

Governor's Task Force on Disproportionality in Child Welfare

- Report to the 2011 Oregon Legislature -

The Road to Equity

The overrepresentation of children, families and communities of color in Oregon's foster care system represents a serious social injustice and an economic emergency. It also offers an opportunity for the state to lead the charge in eliminating this persistent and complex nationwide problem.

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Executive Summary

The Mandate and its Urgency

Foster care in Oregon is used much more often and for much longer periods of time for African American and American Indian/Alaskan Native children than for white children. The overrepresentation of children, families and communities of color in Oregon's foster care system represents both a serious social injustice and an economic emergency. But it also offers an opportunity for Oregon to lead the charge in eliminating this persistent and complex nationwide problem.

The Task Force's Mission and Approach

Executive Order 09-02 and Oregon Senate Bill 630 established the Child Welfare Equity Task Force to study the causes and make recommendations on how to eliminate the problem of racial disproportionality in Oregon's child welfare system to the Oregon legislature and to the Department of Human Services.

Task Force Mission: *To identify and analyze the causes of disproportionality in Oregon's foster care system, make recommendations to the legislature that will permanently and aggressively eliminate disparities in foster care for children and families of color, and set goals for the Department of Human Services, child welfare program to reduce the over-representation of children of color in foster care.*

The Task Force began its objective of developing the recommendations. The work consisted of monthly meetings in Salem, committee and sub-committee gatherings and town hall-style sessions in numerous Oregon communities. Professionals who have analyzed the causes of and potential remedies for disproportionality also provided the Task Force with a number of presentations and a comprehensive review of data and completed work concerning disproportionality in child-serving systems. In addition, the Task Force spent time collecting firsthand accounts from adults and youth of color who have been adversely affected by their experiences with the Oregon child welfare system.

The specific methods/process used to produce the key findings and to develop the Task Force recommendations are detailed in the Final Report. Importantly, the Task Force believes this final report represents only the beginning, and members emphasize that if Oregon is going to achieve the ultimate goal of family stability and child safety for all children and families, the work begun here must be embraced and advanced by communities and state leaders for years to come.

Key Findings

- ***Child Protective Services (CPS) Reports of Abuse or Neglect.*** American Indian/Alaskan Native families were nearly two times more likely and African American families were more than twice as likely to be represented in reports to Child Protective Services (CPS) than to be present in Oregon's general population.
- ***Removal, Placement in Foster Care.*** Once an abuse or neglect report was substantiated ("founded"), American Indian/Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander, and African American children were removed from their parents at a higher rate than were white children. Native American/Alaska Native children

were placed in out-of-home foster care at over five times the rate of white children. African American children were placed at four times the rate of white children, and Pacific Islander children were nearly two times more likely than white children to be placed in foster care.

- **Foster Care.** Children of color, in particular American Indian/Alaska Native children, were in foster care at higher rates than other children. About 20 percent of all children in foster care during the study period were children of color, despite the fact that children of color make up only 11 percent of Oregon's general child population. American Indian/Alaskan Native children were more than five times more likely, and African American children two times more likely, to be represented in Oregon's foster care population than in Oregon's general population.
- **Length of Stay in Foster Care.** Once in foster care, many children of color stayed longer than white children. Over half of the American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA-eligible children had been in foster care two years or more. Close to half (46.5 percent) of African American children had been in care for two years or more. A smaller percentage (38.5 percent) of white children experienced these long stays. An even smaller percentage of Hispanic children (under 25 percent) had stayed more than two years. Long-term foster care (considered the least permanent of all permanent plans) was the plan of record for more American Indian/Alaskan Native and African American children than white children.

