



CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING TASK FORCE

SEPTEMBER 23, 2024

Present: Allison Bishop, Anne Granberg, Allison Williams, Colton Kaltenfeldt, Greg Hansen, Jamie Desmul, Katherine Orlowski, Karla Anderson, Kristi Dominguez, Jon Scanlon, Jason Oldham, Lynn Salazar, Pamela Jons, Ray Deck, Sallye Quinn, Sterling Chick, Tilda Doughty, Vesla Tonnesson

Not Present: Beverly Porter, Christina Jackson, Jen Wright, Kayla Scott-Bresler, Megan Juenemann, Monika Mahal, Samantha Cruz Mendoza, Samya Lutz, Sativa Robertson,

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
Welcome	<p>Introductions, land acknowledgment, housekeeping, and review of agreements.</p> <p><u>Land Acknowledgement:</u></p> <p>I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are here today on the ancestral homelands of Indigenous Peoples who have lived in the Salish Sea basin and the North Cascades watershed from time immemorial, in particular, the Lhaq'temish (LOCK-tuh-mish) people who we recognize today to be the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Tribe, and Semiahmoo.</p> <p>May we be mindful of the inherent owners of this land, our children, who are our future. Our future stewards of the land and advocates for the generation to come. May that truth guide our work and efforts to improve the well-being of all families and children, native and non-native, living in this beautiful county.</p> <p>This land acknowledgment is not meant to be a substitute for authentic relationship-building and understanding. It is meant to introduce us to one way we can show respect and honor for the sacrifices of the first people of this land.</p> <p>Please join me in expressing the deepest respect for our indigenous neighbors, and gratitude for the enduring stewardship of our shared lands and waterways. https://www.lhaqtemish.org/ -Lhaq'temish Foundation</p> <p><u>Agreements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and self-care come first. • Be kind and gentle with yourself and others and assume everyone is coming from a positive place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Everyone has the best intentions. ○ Listen with an open mind and heart. • Be mindful of this space. Step-in and step-out/Step-up and step-back. Offer your truth and insights and listen to others' truths and insights. • Treat each other with honor and grace. We are all working under difficult circumstances. • Embrace diversity. Remember that we all come from different backgrounds giving us different perspectives and only when we embrace that diversity can we develop creative solutions to address the child and family well-being needs in Whatcom County. • What is said here stays here. • Have fun. <p>Fist to Five Consensus Tool – Amended 4.25.22</p>



Approve Meeting Minutes	Minutes from August 26, 2024, were approved as presented.
Agenda Overview, Meeting Input/Evaluation	<p>Evaluation tool: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf59ubhijyXFZQJa0pXGgQQ5HhwJ1jamGFziQLXS6-zZC1hKQ/viewform</p> <p>The purpose of this Task Force was reviewed, as stated in the Ordinance. “The purpose of Whatcom County Child and Family Well-being Task Force is to continually review Whatcom governmental impact on children and family make recommendations for improvement for all departments.”</p>
Community Shares and Shout outs	<p>Vesla shared that there is need for a last-minute replacement for the council meeting presentation at 1:10pm tomorrow on the report we have made. Colton has already written up a script with talking points for whoever is able to come and present. Jon shared that it will be the 2nd agenda item for WCHCS as the Severe Weather Shelter presentation will be beforehand, so the actual presentation time could be closer to 1:30pm. Allie, Karla and Sallye expressed interest in doing the presentation and they will check in with Colton at 9:30a tomorrow.</p> <p>Jason Oldham shared that they are changing the venue for the Dads’ group to the Whatcom Family Village (1501 Fraser St, Unit M 104 98226) at 6:30pm every Tuesday night and they’ve got a shoes off policy so get comfy and cozy. They will be grilling burgers to attract more dads into the group.</p>
Healthy Children’s Fund Update	<p>Sarah provided an update on the Healthy Children’s Fund (HCF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The kick off for the system mapping grant with Start Early happened early September and included partners from across the county. There was mix of excitement and curiosity to build the systems map. A small advisory group has been formed and set a due date of January to have the systems map complete. • Wanted to let everyone know that the Innovations Services Fund RFP was released August 14th.and the RFP will be closing October 29th. • HCF Subcommittee met on September 19th and one of the main topics was the contract process and timeline. Ashley, the Executive Director of Lydia Place, talked about their experience contracting with the county. It was wonderful to have her share about their experiences, challenges and successes to make recommendations to the Executive’s office Finance and Legal around the contracting process • The team also reviewed a draft memo calling for a review of the referendum and initiative process with a goal of reducing the confusion that emerged around the effort of the repeal of the HCF • We received a grant to participate in the RAPID Evaluation Survey. This will allow a quarterly quick 5 question survey to families and caregivers, and will provide swift turnaround of information to the Child and Family Wellbeing Task Force, HCF planning teams and other groups serving parents and caregivers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will report the results of the survey on a yearly basis on our website and more frequently to the HCF subcommittee. ○ We started a survey to families and caregivers around the subsidy plan in person and online and will continue into early October before talking it to council ○ RAPID Survey finding from last year or so in WA state generally: https://rapidsurveyproject.com/our-research/what-weve-learned-about-the-experiences-ofnbspwashington-parents



