

[By request of involved states, this announcement was sent to the Children's Bureau, ACF Regional Offices and Child Welfare Specialists to inform them of this program and the growing state interest.]

ANNOUNCEMENT OF A NEW INITIATIVE October 2006

SUPERVISORY COMPETENCY IN SAFETY INTERVENTION DECISION MAKING

An exciting opportunity exists to address probably the largest need in CPS—expert supervision concerned with safety intervention. Alabama and Wisconsin are spearheading an idea concerned with developing supervisors into experts in safety intervention. These two states are interested in seeking out other states that might be interested in joining them in a multi-state effort to create such a program. They've asked us to spread the word about what has been developing for about a year now and, in particular, to communicate with people in the Children's Bureau, the ACF Regional Offices, Child Welfare Specialists, and others who might be interested in this project. Minimally, Alabama and Wisconsin wanted to be certain that you were informed about the history and current status of what is envisioned as a multi-state project and is currently titled the *Supervisory Competency In Safety Intervention Decision Making*.

In the fall of 2005, in Wisconsin, the question was asked. "*Why do seemingly well-conceived safety intervention model designs and countless hours of training appear to have only marginal impact on staff competency, practice and safety decision making?*" The ensuing discussion led to the conclusion that what was lacking was a most vital component in CPS safety intervention, namely, supervisory effectiveness in safety management. Given the decisive role that supervisors have in guiding safety intervention and enhancing worker competency and performance, it was concluded that it is essential that CPS supervisors be experts in safety intervention. "Boot camps," intensive, focused, rigorous, specialized, technical mastery, certification are a few of the words that were used to describe what would be required to truly develop supervisory competency in safety decision making. Perhaps it could be said that there was some passion on the part of some, a few or many, to see this idea grow into a reality and not just go away as ideas so often do. This was something that the field should incorporate into its thinking, planning and doing was the thinking of many. It was believed that it should have consequences beyond the original discussion. It was out of these conclusions and beliefs that the idea for involving other states grew.

Early in May 2006, the attached discussion paper “Expert CPS Supervisor Safety Management: Professional Development Program: Conceptual Overview and Discussion Paper” was sent to approximately 15 selected individuals along with an invitation to participate in a focus group. The group was to convene on the concluding day of the Meeting of States and Tribes, June 22, 2006. Thirteen individuals from as many states responded to the invitation and participated in the focus group. The states that were represented were Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

The focus question was: “*Is a program to develop an Expert CPS Supervisor Safety Management: Professional Development Program viable?*” The overall consensus was that the need for Expert CPS Supervisor Safety Management was critical, perhaps the most urgent need in the field of Child Welfare. The question of how would such a project be funded was raised and various possibilities were offered—federal grant, public and private foundation, and joint state efforts. It was also decided that the next step should be the preparation of a paper outlining the specifications for such projects that would include a work proposal and budget.

At the present, the attached paper “Developing Supervisory Competency in Safety Intervention Decision – Making: A Meticulous Individualized Learning Program” has been completed and distributed to states who’ve continued to demonstrate interest in the idea. Two states, Alabama and Wisconsin, have expressed an interest in convening a meeting of interested states to determine how to proceed in developing and implementing the project. As a part of a recent meeting with Alabama, it was recommended that key staff at the Children’s Bureau, the Regional Offices, Child Welfare Specialists, and other interested persons be informed of the project and its current status.

Currently a polling process is occurring to determine which states that have shown previous interest are currently open to receive an invitation from Alabama and Wisconsin to meet for the purpose of additional discussion and consideration of a multi-state effort. The hope is to convene a meeting within the next 3 months should sufficient interest exist.

If you are aware of states or individuals that you believe might have a serious interest in being involved in this process, please contact me and we will follow up. Also, as this effort continues, we’ll be pleased to keep you informed. If you have any questions, please contact me.