

RBA Pilot Project: DCF Family Preservation and Supports Programs

Staff Final Report: January 12, 2010

Program Review & Investigations Committee

Project Background

- PA 09-166 Requires:
 - PRI pilot study of selected human service programs based on RBA principles
 - Evaluation of RBA pilot project and recommendations for future work
 - Final report due January 15, 2010
- Results-Based Accountability
 - Appropriations Committee using RBA approach for budgeting process since 2005

Pilot Project Topic

- Family Preservation and Supports (FPS)
 - DCF “front-end” programs – prevent or reduce time in out-of-home placement
- Department of Children and Families
 - Mission: Protect children and improve well-being of at risk children and families
 - \$914 million budget; 3,600 staff
 - Child welfare caseload: 17,525 cases
 - More background information in Appendix G

Today's Presentation

- Brief Recap RBA Concepts
- RBA Report Cards on:
 - Progress Achieving Desired Results for Connecticut Children
 - Child Welfare System Performance
 - Family Preservation and Supports Program Area Performance
 - Program Performance - 5 FPS Programs
- Pilot Project Evaluation

RBA Principles: Basic Concepts

- Data-driven planning, budgeting, management process to improve:
 - Quality of life in a community
 - Performance of programs, agencies, systems
- Focus on end results (outcomes)
- Use data to measure progress and identify corrective actions; make agenda to develop missing information

RBA Principles: Levels of Responsibility

- Population Accountability
 - Well-being conditions of whole population
 - Success depends on broad partnerships
 - Indicators (quality of life results)
- Performance Accountability
 - Well-being of clients
 - Program managers responsible for improvement
 - Measures (client results)

RBA Principles: Indicators & Measures

- Baseline data
 - History and forecast – trends
- Story behind the data
- Turn the curve (improve trend line)

RBA Principles: Taking Action

- What will happen if we don't do something different?
- What would it take to achieve success? How do we do better?
- What actions – including low-cost/no-cost ideas – will make a difference (turn the curve)?

RBA Framework: Components

Population Level:

- Desired population results (statement)
- Indicators of progress (3-5)
- Strategies to achieve
- All partners with a significant role

Program Level:

- Programs that contribute to results statement
- Measures of performance (client level)
 - *How much*
 - *How well*
 - *Anyone better off*

Final Report Contents

- **RBA Framework**: Context for evaluation of FPS
- **Report Cards**: Brief progress summaries for each level of accountability with recommendations for improvements
 - ***Population*** (all children)
 - ***System*** (all child welfare clients)
 - ***Program Area*** (all FPS clients)
 - ***5 Individual Programs*** (clients they serve)

Final Report Contents (cont.)

- **Data Development & Research Agenda**: Combined, all levels
- **Program Performance Profiles**: Supplementary details on project's focus programs (Appendix F)
- **Project Evaluation**: How the RBA approach worked for PRI and recommendations for the future

RBA Framework: PRI Project

Population Accountability (p. 5)

Quality of Life Results Statement

"Connecticut children grow up safe, healthy, and ready to lead successful lives."

Results Statement Population Indicators

Overall Indicator
Well-Being:
CT Social Health Index

Indicator 1
Safe:
Child Abuse Rate

Indicator 2
Healthy:
Low Birth Weight Rate

Indicator 3
Future Success:
Child Poverty Rate

Indicator 4
Future Success:
3rd Grade Reading Proficiency Rate

Major Strategies and State Government Partners Contributing to Results Statement

Strategy 1
Protect from abuse, neglect (A/N), & crime

CGA + State Agencies:
DCF, Judicial Branch, DPS, OCA, CoC, CTF

Strategy 2
Promote physical & behavioral health

CGA + State Agencies: DCF, DHMAS, DPH, ECEC, CoC, CTF

Strategy 3
Preserve & strengthen families

CGA + State Agencies: DCF, DECD, DOL, DSS, CoC, CTF, Judicial Branch

Strategy 4
Provide for adequate education & positive development

CGA + State Agencies: DCF, SDE, DDS, DSS, ECEC, CoC

Non-Governmental Partners

Caretakers & relatives
Child advocacy organizations
Community members & organizations

Healthcare professionals & providers
Private child & family services providers
Schools & child care providers

