



JB Pritzker, Governor
Marc D. Smith, Director

November, 2023

Meet Damaris Acevedo



I am deeply honored, humbled and incredibly excited to begin this journey as chair elect of the DCFS Latino Advisory Council! I am observing, listening and learning so that I can continue the council's mission of representing and advocating on behalf of the Latino children and families that we serve. I am grateful to those who came before me. They demonstrated that real change can be made through intentional commitment to action. I recognize that we have an enormous

responsibility and opportunity to lead the way for generations to come. In the spirit of those that came before us we will develop strategies to effect positive changes in Illinois' child welfare system. Together we will raise collective awareness and overcome barriers.

This council will be instrumental in advising the incoming DCFS director on issues affecting the Latino families we serve, our workers and Child Welfare Contributing Agencies (CWCA). I encourage you to share your talents with us by joining the Latino Advisory Council.

Damaris Acevedo
Director of Child Welfare
Association House of Chicago

The most helpful advice I can give to staff is:

"If you are going to do it, do it right. You must have a passion for it. Don't do it if your heart is not in it."

"You must find your own way of organizing yourself. Find an organization tool that works for you. I buy planners. I have a personal planner for the kids and one for work. I recently downgraded from three planners to two planners."

"Remember, it's a profession. Despite our years of experience we have to be willing to roll up our sleeves and get in there. Doing a visit should never be beneath anyone."

From the editor's desk



I hope that when you read this newsletter, it is because you are attending our first in-person Latino Family Institute since 2019. Everyone at the DCFS Latino Advisory Council is so excited to gather in person. The planning committee has worked hard to make the event a success.

This *Noticias* issue is the last that I will be editing. I would like to thank Maria Calderon, Sylvia Fonseca and Carol Klein who first taught me about this newsletter business and Evelyn Martinez who filled in for me while I was on break from the Latino Advisory Council. There have been so many contributors through the years that it would be impossible to thank everyone.

Noticias will continue long after I have gone to keep you informed as you

continue to grow as Latino service providers.

Julia Monzón
DCFS, Statewide Family Advocacy
Manager

Meet Jennifer Contreras



Jennifer Contreras was a member of the Latino Advisory Council for several years and served as chairperson for two months before leaving

National Youth Advocate Program to begin a new position at another nonprofit community agency.

"I began my child welfare career 15 years ago in the private sector and I am pleased to say that I continue to serve our DCFS population in this area. 85% of our children in care receive case management services

from community-based partners, and through these contractual connections, DCFS families receive trauma-based specialized support services," said Jennifer.

Jennifer holds a bachelor's degree in international relations with a minor in Spanish from Loyola University of Chicago. She believes her desire to learn about different cultures, politics and languages, along with her networking skills and ability to collaborate with community leaders, positioned her to serve one of our most vulnerable populations: children and their families. Jennifer has assisted families reach permanency through reunification, adoption and

guardianship and helped adolescent youth successfully gain their independence. She works diligently to help families and youth find stable housing, connect them to employment opportunities and obtain clothing, transportation and food.

Jennifer is social worker at heart and she remains committed to the values exemplified by the National Association of Social Work by promoting social justice, social change, being an advocate, recognizing and developing human relationships, challenging social injustice and encouraging respectful diversity.



ILLINOIS DCFS LATINO ADVISORY COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT

The Latino Advisory Council represents and advocates on behalf of the Latino children and families that the department serves by advising the director, shaping culturally competent child welfare policies and promoting social work's core value of social justice.

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Child Safety, Risk Reduction and
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Child Welfare Contributing Agencies
(CWCA) Collaboration
Data Analysis, Disproportionality
and Staffing
Latino Family Institute Day
Latino Professional Development Day
Strategic Communications

For membership information
contact Council Chairperson
Damaris Acevedo at
damaris.acevedo@illinois.gov.

DCFS Memorandum of Understanding with the Mexican Consulate in Illinois for minors in the custody or guardianship of the department

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Children and Family Services and the Consulate General of Mexico requires DCFS to notify the Mexican Consulate of Mexican or Mexican American minors being taken into protective custody by the department. To comply with this requirement, DCFS child protection and child welfare and Child Welfare Contributing Agency (CWCA) workers are to notify the DCFS Office of Latino Services which is responsible for notifying the Mexican Consulate's Protection Office.

At the beginning of an investigation, child protection workers will distribute the pamphlet (*CFS 1050-26*), titled *Guide for Parents who are Mexican Nationals*, to all Hispanic subjects of reports. This pamphlet is also available in *Spanish*. DCFS and CWCA child protection workers and permanency workers are required to notify the



Office of Latino Services within five working days of the following:

- Taking protective custody of a Mexican or Mexican American minor(s).
- Identifying a child(ren) for whom the department is legally responsible as having Mexican ancestry.
- Receiving a request from the parent or custodian of a Mexican or Mexican American minor to notify the Mexican consulate.
- Learning that a non-custodial parent lives in Mexico.

