



# Permanency Enhancement Project Technical Assistance Annual Report Update

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## **Southern Region Effingham Action Team**

*This two-part report provides an update of all PEP Action Team and University Partner activities during the 2019 fiscal year (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019). Information herein is based off of communication and correspondence with key Action Team members and all other stakeholder group members. These individuals potentially include action team lead contact persons, PEP regional staff, other division employees, area community members, and families involved in the PEP initiative in the related counties.*

### **Action Team Catchment Area**

The **Effingham Action Team** encompasses the following counties listed below:

- Effingham
- Fayette
- Jasper

### **University Partner Activity Overview**

During fiscal year 2018 the Department of Children and Family Services worked with the University Partner (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville- SIUE) to retain faculty researchers and graduate students (who serve in the role of PEP Action Team Community Liaisons) to explore barriers to permanency, including but not limited to trends in racial disparity and disproportionality as it impacts child outcomes in the Southern Region of Illinois.

During the year, the Department of Children and Family Services Quality Assurance Department did not provide updated annual county level permanency data. Thus, this report is based on the last data received. That data was received in Quarter 4 of FY 2016. Consequently, the analytic report, provided by the University research team documents permanencies, by age and race, over the current 2019 fiscal year. This data analysis will be provided in a **supplementary Permanency Action Team Data Report**.

In addition to analyzing permanency data, the PEP Community Liaison (University Graduate Student **Sriteja Vangala**) contacted representatives who had been identified as leaders of the **Effingham action team** and explored PEP goals, accomplishments, barriers and activities. Communication with the following individuals occurred:

Name	Role in DCFS or PEP Action Team
Robert Cain	Co-Chair, DCFS

Research Assistant made couple of attempts to gather information about Effingham Action Team, out of which only one was successful and rest was unsuccessful.

### **Context of Permanency Barriers for Action Team Catchment Area**

*This section includes a list of the permanency barriers discussed by action team members that are prevalent in the action team catchment area.*

- Low Action Team Membership
- Members from private organizations in fluctuation
- DCFS staff fluctuations, transitions
- Large area covered with three rural counties
- Place, Space logistic challenges (i.e. travel across distance, time, and convenient/accessible location for all)
- No current data for the current fiscal year 2018 was provided by the Division, so current service and permanency data trends are based on data provided in 2016. FY2016 was the last time data was received from the Division.

*This section provides a discussion of the permanency barriers identified above. This discussion is based on information provided by action team members and is supported by the data presented in the supplementary report.*

Effingham Action team expressed concerned regarding the reduction of action team membership due to fluctuations in private organization members. Team also noticed fluctuations in DCFS staff. Team exhibits challenges faced with large area covered with three rural counties. Team also expresses logistic challenges in travelling long distances and the time invested in doing so.

## **Fiscal Year 2019 Action Team Goals**

*This section includes a current list of goals identified by the action team membership.*

- Re-constitute the Action team.
- Maintain the action team membership.

## **Action Team Goal Related Activity Overview**

*Team has no formal activities. Team continues to meet quarterly to discuss the permanency.*

## **Discussion of Action Team Activities to Improve Permanency in the Catchment Area**

Team is currently re-constituting action team and renewing membership. Team is considering more targeted approach to address logistic challenges (i.e. focus on one county at a time; create Action Team Subcommittee for regions if necessary). Team is focusing on exploring innovative communication strategies (i.e. phone conference call or video conference meetings such as Skype to overcome barriers with traveling time and accessibility).

## **Action Team Next Steps:**

Team focuses on continuity to build Action Team membership by outreach to identify new potential members and set regular meeting schedule for Action Team and market to constituents and prospective members. Team is identifying the necessary resources and capabilities to engage in innovative, efficient communication strategies, such as conference calls and videoconferencing. Team is conducting the survey to assess support needs of 'Action Team' to garner ongoing specified support form University partner which will further specify work with local community.

The University Partner will continue to support this team's efforts by:

- ✓ Helping the action team revitalize their operation
- ✓ Helping them understand data trends
- ✓ Maintaining communication with team members and division leaders

- ✓ Provide guidance on the implementation of action team goals.

***\* To see dates of contact and method of communication please refer to attached contact log document***

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