**Children's Services Review Panel (CAC) Minutes**

January 27, 2025; 4:30 – 6:30 PM

https://zoom.us/j/98236935012?pwd=1aQdPvVwuw8V310V5V3vYcJs7BcCem.1

Members Present: Molly Evans, Ankit Sood, Casey Acord & Tonya Long

Ramsey County Staff: Alex Cleveland & Cassaundra Adler

Guests: Laura Gapske (DCYF), Jill Gunderson-Gernes, Charissa Jones

**Reminder of Agreements:**

If you would like a copy of agreements, please reach out to Laura Gapske.

**New Actions:**

* Approval of November 2024 minutes
  + Did not have November minutes so this will be tabled for February.
  + David will reach out to Cassaundra to get these Nov. 2024 minutes.
* Nomination and approval of Co-Chair
  + Ankit is nominated and approved as co-chair
* Recommendation and approval of Naida Medicine Crow to Commissioner Brown for CSRP Appointment
  + Motion moved by Tonya, seconded by Casey. All approve.

**Chair Update:**

**County Update:** Alex Cleveland

MAAFPA Update

The Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Disproportionality Act started in January 1st, and has been implemented first for Ramsey and Hennepin County. The goal is to keep families together and children in community. This will be done by having smaller caseloads for workers, using active efforts, and focusing on cultural specificity and family needs.

We are currently hiring for case manager positions to ensure we can meet the case load needs. We have also filled out open supervisor positions (about 5) and will be finalized in the next month.

Implementation of MAAFPA will be done by stages and percentage of service recipients who qualify for MAAFPA specific services; this is all done in random. The starting percentage is 30%; so, 30% of cases that qualify for MAAFPA will be acting under the MAAFPA laws, and increasing every quarter until we reach 100%. Families who qualify for MAAFPA is based on who is disproportionately represented in the child protection system, which is African American and American Indian families.

OCR Complaint

Office of Civil Rights complaint came to the State in the summer of 2024. Ramsey and Hennepin County have been responding, along with the State. This will be an ongoing effort, Providing data and communication to the federal government.

We hope this will help us figure out ways to continue improving the way we provide services.

Other Updates

We continue to partner and contract with an organization called Alia, which has been providing services to improve staff satisfaction, training, and how we provide services; helping us manage the MAAFPA requirements; and furthering our community relationships.

Hiring CFS Deputy Director should be happening in late winter, early spring. Alex Cleaveland and Bobbi Jo Potter are currently in interim roles.

**DCYF Update:**

Recruitment

We continue to recruit for members. We have a few more applications that came in recently, and we will move forward with interviews; we will keep you all updated.   
  
We ask you to share this group with your circles so we can continue to get new members.

SOS Applications

MN Legislative Updates

None of the budgetary items that DCYF suggested passed in this session. The governor might do an adjusted budget in the future, specifically to update SSIS, which is the computer system Children and Families Services use.

Things that did pass that are important: removal of ICWA grant caps; support for family placement; Mill Lacs denied being an initiative tribe.

Safe Together Model and Updating DV Co-Occurrence Best Practices

Gapske has been working with an organization that focuses on Domestic Violence and how to deal with co-current child protection and dv issues. There is space for community input, including people with lived experiences, and other matter experts. Please reach out to Gapske if you are interested.

Question:

**2025 In Person Meeting Discussion**

We understand that having Zoom meetings is very helpful and convenient. However, we also acknowledge that there is a human aspect missing when we only meet online. We would like to explore the option of meeting in person at least once a year.

We will meet in Person on March 24th at the Plato Building, if the Plato space is open.

Comments/Questions:

* Quarterly meetings in person might be helpful to build relationships and collaborative nature.
* What were meetings like before pandemic?
  + All meetings for CAC, including this one, were in person at the same time every month.
* Quarterly in person meetings would be very welcomed. Suggestion to use the Plato meeting room.
* Jill Esch, State’s American Indian Ombudsperson, has offered her space for us to use.

**Annual Report Feedback from Members**

Annually, this committee is required to provide a report to the State on what we have done throughout the year. Tonya Long has been working on this report and would appreciate member feedback. Laura will share this draft out with members.

**RECEAT and CAC Merging**

The Race Equity Community Engagement Action Team (RECEAT) is a group each department must have to include community input and voices on how Ramsey County provides services to community members. This is very similar to the mission the CACs (and CSRP/CRP) have. For this reason, the recommendation is to combine the Chairs Meeting and make it into a RECEAT. Each committee from the CAC will have a representative attend the RECEAT and liaise between their committee and RECEAT.

The RECEAT will be help the CAC by connecting areas.

Comments/Questions

* How will this work with so many committee members?
  + We will have a RECEAT team which will be attended by Committee representatives, not the whole committee in attendance.
* How will this help us move the work forward?
  + The goal is to help us unify within social services a bit more. The RECEAT will set an overarching goal that all CAC can align with and move together in, while specifically focusing on the area each committee represents.

**Projects for 2025**

Suggestions from Members:

* Continuing the work for the foster youth survey.
  + There have been previous barriers to survey. We will need to look into this as we will be surveying underage foster youth.
  + Could be done with a school social worker or attorneys for support.
  + The survey could also focus on wellbeing.
* Recruiting staff who represent community races proportionally.
* Removing demographic information from reports to help remove bias.
* Supporting foster youth to help divert from justice system.
  + Foster youth have a higher likely hood of being involve with justice system as adults.
  + This could be connected to the charge age going up from 10 to 13

The CSRP will continue to explore a youth survey.

**Next Steps, Action Items**

* David will ask Ramsey County Attorneys to attend a CSRP meeting to discuss MAAFPA.
* Gapske and David will look into the Continuous Quality Improvement and Internal Board, timeline, and what we need to get started on the survey work.