

CWAC Racial Equity Meeting  
January 25, 2022 Minutes

**Attendees:** Dagenè Brown, Elke Hansen, Jasmine Ferrer, Prestina Singleton, Yeni Rojas, Sylvia Fonseca, LaTasha Roberson-Guifarro, Jere Murry, Monica Mosley-Cantrell, Lourdes Rodriguez, Ashley Deckert, Jose Lopez, Claude Robinson, Ronald Wynne, Christopher Towers, Summer Piggee, Evelyn Martinez, Paula Truitt-Alohan

**Approval of Minutes:**

November 2021 & December 2021 Minutes delayed due to staff transitions. No vote or approval currently.

**Membership Discussion:**

Roll call was replaced with attendees entering names into the chat for the record. Dagenè and Elke met previously last month to discuss restructuring. Meeting frequency and restructuring discussed by Dagenè to depart from traditional monthly meeting on the fourth Tuesday with a duration of two hours to new proposed meeting held every two months on the fourth Tuesday with a duration of one and a half hours with proposed time start/end time of 10am to 11:30am. This motion was brought forth by Dagenè with no objections; motion approved with all in favor.

Dagenè provided an update on the bylaws workgroup from previous meetings. The bylaws workgroup has been formed to include Jere, Prestina, Summer and others. Dagenè proposed an action to follow the bylaws of the greater CWAC protocol. More updates and feedback to follow at next meeting in March.

**Workgroup Updates:**

The Education Campaign workgroup was revisited and updated from November's meeting. Amongst others, Christopher and Mary were added to the workgroup. The workgroup will continue to pull together the public announcement campaign to develop a thirty second to one-minute commercial or video to be shared with the public. The ad is to be themed to offer various vantage points. Members requested alignment with DCFS communications department. Dagenè to reach out to the marketing and communications departments to ensure that a member of the aligned departments be present at future workgroup meetings. Summer added acknowledgment and thanks to Christopher and Prestina for their work and vulnerabilities. More content to be shared in March's meeting.

**Regular Updates:**

RE cause to action from 11/21 to be included in RE plan of prioritization responses and will be brought back to the table per Dagenè.

Dagenè provided updates on DEI training. DEI training to be shared with community-based partners. DEI training with community-based partners provided by Department of Human Rights. Training to provide inclusion to all with ability to opt out as well. Divisions to develop plans on DEI usage, incorporation, and utilization.

- DEI Reporting Requirements
  - Dagenè shared possible opt in and opt out reporting for each division
  - Dagenè to provide follow up on REI training implementation
  - Dagenè discussed the importance of proper DEI implementation within the bureaucracy as Jere requested a more immediate implementation. Reasons to support suitable, disciplined implementation were discussed by Dagenè. DEI reporting requirements to be discussed more in depth in near future.

- DEI Trainers
  - Dagenè discussed REI trainers and identified possible key preferred DEI trainers.
  - RE volunteered to be candidates as future DEI trainers. Dagenè and Christopher were identified as possible candidates to train the workgroup. Follow up will be provided in upcoming meetings.

Dagenè provided an update on action teams and locations; a list of action teams including contact info was attached to the agenda. Individuals interested in participation should contact Paula Truitt-Alohan, PEP Administrator. Revitalization of action teams discussed as a priority for department representation. Ron Wynn also identified as a point of contact in action team revitalization. Sylvia requested a LANs breakdown; Paula reconfirmed the LANs breakdown has been provided as shared. Action teams were defined by both Dagenè and Paula as there was a misunderstanding in labeling by some committee members.

Data was revisited from previous meeting. Dagenè shared that the proper data will be shared with the committee upon final approval and finalization.

Dagenè suggested participation from committee members in Town Hall for Autism Beds and Shelter Beds. All interested individuals should contact Dagenè for more info and inclusion.

#### **New Updates:**

The Department of Affirmative Action is now identified as Diversity Equity Inclusion, DEI. REP once was a part of Affirmative Action; moving forward REP will be a part of the Chief of Staff Office and no longer under DEI.

Legislation is under development with focus on Blind Removal Concept. Dagenè is speaking with legislators regarding BRC and will keep the committee updated. Dagenè placed the workgroup on notice as members may be called to action. Jere M. posed an inquiry as to the Director's stance on BRC. Dagenè shared with the workgroup of the initial charge of BRC was spearheaded by the Director. Additional members of the workgroup added viewpoints on the need for BRC, the consequences of BRC, and the possible outcomes should BRC is passed. Dagenè added that Illinois will follow blueprints of other state implementations; currently further research is needed. Dagenè will keep the team updated.

Dagenè provided a recap on LCFS' "Dismantling Institutional Racism in Child Welfare Brick by Brick: Championing Reunification" [<https://youtu.be/InFUNo3-T4E>]. Key takeaways from presentation by Dagenè were reunification and parent advocacy. A question was posed by Dagenè on how to support parents throughout the process of reunification who do not have the resources or lack the understanding of the process. A suggestion was made by Dagenè to add parent advocacy to Family First; there is advocacy for everyone in the reunification process except for parents. Dagenè also shared that the POWER organization's is one group whose primary focus is parent advocacy to which Jasmine F. added that the Wrap Around Program is also another organization focusing on parent advocacy. This expanded the discussion amongst several members within the workgroup. The onus of parent advocacy was placed on caseworkers, courts, and meetings during the discussion to which Lourdes R. shared that ultimately it is the caseworker's responsibility to share info with the parents. Summer P., in summary, added that more education is needed systemically to which Dagenè stated follow up will be provided. LaTasha R., Jasmine F., and Prestina S. added to this discussion as well.

Next Meeting Schedule Date:  
March 22, 2022  
10am – 11:30am