



# Clark County Department of Family Services

## Recruitment Workgroup Meeting

Meeting Minutes from February 13, 2014 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

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### Present

Larry Bowen (Foster Parent), Jessica Guevara (Bountiful Family Services), Pam Porter (Olive Crest), Kristina Weckesser (SAFY), and Sam Diaz (Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department)

DFS Staff - Oscar Benavides, Tara Donahue, Denise Parker, Shannon Rooney, Dawn Sanchez, Gina Hanks, and Barbara Straight

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### Agenda

- Meeting Minutes from 12/09/2013
- Update and review of objectives
- Community, Foster Parent, Agency – involvement, driven by
  - Data
  - Market Segmentation
- Upcoming events – Mayors Faith based event in Park, Event at Center – Others
- Marketing tools – status
- Meeting date - regular

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### Minutes

#### Meeting Content:

1. Greetings and introductions were made
2. Acknowledged the loss of Kevin Smedley, his contribution and work with regard to this work group
3. Denise Kramer, Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) Coordinator, introduced herself
  - a. Requested members bring her up to speed on the direction of the work group
    - i. Discussed participation in foster parent related events in the community at different locations

1. This will allow work group members to recruit within the community they currently are a part of (examples: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-gendered (LGBT), faith based, etc)
  2. Events should be done on a regularly basis and be featured on DFS calendar of events
  3. This recruitment format will run parallel to the Market Segmentation project and the recruitment efforts born out of that project
4. Discussed Market Segmentation Program and Targeted Recruitment
- a. There is a gap in the number of children that need homes among harder to place children (Siblings, Higher Level of Care (HLOC) and Teens) and the number of resource homes, creating long waits for these kids
  - b. While every community has their own challenges, consistently the need for homes for hard to place kids is the number one challenge cited
  - c. The keys to addressing this will be
    - i. To find out how we can identify and recruit people who can/will take care of this segment of kids
    - ii. Identifying what we need to do to support those families once we find them
    - iii. Market Segmentation will create a good source of information for addressing these issues
  - d. QPI is about finding and retaining quality parents
    - i. Market Segmentation will help with defining the parameters of quality parents in Clark County
  - e. The Recruitment work group will be called upon to assist with the Market Segmentation project
  - f. Licensing and this workgroup need to be detailed when expressing the special needs of the Las Vegas community and the gaps and hurdles it faces as a result
  - g. DFS and QPI have the opportunity thru the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment (NRC) to request assistance thru the Diligent Recruitment (DR) grant for a Market Segmentation analysis of Clark County
    - i. Criteria for the analysis will be built by the Special Projects Unit (SPU) team with this work group's input
    - ii. The criteria will be looked at by an outside contractor who will supply reports that identify the demographics of the targeted segments
    - iii. The reports will allow us to look at successful foster parents in our community and identify who they are and where we recruited them
    - iv. This will allow us to be very specific in how we target DFS' future recruitment efforts

1. Example: If we want to look for people between ages forty and fifty (40-50), within a certain income bracket, who live in a specific zip code, read magazines rather than newspapers and eat in Applebee's
  - a. We would be able to narrow down the report specifically to identify households that meet this criteria
  - b. We can then gear the advertising and recruitment plan to the specific people and areas identified by the reports that are generated
- h. Discussed the Special Project Unit's (SPU) efforts thus far in regard to securing the Market Segmentation analysis
  - i. Application for, and approval of, the request for technical help has been given thru DRC
  - ii. Timelines have been established
  - iii. The DR grant will be contributing about \$50,000 toward this project requiring no DFS expenditure
  - iv. Analysis and reports should be done within about six (6) months following final DFS approval being received
  - v. Results and reports will assist with the placement of hard to place foster children, general placements and recruitment efforts
- i. Discussed the market in Las Vegas and how it is different from other parts of the country
  - i. It consists of a large transient population and is a twenty four (24) hour town
  - ii. We are a city where most of the work force works on a point system which deducts points from a worker's record for absences or late arrivals
  - iii. We are a "right to work state"
  - iv. Casino employees don't have the flexibility of a regular dayshift employee and thereby don't have the ability to attend trainings or to be able to take off of work to attend appointments necessary for the case plans of foster kids
  - v. Support for the families seems to be missing in this community as many people move here without family members
  - vi. An attendee mentioned a conversation they had with a Doctor from Chicago who inquired if DFS has a specialized foster parent unit that targets medical professionals to become foster parents for medically fragile children
    1. Chicago has purposely targeted this population to provide foster care for medically fragile children as they already have some or all of the medical knowledge needed

