

REPORT ON CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES
IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION
TASK FORCE ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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Volume I
Recommendations and Discussion

REPORTS ON CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES
IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

June 1988

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PREPACE

In September 1987, the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors advised us of the need for a review of the various organizations created by Los Angeles County to address the growing needs of children. In his letter; the Chairman pointed out that the existence of numerous agencies has created "duplication, fragmentation, and confusion," and called for our recommendations to "best serve children and maximize our resources."

In accordance with our usual practice, our chairman appointed a task force, chaired by Arthur J. Peever, to conduct a study and analysis of the issues. The subject is a continuation of our work, Decision-Making and Organization in Los Angeles County Government, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in September, 1983, as well as of earlier work on the County's systems of commissions and on the intergovernmental structure.

In the course of our work, we interviewed six County department heads and representatives of various commissions, councils and boards that have been working In the field of children's welfare. Under the direction of our task force, our staff conducted over 100 interviews of County employees and other authorities in the field, and conducted a broad literature search to survey current and emerging developments. Our task force convened twelve formal meetings to review the results, discuss alternatives, and reports.

We present our report in two volumes. The first volume summarizes our recommendations and the reasoning that led to them. Volume II contains various working papers, data, and other materials that our task force reviewed in the course of our study.

I. SUMMARY

For the past decade, Los Angeles County government and numerous community organizations have attempted to address the growing needs of children in our society with a number of new initiatives, including the creation of the Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect in 1977 and the creation of a new Department of Children's Services in 1984. Twelve County departments and eighty-five commissions, committees, boards and councils directly affect the welfare of children in Los Angeles County. Over 200 independent governmental Jurisdictions set policies and provide services which combine with the County's to create conditions affecting all children. The Board of Supervisors alone budgets costs approaching \$500 million for these operations, excluding the cost of direct financial aid to families with dependent children.

Local government services to and for children comprise three distinct systems, with the following kinds of functions, and missions;

a protective system, in which the government takes care of the custody and personal needs of a person who is neglected, abused, exploited or otherwise victimized by others in the same household,

a policing and corrections system, in which the government provides for the correction of illegal behavior,

a services and resources system, in which the government makes resources available for health, financial assistance, leisure time, and education.

The focus of our study is the protective system, particularly as it applies to children. The structure of County services for children contributes to the fragmentation and confusion of the system, but it is not the sole cause. From one perspective it merely reflects the pluralism of our society and the fragmentary politics of our communities. The structure also reflects more fundamental, primary issues of law, society, and the professions to which County government responds. For example, the current laws provide for inadequate response to such contemporary needs as day care for all children and the presence in urban communities of large populations of runaway, homeless, or truant children. Futurists and strategic planners forecast continuing complication of these problems. Such organizations as the Los Angeles Roundtable for Children, the Commission on California State Government Organization and Economy, and the Children's Defense Fund have been documenting them and proposing reforms for several years.

Our task force chose to concentrate on the question of how the Los Angeles County government response can be more efficient and effective within the framework of current State law, the current Charter, and the current multi-jurisdictional system. We focused on the structure and operations of County departments providing services to children and of the various commissions, councils and task forces which seek to influence actions of the Board of Supervisors and the governments of other jurisdictions to address the changing needs of children.

Even within these limits, it is clear that laws must be changed and new strategies invented to improve governmental impact on the environments in which children are raised and on their preparation to grow as functioning, contributing members of society. Structural change in Los Angeles County government may be a necessary condition for reform, but it is by no means a sufficient condition

An effective Board strategy must:

- take maximum advantage of the strengths of the Board's present functional form of departmental organization, and build upon it,
- recognize the multi-jurisdictional nature of the local government policy making and service providing functions,
- include all children and families in its scope, and facilitate citizen participation in development of cohesive Board policy on families,
- focus accountability for the results of County social services programs for children and families in a single individual, and
- curtail the potential for future actions to create new commissions, task forces, etc., which might tend to increase fragmentation and duplication.

Our recommendations, if adopted, will support that strategy. Many of the recommendations are in two phases. Phase one can be implemented immediately. Phase two will require further study or planning.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION / REALIGNMENT

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors reorganize the County departmental structure for delivering protective services, retaining the strengths of its present functional form and building upon it.

Phase One: Within Current Structure

- A. Change the name of the Department of Children's Services to Department of Children's Protective Services.
- B. Instruct the Director of Children's Protective Services to continue implementing the Department's organizational development process, In accordance with the goals outlined in its current "Fulfillment Plan.

Phase Two: Functional Realignment

- C. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare and submit an analysis and a plan for consolidating and realigning the programs of the Department of Children's Services, the Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services, and the Department of Public Social Services into two departments: a Department of Child, Adult, and Family Social Services, and a Department of Financial Support.

RECOMMENDATION 2 MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL COUNCILS

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors reorganize the system of multi-jurisdictional councils working in fields affecting children's welfare in order to:

- continue to recognize the multi-jurisdictional nature of the local government policy making and service providing functions,
- strengthen the council system of addressing them,
- minimize costs and duplication.

Phase One: Consolidated Staffing / Standardized Role

D. Consolidate the staffing of the Child Sex Abuse Crisis Center Executive Board, the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee, the Domestic Violence Council, the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN), and the Task Force on Drug Abuse, into a unified staffing structure that reports within the Chief Administrative Office.

E. Standardize the roles of these Councils, by ordinance, as follows:

- to provide forums promoting coordinated interagency projects and operations,
- to formulate and adopt operating policies to implement policy adopted by the Board of Supervisors, other elected County officials, and other governing bodies,
- to facilitate standardized training programs,
- to make recommendations to governing bodies for new or improved multi-jurisdictional services,
- to increase public awareness of problems and resources,
- to implement prevention programs,
- to recommend standardized legislative programs,
- to promote joint information systems development,
- to facilitate public I private partnerships, and
- to recommend criteria for the distribution of grant funding among political subdivisions or districts.

Phase Two: Consolidated Council

F. Consolidate the five multi-jurisdictional councils Identified in D above into a single body, structured as follows:

- a core membership to include elected and appointed officials of the County, the City of Los Angeles, the contract and independent cities, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the County Superintendent of Schools, the Superior Court, and the Municipal Courts;
- operating procedures which provide for augmentation of its voting membership from time to time to consider a specialized subject, when approved by the core voting membership.

RECOMMENDATION 3: CHILDREN'S ADVISORY COMMISSION

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors specify by ordinance the scope and role of the Commission, in order to:

- include all children and their families in the scope of Board policy on which the Commission advises,
- obtain citizen participation in development of cohesive Board policy on families, in consultation with County officials and other interested parties,
- clarify that the Commission is not a supervisory, managerial or appeal body.

The ordinance should specify the following:

G. The Commission's roles are:

- to recommend cohesive Board policy regarding matters which affect children and their families,
- to recommend legislation and review proposed legislation,
- to monitor, and report to the Board of Supervisors, the implementation status of recommendations adopted by the Board related to children and their families, including currently relevant recommendations of the Task Force on Children's Services (1984).

H. The Commission's name is the Commission for Children.

I. The Commission is self-governing, authorized to appoint its own staff, and staffed by such positions as are designated in the current Salary Ordinance or employed by the County by contract.

