



Department of Human Services

Child Welfare: Foster Care Program

Statewide Strategic Plan
2020 – 2024

Foster Care Program
May 18, 2020





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Message from the Foster Care Program Staff


The Oregon DHS Child Welfare Foster Care Program is a sub-section of the Office of Child Welfare Programs and works to uphold the department's values and mission of service to Oregon's children and families. Our goal is to advance the Foster Care Program with the lens toward disproportionality, institutional racism, inclusivity and equity. Through our strategic development of programmatic services, we strive to ensure that children and families touched by child welfare and those that are providing the service of foster care are supported and lead with the most current, forward leading, holistic and inclusive thinking. This program works cross-programmatically with all other Oregon DHS Child Welfare Programs. We are a program of highly dedicated professionals who continue to develop Oregon's strong foster care program.

The Foster Care Program staff focus on the programmatic work regarding the recruitment, retention, and certification of family foster parents and relative caregivers, as well as providing support of and consultation to field staff. In addition, the program includes a small mobile certification and training team which works to train current and prospective foster parents and certify waiting general applicant families.

Overall Goals/Objectives of Foster Care Program:


The Foster Care Program seeks to provide effective program development and consultation to field offices in order to:

- Have clear and consistent statewide certification processes
- Have a certification process that is equitable and culturally agile, including a home study model which supports the assessment of a diverse pool of applicants who reflect the backgrounds and can meet the needs of a diverse range of youth
- Have a home study model which provides a check on personal biases
- Have a certification process that supports relative caregivers
- Have a system that provides on-going support and resources to certified families
- Deliver evidence-based training and supports to foster parents to ensure they have the skills, confidence and community to provide high-quality substitute care over the long term.
- Have certification staff that are well-trained for certification work
- Have an effective, consistent training curriculum for applicants and certified families
- Have an ongoing caregiver training curriculum meeting the needs of both foster parents and relative caregivers

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- Provide certification and training in a flexible and mobile way to applicants and certified families in offices throughout the state in order to move waiting families through the certification and training processes.
 - Have a statewide, effective Retention and Recruitment Plan (Retention/Recruitment team has a separate Strategic Plan)

The unit is led by the Foster Care and Youth Transitions Manager (who also oversees the Independent Living/Youth Transitions unit) and has 3 components:

- Policy Analysts/Foster Care Coordinators
 - Consultation to field staff, including certifiers/caseworkers; supervisors; Program and District Managers
 - Organize Certifier/Adoption worker Triannual gatherings
 - Administrative Rule development, writing, amending
 - Development, writing and review of procedure
 - Legislative tracking/analysis
 - Caregiver Training Design
 - Programmatic Training
 - Quality Assurance Reviews
 - Audit Prep
 - Stateside implementation and Coordination of KEEP Program
 - Current Staff as of 04/2020:
 - 5 Regional Foster Care Coordinators
 - 1 Central Office Foster Care Coordinator
 - 1 Caregiver Training Foster Care Coordinator
 - 1 KEEP Coordinator
- Mobile Certification Team
 - Coordination of Quality Assurance process (supervisor)
 - Coordinate with child welfare districts on certification and training needs
 - Statewide travel to districts to complete Foundations Training
 - Statewide travel to districts to complete the certification process for waiting foster parent applicants
 - Current 4/2020 Staff:
 - 1 Supervisor
 - 3 Certifiers
 - 2 Caregiver Trainers

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- Retention and Recruitment Team
 - Development of Local Retention and Recruitment Plans through data analysis and collaboration with stakeholders, community partners and staff
 - Development of Community Action Teams to consult and develop culturally informed and customer centered retention and recruitment initiatives
 - Provide education, training and coaching to staff for improved service delivery and family engagement
 - Current 4/2020 Staff:
 - 1 Manager
 - 4 Regional Policy Analysts/Champions
 - 1 Central Office Policy Analyst/Champion
 - To be hired: 10 Regional Policy Analysts/Champions


Alignment with Child Welfare’s Vision for Transformation

The Foster Care Program currently has projects underway that supports Child Welfare’s Vision for Transformation. Of the eight aspects for transformation, Foster Care Program’s work emphasizes around:

3. “If foster care is needed, ensure it will be family-based, time-limited, culturally-responsive, and designed to better stabilize families, rather than just serving as a placement for a child,
4. Establish that children and youth, and young adults will be placed in the care of family, friends, and neighbors whenever possible, and help children maintain connections to their cultures, communities, and Tribes; and
8. Guarantee our workforce is supported and has the resources, training, coaching, and services needed to support our children, families and communities”.

