



LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Kimberly A. Foster
Executive Director

COMMISSIONERS:
CAROL O. BIONDI
PATRICIA CURRY, VICE CHAIR
ANN FRANZEN
SUSAN F. FRIEDMAN
HELEN A. KLEINBERG
DR. LA-DORIS MCCLANEY
REV. CECIL L. MURRAY
STEVEN M. OLIVAS, ESQ, VICE CHAIR
TINA PEDERSEN, LCSW, VICE CHAIR
MARTHA TREVINO POWELL
SANDRA RUDNICK
STACEY SAVELLE
ADELINA SORKIN, LCSW/ACSW, CHAIR
DR. HARRIETTE F. WILLIAMS
TRULA J. WORTHY-CLAYTON

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **January 5, 2009**, in Room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Carol O. Biondi	Tina Pedersen
Patricia Curry	Martha Trevino Powell
Ann Franzen	Sandra Rudnick
Susan Friedman	Stacey Savelle
Helen Kleinberg	Adelina Sorkin
Rev. Cecil Murray	Dr. Harriette F. Williams
	Trula J. Worthy-Clayton

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Dr. La-Doris McClaney
Steven M. Olivas, Esq.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Sorkin, Chair.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda for the January 5, 2009 General Meeting was unanimously approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **December 15, 2008**

Action

Motion by Commissioner Trevino Powell, seconded by Commissioner Savelle, the Minutes of December 15, 2008, were unanimously approved.

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

- **Cancellation of February 16, 2009 Regular Commission Meeting**

Action

Motion by Commissioner Curry, seconded by Commissioner Rudnick, cancellation of the Regular Commission Meeting on February 16, 2009, was unanimously approved.

- **25th Anniversary Ad-Hoc Committee**

The tentative date for the 25th Anniversary is April 16, 2009. Commissioner Worthy-Clayton suggested sending out a "Save the Date" notice and there was a brief discussion regarding the lack of funds as well as budget concerns.

Follow-Up

An invitation was extended to those interested in working on the 25th Anniversary Ad-Hoc Committee. The next meeting will be held on January 21 at 9:30 a.m.

- **Approval of Letter to Board of Supervisors on Reorganization**

Commissioner Curry gave a brief recap of the purpose of the Letter to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Final Report on Commissions, Committees, Boards and Authorities in Los Angeles County. Commissioner Williams suggested on page 2, 1st paragraph, adding "*experienced*" county staff and last paragraph, delete "*that would continue to benefit*" and add "*and therefore benefit*". Commissioner Biondi suggested adding cc's to the Probation and Children's Deputies. Commissioner Friedman suggested beginning the letter with a direct statement of the purpose of the letter. Commissioner Friedman indicated that the Board of Supervisors does not have time to read a lengthy letter and it is best to state the purpose at the beginning. It was agreed to add an introductory paragraph and to rearrange some of the paragraphs to open with a clear statement as to the purpose of the letter. Commissioner Friedman also questioned whether the background information on the Commission was necessary. As there is a new Supervisor in the Second District, it was decided to keep the background information in the letter.

Action

Motion by Commissioner Trevino Powell, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg, the Letter to the Board of Supervisors on Reorganization was unanimously approved, as amended.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORT

- **Faith-Based**

Commissioner Sorkin began with a brief introduction of the Faith-Based Committee's background and commented that Supervisor Knabe has made a statement that the faith-based community should be looked at as a resource for the County. Commissioner Franzen, Chair of the Faith-Based Committee gave an overview of the Committee. Commissioner Franzen acknowledged past and present Commissioners who have participated on the Committee, Judge Joyce Fahey, Stacey Winkler, Dr. LaDoris McClaney, Rev. Cecil Murray, Martha Trevino Powell and Nina Sorkin. She also expressed appreciation for the Commission office staff that supported the Committee, Elizabeth Hinton, Matt Hartigan, Wanda Smith, Angelica Muneton, and Leora Katz. Susan Jakubowski of DCFS, Anita Virgil of Probation, and Katie Fesler Bowser of County Counsel were also thanked for their support to the Committee.

Committee Chair Franzen indicated that much progress has been made since the Faith-Based Committee first convened. There has been collaboration with the Department of Children and Family Services and the Probation Department. Commissioner Franzen distributed a written report from the Committee. During the past six months, the Committee has been completing the work without staff support.

The Committee distributed surveys to DCFS and Probation staff in November 2007. Twenty surveys were returned from DCFS by February 2008. With the help of the department, it was determined that the Committee received surveys from each of the eight SPAs. Fifty-five surveys were returned from Probation by May 2008. Probation staff forwarded all responses to Anita Virgil and it is uncertain as to where the responses were received.

More than 300 surveys were mailed to the faith community. However, the return has been very disappointing. The Committee has received a total of 30 surveys. These findings are not included in this report.

Respondents from DCFS and Probation indicated that they are currently receiving such services as Food banks and clothing from the faith community. However, respondents identified being in need of services such as: Transition Program Services, Mentoring, Rental and Utility Assistance.

Some of the barriers to developing and maintaining collaborative partnerships identified by respondents included: staff does not know how to develop and maintain community relationships; need of dedicated staff to handle interface and outreach with faith community; state/church issues are sensitive and there is need for clear understanding on limits; lack of understanding as to each department's role and charge.

Commissioner Curry requested clarification on the data presented. The rating scale identified with respect to engagement and preparedness was based on a 0-5 scale. In addition, Commissioner Curry indicated that it would be helpful to have the data by department. This information will be available in the near future.

Commissioner Worthy-Clayton asked what would be the Committee's next steps. As indicated by the respondents, there is a need for a website listing of the faith community, services they offer, and how these services can be accessed. The Commission's role is advisory and therefore we should be advising DCFS and Probation that a database should be developed as well as a plan of action.

Commissioner Curry suggested that the Committee develop recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for DCFS and Probation to develop a plan, contact communities, and share information.

Follow-Up

Commissioner Curry indicated that it would be helpful to have the data by department. This information will be available in the near future.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lanell Williams, a Career Development Intern, suggested some options for gathering resources and information. His suggestions include: using DCFS' current Career Development Interns (CDIs) to act as liaisons and assist in gathering resources; using City Council representatives to work with the SPAs to gather data for inclusion on the web site; host a Faith-Based event with government and community representatives to discuss how to best utilize available resources.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Trish Ploehn discussed the Governor's recommended Proposed Budget. DCFS staff is working on an analysis of the impact on the Departmental Budget and she will have more information next month. She also indicated that the State will run out of money in March or April if some drastic budget cuts are not taken. State employees will be asked to take mandatory furloughs without pay; State Commissions such as First 5 and Prop. 63, as well as prevention and early intervention will see a major impact on their money.

Commissioner Savelle inquired about cuts to the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds. Ms. Ploehn indicated these are included in the Prop. 63 funds, and there will be cuts in the unaccounted portions of MHSA money. She stressed the fact that these are proposed budget cuts and the legislature, as well as the public, will need to vote on this.

Trish Ploehn also indicated that there will also be a budget reduction affecting welfare, CalWORKS, and child-only cases. DCFS' cuts will begin with discretionary contracts and programs (those not legally mandated or by regulation or by the BOS) and staff cuts will be last.

Commissioner Curry asked which specific discretionary programs might be affected. Ms. Ploehn answered that one example might be a contract to help children with job searching that is not specifically mandated. If that contract's services can be provided internally by DCFS or by another County Department, that contract would be either reduced or cut. She stated that once DCFS' plan for potential budget cuts is sent to the Chief Executive Office (CEO), she will be able to share with the Commissioners the

specific programs that will be affected. Ms. Ploehn does not expect DCFS will need to make significant cuts. The savings generated from the Title IV-E Waiver will save DCFS. The Waiver, as well as community partnerships, are expected to be of great financial help for the Department.

Follow-Up

Commissioner Curry requested a report back when the Title IV-E Waiver Report goes to the Board of Supervisors in February, 2009.

Commissioner Curry requested a report back on what cuts were proposed to the CEO for the DCFS Budget.

VIII. UPDATE – DCFS PREVENTION INITIATIVE

In Angela Carter's absence, Harvey Kawasaki, of DCFS, reported on the current status of the Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP). The PIDP stresses the importance of relationships/partnerships between DCFS and community agencies with shared interests and goals to meet the needs of children. Some best practice issues being developed are: to offer the same full array of services to all 3 different levels of prevention (primary, secondary, and tertiary); to outreach to families; and to develop strategies for economic success.

The 12-month work plan implementation timeframe is July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009. The contract was amended in November 2008 to extend the timeframe to allow a full 12-month implementation period, and to also award an additional \$25,000 to all lead agencies. These funds will be used to contract evaluation liaisons to support the Prevention Initiative Evaluation Collaborative Team.

On November 17, 2008, there was a PIDP Peer Learning Roundtable Discussion with nearly 200 public and private participants, including PIDP lead agencies and DCFS regional offices. Topics of discussion included primary prevention, early success, how to best partner/communicate with the community, what major challenges will be forthcoming in the next 6 months, and what resolutions there are for these challenges. There will be another Learning Session conducted in March 2009.

Mr. Kawasaki gave a case example of the benefit of PIDP intervention. In October 2008, DCFS received a referral that a 7 year old child's mother had left a belt mark on her arm because she did not want to go to school. Through the PIDP network (Friends of the Family) and the Team Decision Making (TDM), it was discovered that the father had lost his job, the mother was working longer hours, they were behind on the rent, and the child had a bully picking on her at school. An agreement was presented and signed by the family indicating that a DCFS case would not be opened if they participated in the program. The father was assisted with writing a resume, got a better paying job, thus relieving the financial stress on the family and a meeting was held with the school to alleviate the child's reluctance to attend school.

Mr. Kawasaki stated that although the current form of PIDP is a one year project, with the Title IV-E Waiver, there is a potential opportunity to continue the project with networking for additional resources.

Commissioner Curry acknowledged Commissioner Rudnick for her work and endless hours on prevention issues.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jacquelyn McCroskey, of USC School of Social Work, stated that each SPA has been actively participating in the evaluation process and working with the Prevention Initiative Evaluation Collaborative Team. The lead agencies have been providing the funds for the contract evaluation liaisons themselves and now the \$25,000 will enable them to continue as part of the Team.

Follow-Up

When the Project Evaluation conducted by Casey Family Programs, USC, First 5 LA, UCLA, and Claremont is completed, Jacquelyn McCroskey, of USC School of Social Work, will report back to the Commission.

IX. PREVENTION INITIATIVE VISITATION CENTERS

Bill Bedrossian, Regional Administrator at the Lakewood DCFS office, gave a brief overview of his involvement with Social Work and the Faith-Based community. His experience began when he was a child and his parents were foster parents. He shared that his parents had always viewed their church as a valuable resource for help in foster parenting. He indicated that he has found that engaging the faith-based community has proven to be very successful.

Mr. Bedrossian stated that every office in SPA 8 is working with the faith-based community. He also stated that Mr. Kawasaki has created relationships with many churches and the Torrance office has been reaching out to the faith-based community and have been meeting to develop strategies. They had approximately 50 participants from 8 churches at their first meeting. They intend to continue meeting and within the next several months will develop a plan for a continuum of care and to connect services with the churches.

Mr. Bedrossian stated that the visitation centers in churches facilitate reunification and replicate a home life setting. Training for the visitation coaches is provided by DCFS as part of the Prevention Initiative. The families also develop ongoing connections with the churches for continued ongoing support, as well as support groups in DCFS.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jacquelyn McCroskey, USC School of Social Work, stated that there is much excitement in the community regarding the Prevention Initiative. She also stated that she would be glad to come back and give a presentation on the PIDP Evaluation.

Follow-Up

Jacquelyn McCroskey will return to report to the Commission on the PIDP Evaluation.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comments were recorded under Agenda Items VI, VIII, and IX.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

XII. ADJOURN

Commissioner Sorkin adjourned the meeting.