UCLA Pritzker Center
For Strengthening Children and Families

BEYOND BLIND REMOVAL

Color Consciousness and Anti-Racism in Los Angeles County Child Welfare

APPENDICES

Appendix A1: Study Methods

The UCLA Pritzker Center was responsible for evaluating the blind removal pilot by the Los Angeles (LA) County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), per the LA County Board of Supervisors motion. Concurrent mixed methods were used with quantitative and qualitative data collected simultaneously to understand the blind removal pilot in each DCFS office from different points of view (Creswell et al., 2003). The evaluation also drew from administrative data provided by DCFS.

Site Selection

Two DCFS regional offices were selected to pilot the blind removal intervention: Compton-Carson and West Los Angeles (henceforth, West LA). The two offices were chosen based on their locations serving constituents in the second supervisorial district. Each office adapted the intervention's implementation pursuant to factors such as previous work to reduce racial disproportionality, office size, staffing, the volume of referrals received from the Child Protection Hotline, and administrators' preferences. The West LA office had not implemented interventions to address racial and ethnic disparities before or during the blind removal pilot; however, staff had received implicit bias and cultural humility training. In contrast and as noted previously, Compton-Carson staff had received these trainings and implemented 4DX (from 06/01/21 through 05/30/22) and Eliminating Racial Disparities and Disproportionality (ERDD; ongoing) to address the disproportionate number of Black children removed from their families by the office.

Participant Selection

A purposive sampling method was used to select participants for the post-pilot interviews and surveys (Patton 2002; 2015). All study participants were DCFS employees and functioned as case reviewers, administrators, Children's Social Workers (CSWs), or Supervising CSWs (SCSWs) in each office where the blind removal pilot was implemented. Administrators from each DCFS pilot office invited case reviewers to sign up for interviews and participated in interviews themselves. Seven of 11 (64%) case reviewers from West LA and all three (100%) case reviewers from Compton-Carson were interviewed.

A West LA administrator invited CSWs and SCSWs involved with the blind removal pilot to complete a survey. A Compton-Carson administrator invited SCSWs involved in the pilot to complete a survey and asked SCSWs to invite CSWs who had at least one case reviewed by the pilot to complete a survey. In the West LA office, 7 of 12 (58%) invited CSWs, and 6 of 7 (86%) invited SCSWs completed the survey. The response rate for Compton-Carson CSWs is unavailable because the administrator did not know how many CSWs were invited, but 12 CSWs completed the survey, and all 10 (100%) of the SCSWs from Compton-Carson participated.[8]

Data Obtained and Collected

Following the blind removal pilot, DCFS provided three de-identified administrative datasets for the Compton-Carson and West LA regional offices to be analyzed. Qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys were conducted in each office and data were analyzed. The UCLA North Campus Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved the research protocol.

Administrative Data. DCFS provided de-identified administrative data for the Compton-Carson and West Los Angeles offices. The first of the three datasets documented children referred to each office, excluding evaluated out referrals. The referral data was retrieved from the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System

[8] Per email communication with DCFS staff from the West Los Angeles (T. Chandler on 11/30/23) and Compton-Carson (L. Corbett on 12/14/23) offices.

(CWS/CMS) on 08/20/23 for the West Los Angeles office covering five years and three months (04/01/18 through 07/31/23) and on 09/13/23 for the Compton-Carson office covering five years and four months (04/01/18 through 08/31/23).[9] The West Los Angeles data was received on 08/24/23, and Compton-Carson on 10/17/23. The referrals dataset includes demographic information (race, age, gender) and allegations made to the Child Protection Hotline.

The second dataset documented exigent (emergency)[10] and non-exigent (non-emergency) referrals and the children for whom court petitions were filed. Two types of petitions distinguish children placed with their other parent from children removed from a parent and then placed in the foster system. Throughout this report, this dataset is referred to as the removal dataset. This dataset was not from an automated source and included some data from court/warrant manual counts.[11] The data periods, dates compiled, and received are the same as noted above. The removals dataset contains demographic information (race, age, gender) and detention, petition filing, and hearing dates.

The third dataset recorded all cases (family and child counts) reviewed through the blind removal pilot. Designated DCFS staff from each office (Coach Developers from West Los Angeles and Assistant Regional Administrators from Compton-Carson) entered case information into a special projects database during the blind removal pilot. DCFS Business Information Services staff ran these reports. The blind removal datasets were received on the dates noted above. The blind removal datasets include demographic information (race, age, gender), allegations made and substantiated, blind removal review date if the case reviewer(s) agreed with the decision to remove, and the referral decision outcome (family reunification, family maintenance, voluntary family maintenance, etc.).

