

Department of Human Services Gender Equity Report

The Department of Human Services (DHS) submits this report as required by ORS 417.270 (HB 3576 Equal Access to Appropriate Services for Girls and Boys) to report on our progress and plans in achieving equal access to appropriate services for males and females under age 18.

DHS has a department wide Gender-Specific Services for Children and Youth Committee to promote and coordinate service related issues. This committee included participation from the Coalition of Advocates for Equal Access for Girls and well as representatives from DHS programs providing services to children and youth.

A primary outcome of this committee was the issuance of department wide policy for providing gender-specific services for girls and boys. Oregon's Department of Human Services became the first human services agency in the nation to issue policy for gender-specific services for children and youth. During the last five years, the Department took steps to implement the gender-specific services policy in programs affecting children and youth. Managers of these programs became familiar with this policy in order to be able to incorporate principles in their specific works. Several DHS staff serving children and youth attended agency sponsored training regarding gender-specific services for girls and for boys. The sessions were conducted by experts in the field to promote services that effectively meet gender-specific needs. These initial trainings covered the following topics:

- What about gender; who are girls, who are boys, and how are they different? Why gender-specific services are important and how gender-responsive approaches are similar and different when providing and planning services to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of girls and boys.

- Understanding Boys, why and how to provide and plan services most responsive to the physical, social, and emotional needs of boys and young men. Real life examples and scenarios for successfully working with boys and young men from diverse backgrounds.
- Understanding Girls, why and how to provide and plan services most responsive to the physical, social, and emotional needs of girls and young women.

The purpose of the trainings and policy is to ensure that gender consciousness and related issues are integrated into the internal and external work of the department, through its programs, services, as well as the many delivery systems through which it provides services.

Over the last biennium, Divisions worked to implement the policy by taking the following steps:

- Including language in contracts and Requests for Proposals (RFP) around gender specific services for children and youth expectations. An example of that in a Family Based Services Contract is: “services shall be based on known effective interventions for changing child abuse and neglect behaviors. All services shall be culturally appropriate and services to a child and youth shall be gender-specific services that effectively meet their needs.”
- Office of Contracts and Procurement (OC&P) Gender equity within DHS Contracts (2012), including DHS requests for proposals:
 - Requests include services to children and youth, with specific guidance surrounding gender specific expectations. Program staff request, continue to include language regarding gender specific service expectations.
 - Proposers are asked to describe their strategies to implement culturally appropriate and gender specific services.

- RFP template includes language, “Services provided under any Contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall consider equal access for both males and females under 18 years of age. ‘Equal access’ means access to appropriate facilities, services and treatment, to comply with ORS 417.270.”
 - DHS contracts include the condition that: Contractors must provide services to DHS clients without regard to race, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation or disability (as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act). Contracted services must reasonably accommodate the cultural, language and other special needs of clients.
 - The directions for the 118-Series Contracting Forms, includes a check box for gender specific services under Other Considerations. This provides program staff the reminder that this is an issue that should be considered when requesting contract documents.
- Providing directions in a series of contracting forms by including a check box for gender specific services under “other considerations.” This provides program staff a reminder that these services should be considered when requesting contract documents. (OC&P)
 - Working with DOJ to clarify the scope of application and legal implications in the standard language under “Special Provisions” in our contract templates. The standard language in DHS personal services contracts has been updated to read: “Contractor shall provide equal access to covered services for both males and females under 18 years of age, including access to appropriate facilities, services, and treatment, to achieve the policy in ORS 417.270.” (OC&P)
 - Providing training to new contracts’ staff and updating the rest of the staff on contracts and solicitations into which Gender Specific Services provisions were incorporated. Discussing the Gender-Specific Services policy at staff meetings. (OC&P)
 - Child Welfare (CW) is requiring a description of diversity competency in how the organization program services will be sensitive, responsive and appropriate with gender specific services.

