Connecticut Department of Children and Families

Enhancing Community Supports and Safely Reducing Congregate Care
Key Indicators

January, 2011
- 4,900 youth in care
- 30% of youth in congregate
- 364 youth in OOS programs
- 200 youth <12 in congregate

March, 2019
- 4,200 youth in care
- 7% of youth in congregate
- 9 youth in OOS programs
- 10 youth <12 in congregate
Connecticut Process

1. Established blueprint
2. Kinship mapping process
3. Developed DCF search/engagement team and expand Wendy’s Wonderful Kids
4. Technical assistance in recruiting and permanency for DCF staff and providers
5. Add clinical supports and child specific recruitment to foster care
6. Developed kinship navigator service
7. Targeted service expansion in clinical and non-clinical services
Connecticut Process (cont’d)

- Examined needs of youth out-of-state and developed in-state resources
- Focused workforce development: (permanency, discharge planning, family engagement)
- Converted shelters to 14-day family-focused service
- Leveraged relationships with legislators and advocates
- Increased efforts to engage families and youth
- Examined service outcomes and practice efforts by race/ethnicity
- Supported critical thinking prior to removals
Agency Self-Reflection

- Policy change (i.e., 10% rule)
- Special review learning forum
- Rightsize state operated beds
- LEAN approach to foster care licensing
- Examine voluntary services program
- Enhanced service oversight
Message:
Families can access services without DCF involvement

Engage early childhood experts

Differential Response/Considered Removal/Announced Visits

Partnership with courts
Connecticut Rightsizing Steps

- Held expedited permanency meetings for youth <12
- Assessed youth >12 beginning with the less intensive levels of care
- Rightsized programs based on established criteria
**Maximize Foster Care Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth created DCF’s foster care profile forms and directed our recruitment video</th>
<th>Panels of youth at racial justice forums and at “Youth at the Capitol Day”</th>
<th>Developed curriculum in LGBTQ sensitivity and launched the “Pride Campaign”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster care with intensive clinical supports</td>
<td>Consultation on recruitment &amp; retention plans and data-informed benchmarks</td>
<td>Targeted effort in rural areas</td>
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Connecticut: Enhancing Community Supports

3/29/19
Challenges

- Messaging
- Recruiting foster parents who want to serve as mentors to biological families
- Balancing emphasis on services/arrays with natural supports
- Shift in provider landscape
- Kin placement permanency
Our Road Ahead

- Capitalize on technology for foster recruitment
- Continue workforce development in permanency
- Fiscal incentives for private agency growth
- Coordinate efforts related to FFPSA