PARTNERS FOR FOREVER FAMILIES
A Public-Private-University Initiative and Neighborhood-Based Approach[1]

PARTNERS
FOR FOREVER FAMILIES

Year 2 Evaluation Report of the Planning Year, 2009-2010

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I. Executive Summary

This report is a summary of Year 2 for Partners for Forever Families (formerly Permanency for Ohio's Children: Recruitment of Relatives and for Sibling Initiative). The initiative is a Public-Private-University Initiative and a Neighborhood-Based Approach to recruitment, funded by Adoption Opportunities: Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in the Foster Care System. The partners of the project were the lead agency, Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services, with the Adoption Network-Cleveland, Beech Brook, Case Western Reserve University and the Neighborhood Collaborative Agencies. Overall, the second year was successful in continuing work on the implementation of the project, which required some modifications from the proposal. The project kept focus on process while starting to focus on outcomes, system and case.

In addition to the name change, there were several other changes. The office for the Project Coordinator was relocated from a participating agency to the public agency. As the second year ends, because the public agency cannot hire, the University will assume responsibility for the position administratively but the Project Coordinator's office will remain located in the public agency. The Neighborhood Collaborative Agencies as an entity withdrew from the project because not all the agencies participating in the Collaborative would benefit directly from project activities; instead, specific neighborhood agencies were re-engaged in the targeted neighborhoods. The agencies are East End Neighborhood House, Harvard Community Services Center, Murtis Taylor Human Services System, and University Settlement. The Managing Director of the Family-To-Family Administrators Council (i.e., Neighborhood Collaborative Agencies) receives updates but is not as active during the second year of the project. Two administrators from Beech Brook who were part of proposal development were downsized and a new administrator was hired. The doctoral student working on the project left before the end of second year and a new doctoral student was hired.

One of the major accomplishments of Year 2 was to continue the process of "threading" project processes into Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services committees and initiatives. A second accomplishment was the ability to finally get referrals for youth who lived or had lived in our targeted areas and who were 16 or older; the project went from 4 children referred to over 20 children in a few months once a "barrier buster" project staff took leadership to remove the artificial barriers to referral. A third accomplishment was the re-engagement of specific neighborhood collaborative agencies from the targeted neighborhoods. A fourth accomplishment was the emergence of leadership for the project from within the public agency. One of the recent master social work graduates decided that since she was no longer in school she could give her time, energy and dedication to the project. This revitalized perceptions of the project without the public agency and resulted in other DCFS managers re-engaging in the grant Leadership Team.

The project did not achieve targeted outcomes for children and families, but the context is important to note in evaluating these outcomes. Tragically, in Year 2 and unrelated to the project, several children were killed after being returned to their parents. The ensuing media criticism resulted in much of the agency energy spent responding to the criticism. On the one hand, a Blue Ribbon Panel (both faculty for the project served on the panel) looked at policies and practices that needed to be improved to try to prevent future tragedies; the public agency responded in a productive way to community concerns. On the other hand, while staff were responding to requests by the Blue Ribbon Panel or trying to manage their relationship with the media, less

focus was on project outcomes. As a second context to the project, Cuyahoga County voters decided in 2009 that a new form of county government was necessary; as Year 2 was coming to a close, a new Executive and new County Board were being elected. How the Executive and Board will impact the public agency was not known but the transition resulted in some inertia. The third context is that Cuyahoga County continues to be extremely economically stressed; since we targeted already low resource neighborhoods, and these areas were hit disproportionately harder, our target number of adoptive and kin families we had hoped to engage by now is very low.

For other projects at similar point in the 5 years of a grant, Partners for Forever Families is making similar progress. The resistance inherent with trying to make changes in large public systems, the complications in public-private partnerships, the difficulties in working with older youth who may be jaded or traumatized by early life experiences, and the work in neighborhoods that have experienced chronic and pervasive poverty and social disorganization were expected and are being well managed. Project staff and partners embrace the role of evaluation and strive to document the learning experiences that are part of this grant. Year 3 is focusing on outcomes and not just outputs.

II. **Introduction and Overview**

Cuyahoga County is located in Northeast Ohio and encompasses the City of Cleveland as well as numerous inner ring and outer ring suburbs. At the time this grant was developed, the overall population of children in foster care had reduced but the children who remained in care were older and the more complicated, requiring new methods to promote their need for permanency. The project was initiated in 2008. In 2008, there were 710 children in permanent custody (pc); 272 (38.3%) had no adoption resource identified and there were 223 (31.4%) adoptive placements. In 2009, there were 708 children in pc; 221 (31.2%) had no adoption resource identified and there were 248 (34.9%) adoptive placements. As of July 2010, there were 649 children in pc; 203 (31.3%) had no adoption resource identified but the goal is 270 (41.6%) adoptive placements (108 adoptions had occurred so far). At the time the grant was written in 2008, less than 37% of children in pc in Cuyahoga County (CC) were being adopted in less than 12 months. *Objective one was to increase the percent of children who exited for adoption in less than 24 months from 25% to match the state's percent of 37% or higher*. As of March 2010 (the last report available to the project), the CSFR outcome for the State and County had not changed. Ohio received no dollars from the Adoption Incentive funds during Year 2.

Focus on Kin

The project had an explicit focus on improving services to kin because many children are initially placed with kin or subsequently move to kin placements, at least historically. Guiding kin toward legal custody or guardianship to avoid taking custody of children has advantages and disadvantages. First, compared to completing a foster care or adoptive home study assessment, the length of time involved in gaining legal custody or guardianship is minimal. Also, some kin families may not meet the criteria required to become foster or adoptive parent. For example, some kin families have past involvement with child protective services. While they may have changed their lifestyle, according to Ohio statue, this involvement precludes them from becoming approved for foster care or adoption. Also, some kinship caregivers are concerned about the impact of the children entering child welfare and the confusion this creates for

children. Thus, some kin choose an alternative legal arrangement better suited to their specific situation.

A disadvantage for kin taking legal custody or guardianship of a child means many kinship families lose the financial support of foster care stipends or potential adoption subsidies if they can be approved as foster and/or adoptive parents. In many cases, kinship providers are only able to apply for much lower financial assistance for children in their care. In addition, they may lose access to case management services that could help them access other concrete resources for the children.

Overall, it is important for kin families to have complete and accurate information about all of the permanency options for children. Knowing about the advantages and disadvantages of legal custody, guardianship, fostering and adoption as soon as possible in the case helps kin caregivers make better-informed choices earlier so that children can move to permanency sooner. It is easiest to engage kin at the time of temporary care of their relatives; kin become more distrustful and angry with the public agency as the agency proceeds to terminating birth parents rights. Team Decision-Making (TDM) meetings or "staffings" at DCFS provides an opportunity for kin to be in the conversation from the beginning. These meetings are held whenever there is a need for a placement decision involving child removal, change of placement, or reunification/other permanency plans. However, we need to get the kin at these meetings and do a better job right at the beginning of engaging relatives. There is data from Cuyahoga County that shows a correlation between relative attendance at TDM meetings and kinship placements, so if the agency wants to increase kinship placement, they need to get kin to attend TDM meetings (Crampton, 2004).

Our second objective is by the time PC is granted, 35% of caregivers who plan to adopt will have a completed home study. At the time of the proposal, 75% of kin families in Cuyahoga County did not have a completed home study by the time permanent custody (PC) was granted. This was a combination of insufficient engagement, cumbersome processes, major paperwork, intrusiveness and not a customer-centered, welcoming reception. It is unclear what, if anything, has changed over the course of Year 2. Some of this has been due to the frustration with getting data from SACWIS; predictions that the system would be up and running in 6 months were inaccurate. It is now almost two years and the data issues between the State and the County has thwarted attempts to get usable data or similar data obtained from the previous system (FACSIS). Relatives continue to have the hardest time getting through the process. Relatives, most who are families of color, compose the highest percentage of inquiry calls (46.4%) but the lowest percentage of licensed homes (1.8 %).

In the proposal, pre-Service training was identified as not addressing the unique issues of relatives, in part because kin and non-kin were trained together. This is one factor that frustrates kin and contributes to increased lack of completing pre-service training for 50% of relatives. *Objective 3 is to change pre-service training to meet the needs of relatives, working with public policy to allow flexibility for relatives.* We had minimal successes with this objective. Pre-service training was modified to better accommodate the needs of kin families at one site in our geo area but few kin attended. It was not piloted in other areas.

In addition to the training, DCFS created a kinship unit that we hope will have an impact on objectives 2 and 3. Following is the plan developed by DCFS for the Kinship Unit.

Kinship Unit Development

The agency has set out to develop a 3-5 year strategic plan focused on the following kinship outcomes:

- *Increase the number of children initially placed with kin*
- *Improve placement stability with kin including sibling placement*
- *Increase permanency with kin*
- *Increase permanent connections for aging out teens*

One component of this agency wide strategic plan is to develop a Kinship Resource Unit. The agency has experienced a decline in the number of children placed with relatives for a number of reasons. The focus of the unit will be to develop and implement "foundational" activities that will become the building blocks to improve our kinship outcomes. The unit will focus on three (3) basic Kinship Best Practice areas:

1. Relative search and engagement
2. Kinship Resources
3. Kinship Cluster Support

The projected kinship unit activities are in Appendix 1.

Kinship Unit Development/Pilot

The Kinship Unit will pilot the unit activities in the AOG grant target areas.

Pilot Population

The pilot population will be children who come into care from the following geographic neighborhoods (project targeted neighborhoods):

o   Fairfax/Union/Miles – 44103, 44104, 44106
o   Harvard – 44128, 44105
o   Broadway – 44104, 44105, 44127
o   Mt. Pleasant – 44146, 44022, 44120, 44139, 44128, 44137

The pilot population may be narrowed to a specific chief's geo-area based upon the volume of cases coming into the pilot.

Case Size

The pilot unit will consist of four Kinship Unit staff and one Kinship Unit Supervisor. The case load for each Kinship Unit staff will not exceed 5 cases per worker, initially. The pilot will service a capacity of 20 identified cases. The unit's initial focus will be to develop the unit activities and test them out with pilot cases. The case size will be expanded once it is determined the amount of time needed to dedicate to the family search and engagement activities.

Training/Consultation

The pilot unit can utilize training/consultation opportunities through the AOG grant free of charge. The pilot will access these opportunities to develop our Kinship Best Practice areas of relative search and engagement, kinship resources, and kinship cluster support.

Older Children in Permanent Custody

Children who are 17 or older for whom a permanent family has not been found can also benefit from a renewed search for kin resource families since these families are the best option for building a permanent family. The terrible consequences for children who age out of the public system with no permanent family are well known. When children turn 18, many go to relatives and most return to birth parents if they age out of the system, even if they have had no direct contact with them for years. The question we asked ourselves is this: *if children are going to their birth family once they reach majority age, why are we not working with relative resource families before they leave care?* We recognize the values and policies that have operated to discourage and prohibit this work but we took a pragmatic approach--we should be working with kin families to help these children transition out of care and have a permanent, positive connection. We recognize that some, or perhaps many, of these families cannot or will not be an adoptive family or a good permanent resource for the older children, but some will. We needed a different way to practice with older children who are at-risk of leaving care without a permanent resource family. We needed to help youth evaluate these relationships while we still have an opportunity. Beech Brook has provided leadership in developing a model for working with the older children in permanent custody (pc).

Siblings

Unfortunately, when children enter the child welfare system, sibling relationships are at risk of interruption and, in some cases, termination. While child welfare practitioners recognize the importance of the sibling bond, in practice sustaining the sibling relationship continues to be a challenge. It takes special families to provide temporary and permanent care to sibling groups. There are too few foster and adoptive homes available for sibling groups, limited physical space to accommodate large sibling groups, a lack of information about the waiver process – exceptions that can be made to allow siblings to be placed together – and, the need for various supports to sustain siblings together in temporary and permanent placements. *Our next objective is to increase adoptive placements of siblings by 22% (from 58% to 80%) and increase our number of resource families willing to care for large sibling groups.*[2]

Siblings have different levels of service needs, from simple to complex. The supports that families need range from respite and financial assistance to therapeutic interventions including individual counseling for the children or family therapy. Often there is a misconception that foster and adoptive families come readily equipped to handle the issues that emerge with fostering or adopting sibling groups. In truth, more so than other families, they require help within their community to care for children. *Our next objective is to increase services and service access to enable resource families to maintain large sibling groups.*

If children cannot be with relative resource families, decisions must be made about their placement in foster care, sometimes in an instant,. An agency operating on the philosophy of

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[2] When the grant was developed using FACSIS, data on siblings was easy to access. With SACWIS, the sibling data is no longer accessible. As such, we might not be able to measure this objective as planned. The evaluation team and the project staff are working together to determine how we can capture the data on siblings.

keeping siblings together absent a compelling reason to separate them should have a procedure in place to automatically evaluate first those resources that can accommodate all of the siblings together. If this is not possible, families who live in close proximity to one another and families who are willing to allow frequent contact between the siblings is the next best alternative. Even if initial separation occurs, careful consideration should be given to replace siblings if there is an opportunity early on to place them together in one home.

Creation and revision of procedures to keep siblings together necessitates revision of forms. All forms associated with placement processes should be revised to reflect the careful attention paid to siblings entering care. Further, the agency management information system (MIS) should be advanced and updated to link information about siblings who enter care at different points in time making it possible to consider placement together. Once procedures have been appropriately revised and written and associated forms and processes reflect the necessary information, caseworkers should be trained. Training should include the information about the philosophy, procedures and the rationale for making all efforts possible to place siblings together.

A work group at DCFS was also developed to focus on concurrent planning for siblings. The Sibling Policy is an off shoot of the Safety and Permanency Strategic Plan Initiative. The committee was made up of 20 members from various departments within the agency. Included in the committee were two Senior Managers (one from adoption), several supervisors, intake and direct service staff, adoption staff, case review facilitators and placement staff. We looked at revising the Sibling form for placement; the previous form had no place to document whether the caregivers for other siblings had been contacted and what their response was regarding placement. The committee had 3 sub groups that included Sibling Tracking, Sibling Training and Awareness, and Sibling Visitation. The Sibling Tracking sub group came up with the new sibling form and definitions to be utilized at time of placement. The Sibling Training and Awareness committee developed a survey which was to be implemented at time of policy approval and the training/awareness of the importance of sibling placement was an area that we wanted to explore with the Training Department, even to see if the grant would pay for some of the training for staff. The Sibling Visitation subgroup stopped when the visitation department was eliminated. The pending policy is in Appendix 2.

The goal of child-centered recruitment was to recruit 5 relative and 5 resource families for siblings in Year 2. We did not meet this goal.

Overview of Recruitment Models

General recruitment

Like all over the US, DCFS experiences the same inverted pyramid from calls inquiring about fostering or adoption to an actual placement; that is, we often get hundreds of calls but only about 5% yield for families who make it through the system to receive training, be studied, approved, and have placement. DCFS has a specific tracking system (DAWN) that was developed by a private adoption agency (Northeast Ohio Adoption Services) and given to them that tracks from the first phone call through each stage of the process--from recruitment to licensure or approval for adoption or drop out inquiries can and will be tracked. We have worked with the recruitment department about how they deal with inquiries, attempting to insure inquiries will receive both general information about adoption as well as information about siblings and older children; we had planned to enroll families in our targeted neighborhoods into a database for follow-up with newsletters about events for at least 2 years, recognizing that many inquiries take time to cultivate. This has not happened with general recruitment.

As part of general recruitment, each year we had planned to collaborate with the Adoption Coalition, which is a public-private partnership of agencies and individuals promoting adoption and the improvement of adoption services and processes/policies in the region. The contracting for adoption services was dramatically decreased in 2009; by 2010 agencies that traditionally been major contractors and leaders in adoption services had either downsized or closed their adoption programs. The Adoption Coalition still operates but at a greatly reduced level. Most of general recruitment for adoption has moved to the State and County; the private sector recruits mostly for foster families because this is still one source of steady funding.

It took far longer than anticipated to determine the process for requesting training and technical assistance from the National Resource Centers. Once the process was defined and contact person was located, the time from a request to approval was short. Approval for training was received in September 2010 and will be scheduled during the next year. We anticipate that the training will target all professional staff and paraprofessional staff in the community/region and focus on working with relatives and resource families for siblings and older children.

Our public appeal for help through General Recruitment techniques is only as good as an agency's ability to support, train, and develop those resource families that are the "successes" of our general recruitment campaign. A key to increasing the number of families who adopt from the public system is friendly and responsive customer service, followed up by the predictability about the adoption process, and support during the waiting process from home study to placement.

In January through March 2010, ANC Navigator staff followed up individuals who contacted the DCFS recruitment line between 6/1/09 to 11/24/09 and who lived in our targeted neighborhoods (zip codes 44104, 44105, 44120 & 44127). One hundred and fifty eight individuals were contacted. Results are in Table 1 below. Only 20% of individuals were successfully contacted. For those classified as "Unable to Reach," a minimum of 2 messages were left and there was no return call, the staff were unable to leave a message, or the phone number was disconnected.

Table 1: Description of Family Followed up in the Project Geo Area in Mach 2010

	44104	44105	44127	44120	All
Unable to reach	30	48	5	43	126
Spoke to individual	3	21	0	8	*32*
Total calls	33	69	5	51	158

Of individuals successfully contacted (n=32), only 21% (n=7) were active; most (34%, n=11) were not ready to move forward and 25% (n=8) identified barriers they expected to encounter in moving forward. Results are in Table 2.

Table 2: Description of Families Successfully Contacted in the Geo Area

	44104	44105	44127	44120	All
Not ready	1	9	0	1	11
No longer interested	0	3	0	0	3
Active PFFF	0	2	0	5	7
Barriers	2	4	0	2	8
Child they want	0	3	0	0	3

to adopt does not meet criteria of waiting children					

This process was repeated in May 2010. Results are in the following Table 3. Again, 77% (n=24) could not be reached and only 23% (n=7) were successfully contacted. For those individual successfully contacted, 2 (28%) were active.

Table 3: Description of Family Followed up in the Project Geo Area in May 2010

	44104	44105	44127	44120	All
Unable to reach	5	11	0	8	24
Spoke to individual	0	4	0	3	7
Total calls	5	15	0	11	31

The goal of general recruitment is to recruit 10 relatives and 15 resource families in Year 2. We planned to support, approve and stabilize at least 50% of those relatives/kin recruited as resource families. In Year 2, the Adoption Network Adoption Navigators collaborated with the DCFS Recruitment Department to follow up on families who expressed interest. As of end of Year 2, 8 families are participating in Adoption Navigator Services to assist them through the adoption process. All 8 participants are single and women of color, and range in age from 45 to 65.

As part of general recruitment, in July 2010, DCFS conducted a study of participant-identified potential barriers to becoming licensed as a foster or adoptive parent. The lead evaluator summarized the data that were collected. During two pre-application classes held by Cuyahoga County DCFS in May 2010, participants in foster/adoptive pre-service orientation training were asked to identify potential barriers to submitting a foster or adoption application. Eighteen participants in 1 week and 22 participants in the second week (many that were the same from the previous week) completed the survey. In week 1, 50% (n=9) identified no problems and in week 2, 55% (n=12) identified no problems. Of problems identified, in week 1, four families identified only 1 problem, 2 families identified 2 problems, 1 family identified 3 problems and 1 family identified 4 problems. In week 2, 6 families indentified 1 problem, 1 family identified 2 problems, 2 problems identified 3 families, and 1 family identified 4 problems. Figure 1 presents problem by week and number of families reporting the problem.

Day care issues and income type were the highest problem identified both weeks. In week 2, both receiving public assistance and no bed in home for children were the problems identified most frequently.

Figure 1: Identification of Potential Barriers to Licensing
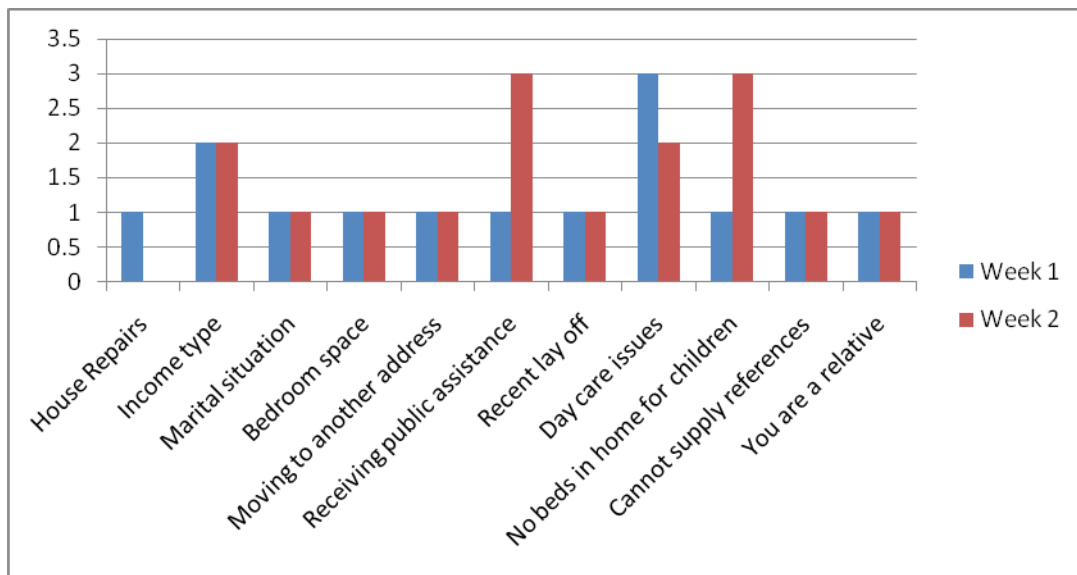
We planned to infuse a customer-service orientation into the work of the ANC and their collaborating agencies in each of the 5 communities. This, in essence, would promote customer service not only in the public agency but also with the private agency partners assisting us with this initiative. We anticipated the benefit of such a customer-service model would be better community relationships.

