

County Name: Erie

Date of Plan: November , 2013

Next Projected QSR: March 2015

Initial X

Update

**Section I.**

**Sponsor Team Members**

- Mary Ann Daniels, Director
- Mary Jo Cline, Administrator
- Aimee Plowman, Administrator
- Debbie Leasure, Administrator
- Amy Jones, Senior Solicitor

**CI Team Members for the CIP Development** (representation comes from casework, supervisor, and administrator staff)

- Alyssa Beer, Ongoing Supervisor
- Maggie Johnson, Ongoing Caseworker
- Tracey McCaslin, Quality Assurance
- Marcia Onuffer, Ongoing Supervisor
- Cindy Pierson, Truancy Supervisor
- Mary Lou Younke, Ongoing Caseworker
- Jennifer Sulewski, Ongoing Caseworker
- Tiffany Titus, Training Supervisor

**Section II. Background:**

In July 2013 Erie County Office of Children and Youth (ECOCY) embarked on the Quality Service Review process. This process was completed over 6 days and was comprised of 110 interviews, averaging 7 interviews per case.

Fifteen cases were reviewed during the QSR in July of 2013 with a sample that included 9 cases (60 percent in-home) and 6 cases (40 percent out-of-home) which were randomly selected from the list of open cases on April 17, 2013.

The safety, living arrangement, and the physical health of the children/youth were all found to be appropriately addressed in the majority of the cases reviewed. However, there were areas for improvement. The information was analyzed and three priority outcomes were developed (see below).

The Sponsor Team believes that by addressing the areas of teaming (formation & functioning), engaging noncustodial parents and ongoing professional development, agency staff and the families they serve will see the following outcomes:

- Increased consistency in assessment and planning for families.
- Increased coordination among service providers and supports systems to help families reach their goals
- Enhanced communication among all team members
- Staff members will feel confident and competent

The County Improvement (CI) Team developed the CI Plan through a combination of facilitated sessions, intersession work and a feedback loop with the units they represent. They worked to develop the three outcomes, assessed the strengths and gaps, and developed remedies. The Sponsor Team has been routinely informed of the CI Teams progress. As the CI Team continues to monitor the plan it will also develop markers that help the team look at evidence of completion. The following plan is the result of the CI team's work.

### **Section III. Priority Outcomes:**

**Outcome # 1:** Fathers and mothers will be treated equally when assessing, planning and implementing work with a family.

**Outcome # 2:** All families will have a formed and functioning working team that shares a common "big picture" understanding and long-term view of the child/youth and family.

**Outcome # 3:** Staff members will have up to date knowledge to enhance their skills through ongoing staff development activities, including team building

### **Section IV. Findings**

#### **Findings related to Outcome # 1:**

In every area where there was an opportunity to rate fathers the scores were significantly lower than those of other caregivers. Only 42% of fathers were rated as within the acceptable range for engagement efforts. Only 33% of the fathers were rated as having sufficient role and voice in the case and were suitably involved in the planning process. The county performed better at maintaining connections among the children/youth's mothers and siblings, but did not perform as high when maintaining family connections with fathers.

#### **Findings related to Outcome # 2:**

In 9 of the 15 cases reviewed during the QSR the Teaming: Formation indicator was rated as acceptable. In 10 of the 15 cases Teaming: Functioning indicator was rated as acceptable. Cases with acceptable team formation and functioning also tended to have acceptable long-term views of the case. The teams were described as a group of professionals and lacked the consistent involvement of family members. Although team members appeared to make good assessments of underlying issues, they lacked a consistent view of what it would take to safely close a case.

**Findings related to Outcome # 3:**

According to focus groups there has not been consistent orientation and training of new and current staff.

**Section V. Strategies and Action Steps for each Outcome**

Outcome # 1: Fathers and mothers will be treated equally when assessing, planning and implementing work with a family						
STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS/ BENCHMARKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	STATUS
Diligent searches will be completed to identify and locate noncustodial parents	Staff members will utilize the results of Diligent Searches and Family Finding by making contact with those identified	Children will be in least restrictive placement settings Greater placement stability	LSI- Paralegals Supervisors Caseworkers	May 2014	Letter to potential resources HZA Data Diligent Search Packet	
	Interviews with children and extended family members will be done to identify/locate noncustodial parents	Caseworker documentation and information in CAPS Children will be in least restrictive placement settings Greater placement stability	Caseworkers	May 2014	CAPS HZA Data Internal Training & technical assistance on process and procedure	
	Non-custodial parents will be notified when a case is opened concerning their children	Caseworker documentation and information in CAPS Children will be in least restrictive placement settings	Caseworkers Supervisors	May 2014	CAPS HZA Data	