The Root Causes of Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare Services

The root causes of disproportionality are complex and have been investigated from a broad range of perspectives. Based on its review of the data and the research, the Task Force found that the disparities and overrepresentation of children of color in the child welfare system result from three primary causes:

- Structural inequalities such as policy/practice, budget deficits, staffing challenges and culturally biased decision-making *inside* the juvenile dependency system;
- External disparities such as poverty, access to health care, inadequate education and the related consequences. These risks and stressors *outside* the child welfare system, impact child safety and family stability and lead to an increased need for state intervention in various communities; and
- Lack of a diverse workforce, training and *accountability* for existing policies and mandates designed to improve the cultural responsiveness of the system and eliminate disparities.

The Task Force has also taken great care to better understand the role that racism -- whether interpersonal, institutional, or systemic -- plays in the overrepresentation of children of color in foster care. While the Task Force believes that most individuals today are not intentionally or overtly racist, as most of us understand that term, but it is undeniable that stereotyping and bias based on race or ethnicity continue to perpetuate negative outcomes for children and families in Oregon and across the country.

Perhaps even more importantly, the Task Force acknowledges the historical and current social impact of race on policy development and decision making. Current systems and structures often make it difficult to harness the invaluable cultural diversity within and between systems and communities, which is greatly needed to improve system functioning, service delivery and accountability. Over time, this has led communities to feel excluded from processes which ultimately impact them directly.

Why Racial Disproportionality Reduction Matters

In this report, the Task Force takes the position that there are at least two primary reasons why ending disparities in foster care must be a priority for the state and for the Oregon legislature:

- First is the unacceptable human impact to African American and Native American children who languish in the foster care system and their families; and
- Second are the financial consequences to the state and its citizens when disadvantaged children become part of a system that virtually guarantees a further decline in opportunities available to them when they exit the system.

Recommendations for Achieving Racial Disproportionality Reduction

A review of the documented research on the reduction of racial disproportionality through evidence-based approaches provided no set script or set of scientifically based policies and/or recommendations that could be adapted for our purposes in Oregon. Given the lack of field-tested recommendations and practice guidelines for addressing the internal and external conditions that sustain racial disproportionality in foster care, Task Force members spent time developing their own unique set of recommendations (See Appendix B for full set of Task Force recommendations). The goal is to achieve proportionality of foster care by relying on best practices in the following key areas: Data-based Decision Making, Policy and Practice, Workforce Development, Community Capacity Building and Culturally Specific Practices.

The recommendations in those areas are designed to make the system more equitable for all children, including families of color. Embedded within these recommendations are ideas for strengthening not just Department of Human Services (DHS) child welfare, but work across the juvenile dependency system, including the Oregon judiciary. In addition, the Task Force has a series of recommendations specific to the communities of color currently overrepresented in foster care, namely, tribal children and families, urban Indian children and families, and African American children and families (see Appendix B).

Legislative Priorities for the next 12 Months

- Require Racial Impact Statements for all statutory policy changes with implications for the child welfare service delivery systems;
- Require evidence of effectiveness and equity for all racial/ethnic groups for practice and policy developments, including consistent data collection and reporting of race/ethnicity data for the Department of Human Services.
- Require allocation of DHS contracted resources to achieve equity for children and families of color using cultural knowledge, evidence and best practices.

Detailed Short-term Planned Changes

To assure that the protections promised citizens of color are enforced, DHS will need to make internal changes and participate in external accountability processes. Internal changes include: advisory committees, updated rules/policies/procedures, evidence-based and best practices implementation, culture change for collaboration with communities of color and an appreciation for their voices in shaping policy, technical assistance, improved data collection (mandatory), avenues for culturally

specific family and child advocacy, and assistance for families in linking to support networks. External accountability processes include: family services review, creation of a community accountability board, and opportunities for families and communities to be respectfully heard.

The Task Force seeks to establish a climate of transformation which changes the view of the child welfare provider as a system of support and resource development, as opposed to an industry to be avoided.