Cuyahoga County DCFS has a customer service department and one strategy for improving customer service was to work through existing structures and personnel. While the department does not focus on recruitment of foster or adoptive families only, it handles these as well as other customer service issues. The department would be better named a complaint department because they follow up on complaints on a case-by-case basis. While the department has a good software program for tracking complaints and could develop reports for administrators and supervisors on customer service issues, no one in the department is trained to use the software *and* no reports have been requested by the administrators. There was a disconnection between the capabilities of the customer service department and the usage of such a department for improved organizational as well as individual responses. This is an organizational and structural problem that needs attention if current customer service capabilities are to be maximized and if a customer-service orientation is to be infused throughout the public agency.

In the first and third quarter of 2009, the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services' (CCDCFS) Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Division administered three survey assessments to measure satisfaction among its customers. The survey became available to the project in the third quarter of 2010 and to the DCFS administrative team in the second quarter of 2010. The complete survey is in the Appendix 3.

Due to limits from the data collected related to sampling, it is not clear how accurate the results are for customer service. Generally, results are very positive. It could be that youth and families served by the agency are mostly satisfied; however, it may be that the people chosen to participate do not represent the views of all clients served by the agency. So, results cannot be generalized, which is problematic.

Targeted Recruitment.

In contrast to general or mass marketing/recuitment, targeted marketing means focusing efforts to find the families that fit the criteria for specific children who need families. We selected 9 neighborhoods (see map below) for intervention. We identified the neighborhoods with high concentration of children in public care as well as having high concentrations of kin and foster families. To test for whether our efforts have the effect we want, we also identified 7neighborhoods not receiving targeted recruitment (our comparison group). These neighborhoods are identified on the following map, Figure 2.

Figure 2: Map of Targeted and Comparison Neighborhoods
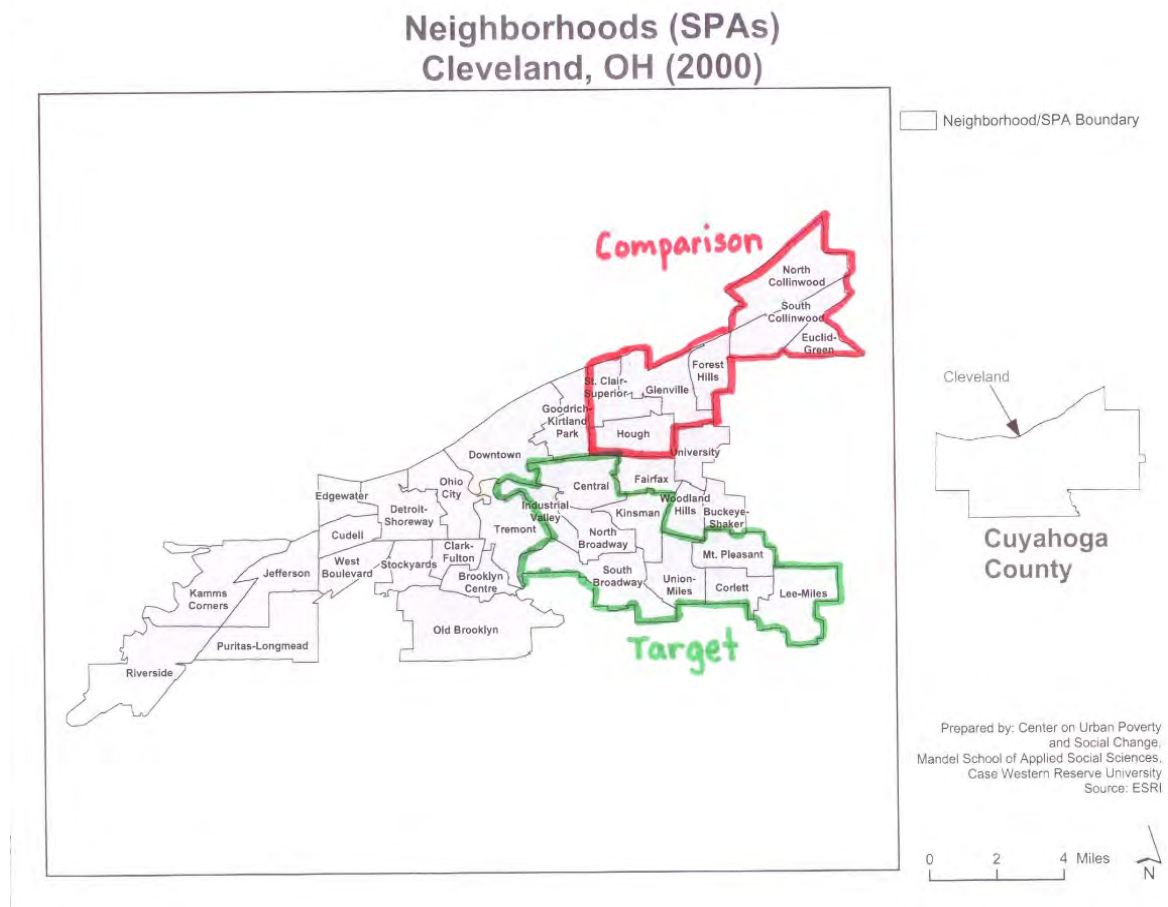
Adoption Network Cleveland (ANC) has a major role in targeted recruitment, in cooperation with the four Collaborating Neighborhood Agencies (CNA) identified earlier. We expect the team to champion foster-to-adoption in their neighborhoods. They will identify potential kin and foster-to-adopt families in their neighborhoods and they will be involved in both helping kin make a permanent commitment to their relations as well as removing barriers for the foster families to move to adoptive families. We think of the ANC and CNA, in part, as barrier busters in their role of targeted recruiters. Some funds are available from DCFS to access if such funds remove barriers to adoption or permanence. Following is the data on the use of these funds in Year 2.

- We received 4 referrals for funding in 2010.

- One referral was submitted, processed and closed out by the end of the grant period. That referral was for $100 to purchase birth certificates for children in the custody of maternal grandmother. This required a lot of work since the internal mechanisms were not yet in place to use department funds to cover cost and receive reimbursement from the grant.
- One referral submitted and is currently being processed for $1500 for housing assistance and a washer/dryer for a maternal grandmother with custody of six grandchildren. Hoping to process this request prior to the end of the grant year.
- One referral submitted but not yet processed as we are waiting on information from the case worker. Email reminders are being sent to case worker. Referral is for housing assistance for an Aunt with six nieces and nephews.

In targeted recruitment, the ANC give families information, emotional support, and logistical support. The ANC will be able to identify resources for the targeted groups of this grant-- relatives, teens, and sibling groups to help families stepping forth to care for the children agency custody. The goal of targeted recruitment is to recruit 5 relative and 8 resource families for siblings or older children in Year 2 in the specific geo-areas receiving the intervention. We planned to support, approve and stabilize at least 50% of relatives/kin recruited as resource families. We planned to compare the number of recruited families and stabilized families in each geographic group and expected to have higher numbers in the target area. We did not reach these targets in Year 2.

Evaluation and technical assistance was provided to ANC throughout the year when the data suggested targets were not being reached. In Summer 2010, a consultant was hired to reach out to community institutions in our target area. She was able to obtain signed agreements with several churches and beauty shops (see Appendix 4) to participate in recruiting families for waiting children. As part of the process, she generated some observations and lessons learned from the process.

- Partner on pre-planned events with good give-aways

- Benefit when you live in the community that you are serving

- Smaller churches give an opportunity to speak to the entire congregation and the Pastor knows the congregation personally and knows the needs, ability and heart of the congregation

- Larger churches may have more resources and more opportunities to partner on events this is contingent on making a true partnership connection (Birth Month Clubs, Men's Ministry etc.)

- Beauty and Barber Shops give more opportunity to talk to people personally

- Summer festivals: **Partner with a Good Foster Parent**!

As a result of these efforts, 50 inquiry cards were gathered for potential adoptive, foster and mentor families. The lead evaluator asked the Project Director to have 25 families randomly

assigned to DCFS to follow up and 25 randomly assigned to ANC. We would then track each of these families through the process and see if there were any differences in participation rates and family outcomes. The request was rejected by the Recruitment Department at DCFS. They wanted all the inquiry calls.

The agreement was that within a week every card would be assigned to a DCFS staff. DCFS staff would then log them into DAWN (family tracking systems for inquiries), make two attempts to call, and then send the packet of information to invite them for the next training round beginning in November. The database entry will allow CCDCFS staff to identify those inquirers who may already be somewhere in the recruitment pipeline, already involved with the Recruitment Department. Ten days later, the navigator would follow up.

On the one hand, this evaluation request was unanticipated in the original plan; it was another opportunity to evaluate. On the other hand, all attempts to question or examine current processes are resisted. It is of a concern that territoriality is more important than learning about if there is a different response if the agency that did the recruitment event followed up compared to the public agency only following up.

Of the original 50 inquiries, 20% (n=10) were appropriate; the remainder were either already involved with DCFS, didn't understand the card they were completing and were not interested in foster care or adoption, we not able to be contacted (phone number disconnected, incomplete or erroneous) and one had the type of felony that would prohibit fostering or adoption. ANC is tracking the 10 appropriate potential families.

Child-Centered Recruitment: System Interventions

Child-centered recruitment refers to the methodology of finding a permanent resource or permanent resources for a specific child. We think that Child Centered recruitment at CCDFS will be greatly enhanced by alignment of concurrent planning practices and policy. There are 4 components of system interventions discussed here.

1) A work group at DCFS developed a concurrent planning policy. For most of the year the policy has been waiting for review and revision. Following is the content of the policy that is awaiting approval from administration. The policy is in Appendix 5.

   Once approved, there will be training about the policy and procedures established to monitor policy compliance.

 2) Enhanced Family Finding strategies: parent/kin locator services and the practice of routinely searching and engaging families on behalf of youth in care are essential activities. With search software, we had planned to develop a user group (super searchers) that crossed all departments and who would be supported by the CCDCFS' Administrative Team (A-Team). Findings of procedural s and clinical issues (i.e., once we have found family, how we engage them is a skill that will be addressed with training) were to be fed back to the A-Team and this will instruct policy and practice guidelines for all staff.

While the parent/kin locator service was employed, the plan to develop a user group was not completed. In order to gain more skills in enhanced family finding strategies, we planned to use the National Resource Centers for training. It took the better part of a year to determine at the County and State level the exact mechanism for requesting training and technical assistance. It was during the last month of the second year that the process was determined and the project is in negotiation with AdoptUSkids for training some time in Year 3.

3) Case Review modifications: Case Review is the unit at CCDCFS with 15 trained facilitators who practice Team Decision Making (aka staffing) with staff and families. Case review is a pivotal agency structure that will support concurrent planning and in turn, child centered recruitment practices. In this department, we intend to shore up concurrent planning through training with the facilitators regarding the building in evidence of file mining for those children who have been in care, of family finding for those entering care, and keeping permanency for Cuyahoga's children on the agenda at all reviews through the life of the case. This is also the agency structure that is well suited to push sibling placements, and from the meetings, interested families can be recruited to step forward to become foster/adopt resource families.

In addition to the Case Review unit, case reviews for the most difficult children waiting permanency occurred. One of the evaluators participated in the spring and summer 2010 case reviews and provided reflections on this process, which are included here.

Reflections on Case Reviews, August 2010

Strengths

- The public-private partnership can keep both accountable for moving towards permanency outcomes.
- There is some investment in the process.
- There is some anxiety in having outside professionals reviewing cases.

Areas for improvement

- Workers must know all their cases in order for the process to work; that includes dates and behavioral health issues. If workers don't have good memories or keep good notes, then they should bring case files.
- Workers have to believe, the foundation of successful home finding; if they don't believe in adoption or that the child is adoptable, then they should be transferred out of adoption.
- There is not a sense of urgency for the cases; workers who had cases for 6 months said they just got the case as did workers who had the case for 30 days.
- There is a general reluctance to establish timelines for accomplishing specific tasks and a sense that workers can make up a time line but will not be held accountable to their commitments.

Recommendations

- Evaluation of staff to make sure organizational needs are align with staff strengths; this requires transferring some staff to other parts of the organization better matched for their skills.
- Training for supervisors on how to supervise for outcomes; there seems to be too heavy an emphasis on process and not enough on outcomes.
- Training on family engagement; there is a tendency to not know what to do once potential families are identified, how to successfully engage these families, and next steps to keeping families engaged.

- For the cases that have been in care for more than 2 years, reviewing them every quarter is not sufficient. They should be reviewed monthly and new methods for recruiting must be tried.
- Training beyond passive recruitment--putting up posters, sending flyers, attending meetings. For the neediest children, there has to be more active outreach and community engagement if the children are going to have a chance at permanency.

4) Diversity training: One essential component of effective concurrent planning is staff competence at engaging diverse racial, cultural and economic communities who are reflective of the children and youth in care. CCDCFS, just prior to this grant, partnered with Dr. Williams from Cleveland State University to provide soup to nuts diversity training. As a part of phase 2, we will coordinate with Dr. Williams to include the learning from his work and apply additional strategies if need be, or extend training to community partners. This training has started with the top of the organization and is intended for all supervisors and all line staff at CCDCFS.

When the contract for Dr. Williams ended at the beginning of the second year, it was not renewed. To date, the training at the time of the organization has not been scheduled for supervisors and line staff. This will be revisited in Year 3.

Child Centered recruitment: Neighborhood Intervention

One child centered recruitment strategy was to develop connections within the arts community to enlist their innovations as applied to recruitment. Print and video recruitment materials that are specific to the children and youth will be augmented through partnership with the arts community. A side benefit will be new groups of folks who help champion permanency for our children.

Engaging the arts community in the targeted neighborhood this year has focused on the Karamu Theater, an historic community theater in the targeted neighborhood of Fairfax that has a rich history (Langston Hughes got his start here) of arts and community outreach. It is a settlement house that was founded in 1915 by two Oberlin graduates who viewed art as medium for bringing cultures together. PFFF contacted the executive director when he was featured in a newspaper article about the adoption of a 11 year old boy from Cuyahoga County was made public. The Project Coordinator realized the project could have a potential recruitment partner who adopted himself and would be willing to work with the project on recruitment through the arts community.

Karamu has agreed to host the Heart Gallery in their theater lobby during a run of a popular spring show (God's Trombones) and will allow staff from DCFS to host a reception and to have opportunities to address the attendees with recruitment information. Additionally, Karamu is going to write a proposal for an experimental theater program where a professional screen writer works with youth in care on exploring barriers to permanency and youth's resiliency in the context of their foster care stay. The youth will get to work with a screenwriter and an actor. Each youth will have an opportunity to perform and this "youth troupe" will provide opportunities for recruitment in the venues where the show goes.

Another artist was approached, national best selling writer Dan Chaon, who writes fiction with themes connected to adoption. He has agreed to read at a Heart Gallery reception at the Cleveland Public Library.

Our second child-centered recruitment approach was to develop a DVD with a child that is used for virtual recruiting (called a Digital Me) and participating in community activities to bring the DVD of the child to the community. A Digital Me can be as simple as a PowerPoint

with photos and memorabilia important to the youth; it can be as complex as a video of the child and still photos with a music tract.   A Digital Me is design to make the children real and to offer more than a static photo and description to capture who the youth is as a person. Children are more than their trauma histories and diagnoses; they are complicated, developing people and a Digital Me captures their nuances that a picture and fact sheet never can capture. It is a promising practice that makes use of available technology and offers one more tool for recruiting for older children. A policy for the development and use of a Digital Me was developed and is waiting review by the A-team. It is included in Appendix 6.

<u>Children Centered Recruitment: Teen Cases</u>

A third child-centered recruitment approach targets youth 16 and older who are in the permanent custody of CCDCFS and for whom no permanency connections have been identified. We are developing an assessment protocol and model of how to work with older youth and birth families.

As part of the permanency planning process, our teen specialist from Beech Brook works with current supports in the youth's life to form a permanency planning team. Team members may include foster parents; foster care networks and/or group home and residential staff; Neighborhood Agencies, CCDCFS staff, educators, coaches, friends and their families, and other people important in the teen's life, as identified by the teen. As the teen specialist identifies permanency resources, she refers to the Adoption Navigators those people who are interested in providing permanency through foster/adopt. System of Care Supervisors in the neighborhood will additionally assist with identifying barriers to licensure and getting youth or families needed services in their community.

Our goal was to work with 25% of youth who emancipate each year (approximately 38 out of 150) and work with a relative resource family before the youth leave care for a total of 152 youth from Years 2-5, with an estimated 38 youth in Year 2. Table 4 presents the data on the number of youth served during Year 2. Overall, during the year, the most clients served was at the end of Year 2 and we achieved 40% (n=15) of the targeted number of youth to be served.

Table 4: Number of Youth Enrolled in PFFF

OCTOBER 2009	11
NOVEMBER 2009	11
DECEMBER 2009	11
JANUARY 2010	11
FEBRUARY 2010	11
MARCH 2010	11
APRIL 2010	11
MAY 2010	11
JUNE 2010	10
JULY 2010	10
AUGUST 2010	13
SEPTEMBER 2010	14

Demographics of youth

All clients are between the ages of 17-19 years old and are in high school with the exception of the two who have recently started college. They all live or once lived in the targeted geographic area of Cleveland, Ohio. They are all in the permanent custody of Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services and have been in care for at least the past 8 years. Most have had multiple placements including some foster, some residential. One client had a disrupted adoption and came back into the system.

All clients originally come from lower socioeconomic families that struggled with issues such as poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, lack of education, poor parenting skills, inadequate housing. All current clients are African American or identify themselves as being African American even if they come from multicultural backgrounds.

In my contacts with bio family members over this past year, it seems as if each family is functioning better than they were 8-16 years ago when the children were taken into CCDCFS custody. At least half of the 14 current clients have at least one bio parent that is currently managing a home, other children and a job.

Notes about youth served

1. One youth went AWOL in April 2010 following an argument with her foster mom and was emancipated from foster care due to her age (18) and lack of cooperation with CCDCFS. I had worked very closely with her prior to her departure from foster care. Once she was AWOL, she made a brief attempt to remain in contact and then stopped calling; her cell phone was disconnected as it was being paid for by foster parents.

In the time I worked with her, she reconnected with her former adoptive family and had several visits with them. Although she did not see this relationship as a permanency resource, she seemed happy to be welcomed back into the family via visits/phone calls.

We were working on finding the whereabouts of her bio mom and extended family when she went AWOL. She seemed very interested in this process.

2. Three referrals were made in the summer of 2010. These were youth that had been referred previously to the PFFF program when it first began but were not serviced because they already had a Child Centered Recruitment (CCR) worker and it was seen as a duplication of service. When they CCR workers terminated these clients in June 2010, they were re-referred to PFFF and I began working with them in August 2010.

3. Eight referred clients were not appropriate for the program. Reasons included:

   o One client was demonstrating extremely aggressive behavior in his residential treatment setting and was uncooperative with any kind of treatment or intervention.

   o Four clients emancipated about the time or shortly after they were referred. They were already 18 and were either AWOL from their program

and therefore emancipated by CCDCFS, or they were emancipated by plan and already had a place to live.

- o One client was in a placement about four hours away and already in an independent living program through job corp.

- o One client emancipated and moved on to adult services (group home) due to multiple disabilities.

- o One client did not feel she needed services. She was 18, in a relative foster home, and planned to remain in this home/family well into the future.

Permanency Connections Case Examples

Two clients graduated from high school, one in June 2010 and one in August 2010. They have emancipated from foster care and are both attending college. Both worked hard to develop good permanency plans. They were open to the process of gathering positive adults from their past and present life to be part of their plan.

