

2016

## IV-E Waiver Evaluation – Leveraging Intensive Family Engagement (LIFE) Program Evaluation

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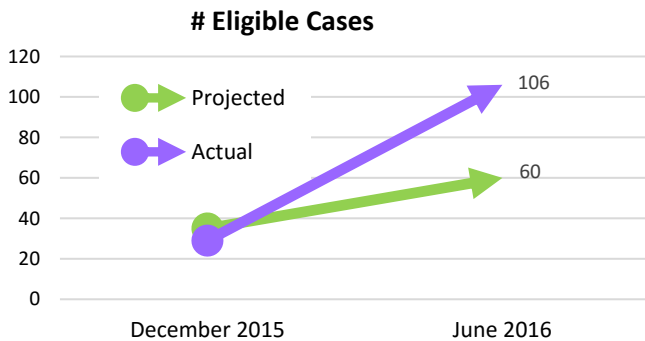
### What is LIFE?

LIFE is a locally-developed values-based intervention focused on addressing gaps and challenges central to reducing the time to permanency for high risk children. LIFE has four key features:

- **Family Finding:** identify and engage a broad network of family support and placement resources
- **Case Planning Meetings (CPMs):** case planning and monitoring informed by child and family voice
- **Peer Parent Mentors (PMs):** help parents engage in CPMs and services, navigate the child welfare/service systems
- **Collaborative team planning** between service providers involved with the case

LIFE Values • Strengths-based • Culturally responsive • Family voice • Trauma-informed

### Eligibility has exceeded projections.

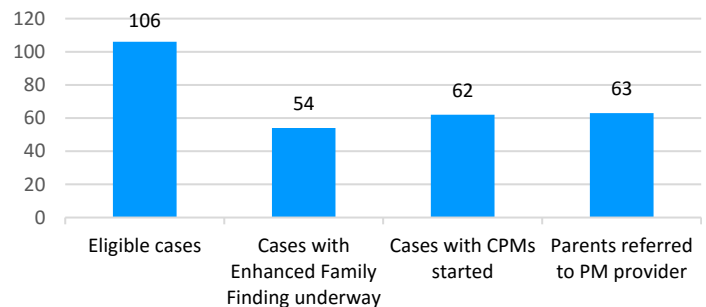


- Jackson and Josephine counties started serving LIFE cases in March 2016
- Larger than expected caseloads in several branches
- Need to hire additional Family Engagement Facilitator (FEF) in Multnomah County (D2)

### Top 3 reasons children are eligible for LIFE services:

- 6-15 years old, in out-of-home placement for at least 2 months
- Previous out-of-home placement
- Child removed due to behavioral problems

### LIFE Services Overview (as of 6/30/16)



### Parent Mentor Outreach and Services

79% of referred parents have accepted PM services. The most common service navigation areas are:

- Child welfare meetings
- Child welfare-related court proceedings
- Transportation
- Visits with children
- Basic needs
- Immediate housing
- Recovery-related activities

The difference between the number of eligible cases and the number of cases receiving various LIFE services (shown in graph above) reflects time needed to get services started:

- FEFs need time to identify, contact, and schedule all of the key meeting participants (e.g., parents, family, caseworkers, service providers, attorneys)
- FEFs need to spend time engaging and preparing parents
- Can be challenging to align diligent relative search branch protocols with Enhanced Family Finding

## Emerging Evidence: CPMs Foster Progress on Case Plans

**Problem solving:** CPMs provide an opportunity to surface problems and identify solutions. FEFs help the group focus on solutions.

**Clear expectations and parent understanding:** CPMs provide a forum for caseworkers and service providers to clarify their expectations and for parents to ask questions. FEFs check in with parents throughout the meeting to make sure expectations are reasonable and to ensure understanding.

**Accountability:** CPMs include a review of action items from previous CPMs and new to-do lists with deadlines. FEFs make sure tasks and responsibilities are clearly specified, and participants learn that they will be asked to report on progress at subsequent meetings.

**Communication:** CPMs provide opportunities for in-person information sharing among relevant players, which means better decisions and shared understanding.

**Parent and youth voice:** CPMs offer opportunities for parents and youth to help plan the agenda, provide updates, ask questions, and provide answers. FEFs explicitly intervene in the meeting process and invite input from parents and youth.

*"It seemed like we were going in circles. Nothing was getting accomplished, and I was doing everything I was supposed to be doing, but I wasn't getting anywhere. So, inviting the DA to the meeting I felt was really, really helpful. I felt really good after that meeting...because we definitely got clarity. I knew exactly where we stood."*

– LIFE Parent

### DHS Leadership

Lacey Andresen, LIFE Program Manager  
Jennifer Holman, D2/15 Program Consultant  
Josh Miller, D8 Program Consultant  
Holly Catalina, D3 Program Consultant

### Evaluation questions? Please contact:

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## Complexity of Enhanced Family Finding

The delineation between usual diligent relative search and Enhanced Family Finding is not always clear, resulting in occasional role confusion. It can be challenging to:

- involve found relatives in a way that is helpful to the planning process
- deal with difficult family dynamics
- manage the workload associated with large family groups
- balance parent voice (e.g., parent does not want a particular relative involved) with the goal of including relatives in planning

## Striving for Parent Engagement at 1st CPM

Characteristics of first CPMs:

- almost all held within 90 days of the case being identified for LIFE services
- have at least one parent/legal guardian in attendance
- average of 7 family members, support people, and service providers

Youth involvement in first CPMs has been less consistent.

## Meeting Preparation Practice

In preparing for the first CPM, FEFs **consistently**:

- talk to caseworkers
- work with parents to identify meeting participants
- discuss child safety
- get input from participants about the purpose and goals of the CPM
- prepare parents/youth to share information
- provide different options for participation (e.g., phone, in-person, letter)

**Less consistent** practices include:

- conduct a pre-CPM meeting with caseworkers and PMs
- prepare participants for family private time
- work with youth to identify meeting participants
- provide written materials (e.g., agenda)