

Families First Community Advisory Board

Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025

Time: 1:00 PM CST

Location: Microsoft Teams

Board Members Present:

- Commissioner Clarence Carter
- Jamie Stitt (Designee for Commissioner McWhorter)
- Ashleigh McFadden (Designee for Commissioner Reynolds)
- Misty Hernandez-Perry (Designee for Commissioner Alvarado)
- Jack Bailey
- Britney Cleveland
- Rachael Corry
- Steven Gentile

- Bishop Edward Stephens

Board Members Absent:

- Commissioner Deneice Thomas
- Chairman Bo Watson
- Leader Raumesh Akbari
- Chairman Brock Martin
- Chairman Bryan Terry
- Frank Lawrence
- Elizabeth Fournet
- Dr. Jerry Askew
- Annie Cacheiro
- Executive Jim Mangubat

Agenda Items and Notes:

1:00 – 1:08 PM

Welcome and Commissioner's Update

Presenter: Commissioner Carter

Key Points Discussed:

- Commissioner Carter acknowledged the work of the board and emphasized the importance of the pilot programs in shaping services for Tennessee families.
- He shared plans for a spring in-person meeting in Nashville.

1:08 – 1:19 PM

MEF Participant Profiles and Research Progress

Presenter: MEF Associates

Key Points Discussed:

- All pilots reached their enrollment goals by December 31, 2024.
 - Updates were provided on evaluation activities, including the cost study, staff timesheet surveys, general ledger data collection, and implementation study findings.
 - Participant demographics highlighted the diversity and unique needs of the study group.
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1:19 – 1:30 PM

Update on Enrollment Goals and Process Improvements

Presenter: PCG

Key Points Discussed:

- Updates on training and technical assistance sessions provided to grantees.
 - Shared enrollment numbers indicating participant growth and program effectiveness.
 - Success stories and marketing efforts, including impactful videos, were highlighted.
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1:30 – 2:53 PM

TOPI Pilot Spotlights; Q&A

Presenters: Various Pilot Leaders

Key Points Discussed:

- **AFIRM:** Carol Jackson presented updates on their fatherhood program, emphasizing community engagement and the development of parenting skills for fathers in Memphis and Shelby County. Events like “Ties and Tiaras” and “Game Day” were highlighted for promoting father involvement.
- **Connecting Forward:** Joel Alex and Michael McSurdy discussed their care coordination model, which focuses on meeting families where they are and addressing goals such as housing, employment, and transportation through collaborative partnerships in Middle Tennessee.
- **East TN Collaborative (ETC):** Kaki Reynolds shared progress from Year 2, including a significant increase in enrollment and specific aid distributed to families. Key outcomes included improved housing circumstances, educational achievements, and increased earnings.
- **EMPOWER Upper Cumberland:** Meghan Spurgeon highlighted program impacts, such as increases in household income, milestone payments, and 68 children moving out of poverty. The team launched the Dave Ramsey Smart Dollar platform to improve financial literacy among participants.
- **GROWWTH:** Stephanie Godwin-Chu focused on workforce readiness and provided updates on their Growth Academy, which trains participants in areas like

resume building, financial literacy, and conflict resolution. The program has successfully increased employment outcomes for participants.

- **Our Chance TN:** Jahna Riley and Marielle Lovecchio shared their year-in-review, including their holistic approach to family support, which integrates mental health, education, and job training. They emphasized partnerships with community organizations to provide wraparound services.
- **STRONG Families NETN:** Leslie Thompson presented on their achievements, including the success of their mentorship and resource alignment programs. She shared participant stories illustrating the transformative impact of their services.

2:53 – 3:00 PM

Concluding Remarks

Presenter: Suzanne Carr

Key Points Discussed:

- Suzanne thanked the board and presenters for their dedication and collaboration.
- The meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.