Interview Data. Individual interviews with the blind removal case reviewers and office administrators from the Compton-Carson and West Los Angeles DCFS offices were conducted. Separate semi-structured interview protocols were used for the two groups (Appendix A2). Topics for both groups included learning through blind removal, changes in thinking about race through blind removal, changes in practice through blind removal, implementation challenges and strategies to work through them, observations of staff engagement in and in response to blind removal, and recommendations for changes to blind removal and to address racial bias beyond bias training. Administrators were also asked about changes in perceptions about blind removal and useful practices from the pilot that will continue. Finally, interviewees were asked to describe the blind removal process in their office. Participants also completed a brief (1-2 minutes) demographic survey. Interviews were completed using Zoom, ranging from 20 to 60 minutes for the case reviewers and 55 to 75 minutes for the administrators. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for data analysis.

Survey Data. Simultaneous with conducting the interviews, two surveys were launched: one for CSWs and a second for SCSWs (Appendix A3). Surveys took between 5 and 10 minutes to complete. Surveys for both groups asked participants to consider the blind removal pilot and the degree of change in (a) talking about race and ethnicity at work, (b) doing their daily work, (c) the support they received at work, and (d) decisions made in their work, plus their feelings about the blind removal process. Additionally, surveys asked SCSWs to

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[9] Per documentation cited in each DCFS data spreadsheet.

[10] Exigent circumstances are defined in LA County DCFS policy as "A CSW may only detain without a court order if the information he or she possesses at the time of the detention provides reasonable cause to believe that the child is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury and the intrusion is reasonably necessary to avert the injury" (CITE)."

[11] Per email communication with DCFS staff (V. Portillo, CSA II on 10/05/23).

consider blind removal and the degree of change in support they offered to CSWs in various aspects of their work. Participants also provided demographic information.

Data Analysis

The research team used Excel and STATA to analyze quantitative data. Researchers generated descriptive statistics for the administrative data about hotline referrals, child removals from their families, and survey responses from CSWs and SCSWs. Quarterly racial/ethnic disproportionality indices were calculated for each office using DCFS administrative data about child removals and U.S. Census data from the Compton-Carson and West Los Angeles service areas.[12]

The research team used a rapid qualitative data analysis approach with the interview data (Beebe, 1995; 2014). As a team, we identified domains based on the interview topics, like those listed previously, and created two data matrices, one for case reviewers and another for administrators. Research team members populated the domains in each matrix with data summaries and relevant quotes for each participant. Then, team members analyzed data across domains from case reviewers within offices and administrators within offices using structured memos. A second round of memoing focused on similarities and differences in each domain between case reviewers and administrators in each office. To complete the qualitative data analysis, team members compared and contrasted domains between the two offices to develop findings about the blind Removal pilot. Team members also drew from interview data to understand how the blind removal intervention was implemented and how this may have varied from the implementation processes developed before the pilot started in each office.

Triangulating data is a key component of the rapid data analysis method (Beebe, 1995; 2014). Qualitative interview findings were triangulated (i.e., compared and contrasted) across participant groups and offices. The qualitative findings were then triangulated through comparison and contrast with the descriptive statistics from each office's CSW and SCSW surveys. Triangulating data across different sources improves the rigor and confirmability of the findings (Patton, 1999). Through this process, the research team integrated the qualitative interview and quantitative survey findings.

Study Limitations

There were several limitations to this evaluation study. First, the blind removal pilot was not implemented in isolation from other interventions designed to address racial disproportionality (i.e., training in preparation for Eliminating Racial Disparities and Disproportionality (ERDD) in the West LA office and 4DX and ERDD roundtables in the Compton-Carson office). This confounds the attribution of any changes in racial disproportionality, or the number of children removed from their families to any one intervention. Second, the three administrative datasets were not designed or able to be linked, therefore, analyses could not be conducted following children's cases from referral through the blind removal review to an outcome (i.e., referral closed, the child remained with parent/caregiver with voluntary or mandated services or child removed from family). Attempting to implement any intervention faithfully presents challenges; thus, the third limitation: the blind removal intervention was not implemented as planned in the West LA office, thereby limiting the scope of analysis.

