## MINUTES

March 1, 2023

9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Meeting held in-person with virtual option via Microsoft Teams

1. **Call to order and introductions. Wilma**

Meeting called to order by Wilma Hashimoto at 9:07 AM with roll call by DSS Staff Support, Julia Perez.

1. **Approve minutes for *February 1, 2023*.**

* Rosemary Alanis (District 4) motioned; Richard Bailey (District 4) seconded to approve February 1,2023 meeting minutes and March meeting agenda.

1. **Updates.**
   1. **Legislative Updates. Elected Official Representative and DSS**
      * Dan Moreno from Assemblyman Jim Patterson’s office provided an update on AB 1794 regarding post-adoption contact agreements. This bill was introduced by Assemblymember Mike Gibson. AB 1794 would allow children and young adults adopted through the child welfare system to maintain critical connections to their biological family and community, strengthening family connections for adoptees when appropriate, by promoting ongoing contact between siblings and allowing parental rights to be reinstated for children and non-minor dependents and foster care after an adoption has failed. AB 1794 will provide a path to reinstating the biological parents’ rights.
      * Ideas for new legislation are still needed. If you have any questions or comments, please reach out to Dan Moreno at: [Dan.Moreno@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Dan.Moreno@asm.ca.gov) .

**Department of Social Services Addressing Critical Areas.**  **Kimberli Smith**

* + - DSS Deputy Director, Kimberli, Smith announced that the month of March is Social Worker Appreciation Month. Be sure to thank a Social Worker.
    - Kimberli Smith provided monthly DSS CWS data points. A handout was provided to the in-person attendees and attached to the Microsoft Teams invite for virtual attendees.
    - Staffing information – CWS is recruiting social workers on every level, there are currently 95 vacancies over the various classifications. Please visit the County Website: <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/fresnoca> if you are interested in joining the team and helping serve the community.
    - Referrals and Caseloads:
    1. Total Referrals (January 2023): 1,665, with neglect being the highest allegation rate at 820 (49.25%)
    2. Total Caseloads (January 2023): 2,952, with family reunification at 1,126 (38.2%) and permanency placement at 850 (28.7%).
    3. Caseloads by Ethnicity (January 2023): : 2,927, with Latino being the highest at 1,775 (60.6%)
    - Re-entry to Foster Care: No changes in data from February’s meeting (October 2020 to September 2021 data) 785 entries: 30 (3.8%) youth re-entered the system in less than 12 months. 755 (96.2%) had no re-entry within 12 months
    - Placements by Facility Type (January 2023): – 2,286 placements; 93 (4.1%) in a group home, 703 (30.8%) placed with a relative, 299 (13.1%) placed with a resource family, and 821 (35.9%) placed with a foster family agency.
    - Dependency Court (January 2023): Department 21 had 174 hearings with 28 continuances, Department 22 had 219 hearings with 39 continuances, and Department 23 had 97 hearing with 40 continuances.
      1. Department of Social Services averaged 14.3% continuances.
    - Mod C (January 2023): 21 entries, 19 youth stayed less than 9 days and 2 youth stayed longer than 9 days (return from AWOL status; placement disruption). Average length of stay is 3.3 days.
    - Kim shared a summary of the Children’s Crisis Continual Pilot Program (CCCP). The primary function of the pilot is to provide therapeutic interventions, specialized programing, and short-term crisis stabilization to permit a seamless transition for foster youth between settings and levels of care. The program is a collaboration between Fresno and Madera County’s DSS and Behavioral Health. The joint-proposal has been approved and $8.4 million from the State of California has been awarded over a grant period of 5 years. For further information on the Request for Proposal (RFP) released by CDSS for the CCCP Program, please refer to ACIN No. 1-55-22.
    - Kim provided a draft pamphlet for in-person attendees to review. The pamphlet is part of the Quality Parenting Initiative to provide valuable information to potential resource families with the hope being that social workers would provide the pamphlet at temporary placements to guide the parents in the next steps of becoming resource parents/families.
    - CWS Enhancement Project and on-going workgroups: FCSOC members are still encouraged to complete a registration form and join if interested. For more information or to submit a registration form email Michael Kifer at [mkifer@fresnocountyca.gov](mailto:mkifer@fresnocountyca.gov) or Brenda Estrada Diaz at [bdiaz@fresnocountyca.gov](mailto:bdiaz@fresnocountyca.gov)
    - There had been previous discussion about using the software program, Binti, to process RFA applications. However, CMS Cares is the State-based program utilized by CDSS, therefore Child Welfare Services will continue to use CMS Cares before petitioning for funding to utilize Binti.
    - Live Scan is now available Saturdays for potential resource parents/families who are unable to come into the office on weekdays for their live scan.
    - Child Welfare is currently reaching out to individuals who previously submitted an RFA application as well as to anyone who has their status set as “inactive” to see if they are still interested in furthering the process or would like to become active again.

