DRAFT Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel (ORPC): Pre-Filing Representation

Goals: Promote long-term family strengthening and protect the fundamental right to parent by providing proactive legal support to parents before a child welfare case is filed.

Objectives



Inputs

Activities



Outputs



Outcomes

Objective 1.

Prevent children from being removed from home and placed in foster care

Objective 2.

Prevent initial involvement and/or further penetration into the child welfare system

Objective 3.

Provide excellent interdisciplinary client-centered representation

Objective 4.

Support continuity of representation for respondent parents

ORPC develops a model for pre-filing representation

Referrals from partner agencies (e.g., DHS, TANF) and mechanism for self-referrals

Trained ORPC contractors: attorneys, social workers, and family and parent advocates

Network of service partners (e.g., community-based orgs, government agencies)

Complementary civil legal service providers (e.g., Colorado Legal Services [CLS])

Implementation team, data collection systems, and in-house research analyst

ORPC Activities (Referrals and Screening)

Promote the program and build relationships with referring agencies

Conduct eligibility screen and direct referrals

ORPC Activities (for Referrals Not Eligible)

Offer explanation and if appropriate, provide referrals or resources

ORPC Activities (Ongoing Improvement)

Use analysis to advance program improvement, inform program scale, and promote equity conditions

Pre-Filing Team Activities (for Eligible referrals)

Initial case planning: collaboratively assess family strengths and legal needs

- Build a clientcentered team
- Provide legal assistance/ representation
- Hold state accountable to its burden
- Make referrals to partner organizations (e.g., CLS)
- Support the client outside of court (e.g., referrals, applications, system navigation)
- Follow up at 6, 12, and 24 months to assess stability and new/reemerging legal needs. Re-open case if needed.

Number and sources of referrals into the program

Reasons why incoming referrals were/were not eligible

Type of referrals made for non-eligible representation

Completed intake forms include documentation of family strengths, legal needs, and service plan

Time spent on cases, by billing category, including:

- Client communication
- Advocacy services provided
- Service referrals made

Case **Outcomes**

Parental Legal Needs Addressed

- Referral accepted by Colorado Legal Services or other organizations for housing
- Resolved housing issue
- Obtained or modified a guardianship order
- Obtained or modified civil protection order
- Obtained, modified, or enforced a custody order
- Established parentage
- Resolved criminal issues (resolved warrant. sealed/expunged criminal record, deregistered from sex offender registry)
- Obtained legal status

Other Outcomes

- Removed from child abuse registry
- Accessed public benefits
- Obtained community services
- Obtained education intervention for child
- Increased financial stability

Client **Experiences**

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Client-centered representation

Procedural fairness

Respectful and inclusive advocacy support

Child Welfare Involvement

Child Welfare Involvement

Prevention of level of child welfare involvement, such

- Filing of D&N case
- Child remains at home
- Kinship placement
- Length of the child welfare case (voluntary and court-involved)
- Re-entry into child welfare system

services

driven by issues related to poverty, joblessness, substandard housing, and other situations that could be remediated through the provision of legal

Equity

Outcomes

disproportionality of

Decreased

child welfare

parents and

children with

disabilities)

involvement (by

race/ethnicity, for

Fewer incidents of

"removal reasons"

with family - Earlier return home

- Increased likelihood of keeping children home or

In Cases where a child welfare case is open,

Parents Receive Continuity of Support

- Improved family experience

- More efficiency and cost savings for ORPC legal team and/or Child Welfare case costs

Target Population: Indigent parents with unresolved legal needs whose children are at risk for being removed from the home. (Candidates under Family First)

Assumptions: Indigent parents with unresolved legal needs lack access to timely and quality legal advocacy. Families with unresolved legal problems are vulnerable to child welfare involvement. Trauma to children is reduced when parents are provided prevention and supports to keep families together. Families need assistance navigating the complexities of the legal system and exercising their legal rights before child welfare related court involvement.