

**Child Welfare Advisory Committee
November 12, 2020 1:00 PM-3:30 PM
MINUTES**

Attendees

Members: Trish Fox, Zach Schrantz, Andi Durbin, Beverly Jones, Brian Finley, Christopher Cox, Dan Kotowski, Elizabeth Richmond, Jason Keeler, Jessica Bullard, Kara Teeple, Kathy Grzelak, Mary Ann Berg, Mary Savage, Melissa Ludington, Melissa Riddle, Nancy Dorfman-Schwartz, Nancy Hughes, Patricia Ege, Raul Garza, Rich Bobby, Tiffany Jones, Toleda Hart, Viviane Ngwa

DCFS: Director Marc Smith, Dagenè Brown, Ashley Deckert, Bruce Thomas, Darryl Johnson, Deborah Kennedy, Gaylon Alcaez, Hope Carbonaro, Jill Tichenor, Kevin Walsh, Kimberly Mann, Lori Gray, Michelle Jackson, Monito Whittington-Eskridge, Robert Blackwell, Royce Kirkpatrick, Angela Harris, Anika Todd, Chevelle Bailey, Daniel Fitzgerald, Deborah Kennedy, Douglas Washington, James Tooles, Jamie Dornfeld, Julie Barbosa, Marnita Martin-Harris, Michelle Grove, Tracey King, Yesenia Perez

Public: Elke Hansen, LaTasha Roberson, Margaret Vimont, Mitchell Sandy, Aisha Davis, Audrey Pennington, Charles Barron, Cameron Zelaya, Carrie M., Charles Montorio-Archer, Forrest Moore, Jill Hayden, Kacy Anderson, Matthew Sanchez, Michelle Churchey-Mims

Welcome and Introductions – 1:00-1:10

- Completed roll call for members and subcommittee chairs.
- Welcomed Beverly Jones, who will be replacing Trish as co-chair. Thanked Trish for commitment to CWAC and child welfare system.
- Approval of August Minutes – Chris Cox motioned for approval, Melissa Ludington seconded, no objections. Motion passed.

Director's Report – 1:10-1:30

- Thanked all public and private partners for all efforts and continued commitment during COVID pandemic.
- Diversity conversations are appreciated to make the necessary impacts and changes in the system moving forward.
- Aware of spike in COVID cases and discussing internally to provide guidance. Will be reaching out to private partners for feedback. Stressed importance in keeping staff, children and families safe while continuing to achieve permanency. Need to balance working remotely while still engaging families and laying eyes on children. Encourage all to continue using masks and other PPE.
 - Q. What's being done to make more beds available for youth diagnosed with/exposed to COVID, and what structural changes can be made to get prompt responses re: bed availability issues? Agencies

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should be working with Monitoring re: what availability makes the most sense. E.g. many providers have opened COVID-only units. The Department is also working with agencies on contracts to increase capacity. Re: structure, will be putting out language on restructuring to address bottleneck issues.

- Q. There is a new stay-at-home advisory for the City of Chicago that just came out, and it specifically states not to have anyone in your home outside of the household. Agencies expect pushback from foster parents. Does the Department know how soon guidance will be issued to address this? Guidance should be expected in the next couple of days. However, there is nothing to preclude agencies from acting under guidance of the current policy.
- The Department is working to increase workforce capacity statewide with the help of the new OES Deputy Director, Kim Bates. Initiatives include reimbursing tuition to those who enter child welfare after graduation.
 - Q. The Governor has indicated there will be cuts in the human services area. Does that affect DCFS, and if so, what can be expected? DCFS has not been given guidance re: the current discussions and proposals for FY22 budget. There should be no expectation on changes or adjustments at this time.
- Encourages all partners join CWAC subcommittees to take part in all processes and provide feedback.

Agenda Items – 1:30-2:45

- Racial Equity and Inclusion – Zach Schrantz
 - Each sub- and adhoc committee was tasked with reviewing system sectors that impact and lead to racial disparities. CWAC was also challenged to address the lack of diverse representation in membership. Moving forward, it will be important to make progress in representation, have active planning and take appropriate action.
 - Proposed changes to CWAC Rules of Procedure – Motion to approve
 - See attached proposal for details. Changes include making racially diverse appointments based on DCFS demographics data, term limits, meeting adjustments due to OMA, subcommittee size and co-chair appointments. Membership recommendations for 2021 will reflect changes re: diversity.
 - Nancy Hughes motioned to approve the proposal, Andi Durbin seconded.
 - Feedback from group: shouldn't limit to just youth in care demographics as a measure; should define "diversity" to include racial diversity and not just cultural; develop process to assess when there's a breach to rules; provide training to new members re: cultural and racial diversity. **Recommendations:** 1) Change "culturally diverse" to "racially diverse". 2) Look at language to define a "breach" and develop a mechanism to review it.
 - Andi Durbin motioned to approve the recommendations, Beverly Jones seconded, members unanimously approved, motion passed.
 - Subcommittee DEI work and recommendations
 - Racial Equity Practice – The educational tool will be rolling out in 2021 and will be posted on the D-Net. The racial equity practice model will be integrated in the IL child welfare core practice model training instead of rolling out as a pilot. Illinois is now part of a nationwide effort with Casey Family Programs to work toward a system that's free of structural racism. Working with the IL Family Equity Practice workgroup, as well as supporting and consulting with other subcommittees. Will be working to incorporate all the various racial equity efforts into strategic planning.
 - CWAC requests this subcommittee bring back ideas from the nationwide effort.

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- OLPD appreciates any feedback on the training curriculum before moving forward with recommendations. If interested in, reach out to Monico, Monico.Whittington-Eskridge@illinois.gov.
 - Intact – Always start with a reminder re: equity before all discussions. Reviewing foundations training to include equity elements, especially re: worker bias. Also looking at representation in the committee. Recommendations include more robust training in judicial system to address evident disproportionality. Will coordinate efforts with ICOY.
 - Well-being – Looking at patterns and trends by race. Hoping that integration further upstream will help address issues. Will share data when available.
 - Foster Care – Efforts include reaching out to CEOs of agencies with foster care contracts requesting membership. Some replies received and will be extending deadline to end of day 11/13. Not restricted to executives nor one per agency. Also looking at decision points related to permanency. Will be changing group name to “Permanency” since most work is related to this vs foster care. Will also be creating a new workgroup, Reunification.
 - Call to Action – See attached letter for details. It’s a series of recommendations made by three CWAC members re: racial equity. Systemic racism needs to be acknowledged and addressed as a group. Need to look at the workforce and ensure it reflects the people served, as well as review practice and policies. Implicit bias plays a large role and needs to be mandated to cover in trainings for all child welfare staff. Issues need to be embraced by all, including subcommittees. They should incorporate this in their discussions.
 - State DEI Plan – See attached plan for details. It was created as a directive from the Governors Office. Goals include develop a DEI division at DCFS, assess impact of and institute changes to policy and practice, and incorporate DEI through awareness and training of the workforce. This has not been approved by the GO yet but will be shared once approved.
- 2021 Membership Application Process – Zach Schrantz
 - See attached application for details. Will send out revision by this week and allow until 12/15/20 for completion. The CWAC Nominating Committee, which will also be diverse, will review then forward recommendations to the Director.
 - Q. Is this open to current members to nominate someone else within their agency to achieve diversity goals? Yes, if you believe there’s a well-suited candidate. This will also be distributed to members with expiring terms.
- Finance Update – Royce Kirkpatrick
 - Budget outlook for FY21 and FY22
 - For FY21, all initiatives are on schedule and funded. Will also be finalizing one-time payments for intact and case management staff today.
 - For FY22, tracking several initiatives for claiming: 1) HMR licensure, which is still slipping; 2) candidacy for intact families, which shows 94.9% for DCFS and 68.4% for POS; 3) CFS 458D re: eligibility determination, which is at 71% compliance for Jan-Feb and 88% for Jul-Dec. Both need to eventually be at 100%. Reports and scorecards are ready and will be submitted to each agency. **Ask:** Agencies need to work on outstanding 458Ds, especially for Jul-Dec.
 - Q. What is the one-time payment for? It’s a COVID-related payment for flexible expenditure to POS re: case management.

