



**Washington State Supreme Court
Commission on Children
in Foster Care**

**9/16/19
1:00 p.m.
Puget Sound
Conference Room
AOC, Building One
1112 Quince St. SE
Olympia**

Agenda

1:00 pm <i>5 min</i>	1. Welcome and Introductions	Justice Barbara Madsen, Co-Chair
1:05 pm <i>5 min</i>	2. Approve March and May minutes	Justice Barbara Madsen, Co-Chair
Old Business		
1:10 pm <i>15 min</i>	3. Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Updates	Jody Becker, DCYF, Co-Chair
1:25 pm <i>50 min</i>	4. Youth Leadership Summit Follow Up	Lauren Frederick, The Mockingbird Society Jolie Bwiza, The Mockingbird Society
2:15 pm <i>15 min</i>	5. Family Reunification Day Follow Up	Lorrie Thompson, AOC Communications Joanne Moore, OPD
New Business		
2:30 pm <i>10 min</i>	6. Inside Olympia Interview	Justice Barbara Madsen, Co-Chair
2:40 pm <i>10 min</i>	7. Normalcy Workgroup Update	Jeannie Kee, Foster Youth Alumni Representative
2:50 pm <i>30 min</i>	8. Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)	Rachel Mercer, DCYF
3:20 pm <i>15 min</i>	9. Membership	Justice Barbara Madsen, Co-Chair

3:35 25 min	10.National Judicial Summit IV on Child Welfare	Justice Barbara Madsen, Co-Chair
4:00 pm	11. Adjournment	Justice Barbara Madsen, Co-Chair
	<u>Next Meeting:</u> December 9 th , 2019	



**Washington State Supreme Court
Commission on Children in Foster Care
March 18, 2019
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present

Justice Bobbe J. Bridge (ret.), Washington State Supreme Court, Commission Co-Chair
Ms. Jody Becker, DCYF, Commission Co-Chair
Justice Barbara Madsen, Washington State Supreme Court, Commission Co-Chair
Ms. Raven Arroya-Healing, NW Intertribal Council
Mr. Jim Bamberger, Office of Civil Legal Aid
Ms. Jolie Bwiza, Tacoma Chapter Leader, Mockingbird Youth Network
Judge Kitty-Ann van Doorninck, Superior Court Judges' Association
Ms. Jeannie Kee, Foster Youth Alumni Representative
Ms. Jill Malat, Office of Civil Legal Aid
Ms. Tonia McClanahan, Parent Advocate Representative
Mr. Martin Mueller, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (designee for Chris Reykdal)
Mr. Ryan Murrey, Executive Director, Washington State CASA
Ms. Joanne Moore, Washington State Office of Public Defense

Members Not Present

Mr. Mike Canfield, Co-Chair of Foster Parents Association of Washington State
VACANT, Washington State House of Representatives
Senator Steve O'Ban, Washington State Senate
Ms. Carrie Wayno, Attorney General's Office (designee for Bob Ferguson)

Guests

Mr. Jacob Braxton, Passion2Action
Ms. Cindy Bricker, Sr. Court Program Analyst, AOC
Ms. Peggy Carlson, Program Supervisor Foster Care Education, OSPI
Ms. Carissa Greenberg, Attorney General's Office
Mr. David Del Villar Fox, DCYF
Ms. Tracey Freckleton, Foster Parents Association of Washington State
Ms. Lauren Frederick, Public Policy and Advocacy Manager, Mockingbird Society
Ms. Laurie Lippold, Partners for our Children

Staff Present

Ms. Akanksha Jayanthi, CCFC Staff Intern, Center for Children & Youth Justice

Call to Order

Justice Bobbe J. Bridge (ret.) called the meeting to order at 1:07 pm. She welcomed Commission members and guests and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

Justice Bridge then introduced new Commission member Ms. Jolie Bwiza, who will serve as the Youth in Care Representative. Ms. Bwiza introduced herself, noting she is the Tacoma chapter

leader for Mockingbird Society, and she recently received a full-ride scholarship to attend St. Martin's University in the fall with plans to study international relations or political science.

Approval of Minutes

Justice Bridge invited a motion to approve the December 2018 meeting minutes. Judge Kitty-Ann van Doorninck moved to approve the minutes, and Ms. Jill Malat seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Legislative Updates

Ms. Laurie Lippold provided updates on the following child welfare-related bills.

HB 1561: Ensuring participation on the DCYF Oversight Board

This bill would add three new members to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Oversight Board. Two of those members would be youth – one representing lived experience with foster care and one representing lived experience with juvenile justice – and the third member would be a pediatrician. The bill also calls for five members of the oversight board to be from Eastern Washington. Currently, three members represent Eastern Washington, so two of the proposed three new members would also need to represent Eastern Washington.

HB 1631: Child Welfare Workers Bill

This bill, which died, was meant to support case workers. It would have reduced caseload size to 18 cases per 1 social worker. The bill also included language around training and improving child welfare workforce culture. Ms. Lippold said the bill wasn't controversial, but it died on the House floor partly because legislators thought they can amend the bill onto SB 5955, a Department request "technical cleanup bill".

SB 5826: Maximize federal funding for prevention and family services and programs

This legislation was requested by DCYF. It seeks to codify the state's implementation of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act and the expansion of preventive services, as well as being able to use Title IV-E money to fund these services. Ms. Lippold said the Senate passed this bill, but legislators decided to use the House Bill, which is HB 1900.

SB 5096: Allowing case aides to provide temporary assistance for foster parents

In 2018, SB 5890 eliminated means-testing for kinship caregivers and created a support program where case aides can provide temporary assistance to foster parents as needed. Now, this new bill would allow case aides to work on a volunteer basis. The bill moved through the Senate and is held up in the House, likely due to scheduling challenges.

SB 5533: Concerning certificates of parental improvement

This bill, which died, would have allowed somebody with a founded allegation of abuse or neglect to petition through DCYF for an eligibility certificate that would allow them to volunteer at their child's school, become licensed, or get a job working with kids or volunteering at an assisted living or nursing facility. In the Senate Ways and Means Committee, legislators had concerns about somebody with such a founded allegation

chaperoning a field trip. Sen. John Braun introduced an amendment to remove considerations for somebody with a founded allegation being a chaperone, but leaving an exception that would allow someone with a certificate to potentially volunteer in a nursing home or assisted living facility. Ultimately, legislators decided to not bring the bill up on the Senate floor and instead continue to work on it during the interim.

Ms. Malat suggested legislators could exclude from the bill people with founded allegations regarding sexual and physical abuse and instead permit those with founded allegations of neglect, which account for 75-80% of founded allegations.

Ms. Lippold said there are also other ways to amend the bill, like not allowing unsupervised contact. She said she is optimistic it can be worked out.

