



Maintenance Needs in Performance-Based Contracting Success: The Missouri Project on Privatization of Out-of-Home Care for Children

Project Overview

Missouri's study will examine the processes necessary for maintaining public and private partnerships in support of performance-based contracting of out-of-home services in child welfare beyond the initial contract implementation process. Using a mixed method design, the project expects to determine those public/private contracting and contract monitoring processes which provide a best-practice model for ongoing use of performance-based contracting in the delivery of out-of-home care that lead to the optimal positive outcomes for children needing such services. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be used in the development of this best practices model.

Description of Sites

Performance-based contracts have been awarded in three regions in Missouri; St. Louis, Kansas City and Springfield (both rural and urban). These sites are fairly representative of the child population in Missouri's foster care system.

Prior to the potential contractors submitting competitive bids, several non-negotiable items were established. Those items included a minimum number of working units, a supervisor to worker ratio and a maximum fee for a child's care (set by an actuary study). These non-negotiable items were the contributing factors for regions to combine smaller agencies into a larger consortium. Seven consortiums were awarded the final contracts.

Missouri's Children's Division has established "mirror" units within the public realm to parallel private contractors in two regions, Springfield and Kansas City. The "mirror" units are Children's Division personnel who perform child welfare case management duties in a replicated environment similar to the private sector. That is, the environment includes criteria such as, pre-established base caseload size, rotation assignments, caseload caps, and supervisor to worker ratio. The establishment of the "mirror" sites lends itself to an exceptional comparative outcome analysis in the areas of permanency, stability, safety, and average residential day usage. Additionally, this supports the opportunity for a cost benefit analysis of privatizing through performance-based contracting.

Long Term Benefit

Missouri's project will result in a well-tested model for the long-term maintenance of Performance-Based Contracts that supports public/private agency collaborations in meeting the long-term needs of children in out-of-home care both effectively and efficiently. It will also provide an exemplary approach to expanding private/public collaboration across the child welfare service continuum and in human services in general.

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