



LGFCU
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

2016 EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION Awards Program

Project ID	PIP-5
Title of Program	Adoption Promotion Initiative 2015
Program Category	Public Information and Participation
Submission Date	5/5/2016 3:33:55 PM
County	CLEVELAND
Employee	ALISON CLARK
Employee title	Program Manager
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County Department	DSS
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County Manager	Jeff Richardson
Supervisor	Karen Ellis
Implementation Date	1/1/2015
FLSA Designation	Exempt
Project Team Members	Alison Clark

Description of Productivity Improvement

Cleveland County had a number of foster children who were in need of forever families through the adoption process. In addition, the children were in placements that had not committed to adopting them. The Adoption Promotion Initiative was implemented by Miss Alison Clark to address the

system's breakdowns and advocate for our foster children. She recognized that many of our foster children were getting older and growing up in the foster care system. Miss Clark met with several resources. The purpose and objective was to recruit and establish adoptive/foster homes for each of these children. Our agency was looking for ways to spread the message that as a community we have children right here in Cleveland County who are in need of a safe, stable, loving permanent family. Alison Clark proposed this idea to her Director and was filled with passion to make this initiative happen. Alison marketed this initiative through numerous community events to raise awareness that individuals and families did not need to go abroad or invest their money with agencies if they wanted to adopt a child. She spread the word that we have beautiful children waiting for a family in Cleveland County. She followed up with telephone calls and email reminders with our community partners. She was able to speak or have DSS representation at many local churches, Connect to Commit to Change Event, YMCA Safe Kids Day, Lowes Safety Day, the Cleveland County Fair, MAPP-TIPP classes and other community events. Miss Clark concentrated on the idea and stressed that one person can adopt a child and impact children greatly. Family can be a family of two. You don't have to be married to adopt a child. She shared that the power is in each person that reaches into their soul to open their home and hearts to Cleveland County Children who need a permanent family. Miss Clark planned and organized our agency's first Adoption Gala. The Gala was held on August 21, 2015 and featured foster children that did not have an adoptive home. Adoptive parents spoke at this event. A video was presented of adoptive parents, children, and staff stating what the adoption process had meant to them through Cleveland County DSS. There was not a dry eye in the house. Dinner and music were provided and the children enjoyed dancing with their new potential families. Miss Clark organized and scheduled the participants in this video, which was completed by Creative Network Studios. This initiative was successful. DSS staff was able to provide education to our citizens and foster parents that attended. The Department completed 20 adoptions between January 2015 and December 2015. There were eight adoptions completed from August 2015 to December 2015 after the Adoption Gala. Alison's project used resources available to DSS without using county dollars.

Description of why this project was initiated

Cleveland County had been experiencing a number of foster children that needed forever families through adoption. In addition, the children were in placements that had not committed to adopting them. The productivity improvement plan was implemented by Miss Alison Clark to address the system's breakdowns and advocate for our foster children. She recognized that the children were getting older thus spending too long in foster care. Every child deserves a forever family.

Quantifiable results (sustainability, cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of service).

Indication of what resources were used and what was done with any accrued time savings

The adoptions that were completed during the time frames referenced above prevented our children from remaining in the foster care system. Consequently, this saved \$124,176 in foster care board payments for one year. Moreover, twenty children received permanence through being adopted through the Cleveland County DSS and achieved their dream of having a forever family

Other descriptive information

This initiative took most of the year to establish and maintain. It required many hours of meetings, conference calls, information sharing, and delegation. Staff spent countless hours to complete the adoptions and create forever families. Families and Children were the big winners!