Refugee Child Welfare Advisory Committee
Quarterly Meeting
January 7, 2015

Attendees: Angelica Quintero, Oscar Herrera, J.D. Devros, Tami Kane-Suleiman, Neeru Kanal, Emese Perfecto and Laila Hajoo by phone

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Review & Approve meeting notes of October, 2014. Group agreed I would resend by email and members to provide a response by the end of January.

3. RCWAC Membership – ideas were provided of organizations and or individuals who may have an interest in becoming an RCWAC member. These include the following:

   - AYCO (African Youth Community Organization provides services to Somali refugees and Jamal Dar is the contact,
   - Kelly Oldinger of Catholic Charities
   - Omar Obaid, who is affiliated with the Iraqi Society of Oregon and their founder. He also is a to the Iraqi refugee community.
   - Need to update the website
   - There is an event that is held one time per year for Mosque Summit leaders and perhaps this is a venue too

Angelica will send the member application to RCWAC members to have available to hand out to folks interested. Angelica’s name can be provided a point of contact if there are any questions or other information is needed.

4. Oscar Herrera, Equity Manager with OEMS, provided an update. The unit is growing as persons are being hired to fill the current vacant positions. Lydia Muniz is the director.

OEMS continues to assist with diversity around the State of Oregon.
Equity – OEMS is developing the framework and it will not be implemented until training has been provided to managers.

Poster – depicts the difference between Equity and Equality. In April there will be a summit for district managers and program managers as well as chairs of Diversity Committees.

Policy regarding equity is under development

Community Engagement - Goal to have 12 Forums across Oregon. So far forums have already been held for Native, Hispanic, and African American communities with more to follow. There has been a nervous/tense reaction initially, but overall the communities have welcomed the forums. Basically the forums are for the purpose of allowing communities to express their concerns. DHS is asking what DHS can do within their communities to improve access to services, provide written material, removing barriers. For example, some offices do not have bilingual staff and clients are being sent home. In some of the more rural areas, families do not have gas $ and therefore are not accessing services. Oscar is preparing a report regarding the results of the forums.

Oscar will prepare the DHS only Equity report by June 2015 and assessment is occurring regarding what content will be included.

Family Services Review Committee – liaisons from different agencies such as legal aid, Catholic Charities, to assess trends within DHS and what DHS is doing to “fix” it.

OEMS is also working to improve language access.

5. Emese Perfecto, OEMS Language Access Coordinator, as of April 2014, gave a presentation:

Essentially, work is being done to take a look at Language access as a whole for DHS and Emese is in the process of gathering a lot of information. Emese is taking into account the perspective of the field as she moves forward.
Emese is currently looking at 2 policies in conjunction with OHA. Work is being done to look at the bilingual certification for employees. For example some employees have a certain level of proficiency. The bilingual proficiency certification will be used in the hiring process with an offer contingent upon certification of proficiency. Policy is being developed around language access, using alternate format, etc.

As Emese travels to different offices, she is researching information about the different signs that are posted in the buildings. For example one office advertises the TTY line on pamphlets but the machine is disconnected. Training needs to be provided to staff on how to use this resource.

Work is occurring regarding the use of face to face interpreters and making sure the process is consistent agency wide.

Publications – work is being done to look at translation services and stream lining the process so that it is consistent within each program, but also consistent across DHS. There is a difference between interpretation/translation. There is a bank of current translated forms so that a request does not need to be made multiple times for the same document.

Web page – working on the design

“I Speak” cards are being developed that clients can keep in their wallets and provide to the receptionist so the right interpreter can be accessed.

Essentially, clients deserve to get services in their language. A variety of things are being considered such as technology being used, training, community outreach, etc so that the best service can be provided.

Emese provided examples of specific situations in which language access was very important.
During Emese’s presentation a question was asked about whether or not the Corrections Dept. was up to par in providing clients access to interpreters, etc.

REAL-D: Race, Ethnicity Access Language & Disability, There is a bill, (HR2134) that looks at a standardized process on how we serve our clients. The goal is to have information available soon. However, OEMS is currently in the analysis stage, looking at systems and program areas.

6. Training for RCWAC members at quarterly meetings – information will be brought to meetings about Child Welfare that will/may be helpful to members.

7. RCWAC website


Adjourn

Next quarterly meeting is scheduled on April 1, 2015