Client #1: He has a permanency plan that includes four sets of former foster parents, current foster father, former CCDCFS worker, current CCDCFS worker, birth parents, and this worker. This youth has had over 8 placements. The total number of formalized permanency connections is **10.**
     Prior to his participation in the PFFF he had already started reconnecting with birth parents and siblings. His siblings are scattered all over the Cleveland area in foster, adoptive and relative placements. He has five full siblings and at least four half siblings. He had been in custody for over 8 years (since about age 9-10) and for a period of four or five years, from about age 12-17, he did not have any birth family contact. Then he moved to a new foster home and found that his birth dad lived nearby. This was the beginning of reconnection with birth family.
     PFFF assisted this youth in formalizing the different roles each adult was going to have in helping him achieve a successful transition from foster care to independence. As it turned out, this client changed his permanency plan at the very last minute due to an argument with his foster father, on the day of his emancipation. This youth chose to leave his foster home and move in with his birth mom and her boyfriend the day after he was emancipated. This was an *unexpected* turn of events but the youth was adamant about it. All other parts of the plan remain the same.
     In the original plan, the youth was going to remain in his foster home with his foster father and pay a small amount of rent for the first few months of college. Then once his financial aid and College Bound money became available, and he secured a part time job, he was going to move to an apartment near college.
     The birth parents agreed to assist with transportation, weekend visits, holidays, and be a back-up for a place to live, if needed. One set of former foster parents also agreed to be a possible living arrangement even though they live over an hour away from Cleveland.
     Workers agreed to assist with navigating the financial aid and college preparations including College Bound, medical card, school supplies, transportation and to stay involved and in touch with this youth for at least the first six months.

Due to the last minute change in plan, there was some confusion about money (mom said he could move in but she could not financially support him) clothing, medical card, bus pass, etc. These issues have been straightened out and the youth is enrolled and attending college, living with birth mom and her boyfriend, visiting with birth dad, maintaining contact with former foster parents, maintaining contact with social workers at CCDCFS and with this PFFF/ worker, and attending events at Adoption Network such as Get Real and Youth Council. He is also going to be working 10-15 hours per week with the Latasha Watts of The Purple Project. This is scheduled to begin late September, 2010.

Client #2: The Youth has a permanency plan that includes his former foster mom and her adult son, birth mom, older brother, former CCDCFS worker and the PFFF worker. He has had many placements (over 12) in foster homes, adoptive placements, and residential treatment, as well as a juvenile record with several Juvenile Detention Home placements. The total number of adults involved in his plan is **6.**

This youth worked hard on his permanency plan. The plan has been implemented and is working well. The youth lives in a dorm and is attending college. His former foster and PFFF worker agreed to help him prepare for college by helping him with supplies for his dorm room. They also agreed to assist with transportation back and forth for school breaks. The PFFF worker will work with him on financial aid, College Bound, finding a part time job on campus and general support in the transition to college.

The former foster mom agreed that he can return for weekends, holidays, school breaks and possibly for summer break. The birth mom also agreed that he can visit in her home for school breaks. The youth will use this as last resort. He is more comfortable in his foster family. His older brother agreed to keep in touch via phone and will try to visit him as well. His former CCDCF worker will keep in touch via phone calls and letters.

This youth has had sporadic contact with his birth mom over the past few years, after many years of no contact whatsoever. He has been in CCDCFS custody since age 2. Their relationship is volatile, and when they do visit, there is often arguing. The youth is looking for other relatives with the help of PFFF.. He would like to know more about his extended family. The birth mom is estranged herself from most of these relatives so she is unable to assist him in this.

The youth is attending college and managing well thus far. The main stressor for him was starting college without any money in the bank for things like books, transportation (bus pass) computer, spending money. The College Bound program will provide for these but it does not go into effect until mid September and he has been in school since 8-18-10. The youth was unable to get a part time job this past summer because he was placed in the foster home mid June and all local jobs for students were taken. He did try to find a job.

Case examples of youth earlier in the process

Client #3: This youth is starting his senior year of high school. He has 5 "permanency connection" adults in his life right now. They are all members of his foster family with the exception of the PFFF worker and CCDCFS worker. He has had the same foster parents for about 12 years and considers his foster parents as his main connection. He feels a part of this family and their extended family.

Client #4: This youth is starting her senior year of high school. She is placed in a relative foster home and has been in this home as her only placement during her custody. She had one previous placement at a very young age but was reunited with birth mom for several years before she came into care again. There are many relatives who this youth has maintained contact with her entire life. We are working to formalize the roles each relative will play once she emancipates in summer 2011. She has **8** committed "permanency connections" right now.

Client #5: This youth is starting her senior year of high school. She did one connections with a one younger brother when she started in the program January 2009. She now has **6** permanency connections, three birth family members (maternal aunt, adult sister and soon to be sister-in-law) as well as the PFFF/ worker, CCDCFS IL worker and current foster mom.

Client #6: This youth is starting his senior year of high school. He is one of the saddest cases. He has been separated from almost his entire life from his birth family and has not made any significant connections along the way with the many foster parents or social workers he has come into contact with. Most of birth family is out of state and he does not have much interest in finding them. He has one aunt and one grandmother that are his permanency connections. Grandma can provide some support and is willing to have regular visits in her home and the aunt is willing to do same as well as provide housing temporarily if needed. She has eight children of her own. This client has **5** permanency connections a mentor.

Client #7: This youth is starting his senior year and is very attached to his foster mom and her mom (she used to be his foster mom for several years until she moved to Columbus for her job). He sees himself as very much a part of this family and their extended family. We are working to expand his permanency options.

Clients # 8-15: All youths are juniors/seniors in high school with the exception of one 17 year old 10th grader. Each client has at least **two** committed permanency connections. Clients #8 through #11 were more difficult to connect with due to a variety of reasons such as scheduling conflicts, ambivalence about yet another social worker in their lives, lack of interest in making a plan, or ambivalence about reaching out to possible permanency connections. Some youth have adults that they feel connected to but are afraid to ask them to be part of their future as they are worried about being rejected or let down.

The Scope of the Work in Child Centered Recruitment

1. Developing working relationships and building trust with youth and foster parents/caretakers via home visits, phone calls, activities, helping out with transportation to youth activities at CCDCFS and Adoption Network.

2. Interviewing youth and helping them complete the protocol and questionnaires.

3. Following up with possible permanency connections provided by the youth via phone calls, meetings, discussion with other team members, and visits.

4. Providing transportation to meet with possible permanency connections and then transporting to ongoing visits to support the establishment of the permanency connection.

5. Record reviews and interviewing past and present social workers, foster, adoptive parents involved with the client. Record mining has been a cooperative endeavor between the Adoption Network Cleveland and Beech Brook.

6. Helping youth become more independent by assisting with job searches, college/vocational school visits, financial aid process for college, looking for housing, and setting up an apartment/dorm.

7. Providing support and education to birth families who agree to re-establish the connection and relationship with their child/grandchild/niece/nephew. Helping them to understand the special needs of their child, including mental health issues, medications, therapy appointments, and IEPs.

8. Completing documentation of contacts with youth and permanency connections.

9. Assisting youth in preparing for permanency planning meetings. Writing up the outcome of meeting and distributing meeting notes to all participants.

10. Following up with permanency plan, checking with all parties to see how the plan is going.

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team is comprised of Administrative Staff of CCDCFS, Adoption Network-Cleveland, Beech Brook, and CWRU-Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences. Nearing the end of Year 2, the leadership team completed a "PFFF/AOG Grant Year 2009-2010 Leadership Team Member Input" form (see Appendix). This questionnaire elicited responses to the following questions:

- Overall, what was achieved in year 2009-2010 of PFFF
- What policies were implemented as a result of PFFF
- How have the children we serve been directly impacted by PFFF
- What system's changes have taken place related to PFFF
- Please list 3 great outcomes that resulted in PFFF in 2009-2010

Content Analysis Summary
Partners for Forever Families (PFFF) Grant Year 2 (2009-2010)
Leadership Team Member Reflections

Ten out of sixteen members of the leadership team completed the questionnaire; the response rate for the team was 62.5%. Missing data was a problem on the surveys, as only two members completed all five questions; two completed four questions; five completed three questions; and one completed one question. Respondents had greatest difficulty articulating the Project's impacts on policy and system changes; the two questions left unanswered the most related to policy implementation (40%) and systems' changes (30%) as a result of the PFFF project. The questions answered the most were the three outcomes from the project (100%),

overall achievements in 2009-2010 (90%), and how children served were directly impacted by the project (90%).

<u>Overall, what was achieved in year 2009-2010 of PFFF?</u>

The most commonly reported achievement noted related to the "connecting" of youth to a support person, biological family members, and/or community collaborators when they have not been adopted and are approaching emancipation. Other team members noted successes in this area to be the following:

- An increased awareness of the special physical (i.e., housing; money) and emotional (i.e., coping with re-establishment of biological family relationships) needs of teens preparing to emancipate from foster care
- Greater acceptance of youth resuming previously severed relationships with biological family members
- Two youth successfully emancipating from the system attending college in the fall, 2009; two additional teens are also planning to attend college as well
- Additional resource support, greater healthy peer and adult relationships; and fostering adjustment in teens' current placements
- A teen from the project has been serving as an officer in the newly formed Youth Council panel; the Council provides a forum for leadership development and skill building opportunities for youth in care

The Teen Specialist from Beech Brook gave positive feedback from the file mining project.

- A very useful tool to receive prior to emancipation to build positive connections
- It was emotionally supportive to know that several people cared along the way
- The experience was extremely emotionally gratifying in reconnecting with extended family/former foster care providers/mentors
- It was helpful in their identity formation process

Other system-based successes were noted by Cuyahoga County Department of Children & Family Services (CCDCFS) and the Adoption Network Cleveland (ANC) team members.

- Having a foundation for the kinship work- a scope was approved, a job description developed, and a unit formed with 4 staff members; the work is still in process related to union representation
- The concept of "permanency" awareness was built-on throughout the agency
- A plan was established for the Family Search and Engagement (FSE) model such as development of the proposal, timeline, staff identification, design and implementation within the agency; preliminary training of the FSE model with staff
- Presentation of the PFFF grant to targeted geo areas within CCDCFS, explaining the purpose and mission of the grant; defined superficial barriers to placement certification
- Establish available funding for superficial barriers to placement
- An increase in the direct service staff utilization of adoption staff during permanency staffings
- Worked with neighborhood collaboratives within targeted areas
- Training all Permanent Custody Independent Living staff on the use of AdoptUsKids;

- **C**ontinuous support for families navigating the child welfare system
- A continuous effort to train front-line staff on the importance of keeping siblings together
- Tenaciously keeping key policies that affect the population served by the Project on the Administrative Team's agenda.

The staff of ANC reported their involvement with several systems-based successes, particularly in the area of creating greater visibility of the project within targeted communities.

- A community forum focused on the needs of older youth, siblings, and kinship care providers and was hosted by Congresswoman Marcia; approximately 100 people attended the event that was held at a high school that served two target areas
- Fostered awareness to service providers within the targeted geo areas through working with the Family-to-Family collaborative
- Collaborating with targeted communities on summer events, highlighting the need for adoptive families
- Specific artwork was designed for recruitment materials to give the projects' image a consistent branding within the community
- Community outreach fostered by the work of an ANC-hired consultant who cultivated relationships with 19 Community Ambassadors (nine beauty salons or barbershops, 10 faith-based institutions); each signed agreements outlinrd how they will assist in recruiting homes, each Ambassodor received a tool kit to assist them in their recruitment efforts, andAmbassadors hung posters designed for the project representing the need for permanency
- Moving Hearts Gallery was displayed at University Hospitals and Cleveland State University
- Adoption Navigators are getting involved earlier to assist relatives/perspective families through the process of fostering/adoption siblings groups
- A restructuring of the Navigator role that included supportive work for youth referred to Beech Brook; case mining, possible searching for kin, and working with the development of Digital Me DVDs; two PFFF Navigator positions are now in place (one at 28 hours/week; the second at 12 hours/week)

What policies were implemented as a result of PFFF/AOG?

Four members reported the establishment of the "Siblings Policy" (40%); two members reported "Concurrent Planning" (20%); one noted "Permanency" (10%); two relayed a "kinship or Relative Policy" (20%); and one a "Video Recruitment Policy" (10%). Three of those four respondents relayed that the "Sibling" and "Concurrent Planning" policies had been presented to the agency's A-Team on several occasions, were still awaiting final CCDCFS agency approval, and were essential to the next steps in the staff training process. Six team members either left this question blank, relayed that they were unaware of any policy changes, or were not involved in that part of the project (60%).

How have the children we serve been directly impacted by PFFF/AOG?

The most commonly-noted impact on children was in the area of teens approaching emancipation. From a systems perspective, a protocol has been established as to how the ANC Navigator and the Teen Specialist acquire teens' case files from the CCDCFS workers. This has

helped them formulate a list of relatives and other individuals mentioned in the teen's case record throughout their time in the child welfare system via file-mining; team members noted that teens have directly benefitted from the project in the following ways:

- Knowledge about their pasts
- Individualized attention received as they work towards a viable realistic permanency plan
- Making connections and reconnections to significant positive adults they feel can be helpful to them in the future
- Increased sibling, biological family, and extended family visits due to pragmatic resolutions (i.e., assistance with transportation)
- Assistance in navigating the college application and financial aid process
- Helping youth prepare to move into their own living space
- Participation in Get Real and Youth Council at ANC validates them telling their personal story

What system's changes have taken place related to PFFF/AOG?

Team members noted some system changes related to the Project. For example, plans have been made to implement a specialized unit for Family Engagement that will focus on "Relatives"; collaboration across departments and agencies have taken place regarding the facilitation of connections between emancipating youth and past connections; and one respondent perceived that the mind set on Permanency within the CCDCFS was evolving but did not clarify how. Another member noted that specific system changes had yet to take place, as the Project was still been worked on at a theoretical level; although, the work done has led to identification of areas to implement strategic plans that will likely lead to system change.

Positive Outcomes that Resulted from PFFF

Team members noted several positive outcomes related to the Project. The outcomes fall under three categories: Positive outcomes with direct impact on children and families; outcomes related to increasing community awareness about adoption and foster care as well as relationship-building with individuals, organizations, and business owners within the targeted geo areas of the Project; and, system-related procedural changes within the CCDCFS and ANC to promote stronger recruitment.

Direct impacts on children and families. Continuous efforts have been made to reduce the number of waiting children in the CCDCFS permanent custody. One way the Project has added to this effort has been by providing greater personalized support to those interested in becoming foster or adoptive parents. Supporting families through the process strengthens recruitment options as the Project's representatives help families identify superficial barriers/bottlenecks in the process as well as potential solutions for those challenges. Also, the choice to foster, adopt, or mentor a child can be a life-altering decision; personalized attention helped to clarify early in the process which individuals were not viable options for becoming foster or adoptive parents. Although this was often a disappointment, the Project's support team has helped individuals focus on ways they could be a part of a child's life when appropriate (i.e., mentoring). Project members also cultivated viable families for children, helping families detour superficial barriers that may cause them to fall between the cracks during the certification process.

Other positive outcomes relate to stabilization of resources to be allocated to two at-risk groups: teens and children in large kinship groups. Significant numbers of teens have been referred to the Assist Youth Program, connecting them to support person(s) who can help them develop a plan and get their needs met when approaching emancipation. For example, two emancipating youths served by the project successfully graduated from high school in 2009 and are now attending college with sound permanency plans in place. Children in large kinship groups have historically been difficult to place together. Investing in resources to keep children together promoted supporting their connections with possibly the only healthy birth family members they had. Supporting strong placement opportunities for large kinship groups fosters the continuous effort to reduce the number of waiting children in CFS permanent custody.

Outcomes Associated with Increasing Community Awareness and Relationships. Awareness about the need for permanent families for children in permanent custody has been fostered through education and relationship cultivation within the Project's targeted geo areas. Team members noted ways in which the Project has carried this mission forward. Negotiations completed by the ANC consultant helped build relationships in the community with ten faith-based organizations and nine barber shops/beauty salons. As a result, they have agreed to allow the Project to come in and raise awareness about the needs of children in the child welfare system. Navigators have promoted visibility within the neighborhood cluster and collaborative meetings. There has been a sharing of resources, personpower, and new ideas as to how to recruit within the targeted areas. Partnering on four events since July has resulted in approximately 75 names of interested individuals about foster care and/or adoption. The Moving Hearts Gallery has also helped raise awareness about youth who need permanency.

System-based Changes within CCDCFS and ANC. Team members relayed important outcomes related to system-related change to be the following:
- Re-engagement of the neighborhood collaboratives with their "out of the box" recruitment interventions
- Having a foundation for the work to be done with kinship groups
- The addition of an ANC consultant increased awareness of PFFF in the community
- Faith-based in-roads have been achieved through the ANC consultant
- Established funding for superficial barriers to placement
- Kept key policies that affect the grant on the A-Team's agenda
- Development of the Family Search and Engagement Proposal; initial work on design and implementation of the proposal.
- Improved teamwork between ANC, CCDCFS, CWRU-MSASS, and Beech Brook to improve the quality of care for clients in CCDCFS custody.

Annual Analysis of Targeted versus Comparison Neighborhoods

In Year 1, we developed baseline data on the children in our targeted and comparison neighborhoods that did not receive the interventions. We are limited in this analysis by the data available to us through the Cuyahoga County Department of Child and Family Services (CCDCFS) SAQWIS system. This also continued to be a problem in Year 2. Several errors were noted in the dataset not found in Year 1 (i.e., case duplications, input errors, and inconsistencies in data categorization). Therefore, evaluators cleaned and analyzed both Year 1 and Year 2 datasets. The following tables provide the baseline data from Year 1 and Year 2 data.

There are two sets of data used in these analyses. The first set is data extracted from SAQWIS in January, 2011 that shows the open cases (entry cohort data). The second data set provides information on youth leaving care (exit cohort data). Tables 5 to 10 provide the demographic information of those youth in our target and comparison neighborhood areas for the entry cohort. Tables 11 to 15 provide exit cohort data on youth leaving care from January 2010 to January 2011.

Demographic characteristics between the target and comparison neighborhoods were examined by utilizing the Pearson's chi-square (χ^2) and the two-tailed, Fisher's exact test. The chi-square was implemented when the expected count in each cell of the crosstabulation was greater than or equal to five. If the expected cell count was less than five, the approximation to the chi-square distribution breaks down creating a greater risk for misleading probabilities; the Fisher's exact test is recommended to avoid making type-II errors (Yates, Moore, & McCabe, 1999, p. 734).

Year 1 captured data from January through August 2009, consisting of only an 8 month time frame versus the subsequent year that ran from January 2010 to January 2011 (further referred to as Year 2). Year 1 was limited to 8 months because of difficulties accessing data from the public agency due to transition from one software system (FACTS) to another (SAQWIS) in February, 2009. Following this transition, the public agency had challenges with reconciling census statistics. For example, FACTS reported that the agency had 2300 children in care for January, 2009. Following the software change, SACWIS reported that 2055 children in the care of CCDCFS for January, 2009 (Accessed February 1, 2011 at http://cfs.cuyahogacounty.us/pdf_cfs/en-US/reports/Jan2010.pdf).

Another important factor to note is the public agency's fluctuating census of the number of children in care between January 2008 and January 2011. Between January 2008 and January 2009, there was a 7.0% decrease in the total number of children in care followed by another 14.0% decrease between January 2009 and January 2010; then a reverse trend where the census increased by 6.90% between January 2010 and January 2011. It is suspected that the 14% decrease between 2009 and 2010 may have been linked to dramatic budget cuts that impacted agency operating funds. We hypothesize the 7.0% increase in the number of children in care is linked to the number of youths who died at the hands of their parents in 2009-2010. We speculate this catalyst, along with much negative media attention, swayed CCDCFS towards more conservative child welfare practices (Accessed February 1, 2011 at http://cfs.cuyahogacounty.us/pdf_cfs/en-US/reports/Jan2010.pdf).

In Year 1, significant differences were found between target and comparison neighborhoods when examining the number of months that youth were in placement (χ^2 [1]) = 6.59, p = .01). The targeted neighborhoods had fewer children in care than expected (28.6%) for the under 24 months group in contrast to those in the comparison group (71.4%). To determine the magnitude of the significant relationship, the Cramer's φ indicated a weak effect size (V = 0.163) for this relationship. The majority of children in care for both the targeted (93.8%) and comparison (83.5%) neighborhoods were in placement for greater than 24 months.

In Year 2, there was a total of 470 youth who had open cases; 260 were in the targeted neighborhoods and 210 were in the comparison neighborhoods. Significant results were found between target and comparison neighborhoods with entry cohort data for current age of youth in foster care (χ^2 [4] = 9.562, p = .048) as well as race (Fisher's Exact Test = 17.641, p < .001).

