PROBLEM STATEMENT

DHS has been unable to recruit, train, and retain enough caretakers to meet the needs of children and youth in Oregon. Not only does this place caseworkers in a difficult position of placing children in homes that may not be the best match, but in some cases, has led to children spending time in DHS offices or hotels. Interviews, surveys, and numerous reports have identified that a combination of inconsistent training, lack of ongoing support, and lack of recruitment capacity locally has led to this shortage of quality homes.

STATUS SUMMARY

Caregiver recruitment, retention, and support is now a standalone project from caregiver training and will be under the purview of the standing Foster Care Recruitment, Retention, and Support Workgroup. The workgroup currently meets quarterly, which will need to change in order to move this work within the Child Safety Plan timeline.

QUARTERLY BUSINESS REVIEW (QBR) ALIGNMENT

This project does not align with priorities within QBR measures.

WORK ACCOMPLISHED IN THE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

1. Held preliminary internal meeting to draft charter and scope in alignment with the PIP.
2. Met with GRACE data coordinator to discuss foster parent customer service survey.
3. Hatfield Fellow developed snap-shot reviews of customer service data for each district.
4. Enhanced Foster Parent Resources section of Caregiver webpage.
5. Outreach to additional workgroup members.
6. Met with EMBRACE Oregon/Every Child Director to discuss partnership and success to date.
7. Met with Oregon Social Learning Center to explore the current DHS Pilot of KEEP. Keep is an evidence-based program developed to provide increased support caregivers, especially those experiencing challenges.
8. Secured feedback from the field to develop a caregiver customer service tool and message to go to the field in September from the Child Welfare Director.
WORK TO ACCOMPLISH IN THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

1. Hold workgroup meeting with expanded membership (Oct 4).
2. Finalize charter and map milestones.
3. Evaluate infrastructure needs for statewide recruitment/retention program sustainability

RISK AND MITIGATION STRATEGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISK</th>
<th>MITIGATION STRATEGY</th>
<th>FURTHER ACTION NEEDED?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Define in charter.</td>
<td>Agree and write into charter/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts</td>
<td>Clearly define plans and timelines.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>In tandem with implementation, explore sustainability plans.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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</tbody>
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CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The recruitment, retention, and support of caregivers is a hot-topic right now as a result of the news coverage of children staying in hotels or child welfare offices. It’s an issue that is not unique to Oregon or child welfare-contracted providers are also struggling to find and retain quality caregivers. All of this attention has created a number of opportunities. The partnership with Every Child Oregon has increased visibility of recruitment/retention issues and created opportunities for individuals and communities to participate in news ways to support kids. The work of the GRACE project has also shown positive results using targeted recruitment plans and increased local coordination at branch offices. The KEEP pilot program underway could be the groundwork for enhanced foster parent support in the future. The legislature has asked for DHS to develop a request for funds for foster family support, in addition to funding caregiver rate increases last session. The challenge moving forward will be to take full advantage of these opportunities and plan for sustainability and statewide scale.