

CWAC RACIAL EQUITY MEETING MINUTES

Department of Children & Family Services
CWAC Racial Equity

Date of Meeting:	03/29/2023	Time:	10am – 11:30am
Meeting Facilitator:	Dagené Brown	Location:	WebEx

1. Attendees

Name(s)			
Dagené Brown (Co-chair)	Dr. Charles Montorio-Archer	LeVonda Harris	Prestina Singleton
Jasmine Mobley (Co-chair)	Damaris Acevedo	Lourdes Rodriguez	Ryan Goodwin
Ashley Deckert	Daniel Fitzgerald	Lyman Letgers	Dr. Alvin Tillery, Keynote Speaker
Beatriz Valdez	Jere Murry	Mari Christopherson	
Chandler Mattison-Farris	LaTasha Roberson-Guifarro	Paula Truitt-Alohan	

2. Meeting Objective/Agenda

CWAC RE Meeting

3. Attachments & Handouts

Description	Prepared by
 RE Agenda 03292023.docx	Dagené Brown
SharePoint Link to meeting: https://il.gov-my.sharepoint.com/:v/r/personal/levonda_harris_illinois_gov/Documents/Recordings/CWAC%20Racial%20Equity%20Committee%20Meeting%20w_%20Guest%20Speaker%20Dr.%20Alvin%20Tillery-20230329_094353-Meeting%20Recording.mp4?csf=1&web=1&e=W6twNQ	Dagené Brown
 CWAC Systemic Racism Presentation .j	Dr. Alvin Tillery

4. Meeting Summary & Minutes

1. Welcome

- a. Roll call was completed via the WebEx chat box and participant list.
- b. Approval of minutes for January 2023 was achieved after reaching quorum after the presentation. The motion to approve the identified minutes was made by Dagené. Motion moved by Dagené; motion seconded by Prestina; no abstentions; all in favor. Motion carries.

2. "Systemic Racism" Presentation, Dr. Alvin Tillery, Northwestern University

- a. Dagené opened this portion of the meeting with a kind introduction of today's keynote speaker. Dr. Tillery followed Dagené's preliminary introduction with a supplementary introduction to include his background and achievements. Dr. Tillery thanked Dagené as well as the group for their time. Dr. Tillery shared that he would speak for approximately twenty-five minutes in two short modules. The first module will focus on key terms and concepts, and the second module will focus on important facts about racial inequality in America that are often omitted in politicized conversations.
- b. Dr. Tillery opened the discussion with key terms and concepts that individuals should be familiar with when discussing systemic racism. In this first module focused on defining racism and race formation, he verbally illustrated the usage of racial stereotypes within popular media to show that all those ideas are formed at the level of culture and at the level of government as well as enforced at the level of government. Dr. Tillery visually and verbally showed how the construction of race was developed. He took a historical look at how skin color was hierarchized and defined in the building phases of America as well as across the Europe that has continued to impact ideals today. Race forming and racial hierarchies are systems of societal stratification that assigns social status and or citizenship rights based on the view that some races and ethnicities are superior to others and subsequently treated as separate species. Even some whites were deemed inferior to Anglo-Americans. Dr. Tillery spoke on the fact of Thomas Jefferson was explicit in his notes on blacks and whites being separate species and could not own their own bodies yet at the same time fathered biracial children; subsequently reminding the group that a separate species was defined as not being able to have offspring with another species.
- c. Dr. Tillery moved into the second module of the presentation which focused on key facts of racial inequality in America. He shared the visual legacy of racism that included historical propaganda within its one hundred and eighty plus years as a racial dictatorship. He reminded the group that America's founding fathers held racist ideals, implemented racial hierarchies, and implemented a pro-slavery constitution. He shared a timeline which showed from the inception of the constitution and up until modern time today which covered racial laws implemented in America. Dr. Tillery briefly discussed critical race theory, CRT. He explained the basis of CRT and provided an in-depth breakdown of its meaning. He furthered the module on key facts by giving overviews and defining language of immigration and naturalization laws as well as such laws as the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act. These laws broke up the racial dictatorship and moved America towards a racial democracy but still required active work by those impacted to put systems in place for those disadvantaged by the systems. He defined racial equity as removing barriers, system transformation, and racial healing; RE work is the development of fair practices to promote a positive equality between different racial groups. He showed disparities in income between blacks and whites was a distribution of incomes via government subsidies which exploded inequalities between those same groups. Dr. Tillery shared data that explained how the G.I. bill also exploded inequalities between blacks and whites as the military was segregated at the time of the introduction of the G.I. bill. He shared visual evidence to support his claims. This bill also generated new forms of segregation and racist exclusions such as the hyper-policing of suburban areas in America which was meant to keep black people out of those areas. Banks also engaged in exclusionary acts under the G.I. bill. The G.I. bill created zones of inequality via outsourcing jobs from urban areas. Dr. Tillery stated in closing the infusion of resources never seem to come up in America.
- d. Dagené thanked Dr. Tillery for his presentation which opened the floor to questions and answers. Lourdes shared comments of how the presentation provided knowledge and understanding of racism and wishes this historical content could be shared with individuals within and around DCFS as reference points. Dr. Tillery replied to inform that he does a similar presentation to today's presentation for the Latino community which details how the migrant children are deemed expendable, and the annexation of Texas was when the southern slave holders did not want the mixing of races and instituted similar Jim Crow laws. Dr. Tillery closed the response with additional facts on the treatment of Mexicans by the American government.
- e. Daniel thanked Dr. Tillery for the knowledge and understanding before asking what the solutions as leaders in child welfare are. Dr. Tillery responded to Daniel's question with his perspective that we shouldn't expect children or adults in their lives to be superheroes; some will be superheroes and beat these structures in place, but most will not beat the structures or barriers in place. He also detailed that we demand more of our politicians to consider the structuralist thinking. Dr. Tillery reminded the group that what he said today is now illegal in many states, and we should be pushing back against this and advocate for system change. Additional solutions included becoming smarter about spending; invest in communities by influx of mass distribution of resources to decrease poverty. Daniel followed Dr. Tillery's comments to share his agreeance with Dr. Tillery's solutions. Dr. Tillery stated that Governor Pritzker understands this concept but is wrapped up in a party structure that is against him, so we need to stop voting those types of people into office who fight against change.

