

Workforce Crisis Task Force

January 19, 2022

Notes (Draft)

Attendee:	Position/Agency:	Present (x)
Amanda Whitlock	Children's Home & Aid - Senior Vice President, Child Welfare & Behavioral Health Services	
Anne Irving	AFSCME	x
Betsy Goulet (co-chair)	University of Illinois - Springfield & Child Protection Training Academy	x
Comisa Hamilton	DCFS - Licensing - Acting Deputy Director	x (Proxy/ Shontee Blankenship)
Deja Lockett	Illinois Community College Board	x
Denice Murray	Ascension Advisory Services - Child Welfare	x
Heidi Farris	Illinois Board of Higher Education	x
Jason House	DCFS - Budget Office	x
Joe McDonald	DCFS - Finance - Acting CFO	x
Lisa Jones	Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity	
Mark Stutrud	Lutheran Social Service - CEO	x
Paola Baldo	Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority - Research Analysis	x
Rep. Dan Caulkins	Illinois State Representative - 101st District	
Rep. Dave Vella	Illinois State Representative - 48th District	x
Rep. Maurice West	Illinois State Representative - 67th District	x
Sarah Daniels	Illinois Collaboration on Youth - Assistant Deputy Director	x
Sen. Craig Wilcox	Illinois State Senator - 32nd District	x
Sen. Julie Morrison (chair)	Illinois State Senator - 29th District	x
Sen. Steve McClure	Illinois State Senator - 50th District	x
Rep. Tony McCombie	Illinois State Representative - District	x
Tami Fuller	Children and Family Research Center - University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign	x

I. Welcome/ Roll Call

Sen. Morrison welcomed the group. Kate Smith, DCFS, took attendance.

II. Introduction – Please provide your name and your professional title

Following attendance each attendee introduced themselves (listed above)

III. Background – Task Force on Strengthening the Child Welfare Workforce for Children and Families

Tami Fuller (Children & Families Research Center – School of Social Work) gave an overview of the December 2020 *Child Welfare Workforce Task Force: Literature Review, Employer Survey, and Recommendations*. Noted

factors of high importance: Worker Stress; Emotional Exhaustion; Job Satisfaction; Organizational Commitment to Workers. Salary was noted as particular interest, but not amongst the highest of concerns. Current status/progress of Stipend Program was discussed. It was discussed that this document would be sent out to all attendees.

IV. DCFS Updates

(Loan forgiveness) Stipend Program was initiated by Sen. McGuire. It is a five-year pilot with required yearly reports to monitor success. DCFS currently has \$500,000 set aside in the 2022 budget for this program. This allows for \$5,000/semester and a total of \$10,000/participant. Informal agreements have been made with 12 universities. It's possible that the funding would be expanded for the 2023 budget.

V. Recommendations Discussion

- Improving court relationships were discussed as many judges are not familiar with the role or purpose of DCFS and are simply “anti-DCFS.” Educating judges on the goal, purpose and role of DCFS with judges could improve the relationships with the courts.
- Training of the frontline – simulation training.
- Health and safety of workers.
 - Helena Buckner will be providing an update with current measures to improve safety.
 - Panic button; tracking system; radio system; body cams
 - AFSCME proposals – engage with law enforcement and travel in pairs
 - De-escalation technique training
 - Using off-duty and retired police officers to accompany investigators in homes
- Streamlining the CMS hiring process – Why does the hiring process take so long?
- Re-establishing trust of DCFS to Illinois residents
- Law enforcement arm to DCFS (similar to conservation)
- Addressing rising crime in Illinois by the General Assembly (task forces outside of DCFS)
- What feedback are DCFS recruiters getting? What are the target numbers for hiring?

VI. Comments

Request for an email list sent to all attendees of attendees listed above.

Individuals requested to attend next meeting:

- Director Smith
- Kim Bates (recruitment)
- A representative from CMS

Virtual Chat Room Comments:

from Jason House to everyone: (approximately) 10:26 AM

We have 12 public universities exploring the stipend program.

from Heidi Farris to everyone: 10:28 AM

@jason house - thank you

from Rep Tony McCombie to everyone: 10:40 AM

We can not promote growing staff... when we cannot answer how you are going to keep people safe... cart before the horse!

from Rep Tony McCombie to everyone: 10:53 AM

Meaghan... I know there are alot of reports that are posted on ILGA... can you send/email us a list of what you have out there?

from Meaghan Jorgensen (internal) to everyone: 10:54 AM

Yes. Will get that to you.

from Heidi Farris to everyone: 10:56 AM

What is Kim Bates title?

from Mark Stutrud to everyone: 10:57 AM

Some thoughts on Workforce Crisis – Recruitment, Retention and Vocation

The recent Rate increases and potential increases in the State Budget can make a significant impact.

However, Private organizations are challenged by some structural issues in the DCFS contracts:

- Rate
- Case Volume
- Allowable Costs (some with Caps)
- Excess Revenue

The current Contract structure poses challenges in effectively:

- Forecasting
- Calibrating Budgets
- Financial Modeling (that assures long term viability)

In the immediate term:

- Address structural contract issues
- Enhance Salary/Benefits
- Double the Efforts in Training, Onboarding and Supervision

Longer Term:

- Vocation: Redesign the Child Welfare approach:
 - o Evidence/Team Based Model
 - o Accountable Outcomes based on Permanence

VII. Adjournment

Future meeting dates were discussed and agreed upon (all to be held from 10:00am – 11:00am).

- 2/2/22
- 2/16/22
- 3/2/22