



Georgia Department of Human Services
Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services

May 21, 2024

Hybrid, In-Person and Teams Meeting

Board members present: Chair Shondeana Morris (R14), Vice Chair Meredith Holt (R13), Secretary Jennifer Shipoch (AL), Randel Hambrick (R3), Anna Bearden (R5), Tommy Hill (R10), Laci Tippins (R11), Allyson Christianson (12), Jeff Mauer (AL), Virgil Costley (AL),

Board members absent: Deke Copenhaver (R7), Belva Dorsey (R8), Travis Niblett (R9), JaNice VanNess (AL), Vacant (R1), Vacant (R4), Vacant (R6), Vacant (AL), Vacant (AL)

DHS staff: Mary Havick, John Hallman, Sreeji Vijayan, Sunny Patel, Kylie Winton, Emma McCullough, Emily Hatchett, Ramirez Evans

Welcome and Introductions, housekeeping. Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m.

Presentation by Mary Havick, DHS Deputy Commissioner, Child Welfare

- Realistic Job Preview Day
 - Hosted two in-person realistic job preview days which give individuals a view of what the job looks like day to day
- Technology Modernization – Georgia Communicare, Caregiver Connection
 - Launching app for Communicare which will better connect child welfare staff, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), foster parents, and parents.
 - Caregiver Connection project will digitize the foster parent onboarding process
- National Foster Care Month and the Virtual Foster Caregiver of the Year Celebration
 - May is National Foster Care Awareness Month
 - Recognizing 14 Foster Caregivers on May 22nd in virtual celebration
- There's No Place Like Home
 - Every year, a cohort of children & youth is selected who have an identified resource for adoption and work towards finalization in that year
 - Agency is meeting goals established each year towards finalization of adoptions

Presentation by John Hallman, DHS Deputy Commissioner, Office of Family Independence

- Intelligence Task Routing
 - New system would prioritize cases based on current needs and help caseworkers work on the most pressing work
 - Implementation will start in Fall of 2024
- Professional Development Program
 - Program will formalize the knowledge transfer between supervisor to case workers
- Library Kiosk Project

- Project just concluded that placed dedicated Chromebook kiosks that provide access to Gateway in 400 libraries throughout Georgia

Presentation by Sreeji Vijayan, Chief Information Officer and Deputy Commissioner, Information Technology

- Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) Portal
 - New Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) Portal, which allows Georgians recovering from disasters to request and receive D-SNAP benefits more easily
- SHINES Re-platform
 - Upgrades software of Georgia SHINES to the latest technologies
 - Re-platform will go live in Summer of 2024
- BOTS: Automation for data entry
 - Robotic process automation (RPA) streamlines workflows by automating tasks
- ARGO Placements
 - Argo Placements facilitates communication between service providers and DFCS case managers to better serve families and children by supporting the placement finding process

Board Business

Committee Assignments

- OFI Committee
 - Fran Chastain
 - Travis Niblett
 - Laci Gillis Tippins
- Community Relations Committee
 - Anna Bearden
 - Allyson Christianson
 - JaNice VanNess
- Regional Trends Committee
 - Randel Hambrick
 - Tommy Hill
 - Meredith Holt
- Child Welfare Committee
 - Shondeana Morris
 - Jennifer Shinpoch
 - Virgil Costley

Please reach out to Board Liaison, Emma McCullough, if you would like to be placed in a different committee.

Advisory Board Member Regional Reports

- R3 – Randel Hambrick
 - Successes: Honoring foster parents throughout May
 - Challenges: Questions around providing gift cards through donations to Region 3 for foster parents
- R12 – Allyson Christianson

- Successes: Appreciation week for staff, Chamber recognized DFCS as First Responders
 - Challenges: Vacancy for Regional Director
- R14 – Shondeana Morris
 - Successes: Celebrating National Foster Care Month, Preparing for National Adoption Month and for December Celebration with the Courts
 - Challenges: Vacancy for DeKalb County Director
- AL- Jennifer Shipoch
 - Successes: Monthly event in Region Five includes services providers, child placing agencies, DFCS staff who provide updates and celebrations in region

Closing remarks and parting words from Chair Morris

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 p.m.