[12] The disproportionality indices (DI) for each racial and ethnic group were calculated using the following two equations. First, the count of Black children removed during each quarter was divided by the total number of children removed for each quarter and the result was multiplied by 100 to get the percentage of Black children removed during each quarter. Second, the percentage of Black children removed during each quarter was divided by the percentage of Black children under age 18 in the DCFS office's services area. The result was the DI for Black children removed from their families during each quarter in either the Compton-Carson or West Los Angeles service area. This process was repeated using data for children in five racial/ethnic groups: Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, White, and American Indian/Alaska Native.

Appendix A2: Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Blind Removal Case Reviewers

1. What is your position at DCFS?
    a. How did you become involved in blind removal reviews and what is your role in the reviews?
2. How did the blind removal pilot facilitate learning about race within DCFS?
    a. How does your experience with blind removal change or influence your thinking about the role of race or ethnicity in DCFS?
    b. How about during investigations?
    c. How about when making decisions about removing children from their families?
3. In addition to what you just shared, what did you learn from the blind removal pilot?
4. Who decides which cases to bring for blind removal?
    a. What criteria were used to decide to refer a family's case for BR review?
5. Do you do anything differently because of the blind removal pilot? If yes, please describe.
6. Is there anything else you wish you could do related to blind removal? If yes, please describe a) what that is, b) any obstacles you may face, and c) what you would need.
7. What challenges did you observe as blind removal was implemented?
    a. How did you or others work through or around these challenges?
8. Over time, what did you observe about how your colleagues engaged in and responded to the blind removal reviews?
    a. Please describe both positive aspects and areas for improvement.
9. What recommendations do you have for future blind removal implementation within LA County DCFS, in CA, or elsewhere?
10. Thinking beyond racial bias training, what other practices would be helpful for recognizing and addressing racial bias in child welfare investigations?
11. Based on our conversation today and your experiences during the blind removal pilot, what else would you like to add?

Interview Questions for Administrators

1. How long have you been in your current role in the [West LA or Compton-Carson] office?
    a. What positions did you hold previously? In which office(s)?
2. How did the blind removal pilot facilitate learning about race within DCFS?
    a. How does your experience with blind removal change or influence your thinking about the role of race or ethnicity in DCFS?
        i. How about during investigations?
        ii. How about when making decisions about removing children from their families?
    b. What changes, if any, have you observed about how your staff think and speak about race and ethnicity?
3. In addition to what you just shared, what did you learn from the blind removal pilot?
    a. How does this inform your current work within DCFS?

Interview Questions for Administrators (continued)

4. How did staff decide to bring cases for blind removal review?
5. Do you do anything differently because of the blind removal pilot? If yes, please describe.
6. Is there anything else you wish you could do related to blind removal? If yes, please describe a) what that is, b) any obstacles you may face, and c) what you would need.
7. What learning took place for you as blind removal was implemented in your office and Compton-Carson?
8. What challenges did you observe as blind removal was implemented?
    a. How did you or others work through or around these challenges?
9. What policies or legislative barriers interfered with blind removal implementation?
    a. How did you work through or around these barriers?
10. Over the blind removal pilot year, what did you observe about how your staff engaged in and responded to the blind removal reviews?
    a. Please describe both positive aspects and areas where you would have liked to see improvement.
11. What have you noticed about your staff's perceptions of blind removal from the pilot's launch until the end?
    a. Please describe both positive aspects and areas where you would have liked to see improvement.
    b. How have your perceptions of blind removal changed from the beginning to the end of this pilot?
12. Going forward, what will you continue to use from the blind removal pilot? And why?
    a. How do you see yourself continuing these practices?
13. What recommendations do you have for future blind removal implementation within LA County DCFS, in CA, or elsewhere?
14. Thinking beyond racial bias training, what other practices would be helpful for recognizing and addressing racial bias in child welfare investigations?
15. Based on our conversation today and your experiences during the blind removal pilot, what else would you like to add?

Appendix A3: Surveys

Children's Social Workers (CSW) Survey

Blind Removal and Talking about Race and Ethnicity

Instructions: In each row, please indicate how the blind removal pilot has changed how much you talk about race and ethnicity with each person, or in each situation, identified below.

How has the Blind Removal pilot *changed how much I talk about race and ethnicity* with each person, or in each situation, below?

