

Casey Family Programs  
and  
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

## ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE PROJECT

Quarterly Progress Report  
July - September 2009

### Introduction

Ohio's April - June 2009 report to Casey Family Programs reported a sustained focus on maintenance and routinization. Activities were adjusted in response to the impact of the state's declining financial revenues on county budgets. These activities continue July through September, with a specific concentration on preparing for the October 2009 when the project evaluation no longer accepts new families into the study.

The report is organized into the following topical categories:

- ✚ *Project Progress*; a description of the **state's** progress with the overall project, including obstacles encountered during the quarter.
- ✚ *Activities and Results*: a snapshot of the **ten sites'** activities during the quarter.
- ✚ *County Voices*: a general assessment of **ten sites'** successes and challenges during the quarter.
- ✚ *Lessons Learned*: nuggets of wisdom that **ten sites** have gained during the quarter.
- ✚ *Planned Activities*; a synopsis of the **state's and ten sites'** priorities for next quarter.

### Project Progress

*State partners* have focused on the following aspects of project operation:

- ✚ **Ensuring that alternative response is integrated into the state's overall priorities:** State staff have spent the past months:
  - *Integrating alternative response into Ohio's Program Improvement Plan for continued sustainability and commitment:* Alternative Response is one of the four key components of Ohio's proposed plan. Over these past months, state staff conferenced with federal Children's Bureau staff to ensure clear documentation between Ohio's alternative response work and the Child and Family Services Review goals of safety, permanence and well-being.
  - *Planning the expansion of Ohio's alternative response pilot sites:* Ohio's state fiscal year 2010 – 2011 budget bill includes statutory authorization for the existing ten sites to continue uninterrupted and for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to add to the number of pilot sites if so desired at the conclusion of the Project. The permission of

pilot expansion prior to statewide implementation is to avoid losing momentum during what is expected to be a significant and lengthy legislative process. These sites would operate under the Ohio Administrative Code internal management rules that currently govern the ten project sites, as well as the program model and practices that have been developed through Ohio's Alternative Response Leadership Council. Plans for statewide implementation would proceed concurrently (see Attachment 1).

ODJFS staff have initiated time and task planning for adding new pilot sites. Statutorily, this could not occur until 2010. It would be a voluntary process, which would include a capacity review and (possible competitive) selection process. The process will include a state symposium featuring the ten pilot sites. This will be used as a platform for counties to assess readiness and develop applications. Since the process of implementing alternative response within a new community requires a coordination of organizational and community resources, as well the development of new staff capacities, this is a substantive undertaking at both the state and local level. The state, however, is committed to this investment.

Ohio also is encouraged by the application of six counties to become research and demonstration sites under the federal Quality Improvement Center on Differential Response. We are very hopeful of the sites' favorable review. In addition to adding five new counties where alternative response is an option for families, the state would contribute to the growing body of knowledge in this approach of increasing national interest.

- *Addressing sites' SACWIS case management and tracking issues:* For the past several months, each of Ohio's ten alternative response sites has been planning its transition from a study site to a county where alternative response is one of the community's child protection options. In preparation, agencies began to conceptualize how alternative response should appear in terms of an agency response rather than a pilot program within the agency. This has involved examination of agency-wide staffing, structural organization, staff competencies, community responsiveness and resource capacities, as well as a reassessment of initial expansion plans in light of unanticipated budget cutbacks.

Although pilot status continues through December 31, 2009, no new families are assigned into the Institute of Applied Research's study after September 30th. This allows for the study to follow families over a period of time. For most caseworkers and administrators, the elimination of the randomization process was an eagerly awaited event. Counties looked forward to being able to control families' assignment to the alternative

response pathway and to more effectively predict and manage caseloads. However, the September 30th cessation of the randomization process also meant that, at a minimum, the number of cases assigned to the alternative response pathway would double on October 1, 2009 as cases assigned to the alternative response pathway no longer were divided between control and experimental groups. As counties prepared for this sudden surge in pathway demand and considered expanded implementation within the agency, the ability to track and record alternative response case information within the Statewide Automated Child Welfare System (SACWIS) became ever more critical to county administrators.

The prospect of doubling the number of cases for which information was not accessible through SACWIS also was of concern at the state level. SACWIS, Management Information System (MIS) and child welfare policy staff all saw the answer as clear: enhancements to SACWIS were needed and had to be completed by the time the randomizer was turned off. Although the solution seemed simple on paper, making these very complex changes in the database are never easy.

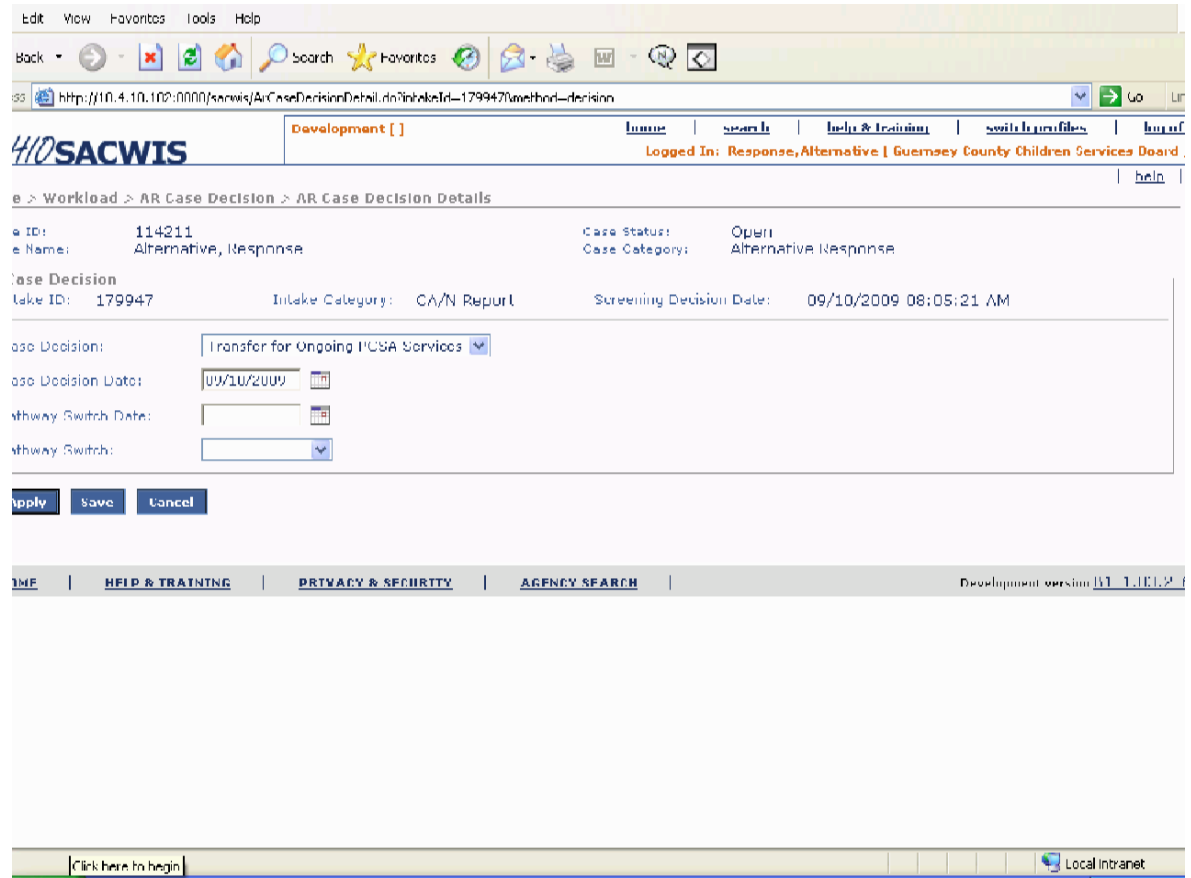
State and pilot discussions identified that change was needed to require SACWIS to allow for case data entry for alternative response cases, minimize the “paperwork “ burdens and have advance testing to assure that the functionality met the needs of the county users. Although it was recognized that this was just the beginning of alternative response in SACWIS, planners understood the significance of these enhancements: an important step in moving toward Ohio’s statewide implementation was in motion.

