

Supporting Wraparound Implementation: Chapter 5d.4

Developing, Financing and Sustaining County-Driven Wraparound in Butler County, Ohio

Neil Brown, President
Neil Brown Consulting, Inc.



Over the last four years, Butler County has undertaken a process to develop, finance, and sustain a successful, visible wraparound initiative. Butler County is located in the southwest corner of Ohio, just outside of Cincinnati. In 2000, the population of the county was 323,807 (91% White, 5% black or African American, 1.6% Asian, and 1.4% Hispanic). The median household income was \$47,885.00. The county has experienced rapid growth in the last decade and its social service delivery capacity has been stressed as a result.

Ohio has a history of collaborative cross-system practice stretching back several decades. One of the forms that this work has taken has been the creation of county-based “clusters,” groups of cross-system representatives who work together to arrange services and plans for families whose needs are not met in typical service delivery. Growing frustration with this “cluster” process led to the decisions that premised Butler County’s development of an effective wraparound capacity. In Butler, and many other Ohio counties, there had been a history of having collaborative fixed teams of system staff meet on a regular basis to review plans for families who were in need of additional or different responses to their needs than the typical service processes were able to deliver.

Over four years, Butler County has planned and implemented a series of strategies related to the development of an effective wraparound capacity. One significant feature of this effort has been the high trust level present between the Family and Children First Council (FCFC) and its host, the Educational Service Center, and amongst the partici-

pating systems from across the community. Trust has fostered the support and flexibility, as well as patience, needed to see through the development of this effort.

The Context

Local counties operate all key child/youth- and family-serving agencies in Ohio. This means that all employees providing for the care and support of youth and families are employees of the county government with the exception of the Mental



Health (providers of service are hired at private companies and non-profit organizations) and Education systems (hiring of school personnel is based in districts that have different geographic boundaries than the counties they are located in). Over the years, each county has evolved a network of contract agencies that provide the direct care and management of behavioral health services. Most Ohio counties also have multiple school districts within their geographic regions. Special Education services are district based and supported by regional educational service centers that provide training, consultation, and specialized services that districts do not maintain individually.

In each of the 88 counties in Ohio there is a body called the Family and Children First Council (FCFC). This is a mandated collaborative structure that brings together child- and family-serving system representatives and parent representation, to oversee and manage services and supports for families that are multi-system involved. These councils are supported by a state level council

that is made up of the leadership of for each individual system. FCFCs are also charged with the oversight of collaborative service efforts and planning for community needs for youth and families. The FCFCs have grown out of a long history of collaboration at the cross system level that was first implemented in the state over 30 years ago.

Ohio is a home rule state. As a result, many state initiatives take on a flavor that is shaped by a county context. Wraparound has been no exception. Each county is required to submit to the state a “Service Coordination Plan.” This plan describes the county’s arrangements for meeting the needs of families whose lives touch more than one or two of the county’s child and family serving systems. In Ohio, the wraparound process is one of many options that counties can pursue to improve services and outcomes for children, youth and families who bump up against multiple systems. Butler County elected to pursue the wraparound process because local leadership felt this approach could yield improved outcomes for youth and families served collaboratively across systems. Specifically the county leadership sought to serve multi-need youth within the county borders as opposed to utilizing out-of-county placements

The History of Implementation

Plan A: Once leadership in Butler County decided to develop wraparound capacity, their next decision was to build a design. After spending a year in design conversations, their original design involved creating wraparound facilitation capacity across local systems rather than through a centralized team or unit. This design called for training system staff from all child and family serving systems and for their “home” systems to allow and support the staff to facilitate wraparound teams for families identified through the FCFCs. The original designed called for wraparound facilitators to facilitate across systems. For example, a child welfare worker would facilitate for a probation-involved family while a probation worker would facilitate for a mental health involved family and so on.

