

Child Welfare Advisory Committee

May 16, 2024, 1:00 PM

Members Present

Glenda Lashley (DCFS Staff Liaison)	Annetta Wilson
Beverly Jones – CoChair	Keely Giles on behalf of Karen Taylor
Christopher Cox – CoChair	Patrick M. Phelan
Stephanie Franklin	Harriet Kersh
Audrey Pennington	Jason Keeler
Kim Cobb	Dr. Tiffany Johnson
Phyllis Summers	Kara Teeple
Mary Savage	Elena Thompson
Kimberly Jones	Lisa Nicklas
LaTasha Roberson-Guifarro	Jere Murry
Nancy Dorfman-Schwartz	Andrea Durbin
Evelyn Smith	

I. Welcome and Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by Chris Cox at 1:10 PM. An in-person/virtual quorum was established, allowing the meeting to proceed.
- Glenda Lashley, DCFS Staff Liaison proceeded with the member roll call.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes



- **Approval of November 2023 Minutes** – Chris requested a motion for approval of the minutes for this meeting due to the lack of an in-person quorum. Dr. Tiffany Johnson moved for the approval of November’s minutes and Annetta Wilson seconded the motion. After a brief discussion and no objections, the minutes were approved with corrections by all members present with the amendment that Jason Keeler was not present.

- **Approval of February 2024-** Chris requested a motion for approval of the minutes for this meeting due to the lack of an in-person quorum. Jason moved for the approval of February’s minutes and Dr. Tiffany Johnson seconded the motion. After a brief discussion and no objections, the minutes were approved as written by all members present.

III. **Co-chair Report**

Director's Welcome:

- Beverly acknowledged appreciation to the committee's dedication to work cohesively towards the welfare of children and their families.
- Beverly also acknowledged and expressed gratitude to the fact that contracts have been received much earlier than anticipated.
- Chris mentioned that four out of the eight priorities from the CWAC FY24 will be addressed in today’s agenda.
- Funding
- Illinois Connect
- Employee Background Checks
- Permanency
- Chris also mentioned that he, Beverly, Glenda, and Kara will be meeting tomorrow to discuss structure surrounding openings within the committee and the identify key leaders within.
- Chris stated that the Finance and Administration committee has a current vacancy within the Marketing Committee.

- In consultation with the department, it was also mentioned that co-chairs Beverly and Chris asked Andy to step in for May 29th meeting on their behalf.

IV. Director's Remarks

- Director Mueller expressed gratitude to the fiscal team for working efficiently.
- She then stated that she was excited to be working with Kara as they reset, and fill vacancies.
- It was also mentioned that there are several boarding positions within child welfare.
- Reiterated that our goal is to make sure that our time, effort, and work is in the best interest of child welfare and to make their lives better.
- Spoke to the time that leadership has spent identifying core values and putting them into action.
- In closing, Director Mueller emphasized the importance of being intentional about the work we do, the standard we hold ourselves to and the manners in which we conduct ourselves.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Illinois Connect

- DCFS liaison Glenda Lashley opened this part of the meeting with an outreach update.
- The purpose of agency outreach is disclosed and listed as follows:
 - To obtain updated information to improve communication with partnering agencies.
 - To provide information to agency workers about upcoming events and opportunities.
 - To increase awareness of the Illinois Connect program and support agency workers.
- The data from recent outreach efforts were captured and presented.
 - 124 agencies have been Provided with surveys.

- 45 of these agencies have successfully completed their Survey. 79 agencies still have surveys that are outstanding.
- Resulting in 36% completion of surveys that have been distributed.
- A QR code of the Child Welfare Contributing/Private Agency Information survey was presented by Glenda.
- Meeting participants were encouraged to apply and share the survey with colleagues, committee members and other liaisons to help agencies confirm their contact information.
- James Daugherty- ISI Business Process Redesign
 - This business process is designed to incorporate technology to make the lives of employees more efficient by:
 - Defining the current need
 - Identifying strategies to improve.
 - 2723 opportunities to improve have been identified.
 - Developing a future state.
 - Identifying other solutions.

Policy Bot

- Currently focused SCR/DCP
- Pilot Usage Data- First two week
- Launched 2/15/2024.
 - 9 pilot users.
 - 66 questions asked.
 - 2 small permission issued fix.
 - Average of 8.2 seconds to respond.
 - DCP will be launched Statewide 6/15/2024.

Ally-IL

- Modern secure platform.
- Ease case management.
- New avenues for progress.
- Enables caseworkers to virtually connect with youth and alliances.
- Three dashboards to provide analysis on utilization significance.

- Will be launched statewide 6/3/2024.

Guardian Bot

- Impact from 8/24/2023-2/29/2024
 - 6828 consents were processed by PAC Bot. In the first six months.
 - A significant reduction in process time.
 - Faster and safer processing of medication for children in need.

II. Employee Background Check Update

Carla Holmes

- There is no current backlog in agencies and institutions.
- No issues with portal since the department's last report.
- 10 business days for applicants to appear in the portal.
- April Statistics for 718
 - 1087 applications were received.
 - 1004 applications were processed.
 - 110 applications were returned to the facility incomplete.
 - There were 19 notifications sent to facility representatives for recommendations.
 - Eight were sent to child welfare agencies.
 - Nine were sent to childcare institutions.
 - Two were sent to group homes.

III. FY 25 Budget

- Brian Turner opened this part of the meeting by stating that the budget has not changed for the upcoming fiscal year.
- Brian also mentioned that final adjustments are contingent upon current discussions with governor and general assembly.

Initial placement startup fund (Prepaid Cards)

- Benefits of the program, immediate availability of funds, convenience and minimizing barriers.
- Launched 5/1/2024.

- To improve financial resources for caregivers and provide seamless support to youth in care.
- Card value will be \$500.
- Attempts to bridge the potential financial gap between initial placement and receipt of first board payment.
- This card will be given to all in home caregivers to assist with the essential needs of children placed in their care (clothing, food, bedding, personal hygiene products, etc.)
- Assigned to every youth in care.
- Items will be required to stay with youth as they transition.
- Cards are currently stored at DCFS field offices.
- Completed CFS-906-9 form will be placed in the case file.
- 112 cards have been distributed within the last two weeks.
- It is anticipated that 85-90% of placements will receive cards through DCP.

IV. Announcements/Updates

- Fiscal Year (FY) 25 Contracts
 - Sydney opened this part of the meeting by stating that he and his team are working on mailing out contracts earlier this year.
 - One of the goals from this year was to speed up the contract process.
 - Sydney stated that he was adamant on ensuring that the current contract process was revamped.
 - Additionally, Sydney stated that an aggressive timeline was implemented that allows contracts to be mailed out up to five weeks sooner than normal.
 - As of today 30%, of the FY25 contracts have been distributed.
 - For the new few days, residential contracts (158) will be the departments focus.
 - 18 are expected to go out today.
 - The department is currently waiting on about 45 program plans and matching checklists from the residential contracts list.
 - Sydney also stated that by the end of May, the team anticipates that 90-95% of the contracts will be distributed.

- Sydney asks for cooperation in returning the contracts and all supporting documents to the contracts.
- The goal is to have 100% contract execution by June 30, 2024.

V. Public Comments

- Chris opens this part of the meeting up by inviting participants of the meeting that are not on the CWAC committee to ask questions or make comments based upon the information that was presented today.
- Kathy Grzelak stated she was curious as to why there was not a schedule for staff to get into foundation training, The current schedule is delaying the process of assigning caseloads.
 - Monico was not present to answer the question.
 - Jassen stated he will follow up with Monico on as it pertains to Kathy's question.
- On behalf of Latasha, Glenda stated the Monico and Latasha will be sending out the new schedule for the Work Force Development Committee.
- Chris stated that he was excited about being invited to participate in the Family First Prevention Services Act Conference in Champaign IL, on May 29-30, 2024.

VI. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:10 PM.