

Annual Progress and Services Report for the State of Minnesota's Child and Family Services Plan

June 2004

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I. REPORT ON PROGRESS

This report describes Minnesota's efforts to address the goals and objectives outlined in its Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for the federal fiscal year 2004. This document covers the reporting period from October 1, 2003 to September 30, 2004 and reports on the progress made in addressing the goals and objectives of the CFSP report. Additionally, a summary is provided of the progress made on the 1999 Child and Family Services Plan between October 1, 1999 and June 30, 2003.

A. Summary of Goals

The Minnesota Department of Human Services submitted the following goals in its Child and Family Services Plan on June 30, 1999.

1. **Child Safety**
Children will remain safe at home with their families, and if they must be placed out of the home, children will live in a safe environment such as foster care. Services provided to families and children will incorporate safety as a paramount consideration and will reduce the risk of harm to children. Parents will have access to regulated child care, group homes, residential treatment and child foster care that provides safe and nurturing environments.
2. **Family-Centered Services**
Families receiving services from the child welfare system will maintain as much decision-making authority as possible and will be actively involved in developing their case plans. Each family will receive help consistent with the values and beliefs of their culture and heritage.
3. **Child Well-Being**
Children receiving services from the child welfare system will experience improved outcomes as measured by one or more indicators.
4. **Permanence**
Children receiving services from the child welfare system will live in permanent families.
5. **Workforce Development**
Minnesota will have a high quality, culturally responsive workforce to deliver family-centered services to children in need of protection and to their families.
6. **Measures of Accountability**
Measures of accountability for services to children and families will be enhanced through regular reviews of the child welfare system. Providers of services will demonstrate their impact on clients in the system. Accountability will be clear at the state, county and grantee levels.

B. Progress in Accomplishing Goals

GOAL 1: CHILD SAFETY

Children will remain safe at home with their families and if they must be placed out of the home, children will live in a safe environment such as foster care. Services provided to families and children will incorporate safety as a paramount consideration and will reduce the risk of harm to children. Parents will have access to regulated child care, group homes, residential treatment and child foster care that provides safe and nurturing environments.

Child Safety Objective A:

Implement in selected counties a system to provide an alternative response to reports alleging child maltreatment. The term “alternative response” is used to describe a strength-based and community oriented approach in which county social service agencies replace traditional investigative approaches to some child maltreatment reports with family assessment and services. Alternative Response is applied to accepted child maltreatment reports that do not involve substantial child endangerment and in which families are engaged in maintaining child safety. Its goal is to keep children safe by tailoring the response to child maltreatment to the needs of the child and the family. County social service agencies coordinate with community-based agencies and tribes to provide family assessments and appropriate services.

Summary on Progress Since 1999

Alternative Response was developed in 1999 as a non-adversarial approach to child protection assessments. It was introduced as a pilot in 20 counties and by private foundations. Training was provided throughout the state on practice techniques and strategies that improve outcomes for children and families. A preliminary evaluation of the four-year pilot project showed improved outcomes for children and positive response from clients and county staff. The pilot project has concluded and Alternative Response has been implemented in all 87 Minnesota counties.

Results:

- Approximately 6,000 of Minnesota’s 17,000 accepted child maltreatment reports received an Alternative Response assessment in 2003.
- The 20-county Alternative Response pilot project concluded on December 31, 2003. Grant reimbursement related to clients enrolled in 2003 continues through June 2004. Evaluation efforts specific to the four-year pilot will continue and be concluded by October 2004.
- Statewide implementation (87 counties) of Alternative Response was achieved in February 2004.
- Statewide funding was made available for calendar year 2004 through a combination of Title IV-B-2 dollars (75 percent of the funding) and state dollars (25 percent of the funding) to provide support services for families served through the Alternative Response program.
- The Alternative Response evaluation identified greater client satisfaction, lower subsequent reporting of maltreatment and improved child and family well-being outcomes compared to a control group receiving the traditional investigative response. The Institute of Applied Research Web Site at www.iarstl.org has a detailed report of

evaluation findings.

- Technical assistance for implementing Alternative Response was regularly provided upon request or if indicated in county quality assurance reviews.
- Two expert training events were sponsored in 2003: Solution Focused Possibility Oriented Therapy and Attachment Past and Present.
- County sponsored Alternative Response consultation meetings continued and the Minnesota Department of Human Services provided technical assistance.
- Additional enhancements were made to the electronic case management system, supporting the family assessment and investigative tracks.
- Technical assistance and funding will continue for the family assessment response as maintenance of effort activity. The goal of developing an alternative response option in child protection has been accomplished and will be discontinued as a goal for the Child and Family Service Plan.

Child Safety Objective B:

Improve the safety and risk assessment processes used by Minnesota counties in the child protection system. Improvements will be demonstrated by (1) consistency of definitions and procedures across counties, (2) improved service delivery for families in the child protection system, (3) enhanced management of worker case loads and responsibilities, and (4) better documentation of community needs for administration and funding.

Summary on Progress Since 1999

An actuarial-based Structured Decision Making tool was selected for Minnesota's risk assessment tool. Initially eight counties piloted the tool to determine its effectiveness. In January 2004, the risk assessment tool was implemented statewide.

Results:

- All 87 counties are using the actuarial-based Structured Decision Making tool to document risk assessment. A companion safety tool assesses child safety. The Structured Decision Making tool is available on the Social Services Information System for all counties. Department policy staff and Social Services Information System staff coordinated training on using the tools.
- All 87 counties are employing both Alternative Response and Structured Decision Making tools. Initiation and implementation of Alternative Response and Structured Decision Making was accomplished without a mandate from the legislature, but with intensive effort by counties and the Minnesota Department of Human Services staff.
- The Child Well Being Tool was developed through an initiative of the Minnesota Department of Human Services and Olmsted County Community Services. As of January 2004, the tool was made available to all 87 counties. The tool assesses the child's physical health, emotional/behavioral functioning, education, family relationships, social/community relations, cultural/community identity, development and substance abuse. When problems are identified in any of these areas, referrals are made to agencies that will be able to evaluate the child's needs and provide any services indicated. This assessment tool is used to systematically identify critical child needs and help plan effective service interventions.

- The Minnesota Child Welfare Training System provides regular statewide training on the Structured Decision-Making tool, the Child Well Being Tool and Alternative Response.

Child Safety Objective C:

Collaborate with a variety of public and private organizations to implement cross training, support innovative projects and develop best practice protocols for responding to situations in which child maltreatment and domestic violence co-occur.

Summary of the Progress Since 1999

The Minnesota Department of Human Services collaborated with direct service providers to improve protocols for response to cases where there is overlap between child protection and domestic abuse. Federal grant funds were used to improve community response to domestic abuse reports in rural areas of the state.

Results:

- Training concerning domestic violence has been integrated into the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System’s Core curriculum. Core is required training for all child protection social workers. Specialized training concerning domestic violence is also available on a regular schedule within the Child Welfare Training System.
- Best practice guidelines for responding to the co-occurrence of child maltreatment remain in effect and are presented in the Child Welfare Training System’s Core curriculum and specialized training courses. The Minnesota Department of Human Services developed the guidelines with stakeholder participation and approval. The guidelines present best practice in domestic abuse intervention.
- This will be discontinued as a formal development goal in the future but will continue to receive departmental support in daily operations.

Child Safety Objective D:

Identify promising models for intervening in cases involving child protection and substance abuse so that risks to the involved children are reduced and children in out-of-home placement can be safely returned to the custody of their parents.

Summary on the Progress Since 1999

The Minnesota Department of Human Services’ Child Safety and Permanency and the Chemical Health Divisions and the Minnesota Department of Health staff began meeting in summer of 2002 to coordinate regarding substance abuse efforts for women with children. The Maternal Substance Abuse Interagency Partnership was developed to improve communication between departments to better coordinate programs and activities on fetal alcohol syndrome and maternal substance abuse. Short-term and long-term goals were identified. The short-term goal is to determine the barriers, challenges and strengths to providing effective services. The long-term goal is to improve prevention efforts and service delivery to women who abuse substances. The programs funded by the departments that serve women who are also involved in the child protection system. Services will be improved by eliminating duplicate funding to the same agencies and obtain funding in under served areas. The availability of effective treatment programs impacts the need for child protection services and out-of-home placement.

Results:

- Minnesota has experienced a dramatic increase in child protection cases where a parent or caretaker is using and/or manufacturing methamphetamine in the child's home environment. These cases often result in long out-of-home placement and long-term chemical dependency treatment. Training is being developed for child protection workers and foster parents to address the multiple problems associated with these cases, in particular the child's medical needs, chemical dependency treatment issues, placement issues and safety issues for workers and foster parents.
- Many neglect cases involve substance abuse by the parent or caretaker. Alternative Response is a non-adversarial approach, often used to assess allegations of neglect. This approach has been effective at engaging parents in making life changes to improve the quality of care for their children. Social workers work with parents to overcome barriers to a chemical dependency evaluation and recommended treatment. This approach encourages social worker flexibility and creativity to help the client provide an acceptable level of care for their children.
- Department staff continue to provide policy direction and technical assistance on cases where women are pregnant and abusing alcohol.
- In the fall of 2003, the Maternal Substance Abuse Interagency work group convened the Maternal Substance Abuse Interagency Advisory Group of state department stakeholders. Participants identified multidisciplinary programming models to address multiple risk factors; coordinate training and technical assistance; and develop common outcomes. Participants also identified successful program approaches and barriers to working with this population. The participants agreed to obtain and share data across state agencies; collaborate on providing training across programs and state agencies; identify the services provided to this population by each agency; identify best practices and provide opportunities for program replication; and promote integration and coordination across agencies. The next steps are to gather community input and to coordinate a Planning and Training Summit in fall of 2004.

Child Safety Objective E:

Increase the impact of child abuse prevention efforts in Minnesota.

Summary on the Progress Since 1999

Since 1999, the department has contracted with Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota (formerly Family Support Network) to provide statewide child abuse prevention activities. The agencies work jointly to disseminate child abuse prevention materials and to publicize activities. Child abuse prevention activities include ongoing parent support groups, community awareness activities and an annual child abuse prevention conference. Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota collected data on the number of children and families served and the program's effectiveness.

Minnesota Department of Human Services staff worked with crisis nursery programs throughout the state to improve the delivery of services and develop innovative models for working with families in crisis. Crisis nurseries collected cumulative data was collected on the families served and the effectiveness of the programs. The department compiled the data to identify program strengths and needs.

Twenty crisis nursery programs received state funding. Twenty-one crisis nursery programs participated in the statewide crisis nursery association. Crisis nursery services have expanded to serve 75 percent of the state population.

Results:

- The department continued to contract with Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota (formerly Family Support Network) to provide child abuse prevention activities and parent support groups statewide. State agency staff worked with Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota to provide distribution of awareness materials on child abuse prevention online to department staff, county agencies, tribes, grantees and community agencies for use in April 2004 for Child Abuse Prevention Month. The department's Children's Trust Fund and communications staff developed press releases for statewide media. Child Abuse Prevention Month was displayed in the department's lobby.
- A statewide Child Abuse Prevention Conference, co-sponsored with Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota, was held in April 2004. The theme of the conference was "The Power of Prevention: Prevention in Challenging Times." This conference provided information and training to professionals, child abuse prevention practitioners, community leaders and parent leaders on a broad range of relevant topics.
- Department staff continued to work with crisis nursery programs throughout the state to develop innovative programs to meet the needs of the communities and to evaluate the effectiveness of their services. Crisis nurseries help the parents that use their services to develop goals when they receive crisis care for their children. The department began collecting a sample of goal attainment data on October 1, 1999 and statewide data in 2003. Of 2,507 families receiving crisis care, 94 percent of individuals successfully completed or exceeded their goals. Of the families served, 94 percent felt that the crisis nursery helped. Data on demographics, numbers served and goal attainment are now collected in a condensed form, resulting in more consistent data.
- Data was collected from the crisis nursery in Chisago County on the impact that crisis nursery services have on child protection services and out-of-home placement. This study has shown that when clients use crisis nursery services there is a reduction in recidivism for child protection services.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services provided information and training to crisis nurseries on topics including child abuse and sexual abuse prevention techniques, stress reduction, public relations and evaluation. In addition, a number of crisis nursery staff attended the 2004 Child Abuse Prevention Conference that was planned and funded in part by the department.
- In 2003, the state legislature eliminated direct state funding to crisis nursery programs. The Minnesota Department of Human Services continued to provide federal support to crisis nursery programs through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and designated state staff to provide technical support to these programs through June of 2004.
- Legislative changes resulted in a restructuring of state departments. The prevention programs formerly housed at the Minnesota Department of Education were moved to Human Services, which eliminated the need for an interagency plan for crisis nurseries. The legislature eliminated direct state funding to crisis nursery programs when state priorities were. Given the new state priorities, the strategic plan for crisis nurseries was

not disseminated. Information gathered through that process was disseminated to Crisis Nurseries of Minnesota, Inc. as appropriate.

Child Safety Objective F:

Encourage Minnesota counties to develop new approaches to address selected reports of child maltreatment. The new approaches should have several characteristics that set them apart from traditional child protection approaches: (1) Non-adversarial interventions should be emphasized; (2) Family strengths should be recognized and enhanced; (3) Local neighborhood and community assets should be captured; (4) Focus on a specific population or geographic area should be clear; and (5) Child safety should be ensured through referral to the traditional system as needed.

Summary on the Progress Since 1999

The non-adversarial approach to child protection assessments, called Alternative Response, was developed in 1999. Initially introduced as a pilot project in 20 counties. This project was funded with private foundation funds during the pilot project. Training was provided throughout the state on practice techniques and strategies that improve outcomes for children and families. A preliminary evaluation of the four-year pilot project showed improved outcomes for children, positive response from clients and county staff. The pilot project has concluded and Alternative Response has been implemented in all 87 Minnesota counties.

Results:

- This Child Safety Objective has been achieved and is sustained through the successful implementation of Alternative Response (please see Goal 1: Child Safety Objective A Results). Counties have developed differential response systems to address selected reports of child maltreatment, emphasizing use of non-adversarial interventions, recognition and enhancement of family strengths, and the coordination of neighborhood and community resources to meet family service needs. A referral to the traditional system can occur as needed to address child safety concerns that cannot be met through an Alternative Response approach.

Child Safety Objective G:

Prevent Fetal Alcohol Syndrome by continuing the Circle of Women Project services for the prevention of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and drug affected births. Improve the maternal and child health for women who have used alcohol and/or drugs during pregnancy and their high-risk infants and children by continuing the maternal and child health services programs. Enhance the impact of services through collaborative programming between child protection, corrections, public health and chemical health professionals by continuing the Rebound/ReConnect programs.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

The Minnesota Department of Human Services has continued to fund the Circle of Women Project through contracts with community agencies. The project provides services to improve the health and functioning of the families served and to prevent or minimize the development of fetal alcohol syndrome and prenatal drug exposure by working intensively with pregnant women who are using alcohol or drugs. For three years following the birth, intensive services continue to

assist the mother to follow through with chemical dependency treatment, medical care, mental health treatment, child developmental assessments and any other needed services. Program evaluations have shown an increase in client success. Technical assistance and training opportunities have been provided to project staff.

The Minnesota Legislature eliminated funding on July 1, 2003 for two long established programs that served mothers who are chemically dependent. The Maternal and Child Health programs provided health and social services for women who have used alcohol and/or drugs during pregnancy and their children through the children's preschool years. The Rebound/ReConnect programs provided comprehensive services for families identified through the corrections system where children are at risk of maltreatment due to parental substance. Both programs were very effective. Some programs were able to find other funding sources and continued to serve clients in some capacity. Others transitioned clients to other services in the community that could most appropriately meet their needs.

