

Prevention in Kansas



Family First Request for Proposals closes

This spring through summer DCF prepared, posted, and closed the Family First Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Family First Prevention Services Act. The RFP officially posted on May 31, and closed on Aug. 15th, 2022. Proposals submitted are being reviewed and considered as a future Family First grantee.

When will the chosen bids be announced?

It is anticipated the selected Family First grantees for State Fiscal Year 2024 (SFY 24) will be announced sometime between December, 2022 — January, 2023.

When will the new SFY 24 grantees begin working as a Family First service provider?

Current Family First service providers grants end on June 30. An exact start

date for new SFY 24 grantees will be dependent on program start-up and existing program transition plans.

How do agencies or organizations find out about current and future RFPs?

For grant opportunities, visit the DCF Operations Office of Grants and Contracts home page at: <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/Agency/Operations/Pages/OGC/Grants-and-Contracts.aspx>

At the home page you will be able to sign up to receive email notifications when an open RFP is posted. The Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC) coordinates the processing and procuring of goods and services for the agency through contracts, grants, interagency agreements, task proposal requests (TPRs), RFPs, provider agreements or purchasing requisitions.

In this issue...

Family First RFP closes	pg 1
DCF DEI and the Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative	pg 2-3
Performance-Based Contract stakeholder meetings	pg 4
Wichita announces new Regional Director	pg 5

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Email us at:

DCF.FamilyFirst@ks.gov

The OGC acts as the liaison to the Department of Administration and provides training for programs that deal with procuring goods and services.

The Kansas Department of Administration Office of Procurement and Contracts is responsible for all procurement processes other than procurement through the grant RFP process. OGC acts as a liaison to the Department of Administration Office of Procurement and Contracts in obtaining goods and services for DCF.

Additional information regarding the State of Kansas procurement process can be found at:

<https://admin.ks.gov/offices/procurement-contracts>

A conversation with Brandi Turner

DEI Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Since March 2021, Brandi Turner has acted as the agency's first DEI officer. Since her tenure, she's worked on developing and implementing a wide-ranging program to uphold DEI in the agency as a key value and practice to advance racial equity. She's also a core collaborator on the Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative (page 3). Other state agencies have attended DCF DEI trainings, hosted by DEI committee members and many agencies are adopting the trainings as their own. "People are taking these trainings seriously," said Brandi. During a recent regional tour of the state, DCF partnered with TeamTech using the DEI reflective conversation model to hear how the trainings had impacted staff. "People are having vulnerable and honest revelations and it's becoming not just an agency journey but a personal one. With these conversations we are seeing how DCF is learning to support communities, develop trust, and show up better for our clients."



Brandi Turner, DCF DEI Officer

DCF announced the Ally Support Network in August. "This idea came from data collected by those that attended our DEI trainings. People wanted a space to feel comfortable to talk with each other and learn more. DEI isn't just black and brown individuals. The DEI team is excited to help people grow, connect, and build networks in other programs and areas." DCF recently launched an internal DEI site, which houses training videos, educational tools, and resources to help individuals on their DEI journey. Soon, the agency will announce monthly reflective conversations to accompany the Ally Support Network.

Brandi, along with DCF Deputy Director of Communications Jenalea Randall, presented at the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), *Advancing Economic Mobility Through a Race Equity Lens* conference in August. "Out of 47 states represented, I was the only full-time DEI officer I knew of. It's eye-opening and inspiring to see Kansas as a such a trailblazer."

On September 14th at 3:30 pm, the Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative will hold a reflection ceremony on the 1st floor of the Kansas Capitol building. "This is a celebration to honor those individuals who are working to advance race equity in child welfare everyday. We're currently seeking proposals for speakers and expect they'll be powerful and thought-provoking."

Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative Learning Lectures

Below are links to the presentations delivered by the panel of speakers during the four-part learning lecture series. Visit the Kansas Racial Equity website for the presentation slides and to learn more about the Collaborative: <https://www.careportal.org/kansas-racial-equity/>

1 Understanding the Historical Context of Structural Racism and Current Day Implications: How We Got Here and a Better Path Forward

(Panel: Samantha Mellerson & Michael Finley of W. Haywood Burns Institute)

<https://youtu.be/h9g506QT-VE>



2 Addressing Racial Inequities in Child Welfare: View from Early Childhood Education

(Panel: Iheoma U. Iruka, PhD, Department of Public Policy)

