



AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILD & FAMILY WELL BEING ADVISORY COUNCIL

DATE	GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES	TIME
JUNE 25, 2025		5PM – 7PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Blakey, J. Rogers, H. Yusuf, J. Williams, C. Washington, C. Devonish, T. Russell

MEMBERS ABSENT: D. Woods, N. Johnson-Lenoir, K. Porter, Y. Lee, A. Hill, L. Lewis

DCYF STAFF PRESENT: S. McPherson, D. Gilchrist, S. Greene, J. Williams, H. Burton, S. Timm, N. Thyden

I. Call to Order – Chair Blakey

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM by Chair Blakey. Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved without changes.

Council members and guests introduced themselves, representing various organizations and roles, including the DCYF child safety team and policy staff.

Announcement- A significant agenda item was the upcoming Request for Proposal (RFP) for the development of MAAFP training, in partnership with the Child Welfare Training Academy. The RFP offers approximately \$50,000 for the creation of training materials aimed at equipping workers with skills to implement recently passed legislation. Following our guest presentation, council will review the RFP for comments. Members interested in applying were asked to recuse themselves from related discussions to avoid conflicts of interest.

II. COUNCIL/UNIT Updates – Susan McPherson

Annual plans sent to all members for signage. Requirements reiterated.

III. DCYF CSP Staff Presentation – Hannah Burton, Stacey Timm, Shani Greene

Technical Changes in Reporting Statute

Discussion centered on recent legislative changes, specifically SF456, which imposes criminal penalties for knowingly exposing children to fentanyl. The proposed technical amendment to statute 260E would make reporting such exposures mandatory, aligning with new state law. Methamphetamine exposure would also be explicitly included. The importance of clarity in screening guidelines for local agencies was emphasized due to rising cases of child fatalities and near-fatalities tied to fentanyl.

Community-Based Response to Educational Neglect

A new law shifting the response to school attendance issues from traditional child protection to community-based services was outlined. The change requires local welfare agencies or designated partners to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate support to families before escalating to child protection intervention. Guidance and best practices are being developed to support consistent implementation across the state.



Plans of Safe Care and Prenatal Substance Exposure

Updates were given on efforts to strengthen coordinated responses for families affected by prenatal substance exposure. Minnesota is seeking technical assistance to enhance cross-system collaboration and develop plans of safe care, with an emphasis on early support and prevention. The work is at an early stage, with a multi-year process anticipated.

Reporting Prenatal Exposure to THC

The potential legislative change regarding prenatal THC exposure was discussed. The current law requires child protection involvement for positive toxicology tests at birth, but practice varies across counties. Feedback highlighted that removing mandatory reporting could reduce barriers for families and address inequities in testing and intervention, particularly for African American mothers. Education for families and ongoing research into effects of THC exposure were recommended alongside policy change considerations.

Policy and Practice Updates

The policy unit described its broad involvement in child welfare and child protection initiatives, including revising tools, developing best practice guides for African American families, and building networks for knowledge-sharing. The team sought council input on the most effective methods and frequency of providing updates.

III. MAAFPA RFP Council Review – Chair Blakey

RFP reviewed by council members J. Blakey, J. Rogers, H. Yusuf, C. Washington and DCYF staff S. McPherson and N. Thyden

IV. Next Steps and Action Items

- a) Policy staff will provide a list of ongoing projects and seek council prioritization for future discussions.
- b) Steering committee will convene to discuss and structure how policy updates are delivered to the council.
- c) Ongoing collaboration and feedback are welcomed, with future updates and engagement opportunities planned as initiatives progress.
- d) Council will request extension to current deadline for the RFP review.

V. Meeting Adjourned – Chair Blakey

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.