

Why Establish a CCF Committee?

CCF committees can be a practical way to structure and manage the Commission's work to address priority issues. Sometimes a smaller group can be more focused and efficient in dealing with issues than the Commission as a whole.

The benefits of establishing a CCF committee include:

- Sharing responsibilities
- Involving more Commissioners in the work
- Leveraging resources and utilizing the specialized skills of Commissioners
- Providing a vehicle in which complex issues can be examined in greater detail from various perspectives and comprehensive recommendations can be developed

When to Establish a Committee?

Effective committees require additional time and work and should only be formed when necessary.

The following questions should be considered before establishing a CCF committee.

1. What are the benefits of establishing a CCF committee to address this priority?
2. Is there enough important work to be done to justify establishing a CCF committee to address this priority?
 - a. If yes, what type of group should be established?
 - b. If yes, what commitments can I make to a CCF committee formed to address this priority?
 - c. If no, how should the Commission work to address this priority?
3. How, if at all, should Commission meetings be redesigned to support the Commission's work on this priority?

Glossary

CCF Committee: a group, consisting of less than a quorum of CCF Commissioners, selected to consider, investigate, analyze, and/or recommend Commission action regarding specific subject matter.

Standing CCF Committee: a permanent committee with continuing subject matter jurisdiction. Standing committees are subject to Brown Act.

Ad-Hoc CCF Committee: a temporary committee, existing less than a year, established for a very specific purpose. Ad-Hoc committees are not subject to the Brown Act.

Sub-committee: a smaller subset of a larger committee, tasked with a specific objective or focus area.

Workgroup/Taskforce: a group consisting of less than a quorum of CCF Commissioners **and** non-Commissioners, established to address specific issues or tasks.

CCF Priorities

Prevention	Placement Resources	Special Populations: Cross-Over/Probation/CSEC	Global Focus: Legislation
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Commissioner Interest by Priority

Prevention	Placement Resources	Special Populations- Crossover/Probation/CSEC	Global Focus - Legislation
Curry	Berger	Biondi	Cooper
Kim	Curry	Brenes	Garen
McCroskey	Garen	Seipel	McCroskey
	Kang	Smith	Smith
	Teague	Teague	

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES LED COMMITTEES AND WORKGROUPS

	GROUP	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	COMMISSIONER
1.	Children and Youth Welcome Centers Ad-Hoc Committee	This committee was established in response to concerns regarding LA County's temporary shelter for children and youth awaiting foster care placement.	AD-HOC	Curry Smith Seipel
2.	Cross Over Youth Committee	This committee was established to address issues concerning youth involved with both dependency and delinquency systems.	INACTIVE	Curry Biondi Smith
3.	Executive Committee	This committee was established to guide the activities of the Commission.	STANDING	Curry Kamlager Kang Kim McCroskey Smith
4.	Independent Living Program (ILP) Budget and Resources Workgroup	This workgroup was established for oversight of the ILP budget and to discuss resources for the Transitional Age Youth (TAY) population.	----	Curry
5.	Legislative Committee	This committee was established to guide the Commission's activities in the area of legislative advocacy and to support the Commission's ability to make recommendations to the Board regarding legislation impacting children, youth and families.	STANDING	Garen McCroskey Smith Cooper
6.	Public-Private Partnerships Workgroup	This workgroup was established to strengthen and support public-private partnerships between the local philanthropic community and County departments responsible for child welfare.	----	Curry McCroskey

