

Executive Summary:

During the third quarter of implementation of Oklahoma's Pinnacle Plan, the final Metrics, Baselines and Target Outcomes Plan for OKDHS was approved. This marked the final official approval of the plan. OKDHS continues to focus intensively on strategies to decrease shelter utilization, expand quality placement options and supports for resource families, and expand and support our workforce.

Availability of quality placement options for children in OKDHS custody is paramount to achievement of positive safety and permanency outcomes for children and is a major focus of the Pinnacle Plan. The beginning of this quarter marked a major Pinnacle Point accomplishment. The target date for all children under two years of age to be placed in family-like settings was 12/31/12, meaning that children under two would no longer stay overnight in a shelter. During this quarter a total of 8 children under the age of two spent a night or nights in a shelter. However, most of these children were members of a sibling group of four or more which is an automatic exception that is granted so that sibling groups can remain placed together. As our number of placement options continues to increase, shelter utilization will decrease. OKDHS has committed to working with private agencies for the recruitment, support, and retention of non-relative resource parents and treatment foster families. The process was initiated at the end of last calendar year, and contracts were awarded this year. However in early April, a decision was made by Director Lake to cancel the recruitment contracts, as he felt OKDHS could make more progress with a different approach. OKDHS recognizes that while this may delay the progress a few months, the long term goal is to improve upon the process and create a system that will sustain an effective Bridge resource home recruitment, retention, and support program. On April 15, OKDHS immediately began preparing for the new round of RFPs and will push for a very quick turnaround for the new providers and contracts. In the interim, OKDHS developed short term solutions to meet the current needs. Director Lake, Department of Central Services, and other contracting staff know the urgency of placement issues and are committed to ensuring OKDHS meets the goals of having more families. Many other initiatives focus on supporting resource families and on moving new families through the approval process faster starting at the time of initial inquiry. OKDHS has shortened the length of time expected to complete resource family assessments to 30 days from application and shorten the length of time from application to approval to no more than 60 days. This ensures kinship families have the financial supports needed in order to provide care for the children in their homes. During this review period, there was an 86% timeliness completion rate for adoption resource family assessments sent to contractors for completion and an 83% timeliness completion rate for foster care resource family assessments sent to contractors for completion. This timeliness rate has continued to improve. A second rate increase for resource families was included in the CWS budget submitted in October 2012. The Oklahoma legislature is currently in session and will be making a decision as to the OKDHS funding request by the end of May.



We know that nothing can substitute for qualified, stable, and well-supported front line staff. Manageable caseloads are essential in order to produce quality outcomes for children and families. In an effort to begin working towards the target date regarding caseload standards, OKDHS has filled the first of 100 new positions that were allocated at the end of last calendar year. During this quarter, 100 additional worker positions, 20 additional supervisor positions, and 3 district director/field manager positions were allocated. Posting for these positions began in March continuing through April. Additionally, work on major initiatives focused on support and training for staff are underway with target dates for accomplishment set for later this year. Having the right number of staff is essential, but equally essential to the right number of staff is having adequate supports in place for the staff. Much of the next several years will continue to be focused on building the capacity of our workforce by increasing the competency levels of frontline staff and supervisory staff through training and mentoring among other things. An additional source of support for front line staff comes in the form of a new administrative support position that has been approved during this quarter. Hiring for these positions will begin the next quarter, and they will generally be assigned as one for every two child welfare supervisory units with a goal of relieving some administrative job duties from child welfare specialists.

Another major initiative underway this quarter was the ending of secondary worker assignments for children placed in a county contiguous to county of jurisdiction. The goal of this initiative is to ensure safety of children through continuity of worker visitation. The ultimate goal is to have one worker assigned to each family to ensure consistency. As of 4/1/13, substantial progress on this initiative has been made with only 51 children remaining with secondary assignments in contiguous counties compared to 395 cases last quarter. We are working to ensure the remaining cases either have a documented exception or have the remaining secondary assignment end-dated.

Lastly, OKDHS continues to receive extensive community support for Oklahoma's Pinnacle Plan. Community partners are working with us to accomplish common goals, and we continue to expand our capacity to collaborate with other public and private agencies as well as other key community stakeholders in order to achieve common goals of improved outcomes for children and families in our communities.

