

**Meeting of the
Illinois Adoption Advisory Council
Friday, April 24, 2020
Conference Call
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Conference Call: Dial: 888-494-4032 Passcode: 953-069-6277#
APPROVED MINUTES**

AAC Members Present	AAC Members Absent	Guests	DCFS Staff
Kathleen Bush	Laurel Meade	Valerie Darby	Dagene Brown
Keely Giles	Maripat Oliver	Christine Feldman	Jason Cummins
Beth Hunter	Crystal Rekart	Katie Friend	Gwenn Eyer
Natalie Miller	Danny Tolliver, Jr.		Jen Florent
Elizabeth Richmond	Jeremy Wheeler		Sylvia Fonseca
Danielle Sanders	Julie Yelverton		Michelle Grove
Cara Siebert			Kelly King
Brittney Sprouse			
Karen Taylor			
Amy Trotter			
Karen Wardlaw			
Mark Werner			
Linda White			

Welcome and Roll Call

IAAC Chairperson Elizabeth Richmond welcomed everyone to the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and Gwenn Eyer called roll. Staff and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of March 6, 2020 IAAC Meeting Minutes - Council

MOTION: Karen Taylor made the motion to approve the minutes from the March 6, 2020 IAAC meeting. Beth Hunter seconded, and the motion carried.

Adoption Support and Preservation Video

Christine Feldman/Jen Florent

Christine commended Kelly and Jen for getting the videos posted to the Path Beyond Adoption web site, highlighting the importance of seeking supports early and as often as needed. Jen noted that the videos are posted under the Learning tab. Christine noted that one of the things they really want to do is use Spanish subtitles, and now they're working on a complete Spanish version.

QIC Update

Christine Feldman

They have had to change things around due to the pandemic. Some prior plans, including conference support, had to be changed. They are putting together a big manual for the ASAP program to standardize it. Instead of holding a Path Beyond Adoption workshop as they did last year, they will put together a virtual workshop that will include parents. They will seek council input as they proceed. Christine noted that they have a couple of committees working with

Training to do the 10th-hour video for adoption training, remaking the Caring and Sharing video. This will be produced as a complete Spanish version, as well.

Communications Update

Jen Florent

Jen reported a new issue of Illinois Families Now & Forever is set to be mailed on Monday. It will be posted on the DCFS external web site and links will be shared on Facebook and D-net. The DCFS Scholarship application deadline has been extended through April 30, 2020, and the form is on the web site home page. Illinois State Fair tickets are still pending until a decision is made regarding hosting the fair this year. COVID 19 related information has been sent out and everything is posted on the DCFS external website.

National Training and Development Curriculum

Christine Feldman

The Train the Trainers was held in February. They originally planned a roll-out in April, then May, and it has now been postponed until July due to COVID. There is quite an adjustment required, because this training was designed as an in-person classroom training. They have regrouped and have compiled a new toolbox for use during this pandemic.

Office of Caregiver and Parent Support Update

Michelle Grove

Michelle reported that the Foster Parent Support Specialist program is hiring FPSS in southern region and they are working on recruitment opportunities. Another goal is to have membership on both councils full by July 1. They have sent announcements to administrators up to the Deputy level, have posted to D-net, have sent to APT, etc. The FY'21 meeting schedule has been sent to the chairs for approval and will go through Training to ensure that there are no conflicts with other conferences and meetings. The Program Improvement Plan (PIP) is being updated and they will reach out to the council for volunteers to give stakeholder input. Revisions have been made based on prior input and they are refining the plan for further review. Elizabeth asked Michelle to describe her current position overseeing the Office of Caregiver and Parent Support, Incarcerated Parents, and Interstate Compact. One of her workers focuses strictly on private adoption and others do interstate home studies and they will be invited to collaborate with the IAAC in future meetings.

Virtual Adoptive Parent Café

Elizabeth Richmond

Elizabeth noted that the IAAC originally piloted café questions for adoptive parents. We are now doing virtual foster parent cafés through zoom, with people from across the region and across the state. They are looking for an ASAP program willing to host these cafés. Both Kathleen and Cara volunteered their agencies. Elizabeth will coordinate with Be Strong Families to do staff training and co-facilitate parent cafés, using IAAC members as table hosts. Elizabeth noted that even with zoom there is opportunity to do small-group work. She noted that virtual cafés have increased participation in her area.

Membership/Recruitment

Mark Werner

Mark reported that there are currently three adoptive parent openings in Cook County, and two at-large adoptive parent openings. He noted that some members' terms expire June 30, 2020.

Statewide Adoption Update

Sylvia Fonseca and Kelly King

Kelly stated that Post Adoption Service providers are still providing supports virtually. She is still posting new information to the web site and they are refining the phone line operations. Adoption Support and Preservation programs are still providing services in a variety of ways. Providers are doing tele-help, making phone calls and contacting parents to see how they are doing during this pandemic. Respite providers have mentors that are still checking in with the kids. Sylvia reported regional meetings were held with Adoption Supervisors and Adoption Panel Attorneys last week. She noted that some courts are making accommodations for the COVID pandemic. She was aware of at least one judge who conducted an adoption via a Zoom call. Most courts are hearing emergency petitions, including a potential mini Adoption Day to be held in Madison County, and she expects these services to expand. She further stated that sharing information about the way other counties courts, adoption staff and adoption attorneys are conducting the work is invaluable as we work in collaboration to move youth in care to permanency during this time. A council member noted that Madison County is trying to find ways to move forward with adoptions starting in May. It was noted by several council members that staff are doing their best to provide services. They are trying to move Thera-play and other programs to online offerings and families are responding well. One noted that many youth are doing better with phone contact rather than face-to-face, and some families are reporting that home schooling is more effective for their youth and they may continue next year. One agency is trying to do group respite over Zoom, i.e., playing BINGO, trivia contests and other activities. One agency is not officially accepting new clients, but they are calling to provide support in the interim rather than starting the clock on time-limited therapy. Programs are recognizing that this may provide more opportunities in the future using virtual services. It was noted that the pandemic has forced many to improve their technological skills.

YouthCare Managed Care Services

Shawnte Alexander/Traneeka Mickell

Shawnte reported that she is now the vice president for YouthCare. Karen Brach is now overseeing the YouthCare program as the plan president. YouthCare went live with former youth in care February 1st and the new roll-out date for youth in care is June 1st, due to COVID. They are currently conducting Health Risk Screenings for the youth. They have hired several people to service this population, with everyone working remotely. The continuity of care period will extend, 180 days after the roll-out. YouthCare will ask HFS for permission to share the weekly impact stories with this group, re: collaboration and case coordination. Shawnte noted that a computer glitch contributed to some concerns early on, but was quickly resolved by HFS. The highest call driver has been around assigning Primary Care Providers, and those matters are resolved immediately.

Discussion

- Sylvia Fonseca, adoption administrator, asked them to follow up on a list she sent that included the names of post adoption workers. It is important YouthCare workers understand that adoptive parents have authorization to refill prescriptions for their children. (Parents have consent for adopted children.) There should not be a delay.
- Shawnte noted that their Rapid Response Team is addressing issues as they arise and they are pressing to resolve issues within 24-48 hours. Sylvia stated that all issues she forwarded to Anika Todd were resolved quickly, and she wanted to be proactive and avoid future issues and service delays. Sylvia also mentioned the confusion caused when YouthCare identifies themselves as

adoption coordinators as she has received calls from parents who thought they were speaking to their DCFS Post Adoption worker. Shawnte said she would take this information back to her team.

- A council member stated that the most recent handbook outlines a lot of benefits for members including gym membership, financial incentives, transportation services, after school care, school uniforms, etc., that are not typically covered for adoptive families. Shawnte clarified that services are available and will provide further details about providers and how payments are made. She will follow up with training YouthCare staff to ensure that they communicate how the benefits are accessed.
- It was noted that the program branding should all be changed to YouthCare due to the change from Illinicare, i.e., on the recently released handbook.
- Council co-chair reported that the council wants to review some of the language HealthCare uses and will follow up with Shawnte. Kelly brought up the need to ensure the booklet reflected the services provided under YouthCare accurately and used the example of daycare and gym membership.
- Sylvia asked for collaboration between YouthCare and DCFS post-adopt for the provision of services. She requested a WebEx slide presentation with YouthCare. Council members may contact Shawnte at Shawnte.Alexander@illinicare.com or 630-272-5725.

June 5 Agenda Items

YouthCare follow up
Adoption Celebration

Public Comment

None

Stakeholder Comment

None

Plan for Next Meeting:

Adjourn

Motion: Danielle Sanders made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Cara Siebert seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

Next Meeting: June 5, 2020, Doubletree Lisle, Illinois or conference call