



New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect



Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee **2016 10th ANNUAL SORS REPORT**

Proceedings and Findings for the period of July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016



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Note: All members listed, status of membership, job titles, and organization affiliations are as of June 30, 2016.

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Introduction

On July 11, 2006, P.L. 2006, Chapter 47 was enabled which established the Department of Children and Families (DCF). This law amended numerous statutes in order to transfer a number of functions from the Department of Human Services to this new department, including the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect (“Task Force”). The bill also expanded the responsibilities and membership of the Task Force. Further, the law included provisions whereby the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P), (formerly the Division Youth and Family Services (DYFS), Staffing and Outcome Review Panel established under N.J.S.A. 30:4C-3.1 was dissolved and its roles and functions were assumed by the Task Force through the creation of a Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS).

The charge of SORS is to review staffing levels of CP&P in order to develop recommendations regarding staffing levels and the most effective methods of recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff within CP&P. In addition, the subcommittee was mandated to review CP&P’s performance in the achievement of management and client outcomes and prepare a report of its findings to the Governor and the Legislature.

Subcommittee Proceedings

SORS met on the following dates:

- July 16, 2015
- September 29, 2015
- November 10, 2015
- January 19, 2016
- March 15, 2016
- May 25, 2016

These meetings provided SORS the opportunity to discuss and assess items associated with their statutorily mandated work.

To view a copy of the meeting minutes, visit www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/boards/njtfcan/.

Summary of Activities and Focus – 2015 to 2016

SORS fulfilled its charge in 2015-16 as follows through the following comprehensive presentations and/or updates from DCF executive staff around the scope, work and strategic priorities:

- Sustainability and Exit Plan - DCF Office of the Commissioner
- DCF Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) – CP&P Staff
- NJ DCF Workforce Report - Rutgers School of Social Work
- Educational Stability - DCF Administrator, Office of Educational Support and Programs, Office of Research, Evaluation and Reporting
- DCF Resource Recruitment & Retention - Deputy Director Office of Resource Families, Licensing, Interstate and Adoption Operations along & Administrator Office of Resource Families
- DCF Manage by Data Fellows - DCF Manage by Data Fellows Coordinator

During this year, the Commissioner gave a presentation on the Sustainability and Exit Plan. SORS will be reviewing the Exit Plan and will highlight key areas to pursue for further review during the coming year.

SORS' Survey Subcommittee will examine areas identified by the most recent survey to determine if its findings meet the needs of CP&P.

Priorities of SORS

Workforce Survey

In 2011, SORS conducted a survey of CP&P employees focusing on several key areas such as training, communication, workload and supervision. The initial survey results were based on 524 responses. Realizing there were target areas that required additional attention, SORS considered, in 2014, the possibility of conducting three focus groups across the state, however, through technical assistance it was determined that the most effective and reliable way to collect follow-up data was to duplicate the original questions. A new survey was developed consisting of 25 multiple choice questions that were replicated from the 2011 survey. It was distributed to the local CP&P Offices throughout the state with a note to supervisory staff requesting support and assistance in ensuring completion compliance.

The survey was distributed to 3,121 staff and there were 634 responses for a return rate of 20.13%. It was noted that there were positive responses in terms of supervision and training, however, a concern was stated that there was a lack of flexibility by the service providers to address the specific needs of clients. Information from above does not appear to be getting down to line staff as they stated they do not feel they know what is going on with the organization.

The results of the survey were translated into recommendations for the coming year. SORS will continue to provide a voice for CP&P staff through additional surveys that will focus on the information chain of command as well as the ability of the Division to ensure contracted services can meet the unique and specific needs of their clients.

DCF Sustainability and Exit Plan

DCF's Commissioner's Office presented the Sustainability and Exit Plan to SORS. Part of the plan recommends changes to the requirements in order for the Division to be in compliance. Two changes were noted; one in the area of visitation and the other in the timeliness of Family Team Meetings. SORS will pursue both areas for further review.

Foster and Adoptive Families

Foster and Adoption Family Services (FAFS) continues to see an increase in the number of families who inquire about becoming a foster or adoptive parent. Inquirers cite various sources on how they heard about the need for foster parents, including radio, television, newspaper, internet and personal contacts. Over the past year, a variety of CP&P recruiter led initiatives have taken place, including recreational activities, presentations, information tables and faith based events. The variety of sources cited by inquirers, as well as the various types of recruiter led activities are consistent with the message of the November 2015 Recruitment and Retention presentation.

In addition, there has been a strong emphasis on retention as stated in the presentation. FAFS staff and volunteers participated in the DCF Retention Task Force to assist in the development of New Jersey's Resource Parent Retention Plan. This plan has been finalized and implementation on many of the action steps included in the plan has begun based on a report received from the Office of Resource Families.

Issues for Follow-Up in 2016 - 2017

The subcommittee identified the following priorities for in the upcoming year:

1. Complete in depth analysis of staff survey results
2. Request update from the Office of Training and Professional Development on the following:
 - cultural competence training for staff
 - outcomes of training
 - feedback to staff and supervisors on training
3. Request presentations from DCF Chief of Staff and DCF Safety Director on DCF safety initiatives
4. Request update from CP&P Office of Resource Families on the new Recruitment and Retention Plan

SORS will explore these issues to determine what oversight will be necessary to ensure that the improvements being achieved now are sustained for years to come to ensure the safety of our most vulnerable children.