

# Community Partnerships and Youth and Family Engagement

## Meeting Notes

12/3/2019

### Agenda

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Purpose
- Group Format
- Communication Strategies
- Open Discussion

### Welcome!

- Key info
  - Minutes + info will be on website
  - Co-Leads:
    - Tim Marshall and Beresford Wilson

### Connecticut's Response to Family First (JoShonda)

- Planning Cycle
  - 8 months: November 2019-June 2020
  - 7 states in the submission process, 1 approved so far
  - Goal is to implement in October 2020
- Workgroups
  1. Candidacy
  2. Programs
  3. Kinship/Foster Care
  4. Fiscal
  5. Community Partnership and Parent and Youth Outreach
- Anticipated Challenges
  1. Risk averse tendencies
  2. Communication between workgroups and with the public
  3. Paradigm shift
    - A change in how CT views DCF as the child welfare agency to a more broad, more holistic behavioral health and child welfare system for all children in CT especially those with the most complex behavioral health needs. (This is not just about DCF and the children DCF currently interacts with.)

- Child centered → family centered approach
- Major goals of Family First
  1. Leveraging funding further “upstream” to prevent children from developing additional behavioral health needs and entering more deeply into the system
  2. In-home services
  3. Leveraging Evidence-Based Programs (EBPs)
  4. Leveraging quality group home/congregate care when needed in a timely and short, efficient manner
- A note on the goal of partnership
 

*Partnership as defined by FAVOR and Beresford Wilson means a shared authority and responsibility through mutual respect.*

  - a. Families should be a co-equal part of this process
  - b. This is changing another paradigm: working *with* families, not *over/for* families
  - c. Reexamining our own identity as family members ourselves (multifocal approach)

### **Who is missing from this group?**

1. State Departments
  - a. Department of Education
  - b. Department of Labor
  - c. Department of Corrections
  - d. Department of Housing
  - e. Office of Early Childhood
  - f. Juvenile Justice
  - g. Department of Developmental Disabilities
2. Youth voices—need to be an active voice in the conversation
  - Note—logistically it may be difficult to get youth in the room during these meetings (due to school responsibilities, etc) but we can try to engage you in alternate ways such as YAB and 2) have members act as ambassadors and solicit youth voices between meetings and bring their feedback to us
3. Family voices
  - a. Different groups/types of parents
  - b. At-risk families who did not enter the system (resilience approach)

4. Higher education (both 2 and 4 year colleges)
  - a. Sun's Scholars= former foster youth who are now in college or professional degree programs
5. Interfaith communities—they interact with a lot of populations that are wary of DCF
6. Fatherhood groups/initiatives
7. Disability advocates/stakeholders
8. Police and health professionals
9. Consumer + Family Advisory Council

## Group Format

1. Four-hour meetings (can wrap up early)
2. Communication style
  - a. Electronic communications through the website and via [dcfctfamilyfirst@ct.gov](mailto:dcfctfamilyfirst@ct.gov)
    - i. Kick-Off meeting video already posted
    - ii. We will have meeting minutes & FAQ doc posted soon
  - b. This group weighs in on what's happening in other groups
  - c. Might be helpful to include talking points and executive summary to partners + press?
  - d. We will work to document communication and request that members act as ambassadors on our behalf to engage in active discussion with outside partners
3. Group deliverable:
  - a. Review process & further refinement of our plan
4. CT's Approach to Family First
  - a. We want to 1) go above and beyond the feds' intention and 2) get Family First out to the public
  - b. Our goal is to actively engage the people in our community—not just talk with the people in this room
    - i. Goal is actionable activity; creating a *movement* and not just a *moment*—yield benefits through sacrifice
    - ii. Would be very beneficial to translate Family First materials ASAP
    - iii. Might be a good idea to draw up a list of questions that members can bring to the public. Having two or three questions in advance rather than asking broadly for their thoughts might make it easier for them to provide input. This

would probably take the form of simple, easy, quick questions that we can bring to constituents and bring back.

- iv. It's not enough to simply talk about who is not here—we need to make an effort to bring those people into the room. This means members using their social ties and connections to get them into the space. We need to step up and make an effort to include them, not just wish they would come.
- c. We are currently missing a bold vision. We need to craft a picture of the future we want to create. Right now, we need to imagine what the ideal is so that we can then take steps to achieve that goal and who will take ownership of each of those pieces.
- d. We should also look at what other places are doing, on both the state and federal level. Not just digging down, but looking up and sideways.
- e. Note that the Candidacy Group generally wanted a medium broad to broad definition of a candidate/target population.
- f. We want to aim higher than Family First in all respects
  - i. We also want to consider going to the governor, OPM, etc for any ideas or identified needs that are greater than the Family First legislation
  - ii. Design an ideal system and pare down by constraints later (do not let ourselves be inhibited at this stage).
  - iii. The full system of children in CT (not just DCF involved youth and families)
- g. We also want to demonstrate a family systems approach and shift from child focused to family focused.
  - i. Note—we will still need to track cases/youth at the child level

## 5. Logistics

- a. Please only use conference call as a last resort, or if you only intend on listening to the meeting. This is a big group, so having a large conference call with everyone talking would probably be difficult to manage.
- b. We will plan on meeting in Beacon in Rocky Hill (pending room reservations)
- c. If you cannot come, consider sending a delegate to come on your behalf
- d. May be useful to reach out to local news/media and/or national legislators throughout the process

## **What resources do you need?**

- 1. Paperwork/documents/talking points

- a. FYI copies of the agenda & minutes will be sent electronically, but we might be able to print off copies in large batches if the group needs
2. Translations of documents
  - a. We ask that you let us know which languages you need based on what populations you work with so that we can prioritize those
  - b. We do not want to limit translations to only focus on DCF languages
3. Might be useful to have other agencies/orgs add info and resources to their website (or link our page)
4. Recommended reading/watching:
  - a. Familyfirstact.org has national resources
  - b. Many YouTube videos of kids discussing Family First

**Tentative dates**

1. 1/7, 2/4, 3/3, 3/24, 4/7
2. All at 12-4 at Beacon (pending reservation)