



Citizen Review Panel

District of Columbia

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Time: 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Day: Tuesday

Via: Zoom Meeting

Virtual attendance

CRP members: Shana Bartley (Interim Chairperson), Mattie Cheek, Emily Bloomfield, Dr. Wanda Thompson, Elizabeth Mohler, Theresa Gibson, Pierrea Wallace

Absent members: Meghan Schott, Patrick Foley

Visitors: Rick Bardasch

CRP Facilitator Team: Margie Chalofsky, Toni Carr

Welcome/Introduction

Shana Bartley, Interim Chairperson began the meeting at 6:30 PM and welcomed everyone to the meeting. She acknowledged that there was a quorum for tonight's meeting and the satisfaction of public notice was met. At this time of the meeting there was no need for introductions as there were no guests in attendance. Visitor Rick Bardasch joined the meeting later.

Approval of Minutes

Shana asked panel members if they had any edits to the January meeting minutes. There were no changes to the minutes, the minutes were approved.

Approval and/or modification of tonight's agenda

Shana asked if there were any items that attendees would like to add or change to the agenda. There were no modifications to the agenda. She then presented the flow of the agenda.

Moving forward-next steps regarding Workshops

- **Survey Analysis**

Margie Chalofsky expressed that she felt the group was ready to move on to choosing workgroup topics. She shared that the rank survey gave us a graft of member interests; "Prevention" came in first, "Older Youth," second, and "Once in CFSA custody, what

provisions are made to ensure youth have contact with their families? What does that contact look like?” came in a very close third. Margie suggested that instead of being a separate group, that racial disparity be integrated in all workgroups. She shared that Theresa Gibson has volunteered to chair the Older Youth group and posed the question as to whether Pierre Wallace may be interested in chairing the prevention group. She added that it is positive that the group has very diverse skills and suggested to the group that if any skills are missing from their workgroup that they could pull in volunteers who are not panel members. She added that this would also be an opportunity to identify what skills are missing from the panel as a whole and to use it as a basis for recruiting new members. She also stated that after conversation with a few members she feels that public outreach does not have to be a separate workgroup and could be a task in each group. However, Patrick Foley., the only member who has actually been on workgroups has expressed that there should be members assigned to social media and other forms of communication. He has volunteered to work on that.

- **Take-aways from February Family Success Centers’ (FSC) Presentation**

Shana opened the floor to conversation about how the presentation on the Family Success Centers can integrate into our prevention work.

Emily Bloomfield raised questions about the FSC and specifics about their relationship with CFSA such as how they track outcomes of the centers; how they help families navigate to what’s available, etc. She felt that these and other questions would be helpful for the group working on prevention to understand. She also raised the concern about the small amount of money given to FSCs’ for food support as contrasted to the money the city spends on less critical services.

Shana also agreed of the positive benefit should the nutritional grant continue. She also appreciated learning about the distinction between the FSC’s and the Collaboratives and also was interested in understanding how upstream prevention can be measured. She suggested that the prevention workgroup could look at the impact of the FSC ‘s in relation to helping families avoid interaction with CFSA.

Emily added that it would be good to understand the determination process at CFSA when they do not open a case as related to when referrals are given and where they go. Margie responded that there is a continuum that would be helpful to learn about and that hopefully when the warm line is established this process will improve further.

Emily also questioned the services given to kinship families who agree to take children outside of the CFSA system. Margie replied that there is currently a lot of conversation on that in the advocacy community that she would be happy to share about at another time.

Mattie Cheek offered the point that when we do CRP outreach we also may be able to bring more awareness to the FSCs.’

Margie responded that each Family Success Center has a community advisory board which can be a good way for us to reach out in light of the research that Wanda Thompson has done about other jurisdictions regarding how they handle public outreach.

There was a robust discussion with multiple opinions about whether families currently need to be working with CFSA to get services from the Collaboratives . *Margie offered to find that out. The panel also discussed the need for the Prevention group to learn about the triage process at CFSA.*

Pierrea also suggested that the prevention workgroup could look at the concept of CFSA as a “revolving door” for families and whether prevention programs interrupt the pattern of families going out and returning to CFSA involvement.

