

**Child Welfare Advisory Committee**  
**February 23, 2022 1:00 PM**  
**MINUTES**

**Attendees**

**Members:** Beverly Jones, Christopher Cox, Malia Arnett, Monica Badiano, Rich Bobby, Kim Cobb, Ashley Deckert, Nancy Dorfman-Schwartz, Patricia Ege, Katie Friend, Keely Giles, Toleda Hart, Jason Keeler, Harriet Kersh, Charles Montorio-Archer, Jere Murray, Lisa Nicklas, Audrey Pennington, Anthony Riordan, LaTasha Roberson, Deb Roberts, Prestina Singleton, Evelyn Smith, Phyllis Summers, Elena Thompson, and Rick Velasquez

DCFS: Tracey King covered for Dagene Brown (Co-chair)

**Co-Chair Welcome and Report (Beverly Jones and Christ Cox)**

- Member Roll Call
- Approval of November Minutes and FY22 CWAC Meeting Schedule (VOTE) – Christ motioned for approval of the items as submitted, Latasha Roberson motion, Harriet Kersh second, no objections. Motion passed.
- Membership Update – Christopher Cox introduced himself as President/CEO of Hoyleton Youth and Family Services as new Co-chair of CWAC Advisory Committee partnering with Beverly Jones (Co-chair). The following members were carried forward to the class of 2024: Nancy Dorfman-Schwartz, Tony Riordan, and Evelyn Smith. Rich Bobby was re-appointed 2<sup>nd</sup> term. The new members appointed to new 3-year terms were: Kimberly Cobb, Emily Rawky, Deb Roberts, Lisa Nicklas and Ashley Decker. The potential recommended alternatives were Kara Teeple, Dan Kotowski and Andrea Durbin. Committee currently working with DCFS for Orientation Session dates over the next few weeks.
- Co-chair Report – Beth welcomes new partners and those continuing with the committee. Looking forward to real productive and constructive agenda in order to move from words to actions. Christ comment DCFS Director has been meeting in person with CWAC leadership since December 2021. The director has been open, frank and with a very honest dialogue. Christ recognizes important investments DCFS has made in the Child Welfare System with private partners over the last 3 to 4 years. Also, set the agenda intentional on what we perceive are some important issues on our system. Beverly and Christ are committed to work closely with each sub-committees and co-chairs. Would like to discern and define on best structure to support work and community we served. The Director, Beverly and Christ are open for input, from the agenda's items.



## Director's Report

- Thanked CWAC's structure and looking forward to continuing working as a group. Able to make progress due to opening some barriers of single person decision making. Would like to talk about how important for DCFS be of a voice to move business forward. Currently, getting more staff in place in order to serve more children effectively and efficiently. Also, increasing resources such as bed's quality based on capacity structure. The resources that are built for foster home children to be maintained too. In addition, for Residential Programs to provide high quality care for children. There is a big challenge in Illinois. It's a fact there are not enough mental resources for children of the State of Illinois. DCFS is starting slowly to become an organization as a last resource for kids' mental support. For example, if a child is unable to be cared by parents and taken to the hospital. It has become more reasonable for the community to believe DCFS should get involve. It is clear DCFS would never step away from the responsibility of caring for children's needs. However, it is not a reasonable expectation for DCFS to become the children's mental health service for the State of Illinois. But the kids who are in DCFS, are entitled to the highest level of support. We are committed to helping partners in this call and those who are not to develop those services as well. DCFS has placed over 300 kids last year and beyond medical therapeutic placements including residential beds and community support. There are a lot of kids that keep coming through this portal. DCFS is open to develop contracts with agencies in: community based foster care homes, residential programming, ITT programming and all levels of care for all our kids. Building TLP and ILO programs to support kids who are in transition to our communities. Even new providers have stepped up to be a part of DCFS solution. Part of this is developing resources through our budget which will be discuss today. Think what we can do, to continue building the Illinois Child Welfare System.

