

# Family Involvement Strategies



## Executive Summary

Family Involvement Strategies (FIS) are described as both an evidence-informed practice and a transformational strategy, with the fundamental goal of **engaging the family in a decision-making process** when their children come to the attention of the child welfare and juvenile corrections system.



Originating from an anti-racist, anti-oppressive framework, FIS facilitate an integrative planning process where family systems, community members and child welfare agency professionals partner to develop a plan for the safety, permanency and well-being of children.

In FIS processes, a trained coordinator, independent of the case, brings together the family group and the service providers to create and carry out a plan to safeguard children and other family

members. This approach recognizes that families are embedded within an ecological context of extended relations, friendships, neighborhoods and communities, and that long-term solutions are more effective when they are constructed by the families within their own social network.

## 2014 Highlights

**Family Involvement Strategies continues to be utilized across Child & Family Services and Juvenile Corrections.**

**There were 248 families with 355 children participating in 840 conferences.**

- Overall increase in referrals and conferences with a 15% increase in the number of families served and a 12% increase in the number of children served. There was a 11% increase in referrals from Child Protective Services.
- There was a 36% increase in utilization of Family Group Conferences through the Found Engaged Connected project designed to enhance extended family/support network identification and engagement in planning for children/youth and their families. The purpose of these conferences was expanded to include support planning when children remain living within their home in addition to permanency planning when they are in out of home placement.



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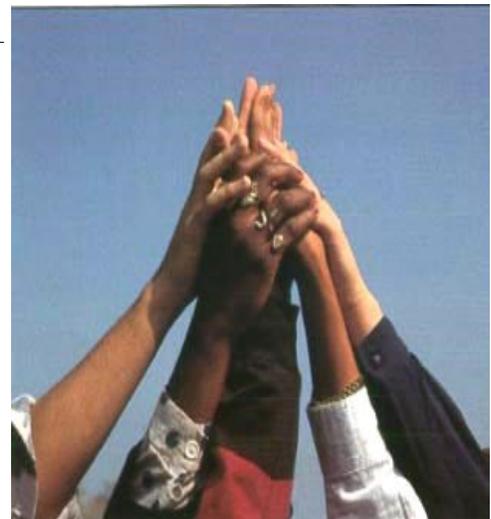
## Core Values for Family Involvement Strategies [FIS]

Family Involvement Strategies supports the development of evidence based practices and adheres to the American Humane Guidelines for Family Group Decision Making in Child Welfare. The following values are the foundation of FIS and their implementation into practice is essential to effectiveness.

1. **Family-centered**, in that there is active discovery, identification, recruitment and engagement of families in decisions that affect their children;
2. **Well-being focused**, in that the family service plans, developed through these processes, are individualized and promote social and emotional well-being and healthy positive functioning;
3. **Child- and family-safety focused**, in that FIS have design elements to address child safety before, during and after meetings, and are specifically organized to *reduce the risk factors* that brought the children to public agency's attention;
4. **Strengths-based**, in that all professionals restructure the way they view family assets and capabilities, and structure the models to leverage the families' strengths to meet their needs and enhance their *protective factors*;
5. **Culturally-relevant**, in that families, cultural brokers, kinship navigators and others partner to make FIS reflect the traditions, values and styles of cultural groups;
6. **Community-based**, in that the responsibility for the safety and protection of children becomes a shared responsibility, between families, agencies and the broader community, with the widest network participating in FIS meetings and accessing services and supports; and
7. **Trauma-informed**, in that the trauma assessments that inform the plans have been conducted and are shared with all stakeholders, so that the harms can be appropriately addressed, and the children, youth and family system can be put on a road to healing and recovery.

*Embracing FIS and the values on which it is based, Olmsted County commits to anti oppressive and culturally respectful practices that are fair, equitable and ensure child safety, permanency and well-being.*

*Recognizing the inherent power imbalance between statutory agency and the family, FIS conferences are facilitated by independent, non-case carrying coordinators/facilitators.*





## FIS Framework: Description of Conference Models

The four primary processes (referred to as a “conference model”) used in Olmsted County are:

*Case Planning Conferences (CPC):* The “family group”, agency staff and other service providers come together to share information and develop immediate next steps in working together.

