OFFICE OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

TO: PCSA Directors, Title IV-E Courts

FROM: Jeffery Van Deusen, Deputy Director
       Office of Families and Children

DATE: May 21, 2021

SUBJECT: Purchase of Virtual Reality Headsets

Background
On April 12, 2021, Families and Children Letter (FCL) 004 was sent introducing a new tool called AVEnueS (the Accenture Virtual Experience Solution) which utilizes a virtual reality (VR) headset to enhance current training and hiring activities.

Purchasing VR Headsets
Due to the increased interest in the VR headsets, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is offering an opportunity for Public Children Services Agencies (PCSAs) and Title IV-E Courts to purchase VR headsets. Attached you will find the Virtual Reality Headset Order form that can be used to purchase the VR headsets through the Ohio Child Care Resource & Referral Association (OCCRRA). Agencies will not be charged a subscription fee as all headsets will be covered under the state’s subscription.

PCSAs may utilize current Best Practice funding to purchase the VR headsets, as it is considered an allowable use under “Equipment and technology support, including but not limited to, the purchase of training, services and equipment such as surface pros, phones, scanners, and mobile broadband.”

VR Headset Training
Training is available through Accenture, the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP) and/or ODJFS for those who purchase the VR headsets.
Upcoming Enhancements
ODJFS is working to build a VR application to capture information from the headsets to assist PCSAs and Title IV-E Courts analyze responses to further support caseworker skill development. The use of this VR application will be available for those utilizing the VR headsets and will require an annual individual licensing fee of approximately $211. More information regarding the licensing fees will be available as the VR application is finalized.

Once the VR Application is operational, ODJFS will work with those who purchased the VR headsets to assist in accessing the licenses and software required to capture and analyze the data uploaded from the VR headsets. Please note, the use of the additional VR application will not be required, and the headsets will be fully operational without this additional platform.

Questions
Please direct questions regarding the purchase of additional VR headsets to Todd Barnhouse, tbarnhouse@occrra.org, (614) 310-1364.

If you have any general questions about AVEnueS, please contact Cynthia Ricketts at Cynthia.Ricketts@jfs.ohio.gov.
Innovating training in child welfare

How virtual reality can accelerate learning and help frontline caseworkers become seasoned decision makers

So much of what child welfare does has had to pivot from in-person experiences to virtual ones. This has meant leaning into technology for a range of functions, including caseworker training. Training and support have always been essential elements of developing and maintaining a stable and reliable workforce. However, rates of attrition have consistently challenged systems, and it takes time for new staff to hone critical and complex skills.

Benefits of learning in virtual reality

Compared to traditional training methods

- **90%** of participants self-report improved engagement skills
- **76%** increase in learning effectiveness
- **31%** reduction in caseworker turnover rate
- **70%** improvement in employment performance
- **40%** reduction in training time
- **75%** reduction in training resource costs

Virtual Reality in Era of COVID-19

We have developed a set of VR hygiene protocols and cleaning standards based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Adhering to these guidelines gives agencies confidence to safely operationalize virtual reality-based training while adapting to a post-COVID-19 world.

Accenture Virtual Experience Solution

The Accenture Virtual Experience Solution, or AVEnueS, is a learning method designed to accelerate the pace with which frontline human services staff become seasoned decision makers.

AVEnueS provides a learning opportunity that is both experiential and reflective. AVEnueS starts in virtual reality where users are immersed in real world scenarios and practice making tough decisions in stressful situations. This is followed by a carefully curated seminar in which groups of users work together to unpack their thinking and increase their ability to inquire, observe and interpret human behavior.

AVEnueS uses breakthrough technology: real actors filmed on location and the only thing you need to control the experience is your voice.
Scenario 1: Sophia’s Safety Assessment

Some of the most challenging work done by Child Protective Services comes after a report of abuse or neglect, and caseworkers must decide when it is safe to leave a child in the home and when it is not. Scenario 1 is designed to help users build their skill in making these types of decisions. The scenario begins with a hotline call containing an allegation of neglect about seven-year-old Sophia and her baby sister. The user’s job is to visit this home to interview Sophia’s mother, Monica, and her mother’s boyfriend, Lance, to assess the safety of the home. At the end of the visit, the user must decide if it is safe to leave these children in the home, or if they must be placed in foster care.

Scenario 2: Sophia’s Safety Plan

Equally complex are cases where a young child remains with their parents after a child protection intervention. Scenario 2 is the natural next step in the agency’s work with Sophia. The user returns to the home to develop a Safety Plan with Monica and Lance. The user’s job is to engage the family and enable them to design a Safety Plan that addresses the remaining safety concerns in the home. Finally, the user decides: are Monica and Lance capable of sticking to a set of behaviors that will keep these children safe?

Scenario 3: Race Equity in Child Welfare

Scenario 3 provides a safe space for the workforce to engage in rich discussions on race. This scenario is designed to invite users into a deeper understanding of their own bias and to increase the likelihood that they will be conscious of it when making safety decisions for vulnerable children. During a home visit involving a young teen named Tori, users must navigate significant conflict between Tori and Tori’s parents. The user must assess the family dynamic, determine if the conflict can be resolved and, in the end, decide if it is safe for Tori to stay in the home. The thread running through this scenario is the dynamic of the user’s race and that of the characters.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Item Price</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Reality (VR) for Accenture AVEnueS Trainings (price includes VR Headsets and shipping to location)</td>
<td>$1,040.00 each</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1,040.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Organization Billing Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Billing Address:</th>
<th>City, State, Zip:</th>
<th>Contact Name:</th>
<th>Contact Telephone:</th>
<th>Contact Email:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchase Order Number: (if applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Organization Shipping Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Shipping Address:</th>
<th>City, State, Zip:</th>
<th>Contact Name:</th>
<th>Contact Telephone:</th>
<th>Contact Email:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please direct any questions that your organization may have in purchasing the additional VR Headset(s) to Todd Barnhouse, tbarnhouse@occrra.org, (614) 310-1364.