



# Permanency Enhancement Project Technical Assistance Annual Report Update

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## **Southern Region Mt. Vernon Action Team**

*This two-part report provides an update of all PEP Action Team and University Partner activities during the 2019 fiscal year (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019). Information herein is based off of communication and correspondence with key Action Team members and all other stakeholder group members. These individuals potentially include action team lead contact persons, PEP regional staff, other division employees, area community members, and families involved in the PEP initiative in the related counties.*

### **Action Team Catchment Area**

*The Mt. Vernon Action Team encompasses the following counties listed below:*

- Jefferson
- Marion

### **University Partner Activity Overview**

During fiscal year 2019 the Department of Children and Family Services worked with the University Partner (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville- SIUE) to retain faculty researchers and graduate students (who serve in the role of PEP Action Team Community Liaisons) to explore barriers to permanency, including but not limited to trends in racial disparity and disproportionality as it impacts child outcomes in the Southern Region of Illinois.

During the year, the Department of Children and Family Services Quality Assurance Department did not provide updated annual county level permanency data. Thus, this report is based on the last data received. That data was received in Quarter 4 of FY 2019. Consequently, the analytic report, provided by the University research team documents permanencies, by age and race, over the current 2019 fiscal year. This data analysis will be provided in a **supplementary Permanency Action Team Data Report**.

In addition to analyzing permanency data, the PEP Community Liaison (University Graduate Student **Gideon Nketsia Sampson** contacted representatives who had been identified as leaders of the **Mt. Vernon action team** and explored PEP goals, accomplishments, barriers and activities. Communication with the following individuals occurred:

Name	Role in DCFS or PEP Action Team
Stacey Weatherford	Action Team Chair
Misty Huff	Action Team Co-Chair

Research Assistant has made several successful contacts with the team leader through emails, phone calls and SIUE Zoom conference call in efforts to revitalize the team to its utmost operational level.

*\* To see dates of contact and method of communication please refer to attached contact log document [https://siuecougars-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/kimcart\\_siue\\_edu/EeZOqHN-wlVPsCF-hfhRWW4B0pVC4qbTwT29yb6k4U4HNQ?e=9mydOQ](https://siuecougars-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/kimcart_siue_edu/EeZOqHN-wlVPsCF-hfhRWW4B0pVC4qbTwT29yb6k4U4HNQ?e=9mydOQ)*

### **Context of Permanency Barriers for Action Team Catchment Area**

- Maintain current level of action team engagement and leadership
- Identification of community partners to help enhance action team efforts
- Not meeting regularly

Mt. Vernon Action team is diligent on permanency and actively addressing the permanency cases. The Team expresses concerns about computer system not large enough for Life books, so the entire office is updating their system in the coming months. The Team says it becomes overwhelming when the leader of the team tries to initiate a lot of projects at once. This could be delayed due to the lack of access to data. The Team emphasizes that easy access to data would accelerate the work on the projects and delivers better outcomes.

## **Fiscal Year 2018 Action Team Goals**

The team has a goal to:

- Assist families in accessing proper hygiene/skincare/hair care for kids
- Gain community support for access to dress clothes for teens and parents in need of proper interview attire.
- Develop a format for writing summaries for youth in care that puts weight on the child's present and more recent history rather than creating an image of the child from the past that is not accurate to the present.

## **Action Team Goal Related Activity Overview**

There has been any current activity in the action team since John Reeves left office. However, the team is working closely with the university partner to bring the team to its maximum operating level.

## **Discussion of Action Team Activities to Improve Permanency in the Catchment Area**

Mt. Vernon is one of the most active action team. The Team created Youth Coalition of parenting providers in the area that collaborate with DCFS. Directors of these programs are a part of the coalition and subgroups are made for the actual providers so they can report needs, gaps in services, progression, accomplishments, etc. Action also created sample for Life books. Team is also networking with area community partners. The Team is working on refining action team goals and plans of addressTeam is addressing needs identified by action team members. Team is working on Youth Coalitions/looking to improve foster parent consistency and improve proper connections for parents in the system regarding their needs.

## **Action Team Next Steps:**

For the next Fiscal year, the action team plans to work on the following:

- To operationalize the digital life book.
- Work on reinstating the quarterly meetings.
- To sustain Action Team Membership as well as attendance
- Continue to identify action team partners
- Solicit and await the arrival of updated data to continue to assess area permanency trends

The University Partner will continue to support this team's efforts by:

- ✓ Helping the action team revitalize their operation
- ✓ Helping them understand data trends
- ✓ Maintaining communication with team members and division leaders
- ✓ Provide guidance on the implementation of action team goals.

**Attached you will find related meeting minutes, correspondence, event flyers, and/or other relevant materials that document Action Team activities**

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