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DCFS Statewide Parents Advisory Council (SPAC)

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RULES OF PROCEDURE – BYLAWS

Article I -- Name and Mandate

The DCFS Statewide Parents Advisory Council (SPAC) of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is created with the object of advising and consulting with the Director of DCFS or his/her designee(s) on all matters involving or affecting the compilation, provision and delivery of services to parents who have involvement with the Illinois Child Welfare System.

The responsibilities of the SPAC shall include:

- (1) Providing input on the issues that affect services and resources received by parents and their families.
- (2) Identifying, analyzing, and recommending solutions to any issues concerning services, service provision and resources delivered to parents and their families.
- (3) Interpreting to the public and the General Assembly the need for resources and services to be provided to parents and their families in order to assist them in keeping their families intact, reunifying with their children who have been placed in care, and helping parents provide safe and nurturing environments for their children.
- (4) Promoting the statewide exchange and pooling of information in the area of resources for and services to parents and their families.
- (5) Participating in statewide planning and promoting parent involvement in local planning, services and resources for parents and their families.
- (6) Reviewing and making recommendations on DCFS child welfare service delivery policies, rules, guidelines, procedures, and practice related to working with parents.
- (7) Developing recommendations concerning training for staff and for parents, to

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improve the quality of services families receive and to help parents to benefit more from those services.

- (8) Reviewing and advising DCFS on pending or enacted legislation, primarily as it concerns services to and resources for parents and their families, and on the Department's responses or positions regarding such legislation.
- (9) Advising the Department on training and supervising child protection, intact and permanency workers and their direct supervisors such that they adhere to sound social work practices when serving parents. Such training and supervision shall include but not be limited to, treating parents with dignity and respect; starting where the parent is before adding complex tasks that parents may not be able to comprehend; and forging therapeutic helping relationships with parents.

Article II -- Membership

- (1) The DCFS SPAC shall consist of the following membership, which shall be phased in as charter members' terms expire.

Child welfare involved and former child welfare-involved parents (parents) who are representative of all areas of the State of Illinois. This will consist of four (4) parents each from the Southern, Central and Northern DCFS Administrative Regions; four (4) parents from Cook County and three (3) parents at-large (from anywhere in Illinois).

At the DCFS Director's discretion, up to seven (7) service providers/professionals who provide services to and/or work directly with parents. Three of these members shall be ranking staff from three different Illinois family Advocacy Centers.

Two (2) co-chairs, consisting of two parent members. The co-chairs may also be able to serve on the DCFS Child Welfare Advisory Committee (CWAC). One Co-Chair will be elected at the last meeting of the fiscal year, and the next co-chair will be elected the following year. Candidates must be members of a local PWP Chapter to be nominated. Co-chairs' terms will be for 2 years, and the co-chair exiting any year will serve one year as a co-chair advisor.

The first election of co-chairs shall be conducted as follows and shall not apply to any other year. Two co-chairs will be elected for this year. One of the co-chairs will be for a two year term and one will be for a one year term. This shall be decided by a coin flip.

The Co-Chairs shall appoint a nominating committee at their first meeting after each January 1 to recruit and recommend to the DCFS Director new members to replace outgoing members who are

filling slots allocated to parents and other Council members. The Director shall make all membership appointments to the Council in writing. In soliciting and making appointments, efforts will be made to ensure the membership of the Council is geographically and culturally diverse and representative. The Nominating Committee will take nominations in April of each year to replace the outgoing co-chair for that year. This election will be held at the last meeting of the fiscal year, typically in June.

(2) Terms of Membership/Reimbursement/Attendance

- (a) Members shall be appointed for a term of three years. No member shall be appointed to serve more than two consecutive terms. Members whose second terms have expired shall continue to serve until their successors have been appointed.
- (b) Members of the SPAC shall serve without compensation, except that they may be reimbursed for travel and per diem expenses necessary in connection with approved meetings and business, in accordance with the Illinois Department of Central Management Services rules, as approved by the Governor's Travel Control Board.
- (c) If a member is absent for 3 consecutive meetings a co-chair shall call to ascertain their ability to remain a member of the Council. Members shall notify a co-chair or the DCFS staff person, in advance, when they know they cannot attend a meeting. The co-chairs may remove any members who have missed three consecutive meetings without being excused.

Article III -- Officers/DCFS Support Staff

Officers of the SPAC shall consist of two members who are parents and who have been elected by the SPAC. The chairs shall be responsible for the duties ascribed to the office, and they shall preside over the meetings of the SPAC. They will also serve as ex-officio members of all SPAC committees.

The DCFS Director shall assign at least one DCFS staff member to support the SPAC and to maintain records, prepare and send meeting notices and agendas for each meeting, and otherwise assist the SPAC as needed.

Article IV -- Meetings

- (1) Regular meetings of the SPAC shall be held at least six times per year. The meetings shall take place using a videoconferencing approach or at set locations, on dates and times determined by the co-chairs after consultation with members and the designated DCFS staff member.

It shall be the responsibility of the designated DCFS staff member, at the direction of the co-chairs, to give notices of the location, dates, and time of meetings to each member, to the DCFS Director, and to staff consultants and the general public by adhering to requirements of the Illinois Open meetings Act, at least 30 days prior

to each meeting.

