



## Linkages – Service Coordination Partnership May 2011

Linkages is a statewide initiative with the goal of effectively integrating CalWORKs and Child Welfare Services. The County of Los Angeles joined the Statewide Linkages initiative in 2005 as an interdepartmental partnership between the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Department of Public Social Services (DPSS).

Los Angeles Linkages is designed to address common barriers that limit parents' ability to parent and their ability to work from a prevention and intervention perspective. Linkages was implemented through a progressive rollout, and effective November 2009, Linkages was fully implemented countywide. The following strategies are part of practice to enhance service delivery, strengthen families through economic self-sufficiency and focus on child safety:

- Enhanced service coordination for CalWORKs families with a DCFS Family Preservation (FP) plan by integrating DPSS expertise into DCFS' FP Multi-Disciplinary Case Planning family meetings, providing GAIN services and including DCFS FP activities in participants' Welfare-to-Work plans.
- Enhanced service coordination to provide GAIN services to CalWORKs participants whose aid was terminated due to the children's removal from the home and who have a Family Reunification Plan in place with DCFS.
- DCFS staff screens families/individuals for potential eligibility for CalWORKs/General Relief during Emergency Response visits and in their ongoing case work where economic need appears to be a factor. Potentially eligible families/individuals are referred to appropriate District Offices with a Linkages DCFS 5122 referral for expedited intake process.
- Integration of CalWORKs expertise into DCFS' Team Decision Making (TDM) family meetings and case consultations outside TDM meetings, through the collocated CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work worker at DCFS. GSWs assess service needs and coordinate DPSS services for mutual families and families determined potentially eligible for DPSS administered programs.
- Service coordination for CalWORKs homeless families with an open DCFS court/voluntary Family Maintenance case.

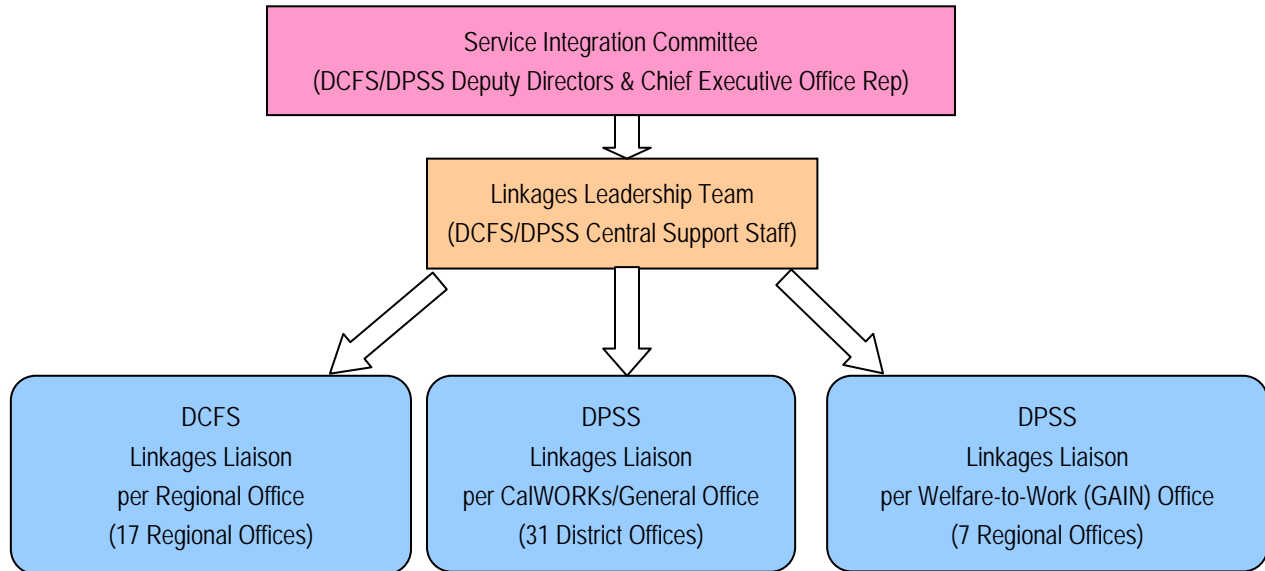
Linkages is centered on practice and work in progress includes: refining and expanding Linkages to serve more families mutual to both departments; working toward stronger coordinated case planning; automated data tracking for outcome oriented reporting; and creating deeper collaborations by establishing strategic leadership hubs throughout the County to sustain Linkages on a countywide level within both DCFS and DPSS.

Support from leadership is a key element in championing Linkages. With support from the County's Deputy Chief Executive Officer and DCFS & DPSS' Directors, the Linkages leadership structure in place to provide support operationally starts with the Service Integration Committee (SIC); SIC is the larger of two central decision-making bodies for Linkages. Under the guidance of SIC, the Linkages Leadership Team (LLT) which is comprised of DCFS and DPSS managers, provides central support to Linkages implementation and ongoing operational oversight. LLT being the smaller of two central



decision-making bodies provides support to line office through a network of liaisons/coordinators at the regional office level.

**Linkages Leadership**



**County of Los Angeles Stats**

Geography: 4,084 square miles

Population: 10,441,080 (January 2010)

DPSS/DCFS February 2011 Data:

	DCFS	DPSS
Number of Offices	17 Regional Offices	31 CalWORKs/General Relief Offices 7 GAIN Regional Offices
Monthly Caseload	11,220 (Referrals) 33,133 (Cases <sup>1</sup> )	178,896 (CalWORKs) 105,721 (General Relief)
Linkages Protocols (# of the protocol reflects the order listed on Page 1)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>108</b> CalWORKs parents were receiving service coordination for Family Preservation through Welfare-to-Work (GAIN).</li> <li>2. <b>108</b> parents with a Family Reunification (FR) in place with DCFS were receiving CalWORKs FR service coordination.</li> <li>3. <b>118</b> families/individuals/caretaker relatives connected with a CalWORKs/General Relief office for an expedited intake application processing, via Linkages referral DCFS 5122.</li> <li>4. Through integration of CalWORKs expertise in DCFS' TDM family meetings, the co-located CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work workers (17 total) attended <b>338</b> TDM meetings for mutual families – AND – conducted <b>1,301</b> case consultations outside TDMs.</li> </ol>	

<sup>1</sup> Includes Emergency Response (open services cases), Family Maintenance, Family Reunification, and Permanent Placement & Adoption Services.