Population Level Accountability Report Card (p. 9 & App. C)

| <u>Area</u> | <u>Indicator</u> | <u>Progress</u> |
|--------------------|--|-----------------|
| Safe | Free from substantiated abuse/neglect | + |
| Healthy | Healthy birth weight | - |
| Future Success | Proficient at reading in 3 rd grade | ↔ |
| | Free from poverty | - |
| Overall Well-Being | CT Social Health Index (SHI) | + |

Population Level Accountability Report Card

- Improvement in some areas; stagnation or deterioration in others
 - Ethnic/racial minority children are worse off
- What's being done
 - Many efforts by various state partners to improve children's safety and health, increase educational achievement, reduce poverty

Population Level Accountability Report Card

- **PRI Staff Recommends:**
 - **Children's committee should maintain a child well-being report card; work to improve and expand indicators (#1 & 3)**
 - **Legislature should mandate OPM-led initiative to share and integrate client-level data on child well-being across agencies and systems, building on existing initiatives (#2)**

System Level Accountability

Report Card (p. 11 & App. D)

- Child Welfare System – safety & stability of at-risk children through FPS and other strategies

| <u><i>Key Performance Measures</i></u> | <u><i>Progress</i></u> |
|--|------------------------|
| Free from repeat maltreatment | + |
| Remain with families | + |
| Do not die from abuse/neglect | +? |

- DCF *with* other state agencies and community partners responsible for performance

System Level Accountability Report Card

- Overall: Positive trends but data issues
- What's being done
 - Within DCF
 - Expanded DCF services including more Flex Funds, community-based, in-home behavioral health programs
 - Better adherence to risk assessment tool (SDM)
 - Several cross-agency safety initiatives

System Level Accountability Report Card

- **PRI Staff Recommends:**
 - **DCF should use SDM information to better understand trends in risks and unmet needs (#1)**
 - **Improve system level data (#2) by:**
 - Children's committee develop better measure of repeat maltreatment (longer timeframe, more aspects)
 - DCF further develop out-of-home placement measure
 - DCF with Child Advocate broaden review and reporting of child fatalities

RBA Framework: PRI Project

Program Accountability (p. 5)

“Connecticut children grow up safe, healthy, and ready to lead successful lives.”

DCF’s Contribution to Results Statement: Main Roles and Related Agency Programs

Keep Children Safe

Work with partners to prevent maltreatment of any child
When necessary, provide quality out-of-home care for DCF-involved children

- DCF Prevention Services
- Hotline (central A/N report intake)
- Out-of-Home Care
 - Foster Care
 - Congregate Care
- Adoption

Meet Health Needs

Implement integrated, comprehensive, behavioral health care system for all children
Ensure children in DCF care receive all necessary health services

- DCF Behavioral Health Services
 - KidCare System (BHP)
 - Riverview Hospital
- DCF Medicine

Help Achieve Stability

Maintain children safely in family when possible;
Strengthen capacity of DCF-involved families to meet child’s needs through effective casework practice and quality services

- **Family Preservation and Support**
 - Intensive In-home Services/Casework
 - Flexible Funding
- Differential Response

Support Development

Work with partners to ensure children in DCF care and custody receive appropriate services to meet educational and developmental needs

- DCF Education
- Juvenile Services (for delinquents)
 - CJTS & Parole
- Adolescent Services
 - Transition to Adulthood

Key FPS Program Performance Measures:

- Repeat Maltreatment Rate
- Out-of-Home Placement Rate
- Improved Family Functioning

Program Area Accountability: Overview of Program Area

Family Preservation & Supports (FPS)

- Goal: Keep families together – both preserve and reunify
- 20 categorical programs
 - 10 primarily for families with confirmed or potential maltreatment
 - 10 primarily for children with behavioral health issues
- Plus Flexible Funding (individualized services)

Program Area Accountability: Overview of Program Area

- Three DCF bureaus oversee
- Programs operated by contracted providers
 - Families referred to services and managed by the 14 DCF area offices

Program Area Level Accountability Report Card (p. 13 & App. E)

- How DCF's Family Preservation and Supports programs are performing

| <u>Performance Measure</u> | <u>Progress</u> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Children are safe | Agency level: + |
| Children remain in or return home | Agency level: + |
| Improve well-being | Unknown |
| Programs are cost-effective | Cannot determine |