The Child-Specific workstream recently completed their research around the value of Kin/Kith Caregiver placements for children in our care. The research findings, along with what was learned from a site visit in Pennsylvania resulted in recommendations to how Oregon can do better with the certification process for Kin/Kith Caregiver placements. The next step from this workstream is to look at the certification process from start to finish and determine how Oregon can improve the way we work with Kin/Kith Caregivers by reviewing Lessons Learned, defining Current State and determining Future State of where Oregon should be heading.

The current work in standing up a Retention and Recruitment Unit within the Foster Care Program stresses the importance of retaining current foster families through engagement and empowerment. In addition, when recruiting for foster families,



Retention and Recruitment Champions (Champions, hereafter) are trained and coached to recruit families from communities that reflects the demographics of where a child/ren is from. Targeted recruitment of foster families is intentional to hopefully decrease the disproportionate services that exists within our current system, but more importantly, to reach the goal of ensuring that a child is placed in a home that is reflective of the community the child is from as well as aligning with the needs and values of that child.


It is important that Champions are supported with an agency focusing on workforce development. To better support foster families and foster children and youth in care, Champions, along with field staff, will need current knowledge and training, on-going coaching and mentoring, along with a supportive learning and development frameworks to continue the work of supporting families holistically. This means that Child Welfare staff will need knowledge and skills that will allow for agility, flexibility and adaptability when working with children and families – a lessons learned from the current COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has forced our staff to shift into a “new” normal of work when supporting and providing services to children and families, which reflects the staff’s abilities to pivot and eagerness to learn to continue providing support and services.


The Foster Care Program is making strides in supporting:


- Guiding Principle 1: Supporting Families and Promoting Prevention, particularly around “Foster Family Recruitment, Training, Support and Retention: Oregon is making significant investments in the recruitment, training, support and retention of foster families to meet the needs of our children, youth, young adults and communities”;
- Guiding Principle 2: Enhancing our Staff Infrastructure around “A Supported Workforce: Improved onboarding employees and Implement RiSE”; and
- Guiding Principle 3: Utilizing Data with Continuous Quality Improvement Systems around “Continuous Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance systems evaluation and treatment services based on evidence-informed data.”


The following workstreams supports these principles by focusing on

- strengthening and preserving connections to family and community, engaging with the community, being culturally responsive, becoming trauma-informed, and working from a trauma-informed lens by using a strengths-based approach;
- recruiting and hiring new staff, workforce development, retention and succession-planning practices; and

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- clear, uniform metrics that can produce meaningful and valuable data in a timely and accurate manner to inform improvement opportunities, shifting the way we do work to a data-driven agency in measuring progress, outcomes and metrics relevant to children, families, agency partners and Tribes.
 - The creation and development of the Retention and Recruitment Unit, inclusive of hiring Retention and Recruitment Champions specifically assigned to each District. Hiring is intentional to ensure that the Champions hired locally, understand the interconnectedness of their community to other community partners, Tribes and the agency. The Retention and Recruitment Unit is developing a structure in supporting the Champions' use of data and metrics to better understand the gaps, address the needs and propose solutions with actionable outcomes of success. These metrics will be used to guide conversations with the agency and community partners to not only support families, but also focus on targeted recruitments that reflects the dynamics and demographics of where the child/ren (in our care) comes from. The Retention and Recruitment Unit Manager is intentional in how the Champions are on-boarded. Coaching is a part of the on-boarding structure where a newly hired Champion is paired with a current Champion and mentoring is provided through this collaborative effort and Thursday Learning Labs. Since all Champions will be sitting locally in their district areas, it was imperative that the unit structure emphasizes on the interconnected relationship in supporting one another as a team.
 - The Retention and Recruitment Unit is updating current tools to assist in gathering data and metrics specific to their district area to help inform the work that needs to be done and how to do it. The tools are the Oregon Foster Family Retention and Recruitment Support tool which also includes the Community Action Team and an evaluation section that can be used to assess progress at six-month intervals. The information collected in this tool becomes the District's specific Retention and Recruitment Plan, which the Champions will assist in documenting and supporting the work. It is imperative to note that with the use of data and metrics to make better informed decisions in supporting local communities, community partners and Tribes, Champions are in need of a workforce development plan that not only supports their training needs but the needs to increase their skills set and knowledge as their work continues to expand, particularly around targeted recruitment inclusive of an equity, customer service and use of the RiSE framework in approaching the work.