<https://youtu.be/2jui1CHPcMQ>



3 Debunking Myths Around Racial Inequities in Child Welfare

(Panel: Ruby White Starr, Family Violence Dept. of the

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges; Deidre Calcoate, Go Within Not Without; Alan J. Dettlaff, University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1TKKu0Syl4>



4 Forward Movement:

Shifting from Control of to Support for Black and Brown Families

(Panel: Kristin Weber, Center for Study of Social Policy; Maleeka Jihad, University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work; Min. Nina Shaw-Woody, Kansas Family Advisory Network; Joni Hiatt, FosterAdopt Connect.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ya_5TPK57UI



Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative Symposium

Activists joined together for Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative Symposium

DCF, along with partners CarePortal and the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare, co-hosted the first-ever Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative Symposium on April 15 at the Burge Union at the University of Kansas. Activists partnered to discuss the history and impact of racial inequities in child welfare. The event was the conclusion of a four-part virtual lecture series dedicated to pursuing racial equity in Kansas child welfare.

Aysha Schomburg, J.D., Associate Commissioner at the U.S. Children’s Bureau, gave a keynote speech about moving toward racial equity.

“Everyone will benefit from an equitable society,” Schomburg said. “You can feel the warmth of impact, the warmth of change, the warmth of racial equity.”

Jessica Pryce, Ph.D., Assistant Professor at Florida State University College of Social Work and Executive Director at Florida Institute for Child Welfare, presented about transforming racial equity in child welfare.

“We want families to be strong, to lean on their communities, their neighbors, their friends,” Pryce said. “We know it’s important for children to be safe, but it’s important for children to feel safe.”

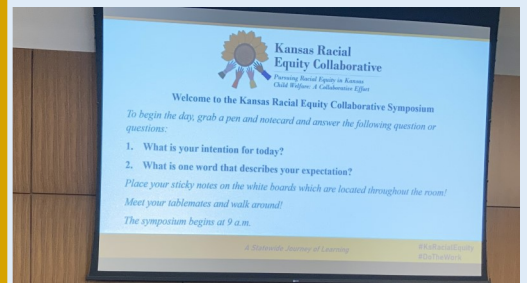
The Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative concluded with a reflection of the day. Activists from across the state walked away with a stronger desire to improve the child welfare system.

“We all had the same vision. We want to impact the children in the child welfare system,” said Shanelle Dupree, DCF Kansas City Regional Director. “We are thrilled with what has happened here today and what is to come.”

For a recap about the Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative journey, visit https://youtu.be/u8Pfd_LJqcw

For highlights about the Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative Symposium, visit <https://vimeo.com/716557429/2084c56e6f>

Bottom left: Aysha Schomburg delivering opening speech to the event. **Top right:** Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative core collaborators L to R; Brandi Turner (DEI officer, DCF), Kelechi Wright (Doctoral Student, KUSSW), Sarah McCall (Project Manager, KUSSW), Pegah Naemi Jimenez, PhD. (Assoc. Researcher, KUSSW), Michelle Mohr Carney (Dean of KUSSW), Tanya Keys (Deputy Sec., DCF), Erika Glenn (Urban Church Ambassador, CarePortal) Shanelle Dupree (KC Regional Dir., DCF), Dr. Becci Akin (Assoc. Prof./ PhD. Prog. Dir, KUSSW), Ashley Smith (Child & Family Advocate, CarePortal), Abby Fry (Regional Mgr., CarePortal) **Bottom center:** Jessica Pryce, Ph.D., MSW, delivering presentation on Strengthening Families Using a Racial Equity Lens. **Bottom right:** KC muralist, Lucky Easterwood, created a bespoke work of art during lunch to inspire attendees.



Performance-Based Contracts stakeholder meetings

During the early part of August, DCF hosted statewide convenings in Kansas City, Topeka, Hays, Pittsburg, Wichita, and Emporia. Community partners and stakeholders gathered to share ideas and experiences toward strengthening and development of performance-based contracts in prevention and foster care. Information was heard and collected and will be incorporated into a report DCF will submit to legislators in January 2023 in response to [HB 2510](#), the Omnibus Appropriations Bill.

