



## **African American Child and Family Well-Being Advisory Council**

Meeting Minutes - Wednesday, August 27, 2025

Members Present: J. Blakey, L. Lewis, J. Williams, C. Devonish, T. Russell, N. Johnson-Lenoir

Members Absent: K. Porter, Y. Lee, A. Hill, H. Yusef, C. Washington, J. Rogers

DCYF Staff Present: S. McPherson, D. Gilchrist, M. Seymore, C. Berg, C Krueger

J. Blakey convened the meeting at 5:07 PM beginning with approval of the July 23, 2025 meeting minutes and the current agenda. Motion to approve was led by Lynn Lewis and seconded by Jonie Cannon and Nashauna Johnson-Lenoir.

A key presentation was delivered by Cassandra Berg and Carrie Krueger from DCYF's Human Services Performance Management Team. They outlined the agency's performance system, focusing on three core child welfare metrics: maltreatment recurrence, 12-month permanency, and relative care. The Council engaged in a Menti-meter poll to assess the relevance of these measures and raised concerns about systemic bias in maltreatment reporting, unrealistic expectations around permanency timelines, and ambiguous definitions of key indicators. Members suggested incorporating qualitative data from families, community-driven data collection, and perspectives rooted in lived experience to improve the system's responsiveness and equity.

Council members reflected candidly on their role and impact, expressing concerns over their limited authority, mission, and perceived underutilization over the past three years. There was a strong call to restructure operations, clarify deliverables, and better leverage the diverse expertise within the Council. Members proposed expanding outreach efforts to include underrepresented populations, particularly African American fathers, whose voices are often absent in child welfare discussions.

Retreat planning was led by Dr. Joyce James, with a four-day format proposed: two in-person sessions in September and two virtual sessions in October and November. The retreat will be hosted at Alia's space. Meals and beverages will be provided, and compensation for Council members is under review. A pre-retreat survey will be distributed to gather input. The retreat will center on systemic racism, leadership development, and strategic planning to strengthen the Council's future direction.

During the annual report discussion, members voiced concerns with stated achievements and recommended framing the report around the Council's current positioning and aspirational goals. The Steering Committee will meet to finalize the draft, which will be reviewed during the September meeting.

Recruitment efforts are set to begin, with members encouraged to recommend candidates. The application process will be shared once finalized. However, members emphasized the importance of clearly defining the Council's mission and scope before onboarding new participants to ensure alignment and effectiveness.

Several action items were identified: Michelle Seymour will investigate compensation policies, develop a structural diagram illustrating the Council's role within DCYF, and present an operational plan with defined deliverables at the next meeting. The Steering Committee will finalize the annual report draft, and Council members will initiate outreach and recruitment. The September meeting will focus on report finalization.



The meeting concluded with a motion to adjourn by Lynn Lewis, seconded unanimously, and officially ended at 1:55 PM.