

Proposal:

Seeking permission to contract with DSS to coordinate the Family Resolutions Program using existing staff. Effective June 1st for one year. The program is funded by NYS OCFS flexible funds, 100% state funded.

Meeting Types:

Elevated Risk Conferences: Meetings in cases where risk and safety are of immediate concern and placement is imminent or has already occurred. Meeting outcomes are for alternative placements for the children, interventions by natural resources that allow children to remain with their parents/guardian while reducing the risk and safety factors. Service Providers and family/community supports would help with Identification of strengths and needs of the family in order to maintain a safe and stable home for the children. The expectation of the Coordinator would be to start the referral within 24 hours and hold the Elevated Risk Conference within than 5 days.

Team-Decision Making Meetings: Mandatory meetings in cases where children are placed in respite with the Department to provide the family and natural community resources to discuss what led to the respite placement and be provided with information in order to plan for the child/children. The expectation would be to start the referral within 48 hours of the respite placement and hold the meeting within 10 days of the respite placement.

Family Group Conferences: Of the three types of conferencing these are the most time consuming meetings to coordinate. The Coordinator receives a referral and meets with each family member or community resource to discuss longer term planning needs for the children. Family Group Conferences are often used for permanency planning for children in foster care or PINS and Juvenile Delinquents with recurring issues. The individual meeting times provides participants with time to consider their ability to commit to more long term plans for children.

Meeting Structure:

1. Informal gathering and encourage family to get comfortable.
2. Information sharing, questions and answers and bottom lines.
3. Family alone time to come up with plan
4. Presentation of family plan.
5. Wrap up.

Cost Benefit:

- Lowered placement costs
- Response time/control
- Increased collaboration between departments
- Reduces net county cost for departments
- Cost effective

FAMILY ASSESSMENT RESPONSE (FAR) PROGRAM HELPING TO PROTECT KIDS



By Gladys Carrión, Commissioner, NYS Office of Children and Family Services

Protecting New York State's children from child abuse, maltreatment, and neglect is the first and foremost mission of the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), in partnership with local counties, which administer child protective services across the state.

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, the Statewide Central Register (SCR), commonly known as the child abuse hotline, triages nearly 300,000 confidential reports of abuse. Last year, 177,000 of those calls were forwarded to county social services departments for investigation.

In cases where children's lives may be in imminent danger, this is entirely appropriate. At the same time, this can be a problem: CPS caseworkers are not only investigators. To improve outcomes for children they also must become a resource to these troubled families.

This has long been one of the challenges in child welfare. Fortunately, some states have figured out a new model. It's called Family Assessment Response (FAR). And OCFS is working with Albany, Chautauqua, Erie, Onondaga, Tompkins, and Westchester counties to pilot this new model of intervention in child protective services in New York State.

FAR does not require an investigation and determination of allegations and individual culpability for families reported to the SCR. It is an alternative approach to providing protection to children by focusing on engaging families in support services that meet their needs and increase their ability to care for their children.

FAR still requires CPS caseworkers conduct an initial assessment of a child's safety. If that child is in danger, FAR would not be initiated.

But, if CPS caseworker finds the child is not in immediate danger, they can engage with the family to determine what services will actually benefit their children. Localities that are utilizing FAR find that it is less threatening to families. As a result, the caseworker is more likely to be viewed by the family as a resource that can help them should problems arise in the future that create a risk for children.

New York's program is largely modeled after a similar program developed in Minnesota, another state-supervised, county-operated child welfare system. There, a rigorous random assignment evaluation of their FAR program was conducted with families receiving FAR being followed for an average of 3.6 years.

As compared to a randomly assigned control group (of families eligible for FAR but instead receiving an investigative response), families served by FAR were less likely to be re-reported for abuse/neglect. They also had a more positive attitude about the child welfare intervention.

Families receiving FAR also received more services, particularly financially related services, than families receiving the traditional investigative approach. This might lead one to conclude that FAR is more expensive than the traditional investigative approach. However, when all costs were included and combined, including responding to re-reports and foster care expenditures (which were higher for the control group), the average cost for control families was 26% higher than for families receiving FAR over the course of time that the families were followed.

Each of the counties participating in this pilot has been able to tailor its FAR initiative to the county's size and sense of readiness, its relationship with community partners, and the types of CPS reports it wants to handle with FAR.

Two of the six counties are initially only addressing reports where parents are alleged to be educationally neglecting their children, while two other counties have chosen to use FAR with a much wider swath of its reported families amounting to about two-thirds of all their CPS reports. One county is contracting with a local community agency to provide FAR after its CPS staff has conducted the seven-day safety assessment.

