



**Mandated Reporting to  
Community Supporting  
Task Force**  
*Communities Keeping Children Safe  
and Families Together*

# Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting

## Shifting from Reporting Families to Supporting Families

Child Welfare Policy Roundtable

December 6, 2024

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## Agenda

- Why This Matters
- Seizing the Moment
- Creating the Task Force
- The Recommendations and Report
- Moving Forward

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# WHY THIS MATTERS

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**Black/African American, Native American, and Latino families are significantly more likely to be reported to child abuse hotlines**

**1 in 3 Children**

in the U.S. is subject to an investigation of child abuse by the time they turn 18.<sup>1</sup>

**1 in 2 Black & Native American Children**

in California is subject to an investigation of child abuse by the time they turn 18.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> American Journal of Public Health, 2017  
<sup>2</sup> California Legislative Analyst's Office, 2024

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## Additional Harms of Mandated Reporting

- **Fear of Asking for Support:** Families share that they often do not ask for help due to fear of how their situation will be perceived, and that they could lose their child.
- **Trauma and Stigma:** Families talk about being traumatized by child welfare investigations and stigmatized by allegations that follow them, even if the outcome of the investigation did not result in formal system involvement
- **CWS System Overburdened:** Majority of reports to the child welfare hotline do not need formal system involvement; as a result, the child welfare workforce is overburdened and unable to focus on referrals that do require formal attention

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## SEIZING THE MOMENT

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## Momentum Toward Mandated Reporting Reform

### Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA):

- Federal government opened door to family strengthening
- California's plan takes even broader approach to investing in prevention

### Prevention and Early Intervention Committee of California's Child Welfare Council:

- Leading prevention efforts since 2007, with integral role in CA's FFPS plan
- Advanced the Community Pathway Recommendations to pave the way for mandated reporting reform and community pathway development



**AB 2085 (2022):** California narrows the legal definition of neglect to exclude economic disadvantage and require substantial risk of harm

### Safe & Sound Issue Brief in Partnership with the Office of Child Abuse Prevention, 2022



### Citizen Review Panel Recommendations, 2022



### LAO Report: California's Child Welfare System Addressing Disproportionalities and Disparities, April 2024



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## Creating the MRCS Task Force

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## Task Force Composition

The Task Force is comprised of **32 diverse members** across 7 sectors and 11 counties

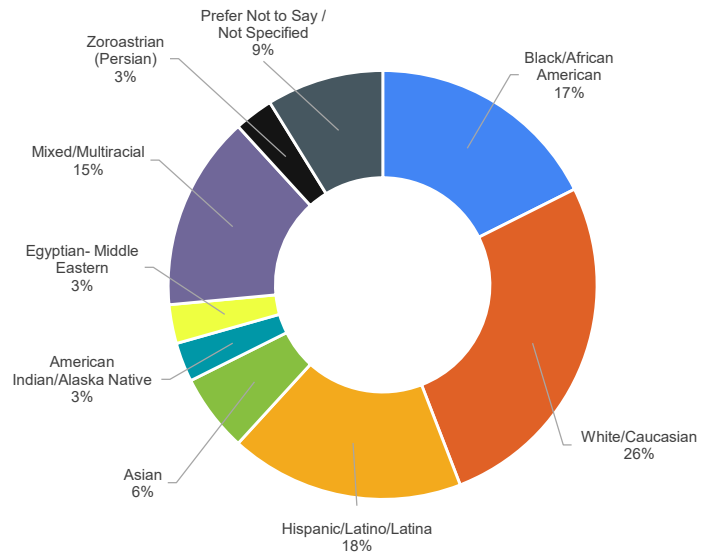
### Lived Experience

- **88%** work, have worked in, or have personal experience with the child welfare system.
- **28%** of had or have lived experience with child protective services as a youth or parent/caregiver.

### Mandated Reporter Experience

- **59%** are Mandated Reporters.
- **94%** work, have worked, or have personal experience with Mandated Reporting laws and/or practices.

Task Force Composition by Race and Ethnicity\*



\* Note: percentages add up to more than 100% as some members may fall into multiple categories

## Subcommittee Composition

Six subcommittees that included 32 Task Force members and **68 cross-sector Subcommittee members** across 24 counties (including 32 Task Force members)