Program Area Level Accountability Report Card

- Overall
 - Data are not consistently available, either by program or for program area, on outcome or process measures
 - DCF has not considered FPS programs as a program area, despite the shared goal

Program Area Level Accountability Report Card

- Overall (continued)
 - Child Welfare bureau (primarily child protection) FPS programs overall do not meet best practice standards

Program Area Level Accountability Report Card: Turning the Curve

- What's being done: DCF has –
 - Improved behavioral health FPS programs
 - Made some diffuse efforts to improve various child welfare FPS programs
 - Focused on improving internal social work practice in response to *Juan F.* consent decree

Program Area Level Accountability Report Card: Turning the Curve

- **PRI Staff Recommends: DCF should –**
 - **Develop and give to all social workers a brief guide that outlines services appropriate for the different types of clients (#1)**
 - **Develop a plan on how the child welfare FPS programs will move to evidence-based models and how the agency will ensure adequate management of those programs (#2)**
 - **Include a needs assessment and identification of evidence-based models**
 - **Due January 15, 2012**

Program Area Level Accountability Report Card: Turning the Curve

- **PRI Staff Recommends: DCF should –**
 - **Designate an office within the Bureau of Quality Improvement to conduct periodic assessments of longitudinal client outcome data by program, within available resources (#3)**
 - **Direct more attention to compiling accurate data on the full costs of providing FPS services to its clients (#4)**

Program Level Accountability

- Focused on 4 categorical programs
 - IFP
 - Parent Aide
 - Supportive Housing for Families
 - IICAPS
- Plus agency wide resource – Flexible Funding

FPS Focus Programs: Overview

| <u>Program</u> | <u>Target Population</u> | <u>Out-of-Home Placement Risk</u> |
|--|--|---|
| Intensive Family Preservation (IFP) | Families w/ A/N case | Moderate-high |
| Parent Aide | Families w/ A/N case | Low-moderate |
| Supportive Housing for Families | Families w/ A/N case | Moderate-high (housing is a main problem) |
| Intensive In-Home Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics (IICAPS) | Children w/ serious psychiatric problems | High (hospitalization or residential treatment) |
| Flexible Funding | All types of DCF clients | Varies – serves range (including those in out-of-home care) |

Program Level Accountability

(p. 19 & App. F)

- **Report cards** summarize evaluation of each focus program
- Give snapshot of the data used to answer each RBA question
 - I. How *much* are we doing? (\$, # clients)
 - II. How *well* are we doing it? (completion rate, meeting demand, satisfaction, program standards)
 - III. Is anyone *better off*? (child & family welfare, cost-effectiveness)

Program Level Accountability

- **Report cards** also give:
 - Story Behind Program Performance
 - Actions to Turn the Curve
 - Current DCF improvement efforts
 - PRI staff recommendations

Program Level Accountability

- Next: Brief overview of findings and recommendations, for each focus program

Program Level Accountability: IFP Report Card (p. 19-20)

- One of two core child welfare programs (other is Parent Aide)
- In-home services for families at high risk of child removal
 - Mitigation of safety problems, links to community services, parenting education, crisis intervention

Program Level Accountability: IFP Report Card

- Key findings
 - No active DCF program manager
 - Ability to quickly meet demand varies
 - Some client-level data collected but not consistently used
 - *Is anyone better off?* data (i.e., outcomes) are not collected

Program Level Accountability: IFP Report Card

- **PRI Staff Recommends:**
 - **Active program management (#1), improve data (#2), examine demand and shift capacity as needed (#4), examine costs (#3), and take a few specific steps to improve services (#5 & 6)**
 - **Program area child welfare FPS plan: Move toward evidence-based model**
 - **Plus 2 data development/research agenda items: add critical information to client database and let providers correct data**

Program Level Accountability: Parent Aide Report Card (p. 21-23)

- The other core child welfare program
- In-home services for families at low to medium risk of child removal
 - Parent education and skill-building, assistance with basic needs, links to community services
- Being re-tooled to focus services on meeting families' needs

Program Level Accountability: Parent Aide Report Card

- Key findings
 - Much data are collected, but few pieces are retained
 - And the information kept might not be accurate

