

Family Services Review Commission Meeting

Draft MINUTES

March 5, 2009, 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

HSB-252

Members present: Doreen Binder, Jessica Chanay, Diane Cohen-Alpert, Ellen Gradison, Yesenia Gutierrez, Peggy Kennerly (by VCON) and Michael Ware

DHS staff present: Dr. Bruce Goldberg, Erinn Kelley-Siel, Mickey Serice, Jim Neely, Vic Todd, Xochitl Esparza, Mary Anne Camp and Nancy Sathrum

Members excused: Kim Freeman

Members absent: Maggie Bagon, Tawna Sanchez

Meeting materials sent via e-mail prior to meeting: Meeting Agenda, Draft Minutes of the February 5, 2009 Meeting, January 2009 Complaint Summary and Narrative Reports, December 2008 Food Stamp Timeliness Report, List of Priority 1 and 2 Legislative Bills being tracked by CAF, January 2009 CAF Public Assistance Caseloads, and Note on the 2/10/09 TANF Rules Advisory Committee Meeting

Handouts from meeting:

- Nancy: January 2009 Self Sufficiency at a Glance,
- Xochitl Esparza: *January 31, 2009 PAS Update and TANF Time Limits Report*

Greeting and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 8:38 a.m. with a quorum in attendance.

Chair Report:

- Member check in and meeting agenda reviewed. Intro's mac. Michael Ware leaving, hoping to be on task force on over-representation out of governor's office.
- Approval of Minutes: **MOTION:** There was a motion by Doreen Binder and seconded by Yesenia Gutierrez to approve the February 5, 2009 FSRC minutes as corrected. Vote was unanimous.

DHS Report: Dr. Bruce Goldberg, one of many questions he has had from different groups is how is the budget process going and how can they help. Stated he would give a general overview then taper down to talk about issues around this table. This is an absolutely extraordinary time, unemployment is now right at 10%, this is close to double from November (6%). The state budget right now is in free-fall; 2 weeks ago there was a new economic forecast that stated there would be an \$855 million shortfall for the rest of the bi ennium. It has been estimated that there will be an approximately \$3 billion shortfall for the next bi ennium. The federal stimulus package is, quite frankly, not enough to plug all holes in the budget. We need to look at this as a 28 month problem at \$4 billion problem. The legislature has put together resources available to cover this bi ennium's budget holes; stimulus \$'s, rainy day funds, ending balances, plus some reductions made in March – all put together it comes to 2 1/2 to 3 billion. This still results in a million \$ or more hole in the state budget. DHS took about \$6 million in cuts (CW, TANF, SPD). The budget bill just passed out of House, will now go to Senate for vote. There will be another forecast in May, may be down again but will have to wait & see. DHS will re-balance budget, may have more expenses as caseloads increase. One of the things DHS has been trying to do is making cuts for last 6 – 8 months, hiring freezes and reduced services in face of dramatically increasing caseloads. DHS will continue to let people know that cuts are being made in face of increasing need for services (caseload & needs). It is now being understood that the large cuts in human services is being counter balanced into

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increasing needs. Now that 07-09 has been put to rest, it is on to 09-11 and how it will come out is unknown. Continuing with ways & means hearings, public hearings are still being held. In the next mo or 2 the Legislature will need to start to hone in on a number for the next budget. The goal with this group is to keep everyone as informed as possible, advocacy need to continue to make people aware of increasing need, that DHS is seeing a 20% increase in the FS & TANF caseloads, that folks are aware of the dramatic change in need, and that we as a state need to find a way to respond to that. We all need to be creative, but in the end there is not enough money to do what we know needs to be done.

The question was asked about how all this is affecting ERDC. At this time the overall caseload is going down. Erinn asked if the group had been e-mailed the power-point that was used to show the different program case numbers, all answered no. This is on the website. **Action Item:** Nancy will send web address to commission members. Non-citizen parents and self employed were eliminated from ERDC. There also now is a first month co-pay but no reduction in benefits. Erinn – the thought is that we don't want to assume these will continue to happen into the next bi-ennium but as it progressed more into the hearings it appeared that the cuts will probably continue into next bi-ennium.

Suggestion was made to possibly pull group together that originally put together the TANF re-design, show them what the budget is going to look like with the cuts and see if they can provide other ideas.

Bruce – These are tough times and no one wants to make changes/cuts. We are now facing the reality of this need. The more groups like the TANF group can provide input – the better the process and outcome will be.