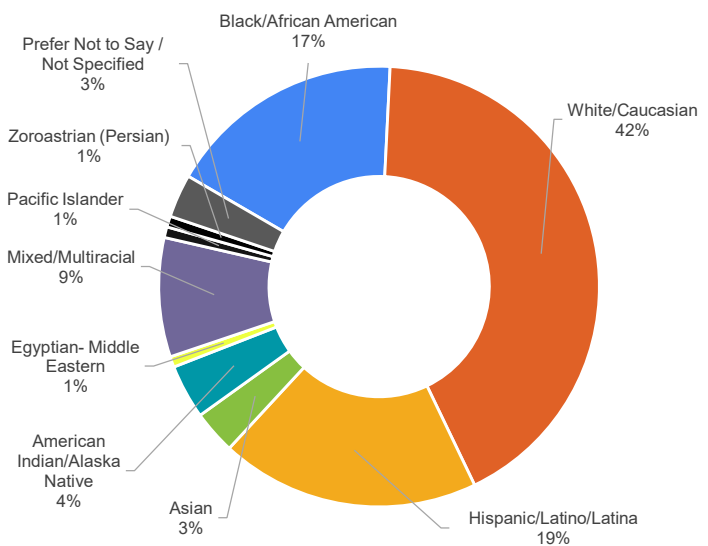
### Lived Experience

- **79%** work, have worked in, or have personal experience with the child welfare system.
- **25%** of had or have lived experience with the child welfare system as a youth or parent/caregiver.

### Mandated Reporter Experience

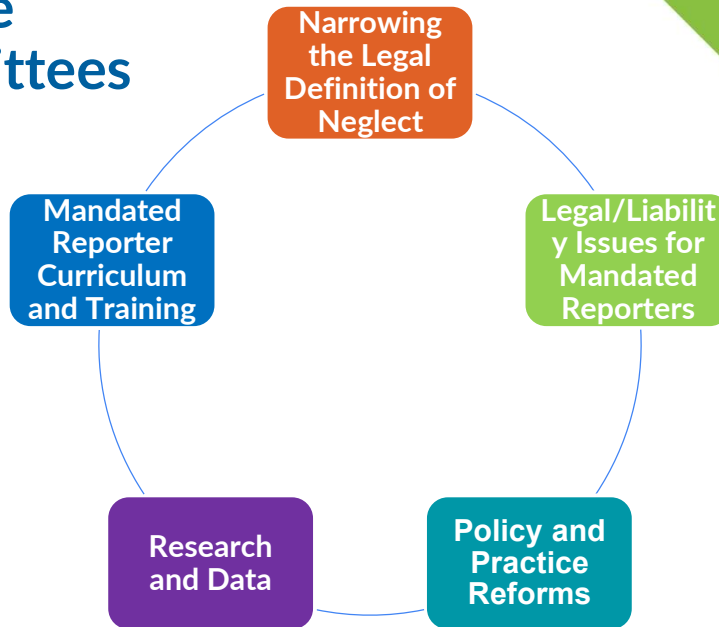
- **63%** are Mandated Reporters.
- **81%** work, have worked, or have personal experience with Mandated Reporting laws and/or practices.

Subcommittee Composition by Race and Ethnicity



\* Note: percentages add up to more than 100% as some members fall into multiple categories

## Task Force Subcommittees



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## Task Force Recommendations and Report

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## Task Force Strategic Priorities



**North Star:** Keep children and families together, safe, well, and strengthened by the resources they need to thrive

- 1 Eliminate the disproportionate surveillance and reporting of Black/African American, Native American/Indigenous people, and Latino families and communities, thereby leading to an environment of anti-racism in support of all children and families.
- 2 Analyze all categories and subcategories of child abuse and neglect under California's mandated reporting law to create more precision about what should and should not be referred to Child Protective Services (CPS) to make consistent decisions to respond to families' needs appropriately.
- 3 Ensure that Mandated Reporting laws, policies, practices, education, and training do not incentivize or encourage inappropriate referrals and separation of families.
- 4 Ensure that Mandated Reporters have both access to and training on how families can connect to available resources, services, and supports; that these supports and how they are delivered are culturally aligned; and that families always retain agency in determining whether and how they utilize these supports.
- 5 Establish a long-term, sustainable, and comprehensive investment in Mandated Reporting reform, and its implementation, to guarantee transformative change and honor the commitments we have made to communities, families, parents, and children.

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## Recommendations & Key Levers for Implementation

### Data / Accountability

**Recommendation 1:** The California Child Welfare Council (CWC), through its Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Committee, shall establish a Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee (MRAC) to ensure the transformation of Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting continues and disparities in the child welfare system are eliminated. (SP 1)

**Recommendation 2:** Request the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), in collaboration with the Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee (MRAC), to continuously monitor disparities in the child welfare system. (SP 1)

**Recommendation 3:** The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) shall ensure the implementation of AB 2085 in all California Counties and Tribes until such time that Recommendation #5 is implemented, and General Neglect is removed as a mandated reporting requirement. (SP 3)

**Recommendation 13:** Require the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) to ensure recommendations from the Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting (MRCS) Task Force and any subsequent policy reforms related to Mandated Reporting are enacted and efforts necessary to ensure continued transformation of the Mandated Reporting system are advanced.

