

CITY OF OAKLAND

AGENDA REPORT

2011 DEC -1 PM 4:07

To: Office of the City Administrator
Attn: Deaima Santana
From: Department of Human Services
Date: December 13, 2011

RE: An Informational Report on the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth
Program Quality Initiative and Improvement Plans for Service Providers

SUMMARY

The Life Enrichment Committee (LEC) has scheduled a discussion item to receive updated information on the status of improvement plans for Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) service providers. This year OFCY is requiring youth service providers to complete a program improvement plan for OFCY's Quality Initiative. The Quality Initiative ensures that service providers use evaluation findings to plan for and deliver continuously improving and high quality services. The plans will be analyzed by OFCY staff to help monitor program quality and develop future trainings for grantees to address common areas of need.

To date, over 70% of OFCY youth service grantees have developed and submitted program improvement plans for review. Overall, Oakland's service providers are assessed by independent evaluators as providing higher quality youth programming than the national average for similar programs using a nationally validated youth program quality assessment tool.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts associated with this report.

BACKGROUND

OFCY's evaluations now include an assessment of each program's quality using a process developed by the Weikart Center for Youth Development. The Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) process includes external assessments of key quality areas and tools for program self-assessment and improvement planning designed to provide all programs with a structured system to develop high quality youth serving programs.

In previous years, the development of program improvement plans was required only of the few programs that were assessed as not meeting expectations in program quality. This year OFCY asked that all youth service providers under contract for FY2011-2012 develop program improvement plans as part of the OFCY Quality Initiative using the YPQA tools developed by the Weikart Center. OFCY and OUSD have provided agencies with professional training and

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guidance so that each agency and program is able to develop program improvement plans based on data and findings from prior external assessments conducted by OFCY’s evaluation consultants. Agencies are now in the process of completing their self-assessments and plans and submitting them for review. To date OFCY has received initial program improvement plans from 70% of programs, and is working with the remaining agencies for completion of their plans.

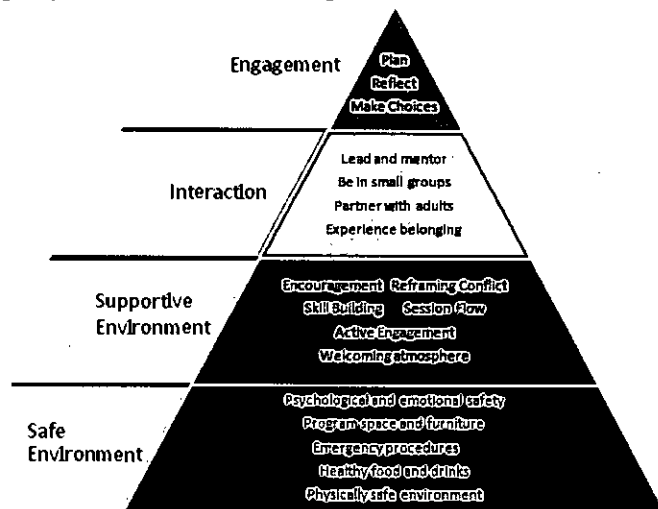
OFCY worked closely with OUSD’s After School Programs Office, OFCY’s two evaluation consultants (See Change and Public Profit, Inc.), and the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality to provide the training, materials and support needed by grantees to develop and complete program improvement plans. Multiple in-person trainings and online webinars have been provided to grantees from July through October 2011. These trainings provided grantees with the context and rationale for conducting program improvement plans, instruction on developing plans based on past evaluation findings, and the materials and documents for completing improvement plans.

Early childhood grant programs are evaluated using the early childhood specific quality assessment process and are not completing program improvement plans this year. OFCY is working with First Five of Alameda County to identify areas of collaboration for training and capacity building for early childhood programs.

KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS

Program improvement plans are being developed by direct service staff and supervisors of agencies receiving OFCY funds in FY2011-2012. The plans provide a clear roadmap for agencies to make improvements related to concrete findings from their external site assessments that are tied to program quality. Each plan identifies the agency’s goal for improvement; the corresponding YPQA item from their external evaluation that is being targeted for improvement; staff responsible for overseeing improvement efforts; steps necessary for reaching the goal; steps to be taken to evaluate and discuss internally how the agency is progressing towards their goal; and any desired support requested to help the program achieve their improvement.

The YPQA tool utilized to assess OFCY programs and as the basis for improvement plans is divided into four main areas, or domains, for youth program quality (see figure). The theory of change for the YPQA tool is that programs need to first ensure that they provide safe and supportive environments (Domains I and II) before being able to provide youth with services that are interactive and engaging (Domains III and IV). Quality youth programs excel at delivering programming that meets expectations in the four domain areas, leading to positive youth development outcomes.



An analysis of program improvement plans received to date indicate that a majority of programs are interested in improving outcomes related to their ability to provide an interactive and engaging program to youth (Domains III and IV).

Domain	Identified for Program Improvement
I	6%
II	17%
III	35%
IV	42%

Within these two domains the four highest priorities identified by service providers were Interaction: Staff engaging in positive ways (15%); Interaction: Manage feelings and resolve conflicts (19%); Engagement: Set goals and make plans (13%); and Engagement: Choices based on interests (12%). A more thorough analysis of program improvement plans and common areas of need will be conducted in the coming weeks to plan for upcoming grantee trainings in early 2012.

To date, response from grantees completing the process has been very positive. Oakland’s youth service providers deliver higher quality youth programming than the national average, and most grantees are receptive to the continual improvement process.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Program improvement plans are being developed by agencies after receiving significant training on working with data to develop actionable and concise plans to improve on their quality across four major areas of youth development: safe environment, supportive environment, interaction, and engagement. Plans will be analyzed by OFCY staff and used for ongoing monitoring of individual program performance and quality and for overall areas of common need for grantees. Future trainings will be developed and delivered to grantees through quarterly meetings and other avenues to address areas identified in program improvement plans from grantees. The development of these plans is part of the larger OFCY Quality Initiative, aiming to develop the capacity of providers for improved quality of youth services in Oakland.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The OFCY Quality Initiative encourages grantees to increase productivity through improved program quality.

Environmental: The OFCY Quality Initiative does not result in known environmental opportunities.

Social Equity: The OFCY Quality Initiative results in direct social benefits through improved program quality in delivery of youth services.

DISABILITY AND SENIOR CITIZEN ACCESS

Approval of the report has no direct impact on disability and senior citizen access issues.

RECOMMENDATION(S) AND RATIONALE

OFCY staff recommends that the LEC accept the information report as presented.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No action is requested of City Council.

Respectfully submitted,



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Director, Department of Human Services

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Children and Youth Services Manager
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DHS Planner

**APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO
THE LIFE ENRICHMENT COMMITTEE:**


Office of the City Administrator