## DCFS Response to CWAC Recommendations

### Reduction of Prevalence and Impact of DCFS Hiring Community Providers Staff by Kimberly Bates #1 – #2

- Allow for a 30-day notice to be given by any IL Child Welfare Professional employed at Private Agency transitioning to the Department. *DCFS responded for Privacy reasons, the department is unable to provide notice to the current employer of an applicant that DCFS has offered the applicant the position. The minimum requirement is 2 weeks' notice (14-day notice) from the time of offered, cannot mandate a 30-day notice.*
  - Latasha would like DCFS team to remain firm at minimum with the 2 weeks' notice. Dan would like this to be reconsider, "from perspective employer date of offered, to give a 30 day start date notice." *Kimberly will review the suggestion with the team.*
- "How to remain competitive and make sure we have something to attract private and public sectors", *DCFS responded positive per Latasha.*
  - Beverly – Wants to highlight what is happening when staff go for Foundational Training. The Trainor tells the staff to get license with private agency, but in 3 months they can come back and work with DCFS.

### Increase the Qualified Candidate Pool for Serving Children and Families by Shelia Riley #3 – #10

- Will circle back due to no DCFS representative available during meeting.

### Fair and Equitable Compensation Amongst the Workforce Serving Families in the IL child Welfare Systems by Royce Kilpatrick recommendations #11 – #17

- Royce Kilpatrick introduced new CFO Kiersten Neswick with background experience at Illinois Commerce Commission, Illinois Technology Agency, Juvenile Justice, and Governor's Management Unit. Looks forward to supporting agencies' mission, work around child welfare and community-based providers.
- DCFS had four straight years of significant investments. Recommended 90% as starting benchmark for starting salaries. Immediately 77% of the budget is going to community-based private partners.

- The hiring crisis is immediate and needs to step out before July. The budget is at 99% in finalizing, for Foster Care while Residential Care is looking good too.
- The minimum salary effective Mach 1<sup>st</sup> is based on position and no longer the educational level. Getting paid based on Rate Setting Methodology. However, an agency can establish salaries higher than our minimums (traditional 30% model).
- The Residential Facilities have requested for additional funds if an agency needs to hire temporary staffing in order to provide childcare support. DCFS does not want the agency to lose money but will provide the needed tools.
- DCFS has initiated the revision to R434 Audits, Review and Investigations to allow actual fringe cost above 25% to be consider as an allowable cost within the excess revenue determination to be effective this year.
- The CFS 458-B Form is used for our largest federal source of funding (25% of budget). Investment of additional dollars for children services is done through our federal return using this form. The old manual system does not work anymore due increase of caseloads. A new version was introduced with two parts; determines who is at home at time of removal within the first 30 days and what their income was. This allows DCFS to comply with federal requirements and prepare for new SACWIS System. Jeremy Wheeler is available to train workers and/or agencies on completing the form.

#### **DCFS FY 19-23 Budget Presentation and Budget Proposal Overview by Jason House**

- Information is posted on front page of DCFS website. Governor Pritzker increased \$250 million on introduce budget which was 50% larger than in 2019.
- Total Budget of \$1.8 Billion, will be allocated to: Investing in Staff(\$29.3 M), Modernizing Systems (\$16.1M), and Critical Investments in Workforce and High-End Youth Services (\$182.6M)
- Budget and Headcount was kept flat, will help DCFS hire for share of caseload.
- DCFS Caseload Trends FY 17-23 for: Investigations Division, Youth Served and Intact Family Services.
- Critical Investments in Workforce, Youth Services: Joint Rate Workgroup with Community-Based Providers (\$87.1M), Level of Care Support Services (\$25.0M), and FY22 Workforce Crisis Response March 1, 2022 (\$13.2M). All positions fully funded, not extra billing for agencies.
- Summary of Goals: Improve Safety Through Training, Increase Residential Bed Capacity, Workforce Task Force, Promote Diversity Equity and Inclusion, Encourage Subsidized Guardianship and Implement CCWIS System.
  - Q: Ashley – What was the CBP Liability Insurance funding before it got double? The total cost to double the funding was 1.6 M annual spread across our rates.
  - Q: Lisa – Does the increase for residential workers also extend to ILO/TLP workers? Not for ILO, would only include direct care from institutions, group homes, transitional living and shelters.
  - Q: Desi – The permanency group was working on some potential incentivization to increase HMR licensure. Did the cost of that make it to this budget? It is cover in the budget.
  - Q: Nancy – CWAC high end committee had made a recommendation for funding a family planning position? Royce commented each position added is a 17M dollars on private agency side. Will focus on the two highest needed, will have conversation on Friday with Timothy Snowden.