Focus and sustain action to ensure the efforts of mandated reporting reform are carried out with fidelity and accountability.



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## Recommendations & Key Levers for Implementation

### Policy

**Recommendation 4:** In alignment with the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) report, *California's Child Welfare System: Addressing Disproportionality and Disparities*, encourage the LAO to continue analyzing disparities in the Mandated Reporting system to determine if narrowing mandated reporter categories in the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA) negatively impacts child safety. (SP 1)

**Recommendation 5:** Support the amendment of the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA) to remove the reporting requirement of *General Neglect* for Mandated Reporters. (SP 2)

**Recommendation 6:** Support the amendment of the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA) to revise and clarify the definition of *Severe Neglect* to be aligned with the definition of Severe Neglect utilized in the [California Structured Decision Making \(SDM\) Tool](#). (SP2)

**Recommendation 7:** Encourage the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), in collaboration with the Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee (MRAC) and Counties, to implement a two-year pilot that provides Mandated Reporters with immunity from liability as identified in [Penal Code Section 11166 \(C\)](#) when there is a demonstrated use of a child abuse and neglect decision-making process that indicates a child's safety is not at risk and a report is not required. (SP 3)



Enact laws and regulations that will address the well-documented over-reporting of the current mandated reporting system, with a focus on the disproportionate burden on Black/African American and Native American communities.

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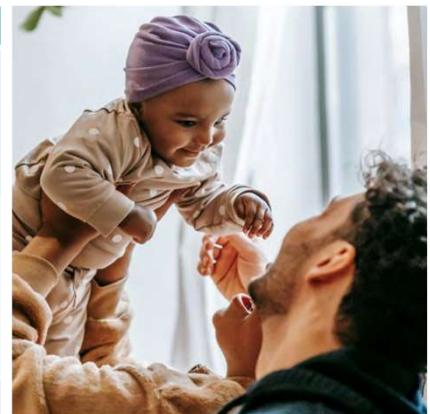
## Recommendations & Key Levers for Implementation

### Training

**Recommendation 8:** Support the amendment of Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA) to require all Mandated Reporters in California receive standardized training on child abuse and neglect. (SP 3)

**Recommendation 9:** Require the CDSS Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) to develop, with participation of individuals with lived expertise, a standardized curriculum for Mandated Reporters. (SP 3)

**Recommendation 10:** Encourage the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), in collaboration with the Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee (MRAC), to create a mandated reporting web page specific to Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting. (SP 3)



Leverage training as a tool to begin shifting the conversation from reporting families to supporting families.

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## Recommendations & Key Levers for Implementation

### Community Pathway

**Recommendation 11:** Require the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to incorporate an assessment of the capacity of community supports and services. (SP 4)

**Recommendation 12:** Consistent with the PEI Community Pathway Recommendations, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS shall be required to ensure Counties' Comprehensive Prevention Plans (CPP) incorporate information and education specific to Mandated Reporters regarding the implementation of and access to Community Pathways and/or community resources available to support families in their communities. (SP 4)

Help ensure mandated reporters understand the resources available to support families and the mechanisms for making connections to supports instead of reporting



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## Recommendations & Key Levers for Implementation

### Narrative Shift

**Recommendation 14:** Ensure the creation and implementation of a statewide narrative change initiative. (SP 5)

Increase awareness and understanding of the need for mandated reporting reform; as well as the individual, family, and societal benefits of safely narrowing the front door to CPS.



*"This will take a reorientation of both mindset and how people work—how we invest in the work and invest in the people who do the work. This is not just an average vote that we turn our backs on. This is a vote with a commitment that we all stay involved and support a mindset shift to make this happen."*

- Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency

[March 13, 2023: In response to a unanimous CWC approval of the PEI Community Pathway Recommendations]

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## The Motion Approved by the CWC on 9/4/24

Approval of this motion advanced the 14 recommendations and final report of the Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting (MRCS) Task Force to implementation planning and concluded the work of the Task Force.

That the **Secretary of Cal HHS** and the **Director of CDSS**, alongside **other associated Cal HHS departments**, work together to craft a **strategy** to move toward a system shift from a focus on mandatory reporting to community supporting, **considering the MRCS Task Force recommendations** as advanced in this report.

This strategy should address **areas of policy** that must be advanced, **trainings** that must be created or implemented, **data reporting** that must be enhanced, and **program structures** that must be altered or augmented.

