



# Department of Housing & Human Services

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## **Family Resource Network Regional Council Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, January 14, 2021

3:00-4:30pm, Zoom

**Present:** Rebecca Alderfer, Danielle Butler, Marc Cowell, Suzanne Crawford, Dr. Perla Delgado, Kristen Hyser, Betsey Martens, Christina Pacheco, Simon Smith, Karin Stayton, Julie Van Domelen, and Dennis Whalen

**Absent:** Robin Bohannon, Margaret Crespo, Will Kugel, and Jeff Zayach

**Guests Present:** Sarah Buss, Heather Durosko, Katrina Harms, Patrick Kilcullen (representing Dr. Diane Lauer), and Courtney Schwartz

**Staff Present:** Angela Lanci-Macris and Whitney Wilcox

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### **Welcome and Introductions**

The regular meeting of the FRN Regional Council was called to order by Suzanne Crawford. Suzanne welcomed Dr. Perla Delgado, the new CEO/Executive Director of I Have A Dream (IHAD) Foundation of Boulder County. Dr. Delgado fills the seat served by the previous CEO/Executive Director of IHAD, Lori Canova. Suzanne facilitated introductions by the group.

### **Approval of November 2020 FRN Regional Council meeting minutes**

November meeting minutes were approved.

### **FRN Proposal Update and Next Steps**

Whitney Wilcox shared that she has finished incorporating feedback by Regional Council and Local Area Collaborative (LAC) members in the FRN Proposal and is transitioning it into a work plan. This document, along with other Regional Council and LAC documents, will be available via the FRN Google Drive.

Whitney also shared that Area Agency Aging (AAA) staff will be attending LAC meetings to provide an overview of AAA's services. This is in response to Regional Council and LAC members concerns that the Older Adult population was not identified in the FRN Proposal. Opportunities and next steps as a result of this connection will be provided through the LAC Updates.

At the January meeting, members discussed early childhood data shared by Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services (BCDHHS), City of Longmont, and Early Childhood Council of Boulder County (ECCBC) staff and FRN members. Regional Council members recommended identifying a core set of early childhood metrics to track local trends. Whitney introduced BCHHS's new Early Childhood Initiatives Manager, Heather Durosko. Heather will be leading development of the FRN Evaluation Framework that will include metrics the FRN membership can use to both understand early childhood trends and track status of FRN Work Plan strategies. Whitney recommended a small group of members convene with Heather to review metrics being used by members, recommending and presenting key set

of metrics to the Regional Council and LACs, and, upon approval, developing a set of data reports and dashboards. Whitney asked members interested to connect with Heather and Whitney.

Betsey Martens asked status of BCDHHS's new Director. Angela Lanci-Macris shared that the new Director, Robert Williams, will begin at the end of the month and anticipate that he will be able to attend next Regional Council meeting.

**Family Homelessness Subcommittee Updates and Discussion** (*FRN Work Plan Focus Area 1, Strategy 1*) Julie Van Domelen and Sarah Buss co-chair the Family Homelessness Subcommittee (FHS). They provided an overview and update on FHS work to date. See attached PowerPoint presentation.

- FHS was implemented in 2018. FHS contracted with ResultsLab in 2019 to assess current status of family homelessness system in Boulder County and worked with FHS members to develop work plan based on assessment's recommendations.
- FHS meets quarterly as a full subcommittee with smaller working groups meeting more frequently. Membership includes representatives from EFAA, OUR Center, Sister Carmen, Safe Shelter, SPAN, BCDHHS, HOPE of Longmont, Inn Between, City of Longmont, City of Boulder, SVVSD and BVSD.
- FHS has prioritized the below activities and established working groups to address. Work plan and groups were finalized in the beginning of 2020, prior to the pandemic. FHS has continued some of this work, but work plan is largely paused while organizations respond to needs emerging from the pandemic. Activities include:
  - strengthening system components through the development and implementation of common intake and assessment tools, which will help facilitate understanding of the number of families experiencing homelessness and facilitate access to resources;
  - building a shared learning and research agenda through review of data and analytics to better understand number of families experiencing homelessness and developing a set of services to support families and children to help mitigate the impacts of homelessness;
  - providing common training and community of practice in partnership with the ISDMC mid-level work group; and
  - increasing family engagement and participant voice.
- Julie shared several higher-level observations about COVID's impacts on family homelessness:
  - There is a significant range of economic shocks to households that increases the risks to families to experience homelessness. Lower-income households are concentrated in sectors that have seen the most significant employment loss (restaurants, retail, and hotels, for example), people are exiting the workforce to care for children where child care is not available or schools are closed (majority exiting are women), and seeing an increase in domestic violence.
  - Pre-COVID, the top reasons families became homeless was attributed to economic shocks like job loss or unexpected expense(s) (75 percent) or a change in family structure, such as divorce, death, or domestic violence (25 percent).
  - A disproportionate number of lower-income and people of color have been impacted by the pandemic. Julie reported that since the pandemic started, at least one of the families living in EFAA's units were impacted by COVID.

