

DCF 56 Advisory Council Steering Committee Meeting - Minutes

10/9/2023

ATTENDANCE

Steering Committee Members				
Member	Present	Nominating Organization	Agency Employed	Area of Expertise
Lisa Broll	x	Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA)	Walworth County Department of Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Emily Coddington	x	Wisconsin Association of Family and Child Agencies (WAFCA)	Wisconsin Association of Family and Child Agencies (WAFCA)	Child Welfare
Jill Collins	x	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	x	WCHSA	Jefferson County Department of Health and Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Mechele Shipman	x	WAFCA	ANU Family Services	Private Child Placing Agency

Advisory Council Members				
Member	Present	Nominating Organization	Agency Employed	Area of Expertise
Kristen Agentin	x	Public Adoptions	Children's Wisconsin	Foster Care and Adoptions
Patty Baker – Julie Brown sat in for Patty		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	x	WAFCA	Foundations for Healthy Transitional Living	Private Child Placing Agency
Julie Kay		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 Lim	x	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		Public Adoptions	Lutheran Social Services	Foster Care and Adoptions

Advisory Council Members will meet with representatives from DCF from October 2023 through December 2024 in a public meeting format. Meetings will be held via Zoom. Advisory Council Members have subject matter expertise related to Chapter 56. Any questions related to the membership please contact Dana Johnson via email at DanaL.Johnson@wisconsin.gov

DCF Staff			
Name	Present	Name	Present
Wendy Henderson	x	Elaine Pridgen	x
Emily Erickson	x	Jennifer Sailer	
Dana Johnson	x	Britny Smuk	x
Shelby McCulley	x	Kristie Buwalda	x
Shannon Braden	x	Jay Warner	x
Lauren Washington - DMCPS	x		

MEETING NOTES

Welcome & Introduction by Wendy Henderson

Roll Call (see above)

Review Vision statement and striving for justice in the child welfare system through addressing systemic oppression, inequity and racism. (Wendy)

Chapter 56 Rule Revision Stakeholder Structure slide (Emily)

Meeting schedule review

Statement of Scope reviewed (Shelby)

- Areas Not in Scope. Questions.

General categories of north stars (BPOHC staff capture ideas to group into the themes)

Themes:

- Clarity
- Focus on safety & well-being
- Training
- Rules

What is most important to you as you think about revising Chapter 56?

- All expectations for licensing process that could be a violation should be captured. Use of cameras and recording foster children needs to be in rule. DHS Code but not in DCF 56. Someone said they lost an appeal due to the discrepancy.
<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/administrativecode/DHS%2094.18>
- Clear expectations for foster parents. Example: Shared parenting & building a relationship with families (could be expanded to align with FFPSA).
- Requirements for 56 and what is related to safety and well-being.
- Want to maintain high standards, while balancing reducing non-safety related barriers to get licensed
- Reduce "pettiness" rules that do not impact safety (e.g., square footage of bedrooms)
- Make it clear in code; sometimes the sidebar in the annotated version of 56 says something different. (e.g., this rule applies to all household members not just foster youth).
- Focus on common exceptions, like requiring a foster parent to not work, stay at home 24/7 or the phone in the home. If most licenses are requiring those exceptions, we should look at if it is needed or should be in code differently.
- Training opportunities – what counts – how many hours. Are recordings allowed, etc. What counts as engaging?
- Re-licensure timeframe
- More training up front and not over 2 years. Make sure they can support and function in the child welfare system.
- Look at how workers can make value judgements in code. Where can we zero in.

- Changes that are occurring are supported throughout the state. Intent of changes is what occurs to the best of our ability.
- Secondary residences & renovations– no guidance. Only one address for FC license.
- Rehab review process if they go on for adoption – requirements are confusing for the family. Streamline the process so they know what is really required.
- Physical environment situations
- Number of children in the home - think some providers can take more placements than what is currently allowed by rule, but do not think this should be applied generally.
- Flexibility. Instead of why can't someone be licensed flip it to what would it take for this person to be licensed?
- If it does not bring a value to safety & well-being why is it in 56?
- Maintain quality of safety and well-being of children.
- Don't add to the length of the Code.
- Play the long-game. Make sure what we are doing makes sense.
- What support do you (foster parent) need. Instead of ruling people out what can we do to make them eligible.
- Training: Benefit from learning and do a more thorough evaluation of their (foster parent) learning.
- Foster parents should not feel like it is a daunting process and not too difficult to do. This is often harder for relatives who we reach out.
- Training and relational piece with foster & birth parents.
- Training – require more about trauma and behavioral interventions.

What are you most concerned about as a member of this group?

- This is our chance and is a big responsibility.
- If we don't think all of it through (reasonable and prudent parenting) explore every angle & not unintentionally due harm.
- Ensure all applicants are able to undertake the responsibility of caring for a child.
- Too prescriptive and lose professional judgement to determine.
- Safety revisions – intent vs. how it impacts practice. (Disproportionality and institutional racism). Look at all of the code through that lens. Balance of different jurisdictions (rural vs. urban)
- Propose changes and unintended consequences. Make thoughtful decisions.
- Format of these meetings being on zoom vs. in-person. Psychological safety to have safe and challenging discussions.

If you had a magic wand, what would you fix today, within the scope of this workgroup?

- Set of standards that laid out principles foster parents were asked to uphold. i.e., work with birth parents. Uphold the child's identity. That could be assessed using professional judgement.
- If training is discussed do not rely just on "hours". What learned vs. time spent.
- What is needed to retain the people who are putting their heart and soul into foster care.
- Have foster parents get training, feedback, and respite placements initially before long-term placements.
- Iterative process. Respite could be a way to get some experience and then as they get more training to become full-fledged foster parent.

- People say they would have a mechanism and get training and feedback and dealing with the system in real time would be helpful. You have to be fully licensed in order to take placement.

At the end of this process, when the rule is done, what would be markers of success or indicators that we did good work together?

- The applicant who passed the eyeball test, but was deemed unlicensed before the rule change, is now able to be a foster parent (relative or otherwise)
- Less foster parents and relatives applying and not following through – finishing the process to get licensed.
- Decrease in the high exceptions (people working outside the home)
- More kids achieving permanency with relatives who can now get licensed.
- All able to coalesce behind the final product.
- Increased permanency with relatives and like-kin because they can be placement options.
- Implementing a rule that we can all stand behind.
- Rule that just makes sense for families (e.g., 1.5. year old sharing bedroom with adult caregiver)
- Rule that is streamlined and easier to read and interpret – paperwork and process is already overwhelming.
- Rules will make sense.
- Easily digestible for workers and families.
- Streamline the process.

What would it mean to have a good process together

- Have my say even if I don't get my way.
- Materials in advance so have time to think about it.
- Ok with healthy conflict.
- Voices are heard and everyone participates.
- Get outside information and listen to people who are impacted.

What will this rule revision do for children and families?

- Increase in number of foster care providers
- Increase number of placements in the child's community of origin
- Increase in permanency and decrease in placement disruptions.
- Allows families to set their own values vs. The rule implying values of what foster parents should be like.
- Have increased # of foster homes that are safe and appropriate to care for our kids all over the state and expectations are attainable.
- The licensing process won't seem overwhelming.
- More long-term foster parents.
- More permanence for kids
- Kids can stay in their communities.
 - Eliminate barriers that can be worked around to keep them closer to home.
- Families have support and self determination and have their own values.
- Less disrupted placements.
- Decrease need for exceptions

What will this rule revision do for the workforce?

- Rule will be easier to interpret and understand
- Employees will feel better about the job they do
- Rule supports professional assessment of reasons for denial (e.g., trauma informed care, shared parenting, etc.)
- Ability to place children with certain foster homes that are not yet licensed (e.g., because cannot meet certified/licensed daycare provider). Often times, providers have someone who is willing to provide daycare but is not certified and thus, it is prohibited by rule. Lean into reasonable and prudent parenting standard.
 - Guide not just for families but easier for new hires to understand.
- Workers will understand what is being asked for them.
- Less duplication; forms more user friendly.
- People feeling more comfortable in holding others accountable.
- Feeling able to ask for exceptions.
- Transparent and will provide a framework for fewer exceptions needed.
- Agency wanted to deny or revoke but there was nothing in 56 that gave them ability to follow through on denial. Professional should be able to rely on rule when there is also negative action that needs to be taken.

What would it mean to have a good process together

- Have my say even if I don't get my way.
- Materials in advance so have time to think about it
- Ok with healthy conflict
- Voices are heard and everyone participates
- Get outside information and listen to people who are impacted

As we think about specific pain points, what are the underlying problem there?

- Not centering lived experience feedback – how this impacts the children and families the rule governs.

Dana asked steering and advisory committee members to consider “How will you get your feedback loop in place to make sure those who elected steering committee members hear back from you?”

Upcoming Meetings

Advisory Council meeting 10.18.23 @10am-12pm.

Steering Committee meeting ~~11.13.23 @10am-12pm.~~ **Schedule Change – 11.06.23 @ 11am-12pm**