Abstract/Summary

Grantee Name: Kids Central Inc.
Grantee City and State: Ocala, FL
Grant Project Title: Families for Florida’s Children (FCC)
Family Connection Program Area: Family-finding

Summary of Grant Project:

Kids Central, Inc. intends to build upon our limited but successful efforts to implement Family Finding in Florida Judicial Circuit 5 (Hernando, Citrus, Marion, Lake and Sumter Counties). Recognizing that there were significant numbers of older youth in the local child welfare system for whom permanency was not being achieved, understanding that it had been many years since these children had been in contact with relatives, and acknowledging the importance and role that connections with extended family, traditions, race, ethnic heritage, and religion play in achieving permanency¹, Kids Central, Inc., the community based Lead Agency responsible for developing and managing the child welfare system of care in Circuit 5, has partnered with Kevin Campbell to provide training on Family Finding to case management staff as well as with Child Trends and J.K. Elder & Associates, Inc. who will be responsible for external evaluation of our project.

Family Finding Coaches and Search Specialists will be hired to provide intensive consultation to supervisors and case managers operating within randomly selected case management units. The study includes two groups of participants: (1) children in out of home care assigned to case management units receiving intensive coaching from the FF Coach and support from a Search Specialist; and (2) children in out of home care assigned to caseloads of case managers who do not receive intensive coaching or search support but who do engage in FF. We will demonstrate that by providing intensive consultation, coaching, and training on a unit-by-unit basis, front-line staff will incorporate the family finding approach into their daily practice and that child welfare related outcomes improve.

In years two and three of our project, the model will be replicated in Judicial Circuit 13 (Hillsborough County) in partnership with the Hillsborough Kids, Inc., the Lead Agency in that Circuit.

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¹ “A Call to Action: An Integrated Approach to Youth Permanency and Preparation for Adulthood” (Casey Family Services)