

**2014 Annual Report for Five-Year Prevention and Permanency  
Objective 2.2 Healthy Families Florida**

**Reporting Period: July 1, 2013 – June 31, 2014**

By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have increased funding for Healthy Families Florida (HFF) at levels necessary to sustain the quality of services, restore and expand funding to ensure the availability of services in all counties, and enhance the program's capacity to better serve families at high risk of child maltreatment due to domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health issues.

**Summary of Plan Activities**

*Please provide a summary of activities for your five-year prevention and permanency plan objective. For each activity, please identify how they support/promote the Protective Factors.*

**2.2.1 Advocacy.** By 30 June 2015, HFF will have worked with partners at the federal, state and local level, including parents, families and other citizens, to advocate as one voice to promote investments in HFF and to support other child and family programs and services.

The activities for this tactic include providing advocacy training to project staff, identifying participants to serve as parent advocates and share their success stories, and working with the media to increase awareness of Healthy Families Florida and its impact on the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Engaging parents and families to share their success stories promote the protective factors by building *parental resiliency*. Engaging community leaders and building strong partnerships promote the protective factors by improving *concrete supports* available in the community for parents and families.

**2.2.2 Restored and Increased Funding.** By 30 June 2015, HFF will have secured sufficient funding to sustain the quality, and restore and increase the availability of HFF services.

The activities for this tactic include working with the Department of Children & Families to develop budget issues to maintain and restore funding lost in 2010-11, identify what the unmet need is in each community and to identify other potential sources for expanding service availability. HFF has integrated the six protective factors into service delivery since its inception in 1998. Increased funding for HFF will result in these vital home visiting services being available to more of Florida's high-risk families.

**2.2.3 Enhanced Funding.** By 30 June 2015, HFF will have secured sufficient funding to enhance the HFF model to better serve families experiencing domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health issues.

The activities for this tactic include working with the Department of Children & Families to develop budget issues to add a licensed clinician to the core staffing model who provides in-home therapeutic counseling to families experiencing domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health issues. Other activities include identifying other potential funding sources for this enhancement. By providing enhanced funding to implement this enhancement will enable more high-risk families to access vital services that further enhance protective factors, specifically *parental resiliency* and *concrete supports*.

**2.2.4 Parent Leadership.** By 30 June 2015, Healthy Families Florida will have increased opportunities for parents, including fathers, to serve in leadership roles within Healthy Families Florida projects as another strategy to increase the *Protective Factors* in families.

The activities for this tactic include providing Parent Leadership Ambassador Training to ensure all local HFF projects have participants serving as parent leaders who contribute to the design, implementation and

evaluation of program services. This training includes learning objectives specific to the protective factors framework. Other activities include expanding parent support groups, enhancing father involvement and providing more opportunities for parents to serve as leaders.

**2.2.5 Quality Improvement.** By 30 June 2015, Healthy Families Florida will have continued ongoing quality improvement efforts to ensure fidelity to the program model and to sustain the quality of services.

HFF is committed to continuous quality improvement. Activities for this tactic include administering an annual participant satisfaction survey, conducting quality improvement groups to improve service delivery, and participating in the Home Visiting Protective Factors Workgroup by having each of our local projects conduct a self-assessment to determine how each protective factor is embed into the foundation of service delivery.

### **Progress**

*Please describe the progress towards achieving your objective outlined in the five-year plan. (If your objective focuses on the State Fiscal Year, please report accordingly. If not, report information based on the 2013 calendar year.)*

HFF continues to make progress on each of the five tactics associated with objective 2.2.

**2.2.1 Advocacy.** We have been successful in engaging many parents and statewide partners such as the Florida Sheriffs Association, the Florida District Kiwanis, Children's Services Councils, the United Way of Florida, Guardian ad Litem, Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops, Florida Afterschool Network, 4Generations Institute and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence in our advocacy efforts. Local projects developed and implemented community advocacy plans to engage and educate community partners, legislators, local officials and the media on the success of Healthy Families Florida in preventing child abuse and neglect before it ever happens.

**2.2.2 Restored and Increased Funding.** The 2013 Legislature increased funding for Healthy Families Florida Funding by \$3 million in non-recurring funds for a total appropriation of \$21.1 million for 2013-2014. This increase restored services in two counties and expanded services in 26 counties to serve an additional 550 families and their 979 at-risk children. The 2014 Florida Legislature appropriated an additional \$7 million dollars in recurring funds for a net increase of \$2 million and total appropriation of \$23,114,329. The additional \$2 million dollars restored services in Baker, Osceola and Seminole Counties that were eliminated in 2010-2011 due to budget cuts.

**2.2.3 Enhanced Funding.** In October, 2013, the Department of Children & Families requested \$500,000 in their 2014-2015 Legislative Budget Request to continue funding for Licensed Clinicians in six local projects to better serve families experiencing Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse and Mental Health issues. This issue did not move forward in the Legislative budget process.

**2.2.4 Parent Leadership.** The number of Healthy Families participants serving in parent leadership roles continues to grow. All 32 local projects have participants or former HFF graduates serving as parent leaders. These parent leaders made presentations, spoke at events and helped plan graduation ceremonies and parent support groups. In addition, the annual HFF Leadership Meeting featured a general session entitled, Investing in Parents as Leaders, that highlighted the diverse roles that parent leaders can play to support programs. Two parent leaders served as presenters along with the Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse Florida.

**2.2.5 Quality Improvement.** The HFF central office continues to engage in quality improvement efforts. HFF provides on-going technical assistance to local projects, conducts ongoing review of performance and makes changes in policies and procedures when necessary to improve the quality of the program. HFF conducted its annual participant satisfaction survey during the

months of September and October 2013. The results of the survey were reported in January 2014 that showed 99.6% of participants completing surveys were satisfied with the home visiting services they received.

