



Philadelphia Department of Human Services
County Improvement Plan
June 2011

Section I. Sponsor Team Members:

The Executive Cabinet at DHS serves as the county improvement sponsor team. Cabinet members include:

Anne Marie Ambrose, Commissioner
Rumana Ahmad, Finance
Timene Farlow, Juvenile Justice Services
Vanessa Garrett Harley, Children and Youth Division
Susan Kinnevy, Performance Management and Accountability
Paul Bottalla, Policy and Planning
Alicia Taylor, Communication

Section II. Background:

In developing the County Improvement Plan, the sponsor team reviewed the results from the state lead Quality Service Review (QSR) as well as the results from our local QSR reviews. Through this process the team found consistencies in both areas of strength (e.g. safety of children, physical health, culturally appropriate services) and areas for continued improvement (e.g. fatherhood engagement, teaming with schools).

The team decided to prioritize our outcomes based on the key areas that need improvement as well as on those that would have the greatest positive impact on other indicators. For example, throughout the QSR process we recognize that we engage children, mothers and substitute caregivers more readily than fathers. We also expect that better engagement of fathers will lead to higher ratings in other indicators concerning fathers (i.e. role & voice, assessment, planning). Also recognizing the importance of education as an indicator of child well being, the Department has already developed the Educational Support Center. Expanding the use of the support center is a natural next step in improving teaming with educational partners. Finally, recognizing that a high percentage of children in placement with DHS are age 16 and older (32% as of January 2011), DHS has already developed several strong programs to assist youth with the transition to adulthood (e.g. Achieving Independence Center). Review of the findings of the QSR process has helped us to focus our strategy to safely assist youth towards moving to independence.

Section III. Priority Outcomes:

Outcome # 1: Engaging Fathers

This overarching outcome supports partnering with families that allows DHS to maximize a child's natural support system.

Outcome # 2: Teaming with School

This overarching outcome supports partnering with schools in a way that enables our youth to learn and develop while maintaining stable school placements.

Outcome # 3: Pathways to Independence

This overarching outcome will assist youth with maximizing their potential and developing and maintaining lifelong connections.

Section IV. Findings

Findings related to Outcome # 1: Engaging Fathers

Findings from the state lead QSR in December found that 23% of the cases reviewed were found to be in the acceptable range in regards to the engagement of the father. This finding is consistent with the findings from our local QSR process that found that 32% of cases reviewed rated in the acceptable range in this category. DHS views the engagement of fathers as an important first step in improving ratings regarding fathers across the other practice indicators (i.e. Role & Voice, Cultural Awareness, Assessment & Understanding, and Planning Process).

Findings related to Outcome # 2: Teaming with Schools

Findings in the state lead QSR in December found that 48% of the cases reviewed received acceptable ratings regarding the formation of a family team and that 40% of the cases rated in the acceptable range for the functioning of the team. These ratings are also consistent with the ratings from our local QSR process that found that 47% rated in the acceptable range for the formation of the family team and 33% of the cases reviewed had a functioning team.

Additionally the finding report from our state lead QSR documented a recommendation (under the academic status indicator) to increase the utilization of the Educational Support Center. With this recommendation in mind, DHS has decided to focus on teaming with our educational partners, through the support center, as a first step to increasing our overall teaming ratings.

Findings related to Outcome # 3: Pathways to Independence

22% of the applicable cases in our state lead QSR in December rated in the acceptable range in the Pathways to Independence. This rating is consistent with our local QSR process which found that 32% rated in the acceptable range for this indicator.

Implementation Team(s)/ Members

Vanessa Garrett Harley, Dell Meriwether, Jascinth Scott-Findley, Deszeree Thomas, Daniel Knapp, Donna Wilson, Brian Clapier, Jessica Shapiro

OUTCOME: ENGAGING FATHERS							
STRATEGIES	ACTION	INDICATORS/	EVIDENCE OF	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBL	TIMEFRAM	RESOURCES	STATUS

	STEPS	BENCHMARKS	COMPLETION	E	E	NEEDED	
The creation and implementation of a new program specifically designed to engage fathers whose children are in out of home care and to support them in access services at the Achieving Reunification Center. This program will be called the “Sankofa Project” and will aim to successfully engage 200 fathers during this calendar year.	Description of services that will be provided through this project will be developed.	A three-to-five page description of this service will be written.	Written description will be submitted as evidence.	Dell Meriwether	7/15/11	Sankofa is currently funded through December, 2011 by National Comprehensive Center for Fathers. Additional funding will be needed beyond December, 2011.	
	Infrastructure for this new project will be built and put in place so that referrals can be made.	Written summary of infrastructure and referral process	Summary will be submitted as evidence	Dell Meriwether	7/15/11		
	Begin Services	Referrals are made to the service and services are provided.	List of number of referrals and services that were rendered will be submitted as evidence	Dell Meriwether	10/15/11 1/15/12 4/15/12 7/15/12		

	Ongoing referrals to program	<u>200</u> amount of referrals made	Quarterly number of referrals and services will be submitted as evidence.	Dell Meriwether	10/15/11		
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Outcome: Teaming With Schools

STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS/ BENCHMARKS	EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	STATUS
Data agreement and partnership with the Philadelphia Public School District will be expanded to Charter School. This Strategy will begin with engaging a large Charter School as a template to be used to expand to other schools.	Develop an MOU with Mastery Charter School to exchange information on a student by student basis.	MOU is complete.	A copy of the MOU will be submitted as evidence.	Lisa Cain and Daniel Knapp	February 2012	n/a	
	Develop a list of Charter Schools to approach following Mastery	List is developed	A copy of the list will be submitted as evidence	Lisa Cain and Daniel Knapp	February 2012		

	Charter.						
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Tracking the number of request for consults with the Educational Support Center and providing this list to the region directors will allow the regions to use this information as a management tool.	The numbers of consults made to the educational support center will be shared with region directors	Lists are developed monthly.	Samples of these lists will be provided as evidence.	Lisa Cain and Daniel Knapp	December 2011	n/a	
Training for staff regarding education screening and the importance of educational stability will reinforce expectations of best practice and expand options for staff in supporting the educational development of children and youth.	Training will be developed.	Curriculum and training plan is developed.	Curriculum and training plan will be submitted as evidence.	Lisa Cain and Donna Wilson	Curriculum and training will be adapted following the September 8th meeting regarding the Educational Stability Bulletin.		

	Trainings provided to DHS staff and provider agencies.	Trainings are provided.	Sign in sheets will be submitted as evidence.	Lisa Cain and Donna Wilson	We anticipate that it will take six months for staff at DHS to be trained regarding the educational screen. We will be able to communicate when this training will begin following the September 8th meeting regarding the Educational Stability Bulletin.
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Outcome: Pathways to Independence							
STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	INDICATOR S/ BENCHMARKS	EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	STATUS
Youth Transitional Meetings as an expansion of Family Group Decision Making will be implemented for youth aging out of the system.	Pilot Youth Transition Meetings	Meetings will be held to plan process for Youth Transition Meetings.	Provide summary of meetings	Dell Meriwether	July 2011	Funding to expand FGDM program beyond current allocation	
	Develop criteria for volume and frequency for expansion of FGDM to have capacity to absorb youth aging out of the	Agency will have the capacity to absorb increased referrals. This capacity will be contingent on funding	Criteria for this type of referral will be submitted as evidence.	Dell Meriwether	December 2011		

	system	allocation.					
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