SB 5604: Concerning the uniform guardianship, conservatorship, and other protective arrangements

Next, Ms. Lippold mentioned SB 5604, a bill dealing with guardianships, specifically addressing concerns with non-parental custody. She said kinship caregiver groups and parent advocates have reached some agreements. Judge Kitty-Ann van Doorninck said lawmakers have addressed the majority of the concerns from the judges' point of view.

SB 5651: Establishing a kinship care legal aid coordinator

This bill would establish a system of legal supports for kinship caregivers. It would give the Office of Civil Legal Aid \$214,000 to contract out to the King County Bar Association to build capacity for pro- and low-bono attorneys statewide to provide guidance to kinship care givers. The bill passed out of the Senate 48-0 and will next be heard in the Civil Rights and Judiciary Committee.

SB 5718: Establishing child welfare housing assistance program to support reunification

Ms. Lippold said the primary barrier to reunification is a lack of appropriate housing. This bill would establish a state-funded program to assist parents with housing costs and other support services for a limited time if they meet eligibility criteria. The House bill died in appropriations, but the Senate bill that limits the proposed program to a pilot program is moving forward.

SB 5892: Concerning factors to be considered in a shelter care hearing

Ms. Lippold invited Mr. Ryan Murrey to introduce SB 5892. The bill did not advance, but it would have provided courts more information from various parties at the 30-day status check with the intention of helping cases move forward faster.

Next, Ms. Lippold discussed three bills regarding children's mental health, noting there is significant overlap with children's welfare, adding that some of the proposed services may be able to draw from IV-E funding depending on the status of the child.

HB 1216: concerning non-firearm measures to increase school safety and student well-being

The School Safety and Wellbeing Bill, also known as the mass shootings bill, presents recommendations on improving school safety with a focus on addressing behavioral health issues. One such recommendation is to have three additional full-time employees for every educational service district (ESD), one of which would focus on expanding the capacity for behavioral health services in school districts across the state. Ms. Lippold said an ESD navigator conducted a pilot of this program with positive results. One of the ESDs became a qualified mental health center, so it was able to use Medicaid dollars. The bill passed through the House and is being heard in the Senate.

HB 1874: Implementing policies related to expanding adolescent behavioral health care access

This bill addresses parent concerns with accessing information about their child in the parent-initiated treatment (PIT) process. Following a PIT, parents often are unable to access information about their child due to privacy and disclosure laws. Federal law does not permit information disclosure related to substance use treatment, but does allow for information regarding mental health. The bill would increase parents' access to information about mental health services as well as permit the PIT process for outpatient, intensive outpatient, and partial hospitalization services. The bill passed the House and is scheduled for hearing in the Senate Behavioral Health Subcommittee.

SB 5903: Concerning children's mental health

The last bill Ms. Lippold discussed compiles a number of recommendations coming out of the Children's Mental Health workgroup. Those recommendations include creating partnership access lines for schools to link students with a school-based child psychiatrist or psychologist, expanding child psychiatry residency programs, and language about the aforementioned ESD pilot expansion. The bill died in the House, but unanimously came off the Senate floor. It is scheduled to be heard in the Human Services and Early Learning Committee.

Justice Bridge opened the floor to anyone else who wants to bring up issues related to the legislature. Ms. Raven Arroway-Healing expressed concern around SB 5437, legislation requested by the Governor expanding eligibility to the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program. She said the Department did not want to include the word "Indian" in the bill because of fears it would be considered unconstitutional and determine eligibility based on race. However, she noted the legislation should include the word "Indian" because not only is the goal of the law partly to increase service to tribal members, but it's also legal under federal law and Washington state law to do so.

Transition Plan

Justice Bridge updated the Commission on her upcoming transition as she steps down as co-chair. There are continuing discussions on how the Commission will be organized moving forward, including leadership and how the Evans School and Center for Children and Youth Justice will fit in the organizational structure. Justice Bridge's last meeting as co-chair will be in May. She introduced Justice Barbara Madsen, who Chief Justice Mary Fairhurst has appointed to succeed Justice Bridge as co-chair.

DCYF Updates

Ms. Jody Becker said the Department of Children, Youth, and Families is gearing up for its next big transition, in which the Office of Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Rehabilitation, and the Child Care Subsidy Program will join DCYF on July 1, 2019. In addition to Deloitte serving as change management consultants, she said the Department is developing its own internal change management program to sustain the organizational transformation on its own.

DCYF Recruitment

Ms. Becker discussed three positions for which DCYF is recruiting. The first is the Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare Operations overseeing the work of the field staff, which is made up of about 2,000 people across six regions. Ms. Becker said she currently has taken on many of those responsibilities. The second position is the Director of Adolescent Programs. This is a new position that will be part of the DCYF leadership team that seeks to address the unique needs of adolescents, a cohort for which the Department feels it does not have an organizational strategy. Ms. Becker said this position will require higher level strategies for adolescents regarding housing, education, relationships, and behavioral health, as well as figuring out how to bring authentic youth voice into the work. The third position is the Family First Prevention Services Administrator, a role requiring facilitation and project management skills and the ability to lead and motivate large groups.

Mr. Jim Bamberger asked what DCYF is doing in the recruitment process to ensure inclusion, diversity, and expanding the racial composition of the leadership team.

Ms. Becker said one of the strategies is to engage in a fair and competitive recruitment process, which depends on having a strong candidate pool. The focus right now is how to strengthen that candidate pool. She said they are trying to spread the word about these openings as widely as they can, particularly to places and people who may not be on the state government website looking for these types of positions. She said they are recruiting nationally.

Child and Family Services Review

Next, Ms. Becker shared results of the state's Child and Family Services Review, a review required by the Children's Bureau to assess how well states meet certain federal child welfare requirements. The review was conducted between April and September 2018 and included a case review and stakeholder interviews. The review found Washington does well in quality assurance, the foster care licensing system, community engagement, coordination of services with federal agencies, and training provided to foster parents. Areas for improvement include case worker contact throughout the life of a case, individualizing services to meet unique needs of kids and their families, timely permanency, and worker retention and supervision.

In response, the state has to develop a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the areas for improvement. Ms. Becker said a team at DCYF has been looking at data and identified the following four focus areas to guide the PIP:

1. A supported, competent, and engaged workforce
2. Engagement from day one to help drive permanency
3. Comprehensive assessment and response
4. Delivering the right services at the right time

The PIP is due to the federal government in early May.

Ms. Becker said DCYF also has to draft a five-year Child Services Plan that is due to the federal government in June. While the PIP focuses on shorter term changes (18-24 months), the Child Services Plan considers a longer term strategy.

