

# MRAC Semi-Annual Report:

## Semi-Annual Report on the Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Implementation Effort



### **Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting**

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*Communities Keeping Children Safe  
and Families Together*

#### **Reporting Period:**

June – December 2025

#### **Submitted by:**

The Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee (MRAC) and Steering Committee, California Health & Human Services (CalHHS), CA Dept of Social Services (CDSS), and the Prevention & Early Intervention (PEI) Committee

#### **Submitted to:**

The California Child Welfare Council (CWC)

**DECEMBER 2025**



## PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Consistent with the charge issued by the Council in September 2024—and in alignment with Recommendation 1 of the Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force—this report documents the Mandated Reporter Advisory Committee’s (MRAC) development and progress to advance the recommendations of the MRCS Task Force, which includes the Committee’s initial implementation plan. The semi-annual reports will serve as the official record of the MRAC’s accountability to the Council, the Legislature, our public-private partners, and most importantly, to the children, families, and communities most impacted by California’s current mandated reporting policies and practices.

*The inaugural semi-annual report of the Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee documents the Committee’s development, the initial implementation plan for the 14 recommendations, and progress made to date.*

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***“We ask you to open your hearts and be bold, not only to the Recommendations, but by inviting more persons with lived expertise to join the tables where decisions are made.”***

**~ Lived Experience Group of the MRCS Task Force**

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## BACKGROUND

### Why This Work Matters

Each year, more than **400,000 children** in California are reported to Child Protective Services (CPS), yet **nearly 90%** of these allegations are not substantiated as abuse or neglect. Instead, many families—particularly Black/African American and Native American families—are swept into a system of surveillance and unnecessary reporting when what they need are supportive community resources that strengthen family stability, safety, and connection.

Recognizing this, the Child Welfare Council charged the statewide Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting (MRCS) Task Force with examining the drivers of over-reporting and recommending reforms rooted in equity, prevention, and trust. Formed in August 2023 and composed of 35 diverse members—over one-quarter of whom brought lived expertise—the Task Force advanced [14 comprehensive recommendations](#) to transform California’s approach to mandated reporting.

At the September 4, 2024 Child Welfare Council meeting, a motion was unanimously approved to accept the PEI Committee’s [Task Force report](#) and recommendations, and to develop a statewide implementation strategy in partnership with CalHHS, CDSS, the Prevention & Early Intervention (PEI) Committee, and other associated departments to turn the recommendations into sustainable action across the state for the well-being of children, families, and communities.

### Standing Up the Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee

To move from recommendations to implementation, an interim “Planning Team” was established composed of the entities named in the motion—CalHHS, CDSS, and the PEI Committee. The purpose of the Planning Team was to fulfill Recommendation 1 by standing up the Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee (MRAC) in full alignment with the requirements set forth in the Task Force report. Per the recommendation, the MRAC is charged with ensuring that California’s transformation from mandated reporting to community supporting continues, and that disparities in the child welfare system are eliminated—not in rhetoric, but in measurable outcomes. To do this, the MRAC’s structure was intentionally designed to reflect the values of lived expertise, equity, and cross-system collaboration. Key components include:



- **Tri-Chairs were appointed**, representing Lived Expertise, Systems Leadership, and the Child Welfare Council. The Tri-Chairs meet weekly to guide direction, coherence, and alignment across partners.
- A **36-seat MRAC was established**, with ongoing commitments to lived expertise, racial equity, proximity to mandated reporting, and cross-sector representation. The MRAC meets monthly to build consensus and guide implementation.
- **Five Workgroups**—composed of members of the MRAC—were formed. The Workgroups are based on the “levers of implementation” that were stated in the Task Force report, and include: Data & Accountability, Training, Policy, Community Pathways, and Narrative Shift. Workgroups have been meeting at least twice monthly to develop detailed plans with specific objectives and deliverables.

This work has been made possible by a coordinated, committed partnership between CalHHS, CDSS, and the CWC’s Prevention & Early Intervention Committee, as well as public–private partners including CDSS, DPH, Casey Family Programs, and Safe & Sound. Their shared investment has created an enduring backbone structure—allowing both the former MRCS Task Force and the current MRAC to focus on advancing systems change with lived expertise centered throughout the effort.

## INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Workgroups—Data & Accountability, Training, Policy, Community Pathways, and Narrative Shift—were formed to align with the “levers of implementation” identified by the Task Force and are composed of members of the MRAC. Although separate in design, the Workgroups interact to create a single implementation plan to advance the recommendations.

To organize development of the implementation plan, the MRAC established a shared framework that articulates the deliverables for each recommendation, guides the identification of key activities, and highlights productive intersections across Workgroups. This framework ensures coherence, efficiency, and aligned action as California works toward its vision of Child and Family Well-Being for all.



TRAINING	DELIVERABLES	ACTIVITIES	TIMING
<p><b>Rec 3</b> — Use data to track AB 2085 implementation [shared with Data &amp; Accountability]</p> <p><b>Rec 8</b> — Require standardized mandated reporter training</p> <p><b>Rec 9</b> — Develop statewide “gold standard” curriculum with lived expertise</p> <p><b>Rec 10</b> — Develop a statewide mandated reporter webpage</p>	<p>Oversight of the AB 2085 training (CDSS lead)</p> <p>Recommendations for CANRA amendments tied to standardized training</p> <p>Curriculum oversight to ensure alignment with core content and lived expertise</p> <p>Training approval standards and certification processes</p> <p>Development and ongoing monitoring of statewide MR webpage</p>	<p>Provide structured oversight of CDSS MR training (feedback loops, reviews, certificate process)</p> <p>Create crosswalk between training and legislation</p> <p>Explore review processes for non-state trainings</p> <p>Survey decision-making tools from CA counties and other states</p> <p>Develop and operationalize MR webpage content, monitoring, and dissemination</p> <p>Monitor AB 2085 training implementation data</p> <p>Develop communications and messaging for training awareness</p>	<p>Oversight of the development of CDSS MR training: <i>March 2025–April 2026</i></p> <p>Decision-making tool survey with the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP): <i>November 2025</i></p> <p>Webpage development &amp; implementation: TBD</p> <p>AB 2085 training development and oversight: January 2026</p>

DATA & ACCOUNTABILITY	DELIVERABLES	ACTIVITIES	TIMING
<p><b>Rec 1</b> — Establish MRAC; track data to monitor and support progress</p> <p><b>Rec 2</b> — Recommend and apply data sets to advance MR reform</p> <p><b>Rec 3</b> — Use data to track implementation and success of AB 2085 [shared with Training]</p> <p><b>Rec 13</b> — Continue to advance MR reform through ongoing data analysis</p>	<p>Semi-annual report to CWC on progress</p> <p>Ongoing analysis of impacts of recommendations</p> <p>Recommendations for future data tools/processes for mandated reporting</p> <p>Oversight of implementation data</p> <p>Regular monitoring of statewide data</p> <p>Annual publication of disparities and impact data with CDSS</p> <p>Data submissions to support Community Pathways capacity assessment (Rec 11)</p>	<p>Align with FFPS CQI workgroup; review plans, EBPs, county saturation</p> <p>Inventory statewide data sources and metrics (SDOH, ACES, EpiCenter, etc.)</p> <p>Conduct landscape scan of available upstream/downstream metrics</p> <p>Develop and recommend five key metrics to track reform impact</p> <p>Outreach to agencies and youth/parent advocacy groups for qualitative data</p> <p>Meet quarterly with all MRAC workgroups to identify shared measures</p>	<p>Metrics landscape analysis + socialization: <i>February 2026</i></p> <p>Recommend five key metrics: <i>March 2026</i></p> <p>Alignment with FFPS: <i>Ongoing</i></p> <p>Quarterly cross-workgroup coordination: <i>Ongoing</i></p>



