

Appendix E5: Data Sources to Consider

A key step in the Exploration Phase is to clearly identify the problem areas of interest. Examining existing data sources, and collecting new data as needed, is crucial to ensure that the problem is well understood and correctly addressed. Agencies often have access to large quantities of data, but may not be sure how to utilize it effectively. Below are some suggested data sources.

- 1. Reports available from CWS-CMS through the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP)** [University of California at Berkeley (UCB) and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS),
http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/ReportDefault.aspx] -
 - a.** This is a good site to start with, as descriptive data on areas of interest can be examined, and very little training is required.
 - b.** The reports cover many different topic areas.
 - c.** Reports can typically be generated by age, gender, and racial/ethnic groups.
 - d.** Comparisons can be made between counties and the state, as well as across time periods.
- 2. Existing annual reports** - Board of Supervisors reports, Board of Directors reports, etc.
- 3. Data from Community Self-Assessments (CSAs) and System Improvement Plans (SIPs)**
- 4. Data from Structured Decision Making (SDM) or other decision support systems**
- 5. Reports to funders** - Foundations and other funding groups typically require periodic reports on process and outcomes which may contain relevant information.
- 6. Other databases to which data is being provided** - Efforts to Outcomes, First 5 databases, etc.
- 7. Data on referrals to outside providers** (e.g., mental health, substance abuse, etc.) - if these are tracked
- 8. Research projects** - Has the agency participated in any research projects, or authorized any research with their clients, that may have applicable datasets?
- 9. Chart reviews** - These can be done on hard copy or electronic charts by examining a subset of charts, randomly selected from a specific population (e.g., children, ages 0-3, in out-of-home care over 30 days, etc.).
- 10. Focus groups** - These can be conducted on the target population to further refine the problem area. Also, it is important to determine if any relevant focus groups have been done, either by the agency or involving agency clients.

11. Surveys - Are there existing surveys that may have information of interest? Existing surveys such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) may be sources of relevant county-level data. The Census surveys also provide relevant information and can be publicly accessed. Many agencies obtain satisfaction surveys from clients on a periodic basis that may contain useful information. Finally, it may be necessary to conduct a brief survey to obtain specific information.