



Institute for  
Research on  
Poverty

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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# Centering Family Experiences In Human Services: Incorporating Family Advisory Councils Into Service Delivery And Research

NAWRS Virtual Workshop  
August 20, 2024

# Agenda

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- Webinar Housekeeping
- About NAWRS and the Virtual Workshop Series
- Why Family Advisory Councils?
- Presentations
- Q & A



## Get Involved!

- **Sign up** for the [NAWRS Mailing List](#)
- **Learn about** NAWRS Summer Virtual Events
  - **Join us** on [LinkedIn](#)
- **Volunteer** for a NAWRS Board Committee

[Lauren Antelo](#), **NAWRS** Virtual Events Co-Chair  
*Senior Advisor, Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health & Human Services*

*a little about...*



NAWRS is a non-profit association whose purpose is to promote the exchange of ideas on how research and statistical analysis can contribute to the development and administration of effective human services programs.



# Centering Family Experiences in Human Services

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- Why Family Advisory Councils?
  - Growing focus on improving **alignment** between programs and family needs & goals
  - Family input is important for program **effectiveness** and **equity**
  - Family advisory councils offer a vehicle for **engagement**
- But how?
  - How do we know where to start?
  - How do we do this well (and what does “well” mean)?
  - What can we learn from the experiences of others?

# Today's Panelists

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**Nicole Dobbins**

Administration for Children  
and Families, U.S. DHHS



**Connie Chesnik**

Division of Family and  
Economic Security,  
Wisconsin Department  
of Children & Families



**Michael Adrian**

Office of Child Support  
Michigan Department of  
Health & Human Services



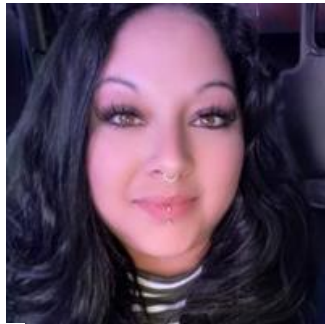
**Shaunta M. Patton**

Michigan Office of Child  
Support Community  
Advisory Council



**Jessica Hunter**

Douglas County Child  
Welfare, Oregon  
Department of Human  
Services



**Diane Deleon**

Douglas County Child  
Welfare Parent Advisory  
Council



**Chelsey Hall, MPH**

Colorado Department  
of Human Services



**Samantha Fields**

Colorado Department  
of Human Services Family  
Voice Council



**Robert Thompson, EdD**

Div. of Economic &  
Workforce Support,  
Colorado Department of  
Human Services

# Our First Panelist

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## **Nicole Dobbins**

*Senior Policy Advisor*

Immediate Office of the Assistant Secretary  
Administration for Children and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## Centering Families in Policy Making is Always the Right Decision



# Our Next Panelist Group

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**Connie Chesnik**

*Administrator*

Division of Family and Economic Security

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families



**Michael Adrian**

*Program Development Division Director*

Office of Child Support

Michigan Department of Health & Human Services



**Shaunta M. Patton**

*Advisory Council Member, Michigan Office of Child Support*



# Lived Experience

Engaging the families we serve in improving service delivery, policy,  
and program operations



Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

## Items to Consider:

- Goals and Objectives
- Level of Engagement
- Length of Engagement
- Compensation
- Feedback loop
- Meeting facilitation
- Group size and composition
- Recruitment considerations
- Training
- Sustainability



## Identifying the Right Family Engagement Approach for Your Program's Goals

Level of Engagement

Program Goals for Engaging with Families								
Family Input on a Specific Process or Service								
Family Input on Broader Community Needs or Issues							Family Input on Program Decision Making	
	Periodic, brief service survey	One-time focus group or interview	In-depth survey	Listening sessions or family forums	Visual (nonwritten) feedback	Storytelling or testimony	Ongoing committees or work groups	Established advisory board
Staff time commitment	Low intensity	Moderate intensity	Moderate to high intensity	High intensity	High intensity	Moderate intensity	High intensity and moderate term	High intensity and long term
Scale	Survey all or a random sample of families receiving a service	From one to several families	Survey a large sample or specific subset of families	Open-invitation gatherings or focus on specific subset of families	Could offer to all participating families	Very few individuals or families	Meeting with the same or different small groups of families over time	Small, representative group of individuals
Purpose	Ask a few closed-ended questions to understand family satisfaction and experience soon after participating in or receiving a service	Ask direct questions of families to understand experience or impact	Ask mainly closed-ended questions to understand family satisfaction, experience, or reactions to ideas or proposed changes	Develop understanding of impacts and scope of problem(s) affecting the broader community of families	Through pictures or other visual media, capture families' experiences and perspectives that may be difficult to articulate through words	Allow leaders to hear the perspectives and experiences of families directly	Collaboratively identify challenges and develop and test solutions on a specific topic or service with direct input from families	Create and long-term, family-driven setting to collaboratively identify areas for improvement and solutions
Depth of Engagement with Families								



<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cs/pag>

## Help Shape Wisconsin Child Support



### Make Your Voice Heard

With the Parent Advisory Group (PAG), use your voice to provide feedback to help shape policy for the communities that the Wisconsin Child Support Program serves.

Make your voice heard and share your concerns and ideas in a safe and respectful environment.

We are looking for a diverse set of applicants that represent the communities that we serve, making the following considerations:

- Gender, age, race, citizenship status, economic class, education level, ethnicity, and more

### Apply Now

Interested in joining the group?

Apply now at: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cs/form/cpag-application>

### Advisory Committee

This is an advisory committee. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) retains the authority on final decisions.

The committee seeks input on policy issues, and will not be fielding questions regarding hiring, recruitment, system design, case-specific items, or other related issues.

*The Department of Children and Families is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access services, receive information in an alternate format, or need information translated to another language, please contact the Bureau of Child Support at [bcsinfo@wisconsin.gov](mailto:bcsinfo@wisconsin.gov). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or speech disabled can use the free Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) – 711 to contact the department.*

### Quarterly Meetings

- Four meetings per year
- Meetings will be virtual
- Flexible meeting times to accommodate work schedules
- Staff may be available to assist with various needs

### Be A Partner

Have thoughts about how to improve the child support process in Wisconsin?

Join the group to help advise the bureau, department, and our partners.

### Learn More

Discover more about the group by visiting the Parent Advisory Group webpage:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cs/pag>

The webpage has:

- Application information
- Goals for the group
- Background information for the project



<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cs/form/cpag-application>

## Parent Advisory Group Application

Please provide the information below to express your interest in participating in the Parent Advisory Group. You may be contacted to complete a follow-up interview to learn more about your interest and capacity to participate in Parent Advisory Group activities.

Information provided in this application will only be used for the purposes of identifying a diverse Parent Advisory Group membership, and no information collected will impact current or future child support cases.

Information provided on this form may only be shared with others for the purpose(s) of the administration of the child support program and other related programs [Wis. Statutes, § 49.83].

### Contact Information

Name \*

Are you enrolled in Safe at Home program? \*

☐ Yes ☐ No

Email \*

Phone \*

What is the best method to contact you? \*

☐ Email ☐ Text ☐ Phone call

### Application

Have you reviewed the Parent Advisory Group informational materials or participated in an information gathering session? \*

☐ Yes ☐ No

The Bureau of Child Support wants to hear from people who are impacted by our program and policies. We would like the Parent Advisory Group to represent people we serve. Please tell us why you are interested in helping the Bureau of Child Support by participating in this group. \*



## Tools for Reflection

What's going well?

What's not working?

What could we try?

ROSE



Success

THORN



Challenge

BUD



Potential



**THANK YOU!**

**Connie Chesnik**  
**Wisconsin Department of Children and Families**  
**[connie.Chesnik@wisconsin.gov](mailto:connie.Chesnik@wisconsin.gov)**  
**608-219-9448**



# Lessons Learned Post-Council Initiation

**Michael Adrian**  
Program Development Division  
Michigan Office of Child Support



m i c h i g a n  
child support

**NAWRS**  
*Centering Family Experiences  
in Human Services*  
**August 2024**



# Rolling Recruitment

- ▶ Recruitment = heavy lift
- ▶ Delay onboarding until critical mass
  - Less disruptive
  - More focused and timed attention
- ▶ Casting net wide: intentional diversity
- ▶ Online recruitment presence (charter, video, application)
- ▶ Parent newsletters

# Starting Slow, Then Ramping Up Engagement

- ▶ Bring professionals along - the right way (tap skills of workforce)
- ▶ Power-sharing becomes more comfortable
- ▶ Inviting community in becomes a necessity
- ▶ Expand avenues for engagement (surveys, focus groups, listening sessions)
- ▶ Exit interviews

# Unique for Child Support

- ▶ Does the program favor:
  - Those with primary custody?
  - Females/Mothers?
  - Balancing needs of both roles in one Council

# Unique for Child Support

- ▶ A human services program becoming more “optional” for families
  - Decrease in required legal cooperation
  - Does the program add value for families?
  - Does the program make things better or worse?
  - Be responsible and accountable to those served

# Distinguish *Outreach* from *Engagement*



# Showing Results of Community Engagement

- ▶ Navigation services pilot
- ▶ Form/Template review and changes
  - Translation (Spanish and Arabic)
- ▶ Input on legislative and executive proposals
  - Discontinue birth expense recovery
  - License suspension
  - Denial of parentage

