

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

WACF - CPA Division Mtg.

September 4th, 2014 11am – 1pm

Olive Crest, [515 116th Ave Ne Ste 174, Bellevue, WA 98004](#)

Attending:

Holly Bernard, YFC Tacoma

Paulette Caswell, Bethany

Jeff Clare, YFC Tacoma and WACF CPA
Division Chair

Xuan Chung, DLR

Paul Johnson, Friends of Youth

Pam McKeown, DLR

Erika Olson, WACF

Alison Palmer, YFC Tacoma

Randy Roberts, DLR

Cindy Steele, CCS

Anne Snook, Olive Crest

Linda Thomas, CCS

Angela Youtsey, West Sound YFC

Kristen Zinsky, CCS

Jenn Bryne, Hand in Hand

Tina, CLS Tacoma on phone

Participated by Phone (did not work well)

Susan Maney, CHS --Phone

Samantha Garcia – PCA

Tina ?, CLS

Sandy Hart, Casey Family Program

Introductions

Jeff Clare gave a brief introduction of WACF and its divisions and all in attendance introduced him or herself.

Pam McKeown introduced herself and her role as a Deputy at DLR. Xuan Chung and Randy Roberts are also representing DLR. The restructure is being made to gain efficiencies. Pam is taking the assessment piece, managing all of the AAs and regional licensors. Xuan is the area administrator for Pierce, Kitsap and King, plus Ron with the CPS piece. Randy is hopeful this creates a better process. The next step is to divide up further. The regional licensing piece is not really changed.

Review and discuss

- **Transfer of Foster Home Licenses**
- **Statewide DLR/CPA Communication via PALs mtg.**

Jeff restated that we want to collaborate and increase effectiveness in communication with CA and the CPAs. We are interested in making foster care more effective and efficient for families. This division put forth two solution-focused documents:

1) Transfer of license

Darcy recently wrote a response by email. The main issue is around the home study piece. Agencies don't want a placement to happen during the transition time.

Randy states that CA is working on a document going step by step but it is not ready for release yet. Do want to assist and make as easy as possible. For example, looking at assessments, if we can look at a home "update" recognizing the author of the original study; we want to identify what we can pull out of a file if there are no changes. For example, an evacuation/fire escape plan could carry over. The draft is coming out very soon, probably the end of the month.

Pam indicated surprise that agencies would be willing to go forward without an assessment, using past work. There are different areas of focus among agencies; sometimes there are really big variations.

Paulette asked for clarification about dates of approval, which are hard to understand. A transfer was approved in March but was backdated to November. It took a long time to sort that out. It seemed arbitrary.

Linda re-stated that consistency of practice is needed regardless of the parties involved. Whether it's a CPA-to-CPA home transfer or a CPA to state licensed home, we all want consistency. There are many ways to vet assessments. For example, can we summarize changes in an addendum vs. doing a whole new assessment? Everyone is on board with owning our own work and we must make sure we are keeping kids safe. Sometimes we want to scrutinize more. We want to understand why the family is making a change and what didn't work in the past.

Jeff offered to help read the document when ready. **Randy will share the draft.**

2) PALS meetings and statewide communication of policy changes

We recommended a statewide agenda so licensors don't have to attend every regional meeting.

Darcy has adopted that. Kristin reports greater efficiency and seeing a lot of consistency. There was a discrepancy in Region 2 that was addressed really quickly.

Randy said that Krissy (Kristina Wright) at HQ pulls the agenda together with requests from agencies. Any suggestions can be sent to her. There's been a lot of positive feedback. Once concern: adding local issues at the end when we want to stay with a standardized agenda.

Linda clarified that the intent is to standardize communication of program and policy issues/statewide issues. Local community collaboration is important. It's positive and very valid to have those local discussions and keep communication going.

Randy clarified that in the future, if the issue is related to policy, it will be added to the next agenda; if strictly a local issue, fine to discuss.

Jeff asked if notes were being taken, and if so, whether the notes could be posted.

Randy: Not formal meeting notes, but any policy interpretation is written and attached to the agenda and that will continue.

