



STAFFING AND OVERSIGHT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Marygrace Billek, Chair

Lisa Chapland, Co-Chair

"In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of notice filed with the Secretary of State, the Trenton Times and the Newark Star Ledger and posted at the Department of State, 125 West State St., 1st Floor, Trenton, New Jersey."

**Please note the meeting was recorded for the transcription of minutes.*

August 13, 2024

SORS Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

- Marygrace Billek, Committee Chair
- Lisa Chapland, Committee Co-chair, Kinship Resource Parent
- Robyn Veasey, Office of the Public Defender
- Laura Jamet, Department of Children and Families
- Mary Hallahan, Public Member
- Katie Stoeher, Department of Children and Families
- Gina Hernandez, Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey
- Elizabeth Sherwood, Division of Law
- Mary Coogan, Advocates for Children of New Jersey
- Linda Porcaro, DHS Somerset County
- Garnet Roberts-Baston, Dad's Group

Guests:

- Collen McCauley, Camden Coalition
- Aaron Truchil, Camden Coalition
- Jessica Trombetta, Department of Children and Families
- Nancy Carre-Lee, Department of Children and Families

Staff:

- Bethany D'Amelio, Department of Children and Families

The meeting concentrated on evaluating pivotal issues impacting the strategic direction and operational efficacy of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency, with an emphasis on program improvement and service enhancements. Key discussion areas included:

1. Documentation Timeliness and Transition Management

- Emphasis was placed on ensuring timely documentation across all cases to prevent avoidable delays.
- The "warm handoff" process was highlighted as critical, particularly when transitioning a case from intake to permanency workers. It involves:
 - Pre-meeting discussions.
 - Joint meetings during the transition of responsibility.
 - Post-meeting follow-ups ensuring that remaining tasks and responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated to all involved parties.
- Enhancement of these transition practices aims to improve case outcomes.

2. DCPD Training & Development (presentation)

- Training categories coordinated by the Office of Training and Professional Development (OTPD)
 - New Worker Training requirements

- In-Service training requirements- 20 hours of annual continued learning. A majority of staff have completed the required training hours.
- Supervisory training
- Specialized topics
- A development of an objective learning Pathway is underway, which includes:
 - Partnerships with civil rights divisions for standalone and integrated training modules.
 - Integration of leadership and supervisory training, focusing on deepening understanding of equity and cultural competence.
- These efforts are complemented by expanding the team with the involvement of 20 new staff members, focusing on curriculum and training design.

3. Staffing and Retention Challenges (presentation)

- Current data on retention rates within the organization were shared, emphasizing continued efforts to improve these metrics.
- The discussion underscored a considerable focus on reducing staff turnover, providing advancement opportunities, and creating a culture that supports workforce stability.
- The Committee noted the broader challenge of staffing shortages in helping professions nationwide, which impacts hiring and retention efforts.

4. Feedback and Continuous Improvement Mechanisms

- Mechanisms for collecting feedback from various meetings were discussed, with an emphasis on utilizing that data to inform ongoing training and policy adjustments.
- This includes leveraging technology and regular evaluations through inter-departmental meetings to align training with actual workforce needs.

5. Remote Work Preferences and Policy Dynamics

- There was a dialogue about the complexities surrounding remote work, balancing flexibility with the need for close supervision and team cohesion.
- Diverse opinions and ongoing navigation were acknowledged as pivotal to adapting workplace policies to meet evolving demands.

6. Safety and Wellbeing Efforts

- Noted were the wellness initiatives aimed at ensuring staff feel supported and recognized in their roles.
- A "Worker to Worker" program and a recently formed Employee Council were key strategies for promoting a supportive work environment.

Conclusion:

The Committee remains committed to examining practices within the NJ DCF Division of Child Protection and Permanency to create suggestions to enhance both efficiency and employee satisfaction, aligning strategic objectives with operational execution while maintaining responsiveness to both internal and public welfare needs.

This memo aims to maintain transparency and provide the public with an overview of the task force's recent deliberations. The committee values community input and engagement as we collectively strive to enhance the welfare of children and families across New Jersey. This meeting report was prepared, in part, with the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). For further information or queries, the public can reach out via the contact channels provided by the Department of Children and Families.