

## Staff Reports

### Child Welfare Unit

#### STAFF

John Rodriguez, Caseworker II, resigned effective December 15, 2023. We are positing for the open position as soon as possible.

#### CASELOAD

- Child Welfare has 22 open cases
  - Dependency and Neglect: 20
  - Voluntary (non-court): 2
- Child Welfare has 21 children in custody or protective supervision
  - Foster care: 6
  - Kinship care: 13
  - Parental care: 2
- The caseload for each worker is as follows
  - Ashley, Lead worker: 10 cases / 8 assessments (12 kids)
  - April, Caseworker I: 6 cases / 4 assessments (9 kids)
  - Michelle Trujillo, Caseworker III: Michelle is semi-retiring. Following the resignation of a caseworker, she agreed to stay on part-time to continue to support visits and foster families. Huerfano currently has three foster homes.
  - Kyle, Case aide: Supervises multiple visits per week; completed Child Welfare Academy
- Case load issues
  - There are several assessments that were not completed in a timely manner. With the recent resignation, the supervisor has met with the state to develop a completion plan and to close out open assessments.

#### ACTIVITY UPDATES

- Child Welfare has started coordinated monthly meetings with the Family Resource Center to improve referral and coordination between the departments.
- Heather Wellman is completing training to become the Security Administrator for Trails.

## **Assistance Payments Unit (Eligibility)**

### **STAFF**

Carey Kaestner onboarded to the unit as an Assistance Payments Technician on 12/4/23. Once he completes training, he will be the full-time Call Center Technician.

### **CASELOAD**

For the month of November, 2023, the Assistance Payments Unit received the following

#### *APPLICATIONS*

- Adult Financial (cash): 14 (100% increase over October)
- Colorado Works: 2
- Medicaid: 78 (100% increase over October)
- SNAP: 39
- Expedited SNAP: 12

**Total applications: 145**

#### *REDETERMINATIONS*

- Adult Financial: 2
- Colorado Works: 5
- Medicaid: 62
- SNAP: 44

**Total redeterminations: 113**

#### *LONG TERM NURSING*

- Active Long-term Care Nursing Facility Cases: 36

**TOTAL CASES AND REDETERMINATIONS: 294; Average 32 cases per worker**

### **ACTIVITY UPDATES**

- Kathleen O'Rourke, Marcie Valdez and Chantal Ramirez met with representatives from Catholic Charities to finalize the referral process.
- Kathleen O'Rourke and Heather Wellman met with Nicole Torres, State Program Support Supervisor, to go over Huerfano County's budget for Colorado Works. She will be researching our most recent Supportive Payments to see where recent spending has been and how much we have remaining from state allocations.
- Heather Santino, Innovation and Change Instructional & Training Specialist II with Colorado Division of Economic and Workforce Support recently provided training videos for Colorado Works, Employment First and Colorado Child Case Assistance Program.
- Heather Wellman is working with the state to get access for Kathleen to CHATS, the system used for Colorado Child Care Assistance Program, so fiscal agreements can be addressed/updated and provide payments can be entered.

## **Adult Protection Services Unit**

### **STAFF**

- Mary Vigil is retiring on 12/27/2023. There will be a retirement breakfast on the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>. She will be presented with a plaque and a custom gift. The BOCC is invited to attend.
- Veteran Service Officer will be moving under the supervision of APS beginning in the new year.

### **CASELOAD**

#### *Adult Protection Services*

- On call emergency responses: 2
- Court Filings: 2 guardianship reports
- Social Security: One rep payee report for guardianship

#### *Single Entry Point / Long Term Care Medicaid*

- Single Entry Point: 136 cases
- Assessments: 6 for nursing home care and community care

### **HUNGER RELIEF**

- APS has reclaimed the commodities program. Distributions will take place the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. Hallie and Joanna will alternate months for distribution.
- Huerfano county has been selected as a pilot county for the Care and Share's new computer application. Our launch date is January 4.
- Distribution for Care and Share will be the first Thursday of the month. This date was selected in coordination with Dorcas Circle and the Mobile Food Market. There will be now be one Care and Share Distribution per week in Huerfano County.
- An application for the Mobile Food Market has been submitted for the Gardner community. Micky DeAmbrosia will host the Mobile Food Market with help from local volunteers.
- DHS met with Dorcas Circle to work on coordinating our food systems distribution and to provide mutual aid.

