

**CT Early Childhood Cabinet
Subcommittee on Families with Young Children Without Homes**

June 25, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Commissioner Myra Jones-Taylor, OEC Laura Dunleavy, OEC; Rick Porth, United Way of CT; Alana Kroeber, United Way of CT; Louis Tallarita, SDE; Bill Halsey, DSS; Janet Brancifort, DPH; Ann Giordano, Education Connection; Arietta Slade, Minding the Baby; Grace Whitney, OEC; Kelly Anelli, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Magdalena Rosales-Alban, LULAC; Brenda Earle, DOH; Alice Minervino, DHMAS; Kara Capone, New Reach; Kim Somaroo-Rodriguez, DCF; Sarah Fox, CT Coalition to End Homelessness; Kim Nilson, DCF; Betsy Cronin, The Connection; Eileen McMurrer, OEC – Birth to Three; Maggie Adair, OEC; Mary Farnsworth, OEC.

Introductions

Commissioner Jones-Taylor welcomed the group and outlined the order of the meeting.

Directory of Services

Grace Whitney shared a directory of services available in Connecticut that supports families who are experiencing homelessness.

United Way 2-1-1

The United Way of Connecticut gave a presentation about the new 2-1-1 search engine, which is anticipated to go live in August 2015. The new search engine is more robust and user-friendly. 2-1-1 houses information about 4,100 organizations and 48,000 services, most of which are based in Connecticut. The new search engine makes it easier to search simple, common-sense words, much like Google. Five full-time staff maintain 2-1-1 and keep it updated. An e-library houses 450 white papers that are developed by United Way of CT staff. A new feature allows an organization to post updates about the organization on-line, which is then reviewed and processed by United Way of CT staff. Another feature allows individuals to share information from the 2-1-1 website with another person by email or by text. The translator function is more powerful and improved.

2-1-1 serves as an entry hub for families experiencing homelessness or at risk of being homeless. 2-1-1 can make an appointment for such a family to undergo an assessment through one of the 8 Coordinated Access Networks (CANS). The assessment tool helps identify which families can be diverted from a shelter and which families need immediate shelter services.

Challenges and Needs

Commissioner Jones-Taylor led the group through an exercise to identify the challenges and needs of families with young children experiencing homelessness. The group identified the following:

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Affordable and Stable housing | Substance Abuse Services |
| Early Care and Education | Transportation |
| Food and Nutrition Services | Job and Income |
| Health and Behavioral Health | Job Training |
| Dental Care | Safety |
| Vision Care | Entitlements/Cash Assistance |
| Parenting Support | Adult Education |
| Child Support | |

Brenda Earle noted that there are no state funds for rapid rehousing and federal funding does not come close to addressing the need. She said HUD does not recognize doubling-up as a condition of homelessness, unlike the McKinney-Vento Act.

Top 5 Policy Changes

Commissioner Jones-Taylor asked the participants to identify the top 5 policy changes that their state agency could implement that would support families with young children experiencing homelessness. Participants representing nonprofit organizations were asked to pair up with individual representing state agencies.

A list of the policy changes captured on flip charts is attached to the minutes.

The OEC will develop and send out a survey to allow participants to review the policies identified, identify additional potential policy shifts and rank them in importance.

Commissioner Jones-Taylor said she would review the potential policy changes identified and reach out to fellow state agency commissioners to discuss. Discussion about potential policy changes will be brought to the full CT Early Childhood Cabinet meeting on July 30.

Other issues were raised at the meeting:

- Fathers and grandparents must be supported
- Make the connection between the Second Chance Initiative and the child
- Cross training with homeless shelter and domestic violence shelters is needed.
- How can the Governor's transportation agenda support this population?
- Judicial and Court Support Services Division should be at the table.

CT Early Childhood Cabinet Meeting

The CT Early Childhood Cabinet meeting will take place Thursday, July 30, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, 79 Elm Street, Hartford. An hour session will follow the Cabinet meeting to allow early childhood stakeholders to hear about work underway in the Office of Early Childhood and to provide comments and feedback.

Adjourn

The subcommittee meeting adjourned at 12 noon.

