

BENEFITS PACKAGE DOCUMENTATION

CW RELATIVE SEARCH REQUEST

Event Id (if applicable): CAF CW 01 1.3

Version No.: 1.0

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE:

Finding suitable relatives not only for placements, but also for potential familial connections to each child is essential to the health and safety of the over 6,500 children in foster care. Previously, the relative search process was time consuming, ineffective, and inefficient. Each branch conducted the relative search process differently throughout the state. The variation in branch processes resulted in inconsistent outcomes for initiating contact, locating, and placing children with relatives.

The RPI team assigned to the Relative Search Request initiative developed a stream-lined relative search process from the time the request to start the search is made until the search is complete and results are submitted to the case worker. The efficiencies in the process resulted in eliminating the number of steps in the process from 69 to 32 (54% reduction in steps), and reduced the average touch time required to conduct the relative search from the previous range of 1 day to 8 days, to the future state of 2.15 hours for initial search and 1.07 hours for ongoing search. Additionally, the improved process discontinued the use of certified mail thus saving \$9,265 to date across the 3 pilot branches (small/medium/large representation) in the January thru May 2009 timeframe. The savings would be \$22,250 on an annualized basis.

In the revised relative search process, relatives are identified more promptly for placement, allowing caseworkers to perform case planning activities with family members that result in better outcomes for both the children and their families. Additionally, the revised process has resulted in higher stability for children placed in substitute care. Children move less frequently, feel more secure, and are maintaining stable relationships, thus achieving a higher level of permanency.

The initiative is on hold as of June, 2009, as a revised policy regarding relative placements is being written that may affect this initiative.

IMPROVEMENT SUMMARY

The Rapid Process Improvement team developed a stream-lined relative search process from the time the request to start the search is made until the search is complete and results are submitted to the case worker. The revised process efficiencies include:

- Removal of unnecessary work and the reduction of the amount of steps required to initiate and process relative searches from 69 to 32 (54% reduction in steps).
- Reduction of the overall touch-time required to conduct relative searches from the current range of 8 hours to 8 days, to the future state of 2.15 hours for initial search, and 1.07 hours for an ongoing search.
- The new process also identified methods and technological tools available to conduct searches, allowing for congruency across the state.

- The process of utilizing certified mail (costing the state \$6.50 per certified letter) that was utilized in 11 of 16 districts was discontinued in the pilot branches after finding that 62% of the certified letters were returned to the sender.

BENEFIT/OUTCOME DESCRIPTION

COST SAVINGS:

- The pilot branches discontinued the use of certified mail to search for relatives saving over \$9,262.50 to date in postage. (\$22,250 annualized).
- Branch surveys indicated that over 62% of all certified letters were returned to sender. Money is no longer spent on postage for letters that relatives refused to sign for. Employees are no longer sorting returned mail, documenting, and filing it.

PEOPLE:

- Relatives are identified more promptly for placement, allowing caseworkers to perform case planning activities with family members that result in better outcomes for both the children and their families.
- Children in substitute care are making connections with extended family members, are being supported by safe and supportive relatives or persons with a caregiver relationship, and developing meaningful relationships with these individuals.
- Based on the improved relative search process, the percentage of children placed in relative care increased in Clackamas County by 1.1% between November, 2008 and May, 2009.

SERVICE:

- The revised relative search process has resulted in higher stability for children placed in substitute care. Children move less frequently, feel more secure, and are maintaining stable relationship, thus achieving a higher level of permanency.
- Removal of unnecessary work and the reduction of the amount of steps required to initiate and process relative searches from 69 to 32 (54% reduction in steps).

QUALITY:

- The stream-lined process improved relative search outcomes by identifying relatives more rapidly.

LOGIC DESCRIPTION

Actual cost savings on postage based on data collected from the pilot branches on the number of letters mailed, multiplied by the cost of certified mail, return receipt, and first class postage (\$6.50).

Number of children in care based on Total Subcare Report.

Relative Placement data from November, 2008 and May, 2009 Statewide Dashboard Report.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Data Spreadsheet
- Reinvestment Plan