

**2013 Annual Report for Five-Year Prevention and Permanency
Objective 2.2 Healthy Families Florida**

Reporting Period: January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013

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 levels, 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 preventing 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 local HFF projects, the Healthy Families Florida Advisory Committee and the Department of Children and Families to develop budget issues to maintain and restore funding lost in 2010-2011, identify what the unmet need is in each community and 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 local HFF projects, the Healthy Families Florida Advisory Committee and the Department of Children and Families to develop budget issues that enhance the HFF model by adding a licensed clinician to the core staffing to provide 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. Providing 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 HFF participants in all 32 Healthy Families projects who are interested in serving as parent leaders. The role of a parent leader is to provide input and recommendations to the project staff and their local advisory boards on what services are most helpful and any improvements they think are needed to improve services. In addition, parent leaders serve as parent group facilitators, conduct outreach at community events, help organize special events and provide testimony highlighting the impact the program has had directly on their lives. 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, providing technical assistance, conducting quality assurance monitoring and conducting quality improvement groups. The purpose of these activities is to ensure quality of services, which includes helping families build protective factors, and to improve 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.

- **Advocacy** - We have been successful in engaging many parents and statewide partners in our advocacy efforts. Our statewide partners include the Florida Sheriffs Association, the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops, United Way of Florida, Florida Kiwanis, Guardian ad Litem, State Child Abuse Death Review Committee, Children's Home Society, Florida Children's Services Council, the Florida After School Network and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence. In addition, local projects develop community advocacy plans to engage and educate community leaders, legislators and the media on the importance of prevention and the success of Healthy Families Florida in preventing child abuse and neglect.
- **Restored and Increased Funding** - In Fiscal Year 2010-2011, the Legislature cut \$10 million of the \$28.1 million during the height of the recession which represented a 36% cut to Healthy Families Florida. This cut resulted in the elimination of Healthy Families services in 14 counties and a significant reduction in services in the remaining 53 counties.

In Fiscal Years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, the Legislature maintained level funding at \$18.1 million. In Fiscal Year 2013-2014, the Legislature appropriated an additional \$3 million in non-recurring funds for Healthy Families Florida bringing the total investment to \$21.1 million (\$5 million of the \$21.1 million is non-recurring funds). This increase enabled the program to sustain quality services, restore services in two counties where Healthy Families was eliminated and

restore some services in 29 existing counties to serve an additional 550 families and their 979 children.

The Department of Children and Families Legislative Budget Request for 2014-2015 restores the \$5 million in non-recurring funds with recurring general revenue funds to maintain current level funding. Healthy Families has also leveraged cash and in-kind contributions totaling almost \$12 million dollars from local communities to help with operating costs and to serve additional high-risk families. These contributions are evidence that communities throughout the state recognize Healthy Families Florida as a critical prevention program to prevent child abuse and neglect.

- **Enhanced Funding** - In August 2011, the Department of Children and Families funded a pilot to enhance the HFF model in six local projects by adding a licensed clinician to the core staffing to provide in-home therapeutic counseling to families experiencing domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health issues. While funding for the High Risk Pilot concluded on June 30, 2013, eight local HFF projects were able to find funding from partners in their community to support the continuation of the enhancement for this fiscal year only. The Department of Children and Families has recognized the need and benefit of having a licensed clinician as part of the HFF team to better serve families with substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health issues and has included an additional \$500,000 in its 2014-2015 Legislative Budget Issue to restore this critical service in six of the eight local HFF projects.
- **Parent Leadership** - The number of Healthy Families participants serving in parent leadership roles continues to grow. All 32 local projects have at least one participant serving as a parent leader. These parent leaders are making presentations, speaking at events, serving as a member of the project's advisory board and helping plan graduation ceremonies and parent support groups. In addition, the annual HFF Leadership Meeting featured the testimony of a recent HFF graduate and presentations from two parent leaders on the impact that the parent leadership training and other activities are having in their lives personally and professionally.
- **Quality Improvement** - The HFF central office continues to engage in quality improvement efforts. HFF conducted its annual participant satisfaction survey during the months of September and October with the official results expected in January 2014. Local projects just submitted their latest updates to their protective factors action plans with five projects reporting the completion of all planned activities. Currently underway is a quality improvement group with staff from nine local projects convened to improve father engagement.

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.

Eighty-four percent (84%). HFF identified 32 Measures/Benchmarks in the plan. Of these, HFF has completed 27. It is noted that many of the measures include 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. As of June 30, 2013:

- 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.

A recent analysis shows that 95% of children were still free from abuse and neglect within three years after program completion.

Other key measures of success achieved during 2012-2013 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.
- 94% 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.
- 72% 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 2014 related to the five-year plan.

- **Advocacy** - HFF will continue its advocacy efforts by working with state and local partners and participants to raise awareness about the importance of prevention and the success of Healthy Families Florida in preventing child abuse and neglect in some of Florida's highest risk families.
- **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 spares children from the trauma of abuse and neglect, saves children's lives and 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 \$1,800 a year per child.
- **Enhanced Funding** - HFF will continue to work with the Department of Children and Families, the Governor's Office and local community partners to secure adequate resources to fund the

High Risk Enhancement to add a licensed clinician to the HFF core staffing in all Healthy Families projects to better serve families with substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health issues.

- **Parent Leadership** - HFF will continue to support its local projects in identifying, supporting and engaging participants as parent leaders. While almost all 32 local projects have more than one participant serving as a parent leader, HFF would like to see this number grow. HFF plans to feature more parent leaders at its annual meeting in 2014.
- **Quality Improvement** - Programmatic activities planned for 2014 include improving fatherhood involvement, enhancing training and policies to further incorporate the protective factors framework into service delivery and continuing to identify innovative strategies to share between local projects that will enable the program to operate more efficiently and effectively. In addition, Healthy Families Florida is currently undergoing its third national accreditation process and is expected to finalize this process in April 2014.

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.

HFF will engage its local projects and its Advisory Committee during 2014 to establish specific activities for inclusion in the next five-year plan.