

Meeting Minutes
CWAC Foster Care Recruitment Workgroup
May 4, 2021 10:00 am-12:00 pm
Via WebEx / Conference line only
APPROVED

Participants (DCFS, POS): Dagenè Brown, Nancy Dorfman-Schwartz, Allison Archer, Carly Jones, David Morris, Deb Lopez, Denise Rogers, Gayla Jackson, George Lempris, Jose Lopez, Katie Friend, Ann Pastula for Kelley Lumpkin, Kelly Kennedy Skole, Kristina Engel, Kymberle West, Gwenn Eyer for Michelle Grove, Nancy Silver, Olivia DelGuidice, Pleshette Hamb, Ray Rezek, Terese Burton, Valerie Darby, Victoria Hays, Yesenia Perez

Meeting Objective: Provide updates related to FY21 objectives and ongoing initiatives.

Discussion:

Nancy Dorfman-Schwartz motioned to approve the January 19th minutes. Terese Burton seconded. No objections. Motion passed.

R&R Training initiative – About 80+ people have enrolled in the training to date. The last training took place in March. Kristie Mulligan has replaced David on tech issues. Maximum is still 15 participants for each class. Facilitators report anywhere from 2-7 participants drop out for various reasons. Terese and Kristie are working to resolve. However, feedback from participants who have completed the class say it's informational and helpful. Next training: 6/7; already full. Note: Terese has transitioned to a new role but is still committed to resolving glitches and making sure it eventually runs smoothly. Questions/comments/concerns from the group:

- All should encourage FPs and potential FPs to take this training.

HMR Licensing initiative – The workgroup has submitted all forms to the OCFP. Once reviewed, it all goes to the Director for approval. However, the BH Panel has requested to review before sending to the Director. While licensing teams continue to use the old forms, the FP engagement initiative has begun. Re: the HMR/HFK Orientation, an IT will be pushed out soon. The orientation is designed to acquaint caregivers with the expectations on four main components: 1) corporal punishment/discipline; 2) court system and orders; 3) visitation rights of siblings/parents; 4) licensing introduction. While some POS agencies have a high licensing rate for HMR/HFK, the overall rate is still very low. The orientation will be made available on the VTC on 4/30. DCP will be primarily responsible for distributing link information and providing tech/access if necessary. Caregivers must complete part 1 of 3 and receive a confirmation before placement clearance can be granted. They then have 30 days to complete the entire orientation. The goal: increase number of licensed homes and decrease maltreatment rates. Questions/comments/concerns from the group:

- Concern voiced that the orientation will be another deterrent since relatives already complain about having to do a lot. The Department is aware and understands that the process can be overwhelming, but there are systemic issues (*e.g. high maltreatment rates while in unlicensed HMR*) that can't be overlooked and need to be addressed.
- Q. Re: need to complete part 1, what about situations that require immediate/emergency placement? There are concerns that there is no time to orient since it all happens very quickly. Per Operations via Dagenè, the orientation is mandatory before placement much like a background check. Part 1 is only about 30 minutes and DCP will send link information as soon as a relative is identified.
- Q. Is DCP aware of this protocol and will have completed before handing off to a POS agency? Yes, DCP is aware. There are a few exemptions, but timeframe to complete is not one of them.
- Q. How will workers confirm that parts 2 and 3 have been completed? The caregiver will be set up on the VTC.
- Q. Will parts 2 and 3 be trainer-led or self-paced? All are self-paced. Any questions can be directed to the worker.
- Q. Will there be consideration for a trainer-led orientation? Emphasized that this is an orientation, not a training.
- Q. If parts 2 and 3 are not completed, will the youth be removed from the home? If so, need to ensure that policy and procedure reflects this requirement. No answer was readily available but anticipate the answer to be 'no'. Lengthy conversation re: language with FPs on getting licensed (*i.e. "don't need to be" vs "required" vs "encouraged"*), including need to change the narrative to increase number of licensed homes; especially at the front-end with DCP. Dagenè will note this question and take back to the appropriate party for a response.
- Q. Can POS review the orientation to know what to expect? Also, is there a mechanism to track that the caregiver is watching/actively participating in part 1? Yes, POS agencies can review it on the VTC. If not on VTC, Dagenè will follow-up with OLPD. Re: part 1 tracking, yes there is a mechanism in place. Once completed, the confirmation goes to the Placement Clearance Desk. The PCD then sends it out to the field staff.

