

**IDENTIFYING AND MAXIMIZING RESOURCES WITHIN  
THE FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S DIVISION OF THE  
SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Welfare reform has created a change within the welfare system. The traditional way of conducting business is under attack by both federal and state governments. The proposed changes will impact clients and administrators and change all aspect of governmental funding. To put it briefly, Congressional re-engineering of the welfare system has caused states, counties and cities' governments to ponder new ways to leverage there decreasing dollars. The governmental challenge is to provide social services to needy families with less revenue.

This case study will discuss some aspects of welfare reform response by Department of Social Services City and County San Francisco Family and Children's Division, in order provide services to clients by identifying and maximizing resources.

## **BACKGROUND**

The governmental structure of San Francisco is unique within California, because it is both a city and county. November is usually a memorable month for most citizens in San Francisco due to the highly publicized election process. November 1992 was an exceptional year for Department of Social Services City and County San Francisco Family and Children's Division because of two events that would change the direction of the department's service delivery.

The first event was California State Department of Social Services formally censured the Family and Children's Division of the Department of Social Services Agency for being out of compliance with child welfare regulations. The main areas of concern were lack of visitation to children in foster care, lack of timely court reports and insufficient children's health and dental records; do to the censure the Department embarked a plan of action to improve their service to families and children.

The irony of the censuring was that in November 1991 the citizens of San Francisco became first in the nation to legislate a baseline of funding for services to children. With the passage of this community initiative the residents acknowledge that health and well being of its children were a major concern. Therefore, both events had a profound impact on the department service delivery to systems. Later, in June 1993, California State Department of Social Services approved the San Francisco Family and Children's Division corrective action plan to correct the insufficiencies.

## **CHILDREN'S AMENDMENT**

Proposition J became known as the Children's Amendment and would provide more than \$122 million for children's services from 1992 and 2002. The Children's Amendment created a property tax "set aside" of local property tax dollars to be used exclusively to serve children under the age of eighteen.

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The Children's Amendment created four funding categories' child care, health and social services, job readiness (training and placement), delinquency prevention (education, recreation and libraries). Funds from the Children's Amendment are administered by the Mayor's Office of Children, Youth and Their Families (MOCYF).

The creation of the Children's Amendment leveraged funding to enhance programs at the Department of Social Services (DSS) as well as three other departments. However, DSS continues to provide many services to families that are not enhanced by these programs, so they have sought supplemental funding through grants and foundations.

## **BUDGET**

A budget is a plan for allocating resources within a fiscal year. Every year government around the country attempt to meet the needs of their constituents through the budgetary process. Public agencies budgetary process often occurs within an ungenerous environment. The cost of these mandates and programs are expensive, causing local governments to operate with limited funds. Limited funding resources have caused county governments to become creative in leveraging these funds.

By passing proposition J (Children's Amendment) San Franciscans became the nation's first to establish a property tax "set aside" of local property tax dollars to be used exclusively to serve children under the age of eighteen. The City's charter was amended to reflect this set aside of funds. The Mayor instructed City Controller to establish the baseline for funding children's services. The baseline established in 1992 was based on revenue spent to provide services to children during 1990-91 and 1991-1992. This meant that during 1992-2002 City could not spend less on children's program unless there was a decrease on the aggregate city appropriations. The baseline funds were divided equally into four funding categories' child care, health and social services, job readiness, delinquency prevention. The Children's Amendment was passed to enhance the quality of life for all children within San Francisco. Many children within the Family and Children's Division (FCD) of the Department of Social Services City and County San Francisco benefited from this proposition.

From the inception of the Children's Amendment social services were a category for funds. This influx of revenue to DSS impacted the budgetary process and established baseline funds to be incorporated into the budget. These funds are called "the baseline" due to the baseline for funding children's services.

The total DSS budget for 1995-96 was \$313 million. The baseline for 1995-1996 was \$5 million. The projected budget for 1996-1997 is \$317 million. The projected baseline for 1996-1997 is \$5 million.

In fiscal year 1995-96 DSS used the baseline revenue within FCD to augment services to abused and neglected children and homeless youth. DSS in collaboration with the Children's Collaborative Planning Committee worked to reduce duplication of social services to children and youth. This collaboration helped to leverage state and federal revenue. Revenue cost sharing

in the areas of departmental, such as staff social workers and public health nurses. Other programs are multidisciplinary team, foster care respite contract, parenting education vouchers, and family support services contracts. The family support contracts provide in-home support services to at-risk families such as parenting classes, counseling, money management, respite and intensive reunification services.

For the projected budget in 1996-97 DSS will continue the programs in last year's budget and increase services in the areas of direct services to clients, catastrophic illness coordinator, and family preservation.

In essence, the Department has attempted to create a new way to enhance the direct services to clients some of these examples are incorporated in to the budget of 1996-97. The catastrophic illness coordinator and enhancement of staff Long Term /Reunification Workers.

### **THE ENHANCEMENT OF DIRECT SERVICES TO CLIENTS**

Catastrophic Illness Coordinator position is needed to assist clientele with HIV/AIDS and other seriously illness with health and welfare services. The consolidation of services to this population will be beneficial to clients and DSS. Duplication of services and documentation of service program will be avoided by providing services at one location. This position will coordinate the integration of income maintenance and social services and become a liaison with other citywide health and welfare programs.

Three Long Term /Reunification Workers positions are needed to reduce the caseload standards and to provide intensive reunification to children and families to return the children home or place them in permanent home. Previously, these services were provided by a three year grant, that demonstrated that 80 children were placed for adoption. The success of this program led to the recommendations of providing these services on a permanent basis.

### **COLLABORATION**

Reviewing the budget, it becomes apparent that San Francisco collaboration projects have been internal and external projects; in that, they have enhanced services to clients and increased staff positions with assistance from foundations, grants and other agencies.

As previously mentioned, the long term /reunification workers were funded by a grant for three years before they were included in the Departmental budget.

Interagency collaboration can save the county revenue. An example of this collaboration is between DSS and Children's Mental Health Services. On a monthly basis DSS transmits a certified list of children in group home placements receiving mental health services. The list describes the percentage of funds spent by DSS on each child. Mental Health Services (MHS) uses the certified list to represent its matching contribution, making them eligible for federal financial participation. This amount is the county's portion of matching funds. Consequently, through collaboration the county is able to maximize and leverage its general fund revenue and provide more services to children.

Another collaborative project by DSS was the Family Preservation Family Support Five Year Plan. The plan was developed by a 65 member planning committee. The committee was representative of the diverse populations within San Francisco. The plan was developed in response to a federal grant that encourages communities to offer services to families at risk. The plan includes a budget of \$1,227,271 to be used over 5 years. Family Preservation Family Support plan will focus on children of color between the age of 0-5, especially African American children because they are over represented in the child welfare system. African American children represent 74% of the cases in FCS.

The Family Preservation Family Support goals are to strengthen and stabilize low income families; establish family focused services that are easily accessed and culturally relevant in neighborhoods that contain large concentration of minority populations and reforming DSS service delivery system for families and children.

Majority of the Family Preservation Family Support will be used to establish five Family Resource Centers throughout San Francisco. The first center will be established in the Western Addition Neighborhood to target African American families. The second center will be in the Mission District to provide services to the Latino families. The plan is to establish other centers in Bayview, Potrero Hill and Outer Mission.

The needs of the Asian Pacific Islanders community will be served by Crisis Hotline and a One stop Information Center. This decision was made by the members of the planning committee and focus groups.

This collaborative effort between DDS and the various communities demonstrates how public agencies and communities can form partnerships that formulate a plan that is responsive to community needs.

Each center as they are developed within the community will build upon existing services to avoid the duplication. The centers will be the focal point for family based services within the community. The centers offer a variety of services including child care, in-home support, substance abuse, employment readiness health and mental health and respite care and child welfare services. Other service needs will be defined by the staff with the assistance of the community advisory board. As other, community based centers they will have flexible hours.

