



Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

Home Visiting Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes

December 19, 2024 -9:00am-1:00pm

Virtual Meeting

Welcome and Introductions

DCYF Home Visiting Policy and Systems Manager, Nelly Mbajah welcomed attendees and initiated introductions.

- [HVAC Slides](#)

Legislative Update

DCYF Senior Policy Advisor Mary Sprute-Garlant and Start Early Director of Policy Erica Hallock provided updates about upcoming legislative priorities and DCYF request legislation.

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expecting a four-year budget deficit totaling \$10-12 billion.• Washington State Standard Monday's "Making Sense of Washington State's Budget Hole".• Sign up for Notes from Olympia from Start Early• Start Early Notes from Olympia December 2024 Interim Edition• Representative Tana Senn has been named Secretary to DCYF.• For the incoming governor's budget, they have the ability to submit an addendum and Governor elect Ferguson has indicated his top priority is \$100 million in additional law enforcement at the local level.• DCYF's task is to follow the administration's budget and cannot advocate for things outside the governor's budget.• Regarding no further funding for 6109, does that mean funding for a certain number of years and will that stay in place? Or is it just one year of funding?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It was just one year of funding. That's all we received initially.○ Since this is a proposal, the legislature could opt to fund it although that is highly doubtful. Please note, just because something is in or not in the governor's budget doesn't mean it will be in the final budget.• Is the 400,000 for the expansion?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We received a million dollars for expansion. We're anticipating that will not be spent this year because of the time it takes for
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hiring. The issue we face is that the budget does not always align with when dollars go out.

- If that money is swept, then it's gone, and it won't go back.

The reason the expansion started was part of the budget was adopted in 2023 but didn't start until the following year. The strategy was to prevent the underspent to give a year to plan.

- Does that mean that our expansion budget is 600K?

- Yes, that's correct.

- There was also a proposed cut to the foundational public health that is significant.
- Is there something that advocates are focusing on in relation to home visiting?
 - Yes, we have a one pager focused on rates. We will continue to talk about rates in partnership with DCYF with regards to education and information. We'll continue to talk about the need. Our number one priority is to protect.
 - [Home Visiting advocacy document](#)
- Do you anticipate all travel to be frozen across DCYF through February?
 - Different state agencies have discretion on what they deem essential and non-essential. Guidance should be forthcoming. I don't anticipate the travel freeze to be lifted before February.
 - We haven't gotten any guidance on how this impacts our contractor's travel but state employees' travel is frozen.
 - Will you give us advice?
 - Yes, definitely once we receive guidance on that.
 - DSHS has no travel outside of the state. Inside of the state is case by case. It will be a rough year for state agency participation and these budget cuts are pretty significant.
 - This is a long session, correct?



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Yes, it is 105 days, ending on April 28th.• I would ask all of us to hold in mind the families we are serving as well as our home visiting workforce and think about them in terms of the economic impact of our state's taxation system. Think about what these losses of services mean to our families.• The 400k reduction was for FY25 only. The funding as it stands in the Gov budget goes back to 1M in FY26 and FY27.
Follow up	Please reach out to Mary (mary.sprutegarlant@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow up questions.

Home Visiting Service Account (HVSA) Fund Balance & Senate Bill 6109 Update

DCYF Home Visiting Policy and Systems Manager, Nelly Mbajah and Home Visiting Practice and Implementation Manager Rene Toolson led the group in a review of the HVSA Fund Balance and Senate Bill 6109 Update.