What initially appeared as a simple solution with minimal enhancement continued to complicate as state and county representatives dissected alternative response case management idiosyncrasies. The past months were spent establishing system requirements, code development and testing. This often required a compromise consensus between state and county. On October 1, 2009, in time to accommodate the cessation of the randomizer, the alternative response enhancements were “pushed” into production.

Under the new enhancements, counties now are able to screen in an intake referral as “Alternative Response.” This gives caseworkers and administrators the ability to track cases within the system and manage cases in SACWIS separate from the traditional Assessment or /Investigation or Ongoing pathway.

Another critical enhancement required that an entirely new SACWIS “page” be created. (See Below). This page is the place in SACWIS to

record the case decision and allow users to record a track change from the alternative response pathway to the traditional pathway - Assessment/Investigation or Ongoing-- when case circumstances indicate that alternative response no longer is the appropriate approach.



Initial feedback from the pilot community is positive. More AR improvements and enhanced development will be needed down the road and that is acknowledged by all. Full enhancement of the SACWIS system to accommodate Ohio's alternative response practice will not be initiated until a final practice model and legislative language is enacted. This is a matter of timing only. It remains the state's conviction that alternative response --like all child welfare programming-- must be fully functional within SACWIS when considering statewide implementation. There is state-level commitment to full integration of alternative response within the SACWIS system.



**Ensuring access to skill development and technical assistance that is responsive to worker requests:** The Leadership Council continues to examine instruction currently available through the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program in light of sites' experience regarding the skills, competencies and philosophic approach most conducive to effective implementation of an alternative response system. Currently, gaps or skill enhancement that sites are

requesting are provided through the AIM Team or sources made available through Casey Family Programs. Recommendations for ongoing training enhancements or revisions will be included in the Final Report. Current focus is on the development of a practice model and establishing self-assessment practices to monitor fidelity.

The AIM Team maintains ongoing contact with the county sites to ensure that practice issues are identified and addressed quickly. Effort is made to solicit input from a range of management and line workers since perspective and issues may differ. Processes also have been established to ensure that training and technical assistance needs can be identified --by site, AIM Team or State request-- and met in a timely manner. Each site has been assigned an AIM Team member as an ongoing contact and there is a scheduled calendar of ongoing interactions and activities that include:

- Worker and Supervisor Conference Calls
- In-Person Meetings with Workers and Supervisors
- Technical Assistance Check-In
- Training Opportunities
- Coaching
- Chronicling
- Leadership Council



**Building state-level support and understanding of alternative response:** State and county staff continue to work with stakeholder associations and agencies to ensure full understanding of the direction of the Project, as well as the potential impact it may have upon the roles, responsibilities and services of partner agencies. During this time period, state and county representatives participated in a number of county, state and national presentations regarding Ohio alternative response project. Ohio counties will be featured in several workshops at the National Conference on Differential Response in November 2009.

Additionally, project staff disburse regular written update on project activities to a wide range of stakeholders. The Alternative Response Quarterly is dedicated to state and site activities; the Ohio Children, Families and the Courts: Ohio Bulletin has a dedicated alternative response column; and, this report to Casey Family Programs has wide distribution.

Alternative response appears to be becoming a regular consideration within planning and long-range policy sessions. Looking ahead to how alternative response may fit within the future state landscape is critical step towards state-wide implementation.



**Identifying the elements that are critical to success, as well as future needs for funding and services:** Even as Ohio looks towards the Project findings in

the Final Report, there are elements that easily are distinguishable now as improving practice or as requiring attention throughout the process. For example:

- Fidelity to the model is of particular importance as the state moves forward to expanded implementation. Additionally, as the number of families that receive an alternative approach grows, the state must develop tools to fold alternative response into the Child Protection and Oversight Evaluation (monitoring) process. The Leadership Council currently is working with the AIM Team to develop self-assessment tools to assess model fidelity. The foundation to this work is the development of a practice model that establishes the basic elements and values that all agency programs hold in common. The Leadership Council is reconvening in December 2009 to finalize these two items.
- Sites have increasingly reported the importance of community and agency preparedness for alternative response. The state will be working with project sites to develop tools for interested sites to self-assess levels of readiness. These instruments also can establish priorities for areas of attention in planning. These will be developed to accompany any application process for program expansion.
- The state still is awaiting response to its application to the Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center. The proposal was recommended to the federal Children's Bureau for funding. This will bring important resources to the state and help establish a hospitable environment for the state's philosophical shift.

 **Initiating work on a collaborative community approach to addressing Intimate Partner Violence within the Alternative Response framework:**

During this period, the state focused on developing a community collaboration plan and the regional Ohio Collaborative stakeholder meetings. The state has:

- Developed a project timeline
- Developed draft project objectives for refinement by planning group
- Utilized the Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) to develop a survey tool to assess community capacity and facilitated the dissemination of the survey
- Engaged in ongoing communications with ODVN in relation to the survey and other selected project deliverables
- Communicated with AR counties in relation to the project, the survey, and their interest in participating as pilot sites
- Set conference calls and call agendas for interested counties
- Developed an interest list for planning group and project sites
- Engaged with Regional Child Welfare Training Program Centers to educate on the project and solicit support and participation