The Task Force identifies the following priorities for DHS changes:

- **Policy:** Shift from intervention to prevention model, committed to internal system improvement and collaboration with stakeholders with the goal of reducing disproportionality;
- **Data-based Decision Making:** Establish consistent racial/ethnic impact data collection, require evidence based programs and evidence-based management, incorporate cultural knowledge in decision making and mandate that cultural data be collected;
- **Community Capacity:** Build community resources for African American and Native American/Alaskan Native families, and collaborate with established family networks and community resources;
- **DHS Workforce Development:** Enhance and transform recruitment and retention efforts for professionals of color, create an advisory committee for hiring rules and provide continuous training;
- **Legislative:** Implement a Racial Impact Policy, ensure highly skilled and competent legal representation for families, establish a coordinated system of care by linking the equity goal to the state's evidence-based program legislation and its expertise in poverty, child abuse and neglect, and juvenile crime prevention;
- **Accountability:** Ensure accountability and enforcement protection (protection through the enforcement of laws, policies, and agreements) by creating a plan for accountability and infrastructure in order to: first, ensure that the voices of communities of color are meaningfully engaged at the state and local levels; next, update and enhance the recommendations of this Task Force with an emphasis on inclusion of a cross-systems effort to address both the inequities of access to preventive services and the overuse of intensive services like foster care placement; and finally, track progress toward safe and equitable foster care reduction goals and hold DHS and the Juvenile Dependency System accountable for change. (See Plan of Accountability and the sections on Organization and Structure of Service Coordination Options 1, 2, 3, and 4).

The Task Force will provide update and progress reports to the legislature on a biennial basis.

Conclusion

Over the course of the last several months, the Task Force has worked diligently and collectively to understand the issue and make recommendations that will be effective and affordable in order to begin the work of eliminating disproportionality within our foster care system. Members have appreciated the opportunity to contribute and look forward to the Legislature's active support in eradicating this great social and moral injustice.

Actively discussing race and institutional racism, and painstakingly examining the impact and contributions of race and racism, set the stage for realigning and transforming the way race influences policy and decision-making. It also diminishes the negative, and unintended ways race influences the culture of the child welfare system.

Members of the Task Force hope that other child-serving systems undergo similar targeted change processes to systematically neutralize the negative racial impact on decision making by embracing an appreciation and use of various forms of knowledge. This knowledge includes client, cultural, scientific, professional, and implementation sciences with the aim of achieving equity by applying a learning organization perspective.

The Task Force does not argue that children of color should not be placed into foster care *when necessary* to keep children safe. The conclusion the group reached is that children of color, to a greater extent than white children, are placed into foster care when, with the right supports, those children could instead be safely cared for by their own families and communities.

Through a long and challenging, yet rich and unforgettable fact finding experience, the Task Force has come to the conclusion that whatever the root causes of racial disproportionality are (e.g. individual and family risk factors, community risk factors, community and systemic factors as well as cultural and racial influences), it is a practice that must be discontinued in Oregon.

Child Welfare Equity Taskforce Recommendations

To actualize a transformed child welfare system driven by the abovementioned practice principles requires the completion of the following recommendations developed by the Child Welfare Equity Task Force:

Workforce Development

1. Establish and maintain **working relationships and partnerships** with culturally centered community organizations and academic institutions to ensure continuous service delivery improvement.
2. Enhance and maintain recruitment, **hiring and retention practices** across programs to achieve a diverse workforce at all levels, by setting benchmarks and management accountability and forming interview committees that include representatives from and of the community representing social justice interests and Tribal Nations.
3. Develop, implement and sustain **culturally responsive training** curricula, in collaboration with communities of color, for child welfare staff and partners, which can be integrated to improve overall child welfare and system-wide training.

