Minutes – SIP Steering Committee Meeting – August 10, 2026

Over 60 individuals attended the Summer quarter meeting of the Santa Cruz County System Improvement Plan (SIP) Steering Committee on Monday, Aug. 10, 2026 at Simpkins Family Swim Center. The focus of the meeting was to share progress toward the design and implementation of the strategic initiatives contained in Santa Cruz County's 2026-2030 SIP. Attendees engaged in small group discussion around key design and development considerations related to advancing implementation of the SIP strategies.

These notes summarize the main points covered during the Aug. 10th meeting. Together with presentation slides and handouts posted to the Santa Cruz County SIP website, a full account of the Summer SIP Steering Committee meeting can be found.

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Dr. Gloria Carroll, Deputy Director of Santa Cruz County (SCC) Human Services Department (former Director of Family & Children's Services) and Jose Flores, Assistant Chief of Probation, welcomed attendees and set the tone for the meeting. Below are highlights from their remarks:

- Dr. Carroll welcomed participants and emphasized the Steering Committee's diverse expertise and shared responsibility for implementing Santa Cruz County's 2026–2030 System Improvement Plan. She highlighted progress to date, the four SIP strategies, and the importance of collaboration, feedback, and continuous improvement as the strategies move through the design and development phase.
- Mr. Flores emphasized that improving outcomes for youth and families requires cross-system collaboration and shared accountability. He focused on strengthening family and community connections for youth involved with Juvenile Probation, encouraging participants to identify opportunities for better communication, coordination, and earlier identification of natural supports to promote lasting family connections and permanency.

Leslie Ann Hay, SIP Implementation Consultant, reviewed the day's agenda and described the goals of the meeting as:

- Learn about current progress toward implementation of the 2026-2030 Santa Cruz County System Improvement Plan (SIP) strategies.
- Gather feedback to help advance SIP strategies in small groups with shared highlights.
- Know about upcoming activities for SIP Steering Committee and SIP Work Group.

SIP Strategies and Leads

Leslie Ann reminded attendees of the four SIP Strategies planned for implementation and evaluation during the 2026-2030 timeframe.

- Aftercare Enhancements: Enhance aftercare planning and support post-case closure, led by Yesenia Salinas.
- Improve Parent Engagement: Increase parents' understanding and participation in court processes, led by Stephanie Vikati.
- Increase Networks of Support: Expand natural and community supports for every family entering the system, led by Melissa Delgadillo.
- Family Connections: Strengthen community and family networks to promote permanency for probation youth, led by Jimmy Cook.

Theory of Change

Leslie Ann reviewed the logic behind the Theory of Change for why we believe these four strategies will have the desired impact for children, youth and families:

- If families are engaged early, supported by their natural and community networks, and connected to preventive aftercare supports,
- Then they will be better prepared, more resilient, and less reliant on the child welfare or juvenile probation systems,
- Which leads to sustained family stability, safety, and overall well-being.

Strategy Progress Overview

Leslie Ann walked through the highlights of the information found on the SIP Strategy Status handout which describes the current progress (as of July 31, 2026) of the four strategies in Santa Cruz County's 2026-2030 System Improvement Plan:

- **Aftercare Enhancements:** A new aftercare planning process and template have been developed for pilot testing in 2027. The approach emphasizes beginning aftercare planning early, developing individualized support networks, and maintaining the plan as a "living document" integrated into Child & Family Teaming (CFT) practice. Next steps focus on warm hand-offs, stronger partnerships with mental health/substance use providers, and evaluation measures.
- **Improve Parent Engagement:** Draft materials have been developed to help parents understand Dependency Court, including an overview brochure and hearing-

specific one-page guides. A process is also being developed to help parents work with trusted allies to prepare questions for their attorneys and social workers after they've read the materials. Next steps include additional orientation tools and assessing parent engagement experiences.

- **Increase Networks of Support:** The strategy seeks to expand each family's natural and community-based support network. Sources of support have been identified, including family finding, trusted allies, natural supports participating in CFT meetings, and community resources. Next steps focus on identifying families with limited support networks and integrating individualized networks of support throughout the life of the case, especially into aftercare planning practice.
- **Promote Family Connections for Probation Youth:** Practice enhancements are underway to strengthen family and community connections for probation youth in out-of-home care. Planned approaches include family-centered coaching, transition and aftercare-focused CFT practices, high-fidelity Wraparound, structured identification of natural supports, and stronger coordination with FCS and community providers.

Overall: The SIP strategies are moving primarily through design, development, and early implementation, with a common emphasis on stronger family engagement, natural support networks, cross-system collaboration, continuity of services, and improved permanency outcomes.

Small Group Discussions

Participants self-selected into three small groups to engage in facilitated discussions of the four SIP strategies. Aftercare and Networks of Support strategies were combined into a single breakout conversation.

- **Understanding Dependency Court:** This small group reviewed draft one-page guides for Detention, Disposition and Jurisdiction hearings. The discussion emphasized making Dependency Court information **clear, concise, trauma-informed, and transparent**, with particular attention to explaining parents' options, responsibilities, and what to expect at each stage of the court process. Participants also emphasized **preparing parents *before* hearings, using plain language, communicating hope, and helping parents identify support people** so they can participate more effectively in their cases.
- **Aftercare and Networks of Support:** This small group reviewed a draft aftercare plan and discussed its content, layout, use with families and their support

networks, and integration into CFT practice. The discussion centered on making aftercare planning **parent-owned, practical, and inclusive of each family's support network**. Participants recommended identifying "accountability partners," clearly defining the roles of support people, making the plan easily accessible to parents, and integrating aftercare planning throughout CFT meetings and the life of the case. The group also highlighted the need to **strengthen connections with community partners**, sustain existing parent and family supports, and use a wellness and prevention approach that reduces stigma and prepares families and their support networks to respond effectively to challenges and crises.

- **Family Connections for Probation Youth:** This small group discussion identified the **distance of available STRTP placements** as a significant barrier to maintaining meaningful connections between probation youth, their families, natural supports, schools, and community providers. Participants explored whether **High Fidelity Wraparound and stronger community-based supports** could be introduced earlier and provided before, during, and after placement to strengthen support networks, reduce time in placement, and increase the likelihood of a successful return home within 12 months.

Resources and Next Steps

Leslie Ann wrapped up the meeting with the following information:

- Reminder to service providers present to update their organization's service and program information on the new and improved 211 Resource Line website.
- Next SIP Steering Committee meeting scheduled for November 9, 2026 at Simpkins Family Swim Center, 11:30 – 1:30pm. Details and registration available in October.
- Next meeting of the SIP Work Group is a virtual meeting on September 9, 2026 from 3:30 – 5:00pm. Focus will be on the Juvenile Probation SIP strategy. Details to follow.