

Implementation of Child Protection Risk Assessment Process

FY2003 Request: \$120,000
Reference No: 35910

AP/AL: Appropriation **Project Type:** Planning
Category: Health/Human Services
Location: Statewide **Contact:** Larry Streuber
House District: Statewide (HD 1-40) **Contact Phone:** (907)465-1870
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2002 - 06/30/2007

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

Funds will provide for the implementation of Risk Assessment Tool Structured Decision Making process. The new system will guide and support critical decisions made in cases and assist in the determination of whether families are at low, medium, or high risk for harm to children.

Funding:	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	Total
Fed Rcpts	\$25,000						\$25,000
Gen Fund	\$95,000						\$95,000
Total:	\$120,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$120,000

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
79% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	0	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

This is the first year of the project.

Project Description/Justification:

These funds will provide for the implementation of a new Structured Decision Making (SDM) process for the Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS). This new system will replace the current Risk Assessment Tool (RAT), which is nearly 20 years old. In 1998, Legislative Audit issued a report based on an audit of DFYS. This audit identified the need to redesign the RAT, to involve social workers in the project, and to provide adequate training to all field staff on the use of the new tool. The new SDM process will address these deficiencies and produce the tools necessary for use during the screening, investigation of Reports of Harm and on-going DFYS case management. For these tools to be effective, all social workers will need to attend training on the development and implementation of the tools. This request will fund the training and finalization of the new risk assessment process.

The new SDM process will guide and support critical decisions made in the life of a DFYS child protection case, from a call of concern coming to the Division through permanent safe placement of the child or children. During the course of an investigation and throughout the life of a DFYS case, the social workers and supervisors must make many critical decisions. These decisions are made in an effort to ensure a child's safety. The first decision is to determine if there is a need to provide support services to the family, remove the child from the home, or close the case after investigation. The critical decisions continue throughout the life of the case and include the identification of appropriate services, parents' ability to protect and nurture the child after treatment with or without supportive services, the appropriateness of placement out of the home, need for continued intervention, and identification of permanent placement. The new SDM process will be useful throughout the life of a DFYS case in assessing safety and risk factors for a child or children within a family or placement. Safety and risk factors include remedial actions on the part of the caregiver, engagement of appropriate supportive services, and current behavior and attitude of the parents (or caregiver) and the child or children as well as historical family information that impacts safety and risk assessment.

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It is necessary to review the impact of this new SDM process to assure its validity. This will be accomplished through the collection of data over a period of time. The data will be analyzed with focus on effectiveness of the decisions made using the new process. Additionally, a longitudinal study will be completed to determine if the SDM accurately identifies families at high, medium, or low risk. The SDM process is expected to take 12 to 18 months from its inception to implementation. An additional 6 months will be needed to complete an extensive evaluation of the new process.

After implementation and a validation study, the contractor will meet with field staff to review their experience to date with the system and to make recommendations for final changes. This will include approving the validation study related changes. From this focus group, the contractor will deliver final tools, definitions, and training manuals for the SDM process.