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL BODIES

	GROUP	DESCRIPTION	COMMISSIONER	CCF APPOINTED A SEAT	LEAD AGENCY	MEETING SCHEDULE
1.	Education Coordinating Council (ECC)	This council was established to raise the educational achievement of foster and probation youth throughout Los Angeles County.	Brenes (February 2016)	Yes	CEO	Quarterly
2.	Children's Court Trust Fund Oversight Committee	This committee was established to direct the use of the Children's Court Trust Fund, which is primarily funded with revenue generated from Court parking fees.	Kang (2016)	Yes	Children's Court	Bi-Annually
3.	First 5 LA Commission	This commission was established to promote, support and improve the early development of children, from the prenatal stage to five years of age.	Curry (2011)	Yes	First 5 LA	Bi-Monthly
4.	Juvenile Probation Outcomes Study Interagency Workgroup	This taskforce was established to support the Probation Department in its development and implementation of best practices in juvenile justice, with particular focus on recommendations included in the 2015 Juvenile Probation Outcomes Study.	McCroskey (September 2015) Biondi* (November 2015)	Yes	Probation Department & CSULA	Monthly
5.	Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) System Leadership Team (SLT)	This team was established to engage stakeholders in the process of developing, approving, monitoring, and adapting MHSA plans in order to transform the public mental health system to achieve recovery, wellness and hope.	Seipel (May 2015)	Yes	DMH	Monthly

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL BODIES

6.	Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development	This roundtable was established to build and strengthen early care and education by providing recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on policy, systems and infrastructure improvement.	McCroskey (May 2015)	Yes	CEO	Monthly
7.	Camp Vernon Kilpatrick Replacement Project Staff/Training/Recruitment Reentry Subcommittee (STRR)	This subcommittee was established to bring about positive cultural change by providing the Kilpatrick Replacement Project Guidance Team with viable, best practice strategies for recruitment of trauma informed, youth focused staff, and a framework for ongoing training, support and professional development.	Biondi	No	Probation	Monthly
8.	Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Steering Committee	This committee was established to direct DCFS work involving the CSEC population.	Teague (November 2015)	No	DCFS	Monthly
9.	Office of Child Protection (OCP) Prevention Workgroup	This workgroup was established to develop and implement recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection (BRCCP) in the area of prevention.	Curry McCroskey Kim	No	OCP	Monthly
10.	OCP Psychotropic Medication Workgroup	This workgroup was established to develop and implement recommendations made by the BRCCP regarding the use of pharmacological interventions in foster care.	Smith	No	OCP/DMH	TBD

**Los Angeles County
Commission for Children and Families Retreat
February 8, 2016**

Retreat purpose: To build on the shared passion of Commissioners to work together as a whole on behalf of LA’s children

- Articulate a framework for the Commission’s activities and impact
- Set priorities to guide our distribution of effort and resources
- Create new structure, process, and agreements for working effectively together

Participants:

Commissioners Brenes, Garen, Kim, Kamlager, Biondi, McCroskey, Smith, Kang, Teague, Curry, Seipel

Staff Tamara Hunter, Lupe Duron, Tery Ton, and Olga Ramirez

Consultant, Elizabeth Sadlon, sadlon@mindspring.com

Agreements – the following DRAFT goals emerged from the retreat deliberations

DRAFT 2016 Priorities and Goals

Leading roles	DRAFT Related 2016 Goals
Advisor to the Board of Supervisors	Introduce consistent methods of communication that strengthen our partnership with the Board of Supervisors and deputies
Partner with the Office of Child Protection	Invest in building effective partnership with OCP
Amplifier of community voice	Develop effective ways for the community to share their perspective with the BOS and Departments regarding children and families

Priority Issues	DRAFT Related 2016 Goals
Prevention	Work with families so they do not end up in the child welfare system
Placement	Expand the full range of placement resources
Children with greatest unmet needs	Identify and address unmet needs of crossover youth involved with probation/ juvenile justice, and commercially sexually exploited children

Operations	DRAFT Related 2016 Goals
Mission	Review and, as appropriate, revise the mission statement to express the Commission’s direction
Cross-department	Articulate the best methods to engage in data-driven, solutions-focused, accountable dialogue across departments and multiple stakeholders, distinct from and supportive of OCP
Structure	Introduce a structure that increases our success working as a whole, connecting various activities and workgroups to our priorities
Workgroups	Assess our commitments to external work groups for alignment with our priorities; streamline our commitments to ensure greatest possible impact
Meetings	Redesign commission meetings to best advance our priorities, allow for deliberation and follow up, leverage our resources and skills, and nimbly respond to changing community needs

Retreat Notes

Opening

Retreat participants introduced themselves by identifying a word or phrase from the current mission statement that expresses what most motivates them to be part of the Commission's work. Though there was a wide range of comments and perspectives, two phrases resonated with multiple Commissioners: the concept that "the children and families can't wait" and the related importance of working with a sense of urgency.