Results:

- The Circle of Women Project, modeled after Seattle's Fetal Alcohol Syndrome - Birth to Three project, provides intensive in-home visitation and advocacy services for women who are engaging in heavy alcohol and/or drug use during pregnancy and have no involvement with other community services. The Circle of Women Project provides services for the pregnant women and their children for three years. The Minnesota Department of Human Services continued to administer grants for two of the original three Circle of Women Projects, the third project site was discontinued because they were unable to effectively provide the contracted services. One of the Circle of Women projects serves women in Minneapolis and one serves women of the Leech Lake Reservation in Cass County.
- Since the start of the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Circle of Women contracts, 33 percent of the women served showed improvement in chemical dependency status and 36 percent of the women served showed improvement in their parenting skills.
- Quarterly meetings provide training, technical assistance and networking opportunities for parental substance abuse grantees. In addition, state staff provide on-site technical assistance.

Child Safety Objective H:

Promote the health and safety of children by supporting licensing activities that regulate center child care, group homes and residential treatment centers; monitoring family child care and family foster care licensing functions performed by counties; and providing technical assistance to counties so there is uniform enforcement of delegated licensing functions in family systems programs.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

Since the 1999 Report, the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Corrections promulgated a new rule (Minnesota Rules, parts 2960.0010 to 2960.3340) referred to as the Umbrella Rule. The enabling legislation for the rule comes from the Omnibus Crime Bill – Laws of 1995, chapter 226, article 3, section 60. This legislation

required the departments to work together to write a new set of licensing standards governing children/juvenile residential care settings.

The Umbrella Rule was promulgated in 2003. The family foster care standards went into effect in January of 2004. The remaining standards, which include detention, shelter care, chemical dependency and mental health treatment, secure settings, correctional settings and restrictive procedures, will go into effect on July 1, 2005. New foster care classifications added to the Umbrella Rule include foster family settings where the license holder resides, foster residence settings where the license holder does not reside and treatment foster care.

The Umbrella Rule standards, which are an improvement over the previous residential licensing standards, include:

- A basic set of licensing standards for residential program settings regardless of the target population served
- Requirements that the unique needs of children placed in residential care will be provided for by the necessary treatment services, regardless of whether they enter the system through corrections or human services
- Requirements that license holders consistently evaluate resident and family satisfaction and effectiveness with the program’s services in improving the resident’s life
- Requirements that programs measure the degree to which each resident successfully attained their intended goals as an outcome of all services provided to the resident
- Requirements that license holders identify their target population and admission criteria, which is relevant for the target population they intend to serve
- Prohibition to license holders for admitting children to their program who have needs the program cannot meet

Results:

- Processed license applications for foster families (Rule 1), family childcare (Rule 2), childcare centers (Rule 3), group homes (Rule 8) and residential treatment centers (Rule 5). Conducted inspections, background studies and evaluations of programs. Processed variance requests, monitored compliance with applicable rules and statutes, investigated allegations of licensing rule violations and investigated reports of alleged child maltreatment. Began actions to correct licensing deficiencies and take appropriate licensing actions. The following table summarizes licensing activity within the Minnesota Department of Human Services:

<i>Actions Between July 1, 2003 and March 31, 2004</i>	<i>Rule 3</i>	<i>Rule 5</i>	<i>Rule 8</i>	<i>Rule 1</i>	<i>Rule 2</i>
Licensed programs as of 03/31/2004	1,591	30	68	4,847	13,766
Variances processed	1,233	37	9	*	*
Licensing complaints completed	352	69	35	*	*
Maltreatment reports completed	127	36	15	*	*
Negative licensing actions	54	2	2	80	228

* Functions delegated to the counties and private agencies. No numbers are available

- Since July 1, 2003, the Licensing Division provided training updates to county and private licensing agencies via monthly transaction report memoranda, including updates and changes to applicable rules, laws, policies and procedures. These training updates provided extensive guidance and training on the most recent legislative changes. In December 2003, training was conducted for county and private licensing agencies related to the implementation of the Umbrella Rule for foster care. Those standards were effective January 1, 2004.
- One means of gaining an idea of how providers meet standards is to look at negative licensing actions. Negative licensing action results from failing to meet the standard of care provided to children as described in the rule and from harm or risk of harm to children. Listed below are the negative actions imposed on licensed facilities between July 1, 2003 and April 30, 2004:
 - Foster home licenses (Rule 1)
 - license applications denied (26)
 - licenses placed on conditional status (13)
 - licenses suspended (4)
 - licenses revoked (32)
 - facilities fined (5)
 - Group homes licensed (Rule 8)
 - facilities fined (2)
 - Residential treatment institutions licenses (Rule 5)
 - license placed on conditional status (1)
 - facility fined (1)
 - Family child care and group family child care licenses (Rule 2)
 - license applications denied (51)
 - licenses placed on conditional status (50)
 - licenses suspended (10)
 - immediate suspensions (34)
 - licenses revoked (56)
 - facilities fined (27)
 - Child care centers licenses (Rule 3)
 - licenses placed on conditional status (4)
 - facilities fined (50)

GOAL 2: FAMILY-CENTERED SERVICES

Families receiving services from the child welfare system will maintain as much decision-making authority as possible and will be actively involved in developing their case plans. Each family will receive help consistent with the values and beliefs of their culture and heritage.

Family Centered Services Objective A:

Implement in selected counties a system to provide an alternative response to reports alleging child maltreatment. The term “alternative response” is used to describe a strength-based and community oriented approach in which county social service agencies replace traditional

investigative approaches to some child maltreatment reports with family assessment and services. Alternative Response is applied to accepted child maltreatment reports that do not involve substantial child endangerment and in which families are engaged in maintaining child safety. Its goal is to keep children safe by tailoring the response to child maltreatment to the needs of the child and the family. County social service agencies coordinate with community-based agencies and tribes to provide family assessments and services that respond to the families served.

Results:

- Results are described under Goal 1: Child Safety Objective A.

Family Centered Services Objective B:

Implement family-group conferencing as a time-limited reunification tool and evaluate its effectiveness in reunifying families.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

In 2000, eight grantees were selected to implement Family Group Decision Making as a strategy for time limited reunification of children. Family Group Decision Making is a process that allows the family to develop a care and protection plan to ensure child safety or to plan for permanence and reunification. The Family Group Decision Making process includes preparation for the family meeting, facilitation of the family meeting, plan development and post meeting activities. The funding source was Title IV-B, Subpart 2 of the Social Security Act. These eight grantees have expanded to include 29 counties and three tribal social services. In 2002, an evaluation was completed by Cooperative Ventures on 113 Family Group Decision Making conferences. Measures of reunification, safety, permanence and satisfaction were positive. In 2003, the funding for the eight grantees was extended through December 31, 2006.

Results:

- As a reunification tool for children in placement, 29 counties and three tribal governments continue to utilize Family Group Decision Making. The grantees have provided family conferences to 318 families and 591 children.
- Grantees were informed that future expenditures should include 50 percent for reunification and 50 percent for family support and preservation.
- Applications for expanding Family Group Decision Making funding for new counties are now being accepted. This funding will continue through December 31, 2006.
- The department has incorporated the concepts of Family Group Decision Making into the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System. A one-day orientation curriculum and a two-day facilitator-training curriculum are being offered statewide.
- Media products were developed and include two videotapes on Family Group Decision Making, one videotape on conferences on youth in transition and a poster inviting families to seek out family conferences.
- A statewide conference on best practices in Family Group Decision Making was held in December 2003 and in February 2004. Several workshops on Family Group Decision Making were held at the Minnesota Family Based Services annual conference.
- A Family Group Decision Making advisory group meets monthly and provides quarterly statewide training. The use of interactive television is being explored to provide better

service to rural Minnesota.

- In 2003, a service code was developed for Family Group Decision Making using the Budget Reporting and Accounting for Social Services (BRASS) code 166. This coding made it possible to match the service code with expenditures and client counts for Family Group Decision Making.

Family Centered Services Objective C:

Conduct an analysis of the use of family preservation funds (state funds used for certain services).

Summary of Progress Since 1999

With the continued development of the department's Social Services Information System data is becoming more available. Information is now available to match the Family Preservation service codes with expenditures and determine the number of clients served through family preservation funds in each county, although outcomes are not yet available. The 2003 state legislature consolidated family preservation funds and several other funding sources into a consolidated block grant from which counties could prioritize their local funding options.

Results:

- The 2003 state legislature consolidated family preservation funds and several other funding sources into a consolidated block grant to counties from which they could prioritize their service funding options.
- Family support and preservation funds are distributed to counties statewide to provide services under the Alternative Response Program. An extensive longitudinal evaluation of this family assessment and support approach has found lower subsequent reporting of child maltreatment, increased services for families, greater client satisfaction, improved family and child well-being outcomes and significant cost savings over time. More details concerning the evaluation can be found on the Institute of Applied Research Website www.iarstl.org.

Family Centered Services Objective D:

Develop methods to involve parents in the initiatives conducted by the Child Safety and Permanency Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

Policy emphasis is shifting from an agency-based child welfare practice to a more family centered practice. Initiatives such as Alternative Response and Family Group Decision Making involve parents to a greater extent in making responsible decisions for the safety of their children.

Results:

- Continued to invite families who received Family Group Decision Making services to present their experiences at conferences, training events and in videotapes.
- Continued networking with parent advocacy group such as the Family Support Network of Minnesota.

Family Centered Services Objective E:

Define clearly the steps, strategies and processes to increase cultural competency in child welfare practices.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

The Minnesota Department of Human Services has made cultural competence and diversity a high priority. The department developed guidelines for culturally competent practice to assist counties, organizations, mental health services and the department to better meet the needs of diverse populations. The guidelines focus on governance and administration, organizational values, organizational culture, policies, procedures, staffing, marketing, community relations, supervision and service delivery. A more structured and standardized process to incorporate cultural diversity and competence were established in all areas of child welfare training and quality assurance reviews.

To better meet the needs of immigrant populations that have limited English proficiency, materials related to child welfare, adoption and children's mental health services have been translated into Hmong, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese. Education was provided to new immigrant communities about child welfare regulations and programs. The department organized community meetings to document the needs of county agencies that serve new immigrant clients who have limited English proficiency.

The department has implemented several initiatives to address the disparity in the over representation of African American and American Indian children in Minnesota's child welfare system. The 2001 legislature requested that the department along with various stakeholders study the disproportionate number of African American children in out of home placement. A committee was convened and a study was completed in April 2002. Five recommendations were identified and are currently being implemented by the department along with community, county and other partners. One recommendation of particular note is the research and review of case practice in Anoka, Hennepin, Olmsted and Ramsey counties. In 2002 an advisory committee was also convened to study and address the over representation of American Indian children in Minnesota's out of home placement system. The committee was comprised of representatives from tribal reservations, urban American Indian programs, and rural and urban counties. The committee identified eight recommendations to the department in 2003 that are currently being implemented.

Research on neglect, funded by the National Institute of Health aimed at improving understanding the scope of neglect among children of color. Better understanding of neglect will influence the development of policies and programs impacting children of color in the child welfare system. The research is being conducted in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Dakota County, Hennepin County, Ramsey County and the University of Minnesota. The five-year study began in 2001.

Results:

- A final version of the guidelines for cultural competent practice has been approved and formally adopted. A process for internal dissemination and implementation of the guidelines has been initiated.

- Final recommendations to address the disproportionate representation of American Indian children were submitted by the American Indian Disparities Initiative Advisory Committee. A full-time staff member has been hired to develop a strategy for implementing these recommendations.
- Preliminary results of the two research projects designed to study the disproportionate representation of African American children have been presented to the community. Final reports documenting the findings will be available next year.
- The Children of Color Initiative coordinator has been assigned to work with the Quality Assurance Team to ensure that cultural competency, limited English proficiency and strategies to eliminate disparities are fully incorporated into future county reviews.
- Continued reviews of Minnesota Child Welfare Training will ensure that cultural competency, Indian child welfare policy and equal language access are addressed in each new curriculum.
- The Children of Color Initiative coordinator continues to participate in the Minnesota Child Welfare Training Central Steering Committee.
- The Directory of Community Organizations Serving Diverse Populations has been updated.
- Through community outreach with diverse populations the Children of Color Initiative coordinator has ensure that new policies such as Alternative Response, incorporates community perspectives.
- A complete review of all translated documents was completed. A plan to update all documents is in place. Documents will be updated according to priority and availability of funds.

Family Centered Services Objective F:

Offer and conduct relative care conferences to families after a determination has been made that maltreatment occurred and services are needed.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

The Minnesota Department of Human Services contracted with the Center for Conflict Management to develop protocol for conducting relative care conferences. The Center also created curriculum for training relative care conference facilitators. Over thirty counties and tribes provided relative care conferences. In 2001, the relative care conference statute was repealed and a new statute was created to authorize Family Group Decision Making.

Results:

- This objective is discontinued. Relative Care Conference activities were replaced by Family Group Decision Making described under Family Centered Services Objective B results.

Family Centered Objective G:

Provide ongoing Indian Child Welfare Family Preservation grant contracts to Minnesota's eleven tribal and four urban Indian social services programs. Services provided by these grants include family-based services, reunification services, permanency planning, pregnancy prevention services, youth suicide prevention services and court advocacy to ensure compliance with federal and state statutes protecting children.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

The Indian Child Welfare Family Preservation grant contracts are a stable program that consistently provides funding and technical assistance to tribal and social service agencies in providing child welfare services to Indian children and families.

Results:

- Provided 11 primary support Indian Child Welfare grants to the 11 Tribal social services programs in the state. Provided primary support grants to four urban Indian child welfare programs.
- Provided nine competitive Special Focus Indian Child Welfare Grants.
- Awarded grant funding to the Indian Child Welfare Law Center to provide legal advice and consultation services regarding the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) child custody issues. Provided technical assistance to all grantees on preparing statistical quarterly reports.
- Provided review of program goals, objectives and outcomes of all grantees.
- Authorized payments as a fiscal management responsibility to all grantees.
- Evaluated the ICWA grantees on a quarterly basis by review of the quarterly narrative progress reports. Technical assistance is provided when progress reports lack information relevant to the operation of the grant.
- Continued to provide technical assistance to county social service agencies, tribal social services and urban Indian programs.
- Worked with the Indian Child Welfare Advisory Council on a quarterly basis to address Indian Child Welfare Issues.

GOAL 3: CHILD WELL-BEING

Children receiving services from the child welfare system will experience improved outcomes.

Child Well-Being Objective A:

Improve the physical health, mental health and educational services to children in out-of-home care. An improved out-of-home placement plan will document additional factors including sibling placement and contact, identified risk and safety factors, documentation of the risk assessment and services matched to the needs of the family, child and family involvement in the case planning, frequency of social worker contact with the child and family, the child's educational, physical and mental health needs.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

Over the past five-years, significant improvements have been made in assessing and meeting the needs of children in the child welfare system. An actuarial based Alternative Response system has helped to engage families in obtaining services. The family takes a lead in developing the Alternative Response service plan. The out-of-home placement plan was revised so it is individual to the family, it engages the family in the developing of the plan and linking the assessed risk to services.

An assessment tool was developed to assist workers in collecting information about children's physical and mental health, education, development, emotional and behavioral functioning. Based on the information collected, workers refer children for further evaluation to determine their need for treatment of conditions that are of concern.

