

UMATILLA COUNTY

Coordinated Comprehensive Community Plan for Children and Families

Prepared for the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners
By the Umatilla County Commission on Children and Families

Shelley Ena, CCF Coordinator
Melvalee Carter, CCF Administrative Assistant
Larry Hanson, CCF Chairman

216 SE 4th Street, Pendleton OR 97801
Phone (541) 278-5486, fax (541) 278-5488

SUBMITTED TO OCCF
JANUARY 14, 2007

Executive Summary

Community Process:

The Umatilla County Commission on Children and Families discussed at a planning retreat held on Martin Luther King Day, 2007 that the process to determine the next steps in the SB 555 Comprehensive Planning, Implementation and Measurement process should include receiving input from as many individuals and organizations as possible in the coming year. Afterwards a list of community stakeholders was drafted. Key informant surveys and interviewing techniques were developed. As the year progressed we collectively reviewed the biennial update, state high level outcome data including the Oregon Progress Board's benchmark data and local data pertaining to our high level outcomes as a starting place to determine if there had been any change in the trend data since the 2006 update. The grid of data sets was updated as new data became available and it was shared with our community partners in a number of ways including being discussed at a variety of committee meetings and sent via direct mail and email to the Community Interagency Network and many other members of various committees. The Comprehensive Community Planning Process was an agenda topic on meetings held by the aforementioned "Network" as well as the Early Childhood Partnership Team, the Umatilla County Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking & Drugging, the Lower Columbia Basin Prevention Coalition, the Local Alcohol and Drug Planning Committee, Hispanic Community Project Committee and the Juvenile Crime Prevention Ad Hoc Committee. All are comprised of a multitude of cross-system, agency and school partners with a broad perspective of viewpoints being shared on a regular basis.

Both the United Way and the Umatilla Morrow County Head Start also conduct needs assessments which were reviewed and considered in our findings. After mapping the available services and discussing the systems that these issues fall under, and also through key informant interviews we looked at the information received from existing committees working on these issues and determined that we had the capacity and community readiness to address a single Focus Area well.

Inclusion of diverse populations:

The Hispanic Community Project was funded by the Oregon Community Foundation to assess the needs of the Hispanic population in our region. We used this committee of key stakeholders and their findings in the planning for our comprehensive community plan. High on their priorities were health care systems that were culturally competent and linguistically accessible including Alcohol and Drug Treatment and Mental Health Care and also access to transportation. We are also fortunate to have leadership from the Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC), which runs the Migrant Head Start Program, in our county and they also help us be in touch with the needs of their families.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) provides representation of tribal members on all of our planning committees including LADPC, UCCRUD, CIN, & ECPT.

Document the community issues:

The community issues that were identified in this process are as follows:

- Youth and Adult Substance Abuse, especially Meth and alcohol, are tearing families apart and putting a strain on every social system available (enforcement, education, courts). Alcohol and drug abuse escalates criminal behavior. Treatment options are lacking.
- Child Care Availability, Accessibility, Affordability, and Quality are lacking. We have severe child care shortages. We are losing more child care sites than we are gaining. Business leaders are not involved in finding solutions.
- Juvenile Crime and Recidivism and holding youth accountable for their misdeeds
- Increasing Gang activity
- Increasingly more children coming into the foster care system with fewer foster families willing to be care providers
- Availability of family wage jobs is scarce.
- Homelessness (adults, families, teens) is apparent with no homeless shelters available. However, the Salvation Army does open their gym to adults at night but only between Thanksgiving and March 1st.
- We lack professional shelter care and other respite care services for homeless and troubled youth
- Domestic Violence is exacerbated by substance abuse and crosses all socioeconomic boundaries
- Few referral sources for mental health/suicide prevention-intervention strategies
- Providing mental health services in the schools for children does not readily occur. School psychologists are shared. Umatilla Morrow ESD lists 7 psychologists and 2 child development specialists in the resource directory. They are shared between 45 different schools in the two counties. Their main job is doing assessments. More child psychologists are needed to provide follow-up care.
- Rural communities are resource poor compared to the west side of the I-5 corridor. .
- There are very few after school and pre-school programs.
- Parent Education and obtaining appropriate parenting skills through available programs are under utilized. No Parent Education classes for parents of teenagers
- Transportation issues: no mass transit, also babies are not allowed on school buses with their teen parents even though they may be enrolled in the early head start classroom across the street. Lack of mass transit system hinders transportation in rural areas
- Affordable housing for low-income families is a problem throughout the county
- There does not appear to be a provider network for Mental Health Professionals currently.

Gaps and Needs surveys were disbursed to community partners and they were asked to identify their top ten most significant issues. The results were very similar to the issues discussed previously. The survey shows that the top ten gaps in the community system to support children, youth and families were:

- Treatment for adult uninsured substance abusers
- Access to alcohol and other drug prevention and treatment services for youth
- Availability of appropriate foster care
- Mental health services for children, youth, and families
- Affordable health care and access for the uninsured
- Drug use during pregnancy
- Affordable child care
- Transportation

- Living wage jobs
- Out of school time activities, including school age child care, summer activities, before and after school time, etc

Focus Issue: By October 2007 data was collected and assessed in community and committee meetings. The community partners decided to identify a single focus area very broadly because of its far reaching impact into the fabric of society. We have determined that the expansive reach of child abuse and neglect is the single-most pervasive and destructive human element that we feel the ability to impact through strategic and intentional investments to improve all systems that network in an effort to reduce it.

Describing the issue: The community of Umatilla County has been working to implement strategies that cross system boundaries and have a positive impact on the health and well-being of children by reducing the impact of child abuse and neglect. Recent successes can be seen through specific implementation of The Drug Treatment Court. This model program has been implemented by Umatilla County Community Corrections with the cooperation and collaboration of the State Courts. This is proving to be a very successful venture and has resulted in several personal success stories. Mothers who had previously given birth to drug affected children that were removed from their care are now giving birth to healthy babies that they are able to care for themselves. A strong Court Appointed Special Advocates program with volunteers who put the needs of children first gives a voice to children in court. The Pioneer Relief Nursery was established in our county by a group of child advocates who recognized the need, investigated the relief nursery concept and then set about to make it happen for this rural area. They networked with members of the Early Childhood Partnership Team, traveled to Eugene to tour their facility and met with leaders of the Eugene Replication Project. They organized and established their 501c3 non-profit status, located a building, received tons of volunteer support, wrote and received grant funding, received support from our local state legislators and were able to open their doors on December 1, 2007. This service will be able to help potentially high risk families who may be likely to abuse find resources to meet their needs and learn coping skills that benefit their children rather than hurt them. Healthy Start workers are meeting with families in their homes to monitor the health and developmental steps of babies born to young and inexperienced parents. Having appropriate child care that is accessible and affordable is also critical as it pertains to this focus area. Child Care Resource and Referral have alerted the ECPT to the lack of child care provider issue at each meeting during this past year. They are concerned that neglect may occur because child care is not available which has caused parents to put their own needs for employment or recreation in front of the safety of their children. As a result, unsuitable and unsafe arrangements for care may be put in place. CCR&R tries to educate parents on the importance of leaving their children with a qualified provider but the fact is that there really just are not enough providers throughout Umatilla County.

Not all abuse and neglect occurs to small children. Because our title includes the words “Children and Families” our office tends to receive calls from parents who don’t know who to call but hope that we can steer them in the right direction because they are looking for resources, referrals, etc that they can access to help their families. On occasion, our local Commission on Children and Families office has received calls from parents of teenagers who are willing to abandon them to the child welfare system because the child is out of control and the parent can

no longer deal with them. Discussions with community partners on the JCP Ad Hoc Committee also attest to the fact that they, too, are confronted with this dilemma. They also see teenagers seek help out of dysfunctional family systems where drugs and alcohol have caused parents to abdicate their responsibilities to care for their children and these older youth are tired of taking care of their parents and younger siblings. So they see running away as a survival option and are not prepared for the risks on the streets. This is an area of concern that we need to find better solutions for and with a concentrated effort to develop resources for this target population of youth we hope to reduce incidents of abuse and neglect to them.

Strategic approaches to address the focus issue: Identified below are resources that have been identified by community partners as positive examples of what has currently been planned for in Umatilla County.

- Early Childhood Initiatives:
 - Early Learning Collaborative identifies children with developmental delays and refers for EI/ECSE services.
 - Pioneer Relief Nursery
 - Promoting readiness to learn by kindergarten with emphasis on family literacy
 - Healthy Start Program through the Public Health Dept
 - The Special Library District's Take Off program promotes early literacy and provides literacy training to child care providers.
 - Child Care Resource and Referral links providers and families and provides training and workforce development opportunities for child care providers.
- Adult Drug Treatment Court
- Celebration of the Family events connect families with resources in the community and emphasizes interagency cooperation.
- ERDC reimbursements rates for child care are increasing which may help child care providers be able to stay in business.
- Foster care payments for relative care has been approved by state legislature starting January 1, 2008.
- District Attorney's Multi-Disciplinary Teams are working effectively to prevent child abuse by having agencies that are aware of issues within the family meet together to discuss and strategize about family supports and what is needed for families to be successful.
- Citizen Review Boards meet to review Child Welfare cases and give community members the opportunity to address the policy and procedural application of child welfare cases by providing oversight and giving feedback to DHS and all affected parties
- Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteers work to insure that the best interest of the child is represented in court
- FREE QPR training for suicide prevention by the BMCC Suicide Prevention Specialist and others trained in this method is available.
- Alcohol and Drug Prevention and Treatment Services are collaborating to provide integrated services among providers in the area.
- Community Access for Resource Effectiveness (C.A.R.E.) teams provide a multi-disciplinary approach in the schools to coordinate the delivery of social services to children, youth and families at highest need in the community.

- Functional Family Therapy delivered by the Marigold Program through Homestead Youth Services helps at risk families.

Umatilla County is striving to implement evidence based programs, practices and principles. Abuse and neglect comes in many forms and occurs to those least able to protect themselves. The county and our community partners will advocate for improved service delivery of quality programs, system change that leads to improved coordination among providers and system-wide training opportunities, and increasing community mobilization efforts to build capacity, develop resources and promote outreach efforts.

Our process has been an extension of the biennial planning updates. We have strong collaboration from many community partners ranging from the faith community, schools, state, local and non-profit agencies, law enforcement, and the courts. We are confident that continuing to build relationships and keeping the lines of communication between interagency networks open will lead to productive progress and improved outcomes for families.