Policy and Practice

4. Institutionalize **racial equity requirement** and binding policies for child and family-serving government agencies and their affiliates through racial and economic impact analyses, adequate race/ethnicity data collection, and equitable funding decisions to support community capacity and infrastructure.
5. Increase **multi-level, cross-systems accountability** with communities by restructuring service delivery system to actively involve communities of color as “stakeholders” and collaboratively developing “incentives and disincentives” for effective service delivery.
6. Shift paradigm from primarily an “intervention” model to “prevention” model by developing and sustaining **culturally responsive and community-based systems of family supports and preservation**.
7. Integrate **internal system practice improvements** in collaboration with communities of color, including:
 1. Developing (or enhancing) an objective risk assessment tool to include cultural context.
 2. Enhancing existing foster and relative **placement support**, as well as **family navigation** services
 3. Expanding racially and culturally **diverse pool of relative and non-relative foster** and adoptive resources.
 4. Facilitating more frequent and meaningful **parental and relative visitation**.
8. Improve **judicial processes** through cross-systems collaborative education/training, data collection and dissemination to local courts, and dependency improvement efforts (i.e. judicial bench card). Expand **access to legal representation** for children and families in juvenile court.

Data-Based Decision Making

9. Set **targets /benchmarks** for achieving goals with the local community.
10. Improve **overall system effectiveness**, efficiency, and accountability by developing a cross-system of method data collection and sharing, performance tracking, evaluation and reporting.
11. Develop comprehensive data analysis and **research-informed decision-making process**.

Community Capacity Building

12. Build trust and confidence with and between communities of color and the economically disadvantaged by **establishing a sustainable vehicle to engage and collaborate** with various communities of color.
13. Develop and sustain cross-system, collaborative culturally-centered **technical assistance/training** for all community partners to strengthen knowledge base, infrastructure and improve service delivery in various communities (i.e. annual system-wide DMC conference; mandatory reporting training, etc).
14. Increase development of an array of affordable, centrally located, sustainable, community based Mental Health and Addictions treatment **services for families**, integrated with school systems, child welfare and other helping services.

Culturally Specific

Recommendations for Cultural Specific Practice with Urban and Rural AI/AN

Practice:

1. Case planning for children that are not ICWA eligible must be built on cultural values, including culturally driven practices and serve to connect children with their cultural identities.
2. DHS should develop a protocol/procedural structure for ensuring Cultural Heritage Protection for all AI/AN children. This procedure should be developed, implemented and evaluated by DHS child welfare staff and AI/AN community partners.
3. DHS staff should be trained in the Cultural Heritage Protection procedures that are developed. DHS Supervisors should provide ongoing coaching and tracking of case work staff adherence to the procedure and honoring the intentions of Cultural Heritage Protection.
4. DHS staff evaluation should include:
 - a. Compliance with Cultural Heritage Protection
 - b. An external review conducted by AI/AN partners that are capable of reviewing staff bias, and staff awareness of how s/he articulates information about and to clients.

Training:

1. Cultural Competency training provided to DHS staff should include information about Urban Indian families. This training should cover:
 - a. Historical/Generational trauma
 - b. Boarding Schools
 - c. Community concerns related to domestic violence and alcohol/drug use
2. DHS should partner with AI/AN community leaders to provide training for mandatory reporters on what warrants DHS involvement. This training should include information about child abuse prevention programs in community agencies.
3. All DHS staff should be trained in effective community engagement, with special regard to engagement of AI/AN families. This community engagement should lead to:
 - a. AI/AN community having equal power in system wide decision-making.
 - b. Representation of AI/AN community who have been involved with the child welfare system on planning committees.
 - c. More family advocates from within the AI/AN community.
 - d. More AI/AN foster and adoptive homes.

Staffing

1. There should be active and ever increasing recruitment and retention of AI/AN staff until the staff reflects the families being served.

