



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

MAURA D. CORRIGAN  
DIRECTOR

September 12, 2011

The Honorable Bruce Caswell, Chair  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on DHS  
Michigan State Senate  
Lansing, MI 48933

The Honorable David Agema, Chair  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on DHS  
Michigan House of Representatives  
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Senator Caswell and Representative Agema:

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is required to provide a report on Section 548 of P.A. 190 during budget hearings. The attached report, submitted as a part of Michigan's Annual Program and Services Review in 2011, represents the information submitted as required by this section of legislation.

Please contact Mary Mehren, DHS Federal Compliance Division Director, at 517-241-7521 if you have any questions about this information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Kangas".

Susan Kangas,  
Chief Financial Officer

CC: Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on DHS  
Senate and House Fiscal and Policy Offices  
State Budget Director

Attachment: Race Equity Report

## Race Equity Report

To address over-representation of children of color in the child welfare system, DHS is committed to maintaining children safely in their homes. However, when children must be removed, they should be placed in an environment that supports their physical, emotional and cultural needs.

In the 2006 Michigan Disproportionality Report about race issues, recommendations were issued to focus Michigan's efforts toward addressing this concern.

### Findings and Recommendations

#### **Review the impact of all policies, programs and procedures on families and children of color**

**Status:** DHS is creating a CPS centralized intake unit through a combination of staff and systems that will receive and manage all calls alleging child maltreatment. Intake staff will receive the same training and will be expected to make decisions consistently. The centralized intake unit will be implemented statewide by April 2012.

DHS is working to improve the placement process including placing siblings together in their neighborhoods to aid parental visits and maintain important relationships. Staff is encouraged to look at all viable relative placement and foster care options prior to placing children in residential settings.

DHS is ensuring that children in relative placement experience the same level of safety in placement and receive a full array of services and financial support when compared to children placed in foster homes. DHS implemented a guardianship assistance program and is focusing on licensing relative placements. The guardianship program is a permanency option for children who would otherwise remain in foster care, providing financial assistance to the individuals providing permanence for foster children who are in situations in which reunification and adoption are not viable options.

#### **Ensure culturally proficient practice**

**Status:** DHS is establishing a contract selection process that:

- Assesses agencies' willingness to serve a diverse population.
- Reports on outcomes by race.
- Develops innovative culturally appropriate services.

#### **Other DHS efforts to address disproportionality:**

**Wayne County:** In FY 2010, Wayne County DHS built culturally appropriate services for African American children and families in the child welfare system by collaborating with:

- Black Administrators in Child Welfare, Inc.
- Juvenile Division of the Third Judicial Circuit Court.
- Wayne County Department of Children and Family Services/Juvenile Justice Division.
- Black Family Development, Inc.

In December 2010, Wayne County DHS hosted a two-day visit with the Black Administrators in Child Welfare to identify themes among service providers and human service agencies serving African American dual wards that would guide future work.

That visit produced a set of proposed protocols for the primary service agencies. The group also clarified who the dual wards are within the county. Therefore, the group was aware that the service

population, while only around 100 cases, it still represents vulnerable young adults who could benefit from a joint framework for service delivery.

**St. Clair County:** DHS established a work group and identified these strategies to reduce the number of children of color:

- Develop a seamless system for dual ward children and youth through collaboration with child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, health and education systems.
- Reduce high-risk behaviors.
- Increase permanency.
- Increase positive youth development.

Collaboration was identified as a priority to reduce duplicate efforts and system inconsistencies and decrease staff confusion of policy, procedures, roles and responsibility.

**Ingham County:** DHS is working with community leaders to improve policies and practices that will assure all youth in Ingham County have successful outcomes in education, health, employment and economic development.

This initiative began because of the identified disparate treatment of African American males in Ingham County, but has evolved into a partnership with Community Mental Health in an effort focused on reducing overall numbers in foster care. The CMH Impact program provides intensive family preservation services to severely emotionally disabled children and their families; Ingham County DHS has successfully reduced the ongoing foster care caseload by 33% since 2008.

