

State Advisory Council Meeting

July 21, 2022 – Great Northern Hotel - 11am-2pm

Members Present: Rochelle Beley (Chair), Wayne Phillips, Trudi Schmidt, Dana Toole, Ken Holmlund, Lesa Evers, Carrie Krepps, Bonnie Bear Don't Walk, Julie Burk, Valerie Winfield

CFSD Representatives Present: Nikki Grossberg, Jennifer Blodgett, Theresa Becker, Deb Cole, Laura McCullough, Sahrita Jones-Jessee, Jennifer Hoerhauf, Effie Benoit, Brandi Loch

Absent: Eric Barnosky, Mick Leary, Courtney Callaghan,

Guest: Brandi Loch attended in place of Mick Leary

11:00-11:10am **Welcome, Introductions and Approve Minutes**

Everyone introduced themselves. Rochelle Beley will take over as chairman.

11:10-11:20am **Approve Minutes**

Motion to approve and second for minutes approved

11:20-12:00pm **Honoring of Council Members – Nikki Grossberg and Council**

Nikki made mention of the members and to honor them. She asked Wayne Phillips and Trudi Schmidt to share their experiences. If anyone has prospective members in mind, please contact Nikki.

12:30-12:50pm **Budget – Effie Benoit**

Effie gave her Financial Summary Report presentations.

Children in Care

- 3/31/2022: 2,942
- 6/30/2022: 2,825
- Variance: -117
- Percent Change: -3.98%

Average Children in Care

- SFY 2021 (*as of June 30, 2021*): 3,376
- SFY 2022 (*as of June 30, 2022*): 3,045
- Variance: -331
- Percent Change: -9.80%

IV-E Saturation Rate

- 3/31/2022: 30.23%
- 6/30/2022: 32.04%
- Variance: 1.81%

Effie gave her Financial Summary Report on Funding Foster Care, Adoption, Guardianship, Vacancy Report and CFSD Financial Information.

Vacancy Report

	October 2021	December 2021	March 2022	June 2022
ALL Positions	38	57	68	58
CPS Workers	23	34	40	39
CPS Supervisors	1	2	5	3
CI Workers	3	5	7	4
CI Supervisors	0	0	0	0

Nikki reviewed how programs were developed.

Ken asked why there is such a high turnover of employees. Wages and low applicants is the main reason for high turnover. Wages in each location is the same. Cost of living is astronomical and location should be considered.

Carrie Kepps has concerns on the housing issue and how it affects each location. Wayne Phillips said cost of living and child care costs affect housing. If Montana does not use monies for cost of living it goes back to some other state.

Effie reviewed funds on CARES Act, CAA 2021, ARPA and CRSAA. CAPTA is receiving funding for forensic training across the state. ARPA has until 2025 to spend their monies.

Nikki discussed how members could reach out to the Regional councils. There are eight regional councils across the state to increase participation.

Stakeholder engagement Round 4 has started and will end in 2025.

Nikki reviewed the material from the Capacity Building Center flyer about States and Round 4.

Deb Cole asked questions of Nikki about Children's Bureau.

Nikki asked if there were any questions. Nikki will send out emails on process.

Nikki asked that an email be sent to all regions on who the new person is for the fair hearing requests.

LUNCH 12:00

12:30-1:30pm **Bylaws, CAPTA and CJA – Nikki Grossberg/Brandi Loch**
Continuous Quality Improvement
Regional Advisory Boards

Brandi Loch explained the CAPTA program to the members. The attorney for Children and Trust has been vacant for some time and has finally been appointed. Nikki will be reaching out over the next few months to get more people on board and how positions can get filled.

Nikki pointed out that CJA is due in 2023.

Brandi reviewed grants and will keep everyone updated about the funds.

REGION REPORT OUTS

Sahrita Jones-Jessee – Great Falls, Havre, Cutbank area

Great Falls - internal

- The second welfare manager hired.
- Five vacancies of CPS in Great Falls.
- CPS employees received pay increase.
- Conrad office – 1 opening

Jennifer Hoerhauf

- Facing many vacancies – 5 in Butte, Bozeman, 1 Soc Serv Technician. People leaving was due to wage.

Jennifer Blodgett –

- New child welfare manager
- Moving permanencies through the system
- Many vacancies
- There will be interviews this week with some last week
- There are no Social Service Technicians in area
- Overall, the staff is stable
- Every other week there is court

Theresa – Licensing

- Licensing section is stable
- Working closely with everyone.
- The Parent Advisory Board consists of Kyla, Brandi and Theresa
- The goal is to improve and change licensing procedures

Deb Cole – Billings, Red Lodge, Joliet, Lewistown area

- Working on permanency plan to find where the issues are coming from
- Trying to figure out problem areas and barriers
- Steady decrease of removals
- Focusing on having the right kids in care.
- One intake position is vacant
- One supervisor position is vacant in Lewistown area
- Regional Advisory Board meets twice a year
- All staff meeting first of each month

Laura McCullough – Centralized Intake

- Ongoing training
- Pediatrician comes in to help with questions and concerns
- There are five applicants for the Centralized Intake Supervisor position
- Helena office – one thing missing is licensing issues which affects permanency
- New deputy country attorney hired
- New attorney general hired
- Permanency plan team meetings

Julie Burk reviewed what is happening in her area

- Will have tribal members talk to stakeholders
- October training
- March training on ICWA

Dana Toole wanted to mention that DOJ has a missing persons analysis. DOJ gets monthly missing person list and checks names in MFSIS to see if it has been closed or if they are still missing. They do find children who have been missing. They receive a report of all law enforcement or CPS staff. There are 350 calls per year on the Systematic Reports. First one was just done in June which reviewed child fatalities to date and reports that have been completed.

Carrie Krepps –

- Finding ways to increase salaries to retain people.
- Nikki discussed Medicaid rate issues.

Lesia Evers would like to see native kids in care information and what is being done for them. ICWA training is important.

Bonnie Bear Don't Walk gave background on her program with Family Bear Ties

Trudi Schmidt asked about OPI process. Brandi Loch gave background info.

There was no public comment available.

1:45-1:50pm **Wrap Up/Next Meeting: Nikki Grossberg**

Nikki wrapped up the meeting by asking members to email her if they feel meetings should be hybrid or in person. Adjourned at 1:50pm