

**Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Families Workgroup  
Meeting Minutes  
March 7, 2012**

**Members In Attendance:** Jim Braun, MCCA/Youth in Need; Phyllis Hackman, St Louis Resource Parent; Ramona Conrad Cooper, MBCH; Karen Nolte, Children's Home Society; Ryan Dowis, Cornerstones of Care; Jay Tioleco representing Deanna Alonso, CMFCAA; Marilyn Nolan, Alternative Opportunities; Lori Ross, MFCAA; Greg Echele, Family Resource Center; Mary Casada, Great Circle; Kelly Schultz, Office of Child Advocate; Candy Shively, Dena Driver, Melody Yancey, Susan Rusk, Susan Savage, Wade McDonald, Amy Martin, Sheila Tannehill, Lesley Pettit, Julie Lester, Tanya Keys, Fred Proebsting, and Marta Halter, representing CD.

**Members Absent:** Jeremy LaFaver, Child Advocate, Vivian Murphy, MJJA; Melanie Scheetz, FACC; Melinda Nicholson, MFCAA

**Guests Present:** Adam Seehaver, United Foster Parents of MO; Lou Tennyson, Missouri Alliance for Children and Families; Carmen Schultz, Great Circle; Carrie Freeman and Kyle Kessler, KVC.

**Welcome and Introductions** – Candy Shively

The meeting was opened with self introductions of workgroup members and guests. Candy reviewed the agenda, binder, and meeting goals. The binder included member contact information, draft multi-year work plan, draft policy memos, and pilot concept paper. The December 1, 2012 Task Force Report was the foundation for the multi-year work plan. Workgroup meetings will be held each quarter with minutes being prepared from each meeting.

**Creation of a Multi-Year Work Plan to Address Task Force Recommendations** – Amy Martin

The draft multi-year work plan dialogue was facilitated by Amy Martin. The design of the plan included recommendations from the formal Task Force Report, along with goals, tasks, action steps, lead facilitators and potential sub group members. A CD staff person has been assigned to each identified component to convene smaller workgroups, monitor action steps, and coordinate related activities. The workgroup engaged in a dialogue on each of the plan goals and recommended steps. This feedback will be incorporated into a revised work plan. Names of additional individuals to serve on the smaller workgroups are being solicited by CD and should be provided to Amy by March 16. Refer to amended work plan attached.

**Establishing a Pilot on Privatization of Foster/Adoptive Home Recruitment and Retention** – Wade McDonald, Amy Martin, Workgroup Discussion

Wade McDonald provided information on contracting and procurement procedures in anticipation of a pilot being implemented during FY13 with passage of the budget bill this session. The contracting process requires, by statute, expenditures in excess of \$3,000 be contracted through the competitive bid process. For the recruitment and retention pilot, \$1.1m was recommended in the Governor's budget, with funds being derived from the reduction of 28 positions currently assigned to do these functions within Children's Division. The Office of Administration is the centralized purchaser and facilitates the process of securing bids for desired services. The Request for Proposal, RFP, is in the beginning stage of being drafted. It typically takes 6-9 months or longer for bid process completion.

Constructs of the pilot are being explored. Pilot sites will likely include an urban location and some rural sites, consistent with the Task Force recommendations. In considering sites, there is a desire to improve resource options in locations where youth are placed out of county versus their home community. A concept paper was given to the workgroup, introducing several different site options, each with a unique set of opportunities and challenges. Included in the site discussion was a metropolitan area, like Kansas City, and rural circuit clusters in northwest and southeast Missouri. This modeling allowed the workgroup to reflect on unique considerations such as geography, transition, minimum qualifications, oversight, and evaluation.

The group described successful privatization as being supported by community partners, private agencies, contractors and subcontractors. Coordination with existing local initiatives such as fostering court improvement would be ideal. With a goal of creating more homes based on a percentage of children in care, pilots could be used to demonstrate new methods. It might be necessary to consider resource hubs for foster/adopt families to access. Vendors would need to understand implications associated with geographic distances while considering start up time associated with establishing new offices, hiring staff, and connecting to key stakeholders. There would also be costs associated with resource home retention. To document success and potential for replication, data monitoring and evaluation is important. It is equally critical to understand key variables in measuring results between the different pilots.

The group discussed transition and transfer of existing cases. Some believed it may take less time to transition in an urban center such as Jackson County. Rural areas will need to create awareness, identify options, and conduct informational meetings to achieve a seamless transition. Regardless of locations selected, a better understanding of functions conducted by or interfacing with the current FCCM contractors and the FCARTSC contractors was needed. The group recommended contractor qualifications be consistent with those of FCCM contractors doing these functions today. Invoice and payment approaches were also discussed, with some suggesting a flat fee payment. It was believed a sampling of assessments performed by the pilot contractor could be reviewed by the Department for oversight purposes. Demonstration measures should be developed to determine pilot strengths and potential for statewide replication.

After the workgroup digested various pilot scenarios, four focused questions were posed to capture additional input.