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- Currently, with the support of a Data Analyst from the Child Welfare’s Project Management Office (CW-PMO), more data and metrics are being pulled from various sources – OR-Kids, data warehouses, surveys, etc. – to help inform Foster Care’s work overall. Having the Data Analysts support has been extremely helpful in understanding the current work as well as using the data to inform how to do the work differently. For example, the Temporary Certification Dashboard was a collaborative effort between CW-PMO’s Data Analyst and the Foster Care Program to inform the number of temporary certifications exist and the length of time from start to finish in getting a foster family certified. With the data being pulled into PowerBI, this will allow Foster Care Coordinators to review the data for the districts they provide consultation to easily understand where the gaps/needs are and what support that local branch or District may need. As we move forward to a “new” normal, continued learning opportunities to learn these new skills is important in the way a “new” business operation will exist moving forward.
 - The Child-Specific workstream has concluded on their research that a child thrives at a much higher rate when they are placed with a Kin/Kith caregiver relative. A project request stemming from this workstream is to review the current certification process and assess points in the process where the agency has opportunities to improve and empower Kin/Kith Caregiver Relatives. This request will review the certification process from start to finish, identify the issues or barriers and provide a recommendation on how to be more inclusive with Kin/Kith Caregiver relatives, inclusive of our local Tribes and communities and working closely with the Office of Equity and Multicultural Services office to ensure the recommendation is inclusive from an equity lens. This ensures that the work is intentional in including voices and experiences from families, communities and groups who are most impacted by the current certification process the agency has in place.
 - For valuable impact to be made, training will also need to be looked at. Currently, the Orientations Training is being worked on to be readily accessible via an online format. The Orientations Training provides an overview of what to expect if an individual or family decides foster care is an interest and would like to pursue. The Orientations Training would provide the foundation of “what to expect” should becoming a foster family become an interest. The Orientation Training, just like the Foundations Curriculum Re-Design project, is developing curriculum that is inclusive of and representative of the families we serve, as well as developing with trauma-informed care and a strengths-based approach in mind.

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- Currently, the Foundations Curriculum Re-Design project is a collaborative partnership with the Portland State University co-op, focusing their re-design of 30 total hours (15 hours online modules and 15 hours in-person), based on feedback gathered in the last few years to improve the curriculum as well as accessibility for foster families. As mentioned above, the curriculum is designed and developed from a trauma-informed lens using a strength-based framework. The modules are as follows:
 - Module 1: Introduction to Caregiving
 - Module 2: Supporting Children Impacted by Trauma
 - Module 3: Promoting Healthy Sexuality
 - Module 4: Supporting and Promoting Racial Equity and Inclusion
 - Module 5: Using a Strengths-Based Approach to Support Reunification and Lifelong Connections
 - Current collaborative work is in progress in the ways Foster Families are being supported. This includes the expansion of Every Child statewide, assisting in the recruiting process as well as collaborating with the agency on their data collection efforts, providing information that will assist with recruiting families or if needed, targeted recruiting for families that aligns with the child/ren’s needs and demographics.
 - Oregon Social Learning Center Developments, Inc. (ODI, hereafter), operates KEEP and is currently expanding KEEP statewide as part of a collaborative effort with the agency. KEEP is a foster family and caregiver relative support framework, focusing on providing courses that helps coach and mentor through the foster parenting process. As COVID began to hit Oregon, KEEP has been instrumental in successfully shifting all their in-person sessions onto a virtual platform using Zoom – a platform that allows for ease of collaboration with the families they support – within a two-week period. This ability to shift in such a short period of time to ensure continuity of services and support is provided to foster families and caretaker relatives is due to the Tele-KEEP versions, provided to rural areas.
 - Current work is being focused around the SAFE Home Study Assessment tool. This workstream is focused on reviewing the SAFE Home Study Assessment from an equity lens as well as opportunities for improvement around how the assessment is utilized in the way the “new” normal of work will look like. This includes collaboration with the Consortium on Children, field staff and supervisors, Tribes, Foster Parents, Foster Youth and other community partners that will help inform the recommendations. Once updated to meet the needs of Oregon’s “new” normal of work, the SAFE Home Study



Assessment tool will be used as the foundation on how to inform, train, coach and mentor the workforce, from staff to supervisors and so on. The training will focus on using the assessment as a guide on how to ask the questions or how to conduct the dialogue, but mostly, to utilize the tool from a trauma-informed lens using a strengths-based approach. This workstream will require collaborative efforts from other impacted units, such as Permanency, the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children and Child Welfare Training Unit.

As the Foster Care Program continue to work through their projects and workstreams, each of these efforts will move forward in support of and alignment with Child Welfare's Vision for Transformation.



