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## **STATEWIDE FOSTER CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL BYLAWS**

### Preamble

These bylaws are defined pursuant to the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Law (20 ILCS 525).

### Article I -- Name and Mandate

The Department of Children and Family Services ("the Department") shall convene and maintain a Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council to advise the Department with respect to all matters involving or affecting the provision of foster care to abused, neglected, or dependent children and their families.

The responsibilities of the Council shall include:

- (1) Providing input on the issues that affect foster care and the services received by children who are in the care of the Department and their families.
- (2) Identifying, analyzing, and recommending solutions to any issue concerning foster care services.
- (3) Interpreting to the general public the need for foster care the important service that foster parents provide.
- (4) Promoting the statewide exchange and pooling of information in the area of foster care.
- (5) Participating in statewide planning and promoting foster parent involvement in local planning concerning foster care services.
- (6) Reviewing and making recommendations on Department foster care and child welfare service delivery policies, guidelines, and procedures.

- (7) Developing recommendations concerning foster care training to improve the quality of foster care services children receive.
- (8) Reviewing and advising the Department on pending or enacted legislation, primarily as concerns foster care services, and on the Department's responses or positions regarding that legislation.
- (9) Developing, as necessary, recommendations by which the Department may improve the child welfare service delivery system, primarily on issues affecting the delivery of foster care services.
- (10) Reviewing, approving, and monitoring plans of the Department's administrative regions and contract agencies providing foster care as required by the Foster Parent Law.

## Article II -- Membership

- (a) The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council shall consist of the following membership:
  - (1) 2 foster parents from the Department's southern and northern administrative regions; 3 foster parents from the Department's central administrative region; and 2 foster parents from each of the Department's Cook County administrative regions. One of the 6 foster parents representing the Cook County administrative regions shall be the current President of the Cook County Foster Parent Advisory Committee;
  - (2) 2 foster parents representing the Department's Child Welfare Advisory Committee, with at least one foster parent residing in Cook County;
  - (3) 2 foster care professionals representing the Department's Child Welfare Advisory Committee to represent agencies providing foster care services under contract to the Department;
  - (4) the current president of the Illinois Foster Parent Association; and
  - (5) 4 other non-Department persons with recognized expertise regarding foster care who shall be nominated by the Director of the Department ("the Director").

Each Administrator of the Department's specified administrative regions shall make recommendations of foster parents for appointment as members to the Director. The recommendations of the Regional Administrator shall be based upon consultation by the Regional Administrator with organized foster parent groups and Department staff.

All appointments to the Council shall be made in writing by the Director. In soliciting and making appointments, the Director shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure the membership of the Council is culturally diverse and representative and also geographically representative of the Department's administrative regions.

- (b) Each member shall be appointed for a term of 3 years. No member shall be appointed to more than 2 terms, except the President of the Illinois Foster Parent Association and the President of the Cook County Foster Parent Association may serve as long as he or she holds office. Members shall continue to serve until their successors are appointed. The terms of original members and of members subsequently appointed to fill vacancies created by a change in the number of the Council's members shall be determined to assure as nearly as possible that the terms of one-third of the members in each sector expire each year on June 30th. The original members in each sector shall determine by lot the length of each member's term, one-third to be for 3 years, one-third to be for 2 years, and one-third to be for one year, and the Council's secretary shall record the results. Thereafter, any member appointed to fill a vacancy other than one created by the expiration of a regular 3 year term shall be appointed for the unexpired term of the predecessor member, or in the case of new memberships created by change in number of members, for such term as is appropriate under this subsection.
- (c) Members of the Advisory Council shall serve without compensation, except that the Department shall reimburse members for travel and per diem expenses associated with participation in Advisory Council meetings and activities. Reimbursement shall be consistent with Illinois Department of Central Management Services rules, as approved by the Governor's Travel Control Board.

### Article III -- Officers

- (a) Officers of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council shall consist of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, who shall be elected by the Council. The immediate past Chairperson shall serve as a consultant for one year. The Director shall appoint a staff member of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services to maintain records, prepare notices and agendas for each meeting, and otherwise carry out the functions of the Council.
- (b) The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be elected for a term of one year at a meeting prior to July of each year, and those officers shall assume the duties of their offices on the first day of July each year.
- (c) Any officer of the Advisory Council shall be eligible for consecutive election to the office held for no more than 2 consecutive one year terms.
- (d) The Chairperson of the Advisory Council shall perform the duties ordinarily ascribed to that office and shall preside at all meetings of the Advisory Council. The Chairperson

shall also serve as an ex-officio member of all committees of the Advisory Council and shall make such reports on behalf of the Advisory Council as may be required.

- (e) In the event of the Chairperson's inability to act, the Vice-Chairperson shall act in his or her stead.

#### Article IV -- Meetings

- (a) Regular meetings of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council shall be held at least quarterly. The meetings shall take place at locations, dates, and times determined by the Chairperson of the Advisory Council after consultation with members of the Advisory Council and the Director or the designated Department staff member.

It shall be the responsibility of the designated Department staff member at the direction of the Chairperson to give notices of the location, dates, and time of meetings to each member of the Advisory Council, to the Director, and to staff consultants at least 30 days prior to each meeting.

Notice of all scheduled meetings shall be in full compliance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

- (b) Special meetings of the Advisory Council may be called by the Chairperson after consultation with members of the Council and the Director or the designated Department staff member, provided that:
  - (1) at least 7 days' notice by mail is given the membership;
  - (2) the notice sets forth the purpose or purposes of the meeting; and
  - (3) no business is transacted other than that specified in the notice.
- (c) An agenda of scheduled business for deliberation shall be developed in coordination with the Department and the Chairperson and distributed to the members of the Advisory Council at least 7 days prior to a scheduled meeting of the Council.
- (d) If a member is absent from 2 consecutive meetings or has not continued to make a significant contribution as evidenced by involvement in council activities, membership termination may be recommended by the Chairperson to the Director. The member shall be terminated and notified in writing. Members shall submit written confirmation of good cause to the Chairperson or designated Department staff member when a meeting has been missed.