In 2003, the legislature authorized a requirement for children in the child protection system and juvenile justice system to have a mental health screening. The screening is used to determine the need for a thorough mental health evaluation.

All counties in the state use an actuarial based risk assessment tool. In addition, a safety assessment tool is used to determine need for out-of-home placement or reunification.

Results:

- The Minnesota Child Welfare Training System has enhanced the training provided to county social workers. Core 102, which is a training program required for all child protection social workers, provides information and skills development in using the risk assessment to develop case plan objectives and match these needs to services. The training encourages engaging the family in case planning. The training system has also developed an enhanced course to further develop social workers to further develop skills associated with case planning.
- A team of county agency staff, tribal agency staff and department representatives developed a child well-being tool to be used as part of the Structured Decision Making Assessment. This tool provides social workers with a consistent method to address the well-being of children when in the care of their parents or in out-of-home placement. The tool was implemented statewide in January 2004.
- In 2003, the Minnesota legislature required that children in the child welfare and juvenile justice system be screened to identify the need of mental health services, effective July 2004. The Minnesota Department of Human Services developed a comprehensive implementation plan, including recommendations from child welfare and juvenile justice representatives. The plan includes approved child welfare and juvenile justice mental health screening tools, an instructional bulletin describing the implementation process, a grant allocation distribution for county social service agencies and interactive statewide training.
- The Social Services Information System met with county staff to discuss which outcome indicators were most needed by state and county management and which reports are needed to track these outcome indicators on the social services information system. These reports will help county social service agencies monitor and measure the safety, permanency and well-being of children in their care. All of the federal outcome indicators are now available to counties. Additional state outcome indicators will be available social Services Information System in late 2004.

Child Well-Being Objective B:

Provide statewide, intensive, independent living skills training to adolescents that will result in measurable gains in their ability to live independently. In addition, provide youth who are in transition to independent living with supports such as household goods, uniforms for employment, drivers' training, books or fees for employment training programs. Also, ensure

that a range of options for safe, stable housing with related supportive services is available for adolescents that will prevent homelessness and prepare them for independence.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

State and federal funding increases resulted in expanded services to adolescents between 1999 and 2004. Services were specialized for minor parents, homeless youth and youth in out-of-home placement. Funds were provided to county and tribal social service agencies and grant awards to nonprofit agencies were increased. Special attention was focused on serving youth of color and developing transitional housing options. The numbers of youth receiving independent living skills training skills increased by 60 percent between 1999 and 2004. Follow-up surveys of youth rated the services they received very highly. Improvement was demonstrated in all nine of the outcomes measured. Each year county social workers and youth workers from community agencies were supported with technical assistance from state staff. In addition, county social workers and staff from community agencies attended a statewide adolescent services conference and several intensive workshops focused on how to teach youth independent living skills. During each year, 200 youth and 75 youth workers attended a statewide youth leadership conference.

Activities from previous years were continued with Chaffee funds serving 2,738 youth in 2003. One-third were youth of color, which is an accurate reflection of the eligible population. The new Education and Training Vouchers will former youth in care pay for post-secondary school. State budget cuts, which took effect July 1, 2003, resulted in a loss of shelter, transitional housing, and other services to homeless youth. Minor parent programs were also cut.

Results:

- Chafee Foster Care Independence Program federal funds provided independent living skills training, case management, referral, employment and housing assistance, access to community resources, and other related services to 2,738 eligible youth. A detailed report on these activities is attached.
- Outreach, shelter and/or transitional housing was provided to 1,571 homeless youth.
- Supportive services, life skills training and other case management services were provided to 185 minor parents.
- Committee participation including the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Advisory Committee, the Interagency Task Force on Minor Parents, and the Interagency Committee on Adolescent Transition.
- Training and technical assistance was provided to counties and agencies serving youth. Technical assistance is provided during site visits, telephone and e-mail contact. Provided one statewide conference and one workshop for county social workers, private agency youth workers, alternative education staff, probation officers, youth employment staff, group home and residential treatment staff. Additionally, a three-day leadership conference is held each year for Minnesota youth who are high risk and/or Chaffee eligible.
- A curriculum was written for foster/adoptive parents on preparing adolescents for transition to adulthood. The curriculum is now available statewide, upon request.
- Outcome data for Chafee Foster Care Independence Programs shows that:
 - 527 of 1024 adolescents with “readiness for independent living” as a goal improved their skills. (51 percent)

- 89 of the 230 adolescents with housing as a goal improved their housing status. (37 percent)
- 664 of 1043 adolescents with education as a goal improved their educational status. (64 percent)
- 20 of 78 adolescents with financial self-sufficiency as a goal improved their financial status. (26 percent)
- 12 of 37 adolescents with social network status as a goal improved their skills in this area. (32 percent)
- 517 of 756 adolescents with child well-being as a goal improved the well-being of their children. (68 percent)
- Only 3 percent of minor parents had a second pregnancy.
- 96 of 268 adolescents with reunification with parents as a goal did reunify. (36 percent)
- 102 of 113 adolescents with reduced risk of prostitution as a goal did not participate in prostitution. (90 percent)

Child Well-Being Objective C:

Implement the Child Needs-Provider Interventions assessment tool and practice model. The Child Needs Provider is an assessment tool used to determine the level of financial support paid to a child foster home. The tool was developed with assistance of foster parents and social workers.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

The Child Needs-Provider Interventions assessment tool was developed with the assistance of social workers and foster parents. Before the tool was implemented, comparisons were made between the payment rates using the existing tool and the new tool. Feedback was received from adoption workers on how to modify the tool for application on adoption cases. The tool was weighted and field tested statewide to ensure reliability before it was implemented.

Results:

- The Child Needs-Provider Intervention assessment tool was implemented for use with foster care placements. The tool would need to be re-weighted and adapted to make it usable for Relative Custody Assistance and Adoption Assistance.
- Two counties were granted waivers from state requirements to implement the Child Needs-Provider Intervention Tool as a pilot project. The intervention tool determines the payment rate for children in foster care based on the child’s physical or mental health or behavioral needs that impact their care. One county’s pilot project involves a team of agency staff and a foster parent who review the child foster care rates.

Child Well-Being Objective D:

Plan and implement a statewide permanency initiative, using concurrent planning and other strategies.

Results:

Results are described under Goal 4, Permanence Objective D

Child Well-Being Objective E:

Provide baseline measures to Minnesota Department of Human Services and county staff on child welfare performance indicators (including safety, permanency and system activities) as the data collection system permits.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

In 1997 and 1998, state staff worked with representatives of county agencies to develop child welfare performance indicators. In 1999, the work group was again convened to address child and family well-being indicators. A set of indicators was developed and included social adjustment, educational development, health and family well-being. While these were excellent measures, they were not readily available on an automated basis, and as a result, no reports were developed.

The department published reports on child welfare data and outcomes for calendar years 2000, 2001 and 2002. Federal and state performance indicators focused on child safety and permanency was included. In 2002, state staff again met with county representatives to review the earlier work and to develop a plan for development of automated reports (available to county staff on the Social Services Information System) on the most needed performance indicators. This work group recommended a new approach to measuring of well-being.

In 2003, a child well-being tool was developed. It is designed to assess a child's strengths and needs, and will be used with children whose families are receiving case management services through child protection, Alternative Response and children's mental health. The tool will be used for children who are in placement as well as those who remain in their own home while they receive services. The tool was released in December 2003, and is temporarily implemented through the agency e-docs system until it can be added to the Social Services Information System.

Results:

- In 2003, the department prepared reports of county performance on the child welfare performance indicators related to the national standards. Three years of county-level data were shared in two areas where the state is working to improve its performance, and also on all six national standards.
- In early 2004, the Social Services Information System released an updated version (version 3.7), that enables county staff to run reports on the federal performance indicators as needed. These reports allow the staff to easily identify which cases affect their performance. County performance indicators have become a key part of the Minnesota Child and Family Service Review process, the department's quality assurance process.
- The Child Well Being Tool is intended to assess child strengths and needs in the domains of: physical health, emotional/behavioral, education, family relationships, social/community relationships, cultural/community identity, development and substance abuse. All children open for child protection case management, regardless of whether a traditional investigation or a family assessment was completed, should have a Child Well Being Tool completed. The Child Well Being Tool is to be completed for Child Welfare

placement situations. If a child is found to have a need as a result of the assessment and tool completion, then the referrals are made to the appropriate resources or services on behalf of the child.

- In November 2003, training was completed for county/tribal agency staff on the implementation and use of the Child Well Being Tool. The Child Well Being Tool is available statewide in a web-based format to social workers. Plans are underway to incorporate the tool into the Social Services Information System by December 2004. Enhancements to the Child Well Being Tool were made in March 2004 allowing for three of the eight domains to have an additional response of "Not Applicable" (N/A) for use when the domain does not apply to child's age or other specific condition. These domains are: Education, Social/Community Relationships, and Substance Abuse.

Child Well Being Objective F:

Collaborate with the Minnesota Supreme Court on the Children's Justice Initiative to assist local jurisdictions in improving the quality and timeliness of decision making in child protection cases.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

This objective was added to the Child and Family Service Plan Annual Progress report in 2003. The Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Supreme Court are collaborating on the Children's Justice Initiative. This joint venture is designed to improve the handling of child protection cases. The Children's Justice Initiative involves gathering information about each county's existing court practices, identifying areas of strength and areas needing improvement, developing a plan for implementing court system and procedural improvements, and assessing progress toward improved practice. Twelve pilot counties began participating in the Children's Justice Initiative in 2001 and 15 counties were phased into the project in 2002. Currently, Minnesota's 87 counties are participating in the project.

Results

- Through the collaborative Children's Justice Initiative, the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Supreme Court, presented four two-day conferences for judges, county attorneys, social workers, guardians ad litem, public defenders who represent both parents and children in juvenile court, tribal representatives and other court system stakeholders in 60 Minnesota counties. The conferences focused on implementing improved handling of cases involving abused and neglected children in foster care, using judicially driven multidisciplinary teams at the local level modeled on practices recommended in the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges *Resource Guidelines*.
- Children's Justice Initiative training efforts in 2003-2004 included emphasis on the Indian Child Welfare Act and on early, culturally appropriate, thorough assessments and timely service delivery. Children's Justice Initiative continued its training focus on child development, children's mental health, and the affect of parental chemical abuse on children.

GOAL 4: PERMANENCE

Children receiving services from the child welfare system will live in permanent families.

Permanence Objective A:

Use family group conferencing as a reunification tool

Results:

- Please see Goal 2, Family-Centered Services Objective B.

Permanence Objectives B and C:

Increase the use of relatives, including fathers, as placement resources and options for permanency.

Summary of Progress Since 1999:

More Minnesota children are being placed in permanent homes with relative care providers. In 2001, Minnesota's law was amended to require that the court review the suitability of a prospective relative custodian before transferring permanent legal and physical custody of a child. Other amendments made in 2001 clarified that relatives must be considered for placement as soon as possible after determining the need for the child to be placed in foster care. Relative searches must be reasonable in scope and can last up to six months or until a fit and willing relative is identified. In 2003, amendments were made to the statutes enabling tribal courts to make adoptive placements for children in their jurisdiction, without termination of parental rights of the child's birth parents. This maintains the child's cultural heritage and permits the child to be raised in a permanent family.

Results:

- Training on transfer of legal and physical custody and Relative Custody Assistance was limited by severe budget constraints during the 2003 state fiscal year. Technical assistance/training was provided to counties upon request. Training on Relative Custody Assistance was held in Hennepin County and southeastern Minnesota counties.
- As of December 31, 2004, 1,661 children were receiving Relative Custody Assistance based on a transfer of legal custody; another 70 children are eligible but are not receiving Relative Custody Assistance. This is over a 20 percent increase from December 31, 2002 when 1,372 children received Relative Custody Assistance.
- During case consultation, department staff recommended that county social workers complete thorough assessments including both parents or adults in the household. When services are provided, both parents or adults in the household must be engaged with the services provided to the family, not just the parent that is available during the day.

Permanence Objective D:

Plan and implement a statewide permanency initiative, including Concurrent Permanency Planning and other strategies.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

Together, the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Supreme Court, sponsored four

statewide conferences for judges, county attorneys, guardians ad litem and attorneys for children and parents concerning implementation of state and federal permanency requirements. With the Supreme Court, provided training to judges on child development and domestic abuse issues involving children at the Annual Statewide Judge's Conference. The department sponsored annual training for Minnesota county attorneys who handle child in need of protection or services and permanency cases. The training is developed and delivered through the Minnesota County Attorneys Association. The department also worked with the Hennepin county juvenile bench to provide a full-day training course for all Hennepin County child protection stakeholders. The training focused on handling child in need of protection or services and permanency cases with a special focus on medical issues and poverty-related issues for children and families in juvenile court.

Results:

- The department has convened a Concurrent Permanency Planning work group, with members from eight Minnesota counties whose practice focuses on principles of this model. This work group has assisted the department in the developing a Concurrent Planning Practice Guide. This guide will be completed and made available to county social service agencies and the court system in 2004. The work group will also assist the department in a series of interactive television sessions that will highlight best practice.
- The department introduced a single home study format to be used for foster care and adoption assessments, to simplify adoption of children by their licensed foster care or relative care providers. Information sessions were offered statewide both before and after the home study format was required. The Minnesota Child Welfare Training System offers a two-day training session on completing foster and adoptive family assessments using the single home study format.
- The State Court Administration and Department staff provided ongoing technical assistance and training regarding permanency laws and concurrent planning to county social services, guardians ad litem, public defenders, county attorneys, court administration and judges. Training and technical assistance focused on improving the processing of cases so that the court is poised to make timely decisions about the permanent placement of children. Technical assistance is provided on site as requested by county social services and court staff. Technical assistance is also provided by telephone and e-mail consultation on particular problems.
- The department entered into joint a venture with the Minnesota Supreme Court, which resulted in a five-year plan to fully implement best practice in Minnesota juvenile courts as reflected in the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Resource Guidelines. The Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court and the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services spearhead the Children's Justice Initiative. The initiative includes identifying and developing a pool of Minnesota judicial experts in permanency. This initiative is active in all of Minnesota's 87 counties.
- With the Supreme Court, the department sponsored four two-day conferences for judges, county attorneys, social workers, guardians ad litem, public defenders, tribal representatives and other court system stakeholders in 60 Minnesota counties. The conferences focus on implementing improved handling of cases, involving abused and neglected children in foster care using judicially driven multi-disciplinary child protection teams at the local level modeled on practices recommended in the National

Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

- The department has worked with the Minnesota Supreme Court to add basic information about handling child in need of protection or services and permanency cases to Minnesota's Judicial College. The Judicial College is required training for all Minnesota District Court judges every six years.
- Technical assistance is available to judges, court administrators, county social services, county attorneys and guardians ad litem based on analysis of local jurisdiction data that is being collected by court and department staff. The data analysis will identify areas where practices could be improved and state staff will provide advice on changes in practice or policy that would lead to improvement.-
- The Minnesota Child Welfare Training System continues to offer three courses specific to Concurrent Permanency Planning to county and tribal social services staff. The first course, Concurrent Permanency Planning, was offered initially in 1999. The second course, Advanced Concurrent Permanency Planning, was initially offered in 2001. And, the third course, Concurrent Permanency Planning and Indian Child Welfare, was initially offered in 2003. Additional courses related to Concurrent Permanency Planning and topics such as chemical dependency, incarceration and mental health are planned.

