



Celebrating the Love of Our Work!

Hello Team,

February's arrival whispers of longer days, warmer sun, and spring's hopeful embrace. It's a month that resonates with love, and that love finds its way into our work every day. This February, we celebrated our incredible colleagues by "Showing Some Love"

From the Commissioner

for their dedication and impact. Over 4,000 heartfelt messages flowed through our work family, each a testament to the passion we share. For many, working with families transcends mere occupation; it's driven by love.



The warmth that blooms after helping a family access needed resources. The joy of reuniting a child with loved ones. The profound sense of making a difference – it's a calling that resonates deep within.

[Read more here](#)

Former Voices of The Commonwealth Member Joins DCBS

"Hello, I am Dante Lynox, and I am the new Regional ICPC and Safety Net worker for all 17 counties in the Lakes Service Region. I am so excited to be continuing my journey on the DCBS Team. I have done my internship under the amazing and

helpful Permanency Team which has cultivated my skills and compassion for what we do as an organization and what we do for our families. I have also had insightful 4-year experience in child welfare advocacy as a member of The Voices of The Commonwealth and have recently obtained my Bachelor of Social Work."



Fathers Matter: Empowering Dads, Strengthening Kentucky's Families

The Commonwealth Center for Fathers and Families (CCFF) is an emerging non-profit organization that seeks to improve child outcomes and enhance families and communities through increasing positive fatherhood engagement across Kentucky. We will do so by ensuring services are available to fathers and families to increase responsible fatherhood ALL ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH. Services and actions CCFF will resource and promote include:

- Child and Family Well-Being
- Responsible Fatherhood
- Health and Equity
- Economic Stability and Employment
- Healthy Relationships
- Evidence and Trauma-Informed Practice
- Empowerment and Advocacy

[Read more here](#)

Beyond a Hashtag: Regions Dive Deep into Black History This Month

EMSR's Racial Equity Team has worked hard to promote and celebrate Black History Month across the region. Team members have provided weekly resources to spotlight some of the many Black leaders throughout American history, including Frederick Douglass, Rosa Parks, Henrietta Lacks, Martin Luther King, Jr and Georgia Davis Powers. Local offices were provided with Black History Month resources such as puzzles and informational sheets to share with families and children who visit our lobbies. We'd like to recognize our Leslie County DCBS office for preparing a fantastic bulletin board to promote Black History Month. One of the highlights of the month was an incredible guest speaker and civil rights attorney, John Rosenberg, who shared words of wisdom with our Leadership Team and Racial Equity Team.



Early Intervention, Lasting Impact: Agencies Join Forces for Kentucky's Youth

Representatives from DCBS, DMS, DJJ, and DBHDID attended the policy lab to develop strategies for meeting the highest needs of children and youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems and to reduce the number of children in crisis through early intervention. The goal is to build on the system of care goals that the State Interagency Council for Services & Support for Children & Transition Age Youth (SIAC) promotes including administering cross-sector strategies to improve behavioral health outcomes for youth. This will be ongoing work to address barriers that are impacting behavioral health outcomes for children, youth and families with the overarching goal simply for families and children to be able to access appropriate services when they need them.



DCBS Charts a Course for 2024: Setting Goals and Measuring Success to Empower Families

DCBS Leadership had an in person Strategic Planning Day to brainstorm agency goals for 2024.

Leadership was asked to think what would be on our agencies “dashboard” to ensure we are meeting the needs of families?

During the planning, Leadership discussed criteria for identifying Key Performance Indicators (KPI'S) that will help DCBS monitor growth on the services we provide.

Identifying KPI's keeps our Agency Goals in the forefront. It also helps keep people informed, involved, interested, and inspired.



Beyond Statistics: Real Deal About Dad

THE FATHER EFFECT



LET'S TALK ABOUT THE FACTS

1. Life chances (as adults, fatherless children are more likely to experience unemployment, have low incomes, remain on social assistance, and experience homelessness)
2. Future relationships (father absent children tend to enter partnerships earlier, are more likely to divorce or dissolve their cohabiting unions, and are more likely to have children outside marriage or outside any partnership)

DID YOU KNOW?

1. There are an estimated 74 million dads in the United States, and 72 million of those are biological fathers.
2. Fathers with children younger than 6 years old tend to spend more time with them. These dads spend 1.62 hours with their kids on average per day, including 0.57 hours providing physical care; 0.64 hours playing with them; and 0.08 hours reading to and with them.
3. 17.8 million children, nearly 1 in 4, live without a biological, step, or adoptive father at home.