- **Panel Discussion on Workgroups**

Margie suggested that since prevention is so multifaceted it may be best to break the group into two issue areas. A discussion was held about this suggestion as well as members' differing opinions as to how broadly we can define prevention in order to meet our mandates. It was also mentioned that it would be difficult to find data of how many families did *not* come into CFSA because of prevention services; it will be much easier to find data of families already being served by CFSA.

Mattie followed up with Margie’s comment regarding data and asked what data they collect and what are their outcomes and how are they measured? Do they see families getting better? She asked what is done in terms of interventions and whether or not this in fact prevents children from coming into the system.

Emily stated that we have to do it in chunks as we are a small group of people and we're all volunteers. She added that one way to approach may be asking questions focused on one outcome and then making the recommendation that CFSA engage someone to do a fuller program analysis and impact study that incorporates an assessment of entities in DC that are on the prevention side of services.

Mattie stated that organizations are getting contracts but when you see the data, it shows that children are not being served, and are still entering into the system. She asked how it is measured whether or not these contracts improved or did not improve services . She suggested that once you start looking at that then you can start going to the City Council and others and question why are you still funding these contractors or these nonprofits when in fact our children are still coming into the system? She suggested that a project could be looking at the evaluation components of all the prevention programs, including the data, the goals, how they were measured and what were the challenges.

Margie suggested that as there are many potential paths, that each workgroup submit a proposal as to how they want to approach their topic.

Shana replied that she thinks what this conversation has produced is a lot more

questions, which is a good thing. She agreed with Margie that it sounds like the working groups need to develop a proposal (not a full-blown one) but more of a write up describing or clarifying the plans, research questions and a project description page. She added that this was a previous request from CFSA and feels it's a good way to build accountability also with CFSA as our primary agent. She added that even in the short time that we had with the Family Success Centers, that so many of us came away with even more questions. She added the suggestion that members on this working group really spend time in a facilitated discussion trying to drill down on what it is that we really think we can do and developing a proposal of what the projects could look like. She added that maybe that it's not a single proposal but could be a couple of different proposals that come out of this and then the wider panel has a conversation around which direction feels the best to go. We could then have a similar discussion with CFSA around which of the scopes are also useful for them as they're thinking about their ongoing work so that we're also producing reports with recommendations where they're actually ready to take some action on what we might recommend because they are also holding similar questions. This conversation should not necessarily sway us or tell us what to do but could be a way of narrowing down the focus for this prevention group.

Mattie shared that she did not see it necessarily having to be different proposals but more as different action steps within the same concept of an action plan.

Shana replied that it might be different scopes given the amount of time we have to produce a report. She expressed that there's things to discuss and determine in a smaller group setting with the members participating in the working group. Mattie agreed.

Margie added that we could also look at it as multi-year, starting with this and moving to that. She agreed with Shana that it should be discussed in a smaller group. She also added that she will be calling members individually to see about their group preferences now that it is narrowed down from the amount of options in the survey.

Wanda Thompson added that even though we're looking at the well-being of children, a lot of what we'd be looking at would be also about the parents. She added the suggestion of having an assessment across the different programs with maybe a pretest and a post-test and then something on the well-being of the children comparatively on some indicator or measure based on self-report that shows an improvement in the well-being of children. She added that prevention is going to be directed at the parents in terms of what they gained from the services.

Pierrea shared that she has been writing down a lot of the questions that came up from this meeting that could be shared with members before the prevention group meets. Margie C. replied that due to the minutes taking some time to get out that she and Toni would also put out bullet points of action steps.

Shana added that the good thing about this is there is no wrong way and that there was a wealth of good ideas and that it feels really great and that we can now start a similar discussion around the older youth group.

- **Older Youth Working Group**

In Patrick's absence, Shana shared that he wanted to think of the description of this working group differently from asking the question of "Are those aging out of care provided significant services and contact to assist with aging into adulthood?" and shift to be more about services, because so many youths aging out of care are not receiving significant services - to reframe the question and then start to dig in that way.

Margie added that Patrick also suggested that we see if there was an opportunity to look at similar sized systems in other places as one way of potentially comparing their work on older youth to DC's. Theresa stated she agreed with Patrick. She shared that what she had in mind is "what are the services being provided and then looking at the data from those services. She added that it would be nice to publish a pamphlet with information for youth aging out of the system. Theresa also added that as far as where to start, that we should start with knowing who are the department chairs or department heads of the older youth services? What are some of the organizations that CFSA has contracted to provide services? She suggested that we could look at the six (6) needs shared in her presentation and then determine if those needs are being met in these services.

