



## Operation Youth Success Families Work Group

Tuesday, April 17, 2018  
9:00-11:00 AM  
Heartland Workforce Solutions

**Purpose Statement:** Empower families to better understand the system and engage in their youth's care.

### **Families Working Group Charter**

- Empowering families to better understand the system
- Engage youth and families
- Seek help when needed
  
- Introductions
  - Present: Tom Hanks, Margaret Vacek, James Hubbard, Mary Jo Thompson, Andrea Wright, Nicole Seymour, Justin Coleman, Lt. Vivian Buckley, Camas Steuter, Janee Pannkuk, Catherine Rivier, Karla Dush, Debora Faga
  
- Updates
  - OYS
    - NJJA Conference, May 2-4, Kearney, NE
    - Juvenile Justice Provider Forum (JJPF) is April 30; Jaci Dai'Klabunde with Nebraska Legal Aid and Jessica Kroeker with Project Harmony will be presenting
    - Prevention WG is participating in the Juneteenth Parade, June 16, if anyone would like to join us
    - Steering Committee Meeting this Thursday, April 19
    - OYS will have a table at Cinco de Mayo again this year; a sign-up invite will be going out to all work groups
    - OYS backbone staff attended the Collective Impact Convening in Austin, TX, April 3-5
    - The Art of Hosting is a program OYS is exploring
  - Member
    - World Refugee Day is June 16
    - May 4, Suicide Awareness at the Storm Chaser's game at Werner Park
  
- Summary of last meeting's activities
  - Heather Briggs, Probation, spoke to our group

- Broke out into small groups working on Strategies 1 and 2 of the work plan
- Discussed the pamphlet
- Discussed the video; possibility of having a Spanish version
- Group Discussion
  - Want to be intentional about bringing in the community; working with existing groups instead of creating new ones
  - Identify existing groups
  - Perhaps look at expanding a facilitation program to include youth
  - Youth Advisory Council
- Work plan revisions – broke into small groups to discuss the strategies
  - Strategy 1
    - Increase youth a family participation and involvement, in all OYS activities to increase trust and transparency as a means to engage and bring more voices to the table
  - Strategy 2
    - Provide youth and families the tools and information to advance their knowledge in the juvenile justice system
  - Strategy 3
    - Identify engagement opportunities for youth and families across the system
- Work plan next steps
  - Notes from break out groups were submitted to Margaret and Karla for incorporation into the work plan to be discussed at next meeting.
- Family Engagement 2.1
  - DHHS – Initial Assessment of Child Protective Services, Camas Steuter, Eastern Service Administrator
    - 61 initial assessment staff located at Project Harmony, 7 of which are now co-located with PromiseShip
    - Get referrals in two ways; through the state-wide reporting hotline and through law enforcement
    - Smaller volume comes from direct files from judges and county attorneys
    - 8,000 calls come through their hotline a month; 2500 Douglas/Sarpy County calls a month, about 500 of which are accepted for assessment each month
    - Traditional Response - Initial Assessment Flowchart handed out (attached)

- Referrals to PromiseShip (Nebraska Families Collaborative) depending on Risk Determination
- Struggle with Sarpy County right know because they automatically check the “state ward” box; have an agreement to give DHHS 48 hours to try to work through the situation before actually making that happen
- Always look at coming up with a plan instead of removal
- Staff is on-call 24/7/365
- Intake can also be “not accepted” and in that case referrals can be made to several places, for example, Nebraska Family Helpline, Region 6, Community Response, or other community agencies
- Another category is Law Enforcement Only, which is, for example, if abuse is caused by a neighbor
- If a removal has to happen, the first option is a non-custodial parent, then a relative or possibly a neighbor/friend, final resort is a foster home
- Alternative Response Program (ARP)
  - Pilot program started in five counties, one of which was Sarpy County; now is state-wide and includes Douglas County
  - Have an independent team that manages these intakes
  - Has to meet the threshold for being accepted at the hotline
  - If the family qualifies under the criteria to meet the ARP
  - 50/50 to traditional and alternative in order to compare the responses; there have been about 600 eligible in Douglas County so about 300/300
  - Qualifying criteria: Neglect/generational poverty/low level physical abuse/adolescent mental health
  - There are 21 exclusionary criteria
  - Assessments are done a little differently than traditional
  - Interview process includes the family
  - Fully voluntary (still obligated to do a safety determination)
  - There is no central registry finding
  - Hoping ARP will be able to grow and increase
  - Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) changes the funding structure for everyone
  - ARP families are not referred to PromiseShip, they stay with the case team
  - Have increased the ARP staff and decreased case load, resulting in better worker satisfaction and carrying over to families satisfaction

- Statewide 980 have participated, 961 were eligible but didn't participate because of the randomizer
    - Legislation coming up that would remove some of the exclusionary criteria and allow more families to be eligible for ARP
  - Statutorily, all reports, traditional and alternative, are shared with law enforcement
  - The next juncture is community response – primary and secondary prevention
  - Staff diversity – 15 out of the 61 staff are persons of color, 1 is Spanish-speaking; working on becoming more diverse
- Feedback surveys – handed out
  - Next Meeting May 15, 2018

**Operation Youth Success** is bringing people together to decide what aspects of juvenile justice in Douglas County need to change and how that change will happen.

Mission Statement:

Across Douglas County, our vision is a **comprehensive, coordinated, and community-wide** approach to **juvenile services** that **eliminates** the need for youth involvement with our justice system while maintaining **public safety**.

For **all youth** who do enter our justice system, our goals are to provide **effective, compassionate** and **individualized** support that empowers youth and their **families** to **succeed** and to build an environment of **mutual trust and accountability**.