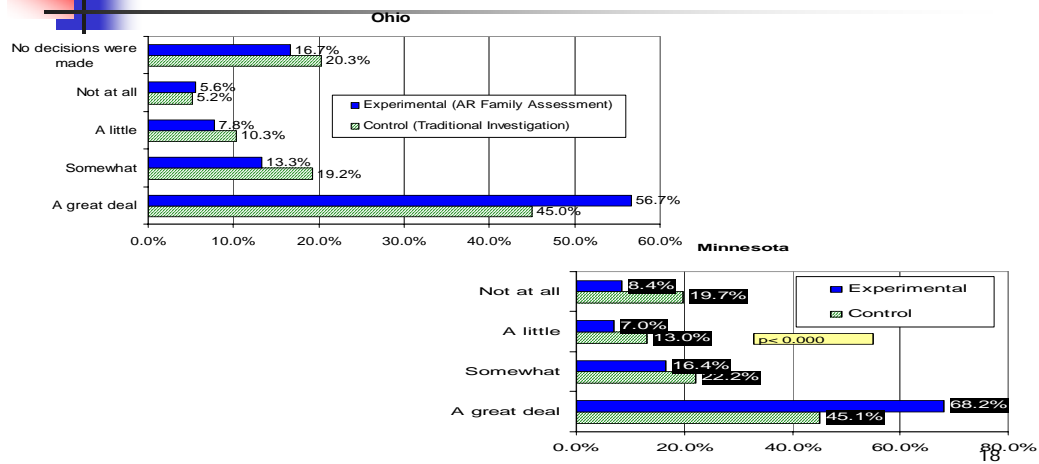
- Held several contractor personnel planning and implementation meetings
- Engaged with potential vendor Dave Mandel for provision of community plan services
- Began development of list of national/local resources
- Planned project website component
- Arranged for the first regional stakeholder informational meeting to be held as part of the ODVN Prevention in Progress Summit, October 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, which will incorporate technology, interactive teaching, forums, and local data to engage and empower Ohio communities and social service organizations for greater impact.
- Planned agenda and materials for first stakeholder meeting.
- Planned timeframes for subsequent stakeholder meetings.



**Monitoring Progress and Outcomes:** The fifth phase of Ohio's Project, *Project Evaluation*, runs concurrently with, but independently of, the *Project Implementation and Support* phase. The evaluation is being conducted by the Institute of Applied Research (IAR). IAR is part of the AIM Team selected by Ohio to assist with the design, implementation and evaluation of AR, but it is conducting the evaluation separately from those assisting with design and implementation. A September 2009 IAR presentation that provides background regarding evaluation activities and time frames as well as a very preliminary look at selected data is attached. When reviewing this document, please note that caution should be taken in extrapolating conclusions at this point.

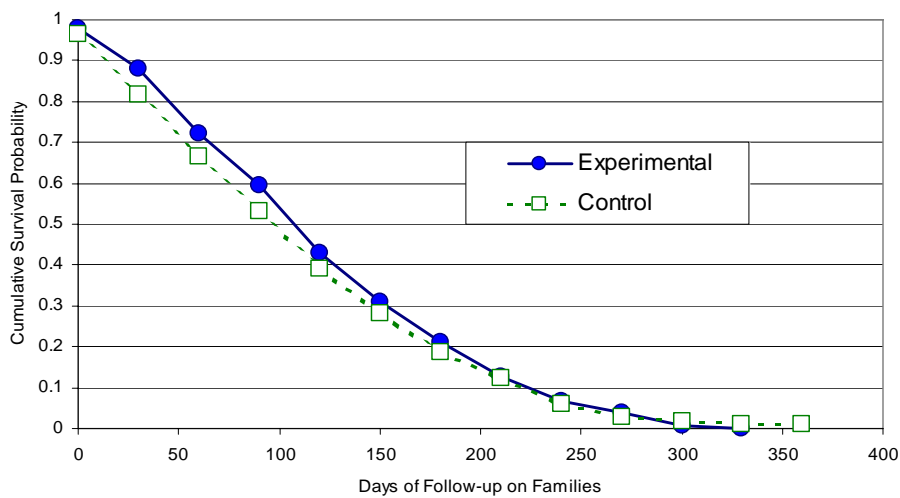
Earlier Ohio reports have noted that Ohio data appear to be following data trends experienced in Missouri and Minnesota studies. Since these states both have long-term realized the reductions in placement and reports that Ohio seeks, this is very promising. Ohio's very early data almost exactly mirror the data at the same point in Minnesota's study. An example is shown below with Ohio findings shown in the top graph and Minnesota's on the bottom.

## Family Reports: Involvement in Decision Making



Significant findings in outcome measurements are hampered by the shortness of Ohio's study. Minnesota only was beginning to see families' outcomes separate at the 18 month point, with real separation occurring in later years. Still, Ohio begins to see early and promising trends, such as the table below which shows beginning separation in new reports to the child protection agency:

## Life Table: New Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect



Early findings are more comprehensively discussed in Attachment 2, a Research Brief dated September 2009.

- ✚ **Continuing project oversight and accountability:** Efforts continue to ensure that Ohio's project operates with an eye to model fidelity and in compliance with established state policies and procedures. At all points in the project, child safety remains paramount.

### Activities and Results

All [ten sites](#) continued to offer an alternative response to accepted reports of child maltreatment. In addition to the administrative and management functions that accompany a child protection program, counties addressed a wide range of issues to integrate new practices into overall agency structure and community network. The variety of counties' focus is reflective of the diversity of counties and the flexibility of design that is required in a state-supervised county-administered system. County-specific data can be located in the attached "County Snapshots."

[Clark County](#) focused on:

- ✚ **Developing the county's Transition Plan.**
- ✚ **Ensuring agency-wide model awareness:** The agency will be utilizing the AIM team to train non-AR intake workers and currently is confirming logistics.
- ✚ **Developing caseworker skills:** All alternative response staff participated in two days of coaching provided by Russell Rowenhorst from Minnesota
- ✚ **Educating the community:** All speaking engagements and child abuse and neglect training sessions in the community include information about the alternative response project in Clark County
- ✚ **Utilizing supervisors in quality assurance, model fidelity and skill development:** Supervision continues to emphasize use of engagement strategies
- ✚ **Developing a team:** Participation in conference calls and in-person worker and supervisor meetings continue to reinforce that staff are working as part of a state team that is helping to establish the direction for the state.

[Fairfield County](#) focused on:

- ✚ **Continuing to partner with Fairfield County Department of Job & Family Services - Community Services Department:** The AR initiative continues to partner with FCJFS - Community Services Department in their designation of a staff member to serve as a Resource Specialist. As a result of significant state budget cuts, our agency experienced a restructuring process. This has resulted in the Resource Specialist no longer being able to accompany a member of the AR team on initial home visits to timely finalize eligibility of benefits and assist with strengths and needs inventory with the families. This Resource Specialist is still working with the AR team and AR families although in a different capacity.
- ✚ **Incorporating a Financial Stability Specialist who provides direct services to alternative response families:** Provided through collaboration with the United Way of Fairfield County and Community Services, this Financial Stability

Specialist works with families one-on-one with budgeting issues and identifying resources to address more difficult financial situations. Her services are being shared with all departments within the agency at this time.

✚ **Maintaining the partnership with a local mental health organization for early childhood/adult mental health and behavioral assessments:** This endeavor has eliminated families from a “wait list” for assessment purposes and secured mental health services for 57 individuals to date. Additionally, this piece of alternative response partnership has allowed our child welfare agency to identify the service modality that best suits the family’s needs.

✚ **Integrating group decision-making into regular practice:** The framework utilized in Olmstead County has been integrated into clinical supervision and screening decisions as established practice. This has proven to be an effective way to assure safety of children and provide services to families that are open, honest, and family-driven. This concept has now been incorporated into other service delivery units within our Child Protective Services Agency. Formal framework, policy and procedure has been established and has been overwhelmingly been welcomed by staff and managers.

✚ **Educating the community to promote alternative response and overall safety of children:** Community education continues to be a key construct to promoting AR as well as overall recent cuts in state financial resources have forced the agency to significantly modify outreach activities. The alternative response team continues to take advantage of every opportunity to present to groups and other organizations. Formal presentations have been provided to the local Bar Association and educators within county schools.

