



**FINAL**

DHS Children, Adults and Families  
Child Welfare Advisory Committee  
**Future Issues Work Group**  
August 5, 2009

Attending: Janet Arenz, Mike Balter, Benjamin Hazelton

Guest: Ann Witsil, Kinship House Executive Director

Minutes by Pam Pearson

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The 6/10/09 FIWG minutes were approved.

## **PREPARE DRAFT CWAC WORK PLAN**

FIWG's primary task today is to draft a CWAC work plan to present to the full committee on 9/9/09. The discussion with CWAC will be prefaced by asking:

How does this work plan improve our skills/function to analyze, influence and promote solutions for CWAC's four priorities?

- ▶ Identifying strategies to reduce over-representation of children of color in the child welfare system.
- ▶ Preventing foster care placement.
- ▶ Assuring that children placed in foster care are safe and are thriving.
- ▶ Providing permanency for children placed in foster care in a timely manner.

Originally, the four priorities were listed in the order: prevention, safety, permanency and over-representation. FIWG recommends moving the over-representation priority to be listed first, not necessarily as a statement of priority, but to reflect the life of a case.

The work plan will help harness the energy and activities of CWAC and keep our momentum moving forward. During the July retreat four work plan goals were developed. FIWG further refined the goals, developed an objective and suggested strategies for each goal. CWAC will have an opportunity to continue to refine them during their 9/9/09 meeting. Small groups of CWAC members may be formed following the September meeting to deliver specific actions or strategies. DHS staff are likely to be the ones who can identify data and target dates to measure the objectives, as well as names of staff leads and time frames for the strategies.

The goals are meant to improve the operations of CWAC to make it better able to influence CAF policy decisions that will achieve CWAC's four priorities. When CWAC is asked to look at policies, etc. this work plan will help the committee consider how those policies will support the four CWAC priorities.

**Goal 1: Improving communication and collaboration on key initiatives designed to safely reduce foster care.**

**Objective: CWAC will enhance its understanding of the Child Welfare Equity Task Force (CWETF) and the Casey Partnership as they relate to a reduction of foster care and a reduction of over-representation of children of color in the child welfare system.**

**Strategies:**

- 1A: CWAC will receive training regarding the institutional impacts of racism.
- 1B: CWAC will offer itself as a focus group for CWETF.
- 1C: Clarify the role of CWAC members who serve on these other committees.
- 1D: Review planning documents for Casey and CWETF to determine opportunities for meaningful dialogue.
- 1E: CWAC will review common core documents related to research in safe reduction of foster care, with an emphasis on reducing disproportionality.

Even though other opportunities and initiatives exist, such as DHS Transformation, Workload Staffing, and Rule Advisory Committees; Goal 1 will focus on CWETF and the Casey Partnership. For 1E, CWAC agendas could include time for "book reports" for members to share knowledge gained from literature.

**Goal 2: Engaging persons who are under-represented on CWAC.**

**Objective: CWAC will better represent the diversity of stakeholders in child welfare.**

**Strategies:**

- 2A: Re-engage the ICWA Advisory Committee.
- 2B: Inventory the diversity of the existing committee.
- 2C: Targeted recruitment to persons who are under-represented on the

CWAC.

- 2D: Encourage non-member participation in CWAC meetings.
- 2E: Identify additional strategies of expanding our conversation such as inviting and welcoming guests to the meeting.

FIWG recognizes that the CWAC membership is limited by statute to 21 members. If someone is added, a current member would have to be subtracted. However, there is a need to reach out to members who are not attending. As vacancies occur, recruitment can be targeted toward under-represented populations so as to be more inclusive in the membership. Diversity of membership can also mean having members who are knowledgeable in prevention, safety, permanency and reducing over-representation of children of color. This will enable CWAC to advise CAF from the diverse points of view of its members.

**Goal 3: Closing the gap between state and local efforts**

**Objective: The state CWAC and local CWACs (regardless of committee name) will have a better understanding and appreciation regarding each other's efforts and how they may best support each other's work.**

**Strategies:**

- 3A: Create a directory of key, local contacts of committees who are the "dependency experts."
- 3B: Encourage member attendance at local meetings in months that CWAC is not scheduled to meet.
- 3C: Promote and support local CWAC initiatives.

During the CWAC July retreat, Goal 3 was stated as "Moving from passive to active-voice for children." During the retreat, some members were in favor of CWAC carrying the DHS message and others did not see that as a role for CWAC. FIWG recommends tabling that goal for future consideration. FIWG determined that the original Goal 2 could be split in two, with one to engage persons who are under-represented on CWAC and the other to close the gap between state and local efforts.

The first step towards meeting Goal 3 should be to create a directory of key, local contacts. In some counties, that is the multi-disciplinary teams. Other counties use

the model courts or have a separate local child welfare advisory committee. It would be the group seen as the driver of dependency issues in each community.

For 3B, FIWG sees CWAC members doing outreach and attending local meetings individually. CWAC members that are on FIWG or serve on the CWETF or Casey Partnership committees could consider themselves exempt from this strategy.

**Goal 4: Compare the consistency between the Oregon Safety Model (OSM) and CWAC's four priorities.**

**Objective: Evaluate the core concepts of the OSM against the four priorities of CWAC.**

**Strategies:**

- 4A: Empanel a subcommittee to research the compatibility of the OSM and CWAC priorities.
- 4B: Subcommittee leads discussions with the full membership at regular intervals over the next year.

A small group of CWAC members will be needed to develop the specific steps in this strategy. The work of the Teen Issues in Child Welfare Subcommittee illustrated the challenge of getting data that will answer the questions we have. CWAC had recommended the CWAC chair receive updates on the data set prepared for the subcommittee every six months to see if there has been any change in access to DHS child welfare services for teens after the OSM was implemented. A six-month update is being prepared at this time and will be sent to Interim Chair Benjamin Hazelton soon.

**UPDATE LIST OF ISSUES**

FIWG reviewed the ongoing list of issues. Issues that have been resolved or are now part of the CWAC work plan will be moved to the list of completed issues.

A summary of completed issues will be prepared and shared with CWAC as part of the introduction to the draft work plan. Mike Balter offered to provide a poster of CWAC's four priorities that can be displayed at all CWAC meetings.

For the retreat, Benjamin had prepared a document summarizing CWAC's major recommendations over the past few years. It is duplicated here in the following table. It recognized the progress and work done by CWAC. It was suggested that copies of this list and the documents it refers to be available at CWAC meetings for members reference.

<b>Principles</b>	<b>Letter 3/07</b>	<b>Letter 4/08</b>
Balance prevention and intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevent children from entering care</li> <li>• Ensure that children exit care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevent placement</li> <li>• Timely permanency</li> </ul>
Resist impulsive solutions		
System change = resource discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face contact</li> </ul>	
All children are served as individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy and nurtured in care</li> <li>• Reduce over-representation</li> </ul>
Preservation of parental and family relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely permanency</li> <li>• Reduce over-representation</li> </ul>
Integrated service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely permanency</li> <li>• Reduce over-representation</li> </ul>

### **PLANNING FOR SEPTEMBER CWAC AGENDA**

Benjamin Hazelton will contact Erinn Kelley-Siel to build the September CWAC agenda. FIWG recommends Erinn's Assistant Director's report include updates on:

- Legislature
- Impact of furloughs
- Update on agency organizational structure
- Update from Kory Murphy on CWETF.

Meeting adjourned.