



Governor's Council on
Child Safety and
Family Empowerment

**Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment
January 11, 2024, 10:00 AM
Hybrid Meeting**

1700 West Washington Street, Suite 104, Phoenix, Arizona 85007
A general meeting of the Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment
convened on **January 11, 2024**, notice duly given.

Members Present (17)	Members Absent (06)
Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair	Kate Brophy McGee
Colleen McNally, Co-Chair	Rachel Mitchell
Berisha Black	Darlene Newsom
*Terry Crist	Leslie Reprogle
*Obed Escobar	Ginger Ward
Tonya Hamilton	Ryan Young
*Dr. Lorrie Henderson	
Claire Louge	
David Lujan	
James Molina	
*Paul Mulligan	
*Katie O'Dell	
Kathryn Blades Ptak	
Torrie Taj	
Jeff Taylor	
Mark Upton	
Richard Yarbough	
Staff & Guests Present (05)	
Amy Peep, GOYFF	Tené Marion, Presenter
Chantel Hutchinson, GOYFF	
Jaime Perez, GOYFF	
Latrisha Centers, GOYFF	

**Indicates virtual attendance*

Call to Order

- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, called the Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment (CSFE) meeting to order at 10:06 AM with **17** members and **five** staff/guests present. She reviewed the Council meeting procedures, welcomed all those joining via Zoom, and thanked them for their flexibility.

Approval of Minutes

- With the quorum met, **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, requested a review of the **November 09, 2023** meeting minutes.
 - **Tonya Hamilton** moved to accept the **November 09, 2023** meeting minutes.
 - **David Lujan** seconded the motion.
- The motion passed with no dissenting votes at **10:10 AM**.

Department of Child Safety Update

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, welcomed **Cabinet Executive Officer (CEO) David Lujan** to provide an update from the [Arizona Department of Child Safety \(DCS\)](#).
- **CEO Lujan** provided an update regarding the [DCS — Performance Audit and Sunset Review](#) by the [Arizona Legislature](#). In preparation for the first sunset review hearing, the [Arizona Auditor General](#) published a recommendations [report](#) in September 2023 to present findings at the January 3, 2024 meeting. A few of the recommendations **CEO Lujan** presented are below.
 1. Ensure the DCS caseworkers attend the [Foster Care Review Board \(FCRB\)](#) hearings and follow up with necessary reports.
 2. Ensure the DCS' effective and efficient court reports provide enough information for judges to decide.
 3. **CEO Lujan** mentioned addressing the Guardian System is a significant portion of the DCS' [fiscal year \(FY\) 2024 Strategic Plan](#). The DCS is in contact with multiple third-party providers for feedback on the system's shortcomings.
 4. Ensure the DCS caseworkers interview children in congregate care homes, as the report found several shortcomings in the DCS' investigations, including nonexistent enforcement actions when possible violations occurred.
- The Auditor General will produce a six-month update (March 2024) explaining the DCS' progress to address the provided recommendations.
- The first sunset review hearing ended with a recommendation for the DCS' continuation for the next four years.

Addressing Disproportionality in DCS

- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, introduced **Tené Marion** to speak to the Council about the DCS' initiatives to address disproportionality in the child welfare system.
 - **Tené Marion** was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, and obtained her Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) at Eastern Michigan University. **Tené** has worked in child welfare since 2000 and began her career with the DCS in 2011. She has been an Investigator, Investigations Supervisor, and Program Manager during this time, currently serving as the Statewide Prevention Administrator. **Tené** also serves as the Internal African American Racial Disparity Committee Chair.
- **Tené Marion** began her presentation by stating she would speak on disproportionality through the prevention lens, emphasizing that addressing disproportionality is not a solitary journey; collaboration is necessary.
- **Tené Marion** reviewed the DCS 2023 data:
 - African Americans represented 18% of intake reports (calls to the hotline); this percentage has not fluctuated over the last three years.
 - Of that 18%, the most common allegation made was "Significant Incident or Repeated Exposure to Domestic Violence," recognizing the importance of the myths and stereotypes for particular races that may have contributed to this being the most common.
- **Tené Marion** stated that the DCS Office of Prevention created [A Helping Grand](#), an upstream prevention program aimed to support 1,000 eligible families with a \$1,000 one-time grant for assistance with concrete resources such as auto repairs, trade/vocational school, pediatric dentistry, and mental health services; a primary need identified in underserved communities.
 - With increased disproportionate intake and removal rate, the pilot was completed in the following Arizona ZIP codes: 85008, 85009, 85040, 85041, 85035, 85033, 85705, and 85706.
 - To date, the DCS has approved over \$600,000, supporting approximately 500 families.
- **Tené Marion** explained that the DCS has begun to look at the hotline calls that did not meet the statutory requirements for reports to identify the primary need of callers.
 - The DCS is working to relieve the overreliance on the DCS by redirecting individuals to Family Resource Centers (FRCs), entities defined as community-based resource hubs with a primary focus on promoting a family's overall health and well-being by increasing access to formal and informal supports.
 - Currently, there is no statewide pathway to receive resources; the centralized coordination of FRCs will:
 - Collect data on service utilization to identify areas of need;
 - Create infrastructure (website) for centralized coordination and referral;
 - Connect families and providers to websites;