Program Level Accountability: Parent Aide Report Card

- **PRI Staff Recommends:**
 - **Change data collection immediately (#1)**
 - **Otherwise, same as for IFP: program management, data, service improvements (#2-6)**
 - **Plus 3 other data development/research agenda items: add critical information to client database, let providers correct data, and adjust the new program's forms**

Program Level Accountability: SHF Report Card (p. 25-26)

- Provides case management and assistance in finding and affording new safe, permanent housing for child welfare families
- Relies on DSS Section 8 and RAP to move clients into new housing
- Without available DSS assistance, cannot take in more clients absent substantially more funding
- Given 66% increase in funding for FYs 10-11

Program Level Accountability: SHF Report Card

- Key findings
 - Active DCF management
 - Much data is collected and examined
 - DCF area offices are satisfied, except program cannot meet demand quickly
 - Might not be possible

Program Level Accountability: SHF Report Card

- **PRI Staff Recommends:**
 - **Fine tuning to improve performance and data (#1-4)**
 - **Including 4 data development/research agenda items: adjust client databases (provider and DCF) for to better understand outcomes, analyze data to better understand services, and consider how to measure family functioning**

Program Level Accountability: IICAPS Report Card (p. 27-29)

- Provides in-home family-focused behavioral health services to children with severe emotional disturbances
- Goals: Prevent or reduce length of institutionalized care, reduce problem severity, improve functioning

Program Level Accountability: IICAPS Report Card

- Key Findings
 - Expanded capacity, with effective interagency partnerships, but still wait lists
 - Strong accountability
 - Good progress on process and outcome measures
 - Variation across providers needs more examination
 - Positive behavioral health results, but longitudinal data and child welfare outcomes lacking
 - Likely cost-effective but research needed

Program Level Accountability: IICAPS Report Card

- **PRI Staff Recommends:**
 - To strengthen oversight (#1-2)
 - **Seek area office feedback on provider quality**
 - **Calculate and track total case costs**
 - To further expand access (#3-4)
 - **Assist in increasing supply of trained teams**
 - **Consider requiring some routine services on weekends**
 - Plus 4 data development and research items

Program Level Accountability: Flexible Funding Report Card (p. 31-32)

- DCF social workers use for timely, individualized services and goods when other resources not available
- Goal: Prevent or delay out-of-home care and facilitate reunification or placement stability

Program Level Accountability: Flexible Funding Report Card

- Key findings
 - Greatly expanded resources in response to Court Monitor recommendation, national research
 - Accountability decentralized; accounting cumbersome
 - New credentialing process addressing quality, consistency for some high cost services
 - Anecdotal evidence from workers, two Court Monitor studies indicate important factor in reduced removal rates, meeting family needs
 - Outcome research challenging due to data quality issues, complex methods required

Program Level Accountability: Flexible Funding Report Card

- **PRI Staff Recommends:**
 - **Streamline accounting (#1), standardize administrative procedures (#2), develop more guidelines and expanded inventory of alternative resources (#2,4)**
 - **Revise area office allocation method (#3), establish interagency workgroup to promote shared responsibility for clients with multiple needs (#5)**
 - **Request another Court Monitor review of flex fund use (# 6)**
 - **Plus 2 data development/research agenda items: conduct annual needs assessment and develop plan for scientific evaluation study**

Pilot Project Evaluation

(p. 37-42)

- Assess RBA as evaluation and oversight tool
 - Integrate PRI and Appropriations work
 - Alternative to sunset review
- PRI staff found promising process
- Too soon to tell if pilot project work useful to legislative process

Pilot Project Evaluation

- Challenges and lessons learned
 - Good quality program performance and client outcome data lacking
 - Inadequate automated systems; minimal analytic capacity
 - Little cost information available
 - No comprehensive long-term plan; formal policy statements rare
 - Commitment from management to use results data crucial to RBA success

Pilot Project Evaluation

- **PRI Staff Recommends:**
 - **Continue PRI pilot, select new topic with Appropriations by Feb. 15, 2010 (#1-2)**
 - **Request nonpartisan staff offices help committees use current pilot work (#3)**
 - **Repeal sunset law (#4)**
 - **DCF take steps to continue RBA approach to FPS program area (#5-7)**

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