

Child Welfare Advisory Committee

Overview

This charter will define the objectives, roles, and responsibilities of the Child Welfare Advisory Committee, hereinafter referred to as Advisory Committee, for the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). It will also identify potential membership and operations of the Committee.

Scope

The Advisory Committee will be the primary organization to advise the Director of the Division of Family Services on child welfare issues. The Advisory Committee should ensure that all child welfare activities are child centered, family focused, and community based. Child welfare programs include Adoption, Child Protective Services, Prevention Services, Foster Care, and Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC).

Objectives

The objectives of the Advisory Committee include:

1. Advise on child welfare program, policy, training and practice issues.
2. Advise on the development of the five year Child and Family Services Plan and annual progress reports as well as other state plans under the responsibility of Family Services
3. Guide development and implementation of Virginia's Program Improvement Plan for any element that Virginia does not meet requirements of the Child and Family Services Review.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Advisory Committee serves in an advisory role for the Division of Family Services and accepts the following responsibilities:

- To advise on work of various policy and training committees which relate to the Advisory Committee
- To provide feedback on data analyses and sharing of results related to outcomes and national indicators
- To review major changes in federal, state, and local policies and legislation that will affect child welfare
- To assist the Division in planning and implementing all appropriate program improvements in a timely manner
- To serve as a channel of communications among each member's professional arena regarding child welfare policies, programs, and practices
- To provide information on current practices in the private and public sectors that will assist in the VDSS strategic decision making process
- To understand the elements of the Child and Family Services Review and Program Improvement Plan, as well as program changes needed to improve outcomes

- To provide input on development and implementation of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that addresses areas of improvement for positive outcomes for children and families, and the systemic factors that support positive outcomes.

Structure and Composition of the Steering Committee

The Advisory Committee is composed of appropriate members that provide representation from various stakeholder groups. Members may include, but is not limited to, at least one representative from each of the following areas:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and family services private agencies • Private child placing agencies • Foster and adoptive parent associations • Foster youth or foster alumni • Foster families, adoptive families, birth families • Representative from the Bar including: GAL and DSS attorney • Law Enforcement • Domestic Violence • Local departments of social services, including representatives of the child and family services committee of the Virginia League of Social Services; (local membership should include | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> representatives from various geographic areas of the state and size of agencies) • Local community services boards • Family and Children’s Trust Fund • Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) • State Departments of Education; Health; Medical Assistance Services; and Behavioral Health and Developmental Services; Office of the Executive Secretary and the Supreme Court (CIP); Department of Juvenile Justice; and The Children’s Services Act • Representatives from local Indian tribes • Appropriate program managers at VDSS and representatives • Director and Assistant Director of the Division of Family Services |
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When necessary, staff from other program areas and functions will be consulted for input in making decisions that will impact those areas.

The Advisory Committee will include standing sub-committees: Prevention, Child Protective Services, Permanency, and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). Each sub-committee will focus on Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being as it relates to that point of entry into the child welfare system. Each subcommittee will be chaired by Advisory Committee members and will be staffed by VDSS staff from the child welfare program area that is the focus of the subcommittee. The sub-committees will meet at the discretion of the Division Director and the chairs and will report to the full committee as needed.

Amendments to the Charter

This charter may be amended at any regular meeting of the Advisory Committee by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members, provided that the membership is notified in writing of any proposed amendments to said charter prior to convening of the meeting when such amendment is discussed and acted upon.