

Quality and Productivity Commission  
**27<sup>th</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
*"Saluting County Excellence"*

**11.0**

**2013 APPLICATION**

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

**NAME OF PROJECT: DCFS DATA DASHBOARD OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

**DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION:** NOVEMBER 2011  
(Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before June 30, 2012)

**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. Summarize the problem, solution, and benefits of the project in a clear and direct manner

1 **Challenge:** DCFS' workload is large, complex and multifaceted, with close to 200,000  
2 calls annually to the Child Protection Hotline and about 15,000 children placed in Out-  
3 of-Home Care. DCFS measures performance by three key areas: Child Safety,  
4 Permanence, and Child and Family Well-Being.  
5 **Solution:** DCFS developed the Performance Management Data Dashboard and an  
6 associated business review of agency statistics (DCFS Stat). The dashboard provides  
7 all managers and staff updates on key performance indicators, which enables  
8 performance management, staff accountability, and stimulates creative problem solving.  
9 Federal, State and locally defined Performance Indicators are displayed with daily  
10 updates so all levels of staff in DCFS may look at broad departmental performance or  
11 may drill down into Bureau, Office, Unit or even line worker level metrics. In the Stat  
12 process, the Data Analytics Team (DAT) reviews data and prepares cogent questions,  
13 culminating in a large monthly departmental meeting that is preceded by local meetings.  
14 **Benefits:** Managers discuss data, trends and efforts to improve performance.  
15 Improvement has been achieved on several levels of many performance indicators.

(1) ESTIMATED/ACTUAL ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ESTIMATED/ACTUAL ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ESTIMATED/ACTUAL ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) TOTAL ESTIMATED/ACTUAL BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$ 530,400	\$ 50,000	\$	\$ 580,400	
SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Department of Children and Family Services 12440 Imperial Hwy, Norwalk Norwalk, CA 90650			TELEPHONE NUMBER	
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Cecilia Custodio			TELEPHONE NUMBER (562) 345-6607 EMAIL ccustodio@dcfs.lacounty.gov	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE <small>(PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME)</small> Tricia J. Denson		DATE	TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 739-6435 EMAIL densot@dcfs.lacounty.gov	
SIGNATURE ON FILE				
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Philip Browning 			TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 351-5600	

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**FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY:** Describe the **Challenge, Solution, and Benefits** of the project, written in plain language. Include a discussion of the technology and linkage to the County Strategic Plan. The description should identify Performance Measures.

**CHALLENGE**

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) work is guided by federal and state law, augmented by county policy which is often more stringent than the guiding federal or state mandates. Given DCFS' huge, complex and legally mandated workload, it must maintain extensive electronic records of transactions in order to provide compliance and performance reports to state and federal child welfare administration, as well as the Board of Supervisors and other internal and external stakeholders. In view of DCFS responsibilities to its client children and families, it must continually assess performance of many indicators, not only to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, but also to make sure that its programs and practices are effectively meeting the needs of children and families.

DCFS ultimate performance and success as an agency is dependent on accurate evaluation of the many key performance areas of Child Safety, Permanence, and Child and Family Well-Being, and evaluating the metrics over time and across 18 regional services offices. Prior to development of the DCFS Data Dashboard and related DCFS Stat process, DCFS developed data from the statewide CWS/CMS application in a "piecemeal" fashion, with reports and data made available to managers in their areas of supervision and responsibility. There was minimal sharing of data across areas of responsibility or between managers and lower level supervisors and even line staff.

Successful strategies used in one office or bureau typically were not shared with other offices or bureaus and there was not a department wide application, process or consistent methodology. DCFS required monthly data to: 1. identify, define and calculate key performance indicators; 2. evaluate the data and identify performance deficits, trends and outcomes; and 3. create a common set of expectations across bureaus, offices, units, and staff. Prior to the DCFS Data Dashboard and the associated DCFS Stat process, offices and staff did their best to highlight good performance or to "tell their story" behind the data. Explanations are extremely useful in understanding and developing strategies for improved performance because statistics don't always tell the correct or thorough story of what is happening in a child welfare case.

**SOLUTION**

In order to make more effective use of the key performance data collected, DCFS maximized and expanded existing technology and developed new business evaluation processes. DCFS had collected data and developed numerous reports for many years using various technologies (including Cognos Business Intelligence (BI) software) that is accessible to managers and staff via the DCFS intranet site called "The Site Reports"

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<http://dcfsaspnet.dcfslacounty.gov/site/>. Using Cognos BI and other tools, DCFS developed a “data dashboard” and located it prominently on “The Site Reports” so everyone in the department can access it and view performance results. Prior Cognos reports that tracked key performance indicators were redesigned and moved into the new data dashboard while new reports were added.

New dashboard functionality and graphics were developed to identify federal, state or local standards and to explain the calculation methodologies used to calculate progress and dynamically display trends. Displaying summary information with the ability to drill down from the Department level to the Bureau, Office, Section, Unit or even an individual caseworker level was developed and implemented with the assistance of the Internal Services Department / Internet Development Division (ISD/IDD). These new features enable analysis of broad, macro data at the director/management level, while also enabling micro level consultations between a line social worker and his or her supervisor. DCFS staff now has the best of both reporting worlds: broad, Department-level data, and micro, individual caseworker level data. In developing these new Stat Business Processes and the Data Dashboard, discussions were held with all levels of DCFS staff to get their input on what they needed to better perform their job duties. The Union was included in discussions to ensure transparency, openness and inclusion of ideas which might enhance the processes.

