
Child Welfare Partnership

Graduate School of Social Work
Portland State University

Systems Response Project

October 2006 – September 2007

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Systems Response Project Final Report

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Report completed by:

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Project Goal:

Provide highly-effective multi-disciplinary action planning seminars that will increase collaboration between parole, probation and dependency court proceedings. [Note: The Children's Justice Act Task Force was particularly interested in promoting local court solutions that reflected the collaborative principles and practices in use in Multnomah County.]

Project Description:

This half-day seminar, sponsored by a local Judge or Judges and facilitated by an experienced facilitator, convenes participants from Juvenile Dependency and Adult Criminal Court systems to develop a model of court collaboration for families involved in dependency court who may also have probation and parole involvement. A typical seminar includes a welcome by the Judge and lead administrative person from each system, a keynote by a representative on the Multnomah County models for collaboration, dialogue from the floor leading to action planning and closing with comments to confirm judicial leadership and support for approaches presented. Lunch or refreshments are provided to support a spirit of 'breaking bread' together, and underscore the experience of collaborative problem solving.

The opportunity to host a seminar was presented to all Juvenile Court judges by means of an invitation letter distributed through the Juvenile Court Improvement Project. Three counties applied, and all were selected. Seminars were completed in:

- Klamath July
- Yamhill August
- Washington September

General Questions for Project 2:

1. List and provide a brief description of major Project Activities during the year.

Project activities:

- a. Provided oversight with support and technical assistance for to each of the three local jurisdictions.

- b. Engage the stakeholders in an action planning process, with a goal of developing sustainable programs or collaborations meeting the following objectives:
 - To increase knowledge of systems challenges for families involved in both the adult criminal system and the juvenile dependency system
 - To learn about approaches to address these challenges
 - To create action plans that will improve court processes and outcomes for these families
- c. A network of support for this project was developed on a local and state level. Tim Travis, JD of the Juvenile Court Improvement Project assisted in disseminating project information to the juvenile court system for the recruitment of interested jurisdictions.
- d. Jurisdictions with strong judicial leadership were considered imperative to assure the effectiveness of a collaboration project. For this reason, preference was given to Judges with the power to convene a wide constituency and provide ongoing support and follow through on action plans.
- e. Project staff worked with each selected jurisdiction to:
 - Identify the objectives each Judge had for local system collaboration
 - Find a date and venue for each seminar
 - Assist the Judge in the invitation process that would engage a wide variety of stakeholders in action planning
 - Identify and confirm an appropriate content expert to present on the type of collaboration the Judge had identified
- f. Project staff provided technical assistance, developed a standardized planning format, agenda and evaluations.
- g. In addition, project funds were used to arrange a presentation by the collaboration expert to juvenile court judges from around the state at the “Eyes of the Child” Summit in August, 2007. The following workshop was presented. (This also formed the basis for the presentation in the three project counties.)

Martha Strawn Morris, J.D., Program Development Specialist
Multnomah County Family Court

Presentation: “*Child Welfare and Adult Probation Crossover and Collaboration in Multnomah County*”

Qualifications: Martha has conceptualized, implemented and managed many successful collaborative programs including The Family Involvement Team, The Family Probation Program, and the Juvenile Court Facilitation

Family Services sponsored. This was a workable solution and fulfilled the committee's intention, we believe.

- b. Judge Fun from Washington County requested that the focus of their planning be changed because he felt his court was not quite ready to discuss collaboration between adult probation and juvenile dependency. Judge Fun opted instead to discuss modification of release agreements, which had impact on similar child welfare families. Martha Strawn Morris adapted her presentation "Child Welfare and Adult Criminal Supervision – How to Identify and Influence Decision Points in Order to Help or Hinder Success" to accommodate Judge Fun's request, and provided coaching and ideas as Washington County professionals designed their collaboration.

6. If project was not completed or there were significant changes in the project as originally proposed, please discuss issues, how they were resolved, and the outcomes of the changes.

The project was completed on time with changes listed above.

7. Total amount of funds expended to date. Do you expect to expend all requested project funds?

It is expected that this contract will be under-expended. The final accounting will be completed by Oct 31, 2007 and will be submitted to the contract officer.

Summarize how activities conducted helped reach the goal that "seminars will facilitate collaboration with parole and probation to coordinate expectations and services and share information about the progress of family members involved in a dependency case."

There were three Systems Response Projects during the time period October 2006-September 2007.

