

Department of Human Services Response

Oregon CAPTA Citizen Review Panel Report

2017 - 2018 Fiscal Year

The Department would like to thank the local citizen review panels for their review of potential issues facing child welfare practice in the respective local areas and the thoughtful work done in assessing the selected issue.

Baker County's Citizen Review Panel focused on improved foster parent recruitment and retention.

The recommendation regarding including former foster parents into Foundations training is essentially already occurring. A foster parent panel is part of the Foundations curriculum, as well as an adoptive parent panel in training of pre-adoptive parents. However, the branch office will solicit information from foster parents prior to and invite them to speak at the introductory class also. The panel participants will be guided through a question and answer period by the trainer.

The branch office appreciated the idea of developing a more relaxed and informal question and answer session for newer foster parents, therefore will begin hosting brown bag lunches at the DHS office like the GRACE counties. The conversations may be facilitated, and the certifier will elicit questions from the foster parents prior to the luncheon to ensure the conversation is meaningful and helpful.

The branch office concurred with the recommendation to work with community members to help recruit and support foster parents. The branch office will be completing a Branch Needs Assessment to determine the gaps and the results will be used to develop community surveys and to guide the convening of community strategy sessions for expanding recruitment and support efforts.

DHS will be collaborating with CRB and JCIP on the recommendations for a possible video to help educate foster parents on the dependency process. DHS will also work with the CASA director to review the training CASA's receive to determine if more emphasis needs to be made on the depth of interaction with foster parents.

Linn County's Citizen Review Panel focused on two areas. Like Baker County they had recommendations for foster parent recruitment, support and retention. The other area of focus was DHS worker retention.

The branch office believes the "Every Child" program that launched in their county in January 2018 will improve the support provided to new foster parents. Every Child actively identify foster parents who need additional support and develop the specific wrap around services for the foster parents. Every Child also helps ensure foster parents can attend training, which is a place to obtain mentoring and develop relationships. The branch office will continue to collaborate with Every Child, other community partners and foster parents to develop innovative ways to provide mentoring to new foster parents.

The branch office concurs that customer service is essential to promoting and developing strong relationships between foster parents and workers. They provide foster parents with the CPS worker on call number, which is manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This will ensure any emergency needs are met. Foster parents also have access to 211 and the Linn/Benton foster and adoption Facebook page promote 211 as well as other resources. This recommendation is really connected to the other focus for the Linn County CRP, which is worker retention. District 4 requires all staff leave an outgoing message which states they will return the call within 2 business days, and if the call is not returned they are directed to call the workers supervisor.

The branch office utilizes business protocols to try and find efficiencies wherever possible. DHS central office are developing a new case plan that will meet the both the case plan requirements and the court report requirements. Many ideas have been submitted to Continuous Quality Improvement and the OR-Kids business team and the analysis and development is on-going.

The branch office will continue to work with Supervisors to improve on holding regular individual clinical supervision with each employee. Supervisors have iPhones and are expected to be available by phone when not in the office. The District requires at least one supervisor remain in the office when required trainings occur. The agency is developing an employee engagement model that will provide supervisors with tools on how to ensure they are providing supports to employees and creating a safe work environment as well.

Supervisors are required to participate in the Child Welfare Clinical Supervision training as well as essential manager training through Human Resources. DHS is developing an advanced Supervisor training and it will be implemented in 2019.

The branch office concurs with the recommendation that stakeholders take opportunities to recognize good casework practice and look forward to collaborating with community partners and stakeholders on how this can be done.

Multnomah County's Citizen Review Panel also focused on foster care but concentrated on youth age 18 to 21.

DHS will be undertaking a 5 year planning process over the next six to seven months. The Youth Transitions team is in the process of finalizing plans to identify prior 5-year plan goals achieved, progress attained, and goals unable to implement. An expanded ILP services model is being created. The model will serve foster youth ages 14 – 23, as allowed under the Families First Prevention Services Act. Reviewing and updating existing Oregon Administrative Rules will be necessary and shall include youth, DHS staff, community partners and other stakeholders on the policy workgroup(s).

The Youth Transitions team has implemented two pilot projects to address services for younger teens. DHS has partnered with Institute for Youth Success to pilot a "youth identified mentor" project for teens. IYS is partnering with four ILP Providers to implement the mentor project over the next year. Curriculum has been specifically tailored to foster youth needs and resources available.

The branch office will work with the local CRB to consider boards who specialize in reviewing the cases of older youth and young people in foster care. The agency recognizes the needs of this population are expansive and unique and agrees having boards with specialized knowledge pertaining to challenges, case planning decisions and resources specific to this population would be very helpful.