

**Family Services Review Commission Meeting
December 7, 2006
HSB-252**

Members present: Doreen Binder, Jessica Chanay, Diane Cohen-Alpert, Shirley Kaping, Peggy Kennerly, Rosemary Lazzari (by phone), Rob Potter, Angela Sanchez, and Michael Ware

Members excused: Maggie Bagon, Kim Freeman, Miranda Herrera

Members absent: Bonnie Davidson

DHS staff present: Mickey Serice, Jim Neely, Vic Todd, Dave Lyda, Lori Nelson, and Nancy Sathrum

Administrative Handouts, sent via email prior to the meeting: Meeting Agenda, Draft Minutes of the October 6, 2006 FSRC Meeting, Draft Minutes of the November 22, 2006 Policy Committee Meeting, DHS Summary of Complaints Report for October 2006, Draft TANF Legislative Concept 722

Administrative Handouts at meeting: FSRC Member Roster, Draft Minutes of the October 6, 2006 FSRC Meeting, Draft Minutes of the November 22, 2006 Policy Committee Meeting, 2007 FSRC Meeting Schedule, DHS Summary of Complaints Report for October 2006, Draft TANF Legislative Concept 722, and 2-page TANF highlights of 2007-09 Governor's Recommended Budget

Greeting and Roll Call:

- Meeting was called to order at 8:45 a.m.
- Bonnie Johnson has resigned from FSRC. She did an outstanding job while on the commission. Ramona sent a letter thanking Bonnie for her work for FSRC.
- Email has been sent to Bonnie Davidson regarding her FSRC status.
- Other membership issues were discussed. Representation from around the state is needed.
- Expense policy: Rob will review statutes and work on the FSRC Operation Procedures for discussion at our next meeting.
- Use of VCON equipment was discussed. Peggy will arrange to attend the meeting via VCON from Roseburg. Rosemary plans to attend the January meeting in person.
ACTION: VCON equipment is reserved for all 2007 FSRC meetings in the Human Services Building. Peggy reserved equipment in the Roseburg office for the January meeting.
- 2007 FSRC meeting schedule included in packet. HSB-252 is reserved all day to accommodate committee meetings in the afternoon. The Policy committee will meet from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. after the January FSRC meeting.

Chair Report:

- Action and follow-up items: Reviewed action items from the October 5th meeting minutes.

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- Grievances: The Governor's office is getting involved in some of the complaints. Concerns were expressed about large districts with no complaints reported. Please report to Jim, or call the District Manager, if complaint forms aren't in your local offices. Further discussion tabled until Lori Nelson joined meeting.
 - ACTION from October meeting: Status of Visual Chart: Jim has recently received the first draft of the grievance process flow chart that is being developed.
- Approval of Minutes:
 - October 5, 2006 FSRC meeting minutes – motion to approve by Michael Ware, seconded by Shirley Kaping, unanimous vote in favor.
 - November 22, 2006 Policy Committee meeting minutes – motion to approve by Michael Ware, seconded by Shirley Kaping, unanimous vote in favor.
- Commission membership – brief status update.
- Expense Policy – Tabled to the January meeting

DHS Director's Report, Dr. Bruce Goldberg:

Neither Dr. Goldberg nor Clyde Saiki was available for today's meeting. Jim gave a brief update on the release of the Governor's Recommended Budget. All things considered, the budget is very good for DHS. The Governor has taken the opportunity to make significant investments in policy option packages to serve children and families. Further review/discussion will be needed as more detailed information is released.

ACTION: Send link to governor's website. (Sent by Nancy on 12/12/06)

- Next steps for budget – The Legislature convenes January 8th. Typically, the Legislature begins budget hearings in April or May. If you are interested in having discussions with legislators, February or early March may work best.
- Vic and Dave will supply additional information regarding the overall TANF budget as they have not received final confirmation of this budget.

CAF Report, Ramona Foley, Mickey Serice and Jim Neely:

Mickey gave a brief overview of the legislative process. The original TANF Legislative Concept (LC 722) will be introduced as Legislative Counsel did not have sufficient time to work on our suggested edits. Amendments will be submitted early for work during session. DHS began lobbying months ago to educate legislators on our need to pass a TANF concept this session.

ACTION – Mickey: Rob requested updates as committee assignments are made so FSRC members know who to contact on LC 722. Nancy will forward to FSRC as assignments are made. (Sent electronically by Nancy on 12/18/06.)

TANF Reauthorization

- **Discuss status of new TANF regulations and DHS policy**

Proof of citizenship was discussed. Nothing changed for TANF. New citizenship verification issues relate to Title XIX, Medicaid. What is DHS doing to help clients

acquire ID? Are funds available to assist them? Angela reported that the Hood River branch is paying for clients to obtain ID in hardship situations. DHS' staff has electronic access to Oregon vital statistic records.

- **Review results of the TANF Oversight Committee**

Formation of the Oversight Committee is an excellent example on how DHS invited FSRC to provide input on LC 722. Doreen and Diane were selected to represent FSRC on the Oversight Committee. Diane commented that she has been impressed by the partnership with DHS and feels that the communication by e-mail has been helpful.

- **ACTION for Vic/Dave:** Doreen, Diane and Rob suggested the Oversight Committee meet to review policy package proposed in the Governor's budget to compare with the committee's recommendations.
- **ACTION from October meeting:** – **FSRC requested a list of the programs/benefits and funding sources.** Vic/Dave will prepare and forward to Nancy for distribution.

Grievance Report – discuss policy status and any individual grievances, Lori Nelson
Action items from October meeting:

Lori gave update on customer service policy. Suggestions have been incorporated into draft document and distributed to department leaders for review. These changes should be made by 12/15, after which the documents will be distributed for public comment.

Comments will be accepted for approximately three weeks. Then the rule writing process will begin.

ACTION: Lori will send updated draft policy to Nancy for distribution to FSRC members. Comments will be circulated within the FSRC via e-mail; then sent to Nancy, who will forward to Lori Nelson.

ACTION -- Jim: Send draft policy to contractors for suggestions before the comment period is over.

Confidentiality issues addressed in the policy are difficult to maintain in our current office environment. We are working with Jane Alm, DHS Privacy Officer, to establish a process for desk-side interviewing and maintaining confidentiality. DHS is currently working on department-wide customer service training that is scheduled for roll out the first quarter of 2007. The training should establish expectations and measurements for both workers and supervisors.

NOPR on OAR 461 – Discuss Rule Summary section and impacts of rule changes on TANF clients

How is the bill tied to rules and policies? Dave reported there are not many substantial issues other than the time limit rule. Based on comments received, the plan is to modify within the rule. The biggest item is clients who return after they have exhausted the 60 months being held to the same regulations as other clients. The 60-month limit is specifically for families with an adult recipient of TANF-funded cash assistance. The rule

will be amended as needed as the bill moves forward. States are allowed to make exceptions to time limits on up to 20% of entire caseload so there is room to continue to serve these clients. We don't anticipate reaching the exception cap for quite some time. At this time we are not looking at a state-only program to handle most clients.

Lobbying guidelines: Information packets were distributed. You are required to report lobbying hours but don't need to register as a lobbyist unless you approach 24 hours in any given quarter. Drafting documents or responding to a request for information only is not considered lobbying. The time spent sharing your position or advocating for a bill with a legislator is considered lobbying. Garnering good will from legislators is also reportable. It is best to error on the side of safety so any direct contact with legislators should be reported.

ACTION: Mickey will research and clarify questions regarding lobbying by FSRC members. (E-mail sent 12/7/06.)

ACTION: Mickey to follow through on clarification regarding public meeting laws. Is a membership quorum required? Rosemary read a paragraph from the New Board/Commission Member Training materials that indicated it is only a public meeting when a quorum of the membership is participating.

TANF Policy vs. Legislative Concept vs. rules: Additional handouts: Draft Summary of Governor's Recommended Budget on TANF funding.

Recommended beginning discussion with the Draft Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) summary related to redesign of TANF program and then work through the legislative concept and edits. The draft summary was reviewed. Packages funded in the GRB included changes in Self-Sufficiency caseloads, including staff, and base inflation of 3.1 percent for families on TANF case assistance, and other Self-Sufficiency programs. The total package includes \$20 million in General Fund, \$5.8 million in CCDF other funds and \$7.2 million in anticipated TANF federal funds carry forward. Many of the elements of the TANF Oversight Committee's recommendations were funded as proposed, some modified and some were not able to be funded in the GRB.

