



Board of Directors Meeting

February 11, 2010

Information Item

Child Welfare Advocacy Update

Item V.D.

Recommended Action:	Information Only
Issue:	Child Welfare System Update
Program:	Child Welfare Advocacy
Budget Impact:	NA
Strategic Plan Goal:	Child Maltreatment

Community Based Care Update

Eckerd Community Alternatives (ECA) and its co-located partner agencies – Directions for Mental Health, Gulf Coast Community Care and Salvation Army – will be relocating their Pinellas County offices. The offices will move from their current Honeywell location to the Spectrum Technology Park which is located on Ulmerton Road, between the intersections of Belcher and Starkey Roads, in Largo.

In an effort to improve the quality of services and professionalism, Eckerd Community Alternatives (ECA) has decided to relocate their community-based child welfare services in Pinellas County. This has been a recommendation of the Florida Department of Children and Families along with community leaders since Eckerd Community Alternatives took over the lead agency community-based care contract in 2008. The new offices will be conveniently located along bus routes, will feature larger staffing and visitation rooms for their clients, and will be co-located with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Child Protective Investigations Division.

Effective Monday, March 8, 2010, their new address will be 8550 Ulmerton Road, Suite 130, Largo, Florida 33771. ECA has indicated that all email addresses, phone numbers and fax numbers will remain the same.

Foster Parent Recruitment Project

The Foster Parent Project was initiated in 2007, when Eckerd Family Foundation began a partnership with the Youth Law Center and the Department of Children and Families in response to the use of inappropriate placements for children and youth in the child welfare system throughout the state. The overall goal of the initiative is to position Florida as a national leader in achieving standards of excellence in the quality of a home life for children who are placed in licensed foster care.

In Fiscal Year 2009-2010 the Eckerd Family Foundation and the Youth Law Center agreed to continue their financial and consultative support of the three pilots and expanded their Foster Parent Pilot Project in up to four additional Community-Based Care lead agencies. Eckerd Community Alternatives (ECA) has been selected as one of the lead agencies to participate in the expanded pilot project. Lead agencies selected for participating in the initiative are required to:

- Identify a key staff member who will be responsible leading the effort and organizing a core group of staff, community partners, foster parents, bio-parents and youth
- Analyze data to determine the needs in foster family recruitment and breakdowns in the system
- Determine what the responsibilities and attributes of successful foster parenting are
- Determine how messaging both external and internal can support successful foster parenting
- Assess the success of the effort

On September 22, 2009, representatives from Eckerd Family Foundation and the Youth Law Center met with a local project team to provide an overview of the process and gather information about our local system. Several follow-up meetings have been held since September. The next meeting is schedule on Wednesday, February 17, 2010.

Announcement of Competitive Procurement Process

Eckerd Community Alternatives (ECA) has invited all agencies with extensive experience in the delivery of child welfare case management services to submit a proposal to provide Case Management and Adoptions services to eligible children and families residing in Pinellas and Pasco Counties. The official Request for Proposal (RFP) was posted on January 26, 2010. It is their intent to award a minimum of 2 Pinellas and 1 Pasco contracts as a result of the solicitation process. The anticipated effective date of the contracts is Thursday, July 1, 2010. The total funding allocated for case management services in both Pinellas and Pasco Counties is projected to be \$11,931,038. All interested parties must submit an “intent to submit a proposal” by Friday, February 5, 2010 at 5pm. The RFP #ECACMOFY11 document is available at http://www.eckerd.org/ECA/ECA_ITN.html. The Juvenile Welfare Board has been invited to participate in the review process.