

CWAC Racial Equity Meeting
July 27, 2021 Minutes

Attendees: Dagenè Brown, Elke Hansen, Daniel Fitzgerald, Christopher Towers, Jere Murry, Claude Robinson, LaTasha Roberson-Guifarro, Prestina Singleton, Monica Mosely-Cantrell, Sylvia Fonseca, Jennifer Seward, Wendy Ingersoll, Ashley Deckert (alternate for Randi Slack), Heather Dorsey, Relunda Washington, Yeni Rojas and Monico Whittington-Eskridge (alternate for Shelia Riley).

Chapter Update

The CWAC RE committee welcomed additional members to the group. There was discussion relative to the roles and key functions that will best serve the RE work. Key functions identified to impact practice, policy and procedure. New members added from the IL Courts, Lived Experience, LAC, QE, and Permanency. Additional suggestions were made for potential members to include ISBE, AC F's, YAB, CASA, DHS, Health Care (MPEEC), Law Enforcement, Foster Parent, Birth Parent, DCP and Licensing. Those names were documented for follow up.

Racial Equity Improvement Collaborative

Lyman Letgers from the Casey Family Foundation did a brief introduction and presentation on the work of Casey, and how they are supporting the Racial Equity work in Illinois. Mr. Letgers discussed the premise of the REIC and how the CWAC RE committee work can align. Illinois is one of the 14 states included in the collaborative. The REIC focus is to dismantle and deconstruct of institutional systems. He encouraged the committee to ensure a team is built that includes other entities that intersect with child welfare. The REIC Core team will be a small group represented in each state, but the extended team to be broad to assist with the work locally. He encouraged a multisystem approach that must be intentional. Mr. Letgers referenced other work being done in the RE space to include: Michigan and the blind removal pilot, South Carolina working on health initiatives with children and families; and Washington state with introducing legislation in the RE space. Additional discussion relative to what power dynamics does the committee need to focus on was raised. Lyman suggested to the committee that the committee needs to determine what their focus will be and attention to power, community and lived experience. He encouraged the committee that it is not a competition as there are pockets of work being done different areas of the nation, but not very significant as a whole. Mr. Letgers also offered his assistance to the group, inviting Corey Best to present to the group, and commitment to participating as often as his schedule permits.

Racial Equity Initiatives

- Education Campaign –
 - Jere Murray reviewed some of the footage but determined that she needed assistance. The lens has changed since the origination of the taping, and a team will be needed to review. Relunda, Sylvia and Chris volunteered to assist. Dagenè will provide the footage to Chris for distribution to the rest of the subcommittee. Jere Murray will chair the education campaign.
- Racial Equity Curriculum –
 - Dagenè discussed the proposed RFP that was to develop a racial equity curriculum and stated that the Department wouldn't be moving forward with that RFP. She discussed the need to determine what a curriculum could look like, how to ensure it is infused it into all of the disciplines, if this is something that can be procured and tweaked to child welfare. Dagenè suggest a work group be developed to determine how to move forward with a curriculum. Ashley, Dagenè, Prestina, Randi, Jennifer and Yoni, volunteered to participate in this committee.

Updates:

- Dagenè shared with committee that a RE plan will be written soon and will be soliciting committee members to participate in that work.
- Paula Truitt-Alohan provide history of the Permanency Enhancement Project. The PEP came out of work done in the African American Council in 2007, beginning in the Southern Region. Under previous administration (McEwen), there was a push to look at disproportionality data in all regions; resulting in the creation of the Action and Transformation Teams. At that time, AA youth were not achieving permanency consistent with other races. The Department developed strategic partnerships with community partners to

look at data in specific regions and determining what needs to be transformed (decision points). The Action Teams were to address areas around prevention, reunification, adoption and subsidized guardianship. There is a partnered University in each region that focuses on data and supporting the work of the action teams. Paula provided an update on Central Region data via Champaign County Action Team, who has partnered with United Way.

- DEI Plan – final draft has been sent to the Director; awaiting approval.
- Governor’s DEI Training – specific to state agencies; but can share with the Community Based Providers (CBP) if they don’t have their own training. DEI training is separate and distinct from the Implicit Bias Training.
 - There was a push to CBP to encourage staff to complete the IB training that has an August 6th deadline.
 - Monico has the list of agencies/persons who need to complete. Monico offered to share with members who requested that information relative to their agency.
- Sub Guardianship Proposal –
 - The Department was awarded an RFP to address Sub Guardianship Proposal through UIUC. The proposal is to address the low rate of sub guard as an option with black and brown children. Culturally, black and brown families are not interested in adoption, so there is a need to push sub guard by educating the courts, CASA, states attorneys, etc., in an effort to remove permanency roadblocks. The sub guard initiative is also connected to BH.

Action Items

- Follow up on additional membership in areas identified above
- Develop workgroups for the education campaign and race equity curriculum
- Request for the United Way presentation to be sent out to members
- Data request was made specific to region e.g., Chapin Hall, Action Teams, University partners
- Need to revitalize all Action Teams ensuring DCFS presence is there for support of the work

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, August 24, 2021 @ 10:00 a.m.