2. Chicago has also created a training program that worked better for these professionals as they work twelve (12) hour shifts normally

5. Discussed Recruitment Options and Focuses

- a. Tables set up at events will still be a part of the recruitment plan, as there will continue to be a need for adopting and fostering parents to provide homes for kids in general
- b. The police department is currently working on recruiting
  - i. Their approach is to target individuals that have already been through some sort of background checks
  - ii. Suggested that DFS might consider targeting this segment of the population as well
  - iii. For our use the police recruiter can provide DFS with contacts with police, reserves and military personnel if we choose to adopt this approach
- c. Word of mouth is important
  - i. Toolkits are moving forward as marketing materials for the foster parents to help with recruiting through word of mouth
  - ii. Identification cards for foster parents are a future goal
    1. There will be a presentation at the National QPI meeting and samples will be shown
    2. Samples resemble the DFS staff identification cards
    3. The Community Partnership workgroup is looking at linking the cards to discounts available to foster families from community partners
- d. Promote pride among foster parents
  - i. This speaks directly to what QPI is working to develop
  - ii. Market Segmentation will help us to identify the profile of a "quality parent"
- e. Promote empowering of foster parents
- f. We are losing families and finding out why we are losing so many of them thru the licensing and placement processes is very important
  - i. Discussed how we identify the reasons some applicants follow through the whole process rather than dropping out
    1. If we determine that this is due to Las Vegas' unique environment, this could help to identify a large untapped market we could target for recruitment
      - a. We will need to identify what supports they will need (evening trainings, creating support systems, etc)
      - b. Community Partnership members could go out and speak to the casino representatives regarding the special needs of casino employees and possible

- accommodations the casinos could make to assist staff in becoming foster parents
- c. Wynn Hotel and Casino has a Community Director who would be a contact for this type of dialogue
  - i. It is likely that all of the casinos will have a similar position within their organization
- d. Once we get the Community Directors on board, we need to let them work through their system to get approval from the casinos
- e. Assisting with finding additional resource families for DFS creates good public relation opportunities for businesses/casinos
- ii. Discussed the hurdles specific to Las Vegas that prevent us from creating more resource homes
  - 1. Bad press and the effects of media on people considering becoming foster parents
    - a. It is cyclical and seems to always catch the one person who is “doing it wrong” or we didn’t identify
    - b. This is a hard battle to win
    - c. Counter balancing the information being released to the public is going to be important
    - d. Highlighting the strengths and positive family stories in the
      - i. Media and community we can change the overall view of the foster and adoption process
      - ii. Caregiver Currier has the ability to highlight positive foster parents and workers
    - e. The recent Open Heart Gala, hosted by DFS, The Adoption Exchange and Clark County Foster & Adoptive Parent’s Assoc. highlighted a foster family with a very positive story, but the media wasn’t present
    - f. We need a system to help develop a relationship with the media and assist in creating a change in their view of DFS and the foster program
    - g. Community partners can be a resource to disseminate positive information to the community if we can’t get the media on board
    - h. The Wednesday’s Child program would be a good resource

- i. Local celebrity, Celine Dion, and her staff are also a possible resource, as she is known to be a supporter of the fostering process
    - j. DFS has a public relations (PR) person reviewing the current recruitment materials
      - i. Materials need some revisions
      - ii. Suggested DFS hold off on making major changes until we have the reports back from the Market Segmentation project
      - iii. PR person will be involved in developing marketing materials in conjunction with the results of the Market Segmentation project
  - 2. Fear of allegations and investigations once licensed
    - a. Educating foster parents as to the possibility of being investigated due to an allegation and the process will be important to demystify these issues
  - 3. Police officers and persons who own guns are concerned they will not be licensed or that their right to own weapons will be challenged
- g. Discussed how long the process usually is between the time a person begins to considering becoming a foster parent and when they actually take steps to move forward in the process
  - i. Usually it takes an average of two (2) years
  - ii. Number one (1) reason stated for considering fostering/adopting is “personal reasons”
  - iii. As we are marketing now to persons who will not actually take any forward steps until two (2) years from now, we need to consider
    - 1. What are the seeds that need to be planted
    - 2. Where do the seeds need to be planted
    - 3. Market Segmentation will help with this
- h. Largest under utilized segments in our community for recruitment are the faith based communities and current foster parents
  - i. The faith based community requires you to be invited to address them
    - 1. A relationship needs to be established first
    - 2. Pastors are now a larger segment of the foster parent community
    - 3. Pastors must be passionate about the program to give their support to the fostering system
    - 4. A previous meeting with a faith based partner resulted in a minister that will be assigned to assist with foster parents and to assist with Partnering for Safety and Performance –

Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (PS-MAPP)  
training in Spanish

- ii. The faith based community and current foster parents provide support for foster kids and parents (examples: sense of community, respite, etc)
- i. Discussed why having respite is so important for foster families in Clark County
  - i. As previously mentioned, much of the population has little or no support from family living locally
  - ii. As a component of QPI, there is a push for a lessening of respite for foster families
    - 1. The belief is if they are going to be agreeing to parent the kids, there should be no more of a need for respite than there would be for biological children in a home
      - a. Examples were cited
        - i. If you are going on vacation, so are the foster kids
        - ii. If your biological children are going to their Aunt's home for a sleep over, so are the foster kids
- j. Big budget advertising doesn't always produce quality foster parents
  - i. Cheap advertising suggestions were
    - 1. Foster Parent business cards
    - 2. "Ask Me About Foster Parenting" wrist bands, t-shirts, etc.
- k. Preventing a separation between DFS and the agencies is imperative
  - i. It is important that we work together and collaborate rather than compete
  - ii. Collaboration is really about the kids and respecting the foster parents that are willing to step forward
  - iii. Respecting the foster parents' choices and supporting their decisions will be important
  - iv. Not every foster parent is going to be a good fit for DFS
- l. A large number of people migrate to Las Vegas who were foster parents in other jurisdictions
  - i. They don't have the support systems here that they might have had back home
  - ii. This creates a gap they aren't expecting
  - iii. This may be a group that comes up on the Market Segmentation project as a segment of the population we need to provide additional services for
  - iv. PS-MAPP and the various foster parent associations create relationships for the foster parents here and help to fill the void, but may not be enough

6. Las Vegas City Council's Spring Celebration and Foster Connections event will be held at Floyd Lamb Park on April 5, 2014
  - a. Attendees were tasked with creating awareness for this event
  - b. Hours of the event are
    - i. 10:00 am – 12:00 pm (open to foster parents and their kids only)
    - ii. 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm (general public)
7. Recapped the future goals of the work group
  - a. Event Sub-Committee may need to be created
    - i. People who are interested in taking part should connect with Denise
  - b. There has to be a presence in the community to create awareness
    - i. Will need to examine the effectiveness of current recruiting avenues versus the value and number of recruited foster parent potentials from each avenue
    - ii. Need to make sure there is a balance between types of recruitment strategies which will need to be very targeted and well supported
    - iii. Identifying events in the community where we can start the awareness portion of our plan
  - c. Taking a look at the mechanisms being used to get the awareness out there now and offering possible additions or suggestions
  - d. Members were tasked with bringing new members from agencies, community partners and foster parents to future meetings
  - e. Challenge for this work group is to identify the programs and connections we need to make in the community, bring back the ideas to discuss and formulate action plans to implement them

Next Meeting:

1. Monday March 10, 2014 (12:00 pm – 2:00 pm) at DFS Central Carson City Room