Background Clearance issues

Response time

RAP sheets not provided to CPAs

Pam acknowledges that Region 4 has been problematic. A position has been vacant and in Region 2S another person has been out. They have an interim plan to get current. Regional licensors are taking up that work. Please contact Pam if you have been waiting. A “typical” timeframe is hard to define. Staff is committed to turning around as quickly as possible. Some people get “stuck” along the way

Randy: we have been in talks with WSP regarding FBI/Fed rules. Releasing info is very challenging; there might be options that come out of these talks that we could share. As of now the family would have to share that information directly.

The group posed several questions about how to vet a family when info is coming out that CPAs can't get full access to. Even if cleared, agencies then assume responsibility. Can there be some kind of release? Perhaps a meeting to foster that communication with CA, agency and family?

Pam: there could be a caveat that if the family hasn't disclosed the info to the agency, nothing can move forward. Randy requests that this discussion be continued; this is an area where we need to partner. Chris Parvin has been involved in the talks with WSP. Jeff will invite Chris to an association meeting.

The group posed several questions about the timeframe for background checks, barring unusual situations/exceptions. Agencies are waiting for months and months; information is expiring and that is very negative for the families waiting who have done everything they've been asked. From the agency perspective, wait times appear to be person dependent, not process dependent. Pam and Xuan explained that some workload is seasonal (high volumes in October). Information is valid for 90 days but the goal is to do better than that with our timeframes. The rule of thumb is six weeks; at that point agencies should reach out to the licensor and ask for an update; then go up the chain to the supervisor etc. as needed. Pam wants to hear about this; we want to be faster. Email Pam and Xuan with any specific names/situations that need immediate attention.

Forum for foster parent feedback

Foster parents' experiences in the system can be so difficult; by the time families are licensed we have to “patch things up” and help people feel more positive. Does CA want to hear about these experiences? Is there a forum for this? This request is related to the difficulty of becoming licensed. Families don't understand when you communicate the urgent need for foster families and then six months later they still are not licensed.

Pam: there were a lot of opportunities for this in the past. Area admins would come to RDS meetings and get feedback. Meeting would be organized by DCSF at places like a Boys & Girls Club so the kids could play and the adults could talk. It would be nice to return to something like that. Some in King County are still doing. This could be brought up at a larger management meeting.

CA will identify where those RDS meetings are still happening so WACF can publish and share. Agencies and other support groups can get the word out too. Randy agreed it is valuable to find ways to bridge gaps and provide support.

Other ideas offered: perhaps a conference call that families could join to talk directly to Randy and Pam? Families have first hand experience and want avenues to advocate for system change. They can help contribute to solutions. Education is important; families don't know what falls under DLR vs. DCSF. Does DLR attend the RDS meetings? We want in-person meetings to be positive and solution focused.

Pam noted that DLR usually would attend meetings but that's not happening everywhere; Randy will pull the results of the last annual foster family survey and this conversation can continue.

DLR agenda items: update regarding WACs

Randy: We are very appreciative of the feedback from WACF. Drafts are fairly final; public hearing is last October; should come out in November or early December. This will be a great improvement for all. Families and CPSs have their own books. Group care has its own book. We did focus groups with licensors, foster parents and CPAs. State licensors may struggle a bit; this will be less directive; they will need to use professional assessments. Excellent example of collaboration between CA and WACF.

CA representatives departed at 12:30PM

Follow up discussion:

Linda will follow up regarding a request to CA to articulate process for us and aspirational timeline for background checks.

Regarding information that can't be disclosed - Jeff will ask Greg about getting on to the next association agenda. Group discussion about consulting an attorney – perhaps adding language “based on information received from DLR” to state our shared liability. Consider putting the RAP sheet issue forward as an agenda item at the next quarterly meeting with CA.

Discussion of the idea put forth by Tim Kelly that WACF help update contact lists, due to CA's lack of staff time to maintain. Point made that even if list is current, Tim only uses the contract signer, not the local contact, on his lists.

Regarding PALs meeting agenda – Linda suggests WACF could ask for feedback among WACF members about how that is working. Most feedback seems very positive. Don't want those few complaints about restriction of local discussion to taint the overall impression of how this is working. Can a WACF survey be an agenda item on the next PALS agenda?

Jeff will email everyone regarding attendance at the next quarterly CA meeting.

Adjourned at 1PM

