Family Connection Grant Project
Abstract/Summary

Grantee Name: Rhode Island Foster Parents Association
Grantee City and State: East Providence, RI
Grant Project Title: Rhode Island Partnership for Family Connections
Family Connection Program Areas: Kinship Navigator, Family-finding, and Family Group Decision-Making

Summary of Grant Project

The Rhode Island Partnership for Family Connections will support two demonstration initiatives:

1. expanding local models of intensive family finding and family group decision making in order to fully integrate them into the state-wide system of care redesign scheduled for rollout in late 2010
2. building a statewide kinship navigation system.

The nine agency planning team authoring this proposal was made up primarily of existing members of the Permanency Support Teams, each of which are private agencies co-located in the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) 2 days per week, utilizing their individual expertise to consult with Family Service Unit (FSU) workers on permanency team cases. The leadership of DCYF, including Director Martinez, fully participated in the planning process to ensure that this demonstration initiative will integrate into the full system of care redesign.

Rhode Island is an ideal location for a demonstration program. Rhode Island is able to develop this project on a statewide scale, including both rural and urban communities, and given the state’s size it can be easily replicable across other states and counties. All participating agencies are fully committed to the planning process and are fully invested in ensuring that this demonstration project truly leads to full system change. The lead agency, the Rhode Island Foster Parents Association has been utilizing best practices in intensive family finding and kinship support, informed through training from Casey Family Services and the Casey Center for Effective Practice, for over three years. We ensured that each partner agency, through participation on the Executive Committee, and through direct project staff involvement, will play a significant role in managing the requested funds over three years in collaboration with all partners to create a program that will be measurable, replicable and able to ultimately be embedded across the full system of care in Rhode Island, resulting in increased timeliness to permanency, increased kinship placement and other key outcomes for children in care.

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