Requirements for Stability and Housing (Family with Child)

- *Affordable and stable housing
- *Early Care and Education
- *Domestic Violence
- *Food Nutrition
- *Health/Healthcare
- *Dental/ Vision
- *Job/ Income/ Job Training
- *Child Support
- *Mental Health/ Mental Healthcare
- *Parenting Support
- *Adult Education
- *Safety
- *Transportation
- *Substance Abuse Treatment Services
- *Entitlements/ Cash Assistance

Top Priority Changes for DCF

Data- Housing need assessment completed during intake (embedded in SACWIS)

Prevent- Expand Housing Services to FAR (non-DCF un-sub) Families

Prevent- Expand Communities Support for Families Services to Non-CPS not Accepted) Families (Prevention)

Assess- Expand Questions asked about a family's needs at care line

PD Training- Professional Development of DCF Staff on definitions of homelessness, current policies local resources include cross training

Dream- DCF Staff as local Homeless Liaisons relationship building, resource not a threat to support to Staff families

More- Federal Unification vouchers (FUP) (local)

Top Policy Changes for OEC

CCDF- create a protective service category for homeless children (parents do not have to be working)
Legislative and Admin Changes

Documentation- Grace period for documentation-i.e. birth certificate, immunizations ect. Legislative and Admin Changes

Care 4 kids- Shorten application time

Create an early care and education certificate to access immediate services

Prioritize access for homeless families across state- funded early childhood programs

Higher Care 4 Kids reimbursements rate for homeless children adequate to access to early care and education programs

Provide training to providers concerning ID and Data needs of children experiencing homelessness (Screen for housing needs, resources available)

School residency requirements changed

Use licensing requirements for consultants to increase screening for housing instability

Top Priority Changes for DSS

Healthcare:

-Screening/Early Id

-Mental Health Tx

-SA TX

-Dental

Tranf funds-

Repurpose-division fund during eligibility appointment

Preventive Services

-Introducing evidence- based community/ home models

*community health workers

*intensive care mgmt.

*care coordination

*infant mental health

-Screening to verify eligibility for the service

-Establish eligible criteria

-Multiple avenue of referral = pediatrician, schools, agencies, state agencies, coordinated access networks

Eligibility- address change of address issue; more stable/ flag for homeless or at risk

-DSS office as address

-Shelter

-DV Shelter

-housing stability question

-check PO Box Policy

SNAP

Cash

Preventive Services

Introducing evidence based community models

-community health workers

-intensive care mgmt.

-care coordination

-infant mental health

Screening to verify eligibility for the services

Establish eligibility criteria

Top Policy Changes for DPH

Community Health Centers

WIC & Other DPH programs

Screen assess and enhance developmental/ education, housing stability/ risk @ intake & subsequent points of contact

Assess and enhance current referral procedures- supports

Develop a metric for evaluating outcomes

Prenatal, perinatal and lactation

Social determinants of health risk

Systems of care

Top Policy Changes for SDE

Child Find link

-OEC/ECE

-Homeless

-SDE/LEA

- Screening/identify

McKinney-Vento liaison on SR Council

Systems of Care (?)

Regionalized transportation networks- shared resources

Teens in adult education

-parenting teens

SPPT program expansion

Nutrition program-start serving shelters

Top Policy Changes FEDS

Line up homeless definitions among Federal agencies

Allow transitional housing and doubled up situations to use federal funds for rent

Top Policy Changes for DOL

Child care at job centers

Prioritize support for homeless families and those at risk of homelessness- center based case

Transportation

Top Policy Changes for CAN

*AT 211 add diversion follow-up questions pertaining to safety of children

*Diversion funding and deeper questions at assessment level (screen)

*Funds for rapid exit

*Screen linking to home visit and linking with homeless shelters

OEC – home visiting in homeless shelters

-home visitors better trained in adult employment placement

Top Policy Changes for DOH

*Review/Changes Regulations for the eviction prevention program.

-Prioritize families

-Higher rent bank amount

-terminate 60% of income reg

-work closer with legal services for mediation

-Children in shelter- childcare vouchers