- Offer professional development opportunities to FRCs;
 - Create/braid funding streams to support FRCs;
 - Funnel family resources through the FRCs network;
 - Reduce overreliance on the DCS; and
 - Identify what is needed and where.
- **Tené Marion** mentioned that educators are commonly missing from prevention discussions. Although one of the most frequent callers to the hotline, only 48% of calls from educators receive a report. Considering Yourself a Mandated Supporter - Training of Trainers (TOT) educates school social workers and teachers on being mandated supporters. For example, how to support a family through the DCS process or (more commonly) where to access a tangible good (shelter or food).
 - In collaboration with Prevent Child Abuse Arizona and rooted in the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework, the training equips educators to support families better by considering themselves mandated reporters and supporters, allowing them to examine how they can reduce family overwhelm, ultimately protecting children from adversity and maltreatment.
 - The first TOT was held in May 2023 with the target audience: Community Leaders, Social Workers, and Parents with Lived Experience.
 - The goal is to participate in the Professional Development Days with the Arizona Department of Education.
 - Each trainer will receive a stipend to conduct one school training.
 - **Tené Marion** stated regarding intervention, the DCS is working through a partnership with [Cultural Brokers](#).
 - Cultural Brokers works with families currently involved or at risk of being involved with the child protection system with a motto, 'Supporting the Power of Families to Strengthen Communities.'
 - Cultural Brokers' goal is to increase the quality of relationships between the African American families served by the DCS and the Department by offering technical assistance to adopt diversity, equity, and inclusion in the DCS services to achieve better outcomes.
 - The DCS is beginning to implement a pilot program out of the Glendale office.
 - Cultural Brokers will accompany the DCS specialists in the community, serving as a third party to help families navigate the DCS process. Most importantly, they are culturally grounded and can relate to the affected family.
 - **Tené Marion** briefly discussed other initiatives the DCS is working on:
 - 40 Case Reviews of African American children in Congregate Care;
 - African American Racial Disparity Committee (Internal);
 - Ensuring diverse representation from each community on the DCS Oversight Committee;
 - Culturally Grounded Practice and Empathy Training – launches January 2024;
 - Hiring a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Officer; and
 - Central Registry.
 - **Tonya Hamilton** asked how it was determined to pilot the Cultural Brokers program at the Glendale office, additionally asking about the duration of the pilot..
 - **Tené Marion** responded the Glendale office has disproportionate outcomes (higher rates of intervention and higher reports for African American families). There is also a high refugee population in that area.
 - **CEO David Lujan** added that the pilot program will eventually be permanent and implemented across all locations.
 - **Kathryn Blades Ptak** asked for clarity regarding children in congregate care data, stating that overall, it is trending downward, but some populations are not changing; is this metric determining review case selections?
 - **Tené Marion** responded yes; particularly for African American children in care, it is important to look for kinship placements, an area in the DCS with room for improvement going forward.
 - **Mark Upton** asked about the educator training and what outcomes they have seen.
 - **Tené Marion** responded they had just begun implementing these training sessions, but over 600 people participated in the first pilot training.
 - **Berisha Black** commented on being part of the case review, adding that the panel recently finished reviewing five cases. She emphasized the importance of asking the young person who they are connected to in their community when looking for kinship placements.

- To view **Tené Marion's** presentation, click [here](#).

