



Illinois Adoption Advisory Council
Serving Adoptive and Guardianship Families
Joint Meeting with Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council
minutes
January 14, 2022 9:00 a.m. – 12 p.m.
WebEx videoconference

IAAC MEMBERS PRESENT	IAAC MEMBERS ABSENT	GUESTS	STAFF
Mary Kay Collins	Maripat Oliver	Julie Yelverton	Gwenn Eyer
Katie Friend	Shirly Padera		Sylvia Fonseca
Keely Giles	Danielle Sanders		Michelle Grove
Alex Montgomery	Brittany Sprouse		Kara Hamilton
Crystal Rekart	Karen Wardlaw		Wendy Ingersoll
Elizabeth Richmond	Jeremy Wheeler		Terry McGlothlin
Cara Siebert			Pedro Mendoza
Karen Taylor			
Amy Trotter			
Danny Tolliver			
Mark Werner			

Welcome/Introduction

Council members logged on early to load and test video presentations for the meeting. Keely Giles, IAAC chairperson, called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and conducted an IAAC voice roll call. Present: Mary Kay Collins, Katie Friend, Keely Giles, Crystal Rekart, Elizabeth Richmond, Cara Siebert, Karen Taylor, Amy Trotter, and Danny Tolliver were present. Alex Montgomery and Mark Werner joined the meeting following the roll call.

Approval of November 5, 2021 Minutes

Council

MOTION: Cara Hamilton made the motion to approve the November 5, 2021 minutes. Mary Kay Collins seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously through roll call vote.

Vote for approval: Katie Friend, Mark Werner, Mary Kay Collins, Alex Montgomery, Amy Trotter, Karen Taylor. Opposed: none. Danny Tolliver abstained since has was absent for that meeting.

Update from Office of Caregiver and Parent Support

**Michelle Grove,
Associate Deputy Director**

Michelle commended the council for their outstanding work. She noted that she participates in a statewide stakeholder group and that the group was pleased with council progress in meeting their goals and that the council's goals may be used as a model statewide.

She said that Foster Parent Support Specialists have been training the CORE Teen curriculum with a new session beginning January 24, 2022. She noted that Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma training may be adjusted to apply to the larger caregiver group and offered to include the council in this work. Michelle asked the council if they would like to hear an update from Family First. Council members discussed the option, noting that

if there are updates to services currently available, they would like the information. Michelle will fine tune the information and will distribute it to council members.

She reported that DCFS has federal outcomes to complete, with penalties attached when goals are not met. The department is in quarter six of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Deputy Director Julie Barbosa has developed a presentation describing why the department operates as it does, administratively. Michelle asked if the council would like to have Julie present at the next council meeting.

Michelle stated that council members are required to complete two annual trainings that must be done by the end of each year. She reported that there was a DNET announcement re: staff safety issues. Additional staff trainings are being scheduled. She reported that there was a tragic staff loss in the Central Region and the Director is committed to providing support. Sylvia noted that Deidre Silas is the name of the worker that was murdered, and services are being held on January 22, 2022 in Springfield.

Statewide Adoption Update

Sylvia Fonseca/Kelly King

Sylvia reported that we are bound to the quality of services being equitable across the state and the ASAP team has been working diligently in Kelly King's absence. Sylvia commended the ASAP providers in this work in making this commitment to children and families. They are using statistics and data to prove the need and provide additional supports. She noted that they are still moving forward with the HB1065 permanency discussion with all caregivers having a voice, providing staff training, etc. The training strongly advocates implementing tools for parents of children who have experienced trauma.

Connecting with Local ASAP Providers

Keely Giles

The workgroup has recommended a stronger link between the council and the community, using the IAAC as a resource for community support. Council members are encouraged to connect with their local providers, introducing themselves, joining in training and support, and connecting on behalf of the council. Please report your participation via the IAAC mailbox, so that the council may track the data. The workgroup is working on resources for council members to use in this work, including a vision statement, business cards and council fact sheets.

Meeting Schedule

Katie noted that the co-chairs met to revise the meeting schedule for the remainder of the year. The February meeting was moved to February 18, 2022, due to the state holiday. The council will not meet in May or December this year.

Review Adoption Readiness Training

Katie Friend / Elizabeth Richmond / Keely Giles

Keely stated that she was very happy to have council members share the culmination of their vision for the adoption certification training, Adoption Readiness. This training is now being presented across the state and Keely commended the council for their work in developing this high-quality training. Pedro Mendoza, RA asked about how the 120-day timeline is working. He noted that they compared permanency data in a meeting yesterday, focusing on reunification, adoption and subsidized guardianship. This time last year they had 123 adoptions, and have 131 this year, and that numbers are improving, overall. Keely noted that participants have been shocked by the number and noted that participants are encouraged to be patient and endure. Sylvia noted that the 120-days do not include termination of parental rights, or time required for the completion of a requested CIPP. She said that this training encourages parents to stay in close contact with their workers. Crystal Rekart requested a copy of the training to share with the SYAB. Elizabeth suggested offering a presentation at an upcoming SYAB meeting. Elizabeth will follow up with Training to ask about sharing the training and will follow up with Crystal.

Discussion:

- This is fantastic information that council members wish had been available historically.
- Some pieces of this would be nice to do sessions 2-5 as part of ASAP. That's Plan B for future use.
- Council members expressed excitement about the training program.
- Is this material included in training for foster parents?
- They are planning to rewrite the Adoption Core training and they plan to include parts in that training.
- Include this material in staff training. Karen Taylor will follow up with Training.
- CORE Teen training is heavy on trauma. Although titled "teen" it is appropriate for parenting all ages.
- CORE Teen is very strong training that will provide caregivers with tools they never dreamed of developing.

Committee and Workgroup Reports

Keely noted the time and asked if any committee or workgroup chairs needed to make a verbal report, or if reports could be distributed in writing. A few committees made brief reports and reports will be Emailed to council members.

Bylaws Committee

Mark Werner

Mark noted that no current work is necessary at this time.

Legislative / Public Policy Committee

Jeremy Wheeler

Karen Taylor reported that the committee has not met since the last meeting.

Membership Committee

Mark Werner

The membership committee is following up on six pending applications, with interviews scheduled.

Stakeholder Comments

None

Public Comments

None

MOTION: Karen Taylor made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mary Kay Collins seconded, and the motion was approved through roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m. Voice Vote: Approved by: Danny Tolliver, Crystal Rekart, Keely Giles, Katie Friend, Crystal Rekart, Karen Taylor, Cara Siebert and Mary Kay Collins. Opposed: none.

Next Meeting: February 18, 2022, 9am – noon, via WebEx, for the safety of council members.