

Nebraska Children's Commission – Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee

Third Meeting
December 9, 2013
1:00PM-4:00PM
Airport Country Inn and Suites, Platte Room
1301 West Bond Circle, Lincoln, NE 68521

Call to Order

Peg Harriott called the meeting to order at 1:00pm and noted that the Open Meetings Act information was posted in the room as required by state law.

Roll Call

Subcommittee Members present: Peg Harriott, Jena Davenport, Corrie Edwards, Leigh Esau, Shannon-Jo Hamilton, Susan Henrie, Jackie Meyer, Sherry Moore, Alana Pearson, Katie McLeese Stephenson, Bev Stutzman, Ryan Suhr, and Lana Temple-Plotz.

Ex-Officio Members present: Michele Anderson, Lindy Bryceson, Sara Goscha, Karen Knapp, Richard Pope, Thomas Pristow, and Debbie Silverman.

Subcommittee Member(s) absent: Bobby Loud, David Newell, and Barb Nissen.

Ex-Officio Members absent: None.

Also attending: Anna Eickholt, Liz Hruska, and Leesa Sorensen.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Katie McLeese Stephenson to approve the agenda as written. The motion was seconded by Shannon-Jo Hamilton. Voting yes: Peg Harriott, Jena Davenport, Corrie Edwards, Leigh Esau, Shannon-Jo Hamilton, Susan Henrie, Jackie Meyer, Sherry Moore, Alana Pearson, Katie McLeese Stephenson, Bev Stutzman, and Lana Temple-Plotz. Voting no: none. Bobby Loud, David Newell, Barb Nissen, and Ryan Suhr were absent. Motion carried.

Approval of October 18, 2013 Minutes

A motion was made by Lana Temple-Plotz to approve the November 15, 2013 minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Katie McLeese Stephenson. Voting yes: Peg Harriott, Jena Davenport, Corrie Edwards, Leigh Esau, Shannon-Jo Hamilton, Susan Henrie, Jackie Meyer, Sherry Moore, Alana Pearson, Katie McLeese Stephenson, Bev Stutzman, and Lana

Temple-Plotz. Voting no: none. Bobby Loud, David Newell, Barb Nissen, and Ryan Suhr were absent. Motion carried.

Chair's Report

Peg Harriott provided the committee with a copy of the November 19, 2013, Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee report that was presented to the Nebraska Children's Commission. Peg reminded everyone that the committee was responsible for making recommendations, including about appropriations, for the implementation of the new rates and level of care assessments. Peg noted that Liz Hruska was on the agenda for the meeting to provide committee members with information on the funding that had already been appropriated by the Legislature.

Peg also provided committee members with a handout of proposed 2014 meeting dates for the committee. A proposal was made to have the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee meet the first Tuesday of the month. This meeting timing allows more time for preparation of reports prior to the Nebraska Children's Commission meetings.

Legislative Update

Anna Eickholt, Legislative Aide to Senator Dubas, provided a brief legislative update. Anna noted that Senator Dubas was aware of the progress that was being made on the Level of Care Assessment work and the additional work that was needed on rates. Anna noted that it was likely that a placeholder bill would be introduced during the legislative session to accommodate any legislative or appropriation needs that were identified. Anna acknowledged that the LR209 group was aware that greater details may not be ready by the February 1, 2014, reporting deadline.

Public Comment

There were no public attendees that wished to make comments.

Base Rate Implementation

Thomas Pristow noted that DHHS has reviewed the budget and has determined that there are sufficient funds available in the budget to implement the July 1, 2014 rate and the corresponding level of care assessment rates. Rich Pope also noted that Probation is waiting to see what everyone else does with the July 1 rate, but he believes they would be implementing the rate and that Probation has funding in the budget to do so. Ellen Brokofsky and Kerry Winterer will be meeting to discuss the need to transfer additional funds from DHHS to Probation for this purpose. Liz Hruska confirmed that DHHS was appropriated funds to cover the \$3.10 increase and for the July 1 rates to be implemented for an estimated 1,500 children in foster care. Liz noted that the budgetary needs may change based on the number of youth in need of foster care. Liz also noted that DHHS was required to transfer funds to Probation to cover foster care for the youth that moved from OJS to Probation. It was also noted that budget needs may change even

if the number of youth in care reduces, if the youth in care have greater needs as determined by the level of care assessments. It was also noted that a plan for implementation, including communicating to foster families, must be created to help families know how the new rates may impact them.

