



Permanency Enhancement Project Technical Assistance Annual Report Update

Southern Region Olney Action Team

This two-part report provides an update of all PEP Action Team and University Partner activities during the 2017 fiscal year (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017). Information herein is based off of communication and correspondence with key Action Team members and all other stakeholder group members. These individuals potentially include action team lead contact persons, PEP regional staff, other division employees, area community members, and families involved in the PEP initiative in the related counties.

Action Team Catchment Area

The **Olney Action Team** encompasses the following counties listed below:

Crawford
Edwards
Lawrence
Richland
Wabash

University Partner Activity Overview

During fiscal year 2017 the Department of Children and Family Services worked with the University Partner (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville- SIUE) to retain faculty researchers and graduate students (who serve in the role of PEP Action Team Community Liaisons) to explore barriers to permanency, including but not limited to trends in racial disparity and disproportionality as it impacts child outcomes in the Southern Region of Illinois.

In the month of **May** the Department of Children and Family Services Quality Assurance Department provided county level permanency data for **Quarter 4 of fiscal year 2016**. The data provided spans the following months: **March - June FY 2016** to SIUE, so that the University research team could analyze trends in permanencies, by age and race, over the period in question. This data analysis will be provided in a **supplementary report**.

In addition to analyzing permanency data, the PEP Community Liaison (University Graduate Student) **Jordan Boyer Madden** contacted representatives who had been identified as leaders of the **Olney action team** and explored PEP goals, accomplishments, barriers and activities. Communication with the following individuals occurred:

Name	Role in DCFS or PEP Action Team
Lindsey Tompson	Action Team Leader
Aundrea Brooks	Action Team Leader
Michael Burns	DCFS Partner

** To see dates of contact and method of communication please refer to attached contact log document*

Context of Permanency Barriers for Action Team Catchment Area

This section includes a list of the permanency barriers discussed by action team members that are prevalent in the action team catchment area.

- **Maintain current action team engagement and leadership**
- **Limited on family counseling contracts and drug testing contracts (Lack of ability to utilize Indiana resources)**
- **Large area spread out to five counties with predominately rural setting**
- **Limited resources for children transitioning from residential facilities to next steps toward permanency.**
- **Issues with confidentiality in past with community stakeholders in rural towns within Action Team**
- **No Current data supplied by Division to assess current service data trends and updates on permanency numbers for region**

This section provides a discussion of the permanency barriers identified above. This discussion is based on information provided by action team members and is supported by the data presented in the supplementary report.

The challenges of being a large five-county action team creates many issues for Olney. Even with the large area, there are limited on resources due to the rural communities. There are different issues with permanency in each county. The action team leaders and their community liaison discussed the option of focus on one county at a time. Starting with Olney County the action team would focus on case-by-case systematic areas of improvement and resources by area. Limitations on resources can be assisted utilizing other DFCS professionals, community stakeholders, and University Partners. These professional networking, have already began starting with conversations and discussions at Quarterly Steering Committee Meeting on May 11,2017.

Fiscal Year 2017 Action Team Goals

This section includes a current list of goals identified by the action team membership.

- **Sustain Action Team Membership as well as attendance**
- **Growth of committee focusing on court-related issues similar to Madison County’s Court Sub-committee (Utilizing Juvenile Court Act)**
- **Focus on one county at a time starting with Olney County.**
- **Grow Action Team membership focused on region, court subcommittees, etc.**
- **Implement survey to assess support needs of ‘Action Team’ to garner ongoing specified support form University partner which will further specify work with local community**
- **Solicit and await the arrival of updated data to continue to assess area permanency trends**

Action Team Goal Related Activity Overview

Activity	Location	Date & Length of Time	Stakeholders Represented	University Partner Role	Other
Phone Meeting with University Partner	N/A	2/24/17	Action Team Leader- Aundrea Brooks	Asked questions to gain information on current Olney Action Team	
Action Team Leader Meeting	Olney DCFS	4/20/17	Both Action Team Leaders- Aundrea Brooks and Lindsey Tompson	Discussed previous Action Team goals, challenges, and updates	

Discussion of Action Team Activities to Improve Permanency in the Catchment Area

Jordan Boyer Madden, Aundrea Brooks, and Lindsey Tompson met at Olney DCFS to discuss Olney Action Team. Barriers to permanency were discussed such as confidentiality, loss of counseling contracts, rural setting, large area to cover, five counties, and different judges used for families. Meeting with University Partner at Olney DCFS office occurred on 4/20/17. Communication with both Action Team Leaders as a University Partner and actively receiving emails and returned phone calls.

Action Team Next Steps:

Olney Action Team will continue to work on increasing community stakeholders from all five counties. The Team plans to work on one county at a time with Olney being the first. Lindsey Tompson has reached out to Jay Reeves for resources and advice with building up action team membership in rural counties.

Olney Action Team will to grow membership, set action team meeting dates quarterly, and work towards the objectives towards permanency enhancement. The university partners also ask that the Olney Action team participate in the survey that they developed.

Include all meeting minutes, contact logs, event flyers, and other relevant materials with the report document.