



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board

Meeting Agenda

April 16, 2026 9:00 – 11:00 AM
County Administrators Center (CAC)
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 302
San Diego, CA 92101

1. Welcome and Introduction to the Board
2. Public Comment: Opportunity for members of the public to speak to the Board on any subject matter within the Board's jurisdiction, but not an item on today's agenda.

Notice regarding juvenile case confidentiality: Those involved in a juvenile matter should ensure that they do not inadvertently disclose identifying information that violates juvenile court confidentiality provisions.

Please remember not to use acronyms in comments

3. Approval for the Statement of Proceeding/Minutes for the meeting of January 23, 2026
4. Child and Family Well-Being 2025-2026 Legislation Updates
5. Local Effects of House Reconciliation 1 (HR1)
6. Proposed County Budget Update
7. San Pasqual Academy Engagement Sessions Update

8. Work Group Updates
 - a) Lived Experts Action Partners Work Group
 - b) Child and Family Well-Being Work Group
 - c) Placement and Caregiver Support Work Group

9. Child and Family Well-Being Department, Director's Report
 - a) Behavioral Health Services Update
 - b) CARES Update
 - c) Board Letters
 - Polinsky Children's Center & Child and Family Well-Being Donations

10. Advisory Board Member Updates

11. Adjournment

Next Meeting of the Advisory Board:

Friday, July 24, 2026

If you are planning to attend and need special accommodations, please call Torrey Giaquinta at (858) 581-5893 at least three days in advance of the meeting.

Pursuant to Government Code section 54957.5, written materials distributed to the Advisory Board in connection with this agenda less than 72 hours before the meeting will be available online at: <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/cfs.html>.



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Child and Family Strengthening
Advisory Board
Minutes of January 23, 2026

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

PALOMA AGUIRRE
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

4.16.26 CFSAB Meeting,
Agenda Item 3

Members Present:

Lauren Welty, District 2 Appointee
Jason Sharpe, District 4 Appointee
AnneElise Goetz, District 3 Appointee
Jeff Wiemann, Foster Family Agency
Stephen Moore, Voices for Children, Inc
Adam Reed, Dependency Legal Services
Patricia Boles, Foster Parent Association
Erin Gospodarec, Congregate Care Provider
Jovanna Aguilera, Protective Services Worker
Diana Venegas, Individual with Lived Experience
Chief Tamika Nelson, San Diego County Probation
Hon. Judge Tilisha Martin, San Diego Superior Court
Beth Ploesch, Children's Legal Services of San Diego
Dr. Gloria Ciriza, San Diego County Office of Education
Dr. Joseph Robinson, Individual with Lived Experience
Alfredo Guardado, Child and Family Well-Being Department
Stephanie Ortega, Polinsky Children's Center/Promises2Kids
Dr. Elizabeth Hernandez, County Health and Human Service Agency

Supervisor Present:

Monica Montgomery Steppe

Members Not Present:

Dr. Patricia Fernandez, District 1 Appointee
Alethea Arguilez, First 5 San Diego
Melissa Villagomez, Individual with Lived Experience

Staff Present:

Sandra McBrayer, The Children's Initiative
Torrey Giaquinta, The Children's Initiative
Kyle Sand, County Counsel

1. Welcome and Introduction to the Board

Judge Martin opened the meeting. New board member Tandy Litt introduced herself as did the rest of the board. Quorum was achieved.

2. Public Comment: Opportunity for members of the public to speak to the Board on any subject matter within the Board's jurisdiction, but not an item on today's agenda.

There were no requests to make public comment.

3. Approval for the Statement of Proceeding/Minutes for the meeting of October 10, 2025

Patricia Boles motioned to approve the minutes, Chief Tamika Nelson, seconded; Stephanie Ortega abstained, all other members present voting in favor.

4. CalAIM (California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal)

Heather Summers and Jennifer Hancocl from Medical Care Services presented on CalAIM.

One in three San Diegans receive Medi-Cal. Enhanced Care Management (ECM) and Community Supports (CS) are new services available to support the health and well-being of Medi-Cal members with complex needs.

ECM core services include outreach and engagement, comprehensive assessment and care management plan, enhanced coordination of care, coordination of and referral to community and social support services, member and family support, health promotion, and comprehensive transitional care. ECM focuses on adults, children, and youth who are experiencing homelessness or who are transitioning from incarceration. Children and youth involved with child welfare, or those enrolled in California Children's Services who have additional needs. The presenters shared a few examples of ECM eligibility as well as the link to the universal referral forms. ECM is typically authorized for twelve months but can be extended.

CS are services that help address members' health related social needs. There are fourteen CS services, each has its own eligibility criteria. CS referrals are separate from ECM. CS tend to be short term. There are four managed care plans that provide CS in San Diego County. Those are Community Health Group, Blue Shield, Kaiser Permanente, and Molina.

There is a Healthy San Diego Consumer and Professional Advisory Committee CalAIM Task Force. The Task Force has both consumer and professional seats and are seeking a consumer of child and youth services.

A CFSAB member shared that children adopted from child welfare are being cut off from medical services. Those children need advocacy and additional support.

This program is up for waiver approval on December 31st. ECM has been added onto contracts, but CS is more at risk.

A CFSAB member asked how 'involved in child welfare' is defined. Families with either voluntary or open cases within the past six-twelve months could qualify. CFWB social workers assigned to voluntary cases need to be informed and educated about this resource.

5. San Pasqual Academy Stakeholder Engagement Process

On November 18, 2025, the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors voted to initiate efforts to maximize resources at the San Pasqual Academy (SPA). This includes stakeholder engagement to develop recommendations for best serving foster youth and maximizing the use of the SPA campus. Specific stakeholder groups were called out including CFSAB. There will be ten engagement sessions; two of the sessions have already taken place. In April, the recommendations will be drafted and submitted to the Board of Supervisors for the May 2026 meeting.

6. Children's Trust Fund Report

The Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board determines the priorities for Children's Trust Fund (CFT) dollars. New priorities need to be set this Spring. Aimee Zeitz and Rosa Gracian from Child and Family Well-Being discussed the origin of the funds which is the fees from birth certificates issued in San Diego County.

Next, Nathaniel Martinez from SAY San Diego, shared how they have used the CTF dollars at the Family Connection Hub. Concrete supports were identified as a need by families and also has been shown by research to be a protective factor. Between May 2025 and December 2025, over \$73,000 was spent on filling 100 families' essential needs. The primary use of funds was housing assistance, funds also restored utilities or transportation. A client testimonial was included in the meeting materials packet. Board members asked about collaboration with ECM services which is done at the Hub. The goal is for the Family Connection Hub to operate as a no wrong door system, however due to needing the CARES system to be active in order to be able to submit FFPSA claims, at this time, only direct referrals from CFWB staff are accepted.

Then, Melissa Brooks from the YMCA discussed their Kinship Support Program which is partially funded using CTF. The Kinship program serves all caregivers who are currently raising a child either informally (without CFWB involvement) or formally (through CFWB). The majority of clients helped were informal caregivers (74%) and 86% were female. Staff include six kinship navigators, MSW interns, and youth development and engagement specialists. Services provided include needs assessment, support plan, referral, and advocacy. Weekly support groups are also available throughout the County. These meetings include peer support, education, resources, childcare, and meals.

Lastly, Heather Carmody and Christine Hall from the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program talked about the special education and pre-petition legal services funded through CTF. The education rights program was established in 1998 to preserve the right of dependency youth by advocating for special education services, preventing unjust disciplinary action, and holding districts accountable to their obligations under federal and state law. Youth in grades TK-12 with open CFWB cases (including voluntary) are eligible for service. As are nonminor dependents who need transition support. Referrals are received from CFWB, attorneys, and CASAs. In FY25-25, education advocacy was provided to 69 youth. Pre-petition legal services has existed to provide voluntary guardianship services since 1996. In 2025 the program included 1.5 full time staff attorneys, and 2,454 volunteer hours. This program serves parents or caregivers with an open CFWB investigation before a dependency petition is filed. Services include helping caregivers establish or modify a guardianship, helping parents establish, contest, or modify a guardianship, and obtaining Special Immigrant Juvenile status for youth 18-21. Board members asked about conflicts of interest when SDVLP is not able to work on a guardianship because they previously supported the family through the education rights program. SDVLP have conflict attorneys they can refer to including Legal Aid and others.

7. Work Group Updates

Due to time constraints, no verbal updates were provided at the meeting. Meeting summaries for the November and December work group meetings were provided in the meeting materials.

- a) Lived Experts Action Partners Work Group**
- b) Child and Family Well-Being Work Group**
- c) Placement and Caregiver Support Work Group**

8. Child and Family Well-Being Department, Director's Report

- a) Polinsky Children's Center**

The PCC population is staying on track. This year the average number of children at PCC was 21, last year it was 19. There has been a decline in youth leaving campus without permission.

b) Board Letter: Appointment of San Diego Child Care and Development Planning Council Members

A letter is going to the Board of Supervisors to appoint nine new members and reappoint eight members.

c) California Child and Family Services Review, County Self-Assessment

CFWB has begun the county self-assessment process of the California Child and Family Services Review. An email will go out inviting CFSAB members to take part in the process.

9. Advisory Board Member Updates: Members may make brief announcements or report on their activities that are relevant to the Advisory Board

Straight from the Heart has many cribs and bikes available.

The family support liaison program is currently being assessed to determine if families' needs are being met and if the program is the right size.

10. Adjournment

Next Meeting of the Advisory Board: Thursday, April 16, 2026

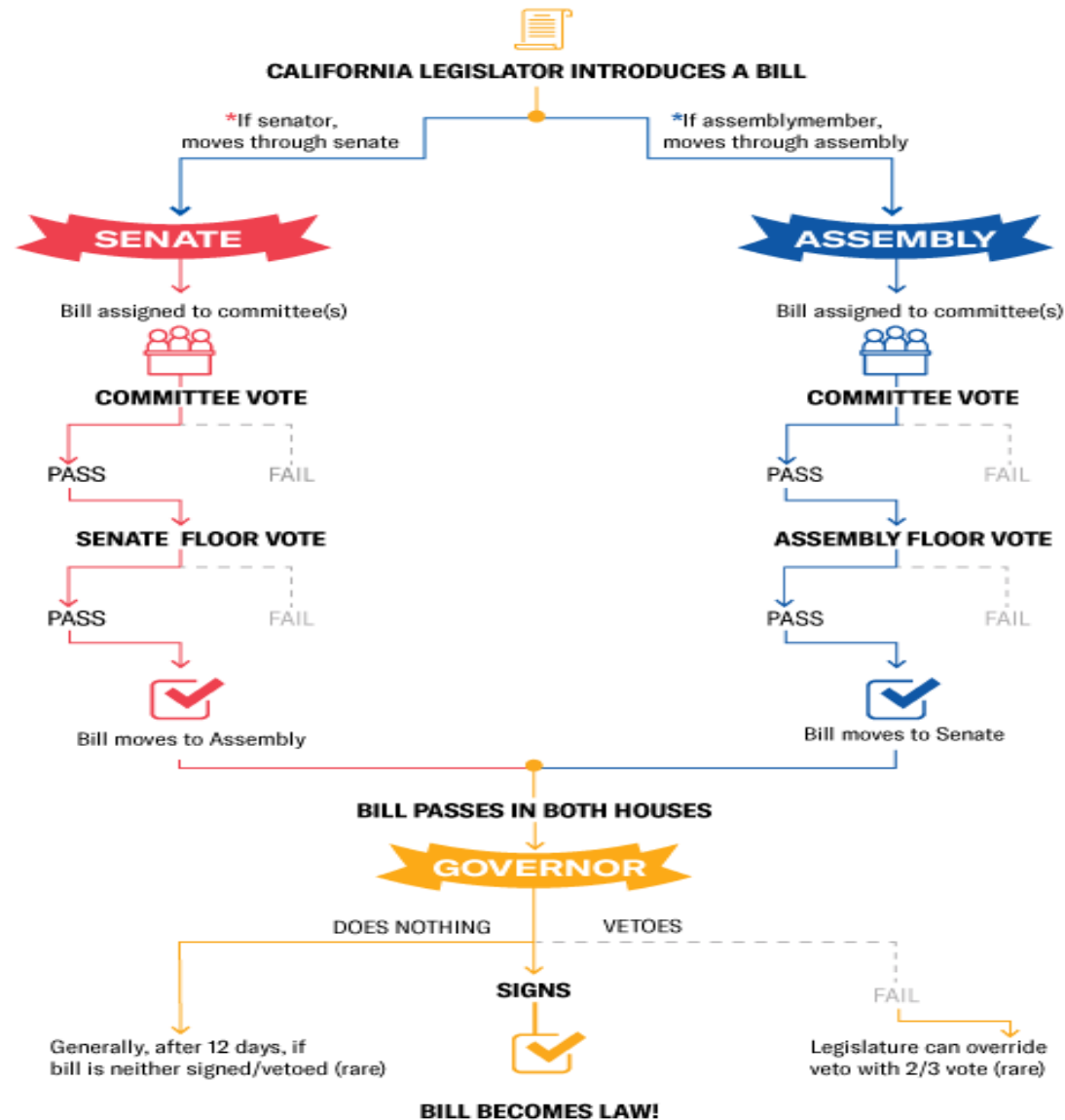


Child and Family Well-Being 2025-2026 Legislation Updates

Stephannie Novitski, Policy Analyst

Becoming Law

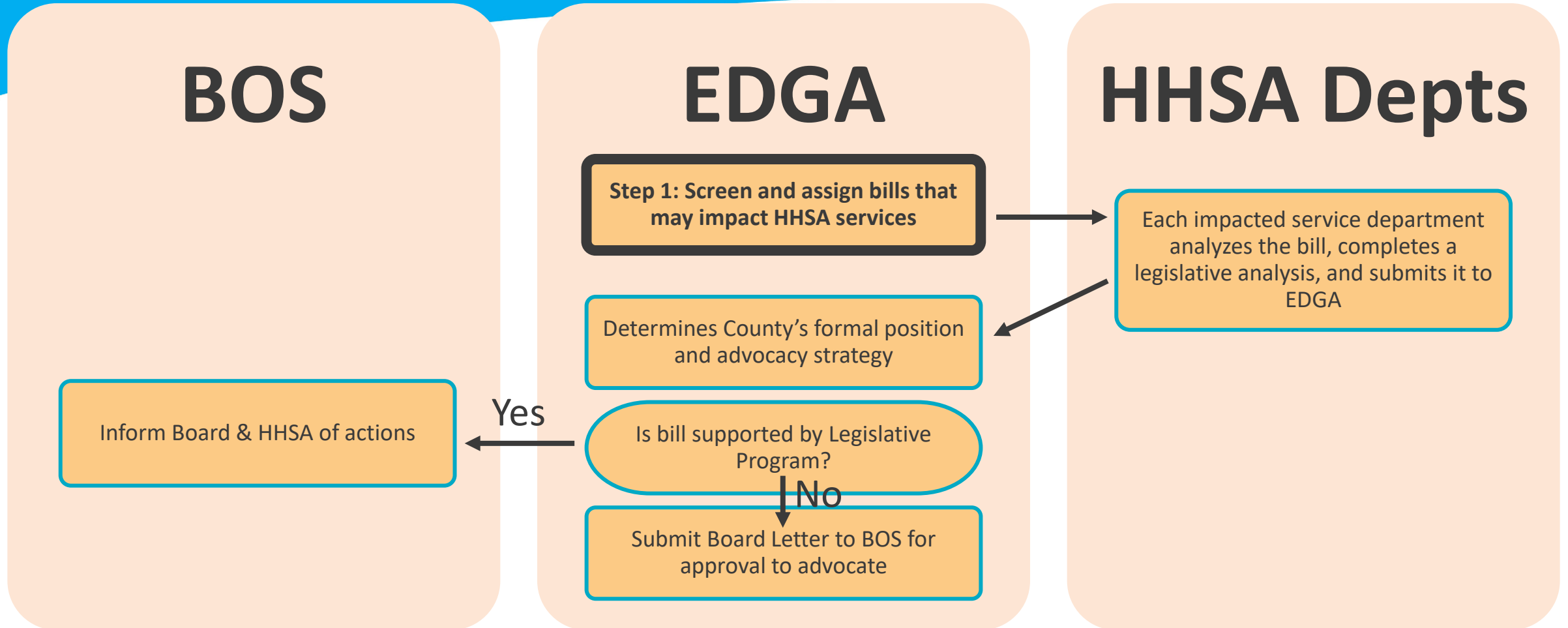
HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW



- *Bills that start with "SB" are introduced in the senate
- *Bills that start with "AB" are introduced in the assembly



HHSA Legislative Process



Highlights of the 2025 Legislative Year

1400+

- Total bills received for COSD to review

106

- Bills CFWB received to review (not including bill amendments)

314

- Including bill amendments for CFWB to review

57

- Bills that died and did not make it to the Governor

3

- Bills that changed to no longer applying to child welfare

48

- Bills that were enrolled and went to the Governor

6

- Bills that the Governor vetoed

42

- Bills that the Governor signed into law and were chaptered



CFWB Related Laws Passed in 2025



Adoptions Assistance Program (AAP)

AB 118 – AAP Payments to Out-of-State Out-of-Home Placements

- Effective 7-1-25.
- AAP can only be paid for out-of-state residential treatment facility placements if:
 - At least one caregiver must reside in the state the youth will be placed in, and
 - The County must determine whether the placement is necessary for the youth's mental, emotional, and/or behavioral health, and
 - That the placement will be temporary (not to exceed 12 months of cumulative time), and
 - That the youth's need was present prior to adoption.
- Adoptive family must provide the following proof to the County before the County can authorize AAP benefits:
 - Licensed or otherwise approved by the applicable state or tribal authority.
 - In good standing.
 - Eligible as a Title IV-E funded placement.
 - A qualified residential treatment program, as defined in the federal Social Security Act (same as CA STRTP requirements).



Child & Family Teams (CFTs) & Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)

AB 118 – CFT Meeting (CFTM)	SB 119 – Attaching CFT Summary & Action Plans to Court Reports	SB 119 – CANS Timelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CFTs are required to be held for Family Maintenance (FM) cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A copy of the CFWB CFT Summary and Action Plan must be attached to court reports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CANS are to be completed timely for every youth and NMD in foster care.



Placement Transitions

AB 896 – Foster Care Placement Transition Planning

- Adds that a resource family (RF) is to work cooperatively with a birth family and other resource families to support transitions in placement settings or permanency.
- Clarifies that as part of RF training that RFs are to work cooperatively with child welfare, the birth family, other RFs, or other service providers implementing the case plan to support case plan goals and objective, including placement transition planning to reduce trauma during transitions to reunification or other placement settings.



Court Hearings

AB 651 – Court Hearings with Incarcerated Parents

- Requires notice and the opportunity for an incarcerated parent to be physically present at dependency hearings related to their child.
- Requires the incarcerated parent who has waived their right to be physically present to be given the opportunity to participate by videoconference.
 - If videoconference isn't available, then using teleconferencing is required.
 - A WIC 366.26 court hearing cannot take place unless the court has the physical signed waiver from the parent.

AB 651 – NMD Court Entitlements

- Expands NMD court hearing rights to include:
 - Being present at hearings.
 - Being represented by counsel of their own choice.
 - Addressing the court and participating in court if they desire.
 - Being properly notified of court hearings.



Non-Minor Dependents (NMDs)

SB 624 – NMD Tax Guidance

- Requires CDSS by 7-30-26 to issue guidance with information to support best practices for NMDs to file state and federal income tax returns and access the foster youth tax credit.
- Child welfare departments are to then mail that information to NMDs every year.

AB 890 – NMD Intercounty Transfers (ICT)

- Authorizes an NMD's residence to be changed to another county where they are living if the NMD requests the jurisdiction transfer and the court finds it in the NMD's best interest.
 - The court will need to consider all relevant information.
- Requires the court to issue the order within 30 calendar days of the NMD's request.



Transitional Housing Placement (THP) Providers

AB 1314 – THP Providers

- Requires all county and THP provider contracts to make sure that decisions about sharing bedrooms, bathrooms, and units together are led by the program participant and agreed upon with the provider.



Postsecondary Education

AB 243 – Verifying Juvenile Dependency Status

- Authorizes a county child welfare department, to provide upon request, the following information, to a financial aid administrator for youth who are attending or applying to attend a postsecondary school:
 - The information necessary to verify that the person is or was previously a dependent, a ward, or was in the custody of the juvenile court, is limited to:
 - The applicant's name and DOB.
 - The dates the applicant was within juvenile court jurisdiction, placed in foster care or on probation, or taken into custody of the county probation department, or a statement that the applicant was not within the juvenile court's jurisdiction if that applies.
 - A statement that the applicant is or was a foster youth or juvenile court ward.



Family Court Adoptions

AB 450 – Family Court Adoptions

- Expands a Family Court’s jurisdiction to include adoption proceedings for CA-born minors.
- Clarifies that the above does not limit jurisdiction that is permitted under the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC).
- Requires a petitioner to be responsible for providing any additional documentation or information necessary to complete the investigation described above if the out-of-state home study report does not match CA standards or is missing required information.



SB 120 – Childcare Eligibility Extension

- If a family adds an additional child to their family size and the family already has childcare for a child that receives protective services or is/at risk of being neglected, abused, exploited, then the family can extend their childcare eligibility redetermination for at least 12 months if they request childcare for the new child.



Minor's Attorneys

AB 373 – Minor's Attorneys

- Requires a minor's attorney to advocate for an NMD's wishes even if those wishes conflict with the NMD's protection or safety.
- Removes the requirement that the primary responsibility of a minor's attorney is to advocate for the protection, safety, and physical and emotional well-being of an NMD.



Family Finding State Average

AB 562 – Meeting Family Finding State Average

- Starting on 1-1-27, each county is required to review publicly available data comparing the statewide average rate of placing children with relatives in the prior year for comparison with the county's placement rate during the same period.
 - In ICWA cases, comparing statewide average rate to the federal ICWA placement preferences.
- If a county's placement rate is less than the statewide average, then the county welfare director (or designee) is required to consult with the Center for Excellence in Family Finding, Engagement, and Support to identify best practices that may be adopted by the county to improve its placement rate.



Pending Legislation

CFWB Related Bills in 2026



2026 Legislation

Current Bills

- AB 1566 – Expanding the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act definition of Severe Neglect
- AB 1579 – Extending the use of allocated Children’s Crisis Continuum Pilot Program funds
- AB 1628 – Expanding the ability to safely surrender a baby from one who is no more than 3 days old to one who is no more than 30 days old
- AB 1688 – Noticing parents and attorneys when there is a report of abuse or neglect in a placement
- AB 1846 – Clarifies when relatives are to be assessed for placement to support relative placements for youth
- AB 1967 – Expanding the criteria for a nonminor to file a petition to resume dependency jurisdiction after exiting foster care
- AB 2478 – Adopting a kinship family approval process for relatives, NREFMs, and extended family of an Indian child
- AB 2684 – Defining out-of-state monthly SW visits for NMDs
- SB 1143 – Allowing child welfare agencies to access forensic interview videos from CACs when investigating child abuse or neglect



Legislation Websites

- [CA Bill & Legislative Information \(1999 - present\)](#)
- [Federal Legislation Information](#)



Thank you!



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ELIZABETH A. HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.
INTERIM DEPUTY CHIEF
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING DEPARTMENT
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(858) 616-5811 • FAX (858) 616-5908

ALFREDO GUARDADO, MSW
DIRECTOR

December 26, 2025

CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING SPECIAL NOTICE

TO: All Social Work Staff
Child and Family Well-Being

FROM: Alfredo Guardado, MSW
Director
Child and Family Well-Being

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE YEAR

Purpose

This Special Notice introduces staff to new laws that change how the Health and Human Services Agency provides child welfare services. This is not a complete list of all legislative changes, but highlights the main bills that impact Child and Family Well-Being (CFWB) staff.

Italics indicate new policy that is to be followed by all CFWB staff. More detailed requirements of some of these new laws will be addressed separately in forthcoming policy updates.

Background

During every legislative session, Senators and Assembly members introduce thousands of bills to create new laws, or amend existing ones, and CFWB Office of Administration/Policy staff track and analyze the bills that are related to child welfare.

Bills that are passed by both the Senate and the Assembly are sent to the Governor's desk for signature. If the Governor signs a bill, then it is "enacted" or "chaptered" and becomes law; if they decline to sign it, then it is "vetoed" and does not become law.

Effective Date

All new laws are effective January 1, 2026, unless noted otherwise.

**Changes Affecting the
Adoptions Assistance
Program (AAP)**

[AB 118](#) – AAP Payments to Out-of-State Out-of-Home Placements

- *In order to pay AAP for out-of-state residential treatment facility placements:*
 - *At least one caregiver has to reside in the state the youth will be placed in, and*
 - *the County has to determine the placement is necessary for the youth's mental, emotional, and/or behavioral health, and*
 - *that the placement will be temporary (not to exceed 12 months of cumulative time), and*
 - *that the youth's need was present prior to the adoption.*
 - *The adoptive family must provide the following to the County before the County can authorize AAP benefits for the out-of-state residential treatment facility, including proof that the facility is:*
 - Licensed or otherwise approved by the applicable state or tribal authority.
 - In good standing.
 - Eligible as a Title IV-E funded placement.
 - A qualified residential treatment program, as defined in the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 672(k)(4)), which is akin to CA STRTP requirements.
 - *The documentation required above must originate from the government agency or tribal authority that licenses or approves the out-of-state residential treatment facility, or the appropriate state or tribal Title IV-E agency.*
 - *The County is responsible for designating which residential treatment facility the youth will go to, after consultation with the adoptive family and receiving the above documentation.*
 - *Placement can only be made with the intent for the youth to return to the adoptive family, and*
 - *the adoptive parents must actively participate in the reunification plan.*
 - *The AAP rate paid for an out-of-state residential treatment facility is not to exceed the lesser amount of the following:*
 - The rate paid for an STRTP in CA, or
 - The rate determined by the state where the facility is located.
 - *If a child was placed in an out-of-state residential treatment facility before 6-30-25 and remained there as of 6-30-25, payment must not exceed the timeframe that was already authorized in the AAP agreement that was in effect as of 6-30-25, unless CFWB and the adoptive parents have negotiated and agreed on up to an additional 60 days for the purpose of transitioning the child home.*
-

**Changes Affecting
Resource Family
Approval (RFA) and
Placement**

[AB 896](#) – Foster Care Placement Transition Planning

- *Adds that a resource family (RF) is to work cooperatively with a birth family and other resource families to support transitions in placement settings or permanency.*
- *Clarifies that as part of RF training that RFs are to work cooperatively with child welfare, the birth family, other RFs, or other service providers implementing the case plan to support case plan goals and objective, including placement transition planning to reduce trauma during transitions to reunification or other placement settings.*

**Changes Affecting
Family Maintenance
(FM) Cases and Child
and Family Teams
(CFT)**

[AB 118](#) – Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM)

- *CFTMs are required to be held for Family Maintenance (FM) cases.*

**Changes Affecting
Court Reports and CFTs**

[SB 119](#) – Attaching CFT Summary and Action Plans to Court Reports

- *A copy of the CFWB CFT Summary and Action Plan must be attached to court reports.*
- *Effective once a final form is released by CDSS, in 2026, SWs are to document the CFT occurrence and its summary on the CFT Summary and Action Plan developed by CDSS.*
 - *The CDSS CFT Summary and Action Plan is to then be attached to court reports with any necessary redactions.*

**Changes Affecting
Child and Adolescent
Needs and Strengths
(CANS)**

[SB 119](#) – CANS Timelines

- *CANS are to be completed timely for every youth and NMD in foster care.*
 - *These timelines can be found in the [CANS \(Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths\)](#) policy.*

**Changes Affecting
Court Hearings with
Incarcerated Parents,
Nonminor Dependents
(NMDs), and
Adoptions**

[AB 651](#) – Dependency Hearings with Incarcerated Parents and NMD Court Entitlements

- *Requires notice of, and the opportunity for, an incarcerated parent to be physically present in dependency hearings related to their child.*
 - *Requires an incarcerated parent who has waived their right to be physically present to be given the opportunity to participate by videoconference.*
 - *If videoconference technology isn't available, then using teleconferencing is required.*
 - *A WIC 366.26 court hearing cannot take place unless the court has the physical signed waiver from the parent.*
-

Changes Affecting Court Hearings with Incarcerated Parents, Nonminor Dependents (NMDs), and Adoptions (cont.)

- *Expands NMD court hearing rights to include:*
 - *Being present at hearings.*
 - *Being represented by counsel of their own choice.*
 - *Addressing the court and participating in court if they desire.*
 - *Being properly notified of court hearings.*
-

Changes Affecting NMDs

[SB 624](#) – NMD Tax Guidance

- Requires CDSS, by 7-30-26, to issue guidance with information to support best practices for NMDs to file state and federal income tax returns and access the foster youth tax credit.
 - Requires the guidance to be updated as needed and reissued no less than every 2 years.
 - The information is to include, but is not limited to:
 - Eligibility requirements for the foster youth tax credit.
 - The maximum foster youth tax credit available pursuant to Section 17052.2 of the Revenue and Taxation Code.
 - Outreach strategies to increase awareness among NMDs and former foster youth about the foster youth tax credit.
 - Resources from the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) website for identifying local Volunteer Income Tax Assistance providers.
 - *Requires county child welfare departments and juvenile probation departments to annually mail the above CDSS information to every NMD.*
 - *Mailing is to happen between every November 1 and January 31.*
-

Changes Affecting NMDs, Court Hearings, and Intercounty Transfers

[AB 890](#) – Changing an NMD's County of Residence

- *Authorizes an NMD's residence to be changed to another county where they are living if the NMD requests the transfer of jurisdiction to the new county and the court finds that the transfer is in the best interest of the NMD.*
 - *The court will need to consider all relevant information, including the following, when making its determination:*
 - *Whether the transfer would increase the NMD's access to services.*
 - *The SW's, including tribal SW's, position and, if applicable, the probation officer.*
 - *Whether the NMD would qualify as a resident in the new county.*
-

**Changes Affecting
NMDs, Court Hearings,
and Intercounty
Transfers (cont.)**

- *Whether the NMD has made significant connections to the new county through:*
 - *Employment or independent contracting,*
 - *Enrollment in an educational or vocational program,*
 - *Obtaining housing, or*
 - *Establishing family or other supportive connections in the new county, including relationships that provide emotional or social support to the NMD, such as relationships with family members, mentors, close friends, or community ties, such as being a member of a religious congregation or nonprofit organization*
 - *Whether the NMD is involved in a separate dependency case as a parent in the new county.*
 - *Requires the court to issue the order within 30 calendar days of the NMD's request.*
 - *And deem the new county to have jurisdiction over the NMD within 10 calendar days of the order to transfer.*
 - *Requires the court to consider whether the youth asked for a transfer of jurisdiction at the last hearing before the youth turns 18 and at hearings as an NMD.*
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**Changes Affecting
Institutions Evaluation
Unit (IEU) and
Extended Foster Care
(EFC)**

- [AB 1314](#) – Transitional Housing Placement (THP) Providers
- *Requires all county and THP provider contracts to make sure that decisions about sharing bedrooms, bathrooms, and units together are led by the program participant and agreed upon with the provider.*
-

**Changes Affecting
Voluntary Services and
Prevention**

- [SB 119](#) – Voluntary and Stabilization Support Services
- *Voluntary services and stabilization support (prevention services), do not require:*
 - *Allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation*
 - *Substantiated abuse, neglect, or exploitation*
-

**Changes Affecting
Education,
Confidentiality,
EFC/NMD, Adoptions,
Guardianship, and
Ongoing**

- [AB 243](#) – Verification of Juvenile Dependency Status for Postsecondary School
- *A CFWB policy will be forthcoming with guidance and forms regarding this new legislation.*
 - *Requires a CA financial aid administrator to accept a sworn statement with information signed under penalty of perjury by an authorized representative from the local education agency, county child welfare department, or probation department.*
-

**Changes Affecting
Education,
Confidentiality,
EFC/NMD, Adoptions,
Guardianship, and
Ongoing (cont.)**

- A financial aid administrator would still be able to accept other types of acceptable documentation to verify a student's circumstances in lieu of a sworn statement.
 - *Authorizes a county child welfare department, county probation department, or local educational agency, to provide, upon request, the following information, to a financial aid administrator for youth who are attending or applying to attend:*
 - *The above sworn statement.*
 - *The information necessary to verify that the person is or was previously a dependent, a ward, or was in the custody of the juvenile court, with that information limited to:*
 - *The applicant's name and DOB.*
 - *The dates the applicant was within juvenile court jurisdiction, placed in foster care or on probation, or taken into custody of the county probation department, or a statement that the applicant was not within the juvenile court's jurisdiction if that applies.*
 - *A statement that the applicant is or was a foster youth or juvenile court ward.*
-

**Changes Affecting
Independent
Adoptions**

[SB 450](#) – Family Court Adoptions

- Expands a Family Court's jurisdiction to include adoption proceedings for CA-born minors when:
 - Proceedings to free the minor from the custody and control of one or both parents are not required to make the minor available for adoption, and
 - The proceedings to free the minor from the custody and control of one or both parents to make the minor available for adoption are being brought into CA.
 - Clarifies that the above does not limit jurisdiction that is permitted under the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC).
 - Requires an adoption order issued for unmarried minors to include the names of the adoptive parent(s) and any existing parent(s) who will maintain their parental rights after the adoption finalizes.
 - A failure to do this does not mean parental rights and responsibilities are terminated.
 - Requires a petitioner to be responsible for providing any additional documentation or information necessary to complete the investigation described above if the out-of-state home study report does not match CA standards or is missing required information.
-

**Changes Affecting
Childcare**

[SB 120](#) – Childcare Eligibility Extension

- Families that are already receiving childcare services because a child is a recipient of protective services, is being neglected, abused, or exploited, or at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation, and then adds an additional child to the family size and the family requests services for that additional child during the current eligibility period will have their eligibility period extended, as necessary, for at least 12 months to make sure the additional child receives services before a redetermination of eligibility is needed.
-

Legislative FYI

[AB 137](#) - California Hope, Opportunity, Perseverance, and Empowerment (HOPE) for Children Trust Account

- Changes the definition of an “eligible child” to mean either:
 - A resident of CA who is under 18 years old, is not emancipated from their parent, Indian custodian, or legal guardian, and meets one of the COVID-19 qualifications, or
 - A resident of CA who is at least 18 years old and who, prior to turning 18, was not emancipated from their parent, Indian custodian, or legal guardian and met one of the COVID-19 qualifications.

[AB 144](#) – Updating Medi-Cal Eligibility for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)

- Effective on 9-17-25.
- Clarifies that current and former foster youth with unsatisfactory immigration status are exempt from freezes on Medi-Cal enrollment, payment of premiums, and other provisions adopted in the 2025 Budget Act (AB 116).

[AB 373](#) – Minor’s Attorneys

- Requires a minor’s attorney to advocate for an NMD’s wishes even if those wishes conflict with the NMD’s protection or safety.
- Removes the requirement that the primary responsibility of a minor’s attorney is to advocate for the protection, safety, and physical and emotional well-being of an NMD.

[AB 495](#) – Family Preparedness Plan Act of 2025

- Expands the type of relative who is authorized to carry out a caregiver’s authorization affidavit and give that person the same rights to authorize school-related medical care for the minor that are given to guardians.
 - Authorizes Family Court, if a custodial parent is subjected to an immigration-related matter where the parent may be temporarily unable to care for their child, to appoint the custodial parent and a person nominated by the custodial parent as joint guardians of the minor.
 - All records, petitions, orders, and documents related to these proceedings are to be confidential.
-

Legislative FYI (cont.)

- Prohibits licensed child day care facilities, employees of licensed child daycare facilities, and license-exempt CA state preschool program facilities from collecting information or documents about a child or their family's citizenship or immigration status, except as required by state or federal law or as required to administer a state or federally supported educational program.
 - Requires a licensed child daycare facility and a license-exempt CA state preschool program facility to first follow any parent instruction relating to the child's care as documented in the child's emergency contact information if the facility's employee is aware that a child's parent or-authorized representative is not available to care for the child.
 - These facilities are required to request that parents or authorized representatives update their emergency contact information.

[AB 561](#) – Restraining Orders

- Requires a court, or court facility, that accepts petitions for domestic violence restraining orders to accept electronic filings at no charge to the person filing the petition.
 - Including protective order petitions and any related filings for elder or dependent adults.
 - Requires the following to be provided electronically to the requestor unless they request to pick the documents up at court:
 - The request
 - Notice of the court date
 - Copies of the request to serve on the respondent,
 - The temporary restraining order, if granted
 - Allows a party or witness to appear remotely at the protective order petition hearing, and prohibits the court from charging a fee for the remote appearance.
 - Prohibits a court from charging a fee for a party, support person, or witness to appear remotely at a domestic violence restraining order hearing.
 - Requires information about electronic filing and access to the court's self-help center to be prominently displayed on each court's home page, and requires each self-help center to have information related to elder abuse restraining orders.
 - Authorizes court to allow an alternative method of personal service if the petitioner made diligent efforts to serve the restrained party but there is reason to believe that the restrained party is evading being served.
-

Legislative FYI (cont.)

[AB 562](#) – Meeting Family Finding State Average

- Starting on 1-1-27, each county is required to review publicly available data comparing the statewide average rate of placing children with relatives in the prior year for comparison with the county’s placement rate during the same period.
 - In ICWA cases, comparing statewide average rate to the federal ICWA placement preferences.
- If a county’s placement rate is less than the statewide average, then the county welfare director (or designee) is required to consult with the Center for Excellence in Family Finding, Engagement, and Support to identify best practices that may be adopted by the county to improve its placement rate.

[AB 607](#) – CalWORKs Home Visiting Program

- Clarifies that the time on the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program is not to exceed the timeframe of the applicable home visiting program model.
- Authorizes, for a voluntary participant who has been removed from the assistance unit or exits the CalWORKs program, to continue receiving home visiting services until the home visiting program is completed or for up to 12 months, whichever is sooner.

[SB 132](#) – CalWORKs, Kin-GAP, and AAP

A Chiquita Canyon elevated temperature landfill event payment cannot be considered income for the purposes of CalWORKs, Kin-GAP, or AAP.

Alignment with SET

New legislation and subsequent policies support all SET values and expectations by enhancing:

- Communication and inclusion of children and families in decisions made throughout the CFWB process ([Value 1](#)).
 - Coordination with resource families to support what they need in order to provide optimal care to the youth in their homes ([Value 2](#)).
 - Supports and services available to youth in care to help them achieve permanency or transition to adulthood successfully ([Value 3](#)).
 - Coordination with BHS and Probation partners to provide quality services for youth and families ([Value 4](#)).
 - Streamlined processes with our court partners to meet the needs of youth and families while enhancing efficiency for both the court and CFWB systems ([Value 5](#)).
 - SW trainings to continue our learning about how to partner with youth and families ([Value 6](#)).
-

ORC Statement

This Special Notice was reviewed by ORC members Rachel Swaykos, Omar Avila, Denise Bahen, Peggy Ceballos-Lopez, Miriam Curiel, Fanita Durham-McLennan, Nancy Elizarraraz-Lopez, Amanda Garcia, April Griffiths, Jennifer Hancock, Leonard Hopper, Tanya Ramirez, Peggy Ruefer, Linda Schulte, and Aubrey Sheetz.

Contact

Staff with questions about this Special Notice may contact Stephannie Novitski, CFWB Policy Analyst, at 619-964-6260 or email at Stephannie.Novitski@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Alfredo Guardado, MSW
Director
Child and Family Well-Being

AG/sn



Helping You Navigate Upcoming Changes to CalFresh & Medi-Cal Benefits

March 2026

What is Changing?

House Resolution 1 (H.R. 1) or the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” was signed into law on July 4, 2025. This law includes changes to CalFresh and Medi-Cal for some individuals.

CalFresh Changes

April 1, 2026: CalFresh non-citizen eligibility categories will change

June 1, 2026: Work requirements will apply to “Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents” (ABAWDs)

Medi-Cal Changes

January 1, 2026: Full-scope Medi-Cal enrollment freeze for individuals with “Unsatisfactory Immigration Status”

October 1, 2026: Fed gov’t will change how some immigration statuses are classified for federally funded full scope Medi-Cal

January 1, 2027: Medi-Cal work requirements begin. Six-month eligibility checks begin.

*Pregnant people and their infants are eligible for full-scope Medi-Cal during pregnancy and for one year after birth, regardless of immigration status.

CalFresh Changes

Eligibility for Non-Citizens

Before April 1, 2026

- Certain non-citizens were eligible to receive CalFresh, such as asylees, and refugees.

After April 1, 2026

- Certain non-citizens are no longer eligible to receive CalFresh benefits, such as asylees and refugees.

Work Requirements for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)

Before June 1, 2026

None (in San Diego)

After June 1, 2026

- Age Range: 18 to 64 years old
- Exempt if a parent/guardian of a dependent child **under 14** in the home

Note: Some individuals may be exempt from work requirements if they are physically or mentally unable to be employed

Who is Still Eligible for CalFresh?

Starting **April 1, 2026**, customers **are eligible** for CalFresh if they are one of the following:



United States
(US) citizen

US National

Lawful
Permanent
Resident (LPR)

Cuban or
Haitian Entrant
(CHE)

Compacts of
Free
Association
(COFA) citizen

Who is No Longer Eligible for CalFresh?

Starting April 1, 2026, customers are no longer eligible for CalFresh if they are a/an:

Asylee

Refugee

Parolee
(unless CHE)

Individual with
deportation or
removal withheld

Conditional entrant

Victim of trafficking

Battered non-
citizen

Iraqis and Afghans
with Special
Immigrant Visas
(SIVs)

Certain Afghan
nationals granted
parole between July
31, 2021, through
September 30, 2023

Certain Ukrainian
nationals granted
parole between
February 24, 2022,
through September 30,
2024

Ineligible non-citizens who **adjust to a qualifying immigration status** *may* be eligible for CalFresh.

- For example, a refugee adjusts their immigration status to Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR).

CalFresh Work Requirements



People who must meet work requirements include:

- Adults 18-64
- Do not have children under 14 at home
- Are physically and mentally able to work
- Do not meet any other [exemptions](#)

Work requirements can be met by completing 20 hours/week or 80 hours/month through the following activities:



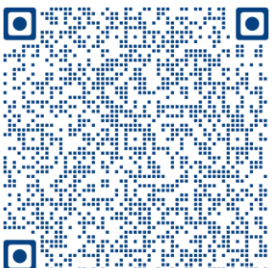
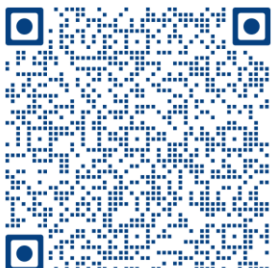
Work

Self-
Employment

Training

Volunteering

What should I do next?

BenefitsCal Account: Update contact info	Family Resource Centers: visit for in-person support
 <p>Visit your BenefitsCal account and make sure your contact information is up to date.</p>	 <p>Visit a Family Resource Center.</p>
Website	Access Customer Service: call for phone support
 <p>Visit the Changes to CalFresh and Medi-Cal webpage to view changes to benefits.</p>	 <p>Call 1-866-262-9881.</p>
<p><i>If you are impacted by any of these changes, you will be contacted or informed during your intake interview or next re-certification.</i></p>	

What should I do next?



If you are using a County of San Diego P.O. Box, check your mail at least monthly to ensure you do not miss any communication.




Respond to communications that come from County of San Diego staff.

If you are impacted by any of these changes, you will be contacted or informed during your intake interview or next recertification


Additional Community & Food Resources

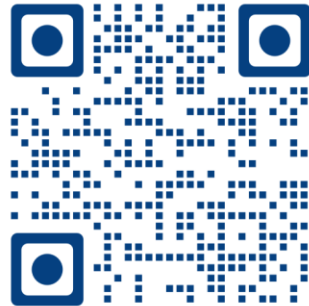
Self-Sufficiency Programs

 (866) 262-9881




211sandiego.org

 2-1-1




Feeding San Diego

 (858) 452-3663



San Diego Food Bank

 (858) 527-1419



San Diego Hunger Coalition



Catholic Charities (619) 323-2841



Jewish Family Service (858) 637-3210



San Diego Workforce Partnership (619) 319-9675



HandsOn San Diego





ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE

**County of San Diego
Health and Human Services Agency
April 16, 2026**



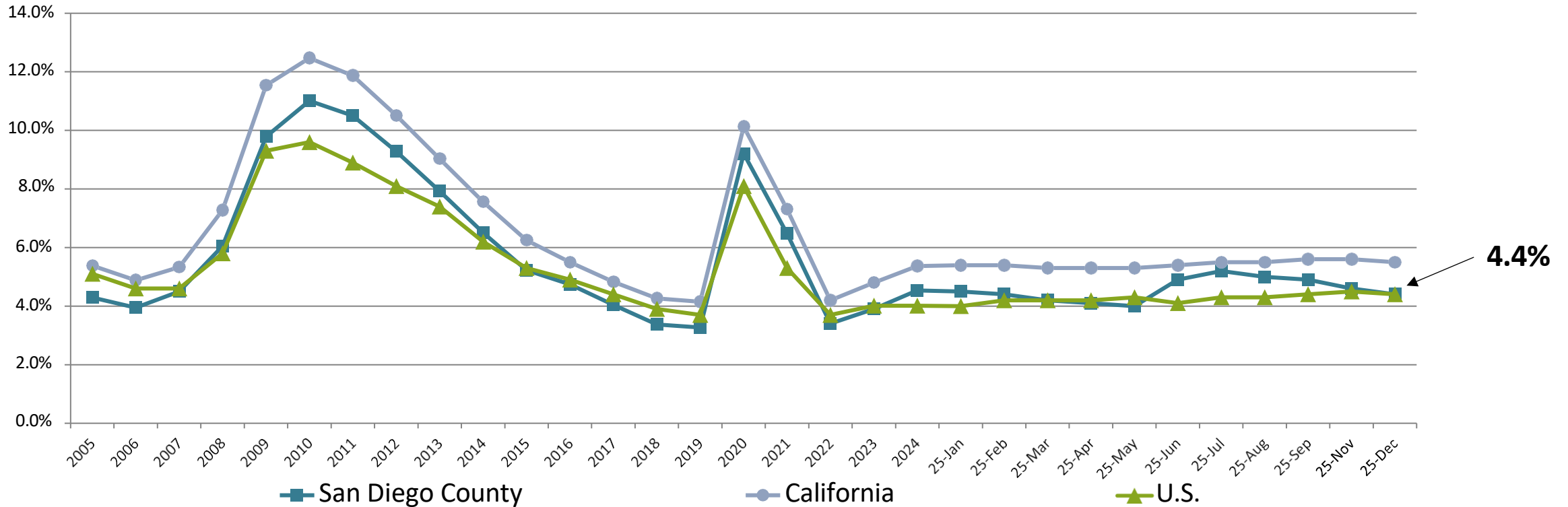
AGENDA

- Economic Updates
- A Brief Look Back: Adopted Budget FY 25-26
- Upcoming Budget
- Key Timelines
- Q&A



UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment Rate Comparison
2005 through December 2025



Source: California EDD, Bureau of Labor Statistics

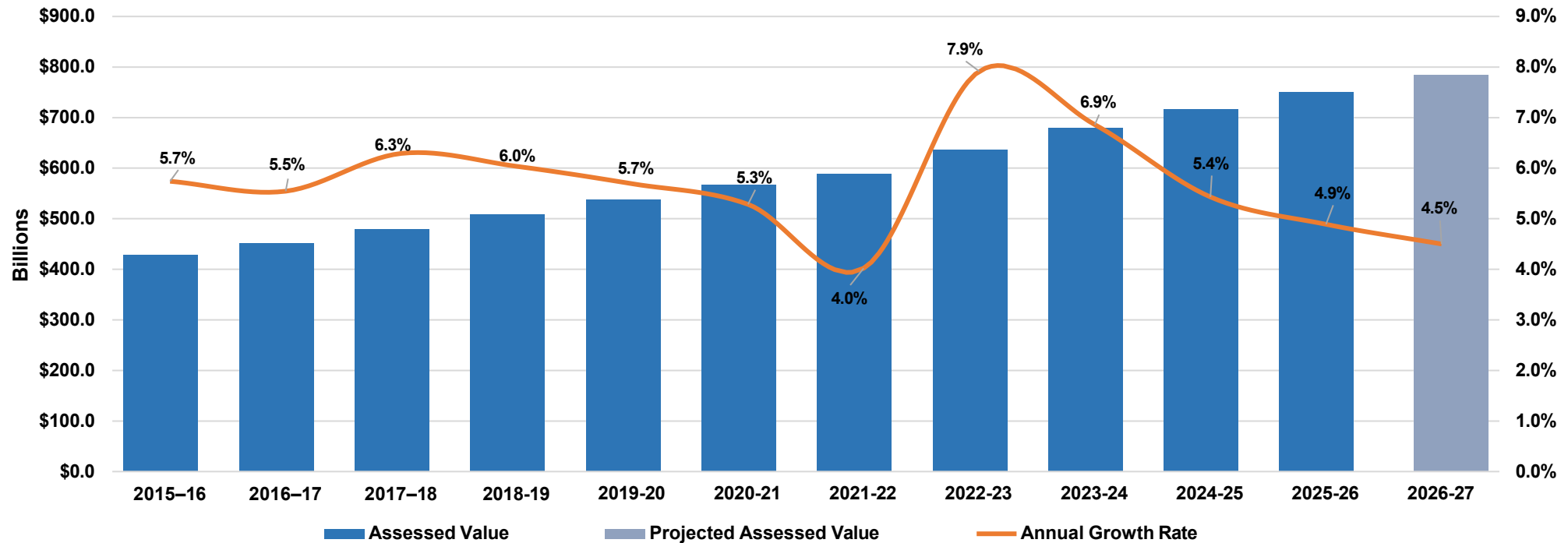
Note: Per BLS, October 2025 data is "unavailable due to the 2025 lapse in appropriations. BLS was unable to retroactively collect this data."



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

ASSESSED VALUE GROWTH

Assessed Property Valuation
FY2015-16 through FY2026-27



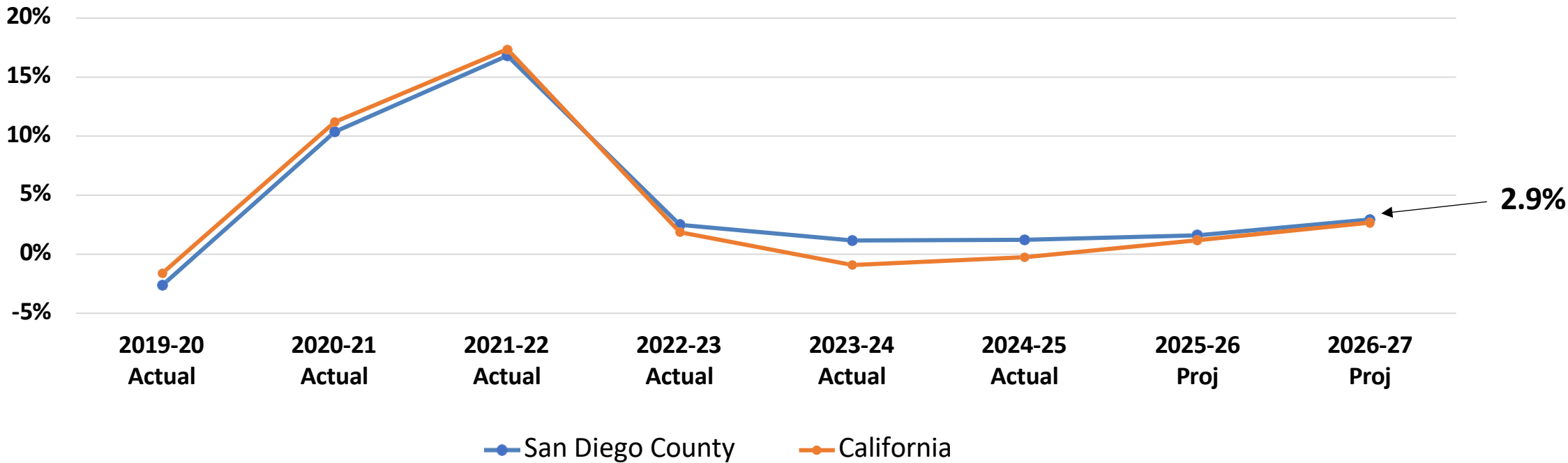
Source: Auditor & Controller, Property Tax Services annual report ending June 30, 2025 and Office of Financial Planning
 Note: Projected Assessed Value based on historical data provided by Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

SALES TAX REVENUE TREND

Sales Tax Growth Rate and Estimates

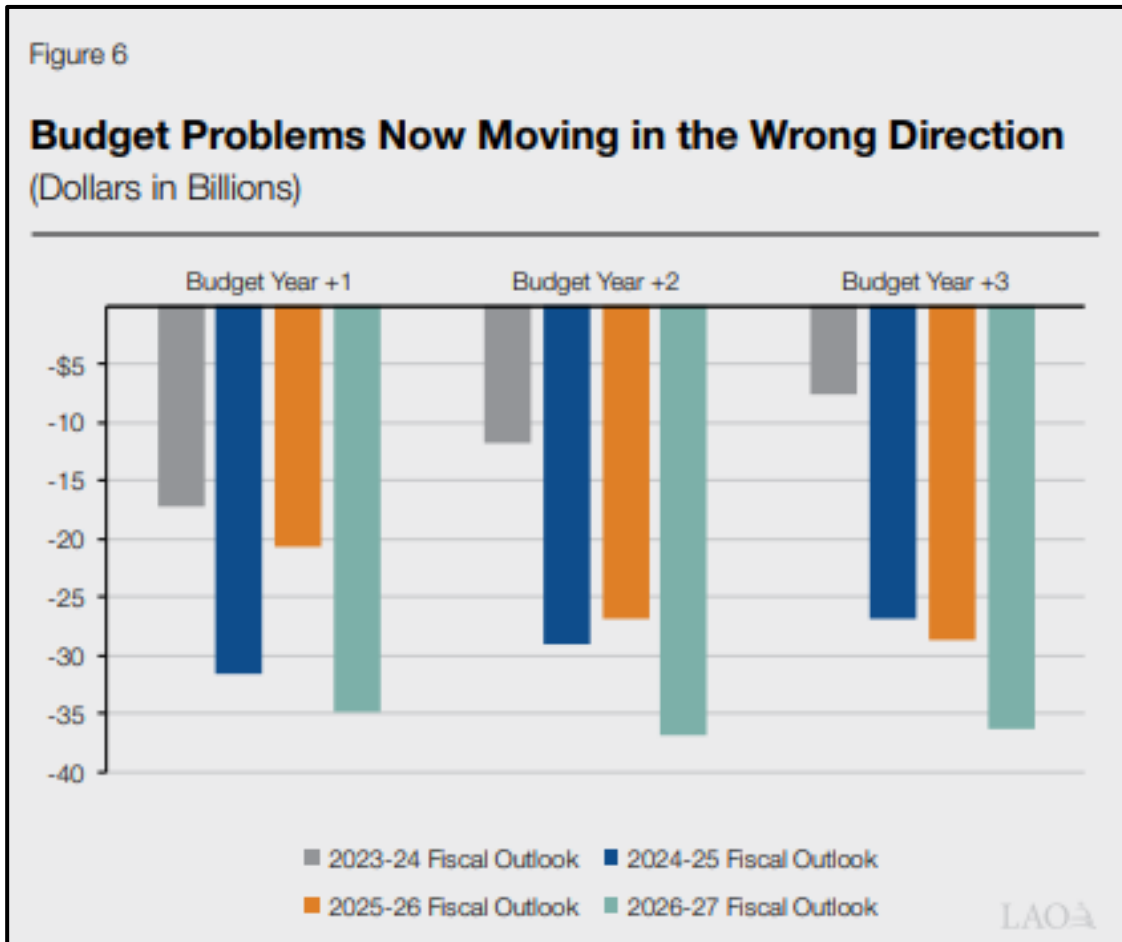


Sales tax drives HHSA Realignment revenue: \$815.2M, 23.2% of HHSA's Total FY25-26 Budget

Source: State Controller's Office Half-Percent Sales Tax for Public Safety for actuals from FY 2019-20 to FY 2024-25; HdL 2Q25 Prop 172 Report growth estimates for FY 2025-26 to FY 2026-27.



STATE & FEDERAL IMPACTS



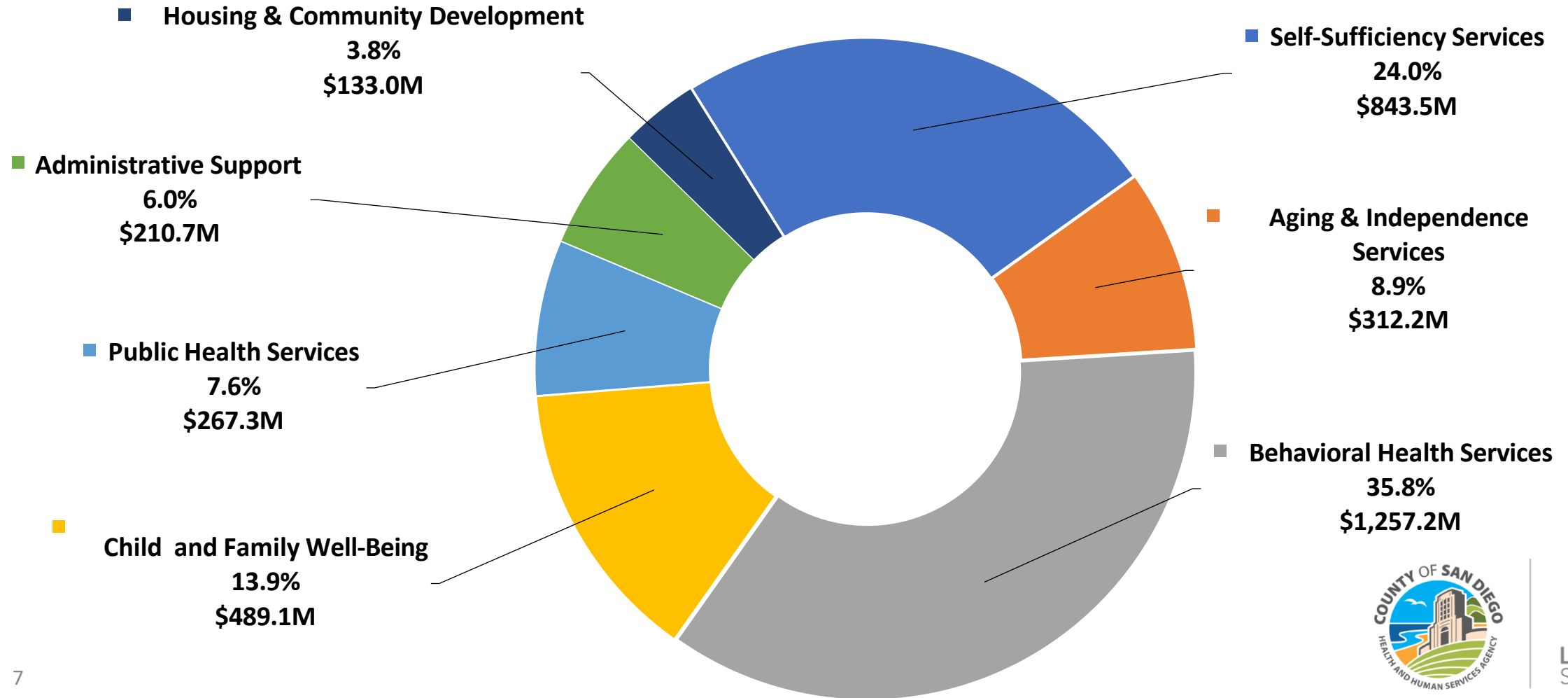
HHSA Items of Interest:

- Impacts of H.R.1
 - Medi-Cal
 - CalFresh and nutrition programs
 - In-Home Supportive Services Residual Program
- Homelessness and Housing
- State Proposed Budget can be characterized as “wait and see budget”
- Federal Revenues
 - Impacts of H.R. 1 – CalFresh admin revenue
 - Public Health Revenue Risks

(Source: [The 2026-27 Budget: California’s Fiscal Outlook](#))

A LOOK BACK: HHSA FY2025-26 BUDGET BY DEPARTMENT

TOTAL \$3.5 BILLION

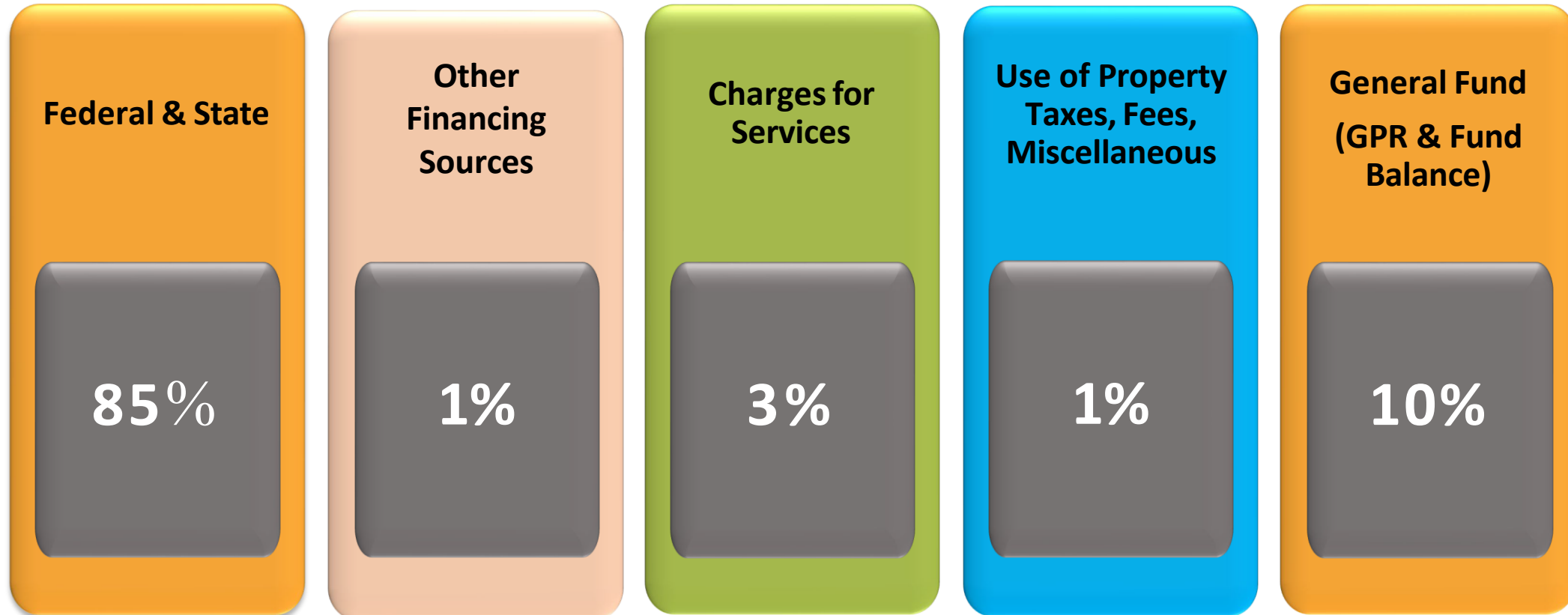


AVAILABLE REVENUE SOURCES SUMMARY

FY 25/26 ADOPTED

Budget: \$3,513.0M

Staff: 8,075.50



LIVE WELL!
SAN DIEGO

A LOOK BACK: HHSA FY25-26 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

TOTAL \$3.5 BILLION

Meeting Mandated Safety Net Demands

Behavioral Health Services continued investment in Continuum of Care

Restructuring Departments to streamline operations

De-prioritizing and Reducing Discretionary Services



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BUDGETARY PRESSURES

Ongoing

- Ongoing cost of doing business outpacing revenue growth
- H.R. 1
- Existing budgetary pressures in Public Safety
- Staffing due to increased workload, including Prop 36

One-time

- Infrastructure
- Information Technology
- Sustainability
- One-Time Operational Needs

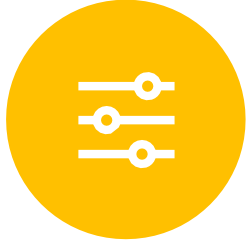
BUDGET BALANCING STRATEGIES



**Prioritize
Mandated Services**



**Consolidate/
Restructure &
Streamline
Operations**



**Service Level
Reductions**



**Suspend New
Requests**



**Employ Revenue
Stabilization
Strategies**



**Maximize Alternative
Funding**



Proposed GPR Investments



Sustain core health, housing, and social service operations

Protecting the Safety Net

H.R. 1 Stabilization Funding

General Relief Program

Refugee Support Services

Covering Cost Increases

Workforce Agreements

Insurance and Operating Costs

Contract Adjustments

Supporting Children & Families

Foster Care & Adoptions

Family Connection Hub

Community Response Guide

In Home Support Services



Proposed Budget Strategy

- Consolidating and restructuring operations (centralizing admin functions, facility reductions, department mergers)
- Partnerships for efficiencies and safety net strengthening
- Continued shift to upstream prevention to lower long-term costs
- Strategic reduction in service levels, still meeting requirements and supporting those who need it most
- Slowing hiring for programs that currently meet state requirements and service level demand
- State grant and Medi-Cal funding to support people experiencing homelessness



BUDGET ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Board
Workshop
& Public
Comment



Engage San
Diego
County
Webpage



Community
Surveys



Budget
Pop-
ups/Open
houses



Comment
Tools



Letters to
Clerk of the
Board



Virtual
Community
Meeting



District
Specific
Budget
Meetings



Community
Meeting
Recordings



Budget
Hearings



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KEY ENGAGEMENT DATES

March	Communications Preference Survey & Priorities Tool
April	Budget Pop-Ups in Your Community
May 18	CAO Recommended Operational Plan released
May 27-28	Community Open House and Virtual Meeting
June 1 & 11	Public Hearings on Budget with Board <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12:00 PM – June 1 at County Administration Center• 5:00 PM – June 11 at County Administration Center – Last day for written testimony on budget
June 12	Revised Recommended Budget Released
June 23	Budget Deliberations and Adoption

CLOSING REMARKS AND Q&A

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www.glasbergen.com



"I met with the budget people and we agreed that the cheapest way to fix all of our problems is chocolate."

Charissa Japlit

Interim HHSA Chief Financial Officer

Charissa.Japlit@sdcounty.ca.gov

Office: (619) 643-4595

Maryneeza Moraleja

Interim HHSA Assistant Chief Financial Officer

Maryneeza.Moraleja@sdcounty.ca.gov

Office: (619) 338-2602



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

THANK YOU






SAN PASQUAL ACADEMY

Update

4.16.26 CFSAB Meeting,
Agenda Item 7



Initiate Efforts to Maximize Resources at the San Pasqual Academy

- To develop recommendations
 - Best serve foster youth
 - Maximize the use of the San Pasqual Academy campus



Community Engagement

Thirteen focus groups ≈
270 participants

Survey on Engage San
Diego County ≈ 180
participants

Questions

Education: What educational options should youth at SPA have access to?

Extracurricular: What types of extracurricular activities should youth at SPA have access to?

Behavioral Health: What services and resources would best support the behavioral and mental health of youth at SPA?

Questions

Environment: What are the most important conditions for creating an optimal living environment?

Transportation: What transportation options would make it easier for foster youth at SPA to access extracurricular activities, employment, internships, and family visits?

Questions

Connection to Families and Communities: How can we strengthen the connection between foster youth and their families and communities?

Location: The SPA campus is 238 acres, how could that space be used to meet other needs or serve other populations?

Timeline



Nov. 2025

Board Letter



Dec. 2025

Preparation
and planning



Jan.–Mar. 2026

Engagement
sessions



April 2026

Draft report
submitted



May 2026

Report
presented to
Board of
Supervisors



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board

Lived Expert Action Partners Work Group

Meeting Summary

Date: Thursday, February 19, 2026

Chair: Joseph Robinson

Meeting Staff: Torrey Giaquinta

Participants: 29. Board member present: Joseph Robinson

1. Welcome and Introductions

Participants introduced themselves.

2. Transitional Youth Housing and Employment

CFWB staff presented on the different Transitional Youth Housing plans. THPP, otherwise known as extended foster care, is federally funded and falls under community care licensing. There are 440 beds with 8 providers.

After extended foster care, THP+ aftercare housing is available. This program is state and county funded. There are 162 beds among 7 providers. Once the court's jurisdiction has been terminated, Transitional Youth Housing (TYH) is available for youth 18-25. These 60 beds with 3 providers are county funded. Non-Minor Dependents (NMDs) can have 36 months of service (cumulative) or until the age of 25. Ideally, when extended foster care closes at 21, NMD can switch over to TYH for another three years.

TYH programs require NMDs to have 32 hours per week of productivity such as work or school, to follow the rules and expectations, to allow monthly housing inspections, and to not be away from the housing for more than 14 days.

Then the youth broke into groups for discussion.

- **Discussion/Break out groups** (notes were obtained from only one of the groups)

The following suggestions were made:

- o More information about and help with college applications and possible athletic scholarships
- o Private training opportunities and coaching for athletes
- o Ability to vet roommates prior to moving in together
- o Help with part time jobs while in school
- o Tutoring help for school
- o Transportation – suggestions were a car program, setting money aside for car ownership, bus passes and uber, lyft accounts that are easily accessible (Additional opportunity was suggested to see if County cars instead of being auctioned could be used for a car program)
- o Ability to get electric bikes and scooters
- o Help with bank accounts and IRA type vehicles for money put aside
- o More money for shoes/clothes
- o Living with partners
 - i. What were requirements for living with a partner
 - ii. Discussed what type of interviews would be needed for a partner
 - iii. Discussed the importance of vetting the partners
 - iv. Discussed a plan if partnership ends

3. Adjournment. Date of Next Meeting – March 19, 2026, 6:00pm.



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board

Lived Expert Action Partners Work Group

Meeting Summary

Date: Thursday, March 19, 2026

Chair: Joseph Robinson

Meeting Staff: Torrey Giaquinta

Participants: ≈25; board member present: Joseph Robinson

1. Welcome and Introductions (6:00-6:30pm)

- **Refreshments**
- **Group Agreements**

Joseph opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. The purpose of LEAP was explained.

2. Topic of the Month: Employment (6:30-7:20pm)

- **Break Out Groups**

All of the youth participated in one group discussion. Some of the youth present were currently employed, a few were in the process of applying for jobs, and a couple were not interested in employment. Youth noted that a lack of experience made it hard to get hired. Youth were asked what CFWB has done to help make them employment ready and whether those services were sufficient.

Some providers suggested that youth could use their participation in these focus groups on their resumes. Other providers suggested adding any sports youth participate in to their resume. Although not employment, being on a sports team can show potential employers that youth are dedicated, can work as a part of a group, have good communication, and are goal oriented.

Providers encouraged youth to think about what type of environment they would like

to work in, sitting at a desk vs being up and about vs a job outside. Youth were also asked to consider if they liked the consistency of repetitive work or want a job that is different day to day.

Most youth cited high school staff or behavioral health program staff as the biggest help to getting employment. It was suggested that CFWB could help youth in foster care prepare for employment through transportation, volunteer events, County internship rotation, resume writing clinics, test interview panels, and career mentorships. Some participants mentioned needing a driver's license and high school diploma in order to be eligible for some jobs. Providers mentioned that if they put on job or volunteer fairs, youth need to show up and participate.

3. Closing Remarks (7:20-7:30pm)

Date of Next Meeting – March 19, 2026, 6:00pm.



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board

Child and Family Well-Being Work Group

Meeting Summary

Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Chair: Stephanie Ortega

Meeting Staff: Torrey Giaquinta

Attendees: 19, board members present: Stephanie Ortega, Tandy Litt, Jovanna Aguilera, Beth Polesch.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Stephanie Ortega opened the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves.

2. **Announcements**

3. **Review of 2024-2026 Action Plan**

In fall of 2023, the Children's Initiative brought on a consultant to assist in the development of two-year action plans. Over about six months, each work group had brainstorming sessions that then led to themes, and lastly action plans. The co-chairs from the three work groups met to ensure alignment across all groups. The goals for the Child and Family Well-Being Work Group were:

- Goal 1: Increase Equitable Access to High-Quality Well-Being Services and Coordination of Care.
- Goal 2: Prioritize Lived Experts (Child, Youth, Family, and Caregiver).
- Goal 3: Align 211, the Community Information Exchange (CIE), the Family Connection Hub, and Community Based Referrals through Improved Referral Pathways.

The majority of the work group's time was spent on goal one. After presentations from SBCS, Your Safe Place, 211, San Diego Volunteer Lawyers Program, and others, the two main areas of unmet need were domestic violence services and concrete needs. The Family Connection Hub has been supporting families in strengthening their foundation.

Each work group had a goal related to increasing and compensating lived experts.

A plan for the Care and Compensation of Lived Experts was created and is being piloted by the Lived Expert Action Partners Work Group.

In fall, 211 San Diego discussed the process for updating records in their system.

4. Begin 2026-2028 Action Plan Process

Attendees were asked to brainstorm potential topics for the next action plan. Behavioral health was frequently named. That includes the County's no wrong door approach, wait times, and referrals per [All County Letter 24-35](#). The waitlists of term versus non term providers were brought up as was difficulties when multiple children in the same family are not eligible for service from the same provider. Questions came up about the relationship between behavioral health and CFWB once behavioral health is no longer part of HHSA.

Torrey will invite someone from behavioral health to present at the next meeting.

5. Date of Next Meeting – March 18, 2026. 11am-12:30pm

The statewide Collaborative Prevention Convening is on March 18 and 19. The next work group meeting was moved to March 25 to allow attendees to attend both.

6. Adjournment



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board

Child and Family Well-Being Work Group

Meeting Summary

Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2026

Chair: Stephanie Ortega

Meeting Staff: Torrey Giaquinta

Attendees: 19, board members present: Stephanie Ortega, Tandy Litt, Jovanna Aguilera, Patty Boles.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Attendees introduced themselves.

2. **Strategic Behavioral Health Initiative**

Kristin Garrett Montgomery from the Policy and Innovation Center presented on the Strategic Behavioral Health Initiative which looked at children's behavioral services in San Diego. The Statement of Need includes: the current system of care is not effective for meeting children's mental health needs, and resources are disproportionately allocated to adult mental health services. 94% of CA youth ages 14-25 report mental health concerns in an average month. There is only 4.6% utilization (medical youth on MediCal who receive specialty mental health services) in San Diego. The SBHI started in July 2023 and consisted of a needs assessment which resulted in 51 recommendations and 9 interconnect strategies.

1. Facilitate access to care for all youth in need regardless of insurance coverage or payer.
2. Advocate for appropriate compensation for services to ensure San Diego maintains a full continuum of accessible clinical services for all youth.
3. Expand school-based services and supports by implementing the school based multi-payer fee schedule in partnerships with CBOs.
4. Develop, expand and retain the pediatric behavioral health workforce to meet growing demand.

5. Promote prevention and early intervention to improve long-term behavioral and developmental well-being for our children.
6. Enhance access to screening and clinical services for those with substance use disorders.
7. Improve coordination and access to behavioral health services for youth in special populations.
8. Strengthen care coordination and interoperability in youth behavioral health by implementing electronic information exchange and clinical care pathways.
9. Establish an ongoing coordination and advocacy platform to ensure cohesive efforts in improving children's behavioral health in San Diego.

Currently those with mild behavioral health needs can be seen on Managed Care Medi-Cal, however, once those needs become complex, the youth needs to switch to a Mental Health Plan. As the condition improves and worsens, the youth keeps changing insurance plans. Coordination typically fails between crisis discharge and school re-entry, between mild/moderate care and specialty mental health, between commercial insurance and Medi-Cal coverage, and between school services and sustainable reimbursement.

The need to share information on [SB 855](#) was highlighted as that bill requires a right to timely treatment among commercial insurance companies.

SDCOE is working on a fee schedule and infrastructure grant for school-based behavioral health.

Attendees discussed the importance of prevention/early intervention programs such as Home Visiting. Organizations need to treat the child and caregivers/family as a unit. About a third of families working with the Family Connection Hub have private insurance. Services geared toward this population need to include private insurance in addition to Medi-Cal.

There is an Advisory Board as well as a Constituency Council. CFSAB has a representative on the Constituency Council which is hoped to be a bi-directional exchange of information with groups working with, serving, and supporting children's behavioral health. Those interested in attending a meeting can email: kgarrett@thinkpic.org.

3. Announcements

Behavioral Health Services was presenting to the Board of Supervisors meeting today but will be at the May work group meeting.

4. Date of Next Meeting – May 20, 2026. 11am-12:30pm

5. Adjournment



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board
Placement & Caregiver Support Work Group
Meeting Summary

Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026

Co-Chairs: Jeff Wiemann and Patty Boles

Meeting Staff: Torrey Giaquinta

Participants: 21, Board Members present: Beth Ploesch, Stephanie Ortega, Adam Reed, Jeff Wiemann, Patty Boles

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jeff opened the meeting.

2. Update on MediCal and Adoptions

Patty provided an update on medical coverage for young adults adopted from foster care. In one case, the benefits were ordered to be reinstated by the court. Children who are adopted from foster care are cut off from MediCal when they reach age 18, even though other children can stay on their parents' plans until age 26. Since the young adults are over the age of 18, parents are running into issues with confidentiality when dealing with the insurance information.

3. Review of 2024-2026 Action Plan

Participants reviewed the three goals from the 2024-2026 Action Plan:

1. Implement Kin-First Model

This goal centered on transition plans for when children move to or from a kin placement. A draft was created which included all of the information partners felt

needed to be exchanged. CFWB staff, Rachel, cross walked that information with current CFWB forms. Rachel is no longer with CFWB. CFWB will give an update at the next meeting.

2. Increase Placement Options for Children and Youth in Specific Populations
3. Increase Retention, Support, and Services for Caregivers

For this goal, caregivers were asked what information they should have had access to but did not. USD staff researched laws and regulations that govern what information can be shared with caregivers.

QPO conducted three surveys with caregivers and caseworkers. Participation went down for each survey. The fourth survey will be on the new transition plans (see 1) and will go out after that has been implemented, probably in the fall.

The State does surveys of Resource Family Agencies and CFWB has access to the information for San Diego County.

Past research has shown that relatives are more likely to stop being caregivers once permanency has been achieved.

4. Begin 2026-2028 Action Plan Process

Participants mentioned current challenges:

- There have been some reports of youth in ECM having difficulties getting an extension on services. Other providers have youth on ECM who have not yet reached the one year termination and will ask if any of them have difficulty getting an extension. ECM is only available on managed care plans. Some former foster youth have found their children are not eligible. Once adoption assistance closes, the (former) youth must qualify for the HMO.
- Just in Time is conducting a pilot program with former foster youth to see if they have different needs.
- The impact of Behavioral Health Services moving out of the Health and Human Services Agency is unknown.
- Accessing behavioral health services for all ages can be difficult.

5. Updates/Announcements

This is Jeff's last meeting as co-chair. As Angels closed, he had to resign his seat on the Board. The foster care system has made a lot of changes during his fourteen years in this role. For instance, the child he fostered would not be brought into care today under the same circumstances. There are many FFA closing across the State and County. There should be efforts made to keep that knowledge and those staff in this field.

6. Date of Next Meeting –March 26, 2026 at 11:00 am

7. Adjournment



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board
Placement & Caregiver Support Work Group
Meeting Summary

Date: Thursday, March 26, 2026

Co-Chairs: Patty Boles

Meeting Staff: Torrey Giaquinta

Participants: 22, Board Members present: Tandy Litt, Stephanie Ortega, Jovanna Aguilera, Patty Boles

1. Welcome and Introductions

Patty opened the meeting. Participants introduced themselves. Tania Jimenez was introduced as the new Peggy Ruefer.

2. Update on Transition Plans

The transition plan is being operationalized and will then be brought back to this work group. Beth Ploesch shared the transition plan documents from a few other counties. These documents can be found in the [work group shared folder](#). CFWB is working with other counties in developing our transition plan documents, however, as San Diego is one of the largest counties in the state, what works for smaller counties may not work here. CFWB has met with their internal workgroup, and is incorporating their feedback into the document.

Participants suggested sharing the new transition process with caregiving families at TIPS. At the last meeting caregivers were asked “what questions would you want to ask the prior caregiver about the child?”. CFWB needs to make sure there are ways for that

information to be shared even when the prior caregiver does not want to be involved (perhaps because of animosity or an allegation). When caregivers all not given all the information about a child (such as known diagnoses or behaviors) more placement changes happen. All transitions need to be made thoughtfully, even those that are a return to parent.

CFWB staff from Polinsky shared that it is often a part of a transition between placements and staff there act as caregivers. There is one social worker whose entire job is to help with transitions. Any caregivers caring for a child that has been at Polinsky can contact them for information.

3. Review of QPO 2025 Surveys

There were three QPO surveys over the last year. Torrey shared the results from the latest survey on transition meetings (child and family team meetings). As well as a document that discusses all three surveys (these are also available in the [work group shared folder](#)).

The next set of surveys will be pre and post surveys on the effect of the new transition plan. It is up to supervisors to make sure that the policy change is actually being implemented.

4. 2026-2028 Action Plan Process

Participants mentioned information sharing as a possible action area. An easier way for caregivers to share information with the case worker is needed.

There are also a lot of changes coming with MediCal and the possibility of the state continuing to cover adopted children until the age of 26.

Torrey will add the notes from the 23-25 action plan brainstorming to the shared folder.

Participants can review which items are still relevant.

5. Updates/Announcements

The Children's Crisis Continuum Program (CCCP) is a program for children in care who have higher needs but are not yet at the level of needing an short term residential therapeutic program. Children are identified by the level of care assessment and caregivers are contacted for intensive foster care services (IFCS) which at minimum include two wrap sessions a week. There is also a higher monthly reimbursement rate based on the child's needs for caregivers that are RFA approved. FFA programs are providing this support to County families. Level of care assessments are done for each new placement or when there has been a change in circumstances. Caregivers can request a new assessment from their caseworker. For caregivers to participate in IFCS they need to undergo additional training which can be provided by FFAs. Caregivers who do not want to be IFCS certified must still make the child available for the intensive services.

Straight from the Heart has many items for children and youth in foster care.

There are approximately \$400,000 in flexible funds that need to be used by June. Please encourage caregivers to submit requests.

6. Date of Next Meeting –May 28, 2026 at 11:00 am

7. Adjournment