

Child Welfare Advisory Committee
September 1, 2021 11:00 AM – 1:30 PM
DRAFT MINUTES

Attendees

Members: Beverly Jones, Zack Schrantz, Alana Thompson, Andrea Durbin, Annetta Wilson, Anthony Riordan, Audrey Pennington, Charles Montoria-Archer, Christopher Cox, (Prestina Singleton), Dan Kotowski, Elena Thompson, Harriet Kersh, Jackie Sharp, Jason Keeler, Jere Murray, (Jessica Bullard), Kara Teeple, Kathy Grzelak, Keely Giles, LaTasha Roberson-Guifarro, Malia Arnett, Mary Savage, Monica Badiano, Patricia Ege, Phyllis Summers, Prestina Singleton, Rich Bobby, Rick Velasquez, Tanya Gassenheimer, Toleda Hart

Co-Chair Welcome and Report (Zach Schrantz, Beverly Jones)

- Member Roll Call – Completed.
- Approval of June Minutes and FY22 CWAC Meeting Schedule (VOTE) – Malia Arnett motioned for approval of the items as submitted, Dan Kotowski second, no objections. Motion passed.
- Co-chair report – Thank Steve Buddy and Melisa Riddle for their service to CWAC for over many years. We will be starting up the annual process to solicit recommendations and or applications for membership in or before November. Zack's term ends 12/31/2021. Christopher Cox was recommended to the department and excepted as incoming Co-chair. Rich Bobby recommended that Zach and Bev form an ad hoc CWAC work group to review and address issues related to the populations of DCFS system for youth that has either DD or are on the Autism spectrum to find better ways to serve and support, including the necessary involvement of DHS. Should it also include the parents with developmental disabilities? It will be formulated into a formal recommendation and submitted to the department. Rich Bobby has offered to Co-chair and has reached out to Allison Starks, Dir. of the Division of Developmental Disabilities within DHS and anyone else from DCFS and all the private providers who are interested in joining this effort.

Director's Report

- Thanked Zack and Bev for their hard work and doing an excellent job. DCFS supports the idea of full vaccinations for our staff, children & families that are being served in the mist of the pandemic. Make sure to continue to have that message go out from DCFS and through our private agency partners. There will be a survey rolling out to get input from providers about what your feelings are about the vaccination. Which will help inform his recommendation to the Governor's office. (Dan Kotowski) Q: Do you foresee at any time that you will require your people who work directly for you, be mandated to be vaccinated or required to be tested weekly if they are not required to be vaccinated? A: Some decision is being made on exactly what our continued response will be to the staff about vaccinations & testing. Expectation: To encourage everybody on the call to recognize that we are looking for, expecting and willing to support the growth of your

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organizations. Contacting Derek, Tim, Laurie or Royce if you are interested in expanding your footprints in our world. You are encouraged to develop a recruitment plan.

- (Zack Schrantz) Q: Can you share what The Strategic planning process that the department has started, will look like and what you are planning to get from it and how can CWAC help with that? A: Looking forward to continuing that work in partnership with the private sector, hopefully to engage our partners in the conversations about where the Child Welfare System be in the next 10 years.

“Key Issues” Agenda Items - 11:30-12:15

- *CWAC Recommendations Prior Recommendations*
 - DCFS Process
 - Recommended Framework (LaTasha Roberson) (VOTE) – See the Recommendations Procedure provided via email. Goal: ensure there are clear and actionable recommendations sent to the Department, as well as measurable and accountable responses in return. (Dagene and Julie Barbosa) walked through the recommended process. Effective date if approved and accepted: 7/1.
 - Highlights: Subcommittee chairs to send drafted recommendations to CWAC Co-chairs;(Zack & Bev) CWAC Co-chairs to send drafts to the Director and S.P.I.C.E. within 14 days; S.P.I.C.E. to review and track for input and feedback; the Director to respond to all parties within 90 days; S.P.I.C.E. to update tracking system with decision/rationale; Subcommittee chairs to share responses with committees; Director to update CWAC on accepted or not accepted recommendations every 180 days, at minimum, until fully implemented.
 - 3/5/21 Prior Recommendations – See the Compiled Recommendations provided via email. They will be the first to be processed by this new procedure. Subcommittee chairs should expect requests for updates/clarification since some are quite old.

Workforce Crisis

George Vennikandam – Policy Guides were drafted and distributed to community providers on 5/28. Comments were requested by 6/4. Accepted recommendations to become effective 7/1

- Highlights: On behalf of licensing it is recommended to try the policy guide first and see how it impacts the workforce and then see if you need to regroup or make any changes.

Racial Equity

- Response to the Racial Equity Recommendations (Dagene Brown) – See the Racial Equity Call to Action provided via email.
 - **Received from CWAC:** review and provide feedback on prioritization.
 - Strive to have a minimum of one person of color representing the private agencies CWAC Co-chairs. We are in support of their recommendations and working to ensure that it is established across our committees.
 - Establish term limits for all CWAC members and for all Co-chairs of CWAC this process was implemented for membership determination for this new CWAC body.
 - Establish a racial equity review process to determine CWAC membership. A process was implemented for membership determination the second part of that was to have a formal and final review by the DCFS Deputy of Diversity Equity and Inclusion. The department is willing to explore that and have a discussion around that additional piece.
 - For systemic issues to be addressed there was a thorough review of all DCFS policies & procedures.
 - Implicit bias training as a part of all permanent newly racially mandated reporting

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- A blind hotline removal process.
- Removal of a child or youth of color required to decision making to formally document responses.
- To identify systemic decision points that historically contribute to permanency disparities.
- Mandatory racial equity training for the impact of implicit and cultural bias for DCFS and all private agencies.

In a nutshell the department support all those recommendations. Some of those recommendations are being addressed within our CWAC Racial Equity committee there is a committee in place to address a talk about the Racial equity training and what the will look like.

Rate Setting

- CWAC recommendations will be part of the rate work group that will be forming here shortly. (Royce Kirkpatrick) Finance in this case is clear fiscal and budget consideration and will provide support in that area. This is the last CWAC meeting before the close of LAPS, they are closing very quickly. That means those bills need to get in and processed. Welcome Chris Schantz, who was recommended, and Director approved to be named CWAC FAS Co-chair. There is going to be a call for proposals around residential programming. They are on an aggressive time frame because there is a sense of urgency to address the residential programming needs, just wanted to give a heads up that it will be coming out next week.

Presentation and Discussion – 12:15-1:15

- The Parent Perspective – Elena Thompson (Nina), Tony Lawler, and Antoinette Roundtree P.O.W.R. is partnered with Shriver and collaborated as Impacted Parents and they are now Impactful Parents. They are here for parent advocacy to inform and educate folks to reform the system and work together while being at the table so you can understand some the nuances and things that families go through.

Closing Remarks from Director Smith – We appreciate the voices of P.O.W.R. being present at the table today expressing themselves. As we talked about expanding and what CWAC and Advocacy means we really wanted to make sure we had voices from all sides, so we never forget there are different points of views. DCFS will keep offering support to parents and families to be able to care for children safely and look forward to that progress.

Next meeting: *Tentatively November 18th, 1-3:30 pm*

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