It soon became obvious that this strategy was difficult to implement for the following reasons:

1. Capacity and Expertise: It was difficult for

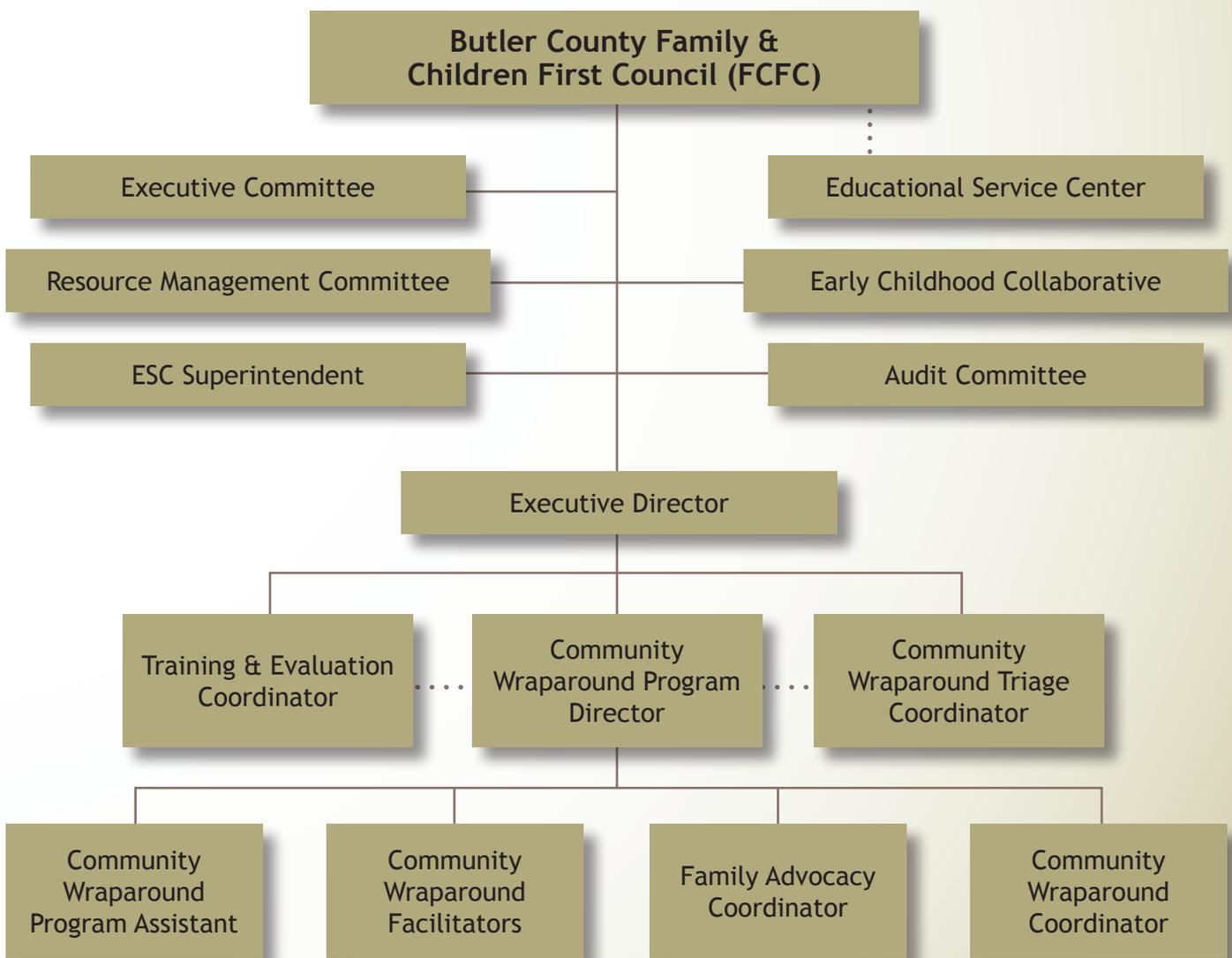
facilitators to learn facilitation skills while at the same time still performing the core tasks of their “real” job in the organization they worked for.

2. Diffuse Supervision: Since there was no centralized wraparound supervision, there was not enough consistency to assure quality in the process as it happened across multiple sites within the county.
3. Agency boundaries: Agencies required that staff from key systems only facilitate for families involved in the worker’s home system.

Plan B: Butler County leadership, through the FCFC, developed a second strategy, which was to build a pool of Community wraparound facilitators. The FCFC recruited community members and interested system staff to be trained to serve as facilitators. These community facilitators received contract rates per family when they facilitated a wraparound team and plan. Payment was delivered in increments, when key benchmarks in the process were reached. These benchmarks included the completion of a Strengths, Needs, and Culture Discovery document, the initial wraparound plan, and the crisis/safety plan.

