

DCYF ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2013-2014

Key Success #1

- Children's Rights Lawsuit: Favorable decision in the major federal court law suit brought by New York-based Children's Rights Incorporated against the State of RI/DCYF (Cassie M. etc. A. v Lincoln D. Chafee et. Al). This group brought similar suits in other states and won, causing the states to have to invest tens of millions of additional dollars in services. We worked exhaustively with the AG's Office for the past few years to defend this suit and the judge ruled that the evidence did not support the serious allegations made in the case.

Key Success #2

- Achieved full compliance with federal requirements: The Department successfully completed its Program Improvement Plan (PIP) developed and implemented as a result of the State's Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSC) with the Administration for Children and Families. As part of the two year process of achieving full compliance, DCYF engaged internal and external stakeholders in a strategic planning process which identified goals and objectives based on the areas needing improvement. Through hard work, the department not only achieved, but exceeded its benchmark outcomes.

Key Success #3

- Close to end of 40+ year federal court oversight of Training School: The Department, together with the ACLU and the Master appointed by the Federal District Court, submitted a motion to amend the long standing (1972) federal court order related to operations of the Training School. We expect to end the federal court order within the next year based on the work we have done in the past three years.

Key Success #4

- Created new vision and mission for the department: The Department revised its promulgated vision and mission to reflect a system transformation built on communication and partnerships, client voice and choice as well as safety, permanence and well-being of Rhode Island's children, youth and families and put forward three overarching goals pursuant to the new vision and mission. A joint DCYF – Community planning forum was held to ensure statewide buy-in and participation.

Key Success #5

- Creation of a wellness-based agency: In response to the presence of secondary stress associated with working for the Department and to create a healthier work environment and strong staff supports, a wellness committee representative of all areas of the department was created. The group has been very active in addressing the needs of staff through new communication vehicles, through clinical and other training opportunities and through creation of a peer support team which is available 24/7 for staff experiencing secondary trauma and stress. Widespread training on the skills associated with Restorative Practice was provided to senior and mid-level administrators as well as the wellness committee and peer support team members.

Key Success #6

- Aggressive Efforts to win competitive federal grants: The Department has been extremely successful in bringing in federal money to address critical areas including infrastructure building.
 - 5 year, \$2,000,000 cooperative agreement from the Administration for Children and Families for diligent recruitment of families for children in the foster care system.
 - 5 year, \$2,425,000 cooperative agreement from the Administration for Children and Families for the development of a trauma-responsive system to support children adopted through the state.
 - 2 year, \$494,365 grant to solidify the infrastructure capacity between state agencies targeted to coordinate and enhance child welfare and early care and education services for children at-risk or in need of foster care services.
 - 4 year, \$4,000,000 cooperative agreement for the Expansion of Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their families Program to implement a statewide infrastructure serving children and youth with serious emotional disturbances in the publicly funded system
 - 1 year, \$300,000 planning grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to support the further development of Rhode Island's system of care.
 - 4 year grant in partnership with RI Department of Education to enable screening for young children and training for providers to maximize success of young children in the child welfare system
 - Initiative at the Center for Healthcare Strategies, Inc. to provide Rhode Island with technical assistance and training to help develop guidelines and procedures for the use of psychotropic drugs for children in care

Key Success #7

- Creation of Permanency Committee with the Family Court: A Joint Family Court-DCYF Permanency Committee was established to support the work initiated under the Child and Family Service Review Program Improvement Plan. The committee includes representation of the court, DCYF, parent advocates and child advocates. The committee meets on a quarterly

basis to identify the strengths and challenges in achieving timely permanency outcomes for children and youth.

Key Success #8

- Enhancement of behavioral health services/psychiatric/medication: This year, the department arranged for the availability of a child psychiatrist to provide consultation to DCYF staff relative to medication and diagnosis for children in DCYF care. This has been instrumental in ensuring professional review and approval of the use of any psychotropic medications.

Key Success #9

- Increased use of kinship placements: With a focus on decreasing the use of congregate care placements and utilizing the least restrictive option when children must be removed from their parents, the Department has been very successful in increasing the use of kinship placements. 70% of children who are in care are in foster homes, and of that 70%, more than half of the children are placed with relatives.

