

CWAC Racial Equity Meeting
June 15, 2021
Minutes

Attendees: Dagenè Brown, Christopher Towers, Elke Hansen, Susan Stephens (Retired Social Worker/Community Volunteer), Jere Murry (LSSI; Previous DCFS PEP & AAAC), Daniel Fitzgerald, LaTasha Roberson (LCFS), Claude Robinson (UCAN), and Paula Truitt-Alohan.

Redefining the Chapter

There was discussion relative to redefining the CWAC RE Charter. It was suggested that the racial equity lens be used across all sectors of the work. Also, that there needs to be a concrete purpose that is sustainable regardless of changes in leadership. It was further suggested that DEI should not overlap with REI. DEI and REI were defined as different but with overlap. The current goals of the charter were discussed, and feedback was given on changes to be made.

It was also discussed the need for additional participants in areas where systems and structures intersect, to include education, courts, etc.

Racial Equity Initiatives

The ten week “Educational Campaign” 18 hours of footage needs to be reviewed to access this project moving forward. It was discussed that the educational campaign needs to be embedded within all sectors, internally and externally, addressing implicit bias. Feedback given was that the work needs to be more actionable rather than just awareness. In need of a committee to review the 18-hour footage; Jere Murry agreed to review and provide feedback to the group.

There was a question raised relative to a what a Racial Equity Curriculum is and how should it be implemented. The suggestion was made that the curriculum can be embedded in Child and Family Team Meetings or ACR. The question was raised to how others would receive the curriculum if it’s specific to implementation into work of only field staff. It was raised that a vendor could provide a curriculum; more discussion is needed to move this initiative forward.

Updates

- The Implicit Bias Training rolled out on June 14th and is to be completed by August 6th; House Bill 3100.
- The DEI Plan is in its final draft and awaiting approval.
- PEP Project transformation/action teams to follow program plans, but lack of DCFS participation has kept all from being on the same page and in good collaboration/communication. The PEP Administrator is working to rebuild teams.
- Funding opportunities through the R3 Renew, Reinvest, Restore Board to address violence, legal issues, housing, and youth development. Information needs to be shared with community groups of the PEP project. Dagenè will be sharing information with the committee when the next funding opportunity has begun.
- DCFS participation in the Governor’s Office DEI Train the Trainer Training. It will be determined at later time if this will be for all Child Welfare Staff in Illinois.
- Education Series on pause until it can be reviewed.
- RE Proposal with UIUC on Sub-Guardianship; awaiting decision

Next Steps

- Co-Chairs will update the charter and share with committee; to be reviewed bi-yearly
- An ask for more participants on committee to include “lived experience”

- Jere to review the Educational Campaign Footage
- The committee to determine if there is a RE curriculum model or does in need to be created
- CWAC RE Committee to be extended team to the Racial Equity Improvement Collaborative
- Use RE data to begin discussion on a baseline
- Committee decided to meet once a month, the 4th Tuesday from 10 – 12