This strategy provided enough momentum, in

Figure 1. Butler County Family & Children First Council Organizational Chart



“The stars aligned and we were able to develop wraparound for families in our county”

- Butler County Wraparound Program Staff Member who has watched the growth from the very beginning through the current status

terms of developing community support for wraparound, that the next step was taken. Two local systems, Child Welfare, and the Department of Job and Family Services (DJFS, Ohio’s evolution of the adult welfare system, responsible for welfare in the era of post welfare reform) created contracts that currently fund the positions described below. The adult system’s funding position for the wraparound initiative came to pass because of the DJFS participation and history in the local collaborative infrastructure as well as

it understanding of the role it plays in supporting families in the community care system.

The Butler County Wraparound Program currently operates as a staffed unit of the county’s collaborative structure. The development of the Wraparound Program is unique as it was not funded as a discrete program but rather “grown” through several different strategies that resulted in the formalization of the county’s commitment to the approach. The FCFC, through its executive committee and staff leadership, has built a structure that now provides wraparound to 100 families or more a year.

The Elements of the Process

Overview

The wraparound unit in Butler County is housed at and managed through the FCFC. In turn, the FCFC is housed at the Educational Service Center (ESC), the multi-district special education support center for the county. The ESC serves as

the fiscal agent for all activities related to the program components. Oversight of the activities of the FCFC staff is conducted by the Executive Director of the FCFC who reports to the Executive Committee of the Council. The organizational chart (see Figure 1 on previous page) reflects the current structure and staffing for the Wraparound Program in Butler County.

The wraparound initiative is currently composed of eight FTEs and the services of the Executive Director of the council. Positions within the structure include:

- **Facilitators (4 FTEs):** There are four full-time facilitators who implement the wraparound process. These positions are employed by the ESC. The family load for these staff varies across the year but averages about 15 families at a time.
- **Family Advocacy Coordinator (1 FTE).** This position is responsible for developing volunteer parent-to-parent connections for families in the wraparound process. There is limited capacity for funding through stipends to some parent to parent supporters. Thus there are both paid and volunteer “advocates” supported by this position.
- **Community Wraparound Coordinator (.5 FTE):** This position supports community wraparound facilitators through individualized coaching and field-based support.
- **Program Assistant (1 FTE):** The person in this position provides support to the project, including data entry for tracking outcomes and process.
- **Community Wraparound Program Director (1 FTE).** This position supports and supervises all project staff.
- **Community Wraparound Triage Coordinator (1 FTE).** This position assists families through the intake process to access the wraparound process. The Triage Coordinator also provides support for and to families who may not be eligible for the program. Additionally, the Wraparound Triage Coordinator is available to help families who aren’t able to immediately enter into the wraparound project but are in a crisis

based on an immediate lack of options or service responses.

County Wraparound Facilitation Capacity

Team facilitation is provided primarily by the four county staff who are managed under the auspices of the county collaborative structure. Additionally, there are six Community Wraparound Facilitators, including people who are not county employees but who are trained and supported to serve as wraparound facilitators for a small number of families. Additionally, a small number of system employees, not employed by FCFC, who work in other county organizations, are viewed as “community facilitators” who provide facilitation to typically no more than one family at a time.

Parent Advocacy and Partnership

All families involved in wraparound in Butler County are offered access to a Parent Advocate. In Butler County advocates typically work with a small number of families at a time—one to three or four families depending on the role of the advocate (paid or unpaid) and the amount of effort the advocate has available to devote to the work. Butler County Parent Advocates partner with a parent throughout the team planning and support the service delivery process in order to assist families in:

- Engaging in the wraparound team development and planning process;
- Assisting teams, providers, and other supports to clearly hear and understand the family’s unique perspective and voice; and
- Providing support to families as they participate in various meetings throughout the community and system.

Butler County has developed several avenues to assure the presence of parent advocates in their wraparound initiative. In addition to funded positions there is a cadre of “volunteer” parent advocates who can provide peer-to-peer support. These efforts are supported by a Family Advocacy Coordinator who is responsible for;

- Linking local volunteer advocates to the state-wide efforts
- Recruiting and supporting parent advocates as they work with families

Enhancement Efforts

Triage: Over the course of the year, the Butler County Wraparound Project may maintain a waiting list. Additionally, some families face imminent risk of out-of-home placement, with no immediately available wraparound response. The county has a commitment to addressing the needs of all families referred, including those who wouldn’t necessarily meet eligibility requirements for the formal wraparound process. In order to meet this commitment, Butler County has recently added a Community Wraparound Triage Coordinator. This person is responsible for:

- Assisting families entering the Wraparound Program with any immediate needs that must be met in order for them to make benefit of the wraparound process;
- Assisting families whose children are at immediate risk of an out-of-home placement or whose children are being discharged from a placement without a plan for services by providing supports through rapid clinical assessment and coordinated service response across systems; and
- Assisting families who were referred but not eligible for the wraparound project in linking to improved categorical, programmatic, and community resources through short-term service coordination activity.

Training: Butler County uses training in wraparound as a means to build community support for the process. A community-operated training team, led by FCFC, provides regular training on a variety of topics throughout the year. The training team is made up of representatives from the key child- and family-serving organizations in the county. In the first full year of operations, training sessions were conducted to inform providers, funders, and families about wraparound and local implementation plans. A total of 349 people attended these trainings. The training team also trained 43 people

in methods for team facilitation. Several of these became the Community Facilitators. Training capacity is currently maintained in order to improve the quality and efficacy of wraparound as well to continue building community support.

Tracking and evaluation: The collaborative structure is developing a mechanism for tracking wraparound process by family and facilitator to ensure adherence to key steps in the process. This information will be used in supervision of staff and community facilitators. The Ohio Scales, a tool designed to track status and outcomes of youth receiving behavioral health services across the state, is also maintained and analyzed by the Butler County Wraparound Program.

How the Funding Works

Staffing & Infrastructure

Staff positions for the Butler County Wraparound Program are funded by agreements across the FCFC executive leaders. Specifically, the But-

ler County Department of Job and Family Services provides funding that supports six of the staff positions. The local Child Welfare agency funds the remaining facilitator positions. By agreement, funds are moved to the Educational Service Center (ESC), the fiscal agent for all FCFC programs. The ESC hires the staff and provides office space and other support for the Butler County Wraparound Program.

Funding for Family Plans

The Butler County service system includes an array of services for youth and families that is comparable to that available in many other communities. Butler County has worked to expand the number of intensive in-home and in-community resources available to families to assure a range of options is available to them. These services are traditionally funded and can be found in individual wraparound plans.

When family teams develop care plans that require activities and supports that are not funded

Table 1. Butler County FAST Expenditures by Category 2006*

Category	Amount
Bed	\$167.97
In-Home Services/Supports	\$15,192.00
Respite	\$640.00
Safety Devices/ Alarms	\$312.20
Service Coordination/Facilitation	\$5,154.37
Social Recreational	\$8,311.54
Utility Assistance	\$314.59
Administrative Fee (Partially Funds Admin. Position)	\$7,333.00
Grand Total:	\$34,415.67

* From the Butler County 2006 Annual Wraparound Report

Table 2. Butler County Pooled Fund Expenditures by Category 2006*

Category	Amount
Car Repair	\$1,023.41
Child Care	\$372.25
Homemaking Services	\$1,204.60
Housing Assistance	\$3,800.00
In-Home Therapeutic Supports	\$24,101.91
Outpatient Therapy	\$9,207.00
Utility Assistance	\$2,626.95
Grand Total:	\$43,336.12

* From the Butler County 2006 Annual Wraparound Report

in the local array of services, they turn to two discrete resource pools. The first is a state funding stream called FAST, while the second is referred to as Pooled Funds.

- FAST dollars are Ohio Department of Mental Health funds allocated on a formula basis to each county. These funds are used to for families who are receiving behavioral health care services through the local mental health system. Eligibility requires enrollment in the mental health system and the completion of tools used to track the impact and efficacy of these dollars across the state. These tools include a Caregiver Wants and Needs Scale, the Ohio Scales, and an inventory of needed and accessible services. FAST dollars are managed by the local mental health authority but decision making about their use in a family plan resides in a committee of the Butler FCFC called the Community Resource Team (CRT). See Table 1 for FAST Expenditures in 2006.
- Pooled Funds are local dollars that system managers have contributed to a shared pool of dollars. These dollars are managed by the collaborative county structure. This pool of funds has been created to meet the needs of families participating in the wraparound process who are ineligible for other funding sources. Pooled funds were originally created in Butler County in 2002. County leadership agreed to pool dollars equal to what they were already spending on their most expensive out-of-county placements. Alternative plans were developed for those youth in care and their families. This effort resulted in improvement in functioning and system outcomes on 11 out of 13 measures they tracked. It also resulted in a savings of 60% of the original investment. These pooled dollars were committed to meeting the needs of families using the Butler County Wraparound Program. These dollars are also managed by the CRT. See Table 2 for pooled fund expenditures in 2006.

The CRT is made up of mid-level managers from across the systems and provider agencies in the community. When a family plan needs resources not otherwise available in the community system, the team and facilitator prepare a budget request that describes what dollars are needed, what activities they will fund in the broader plan for the family, and what outcomes the request will support. The CRT meets, reviewing the plan and the wraparound process for the individual family. The committee's role is threefold:

- To identify different or additional community resources already funded that could be adapted to support the planned request,
- To authorize the use of flexible dollars as fits a given family, and
- To support the implementation of high fidelity wraparound by providing suggestions and access to services and supports.

When these funding streams are used, individual budgets tracking flexible expenses are created and utilized within the system. They are used to track expenses and aggregate information for reporting. This information is reported to the broader FCFC committees as a tool for anticipating new developmental needs for the cross-system service environment in Butler County.

Many plans developed by child and family teams do not require flexible funding. In 2006 in Butler County, \$34,415.67 from the state FAST funds available to the county were assigned to support individual plans for families receiving behavioral health services and using wraparound teams as a planning and support mechanism. Teams supporting families not enrolled in the behavioral health system accessed \$42,336.12 from the local Pooled Funds resource. A description of the population served, outcomes attained, and other details of the effort are available in the Butler County 2006 Annual Wraparound Report. (See Appendix x.4 of this *Resource Guide*.)

Summary

Butler County has developed a “right sized” wraparound capacity for its community and families. Key ingredients in getting to this point include:

- ***Self-reflection & self-analysis:*** Having a level of frustration with current system functioning is often a necessary catalyst to a willingness to change and adapt structures: Butler County had to self-analyze their existing structures, systems and assumptions in developing a wraparound capacity. A significant decision included taking a risk by pooling funds and maintaining a focus on those children in out-of-home care. This ability to self-analyze continued as Butler County adapted its original design of a diffuse facilitator model.
- ***Don't stop until you get it right:*** Self-analysis is part of the equation. Doing something about your assessment is as important as accurately assessing your implementation. Assuring that the first implementation plan can be changed and corrected based on county and state realities is a critical capacity. The shift from a vision for diffuse cross-system facilitation to the current FCFC-based wraparound unit is the reflection of this ingredient for Butler County. The FCFC staff are also aware that future changes may be necessary to continue to assure quality implementation in their setting
- ***Training should have a point:*** Butler County has used training opportunities strategically. All training has had a focus in terms of payoffs. Developing and maintaining a training capacity helps build support for the process across the community. Training assisted in developing a pool of interested parties that comprise the Community Facilitator pool. Training can also serve to build a framework for continuous skill enhancement. The Butler County Community Wraparound Coordinator is responsible for identifying and planning for the developmental training needs of staff. This focus on skill enhancement and the capacity to address those needs in a planful way is an important component of the Butler County implementation.
- ***Program for fiscal flexibility:*** Building wraparound requires multiple funding streams and agreements if it is to be sus-

tained over time. Within the Ohio environment, where there are no funding streams directed specifically at staffing wraparound initiatives, the ability to blend resources from multiple streams into a cohesive program effort has required on-going flexibility and negotiation across the funding systems. Building flexibility in public systems tends to be a challenging task. In the Butler County implementation efforts, the presence of a cross-system collaborative organization (FCFC) at the county level has been a critical ingredient in carving out the flexibility to provide effective wraparound to families. It has allowed county systems to expand the array of care available to families, and it has exposed their staff to a changed framework for care planning without having to mandate changed practice across all staff roles. The FCFC has offered a shelter within which it has been possible to foster innovation within the framework of a county-operated model.

Author

Neil Brown is President of Neil Brown Consulting Inc, a consulting firm focused on supporting the development of individualized services. Mr. Brown has focused his work in the last fifteen years on the development of effective systems of care in a variety of community settings through work at state, county, and local government levels, as well as through support to agencies and programs that contribute to providing effective care for youth and families.

Suggested Citation:



Brown, N. (2008). Developing, financing and sustaining county-driven wraparound in Butler County, Ohio. In E. J. Bruns & J. S. Walker (Eds.), *The resource guide to wraparound*. Portland, OR: National Wraparound Initiative, Research and Training Center for Family Support and Children's Mental Health.