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Healthy Families Oregon State Advisory Committee DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Committee approval pending.

Meeting date: **Tuesday, November 3, 2020**

Meeting location: **Virtual – Zoom**

Meeting type: **Regular**

Pursuant to notice made by electronic bulletin remitted to all subscribers of ELD Public Notices, a regular meeting of the Healthy Families Oregon State Advisory Committee – formerly convened as the Best Beginnings subcommittee of the Early Learning Council – was held virtually via Zoom.

Present were Chairperson Elena Rivera; committee members Benjamin Hazelton, Beth Dasher, Beth Green, Brenda Comini, Emily Berry, Gisela Morales, Hannah Hill, Martha Brooks, Melody Carrington, Pamela Heisler and Rosario Leichner; and Early Learning Division (ELD) staff members Elisabeth Underwood and Christina Cooley. The Chair presented the Committee's agenda as follows:

- 1) Call to Order, Introductions, Public Testimony (none submitted)
- 2) Healthy Families Oregon Program Overview
- 3) Healthy Families Oregon 2020 Program Updates
- 4) Committee Purpose, Values discussion
- 5) Wrap-up, Adjournment

The Committee was called to order. Self-introductions were made by each person in attendance, as led by the Chair, indicating each person's name, professional role, super power, and source of inspiration.

ELD representative and Healthy Families Oregon (HFO) Statewide Coordinator Elisabeth Underwood then provided a high-level overview of the HFO program, describing its distinguishing features as one of several programs that comprise Oregon's home visiting system:

HFO is accredited by Healthy Families America (HFA), a national research-based model developed under its parent organization, Prevent Child Abuse America. It is designed to reduce the risk of child maltreatment by providing families with a variety of supports and promoting parent-child attachment. Program policies and procedures are guided by 159 Best Practice Standards; the program's goal seeks to ensure that all of Oregon's communities have nurturing, caring families where children are healthy and thriving, by promoting positive parent-child relationships, healthy childhood growth and development, and enhanced family functioning. Healthy Families is a key strategy in Raise Up Oregon, the early learning system's strategic plan. Services are voluntary, initiated prenatally or within 90 days of birth, and may continue until the qualifying child reaches an age limit, which can be variable from three to five years of age. Eligible families have two or more risk factors associated with child abuse, and home visiting services seek to increase protective factors.

Program updates were then shared by Elisabeth Underwood regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on program activities, the status of the HFO Budget, and the progress of an existing HFO Database Workgroup in identifying a long-term solution for recording and evaluating HFO data:



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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it became necessary in the spring of 2020 to pivot the home visiting model. Individual agencies implementing Healthy Families programming around the state adjusted their home visiting practices and content to a virtual environment. HFO's Central Administration established regular communication channels and developed guiding materials to facilitate statewide adaptation, which was followed by the release of comprehensive guidance by HFA and Oregon Health Authority (OHA). The impact of the pandemic on statewide program outcomes is not yet known, but reductions in family engagement, staff retention, home visit completion, and screening and enrollment are expected.

Funding for HFO program services is derived from three primary sources: Legislature-allocated General Funds; Medicaid claims reimbursement; and Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funds. In 2019, Student Success Act (SSA) funds were awarded by the Legislature for the express purpose of expanding home visiting services to additional eligible families beginning in 2020-21. A non-competitive application process was established to allocate SSA funds to community HFO programs in need; the first round of applications were processed in the spring, and second round of applications is presently under review to distribute remaining SSA dollars. While HFO was identified for potential cuts to General Funds, the existing biennial budget was ultimately left intact by the Governor.

A Database Workgroup has been established to assist ELD in identifying a database to permanently house HFO data. In the spring of 2020, in anticipation of budget reductions, ELD halted work with the developer Vistalogic, Inc., which had previously been commissioned to build a custom HFO database, in order to seek out a more cost-effective solution. The Workgroup benefits from the expertise of its members, which include ELD personnel and HFO community Program Managers, and has been meeting to review options for a database. Currently under consideration is an existing "off-the-shelf" system that was designed specifically for use by HFA programs.