### **ACTIVITY UPDATES**

- The unit received a second ARPA payment allocation that will be used for client needs.
- The unit continues to work with Las Animas County DHS and Southern Colorado Disability Services to plan for the upcoming Community Center Board and Single Entry Point merger.

## **Family Resource Center**

### **STAFF**

### **CASELOAD**

- New referrals: 6 (3 agency referrals, 3 walk-ins)
- Ongoing Case management:
  - Huerfano: 6 families (2 child welfare cases, 4 no child welfare involvement)
  - Las Animas: 7 families (7 child welfare cases)
- Basic Needs and Services
  - Huerfano: 2
  - Las Animas: 1
- Family meetings
  - Huerfano: 4 scheduled, 4 canceled
  - Las Animas: 6 held, 2 canceled

### **ACTIVITIES UPDATE**

- The FRC held a birthday celebration for Missy Serra and hosted the DHS holiday party
- PSSF Grant: FRC received the invoice template
- The FRC received a donation of new plushies from Spark Colorado. These will be given out to community playgroup, speech therapy, and case management families as part of holiday gifts.
- CDHS Stakeholder Engagement Sessions – Andrea participated in 3 stakeholder meetings for upcoming rule changes for the Collaborative Management Program due to HB23-1249 legislation. CDHS will now develop a general referral form and funding formula policies to be presented to our CMPs beginning in January.
- 3rd Judicial District Truancy Program – Andrea participated in team sessions with stakeholders and team members for the truancy court program which is currently piloted through Trinidad School District with Judge Fowler, probation, CYDC, and school administrators. This is a Las Animas County Collaborative Management Program and the FRC participates as coordinator of the Las Animas County CMP and for the FRC as a provider of services.
- Smart Choices Safe Kids Conversations Guide for Professionals Training – Illuminate Colorado developed a conversation guide for professionals in talking to families about substance use and preventing child maltreatment. The Substance Use Conversation Guide is a tool for professionals that provides direction on strengths-based conversations with families on substances and substance use, including sections on safe storage, safe and engaged caregiving, and the Protective Factors. Safe storage bags, family handouts – available in both English & Spanish – accompany the Conversation Guide to support professionals in starting and continuing these conversations. This training addresses the concepts found in the Conversation Guide, and also explores stigma, bias, boundaries, screening tools, and resource/referral options. As of November 2023, all three full-time

staff at the FRC are trained and certified in this topic. Safe bags, handouts for caregivers, and trained staff ready to talk about substance use and keeping children safe are available at the FRC.

- Family Resource Center Association Member Meeting and Annual Board Meeting – Andrea was able to attend the quarterly member meeting for FRCA member centers and the annual board meeting for the FRCA. Held in Arvada, Colorado at the Colorado Gives Foundation, topics included legislative updates and strategic planning with FRC lobbyists, peer led panels, technical assistance, JEDI topics and planning, opportunities for collaborating with state agencies, My Friend Ben, Community Resource Center programming, self-care for professionals, and great networking with FRCs across the state.

## **Financial Updates**

### **STAFF**

- The new Accountant I position has been filled and we are currently developing a training and transition plan.

### **ACTIVITY UPDATES**

- Jan was able to get access to required systems the week of 12/11. She is currently working on inputting all financial data, and financial reports will be available at the next Human Services Board meeting.

## **Organizational Update**

### **STAFF**

- Heather is working on a salary comparison and suggested salary change documents for the next meeting.
- One staff member resigned effective 12/15.
- Carey Kaestner is assuming his work in the call center.
- The supervisors along with the director have decided to maintain current staffing and to evaluate staffing loads and needs following a settling period of 12 weeks.
- We have current positions for Office Manager and Case Aide.
- Supervisors have started having weekly one-on-ones with the director.
- Monthly all supervisor meetings begin on December 27.
- All units are beginning either weekly or monthly unit meetings.
- The director was able to get all existing staff access to systems they did not have access to that were necessary for their positions. However, the director is waiting on access to systems and is completing training for security administration.

### **FACILITIES**

- In January, the office will rearrange.
  - The Child Welfare office will be rearranged to ensure only child welfare case workers are housed in the child welfare unit room.
  - The family visitation room will be moved and developed into a more welcoming visitation environment.
  - A new meeting room/conference room will be established.
  - The front area will be revamped to be more welcoming for clients

### **TRAINING/EVALUATIONS**

- Staff will begin to have monthly training. The supervisors and director are developing a plan at the all supervisor meeting.
- All staff will have evaluations completed once per year in February.