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Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) Council
Meeting Minutes
March 28th, 2024
11:00 A.M.
Meeting Held via Zoom

Council Members Present	Council Members Absent
Patricia (PJ) West – Iowa HHS - Chairperson	Jeremy Ritchie – Iowa Workforce Development
Stephanie Stebens -Citizen Representative – Vice Chairperson	Eudora Beckley- Citizen Representative
Monica Garner – Department of Education	Zebulon Beilke-McCallum – Domestic Violence Representative
Billie Marchik – University of Iowa	
Mary Whisenand - Business Representative	
Nicole Berensmann-Maddox – Citizen Representative	
Dr. Kere Belding - Iowa State University	
Lorie Easter – Iowa HHS – Community Action Agencies, Director	
Anne Plagge - University of Northern IA	
Ex-Officio Members Present	Ex-Officio Members Absent
Senator Claire Celsi	Senator Sandy Salmon
	Representative Tom Determann
FaDSS Council Staff Present	FaDSS Council Staff Absent
Page Humphrey – Iowa HHS – Community Action Agencies	Angela Madison – Department of Health and Human Services
Elizabeth Patten – Iowa HHS – Community Action Agencies	
Melanie Ruffalo – Iowa HHS – Community Action Agencies	
Others Present	
Mindy Williamson – West Central Community Action	Laura Benson – Mid-Sioux Opportunity
Joy Szewczyk – Community Action of Southeast Iowa	Christy Anthofer – New Opportunities Jamie Johnston – New Opportunities
Mindy Clayton – Mid-Iowa Community Action	Alisa Schlieff – Upper Des Moines Opportunity

Nichole Griese – NEICAC	Jody Trimble-Dirks- Polk County FEC Doug Stodgel – Polk County FEC
Jessi Bergin - Community Action Agency of Siouxland	Leanne Corwin – Operation Threshold

Introductions – PJ West, Chairperson

PJ West, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Quorum was established.

Approval of Agenda – PJ West, Chairperson

Stephanie Stebens moved that the agenda be approved. Lorie Easter seconded the motion. All council members voted aye. The agenda was approved.

Approval of November 16th, 2023 Council Minutes – PJ West, Chairperson

Stephanie Stebens moved that the November 16th, 2023 minutes be approved. Billie Marchik seconded the motion. All council members voted aye. The minutes of November 16th, 2023 were approved.

Council Representative’s Update – All Council Members

Billie Marchik retirement from University of Iowa School of Social Work was announced. The Council celebrated her years of service to the Council and how instrumental she has been in supporting the program.

New Council member Mary Whisenand introduced herself to the other Council Members, she is taking a Business Representative position. Anne Plagge introduced herself. She is taking over for Dr. Michael Fleming from the University of Northern Iowa. Senator Claire Celsi also introduced herself from the State Senate and thanked the Council for having her back.

IFDA Update – Laura Benson, IFDA

FaDSS Day on the Hill was on January 25, 2024, there was good attendance from grantees and good conversations with legislators. Grantees continued emailing their legislators throughout the session to provide them updates and providing family stories to them. Regional meetings were held in February throughout the state. IFDA Leadership has been meeting to plan this year’s retreat that will be September 23rd and 24th at the Fred Maytag Scout Center in Des Moines.

Grant Review Committee Report - Page

The Committee reviewed the grant application that was presented. It's a renewal application for the next 3-year grant cycle. This would be a non-competitive application with all of the service areas remaining intact without changes to the current structure. The draft was approved by the committee. The Council also discussed utilizing Iowa Grants for the application and this was added to the recommendation. The recommendation is to move forward with the Grant Review Committee’s recommendation for a renewal application posted in Iowa Grants.

Since the recommendation came out of committee, the recommendation was voted on. All council members voted aye. The Grant Review Committee recommendation was approved.

Staff Updates - Page

Monitoring

Page and Elizabeth have been conducting monitoring in line with the Continuous Quality Improvement process. Claudia Schabel, a DEI Consultant, has assisted in facilitating the DEI assessment component of the monitoring plan. Five grantees participate in this process each fiscal year throughout the three-year grant cycle. 2 of the 5 Fidelity reviews have been completed so far, this fiscal year with the third wrapping up in the next month. This new model fidelity review is used to identify the strengths and opportunities for growth for each agency. This process is more focused on the quality of services provided to the families.

Jamie Swearingin from SCICAP shared how the new model for the review worked for the program coordinator and her team. Jamie shared that some of the things they took away from the review was the laidback conversations to get to know the program better. Jamie found the experience to be enjoyable and beneficial for her team. Coming out of the meeting showed the strengths of things that we do really well and some growth opportunities. After the process, Jamie has been able to implement several changes to how they coach team members and families.

The new way of doing the reviews came from the Mathematica evaluation along with input from the supervisors and program coordinators. This process continues to evolve with feedback from the grantees.

Training- Page

The second FaDSS New Worker training is being held in April. State staff are also working on creating a refresher training for supervisors in June coupled with an in-person coordinator meeting in June.

Capacity Report- Page

After the February report, most of the grantees are meeting the 95% standard. A few grantees have had staff turnover. Special note that Operation Threshold and Mid-Sioux Opportunities met their capacity for the first time in quite a while. The staff at those agencies worked really hard to accomplish this.

Special Projects- Page

Elizabeth and Lorie are both on the Iowa HHS Health Equity Committee. This committee has representatives from all divisions, focused on creating ownership over health equity practices to increase buyin once we get to the recommendation phase. Page is in a workgroup called Families are Safer together, focused on how states can best provide concrete support to families to prevent involvement with child welfare.

Administrator's Report- Lorie

Additional alignment has been happening within HHS. FaDSS is moving to Family Well-Being and Protection May 1st. With the current changes, the Community Access division name has changed to Community Access and Eligibility. Further changes include Refugee Services being added to Community Action Agencies along with the name being changed to Community Services.

The Service Delivery Alignment project is going to be starting this year with Behavioral Health. There is currently House file 2509 and Senate file 2354 on realigning the Behavioral Health System. Next steps will be for broader system alignment. There will be more time for stakeholder feedback while moving forward.

The first recommendation for board and commissions was to eliminate the FaDSS Council and consolidate the duties into the HHS Council and eliminate the Community Action Agencies Commission. There are 2 bills, Senate File 2385 and House File 2574, both have been put on the unfinished business calendar. House file 2574 keeps the FaDSS Council and eliminates the Community Action Agencies Commission. SF2385 shows that the FaDSS Council will be eliminated and the duties will be combined into the HHS Council. The bills are still in the legislative process.

Senator Celsi confirmed that the House file has had more work done on it. It keeps more boards and commissions. Senator Celsi said they are wanting to have the House bill pass so that so many boards and commissions are not cut or at least take the recommendation of not cutting so many. Senator Celsi expects there to be a compromise between the House and Senate bills.

Other Business- no other business.

Adjournment – Billie Marchik motioned for the meeting to adjourn and Kere Hughes-Belding seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 11:55 p.m.