

PENNSYLVANIA FAMILY SUPPORT ALLIANCE

Report of Findings Affiliate – State Office Survey December 2009

PURPOSE

The purpose of this survey was to collect data about the usefulness and quality of services provided by the state office of Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) to affiliated programs. **The goal was to assess what services were not useful to affiliates and in what areas quality of services could be improved.** We asked about increases/decreases in services over the past two years, since our last survey in 2007. Results of the survey are used to design our program plans for the next year or two, which are incorporated into our Organization Business Plan. The Program staff uses the information in this survey to design and deliver services to affiliates to strengthen the Family Support Programs (FSPs) offered in local communities.

SURVEY DESIGN

The survey was mailed to 52 local, affiliated programs in August 2009, with a requested return date of September 30, 2009. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey was included with the form, which was emailed or mailed first class to affiliates in July of 2009. Reminders were included in affiliate mailings and emailed or faxed one week before the survey due date. Respondents were permitted to remain anonymous. Questionnaires were returned by email, mail and fax to the state office.

The survey was straightforward and easy to complete. The first question asked the length that the organization had been affiliated with PFSA; the second question asked about the services provided by the affiliated organization. Respondents were then given some general categories of services provided by the state office and asked about the quality of each of these services. A range of answers was presented, with 1 being the least desirable response (poor) and 10 the most desirable (excellent). Next, they were asked if the services of the state office had changed over the past two years; choices for answers were “has become more effective,” “has become less effective,” “has stayed about the same,” and “don’t know/have no opinion.” To assess the usefulness of services, respondents were given a specific list of 15 services (such as facilitator training, video lending library, and newsletter) and asked how useful the service had been to the affiliate in the past two years. Again, a 10-point rating scale was given, with 1 being “not at all useful” and 10 being “very useful” to the affiliate in the past two years.

One area in which we have only limited information about our affiliates is the types of services they provide in their local communities. A list of 13 services was provided, and a choice of answers regarding whether the affiliate provides the service, has provided the service in the past but discontinued it, plans on offering it in the future or is unsure of any future plans for the service. Finally, we asked about the unmet needs or emerging issues facing our affiliates in the form of seven possible needs and an opportunity to include additional issues we may not be aware of in the survey form. The last question of the survey asked about the overall opinion of the services provided by PFSA to affiliates.

RESPONSE RATE

Questionnaires were returned by mail and fax to the state office. **Response rate for surveys from affiliates was 53%, with 28 surveys returned and included in the results.** This is slightly higher than the number of responses we received in the two previous surveys, in 2004 and 2007.

RESULTS

Some of our affiliates (32%) have been associated with the state office for between one and five years; and 50% have been affiliated for more than 5 years. The majority of affiliates (57%) listed “parent education and support” as the primary service provided by their organization; 40% listed “counseling or family therapy” as their primary service. Remaining respondents listed “other services,” “services to low income families,” “other” or “governmental mandates” as their primary mission.

In response to the question, “How would you rate the quality of services provided by the state office of PFSA during the past two years?” **All affiliates rated our services between “5 and 10 (good and excellent),” with 84% rating the state office quality at between “8 and 10 (excellent).”** There were no ratings lower than “5.” Therefore, there is considerable agreement between affiliates that the quality of services from the state office is high.

Regarding the affiliates’ perception of changes in services over the past two years, the survey showed that **43% of affiliates felt that the services have become more effective,** 43% felt the services have stayed the same and 14% did not know how or if the services had changed.

There were several notable changes in which services were found to be most useful to the affiliates. There was a much wider variety of services marked as “very useful” to affiliates in this survey than in previous years, indicating that many affiliates are making use of several PFSA offerings, rather than concentrating on using one or two. In this survey, **the most useful service by far was the monthly affiliate mailing,** with 87% of affiliates saying it is “very useful” to them. Among the other services offered to affiliates, the following services are rated as “very useful” to our affiliates: “Alliance” newsletter - 82% (an increase of almost 20% since 2007); the website - 82%; “Building Your Family” curriculum - 77%; site visits - 77%; program evaluations 72%; facilitator training - 70%; brochures for parents - 74%; toll-free number - 69%; technical assistance- 67%; child abuse prevention month materials - 68%; marketing materials - 65%; regional conferences – 55%; and the video and book lending libraries (44% and 46%, respectively).

Questions regarding services being offered by local affiliates indicate that **parent support groups are the most prevalent service our affiliates provide; 84% offer support groups on a regular basis.** Currently, 46% of affiliates use PFSA’s “Building Your Family” curriculum, and an additional 9% plan on offering it in the future. Seventy-five percent of affiliates conduct program evaluations and 49% provide educational seminars for parents. Parent coaching/mentoring programs and in-home parenting programs are offered by 57% and 61% of affiliates, respectively. Some affiliates offer clothing assistance (61%), therapy/counseling (46%), supervised visitation for non-custodial parents (48%), housing programs (14%), after school programs for children (19%) or legal help (14%).

The final questions addressed the important issues of unmet needs of the affiliates. Possible answers were:

- ❑ New sources of funding for the program, which was selected as “very important” by 88% of affiliates.
- ❑ Ways to attract and keep good staff, which was very important to 87% of affiliates.
- ❑ Marketing strategies to attract new clients (74%).
- ❑ Networking opportunities (78%) and increasing visibility in the community (70%).
- ❑ Expert training for staff and volunteers (79%)
- ❑ Space, location or logistical problems (56%)

The need for funding and recruitment of qualified staff are the top need for most affiliates. We ended the survey with a general question, “What is your overall opinion of PFSA during the past two years?” **Every respondent answered that the services of the state office are good or excellent; 93% of affiliates say the services are “excellent.”**

CONCLUSIONS

Surveys to affiliates provide a wealth of knowledge that is helpful in planning for future program development, training and technical assistance. The staff of local affiliated programs understands the needs of families and has a supportive and useful relationship with PFSA. The expertise of the state office staff is recognized by affiliates as being competent and knowledgeable. Together, the partnership is beneficial to both organizations. The survey helps the state office staff to know what services are most valuable and needed by affiliates, and affiliates have an opportunity to express their opinion on services offered by PFSA.

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Survey item	2009 Results	2007 Results
PFSA services more effective	43%	58%
PFSA services stayed the same	43%	31%
Quality of service excellent overall	84%	76%
Overall opinion of PFSA excellent	93%	81%
Knowledge of PFSA staff excellent	86%	76%
Provide parenting education/family support	57%	69%
Survey Item	Very useful in 2009	Very useful in 2007
Affiliate Mailing	87%	86%
Newsletter	82%	64%
Facilitator Training	70%	55%
Website	82%	69%
“Building Your Family”	77%	60%
Site visits	77%	51%
Toll-free number	69%	78%
Regional conference	55%	24%
Brochures for parents	74%	71%
Book lending	46%	28%
Video lending	44%	40%
Program evaluations	72%	46%
Technical assistance	67%	69%
April materials	68%	59%
Marketing materials	65%	59%
Survey item	Unmet needs in 2009	Unmet needs in 2007
New sources of funding	88%	97%
Attract and keep good staff	87%	72%
Marketing	74%	67%
Networking	78%	51%
Increased visibility	70%	65%
Staff training	79%	67%
Space, logistics	56%	48%