1. **New Business**
2. **Presentation from Fresno County Behavioral Health Division Manager, Ahmad Bahrami, and 988 Helpline worker, David Lopez**

* The 988-helpline number is recognized nationwide as a suicide and crisis lifeline. Calls are routed based on a caller’s area code, so that a trained counselor familiar with that community can help provide referrals to nearby resources.
* The lifeline offers free and confidential emotional support services and is not specific to suicide risk, but any emotional distress. Individuals can call, text, or chat online with a trained counselor 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
* Central Valley Suicide Prevention Lifeline is funded by 7 counties, Fresno being the largest of those counties and has the largest call volume.
* There are over 200 crisis call centers in the United States and more than 20 million calls were answered from 2005 to 2020. The most common age groups for calls are 14 - 21 and 35 - 52.
* All counselors are trained in crisis prevention, many of whom have bachelors or masters degrees. Follow-up calls and counseling are available after the initial contact, which has been proven to reduce the suicide risk rate. Fresno County is the only county known to offer this additional service.
* For persons not in a suicidal or emotional crisis, other resources to help are as follows: CalHope at 1-833-317-HOPE or CalHope.org and the California Peer Run Warm Line 1-855-845-7415. For general information and/or additional resources visit: FresnoCares.org.

1. **Review of Action Items. Wilma**
   1. **Vote on Attendance Options for April 5, 2023 Meeting**

* Effective March 1, 2023, in-person attendance is required for Committee members with the exception of virtual attendance if the Committee is given 72-hours prior notice and the physical location of the Member’s virtual attendance. If a member does attend virtually, their location will then be made public, as they will be seen as an extension of the FCSOC meeting and the public will be allowed to join the meeting from their location. Additionally, the Committee will now vote to allow Committee members to join virtually. Members of the public will continue to have the option to attend in-person or virtually via Microsoft Teams.

1. **Subcommittee Updates.**
   1. **Education** **Wilma**
      * Education Committee is meeting with Judicial, DSS, Fresno Unified School District, and the District Attorney to address the need for seamless transitions when youth are having frequent placement changes.
   2. **Children’s Mental Health Wilma**

* Wilma mentioned that a representative from the FCSOC is still needed, if anyone is interested in attending the Children’s Mental Health meetings, please let Wilma know and she can provide information.

1. **Round Table Discussion by members. All**

* What option is available to resource parents who take in a child with immediate needs such as ringworm or lice, which are contagious? The placement process is to have children medically cleared prior to placement in the home; however, if a situation does occur, Child Welfare has some supplies available on hand to provide to the families. Further collaboration will take place to aid in the transition into an emergency placement.
* In response to the awarding of the CCCP funding from the State, Kevin Lisitsin suggested that DSS create an advocacy group or schedule a meeting to investigate what programs already exists to ensure that new programs being funded aren’t duplicate programs that may already be in effect somewhere and not being taken advantage of.
* Richard Bailey provided informational handouts to in-person attendees regarding court processes and hearings in Fresno County from 2017. The information was not discussed in length due to time constraints.
* An update on Court Improvement Committee’s efforts was requested by Richard Bailey. Judge Leann Le Moń has resumed the judicial meetings and it was suggested that the FCSOC request written updates from Judge Le Mon to share with the committee.
* There are currently three FCSOC vacancies, two in District 1 and one in District 4. The Committee is not district-specific so members can live anywhere in the County.
* Wilma shared that CASA is planning a day of fun for the foster youth at Clovis Wild Waters on Saturday, May 27, 2023. More information to come.

1. **Public Comments.**
2. **Adjourn Wilma**

Next meeting will be on April 5, 2023, in-person and virtually via Microsoft Teams (camera access required for Committee members). Meeting adjourned by Wilma at 11:01 AM.

**Committee Attendance**

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| **District 1** | **District 2** | **District 3** | **District 4** | **District 5** |
|  |  | Sal Quintero  Ari Martinez (Proxy) |  |  |
| Karina Perez | Kevin Lisitsin | James Martinez | Rosemary Alanis | Pamela Hancock |
|  | Maisie Young | Elizabeth Thomas | Richard Bailey | Ed Avila |
|  | Tracy Kashian | Patricia Miller |  | Wilma Hashimoto |

**Attending Staff and Guests**

In Person: Kimberli Smith, Elizabeth Bell, Julia Perez, Pat Scovill, Brian Van Anne, Ingram Tate, Ahmad B., Hillary Bolger, Dustin Ragsdale, Rocky Vang, | Microsoft Teams: Rebekah Rodriquez, Ronald Alexander, Christie Lee, Dan Moreno, Joshua Lawson, Marc Salazar, Marco Rodriguez, Maya Daugherty, Paul Nerland, Mary (Guest), Sonja Dosti, Amina Flores.