The Board of Supervisors should also explicitly:

J. Direct each County citizens' advisory commission and multi-jurisdictional council to cross-refer to the Commission for Children any matters that come before it which have an impact on Board policy affecting children and their families.

K. Direct each County official appointed by the Board, and request all County, city, and school officials, to supply the Commission with all such Information that it may request with a bearing on the welfare of children and families.

RECOMMENDATION 4: PURCHASE OF SERVICES

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors focus accountability for the results of County social services for children and families in a single individual.

Phase One: Interdepartmental Agreements

- L. Instruct the Department of Children's Protective Services to enter into formal agreements with the Departments of Mental Health, Health Services, County Counsel and the County Superintendent of Schools.

Instruct the directors of the identified departments to cooperate in negotiating such agreements, to execute them, and to present them to the Board of Supervisors for adoption before December 31, 1988.

Direct that the agreements shall specify the nature, quantity, quality, and other relevant terms and conditions for services to children and families who are the clients of the Department of Children's Protective Services.

Phase Two: Program Management

- M. Instruct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to implement a complete program budgeting system effective July 1, 1989 for all programs managed by the Department of Children's Protective Services which includes services provided to its clients by other county departments and which incorporates the following policies:

That the full cost of services provided to children in the care of the Department by County Counsel, the Department of Health Services, and the Department of Mental Health is to be reflected as expense in the accounts of the Department of Children's Protective Services.

That the Director of Children's Protective Services is solely responsible for all financial and programmatic decisions to secure the care of children in his or her charge, including the choice of provider, whether another county department, another governmental agency, or a private provider.

- N. Seek legislative authority to implement the recommended changes, as necessary.

RECOMMENDATION 5: ADVISORY COMMISSIONS

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors curtail the potential for future actions which might tend to. increase fragmentation, duplication, or confusion.

- O. Enforce the procedure requiring the CAO to minimize the creation of additional commissions, by a) reviewing the purpose of any new commission to determine whether its intended functions could be performed by an existing group, b) recommending assignment of the functions to an existing group whenever feasible, and c) recommending the detailed functions, composition, and method of operation of a new commission.
- P. Brief all newly appointed commissioners on the County's overall structure, programs, legal responsibilities, budget, operations, commission system, and other relevant information,
- Q. Brief all commissions annually on the state of the County and in particular on the major actions attributable to commissions' recommendations.
- R. Implement the recommendations of the 1988-87 Grand Jury to enforce reporting requirements for the costs and the accomplishments of commissions, and to establish sunset dates where appropriate.

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II. DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Departmental Organization / Realignment

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors reorganize the County departmental structure for delivering protective services, retaining the strengths of its present functional form and building upon it.

Discussion

As we emphasized in our 1983 recommendations on decision making and organization, the basic structure of the County's departmental system is a major source of duplication, fragmentation and overlap in the delivery of services. The Board of Supervisors lacks a single unifying principle of organization that consistently applies to the structure. In our study of the County's services to children, we found ample evidence of the effects of this weakness. We have identified both short term and long term actions that, with the sustained attention of the Board of Supervisors, will relieve this situation. It is reasonable to expect that reducing this confusion will result both in savings and in an improvement of effectiveness. We envision a two phase program for accomplishing the reorganization.

Phase One: Within Current Structure

- A. Change the name of the Department of Children's Services to Department of Children's Protective Services.

B. Instruct the Director of Children's Protective Services to continue implementing the Department's organizational development process in accordance with the goals outlined in its current "Fulfillment Plan".

Discussion

Department Name. When the Board of Supervisors created the Department of Children's Services (DCS), it adopted an ordinance specifying the mission and responsibilities of that department. According to the ordinance, the duties of the Director of Children's Services are to perform services generally recognized as "protective" services to juveniles, in accordance with law, including adoption services.

The name of the department is a source of confusion in the County system, because it seems to imply that DCS is in some sense responsible for all services to all children. However, it has no statutory responsibility for children such as those supervised by the Chief Probation Officer, children who are homeless or runaways, children who receive care from the Departments of Health Services and Mental Health, children without parental supervision at beaches, libraries, and parks, or many other types of children. In many cases, the Board of Supervisors itself has no legal responsibility for Los Angeles County children. One of the most effective and least difficult actions the Board can take to reduce confusion over the roles and responsibilities of the current department is to change its name to reflect its actual mission. (Point A.)

Fulfillment Report. Shortly after his appointment, the present Director of Children's Services undertook an organizational development process, supported by a consulting specialist, to improve the internal structure of the department. The department has documented the results of the process to date in its "Fulfillment Report", which contains a discussion of the external and internal difficulties the department is facing, a diagnosis of potential organizational and operational Improvements that should be useful in correcting its problems, a statement of mission, and a plan of goals and activities for the future. The department is well into the implementation of this plan. We believe that the plan is sound and that the process incorporated in it is likely to be effective for implementation. The process provides for modification where necessary. Therefore, we propose that the Board of Supervisors reaffirm its commitment to the organizational development program chosen by the Director of Children's Services, and encourage its prompt completion. (Point B.)

Phase Two: Functional Realignment

- C. Direct tile Chief Administrative Officer to prepare and submit an analysis and a plan for consolidating and realigning the programs of the Department of Children's Services, the Department Of Community and Senior Citizen' Service, and the Department of Public Social Service: into two departments: a Department of Child, Adult, and family Social Service, and a Department of Financial Support.

Discussion

This may be the most significant of our recommendations in its potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of County social services. The inefficiencies of duplication, overlap and confusion in the County system result more from its structure than from the performance of its individual managers. As we stressed in our 1983 report, Decision Making and Organization in Los Angeles County Government, thus far no Board of Supervisors has adopted a plan of organization. The County departmental structure is not based on any consistently applied functional or programmatic principle. It has evolved ad hoc to respond to current conditions or to the characteristics of Incumbent personnel. In a consistently functional structure, similar work would be managed by the same department. The County groups dissimilar functions in some departments, and has organized others into separate departments even when similar.

Constituency Principle. When the Board of Supervisors created the Department of Children's Services, we noted that the organizational principle on which it is based unifying programs around a clientele or a constituency rather than a function or system is a means of increasing the Impact of advocacy for that constituency or clientele. It emphasizes effectiveness over efficiency. It is based on the political judgment that

influence resulting from the visibility and access available to a Board level department is more important than operating efficiency.

Indeed, the Department of Children's Services has successfully increased the resources for children's protective services operations by 47% since its creation, from \$101.9 million budgeted in fiscal year 1984-85 to \$149.5 million budgeted in 1987-88¹. In the same period, the total County budget has increased by 27%. The overall caseload has decreased from 47 children per social worker to 27 per social worker². Of course, few children advocate for themselves; the professional service providers and others who understand the problems and needs of these children are the effective advocates.

Separating the children's protective services programs from the Department of Public Social Services and creating a new department by combining them with adoptions programs was a first step toward implementing the strategy of realignment we recommended in our 1983 study, as adopted by the Board of Supervisors. However, consistent application of the constituency principle to the top level structure would lead the County to a form of organization based entirely on the various constituencies: a department for senior citizens, a department for women, a department for Latinos, and so forth, each providing a full range of services medical, social, financial, consumer, etc.