Recommendations for Sovereign Nations

Oregon has nine federally recognized, sovereign tribes under federal and state statutes. The federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978 requires that active efforts be made so that Indian children are protected from unnecessary removal. It also requires that remedial and rehabilitative services are provided to the family to prevent the removal of the child(ren), except to prevent imminent damage or harm to the child and to reunify an Indian child with his or her parent or Indian custodian. To strengthen the state's efforts to comply with ICWA and enhance support for Tribal child welfare programs, Oregon Tribes recommend the following:

Tribal Engagement

- Tribal role in DHS staffing and staff development
 - DHS should utilize tribal representatives as a resource in key staffing decisions.
 - Involve Tribes in interviews and selection of ICWA Liaisons.
 - Involve Tribes in staff training.
- Develop and expand the State-wide ICWA Unit.

Legislative

- Enact State ICWA legislation
 - The Oregon Legislature will enact State ICWA legislation which adopts in full the Federal Indian Child Welfare Act as Oregon State law.

Policy

- Government to Government agreements
 - All Oregon State agencies will honor current government to government agreements (comply and honor) as embodied in SB 770 in all dealings with Oregon Tribes.
 - DHS will affirm and acknowledge in written policy that ICWA is law and must be complied with (honor/collaborate with tribes). *Note:* This is separate from its actions to accommodate cultural competency and/or diversity.
 - DHS will collaborate with Tribes to develop and implement a government to government grievance process for Tribes with regard to ICWA compliance including a process for reporting non-compliance to the Office of the Director.
 - Develop an internal compliance plan with Tribes and NRC consultant.
- Comprehensive policy review
 - DHS will conduct an annual comprehensive compliance review of current policy and procedures pertaining to AI/AN children and child welfare as identified and approved by the ICWA Advisory Committee.
 - DHS will develop and adopt a comprehensive plan for 100% internal compliance with existing policy and establish metrics for measuring and reporting the progress toward achieving the goals of the plan.

Accountability/Quality Control

- DHS accountability and compliance
 - DHS will develop and implement a robust quality control capacity that is integrated across all aspects of the agency to monitor and report to the ICWA Advisory Committee on compliance with internal policies, external policies, laws and mandates, as well as on ICWA outcomes.
 - Report key compliance metrics to Tribes quarterly such as no-active efforts findings by office.
 - Develop, fund and implement a regional Tribal review process for regular and periodic review of

ICWA cases for compliance.

- CFSR tool should be adopted into policy.
- Annually conduct a statewide review of ICWA cases using CFSR ICWA tool.
- DHS will develop a process to document ICWA compliance and hold management accountable by creating and implementing incentives and disincentives for lack of compliance.
- DHS should ensure that any elements its federal Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that related to Tribes and/or disproportionality be reported to the Tribes on a quarterly basis as part of its quality control process.
- Measureable outcomes are developed with Tribes and tied to PIP and reported quarterly.

Practice

- Active Efforts
 - DHS will adhere to active efforts (i.e. expert witness, Tribal preference, etc.) to prevent removal and provide rehabilitation services expanding the existing document (Guiding Principles for Active Efforts) to provide guidance for up front work.
 - DHS will adopt a service system which is prevention based to prevent unnecessary removal.
 - DHS will move to a prevention model.
 - DHS will designate prevention caseworkers that are recruited and endorsed from Tribal Communities.
 - DHS will identify funding resources for prevention efforts (i.e. 20% adoption resources tagged for prevention).
- Prevention and Rehabilitation Services
 - DHS will expand and increase the use of prevention and rehabilitation, (cultural appropriate and Family-driven) where children can remain safely in their own homes, either voluntarily or with court monitoring.
 - DHS will fund and use Tribal and Urban Indian In-home Services as the preferred providers for Indian children.
 - DHS will use cultural appropriate and family driven approaches with Indian families to build family supports and prevent unnecessary removals.
- Assessments
 - DHS should strictly adhere to existing policy and procedure and require collaboration with Tribes on investigations and assessments.
 - DHS will continue to evaluate the tools used to ensure there is not cultural bias included.
- Legal
 - DHS will ensure adequate legal representation for children.
 - DHS will collaborate with the courts and the ICWA Advisory Committee to develop a check list of questions to ask at ICWA hearings.
 - DHS will maintain a trained pool of expert witnesses endorsed by Tribal communities to ensure the capacity to meet ICWA requirements in all hearings.
- Child Centered Focus
 - DHS should write, interpret and consistently apply policy that is child centered in collaboration with Tribes to ensure that the child's experience of the system enhances their sense of safety, permanency and well being as follows:
 - Connection of Indian children to Tribal communities, culture and other appropriate activities
 - Allowing and ensuring youth are allowed to participate in decision making and will be heard always

