public as conditions change and new methods of approaching the responsibilities of the government become available.

The utility of a citizens' advisory commission in Los Angeles County government is to provide the Board of Supervisors with information, advice, and insight that the Board would not otherwise receive from the experts it employs to manage its departments and operate its programs. That is, the commissions provide an external, nonexpert view that is to be valued primarily because it is innovative rather than technocratic or administrative.

It is important for the commission to influence policy, which is decided primarily by the Board of Supervisors in its budgets, ordinances, and legislative programs. In order to do so effectively, in formulating its recommendations, the commission will wish to consult with County department heads, public officials of other jurisdictions, and other experts. The consultative process produces information that will keep the commission informed on current developments and assist in ensuring feasibility of the recommendations. It can produce consensus.

However, it is equally important for the ordinance to avoid even the appearance of a managerial role. In the children's services arena, it has been the perception throughout most

departments that the Commission views its role as including departmental management, operational investigations, program development, and individual case appeals. Whether the perception is correct or not is irrelevant. People act on their perceptions. Professional County managers are not accountable to anyone but the elected Board of Supervisors. If this perception is permitted to continue, the Commission's effectiveness will erode, it will become increasingly isolated, and its actions irrelevant. As long as County officials or anyone believe that the Commission's role is managerial, the consultative process will not work, and it will become increasingly difficult to attain any cooperation at all. The best way to eliminate the perception that the Commission views its role as managerial is to explicitly exclude that role in the ordinance.

Our task force also believes that the ordinance should explicitly exclude the review of individual cases from the role of the Commission. At times, a case has been so tragic, or so badly mismanaged by the County, that the Commission has attempted to intervene to correct the problem. In some cases, people involved in the case have appealed to the Commission for assistance. While there is apparently no legal obstacle to the Commission's receiving such information, which is supplied voluntarily by those involved in the case, the practice creates distortions in the system of accountability of public officials:

- It creates a presumption that the Commission is competent to do something about cases that it hears, while the Commission has no such authority, and cannot. -65

- It makes certain cases -those brought by parties who know of the Commission's interest in and activities on individual cases -a higher priority for public officials who must respond to the Commission.
- It creates an expectation on the part of those interested in the case that the Commission's judgments will prevail. when the Commission can be overruled by numerous elected or appointed officials.
- It creates a demand on the staffing and facilities available to the Commission to secure confidential and sensitive information.

In our view, decisions on specific individual cases are properly the role of management or the judiciary, and are inappropriate for a citizens' commission.

When we discussed this point with Commissioners following our initial report, they pointed out that they must have information about the performance of the County system if they are to advise the Board on how to correct the deficiencies. We agree. However, information about a few individual cases is not adequate to formulate new policies or procedures, and it can be misleading. The Commission needs systematic information on the quality and timeliness of the County's case decision-making processes. To do so, the Commission, perhaps assisted by a panel of specialists, could periodically examine the status of a valid sample of cases, with expert testimony from community organizations, court officials, and others. The analysis would provide sufficient information for the Commission to advise the Board on the most effective means of keeping the mismanagement of cases to a minimum. That is, the focus should be on improving overall policy and system, rather than on directly influencing a few individual case decisions.

Therefore, we propose that the Board explicitly exclude managerial and appellate roles in the ordinance, and define the Commission's mission as advising the Board of Supervisors on all areas of children's welfare and family policy, including the status of implementation of Board-approved recommendations. We further recommend that the Board clearly disassociate the Commission from management of the Children's Protective Services Department, or any department.