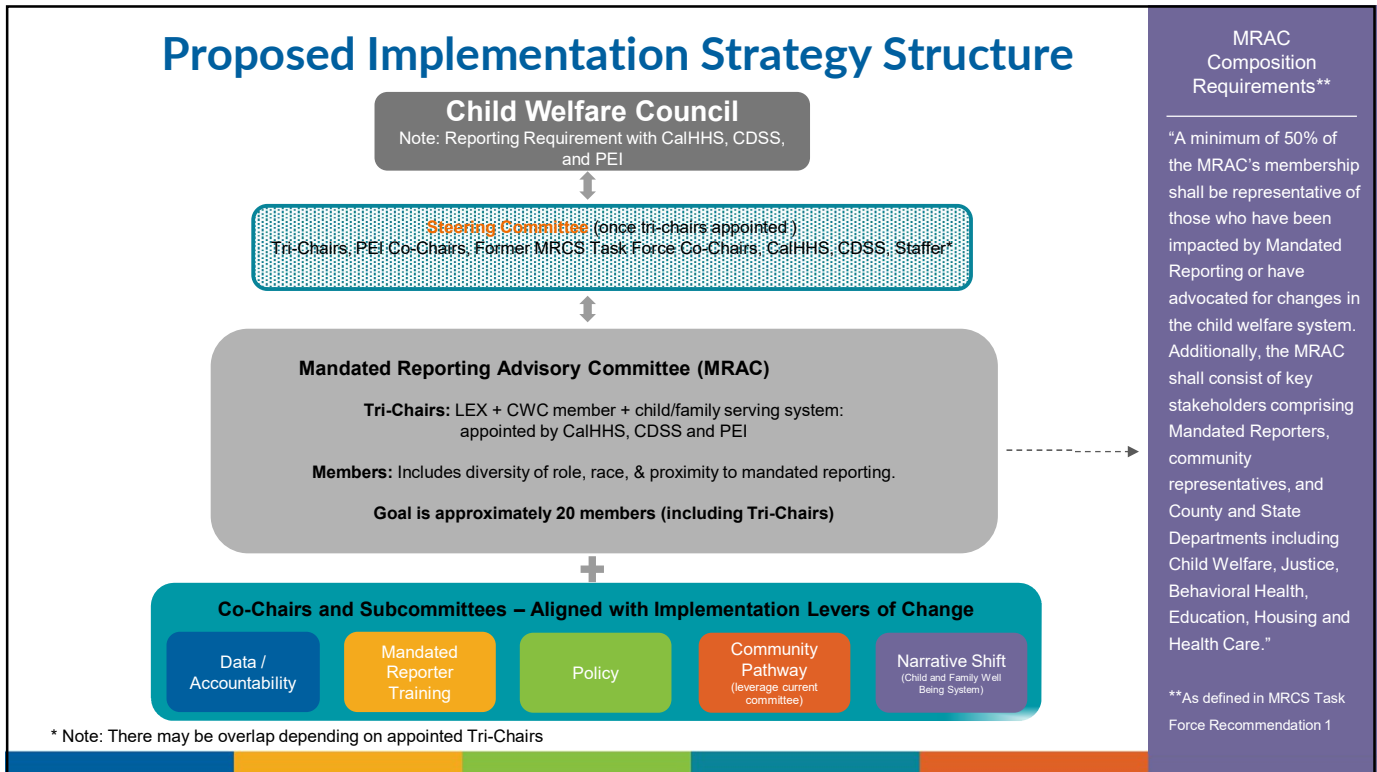
The **director of CDSS** should work with the **PEI Committee** and the **MRCS Task Force**, including the **lived experience subcommittee**, and be prepared to provide the CWC a quarterly update, during each of its meetings, on progress in creating this comprehensive strategy to consider each of the MRCS recommendations and ultimately move toward a system shift from a focus on mandatory reporting to community supporting.

Cal HHS and CDSS will then bring the strategy back to the Council for consideration.

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## Implementation Strategy

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## Next Steps

- Identify and confirm participation of child and family-serving agencies beyond CDSS, as well as individuals with Lived Experience, and Tribal representatives, across the Steering Committee, MRAC, and the Subcommittees
- Resources that we are working to secure:
  - Funding for Lived Experience
  - Funding for communications – website, narrative shift
  - Project management team

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## HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE MOVEMENT



**Mandated Reporting to  
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### Read and share the report



Keep the discussion going  
on the **Community Pathway  
and Mandated Reporting  
Reform** online community



### Let people know:

- The Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force has finalized a set of recommendations.
- The Child Welfare Council has requested an implementation strategy to move the recommendations forward.
- The recommendations call for a gold standard statewide mandated reporter training, which is underway by the state.
- The recommendations require legislative action. Discussions are underway for the 2025 legislative session.
- A Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee will be created by March 2025 to ensure implementation accountability.
- The Child Welfare Council has requested implementation updates at the quarterly Council meetings.

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# Thank You & Discussion

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