- (2) An agenda of scheduled business for deliberation shall be developed in coordination with the DCFS staff person and the co-chairs and distributed to the members and publicly posted at least 7 days prior to a scheduled meeting of the SPAC.
- (3) Should meetings need to be cancelled for any reason the Department shall consult with the co-chairs, and then give reasonable notice to all members.
- (4) Should circumstances prevent the physical gathering of a quorum of members for a regularly scheduled meeting, the co-chairs, in consultation with the Department, may decide to have a meeting via conference call or a virtual platform provided by the Department. Any official business conducted in person or via conference or videoconference shall be consistent with recognized parliamentary procedure, in general compliance with Roberts Rules of Order.

Article V -- Quorum

- (1) A quorum at any regular or special meeting of the SPAC shall be necessary to transact business and shall consist of a majority of the SPAC members who are present, but a minimum of 10 members must be present in order to vote on any motions other than approving minutes and adjourning meetings. When a quorum of members is not present and the motion is of particular importance, the co-chairs may poll the absent members after the meeting and the motion will be decided based on absent members' input combined with the votes of those who were present. For the purpose of election of officers, the necessary quorum shall be a majority of the duly appointed members, which can be obtained by polling members who were absent during election voting.
- (2) For the purpose of subcommittee action, a quorum shall consist of at least one-half of those members appointed to the subcommittee, but in no event no fewer than two members.

All business of the IAAC meetings and its subcommittees shall be conducted in general accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. The Chair(s) of the council may, at their discretion and with approval of the council, appoint a member to function as the Council's parliamentarian, who shall be responsible for ensuring appropriate compliance with parliamentary procedure.

Article VI – Committees and Workgroups

- (1) Standing and ad hoc committees of the SPAC shall be appointed by the co-chairs. Members of these committees shall consist of Advisory Council members. The majority action of the SPAC shall give approval to the establishment of a committee, as well as determine the completion of a committee's assignment. Final committee reports will be submitted to the DCFS Director after having been

- approved by Council vote.
- (2) Workgroups of the Advisory Council may be established as needed to perform supportive functions for the Advisory Council. Workgroups may include individuals who are not members of the Advisory Council. These functions will be determined by the Advisory Council and may include, but not be limited to researching issues and compiling draft reports and recommendations, tracking and submitting draft comments on proposed legislation, reviewing and providing draft comments on DCFS rules and procedures (both current and proposed), and special work which is not performed by the Advisory Council's committees or where committees require additional assistance and input.
 - (3) Each workgroup shall be staffed by at least one duly appointed member of the Advisory Council who shall serve as the chair of the workgroup. Members will be appointed by majority vote of Advisory Council members present, and members will serve until the workgroup has completed its mission.
 - (4) Each workgroup shall elect a co-chair from among the membership of the workgroup who may or may not be a member of the Advisory Council. He or she shall be elected by majority vote of the workgroup members. In close cooperation with the workgroup chair, the co-chair shall be responsible for consulting closely with the Advisory Council and with the Director's appointed Advisory Council Coordinator to schedule meetings and conference calls; ensure that meeting notes are taken and filed with the Advisory Council co-chairs; facilitate the development, drafting and forwarding of workgroup draft recommendations to the Advisory Council co-chairs for formal action; and to handle other related matters of coordination.
 - (5) Workgroup draft recommendations must be approved by the Advisory Council before being sent to the Director or otherwise acted on. The Advisory Council maintains the authority to act on, not act on and to modify draft workgroup recommendations. External (non-council member) members of workgroups shall serve without compensation, except that the Department shall reimburse external workgroup members for travel and per diem expenses associated with participation in Advisory Council workgroup meetings and activities. Reimbursement shall be consistent with Illinois Department of Central Management Services rules, as approved by the Governor's Travel Control Board.

Article VII -- Minutes

Notes will be kept of the business of each meeting and they shall be filed with the DCFS Director. Notes must be recorded in writing and must include:

- (a) the date, time, and place of the meeting;
- (b) the members recorded as either present or absent; and

(c) a summary of matters discussed or decided and a record of any votes taken.

Article VIII -- DCFS Professional Staff

The DCFS Director's designated staff member shall serve as the Department's representative to the SPAC. The Director may designate other DCFS staff members to assist in that or other functions.

Article IX – Conflict of Interest & Mandatory Training

Members shall abide by the conflict of interest provisions contained in the DCFS Rule 428, Section 428.175. This provision shall be permanently attached to the Council's bylaws.

Members shall successfully complete conflict of interest training, ethics training and any other training deemed by DCFS to be a condition of membership.

Charter members shall be given copies of the draft bylaws before the SPAC's initial meeting on 04/26/2022. Thereafter, new members shall be given copies as they are appointed to the Council.

Article X – Rules of Procedure/Bylaws

Any amendments to these bylaws after they have been initially been formally adopted in open session must be made only by amendments that have first been studied and drafted by a Bylaws Committee of the SPAC, presented to the Committee of the Whole during a regularly-scheduled SPAC meeting in open session, and approved by a majority of the SPAC members who are in attendance. The SPAC must have a quorum in attendance before such vote can occur. Council members shall begin their deliberations on the draft bylaws during their meeting on 4/26/22, and approve a set of official bylaws at their second meeting.