

Washington County Citizens Review Panel

"Citizens partnering with Child Protective Services to keep children safe."

November 15th, 2016

Attendance:

Members Present: Julia, John, Nissa, Mary, Sarah, LaJuan, Bonnie, Deb, Jan, Ralph, Mel. Members Absent: Dawn, Teri, Nancy, Jennifer

Approval of Minutes

October 18th minutes approved.

Old Business

Foster Parent Recruitment: Information meeting with Becky was held November 7th for prospective parents. Nancy and Dawn to serve on Foster Parent Recruitment Task Force.

Holiday Gathering: Reservations have been made at Mallards in Bayport, December 13th at 6:00 pm.

Annual Report: Deb is continuing work on annual report which is due in January. Reconsideration numbers to be included.

Snack and Minutes Sign-up: Jennifer has volunteered to take minutes for the year with back-up from members if she is unable to attend. Deb will adjust sign-up sheet.

New Business

2017 Planning:

1. Foster care re-entry project/file review
2. Permanency guidelines file review
3. Mentorship programs resource list
4. Safe harbor/sex trafficked youth workgroup

Sarah and members assessed each need/idea. Foster Care Re-entry Study was last done in 2012. Washington County re-entries are 23.5%; State average is 24.5%. There were thirteen case file reviews with recommendations for action. Sarah envisions a process similar to reconsiderations: pull 10-13 files for a random sampling of kids in and out of home placement. Re-entry remains the biggest challenge for County. Mary stated that Minnesota tries to re-unify more children than other states. State Data Dashboard can be used to highlight which counties have greatest re-entry rates.

County is working on internal plan for Safe Harbor/Sex Trafficked Youth.

Deb felt that compiling list of potential mentors would not be too time consuming.

Sarah explained Permanency Guidelines. Intense services include examining factors for kids going over permanency. County continues with concurrent practice which involves plans for both re-unification and out of home placement.

Bonnie suggested Sarah compile brief description and scope for each idea. CRP will divide into small groups and address each issue.

Update from Washington County (Sarah, Nissa)

Donated children's books are now available at both Cottage Grove and Stillwater offices. Youth books are in Stillwater courtroom area. Sarah shared brief story of young boy's delight in being able to pick out a book and take it home.

New Director Bill Toppel has been hired. He is former HHS Director from Winnebago County, WI. He has come out of retirement to relocate for MN position and will start January 9th, 2017.

New County Commissioner Stan Karwoski from Oakdale elected to serve on County Board. Election fills seat left vacant by death of Ted Bearth.

Governor's Task Force recommendations remove contract staff as option for County, which staffs 24/7 with Crisis Response Team (CRT) and employees often working with contract agency as second job. County can contract for screening on weekends, but may not contract for face to face meetings. Challenges for staff include lack of funding for additional hours worked by staff. Lengthy discussion ensued about current County protocol.

John suggested survey be developed to collect data on after-hours procedures/experiences by clients, with findings to be presented to Legislative Task Force. Sarah was open to idea; said that Law Enforcement is currently rated through survey. A feasibility study regarding the use of CRT for mental health and child protection is under consideration. Data from survey could be used to support contract work or to support internal CRT. Bonnie asked whether waiver is an option as County has system in place (operating for 15 years). Ralph spoke to variable labor supply concerns.

Sarah thanked members for recent work on reconsiderations. Mike, Bonnie, and Jan volunteered to meet Tuesday November 29th for new reconsiderations.

Nissa and Sarah plan to attend National CRP Conference being held in Anchorage, AK in May 2017. They are planning to submit proposal for presentation. Conference open to CRP members, but they must pay for trip expenses.

Update from DHS (Mary)

New CRP member training to be held at LifeTrack.

DHS is working to combine funding for Homeless and Runaway Youth; MN is the only state talking between Child Protection and Child Welfare.

Recent Multi-disciplinary Team Conference for Counties met with goal: What sort of services will help with continuity and implementation?

Mary explained MN Care and MA for former foster youth. Provision in ACA provides for coverage until age 26, but complications arise with youth in and out of system.

Child and Family Service Review completed; undertaken last in 2009. Results will include Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

Meetings are ongoing with Governor's Task Force. There is concern among MN Counties as many are understaffed and have difficulty filling positions, especially in out-state areas and smaller communities. Recent funding from State marks first time Child Protection budget line was added. Minnesota is 2nd lowest state for CP funding.

Meeting Adjourned