

ADOPTION ADVISORY COUNCIL
Friday, April 1, 2005, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
160 N. LaSalle, Chicago, IL
Approved As Written (at June 3, 2005 Meeting)

Members Present	Members Absent	DCFS Staff
Donsetta Blakely	Felicia Blasingame	Janise Alston
Sue Cianci	Kathy Casey	Michael Byrd
Art Davis	Patricia Cooper	June Dorn
Ronald Davis	Mary Debose	Ray Gates
Diane Dominguez	Jeanne Howard	Bridgette Glickman
Gwenn Eyer	Vance Johnson	Terry McGlothlin
Brian Hall	Marianne Kelm	Regina Perkins
James Jones	Jackie Sharp	
Susanne Loss	Terry Solomon	
Joyce Loy		
David Matthews		
Krista McCoy		
Gina Miranda		
Marilyn Panichi		
Elizabeth Richmond		
Gretchen Schulert		
Bernadine Spitz		
Shannabeth Stein		
Kim Perez (for Cleo Terry)		
Ron Tyler		
Kim Wheelock		
Melinda Woods-Lis		

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Co-Chairs Elizabeth Richmond & Jim Jones welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.

New Business

Reports on SWFCAC/YAB/CWAC/CIAC/CFS - Janise Alston

Janise Alston gave reports on the following councils:

SWFCAC

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council has received and scored all agency implementation plans and feedback letters are being sent. The Policy Committee continues to work on the implementation plan review process. The council is also working on filling vacancies. Their March 18 meeting was cancelled and their next meeting is scheduled for April 22 in Joliet.

CIAC - Their last meeting was December 9th and they will meet again on April 26. They have an opening on their council for a birth parent that has either initiated a search or found a child through a search.

CFS - They cancelled their March 17 meeting and will meet again on June 16.

CYAB - Sibling Rights Hearings - The Task Force had a conference call on March 22 at Senator Collins' office. Michael Byrd introduced everyone and the guidelines were reviewed. The first hearing is scheduled for April 4. The list of hearing dates and sites is on page 20 of member packets. Janise asked that anyone interested in attending please RSVP to April Curtis at 312/641-2505, Ext. 19. The public hearings are open to anyone. Minutes will be taken at the hearings.

Gwenn Eyer made a motion that any members that testify at the hearings represent themselves as individuals rather than representing the council. Melinda Lis seconded. The motion carried.

Council Priorities - Memo to Director Samuels - Co-Chairs

Jim Jones put together a memo to the Director with input from Elizabeth and Ray. Jim referred to page 12 of member's packets, which was the memo that he developed based on the workgroup recommendations. He asked members to review the memo.

There was discussion regarding working with the National Resource Centers to identify resources.

Diane Dominguez made a motion that the council work more closely with the National Resource Center, and use June as the point person. Rev. Davis seconded. The motion carried. June will report at the next meeting.

Gretchen Schulert said that Wisconsin put out a Request For Proposals for regional post adoption resource centers (4-5). These resource centers would operate independently with common goals and program plans through a 24-hour 800# that would connect families to resources. She said this sounded a lot like what was discussed in a workgroup.

Diane Dominguez made a motion that June and Marilyn gather the information on the Wisconsin RFP through the state adoption managers and bring the information back to the next meeting. Gwenn Eyer seconded. The motion carried.

Melinda suggested that we preface our discussion with Velma or the Director by mentioning that we have more children in adoption than in foster care. She said that as a state we should look at foster care and adoption jointly so that it doesn't look like we are taking away from one group to give to another.

Michael Byrd mentioned that Karen Taylor is developing pre and post adoption training with involvement of council members.

The Director designated Cynthia Moreno to follow up on all of the issues in the memo. Cynthia asked June Dorn to work closely with the council on these issues. June will take issues discussed at meetings back to Cynthia and report back at the next council meeting with feedback from Cynthia and the Director.

June gave the following information in response to the memo:

*Training & Staffing Issues: Adoption Core Training is currently being developed. Adoption Coordinators will return to their old job descriptions in the new fiscal year so they will be specialized on adoption issues again. Cynthia and June met with Arthur Bishop and Larry Chasey regarding what the roles will be as well as post adoption staff roles. They are looking at taking away some of the post adoption responsibilities and centralizing them, perhaps under the Division of Service Intervention, so they can work in a more organized and consistent fashion.

*Developing Community Resources: June said this is a long-term effort and she would like to work on this with the council in future meetings to articulate it better to Cynthia and the Director.

*Cynthia does agree with the need to update the Post Adoption book and other outdated publications.

*June said that DCFS is required to bid out the AICI contract (the Listing Service and Information and Referral Service) and that posting will be out within the next week. The Statewide web-based resource directory hopefully we will accomplish in the next year via The Cradle contract for online training.

*Service gaps statewide - June said we face these issues every day and she will work with the group more closely to flush these issues out.

Jim Jones asked that June invite Ray Knight and/or Bobby Hall to the next meeting to explore what opportunities might exist for grant type funding to address adoption needs. Ray Gates said there are also ongoing general federal research & demonstration grant opportunities that are announced in the Federal Register. Bobby Hall tracks those and flags any that might be of interest to the Department. There is a decision-making process that goes on under Ray Knight's direction to decide which ones the department should apply for. Jim asked that some of that information come to this group. June said that Nancie Brown circulates that information within the Department. Terry will survey the council to see who wants to be added and let Nancie Brown know. June suggested that we should have a conversation with Bobby Hall to find out what resources we have in the department to do grant writing. Jim said the Director said it was ok for us to do this and Jim would like to get the process started. June will have a conversation with Bobby and also talk to Cynthia regarding the council's interest in having Ray or Bobby come to the next meeting.