Jessica – It was mentioned during testimony that there was the possibility of easing up on the cuts with the federal stimulus monies – yes, it is a type of rebate program. It does require some state investment – we put in 20% and fed's give 80%. Legislature wants to be shown how to maximize federal funding access and still keep the economic reality in focus. Right now there is very little case management being done as so much is being done on front end (eligibility). All programs except ERDC have grown dramatically. Last 2 month's food stamps have gone up by 17,000 cases. Staff should have grown but has not. DHS is creating a new TANF exemption category due to unemployment.

Stimulus package – there will be an enhanced federal match which will expire Dec 31, 2010 – will be retro to 10-2-08. Erinn clarified different funding sources – this will be for FMAP. TANF has base year, hoping will pick 07 instead of 08 based on funding needs. Funds will be more applicable to next bi-ennium. One issue is to separate out on the TANF side of things. The Legislature is looking to CAF/DHS for plan for TANF, FS, etc. Legislature wants to maximize the monies as much as possible. Bruce cautioned that this is not enough and won't solve need. On the FMAP side, DHS will get 800 million over the next 9 quarters in enhanced FMAP imbursement. DHS can't cut eligibility for any program's that get this. Benefits and payments can be reduced.

Jessica shared that while in DC had heard there may be a second stimulus pkg. Bruce confirmed that it may happen but hopes won't happen until fall. There are a lot of issues around accountability and tracking.

Bruce stated he can't stress enough the increasing need for these services. Legislature is going to need to prioritize. Erinn stressed the advocates can really make case about what's happening in communities and the need to support each other.

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Erinn Kelley-Siel, when CAF closed out recent testimony, it was stated that CAF (TANF, food stamps) will be where there are problems.

Jessica wondered if there is information available around the economic impact & stimulus monies.

Action Item: The info is located on website, Nancy will e-mail out the web link. Budget analysis has been done and this is good info to have when talking to legislators & community members.

Besides one on one and letters, are there other opportunities for input? Right now for CAF, what is needed is to reconvene with TANF group members and reassess. In Erinn's experience in budget discussions, after economic re-forecast is when discussions regarding 09-11 will begin. Does think there will be other opportunities for input, CAF and advocates need to be supportive as other programs can greatly impact CAF programs. She had tried to weave in how important mental health and A&D is to CAF. Public testimony is a great opportunity to reinforce how programs impact each other. Caseload numbers – can this be done by branch. Erinn shared that there was a graphic made for legislative presentation that showed the numbers. When was snapshot taken, 12-08. Can that be updated? CAF does maintain charts that show where the greatest increases are. Have to be cautious/careful as to how heavy we press the staffing/caseload issue. As of December, in self sufficiency, overall there are 900 too few staff. There is an on-going internal discussion regarding this issue. CAF has been challenged as to how this is presented, focusing on client services in regards to staffing levels.

If advocacy groups can get those numbers, this could possibly help clients understand why they may have to wait or come back Can we pinpoint a place in time, create data and have as resource?

Diane - Feels that the need to come back together and re-look at TANF design plan to come up with solutions as opposed to focusing on negatives.

Doreen - Need to focus on fact that there are a lot of poor people that need help.

Need to think about how to talk about issues– the conversation CAF is having with ways & means is that CAF is on the front lines of trying to meet the basic needs for people to stay afloat. The idea is there that if investment is made in staffing and support of programs that we may not be willing to give staff/\$ up when caseloads go back down. Is there a way to strategically think that this is what we need to do in crises and not as business as usual?

Doreen -Can we look at one year's supp and guarantee that we won't keep these numbers in the future? Vic – need to move from emergency thinking to crisis mode. Jessica – Group will continue discussion among selves and come up with questions/suggestions for Erinn.

Erinn asked if the group would be willing to use the whole next meeting for just TANF design.

Would give plenty of time to prepare and invite participants. May be able to invite Rep Kotek.

3-23 –Legislature is having an in district day. Erinn encouraged them to visit local DHS offices.

Diane – would like to find a better word than crisis.

Mickey Serice – CAF has completed ways & means presentations for this bi-ennium. Covered last bi-ennium and this bi-ennium budgets. Department is still up for ways & means until into May. Over-all presentation done by CAF went well. There was a bottleneck of bills but now are coming thru regularly.

