

County Snapshots Statistics and Stories

Statistics^{**}: July – September 2009

Clark County

- ✚ 47 new cases were opened in the AR Unit
- ✚ 23 cases opened in the prior two month period continued to receive services for some part of the July-September period
- ✚ 14 of the families opened in July-September had Family Service Plans
- ✚ 2 cases of the forty-seven (47) had to be reassigned to the TR track. Both cases were subsequently opened for on-going services in another unit. In one of these cases, the children were placed in foster care and the other case, custody of the children was granted to relatives, with a court ordered reunification plan.
- ✚ Of the 47 new cases in July-September period, 16 (34%) were able to close by September 30, 2009.

Fairfield County

- ✚ 68 families were assigned to the Alternative Response Track (PTD=275).
- ✚ 48 families were assigned to the control group (PTD=233).
- ✚ 30 Service plans were signed (PTD=159).
- ✚ 27 service plans were completed within 90 days, resulting in a case closure with CPS during this reporting period (PTD=169).
- ✚ 5 cases (average) transferred from Intake and Assessment per month in non-AR cases during the last reporting period. This is in part due to the services AR provides to families, the ability to work with them longer than 30-45 days and engaging families to identify barriers they may be experiencing and develop a plan to address the barriers.
- ✚ Linkage to transportation, housing and drug and alcohol has been the most needed service needs identified this reporting period.
- ✚ 26 families have identified domestic violence as their primary concern during this reporting period (PTD=111). Prior to AR, mental health was identified as the number one need for services for families. With it being addressed, domestic violence services have become the number one need.
- ✚ 9 families had the eligibility process of benefits streamlined through Community Services with use of the Resource Specialist (PTD=86).
- ✚ 15 individuals (PTD=61) received mental health services without a “wait list” through the Partnership with a local mental health organization.

By focusing on the needs as identified by the family, the AR team has experienced:

- ✚ Successful assistance to more than 12 families through the efforts of the Resource Specialists in streamlining families in acquiring needed benefits during this reporting

^{**} Statistics have been extracted from various sources assembled at a county level for county-specific purposes. Counties not included should not be considered “missing;” this profile is intended only as a sample of county experiences. All Alternative Response Pilot sites fully participate in data reporting as established by the Institute of Applied Research for research and evaluation purposes.

period. This increases the number of families served through this process to over 89 for the length of the project thus far.

- ✦ Seven families assigned to the AR track had a track change and did result in the case being transferred to the ongoing service team for continued case management for this reporting period. This brings the number of families changing tracks and being transferred for ongoing services to 16 for the length of the project thus far.
- ✦ No children receiving services through the AR track entered agency custody during this reporting period. Only 4 children assigned to the AR track have entered into agency custody during the project thus far. One child was able to be placed with a kinship care provider and the other 3 (1 family) are placed together in Foster Care.
- ✦ 15 of the 68 families assigned to the AR track this reporting period identified potential mental health issues as an area of concern. This brings the number of families identifying mental health as a concern to 80 of 275 families for the project to date.
- ✦ All 15 families identified were linked with mental health services as a primary service provider for this reporting period, bringing the totals for the project to 57 of 80 families linked to mental health services as a primary service during the length of the pilot.
- ✦ Successful participation in a new housing voucher program within Fairfield County.

Franklin County

- ✦ 840 total Experimental AR cases to date.
- ✦ 165 total service plans completed to date.
- ✦ 27 total pathway switches
- ✦ 44 case openings for ongoing services to date.
- ✦ 4 families with children receiving placement services to date.
- ✦ Services linked/provided in order of frequency beginning with highest: Settlement House referrals; contracted services (parenting, counseling etc.); and, hard services, e.g. utilities, furniture (beds), rent, moving expenses, car repairs, food, appliances, translators and clothing (through August 2009, FCCS has spent \$40,106.19 on hard services)

Greene County

- ✦ 98 reports were appropriate for Alternative Response July 1 through September 30, 2009. Of this number, only 95 were placed in the randomizer as two of the reports were second referrals on already opened Alternative Response cases and one case was assigned to Alternative Response when the randomizer was not working properly.
- ✦ 47 (of the 98) reports were serviced through Alternative Response.
- ✦ 2 (of the 47) were transferred to an on-going unit for voluntary protective services, after short term services were provided.
- ✦ 22 service plans were developed during this quarter.
- ✦ 474 reports of alleged child abuse and neglect have been determined by the agency to be appropriate (under the capacity established for the pilot) for Alternative Response between July 2008 and September 30, 2009.
- ✦ 221 families (of the 474 reports) have received services through the program.
- ✦ 96 families (of 221) have had service plans.
- ✦ 12 (of 221) cases have changed tracks from Alternative Response to the traditional track since the pilot began. Two families refused Alternative Response services and

the other track changes were due to second referrals alleging sexual abuse, drug use by the parents, and criminal activity.

- + 11 (of 221) cases transferred from an Alternative Response worker to an on-going unit. Nine of these cases were transferred for voluntary protective services and two were transferred because court ordered protective supervision was needed.
- + No children have been removed from an Alternative Response case. However, one case involving two children experienced a removal after transfer to an on-going unit.

Guernsey County

- + Overall, Guernsey County has seen an increase in temporary custody placements between July 1 and September 30, 2009. Twenty children were taken into temporary custody as compared to entries of 7 children in the second quarter and entries of 10 children in the first quarter. This means we have brought 3 more children into care in one quarter than we did in the previous two quarters combined. Included in this, are that the majority of children entering TC have a projected outcome of PC (Poor reunification prognosis). This will tax resources and change the caseload dynamic in ongoing services.
- + 16 Control Group Cases
- + 19 Experimental Group Cases
- + 25 Cases not in study group accepted.
- + Increase overall in total volume of calls by 10% over 2008 to date

Licking County

- + 70 reports of abuse and/or neglect were accepted into the Alternative Response program between June 1 and September 30, 2009.
- + 49% of those 70 reports were randomized as experimental and these families have been offered AR services.
- + Funds from the AR program have assisted families with clothing, beds, YMCA memberships, appliances, security deposits and rent, food, car payments, clothing, baby items, utilities, tools, as well as a computer system for a family involved in home schooling.
- + Our goal within the next two years is to serve approximately 60% of our cases in the AR track.

Lucas County

- + 729 Lucas County cases have been submitted for randomization between July 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009.
- + 383 (of 729) cases have been assigned to AR staff.
- + 85 of the alternative response referrals currently are open cases; it is anticipated that these will all be completed before early 2010.
- + 644. traditional cases were opened by the Department of Family Services over the past quarter. It is an increase in openings, which although less than in years past, may be the beginning of a trend in the county.
- + Children entering agency or relative custody and overall numbers of child abuse and neglect reports have also increased, beginning in the Spring of 2009.
- + 100 additional cases (on average) are being screened in for assessment of abuse or neglect each month.

Trumbull County

- ✚ 352 cases have been assigned to AR July 2008 through September 2009.
- ✚ 112 Family Service Plans have been developed for the 352 pathway assignments.
- ✚ 287 (of 352) cases have been closed and 66 remain open.

Length Of Service On Open Cases (Days)					
<20	20 to 40	40 to 60	60 to 80	80 to 100	100+
5	23	13	3	6	16
<u>7.58%</u>	<u>34.85%</u>	<u>19.70%</u>	<u>4.55%</u>	<u>9.09%</u>	<u>24.24%</u>
Length Of Service On Closed Cases (Days)					
<10	10 to 20	20 to 40	40 to 60	60 to 80	80+
70	92	60	33	14	18
<u>24.39%</u>	<u>32.06%</u>	<u>20.91%</u>	<u>11.50%</u>	<u>4.88%</u>	<u>6.27%</u>

- ✚ 27.79 days is the average length of service. on closed cases.
- ✚ 4.53 days is the average length of time for caseworkers to finalize the Safety Assessments.
- ✚ 21.46 days is the average length of time for caseworkers to complete the Family Assessments.

Tuscarawas County

- ✚ 93 children are in foster care placements as of September 30, 2009,. The figure for this report quarter continues to represent a decline from the 127 children who were in care at the beginning of the pilot in July 2008.
- ✚ 16 cases were assigned to AR between July 2009 and September 2009. Of these cases:
 - ✚ The average number of days these cases were open was 58.42.
 - ✚ 47% closed within 45 days
 - ✚ 27% closed within 45 – 90 days
 - ✚ 22% closed >90 days
- ✚ 11 cases were in open status as of 9/30/09
- ✚ During the period of randomization, July 1 2008 – September 30, 2009, 44% of the cases were in the control group and 56% were experimental.
- ✚ 2 cases have been transferred to the ongoing worker since 5/15/09; both have now closed.

State-wide Case Assignment

- ✚ 2,128 experimental cases
- ✚ 2,118 control cases.
- ✚ The experimental count does not include 92 cases with pathway changes from AR to TR.



Organization of AR

County	Main City	Population	# of allegations 2007	# of AR workers	Role of worker
Clark	Springfield	140,477	1871	3	previously 6 dual, now dedicated
Fairfield	Lancaster	141,318	1819	4	AR
Franklin	Columbus	1,118,107	12883	5	AR, transfer to ongoing
Greene	Xenia	154,656	1119	3	AR/TR
Guernsey	Cambridge	40,409	549	3	AR/TR
Licking	Newark/Heath	156,985	1504	2	AR/TR
Lucas	Toledo	441,910	4638	6	AR/TR
Ross	Chillicothe	75,398	819	3	2 AR
Trumbull	Warren	213,475	1935	2	AR, unique system
Tuscarawas	New Phil.	91,398	580	1	AR

Stories from the Field: How Does Alternative Response Work?

Connecting with Families

- Feedback from a caseworker that shadowed AR: *Just wanted to say thank-you for letting me shadow you on Wednesday, your enthusiasm and knowledge of the AR program was informative and exciting. I know I only got to watch you interact with one parent but that experience spoke volumes of the effectiveness of the program. When the lady walked towards the door her body was stiff and there was a scowl on her face, until she realized that it was you, her body immediately became more relaxed and we were invited in. I was even more amazed when you had told me that the only contact you had had up until that time, were phone conversations. As an agency we have implemented and talked about our guiding principles, it was definitely a learning experience to actually see what the principles can accomplish when we apply them. I mention the guiding principles because I believe the AR program is the guiding principles being carried out. I hope that I can, in someway, be connected to the AR program in the future.*
- The agency worked with a family for about five months. Mom and Dad were both working and had five children. Money was tight, and Mom and two of the children had some mental health issues. By working together, we were able to identify many of the problems the family was facing—the biggest being chronic poverty. Because of some of the ongoing problems facing the family, it was eventually transferred for on-going services. However, because of the trust the Alternative Response caseworker had built with this family, the Dad called his past worker six months later. Dad had lost his job, the plumbing in his house needed fixed, and he was feeling desperate. Because of the experience with the Alternative Response approach, the Dad felt comfortable calling his Alternative Response caseworker before the situation escalated into something much worse. Working together, we were able to get his plumbing fixed and his unemployment benefits sorted out. (Greene)

Changing Perceptions through Relationships

- Comments from assessment worker who kept case over period of several months instead of passing to ongoing services: *I worked with (MOM) and family for some time and for the past two months, they have made great progress and they commented on how nice Alternative Response was and that they were glad that they were not labeled as perpetrators. As a caseworker, It was nice to be able to provide them with services for a short time and not open the case to where another caseworker would have had the case.* (Guernsey)
- Our agency became involved with a young mother who was allegedly displaying drug seeking behaviors. Upon meeting with the family, it was learned that the mother had recently undergone major surgery and did not realize that she had not filled the original prescription which had been given to her upon her hospital discharge. At the time of the report, the family was facing financial hardships due to the father's lay off from work, the mother's medical issues and was residing with her extended family in crowded living conditions. This mother was very suspicious of children services intervention as the agency had been involved with her as a teenager when she was identified as a suspect in her younger brother's death. However, after the program was explained to the family, they became cooperative and reported that they were looking forward to working with the social worker. We have found that many of the families who were initially hesitant of agency involvement, based on past experience, are able to overcome their fears and embrace working with the agency in Alternative Response. (Licking)

Helping Families Find Independence

- The agency received a concern about a Mom who had been in Child Protective Services custody for a time as a teenager. She had engaged in a physical altercation with her paramour while both her four and one year old children were present. Mom was arrested and, because the incident occurred on a Friday, went to jail for the weekend. Mom has slight cognitive delays and did not fully understand what was being told to her in a video hearing. She became afraid that if she did not plead guilty she would have to spend another ten days in jail and away from her children. Mom adamantly denies any intent to cause harm to her paramour. She slammed the sliding door and her paramour hit the glass shattering it and receiving a small cut on his cheek as well as cuts to his knuckles.

As a consequence of this incident, the couple split up, Mom and the children became homeless, Mom lost employment and the Mom got Domestic Violence charges on her legal record. She felt very hopeless when she first met our Alternative Response worker.

Our Alternative Response caseworker was able to work with Mom to develop a Family Service Plan. She was linked with Community Service benefits, WorkNet, Counseling, Financial Education and was placed on the Family Unification Program list. Also, Alternative Response assisted Mom in a hearing with Metropolitan Housing regarding her non-eligibility that resulted from the Domestic Violence charge.