- Celebrating Vesla for her work in bringing the RAPID survey to the WCHCS and how vital she was for the work during the application process and probably the main reason that we were awarded the grant
- Vesla stated that we were one of 5 communities across the nation that got this technical support from Stanford University and they helped design the questions with some input from us.
- This can actually allow the voices of families in our community to be heard in real time about how they are doing so that funding streams can be directed to the actual need of families
- Budget – things are shifting in terms of what is contracted vs what is awarded, budgeted and planned. I also included in the explanation of the budget report, the percentages of the fund that the ordinance dictates can be spent in each category
 - Pamela – Are there any contracts going to county council this month?
 - Whatcom Center for early learning and mental health contract is going to council tomorrow
 - Catalyst is the other mental health contract that was executed today and went through council earlier this month
 - Lydia Place Housing contract is on the October agenda? We don't have confirmation that it is on the agenda but the deadline for items is this Friday. We will know by the end of this week it's made it onto the October 3rd meeting agenda.
 - Jon Scanlon– What are we expecting regarding RFP contracts for rest of the year?
 - Subsidy plan to find an administrator
 - Hoping to do a small capital for expansion of local childcare centers before January with peer support and training for families and parents.
 - BTC contract for professional development is currently in Legal & Finances hands
 - Drop-In Care contract
 - Innovation RFP will have many proposals and we will likely be working on those contracts through the new year.
 - Vesla requested that we have an update on the utilization of ARPA funding at another meeting

Allison Williams shared about the Doula program and its current status

- We have 8 of 9 contracts signed. WE launched this project on August 20th and it's providing birth and postpartum Doula services to Medicaid eligible families. That's currently not a benefit under Medicaid or apple health. But the health care authority is going to be rolling that out as a benefit in early 2025.
- This is an opportunity to develop a cohort that's ready to take advantage and leverage this funding.
- We've had 23 referrals already so there is a clear and demonstrated need and desire for folks to have these services in our community
- Last week was the first child born at PeaceHealth supported by a Doula through this project
- Allison presented to the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee last week on Monday, when we only had 18 referrals at the time and thus we don't have the updated data
 - 50% of referrals identified themselves as racially or ethnically nonwhite
 - 60% of folks are living outside of Bellingham
 - Almost all are choosing both birth and postpartum services
 - There are variety of referral sources, including PeaceHealth, OB, certified nurse midwives, community staff, home visiting staff and also from therapeutic court staff (family recovery court and mental health court)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 75% stated they had limited support system when asked why they might benefit from a doula ○ 60% have anxiety around the birth process ○ 25% identify this as their first delivery. ○ Many are single parents in unstable housing which can lead to high risk pregnancies ○ 25% identify mental health concerns and a little under 20% identified having domestic violence concerns or being a parent under 18 ○ The program was budgeted to provide support to about 100 families and it won't take long to reach that. We hope the healthcare authority rolls out their programs soon. ○ Doula link to connect Medicaid eligible family to services https://www.whatcomcounty.us/3289/Healthy-Pregnancy-Parenting ○ Family recovery court link https://www.whatcomcounty.us/4124/Family-Recovery-Court <p>Ray – the initiative that sought to repeal the HCF received a judicial review with a 90-minute hearing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lots of back and forth for making each sides case and often were discussing the issues of the process ● Judge ruled that the initiative was substantively invalid, meaning that you can't do that with the initiative instrument because it violates the Washington State constitution. ● The repeal initiative will not be on the ballot this November. ● In response the HCF subcommittee talked about the process and drafted up a memo, mentioned a bit earlier, to clarify some confusion around the entire process of challenging an initiative and if people are getting the advice needed to ensure that the process is followed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The draft will be shared out to solicit any comments to Ray and then brought to the next meeting.
<p>Workgroup updates</p>	<p>Ray shared an update on the Issues and Policy Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tilda had sent in an agenda item for the group regarding the Child Care for WA and we haven't yet gotten the change to look at it. They will be meeting to discuss it in the near future <p>No other workgroup updates</p>
<p>Update on Task Force Governance</p>	<p>Vesla wanted to share about current issues and constraints regarding governance for the Task Force</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The recommendations that we put in to our Council presentation were that we would like some feedback on the idea of potentially removing some of the constraints that the open Public Meeting Act requires of this group and other advisory bodies while still maintaining a very strong and required transparency within an open public meeting setting. ● The speed at which this group can maneuver is very, very slow, which sometimes is the intended way for government. But oftentimes we are a little bit behind because of the way that we need to meet quorum and other such requirements of OPMA that we must comply by. ● OPMA has not caught up with the possibilities of collaborative documents and it currently prohibits shared google docs because they are considered a meeting. But if we were able to utilize shared documents we could move a lot faster in some of our work.



- All of these recommendations are in the report including the Attorney General's take on whether or not our group is required to comply with OPMA, but is in our ordinance. If we are to ask council to remove it and consider it, what & how does that affect the other advisory bodies. We want to be very responsible and articulate that we are all about the transparency and accessibility of these meetings.
- Colton – What is our exact ask to council at this moment? Is it general? An idea that we have? Hey we'd appreciate some legal opinion on it?
 - Vesla stated that this is always a question they have for institutions: Is the way we have been operating the best way or does it need to be revisited? Part of the original conversation was how other folks could potentially adopt some more collaborative responsive ways of working. This would exclude things to my understanding advisory bodies that have any sort of oversight on actual budgetary decisions as the Attorney General was very clear that OPMA compliance must be there for budgetary decisions.
- Jon Scanlon – He is looking forward to this discussion. They conducted a survey of county advisory groups to gain feedback on OPMA compliance and all kinds of different things. He'll be sharing those results with fellow council members so they can take a look, and see what do we need to change in these processes.
 - He was also wondering about subcommittees in other counties or cities and how they have been able to do this online collaborative work. Vesla answered that in communications with the Attorney General's office there have not been many examples. The question then became is OPMA compliance actually needed on an advisory team to begin with and is it an unnecessary burden on those simply making recommendations, not final budgetary decisions.

Sterling Chick – the council of a year and half ago changed the calculation of quorum from all current members to all potential members. Is it going to be a potential ask for council to revisit that change and revert it?

- Vesla stated that it isn't in their current report but it is a very good idea. Historically the Task Force has always been 2 short in the DCYF and Tribal representative seats.
- There are 2 channels to ask about removal but Vesla doesn't have the context of why or what it was made for and we will talk about vacancies later in the agenda. All channels will include changing the actual ordinance and will be a council discussion to change it said ordinance.
- Colton asked Jon if any other other advisory groups have brought this up to council or heard anyone else talking about it.
 - Jon did not hear anything specifically around google docs but there were other issues regarding quorum and if advisory groups not making budgetary decisions should be subject to OPMA.
 - One thing that was very clear from survey results was wanting guidance for new members. When new members take their seats for the first meetings of the new year it would be a good time to do trainings and have more discussions.
- Vesla asked if there is a report available yet for the survey. Jon said no but is getting it around to other council members and probably will be a discussion for the committee of the whole.
 - Vesla asked to be notified when it gets scheduled and if council wanted any questions to be answered by the task force they could get some folks together.





<p>Task Force Public Listening Sessions</p>	<p>Colton inquired about last week’s discussion on soliciting feedback from families in the community in the form of listening sessions to ensure we are making proper recommendations with noticeable impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1 – host listening sessions ourselves as the TF and there will be a volunteer lift needed for it and could maybe tap into county resources for it. The timeline for that would probably be late this year early next. • Option 2 – chatting with some folks with the childcare coalition and there might be an RFP for a hub and spoke community model to include listening sessions. Would potentially leverage the work done there to hear from families in the community but is going to defer to Sarah about said hub and spoke model. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hub and spoke model for HCF – The largest component is that each school district and catchment area or region of our community that has a hub has a say in what their hub is, what it looks like and how it benefits their community ○ Subcontracting for the folks needed to support the lift of the hub and spoke groups ○ With other RFPs coming out it may or may not come out before January but not after Q1 ○ Could be a possibility for TF representatives at hub meetings to be active listeners? ○ Vesla’s understanding was that the listening session would be more for the general public but the hub and spoke would be for childcare providers so this feels like a different audience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Idea would be involving community members of what they would like for a hub for early learning and care in their community, and what kinds of services they would like in a hub, so there is a potential it wouldn’t be as broad as the full scope of the Task Force. • Option 3 – Both. They aren’t mutually exclusive things and we can work to ensure we have some representation and presence in those listening sessions. • Vesla had emailed Jed inquiring if the Exec’s office knew of any sort of model or template that could be tapped into for listening sessions for advisory boards to utilize and learn from them the public. Jed has received her inquiry and is thinking about it but no specific details at this moment. • Colton is happy to move this discussion under the accountability subcommittee and probably report back in December if that works. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sallye wants to throw hat in the ring with Colton and add that we could do a road show of combined outreach of the activities of the Task Force with probably a large focus on the HCF and collaborating with Health and Community Services while ensuring we are hearing from our community. ○ Jon, Sallye, and Katherine interested in helping out with the listening sessions. ○ Tilda - Looks like we have a five-year b-day coming up and we could use that as a celebration point for the community to come learn of what has been done and to come chat with us. • Jon loves idea of listening tours and as we consider locations we should include childcare deserts and places where it is difficult for folks to come from to attend meetings. Could perhaps partner with EWRC and other organizations doing work in East County. Should also visit Point Roberts. We should ensure that we’re getting out to parts of the county that often feel like their voices aren’t heard
<p>Vacancies & Co-Chair Volunteers</p>	<p>Ray stated that we are coming up on our 4-year anniversary and we have 4-year terms for the Task Force. The first group of inaugural members are reaching the end of their first term in January 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules are that two consecutive terms can be served and a number of us have inherited a partial term because they filled in for another person, so their term is also up and they are encouraged to renew for a second term



