

## THE ROLE AND INTENT OF COMMUNITY ALLIANCES IN FLORIDA

### Why do the Alliances exist?

- To support the Department of Children & Families (DCF) with the “intent to encourage communities and other stakeholders in the well-being of children to participate in assuring that children are safe and well-nurtured.”
  - The Community Alliance is not a direct authority over the Department, but constitutes a collaborative partnership relationship.
  - The Community Alliance exercises a determining influence on the outcomes of children and their families.
- As a collaborative partnership where systems and families come together, the alliances gives communities the opportunity to strategically plan for a better system of care and better outcomes for their own citizens.
- The role and function of Alliances is essential for the Department to more effectively carry out its mission “to work in partnership with local communities.”
- Alliances are the central point of contact for broad-based community input and interagency coordination.

### How do the Alliances help?

On July 1, 2000 House Bill 2125 became effective as FS 20.19 (6) (a): “The Department shall, in consultation with local communities, establish a community alliance of stakeholders, community leaders, client representatives and funders of human services in each county to provide a focal point for community participation and governance of community-based services.”

- Local communities are best able to determine the diversity of services needed for local children and their families.
- Involving the consumer families and youth in the determination of services and desired results are key factors in this initiative.
- The local community, as represented in part by the Alliance membership, is the lynch pin to the success of the Community-Based Care initiative.

**Community Alliances may establish workgroups to address specific issues.** These workgroups may include stakeholders who are not members of the Community Alliance including: local providers, department staff, advocacy groups, consumers, and others with an ability and willingness to participate.

### **The collaborative partnerships between the Department, local Lead Agencies and the community rely on many partnerships between key local stakeholders:**

- The dependency court judges
- An effective, high-quality, not-for-profit Lead Agency
- The Department of Children & Families
- A community Alliance, for which the Legislature mandated seven core members including representatives from County government and Children’s Services Council, as well as
- Collaboration and communication between service agencies, families and advocates