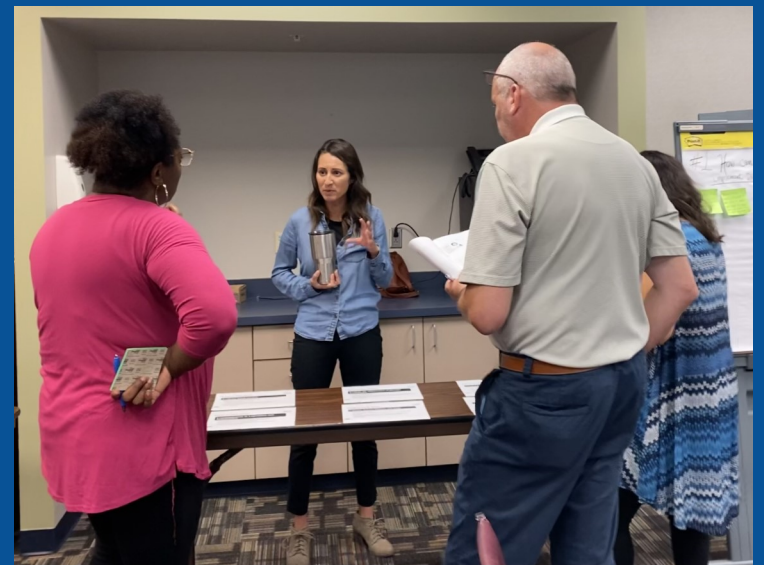
In the official Message from the Governor Regarding House Bill 2510, Gov. Laura Kelly writes that some of the key investments include “expanded training opportunities to prevent child abuse, and measures that build on our successful work to reduce the number of children who enter the foster care system.”

Communities held robust conversations which reflected a clear interest by stakeholders to share their voice with DCF. Caroline Hastings, Northeast Regional Director shared her thoughts on the event. “DCF is on a path of progress and growth and the agency can’t get there without the input from Kansas communities. The feedback received in these venues will help improve current services and design stronger supports for families moving forward. We are grateful to all that attended this information-gathering process.”

Discussions were held around appropriate and relevant evidence-based services for families, prevention services for families with children at risk of an out-of-home placement or have a child out-of-home care and children awaiting adoption, community capacity, and how to evaluate the effectiveness of foster care provider performances. Attendees included lived expertise, contract and grantee partners, community-based services, legislators, advocacy groups and regional DCF program

and leadership staff.

Information provided by stakeholders is vital to the formal development and implementation plan and in understanding how to strengthen performance-based outcomes in services and support for Kansas children and families.



The logo for the Kansas Department for Children and Families is centered. It features the text "Kansas" in a large, serif font, with "Department for Children and Families" in a smaller font below it. Above the text is a circular emblem with the Latin phrase "AD ASTRA PER ASPERA". To the right of the logo are several social media icons: a star with the number 32, a speech bubble with the number 5, an envelope with the number 11, and a thumbs-up icon with the number 25. Below the logo, the text "CONNECT WITH US" is written in a large, bold, blue font. The background of the entire block is a blurred image of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard.

Four social media icons are displayed in a row: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Below each icon is its corresponding handle: @kansasdct, @dcfkansas, @kansasdct, and DCF Kansas. Below the icons, the text "LIKE + FOLLOW" is written in a large, bold, white font. At the bottom, a globe icon is followed by the website URL "www.dcf.ks.gov". The background of the entire block is a solid blue color.

Wichita Region announces new Regional Director

The Wichita Region announced Dee Nighswonger as Regional Director starting July 5th, 2022, following Tom Buell's retirement. Dee began her Social Work career in 1992 at the Wichita SRS Office located on East Douglas in the Foster Care and Special Needs Adoption unit. Dee left the agency to pursue her Master's degree at the University of Kansas where her concentration was social work with children and families and administration. Dee has 30 years of practice experience working in the Wichita area in a variety of settings including non-profit organizations, hospitals, community mental health centers and developmental disabilities. She has over 20 years of experience in government service. Dee is a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) and Licensed Clinical Addiction Counselor (LCAC) and holds several certifications in leadership, coaching and dual diagnosis.

Dee is passionate about serving vulnerable populations and empowering the professionals who do the essential work to make our communities stronger.

Dee is a Lecturer for Wichita State University's School of Social Work and teaches graduate level badge courses focused on developing the knowledge and skills of clinical professionals to better serve individuals with

intellectual and developmental disabilities and co-occurring behavioral health conditions. She a member of the Practicum Advisory Committee for the School of Social Work at WSU and loves giving back to the profession by helping to develop new social workers.



Wichita Region, Left to Right: Anne Ellis (Program Administrator) Dee Nighswonger (Regional Director), Janet Barnes (Interim Assistant Regional Director) and Vallie Tracy (Program Administrator)

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