

POLK COUNTY DECATORIZATION

FY 11 CHILD WELFARE & JUVENILE JUSTICE SERVICES PLAN

MISSION STATEMENT:

“To promote a cooperative and collaborative planning process that strives to provide and support an efficient and effective continuum of service delivery to Polk County children and families.”

Staff

- Ann Harrmann - Decat Project Coordinator
- Lori Helton - Program Specialist
- Denise Moore - CPPC Program Manager, Parent Partner Coordinator
- Calleus Orr - AmeriCorps Member
- Bobbi Zenor – AmeriCorps member

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Pertinent Polk County Data

- According to child welfare data in Polk County in 2009, the percentage of children in out of home placement (including foster family, foster group, and relative caretaker placements) that are African American has remained steady at 22%. The most recent data in 2010 indicates the percentage has risen slightly to 22.4%.* *DHS
- Polk County has 11 census tracts that are considered high-risk, and 16 that are considered high or moderate risk, meaning that 34% of Polk County's census tracts are considered high or moderate risk. These census tracts represent inner-city neighborhoods where children face the greatest challenges to well-being, growth and development. The following data reflects the basic demographics of the most high-risk census tracts in Polk County:
- Persons of color (either non-white or Hispanic) represent the majority of residents (51%) in these neighborhoods, although they represent only 20% of the population for Des Moines as a whole, and a much smaller proportion (6%) of the population in the suburbs and the rest of Polk County.
- The racial diversity is most dramatic in the neighborhoods' child population, with nearly two-thirds of all children being of color.
- These same neighborhoods are much younger overall than the rest of Des Moines. Nearly 30% of all residents in these neighborhoods are children, which mean that education is an important issue.
- Families in the high risk census tract areas have: a) families are 3 times more likely to be below the poverty level; b) adolescent are 6 times more likely to be parents; c) the probation and parole population is 6 times greater; d) FIP (TANF) participants are 5 times greater; e) infant mortality is 2 ¼ times greater; f) adults are ½ as likely to have post-graduate degrees; and g) adults are 3 times as likely to be without high school diplomas.
- In Polk County, youth accounted for 25.7 percent of the total population in 2000 compared to 25.1 percent statewide. Minority youth in the county numbered 18,766 in 2000 and are projected to increase to 35,091 by 2020, with the largest increase anticipated with the Hispanic population.

** This information is generated from the SMART system

The Iowa Youth Survey has been conducted four times – in 1999, 2002, 2005, and 2008. While the Iowa Youth Survey includes information about several attitudes and behaviors, this discussion will be limited to drug, alcohol, and tobacco use in the past six years.

In terms of tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drug use, the trend data supports positive behavior changes for Polk County youth. Of the three surveys conducted, all three grade levels surveyed – 6th, 8th and 11th – there is a consistent decrease from one survey to the next and consistent across grade levels:

- Tobacco use by 6th graders in 2002 was reported at 3%, 2005 at 2%, and 2008 at 2%
- Tobacco use by 8th graders in 2002 was reported at 13%, 2005 at 9%, and 2008 at 8%
- Tobacco use by 11th graders in 2002 was reported at 31%, 2005 at 28%, and 2008 at 25%

The same trends are reflected with alcohol use:

- 6th graders –5% in 2002, 4% in 2005, and 5% in 2008
- 8th graders – 21% in 2002, 15% in 2005, and 15% in 2008
- 11th graders –48% in 2002, 41% in 2005, and 37% in 2008

Similar trends were reported in drug use:

- 6th graders – 2% in 2002, 4% in 2005, and 5% in 2008
- 8th graders – 13% in 2002, 11% in 2005 and 10% in 2008
- 11th graders – 26% in 2002, 25% in 2005 and 23% in 2008

This data comes from the Iowa Youth Survey, found at:

http://www.humanrights.iowa.gov/iys/images/2008_County_reports/77.Polk.pdf

Data from the Des Moines School District indicate the following in 2009*:

- The minority enrollment is 48.6% (which represents a large increase from 37.1% in 2006, and 36% in 2005).
- The African American enrollment in the Des Moines Public School District was approximately 17% in 2009.
- The percent of minority enrollment in the Des Moines Public Schools has increased each year since 1997.
- Hispanic students continue to constitute most of the minority increase.
- In reviewing child welfare data in Polk County in 2010, the percentage of children in out of home placement (including foster family, foster group, and relative

caretaker placements) that are African American has increased slightly to 22.4% from 22% last year.

