

Ohio Commission on Fatherhood

Minutes from the Meeting of

Thursday, September 8, 2011

<p>Commissioners Present:</p> <p>Mr. Peter Lawson Jones, Chairman</p> <p>Mr. Robert Boykins</p> <p>Director Susan Brown</p> <p>Mr. Cedric Collins</p> <p>Ms. Kimberly Dent</p> <p>Mr. Thomas Joyce</p> <p>Mr. Steven Killpack</p> <p>Dr. Randy Leite</p> <p>Mr. Scott Neely</p>	<p>Guests:</p> <p>Mr. Scott Anderson, Ohio Department of Alcohol & Drug Addiction Services</p> <p>Mr. Brian Byorth, Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Correction</p> <p>Mr. Matthew Cunningham, ODJFS, Office of Family Assistance</p> <p>Mr. Robert Cummings, Lighthouse Youth Services</p> <p>Mr. Alton Howard, Lighthouse Youth Services</p> <p>Ms. Tamara Howard, Legislative Aide for Representative Carlton Weddington</p> <p>Mr. Paul Lee, Fathers & Families</p> <p>Ms. Kelly Rybacki, Legislative Aide for Representative Timothy Derickson</p> <p>Mr. David Salisbury, Legislative Aide for Representative Jeffrey McClain</p>
<p>OCF Staff Present:</p> <p>Mr. J. Tracy Robinson, Executive Director</p> <p>Ms. Monica Mahoney, Policy Coordinator</p> <p>Ms. Whitney Logan</p>	

I. Call to Order & Welcome

Executive Director Tracy Robinson (“Director Robinson”) called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. Director Robinson introduced himself and welcomed our guests. Director Robinson then turned the meeting over to Commissioner Steve Killpack who is the Secretary. Chairman Peter Lawson Jones (“Chairman Jones”) arrived soon thereafter. A quorum was achieved.

II. Approval of June 2, 2011 Minutes

Commissioner Eddie Joyce moved, with Commissioner Killpack seconding, that the minutes from the meeting of June 2, 2011, be approved as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Executive Director’s Report

Director Robinson provided a written summary of his activities in June, July and August, a synopsis of which has been incorporated in these minutes. Director Robinson informed the commission that as of August, the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood (“OCF”) has been incorporated into the Office of Family Assistance and reports to Deputy Director Trudie Bormann. The Office of Family Assistance will assist OCF navigate through ODJFS policies and procedures.

IV. Family Empowerment Day

Commissioner Susan Brown shared details about the success of Franklin County’s third annual Family Empowerment Day. On August 17, 2001, over three hundred and fifty families attended the event at St. Stephen’s Community House located in the Linden neighborhood, one of the most impoverished in Columbus. Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency and the Columbus Urban League co-sponsored the event which was created to help families by providing access to community resources and child support services. Senator Charleta Tavares was the key note speaker. Opening remarks were provided by Franklin County Commissioner

John O'Grady and Franklin County Judge Elizabeth Gill. ODJFS Director Michael Colbert and Office of Child Support Deputy Director Jeffrey Aldridge also attended the event.

Many agencies provided information in the community resource area including Action for Children, Goodwill, the Legal Aid Society of Columbus, Job & Family Services, and Columbus State Community College. While parents took care of business, children played in the expanded Kids' Zone. Many parents met with Franklin County Child Support Enforcement staff:

- 89 individuals signed up for new hearing dates in order to have their civil warrant lifted.
- 49 drivers' licenses were reinstated with agreements being signed for over 100 more just waiting for payment.
- 22 individuals requested Administrative Adjustment Reviews
- \$2,051.00 in child support payments was received, a 55% increase from the 2010 Family Empowerment Day. Chairman Jones believes this event should be replicated in all counties and asked Director Brown to contact Al Grimes in Cuyahoga County.

