

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

WACF/CA Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

9:00 – 11:00AM

Lutheran Community Services - SeaTac Office

4040 South 188th St.

SeaTac, WA 98188

Jennings Board Room - 3rd floor

Attendees:

WACF: Charlotte Booth, Erin Larson, Joanne Stimson, Linda Thomas, Paulette Caswell, Ryan Kiely, Rod Johnson, Rose Quimby

CA: Jennifer Strus, Connie Lambert-Eckel, Pamela McKeown, Darcy Hancock.

Agenda/Minutes

Introductions – New WACF Executive Officers

WACF - General Association Topics/Concerns

- Placement crisis – how can we work together to ensure adequate placements and families for every child and youth?
 - Barriers CA faces in addressing the crisis?
 - DLR – timeline for licensing & retention and recruitment of foster homes
 - DLR – Timeline for getting background clearances for staff. Doubling up on staff for case management appointments costs agencies a lot of money

WACF members raised that the term "crisis" usually refers to a time limited situation, but this is ongoing. How can we manage resources to use them more effectively? Members discussed concerns including the delay in getting homes licensed and background check issues, though noted a current workgroup for the latter. It was also noted that this becomes a foster parent retention issue.

Darcy stated that the statute allows 90 days, but it should not take as long as the allotted timeframe. She noted if providers are waiting more than 30 days, (for a home without issues of concern), this is not acceptable and CA would want to have this raised up the chain of command. Please contact CA if more than 30 days. Darcy will communicate this to managers.

The group discussed the net impact of loss of homes and asked if there is data on that. Darcy noted the decline in homes and impact of permanency push on net numbers of beds. Darcy also

noted systemic changes that have had an impact, including examples that homes don't have to be licensed to do dependency guardianships and tribes do their own licensing. She noted there is tracking on why homes close and the reasons stated tend to be adoption of child, child no longer in need of care, and personal issues including divorce, death, health, etc. It was noted by Darcy that more licenses are being revoked than in the past. There are reportedly about 4900 homes statewide.

BRS division noted that the backlog for homes pushes the needs up the system to residential care as well.

Strategies to close the gap were discussed, including reaching out to people who have adopted and have shown successful foster outcomes, reaching out to homes that are tired to see what they need and unpack what the frustration is stemming from and how to better support them. Pam also noted the need to cultivate bridge homes that can transition into adoptive homes. Darcy stated they are hearing positives about the pre-service curriculum, but that some are not happy about in-service training requirements and have not renewed because of those requirements. The Alliance is working on child care options and stipends to support families in attending training. They are also expanding on-line courses and Netflix options.

WACF members noted background checks are still delayed and these delays are somewhat regionally specific (3 North primarily, and some delays in 2) and that even appointments can take a long time. When it goes to CA to get OCA number, assigned, there is a delay in getting that information back to the CPA. Darcy noted there are limited people doing the work. Pam noted that there was a backlog about 6 months ago. A timeframe of 5 days was identified to get the OCA number assigned. The WACF members asked if this could be better communicated when the number is assigned. Pam stated that the goal is for completion of clearance in 2 weeks in Tacoma, and they are close to that mark. It is taking 5 weeks to get them back from the FBI if there are no hits. Paulette provided information as to process in other states where the FBI does "Field Print" live scan. CA staff noted this as something to investigate and said that the FBI had deemed these clearances to be a lower priority compared to other clearance requests. In discussing staff clearances, Connie reported the move to the consolidated background check process is progressing. The goal is to identify a position to address the piece related to clearance of character, competency and suitability. That new role will relieve that piece from the licensors. She discussed funding for this role, and that the work is coming in stages. The consolidated process would create a tier of decision making. Licensing reminded the group that agencies could utilize the statutory provisional clearance (at the agency's liability and risk) - you can bring an employee on staff when awaiting fingerprints if WSP is submitted. The provision is good for 60 days and an extension can be requested. Rod noted that digital access had previously been planned. Jennifer and Connie will have IT follow up on that option.

- Educational Requirements - approved list of degrees

The group discussed issue of the WAC requirement interpretation limiting acceptable degrees for case managers. CA noted this is the same list that the state uses for their staff and that the WAC has always required a social service degree. Darcy stated that waiving the WAC, while allowable for CA staff, would result in loss of federal funding. It was noted that some agencies are laying off staff not grandfathered in with the new implementation of the WAC. Darcy clarified that if the prospective candidate minored in an acceptable degree, that can be taken into consideration, as can course transcripts.