Comments on the draft summary of GRB package components:

- Family mentoring program: FSRC was supportive of the Governor's budget but asked how this, as well as other priorities, could be accomplished with the available funding streams. FSRC will be looking at items not funded and will be making comments/recommendations. A family mentoring program utilizing community volunteers and staffed by five mentorship coordinator positions was not funded as part of this package. Other items from the TANF Oversight Committee Recommendation not funded in the GRB include, funding for raising the TANF cash grant amount beyond the base inflationary increase, funding for 12 Social Services

Specialist statewide to act as consultants on multi-barrier cases, and funding for additional system supports for the program modifications. **ACTION:** Mike requested dollar amounts of items not funded in the GRB.

- SSI Program: Amount of grant that would be paid for state only SSI program participants was reduced from a total of \$656 per month in Oversight Committee recommendation to \$614 per month. This program would provide an on-going Family SSI assistance grant equal to 43 percent of the current federal SSI monthly benefit plus an amount equal to the TANF No-Adult payment standard including the Cooperation Incentive. For a family with one parent SSI applicant and two children this would be \$260 plus \$354 per month, for a total of \$614 per month. The original proposal would have provided a total monthly grant of \$656 (\$302+\$354). The adult portion of the grant in the original recommendation represented 50% of the current SSI monthly benefit. Discussed problem of getting psychological evaluations done by people approved by DDS and hearing dates can take up to two to three years. Program funded in the GRB includes 24 positions and also includes funding for contracted medical services. This will be a voluntary program option available to clients determined through evaluation to most likely to be found eligible for SSI. Eligible clients who volunteer for this program will be required to sign an interim assistance agreement. Program will be state-only funded.
- Family Support and Connections: Family Support and Connections child abuse prevention services would be made more readily available to families. Program funding would expand by 10 percent above current levels. How will the funds be used? Better integrate these services into the TANF/JOBS programs. Different methodologies currently used throughout the state. Looking at ways to improve current practice to strengthen follow through on client referrals. This element of the GRB was not specifically discussed by the Oversight Committee. **ACTION:** Diane requested updates on this issue. However, this was part of the initial handout of information provided to the Oversight Committee.
- Assessment Program: Modifications would be made to the current Assessment program to ensure improved statewide consistency in meeting initial family basic needs, enhance family evaluation including parent self-evaluation of goals, and a completed participation plan prior to opening On-going TANF grant. Concern was expressed that clients are not currently being assessed effectively.
- Post-employment TANF: Program would provide a sustainability grant of \$150 per month (for up to 12 months) for Pre- and On-going TANF families that become employed, and also would provide limited additional training and support services.
- Rosemary asked question on child support pass through; this needs to be addressed since TANF grant is not going to be increased substantially. There have been initial conversations with DCS to identify specific level of back fill required, but no solid

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figures are available. Changes due to the Deficit Reduction Act will cause loss of funding for Child Support program.

- Noted that Department of Justice (DOJ) Child Support program, as well as other programs need additional bilingual assistance. Very difficult to get help for non-English speaking clients. Recommended this be incorporated into CORE values.
- Jessica asked for a brief explanation of changes to Pre-TANF assessment pieces not in affect now. This concept provides for improving the process and the level of consistency of the front-end assessments around the state. Another tangible change currently underway will incorporate a stronger client self-assessment philosophy into our case management practice.

Partnership Committee – Discuss recent activities (Diane)

Diane reported on the delay of the kick off of the new CW Program (Oregon Safety Model). Concerns have been expressed that the new model will eliminate services to children. Social services and DHS staff has been disappointed with timelines of feedback so additional time has been allowed. Dave and Vic are keeping CWAC posted on TANF issues. Diane will continue to be a resource to CWAC regarding TANF/public assistance programs. **ACTION: Forward CWAC minutes to FSRC members.** (September minutes and web link sent on 12/12/06. Minutes can't be distributed until they are voted on and approved by CWAC.)

Items not discussed:

- **Complaint Report: Case 105166, SDA 11 – Update from Jim.**

January 2007 FSRC meeting agenda:

- Review committee assignments
- Review Strategic Plan

Next Meeting: The next FSRC meeting is scheduled for January 4, 2007, 8:30 a.m. to noon, in HSB-252, followed by a Policy Committee meeting from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00.