

Region 4 Area Advisory Council Meeting

August 20, 2013
CREC Polaris
474 School Street
East Hartford, CT.

Present: Milly Arciniegas, Jessica Bolorin, Sophia Brown, Janier Caban-Hernandez, Tim Carroll, Gwen Drummond, Sarah Eagan, Ivy Farinella, Alice Farrell, Angelita Feliciano, Cathy Flippen, Maureen Francis-Dunn, Hector Glynn, Shauna Goodwin, Colinda Hunter, Wayne Johnson, Beth Landolina, Christine Lau, Jamie Lehane, Roderick Lester, Lorna Little, Lisa Lumbruno, Manuel Maldonado, Pat Maneggia, Allison Matthews-Wilson, TJ Michalski, Barbara O'Brien, Alana Parkinson, Paula Plante, Sherry Rautenberg, Malika Robledo, William Seals, Charlette Scott, Amanda Toni, Maria Turchi, Milagros Vega, Jeanette White, Jami Williams, Michael Williams.

The meeting was hosted by Tim Carroll from CREC and lunch was provided. Meeting was held from 12- 2 PM.

Region 4 Area Advisory Council Co-Chairperson, Ivy Farinella called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30 PM after lunch.

Region 4 Area Administrator's Report

The Region 4 Area Office Administrator, Michael Williams thanked Tim Carroll and CREC for hosting the RAC meeting. And, thanked the attendees for their presence given that many people were on vacation and the RAC usually doesn't meet in August. Mr. Williams gave the following update:

- The state hiring freeze has been suspended and the region has been allowed to fill vacant positions. (social workers and supervisors)
- There are several new programs that have been implemented or in the process of implementation around the state including the following:
 - The Family Based Recovery System. This is a new substance abuse program that is up and running. The Village for Children and Families will be handling the Manchester Office catchment area and Catholic Charities will be handling the Hartford Office catchment area.
 - The Homebuilders Program. This is an evidence based in-home program designed to help prevent at risk children from being removed from their families because of safety issues. There is

currently an RFP out for this program and final selection of the agencies that will be awarded the contract has not been selected at this time. The current Intensive Family Preservation (IFP) and Family Reunification Services (FRS) programs are being down sized to make funds available for the homebuilders program.

- Triple P Program. The Positive Parent Program also known as Triple P is an in home, evidence based program that provides parenting education services and has replaced the Family Enrichment Services (FES) program. All of the previous providers of FES has been trained and certified in the Triple P model.
- Mr. Williams discussed some key DCF state wide and Region 4 performance data including the following:
 - The statewide goal for children out of home is that no less than 30% of child out of home should be placed with relatives. Currently Region 4 has exceeded the current goal and approximately 35 % of our children in placement are in the homes of relatives.
 - The commissioner has increased the old standard of children on placement with relatives from 30% to 40%. Region 4 is on its way to reach the new goal but still have some work to do to meet the new benchmark.
 - The new statewide expectation is that 50% of new removals should go into relative's homes. Region 4 has begun working with Journey to Healing Clinical Services around supports for kinship care to improve outcomes for families to provide care for children in their extended families.
 - Based on the statewide 7/16/13 DCF Dashboard Report 4,000 children were in placement and approximately:
 - 43% were in foster care,
 - 24% were in relative care,
 - 23% were in congregate care,
 - 5% were in special study homes and
 - 4% were in independent living
 - Based on the Region 4 7/16/13 DCF Dashboard Report 986 children were in placement and approximately:
 - 41% were in foster care,
 - 30% were in relative care,
 - 19% were in congregate care,

- 4% were in special study homes and
 - 5% were in independent living
 - Note: Relative and special study homes total 35% for Region 4.
- Other initiatives and discussion items were as follows:
- The Permanency Round Table Initiative:
 - Process designed to identify kids 13 – 18 without goals for permanency - ageing out without a permanent plan. Will identify kids past history to discuss who the kid can connect with once they are out of DCF care and help build relationship for older kids.
 - Process will assist older kids make connections with family and other key adults upon leaving DCF.
 - Chris Lau further explained that the Round Table at this point have been brain storming sessions to see what was the best way to better plan for individual youths and also that the Round tables have not included foster parents at this time.
 - Racial Justice Initiative:
 - Will be looking at the disproportionality of child of color over represented in DCF care and why they fare worse in the system than Caucasian children.
 - Diversity Action Team:
 - The group examines cultural issues in the workplace.
 - The groups are led by Tina Jefferson in the Hartford and Loida Reyes in the Manchester Office.
 - New Birth to Three legislation
 - There is new legislation that assures screening for children 0 – 3 years old to identify any developmentally delays.
 - Raise the Grade
 - This initiative is designed to improve the grades of children in care by reviewing their educational records by way of achievements and below average grade and develop plans to address deficiencies. As a result, DCF case planning will change to better support this initiative.

- Domestic Violence Consultant
 - The department has replaced its contracted DV consultants with in home DV consultants to help social workers with cases involving domestic violence.
- Roundtable Discussion:
 - Focus on youth in APPLA
 - Geared for staff to think about permanency for adolescents, then a discussion with the adolescent, foster parent and worker.
 - Takes workers through a series of questions and challenges to identify other community support
 - Purpose is to walk away with a set of action steps
 - Need to increase formal teaming with adolescents

Presentation by Beth Landolina

Beth Landolina of the Professional Development committee gave a presentation on the process of how that committee developed its goals and objectives to help model the work and expectations of the other Standing RAC Committees. She passed out a list of questions developed by the committee for each Principle of Partnership for Supervisors, Managers, Workers and Staff to ask themselves when implementing the principles on a daily basis. These questions can be used by DCF staff as well as partner agencies in order to be on the same page. Everyone was asked to review the questions and provide feedback to Beth via email.

RAC Business

RAC Co-Chairperson, Sarah Eagan, Executive RAC member Regina Roundtree and Michael Williams discussed/addressed the following other RAC business items:

- RAC membership is on-going and the group is moving toward identifying how the 21 voting members will be identified. It is her hope that this will be completed by the end of the year.
- A Schedule of Standing Committee reports to the RAC was distributed the listed the names of the Standing Committees and dates that they will need to report progress to the RAC.
- A permanent venue to hold future RAC meetings is being looked at. A place on the bus line should be considered because not all people interested in the RAC may have access to an automobile.

- Some people may not have e-mail addresses and still need to receive information from the RAC. A phone list to contact RAC members is a possible solution.
- Sarah Eagan accepted the position of Child Advocate and will no longer be the Co-Chairperson of the RAC. Regina Roundtree has agreed to fill the Co-Chairperson vacancy.
- Future RAC guest speakers will be informed that presentations to the RAC are expected to be interactive so that RAC members can express concerns and opinions.
- The next meeting will be held on September 17, 2013 at 12 noon in the Large Conference at the Hartford DCF Office located at 250 Hamilton Street in Hartford. Parking is available at the parking lot at 237 Hamilton Street, across the street and about a ½ block from the Hartford Office.

The RAC meeting was adjourned around 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Johnson, Children's Services Consultant
Janier Cabán-Hernández, Foster Parent