

# Advisory Council on African American Children, Families, and Well-Being

## Public Meeting Summary

**Date:** January 28, 2026

**Format:** Virtual Meeting

**Start Time:** 11:02 PM

Present: J. Blakey, L. Lewis, J. Canon, T. Russell, N. Johnson-Lenoir,  
DCYF: N. Lanz,

## Overview

The Advisory Council on African American Children, Families, and Well-Being convened for its regularly scheduled meeting. The Council approved the previous meeting minutes, received an update from the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) on the Concurrent Permanency Planning Practice Guide, and engaged in discussion regarding community well-being and emerging concerns affecting children and families.

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## Presentation: Concurrent Permanency Planning Practice Guide

**Presenter:** DCYF Permanency Division

DCYF provided an overview of the updated **Concurrent Permanency Planning Practice Guide**, which supports county and tribal partners in planning for permanency for children in foster care.

## Key Updates

- Full revision of the guide to reflect current law and practice; the previous version was last updated in 2007.
- Alignment with **Minnesota Statute 260C.223**, effective January 1, 2026.
- Requirements for ICWA/MIFPA inquiry prior to adoptive placement.
- Emphasis on identifying a **single foster parent** who supports both reunification and permanency.
- Expanded sections on:
  - Permanency options
  - ICWA/MIFPA considerations

- Engagement with noncustodial parents and fathers

## **Council Input**

Council members highlighted the need for:

- Clearer guidance on “reasonable” and “active” efforts
- Specific direction on engaging fathers and incarcerated parents
- Practical strategies for identifying foster parents who support reunification

DCYF requested written feedback from Council members by **February 28, 2026**.

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## **Community Well-Being Discussion**

The Council held space to acknowledge the impact of recent immigration enforcement actions and public safety incidents on children, families, and communities.

### **Themes Raised**

- Increased fear and instability among immigrant families
- Youth experiencing heightened anxiety, bullying, and uncertainty
- Community members limiting public activity due to safety concerns
- Stress on frontline workers and service providers
- Need for mental-health supports and prevention-focused strategies

Council members emphasized the importance of centering **child and family well-being**, including the broader social conditions affecting safety, stability, and resilience.

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## **Next Steps**

- Council members will review the draft Concurrent Permanency Planning Practice Guide and submit feedback to DCYF.
  - The Council will continue monitoring community well-being concerns and identifying opportunities to support prevention and family stability.
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## **Adjournment**

The meeting concluded following open discussion. The next meeting will follow the Council's regular schedule.

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Below is a crisp, accessible **one-page public summary** suitable for posting on a state website, distributing to community partners, or including in a public meeting packet. It stays neutral, clear, and focused on key actions.

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# **Advisory Council on African American Children, Families, and Well-Being**

## **Public Summary of Meeting – January 28, 2026**

The Advisory Council on African American Children, Families, and Well-Being held its regular meeting on January 28, 2026. The Council approved the previous meeting minutes and received an update from the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) on the revised Concurrent Permanency Planning Practice Guide.

### **Concurrent Permanency Planning Guide Update**

DCYF presented an overview of the newly updated practice guide, which supports county and tribal partners in planning for permanency for children in foster care. The guide was fully rewritten to reflect current law and practice, including updates to Minnesota Statute 260C.223. Key changes include:

- Requirements for ICWA/MIFPA inquiry before adoptive placement
- A shift toward identifying a single foster parent who supports both reunification and permanency
- Expanded guidance on permanency options, ICWA/MIFPA considerations, and engagement with noncustodial parents and fathers

Council members asked questions about reasonable and active efforts, engagement with fathers and incarcerated parents, and practical challenges in identifying foster parents who support reunification. DCYF requested written feedback from the Council by February 28, 2026.

### **Community Well-Being Discussion**

The Council held space to acknowledge the impact of recent immigration enforcement actions and public safety incidents on children, families, and communities. Members noted:

- Increased fear and instability among immigrant families

- Youth experiencing heightened anxiety, bullying, and uncertainty
- Stress on frontline workers and service providers
- The need for prevention-focused and mental-health supports

The Council emphasized the importance of centering child and family well-being, including broader social conditions that affect safety and stability.

## Next Steps

The Council will continue reviewing the draft Concurrent Permanency Planning Practice Guide and will provide feedback to DCYF. The Council will also continue monitoring community well-being concerns and identifying opportunities to support prevention and family stability.

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If you want, I can also prepare a **graphic version**, a **social-media-ready version**, or a **PDF-style layout**.

Below is a polished **formal minutes format** based entirely on the transcript you provided. It's structured, neutral, and ready for official records.

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# AACFWB Advisory Council – General Meeting Minutes

**Date:** January 28, 2026

**Time:** 11:02 PM

**Location:** Virtual Meeting

**Recorder:** Susan McPherson (DCYF)

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## 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair **Dr. Joan Blakey**.