Ms. Malat brought up some concerns highlighted in the state's CFSR, namely that the state measures at 17% for stability of children while the child welfare requirement is 90%. One of the elements considered in the stability of children is whether the reason for moving the child is in the child's best interest. The CFSR found 32% of the time, the move was not in the child's best interest, which Ms. Malat noted is a huge area for concern. She said she sees the most concerning part of the child welfare system to be the lack of stability, and stability should be a focus when talking about CFSRs.

Ms. Malat also mentioned that conversations around worker retention rarely deal with vicarious trauma for workers. She said this secondhand trauma is certainly contributing to low worker retention rates, yet meetings about worker retention do not address such concerns.

Ms. Becker said DCYF is engaged in conversations about what a trauma-informed care system looks like. Currently there is a peer support network, but she said the system does not have an overarching strategy to address vicarious trauma on a system-wide level.

Ms. Joanne Moore said the Family First Prevention Services Act seems to be the most basic answer to trauma for families, and the Department should embrace this act as soon as possible. She said preventive services and reducing workers' caseload should be a big part of the PIP.

Mr. Bamberger agreed and noted the importance of distinguishing between primary and secondary trauma. While lawyers and social workers represent the primary victims, he said there needs to be an intentional approach to building systems, training, and support for secondary trauma victims.

Ms. Tonia McClanahan said a trauma-informed, multi-stakeholder workgroup meets monthly at court in Thurston County where they discuss how to integrate trauma-informed practices into their work. They discuss everything from the décor of buildings where children and parents sit to how cases are called to administrative processes. She encourages other counties to do the same.

Indian Child Welfare Case Review

Next, Ms. Becker mentioned DCYF will launch an Indian Child Welfare Case Review in July or August. The last one was done in 2015. DCYF is partnering with the Attorney General's office to make sure the review is aligned with Bureau of Indian Affairs guidelines. She also mentioned the Department will work closely with tribal nations on the process for review.

Administration of Children and Families Grant

Ms. Becker then discussed a five-year, \$7.9 million grant DCYF received from the Administration of Children and Families to improve permanency. The Department is trying to align existing efforts to leverage as much capacity as possible.

Child Abuse Prevention Month

Next, Ms. Becker outlined upcoming events. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, so on March 31st DCYF plans to plant pinwheels at the Capitol to beautify the campus for the month of April. On May 19, DCYF is hosting its annual We Are Family event at a Mariners baseball game to support and recognize caregivers.

Questions and Comments

Returning to the permanency grant from the Administration of Children and Families, Ms. Jeannie Kee asked if DCYF has a parent and alumni of care representative helping to make decisions, as she said permanency means something different to alumni of care than it does to the child welfare system. Ms. Malat said there is both a parent and a youth voice on the grant.

Ms. Jolie Bwiza asked, in relation to the CFSR, what is meant by “community engagement”? Ms. Becker said that during the review process, reviewers spoke with people about their experiences in child welfare to understand what is working, what is not working, and where they would like to see improvements. The goal is to get feedback and try to understand their lived experiences in the system, details which are not apparent just by looking at case files.

Ms. Bwiza then asked what the Department does if they receive feedback about something that is impossible to change. Ms. Becker said they have to assess if it is lawful for the Department to take a particular course of action, and they also have to assess their capacity to make the change. She said she wants state agencies to do a better job of closing the loop after someone makes an inquiry or suggests an idea and tell that person that they’ve looked into the matter and outline what they can or cannot do about it.

Ms. Tracey Freckleton asked if the Department plans to include foster parents in helping birth parents work with their kids, particularly as foster parents have been caring for the kids for up to three years. Ms. Becker said agencies can do a better job of engagement overall, whether that means engaging birth parents, foster parents, or parents in tandem. She said she is having conversations with Casey Family Programs to try to bring in a national program to serve as a model in Washington State for how to have those conversations. Ms. Freckleton mentioned the Foster Parent Association of Washington State is working on a pilot program doing just that.

Mr. David Del Villar Fox noted the Governor’s proposed budget includes allocations for engagement with foster parents.

Ms. Bwiza asked what happens when foster parents continually have problems or mismatches with children placed in their care. Ms. Becker said the state would hopefully first work with those foster parents if such patterns emerged, such as more training on how to work with youth. She also said she would hope a case worker would be working really hard to find a good match for a foster placement and connect children in a home where they can thrive.

Mr. Ryan Murrey asked who will lead CSFR once April Potts leaves. Ms. Becker said that position, which focuses on quality assurance and improvement work, is open for recruitment. In the meantime, existing team members will help fill the gaps.

Commission members took a 10 minute break, and resumed at 2:38 pm.

Normalcy Workgroup Updates

Ms. Jeannie Kee provided updates from the Normalcy Workgroup regarding SB 5395, which would mandate comprehensive sex education for public school K-12 students across the state. Ms. Peggy Carlson added the bill would require school districts to either pick a curriculum OSPI approves or find a curriculum that would cover the same set of standards. School districts would be responsible for adopting the curriculum.

Workgroup members are still concerned with how to ensure a child receives sexual health education if their parent decides to opt them out of receiving that education at school via the prudent parent standard. Further, the Workgroup is considering how to check whether a child has received sexual health education. Ms. Kee said some youth do not want to be asked in court by a judge if they have received this education, as it may be a vulnerable topic of discussion. She said other options may be to have a check box at the planning meeting at age 17.5 indicating if they have received this education. If not, the care team could partner with community programs and providers to do so.

Ms. Tonia McClanahan said the 17.5 point marker might be too late for youth. Ms. Kee said that check-in would be the last chance to check before the youth leaves the system.

Thinking of the timeline of the proposed legislation, the requirement for public schools to provide sexual health education would go into effect in 2021. Ms. Kee said another question is what should be done for youth in the next two years? The Workgroup continues to explore options.

Title IV-E Funding to Parents' and Children's Representation

Next, Ms. Joanne Moore outlined and provided updates for the Office of Public Defense's Parents Representation Program for child welfare cases and updates to Title IV-E Funding affecting parent and child representation. The Parents Representation Program launched in response to a need for equitable legal representation in dependency and termination cases. In 2000, OPD asked the legislature for \$7 million to fund a pilot program to better pay parents' attorneys. The program has slowly expanded since then, and this year is the first year that the program has had statewide parents representation.

The program uses contract attorneys and imposes a case load limit of 80 cases per attorney. After the program expansion, Ms. Moore said the program has become underfunded, and the contracts are worth \$35,000 less than they were in 2004, adjusting for inflation. As a result, many attorneys are leaving the program because they can't afford to do the work anymore.