For current age of youth in foster care, the greatest percentage differences were found among older youth. For example, youth ages 16 and older in the target neighborhood accounted for 23.8% and the comparison neighborhood, 31.0%. Also, percentages of youth ages 11-15 in the target neighborhood (32.7%) was greater than the comparison neighborhood (20.5%) by

12.5%. Although statistically significant, Cramer's φ denoted a weak effect size ($V = 0.143$). Percentages of youth in the target and comparison groups were comparable in size for those in the three younger categories.

A significant relationship existed between race/ethnicity and the target and comparison neighborhoods (two-tailed, Fisher's exact test $= 17.641$, $p < .001$). A greater percent of African American youths lived in the comparison neighborhoods (95.2%) and a greater percent of White youth in the target neighborhoods (11.9%). Although statistically significant, Cramer's φ noted that the effect size for race was weak ($V = 0.191$).

Table 5 presents the age distribution of youth within the target and comparison neighborhoods at the time of the project. The number of youth 11 years of age and older are the majority of children in the public child welfare system waiting for permanency. Children over the age of 11 and older make up 56.5% of the target and 51.5% of the comparison group.

When comparing Year 2 to Year 1 results, three age groups decreased in terms of their percentages of children in care. For example, the comparison group had a 3.70% decrease in youth under the age of 1; the target neighborhood decreased for children ages 1 to 5 by 4.20%; and in the 16 and over age group, there was a 4.30% decrease for the target group. Another important result to note is the 19.4% increase in youth 16 years and over in the comparison neighborhood between Year 1 and Year 2.

Table 5
Current Age of Youth in Foster Care

| Age | Year 1 January 2009 – August 2009 | | Year 2 January 2010- January 2011 | | Year 4 | | Year 5 | |
	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Under 1	3.1% (4)	6.6% (8)	3.50% (9)	2.90% (6)				
1-5	25.0% (32)	21.5% (26)	20.8% (54)	23.8% (50)				
6-10	14.8% (19)	26.4% (32)	19.3% (50)	21.9% (46)				
11-15	28.9% (37)	21.5% (26)	32.7% (85)	20.5% (43)				
16 and over	28.1% (36)	11.6% (29)	23.8% (62)	31.0% (65)				
Total:	128	121	260	210				
Pearson Chi-Square	$X^2 (4) = 7.752$, $p = .101$		* $X^2 (4) = 9.562$, $p = .048$					

[1] Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category
Significant p < .05

Table 6 presents the age that youth in the target and comparison neighborhoods when the child entered public care. The results indicate that in both the target (91.2%, n = 237) and the comparison neighborhoods (85.6%, n=180), the majority of the youth enter care when they are ten years old or younger. Comparing target neighborhoods from Year 2 to Year 1, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of children entering care under the age of one (2.00%) and between ages 11-15 (1.40%) .

Table 6
Age of Youth When Episode Began

	Year 1 January 2009- August 2009	Year 2 January 2010- January 2011	Year 4	Year 5

Age	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Under 1	26.6% (34)	26.4% (32)	24.6% (64)	27.1% (57)				
1-5	27.3% (35)	24.8% (30)	28.5% (74)	23.3% (49)				
6-10	35.9% (46)	35.5% (43)	38.1% (99)	35.2% (74)				
11-15	10.2% (13)	12.4% (15)	8.80% (23)	12.9% (27)				
16 and over	0.00% (0)	0.80% (1)	0.00% (0)	1.40% (3)				
Total:	128	121	283	210				
Pearson Chi-Square	(Fisher's Exact Test) (4) = 1.455, p = .924		(Fisher's Exact Test) = 6.752, p = .134					

[1] Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 7 indicates that there were no significant differences found between target and comparison neighborhoods for Year 2. During Year 2, the majority of youth were in care for over 24 months (target = 89.6%; comparison = 56.7%). There was a greater percentage increase of children in care under 24 months in the comparison groups (Δ = 26.8%) when examining differences between Year 1 and Year 2 data. There was also a decrease (Δ = 4.20%) in the percentage of children in care over 24 months in the target neighborhood group from Year 1 to Year 2. More youth in the comparison neighborhoods had been in care under 24 months in both Year 1 and Year 2.

Table 7
Months of Youth in Placement

	Year 1 January 2009 - August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 4		Year 5	
Months	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
24 or under	6.30% (8)	16.5% (20)	10.4% (27)	43.3% (91)				
25 and over	93.8% (120)	83.5% (101)	89.6% (233)	56.7% (119)				
Total:	(128)	(121)	(260)	(210)				
Pearson Chi-Square	*X^2 (1) = 6.59, p = .010		X^2 (1) = .131, p = .718					

[1] Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category
*Significant p < .01

Table 8 presents the gender of youth in foster care. There are 10% more males in the target neighborhoods and 13.4% in the comparison neighborhoods being served by the project than females. There were no significant differences found between groups related to gender.

Table 8
Gender of Youth in Foster Care

	Year 1 January 2009- August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 4		Year 5	
Gender	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Female	45.3%	42.1%	45.0%	43.3%				

	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison				
	(71)	(45)	(117)	(91)				
Male	54.7% (79)	57.9% (75)	55.0% (143)	56.7% (119)				
Total:	150	120	260	210				
Pearson Chi-Square	$X^2 (1) = 0.253$, $p = .615$		$X^2 (1) = 0.131$, $p = .718$					

[1] Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 9 presents data on siblings in foster care. In order to identify siblings, youth with the same case number were assumed to be siblings; however, there may be additional siblings that were not assigned the same case number because they entered the system during different times and did not have the same last name and/or children with the same last name and birth family address were not consistently reported to be siblings. Thus, the data presented here undercounts the actual number of siblings in foster care. The raw data also fails to clarify whether siblings were placed together or even living within the same neighborhoods. There were no significant differences found between the target and comparison groups for Year 2.

Table 9
Siblings in Foster Care

	Year 1 January 2009– August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 4		Year 5	
Siblings in Foster Care	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Yes	36.7% (47)	36.4% (44)	34.6% (90)	32.4% (68)				
No	63.3% (81)	63.6% (77)	65.4% (170)	67.6% (142)				
Total:	128	121	260	210				
Pearson Chi-Square	$X^2 (1) = 0.003$, $p = 0.954$		$X^2 (1) = 0.260$, $p = 0.610$					

[1] Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 10 indicates that there are mostly African-American youths in care in Year 2 (targeted = 83.1%; comparison = 95.2%). Significant differences were found between the target and comparison neighborhoods in Year 2 (two-tailed, Fisher's exact test = 17.641, $p < .001$). There were a greater percentage of African-American youth in the comparison neighborhood (95.2%) than the target neighborhood (83.1%). There was also a higher percentage of multi-racial (target = 4.60%; comparison = 1.00%) and white youth (target = 11.9%; comparison = 3.80%) when comparing the two neighborhood groups. There was a small decrease in the percentage of African American youth between Year 1 and Year 2 data ($\Delta = 2.10\%$).

Table 10
Race and Ethnicity of Youth in Foster Care by Target & Comparison Neighborhoods

	Year 1 January 2009- August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 4		Year 5	
Race &	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison

Ethnicity								
Black/ African American	85.2% (109)	91.7% (111)	83.1% (216)	95.2% (200)				
Multi-racial	4.70%(6)	1.70% (2)	4.60% (12)	1.00% (2)				
White	9.40% (12)	6.60% (8)	11.9% (31)	3.80% (8)				
Undetermined	0.80%(1)	0.00% (0)	0.40% (1)	0.00% (0)				
Total:	150	120	260	210				
Pearson Chi-Square	(Fisher's Exact Test) = 3.445, p = .153		***(Fisher's Exact Test) = 17.641, p < .001					

[1] Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category
*Significant p < .05; ***Significant p< .001*

In Year 2, Table 11 indicates that the majority of youth who exited care had entered foster care when they were less than 10 years old (80.0% in target neighborhoods; 37.5% in comparison neighborhoods). In the comparison group, 75% of children in the Year 2 sample were under the age of one year. The differences were not statistically significant and were similar to the entry cohort data.

Table 11
Ages of Children when Initially Placed in Foster Care

	Year 1 January 2009– August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 4		Year 5	
Age	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Under 1	40.4% (19)	60.0% (21)	30.0% (3)	75.0% (6)				
1-5	19.1% (9)	17.1% (6)	30.0% (3)	12.5% (1)				
6-10	25.5% (12)	11.4% (4)	20.0% (2)	12.5% (1)				
11-15	14.9% (7)	11.4% (4)	20.0% (2)	0.00% (0)				
16 and over	0.00% (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)				
Total:	47	35	10	6				
Pearson's Chi Square	(Fisher's Exact Test) = 3.771, p = .285		(Fisher's Exact Test) = 3.739, p = .080					

[1] Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 12 provides the age that youth exited care. In Year 2, 45% of those children exiting the system for adoption in the target and comparison neighborhoods were between the ages of 1-5 and 40% were ages 16 and over. Differences between children in the target and comparison neighborhoods were not statistically significant.

Table 12
Ages of Children when Placed in Adoptive Home

	Year 1 January 2009– August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 4		Year 5	
Age	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Under 1	6.40%	17.1%	10.0%	50.0%				

					Year 4		Year 5	
	(3)	(6)	(1)	(4)				
1-5	25.5% (12)	37.1% (8)	20.0% (2)	25.0% (2)				
6-10	23.4% (11)	28.6% (10)	20.0% (2)	12.5% (1)				
11-15	31.9% (15)	11.4% (4)	10.0% (1)	12.5% (1)				
16 and over	12.8% (6)	5.70% (2)	40.0% (4)	0.00% (0)				
Total:	47	35	10	8				
Pearson's Chi Square	(Fisher's Exact Test) = 7.747, p = .097		(Fisher's Exact Test) = 5.947, p = .203					

[1] Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 13 presents the gender of the youth leaving foster care. No statistically significant results were reported between children in the target and comparison neighborhoods for Year 2. Comparing target neighborhood results between Years' 1 and 2, there was a higher percentage of males leaving care in the target neighborhoods (80%) in contrast to the comparison neighborhoods (50%).

Table 13
Gender of Youth Leaving Foster Care

Gender	Year 1 January 2009– August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 4		Year 5	
	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Female	40.4% (19)	57.1% (20)	20% (2)	40% (4)				
Male	59.6% (28)	42.9% (15)	80.0% (8)	50.0% (4)				
Total:	47	35	10	8				
Pearson's Chi Square	X^2 (1) = 2.248, p = .134		(Fisher's Exact Test), p = .321					

[1] Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 14 indicates the number of youth exiting care who have siblings; it is unknown whether the siblings have been placed together or left siblings still within care. About 75% of the youth in the target and comparison groups who left foster care had a sibling still within the system. A slightly higher percentage (0.20%) of children exited the foster care system leaving siblings behind in Year 2 when compared to Year 1, yet caution should be exercised due to small n for Year 2. There was no significance difference between the target and comparison neighborhoods for Year 2.

Table 14
Youth Leaving Foster Care who have Siblings within System

Siblings in Foster Care	Year 1 January 2009- August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 4		Year 5	
	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Yes	29.8% (14)	28.6% (10)	30.0% (3)	25.0% (2)				
No	70.2%	71.4%	70.0%	75.0%				

	(33)	(25)	(7)	(6)				
Total:	47	35	10	8				
Pearson's Chi Square	$X^2(1) = .014$, $p = .905$		(Fisher's Exact Test), $p = 1.00$					

[1] Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 15 indicates the majority of youth exiting the system are African-American (94.4% in target and comparison neighborhoods). In the target neighborhoods, 100% of those children leaving foster care were African-American and 12.5% of children in the comparison group were White. No multi-racial children left either the target or comparison group during Year 2. No statistical significance was found between the target and comparison groups in terms of race.

Table 15
Race and Ethnicity of Youth Leaving Foster Care by Target & Comparison Neighborhoods

	Year 1 January 2009- August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 4		Year 5	
Race & Ethnicity	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Black/ African American	70.2% (33)	85.7% (30)	100% (10)	87.5% (7)				
Multi- racial	2.10% (1)	2.90% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)				
White	27.7% (13)	11.4% (4)	0.00% (0)	12.5% (1)				
Undetermined	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)				
Total:	47	35	10	8				
Pearson's Chi Square	(Fisher's Exact Test) = 3.419, $p = .153$		(Fisher's Exact Test), $p = .444$					

[1] Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

III. Conclusions

Partners for Forever Families is making good progress in implementing a wide range of system change interventions. During the end of Year 2, there was much more investment of different departments from Cuyahoga County into the project. There were renewed efforts for neighborhood recruitment and partnerships are solidifying.

While the target number of youth to be enrolled in the project was not met nor the number of families to be recruited, there is some indication that older youth and youth who have been in care longer are being served by the project. Year 3 will focus on meeting targets; the Lead Evaluator has met with all partners to review the success of the year and to develop strategies for meeting targets in Year 3.

In many way, Partners is on the threshold of having major impact—on the way that the County "does business," with partners focusing on the same outputs and outcomes, and on the lives of youth and family in the communities targeted. There is cause for cautious optimism.

IV.   **Implications of Results and Recommendations**

The transfer to SACWIS continues to be a problem in obtaining data for CCDCFS. When the Director requested permission to buy an additional software program that would help the County make better, data-driven decisions, the State of Ohio denied the request. This is even though they did not have to come up with any funding.

The counting of siblings continues to be problematic; the data cannot determine the number/percent of siblings placed together. The implication is that the County need sto continue working with the MIS system and State SACWIS officials to better identify the siblings in the system and understand their placements and paths.

Since the project is concerned about the promotion of kinship care, there is a breakdown of information in knowing the exact percent of children diverted from entering the system into kinship care. There is also no analysis as to whether the children initially diverted from entering foster care subsequently enter care at a later time (and later age with perhaps more trauma and problems or problems that were left unattended).

The County needs to renew its commitment to Diversity Training. This becomes particularly important in family engagement strategies. There tends to be an assumption that since the majority of families served are African-American and a large percent of the Child Welfare Staff are African-American diversity practices are less problematic. Nothing could be further from reality since, at the very least, class issues play a major role. Diversity training must transcend issues of race to focus on issues of working with the poor and dispossessed in urban areas.

Customer Service remains an area for development. The current Customer Service system needs to be better developed and staff trained to use the maximum potential of the system. As with other data-drive decisions, Customer Service data should be analyzed monthly and used by all levels of the administrative and supervisory system. In addition, training on creating a culture of Customer Service Child Welfare System would strengthen the foundation for improving Customer Service.

Midway through the last year the strategic planning subgroups were either dissolved or dissolving. The initial planning in the grant was to work with these strategic planning groups on project goals. So much of the work plan for "systemic change" relies on functioning internal work groups, where champions help to move change forward. So with those areas of strategic planning dormant, the Project Coordinator proposed to the administrative team the idea of creating 5 work groups to build on the work that has been done, but augmented now by the grant in terms of available technical assistance from the NRC's. The administrator decided that the work groups would not feasible since the agency was in the process of strategic planning again. However, the content of the work groups could be subsumed in the agency strategic plan work groups. This has the benefit of institutionalizing (at least for the next three years) the areas of practice stated in the cooperative agreement. This will require PFFF involvement with the agency strategic plan. The director is working with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to identify the facilitator so that in the last quarter of 2010, the strategic planning process will begin.

Finally, as the Year 2 was finalizing, a Blue Ribbon Panel of community and national professionals developed a list of recommendations for how the County could improve service delivery. The Project Coordinator will determine what elements of the recommendations should be addressed by PFFF.

References

Yates, D., Moore, Moore, D., McCabe, G. (1999). The Practice of Statistics (1st Ed.). New York:

W.H. Freeman.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

1. Relative Search and Engagement

Priority	Kinship Unit Activities	Increase # of children Initially placed with kin	Improve placement stability with kin including sibling placement	Increase Permanency with kin	Increase permanent Connections for aging Out teens	*Role*
H	1. Complete an initial relative-kinship search document within 90 days of child coming into care.	x	x	x	x	Kinship Unit Staff
H	2. Update the relative-kinship search document every six months or at key decision points in the case.	x	x	x	x	Ongoing worker Reminder/ verification by Kinship Unit.
H	3. Develop and conduct training to assist agency staff in updating the relative-kinship search document.	x	x	x	x	Kinship Unit Staff
H	4. Develop a reminder/tracking system to remind staff it is time to review the relative-kinship search document every six months and provide kinship unit with updated version of the document.		x	x	x	Kinship Unit Staff
H	5. Review information, gain necessary permissions and background checks, plan for initial contacts with relatives.		x	x	x	Kinship Unit Staff/ Ongoing Worker
H	6. Interview family members to identify family strengths, resources, and connections; explore level of interest and invite to TDM's if appropriate.	x	x	x	x	Ongoing Worker/Kinship Unit Staff
M	7. Provide additional assistance with diligent search that includes record mining and database searches to expand the relative-kinship search document.	x	x	x	x	Kinship Unit Staff
M	8. Make resources available to workers regarding kinship issues/services/supports via phone calls or requests to be present at TDM's by creating a Kinship Help Desk staff can call for information.	x	x	x		Kinship Unit Staff
L	9. Assemble and facilitate a Kinship Committee to act as a steering committee for the unit development.	x	x	x	x	CCDCFS, Kinship Unit, Collaboratives

2. Kinship Resources

Priority	Kinship Unit Activities	Increase # of children Initially placed with kin	Improve placement stability with kin including sibling placement	Increase Permanency with kin	Increase permanent Connections for aging Out teens	*Role*
H	1. Develop a Kinship Toolbox containing 6 tools to assist staff to engage and support relatives. The toolbox will be designed for use with agency staff, collaborative partners, and relatives. The following areas will be components of the toolbox: • *Develop a tool to assist agency staff in updating the relative-kinship search document.* • *Develop tool that is a guide to assist in reviewing the information obtained in the relative search activities, gain necessary permissions and background checks, and develop a plan for making initial contacts with relatives.* • *Develop tool that educates family members about the continuum of opportunities to be a part of the support system and case plan for a child/sibling group in an effort to increase number of relatives active in the case plan.* • *Develop and distribute information sheets to agency, community and families on kinship issues and resources for families.* • *Develop a guide to conduct additional diligent search activities such as record mining and database searches that will expand the information available in the relative-kinship search document.* • *F. Develop educational tool that provides relatives, agency, and community consistent information about legal options to families (one page fact sheet).*	x	x	x	x	Kinship Unit Staff
M	2. Develop and distribute a Kinship Resource Manual made available to staff, relatives, and the community to assist and guide families through the process of becoming a kinship resource family.	x	x	x	x	Kinship Unit Staff
M	3. Conduct annual Kinship Fair model to provide linkages to needed services and supports to assist relatives and reduce barriers to placement stability.	x	x	x	x	Kinship Unit Staff
L	4. Provide ongoing kinship training curriculum to relatives to address specific needs of relative caregivers.	x	x	x	x	Kinship Unit Staff

3. Kinship Cluster Support

Priority	Kinship Unit Activities	Increase # of children Initially placed with kin	Improve placement stability with kin including sibling placement	Increase Permanency with kin	Increase permanent Connections for aging Out teens	*Role*
L	1. Maintain and support existing kinship cluster support groups.		x	x		Kinship Unit Staff

Appendix 2

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services

POLICY STATEMENT</td></tr>
<tr><td>POLICY NO. 6.01.04</td><td>SUBJECT: Sibling Policy</td></tr>
</table>

PURPOSE: To promote and support healthy, bonded sibling relationships for children in out-of-home care.

SCOPE: This policy pertains to all staff of the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS), all foster parents and all private foster care agencies that provide contracted services to CCDCFS.

POLICY

The CCDCFS believes that every effort should be made to place siblings together, to facilitate visitation between siblings and to reunite siblings who have been separated.

Siblings are children who have at least one biological parent in common, or who have been adopted by the same parent. Siblings can have connections through blood or adoption.

Efforts to work with siblings shall include concurrent planning, identifying caregivers who are able to manage younger and older sibling groups, as well as, support the developmental and behavioral issues of youth impacted by child abuse and neglect (CA/N), targeted and client-centered recruitment and client-driven services.

PROCEDURES

When a decision is made to take a child into custody, the following will occur:

1. Worker of record (WOR) (after hours- Hotline in conjunction with the Placement Department) will begin a relative and sibling search, utilizing the Sibling Tracking Form (see Addendum A) for purposes of placement. The WOR will check State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) for siblings who may, or may not, currently be in placement.

    a. Both maternal and paternal relatives, including half-siblings and any adult siblings, should be explored and thoroughly documented in the activity log. This information is then available to identify potential relative caregivers.

b. For large sibling groups, the WOR should work to understand the family dynamics between the children's relatives with the goal of keeping large sibling groups together.

2. The WOR will take a copy of the Sibling Tracking Form and SACWIS View Member History screen to placement.

3. The Placement representative and WOR will look into the placements of all other siblings, regardless of their age, custody or legal status. All efforts will be documented in the activity log and on the Sibling Form.

