

Child Support Advisory Committee Meeting

November 14, 2017 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Healthcare and Family Services (HFS)

By video conference and teleconference

Committee Members Present: Margaret Bennett, Margaret Stapleton, Kirk Harris, Nicole McKinnon, The Honorable Judge Pamela Loza, Dawn Porter (for The Honorable Dorothy Brown via phone), Zeophus (Zee) Williams, The Honorable Judge Diane Winter (via phone), Richard Zuckerman(via phone), Latanya Law-Fountain (for DHS Secretary James Dimas), Scott Black(via phone), The Honorable Kelly Burke (via phone), Geraldine Franco(via phone)

Committee Members Absent: The Honorable La Shawn Ford, Sequane Lawrence, The Honorable Robert Martwick, The Honorable Patricia Bellock, The Honorable Sidney Mathias, Darryl Apperton

HFS Staff Present: Pam Lowry, Gina Hemphill, Ralph Abt, Sharon Shapiro, Hilary Johns Felton, Bryan Tribble, Mary Bartolomucci, Sean Rosenthal, Daun Perino, Yvette Perez-Trevino, Veneza Lozada(DHS)

Public Guests: Present in Chicago: Mick Gerhardt and Annette Bannon

- **Welcome to CSAC members – Pam Lowry**
Pam Lowry welcomed meeting participants and thanked the 2017 committee members for their service to the committee.
- **Remarks – Chairperson Bennett**
 - Roll call of committee members – Chairperson Bennett
 - Introduction of state employees and members of the public – Chairperson Bennett
 - All committee members, attendees and members of the public were asked to sign in
 - Approval of meeting notes from the September 19, 2017 CSAC Meeting
 - Dr. Harris indicated a correction needed to be made to the notes to show that he was present.
- **CSAC Quarterly Numbers – Pam Lowry**
 - Support order establishment just under 83%
 - Current collections just under 63%
 - Arrearages just under 62%
 - PEP – 83% last year; 91% this year
 - To improve the PEP, HFS developed strategies that focused on data analysis, the hospital paternity program and partnership with WIC centers, Cook County case management, and partnership with the Clerk of Court of Cook County.

- **Power of Fathers – Kirk Harris and Norris Stevenson**
 - Dr. Kirk Harris spoke about a pilot initiative between Children’s Home and Aid, Family Focus, Metropolitan Family Services, and Power of Fathers wherein these organizations leverage their collective resources to address and assist in family issues, such as employment, counseling for trauma, child support, co-parenting, etc. They help men develop healthy and supportive relationships with their families. This program is already up and running, and is looking to partner with HFS and other social service programs that mother & children usually receive. Dr. Harris requested support from the Committee and HFS to partner with this program, indicating that it was an opportunity for this committee to determine how we bring a better outcome for our families. Because Power of Fathers already has private grant funding, they seeking to coordinate services with State agencies at no cost to the Agencies.
 - Chairperson Bennet congratulated Dr. Harris and Power of Fathers on an award they are receiving in New York. The sentiment was echoed by all committee members and staff present.
 - There were several questions regarding the requested partnership:
 - Judge Loza inquired as to whether the participation would be voluntary. Dr. Harris responded that Power of Fathers wanted to partner with child support and the Domestic Relations Court because of the access to fathers who may benefit from the services. The first point of contact could be the SAO with a possible second point of contact through the Hearing Officers. Pam Lowry also commented that there could be referrals from HFS via CIRU.
 - Judge Loza inquired as to the structure of the organization. Dr. Harris responded that each of the participating organizations has specific services to offer encompassing the following service areas:
 - Employment services
 - Counseling for trauma
 - Co-parenting
 - Child development
 - Group peer support
 - Case management
 - Judge Loza inquired if there was a hand out or materials that they could pass out in Court. Dr. Harris responded that he could provide something at the next meeting.
 - Ms. Stapleton inquired about the profile of fathers who were good candidates for the program. Dr. Harris stated that services are most needed for fathers who live on the South & West sides of Chicago. To obtain more information you can visit the website www.ffhc.org.
 - Chairperson Bennett suggested that the Department of Mental Health may also be interested in coordinating efforts regarding the counseling and trauma based issues.

- Dr. Harris inquired if there was a way to determine if the committee was interested in supporting these efforts. The consensus was that there needed to be something in writing or a presentation for the committee to review prior to making any commitments. Dr. Harris is to provide more specific information at the next Child Support Advisory Committee meeting.
- **Potential Legislation for Consideration by the Committee**
 - At the request of the Committee for potential future legislative opportunities, Pam Lowry discussed some difficulties with the current statutory Clean Slate program to forgive assigned debt owed by noncustodial parents who can show evidence of inability to pay at the time the debt accrued. Like other states at the time, Illinois' statutory program was structured to forgive the assigned debt after the parent made a series of current payments. This approach has had limited success throughout the nation. Some states are transitioning to programs that focus the arrears forgiveness on the parent's participation in activities that lead to job readiness or parenting skills including economic strengthening or family strengthening activities.
 - Committee members discussed exploring possible amendment to the current Clean Slate program.
 - The Committee is interested in forming a sub-committee to review our current statutes/legislation, review and contrast with other State's programs/statutes.
- **New Business – Committee Members**

Judge Loza shared that she had been appointed to the Supreme Court Family Law Forms Committee to address and update the income and expense affidavits. The Committee discussed the need for something shorter and simpler for parents without significant assets.
- **Public Comment – Members of the Public**

Annette Bannon inquired if HFS provides help to people who don't know why their license is suspended. Pam Lowry responded that if the suspension is not for nonpayment of child support, individuals are directed to the Secretary of State for more information. Annette Bannon inquired if HFS has any public service announcements regarding the availability of the Clean Slate program. Pam Lowry responded that the information is available on the HFS website, but there hadn't been any additional publication of the program due to budgetary constraints.
- **Closing**

Motion to adjourn was offered and approved.
- **Meeting Adjourned**