COMMUNITY PATHWAYS	DELIVERABLES	ACTIVITIES	TIMING
<p><b>Rec 11</b> — CDSS to assess capacity of community supports/services for MR and OCAP funding alignment</p> <p><b>Rec 12</b> — CPPs must include MR-specific info/education on community pathways</p>	<p>Review of CQI Outcomes</p> <p>Develop Recommendations from CQI findings (in partnership with CP Advisory Committee)</p> <p>Align OCAP Funding (ensure funding is accessible to CBOs and linked to prevention needs)</p> <p>Define “information and education” for CPP amendments; develop statewide template</p> <p>Draft All County Letter or Interagency Letter with requirements and timeline</p> <p>Create process to ensure all amendments are completed</p> <p>Monitor implementation of amendments through CDSS + CP Advisory Committee</p> <p>Support counties in building MR-focused websites and warm handoff practices</p>	<p>Coordinate timelines with MRAC Data and CP Advisory Committees</p> <p>Review statewide CQI reports and identify gaps</p> <p>Conduct EBP access and county CPP gap analysis</p> <p>Stakeholder outreach and engagement (ILTs, providers, counties)</p> <p>Create dissemination plan for recommendations</p> <p>Collaborative meetings with CDSS, CP Advisory Committee, and workgroups</p> <p>Draft CPP amendment template</p> <p>Establish ACL/Interagency Letter content &amp; approval process</p> <p>Develop tracking tool for county submissions</p> <p>Coordinate with Data Workgroup on monitoring</p>	<p>All Rec 11 Initial Deliverables: <i>Within 0–12 months</i></p> <p>All Rec 12 Initial Deliverables: <i>Within 0–12 months</i></p>



POLICY	DELIVERABLES	ACTIVITIES	TIMING
<p><b>Rec 4</b> — Support LAO analysis of narrowing MR categories</p> <p><b>Rec 5</b> — Amend CANRA to eliminate General Neglect as a reporting requirement</p> <p><b>Rec 6</b> — Update CANRA definition of Severe Neglect to align with SDM</p> <p><b>Rec 7</b> — Implement 2-year liability immunity pilot using decision-making tools</p>	<p>Collaboration with LAO to analyze MR categories and child safety impacts</p> <p>Research on national MR category reforms</p> <p>Recommendations for legislation removing General Neglect from MR requirements</p> <p>Recommendations for clarifying Severe Neglect definition</p> <p>Liability pilot design, tools, evaluation framework (leveraging LA County model)</p>	<p>Invite LAO to present findings; develop 1-page summary</p> <p>Review other states' MR categories and outcomes</p> <p>Gather data from mandated reporters beyond top categories</p> <p>Review SDM tool use across CA counties (Humboldt, LA, Ventura)</p> <p>Research other states' definitions of neglect and recent reforms</p> <p>Review CA county MR decision-making tools to inform pilot design</p>	<p>LAO engagement + report alignment: <i>Feb 2026</i></p> <p>SDM tool review (counties + definitions): <i>Feb 2026–March 2026</i></p> <p>Liability pilot research + stakeholder coordination: <i>March 2026</i></p>

NARRATIVE SHIFT	DELIVERABLES	ACTIVITIES	TIMING
<p><b>Rec 14</b> — Create a statewide narrative change initiative to shift beliefs and values from mandated reporting to community supporting</p>	<p>Establish campaign objectives and communications plan</p> <p>Develop and implement statewide Narrative Shift Campaign</p> <p>Co-develop messaging with lived experts and community stakeholders</p> <p>Build qualitative data library (case studies, lived expertise stories)</p> <p>Merge dissemination and NS Workgroup efforts</p>	<p>Develop key messages (poverty = support, safety redefined, harm acknowledgment)</p> <p>Gather stakeholder input through extensive listening sessions</p> <p>Review existing listening session data (Humboldt, LA, statewide FGIs)</p> <p>Draft full communications plan (purpose, audiences, strategies, tactics)</p> <p>Compile qualitative stories, bright spots, and case studies</p> <p>Coordinate with CP, Data, Training, Policy Workgroups to support their implementation</p>	<p>Key messaging + harm statement: <i>Jan 2026</i></p> <p>Listening sessions + synthesis: <i>End of Q2 2026</i></p> <p>Full communications plan: <i>Draft by Sept 2026; Final by Nov 2026</i></p> <p>Qualitative Data (stories) Library: <i>Q1 2026 and ongoing</i></p>



Seeing clear intersections across recommendations, the MRAC is pinpointing where an integrated approach will move the work forward faster and more effectively. The first such area is AB 2085. Signed into law in 2022—with implementation started in January 2023—AB 2085 is an essential step in reforming mandated reporting because it directly addresses the conflation of poverty and neglect which currently drives the significant over-reporting of families based on general neglect allegations.