The ordinance should specify the following:

3A. The Commission's roles are:

- ***to recommend cohesive Board policy regarding matters which affect children and their families,***
- ***to recommend Board sponsorship of Legislation and Board positions on proposed Legislation,***
- ***to monitor, and report to the Board of Supervisors, the implementation status of recommendations adopted by the Board related to children and their families, including currently relevant recommendations of the Task Force on children's Services (1984),***
- ***to provide leadership by recommending to the Board of Supervisors new programs and methods of implementation.***

Policy. We identified several major elements of the County and multijurisdictional systems affecting children that should be a continuing subject of commission policy recommendations. They should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- the structure and organization of County social services delivery systems, excluding financial assistance programs,
- proposed improvements of the effectiveness, efficiency and cost of services affecting children, youth, and families,

- proposed legislation.
- an annual report on the status of children and families in Los Angeles County, with reference to the policies of the Board of Supervisors, the funding and operations of services, and the effectiveness of systems' coordination, both intra-county and inter-Jurisdictionall
- the proposals and programs of external organizations regarding children and youth and their families.

Monitoring. When the Commission was first formed, one of its primary functions was to report to the Board on County progress in implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Children's Services as adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1984. Most of the recommendations have been implemented, or are in various stages of implementation by the Department of Children's Services and other County departments. Some new knowledge of the field and of operations has developed in the four intervening years, and new legislation has been adopted: recommendations developed by the Commission can take these into account and may supplant some recommendations of the 1984 task force. In most cases¹ the 1984 recommendations which are still pending can be referred to individual implementing departments for evaluation and report. or to the proposed Coordinating Council on the Family when the cooperation of multiple Jurisdictions or departments is needed for implementation.

Finally, a focus on the task force recommendations narrows the Commission's role to a linkage with the Department for Children's Services. We believe the Commission will be most effective with a broader role bearing on Board policy, whether or not related to the operations of current County departments or

existing programs and services. The Commission will always work in consultation with the current officials of local and State government but the ordinance should not limit its role to primarily focus on them.

Instead, the ordinance should include a specification that the Commission's advisory role on policy includes the responsibility to monitor implementation of its recommendations adopted by the Board of Supervisors and other recommendations affecting children's welfare. That is, we recommend broadening the Commission's monitoring role to include all recommendations adopted by the Board in the field. We include reference to the Task Force Report (1984) so that those which should still be monitored by the Commission can be within the recognized legal framework of the roles. In our view, the Board should ask the Commission to continue monitoring, in particular, the following recommendations of the 1984 Task Force:

- ongoing inservice training,
- expanded foster home recruitment,
- criteria for use in matching individual children to foster homes,
- services, funding, and legal status for runaways, truants, and other status offenders,
- regionalization/decentralization of services, including the Court,
- the burden of proof in termination of a case.

Some of the most impressive achievements of the Commission have resulted from its exercise of leadership in bringing to reality plans and programs that had been stalled in one way or another in the County system. This work -particularly on day

care and on the dependency courts 4s a model for the role we believe should be emphasized. The Commission is capable of exercising leadership¹ and the explicit recognition of that point in the ordinance could create additional incentives for it to do more.

3B. The Commission's name is the Commission for Children.

Part of the confusion over the scope and role of the Commission is due simply to the Commission's name. which seems to associate its mission with a particular department. The second point of our recommendation is to provide a name by ordinance that is consistent with the mission of advising on policy for all children. (Point B.)

3C. The Commission is self-governing, authorized to appoint its own staff, and staffed by such positions as are designated in the current Salary Ordinance or employed by the County by contract.

The Commission should elect its officers. determine its operating procedures. select and direct its staff, and be staffed independently of any departmental unit of the County, except for necessary administrative linkage to a department. This can and should include internal disciplines to control the activities of individual Commissioners. when acting in their capacity as Commissioners. In its actions to find and employ staff. the Commission should seek the support of the Chief Administrative Officer and the consent of the Board of Supervisors.

The Board of Supervisors should also explicitly provide in the ordinance for the coordination of the various commissions working in the field:

3D. Direct each County citizens' advisory commission and interagency or multijurisdictional council to notify the Commission for Children of any significant matters that come before it which have an impact on Board policy affecting children and their families.