Ingham County also participates on an ongoing panel studying the medical needs of people of color. Another collaborative effort the county participates in is chaired by the Ingham County Commission and is studying health care needs of males in foster care.

#### **Engage families as partners**

**Status:** DHS continues to engage parents in decision-making processes. The implementation of MiTEAM, Michigan's engagement model, which stands for teaming, engaging, assessing and mentoring, will improve family engagement.

DHS hired permanency resource managers to ensure the permanency needs of children are addressed and to coordinate statewide planning.

DHS increased efforts to achieve timely reunification. Counties receive a bi-monthly report identifying the children who have been in foster care for 200 to 300 days with reunification as the permanency goal. The Permanency Resource Manager focuses on creating innovative strategies to find safe placements for children.

#### **Address families' basic needs and focus resources on the most vulnerable families**

**Status:** DHS has developed training to address poverty, attended by over 700 child welfare workers, to:

- Give better understanding of how poverty and neglect differ and help staff recognize the difference between determining a family's situation and needs.
- Explore the difference between generational and situational poverty and how people in each situation view the world.

- Provide helpful tools for determining the best services or resources to assist a family.

### **Building community support for reducing disproportionality**

**Status:** In collaboration with the State Court Administrative Office, DHS held a conference last October for child welfare professionals, judges, lawyers, CPS and foster care workers and educators to provide information and encourage discussion in a solution-focused manner that encouraged problem-solving while:

- Introducing participants to disproportionality and its history.
- Addressing racism and its effects on our society.
- Highlighting what is being done nationally through the courts and other Michigan stakeholders to measure and reduce disproportionality.
- Assessing the interest of participants to become involved locally with disproportionality reduction efforts.

After the conference, a committee began working to analyze data to guide decisions to address disproportionality and assist with the implementation process. A proposal was submitted to Casey Family Programs in May 2010 for grants and funding for training.

### **Monitor DHS' progress in reducing disproportionality**

**Status:** DHS and the State Court Administrative Office finalized a data sharing agreement for child welfare information to determine where disproportionality exists and to measure the effectiveness of interventions.

A committee of public and private child welfare professionals will analyze disproportionality data, policies, procedures and practices that will reduce the over-representation of children of color.

The State Court Administrative Office sought funding from Casey Family Programs to support this work and to initiate a pilot program in Saginaw County. Grant funds were received and a committee is being formed with DHS and national foundations to collect and analyze data that will help guide decisions. Training will be provided to both the state and Saginaw County. Each member will be trained in Casey Family Programs' "Knowing Who You Are" and the People's Institute "Undoing Racism" training.

### **Training and workforce development**

**Status:** The State Court Administrative Office, DHS and Michigan's tribes jointly planned and held five regional Indian Child Welfare Act trainings that required each county to identify a team of key stakeholders to serve as local experts on the Indian Child Welfare Act. These teams consisted of the following representatives:

- State court judge.
- Local DHS manager.
- Indian Outreach worker.
- Lawyer-guardian ad litem.
- Tribal representative(s) for counties having Tribal Social Services.

More than 2,000 workers have been trained in:

- Family Preservation - Self-Awareness: This training widens trainees' views of other cultures and increases their sensitivity and helps participants examine how their own cultural background influences their view of different cultures.
- Self-Awareness/Cultural Diversity: The training helps participants define diversity and understand the benefits to families. Participants explore their personal attitudes, hidden feelings and assumptions that affect interactions and learn how to address their biases while respecting families.
- Poverty in Child Welfare: This training gives trainees a better understanding of how poverty and neglect differ according to policy and how to recognize this when determining a family's situation and their needs. The training provides helpful tools to determine which services or resources best assist a family, and how to locate them.
- Indian Child Welfare Act: This training provides foster care, CPS and adoption specialists with an overview of the history, laws, policy and operational requirements of the act and provides resources that can help workers comply when working with American Indian families and children.
- Knowing Who You Are: This training explores racial and ethnic identity to help youth in foster care achieve a positive and healthy sense of racial and ethnic identity.
- Cultural Diversity: This training is offered to child welfare workers in urban counties to create an atmosphere of acknowledgement and acceptance while working with participants to define and examine the benefits of diversity.