- Contract changes – Providers need adequate time to review and respond

WACF members noted that it is good to get 60 days to review contract, and while a pre-review had occurred, timeframes were shorter and some contracts are not even out yet. Group members noted that some contract changes altered the infrastructure and processes for some agencies and that some contracts changed from the pre-review stage. Connie agreed to follow up on this issue. It was also noted that there is no one at CA specifically "responsible" for CPA contracts and so no track changes guide was available.

CPA

- CPA Rate Restoration

The CPA division noted that we will continue to advocate for rate restoration. The ability of agencies to provide after hours response is greatly impacted by the CPA rate. The current case management rate of \$12/day is crippling. Agencies are primarily funded through philanthropy in this environment. Jennifer noted it was in the CA budget request. Linda reported that ICM (Intensive Case Management) codes have not been authorized by Social Workers, and asked how can we be more creative in gaining appropriate levels of funding for individual kids. Jennifer noted that Social Workers are hesitant when it comes to money/budget. Connie asked if the gatekeepers are engaged and was told that while service levels go through the gatekeepers, it is the experience of the CPA group that the Social Worker is the barrier in approval for the individual child. Rose noted that agencies that do both levels of foster care are seeing high level BRS youth placed in regular foster care. Connie agreed with the drift and that both economic and child's best interest are factors in workers looking at placement in normalized family settings. WACF members noted the need for a better tiered system to step up or down.

- Home Study Disclaimer Statement

WACF CPA division reminded CA of WACF consultation with attorney to develop a disclaimer for agencies to apply to home studies. The disclaimer reflects that the home study recommendations are based on known information, which is restricted due to not having access to FBI check specifics.

Darcy reported to the group that they are drafting an emergency WAC to allow medical exemptions to the flu shot (signed by an MD) for homes licensed for under age 2.

- Thank you for working with us in a collaborative effort and giving us opportunities for input on: Data security verbiage and assisting DLR in drafting new policies and procedures around home studies

The group highlighted that there was great collaboration and consultations resulting from the data security training and thanked CA. WACF members did note the increased expense to agencies based on the data requirements. Connie reported that some Social Workers are still adapting to importance of security requirements in sending encrypted emails. Social Workers can now bracket subject line to enable encryption.

BRS Division:

- Thank you for asking for our help in the past to help keep more children in state! Re-address the goal of serving more of our youth in-state, closer to their homes.

The BRS division noted reports of referrals of youth out of state and the continued impact of current rates on staffing and ability to serve high-level youth. These are known youth that have been served by in-state agencies. Providers and CA would like to serve youth in state. The group would like data, as available, on youth referred out.

- BRS rate reimbursement update

Again, the group discussed the need for restoration of BRS rates cut in 2009. It was noted by BRS division members that this is a child safety issue at this point. Organizations are still closing programs or holding buildings open that could hold BRS beds. Youth are more acute, but the rates are lower. The House did pass the restoration; it is held up in Senate. Jennifer stated forecasting would help tremendously, as it does for traditional foster care, DDA, and Aging and Adult Services. The membership asked if there is data regarding decrease in BRS beds resulting in increased need in foster care. No data reported. The group will continue to advocate for restoration.

FPSS Division:

- Thank you for collaboration on FPS redesign

The FPSS division expressed gratitude for the level of collaboration in the FPS redesign and webinars. The FPSS group anticipates it will help with the level of quality.

- FAR

The group requested update/information and asked if EBP funding would be under a proviso again to move service dollars to FAR. Jennifer reported a suspension of FAR implementation as of July 1st because neither budget had FAR funding allocated. Jennifer reported on conversation with Ruth Kagi in which Representative Kagi asked if FAR could be implemented if they gave FTEs and wrote proviso that they want it spent on CPS investigation, FAR, and Braam compliance. Jennifer responded to her that they could keep it going, but not as aggressively. Hargrove was approving of proviso, but only wanting 10 FTEs for CPS. Jennifer is not sure where it will end up. The senate does not want to give 107 FTEs (per the ask), but CA will not implement if not paid for. Jennifer suggested maybe a small business impact statement to legislators could be effective. She reported that letters will go out on Tuesday to CA staff regarding government shut down in the first week of July. Refer to OFM website for listing of state agencies shut down and experiencing unpaid lay offs.

- How are we doing on the waiver? Can we anticipate any reinvestment in increased services to prevent foster care?

CA noted regarding the IV-E waiver that foster care has gone up and they are negotiating with the feds on some of those terms; other states are experiencing some things as well. There is no money in the reinvestment account.

The meeting adjourned at 11 am after thanking all for their attendance.
Next meeting date to be determined.