

## Family Services Review Commission Meeting

### MINUTES

January 8, 2009, 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

HSB-252

**Members present:** Doreen Binder, Jessica Chanay, Diane Cohen-Alpert, Kim Freeman, Ellen Gradison, Yesenia Gutierrez, and Peggy Kennerly (by phone)

**DHS staff present:** Mickey Serice, Jim Neely, Vic Todd, Xochitl Esparza, Robert Trachtenberg and Nancy Sathrum

**Members excused:** Michael Ware

**Members absent:** Maggie Bagon

**Guests:** Sherrie Burrell, DHS District 2, and Tawna Sanchez, NAYA Family Center

**Meeting materials sent via e-mail prior to meeting:** Meeting Agenda, Draft Minutes of the November 6, 2008 and December 4, 2008 Meetings, 12/31/08 PAS Update, November 2008 Self Sufficiency at a glance, and November 2008 CAF Public Assistance Caseloads

Handouts from meeting:

- Ellen Gradison: October Food Stamp Timeliness Report
- Robert Trachtenberg: OSSP Rules Advisory Committee Roster, Recommendations of the Self Sufficiency Transmittal Workgroup
- Jim Neely: Allocation plan for CAF SSP 48 limited duration positions
- Jessica Chanay: two recruitment documents

### **Greeting and Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 8:45 a.m. with a quorum in attendance.

### **Chair Report:**

- Meeting agenda was reviewed. Two items were added: 1) review the food stamp timeliness report that Ellen distributed, and 2) discuss FSRC meeting time.
- Approval of Minutes:
  - **MOTION:** There was a motion by Yesenia Gutierrez and seconded by Ellen Gradison to approve the November 6, 2008 and December 4, 2008 FSRC minutes as written. Vote to approve was unanimous.

### **DHS Report: Mickey Serice, Jim Neely, Vic Todd, Robert Trachtenberg and Xochitl Esparza**

- Office of Self-sufficiency Programs Rules Advisory Committee: Robert Trachtenberg OSSP is expanding its Rules Advisory Committee to review all rule changes. Exceptions include minor changes (cost of living adjustment, etc.).

Robert distributed a Rules Advisory membership list that included participants from the TANF Advisory Committee, with a few additions. The meetings are open to the public and notices will be posted to the DHS web site. Two meetings have been scheduled: the first will be held on Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>. Vic stated that it would be an evolving process. Initially, DHS will continue to work with the eligibility work team, although advocates may decide it is no longer necessary. Comments go to Vic at [vic.todd@state.or.us](mailto:vic.todd@state.or.us) or Robert at [robert.trachtenberg@state.or.us](mailto:robert.trachtenberg@state.or.us).

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- Transmittal Workgroup: A transmittal workgroup comprised of central office and field self-sufficiency employees met to review the method of communication for policy and rule changes to the field. DHS is now batching transmittals to the field on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month to become effective on the first day of the following month. There may be exceptions when an urgent need arises. Field staff has committed to reviewing changes in the latter part of the month so staff is aware of the changes by the effective date. Other items to increase staff knowledge include quizzes and refresher notices. The self-sufficiency training committee will receive a draft of the changes approx. 75 days prior to the effective date to give them an opportunity to weigh in on training expectations. Transmittals sent on the 15<sup>th</sup> will identify related training requirements.
- Parents as Scholars (PAS): Xochitl, Esparza  
PAS numbers are determined by caseload on January 1 of each year. 191 slots were filled last month and 40-43 applications remain on the wait list. The number of PAS slots was increased by 35 because of the recalculation on Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>. DHS is creating an e-mail box ([TANF.PAS@stateor.us](mailto:TANF.PAS@stateor.us)) to allow applicants to turn in their application via e-mail and to answer client questions. **ACTION:** The FSRC asked for information on the high number (110) of denied application in the category "Verification of full-time enrollment not included with application or does not meet requirement for acceptable proof". Ellen asked if applicants get a notice of denial that includes hearing rights. Xochitl will follow up.
- Workload and Intake Issues: Jim Neely  
Jim provided a handout that outlined the allocation plan for the 48 CAF limited duration positions. 12 of the 60 authorized positions are with Seniors and People with Disabilities Division (SPD). The positions were allocated based on current district staffing and the increase in food stamp (FS) applications. The hiring plan for these positions will begin Jan. 2009. **ACTION:** Ellen asked Jim to provide a branch-by-branch snapshot of intake processing times.

Ellen distributed a handout on FS timeliness. Vic said the report is coding dependent and errors or inconsistencies may skew the results. In 2007, Oregon ranked 18<sup>th</sup> nationally for meeting processing times, slipping slightly from 2004 or 2005 when it was in the top 10. The growth in caseloads has had an impact, although Oregon is doing well, comparatively speaking.

DHS plans to roll out the RPI model from February to May because of substantial progress in providing benefits. Work is being re-arranged and food stamps are being distributed on the same or next day in expedited cases. DHS central office staff will be assisting field staff with the recertification backlog. **ACTION:** Jim was asked to provide the RPI schedule and a one page synopsis of the new process.