Permanence Objective E:

Ensure that every child committed to the guardianship of the Commissioner of Human Services has the opportunity to be adopted.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

The number of days from termination of parental rights to adoption has consistently declined. A special recruitment tool called, *We Have Been Waiting*, was first published in the summer of 2002. This publication proved to be an effective strategy for finding adoptive families for sibling groups and for children who had been waiting for adoptive families for a long time.

Results:

- In March 2004, 1420 children were under state guardianship. Of that number, 464 children were in pre-adoptive homes and 598 children were waiting for adoptive families.
- 712 children under state guardianship were adopted in 2003, a 16 percent increase from the previous year.
- Of the 712 children adopted, 88 percent of sibling groups were preserved in their entirety.
- Of the sibling groups not preserved in entirety, 85 percent of children were adopted with one or more sibling.
- Of the 712 children adopted, 361 had a psychological or medical disability.
- In 2003, the average number of months from termination of parental rights to adoption was 18 months, a reduction from the previous year.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services continues to contract with eight licensed adoption agencies to enhance adoption services for children under state guardianship. In calendar year 2003, these agencies recruited and trained 482 families, prepared 171 families and provided adoption services to 258 children under state guardianship.
- State funding provided to licensed private adoption agencies (Public/Private Adoption Initiative) enhances the work of public agencies and increases the number of families available to adopt children under state guardianship.

- 394 families received pre-service adoption training.
- 134 families completed an adoption study and were registered on the State Adoption Exchange or had a child placed in their home.
- 81 families completed an update to their adoption study because they did not have a child placed with them within the last year or because they wish to adopt another child under state guardianship.
- The *Minnesota's Waiting Children* publication was published quarterly. The book will now be published annually and used primarily as an informational source rather than as a recruitment tool for specific children. However, all children previously listed in the book are available for viewing on the Minnesota Adoption Resource Website.
- Minnesota maintains the State Adoption Exchange, a secure Web site that matches waiting children and prospective adoptive families based on criteria such as children's age, gender, sibling status and level of special needs. Social workers who place children for adoption and social workers who complete adoption home studies for families have access to this secure Web site.
- Social workers for all children not registered on the State Adoption Exchange within statutory time limits are contacted to request registration.
- In July 2003, the department received a federal grant of \$5000 for one year from the Collaboration to AdoptUSKids to enhance adoption recruitment efforts for waiting children. Minnesota's project is to finance professional recruitment photos for children under state guardianship. The photos will be used on the approved state and national photo Websites.
- Since November 2003, the Minnesota Department of Human Services has participated in a public-private partnership with Target Corporation, Eastman Kodak Company and the Collaboration to AdoptUSKids on a project titled "Meet the Children." The private partners are providing one-time use cameras and film development services to ensure that all waiting children are listed on the national photo Website. The project will soon be launched as a pilot in Minnesota with plans to develop into a national campaign.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services is receiving a federal Adoption Opportunities Activities Grant worth \$1.75 million over five years to provide child specific recruitment efforts for youth under state guardianship, ages 13-17. The Homecoming Project will increase the number of adolescents adopted from the foster care system and assist youth, for whom adoption is not possible, to establish life-long connections with caring adults. The project has a child focus and empowers youth to fully and actively participate in the development and implementation of their individualized recruitment plan.
- The department sponsored four adoption activities with funds and/or staff time in 2003. These activities and the publicity surrounding them generated 33 media inquiries about adoption, news and feature stories on seven television stations, news and feature stories in newspapers and magazines, and radio interviews throughout the state. These included:
 - Celebrate Adoption: A Circus of the Heart in October. For the sixth consecutive year this celebration honored and recruited adoptive families for children under state guardianship.
 - National Adoption Day was held in November. The department raised awareness of the need for adoptive parents by highlighting 44 adoption finalizations in Hennepin County on this day.

- In December, adolescents in the foster care system performed and shared information about their desire to be adopted and what they need from adoptive families in a performance called, Last But Not Least.
- A televised special called, “Home for the Holidays,” was broadcast in December. During the program, information about adoption was broadcast and a phone bank was staffed by volunteers to answer phone inquires about adoption.
- News releases issued by the department and an editorial article on adoption written by the Assistant Commissioner were published in numerous daily, weekly and specialty newspapers statewide. Adoption advertisements and public service announcements aired over a three-month period at the end of 2003.

Training results:

Training objectives were hampered due to budget constraints. However, technical assistance continued to be provided to counties upon request. The following training/technical assistance was provided between July 1, 2003 and March 31, 2004:

- September 23, 2003 – the department provided technical assistance on adoption process and practice, adoption recruitment, sibling separation, Adoption Assistance and Relative Custody Assistance. There were approximately 25 attendees including social workers, county attorneys and court administrators.
- October 8, 2003 – department staff provided technical assistance on adoption recruitment efforts and the differences between adoption and long-term foster care. There were approximately 25 attendees consisting of social workers and supervisors.
- December 1 and 15, 2003 – department staff, provided training on *Permanency Planning: Compelling Reasons for Long-Term Foster Care* via interactive television. This training followed the “*Practice Guide for Using Long-Term Foster Care*” developed by DHS. The training included pertinent law, policy and best practice issues.
- January 6, 2004 – department staff consulted on adoption process and practice, adoption recruitment, sibling separation and the differences between adoption and long-term foster care.
- February 10, 2004 – department staff partnered with an assistant Hennepin County attorney to provide technical assistance on pertinent law, policy and best practice issues in sibling separation.
- DHS staff participate on Hennepin County’s Adoption Process Improvement Committee, an ongoing work group that meets quarterly to discuss and resolve bureaucratic barriers to adoption of children under state guardianship. Hennepin County is a large metropolitan county that includes Minneapolis, and accounts for the majority of Minnesota’s state ward adoptions each year.

Permanence Objective F:

Continue and enhance “Minnesota’s Adoption Support and Preservation” services, a coordinated system to provide post adoption information and support to individuals and agencies across the state.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation provided support and information to adoptive parents through a variety of venues. They maintained a phone line and clearinghouse for

inquiries. Parent liaisons were hired to provide regional representation serving adoptive parents and their children. Training was provided for adoptive parents on adopting children of another race, fetal alcohol syndrome/fetal alcohol effect, leadership, advocacy and starting support groups. A conference on strengthening family systems. A quarterly newsletter on services for adoptive families was distributed to over 5,000 parents and professionals every year. Support groups were developed for families experiencing stress or crisis.

Results:

- Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation continued the warm line and responded to approximately 1,409 contacts through telephone, e-mail, letter, fax and personal communication.
- Minnesota maintains the State Adoption Exchange, a secure Website that matches children waiting for adoption with prospective adoptive families. The Website averaged 165 hits per day.
- Each quarterly edition of the Family Voices newsletter was distributed to approximately 6,700 adoptive families and professionals.
- Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation hosted one training on adoption group development, attended by 12 parent leaders. The training was held to prepare these parent leaders to start new adoption groups throughout the state. Training materials and follow-up support will be provided to eight additional parent leaders.
- Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation provided 24 training sessions in the past year, an average of 6 training opportunities per quarter.
- In the past year, 672 adoptive parents and 254 professionals attended training sessions offered by Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation.
- Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation is developing training sessions for adopted children. There were 103 children at the first program.
- Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation supports 25 adoption groups, including two online groups, serving more than 280 parents.
- Eleven parent liaisons responded to an average of 1,327 phone calls per quarter from families experiencing serious stress or crisis. The parent liaisons also responded to an average of 355 phone calls per quarter from social workers, tribal officials and other professionals.
- Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation sponsored a celebration for adoption of children under state guardianship in October 2003 called “Circus of the Heart.” This celebration also served as a public awareness and recruitment event to highlight the need for adoptive families for Minnesota’s waiting children.
- Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation made the decision to forego their annual spring conference for adoptive parents and instead collaborate with the North American Council on Adoptable Children on their annual conference in July 2004

Permanence Objective G:

Recruit diverse families and permanency families to ensure that available families reflect the diversity of children who are in need of foster and permanent homes.

Summary Since 1999

For the past five years, the Minnesota Department of Human Services has expanded efforts to

promote adoption of children available for adoption through the foster care system. Creative and innovative ideas for promoting and marketing adoption have resulted in consistently higher adoptions. Between 1999 and 2002, 2,440 children were adopted through the child welfare system.

Results:

- The Minnesota Department of Human Services supports county social services recruitment of foster and adoptive parents through a regional recruitment program to help communities find foster and adoptive families to care for the diverse children in their communities. The goals of the Regional Recruitment Program are to:
 - Involve foster and adoptive families in recruitment:
 - Find foster and adoptive families for children who are in need of care
 - Keep siblings together in foster care and adoptive placements
 - Keep children in their home communities
 - Reduce other changes in children's lives as they are removed from their home
 - Promote permanency for children.
- The regional recruitment program supports the work of Community Action Teams in 11 Minnesota communities. Members of Community Action Teams include foster parents, adoptive parents, community members, county social service staff and other foster care or adoption professionals. The regional recruitment effort utilizes foster or adoptive parents as family resource developers, to establish community action teams. One family resource developer works statewide with the American Indian Community and one developer works statewide with the communities of faith. Nine of these communities are regions of the state. In fiscal year 2003, this recruitment project presented community outreach to 60,049 people and recruited 196 foster or adoptive families. This past year the Community Action Teams have:
 - Organized "Last But Not Least," a theater event that showcased the talents of children and youth waiting for adoptive homes. The event included a panel of youth taking about permanency.
 - Organized tables at community events
 - Created a teddy bear float for community parades, 700 teddy bears represented the number children waiting for adoptive families.
 - Presented information to parent organizations at schools, churches, civic organizations and other community organizations.
- County social service agencies organized a day for foster parents to have display tables at several Twin Cities grocery stores to promote the need for foster parents.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services continues to recruit for adoptive families for waiting children through the secure State Adoption Exchange and the public state and national adoption photo Web listings.
- An information and recruitment tool for special needs adoption titled, *Minnesota's Waiting Children*, continues to be published annually.
- A recruitment tool published biannually titled, *We Have Been Waiting*, focuses on specific groups of children. The fall 2003 issue highlighted 15 adolescents waiting for adoption. Since the publication, 20 percent of them have adoptive families. The spring 2004 issue will focus on children who have been waiting for adoptive families for the

longest amount of time.

- In July of 2003, Minnesota received a federal grant of \$5000 for one year from the Collaboration to AdoptUSKids, to enhance adoption recruitment efforts for waiting children. Minnesota's project is to finance professional recruitment photos for children under state guardianship. The photos will appear on the approved state and national adoption Web listings.
- Since November 2003, the Minnesota Department of Human Services has participated in a public-private partnership with Target Corporation, Eastman Kodak Company and the Collaboration to AdoptUSKids on a project titled "Meet the Children." The private partners are providing one-time use cameras and film development services in order to ensure that all waiting children are listed on the national adoption photo Web listing. The project will soon be launched as a pilot in Minnesota with plans to develop into a national campaign.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services applied for and received a federal Adoption Opportunities Activities Grant to find adoptive families for children in foster care. Minnesota's program, *The Homecoming Project*, provides child specific recruitment efforts for 13 to 17 year olds under state guardianship. The five-year demonstration Homecoming Project is to increase the number of adolescents adopted from the foster care system and to assist youth, for whom adoption is not possible, to establish lifelong connections with caring adults. The project has a child focus and empowers youth to fully and actively participate in the development and implementation of their individualized recruitment plan.

Permanence Objective H:

Improve performance in regard to placement stability and re-entry into foster care. Improve performance on the federal measures of placement stability and foster care re-entry.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

In 2002 and 2003, department staff collaborated with Hennepin County in a study of administrative data of approximately 2300 children who left foster care for the first time in calendar year 2000. The characteristics of children who did not re-enter foster care and those who did were compared. With the assistance of the University of Minnesota and Dr. Susan Wells, 60 cases were subjected to an in-depth review and the resulting data were analyzed. Hennepin County and the department used the findings of the study to address documentation, policy and supervision issues believed to improve practice.

Results:

- The department's child welfare staff convened a work group with staff from the Social Services Information System, University of Minnesota Center for Applied Studies in Child Welfare and county representatives. A questionnaire was developed on placement re-entry and placement stability and sent to 87 counties. Data collected from the questionnaire was used to improve training on case documentation for respite care placements; address judicial orders for placements made without county agency recommendations, youth placed for delinquency consequence, and use of emergency shelter care. Along with this effort, Social Services Information System worked with county staff to resolve any confusion regarding placements, temporary absences from

placements and discharges from placement. A number of factors have been identified, and those amenable to change have been addressed by policy and Social Services Information System staff.

- Information and technical assistance on the issues of re-entry and placement stability have been provided using email, print communications and presentations at regional and statewide meetings and conferences.
- The department's quality assurance staff adopted a process to review the county child protection systems modeled on the federal Child and Family Services Review. Staff are identifying practices that support permanency and placement stability, as well as those practices that may undermine them.
- In February 2004, the department began a partnership with counties to reduce Minnesota's placement re-entry rate. This partnership began by asking each county agency to analyze their own placement data and develop a plan that focuses on strategies to reduce the number of children who re-enter the foster care system. Promising practices identified by the quality assurance staff were shared during an interactive television training on the planning process was offered in March 2004. Initial county plans are due in May, followed by a progress report in August 2004.

Permanence Objective I:

Collaborate with the Minnesota Supreme Court on the Children's Justice Initiative to assist selected local jurisdictions to improve the quality and timelines of permanency decisions.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

The Minnesota Supreme Court and the Minnesota Department of Human Services implemented the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges *Resource Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases*. Emphasis was placed on understanding permanency requirements, including timelines for decisions and the importance of safety and stability for children. Children's Justice Initiative works to develop a group of judicial experts willing to lead local teams to fully implement the spirit of the Adoption and Safe Families Act.

The department has developed a practice guide on permanency that focuses on front-end practices related to finding and utilizing relatives and non-custodial parents, placing sibling groups together and on working with parents or guardians and children, when appropriate, relative foster care providers and other foster care providers to understand the various permanency plans child when children cannot be reunified.

Results:

- Children's Justice Initiative training efforts put emphasis on the Indian Child Welfare Act and on culturally appropriate assessment and service delivery. Children's Justice Initiative continued training focuses on child development, children's mental health and the effect of parental chemical abuse on children.
- Children's Justice Initiative developed a Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) Bench Book with accompanying checklists and model orders that support practice under Minnesota Court Rules of Juvenile Procedure that implement the *Resource Guidelines*.
- The Children's Justice Initiative provided training and technical assistance to 60 Minnesota counties involved in the initiative. Through a variety of sessions available to

all child protection stakeholders.

- The Children's Justice Initiative offered small grants to selected Children's Justice Initiative counties to improve service delivery at the local level. The initiative will request data in July 2004.

Permanence Objective J:

Planning and reducing reliance on long-term foster care as a permanency plan.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

A factor that is believed to significantly impact the reliance on long-term foster care is the difference in reimbursement rates between different types of care. Foster care rates are higher than relative custody or adoption. Families that provide care to relative children often cannot manage financially with less funding if they adopt or accept permanent custody of the foster children. A study of the disparity among foster care, Adoption Assistance and Relative Custody Assistance was completed and submitted to the legislature. Due to budget constraints, no additional funding was available, therefore no changes have been made in the reimbursement rates. Relative searches are now being conducted earlier and more diligently in a child's placement. A single home study format is now being used for foster care and adoptions, so that if a licensed foster parent applies to adopt a child in their care, they do not need an additional study.

