



Legislation Text

File #: 2019-245, Version: 1

TITLE

DHHS-DSS PARTNERSHIP WITH SOUTHEASTERN WORKFORCE STRATEGIES, LLC

SPONSOR

Heather Skeens (Shelia Stokes)

BACKGROUND

Guilford County Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services has partnered with Southeastern Workforce Strategies (SWS) to target achieving timely and successful reunification for children. In Guilford County, approximately 20% of children and youth entering the child welfare system are successfully reunified with their birth parents, compared to more than 50% of children in other communities. The percentage of reunification in Guilford County has consistently fallen below that of the state. Most children entering care are under the age of five and a disproportionate rate of these children are African American.

In April 2018, the Board of County Commissioners approved a partnership between Social Services and Southeastern Workforce Strategies (SWS) to implement A Model Approach for Change in Child Welfare (AMAC-CW). The goal of this partnership is to improve reunification outcomes for Guilford County children in foster care by examining Guilford's foster care system as a whole. Guilford County Social Services and Southeastern Workforce Strategies presented the outcomes of the first phase of A Model Approach for Change in Child Welfare (AMAC-CW) at the work session on April 18, 2019.

SWS recommends that GCDSS embark on the second phase of AMAC-CW, including further research, collaboration, and establishing a hybrid collective impact governance structure.

- Recommendation 1: Research and Data
 - Convene and implement a Judicial District 18 Court Improvement Collaborative, aligned with direction and guidance from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.
 - Conduct a comprehensive case file review to understand specific case factors and

their impact on family reunification.

- Conduct a policy and procedure analysis.
- Recommendation 2: Internal Alignment
 - Convene an internal review of Phase I findings and recommendations.
 - Establish an internal AMAC-CW Steering Committee.
- Recommendation 3: External Alignment
 - Establish an external AMAC-CW Advisory Council.
 - Convene a series of facilitated discussions to strengthen the relationship between GCDSS and the District 18 Guardian ad Litem program.
- Racial and Ethnic Disparities
 - Analyze census data disaggregated by race and ethnicity.
 - Identify racial and ethnic disparities through the case file review
 - Identify access to disaggregated data available through AMAC-CW partners, including members of the Court Improvement Collaborative and other core stakeholders.
 - Explore the potential use of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide, including data collection/analysis and implementation of a Race Equity Impact Assessment.

A whitepaper, *Factors Influencing Family Reunification in Guilford County*, outlining the research and work in Guilford during Phase I, with recommendations, is attached.

To continue this quest of achieving timely and successful reunification for children in Guilford County we are requesting to embark on Phase II with SWS in the amount of \$220,000.

Information regarding breakdown of our Room and Board payments for foster children will be shared with Board of Commissioners.

Upon adoption, the effective date of the contract will be November 1, 2019 for a one (1) year term. This contract is a decrease of \$30,000 from the previous contract dated April 2018.

BUDGET IMPACT

NO ADDITIONAL COUNTY FUNDS REQUIRED

REQUESTED ACTION

Approve contract, in substantial form, with Southeastern Workforce Strategies by and through the Health and Human Services Department (Division of Social Services) in the amount of \$220,000 for a one (1) year term effective November 1, 2019 towards the second phase of A Model Approach for Change in Child Welfare (AMAC-CW).