No one, including the Board of Supervisors, has utilized the Commission for Children's Services as a unifying element - a means to find common ground among the various internal and external interests that seek to influence County policy regarding children, youth, and families. The Board appoints at least 35 other citizens' commissions whose advisory roles have an influence on that policy; the County has provided ministerial and staff support to several others which are primarily external groups, not appointed by the Board, seeking to influence the same policy. One of the key leadership roles the Commission can perform effectively would be to suggest to the Board of Supervisors means of most effectively using the entire system of commissions for the benefit of children and their families.

For example, recently the Board created a new advisory group whose mission includes advice on child neglect and abuse -the Task Force to Promote Self Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility. Similarly, the Board also, rightly in our view, refers certain matters to other commissions for review. For example, the Board referred the review of protocols governing the care of child victims of sexual assault to the Emergency Medical Services Commission. Finally, nothing prevents other

commissions from developing and implementing programs in the areas of children's welfare. For example⁹ last year the Commission for Women held a conference on satanic rituals and cults. including their relevance to child abuse.

We believe strongly that the Commission for Children can and should perform the role of providing a common ground for unification of the policy recommendations. programs and legislative proposals of all citizens' advisory commissions whose roles interact with the welfare of children We provide the elements of the means to do so in the fourth point of our recommendation. We prefer cross-referral to consolidating commissions, as- signing exclusivity to the Commission for Children. attempting to establish a hierarchy among citizens' advisory commissions. or dissolving commissions which are now standing.

Cross-referral will maximize citizen involvement over a broad range of interests. affecting all subpopulations of children, and all County departments. At the same time, it will preserve the centrality of interest with the Commission for Children where the issues cross boundaries. By consulting with other interested citizens' advisory commissions. the Commission for Children will increase its level of influence over policy and improve the degree of consensus available to the Board. In addition, consultation will increase its access to information and other prior work acquired by those commissions, thus reduc- ing duplication. (Point

3E. Direct each County official appointed by the Board, and request all County, city, and school Officials, to supply the Commission with all infor- Mation that the Commission formally requests with a

Bearing on the welfare of children and families, Unless the release of the information to such a Body is prohibited by law.

The current ordinance authorizes the Commission to "review all programs administered by County departments which provide children's services for all children at risk." That provision implies the kinds of information flow we suggest in this point, but the current ordinance does not make it explicit. Its absence is a source of confusion and frustration in the relationships of the Commission to County agencies. Making the need for information an explicit provision of the ordinance will clarify its authority to obtain information from County officials, and will eliminate the lack of useful information as a source of difficulty in the relationships of the Commission with County officials.

When we reviewed our original recommendations with County officials, several objected to these points (D. and E.). They believe that the Commission will make unreasonable demands, for information that is not available, for information in excessive and costly quantity¹ for confidential information, and for information that is too sensitive for public review.

We have suggested that the Commission should formally request information it requires from the County as a committee of the whole. Its action should be enough to filter out unreasonable or irresponsible demands. In the unlikely case that the Commission does seek data that County officials cannot ethically supply, then the Board of Supervisors can and should intervene. The Board's appointees on the Children's Services Commission are busy people providing a volunteer service to the

community. It is nonsense to imply that they will make meaningless or unreasonable demands.

On the other hand any reasonable person would understand that. in order to be effective in supplying useful advice to the Board of Supervisors. the Commission must be provided with sufficient information from County and other agencies to understand the system and the issues. to analyze them. and to otherwise discharge its functions. To object to providing the Commission with information is the same as objecting to its doing anything at all.

NOTES TO RECOMMENDATION 3

¹Los Angeles County, Task Force on Children's Services, Final
Report, 1984

4. PURCHASE OF SERVICES

DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM

The ordinance creating the Department of Children's Services provides that the Director administers children's protective services and programs, including the formulation and implementation of departmental policy, and including the direction of other functions regarding protective services assigned by the Board. The principle on which State protective services of children is based is the legal doctrine of the sovereign parent. That is. the County government. through the Board's Department of Children's Services, temporarily performs the role of a parent, on behalf of the State, for the children in its charge.

The duties of the Director of Children's Services are an exercise of the sovereign power of the State to act as the parent of a child who lacks a legal or functional caretaker. Like any parent, the Director must therefore determine the needs of the child and choose the best ways to provide for those needs. In the present County system, the Director of Children's Services controls the choice of producer of such services as shelter, nutrition, and daily supervision, and finances them with the resources under his control. However, the directors of other, autonomous County departments control resources for such P

specialized care as mental health or health, schooling, and legal counsel. Before a child is placed with a foster parent or a group home¹ they decide what will be provided¹ and they determine the quantity and quality of the outcome. In contrast to a parent, the Director of Children's Services lacks control over the nature, quantity, quality¹ timing, and other specifications for services he may determine the child needs.

In the State and County system, the responsibility for the allocation of health, mental health, legal services, and schooling to protected children is controlled by the Departments of Health, Mental Health, County Counsel, and the County Superintendent of Schools. The cost of the services and the revenue supporting them are, for the most part. carried in the accounts of those departments; even when the cost is charged back, the Children's Services Department has little control over the cost or over the quantity and quality of what is provided. In the County's budgeting system. and in its pay for performance system, each department must optimize its own financial performance. Each must optimize its own operations and costs, independently of the impact on any other department.

Once a child is placed outside County facilities, the foster parent or group home takes charge of providing for medical care, schooling, and other needs in accordance with their own choice of providers. Medical care may, in such cases. be financed by Medi-Cal. which permits open choice of provider.

One of the primary purposes for creating the Department of Children's Services was to focus the accountability for protected children in a single individual. The Department, in its work on the Fulfillment Plan, has defined that accountability in terms of the metaphor "parenting", A parent, however, has control of the source from which he or she obtains services intended to benefit the child. provides the resources to pay for the cost of such services. and may change the source of services as needs change. In the present system. the Director has no such control.

Our recommendation is to rectify this in two phases. We have identified phases in this case because the first phase we recommend is close enough to what the County does now, and easy enough to accomplish under the current laws and within the current system, to be feasible in the short term (less than one year). The second phase is more complex, will require changes in some of the County's basic Systems, and may require legislation. It is intended for the long term (more than one year).

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors focus accountability for the results of county social services For children and families in a single individual.

4A. Phase One: Interdepartmental Agreements

Instruct the Department of Children's Services to Enter into annual formal agreements with the Departments of Mental Health. Health Services, County Counsel, and the County Superintendent of Schools.

- Instruct the directors of the identified departments to cooperate in negotiating such agreements, To execute them, and to present them to the Board Of Supervisors for adoption before June 30, 1989.***

- ***Direct that the agreements shall specify the nature, quantity, quality, and other relevant terms And conditions for services to children and families who are the clients for the Department of Children's Services.***

The Director of Children's Services cannot reasonably be held accountable for the performance of services that he does not choose and cannot control. A workable means of addressing this problem of interdepartmental service suppliers is to direct the department heads to formulate and adopt enforceable agreements which detail the expectations for each service. Each of the department heads producing services for children in the care of the Department of Children's Services is also a public official, responsible in Charter and in law for certain duties. They are the responsible stewards of resources provided by the Board of Supervisors. or the State and Federal governments, to support the discharge of those duties. The Director of Children's Services, the Chief Administrative Officer, and, in some cases. the Board of Supervisors lack authority to compel these public officials to act according to a specification with which they do not concur.

Because of this accountability of public officers. the County's system of autonomous departments. and the effects of categorical funding systems. formal interdepartmental agreements may be the only means available within current law to the Director of Children's Services to address the issue of controlling the services supplied by other public officials. While nothing prevents County department heads from entering into such agreements on their own authority. and some have done so. formal

direction to do so by the Board of Supervisors has the added advantage of improving their enforceability. Adoption of such agreements by the Board would further strengthen that enforce ability. Therefore. we recommend that the Board apply the concept of the interdepartmental agreement as an interim means of assisting the Director of Children's Services in fulfilling his responsibilities. as parent of the children in his charge.

County departments have entered into such agreements in the past. Such an agreement is implicit in the County budget. In addition¹ on some occasions the departments enter into explicit agreements which specify aspects of the service to be provided. During the review of our recommendations, officials of some departments asked us how the agreements we propose differ from those they have entered into. The agreements we propose differ from current agreements in the following two specifics:

- they would be negotiated and entered into annually;
- they would be submitted to and approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Some officials have also suggested that County Counsel might find such agreements illegal. Since departments already have similar agreements. it is difficult for us to understand how they might be illegal. It may be true that courts would find that the agreements would be unenforceable as contracts. since the Board of Supervisors provides all services. and the departments work for the Board. That would not make them illegal. It would reinforce our point that the agreements will be more efficacious if approved by the Board of Supervisors than they are now.

Finally. County officials have pointed out that it would be professionally unethical for them to abdicate their medical mental health, or legal responsibilities to non-credentialed people in the Department of Children's Services. We concur. When a parent employs a doctor or a lawyer, the parent acts responsibly as a parent. not as a doctor or lawyer. The parent retains a veto over the actions of the doctors or lawyers. If the parent does not like the doctor's or lawyer's performance or the cost of the services, then he or she selects another.

We anticipate the same kind of relationship in the case of the Department of Children's Services. It is only reasonable for the Director of Children's Services, as the parent, to establish formally the expectations he has for the performance of the physicians to whom he entrusts the medical care of children in his charge, and for the performance of the attorneys who represent him in court. If he cannot do that, he cannot be held accountable. As we have emphasized in the past, one of the primary weaknesses in the County structure is the diffusion of accountability that results from the absence of explicit and formal definition of the expectations of one department for the services provided to it by another.

4B. Phase Two: Program Management

Instruct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to Implement a complete program budgeting system effective July 1, 1990 for all programs managed by the Department of Children's Services, which includes Services provided to its clients by other County Departments and which incorporates the following Policies:

- that the full costs of services provided to children in the care of the Department by County Counsel, the Department of Health Services, and the Department of Mental Health are to be reflected as***

expense in the accounts of the Department of Children's Services.

- That the Director of Children's Services is solely Responsible for all financial and programmatic Decisions to secure the care of children in his or Her charge, including the choice of provider, whether another county department, another governmental Agency, or a private provider.***

In the County system, in the absence of a chief executive officer to integrate priorities, no one has the responsibility to determine optimally cost effective decisions among a group of departments contributing to the same delivery system for the same clients. The point of a program budgeting system is to link the financial plan for each of the departments contributing to the welfare of children for whom the County is the temporary protector and parent. Without it, the Director of Children's Protective Services cannot fully discharge his or her responsibilities. and cannot reasonably be held fully accountable for them.

Program budgeting for children's services was a cornerstone recommendation of the Children's Roundtable report adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1986. The CAO has published program budgets for several County departments. but so far children's programs are not among them. We believe it is feasible and timely to implement a complete system for the next fiscal year.

Mere transfer of funds, budgetary responsibility, and accounting documentation would not suffice to hold the Director of Children's Protective Services accountable for the functions of protector and parent. Some degree of choice over the cost, quantity, and quality of services provided by other departments

is necessary. With choice of provider, the Director will be able to hold the other departments accountable for their performance by changing to another source, or by withholding payment when the terms of the agreement have not been met. Therefore, he or she will be solely accountable for the effects on the children.

The providers, whether internal county departments or an alternative public or private provider, will function as subcontractors to the Department of Children's Services, and the Director of Children's Services will function as a program manager for children under County protection.

Our recommendation may create accounting and auditing complexities for which the County and State are not prepared. Different departments count different things as cases, depending on the nature of the services provided and the regulations of State or Federal funding agencies. The case is not necessarily the same as the child for whose benefit the services are designed. Any of the departments may treat the child only or associated adults or siblings, but they all use different case counting procedures for accounting purposes. For this reason, the agreements on which the transactions are based must be carefully drafted to define the case as the basis, rather than 'units of service' or 'children'. In turn, this could cause auditing complexities for the State. We believe that it is feasible for the CAO and others to design a workable system for the 1989-90 fiscal year. (Point B.)

4C Seek legislative authority to implement the recommended changes, as necessary.

County Counsel has advised us informally that the kind of system we propose may not be feasible under the current statutes. The reason is that the laws designate an individual public official, such as the Mental Health Officer or the Health Officer, as responsible for controlling the nature, quantity, and quality of the functions provided under the statute. Thus, if the Board of Supervisors adopts our recommendation, it may be necessary to seek legislation authorizing it to implement our recommendation. (Point C.)

5. ADVISORY COMMISSIONS AND INTERAGENCY COUNCILS

DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM

The 1986-87 Grand Jury conducted a comprehensive analysis of the system of commissions and committees in Los Angeles County government. Our task force used that study as a basis for understanding the County system.

The Board of Supervisors needs and should continue to seek out the advisory participation of citizens in addressing the problems of the region. We strongly believe that citizens' commissions formed to advise the Board of Supervisors on matters of policy are one of the strengths of the County system. In addition, interagency councils are needed to coordinate implementation of local programs which require participation of multiple organizations. It is natural enough to consider the sheer multiplicity of Committees, commissions and boards as a problem in itself. We do not agree. Each of them makes its contribution usually at a minimal cost. As the Grand Jury pointed out, the complexity of our society and the various roles of government in it creates a need for citizen participation. Advisory committees and commissions are a good way of providing for it. Other committees, both internal and external, are needed to provide for networking

among the professionals in the system, community organizations, and clients. *It is not the multiplicity of these organizations that is an issue. Issues and excessive costs can develop when:

- commissions work at cross purposes to one another.
- commissions lack a clear understanding of their purposes and goals, or
- commissions continue in their activities, with associated costs, after the work for which they were formed is completed or found to be clearly infeasible.

Citizens commissions and committees may duplicate one another, and interagency councils may also duplicate one another. However, in our view, it is not likely that a citizens commission will duplicate an interagency council. Most citizens commissions are composed of volunteers who have no direct or professional interest in the business area of the commission, but are well enough informed to provide an external, lay perspective on the situation for the Board of Supervisors and other public officials. They can be a source of innovation and creativity as well as of information that the public officials might otherwise not see. The councils, on the other hand, are composed of professionals in the field of interest, including service providers and policy makers. They are directly concerned with the delivery system. and have an interest in it. That a citizens commission is working in the same field as a group of professionals is no evidence that they are duplicative. When they disagree on policy and priorities. that is a healthy indication that the system is functioning. It is part of the nature of citizens commissions to take a contrarian view from that of the

professionals, and it can be one of the most useful contributions of a commission to introduce such views. It is part of the job of the Board of Supervisors to use both kinds of input to arrive at the best improvement of the system under study.

On the other hand, the multiplicity of citizens commissions working in the same field can lead to increased probability that their activities will conflict or their roles become confused. In creating commissions, the Board has historically introduced duplication and fragmentation. The roles of the various commissions overlap because the problems and the populations they affect most severely overlap.

For example, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors appoints a Commission on Youth with the responsibility to "give advice, counsel and suggestions to the Board of Supervisors regarding the needs and concerns of young persons, including health, education, employment, recreation, delinquency, and family relations" (County Code 3.66). In 1984, the Board created the Children's Services Commission to review programs and make recommendations to improve children's services. In 1987, the Board created the Task Force to Promote Self Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility to address (among other things) teenage pregnancy. child abuse. and the failure of some children to reach their potential (Minute Order 81. Proceedings of November 17, 1987).