Commission Roles for Advancing its Mission

This segment began with a recap of the comments heard by consultants during the 1:1 conversations with Commissioners about historic CCF results, the tools the Commission can use in different settings to advance its mission, and the nature of power and influence. The group then reviewed a wide-ranging list of possible roles for the Commission (provided in handout). The group noted:

- In certain settings, our role is pre-determined. For example, when we request and hear a presentation, we are in a review mode; when we attend a strategic planning session convened by another group, we are in a partner role.
- We must always be aware of and telegraph the different roles we play at different times
 - Begin by being aware among ourselves
 - Share with external partners
 - To do this requires trust, consistency, and transparency among Commissioners

In small groups, participants addressed three questions:

- What roles are most important for us to emphasize and/or improve?
- What clarifications or revisions would you make to these descriptions?
- Which three roles are most uniquely filled by CCF?

Across the groups, there was group agreement (11 green cards, 1 yellow) that the following roles are unique and/or most important for CCF at this time:

- Advisors to Board of Supervisors
- Partner with Office of Child Protection
- Effective place and way for community to have voice

AND the group committed to work to better define the Commission's role working across departments, including how CCF can best add value, and how to gather information across roles.

The word "Convener" has specific meaning in some settings that is different from the role the Commission takes on, and can therefore be misleading. The appropriate role when the Commission bridges stakeholders across departments and functions (particularly important right now) is to aggregate and serve as a conduit for data, as a mutual partner. In the coming year, it will be important to clarify the distinction between CCF and OCP in this role.

One small group noted that several of the roles could be combined to emphasize relationships:

- A mutual relationship with the Board of Supervisors and their various deputies
- A relationship with the many departments that impact children and families, including oversight, analysis, support, and serving as allies; at different times we may use different strategies of bringing people together, providing the big picture view for all children, in order to break down silos; the flow must be two-way
- A relationship with nongovernmental organizations and community at large
- A relationship with OCP, which is emerging and forming right now

Multi-Year Issue Priorities

This segment began with a recap of messages heard by the consultant in 1:1 conversation with Commissioners about the benefits of prioritizing among issue areas, possible criteria to consider when selecting among possible priorities, and thoughts on which issues are most important in the coming years. Input gathered by Commissioners from their respective deputies was also included.

The group then used the framework from the BRCCP recommendations to review which areas the Commission is already active, then mapped current workgroups and external committees to that same framework, recognizing that some are activities representing the Commission as a whole (Commission-led committees and those where the Commission has formally designated seats) and others where the Commissioners participate as individuals and may bring information back to the Commission (Strategic Plan Objectives Teams). Participants identified additional BRCCP recommendations that could be appropriate areas for focus of Commission work:

- Recommendation 2.9: Cross-department access and delivery for those at highest risk
- Recommendation 3.5: Service to support relative caregivers

(See Framework graphic on the next page.)

Small groups then discussed which issues warrant greatest attention in the coming years, recognizing that all of this work cuts across multiple years. The importance of investing energy in serving as an effective OCP partner was recognized as essential, in particular in 2016, and as consistent with the role-based priorities set in the earlier section.

