

FY11 Annual Progress Report
Muscatine County Decategorization
Project

Submitted by:
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1) Summarize the project's key activities during the previous fiscal year:

Muscatine County Decategorization Project's intention for fiscal year 2011 was to stay true to the mission of Decategorization, helping youth and families by enhancing the infrastructure to include strength based services that are preventive, family centered and community-based in order to reduce use of restrictive approaches that rely on institutional, out-of-home, and out-of-community care to meet the diverse needs of the community. Muscatine County Decategorization continues to use the report that was written in response to the community forum hosted by Cedar County and Muscatine County Decategorization on March 8, 2010 as a guide (See Attachment A). Information gathered at the community forum revealed that agencies are working with individuals experiencing a higher level of stress and more people are seeking community-based assistance. Participants also discussed poor communication between local human services, clientele, and legislators.

Muscatine County Decategorization continues to utilize an email distribution list that has increased over the last year; currently there are approximately 25 individuals on the list including State Legislators. One week prior to a Decategorization Board meeting the Muscatine County Decategorization Coordinator emails information regarding the meeting, including agendas to everyone on the distribution list. This community email list is a convenient way to distribute Request for Proposals (RFP) notices, program information, meeting agendas, job listings, and upcoming trainings. This strategy has increased the number of public attending our Decategorization meetings. This method was helpful during the release of the Parent Partner RFP to cover Cedar, Des Moines, Henry, Lee, Louisa, Muscatine, and Scott Counties.

In order to stay in tune with the needs of the community, Muscatine County Decategorization staff members continue to participate on numerous community planning committees, community outreach, and training opportunities. The following is a list of the current meetings and trainings attended by Muscatine County Decategorization staff:

- 7th Judicial District Summit
- Statewide DMC
- Parent Partner Project Management Team
- National Association of Social Workers Iowa Chapter
- St. Ambrose Master of Social Work Continuing Education Committee
- United Way of Muscatine Agency Association Meeting
- Muscatine Director/Provider Meetings
- NASW Disproportionality Diversity Work Group
- Iowa Permanency Summit
- Voices for the Silenced: Affirming & Empowering Approaches to Working With GLBT Youth, Racial Minority Youth, & Siblings in the Child Welfare System
- 4th Annual Mental Health Awareness Conference
- Disentangling Disproportionality: Race, Poverty, and the Overrepresentation of Children of Color in the Child Welfare System

Muscatine County Decategorization also continues to use the plan that was developed in fiscal year 2010 for building capacity and achieving outcomes (See Attachment B). Weaving together program requirements with board decision-making assists Decategorization Board members to focus on effective programming and fiscal accountability.

2) Describe the project's progress in reaching the desired outcomes of their project plan during the previous state fiscal year:

Muscatine County Decategorization identified the following goals in the fiscal year 2011 annual plan: improve services in the community that will assist in the achievement of the Child and Family Service Review outcomes of child well-being, safety and permanency; to keep youth from entering the more expensive child welfare and juvenile justice systems and to ensure a safe and permanent exit from those systems if already involved; to maintain positive leadership role in the community and a reputation for excellence through the continuity of qualified staff and board members; and to continue to be fiscally responsible with state funds. Muscatine County Decategorization was successful in meeting all goals identified in fiscal year 2011.

Muscatine County Decategorization achieved these goals by maintaining active relationships with community stakeholders, participating in and initiating community planning processes, working closely with the Iowa Department of Human Services and Juvenile Court Services, providing professional development opportunities to assist with staff development, completing all required contractual training as identified by the state of Iowa, promoting the importance of the 28E, and by maintaining a subcontract with Bi-State Regional Commission for the purposes of obtaining necessary financial and personnel services.

Muscatine County Decategorization stayed true to the mission of Decategorization with all contracts. Programs that were funded in fiscal year 2011 had projected outcomes to keep youth out of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, improving family functioning, improving the educational wellbeing of children, and increasing informal family supports. These outcomes were closely monitored by the Decategorization Coordinator and were reported to the Muscatine County Executive Board. During Decategorization Board meetings the members reviewed the outcomes and gave input on modifications and recommendations to contract holders.

3) Describe any planning adjustments and lessons learned during the fiscal year:

The Muscatine County Decategorization Board has always tried to find ways of implementing preventative, stable funding within our service area to better assist youth and families. In previous years this has been difficult due to the administrative rules in Iowa Code Chapter 232.188, Decategorization projects were permitted to carryover unspent funding for one additional year. However, Decategorization sites are not notified of the carryover amount until October or November which has limited the competitive bidding process and the ability to execute a long term contract and

effectively begin a new service prior to the end of the fiscal year. DHS contracting specialists outline that an RFP process can take anywhere from six to nine months to complete, which in return makes it challenging for new programs to get started. Contractors have a short amount of time to hire and train staff, become established in the community, and have an effective referral process. Decategorization board members and contractors have been reluctant to take the considerable financial risks to embark on such projects when they do not know if the project can be sustained from year to year due to the unstable carryover funding process.

Nevertheless, Muscatine County Decategorization staff remained committed to educating local legislators about the funding regulations. Local legislators were invited to Decategorization board meetings and community events. During fiscal year 2011 legislative changes were made in House File 649 allowing Muscatine County Decategorization to carry forward funds for two succeeding years, which will allow the board to make more impactful decisions to meet community needs.

4) Muscatine County Decat Funded Programs

Project 1) Summer Community Services, DCAT8-08-299, Lutheran Services in Iowa

Description:

This contract provides Summer Community Services for youth ages 12-17 who reside in Muscatine County who have been court-ordered to provide community service as a consequence for problem behavior and to monitor progress toward identified outcomes.

Key Activities:

The Performance Measures for this service are:

- 75% youth completed their community service hours designated by their Juvenile Court Officer for the summer program
- 50% of youth will avoid new delinquency charges for a period of six months after completion of their community service hours.

Progress in reaching desired outcomes:

- 50% youth completed their community service hours designated by their Juvenile Court Officer for the summer program
- 83.5% of youth avoided new delinquency charges for a period of six months after completion of their community service hours.

Planning adjustments and lessons learned:

The performance measure "75% of youth will complete their community service hours designated by their Juvenile Court Officer for the summer program" replaced an old performance measure of "75% of youth will complete their community service hours" during the middle of the fiscal year. Due to this change the 50% may not be accurate. The Decategorization Coordinator expects this percentage to increase for FY12. This contract was renewed for another year.

Expenditures:

FY11 Contract Amount: \$15,000.00

FY11 Total Expended: \$9,274.53

**Project 2) Family Advocacy Program, DCAT8-10-037, Muscatine County
Community Services****Description:**

This contract provides outreach, mental health treatment, crisis intervention and advocacy for children who have been diagnosed with a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder of sufficient duration to meet diagnostic criteria specified in the DSM-IV during the preceding year.

Key Activities:

The Performance Measures for this service are:

- 75% of the children who were successfully discharged will have no involvement with the Department of Human Services 6 months after discharge.
- 75% of the children who were successfully discharged will have no involvement with the Juvenile Court System 6 months after discharge.
- 50% of current participants will not have had a new psychiatric hospitalization while participating in the program.
- 80% of families will have added one informal support upon successful discharge from the program.

Progress in reaching desired outcomes:

- 100% of the children who were successfully discharged had no involvement with DHS 6 months after discharge
- 99.75% of the children who were successfully discharged had no involvement with the Juvenile Court System 6 months after discharge
- 94.25% of current participants had no new psychiatric hospitalization while participating in the program
- 100% of families had one informal support added upon successful discharge from the program.

Planning adjustments and lessons learned:

Contract was renewed for another year.

Expenditures:

FY11 Contract Amount: \$100,000.00

FY11 Total Expended: \$87,872.73

Project 3) Muscatine Brief Intensive Services (BIS), DCAT3-11-133, Muscatine County Community Services

Description:

This contract provides in-home family-centered brief intensive services to children (age six to seventeen) in Muscatine County who are not currently involved with and who are at-risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system and/or child welfare system. This program also provides services to families who are in the process of exiting or have been discharged from the Iowa Department of Human Services and/or Juvenile Court Services.

Key Activities:

The Performance Measures for this service are:

- 90% of children and families will have no involvement in the child welfare system.
- 90% of children and families will have no involvement in the juvenile court system.
- 75% of families will show improvement in family functioning
- 75% of families will have at least one informal support added at the close of the case
- 60% of school age children will improve school performance (i.e., behavior, truancy, and/or homework completion) by the close of services and maintain this level for 3 months after services are completed.

Progress in reaching desired outcomes:

- 94% of children and families had no involvement in the child welfare system.
- 100% of children and families will have no involvement in the juvenile court system.
- 92% of families showed improvement in family functioning
- 100% of families had at least one informal support added at the close of the case
- 100% of school age children will improve their school performance (i.e., behavior, truancy, and/or homework completion) by the close of services and maintain this level for 3 months after services are completed.

Planning adjustments and lessons learned:

This contract began in November 2010 and has been renewed for another year at a lower dollar amount.

Expenditures:

FY11 Contract Amount: \$80,000.00

FY11 Total Expended: \$14,004.05

Project 4) Strengthening Families, DCAT3-11-131, Muscatine County Extension Council

Description:

This contract provides the Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth ages 10-14 who reside in Muscatine County. The program is delivered within parent, youth, and family sessions. The Strengthening Families Program is aimed at preventing teen substance abuse and other behavior problems; strengthening parenting skills; and building family strengths. The Strengthening Families Program is a prevention program promoted to all families, but especially target families that are at risk of having their children in out of home placement, has children with behavioral problems, and who are currently involved with the Iowa Department of Human Services and/or Juvenile Court System.

Key Activities:

The Performance Measures for this service are:

- 100% of sessions will be held
- 100% of families will be given a pre and post test to help determine program success
- 90% of families who enroll in the program will complete the program
- 90% of parents will feel they have better parenting skills upon completion of the program
- 90% of youth will indicate that they feel more confident standing up to peer pressure after completing the program
- 100% of Muscatine County School Districts will receive information about the program
- After 6 months of completing the program, 80% of the youth will have had no contact with the Juvenile Court System for charges of alcohol, drugs or inappropriate conduct
- After 6 months of completing the program, 80% of families will have had no contact with the Iowa Department of Human Services.

Progress in reaching desired outcomes:

- 100% of sessions were held
- 100% of families were given a pre and post test to help determine program success
- 83% of families who enroll in the program completed the program
- 100% of parents felt they have better parenting skills upon completion of the program
- 97.5% of youth indicated that they feel more confident standing up to peer pressure after completing the program
- 100% of Muscatine County School Districts received information about the program
- Unknown % of youth having no contact with the Juvenile Court System 6 months after completing the program for charges of alcohol, drugs or inappropriate conduct

- Unknown % of families having no contact with the Iowa Department of Human Services 6 months after completing the program

Planning adjustments and lessons learned:

Muscatine Decategorization Board chose not to renew this contract due to funding cuts and other local priorities. Contract ended June 30, 2011.

Expenditures:

FY11 Contract Amount: \$24,000.00

FY11 Total Expended: \$14,813.54

Project 5) Muscatine County CPPC, DCFS-07-029, Muscatine Safe Streets

Description:

The contract provides leadership and coordination of activities to implement the Community Partnership for the Protection of Children (CPPC) Initiative in Muscatine, Iowa.

Key Activities:

The Performance Measures for this service are:

- A decrease in the number of Calls for Service to the Department of Human Services from year-to-year.
- A decrease in the number of calls to the Muscatine Police Department from year-to-year.
- An increase in the number of participants attending Neighborhood Meetings and Trainings from year-to-year.
- Neighborhood councils represented on the Shared Decision-Making Board no later than September 1, 2008.

Progress in reaching desired outcomes:

- Performance measures were amended in April 2011, which did not give the contractor enough time to report on. For FY12 the contract was renewed and decreased to \$20,000.00.

Planning adjustments and lessons learned:

Contract was renewed for another year.

Expenditures:

FY11 Contract Amount: \$40,000.00

FY11 Total Expended: \$39,071.82

Project 6) Decat Coordination, DCAT-07-029, Scott County Decategorization

Description:

This contract provides Decategorization Coordination and support services for the Muscatine County Decategorization Project.

Key Activities:

The Performance Measures for this service are:

- 100% of board meetings conducted by Decategorization staff shall be conducted by the State of Iowa open meeting laws.
- 100% of contracts will be implemented according to DHS contracting guidelines as they are published at the time the contract is written.
- 95% of bills will be submitted to Bi-State Regional Commission within 5 business days upon receipt by Scott County Decategorization unless there is an error on the bill that the Decategorization Coordinator is resolving prior to submission to Bi-State Regional Commission.

Progress in reaching desired outcomes:

- 100% of board meetings conducted by Decategorization staff were conducted by the State of Iowa open meeting laws.
- 100% of contracts were implemented according to DHS contracting guidelines as they are published at the time the contract is written.
- 100% of bills were submitted to Bi-State Regional Commission within 5 business days upon receipt by Scott County Decategorization unless there was an error on the bill that the Decategorization Coordinator is resolving prior to submission to Bi-State Regional Commission.

Planning adjustments and lessons learned:

Contract was renewed for another year.

Expenditures:

FY11 Contract Amount: \$10,000.00

FY11 Total Expended: \$9,931.73

Project 7) Victim Restitution, DCAT3-11-042, 7th Judicial Branch of the State of Iowa

Description:

The Judicial Branch will act as the employer of record and perform the payroll functions for the juveniles enrolled in the Seventh Judicial District Juvenile Court Services Victim Restitution Program.

Key Activities:

The State Court Administrator will perform all payroll functions within the time required by law and submit monthly payment vouchers and supporting documents.

The Judicial Branch acted as the employer of record and performed the payroll functions for the juveniles enrolled in the Seventh Judicial District Juvenile Court Services Victim Restitution Program.

Progress in reaching desired outcomes:

N/A

Planning adjustments and lessons learned:

This contract has been identified as a priority by Juvenile Court and a new contract has been developed for FY12.

Expenditures:

FY11 Contract Amount: \$3,000.00

FY11 Total Expended: \$1,625.31

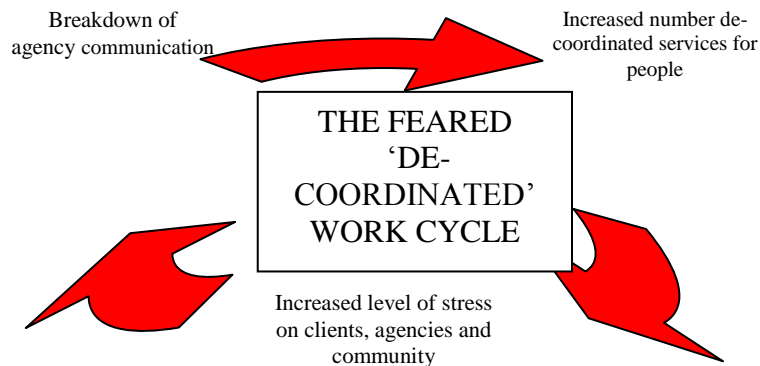
Attachment A:
Cedar and Muscatine Community Forum
March 8, 2010
Facilitated by: Cedar and Muscatine Counties Decategorization

Local area public, private, state and community-based agencies gathered to discuss the impact of the local economy is having on their agency and how they are responding to the current social and economic situation. The agency representatives were candid with their answers concerning short and long term challenges and short and long term solutions for their agency, community at large, and the citizens of Cedar and Muscatine Counties.

