

IAAC
Friday, February 2, 2018
Eastland Suites, 1801 Eastland Drive, Bloomington, Illinois
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
APPROVED MINUTES

AAC Members Present	AAC Members Absent	Staff
Kathleen Bush	Alice Couch	Crystal Carr
Natalie Miller	Crystal Rekart	Gwenn Eyer
Maria Nanos	Keisha Robinson	Michelle Grove
Michelle Price	Karen Wardlaw	Kelly King
Elizabeth Richmond		Vanessa James
Shelly Roy		
Danielle Sanders	Guests	
Karen Taylor	Glenn Eyer	
Danny Tolliver	Christine Feldman	
Mark Werner	Dei Fleury-Simmons	
Jeremy Wheeler	Katie Friend	
Julie Yelverton	Nancy Rolock	
	Stephanie Wolfe	

Welcome & Introductions

10:11 a.m. - Elizabeth Richmond, IAAC co-chair, opened the meeting and welcomed the new council co-chair Mark Werner.

QIC-AG Update

Christine Feldman

Christine introduced Stephanie Hodge-Wolfe, Dei Fleury-Simmons, and evaluator Nancy Rolock. They shared what they’ve learned so far. Their presentation included project and evaluation updates, case stories and the next steps for the communication plan. Stephanie discussed the increase in outreach in Cook and Central regions, sharing the youth and parent survey results. Nancy provided an update on the evaluation process. In Cook County, 50 families agreed to participate, and 17 families will meet the evaluation criteria. Some cases were closed due to the following reasons: four families could not be reached after exhausting all attempts, one family refused when contacted by a facilitator, four families didn’t complete the TARGET sessions and two families needed more intensive services. She reported progress on the “still active” side: two families from very early cohorts (3 and 4) have no session activity; of the 11 from somewhat early cohorts (7, 8 and 9), three had activity in December and January; and of 9 from more recent cohorts, one has had recent activity. They’ve learned the following about the families that have participated in Cook County: 68% of the families who spoke to a worker and declined services did so because they reported that everything is fine, and they didn’t feel that they needed services; 15% reported that their needs were being met elsewhere; and 10% were not interested. They had different expectations for Central Region, due to limitations re:

providers, etc. In Central Region, 270 were sent letters. 53% spoke to the outreach worker and 24% agreed to participate. Rationale for non-participation included 80% reporting that “everything is fine,” and they don’t need services; 4% reported that their needs were being met elsewhere; 5% were not interested; and the remaining were marked “other.” 24 have attended at least one session and 16 have attended at least four sessions. Still active cases include one family from a very early cohort (4) with no session activity; three from somewhat early cohorts (2 and 8), and two had activity in November and January; and of the nine from recent cohorts (11 and 12), one has had recent activity.

Their focus is on youth 12 and up in adoption and guardianship, and Nancy said that part of the challenge of doing prevention work is to try to identify who “might” face a challenge in the future and draw them in. Families recognize the need for this kind of program when they’re in the midst of a situation, not when it’s the prospect of a possible situation in the future. Families are offered 10 lesson-based sessions. They may hold sessions in the home or in the office, depending on the family’s needs. They work at a pace established by each family. They will eventually pull data from the control group, with the expectation that the families that went through TARGET will have better outcomes.

Christine discussed the case stories Vanessa put together using compilations of interviews with actual facilitators and families, using stock photos in each one. Handouts were distributed. Christine called on Vanessa James to discuss the communication plan that will follow a family’s engagement in this project.

Vanessa discussed the Connecting Families after Adoption and Guardianship: Strategic Communication Plan that is a deliverable under the QIC-AG grant. This is a comprehensive plan to effectively communicate with families after adoption or guardianship. In addition to traditional outreach, the plan includes developing a one-stop-shop for communications, a digital portal where they can find all the resources they need to find services and information pertinent to families formed by adoption and guardianship.