Regarding the issues where the Commission can have the greatest impact, after discussion and integration, the group had full agreement (12 green cards) that the three top issue priorities are:

- Prevention: working with families so they don't end up in DCFS/system
- Placement resources including kin, non-kin, licensed and other forms, support, recruitment and retention
- Children with greatest unmet needs: crossover/probation/juvenile justice and CSEC

The intention of setting priorities is to be able to tap the benefits described in the 1:1 conversations with Commissioners, including the ability to focus our resources and energies where we will have the greatest possible impact. These priorities do not preclude individuals from engaging in activities that are beyond these broad areas.

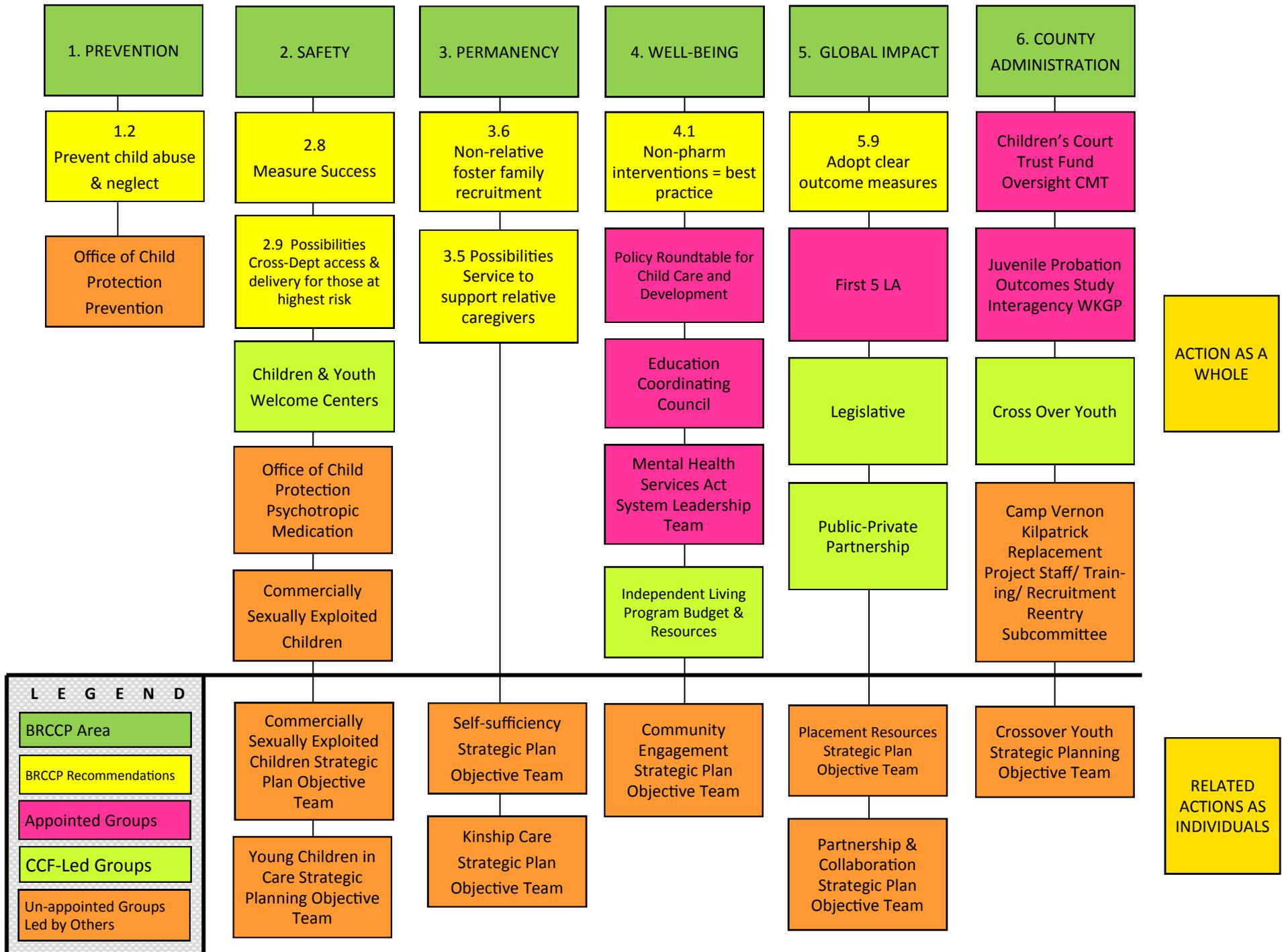
Across all of these priorities, the group recognized overarching themes:

