



Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council

MEETING NOTES
 July 16th, 2021
 WebEx videoconference
 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

SWFCAC MEMBERS PRESENT	SWFCAC MEMBERS ABSENT	GUESTS	STAFF
Jessica Bullard	Kathryn Adrian	Krista Teckenbrock	Gwenn Eyer
Gladys Boyd	Kimberly Coniglio		Michelle Grove
Arrelda Hall	Kelly Elleman		
Harriet Kersh	Tiffany Jones		
Susan McConnell	Maya Maclin		
Kellye Norris	Kate Monte		
Stephanie Tesreau	Samella Taylor-Lewis		
Audrey Reynolds			
Jesse Rodriguez-Hammond			
Mary Savage			
Phyllis Summers			
Rebecca Thomas			

Welcome/Introduction

Arrelda Hall, Chairperson

Michelle welcomed everyone to the meeting at 9am as chairperson Arrelda Hall worked to maintain a clear internet connection. Gwenn Eyer reported that the meeting was being recorded.

Approval of April 16th, Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Gladys Boyd made the motion to approve the 04/16/21 minutes. Mary Savage seconded and the motion carried unanimously via voice vote.

Approval of June 30th, Special Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Mary Savage made the motion to approve the 06/30/21 special meeting minutes. Audrey Reynolds seconded and the motion carried unanimously via voice vote.

Election results (Chair and Vice-Chair)**Chair and Nomination**

Arrelda reported that the election results were previously distributed by Email and that a run-off was held to break a three-way tie for vice chair. Arrelda stated that due to an oversight a new Nomination Committee was not appointed in April and the past committee continued to serve. Arrelda reported that Susan McConnel was elected co-chair in the run-off elections.

“Rules of the Road”**Arrelda Hall, Chairperson**

Arrelda said that her goal for the coming year is to be sure that we don't continue to add causes without the participation and commitment to resolving issues. She does not anticipate inviting a lot of outsiders to participate and will focus instead on actual council member and committee work. They will bring in outsiders for support in meeting the goals but will primarily do the work as a council. Members are expected to participate in committee work. Those who are not willing/ able to participate fully will be asked to resign from the council.

Gwenn Eyer shared a PowerPoint presentation that covered the history and purpose of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. She reviewed the overall goals of the council established by law. She reviewed several accomplishments over the years before focusing on tasks assigned to the council. She then addressed council members' responsibilities include attending and participating in council and committee meetings, staying engaged, regularly reading and responding to Email from the Council mailbox, scoring implementation plans, completing training and submitting paperwork in a timely manner. She described council members as leaders, experts, and resources, noting that members are the first level of support for each region. She discussed leadership styles and the roles of the members, council committees, the council chair and vice chair and Office of Caregiver Support staff. She stated that council members should be committed to setting goals for both committee work and council work, collecting data and regularly reporting to the council. She noted that the council must always have a work plan in place, setting goals, both long and short-term; setting benchmarks for measuring progress; collecting data and regularly reviewing goals, progress and barriers; documenting progress and making administrative recommendations, as needed. She stressed the need for professionalism, teamwork, respect for authority, and personal responsibility and accountability.

Office of Caregiver and Parent Support Update**Michelle Grove**

Michelle updated the council on CORE teen a Spaulding curriculum that helps parents work with teens with behavioral or mental health issues. Foster Parent Support Specialists were trained to facilitate and will join with Adoption Support and Preservation providers to present 7-week sessions virtually, beginning July 29, for the Southern

Region. Another 7-week session is scheduled to begin August 2, with a day off for Labor Day, for the Northern Region.

Michelle noted that the change response procedure includes a designated timeframe for response. The council will need to have an understanding of the lengthy timeline for an answer.

Reports from Other Councils/Committees/Workgroups:

Council Reports:

CWAC

Harriet Kersh/Mary Savage

Jessica Bullard/Phyllis Summers

Harriet reported that CWAC addressed giving an increase to foster parents. Mary said that they're focused on the workforce crisis, working on solutions which may include waiving education requirement and other credentials. They are pressing for racial equity throughout the councils. They discussed COVID issues. The next meeting is August 19,

Harriet reported that COVID vaccines will be required for youth in care within a certain age range. Youth may refuse, but the DCFS State Guardian will follow up to counsel. Council members reported that they are hearing about a policy that if foster parents want to travel with the youth they do not need currently need regional/area administrator approval.

IFAPA

Gladys Boyd/Arrelda Hall

Gladys reported that foster parents are concerned with children returning to school without COVID vaccines. Foster parents are concerned because DCFS is reducing the number of respite days provided. Arrelda reported that she has received Emails from people asking if an in-person conference will be held. Gladys reported that IFAPA has the Director's attention, but no conference plans will be made until the COVID pandemic is less threatening.

