Quality and Productivity Commission

28th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program

"Los Angeles County: Ahead of the Curve"

2014 APPLICATION

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

NAME OF PROJECT: MEDIATION WORKS

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: JULY 1, 2000
(Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before June 30, 2013)

PROJECT STATUS: X Ongoing _____ One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? _ Yes X 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.

Employment litigation is a costly option for the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). For every dollar paid to employees through litigation, at least another dollar is paid to attorneys involved in handling claims. In addition to the direct costs of litigation, DCFS is bound to spend significant resources in designing preventive and corrective personnel practices to minimize litigation exposure. These costs significantly affect the Department's resources available for hiring additional staff and expanding services.

DCFS' participation in the Department of Human Resources' (DHR) Dispute Resolution Mediation Program has proven to be an effective solution. The Department has resolved numerous employment discrimination, harassment, and retaliation complaints through the Program and, according to DHR, went from incurring $1.2 million in employment litigation expenses in fiscal year 2011-2012 to incurring only $300,000 in 2012-2013. DCFS' participation in the Program has also positively affected workplace harmony and productivity. DHR has commended DCFS' participation in the Program.

(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
$0.00	$900,000	$ 0.00	$900,000	☐

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Children and Family Services 425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020	**TELEPHONE NUMBER** (213) 351-5850
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Keisha Lakey-Wright	**TELEPHONE NUMBER** (213) 351-5535 **EMAIL** lakeyk@dcfs.lacounty.gov
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Tricia Denson **DATE** 1/15/14	**TELEPHONE NUMBER** (213) 739-6435 **EMAIL** densot@dcfs.lacounty.gov
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Philip L. Browning **DATE**	**TELEPHONE NUMBER** (213) 351-~~5506~~ 5600

We Support Plain Language

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **Challenge, Solution, and Benefits** of the project.

Since April 2009, when the Department entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of Affirmative Action Compliance (now part of DHR) to become part of the Employment Discrimination Investigations Shared Services Program, DCFS has received over 1,000 employee complaints of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. These complaints have negatively impacted productivity as some employees who perceive inequities in the workplace have gone out on extended leaves of absence, transferred to other locations within DCFS or to other departments, or continue in their assignments so disgruntled they bring down morale in the office and do not work at their full potential.

The mediation process promotes communication, cooperation, and the restoration of relationships by negotiating mutually agreed upon settlements. In mediation, the underlying causes of the problem are examined. Since complainants are encouraged to tell his or her own story in his or her own way, emotions are acknowledged, thus promoting movement towards settlement. Participants in DCFS mediations report satisfaction in the mediation process mainly because of their active involvement and higher commitment to upholding the settlement. In addition, mediation is a faster and less intimidating process than going to court. Since there are no strict rules, there is flexibility to allow the involved parties to find the best path to agreement.

Mediation has been proven to be very cost-efficient for the Department. In conclusion, the cost-savings to DCFS from engaging in mediation is substantial not only in financial costs but also in the positive impact this program has had on DCFS' staff and productivity. Just recently, DHR indicated that DCFS' participation in the Program is exemplary.

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

By participating in the Dispute Resolution Mediation Program and agreeing to mediate almost all employee complaints in an effort to realize significant cost-savings by reducing litigation costs, the Department is adhering to the following Los Angeles County (County) Strategic Plans:

- Goal I: Operational Effectiveness: Strategic Initiative 1: Human Resources Management: Continue ongoing projects to reduce risk for all County departments: Continue Strengthening Human Resources Services: *Upgrade technical skills of human resources…establish DHR service level agreements with all County departments.*

- Goal I: Operational Effectiveness: Strategic Initiative 2: Risk Management: Continue ongoing projects to reduce risk for all County departments: Strengthen Loss Control Efforts: *Replace or upgrade liability claims system, improve data analysis to better target loss control efforts at the department level, and implement targeted loss control efforts for key departments with significant exposures.*

DCFS' continued involvement and participation in the Dispute Resolution Mediation Program also adheres to DCFS' Strategic Plan: Goal III: Strengthen Organizational Operations and Systems: *Ensure an organization where all components operate as an integrative and supportive system.*