

In California, it is the Counties that protect abused children and the elderly and help struggling families reach self-sufficiency.

Today there is an unrelenting, **increasing need** for County Human Services.

Today Federal and State performance **mandates are increasing** along with threats of financial penalties.

County Human Services have already suffered \$1.2 billion in **budget cuts**.

***The safety net
is coming
unraveled.***

Recent trends and decisions threaten the viability and integrity of social services programs, and have placed California at great risk.

► **Counties' caseloads climb in Child Welfare, Adult Protective Services, Adoptions, Food Stamps, MediCal, and In-Home Supportive Services**

► **The Federal Government enacts tough new performance standards in Social Services, and threatens harsh financial penalties**

► **The State cuts counties' Social Services funding by \$1.2 billion over three years**



Adult Protective Services

More and more reports of elder and dependent adult abuse come in...

In the three-year period between September 1999 and August 2002, reports of abuse of the elderly and disabled increased by over 60%. Counties have been inundated with new cases that require investigation and intervention in order to protect the health and safety of the community's aged and dependent adults. The need for resources to assist these individuals has never been greater, as the In-Home Supportive Services program continues to expand at a rate of nearly 12% per year.

...but resources have been cut.

In the face of this increasing demand for help, the funding for Adult Protective Services was cut in FY 2002/03 by \$17.7 million. The Special Circumstances program,

designed to enable disabled persons to remain in their own homes by paying for such assistive devices as wheelchair ramps, was eliminated; this represented a cut of \$8.3 million. The local system by which counties process the rapidly increasing demand for In-Home Supportive Services was underfunded by \$63.1 million. Reports will keep coming in, but counties will not be able to respond to them; elderly and disabled members of the community will need wheelchair ramps and domestic services, but counties will not be able to authorize them.

Child Welfare Services

More and more reports of child abuse come in...

Counties are required to investigate each report in order to assure the safety of the child. In 1999, the counties acted on approximately 505,000 reports. In 2001, counties received nearly 549,000 reports of child abuse—an increase over these two years of 8.7%.

...but resources have been cut.

Over the past three years, funding for Child Welfare has been both suspended and cut, resulting in a shortfall for FY 2002/03 year of \$49.5 million. Counties now take longer to investigate reports, and some reports may not be investigated at all. Children already in foster care may not be visited as frequently as the law requires. Children may languish in foster care instead of being reunited with their parents.

More and more children need adoption services...

Counties have made remarkable progress in putting an end to “foster care drift,” where children wandered for years through a foster care system that offered no permanency. Adoptions of children have been increasing at a rate of 14% per year.

...but resources have been cut.

Over the past three years, the funds needed by counties to recruit and approve adoptive parents and to arrange for the adoption of children were both

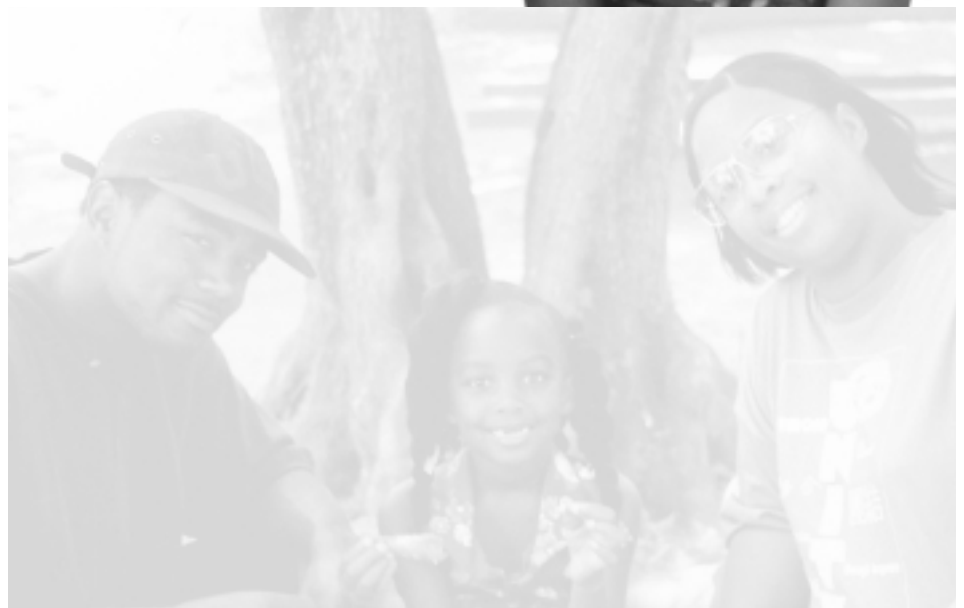
suspended and cut, resulting in a shortfall for the FY 2002/03 year of \$18 million. Children will wait longer in foster care, deprived of the stability of an adoptive home, while foster care payments continue to be made. Even the foster care infrastructure—the local activities by which counties determine children’s eligibility for foster care and ensure that foster parents receive timely payments—was underfunded by \$27.5 million, threatening timely certification and payment.

