

Quality and Productivity Commission
33rd Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Empowering Innovative Solutions"

2019 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: Child Abuse Reporting Electronic System (CARES)

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: NOVEMBER 15, 2017

(Must have been fully implemented for a minimum of at least one year - on or before July 1, 2018)

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 In October 2015, Senate Bill (SB) 478 was signed into law by the governor of California
 2 (CA), which allows participating counties to test the concept of an online reporting
 3 system with a group of mandated reporters (law enforcement agencies, schools,
 4 medical professionals, mental health clinicians, Probation, Coroner and Department of
 5 Children and Family Services (DCFS) employees) in non-urgent situations, with the
 6 hope of creating a more efficient reporting process. Los Angeles County (County) is the
 7 only county within CA, which opted to develop an online pilot. Child abuse calls in the
 8 County have increased by 23.6% in the last 10 years. To effectively handle the
 9 increasing number of calls being reported to the County's DCFS Child Protection
 10 Hotline (CPH), CPH, in conjunction with DCFS' Business Information Systems (BIS)
 11 Division, developed and designed the Child Abuse Reporting Electronic System
 12 (CARES), which is an on-line reporting system for use by mandated reporters, who may
 13 use the system in lieu of the initial telephone report and will not need to submit the
 14 required written follow-up report. Through implementation of the automated CARES,
 15 non-urgent child abuse reports are more expeditiously and appropriately addressed.

BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Department of Children and Family Services Child Protection Hotline 1933 S. Broadway, 5 th floor, Los Angeles, CA 90007		TELEPHONE NUMBER 213 765-7257
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Jennie Feria, Division Chief		TELEPHONE NUMBER 213 765-7257 EMAIL chanjb@dcfs.lacounty.gov
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Arman H. Depanion 	DATE 6/20/19	TELEPHONE NUMBER 213 739-6435 EMAIL depana@dcfs.lacounty.gov
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Bobby D. Cagle, Director 	DATE 6/20/19	TELEPHONE NUMBER 213 351-5600

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s)** of the project to the County. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success and **specify assessment time frame**. Use Arial 12 point font.

Challenge: The Department endeavors to address all reports of both non-urgent and urgent suspected child abuse/neglect. In alignment with that purpose, one of the defining goals and outcomes for DCFS CPH is to meet the demands of the increasing number of incoming calls from the CPH 800 number; however, in order to do this effectively, staff needed a mechanism to filter non-urgent calls, which do not need to be handled by a live person, to allow them to prioritize urgent calls requiring immediate attention. The main goal is ensuring children are safe.

Concurrently, goals for client satisfaction include:

- Increase in the number of mandated reporters using the online reporting system;
- Minimize number of technical related issues with using the online reporting system; and
- Overall positive satisfaction with using the online reporting system.

CARES allows the selected mandated reporters to report non-urgent suspected child abuse and/or neglect online. This option will decrease the wait time for mandated reporters and the CPH’s abandoned calls. CPH social workers are heavily impacted with the call volume associated with addressing the CPH’s incoming calls. Implementation of CARES was needed to further allow the social workers at the CPH to focus on incoming urgent calls.

Solution: To address operational challenges, on November 15, 2017, the Department’s BIS and CPH announced that CARES would be implemented as an online pilot reporting system. The CARES application can be used as an alternative for a mandated reporter to make suspected child abuse reports. This system allows the effective tracking of child abuse reports within the eReports application.

DCFS’s regional Children’s Social Workers (CSWs) can use CARES to report non-urgent abuse, companion and related referrals after their initial investigation. The added utility of being able to report online via CARES reduces call volume, wait time, and accelerates the initial assessment of child safety. CARES application can be used 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week. These reports can be referenced in historical data and produce management reports to assist in future management strategies and/or goals.

CARES has a user-friendly design that captures all of the necessary information required in a verbal report to the CPH. The system has an auto-save function built-in to reduce risk of data-loss after minutes of inactivity. Mandated reporters have the

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option to save a draft, complete and submit the report later, or delete reports created by mistake. If a report is not completed within 24 hours, mandated reporters will receive a reminder email prompting them to complete it within 48 hours. If a report is not completed within 48 hours of receipt of the email, a CPH staff will attempt to contact the mandated reporter and assist them in completing the report. Before submitting the report, mandated reporters can review, go back, and edit information. The system automatically generates an email receipt after a report is received and assigned a unique report number. Mandated reporters can also view a list of reports that were previously submitted and print these reports as confidential record.

Non-urgent reports submitted by mandated reporters in CARES are then transmitted to the eReports application for CPH staff to review and assess. CPH CSWs assess and select an outcome for each report in the eReports application and Supervising Children’s Social Workers (SCSWs) review and approve the report processed by CSWs. After the SCSW’s approval, report assessment and outcome are automatically sent to the mandated reporter via email. A record is then generated in the Automated Referral Entry System (ARES). If, post assessment, the outcome is a consultation, then further investigation will be considered by CPH staff.

Benefit: The automated CARES has exceeded DCFS’ expectations. As of December 25, 2018, there have been 7,065 logins to the CARES system since implementation. Over 2,404 people have registered to use the system and 1,618 reports have been submitted online. Over 831 online reports were submitted in the first 11 months of the pilot. The one-year review with the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) on the CARES reporting pilot revealed 86% of reports completed (vs. incomplete reports). CARES screened out 1,168 as Immediate Response. Reporters were stopped at the initial screening questions and instructed to call the CPH 800 number to make a verbal report, which indicates that the filtering methods are effective in ensuring emergencies are not entered into the online system.

Automating CARES to allow for an alternative way to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect has had a positive impact for a selected group of mandated reporters. It further aligns with DCFS’ objective to promote better service in other counties throughout CA.

Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, highlighted the value of CARES by saying, “This is an important new system to allow DCFS social workers to quickly distinguish between urgent and non-urgent calls[.]” She further acknowledged that “CARES streamlines our Child Protection Hotline, and ensures that social workers can respond to emergency situations as quickly as possible. I’m proud that LA County is the first county in the State to take advantage of this program.”

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Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only. Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how. Use Arial 12 point font.

County Mission: Establish superior services through inter-Departmental and cross-sector collaboration that measurably improves the quality of life for the people and communities of Los Angeles County

Child safety remains the leading priority – specifically for those that are vulnerable in being abused, neglected or exploited. CARES meets an essential need of timely child protection in response to a growing volume of child abuse reports from the community.

Goal I: Make Investments That Transform Lives

Strategy I.2 - Enhance Our Delivery of Comprehensive Interventions

In an active effort to improve the quality of services provided to children and families, DCFS innovated technology via CARES. This web-based system was developed as a continuous effort to leverage technology to improve the quality of service. CARES has diverted non-urgent reports from the phone lines and minimized caller wait times, thereby enabling CSWs to more expeditiously handle urgent child abuse reports.

GOAL II: Foster Vibrant and Resilient Communities

Strategy II.2 – Support the Wellness of our Communities

CARES allows for convenient reporting of child abuse and neglect, encouraging mandated reporters to report concerns regarding our most vulnerable population. The need of children and families are expeditiously and appropriately addressed due to implementation of the option to report abuse online. Detection and early intervention into child abuse dynamics can reduce the long-term effects of trauma sustained from abuse and neglect. This supports wellness of children and families in our communities.

GOAL III. Realize Tomorrow’s Government Today

Strategy III.2 - Embrace Digital Government for the Benefit of our Internal Customers and Communities

III.2.3 Prioritize and Implement Technology Initiatives That Enhance Service Delivery and Increase Efficiency

CARES assists with triaging reports of child abuse, improving efficiency for social workers and enabling them to provide better services to children being victimized and to those reporting child abuse. The system eliminates long wait times for select mandated reporters in filing non-urgent reports. The innovative CARES is the first of its kind in CA and given the success of this approach, CDSS is likely to use the DCFS’ model to ensure better service to children and families throughout the State.

This system merits consideration for recognition due to its successful efforts to *establish superior services via cross-sector (social work and technology) collaboration that measurably improves the life for people and communities of the County.*

Please consider this submission as a candidate to receive the Process Improvement Award.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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Although DCFS has not achieved cost savings or cost avoidance, no capital costs were incurred from the CPH management team in the development and implementation of the automated CARES platform due to leveraging the skill sets of BIS Division’s in-house staff. However, as a requirement of the pilot, an independent evaluator had to be secured to assess the identified outcome measures set by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Child Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), and DCFS. Through a sole source contract with UCLA, independent evaluation services determine the effectiveness, validity in assessing safety and the overall quality of the service provided by the pilot program. As previously mentioned, the one-year review with UCLA on the CARES online reporting pilot revealed 86% of reports completed (vs. incomplete reports).

The cost to hire UCLA as an outside evaluator to evaluate the CARES pilot is \$30,000 per year, funded by the County, per requirements provided by CA. UCLA will evaluate the CARES pilot project for three years. The State of California did not allot any funding to Los Angeles County for the development of the system or the outside evaluator.