Strategic Goals, Objectives and Strategies

The Foster Care Program's efforts falls within four overall strategic goals to improve the goals of the Foster Care Program which includes retention of currently certified foster parents and recruitment of prospective foster parents; and resources in providing on-going support to Foster Parents. These strategic goals are:

- Strategic Goal 1: Improve the Foster Parent Certification Process
- Strategic Goal 2: Improve Foster Parent Support
- Strategic Goal 3: Improve the Foster Parent Recruitment Process
- Strategic Goal 4: Collaboration and Improvement Opportunities

Each of the Foster Care Program's strategic goals are supported by objectives and strategies to support Child Welfare's mission of ensuring that "Every child and family is empowered to live independent, safe and healthy lives" by:

- Increasing the retention rate of foster parents
- Monitoring the rate at which new foster parents are recruited and the capacity of local offices to assess new applicants
- Quality, evaluation, and fidelity of the Foundations training statewide
- Reviewing the certification process to determine if processes are efficient and effective
- Improve foster parent supports by proposing a Respite Care Program Business Plan
- Increasing satisfaction of Foster Parents through a collaborative partnership



Strategic Goal 1: Improve Certification of Foster Parents

Child Welfare: Foster Care Program is making significant investments in the certification process of foster parents. The Foster Care Program is working on several initiatives to make the certification process more streamlined, equitable, consistent and timely statewide, to improve the ability of certified families to meet the safety, health and well-being needs of children who experience foster care. This includes work provided around consultation with and trainings provided to support field staff.

Objective 1: Foundations Curriculum Redesign, Development and Evaluation


The current pre-service Foundations Training for current and prospective Foster Parents was developed over ten years ago through a partnership with Portland State University's (PSU) Child Welfare Partnership program. Since implementing the curriculum, there has been no consistent review of the content and delivery to ensure for consistency with the agency's current mission, values and goals, quality and fidelity assessment.

Strategies:

- Collaborate and strategize with stakeholders and workgroups throughout the re-design process of the Foundations curriculum
- Developing new curriculum that meets the needs of the population of children and young adults in foster care
- Developing online curriculum to allow families to take training on their own time
- Participate in larger Learning Management System workgroup to ensure accessibility for Foster Parents statewide as well as tracking of trainings started, in progress or completed to consolidate training records
- Redesign and develop course evaluations in partnership with PSU's Child Welfare Partnership to assess content, delivery and feedback
 - 15 hours in-person content
 - 15 hours online content
- Implement evaluation measures of online and classroom content, trainer's facilitation skills and delivery, and timeliness of classroom offerings; measures help inform training content and support offered to trainers

Performance Goals:

- Increased number of foster parents completing trainings timely
- Progress of training tracked for timely completion
- Improved data collection of foster parents completing/not completing training

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- Course Evaluations to collect data on content and delivery of trainings
 - Curriculum updated regularly to align with current policies and procedures
 - Standardization of training content and delivery to support fidelity statewide

Project Health:

Stage: Planning

Status: Off Track

Risk Level: High

The project is two-fold, updating the Foundations Curriculum as well ensuring a viable Learning Management System that is easily accessible by current and potential Foster Parents. The project is Off Track and at a High risk due to delays in getting responses that impacts the project moving forward.

Projected Timeline & Milestone:

Timeline: January 2019 – July 2021

Milestone: Upcoming milestone is to finalize draft of key content and learning objectives by 02/27/2020, with curriculum development to begin 02/28/2020. Curriculum development will occur between February 2020 and November 2020 with multiple vetting points with Subject Matter Experts from internal DHS Child Welfare and Community.

Objective 2: Research the Effectiveness of the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) Home Study Model and Research other Home Study Practice Models that can better serve our families

The Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) is a home study methodology that provides a suite of comprehensive home study tools and practices for the description and evaluation of potential foster and adoptive families. Currently, the SAFE model is being reviewed through an equity lens with collaboration with the Office of Equity and Multicultural Services (OEMS) and is also being assessed around value-impact to the foster parents.

Strategies:

- Partner with Casey Foundations to provide current evidence-based research on what other practice models are being utilized
- Collaborate with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) manager to gather any additional research or practice models
- Collaborate with ICPC, Permanency, and Mobile Certification units to ensure all lens are represented for the SAFE Home Study assessment or review of another tool



Performance Goals:

- Draft Proposal to Child Welfare Leadership, recommending the most effective and efficient Home Study or practice model for Oregon's utilization

Project Health:

Stage: Initiating

Status: Off Track

Risk Level: High

The project is Off Track and at a High risk because it was determined that the project workstream required representatives outside of the Foster Care Program. The project was re-initiated in January 2020 to also include project leads from the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), Permanency and the Mobile Certification and Training Team.

Projected Timeline:

Timeline: December 2019 – June 2020

Milestone: Determined the right representatives for this project workstream, upcoming milestone is to discuss opportunities of improvement to the current SAFE Home Study Assessment tool or other practice models

Objective 3: Review the current Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) Home Study Model with an Equity Lens and provide Recommendations

The Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) Home Study Assessment has questions that may inadvertently create a disproportionate impact to current and potential foster parents. The Office of Equity and Multicultural Services (OEMS) was tasked to assist in reviewing the SAFE Home Study Assessment and provide recommendations.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with OEMS to review SAFE Home Study tools and templates with an equity lens, develop surveys, conduct focus groups and provide recommendations
- Gather input from certifiers and certification supervisors through a Staff User Feedback Survey.
- Conduct focus groups representative of certifiers and certification supervisors, foster parents, Tribal partners and foster youths to gather feedback



Performance Goals:

- Recommendation Plan highlighting areas of improvement to the SAFE Home Study Assessment tool in terms of language use in questionnaires; training and support to practitioners of this model (both supervision and home study writers)

Project Health:

Stage: Planning

Status: Off Track

Risk Level: High

The project is Off Track and at a High risk due to workload capacities.

Projected Timeline:

Timeline: January 2019 – June 2020

Milestone: Pre-Focus Group Survey sent, results gathered and will be analyzed; in process of drafting and finalizing Staff Feedback Survey to be sent out to staff in May 2020; in process of drafting Focus Group Questions for Staff, Foster Parents, and Foster Youth

Objective 4: Assessment of Child-Specific Certification Practices

Oregon Child Welfare affirms the value of kin/kith placements for children. The Department of Human Services (DHS) recognizes the importance of preserving the family ties and relationship of children in the legal custody of DHS. Kin/Kith relationships are important to a child’s sense of identity and belonging. Currently, the same process utilized to assess and support general applicant foster parents is used for kin/kith placements. We are assessing our current practices and reviewing other Kinship Care practice models that may better suit Oregon’s children and families.

Strategies:

- Work with Casey Foundations to provide current evidence-based research on other Kinship Care practice models being utilized across the nation
- Research and review kinship care practice models and provide a comparison matrix of viable options for Oregon

Performance Goals:

- Draft Recommendation Plan to submit to Child Welfare Leadership with recommendations of practical and tangible shifts in practice to increase the number of children placed with kinship caregivers and to increase the satisfaction and support felt by kinship caregivers.



Objective 6: Review and Revise the Criminal Administrative Rule

The Oregon Administrative Rules regarding criminal history background checks have historically lived within a different program area. Recently they were transferred to the foster care program. The rules have not been holistically reviewed and amended in several years. A thorough review of the rule set to review the process, the accuracy of the crimes in the rule, and the process is needed.

Strategies:

- Create a workgroup to review the OAR relating to criminal background checks.
- Review procedures and criminal history tools.
- Create a draft rule, procedure and tools.
- Hold a review advisory committee (RAC) to review draft materials.
- Finalize OAR and Procedure.

Performance Goals:

- Implement recommendation plan
- Implementation of the standardized process and protocols

Project Health:

Stage: Not Started

Status: On Track

Risk Level: Low

Projected Timeline:

Timeline: May 2020 – December 2020

Milestone: none identified



Strategic Goal 2: Improve Foster Parent Support

Foster parents could benefit more with support from the community, non-profits and Child Welfare when experiences the challenges within the foster care system. Initial, ongoing and consistent support could help ensure better retention. Child Welfare is working on several initiatives to improve the needed support.

Objective 1: Improve On-going Training for Foster Parents

Foster Parents would benefit from consistent offerings of on-going training menu over time, to help improve skills and capabilities. Currently, on-going training opportunities are limited.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with foster parents, current or former young adults in foster care, and other community, internal and external stakeholders in determining needs for on-going trainings
- Collaborate with stakeholders and workgroups in determining and prioritizing needs for on-going trainings
- Collaborate with either PSU Child Welfare Partnership or Child Welfare Training Unit to develop on-going trainings
- Review evaluation findings from KEEP helping inform ongoing training needs

Performance Goals:

- Develop on-going trainings (in-person or online modules) on topics recommended by Foster Parents current or former young adults in foster care, and stakeholders/workgroups

Project Health:

Stage: Not Started


Status: Not Started

Risk Level: Low

Projected Timeline:

Timeline: January 2021 – June 2021

Milestone: none identified



Objective 2: Research opportunities or work with the Employee-Related Day Care (ERDC) Program for Childcare Payments for Foster Parents

The Employee-Related Day Care program provides subsidies for low-income working families to help pay for day care costs. Child Welfare is looking to partner with ERDC to extend subsidies to foster care parents, so that they can more readily take advantage of day care, as needed.