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those whose 4-year term is ending are Allie, Jamie, Jen wright, Lyn, Megan, Ray, and Vesla. • There are currently four (4) vacancies within the Task Force– general public, generations forward & 2 seats that we have always had trouble filling, the DCYF and Lummi Nation seats. • Vacancies will be posted on council webpage (https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1585/Current-Vacancies). All seats for all boards typically are posted in October but will confirm with the person who usually publishes. • An application would need to be filled out again and council will vote on who to approve. The link for the application and how to apply is here: https://wa-whatcomcounty.civicplus.com/1584/How-to-Apply <p>We have gradually been working to new system for co-chairs. The most recent change was going to 4 total cochairs on 2-year terms. 2 start the first year and 2 start the next year so that new cochairs have support from those who have been cochairs for a year already. Ray and Christina are completing their 2nd year and there will be two seats open. Vesla and Colton are in their 1st year and thus will be helping with the 2 new cochairs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership will pick its own cochairs and members are encouraged to think about it and talk to current cochairs early to get perspectives. If there are 3 people that self-nominate then it will go to a vote. The new cochairs will start in January and then have the first retreat in February to onboard new members and leadership together. • Sallye asks for a bold very important email to be sent reminding folks to reapply to renew their spots. <p>Colton wondered if are there any folks currently who are terming out and aren't looking to renew so that the cochairs may predict potential vacancies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specifics at the moment and just wanted to ensure that people knew about it and give the chance to consider renewing or not
<p>Public Comment</p>	<p>Vesla wanted to mention that kids are curious and not apathetic and have experienced and seen real problems but don't believe that anyone is going to do anything about some of the big problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katherine suggested the need for a youth council and if interested on creating some to reach out to her • Jamie noted that teens are asking questions as to why we haven't been doing things <p>Should we have youth representation on this committee?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no requirement for members to be over 18 just to be a registered voter but has been removed. • Kristi Dominguez – students often have ideas that are different from our own • Could roll into governance discussions and ensure it is a secure space for members of youth • HCF and the Child and Family Action plan is focused on early learning and children which is different from youth but no age range is specifically listed in the ordinance just “early learning and children”.
<p>Closing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting adjourned at 4:59pm
<p>Next Meeting</p>	<p>Next regular meeting: October 28, 2024 <u>Location: Hybrid</u></p>



NO-COST DOULA SERVICES



Who is eligible?

Funded By The Healthy Children's Fund, free birth and postpartum doula services are now available to Medicaid-eligible families in Whatcom County. Benefits of doula care include increased knowledge and confidence about birth and parenting, reduced likelihood of low birth weight and premature birth, an increased system of support for navigating health care and social services, and improved maternal health outcomes. Eligible and interested families should talk to their doctor or midwife for a referral.

What is a doula?

A doula is a trained, non-clinical worker who provides emotional, physical, and informational support for pregnant people before, during, and after labor and in the early months of parenting. Doulas share useful information on what to expect during pregnancy, labor, and delivery and can help families plan for the birth experience they hope for.

How does the program work?

Clients can get free birth doula services which include:

- Up to 3 visits before birth
- Help during labor and delivery
- 2 visits after birth.
- They can also choose up to 16 hours of support after the baby is born.

To qualify, clients must be referred to the program by a provider and be eligible for Medicaid, Apple Health, or WIC.

Refer a client

Any Medicaid-eligible family would be appropriate, especially families experiencing challenging social-economic circumstances. To refer a client, providers can scan the QR code below or visit (link) to fill out an intake/referral form. Referral forms must be faxed to 360-778-6004. A referrals coordinator will follow up with the client within 5 days of receipt of the referral to connect them with a doula.



Questions?

Email HCFdoula@co.whatcom.wa.us

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