¹CAO'S recommended budgets and County final budgets, various years.

²Department of Public Social Services, Children's Services Task Force Presentation, September 22, 1983, and Department of Children's Services, Statistical Report, September, 1987.

Functional Principle. The Board's overall departmental structure appears to be based on function. Most departments have missions that are based on what they produce, rather than for whom they produce it. For example, the departments of Health Services and Mental Health provide a full range of health care services to all clients, regardless of age. Within that framework, they include specialized services for various groups, including children. The hospitals have pediatric wards; the Medical Center has a Pediatric Pavilion; the Department of Mental Health has a division specializing in children. Application of the functional principle of organization emphasizes efficiency over advocacy. The organization will have less duplication of similar functions for different constituencies, and no group of clients will tend to be favored more than another. The functional form of organization performs best for ongoing production of well-defined products or services.

In our 1983 study, we showed that the County's failure to follow consistently the functional principle of organization has led to a misaligned, weakly coordinated structure. Separate departments provide related or similar services. Some departments perform unrelated or dissimilar services. In some instances, the same department may incorporate functions with competing values, goals, and objectives. By creating the Children's Services Department, the Board took an early step to correct one misalignment in the County's overall functional structure

Duplication and Fragmentation. However, the creation of a department specializing in protective services for children is inherently fragmentary and duplicative, as is any organization based on the constituency principle. The reason is that other departments provide similar protective or social casework functions. The populations overlap; a violent living arrangement is violent for such other potential victims who live in it as spouses and elders, not just the children. Thus, victims of domestic violence often have children with them when seeking a shelter, and may receive services from the Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services, rather than from the Department of Children's Services. Similarly, 30% of the homes visited by in-home supportive services workers from the Department of Public Social Services have children in them. The work performed by social workers employed in different departments is also similar enough to be duplicative. The work of a person responsible for managing the protection of an abused adult or elderly person is similar to the work of a person managing the protection of a child. The details of what is provided, and the legal status and source of funds, may differ, but most of the workers do similar things nonetheless.

The system of social services for children has become fragmented partly because different agencies are responsible to serve the particular household member who is the current victim. In reality, victimization is the presenting symptom of family dysfunction. Changes in the structure of the family as

the basic unit of society and changes in the economy create the conditions leading to child, elder, and spousal abuse, substance abuse, exploitation, delinquency, crime, violence, homelessness and the other ills which threaten society and strain public resources. Government policies and the service structures that result from them fail to recognize that all of these problems are strongly related to one another.

The most effective non-duplicative County strategy to address the changing social structures that underlie all of these problems is a unified, cohesive effort to strengthen the family unit. An integrated effort is impossible when different autonomous departments are responsible to provide 9ft5C management to different members of the same household.

Effectiveness. The structure we propose would increase both the political efficacy and the service effectiveness of the realignment which the Board initiated when it created the Department of Children's Services. What is needed at the County level is a family policy that integrates all of the services intended to assist children and the adults who care for them. That is, regardless of the wish of some social service professionals and advocates to focus exclusively on the child, the fundamental reality is that a child cannot be separated from the context of at least the family, the school, and the neighborhood. Most of the contemporary findings in social service research support this conclusion. Indeed, current California law specifies that the primary objective of County protective services is to

reunify the family. from which the child is taken; or, when unification is proven undesirable, to plan either for permanent placement of the child in a family setting or for emancipation as an independent, functioning member of the society.

Decentralization / Centralization. Integration and realignment of social services programs is needed not only at the administrative level of County government, but also at the neighborhood level where local culture can be effectively recognized in the designs of these programs. County officials have long recognized the need for one stop centers to integrate services tailored for each client, in the clients' own community. The Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services manages Neighborhood Service Centers. These Centers were, in the 1970's, viewed as the focal point for one stop services and local integration of multi-departmental services. They did not succeed, principally because the centers were viewed only as facilities to be occupied by outstationed personnel from various programs, with little attention to the fragmentation of policies and resources resulting from separate and autonomous administrative structures.

The unification of management is a necessary condition for innovation in public services. Innovation may depend on other factors, but it is certain that it cannot occur without the local integration of services which is impossible under the current structures.

In addition, some communities have highly developed local networks of residents who share in providing support to one another. These networks, allied with County services, would provide a powerful combination for the prevention of child neglect and abuse, for the local care of victims of all forms of domestic violence, and for a wide variety of existing and newly invented efforts to strengthen families and communities. Such programs and services need not be provided by or funded by County government. The role of government may be to facilitate the effective use of resources that are available or could be made available in the community. Through leadership and the provision of common ground such as Neighborhood Service Centers and other group facilities, County social service management could facilitate local integration of public and private social service functions.

Functional Realignment. We believe that the best way to implement such a policy is by consolidating the programs under a single management in a single department. (Point C.). What is needed is a structure that unifies the functions and reduces the duplication of service populations, while preserving within it the various professional specialties. That is, an agency for protective services would still have special programs devoted to children, adults, and elders, in order to recognize differing needs of those populations. It would also be capable of providing services to entire family units, and of developing preventive strategies which address the similar causes of seemingly

diverse social problems. It would be more efficient, since it would permit both unification and specialization by realigning all of the County's protective functions in a single functional agency. It would reduce costs, since each of the participating units would share a common administration. It would increase effectiveness, since it would facilitate explicit focus on family centered rather than individual (child, adult, elder) centered prevention and treatment. It would take advantage of the strengths of both the functional and constituency principles of government organization.

Figure 1 on Page 22 illustrates the current structure. Figure 2 on Page 23 depicts the structure we propose. The social services programs we propose the Board reorganize into a single department include the entire Departments of Children's Services and of Community and Senior Citizens Services, and the following programs of the Department of Public Social Services: Information and Referral, Adult Protective Services, and In-Home Supportive Services. The new department might also include Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN). It would not include the financial assistance programs. The management issues for effective financial aid programs, and the work performed, differ materially from those of the other forms of social and protective services case management. It would not include law enforcement programs, law enforcement agencies' investigations, probation, mental health, or schooling.

A COPY OF FIGURE 1 MAY BE OBTAINED FROM
THE ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION OFFICE

A COPY OF FIGURE 2 MAY BE OBTAINED FROM
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The GAIN program is so closely linked to the financial relief programs (AFDC) that unbundling it could create serious disruption without the careful planning process we recommend. We believe the CAO should examine it as part of the planning process because it incorporates counseling, job training and child care.

Recommendation 2: Multi-jurisdictional Councils

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors reorganize the system of multi-jurisdictional councils working in fields affecting children's welfare in order to:

- continue to recognize the multi-jurisdictional nature or the local government policy making and service providing functions,**
- strengthen the council system of addressing them,**
- minimize coats and duplication.**

Discussion

Multi-jurisdictional Service Delivery System. Local government services in the Los Angeles region are delivered by a multi-jurisdictional system. Over 200 governments in Los Angeles County, with independent elected boards, set policies With an impact on children and families. They control services and resources which affect the same people as County social and children's services, in the same communities. They influence priorities at the local, State and Federal level which strongly affect the performance of County services, and they support active and influential lobbies which affect legislative action.