V. Update on H.B. 145: OCF Statute Amendment

Director Robinson thanked Representatives Carlton Weddington, Timothy Derickson, Jeffrey McClain and Mike Ashford and Senators Charleta Tavares and Bill Beagle for their support and hard work in their caucuses to make sure that the OCF was included in SB 153, the budget bill. SB 153 funds OCF with \$1,000,000 of item 600689 TANF Block Grant and made three changes to the OCF statute:

1. The Governor appoints the Executive Director and sets his salary (O.R.C. 5101.341(B));
2. Executive Director reports to Director of ODJFS (O.R.C. 5101.341(B)); and

3. Annual report "describes the commission's expectations for the outcomes of fatherhood-related programs and initiatives and the methods the commission uses for conducting annual measures of those outcomes." (O.R.C. 5101.342(B)(2))

HB 145 is pending before the Senate Health, Human Services and Aging Committee chaired by Senator Scott Oelslager. The OCF Legislative Subcommittee will meet on October 19 and discuss how the commissioners would like Representatives Derickson and Weddington to proceed with respect to HB 145 in light of the changes to the OCF statute included in SB 153.

VI. Responsible Fatherhood Grant Application

Director Robinson informed the commission that OCF staff submitted a federal grant application on behalf of ODJFS. The Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood Grant seeks \$2 million in funding over 3 years. According to the grant announcement, the federal government plans to award 17 grants in the \$800,000 to \$2,500,000 range and 58 grants in the \$300,000 to \$799,999 range. Director Robinson believes our grant application is a competitive contender to be funded. Award announcements are expected on September 30th. Director Robinson thanked Sue Cook, Matthew Cunningham, Whitney Logan and Monica Mahoney for their hard work in completing the grant application.

The project abstract was distributed to the commission and states:

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) will develop and implement a comprehensive approach to promoting responsible fatherhood through a **project known as the Ohio Fatherhood Initiative (OFI)**. The purpose of the OFI Project is to help fathers in diverse communities throughout Ohio **succeed as providers, parents and partners**.

Services The goal of the OFI Project is to strengthen vulnerable Ohio families through a comprehensive three-pronged approach: 1). create greater economic stability by helping fathers

prepare for, find and retain long-term employment; 2) foster responsible parenting through skills-based classes and individualized mentoring; and 3) promote healthy marriage by providing mothers and fathers with conflict resolution and communication skills training. The OFI Steering Committee will be responsible for statewide oversight and management of the project in 26 different Ohio counties. Integrated into the three-prong approach, ODJFS will develop a comprehensive strategy for identifying, preventing and remedying domestic violence and child maltreatment in all local communities participating in the OFI project.

Population By partnering with 16 county agencies and local non-profits already providing services to vulnerable Ohio families, the OFI Project will serve over 1200 fathers and eligible mothers living in urban, suburban and rural counties including several in Appalachia, an under-served population located in pockets of poverty. The OFI Project's priority targeted population will be TANF eligible low income, non-married, unemployed and under-employed fathers ages 16 to 41.

Needs In Ohio, eligible fathers who reside in urban counties are predominantly black and those living in suburban, rural and Appalachian counties are predominantly white. Many of these men have not completed high school and lack marketable job skills. The majority are under-employed or unemployed and either pay or owe Child Support. Many do not reside with the mother of their child(ren) and have children by multiple partners. These men often were raised in father-absent homes and therefore lack experience in what it means to be a committed, involved and responsible father. As a result, the targeted population often needs skills and services in all three program component areas: employment, parenting and healthy relationship.

Goal The Project will meet the multiple needs by developing and implementing a comprehensive approach to promoting responsible fatherhood, including activities designed to

promote economic stability, foster responsible parenting, and promote healthy marriage.

ODJFS will create a seamless and continuous system of care that provides the father needed services based upon an individualized assessment. Fathers and family members in the targeted communities will be made aware of services through a coordinated public awareness campaign.

VII. Update on OCF Fatherhood Grants and RFGA 2011-2013

Director Robinson announced that the OCF Fatherhood Request for Grant Application (RFGA) 2011-2013 has been completed and awaits approval. The \$600,000 grant will award eight programs at \$75,000 for two years. Mr. Matthew Cunningham confirmed that his department reviewed the RFGA and that it is being reviewed by the Office of Contracts and Acquisitions, Office of Budget and Management and ODJF Director Colbert's office before posting on ODJFS website.

VIII. Announcements & New Business

- Seventh Annual Cuyahoga County Fathers Matter Conference
September 9, 2011
- Columbus Urban League 2011 Fatherhood Summit
September 11, 2011

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned 11:35 a.m.