

Date: Wednesday, May 25, 2022

Time: 1:30 PM

Location: Commissioners Conference Room Second Floor –County Administration Building

BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES MINUTES

Meeting was recorded, broadcast online and archived

Introduction and Announcements

- In attendance: Commissioner Kristin Stephens, Commissioner Shadduck McNally; Commissioner Kefalas; Interim County Manager Lorenda Volker; Director Heather O'Hayre; Division Manager Thad Paul; Division Manager Lori Metz; Division Manager Jill Maasch; Division Manager Gordon Coombes; Executive Assistant Lindy Blue

Additions to the Agenda

- None

Supported Families, Stronger Communities Grant (SFSC) Update

Link to presentation: [Supported Families, Stronger Communities Grant Update](#)

- Thad Paul introduced Deb DeLuca-Forzley, Social Caseworker Manager, and Casey Blackwatters Project Manager for Supported Families, Stronger Communities Grant.
- Timeline: Community Needs Assessment and GIS Mapping done in 2018. In 2019, funding awarded from the Children's Bureau. Between 2019-2020 development of implementation and evaluations plans. On April 1, 2021, the project was launched and in January 1, 2022 eligibility was expanded to all Larimer County zip codes.
- Based on the number of child welfare assessments, two zip codes were originally selected for program to be implemented in. Those zip codes were 80526 in Fort Collins and 80537 in Loveland. Having only two zip codes was determined to be a barrier and the opportunity emerged for expansion of program to all of Larimer County.
- Supported Families, Stronger Communities Grant
 - A multi-level, interagency community coalition initiative designed to reduce the number of children who experience maltreatment and strengthen families.
 - Three areas of focus for the program:
 - Early Intervention: Striving to intervene early, to support families and prevent child maltreatment before it starts
 - Meaningful Partnerships: Aiming to cultivate meaningful partnerships with community agencies across Larimer County, to most effectively work together to prevent child maltreatment
 - Authentic Family Engagement: Seeking to engage families with lived experience across the continuum of child maltreatment prevention, from service design and delivery to program evaluation.
 - Eligibility requirements: Any Larimer County zip code and at least one dependent child under 18 in the home.
 - Four community Navigators were hired to assist families in finding available resources. Each navigator has lived experience and three have a language other than English as their first language. Their roles consist of providing available resources, completing referrals, case manager services, helping families create support networks, and supporting natural leaders in the community. They coordinate with agency partners and work with those partners to serve families.
 - A tool used for assessment is the Protective Factors Survey (PFS).
 - The PFS is an in-person tool that assesses multiple protective factors for child maltreatment prevention and family strengthening in five domains. The PFS is used to understand the protective factors a family possesses, tailor service navigation and support, engage goal setting with families as partners, and create family-centered connections within and across community partners.

- The five domain areas used in the assessment are:
 - Family Function and Resilience; Nurturing and Attachment; Social Support; Caregiver and Practitioner Relationship; and Concrete Supports.
- Commissioner Kefalas asked how families are identified, how outreach is done, how the process interfaces with differential response, and how the PFS was proven valid and what the methodology behind it is.
 - Deb DeLuca responded that the outreach has been challenging due to COVID and being remote. Many virtual interfaces were done, and a formal onboarding process was established. Areas were looked at that may have higher child welfare referrals and asked what assistance would be most helpful. Bi-lingual cards were provided to families that list what help is available and how to contact the community Navigators. Community events were hosted (BBQ, Back to School Night, etc.).
 - Commissioner Kefalas suggested using the Larimer County Farmer's Market as a potential place for community outreach.
 - Casey Blackwatters responded that the PFS isn't a site specific or CSU specific survey but is something that all grantees use for their initiative. PFS has been assessed for reliability, validity and is evidence based.
- Overview of Evaluation and Metrics
 - Evaluating the program means looking into how the initiative is implemented and how the outputs link to outcomes. Service coordination and partnerships are tracked based on referrals. Strengths-based and family-centered approaches are advanced for prevention through the integration of the PFS.
 - There is a three-tiered system for outcome: Family outcomes, community outcomes, and system outcomes. These outcomes have been operationalized in the tracking.
 - Key Evaluation Metrics: Referral Tracking
 - Referral Episode Tracking (RET) Form: Web-based Qualtrics form that goes directly to CSU and has allowed for an interactive map to be completed. Agencies are onboarded on how to use the form. The form captures referral information (where the referral came from, where it's going, and how it aligns with the protective factors).
 - Evaluation Outputs: Tracking and Mapping Referrals
 - 434 RET forms have been submitted since launch that contained 724 referral episodes. 78% of onboarded agencies have submitted at least one RET form.
 - [Interactive Map](#): Interactive referral map that depicts real data from the SFSC Initiative and helpful features include the ability to filter referrals by agency type or protective factor and to search by agency. The CSU team updates the referral map every two weeks and recommends that people bookmark the link to check back for updates.
 - Commissioner Stephens asked if the RET forms are electronically submitted and how cumbersome the form is.
 - Casey Blackwatters responded the form is electronic through Qualtrics and takes about two minutes to submit.
 - Goal has been met for Federal Fiscal Year. 340 RET forms submitted that contained 587 referral episodes with 78% of onboarded agencies submitting at least one RET. The goal was for over 560 referral episodes and over 70% of onboarded agencies submitting at least one RET.
 - Evaluation Outputs: Protective Factors and Referrals
 - Referrals for each PFS: Concrete Supports – 530; Family Functioning and Resilience – 240; Social Supports – 144; Nurturing and Attachment – 84; Caregiver and Practitioner Relationship – 49; Unsure – 39
 - The greatest need determined in Larimer County is for Concrete Supports.
- Equity in Implementation
 - Additional federal funding was received for Equity, Diversion, and Inclusion (EDI) and a Bridges Out of Poverty training was held in early May. Train the Trainer through Bridges Out of Poverty was held at the end of May. A community consultant was hired to CSU and CSU underwent an anti-oppressive hiring practice to identify and hire an individual from Larimer County to support family-facing evaluation activities.
- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally asked if Estes Park was included in this initiative.
 - Director O'Hayre responded that additional support is provided to the Estes Valley through the