Mattie suggested that maybe we could do some sort of longitudinal study to see what happened to those youth who have aged out to see where they are and that what they are doing now. Wanda shared that locating youth for longitudinal study might be an issue as we will have to know how to identify and locate them. She added that it's probably much more likely to get data of those that are about to age out. Margie added that youth that don't choose to be part of their aftercare services would be very hard to connect with, so maybe focusing on the youth who are in aftercare might be best.

Wanda added that she wondered how many youth that are in foster care have actually developed an attachment to their foster families, and whether or not there's a difference between those who stay in touch with their foster families and have an ongoing relationship (from those who do not.)

Pierrea suggested looking at this as basing it off the older youth specifically around homelessness. Once a child turns twenty-one, we have this person who's an adult; if they're not participating in aftercare, they're not tracked. She added that nationally one in four foster care youth end up homeless and she questioned if DC is tracking that. She added that another big issue that we see with teenagers in the system is, because they've been in so many placements, very basic level life skills like hygiene are lacking and that it is one of the biggest reasons why placements disrupt; moving from house to house, they never develop those skills and then they're penalized by being in more placements. These services really don't exist in the agency. She agreed with Theresa's point of looking at housing, education, and understanding what meaningful engagement looks like in the success of programs.

Pierrea also added that what we see often with older youth is that an underused tool in the system is extracurricular activities which can be positive things for the youth to be

engaged to give them a sense of community. Oftentimes GAL's have to ask for court orders to get any type of funding for that and it is a huge hole in services for our youth.

Theresa asked "what age does moving toward aging out starts? She added that she felt it should be 15 years old and not when they are in the 11th grade or 12th grade as it is not enough time. Pierrea responded that she believes it starts at 15, but that the process of actually getting information and resources may start much later. She stated that it's like they are still waiting and hoping that there's this forever family for this child, but at 16 and 17, they're not getting life skills, and we're also not talking about potentially aging out of care.

Wanda asked if there is any data or any knowledge of how many youth in foster care go to college. Margie responded that DC does have that data.

Mattie added that it would be very interesting to find out from the kids why they went to college – what made them go.

Margie shared that she thinks it is just like with the prevention, it's going to be narrowing down on what the older youth group wants to focus on that's different than the financial piece that was focused on previously. She added that looking at the six needs that Theresa mentioned and how the youth's experiences compare to these needs would be a good place to start.

Theresa asked how many people were on the committee. Margie replied that she will call everyone individually; it looked like there were three members interested in older youth, but because the survey was based on a ranked scale we need to make sure everyone is really where they want to be. Also, as said before, we can bring other people in who are not members of CRP and if it's a smaller group, we can take a smaller chunk to start with. Members agreed with this next step and felt the panel was at a good stage.

- **Facilitator Report and Updates**

- MOTA Contact

- Margie shared that she met with James Bassett, our new MOTA contact. She had expected that he would join us tonight, but apparently he was not able to make it. She stated that she spoke with him regarding Pierrea's appointment, as well as looking at the people who were in the pipeline. Margie stated that she had been told by our last MOTA contact that Pierrea's appointment was waiting to go to the legislature for approval, as were the new members in the pipeline. However, James Bassett questioned that understanding that people who were nominated on the Mayor side have to go through council approval; Shana added that her understanding is that mayoral appointees go through the mayors process and council appointees go through the council process. Margie stated that she would *circle back with him to clarify the process*.

- Margie added that James Bassett seemed very open when she discussed the idea of recruitment coming from us and that if somebody applied directly to the Mayor's office that

we have more input in assessing potential new members related to how they blend with what skills we need, and how and whether that would be an added value. She added that we also should be starting to think of other people that members might want to recommend.

Annual Report

Margie announced that she has to do an annual report which is due in April. She mentioned that CFSA was really very supportive of us doing sort of a reset and taking this time to process and move forward and she feels comfortable with writing the report. She added that she will probably send it to some of the members to look at some pieces of it.