This data comes directly from the DMPS website,

Community Planning Process

The Polk County Decategorization Governance Board serves as the “Planning Team” for the development of the annual Child Welfare & Juvenile Justice Services Plan. The Governance Board consists of 20 members representing a diverse cross section of the community and meets on a monthly basis.

The organizational structure of the Polk County Decategorization Project consists of several committees and project staff. The committees include:

- ✓ Governance Board
- ✓ Executive Committee
- ✓ Providers Advisory Committee.

The planning process is on-going throughout the year and not just limited to the months surrounding start and end dates of a fiscal year. Each committee provides input into the development of the annual child welfare/juvenile justice services plan by bringing concerns and issues to the table during the year. The Governance Board serves as the central point for collection. The Governance Board meets monthly and discusses current issues, while striving to remain proactive in planning for an efficient child welfare/juvenile justice service delivery system.

Decat Connections to Other Planning Efforts

Polk County Decategorization (DCAT) is currently in its 22nd year. Being one of the first Decat sites has provided opportunities to build solid community relationships and coordination.

Polk County DCAT was designated as a Community Partnership for Protecting Children (CPPC) site in 2003. DCAT and CPPC work together. The CPPC project in Polk County has focused on developing approaches to support the 4 core strategies: 1) family team decision-making, 2) community networking, 3) shared decision-making, and 4) policy and practice change.

CPPC efforts focus on building capacity for implementing community based family team meetings (so that families can get help before they become involved in the child welfare system) and addressing disproportionate minority contact within the Child Welfare/Juvenile Justice system. The Decat CPPC Program Manager, along with AmeriCorps volunteers, the Decat Coordinator and a steering committee provide staffing for the

CPPC activities in Polk County. The CPPC Program Manager also serves on the state-wide CPPC Executive Committee.

Seven years ago, Polk County was selected as one of two pilots in the state to address the over-representation of minority children in the child welfare system, referred to as MYFI (Minority Youth and Families Initiative). The first two years of the project concentrated on specific services provided through a contract with PACE, a program of Orchard Place. The last five years were aligned more closely with CPPC and the Casey Breakthrough Series Collaborative. Efforts started during the initial pilot have continued, as has Polk County Decat's involvement. A Decat staff member (CPPC Program Manager) is a faculty member on a statewide Casey Breakthrough Series Collaborative to develop a statewide framework to address disproportionality.

Plans and Goals

Polk County Decategorization will work closely with the DHS Des Moines Service Area Administrator, 5th Judicial District Chief Juvenile Court Office, and the Polk County Director of Community, Family & Youth Services (who are all members of the Decat Executive Committee) to monitor and measure outcomes in the following areas during FY 11:

- Safety, permanency and well being (CFSR goals)
- Placement stability (CFSR goal)
- Timely achievement of permanency (CFSR goal)
- Transitioning Youth
- Family Team Meetings
- Parents Partners
- Engaging fathers and positive male role models
- Disproportionate minority contact/ disparate outcomes
- Decat Coordination

The planned FY '11 expenditures will reflect the areas listed above.

Each of the individual contracts awarded through Decat during FY '11 will include specific performance measures that will be tracked and monitored on a quarterly basis. The results of the quarterly reports will be summarized and shared with both the Decat Governance Board and the Decat Executive Committee.

The Decat Coordinator and Decat staff will work with the DHS Des Moines Service Area staff and Leadership Team in reviewing critical service area data, and re-adjusting priorities within the Polk County Decategorization Plan as needs and/or gaps in services are identified.

In addition, as of September 22, 2010, Polk County DCAT will begin leadership and coordination of the Parent Partner program. This program is an approach that promotes

innovative changes in social work practice that is unique because it not only celebrates individuals who have overcome obstacles through change, recovery, and accountability, but also uses their experience and skills to mentor families who are currently involved with DHS because their children are in foster or kinship care. Parent Partners demonstrate advocacy, support and effective communication, while holding families accountable.

Federal Community Partnerships Funds

Community Partnership for Protecting Children (CCPC) funds are available from October 2010 through June 2011. Funds will be utilized to support the following:

- 2 AmeriCorps volunteer stipends
- Community activities/events, training & consumer stipends
- Parent Partners mentoring services

The goals of CPPC are:

1. Shared Decision-Making
2. Neighborhood Networking:
3. Individualized Course of Action (Family Team Meeting):
4. Practice and Policy Change:

Promoting Safe and Stable Families

Promoting Safe & Stable Families (PSSF) is utilized for time limited family reunification services, which include the following:

1. Individual, group, and family counseling.
2. Inpatient, residential, or outpatient substance abuse treatment services.
3. Mental health services.
4. Assistance to address domestic violence.
5. Services designed to provide temporary child care and therapeutic services for families, including crisis nurseries.
6. Transportation to or from any of the services and activities described above.