## **CURRENT ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES**

Department of Social Services City and County San Francisco Family and Children's Division, uses creative ways to provide services to clients. Upon the acceptance of the Family Preservation Family Support plan by DSS a partnership the with community was created.

According to the Family Preservation Family Support plan FCD will continue to divert children from the child welfare system by reallocating foster care funds covered by family preservation program. GAIN and PIC as Economic Development Funds will coordinate the employment and

training of the clients. They will use federal dollars to enhance services, in the areas of substance services and subsidized parenting classes.

As previously stated, Family Resource Centers will be opened in targeted communities over the next five years. The centers will provide family-focused community based services. Re-engineering the DSS service delivery system is a goal Family Preservation Family Support plan. Providing services within the community will challenge DSS in many ways. This means that services will be decentralized and community based. Social work services have been centralized for years. The challenge will be redefining the role of outstationed social workers. In spite of the challenge, for DSS family-focused services in the community is the goal, and DSS is confident that this is a worthwhile process that will be beneficial to everyone involved.

A partnership between a social services department and the community is a formidable task. It will mean that both parties will have to relate to one another in a different manner. This is an opportunity for the community to learn more about the child welfare system and how to empower themselves as they assist families at risk. Community standards will redefining the definition of children at risk.

It appears that San Franciscans are focused on ways to improve the quality of life for children and families. Department of Social Services City and County San Francisco Family and Children's Division, has succeeded in maximizing the funds from Proposition J (the Children's Amendment). The proposition had a profound effect on the collaboration process of governmental agencies, in that funds were used to provide services to children and families. This new revenue source allows agencies to respond to the needs of children throughout the city utilizing community based and governmental agencies.

Family Resource Centers are the next step in collaborative efforts for San Francisco. The intent of community bases services are to be responsive to communities. The centers will provide preventive or diversionary services to assist families at risk in minority communities.

## **LESSONS LEARNED/IMPLICATIONS FOR SANTA CLARA COUNTY**

Santa Clara County Social Service Agency Department of Family and Children's Services has three Family Resource Centers (FRC) that focus on providing services to minority population within the child welfare system. They are the Ujirani, Asian Pacific Islanders and Nuestra Casa Family Resource Centers.

After reviewing, the Department of Social Services City and County San Francisco Family and Children's Division plan for FRC, the following recommendations would assist DSCF in obtaining community involvement in the advancement of the Ujirani, Asian Pacific Islanders and Nuestra Casa Family Resource Centers:

1. To establishment of community advisory board for each center.
2. To collaborate with GAIN and JTPA to offer employment readiness services for client at the resource centers.

3. To collaborate with the Drug and Alcohol Bureau to provide services at the resource centers.

My observations of the San Francisco Family and Children's Division, revealed that they have successfully collaborated with foundations and governmental agencies to obtain revenue for staff positions and pilot projects. The implications for DFCS are that building relationships with foundation, and obtaining grants for programs from foundations and governmental agencies will augment the services to families and children within the child welfare system. The establishment of a position to monitor and write grant proposals with input from staff would be beneficial to the agency.

Furthermore, Santa Clara County would benefit from a Children's Amendment so that more children and families could receive services regardless their income. On June the 1, 1996, is Stand For Children's Day, initiated by the Children's Defense League and supported by many groups and agencies throughout the country. Perhaps some citizens' groups will be inspired to initiate a Children's Amendment within Santa Clara County.

## **CONCLUSION**

Public Agencies are embracing the ideas of welfare reform due to shrinking county allocation from federal and state governments. At the same time, agencies are being attacked by public demands and congressional re-engineering of the welfare system. Welfare administrators are compelled to become more creative, pursuing new revenues' sources from non tradition appropriations and plan integrated services systems. The new formula for success in social services agencies is maximizing resources, planning and creativity in order to provide quality services to clients.