[To Read the full story click here](#)

Time to Un-Hibernate: Spring is Calling!

It's almost time to un-hibernate! With that being said we know that spring weather can be a bit unpredictable.

It's always good to know what to do in the event bad weather would come your way.

- Take action
- Be weather-ready
- Sign up for notifications
- Create a communication plans
- Practice your plan
- Prepare your home

[Read more here:](#)



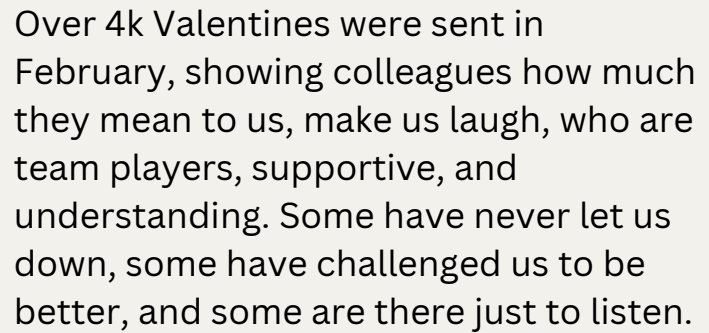
Empowering the Future: Rowan County Family Support Shines at KEDC Fair!



Northeastern's Rowan County Family Support Staff participated in the Kentucky Educational Development Corporation's (KEDC) Transition Fair that focused on "Life after Highschool, Hitting your Target", in December 2023. DCBS staff collaborated with KEDC to share resources.

Agencies were invited to set up a table and display information on services and resources. Students were able to rotate through the exhibit area and learn about these resources and services.

4,000+ Valentines Sent with Heartfelt Intent



That's what makes DCBS more like family than work colleagues!

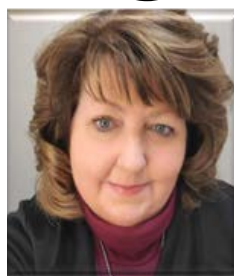
The DCBS Youth Experience survey is a key part of our quality improvement efforts. It gathers feedback from youth who are 16+ years of age. The survey captures feedback on youth experiences around education, job preparedness, emotional support, social interactions, healthcare & basic food/clothing needs, supportive services/permanency planning, and recommendations for system improvement.



Behind the Scenes of Quality: Introducing the CQI Branch



Tiffany Mullis,
Asst. Director



Melinda Vise,
Branch Manager

Formally known as Procedures Development Specialists II, CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement) Specialists assist DCBS professionals at all levels with important reporting responsibilities. This article presents an opportunity to place a face with a name and learn more about these colleagues performing essential departmental duties.

Working under the Division of Service Regions Field Quality Branch, CQI Specialists collect, research, and analyze data that is used to provide customized reports related to all service areas. These reports assist DCBS in monitoring goals and outcomes for families and children.

CQI Specialists promote performance and quality of services through the coordination of the CQI process; they also attend key stakeholder group meetings.

The Field Quality Branch provides technical assistance, analysis and identifies patterns of case work excellence. These employees also detect areas needing improvement and implement special projects to enhance quality services in achieving the agencies goals and outcomes.

CQI Specialists can assist DCBS employees with the above-mentioned duties as well as provide one-on-one training/assistance with the following:



Amy Carder,
Adm. Specialist I



Melanie Rose,
P&P TLSR



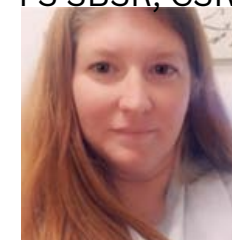
James Persley,
FS SBSR, CSR



Ashley Peercy,
P&P SBSR



Bridgett Moss,
P&P JSR



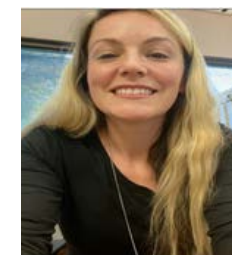
Tiffany Combs,
P&P/FS



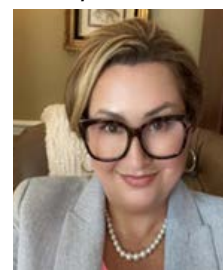
Sara Redfield,
FS/P&P JSR



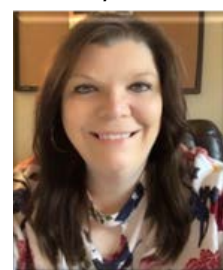
Denita Moore,
P&P/FS SRT



Katie Cunningham,
SW/P&P, SRT



Jenny Mead, P&P
EMSR



Terri Gibson,
P&P Two Rivers



Melissa McGowan,
P&P CSR



Andrea Eslami,
P&P NBSR



Christi Porter,
P&P NESR/SW



Karissa Hall,
NESR & EMSR

From Holocaust Survivor to Civil Rights Champion: John Rosenberg Inspires EMSR

Holocaust survivor and civil rights attorney, John Rosenberg, attended a regional meeting with EMSR leadership and our Racial Equity Team on 2/20/2024. He spoke about his experiences in Nazi Germany and how his family escaped the Holocaust and made their way to America. With antisemitism on the rise around the world, his message was educational and very timely. Mr. Rosenberg has an incredible story of survival and of service to others.

He grew up in North Carolina, earning a BS in Chemistry from Duke University. After college, he enrolled in the US Air Force and told us about an experience serving alongside a friend and fellow officer by the name of Abe Jenkins. After returning a plane from England to New York, the two of them boarded a train in New York and headed south to see their families.

“When the train got to Washington, D.C., Jenkins said to me, ‘I’ll see you when we get back to New York,’” says Rosenberg. When Rosenberg asked his fellow uniformed officer, who was Black, where he was headed, he learned that Jenkins needed to move to a train car in the back since they were readying to cross the Mason-Dixon Line. “I grew up in the South so I knew about segregation,” says Rosenberg. “Since the military was the first institution to desegregate, I had served alongside Black men in the Air Force and I was really struck by the injustice.”

Rosenberg enrolled in law School at the University of North Carolina after his military service ended. There, he became good friends with Julius Chambers, who went on to become a noted civil rights leader.



His friendships with Chambers and Jenkins were among the forces that led him to civil rights work. He had a distinguished career that included years with the US Dept of Justice where he litigated racial discrimination cases throughout the South. He was one of the attorneys who helped prosecute the men responsible for the murders of 3 civil rights workers in Mississippi in 1964, which was the case that the movie "Mississippi Burning" is based on.

In 1970, John and his wife Jean left Washington DC, and came to the Kentucky Coalfields to work on legal and structural poverty issues facing the region. They settled in Prestonsburg in Floyd County, and have lived there since. He founded the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund (AppalReD), a non-profit law firm now serving 37 Kentucky counties. At age 94, John remains very active in our communities to this day. John and Jean Rosenberg are true servant leaders and an inspiration to us all. We are proud to say they call the Eastern Mountain Service Region their home

Applauding Our Awesome Staff: A Shoutout Corner Celebration



Latasha Moss, a new Social Service Worker I in the DCBS Jefferson Region, recently received high praise from Chief Michael Lamey of the Strathmoor Village Police Department for her dedicated efforts to assist a family in need during a challenging situation.

Chief Lamey wrote Moss's supervisor, Tim B. Padgett, with the following letter of commendation:

Dear Mr. Padgett:

"I would like to bring to your attention one of your assets her name is Latasha Moss. I believe her official title is Adult Protective Services social worker. The Mayor of Seneca Gardens located in Louisville Kentucky and myself we're working a very difficult case in the city of Seneca Gardens. We went through a few APS workers and nothing happened to our dismay.

However we had the pleasure of coming in contact with your asset Latasha Moss, a very dedicated hard-working individual who was relentless in her efforts to help this family. Please understand Mr.

Padgett we called everyone we knew that we thought could help and was not getting any from anyone until the mayor's office downtown was contacted with Metro Louisville. I believe that's when Latasha picked up the case and it became active. I want you to know that it was my honor to work with such a wonderful asset that the state employs. I've been in law enforcement 31 years retired three times I keep going back because I want to help, and that's exactly what I see in Latasha.

Latasha gave it everything she had and then when there was no more to give somehow she found the energy to continue many calls after hours which was appreciated so much because as you know 5:00 p.m. for most people just means it'll wait till the next day not with Latasha.

I don't know if the state has a nomination program or a program for recognition, I can tell you the next email that I write is going to be to Governor Andy Beshear because of everything that Latasha did and all the time she vested into this the people were able to get help. Please know that you have a most wonderful asset something that should be treasured especially in today's Workforce ...