#### **Licensing Background Checks Forms by /George Vennikandam and Shontee Blankenship**

- In order to satisfy the Federal Title 4E Claiming and in accordance with the CCBDBG we had to revised background check rules as well as the 718 forms that authorizes background checks. Working with IT to get the conversion on our system. Currently pending with Office of Child and Family Policy, once revised then process immediately the 718A and 718B letters. The federal requirement of Title 4E Claiming, clarify that conditional employee status is not acceptable for Federal Government to extend their funds to any state.

- The department will issue a clearance letter with the hiring date being on or after clearance date. Did major database changes by removing hiring/starting date with pre-hire date for auditors. The effective date will be the day the “letter of new process” is sent out.
- The background checks will take 3 to 5 days no more than 7 days. No type of training can be done at all. Agencies can transfer clearance of employee from one agency to another. It’s just an immediate update within 48 to 72 hours by DCFS. Contact us at [dcfs.dg.bcu-chgo@illinois.gov](mailto:dcfs.dg.bcu-chgo@illinois.gov), [Patricia.Stokes@illinois.gov](mailto:Patricia.Stokes@illinois.gov), or call DCFS Manager/Licensing Representative. Only contract agencies with DCFS are subject to this rule of full clearance.

#### **Quality Achievable Workloads with Intentional Focus on Efficiency, Effectiveness and Redundancy Elimination.**

- Number 17<sup>th</sup> recommendation: The Department allowed paraprofessionals to complete some critical tasks currently assigned for Child Welfare Specialists. *DCFS response: It was determined by Intact leadership that the paraprofessionals would take the Departments Fundamentals course to prepare them with the knowledge to engage with families. Would only be consider during the on-going rate workgroup discussions this Winter/Spring confirm by Tim.*
- Latasha – It’s about looking back retrospectively through new immerse areas of growth. Look through some of the things that were tried through the Immersion Sites that were never able to roll out statewide. To see technology advance such as SACWIS for quick and urgent support. There were things submitted around Immersion Sites, ITEC, and Paperwork Busters that were tried.
- Dr. Mann – Yes, On October 6, 2017, a team of people were trained locally in Central Matching (CM), but ultimately founded a heavy lift in terms of time and ended October 2018. When things are taken out of the system and trying to make them more efficient there will be a need for resources.
- CWAC committee comment a lot of the recommendations came out from the Ad-Hoc version. Asking for commitment from DCFS for a representative be able to speak on each of the 17 recommendations making sure the intention and response is fully understood.
- Monico Whittington-Eskridge represents the department’s committee but currently on leave. Jassen will identify who will represent for Friday, March 3, 2022 Work Force Subcommittee meeting.
- Latasha – Thanked DCFS for the community-based providers added. Also, the emergency rules were filed to enhance the candidate pool. Shontee did confirmed still work in process for this request.

#### **Overview of the Strategic Plan by Tracey King**

- The Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025 will roll out in March. Appreciated all feedback from CWAC leaders and Focus Groups. Advise CWAC to review it with their team to help DCFS lead Illinois Child Welfare.

#### **Overview of the DEI Plan by Daniel Fitzgerald**

- It came as a directive from the Governor’s Office for all state agencies to have a Diversity Equity Inclusion Plan and DCFS was able to comply with it. Highlight assistance from Christ towers, Dagen Brown, Marla Courts, Monico Whittington-Eskridge, and Sheila Riley. Former name was Office of Affirmative Action, new name is Diversity Equity Inclusion as of February 23, 2021. The group implemented the Implicit Bias Training, over 80% of DCFS and community-based providers have taken it. Currently working on Cultural Climate Survey and Trainer Model. In the future, it will be available to all community- based providers.

### **Questions/Comments**

- The agencies had set aside goals within the group, where they achieved? Beverly will circle back.
- This year's pool was much smaller as members of CWAC and advise to encourage people to apply.
- Agencies having issues with judge's order of daily visitations for babies. It can be an issue due to lack of staff and time consuming. Pedro Mendoza comment to contact Carol Casey or Tim Barrett in legal, requesting order to be modify.
- Those who are co-chairs of subcommittees, please respond to Doodle Poll to schedule meeting. For agenda items or issues that you would like this group to tackle per Christ.

Adjourned at 2:57 PM

Next meeting: Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM