

COUNCIL ACTION ITEM

2011-12 PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS for Teen Time After-School, ARMs, Teen Time, and La Promesa (May 2011)

Executive Director Recommendation

Background Information (*brief history of the situation*): The mission of the Children's Services Council is to improve the quality of life for all children in St. Lucie County. To accomplish our mission, we develop and financially support systems of care that currently reach over 25,000 children and families in St. Lucie County. The systems of care are comprised of programs that provide direct services to St. Lucie County's children and families. All this is done with accountability to the tax payers of St. Lucie County.

In 1990, when the Children's Services Council was established in St. Lucie County, one of its first priorities was teen pregnancy prevention. At the time, St. Lucie County's teen pregnancy rate was over twice that of the State. With a continued focus on this priority through 20 years of funding and supporting services, the teen pregnancy rate has been reduced over 70%. For the first time, the rate in St. Lucie County is below the State rate. This has been accomplished by the development and access of evidence-based programs and systems to educate both youth and parents.

Regarding the teen pregnancy prevention priority, the Children's Services Council – the board and staff – over the last four years have been inundated with local resident concerns regarding a component of our system of care to reduce teen pregnancy. The expressed concern is not always with the service being provided, but with one agency providing such services, Planned Parenthood.

The Children's Services Council board has addressed these concerns by adopting an open ended application process three years ago and by encouraging (at Council meetings) those with concerns to apply to provide services to reduce teen pregnancy. Additionally, six months ago, the Council discussed the possibility of releasing program applications for open competition annually. As recently as February, the Council requested staff to develop a list of potential alternative providers to the services currently being offered by Planned Parenthood.

Current Situation (*why it is being brought to Council now*): Staff believes the program services offered through Planned Parenthood - Teen Time After-School Program, Teen Time, La Promesa and Adult Role Models programs, fall into two categories:

- Teen Time After-School –long-term, comprehensive, research-based after-school/summer program for teens which focuses on positive decision-making, health, academics, arts, athletics, and career preparation.
- Teen Time, La Promesa, ARMS – educational services that target teens, faith organizations and parents to promote increased parent/adolescent communication to delay the onset of sexual activity.

I believe that in order to truly assess whether or not there are alternative agencies that can more effectively provide services to reduce teen pregnancy, a formal request for proposal needs to be released in the following areas:

- 1) Comprehensive, research based year-round after-school and summer programs to serve teens that involves the family with special consideration for Creole and Spanish speaking families in a research based program model. (up to \$255,000)
- 2) Pregnancy prevention education services that serve the entire community including Spanish and Creole speaking populations that involve both the child and parent. (up to \$230,000)

Action (*requested or required of Council*): The Council is being asked to approve the following timeline for release of two Program Proposal applications:

- June 9th – Council approval of Program Proposal application
- June 13th release of Program Proposal application
- June 27th bidder's conference
- August 1st Proposals Due
- August 8th – August 26th (staff and community review)
- September 8th (special meeting prior to TRIM hearings – 2nd & 3rd Wed)– Council action on funding recommendations
- October 1 contract start date for funded proposals

Strengths:

- Timeline for application release allows for no gaps in service provision
- Release of applications provides an opportunity to enhance the current system of care including a possible consolidation of costs and streamlining of service delivery

Concerns:

- None

Recommendation: The Children's Services Council of St. Lucie County is responsible to our community – its children and families, and the taxpayers. Central to accomplishing our mission of improving the quality of life for all children is providing financial support to programs and services. I believe the release of the application and its timeline supports our mission, St. Lucie County's children and families, and the taxpayers.