

**Ohio Commission on Fatherhood
Minutes from the Meeting of Thursday, September 25, 2014**

Attendance	
Commissioners	<p> Senator Bill Beagle Ms. Carri Brown Ms. Kara Bertke-Wente Director Susan Brown Mr. Cedric Collins Representative Tim Derickson Mr. William Green Director Kimberly Hettel Mr. Chad Hibbs Mr. John Hurley Senator Eric Kearney Dr. Randy Leite Representative Jeff McClain Mr. Scott Neely Mr. John Silverman Mr. Luis Vazquez Mr. Tarik White Representative Roland Winburn </p>
Designees of Commissioners	<p>Jared Holt for Representative Ashford</p>
Presenters	<p> Director Cynthia Dungey, ODJFS Roger Fisher, WSOS LuAnn Berry, WSOS Pastor Eli Williams, Fatherhood Clark County Dr. Jo Alice Blondin, Clark County Community College </p>
Guests	<p> Brie Diehl, LA for Representative Derickson Daniel Fitzpatrick, ODJFS Legislation Tremaine Phillips, Law Intern for Senator Kearney Barry Sheets, The Ridge </p>
OCF Staff	<p> Director Kimberly Dent Mrs. Whitney Addison Ms. Monica Mahoney </p>

I. Call to Order & Welcome New Commissioners	
10:00 to 10:15	Senator Bill Beagle
II. Fatherhood Initiatives at the Department of Jobs and Family Services	
10:15-11:00	Director Cynthia Dungey
<p>ODJFS Director Dungey said that she did not know there was an Ohio Commission on Fatherhood before she became the agency director. She believes that father involvement is under-reported because the way public benefits are structured – if a father is involved the family will become ineligible and yet they still need help.</p> <p>Director Dungey spoke about her background and how it led her to a career in public service. She was raised on the near eastside of Columbus in stable family with an extended support network. Her family lived below the poverty line but because they valued education they sent her to The Wellington School. Many of her peers became teen mother, were incarcerated or died. She realized that if she could help vulnerable families the whole community would do better.</p> <p>As a girl Director Dungey admired Judge Wopner from the TV show, “The People’s Court” because he was humble, wise and always did the right thing. His example inspired her to go to law school, become a prosecutor in the Attorney General’s Office and later, Director of Investigative Audits. While in that position, Director Dungey suggested that Medicaid be removed from ODJFS. As the Director of ODJFS she now has to implement this change which makes her feel as if this path was predestined for her.</p> <p>Governor Kasich's Mid-Biennium Review created a new office within ODJFS - the Office of Human Services Innovation and Director Dungey selected former ODJFS Director Douglas Lumpkin (2009-2011) to lead it. Thee purpose of this new office is to coordinate services across public assistance programs to help individuals find employment, succeed at work, and “stay out of poverty”; revise incentives for public assistance programs to foster individual-centered case management; and standardize and automate eligibility determination policies and processes for public assistance programs.</p> <p>Director Dungey was recently in the hospital and she realized that from the moment she gave her insurance card, the hospital was focused on discharging her. In her future vision for ODJFS, she sees the agency like a hospital emergency room: People only access it when they are in crisis and people are treated for their immediate needs but are referred to community resources for their long-term care.</p> <p>The Director’s goal for ODJFS is to create a pathway out of poverty by making sure that families can sustain themselves.</p>	

Because the current volume of services delivered by ODJFS is so high, the agency cannot do case management. By automating eligibility determinations, the hope is that case workers will be able to focus more on case management.

Some of the ODJFS initiatives for fathers include:

- Bringing “One-Stop” centers to prisons to assist men during the reentry process
- ODJFS and Ohio Means Jobs are working with employers to encourage them to hire formerly incarcerated men
- Also working with faith-based organizations to get them to work with fathers who face barriers

On a personal level, Director Dungey goes to her community barber shop every other Friday to talk with fathers. She tells men that children did not ask to be here so fathers need to deal with the reality that children have daily needs. She encourages fathers to engage with their children so they can better understand children’s need for emotional and financial support. As the mother of a 3 year old son she sees how important her husband’s interactions with their son are.

III. OCF Grantee WSOS

11:00-11:20 Roger Fisher and LuAnn Berry

WSOS is one of the six current grantees selected for funding by OCF. They serve fathers in Northwest Ohio in Wood, Seneca, Ottawa, Sandusky, Erie, Hancock, and Huron Counties. Roger Fisher, Employment and Training Coordinator at WSOS, spoke about the history and services provided by WSOS. He was accompanied by LuAnn Berry, a Family Advocate at WSOS who leads fatherhood classes in five correctional facilities.

WSOS has been funded by OCF since 2006 and have expanded the services they offer to fathers to meet the changing RFGA requirements. Starting in 2013, WSOS entered a subcontract with CACEHR to expand the number of counties they serve. They mainly work with fathers in community-based correctional facilities. WSOS is also the recipient of a federal responsible fatherhood grant.

They are contracted to serve fathers in seven counties (Erie, Hancock, Huron, Wood, Seneca, Ottawa and Sandusky) but in fact serve fathers from 27 counties because they currently work primarily with incarcerated fathers who come from all over Ohio. Last year, WSOS served 212 fathers.

In addition to teaching fatherhood classes using evidence-based curricula, LuAnn Berry informs fathers of their rights, helps them get Parenting Time Orders and modifications of their Child Support orders.

Commissioner Scott Neely thanked WSOS for working with incarcerated fathers. He asked if they help men get “Certificates of Employability”. Mr. Fisher said they need help and training on that. Commissioner Neely said that Steven Johnson Gray offers training.

Commissioner John Hurley asked if all of the fathers served are incarcerated. Mr. Fisher responded that only 128 of the 212 fathers served last year were incarcerated.

Commissioner Randy Leite asked if WSOS tracks attrition rates and contributing factors. Mr. Fisher replied that many issues contribute including family needs and work schedules but of the 207 fathers in classes last year 190 graduated.

Chairman Bill Beagle asked what are WSOS's funding sources. Mr. Fisher said that WSOS has eight (8) different funders:

1. Federal Responsible Fatherhood grant – extended one year until September 30, 2015
2. Second Chance Act Funding
3. and 4. Department of Labor – two year grant for Lucas County residents and a juvenile offender grant
5. and 6. Workforce Investment Act funds two youth programs
7. TANF Summer Youth grants – some funds were used to get jobs for fathers; and
8. OCF grant which is also TANF funded

WSOS' Presentation was posted on OCF website following the meeting.

IV. Approval of June 19th Minutes

11:20-11:22

The minutes from April 17 were approved as submitted.

V. Results of "June is Responsible Fatherhood Month"

11:22-11:35

Whitney Addison

Whitney Addison provided a hand out summarizing the organizations funded by "June is Responsible Fatherhood Month." She showed a video of one of the events in Columbus, "Fishing with Dad" by the Columbus Urban League that was highlighted on the local news. OCF Staff and some commissioners attended activities funded through these grants. OCF plans to offer grants annually but in the future the funding announcement will be released much earlier. OCF would also like more commissioners to attend more of the events to give them more visibility.

VI. Executive Director's Report

11:40-11:47

Director Kimberly Dent

Director Dent provided a written report summarizing OCF staff's activities from July to September 2104. The report was posted on the OCF website following the meeting.

Director Dent highlighted the Child Support Collaborative that she participates in. ODRC and The Office of Child Support began the collaborative in 2006 and is in the process of implementing recommended changes.

Commissioner Susan Brown offered to do a presentation on Child Support, prison and other remedies for nonpayment at a future OCF meeting.

VII. Announcements & New Business

11:47-11:58

Fathering Institute

Reverend Eli Williams, Director of Fatherhood Clark County and Dr. Jo Blondin, President of Clark State Community College, made a presentation on a pilot project they are launching together to create a “Fathering Institute” in Clark County. They hope to develop a permanent community based, college places, locally operated institution in Springfield that serves willing, unemployed and underemployed fathers with minor children that live in Clark County. According to Dr. Blondin, there are 23 community colleges in Ohio and 70% of college students are female and only 30% are male. One of her goals is to increase the number of men who attend college in Ohio.

Commissioner Tarik White asked if they plan to offer any short term incentives to participate because 12 months is a long time. According to Rev. Williams, Clark County JFS will provide transportation to class and if a father finishes 6 weeks of training, every father is guaranteed to receive a living wage job.

Commissioner Roland Winburn requested an executive summary of their proposal.

Commissioner Tim Derickson said as a legislator he appreciates the direction they are going to seek private and independent funding so not exclusively depending on state government funds.

Their presentation was posted on OCF website following the meeting.

Fatherhood Research and Practitioners Network Grant Proposal

Commissioner Leite provided a brief summary of the Federal Evaluation Grant application he is submitting. Collaborators on the grant are Ohio University, Bowling Green State University and Ohio Commission on Fatherhood. Award notification will be Oct. 31.

VIII. Action Items

11:58-12:00 **Carri Brown**

1. If anyone is interested in serving as Vice chair of the Commission, please email Kim or Senator Beagle before the Nov. 20th meeting;
2. Check out the Ohio Means Jobs website
3. OCFI is offering two webinars as part of the training for counties – one by Eli Williams on how they created Fatherhood Clark County on Oct. 30 and one on Sustainability and funding by Carri Brown on Nov. 12. Contact Monica if interested

X. Adjournment

12:00 The regular meeting adjourned and guests were excused. Commissioners remained to discuss Senator Frank LaRose’s proposed legislation on parenting equality. Senator LaRose’s Legislative Aide, Matt McDonnell and Senator Beagle’s Legislative Aide, Camilla Hydzik attended the closed door session and took notes about the commissioners’ questions and feedback about the proposed bill.