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## 2. Approval of Minutes

- **Motion:** Lynn Lewis moved to approve the previous meeting minutes.
  - **Second:** Seconded by Joanie Cannon and also by Nashauna.
  - **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously. No opposition or abstentions.
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## 3. Presentation – Concurrent Permanency Planning Guide Update

**Presenter:** Nicole Lanz (DCYF)

### Key Points:

- DCYF has updated the **Concurrent Permanency Planning Guide**, last revised in 2007.
- Updates reflect changes to **Minnesota Statute 260C.223** effective January 1, including:
  - Requirements for ICWA/MIFPA inquiry before adoptive placement.
  - Emphasis on selecting **one foster parent** who supports both reunification and permanency.
- Expanded sections include:
  - Permanency options and definitions
  - ICWA/MIFPA guidance
  - Engagement with noncustodial parents and fathers
- The guide is intended for **county and tribal partners** to support permanency planning practice.
- The document was largely rewritten due to outdated content.

### Council Questions & Discussion:

- Clarification requested on:
  - How the guide addresses MAFA/CWDA requirements
  - Definitions of “reasonable” and “active” efforts
  - Engagement with fathers and incarcerated parents
- Members emphasized the need for clear guidance to support frontline workers.

### Action Item:

- Council members to review the draft guide and submit feedback by **February 28, 2026**.
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## 4. Community Reflections and Safety Concerns

Dr. Blakey opened space to acknowledge community trauma related to recent immigration enforcement actions and local unrest.

### **Member Reflections:**

- **Titi** shared impacts on immigrant families, Somali community members, and county staff experiencing fear and instability.
- **Susan McPherson** described safety concerns following a nearby disturbance.
- **Joanie Cannon** noted incidents involving community members and public officials.
- **Nashauna** highlighted the mental-health impact on youth, including increased anxiety, bullying, and coping challenges.

Members emphasized the importance of recognizing these conditions as part of the Council's broader focus on **child and family well-being**.

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## **5. Agenda Continuation**

Due to technical issues accessing the agenda, Susan McPherson provided the agenda via chat. Discussion continued regarding community support, youth well-being, and the Council's role in prevention and resilience.

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## **6. Adjournment**

The meeting concluded following open discussion. No additional business was raised.

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If you'd like, I can also prepare:

- **A leadership-ready executive summary**
- **A version formatted for public posting**
- **A condensed one-page minutes**

Just tell me what you want next.

Absolutely — here is a **clean, public-facing version** of the minutes, written in accessible, neutral language and ready for posting on a website, SharePoint, or public packet. It removes internal jargon, preserves transparency, and highlights key actions without sensitive personal detail.

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# AACFWB Advisory Council

## Public Meeting Summary

**Date:** January 28, 2026

**Format:** Virtual Meeting

**Start Time:** 11:02 PM

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### 1. Opening

The meeting was opened by Chair **Dr. Joan Blakey**. The Council approved the previous meeting minutes by motion and unanimous vote.

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### 2. Presentation: Concurrent Permanency Planning Guide Update

**Presenter:** *Nicole Lanz, Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)*

Nicole provided an overview of the newly updated **Concurrent Permanency Planning Practice Guide**, which supports county and tribal partners in planning for permanency for children in foster care.

#### Highlights of the Update

- The guide was fully rewritten due to significant changes in law and practice since 2007.
- Updates reflect **Minnesota Statute 260C.223**, effective January 1, 2026.
- New requirements include:
  - Inquiry into ICWA/MIFPA eligibility before adoptive placement.
  - A shift toward identifying **one foster parent** who supports both reunification and permanency.
- Expanded sections address:
  - Permanency options
  - ICWA/MIFPA considerations
  - Engagement with noncustodial parents and fathers

#### Council Feedback Themes

- Need for clarity around “reasonable” and “active” efforts
- Importance of guidance on engaging fathers and incarcerated parents

- Practical challenges in identifying foster parents who support reunification

**DCYF requested Council feedback by February 28, 2026.**

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### **3. Community Reflections**

The Council paused to acknowledge the emotional and community impacts of recent immigration enforcement actions and local public safety events.

Members shared concerns about:

- Fear and instability among immigrant families
- Youth experiencing anxiety, bullying, and uncertainty
- Community members avoiding public spaces due to safety concerns
- Increased stress on frontline workers and service providers

The Council emphasized the importance of centering **child and family well-being**, including prevention and mental-health supports.

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### **4. Additional Discussion**

Members discussed:

- Community-based support efforts
  - Youth mental-health needs
  - The importance of recognizing everyday acts of resilience and care within families and communities
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### **5. Adjournment**

The meeting concluded following open discussion. No additional business was raised.

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If you'd like, I can also prepare:

- **A one-page public summary**
- **A version formatted for a state website**
- **A graphic/visual summary** suitable for social media

Just tell me what format you want.