	A lot less	A little less	No change	A little more	A lot more
with my colleagues?	○	○	○	○	○
with my supervisor?	○	○	○	○	○
in unit meetings?	○	○	○	○	○
with my Assistant Regional Administrator?	○	○	○	○	○
with my Regional Administrator?	○	○	○	○	○
in General Staff Meetings?	○	○	○	○	○
with families during investigations?	○	○	○	○	○
when determining which services to recommend to families?	○	○	○	○	○
while assessing whether to detain children?	○	○	○	○	○
in required DCFS trainings?	○	○	○	○	○

Children's Social Workers (CSW) Survey (continued)

Blind Removal and Your Daily Work

Instructions: In each row, please indicate to what degree the blind removal pilot has changed how you do different aspects of your daily work.

To what degree has the Blind Removal pilot *changed how I*...

	A lot less	A little less	No change	A little more	A lot more
engage with families?	○	○	○	○	○
gather information from families?	○	○	○	○	○
help families build support networks?	○	○	○	○	○
gather information from families' support networks?	○	○	○	○	○
develop overall safety assessments?	○	○	○	○	○
assess families' strengths?	○	○	○	○	○
assess families' skills?	○	○	○	○	○
assess families' motivation for change?	○	○	○	○	○
assess families' needs?	○	○	○	○	○
create individualized service plans?	○	○	○	○	○
adapt service plans as needed?	○	○	○	○	○

Children's Social Workers (CSW) Survey (continued)

Blind Removal and Support at Work - Part A

Instructions: In each row, please indicate how the blind removal pilot has changed the amount of support, from various people, that you receive for talking about race and ethnicity in your work.

How has the Blind Removal pilot *changed the amount of support I receive for talking about race and ethnicity in my work* from each of the following people?

	A lot less	A little less	No change	A little more	A lot more
with my colleagues?	○	○	○	○	○
with my coach developer?	○	○	○	○	○
with my Blind Removal consultant?	○	○	○	○	○
with my SCSW?	○	○	○	○	○
with my unit supervisor?	○	○	○	○	○
with my Assistant Regional Administrator?	○	○	○	○	○
with my Regional Administrator?	○	○	○	○	○

Children's Social Workers (CSW) Survey (continued)

Blind Removal and Support at Work - Part B

Instructions: In each row, please indicate how the blind removal pilot has changed the amount of support, from various people, that you receive for managing your own bias related to race and ethnicity in your work.

How has the Blind Removal pilot *changed the amount of support I receive in managing my own biases related to race and ethnicity* from each of the following people?

	A lot less	A little less	No change	A little more	A lot more
with my colleagues?	○	○	○	○	○
with my coach developer?	○	○	○	○	○
with my Blind Removal consultant?	○	○	○	○	○
with my SCSW?	○	○	○	○	○
with my unit supervisor?	○	○	○	○	○
with my Assistant Regional Administrator?	○	○	○	○	○
with my Regional Administrator?	○	○	○	○	○

Children's Social Workers (CSW) Survey (continued)

Blind Removal and Decisions

Instructions: In each row, please indicate to what degree the blind removal pilot has changed the control you have in conducting investigations and making decisions.