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). Specific resources through Behavioral Health are also provided.

- Commissioner Kefalas asked if the work that is being done intersects with the work CSU is doing with their Civic Capacity Index.
 - Casey Blackwatters responded that the Civic Capacity Index is one of the evaluation measures.
- Commissioner Kefalas asked

Employee Engagement and Support

Link to presentation: [Employee Engagement and Support](#)

- Director O'Hayre provided update on how employee support and engagement is being addressed within Human Services.
- Timeline: In 2019, Resilience Alliance in Child Welfare with launched. In 2020, phase one of the PEER Program was implemented. In 2021, the virtual work model began, onboarding was centralized, and internal communication was expanded. In 2022, platforms like Sigbee, and Nectar were introduced, the work model became hybrid, Resilience Alliance was expanded, phase two of PEER began, the EDI Committee was created, a new supervisory training model was launched, and a focus on recruitment began.
- Partnership for Employee Engagement and Retention (PEER)
 - PEER Navigators: Welcome and orient new staff; orient new staff to culture and expectations; connect with staff throughout the first year of employment.
 - PEER Ambassadors: Staff with additional clinical training to debrief with peers; ongoing clinical development/supervisor of team; promote self-care and ongoing resilience.
 - In 2021, the onboarding and orientation of staff was centralized.
 - All new staff start on the first day of a pay period; first two days are spent in DHS101 and department orientation; introduced to the HS leadership team; connect with Navigator and other new staff; a warm handoff to manager the first week.
 - In 2022, focus has been on retention and the hiring process has been standardized.
 - A partnership with Visualize Results for 'Day in the Life' videos; revised many job descriptions to increase lived experience; standardized hiring process for all teams; created strategies with EDI committee to increase diversity in hiring (late 2022)
 - Interim County Manager, Lorenda Volker, stated the work done by Human Services on removing unnecessary job requirements has spurred further conversation and action among other Larimer County departments.
 - Clinical supports are provided to employees when egregious, fatal, traumatic events occur.
- SigBee
 - SigBee is a wellbeing app that gathers information from staff on their day-to-day resilience and wellness. The pilot began in January of 2022 and involves 25% of employees. The information the employees provide to the app is provided to the direct supervisor. Aggregate level data is provided to department leadership.
 - Staff check-in daily and are asked rated questions. There is then an open-ended question for staff to answer. The pilot users have stated the self-reflection aspect of the app have allowed for a more intentional perspective.
 - The aggregate data reports provide insight on specific areas staff may be struggling in (wellbeing, connection, confidence, and resilience). The reports can be broken out by division, tenure, age group and race/ethnicity.
 - Research backed questions will be used when the app is deployed department wide so strategies can be developed.
 - Commissioner Shadduck-McNally asked if the trends will be tracked in order to be proactive.
 - Director O'Hayre responded that the hope is the SigBee tool and PEER program will allow for supervisors to have a better insight on where their staff is at and will provide supervisors help on what questions to ask their staff when checking in with them.
 - Commissioner Shadduck-McNally asked if other agencies are using this app.
 - Director O'Hayre responded the app is being used in different areas across the nation but has been used most often for foster families. There are many different areas this app could be used (aging and adult caregivers, foster families, etc.)
 - Commissioner Shadduck-McNally asked if the app check-ins were required for those who may feel uncomfortable sharing private things.
 - Director O'Hayre responded the app check-ins are not mandatory.
 - Commissioner Kefalas asked if there is consideration for using this tool county wide.
 - Director O'Hayre responded she will share the suggestion with Human Resource Director, Bridget Paris.
- Nectar

