

NEEDLE-MOVING COLLABORATIVES THREE-YEAR FOLLOW-UP

# Herkimer County, New York

## Integrated County Planning Team

**Focus areas:** Health and well-being of children and families in Herkimer County. Tracked metrics have included children in foster care placements, persons in need of supervision (PINS), and total number of residential care or detention days.

**Founding date:** 1998

**Leadership (backbone):** Herkimer Integrated County Planning

**Results at time of 2012 study:** From 2003 to 2011 children in foster care placements at year-end decreased by 54 percent; from 2002 to 2011 PINS was reduced by 61 percent<sup>1</sup>; and from 2002 to 2011 total number of residential care or detention days decreased by 50 percent<sup>2</sup>.

**Most recent results:** From 2011 to 2014 children in foster care placements at year-end increased by 16 percent (43 percent overall reduction from 2002 to 2014); from 2011 to 2014 PINS increased by 24 percent (51 percent overall reduction from 2002 to 2014); and from 2011 to 2014 total number of residential care or detention days increased by 9 percent (46 percent overall reduction from 2002 to 2014).

**Herkimer County's experience over the last three years:** Herkimer is a rural county in upstate New York with a land area of over 1,450 square miles and a population of 64,000. Herkimer's approach differs significantly from the archetypal collective impact framework. Rather than organizing around a single issue or closely related set of issues, its Integrated County Planning department is organized around a collaborative *process*—taking up particular issues as needs arise. For example, as more youth were becoming involved with the juvenile justice system in 2012 and 2013,

*“This way of working with one another is how Herkimer County does business. People know why they're at the table, know their mission, and are able to measure progress and celebrate their successes.”*

DARLENE HAMAN, COORDINATOR,  
INTEGRATED COUNTY PLANNING

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1 “2014 Updated HCDSS Placement Statistics.” Herkimer County Department of Social Services. Mar. 2015. Note: This data differs from data included in 2012 Needle-Moving Community Collaboratives report as we received more updated information from Herkimer County.

2 Ibid. Note: This data differs from data included in 2012 Needle-Moving Community Collaboratives report as we received more updated information from Herkimer County.

the group developed a new system for coordinating resources across the county to help improve its outcomes and reduce reliance on out-of-home placements. As one court official said, “It’s such a benefit to have this collaboration. We have a much broader perspective on what can be done, and we can meet and develop a plan before the court date.”

In 2012, the county invested in a management approach called Results Based Accountability and received training in how to use the system. This system is meant to leverage data to highlight current trends and to hold various stakeholders accountable for specific outcomes. The county now manages a dashboard across all its agencies, and engages committees and agency leaders to look at the data and ask: “How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?” The answers to these questions are meant to form the basis for better-crafted solutions.

Take Herkimer’s handling of setbacks to progress. Between 2011 and 2013, the number of children in foster care increased 45 percent. In response to this trend, the county made changes in its service delivery system that resulted in a reduction of children in foster care from 2013 to 2014. The current in-care number, 74 youth, is significantly lower than the high numbers of the early 2000s, though a slight increase from the 20-year low of 64 achieved in 2011.

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