- Including language in RFP/Contract standards for new In-home Safety and Reunification Services. Examples of complete excerpts are:
 - "Specific cultural adaptation should be described in proposals for services. Proposers will be expected to describe a model for working with minority cultural groups disproportionately represented in the child welfare populations described in 5.4 District Requirements."
 - "Cultural Competence: is the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, religions, genders, sexual orientation and other characteristics in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities, and protects and preserves the dignity of each. Operationally defined, it is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services, thereby producing better outcomes. (Child Welfare Procedural Manual)"
 - "Gender Specific Services: Refers to treatments, interventions, educational programs and approaches that comprehensively address the unique needs, strengths and risk factors of each gender and fosters positive gender identity development." (CW) Redesigning services and program standards with a Family Based Services Workgroup with the participation of child welfare staff, current contractors, Citizen Review Board representatives and other District participants. (CW)
- Continuing to review and provide feedback to contracted Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS) shelter or residential treatment programs regarding their ability to provide services that are gender specific. (CW)
- Continuing to raise awareness with staff and providers through meetings to discuss and understand what gender specific services mean. (CW)
- Tracking current male/female ratios in all licensed child facilities and encouraging providers to participate in the Licensed Child Placing Agencies program review for assessment and monitoring.(CW)

- Program participation in the National Youth in Transition Database tracking program. (CW)
- Child Welfare continues to be engaged with the Coalition of Advocates for Equal Access for Girls by;
 - Having a DHS staff member attend the monthly Coalition meeting for education and information
 - Refer staff, community programs and inquiries to explore the website for Coalition of Advocates for Equal Access for Girls' <http://equalaccessforgirls.org>
- Member of Equity Foundation, collaborating with other agencies, universities, national partners and entities on model training program on equity, including gender equity. Accomplishments and future plans include:
- Launch of a web page offering resources, training curriculum for both private and public agencies to utilize trainings specific to the needs of each organization. www.rri.pdx.edu/lgbtq.php
- Development of training pilots to provide most current training available.
- Equity Foundation will continue to seek out grants to continue funding for the training program.
- Covering gender-specific services in meeting the needs of children and youth in depth in CORE training for Child Welfare Workers through the Child Welfare Partnership. (CW)
- Continuing to provide technical assistance to those programs that may be struggling to develop gender specific services. (CW)
- Residential Treatment Services and Licensing BRS system redesign was completed. It increased the number of designated programs for girls and young women. (CW)

- All of the BRS treatment services contracts require Contractors to provide gender and culturally specific, services. (CW)
- DHS Licensing Coordinators monitor child caring agencies with attention to gender considerations. (CW)
- A Staff from the Residential Treatment Services and Licensing unit attends the Coalition of Advocates for Equal Access for Girls as a DHS Liaison. (CW)
- "In 2009, a focused pilot was started to address diversity/cultural competency in addressing disparity and disproportionality in the largest district in our state, Multnomah County. A trainer was hired to begin working with child welfare staff in that area. There are approximately 593 child welfare staff in Multnomah County. Learning Circle training (small groups for focused conversation) titled "It's My Life" is taking place each week and throughout 2010 to accomplish the goal of training all child welfare staff in this area. They are discussing and looking at responsive services for clients regardless of culture, gender, sexual orientation, etc. To date, nearly 300 caseworkers have been trained." (CW)
- "The CW Training Services Unit worked in collaboration with the Equity Foundation - Juvenile Justice Project to assist in the development of a training specific to the Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transsexual-Queer (LGBTQ) group. The training focuses on the disproportionality and disparity of this population and providing responsive services to this population as well as gender appropriate services. Most of this training was held in Multnomah County. In addition to the development of this training, some wording changes in both policy and other training material were presented for modification. In addition, resources and training related material for this community was also added to the DHS Learning Center as a resource for staff and providers." (CW)

During the upcoming year, the Department will work diligently on continuing to implement the gender-specific services policy for children and youth. The department's policy provides a description of expectations and actions designed to enhance equity in the delivery of gender-specific services to children and youth. It provides for assurance that children and youth accessing services receive them in a gender-specific manner that meets their needs. The policy includes expectations for all DHS staff working with programs affecting children and youth including managers, contracts and procurement staff, and direct service providers.

DHS will continue to work on strengthening RFP/Contracts language and requirements to meet gender-specific services policy. Each Division will continue to provide training on gender-specific services to staff providing those services. DHS will continue to raise awareness of the policy to providers and potential applicants. Divisions will continue to review policies and rules applicable to the delivery of gender specific services for children and youth and make recommendations for enhancing services as appropriate. The Department will create a website with access to gender specific services information for children and youth. This resource will provide tools and resources for DHS staff, providers, and customers.

A full copy of the department's policy and procedures for gender-specific services for youth is available at:
www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/admin/exec/010_004.htm