



Quality and Productivity Commission  
**30<sup>th</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
*"Heritage of Excellence"*

**2016 APPLICATION**

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

**NAME OF PROJECT: THE ARC PROGRAM: CLOSING THE DISPARITY IN BENEFITS**

**1<sup>st</sup> FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY:** Describe the **Challenge, Solution, and Benefits** of the project. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made. Use Arial 12 point font

**Challenge:**

In the County of Los Angeles, caregivers who provide care for non-federally eligible children may apply for California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) benefits. The CalWORKs per child cash benefit is significantly lower than the basic Foster Care (FC) rate. The ARC Program addresses the disparity between the CalWORKs cash benefit and the basic FC rate for federally eligible children that are placed with relative caregivers. Furthermore, the ARC Program provides assistance to caregivers that would not qualify for CalWORKs or were hesitant to apply.

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) faced the following challenges for implementing the program: (1) combining two programs that are serviced through two different departments – Foster care program administered by DCFS and the CalWORKs program administered by the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS); (2) outreach to a large population of caregivers serviced by either department; and (3) developing a plan to implement and administer the ARC Program within strict timelines.

**Solution:**

DCFS' innovative approach to implementing the program consisted of initiating a collaborative effort with DPSS to organize and lead a task force comprised of 32 DCFS and DPSS staff. This task force expedited the review of the base relative population of 3,800 children who may have potentially been eligible for the ARC Program. The task force was disbanded August 31, 2015 and two ARC Maintenance Units were created within DCFS effective September 1, 2015.

DCFS' approach to implementing the ARC Program was unique in comparison to other child welfare departments in California counties because the County of Los Angeles has the largest relative caregiver population in the State. Also, the program's implementation involved the collaborative efforts of two departments – DPSS and DCFS. Additionally, DCFS implemented the program in the County of Los Angeles with the optional retroactive option. This greatly enhanced the level of service provided by allowing eligible relative caregivers to benefit from receiving retroactive ARC payments from January 1, 2015 through May 31, 2015. These payments were provided in addition to the ongoing payments starting with the implementation month of June 2015.

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As of July 1, 2014, the County of Los Angeles' base relative caregiver population was 3,800 children. In order to expedite the review of cases, an ARC Task Force was developed. The ARC Task Force operated from April 1, 2015 to August 31, 2015 and included employees from DCFS and DPSS. DCFS headed the Task Force; however, joined by the mutual goal of offering much needed aid to child clients and their families, both DCFS and DPSS collaborated seamlessly to fully implement the program as soon as possible. The Task Force was comprised of a Human Services Administrator I (HSA I), three Eligibility Supervisors (ESs), four Intermediate Typist Clerks (ITCs), and 23 Eligibility Workers (EWs). Training was developed by DCFS and provided to the Task Force.

While the Task Force was operational, DCFS developed the implementation plan for the ongoing initial determination and maintenance processes. The guiding principle in developing these processes was to minimize the impact to relative caregivers, to ensure continuity of care and expeditious delivery of benefits. The process begins with the FC Intake EW determining the initial eligibility of AFDC-FC. In the event the case is found to be non-federally eligible, the same EW evaluates the case for ARC Program benefits. The ARC approved case is then transferred to the ARC Maintenance Units and assigned to a case-carrying EW. The maintenance units are comprised of DCFS-only staff with a total of one HSA I, two ESs, ten EWs, and two ITCs.

**Benefits**

Outreach information and the ARC Application (ARC 1) were sent to the base population. Of the 3,800 children, 1,529 cases were initially approved for the ARC Program and 909 cases were eligible for AFDC-FC; in total, 2,438 children were able to receive benefits from the Task Force's review. In addition, 1,294 of the approved cases received retroactive payments from January 1, 2015 through May 31, 2015. As such, over half of the identified population was no longer affected by the disparity between rates paid to relative caregivers for children who were ineligible and eligible for AFDC-FC. Based on its base population, the County of Los Angeles was allocated 15 million dollars from the State General Fund. From implementation to May 2016, approximately \$18 million was paid out to caregivers. The number of children that benefited from the ARC Program in comparison to other counties is massive, as other counties' combined ARC caseload is approximately 400.

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**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN (DETAIL IS REQUIRED FOR COUNTY DEPARTMENTS): Use Arial 12 point font**

**County Mission: To Enrich Lives through Effective and Caring Service**

The Approved Relative Caregiver Program merits consideration for recognition due to the both the tireless effort that was put forth in, and innovative approach to, benefitting the children of the County of Los Angeles.

**Goal 1: Operational Effectiveness/Fiscal Sustainability**

The County of Los Angeles relative caregiver base population, as of July 1, 2014, was 3,800 children. In order to expedite the review of cases, an ARC Task Force was developed. The ARC Task Force operated from April 1, 2015, to August 31, 2015 and included employees from DCFS and DPSS. DCFS headed the Task Force; however, joined by the mutual goal of offering much needed aid to child clients and their families, both DPSS and DCFS collaborated seamlessly to fully implement the program as soon as possible. The ARC Program benefit amount is comprised of the CalWORKs benefit and the State General Fund (SGF). This allows counties to leverage CalWORKs dollars and expand the use of their allotted SGF.

**Goal 2: Community Support and Responsiveness**

**Strategic Initiative 1: Customer Services Innovation/Enhancement**

The ARC Program bridges the gap in payment between the CalWORKS and AFDC-FC Programs. Aside from opting-in to the program, the County of Los Angeles also chose to participate with the retro-active option, which benefitted 1,294 children that received up to an additional five months of retroactive benefits. In California, the County of Los Angeles has approximately 50% of the children in out-of-home care. The number of children that benefitted from the ARC Program in comparison to other counties is massive. The County has over 1,900 approved ARC cases, while other counties' combined ARC caseload is approximately 400.

**Goal 3: Integrated Service Delivery**

DCFS continues to strive to better serve the children by continuously evaluating the outcomes of the program and participating in collaborative meetings with the California Department of Social Services, the County Welfare Department Association, and other child welfare agencies and counties.

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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. 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.

**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.

(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**



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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>	
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES	
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>  KIMBERLY WHITE  EMAIL: <a href="mailto:KIMBERLYWHITE@DPSS.LACOUNTY.GOV">KIMBERLYWHITE@DPSS.LACOUNTY.GOV</a>	<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>  SHERYL SPILLER  EMAIL: <a href="mailto:SHERYLSPELLER@DPSS.LACOUNTY.GOV">SHERYLSPELLER@DPSS.LACOUNTY.GOV</a>
<b>DEPARTMENT NO. 3 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b>	
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>  EMAIL: _____	<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>  EMAIL: _____
<b>DEPARTMENT NO. 4 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b>	
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>  EMAIL: _____	<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>  EMAIL: _____
<b>DEPARTMENT NO. 5 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b>	
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>  EMAIL: _____	<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>  EMAIL: _____
<b>DEPARTMENT NO. 6 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b>	
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>  EMAIL: _____	<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>  EMAIL: _____
<b>DEPARTMENT NO. 7 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b>	
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>  EMAIL: _____	<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>  EMAIL: _____