During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, HFF established a quality improvement group made up of staff from numerous local projects. The goal of the group was to improve the participation and engagement of fathers and male caregivers. The group developed the following strategies for consideration: develop specialized training for staff to encourage the involvement of fathers and male caregivers in services, enhancing and expanding services and resources to be made available to staff and creating more leadership opportunities for fathers and male caregivers. The group also identified several barriers to father and male caregiver engagement and a dedicated session on this topic was offered at the 2013 annual Leadership meeting.

Finally, in April 2014, Healthy Families Florida received its third HFA national accreditation in 15 years as a provider of evidence-based home visiting services. All 32 HFF projects and the central office met the threshold for accreditation without having to submit a response to the Accreditation Panel, which is a first for any state Healthy Families America multi-site system. This accreditation confirms that all programs within the Healthy Families Florida system are providing high-quality services according to the best practice standards established by the national model.

*Please identify the percentage of achievement of your objective in the five-year prevention and permanency plan you think your team has achieved, and describe why.*

84%. HFF identified 32 Measures/Benchmarks in the plan. Of these, HFF has completed 27. It is noted that many of the measures includes an annual update. Therefore, several of the benchmarks are technically ongoing. Those are included in the 27.

*Do you think your team is on target to accomplishing your objective by June 2015?*

Yes.

### **Highlights and Accomplishments**

*Please describe any highlights and accomplishments connected to your objective's five-year plan.*

Healthy Families Florida continues to be successful in preventing child abuse and neglect. For FY 2013-2014:

- 98% of children were free from abuse and neglect during services.
- 98% of children were free from abuse and neglect within one year after program completion.

Other key measures of success achieved during 2013-2014 include:

- 98% of mothers do not have a subsequent pregnancy within two years of the target child's birth. Mothers with less frequent pregnancies have fewer pregnancy related complications and are less likely to give birth to low-birth weight and premature babies.
- 99% of participants and their children are connected to a primary health care provider, which reduces the use of costly emergency room visits and increases the consistency of care received by the mother and child.
- 89% of children in Healthy Families Florida are fully immunized by age two, exceeding the state and national averages of 81% and 71% respectively. This is especially significant given that Healthy Families Florida serves high-risk families and the state and national rates include the general population.

- 94% of children received age-appropriate developmental screening at prescribed intervals. Early detection of developmental delays allows for early treatment and reduces the likelihood that more serious and costly problems will develop.
- 89% of participants were screened for postnatal depression, a research-based risk factor correlated with child abuse and neglect.

Healthy Families also contributes to workforce development by promoting personal responsibility that leads to family self-sufficiency:

- 84% of participants improve their self-sufficiency by getting their GED or a college degree, enrolling in job skill development training, getting a job, finding more stable housing, learning English as a second language, attending literacy classes or obtaining a driver's license.
- 80% of program completers who were unemployed at enrollment gained employment while receiving Healthy Families services.

### Next Steps

*Please identify what your objective's proposed next steps are for 2015 related to the five-year plan.*

- 2.2.1 Advocacy.** HFF will continue its advocacy efforts to raise awareness about prevention and the success of Healthy Families Florida in preventing child abuse and neglect. HFF is looking for additional partners to add to its coordinated advocacy strategy.
- 2.2.2 Restored and Increased Funding.** HFF will continue to educate legislators, community leaders and the media about why Healthy Families Florida is a smart investment that not only saves children's lives but also saves taxpayers millions of dollars. Failing to invest in effective prevention has costly consequences. Conservative estimates for child welfare services, hospitalization, school dropouts, special education and juvenile justice costs alone come to \$72,709 a year per abused child. Healthy Families Florida effectively prevents child abuse and neglect for an average of just \$1,900 a year per child. Healthy Families will continue to work with the Department to restore funding to the 2009-2010 funding level of \$28,098,178
- 2.2.3 Enhanced Funding.** HFF will continue to work with the Department of Children & Families, the Governor's Office and local community partners to secure adequate resources for all projects to fund the High Risk Enhancement to add a licensed clinician to the HFF core staffing to better serve families with substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health issues. A Johns Hopkins study (Tandon, et al., 2005) concluded, "Home visiting programs might benefit from collaborating with professionals who are more skilled and experienced in dealing with mental health, domestic violence and substance abuse issues." A portion of the Family Specialist's time is spent providing one-on-one consultation with Healthy Families paraprofessional home visitors and their supervisors to discuss the challenges these families are facing and to make recommendations that will help the home visitors in their work with parents to build protective factors and gain the knowledge and skills families need to provide a safe and stable environment for their children and improve self-sufficiency. This consultation also serves to develop strategies to improve family follow-through on treatment plans, referrals to other community resources and engagement in the program.
- 2.2.4 Parent Leadership.** HFF will continue to support its local projects in identifying, supporting and engaging participants as parent leaders. HFF plans to continue to feature parent leaders during its annual meeting in 2015 and work with Prevent Child Abuse America to provide additional Parent Leadership training.
- 2.2.5 Quality Improvement.** Programmatic activities planned for 2015 include enhancing training and policies to incorporate the newly issued July 1, 2014-December 31, 2016 Healthy Families America Best Practice Standards and continue to identify innovative strategies to share between local projects that will enable the program to operate more efficiently and effectively.

*Please identify what your objective's proposed next steps are for the next five-year plan, to be launched in July 2015.*

The State of Florida will continue to increase funding for Healthy Families Florida (HFF) at levels necessary to sustain the quality of services, restore and expand funding to ensure the availability of services in all counties, and enhance the program's capacity to better serve families at high risk of child maltreatment due to domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health issues.