



Division of Safety and Permanence DCF 57 Advisory Council Meeting

August 26, 2025 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL Meeting Link:

<https://dcfwi.zoom.us/j/82438817843?pwd=e2np8XasubfLAhE6sbwMfuDhybq9oe>.

DCF Staff			
Name	Present	Name	Present
Dustin Hinze	x	Elaine Pridgen	
Katie Davis	x	Amy Bryant	
Dana Johnson	x	Emily Erickson	
Kristie Buwalda	x	Jeanette Paules	x
Mary Morse	x	Frances Bass	
Rob Collins	x	Rachel Nili	

Member	Present	Nominating Organization
Kathy Markeland	x	WAFCA
Marye Beth Dugan		Nehemiah Group Home
Dave Fretz	x	Forward Home for Boys
India Hansen		Office of Lived Experience @ DCF
Brian Peil		DOC – Juvenile corrections
Dr. Maurice Johnson	x	Moe's Transitional Living Center (COA)
Lisa Netterville	x	New Hope & Destiny Home II (COA)
Caylee Nichols	x	Positive Alternatives
Audra O'Connell		Walker's Point GH (homeless program)
Jennifer Pester		Office of Lived Experience
Jill Collins		DMCPS
Lisa Pendleton		WAFCA (Winnebago County)
Stephen Bedwell		WAFCA (Racine County)
Amy Rodriguez		DOC
Others in Attendance: Sarah Plascencia Karri – WAFCA	x	

AGENDA

I. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions (DCF)

II. Overview of Proposed Changes to DCF 57: (DCF) Reviewed timeline of the rule writing project. We are on target for a possible effective date of March 2026, if all revisions and AO/GO/Legislature is in approval.

III. Questions from DCF Policy Team for Input

- **DRAFT 57.09(1)(d)** The licensee shall notify the placing agency, resident's parent, guardian, legal custodian, or Indian custodian **within 24 hours** of any serious incident involving a resident. Current rule language is "as soon as possible". **Q: Is there a reason staff at a facility would not be able to call within 24 hours?** They still need to do the formal Serious Incident Reporting within 72 or 24 hours.

A: One group home has a current policy to notify those persons within hours. 24 hours seems reasonable.

Consider adding in writing or verbally.

Question from the AC: When does the 72 hours start – re: business hours excluding the weekend? **Follow-up needed here by DCF staff.**

- New group homes will be required to become Q RTP certified within 3 years.

Q: Is 3 years an adequate period of time? Too long or too short? Concerns?

A: COA accreditation - 3 years seems too short.

A: I would have been more prepared if I was accredited from the beginning.

A: 3 years seems acceptable. 5 years too long and they are being complacent.

A: If you have TA to help them through the steps of accreditation would be beneficial.

A: 3 years seems acceptable. Having a timeline would be helpful. Joint Commission 3 years is doable. Protects DCF if someone gets into group home care this may weed them out sooner. Joint Commission focuses more on medical side of care.

A: They will try to work with you and offer extensions to keep your accreditation.

Question from the AC: **What happens if you lose your accreditation?** **Follow-up need here by DCF staff.**

- **Update to last meeting:** Decided to include policies in the section of rule where they are applicable and not list them all out in DCF 57.05. The list of all required policies & procedures will be on the form *Policy/Procedure Checklist – Group Homes for Children*, will include the citation for the required policies/procedures and plans. **Q: Any concerns with removing the policies from one section of the rule?**

A: One person said they like it in the rule book (aka Admin Rule) under DCF 57.05. Feels the checklist would be changed without them knowing.

Point of Information: The program statement and a paragraph stating that you will ensure compliance with required policies and procedures under DCF 57 are all that remain in 57.05.

- Created **DCF 57.14 “Employees or contractors who are not staff members”**. Last time it was stated that we were using congregate care worker, and we are not using congregate care worker in the future draft rule. Goal was to hopefully add clarity. The employees or contractors under DCF 57.14 need to comply with the hiring requirements **except 57.11(4)** “A licensee determination that the prospective staff member displays the capacity to successfully nurture and care for a resident”.

This category would apply to people who provide services in the group home but do not provide direct care and supervision to a resident.

Staff members include; Program director, group home manager and resident care staff. As such they need to do the trainings. An employee or contractor under DCF 57.14 & volunteers do not need to do required training or fingerprinting. **Q: Any concerns with this change?**

A: No comments.

- Q: Do any group homes with multiple locations share staff? How do you address ratios? Do you ever move staff from one group home to another during a shift?**

A: There are times that staff are shared. Some residents respond better to a staff member in a different home. Designated staff but can be responsive if there is a need.

A: Floating staff and stationary staff. 3 facilities.

A: Have additional staff during “twitching hours”.

A: There is an exemption to have files at one location.

A: 6 locations. Some have shared staff to address staff shortage. There are e files and a policy to keep staff member records at one location.
- How do you address chores? Draft DCF 57.34 Household duties. (1)** Each resident shall have opportunities to share in responsibility for household duties or chores appropriate to the resident’s age, developmental level, health, and ability.

(2) A resident’s household duties may not interfere with school attendance, family visits, sleep, study, or religious practice and may not violate the principles of nurturing care in s. DCF 57.23. **(3) A licensee may not rely solely on the household duties of residents to ensure compliance with s. DCF 57.38 (1) (b).**

Q: Are there currently questions or concerns about this topic? We received feedback from youth, during focus groups, who felt this may not have been followed.

A: Teaching independency skills such as cleaning; how to clean, shovel snow, etc. is an important part of normal youth development. If youth refuse to clean up behind themselves, they don’t get additional monetary incentives. Many group homes have a structure in place. Does not agree with the rule as written.

A: Agree teaching independence is key. One group home teaches Independent Living Skills in-house, which includes teaching youth how to treat their home when they get out on their own.

A: There was one group home that indicated they were cited for not having a clean room of a resident, but that was because the resident didn’t clean their room and staff have not gotten to it yet. It should be expected that sometimes cleanliness cannot be met 100% of time given issues with youth or staffing time.
- Draft 57.36.** If a resident is absent there are requirements to notify the placing agency & law enforcement but not the parent, guardian or Indian custodian. **Q: Do you notify them anyway? If not, what would be a reasonable time frame to notify them. Or why would you choose not to notify?**

A: Call and email to the child welfare professional occur to help manage the recording keeping of a time and date stamp.

A: Contact primary county/placing agency staff sooner if the youth has autism or other special needs.

A: Depends on intake is the parent participating and they are immediately notified.

A: If a youth chooses to leave care they immediately notify law enforcement. Staff notify legal guardian and child welfare professional by end of the shift.

A: If a youth goes missing it is treated as a serious incident.

Q: Should we add a statement that requires notifying parent, legal custodian, guardian or Tribe. **A:** Yes.

- **For those providing respite: DCF 57 revised draft includes:** “Phone numbers for emergency contacts to include the youth’s medical provider’s contact information”. **What other numbers are needed?**

A: No comment.

- **57.40(11). How do you address cleaning supplies? Current draft says to “prevent access based on a resident’s age, developmental, emotional, and behavioral needs.”** Added language from DCF 56 in case younger children (homes with residents placed with their child for example) or to whom access to chemicals would be problematic.

A: Always kept locked and inaccessible.

- **Changed requirements for fire evacuation drills.** Conducting monthly evacuation drills with residents and at least once every 6 months an evacuation drill shall be conducted that simulates sleeping hours. **Q: Any concern with the proposed change?**

A: No comments.

- **Unable to remove the requirement to have fire extinguishers in alternate locations due to fire code/building code regulations.** Added that the fire safety inspection should include them testing your extinguishers. **Q: Would this be a problem? Do they inspect your extinguishers now? If not, how do you get them inspected?**

A: A company comes out yearly and inspects them and they provide the approval or replacement of each fire extinguisher.

- Added ability to use ride share. **Q: Has anyone had negative experience with this option?**
Question from the AC: Is there group home liability? The group believes that this would be similar to any other liability when youth travel in cars, take city buses, and that the liability would fall to civil litigation.

- **Pets are allowed in group homes and this will not change.** DCF added that if the pet is ill the animal needs to be evaluated by a veterinarian and treated if necessary to ensure the safety of the residents. OR Removed from the group home until the pet is no longer ill or infected.

Q: Any concerns with that change?

A: No comments.

- **Q: Would you like forms to be mandatory or have voluntary forms?**

A: DCF forms are a good place to start and build off of them to tweak into forms that are specific to their group home. Stay away from the mandatory form. They can ask for an exception to a specific form if there is a reason they want to use their own.

A: Like the way we are currently doing forms as it provides flexibility for group homes to use forms that meet their needs.

- DCF Staff Katie Davis and Jeanette Paules will review the new proposed needs determination and application process.

IV. Additional Topics and Feedback Received:

- **Curiosity question:** What about transfer of a license from one group home to another that is built? There is a current need and if they are changing the ownership they would not need to go through this process. Can't transfer license, they need to apply for the license. Process would remain the same – just need the application. Statute does not allow for a transfer of a license. You need to close a license and reissue it, but you don't need a needs determination.
- **Q: Single county group homes, how would licensing work in determining need for new facilities?** New process would still apply to these types of group homes. This may be an emergent situation to consider a group home outside of the need's determination process. Goal is to anticipate needs and add beds to meet the needs of the youth.
- **Q: Why do I need to do a needs determination if I have a group home and I want to add another home?** The department will approve that there is a need for additional beds. If the department determines that there is no need for more beds, they will issue a statement stating there is no need for more beds at this time.
- **Q: What type of data will we DCF be reviewing to in the need determination process?** Using SYNC portal data related to referrals, approved/decline reasons and look at services which are needed. Referral source for a specific area of the state could be considered, as well as current capacity and utilization. Data points may change/expend over time. DCF intends to have a team of assessors outside of DCF (group home owners) to assist in identify need.
- **Q: An increase in youth being targeted for needing placement, anecdotally. Current processes like a RFP's become competitive. How do you measure need in a process like an RFP? Would existing group homes know if there is a need?** Requirements are the same between the current & proposed forms/information. The process is being changed not what information is needed to determine need. Scoring of responses will not include facility names or identifiers and will involve current providers as well.
- **Comments:** May lose some nimbleness in the new process compared to current process even if we build in emergent needs. Public purchasers are using these resources and there may be a limited pool of people using this service. Keep in mind that group homes may be used for other services, like short-term respite. It is recommended that we not only use SYNC for data.

V. Next Steps – Next Advisory Council meeting scheduled for October 1, 2025 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm.