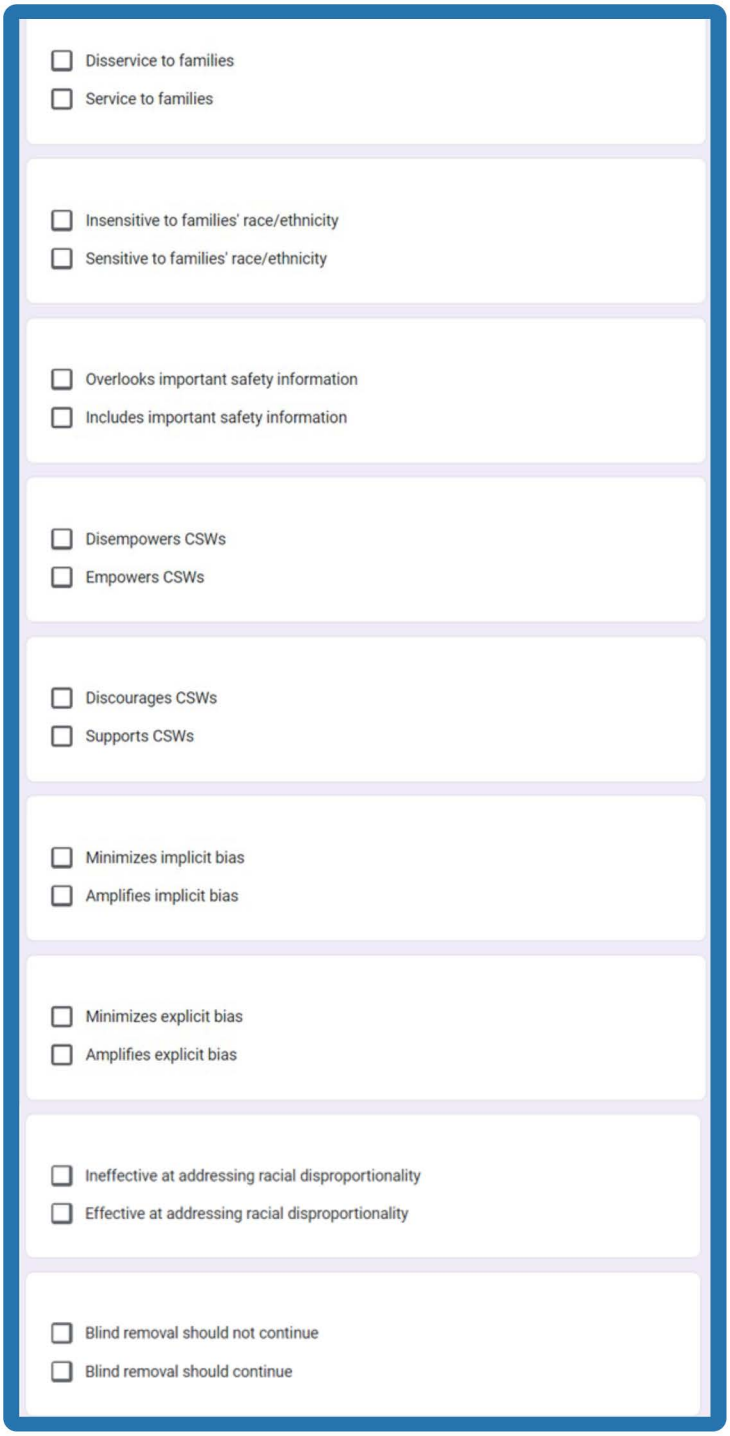
To what degree has the Blind Removal pilot *changed the control I have in* each of the following?

	A lot less	A little less	No change	A little more	A lot more
how I conduct my investigations?	○	○	○	○	○
making decisions about detaining children?	○	○	○	○	○

Children's Social Workers (CSW) Survey (continued)

Feelings about Blind Removal

Instructions: In each section below, please read the two phrases and **check the box next to the phrase that most closely describes how you feel about the blind removal process**.



End of CSW survey.

Supervising Children's Social Workers (SCSW) Survey

Blind Removal and Talking about Race and Ethnicity

Instructions: In each row, please indicate how the blind removal pilot has changed how much you talk about race and ethnicity with each person, or in each situation, identified below.

How has the Blind Removal pilot *changed how much I talk about race and ethnicity* with each person, or in each situation, below?

	A lot less	A little less	No change	A little more	A lot more
with my supervisees?	○	○	○	○	○
in unit meetings?	○	○	○	○	○
with SCSW colleagues?	○	○	○	○	○
with Blind Removal Consultants (West LA ONLY)?	○	○	○	○	○
with Coach Developers?	○	○	○	○	○
with other colleagues (e.g., CPMs, RMDs, CQI, etc.)?	○	○	○	○	○
with County Counsel?	○	○	○	○	○
with my Assistant Regional Administrator?	○	○	○	○	○
with my Regional Administrator?	○	○	○	○	○
in General Staff Meetings?	○	○	○	○	○
with families I may have contact with during investigations?	○	○	○	○	○

Supervising Children's Social Workers (SCSW) Survey (continued)

Blind Removal and Your Daily Work

Instructions: In each row, please indicate to what degree the blind removal pilot has changed how you support CSWs with doing different aspects of their daily work.

