



Permanency Enhancement Project Technical Assistance Annual Report Update

Southern Region Sparta Action Team

This two-part report provides an update of all PEP Action Team and University Partner activities during the 2018 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 **Sparta Action Team** encompasses the following counties listed below:

- **Monroe**
- **Randolph**
- **Washington**

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 2016 period and not 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 **Sparta action team** and explored PEP goals, accomplishments, barriers and activities. Communication with the following individuals occurred:

Name	Role in DCFS or PEP Action Team
Tina Simpson	Sparta Action Team Leader

Research assistant was able to make successful contacts with action team leaders during PEP steering committee meeting.

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.

- There is a challenge in maintaining the staffing within the Action Team
- Lack of resources for foster care parents

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.

Sparta action team faced/facing challenges with the staffing shortages in the team. Lack of membership has been stood as a barrier in addressing the permanency. Team has also been facing issues in conducting formal meetings due to lack of membership. Despite of the barriers, team managed communication with community partners and constituents as needed to move forward. Team expressed concerns with the difficulty in recruiting and sustaining the action team members.

Fiscal Year 2019 Action Team Goals

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

- Action team is working on to conduct the formal meetings with the memberships
- Action team’s goal is to maintain the staffing in the team
- Action team continues meetings with state attorney in addressing permanency
- Action team continues conducting online training to foster care parents

Action Team Goal Related Activity Overview

Action team has no formal activities due to low membership and no meetings for the year. Action team's major goal is to maintain the membership in order to address permanency.

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

Action team has been diligently working to address the permanency by meeting with state attorney to address any roadblocks. Team has also been working on specific identified needs with attorneys and court systems. Team leader has been facing chaotic situations regarding staffing of the team. Action Team has been working on maintaining the team membership in order to address the permanency. This being the reason, team has not been active in FY18-19 year. Thus, team is focusing on potential online trainings for foster parents and efforts towards community engagement to encourage foster parent recruitment.

Action Team Next Steps:

Team is in consideration of full team meetings as needed and also would continue to develop and engage in partnership with court systems and attorneys. Team is planning to work on maintaining the Action team membership by outreaching the community partners and thus address the permanency without any discrepancies.

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.

Attached you will find related meeting minutes, correspondence, event flyers, and/or other relevant materials that document Action Team activities.

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