



County of Orange
C a l i f o r n i a

Thomas G. Mauk
County Executive Officer

August 21, 2007

Honorable Nancy Wieben Stock
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92702

Subject: Response to Orange County Grand Jury Report, "Pre & Post
Emancipated Youth: Is Camelot Still a Dream?"

Dear Judge Stock:

Per your request, and in accordance with Penal Code 933, enclosed please find the County of Orange response to the subject report as approved by the Board of Supervisors. If you have any questions, please contact Theresa Stanberry at (714) 834-3727 in the County Executive Office who will either assist you or direct you to the appropriate individual.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas G. Mauk".

Thomas G. Mauk
County Executive Officer

Enclosure

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2006-07 Grand Jury Report
“Pre & Post Emancipated Youth: Is Camelot Still A Dream?”
Response to Findings and Recommendations

Responses to Findings

- F-1 **Master Report**: A master report that incorporates program data and outcomes data does not exist.

Response: Disagree with finding.

The ILP Annual Narrative Report and Plan and the CDSS SOC 405 A form, which are submitted to CDSS annually, include program information, financial information, assessment tools utilized, access to services, specific services provided, collaborations, evaluations, outcomes, and financial information. The CDSS SOC 405 A form, provides a one-page summary of the Youths Served, Client Characteristics and the Program Outcomes/Client Progress.

- F-2 **Association with the “Fullerton Report”**: Available data does not associate programs and outcomes with the Fullerton Report recommendations.

Response: Disagree wholly with finding.

The documents CFS submits to CDSS contain program and outcome data and narrative findings on the interventions and advances in several of the recommended areas of the Fullerton Report. The Independent Living Program (ILP) Annual Narrative Report and Plan, which is submitted to CDSS annually, provides information on various Fullerton Report recommendation areas and also includes program information, financial information, assessment tools utilized, access to services, specific services provided, collaborations, evaluations, outcomes, and financial information.

- F-3 **Program Population**: It is very difficult to determine total population for each program and what percentage of that population is actually served and their outcomes.

Response: Disagree partially with finding.

CFS is fully aware of the population served by ILP. All dependent youth, age 16 and above, have a Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP); all youth receive some degree of ILP services. The level of ILP services varies, and each youth receives individualized services.

CFS agrees that it is difficult to track outcomes. ILP is a voluntary service. While services are offered to all youth over the age of 16 and while youth are encouraged to participate, not all youth take advantage of the services available. Those who do participate are not obligated to provide CFS with personal information, such as their education, employment, or living situation. The lack of a tool to collect the data in the

Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) also makes it difficult to track outcomes.

- F-4 **Annual Report:** A full report, in the form noted above, is not provided to the Board of Supervisors on an annual basis.

Response: Agree with finding.

- F-5 **Independent Living Skills:** The annual “Skills Day” is not enough opportunity for pre-emancipated youth to exercise their Independent Living Skills.

Response: Agree with finding.

There are various learning activities available to pre-emancipated youth. The annual ILP skills day event, “Independent City,” is only one opportunity for youth to exercise their independent living skills. The expectation is that youth will complete the activities identified in their TILP and practice what they learn in ILP workshops and other ILP activities with the support of their caseworker and caregiver, in everyday living.

- F-6 **Housing:** The demand for pre-emancipation transitional housing and availability is unclear.

Response: Agree with finding.

When planning to leave the foster care system, many youth believe that they have secured housing and consequently do not require or decline assistance. Often, it is not until a youth has been on his or her own for several months, that he or she realizes the arranged housing situation is not stable.

- F-7 **SSA Website:** The web site <http://www.ssa.ocgov.com/youth/default.asp> is not user friendly for emancipated youth.

Response: Disagree wholly with finding.

CFS Emancipation Services Program’s website received 2,436 hits since November 2006, and visitors left only positive feedback. None of the feedback requested changes to the site.

- F-8 **Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment:** Emancipated youth do not always use the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment and when they do they may not enter the county identification code.

Response: Agree with finding.

CFS has made the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) the instrument of choice for assessing the skills and deficits of foster youth. Youth are continuously

encouraged to use the ACLSA; however, as with all ILP services, it is voluntary. The County cannot force youth to participate, nor can it require the youth to include the County identification code.

Response to Recommendations

- R-1 **Master Report:** SSA needs to report programs and outcomes in one document. Numbers presented without background data borders are useless. A report card format would be very beneficial in that it would identify each program and provide population data, i.e. number in the group to be served, number actually served, and number that experienced success and/or percentage of success measured against total population to be served.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

The ILP Annual Narrative Report and Plan and the CDSS SOC 405 A form, which are submitted to CDSS annually, include program information, financial information, assessment tools utilized, access to services, specific services provided, collaborations, evaluations, outcomes, and financial information. The CDSS SOC 405 A form, provides a one-page summary of the Youths Served, Client Characteristics and the Program Outcomes/Client Progress.

- R-2 **Association with the “Fullerton Report”:** A link between the Fullerton Report recommendations and what is actually occurring needs to be established. Time, money, and effort were expended in the development of the report and it appears it has been placed on a shelf. If it was important to develop the document then it is equally important to implement its recommendations. The recommendations should be merged into the report card format mentioned in R-1.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented

When CFS restructured the Emancipation Services Program, the recommendations from the Fullerton Report were taken into consideration and the majority of the recommendations were implemented. The ILP annual reports submitted to CDSS includes a summary of progress and data regarding several of the recommended areas of the Fullerton Report.

- R-3 **Program Population:** The presentation of data needs to be in the context of the overall population served. Calling data “outcomes” that merely identify attendance numbers is not really an outcome. Attendance does not automatically mean the youth grasp the concepts. Outcomes should be presented that reflect the youths’ ability to actually use the information provided.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

The CDSS SOC 405 A form, which is submitted annually to CDSS, provides a one-page summary of the Youths Served, Client Characteristics and the Program Outcomes/Client Progress. The youth's ability to use the information provided in the workshops, is captured in the Program Outcomes/Client Progress section of the form in the areas of:

- High School Education completion
- Post-Secondary Education enrollment
- Employment/Vocational Training
- Housing

R-4 **Annual Report**: The report card recommended in R-1 should be presented annually to the Board of Supervisors.

Response: The recommendation will be implemented.

The annual ILP reports required by CDSSS will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors.

R-5 **Independent Living Skills**: The opportunity for youth to exercise Independent Living Skills once a year is not enough. The youth should have multiple opportunities during the year to use the skills they have learned in workshops. Vendor contracts should be revised to require competency testing for each workshop. This would also allow for the assessment of outcomes.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable.

There is no empirically based "Competency Test" for ILP skills and testing youth may be a deterrent for participation. However, both formal and informal ILP learning opportunities for youth exists throughout the year, with integration of the skill set into everyday living as the goal. In addition, the youth, caseworker, and caregiver identify opportunities for the youth to develop and master the skills learned in the ILP workshops through the development of the youth's TILP.

R-6 **Housing**: The SSA needs to identify the actual demand for Transitional Housing and consider changes to the screening process and criteria for living in these programs.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

CFS recognized an increased demand for transitional housing and developed a spectrum, which includes host families and independent housing for youth long before the Grand Jury issued its Report. Additionally, CFS continuously reviews the screening process to meet the needs of youth.

R-7 **SSA Website**: Revise the website so that it contains an area that is specific to pre- and post-emancipated youth services.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis.

Of the 2400 users of the CFS Emancipation Services Program's website, none of the feedback received contained complaints about or suggestions for improvement of the site. However, the Department acknowledges that enhancements to the website could improve usability and plans to assess the necessary pages and update them as deemed appropriate.

R-8 **Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment**: The SSA has improved the use of the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment; however, more should be done to ensure participation of post-emancipated youth by offering incentives that are important to them.

Response: The recommendation will requires further analysis.

SSA will analyze a variety of inducements to determine what would be most appealing to post-emancipated youth. Once a determination has been made, SSA will offer the chosen incentives to youth to encourage participation in the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment.