



WHAT TO EXPECT

It is the expectation of the Legislative Assembly and DHS, that by implementing this program and making this change to current practice and service provision, we will achieve the following:

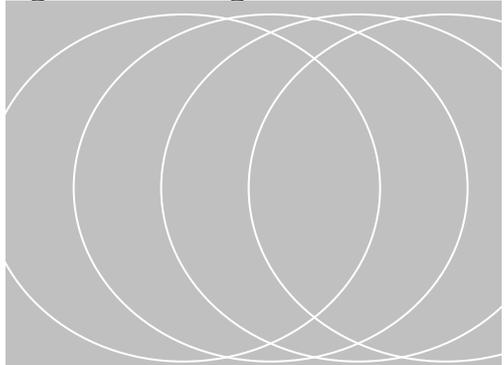
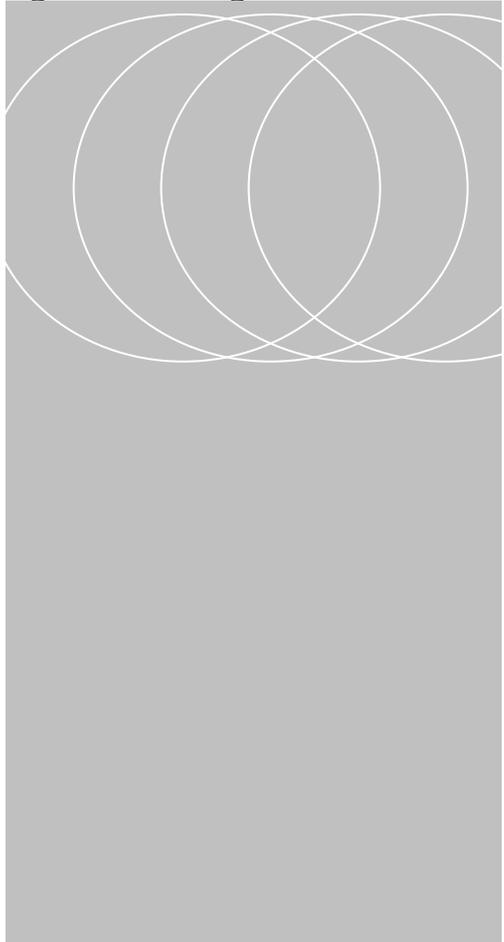
1. Reduction in the number of children entering foster care and reduction in their length of stay in foster care.
2. CPS involvement is less traumatic to children and families.
3. Families receive family-focused services timely, while children remain safely at home.
4. Better collaboration between DHS and its county partners, especially when providing appropriate and necessary services to families.
5. Better outcomes for children and families.



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Strengthening, Preserving, and Reunifying Families (SPRF) Programs

Updates and Implementation Plan

A graphic consisting of three overlapping circles arranged in a triangular pattern, set against a grey background. The circles are white outlines and overlap in the center and at the intersections between pairs of circles.

SENATE BILL 964

- STRENGTHENING
- PRESERVING
- REUNIFYING

June 29th, 2011 – Governor John Kitzhaber signed into law Senate Bill 964, which requires the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare to provide extensive services to each family throughout the life of the case.

The focus of the directive is to reduce the amount of trauma to children and families, by way of offering additional family-focused services starting at the assessment phase of the case and extending into aftercare services when children are returned to their families.

The legislative assembly made several findings¹ regarding best practice

- 1.** Severe trauma may occur when children are removed from their families, resulting in negative future outcomes.
- 2.** Improving permanency outcomes for children is most likely achieved when services are offered that allow children to remain in their homes when appropriate and safe.
- 3.** Keeping families intact while services are provided preserves Child-Parent bonds and

improves outcomes for children and families.

4. If children are placed into care, their duration of stay and level of trauma is lessened when family-focused services and routine visits are offered early and often. Additionally, continuing services should be offered to children and families when children return to their parents or caregivers.

5. Housing is essential to the safe reduction of the number of children in foster care.

Legislation mandates that by October 1st, 2012 DHS will implement this program and its services

WHAT WILL CHANGE

The specific programs implemented as a result of SB964 will include an array of services, which depending on resources and availability may include the following:

Mental Health and Drug Treatment providers will accompany DHS staff during the initial visit when responding to an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

DHS staff and Community Providers will work with the family in addressing safety concerns, developing safety plans, and facilitating services and visitation.

DHS and its partners will provide culturally competent services that are evidence-based or evidence-informed.

DHS and its partners will provide immediate access to supervised drug-free emergency and short-term housing.

DHS will provide family-finding services to identify extended family to help with support, resources, or alternative placement options.

UPDATES & IMPLEMENTATION

As of February 2012, three counties have been identified to pilot the SPRF program; Jackson, Clackamas, and Malheur Counties. Since that time, these counties have participated in a Service Needs Assessment and GAP Analysis to identify the current service and resource needs to support the SPRF program in their areas. Additionally, a budget has been allocated to each of the counties to support their efforts.

The Department has made efforts in identifying specific Community Providers and has begun the contract process to obtain their services for eligible families. Furthermore, the Department has identified additional programs that may need assistance to begin offering related services to the identified counties.

The Department is developing a communication plan and training to orient staff to the change of procedure to comply with SB964. During implementation, the program will be closely monitored in each of the areas and a comparison of the outcome data to the goals and expected outcomes of the program will occur. Strategically, additional counties will be added, with a goal of having the SPRF program implemented fully across the State of Oregon.

¹ Source:

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/11reg/measpdf/sb0900.dir/sb0964.en.pdf>