

OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |
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OCFS-4616EL (Rev. 11/98)

Transmittal No: 00 OCFS LCM-27

Date: October 2, 2000

Division: Strategic Planning
and Policy Development

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: Guidelines and Instructions for Preparing
County Service Plans 2001-2003

ATTACHMENTS: Consolidated Service Plan
Child and Family Services Plan
County Comprehensive Plan
(attachments not available on-line)

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the planning guidelines for counties for the three-year plan for the period January 1, 2001 to December 31, 2003. These guidelines represent the first step in the development of new plan guidelines that are consistent with the operational policy of the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) and County Youth Bureaus are required by statute to develop and submit to the State local multi-year plans for the provision of services and the allocation of resources. The creation of the Office of Children and Family Services provides an opportunity and a mandate to bring these two county planning processes together.

These guidelines continue the movement away from planning that centers around "process" and activities in discrete service areas, as indicated in 94-LCM-128, and replaces it with a comprehensive needs assessment that supports outcomes for children, youth, families, adults and communities supported by services. The outcomes must relate to the State and federal goals, which are broad enough to allow counties to focus their activities based on their unique needs assessments. These goals are best met through collaboration.

The Integrated County Planning Project (ICP) represents OCFS' long-term commitment to develop a local collaborative planning process and to actively involve counties in the evolution of revised planning guidelines that will support such a collaborative process. There are sixteen sites participating

in the demonstration project, now concluding the second year of a five-year project. Based on the lessons learned through these sites experimenting with collaborative approaches to needs assessment, outcome development and strategic planning, revisions to the requirements for planning will be made and will result in plan guidelines recommendations by the conclusion of this demonstration project.

Until such revisions are determined, all counties, including those involved in ICP, remain subject to existing statute and regulations regarding planning. It is for this reason that the attached guidelines are "Interim."

The guidelines enclosed include input from counties actively participating in the ICP Project and reflect the following principles:

- * to support local collaborative planning process inclusive of broad stakeholder involvement;
- * to construct a planning process that has meaning and utility locally while preserving accountability to state and federal requirements;
- * to clarify a consistent planning process for counties; and
- * to support a process that focuses on outcomes for children, youth, families, adults and communities.

Plan Guidelines

There are three different interim plan guidelines included. They are:

- * Consolidated Services Plan - required for LDSS in counties not participating in ICP.
- * Child and Family Services Plan - required for counties participating in ICP.
- * County Comprehensive Plan - required for County Youth Bureaus in counties not participating in ICP.

All three are included to provide the opportunity for all counties to become familiar with the range of plan requirements. These guidelines represent the minimum current existing statutory and regulatory plan requirements. The language and format of these guidelines are consistent. The Child and Family Services plan includes the requirements for both the Consolidated Services Plan and County Comprehensive Plan. This is the first step in creating a single plan document representing the planning requirements for local Departments of Social Services and County Youth Bureaus.

Counties not participating in ICP are still required to submit a Consolidated Services Plan developed by the LDSS and a County Comprehensive Plan developed by the County Youth Bureau. While these are separate plan documents, the document guidelines were developed to encourage a collaborative planning process.

Any county not participating in ICP may choose to submit a joint Local Department of Social Services and Youth Bureau Child and Family Services Plan instead of submitting the Consolidated Services Plan and the County Comprehensive Plan. This is not a requirement or expectation. This choice is offered to provide an opportunity for counties that are ready to engage in this level of collaboration.

Submission Dates

The Consolidated Services Plan is due on November 1, 2000. The Children and Family Services Plan for ICP counties is due December 1, 2000. Because OCFS is committed to local planning, it is our goal to have local plans submitted, approved and in place by January 1, 2001. If a local district is unable to meet the deadline, due to difficulty scheduling a public hearing for example, an extension may be requested. Please submit a letter to your Regional Office director describing the reasons for requesting an extension and giving the date on which the plan will be submitted.

"OCFS" will be releasing guidelines for the submittal of a revised child care section for the CSP an ICP plan. Counties are not required to submit details on their child care program prior to the release of the child care guidelines. However, counties that wish to submit changes to their child care program may do so by describing these changes in the Interim Document for the CSP or ICP. Any approved changes will be treated as amendments to the child care section of the CSP or ICP. Districts submitting information regarding their child care program should indicate whether their submittal is intended to amend portions of their existing child care section or replace it in its entirety.

Technical Assistance

Regional Offices and the Bureau of Policy Development have conducted a series of regional training sessions. Regional Offices continue to be available and involved on an ongoing basis. Questions pertaining to the adult services components should be directed to the Bureau of Adult Services at (518) 473-6446. Day Care questions should be directed to the Bureau of Early Childhood Services at (518) 474-3775. These guidelines are based on existing statute and regulation and are substantively consistent with the previous guidelines. You may wish to refer to technical assistance material previously issued in 94 LCM-128, which may be found in ELIB under LDPC02 where Office releases dated prior to June 1998 are maintained.

William F. Baccaglioni
Director
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and Policy Development