4. If the child needing placement has one or more siblings:

a. In Emergency Custody (EC)/Temporary Custody (TC)/Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA).

i. The WOR will review the siblings' legal status in the SACWIS court screen.

ii. The WOR will review the placement screen in SACWIS to determine the sibling's placement type. If the sibling is placed with a relative, the WOR will contact the caregiver(s) and assess the appropriateness of the placement for the child (ren). The WOR will document in the SACWIS activity log the date of contact, who was contacted and the caregiver's response.

5. If the relative caregiver of the sibling(s) expresses interest in caring for the child (ren) needing placement, then a Kinship Caregiver Approval form (following the Kinship Caregiver Approval Policy #6.04.01) must be completed.

a. The WOR will make diligent efforts to locate all adult siblings and contact them to assess their ability and willingness to provide support, visitation, placement and/or permanency for their siblings. The WOR will utilize the Kinship Caregiver Approval process for adult siblings and others residing in their home. Adult siblings shall be referred to the Recruitment Department for foster care/adoption approval. The WOR will document in the SACWIS activity log, the date of contact, who was contacted and the caregiver's response.

b. If the siblings(s) are in the legal custody of a relative or non-relative, the WOR will contact the caregiver(s) and assess the appropriateness of placement using the Kinship Caregiver Approval process. The WOR will document in the SACWIS activity log, the date of contact, who was contacted and the caregiver's response.

6. If the siblings are placed in a foster home, the Placement representative will call the caregiver(s) to see if the family is willing to provide care for the child (ren) needing placement. The Placement representative will electronically document, the date of contact, who was contacted and the caregiver's response, this information will be forwarded to the WOR via email.

a. If there is more than one sibling placed in more than one home, then the appropriateness of each home will be assessed to determine which is in the best interest of the child needing placement.

b. The Placement representative and the WOR will attempt to reach consensus on which home would be the best. If an agreement cannot be reached, the decision will be made by the WOR and their respective chain of command.

i. All caregivers (relative, agency and network foster care) will be contacted in an effort to maintain all siblings together in one placement.

ii. If siblings cannot be placed together, the WOR will document what efforts were made to place the siblings together and why those efforts were unsuccessful.

7. In Permanent Custody (PC)

a. The WOR will review the View Member History screen and the Court screen in SACWIS. If the WOR identifies that one or more siblings were committed to permanent custody, the WOR will review the Placement screen in SACWIS to determine the sibling's placement type.

b. If the PC sibling is placed in a relative home, the WOR will contact the caregiver(s) and assess the appropriateness of the placement for the child (ren). In the interest of placing siblings together, all caregivers (whether blood related or not) will be considered, using the Kinship Caregiver approval process (See Kinship Caregiver Approval Policy #6.04.01). The WOR will document in the SACWIS activity log, the date of contact, who was contacted and the caregiver's response.

i. If the siblings are placed in a foster home, the Placement representative will call the caregiver(s) to see if the family is willing to provide care for the child (ren) needing placement. The placement worker will document in the SACWIS activity log, the date of contact, who was contacted and the caregiver's response.

ii. The Placement representative will contact the caregiver regarding adopted siblings, if the provider with whom the sibling is placed has an active foster care license. The Placement Worker will document in the SACWIS activity log, the date of contact, who was contacted and the caregiver's response.

iii. If a sibling adoption has been finalized, the WOR will contact the Post Adoption Department. The Post Adoption Worker will contact the adoptive family to see if the family is willing to provide care for the child (ren) needing placement. If the family is interested in placement, they shall be referred to the Recruitment department to begin Pre Service training. The Post Adoption Worker will document in the SACWIS activity log the date of contact, who was contacted and the caregiver's response.

Placement may not be immediate, if the caregivers do not have a current foster care license. While licensing is sought, the child (ren) will be temporarily placed elsewhere. The Individual Child Care Arrangement (ICCA) is to accurately reflect that this is a short-term temporary placement while another is being pursued.

Pre-placement visitation shall occur minimally every 10 days/ 2 weeks with the perspective caregiver and siblings as arranged by the WOR.

8.   If a sibling is not going to be placed with another sibling, see Policy (6.01.03, Out-of- Home Care), the following shall occur:

   a.   The Senior Manager of the WOR and the Administrator of the Contracted Placement and Resource Department will be notified by the Placement Worker, within 24 hours via e-mail.

   b.   Emails will be sent by the Placement representative to providers (agency and network) notifying them of the need to find a placement for siblings who have been separated.

   c.   Every 90 days, if placement of the siblings together in one home has not been achieved, the children's placement shall be reviewed during the 90 day case review process. This is an opportunity for the WOR, Placement staff and agency and/or network providers to plan ways to bring siblings together, it is the responsibility of the WOR to notify a placement representative of the scheduled case review. Plans may include; but, are not limited to, placing children in the same network, attending same recreational, religious, cultural and arts activities, school, etc. All parties must agree to maintain and encourage the bond between the siblings, during their time in out-of- home care.

   d.   It is the responsibility of the WOR to develop a written visitation plan pursuant to Rule 5101:2-38-05, barring any safety concerns, to continue efforts to rejoin siblings and implement a plan that promotes connectedness, including visitation that will be reviewed during supervisory case conferences and more formalized reviews.

   i.   Visits between siblings in out-of-home care should be frequent and based upon the child's age, developmental level and relationship with each other.

   ii. A sibling visit can be held concurrently and/or consecutively with their parent/guardian visit; however, if the parent/guardian is not visiting, sibling visits are still an expectation.

   iii. The WOR is to explain to the foster/adoptive parent the importance of siblings' visits and encourage foster/adoptive parents' role in helping to facilitate visitation.

   iv. All visitation plans should provide locations and schedules that are easily adaptable for the siblings to visit.

     v.   Siblings should be involved, if appropriate, in the development of the visitation plan.

9.   Sibling Disruptions

Every effort should be made to avoid and prevent sibling disruptions. Any potential disruption which could result in a sibling being separated will be staffed.

    a. Services should be provided to prevent sibling disruptions.

    b. In most situations, consideration should be given to moving all siblings if one child needs to be moved. If separated, every effort should be made to reunite the siblings as soon as possible.

    c. If sibling separation occurs, the separation must be reviewed during supervisory conferences and every 90 days.

    d. Staff will document on the SAR or Staffing report any compelling reasons justifying the continuing separation of the siblings AND efforts that will be taken to expedite sibling reunification OR alternative permanency plan based on the child's best interest.

10.   The Sibling Placement Matrix will be used as a tool in determining Placement.

SIBLING FORM –draft October 2009

The WOR must complete this form prior to requesting a placement for child (ren) with known siblings. Reference Sheet Attached

** The following methods were used to obtain information regarding siblings. (Circle **All** that apply) Previous SW   Parents   Children Maternal/Paternal Relatives   Old Record(s)   View Member History in SACWIS (print & attach results)   Relative Checklist   Other

(If sibling's adoptive placement is closed, the WOR must contact the Post-Adoption Department (x.4090) prior to placement request (Ex: email or Activity log attached)

Case Name & ID#:		**Date of Request:**	
Name & Person# of Child(ren) being placed:		**Social Worker Name:**	
		Supervisor <u>Signature:</u>	
Placement Worker:		**Senior Supervisor:**	

Sibling(s) Name & Person ID #: (Include half-siblings & relationship: Maternal or Paternal) Circle Relationship:		Type of Custody (Legal Custody, Guardianship, POA, EC, TC, PPLA, PC, Adopted)	Type of Placement (Foster Home, Adopted Home, Relative, Residential)	Caregiver's Name: Address: Telephone #	Date of Activity Log completed of contact with Caregiver	Are Caregiver(s) willing to accept placement of sibling(s) at this time?
	Full sibling Half sibling-- Maternal / Paternal					
	Full sibling Half sibling-- Maternal / Paternal					
	Full sibling Half sibling-- Maternal / Paternal					
	Full sibling Half sibling-- Maternal / Paternal					

Are there any compelling reasons why placement with siblings should not be considered?

_____

_____

Sibling Form
Reference Sheet – Draft 11/17/09

The Worker of Record (WOR) must complete a Sibling Form & submit to the Placement Dept. at the time of any placement request. Instructions below specify who is responsible for documenting information on the form & in SACWIS.

Purpose: To build the capacity of the agency to strengthen all sibling relationships, regardless of age or custody status.

WOR completes the following:

- Methods used to obtain sibling information- please circle ALL that apply. It is the WOR's responsibility to use all sources listed on the Sibling Form, as well as any others at their disposal, to identify siblings.
    - > >>To identify and document siblings not currently active in SACWIS, select the View Member History link, print screen, & attach to Sibling Form. Note: This screen will not always list all siblings.
- All identifying information in top section to be completed by the WOR, except placement worker.
    - **Supervisor's signature mandatory**
- Sibling Names and ID#: - only 1 form needs to be completed per placement request. Enter names of all children being placed and their ID #'s. Use an additional sheet if necessary.
- All Half Siblings: include
    - Maternal = a child being placed & sibling have the same mother
    - Paternal = a child being placed & sibling have the same father
- Type of custody and Type of placement
- Caregiver's name and address- WOR completes the *entire form* if the placement is a relative.
    - If sibling is in a foster home or open adoptive home and the WOR does not have this info., the Placement Worker must record it; if info. is unknown to the WOR regarding a closed adoptive home, the Post- adoptive worker must record it.
- Activity log & Are caregivers willing to accept placement? – WOR is required to make contact with Caregiver(s), complete these 2 columns, and complete an activity log in SACWIS for each contact made with detailed responses if a sibling is placed with a relative or non-relative. The WOR is required to contact the Post-Adoption Department if a sibling is placed in a closed adoptive home and the Post-Adoption worker is required to make contact with the Caregiver(s), complete these 2 columns, and complete an activity log in SACWIS for each contact made with detailed responses.

Placement Worker completes the following:
- Placement worker- completed by the assigned placement worker
- Caregiver's name and the following columns- The Placement Worker is required to make contact with Caregiver(s), complete these 2 columns, and complete an activity log in SACWIS for each contact made with detailed responses if a sibling is placed in foster care or an adoptive home still open in SACWIS.
- The Placement Worker is required to return the completed Sibling Form to the WOR along with the level of care tool and placement referral form.

Post-Adoption Worker completes the following:
- **The Post-Adoption worker** is required to make contact with Caregiver(s), complete the last 2 columns, and complete an activity log in SACWIS for each contact made with detailed responses.

**The WOR is required to submit the Sibling Form for scanning into the FACTWIS case reading file upon completion. **

Cuyahoga County
Department of Children and Family Services

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Summary Report – September 2009

Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services
3955 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115
(216) 881-5500
24-Hour Children's Hotline 696-KIDS (5437)
Ohio Relay Service (TTY) **711**

TABLE OF

Mission Statement
The purpose of the Department of Children and Family Services is to assure that children at risk of abuse or neglect are protected and nurtured within a family and with the support of the community.

Agency History

The Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) is a county government administered and operated child protection agency that is governed under the auspices of the Cuyahoga County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

The Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services was created on July 07, 1992, when the BOCC restructured the Cuyahoga County Department of Human Services (formerly the Welfare Department) into five separate and distinct entities. Each division inherited its own director and organizational structure. CCDCFS delivers child welfare services regulated by local, state, and federal mandates.   The Agency Director is supported by an Assistant Director, (3) Program Deputy Directors and Administrative Team (A-Team) to adopt policies and implement practices that promote time sensitive, goal oriented outcomes. There is an assigned Cuyahoga County Prosecutor to interpret legislative laws to ensure that agency policies are developed within the framework of the Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Code. CCDCFS understands that the important work of protecting children cannot be done alone and affiliates itself with other agencies, groups, and organizations that promote child safety and permanency.

In 2008, the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) proudly commemorated its organization's achievement of becoming a Council on Accreditation (COA) accredited member in the health and human services field. This recognition and partnership agreement with the internationally renowned accreditor, Council on Accreditation, means CCDCFS is committed to improving and promoting quality services that support national standards of best practice and organizational excellence. In efforts to enhance quality improvement, CCDCFS has conducted internal/external surveys to evaluate customer satisfaction among staff, clients, caregivers, service providers, and community partners. By utilizing surveys as a form of measurement for assessing needs and obtaining valuable feedback, effective strategies can be incorporated to strengthen service delivery.

The main office of the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services is located at 3955 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio. In addition, CCDCFS maintains (4) satellite offices that are geographically placed throughout Cuyahoga County.   This enables residents to receive family support and services within their neighborhood community.   CCDCFS embraces the Annie E. Casey's Foundation Family-to-Family philosophy and is among one of their Anchor Sites.

Introduction

In the first and third quarter of 2009, the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services' (CCDCFS) Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) division, administered three survey assessments to measure satisfaction among its customers. The population surveyed consisted of walk-in customers, youth in custody, and licensed caregivers. In addition, these three instruments were also distributed in 2005 and 2006. The primary reason for distributing the same survey instruments was to compare service levels of the current and prior years.

Overall, the distribution and facilitation of the surveys was a collaborative effort involving   CQI staff and youth who represented the Independent Living Teen Advocate Group Program and St. Martin de Porres High School. The survey assessments were comprised of in-house and mail surveys. The in-house customer satisfaction questionnaire contained 14 questions and was directed to agency visitors to assess their impression of services and to identify areas of improvement. The other two assessment types applied to youth and foster parents and were mailed to their homes. Overall, a total of 1000 participants were randomly selected to participate in the study. The targeted population demographic profile was abstracted via Ohio's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). Five hundred surveys containing 19 questions were issued to youth in placement and 500 surveys comprised of 17 questions were sent to foster parents. Both agency and private network providers participated in this activity.

In-House Survey Report Findings

In comparing the number of in-house customer satisfaction surveys conducted in 2005 (350), and 2006 (151), the level of participation declined among agency visitors in 2009 (102). This decrease may be associated to the number of surveyors that were available to conduct interviews. Historically, there were approximately (7-10) contracted surveyors; however, in 2009 a team of (4-5) survey volunteers were utilized for this quality improvement effort.
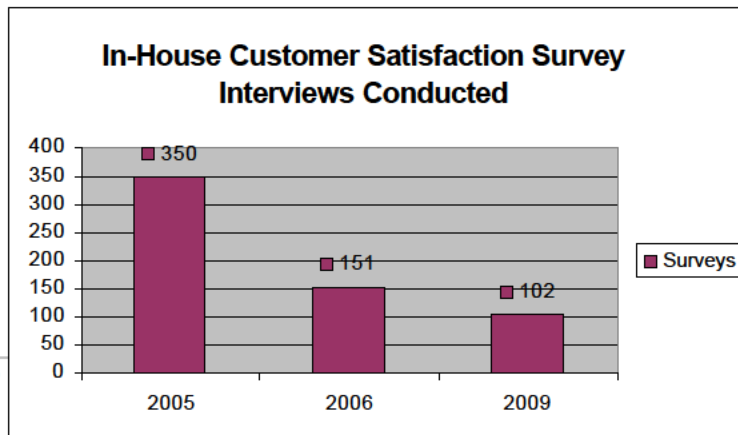
The customer satisfaction surveys were conducted over a four-week period. The surveyors were issued a set of guidelines and a survey script to follow when interviewing agency visitors.

In addition, participants were informed that their responses would remain anonymous. In analyzing the current data, many of the participants provided a partial answer or no response to Question #1, which asked to **"who were you here to see today"** and **for what purpose?** (Ex: Meeting, Training, Review Records, etc.) Out of 102 surveys, 73 (71.5%) responses fell into the meeting category. As briefly described on page 12, the meeting category consisted of staffings, semi-annual reviews, and appointments with social workers, supervisors, and other staff members whose names or program area were not identified by the participant. Out of 102 surveys, 60 (58.8%) of the responses for Question #1 did not capture the staff member's identity, or the program area facilitating the meeting. Similar results were also noted in the 2005 survey distribution. Out of 350 surveys, 109 (31.1%) respondents left Question #1 blank. In reviewing prior surveys, there was an upward trend of more responses pertaining to visitors attending semi-annual reviews (SARS) and staffings. In 2005 (9.4 %) and 2006 (11.25%) and 2009 (12.7%) visits pertained to a SAR or staffing.

Listed below is a comparison chart that illustrates the remainder of the questions and responses generated from the customer satisfaction surveys. The majority of responses that were selected by the respondents are presented in bold print.

Survey Question	2005	2006	2009	Survey Question	2005	2006	2009
Did you have a scheduled appointment?				**Did the person you met with introduce him/herself?**			
Yes	**83.4%**	**84.1 %**	**80.3%**				
No	16.3%	15.2 %	20.0%	**Excellent**	31.7%	43.7%	**51.9%**
How long did you wait before you were seen?				**Did the person listen to what you had to say?**			
15 minutes or less	**72%**	**78.8%**	**76.4%**	**Excellent**	28.0%	**55.0%**	**54.0%**
How did today's visit with agency staff compare to past experiences?				**Did the person dress professionally?**			
				Excellent	28.9%	**55.0%**	**49.0%**
Better	23.4%	**38.4%**	39%				
Same	**44.3%**	37.1%	**40%**	**Did the person maintain a tidy office?**			
Worse	19.1%	2.0 %	9.0%	**Excellent**	22.9%	**47.0%**	35.2%
No Previous Exp.	19.1%	20.5%	11.7%	**Don't know**	22.0%	21.0%	**45.0%**

Survey Question	2005	2006	2009	Survey Question	2005	2006	2009
How would you rate your experience today? 　Better 　Same 　Worse 　No Response	20.9% **59.4%** 13.1% 6.6%	**43.7%** 43.0% 3.0 % 9.9%	**48%** 44% 8% 0%	**Did the person conduct themselves in a courteous manner?** 　Excellent **Did the person appear pleasant?** 　Excellent	**30.6%** **31.1%**	**58.3%** **58.9%**	**58.8%** **60.0%**
How safe is the environment during your today's visit at the agency? 　Very Safe 　Safe	33.7% **58.9%**	**47.7%** 47.0%	**71.5%** 28.0%	**Did the person make eye contact with you?** 　Excellent	**30.3%**	**59.6%**	**56.8%**
How would you rate the quality of services received at your visit today? 　Excellent 　Very Good 　Good	**20.3%** 19.1% 31.1%	**35.8%** 18.5% 3.6%	**39.2%** 19.0% 27.4%	**Did the person treat you with dignity?** 　Excellent **Did the person seem concerned to help you?** 　Excellent	**30.6%** **31.1%**	**57.0%** **55.6%**	**59.0%** **59.8%**
Survey Question	**2005**	**2006**	**2009**	**Survey Question**	**2005**	**2006**	**2009**
Overall, how satisfied are you with the way you were treated during your visit? 　Very Satisfied 　Satisfied	 19.4 % **46.0 %**	 15.9 % **65.6 %**	 29.0 % **53.0 %**	**Did the person explained actions taken on the case?** 　Excellent	**28.6 %**	**55.6 %**	**51.9 %**
Do you know the name of the interview/worker or leader of your meeting? 　Yes 　No	 **88.9 %** 8.6%	 **58.9 %** 5.3 %	 **87.2 %** 12.7 %	**What is your gender?** 　Male 　Female 　No Response	25.7 % **71.4 %** 2.9 %	16.6 % **80.8 %** 2.6 %	20.5 % **79.4 %** 0
What is your age? 　17-22 　23-34 　35-45 　46-49 　50-64 　65 or older	14.6 % **30.3 %** 27.7 % 7.7 % 12.9 % 2.6 %	6.6 % **31.8 %** 30.5 % 7.9 % 16.3 % 3.3 %	18.6 % 17.6 % **31.3 %** 6.8 % 18.6 % 6.8 %	**What is your race?** 　American Indian 　Asian 　**Black, Non Hispanic** 　Hispanic Origin 　White, Non Hispanic 　Southeast Asian	1.1 % 3.0 % **55.7 %** 3.7 % 31.7 % 3.0 %	3.3 % 0 **68.2 %** 2.0 % 19.2 % 0	.01 % 0 **66.6 %** .01 % 30.0 % 0

| No Response | 4.3 % | 3.3 % | 0 | Other | 3.4 % | .7 % | .02 % |
| | | | | No Response | 3.7 % | 6.0 % | 0 |

According to the data presented, <u>improvement</u> was made in areas related to the following:

- The customers overall visit experience
- Building safety
- Quality of services
- Interaction between contact person (ex: self-introduction, engaged listening, professional dress, courteous, pleasant disposition, eye contact, treated customer with dignity, provided explanations regarding actions taken on the case)

Additionally, the following received high ratings, but remained <u>about the same</u> in comparison to prior surveys.

- Waited 15 minutes or less before being seen
- Satisfied with the way he/she was treated during the visit.