Key Success #10

- Approved Title IV-E Waiver: The department received approval for a Title IV-E waiver which will allow for more flexibility with federal funding which will be used to enhance existing and develop new in-home and community-based services to reduce reliance on congregate care and improve the array of in-home and community-based services, foster home support and treatment foster care services.

Key Success #11

- Super community designation for the Chadwick Center Trauma Grant: Rhode Island was one of six areas in the nation and the only statewide effort selected to participate in this federally funded project which provides system training for all public and private providers.

Key Success #12

- Evidence to Success: The Department was selected as a pilot partner in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Evidence2Success Initiative which focuses on improving young people's well-being in the community and across public systems.

Key Success #13

- Collaboration with and Co-location of community partners: FCCP, Narragansett Indian Tribe, Trauma Center, etc. – In an effort to enhance community partnerships and to provide more coordinated and supportive services to clients and staff, we have invited community partners to co-locate with our staff and this is just a representative sample of the agencies that have taken us up on the offer.

Key Success #14

- Work with LGBTQI/SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression): The department has been working with an LGBTQI committee which was formed to specifically address the unique needs of youth in state care and which is comprised of DCYF, system of care networks, network of care providers and community providers, Gay and Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, and Youth Pride, Inc. A two day, 6 hour training will be attended by DCYF and Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning Youth to cover adolescent identity development, legal responsibilities and practice recommendations specific to child welfare.

Key Success #15

- Partnership to address human trafficking: The department has worked closely with Homeland security, FBI, Day One, and the US Attorney and other members of law enforcement and the treatment community to confront human trafficking and has partnered with the US Marshall by participating in sex offender sweeps to insure the safety of children to whom offenders may have had access.

Key Success #16

- Statewide recognition of children's' issues: The Department coordinated the April 2014 statewide collaboration for prevention of child abuse and recognition of children's' mental health months during April and May.

Key Success #17

- Recognition of infant/toddler issues: The Department has worked closely with Susan Dickstein of on the issue of social, emotional, and mental health of infants and toddlers which has helped inform policy and practice. Dr. Dickstein is associated with Brown University Medical School, is a psychologist at Bradley Hospital and is President of the RI Association for Infant Mental Health.

Key Success #18

- Consolidated Youth Services: We have focused the last several years on providing critical support services to hundreds of older youth (310 in FY 14). These youth live in their communities and are either working and/or attending post- secondary schools. Now in its 7th year, we are seeing more youth graduating from college (including law school) and leading productive lives. YESS participants who are also in active in our ASPIRE-IDA component are more likely to have long term employment at higher wages and/or enrolled full time in college. Without YESS and the other Consolidated Youth Services of which YESS is a part, these youth would either remain on the DCYF caseload at a much higher cost, end up in adult corrections or homeless.

Key Success #19

- Improved outcomes for children: The improved outcomes are too numerous to mention but some of the more major ones are:
 - Face to face contact - we are on target for the first time in 5 years to ensure that 90% of youth in foster care are visited at least once per month by their social worker
 - Placement stability: We have increased the percentage of youth experiencing 2 or fewer placements during their first 12 months in care from 86.6% in 2010 to 88.6% in 2013.
 - Reunification: We have increased the percentage of youth discharged from foster care to reunification in less than 12 months from 70.2% in 2010 to 77.5% in 2013 and decreased the median length of stay from 7.4 months in 2010 to 6.4 months in 2013.
 - Placement of Young children: We have reduced the percentage of young children age 12 and under placed in group homes or institutions from 18.4% in 2010 to only 7.9% in 2013.

Key Success #20

- Home Confinement/Electronic Monitoring Program (HC/EM): Through the collaborative efforts of The Family Court; DCYF, Public Defenders Office, Attorney General; and the General Assembly, legislation was passed that created the State's first Home Confinement/Electronic Monitoring Program (HC/EM). HC/EM is comprehensive GPS tracking system that offers the Family Court a reliable alternative to the Detention or Sentencing of youth to the RITS. In its first

3 years HC/EM has worked with over 500 of our most high risk youth and has recorded a success rate of over 82%. This has allowed youth to remain in their community and reduced placement and detention costs.