✚ **Participating in the teleconferences specific to Domestic Violence:** The Casey Family Program support of an initiative specific to intimate partner violence will advance our aspiration to develop a comprehensive service system to more effectively address the increasing number of domestic violence reports. Although the application to the Avon Foundation previously described was not a successful endeavor, the information gathered through the joint process with the local shelter has proven to be invaluable for service gap identification, which is an initial step in the initiative.

✚ **Expanding services:** Help Me Grow and the alternative response team developed recommendations to assure successful linkage with services. Initial meetings have taken place to modify existing practices to promote more effective collaboration on behalf of families referred to Help Me Grow. Look for more to come on this growing partnership.

✚ **Meeting families’ housing needs:** A significant accomplishment for our agency was receiving recognition in partnership with local housing authority for Family Unification Program vouchers. As in our partner sites, housing is a major challenge to families receiving services through AR.

*Franklin County* focused on:

✚ **Ensuring that alternative response is internally integrated within the agency’s composite child protection programming:** Monthly internal group meetings with two Intake and two Ongoing AR units continues to be

successful. In addition to ensuring a “team” bridge between the units’ functioning, these meetings are used to share information, discuss common issues and AR workflow, and enact a teamed decision-making regarding critical decision points. In anticipation of the agency expansion of AR programming, we have opened these meetings to include traditional service teams . Several traditional response units have taken advantage of this opportunity to watch and participate in staffing of AR cases.

+ **Developing a post-pilot transition plan:** We anticipate the expansion of AR within the next

+ **Developing staff competencies:** Franklin County Children Services just completed American Humane coaching with Russ Rowenthal. Supervisors and caseworkers found this extremely beneficial. We would like to have Russ return at some point in 2010.

+ **Assisting state-level expansion efforts:** Franklin County Children Services agreed to act as the Leadership Council representative in the development and testing of AR in SACWIS. The agency simultaneously developed its own internal procedures for going "live" with AR.

+ **Serving as a leader in Ohio’s alternative response work:** Franklin County Children Services developed an AR presentation at the PCSAO (Public Children Services Association of Ohio) conference in September. The agency also had two presentations approved for the National Differential Response Conference in Pittsburgh. Both Administration and line supervisors will be involved in the presentations.

*Greene County* focused on:

+ **Maintaining service delivery standard currently in practice:** This activity was to note that the agency has a commitment to provide Alternative Response services and short term services to families using a one worker model. During this past quarter, one of the Alternative Response staff accepted another position at the agency. This has meant that the number of families served through Alternative Response in the quarter has decreased.

+ **Planning for transition from randomizer and expansion of unit:** Several meetings with the Alternative Response staff occurred to develop a transition plan for handling cases once the pilot ended. As a result, the agency decided to expand the number of workers accepting Alternative Response cases. Based on a review of cases that could potentially go the Alternative Response pathway, the agency determined that a continuation of the randomization of cases, calibrated to 50/50, will be necessary. This was determined to be the only way staff felt they could ethically provide services to eligible participants.

+ **Training new Alternative Response staff and all on-going staff:** This activity is in process. Discussion has occurred with new Alternative Response staff regarding agency procedures for implementation. Coaching for Alternative Response staff has been arranged through American Humane. The agency is in process of arranging family centered training for all casework staff.

+ **Communicating Alternative Response successes with community providers and public at large:** Currently there is a news article posted on

the agency website and an article will be in the agency's next edition of its newsletter regarding the success of Alternative Response in Greene County. The Executive Director has given an Alternative Response update at the county's Family and Children's First Council Steering Committee and has planned a presentation for the next full Council. On October 9, the Executive Director is presenting family centered, strength bases services to the regional meeting for Parent Advocates. An Alternative Response Advisory Committee meeting is planned for November.

✚ **Assessing the impact of local budget cuts on services to Alternative Response clients:** Greene County is still in process of determining the fall out from the state budget cuts. Parenting programs in the county have already suffered cuts. There is a critical mental health levy on the November ballot that will determine the future of adult and children's mental health services for the county. This will be a topic of discussion for the November Alternative Response Advisory Committee. There will likely be significant gaps in our safety net of services. The agency is fortunate to have had the money provided for hard services for its Alternative Response families. Over the last year, the agency has lost close to one million dollars in revenue.

✚ **Using information gained from the budget analysis to determine service gaps.**

*Guernsey County* focused on:

✚ **Developing a process and relationship for drug testing for service recipients:** Interest was locating testing at our local drug and alcohol (D/A) office instead of the hospital to save both financial resources and to create an opportunity for quicker engagement in services for those needing to become involved with D/A as a counseling and support process either during or post-agency involvement. We have found a greater number of our cases involve drugs of abuse and the denial that typically goes with these issues is greater than a typical child welfare case and is more on par with DV type cases. We do not wish to be in the business of "policing" drug testing, however have found that without some type of check and balance, the denial associated with drug addiction is such that in many cases, AR or TR there is a need for us to work with families to break the cycle of addiction. Research from the field suggests that testing is one vital link in this process.

✚ **Educating the community to promote alternative response and overall safety of children:** Recent cuts in state financial resources have forced the agency to significantly modify outreach activities. The alternative response team continues to take advantage of every opportunity to present to groups and other organizations. AR has been added to our prevention and abuse/neglect reporting training. In addition, we have strengthened our path toward prevention by incorporating an enhanced Shaken Baby initiative and a Daddy Boot Camp to involve fathers in their families from the beginning. While not undertaken with Casey funds, both of these projects are seen as a vital form of Alternative Response in our community. To get there before CA/N occurs is certainly better than waiting for it to happen. AR allows us yet another avenue into the

community where we can talk about other agency programming that may prevent a child from ever becoming a victim of CA/N and a family from being involved with our system from the start.

✚ **Integration of AR to All Staff:** We have been sending staff out to the field with AR staff to get a feel for the approach at the door. In general AR does not alter our overall response to families as we expect engagement as discussed in the AR project. The process does let our staff out of the “box of blame” which does free up possibilities in their work with families in a more cooperative nature. We will continue to work to integrate this into our practice and help staff who, out of necessity must take any type of case assigned. We are waiting until after SACWIS is engaged and random assignment is eliminated to complete this integration.

✚ **Preparing for the end of random assignment:** We continue to prepare systems for tracking and monitoring at the end of random assignment. The introduction of AR as a response pathway will change slightly when there is no study involvement as families will no longer have to be advised they are part of a research project and may be contacted at a later date etc. We are working on materials for this transition and deciding how to integrate AR into our client rights materials. This will likely not be fully completed until January 2010.

✚ **Educating the community:** We continue to utilize our CARE (Community Awareness, Relationship and Education) team which is made up of staff from across the agency to conduct community presentations about our agency, part of which is our participation in AR. This has brought some difficulty in the past with service providers thinking they can refer to AR. We see this as becoming less of an issue as families are tracked AR more frequently once randomization ends, but we are working on our mandated reporter letters to integrate assignment decisions of AR/TR and explain this process better. Though repetitive, we believe for a time, this will be necessary as well as beneficial.

