



## Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council

### MEETING AGENDA

August 13th, 2021

WebEx videoconference

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

SWFCAC MEMBERS PRESENT	SWFCAC MEMBERS ABSENT	GUESTS	STAFF
Jessica Bullard	Kathryn Adrian	Lisa Bernal	Janet Ahern
Gladys Boyd	Kimberly Coniglio	Debbie Freke	Jason Cummins
Kelly Elleman	Maya Maclin	Tina Haynes	Gwenn Eyer
Arrelda Hall	Kellye Norris	Joe Podlasek	Michelle Grove
Tiffany Jones	Audrey Reynolds	Jody Roy	Kara Hamilton
Harriet Kersh	Mary Savage	Tammy Step	
Susan McConnell	Samella Taylor-Lewis	Krista Teckenbrock	
Kate Monte	Stephanie Tesreau	Arlene Woods	
Jesse Rodriguez-Hammond			
Phyllis Summers			
Rebecca Thomas			

#### Welcome/Introduction

**Arrelda Hall, Chairperson**

Arrelda called the council meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. Roll call was taken of council members.

#### Approval of July 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes

**Council**

The July 16<sup>th</sup> minutes were reviewed.

*A motion was made by Arrelda Hall to accept the July 16<sup>th</sup> minutes. Jessie Rodriguez-Hammond seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### Office of Caregiver and Parent Support/ Success in the Child Welfare System

**Michelle Grove**

Recently Tim Snowden, Deputy Director of Permanency, provided information regarding in-person meetings. No more than 10 people can be physically present during meeting. While meeting, social distancing and masks are required. The next update will be provided September 6<sup>th</sup>.

CORE Teen training will begin on 08/16/2021. Debbie Freke is providing this training which will start Monday and will run for the next 7 Mondays except Labor Day. Only 3 people have signed up. The training is an invaluable training opportunity for foster parents. There is another training being offered in Southern Region by Brenda Marshall. Foster parents can receive credit for the training. Registration can be completed through the VTC website. Participant is capped at 15 people. Information regarding CORE Teen can be attached to the meetings minutes below and sent out to council members.



CoreTeen Meeting  
Announcement 2021

Stakeholder process was presented during the last meeting. There was question posed by administration on what stakeholders envision as to what a successful child welfare system would look like. Michelle indicated that responses can be emailed to the SWFCAC mailbox. Michelle stressed that input from SWFCAC and foster parents is valued. Some of the issues are a delay in payment, lack of specialized services/counseling, and the lack of timeliness of service. Also looking at how we can partner with the private agencies. There is a focus on providing services to foster parents to help the child welfare become successful. Gladys requested the questions be provided to council members through an email to provide a thoughtful answer. A separate email will be sent out to council members. Harriet Kersh inquired if these questions are geared more to high needs or specialized youth. Michelle stressed that the workgroup and questions are for all foster children and foster parents.

There is spot for a Foster parent to be on the CWAC Equity subcommittee. If anyone is interested or knows a foster parent that would a good representative, please email the candidates information to the SWFCAC mailbox. This is another way for your foster parent voice to be heard.

### **Foster Parent Implementation Plan**

**Gwenn Eyer**

Agency Executive directors, RA, AA, and FP liaison are being contacted and foster parent implementation will go out along with the foster parent grievance process. September is the month for public review and comment. That means that anyone can go to an agency and request to review the implementation plan and then be provided a means to comment on the agency plan. October and early November implementation plans should be finalized. Must be signed off by foster parents. Foster parents should be asked to participate in the implementation plan process. Council members should be able to rate and score at least one plan with Gwenn Eyer's guidance. Rule 340 is the document that dictates the scoring process. Gwenn provided an overview of the implementation plan scoring procedure. Gwenn indicated an hour to score a plan is plenty of enough

time. Gwenn stated she can make herself available to new members to help new members and provide training regarding the scoring process.