Website Update

Margie shared that Toni Carr is revamping the website. She added that, also, as suggested by panel members, we are trying to create a member's only page where members can login and view documents in the hopes to cut down on some of our emails. She added that when it gets a little further along, Toni will share a draft for members' review and input. She also shared that she and Toni have been reaching out to different community organizations to write blurbs about their organization with a link to their logos.

Oversight Hearing

Margie reported that the Chief Ombudsperson has resigned. The Chief Deputy is now acting as the Interim Ombudsperson. There has also been a Deputy hired specifically for CFSA, whose name is William Thomas. Margie added that she has been involved with other advocates in working with the office to try to see what support they need so that they can be the most successful. She added that she will keep members posted and she thinks that once they get a little settled in these new roles, she will schedule a time for members to meet them.

Margie shared a few bullet points from the CFSA oversight hearing that might be relevant to CRP work. She added that there were young people who testified and that it's often disheartening to listen to the young people because it's often the young people who have had terrible experiences in their homes and with their social workers who choose to testify. She added that this time there was a little bit of balance.

Shana suggested that this could be a place to start for the older youth working group- by asking some of the youth who testified for ideas of what the pressing issues are. She added it is really hard to make connections to young people via CFSA so that maybe listening to the hearing and learning what organizations they might be working with might be another way to get information. Margie added that if they are willing to talk in front of a television, they're probably willing to talk to members and added that this could be a great idea.

Meeting In-person

Margie asked panel members if they would be willing to do a meet and greet in-person when it gets warm outside and maybe at a later point have a retreat. Members agreed.

- **Financial Report**

In the treasurer's absence, Margie reported on finances for the months of January and February. She shared that for the month of January, salaries totaled \$3,333.00; Supplies totaled \$10.00, and website hosting totaled \$10.00 for a total of \$ 3,353.90. For the month of February, salaries totaled \$3,333.00, and supplies totaled \$55.00 which included \$10.00 for Zoom extra cloud storage and Constant Contact \$45.00, and Website hosting, \$12.57 which increased \$2.57. The current expenditure totaled \$27,027.09 with a current balance of \$22,972.91.

Margie also reported that there is money for the workgroups and once the workgroups start, we can talk about what's needed in order to be successful. There were no questions or comments from panel members. The meeting was handed back over to Shana.

- **New Business/Other Items**

As new business was discussed throughout the meeting, Shana opened the meeting for public comment and other items members wished to share.

- Theresa gave a shout out to all the women for Women Empowerment Month –and for the awesome things that women do and that members are doing.
- Margie shared with members that she feels that this is a great group and that the conversations are meaningful and on point and will really lead to some really good work. She thanked everyone.
- Wanda announced that there was an upcoming CFSA pop-up on Thursday at 4:00 pm and thought she would be able to attend the entire meeting but can now only do half of it. Margie added that it would be nice if someone could attend as she will not be able to due to another commitment. There were no other members who were available to join. Wanda stated that she will see if there's anything she can do to attend the entire meeting. Pierrea asked if the pop-ups were recorded. Margie responded that she did not think so but *would be happy to ask again* and that she will try to find someone who's not on our panel, who might be going and be able to report something back to us.
- Margie shared that Toni has found the appropriate person to reach out to regarding the CRP National Conference and that we will inform members once we know.
- Margie asked panel members if they wanted to continue doing the information sessions on alternate months and if so, to send her an email of topics/organizations/individuals that members are interested in. There were no suggestions at the time of the meeting. Shana suggested Margie and Toni

- take a month off from planning a session in April.

- **Concluding Comments**

Shana stated that this was a great discussion and thanked Margie and Toni for the follow-up and the next steps. She also thanked Pierrea for being her co-facilitator and shared that she looks forward to passing more things off to her. She added that she appreciates everyone for the engagement at this evening's meeting.

Follow up tasks/Next Steps

1. Finding out if someone has to be in the CFSA system to get assistance from the collaboratives- Margie
2. Phone calls to each panel member to discuss their choice of workgroup now that we have narrowed them down – Margie
3. Workgroup proposals; what the project would be like, building in in a conversation with CFSA for input (not approval)- Workgroup members after assignments finalized.
4. Find out if pop-ups are recorded – Margie

The meeting adjourned at 8:30

The next meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2023

Respectfully Submitted

Margie Chalofsky, CRP Facilitator

Toni Carr, CRP Administrative Support