*Licking County* focused on:

✚ **Developing a transition plan to prepare for end of randomization process.**

✚ **Educating the community:** Licking County has continued to meet with community groups, updating them as to our progress with Alternative Response. Community agencies have been extremely supportive of our participation in the pilot program and excited that we are offering a non-traditional approach with families in our county.

✚ **Engaging staff and developing skills:** Staff continue to participate in teleconferences for alternative social workers and supervisors. We are also continuing to participate in teleconferences for AR social workers, AR supervisors and AR technical assistance. We are thrilled to be able to have another coaching opportunity next year and plan to include at least two more TR workers who will be receiving AR cases as we work toward increasing the number and type of AR case. We are currently discussing the needs of our AR workers and program to design a meaningful coaching experience.

- ✚ **Finding creative solutions for families:** The funding allocated to each family via the service plan has allowed the agency to be creative in providing needed concrete services.

*Lucas County* focused on:

- ✚ **Integrating alternative response forms and process with ongoing processes:** The required CAPMIS documents continue to be completed as word documents on all cases and entered into the agency's legacy database. The agency also continues to manage the AR assignments and caseloads through an excel spreadsheet. The ability to work within SACWIS will alleviate this considerable time investment.
- ✚ **Implementing joint supervision:** Joint supervision continues to be held with staff on a monthly basis and supervisors review individual cases with their workers bi-monthly. New assignments are reviewed prior to initiation for an assessment plan.
- ✚ **Participating in project activities:** The Project Manager and the North District Supervisor from Lucas County attended the in-person meetings in July and September 2009.
- ✚ **Planning for transition.** The agency continues to develop a transition plan for agency response when the randomization of cases ceased. A group of 25+ agency staff are meeting regularly and a draft proposal has been developed. The agency began to feature articles in its twice-monthly agency newsletter on AR families and the agency transition plan.

*Ross County* focused on:

- ✚ **Planning for transition:** The agency has identified two additional workers who will begin to provide an alternative response to families as soon as they have been trained. We have revised our in-house forms to continue to collect data on AR Cases. The AR Team is scheduled to provide an overview of our pilot experience to the children's division on October 14<sup>th</sup> which will include outcomes of the pilot and information on our county AR Transition Plan. The supervisors and administrator for our division met and have scheduled weekly group supervision for AR Cases in an effort to have a team review process in place in preparation for an increase in caseloads as we provide an alternative response to more families.
- ✚ **Engaging families and community partners:** The AR Supervisory Team has begun to review our existing memorandums of understanding to see where we may be able to include any of our new partnerships that were formed during the AR Pilot.

*Tuscarawas County* focused on:

- ✚ **Communicating progress to the community:** Tuscarawas County continues its routine communication of AR progress to the community via our Foster Care Planning Committee quarterly meetings. AR has continued to be a solid factor in our success in reducing the number of child placements into the foster care system.

- ✚ **Planning for transition:** Our transition plan had been finalized when we learned of the budget cuts. Adjusting work practices to accommodate the staff changes has caused a delay in solidifying AR in our ongoing units. We shall resume our strategies this coming quarter to train more ongoing staff and more investigative staff in AR.
- ✚ **Experimenting with group supervision:** The agency continues to utilize group supervision that began after a coaching session provided by the AIM team. Adaptations have been made to meet the needs of the staff, such as allowing more of a collaborative approach rather than directive in soliciting feedback. Group supervision is not utilized on all AR cases, but is employed on a routine basis and with more challenging families.
- ✚ **Expanding the philosophies of alternative response to other staff:** The State funding challenge, which brought a reduction in allocations, set us back temporarily in our goal to advance AR into our ongoing units. We had to lose two Social Service Worker positions. As a result, we moved the ongoing workers who had been trained in the AR approach to our investigative unit. We believe front-loading investigation with workers trained in AR may help us prevent placing children into care, thereby offsetting the loss of staff in the ongoing units that had to occur.

### Successes

All [ten sites](#) report:

- ✚ Families are more engaged and satisfied
- ✚ Workers are more satisfied with their roles/responsibilities
- ✚ Enhanced community awareness, support, collaboration & participation

Examples of family successes are highlighted in the attached "County Notes." Agencies also report systemic successes and achievements:

#### *Clark County:*

- ✚ **Staff energy, commitment and involvement** remain at a high level
- ✚ **Families continue to report satisfaction** with the assessment process and access to "hard" services. AR workers continue to note the **improved relationships** they experience with their families.
- ✚ **Access to flexible funds** continues to be a great advantage to our families.
- ✚ **Positive interest in and response to AR by community service providers** continues. The Pilot Leader was asked by Cluster Supervisors and the Family and Children First Council to come to a meeting and update the group on the implementation of AR in the community. Overall response from the Cluster Supervisors was positive and supportive.
- ✚ We **continue to work with the Fiscal Unit** to clarify procedures for accessing funds, goods and services.
- ✚ AR Workers have settled into the different practice to the point that the **AR approach has become second nature.**
- ✚ **Anticipation of AR SACWIS access** by October 16, 2009.

### *Fairfield County:*

- ✚ The success of **group supervision and decision-making** has been adopted by other areas of the department and has become a crucial part in decision making regarding family cases opening for on-going services with the agency.
- ✚ Agency continues to receive numerous **thank you cards and letters from families** served in alternative response.
- ✚ The agency continues to receive **positive feedback from partner agencies**. This has increased interest from other service providers on how we can collaborate more efficiently in serving families.
- ✚ Several families have experienced success from our agency's ability to provide a **non-traditional service** delivery system.

### *Franklin County:*

- ✚ Internal relationships between ongoing and intake continues to flourish! **We have become the AR team** as opposed to the "Intake AR team" or the "Ongoing AR team." Communication is exceptional, warm handoffs are helpful and the **appreciated by clients**.
- ✚ We have continued to use **flexible options to avoid court involvement while ensuring safety**. This includes safety plans / planning and the use of voluntary custody agreements. The AR team will continue to be creative and engaging in order to balance safety and trust with children and families.
- ✚ **Caseworkers are building strong, supportive relationships with clients**. In fact, we had questions for Russ Rowenthal because of the increased requests from clients not to close cases. Parents seem to become comfortable with the support they receive; as a result, closing the case then creates a sense of anxiety. The anxious feelings associated with child welfare involvement have given way to anxious feelings of life with out it. We need to focus not only on safety but eventual independence, self-confidence and empowerment.
- ✚ We recently hired an AR Community Service Worker (CSW). This is a **support staff position that provides assistance to caseworkers and an opportunity for increased engagement**. We also allow this position the flexibility to work with Intake for those cases that are expected to open.

### *Greene County:*

- ✚ Through meetings with the Alternative Response staff, it is evident that they believe the program has been successful. As a result, **the agency is increasing its Alternative Response casework staff** in order to accept additional cases into this pathway.
- ✚ Short term services provided in a **one worker model has been responsible for fewer cases being transferred for on-going services**. See also, stories from the field.
- ✚ The agency is also pleased that **SACWIS now accommodates Alternative Response** (October 1, 2009). This will assist the agency in tracking and statistical information.

### *Guernsey County:*

- ✚ **Families continue to report satisfaction** with the assessment process and **access to "hard" services.**
- ✚ **Access to flexible funds** of AR has and continues to be a benefit that should be considered as AR moves forward. The ten pilot counties all report this as a success and therefore we need to look at the way we classify and utilize funds across our entire system for the benefit of families. While we have long used ESA funds for many of the concrete needs of families, AR has allowed us to be more creative using funds to meet family needs and requests that will reduce stressors in the home hopefully preventing further system involvement as opposed to the need to classify something as an emergency to prevent removal.
- ✚ **We have diverted cases** which would have been in ongoing for 6-7 months, but since there was no change in worker were kept in assessment for 90-120 days and able to be closed. The relationship with the assessment worker meant no change in worker and faster family services activities. This is due largely to the ease and simplicity of the family service plan.

### *Licking County:*

- ✚ The agency believes that having an ability to choose the appropriate track for a family results in an enhanced relationship and **better success in maintaining the safety of a child.** The family's full participation in services ultimately **keeps the child safe once agency intervention is closed.** The agency still receives a significant number of families alleged to be using/distributing/manufacturing methamphetamines as well as sexual abuse reports and severe physical abuse, and will not include those families in the AR track. However, the agency plans to **increase the number of cases** which are tracked AR by modifying the parameters of our internal screening decisions to a less conservative model.
- ✚ The agency has shown **a decline in the number of children entering foster care.** This is probably not directly attributable to the AR pilot, but we believe that **there has been an overall shift in agency focus and services of which Alternative Response is an integral part.**
- ✚ The agency has also **instituted facilitated family team meetings at various points in the life of a case.**
- ✚ **AR workers are being assigned to delinquent and unruly youths** where the court is considering placing custody with the agency in an effort to develop an alternative plan.
- ✚ The agency is utilizing more creative approaches with families by **engaging extended family members and non traditional services.**
- ✚ We are **continuing AR weekly team meetings.** Discussing cases and sharing ideas has been very productive in managing AR cases.
- ✚ Also in this quarter, we have again found that **concrete services have been the most utilized of all services.** Our agency has traditionally been able to meet concrete needs of our TR families, however, with current budgetary restrictions, eliminations of other funding sources; we are very concerned that we will need to become increasingly more creative in resolving basic needs of our families in these uncertain economic times. The agency has dedicated all of the AR funds

(\$10000.00 per family received) to services for families. If families do not utilize the complete amount, that balance is carried over to provide services to other AR families. Even once the pilot is finished, the agency will continue to use the balance of the **AR funds to assist AR families. This may lessen the impact of depleted program funds at least temporarily.**

#### *Lucas County:*

- ✚ **Families and Assessment staff continue to provide positive feedback on Alternative Response.**
- ✚ **Staff are also looking forward to continuing with AR cases and actively participating in the design of the transition and long-term plans for implementation.**

#### *Ross County:*

- ✚ **AR Workers have formed some very special and unique relationships with the families** they have worked with in this pathway. AR Workers find that AR Families remain in touch with them long after their case is closed.
- ✚ **Enhanced relationships result in more open communication.** Families call into the agency to talk to their AR Workers to give them continued updates on their families. Sometimes they call to give an update on their progress in counseling or they may call to report that their child did not follow a house rule.

#### *Trumbull County:*

- ✚ We consider the **pending completion of the Pilot Phase** to be a success.

#### *Tuscarawas County*

- ✚ We have found that **community, families, and staff have been supportive of Alternative Response.** It has contributed to the decline of children in foster care placements.
- ✚ We are beginning to see **a cultural shift within the agency** in which staff are becoming acquainted with working with families to draw on existing capacities to build supports for the families to succeed.

### Obstacles and Challenges

All ten sites report:

- ✚ Difficulty in working outside of SACWIS/Maintaining dual documentation system
- ✚ Caseload Demands
- ✚ Wanting more families/cases to receive alternative response than are eligible during pilot
- ✚ Concern about how alternative response caseload will be managed when randomization is eliminated
- ✚ Disruptions in services and staffing as a result of state budget cutbacks; counties have experienced various levels of revenue loss, but almost all have had reduced staff and been required to adjust original roll-out plans.

Sites each have encountered systemic obstacles that continue to challenge:

## Clark County:

- ✚ The greatest problem at this point is probably trying to keep **morale** at a reasonable level and to support staff so that they are able, in turn, to support families. With the budget issues and lay offs, it has been very hard for staff to stay focused on their families and practice.
- ✚ With the anticipation of state wide implementation, a major obstacle for Ohio could be that **counties could choose not to implement AR in their counties due to budget and staffing issues.**
- ✚ Along with the successes in working with the Fiscal Unit come the additional **challenges of working within the guidelines** for getting "quotes" for the purchase of certain goods.
- ✚ **Access to substance abuse assessment and treatment services remains an enormous challenge** as previously reported. Services for the "working poor" continue to most problematic.
- ✚ Access to **mental health assessments and treatment for both adults and children is a challenge.** Long waiting lists continue to be an issue in our community. Again, services for the "working poor" remain most difficult to access.
- ✚ **Access to psychotropic medication assessment** for both adults and children is a challenge. Long waiting lists continue to be an issue in our community. The standard wait is 6-12 weeks for an assessment.
- ✚ Severe **budget cuts have necessitated the cutting of agency contracts for purchase of supportive services** for client families. There are fewer services to which we can refer our families.
- ✚ The uncertainty of the state budget situation makes it **impossible to predict what future staffing levels** will be, or to predict our ability to provide needed services. There is bound to be some impact on our ability to serve not only AR, but all families. In September, the agency laid off 33 staff members, 4 coming from Family and Children Services. Clark County's Pilot Leader was one of the individuals laid off. Due to the continued budget issues, there will be additional lay offs by the end of the year.
- ✚ Training is a process, and **there continue to be training needs for staff** working in AR. Even though they attended training on using a strengths-based approach, they continue to have needs particularly around engagement skills.
- ✚ **Working with a family using the AR approach takes more time** with the family than a traditional investigation. **With staff cutbacks and additional responsibilities it will be increasingly difficult for workers to spend as much time** with their AR families. The concern is that this will affect their engagement and effectiveness with their families.
- ✚ **Developing a transition plan for full AR implementation across intake** is a challenge!

## Fairfield County

- ✚ Fairfield County does not offer a **countywide transportation system**; this continues to be a challenge.
- ✚ **Housing issues** remain difficult due to current economic and state financial challenges.

