



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

RICHARD VALLE

President
Board of Supervisors

January 14, 2020

Honorable Tara Desautels
Acting Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Alameda
1225 Fallon Street, Department One
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Judge Desautels:

Sections 933 and 933.05 of the California Penal Code requires the Board of Supervisors to formally comment on Grand Jury findings and recommendations which pertain to matters under the control and authority of the Board.

In accordance with this statutory directive, I am hereby formally submitting Alameda County's responses to the 2018-2019 Grand Jury Final Report addressing the following investigated areas: County Supervisors' Mismanagement Loses Millions for Terrorism and Disaster Training; Independent Living Homes in Alameda County: Taming the "Wild West" and Alameda County Foster Care System: Some Positive Trends, But Too Many Children Sent Out of the County.

The County's responses were approved by the Board of Supervisors at its meeting of December 17, 2019 and a revised version adopted on January 14, 2020.

Very truly yours,

Richard Valle, President
Board of Supervisors

RV/SSM:AC:sg

Attachment

c: Other Members, Board of Supervisors
Gregory Ahern, Sheriff
Susan S. Muranishi, County Administrator
Donna Ziegler, County Counsel
Chris Bazar, Director, Community Development Agency
Lori Cox, Director, Social Services Agency
Geoffrey Sylvester, Foreperson, Alameda County Grand Jury
Chad Finke, Court Executive Officer



**ALAMEDA COUNTY RESPONSE
TO THE
2018-2019 ALAMEDA COUNTY GRAND JURY
FINAL REPORT**

**PREPARED BY:
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**APPROVED BY:
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
December 17, 2019
Revised version approved:
January 14, 2020**

ALAMEDA COUNTY RESPONSE TO THE 2018-2019 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

Alameda County Foster Care System: Some Positive Trends, But Too Many Children Sent Out of the County

Findings 19-26 through 19-29:

Finding 19-26

The Department of Children and Family Services has not recruited and retained an adequate number of approved foster homes in Alameda County.

Response:

The Board of Supervisors partially disagrees with this finding. The Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA), Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) launched a recruitment campaign in March 2019 with Hill & Company Communications to increase the number of resource families. The campaign included commercials and billboards throughout Alameda County. While the DCSF has actively made efforts to recruit foster families, there continues to be an inadequate number of approved foster homes in Alameda County.

Additionally, the Department of Children and Family Services is working with Casey Family Programs and the California Department of Social Services for their Group Home Project, working to move youth in group homes to family-based care. The Department will also be using a consultant that has had success using out of the box ideas for direct recruitment (e.g. recruitment focused on individual children).

Alameda County Foster Children, Youth and Non-Minor Dependents in Foster Care on July 28, 2019

	Child/Youth 0-17				Total # of Children/ Youth 0-17	% of All Alameda County Dependent Foster Youth	Non Minor Dependent				Total # of NMDs	% of all Alameda County Non Minor Dependents
	Alameda		Out of County				Alameda		Out of County			
	Relative/ NREFM	No Relative/ NREFM	Relative/ NREFM	Not Relative/ NREFM			Relative/ NREFM	Non Relative/ NREFM	Relative/ NREFM	Not Relative/ NREFM		
County Foster Home		63		2	65	7.7%		6			6	1.9%
FFA/FFA-RFA		39		192	231	27.3%		9		12	21	6.8%
Group Home/STRTP		40		73	113	13.3%		8		13	21	6.8%
Guardian Home		2			2	0.2%					0	0.0%
Relative/ NREFM Home	197		231		428	50.5%	8		2		10	3.2%
Small Family Home				2	3	0.4%				2	2	0.6%
Supervised Independent Living Placement					0	0.0%		47		50	97	31.3%
THFP/THP+ FC		4			4	0.5%		95		56	151	48.7%
Court or Tribe Specified				1	1	0.1%				2	2	0.6%
	197	148	231	271	847		8	165	2	135	310	
Non-Relative (Non-Dependent) Legal Guardian Home	1	114		5	120			21		1	22	

% of dependent foster children/youth 0-17 placed out of county 59.3%
 % of dependent foster children/youth 0-17 placed out of county with non-relative FFA 22.7%
 % of dependent foster children/youth 0-17 placed out of county in a group home, small family home or STRTP 9.0%
 % of dependent foster children/youth 0-17 placed out of county with a relative or NREFM 27.3%
 of all dependent foster children/youth 0-17 placed out of county, % placed with Relatives or NREFMs 46.0%

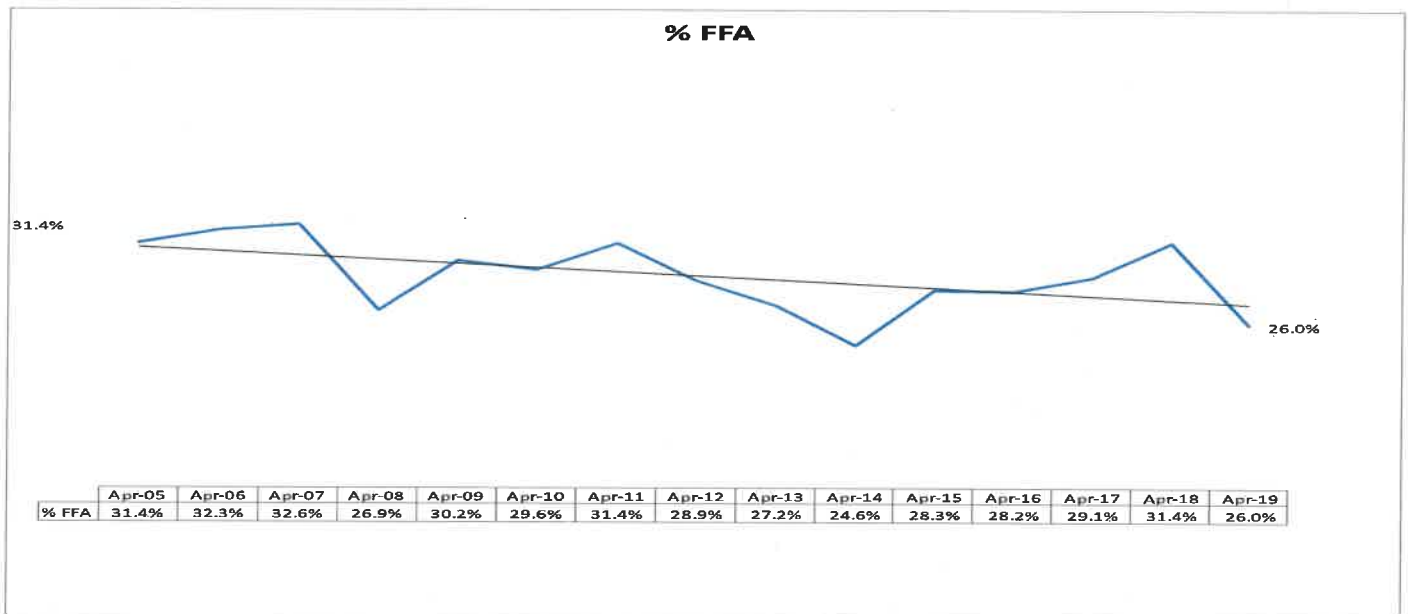
ALAMEDA COUNTY RESPONSE TO THE 2018-2019 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

Finding 19-27

An excessive percentage (more than half) of Alameda County’s foster care placements are made to homes located outside of Alameda County, despite evidence that out-of-placements are generally not in the best interests of foster children.

Response:

The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with this finding. The Department of Children and Family Services seeks to place children in their community and with family or extended family members whenever possible as a core tenet of practice. However, the information listed in the Executive Summary (p. 91-93) is slightly inaccurate, likely due to the way the information was presented on the data source. Of the 847 dependent youth under the age of 18, **59.3%** are placed out of county. However, **27.3%** of those youth are placed in the home of a relative or non-related extended family member. Additionally, **9%** of the youth placed out of county are in a group home and only **22.7%** are placed in a non-relative FFA home. Of the 847 dependent youth under the age of 18, **50.5%** of them are placed with a relative or non-related extended family member and **27.3%** of them are placed in an Foster Family Agencies (FFA). A data extraction from July 29, 2019 is attached for your reference.



ALAMEDA COUNTY RESPONSE TO THE 2018-2019 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

Placement Type	Point In Time															
	↑ Apr-05	↑ Apr-06	↑ Apr-07	↑ Apr-08	↑ Apr-09	↑ Apr-10	↑ Apr-11	↑ Apr-12	↑ Apr-13	↑ Apr-14	↑ Apr-15	↑ Apr-16	↑ Apr-17	↑ Apr-18	↑ Apr-19	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	
Pre-Adopt	50	40	43	38	46	36	21	20	18	21	16	16	13	23	18	
Relative/ NREFM	964	921	833	862	781	681	581	517	464	508	503	504	445	315	369	
Foster	165	140	125	140	126	129	119	117	113	116	117	103	101	165	81	
FFA	820	781	728	552	563	474	431	340	291	266	321	322	309	315	215	
Court Specified Home	9	11	9	4	2	4	2	2	1	1	2	3	1			
Group	412	336	333	310	227	161	124	104	107	94	109	115	129	121	102	
Shelter						1										
Non-FC	96	36	23	22	17	16	10	10	10	12	11	11	9	7	6	
Guardian - Dependent	24	15	12	16	15	13	16	16	14	7	11	9	8	4	3	
Guardian - Non- Dependent	307	273	258	236	201	193	173	172	170	172	148	135	137	129	124	
Runaway	15	72	69	51	52	47	41	28	22	28	21	27	24	27	21	
Trial Home Visit	15	14	7	15	3	3	3	2	4	2	2	4	1	3	2	
SILP											1					
Transitional Housing	9	13	16	14	11	13	7	2	6	7	7	6	8	5	8	
Other	31	40	32	28	21	22	17	20	20	21	15	22	13	17	3	
Missing																
Total	2,917	2,692	2,488	2,288	2,065	1,793	1,545	1,350	1,240	1,255	1,284	1,277	1,198	1,131	952	

Total excluding NRLG	2,610	2,419	2,230	2,052	1,864	1,600	1,372	1,178	1,070	1,083	1,136	1,142	1,061	1,002	828
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	Apr-05	Apr-06	Apr-07	Apr-08	Apr-09	Apr-10	Apr-11	Apr-12	Apr-13	Apr-14	Apr-15	Apr-16	Apr-17	Apr-18	Apr-19
% FFA	31.4%	32.3%	32.6%	26.9%	30.2%	29.6%	31.4%	28.9%	27.2%	24.6%	28.3%	28.2%	29.1%	31.4%	26.0%

Finding 19-28

Average caseloads for Department of Family and Child Services emergency response and family maintenance child welfare social workers are too high, which is not conducive to the delivery of high-quality services to Alameda County’s foster children.

Response:

The Board of Supervisors partially disagrees with this finding. The caseload guidelines recommended in the 1998 SB 2030 study were never realized in the state of California due to the exorbitant cost. Despite those standards not being funded, Alameda County has strived to maintain a caseload close to those numbers. The caseload numbers listed in the Executive Summary are not fully accurate. The report reflects that the Emergency Response program has a caseload of 24.99 (p. 95). However, Child Welfare Workers in Emergency Response have a caseload guideline of 15 and over the last year Child Welfare Workers have averaged less than 15.

Finding 19-29

The Department of Children and Family Services has not been timely in its implementation of the Child and Family Team concept that is a central element of California’s Continuum of Care Reform legislation.

Response:

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding. The Department of Children and Families Services implementation of Children and Family Teams was delayed as a result of ongoing discussions with our labor partners. However, resolution was reached in June 2018.

ALAMEDA COUNTY RESPONSE TO THE 2018-2019 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

Recommendation 19-26:

The Department of Children and Family Services must address the shortage of in-county foster homes by implementing more effective resource family recruitment strategies and techniques. Aggressively moving forward with plans the agency has formulated for revamping and revitalizing foster parent recruitment activity is strongly recommended.

Response:

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this recommendation, though the Social Services Agency, Department of Children and Family services (DCFS) has already been aggressively recruiting families as previously mentioned. As a part of the campaign, DCFS included a website with more information about the resource family process <http://myresourcefamily.org>. We anticipate using this fiscal year's allocation to have another campaign addressing permanency, and a campaign in the spring. Each campaign will involve commercials and billboards.

Recommendation 19-27:

The Department of Children and Family Services must develop and implement a strategy for significantly reducing the percentage of out-of-county foster home placements. Any strategy to achieve that goal should include measures to reduce Alameda County's utilization of foster family agencies.

Response:

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this recommendation. The Department of Children and Family Services will continue to make every effort to place children and youth in homes in Alameda County, that are able to meet their needs, whenever possible.

Recommendation 19-28:

The Department of Children and Family Services must reduce social worker caseloads to levels that meet expert recommendations.

Response:

The Board of Supervisors partially disagrees with this recommendation. The largest driver in caseload size is maintaining a full workforce. The Department of Children and Family Services currently has 273 funded Child Welfare Worker II positions. Currently, the vacancy rate for DCFS is 14%. The Department of Children and Family Services currently has a class of sixteen Child Welfare Worker II's in Child Welfare Core Induction training, which ended on September 15th. We are currently seeking to have a potential class of twenty Child Welfare Worker II's early in 2020 and a class in summer 2020. These new child welfare staff should address the caseload concerns referenced in the report.

Recommendation 19-29:

The Department of Children and Family Services must devote priority attention to completing its conversion from Team Decision Making to the Child and Family Team approach called for in the Continuum of Care Reform bill.

Response:

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this recommendation. The Department of Children and Families Services implementation of Children and Family Teams was delayed as a result of ongoing discussions with SEIU Local 1021. However, resolution was reached in June 2018. On December 1, 2018 the first phase of Children and Family Teams (CFTs) were begun with case planning meetings. On June 17, 2019 Child and Family Teams were fully implemented with all teaming meetings, including Team Decision Making, converting to Child and Family Teams.