Questions remitted by meeting attendees in the virtual Zoom chat were then read aloud and addressed. It was shared that approximately 2,000 Oregon families received home visiting services through HFO in 2019, while approximately 4,600 families were screened for eligibility during the same year. The current operational biennium was described as being funded through June 30, 2021. HFO is intended to serve all 16 Early Learning Regions of Oregon, but due to recent events, only 14 regions are presently being served by community HFO programs.

Following this question and answer period, the Chair transitioned to discussing the HFO State Advisory Committee's purpose. Reviewed were those HFA Requirements that establish and govern the Committee and the Committee's specific Charge:

Elisabeth Underwood shared the four specific HFA Best Practice Standards that describe this Committee's establishment and governance:

- A-2 The multi-site system has a broadly-based group (not limited to representatives of member sites / host agencies) which serves in an advisory capacity in the planning and coordination of system services and activities.
- A-2.1 The central administration's advisory group is an effectively organized, active body advising the functions specified in A-2.
- A-2.2 The advisory group is comprised of state / system-level stakeholders with diverse professional and cultural representation, including individuals from within and outside the multi-site system and with capacity to



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advocate and promote the integration of HFA within a broader network of supports and services, on behalf of the needs of families throughout the state / multi-site system.

- A-2.3 The central administration and the advisory group work as an effective team in the review and evaluation of the multi-site system's goals and objectives and recommend strategies for improvement.

The Chair presented the Committee's Charge, which was developed with these requirements in mind. Two Interim Advisory Committee meetings were held in the spring of 2020 to gain input on the development of the Charge; the final document outlines the Committee's duties, the first of which is to utilize the Oregon Education Investment Board's Equity Lens to understand program needs and inform recommendations to ELD. The Chair reviewed the Equity Lens document and the eight guiding questions contained therein,

The Committee was then divided into several small groups to discuss values and the intention to center parent voice through the Committee's work. Discussion groups were asked to assign a note-taker and reporter so that each group's ideas could be shared with the whole committee after the exercise. Prompts for discussion directed groups to identify aspects of the Equity Lens that they liked, aspects of the Lens that they wondered about, and the means by which the Committee would know that parent voice is being centered. The following ideas were shared by group reporters:

- "Who is answering [the Equity Lens questions] is as important as the questions... If there is a time we're applying this Equity Lens, or a modified version of it, we'd want to make sure that our room is representative." – Pamela Heisler
- "[We like that] it provides common language and recognizes that what gets funded matters... It's an opportunity to pause and reflect on both the intended and unintended consequences of the action. We wondered, how do we really know the impact? ... Part of knowing the impact is: do we have the right people in the room asking and contemplating questions? ... Emily [Berry] contributed that we would know we are family-centered when we know that non-white community members are accepting and staying in the service as long as white members are." – Benjamin Hazelton
- "When we're working with families, we really want to have a trauma-informed approach and respect that people are the experts of their own lives. In regards to how we keep the parent voice central, parent participation is one way, but really considering the impact to families as we're making decisions within the committee and the possibility of getting direct family feedback, if and when appropriate." – Beth Dasher

The Chair then reviewed the quarterly meeting schedule, which proposes that the Committee convene on the first Tuesday of January, April, July and October 2021. A formal vote was not taken, but the majority of committee members indicated their initial approval of the meeting schedule. Beth Dasher asked if proximity of the proposed July meeting date to the Independence Day holiday might impact committee attendance; the Chair proposed that this question be raised at the next meeting in January. Beth Green asked if the committee would receive electronic calendar invitations to hold the given meeting dates; this was answered in the affirmative.

Committee member Benjamin Hazelton asked to clarify the purpose of video recording this virtual public meeting. The Chair stated that the recording would be used for reference in writing these very meeting minutes. However, it is here noted that future public meetings of this committee will continue to be recorded by video, and those recordings may be made available to the public in place of written minutes.

Having concluded all business prescribed by the agenda, there being no further proposals for discussion, the meeting was adjourned.