- Nimble and flexible – the Commission must be open and ready to respond to changes and significant needs beyond the issue priorities listed above
- Mental health and safety of children are essential concerns that cut across all of the Commission's work

Remaining questions for the Commission to address as it implements these priorities:

- How do we set and report our own measures of success
- How do we communicate these priorities to external partners

Mapping Commission Activities to BRCCP Framework



Greater Impact by Working As a Whole

This segment also began with a recap of what was heard in 1:1 conversations with Commissioners, integrating input from deputies as well. These comments addressed possible changes to the Commission's own committee structure, adjustments to the meeting schedule and agenda-setting, and methods for communicating with deputies.

Small groups then reviewed the ideas that had emerged from the pre-retreat input, and offered proposals for how the Commission could move forward in these three ways.

Deputy Interface

A small group reviewed offered the following approach for deputy interface. The full group endorsed this proposal with 12 green cards.

- The Commission's Executive Director + Chair + 1 – 2 additional Commissioners, depending on the topic(s) to be covered, attend deputies cluster once per quarter or, as needed, more often
- Each Commissioner develops together with their respective deputy a communications plan that fits their individual needs and workstyles; there is no need to report on or coordinate this plan with the rest of the Commission
- The Commission Executive Director will provide deputies with a sense of upcoming agenda items, highlighting anything that may be of interest
- The annual report to the Board of Supervisors will be prepared by compiling the recommendations from across the Commission's committees, plus any letters of recommendation that were prepared through the year.
- The Executive Committee reviews any emergency recommendations.

There were no additional written comments about the Deputy Interface discussion

Meeting Redesign

The small group offered and the Commissioners agreed on some aspects of redesigning the meetings

- Use a matrix to develop agenda that considers:
 - Commission priorities
 - Commission's role related to the priority or issue
 - BOS considerations or current issues
 - Community voice or issues
- The Chair will seek input from the Executive Committee prior to finalizing the agenda
- Agendas will provide opportunities for periodic check-in with each of the Commission's committees
- More Commission meeting time will be spent in deliberation and follow up of previous recommendations, with less time in presentations
- Commission meetings will include reports from the Commission committees
- Spend less time in the DCFS report representation; agenda for needed issues
- It is important for OCP to be present at Commission meetings; the frequency and role to be determined as the partnership unfolds in the coming weeks and months

There were different opinions about at least two important aspects of the meeting redesign, with a shared interest to further explore these questions together

- How to create time for Commission committee discussions – whether setting aside some of the time that is currently scheduled for all-Commission meetings
- Whether the DCFS director should continue to be asked to provide a report at all Commission meetings

Commissioners offered the following written comments about the Meeting Redesign discussion:

Thoughts about how to use the four hours each month committed to Commission meetings

- Agenda to be set by the Executive Committee with Executive Director based on priorities previously set, and to include follow-ups and discussion.
- 2-4 meetings: we need more time to discuss and have time for committees to work not just reports.
- More time for full commission discussion and decision making.
- Short time so have time for committee work
- Two times a month, but still 10-noon.
- Committees should have time on agenda to report out/back.
- Workgroups to develop – need a lot of discussion about purpose and definition of each of these.
- 1 month meeting with work in between

The Commissioners agreed they need to have more discussion about how to design and support the most effective participation by the DCFS director in Commission meetings, as well as the participation of the new OCP director and other department directors. The discussion will address topics such as the frequency of requested reports, opportunities for two-way discussion, and methods for engaging the Directors beyond a reporting role.