... As I said, my next email, I'll be sending to Governor Andy Beshear that's how much this young lady impressed me.

I want to thank you for the hard work that you and Latasha do and I'm sure the rest of your team unfortunately I did not get a chance to work with anyone else. If there is anything on a recognition or accommodation this young lady is most definitely deserving. "

Sincerely,
Chief Michael Lamey
Strathmore Police Department

CUMBERLAND SERVICE REGION AWARDS ITS STAFF AND CELEBRATES “ONE TEAM, ONE STATE, UNIFIED FOR KENTUCKY FAMILIES”



The Cumberland Service Region held a regional awards ceremony February 21st for its Family Support and Protection and Permanency staff. DCBS Commissioner Lesa Dennis, Chief of Staff Shannon Hall and Division of Service Regions Director Amanda Gehring attended to share in the celebration of the staff's dedicated service throughout the Commonwealth.

Commissioner Dennis discussed her ideas for “Building a 21st Century DCBS” and commended the staff on their hard work and continued commitment to serving Kentucky families. Attendees then examined an 18-month strategic plan and gathered into breakout groups to take discuss the plan more in-depth. The staff discussed details they most liked about the plan and provided additional ideas for strategic planning in the future.

The event also featured a welcome from SRA Billy Fore and recognition for regionally nominated staff including Catherine Reed, April Vandeventer Award; Jessica Gilbert, Paul T. Grannis Award; Lisa Tucker and Connie Hurley, Commissioner's Awards; Rebecca Keltner and Devona Upchurch, Sheila G. Eckler Awards.

Additional staff recognized for the DCBS CARES Day included Charlotte McGarrah, April Vandeventer Award; Sharita Liner, Paul T. Grannis Award; Betty Sparks and Cortney Napier, Commissioner's Awards; Brian Vanhooser, Boni Frederick Award; and Crystal Siler, Racial Equity Champion Award. Also, Karrie Gay was presented as a statewide recipient of the Sheila G. Eckler Award.

In addition to the presentations and planning, the attendees enjoyed a delicious feast – seven tables in all! – of dishes all cooked by the staff.



Alternative Response: A Family-Centered Approach to Child Protection

“ You have helped me with areas I didn’t know I could get help with. You have helped relieve a lot of stress and took several weights off my shoulders. I cannot express my gratitude. ”

— Kentucky parent

“ With my Alternative Response worker, I felt comfortable to ask for help and support. ”

— Kentucky parent

What is it?

Alternative Response is a child protection model that focuses on collaboration with families rather than an adversarial approach. It addresses low-to-moderate risk situations and prioritizes family strengths and resources.

Key Features:

- Family-centered and strengths-based approach
- Caseworkers partner with families to build trust and address concerns
- No entry into central registry upon case completion
-

Implementation:

- Currently used in Northeastern and Two Rivers Service Regions
- Northern Bluegrass, Cumberland, and Eastern Mountain Service Regions to begin using it in May/June 2024



[To Read the full story click here](#)

1st Century Solutions: DCBS Charts a Course for Streamlined Services



The Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) is committed to becoming a 21st Century agency by reducing barriers and increasing access to services. The 18-month strategic plan outlines four primary goals and the strategies for implementation. Key features of the plan include a project management structure, building upon the accomplishments of initial transformative efforts, specifically the 6-month stabilization plan, and the DCBS "Five Pillars" framework. Hallmarked by its co-design with staff, valued partners, and trusted advisors, the 6-month plan served as the model for collaboration. The "Five Pillars" framework is the foundation of the Department's vision, mission, guiding principles and values that inform and shape policies and practices.

To achieve a successful implementation of the 18-month strategic plan goals, a project management team and governance structure was established in the Spring of 2023 and is composed of executive leadership, trusted advisors, a project lead / co-lead, and agency champions.

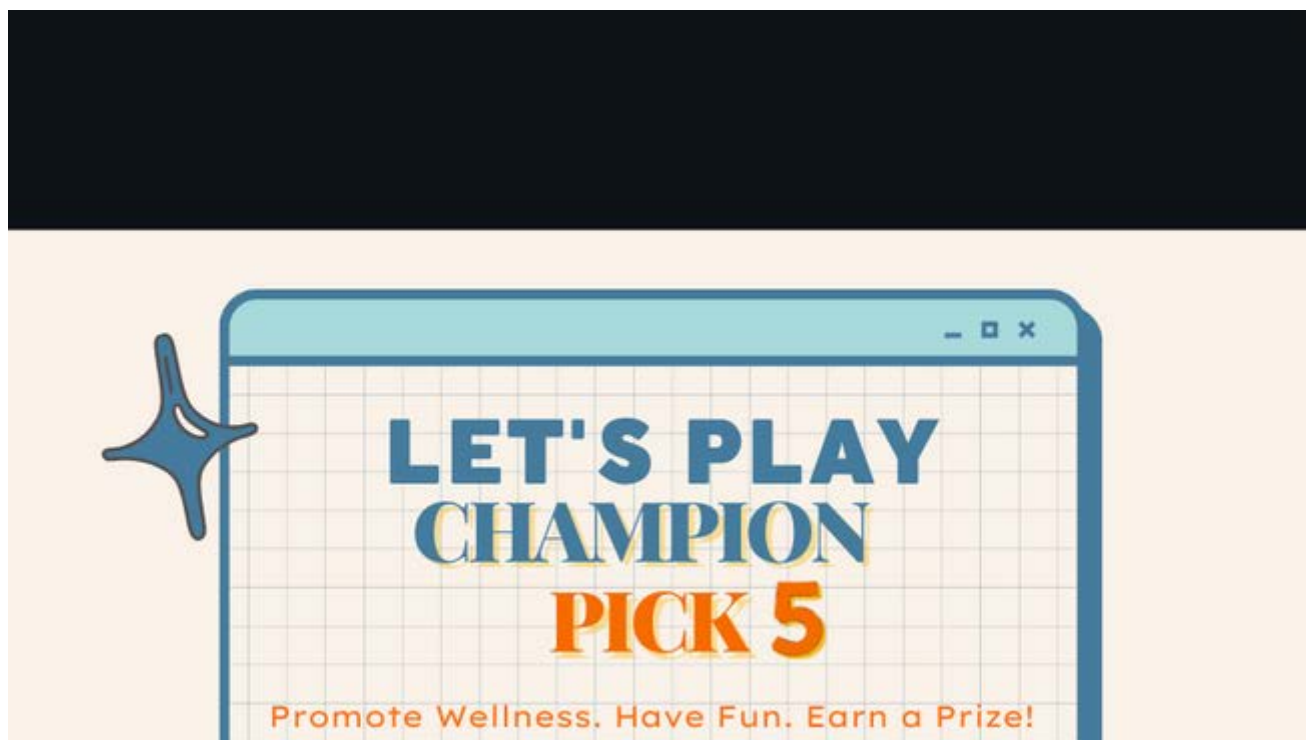
The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the progress that has been made towards the implementation of the 18 Month Strategic Plan. As such, the following are highlights of what has been accomplished, some of the work that is ongoing and some of the long-term work that will need more time and will therefore be moved to our 3-year Strategic Plan. The 3-year Strategic Plan drafting work will begin during this year of 2024. The updates are presented according to our four thematic areas, Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Resiliency; Community Partnerships, Efficiencies, and Those We Serve.

[Read more here](#)

Pick Your Way to Wellness: A Health Lottery Where Everyone Can Be A Winner!

It's never too late to play Champion Pick 5! I want to encourage you to give it a try! The goal of the LivingWell Program is to motivate you to stay engaged in achieving your wellness goals and to support your colleagues in doing the same!

This Pick 5 game can set a plan in place and get you and your colleagues moving in the right direction. Watch this short video to learn more about this new Champion Pick 5 game.



Here is how to play:

- Pick one activity from each of the five categories.
- Complete all five activities by April 22, 2024.
- Submit Champion Pick 5 Submission form by April 22, 2024. You must complete your Submission Form by the 22nd to earn your prize!