The demographic profile of the respondents consisted of the following:

- The majority of participants were females.
- The 2005 & 2006 data indicated the majority of respondents were between the ages of 23-34,   whereas; the 2009 data revealed the majority of participants were between the ages of 35-45.
- All three survey periods indicated the majority of respondents were Black, Non-Hispanic; followed by White, Non-Hispanic.

<u>In-House Survey – Comments & Suggestions</u>

Survey Question #10 was open-ended and asked **"what changes or improvement, if any, would increase your satisfaction with the agency?"** The following summarizes the responses for 2005, 2006 and 2009.
Related to staff:

- Enhance better communication

- Ensure staff return phone calls and read their mail.
- Respond to customers requests in a timely manner
- Maintain appointments – be on time.

Related to services:

- Overall, the majority of issues that were cited in the 2005 & 2006 surveys have been addressed by the agency. The 2009 survey captured brief comments that alluded to the following "overall, services is good; provide foster parents with car seats; and continue making agency improvements."

Related to building concerns:

- There was a repeated concern regarding the need for more comfortable chairs in the waiting area, provide adequate parking, and provide refreshments (free coffee – noted in the 2005 & 2006 surveys.) Note: The need for bathroom cleaning was noted in 2005 & 2006, but not identified in 2009.

Youth Survey – Report Findings

Youth surveys were disseminated in 2005, 2006 & 2009 to obtain feedback on their experiences, expectations, and concerns while in foster care. In addition, the survey was comprised of open and closed-ended questions to help assess their aspirations for the present and future. The youth were also asked to name one thing that would make his/her life better.

In analyzing the results from all three survey periods, the response rate in youth returning completed surveys were 2005 (10.1%); 2006 (9.0%); and 2009 (10.4 %.) This reflects a stable trend in youth participation. In comparing all three survey periods, the sampling size was smaller for youth residing in agency foster homes. The majority of the survey population consisted of youth residing in private network homes. It is a possibility; the smaller samplings may be attributed to the decrease of custody cases that have resulted in recent years. Listed below is a distribution breakdown for the 2006 and 2009 period.

2006 - Out of 532 surveys, 151 (28.3%) were distributed to youth in agency homes; whereas,
381 (71.6%) were issued to youth in private network homes.

2009 - Out of 500 surveys, 68 (13.6%) were distributed to youth in agency homes; whereas,
432 (86.4%) were issued to youth in private network homes.

Overall, the quantitative (closed-ended) questions that applied to the youth knowledge and awareness of decisions made regarding placement, moves, unrestricted visitation, counseling services, received high ratings. When the youth were asked how many of them moved 1-2 times while in placement, the 2005 and 2006 surveys captured this as the highest response; whereas, the 2009 data indicated 1-2 times moves as the second highest. On the other hand, when asked how many youth have moved 0 times, the 2009 survey results were the highest. In addition, the reports indicated the youth see their social workers on an average, one or two times per month and feel safe within their home environment.   Furthermore, the youth expressed   Children and Family Services staff are most likely to listen to their concerns. The majority of youth responded that obtaining a college degree is their goal preference; followed by earning a high school diploma; and third learning a technical trade.

In addition, the youth survey was designed with qualitative (open-ended) questions for communicating concerns or offering suggestions for improvement. In the 2009 survey assessment, several youth acknowledge concerns that required agency follow-up. Their issues were referred to the respective program areas. Although respondents can choose to remain anonymous, these youth chose to disclose their identity and request services. In these situations, the surveys served as a vehicle for identifying and providing solutions.

Youth Survey – Comments & Suggestions

As mentioned in the previous sections, youth were asked to name one thing that would make his/her life better. In comparing the prior and current survey results, listed below are responses that surfaced in all three surveys.

One thing that would make my life better

- Being reunified with family members
- Being with all siblings together and not split up
- Seeing siblings that you never met
- More visits with family
- Being adopted
- Having a family that loves me
- Having a job
- Having an apartment
- Attending school on a regular basis
- Getting better grades

- Getting high school diploma
- More freedom and rights
- Money for college and other purposes
- Resources for school – a laptop
- More clothing vouchers
- Being able to control anger, impulsiveness – be good, listen and respect
- Leaving foster care placement
- New social worker
- Spend more time with current social worker

Additional Comments

- Many of the youth expressed appreciation for the foster parent's involvement in their lives and have recommended that CCDCFS present them with recognition awards.

- There were repeated statements made in reference to allowing youth participate when making decisions on their behalf. Many expressed the need to be a part of the team decision making process.

- There were references made to continue using the survey method to assess youth concerns. One youth expressed their interest in participating in the survey distribution and inquired on a timetable.

Foster Parent Survey – Report Findings

Foster parent surveys were disseminated in 2005, 2006 & 2009 for the purpose of obtaining feedback on their experiences and perceptions in caring for children who are currently placed in their homes. These questions were designed to assess the caregiver's level of satisfaction in working with the agency on behalf of the child's permanency plan. Questions applied to goal planning, visitation, supportive services, and interactions with agency personnel.

In analyzing the results from all three survey periods, the response rate in caregivers returning completed surveys were 2005 (14.8%); 2006 (10.4%); and 2009 (14.6 %.) This data illustrates a fluctuation of (4%) between each timeframe. The survey results listed below reflects responses from both agency and private networks providers.

In comparing the data results from all three survey periods, all of the caregivers responded "Yes" to the following statements:

- I am involved in the child's plan   and agree with set goals.
- I am informed of child's court hearings in advance.
- Visitation arrangements protect the safety of the child.
- I know what mom and or dad has to do in order for the child to return home.
- Safety is considered prior to returning the child to the home.
- I have received the support I need from Children and Family Services to provide for the   child.
- I was told about the child's medical, educational, and social needs before placement.
- The medical, educational, and social needs for the child are currently being met.
- A Children and Family Services Worker visits with me in my home at least once a month.
- My phone calls are returned promptly by Children and Family Services Staff.
- The child's counselors and therapists have helped.
- Children and Family Services staff has treated me with respect.

Here, the caregivers differed in their responses to the following statements.

<u>The child in my care visits with mom and/or dad at least once a month</u>.

- The majority of the 2005 network providers responded **"No."**
          The majority of the agency providers responded **"Yes."**

- The majority of the 2006 survey data captured "**No"** for both agency and network.

- The majority of the 2009 agency provider's responded **"No"**
              The network agencies had an even distribution rating of (43 %) among their "**Yes & No**"
              replies.

<u>The child in my care visits with siblings at least once a month</u>.

- The majority of all caregivers responded **"No,"** with the exception of the 2005 survey.
                    In the 2005 survey, the majority of agency providers responded **"Yes."**

Foster Parent Survey – Comments & Suggestions

Foster parents were asked if there is anything that Children and Family Services could do to help them or the child in care. Listed below are some of their comments & suggestions.

Agency Homes

- Provide more daytime training during weekdays
- Provide training classes that are tied into activities with the kids
- Accelerate the pace for issuing clothing vouchers
- Accelerate the pace for issuing travel reimbursements
- Issue medical cards promptly
- Open a daycare center (free of charge) for working foster/adoptive families who do not qualify for a daycare voucher
- Provide daycare provider payment in the beginning for toddlers
- Provide more youth programs and day camps for the (13-18) age group. There seems to be more for younger children and not many for older kids.
- Respite Care
- Provide more advice regarding on-going services after adoption
- Adoption process needs to proceed at a faster pace
- For the most part, I have a very good communication and support with the child's social worker and excellent support from my resource manager.

Network Provider Homes

- Process clothing vouchers faster
- Assist with summer camp arrangements
- Help child understand college options
- I think the foster parents should be able to enroll the child into school.
- Child is now 18-yrs old, and has been in my home since 2003 and states she is done with therapy. Is this a true statement?

- Foster parents should be allowed to go to court when decisions are being made for the placement of the child, since they are the ones caring for them on a daily basis.
- Encourage workers to communicate properly with foster parents.
- I have worked with my social worker for approximately 3-years. She is an excellent social worker and cares about children and the foster parent. She treats you with utmost respect. Job Well Done!
- Treat your caseworkers better. They are overworked and underpaid. I feel for them and all they do. You guys are the best!
- My worker, is so helpful and professional and also knowledgeable in supporting the child and placement family.

GENERATED RESULTS

IN-HOUSE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

SURVEY INTERVIEWS

IN-HOUSE SURVEY RESULTS

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys were conducted from June 29 thru July 31, 2009 at the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) main headquarters. The surveyors were comprised of youth representing the Independent Living Teen Advocate Group Program and the St. Martin de Porres High School. During this four-week study, the surveyors interviewed 102 agency visitors to obtain feedback on the respondent's impression of services. Listed below are the results that were generated from the assessment.

SERVICE SATISFACTION

Question 1: Who were you here to see today?

Out of 102 respondents, 73 (72%) indicated they were at the agency to attend a meeting. Meetings consist of (staffings, semi-annual reviews, etc.) Also, included in this count are (scheduled/unscheduled) appointments with social workers and supervisors for case related inquiries.

	Frequency	Percent
Meeting	73	.72
Records	9	.09
Visitation	5	.05
Adoption	5	.05
Independent Living	3	.03
Fingerprinting	2	.02
Training	2	.02
Unknown	2	.02
Drug Assessment	1	.01

Question 2: Did you have an appointment with someone in that area/unit?

The majority of respondents 82 (80%) had scheduled appointments. Twenty (20%) were walk-ins (unscheduled appointments.)

Question 3: Thinking back over your visit how long would you say you waited before you were seen?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	82	.80
No	20	.20

The majority of respondents 78 (76%) indicated they waited 15 minutes or less.

	Frequency	Percent
15 minutes or less	78	.76
16-30 minutes	9	.09
31-45 minutes	6	.06
46-60 minutes	3	.03
60 min or greater	3	.06

Question 4: How did your experience with agency staff today compare to your past experiences?

	Frequency	Percent
Better	40	.39

	Frequency	Percent
Same	41	.40
Worse	9	.09
No previous exp.	12	.12

Question 5: How would you rate your experience today?

The majority of respondents 49 (48%) rated their experiences as "Better" than what they expected, whereas; 45 (44%) indicated "About what they expected" or the "Same."

	Frequency	Percent
Better	49	.48
Same	45	.44
Worse	8	.08

Question 6: How safe is the environment during your visit to the agency today?

The majority of respondents 73 (72%) found the agency to be "Very Safe."

	Frequency	Percent
Very Safe	73	.72
Safe	28	.28
Unsafe	1	.01
Very Unsafe	0	.00

Question 7: How would you rate the quality of service received at your visit to the agency today?

The majority of respondents 40 (39%) rated the quality of service as "Excellent." The next highest response 28 (27%) was rated "Good."

	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	40	.39
Very Good	19	.19
Good	28	.27
Fair	7	.07
Poor	6	.06
No Rating	2	.02

Question 8: Overall, how satisfied are you with the way you were treated during your visits to the agency today?

The majority of respondents 54 (53%) indicated they were "Satisfied" with their visit.

	Frequency	Percent
Very Satisfied	29	.29
Satisfied	54	.53
Somewhat Satis.	5	.04
Dissatisfied	1	.01
Somewhat Diss.	4	.04
Very Dissatisfied	8	.08
No Response	1	.01

Question 9: The following is a list of characteristics, please rate the interviewer/worker, person or leader of your meeting or group using the scale (5) Excellent; (4) Very good; (3) Good; (2) Fair and (1) Poor.

a. Introduced him/herself
b. Listened to what I had to say
c. Dressed professionally
d. Maintained a tidy office
e. Was courteous
f. Was pleasant
g. Made eye contact with me
h. Treated me with dignity
i. Was concerned with helping me
j. Explained action taken on the case

Introduced him/herself

	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	53	.52
Very Good	25	.25
Good	14	
		.13
Fair	3	.03
Poor	1	
		.01
Don't Know	6	
		.06
No Response		

Listen to what I had to say

	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	56	.54
Very Good	24	.24
Good	10	
		.10
Fair	3	.03
Poor	5	
		.05
Don't Know	4	
		.04
No Response		

Dressed professionally

	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	50	.49
Very Good	27	.26
Good	17	.17
Fair	2	.02
Poor	1	.01
Don't Know	5	.05
No Response		

Maintained a tidy office

	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	36	.35
Very Good	9	.09
Good	8	.08
Fair	2	.02
Poor	1	.01
Don't Know	46	.45

No Response

Was courteous

	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	60	.58
Very Good	21	.21
Good	14	.14
Fair	3	.03
Poor	1	.01
Don't Know	3	.03
No Response		

Was pleasant

	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	62	.60
Very Good	18	.18
Good	15	.15
Fair	3	.03

	Frequency	Percent
Poor	1	.01
Don't Know	3	.03
No Response		

Made eye contact with me

	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	58	.56
Very Good	19	.19
Good	15	.15
Fair	3	.03
Poor	2	.02
Don't Know	5	.05
No Response		

Was concerned with helping me

	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	61	.59
Very Good	18	.18
Good	12	.12
Fair	4	.04
Poor	3	.03
Don't Know	4	.04
No Response		

Treated me with dignity

	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	61	.59
Very Good	20	.20
Good	12	.12
Fair	4	.04

Explained actions taken on the case

	Frequency	Percent

Excellent	53	.51
Very Good	24	.24
Good	13	
	.13	
Fair	2	.02
Poor	2	
	.02	
Don't Know	8	
	.08	
No Response		

*Question 14: Do you know the name of the interviewer/worker, person or leader of your meeting or group?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	89	.87
No	13	.13

SERVICE/MISCELLANEOUS

Question 10: What changes or improvements, if any, would increase your satisfaction with the agency?
(The following is a list of the responses)

Staff:
o   Try to listen to the parent being accused
o   The agency's workers need to take proper action when dealing with the cases, and not just tell the clients something and not following through with it.
o   Waiting time
o   Quicker staff
o   Better communication
o   The timeframe in which the workers meet with the client
o   Making a quality effort that ensures the staff receive their mail and open it in a timely manner
o   Have social workers return the calls that they say they will
o   Listen to the teens
o   Listen to the clients, offer help

Services:
o   Everything was very satisfying
o   Give away car seats
o   The whole system is messed up

Building Concerns:
o   Air conditioning
o   Chairs
o   Better parking
o   The seating in the waiting area

_____

Question 11: What is your age?

The majority of the respondents 32 (31%) were in the (35-45) age category. The second highest responses were obtained from individuals between the ages of (17-22 and 50-64.)

	Frequency	Percent
17-22	19	.19
23-34	18	.17
35-45	32	.31
46-49	7	.07
50-64	19	.19
65 or older	7	.07
No Response		

Question 12: Respondents Gender

The vast majority of survey participants were females. Out of 102 respondents, 81 (79%) were females compared to 21 (21%) males.

	Frequency	Percent
Female	81	.79
Male	21	.21
No Response		

Question 13: Respondents Race

The majority of respondents 68 (67%) were in the Black, Non Hispanic category. The second highest responses 30 (29%) were obtained from the White, Non Hispanic origin.

	Frequency	Percent
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	.01
Asian	0	0
Black, Non Hispanic	68	.67
Hispanic Origin	1	.01
White, Non Hispanic	30	.29
Southeast Asian	0	0
Other	2	.02
No Response		

GENERATED RESULTS

YOUTH BETWEEN THE AGES

(12-18 YEARS OLD)

PLACED IN AGENCY HOMES

Listed below are survey results generated from youth residing in CCDCFS agency licensed homes. There were a total of (68) surveys mailed to youth between the ages of 12-18. Respondents were given a three-week timeframe to complete the survey by February 23, 2009. Out of 68 surveys distributed, (7) were returned completed and (2) were undeliverable. This represents a response rate of (10.2 %.)

Question 1: I feel safe where I live now.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	7	
		100
Sometimes	0	0
No	0	0
No Response	0	0

Question 2: I can talk with my Children and Family Services Worker about what I need.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	3	.43
Sometimes	3	.43
No	1	.14
No Response	0	0

Question 3: I know what my mom or dad has to do before I can go home.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	2	.29
No	0	0
I'm not going home	5	.71
No Response	0	0

Question 4: I have moved ___ times since I left home.

	Frequency	Percent
0 times	5	.71
1-2 times	2	.29
3-4 times	0	0
5 or more	0	0

Question 5: I understand why I moved each time.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	2	.29
I haven't moved	5	.71
No	0	0
No Response	0	0

Question 6: I was told in time to prepare for each move.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	0	.0
I haven't moved	5	.71
No	2	.29
No Response	0	.0

Question 7: I have blown a placement on purpose.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	0	0
Sometimes	0	0
No	7	100
No Response	0	0

Question 8: I'm learning what I need in school.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	5	.71
Sometimes	2	.29
No	0	0
No Response	0	0

Question 9: I can talk to or visit my mom and/or dad when I want.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	1	.14
Sometimes	3	.43
No	1	.14
I don't want to visit	2	.29
No Response	0	.0

If, no why?
o   No, because I don't want to go to that house anymore.
o   I can't have visits with my dad, because I can't get in touch with Megan.
o   Parents are abusive
o   No, because my mother and father died.

Question 10: I can talk or visit my brothers and/or sisters when I want.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	3	.43
Sometimes	1	.14
No	0	.0
I don't have brother or sisters.	2	.29
I don't want to visit.	0	0
No Response	1	.14

If not, why?
o Because, I don't have no contact
o I talk, but not visit, because people not trying.

Question 11: My counselors and therapists are helping me.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	2	.29
Sometimes	0	0
No	1	.14
I don't see a counselor or therapist	4	.57
No Response	0	0

Question 12: I have gotten the help I need when I am sick or hurt.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	5	.71
Sometimes	2	.29
No	0	0
No Response	0	0

Question 13: These people have kept their promises to me.

	Frequency	Percent
Mom	1	.06
Dad	2	.12
Worker	5	.29
Foster Parent	6	.35
Counselor	2	.12
Therapist	0	0
Other	1	.06

Others noted
o Brother Charles

Question 14: People from Children and Family Services listen to what I have to say.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	2	.29
Sometimes	4	.57
No	1	.14

No Response   0
                          0

                                                                    0

Question 15: How frequently does your Children and Family Services County Worker see you per month?

	Frequency	Percent
1 time	2	.29
2 times	3	.42
3 times	0	
		0
4 times	0	
		0
Other	2	.29
No Response	0	

                          0

Other Comments:
o   don't know
o   once every two months

Question 16: I like the people I live with.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	.57
Sometimes	3	.43
No	0	
		0
No Response	0	

Question 17: I plan to get a:

	Frequency	Percent
HS Diploma	2	.29
GED	0	
		0
College Degree	5	.71
Technical Trade	0	
		0

Question 18: Name one thing that would make your life better.

o   To get my brother back
o   My Mom
o   doing something
o   If I could have a job
o   If my mom would step up and be a mom
o   doing work--stop being late all the time

Question 19: Is there anything else you would like to say?

o   No
o   Sometimes when my case workers come they always seem to try to make decisions without asking me.

GENERATED RESULTS

YOUTH BETWEEN THE AGES

(12-18 YEARS OLD)

PLACED IN NETWORK HOMES

Listed below are survey results generated from youth residing in CCDCFS network provider homes. There were a total of (432) surveys mailed to youth between the ages of 12-18. Respondents were given a three-week timeframe to complete the survey by February 23, 2009. Out of 432 surveys distributed, (45) were returned completed and (8) were undeliverable. This represents a response rate of (10.4 %.)

Question 1: I feel safe where I live now.

	Frequency	Percent		
				0
Yes	42	.93	No Response	0
Sometimes	3	.07		
No	0			

	Frequency	Percent
0 times	12	.27
1-2 times	12	.27
3-4 times	11	.24
5 or more	10	.22

0

Question 2: I can talk with my Children and Family Services Worker about what I need.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	28	.62
Sometimes	14	.31
No	2	.04
No Response	1	.02

Question 3: I know what my mom or dad has to do before I can go home.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	16	.36
No	6	.13
I'm not going Home	23	.51
No Response	0	

Question 4: I have moved ___ times since I left home.

Question 5: I understand why I moved each time.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	31	.69
I haven't moved	5	.11
No	8	.18
No Response	1	.02

Question 6: I was told in time to prepare for each move.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	23	.51
I haven't moved	13	.29
No	8	.18
No Response	1	.02

Question 7: I have blown a placement on purpose.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	.18
Sometimes	6	.13
No	31	.69
No Response	0	
		0

Question 8: I'm learning what I need in school.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	34	.76
Sometimes	6	.13
No	4	.09
No Response	1	.02

Question 9: I can talk to or visit my mom and/or dad when I want.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	.38
Sometimes	6	.13
No	15	.33
I don't want to Visit	5	.11
No Response	2	.04

If, no why?
o Because I'm moving on with my life
o I can talk when they call--visits sometimes have trouble with.
o Because, I can only visit on weekends.
o Because, I'm not allowed to see them.
o My mother is deceased and I don't talk to my father.
o Because to me, I just do not want to see them anymore.
o   Yes can talk. Because my dad won't do what he's suppose to do.
o because of my situation in my life
o because I'm in foster care
o because I'm in foster care and I have 2 visits a month
o talk, yes. I haven't had visitation yet. I want to visit my mom and not dad
o because, my caseworker placed me 3-hours away from my home

- because, I don't want to
- I talk to my mom on the phone--sometimes, I don't have visit
- My Mom lost custody and I don't know why with my Dad.
- I don't want to visit with her.
- don't know
- We call every other day and visit on Fridays
- I can talk with my mom, but I can't visit my old home.
- because my mother is going through some things

- because he had drugs in the house
- because my sisters live far and my brothers live with me
- I just call my brother.

