



DCF 56 Advisory Council Meeting

July 17, 2024

12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL Meeting

Meeting Link:

<https://dcfwi.zoom.us/j/82561248887?pwd=UUpiRy9SMkV1Zm4yemFjVXIQYVZRZz09>

DCF Staff			
Name	Present	Name	Present
Shannon Braden		Elaine Pridgen	
Emily Erickson	x	Jennifer Sailer	Absent in training
Dana Johnson	x	Britny Isaacs	x
Shelby McCulley		Kristie Buwalda	x
Allison Fern		Taylor Gilbertson	
Rachel Nilli	x	Lauren Washington	

Steering Committee Members (not required to be in attendance for this meeting)				
Member	Present	Nominating Organization	Agency Employed	Area of Expertise
Lisa Broll		Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA)	Walworth County Department of Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Emily Coddington		Wisconsin Association of Family and Child Agencies (WAFCA)	Wisconsin Association of Family and Child Agencies (WAFCA)	Child Welfare
Jill Collins		Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS)	Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS)	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Deanna Collins		Forest County Potawatomi Tribe	Forest County Potawatomi Tribe	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Brent Ruehlow		WCHSA	Jefferson County Department of Health and Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Machelle Shipman		WAFCA	ANU Family Services	Private Child Placing Agency



Advisory Council Members				
Member	Present	Nominating Organization	Agency Employed	Area of Expertise
Kristen Agenten	x	Public Adoptions	Children's Wisconsin	Foster Care and Adoptions
Patty Baker	x	Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS)	Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS)	Child Welfare Training
Cassandra Eggert	x	WCHSA	Outagamie County Human Services Department	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Laura Goba	x	WAFCA	Children's Wisconsin	Private Child Placing Agency
Katlyn Graebner	x	WCHSA	Green County Health and Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Kate Gravel	x	WCHSA	Dane County Health and Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Laura Halonen-Schultz	x	DMCPS	Wellpoint	Congregate Care Facilities and Services
Allison Higgins		WAFCA	Foundations for Healthy Transitional Living	Private Child Placing Agency
Julie Kay	x	Forest County Potawatomi Tribe	Forest County Potawatomi Tribe	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Andrea Leaman	x	DMCPS	Children's Wisconsin	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Michelle Jones Lim		WCHSA	Waukesha County Health and Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Tracy Schumacher	x	WCHSA	Forest County Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Brittany Shellenberger	x	WCHSA	Winnebago County Health and Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care



Julie Zidek	x	Public Adoptions	Lutheran Social Services	Foster Care and Adoptions
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Public: Karla Meyer (Eau Claire)

AGENDA

- I. **Welcome & Attendance:**
- II. **DCF 56.03 – Definitions**
 - a. *Which definitions in this section could use revision? Which definitions could use more clarity?*
DCF 56.03 (20) – household member: step kids in the home sometimes or college kids. Can we add more specificity around who is a household member, consider historical time spent in a home, frequency and duration of stays.
(35m) – severe emotional disturbance. No other diagnostic category is mentioned in rule, why this one specifically and are others necessary to define in rule?
Recommendation: Include all annotations into the rule definition.
FLAG: formatting question for Elaine.

Are there definitions that are currently excluded you think would be helpful to define (add)?

No comment.

DCF 56.13 – Level of Care Certification

Are there any recommended changes you would make to Child-Specific licensing requirements?

Non-relative Rule: (1) does not apply. Agencies are using Level 1 licensing if the applicant does not have training completed. Rare cases when this applies. Plan is to keep Level 1 which is separate from the Relative/Like-kin rule. Adoption never uses child specific Level 1. If they are level 2 and are due for re-licensure they may bump down until they meet Level 2 requirements (training). Try not to drop down to Level 1 due to change in financial assistance. Will generally ask for an exception before dropping a home down.

Relative Rule: “Substantial” relationship to parent or child. Concerns about a parent meeting someone relatively recently and saying they have a “substantial” relationship. Model after Subsidized Guardianship standards for a 6-month minimum relationship threshold. Conversation around this scenario occurred. We don’t want to inadvertently remove the Level 1 pathway to licensure, particularly when there are non-safety related concerns. Recommended changing who can receive non-safety waivers since it is only applicable to relatives at this time.



Why would we need Level 1 if the exceptions are allowed for training? It probably will not be used often. Decision to keep as it is part of the Wisconsin Levels of Care and Rate system. To get to long-term kinship or adoption you need Level 2.

We want relatives to get to L2 for rate parity.

Q: How about a court ordered placement and the relative does not want to complete the training? What will be the recommendations here? **Flagged for considerations by internal DCF team.**

Are there considerations you have regarding the number and types of references required for licensing a foster parent? Are there specific differences or similarities you would recommend related to relatives or like-kin?

