

AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILD AND FAMILY WELL BEING ADVISORY COUNCIL

Council Meeting Minutes - April 22, 2026

Present: J. Blakey, L. Lewis, J. Cannon, M. Doward, S. Brown, T. Russell, S. Hall, K. Kamara, K. Porter, K. Caston, S. Washington, S. Kabalan, L. Coleman, A. Lamb-Onayiga, P. Fritz,

Absent: A. Hill, H. Yusuf, N. Lenoir-Johnson, K. Holliday, C. Fleming, A. Goff, L. Davis, L. Muhammad, P. Frye

DCYF Staff: S. McPherson

Guest: G. Domally, Kari Hohn, K. Houston

The AACFWB Advisory Council convened to receive updates on early implementation of the African American Family Preservation Act (MAAFPA) and to discuss emerging legislative threats, county readiness, and opportunities for coordinated advocacy. The meeting featured a detailed presentation from **Olmsted County Child & Family Services** and a strategic briefing from **Kelis Houston**, author of the MAAFPA.

1. County Readiness: Olmsted County's Approach

Olmsted County leadership (Gilbert Domally and Kari Hohn) outlined proactive steps taken before official statewide implementation, emphasizing transparency, cultural humility, and community partnership.

Key actions:

- **Community Engagement:** “Barbershop Talk Live” events and open observation of child protection screening to build trust and gather feedback.
- **Practice Alignment:** Use of rapid case planning, group consultation for all major decisions, revised father-engagement policies, and expanded reflective supervision.
- **Culture Change:** Leadership training on bias and organizational culture; embedding lived experience voices through upcoming parent partner roles.
- **Data & Accountability:** Targeted analysis of mandated reporting patterns, particularly from schools, and efforts to reduce racial disproportionality.

Olmsted emphasized that MAAFPA success requires practice and culture transformation, not additional staffing or large budgets.

2. Council Dialogue: Concerns & Opportunities

Members raised questions about bias, decision-making tools, father engagement, multi-system collaboration, and how outcomes will be measured.

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Olmsted acknowledged persistent disparities despite progress and noted opportunities to strengthen data systems and communication practices.

3. Legislative Threats to MAAFPA

Kelis Houston provided a briefing on active legislative efforts to weaken or delay the MAAFPA.

Key risks include:

- Bills proposing removal of active efforts,
- Delays in implementation,
- Removal of the community feedback portal,
- Curtailing kinship placement preferences,
- Statutory changes increasing surveillance or punishment (e.g., automatic investigations).

She emphasized the need for:

- Educating members on the history of racialized child welfare practices,
- Meeting with legislators, the Governor's Office, AMC, and the judiciary,
- Rapid-response letters and collective advocacy,
- Public town halls and community visibility.

4. Council Capacity & Next Steps

Most Council members are newly appointed and will undergo orientation covering:

- The MAAFPA statute,
- Child protection law and decision points,
- Historical drivers of disparities for African American families.

Next priorities:

- Strengthening subcommittee engagement,
- Upcoming meetings with Hennepin and Ramsey Counties,
- Reviewing Houston's policy briefs and call-to-action alerts,
- Developing practice recommendations for statewide county adoption.