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## COMMUNITY COOPERATION

A cooperative working relationship between protective services and community referral and treatment resources is to be developed, maintained, and used.

Establishing cooperative relationships should assist the Agency and the community in reducing the incidence of child neglect and abuse and in providing needed services to families and children.

### Multi-Disciplinary Teams

Child abuse and neglect is a multidisciplinary problem. It is a sign of social breakdown which may require medical diagnosis and treatment, legal authority to intervene, and psychiatric and social work intervention. The Agency must communicate to the community that the responsibility for the development of a comprehensive program is largely that of the community. It cannot be borne by the Agency alone.

The Agency is mandated by law to investigate child abuse and neglect and to seek protection for children in danger. Yet protective services is primarily a crisis intervention service and cannot effectively provide long term treatment. Therefore, community diagnostic and treatment resources are essential.

Local office administration is responsible for and is to take the initiative in assessing the community's services needs as it relates to child protection. The assessment is to include the need for establishment or strengthening of multidisciplinary teams.

Three types of multidisciplinary teams (MDT's) have emerged:

1. Community action teams

Community action multidisciplinary teams are composed of various professionals and laypersons united to plan, **implement, and coordinate multidisciplinary services** within a given community. They do not become directly involved with clients, but do serve as a vehicle to raise money and coordinate needed programs. In addition, they may provide education and public information. The goal of the community action MDT is to establish a comprehensive, coordinated community protective service program which has a high degree of interagency cooperation.

## 2. Consultative teams

Consultative MDT's are usually composed of a physician, lawyer, psychiatrist or psychologist, public health, and mental health professionals. They provide consultation to protective services, community action groups, and hospital or school diagnostic teams. They do not provide direct services to clients. Their purpose is to provide expertise to direct service professionals in exceptionally complicated or difficult cases.

## 3. Diagnostic teams

Diagnostic teams are most often located in medical/hospital facilities. Their purpose is to provide early diagnosis and intervention. Such a team can be of great benefit in the initial stage of the protective services investigation.

One, all three, or a combination thereof may be appropriate to meeting the needs of a community. The local office is to take the lead in assuring that needed teams are developed and operational for their community.