

Otter Tail Family Services Collaborative

2010 Biennial Plan

What are the needs in Otter Tail County?

- i) Current data specifically shows concerns in the following areas:
 - a) **Economic environment** concerns include increased: food shelf usage; free and reduced lunch usage; WIC usage; the average cost of child care; and percentage of children living in poverty.
 - b) **Social environment** concerns include: *number of children re-entering foster care system within 12 months of initial placement**; *number of children abused/neglected**; *number of children born to teen/unwed mothers**; and *number of juvenile out-of-home placements**.
 - c) **Health related** concerns include: percentage of children obese/overweight; *number of children in placement that received a mental health screening**; *children born to mothers that received late or no prenatal care**; *increase in children with autism or other health impairments**

***Note: These indicators reflect small actual numbers of children/families directly affected.**

- ii) **Partner assessment** – A survey of our partners in late 2009 indicated the following:
 - a) Top challenges facing our partners:
 - 1) Finances & budget cuts
 - 2) Short staffed – same services, less staff
 - 3) Lack of resources available for needed services
 - 4) Intake and reporting requirements are too demanding.
 - b) Partners identified the following challenges which are affecting the families they serve:
 - 1) Poverty and borderline poverty
 - 2) Unemployment and underemployment – loss of hours
 - 3) Family structure – divorce, single parents, extreme stress
 - c) Partners think that local agencies and services could do the following to address their needs and the needs of families:
 - 1) Do a better job of connecting clients with appropriate services, resources and finances
 - 2) Offer support and advocacy
 - 3) Locate help where the need is, and not where the agency office is located
 - 4) Subsidize basic needs (food, housing, clothing, etc.)

Step 1: Identify specific strategies to address the needs of families outlined above.

Each Collaborative work group is asked to conduct activities during the next two fiscal years which will improve:

- Food/nutrition - identify specific strategies and tasks to improve intake systems to ensure those who qualify for food support programs are referred to available resources as part of their common intake processes
- Support – identify specific strategies and activities to be used within their programs which will help families identify and access programs, services and resources
- Education - create and promote educational opportunities for families and/or children which are specific to their agency and/or work group goals and objectives
- Family structure – identify specific strategies to enhance, support and develop the family structure when education, services and/or community opportunities are offered

Step 2: Establish and collect existing baseline data against which your group will be able to measure effectiveness of strategies PRIOR to implementing them.

Step 3: Implement identified strategies utilizing existing resources which are available.

Each Collaborative Work Group must identify strategies and activities which can be accomplished:

- a) Through Collaborative programs, services, activities and events; and/or if possible, b) through individual partner agency programs, services, activities and events.

Step 4: Reassess existing post-implementation data to assist in determining whether or not strategies implemented were effective in improving outcomes for children and families.