Klamath County

Seminar date: July 18, 2007

Location: Crystal Terrace Assisted Living, Klamath Falls

of Attendees: 14

Jurisdiction: Klamath County Circuit Court

Judicial Sponsor: Judge Isaacson (other Judges in attendance)

Action Planning Outcomes:

- See Appendix A

Participant Evaluations:

- See Appendix A

Strengths of project:

- Bundling cases is easy for this jurisdiction because it is small
- 3 out of 4 Circuit Court Judges were in the seminar
- Good representation from Parole Officers and DHS supervisor Cindy Kallstrom
- The DA's office attended

- The needs of the local Tribal Court were incorporated into planning the day
- This community has strong social services including an Attachment Relief Nursery that is in development.

Yamhill County

Seminar date: August 9, 2007

Location: Yamhill County Courthouse Annex

of Attendees: 24

Jurisdiction: Yamhill County Circuit Court

Judicial Sponsor: Judge John. L. Collins

Action Planning Outcomes:

- See Appendix B

Participant Evaluations:

- See Appendix B

Strengths of project:

- Strong leadership by Judge Collins
- Commitment by Corrections Director Richard Sly and Silas Holloran-Steiner to incorporate the day's outcomes into a set of policies and procedures that can be utilized across agencies.
- There was a system for tracking cases involved in both dependency and criminal court. This group was able to build upon that system.
- This county is proud of the fact that the dependency cases filed per capita for Yamhill County is low because DHS is doing excellent case work with voluntary agreements and without judicial involvement.
- This group discussed adopting Marion County's practice of sending CPS workers out to the field with Parole Officer's.
- SB267 Evidence Based Practices for Parole Officer's is being implemented.
- A decision was made to communicate at the first shelter hearing if the parent is incarcerated or on probation.
- Strong support for the transfer of supervision to one judge as it improves "judicial memory" resulting in more accountability and the judge can consider how probation sanctions will impact the children in the family.
- Good representation of parole officers
- DHS had local supervisors and administrator present, including Kevin Sharp-Smith and Jan Schenk

Washington County

Seminar date: September 28, 2007

Location: Washington County Circuit Court, Hillsboro

of Attendees: 12

Jurisdiction: Washington County Circuit Court

Judicial Sponsor: Judge Jim L. Fun

Action Planning Outcomes:

- The stakeholders made a decision to collaborate and make system changes for the modification of release agreements.

- The stakeholder group will meet next in November 2007.
- *Judge Fun's assistant will be forwarding the summary of the September 28th session to Katharine Cahn/CWP and Stephanie Stafford/CJA upon completion.*

Participant Evaluations:

- See Appendix C

Strengths of project

- Judge Fun requested that the topic of combining Probation Violation hearings and Dependency hearings not be the focus of the day because they have recently began an Early Case Resolution Program and it needs to be more established.
- The focus of the day was changed to improve cooperation between the Criminal Court and the Juvenile Court (DHS, LEA, the Bar and Bench) on release agreements that prohibit contact with their children in care.
- Martha Strawn Morris adapted her presentation to “Child Welfare and Adult Criminal Supervision – How to Identify and Influence Decision Points in Order to Help or Hinder Success”.

Systems Response Project: Comments and Lessons Learned

- Judges who have heard both the dependency and criminal case tell us that offenders are motivated when they know it is the same judge hearing both.
- Improving court systems works and there are improved outcomes for families who will have the requirements of one judge to meet as opposed to multiple judges and DHS requirements for dependency cases. It ensures that there is not duplicative and unrealistic service plans and split representation.
- Collaboration can mean safer outcomes for children, ie: the probation officer tells the DHS worker that the dangerous boyfriend was there when he was out to visit.
- Better outcomes for kids if agencies communicate, ie: probation officer can tell the DHS worker that they will have to make arrangements for kids because they are taking the parent into custody.
- Shared information, ie: all parties/agencies know the outcome of urine analysis.
- It is crucial for the Judge sponsoring the event to articulate his/her support of collaboration between juvenile and adult court, the positive impact they expect it to have on their court, and most importantly the improved outcomes they expect for families.
- Multidisciplinary collaboration works and is a rich process.
- The collaboration gave participants an opportunity to network across disciplines.
- Clear ownership by the Judge set the tone for the day.
- Action planning and discussion is better focused if the educational part that precedes it is comprehensive in exploring model collaborations. This helps the group focus in on what might benefit the local court system.