Ms. Malat then discussed the children's representation. A bill passed five years ago requiring counsel for all children when both parents' parental rights were terminated and they had not

reached permanency after six months. Last legislative session a study was created in Grant and Lewis Counties, and the Washington Center for Court Research is conducting an evaluation in those counties. The evaluation is due to the legislature in December, but OPD is requesting the study be extended a year to ensure they can analyze enough decision points to present an analysis with adequate statistical power.

Justice Bridge asked about the process for getting the extension. Ms. Malat said they are not asking for more money. They did not use the whole appropriation they received, so they're hoping the legislature will re-appropriate what OPD did not originally use.

Ms. Moore next talked about the Family Justice Initiative, a new collaborative initiative funded by the Casey Foundation that brings together parents' and children's attorney leadership. She said the two groups have so much in common they do not need to be fighting over resources or support. Partly in response to national movements of improving parents' and children's representation, the Children's Bureau issued a policy change in December 2018 reinterpreting Title IV-E administrative costs. The Title IV-E Program funds the federal part of foster care support, adoption subsidies, the Attorney General's office, and many administrative costs. The policy change permits states to seek administrative cost reimbursement from the federal government to pay for the cost of attorneys on behalf of the children in foster care in the state eligible for Title IV-E foster care benefits and their parents. Ms. Moore said OPD hopes this funding change helps meet the needs to increase compensation for these attorneys.

FPAWS

Tracey Freckleton spoke with the Commission about the Foster Parents Association of Washington State's Pacific Northwest Caregivers Conference and Shining Stars Awards Event at Great Wolf Lodge scheduled for the first weekend in May. The conference features classes and sessions to discuss and learn about relevant topics, including caregiver advocacy, self-care, creating relationships with birth parents, aggression replacement training, training on the needs of LGBTQ+ youth, keeping kids safe from social media, and more. There will also be a Kids Camp at the conference so kids have a program to engage in during the weekend as well. The Night of Shining Stars Event intends to recognize those who are making a difference in foster care communities and for foster families.

Ms. Freckleton also mentioned FPAWS recently signed a contract to bring 7 additional training conferences around the state that hope to make it easier for interested foster parents to attend, as a lack of child care tends to prohibit foster parents from attending such conferences. She said FPAWS is developing a teen program for these conferences so foster parents who do not want to leave their teenage kids at home can bring them to the conference where the teens will be able to learn something.

FPAWS is also planning its first large-scale fundraiser event in the fall. The event intends to raise awareness of the need of more foster families and change the culture between foster parents, birth parents, social workers, and agencies to more collaboratively find permanency for children. The fundraiser is scheduled for October 22 at the Museum of History & Industry in Seattle.

En Banc Presentation

Lastly, Justice Bridge and Ms. Akanksha Jayanthi introduced a new way to compile information for the Commission's annual Report to the Supreme Court. Previously, Commission staff would review meeting minutes from the prior year and select highlights to present to the court. This year the staff wanted to also ask Commission members directly if there were particular items they wanted the report to address. Justice Bridge mentioned the work from the Normalcy Workgroup should definitely be included. Ms. Carlson wanted to highlight the importance of the opportunities for the Commission to hear youth voice. Mr. Murrey mentioned how DCYF did a good job of keeping the Commission updated throughout the Department's transition.

Justice Madsen, incoming co-chair, offered the perspective of the Court, saying the justices are always interested in knowing how the courts are doing and what they can be doing differently. She said anything the Court can do to facilitate the success of the Commission is of great interest.

Ms. McClanahan reiterated that many of the conversations in the previous year were centered on the DCYF transition, which caused a bit of tension at times. Ms. Moore said one of the big progress areas was setting up the Reunification Day Steering Committee, adding the time is coming to get started on this year's Reunification Day plans.

Ms. Malat said it would be important to talk about the Youth and Alumni Leadership Summit, particularly as the requests the young people were asking for – like group homes without bedbugs and not exiting into homelessness – are basic things. She said it seems “shameful” that young people have to ask for these types of things.

Final Comments

Right before adjournment, Mr. Murrey noted the scheduled May meeting date conflicted with the Children's Justice Conference. Justice Bridge said Commission staff will look into rescheduling the CCFC May meeting so it does not conflict with the Children's Justice Conference.

Adjourned at 3:42 pm by Justice Bridge.



**Washington State Supreme Court
Commission on Children in Foster Care
May 6, 2019
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present

Justice Bobbe J. Bridge (ret.), Washington State Supreme Court, Commission Co-Chair
Ms. Jody Becker, DCYF, Commission Co-Chair
Justice Barbara Madsen, Washington State Supreme Court, Incoming Commission Co-Chair
Ms. Raven Arroway-Healing, NW Intertribal Council
Ms. Jolie Bwiza, Tacoma Chapter Leader, Mockingbird Youth Network
Judge Kitty-Ann van Doorninck, Superior Court Judges' Association
Ms. Jeannie Kee, Foster Youth Alumni Representative
Ms. Jill Malat, Office of Civil Legal Aid
Ms. Tonia McClanahan, Parent Advocate Representative
Mr. Ryan Murrey, Washington State CASA
Ms. Joanne Moore, Washington State Office of Public Defense

Members Not Present

Mr. Jim Bamberger, Office of Civil Legal Aid
Ms. Beth Canfield, Foster Parents Association of Washington State
Mr. Mike Canfield, Foster Parents Association of Washington State
Mr. Martin Mueller, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (designee for Chris Reykdal)
Ms. Carrie Wayno, Attorney General's Office (designee for Bob Ferguson)

Guests

Ms. iLeana Areiza, Mockingbird Society
Ms. Annie Blackledge, Mockingbird Society
Ms. Cindy Bricker, Administrative Office of the Courts
Ms. Peggy Carlson, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Mr. David Del Villar Fox, DCYF
Ms. Katie Ferguson, Amara
Ms. Laurie Lippold, Partners for our Children
Mr. Matt Orme, Washington State Center for Court Research

Vacant

Washington State House of Representatives
Washington State Senate

Staff Present

Ms. Cynthia Delostrinos, Administrative Office of the Courts
Ms. Moriah Freed, Administrative Office of the Courts
Ms. Akanksha Jayanthi, CCFC Staff Intern, Center for Children & Youth Justice

Call to Order

Ms. Jody Becker called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm. She noted May is Foster Care Month, and also that it was Ms. Cindy Bricker's birthday. She then invited everyone to introduce themselves.

Ms. Becker started the meeting by acknowledging that it is Justice Bobbe Bridge's last meeting as co-chair and Ms. Akanksha Jayanthi's last meeting as the CCFC staff intern. She invited Commission members to offer comments or thoughts on Justice Bridge's departure and legacy.

Ms. Joanne Moore read prepared remarks about Justice Bridge's accomplishments as an integral part of forming the Commission and carrying out its work. Many Commission members shared their gratitude to Justice Bridge for her work, dedication, and guidance throughout the years.