#### Article V -- Quorum

- (a) A quorum at any regular or special meeting of the Advisory Council shall be necessary to transact business and shall consist of one-third of the duly appointed members of the Advisory Council. For the purpose of election of officers, the necessary quorum shall be a majority of the duly appointed members.
- (b) For the purpose of subcommittee action, a quorum shall consist of at least one-half of those members appointed to the subcommittee, but in no event fewer than 2 individuals.
- (c) All deliberations of the Advisory Council and its subcommittees shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

#### Article VI -- Committees

- (a) Standing and Ad Hoc Committees of the Advisory Council shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Advisory Council. The majority action of the Advisory Council shall give approval to the establishment of a committee, as well as determine completion of a committee's assignment. Final committee reports will be submitted to the Director.
- (b) Members of Standing or Ad Hoc Committees must be members of the Advisory Council.
- (c) A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson at the April Advisory Council meeting. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson at the June Advisory Council meeting.

#### Article VII -- Minutes

- (a) Minutes will be kept of the transactions of each Council meeting and shall be filed with the Director. Minutes must be recorded in writing and must include:
  - (1) the date, time, and place of the meeting;
  - (2) the members of the public body recorded as either present or absent; and
  - (3) a general description of all matters proposed, discussed, or decided and a record of any votes taken.

#### Article VIII -- Professional Staff

- (a) The Director or a designated Department staff member shall serve as the Advisory Council's official consultant and advisor. The Director may designate other members of the staff to assist in that consultation.

## Article IX -- Rules of Procedure

- (a) The Advisory Council shall within 6 months of its first meeting adopt Rules of Procedure to govern the business of the Council.

## Article X -- Addenda

As Articles I - IX are prescribed by the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Law (20 ILCS 525), any additions to the bylaws by the Council are added here and may not supersede any clause from earlier articles.

- (a) The addenda in Article X may be added to, removed, or replaced at any regular or special meeting by a 3/4 majority vote of a quorum.
- (b) The Council shall maintain regular communication with the regional foster care advisory councils and with the DCFS Child Welfare Advisory Committee.
- (c) If a member has 2 unexcused absences in a 12-month period or has not continued to make a significant contribution as evidenced by involvement in Council activities specified in these bylaws, membership termination shall be recommended by the Chairperson to the Director and the Council. In order to avoid unexcused absences, the member shall submit confirmation of good cause – in advance of the meeting to be missed - to the Chairperson or designated Department staff member when a meeting will be missed. Exceptions may be made in the case of sudden illness or emergency.
- (d) Each member shall review, evaluate and score the assigned number of Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans during each December/January period, unless the Department requests that they be scored at some other time. The number assigned will be an equal number of plans, obtained by the total number to be reviewed divided by the number of council members. Members must score the plans sent or given to them and return their completed score sheets to the Department as instructed within 21 calendar days of receiving them.
- (e) Members must be active on at least one committee.
- (f) Members who miss a meeting are expected to remain current with Council business by reviewing the meeting handouts, which are mailed to them as well as the agenda and the minutes. They should also confer with fellow members who attended. Decisions made by a quorum of members present at an official Council meeting are considered to be final.
- (g) Candidates for officer positions must have been an active member for at least one year and must not have missed more than 2 meetings from the current fiscal year.

(h) Candidates for officer positions must have scored the required number of implementation plans required for members the preceding plan cycle.

(i) Workgroups of the Advisory Council may be established as needed to perform supportive functions for the Advisory Council. Workgroups may include individuals who are not members of the Advisory Council. These functions will be determined by the Advisory Council and may include, but not be limited to researching issues and compiling draft reports and recommendations, tracking and submitting draft comments on proposed legislation, reviewing and providing draft comments on DCFS rules and procedures (both current and proposed), and special work which is not performed by the Advisory Council's committees or where committees require additional assistance and input.

Each workgroup shall be staffed by at least one duly appointed member of the Advisory Council who shall serve as the chair of the workgroup. Members will be appointed by majority vote of Advisory Council members present and members will serve until the workgroup has completed its mission.

Each workgroup shall elect a co-chair from among the membership of the workgroup who may or may not be a member of the Advisory Council. He or she shall be elected by majority vote of the workgroup members. In close cooperation with the workgroup chair, the co-chair shall be responsible for consulting closely with the Advisory Council and with the Director's appointed Advisory Council Coordinator to schedule meetings and conference calls; ensure that meeting notes are taken and filed with the Advisory Council Chair; facilitate the development, drafting and forwarding of workgroup draft recommendations to the Advisory Council Chair for formal action; and to handle other related matters of coordination.

Workgroup draft recommendations must be approved by the Advisory Council before being sent to the Director or otherwise acted on. The Advisory Council maintains the authority to act on, not act on and to modify draft workgroup recommendations. External (non-council member) members of workgroups shall serve without compensation, except that the Department shall reimburse external workgroup members for travel and per diem expenses associated with participation in Advisory Council workgroup meetings and activities. Reimbursement shall be consistent with Illinois Department of Central Management Services rules, as approved by the Governor's Travel Control Board.

(j) In accordance with II-b, members who are appointed to the remainder of a predecessor's term may be serve up to two more terms after their predecessor's partial term.

(k) In accordance with III-c, members may serve in an officer position for up to two consecutive terms. A member may hold the office again after not holding the office for at

least one year. Term limits on one office do not affect a member's ability to hold a different office.