

Children's Services Review Panel (CAC) Minutes

23 September 2024 4:30 – 6:30 PM

<https://zoom.us/j/98236935012?pwd=1aQdPvVwuW8V310V5V3vYcJs7BcCem.1>

Members Present: Molly Evans, Lynette Renner, Alexis Kramer, Casey Acord, Rae Johnson & Tonya Long

Ramsey County Staff: Bobbi Jo Potter Cassandra Adler

Guests: Laura Gapske (DCYF)

Introductions:

Chair Update:

- The annual retreat was up at Mille lacs in their cultural center. There were updates and reports from other CSRsPs, DHS|DCYF and their Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) team, judges, members of the Children's Justice Act Task Force and others with lived experiences.
- It is possible to send out letters to families who have closed cases to assist with recruitment.

CAC Update:

- Flyers and community events will continue to serve as recruitment vehicle tool.
- Community balk when they learn a 4-year commitment to serve on this panel which is in statute.

County Update:

- Bobbi Jo provides overview of the Minnesota African American Family Preservation Act (MAAFPA).
- Alarmed by the disproportionality of African American children within the child protection or child welfare system here in Minnesota, MAAFPA was first talked about in 2018.
- Governor Tim Walz signed the HF912 | SF 716 into law on July 10, 2024.
- The law has clear requirements for social service agencies, how to engage with families and the safety planning that's required for upfront services.
- Active efforts require level of prevention to prevent out of home placement and identify barriers to assist family remain as a family unit.
- There are additional traumas that occur once removal occurs.
- Ramsey County and Hennepin County are working on MAAFPA phase in implementation.

- We are sprinting to get up and running by January 1, 2025, building on what we've already been doing and utilizing feedback we've received.
- We are looking at resources. Challenges include cutting community contracts; how to provide services with reductions in areas. Approximately, 38 staff have been lost due to cutting of positions. We are currently filling 20 open child protection positions. These staffing issues are caused by burnout due to high pressure and high caseload sizes.
- In collaboration with Hennepin County, DCYF and Minnesota Association Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) we are developing workgroups to ensure impact on community will remain centered in conversation. In addition, we are creating an internal governance team that includes county commissioners.
- The law requires people serving families be trained in culturally responsive training for that specific population. DCYF is working on developing those trainings.
- The law goes into effect for the state on January 1, 2027.

DCYF Update:

- The Department of Human Services is now officially the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).
- Tikki Brown serves as Commissioner of DCYF and Rebecca St. George serves as Assistant Commissioner of Child Safety & Permanency. DCYF is the department this panel will be supervised under.
- New members will sign a membership agreement and an oath agreement.
- This panel can have up to 15 voting members, we're currently a bit behind on that goal.
- What have others seen as successful acts to recruit new members?
- We value your time and use the stipend as an incentive. Cassaundra has developed an invoicing system for payment that will be done on a quarterly basis.
- Ramsey County bylaw changes were requested at the last meeting to better align with legal guidance we've received in the past year. That process might take longer because it has to go through the board and administration.
- Everyone has different ways they like to be assigned tasks. Accountability is important if there's no accountability resentment can grow. I put action items on the agenda and follow up items.
- What are some ways we can work together to be the most successful?

Advisory input requested: Put icebreaker question on agenda to allow folk to think about their answer ahead of time.

Advisory input received:

- Member revealed her neurodivergence and the need for reminders and repetition.

- Member suggests summary of what was discussed after meeting. Too many emails cause folk to get overwhelmed and lost.
- Member suggests using SharePoint or Google Docs as a shared folder for minutes to alert folk about updates.

Project ideas/update:

- **Tonya Long** suggests a *foster care survey*. New York State does one for all their foster children.
- **Laura Gapske** met with DCYF Institutional Review Board (IRB) Department to discuss how New York maybe went around that. I have notes. You can do 2 IRBs, it's called seating. Doing interviews or surveys with youth and foster kids over age 18 it might be easier to get around. Father's Rights Engagement may be another project idea. DCYF is in the process of updating the best practices guide.
- **Casey Acord**: suggests looking into teenagers being tried as adults

New/unique agenda items:

Follow up items:

Action item	Person responsible	Due date/deadline
Check with Race, Health & Equity Liaisons and/or the planning manager to see if they can assist with recruitment efforts.	Bobbi Jo	October 28 depending on if Planning Manager position is filled.
Connect with American Indian Family Center to get form letter that could be sent out to community members to aid recruitment.	Casey Acord	Open