

County Snapshots Statistics and Stories

Statistics**: July – September 2008

Clark County

- ✚ 76 families were served by the Alternative Response Unit.
- ✚ 18 families had Family Service Plans.
- ✚ 27 cases opened since July 1 were able to be closed by 9/30/08.
- ✚ 3 cases had to be re-assigned to the Traditional Response pathway.

Fairfield County

- ✚ 49 cases were assigned to the Alternative Response track.
- ✚ 31 Service plans were signed.
- ✚ 12 cases were completed within 90 days.
- ✚ There is an average of 6-7 cases transferred from Intake and Assessment per month in non-Alternative Response cases.
- ✚ Linkages to transportation, housing and parent education have been the most popular service needs.
- ✚ 28 families have identified domestic violence as their primary concern.

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

- ✚ Successful assistance to more than 20 families through the efforts of the Resource Specialists in streamlining families in acquiring needed benefits.
- ✚ Only one pathway track change.
- ✚ Only one child assigned to the Alternative Response pathway has entered agency custody. That child was able to be placed with a kinship care provider and is the one case transferred to the ongoing service team.
25 of the 49 cases assigned to the AR track identified potential mental health issues as an area of concern. 11 of the 25 cases identified were linked with mental health services as a primary service provider.

Franklin County

- ✚ Delayed start: went live August 4, 2008.
- ✚ 110 families assigned to Experimental Group
- ✚ 3 Track Changes

** 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.

Greene County

- ✦ In July, the agency served 16 families with the Alternative Response approach. Of those 16 cases, 2 families had a second referral in the month of July. Both cases remained in Alternative Response. Six (6) service plans were completed in July.
- ✦ In August, 16 families were served. Of this number, 3 service plans were written.
- ✦ In September, 17 families were assessed using the Alternative Response approach, with 5 service plans being written.
- ✦ Two cases have been transferred for on-going support services. One client refused Alternative Response and was provided with a traditional assessment.

Guernsey County

- ✦ We accepted 16 reports for AR out of 40 possible (based on randomizer) or 40% of eligible cases.
- ✦ Utilized 65% of the fiscal resources (10,000) put into pre-paid visa cards (past planned activity). Remaining cards must be used by January 9, 2009.

Licking County

- ✦ From July 9, 2008 through October 9, 2008, the agency accepted 39 reports of abuse and/or neglect into the Alternative Response program.
- ✦ Approximately 62% of those 39 reports were randomized as experimental and these families have been offered Alternative Response services.
- ✦ Funds from the AR program have assisted families with rent, groceries, utility bills, YMCA family memberships, clothing, furniture, school supplies, and door alarms.

Lucas County

- ✦ 92 cases have been assigned to Alternative Response staff.

Ross County

- ✦ During this period, approximately 20% of all screened in reports of child abuse and neglect met the criteria for Alternative Response.
- ✦ Of that 20%, approximately 50% was randomly assigned to the experimental group.
- ✦ Through the implementation of Alternative Response in our county, we see the potential to reduce the number of cases transferred to protective services. The cases served via Alternative Response would have typically been transferred to protective services as they were not resolved within the designated 30 day time frame. We expect the number of cases that can be resolved without a transfer to continue to grow as the number of Alternative Response cases increases.

Trumbull County

- ✦ 59 cases have been assigned to TCCS' Alternative Response program.
- ✦ Of these cases, 25 have been closed and 34 remain open.
- ✦ The average length of service on closed cases was 22.68 days.
- ✦ Family Service Plans have been developed on 27 (45.76%) of these cases.

Tuscarawas County

- ✚ July: 8 experimental cases; 15% of our total caseload
4 completed service plans
10 control cases
- ✚ August: 3 experimental cases; 5% of our total caseload
3 completed service plans
7 control cases
- ✚ September: 5 experimental cases; 11% of our total caseload
4 completed service plans
8 control cases

Stories from the Field: How Does Alternative Response Work?

Connecting with the Community

The Alternative Response worker received a report alleging deplorable living conditions. The report alleged that the family's apartment was infested with roaches and that the roaches were biting Mother's seven-year-old daughter. This was verified by the Mother at initial contact. She explained that her apartment was infested with roaches, but her landlord had not attempted to get rid of the roaches in either her or her neighbors' apartments. She and her daughter moved in with the maternal grandmother because of the roach infestation, but they were not going to be able to stay long because the grandmother resides in senior-citizen subsidized housing; their presence was actually putting the grandmother at risk of losing her housing. The Alternative Response worker, Nancy, arranged to meet with Mother within two days. At the apartment, Mother informed Nancy that she had located a new residence; however, she did not have the full amount to pay for the security deposit and first month's rent. Nancy advocated for the agency to pay the remaining rent/deposit. As a result of the roach infestation, Mother was unable to take any of her furniture or the family's clothing from their previous residence. The agency purchased new beds for the family and Nancy connected the family to a clothing pantry and a community provider that was able to donate furniture. The caseworker linked the family with a local settlement house that will act as an ongoing support/advocate for the family. During the assessment period, Nancy engaged with the family and developed such a rapport that Mother would contact her and ask about other available community services. Mother referred to Nancy as "her caseworker" and when the case was closing, she repeatedly thanked Nancy for her kindness and help during her difficult situation.

Connecting with Families

Paige received a case that alleged Mother and her mother were abusing drugs in front of Mother's five-year-old son. Paige contacted Mother via telephone to initiate the referral. At first Mother was quite hesitant to meet with Paige. She acknowledged that her mother had been abusing drugs in front of her son, but indicated that she and her son had moved in with her father in order to get away from the unsafe living arrangement. Mother told Paige that she did not think it was necessary to meet with her since she was no longer living with her mother. Paige explained the Alternative Response process and explained how the intent of the agency is to help families, not punish them (much like the media suggests). Mother then asked Paige to take her to her doctor's appointment the next day since Paige indicated the agency was there to "help" families. Paige did take Mother to her OB appointment the next day. Paige stated Mother talked very little while they were on their way to the appointment; however, the doctor was running behind so Paige and Mother talked while in the waiting room. Paige allowed Mother to lead the conversation and she gathered some assessment information as Mother talked

about her pregnancy and her non-existent relationship with the child's father. The day after the doctor's appointment, Mother contacted Paige and asked if Paige could take her to ODJFS to talk with her caseworker. Paige agreed to take her to the appointment. Again Paige utilized her time with Mother to gather more information. Paige continued this engagement and rapport building with Mother through the entire assessment period. Paige took Mother to doctor's appointments, a WIC appointment, and a Charity Newsies appointment (agency that gives school clothes to children). Each time Paige was with Mother, Mother would open up a little more and provide Paige with more and more information regarding her family, its dynamics, its strengths and its needs. Mother would contact Paige when she had questions regarding various community resources and how to access needed services. Paige linked Mother and her son with a settlement house so they could continue receiving support/advocacy services. Paige also referred the family to an in-home support service because Mother identified the need to learn how to set firmer boundaries for her son's behavior. Paige was able to close the case at the end of the assessment period, because the family had been linked with support services and because the family demonstrated strengths which mitigated a protective need.

Respecting Families' Ability to Self-Determine

One worker was thanked for her patience and her ability to work around the client's work schedule.

Another mother, who was involved in a domestic violent relationship wanted to stay in the relationship, but work at developing her independence. Our agency was able to work with her to identify a nurses' aide training program that included job placement to move in this direction.

Establishing Relationships

One worker had a client say that she would rather talk to her than her counselor.

As suitable housing has been one of our major challenges during this first quarter, Alternative Response Workers have begun an initiative where they present a cleaning supply basket to every family for which they help secure housing. Alternative Response Workers are routinely helping families clean new/old homes. The workers have received great personal reward by comments made from families such as, "Changes really happened in my life when Children Services got involved this time." This comment was from a family that had a prior open protective services case however they noted a positive change in their family after working with an Alternative Response Worker.

Helping Families Find Independence

In one case, the mother was very happy because we were able to pay a deposit for her rent and for her LPN State Boards application. We also will be helping pay for

her state board test. Once she has completed the test, she will be able to obtain employment. These all are big steps for this mother.

Helping Families to Find Their Strengths

One mother, who previously had her children removed and returned by our agency, identified her biggest worry was having her children removed again. The worker was then able to ask her what strengths she had developed that could assist her with this.

Moving Beyond “Incidents”

The agency, in coordination with a local church and a car dealership was able to provide a mini-van for a family of six, replacing a small car which only accommodated four family members. This Alternative Response mom had two children under the age of four when she gave birth to triplets. The report was originally accepted as neglect due to conditions of the home. By assessing the family’s needs, coordinating family members, and providing concrete services, the children’s safety issues were resolved. Our Alternative Response mom was extremely appreciative and told the Alternative Response worker that in the future when she was “back on her feet” that she would “give back” and help someone else in need.

Empowering Workers and Families to Seek New Solutions

For the past two years, our city school district has eliminated busing for elementary age school children who reside within one mile from the school and for high school students who reside within two miles of the school. Most parents in the school district provide a ride for their children to and from school; however, our Alternative Response mom does not have a car or a driver’s license. The high school children were leaving shortly after 6 am, walking almost two miles to school. We purchased bicycles (and helmets) for the children. Providing bicycles allowed the children to leave their home later and arrive at school sooner and during daylight hours.