More and more federal attention is paid to performance...

California is undergoing a review by the Federal Government of its child welfare services programs. The federal Administration for Children and Families is tracking “outcome measures” related to child safety, stability in care and overall program effectiveness. If California does not meet the federal requirements, it will face millions of dollars in sanctions.

...but resources have been cut.

The Legislature directed the commission of a study of child welfare caseloads (SB 2030, Costa) in 1998. The study concluded that the state’s “caseload standards,” as they currently exist, could not support effective child protection. Rather than implementing the study’s recommendations and taking the steps to achieve compliance with federal expectations, California has cut funding to child welfare, thereby increasing caseloads and jeopardizing both the safety of the state’s children and the federal dollars that support the state’s Program-A program, already on the precipice of failure.



Self-Sufficiency

California's counties have been remarkably successful at reducing the number of families dependent on cash assistance programs. By aggressively connecting families to resources that include vocational training, transportation and child care, counties have helped to resolve barriers to employment. And by providing therapeutic and counseling services for those who may be impacted by mental health, substance abuse or domestic violence concerns, counties have worked to overcome barriers to continued employment.

Counties now face the task of continuing these efforts toward self-sufficiency...

As the state's unemployment creeps higher and the job market contracts, it becomes more difficult to connect job seekers to employment. Cutbacks in education and federal job retraining programs have increased the challenge counties face in preparing families to meet a more selective job market, even as the families' "welfare clock"—the maximum time they may receive public assistance—is ticking.

...but resources have been cut.

Over the past three years, funding needed by counties to provide services to CalWORKS participants has been both suspended and cut, resulting in a shortfall for FY 2002/03 year of \$297 million. Families will stay on public assistance longer than necessary and, without ongoing supportive services, are more likely to return to public assistance even if they are able to leave.

Counties face increasing demand to help low-income working families with supportive nutritional services that

enable them to keep working, even as California faces increased scrutiny from the federal government concerning the state's performance...

The number of families receiving Food Stamp benefits—and who are not receiving any cash assistance—has increased over a two-year period by 16%. At the same time, the Federal Government has sanctioned California for its failure to meet federal accuracy standards in the state's growing Food Stamp caseload.

...but resources have been cut.

Over the past three years, despite this increased scrutiny, demand and caseload, funds needed by counties to run the Food Stamp program have been both suspended and cut, resulting in a shortfall for FY 2002/03 of \$159.6 million. Families will wait longer to obtain assistance, errors will increase and federal sanctions will continue.

Counties face increasing demand to help low-income working families with supportive medical services that enable them to keep working...

The number of families receiving MediCal benefits—and who are not receiving any cash assistance—has increased over a two-year period by 61%.

...but resources have been cut.

Over the past three years, despite this increased workload, the funds needed by counties to run the MediCal program have been both suspended



and cut, resulting in a shortfall for FY 2002/03 of \$458.9 million.

As caseloads increase, and the number of staff available to meet the demand decreases, applicants wait longer to receive necessary medical care, errors increase, and the program may end up paying for persons ineligible for coverage.

Increased workload and program complexity may be mitigated by advances in technology...

Counties have been working with the state and federal government to implement modern information technology approaches to public assistance programs. These approaches can result in cost savings, error reduction and the timely, efficient delivery of services.

...but resources have been cut.

Over the past three years, funds needed by counties to implement information technology approaches to efficient service delivery have been both suspended and cut, resulting in a shortfall in FY 2002/03 of \$81.9 million. Programs will continue to be run at less than optimal efficiency, as workload and complexity combine to make public social services programs unmanageable.



Between FYs 2001/02 and 2002/03, California has faced increasing oversight from the Federal Government, demanding that the state be programmatically and fiscally accountable for the programs mandated by the Federal Government.

California's counties face a rapidly increasing demand for services, while the state has both suspended and cut its funding to county-administered social services programs, resulting in a shortfall of \$1.2 billion.

With these kinds of cuts, can the counties continue to provide effective, efficient services to the state's low-income working families, to the state's abused and neglected children, and to the state's abused elderly and disabled adults?

Counties cannot.

The strength, health, and safety of our communities depend on county human services. Please support our efforts as we work to protect children and the elderly, and to provide support to low-income working families.

If you would like to learn more about county human services and how to support them, please contact your local human services agency, or contact CWDA at (916) 443-1749. You may also visit our website at www.cwda.org.

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) is a non-profit association representing the human service directors from each of California's 58 counties. The Association's mission is to promote a human services system that encourages self-sufficiency of families and communities, and protects vulnerable children and adults from abuse and neglect.



To accomplish this mission, the Association...

...**Advocates** for policies that will further the mission of the organization.

...**Educates** state and federal policy-makers and the public regarding the impact of human services policies on individuals, communities, and county social services operations.

...**Collaborates** with governmental and community-based organizations to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.

...**Facilitates** effective communication between and among county social service agencies, and state and federal administrative agencies, including the exchange of knowledge and best and promising practices.



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