

**Maine Justice for Children Task Force**  
**December 14, 2021 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**  
**Via Zoom**

**In attendance:** Chief Justice Stanfill, Justice Gorman, Deputy Chief Judge Lawrence, Betsy Boardman, Kaela Jalbert, Caroline Jova, Kelly Dell’Aquila, Travis Bryant, Christine Thibeault, Clint Boothby, Francine Garland Stark, Ariel Gannon, Rep. Rebecca Millett, Liam Shaw, Elizabeth Ward Saxl, Bobbi Johnson, Heidi Aakjer, Chris Bicknell, Comm. Mike Sauschuck, Bette Hoxie, Nora Sosnoff, Rebecca Millett, Cassie Rodgers, Jamie Brooks, and Karen Tompkins, Ann Marie Lemire, Mary-Jo Robinson (PCG), Kevin Zacks (PCG), Alex Kissling (PCG), Kyle Feuer (PCG), Mike Ruppel (PCG), Karen Hallenbeck (PCG), Chris Northrop, Jill Ward, and Joanna Davis.

**Welcome** (10:00 a.m.-10:05 a.m.) —Chief Justice Valerie Stanfill

**Introductions** (10:05 a.m.-10:15 a.m.)

**Review of September 2021 Minutes** (10:15 a.m.-10:20 a.m.)

- September 2021 minutes were unanimously approved.

**Interagency Data Assessment Project Presentation:**

Introduction and Race and Equity Committee Update: Associate Justice Ellen Gorman

Public Consulting Group (10:20 a.m.-10:50 a.m.)

1. Justice Gorman:
  - a. As a background, the goal of this project is to investigate what data regarding youth and families the different entities and departments in Maine are collecting, and how to better share that data.
  - b. In August 2021, the Race and Equity Subcommittee created an RFP. There were five bids submitted and those bids were reviewed in September 2021. Public Consulting Group (PCG) was awarded the contract.
  - c. PCG has put forth a draft action plan, on which the subcommittee must provide comment by Friday, December 17.
  - d. Karen Hallenbeck is the PCG team leader, Kevin Zacks is the project manager, and the rest of the team includes Alex Kisslings, Kyle Feuer, and Mike Ruppel who are all data analysts.
2. Kevin Zacks:
  - a. Project goal is to conduct an assessment among five partner agencies to evaluate the extent to which they can collect and share data regarding families served. The five partner agencies are the Maine Judicial Branch, Department of Health and Human Services (Office of Child and Family Services), the Department of Corrections, Department of Public Safety, and the Department of Education.
  - b. Three major inputs will inform the assessment:
    - i. A series of interviews with key managerial and data stakeholders at each partner agency;
    - ii. Interviews with national experts and other state child welfare agencies; and
    - iii. Literature review to identify best practices in cross-system data sharing.

- c. PCG will create a Data Mapping Inventory Report and a Final Report.

**Updates (10:50 a.m.-11:30 a.m.) Maine Supreme Judicial Court- Chief Justice Valerie Stanfill**

- **An Organizational Update from the Judicial Branch – Deputy Chief Judge Rick Lawrence (10:50 a.m.-11:00 a.m.)**
  - As of December 10, 2021, there were 995 new PC filings statewide. In 2020, total filings were 1,098.
  - Maine CASA continues to hold brown bag lunches every other month. The latest session covered GAL investigations.
  - 2022 Spring Administrative Week will be March 28<sup>th</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **An Organizational Update from the Office of Child and Family Services at DHHS - Dr. Todd A. Landry, Director & Bobbi Johnson, Associate Director (11:00 a.m.-11:20 a.m.)**
  - Child fatalities: 5 in June 2021. DHHS looked at what is happening in other states, Maine is about half of the national average of child deaths from abuse and neglect.
  - Casey Family Programs connected OCFS with Collaborative Safety, an organization that developed a safety science-based model for conducting critical incident reviews.
  - Casey Family Programs Report key findings:
    - Impact of the pandemic on workload;
    - Staff turnover;
    - Timeframes;
    - Standby staffing patterns;
    - Communication and coordination with providers;
    - Difficulty engaging caregivers;
    - Family team meeting coordination; and
    - Communication between partners (law enforcement and hospitals).
  - Report recommendations:
    - Work with a coalition of providers to support effective coordination with child welfare staff;
    - Establish joint protocol agreements between law enforcement, hospitals, and child welfare staff;
    - Explore ways to support consistent practices, including support for family team meetings;
    - Explore ways to support engagement between parents and the child welfare system;
    - Continue to examine national best practices regarding standby and after-hours practice;
    - Examine national best practices for assessment timeframes and ensure that whatever timeframe is selected, it is compatible with the expected workload; and

- Conduct an analysis of current work tasks required in an assessment and remove any unnecessary and/or redundant tasks.
- Also looking at implementing the collaborative safety model to have a standardized review process that understands how decisions were made and what decisions were made in a model that promotes learning, support, and system learning and change.
- There are OCFS staff that have engaged in this process and reported feeling hopeful.
- OCFS is building different interfaces with community partners, including interfaces for resource parents and mandated reporters.

#### **Strategic Plan Updates (11:20 a.m.-11:40 a.m.)**

- **Parent Curriculum Workgroup Update:** Betsy Boardman and Kelly Dell'Aquila
  - Staff working on Child Protective Services 101 – Jamie Brooks, Karen Tompkins, and Kelly Dell'Aquila.
  - Virtual sessions will start for parents in January 2022. Different stakeholders are pre-recording sessions for parents to watch, while the session itself will be facilitated.
  - The registration flier will be distributed to Task Force members.
  - The Opportunity Alliance Group is willing to attend the next Task Force meeting to provide a program update.

#### **Miscellaneous (11:40 a.m.-12:00 p.m.)**

- Transitions long-term partners: ADA Christine Thibault is moving to DOC in two weeks and ADA Nora Sosnoff is retiring February 1, and Ariel Gannon is taking her place as Chief of the division.
- Scheduling of meetings for 2022: Betsy will soon provide proposed dates to MJB leadership but expects the next meeting will take place on March 15.

#### **ADJOURN (12:00 p.m.)**

- Meeting adjourned at 11:29 a.m.