Regional Reports:

Northern Region Report

Kimberly Coniglio/Rebecca Thomas

Rebecca reported that support groups continue to meet in various counties and areas. With the recent loss of Help at Home as a transportation contract foster parents are working with new providers. The new providers are trying to very quickly put things together to maintain family contact. Northern Region continues to face challenges locating homes for children coming into care. They found that approximately 86% of the homes in the Northern Region are not actively accepting placements now.

Central Region Report

Kelly Elleman/Kathryn Adrian

NO REPORT

Cook North
NO REPORT

Kate Monte

Southern Region

Stephanie Tesreau/Audrey Reynolds

Audrey reported that in-person support groups resumed last month. Help at Home provider issues provide challenges to foster parents in the Southern Region. Foster parents have requested training re: building relationships between birth and foster parents. Arrelda noted that Reunification Training and other in-service modules may be helpful. She asked the council's Training Committee to address the issue.

Cook South
NO REPORT

Maya Maclin/Kellye Norris

Cook Central

Arrelda Hall

Cook Central and Cook South have gone on break from support group meetings and will consider meeting in-person when they start again. Cook Central has a large Burgos population and they have noted that some of the DCFS brochures are not currently available in Spanish. They are not working to identify more resources and they are currently holding support groups for the Spanish-speaking population.

Workgroup Report
Day Care

Jessica Bullard/Arrelda Hall
Mary Savage/Rebecca Thomas

Rebecca reported that their work group has been working together for a couple of months. She noted that they have focused on the issue that full-time employed foster parents are unable to maintain a youth in their home when childcare is necessary, but not an option because the youth is above the age limit of 12 years. She reported on her research to demonstrate the need for improvement, especially for youth 13-15+ who are not functioning on their chronological age level. She reported hourly child care rates by national standard and regionally. She related the issues to Family First requirement to keep children in a home setting. The group is proposing two changes: 1. To increase the License Exempt, Non-Relative/Relative Childcare rate to a level which is on par with industry standards that would allow foster parents to find quality in-home care allowing the youth in care to remain in their current placement avoiding additional placement disruption. 2. To allow for the childcare payment to include 13-15-year-olds when deemed necessary to allow for the youth to remain in the home as opposed to be sent to live in a shelter.

MOTION: Gladys made the motion to approve and move forward with the recommendation. Rebecca seconded and the motion carried unanimously via voice vote

Michelle will move it forward on behalf of the council, opening the opportunity to other advisory boards and committees to join in the work. She will encourage a shorter resolution timeline than is currently the 180-day standard.

Committee Reports:

Health Care Committee

Kimberly Coniglio

NO REPORT

Training Committee

Harriet Kersh

The committee has been reviewing updated PRIDE training and Home of Relative training. PRIDE is nearly complete

Foster Parent Support Specialist

Arrelda Hall

Arrelda reported that the Office of Caregiver & Parent Support has been working diligently to recruit statewide coverage. The FPSS workgroup has been revising the Foster Parent Handbook and they are identifying areas for review by others.

Policy & Legislative

Susan McConnell/Stephanie Tesreau

The committee has met with Meaghan Jorgensen and they are working on some ideas. They are interested in educational and day care issues.

Hospitality and Public Relations

Stephanie Tesreau

NO REPORT

Respite

Gladys Boyd

Gladys Boyd will continue to chair this committee. Mary Savage is a committee member. She noted that she has discussed the recommendation with Director Smith.

Membership

Susan McConnell

Susan reported that when notified of vacancies she will actively seek qualified candidates. She would be happy to have more committee members.

Adolescent Issues

Kimberly Coniglio

NO REPORT

Permanency**Susan McConnell**

They held a joint meeting with the IAAC Permanency Committee.

Nomination Committee**Kate Monte/Stephanie Tesreau**

The report was made earlier with the announcement of vice chair.

Public Comment

Krista Teckenbrock reported that her foster parents have a lot of issues around the child tax payments that are going out now. She believes that foster parents should be directed about how to resolve payment issues. Michelle reported that the issue has gone to the Business Unit and they are considering how to address it.

Stakeholder Comments

None

Closing Council Discussion

Gladys followed up on Krista's comments and the potential need for foster parents to return money that was sent to them in error.

Susan asked if there is a way to communicate announcements about upcoming meetings to the public. It was suggested that the council provide information/ announcements via the SWFCAC mailbox to go to Communications for publication.

Agenda Items

Implementation Plans timeline

Bylaws Walk-through

Update and preview membership handbook including list

Meeting in Person

Adjourn

MOTION: Gladys Boyd made the motion to adjourn. Kellye Norris seconded, and the motion passed unanimously via voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 12:10pm.

Harassment and Ethics Training <https://OneNet.Illinois.gov/MyTraining>

Next Meeting: August 13th, 2021