- Julie said there isn't good data yet to know whether family homelessness is increasing. Overall, housing instability is increasing, with more people requesting rental assistance. McKinney-Vento data is the best indicator because the data is real time. It doesn't appear from this data that the numbers in our community are changing drastically. McKinney-Vento staff suggested the numbers may be stable because of the availability of rental assistance and moratorium on evictions.
- Concerned about eviction moratorium ending and the funding of arrears, which have accumulated and could be significant.
- Since March 2020, BCDHHS, Sister Carmen, EFAA, and OUR Center provided almost \$5.7 million in rental assistance to 4,300 households, including 700 households with children prenatal-5.
- Boulder County is expected to receive additional federal rental assistance estimated between \$8-10 million from the Department of Treasury. Funds can be used to pay arrears.
- Responding to the pandemic will remain front and center for the FHS. Expect to sustain scale-up and continued coordination of rental assistance. Julie said important to remember broader support needed for families beyond rental assistance, including child care, mental health, and other supportive services.
- Julie also advocated for the equitable distribution of vaccines and ensuring that this population has access (most families experiencing homelessness tend to be employed, tend to be on the front lines, and may not have a primary care physician or medical home).
- Julie asked about number of child care centers that had closed. Danielle Butler said ECCBC's data shows that 18 out of 330 centers had closed permanently. Licensed family child care providers have been the most likely to stay open. Licensed child care centers, deemed emergency service providers, have had difficulty in adapting to the health regulations and are operating at reduced capacity. Child care centers are also having a difficult time retaining the child care workforce. There was brief discussion about ensuring child care providers ability to refer families experiencing homelessness to the appropriate service provider. Sarah Buss, Courtney Schwartz, and Whitney Wilcox to discuss.
- Kristin Hyser shared update on City of Boulder's [No Eviction Without Representation \(NEWRI\) initiative](#), which was passed by voters in November 2020. A \$75 tax will be charged on rental units, with funds being used to align eviction prevention services and programs. In addition to facilitating access to rental assistance and mediation supports, program will include legal services provided through a contract with Bridge to Justice. Services are available for all City of Boulder residents, with income restrictions on rental assistance and no income restrictions on legal services. Program is specific to Boulder residents and Kristin encouraged exploration of expanding program countywide. City of Boulder staff will help navigate and refer residents to the appropriate service provider, including EFAA, the Housing Helpline, and Bridge to Justice. Kristin encouraged people to share input as they're implementing the service.
- Patrick Kilcullen shared that last year, SVVSD initiated partnership with City of Longmont Youth Center to provide virtual after school tutoring. They are shifting program to provide after school support and counseling for high school students. Christina Pacheco said they found that youth and families have been struggling over this past year and want to provide services to meet this need. The program will start with high school students and are exploring a similar model for middle school youth.

## **LAC Updates and Discussion**

Katrina Harms and Courtney Schwartz provided updates on behalf of the four LACs.

- The LACs have begun working to identify and develop recommendations during their monthly meetings. Moving forward, LACs will work to identify critical service issues to bring to the Regional Council to address.
- Nick Robles, BCPH's COVID-19 Bilingual Resource Coordinator, is meeting with all the LACs to talk with them about the resources available to people isolating or quarantining because of COVID-19.
- Katrina said mobility is one of the leading issues in the mountains needing to be addressed soon. Resources like food, health care, and internet can be difficult to access. The region has limited delivery options, many items that are delivered are delivered to the post office and not to individual's homes.
- Courtney shared that one of the other needs identified across LACs is access to technology and digital literacy. While many resources have been provided to close this gap, LAC members have shared continued challenges by caregivers/parents to help students with remote learning and participants challenge accessing and enrolling in online benefits. In the mountains specifically, access to cell and internet service is limited. Hardware and software are also challenges.
- Courtney also shared that the significant need in the community – and significant increase in funding - but very limited increase in capacity to deliver services and administer funding, have led to continued reports of overwhelm and burnout by staff.

## **Nominations and Elections for Chair and Vice Chair**

Suzanne asked members for feedback on updating officer terms in the bylaws from two years each to one year each, with elected officers serving one year as Vice Chair and, upon the resignation of the Chair, one year as Chair. Suzanne also asked members for feedback on including language in the bylaws about elected officers representing different systems (nonprofit, government, schools) and regions (East County, Boulder, Mountains, and Longmont). The group supported staff drafting language for review at March meeting.

Christina volunteered to step into the Chair role and Kristin volunteered to step into the Vice Chair role. Suzanne asked for a motion to nominate. The group approved the nominations.

Several people thanked Suzanne for her leadership over the past four years.

The meeting was adjourned.