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*The MRAC is not simply a committee tasked with carrying out recommendations. It is a statutorily mandated body with a clear charge: ensure California’s shift from mandated reporting to community supporting moves forward, and that it drives the measurable elimination of disparities in the child welfare system.*

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Specifically, AB 2085 limits the definition of general neglect to only include circumstances where the child is at substantial risk of suffering serious physical harm or illness, and thereby it helps to:

- Reduce surveillance of families due to poverty.
- Encourage supports over automatic reporting.
- Align with goals of reducing racial disproportionality.

However, almost three years following the implementation of AB 2085, awareness and adherence to the law is extremely low across the state. With a coordinated implementation effort that strategically applies the implementation levers of change—Training, Community Pathway connections, Data, Narrative Shift, and ongoing Policy refinement—the MRAC will harness our collective impact efforts to significantly increase awareness, help strengthen practice consistency, and ensure the law achieves its intended impact of reducing unnecessary reporting and advancing equity statewide.





## PROGRESS TO-DATE: June–December 2025

Between June and December, the MRAC and its Workgroups advanced critical milestones, including:

- **Finalizing initial implementation plan** to present at the December 2025 Child Welfare Council meeting, in alignment with the approved motion and statutory requirements.
- **Maintaining strong alignment across State agencies**—CalHHS, CDSS, DHCS, and PEI—ensuring implementation activities are coordinated within broader statewide prevention and well-being strategies.
- **Advancing statewide dissemination and early narrative shift**, including presentations—or planned presentations at:
  - BUILD National Conference (December 2025) – presenting with Colorado and New Jersey on national reform efforts
  - Stanford Child Abuse Conference (November 2025)
  - Beyond the Bench (November 2025)
  - Child Welfare Directors Association Conference (October 2025) – co-presenting with FFPS Advisory Committee
  - Children’s Network Conference (October 2025)

These platforms have helped build a statewide foundation for adoption, capacity-building, and clear understanding of the “why,” “what,” and “how” of this transformation.

The momentum was further solidified by the passage of SB 119 which codifies the shift from reporting to supporting. Signed into law in July 2025—SB 119 is a landmark achievement and a visible acknowledgement of both the urgency and momentum of this work. SB 119:

- **Establishes the MRAC in statute** - What was initially the implementation of Task Force Recommendation 1, is now an affirmation of the state’s intent and commitment to continue transforming how California responds to families who need support, not system involvement.
- **Integrates Task Force recommendations into county Comprehensive Prevention Plans (CPPs)** - Advances Recommendation 12 by ensuring counties articulate how they will provide mandated reporters with accurate, accessible information about community-based family supports.
- **Aligns mandated reporter training with the intent of this reform** - Following Recommendation 9, the statute requires that statewide training include content developed in partnership with lived experts, county agencies, and additional stakeholders.



This legislative action signals long-term commitment; aligns with California’s child, family, and community well-being vision; and confirms that the transformation is already underway.

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***“In California, we have long demonstrated our commitment to supporting youth and preserving and strengthening families. The overrepresentation of children of color in the child welfare system is a profound and persistent issue that demands our continued attention. To this end, California has made many recent, historic investments to support youth and families as we work towards a more equitable system. We must continue working to ensure that every child, regardless of race, tribe, or background, can thrive in a safe and supportive environment, supported by a system that serves all families with fairness and equity.”***

**~ Kim Johnson, Secretary of California Health and Human Services**

(quote from September 2024 when Secretary Johnson was Director of California’s Department of Social Services)

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## THE ROAD AHEAD

The work is now fully centered on implementation and measurable systems change—bringing the recommendations into communities, supporting counties as they refine their prevention plans, strengthening accountability metrics, developing trauma- and equity-grounded training, shifting narratives statewide, and connecting mandated reporters to existing and emerging community pathways that ensure families receive support when needed, instead of a report to the hotline.

Through shared leadership, sustained partnership, evidence-informed strategies, and deep commitments to lived expertise, the MRAC is poised to transform bold recommendations into lasting systemic change. We look forward to sharing progress at the quarterly CWC meetings and providing detailed updates through each semi-annual report.

Thank you for considering this implementation plan and affirming the MRAC’s proposed approach to drive systems change in service to, and in partnership with, all of California’s children and families.

