



Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Commissioner
Jaime Masters, MS, MFT

DFPS Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes:
Committee on Advancing Residential Practices (CARP)
Monday, July 11, 2022, 11:00 am
4900 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin, TX 78751
Brown-Heatly Building, Public Hearing Room

Meeting Minutes

CARP Committee Members Present:

Glenna Bilberry, State Director	The Bair Foundation
Stephanie Brown, Sr. Vice President	Children’s Hope
Jenifer Jarriel, CEO	DePelchin Children’s Center
DeJuana Jernigan, Director of Child Welfare	Arms Wide Adoption Services
Karen Lund, Executive Director	CK Family Services
Scott Lundy, CEO	Arrow Child & Family Ministries of Texas
Candice Matthews, Executive Director	Children of Diversity
Katie Olse, Executive Director	Alliance of Child & Family Services
Glenn Scruggs, CEO	The Giocosa Foundation
Jennifer Maddox, Director of Foster Care and Adoption	Jonathan’s Place

The meeting was called to order at 11:02 am by the Committee Chair Scott Lundy, and the Committee members present introduced themselves.

Elizabeth Kromrei, CPS Director of Services, gave an overview of COVID vaccines and arrangements that are being made to organize vaccine clinics for children in DFPS care, including those that are PMN or have special needs. Updated information was shared from DFPS documents recently posted to the Coronavirus Resources page on the DFPS website, including [“COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance For Youth”](#) and [“COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ For Youth”](#). There was a reminder to continue to report any children in state conservatorship who are tested for COVID to the dfpscovid19testreporting@dfps.texas.gov box.

Hector Ortiz, DFPS Director of Conservatorship, announced recent changes to CPS Staffing within leadership, including Erica Bañuelos, who was promoted from Director of Field Operations to Associate Commissioner for CPS.

Kason Vercher, DFPS Residential Child Care Contracts Director, explained that all residential child care operation contracts from the current Open Enrollments that are expiring on 8/31/2022 would be extended an extra year through a re-certification process, giving time for the Department to update the Open Enrollments.

Bill Walsh, DFPS Director of Purchased Client Services, did an update on the DFPS response to the Provider Workgroups, including that the Residential Provider Report Cards have been sent out to providers who complete the request process. In response to provider feedback, the Incentives and Remedies processes for EBI Training and Background Checks remedies will be removed for the FY23 year, and there will be an addition of an incentive that Emergency Shelters will be eligible for. More detailed information on updates will be sent out to providers by the end of July.

Rocky Hensarling, DFPS Director of Permanency, gave an overview on updates made to the [Provider Portal and Caregiver Training Hub](#) at the end of June, 2022. The former training titled "Recognizing and Reporting Sexual Abuse, including Sexual Aggression", has been replaced by the training titled "Preventing and Recognizing Youth Sexual Abuse". The new training should be taken going forward for all new caregivers, and by current caregivers when they are due for their annual training. In addition, two other DFPS trainings, "Administering Psychotropic Medications" and "Trauma-Informed Care" can now be taken through the Caregiver Hub, allowing providers to generate a report showing the completion status of their caregivers. It was acknowledged that the trainings do not yet generate a certificate upon completion, but that functionality will be added.

Jillian Bonacquisti, DFPS Director of Placement Services, gave an update on the currently posted Open Enrollment residential contracting opportunity for Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP), and the upcoming posting for Treatment Foster Family Care (TFFC). Interest has been expressed by a number of operations in both contracting opportunities, but there have been no applications for the QRTP thus far due to concerns over the “no eject-no reject” requirements for accepting and keeping children, so changes are being considered.

Kaysie Taccetta, DFPS Director for Client Services, Forecasting, and Federal Funds in the Office of Finance, gave an introduction to the TANF school allowance funds that recently completed their first round of payments. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Pandemic Emergency Assistance Fund was authorized through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (HR 1319), enacted on March 11, 2021, providing \$1 billion through Title IV-A of the Social Security Act for states, tribes, and territories to provide non-recurring short-term expenses and benefits to families that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Texas was awarded and allotted \$49,518,884. Of that amount, DFPS has been allocated a total of \$15,625,000. DFPS has designated \$9.4 million of its allocated COVID funding for the school allowance effort. A portion of these funds will be used for children in Paid Foster Care including Child Placing Agencies, DFPS Foster Homes and children placed with a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC). These funds are available until September 30, 2022. There will be two distributions of payments, a Spring and Fall allocation, each \$250 per child 4 years and older. Providers/caregivers do not have to turn in receipts for these school purchases, but it must be spent on the individual child, not pooled for a group of children. The distribution of the second and final allocation will work slightly differently from the first round that happened in June. Any questions should be directed to DFPSTANFCOVIDSchoolAllowance@dfps.texas.gov.

HHS' Child Care Regulation division is still preparing to provide additional information regarding Employment Verification for potential Operation Employees, so stay tuned.

Kaysie Taccetta, DFPS Director for Client Services, Forecasting, and Federal Funds in the Office of Finance, gave an update on the [Foster Care Rate Modernization](#) methodology progress. Please see the slides provided for more information. Any questions should be directed to dfpsratemodernization@dfps.texas.gov.

Adam King, DFPS Director of Data and Systems Improvement, gave an update on how most numbers associated with children in conservatorship of the state, and those in paid placements, are trending downwards, including children without placement. The mid-year Foster Care Needs Assessment report will be published in the next few days. This data will influence the nature of the DFPS Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) that will be finalized in the next couple of months and posted to the DFPS public website on the [Budget and Finance Data and Reports page](#).

Jerome "Jay" Watts, CPS State Office Placement Program Specialist that oversees the General Placement Search (GPS) application gave an update on provider utilization of the system and common issues. Please see the slides provided for more information. Any questions should be directed to dfpsgpsproject@dfps.texas.gov.

Committee Chair Scott Lundy introduced how there has been a proposal to rearrange the Public Private Partnership (PPP) and CARP meetings to be on the same day, one after the other, with a joint session in between featuring agenda items that are of interest to both committees. The committee was in agreement with trying this new format at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:33 pm.