



Provider Supports Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2022- 9 a.m.-1p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Welcome, Introductions, Virtual Meeting Protocols, and Meeting Material Review

DCYF Community Engagement Acting Assistant Director Erin Kerrigan welcomed members, reviewed virtual meeting protocols, and completed introductions. The group reviewed the [Feedback Loop](#) and the [October meeting minutes](#).

- [FSKA TLS Recommendation Report](#)

Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please reach out to the Community Engagement Team (dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov) with any questions.
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2023 Workplan

Erin Kerrigan provided members with an overview of the 2023 Work Plan process and members provided feedback on future agenda items.

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is the calendaring switching? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We are shifting the calendar to coincide with the fiscal year, rather than the calendar year to better align with reporting and legislative directives related to the Fair Start for Kids Act. • Can we get an update about the Early Learning Division’s reorg and what does it mean to providers? There is a huge need for frequent communication from Early Learning with providers; how will these changes impact that? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will connect with the Early Learning Division on providing an update on that for the next meeting. • What does DCYF mean by the statement we have a commitment to Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ)? What do these practices look like and how do providers walk alongside DCYF? Providers want to engage in meaningful ways at meaningful times. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does DCYF even have a RESJ team anymore? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, they are currently building a new team. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ So, it was a complete staff turnover? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes, and are expanding the size of the team as well. ○ We will connect with the RESJ team to provide an update and ensure they are included in the 2023 work plan. • This committee has been trying for almost a year to have meaningful conversations with licensing and Child Protective Services (CPS) about what providers can expect with a licensing investigation and how that differs from a CPS investigation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Licensing agrees with providers and can come to meetings and answer questions. If something happens, we want you to call. To make changes to the process is going to take some time. • Can we get an update from the agency between meetings or alternating months? Emailed updates would suffice to help be more up-to-date. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That's a great suggestion! We will discuss that as a team and see what we might be able to offer
Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please reach out to the Community Engagement Team (dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.



Retention Grant Update and Next Steps

Provider Supports Executive Committee members Julie Schroath and Katie Hudkins reviewed updates regarding the Workforce Retention Grant and discussed the next steps for the subcommittee.

- [Workforce Retention Grant Q&A](#)
- [ELAC Letter to DCYF Leadership](#)
- [DCYF Response to ELAC](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One of the responses from DCYF has been that the use of Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT) for distributing the grants was discussed at the August Provider Supports meeting. Looking back at the meeting minutes, we discussed that there is no category for substitutes and that providers should have discretion on how funds were distributed among their staff. During the meeting, they did not say there was anything that would deem staff ineligible, like checking a box. The questions that are coming up now were not discussed at the August meeting.• The WAC that keeps getting referenced is not very specific about verifying staff.• We have people who were eligible but denied because we don't have a licenser assigned. There are some problems within the system that are unfairly punishing providers.• They did not answer how many staff the providers applied for. We would like to know how many staff were deemed ineligible.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We will reach out to clarify the question with the Early Learning team.○ This is just providers, not total staff applied?<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Correct• I've been seeking out the people that had the box checked to see how they knew to check it. Nobody knew anything except for one who had a licenser who was a stickler for the boxes.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I had to educate my brand-new licenser because they did not know how to approve us in the system. Communication with the licenser was also hard.○ This has not been part of the process, it was not expected of anyone until this grant. It should not be the fault of providers or licensors.○ I knew about the box as a result of having the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) at the center and our contractor told us about the "confirm" button so that education could be verified and professional development plans to be monitored. I did not understand what the uproar was about at first, but after hearing from everyone, I fully understand the anger.• I've heard feedback that boxes that were checked somehow got unchecked. The common question is, did this happen as a consequence of MERIT being updated?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We have not heard this. If anyone has experienced this, I would urge them to reach out directly so we can look into their account.• Why was this not paused when large numbers of staff were being denied?• Item #11 on the Q&A: If we can't get wiggle room from DCYF because these are public funds, is there wiggle room from another agency? Where did these funds come from? Can DCYF advocate on behalf of providers?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The federal government oversees the funds and requirements. DCYF does not have the authority to extend the deadline or reallocate funds, but the Agency has submitted a request to see if an exemption or exception is possible.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Who is the roadblock for reallocation?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The federal government is the authority on compliance measures. Also, no funds have been returned as of now, so there is nothing to reallocate.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is the likelihood of the exemption being done by the deadline? Do we have to start the process all over? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This will depend on the response we receive on the request. • Could the legislators find money to make up for the error in this process? • Does DCYF have an intention on making this right across the board? • Can more funds come down the line? • Is the committee comfortable with a written update? Or do we want a verbal Q&A? Is it helpful to have this time to review the questions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Having written answers is helpful. ○ I'm fine with written updates. I think DCYF can better prepare a truly responsive answer this way. • Moving forward, we want to collaborate with the department before another grant comes out. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is an opportunity to collaborate on the Equity Grant Webinar on January 9th • Is there funding remaining that didn't get spent this round? If there is funding that didn't get spent, can the ones who were denied have another chance to resubmit? If there is no funding left, can legislation be asked for funding to fill the gap?
<p>Next Steps/Follow Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please reach out to the Community Engagement Team (dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.

New DCYF Training Site for Child Care Providers

DCYF Learning Management System Coordinator, Karma Hugo and DCYF Professional Development Coordinator, Marlene White provided an update on the new Learning Management System for early learning and child care providers.

- [Training Site Presentation](#)

<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can stay up-to-date with DCYF's New Training Site through this dedicated webpage and receive email updates by subscribing here. • Merit is very difficult to navigate, finding current trainings is hard, and some trainings such as 30 hours basics are 3-4 months out. • Why not fix what we already have? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MERIT is a homegrown tool that was created by DCYF and managed by IT staff at DCYF. The current learning management system (LMS) online training site is separate and exists outside of MERIT. The platforms aren't robust enough to interface with the data systems currently in place. • Will it connect to MERIT? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It will connect to MERIT. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How will they be connected? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new training site will allow people to search and record trainings in one site. ▪ Will MERIT go away? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right now we will be keeping it. The main training site will contain all training components. Any interaction with MERIT will happen on the backend and not be experienced by the user. • Will we be required to use this website or is it just a resource? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That is a good question. There are required trainings but I'll check on if there will be anything else. • Will there be opportunities along the way for providers to give their input on design?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Yes, we will be doing user tests with providers for feedback to give to the developer.
Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please reach out to Karma (karma.hugo@dcyf.wa.gov) or Marlene (marlene.white@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.

Closing Remarks/Adjourn

- [Discussion Question Responses and Feedback](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The next meeting is scheduled for February 8, 2023.
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