For example, numerous agencies are involved in prevention of child abuse and neglect through education and information, financial assistance, the reduction of unemployment, in-home supportive services, day care, mental health treatment, or recreation. Additional agencies are involved in intervention on behalf of abused and neglected children through reporting suspected incidents, removing children from danger, placing them in safe facilities, treating them medically or psychologically, counseling or prosecuting the offenders, and taking judicial action. The range of agencies includes Board-supervised departments (such as Children's Services, Community and Senior Citizens Services, County Counsel, Health Services, Mental Health, Parks and Recreation, Probation, and Public Social Services), County-level elected officials (District Attorney, Sheriff), other levels of government (city attorneys and police, Federal and State prosecutors), education (school districts and the County Superintendent of Schools), and the courts (juvenile and criminal).

The local service delivery system is multi-jurisdictional not just for protective services, but for all problem areas which plague the population, including homelessness, unemployment, gang violence, and substance abuse. These problems are strongly related to one another, and they all affect children. In the absence of metropolitan government, city-county consolidation, or other organic means of unifying these governments, the method of choice to create system-wide changes has been the creation of voluntary interagency councils.

Multi-jurisdictional Council System. A multi-jurisdictional council is a committee composed of the decision-makers of the various jurisdictions, formed for the explicit purpose of developing and implementing joint programs, including standardized approaches to the operational policies of each member agency. The membership of some multi-jurisdictional councils includes private service providers whose functions support those of the agencies. Sometimes the membership includes private individuals who serve as advisors to the Board and other officials, particularly representatives of citizens' advisory commissions with the potential to contribute to the proceedings.

Our task force identified five Board-created multi-jurisdictional councils with direct impact on the welfare of children In Los Angeles County. They are:

the Child Sex Abuse Crisis Center Executive Board,

the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC),

the Domestic Violence Council,

the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN), and

the Task Force on Drug Abuse.

We also identified three additional Board-generated interagency councils whose membership and functions are strongly linked to the fields of protective services and social services. Their composition is similar to that of the five listed above, except that fewer independent jurisdictions constitute these three. They are:

the Task Force to Curb Pornography,
the Task Force on Teenage Pregnancy, and
the Task Force to Promote Self Esteem and Personal
and Social Responsibility.

If approved by the Board, the proposed Interagency Regional Task Force on the Homeless would be a ninth such group. These bodies share a strong commonality of role, functions, and tasks, in slightly different subject areas. While not identical, the agency memberships of these bodies are similar. For example, the Sheriff belongs to seven of the existing eight groups; the District Attorney, Health Services, Probation, and Superintendent of Schools are members of six; Children's Services and Superior Court belong to five; Mental Health, Public Social Services, the Los Angeles Police Department, other city police, and the Los Angeles Unified School District serve on four.

Consolidation and Scope. In our view, County and other governments in this region must continue to recognize the need for multi-jurisdictional approaches to social problems. In the current system of government, the only feasible approach to coordinating these needs is to form an interagency council. Such councils do not actually manage the delivery systems. Each department head of each jurisdiction is responsible for managing the delivery of services produced by that department.

Nevertheless, the Councils have accomplished much in implementing new initiatives that help standardize the approaches of the various jurisdictions. For example, CCJCC has developed a

highly successful approach to information systems, using the County's Systems Planning methodology, and both ICAN and the Domestic Violence Council have developed successful multi-jurisdictional training programs.

We are convinced that the County and other governments should continue to support multi-jurisdictional councils. However, because of the cost and the overlap of functions and service populations, we believe that the need can be met better with one such council than with nine. We envision a two phase process for consolidating the councils.

Phase One: Consolidated Staffing / Standardized Role

- D. Consolidate the staffing of the Child Sex Abuse Crisis Center Executive Board, the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee, the Domestic Violence Council, the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN), and the - Task Force on Drug Abuse, into a unified staffing structure that reports within the Chief Administrative Office.
- E. Standardize the roles of these Councils, by ordinance, as follows:
- to provide forums promoting coordinated interagency projects and operations,
 - to formulate and adopt operating policies to implement policy adopted by the Board of Supervisors, other elected County officials, and other governing bodies,
 - to facilitate standardized training programs,
 - To make recommendations to governing bodies for new or improved multi-jurisdictional services,
 - to increase public awareness of problems and resources,
 - to implement prevention programs,
 - to recommend standardized legislative programs,

- to promote Joint information systems development,
- to facilitate public / private partnerships, and
- to recommend criteria for the diatribution of Grant funding among political subdivisions or districts.

Discussion

Cost. The total annual direct County appropriation for these bodies amounts to at least \$660,000 for staffing, services, and supplies. Assuming an average departmental overhead rate of 35%, the budgeted costs amount to at least \$1 million. We estimate the total actual cost to be in excess of \$2 million, including the salaries and benefits of the member agencies' representatives attending meetings and the cost of others who attend because of a compelling business interest in the proceedings. This cost excludes the amounts appropriated for such programs initiated by the councils as training seminars and data processing systems, and it excludes the cost of staff work performed to support the activities of the officials in serving as members of the councils.

Responsibility for staffing. The Child Sex Abuse Crisis Center Executive Board and the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee share the same staff. It is budgeted, physically located and supervised in the Chief Administrative Office. The staff of the Domestic Violence Council is budgeted, located and supervised in the Department of Community and Senior Citizens' Services.

The ICAN staff is budgeted in the Department of Children's Services and is physically located in the Department's emergency shelter for children. The staff is supervised by the chairperson of ICAN, who approves the staff's discretionary expenditures. These are then charged to Children's Services unless another department volunteers to cover them. The chairperson is elected by the department heads who comprise the ICAN Policy Committee; he is not at present the Director of Children's Services.

No staff is budgeted for the Task Force on Drug Abuse. During development of recommendations, CAO staff who had other duties provided staff support. During implementation of the recommendations, the Sheriff will provide staff support.

Program Overlap. The issues and problems the councils are formed to address are strongly correlated Domestic violence is distinguished by statute from child abuse and neglect, but many victims of domestic violence have children with them when they seek shelter. Drug abuse is increasingly associated with both domestic violence and child abuse. All three create demands on law enforcement and on the justice system, as well as on social services agencies. Regardless of the specific problem, the designated functions of the various agencies do not change and all of the problem areas overlap. That is the reason why the degree of commonality is so high in the membership of the councils.

Task Overlap. The work performed by each of the councils, principally through their staffs, reflects the same set of interrelated agency needs. Many councils have already formed subcommittees intended to address those needs: information systems, training, legislation, technology, and funding. Those assigned the responsibility to assist the Board with inter-district allocation of grant funds have also formed committees to establish the required formulas and criteria for recommendation to the Board.