- Caseworker relationships are consistent and stable
- Children receive services needed
- Face to face contact/quality contacts
- Use family members/Tribal community to supervise visits
- System to allow children to deal with the trauma of removal, developing healthy coping skills/peer groups settings
- Allow supervised visits outside of DHS offices
- Allow visits with other family members per DHS policy
- Recruitment/Retention of Native Foster/Resource Families
 - DHS will collaborate with Tribes and Indian Organizations to develop and implement an adequate pool of ICWA compliant resources for children.
 - Reduce the number of Native kids placed in non-Native homes
 - Recruit, train and retain Native foster parents.
 - Develop a specialized workgroup to review each stage of native foster home recruitment strategy and certification process
 - Recruit in places where adults participate and care for children
 - Train DHS staff of exceptions to the exclusion list to enable more foster homes get certified
 - Define (not just DHS!) quality of relationships and ability to respond to the needs of the child as having precedence
 - Have specific staff for certification and training for native foster parents and enable staff to also focus on retention of Native foster parents
 - DHS should expand its capacity to ensure support of Indian families and their resources
 - Acknowledge Tribes as part of support system
 - Specialized training for foster/guardian/adoptive parents when children enter adolescence
 - Provide child/respite care
 - Go beyond asking if relative can be a placement resource and engage family in developing lifelong connections with child, e.g., transport to counseling, take to pow-wows, on-going activities with them, etc.
- Training
 - DHS, in consultation with the Tribes, will provide training to DHS/Tribal staff, lawyers, judges, and community partners.

Recommendations for Culturally Specific Child Welfare Practice with African Americans

While the African American community does not have the benefit of ICWA, there is a need for systems to understand that best practices in one community might not be best practice in our community, and that African American communities need a concrete guide for others on how to best meet our needs. Acknowledging the need to involve people from the community – that understand our communities is crucial in creating community based organizations. In addition, the recognition of new structures is an integral part of the solution.

This community offers the following suggestions:

Practice

- Case planning for children of color must be built on cultural values, including culturally driven practices, and serve to connect children with their cultural identities.

- DHS will expand and increase the use of prevention and rehabilitation (culturally appropriate and family driven) where children can remain safely in their own homes either voluntarily or with court monitoring.
- DHS should strictly adhere to existing policy and procedure on investigations and assessments and ensure that policy/procedure tools are not culturally biased.
- DHS should develop a protocol/procedural structure for ensuring Cultural Heritage Protection for all children of color.
- Procedure should be developed, implemented and evaluated by DHS staff and Communities of Color.
- DHS staff should be trained in effective community engagement, with special regard to Communities of color which should lead to:
 - DHS acquiring more family advocates from within communities of color
 - Increase in number of CASA's reflecting communities of color
 - Increase in recruitment and retention of communities of color foster/resource families
 - Involvement of the Faith Community seen as intricate in preserving community
 - Faith community must be the educators
 - Faith community should be proactive not reactive
 - Community is empowered seen as
 - Sustainability within the community (*Prevention*)
 - Specific programs and opportunities for African American youth identified
 - Decreased number of African American children entering foster care
 - Increased number of African American children remaining with their families
 - Shift in opportunities structure
 - Outcome: Living life to be a positive, contributing citizen
 - Give people back their crown and allows them to own their strength
 - More men/fathers supporting each other and uplifting each other
 - Transformation
 - Nontraditional Plan
 - Policy Making
 - Planning
 - Implementation
 - Quality Assurance
 - Ongoing Evaluation