**Foster Parent Training Update**

**Veronica Sanchez**

No update was provided

**ICWA Presentation**

**Lisa Bernal/Jody Roy/Joe Podlasek**

The ICWA Council is exploring what other councils can provide to help address and service the native American population. ICWA provides the protection and advocacy for children that come into care and are a member of the a Native American tribe. Tribal members hold dual citizenship to the U.S. and their tribe. The Native American Council is the voice for the native American population in Illinois since there is no reservation in the state of Illinois. There is a large native American population with at least 25,000 eligible members in Illinois. The Native American Council works with the individuals employed by DCFS in the office Diversity Equity and inclusion office. Lisa indicated a goal is to increase the number of Native American homes in Illinois and specifically in the Chicagoland area. Arrelda indicated that the SWFCAC provides a voice for foster parents throughout the state. Arrelda indicated that through her PRIDE of 22 years she has not meet any Native American foster home. The SWFCAC would be more than willing to work with the NA Council. Arrelda indicated that regionally council members attend the local and regional meetings. Lisa indicated that resources for the Native Americas in an urban areas is limited. Lisa indicated that through her Chicago Public School program she can offer resources to Native American youth. Her program and others would want to be identified as a possible support or resource avenue for the Native American that come into care. Arrelda indicted there could a more formal connection with the Native American Council through the OCPS. Lisa requested that if native American foster parents are identified then the Native American Council be connected with these foster homes. Susan inquired as to the number of Native American children in care. Lisa believes there are under 100 native American children in care but is not sure how many of these cases are active. Lisa provide her email and number for all council members: [lkbernal@cps.edu](mailto:lkbernal@cps.edu) phone # 773-553-6598.

**Bylaw Review**

**Arrelda Hall**

Arrelda indicated that members should review the bylaws as there are sections that could/should be addressed for changes. Susan indicated commitment to the council and to the commitments.

**Membership Handbook**

**Council**

Indicated if members do not have a handbook that an email can be sent to the council mailbox and an updated

## **Reports from Other Councils/Committees/Workgroups:**

### **Council Reports:**

#### **\*CWAC**

**Harriet Kersh/Mary Savage  
Jessica Bullard/Phyliss Summers**

There was no recent CWAC meeting and no update.

#### **\*IFAPA**

**Gladys Boyd/Arrelda Hall**

Gladys indicated there are complaints regarding the placement of children in their home and the lack of information being provided by the placing worker and misinformation. Gladys indicated that COVID-19 and the issues surrounding the health concerns are a barrier to FP not accepting foster children. Arrelda indicated she has received similar responses and FP are requesting that IFAPA meet with the director. Gladys indicated she recently introduced herself to the director's assistant. Gladys indicated she and Arrelda will provide some dates to meet with the director.

### **Regional Reports:**

#### **\*Northern Region Report**

**Kimberly Coniglio/Rebecca Thomas**

There persists a difficult time for foster homes taking a new foster child into care. There are several foster parents relinquishing their licenses. The foster parent support groups in the Northern region are now up and running. Indicated that Gwenn recently attended a meeting addressing foster parent law. Rebecca Thomas requested that maybe the training committee to help address or recommend that foster parent law training be added to PRIDE. Harriet Kersh indicated that the training has been developed and is now awaiting approval to be rolled out. Gwenn also stressed that PRIDE training does not address or mention foster parent implementation plan or foster parent law. Highly suggested that the council take on this issue possibly through the training committee.

#### **\*Central Region Report**

**Kelly Elleman/Kathryn Adrian**

Kelly's report echoed the same concerned with a emphasis on a lack of foster homes

#### **\*Cook North**

**Kate Monte**

Kate indicated that there are the same issues in Northern region with a huge reluctance to accept younger children especially under the age of 12 where the vaccine cannot be administered.

#### **\*Southern Region**

**Stephanie Tesreau/Audrey Reynolds**

No report. Arrelda provided a reminder that if no one is present to report then to send the report to the SWFCAC mailbox.

**\*Cook South**

**Maya Maclin/Kellye Norris**

No report.