Key Success #21

- Youth Transition Centers (YTC): This OJJDP best practice model is currently in its 5 year of operation. The YTC is public/private collaboration between Juvenile Probation and Tides Family Services. It works closely with the Providence Police, Attorney General Office and other civic groups in the community. It is designed as a re-entry program for high risk youth leaving our correctional and residential facilities AND is also used as an alternative to incarceration for high risk youth currently in the community. This intense program provides neighborhood based services and intensive supervision for a period of 4 to 6 month in order to insure the youth is stable in their community. YTC programs are located in the core cities of Providence and Pawtucket.

Key Success #22

- Non-Violence Workshops: Juvenile Probation, in partnership with the University of Rhode Island's Center for Non-Violence and Peace Studies, has been providing non-violence programming to our most high risk youth at the YTC. In preparation for the implementation of these workshops, URI has provided training for probation and Tides YTC staff. This programming explores the Kingian Principles of Non-Violence and is seen as offering each student the possibility of making life-long changes in their relationships at home, with friends, and in their community.

Key Success #23

- Transitional Planning Initiative: In the spring of 2014 Juvenile Correctional Services implemented a comprehensive transitional planning initiative that will greatly enhance the communication, planning and programming of all youth who are sentenced to serve time inside the RITS. This initiative is based on the philosophy that re-entry programming starts at the point of intake into the Training School. Probation & RITS staff, the youth, and family participate in formal and informal meetings from the time the youth is adjudicated and sentenced into the Training School to the time of re-entry into the community. As all research shows that the first 60 days after release are the highest risk period for youth all youth released from the RITS enter into Probation's Transition Unit where they receive intense supervision and treatment as established in their discharge plan.

Key Success #24

- Probation Clinical Assessment Program (2014): Juvenile Probation, in partnership with Dr Mary Clair at URI's Cancer Prevention Research Center has developed an educational and clinical

assessment program. This program allows for interns, under the supervision of Dr. Clair to administer an array of assessments and outcomes to assist our probation officers in finding the appropriate level of educational and clinical service. This unfunded program has been helpful for those high risk youth who for either behavioral or financial reasons have not been able to get the testing they need

Key Success #25

- **Transition to Success:** Juvenile Correctional Services and Tides Family Services partnered on this SAMHSA grant. The focus was on juveniles who have significant substance abuse histories and are re-entering the community after an adjudicated stay at a secure detention facility. *Transition to Success* provides seamless services beginning in the correctional facility and continuing into the community. All parties were trained in Motivational Enhancement/Cognitive Behavioral Therapy - Five Sessions (MET/CBT5), an evidenced-based treatment model proven effective with juvenile corrections populations. Community-based services including: outreach and tracking, care coordination, school and workplace support are provided to youth as they transition back to the community.

Key Success #26

- **YTC Community Service Garden Program:** Through start-up funding from our Department and in collaboration with Farm Fresh RI, Tides Family Services and AS220 probation established a “Restorative Justice” program based around garden building and gardening. Located in the heart of south Providence this hands on program has youth working along-side probation and Tides staff in creating building and caring for a neighborhood garden. Produce from the garden has been used by Harvest Kitchen staff in making salsa. Youth participating in this program learn to give back to the community by taking part in this community service program

Key Success #27

- **The Harvest Kitchen Project:** The Harvest Kitchen Project (HK) is workforce development collaboration between DCYF/ Division of Juvenile Correctional Services and Farm Fresh Rhode Island for high risk youth in the juvenile justice system that are either in the community and open to probation or those that are currently under sentence at the Rhode Island Training School (RITS). Entering into its 4th year this program HK provides over 100 students with culinary art, marketing, and customer service skills. HK currently produces a variety of fruit, vegetable, and baking good products that are labeled and sold here in RI and Massachusetts. Student who have graduated from HK have obtained jobs at RISD, Schartner Farms, Blue Cross Blue Shield of RI, the Market Mobile, the Community Kitchen at the RI Food Bank, local food kitchens, and area restaurants. In 2014 our partner Farm Fresh received the RI Foundation Community Leadership Award for Innovative Programs (inclusive of the Harvest Kitchen Project).

