



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board

Summary of Subcommittee Meeting

Subcommittee:

Foster Alumni and Youth Community Empowerment Subcommittee (FAYCES)	6:00 -7:30 pm
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Date: Thursday, August 18, 2022

Location: Virtual via Zoom

Facilitator: Sandra McBrayer, Stephanie Heying

Meeting Staff: Emily Lay

Foster Alumni and Youth Community Empowerment Subcommittee Summary:

26 attendees took part in the Subcommittee.

Advisory Members Participating: Carolyn Griesemer, Jessica Heldman, Sade Burrell, Simone Hidds-Monroe

Stephanie Heying opened the meeting and recapped that the meeting is a subcommittee of the larger Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board. Stephanie reviewed how the meeting was being conducted via the Zoom platform and provided attendees multiple ways to ask questions. Stephanie encouraged participation via the chat and raise your hand feature. She also reminded current foster youth to turn off their camera for confidentiality purposes. Stephanie then turned it over to Simone Hidds-Monroe, who reviewed the goals of FAYCES.

Update on SPA

Stephanie opened the item and turned it over to CWS’s Laura Krzywicki. Stephanie stated that Laura would only share basic information due to this being an active procurement. Laura shared CWS is finalizing the procurement for the foster family agency (FFA)/Group Home component of SPA. She introduced the SPA manager, Jay Sakamoto, who shared he is welcome to speaking to anyone who has any questions about SPA.

- Simone asked for clarity on what the finalization of the procurement process means. Laura explained that companies/associations who applied for the FFA/Group Home component of SPA will be informed whether they were awarded the contract or not.
- Simone asked for an update on the application process and how groups can apply for similar contracts.

Update on Career Pathways for Foster Youth

Stephanie opened the item and turned it over to CWS’s Laura Krzywicki. Laura shared that CWS is finalizing the components of the program and plan to take the proposal to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on September 27, 2022.

- Simone stated that FAYCES had given CWS several recommendations regarding Career Pathways, and that these recommendations had been approved. She asked if that information would be

provided in the letter to the BOS in September. Laura responded that the information would be included in the BOS letter.

- Simone asked who at the County would be a point of contact for FAYCES for Career Pathways. Laura explained that herself and Antonia (Toni) Torres would be points of contact for Career Pathways.
- A participant asked what the timeline is once everything is approved. He asked when collaborations and planning might begin. Toni shared there is no timeline in place, but they are aiming for mid-to-late-October start.
- Simone asked for information about the workgroup, who might be in the group, how frequently the meetings will take place, etc.
- Sandra McBrayer stated that the recommendations from FAYCES incorporated into CWS projects can be beneficial to both groups.

Update on SPA Student Experience Survey

Sandra opened the item and turned it over to Simone. Simone gave a brief overview of how the SPA Student Experience Survey was developed. James Hidds-Monroe shared the survey has gone through several versions, with approximately 90% of the feedback received incorporated into the final version of the survey. James shared that the survey focuses on the experience of the individual at SPA including education, employment opportunities, independent living skills, housing/living situations, and relationships built with various individuals like SPA staff, family members, attorneys, teachers, clinicians, etc. The survey is anonymous and will not collect any personal information. He stated they would like to begin sending out the survey as soon as possible and would like to have summary data to provide at the October meeting.

- James asked for an update regarding the \$25.00 gift cards as an incentive for completing the survey. Sandra stated CWS has secured the money for the gift cards and CWS will work with Just in Time to coordinate the release of the e-gift cards. She stated she will get the CWS point of contact to coordinate with.
- James asked which community partners could help in getting the survey out to current and former SPA students. Sandra stated there are many organizations that have connections to current and former foster youth that would be willing to support. Rashida of Promises2Kids stated her organization is more than willing to help. Carolyn Griesemer mentioned CWS might be able to assist with the current SPA youth.
- Carolyn Griesemer stated it is important to get data that is representative of a cross-spectrum of all the youth experiences. Sandra stated the data should be broad to include youth who attended SPA, those who stayed 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, etc. She stated the goal is to get as many people as possible to complete the survey to get concrete data.
- A participant stated the holidays often bring alumni back to the SPA campus, and that might be a good opportunity to reach former SPA youth.

FAYCES 2022 Priorities Discussion

Stephanie opened the agenda item and turned it over to Simone. Simone shared that Career Pathways and SPA Experience Survey have been the main priority of 2021. She then introduced Jessica Heldman, who shared that University of San Diego (USD) School of Law students have been looking into policies and practices related to Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs). A mobile app is being developed with a survey for individuals who have had any experiences at an STRTP in the last 5 years to give input on many topics such as improvements to STRTPs, recommendations, problems, and complaints. She shared that a gift card would be given out to those who complete the survey.

- A participant asked for more context around why data is being gathered within the last 5 years. Jessica responded that a group of legislation, passed in 2015, called for a change in group care and in Group Homes. This newer model of group care is the focus of their research, and data

within the last 5 years would be more relevant to the newer model of group care.

- A participant shared that her involvement with STRTPs has shown how difficult it is to keep staff onboard, they are overworked and underpaid. Jessica stated part of the research will focus on policy around increasing pay for direct-care workers and increased certified training.
- A participant suggested reaching out to Juvenile Probation to discuss STRTPs to reach youth who are under Probation and STRTP care.
- A participant asked if the questions in the survey are finalized. Jessica responded the questions are not finalized, and they would be welcome to input from members.

Jessica then shared that several community groups have partnered with the Children's Advocacy Institute (CAI) at USD School of Law to develop resources and supports focused on youth who have experienced identity theft or other credit fraud issues.

- Carolyn Griesemer shared that failed adoption youth often fall through the cracks. She suggested some insight from someone with lived experience would be helpful in aiding these youth.
 - Sandra asked if anyone is tracking why adoptions are failing and if any data has been collected. Carolyn responded that there are many reasons adoptions are failing, but that she does not believe anyone is tracking the information.
 - A participant stated the psychological issues associated with failed adoptions negatively impact these youth. The assessments associated with Resource Families, foster care, and adoptions are often inaccurate, and parents are unaware of how the process works. Jessica Heldman reiterated that prevention on the front-end would help minimize challenges to the adoption process.
- Sandra asked if information for the State Ombudsman or State Hotline for youth in foster care could be included in adoption paperwork moving forward.
- Simone shared that the length of stay at Polinsky Children's Center (PCC) should be considered a FAYCES priority as well as a lack of lived experience influence on Family First.
- Simone shared that movement meetings, where she and several others meet with current and former foster youth, occur every other month.
 - A participant asked how to invite current and former foster youth to the movement meetings that occurred every other month. Simone shared that they are currently working on marketing materials to share, but she is happy to partner with anyone who is interested in helping.
- Jessica Heldman shared that the next PCC advisory board meeting is in September.

Date of Next Meeting – October 20, 2022