- Q. Does fingerprinting have to be completed as part of the background check before placement? No, that process has not changed; only that Orientation Part 1 has now been added to the checklist.
- Q. Concern voiced that there will be technical difficulties and logistics re: sending links and getting completed; especially for middle-of-the-night placements. Has this been piloted? The Department understands and discussed the challenges of implementation, but exceptions only include 1) if an FP is out-of-town or the like, they don't have to complete part 1 until they return; 2) technology-related issues. Middle-of-the-night placements were also discussed but not seen as a major hurdle.
- Q. How do undocumented caregivers fit into the plan to license homes? The Department doesn't expect 100% licensing of homes since that is not realistic. However, should pursue licensing whenever possible. Lengthy conversations re: challenges to license homes, including the fact that there will always be obstacles; however, workers should always try to encourage FPs to become licensed.

If anyone else still has questions, email Dagene and she will forward along: Dagene.Brown@illinois.gov.

Family Finding Committee – Recommendations were submitted to the CWAC High-End and CWAC Permanency subcommittees for approval. They will then be forwarded to the full CWAC. Highlights: change the current systemic culture to recognize families as a strength for support of youth; need for a dedicated person per agency per region to work on the collaborative process; training should be available to all stakeholders and not just DCFS/POS staff. Note that if implemented, they will be reviewed for cost efficiency and effectiveness.

Resource regional document for FPs – Barbara Crandell was the lead but has since retired; Deb Lopez took over re: providing updates. The team is still brainstorming, and Communications continues to collect information. It has evolved from a “refrigerator page” since there is so much information that is considered “important”. The current team plans to regroup to further lock down this document's goal/purpose. Beatriz Ramirez volunteered to assist.

Foster Parent Support Specialists – No updates to report currently.

Foster Parent Recruitment Strategies – This was added to the agenda to be a regular item for discussion at the direction of Michelle Jackson. Advised to focus on two groups for recruitment: 1) youth aged 17+ coming into the system, and 2) youth stuck in hospitals and going BMN.

- CWAC High-End is currently working on capacity building and not recruitment strategies specifically.
- CWAC Specialized FC also has this item for discussion. They agreed that a workgroup is needed and collected a list of volunteers, but no further direction has been received. Note that POS and DCFS staff are needed on a workgroup since this should be a collaborative effort. Comment made that it's very likely Troy Reeves and Lauren Williams keep the list. Nancy will reach out and provide list of volunteers from this group that will join and report on progress: Jose Lopez, Nancy Silver.
- PR/Marketing workgroup completed a presentation to the Chinese Mutual Aid Association re: becoming FPs and getting involved. A second presentation is scheduled on 5/12 to a Fortune 500 company. Working on a statewide plan to present on a quarterly basis, in English and Spanish. Questions/comments/concerns from the group:
 - Q. Will there be commercials? And/or ads on digital platforms? As part of recruitment efforts, the Department does weekly postings on the website and social media platforms. Communications currently tracks clicks, likes, shares, etc.
 - The Department received 6,957 inquiries statewide for calendar year 2020. Screened and sent 1,646 (24%) to Licensing. Of those: 94 have been licensed; 803 are still being tracked to see if they'll be licensed or not. Received 2,211 inquiries for Jan-Apr 2021. Breakdowns are pending.
 - Q. Did COVID affect these numbers? R&R sees some leveling off in 2021, but don't see that COVID had much of an effect. Dave will complete an analysis to compare before and after, but statewide logs only go back to the start of the campaign; which is Jan 2020.

No public comments made.

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 am.

Action items:

- Dagenè will follow-up on – question re: HMR orientation and whether youth will be removed if parts 2 and 3 are not completed in time allowed; whether the orientation is on the VTC for review.
- Beatriz will assist Deb's team and provide a more substantial update re: the resource regional doc for FPs.

- Gwenn/Michelle will provide an update re: FPSS at the next meeting.
- Nancy will follow-up with Troy and Lauren re: FP recruitment strategies workgroup; to include Jose and Nancy S. Hope to get progress updates at the next meeting.
- Dagenè/Dave will provide updated recruitment data at the next meeting.
- Dave will complete an analysis of inquiries to determine effectiveness of campaign and whether COVID had an impact. To send to Dagenè and try to complete by the next meeting.

Next Meeting: July 20th, 2021 at 10:00 am via WebEx.

Future Meetings – Quarterly on the 3rd Tuesday of the month:

- October 19th, 2021