Maryland Department of Human Resources  
Advisory Council for Alternative Response  

Meeting, February 12, 2013  
Minutes

Council Member Attendees: Pamela Brown, via telephone, Paul DiLorenzo, Janet Forrester Hartge, John McGinnis, Dick Paulman, Melissa Rock, Dr. Albert Zachik, Sabrena McAllister (for James Trent), Vanita Taylor, Ted Dallas, David Thompson

SSA Representatives: David Ayer via telephone, Steve Berry, Shanda Crowder, Carnitra White, Audrey McLendon

Other attendees: Carol Spigner, Sandra Barnes, Megan Lucy, Leslie Rozeff, Brian Schleter, ML Wernecke, Christa Linton, Maria Tillman, Caren Kaplan, Denise Wheeler, Joan Little

Welcome and Introductions
Secretary Ted Dallas welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Agenda Review
Carol Spigner reviewed the Agenda items. The January 8, 2013 minutes were approved.

Workgroup Updates

Practice Workgroup
Steve Berry and David Thompson, co-chairs reported on the Practice Workgroup’s meeting. The workgroup viewed the Power Point presented at the Alternative Response (AR) Community Forum. The group suggested that the overview describe AR services and the benefit and impact of the services on families.

Detailed training descriptions were developed with the assistance of the Child Welfare Academy.

The first co-coordinator planning meeting was held with the five jurisdictions in Phase I. A local dss and community partner representing each county participated. (A Garrett Co. community partner was not available for the meeting.) The meeting covered:

- The introduction and history of Alternative Response
- The role and charge of the co-coordinator
- A thorough review of the Implementation Template
- A review of the readiness form for the local dss
- The training schedule

Caren Kaplan, the National Resource Center representative was present at the co-coordinator meeting and provided information regarding AR implementation in other states as well as answering implementation and general questions.
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The co-chairs will provide the top 5 concerns that were expressed during the co-coordinators meeting. General concerns included how to organize staff, the barriers preventing the passage of the legislation in past years, clarifying the role of child protective services workers, and developing separate frequently asked questions brochures for staff and stakeholders.

The suggestion was made that materials are created that provide a definition of AR and how the family is affected by AR. Communications is currently developing brochures for partners, families and staff.

Caren Kaplan complimented the Council for including stakeholders early in the AR process. It was noted that an important part of AR Practice is training, supervisory overview and monitoring of cases. Paul DiLorenzo volunteered the services of the Casey Family Programs.

Community Forum Updates  
Carnitra White reported on the Community Forum Evaluation Results. The attendees appreciated:

• The opportunity to work with their partners during the breakout sessions  
• The Question and Answer period  
• The amount of time given for the Forum  
• DHR staff available for questions and suggested that a staff member is available for all breakout groups

Comments for improvement:

• Ensure that the attendees understand the definition of an AR case and that it is not a ruled out case  
• Revise Breakout questions

The next AR Community Forum, Central Region will be held April 19th at Harford Community College. Invitations will be sent in the next 2 weeks. The Central Region includes Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford and Howard Counties. The next Central Forum may include changes to:

• The Power Point  
• The questions asked in the breakout groups  
• The emphasis on the impact on families

The Council is to forward ideas for the Power Point and the breakout group questions to Carnitra White. The Council suggested that the presentation include information about the boundaries of an AR case and that AR cases are ruled in cases, not new cases that are ruled out during an investigation.
Community Partners Workgroup
Report out provided with the Community Forum updates

Communications
Brian Schleeter reported that the AR Public Website is available on the DHR internet. The flyers for the Central Region Community Forum, materials for case workers, and the staff Power Point are under development.

It was suggested that a one-pager is developed that would summarize the history and implementation of Alternative Response including other states’ experiences. Casey Family Programs and the National Resource Center have information on other states that will be provided. In addition, it was suggested that everyone track questions received from community groups to ensure that processes or communication may be enhanced or clarified.

Evaluation Workgroup
Co-Chairs Melissa Rock and David Ayer reported on the Evaluation Workgroup handout. The handout provided the survey questions and the priority level for each question that may be utilized during the Evaluation Phase. The Council was asked to provide feedback to the Workgroup by February 19th. The evaluation will review the process measures as the regions are phased in. The outcome measures will be reviewed at a later time during the process.

Sabrena McAllister reported that the Children’s Review Board is developing a method to review AR cases during their regular case review process.

Al Zachik suggested that the partners’ evaluation be moved to a higher priority to ensure that families are receiving the services needed. If families are experiencing problems accessing services, the partners should be notified to ensure that the problems are resolved timely.

Policy Workgroup
Co-chair Dick Paulman reported that the policy is under review regarding the mandatory disqualifier of a substance abuse baby. The Policy Workgroup will review and make a recommendation at the next Council meeting.

Wrap up
The Secretary thanked everyone for their time and accomplishments. The process is progressing timely. He asked that everyone consider changing the meetings to a quarterly basis as the implementation and progression continues.
Meeting updates:

- The Evaluation Workgroup needs comments on the Evaluation Handout before February 19th.

- The Community Partners Workgroup will meet via teleconference February 28th, at 1:30 pm.

- The next AR Co-Chair meeting will be held Tuesday, March 5th from 1:00 – 2:00 pm.

- The next Council meeting will be held Tuesday, March 12, 10:30 am – 11:30 am at 311 W. Saratoga St., Room 1044, Baltimore, MD.