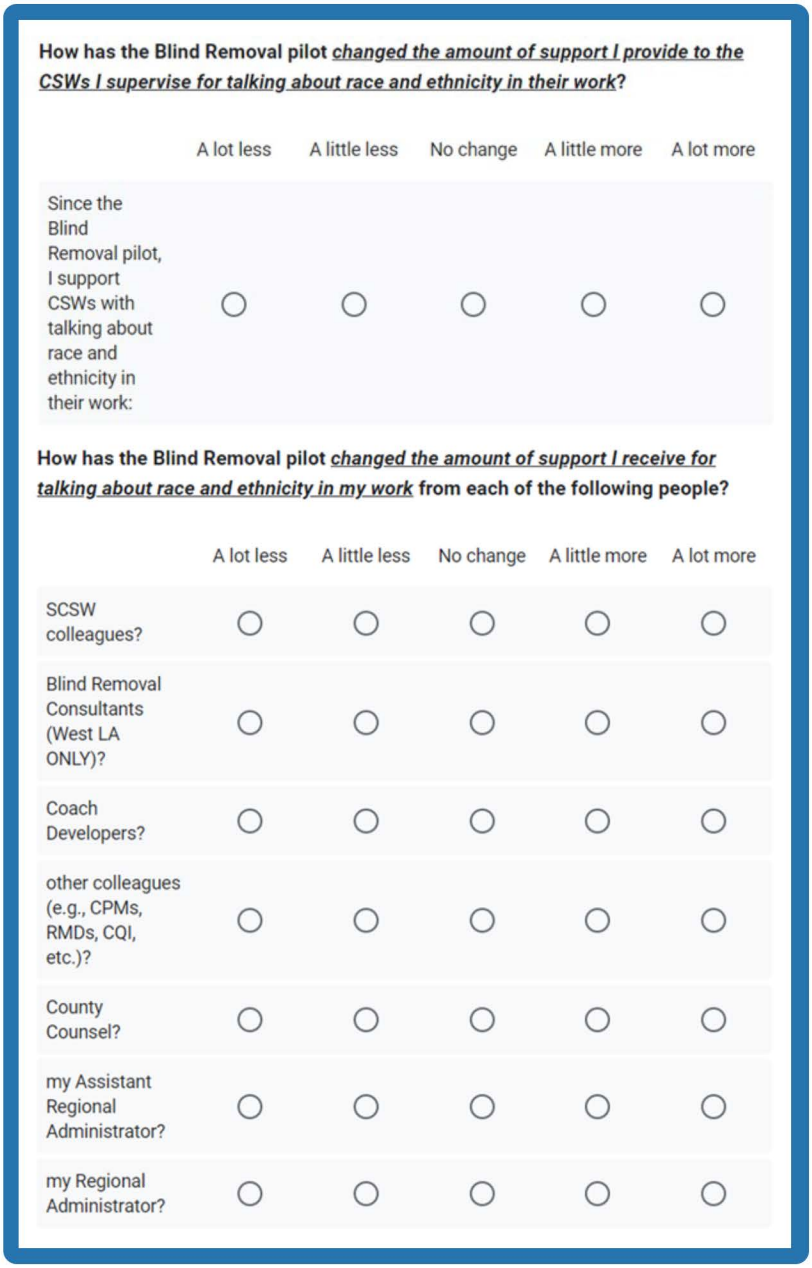
To what degree has the Blind Removal pilot *changed how I support CSWs with...*

	A lot less	A little less	No change	A little more	A lot more
engaging with families?	○	○	○	○	○
gathering information from families?	○	○	○	○	○
helping families build support networks?	○	○	○	○	○
gathering information from families' support networks?	○	○	○	○	○
developing overall safety assessments?	○	○	○	○	○
assessing families' strengths?	○	○	○	○	○
assessing families' skills?	○	○	○	○	○
assessing families' motivation for change?	○	○	○	○	○
assessing families' needs?	○	○	○	○	○
creating individualized service plans?	○	○	○	○	○
adapting service plans as needed?	○	○	○	○	○

Supervising Children's Social Workers (SCSW) Survey (continued)

Blind Removal and Support at Work - Part A

Instructions: In each row, please indicate how the blind removal pilot has changed *the amount of support you provide to CSWs* for talking about race and ethnicity in *their* work **and** that *you receive from various people* for talking about race and ethnicity in *your* work.



How has the Blind Removal pilot *changed the amount of support I provide to the CSWs I supervise for talking about race and ethnicity in their work*?

