

Family Services Review Commission Meeting

MINUTES

February 5, 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, Peggy Kennerly (by phone), Tawna Sanchez and Michael Ware
DHS staff present: Erinn Kelley-Siel, Mickey Serice, Xochitl Esparza, and Nancy Sathrum
Members absent: Maggie Bagon

Meeting materials sent via e-mail prior to meeting: Meeting Agenda, Draft Minutes of the January 9, 2009 Meeting, November and December 2008 Complaint Summary and Narrative Reports, November 2008 Food Stamp Timeliness Report, November 2008 Self Sufficiency at a Glance, and November 2008 CAF Public Assistance Caseloads

Handouts from meeting:

- Nancy: List of Priority 1 and 2 Legislative Bills being tracked by CAF, December 2008 CAF Public Assistance Caseloads, December 2008 Self-sufficiency at a Glance
- Jessica Chanay: Draft letter to Dr. Goldberg, FSRC Legislative Platform document, TANF/EDRC Fact Sheet, FSRC Recruitment Letter, Community Action Partners of Oregon (CAPO) press release
- Xochitl Esparza, January 31, 2009 PAS Update and TANF Time Limits Report

Greeting and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m. with a quorum in attendance.

Chair Report:

- Member check in and meeting agenda reviewed.
- Approval of Minutes: **MOTION:** There was a motion by Doreen and seconded by Michael to approve the January 9, 2009 FSRC minutes as written. Vote to approve was unanimous.

DHS Report: Erinn Kelley-Siel, Mickey Serice, and Xochitl Esparza

Mickey discussed the bill list that is included in the meeting packet and DHS's intent to send this report out to members each month. Priority 1 and 2 bills will be analyzed and testimony will be provided on P-1 bills only. All DHS divisions take the same position on a bill. All bills with a fiscal impact will be assigned to Ways and Means and although they may have hearings, it is unlikely they will move forward. The Legislative website has complete information on each bill.

ACTION: Nancy to send website to members. (Done 2/5/09, <http://www.leg.state.or.us/>)

Further discussion took place on specific bills, as follows:

- HB 2051: Regarding general assistance and medical component.
- HB 2127: Permits DHS to serve contested case notices by regular mail.
- HB 2398 and 2399: Regarding Work Force (It was suggested that DHS contact CAM Preuss at CCWD, Andrea Henderson at OCCA and Laurie Warner, Employment Department on these bills.)
- SB 153: Creates Task Force on Disproportionality in Child Welfare Foster Care. The Casey agreement has been identified as the funding source for this bill. FSRC asked that they be made aware of hearings on this bill.
- SB 200 establishes policy on homelessness. This policy statement does not create programs.
- SB 274: Regarding ALJ hearings and issuance of final orders on behalf of agency.

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- SB 390 would impose a state requirement of legal residence for anyone on assistance. It was pointed out that this may violate federal law in some instances.

FSRC discussed recent DHS budget cut-backs. Commissioners stated that recent changes took them by surprise. They requested more timely notice so they can offer input.

The discussion of TANF funds being diverted to child welfare was brought up. The challenge at this time is to get general fund dollars to replace the TANF funds to continue providing mandatory services. This issue is a fundamental problem of how self sufficiency and child welfare are funded. The challenge for DHS is to find a way to make both programs viable. This discussion will be brought up again during the 2010 TANF reauthorization.

CAF will begin presentations to the Ways and Means subcommittee on human services on February 16 and will last for about 2½ weeks. Hearings will be held Monday through Friday from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. Public testimony will most likely be scheduled in the evening.

Erinn reported the last staffing estimates indicate that self sufficiency is understaffed by 70%. (There was a follow-up email from Erinn with correction that SS is understaffed by 41.2% and child welfare is understaffed by 31.6%). Staff are trying to be creative, RPIs are allowing same day benefits in some offices, 48 additional staff are being hired, and some central office staff are being re-deployed to field offices.

The Governor's Recommended Budget is worse than expected and without needed funds. DHS will not be able to achieve outcomes for the TANF and Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) programs. The Legislature will be grappling with an 800 million projected shortfall, and will continue to sort out the stimulus bills which may offset some of the potential reductions. DHS hopes to show the legislature the magnitude of the impact the economic downturn has had on their services as staff members are stretched thin.

The Commission discussed the need for client testimony at the Ways and Means hearings. The legislature needs to hear this information for decision-making. Commissioners can contact Mickey at michael.serice@state.or.us for legislative updates. The latest on the schedule for 2007-09 budget hearings will be held next week in the evening, followed by the 2009-11 hearings from February 16th through March 4th. The other DHS divisions will follow CAF. The stimulus and revenue forecasts will come out during the DHS budget hearings.

Several outside groups have organized early morning conference calls to discuss the weekly legislative docket. FSRC members can participate.

