
Rebecca O. Ornelas

Education

B.A. 1975, University of Texas at El Paso
M.Ed. 1983, Education, University of Texas at El Paso

Professional Credentials and Certifications

Licensed Professional Counselor, Texas

Honors and Awards

Practitioner of the Year Award, National Hispano/Latino Prevention, 2001

Present Position

National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health (2005–Present)

Serve as Regional Technical Assistance Coordinator assigned to the Technical Assistance Partnership, a partnership of the National Federation and the American Institutes of Research. The Partnership develops and provides SAMHSA system of care grantees with TA resources to design, build and implement effective systems of care to improve outcomes for children with serious emotional challenges and their families. As a TA broker, employ a culturally and linguistically competent, customer-centered approach in assisting twelve system of care grantee sites located in western states, Guam and Puerto Rico. Provide consultation and support in exploring, identifying and planning for effective technical assistance strategies and facilitating access to resources and supports to advance their system transformation goals. Plan and coordinate focused TA calls to address specific issues; monthly community calls with national TA team; respond to site specific resource needs; engage peer-to-peer consultation; serve as primary link between sites and the TA Partnership, Center for Mental Health Services, consultants and federal TA partners. Responsible for coordinating and co-facilitating the national Latino Learning Community; assisting in federal site visits; coordinating new community start up visits; and maintaining a regional Professional Experience

Professional Experience

Clinical Director, El Paso Center for Children (2003–2004)

As clinical director, led development and implementation of the wraparound care management component of El Paso’s 2002 SAMHSA System of Care funded initiative. Our goal was to address the needs of youth currently placed in out-of-town residential treatment centers under the authority of the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. The project goals were to keep youths with their families and in their communities utilizing an intensive team approach and by building a continuum of culturally competent services and supports that addressed their mental health needs and fostered successful life outcomes. Developed processes to actively engage youth, family and key stakeholders in needs and gap assessments, system design, and development of nontraditional and extra-ordinary service approaches guided by a “whatever it takes” and “nothing about us without us” philosophy. Developed care management guide and adapted the wraparound approach to facilitate engagement and participation of bilingual, bicultural youths and families.



Project Coordinator, Casey Family Programs (2001–2003)

Served as project coordinator for the Texas State Strategy Team, a systems change initiative with the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. The state-wide focus was to improve outcomes for youth transitioning from the foster care system to young adulthood through implementation of best practice models, policy change and stakeholder investment.

Responsibilities included lead in logic model development process; completed environmental scan; implemented new practice tools through state-wide training seminars and certified 74 trainers; helped design a supplemental assessment to track national outcome indicators for youth in the system; and assisted in the roll-out of a youth/alumni leadership development effort aimed at building an alumni network across the state. In 2001, coordinated an El Paso initiative focused on youth transitioning from foster care. In 2002, successfully authored a SAMHSA Conference Grant and co-authored the County of El Paso's 2002 grant application to SAMHSA to establish the Border Children's Mental Health Collaborative.

Interim Executive Director, Life Management Center for MHMR Services (LMC) (1983–1999)

Served as executive director on interim basis at behest of governance board, during two periods of transition in organizational leadership. LMC served 6000 priority population children and adults with a staff of 450 professional, paraprofessional and technical employees and a \$24 mil budget. Developed and improved business and service functions through sustained focus on strategic goals and objectives. Team achievements included: implementation of Mobile Crisis Outreach; law enforcement training via consumer/family/staff training teams; expansion of provider network; increased Medicaid revenue by 40%; increased Medicaid ratio by 6%; restructuring of Intake to facilitate access and service coordination functions; increased staff compensation and established career ladder; planned consumer/family resource center; increased financial reserves by 200% over the two year period and met or exceeded performance contract targets.

Deputy Director, Life Management Center for MHMR Services (LMC) (1998–2000)

Managed multi-site program operations that served children/adolescents with serious emotional needs; adults with serious mental illness; individuals with mental retardation and special projects for the dually diagnosed (MH/SA) and homeless with mental illness. Facilitated strategic and local planning process to ensure broad-based community participation and representation. Negotiated Medicaid Managed Care and CHIP Contracts with BHOs to maintain flexible services for children. Responsible for budget management and resource development. Secured HUD Homeless Grant; County funding for onsite mental health services in county jail and in Juvenile Probation and to enhance Crisis Helpline services.

Professional Affiliations

National Counseling Association, 2000 to present

Texas Foster Family Association, 2003

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration IRG, December 2001

National Association of Family Based Services, Board of Directors, 1996–2001

SAMHSA CSAT/CSAP Grants Reviewer, July 1999; July 2000; August 2000; October 2000