The funding amount that will be available for FY11 (October 1 – June 30) is \$55,084.

Results/Outcomes

Within Polk County, significant emphasis is placed on performance-based accountability.

Decat incorporates results-based accountability into the programs/services that it funds or provides oversight for. Regular communication and sharing of information with the

Decat Governance Board, as well as the community at large, is vital to the success of any local planning effort.

Decat contracts identify specific performance measures for which the contractor is held accountable. Depending on the type of service contracted for, these may include numbers served, measures to indicate success such as percentage achieving a particular result, etc. Agencies that have contracts with Decat are required to submit quarterly progress reports, which are reviewed and monitored by designated Decat staff. Each quarter, summaries of the reports are compiled for review by the Governance Board.

Plans for FY 11

This year the planning process included several meetings with the Child Welfare Provider Advisory Committee to discuss gaps in services and system improvements. Several meetings of the Governance Board also concentrated on these areas. Needs that were identified included:

- Lack of money to support children staying at home rather than being placed out of the home
- Lack of resources to provide respite care to families and foster families to prevent children being removed from home or a termination of a foster family placement.
- Lack of assessments and services for mental health needs
- Working with families so that youth can be successful at home
- Need for better coordination of services
- Lack of crisis services
- Huge caseloads of DHS social workers

The federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) identified many positive areas within the Polk County Child Welfare system. In Polk County the federal reviewers sited many areas of strength, including family team meetings, Pre Removal Conferences, and DHS' involvement in the community. The reviewers also identified areas that could be improved. The Polk County DCAT will work with DHS, providers, juvenile court and families to help make needed improvements. DCAT will also continue to help with family team meetings, PRC's and DHS involvement in the community.

Polk County is concentrating on 5 priority areas which will assist in improving Iowa's CFSR outcomes and assist with safety and permanency for children:

- **Kinship and Family Connections.** DCAT recognizes that many kinds of informal and formal supports help relatives provide a home for children who need to be placed out of their own homes. For that purpose, Polk County DCAT plans to focus on resources for families to help them afford to care for a relative's child, Parent Partners who help families improve in order to have their children returned home, assessment of the substance abuse and mental health needs

of children and their parents, family team meetings, and early prevention services.

- **Fatherhood and Positive Male Role Models.** DCAT will encourage programs that recognize the value of fathers, especially non-custodial fathers, and other men who are important to children and youth; and support them positively in that role. For this purpose, DCAT will continue to include fatherhood and positive male role models in future RFP's.
- **Key Transition Points.** DCAT recognizes that transition points are critical junctures for children, and should be addressed in programs supported by Polk County Decategorization. These transition points include moving into foster care or relative placements, changing placements, modification of placements, and transfer from the juvenile system to the adult system. DCAT will fund grants that help with transitions, including Family Team meetings, moving from the child welfare system to the adult system, and supporting parents.
- **Disproportionate Minority Representation.** Disproportionate minority representation continues to be a priority area. DCAT will continue to work with MYFI and Community Partnership for Protecting Children on such projects as community based family team meetings, training and mentoring for DHS, Juvenile Court and providers on minority issues and developing informal support networks for families.
- **Other Identified Community Priority Areas.** CFSR, provider agency and community identified needs, issues, and gaps in service. Polk County DCAT will fund initiatives which will assist with the safety of children including criminal and child abuse background checks, Family Team meetings, and wrap around support for parents and family members.
- **Additionally Polk County DCAT (CPPC) will begin coordinating the Parent Partner Program within the DCAT structure.** The goals of Parent Partners are to help parents negotiate the child welfare system successfully to be reunited with their children and shorten their children's length of stay in foster care by providing the parent with a "mentor" who has already successfully been through the process.

Polk County Decaterization Board Structure

Governance Board

- 20 member board
- Chair and Vice-chair
- Monitors Decat funded activities
- Develops annual plan
- Develops annual progress report
- Meets monthly

Executive Committee

- Chief Juvenile Court Officer
- DHS Des Moines Service Area Manager, Polk County
- Community Family & Youth Services Director
- Polk County Attorney's Office – Juvenile Division,
- Chair of the Governance Board
- Meets at least quarterly

Ann Harrmann
Polk County Decategorization Coordinator
2309 Euclid
Des Moines, IA 50314
Phone: 515-275-2729
Cell – 515-557-0303