

**Illinois Adoption Advisory Council
MINUTES
Friday, July 26, 2019
Conference Call
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

AAC Members Present	AAC Members Present (cont'd)	AAC Members Absent	DCFS Staff
Kathleen Bush	Cara Siebert	Maripat Oliver	Gwenn Eyer
Alice Couch	Karen Taylor	Michelle Price	Michelle Grove
Keely Giles	Danny Tolliver, Jr.	Crystal Rekart	Kelly King
Beth Hunter	Karen Wardlaw	Brittney Sprouse	
Natalie Miller	Jeremy Wheeler	Amy Trotter	Guests
Elizabeth Richmond	Julie Yelverton	Mark Werner	Christine Feldman
Danielle Sanders		Linda White	Heather Williams, LSSI

Welcome and Introductions

Elizabeth Richmond

Elizabeth Richmond welcomed everyone to the meeting. Roll was recorded as callers came on the line.

Approval of June 7, 2019 IAAC Meeting Minutes

Council

Karen Wardlaw made the motion to accept the minutes. Beth Hunter seconded and the motion carried.

Adoptions Update

Kelly King

They are still working on the adoption support magnet/stickers to conform to current legislation. They have a basic design. It was suggested that magnets would be distributed initially, followed by stickers in subsequent years. The council asked for an opportunity to see the magnets prior to distribution. Administrators are in the process of putting together provider Path Beyond Adoption work groups across the state so that they can learn more about post-adoption services, early intervention, what they should be talking to parents about. Those meetings will begin in mid-August. Council members will attend these meetings to report back to the council. Volunteers will let Elizabeth know they plan to attend.

Phone Line Usage

Kelly King

The phone bank has logged 1628 calls since April. They are receiving 10-20 calls per day and are having trouble keeping up. They are working on keeping up the web page. Christine and Vanessa are still providing support with updating the website framework, including, working on making it more mobile-friendly, adding a Frequently Asked Questions, etc. There is a delay due to staffing on the technology side. They are developing flyers for post-adoption services.

IAAC Goals and Outcomes

Elizabeth Richmond

Elizabeth reported that they sent a letter to the director on the work of the council. The letter included three recommendations:

- Provide adoptive parents with access to Education Advisors.
- Recreate a program plan for regional Master Adoptive/Adoption Support Specialists in Illinois, with peer-to-peer support positions like Foster Parent Support Specialists. The goal is not to complete paperwork, but to provide support along the path to adoption.
- Implement HB 3587, influenced adoption policy and practice. Changes in policy and procedure regarding training need to be incorporated.

Adoption Celebration

The draft graphic design was sent to council members for review. The council has identified funding to support this work. The purpose is to make adoption really visible, remove the stigma, normalize adoption indicating that it is about the whole family. A paper chain note will be distributed encouraging adoptees, their family members and friends to find their connections. Karen developed a plan to provide lanyards, wrist bands and paper chain that young people can construct. Posters will be available for businesses to display. It will read “Celebrating Adoption, What’s Your Connection?” Language will be revised to reflect council comments and graphic may be revised. The council will offer a descriptive kit to promote normalizing adoption for adoptive parents, adoptees, therapists, educators, etc. Use social media to promote. DCFS Communications will provide support for the effort. May wish to offer local Embracing Adoption resource fairs. The SYAB hopes to collaborate with the IAAC on an event and Karen and Elizabeth will try to attend their next meeting. There will be a planning call before the next meeting.

QIC AG Update

Christine Feldman

The Path Beyond Adoption Committee has been reviewing the brochure that Kelly referenced. It has gone to DCFS Communications and will be distributed to the council for review at the IAAC September meeting. The brochure talks about the Start program, the ASAP program, using services early and often, prior to crisis situations, etc. All the information is in compliance with current legislation. Christine will share content at the August adoption meetings.

The September meeting will be their last QIC site visit. Christine offered the council the opportunity to provide input on the content of their September grant wrap-up presentation. They would like to invite Nancy Rolock to go over the preliminary Target outcomes and the team would go over some of the lessons learned. They want to discuss additional ways to have people view adoption as a lifelong process. She would like to show the short Spalding video of Target in Illinois. Additional videos will be shown to illustrate adoption support. They will share information that came from New Jersey’s work on the selective interval, working with teens using a Tuning Into Teens program. Christine commended the council’s contributions to their work, focusing especially on training and consolidating content into on-demand training. Christine will develop a one-page flyer to promote the accomplishments. Elizabeth thanked her for her work on the grant on behalf of Illinois families.

Specialized Family Support Program Update

Heather Williams, LSSI

Heather reported that she is located in the west central part of the state. They do adoption support and preservations and adoption respite. They do in-home assessments, a mix of individual and family therapy. They have done attachment training for therapists. They host adoption support groups, child and teen groups, including trauma-informed yoga, painting, drumming, etc. They offer a food bank and respite services. Respite may be provided by an identified family member or utilize a pool of members they hire and train who will take youth out for activities. They will host one of the workshops Kelly referenced in her report. They most often see problems with dysregulation, self-harm, arguing, sneaking, stealing, school advocacy, maintaining safe behaviors in school and other issues that are trauma-related.

Discussion:

- What issues tend to come up the most often? They tend to see more issues show up in middle school aged youth. Kelly noted that the Department is working to ensure that all agencies have staff trained in TBRI.
- Are they recruiting minority therapists for children and youth? Male therapists? Heather replied that LSSI just hired a new recruiter and that African American recruiters on their team of looking at different recruiting sources.
- Do they utilize minority colleges as recruiting sources? It was suggested that they try to publish the opportunities in Illinois to outside colleges and universities. LSSI has relationships with several colleges in Illinois which have majority Black student populations, and LSSI actively recruits candidates from these schools. These colleges include Chicago State University, Malcolm X College, Kennedy King College, and Harold Washington College.
- List adoption support groups on the DCFS web site.
- A council member asked if her agency attending TBRI training which

TBRI, Trust Based Relational Intervention training for professionals guides them in helping foster parents provide trauma-informed care. Kelly King reported that ARC, Attachment Self-Regulation and Competency (attachment and trauma processing therapy) training, will be provided to therapists throughout the state. The Department has been working with agencies to utilize EMDR, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (trauma processing therapy) and the AAI, Adult Attachment Interview (an interview that helps adults identify their own attachment style). These evidence-based approaches are for use with adoptive families. Agencies should have at least one therapist trained in this kind of therapeutic focus. They are going to move forward to ensure that everyone has consistent Foundations training on the front end.

Legislative

Alexa Koziol

The legislative report was distributed and detailed the following:

SB 218 (Cullerton) Parental Right Termination

Amends the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. Provides that unless good cause exists that filing a petition to terminate parental rights is contrary to the child's best interests, the Department of Children and Family Services shall request the State's Attorney to file a petition or motion for termination of parental rights and appointment of guardian of the person with power to consent to adoption of the minor under the Act if the parent is criminally convicted of predatory criminal

sexual assault of a child, aggravated criminal sexual assault, criminal sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of a child, or permitting sexual abuse of a child. Makes technical changes. Sent to the Governor.

SB 1525 (Peters) DCFS Apprenticeship Stipends

Amends the Children and Family Services Act. Requires the Department of Children and Family Services, subject to appropriations, to provide eligible youth an apprenticeship stipend to cover those costs associated with entering an apprenticeship, including, but not limited to fees, tuition for classes, work clothes, rain gear, boots, and occupation-specific tools. Provide that the following youth shall be eligible for an apprenticeship stipend: youth for whom the Department has court-ordered legal responsibility; youth who aged out of care at age 18 or older; or youth formerly under care who have been adopted and were the subject of an adoption assistance agreement or who have been placed in private guardianship and were the subject of a subsidized guardianship agreement. Effective January 1, 2020. Sent to the Governor.

Stakeholder Comments

None

Public Comments

None

Agenda Items:

QIC

Legislative Committee report

Outcomes and Strategic plan

Adoption Month Celebration

Director's Update

Council Professionalism – binders, forms, billing procedure, etc.

Motion to adjourn: *Danielle Sanders made the motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Keely Giles and the meeting adjourned at 11:18 a.m.*

NEXT MEETING: Friday, September 6, 9 a.m. – 3p.m.