# Showing Results of Community Engagement

- ▶ Sensitive data collection
  - Domestic violence: no regular reminder on portal
  - Race and ethnicity
  - Good cause
- ▶ Updated assisted reproduction technology policy
- ▶ Feedback: Parent/Caregiver online portal

# Michigan Advisory Council

- ▶ <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/adult-child-serv/child-sup/our-partners/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>

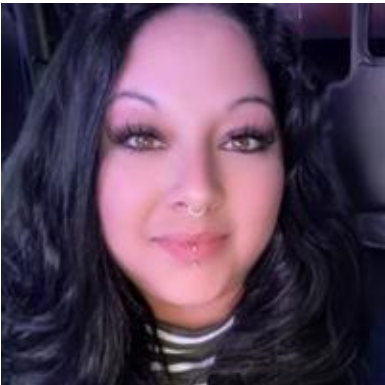


# Our Next Panelists


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**Jessica Hunter**  
*Program Manager*  
Douglas County Child Welfare  
Oregon Department of Human Services



**Diane Deleon**  
*Parent Advisory Council Member, Douglas  
County Child Welfare*



# Child Welfare Parent Advisory Council

District 6, Douglas County Child Welfare

Jessica Hunter, Program Manager, Child Welfare

Diane Deleon, Original PAC Member, Douglas County  
Parent Advisory Council



## Oregon Department of Human Services

# What We've Learned So Far...

## Do...

- Evaluate Community Readiness
- Keep trauma in mind
- Understand your role
- Consider developing a playbook
- Get the right people involved
- Lean into vulnerability and discomfort

## Don't...

- Confuse your role
- Stop dreaming up ways to share power
- Overcomplicate things
- Leave grace and forgiveness out of the process
- Invite feedback, then sit in inaction

# Why Our PAC is Thriving

- We genuinely share power
- PAC work is a priority
- We have the right people at the table with our PAC
- We know and live our core values
- We have excellent community partners
- We are ready and motivated to make change



# Our Final Panelist Group

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**Chelsey Hall, MPH**

*Director of Family and Community Engagement  
State 2Gen Coordinator  
Colorado Department of Human Services*



**Samantha Fields**

*Advisory Council Alumni, Colorado Department of  
Human Services*



**Robert Thompson, EdD**

*Research & Evaluation Analyst  
Division of Economic and Workforce Support  
Colorado Department of Human Services*





# Implementing with Lived Experience: Research Practices within TANF

Robert Thompson - Research Analyst

Chelsey Hall - Director of Family and Community Engagement

Samantha Fields - Family Voice Council Alumni



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Department of Human Services



# Samantha's Story

- Who am I?
- My overall experience on Lived Experience Councils
- What it felt like to provide feedback on the TANF Leavers Survey
- Why you should have a Family Voice Council



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Department of Human Services  
Family Voice Council





# What is the Family Voice Council?

- Members have past or current experience with 2 or more CDHS services.
- Must have personal experience or a family member with experience.
- Max of 20 members - 100% lived experience membership
- Monthly 4 hour meetings
- Average of 2-3 presentations for feedback per meeting
- Currently meeting virtually with 2 in-person events per year.
- All members sign a letter of commitment or a one year term and an option to renew for a second year. Max 2 years.
- Member roles - co-chairing meetings
- All members are compensated for their time @ \$40/hr
- Alumni group available



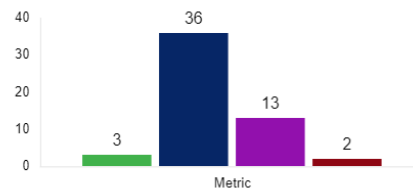
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Family Voice Council

# Overall Outcomes

The CDHS Family Voice Council has provided feedback and input for over 75 statewide programs and services.

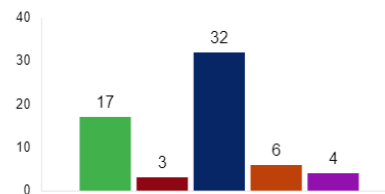
## Presenter Survey Responses (July 1, 2021 Forward)

### Overall Impressions



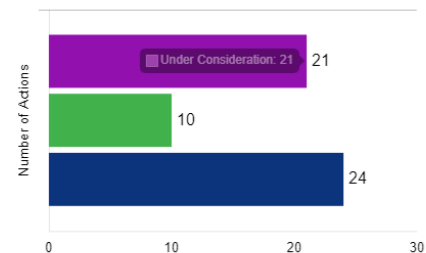
- Completely transformed my thinking
- Shaped my thinking considerably
- Somewhat shaped my thinking
- Did not change my thinking at all

### Number of Action(s) to be Taken



- Do not know yet
- No actions or changes
- One action or change
- Two actions or changes
- Three actions or changes

### Status of Actions in FY 2021-22



- Under Consideration
- In Progress
- Implemented

## 3 Year Report:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hdU\\_m7vnFYJFwRLOCmEtf4YmunSp1QI/-view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hdU_m7vnFYJFwRLOCmEtf4YmunSp1QI/-view)