*Family Group Conference (FGC):* The “family group” comes together to develop a family driven plan or decision based on the bottom lines of the agency. The “family group” is expanded and the agency supports the family plan as long as it meets the statutory bottom lines.

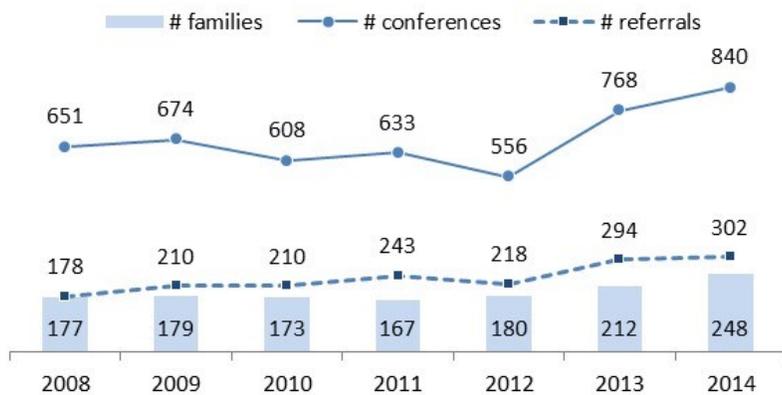
*Parallel Protection Process Case Planning Conference (PPP):* Parents, youth and their attorneys as well as agency staff and the guardian ad litem come together when a Child In Need of Protection or Service (CHIPS) petition is filed. This process is a focused case planning conference with the goal to negotiate a settlement on the admission or denial of the petition and to develop immediate next steps in the case plan.

*Rapid Response Case Planning Conference (RCPC):* The “family group”, agency staff and other service providers are quickly convened to share information and develop a safety plan when a child is at immediate risk for out-of-home placement.

	Purpose	Preparation	Participants	Frequency
<b>Family Case Planning Conference</b>	To share information and develop immediate next steps	Referring worker coordinates, sometimes assisted by FIS staff if warranted	Service providers, immediate family. May include extended family, informal supports	One conference or series of conferences
<b>Family Group Conference</b>	Develop a family driven plan for decision.	FIS staff does all coordination and preparation.  Average 40-50 hours per conference	Immediate family, paternal/maternal extended family, informal supports and service providers	One conference with likelihood of follow up conferences
<b>Parallel Protection Process (Court Ordered)</b>	Negotiate a settlement on the admission or denial of the CHIPS petition. Develop immediate next steps	FIS staff does all coordination and preparation with family	Always involves attorneys and relevant service provider. FIS staff works to ensure child’s voice is heard. May involve extended family, informal supports	One conference  Scheduled by the court, minimum one week notice
<b>Rapid Response Case Planning Conference</b>	Share information and develop a safety plan when child is at risk of immediate placement outside their home.	Referring worker typically coordinates, sometimes assisted by FIS staff if warranted	Usually involves immediate family and supports in close geographic proximity, social services and service providers	One conference  Occurs within few hours to no more than 2 days



### FIS Service Olmsted Statistics



#### # Youth with Conference

2008	290
2009	310
2010	293
2011	304
2012	295
2013	311
2014	355

#### Number of Referrals by Unit and Year

Child Protection	2012	110
	2013	132
	2014	149
Youth Behavioral Health	2012	55
	2013	72
	2014	72
Court (PPP)	2012	23
	2013	34
	2014	28
Family Support	2012	22
	2013	27
	2014	26
Juvenile Corrections	2012	8
	2013	27
	2014	26

*Child Protection includes Domestic Violence*

*Family Support includes Adoption/Foster Care, PACE/HOPE, Financial Assistance, Parent Support Outreach Program, Developmental Disabilities*

#### Number of Conferences by Model and Year

Case Planning Conference	2012	489
	2013	658
	2014	708
Court (PPP)	2012	22
	2013	35
	2014	31
Family Group Conference	2012	32
	2013	48
	2014	75
Rapid Case Planning (RCPC)	2012	13
	2013	27
	2014	26





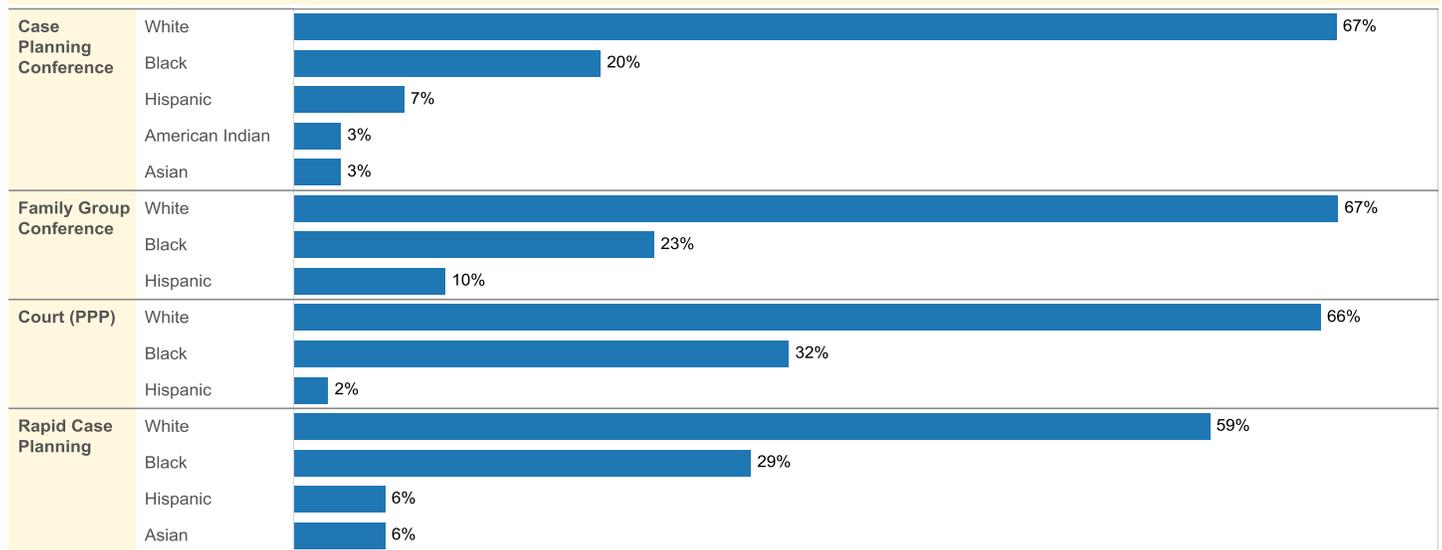
# Youth by 2014 Conference Model

	2014
Case Planning Conference	326
Family Group Conference	84
Court (PPP)	45
RCPC	34
Grand Total	355

Race/Ethnicity of 2014 Youth

	#	%
White	236	66%
Black	71	20%
Hispanic	25	7%
Asian	11	3%
American Indian	10	3%
Unknown	2	1%
Grand Total	355	100%

Race/Ethnicity of Youth by 2014 Conference Model



Build the Community: Ensure Child Safety

Conferences Completed in 2013 <i>One Year Follow Up From Date of Conference</i>	Family Group (n=67 youth)	PPP-Court Ordered (n=57 youth)	Rapid Case Planning (n=30 youth)
% Youth with No Maltreatment Determination	97%	95%	100%
% Youth with No Maltreatment Report	94%	93%	93%

In 2012, language was added to MN Statute 626.556 (REPORTING OF MALTREATMENT OF MINORS) stating that sexual abuse is the subjection of a child to a criminal sexual act or **threatened act** by a person responsible for the child's care or by a person who has a significant relationship to the child or is in a position of authority.

The new language regarding **threatened act** requires that child protection conduct a child protection investigation in situations when a convicted sex offender is residing with children. The current language in statute requires that all threatened sex abuse cases are screened in as family investigation. This legislative change enacted in 2012 results in an increase in the maltreatment recurrence rate.



## Build the Community: Timely Establishment of Permanency

### Placement at One Year Follow Up

#### Rapid Case Planning Conferences (RCPC)

Rapid Response Case Planning Conferences are used when children are at immediate risk of out of home placement. Children involved in RCPC are at the highest risk of out of home placement due to parental use of alcohol or other drugs, unexplained injury of a child under age two, and prenatal drug exposure. In 2013 efforts began to use RCPC with adolescents detained for domestic violence. The early engagement of the family system allows for additional eyes on safety as well as formal placement options if necessary.