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Vic Todd, Xochitl Esparza – Yesenia asked if any way to get updates on bills as Xochitl didn't get to present today. Vic handed out sheet with update. Final version is probably posted.

Action Item: Nancy – talk to Eric re chart of all actions taken.

Vic went over chart for re-balance - One time payments (CW pieces). Remedial daycare was much smaller initially, doesn't represent program change.

FSRC Debrief:

Client Testimony: A lot of kudos go to Kim (Steps to Success) for working with Jessica to get clients to the capitol for the budget hearing. They had 2 vanloads, after arriving in Salem they met before hand to get acquainted. Jessica helped them with how articulate the following: Why are they on assistance, talk about programs, how they have helped their family and what would have happened without the help. Some already had testimony written out. There was lots of emotion during the hearing. One legislator mentioned that there should perhaps be jobs for those coming out of JOBS program, Jessica was not sure if this will ever happen but happy it came up. Some testimony was given on another day regarding ERDC (home care providers).

Action item: link will be sent out to the leg website. On legislative website for bills, can go to archived hearings video/audio.

Asked – As all here may work with clients in different ways, if there is another opportunity for client testimony is there a way to support this? Discussion ensued – some other agencies suggested were Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs (Janet Arenz), Oregon Law Center (John Mullin), OR Coalition against Dom & Sexual violence (Tawna Sanchez), East Mult Head Start (Pam Greenbough), HAP/Section 8 (Rachel Duke, 503-335-6810 and Veronica??), Human Solutions/Sun System (Erica Silver, 503-), Colleges – Mt Hood/PCC (Pam Murphy), Oregon Commission on Children & Families.

TANF Meeting/Input:

FSRC input – budget process (economic stimulus of human services – data for DHS)

Letter from FSRC

Message: this is an emergency – needs a different response

Need is great – update to current situation

Benefit to client (human services)

Survival

Stabilization

Connect to employment

Self respect/esteem

Community connection (churches – OMA, OFRA(?))

Children

What happens without services

TA & DVS stats

Homeless #'s (Doreen)

Crime (Michael, direct link is Casey Family Programs)

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Retention rates (Doreen)
Family disruption
Info from hospitals – provide testimony?
Suicide – public health – (depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts increasing)
Increase in requests for help
Disproportionality (Burns Institute)

Jessica will put the letter together and send around for others to add data and information needed.

Michael – talked about the Burns Institute its work around disproportionality, they have a report out, took 3 ½ years to compile. It was written with the general community in mind the help them understand the issue of dis-proportionality and how staffing affects services rendered. Having event on March 25, address is:

Action Item: discuss having future meetings dedicated to one specific topic. First one could possibly hi-lite the Burns Institute work and disproportionality.

Michael – he used to receive 1500 calls a mo for housing/utility help, he is now getting 2800.

TANF Meeting: Yesinia doesn't want to go 2 months without doing FSRC business. Thought is to have a joint FSRC/DHS meeting and joint facilitation – FSRC and DHS both invite participants.

Option 1: different day - tbd
3 hours

Option 2: FSRC meeting
8-11 TANF, break, 11:30 to 12:30 FSRC business, lunch, 1:30 to 3:30 CSC

Group decided to go with option 2.

Who to invite: suggestions were Kim Freeman (JOBS), OCCF member, Oregon Center for Public Policy.

Jessica will look at the list from the 1st meeting; she has it and will find and send out for anyone to add voices they feel need to be part of process. *find room for 25 people.*

Meeting Substance:

What makes most sense to preserve

Source of dollars and requirements

TANF overview:

pre HB2469

post HB2469.

After cuts

What the projections are for caseload staffing/cuts/future funding

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How TANF connects to other programs – diagram? – How to connect services to clients & funding

ERDC

OHP

A&D

JOBS

VR (?)

CW

FS

Mental Health

Unemployment

Requirements

Deficit Reduction Act

Outcome:

Redesign opportunities

Put in form of recommendation to legislature

Mary Anne will look for larger room – hold at least 25 people.

Future Agenda Items:

April:

Other ideas: Invite Eric Moore to discuss budget issues
Presentation by the Client Services Committee
Invite Representative Kotek to discuss legislative issues
Invite Cathy Iles to discuss the Key Performance Measures
Further discussion of legislative session changes

Next Meeting: The next FSRC meeting is scheduled for April 2, 2009, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in Room 252 of the Human Services Building.