

Risk Pool Peer Review Committee Reports
Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

May 31, 2017

The Risk Pool Peer Review Committee reports each contain findings and conclusions as well as recommendations. This summary report provides those sections from each of the reports.

Kids Central, Inc. (KCI)

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

- Overall, the key to long-term sustainability for KCI is to more effectively utilize up-front services to safely reduce entries into out-of-home care.
- The review committee noted underutilization of diversion and safety management services by Child Protective Investigators (CPIs) and issues related to communication and coordination by protective investigators and KCI contracted case managers and providers.
- The DCF Region and KCI have recently implemented actions to improve utilization of these services. The initial indications are positive, but it is too early to fully evaluate the impact of these actions.
- KCI's Risk Pool application requested \$1,523,118 in funding. As noted in section the current projected deficit is \$1,256,525 based on actual expenditures through December. The Peer Review Committee found KCI to meet the eligibility criteria for Risk Pool funding.

Recommendations

The Peer Review Committee recommends that:

1. The DCF Region and KCI continue the actions initiated in recent months to improve utilization of diversion and safety management services. These should be closely monitored to insure proper utilization of appropriate alternatives to removal.
2. DCF and KCI should jointly review the referral process for these services and streamline this process.
3. The Region should review whether use of a multidisciplinary decision support team process would better support CPIs. Technical assistance and additional training should be provided by the Office of Child Welfare.
4. KCI should review mechanisms to provide feedback to CPIs regarding successful outcomes with children and families. This could improve the confidence of CPIs in the work of service providers.

5. DCF and KCI should review the number of cases that move from In-home Non-judicial to Removal to determine whether they are effectively engaging the families to allow the children to remain safely in the home while services are delivered. In addition, the review should include a determination as to whether increasing the level of intrusiveness by filing a dependency petition could have impacted those cases moving from in-home to out-of-home.
6. KCI should continue close monitoring of the use of Residential Group Care and, where appropriate, transition children to family-based settings.
7. If funds are identified, the Peer Review Committee recommends that KCI receive Risk Pool funding consistent with their projected deficit for the fiscal year.

Eckerd Community Alternatives, Inc. (Circuit 13 - Hillsborough)

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

- Overall, the Peer Review Committee found that the primary factor leading to the current fiscal deficit is a recent increase in removals. While actions to improve prevention, diversion and safety management services are indicated, the increase in removals appears to be largely outside of the control of the Lead Agency. The view of all of the partners in the child welfare system who informed the Risk Pool review process was the increased removals were justified and appropriate.
- The Lead Agency has undertaken a number of actions to reduce costs both in the short term and in the longer term. These actions should continue, however, it is not likely that the current year deficit will be resolved.
- The Risk Pool Peer Review Committee found that Eckerd Community Alternatives meets the criteria for Risk Pool Funding.

Recommendations

The Peer Review Committee recommends:

1. That Eckerd review the cost effectiveness of continuing to contract with Child Placing Agencies and consider performing this function as is done in Circuit 6.
2. That the Lead Agency expand prevention contracts to increase their capacity to meet the increased demand.
3. That the Lead Agency continue to improve and maintain communication with community resources to ensure appropriation utilization of resources available in the community.
4. That the Lead Agency and the Hillsborough County Sherriff's Office continue their efforts to facilitate improved communications between front line CPIs and child welfare staff.
5. That the Lead Agency continue the actions outlined in the Financial Viability Plan and that the Region continue to monitor and support those actions.

6. That the Lead Agency continue with the corrective actions underway to resolve issues identified in the CPA audit and that the Region continue to monitor this corrective action plan.
7. That if funds can be identified by the department, the Lead Agency be approved for Risk Pool funding sufficient to cover the current year deficit.

Lakeview Center, Inc. dba Families First Network (FFN)

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

- FFN's current deficit is the result of increased removals during most of calendar year 2016 and then another slight increase in January 2017. The increased removals have completely overwhelmed their foster home capacity resulting in much higher numbers of children in residential facilities than in prior years.
- FFN and DCF have done an excellent job in re-tooling and implementing the right types of services to serve children in-home when possible. Removals have decreased with the implementation of these services.
- Assuming that the removal trend continues to decline and then stabilize, FFN's biggest challenge will be to increase foster home capacity and reduce use of facility-based care back to historic levels.
- While case manager caseloads of 1:17+ are higher than FFN leadership would like, they are lower than many other CBCs faced with similar challenges so the ability to quickly "recover" from the current situation should be enhanced.
- FFN is in the minority of CBCs in that case management is done in-house as opposed to being contracted out. In addition, several other key services are provided in-house or by the parent company. We have noted that other CBCs with similar structures seem to struggle more financially when faced with a similar significant increases in removals.

Recommendations

The Peer Review Committee recommends that FFN receive risk pool funding. In addition, the following recommendations are made for consideration:

1. FFN should continue work on foster home network development and support strategies. These include participation in the Quality Parenting Initiative, utilization of foster family mentors, tracking reasons for home closures, faith based and social media based foster parent recruitment, pre-screening efforts, foster parent liaison positions, conflict resolution teams and the "ambush teams" to acknowledge foster families.
2. Region and FFN should increase efforts to place children with relatives.