**Of the 30 children who had a 2013 RCPC, 50% did not experience an out of home placement during the one year follow up period.**

**Of the 15 youth placed, at end of one year follow up, 13 were reunited with family, 1 was living with relatives and 1 had reached adulthood.**



### Timely Adoption

For youth with finalized adoption occurring during the report year, and with a FIS conference that occurs prior to the finalized adoption date, what percentage had a finalized adoption within two years from most recent entry into foster care.

	Children with 2014 Finalized Adoption and FIS	
PPP-Court	94%	[n=18]
Rapid Case Planning Conference	100%	[n=2]
Family Group Conference	75%	[n=22]

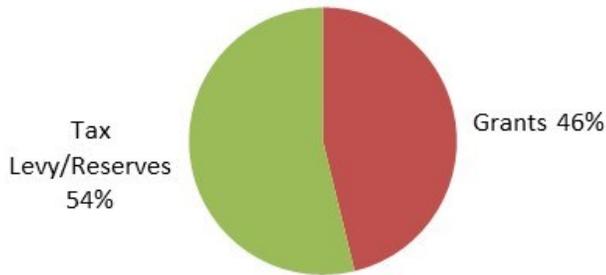


**Community Service M4R:**  
*Timeliness of adoptions within 24 months of exiting care*  
**National Standard = 36.6%**  
**2014 Olmsted = 86%**

Olmsted County Results	
2011	81%
2012	68%
2013	93%
2014	86%

## 2014

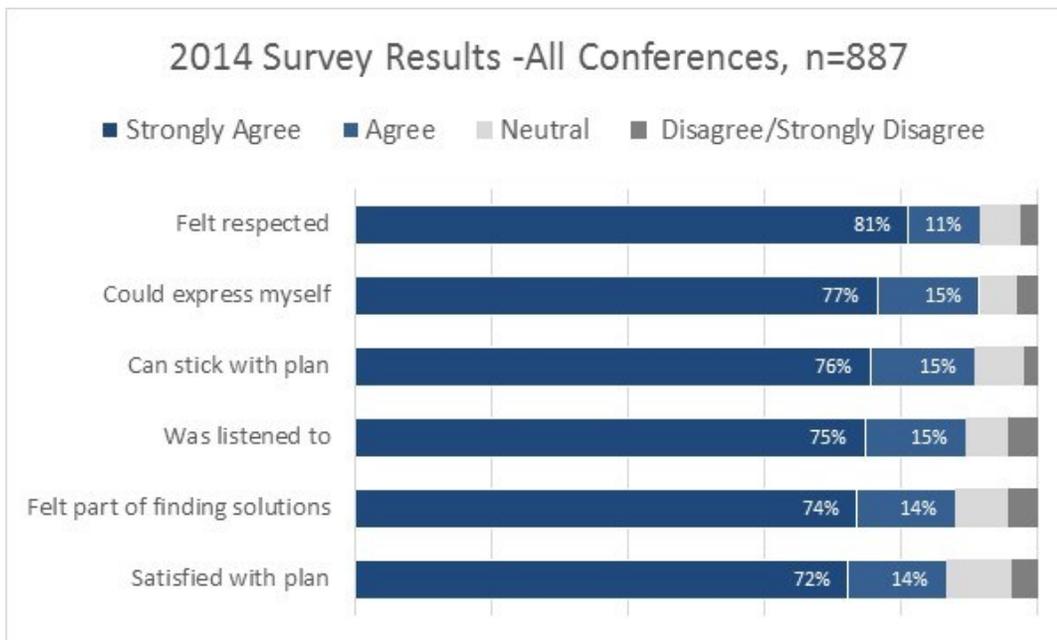
### Revenues



Expenses:	
<b>Program Expenses</b>	
Salaries	102,834
Indirect Costs	205,138
Direct Client Costs	29,574
Direct Service Contracts	792,270
Case Management Contracts	0
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>1,129,816</b>
<b>Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>142,352</b>
<b>Total Program &amp; Adm Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,272,168</b>
Revenue:	
Service Revenue	0
Grants	587,700
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>587,700</b>
Tax Levy/Reserves	684,468
<b>Total Revenues and Tax Levy/Reserves</b>	<b>\$ 1,272,168</b>

### Run the Business Maintain Operational Excellence

### Engage Families, Conference Feedback Surveys



Family participants asked to complete a survey at end of conference

In 2014 about half of all conferences had at least one survey completed

## The Administration on Children, Youth and Families—Children’s Bureau Family Connections: Combination Family Finding/Family Group Decision Making Grant

### PURPOSE

To provide family connection services to children and youth who are at risk of being separated from their parents and/or are already in out-of-home care. Provide support for permanency planning and increase kinship care.

### TARGET POPULATION

Child Protective Services (All Children in Out of Home Placement), Youth Behavioral Health (Youth at risk of Residential Treatment), Youth Behavioral Health (Youth in Out of Home Placement more than 90 days), Juvenile Corrections (Youth in Out of Home Placement more than 90 days)

### SCOPE

- ◆ Intensive integrated Family-Finding (FF) activities which utilize search technology, effective family engagement, and other means to locate biological family members for children/youth
- ◆ Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) to engage the identified family members in planning for the safety, permanency and well-being of their children including the establishment or re-establishment of family connections/relationships
- ◆ Internal and community training specific to kinship care, FGDM, family connections, etc.
- ◆ Rigorous local evaluation to demonstrate how integrative FF & FGDM improves outcomes related to safety, permanency and well-being for the target population of children and youth

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ Finalization of the research design with Kempe and training for the fidelity tools for all staff involved in the project.
- ◆ Training continued to be a significant part of the project. NCCD conducted a day long training with regard to the Structured Decision Making Tool (SDM) and its ability to screen for child safety and use a trauma informed lens. Additionally, Seneca provided 3 trainings for the Family Group Facilitators/Coordinators.
- ◆ Developed the following: Notification Letter (Sent to families), Placement Checklist Procedure, Central Access and Location for Family Finding information in all files, Tip Sheets for staff use, and a Notification Pamphlet for families.
- ◆ Increased numbers of referrals for FGDM meetings and specifically from Juvenile Probation. Follow-up FGDM conferences have increased in addition to the number of family members attending.
- ◆ Hosted a peer networking gathering of the 2011 and 2012 federal grantees to exchange implementation experiences, sustainability ideas and discussion of the support and culture needed within agencies to move forward with the Family Finding and FGDM practice.
- ◆ Traveled to Colorado and California to attend, present, and share information at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of Family Group Decision Making and exchange information with our California partners. (Seneca)
- ◆ Developed an Official Face Book site to help aid in finding family members.
- ◆ Developed a Sustainability Plan which was developed by a combination of THINK Families Committee members/ stakeholders.

**PARTNERS** 1.) Family Service Rochester (FSR): trained independent coordinator/facilitators; 2.) Kempe Center for Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect: project evaluation and training, technical assistance and consultation on FGDM; 3.) The National Institute for Permanent Family Connectedness (NIPFC): training, technical assistance and consultation on Family Finding; and Children’s Research Center; 4.) National Council on Crime and Delinquency (CRC/NCCD): consultation on integrating a trauma-informed lens into training activities.



## Next Steps in 2015

- Continue implementation and refinement of the integrated Family Finding/Family Group Conference model with emphasis on extended family identification and engagement.
- Partner with stakeholders to develop a model of conferencing to engage youth, their families, schools and social services in the development of an education plan when a youth has been truant from school.
- Dissemination of FEC Project information to include professional articles, references for referring workers, National Conference presentations and
- Further develop and implement a sustainability plan post FEC grant to ensure continuity of services.
- Enhance data collection and develop additional outcome measures for each conference model type to assist with program development and service fidelity.

### A SUMMARY OF FAMILY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

Family Involvement Strategies [FIS] is provided by Family Service Rochester and embedded within Child and Family Services and Juvenile Corrections. These services are critical to positive outcomes for children – safety, stability, and timely establishment of permanency.

Recognizing the inherent power imbalance between the statutory agency and the family, FIS conferences are facilitated by independent, non-case carrying coordinators/facilitators.

Early identification and engagement of family members assist in keeping children safe while maintaining family connections.

FIS addresses over representation of children of color in the child welfare system and the disparate outcomes for these children. Through embracing FIS values, Olmsted County commits to anti oppressive and culturally respectful practices that are fair, equitable and ensure child safety, permanency and well-being.