



Ohio Summit on Children

ACTION UPDATE ■ MARCH 2009



Mark your calendar
with plans to attend the

Ohio Summit on Children

Resources and
registration information
available at

www.summitonchildren.ohio.gov

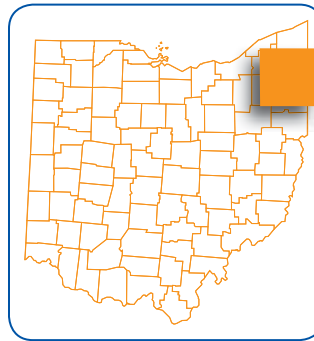
FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS CONTINUE

In order to more fully understand information contained in the Post-Summit Planning Forms, the Summit Planning Committee is conducting follow-up telephone interviews with county team contacts through April 24. In preparation for these interviews, please review the Post-Summit Planning Forms submitted on behalf of your county team.

We are particularly interested in identifying specific laws, rules and policies you feel are an impediment to your work. We also are interested in learning more about your successes as you implement your plans.

Questions? Contact Steve Hanson of the Supreme Court at 614.387.9387. 

COUNTY PROFILE | Trumbull



The Trumbull County team left the Ohio Summit on Children energized, excited and ready to take action. With encouragement from Christine Raffaele, program manager in the Specialized Dockets

Section at the Supreme Court, the team began making plans for a family dependency drug court even before they left Columbus.

“It has long been a dream of mine to develop a family dependency drug court in Trumbull County,” said Marcia Tiger, executive director of Trumbull County Children Services. “I would estimate that approximately 75 percent of the referrals to Trumbull County Children Services have some reference to drug or alcohol abuse as part of the concern for children.”

Family dependency drug courts are designed to give parents needed tools for overcoming drug and alcohol addictions so they can regain custody of their children quickly and provide them with safe, permanent homes.

Participating in a family dependency drug court is optional. Parents who sign up, however, are required to make weekly court appearances to demonstrate compliance with court-imposed conditions, such as random drug and alcohol testing, counseling or intensive treatment programs. Those who do not comply face discipline.

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SERVICES MOST FREQUENTLY CITED CHALLENGE

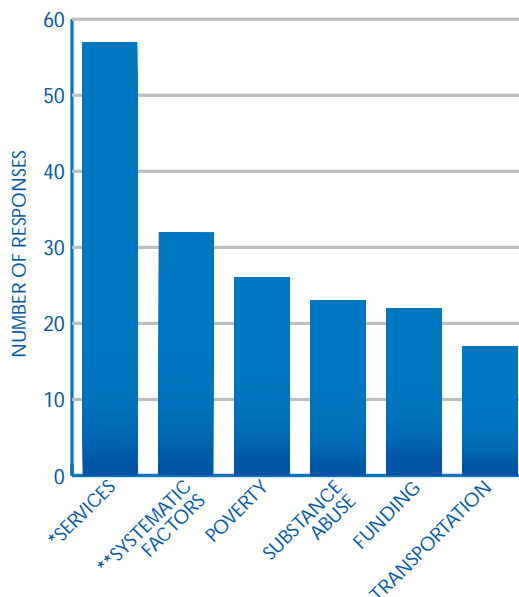
The Post-Summit Planning Form asks counties to identify the top five challenges facing their communities as related to the safety, well-being and permanent home environments for children. The plans submitted to date have identified numerous service- and system-related factors, as well as other impediments to a county's work:

***SERVICES** — Service gaps, long waiting lists for services, shortage of foster homes, lack of transitional services for older youth and need for culturally specific services.

****SYSTEMATIC FACTORS** — High staff turnover, difficulty recruiting qualified staff, lack of a shared community (and state) vision for children, lack of awareness of available resources, noncollaboration of key players and excessive state mandates.

OTHER — Poverty, substance abuse, funding, transportation, education, employment, mental health, health care, domestic violence and criminal justice.

To learn how other counties are rising to these challenges, read the plans posted on the Summit Web site at www.summitonchildren.ohio.gov.



TRUMBULL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Tiger said she believes a family dependency drug court will help families in her county reunite more quickly, which proved to be the case in nearby Lorain County. Lucas, Lorain and Mahoning counties have similar programs, and a team from Trumbull County toured those courts throughout the spring and summer 2008.

“It just holds parents’ feet to the fire more, in terms of dealing with their substance abuse problems,” she said. “We have a very difficult time reunifying children within the one-year time frame when parents don’t ‘get serious’ about their substance abuse.”

Tiger’s dream for a Trumbull County family dependency drug court started becoming a reality at last May’s Summit, when her team facilitator introduced her to Raffaele, who urged her to apply for a start-up grant. By the end of the Summit, Tiger was on the phone with the Trumbull County’s Family and Children First Council (FCFC) coordinator and making plans for a two-day FCFC retreat to brainstorm with other community providers and plan their next steps.

The retreat, held July 14 & 15 in Aurora, was attended by 29 council members and paid for with a small grant from the Raymond John Wean Foundation. Next, Raffaele traveled to Trumbull County in August to help with the application for a \$40,000 start-up grant from the Supreme Court. In September 2008, the Trumbull County team learned the application was approved.

“We are so excited about this,” Tiger said. “I can’t tell you how encouraged I was by the open communication, the sharing of ideas and the progress we made on our plan.”

Trumbull County Family Court is using the grant money to hire a part-time coordinator to launch the program, which officially started Jan. 5. Tiger said they hope to have cases on the docket by May or June.

“We were so inspired by the Summit,” she said. “It was a great opportunity to gather with the other county teams, and the catalyst we needed to spark our already-strong FCFC into action.” 