



OFCFCA
**Promoting healthy children, strong families,
and thriving communities county by county.**



COUNTY: RICHLAND

MISSION STATEMENT / LOCAL FOCUS:

The purpose of the Richland County Youth and Family Council is to provide leadership to assure an effective system of collaborative, coordinated and efficient community services which assist each family and child to meet their individual needs and responsibilities.

OPERATING STRUCTURE:

The mandated members are joined by five agency chief executive officers elected annually from the Family Council Network (60 member list). The Council acts to administer, govern and achieve objectives set forth by the same.

LOCAL FCFC CORE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Community Capacity Building/Planning:** strategies and outcomes
Cooperative endeavors have resulted in establishment of endeavors to fill gaps and enhance services. The most recent effort includes a cooperative venture to establish a Multi-Systemic Therapy Program in the county. The county leveraged Medicaid funding with the pooling of local dollars. Locally established outcomes for the program exceeded those established by the national oversight center and these outcomes have been met on an annual basis. The project assists in keeping children in their homes, in their local schools and out of institutionalized placements. In 2007 there were 88.9% of the participating children that were maintained in their homes (exceeding the target of 85%). In 2007 there were 83.3% of the children enrolled in the program who were enrolled in school or working (just missing the target of 90%). In 2007 there were 77.8% of the enrolled children who successfully remained free of adjudications (exceeding the target of 68%).
- **Service Coordination:** strategies and outcomes
Service coordination is accomplished through a variety of mechanisms. The predominate vehicle is known as the Care Management Committee. Evolving from the Interdepartmental Cluster of years past the Committee most recently assumed the responsibility for oversight of the ABC/FAST implementation. Case managers within the system are assisted by the process with their intersystem families assuring coordination and achievement of desired outcomes. Total number placed out of county in 2003 = 11 and in 2005 = 7. Median number of days waiting for adoption in 2003 = 200 and in 2005 = 75. Median number of days in out of home care in 2003 = 355 and in 2005 = 183. Total number of placement days in 2003 = 48,184 and in 2005 = 34,120. Total number of children in custody during the year in 2003 = 264 and in 2005 = 191.
- **Family Empowerment:** strategies and outcomes
Support Specialists are available to families and Service Coordinators in the County. This offers families opportunities to participate in strength based assessment establishing a families assets, needs and priorities. Supports and services designed to enhance the capacity of the family to meet their needs are likewise identified and engaged. Although this approach is a part of the system wide culture, two specific services are note worthy including the Help Me Grow Family Support Specialist and the non-categorical assessment and initial service coordination provided by the systems jointly funded Gateway entity.
- **Early Childhood System of Care:** strategies and outcomes
A major focus of the Council is the development of a comprehensive system for the provision of Early Childhood services. This is accomplished through implementation of Help Me Grow involving ten vendors, emphasis on prenatal, targeting services to census tract with greatest risk

and implementation of an outcome tracking system known as Pathways. Significant outcomes have been achieved with data beginning to show a reduction of low-birth-weight babies for the county. Consistently Help Me Grow targets are met and exceeded on an annual basis. In most years the available resources are supplemented by additional local TANF funds.

OTHER LOCAL INITIATIVES: strategies and outcomes

The Council has initiated an electronic hub with the intent of assisting in elimination of case management duplication and the tracking of outcomes. The initial implementation of the hub links the ten Help Me Grow vendor agencies. The hub was expanded as the county initiated services relative to their administration of the TANF Demonstration Grant. Exploration continue regarding more broad based utilization of the hub.

FUNDING:

Grant administrative funds are supplemented by local funds for Council administration and activities. Other than paying for a modest administrative staff and operations the Council continues to financially support its original project, Gateway, a non-categorical central point of intake and initial service coordination service. Episodically, funding strategies are devised to secure match for grants and/or to incubate new endeavors. The policy of the Council discourages long term funding reliance on the Council and encourages incorporation of funding mechanism for incubated endeavors into the established system.

STAFFING:

The Council believes it exist to enhance the system, therefore policy prevents the hiring of staff. Rather than hire staff, the Council contracts with county agencies for all activities and staffing. A part-time Executive Director (.5 FTE) is supported through a contract with the City of Mansfield with an Administrative Assistance (1 FTE). The Mansfield City Schools has served as the Administrative Agent for the Council for the past fifteen years.

CHALLENGES:

Families within our community are especially stressed by the current economic conditions of our times. Increasing cost of living, coupled with uncertainties related to employment appear to be root casues of this stress. In addition the economics of the time are stressing agencies providing supportive services to our community. At a recent meeting of the Council's Executive Leadership Team each member was able to share information of significant reduction in revenue to their entity as a result of the state or federal budget.

FUTURE PLANS:

The Council's Executive Leadership Team is currently examining ways to pool resources so as to address the ever growing challenges of families as a result of the current economic conditions of our community. These considerations are in part being guided by the tri-annual needs assessment cooperatively conducted by United Way and the Council.

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