

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