

MULTNOMAH COUNTY CHILD WELFARE WORKGROUP REPORT

*Safely and Equitably Reducing
the Number of Children in Foster Care*

February 2011



*Report to the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners
prepared by the Multnomah County Commission on
Children, Families and Community*



MULTNOMAH
COUNTY



**FAMILY
FOSTER CHANGE
HOPE**

DHS
Oregon Department
of Human Services



MULTNOMAH COUNTY CHILD WELFARE WORKGROUP REPORT

OVERVIEW

- I. Safe & Equitable Foster Care Reduction
- II. County Child Welfare Workgroup
- III. Findings and Recommendations



I. SAFE AND EQUITABLE FOSTER CARE REDUCTION



Oregon has one of the highest rates of foster care placement in the nation.

Multnomah County's rate is even higher.

The 2009 Foster Care placement rate per 1000:

National average = 5.6

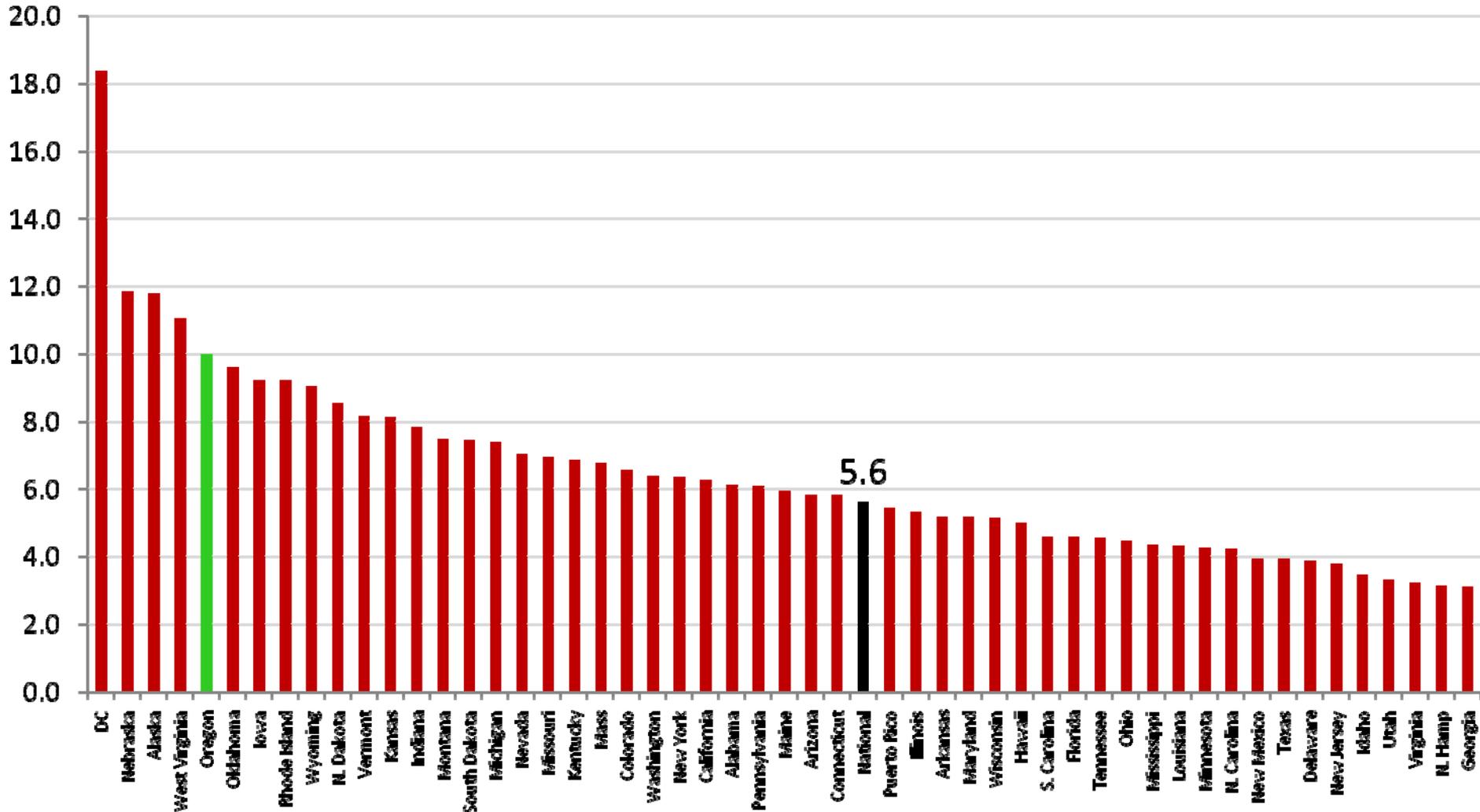
Oregon = 10.0

Multnomah County = 13.8





Rate of Children In Care per 1000 in Population: FY09

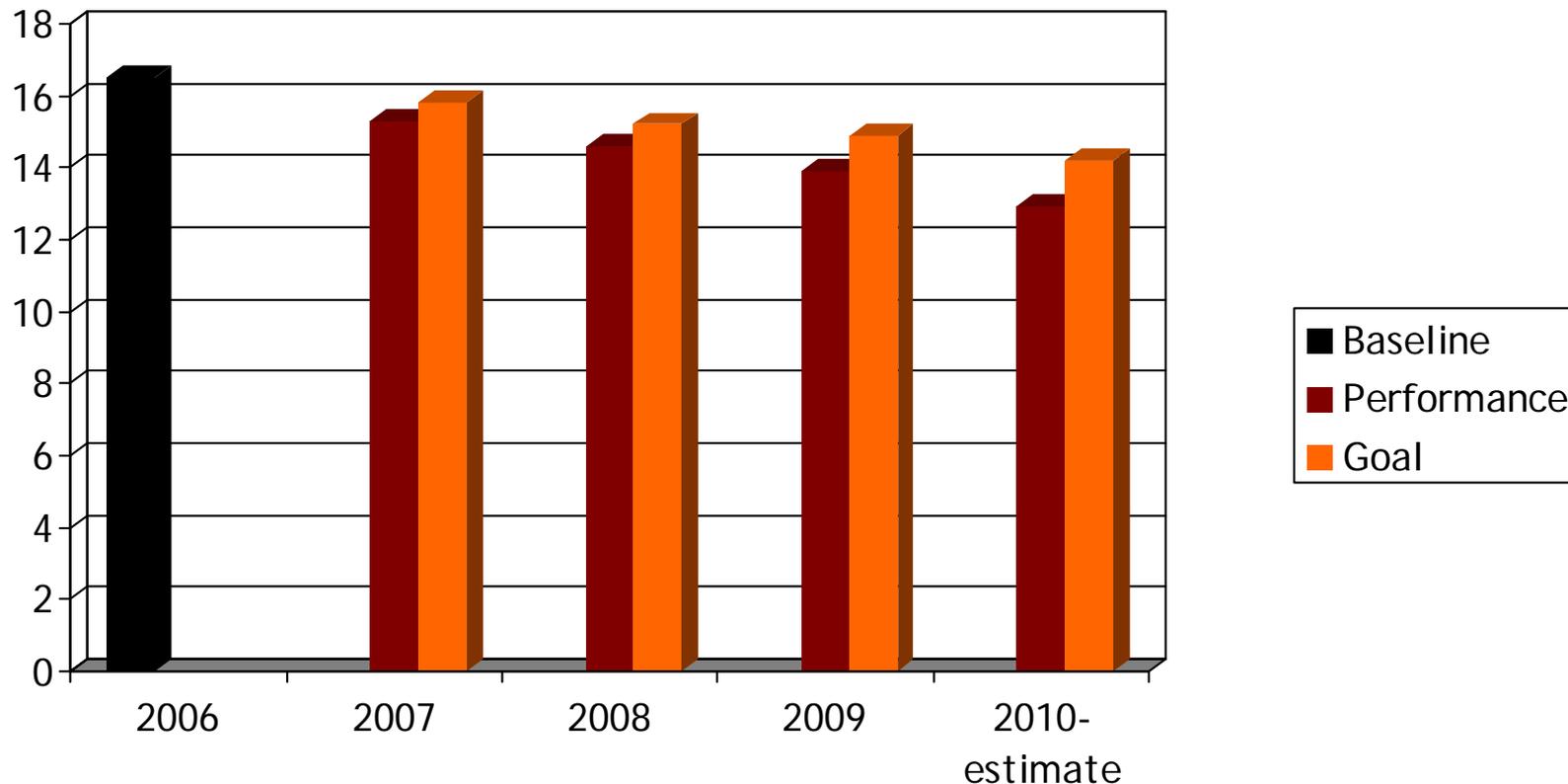




Safe & Equitable Reduction Goal

Progress to date in Multnomah County:

