

**Agenda Item 6  
December 3, 2014**

DATE: November 14, 2014

TO: Children and Families Commission of Orange County

FROM: Christina Altmayer, Executive Director 

SUBJECT: Request for Proposal for Prevention and Early Intervention Services to Families with Children 0-5

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**SUMMARY:**

At the October meeting, the Children and Families Commission confirmed the Round 2 Catalytic funding allocation of \$460,000 to support early intervention prevention services. Commission staff and representatives from the Orange County Social Services Agency have been meeting to discuss opportunities to use these funds to substantially increase prevention services offered to families that have had an initial contact with the child protective services, but whose situation does not meet minimum thresholds for investigation. Through voluntary support services to families, the intent is to reduce the likelihood of concerns of abuse or neglect. Included in the following report is further discussion of the importance of targeting these services and a recommendation to release a Request for Proposal (RFP).

**DISCUSSION:**

Research has increasingly shown that reports of child abuse, whether substantiated or not, is a sign that families are under great stress. Based on research presented to the Commission in May 2014 by Dr. Emily Putnam-Hornstein of the Children's Data Network, the number of children that were reported for child abuse during the first five years of life is significantly higher than the percentage of substantiated abuse:

- Of the children born in 2006 and 2007 in Orange County, 11.5% of those children were reported to Child Protective Services (CPS) before the age of 5.
- Of this same birth cohort, 4.9% was substantiated as victims of abuse or neglect before age 5.

A recent report by Dr. Hornstein, on statewide data on the same 2006 and 2007 birth cohort indicates that the report to CPS is a strong indicator of significant risk to children:

- A previous report to CPS (regardless of disposition) emerged as the strongest predictor of injury or death during a child's first five years of life; significantly associated with a child's risk of either unintentional and intentional injury or death.
- For infants, the most vulnerable population, regardless of the initial determination of substantiation, approximately 60% of infants will have a second report within their first year of life.

In sum, the research found that "maltreatment that begins during infancy is not only likely to be chronic in duration but also developmentally consequential".

The Social Service Agency maintains a data system, Differential Response Tracking System (DRTS). The DRTS identifies families that have had a Child Abuse Report, but did not meet the minimum threshold for investigation. Based on the information provided, SSA staff determined that the identified families would benefit from additional services. A review of the 2012 data indicates:

- 998 families were entered into DRTS, 416 or 42% of the reports involved a child aged 0-5,
- Of the 998 families, 364 had a subsequent referral and of those referrals, 164 or 47% involved a child aged 0-5,
- 76 or 22% of the subsequent referrals were substantiated for abuse. Of the 76 cases that were substantiated 36 involved families with children ages 0-5 totaling 100 children, which represents 60% of the children involved in these substantiated reports.

#### *Social Service Agency and Commission Collaboration*

Commission staff has been working with representatives from the Social Services Agency (SSA) to determine additional ways services can be provided to the families whose reports to the Child Abuse Registry did not meet the minimum threshold for investigation to reduce subsequent concerns. As part of this process staff has reviewed examples for other First 5 Commissions, as well as, a local collaborative effort, Neighbor 2 Neighbor, which was supported by a Commission Capacity Building grant program. A summary of key findings from this review include:

- Strong collaborative relationship with the Social Service Agency is a critical factor,
- Leveraged and blended funding is important for sustainability,
- Early evaluation efforts of the programs in which the other First 5 Commissions have been involved indicate that such programs can increase family functioning and reduce the subsequent and substantiated reports of child abuse, and,
- Large variety of program models and services offered that vary from a case management structure that link families to other community services to a more defined service built on evidence based curriculum.

There is an opportunity to leverage the Commission's allocation of \$460,000 with funding from SSA to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the combined pool of funding. Specifically, the RFP would be for a three year pilot program that targets families, with at least one child age 0-5, which has an initial Child Abuse Registry report. Families that are willing to participate would be referred to a community provider to receive services.

If approved by the Commission, a Request for Proposal would be released in January 2015, with submissions due in March 2015, and planned Commission action on the funding at the May 2015 meeting. The goal would be to start the program as of July 1, 2015. Consistent with Commission practice, staff would hold a proponents bidders conference to address questions. The scope of work included in the Request for Proposal would require a successful proposer to demonstrate:

- The use of standardized evidence based assessment that can be used as a pre and post measurement for participant families.
- A network of community services providers that can leverage existing community resources including evidence based intervention models such as Triple P (Positive Parenting Program).
- A backbone agency that can be accountable for data collection and quality assurance among the community service providers.

- Commitment of all agencies to a rigorous evaluation that identifies the benefit to the individual family for having participated in program, reduction in the number of 0-5 children whose families have subsequent and or substantiated child abuse reports, and the potential cost savings to the system because of the voluntary intervention.
- Payment structure based on achievement of targeted milestones including engagement of families in voluntary programs and completion of services.

Given the focus on prevention and early intervention and the potential high return on investment from avoidance of child welfare costs, this project will likely be a strong candidate for a performance-based contract, similar to the Pay for Success model being assessed for the Bridges Maternal Child Health Network. The proposed plan includes a strong evaluation component and will identify at the onset what data needs to be collected by partners and reporting intervals. Additionally, Commission staff is exploring potential funders that are interested in assessing the feasibility of a Pay for Success model for this program, and has received positive preliminary feedback. Grant opportunities will continue to be identified and explored, as appropriate. Commission staff will return to the Commission with a progress report in March.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN & FISCAL SUMMARY:**

The proposed project has been specifically reviewed in relation to the Strategic Plan and is consistent with the Commission Strong Families goal area. The Round 2 Catalytic Funding has \$460,000 allocated to support early intervention and prevention services.

#### **PRIOR COMMISSION ACTIONS:**

- October 2014- Released contingency on title 4E waiver and confirmation of prevention early intervention scope
- January 2013- Programmatic update and funding set aside
- March 2012- Funding Allocation as part of the Round 2 Catalytic Investment

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

1. Provide direction to staff, and approve the release of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to community services providers to provide prevention and early intervention services to families with children 0-5.
2. Request staff to report back to the Commission with the Request for Proposal (RFP) results by May 2015.

**Contact:** Kim Goll