The family now has a housing voucher and is moving into independent housing. Mom is in counseling and, as she processes the events that took place, is learning new techniques to utilize when she is upset. The family is receiving cash benefits, food stamps and a medical card until Mom finds a job. Most of all, mom is holding her head up again, looking people in the eyes when she talks to them, and the four year old says "for my birthday, we get to have a home again!" (Fairfield)

Helping Families to Recognize Their Strengths

- It was reported that Mom's two year old daughter had widespread bruising on her buttocks and thighs. Mom reported that she left the child at home with her paramour while she went to work. When mom returned home, she noticed bruises on the child's bottom and thighs. Mom asked her paramour about the bruises; he told her he was "rough housing" with the child and did not mean to cause the bruising. Fairfield Medical Center (FMC) reported the child's injuries as inconsistent with the paramour's explanation and as from excessive physical discipline.

This case was assigned to the Alternative Response pathway. The Alternative Response caseworkers were able to engage Mom during the assessment phase. Although concerns of drug and alcohol abuse were not a part of the referral, there were concerns within the family. Mom was encouraged to disclose.

The end of November 2008, mom created a Family Service Plan that included linkage with a local mental health agency to get immediate counseling and the Recovery Center for long term counseling. Mom also agreed to participate in the Drug/Alcohol Random Testing (DART) Program through ETAT, reinstate her license, and seek employment.

The agency again received concerns about the child. The Mom was reported as having contact with the paramour, abusing prescription medication, and pregnant. Due to these concerns, an Out of Home Safety Plan was developed. The Safety Plan required for the child to stay with her maternal aunt and uncle, who would supervise the child at all times and provide her with basic needs and supervision until further notice. Mom was referred to the Drug and Alcohol Random Testing, New Horizons and the Recovery Center for mental health and drug/alcohol counseling.

In May 2009, the agency terminated the safety plan due to mom providing the agency with clean drug screens since December 2008, not having any contact with the ex-paramour, following all court orders (CPO), and having employment, stable housing, transportation, and her license reinstated. Mom agreed to continue counseling, work with Help Me Grow, and provide the agency with further clean drug screens.

Since the termination of the Safety Plan, the caseworker spoke with Help Me Grow, who did not have any concerns regarding the family and reported the Mom as very appropriate during visits. Mom's probation officer also did not have any

concerns, reporting Mom as compliant with all of her court orders (probation orders). The Recovery Center also did not have any concerns at this time for mom, reporting Mom as having completed Alcohol/Drug Education Group in May 2009. Mom continues to provide the agency with clean drug screens and recently, due to recently losing her job, applied for cash assistance in order to assist with the child's basic needs. Mom was able to maintain her home, end the safety plan, obtain sobriety and work through mental health issues with the assistance of Alternative Response. All of these goals were reached within six months. (Fairfield)

- Two parents with developmental disabilities were reported to the agency upon the birth of their daughter. The reporter believed that due to the extent of their disabilities, that they would be unable to parent their child. To develop the trust necessary to assess the family, the family was assigned to the Alternative response track. It was learned that the mother's family had threatened to annul the marriage and take custody of any children born from this relationship. The couple was frightened of any agency involvement. By proceeding very slowly, the social worker was able to gain the family's trust and family was very receptive to the services that the worker and the family had chosen. The social worker spent a great deal of time teaching the family child development and basic care. The social worker was there for the baby's first bath, helped with a feeding schedule, went with the family to the first doctor's appointment, and took the family to the baby and food pantries. In a traditional case, time would not have been available to build the rapport necessary for these parents to engage in services and prevent the removal of their child. (Licking)

Moving Beyond "Incidents"

- One of the Alternative Response caseworkers was engaged with a family for five months until the case closed in February 2009. In September 2009, the young mother began feeling overwhelmed and called our agency for assistance. She felt that the services that she had received through Alternative Response had helped and she felt confident enough in our agency to call when she needed help again. This young mother was suicidal, had a plan and was cutting on herself. Once mom made the call to our agency, we were able to send a worker out to assess the situation, get mom to mental health and find appropriate caregivers for the children. Without mom's positive experience with our agency, who knows what could have happened to mom and/or the children. (Clark)

Empowering Workers and Families to Seek New Solutions

- One of the new Alternative Response families that we worked with during this period was a single mom of an obese 9 year old boy whose health had become severely compromised by his weight. The AR Worker was able to link this child with a dietician and help develop an exercise plan for him. The worker was so committed to this child's health and well being that he actually goes to the child's home and works out with him. This child is more active than he's ever been, he is losing weight and his health has started to recover. The AR Worker in this case has become a coach for both mother and child. (Ross)