



Illinois Adoption Advisory Council

MEETING MINUTES
September 17, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

AAC Members Present	AAC Members Absent	Guests	DCFS Staff
Mary Kay Collins	Beth Hunter	Julie Yelverton	Jason Cummins
Katie Friend	Laurel Meade		Michelle Grove
Keely Giles	Maripat Oliver		Renee Mays
Alex Montgomery	Shirley Padera		Kelly King
Crystal Rekart	Danny Tolliver		Sylvia Fonseca
Elizabeth Richmond	Amy Trotter		Gayla Webster
Danielle Sanders			
Cara Siebert			
Brittney Sprouse			
Karen Taylor			
Mark Werner			
Jeremy Wheeler			

Welcome/Introductions and Roll Call

Keely Giles / Katie Friend

Keely Giles welcomed all that was present. Roll call was taken of IAAC members

Approval of August 6th Minutes

Council

The minutes from the August 6th meeting were reviewed.

Mary Kay Collins made a motion that the minutes be approved. Cara Siebert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Intensive Placement Stabilization & Trauma Credentials

Charles Krause

Charles Krause provided a PowerPoint presentation covering the Family First Program. Charles Krause also answered questions pertaining to the PowerPoint Presentation.

Update from OCPS

Michelle Grove

Michelle described the new process to better support stakeholders, boards, and councils under the purview of DCFS. Members attend stakeholder meeting. Information is shared across the Department and councils. Every council has a liaison. During the meeting information, recent activity, and programs are discussed and shared. Michelle indicated that the goals today are: 1) Provide information about the stakeholder/SPICE process 2) Review the Q&A that will be posted to DNet and 3) How to get goals/needs met and discussed by senior leadership by using the change management process.

The process was implemented throughout the Department in the 2020 PIP. Other Councils have implemented the change management process as the SWFCAC. Through this process the SWFCAC is addressing the issue of Day Care needs for YIC.

Michelle reviewed the 1st question from the Q & A list. After reading the question, the entire Q & A list will be out to IAAC members for review and comment.

The SPICE group meets every second Tuesday of the month from 10:30 to 12:00 Michelle stressed that senior leadership/deputies are present. The change management form and process provide accountability for both the councils proposing issues/concerns/topics and more importantly providing deadlines for administration to provide resolutions to the proposals. The Council stressed that the Q & A should specifically address how this will benefit the council specifically. The council also stated that not everyone on the council has access to the D-Net. Might want to consider placing it somewhere else.

Statewide Adoption Update

Sylvia Fonseca/Kelly King

HB 1065 updates the language regarding adoption and guardianship in response to the Social Security Act. Specifically laying out the different options for permanency of youth in care. Finalized the ASAP manual for all ASAP providers statewide. Reviewing the process to coordinate the phone bank with the new CWIS system. Looking to streamline the information for individuals accessing the database for information.

Sylvia stressed that HB 1065 does not change the criteria for children to achieve permanency (either adoption/guardianship) remains the same.

Review of Council Goals

Council

The following goals were reviewed:

- 1) Prioritize the adoption process by providing recommendations and feedback to the Department (to include Permanency, Adoption Unit, Training) along with outside stakeholders to improve efficiencies and reduce delays in the finalization of adoptions, and the promotion of adoption for waiting youth in care.
- 2) Improve post-adoption services by advocating for improved service provision through better mental health services, training/education, educational advocacy, and access to medical care. Raise awareness of the adoption and guardianship support services through our ongoing enhanced communications plan. Goal of AAC become part of the annual department program plan.
- 3) Improve training on adoption for adoptive parents and adoption professionals by working with DCFS training and other providers. Advocate for updating of the adoption conversion class to include a blended adoption with in-person training. Advocate for policy for training for guardianship parents. Importance of Families Now and Forever newsletter. \
- 4) Work with the Department to have the Adoption Advisory Council to be legislated under the Adoption Act.
- 5) Expansion of Adoptive Master Parent Support Specialist Program. Assist in the refining of the program plan for this position.

Sylvia again indicated that her unit is called the Adoption & Guardianship Unit. Might want to consider a council name change to something like the Post-Permanency council. Permanency is not represented in any other council. Mark Werner reiterated, and Elizabeth Richmond confirmed at least since guardianship issue have always been addressed. Keely indicated she would like to see a possible name change placed on next month's agenda for further discussion.

Goal 1 remains very relevant. Goal 5 should be updated since the program is nearly up and running. Goal 3 could be reworked to reflect what is currently going on.

Keely and Katie indicated they will review and revise the goals prior to next meeting and present the revised goals to the council next month.

Council Strategies

Council

Two ways to look at the council. 1) As appointed representatives by the director to provide changes to policy and directives to the department statewide. Like what is occurring now or 2) representing the adoption/guardianship parents in their respective region. This would need more PR and face time with adoption/guardship staff. More availability and time will be needed from council members.

Discussion regarding these two different approaches. Brochure, business cards, or presentations what would be addressed and what can be done regionally and then statewide. The question was proposed if this had been done in the past. Mark and Elizabeth indicated this has been done in the past but not consistently and was really taken upon by individual members at their own initiative. Sylvia indicated that the ASAP groups/programs could be an avenue to “get the word out” regarding what the council can do both regionally and statewide. The relationship established through outreach with local/regional staff and providers will be invaluable. A point was made was to ensure that if this change is made it must be well thought out and efforts must be consistent with a clear objective. It was stressed there must a separation of the individual and the council member tasks. Specific about the different roles that each council members fill on the council members.

Council vacancies

Council

Katie indicated she was glad to see the vacancies announcement was posted on the DNet. Katie indicated the membership committee would love to have potential members waiting to join. Believes that as the council’s exposure and marketing increases then those individuals interested in membership. The vacancy list was shared and reviewed.

Committee/Workgroups Reports

Membership Committee

Katie Friend

It was stressed that any members that would like to join to contact Katie

Legislative Committee

Cara Siebert

Committee is small and looking for more members. Had first meeting to actively promote legislation to support adoptions and our family. Next meeting 9/29/2021 at 9:30 a.m.

Post Adoption Committee

Keely Giles

Review of the committee notes and are attached below to the minutes. Next meeting is 10/21/11:00 a.m.



Post Adoption
Services Committee |

Training Committee

Danielle Sanders

Review of the committee notes and are attached below to the minutes. Next meeting is 09/30/21 12:45 p.m.



IAAC Training &
Support 9 3 2021.dc

Permanency Workgroup**Alex Montgomery**

Awaiting DCFS staff to join the workgroup as there has been many questions proposed by the Workgroup. Currently at a standstill requesting consultation regarding worker procedures, tracking of displacements, and information or placement disruptions. Kelly King indicated that she or Sylvia could be a part of this group and Alex Montgomery will loop regarding the next meeting and time.

Adoption Month Committee**Katie Friend**

Adoption month is fast approaching. Any celebration must be “pandemic” friendly with social distancing. Katie indicated they are exploring what other states are doing. The next council meeting is October 8th and given how quick that meeting is that any ideas can be presented now. CASA did something called “hands around the Courthouse” and Elizabeth heard many staff stating it was a nice event. One group did a gift card drawing that allowed family to use for dinner after attending an online event/training. Virtual idea-online offering a class such as a yoga class or mediation class for self-care. Could offer later in the evening. Ideas really focused on a celebration and fun activity. Also, mention of having related email “header” identifying and celebrating adoption month.

Communication Committee**Keely Giles**

Communication Committee has not yet met but will hopefully meet soon. Keely, Katie, and Danielle are currently members.

The Post adoption, Permanency and Adoption committee all made recommendations to change the committees to workgroups. Workgroup identification allows for outside membership to provide expertise.

Cara Siebert made a motion that the Post Adoption, Permanency, and Adoption Committees all be changed to Workgroups. The motion was seconded by Danielle Sanders. The motion passed unanimously.

Stakeholder Comments

The issue of changing of the council name was addressed again. Mark Werner indicated that it must be a priority that the council does not lose its identity in the adoption “world” by adopting a different name such as “Post-Permanency Council”. A more appropriate name might be “Adoption/Guardianship Council”. Karen Taylor also agreed with Mark’s comments. Crystal Rekart indicated when her agency speaks of permanency they refer to and include all permanency goals including return home. Do not want to confuse the name and goal such as Post-Permanency name. The Council was united in that “Post-Permanency Council” encompassed a return home goal which this council does not represent.

Public Comments

No public comments

Other Business/Agenda Items

Agenda- possible name change to include guardianship or post-permanency

Adjourn

Alex Montgomery made the motion to adjourn the September 17th meeting. The motion was seconded by Jeremy Wheeler. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: October 8, 2021.