The key messages of the communications strategy are that DCFS is there, it’s normal to need support, and don’t wait to get help. The post-adoption/ guardianship staff and partners are responsive, and this is progressing through the following steps:

- 1) They did focus groups to come up with the branding theme, PATH Beyond Adoption: Partners Available To Help after adoption and guardianship.
- 2) Enhance the current DCFS outreach, recognizing that parents are open to contact if it is worthwhile and targeted. Examples include creating a welcome kit for recent adoptive families with resource reminders, cultivating an email list, creating content specific to subscriber requests, and offer recurring update mailings.
- 3) Develop the digital portal. This community is ready to go online, and an Illinois-specific PATH website should be developed to communicate with this particular audience. This should be web-based, rather than an app. It may include an online community forum, a real-time "chat bot" and a companion mobile app. Vanessa showed a “dummy” web site design for a site that will be maintained on the DCFS server. She plans to add external links like the DCFS Virtual Training Center, Early Intervention Clearinghouse, how to apply for State Fair tickets, what to do upon the incapacitation or death of an adoptive parent, adoption tax credit info, standby

guardianship, what do to when your child is arrested, flow chart for suspected mental illnesses, etc. (Some of these topics may be addressed through blog posts.) Katie Friend, Kelly King, Elizabeth Richmond, Karen Taylor, Julie Yelverton, Danielle Sanders, and Maria Nanos will work with Vanessa on this project.

Support Line for Adoptive and Guardianship Families – Danielle Sanders

The Adoption Guardianship help line has a new number: 866-538-8892. The goal is to establish a monitored voice mailbox that is checked daily, increasing accessibility, improving customer service, and increasing understanding of family needs. The Adoption and guardianship Support and Prevention services (ASAP) program is currently staffing this phone line. They are committed to calling back within 24 hours, reviewing messages and directing callers to the appropriate DCFS/provider contact. The line monitor will then follow up to ensure resolution. The number has been around for a while, and we're working now to make it a more user-friendly experience, with an emphasis on customer service.

Projected options to follow the welcome greeting include:

- An ability to continue the call in Spanish option
- DCFS Subsidy option
- Services or resources option
- Professional inquiry option
- “If something goes wrong, call back and press #” option

Prompts will guide subsidy issue callers through a phone tree to route them to appropriate resources. Before calls are transferred, the phone system will list the number that callers are being transferred to. If callers are unable to narrow down their regional location, they'll have the option to leave a message. There will be weekly reporting of activity, including an analysis of needs and demographics.

Approval of Minutes from 11/17/17 IAAC Meeting

Danny Tolliver made a motion to approve the minutes. Kathleen Bush seconded. Minutes were approved as written.

Empowered to Connect Conference – Kathleen Bush

Kathleen reported that the Empowered to Connect Conference is going to be held in Chicago this year. The Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University hosts the two-day conference for foster and adoptive parents. Kathleen noted that it's a very reasonably-priced adoption conference with presentations from adoptive parents. They will bring in guest speakers and it will be simulcast in churches and agencies throughout the state. Kathleen will send Elizabeth information to distribute to the IAAC.

Update on Post Adoption Services – Kelly King

Things are currently at a standstill re: post-adopt services. Right now, with the new leadership, they're playing catch-up as they get everyone on the same page. Their Post Adoption Conference will be held in May. NTI Adoption Competency Mental Health training is available for mental health providers and clinicians including school social workers and psychologists to make them more competent re: the effects of trauma and other adoption related issues. The mental health portion will run from late March through September. Kelly will send information to the council.

Update from the Adoption Division – Crystal Carr, Acting Deputy

The adoption goal for this year is to complete 2,017 adoptions by the end of the fiscal year. This goal is for adoption cases, only, and doesn't include guardianship cases. Many supports have been put in place to support this goal. Specialists have different roles. Writers write subsidies for all DCFS cases. Readers get the subsidy papers from private agencies. Post Adoption work follows up on subsidies and supports. We now have 1076 completed adoption/guardianship cases with more than 400 pending.

FY17 Adoptions

Total Adoptions = 1840

1594 adoptions from POS agencies

264 adoptions from DCFS

Total Guardianships = 397

372 from POS

25 from DCFS

Management is working in collaboration with the Governor's Office to move permanency forward. Since the age 3-6 Day Care policy was put on hold, they've had to pull it back. (The Department pulled back the new form.) Both the child and the family must qualify. Elizabeth pointed out that some subsidies were signed with the day care coverage before it was withdrawn. Karen pointed out that since there was no policy in place, she wasn't training workers re: this policy.