Non-relative Rule: Adoptions asks for references that are non-relative. Having a relative reference is beneficial. In private adoptions we ask only for non-relative references unless they have adult children. Adoption does ask for adult child references. One person e-mails the questionnaire/references as that comes back faster through electronic method. E-mails leads to better time-driven results. Sending an envelope with stamp and return address labels also helps in expediency. References can take a while to be returned. Some will call references also to speed up the process.

What do you do if the reference comes back with a negative response? What is the point if all are going to show the applicant in a positive light? References can be used as mitigation. If there is a bad reference, some licensors choose to make a note and follow up with concerns about the applicant and wrote the concerns into the home study and explained why they are safe to provide care even if a reference disagrees. Won't approve for adoptions until they can obtain 3 favorable references. School references often have the most concerns.

Should we keep three references as the requirement? Prefer to have relative & non-relative references.

Relative Rule: Adoptions does not differentiate between whether the applicant is a relative or non-relative. At times they ask for exceptions for relatives as they do not have three non-relatives who can be a reference.

Are there any considerations you would like to make regarding the requisite number of hours of training, training topics, or other related ideas?

Non-relative Rule: No comments.

Relative Rule: Pre-service training is sometimes completed after placement. Helpful to have training but it happens later in the process. By the time they receive all training on systems information, they have experienced it. Should be tailored to dynamics which occur in relative placements. In classroom setting, relatives say trauma specific training is helpful. Training helps reduce isolation and makes them feel that they are not alone. Address guilt in training topics. Majority of what is trained on may not be as helpful for relatives. Foundation training is



needed for adoptions. There is a # of hours which need to be met. Prefer to have more self-led options and reading books may take more time than what is currently allowed. Look at # of hours allowed for interactive training.

Are there considerations regarding the professional requirements of staff hired in each level of care that you would like to see revised? (Qualifications)

CPA licensing rule (DCF 54) addresses the percentage of staff with certain level of qualification requirements. It is difficult to find master's level trained applicants.

What would need to change in DCF 54 to make it comparable? Experience is often more beneficial compared to degree that a person has. Decrease reliance on having a social work degree; consider special education as an example. Social workers have training in ethics/boundaries which make the social work degree beneficial. Instead look at how the field can help foster more people getting the social work license.

Mentioned Dane County is paying for license renewal and helping staff to get a licensed if required for their position. In rural counties, they have fewer options for staff and budget which larger counties may have access to assist workers. Lutheran Social Services also helps staff pay for the Social Work certification and go on towards a higher degree.

Are there considerations in the requirements of the agency who is employing and monitoring staff performance you would like to see revised?

No comments.

Are there any considerations you would like to see revised in volunteers at a foster home (shift staffed)?

No comments.

DCF 56 Non-Relative PRESENTATION: A PowerPoint was shared with Steering Committee members on Monday July 14, 2024. Summary of DCF 56 Workgroup & Advisory Council Rule Revision Work.

COMMENTS:

Q: Monitoring: No changes were made. TA has been to reference back to DHS code. Electronic monitoring is not in the current DCF 56. Advisory Council member recommended this to be added. **FLAG for further discussion.**



Q: Appeal process. Example of a child-specific license. If your license gets reinstated that does not mean you will automatically get the placement reinstated.

Clarified that 56.09 will also move requirements that are specific to placing or licensing agencies are moved to those sections and 56.09 are specific to what is required of the foster parent.

QUESTIONS:

What workforce issues do you foresee? Child welfare professional may resist having more contact requirements for a Level 2 home to match Level 3 & Level 4. May overwhelm a foster home if they need to have more contact requirements. May be better supported by the agency but also adds to more stress. Second contact could be virtual or some type of outreach instead of two face-to-face visits, unless there is a concern that warrants two face-to-face per month.

Questions from members of the Advisory Council: What is the problem we are trying to solve by increasing contact standards? Is it more about meaningful contact than frequency?

More contacts also increase driving time and takes staff away from other duties.

Can other service providers meet that requirement? Such as YJ, CASA, etc?

Many foster parents work, and additional face-to-face meetings may impact their employment and impact child welfare professionals' availability.

DCF 56 RELATIVE POWERPOINT

Relatives are able to apply at age 18 (proposed future rule) vs. 21 (current rule). Currently have an application for an 18-year-old for younger siblings. A: Update in draft to age 18 for relatives and non-relatives.

DCF shared Chapter 56 Rewrite project timeline rule promulgation timeline.

ADJOURN: 2:00 pm