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the account balance you are sharing only State General Funds, so not including Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and or 502?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Correct, TANF and MIECHV are reimbursement based. They don't go into the account.• Is there a way for DCYF leadership to assert a protection for this funding? I'm assuming part of the money that hasn't gone out is in anticipation of rates. This money shouldn't be swept so that we can support some level of rate increase for providers.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We are currently doing some active thinking and having that conversation internally.• Is the account balance the same as underspend or is the account balance simply the amount of the money in the account? Since we're halfway through fiscal year 2025, can we assume a good portion of that \$2.1 will go out to programs?
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- This graphic actually shows a projection of where the account balance could be on June 30th after spending.
 - Additional dollars for MIECHV, TANF, and 502 are available for reimbursement but are not included here, correct?
 - Correct. We incur expenses for MIECHV and TANF and then we bill for those expenses.
 - This is just general funds.
- Our general state funds support MIECHV, TANF, 502 but it is not sufficient for the slot counts that they are currently allocated towards. GFS is a big safety net for those funds and a really big part of our funding portfolio.
- We knew this budget crisis was coming. We've talked about struggling with expansion when agencies are having a hard time of meeting their budget and paying their staff. I know we're somewhat limited on what we can do because some of these are legislative decisions. I just want to bring up the frustration of if we expand some slots, we're going to lose others at the same time due to layoffs. Expansion might help fund staff already seeing people, but I just feel frustrated.
 - It is frustrating. You have to make decisions based on a lot of unknown and we just need to support one another.
- My recommendation for HVAC is to recommend to DCYF that the decision about rates is made as soon as possible. It's really hard for implementing agencies to make decisions if we don't know if we'll have the same contract amount in July or not.
- Given that a rate increase was not in the governor's proposed budget and if that doesn't move forward, is DCYF having conversations on what that will look like? I hope DCYF can make sure funds are distributed in an equitable way. Maybe look at what are the costs for each site and having a set amount, raise everyone by the same percentage to make sure it's equal and we continue to have home visiting throughout the state and don't have underserved areas.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It has been several years now of unknowns and significant change. That is a challenge for many reasons.○ Doing an across the board increases does nothing to address inequity. Doing targeted increases may be a better alternative.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We are looking at a lot of different scenarios and the more targeted approach is more considered.• Is using the account balance re: the state funds (2.1 million) and the resources associated with other funding streams (MIECHV, TANF, 502) to go towards rates, a strategy to protect dollars that are currently very vulnerable? Can MIECHV speed up if they will approve using a rate? Can we use the funds toward rates and make that more protected? July seems too late. Can we speed it up to protect the resources?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We have some control of it but not all. We are working with MIECHV to see if that is an option. There is only so much we can do to push that forward. We are trying to figure out how to protect what we have. We don't want to have service or families impacted. We are trying to balance internal initiatives and processes with the federal pieces and how to best utilize the resources that we have. It is an effort to protect but there are pieces beyond our sphere of control.
Follow up	Please reach out to Nelly Mbajah (nelly.mbajah@dcyf.wa.gov) for any follow up questions.

Rates Evaluation Update

DCYF Assistant Secretary for Partnership Prevention Services, Vickie Ybarra gave an update about the next steps with the rates evaluation.

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DCYF is not moving forward with a rates evaluation at this time. Since we have not fully implemented rates in home visiting, I felt it was premature to do this evaluation. Additionally, I wanted the opportunity to consider the DOH contractual resources that would be
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	<p>necessary to complete this kind of evaluation. My suggestion is to reevaluate in the spring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I think we have a key opportunity to look at this from a developmental evaluation process and looking at the input of partners in the development of the rates work and early implementation. I think the development of the rates work could be very informative for HVAC and for DCYF to think about how voices and perspectives are incorporated in designing a new reimbursement process. The early implementation information we could gather would also be helpful for expansion of the RBC work assuming that's still going forward in the spring. There are some opportunities we lose by delaying.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I agree that early implementation offers opportunities for valuable learning. I know researchers tend to think about learning in formal structured way. We've implemented rate based contracting with many contract groups and my hope is we do not have to conduct a formal evaluation in order to hear from those who've been involved to improve our process. I think the local implementing agencies have been fairly engaged and vocal about their preferences. We don't necessarily need to do a formal evaluation as we have an opportunity to hear from the contractors along the way of implementation and make adjustments. We will still be in early implementation in the spring and can reevaluate then because there are so many unknowns right now.
Follow up	Please reach out to Vickie (vickie.ybarra@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow up questions.