Marilyn Panichi said that the Federal Register is all on-line. She said that the ones that the council would apply for will be coming out in May and be due in July so that will not give us much time. Marilyn suggested that a committee be formed to look at what is out there, what the timelines are and bring the information back to the council. Committee volunteers were Marilyn Panichi, Rev. Davis, Gretchen Schulert, Ron Davis, and Melinda Lis. June suggested Judy Pence and Jeanne Howard would also be good assets to this group.

Adoption Section of Illinois Families Now and Forever

One of the recommendations in the council's memo to the Director was that a resource section be added to the newsletter that is specific for adoptive families telling them where to go for medical services, support groups, and other resources that are available. Diane suggested a notation be made that says if this information is outdated or you have new information call this number.

Melinda said that there was discussion in their workgroup about updating the ISU resource website. June Dorn said she has met with Cradle staff and one of their projects through their contract will be to update the resource directory statewide. They will work with Jeanne Howard and adoption workers to pull together the best information. They are beginning now and will work into the next fiscal year.

June said she would set up a meeting with The Cradle. Volunteers to participate in this meeting were Melinda Lis, Dave Matthews, Sue Cianci and Marilyn Panichi.

Gwenn, Elizabeth, Melinda and Vanessa will work together to develop regional specific information about local resources that can be listed in the newsletter.

Report from Office of Foster Parent Support Services - Ray Gates

Ray asked Michael Byrd to talk about two events that are being held in April for Child Abuse Prevention Month. Michael said that the 2nd Annual Walk and Resource Rally Against Child Abuse and Neglect will be held on Saturday, April 16 from 11am-3pm at Garfield Park Blvd. & Halsted in Chicago. He also said that One Church One Child is partnering with DCFS for A Day of Prayer for Adoptive Parents, Foster Children, Foster Parents and the Social Service Community on April 16th from 9-10am. Flyers were distributed on both events and Michael asked that council members share the flyers with other families in their regions.

Ray distributed a flyer with information on the Spring Caregiver Training Institutes. Caregivers were informed about this training through the Illinois Families Now and Forever newsletter. Ray reported that the numbers are very low and said that the flyer is being distributed to get the word out to more caregivers. The flyer gave dates and locations.

Adoption Day Events - Bridgette Glickman

Bridgette Glickman reported that the next planning committee meeting is May 24th at the Chicago Bar Association, 321 S. Plymouth, 1:30-3pm. Brian Hall, Gwenn Eyer & Kim Wheelock are part of the planning committee. Bridgette said that the last meeting was a low turnout and that they are struggling with the focus because adoptions are down. Gwenn said she suggested the focus be on adult adoptees and/or success stories. Bridgette asked if anyone knows of any famous adult adoptees to please let her know. If any other council members would like to participate on the planning committee they should contact Bridgette.

Bridgette also announced that as of June 30 there would no longer be a Wednesday's Child program because of a lack of waiting children.

AICI's Range of Services - Marilyn Panichi

Marilyn Panichi reported that AICI has been in existence since 1981, and grew out of the Adoption Listing Service, which started in 1971. She said their goal is to get kids adopted and although they cannot do adoptions directly, their role is to assist workers and families in the matching and recruiting arena. Marilyn distributed and reviewed the following materials:

- AICI's Role in Recruiting Adoptive Families for Waiting Children
- AICI Fact Sheet
- Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. 2004 Annual Report

OLD BUSINESS

Adoption Core Training

Gwenn Eyer reported that she has been working with Karen Taylor and others to write the Adoption Core Training Curriculum outline. They have a very tight time schedule. Their next meeting is scheduled for April 12th.

NACAC Adoptive Parent Support Groups Update

Donsetta reported that as of March 29 there are 6 support groups up and running.

Donsetta said that they are doing the first pre-adolescent workgroup around domestic violence. It is scheduled for April 30th from 10-2, and is for kids age 9-18.

Approval of Minutes of February 4, 2005 Meeting - Co-Chairs

Diane Dominguez made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Donsetta seconded. The motion carried.

Agenda for 6/3/05 Meeting - Co-Chairs

Update on Spaulding Training - June

June, Gretchen & Marilyn will gather info on Wisconsin RFP and bring to meeting.

June will invite Ray Knight/Bobby Hall to next meeting to discuss possibilities that might exist for grant type funding.

June will report back on meeting with The Cradle regarding statewide resource directory.

Newsletter group (Gwenn, Elizabeth & Melinda, Vanessa) will give update.

Diane Jackson will be invited to discuss next year's Adoption Day Celebration

Donsetta will give an update on the NACAC support groups

Grant Committee (Marilyn, Ron, Art, Gretchen, Melinda, Judy) will give an update

June will give update on discussions with Cynthia/Director.

Melinda suggested that the council break into groups to begin acting on some of the suggestions that were made in the memo to the Director.

Set meeting schedule for FY'06

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned early at 1:30 pm due to change in agenda.