It is in the work involved in the tasks of these subcommittees that we see the greatest opportunity for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of all the councils. The staff of each council has developed particular expertise in one or more areas. For example, the CCJCC has developed highly effective means of implementing joint information systems, using the County's Systems Planning Unit method as adopted by the Board of Supervisors, while ICAN has been struggling for some time to develop a manual data sharing and standardization program. Both ICAN and the Domestic Violence Council have implemented successful training programs, but ICAN has specialized in focused efforts in prevention of child abuse and neglect and has found successful methods of accessing and using the public media and communications technology. Thus, the consolidation and sharing of staff resources will make available to all of them a more efficient structure, and a broader range of skills, than any of them presently has operating independently. Consolidated

staffing will also improve efficiency, since each of the councils can operate with unified administrative and support staff.

We considered several alternative organizational placements for a joint staffing unit, including the Departments of Children's Services and Community and Senior Citizens' Services. We are convinced that the Chief Administrative Office is the most appropriate placement for the staff responsibility. According to the County Code, the Board assigns the CAO the duty to "assist the Board of Supervisors in coordinating the functions and operations of the several such departments, services, institutions or departments of the county" (2.08.050), and "to plan, coordinate, set priorities, and monitor all data processing functions in the county" (2.08.080). As Director of Personnel, the CAO commands the County's training resources. As the budget officer, the CAO has the influence necessary to effect the implementation of any initiative that the councils adopt. (Point D.)

Implementation Role. Coordinating councils do little coordination of current functions. They can effectively coordinate new programs and initiatives, when each of the member agencies agrees to make the investment. In addition, since their mode of operation is collegial, they can obtain the concurrence of member agencies in the standardization of policy and programs. It is this implementation role that we believe to be the most significant accomplishment of such councils. The councils themselves do not set policy, and the members themselves may not, since most are appointed officials accountable to elected

officials. When they concur in policy, however, the members can obtain the authoritative approval of their elected officials, thereby making effective changes to the entire system. ICAN, for example, has promulgated standardized assessment procedures which are recognized by each member jurisdiction; it has also supported the development of new protocols for death review in children's cases.

The Councils are an effective resource for implementation because the member agencies have the authority, power and influence to implement. Acting independently, each agency lacks sufficient power and authority to implement; for example, neither the District Attorney nor the Board of Supervisors can direct the Sheriff. Citizens' commissions lack the authority and power to implement their recommendations. When the Board adopts policy, including policy recommended by citizens' advisory commissions, an interagency council is an ideal forum to provide the details for implementation. For example, the County department heads recently formed just such a council, staffed by the CAO, for implementation of our commission's recommendations on contracting policy.

Joint Project Facilitation Role. As we noted above, each of the councils has structured a work program that includes training, identification of new service needs, information sharing or data processing, funding, legislation, outreach, and grant fund distribution. The County has significant resources in place that can be tapped for support of such programs However, the

ordinances and Minute orders creating the various councils are not standardized in their explicit recognition of what the tasks are likely to be that a council can accomplish effectively. We believe the Board should standardize the work programs, by ordinance, to the extent feasible. (Point E.)

Phase Two Consolidated Council

F. Consolidate the five multi-jurisdictional councils themselves, identified in Point D above, into a single body, structured as follows:

a core membership to include elected and appointed officials of tile County, the City of Los Angeles, the contract and independent cities, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the County Superintendent of Schools, the Superior Court, and the Municipal Courts.

operating procedures which provide for augmentation of its voting membership from time to time to consider a specialized subject, when approved by the core voting membership.

Discussion

Membership Overlap. Table 1 on Pages 35 and 36 illustrates the overlap of the membership of the five multi-jurisdictional councils we propose be consolidated.

The primary goal of our recommendation, consolidation of these councils, will improve efficiency while maximizing the effectiveness of the combined council by making the synergism of each available to all of them.

TABLE 1

Membership of Multi-jurisdictional Councils

<u>Member</u>	<u>Crisis Center</u>	<u>CCJCC</u>	<u>Domestic Violence</u>	<u>ICAN</u>	<u>Drug Abuse</u>
<u>County Officials</u>					
Board of Supervisors	D ³	C ⁴			
Chief Admin. Officer	X	X		X	X
Children's Services	X		X	X	
Community & Senior Citizens Services		X	X	X	
District Attorney	X	X	X	X	X
Health Services	X		X	X	X
Marshal of the Municipal Courts		X			
Mental Health	X		X	X	
Municipal Courts (One or More Associations)		X	X		X
Probation	X	X	X	X	X
Public Defender	X	X	X	X	X
Public Social Services			X	X	
Sheriff	X	X	X	X	X
Superior Court	X	X	X	X	X
Others (Coroner, Fire, Parks, Libraries)				X	X
<u>County Support Depts.</u>					
County Counsel	X	X		X	
Data Processing		X			
Facilities Management				X	
<u>City Governments</u>					
Los Angeles Mayor		X			
Los Angeles Council		X			
Los Angeles CAO		X			
Other City Elected		X			
LAPD		X	X	X	X
LA Attorney		X	X	X	
Other City Law Enforcement	X	X	X		X
Other City Services			X		

³ Supervisors' Deputies

⁴ Chairman, Board of Supervisors

TABLE 1 (cont'd.)

Membership of Multi-jurisdictional Councils

<u>Member</u>	<u>Crisis Center</u>	<u>CCJCC</u>	<u>Domestic Violence</u>	<u>ICAN</u>	<u>Drug Abuse</u>
<u>Educators</u>					
County Supt. of Schools	X	X		X	X
LAUSD		X	X	X	
Other Educators				X	
<u>State or Federal Officials</u>					
U. S. Attorney General		X		X	X
Calif. Attorney General			X	X	
Others					X
<u>Private Sector Participants</u>					
Service Providers	X		X		
Non-Provider Experts	X				
Clients					
<u>Private Sector Citizens</u>					
Representing / Nominated by an Interested Group			X		X
Citizens at Large					

SOURCE: County Commission Documents, various.

We recognize that the content of the work, the details of the membership, and the scope of the various councils differ from one another. However, the reason why the degree of commonality is so high in the membership of the councils is that all of the agencies perform functions which are needed in addressing any given problem area. Most governments organize the provision of services according to function - police, schools, health, community development, and so forth. That is the most efficient organization for the maintenance of ongoing programs. Local governments do not organize to serve specific subpopulations or to solve specific emerging problems. They form councils of the existing functional agencies to provide a collegial approach to the problems.

Regardless of the laws, all the problems addressed by these various councils are related. What is needed is a structure which integrates the various specialties in a systems approach to all of the problem areas, but still permits enough flexibility of membership to include the variation of participation of the present independent councils when it is needed. Therefore, our recommendation includes a provision for a core membership, consisting of the officials who serve now on almost all of the councils, augmented by others when needed to take up specialized issues. (Point F.)

Recommendation 3: Children's Advisory Commission

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors specify by ordinance the scope and role Of the Commission, in order to:

- include all children and their families in the scope of Board policy on which the Commission advises, - obtain citizen participation in development of cohesive policy on families, in consultation with County official: and other interested parties,
- clarify that the Commission that is not a supervisory managerial or appeal body.

The ordinance should specify the following:

G. The Commission's roles are:

- to recommend cohesive Board policy regarding matters which affect children and their families,
- to recommend legislation and review proposed legislation,
- to monitor, and report to the Board of Supervisors, the implementation status of recommendations adopted by the Board related to children and their families, including currently relevant recommendations of the Task Force on Children's Service: (1984).

H. The Commissions name is the Commission for Children.

I. The Commission is self-governing, authorized to appoint its own staff, and staffed by such positions as are designated in the current Salary Ordinance or employed by the County by contract.

Discussion

Scope of Subject Matter. The ordinance (County Code 2.38) limits the scope of the Commission's work to children `at risk'. The term is open to two interpretations. As was noted in the "Fulfillment Report" of the Children's Services

Department, it is a term used in the profession to refer to specific subpopulations of children, namely those who lack a functional parent. We believe it is more meaningful to consider all children in our society to be 'at risks'. They are not all necessarily at risk of neglect or abuse by the people they are living with, but they are at risk of being lured by alcohol and drugs, and at risk of being exploited or victimized by adults or other children. Local government provides little or no services to many children who could benefit from its resources; the issues are not limited to the operations of departments which currently provide services. Furthermore, as we mentioned above, the central societal issue affecting children is not just about children. It is about families, and how children can be raised effectively in the new kinds of family and social structures we are developing today.

We believe strongly that the commission's concern should extend to all children and their families, whether or not served by some agency of local government. The ordinance should make that explicit.

We identified several major elements of the County and multi-jurisdictional systems affecting children that should be a continuing subject of commission policy recommendations. They should include, but not be limited to, the following:

the structure and organization of County social services delivery systems, excluding financial assistance programs,

proposed improvements of the effectiveness, efficiency and cost of services affecting children, youth, and families,

proposed Legislation,

an annual report on the status of children and families in Los Angeles County, with reference to the policies of the Board of Supervisors, the funding and operations of services, and the effectiveness of systems' coordination, both intra-county and inter-jurisdictional,

the proposals and programs of external organizations regarding children and youth and their families.

When the commission was first formed, one of its primary functions was to report to the Board on County progress in implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Children's Services as adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1984. Most of the recommendations have been implemented, or are in various stages of implementation by the Department of Children's Services and other County departments. Some new knowledge of the field and of operations has developed in the four intervening years, and new legislation has been adopted; recommendations developed by the commission can take these into account and may supplant some recommendations of the 1984 task force. In most cases, the 1984 recommendations which are still pending can be referred to individual implementing departments for evaluation and report, or to the proposed Coordinating Council when the cooperation of multiple jurisdictions or departments is needed for implementation.

Finally, a focus on the task force recommendations narrows the commission's role to a linkage with the Department for Children's Services. We believe the commission will be most effective with a broader role bearing on Board policy, whether or not related to the operations of current County departments or existing programs and services. The commission will always work in consultation with the current officials of local and State government, but the ordinance should not limit its role to primarily focus on them.

Instead, the ordinance should include a specification that the Commission's advisory role on policy includes the responsibility to monitor Implementation of Its recommendations adopted by the Board of Supervisors and other recommendations affecting children's welfare. That is, we recommend broadening the commission's monitoring role to include all recommendations adopted by the Board in the field. We include reference to the Task Force Report (1984) so that those which should still be monitored by the commission can be within the recognized legal framework of the roles. In our view, the Board should ask the commission to continue monitoring, in particular, the following recommendations of the 1984 Task Force:

ongoing inservice training,

expanded foster home recruitment,

criteria for use in matching individual children to foster homes,

services, funding, and legal status for runaways, truants, and other status offenders,

regionalization I decentralization of services, including the Court,

the burden of proof in termination of a case.

Advisory Role. In Los Angeles County, the Board of Supervisors is solely accountable to the electorate for appointing County department heads, excepting only those directly elected by the voters and those who may be appointed by the judiciary as an independent branch of government. The County has multiple responsibilities assigned by Charter, by the laws of the State of California and by funding agencies of the Federal government. Elected and appointed department heads discharge these responsibilities. Citizens are active in local government, in addition to exercising their voting franchise, to increase the participation and the influence of the public as conditions change and new methods of approaching the responsibilities of the government become available.

The greatest utility of a citizens' advisory commission in Los Angeles County government is to provide the Board of Supervisors with information, advice, and insight that the Board would not otherwise receive from the experts it employs to manage its departments and operate its programs. That is, the commissions provide an external, nonexpert view that is to be valued primarily because it is innovative rather than technocratic or administrative.

It is important for the commission to influence policy, which is decided primarily by the Board of Supervisors in its budgets, ordinances, and legislative programs. In order to do so effectively, in formulating its recommendations, the commission will wish to consult with County department heads, public officials of other jurisdictions, and other experts. The consultative process produces information that will keep the commission informed on current developments and assist in ensuring feasibility of the recommendations. It can produce consensus. However, it is equally important for the ordinance to avoid even the appearance of a managerial role.

In the government of the City of Los Angeles and a few others, commissions may appoint department heads, establish and enforce departmental policy, or act as a citizen review board. No such commissions exist in County government.

The roles of the 120 County commissions created by the Board of Supervisors are purely advisory. In the children's services arena, it has been the perception throughout most departments that the commission views its role as including departmental management, operational investigations, program development, and individual case appeals.

A principal source of this confusion in role is the use of terms which often imply managerial roles in government. In 1984, the Children's Services Task Force recommended the creation of an "oversight" commission, which would "review all

programs" and "hold all involved agencies accountable"⁵. In the jargon of government and the courts, such language connotes official supervisory authority, which the commission does not in fact possess. Although the Board-approved ordinance which established the commission contains no reference to oversight or accountability, many County officials and employees believe that the language of the Task Force report has influenced some commissioners' Interpretation of the commission's authority and, consequently, their behavior toward County management. Therefore, we strongly recommend that the commission's ordinance clearly emphasize development of policy and legislative recommendations, and reporting on implementation rather than directly enforcing it.

Some commissioners have interpreted the commission's ordinance to authorize it to review or otherwise intervene In the appeals and petitions of Individuals whose cases are In the charge of the Court, of the Director of Children's Services, or of some other public official. While there is apparently no legal obstacle to the commission receiving such information, which is supplied voluntarily by those Involved in the case, the practice creates distortions In the system of accountability of public officials:

It creates a presumption that the commission is competent to do something about cases that it hears, while the commission has no such authority, and cannot.

⁵Children's Services Task Force, Report the Board Supervisors Concerning Recommendation to Improve the Delivery of Services to Abused and Neglected Children in Los Angeles county, March 30, 1984, pages 42 and 43, and Attachment IX.

It makes certain cases - those brought by parties who know of the commission's interest in and activities on individual cases - a higher priority for public officials who must respond to the commission.

It creates an expectation on the part of those interested in the case that the commission's judgements will prevail, when the commission can be overruled by numerous elected or appointed officials.

It creates a demand on the staffing and facilities available to the commission to secure confidential and sensitive information.

In our view, decisions on specific individual cases are properly the role of management or the judiciary, and are inappropriate for a citizens' commission. If the commission is to advise the Board on policy, however, it may wish to evaluate the quality and timeliness of the County's case decision-making processes. To do so, the commissions could examine the status of a valid sample of cases, with expert testimony from community organizations, court officials, and others. The analysis would provide sufficient information for the commission to advise the Board on the most effective means of keeping the mismanagement of cases to a minimum. That is, the focus should be on improving overall policy and system, rather than on directly influencing individual case decisions.