Strategies:

- Determine if Foster Parents can qualify for ERDC for work-related child care
- Determine budgetary resources or constraints based on Federal and State policies

Performance Goals:

- ERDC requirements are reviewed for specific employed Foster Parent requirements
- Solidifies another resource of support for Foster Parent providing care to Oregon's children when needing child care assistance

Project Health:

Stage: Not Started

Status: Not Started

Risk Level: Low

Projected Timeline:

Timeline: May 2020 – July 2021

Milestone: none identified

Objective 3: Research and draft a Business Plan for a formalized Respite Care Program

When one foster parent temporarily cares for another family's foster children, this is respite foster care. It gives the children's original foster parent a bit of a break – a respite. The first step to building a respite care system in Oregon is to do research and build a business case to determine what sort of system might work best. – re-word to reflect that we're not actually building one but researching opportunities for one

Strategies:

- Collaborate with Casey Foundation to provide research on what other practice models are being utilized with other States
- Inquire current processes followed in the Field for respite care
- Inquire a legal opinion to determine if statutory rules allow for specific certification for Respite Care Providers



Performance Goals:

- Draft a Business Plan with a comparison matrix recommending the best option for utilization in Oregon

Project Health:

Stage: Executing

Status: On Track

Risk Level: High

This project is Off Track and High risk due to the strict timeline due date of March 2020.

This project is in transition to the closing phase. The project team met with Child Welfare Leadership on April 17, 2020 and was not able to move forward with a decision due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Per the Alvarez & Marsal Recommendations, submitting the final version of the Business Plan met the outcome of this workstream. However, the research and information gathered to draft the Business Plan allowed collaborative conversations to occur with Treatment Services, in determining how respite can be utilized beyond Foster Parent support. Current and future budgetary restraints impact how to proceed moving forward should the business plan be approved, and the next phase of implementation is considered. The project is scheduled to close May 2020, with the hope of working closely with Treatment Services with the research and information gathered. Currently, this collaborative partnership may be on hold depending on future budgetary decisions.

Projected Timeline:

Timeline: December 2019 – May 2020

Milestone: Respite Care Program Business Plan is in final draft and will be submitted by end of May 2020.

Objective 4: Implement KEEP Program to support Foster Parents Statewide

KEEP is an evidence-based model that provides support, training and community building to foster parents. The pilot began in 2017 in the Portland Metro Area with success with the goal of implementing KEEP statewide. KEEP is an interactive support group for foster/kin families with an evidence-based framework on parenting strategies; KEEP operates in-person and Tele-KEEP, virtual settings in Eastern Oregon. KEEP is currently operating in 24 counties and have had over 483 parents enrolled.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with the KEEP Program (Oregon Social Learning Center Developments, Inc.) for statewide implementation



Performance Goals:

- Successful implementation of KEEP statewide
- Status as of 02/2020:
 - 18 current KEEP Groups (Options Counseling PDX, Oregon Community Programs & OSLC)
 - Participating foster parents in 16 counties
 - In-person groups in D1, D2, D5, D15 & D16
 - Tele-KEEP virtual groups contain mixed participants from multiple remote/geographically dispersed counties
 - 4 Contracted Agencies in mid/late Readiness Phase (Hiring, Training, Recruiting/Actively Taking Referrals)
 - Groups starting in late March/April for D3, D6, D8, D10
 - Contracted Foster Parent Recruiters trained in D3, D6, D8 and D10* (*2/18/2020).
 - D3, D6, D8 actively taking referrals and enrolling families
 - Group leaders in training Feb/March/April
- Tele-KEEP Spanish Language Groups available Statewide
- Making in-roads with Tribal partner collaborations (Grand Ronde, Warm Springs)
- Contracts signed with culturally specific providers, moving into Readiness Phase
 - Centro Cultural (Spanish-language groups) in Washington County & Portland Metro
 - NAYA (Native American culturally specific groups) in Portland Metro

Project Health:

Stage: Executing

Status: On Track

Risk Level: Low

Projected Timeline:

Timeline: July 2020 – July 2021

Milestone: Tele-Keep available in Eastern Oregon, operating KEEP in 24 counties and over 483 parents participating; due to COVID, KEEP has successfully transitioned all KEEP sessions virtually within a 2-week period to better support parents during the pandemic



Strategic Goal 3: Improve Recruitment for Foster Parents

Child Welfare is working on several initiatives designed to improve foster parent recruitment, both increasing the number and diversity of candidates to better suit the needs of children in the system.

Objective 1: Design an Online Portal for Foster Parent Inquiry, Application and Tracking

Child Welfare is working on an online portal that will make it easier for staff to track foster parent application as they move through the process. It will make it easier to quantify the number of applicants at various stages in the process.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with OR-Kids to develop an Online Portal for Foster Parent

Performance Goals:

- Tracking of application status and number of applicants
- Future goal to have access to online training via portal

Project Health:

Stage: Not Started Status: Not Started Risk Level: Low

This is the second phase the OR-Kids team will be working on. The first phase, Home Inquiry is tentatively scheduled for implementation for April 2020, with the planning of this second phase occurring in March 2020. The tentative implementation for the second phase is scheduled for Fall 2020. The third phase is yet to be determined as there are a few items the OR-Kids team will need prioritization recommendations from Child Welfare Leadership; however, this third phase is tentatively scheduled to begin Fall 2020.