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Court

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, introduced **Judge Janet Bostwick** from the Pima County Superior Court to discuss the implementation of the specialty Indian Child Welfare (ICWA) Court to the Council.
 - Before **Judge Bostwick's** appointment to the Arizona Superior Court in 2016, she had a civil litigation practice emphasizing employment law matters and business/commercial disputes, providing consultation on employment discrimination law issues for the University of Arizona.
- **Judge Bostwick** began her presentation by providing an overview of the [Indian Child Welfare Act \(ICWA\)](#), specifically the reasons for ICWA and what ICWA means for child welfare cases.
- **Judge Bostwick** played a video highlighting Leona Wolf and Chief Littlechild segments.
 - In 1879, the Carlisle Boarding School opened, and for over 39 years, thousands of students from over 140 tribes were affected. Native American survival relied on shedding all culture/customs and assimilating fully into white American culture.
 - Boarding Schools stripped students of their customs, culture, and heritage, forcing them to cut their hair, change their names, stop speaking their Native languages, convert to Christianity, and endure harsh discipline, including corporal punishment and solitary confinement. Hundreds of other Native American boarding schools utilized this approach, some operated by the government and others operated by churches. Disease and harsh conditions took their toll, and hundreds of children died, with 186 still buried on the site today.
- **Judge Bostwick** stated that in May 2022, researchers identified more than 500 child deaths after examining records of more than 400 boarding schools in the United States but estimated the total count is in the tens of thousands.
 - From 1879 to 1969, the federal Indian boarding school system consisted of 408 federal schools across 37 states (then territories), including 21 schools in Alaska and seven in Hawaii. The investigation identified marked/unmarked burial sites at approximately 53 schools and expects this to increase.
- **Judge Bostwick** explained the disparities in foster care, a driving force for ICWA in 1978.
 - Between the 1950s through the 1960s, Indian children were actively placed in non-Indian homes.
 - Of Indian children removed, 25% to 35% moved between foster or adoptive homes at some point in their lives.
 - Eighty-five percent of Indian foster children were in non-Native homes; of those adopted, 90% were in non-Native homes.
 - The state often pressured the birth parents to give up their rights without considering cultural differences.
- **Judge Bostwick** explained the goals of the ICWA of 1978 were to protect Indian children's best interests, promote stability and security of Indian tribes and families by establishing minimum federal standards for the removal and placement of Indian children, and promote the placement of Indian children removed from their families in foster or adoptive homes which reflect the unique values of Indian culture.
 - To note, ICWA adds federal standards to state law but does not replace state law except where inconsistent with ICWA.
 - ICWA defines an "Indian Child" as an unmarried person under the age of 18 who is either (1) a member of a federally recognized tribe or (2) a biological child of a tribal member and eligible for membership.
 - The tribe decides whether a child is eligible for membership.
 - ICWA applies if the "reason to know" child is an "Indian child." For example, it is an ICWA case unless/until the determination that it is not an Indian child.
 - ICWA Core Provisions:
 - *Notice*: By registered/certified mail to the Tribe. The Tribe can intervene as a party in a case.
 - *Imminent Harm*: Showing that removal from the home was necessary to prevent imminent physical damage or harm to a child.
 - *Active Efforts*: Avoid removal and reunify the family (to provide remedial services and rehabilitative programs to prevent the breakup of the Indian family).
 - *Placement Preferences*: Keeping the child connected with culture/family/tribe.
 - *Continued Custody*: Continued custody with the parent is likely to result in serious emotional or physical damage to the child beyond a reasonable doubt.

- **Qualified Expert Witness:** A witness familiar with tribal culture and traditions must testify for foster care, termination of rights, or guardianship.
- ICWA Termination of Parental Rights or Guardianship Requirements:
 - Notice of motion for termination/guardianship to parent, [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#), and the Tribe.
 - Qualified expert witness testimony supporting findings that:
 - Active efforts made to prevent the breakup of the Indian family.
 - Placement complies with the ICWA preferences, or good cause to deviate from ICWA placement preferences is shown.
 - Beyond a reasonable doubt that continued custody by a parent is likely to result in serious emotional or physical damage to the child.
- **Judge Bostwick** explained that despite the ICWA, foster care disparity continues with overrepresentation at 2.7 times the general population. In 2020, 57% of American Indian/Alaska Native children in care received placement with non-Native families. In Arizona, there are 22 federally recognized tribes, with 5% of Arizona's population being American Indian/Alaska Native, making the disproportionality rate 1.5.
- **Judge Bostwick** explained that the ICWA represents the gold standard of child welfare work. There are 22 ICWA Courts in the United States, two in Arizona (Pima and Maricopa County).
- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, asked if they can get all ICWA cases in Pima County into their ICWA court.
 - **Judge Bostwick** responded yes, they can also take transfer cases from counties.
- To view **Judge Janet Bostwick's** presentation, click [here](#).