Therefore, we propose that the Board define the commission's mission as advising the Board of Supervisors on all areas of children's welfare and family policy, including the status of implementation of Board-approved recommendations. We further recommend that the Board clearly disassociate the commission

from management of the Children's Protective Services Department, or any department. (Point G.)

Commission Name. We believe that part of the confusion over the scope and role of the commission is due simply to the commission's name, which seems to associate its mission with a particular department. The second point of our recommendation is to provide a name that is consistent with the mission. (Point H.)

Independence. We believe that the commission should elect its officers, determine its operating procedures, select and direct its staff, and be staffed independently of any departmental unit of the County. (Point I.)

We further recommend the following ordinance amendments which will clarify the role of the commission in relation to other County organizations working in the field and will strengthen the commission's effectiveness in advising the Board on policy.

The Board of Supervisors should also explicitly:

- J. Direct each County citizens' advisory commission and multi-jurisdictional council to cross-refer to the Commission for Children any matters that come before it which have an impact on Board policy affecting children and their families.**
- K. Direct each County official appointed by the Board, and request all County, city, and school officials, to supply the Commission with all such information that it may request with a bearing on the welfare of children and families.**

Discussion

Cross-Referral. No one, including the Board of Supervisors, has utilized the Commission for Children's Services as a unifying element - a means to find common ground among the various internal and external interests that seek to influence County policy regarding children, youth, and families. The Board appoints at least 35 other citizens' commissions whose advisory roles have a direct influence on that policy; the County has provided ministerial and staff support to several others which are primarily external groups, not appointed by the Board, seeking to influence the same policy. We have identified budget appropriations alone in excess of \$1 million for direct support of these commissions, excluding the costs of programs they develop, and excluding the costs of county officials who attend their meetings or perform work to support them.

Recently, the Board created a new advisory group whose mission includes advice on child neglect and abuse - the Task Force to Promote Self Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility. The Board also, rightly in our view, has referred certain matters to other commissions for review. For example, the Board referred the review of protocols governing the care of child victims of sexual assault to the Emergency Medical Services Commission. Finally, nothing prevents other commissions from developing and implementing programs in the areas of children's welfare. For example, the Commission for Women recently held a conference on satanic rituals and cults, including their relevance to child abuse.

We believe strongly that the Commission for Children can and should perform the role of providing a common ground for unification of the policy recommendations, programs and legislative proposals of all citizens' advisory commissions whose roles interact with the welfare of children. We provide the elements of the means to do so in the fourth point of our recommendation.

We prefer cross-referral to consolidating commissions, assigning exclusivity to the Commission for Children, attempting to establish a hierarchy among citizens' advisory commissions, or dissolving commissions which are now standing. Cross-referral will maximize citizen involvement over a broad range of interests, affecting all subpopulations of children, and all County departments. At the same time, it will preserve the centrality of interest with the Commission for Children where the issues cross boundaries. By consulting with other interested citizens' advisory commissions, the Commission for Children will increase its level of influence over policy and improve the degree of consensus available to the Board. In addition, consultation will increase its access to information and other prior work acquired by those commissions, thus reducing duplication. (Point J.)

Cooperation. To be effective in supplying useful advice to the Board of Supervisors, the commission must be provided with sufficient information from County and other agencies to discharge its functions. (Point K.)

Recommendation 4: PURCHASE OF SERVICES

We recommend that the Board of Supervisors focus accountability for the results of County social services for children and families in a single individual.

Discussion

The ordinance creating the Department of Children's Services provides that the Director administers children's protective services and programs, including the formulation and implementation of departmental policy, and including the direction of other functions regarding protective services assigned by the Board. The principle on which State protective services of children is based is the legal doctrine of the sovereign parent. That is, the Department of Children's Services temporarily performs the role of a parent; on behalf of the State, for the children in its charge. A parent, however, has control of the source from which he or she obtains services intended to benefit the child, provides the resources to pay for the cost of such services, and may change the source of services as needs change. In the present system, the Director has no such control. Our recommendation will rectify this in two phases.

Phase One: Interdepartmental Agreements.

- L. Instruct the Department of Children's Protective Services to enter into formal agreements with the Departments of Mental Health, Health Services, County Counsel and the County Superintendent of Schools.

Instruct the directors of the identified departments to cooperate in negotiating such agreements, to execute them, and to present them to the Board Of Supervisors for adoption before December 31, 1988.

Direct that the agreements shall specify the nature, quantity, quality, and other relevant terms and conditions for services to children and families who are the clients fo the Department of Children's Protective Services.

Discussion

The duties of the Director of Children's Services are an exercise of the sovereign power of the State to act as the parent of a child who lacks a legal or functional caretaker. Like any parent, the Director must therefore determine the needs of the child and choose the best ways to provide for those needs. In the present County system, the Director of Children's Services controls the choice of producer of such services as shelter, nutrition, and daily supervision, and finances them with the resources under his control. However, the directors of other, autonomous County departments control resources for such specialized care as mental health or health, schooling, and legal counsel. They decide what will be provided, and they determine the quantity and quality of the outcome. In contrast to a parent, the Director of Children's Services lacks control over the nature, quantity, quality, timing, and other specifications for services he may determine the child needs.

A workable means of addressing this problem of Interdepartmental service suppliers is to direct the department heads to formulate and adopt enforceable agreements which detail the expectations for each service. Each of the department heads producing services for children In the care of the Department of Children's Services is also a public official, responsible in

Charter and in law for certain duties. They are the responsible stewards of resources provided by the Board of Supervisors, or the State and Federal governments, to support the discharge of those duties. The Director of Children's Services, the Chief Administrative Officer, and, in some cases, the Board of Supervisors lack authority to compel these public officials to act according to a specification with which they do not concur.

Because of this accountability of public officers, the County's system of autonomous departments, and the effects of categorical funding Systems, formal interdepartmental agreements may be the only means available within current law to the Director of Children's Services to address the issue of controlling the services supplied by other public officials. While nothing prevents County department heads from entering into such agreements on their own authority, and some have done so, formal direction to do so by the Board of Supervisors has the added advantage of Improving their enforceability. Adoption of such agreements by the Board would further strengthen that enforceability. Therefore, we recommend that the Board apply the concept of the interdepartmental agreement as an interim means of assisting the Director of Children's Services in fulfilling his responsibilities, as parent of the children in his care. (Point L.)

Phase Two: Program Management

- M. Instruct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to implement a complete program budgeting system effective July,1 1989 for all programs managed by the Department of Children's Protective Services which**

includes services provided to its clients by other county departments and which incorporates the following policies:

That the full cost Of service. provided to children in the care of the Department by County Counsel, the Department of Health Services, and the Department of Mental Health is to be reflected as expense in the account a of tile Department of Child, Adult and Family Services.

That the Director of Children's Protective Services is solely responsible for all financial and programmatic decisions to secure the care of children in his or her charge, including the choice of provider, whether another county department, another governmental agency, or a private provider.

- N. Seek legislative authority to implement the recommended changes, as necessary.

