Family Connection Grant Project
Abstract/Summary

Grantee Name: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
Grantee City and State: Madison, WI
Grant Project Title: Families Come First
Family Connection Program Area: Residential Family Treatment

Summary of Grant Project

_Families Come First (FCF)_ is a pilot collaboration involving the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families/Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (DCF/BMCW), the Planning Council for Health and Human Services (external evaluator), a private nonprofit agency and Meta House, Inc., a private nonprofit Residential Family Program for women with substance use disorders and their children located in Milwaukee, WI. The purpose of the project is to provide and evaluate an alternative response for children who are at risk of entering foster care. Targeting primarily African American women, _FCF_ will serve mothers from Milwaukee County referred to the BMCW who: 1) have infants born and identified as: affected by illegal substance abuse, having withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, being harmed because of alcohol use or; 2) are pregnant and using substances.

BMCW will team with Meta House to provide family-centered, strength-based services in a continuum of care starting in the Residential Family Treatment Program. Mothers and their children will live together in a safe environment, with comprehensive services that support the safety and well-being of children and their families. This collaboration represents a new teaming process that responds jointly to allegations of child maltreatment involving substance use and other complex co-occurring issues by identifying the impact of these issues on child safety; providing a faster and family-centered response and actively involving mothers in the safety decisions for their children through family group decision making. The intent of _FCF_ is to contribute to child well-being by keeping children safely with their mothers; avoiding out-of-home placement; contributing to healthy birth outcomes and preserving and supporting the family unit. A rigorous evaluation of these outcomes will be conducted by the Planning Council for Health and Human Services.

For more information, contact:
Mary Pat Bohn, Project Director
(414) 220-048
marypat.bohn@wisconsin.gov