Question 10: I can talk or visit my brothers and/or sisters when I want.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	.42
Sometimes	11	.24
No	13	.03
I don't have brother or sisters.	0	0
I don't want to visit.	2	.04
No Response	0	0

If not, why?
- My sibling foster mother doesn't want to let them leave with me.
- I have a brother and I see him, but I can't see sisters.
- I see my brother sometimes. I can't talk or see him when I get ready.
- because I was told I cannot
- Yes, can talk. No visit with sisters. The family won't let me.
- because my caseworker won't let me
- I haven't had visitation yet. I only want visitation with mom and brother.
- 3-hours away from home
- They don't let me.
- due to family problems--you so called know my history, so look in my folder

Question 11: My counselors and therapists are helping me.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	20	.44
Sometimes	9	.20
No	2	.04
I don't see a counselor or therapist	12	.27
No Response	2	.04

Question 12: I have gotten the help I need when I am sick or hurt.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	37	.82
Sometimes	6	.13
No	1	.02
No Response	1	.02

Question 13: These people have kept their promises to me.

	Frequency	Percent
Mom	9	.08
Dad	10	.09
Worker	23	.21
Foster Parent	28	.26
Counselor	19	.18
Therapist	10	.09
Other	8	.07

Others noted
o Teachers
o Little brother
o Best friend
o Perspective Adoptive Mom
o Diversion Worker – Wyandot County
o Sister
o Everybody
o Neither of the above groups

Question 14: People from Children and Family Services listen to what I have to say.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	22	.05
Sometimes	14	.31
No	6	.13
No Response	3	.06

Question 15: How frequently does your Children and Family Services County Worker see you per month?

	Frequency	Percent
1 time	16	.36
2 times	13	.28
3 times	1	.02
4 times	7	.16
Other	7	.16
No Response	1	.02

Other Comments:
o every other week
o two times, if meeting
o every other year
o once every three months
o every other month
o rarely ever
o once every couple of months
o when she comes
o She dropped me off and never came back--seen her once after that.

Question 16: I like the people I live with.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	33	.73
Sometimes	11	.24
No	1	.02
No Response	0	
		0

Question 17: I plan to get a:

	Frequency	Percent
HS Diploma	16	
		.36
GED	3	.06
College Degree	21	.47
Technical Trade	5	.11

Question 18: Name one thing that would make your life better.

o being adopted

- getting a car
- finishing school and getting an apartment for me and my baby to live in.
- my real mom not on drugs
- my (foster mom) helping me change my life.
- Passing High School and going home
- Seeing my mom more
- If my Aunt Julie (real auntie) could adopt me.
- strawberries
- My life is so good. It can't get better.
- One thing that would make my life better is meeting my other oldest sister.
- new social worker
- being out of foster care
- if I was to see my real sister
- stay with my family
- If my dad would do what he has to do, he can see me.
- go to school at all times
- for me to go home with my real mom
- a job
- my dad not aggravating me
- to see my dad more and have him want to see me
- a mom & dad who will love me forever
- go to my mom

Question 18: Name one thing that would make your life better.

- be able to read better
- staying in school
- visiting my brother
- to get signed up for CHMA or Section 8 Housing
- no, therapist or counselors
- more time outside--my mom, and money
- getting the money I need for the goals that I have
- money for my college education and living expenses while attending college

- a laptop
- me to go home with my mom and dad
- Mrs. Emanuel
- be good, listen, respect
- my mom not disrespecting my dad
- It would be better if I had a job
- to go home and see my mom
- to go back home with my mother and brother

Question 19: Is there anything else you would like to say?

- It is hard being a teenager and not be able to go anywhere with friends. I'm very happy with my foster parents, they truly love me and show me that everyday. I am loved and am getting the education I need.
- I feel like my boyfriend takes care of me more than my foster parent. He makes sure I get to and from school, goes to doctors appts., makes sure I eat everyday, buys hygiene items and the more I think, I should get a portion of my foster parent's check to help take care of myself.
- I would like to be drop from the system, once I turn 18 and not be stuck here for 2-3 months after. Would also like to have my own placed before my birthday.

Question 19: Continued …

- I love my family very much.
- Thank you, Mr. Walters, for all you've done for my family. This has showed me that kids can be taken from homes.
- Would it be possible if I could stay in another foster home in Cleveland, if there's any open right now? Thank you, for this survey!!
- no
- I would also like to say that I think that my foster parent / grandma should be

rewarded for being such a wonderful foster parent.
- o I want to go home ASAP and would never like to be place in county custody again.
- o I'm happy where I'm at right now.
- o another MP3 player (1st one got stolen)
- o I need a clothing voucher, because I haven't received one yet. I need a crib, car seat. I would like to be enrolled in a program to get my GED. Would like visitation with my mother soon.
- o Yes, I want to go to Mid-Park High School and not Berea High School and no other school. If I have to be moved then, I would like to be moved in Middleburg Heights. I want to go to Mid-Park High School. Please!
- o It is not my mom fault why I am in foster care. It is Eric's fault why we are in foster care. I love my mom and step dad so much I want to go home to them.
- o I would like to thank children and family services for their help and support throughout my good and bad experiences.
- o I would also like to be with my family more often.
- o I need a clothing voucher. A big brother so I can talk with.

GENERATED RESULTS

AGENCY PROVIDER HOMES

Listed below are the survey results that were generated from CCDCFS agency providers. There were a total of (250) surveys mailed to assess the caregivers impression of services for themselves and the child. Respondents were given a three-week timeframe to complete the survey. Out of 250 surveys distributed, (38) were completed by February 25, 2009. This represents a response rate of (15.2 %.)

Question 1: I am involved in planning for the child in my care.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	30	.79
Sometimes	7	.18
No	1	.02
No Response	0	

		0

Question 2: I usually agree with the goals of the planning.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	.65

Sometimes	11	.29
No	1	.03
No Response	1	.03

Question 3: I am told about court hearings for the child in my care before they occur.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	30	.79
Sometimes	4	.11
No	3	.08
No Response	1	.02

Question 4: The child in my care visits with mom and or dad at least once a month.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	
		.50
Sometimes	5	
		.13
No	14	
		.37
No Response	0	

0

Question 5: The visitation arrangements protect the safety of the child.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	.65
Sometimes	1	.03
No	1	.03
Visits aren't Allowed	9	.24
No Response	2	.05

Question 6: The child in my care visits with siblings at least once a month.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	16	.42
Sometimes	4	.11
No	18	.47
No Response	0	

0

Question 7: I know what mom and or dad has to do in order for the child to return home.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	.45
Sometimes	3	.08
No	4	.10
Child is not returning home	14	.37
No Response	0	

Question 8: Safety is considered prior to returning the child to the home.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	24	.63
Sometimes	4	.11
No	3	.08
No Response	7	.18

Question 9: I have received the support I need from Children and Family Services to provide for the child.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	.71
Sometimes	6	.16
No	4	.11
No Response	1	.02

Question 10: I was told about the child's medical, educational, and social needs before placement.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	33	.87
Sometimes	2	.05
No	2	.05
No Response	1	.03

Question 11: The medical, educational, and social needs for the child are currently being met.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	33	.87
Sometimes	3	.07
No	1	.03
No Response	1	.03

Question 12: A Children and Family Services Worker visits with me in my home at least once a month.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	34	.89
Sometimes	3	.08
No	1	.03
No Response	0	0

Question 13: My phone calls are returned promptly by Children and Family Services Staff.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	22	.58
Sometimes	11	.29
No	5	.13
No Response	0	0

Question 14: The child's counselors and therapists have helped.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	15	.39
Sometimes	1	.03
No	1	.03
Child doesn't see a counselor or	21	.55
No Response	0	

Question 15: Children and Family Services Staff has treated me with respect.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	.84
Sometimes	6	.16
No	0	0
No Response	0	0

Question 16: Is there anything else that Children and Family Services could do to help you or the child in your care?

o make training requirements easier-by having more daytime training during the week when I could attend. My child has multiple health issues and I need to go to the trainings when I have my nurses.
o lift the out-of-county placement bann.
o should automatically provide daycare provider payment in the beginning for toddlers
o Yes, need a clothing order--had children for almost 2 yrs, never received a clothing order.
o Do not lie to foster parents.
o none
o give correct answers
o They need to send payments, toward beginning of month, in a timelier manner.
o All is fine.
o I wish things could move more swiftly and in favor of the person caring for the child
o respite care
o advise me on ongoing services after adoption
o get clothing voucher promptly (I waited 6 weeks)
o open your own daycare center free of charge to working foster/adoptive families. If the government will provide a voucher for those that qualify, why not give those that don't a break with free daycare for foster/adoptive children under school age. The monthly check doesn't cover the monthly rate.

Question 17: Other thoughts and comments …

o When you change policies (ie: out-of-county bann on placements - notify foster parent in writing or grandfather those already foster parents in.
o I think any child that needs a day care provider should be arrange in the beginning and if not set-up in the beginning to be retro-active. Day Care provider reimbursement should be a direct relationship between the county and the provider and day care provider should be open and available some holidays.
o There is a particular day care provider that is not being paid.
o With a "first time" placement, I have been very pleased with all the support from the various social workers & therapists that I've met. Would like to see more programs and day camps available for the 13-18 age group. There seems to be an abundance for younger children and not many for older kids.
o I think that adoptions need to proceed at a better pace.
o Food Stamps should be added for foster children
o The last child placed in our home has since gone home. However, several days after leaving, the child's mother called me on my personal unlisted number and asked me to buy the child some milk. She had gotten our private number from her social worker. Breach of privacy to the max!

Question 17: Continuation …
Thoughts & Comments

o   For the most part, I have very good
     communication and support with the
     child's social worker and excellent
     support from my resource manager. I
     appreciate that as payment for travel
     expenses is somewhat slow-could be
     better.

GENERATED RESULTS

NETWORK PROVIDER HOMES

Listed below are the survey results that were generated from CCDCFS network providers. There were a total of (250) surveys mailed to assess the caregivers impression of services for themselves and the child. Respondents were given a three-week timeframe to complete the survey. Out of 250 surveys distributed, (35) were completed by February 25, 2009. This represents a response rate of (14 %.)

Question 1: I am involved in planning for the child in my care.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	30	.86
Sometimes	4	.11
No	1	.03
No Response	0	

0

Question 2: I usually agree with the goals of the planning.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	24	.68
Sometimes	10	.29
No	1	.03
No Response	0	

0

Question 3: I am told about court hearings for the child in my care before they occur.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	.77
Sometimes	6	.17
No	2	.06
No Response	0	

0

Question 4: The child in my care visits with mom and or dad at least once a month.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	15	.43
Sometimes	3	.09
No	15	.43
No Response	2	.05

Question 5: The visitation arrangements protect the safety of the child.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	16	.46
Sometimes	3	.09
No	2	.05
Visits aren't Allowed	9	.26

No Response   5   .14

Question 6: The child in my care visits with siblings at least once a month.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	.22
Sometimes	1	.03
No	23	.66
No Response	3	.09

Question 7: I know what mom and or dad has to do in order for the child to return home.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	12	.34
Sometimes	3	.09
No	4	.11
Child is not returning home	14	.40
No Response	2	.06

Question 8: Safety is considered prior to returning the child to the home.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	.54
Sometimes	6	.17
No	4	.11
No Response	6	.17

Question 9: I have received the support I need from Children and Family Services to provide for the child.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	.77
Sometimes	4	.11
No	4	.11
No Response	0	0

Question 10: I was told about the child's medical, educational, and social needs before placement.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	28	.80
Sometimes	5	.14
No	2	.05
No Response	0	0

Question 11: The medical, educational, and social needs for the child are currently being met.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	29	.83
Sometimes	5	.14
No	0	

0

No Response   1   .03

Question 12: A Children and Family Services Worker visits with me in my home at least once a month.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	.77
Sometimes	5	.14
No	2	.05
No Response	1	.03

Question 13: My phone calls are returned promptly by Children and Family Services Staff.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	22	
		.63
Sometimes	10	
		.28
No	3	
		.09
No Response	0	
		0

Question 14: The child's counselors and therapists have helped.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	20	.57
Sometimes	5	.14
No	2	.06
Child doesn't see a counselor or therapist	8	.23
No Response	0	

Question 15: Children and Family Services Staff has treated me with respect.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	29	.83
Sometimes	5	.14
No	0	
		0
No Response	1	03

Question 16: Is there anything else that Children and Family Services could do to help you or the child in your care?

- assist with summer camp arrangements
- listen to my child
- stop wasting money on a GAL that few people ever see and use this money for clothing allowance-camp, etc. We already work with a placement agency (Ohio Mentor.) They come out every week. We do not need to waste our County Caseworkers time and county money to have another out-other than maybe every 2 months. We are therapeutic foster parents therefore, highly trained to take care of our foster children's needs-physically and emotionally. We have 60 hours of training every 2-months.
- The child needs to see a therapist on a regular basis
- Give more to the children and less to their drug and alcohol addicted parents! You shouldn't get more than one chance to rehab to get your child back.
- Consider requests that affect placement in order to adequately support child in placement. Level increase that was

requested but denied is unfair to all involved.

- o teach their caseworkers how to communicate properly with foster parents
- o help child understand college options

Question 17: Other thoughts and comments …

- o I have worked with my social worker for approximately 3-years. I feel she is an excellent caseworker. She cares about children and the foster parent. She treats you with utmost respect. Job Well Done!
- o We have (2) Cuyahoga County kids - (1) is PC and (1) is PPLA. No one listens to our child (almost 5 yrs now and the longest he has ever been in one place in his Life-he is 14 year olds) in PPLA due to his autism. We would adopt him if he were PC!!
- o I would like to see her meet with a therapist and some type of one-on-one counseling or a mentor of some type. I think she would benefit from it in the long run. But, she definitely need some more services involved to deal with her issues on hand.
- o Child who is now 18-yrs old, states she needs no more therapy. Is this a true statement? Child has been in my home since 2003 and states she is done with therapy.
- o I think the foster parent should be able to enroll the child. It would take about a week off them missing school.
- o Treat your caseworkers better. They are overworked and always under paid. I feel for them and all they do. You guys are the best.

- o My worker, is so helpful and professional and also knowledgeable in supporting the child and placement family.

Question 17: Continuation …
Thoughts & Comments

- o I think that the foster parents should have some kind of input in the best interest of the child and should be included when a decision is being made concerning who the child will be placed with when the parents can no longer get the child back—not just relatives only. Foster Parents should be allowed to go to court when decisions are being made for the placement of the child so that they can speak on behalf of the child, since they are the ones caring for the child on a daily basis. FP should be considered for permanent placement along with relatives and then after all parties have come forth in court, then a decision should be made. Relatives are not always a good placement for children just because they may have passed a background check. FP, as well as relatives, should be heard and considered equally and then let the courts do what's best for the child—that is why so many children leave foster homes (good homes) placed with relatives and are being hurt.

APPENDIX SECTION

CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Hello, I'm, _____ and we're doing a survey for
The Department of Children and Family Services. We would like to ask you some
questions which will help improve services to persons like yourself.

Q1.   Who were you here to see today? _____
       (Examples of possible responses)

       1. Meeting _____
         (Topic)
       2.
       3. Training
       4. Review record

Q2.   Did you have an appointment with someone in that area/unit?

       1. Yes   2. No

Q3.   Thinking back over your visit, how long would you say you waited before you were
       seen?

       1. 15 min or less   3. 31-45 min   5. Over 1 hr.
       2. 16-30 min   4. 46-60 min

Q4.   How did your experience with agency staff today compare to your past
       experiences?

       1. Better   2.Worse   3. Same   4. No previous experience

Q5.   How would you rate your experience today?

       1. Better than you expected
       2. About what you expected
       3. Worse than you expected

Q6.   How safe is the environment during your visit to the agency today?

       1. Very safe   3. Unsafe
       2. Safe
                          4. Very unsafe

Q7. How would you rate the quality of service received at your visit to the agency today?

1. Excellent	3. Good	5. Poor
2. Very Good	4. Fair	6. No rating

Q8. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way you were treated during your visit to the agency today?

1. Very dissatisfied	3. Somewhat dissatisfied	5. Satisfied
2. Dissatisfied	4. Somewhat satisfied	6. Very satisfied

Q9. I am going to read a list of Interviewer characteristics and would like you to rate the interviewer/worker, person or leader of your meeting or group as excellent, very good, good, fair or poor.

	Ex	**VG**	**G**	**F**	**P**	**DK**
___Introduced him/herself	5	4	3	2	1	0
___Listened to what I had to say	5	4	3	2	1	0
___Dressed professionally	5	4	3	2	1	0
___Maintained a tidy office	5	4	3	2	1	0
___Was courteous	5	4	3	2	1	0
___Was pleasant	5	4	3	2	1	0
___Made eye contact with me	5	4	3	2	1	0
___Treated me with dignity	5	4	3	2	1	0
___Was concerned with helping me	5	4	3	2	1	0
___Explained action taken on the case	5	4	3	2	1	0

Q10. What changes or improvements, if any, would increase your satisfaction with the agency?

_____

_____

_____

Q11. What is your age?

1. 17-22	3. 35-45	5. 50-64	7. No answer
2. 23-34	4. 46-49	6. 65 or older	

Q12. Sex:

1. Female	2. Male

Q13. Race:

1. American Indian or Alaskan Native   5. White, not of Hispanic origin
2. Asian of Pacific Islander   6. Southeast Asian
3. Black, not of Hispanic origin   7. Other
4. Hispanic origin   8. Unknown

Q14. Do you know the name of the interviewer/worker, person or leader of your meeting or group?

1. Yes   2. No

Churches with Signed Agreements to Host Events (ANC)

The House of Prayer Ministries: 10801 Union Ave, 44105 Pastor AJ Thompson 216-441-3250
St James A.M.E.: 8401 Cedar Ave. 44103, Pastor Gerald Cooper 216-231-3562
Damascus Missionary Baptist Church: 9719 Ramona Blvd, 44104, Rev. Samuel Harrell
United Glorious Church: 2682 East 93rd   Rev. Jones
Bible Way Community Church: 10514 Kinsman Road, 44104 Pastor Roger Gavin
St Paul A M E Zion Church: 2393 East 55th, 44104 Pastor Audie V Simon **(Event Scheduled S. Praise 9/18)**
Bethesda Church of Cleveland: 13317 Union Ave. Pastor Morris Terry **(Event held Sister Sunday 8/22)**
First Missionary Baptist Church: 4312 Lee Road, 44128 Pastor Charles Smith
Broadway United Methodist: 5246 Broadway Ave., 44127 Rev. Yvonne Conner
Holy Trinity Baptist Church: 3808 East 131st , 44120 Pastor Flanigan (Tentative event scheduled)
Emmanuel Baptist Church: 7901 Quincy, 44104 Dr. Cobb **(Event held, Back to School Blow-out 8/28)**

Beauty Salon & Barber Shops with Signed Agreements to Host Events
Classic Clippers: 12100 Larchmere, 44120 **(Event to be held, need a date)**
Stephano & Co.: 3649 Lee Road, 44120 **(Event Scheduled 9/3&4)**
Cut Loose Salon: 12024 Larchmere, 44120
A Touch of Rain Salon & Spa: 12912 Larchmere, 44120
Al Kartin Barber Salon: 3661 E 116 St, 44105 216-561-2970
Lake Erie Barber College: 2234 E 55th 44103 **(Event Scheduled 9/25)**
Ruff Inz Beauty Salon: 3833 E 131st, 44120
Ruff Inz Barber Shop: 3833 E 131st, 44120

Agreements have been given to:
Olivet Baptist Church, 8712 Quincy Ave. 44106
Newburgh Church of Christ: 131st Barlett, 44120
Israelite Missionary Baptist Church: 12527 Kinsman, 44128
Vineyard Center Ministries: 13415 Union Ave., 44120
Jesus Christ Church of the Apostles: 10206 Buckeye Road, 44104
Open Door: 8215 Woodland, 44104
Affinity Baptist Church: 4411 E 175th, 44128 **(Event Scheduled 9/11, Back to School Fair)**

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Antioch Baptist Church: 8869 Cedar, 44106

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Appendix 5

Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS)

POLICY STATEMENT **DRAFT 3/10/10**

SUBJECT: **Concurrent Planning**

PURPOSE

Concurrent permanency planning is formalizing an alternative plan to implement if a child's primary permanency goal cannot be achieved within a reasonable time frame. This practice shortens the time to achieve permanency because progress has already been made toward the secondary goal if efforts toward the primary goal prove unsuccessful. Concurrent planning demonstrates best practice by dramatically reducing length of stay, placement moves, and recidivism.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) staff responsible for developing and/or implementing concurrent plans for children and families on their caseload.

