

POST-SUMMIT PLANNING FORM

TO BE COMPLETED BY AUGUST 1, 2008

E-mail to summitonchildren@sc.ohio.gov or fax to 614.387.9409.

COUNTY NAME: Wyandot

CONTACT NAME: The Honorable Kate Aubry, Juvenile Court Justice

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As they relate to the *safety, well-being and permanent home environments* for children in your county, please complete the following:

WHAT ARE THE TOP FIVE STRENGTHS AND/OR RESOURCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

1. Schools - All three main school districts have high graduation rates, are relatively safe, are fairly well supported by the community, and are run efficiently.
2. As a rural county, the communities are relatively safe compared to a more populated area.
3. There is a high degree of collaborative and cooperative relationship among the various family and child-serving organizations, agencies, and other key players.
4. Scenic parks, recreational opportunities, and various youth activities are available for families who have the resources and inclination to participate.
5. Substance abuse rates in youth appears to be decreasing.

WHAT ARE THE TOP FIVE CHALLENGES FACING YOUR COMMUNITY? *

1. Poverty - The poverty rate for Wyandot County has more than doubled in the last five years, and is continuing to grow higher.
2. Poor parenting - lack of understanding of developmentally typical behaviors-vs-appropriate response by parents, and failure to recognize or appropriately respond to problem behaviors at an early age.
3. Substance Abuse - Our substance abuse rate among adults is rising, & continues to rise as external factors worsen (i.e. economy, jobs, etc)
4. Unemployment - Wyandot County's unemployment rate is the worst its been in decades at 8.6% as of July, 2008.
5. Lack of sense of community in many aspects - there is a lack of feeling connected, lack of feeling spiritually whole, and emotional isolation for many parents and children.

WHAT ARE THE TOP FIVE MOST-NEEDED SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?

1. Integrated education - where self-responsibility, commitment to action and follow through, focusing on goals, and managing stress occurs.
2. Life Skills - decision making curriculum in schools that encourages healthy choices, attitudes, and behaviors.
3. Mental Health professionals and counselors in all schools, particularly elementary and middle schools.
4. Peer mentors or role-modeling program that link students with potential to be positive influence with students in need of positive influence.
5. Parenting skills/family skills programming - including nutrition, child development, coping skills, and natural and community supports.

WHAT ACTION STEPS WILL BE TAKEN LOCALLY TO DEVELOP NEEDED SERVICES OR ADDRESS LOCAL CHALLENGES?

1. An automated card-swipe system will be implemented in the food service department for all students at largest school district in county, which will enable students who are eligible for free/reduced meals to purchase food without being identified as being eligible, thereby avoiding stigma.
2. Financial Literacy classes for parents - possibly "Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin-By World, curriculum by Phil DeVol, co-author of Bridges Out of Poverty, Strategies for Professionals and Communities. Several summit members will participate in the "Bridges Out of Poverty" training being made available by a neighboring county.
3. Life-skills classes in schools to address healthy decision-making.
4. Partner with community organizations, initiatives, and/or individuals whose efforts will strengthen Wyandot County's capacity to plan and implement strategies that build protective factors and strengthen families.
5. Implement a peer-mentoring strategy at Upper Sandusky High School where upper classmates mentor in-coming freshmen. We will also involve faith-based to assist with other school-community partnerships & initiatives.

BEYOND FUNDING, WHAT ACTION DOES THE COUNTY NEED FROM THE STATE TO HELP THE COUNTY ACHIEVE ITS ACTION PLAN? *

1. Provide us the flexibility needed in future funding to leverage resources effectively.
2. Do not permit unfunded mandates to be placed upon local governments & agencies.
3. Permit more flexibility for existing funding where restrictions are currently tying the hands of organizations/agencies.
4. Loosening of current mandates that are not necessary or that are not relevant, consistent, or appropriate for our county's identified needs.
5. Streamline case-loads in order for decisions to be made to positively impact kids, and enable us to serve them better.
6. Work cross-systematically w/ Ohio Family & Children First Cabinet Council.

* Please note: It is frustrating that funding is not provided on a continual or consistent basis. Programs/initiatives get started, funding ceases, and effective programs eventually become extinct. Every two years, the state changes its priorities, re-allocates funding into the "hot-button" issue of the day, and ignores its own directive to counties to determine their priorities and strategically plan. The tendency to pigeon-hole issues, or make one-size fit all does not work. Each county has a culture and issues that need to be addressed through bottom-up informed planning and adequately funded implementation and evaluation. Families need services over time, and the constant disruption and discontinuation of services is harmful for families and exacerbates the mistrust families and communities have of government entities & programs.