Standardized Level of Care Work Group Report

Sara Goscha verbally provided information to the committee on the Level of Care Assessment pilot. DHHS staff indicated that an effort has been made to go back and make sure that assessments were properly completed with the foster families and foster agencies, as appropriate. DHHS will continue to monitor the pilot process to make sure there is fidelity to the model.

Lana Temple-Plotz provided committee members with a copy of the meeting minutes from the first Level of Care Workgroup meeting that was held on December 3, 2013. At the December 3 meeting, the workgroup discussed the work yet to be done on the Nebraska Caregiver Responsibilities (NCR) tool. The workgroup members shared information on the seven areas that the workgroup reached consensus about, during the first meeting. Committee members were asked to indicate their general agreement or disagreement with the seven areas. The full committee also reached consensus in support of items 1 through 5 as noted in the December 3 minutes. No vote was taken on item 6, but the committee did agree to work to coordinate efforts on training so there is a consistent message presented to foster parents and other impacted parties. No vote was taken on item 7 as the item will be impacted by April 1 contracts with DHHS and therefore is out of the scope of the committee. The committee also indicated support of the workgroups efforts to change the names of the three levels of care to “Essential Parenting, Enhanced Parenting, and Intensive Parenting”.

Recommendations to Children’s Commission regarding Foster Parent Rates

Peg Harriott provided copies of a December 6, 2013, letter from David Newell on behalf of the Nebraska Families Collaborative (NFC) regarding recommendations for the Foster Care Rate Committee. In addition to the recommendations from NFC, the committee discussed what recommendations needed to be made to the Nebraska Children’s Commission. The committee discussed the need to inform the Commission that DHHS does not foresee a need for additional appropriations for the new foster care rates and level of care assessments. The committee also suggested providing information to the Commission about the need for additional analysis on: the pilot results; the Level of Care assessment tool; and the work being done by DHHS and an outside provider association to define the expectations for agency supported foster care services.

New Business

None.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2013 from 1:00p.m. to 4:00p.m.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Jackie Meyers to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Katie McLeese Stephenson. The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

DRAFT

December 17, 2013

Karen Authier, Chairperson
Nebraska Children's Commission

Dear Karen Authier,

Legislative Bill 530 from the 2013 Legislative Session requires the Nebraska Children's Commission to provide a report to the department and Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature by February 1st. The report should include "recommendations and any legislation necessary, including appropriations, to adopt the recommendations, regarding the adaptation or continuation of the implementation of a statewide standardized level of care assessment".

The attached report is a summation of the progress made by the Foster Care Rate Reimbursement Committee. The committee continues to:

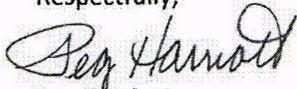
- review the ongoing results of the DHHS pilot project based on information provided,
- identify and complete additional work with the Level of Care Assessment tool to fully operationalize the instrument and
- discuss implementation implications for current foster homes, supporting agencies, DHHS, NFC, and Probation.

Funding Implications: Since the report last month to the commission, there has been additional information provided to the committee by Director Pristow and Liz Hruska regarding the department's ability to fund the new foster parent rates (base rate and levels of parenting). Director Pristow has been clear with the committee that funds are available to support the increased costs of implementing the new foster parent rates (base rate and levels of care) and this was supported by Liz Hruska. Based on this additional information, the committee does not have reason to recommend any legislative action to address additional appropriations at this time. The funds included in the DHHS budget for the implementation of the new foster care rates will need to be proportionally addressed with Probation and in the contract the Department has with NFC.

Exactly what financial impact there may be to individual foster parents who are currently paid over the new rates and contracting agencies (foster care agencies and NFC) remains unanswered at this time due to the need for further work to be completed:

- ongoing analysis of the pilot results
- committee work on the Level of Care Assessment tool,
- the work being done by the Department and an outside provider association to define the expectations for agency supported foster care services and
- input, plans and decisions by the department based on the above.

Respectfully,



Peg Harriott

Chairperson

Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee

Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee
Report to the Children's Commission
December 12, 2013

The Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee had its third meeting on December 9th. The workgroup assigned to further advance the Level of Care Assessment tool met on December 3rd.

The third meeting addressed the following:

Base Rate Implementation:

- Department's current plan for implementation - with new contracts in April
- Funding available : Director Pristow and Liz Hruska
- Funding implications for foster parents/agencies paid by NFC and Probation

Standardized Level of Care:

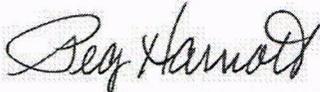
- Update from DHHS on the pilot project
- Department's current timeline for implementation
- Report from the work group
 - Need for pre-assessment rate for new children
 - Renaming the three parenting levels: Essential, Enhanced and Intensive
 - Need for communication and training plan
 - Recommended timeline: estimate 8.5 months

Agency Support/Services Rate: tabled until outside provider association and department define new service expectations.

Review of NFC letter dated 12/6/13 with recommendations for Foster Care Rate Committee.

Meeting dates for 2014 were identified. The next full committee is scheduled for January 7th.

Report completed by:



Peg Harriott
Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee

FFTA



Foster Family-based Treatment Association

April 10, 2013

Senator Annette Dubas
District 34
Room 1018, State Capitol
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Senator Dubas:

Thank you so much for your continued leadership on the issues facing the children and families in our state. Your continued advocacy for foster parents and quality programs to support them is very much appreciated.

With the introduction of LB530, you have done so much to ensure foster parent rates consistently reflect the cost of raising a child; that each child is assessed appropriately; and that foster parents receive reimbursement for the care they provide.

Earlier this year, FFTA came together with the Children and Family Coalition of Nebraska (CAFCON) and the Nebraska Association of Homes and Services for Children (NeAHSC) and published an issue brief outlining Agency Supported Foster Care. This Issue Brief outlines the service and supports provided to children, their families and foster parents by the many agencies across the state. As you know those services include:

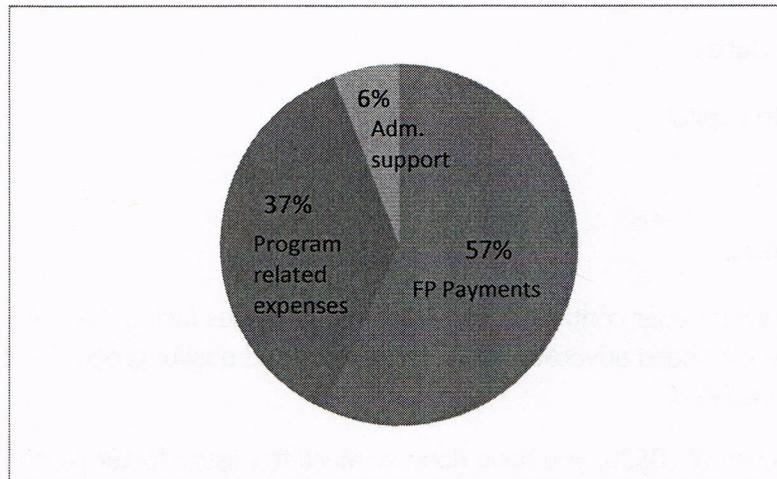
- Recruitment, Training, Support and Retention of Foster Parents
- Matching Children to Homes
- Service Planning and Case Coordination and
- Permanency

It's important to note that of the 4,045 children in out of home placement in Nebraska in December of 2012 (FC Review Office Annual Report), 70% were served by member agencies of these three associations. I have enclosed the Issue Brief for your review.

During testimony for LB530, several questions arose related to the cost to agencies to support foster parents. While there are a variety of perspectives on this issue, several FFTA member agencies including: Boys Town, Building Blocks for Community Enrichment, Child Savings Institute, Christian Heritage, KVC Behavioral HealthCare, Lutheran Family Services, Nebraska Children's Home Society, NOVA Treatment Community and South Central Behavioral Health Services came together to research this very important question.

Combined, these nine agencies provided almost a half a million care days to youth in 2012. Overall, these agencies spent more to care for youth and support our foster parents than we received from DHHS, with an average cost of \$51.00 per day and revenue of only \$47.00 per day.

Of the revenue that the above agencies received in DHHS contract payments in 2012, 57% on average was spent on Foster Parent payments, 37% on program related expenses (staff, occupancy, transportation, recruitment) and 6% on administrative support.



As you can see, the agencies who participated in this analysis spent the majority of the revenue they received (94%) from DHHS on the most important parts of this equation – foster parent payments for those who open their hearts and homes to meet the needs of the children , and program related expenses including support and recruitment. Only 6% was spent on administrative support.