Discussion

Program Budget. In the County system, the responsibility for the allocation of health, mental health, and legal services to protected children is controlled by the Departments of Health, Mental Health, and County Counsel. The cost of the services and the revenue supporting them are, for the most part, carried in the accounts of those departments; when the cost is charged back, the Children's Services Department has little control over the cost or over the quantity and quality of what is provided. In the County's budgeting system, and In Its pay for performance system, each department must optimize its own financial performance. Each must optimize Its own operations and costs, independently of the impact on any other department.

In this kind of system, in the absence of a chief executive officer to integrate priorities, no one has the responsibility to determine optimally cost effective decisions among a group of departments contributing to the same delivery system for the same clients. The point of a program budgeting system is to link the financial plan for each of the departments contributing to the welfare of children for whom the County is the temporary protector and parent. Without it, the Director of Children's Protective Services cannot fully discharge his or her responsibilities and cannot reasonably be held fully accountable for them.

Program budgeting for children's services was a cornerstone recommendation of the Children's Roundtable report adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1986. The CAO has published program budgets for several County programs, but so far children's programs are not among them. We believe it is feasible and timely to implement a complete system for the next fiscal year. (Point M.)

Program Management. Mere transfer of funds, budgetary responsibility, and accounting documentation would not suffice to hold the Director of Children's Protective Services accountable for the functions of protector and parent. Some degree of choice over the cost, quantity, and quality of services provided by other departments is necessary. With choice of provider, the Director will be able to hold the other departments accountable for their performance by changing to another source, or by

withholding payment when the terms of the agreement have not been met. Therefore, he or she will be solely accountable for the effects on the children. The providers, whether internal county departments or an alternative public or private provider, will function as subcontractors to the Department of Children's Protective Services, and the Director of Children's Protective Services will function as a program manager for children under County protection. This provision will make the agreements between the departments, adopted in Phase One, fully enforceable.

Our recommendation may create accounting and auditing complexities for which the County and State are not prepared. Different departments count different things as cases, depending on the nature of the services provided and the regulations of State or Federal funding agencies. The case is not necessarily the same as the child for whose benefit the services are designed. Any of the departments may treat the child only or associated adults or siblings, but they all use different case counting procedures for accounting purposes. For this reason, the agreements on which the transactions are based must be carefully drafted to define the case as the basis, rather than 'units of service' or 'children'. In turn, this could cause auditing complexities for the State. We believe that it is feasible for the CAO and others to design a workable system for the 1989-90 fiscal year. (Point M.)

Legal Feasibility. County Counsel has advised us informally that the kind of system we propose may not be feasible under the current statutes. The reason is that the laws designate an individual public official, such as the Mental Health Officer or the Health Officer, as responsible for controlling the nature, quantity, and quality of the functions provided under the statute. Thus, it may be necessary for the Board to seek legislation authorizing it to implement our recommendation. (Point N.)

Recommendation 5: Advisory commissions

We recommend that tile Board of supervisors curtail tile potential for future actions which might tend to increase fragmentation, duplication, or confusion.

Discussion

County government needs and should continue to seek out the advisory participation of citizens in addressing problems. We strongly believe that citizens' commissions and committees formed to advise the Board of Supervisors on matters of policy. are one of the strengths of the County system. The Board of Supervisors can make the system of committees and commissions work more efficiently and effectively, by reducing the somewhat haphazard system of creating them, by assuring that commissioners understand the parameters within which they are expected to work, and by providing continuing information on their roles and functions. These steps should apply to all situations in which the Board intends to work with a committee, commission, board, or other voluntary group.

Overlapping Roles. In creating commissions and committees, the Board has historically introduced duplication and fragmentation. The roles of the various commissions overlap for the same reasons that those of the multi-jurisdictional councils overlap. The problems and the populations they affect most severely overlap.

For example the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors appoints a Commission on Youth with the responsibility to "give advice, counsel and suggestions to the Board of Supervisors regarding the needs and concerns of young persons, including "health, education, employment, recreation, delinquency, and family relations" (County Code 3.66). In 1984, the Board created the Children's Services Commission to review programs and make recommendations to improve children's services. In 1987, the Board created the Task Force to Promote Self Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility to address (among other. things) teenage pregnancy, child abuse, and the failure of some children to reach their potential (Minute Order 81, Proceedings of November 17, 1987).

Reduced Future Duplication

- O. Enforce the procedure requiring the CAO to minimize the creation of additional commissions, by a) reviewing the purpose of any new commission to determine whether its intended functions to an existing group whenever feasible, and c) recommending the detailed functions, composition, and method of operation of a new commission.

Discussion

The advisory commissions may not be entirely duplicative, but their tasks certainly overlap. Failure to provide for their interaction could be a source of major confusion in the future. This kind of duplication and overlap can seldom be corrected after a commission is formed and appointed. Therefore, the first point of our recommendation is to avoid the creation of additional overlapping commissions. (Point 0.)

In addition, during our present study, many commissioners told us or our staff that they had no information about County government, and little about the role of their commissions, when appointed. They were appointed because they expressed an interest in a field in which the Supervisor recognized a need for citizen participation, and demonstrated a commitment and the ability to contribute. Our next two points are intended to minimize confusion which may result from commissioners' inadequate understanding of the County and of their commission's role in it.

Commissioner Orientation

- P. **Brief all newly appointed commissioners on the County's overall structure, programs, legal responsibilities, budget, operations, commission system, and other relevant information.**

Discussion

Los Angeles County government is a complex and huge business. The potentially significant contributions of commissioners would be enhanced if some provision were made to deepen

their understanding of the system when appointed. Therefore, the point of our recommendation is to provide for periodic briefings of newly appointed commissioners on the overall system of County government, as a matter of initiation. The briefings would be intended to ensure that commissioners a) understand the terrain, b) comprehend the major issues the Board is confronting, and c) understand their missions within an appropriate framework. In the early 1980's, the CAO (Technical Services) developed briefing packages for County executives. Our proposal is to use the same kind of briefing for commissioners. (Point P.)

Annual Conference

- Q. Brief all commissions annually on the state of the County and in particular on the major actions attributable to commissions' recommendations.**

Discussion

A second, more global briefing on the structure, operations, and current state of the County would be made available to all commissioners as a group at least once a year. Things change - budgets, legislation, priorities, demographics, economics. Such changes may have a material effect on the effectiveness of a commission's operations, but not necessarily come to the attention of all of the affected commissions. In addition, the activities of many commissions interact with those of others, but there is no ongoing machinery to ensure communications. The annual conference we propose would provide an opportunity for

County officials and commissions to inform all commissioners on major current developments, and for commissions to establish a work program based on those developments. (Point Q.)

Reporting Responsibility

R. Implement the recommendations of the 1986-87 Grand Jury to enforce reporting requirements for the costs and the accomplishments of commissions, and to establish sunset dates where appropriate.

Discussion

Following a comprehensive study, the 1986-87 Grand Jury recommended that the costs of commissions and committees be made explicit in the Budget documentation, and that the Board provide a sunset date when creating each one. We agree. Commissions generate costs; the costs and benefits produced should be periodically available to the Board of Supervisors and the public for scrutiny. (Point R.)

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