Results:

- The "*Practice Guide for Using Long-Term Foster Care*" was published and distributed to county social services agencies. The practice guide was developed to address placement practices to reduce the use of long-term foster care as a permanency plan. Department staff provided training on the policies and best practice for permanency as a complement to the practice guide on December 1 and 15, 2003 via interactive television. The training included pertinent law, policy and best practice issues.
- January 6, 2004 – department staff consulted on adoption process, practice, and recruitment, sibling separation and the differences between adoption and long-term foster care. As a result, Anoka County Social Services is changing their practice in the area of permanency and closely tracking permanency timelines.
- February 10, 2004 – department staff partnered with an assistant Hennepin County attorney to provide technical assistance on pertinent law, policy and best practice issues in sibling separation.
- Ongoing meetings and round table discussions have occurred with both Hennepin and Ramsey Counties regarding reducing the use of long-term foster care. Robin Nixon, director of the National Foster Care Coalition, Casey Family Programs, presented on the needs of adolescents and permanency on October 10, 2003 at the statewide permanency conference and hosted a roundtable discussion with Hennepin and Ramsey Counties.

GOAL 5: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Minnesota will have a high quality, culturally responsive workforce to deliver family-centered services to children in need of protection and their families.

Workforce Development Objective A:

Increase the training offered by the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System to workers and increase the participation of workers and others in the training. Minnesota Child Welfare Training System provides comprehensive, competency-based, in-service training to county and tribal child welfare staff. The training is culturally sensitive, family-centered, job-related and of high quality. To ensure this, the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System requires that all trainers attend two courses designed specifically to enhance their training skills.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

In response to the Program Improvement Plan, the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System made a comprehensive revision to all four worker-training modules, the management modules and de-emphasized sections of the training not seen as priorities to practice and to make the curriculums more application based. At the conclusion of all Minnesota Child and Family Service Reviews, the Child Welfare Training System staff receive a report on each county's outcomes to evaluate training needs. On a regional basis additional training is offered to accommodate the highest identified training needs. Since 1999, the system has included "training the trainers" on culture and diversity issues. Training was developed and implemented for the Structured Decision Making risk assessment tool.

Results:

- Minnesota Child Welfare Training System continued to schedule and deliver Social Worker Core training.
- Core 100: The Legal Basis for Child Welfare was held five times. On a five-point scale, the average evaluation rating was 4.9. Evaluations indicate a 50 percent gain in knowledge. One scheduled module was cancelled.
- Core 101: Child Protective Services was held five times. On a five-point scale, the average evaluation rating was 4.1. Evaluations indicate a 23 percent gain in knowledge. One additional module will be held in June of 2004.
- Core 102: Casework Process and Case Planning was held six times. On a five-point scale, the average evaluation rating was 4.3. Evaluations indicate a 31 percent gain in knowledge. Evaluation data is not yet available one module held in March 2004.
- Core 103: The Effects of Abuse and Neglect on Child Development was held six times. On a five-point scale, the average evaluation rating was 4.3. Evaluations indicate a 17 percent gain in knowledge. One scheduled module was cancelled. An additional module will be held in April 2004.
- Core 104: Separation and Placement in Child Welfare Services was held seven times. On a five-point scale, the average evaluation rating was 4.8. Evaluations indicate a 26 percent gain in knowledge. One additional module will be held in May 2004.
- A comprehensive revision was completed on all five modules of the Social Worker Core, adding relevant information on Structured Decision Making and Alternative Response making the curriculums more application based.
- Supervisor Core was revised into six two-day modules and re-titled Leadership Core.
 - Supervisor Core 510: Vision and Mission was held once. On a five-point scale, the average evaluation rating was 4.2. Evaluations indicate a 42 percent gain in knowledge. One additional module is scheduled for May 2004.
 - Supervisor Core 511: Diversity in the Work Place was held once. On a five-point

scale, the average evaluation rating was 4.3. Evaluations indicate a 56 percent gain in knowledge. One additional module is scheduled for June 2004.

- Supervisor Core 512: Situational Leadership was held once. On a five-point scale, the average evaluation rating was 4.3. Evaluations indicate an 80 percent gain in knowledge.
- Supervisor Core 513: Transfer of Learning, was held once. On a five-point scale, the average evaluation rating was 4.2. Evaluations indicate an 85 percent gain in knowledge.
- Supervisor Core 514: Team Building was held once. Data is not yet available.
- Supervisor Core 515: Sustaining Human Action was held once. Data is not yet available.
- Seventy-nine sessions of Social Worker Specialized or Related Skills training were scheduled and seventy-four were held. On a five-point scale, the average rating was 4.3. Evaluations indicate a 31 percent gain in knowledge. Twenty-nine additional sessions are scheduled during April, May and June 2004.
- To support the Program Improvement Plan, two sessions of Structured Decision Making training for child welfare workers were held. On a five-point scale, the average evaluation rating was 4.5. Evaluations indicate an 83 percent gain in knowledge.
- Eight sessions of Supervisor Specialized or Related Skills training were scheduled and seven were held. On a five-point scale, the average rating was 4.2. Evaluations indicate a 30 percent gain in knowledge.
- Minnesota Child Welfare Training System continued to schedule and deliver the curriculum Core Overview for Supervisors.
 - Overview of Core 100: The Legal Basis for Child Welfare was held once. On a five-point scale, the evaluation rating was 4.6. Evaluations indicate a 19 percent gain in knowledge. One additional session is scheduled for April 2004.
 - Overview of Core 101: Child Protective Services was held once. On a five-point scale, the evaluation rating was 3.8. Evaluations indicate a 52 percent gain in knowledge. One additional session is scheduled for May 2004.
 - Overview of Core 102: Casework Process and Case Planning was held once. On a five-point scale, the evaluation rating was 4.3. Evaluations indicate a 31 percent gain in knowledge. One additional session is scheduled for June 2004.
 - Overview of Core 103: The Effects of Abuse and Neglect on Child Development was held once. On a five-point scale, the evaluation rating was 4.2. Evaluations indicate a zero percent gain in knowledge.
 - Overview of Core 104: Separation and Placement in Child Welfare Services was held once. On a five-point scale, the evaluation rating was 4.0. Evaluations indicate a 36 percent gain in knowledge.

Workforce Development Objective B:

Increase participation of county child welfare workers in training to increase their awareness and understanding of a variety of cultures and appropriate responses to families' needs.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

Training regarding cultural diversity has expanded since 1999, when only one culture and diversity course was offered. The culture and diversity curriculum was expanded to the

supervisor's core curriculum. Specialized courses that address cultural issues in placement and placement of children across cultures were developed. Minnesota considers training in the area of cultural diversity to be essential to good practice.

Results:

- One session of the Cultural Issues in Placement curriculum for child welfare workers was scheduled and one was held. On a five-point scale, the evaluation rating was 4.5. The evaluation indicated a 34 percent gain in knowledge.
- One session of the Concurrent Permanency Planning: Indian Child Welfare Act curriculum was scheduled and one was held. On a five-point scale, the evaluation rating was 4.7. The evaluation indicates a 39 percent gain in knowledge.
- Four sessions of the Indian Child Welfare Practices curriculum were scheduled and four were held. On a five-point scale, the evaluation rating was 4.3. The evaluations indicated a 42 percent gain in knowledge.
- Two sessions of the Ethnographic Interviewing curriculum were scheduled and two were held. On a five-point scale, the evaluation rating was 4.3. The evaluations indicate a 14 percent gain in knowledge. One additional session is scheduled for May 2004.
- One session of the Cultural Issues in Transcultural Placements curriculum is scheduled for April 2004.
- One session of the Managing Cultural Diversity curriculum is scheduled for June 2004.

Workforce Development Objective C:

Develop and provide training to county child welfare workers on substance abuse issues and their impact on child protection.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

Training has been provided to county workers on substance abuse and fetal alcohol syndrome. As Minnesota is currently experiencing a dramatic increase in methamphetamine cases, regional training forums are being developed to quickly provide necessary training. Forums will begin in the summer of 2004.

Results:

- Two sessions of the Alcohol and Drugs curriculum were scheduled and two were held. On a five-point scale, the evaluation rating was 4.6. The evaluations indicate a 20 percent gain in knowledge. One additional session is scheduled for June 2004.

Workforce Development Objective D:

Implement a comprehensive training strategy to address domestic violence issues in child welfare.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

Developed best practice guidance for responding to co-occurrence of child maltreatment and domestic abuse and distributed the publication statewide. Training was also provided around the state on co-occurrence, it was incorporated into the Child Welfare Training System.

Results:

- Two sessions of the Family Violence curriculum were scheduled and two were held. On a

five-point scale, the evaluation rating was 3.0. Training evaluations indicate a four percent gain in knowledge.

Workforce Development Objective E:

Develop a statewide system to provide competency-based pre-service training for county foster and adoptive and kinship parents.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

From July 2002 to July 2003, 25 Foster, Adoptive, Kinship Care Provider Pre-Service training series were/are scheduled for county and tribal providers. Each series consists of 12 three-hour modules. Ten modules were cancelled. The Pre-Service training was delivered statewide in all regions as requested.

Results

- The pre-service training curriculum for foster parents and kinship providers is being revised based on information from training participants, county staff and trainers. It is anticipated that four of the pre-service modules will be revised by June 2005. The remaining modules will be revised by December 2005.
- From July 2003-June 2004, 32 Foster, Adoptive, Kinship Care Provider Specialized or Related Skills curriculum-training sessions were scheduled for county and tribal providers and delivered statewide in all regions as requested. Four were cancelled. The Specialized or Related Skills curriculum training are Diffusing Crisis, Changing Hats, Children Living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, Interdependent Living Skills and Life books. Two training modules are under development for foster, adoptive and kinship care providers, one module is on attachment and the other is on working with adolescents.
- A database is being developed to maintain information on the Foster, Adoptive and Kinship training program, including training evaluation scores. The advisory committee of stakeholders and county staff is supportive and interested in the continued growth of the training program. No evaluation data is currently available on Foster, Adoptive, Kinship Care Provider training.

Workforce Development Objective F:

Provide specialized training for public and private agency staff who work with families at risk of entering the foster care system.

Summary of Progress Since 1999:

In 2002, the Family Preservation Foundation curriculum was developed. The four-day training is for new family preservation practitioners. The training is currently offered statewide through the Child Welfare Training System to both public and private agency staff. The training covers ethics, laws, values, role identifications, family interventions, culture and diversity.

Results:

- The Child Welfare Training System has altered the priorities in order to focus on training in areas where Minnesota did not meet the standards set in the Federal Child and Family Services Plan and the Minnesota Child and Family Services Plan. Consequently, the

training identified under this objective has not been held since July 1, 2003.

Workforce Development Objective G:

Assist with the development and provision of training to child protection workers and advocates for victims of domestic violence on issues related to the overlap between domestic violence and child maltreatment.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

The Minnesota Department of Human Services published and distributed 4,000 copies of the “*Guidelines for Responding to the Co-occurrence of Child Maltreatment and Domestic Violence*” to county child protection workers and community domestic violence victim advocates. Information from the guidelines was incorporated into the Child Welfare Training System Core training. As part of a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice under the rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization program, training for child protection workers and domestic abuse advocates was held throughout the state in 2000 and 2001. A staff person from the department was part of the training team. The department sponsored an annual TEAM (Time for Effective Action on Maltreatment of Minors) conference for child protection workers, law enforcement officers and county attorneys that addressed the overlap of child protection and domestic abuse.

Results:

- Two sessions of the Family Violence curriculum were scheduled and two were held. On a five point scale, the evaluation rating was 3.0. Training evaluations indicate a 4 percent gain in knowledge.
- The Children and Family Services Administration continues to distribute copies of the “*Guidelines for Responding to the Co-occurrence of Child Maltreatment and Domestic Violence*” to county child protection workers and community domestic violence victim advocates and it is available online.

GOAL 6: MEASURES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Measures of accountability for services to children and families will be enhanced through a regular reviews of the child welfare system. Providers of services will demonstrate their impact on clients in the system. Accountability will be clear at the state, county and grantee levels.

Measures of Accountability Objective A:

See Goal 2: Family-centered Services Objective C, regarding study of family preservation funds.

Measures of Accountability Objective B:

Develop a policy center to respond to county and other requests for assistance in the interpretation of rules and social service policy.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

Developed a policy center to improve the consistency and accuracy of our responses to policy questions from county staff and others. The policy center was operational in October 2002. The

policy center utilizes a *Quick-Place* computer program that can be accessed by any of the child welfare program staff. Approximately 40 staff and supervisors were trained to use the system. Questions can be entered into the *Quick-Place* system and circulated to program staff for additional consultation. Policy clarification that results from an inquiry is stored for future reference to be used when a similar inquiry is made. Internal staff coordinate and improve the use of the policy center.

Results:

This objective was achieved in 2002.

Measures of Accountability Objective C:

Further develop and refine performance and outcome data from contract grantees. Improve the accountability of grantee agencies with which the department contracts, to ensure that contracted services address their intended purposes and achieve their intended objectives.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

Department staff worked with contractors over the reporting period to ensure that the outcome measures were specific and indicated program success. Department staff provided technical assistance to contractors to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the meaning of the outcome indicators and how those indicators were to be implemented.

Results:

- Grant funding contracts for programs serving parental substance abuse, homeless/transitional housing and minor parent support services continued using coordinated client-specific demographic and outcome reporting systems. Refinements made to the outcome reporting systems were made for the Indian Child Welfare grants and the crisis nursery grants. All of these reporting systems use a core set of simple behaviorally referenced measures of status and client progress. Outcome measures include parenting, child well being, chemical dependency, self-sufficiency, education and several other measures tailored to individual grant categories and program needs. The outcome reporting measures provide a new and increased level of accountability that focuses on results for grant funding contracts managed by Children and Family Services Division. For each of these categories of grant funding contracts (excluding the adolescent category for which the data base is being developed), outcome summary reports for the first and second years of the measures have been produced to evaluate the grant contracts and program development.

Measures of Accountability Objective D:

Evaluate how satisfied counties, tribes and contract grantees are with the assistance provided by Children and Family Services staff.

Summary of Progress Since 1999:

A grantee satisfaction survey was sent to 186 providers in the fall of CY 2000. The survey asked grantees to rate their satisfaction on a five point likert scale from Very Satisfied to Very Dissatisfied. The raters also were asked to indicate “what we are doing right?” and “what should we change?” A total of 88 surveys were returned indicating general satisfaction in the five components of the grant process (Application/ RFP, Negotiation, Program Assistance, Financial

Process and Evaluation). The results of the survey was published and presented to division management and shared with contract managers and their supervisors.

Results:

- The Minnesota Child Welfare Training System collects evaluation data on all training sessions. The relevance of the training and the effect of training on knowledge is rated along with trainer performance.
- In response to the findings from the Satisfaction Survey of Grantees, the Division implemented a policy of hosting a “bidders conference” prior to the due date of grant applications for funding. Where possible, grant managers have streamlined the reporting requirements related to program outcomes by allowing grantees to aggregate outcome data rather than submitting individual client records.
- During the Minnesota Child and Family Service Reviews, satisfaction surveys are distributed to each county. See Measure of Accountability, Objective F for preliminary findings of the survey.

Measures of Accountability Objective E:

Further develop performance measures in regard to child well being and reform of the child welfare system. Develop a process for counties to develop performance targets for child welfare services. Specifically, develop an agreed upon set of statewide family and child well-being indicators and a method for developing state and county-specific performance targets.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

In 1997 and 1998, department staff worked with representatives of county agencies to develop child welfare performance indicators. In 1999, the work group was again convened to address child and family well-being indicators. A set of indicators was developed and included social adjustment, educational development, health and family well-being. While these were excellent measures, they were not automated and as a result no reports were developed.