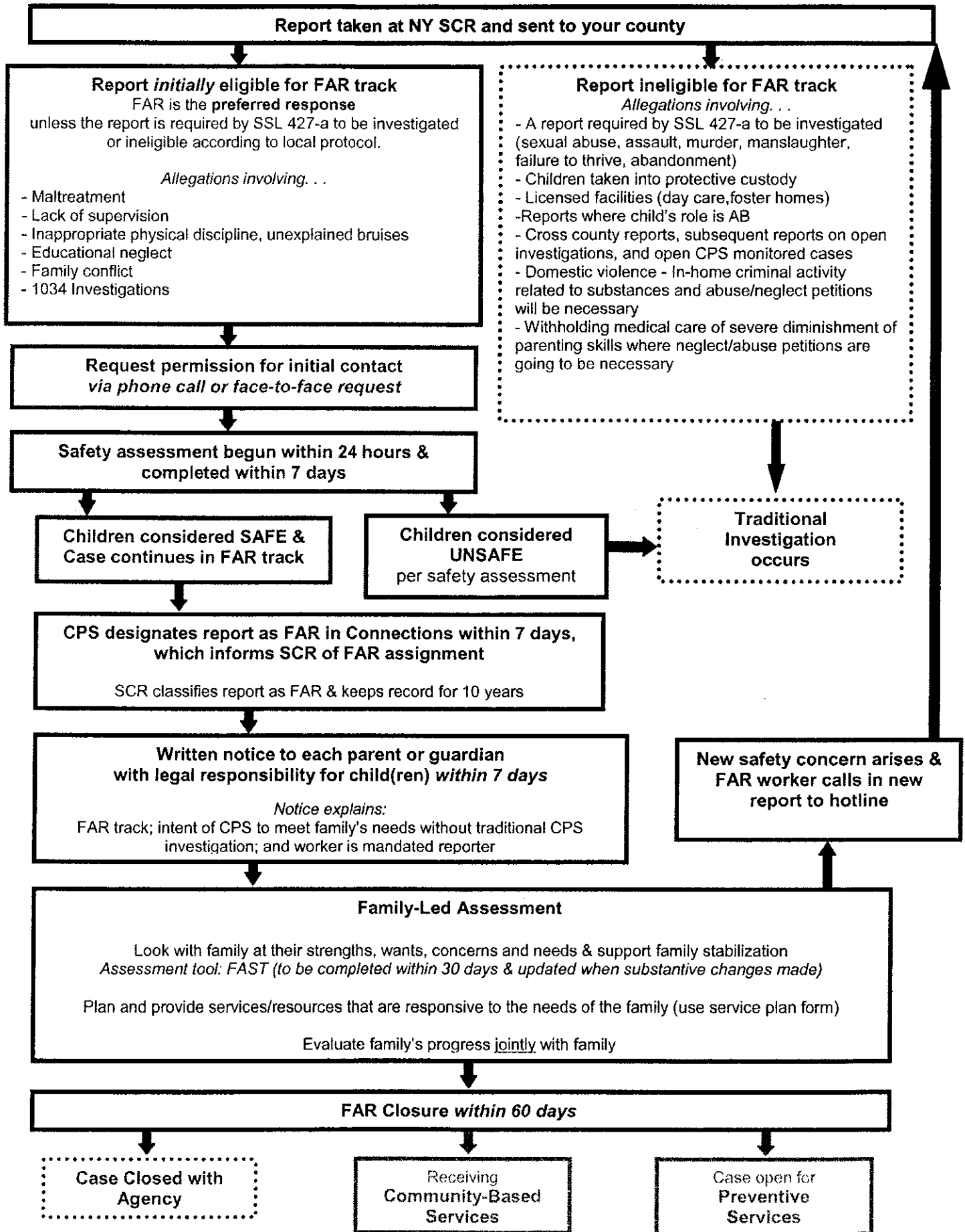
OCFS is actively supporting the counties experimenting with this new child protective services model. The agency has contracted with the national leader in CPS differential response, the American Humane Association, to provide training and coaching for local FAR staff.

We also have provided limited, flexible, non-categorical funding to participating counties to meet immediate family financial and related issues such as transportation, home repairs and furniture. We also have bi-weekly conference calls for these six counties.

While OCFS is still in the pilot stage with FAR, ten more counties are already actively considering submitting their own applications to utilize this new model.

Meanwhile, OCFS is evaluating FAR implementation and effectiveness, so that when statutory authority for this project expires in June 2011, the agency can, hopefully, make a good case for making the law permanent and improving outcomes for children. ■

Family Assessment Response (FAR) – Washington County, NY



VACANCY OR ANTICIPATED VACANCY CHECKLIST

Civil Service Title of job being vacated: Typist – Assistance Programs

Date aware of vacancy: 5/11/09

Date position will be vacated: 6/11/09

Why? Relocating to Alaska

Hours a week in this position: 35

Length of time this person been in this position: almost 6 years

Date the last person left this position? 8/25/03 **Why?** Termination, during probation

Is there a position with similar duties? There are three typists that share all of the clerical duties from the programs within the division to include typing, data entry and file maintenance for all of the benefit program files. Each of them has specialized duty sets as well. This specific position works on the clerical portion of the HEAP cases which are in receipt of Food Stamps and/or Temporary Assistance. During the portion of the year that HEAP is not "open" work is done to prepare for the upcoming season and to pick up on the work that was not completed for the other programs during the frenzy of the HEAP season.

Has there been a recent review of job description (with specific duties done by employee)? Yes

How many people in this title in unit/department? 3

Are the duties performed by this vacated position mandated duties? Yes **If yes, where does the funding/reimbursement come from?** Claimed under HEAP 100% Fed – 0% State – 0% Local

Can the work be absorbed by others in the department? No

Are there duties within this position that don't have to be done in your department? No

How or who will get this work done if you don't have permission to fill? It would pile up and when something is needed that should have been filed a worker will have to sort through to locate it or make an error in the absence of the accurate filing.

If this is a full-time position can it be done with a part-time person or a temporary person? No

A copy of job specification will be attached to this checklist for staffing review committee consideration.

VACANCY OR ANTICIPATED VACANCY CHECKLIST

Civil Service Title of job being vacated: Social Welfare Examiner - Medicaid

Date aware of vacancy: 4/1/09

Date position will be vacated: 4/10/09

Why? hired as a trainer for the State

Hours a week in this position: 35

Length of time this person been in this position: 1 year, 3 months

Date the last person left this position? Earlier this year there was a vacancy in the same title
Why? That vacancy was the result of a promotional sequence from a retirement in a Supervisory position

Is there a position with similar duties? yes

Has there been a recent review of job description (with specific duties done by employee)? yes

How many people in this title in unit/department? 24

Are the duties performed by this vacated position mandated duties? yes **If yes, where does the funding/reimbursement come from?** The reimbursement for the Medicaid Unit = 50% Federal – 50% State – 0% Local

Can the work be absorbed by others in the department? No, in the period of time that the unit has been short this worker the number of applications that are overdue for processing has steadily continued to rise.

Are there duties within this position that don't have to be done in your department? No

How or who will get this work done if you don't have permission to fill? The caseloads and influx of applicants to DSS are so high that there is no flexibility within the Unit/Division to not backfill this position and still get the work done.

If this is a full-time position can it be done with a part-time person or a temporary person? No

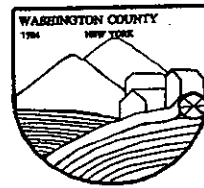
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**WASHINGTON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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Tammy L. DeLorme, Commissioner

The Washington County Board of Supervisors members are invited to join a worker from the Department of Social Services as they carry out the standard duties of their assigned program.

If you are interested, please provide the information requested at the bottom of this letter and return it to Tammy DeLorme at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your consideration of this offer, which is made to assist the Board in becoming more familiar with the programs administered by the Department and the duties performed by it's employees.

I will contact you to make the arrangements for you to join an employee of the Department once we have been able to appropriately link you with the program unit(s) you request below.

Sincerely,

Tammy L. DeLorme
Tammy L. DeLorme

I would like to join a worker from the Department as they carry out their standard duties. The time frame/day of the week that would be best for my availability are as follows:

The program(s) that I am most interested in observing are:

Administration Division:

- Investigations (Fraud)
- Child Support & Enforcement

Aging and Disabilities Resource Center:

- Adult Protective Services
- Long Term Care Coordination
- Resource Center

Assistance Programs:

- Employment
- Food Stamps
- Medicaid
- Temporary Assistance

Children's Services:

- Adolescent Preventive
- Child Preventive Services
- Child Protective services
- Placement Services

Additionally, I understand that I will be asked to read and sign a confidentiality policy before I am permitted to have access to client specific information.

Supervisor _____, Town of _____