	A lot less	A little less	No change	A little more	A lot more
Since the Blind Removal pilot, I support CSWs with talking about race and ethnicity in their work:	○	○	○	○	○

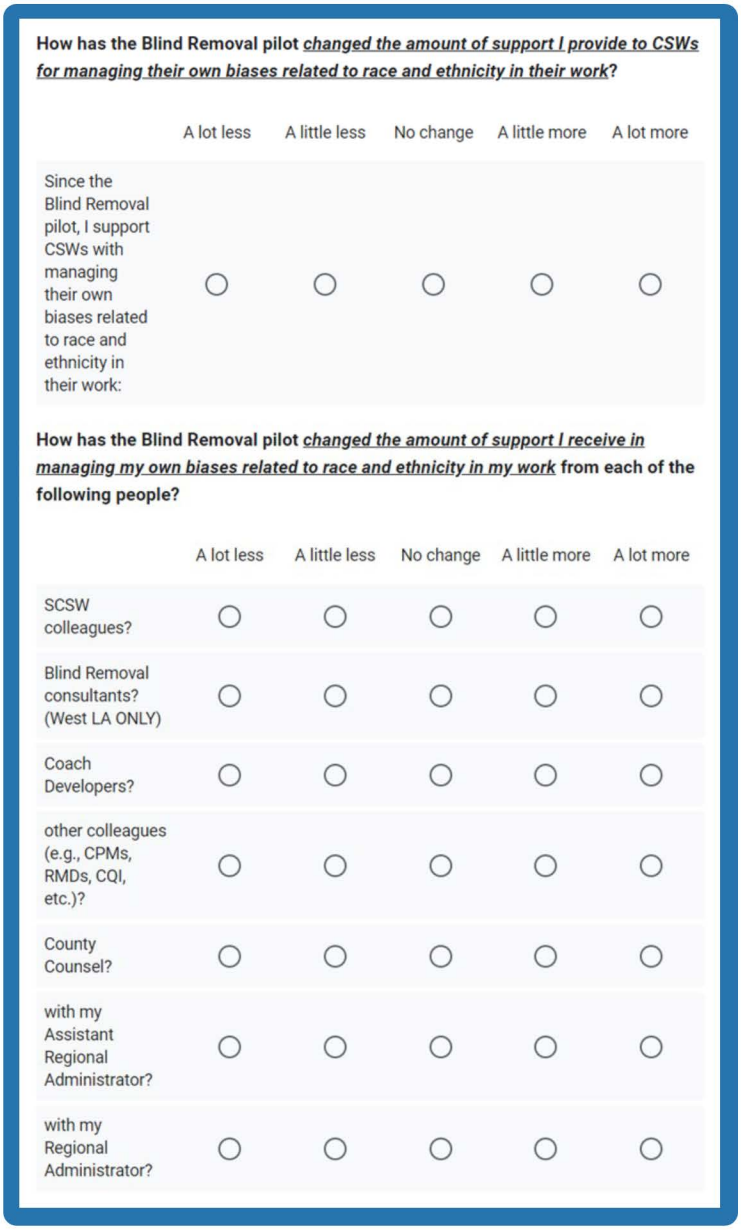
How has the Blind Removal pilot *changed the amount of support I receive for talking about race and ethnicity in my work* from each of the following people?

	A lot less	A little less	No change	A little more	A lot more
SCSW colleagues?	○	○	○	○	○
Blind Removal Consultants (West LA ONLY)?	○	○	○	○	○
Coach Developers?	○	○	○	○	○
other colleagues (e.g., CPMs, RMDs, CQI, etc.)?	○	○	○	○	○
County Counsel?	○	○	○	○	○
my Assistant Regional Administrator?	○	○	○	○	○
my Regional Administrator?	○	○	○	○	○

Supervising Children's Social Workers (SCSW) Survey (continued)

Blind Removal and Support at Work - Part B

Instructions: In each row, please indicate how the blind removal pilot has changed *the amount of support you provide to CSWs* for managing *their* own biases related to race and ethnicity in *their* work **and** that *you receive from various people* for managing *your* own biases related to race and ethnicity in *your* work.



How has the Blind Removal pilot *changed the amount of support I provide to CSWs for managing their own biases related to race and ethnicity in their work*?

	A lot less	A little less	No change	A little more	A lot more
Since the Blind Removal pilot, I support CSWs with managing their own biases related to race and ethnicity in their work:	○	○	○	○	○

How has the Blind Removal pilot *changed the amount of support I receive in managing my own biases related to race and ethnicity in my work* from each of the following people?

