

**Illinois Adoption Advisory Council
Friday, February 1, 2019
CONFERENCE CALL
9:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.
APPROVED MINUTES**

AAC Members Present	AAC Members Present	Staff
Kathleen Bush	Karen Taylor	Janet Ahern
Alice Couch	Danny Tolliver Jr.	Gwenn Eyer
Keely Giles	Amy Trotter	Jen Florent
Natalie Miller	Karen Wardlaw	Sylvia Fonseca
Maripat Oliver	Mark Werner	Michelle Grove
Anne O'Malley	Julie Yelverton	Audrey Reischauer
Michelle Price		Guests
Crystal Rekart	AAC Members Absent	Christine Feldman
Elizabeth Richmond	Keisha Robinson	Katie Friend
Danielle Sanders	Jeremy Wheeler	Vanessa James
Brittney Sprouse		Stephanie Wolf

Welcome and Introductions

Elizabeth Richmond, IAAC co-chair, opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. Elizabeth reported that council member Danny Tolliver submitted absence forms for several meetings and Maria Nanos submitted her resignation. The meeting, originally scheduled for Bloomington, was changed to a conference call due to the threat of bad weather. The agenda was updated with call-in information, distributed to council members, and posted.

Adoption Month Recap

Council

Julie, Michelle and Elizabeth set up a foster parent recruitment table during showings of the “Instant Family” movie. Keely and Natalie partnered with Children’s Home & Aid, the local ASAP provider, to staff a table downstate. They spoke with 19 families. Alice tried to do an event in Cook, but costs were prohibitive. Katie Friend stated that she thought it might have helped in recruitment, but they often have an increase in inquiries during the holiday season, so it’s hard to document. Some families referenced the movie, but there was not a huge increase. Janet reported that DCFS held an event at the Chicago Children’s Museum for Cook and Northern families.

Approval of Minutes from 11/02/18 Meeting

Elizabeth Richmond

Maripat Oliver made the motion to approve the minutes, with a second from Danielle Sanders. The motion carried.

State Guardian

Janet Ahern

Janet encouraged families to have youth apply for DCFS scholarships. She announced that the Department has a new Assistant Guardian, Lon Krueger. Lon may attend future meetings. The Director’s last day is February 15th. There is a nationwide search underway. Janet stated that if no one has been identified, she anticipates that an Acting Director will be appointed.

**QIC/AG Update/Phone line/Web site
Caring and Sharing Training**

Christine Feldman and Vanessa James

Christine reported that they're still working on a few more Trauma Affect Regulation, Guidance for Education and Therapy (TARGET) cases and the evaluation is still in progress. The results will probably not be available until the fall 2019. Metropolitan and Baby Fold have certified TARGET facilitators.

She reported on the sustainability of the grant. Overall, the purpose of the grant was to reach out early to families to have them feel comfortable accessing and utilizing services to prevent crises. Another aspect of the grant is to provide 1-day START workshops to support the Adoption Support and Preservation (ASAP) agencies that are part of the grant, building on what they know and bringing in new materials and concepts to get people excited about the work they do. They'll share the message that these services are valuable and normal and not a negative reflection of the adoptive parents.

START:

Start Early

Trauma informed

Attachment Focused

Resiliency Building

Therapeutic Services

The next big pieces are to take what they gather from the workshop and share the information with adoptive parents throughout the state. The Connections to Count On video is in the final approval stage and they will release it shortly. They are working on a brochure to make available in addition to the handbook. They continue to develop ways to publicize and promote the program. Their biggest push right now is to get the web site up and running in an efficient manner.

Web Site

Vanessa James/Jen Florent

Vanessa asked Christine to introduce Stephanie Wolf, from Spaulding for Children. Vanessa described Stephanie as the "project manager" for the website. They are working to make sure that necessary information is included on the web site, that information has been vetted for accuracy, and the information reflects what adoptive parents, council members, etc. feel is valuable. IAAC members of the content committee, adoptive parents, staff may make recommendations via the mailbox. Information will funnel to a database where they'll create a record for each submission idea. They have a standard review where it will go through a full review process, a streamlined process for things like calendar postings, and a fast track for things that might be time-limited. Vanessa walked the council through the decision tree. Postings come through the Email box and go to Kelly King in Adoptions for documentation and movement as needed. Jen Florent will review it from the Department perspective, getting deputy sign-off as needed. IAAC members will become involved in reviewing/approving blog posts, including an adoptive parent member and a professional member. They also will utilize a list of adoption supervisors for review. The content committee typically meets once per month, during the lunch hour. Council members who wish to join the committee should let Elizabeth know. Christine thanked the council for their support. The site visit will be held in June, so they plan to send representatives to the IAAC June meeting.

Communications

Jen Florent

While we are still trying to get the web site up and running, people may send information to the Email box for Jen to distribute via social media. Jen stated that Kelly King submitted a lot of resources that could go on the web site. Two of the articles will be shared via social media very soon, one regarding Adoption Tax Credit and one regarding working with a child's pediatrician. She noted that they are still working on a way to fund and produce cards to promote the new web site. The DCFS Scholarship application program is open until March 31, 2019. There are other resources available if youth do not qualify for the DCFS scholarship. Information may be found on the DCFS external web site and on Facebook and Twitter. The fourth annual legislative Shadow Day is coming up on May 14 and 15. Orientation will be conducted on the 14th to prepare them. They will go to the Capitol on the 15th for Shadow Day. Jen will distribute the link for kids to sign up.

Adoption Column in Illinois Families Now & Forever

Elizabeth Richmond

Michelle stated that we want to continue the newsletter with an issue possibly coming out in May. Sylvia will review the content before submission for layout and publication. The IAAC will work on a column at the March meeting. Jen suggested that we include the State Fair ticket application form. It was suggested that we offer, at minimum, May and November issues. Send topics to the Office of Caregiver & Parent Support.

Foster Parent Handbook

Elizabeth Richmond

Elizabeth asked council members to take handbook chapter seven revision suggestions to the March meeting. Vanessa noted that a more detailed post-adoption section needs to be added. The handbook began many years ago and has been updated over time. The last major update was done in 2014. Vanessa stated that reviewers need to submit missing information in addition to reviewing what's currently in print. Deputies and Communications review prior to updating. The handbook is posted on the Virtual Training Center under the icon Foster Parent Resources. Revised handbooks will need to be posted on both the VTC and the DCFS external web site. Jen stated that from a Communications standpoint it would be best if we were able to link the document directly to the DCFS website, to ensure consistent information sharing. Audrey will discuss redirecting the link with Jeanette Long and will follow up with Gwenn.

Public Comment – None

Stakeholder Comment

Mark reported that membership slots are open to adoptive parents in Cook North, Cook South and Cook Central; one adult adoptee (statewide position) and a professional member (statewide).

Motion: Mark Werner moved to adjourn the meeting; Alice Couch seconded and the motion for adjournment carried.

NEXT MEETING: Friday, March 8, 2019 at the Chateau Hotel in Bloomington, Illinois.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

DCFS and other scholarship opportunities
SPYDER
New Director or Acting Director

Goal setting
SSI procedures