The Department published reports on child welfare data and outcomes for calendar years 2000, 2001 and 2002. Federal and state performance indicators were included in these reports; focused on child safety and permanence. In 2002, state staff again met with county representatives to review the earlier work on performance indicators and to develop automated reports (available to county staff on the Social Services Information System) on the most needed performance indicators. This work group recommended a new approach to measuring of well being by the use of a new tool completed periodically by child welfare staff that collected child well being information on the Social Services Information System.

In 2003, a child well being tool was developed. It is designed to assess a child’s strengths and needs, and will be used with children whose families are receiving case management services through child protection, alternative response and children’s mental health. The tool will be used for children who are in placement as well as those who remain in their own home while they receive services. The tool was released in December 2003, but has not yet been included on the Social Services Information System.

Results:

- In 2003, the department prepared reports of county performance on the child welfare performance indicators related to the national standards. Three years of county-level data were shared in two areas where the state is working to improve its performance, and also on all six national standards.
- In early 2004, the Social Services Information System released an updated version (3.7), that enables county staff to run reports on the federal performance indicators as needed. These reports allow the staff to easily identify which cases affect their performance. County performance indicators have become a key part of the Minnesota Child and Family Service Review process, the department's quality assurance process.

Measures of Accountability Objective F:

Monitor the provision of child protection services through an external review process. In support of the Program Improvement Plan, use data from the quality assurance reviews of county practices to measure progress toward substantial conformity on the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) outcome items, which were problematic during the on-site review.

Summary of Progress Since 1999:

In 1999, Minnesota was conducting external reviews of child protection practice in each county of the state. In January 2003, the external review process was modified to be more outcome focused review based on the Federal Child and Family Service Reviews. The Minnesota Child and Family Service Review (MN CFSR) data has been used to inform child welfare practice. County review data for each of the seven Safety, Permanency and Well-being Outcomes, along with the 23 associated performance items has been collected and analyzed on a quarterly basis. A 2003 year-end Quality Assurance Report included outcome data. Related systemic and practice observations was shared with county administrators in March of 2004. A bimonthly report to counties featuring data and related practice observations for particular items, called "PIP TIPS," was introduced to counties in April 2004. Outcome data obtained through county reviews and supporting quality assurance practices are being provided to county child welfare supervisors through regional quality assurance forums.

Results:

- A review of Minnesota's 87 county child protection systems will be completed by June 30, 2004 to provide baseline data on compliance and practice. Fifteen county reviews were conducted since July 1, 2003. By July 2004, state quality improvement staff will have initiated the second round of county reviews.
- Surveyed county staff following Minnesota Child and Family Services Reviews during the past year. Thirty-nine surveys from 15 different counties were returned. Results of survey questions: 1) "Helpfulness Of Review" was 94 percent affirmative; 2) "Satisfaction With The Review Process" was 86 percent affirmative; and 3) "Satisfaction With The Reviewer" was 92 percent affirmative.
- State Quality Assurance staff met or are scheduled to meet with management in 17 counties between July 2003 through June 2004. In each of these 17 counties, a quality assurance review was held in the preceding year. The focus of these one-year follow-up meetings is for the state Quality Assurance staff and county managers to review the

progress made by the county on their individual program improvement plans.

- Each reviewer consults with counties about problem solving strategies both during and after reviews, sharing information about best practice and new mandates through personal contacts and meetings. This is an ongoing process.
- Participated in the ongoing process of the Minnesota Child and Family Service Review Program Improvement Plan: Promoting Quality Practices for Supervisors, Using Data to Improve Case Practice and Improving Quality Assurance Reviews. State and regional quality assurance forums, focusing on how to use data to inform child welfare practice and result in improved outcomes for children and families, are scheduled throughout 2004. The first of these forums was held at a statewide supervisors quarterly meeting in January 2004. One regional forum and a statewide conference are scheduled for this year. Efforts will be made to schedule more regional forums before the end of 2004. State Quality Assurance staff also co-facilitates the Tools for Management Training with staff from the Social Services Information System. This training identifies how managers can use Social Services Information System information to support systemic and practices changes that will improve outcomes for children and families.
- In 2003, 20 quality assurance reviews were completed and each of these counties has or will complete a program improvement plan. The program improvement plans address all the Child and Family Service Review performance items with an aggregate rating of “needing improvement.” State quality assurance staff provided technical assistance in the development and implementation of the county program improvement plans. The 2004 quality assurance work plan includes the review of 21 counties and specific plans for the state to share periodic data and information with counties. The specific plans for the counties include the *Minnesota Child and Family Service Review Year End Report*, *Quarterly Minnesota Child and Family Service Review Data Reports* and the monthly PIP TIPS, which addresses systemic and direct practices that support improved outcome and performance item achievement.
- The state quality assurance staff developed the *Minnesota Child and Family Services Review Procedures Manual*. An expansion of the manual is underway, which includes a section on developing and implementing of county program improvement plans.
- In 2004, state Quality Assurance staff members are co-facilitating the *Tools for Management Training* with staff from the Social Services Information System. This training is designed to help county supervisors use available Social Services Information System data to support direct practices aimed at improving outcomes for children and families.
- Collaboration between the state’s Quality Assurance and the Child Welfare Training System staff is noteworthy. The training system is currently assisting with the coordinating and marketing the Child and Family Service Review pre-review training and regional quality assurance supervisor forums. Training system staff have taken an active role in the development of the Minnesota Child and Family Service Review data base. This database will be a resource for both state quality assurance and training system staff.

Measurement of Accountability Objective G:

Citizen Review Panels will provide new opportunities for citizens to play an integral role in ensuring that Minnesota is meeting its goal of protecting children from abuse and neglect and is meeting the permanency needs of children.

Summary of Progress Since 1999:

The first three citizen review panels in Minnesota began operating in October 1999. A fourth panel was added in the fall of 2002. The volunteer facilitator of the Citizen Review Panels' Steering Committee, summarized the progress of the panels as, "Common knowledge is that new initiatives take at least three years to begin to produce desired results. The fourth year of Citizen Review Panel work has been completed and results seem to conform to the adage. Three years of work to lay an operating foundation, effect changes to improve communication and interaction, and assess where in the child protection system panels might make a significant difference has established a viable county/panel partnership working together to ensure the safety and well-being of our children."

Results:

- The panels' summary of their activities and recommendations is in the attached, *Minnesota Citizen Review Panels Annual Report - 2003*. The objectives of the citizen review panels and how they were met in 2003 are also included in the report. *Minnesota's Compliance with the State Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Plan- 2003, A Report of the Citizen Review Panels* is in Appendix One of this annual report.
- The Chisago County Citizen Review Panel piloted training to review case files, tools and procedures developed by a committee of citizens, county and state employees. This committee met monthly. The review materials were modeled after the federal Child and Family Services Reviews and concentrated on well-being outcome two, children receive services to meet their educational needs. By December 2003 the pilot was well under way. There are plans to duplicate the process with other panels.
- The Washington County Citizen Review Panel conducted a survey of mandated reporters and as a result recommended that training for mandated reporters should be consistent and accessible throughout the state. In 2003, a University of Minnesota social work student intern contacted the child protection agencies in each of Minnesota's 87 counties to determine what mandated reporter training was in place. The Steering Committee shared these findings and the results of the survey with Minnesota's Children's Justice Act Task Force in September 2003. Together they plan to develop a mandated reporter training that can be used by all county child protection agencies in Minnesota.
- Members of the citizen review panels in Chisago, Ramsey, Washington and Winona counties reported contributing 956 hours in 2003 to review their child protection systems and Minnesota's Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act plan. The four panels continue to meet monthly. The steering committee met two times, and county staff working with the panels met quarterly.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services continued to provide recruitment, screening, training, recognition and technical support to the Citizen Review Panel members and the county staff members working with them.

Measures of Accountability Objective H

In support of the Program Improvement Plan, data from the quality assurance reviews of county practices was used as measure of our progress toward substantial conformity with the federal Child and Family Services Review outcome items which were problematic during the on-site review.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

Until December of 2002, Minnesota conducted external reviews of Minnesota county child protection systems. The external reviews looked at compliance with Minnesota laws and policies. In 2003, a new review process was implemented. The Minnesota Child and Family Service Review evaluates the same outcome measures that are evaluated by the Federal Child and Family Service Review. After each Minnesota Child and Family Service Review is completed, the county is required to prepare a program improvement plan. Program improvement is supported through training, technical assistance and review of the county data.

Results:

- Between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2004, 20 county reviews were conducted. The reviews focus on measures of child safety, permanency and well-being.
- The schedule for county reviews beginning July 1, 2004 is to review a county once every four years, if the current number of quality assurance staff is maintained.
- Information about good practices, problem solving strategies and new mandates is shared with counties through newsletters, meetings in counties, regional meetings and online. The child welfare supervisor's Web-site features a section for quality improvement staff to share good child welfare practices they have observed both inside and outside the state.
- Progress includes developing of regional and statewide quality assurance forums and joint training efforts with the Social Services Information System on how supervisors can use child welfare data to improve outcomes for children and families.
- Monthly program improvement plan tips (PIP TIPS) were sent to counties beginning in April of 2004. These PIP TIPS focus on direct practice guidance that will assist county staff in improving performance on the 23 Child and Family Service Review items. Each PIP TIP will discuss of one Child and Family Service Review item.

Measures of Accountability Objective I

In response to the Program Improvement Plan a statewide quality assurance system will evaluate the quality of services, identify strengths and needs of service delivery system, provide relevant reports and evaluate implemented program improvement measures.

Three components of the statewide quality assurance system are the review of county child protection agencies, the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System, and the Social Services Information System. All three reinforce each another and impact local practice in the outcome areas. This approach builds on the existing work of the review process, which requires the county to report on their plan to address concerns raised by the review. The Minnesota Child Welfare Training System is providing training for supervisors and managers that will include quality practices. The Social Services Information System developed a series of reports for all aspects of the child welfare and child protection work. Training is regularly provided to directors, managers and supervisors on the use of Social Services Information System reports to track and manage the work. The review process has also focused on helping county agencies make the best use of data and the Social Services Information System.

Summary of Progress Since 1999

In 1999, the external review process was modified from a review of county compliance issues to

a review of the outcome measures that are the focus of the Federal Child and Family Service Reviews.

Results

- The Minnesota Child Welfare Training System, Social Services Information System and Quality Assurance staff jointly focused on issues related to substantial conformity with the Child and Family Service Reviews outcomes. To achieve substantial conformity in each of the seven Child and Family Service Review items of safety, permanency and well-being outcomes and to promote quality practices, modifications were made in the quality assurance reviews and training curriculums offered through the child welfare training and social services information system.
- A Case Review and Consultation Guide was developed to help supervisors better evaluate outcome and performance on individual cases within their agency. This guide has been shared with counties as part of the program improvement plan and with county supervisors that have served as peer reviewers in another county review. The guide is also available on the department's Website for county supervisors.
- Also available is a supervisor's guide that uses a logic model format to outline the primary role of supervisors in case consultation and quality improvement practices. Child and Family Service Review outcomes and performance indicators are woven into each of the program logic models. Instruction was given on the use of data reports that are now available on the Social Services Information System to track local progress on the outcome indicators.
- The Social Services Information System training staff maintains updated Social Services Information System training modules incorporating data entry requirements that supports best practice in social work. The training modules are all available on the department Web site in County Link. In addition, online computer based training is available to county staff for an overview of the system, and also application of the system for new workers.
- The bimonthly publication, *Project Update*, of the Social Services Information System contains articles reminding users about accurate data entry related to improving various child welfare practices in the Program Improvement Plan.
- A series of reports on Minnesota's performance indicators was developed using data from the Social Services Information System. The reports provide county managers, supervisors and state personnel with information on the outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency and well-being. Report formats are coded into Social Services Information System. Implementation of the new report formats began in May of 2004 and will continue through September of 2004.
- The Social Services Information System added a section to the Tools for Management training, which is for supervisors and managers, on how to create county reports that will help supervisors monitor staff adherence to federal and state requirements for the safety, permanency and well-being of Minnesota's children.
- Every quarter, county outcome data derived from both populous and less populous counties was shared with the Administration for Children, Youth and Families regional offices in Minnesota's Quarterly Program Improvement Plan update.

C. Revisions to Goals and Objectives

Since submitting the Child and Family Services Plan in 1999, several revisions have been proposed to the planned goals and objectives. They are as follows:

Child Well Being Objective F:

Collaborate with the Minnesota Supreme Court on the Children’s Justice Initiative to assist local jurisdictions in improving the quality and timeliness of decision making in child protection cases.

Family Centered Services Objective F:

The Family Centered Service, Objective F, which refers to relative care conferencing, has been discontinued. *Relative Care Conference activities, now referred to as Family Group Decision Making, are described under Family Centered Services Objective B results.*

Permanence Objective F:

Continue and enhance “Minnesota’s Adoption Support and Preservation” services, a coordinated system to provide post adoption information and support to individuals and agencies across the state.

Permanence Objective G:

Recruit diverse families to ensure that available families reflect the children who are in need of foster and permanent homes.

Permanence Objective H:

Improve performance in regard to placement stability and re-entry into foster care. Improve performance on the federal measures of placement stability and foster care re-entry.

Permanence Objective I:

Collaborate with the Minnesota Supreme Court on the Children’s Justice Initiative to help selected local jurisdictions improve the quality and timelines of permanency decisions.

Permanence Objective J:

Reduce reliance on long term foster care as a permanency plan.

Measures of Accountability Objective F:

Monitor the provision of child protection services through quality assurance reviews. In support of the Program Improvement Plan, use data from the reviews to measure progress toward substantial conformity with the federal Child and Family Services Review outcome items, which were problematic during the on-site review.

Measurement of Accountability Objective G:

Citizen Review Panels will provide new opportunities for citizens to play an integral role in ensuring that Minnesota is meeting its goal of protecting children from abuse and neglect and is meeting the permanency needs of children.

Measures of Accountability Objective H

In support of the Program Improvement Plan, data from the quality assurance reviews of county practices will be used to measure progress toward substantial conformity with the federal Child and Family Services Review outcome items, which were problematic during the on-site review.

Measures of Accountability Objective I

In response to the Program Improvement Plan a statewide quality assurance system will evaluate the quality of services, identify strengths and needs of service delivery system, provide relevant reports and evaluate implemented program improvement measures.

II. SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2004

Minnesota has developed a full continuum of public and private child and family services. This service continuum includes: family support services; family preservation and child welfare services, including child abuse and neglect prevention; intervention and treatment services and foster care; and services to support family reunification as outlined in the final rule (45 CFR 1357.15 (n)).

The form *Estimated Expenditures by Program (CFS-101, Part II)* shows what the various expenditures for these programs are. It also shows information for each service described by:

- The population to be served
- The geographic areas where services will be available
- The estimated number of children to be served
- The estimated expenditure for these services from federal, state, local and donated sources, including Title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2, and the CAPTA program.

The following is a description and definition of these services provided by the state and the county agencies. The information is taken from the 2001 report of the Budgeting, Reporting and Accounting for Social Services Manual (BRASS). The numbering corresponds with the first column on the CFS-101.