<p>Casework practice will include regular efforts to reach out to and engage noncustodial parents</p>	<p>Both parents will receive the same notifications by telephone and by mail regardless of level of involvement in the case</p>	<p>Greater placement Stability Caseworker documentation and information in CAPS Children will be in least restrictive placement settings Greater placement Stability</p>	<p>Caseworkers Supervisors</p>	<p>November 2014</p>	<p>Internal Training on resources Parent Resource Handbook</p>		
<p>Caseworkers will work with noncustodial parent to be included in an individualized plan, including flexibility in location and hours for contact</p>	<p>Caseworker documentation and information in CAPS Children will be in least restrictive placement settings Greater placement Stability Increased placements with kin, when placement is necessary Increase in number of FGDM Conferences</p>	<p>Caseworkers Supervisors</p>	<p>November 2014</p>	<p>Internal Training</p>			



<p>Supervisory protocol will include prompting questions regarding noncustodial parents</p>	<p>Children will be in least restrictive placement settings Greater placement Stability</p>	<p>Supervisors</p>	<p>Critical Thinking Guide for Supervisors FGDM</p>	
<p>Parent Handbook will be distributed explaining the law and agency procedures.</p>	<p>Role and voice of parents will score higher on QSR</p>	<p>Supervisors and Administration</p>	<p>Sample handbooks for Washington and Allegheny Counties Printing Internal Staff Training</p>	<p>March 2014</p>
<p>Staff will be reeducated about the importance of engaging noncustodial parents</p>	<p>The number of cases documenting involvement of maternal and paternal resources will increase</p>	<p>Caseworkers</p>		<p>November 2015</p>
<p>Education will be provided about the law, rights of noncustodial parents; Fostering Connections and about current literature/research</p>	<p>Annual agency training and TA Plan Staff will be able to explain policies and procedures to</p>	<p>Training Supervisor Administration SWAN Representatives</p>	<p>PA Child Welfare Resource Center Multi-Cultural Resource Center</p>	<p>November 2015</p>





Outcome # 2: All families will have a formed and functioning working team that shares a common "big picture" understanding and long-term view of the child/youth and family.						
STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS/ BENCHMARKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	STATUS
Improved teaming with key stakeholders and families	Case specific team meetings with providers and families as needed to assess, plan and implement decisions.	Average length of stay in out of home placement will decrease	Caseworkers and supervisors will work with providers to coordinate	November 2015	FGDM Referral Process	
	Use FGDM more frequently for ongoing case planning by following up with initial referrals.	Average length of involvement with ECOCY will decrease	Caseworkers	November 2014		Critical thinking Guide for Supervisors
	Develop a protocol for regular ongoing communication/progress reporting with providers between meetings.	Improved QSR scores for team formation and functioning	Supervisors and Contract Monitor	November 2014	QSR Teaming protocol	
	Caseworkers will have input/feedback regarding effective of providers and choosing a family's team.	Increase in number team meetings being held		November 2014		
	Supervisory protocol will include prompting formation and functioning			November 2014		
	Cultural competence training/support related cultural issues that pertain to teaming			November 2015		

Outcome # 3: Staff members will have up to date knowledge to enhance their skills through ongoing staff development activities.

including team building						
STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS/ BENCHMARKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME (TO BEGIN WORK)	RESOURCES NEEDED	STATUS
Develop a Resource Guide for staff that includes both procedural steps and resources	Work Team to be developed	Staff will be confident and competent in their skills and have the resources necessary to supplement their work	Training Advisory Group, Training Supervisor, and Administration	November 2014	Work team charter Staff time Existing resource guides at agency	
Individualized staff development plans will enhance the skills of staff members	Onsite training to meet staff needs, investigate alternative training to meet needs of individual workers and explore online training.  Training opportunities will be sent to all supervisors.  Develop format for individualized staff development plans	All evaluations will be completed by anniversary date and will be on file  Annual staff development plan for individuals and agency	Administration Casework Supervisors Training Supervisor	November 2015	Child Welfare Resource Center  Training/technical assistance	
Develop an orientation/mentoring program for new hires and ongoing mentoring for seasoned staff	Training Advisory Group maintenance	Staff will be confident and competent in their skills	Training Advisory Group	November 2014	Work Team Charter Staff time	