Updates



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- [HVAC Updates](#)

Discussion	<p><i>6109 Procurement updates (service & training)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Originally, we were running to procurements one for a startup program and the other for expanding existing programming. Those procurements went live in October and closed in November. We received a few applications for startup but they were missing important elements so we did not move forward with that. For expansion, the requests triple the amount of dollars we have. We're in the process of budgeting and that announcement will come out in January after working on proposals. We're going forward with that plan as the client service contracts should be an exception to the freeze.• 6109 was issued and the DCYF Contracts Office informed us because of the way the money goes out the door it is not a direct client service contract. Therefore, we reissued a formal solicitation. Anyone who did apply will need to reapply. They will need to register with DES and fill out forms for competitive procurement. The process is running through contracts office which requires a protracted protest time period. We have to allow two and half weeks of protest if someone is not funded. The application deadline is January 10, there's a bidders' conference on January 6 and the materials are only released to local implementing agencies (LIAs). While it is a public procurement, you're not eligible to apply unless you are a current LIA funded by DCYF. You have to implement one of the nine home visiting models and you may only propose to implement the model you're currently funded to do. Hopefully, if there are no protests, we'll be able to move forward with contract negotiations by the end of January. Our timeline would be to execute contracts the first week of February.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We're continuing to move forward even though we don't know the final budget. There's still a lot of uncertainty.
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- If funding does not continue for 6109 for implemented organizations, if that LIA has an open funding slot, can we move between funding sources so that we don't lose families?
 - The agency has been working to create pathways for Family First and being able to draw down funds for home visiting. Those conversations are still going forward. We've also discussed creating referral pathways with child welfare agencies because we were not drawing down federal funds for Family First. That work will continue regardless of 6109. We never want families to be cut off from services.
- The funding for expansion was secured in 2023 with a start date of 7/1/24 and was accompanied by additional funds for LIAs. There is a lot of legislative focus on LIA investment and the importance of serving more families. The move to rates is very important to the legislature. The way home visiting is funded now will harm any ability to grow the program.
 - That's correct. We've done a series of contract increases in the last couple of years. We were given a year to do planning and our agency made the determination that no additional dollars would be going out without rates.
- We just completed a procurement for a trained entity to provide foundational training for the substance use disorder work that's called out in 6109, as well as just general services for families impacted by substance use disorder. We've identified two agencies but are on pause now as we await the parameters of the funding freeze. If things move quickly, we're hoping to have trainings starting in March or April. They will be foundational trainings. Both agencies have strong capacity for centering equity and a deep understanding what it means to serve families who have been disproportionately impacted over time. The trainings will be focused on, not only harm reduction but, building relational safety and trust and cover topics such as bias and stigma attached to with substance use. We're



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working and collaborating with child welfare to develop units that are sustainable, that will support incoming staff over time and support ongoing practices to deepen the capacity of the workforce. We're really looking to develop accessible units of training that can be available to a broader audience.

Rates Update

- We've been able to pull together the narrative for MIECHV and are working through finalization and vetting of the slot rates for Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) and PAT.
- Our finance team contracted with a consultant to do some research about MIECHV and rates in other states. That report should be finalized by the beginning of January. We've also been working with MIECHV for technical assistance to support our fiscal team on what needs to be included in the rate. Some of this work will slow down as a result of the governor's budget. DCYF will need to analyze changes in either how we're utilizing the funds or looking at reduction. We're continuing to move forward on the program side with what we can to prepare.
- DCYF is having monthly meetings on rates and we plan to continue having check ins going forward. DCYF still has a lot to learn about administering this and we're using LIAs to help us navigate.
- What kind of documentation are you using to record those discussions, the input provided, and the action taken?
 - We're not formally documenting, only running webinars We don't have the staffing for that.

HVAC Co-chair

- Nelly is following up with members who were nominated at the October meeting.
- The hope is to have a chair and co-chair identified at the February meeting.



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Closing Remarks/Adjourn

Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you have any questions or additional feedback, feel free to reach out to Nelly Mbajah (nelly.mbahaj@dcyf.wa.gov).• The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 20, 2025, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
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