- ✚ Given the philosophy of alternative response, many reports coming into the agency are very appropriate for alternative response. The agency had identified three alternative response team members to serve alternative response families through CPS; even then staff had relatively high caseloads. Again, new **state budget cuts have forced a shift in casework staff, duties and priorities.**

#### *Franklin County:*

- ✚ **Working within SACWIS** has been the primary concern. This issue will, for the most part, resolve itself on 10-15-09 when AR goes live in SACWIS.
- ✚ The Ongoing Units continue to report that **traditional cases and the time needed for them can limit the time needed with AR families.** The CSW position noted above has been helpful in this regard.
- ✚ We will continue to encourage participation by front-line staff in the worker and supervisor calls with other counties in order to problem-solve AR related items and concerns. We've found that **participation can vary due to time constraints.**

#### *Guernsey County*

- ✚ **Systems are not inherently designed to promote flexibility.** As alternative response brokers new partnerships, it requires working within sometimes difficult guidelines. For example, along with the successes in working with the Fiscal Unit come the additional challenges of securing "quotes" for the purchase of certain goods.
- ✚ **Access to substance abuse assessment and treatment services** remains an enormous challenge. Our one D/A agency laid off one staff person permanently and two others have furloughs each Friday. We have been working with them on warm handoff's starting with testing services and while we have had their presence for many years in family group conferences where team and family make decisions, this has lagged in recent months due to the lower staffing levels
- ✚ The **uncertainty of the state budget** situation makes it impossible to predict what future staffing levels will be, or to predict our ability to provide needed services. There is bound to be some impact on our ability to serve all families, including alternative response families.
- ✚ **The lack of a county wide transportation system** has always been and remains a challenge. We already do a large amount of transporting for services and this balance between our resources and needs will be an ongoing issue regardless of the type of case AR or TR.
- ✚ **Housing issues** remain difficult due to current economic and state financial challenges. We have not had a HUD Voucher for use at our agency for nearly 15 months and do not expect to have them. In addition, our HUB offices restrictions on drug convictions are tighter than federal mandates. Many of our clients needing housing have past drug histories and one conviction for drug possession, regardless of amount will keep a person off our HUD list as a lifetime ban.
- ✚ **Working outside of the SACWIS** system has created tracking issues, double case assignment occurrences, incorrect record checks etc. Franklin County is

working with SACWIS developers and ODJFS policy staff to develop an interim solution for this concern. We expect this to be alleviated in large part once the SACWIS enhancement is completed in October 2009.

✚ Encouraging staff to **participate in worker/supervisor calls** to connect/share with other pilot counties can be a challenge. The agency is working to increase participation and contributions to agenda topics to assure topics meet the needs of participants. Part of the issue which continues to be a problem for us is the last minute notice of the agenda and information. Staff set aside to be on the call, but the agenda is out too late (often after 5pm the day of the calls) and therefore staff do not have time to prepare for the topics to be discussed and often are not engaged in the process.

✚ As the agency's program moves ahead, it will be difficult, if not impossible to formulate our long-term plan until we know the State's final position on allowing the **assignment of Dependency reports to the alternative response pathway**.

✚ The **current state financial crisis** causes considerable difficulty. We have always used ESA funds in a flexible manner as possible to include items such as dumpsters for clean-up of unsafe environments, temporary hotel accommodations when needed for safety, rent, utilities when critical, and other family driven flexible uses. However AR has added to our ability to utilize these types of process that we have known were critical to keeping kids in their homes and reducing placements when families could not do it any other way. In many of these cases, workers would have to label a family when it was not necessary except for the state required process. Even unsubstantiated carries a weight with it for families.

✚ The current fiscal crisis has seen cuts to child welfare including adoption subsidies which the agency has decided to make up to keep those families stable. ESA has been cut and we expect it to continue to be cut. Our own experience, supported by MN is that concrete services do matter. While MO was able to get agencies and business in their communities to provide support this.

### Licking County

✚ **Maintaining an equitable case load with uncertain numbers** has been challenging. The agency's plan is to dedicate a minimum of two AR social workers to AR cases beginning October 1, 2009. Other than the occasional emergency case and/or on-call case, AR social workers will only be assigned AR cases. With 7 intake social workers currently assigned to the unit, each social worker handles approximately 15% of the case load. With two AR social workers, the agency plans to assign 30% of the entire caseload to Alternative Response. Two additional traditional social workers have expressed interest in providing services to AR families and as training is available, coaching opportunities are presented, the agency will "slide" those TR workers into AR caseloads. Our goal within the next two years is to serve approximately 60% of our cases in the AR track.

### Lucas County

- ✚ The **SACWIS issues continue to be a challenge**; however the integration of AR into SACWIS with the 10/1/09 "build" should remedy some of the difficulties.
- ✚ Lucas County anticipates significant changes as it moves into the transition plan. Specifically, **the assignment of work in a gradual and equitable manner to the staff will be and area that requires a very structured process.**
- ✚ As the finalized version of the transition plan is implemented, the agency may determine that the best approach is to shift staff. Lucas County Children Services has also learned that it will be better to maintain a "pure" AR caseload. Quality of the service begins to decline when traditional caseloads are added to an AR caseload. As stated earlier in reports, this would **require a very involved bidding process and take a significant amount of time because of the union contracts.** Additionally, the agency decision to maintain AR cases with one caseworker or transition "ongoing" cases will be an area for additional discussion.

### Ross County

- ✚ Identifying the best way to to prepare staff to expand our AR efforts to more families in our community is a challenge. Those workers who have participated in the pilot since the beginning believe that what made AR so successful in our county were the training/learning opportunities that workers had before the pilot began. There is a **concern of how to transfer the knowledge and excitement that AR Staff have to others.** Our experience and belief is that once workers, families and community partners embrace the philosophy of AR and work together challenges are minimized and families have the ability to achieve their maximum potential. So, the training of our two new AR Workers is currently our biggest challenge.

### Trumbull County

- ✚ Developing and implementing **a plan for full Agency implementation** of alternative response is a challenge, especially with limited time and resources and a fear of change.

### Tuscarawas County

- ✚ The current financial crises have resulted in cutbacks within our agency and among our service providers. This, in turn, has led to more **difficulties in accessing mental health services timely.**

### Lessons Learned

- ✚ **Early training in engagement skills** would be advisable. Changing our approach to abuse/neglect and to initial contact with a family sounds easier than it actually is to implement. (Clark)
- ✚ **Continuation of community and agency updates** on AR's progress and practice is critical. (Clark)

- ✚ **It is vital to continue educating community stakeholders** about the AR project. This continues to promote partnerships and increased understanding of AR. Due to all staff and management personnel actively working cases, this important aspect of the AR process has been somewhat lessened. (Fairfield)
- ✚ **Partnering with other services/resources is essential for AR service delivery** but ultimately is impacted by financial considerations to implement joint partnerships/agreements to serve families. (Fairfield)
- ✚ None of the small obstacles we have experienced are insurmountable. An ongoing concern is the **change management process**, particularly how to stage levels of change. A continuing issue is identifying the 'right' time to introduce more information about alternative response to staff and the community. This is a large scale change that will occur over time but it is very connected to the long range plan of the agency. It needs to be viewed that way instead of as a pilot program. This takes constant attention and communication. (Greene)
- ✚ **Much of our current funding systems are directed about placement:** Child welfare funding is crisis driven; meaning even ESA which we have tried to use creatively requires a declaration of an activity that prevents removal or makes it possible for a child to return home. These do not speak to the long term needs of families or an understanding that stressors could be eliminated and therefore the risk of harm (not necessarily needing removal) reduced or eliminated. We need to continue to advocate for flexible funding across child welfare. (Guernsey)
- ✚ **Small changes in process mean big things and take time:** We already had an extensive family group conference structure in place due to our work in Caseload Analysis. This being said, our one visit from Minnesota staff for coaching went very well and we focused the time with our Family Group Conferencing coordinator. We learned a lot about even small changes in language at these conferences meaning big things and have been working to incorporate this. We were able to learn from our first coaching opportunity better what we wish from our next one and will be meeting with staff to plan this next round. (Guernsey)
- ✚ **We need to look at our domestic violence caseload and see what is AR appropriate:** While many counties started out assigning domestic violence to AR, our county did not. We will be looking at this in coming months, as working with our court system which often gets these cases and therefore wants our involvement in a manner which is more regimented than AR. This will take some work with our court and our staff. (Guernsey)
- ✚ Concrete services have been the most utilized of all services. Our agency has traditionally been able to meet concrete needs of our traditional response families; however, with current budgetary restrictions and elimination of other funding sources, we are very concerned that we will need to become increasingly more creative in resolving basic needs of our families in these uncertain economic times. The **ability to access flexible funding to support these basic needs is an important element in preserving families intact.** (Licking)
- ✚ We believe that there has been an overall shift in agency focus and services of which Alternative Response is an integral part. (Licking)
- ✚ We have found that the relationships formed with AR Families are a continuum of two-way communication long after case closure. (Ross)