It is our hope that this information will assist you and members of the legislative body as you continue to advocate for foster parents and the children they serve. Additionally, we hope it helps to dispel the misperception that agencies utilize revenue from DHHS to cover "administrative costs" while underpaying foster parents.

Thank you again for your leadership on this very important issue and please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

Lana Temple-Plotz, MS
Director, NE/IA Foster Family Services
Chair, NE Chapter Foster Family-based Treatment Association

Sample Comparison of FC Pay to Level of Care Assessment Scoring

Age	Result	Parenting Level			Totals	Sample Size
		Essential	Enhanced	Intensive		
0-5	Increase	0	2	3	5	53
	Same	4	3	3	10	
	Decrease	1	1	0	2	
6-11	Increase	0	2	1	3	
	Same	3	4	3	10	
	Decrease	2	1	0	3	
12-18	Increase	0	3	0	3	
	Same	7	5	0	12	
	Decrease	1 (-2 levels)	4	0	5	
Totals	Increase	0	7	4	11	
	Same	14	12	6	32	60%
	Decrease	4	6	0	10	19%
Totals		18	25	10	53	
		34%	47%	19%		

Nebraska Caregiver Responsibility Tool's in this sample were completed by:

- Building Blocks
- CEDARS
- KVC Foster Parent
- Lutheran Family Services
- Nebraska Family Collaborative
- South Central Behavioral Counseling

Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee
2014 Meeting Dates
Time: 1:00pm to 4:00pm
Place: TBD

Tuesday, January 7

Tuesday, February 4 (postponed to February 18 due to weather)

Tuesday, March 4

Tuesday, April 1

Tuesday, May 6

Tuesday, June 3

Tuesday, July 1

Tuesday, August 5

Tuesday, September 2

Tuesday, October 7

Tuesday, November 4

Tuesday, December 2

Foster Care Payment Levels

AGE 0-5	
Level 1	514
Level 2	80
Level 3	35
AGE 6-11	
Level 1	214
Level 2	101
Level 3	87
AGE 12-18	
Level 1	150
Level 2	140
Level 3	135

**** These figures do not include Eastern Service Area. ****

Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee Nomination Form

The Nebraska Children's Commission is seeking nominations for the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee. This committee will be working to review and make recommendations to the Nebraska Children's Commission in the following areas: foster care reimbursement rates, the statewide standardized level of care assessment, and adoption assistance payments. The committee will analyze consumer expenditure data reflecting the costs of caring for a child in Nebraska; identify and account for additional costs specific to children in foster care; and apply a geographic cost-of-living adjustment for Nebraska.

The Nebraska Children's Commission is seeking the following representatives:

1. Representatives from a child welfare agency that contracts directly with foster parents, from each of the service areas;
2. A representative from an advocacy organization which deals with legal and policy issues that include child welfare;
3. A representative from an advocacy organization, the singular focus of which is issues impacting children;
4. A representative from a foster and adoptive parent association;
5. A representative from a lead agency
6. A representative from a child advocacy organization that supports young adults who were in foster care as children;
7. A foster parent who contracts directly with the Department of Health and Human Services; and
8. A foster parent who contracts with a child welfare agency.

Members of the committee will be asked to serve for terms of four years and until their successors are appointed and qualified.

If you would like to be considered for this committee, please complete the attached 2-page form. The completed form must be returned to Leesa Sorensen at the Nebraska Children's Commission by 10:00am on May 5, 2014. The completed form may be e-mailed to Leesa.Sorensen@Nebraska.gov or mailed to:

Leesa Sorensen
FCRO/Nebraska Children's Commission
521 S. 14th Street, Suite 401
Lincoln, NE 68508

**Nebraska Children's Commission
Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee**

Name:			
Address:			
City:		State:	Zip:
Home Phone: ()		Business Phone: ()	
Cell Phone: ()		Business Fax: ()	
E-mail Address:			
Occupation:			
Gender:		Race:	
Employment:			
Education:			
Other Committees or Boards:			
References (Name/Address/Phone):		1.	
		2.	

Representative of: (check all that apply)

- A child welfare agency that contracts directly with foster parents, from each of the service areas. My service area: **SESA only**
- An advocacy organization, the singular focus of which is issues impacting children
- A foster parent who contracts with a child welfare agency

Reason for Seeking this Appointment: