



County of Los Angeles  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602

cc: BY/SC/PA

1-23-06

DAVID SANDERS, Ph.D.  
Director

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January 20, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
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Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David Sanders, Ph.D., Director  
Department of Children and Family Services

Bryce Yokomizo, Director  
Department of Public Social Services

**DECEMBER 20, 2005 AMENDMENT TO BOARD AGENDA ITEM #44: SKID ROW  
OUTREACH STRATEGIES**

**INTRODUCTION**

On December 20, 2005, your Board instructed the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to further enhance Skid Row Outreach efforts by making the Skid Row Outreach Team's first priority child safety. The December 20, 2006 motion:

- Designated DCFS and DPSS as the lead agencies responsible for Skid Row outreach with the goals of assuring child safety, providing ongoing case management and enforcing the Board's zero tolerance policy for families on Skid Row;
- Directed DCFS and DPSS to report back in 30 days on expansion of contracted services available for children and families on Skid Row and work with the County Departments of Mental Health (DMH,) Health Services (DHS), LAHSA, First 5 (Los Angeles) and Public Counsel, along with other advocates in Skid Row to assure that services to Skid Row families are adequately coordinated;
- Directed DCFS and DPSS along with the coordination of DMH, DHS and other agencies to conduct a six-month assessment of the new outreach protocol to ensure the well-being of our homeless families in Skid Row. Additionally the Departments were directed to provide a monthly report on their outreach activities to the Board for the next six months and;

- Directed DCFS, the Chief Administrative Office and County Counsel Office to recommend changes to State law that will give DCFS the authority to intervene when homeless families do not wish to voluntarily assure their children's safety and well-being.

## **ACTIONS TAKEN**

### **Child Safety**

- DCFS executive management instructed the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to establish an internal tracking system at the Hotline to ensure that child abuse and neglect referrals related to the Skid Row area are flagged and assigned to the DCFS Metro North regional office. The purpose of this flagging system is to facilitate and expedite processing of Skid Row referrals to assure child safety and to maximize the coordination of services to homeless families. DCFS will explore the possibility of preparing a detailed analysis on each family for whom services were provided on Skid Row.
- On November 21, 2005, 2005, DPSS added Union Rescue Mission as another site where DPSS eligibility staff are outstationed.
- On December 15, 2005, DCFS and DPSS met with Skid Row community providers to discuss the common needs and issues among service providers in the Skid Row area. The community providers recommended that DCFS:
  1. Trains the staff of Skid Row service providers on proper child abuse/neglect referral criteria;
  2. Ensures an expedited immediate response when a Hotline referral is generated as the result of a contact from a DCFS-trained service provider;
  3. Periodically provides workshops to parents residing on Skid Row, including the provision of life skills advice related to the care and protection of their children when the family is facing homelessness;
  4. Stations DCFS staff on Skid Row in a location where parents can easily go to receive advice and DCFS can easily coordinate seamless County services for Skid Row families;
  5. Remains in continuing dialogue with Skid Row service providers on means by which to get families off the streets.
- On January 17, 2006 and January 18, 2006, the DCFS Child Protection Hotline administration provided a two-day, four-session training for DPSS staff, including case workers, supervisors and administrators who provide direct services to homeless families. The training included Child Abuse and Neglect reporting laws; completion of the Suspected Child Abuse Report form; child abuse and neglect

indicators and the specific application of these indicators to homeless families. DCFS revised its assessment tool utilized by the Skid Row Outreach Team (SROT) to include the procedure of researching prior referral history on each family assessed by SROT. County Counsel is also researching the possibility of running Child Abuse Central Index (CACI) searches on Skid Row homeless families. The CACI is a database of information about child abuse investigations that have occurred in California.

- DCFS currently has daytime presence on Skid Row through the SROT. On alternate workdays, two Children's Social Workers (CSW) share the responsibility of serving children and families in the Skid Row area between the hours of 8:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. One CSW works on Monday and Wednesday; and the other CSW works on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. In the event that the assigned CSW takes a vacation or a day off, two back-up CSWs are assigned to serve in the Skid Row area. Additionally, effective January 19, 2006, DCFS assigned two Emergency Response Command Post CSWs to conduct outreach to homeless families in Skid Row during the evening, between the hours of 6:00 and 10:00 P.M. Monday through Friday. DCFS intends to continue the weekly evening outreach until a Family Preservation service provider begins to provide similar outreach. We are also considering the provision of weekend coverage.
- DCFS is currently in the process of finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles City Attorney to outstation a CSW at the Central Police Station between the hours of 4:00 P.M. and 2:30 A.M.
- DPSS eligibility staff on Skid Row will call the DCFS Child Protection Hotline if child abuse or neglect is suspected on any of the families they serve based on the appropriate indicators. DCFS Hotline staff will assign the referral for immediate response and flag the case for priority response.

#### **Expansion of Contracted Services**

- On December 28, 2005, DCFS management held an internal meeting regarding the immediate expansion of the existing Family Preservation contracts of those providers that service the Skid Row area. These agencies are Para Los Ninos and Hillside Family Services. Para Los Ninos has agreed to submit a proposal outlining services to be provided and the cost of such services. Hillside Family Services has requested additional information and meetings to discuss their current services and the proposed new services.
- On January 5, 2006, DCFS management held an internal meeting to address the general expansion of contracted Family Preservation services for children and families on Skid Row. DCFS is looking to utilize Family Preservation/Alternative Response Services to assist the homeless families in Skid Row in need of housing, transportation, clothing, food, health and linkages to employment training and

educational services. This may require an amendment to the existing family preservation contracts for providers in the SPA 4 area.

- DCFS is currently evaluating the necessary family preservation services for homeless Skid Row families; and will forward letters to each currently contracted Service Planning Area 4 Family Preservation provider soliciting their interest to provide outreach services to the children and families in the Skid Row area. The SPA 4 providers that will be sent solicitation letters are California Hospital, Hillside, El Centro Del Pueblo, Para Los Ninos, and Institute for Multicultural and Counseling Education Services.

#### **Assessment of the New Outreach Protocols**

- On December 7, 2005, DCFS Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP) met with Captain Smith of the Los Angeles Police Department. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a systematic approach that will ensure ongoing communication between DCFS-ERCP and law enforcement to assure child safety on Skid Row after normal business hours.
- On December 9, 2005, DPSS, DCFS, DHS and DMH met with all of the Skid Row Shelter/Mission/Access Centers' case managers. At this meeting, DPSS explained the benefits and services available to CalWORKS' homeless families on Skid Row and explained that the outstationed eligibility staff would take applications and determine availability of homeless benefits for CalWORKS' families on Skid Row. DPSS provided the case managers with reference materials, which included the telephone numbers and locations of the outstationed eligibility staff.
- On January 4, 2006, representatives from DPSS, DCFS, LAHSA, Public Counsel, and Public Health participated in a meeting held at the DPSS Administrative Offices. The purpose of the meeting was to redefine DCFS' role as the co-lead agency responsible for Skid Row outreach.
- On January 17, 2006 DCFS met with First 5 (Los Angeles). At this meeting, we discussed how First 5 could be included to provide services to the families in Skid Row. This included a discussion of the contracts and interagency collaboration. The next roundtable meeting is scheduled to take place on January 31, 2006 at 8:00 AM to further address the issue of how First 5 (Los Angeles) can assist in the effort to service Skid Row families and address child safety issues.
- Effective January 23, 2006, DPSS eligibility workers will be available at the Midnight Mission until 7:30 PM so they can provide assistance to families who come to the Mission shortly before it re-opens for the evening at 7 PM.

### **Recommended Changes to State Law**

The Office of the County Counsel is addressing the legal issues in a separate Board Memo.

### **Monthly Outreach Activity Report**

Attached is the December 2005 statistical report on the activities of the Skid Row Outreach Team and the DPSS eligibility staff outstationed on Skid Row. The number of families whom the DPSS eligibility staff interviewed in December more than doubled from November 2005. The following recent activities contributed to the increase:

1. On November 21, 2005, DPSS added Union Rescue Mission as another site where eligibility staff are outstationed; and
2. On December 9, 2005, DPSS, DCFS, DHS and DMH met with all Skid Row shelter/mission/access centers' case managers.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The Departments of Children and Family Services and Public Social Services remain committed to attaining the goals of assuring child safety, providing ongoing case management and enforcing the Board's zero tolerance policy for families on Skid Row. We are confident that the collaboration that continues to grow between County Departments, law enforcement agencies, the community and other advocates will assist Skid Row families in the care and protection of children. However, in those instances where county intervention is required, the above stated protocols will assure the safety of children and help Skid Row families receive the services they deserve.

DS:BY:aw

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

# MONTHLY REPORT ON SKID ROW OUTREACH STRATEGIES

December 2005

	This month	Since 1/18/05
<b>Referrals</b>		
<b>A. Family Referrals</b>		
1. Walk-ins at Weingart Access Center	14	132
2. Walk-ins at Midnight Mission/referred by other shelters and missions	74	137
3. Walk-ins at Union Rescue Mission	18	18
4. Contacted by Skid Row Outreach Team	20	400
a. Taken/referred to the Weingart/Union Rescue/Midnight Mission	3	35
b. Not taken/referred to the Weingart/Union Rescue//Midnight Mission	17	365
<b>Total (A.1+2+3+4 )</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>687</b>
<b>B. Families Receiving or Referred to CaWORKs</b>		
1. Number of families receiving CaWORKs	95	388
2. Number of families referred to CaWORKs	27	56
3. Number of families who declined a CaWORKs referral	4	243
<b>Total (B.1+2+3)</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>687</b>
<b>C. Reason Families Declined a CaWORKs Referral (from B.3) (New data since 12/05)</b>		
1. Immigration status	0	0
2. Receiving aid in another State	3	3
3. Concerned about DCFS involvement	0	0
4. Child Custody issues	0	0
5. Refused to state	0	0
6. Other (give reason)	1	1
<b>Total (C.1+2+3+4+5+6)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Assistance</b>		
<b>D. Families Referred To CaWORKs (from B.2)</b>		
1. Approved and issued CaWORKs	19	32
2. Denied CaWORKs (i.e., excess income, working full-time)	7	18
3. Not processed (client walked out)	1	6
<b>Total (D.1+2+3)</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>E. Homeless Services (from B.1 and D.1)</b>		
1. Approved and issued homeless services (Homeless Assistance)	27	173
2. Denied homeless services (not homeless, exhausted benefits)	70	179
a. Referred for emergency shelter/voucher	48	129
b. Staying with friends/relatives or other housing arrangement	22	50
3. Declined DPSS Homeless Services	19	64
<b>Total (E.1+2+3)</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>422</b>
<b>F. Reason for Declining Homeless Services (from E.3) (New data since 12/05)</b>		
1. Already participating in a homeless program with a shelter/mission	18	18
2. Other arrangement	1	1
<b>Total (F.1+2)</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Services – Families who were referred to/are receiving services</b>		
<b>G. Welfare-to-Work (from B.1 and D.1)</b>		
1. In GAIN/Employed	57	217
2. GAIN Exempt (disabled, child under one, caring for disabled relative, adult not aided, etc)	52	187
3. Time Limited	5	16
<b>H. Department of Mental Health (DMH) Services</b>		
1. Evaluation for the CaWORKs Families Project	0	75
2. Clinical Assessment/Referral to Downtown Mental Health	16	78
3. Crisis Intervention	0	0
4. Psychiatric Mobile Response Team (PMRT) evaluation	0	0
<b>I. Department of Children &amp; Family Services (DCFS)</b>		
1. Screened for DCFS services	126	687
2. Referred to Child Protective Services/Hotline	1	2
3. Referred to Family Support Services (i.e., family intervention/counseling/etc.)	9	13