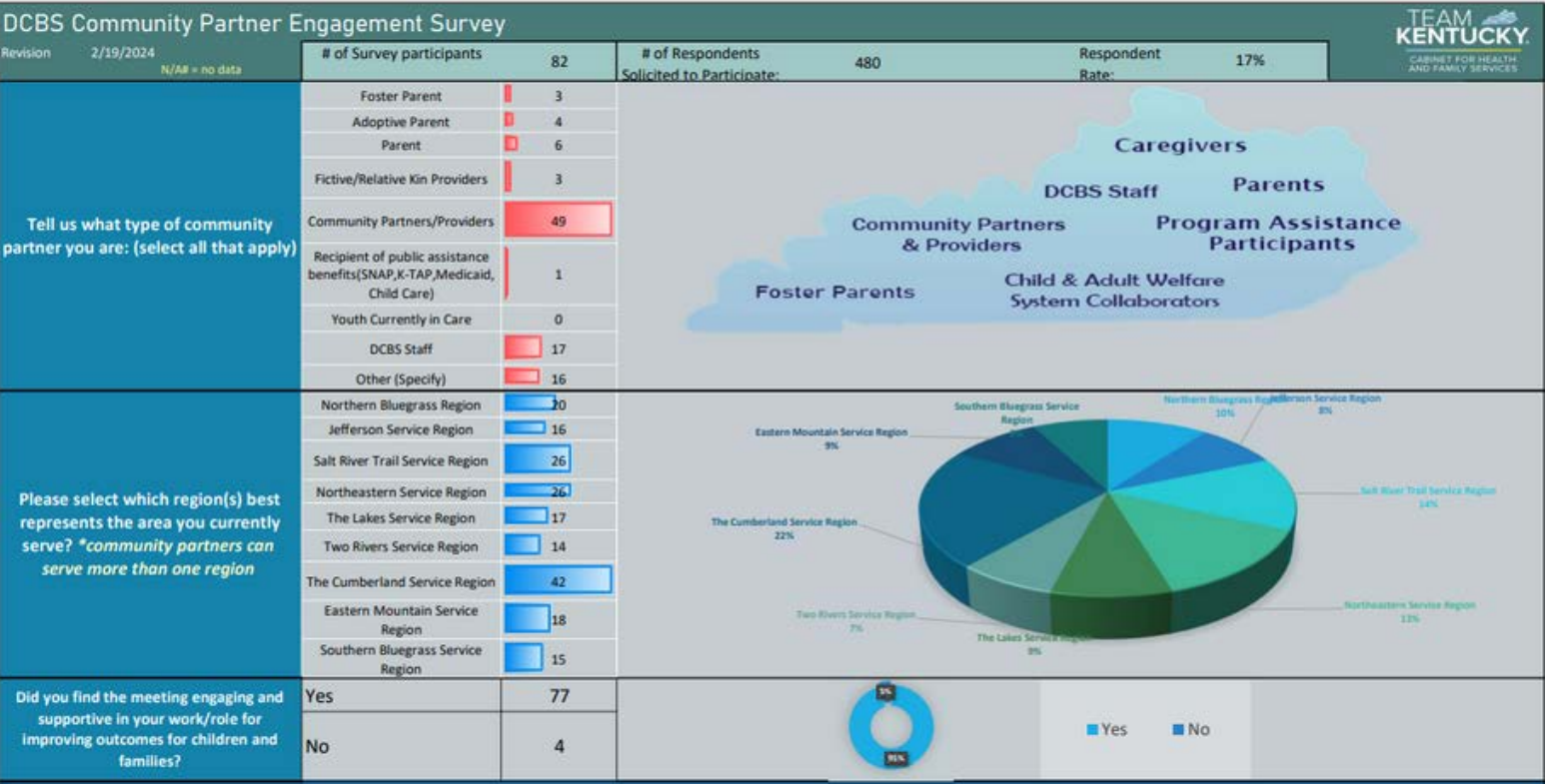
Those who complete a Champion Pick 5 Submission form will win a \$15 Amazon Gift card! Get a Pick 5 POWERPLAY by completing all activities and be entered into an additional prize drawing!

If you have any questions, please let me know! I am happy to meet with you and am excited to work with you on this Pick 5 game!

Engaging for Impact: Insights from the 2023 DCBS Community Partner Survey

DCBS implemented a Community Partner Survey in May of 2023. This survey was intended to collect input and engage our collaborative efforts together. It has an intentional focus on increasing and improving community partner engagement. The survey is utilized across a broad scope of CQI endeavors & convenings. Reported, that there were a total of 480 community partners solicited, with 82 survey participants, giving us a 17% response rate.

One community partner said, *“and this is the best partnership with an administration we have experienced in those 17 years. The DCBS leaders, seek input from providers, respond to the needs of the providers, and celebrates success with the providers. We have a two way communication like never before. We have had Steering Committee meetings (bi-monthly meeting with DCBS and the Children's Alliance) for the last 17 years, however this meeting is more than reporting out to one another - it is a true working meeting where we work to resolve issues together. “*



[To Read the full survey click here](#)