Roles of Commission Committees

There was not agreement among the small group of the direction to be taken in designing a committee structure for the Commission. There is strong support for continuing this conversation and developing a structure that can incorporate the benefits described in 1:1 conversations with the consultants. The word “committees” caused confusion, since Commissioners serve on many committees that are led by external groups. This conversation explored the possibilities of the Commission using committees (or some other structure) to organize its internal work and build connections among external activities.

As an initial consideration, possible Commission committees that parallel the priority issues could be:

- Prevention + Safety
- Permanency/Placement
- Special populations/20%
- Global – legislative

The full group identified the following ideas to incorporate in discussion about committees:

- Consider what is already happening through the existing structure
- Each committee must start differently based on what is happening in that topic
- Prepare a landscape analysis in each topic to not duplicate what is happening elsewhere
- Format to report back to the Commission with recommendations
- Recognize we don’t set direction for externally-led workgroups
- In order to address our internal structure, we need to establish the role of committees and determine how to operationalize them

Commissioners provided these written comments about the Committees discussion:

Benefits and approaches to having a Commission Committee structure

- We should have our own proactive committees to set our own agenda.
- Workgroups/committees are essential to driving the work forward.
- We should evaluate all existing “committees” and combine or eliminate.
- Ensure a feedback loop for “committees” to report in.
- Full reporting of issues and recommendations that come from outside committees to CCF is important and should be done, as needed, by the CCF member who sits on that committee.

Concerns and suggestions for next steps

- Risk of duplication and more time spent with less output.
- Roles seem to assume that all committees should work the same way – which may not be useful.
- Can’t all start at the same place – work doesn’t mostly fit in categories.
- If committees are Prevention, Placement, High needs- first step is to assess the landscape and then determine how the committee should work.
- How can we have committees without understanding “the landscape”?

The term “committee” caused confusion with those that are managed by other groups

- People do not understand committee structure.
- Meetings as committee would be difficult and meaningless since the committees that individual commissioners sit on are other directed and commissioners can only report back to the full commission on events and issues.
- How could an annual plan be made regarding issues that are addressed by other entities and which commissioners only sit on the outside committee?

Comments about continuing this conversation

- We need more clarification of this – Need to operationalize how and what we as a commission can do towards accomplishing work in the 4 areas we prioritized today.
- Follow up with committee structure work.

Reflections

Participants wrote closing reflections in three areas: (1) progress we made today, (2) What I can do to sustain our positive direction, and (3) what we can do collectively to sustain our positive direction.

Progress we made today

- Progress was made to begin and continue to prioritize.
- Great progress. Needed the rules and priorities to be clarified.
- Priorities of topics.
- Agreed on overarching priorities.
- Defined priorities for coming year(s)
- Good articulation of roles.
- Discussed roles-priorities. Found some clarity in the work & time.
- Clearly all agree on mission, purpose and goals.
- Clarification of priorities.
- Issue areas identification.
- A better understanding of the scope of work the CCF is expected to do.

What I can do to sustain our positive direction

- Keep an open mind as we change.
- Stay on track. Support the finalizing of the “How”.
- Stay focused.
- Listen.
- Think further about structure – what would serve us best in terms of how works gets done.
- Be more present and participate in the newly agreed format.
- Support the decision of the group.
- Reference priorities in conversations with external players & let people know that the retreat was productive and positive.
- Be present.
- I’ll work on whatever area of work the CCF/Exec Committee wants me to do.

What we can do collectively to sustain our positive direction.

- Keep focused as a group.
- To commit to what we agree on.
- Be sure to walk our talk.
- Make changes in structure of meeting; continue to work on creating structure.
- Need to stay on task. Need to develop accountability measures.
- Continue to work on unanswered questions.
- Be open to doing things differently.
- Continue to discuss and communicate with each other towards making changes in the meeting agendas & programs/ as out general meetings.
- Same as above.
- Not sure.