- Human Services' employees are frequently using Nectar and are enjoying the platform. Monthly additional points are sent to Deputy Division Managers and leadership team to provide to their teams.
- Additional efforts in 2022-2023
 - Increased Support for Supervisors
 - Enhanced training model for supervisors and providing additional training tools
 - HS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee
 - Socioeconomic equity (Bridges Out of Poverty); Race/Ethnicity Equity (America Public Human Services Association); Human Services Calve Curve systems model; Strategies to impact EDI internal to HS as well as external through our services
- HR Employee Surveys
 - From 2019 to 2021, every category has increased. Enjoyable place to work category has increased by 7%, Innovation/continued improvement increased by 5%, and the Management category increased by 10%.

Department Activity Report Q1 2022

Link to presentation: [Department Activity Report](#)

- Director O'Hayre presented the Department Activity Report for Q1 of 2022.
- Children, Youth and Family Division
 - The number of referrals are continuing to increase and are closer to pre-pandemic numbers. The level of severity of cases are increasing partly due to the use of Fentanyl in the community. Strategies are being created with the Health Department to address the opioid issues.
 - The number of children/youths referred to CYF in Q1 2022 was 2,177. The number of children/youths screened in for assessment was 778. The number of children/youths screened in on the Family Assessment Response (FAR) track were 554. The caseload (number of children open for services) was 752.
 - Larimer county continues to show a difference in in-home vs. out-of-home population compared to the Large 11 counties' average. This has increased over Q1 2022. Larimer's in-home open case percentage is 70.5% compared to 59.4% for the other Large 11 counties. Larimer has 29.5% of open cases out-of-home vs 40.6% for the other Large 11. The placement type for the OOH population is fairly consistent between Larimer and the other Large 11 counties.
 - There was an increase in family meetings held this quarter from last quarter and a corresponding increase in family members and participants. The number of family meetings held by the Community Resource Unit (CRU) was 392. The number of family members was 1,107 and the number of community participants was 1,870.
- Aging and Adult Services Division
 - Referrals are increasing as well as the severity of those referrals. The percentage of referrals remained consistent from last quarter.
 - The number of adults referred to Adult Protection Services (APS) was 561 and the number of referrals assigned for assessment was 108.
 - Caseloads have decreased since last quarter but remain higher than in quarter one of 2021.
 - The caseload for APS was 128.
 - The overall contacts for Ombudsman in the Office of Aging have remained steady this quarter. In-person visits suspended in March 2019 due to visitation restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. All consultations during Q2 of 2020 happened on the phone/virtually. Limited in-person visits were re-implemented during Q1.
 - Options for Long-Term Care is one of the few programs that is still under full waivers and will remain that way until the Public Health Emergency is over at the Federal level.
 - Client counts for Q1 of 2022 were 1,384. There were 506 community-based assessments, 219 assessments in institutions, and 33 assessments in the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE). Total amounts of assessments were 758.
- Benefits and Community Support Division
 - There is a continued need for benefits. Food assistance benefits and TANF benefits issued have increased.
 - Food assistance benefits issued in Q1 of 2022 were \$12,701,031 and TANF benefits issued were \$817,545.
 - The caseload for food assistance increased to 14,211, financial assistance (OAP, AND, and TANF) cases increased to 1,307, and child support cases increased to 6,547. More detail will be provided during August Board of Social Services meeting.
 - The amount of child support collected was \$4,594,993 and has increased since last quarter.
 - Strategies for recouping child support payment arrears were paused during the pandemic so now those who have long standing arrears are now being required to make payments since the

strategies have been put back into place.

- The amount of applications received for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) decreased from last quarter to 210. The average number of children served was 686 and there are zero children in need on the waitlist.
- Human Services Service Provision
 - Since last quarter services decreased in Adult Protection Services and Office on Aging.
 - Community and Resource Engagement (CARE) has seen a steady decrease in CARE services and is likely linked to the decrease in open cases as services are provided on open cases.
- Commissioner Kefalas asked if an update would be provided on the Larimer Home Improvement program and if data would also be provided.
 - Director O'Hayre responded that Laura Walker would provide an update as part of the Strategic Plan work. The Loveland Housing Authority maintains the data and would be included in the update.

Other Business

- None