Arizona Center for African American Resources (AZCAAR)

- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, introduced **Dr. Carlian Dawson** to speak to the Council.
 - **Dr. Carlian Dawson** is the Arizona Center for African American Children's Education Director, a non-profit organization, and an independent education/trauma consultant. She is a master trainer for two programs: the Neurosequential Model for Caregivers and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). **Dr. Dawson** has over 40 years of combined education experience, including being a teacher, principal, adjunct associate professor, university administrator, and Parenting Education Program Director.
- **Dr. Carlian Dawson** explained that the [Arizona Center for African American Resources \(AZCAAR\)](#) serves as a resource for the African-American community in Arizona, focusing on African American child well-being, civic engagement, education, health and wellness, and juvenile justice. Her presentation included a chronology of the activities, events, outputs, and outcomes AZCAAR has had since the organization's conception in 2006.
 - 2006: Connie Robinson, Carolyn Bristo, Carol Coles-Henry, Jim Robinson, Carlian Dawson, Joy Johnson, Kent Earle, Roy Dawson, and Teresa Tone began meeting to discuss the state of the African American community in Arizona, establishing AZCAAR.
 - 2007: AZCAAR's initial agreement was to serve as the leadership/organizational development consultant for City of Phoenix Councilman Michael Johnson. The deliverable was a data-driven design plan for the African American Strategic Leadership Group. AZCAAR began consulting with political and community leaders.
 - 2008: AZCAAR and [Facilitating Independence Building Comprehensive Opportunities \(FIBCO\) Family Services, Inc.](#) researched the needs of African American children in Arizona. AZCAAR/FIBCO held a Colloquium on Education, the first in a series of Colloquia on the Needs of African American Boys in Arizona.
 - 2013: Established the Gap Closing Collaborative (GCC) to continue working on disproportionality and other child welfare problems in the African American community; submitted a memo to former Governor Jan Brewer about dispositioning reports as "not investigated," causing a significant disruption of the State's child welfare system. This disruption led to a break in the GCC's planning.
 - 2017: Conducted a workshop on Infant Mortality among African American Children in Arizona.
 - 2019: AZCAAR held the 8th Annual African American Conference on Disabilities and hosted the 3rd Annual Evelyn Marie O'Neal Carson Child Welfare Workshop, where **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, was the morning keynote speaker.
 - 2023: Invited to the Arizona Governor's African American Roundtable and established monthly meetings with the DCS CEO David Lujan about the wellbeing of Black/African American children.

- **Dr. Carlian Dawson** thanked the DCS and **CEO David Lujan** for the continued support and opportunity to collaborate.

Workgroup Updates

- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, introduced the Prevention Workgroup Chair, **Claire Louge**, to share any updates with the Council.
- **Claire Louge** explained that in collaboration with the [Arizona Family Resource Network](#) and various state agencies, [Prevent Child Abuse Arizona](#) seeks to understand Arizona [Family Resource Centers \(FRCs\)](#) locations and services.
- **Claire Louge** explained that FRCs are welcoming community hubs where families can access formal and informal support, both in times of need or day-to-day life, offering responsive, on-site programs that strengthen families in their communities, including
 - Information, resources, and referrals.
 - Parenting activities, classes, and support.
 - Opportunities for families to build social connections.
- If a Council member's organization or a program within their organization fits the above definition, they are encouraged to complete the survey using this [link](#).

Upcoming Meeting

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, reminded members that the next meeting will be on **March 07, 2024**, at **10:00 AM** in the Executive Tower and in a hybrid format for members to attend in person or virtually.

Adjournment

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, thanked everyone for being part of the meeting and asked for a motion to adjourn.
 - **Richard Yarbrough** moved to adjourn.
 - **Paul Mulligan** seconded the motion.
- The motion passed with no dissenting votes. The meeting adjourned at **11:38 AM**.

Dated 12 of January 2024
Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment
Respectfully Submitted By:
Amy Peep
GOYFF