



SUBCOMMITTEE ON RACE POVERTY AND NEGLECT

Katherine Stoehr, Chair

“In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of notice filed with the Secretary of State, the Trenton Times and the Newark Star Ledger and posted at the Department of State, 125 West State St., 1st Floor, Trenton, New Jersey.”

**Please note the meeting was recorded for the transcription of minutes.*

February 27, 2024

Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Katherine Stoehr, Department of Children and Families

Larry Braasch, Department of Human Services

Patricia Risch, Department of Human Services

Natasha Johnson, Department of Human Services

Wendy Yallowitz, Department of Children and Families

Eleanor Gilliam, Department of Children and Families

Sonia Moticha, Department of Education

Guests:

Lolita Allen, member of the public

Staff:

Bethany D’Amelio, Department of Children and Families

I. Agenda and Protocols

1. Introductions and Attendance:

- The session commenced with standard procedural introductions and confirmations of attendance, ensuring compliance with Chapter 231 of the public laws of 1975.

2. Focus Groups Discussion:

- An ongoing initiative involves the development and refinement of focus group protocols aimed at gathering insights from critical stakeholders, such as school personnel, medical professionals, and law enforcement.
- Draft surveys, comprising structured questions and subdomains, have been developed and are open for feedback from members within a one-week timeframe.

3. Stakeholder Engagement:

- Engagement with the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, the Attorney General's office, and the NJ Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is crucial to refine the focus group questions for differing professional groups.
- Collaboration with the Attorney General's office has been pivotal in assembling participants across municipal forces and various offices within the law enforcement community to participate in the focus groups.

II. Focus Group Management

1. Logistics and Execution:

- It is recommended that focus groups be conducted in cohorts of ten to twelve participants, capping at fifteen, to ensure robust, qualitative engagement.
- The choice between in-person and virtual (Zoom) sessions remains open, depending on stakeholder convenience and preference.

2. Survey and Feedback Collection:

- A parallel survey mechanism was contemplated, providing an extended platform for feedback beyond initial focus group engagements.

III. Child Welfare Data Analysis

1. Neglect and Reporting Statistics:

- A comprehensive analysis of state-level neglect cases was presented, highlighting discrepancies in neglect reporting relative to racial demographics and geographic distribution.
- An examination of reporting patterns by professional sectors, such as education and law enforcement, established that neglect reports often exceed other types of child welfare concerns.

2. Data Transparency and Public Access:

- The subcommittee underscored the accessibility of the child welfare data through a public child welfare data portal, facilitating transparency and community engagement.

3. Ongoing Analyzes and Future Research:

- Discussions are underway on further data dimensions for exploration, such as socioeconomic status indicators and the impact of systemic issues on child welfare outcomes.

IV. Concluding Remarks and Next Steps

- The session concluded with reflections on the progress toward initiating focus group sessions and consolidating feedback for actionable insights.

- The subcommittee members committed to providing further updates in future meetings, particularly concerning ongoing data analyses and methodological enhancements.

Action Items:

- Stakeholders are encouraged to review the proposed focus group survey and provide feedback within the specified period.
- The subcommittee will continue to explore comprehensive data analysis strategies to enhance child welfare interventions.

This memo aims to maintain transparency and provide the public with an overview of the task force's recent deliberations. The committee values community input and engagement as we collectively strive to enhance the welfare of children and families across New Jersey. This meeting report was prepared, in part, with the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

For further information or queries, the public can reach out via the contact channels provided by the Department of Children and Families.