	A lot less	A little less	No change	A little more	A lot more
SCSW colleagues?	○	○	○	○	○
Blind Removal consultants? (West LA ONLY)	○	○	○	○	○
Coach Developers?	○	○	○	○	○
other colleagues (e.g., CPMs, RMDs, CQI, etc.)?	○	○	○	○	○
County Counsel?	○	○	○	○	○
with my Assistant Regional Administrator?	○	○	○	○	○
with my Regional Administrator?	○	○	○	○	○

Supervising Children's Social Workers (SCSW) Survey (continued)

Blind Removal and Decisions

Instructions: In each row, please indicate to what degree the blind removal pilot has changed the control you have in supervising how your CSWs conduct investigations and how you make decisions.

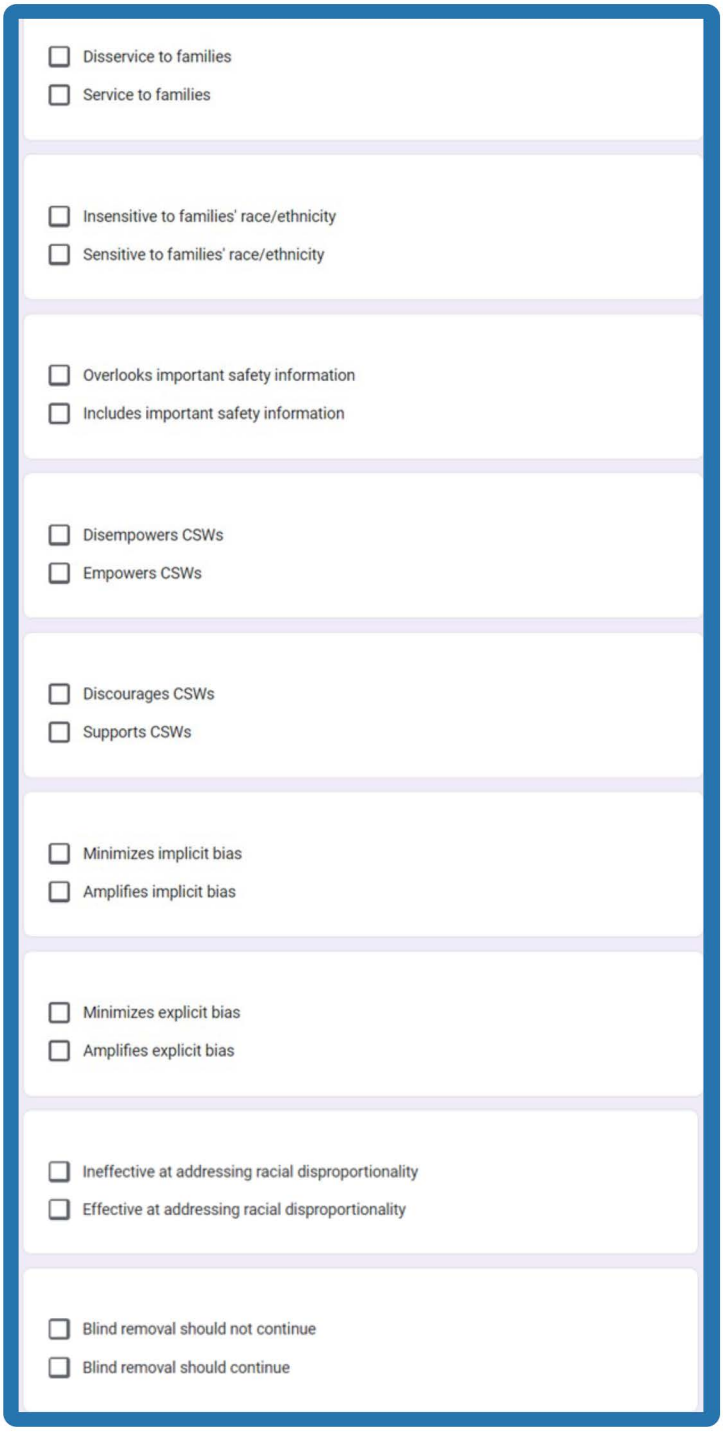
To what degree has the Blind Removal pilot *changed the control I have in* each of the following?

	A lot less	A little less	No change	A little more	A lot more
supervising CSWs as they conduct their investigations?	○	○	○	○	○
making decisions about removing children from their families?	○	○	○	○	○

Supervising Children's Social Workers (SCSW) Survey (continued)

Feelings about Blind Removal

Instructions: In each section below, please read the two phrases and **check the box next to the phrase that most closely describes how you feel about the blind removal process**.



End of SCSW survey.

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