

Child Welfare Advisory Committee Charge

Overview

This charge 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, Family Preservation, 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 at least one representative from each of the following areas:

- Child and family services private agencies
- Private child placing agencies
- Juvenile court judges
- 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 representatives from various geographic areas of the state and size of agencies) and representatives of the Virginia Alliance of Social Work Practitioners
- Local community services boards
- Foster and adoptive parent associations
- Virginia Institute for Social Services Training Activities (VISSTA)
- State board of social services
- State local advisory team (SLAT)
- Prevent Child Abuse Virginia (PCAV)
- Family and Children's Trust Fund
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
- State Departments of Education; Health; Medical Assistance Services; and Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services; Office of the Executive Secretary and the Supreme Court; Department of Juvenile Justice; and Office of Comprehensive Services for Youth and Families
- Representative from the Bar to include: GAL and DSS attorney
- Virginia Council of Indians
- Appropriate program managers at VDSS (CPS, Permanency, and OASIS) and representatives
- Director and Assistant Director of the Division of Family Services

When necessary, staff from other program areas and functions will be consulted for input in making decisions that will impact those areas.

Amendments to the Charge

This charge 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 charge prior to convening of the meeting when such amendment is discussed and acted upon.