I. Welcome and Opening

a) Opening – Ivy welcomed everyone and explained that due to current COVID-19 social distancing guidelines, this quarterly Task Force meeting is being held by Zoom teleconference and will be divided into multiple segments as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Main Agenda Item</th>
<th>Zoom Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5/28</td>
<td>1:30-3:00</td>
<td>HCSO, DHHS, CWS Updates Ombuds System Review</td>
<td><a href="https://zoom.us/j/95157304259">https://zoom.us/j/95157304259</a> Meeting ID: 951 5730 4259, Password: 421540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6/4</td>
<td>1:30-3:00</td>
<td>CWS System Improvement Plan (SIP)</td>
<td><a href="https://zoom.us/j/96437951614">https://zoom.us/j/96437951614</a> Meeting ID: 964 3795 1614 Password: 421540</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6/11</td>
<td>1:30-3:30</td>
<td>Child Protection Reporting Guide (CPRG)</td>
<td><a href="https://zoom.us/j/94539411090">https://zoom.us/j/94539411090</a> Meeting ID: 945 3941 1090 Password: 421540</td>
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It is Ivy's hope that people can attend the segment they are interested in.

b) Welcome and Leadership Updates

i) Connie Beck, DHHS Director – Connie was unable to join but will hopefully be able to attend the upcoming meeting.

ii) Scott Hicks, Sheriff's Investigator – HCSO – Sheriff Honsal was unable to attend. Scott Hicks reported that things continue to progress in the Sheriff’s Office with regards to the AG Stipulated Judgment. The Department has had to make
some adjustments due to COVID-19, mostly with regards to social distancing and taking extra precautions. They continue to go out to calls and are working on continuing training.

**Question:** Has the Department seen a drop in referrals or calls out?

**Answer:** Scott reported that although he does not handle calls for service, he has not really seen a decline. Cross-reporting from CWS is steady, and the Department expects an increase in September when schools open up.

II. **CWS Program and AG Stipulated Project Updates**

a) **Amanda Winstead, Director of CWS,** reported:

- She has now been in her current role as Director for exactly one year. The most unexpected thing she has encountered, looking back, is that a large chunk of that time has been spent responding to one emergency or another (power outages, pandemics). But she is happy where she is at and things continue to move forward, even with these obstacles.

- COVID-19 impacted CWS operations and non-safety related in-person contacts were temporarily suspended and replaced with video contact. It feels like we are coming to the other side of shelter-in-place and are starting to get back out into the field. CWS never stopped completely, but are now re-establishing in-person visitations and other field contact.

- CWS continues to work internally and are moving through tasks with the judgment. We are working hard to establish long-range, sustainable change in these areas. CWS is in the process of hiring managers to help us develop programs we are excited about such as CQI, Workforce Development Training and ICWA Training.

- The NCCD Workload Study project has been suspended temporarily. A lot of work was done to get it going and then COVID hit, resulting in practice being done in other ways which doesn’t reflect typical practice. The data collection process that records time spent doing specific activities was suspended.

- We are still moving forward with the Child Protection Reporting Guide (CPRG). These is a meeting scheduled for June 11 to continue fine-tuning that guide.

b) **Nica Meggerson, Program Manager (Emergency Response - Screening, Investigation, Court Intake),** reported:

- As of Monday, ER has zero (0) backlogged referrals, meaning there are no investigations open over 40 days. This is unprecedented in Nica’s history with CWS and significant for many reasons. However, it’s unrealistic to expect to never have any referrals over 40 days again. She and her staff are very excited and are celebrating this accomplishment.

- Investigation numbers are down approximately 30% compared to prior to the shelter in place. Referrals assigned for an in-person response (investigated) have seen an increase in recent weeks, but overall reports being made to CWS are still down. There has been a slight increase in calls in recent weeks.
• The program never stopped investigating during COVID shelter-in-place, but were more creative with how in-person visits could be handled safely. They continue to use the partner social worker model, which provides back-up, feedback and support and has been very successful.

c) **Alison Phongsavath, Program Manager (Resource Family Approval (RFA), Adoptions, Placement)**, reported:

• Her programs are still functioning, but differently. Resource Family Approval is being done mostly through Zoom teleconferencing.

• RFA investigations are still occurring in person.

• Orientation/education has moved to a virtual platform but continue to happen. She recognized that providing these services virtually has allowed people to attend who might not otherwise be able to do so physically or due to transportation issues. It is possible that this is one of the things that might be carried forward after things go back to our future “normal.”

• Placement unit is still doing placement searches.

• For Adoptions, federal and state guidelines have allowed Zoom teleconference to be used for contacts.

d) **Sheryl Lyons, Program Manager (Independent Living Skills (ILS), Family Connection Center (FCC), Case Review, Extended Foster Care, Ombuds)** – Sheryl was unable to attend. Ivy reported:

• Sheryl’s programs are working on establishing more in-person visits and site-based services and are exploring ideas to maintain social distancing.

• The Family Connection Center is being moved to the Plaza Building.

• Extended Foster Care and ILS are doing mostly virtual visits and some in-person.

• Case review has continued to do their processes – they work well with phone and video chat.

e) **Cherie VonSavoye, Program Manager (Ongoing)**, reported:

• The Ongoing staff are mostly telecommuting and programs are still operating. They are limiting field work and doing mostly virtual visits. They are still going out for safety visits.

• They are doing a lot of virtual child and family team meetings, especially for families in rural areas.

• Staff continues to provide access to food and other things; with staff doing some deliveries. Phones are being provided for visitation, if necessary.

• She is currently working with tribes to identify and prioritize families as they start doing more field work.
III. Ombuds System Review Update – Amy Cone (DHHS Compliance and Quality Assurance (QA) Administrator) --

a) **Poll #2** – Ivy conducted a poll regarding knowledge about the Ombuds Office. It was revealed that people are aware of the Ombuds and there is room for improvement to educate community on how to contact them.

b) Amy reported that the Compliance and QA unit conducted a review of the CWS Ombuds Office to identify gaps and areas for improvement. She explained the System Review Process and that Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is always a goal.

c) Amy, Ivy gave a PowerPoint presentation which focused on a brief background of the Ombuds Office, the purpose of the System Review and explanation of that process, recommendations generated through the review and next steps.

d) **Poll #3** – Of the list provided, what are the most important recommendations generated by the report? The poll revealed that moving the Ombuds Office out from under CWS, creating standardized case file maintenance and enhancing the feedback loop for CQI were all important. Amy concluded they are doing work on all of the listed items.

e) Ivy explained that an additional step is to gather perspective from complainants (by survey), but this has been delayed due to COVID.

f) Ivy reported that there has been a decision to move the Ombuds Office out of CWS but that this, too, has been delayed due to the COVID situation. Ivy shared contact information for the Ombuds Office and offered that anyone who would like brochures can request them through the Ombuds Office or through Ivy, IBreen@co.humboldt.ca.us.

g) **Poll #4** – Do you want to hear more about the Ombuds Office at future Task Force meetings? The poll revealed a strong yes to wanting to hear more about implementations of recommendations.

h) **Susi Cha, Ombudsperson**, spoke briefly about how she is coming into her role and working with programs and staff.

IV. Public Input – Participants of the meeting were able to comment through the Chat area.

V. Closing Remarks and Dates for next Task Force Meeting

a) The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 4, 2020 from 1:30 to 3:00 PM by Zoom teleconference. The Agenda for that meeting is still be developed, but may be focused around the AG Stipulated Judgment.

b) In June, some of our NCCD partners will join to provide updated information on the CPRG.

c) Ivy thanked everyone for their contribution and participation. She hopes that people are able to participate in the meetings they are interested in.

d) Ivy wishes safety and wellness and hopes to see everyone in person soon!
HUMBOLDT COUNTY
COMMUNITY TASK FORCE
MAY 28, 2020
SYSTEM REVIEW OF THE CWS OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

COMPLETED BY:
QUALITY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

PRESENTED BY:
AMY CONE & IVY BREEN
TODAY’S OBJECTIVES

- Brief background of CWS Office of the Ombudsperson
- Purpose of Ombuds Office System Review
- System Review Process
- Recommendations
- Next Steps
Ombuds Office Background
- Attorney General Stipulated Judgment
- Required creation of a Complaint Procedure
- Within 60 days of Entry of Judgment (February 2018)
- Ombuds Office launched April 2018

Ombuds System Review Background
- Responsive to Community Concerns
- Initiated May 2019
- In depth review with findings and recommendations
- Improve service to community
“Within 60 days of the entry of Judgment, Defendant CWS shall create a complaint procedure that can be easily understood by and publicized to the community. This procedure shall include the timeframe for handling complaints submitted formally and informally, written and orally. CWS shall create a policy designating a supervisor who will be responsible for ensuring all complaints are investigated.”
Meeting Attorney General Stipulated Judgment Expectations
Doing many things well
Engaged
Implemented within extremely short timeframe
SYSTEM REVIEW PROCESS

- In-depth analysis to identify:
  - What is working? What needs adjusting? What better business processes can be incorporated?
- Developed Leading Questions
- Reviewed Regulations
- Researched Other Jurisdictions
- Conducted Interviews
- Conducted Case/Documentation Reviews
- Consultation/Training with State Foster Care Ombuds Office
LEADING QUESTIONS

- Is the role of the ombudsperson specifically outlined and known?
- Is the policy adequate or does it need to be updated? If so, how does that look?
- Concern has been raised regarding a lack of youth representation in the data from the ombudsperson. Was this due to marketing, tracking or other reasons? Are the services delivered in a youth-friendly way?
- What is the communication loopback to the complaining party?
- What follow-up is happening to show what is being done to address the situation?
- Is it appropriate to communicate back to a complainant if they do not have a valid release?
- Is there a lack of awareness of cultural or tribal systems by the Office of Ombudsperson?
- Is there an established system for improving the effectiveness of the Office of the Ombudsperson?
- Is the data presented from the Office of the Ombudsperson accurate and easy to understand?
- How is data being used to change practice?
- Are complaints that are founded or partially founded receiving and completing corrective action plans?
- What role do coaches play especially with the tribes?
- What are the educational efforts for understanding the role of and outcomes of the office? Are the roles and outcomes sufficiently meeting community expectations?
EXPECTATIONS

- Does every complaint need to filter through the Office of the Ombudsperson?
- Are partners demands being met?
- How is the Office of the Ombudsperson getting messaged?
- Data does not look right to audience and potentially reviewers of data have no confidence in the data.
  - Community does not understand the numbers?
- How to gain community trust?
- What is working/what can be tweaked/what can be removed?
- Outcome/finding letters have been discharged per county counsel?
  - Is this appropriate?
  - Revised practice not reflected in P&P.
- Annual reporting of outcomes and the process for the Office of the Ombudsperson.
  - Ongoing review of the Office of the Ombudsperson.
198 Complaints between April 2018 and June 2019

17 complaint cases reviewed in-depth

- Involved reports from parents: 6
- Involved report from tribal agency: 4
- Involved Reports from relatives: 3
- Involved reports from school personnel: 2
- Couldn’t be deciphered: 1
- Referred out to CACI process: 1
Move Ombuds Office from CWS chain of command
Update Policy and Procedure
Enhance Clarity of Role for the Ombudsperson
Implement Additional Training
- Staff
- Ombudsperson
- Create Standardized Case File Maintenance
- Implement Additional Marketing Strategies
- Enhance Feedback Loop for CQI Based on Ombuds Data
- Improve Communication
- Enhance Confidentiality Measures
- Create Closure Process with Complainant Follow-Up
REVIEW RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
(SLIDE 3 OF 3)

- Utilize Corrective Action Plan Tools
- Build Relationships
- Increase Involvement w/ Practice and Cultural Coach
- Ensure Youth Friendly Access
- Customer Service
NEXT STEPS

- Complainant Survey
- CWS and DHHS Administration Reviewed Recommendations
- Decision Made to Move Ombuds Office from CWS chain of command
- Move Determined as First Step for Implementation of Recommendations
- Delayed due to COVID-19
CWS OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

- Website: [https://humboldtgov.org/2360/CWS-Office-of-the-Ombudsperson](https://humboldtgov.org/2360/CWS-Office-of-the-Ombudsperson)
- Phone: 707-388-6777
- Email: CWSOmbudsperson@co.humboldt.ca.us
- Mailing address:
  - CWS Office of the Ombudsperson
  - 2430 Sixth St.
  - Eureka, CA 95501