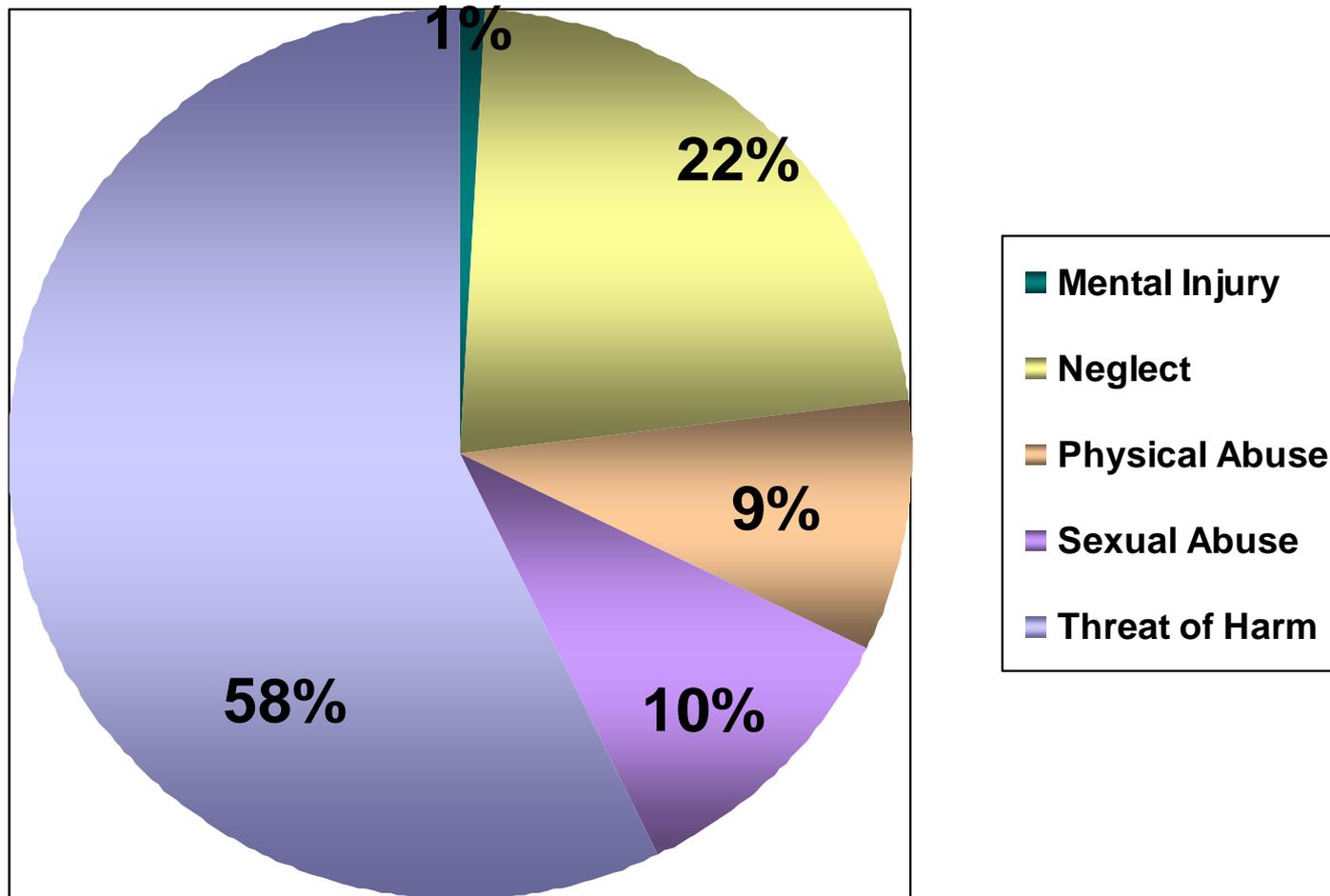
Safely Reduce the rate of children in foster care by 20 %





Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents

Multnomah County (2009)



I. SAFE AND EQUITABLE FOSTER CARE REDUCTION



There are a disproportionate number of African American and Native American children in foster care.