**\*Cook Central**

**Arrelda Hall**

Cook Central along with the other Cook region met with the new RA Jacqueline Dorsch in Cook. The meeting focused on preventing children that come into care and do not sleep/spend the night in field offices. There is a work group to address what hard services and training can be offered to foster parent to help. Also working to provide the field a list of homes that will take children on an emergency basis. The Cook region will also begin Christmas donations for the foster children give away.

**Workgroup Report**

**\*Day Care**

**Jessica Bullard/Arrelda Hall**

**Mary Savage/Rebecca Thomas**

Jessica indicated working on getting daycare payments in a timely manner. Can take up to 3 to 6 months. Working with staff in the OCPS to provide a more streamlined process that can be completed digitally with an attached work order. Utilizing the change management process. The question was posed if this a problem statewide. Arrelda indicated that the issue is present in Cook. Also reiterated that one barrier is the policy suggest that the forms must be physical sent with no digital ability submit. A suggestion was made with a possibility of placing all forms for foster parents in a centralized spot for foster parents.

**Committee Reports:**

**\*Health Care Committee**

**Kimberly Coniglio**

No report.

**\*Training Committee**

**Harriet Kersh**

Yesterday there was a meeting but only Harriet was present. There was an email that was sent out to address the implementation of foster parent law training. Harriet indicated the meetings are schedule every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 2:00 p.m.

**\*Foster Parent Support Specialist**

**Arrelda Hall**

FPSS is working with the OCPS to be fully staffed. Contracts have been added and many have been approved for a three-year contract. Jason Cummins verified there are new contracts and hires statewide. Once approved the FPSS will nearly be fully staffed.

**\*Policy & Legislative**

**Susan McConnell/Stephanie Tesreau**

Rebecca stated they are formulating a response for childcare for 13 years and older. In every school have an individual to identified as a foster parent support. This was implemented in Wyoming and hopes to be copied in Illinois.

**\*Hospitality and Public Relations**

**Stephanie Tesreau**

No report

**\*Respite**

**Gladys Boyd**

Gladys is the Chair for the Respite Committee. There was as recent change from DCFS providing 14 days of respite to 7 days of respite care. There is also a delay in DCFS paying respite. Respite is \$36 per day for more that one child and \$30 for one child.

**\*Membership**

**Susan McConnell**

No report. Indicated that Susan and Arrelda will be contacting each committee in the near future.

**\*Adolescent Issues**

**Kimberly Coniglio**

No report

**\*Permanency**

**Susan McConnell**

Concurrent planning and visit schedule. Also discussed procedure 309. New adoption and guardianship laws were also reviewed.

**\*Nomination Committee**

**Kate Monte/Stephanie Tesreau**

No report out

Arrelda Hall acknowledged Janet Ahern. Janet Ahern. Janet Ahern urged everyone to please start back to school safely with mask wearing and having children vaccinated who can be vaccinated. Janet agreed that the Department needs emergency homes. Also acknowledged the need for respite care. Foster parents can sign for the COVID-19 testing. It is considered as ordinary and routine. Also indicated there is a pilot program regarding access for foster parents in the healthcare portal. Immunization card to go the primary care physician and to the caseworker. If the card is presented to the pediatrician, the COVID-19 immunization can be loaded into the ICare system.

Cannot get emergency passports at this time. (taking 18 weeks instead of 4 weeks). Please plan accordingly.

**Public Comment**

No public comment

### **Stakeholder Comments**

Gladys indicated the past chair is no longer a part of the council and was not the advising of the council. Gladys indicated she was asked to be the advisor regarding Robert's Rules. She was appointed to be the advisor.

Jessica Bullard indicated foster parents are having delays in getting birth certificates. Janet Ahern indicated she has also heard this and stated they can contact the guardianship office, but the birth certificate is with a different state agency.

### **Closing Council Discussion**

Arrelda wanted to remind everyone if a member is not going to present, the report for the committee can be sent to the SWFCAC mailbox to be presented at the meetings. There is also an absences form and should be filled out if one is aware of their absence.

### **Adjourn**

*Arrelda made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jessica Bullard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m.*

**Next Meeting: September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021**