- ✚ The top areas for utilization of the financial resources AR provided continued to be for basic needs such as utilities, rental assistance, furniture, and home and car repairs. We have been able to provide funding for treatment in a couple of cases. In addition, we funded STNA training to enable a parent to gain the skills necessary to better support her family. In part, a lesson learned is that **families still need to get the basics of their life secured in order to make advancements in ensuring safety for their children.**(Ross)
- ✚ **Group supervision has fostered a greater level of teamwork and generated a wider array of potential solutions/resources for families.**(Ross)
- ✚ As well intentioned and well informed it may be, **change always is hard and seldom embraced.** (Trumbull)

### Planned Activities

#### State:

- ✚ Supporting sites' "post-randomizer" plans.
- ✚ Implementing skill development opportunities supported by Casey Family Programs.
- ✚ Building alternative response into state's ongoing priorities.
- ✚ Project oversight and accountability.
- ✚ Developing site readiness tools.
- ✚ Establishing a state alternative response practice model.
- ✚ Finalizing process to bring additional sites into pilot.

#### Clark

- ✚ Implement the plan for agency-wide implementation of AR that was submitted to the AIM Team.
- ✚ Participate in coaching activities between November 2009 and February 2010 to improve our implementation of AR and to assist staff with skill levels.
- ✚ Begin training of intake workers who are not currently using the AR approach in order to prepare for agency-wide implementation
- ✚ Continue to emphasize engagement skills in supervision including the taping and critiquing of interviews
- ✚ Clark County, along with five (5) non-pilot counties, is applying for The National Quality Improvement Center on Differential Response in Child Protective Services grant. There will be 3-5 awards nationally that will be announced December 11, 2009.

#### Fairfield

- ✚ Discussions with Family, Adult and Children First Council to involve Help Me Grow continue. Service development/enhancement is being reevaluated as new barriers arise (i.e. service restrictions on these providers due to financial considerations).
- ✚ Continue monitoring results of group supervision.
- ✚ Continue participation in Leadership Council.
- ✚ Continue collecting and analyzing Fairfield County data regarding needed resources for potential families to be served by Alternative Response. Data

collection and analysis provides new areas of concern for gaps in services and the data supports the development of services to address these areas.

- ✚ Participate in the Casey-supported Intimate Partner Violence Project. The county Domestic Violence Shelter and the City Prosecutor's Office have verbalized their interest in participating as well and partnering with the agency. Collaboration with law enforcement regarding domestic violence is still in the scheduling process. Efforts will be made to include law enforcement in this endeavor.
- ✚ Transition from the Randomizer for the county, with consideration of the number of family situations appropriate for AR services, case load size and looking ahead to the integration of AR into SACWIS.

### Franklin

- ✚ Continued discussions with service providers and reframed Requests for Proposals to address service gaps. Franklin continues to align service availability with service needs.
- ✚ Present at the National Conference on Differential Response in Pittsburgh.
- ✚ Respond to cessation of randomization.
- ✚ Increase the use and structure of group decision-making.

### Greene

- ✚ Participate in coaching opportunities provided by American Humane
- ✚ Explore and participate in the Casey-supported Intimate Partner Violence project
- ✚ Expand Alternative Response staffing

### Licking

- ✚ To increase the number of AR cases screened into the program. The agency identified 22 AR cases for the month of June, 12 AR cases for the month of July, 21 cases for the month of March, 15 cases for the month of August, and 21 cases for the month of September. Overall AR case assignment constituted 21% of the total caseload, with only 11% assigned to the experimental group. Our goal is to increase AR families from 11% to 30% by the end of the year and continue to increase the percentage once training is completed for additional workers.
- ✚ Reduce/eliminate the number of traditional response cases assigned to AR social workers to allow the social worker to concentrate on services to AR families.
- ✚ Continue exploring contracts/agreements with community agencies to provide additional services to AR families.
- ✚ Finalize an agency-wide plan in reference to Alternative Response. At this point, AR intake social workers are maintaining the case, if the case is deemed to require additional services past 45 days through 90 days or beyond. Agency supervisors are discussing options as to the assessment and ongoing functions of AR.

### Lucas

- # Continue to work on the transition and long-term plans Alternative Response cases. A date will be selected for additional AR reports to be screened in for agency response.
- # Institute training opportunities for staff by having current AR workers have additional staff "shadow" them in the field.
- # Schedule remaining days of coaching from the AIM team.
- # Coordinate with Regional Training Center Staff to plan for additional AR training of Lucas County staff, as well as regional staff in the late 2009 and early 2010.
- # Attend the Leadership Council Meeting in December.
- # Attend the Intimate Partner Violence Summit in October.

### Ross

- # Provide a division-wide training and information session to all children's services workers in our county on Wednesday, October 14, 2009. It will be conducted by AR staff.
- # Continue weekly group supervision to manage AR case movement, service provision and to facilitate timely decision making and finally closure of AR Cases between supervisors and administrator.
- # The supervisory staff also met with the Recovery Council to collaborate to provide timely in home mental health and substance abuse assessments and counseling to families. A second meeting is scheduled with the Recovery Council's owner, administrators and staff to further discuss this collaboration.
- # Expand AR to more families and expand the types of cases that are assigned to this pathway. Since a large number of our reports include an element of domestic violence, we worked with our Intake Unit to develop a brochure entitled: "Choose Your Partner Carefully...your child's life depends on it". Members of the AR Team along with our Intake Unit will be utilizing this brochure as we provide mandatory reporter trainings in our community.

### Trumbull County

- # Since August, the Agency's AR Workgroup has been meeting at least weekly to develop a plan for Agency wide integration of Alternative Response. While everyone involved agrees that AR is the future of CPS services, because embracing certain aspects may mean a shift away from Triage, which has been part of the Agency cultural identity for over a decade, progress has been slow. In addition, ODJFS' refusal to allow Dependencies to be included in AR has unnecessarily limited the progress that has been made. The Workgroup will continue to meet weekly with the goal to being to bring a skeleton model of what the Agency's AR services should look like by November 2009.

### Tuscarawas County

- # Continue transitioning AR into all of our Social Services for children and families.