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Family Voice Council


# Compensation Components

**CDHS Community Member Compensation Policy Link**

- Definitions (compensation vs reimbursement)
- Rate Setting
- Payment Options (gift card, check, direct deposit)
- Accounting Protocols
  - W-9s
  - Set up as independent contractors
  - 1099s
- Avoiding Benefits Cliffs
- Have the conversation with the community member first!
- Want to access all our tools and templates? Check out our [Family Voice Compass!](#)



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Family Voice Council

A photograph of two young children, a girl on the left and a boy on the right, sitting at a table and playing with various wooden toys. The girl is wearing a red dress and has a pink hair tie. The boy is wearing a light blue shirt. They are both focused on their play. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the play area. A semi-transparent blue banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

# Programmatic Example for including Family Voice



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# Family Voice Council Consultation with CDHS Research Initiatives

Partners with Division of Economic Security to provide feedback for the Colorado Works TANF Leavers Survey.

Historical Topics of Discussion:

- Brief Feedback
  - Housing
  - Industry
- 2 Cycles of Survey Feedback



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Department of Human Services  
Family Voice Council

# What is Colorado Works?

- A cash assistance program
- Otherwise known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- To be eligible, a person must have a child in the home or be pregnant
- Goals are to help bring stability to families and promote employment



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Department of Human Services



# Colorado Works (TANF) Leavers Survey

## What is the Colorado Works Leavers Survey?

Follow up with families who leave the Colorado Works program to:



Evaluate their experiences



Understand why they exited the program




Collect information on key program outcomes



Determine how the program contributed to the family's self-sufficiency goals.



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# Family Voice Council's Review of the Survey



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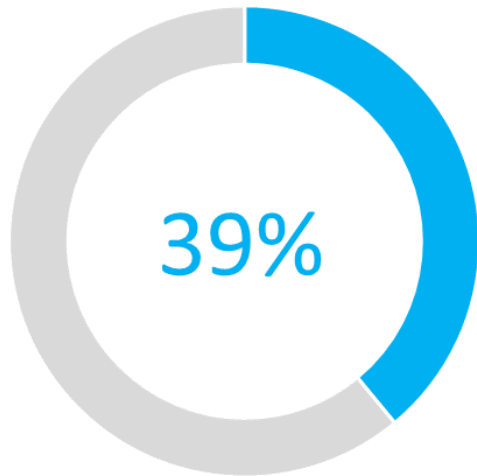
# How did meeting with FVC impact our survey?

Feedback from FVC	Change that we made
<i>Clients won't want to take a survey that feels too long.</i>	Took out duplicative questions to ask only what we need. Revised intro to let them know it will take 10-15 minutes.
<i>There should be a space to share openly.</i>	Added in a new open text question of "In what way could Colorado Works have been better?"
<i>The supports you ask about aren't as relevant to child-only families.</i>	Expanded the supports we asked about. Changed wording from "your child" to the child in your care, or your family. Added "does not apply options" and more opportunities to skip non-relevant sections.
<i>There are terms like "non-cash supportive services" that don't make sense.</i>	We defined that term and other possibly concerning terms in the body of the survey.

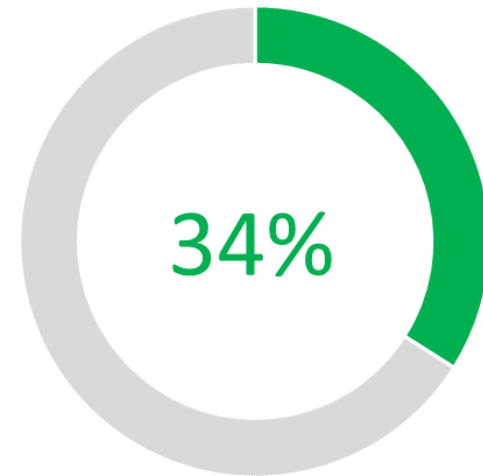


# How did meeting with FVC impact our survey?

Missingness  
2021-2022



Missingness  
2022-2023





**THANK YOU!**

**Please reach out!**

**Samantha, [internettie1960@gmail.com](mailto:internettie1960@gmail.com)**

**Chelsey, [chelsey.hall@state.co.us](mailto:chelsey.hall@state.co.us)**

**Robert, [robert.m.thompson@state.co.us](mailto:robert.m.thompson@state.co.us)**



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Department of Human Services

# Q&A

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- Type questions into Q&A box
- Moderator will read questions to panelists

# Thank You for Participating!

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- Webinar resources
  - [Webinar website](#) will soon be updated with slides, recording, resource handout
- Email with recording and survey coming soon!
  - Your feedback is greatly appreciated!