

DSS Policy and Procedure Guide	
Division 03: Child Welfare	Chapter 12: Staffings, MDITs, Icebreakers, TDMs
Item 007: Back-Up TDM Facilitators: Qualifications, Training, Expectations and Utilization	
Suggested changes send to: DSS PSOA Mailbox	Issued: May 18, 2012
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Policy

The Team Decision Making (TDM) Unit consists of fulltime facilitators and a scheduler. At times, it is necessary to utilize back-up facilitators to assist with TDM meeting coverage. Coverage reasons may include, but are not limited to scheduled vacation time by a fulltime facilitator, TDMs scheduled in excess of facilitator availability, and mandatory training or meeting attendance for fulltime facilitators.

Purpose

To establish performance expectations and utilization of back-up TDM facilitators.

Definitions

TDMs address the safety, permanency and well-being of children as it relates to placement. The process involves family, youth, extended support members, caregivers, service providers, community representatives, and agency staff in all decisions regarding child removal, placement changes, placement stability and reunification. TDM also helps create a network of support for children and the adults who care for them.

In TDMs for Emergency Removal, protective factors are used to form action plans that address the safety threats and enable children to safely return home with appropriate services and supports. When it is recommended that children remain out of the home to ensure their safety, the Department of Social Services (DSS) considers the least restrictive placement possible for each child that will preserve and nurture familial and community connections.

Imminent Risk of Removal TDMs are held when children remain at home and are at risk of being removed and placed into protective custody. The focus of these meetings is to provide for the child's safety and well-being and, at the same time, to preserve the family. Safety threats and protective factors are also addressed. Appropriate services and family and community supports are utilized in creating safety plans.

Placement Change TDMs are held to stabilize and support children in out-of-home placements that are in crisis. When a child cannot safely be maintained in the current placement, the focus then turns to identifying another placement that is safe, meets the child's needs, fosters educational stability is in the child's best interest, and is the least restrictive placement possible. Action plans are created to support the child and resource family and address stability and permanence.

Permanency or Reunification TDMs are held when DSS is considering plans for children to return home or plans for permanency when reunification services are being terminated. When children can safely return home, the focus of the TDM is to create an action plan that supports the transition from out-of-home care and ensures the parents have access to services and resources to meet the children's on-going needs. If reunification is unlikely to occur, the focus of the TDM will be on creating a permanent plan of adoption, guardianship, or long term foster care, and on maintaining familial and community connections for the children.

Procedure

The DSS requires a TDM to be held for all placement decisions, which may include Emergency Removal, Imminent Risk of Removal, Placement Change, and Permanency or Reunification. TDMs are conducted by trained facilitators.

Qualifications to be a Back-Up TDM Facilitator

The ideal back-up TDM facilitator is a social worker (SW) in a non-case carrying position with some flexibility to facilitate meetings on short notice. Minimum qualifications to become a back-up facilitator: SWII, SWIII, or SWP. Back-up facilitators in a case-carrying position may be considered if it has been determined that he/she is able to meet the minimum monthly facilitation requirements.

Training for Back-Up Facilitators

- The 4-day TDM Facilitator Training shall be completed prior to facilitating a TDM.
- Any SW who wishes to be trained as a back-up facilitator must receive approval from the social worker's direct Social Work Supervisor (SWS) and Program Manager as well as the TDM SWS prior to attending the TDM Facilitator Training.
- In addition, refresher training topics shall be identified by the TDM SWS, based upon the TDM SWS's direct observation of the back-up facilitator's performance.

Responsibilities of the TDM SWS

- The TDM SWS shall be responsible for maintaining an active list of back-up facilitators. The back-up list must be approved by the Child Welfare Deputy Director and impacted Program Managers.
- To enhance skill development for the facilitator, ensure quality assurance of the TDM model, and identify areas in which training may be needed, the TDM SWS shall observe each back-up facilitator at least once annually.
 - The TDM SWS shall provide feedback from the observation to:
 - The back-up facilitator, and
 - The back-up facilitator's direct SWS.

Utilization of Back-up TDM Facilitators

Back-up facilitators shall be contacted by the TDM SWS or TDM scheduler when TDM requests exceed facilitator availability. Requests may be made via email or telephone.

- Once coverage by a back-up facilitator has been confirmed, the TDM scheduler shall send a confirmation email to the back-up facilitator and the back-up facilitator's direct SWS advising of the TDM date and time.
- Back-up facilitators may be contacted to provide TDM coverage for the following reasons: scheduled vacation time by a fulltime facilitator, TDMs scheduled in excess of facilitator availability, mandatory training or meeting attendance for fulltime facilitators, or scheduled coverage to meet back-up facilitator monthly coverage requirements (See Expectations of Back-Up TDM Facilitators).
- Coverage requests shall be made with as much advanced notice as possible. In the event of TDMs scheduled in excess of facilitator availability, requests for coverage may be made in a shortened time frame.

Expectations of Back-Up TDM Facilitators

- **Individuals identified as back-up facilitators shall be required to facilitate at least two (2) TDMs per month and attend quarterly TDM refresher training.** (Back-up facilitators may be requested to facilitate additional meetings if coverage is required.)
- When back-up coverage is requested, the back-up facilitator may not be available due to primary workload responsibilities. **The back-up facilitator may decline to provide coverage based on workload commitments.**
 - It is not expected that a back-up facilitator neglect primary workload responsibilities to provide TDM coverage. If the back-up facilitator is reasonably able to rearrange his/her schedule to provide TDM coverage while still meeting workload responsibilities, the back-up facilitator may provide coverage.
 - It is the responsibility of the back-up facilitator to ensure that his/her workload responsibilities are kept current and within DSS policy and procedure guidelines.
- To best accommodate the workload issues, each back-up facilitator shall provide a general list of dates and time of their availability to the TDM SWS. Back-up facilitators shall be utilized according to their availability schedule.