



B. J. Walker, Commissioner

Georgia Department of Human Services • Division of Family and Children Services • Mark A. Washington, Assistant Commissioner
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To: All Providers

Date: November 2, 2009

Re: Performance-Based Permanency Initiative

Dear Provider Partners:

Department of Family and Children Services is set to move forward with the performance-based permanency initiative that was outlined during the Provider Summit on September 25, 2009. The purpose of this initiative is to make available to our provider partners funding for services necessary to secure permanency for a number of youth who have been in care for an extended period of time. While permanency for all youth in Georgia is a central goal of DFCS and the provider community, the scope of this particular project is specific to certain youth. Some minor refinements have been made to the model since its introduction. Specifically the youth being targeted in the initial phase of this project will meet the following criteria:

- 13 years of age or older
- 24 or more months in care
- With a primary or concurrent permanency plan of Reunification or APPLA
- In a group home, child care institution, or CPA foster home


To allow for the needed development of resources and to ensure success, the permanency initiative will be “rolled-out” in stages. Targeted youth currently being served in CCI’s will be eligible for enrollment beginning in early December. Targeted youth being served in CPA’s will be eligible for enrollment in early February. Within the coming week the CCI and CPA providers who currently care for youth that have been targeted based on the criteria outlined above will be notified. If you are not notified and feel you are currently caring for a youth that meets the criteria please contact Catrechia Stokes, Director of Contract Monitoring, OPUOM at 404-657-3436 or 770-378-7038 or castokes@dhr.ga.gov.

Attached to this correspondence you will find a document outlining the minimum standards and scope of work for this project. If your agency currently cares for youth that have been targeted during this initial phase you will be eligible to have this scope attached to your current RBWO contract in the form of an annex. Please review this document carefully as there have been minor changes made to the structure based on agency needs and feedback received at the Provider Summit. Additionally, an organizational readiness form is included for your review. This document is designed to facilitate a dialogue between your organizational leadership and the department in order to ensure appropriate steps have been taken in preparation for delivering this service.

A special Permanency Initiative training will be held on December 3rd and 8th, 2009 for **ONLY** providers who currently care for youth which have been identified during the initial phase (this includes CCI's and CPA's). The purpose of the training will be to thoroughly review the standards, scope and payment structure. Additionally, information will be given regarding reporting procedures that are outlined in the attached scope of work. Look for more information regarding this important training in the coming weeks.

We look forward to this exciting new partnership and the permanent results it will generate for our young people. Based upon an evaluation that will occur in May, 2010 we hope to expand this initiative and utilize this program to help more young people achieve permanency.

Respectfully,


Kenneth F. Joe Sr.
Chief Administrator, DFCS

Cc: Mark Washington, Assistant Commissioner, DHS
Vanessa J. Payne, Executive Director Operations Support and Services
Isabel A. Blanco, Executive Director, Family Outcomes & Practice Standards
Terence D. Johnson, Director, OPUOM

Permanency Project Scope and Minimum Standards

- a. Provide and document an array of services to youth 13 years of age and older and their community-based resource (family, kinship, etc) with a goal of permanency. In addition the youth served in the program will have been in the custody of DFCS for a minimum of 24 months. These services should include, but are not limited to:
 - i. family support
 - ii. individual support
 - iii. school-based reintegration activities
 - iv. crisis intervention support
 - v. case management activities as indicated
 - vi. aftercare service coordination as indicated
- b. Complete authorization form and social history for all youth and family members associated with the identified placement to ensure the appropriateness of the placement. Develop an individualized unification and permanency plan based on the social history results and the youth, families and DFCS Case Manager's input. Each barrier to reunification in the social history should be addressed in order to ensure safety and successful transition. Submit copies of the social history and the developed Permanency Plan to the DFCS Case Manager. The social history should be submitted prior to admission. The permanency plan should be submitted within 30 days of admission.
- c. Provision of services must meet the following minimum standards:
 - i. staff to client ratio of no greater than 1:6 with staff possessing a masters degree or bachelors degree plus two years experience working with emotionally troubled youth and their families
 - ii. supervisor to staff ratio of no greater than 1:4 with supervisors possessing a masters degree or bachelors degree plus three years working with emotionally troubled youth and their families
 - iii. a licensed clinical professional must provide consultative supervision to all therapeutic services provided to the family
 - iv. 24/7 on-call availability clients
 - v. No fewer than three successful over-night home visits must occur prior to permanent step-down
 - vi. After permanent step-down has occurred there must be a minimum of two face to face visits per week with the youth and family.
 - vii. Attendance at all court dates related to the client
 - viii. Participation in all Family Team Meetings
 - ix. Coordination of monthly visitation with siblings and parents
- d. Provide a monthly report which documents the services provided and outlines progress made and continuing barriers to permanency. The monthly report is due to the DFCS Case Manger and the Office of Provider Utilization and Outcomes Management (OPUOM) Contract Monitoring Director by the 15th of the following month.
- e. Participate in all monthly performance monitoring efforts designated by OPUOM. These include, but are not limited to, site visits, clinical records review, credentials review, client satisfaction surveys, etc.
- f. Provide a monthly report which outlines raw data related to the population being served and outlines progress made and continuing barriers to reunification. The monthly report is due to the OPUOM Contracts Monitoring Director by the 15th of the following month. Beginning. The report must contain the following.
 - i. # of children receiving reunification services and their current placement (RBWO, home with family, home with relative, etc)
 - ii. # of children successfully transitioned to permanency during the month
 - iii. # of children successfully discharged from the program during the month
 - iv. # of children returning to out-of-home care during the month
 - v. # of children unsuccessfully discharged from the program during the month

- g. It is expected that each reunification or placement in a permanent living environment will be supported by services to support the placement. Concretely, it is an expectation that at least 70% of assigned children be placed in a permanent living environment within six months of admission and that 80% of those children remain stable at the six-month anniversary of their discharge from the program. Outcomes will be tracked by the OPUOM Contract Monitoring Unit of DFCS and reviewed with all providers. Providers accomplishing a higher rate of stabilization may receive additional funding to broaden their capacity, and providers producing at lower levels may receive a reduction in funding up to and including suspension from the permanency program.
- h. All children participating in this program must be approved by the Office of Provider Utilization and Outcomes Management.
- i. Payment Plan – Providers will receive incentive payments for achieving certain milestones in the life of a case. Incentive payments *could* total \$35,000. The milestones and their respective payments are defined in the following way:

Milestone 1 – Step-down to permanent placement (enrollment in school, parental supervision and safety plan submitted) – Payment - \$12,000

Milestone 2 – Discharge from permanency program (school or vocational attendance 80% of the time during the past 30 days, zero incidents of serious physical aggression the past 30 days) – Payment - \$14,000

Milestone 3 – 90 days post-discharge from the permanency program (assuming child remains in permanent placement) - \$9,000

The determination of milestone accomplishment should be a collaborative effort between the provider and DFCS. In the case of disagreement with respect to the accomplishment of a goal the Director of OPUOM will make the final determination.

- j. Provider will submit invoice to OPUOM no later than 15 business days following the last day of each calendar month. Any invoice submitted later than 15 business days following the last day of the month will not be paid by the Department.

RBWO Permanency Program Agency Readiness Evaluation

Provider Agency

Provider Name	Provider Address	Contact Person
Number of Targeted Children for Permanency Program	Number of Direct Care Staff assigned to the Program (FTE's)	Number of Leadership Staff assigned to the Program (FTE's)

Organizational Capacity

Does your agency employ any sub-contractors that are assigned to the permanency program?	Does your organization have the financial security to operate your permanency program for six months unfunded?
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

Please explain (if sub-contractors are used please detail your efforts to monitor their work):

Programmatic Evaluation

Is your agency using an evidence-based model in the permanency program?	Have the appropriate staff been trained in the model you are using?
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Please explain:	

Staff completing the form

Date