The participants discussed the consistent reduction of funding from the State of Iowa as a result of lower State revenues. The decrease of dollars has increased the number of people accessing and utilizing the current social service delivery system. Furthermore, people seeking services present with more complex and intensive needs. Local agencies are struggling with how to provide more specialized services during a time when identified gaps in services are increasing.

The forum members discussed there was a higher level of stress being experienced by individual agencies, as well as, their specific population served. As additional people are seeking community-based assistance, it is unclear where the entry point of services is located in the community. This is true for practitioners; members shared how individually they are the broker of information in assisting clients in navigating the system. This informal support system was identified as a successful business model in the community however, as agencies' funding and time become more restricted members are concerned with fragmentation of services.

Figure 1 represents the cycle the community would like to avoid during this economic downtime.



The perception among the participants was that there will be a decrease in funding for social service programming in FY 11. The consensus of the attendees is to continue to rely on internal knowledge and positive interagency relationships. Agency personnel will share information and program changes, a structure to receive update information that will assist clients to navigate the

social service system successfully. This collaborative style of communication is a long standing practice in the communities. For agencies to meet the higher demand for their services, working harder will not overcome the barriers of *time*. As the informal communication system currently functions it can be a drain on agency resources in attempting to locate the right person with the specific information.

Here is a brief list of examples shared:

- There is not a clear pattern of communication between local agencies and schools
- Muscatine United Way 211 is underutilized and contains limited information
- No formally supported multiagency meetings
- Lack of information about Decategorization programs and processes
- Lack of coordinated communication system between agencies

The communication topic shifted focus and began to reveal the potential root cause of the challenges. The group discussed how there is a break in communication between local human services, clientele, and legislators. Legislation sessions can be time consuming, difficult to understand, and difficult to obtain information about. In addition, the client population served by human service providers generally do not vote. In the human service field, the people seeking services are families that are not heard, marginalized by institutions and have diverse backgrounds which limit their interactions with the legislative system such as: persons with convicted felonies, of illegal immigrant status, and with limited cognitive abilities. This complicates the ability to inform legislators of effective programs, gaps in services for children and youth, and rally constituents to advocate for services with legislators. This process results in less local program awareness and less funding which are all unintended outcomes for children and families.

As this pattern unfolds, the participants reveal the agency's reality when they are faced with funding obstacles. The figure below captures the agency barriers and how these barriers influence practice and programming to children and families.

Agency struggles:

- Influx of new client population
- Insurance reimbursement does not pay for necessary intensive programming
- Lack of stable funding for programming
- Sliding scale fees not being paid by clients
- Lack of formal interagency meetings
- DHS staff reductions

Gaps in services for children/youth:

- DHS and JCS transitional services
- Transportation to all appointments, school and community functions, parents to and from work
- Lack of crisis Intervention services
- Decreased number of prevention programs
- Local programming is structured for specific ages not to address overall client needs
- Decreased number of family based services and more limited services to families who work 2nd and 3rd shift
- Limited programming specific to the needs of teens

The participant goals are:

- Increase awareness in legislative issues to include mental health
- Attend coffees or community meetings with legislators to advise on local and agency issues
- Kick off legislative session with a formal meeting with legislators
- Share information with other agencies to increase effectiveness and decrease agency staff anxiety
- Engage school members
- Reconvene Directors Meetings to share agency information
- Reconnect with United Way and connection between services
- Create a link system to share training information, agency updates, and other info

The lingering theme of the day was: being internally intentional. Having a clear purpose will allow us to remain collaborative partners if in the future tough choices arise.

The Decategorization programs of Cedar and Muscatine Counties appreciates the investment of the forum participants in their communities. Thank you for your time and sharing your thoughts during the forum.

Attachment B:
DECATEGORIZATION: BUILDING CAPACITY AND ACHIEVING OUTCOMES

