

## **Home Visiting Consortium Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, September 30, 2015**

**9:00 am to 12:00 PM**

**Consortium Members in attendance:** Pam Langer, Darcy Lowell, Melissa Mendez, Noraleen Dunphy, Kathy Bleacher, Crista Marchesseault, Merrill Gay, Judith Meyers, Kareena DuPlessis, Grace Whitney, Karen Foley-Schain, Kim Nilson, Donna Maselli, Mickey Kramer, Elizabeth Teller, Kathy Bleacher, Karen Ohrenberger, Isabelina Rodriguez, Shari Rungarini, Steven Hernandez, Debra Anderson, Commission on Children designee)

**Welcome and Introductions** were facilitated by co-chair Melissa Mendez.

### **Business**

**Purpose of the Consortium** – Melissa reviewed with the members the purpose of the consortium per Public Act No. 15-45 An Act Establishing a Home Visiting Consortium.

**Task for the Meeting** – Melissa reviewed the tasks for the meeting which included identifying key areas of work for the consortium based on the recommendations contained in the home visiting report that could be implemented over the next year, particularly within the next 6 to 9 months.

**Attendance and Meeting Minutes** – co-chair Karen Foley-Schain distributed the sign in sheet and the meeting minutes from the July meeting. Judith Meyers made a motion, seconded by Karen Ohrenberger, to approve and adopt the meeting minutes. The minutes will reflect one correction – Elizabeth Teller was present at the meeting in July.

**Meeting and Decision Making Process** – Karen discussed the decision making process with members. The members agreed that decisions will be made on a consensus basis whenever possible and that a formal vote will be held if there is significant disagreement among members resulting in an impasse.

**Other Groups Working in Early Childhood** – Maggie Adair, government relations for the OEC, presented the members with a list and description of several legislatively established committees working on related matters. Discussion followed. It was noted that the work of additional groups will be presented to committee as they relate to the work of the consortium overtime.

**Home Visiting Landscape** – Melissa made a brief presentation on the current home visiting landscape, noting that Connecticut has programs that meet the needs of a broad range of parents including those in need of preventative and intervention services.

Karen presented notes from a “Town Hall” call with HRSA MIECHV Director Dr. David Willis. She let the group know that the funding for the program would be changing. Karen highlighted key points made by Dr. Willis on the call including:

- Ninety percent of the funding will be allocated to states on the basis of a funding formula.
- Ten percent of the funding will be allocated on a competitive basis.
- The formula used to determine funding levels for each state will reflect need, performance, grants management, and stability of funding.
- The competitive funds will be used for a different purpose than the formula funds (purpose not provided).
- That HRSA will not be able to “support all that it has built” with the current funding allocation.

Karen said that she did not know what the implications of this change would be for the state. She said that HRSA indicated that the new Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) would be available in November and that applications would be due in sixty days.

A lively discussion followed. The members asked about their role in addressing any reductions to the funding for current services provided through the MIECHV grant. Karen noted that since many of the members on the consortium have a direct financial interest in the grant funding (including three model developers or their representatives and a number of state contracted services providers receiving MIECHV funds) that they would not be allowed under the state ethics rules to participate in decisions about the allocation of the grant funds. She also noted that they would, however, be allowed to provide recommendations on a process to ensure the best possible allocation of funds under the grant should reductions be needed.

Several recommendations for the OEC emerged from the discussion. The members would recommend that community need, data, and performance information guide the decision making process and that individuals without a financial interest and those who would be objective in their decision making participate in the process. The co-chairs agreed to bring these recommendations to the OEC commissioner.

Karen also let the group know that she would send the FOA to the members as soon as it becomes available, and that the current MIECHV budget for the state’s competitive and formula grant is posted on the OEC web site at [OEC.CT.GOV.MIECHV](http://OEC.CT.GOV.MIECHV) - under grant applications – see budgets.

## **The Home Visiting Plan**

**A Vision for a Coordinated Network of Home Visiting programs in Connecticut** – Karen led a discussion about the recommendations in the report and proposed a process to assess the priorities of the members. Cathy Lenihan, OEC staff, led the group through the process and shared the results with the group.

**Review and Discuss Recommendations** – three areas emerged as priorities for the group including recommendations related to funding for home visiting services including services for special

populations, efforts to improve public awareness of home visiting, and the development of shared performance and outcome measure. Discussion followed.

**Select Top 3 for the work of the Consortium for the next nine to twelve months** – based on the discussion, the members agreed that they would like more information and discussion on each of the 15 recommendations before settling on three priority areas. The members decided to meet monthly for the next five months to accomplish this task. Once all of the recommendations have been reviewed, the members will revisit the priority areas.

### **Next Steps**

**Plan Consortium Members Tasks for the Next Meeting** – Melissa led a discussion about the tasks for the next meeting. The members agreed to look at a ‘grouping’ of related recommendations at the next meeting and at each of the next four meetings.

**Next Meeting Date** – in order to allow the staff time to prepare for presentations and a thorough discussion of the recommendations, the members agreed to meet in mid-November (rather than in October). A doodle poll will be circulated to select the next meeting time.

**Public Comment** – There was no public comment.