Child Population in Multnomah County in 2008

12% = AI/AN and Black children

80% = White

In Foster Care in Multnomah County in 2008

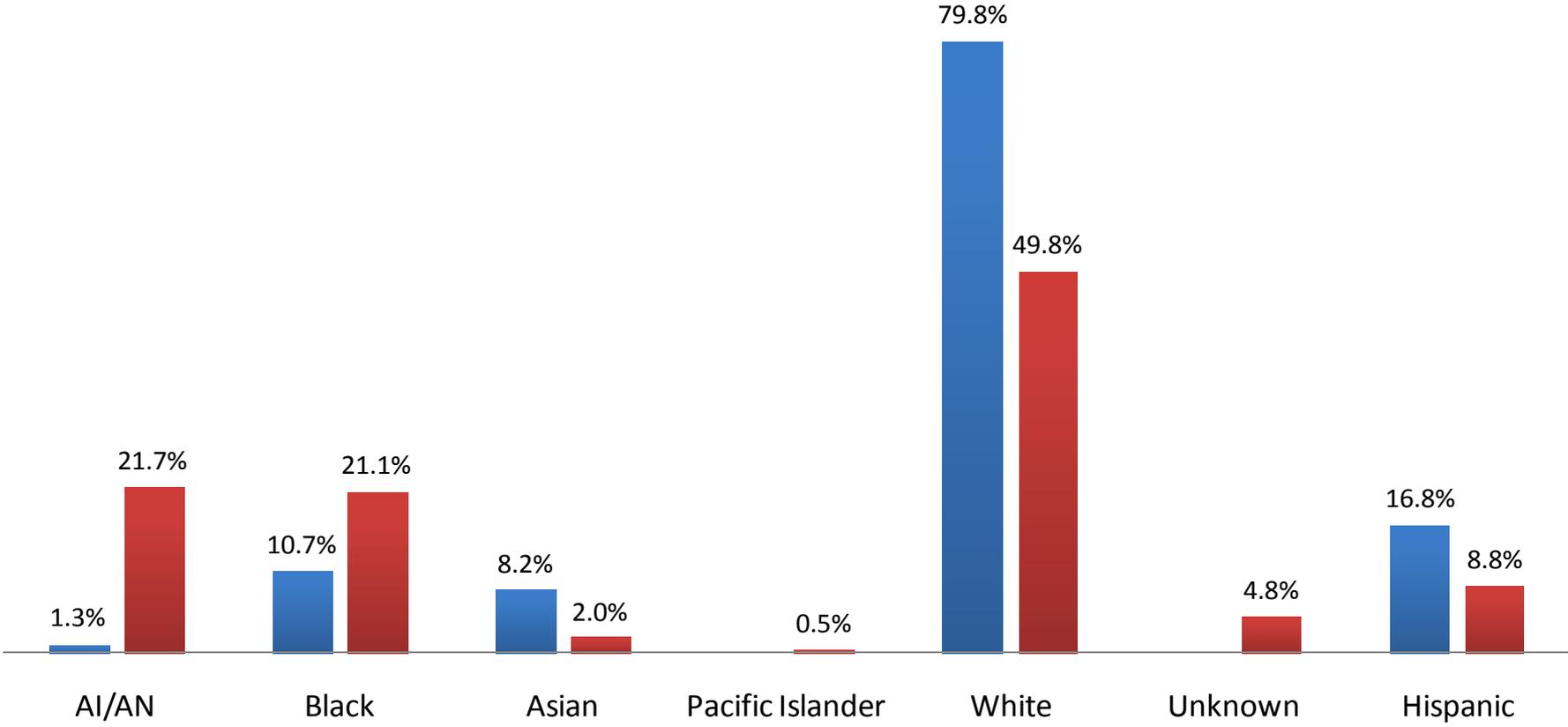
43% = AI/AN and Black children

50% = White



Multnomah County Child Population Statistics and Length of Stay in Foster Care by Race and Hispanic Cultural Origin (n = 2,488)