- 1. Prevention and Support Services** (Family Support). Services include: information and referral, community education and prevention, health-related services, housing services, social and recreational services, money management, home-based support services, homemaking services, individual counseling, respite care; group counseling, approved pilot projects, local collaboratives, adaptive aids, supplies or special equipment, adolescent life skills training, specialized case management, Community Alternative Care (CAC), Community alternatives for Disabled Individuals (CADI) or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI.)
- 2. Protective Services.** Services are: child protection assessment and investigation, including all activities from initial reports of maltreatment to determination of whether maltreatment occurred and whether child protection services are needed.
- 3. Crisis Intervention.** (Family Preservation) This category of services includes: child welfare assessment, court-related services, family-based crisis services, family-based

counseling services, family-based life management skills, respite care, general case management, Children’s Mental Health (CMH) family community support services, case management (Rule 79); child general case management, CMH family-based services and therapeutic support of foster care.

4. **Time-limited Family Reunification.** Services include Family Group Decision Making projects.
5. **Adoption Promotion and Support.** Services include the Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation program.
6. **Foster Care Maintenance.** These core services include: child foster care, Rule 8 child group home, correctional facilities, child shelter, and Rule 5 child residential treatment.
7. **Adoption Subsidy Payments.** This category also includes payments for Relative Custody Assistance, a state-funded program.
8. **Independent Living Services.** This category includes services provided under the Support for Emancipation and Living Functionally (SELF) or Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) programs and homeless and runaway youth services. See the CFCIP plan for a detailing of services to be provided included in this report.
9. **Foster Parent Training and Recruitment.** This category includes activities by county human services agencies and by the department’s recruitment grantees.
10. **Adoption Parent Training and Recruitment.** This category includes the Public/Private Adoption Initiative service grants and county agency provided adoption services.
11. **Child Care related to Employment and Training.** This category includes: basic sliding fee child care and child care for participants in the Minnesota Family Investment Program.

III. SYSTEMS SUPPORT OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Staff Training

Minnesota has a statewide, competency-based child welfare-training program. This comprehensive and integrated program is designed to improve the quality of child welfare practice by county and tribal child welfare staff, supervisors and managers. It includes a 15-day Core curriculum for social workers and a 12-day Core curriculum for child welfare supervisors and managers. It also includes specialized and related training curriculums based on individual training needs. The Minnesota Child and Family Service Plan outcomes for counties are reviewed by the training system staff to assess training needs for each region of the state.

The target training population includes foster/adoptive/kinship care providers. Training for this includes a 36-hour, pre-service curriculum, two related skills training curriculums, “Training of Trainers”, “Training of the Trainers on Culture and Diversity” and technical assistance.

Other activities include the University of Minnesota Title IV-E Scholar program:

- The University of Minnesota provides social work education at the master’s and doctoral levels assisting practitioners to develop advanced knowledge of the problems surrounding and policies regarding children at risk of and in out-of-home placement. Last year 40 master’s students and two.D. students participated in the program. Approximately 23 percent were students of color.

- A second component, through the University of Minnesota-Duluth, offers a master's in social work to increase the pool of master's level social workers with a special focus on American Indians. At the University of Minnesota-Duluth, 33 students are enrolled in this program, 10 are American Indian.
- Work through the University of Minnesota and a collaboration of state colleges culminated this year in the development of a Title IV-E funded bachelor of social work proposal, which will focus on increasing the number of social workers in Minnesota, especially in rural areas. Federal approval for this project was received from the regional office during the first quarter of 2004. This program is expected to be fully implemented in the fall of 2004.

The University of Minnesota Eligibility Determination training program employs four trainers who provide services to Minnesota's 87 counties and 11 tribal social services organizations. These services include eligibility determination training for Title IV-E, Medical Assistance and Social Services Information System. Special emphasis for the current year has been to help counties prepare for a federal Title IV-E audit. Over the past year, trainers have visited all 87 Minnesota counties providing training to over 450 county and tribal staff. Six basic formats used for this technical assistance and training include:

- Title IV-E Overview for all staff
- Title IV-E AFDC Readiness for all staff
- Title IV-E Refresher for experienced staff
- Title IV-D new worker training
- Question and answer sessions
- Consultation.

Minnesota also provides comprehensive training to all child welfare workers and supervisors on the Social Services Information System. Regular hands-on sessions at computer training labs are offered for new workers (3-day curriculum) and for experienced workers in specialized areas of work such as Adoption, Placement, Service Plans. This training is being reviewed and updated to emphasize practice issues that have been identified as part of the Program Improvement Plan.

The Social Service Information System continued to provide special training to instruct supervisors and managers to use data reports to track local and statewide data about permanency timelines, case outcomes, casework standards and other information that addresses the well-being of children and their families and other data related to the federal outcome indicators.

In addition to the regularly offered training sessions, the Social Services Information System also offers specialized training to update county staff on changes and additions to the application such as interactive video conferences, hands-on training, classroom training, online help, user manual updates and regional meetings.

Other training and support methods that Social Services Information System provides are:

- Mentor program. Eighty-six (of 87) Minnesota counties have designated mentors to assist workers within the county and attend bimonthly Social Services Information System meetings or training sessions on topics ranging from case management and best practice to requests for enhancement to the system.

- Help Line. County coordinators and mentors can call with questions on how to best record case management information and required state and federal data on the Social Services Information System.
- Regional Meetings. These geographically based groups are small groups and allow county staff to discuss issues one-on-one with Social Services Information System staff and other county staff.
- Project Updates. These biweekly updates communicate information to staff on a range of topics, including reminders to workers to accurately enter data, which may result in improved outcomes related to the Program Improvement Plan.
- Web Site. This site includes the Social Services Information System User manual (updated with each new version of the application), Job Aids, training schedules and registration forms
- Computer Based Training (CBT). This computer assisted training is available on CD-Rom or on the Web site.

Technical Assistance

State staff will provide technical assistance to:

- County social services staff in the areas identified under the goals and objectives section as well as maintenance efforts
- Community-based service providers and contractors
- Foster care and adoptive families and other placement providers
- Adoption agencies that are new partnerships.

Department staff are also available to give technical assistance to county social service staff and others upon request.

Evaluation

The department has collaborated with county officials and staff from the Children's Defense Fund to develop performance measures in the areas of safety, permanence, child and family well-being, and system activity. With the use of these performance measures and the implementation of Minnesota's Adoption and Foster Care analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), the Social Services Information System and the child welfare system have enhanced capacity to evaluate its performance.

Over the last year, Minnesota supported the evaluation of Alternative Response in an attempt to demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency related to program outcomes. The Alternative Response evaluation uses an experimental design to determine the impact of the program related to safety, permanency, family functioning and cost as well as to assess program process. After two and a half years of following families who were assessed under Alternative Response and families in a matched control group receiving the traditional investigation, there are findings of lower recidivism rates for Alternative Response families along with greater family stability and improved child well-being. The Alternative Response is a four-year longitudinal evaluation that was completed in 2004.

An evaluation was conducted on 113 families who utilized the Family Group Decision Making conference. Outcome measures for reunification, safety, permanence and client satisfaction were positive.

The African American Disparities Study and the Child Neglect Study, both led by the University of Minnesota and the Department of Human Services, are attempts to identify the factors that contribute to the disproportionate representation of African American children and other children of color in the Child Welfare System. The five-year study of child neglect began in January 2000 and will be concluded in the fall of 2005. The African American Disparities study began in 2003 and results are expected in the summer of 2005. The results of these studies will be used to design local and state strategies to eliminate such factors and improve outcomes for children of color in Minnesota. The state intends to use the results of the studies to encourage counties to:

- Assess the appropriateness of their decision making processes, including level, type and delivery of services.
- Engage in partnerships with other county agencies, community organizations, faith-based initiatives and communities of color.
- Increase monitoring and evaluation through methods that track county performance and demographic trends.
- Research new approaches to develop effective, culturally relevant services and training strategies.

In response to Minnesota's federal Child and Family Service Review, a study of the children placed out of the home by Hennepin County (the state's most populous county) was conducted by the University of Minnesota, School of Social Work. The purpose of the study was to identify the factors that contributed to placement re-entry and placement stability, so that efforts can be made to improve practice. The factors identified as increasing the likelihood of re-entering placement were children who had a high number of placements, children who had been placed in a kinship setting; and cases where chemical dependency services were provided after the child was placed. The factors that seemed to reduce the likelihood of re-entering placement were children who were an ethnic minority, parents who participated in parenting classes during placement, individual counseling was provided after exit from placement. Hennepin County used this information in supervision of workers to improve county practice.

In February of 2004, the department began a partnership with counties to reduce Minnesota's re-entry rate. Each county agency analyzes their own placement data and develops a plan that focuses on strategies to reduce the number of children who re-enter the foster care system. In addition, the Social Services Information System disseminated information about data entry on placements to reduce or eliminate incorrect data entries that impact the statewide re-entry outcome measure.

IV. MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT

Minnesota assures that the state and grantees support the maintenance of effort and non-supplantation requirements in Section 432(a)(7) of the Act, and the federal regulation at 45 CFR 1357.32 (f).

V. TITLE IV-B, SUBPART 2, EXPENDITURES

Minnesota still plans to expend a minimum of 20 percent of Title IV-B, subpart 2, on actual service delivery under:

- Family Preservation
- Community Based Family Support
- Time-Limited Family Reunification
- Adoption Promotion and Support Services
- Up to another 20 percent will be allocated for planning and services coordination.

VI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A. Diligent Recruitment Efforts

Legislative action in May 1997 removed all considerations of a child's race and ethnic heritage from placement decision making. The statute now requires an "individualized determination of the needs of the child and how the selected placement serves the needs of the child being placed." Authorized child placing agencies are required to have written plans for recruiting families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in need of foster and adoptive families.

The following are specific strategies Minnesota is using to develop an adequate pool of families capable of promoting each child's development and supporting the family's case goals.

General Recruiting

State statutes require the commissioner of human services to administer and supervise all child welfare activities. State statutes also authorize child-placing agencies to make special efforts to recruit foster and adoptive families for waiting children. Minnesota expects, as a state supervised and county administered system for the delivery of social services, that local public and private agencies will fulfill their obligations to recruit, train and provide services to foster and adoptive families within their jurisdiction.

Strategies carried out at both the state and local levels have included: articles and announcements in major newspapers; television and radio public service announcements; brochures and informational booklets distributed at community meetings; neighborhood billboards; and presentations to community and church groups.

In June 2001, a four-year grant was awarded to begin a regional recruitment initiative for foster and adoptive families. This grant supports community recruitment through the utilization of regional parent resource developers and regional advisory committees. Eleven parent resource developers work within various regions of the state to promote comprehensive community collaboration in the recruitment and support of foster and adoptive families. The parent resource developer established an action committee in one community that identified their needs for foster

and adoptive homes. They are in the process of developing and implementing a plan to identify local agency needs, focus recruitment on the region's children who are not being placed in their home community, support stability of foster care placements and seeks ways to mobilize supporters in working together to recruit support foster care and adoptive homes in the region. Minnesota supports this program with an annual grant of \$500,863. This grant ends June 30, 2005.

The Department observed May as National Foster Care Month to support the recruitment of foster parents and to honor the various roles of foster parents. On May 31, 2004, foster families were be recognized at the Minnesota Twins baseball game. Local media covered the event in their broadcasts, foster parents were recognized, free admission was offered to a limited number of foster families, and activities for the children were provided. During the national foster parent event, local television networks contacted volunteer foster parents. In addition, local county social service agencies were encouraged to contact the media in their area about the community's need foster parents.

The department contracted with licensed child-placing agencies to provide adoption services in collaboration with county human service agencies. This public/private partnership has enhanced Minnesota's efforts to ensure that children available for adoption are placed with appropriate adoptive families in a timely manner.

The department has coordinated a variety of media events featuring adoption, in the past year. These include:

- "Celebrate Adoption: A Circus of the Heart" in October 2003. This was the sixth consecutive year the celebration was hosted to honor and recruit adoptive families for children under state guardianship.
- National Adoption Day in November raised awareness of the need for adoptive parents by highlighting 44 adoption finalizations in Hennepin County.
- Three theatrical performances of "Last But Not Least" by adolescents in the foster care system were held in December. Through the performance, the adolescents shared information about why they want to be adopted and what they need from adoptive families;
- "A Home for the Holidays" adoption special, phone bank and promotional pieces about adoption.

Methods of Disseminating General and Child Specific Information

Minnesota's current system for recruiting foster and adoptive families includes the coordinated efforts of the Minnesota Department of Human Services, public and private agencies, local television and newspapers. The following recruitment efforts are part of the plan to continue to find permanent homes for children.

Minnesota places first priority for foster care recruitment and permanent placements within the extended family of the child in need of placement. County agencies search for relatives who are interested and capable of providing a safe and nurturing temporary home for the child. Relatives

interested in providing foster care to a child in their family must complete foster care application materials including a criminal background check.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services supports county social services recruitment of diverse foster and adoptive parents through a regional recruitment program. The goals of the regional recruitment program are to involve foster and adoptive families in recruiting foster and adoptive families through the following objectives:

- Find foster and adoptive families for children who are in need of care
- Keep siblings together in foster care and adoptive placements
- Keep children in their home communities
- Reduce other changes in children's lives as they are removed from their home
- Promote permanency for children.

The recruitment program supports family resource developers working to establish community action teams. The regional recruitment program supports the work of Community Action Teams in 11 Minnesota communities or regions. One resource developer works statewide with the Native American Community and another works statewide with the communities of faith. In fiscal year 2003, this recruitment project presented to 60,049 people and recruited 196 foster or adoptive families. This past year the Community Action Teams have:

- Organized tables at community events
- Created a teddy bear float for community parades
- Presented to schools, churches, civic organizations, and other community organizations.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services and county social service agencies implemented the following recruitment efforts:

- Promotion of the need for foster parents at community events through exhibit tables, parade activities and local media.
- The secure State Adoption Exchange and the public state and national adoption photo Web listings.
- An information and recruitment tool for special needs adoption titled, *Minnesota's Waiting Children*, which continues to be published annually.
- A recruitment tool published twice yearly titled, *We Have Been Waiting*, which focuses on specific groups of kids.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services applied for and received a Federal Adoption Opportunities Activities Grant to find adoptive families for children in foster care. Minnesota's program, *The Homecoming Project*, provides child specific recruitment efforts for 13 to 17 year olds under state guardianship.

B. Cross-Jurisdictional Resources to Facilitate Timely Adoptions

Minnesota has a long history of cross-jurisdictional, intrastate adoptions. The Minnesota State Adoption Exchange, the Minnesota Waiting Children's booklet, monthly meetings of adoption social workers from throughout the state and a state administered Adoption Assistance program

both minimize and help address cross jurisdictional issues. Intrastate placement of children for adoption and/or transfer of permanent legal and physical guardianship to a relative is supported by statute.

In 2003, a legislative change was made that expanded the definition of an adoption agency to include federally recognized Indian tribes in Minnesota. This change enables children adopted through a tribal social service agency to be eligible for Adoption Assistance.

All children in need of adoptive placement are on the State Adoption Exchange Web site. The Web site has been modified to make it easier for families and social workers to access one another. The Public/Private Adoption Initiative (PPAI) has increased the amount of funds to use for extensive child specific recruiting, in addition to reimbursing counties for relative adoption studies. Adoption assistance provides reimbursement for adoption studies of a specific child by agencies in other states. The department is able to contract with Tribal social service agencies to assist in the adoption of American Indian Children under state guardianship.

C. Compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act

On June 18, 1998, the Tribal-State Agreement was signed by the Commissioner of Human Services, David Doth, and by the chairpersons of the 11 Minnesota Tribes and Bands. The department has maintained an active role with the Indian Child Welfare Advisory Council (Minnesota Statutes section 260.835). The department has also revised the Indian Child Welfare section of the department's Social Services Manual in collaboration with representatives of the Reservations and the Attorney General's office. The manual sets forth the procedures to be followed by county social service staff when an American Indian becomes involved with child protective services.

The Department offers training on the Federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act of 1985, the Tribal-State Agreement of 1998 and the Indian Child Welfare Social Services Manual throughout the state. Training on the Indian Child Welfare Act began in July 2000. The department continues to regularly provide ICWA training through the Minnesota Child Welfare Training system and has added new Indian child welfare related courses.

The Department continues to fund family preservation and reunification services and special focus grants to the 11 Indian Tribes and Bands, and four urban American Indian agencies. One grant has been awarded to the Indian Child Welfare Law Center for legal services to Indian families. The annual amount of the grants is \$2,139,201.

In 1999, the Compliance Review Team was established for referrals alleging noncompliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act and the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act. The Compliance Review Team members represent the Indian Child Welfare Advisory Council, the Ombudsperson for American Indian Families, Minneapolis American Indian Center Indian Child Welfare Court Monitor, the county social services agencies, private child placing agencies and Minnesota Department of Human Services. Since the inception, 32 cases have been reviewed for noncompliance to the Indian Child Welfare Act. The Team submits their decision of compliance

or noncompliance to the involved agencies with a request for a plan, if found to be in noncompliance. Department staff is charged with providing technical assistance for Indian Child Welfare activities and other support as needed to improve compliance, while providing services to American Indian children and families. The department also receives Indian Child Welfare noncompliance reports from biological parents and other extended family members, tribal staff, county staff and other private agency staff.

D. Activities on Behalf of Children Adopted from Other Countries

Minnesota Statutes Section 257.05 requires the Commissioner's consent for the importation, domestic or international, of any child into Minnesota for the purposes of adoption. The statute requires assurances of the suitability of the home and requires the Commissioner to protect the child's interests until the child reaches the age of 18 or is legally adopted. Minnesota Statutes 259.60, subdivision 3 requires full faith and credit be given to any post adoption reporting requirements of the county of the child's origin. The statute also recognizes the validity of inter-country adoptions. All children adopted from other countries or brought into Minnesota from other countries are to receive the full benefit of services identified in the child welfare case plan to meet the critical needs of the child.

The department's adoption unit works closely with the licensed adoption agencies and the Immigration and Naturalization Services to ensure compliance with statutes. County social services agencies provide child welfare services as appropriate and needed. The resources of the Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation program are available to all adopted children, including those adopted from other countries.

E. Data on Children Adopted From Other Countries

Minnesota's Adoption and Foster Care analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the Social Services Information System, records information on children adopted from other countries who enter out-of-home placement. Because place of birth is not an AFCARS requirement, and our system does not capture that information, we are unable to determine which, if any, children in out-of-home placement at the county level were adopted from a country outside the U.S. We are investigating ways to identify these children to obtain the requested information.

The department maintains a separate data base on all children under state guardianship so it is possible to identify state wards from countries outside the United States.

F. Adoption Incentive Fund Activity

Minnesota received an adoption incentive award of \$82,000 for Federal Fiscal Year 2003. The funds were used for Adoption Assistance or for recruitment activities and supports for adoptive families.

VII. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT ACT

Accomplishments

Minnesota has continued to make progress in preventing child maltreatment, integrating substance abuse intervention and child protection, improving safety and risk assessment, developing citizen review panels, and supporting the Children's Justice Initiative. The details of our accomplishments are included in the updates provided below.

1. Program Area: Prevention

Objective: *Increase the impact of child abuse prevention efforts in Minnesota.*

Update:

- The department continued to contract with Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota to provide child abuse prevention activities and parent support groups statewide. State agency staff worked with Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota (formerly Family Support Network) to distribute materials to promote the awareness of child abuse prevention online to department staff, county agencies, tribes, grantees and community agencies for use in April 2004. The Children's Trust Fund staff worked with the communications staff on press releases. A Child Abuse Prevention Month display was provided in the lobby.
- A statewide Child Abuse Prevention Conference, co-sponsored with Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota, was held in April 2004. The theme of the conference was "The Power of Prevention: Prevention in Challenging Times." This conference provided information and training to professionals, child abuse prevention practitioners, community leaders and parent leaders on a broad range of relevant topics.
- Department staff continued to work with crisis nursery programs throughout the state to develop innovative programs to meet the needs of the communities and evaluate the effectiveness of their services. Crisis nurseries help parents to develop goals when they receive crisis care for their children. The department began collecting a sample of goal attainment data on October 1, 1999. In State Fiscal Year 2003, the department collected statewide data on goal attainment. Of 2,507 families receiving crisis care, 94 percent of individuals successfully completed or exceeded their goals. Of the families served, 94 percent felt that crisis nursery helped. Data on demographics, numbers served and goal attainment are now collected in a more condensed form, which resulted in more consistent data.
- Data was collected from the crisis nursery in Chisago County on the impact that crisis nursery services have on child protection services and out-of-home placement. This study has shown that when clients use crisis nursery services there is a reduction in recidivism for child protection services.
- The department provided information and training to crisis nurseries on topics including child abuse and child sexual abuse prevention techniques, stress reduction, public relations and evaluation. In addition, a number of crisis nursery staff attended the 2004 Child Abuse Prevention Conference that was planned and funded in part by the department.
- In 2003, the state legislature eliminated direct state funding to crisis nursery programs. The department continued to provide federal support to crisis nursery programs through

the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and designated state staff to provide technical support through June 2004.

- Legislative changes resulted in a restructuring of state departments. The prevention programs formerly at the Minnesota Department of Education were moved to the Minnesota Department of Human Services, which eliminated the need for an interagency plan for crisis nurseries. Given the new state priorities, the strategic plan for crisis nurseries was not disseminated. Information gathered through that process was disseminated to Crisis Nurseries of Minnesota, Inc. as appropriate.

2. Program Area: Child Protection and Parental Substance Abuse

Objective: *Improve services to families affected by child maltreatment and/or substance abuse.*

Update:

- Minnesota has experienced a dramatic increase in child protection cases that involve a parent or caretaker who uses and/or manufactures methamphetamine in the child's home. These cases often result in long out-of-home placement and long-term chemical dependency treatment. Training is being developed for child protection workers and foster parents to address the multiple problems associated with these cases, in particular the child's medical needs, chemical dependency treatment, placement issues and safety issues for workers and foster parents.
- Many neglect cases involve substance abuse by the parent or caretaker. Alternative Response is a non-adversarial approach, often used to assess allegations of neglect. This approach has been effective at engaging the parent to make life changes that will improve the quality of care they provides. The social worker helps the parent overcome barriers to obtaining a chemical dependency evaluation and recommended treatment. This approach encourages social worker flexibility and creativity to help the client provide an acceptable level of care for their children.
- Staff continues to provide policy direction and technical assistance on cases where women are pregnant and abusing alcohol to Minnesota's 87 counties through coordination and technical assistance.
- In the fall of 2003, the Maternal Substance Abuse Interagency work group convened the Maternal Substance Abuse Interagency Advisory Group of state department stakeholders. Participants identified multidisciplinary programming models to address multiple risk factors, coordinate training and technical assistance and develop common outcomes. Participants also identified successful program approaches and barriers to working with this population. The participants agreed to obtain and share data across state agencies; collaborate on providing training across programs and state agencies; identify the services provided to this populations by each agency; identify best practices and provide opportunities for replication; and promote integration and coordination across agencies. The next steps are to gather community input and to coordinate a Planning and Training Summit in fall of 2004.
- The Circle of Women Project, modeled after Seattle's Fetal Alcohol Syndrome - Birth to Three project, provides intensive in-home visitation and advocacy services for pregnant or postpartum women who are engaging in heavy alcohol and/or drug

use during pregnancy and have no involvement with other community services. The Circle of Women Project provides services for the pregnant women and their children for three years. The department continued to administer grants for two of the original three Circle of Women Projects, the third project site was discontinued because they were unable to effectively provide the contracted services. One of the Circle of Women projects serves women in Minneapolis and one serves women of the Leech Lake Reservation in Cass County.

3. Program Area: Training

Objective: *Ensure that professionals involved with child maltreatment cases receive specialized training on interviewing child victims, conducting maltreatment investigations and prosecutions, and working as part of a multidisciplinary team.*

Update:

- The department continues to work with CornerHouse and First Witness Child Abuse Resource Center to provide specialized forensic interview training to child protection workers, law enforcement officers and county attorneys involved in investigating and responding to reports of child maltreatment. Approximately 85 child protection workers, law enforcement investigators and attorneys received interview training between July 2003 and June 2004. An additional 120 social workers, supervisors, therapists and other professionals with a responsibility for the ongoing work on child sexual abuse cases received training on child sexual abuse issues through CornerHouse and First Witness.
- In November 2003, grant funds available through the Children's Justice Act program were used to pay the registration and travel expenses for eight county staff attending the Midwest Regional Child Advocacy Center training on child maltreatment.
- The department and the Minnesota Supreme Court, through a collaborative project called the Children's Justice Initiative, presented four two-day conferences in 60 Minnesota counties. Attending the conferences were judges, county attorneys, social workers, guardians ad litem, public defenders who represent both parents and children in juvenile court, tribal representatives, and other court system stakeholders. The conferences focus on implementing improved practices on handling cases involving abused and neglected children in foster care using judicially driven multidisciplinary teams at the local level modeled on practices recommended in the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges *Resource Guidelines*.
- Children's Justice Initiative training efforts in 2003-2004 included emphasis on the Indian Child Welfare Act and on early, culturally appropriate, thorough assessments and timely service delivery. Children's Justice Initiative continued its training focus on child development, children's mental health, and the affect of parental chemical abuse on children.

4. Program Area: Risk Assessment

Objective: *Improve the safety and risk assessment processes used by Minnesota counties in the child protection system. Improvements will be demonstrated by more consistent*

definitions and procedures across counties, improved service delivery for families in the child protection system, enhanced management of worker case loads and responsibilities, and better documentation of community needs for administration and funding.

Update:

- An actuarial based Structured Decision Making tool was selected for Minnesota's risk assessment tool. Initially eight counties piloted the tool to determine its effectiveness. In January 2004, the risk assessment tool was implemented statewide.
- All 87 counties are using the actuarial-based Structured Decision Making tool to document risk assessment. A companion safety tool assesses child safety. Department policy staff and Social Services Information System staff coordinated training in the use of the tools.
- All 87 counties are also employing the Alternative Response. Initiation and implementation of Alternative Response and Structured Decision Making was accomplished without a mandate from the legislature, but with intensive effort by counties and Minnesota Department of Human Services staff.
- As of January 2004, a child well being tool was made available to all 87 counties. The tool was developed through an initiative of the Minnesota Department of Human Services and Olmsted County Community Services. It assesses the child's physical health, emotional/behavioral functioning, education, family relationships, social/community relations, cultural/community identity, development and substance abuse. When problems are identified in the child's functioning in any of these areas, referrals are made to agencies that will be able to evaluate the child's needs and provide any services indicated.
- The child well-being tool is used to assess the presenting strengths and needs of an individual child. This assessment tool is used to systematically identify critical child needs and help plan effective service interventions. Training on the Structured Decision Making tool, the child well being tool and Alternative Response is regularly provided statewide through the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System.

5. Program Area: Citizen Review Panels

Objective: *Determine if the county child protection systems are adequately meeting their public mandate to protect children, in particular through fulfillment of the State Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Plan.*

Update:

- The panels submitted a summary of their activities and recommendations in the attached, *Minnesota Citizen Review Panels Annual Report - 2003*. The objectives of the citizen review panels and how they were met in 2003 are also included in the report. *Minnesota's Compliance with the State Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Plan – 2003, A Report of the Citizen Review Panels* is in Appendix One of this annual report.
- Members of the citizen review panels in Chisago, Ramsey, Washington and Winona counties reported contributing 956 hours in 2003 to review their child protection systems and Minnesota's Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act plan. The four panels continue to meet monthly. The steering committee met two times, and county staff

working with the panels met quarterly.

- The Chisago County Citizen Review Panel piloted training to review case files, tools and procedures developed by a committee of citizens, county and state employees, which met monthly. The review materials were modeled after the federal Child and Family Services Reviews and concentrated on well-being outcome two, children receive services to meet their educational needs. By December 2003, the pilot was well under way. There are plans to duplicate the process with other panels.
- The Washington County Citizen Review Panel conducted a survey of mandated reporters and as a result recommended that training for mandated reporters should be consistent and accessible throughout the state. In 2003, a University of Minnesota social work student intern contacted the child protection agencies in each of Minnesota's 87 counties to determine what mandated reporter training was in place. The Steering Committee shared their findings and the results of the survey with Minnesota's Children's Justice Act Task Force in September 2003. Together they plan to develop a mandated reporter training that can be used by all county child protection agencies in Minnesota.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services continued to provide recruitment, screening, training, recognition and technical support for Citizen Review Panel members and the county staff members working with them.

Activities Update

The department provided leadership and expertise to an effort spearheaded by Family Support Network to implement a one-day child abuse prevention conference for professionals that was held in April 2004.

Some CAPTA funding has been used to conduct some of the training and technical assistance activities of the Children's Justice Initiative. This collaboration with the Minnesota Supreme Court promotes best practices in the courtroom through use of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) resource guidelines and collaboration of the court and child welfare systems.

CAPTA Assurances

The assurances form has been completed and signed by Minnesota's Governor Tim Pawlenty and was included with the previously submitted plan.

Services and Training

Pursuant to the CAPTA State Grant requirements of section 106(b)(2)(C), Minnesota has conducted the following services and training activities:

- A statewide child maltreatment prevention conference for professionals was conducted in April 2004.
- Training in assessment and investigation of child maltreatment is ongoing through Minnesota's Child Welfare Training System and the specialized activities of forensic interviewing.
- A publication on mandated reporting is provided to counties and other interested

professional and lay organizations. The publication is also available on the department's Web site. Using Children's Justice Act funds, the department contracts with private agencies to provide mandated reporter training.

- Training is available for multi-disciplinary child protection teams using Children's Justice Act funds.

Substantive Changes in Minnesota Law

Some changes were made to the statutes that impact issues of child protection service delivery, criminal investigation and training.

- The Children and Community Services Act establishes a \$100+ million block grant for social services with an emphasis on children and families by combining the Community Social Services Act, Title XX, Children's Mental Health, Family Preservation and a number of smaller grants. The grant is tied to biennial county social services plan and department specified outcomes and performance targets for children's mental health, child safety, permanency and well-being.
- Children's mental health screening for children within the juvenile justice and child welfare systems to ensure that youth with mental health needs are referred to mental health services.
- Children adopted through tribal courts without termination of parental rights and children who are wards of the tribal court are eligible to receive Adoption Assistance.
- The definition of adoption agency was expanded to include federally recognized tribes. Tribal social service agencies considered to be an adoption agency are able to receive reimbursement for providing services for children eligible for Adoption Assistance after entering a reimbursement agreement with the commissioner of Human Services.
- A more flexible Medical Assistance benefit set was created to expand coverage for children's mental health rehabilitation services.
- Medical Assistance will cover children's mental health crisis response services including crisis assessment, mobile crisis intervention services and crisis stabilization services for children who meet eligibility requirements.

Citizen Review Panels Annual Report

A copy of the annual report entitled, *Minnesota Citizen Review Panels 2003 Annual Report*, is in the appendix.

Request for FY 2003 Funds

Please see the attached CFS-101, which outlines the FY 2003 request.