As the dashboard was being developed and refined, a business process similar to the DPSS Stat Process was created, called DCFS Stat. In this process, the dashboard data is updated by the 10th of each month, and shortly thereafter a Data Analytic Team meets to review and discuss the data. This team develops relevant and helpful questions designed to facilitate discussions about the progress, strategies, and factors reflected by the data. Later in the month a large meeting (over 100 attendees, including the Director and the Deputy Directors) of managers and staff from throughout the department is convened to discuss the progress, to answer questions developed, and to address follow up questions or concerns. In addition, multiple regional DCFS office “DCFS Stat” processes convene to discuss local data in advance of the large monthly DCFS Stat meeting.

The DCFS Data Dashboard takes the ongoing mountain of DCFS data, sorts it, organizes it, and makes it available in an attractive, easily understood and user friendly application that is available to staff at all levels of the department. The DCFS stat process is the vehicle to make effective use of the data that shows progress on the DCFS Performance Metrics. Combining the DCFS Data Dashboard tool and the Stat business process helps staff focus on performance, ongoing improvement, and accountability at all departmental levels. Ultimately, improved performance means better services and outcomes for children and families.

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**BENEFITS**

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN (DETAIL IS REQUIRED FOR COUNTY DEPARTMENTS):

The DCFS Data Dashboard and Stat process strongly meets the County's Strategic Plan Goal of *Organizational Effectiveness*.

While change in the area of child welfare is often a difficult and slow process, by developing a reliable set of data and focusing on key department outcome measures, the DCFS Stat process and Data Dashboard have helped to improve DCFS performance as shown in many metrics. The Data Dashboard provides management and staff updated performance data on numerous indicators of child safety, permanence, and well-being. A detailed DCFS Stat process makes use of this data to enable performance-based management decisions through using local DCFS offices to address internal performance issues and a large department-wide meeting to address Countywide performance concerns.

The data-rich dashboard and the associated Stat process have shown real and tangible benefits. For example, in one two year period between 2010 and 2012, departmental performance on the Safety Indicators of No Recurrence of Maltreatment and Timely Contacts – Referrals, improved 6.09% and 8.51%, respectively. In addition, among the 28 Performance Indicators displayed on the dashboard and its “heat map” scorecard displaying color coded scores (Green indicating top 1/3 of departmental performance; Yellow denoting the middle 1/3 of departmental performance; and Red indicating the bottom 1/3 of departmental performance), overall more indicators show “Green” scores (indicating meeting the standard) than when the dashboard and Stat process was implemented in November of 2011. Data on work in child welfare, concerning families working with DCFS and community service providers to resolve complex social, behavioral and emotional problems, can vary monthly and not all areas of analysis have shown continual improvement since the DCFS Dashboard and Stat process has been in place, but the overall performance trend is improving, and areas of needed focus and resources are now more clearly defined by objective data. Ultimately, the DCFS Dashboard and the Stat process benefits DCFS client children and families through an ongoing departmental commitment to using data for accountability and performance management.

**COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFIT):** If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. 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.

**Cost Avoidance:** Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes.

**Cost Savings:** A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes.

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

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\$ 530,400	\$50,000	\$	\$	<input type="checkbox"/>

**ANNUAL= 12 MONTHS ONLY**

Given that IBM consultants typically charge \$255+ per hour, a six month engagement would have cost DCFS approximately \$530,400 for two consultants to develop the Stats Dashboard. Since DCFS IT staff performed the development work internally, the costs were already encumbered in DCFS budget. Thus, DCFS avoided consultancy costs by having their own staff perform the work and work with ISD/IDD as needed for technical guidance.

Ongoing contractor expenses of approximately \$50,000 annually are avoided because DCFS IT Staff can maintain the DCFS Data Dashboard, the data warehouse of data and all the data feeds from the various applications that feed data. As enhancements are requested or as problems detected, the DCFS IT staff is there to provide the necessary support and they can call on ISD/IDD anytime.

In addition, but hard to quantify, since this is for measuring child safety, permanency and child well-being in the area of child welfare, the DCFS programmer's knowledge and expertise regarding DCFS business practices saved considerable time and money that would have been required for contract programmers to learn the system requirements. The Dashboard design was intentional to save staff time by providing one system to display many statistics with a consistent calculation methodology. As a result of this design, it has already eliminated many of the numerous ad hoc reports previously requested by DCFS management.

Ultimately, the DCFS Data Dashboard saved DCFS and the County significant county funds by having a internal staff create the application instead of spending money on outside contractors. The dashboard has greatly reduced and almost eliminated the need for staff to spend time preparing numerous and sometimes duplicative, ad hoc reports for reporting on performance metrics.

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**FOR COLLABORATING DEPARTMENTS ONLY**

*(For single department submissions, do not include this page)*

<b>DEPARTMENT NO. 2 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b> Internal Services Department / Internet Development Division 1100 N. Eastern Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90063	
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> Celina Ortiz 1100 N. Eastern Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90063 (323) 267-3111 cortiz@isd.lacounty.gov  <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">SIGNATURE ON FILE</div>	<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>  TOM TINDALL  <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">SIGNATURE ON FILE</div>
<b>DEPARTMENT NO. 3 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b>	
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT NO. 4 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b>	
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT NO. 5 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b>	
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>