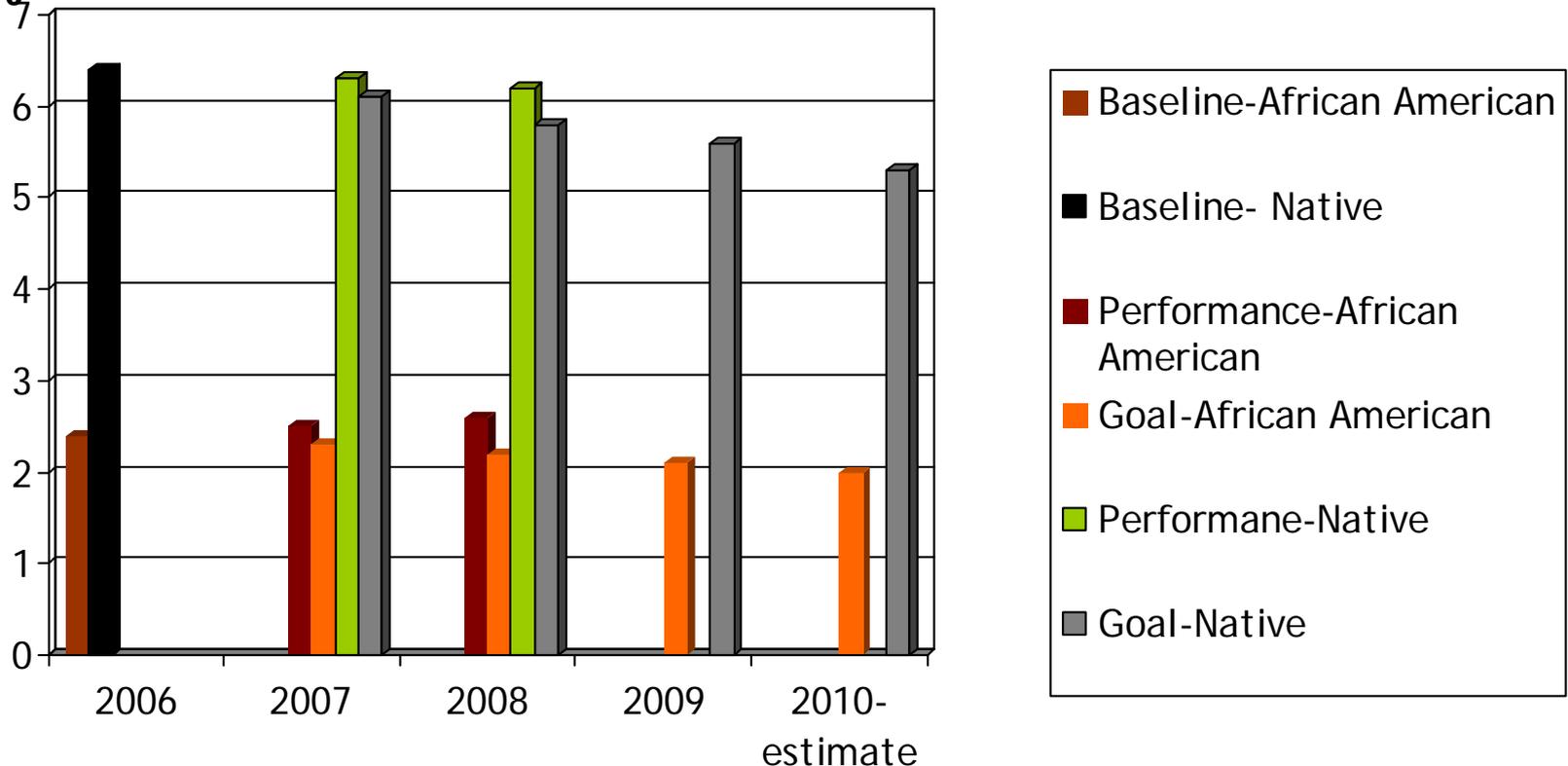
■ Child Pop ■ CW Population



Goal: Reduce disproportionality for Native and African American children

Progress to date in Multnomah County:

Reduce disproportionality ratio for Native & African American children by 25%



II. COUNTY CHILD WELFARE WORKGROUP



The County Child Welfare Workgroup was formed by County Resolution.

Resolved to...

