



Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee

The mission of the Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee is to provide oversight for and promote communication between the Board of Supervisors, the Department of Social Services and its related agencies, and the community, with emphasis on providing information and recommendations that make the system more effective and efficient.

MINUTES

November 2, 2022

9:00 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

Meeting held In-person with Zoom option

I. Call to order and introductions.

Wilma

Meeting called to order by Wilma Hashimoto at 9:06 AM with roll call by Julia Perez.

II. Approve minutes for **October 5, 2022**.

- Kevin Lisitsin (District 2) motioned; Jill Stepke (District 1) seconded to approve October 5, 2022, meeting Minutes and current meeting Agenda.

III. Updates.

A. Legislative Updates.

Elected Official Representative and DSS

- No Updates.

B. Department of Social Services Addressing Critical Areas.

Dalvin/Kimberli

- Recognition for November being National Adoption Month. Proclamation going to the Board of Supervisors on November 8, 2022.
- Department will be hosting 26th Annual Adoption Day Event on November 18, 2022 in Hope Center. The hope is to finalize adoptions for 30 families.
- Adoption data points from July 1st 2021 – July 30th 2022 include the finalization 307 adoptions for Fresno County. 30% of those adoptions were youth ages 8 and up.
- Adoption rate for Fresno County is 27.1%, which is slightly higher than the state standard of 25.2% (According to data provided by UC Berkeley).
- Updates on the Child Welfare Enhancement work include an expansion of work towards the Complex Needs Youth Workgroup. Along with CDSS, the Department is looking to apply for the Children's Continuum of Care (CCC) Grant and is working with local and Madera County's Department of Behavioral Health to determine the needs of the region.
- Pam is part of the Specialization Review Workgroup and mentioned there is a Finalized Matrix of Information of Specialized Areas across CWS.
- The Fresno County Workgroup Registration handout was reviewed. It gives committee members a chance to participate in the workgroups that are being held.

IV. New Business

A. Presentation by Rebecca Reynolds, Family Urgent Response System (FURS)

Rebecca

- Rebecca Reynolds is a Marriage and Family Therapist who works for Kings View in partnership with the Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health and CDSS. Rebecca is also the Program Manager for the Family Urgent Response System (FURS).
- The Family Urgent Response System (FURS) is a program that offers 24/7 immediate, trauma-informed support to current/former foster youth and caregivers.
- Placements are lost or disrupted for various reasons, but FURS assists to de-escalate, stabilize and/or resolve issue.
- If there are problems at home, FURS can serve as the first intervention that individuals can reach out to.
- There are 2 licensed therapists and after-hours associate therapists on call.
- A big portion of Rebecca's clientele was foster youth and noticed that some of youths did not want to speak with their social worker, so that is when FURS steps in to provide third-party/objective assistance.
- The goal is to stabilize the placement, de-escalate the situation and provide additional services (linkage to other providers and making sure they are connected with their therapist) within 24 hours.
- Part of the contract is to attend Child/Family Team (CFT) meetings.
- Another main goal for FURS is to preserve the placement of the child because constant relocation is not beneficial.
- Available to Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs) and schools.

- Overall goal is to promote stability while they are part of the system.

B. FCSOC Member Attendance

Wilma

- Wilma wanted to emphasize the importance of committee member attendance because they play an important role for the youth in foster care. A copy of the FCSOC Bylaws was dispersed to committee members.
- Members were asked to notify DSS Staff Support (Elizabeth Bell and Julia Perez) in advance of any upcoming absences.
- If a member has missed 2+ consecutive meetings or more than 3 meetings in a year, they will be contacted to inquire if they are still interested in being part of the FCSOC. (*Further details provided in FCSOC Bylaws handout.*)

C. Citizen Review Panel for CDSS Lead by CWS

Dalvin/Kim

- Outlines recommendation that this review panel is making to CDSS to set in motion initiatives and implementations. Diana from CDSS can provide more information on what was presented.

V. Review of Action Items.

Wilma

A. Vote on Attendance Options for December 7, 2022 Meeting

- Ari Martinez (District 3-Proxy) motioned for the December 7th meeting to continue as a hybrid meeting, with the option of either virtual (Zoom) or in-person attendance for community members only; Maisie Young seconded the motion.
- Zoom option (with camera access) only available to community members. Committee members are required to attend in person.