Staffing Updates

Justice Bridge shared the courts and CCYJ have decided to continue with the status quo and have another CCYJ intern from the University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy and Governance be the staff person for the Commission.

En Banc Presentation Recap

Ms. Jayanthi then briefly summarized the en banc presentation and reported delivered to the Supreme Court in the first week of April. She said the Court was interested in hearing the activities and accomplishments of the Commission. The Court asked questions about how they can support Commission work in the future and whether there have been decreases in racial disparities and outcomes in timeliness and dependency hearings. Overall, the Court reaffirmed the work of and their support of the Commission.

Dependency Timeliness Report 2018

Mr. Matt Orme from the Washington State Center for Court Research presented findings from the 2018 Dependent Children in Washington State: Case Timeliness and Outcomes Report. He first outlined basic changes to the Report data changes and methodologies. He said there are new targeted data elements in the new DCYF family system regarding final discharge outcome types, and there is more information related to extended foster care placement types. The biggest difference in this year's Report is that there is no data from King County because the county has its own case management system, and they have not been able to migrate data between that database and the database the other counties use. Mr. Orme said IT teams are working on the data migration and hope to have some of that data extracted by July and entered into a database repository with all the other counties for a statewide data pull.

All of this means this year's Report is county-based. They can't do a statewide pull because of King County, and there are no specific reports on FJCIP counties because King County is one of those. Mr. Orme's presentation highlighted findings from Thurston, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties.

Flow of dependency filings

Mr. Orme said the flow of filings -- how many cases are coming into the system versus how many are exiting the system -- indicates the pressure on the system, or the backlog of cases.

Snohomish County faces a high pressure on its system, as there is a “tremendous amount” of filings entering the system, exceeding those that are dismissed. In 2018, Snohomish County reported 485 dependency filings and 186 termination filings, and 502 dismissals. Thurston County’s backlog peaked in 2013 and has since leveled out. In 2018, there were 147 dependency filings, 68 termination filings, and 142 dismissals. Pierce County had been rising since 2012, but in 2018 there was a decline in the backlog. They had 617 dependency filings, 248 termination filings, and 660 dismissals. Mr. Orme said Pierce County’s backlog is falling partly due to the county’s new preventative approach in which they conduct a secondary review of the filings before taking the case in. These secondary reviews provide the courts an added opportunity to use a family assessment response system to take advantage of volunteer replacement agreements or short-term stays with relatives, diverting children from entering the system in the first place. Mr. Orme said it will be interesting to watch how well Pierce maintains this trend and keep an eye on re-dependency or re-entry to see if these cases come back in to the system.

Mr. Orme also talked specifically about children removed from parents because of parents’ substance use. He said Snohomish County specifically has faced a large opioid crisis, with about half of dependency caseloads resulting from parental substance abuse. The rate in Pierce County is slowly increasing in these cases, which Mr. Orme said is representative of the entire state. Thurston County’s numbers had been falling from 2012 to 2014, but have been rising again since then, currently just under 60%.

Further, the biggest age group of children entering dependency filings are infants, between 0 and 2 years old. Infants made up 46% of dependency filings in 2018 in Pierce County, 45% in Snohomish County, and 44% in Thurston County. The percentage of infants entering dependency filings because of parental substance abuse was 60% in Pierce and Snohomish counties and 63% in Thurston County.

Mr. Orme discussed the rising number of intakes overall. There was a 39% increase in intakes for Child Protective Services from 2010 to 2018. Overall, cases which required a face-to-face response increased by 60% during this time frame. More specifically, the number of emergent cases requiring a face-to-face meeting within 24 hours where many kids enter the system right away has increased by 185% from 2010. Cases requiring a 72-hour response increased by 22% during that same time period.

Ms. Annie Blackledge commented that the effects of the Great Recession are ending for most at-risk families, and wondered if there might be some correlation with the rise in intakes. Mr. Orme said there was a confluence of factors in 2010 that has led to the current state of affairs, including significant turnover at departments as well as the opioid epidemic. He also noted positive changes, like the improving economy and slightly more resources. The department is still navigating the wake of these changes, he said, so it often feels like they are playing catch up.

Ms. Moore asked if the data analysis makes adjustments for population increases. Mr. Orme said they look at filing rate counts, so looking at the number of filings per 100 people, for example. This allows for comparisons between counties with varying populations.

Exiting the System: Adoptions and Reunifications

Statewide, reunifications have slightly increased while adoptions slightly decreased. In Pierce County, 41% of reunifications took less than 15 months, while 32% of reunifications took more than 24 months. In Snohomish County, 51% of reunifications took less than 15 months while 20% took more than 24 months. In Thurston County, 43% of reunifications took less than 15 months while 19% took more than 24 months.

On the other hand, adoptions tend to take much longer. In Pierce County, 82% of adoptions took more than 24 months. Adoptions took more than 24 months in 75% of cases in Snohomish County and in 66% of cases in Thurston County.

Extended Foster Care

Mr. Orme said the courts have been tracking extended foster care outcomes for a couple of years now. One measure is whether a caretaker was given adequate timely notifications for hearings. While some counties are not documenting this outcome at all, some of the bigger ones – like Pierce, Snohomish, and Grays Harbor – are. Mr. Orme specifically highlighted Thurston County, which gave 1,000 timely notifications to caregivers, including orders for review hearings, first review hearings, and permanency planning hearings. He said Thurston County is a good example of what can be accomplished when a county has leadership from the bench.

Other Findings

Pierce County saw a decline in the percent of cases with fact-finding within 75 days of petition between 2017 and 2018 (from 84% to 77%), which they do not think should be happening. Snohomish and Thurston Counties both reported increases in percent of cases with fact-finding within 75 days of petition. Snohomish went from 64% in 2017 to 72% in 2018, and Thurston went from 77% in 2017 to 88% in 2018.

As for having a permanency planning hearing within 12 months, Snohomish County has fallen slightly in this realm from 84% in 2017 to 80% in 2018, and they are not quite sure why. Both Pierce and Thurston Counties have increased the percentage of permanency planning hearings, both at 96% in 2018.

For percent of termination petitions filed within 15 months of out-of-home care, Pierce County fell from 78% in 2017 to 70% in 2018, while both Snohomish and Thurston Counties increased during that same time frame, from 72% to 75%, and 87% to 92%, respectively.

Overall, Mr. Orme mentioned that Pierce County is facing some challenging times right now, and much of the turmoil is due to staffing challenges.

He also mentioned Thurston County has decided to implement more oversight on these cases, like having workers come to the court and give reviews on timeliness. The county has attributed some of the lateness in these filings to a lack of dedication on the social worker side and is trying to have more oversight or conversations around that.