The commission would like to support DHS in the budget process and work on TANF reauthorization in 2010. **ACTION: Agenda Item:** Invite Eric Moore to visit and explain TANF funding, MOE, managing the budget, maximizing and allocating resources, etc. **ACTION: Vic will forward a copy of the draft letter that was written and sent to Dr. Goldberg. (Done 2/5/09)**

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CAF has plans for monthly press releases after the unemployment caseloads are published and is seeking client stories to add a human face. **ACTION: Jessica will follow-up with Erinn. Send ideas to Erinn and Lauri Stewart. (Email addresses sent to FSRC on 2/6/09.)**

Parents as Scholars (PAS): Xochitl, Esparza

The January 2009 PAS report was distributed. The program is currently full with 223 slots and applications continue to be processed and put on waiting list

A TANF Time Limits report was distributed. Two different clocks are operating simultaneously; federal and state. In July some families met the federal time limit but not the state limit. DHS is creating a new hardship criteria that is related to the unemployment rate which will enable DHS to continue to use federal funds. This was included in the state plan in the “other” category.

FSRC Debrief:

CAF Bills: The CAF-focused bills were discussed. Apparently, many of them won’t go anywhere because of their fiscal impact. The FSRC suggested that DHS resurrect the TANF Oversight Group that included three FSRC members.

The FSRC went through the bill report to prioritize those bills that FSRC would like to track. Specific bills were assigned to commissioners for further review to recommend support or opposition. It was suggested that the FRSC get feedback from the Child Welfare Advisory Committee (CWAC) regarding their stance on bills. **ACTION: A conference call was scheduled for Thursday, February 19th, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. to share bill information. (Done 2/6/09)** FSRC members were asked to email their information to Jessica if they are unable to participate.

HSCO membership was discussed. DHS is unable to pay for the FSRC membership because this group’s main purpose is to advocate for legislation. FSRC members can join individually. Further discussion is needed.

The commission discussed the upcoming legislative hearings. Yesenia would need an official invitation to participate. Ellen is unable to participate since the Oregon Law Center has two lobbyists that testify on their behalf. If FSRC members are not able to attend, the Legislative Platform document will be sent to the committee as a written record.

Commissioners were asked to gather legislative agendas from other partners for review:

Human Services Coalition (HSCO) – Jessica
Oregon Hunger Task Force – Jessica
Oregon Food Bank (OFB) – Jessica
Children First for Oregon (CFFO) – Jessica
Oregon Law Center (OLC) – Ellen
State Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) – Diane
Oregon Alliance of Children’s Programs (OACP) – Michael

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Disability Rights of Oregon (DRO) – Ellen
Oregon Community College Association (OCCA) – Kim
Oregon Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Violence (OCADSV) – Tawna
Oregon Health Action Campaign (OHAC) – Ellen

Report from Client Services Committee: Diane & Yesenia

This item was postponed. The minutes of the last meeting will be forwarded to the full commission.

Legislative platform statement: Jessica

The platform was reviewed. Additional detail is needed under each item. **ACTION: Use Jessica's document as a framework for legislative testimony. Each person was asked to draft 1-2 sentences exemplifying item #1 by Wednesday, 2/11. Send to Jessica.**

Letter to DHS:

The FSRC discussed edits to the DHS letter on transparency. **ACTION:** Kim will make changes and share via email with FSRC. A **MOTION** was made by Kim and seconded by Diane that the letter, as edited, be sent to Dr. Goldberg. Vote of approval was unanimous and motion carried.

Dr. Goldberg will attend the March 5th FSRC meeting. Areas of interest include the state budget, economic stimulus and other legislative concerns.

FSRC Recruitment:

Diane is communicating with Minister in Portland. He is currently too busy to participate but will share our recruitment letter with others and send information to Diane. Diane also contacted Clover from Work Systems, Inc. (WSI) She is very interested and will meet with Diane and Jessica.

Kim will contact John Gardner, previously with WSI and now with CAWS, about representing private constituency if Clover doesn't work out.

Doreen suggested looking for a local Salem member from the DV network. (Ask someone from Henderson House in Yamhill.)

Jessica reported that Norene Goplen is immersed in Disaster Relief for several more months.

Other Items:

ACTION: Ellen will follow-up with Jim about the commission's request at the January meeting.

ACITON: Kim will send out information on *Skills to Compete*, a program that guarantees 2 years of post secondary education. They are looking for organizations to endorse the concept.

Future Agenda Items:

March: Dr. Goldberg's visit

Other ideas:

- Invite Eric Moore to discuss budget issues
- Presentation by the Client Services Committee
- Invite Representative Kotek to discuss legislative issues
- Invite Cathy Iles to discuss the Key Performance Measures
- Further discussion of legislative session changes

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

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon