

**CWAC Racial Equity Meeting
Wednesday, January 22, 2025
Meeting Minutes**

Attendees: Dagené Brown, Jere Murry, Rhonda Thompson, Cady Landa, Lariza Fenner, Lourdes Rodriguez, Chandler Farris, Damaris Acevedo, Yeni Rojas, Paula Truitt-Alohan, Mareema Ali, April M. Curtis, Mari Christopherson, Wendy Ingersoll, Amanda (Last Name Unlisted)

FY2025 Charter Goals Discussion

The following initiatives have been identified as the FY25 Charter Goals:

- Expungement – Helping families with the process of removing “unfounded” listings from child welfare databases and systems.
- Pre-Petition Representation: Research regarding a process that can be used in Illinois.
- Father Engagement Initiative – strategize to examine which areas across the State are in need of more programs that engage fathers.

Co-Chair Updates:

- Implicit Bias Campaign
 - OREP received a draft of the video production that didn’t thoroughly convey the intended message, so OREP is awaiting a copy of the revised edits for the video.
- Allegation 60
 - No further work is needed from the CWAC RE Committee regarding Allegation 60. The proposal is currently being revised by the DCFS Legal team.
- RE Curriculum
 - University of Maryland’s SHARP (Structural Oppression, Historical Context Analysis of Role, Reciprocity, and Power) Framework has been identified to provide race equity training for the agency.
- Bias-Free Pilot Program
 - Pilot rollout was set for January. However, the automation process is currently being audited, therefore the rollout date is postponed until further notice.

Presentation:

Embracing Healing Centered Engagement to Advance Racial Equity in Child Welfare by April M. Curtis, Chief of Staff of Youth Guidance

- **Understanding Healing-Centered Engagement:**
 - Defining Healing-Centered Engagement: A strengths-based, holistic approach to well-being that focuses on restoring and uplifting rather than solely treating trauma.
 - Key Principles: Emphasizes cultural identity, community connection, empowerment, and acknowledging shared experiences.
- **Healing Centered Engagement vs. Trauma-Informed Care:**
 - Trauma-informed care focuses on identifying and addressing trauma with individual-level interventions and emphasizes triggers and harm.
 - Healing centered engagement focuses on holistic well-being and growth collective, community-centered approach and emphasizes the fostering of hope, agency and restoration.
 - Applying a racial equity lens to healing centered engagement looks like addressing racial disparities, promoting culturally responsive practices, advocating for organizational change that honors the culture of individuals as a collective community.

- **Decolonizing Therapy Principles Applied to Foster Care and Trauma Culture:**
 - Healing historical and intergenerational trauma by addressing trauma passed down within the culture of foster care and trauma survivors.
 - Reconnecting with cultural wisdom by embracing the shared knowledge and resilience with this cultural community.
 - Challenging systems of oppression by recognizing and controlling societal structures that marginalize this culture.
 - Fostering community and collective care by building support systems that honor cultural identity of foster care and trauma experiences.
- **Practical Strategies for Implementation**
 - Staff training and coaching
 - Holistic assessment tools
 - Peer support and healing circles
 - Policy revision

Public Comments

- Yeni Rojas: Intact Family Services is having the Safe Soft Launch Coaching Session for Cook, Northern, Southern, and Central regions. This is a required coaching session for the Safe Model practices. This round of coaching sessions is for intact supervisors and administrators only. More information, including the exact dates, is available on the DNet.

Updates

- The FY2025 Charter Goals:



CWAC RE Practice
Charter FY25.docx

FY2024 HB2914:



FY2024 HB2914
Disproportionality R

Next Steps

- DB will send the RDI report for the 2024 HB2914 to the CWAC RE Committee.
- DB will get data to support FY2025 Charter Goals pertaining to expungement and Allegation 51.

Next Meeting: Tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, March 19, 2025 @ 10:00 AM.