**ACTION:** Nancy will work with central office SS staff to provide the monthly FS timeliness report to the FSRC. Nancy will provide the web location of the Statewide Data Report (<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/assistance/data/main.shtml>) and Branch and District Data Reports (<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS>) and will provide a hard copy of these reports at each FSRC meeting.

### **FSRC Debrief:**

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DHS staffing is approximately 60-70% of capacity because of the hiring freeze. This has taken place at the same time applications for services have drastically increased. More people are applying for the first time and are waiting longer for benefits. The RPI process will help but staffing ratios and caseloads have increased. FSRC members discussed the expedited food stamp figures and caseload numbers. FSRC will continue to review this information. **ACTION:** The FSRC asked Jim to provide staffing ratios and raw data levels by district on a monthly basis.

- The FSRC also discussed contractor staffing levels, which are around 50%. Disclosure and transparency has been issue, particularly when cuts are being implemented. Other issues include where federal funds are being used, such as TANF resources being used for CPS cases. Although this is allowable under federal law, an analysis is recommended to determine how much TANF funding is being diverted to child welfare.  
**ACTION:** Letter to Dr. Goldberg recommending increased transparency. Kim will take the lead on drafting the letter and will share via e-mail. A copy should go to Erinn Kelley-Siel and the Governor's Office. Items to include in letter:
  1. Communicate need for more transparency during budget reductions and more inclusive planning with partners; give FSRC appropriate time to provide input.
  2. Use additional funding from federal stimulus and aid to states to invest in staffing. Fund the 60 limited duration positions on a permanent basis.
- The FSRC discussed how the FSRC is operated and if changes are needed. It is difficult to make recommendations when information is received after DHS has made decisions. A communications plan could be helpful.

### Commission Structure & Recruitment:

- The FSRC discussed changing the meeting start time to 9:00 a.m. After discussion, it was decided that the FSRC will continue to meet at 8:30 a.m. Jessica asked members to make it a priority to arrive on time and call her (541-915-5136) if they are running late.
- Jessica reported that she had done some research on the Seniors Commission. They have a budget of \$100,000 and paid staff. It was recommended that the FSRC establish a budget and make a request to DHS.
- The FSRC decided to develop a fact sheet that included who we are, what we do, etc.  
**ACTION:** Jessica will put together a fact sheet and share via e-mail for review.
- Jessica distributed two handouts on recruitment. She reviewed the statute and found that we need "at least one member" from each of the five congressional districts. The FSRC should take into consideration geographical location and potential member perspectives as we work on recruitment. Suggested program areas to include in recruitment efforts are the faith-based community, business, housing authority, and the employment department. **ACTION:** Jessica will send the recruitment letter to FSRC members.
- It was suggested that the FSRC include the Department of Labor and workforce impact in their discussions and recommended recruiting FSRC membership from the Employment Department and the Workforce Board.
- Current recruitment efforts:
  - Yesenia: Community action member, DV resource center in Washington County
  - Ellen: Mental health (2 contacts)
  - Sherrie: Housing authority

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Kim: Andrew McGauff (business), Hood River Employment Division Office  
Jessica: Noreen Goplen, faith based; Jeff McDonald, IRCO; Kevin Troutman  
Diane: Minister in Multnomah County

2009 Legislative Session and Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB)

- Jessica mentioned that the Hunger Relief Task Force is creating a TANF white paper and suggested that the FSRC develop a legislative platform and translate it into a one to two page fact sheet with input on the GRB and session priorities.
- One-on-one meetings with legislators for information-sharing were suggested. These personal meetings are much more effective than written materials. Short, bulleted items work best followed by actual family stories. Assumptions are made that legislators have information that they may not have. Targets could be Revenue and Ways and Means Committees.
- Another strategy would be to attend regional legislative meetings. Go with facts (staffing ratios, caseload increases, and real client stories).
- Messaging should include 1) economic recovery and economic investment argument, 2) federal match and loss of federal funds, and 3) safety net which should be protected and even bolstered during these difficult economic times.
- Testimony suggestions 1) pull facts together, 2) be clear with key committees, 3) compare prior outcomes to current outcomes; no jobs, lower wages, etc.
- Discussed involving clients in the legislative process. Should proceed carefully. Sometimes client stories cause a focus on the individual instead of the larger issues. Sherrie mentioned that District 2 and 15 have developed a CD with amazing success stories.

**MOTION:** Diane motioned and Kim seconded that the FSRC ask DHS to pay the \$150 organization application fee for membership to the Human Services Coalition of Oregon (HSCO). HSCO holds monthly meetings in Portland (Salem during session). Vote to approve was unanimous and application will be forwarded to Mickey Serice.

**Future Agenda Items:**

*February:* Invite Representative Kotek to discuss legislative issues  
Invite Cathy Iles to discuss the Key Performance Measures  
Further discussion of legislative session changes

*March:* Dr. Goldberg's visit

*Other ideas:* presentation by the Client Services Committee

**Next Meeting:** The next FSRC meeting is scheduled for February 5, 2009, 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon in Room 252 of the Human Services Building.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.