



## Board of Directors Meeting

February 10, 2011

### Child Welfare Advocacy Report

Item V.D.

---

<b>Recommended Action:</b>	<b>Information Only</b>
<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Child Welfare System Update</b>
<b>Strategic Plan Goal:</b>	<b>Child Maltreatment</b>

---

#### Eckerd Community Alternatives

##### Competitive Procurement Process Update

Eckerd Community Alternatives (ECA) invited all agencies with extensive experience in the delivery of child welfare case management services to submit a proposal to provide Case Management and Adoptions Services to eligible children and families residing in Pinellas County. The Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) for Case Management and Adoptions services in Pinellas County was advertised on November 8, 2010. In response to the ITN, ECA received seven proposals which were available for distribution to the evaluators on January 7, 2011. Representatives from the following organizations were invited to participate on the evaluation team: Pinellas County Sheriff's Office Child Protect Investigations Divisions, Guardian Ad Litem's (GAL) Office, State Attorney's Office, JWB Children's Services Council of Pinellas County, and ECA.

This selection process will consist of two phases:

##### Phase I – Evaluation/Scoring of Written Proposals

- January 28 – Evaluation Team submitted their preliminary Phase I scores.
- January 31 - Evaluation Team met to finalize Phase I scores and make recommendations to ECA for Phase II presentations.
- February 1 - ECA will post the Notice of “Invitation to make Phase II Presentations”.

##### Phase II – Evaluation/Critique of Agency Presentations

- February 7 - Evaluation Team judges the Phase II Presentations and makes the top two recommendations to ECA.
- February 14 - ECA will post the “Invitation to Negotiate” by 5:00 pm. The “Invitation to Negotiate” will include the top two finalists who will then make presentations to the Eckerd Youth Alternative (EYA) leadership. A finalist and runner-up will be determined.
- March 1 - “Intent to Award” Notice is scheduled to be posted by 4:00 pm.

### Circuit 6 Phone Staffing Protocol

In response to a consistently high removal rate in Pinellas County, Eckerd Community Alternatives (ECA), in partnership with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office Child Protection Investigations Division (CPI), is in the process of developing and implementing a protocol to initiate a conference call staffing prior to the removal of children. The staffing will be available to CPI's when they are making critical safety decisions regarding the need for removal. The intent of the staffing is to provide CPI's with immediate access to community resources that may adequately address risk so that removal of children can safely be avoided.

It has been proposed that during the community staffing call, the CPI would present the case scenario including the following information:

- Current incident of abuse, neglect, or abandonment and investigative findings to date
- Prior abuse history and findings
- Critical risk factors that threaten the imminent safety of the child(ren)
- Criminal history pertinent to child safety (only criminal history that is allowed to be disclosed)
- Previous efforts or services attempted to maintain the integrity of the family

Staffing participants would have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions and suggest alternative services for CPI staff to consider. Staffing participants would be required to:

- Offer services that can assist in mitigating the risk to the family
- Accept referrals and respond to family needs on an emergency basis
- Respond back to the CPI regarding the status of implementing emergency services

ECA is hosting a meeting on February 2<sup>nd</sup> to further discuss the phone staffing protocol and the potential piloting of the process with two CPI units.

### **Ready for Life**

#### Journal Project II

The Juvenile Welfare Board sponsored the second Ready For Life (RFL) Journal Project. The objective of the project was to engage foster youth aging out of care to capture their real life experiences, challenges and triumphs in leaving foster care. The project focused on the youth's feelings during their final weeks in care and transition out of foster care. Youth were paid stipends for their participation in the project which began in April and concluded in December 2010. The RFL staff are working on the final report and are scheduled to present to the JWB Board at the March 2011 meeting.

#### Life Kits

To ensure youth have what they need to begin their new journey, Ready for Life (RFL) and the Clearwater Dunedin Junior League continue to partner to provide youth aging out of foster care with a "Life Kit". The kits include many of the basics needed when moving into your first place such as: bedding, pots and pans, dishes, silverware, towels, shower curtain, first aid kit, cleaning supplies and other necessities. Five kits were delivered to youth in January.

#### Youth Council

Members of the RFL Youth Council and Florida Youth Shine travelled to Tallahassee to meet and welcome Florida's recently-appointed Secretary of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), David Wilkins. Mr. Wilkins replaces George Sheldon who, along with his predecessor Bob Butterworth, made significant progress in reforming the state's foster care system.