The Board of Supervisors can make the system of commissions and councils work more efficiently and effectively. by reducing 5 the somewhat haphazard system of creating them, by assuring that

commissioners understand the parameters within which they are expected to work. and by providing continuing information on their roles and functions.

Our recommendation is designed to reduce duplication and to reaffirm the recommendations made by the Grand Jury to reduce waste when it occurs.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors curtail the Potential for future actions which might tend to increase fragmentation and duplication.

5A. Enforce the procedure requiring the CAO to minimize the creation of additional commissions by a) reviewing the roles of any new commission to determine whether its intended functions could be performed by an existing group, B) recommending assignment of the functions to an existing group whenever feasible, And c) recommending the detailed functions, composition, and method of operation of a new commission.

The advisory commissions may not be entirely duplicative. but their tasks certainly overlap. Failure to provide for their interaction could be a source of major confusion in the future. This kind of duplication and overlap can seldom be corrected after a commissions is formed and appointed. Therefore, the first point of our recommendation is to avoid the creation of additional overlapping commissions. (Point A1)

5B. Direct the CAO to brief all newly appointed citizen commissioners on the county's overall structure, programs, legal responsibilities, budget, operations, commission system, and other relevant information.

5C. Direct the CAO to brief all citizen commissions annually on the state of the County and in particular on the major actions attributable to commissions' recommendations.

During our present study, many commissioners told us or our staff that they had no information about County government, and little about the roles of their commissions, when appointed. They were appointed because they expressed an interest in a field in which the Supervisor recognized a need for citizen participation, and demonstrated a commitment and the ability to contribute.

Los Angeles County government is a complex and huge business. The potentially significant contributions of commissioners would be enhanced if some provision were made to deepen their understanding of the system when appointed. Therefore, the point of our recommendation is to provide for periodic briefings of newly appointed commissioners on the overall system of County government, as a matter of initiation. The briefings would be intended to ensure that commissioners a) understand the terrain, b) comprehend the major issues the Board is confronting, and c) understand their missions within an appropriate framework. In the early 1980's, the CAO (Technical Services) developed briefing packages for County executives. Our proposal is to use the same kind of briefing for new commissioners. (Point B.)

A second, more global briefing on the structure, operations, and current state of the County should be made available to all commissioners as a group at least once a year. Things change budgets, Legislation, priorities, demographics, economics. Such changes may have a material effect on the effectiveness of a commission's operations, but not necessarily come to the attention of all of the affected commissions. In addition, the

activities of many commissions interact with those of others, but there is no ongoing machinery to ensure communications. The annual conference we propose would provide an opportunity for County officials and commissions to inform all commissioners on major current developments, and for commissions to establish a work program based on those developments. (Point C.)

We believe it would be worth the effort to brief newly appointed commissioners on the county, the commission's role, and on the expectations and to brief all commissioners on the status and needs once a year. Such briefings would be easy to arrange, and would minimize confusion which may result from commissioners' inadequate understanding of the county and of their commission's role in it. These steps should apply to all situations in which the Board intends to work with a citizen committee, commission, Board, or other voluntary group.

5D. Direct the CAO to implement the recommendations of the 1986-87 Grand Jury to enforce reporting requirements for the costs and accomplishments of citizen commissions and to establish a sunset date for each when appropriate.

5E. Direct the CAO to enforce reporting requirements for the costs and accomplishments of interagency councils.

Following a comprehensive study, the 1986-87 Grand Jury recommended that the costs of commissions and committees be made explicit in the Budget documentation, and that the Board provide a sunset date when creating each one. We agree. Commissions generate costs; the costs and benefits produced should be periodically available to the Board of Supervisors and the public for scrutiny. (Point D.) We would apply the same requirement to the interagency councils. (Point E.)