Accountability/Quality control

- DHS Accountability and compliance
 - DHS will develop and implement robust quality control capacity that is integrated across all aspects of the agency to monitor and report to communities of color on compliance with internal policies, external laws, policies and mandates as they pertain to children in care.
 - Report key compliance metrics to communities of color advocacy committee bi-annually
 - CFSR tool should be adopted into policy
 - DHS should ensure that any elements of its Federal Program Improvement Plan (PIP) related to disproportionality and/or Tribes be reported to Communities of Color on a quarterly basis as a part of its quality control process
 - Inclusive hiring practices within institutions and systems

Future Outlook (3 – 10 yrs)

Advocacy

- Leadership
 - Allow for those leaders who work within the community to contact DHS and engage in open dialogue with and about our families

Child Welfare

- Best Practice paradigm shift
- System having an attitude of acknowledging strengths in African American homes
- Identify specific programs and opportunities for African American youth
- Decreased number of African American children entering foster care
- Increased number of African American children remaining with their families
- Collaboration with corporations

Community

- Accountability to and from the community
 - Mutual accountability and responsibility
 - Partnership with department and community
 - A commitment together
- Faith Community is intricate in preserving community
 - Faith community must be the educators
 - Faith community should be proactive not reactive
- Community is empowered
 - Sustainability within the community (*Prevention*)
- Need has to shift to an opportunities structure
 - Outcome: Living life to be a positive, contributing citizen
 - Give people back their crown
 - Owning their strength
 - More men/fathers supporting each other and uplifting each other
- Sense of community regardless of where folks live
- Transformation
 - Nontraditional Plan
 - Policy Making
 - Planning
 - Implementation
 - Quality Assurance
 - Ongoing Evaluation

Human Resources

- Inclusive hiring practices within institutions and systems

How might we get there?

Advocacy

- Establish Structure
 - Legislative Action
 - Administrative Rules
 - Similar to Tribes (Gov-to-Gov)
- Involvement in the legislative process on regular basis
 - Educate ourselves
 - Sustainable model

- Visibility
- Leadership
 - Unity
 - Showing Up
 - We need followers as well as leaders
- Address with government system the reduction of *silos*
- Recommendations for task force to legislative committees must include input from this meeting

Child welfare

- DHS internal commitment and action
- Build Trust
- Multi-System Approach
 - Invoke the court system

Community

- Need to address our own injuries
 - Mental, emotional and relational
 - Deal with our pathology
 - Healing
- Multi-generational implementation approach
 - Intergenerational conversation and secession plan
- Education and awareness through Faith community
- Transform system and community
 - Outline strategic approach
 - Create a relational system that can relate to the communities
- Community Engagement and Mobilization
 - See It
 - Hear It
 - Change It

Education

- Scholarships to African American social work students specific to needs within communities
- Allow for real cases to be presented to school of social work
 - Increase culturally appropriate methods

Funding

- Evidence based practice
- RFP's
 - Consulting
 - Training

Human Resources

- Improve human resources
 - African Americans “ruled out” before having opportunity
 - When hiring – work through office of affirmative action and equal opportunity

Next Steps

Continue community leadership conversations

- Be Unified
- Create the “dream team”
- Identify who is absent? Who else needs to be included?

- Establish quarterly meetings
- Designate “dream team” to address immediate opportunities and challenges
 - Develop list based on focus areas (six critical factors)

Utilize Portland African American Community Leadership Forum

- African American specific advocacy groups/NGOs
- Paid Staff

Build voice of community

- Let people tell us what to do
- Assess
- Involve client representation from child welfare and decision-making
 - Youth Voice
 - Parent/Family Voice
 - Engage Fathers
- Build dialogue around community healing
- Staff Support
 - Interns
 - Utilize internal staff to inform community
- Development of outside consultant