Projected Timeline:

Timeline: March 2020 – June 2021

Milestone: none identified

Objective 2: Create and Utilize Geo-Mapping to focus on Recruitment

Geo-Mapping tools can help Child Welfare identify where to focus foster parent recruitment efforts by highlighting high-risk populations and demographics. More



targeted recruitment can ensure better matching opportunities between children and foster parents.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with the Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics & Implementation (ORRAI) to develop Geo-mapping (GIS system) tools
- Collaborate with OR-Kids to develop a process to effectively use the Geo-Mapping tool in meeting the needs represented of the demographics of a location/area

Performance Goals:

- Geo-mapping tool utilized to identify characteristics and demographics of a location to meet the needs of a child in care within their own community

Project Health:

Stage: Planning

Status: Off Track

Risk Level: High

This tool has gone through various iterations over the course of several years. There are current conversations happening with the Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics and Implementation (ORRAI) to revive and modernize the tool for use by the Retention and Recruitment Champions to assist with targeted recruitment.

Projected Timeline:

Timeline: June 2013 – July 2021

Milestone: Data requested for three data sets for first phase; overall goal is to connect mapping tool to data warehouse for automatic updates

Objective 3: Implement Every Child Statewide

The Every Child initiative brings awareness and education around foster care in Oregon, supports foster parents and foster children through donations, volunteering and recruits highly committed foster parents to care for vulnerable children. The program has had a presence in 17 of 36 counties and is now being expanded statewide.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with Every Child for statewide implementation

Performance Goals:

- Successful implementation of Every Child statewide



Project Health:

Stage: Not Started

Status: Not Started

Risk Level: Low

Projected Timeline:

Timeline: July 2016 – November 2021

Milestone: none identified

Objective 4: Create and Develop the Foster Parent Retention and Recruitment Unit (Hiring and On-boarding the Foster Parent Retention and Recruitment Champions)

Foster Parent Recruitment Champions are managed out of Central Office in Salem, Oregon, however, Champions are out-stationed in local Child Welfare branches to build action teams and develop targeted recruitment action plans for their District and county areas.

Strategies:

- Hire all 16 Champions by April 2020
- Successfully on-board all 16 Champions by June 2020
- Development of Retention and Recruitment Unit structure and procedures
- Collaborate with the Retention and Recruitment Program Manager to finalize the Retention and Recruitment Statewide Plan (stems from OFFRRS Tool)
- Develop a 6-month Retention and Recruitment Champions Competency Evaluation

Performance Goals:


- All 16 Champions successfully hired and on-boarded, out-stationed in local Child Welfare branches and communities
- All 16 Champions fully competent in collaborating with local Child Welfare branches and community partners to draft the District-level Diligent Retention and Recruitment Action Plan and Community Action Team Plan
- Retention and Recruitment standard operating procedures finalized for use by May 2020
- Retention and Recruitment Statewide Plan finalized for submission by May 2020
- Retention and Recruitment Champions Competency Evaluation finalized for use by May 2020

Project Health:

Stage: Executing

Status: Off Track

Risk Level: High



This project is At Risk due to hiring the last 10 Champions at a quicker pace compared to the strategic phased hiring for each District. Interviews are currently being conducted to hire 4 Champions by the beginning or middle of March 2020, bringing the total number of hired Champions to 7. A vacancy recruitment for the last 8 Champions was announced nationwide the last week of February 2020, with anticipated interviews to occur mid-March 2020 and position offers to occur the beginning to middle of April 2020. All 15 Champions will be on-boarded via a “training academy” method starting the first week of June 2020, with on-going support structured as a Coach/Mentee – current Champions partnered up with the newly hired Champions.

UPDATE: As of April 2020, agency hiring focused solely on positions considered to be “Essential” in supporting the agency operations during the COVID pandemic. Another request for hire of the last 10 Champions was requested and are awaiting a response.

The structure Oregon Foster Parent Retention and Recruitment Support (OFFRRS) Tool will be used to inform the Retention and Recruitment Statewide Plan and vice versa. The Retention and Recruitment Statewide Plan will address two high-level objectives for each District to achieve, in addition to additional objectives and goals identified by the District. The current draft of the Retention and Recruitment Statewide Plan, stemming from the OFFRRS Tool, is being updated with an anticipated final draft to be submitted in May of 2020. **Please see Appendix D attachment for the current draft of the OFFRRS Tool.**

Projected Timeline:

Timeline: April 2019 – June 2020


Milestone: Next 4 Champion positions offered, hired on with a start date first week to mid-March and vacancy recruitment announced by end of February 2020

Objective 5: Create a Standardized Recruitment Policy

A standardized Recruitment Policy will provide detailed instruction to the field at the branch-level responsibilities in the area of foster parent recruitment, aligning statewide and local branch-level goals.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with Retention and Recruitment Champions, community partners and field staff to determine current state and future state maps

- 
- Develop a standardized process for statewide use, with protocols to outline the steps for each process step

Performance Goals:

- Standardized process in alignment with agency policies and procedures
- Implementation of the standardized process and protocols

Project Health:

Stage: Planning, currently stalled Status: On Track Risk Level: Low

This project is stalled as it was not determined as a priority. Project will resume July 2020.

Projected Timeline:

Timeline: January 2020 – December 2020

Milestone: none identified

Objective 6: Implement the Oregon Foster Parent Recruitment Retention and Support (OFFRRS) Diligent Recruitment Planning Tool

Child Welfare is developing a data-informed diligent recruitment tool, designed for local districts to create action plans for targeted recruitment, increasing retention and support, and building a culture reflective of customer service concepts.

Strategies:

- Develop the OFFRRS Tool in alignment to Oregon’s policies, procedures and demographics to inform the creation of the Diligent Retention and Recruitment Action Plans
- Develop the structure of the Diligent Retention and Recruitment Action Plan (stems from the OFFRRS Tool)
- Develop the Community Action Team tool (stems from the OFFRRS Tool) to assist in identifying and building collaborative relationships with local community partners and agencies
- Develop the 6-month Diligent Retention and Recruitment Evaluation (review of the Action Plan to determine measurable outcomes or impacts every 6 months)
- Develop the Customer Service Model Training in alignment to Oregon’s policies, procedures and demographics



Performance Goals:

- Implementation of
 - OFFRRS Tool
 - Diligent Retention and Recruitment Action Plan
 - Community Action Team Tool
 - Customer Service Model Training delivered to internal staff and potentially, community partners
 - Diligent Retention and Recruitment Evaluation

The OFFRRS Tool will be used to develop a baseline for each district and provides a high-level view of each District's demographics, characteristics and opportunities for improvement, in terms of filling the needs and gaps for targeted recruitment, building community partnership and identifying support or additional resources to current and potential foster parents.

The Diligent Retention and Recruitment Action Plan stems from the OFFRRS Tool to consider the "Next Steps" after identifying the needs and gaps for the District. The Diligent Retention and Recruitment Action Plan will have at minimum, two objectives to achieve that stems from the Statewide Retention and Recruitment Plan, while also allowing the flexibility of identifying objectives the District would like to focus on.

Both of these tools feeds into the Community Action Team Tool, which identifies current and potential community partners to build relationships with, develop collaborative opportunities to assist in meeting the needs or filling the gaps and identifying opportunities of resources and supports to ensure the placement of a child is within the community the child is from. This tool places the Retention and Recruitment Champion in a liaison position between the agency and community partners. The action team will consist of DHS leadership, community partners, foster care agencies, business partners and Foster Parent Association reps, among others.

All these tools will be utilized and conducted from the Customer Service Model. The training will be delivered to internal staff, and potentially, to community partners. Operating from this lens allows opportunities to enhance retention and recruitment practices through a customer service approach, focusing on empathy, active listening and respect. The model utilizes the PRO Framework – Process, Relationship and Organizational Culture – to assess the response time in a consistent and efficient manner, that builds on mutual trust and respect to engaging families and foster parents



in partnership throughout the journey, that should give way to shifting the organizational culture that addresses the needs of both staff and families.

The Diligent Retention and Recruitment Evaluation is an additional tool developed to look at the progress a District makes at an every 6-month period. The tool is utilized to help track measurable outcomes and the progress each District has made identified in their Diligent Retention and Recruitment Action Plan. The tool provides additional information to the local Retention and Recruitment Champion to provide additional support in achieving those objectives and goals if no progress has been made or progress has been delayed.

Project Health:

Stage: Executing

Status: Off Track

Risk Level: High

Projected Timeline:

Timeline: April 2019 – May 2020

Milestone: Finalized draft of tools and plans due by March 2020 with finalized versions for use to be completed by May 2020 in preparation for the June training academy

Appendices

Appendix A: Foundations Training Curriculum Development Timeline
See Attachment.

Appendix B: Respite Care Program Business Plan
See Attachment.

Appendix C: Child-Specific Certification Recommendation Plan
See Attachment.

Appendix D: Draft of Oregon Foster Family Recruitment Retention and Support (OFFRRS) Tool (the OFFRRS Tool feeds into the Retention and Recruitment Statewide Plan, see process flow below.) **See Attachment.**

Appendix E: Retention and Recruitment Tools and Plans Process Flow Map