For the department to notify the Mexican Consulate of a child(ren) of Mexican ancestry, the child protective services worker or the permanency worker must obtain the written consent of the parent(s) or custodians using the *CFS 600-3 Consent for the Release of Information*. If the parent(s) or custodian(s) refuse to sign the consent, the worker shall document the refusal in the space provided on the *CFS 1000-6*.

While information cannot be released to the Mexican Consulate without the consent of the parent or custodian, workers are still required to submit the *CFS 1000-6* to the DCFS Office of Latino Services by fax at 312-808-5134. If you have questions please contact Latino Services at 312-485-4922 or email Jose.J.Lopez@illinois.gov.

Please refer to *POLICY GUIDE 2020.13* for more detailed information.

Service milestones *(May 2022 thru May 2023)*



5 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Ariana Acevedo, Aurora
- Rebecca Acevedo, Bourbonnais
- Susan Pinto, Chicago
- Aracely Tirado, Chicago
- Rebecca Garduno, Deerfield
- Jessica Del Toro, Deerfield
- Areli Santiago, Elgin
- Yvonne Cardenas-Martinez, Naperville
- Grisel Solis, Naperville

- Sarah Farias, Springfield
- Ariel Frias, Springfield
- Linda Hernandez, Springfield
- Madison Parada, Urbana
- Ruth Mejias, Waukegan
- Alejandro Valdez, Waukegan

10 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Marisol Rubio, Chicago
- Yolanda Gomez, Springfield

15 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Benny Barraza, DeKalb
- Richard De La Haza, MD, Deerfield

25 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Joan Pegues, Peoria

30 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Julia Monzón, Chicago
- Isabel Rodríguez, Chicago

What's going on with the Cook Intact Team?

The Cook Child Family Team Meeting Pilot Project started in July 2021 with the collaboration of the Capacity Building Centers for States team. There have been ongoing working groups involving Cook intact family services teams from DCFS and Child Welfare Contributing Agencies (CWCA). Today there are 29 teams and 14 agencies involved in the Cook Child Family Team Meeting (CFTM) Pilot Project.

What are the three CFTM Pilot Project interventions?

1. Increase engagement through the enhanced implementation of child and family team meetings.
2. Align the CFTM policy and procedures with practice, messaging, evaluation and workforce.
3. Develop strategies to increase and enhance the use of CFTMs with intact family cases.

What is the Theory of Change?

The Theory of Change is the practice of Child Family Team Meetings (CFTM) using the Illinois Core Practice Model, supporting family preservation and inviting supportive family members, friends and community partners to participate in their CFTM team. Families are provided with an opportunity to identify their strengths, needs, challenges and alternative solutions as they determine their overall outcomes.

By fully implementing the Illinois Core Practice Model with the Child Family Team Meeting model, Cook intact family teams are supporting:

- Family engagement.
- The protection of children.
- Permanency.
- Stability.
- Relationship building.
- Educating families.
- Identifying needs.
- Implementing a change management process with families that will improve outcomes.



NOTICIAS is brought to you by the Illinois Department of Children and Family

Services and the Latino Advisory Council. It is distributed to DCFS employees, Child Welfare Contributing Agencies (CWCAs) and agencies affiliated with DCFS. The newsletter includes articles pertinent to child welfare and Latino welfare issues and DCFS/CWCA programs and strives to be an informative source for staff by providing updates on new child welfare initiatives as well as upcoming events.

Latino Advisory Council Strategic Communication Committee members:

Julia Camacho Monzón, chairperson; chief editor

Contributing writers and editors:

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If you would like more information or to participate in one of the Latino Advisory Council committees, please contact Latino Advisory Council Chairperson Damaris Acevedo (damaris.acevedo@illinois.gov) or any council member.

Special thanks to:

Daniel L. Fitzgerald, Chief Diversity Officer, DCFS Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

José J. López, Chief, DCFS Office of Latino Services

Office of Communications:

Bert Tijerina, graphic designer

Jen Florent, Public Information Officer III

Deborah Lopez,
Associate Deputy Director

Cook CFTM Pilot Project governance structure:

- Quarterly executive meetings.
- Implementation team meetings.
- Workgroup meetings (communications, evaluation, coaching, partner engagement and summit planning for July 2023).
- In person and quarterly supervisory meetings and coaching.
- Meetings with supervisors (every other month virtually and in-person quarterly).

Cook CFTM documents:

- Parent surveys (English and Spanish).
- CFTM informational flyer (English, Spanish and Polish).
- CFTM Six Elements tip sheet (Planning, Facilitating, Engaging CFTM, Record review, Follow up, Meeting guide).
- CFTM documentation template.
- CFTM documentation tip sheet.
- IFS-quality contact tips.
- CFTM Posters (English and Spanish)