POLICY

Concurrent permanency planning involves considering all reasonable options for permanency at the earliest possible point after the primary plan is developed and agreed upon. Typically, for children in custody, the primary plan is reunification with the child's family of origin.

Concurrent planning must be supported with adequate case management and service provision both within the child welfare agency and among community partners and contracted professionals. Lack of acceptance on the part of any group can jeopardize the effectiveness of the approach; agency partners serving families should be part of the planning, training, and implementation process.

Early and aggressive efforts should be made to identify all reasonable permanency options for children entering out of home care. A thorough search for absent and missing parents and relatives (parent/relative locator) should begin at the intake level. The results of the search should be documented and any required legal follow up, including notification to all known relatives should be completed. Additionally, paternity testing should be requested for when necessary. Concurrent planning is fundamentally about focusing permanency efforts squarely on the best interests of the child.

Individualized assessment and intensive, time-limited work with families targeting the problems that necessitated out of home care is vital to the success of concurrent planning.

Families should be engaged in collaborative planning and decision making in the permanent plan for their child/relative. Interactions with families should be respectful, honest, open, and culturally sensitive. Such an approach is not only essential for family engagement, but also to clarify ethical considerations for caseworkers and legal issues for the courts.

Cooperation and preparation of the judicial system (legal) is very important in the concurrent planning process. More timely planning and casework services cannot be effective without the development and enforcement of judicial procedures that ensure smooth progress of cases through court.

In cooperation with the court system, both the primary case plan as well as the concurrent plan will be reflected in the court file and made part of any judicial proceedings. Ideally:

- Judges/magistrates will ensure that the parents are fully aware of both permanency plans, and inform them from the bench about the consequences of not complying with their primary plan
- Concurrent Planning Families will be involved in all hearings and reviews as allowed
- Thorough documentation of parental/legal guardian compliance as well as CCDCFS efforts will be available at all court proceedings
- Reasonable efforts determinations will be made timely

PROCEDURES

A.   Identification of Concurrent Plan for Non-Custody Cases

1. Non-Custody Cases:
Effective case planning and case management are essential components of an effective primary plan. Best practice involves determining the least restrictive child-specific plan that ensures the safety of the child(ren). Families must be empowered to pursue their own private court filings whenever possible. If this is not possible CCDCFS may pursue a court filing through Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court.

B.   Identification of Concurrent Plan for Custody Cases

1. Custody Cases:
   A specific documented Concurrent Plan is required for children entering CCDCFS custody. Concurrent planning is child-specific for each child in CCDCFS custody. Children over the age of 15 in Permanent Custody status may have the concurrent plan of adoption and strengthening permanent connections in the community to support self-sufficiency in the future. Children in Planned Permanent Living Arrangement custody status have a concurrent plan which is based on their eligibility criteria for PPLA. Reunification, legal custody, and adoption may be an appropriate concurrent plan.

—

C.   Development of the Concurrent Plan for Custody Cases

1. The health and safety of the child are of paramount concern in the development of the permanency plan. The primary plan and concurrent plan each contain a permanency goal.

2. The primary plan and the Concurrent Plan empower birth parents or legal custodians and allow them to clarify expectations and focus on tasks. The primary plan and the Concurrent Plan must specify both short and long term goals. The primary plan must provide service linkages (e.g. drug treatment, domestic violence counseling, mental health care, family supports). Conducting case reviews of both the primary plan and the Concurrent Plan at least every 90 days is critical to assess progress, review continuing needs and plan for the future.

3. Full disclosure of information must be provided to all parents or legal custodians after a child has come into custody and placement. This disclosure must stress the importance of parents' involvement in case planning towards reunification, their rights and responsibilities, and the legal consequences if they are unable to make the necessary changes to have their child safely returned home.

       a. The Worker of Record (WOR) will discuss the Concurrent Plan with the parents/legal guardians, and stress why it is important to have an alternative permanency plan in place.

b. For each child who enters placement, the assigned worker of record (WOR) completes with and provides to the parents/legal custodian a copy of the Addendum For Concurrent Planning within 90 days (first Semi Annual Review [SAR]) of the original placement. **The WOR will thoroughly review this document with the parents to ensure their understanding prior to the first SAR.** The original Addendum for Concurrent Planning is attached to the Case Plan at the first SAR, and subsequently filed with juvenile court.

       c. WOR and Supervisor, through conferences or formal agency meetings, discuss the decision to implement the Concurrent Plan. This decision is based on CAPMIS tools, reviewing safety, risk, strengths and needs, and visitation. Permanency Planning Assessment is then used to guide the decision to finalize the implementation of the Concurrent Plan at a staffing or SAR.

d. Throughout the case planning process, the WOR and supervisor should consistently keep parents/legal custodians mindful of the time frames necessary to achieve reunification and openly discuss parent's progress or lack of progress toward attaining that goal.

e. All discussions pertaining to case planning and Concurrent Plan development will be documented in activity logs according to mandated time frames.

  —

4. Guide for various stages of the Concurrent Plan Development:

a. At the point of initial agency involvement or at removal:
1. Initiate Absent parent search (begin at Hotline)
2. Initiate Relative search (begin at Intake)
3. Ongoing WOR will continue parent and relative searches and complete relative checklist at a family team meeting or home visit.

b. At Initial Custody Staffing:
1. Begin development of primary plan for child through open discussion with family. The dialogue should describe the primary goal and identify the concurrent plan.
a. Ensure full disclosure of possible outcomes through open and honest communication.
Discuss the parents' rights and responsibilities, the negative impact of substitute care on their children, available CCDCFS assistance and consequences for all action/non actions.
b. Discuss the need to obtain permanency quickly for the child(ren).
c. Be candid about time limits to achieve objectives (e.g. 12/22 months).
d. Identify and establish family supports/neighborhood partners and establish service linkages.
e. Obtain information to complete relative/parent searches.

c. At 7 day "All About Me" Meeting:
1. Plan visitation in the least restrictive setting possible. See Policy (#5.01.04a)
2. Continue gathering background information.
3. Complete All About Me Form and share all pertinent information re: the child.
4. Continue development or amendment of primary case plan (see case plan policy 5.01.03).

d. At Case Plan Family Team Meeting:
1. Primary Case Plan goal and concurrent plan **goal** developed and agreed upon.
2. Begin completing the Addendum for Concurrent Planning form.

e. Within 90 days of placement: First Case Review Tool, Permanency Planning Assessment, and SAR.
1. Assess family's progress toward achieving case plan Goals.
2. Initiate Concurrent Plan through completion, finalization, and review of Addendum for Concurrent Planning.

___

        3. Ensure adequate documentation of services and family
           response to the services listed on the primary plan.
      4. Document visitation in the Case Review and SAR, and
         amend case plan as needed. Discuss steps necessary
         toward less restrictive and more frequent visits.
    f. Within 180 days of placement (Second SAR):

1. Assess family's progress toward achieving case plan
a. goals.
2. Assess visitation compliance/progress.
3. If sufficient progress has not been made toward primary plan by the family and compelling reasons are not identified to continue the primary plan , implement the concurrent plan.
4. Update and review Addendum for Concurrent Planning form.
      g. At all Family Team Meetings, held after initial SAR
      1. Review the Addendum for Concurrent Planning and
        amend if needed.
      2. If Concurrent Plan is amended, ensure full disclosure,
        obtain signatures, and distribute updated plan.
  h. At all subsequent 90 days Case Reviews and SAR's.
1. Follow all steps from the 1st Case Review and SAR
2. Intensify Concurrent Planning and contact between all parties to facilitate permanency discussion and action steps.

  i. At all 90 day Case Reviews and SAR's, Case Review Facilitators
        will:
1. Document the agency's progress toward implementing an existing Concurrent Plan (if necessary), including whether any amendments are needed.
2 .Document any updates in the timeframe for concurrent plan implementation.
3. Document new input or alternative plan offered by parents, children, or others.
4. Document progress on any additional steps necessary tobsecure the concurrent plan for use, if necessary (OTI, Kinship Caregiver Approval, etc.)

Cuyahoga County Department of Children & Family Services

ADDENDUM FOR CONCURRENT PLANNING

CONCURRENT PLANNING IS REQUIRED FOR EVERY CHILD UPON ENTERING AGENCY CUSTODY. AS THE CHILD'S

TEMPORARY CUSTODIAN, THE CUYHAOGA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES MUST ENSURE THAT A BACK-UP PLAN IS IN PLACE AND READY FOR EACH CHILD IF, FOR WHATEVER REASON, HE/SHE CANNOT RETURN HOME. THIS CONCEPT IS SIMILAR TO PARENTS CREATING A BACK-UP PLAN FOR THEIR CHILDREN IN THE EVENT SOMETHING HAPPENS TO THEM AND THEY CAN NO LONGER

PROVIDE CARE. FOR THIS REASON, PARENTS SHOULD BE THE FIRST PARTIES CONSULTED AS TO WHAT CONCURRENT PLAN THEY WOULD NATURALLY CHOOSE FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

MEETING TYPE: ☐STAFFING ☐SAR ☐FTM ☐OTHER_____

CUSTODY TYPE: ☐ATC ☐EC ☐TC ☐PPLA ☐PC

CASE PLAN GOAL: ☐Reunification ☐PPLA ☐Ind. Living ☐Adoption ☐Legal Custody

CONCURRENT PLAN TYPE: ☐INITIAL ☐REVIEW ☐AMENDED PLAN (please indicate reason plan needs to be Amended):_____ -

_____

_____ -

_____

_____

*HAS THE AGENCY MADE A FULL DISCLOSURE REGARDING CONCURRENT PLANNING? ☐YES ☐NO

WHAT IS THE CONCURRENT PERMANENCY PLAN IF THE CURRENT CASE PLAN GOAL IS NOT SUCCESSFUL?

☐Legal Custody to a Relative (name):_____ Relationship:_____

   Which child(ren) does this affect? ☐All ☐Names:_____,_____,_____

☐Legal Custody to a Non-Relative (name):_____ Relationship:_____

   Which child(ren) does this affect? ☐All ☐Names:_____,_____,_____

☐Adoption by a Relative (name):_____ Relationship:_____

   Which child(ren) does this affect? ☐All ☐Names:_____,_____,_____

☐Adoption by a Non-Relative (name):_____ Relationship:_____

   Which child(ren) does this affect? ☐All ☐Names:_____,_____,_____

☐Adoption by a Foster Parent (name):_____

   Which child(ren) does this affect? ☐All ☐Names:_____,_____,_____

☐Other:_____

Which child(ren) does this affect? ☐All ☐Names:_____,_____,_____

WHAT STEPS ARE NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THE CONCURRENT PERMANENCY PLAN?:

_____

__

Specific Action Step   Responsible Party   Date to be achieved by:

A._____

B._____

C._____

D._____

E._____

F._____

WAS CONCURRENT PLAN DEVELOPED WITH INPUT FROM PARENT/GUARDIAN? ☐YES ☐NO

IF NO, WHY NOT?

_____

_____

IF YES, DO THEY AGREE WITH THE PLAN? ☐YES ☐NO

IF NO, WHY NOT?

_____

_____

DID THEY OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN? ☐YES ☐NO

IF YES, WHAT IS THEIR ALTERNATE PLAN?

_____

_____

_____

IF YES, AND THEIR PLAN WAS NOT USED, WHY WERE WE NOT ABLE TO USE THEIR ALTERNATE PLAN?

_____

_____

_____

IF CONCURRENT PLAN INVOLVES OTHERS, WERE THEY PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN?:

☐YES -- PARTIES INVOLVED:

Party Involved	Relationship

☐NO -- WHY WERE NO OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED?:_____

HAS RELATIVE CHECKLIST BEEN ATTACHED?: ☐YES ☐NO

_____

___

COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS:_____

_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____
_____
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_____
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_____
_____
_____
_____

SIGNATURES:

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	SIGNATURE	DATE
	Social Worker		
	Supervisor		
	Guardian Ad Litem		
	Other Panel Member		
	Facilitator		

Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS)
Policy Statement

POLICY NO.:	SUBJECT: Creation, Use and Distribution of Video Recruitment Materials

PURPOSE: To increase CCDCFS staff knowledge regarding the creation, use and distribution of video recruitment materials (VRM).

SCOPE: This policy pertains to all staff of the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS), child specific recruiters, all foster parents and all private foster care or community based agencies that provide contracted services to CCDCFS.

POLICY

The creation, use and distribution of video recruitment material (VRM) is an essential function to the overall recruitment strategy for every child in permanent custody of the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services.

Based on the premise that every child deserves a family, CCDCFS staff and child specific recruiters must exhaust all options in connecting children with potential families. These options include the creation, use and distribution of VRM.

A VRM, sometimes referred to as "Digital Me's", can be an effective tool that showcases the special individuality of a child and can be seen by potential adoptive families nationwide. CCDCFS staff and child specific recruiters should encourage children available for adoption to participate in creating a VRM and support the youth and their caregivers through the process of creation and distribution of the material.

PROCEDURE

1. The worker of record (WOR) and/or child specific recruiters will make a referral to an outside partner agency for the creation and editing of video recruitment material (VRM). Please use attached referral form for this purpose.

2. WOR and/or child specific recruiters will work with the partner agency to identify a date and time for VRM to be created.

3. WOR and/or child specific recruiters will complete the Child Preparation Form in two sessions. The first session will consist of the WOR and/or child specific recruiters and youth completing the Child Preparation Form together. The second session will consist of the WOR and/or child specific recruiters, youth and a representative from the partner agency reviewing the completed Child Preparation Form prior to creating the VRM. Please use the attached Child Preparation Form.

4. WOR and/or child specific recruiters will discuss and provide an information sheet to the foster parent regarding expectations and guidelines for the youth participating in the VRM. Please use the attached Foster Parent Informational Sheet.

5. WOR and/or child specific recruiters will accompany the youth to the creation of the VRM to provide process oversight and support the youth during the creation of the VRM.

6. Approximately 60 days after creation of the VRM, WOR and/or child specific recruiters will contact the partner agency if a finalized VRM is not received by Department of Children and Family Services.

7. WOR and/or child specific recruiters will review the VRM for content and quality and report any inappropriate material to their Supervisor and Senior Supervisor. Portable DVD players are available for this purpose through the Adoption Matching Coordinators. Outside partner agencies are not permitted to use or distribute the VRM unless approved by DCFS staff.

8. If the WOR and/or child specific recruiters have concerns with the VRM, they should report those concerns to their Supervisor. The Supervisor will review the VRM and contact the Senior Supervisor and partner agency with the concerns.

9. If no concerns are noted with the VRM, WOR and/or child specific recruiters will request an additional 5 copies for future recruitment activities. Including but not limited to Neighborhood Collabs, Northeast Ohio Adoption Resource Exchange, Adoption Mixers, and the Statewide Matching Expo.

10. WOR and/or child specific recruiters should not mail a copy of the VRM to the inquirer. Any inquiries received regarding a youth with a VRM will be directed to the AdoptUsKids website, www.adoptuskids.org, to view the VRM.

11. An assigned adoption supervisor will be responsible for the storage and distribution of any VRM to appropriate partner agencies. The supervisor will utilize a log to track VRM within the community; identifying the recipient agency of the VRM, the contact person from that agency, date it was sent and date returned to our agency. The assigned supervisor is responsible for following up with agencies to secure the return of the VRM. The assigned supervisor will contact the WOR and adoption supervisor via e-mail when

any VRM is sent to other agencies for recruitment purposes. The WOR will document all recruitment efforts in SACWIS under the Adoption Details tab.

12. Upon termination of permanent custody, the WOR and/or child specific recruiters will provide a copy of the VRM to the youth or adoptive family. WOR and/or child specific recruiters will notify all recruitment contacts that child is not longer available. The partner agency will return all copies of the VRM to DCFS.

Moving Hearts Gallery/ Video Recruitment Material Referral

Name of Child
_____Age_____

Name of Sibling
_____Age_____

Name of Sibling
_____Age_____

Name of Sibling
_____Age_____

Adoption Worker _____ Phone

CCR Worker _____ Phone

Have there been previous adoptions? Yes _____   No _____

Have any siblings been adopted? Yes _____   No _____   If Yes how many?
_____

Please describe the child's strengths:

Please describe the child's challenges:

Have you spoken to the child/family about this referral? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, how did they react?

Social Worker - please write down a brief quote about this youth's positive attributes, or an upbeat comment made about them by their foster parent, teacher, coach, siblings, etc, and cite whose quote it is:

_____
_____

_____
__

Social Worker
- I agree to ensure that I or another authorized adult who knows the youth is available to be present for the entire photo shoot and/or video shoot.
- I will be in touch with the Heart Gallery and/or VRM Coordinators in the case that the youth I referred for the Gallery changes his/her mind about participating.
- I will get in touch with the Heart Gallery and/or VRM Coordinators in the case that I experience any difficulty with a volunteer photographer or videographer.

Referring Worker's Name:

_____

Referring Worker's Signature:
_____Date_____

Referring Worker's Supervisor Signature: _____
Date_____

Worker of Record's Name:

_____

Worker of Record's Signature:
_____Date_____

Worker of Record's Supervisor Signature: _____
Date_____

Cuyahoga County Moving Hearts Gallery and Video Recruitment Material
Youth Participation Agreement

Youth:
- I agree to have my picture taken and/or video filmed for the Moving Hearts Gallery and/or Video Recruitment Material, projects that help the community learn about youth who are waiting for permanent families.
- I know the exhibit and/or the video will be displayed at multiple sites in the Greater Cleveland area and surrounding suburbs and will include my photo/video, first name and a few sentences that state my interests in life and goals for the future.
- I also agree to allow my photograph or video to appear in:

_____
__

Yes No

☐	☐	The Plain Dealer **(Heart Gallery Only)**
☐	☐	The Call and Post **(Heart Gallery Only)**
☐	☐	The Cuyahoga County Website, newsletters, and recruitment information
☐	☐	Heart Gallery promotional flyers and invitations **(Heart Gallery Only)**
☐	☐	Other print and electronic media outlets (i.e. Adopt Us Kids)
☐	☐	Recruitment and awareness events and community partner venues
☐	☐	I would like to pre-approve other uses of my photo/video

If I change my mind and do not want my picture or video in any of the publications listed above, I will contact my social worker.

I have read the information above and I understand and consent to the use of my image in the Moving Hearts Gallery and Video Recruitment Material. I am aware and comfortable that my photograph and/or video will be on display at multiple sites in the Greater Cleveland area and surrounding suburbs. This consent is in effect for one year from the date of signature.

Youth's Name:

_____

Youth's Signature: _____Date

Social Worker/CCR Name:

_____

Social Worker/CCR Signature: _____Date

SW/CCR Phone Number: _____Email_____

DIGITAL ME INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED BY EACH CHILD:

1. **If you had three wishes, what would they be?**
2. **What do you get excited about the most?**
3. **If you could be any animal, what would it be? Why?**
4. **What would you like people to know about you?**
5. **What are you most proud of? What is one thing you work very hard to do?**

_____

__

6.   Is there anybody in your life that you would life that you would like to stay connected with?

After each child answers the mandatory six questions above, please have the child select at least two questions under the corresponding age group or sibling group (if applicable) sections to answer as well.****

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE TO BE ANSWERED BY SIBLING GROUPS ONLY:

1.   How do you relate to your sibling(s)?
2.   What do you like most about your sibling(s)?
3.   What's the best memory of time you spent with your sibling(s)?
4.   What is your sibling good at?
5.   Tell me why you feel you and your sibling(s) are better as a team.

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE TO BE ANSWERED BY EACH CHILD RELATIVE TO THEIR AGE GROUP:

CHILDREN UNDER 12

1.   When you visit the zoo, what is your favorite animal to look at?
2.   What is your favorite season? Why?
3.   If you could visit any place on earth, where would you go? Why?
4.   What is your favorite kind of book or movie? Why? (i.e. drama, comedy, mystery)
5.   Who helps you when you have a problem?
6.   What object gives you the most comfort? (i.e. blankie, favorite toy)

CHILDREN 13 AND OVER

1.   What do you do with your friends or loved ones?
2.   What is your favorite part of the day? Why
3.   What could a person learn about you by looking at your room?
4.   Who helps you when you have a problem?
5.   What sports do you enjoy playing or watching? What part of the sport do you enjoy the most?
7.   What would you like to do during your vacations from school?