



Within Our Reach

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## *Child Safety Forward: A National Initiative to Reduce Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities and Injuries Through a Collaborative, Community-Based Approach*

### **Child Abuse Prevention Council of Sacramento**

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime is funding a demonstration initiative to develop multidisciplinary strategies and responses to address fatalities or near-death injuries as a result of child abuse and neglect.

The Child Abuse Prevention Council of Sacramento was one of five demonstration sites in the nation chosen for this grant. The other sites include: Indiana State Department of Health; St. Francis Hospital in Hartford, Connecticut; Cook County Health, Illinois; and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Children are not supposed to die, let alone at the hands of those entrusted with their care.

Tragically, from 2008-2017, 140 Sacramento County children were victims of an abuse and neglect fatality/near-fatality, more than double the California rate. Eighty percent of victims were zero to five years and 50 percent were one year of age and younger. African-American children made up 40 percent of the victims while comprising only 11 percent of the child population. Sixty-four percent of perpetrators were biological parents acting together or alone. Two-thirds of fatalities or near-fatalities were in seven neighborhoods. And, of the 62 child abuse and neglect homicide victims, 63 percent had prior child welfare involvement.

The Child Abuse Prevention Council of Sacramento, in partnership with public and private multidisciplinary agencies, will collaboratively develop a model for a coordinated response to effectively identify and address child abuse and neglect fatalities/near-fatalities. Sacramento County has convened a county-wide cross-disciplinary, public and private Prevention Cabinet that embraces the opportunity and challenge to further analyze child fatality/near-fatality data; collect social determinants of health data; review current screening and investigative policies; and use this information to inform and implement a strategic plan to accomplish their vision to eliminate child abuse and neglect deaths and critical injuries, in Sacramento County, by 2030.

Three frameworks are used concurrently for the development and implementation of the strategic plan: 21st Century Child Welfare System, Public Health Model, and Collective Impact. Steps include: expand analysis of child fatality/near-fatality and injury data including systems involvement; conduct key informant interviews; review current policies and procedures of identified systems; review literature and evidence-based approaches to prevention; and create a sustainability and evaluation plan.

After an in-depth analysis of the circumstances surrounding and systems involved in each child victim's death, the Prevention Cabinet will use this information to inform, develop and implement a strategic plan to prevent child abuse and neglect deaths and critical injuries in Sacramento County. The strategic plan will:

- Address the findings of data analysis, policies and procedures review, and community assessment;
- Incorporate a coordinated multi-disciplinary public/private systems approach to prevention; and,
- Integrate ongoing evaluation and lessons learned for continuous quality improvement.

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