3. Region and FFN should continue to educate CPIs about available front-end services and how they can be accessed. Additional training for Safety Management providers may be necessary so that they understand their scope of services.
4. FFN should continue to work to recover costs for behavioral health services provided in residential facilities through Medicaid or the Managing Entity to reduce the cost to the DCF contract.
5. FFN should continue work on increasing capacity for Medicaid funded Specialized Therapeutic Foster Care (STFC).
6. Region and FFN should continue efforts to access APD funding by engaging the DCF Assistant Secretary for Operations in that process.
7. Region should review lack of direct files and determine whether it is an issue that needs to be addressed.
8. Region and FFN should analyze removals that occur in open case management cases to see if it is informative to the practice.
9. Review all possible opportunities for cost savings, including leasing cars rather than paying mileage. consider bringing pre-service training in -house vs contracting, eliminate the use of ASK and use FSFN filing cabinet, review EFC program costs which have increased even though population served has decreased by 33%, review need for current level of staffing for Childhood Court (i.e. is it a current priority), and combining the function of the Community Relations and Recruitment section with the Clinical Services and Placement functions. Where possible, re-invest in case managers.

Childnet, Inc. (Circuit 15 – Palm Beach)

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

- Childnet (CN-PB) has significantly reduced reliance on facility-based care, resulting in their current monthly spending level being within their monthly contract amount. They will have a current year IL deficit of \$1.35m that can only partially be covered with core funds (all but \$700k can be covered) and continue to have the carry forward deficit of \$2.1m. The resulting cumulative deficit is projected to be \$2.8m.
- CN-PB has also made significant progress in implementing front end services

Recommendations

The Peer Review Committee recommends that:

1. CN-PB continue to reduce facility-based placements to get at or below the statewide average.

2. CN-PB continue to review front-end services and expand / adjust as necessary to provide the maximum level of service to effectively serve as many children in-home as possible.

It is recommended the Risk Pool Funding be approved to the extent available to reduce the cumulative deficit, considering specifically the impact of the historic IL deficits.

Childnet, Inc. (Circuit 17 – Broward)

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

- While Childnet (CN-Broward) experienced some removal increases in prior years, it has taken too long for their case management function to recover resulting in disproportionately high numbers of children in care, and those in care remaining for too long.
- CN-Broward can be financially viable if they focus on getting caseloads in line with statewide averages related to total removals as well as children in care for more than 18 months.
- CN-Broward's overall culture and operating environment has been negatively impacted by the crisis-oriented management style.

Recommendations

The Peer Review Committee recommends that:

1. CN-Broward should review the data in this report and indicate whether they agree that financial viability is achievable within the current funding structure.
2. CN-Broward should review their Roadmap efforts to determine which will have the most significant impact on discharging children from the system in a timely manner.
3. CN-Broward should then set adjust and / or amend measurable goals so that staff and stakeholders understand the timing, expected impact, and how that impact will be measured.

It is recommended the Risk Pool Funding be approved to the extent available to reduce the prior year's cumulative deficit to the extent possible and to improve cash flow. Because CN-Broward has been so slow to improve their case management function, the current year deficit of \$3.7m should not be covered. This translates to a minimum of risk pool funding of \$1m to get the cumulative deficit below 1 month cash (to \$5.9m), but no more than \$3.7m which leaves them with only the current year deficit. This is contingent upon CN-Broward indicating that they believe that the current funding level is adequate for future financial viability and provide a clear and detailed update to the Roadmap to achieve such.

FY 2016-2017 Risk Pool Requests and Recommendations					
DCF Region	Risk Pool Tier	Lead Agency (CBC)	FY16-17 Risk Pool Request	Allocation from \$5M Risk Pool (#B-0370)	Allocation from \$9.5M Back of the Bill
Suncoast	1	Sarasota Family YMCA	\$2,100,000	\$1,785,000	\$709,002
Northeast	1	Community Partnership for Children	\$2,136,770	\$1,816,255	\$0
Central	1	CBC of Central Florida	\$3,678,980	\$1,398,745	\$1,423,887
Northeast	1	St Johns County Family Integrity Program	\$150,000	\$0	See note
Central	2	Kids Central, Inc.	\$1,523,118	\$0	\$1,270,073
Suncoast	2	Eckerd Community Alternatives (Hillsborough)	\$2,100,000	\$0	\$1,026,682
Northwest	2	Lakeview Center dba Families First Network	\$768,156	\$0	\$1,310,473
Suncoast	3	Eckerd Community Alternatives (Pasco-Pinellas)	\$1,200,000	\$0	See note
Southeast	4	Childnet, Inc. (Palm Beach)	\$2,752,695	\$0	\$1,350,000
Southeast	4	Childnet, Inc. (Broward)	\$5,509,000	\$0	\$2,409,883
		Total	\$21,918,719	\$5,000,000	\$9,500,000
<p>Note: St Johns County Family Integrity Program qualified for Risk Pool funding but does not project a deficit. Eckerd Community Alternatives withdrew their Risk Pool application.</p>					