Key Success #28

- **IV-E Record Review:** The Department successfully completed a federal title IV-E primary record review in August 2013. These on-site audits are conducted every three years by the Administration of Children and Families to review a sample selection of foster care reimbursement cases to ensure compliance with IV-E eligibility requirements. Only 4 error cases are allowed for the Department to pass the audit. The Federal Benefits Unit staff work diligently throughout the year to ensure that all necessary documentation and eligibility criteria are being met. As a result, the Department passed the audit with 3 minor errors noted, which were system issues. The penalty was less than \$300.

Key Success #29

- **Improvements in Surveillance, Evaluation, Research and Outcome Reporting:** The Department has hired two additional epidemiologist (through federal grants) to analyze data, evaluate programs and interventions, and conduct research to monitor and provide data-driven reports for continuous quality improvement. A number of evaluative and surveillance data reports on child, family, program and system outcomes have been produced. Highlights include:
 - FY13 and FY14 permanency indicator surveillance report
 - Congregate Care – data driven recommendations
 - Clinical Assessment Report, Clinical Assessment Outcomes : Child and Adolescent Needs and Strength assessment (CANS)
 - Multi-systemic Therapy Outcome report
 - Level of Care report
 - Adoption Surveillance report
 - Wraparound Fidelity Index report (measuring fidelity to Wraparound model)
 - Family Team Meeting Surveillance report
 - Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment surveillance report
 - Family Care Community Partnership report
 - Predictors of Long Term Foster Care report
 - Psychotropic Medication prescribed among children in RI DCYF surveillance report

Other accomplishments include:

- Evaluation in collaboration with The Consultation Center at Yale University of the Adoption and Well-being after Trauma grant initiative
- Successfully trained statewide RI DCYF contracted providers in the CANS, a clinical assessment, to supplemented the already in existence functional outcome assessment measures, Ohio Scale and Ages & Stages Social Emotional.
- Implemented a formal process for the proposal and establishment of new programs by RI DCYF providers inclusive of a Logic Model with identified outcomes and data submission process
- Ongoing: working toward building the infrastructure to have a State-led Child and Family Service Review CQI process

Key Success #30

- **PEW Initiative – Results First:** The department is participating in the Results First Initiative. This is funded by the PEW Charitable Trust and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The department is working in cooperation with the Office of Management and Budget. The goal of this initiative is to utilize data in the implementation of an innovative cost-benefit analysis approach that helps identify policies and programs that are proven to work.

Key Success #31

- **Involvement of parents in programming:** The Department appointed parents who were served by the Department as co-chairs of the Family Community Advisory Board (FCAB) which is advisory to the state's new system of care.

Key Success #32

- **Fatherhood Initiative:** The exclusion of fathers from the child welfare process has adversely impacted the ability of the child welfare system to respond to the diverse needs of the children and youth impacted by abuse and neglect. Through a combination of training, advocacy, and organizing activities, the CWI works to support the Department's goals of diligent recruitment, right-sizing congregant care while achieving safety, permanency, and well-being for children and youth in care.
 - **Speakers Bureau** was created which commenced in February 2014 and included five men and their children as participants. The process involves a 12-week empowerment based psycho-educational curriculum.
 - **Advocacy.** CWI oversees the LEAD Committee. LEAD represents a public-private-consumer led process that supports training, advocacy, and community organizing to insure the inclusion of fathers in child welfare and human services.
 - **Organizing.** CWI hosts a Bi-annual Fatherhood Summits that unite public, private, and consumer groups in shared discussions about the service delivery system and meeting the needs of Rhode Island's children, youth, fathers, mothers, and families. There have been two summits, 2012 and 2014. The summit serves as a vehicle to establish a course of action in support of father inclusive practice as well as a method for reporting successes and ongoing efforts. CWI also hosts an annual Fatherhood Legacy Award Breakfast to honor a Rhode Island professional and father that are promoting a positive legacy of fatherhood. Both of these activities promote attention to the importance of fathers and serve as a guide for fatherhood practice.

Key Success #33

- **National Building Bridges Initiative:** The Department is working with the national Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) to help build partnerships among service providers, families, youth,

advocates and policy makers to achieve positive outcomes for children, youth and families. The program provides a framework for measuring meaningful, long term outcomes; promotes accountability for providers, families, payers and regulators and for using data to inform decision making to achieve better coordination of care. Seven residential care community providers in Rhode Island will be part of the initiative at this time and the initiative will be expanded to other residential and community-based programs later in the process.