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- Q. Are executives copied on claiming-related communication? Agencies identified their point person, but anyone can be included.
 - Q. Is the GO aware of the effort to fix Medicaid-payment issues re: QRTP stays? Yes, the GO is aware and working with the congressional delegation at fed level.
 - Q. Will DCFS consider payments to group home and residential programs for additional staff doing e-learning? This has been previously raised on FAS and COVID platforms. The Department plans to review how hiring is impacting agencies and cash flows in Jan at FAS.
 - Q. Will the \$100 stipend for foster parents be coming back? No, not part of the budget.
- Subcommittee FY22 Program Plan Recommendations
 - Foster Care and Intact recommendations have been received.
- COVID Planning – Derek Hobson, Jassen Strokosch
 - The executive team will be reviewing previous guidance re: COVID to provide an update. Plan to invite agencies to discussions early next week. Currently maintaining a CQC, which still has openings for youth that have been exposed/potentially exposed. Also offering additional supports to foster parents who accept exposed/potentially exposed youth.
 - Agencies implore the Department to respond quickly due to the rapidly changing environment. Various examples provided by POS re: urgency. Next week may be too late for guidance and flexibility is needed to make emergency decisions, especially with coming holidays. Conversations have already taken place with Department involvement and will continue. The Department acknowledges sense of urgency, but time is needed to review information at various levels to take appropriate action. Agencies are advised to reach out to their DCFS contact and use the current guidance.
- Permanency – Desi Silva
 - See attached PDFs for data details on FY21 and previous fiscal years. There are permanency issues that need to be addressed. The Department and POS underperformed nationally together and separately during last quarter in FY20 but rebounded in June. Should note there are regional and jurisdictional considerations. Recommendations have been shared with legal, including information on court hearings. Will also share with CWAC Foster Care: youth of color in care data by permanency type and area, as well as racial composition of recruitment and placements. There are also trends by county that need to be reviewed and shared with the subcommittee. There's been a drop in sub-guardianship and adoption that needs to be addressed when return-home isn't an option.
 - Advocate noted that Zoom hearings have slowed things down re: reunification.
 - Q. Why wasn't the county level data shared? Not a problem with sharing, can forward to members.
- PIP Update – Julie Barbosa
 - Approved in Oct and encourage people to review and comment. There is a steering committee and smaller workgroups to support this work. Invitations will be sent to smaller workgroups to break down the work into specific actions. Will also identify people responsible and timeframes.

Committee reports – 2:45-3:15

- Workforce Education Recommendations – Rich Bobby, Monico Whittington
 - Reviewing specific positions, including supervisory roles for residential and congregate care settings and licensing requirements. Looking at including other experiences or waive degrees. Also reviewing child welfare specialist supervisor and expanding degree requirements.

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- Deb McCarrel completed an independent review. There are no degree requirements tied to the statute so there's more leeway to change rules. There are three rules that will be impacted. Will be submitting policy guides changes in coordination with rule changes.
- Other
 - No other committee report-outs.

Next Steps – 3:15-3:30

- CWAC Strategic Planning Retreat
 - Receiving support from Department to plan a subcommittee retreat. Topics to be discussed include the PIP, DEI, organizing and syncing work and data from well-being to feed and structure CWAC. Zach and Beverly will work to schedule in Jan.

Next meeting: February 11, 2020 1:00 PM-3:30 PM. Location TBD.

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