- Create an interdepartmental workgroup
- Invite the Oregon Department of Human Services to partner
- Study scope of County services and opportunities for collaboration



II. COUNTY CHILD WELFARE WORKGROUP



Chairs

Deborah Kafoury, Multnomah County Commissioner

Barbara Willer, Multnomah County Commissioner



II. COUNTY CHILD WELFARE WORKGROUP



Goals

- Establish a baseline of interaction between DHS and the County
- Catalogue County investments in serving families involved with DHS
- Identify opportunities for better collaboration
- Identify key areas for further exploration



II. COUNTY CHILD WELFARE WORKGROUP



Process

- Identify County funded services provided to children and families involved with child welfare
- Collect feedback from County programs and contracting agencies
- 6 work sessions of the County Child Welfare Workgroup
- Report Writing Committee
- Report and Recommendations



COUNTY CHILD WELFARE WORKGROUP

Overview of Work Sessions



II. COUNTY CHILD WELFARE WORKGROUP



Participants

- 521** people participated in **Community Forums**
- 66** people participated in **Work Sessions**
- 44** **County programs** provided written feedback
- 9** **Agencies that Contract with the County** provided written feedback
- 12** people participated in the **Writing Committee**



II. COUNTY CHILD WELFARE WORKGROUP

Participants

Health Department

Sherriff's Office

Department of Community Justice

Department of County Human Service

District Attorney's Office



II. COUNTY CHILD WELFARE WORKGROUP



Participants, cont.

- Oregon Department of Human Services
- Commission on Children, Families & Community
- Janus Youth Programs
- Native American Youth and Family Center
- Impact Northwest
- Self Enhancement Inc.
- El Programa Hispano Catholic Charities
- DePaul Treatment Center
- Cascadia Behavioral Health Care
- Choices DVIP
- Lifeworks Northwest
- Quest Center
- CODA
- Latino Network



III. Findings and Recommendations



DHS and CCFC Staff identified 97 county programs in fiscal year 2011 that served children and families involved with child welfare.

Themes from County Program Feedback

- Some programs lack effective communication with DHS
- Difficult to find funding to bring programs to scale and maintain them over time
- Need more collocation of staff, joint funding, clear protocols for interaction and/or joint case planning



III. Findings and Recommendations



Participants in the workgroup often identified families that ended up in the child welfare system due to a lack of adequate prevention and basic needs services.

Themes from County Workgroup

- Address disparities for African American and Native American families
- Invest more in prevention services
- Review current policies and procedures that impact families in the child welfare system
- Improve service coordination and collaboration



III. Findings and Recommendations



If termination of parental rights and removal are to become last resorts, then a fundamental shift in how the County and State think about child welfare must occur.

Recommendations

1. Multnomah County should continue to support Countywide efforts to promote racial equity and empowerment through policy, programmatic and organizational changes.



III. Findings and Recommendations



If termination of parental rights and removal are to become last resorts, then a fundamental shift in how the County and State think about child welfare must occur.

Recommendations

2. Multnomah County should include in its legislative agenda supporting comprehensive state tax reform that ensures Oregon maintains investments in preventative and supportive services for struggling families that help prevent entry into the child welfare system.



III. Findings and Recommendations



If termination of parental rights and removal are to become last resorts, then a fundamental shift in how the County and State think about child welfare must occur.

Recommendations

3. Individual County department should explore systematic ways to document child welfare involvement of the children and families they serve and work, where appropriate, to coordinate County and State investments with families.



III. Findings and Recommendations



If termination of parental rights and removal are to become last resorts, then a fundamental shift in how the County and State think about child welfare must occur.

Recommendations

4. Replicate the successful “30 Families in 30 Days” housing model created by Commissioner Kafoury and the Department of County Human Services, with a new focus on aligning County and State resources so families would be able to keep their children out of foster care or have their children returned.



III. Findings and Recommendations



If termination of parental rights and removal are to become last resorts, then a fundamental shift in how the County and State think about child welfare must occur.

Recommendations

5. Create a joint DHS/County workgroup to explore opportunities for greater partnerships, coordination and improved client care for children with developmental disabilities.



III. Findings and Recommendations



If termination of parental rights and removal are to become last resorts, then a fundamental shift in how the County and State think about child welfare must occur.

Recommendations

6. Establish a task force to study how DHS, the Courts and Multnomah County might help decrease the number of family members who are excluded as placement resources because of past criminal records.



III. Findings and Recommendations



If termination of parental rights and removal are to become last resorts, then a fundamental shift in how the County and State think about child welfare must occur.

Recommendations

7. Continue to support the Community Response to Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children program and support efforts to prevent victimization of children and provide support services for children who have been victimized. Continue working collaboratively across County departments and State agencies to address the needs of this population with a special attention to children who have been engaged in the child welfare system.



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THANK YOU!

The full report and supporting documents are available at www.fosterchange.com.