- 1) *How is project success tracked and measured?* Feedback included doing urban/urban, rural/rural comparisons of pilot/non-pilot locations
- 2) *What standards of comparison will be utilized?* The group suggested use of milestones, targets and outcomes. Examples included fewer youth in residential care, fewer placement changes/placement stability, and increased number of resource homes. It would also be important to measure the strength of the partnership. Effectiveness could be addressed through quantitative/qualitative data.
- 3) *What would dual licensure entail; what would it mean for the home assessment process?* Suggestions included establishing two tiers for appropriate placement, making permanency the focus of placement decisions throughout the life of the case. By combining STARS and Spaulding into one training for all families, redundancy and duplication could be eliminated. A consolidated training at the time of the initial assessment would be advantageous since Spaulding training sessions are held less frequently. A potential foster parent could opt out if not interested in becoming an adoptive parent. In terms of the assessment, a social summary is needed for the Court's consideration when adoption becomes the permanency goal. There was

discussion as to whether an addendum could be prepared as a re-licensure update to account for the need for a social summary.

4) *What data elements can be used from FACES and what manual reporting will be necessary?*

Topics discussed included the need for site specific measures, some form of quality assurance on completed home assessments, effectiveness indicators as outlined on pages 12-13 of the Task Force report, and child well-being as measured through placement stability, maintaining in same school, unique placement demographics.

**Review of Draft Policies** – Dena Driver

Dena reviewed the policy draft on Release of Information to Resource Parents. The policy change is designed to encourage resource parent participation as a member of the professional team and equip them with information to care for children in their home. There was consensus on the policy draft, yet a few questions emerged during the discussion. CD will conduct further research on the availability of court orders, court reports, HIPAA consents and the openness of adoption records. Two pending pieces of legislation surrounding adoption records can be found in HB 1137 and SB 713.

CD will reflect on the additional questions as the policy is refined. As a next step, the draft policy is being shared with the foster and adoptive advisory board for additional feedback. CD hopes to formalize the policy by June 1, 2012.

**Recruitment Campaign Video Ads** – Amy Martin

The Department has been working with Hughes Marketing in the production of a new marketing campaign to increase the number of foster and adoptive families serving CD children. A short video was shared. Private agencies expressed interest in posting links on their websites. The clip is available through the links below.

Car: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSpER3fSIQ&list=UU8ju6eU1LrClG8gpVvl4Y-Q&index=2&feature=plpp\\_video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSpER3fSIQ&list=UU8ju6eU1LrClG8gpVvl4Y-Q&index=2&feature=plpp_video)

Dinner: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8gtkPTIhm8&list=UU8ju6eU1LrClG8gpVvl4Y-Q&index=1&feature=plcp>

**Workgroup Member Updates** – All

- Legislative Updates - Melody Yancey shared current legislation on HB 1347 regarding the Release of Information from foster parent records and HB 1576 pertaining to Level B resource providers having access to state health insurance. The bill initially included all resource providers and the language revisions now specify Level B resource providers.
- Lori Ross of MFCAA mentioned efforts to increase the respite program through conducting surveys to identify and develop emergency and crisis respite providers. In these efforts, online training will be provided and certification with the intent to obtain 50 volunteers by the end of the year 2012. MFCAA received grant funding from the Health Foundation to identify resources for children.
- Mention was made regarding payment of respite care being reportable as income for federal taxes but not for state income tax.
- Lou Tennyson of MO Alliance updated the group about “Homes That Heal” a training program for resource providers, contracted providers and child welfare staff surrounding trauma informed care. Currently, MO Alliance is training 8 families and is working in partnership with

other agencies to rollout the training. The program aids in moving youth out of residential facilities and into the community preferably with family. Another partnership occurring in the St. Louis region with private and public agencies is “30 Days to Family Initiative”. The program is designed to identify and place youth with relative and kinship providers early on within the case.

- Kelly Schultz of OCA shared the referrals for the month of February increased to 86. The increase is thought to be a result of a high profile case and 3<sup>rd</sup> party case reviews. OCA provides community outreach to agencies throughout the state to facilitate dialogue when difficult situations occur and communities are struggling to move forward.

### **May Agenda Building** – Candy Shively

- *Work Plan Updates* – names of additional sub-group members may be sent to Amy Martin by March 16. The revised work plan will be sent with minutes. Before the May meeting, sub-group leads will host a call with their teams and identify recommendations having a potential fiscal impact.
- *Recruitment/Retention Pilot* – update. Concepts will be further refined based on feedback from key stakeholders.
- *Legislative/Budget* – update on 2012 session, including budget bill and other legislation impacting this work.
- *Policy Drafts* – review. Potential drafts include transitional living advocate program, foster/adoptive resource recruitment, release of information to resource providers, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.
- *Trauma Informed Approaches* – presentation. Lou Tennyson and Ryan Dowis will share trauma informed practices being used by their organizations.
- *Workgroup Information Sharing* – updates.

Additional agenda items may be submitted to Amy Martin.

### **2012 Meeting Schedule**

Wednesday, May 23, 2012; Wednesday, August 29, 2012; Thursday, November 29, 2012