VI. Subcommittee Updates.

A. Education

Pam

- No update

B. Children's Mental Health

Wilma

- Upcoming guest speaker presentation from Robert Dutile, CEO of the new River Vista Behavioral Health clinic.
- Link provided for the next Mental Health Subcommittee meeting being held on December 15, 2022 at 9:00 AM:
<https://fresnocountyca.webex.com/fresnocountyca/j.php?MTID=m33de268a65ae8f8835e0da724a0b0595>

VII. Round Table Discussion by members.

All

A. Discussion regarding FURS.

- Jill Stepke (District 1) asked if there is an in-person mobile response team. Rebecca said yes and described the process as: Receive phone call → FURS receives information from CWS AND CMS → FURS responds. If the call is urgent, FURS can be there within 1 hour and for non-urgent calls, assistance will be there within 3 hour(s).
- Tracy Kashian (District 2) asked how the public gets information about FURS. Rebecca said they are marketing by going to agencies. There are plans to go to different Foster Family Agencies (FFAs).
- Rebecca said there are 2 complicating factors: 1) Many people do not know about FURS and 2) Do not understand what services FURS provide, which leads to uncertainty on when to call the service.
- Rebecca would like the youth to be the ones to call to be able to understand the resources that are available to them. More public awareness is needed.
- Maisie Young (District 2) believes providing information about FURS to school counselors and principal offices would be beneficial.
- Kimberli Smith (CWS Deputy Director) expressed that FURS is an underutilized resource that we have in our community. There is not enough advertisement for this resource. Having QR Codes or refrigerator magnets are some suggestions that have been made for outreach.
- Kimberli also shared that the State would like the youth or caregiver to make the FURS call.
- There is a statewide low call-in rate for FURS. Only 6 phone calls have been received since July 2022. When FURS was being operated by a different agency last year, only 17 calls were received. Further marketing and training for FURS is needed.
- Sonia De La Rosa (County Administrative Office) suggested that FURS should have advertisements expressed in simpler terms so the average person can understand their services with ease. Rebecca would like to have feedback from the youth to figure out the best way to have community engagement.
- The use of mass emails/text messages for advertising FURS was discussed.
- Judge Mary Dolas believes every attorney who represents minors should have FURS contact information to give to the youth.
- Elizabeth Thomas (District 3) asked if FURS will be a replacement to the county 24-hour County Crisis Line and Rebecca responded no.

- Rebecca and Dalvin believe it would be beneficial for complex needs youth to meet with the clinicians they may be working with for pre-planning purposes, but this process has been rejected in the past due to FURS being a crisis-response system.
- Jill shared that there may be some hesitation to call the FURS number due to the misinterpretation surrounding the word *crisis*. FURS provides services that de-escalate non-emergency problems/situations.
- Rebecca said there is a peer support position available. Finding young adults with experience as a former foster youth to provide peer support to current youth in foster care is needed. This is also a statewide issue.
- Josh Lawson (Fresno County Foster Parent Association) said focusing solely on technology to disperse information (e.g., website, email, QR Code) cannot be depended on because many individuals are not proficient in technology. Kimberli responded that various forms of dispersing information for everyone will be used to respect anyone who is not proficient in technology.

VIII. Public Comments.

- Pat Scovill (Former CASA Advocate & Foster Youth Advocate) brought up the idea to have vocational training for high school juniors and seniors who may not be academically successful. By learning a trade, they will have important life skills to make a living and be successful. Without these important life skills, they may turn to other ways to earn a living (e.g., drug dealing, prostitution).
- Kevin said there is a program called, Career Technical Education (CTE) in Fresno Unified School District that offers vocational training for high school youth (9 – 12th grade).
- Patricia Miller (District 3) agrees with Josh about having a Directory of important numbers for the foster parents. Some calls are urgent and if a general number is called, many times assistance will be delayed, or the call may not go through. She would like to have staff names and specific numbers to be able to return a phone call to the right individual.

IX. Adjourn.

Pam

Next meeting will be on December 7, 2022, in-person and virtually via Zoom. Meeting adjourned by Wilma at 10:44 AM.

Committee Attendance

District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sal Quintero <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ari Martinez (Proxy)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Karina Perez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kevin Lisitsin	<input type="checkbox"/> James Martinez	<input type="checkbox"/> Rosemary Alanis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamela Hancock
<input type="checkbox"/> Wendy Yribarren	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maisie Young	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth Thomas - Zoom	<input type="checkbox"/> Richard Bailey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ed Avila - Zoom
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jill Stepke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracy Kashian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patricia Miller - Zoom	<input type="checkbox"/> Connie Waldrop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wilma Hashimoto

Attending Staff and Guests

In Person: Kim Smith, Dalvin Baker, Elizabeth Bell, Julia Perez, Rebecca Reynolds, Miriam Flores, Sonia De La Rosa, Judge Mary Dolas, Pat Scovill | Zoom: Dan Moreno, David Rodriguez, Josh Lawson, Focus Forward, Kimberly Hazelton, Krystal Kwartz, Rebekah Rodriquez, Maya Daugherty, Robert Jeffers, Ashlyn S, Brian Van Anne