Looking at prior dependency and re-entry into the system, Thurston County has reported fewer re-entries (from 5% in 2017 to 4% in 2018) while there were more re-entries in Snohomish (9% in 2017 to 11% in 2018) and Pierce (6% in 2017 to 9% in 2018) Counties. Mr. Orme noted that

in Snohomish, every re-entry case coming back in at the two-year mark was due to a drug relapse. The judicial system there is trying to figure out how to provide more services to make sure kids can stay at home after reunification.

Mr. Ryan Murrey mentioned that the flip side of that statistic is that 90% of the parents did not relapse, which is a positive indicator. He said that in Snohomish County if only 22 families re-entered the system, that's an improvement in the grand scheme of things.

Ms. Tonia McClanahan mentioned how Thurston County has been highly successful with its Family Recovery Court, reaching 100% graduation rates. Mason County's Family Recovery Court is growing by the week. She said parents who are not in recovery court themselves are staffing the court. This approach has positively affected families, as they do not have to wait between 3 and 6 months to come to court, and instead they can be there every month.

Mr. Murrey asked if Mr. Orme will re-aggregate the data and provide an update when he gets the data from King County. Mr. Orme said they think the data will start coming in July, so he does not know if they will have time to issue a supplemental report with King County data before having to start working on the 2019 Report.

Normalcy Workgroup Actions and Update

Justice Bridge asked the Commission if they formally approved the recommendations the Normalcy Workgroup provided in December 2018 regarding comprehensive sexual health education for youth in foster care. Ms. Jeannie Kee recapped the main recommendation, which is to partner with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to mandate comprehensive sexual health education for all students in public schools.

Judge Kitty-Ann van Doorninck motioned for approval of the recommendations. Mr. Murrey seconded the motion. The recommendations were unanimously adopted.

Ms. Kee then provided an update on SB 5395, the bill requiring comprehensive sexual health education for all students in public schools. The bill died in the House of Representatives, likely due to budget issues and fears around misinformation. The bill returned to the Senate Rules Committee.

While the bill remains in Committee, Ms. Kee said the Normalcy Workgroup is working on action plans to make sure youth in foster care receive some sort of sexual health education before exiting care. She mentioned the Licensing Division is considering creating a brochure highlighting reproductive health rights for which youth in care are eligible, including Medicaid to age 26.

Justice Bridge suggested Mockingbird Society could offer seminars or presentations in their chapter networks to provide this type of information as well. Ms. Kee added that a lot of youth in care and extended foster care are not aware of their reproductive rights, like access to birth control and exams, or services for which they are eligible. She said the Normalcy Workgroup is also considering talking to Child Health and Education Tracking program screeners to share this information. She mentioned adding or updating links on independence.wa.gov, a website with

resources on independent living for youth in care. The Workgroup also floated the idea of suggesting youth in care use Planned Parenthood's app which offers information about sexual health. Another option might be to develop their own app. Justice Bridge said that even with an app, the youth have to know it exists, which is where Mockingbird could use their networks to spread the word. Ms. Blackledge said Treehouse could also play a role in that process.

Justice Bridge said the Senate bill is great because it normalizes the experience of receiving sexual education and applies to all kids. However, she said if it needs to be responsive to the youth voice and the recommendations made to the Commission, they must ensure the youth voice is part of the process.

Ms. McClanahan asked if the Normalcy Workgroup has spoken with a pediatrician or found a way to get pediatricians on board with supporting the bill, as they can talk about how puberty is starting earlier and they are having conversations about puberty in their offices starting at 8 years old. Jeannie mentioned the Workgroup plans to work with local public health offices.

Mr. Murrey asked if this policy requires a legislative change or if OSPI can just implement the change themselves. Ms. Peggy Carlson said OSPI has an approved curriculum, but there are concerns with the cost of implementation of the curriculum, especially in districts that do not currently offer any type of sexual health education.

Ms. Blackledge said concerns about funding speaks to the larger issue of eliminating support positions in schools after the Recession. Some schools do not have a nurse or a health teacher.

Ms. Kee said one of the Workgroup's recommendations was to ask for a teen clinic in all schools, noting that places like King County have the money to do so. She said OSPI suggested they would work with foster care liaisons around the state, underscoring the importance of relaying sexual health information to youth. The driving force here is to normalize the experience for youth in care so they do not have to go somewhere separate to receive sexual health education. Further, she said she wants to normalize conversations around sexual health education in the public and legislature, so the next time the legislation comes up for a vote, it is easier to engage in the conversations. Ms. Kee said caregivers would like to have some type of training or support on having conversations about sexual health with youth in care, especially as they do not know when kids are going to need or ask for this information.

Ms. Blackledge brought up the idea of an app again, saying Microsoft does a hackathon every year where people develop apps, so she can connect Ms. Kee to that. Ms. Lippold mentioned she can connect Ms. Kee there as well.

Reunification Steering Committee Update

Ms. Moore talked about updates to the Reunification Steering Committee, mentioning that Judge Jeffrey Bassett of Kitsap County is the chair.

June is Reunification Month, and events are held on different days throughout the month. Ms. Bricker found a way to offer a \$100 grant to any county or court that applies and wants to use those funds for a Reunification Day celebration. Additionally, Ms. Lorrie Thompson secured a

contribution of teddy bears, so everyone who participates in Reunification Day at their courts will receive on.

The Reunification Steering Committee has redrafted a proclamation for the Governor's Office to sign. Justice Bridge asked if the Committee should update the proclamation every year. Ms. Moore said that is definitely something they can do to show unified support for Reunification Day.

Reunification Day events offer food, photographer, resources tables, and more for participants. Ms. Moore said a lot of smaller courts are also participating in the festivities, including San Juan, Skagit, and Lewis Counties. She also mentioned how there has been good press for Reunification Day, including positive representations of child welfare and their families, which has been one of the objectives of Reunification Day.

Children's Legal Representation Pilot Update

Ms. Jill Malat next provided updates on the ongoing Children's Legal Representation Pilot study in Grant and Lewis Counties. The study began in 2017 to assess the effects of appointing lawyers to all kids at the initial shelter care hearing. The outcomes – case load standards and impacts to timeliness and wellbeing outcomes – are being compared to Whatcom and Douglas Counties among kids that do not have standard based representation. The Washington State Center for Court Research has contracted with the University of Washington School of Social Work to conduct the study, and they said they need more permanency episodes to have enough data samples to produce a statistically reliable dataset. Ms. Malat said the study recently received a year-long extension to collect the additional data. It did not require more money.

However, in Grant County there is a judicial officer who does not want to participate in the study. Ms. Malat said this is an isolated incident and not indicative of any larger movement. One attorney filed a Notice of Disqualification, which a lawyer files if they do not think the judge can be fair in a case. The judge does not have a choice when such a notice has been filed, but this judge did not accept the notice and heard the case.