Elizabeth suggested that the Adoption Division consider the utilization of the new Illini managed care system in adoption and guardianship. Local adoption subsidy workers are unable to make approvals. Approvals are all done within DCFS.

If you need to follow up on adoption issues, send an Email to Crystal.Carr@illinois.gov.

Adoption Listing Service and Inquiry Unit – Katie Friend

Katie reported on changes made in their unit since last October. They are now managed by the Center for Law and Social Work and will be fully staffed by the middle of February. They should have about 30 kids listed on the web site by the end of next week. They are working on a way to list both information and photos together. If photos are not available, information will still be listed. Their intake number is 800-572-2390. They're working on cleaning up the data and update listings.

Update on Subsidy Changes and Training – Karen Taylor

Karen said that everyone's been talking about "lean management." She reported on the Lean Management Committee, a group initiated by the Governor's Office to work on amending the adoption process to reduce delays in the adoption/guardianship completion process and enhance the number of adoptions and guardianships that occur in DCFS. She is a member of that group. Because of that committee's work, there will be changes in policy and the timeline for completion of the adoption/guardianship work. Once the work is finalized, training of the DCFS adoption staff, including the DCFS Adoption liaisons to the private agency adoption agency staff, will begin to ensure that everyone is aware of the shortened timeframes and the division of duties. That is expected to begin this spring. The changes will also be reflected in the Adoption

Core training for Adoption Specialists and the Adoption Legal and Subsidy Training. The Adoption Core is currently a 13-day training with a certification exam on the last day. Karen expects that training to be reduced in classroom days in addition to the content changes. The Adoption Legal and Subsidy training is a two-day training for all workers and supervisors doing adoption/guardianship work and is more geared to the paperwork requirements. The Lean Management Committee has recommended some reduction of forms and the Department is actually combining some forms to actualize those recommendations. Those changes and the timeframes will be incorporated into the Adoption Legal and Subsidy Training. Karen suggested to the AAC that if they were interested in making comment to the Adoption Core training, she could seek their review and comment once it's done, probably no earlier than at least June 2018. She then reminded the Council that the web-based adoptive parent training had been sent out to them for comment recently and that they should be sure to look at it. Elizabeth said that it had been sent out to council members and that she needs comments right away.

Discussion Items

Membership – Mark reported that council members are appointed for three-year terms and are up for re-appointment at the end of the first term, then members must take a break before reappointment. He noted that we have a strong council, but there are a lot of vacancies in Cook, and we are looking for qualified applicants. There is one adoptive parent opening in the Southern Region. He believes that we are going to be able to fill at least one of the adoptee spots soon. The professional positions are all filled. We want council members to be vocal, to bring their personal experiences without asking for case consultation, and they must be committed to working on behalf of the council. Have prospective members call Mark.

Mark stated that the council was recently asked to provide a report to Maggie Poteau for a federal report listing 2017 IAAC goals and achievements. He noted that council was instrumental in enhancing mental health services for post-adopt and guardianship services; helped improve training for adoptive parents and professionals working with post-adopt/guardianship youth; participated in focus groups regarding the new case management system, CCWIS; and influenced many aspects of the QIC/AG/TARGET grant activity. The final goal was partnering with the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council, while still advocating against combining the councils into one. He asked the council for input in 2018 IAAC Goals. None were set at this meeting.

Committees – Mark stated that moving forward, we're going to place more emphasis on committee work. He will send out the committee list and council members are requested to respond to the committees they want to be on, minimum one per council member.

Contact information shown on the DCFS web site – Maggie Poteau, Statewide Councils, asked for council input as to the extent of information to be shared on the web site. Elizabeth suggested that we continue to list regions and names only and get an AAC Email address and list the office number for contact shown on the web.

Kathleen distributed a legislative report from Gwen Walsh, Deputy Director, Office Legislative Affairs, including: HB 703, Interstate Adoptions; HB 817, Group Insurance – Adoption Placement; SB 646; and Domestic Violence Co-Location.

Adjourn

The motion to adjourn was made by Danny Tolliver, seconded by Karen Taylor. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: March 19, 2018, Crowne Plaza Springfield. Suggested March Meeting Agenda Items: Recruitment program, New 402 – Stacy Sinte, Policy