- f. Dagené thanked Dr. Tillery for joining appreciatively and shared with the group her thoughts on how the G.I. bill negatively impacted the black community. shared that one of the key reasons she asked Dr. Tillery to present was because he lays out very basic things for us to understand as it pertains to how we got here and in the work that we need to do to keep it moving. Dr. Tillery closed with sharing his thoughts on the racial equity efforts of banks such as JP Morgan and Bank of America for Black, Latinx, and Asian populations; they are aware that they will get benefits back by investing now.
 - g. Additional comments were brought forth by the group. Jere shared how the idea of resources resonated and concerned if the family advocate centers, FAC's, are still available to the communities and has hopes to bring it to the Director's attention. Dagené let all know that FAC's are still open, and but it's how the FAC's are utilized which were primarily built to service the community but the political arena has impacted FACs' greatly. Ashley supported Jere's comments and shared interest in leveraging family first funds to better support and assist FAC's via the possibility to utilize Title 4E reimbursements. Ashley adds hopes that critical race theory, CRT, could be available across the state to both DCFS and POS casework staff as it frames things differently. Lourdes added to echo Jere's comments of resources such as available resources and the location of the available resources which segway into the next portion of the meeting, Children360 update.
3. Co-Chair Update
- a. CCWIS – Children360: Dagené shared with the group background on the development of Children360 during the CCWIS build and provided an in-depth, live demonstration of the Children360 dashboard which shows available resources and where they are in communities statewide which is meant to minimize system entry of children in care. LaTasha shared details of how cases come in for neglect are around poverty and the lack of resources, and Children360 was designed to counter and address those issues. Dagené supported LaTasha's comments and gave thoughts of Children360 being the missing, needed component. Beatriz posed the question of the timeframe of the rollout of the Children360 dashboard to which Dagené responded that the dashboard is live now to internal users only and should be more widely available in the future. Prestina shares a concern of the quality of service available to our youth and families in Cook County to which Dagené responded that is always the concern in her opinion as we look at all resources and, those concerns are taken into consideration. Paula shared comments of addressing poverty via coming together as a collective and bridging the gaps of how we integrate services in child welfare issues through to systemic racism in building transformation at the institutional level. LaTasha followed Paula's comments to share that Children360 does not show quality of services as many other tools do not show this as well and subsequently does not include feedback from the community. Ashley contributed via inquiring if the Department can start thinking through and advancing the next steps around ensuring service accessibility in those areas to which Dagené responded that she is having those conversations in meetings on how we help ourselves help our children and encouraged the group to utilize the Office and the tools available as a resource.
4. Workgroup Updates
- a. Anti-Racism and Equity Assessment: This update was tabled until the next meeting due to lack of time considering today's guest speaker and presentation.
 - b. Race Equity Toolkit: This update was also tabled until the next meeting due to lack of time considering today's guest speaker and presentation.
5. Public Comments
- a. There were no public comments for the record.
6. Adjournment
- a. Adjournment and a wealth of gratitude were provided by Dagené. Dagené informed the group of wishes to move to an in-person meeting for May to which Lyman has agreed to sponsor. Details are forthcoming.

5. Action Items			
Item	Owner	Deadline	Follow Up
Share Dr. Tillery's PowerPoint presentation with CWAC RE members	LeVonda Harris	After meeting	NA

6. Next Meeting (if applicable)					
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