Ms. Malat said she tried to initiate a conversation with the bench in Grant County to resolve the issue, but the bench did not seem open to doing so. She next found out the bench issued a letter in response to the Notice of Disqualification deciding to no longer appoint lawyers to kids in these shelter care hearings.

Ms. Malat noted that counties do not have to participate in the study, and the legislation does not require that judges appoint lawyers to these kids. She also said she recognizes that the legislature imposed this study on counties without getting buy-in from them; however, the study has been ongoing for two years. She said if the judges did not appoint lawyers to the kids, the study would have to end, and they would not have a statistically valid data set.

Ms. Malat notified the legislator who sponsored the original legislation creating the study and drafted a letter to the presiding judge. She said even though the judges were not appointing attorneys to these kids, the lawyers still showed up to the hearings and provided a Notice of

Appearance, which were recognized by the bench. Therefore, the study will continue on for the time being.

Fostering Family Initiative

Ms. Katie Ferguson from Amara spoke to the Commission about the new Fostering Family Initiative, which seeks to build more community support for foster kids and families. She mentioned how Amara's CEO John Morse wants to recognize the business community as an untapped resource for providing supports to families. The result is the Fostering Family Initiative, which is scheduled to launch May 16.

The initiative is a pilot project with two main goals. The first is to raise awareness about children in foster care, particularly in the Puget Sound region. The second is to transform that awareness into action and community-wide support. The key message of the initiative is that sometimes situations arise that affect a family's ability to be together. Regardless of the reason, everybody has a role to step up and support those kids and families. The tagline of the initiative is, "We all have a role. Find yours." Everyone can show up and offer support in their own ways. By reducing stigma and shame, the community can help improve outcome for kids and families all around.

The initiative has some calls to action, namely asking community members to listen to the foster care community and learn how they can be supportive. Ms. Ferguson said this initiative is not intended to be a recruiting event; a common misconception people have is they have to become a foster parent to be helpful. Instead, people can support foster families in whatever way makes sense to them, whether it be volunteering, giving donations, cooking a meal for a neighbor, or something else. In the next phase of the initiative rollout, people can go to the website and search by their geographic area to find opportunities to support their foster family neighbors. The website intends to gather partner organizations in one space so people can look for opportunities to help in one place instead of looking at individual organizations.

The other side of the Fostering Family Initiative is to leverage businesses as an untapped resource who have both internal reach among employees and external reach in communities. The biggest ask of businesses is to help the marketing aspects of the campaign, by donating paid marketing space, for example. They could also provide discounts to foster families. Ms. Ferguson mentioned she has been talking with Ms. Bricker about asking businesses to provide something for Reunification Day events.

Ms. Ferguson said that while Amara is leading the initiative, they are being intentional about having the Fostering Family Initiative under separate branding. The hope is that doing so will encourage people to take part of the initiative without feeling like it is Amara. Given the initiative is a pilot project, Ms. Ferguson said they will see how everything goes for the next two years and then re-evaluate.

Justice Bridge noted it is part of the Commission's responsibility – under Court order – to engage in efforts to raise public awareness of foster care, particularly of kids in foster care.

Mr. Murrey asked what kind, if any, of stewardship will be done after people make initial contact. Ms. Ferguson said she will be sending out regular digital newsletters for people to stay engaged. The overarching goal, though, is for people to be self-sufficient and simply go to the website to find opportunities to get involved.

Foster Youth and Alumni Leadership Summit

Ms. iLeana Areiza introduced Mockingbird's annual Foster Youth and Alumni Leadership summit, which offers Mockingbird chapter members the opportunity to develop and present policy ideas to the Office of Homeless Youth and the Commission. Ms. Jolie Bwiza outlined ideas chapters are planning to develop at the summit, including: LGBTQ+ training for foster parents; eliminating homelessness by addressing lack of housing assistance and other barriers to stability; culturally responsive housing options for foster youth and young people in extended foster care; addressing barriers to accessing IDs; eliminating restrictions on sibling visitations and eliminating sibling separations; and increased supports for returning to formal education.

Ms. Blackledge noted two recent successes stemming from last year's summit. SB 5290 ending the use of detention for status offenses has passed, as has a bill requiring young adults with lived experiences to be on the DCYF Oversight Board and the Office of Homeless Youth Advisory Council. She said the next steps are ensuring young people apply for those seats.

Ms. Blackledge said Mockingbird had a goal of doing work around improving transition planning, but the state budget did not include funding for it. However, Mockingbird has supportive partners with DCYF. She said the sexual health education piece discussed earlier fits with many of the other issues young people have brought up, like transition planning and financial literacy.

Justice Bridge said the financial literacy questions have been present for a long time, but the connections with resources in the community never get made. Ms. Blackledge said Mockingbird is trying to work with the Washington State Employee Credit Union to see if young people can get bank accounts before leaving care. There also are protections in place where departments can seal a young person's credit upon entering care and make sure they can resolve any potential discrepancies before exiting care.

Ms. Blackledge also mentioned other structural challenges, like youth in care accessing IDs. This problem will likely only become more challenging given the change to the enhanced ID required for air travel beginning in 2020.

Lastly, Ms. Blackledge discussed Mockingbird's Keep our Kids in Kent Initiative. She said they are creating constellations of foster families in that community to guarantee a young person can remain in the community if going into care. There is buy-in from all stakeholders in Kent, but the initiative did not get funded. Mockingbird is currently looking for other ways to continue advancing that work. There are 11 constellations in the state right now, but there is only funding for eight of them. The department is in discussions about how to keep the remaining three constellations operating. Ms. Blackledge said this is in contrast to Mockingbird in the United Kingdom, which has been in place for four years. There are almost 50 constellations in the UK.

Ms. Blackledge reiterated the Summit will be August 6 and 7, with the presentations to Commission members on the 7th. They are still waiting to confirm the location of the Summit.

Miscellaneous

Before wrapping up the meeting, Justice Madsen said she spoke with Rob Mead, the librarian for the Supreme Court library, who offered the Commission an embedded librarian who would be assigned to the Commission and conduct research. The Commission overwhelmingly accepted this offer.

Justice Madsen also mentioned that she and Justice Bridge will be interviewed on Inside Olympia. The interview might happen before the Youth and Alumni Leadership Summit, in which case they could highlight the summit on air. Justice Madsen also suggested having TVW televise the Summit. Ms. Blackledge said the main consideration would be filming youth under age 18, but said they could talk later to figure out logistics.

As her final words as co-chair of the Commission, Justice Bridge encouraged the Commission to continue doing what they are doing. She said there is always such energy in the room, and even though everyone is always extraordinarily busy, they come to meetings and participate and get the work done.

Adjourned 3:23 pm by Jody Becker.








Youth Leadership Summit

ONE UNITED VOICE FOR CHANGE

Mockingbird Youth Programs



Mockingbird Youth Programs is a powerful statewide coalition of young people affected by foster care and/or homelessness. Through seven chapters around the state, the program brings together young people who have experienced the child welfare system or our state's homeless youth response system first-hand and want to share their stories so tomorrow's youth will not have to face the same challenges.

-  **Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness (YAEH)** in partnership with New Horizon Ministries
-  **Olympia Chapter** in partnership with Community Youth Services
-  **Seattle Chapter** in partnership with the Accelerator Y
-  **Spokane Chapter** in partnership with Volunteers of America, Eastern WA & Northern ID
-  **Tacoma Chapter** in partnership with The REACH Center
-  **Yakima Chapter** in partnership with Catholic Charities, serving Central WA
-  **Everett Chapter** in partnership with Cocoon House

2019 Youth Advocacy Proposals*

YAKIMA CHAPTER

Topic: Supportive foster care placements for LGBTQ+ young people in care

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ+) youth in foster care face a variety of challenges at increased rates compared to their peers. Approximately 22.8% of youth in out-of-home care identify as LGBTQ+, compared to roughly 3.8% of the general population. The Family Acceptance Project (FAP) found that LGBTQ+ young people who were rejected by their families engaged in more risky behaviors compared to LGBTQ+ young people with no family rejection. Conversely, 92% of the young people who felt comfortable in their placement believed that they would grow into a happy, healthy adult. The Yakima Chapter proposes requiring LGBTQ+ sensitivity training for foster parents in the licensing process.

** Please Note: This document does not reflect The Mockingbird Society's final advocacy agenda for the 2020 legislative session. These proposals represent program participants' best thinking about the reforms they want to prioritize in the year ahead. Mockingbird will work with community partners and legislative champions to determine which issues will be included on the agency's agenda, to be finalized in fall 2019.*



Youth Leadership Summit

ONE UNITED VOICE FOR CHANGE

TACOMA CHAPTER

Topic: Youth-informed evaluation of training for Young Adult Shelter staff

Staff members in Young Adult Shelters are present to grow, protect, and assist young people with the goal of helping young adults become stably housed. According to the Homeless Hub research library, 45% of people experiencing homelessness have a disability or mental health issue. Without the proper knowledge, shelter staff cannot effectively help young people and may end up causing further trauma. Shelter staff are not consistently trained to support young people of color, LGBTQ+ young people, those with disabilities, and youth experiencing mental health crises. To address these issues, Tacoma proposes that the Office of Homeless Youth conduct youth-informed evaluations of training for shelter staff, including focus groups, to ensure that staff are utilizing what they have learned. Tacoma also proposes that before starting their jobs, all Young Adult Shelter staff receive comprehensive training, including racial equity, Mental Health First Aid, young adult development, care for disabilities, and trauma informed care.

YOUTH ADVOCATES ENDING HOMELESSNESS CHAPTER

Topic: Expand Master Leasing programs for young people experiencing homelessness

The Office of Homeless Youth currently funds twelve programs that include master leasing in Washington state. People of color and those who are LGBTQ+ are more likely to be evicted and have a harder time getting a lease, and master leasing programs for young people could help address these inequities. However, master leasing programs for young people experiencing homelessness are not available statewide, and are limited to a small number of agencies. Additionally, in our experience, young people are not aware of existing master leasing programs. The YAEH Chapter proposes to expand master leasing programs for young people experiencing homelessness across the state. YAEH also proposes promoting the programs widely, ensuring that young people who are referred to rapid rehousing programs be notified of master leasing programs. Lastly, we propose that master leasing agencies use more expansive eligibility criteria when determining the homeless status of young people.



Youth Leadership Summit

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SEATTLE CHAPTER

Topic: Comprehensive, culturally responsive training for foster parents and social workers

The Seattle Chapter has experienced and seen their peers struggle with the lack of long-term, culturally responsive placements for young people in foster care and extended foster care. The Seattle Chapter proposes that Washington state require all people that support young people in foster care and extended foster care to receive a comprehensive core-curriculum, and on-going trainings. This would include social workers, foster parents, therapists contracted by the state, and group home and shelter staff. These trainings would be in-person, involve young people in their creation and review, and cover cultural responsiveness, crisis de-escalation, trauma-informed disciplinary practices, trauma-informed care, casefile interpretation, and acceptance of beliefs. The Seattle Chapter also proposes that the state form a curriculum and training task force to assess current trainings being offered, train trainers across the state, and evaluate for fidelity.

SPOKANE CHAPTER

Topic: Access to Identicards for youth experiencing homelessness

Youth experiencing homelessness (ages 13-17) have a more difficult time obtaining Washington state Identicards than their peers in foster care. Without an Identicard, youth cannot successfully transition into adulthood. Not having an Identicard creates barriers for youth in applying for jobs, getting into housing, and pursuing higher education. Youth without an Identicard are also unable to provide identification to law enforcement when asked. In addition, youth who do not have an Identicard will face barriers in obtaining the Enhanced Identification Card which will be required to board an airplane or enter federal buildings starting in October of 2020. The Spokane Chapter proposes that McKinney-Vento liaisons or a designated state agency be able to verify identity for youth who are homeless in the process of obtaining a state ID, so that they will more easily be able to obtain an Identicard.



Youth Leadership Summit

ONE UNITED VOICE FOR CHANGE

EVERETT CHAPTER

Topic: Elevate youth voice in foster care case planning documents

DCYF has adopted specific policies mandating that social workers include foster youth voice while creating permanency plans. However, not including the voices of young people on important documents such as placement referral forms prevents young people from having a say about their potential homes and families. The Everett Chapter proposes that young people should be able to see their placement referral forms, and tell their own stories for possible foster parents to see. To this end, Everett Chapter also proposes including young peoples' stories in their own words on DCYF placement referral forms.

OLYMPIA CHAPTER

Olympia Topic: Equitable, accurate vulnerability index assessments for young people experiencing homelessness

Vulnerability assessment tools are created to determine an individual's vulnerability, and to prioritize the most vulnerable people for housing resources. Currently, different agencies in Washington state use different tools to assess vulnerability for young people. The assessments often do not include key factors that contribute to youth and young adult homelessness including disability, domestic violence, foster care history, and other categories. When implemented, vulnerability assessments may not be evaluated to ensure that they are not exacerbating racial disproportionality for people of color experiencing homelessness. The Olympia Chapter proposes that the Department of Commerce choose or create a vulnerability index assessment tool designed for youth which equitably and accurately assesses vulnerability for young people experiencing homelessness.

