



Governor's Council on
Child Safety and
Family Empowerment

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON CHILD SAFETY AND FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

Hybrid Meeting

August 08, 2024, 10:00 AM

1700 West Washington Street, Suite 200, Phoenix, Arizona 85007

A general meeting of the Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment was convened on **August 08, 2024**, notice having been duly given.

Members Present (14)	Members Absent (11)
Colleen McNally , Co-Chair	Maria Cristina Fuentes , Co-Chair
Berisha Black	Obed Escobar
Pastor Terry Crist	Marie Fordney
Tonya Hamilton	Dr. Lorrie Henderson
Erin Riggs (proxy for Malcolm Hightower)	Darlene Newsom
Claire Louge	Katie O'Dell
* Chris Gustafson (proxy for David Lujan)	Abi Saifi
* Sara Micflikier (proxy for Rachel Mitchell)	Torrie Taj
James Molina	Mark Upton
* Paul Mulligan	Ginger Ward
* Hope Kopp (proxy for Kathryn Blades Ptak)	Ryan Young
* Leslie Repogle	
* Jeff Taylor	
Richard Yarbough	
Staff & Guests Present (5)	
Amy Peep , GOYFF	Luis De La Cruz , Presenter
Shayne Johnson , GOYFF	Valentina Restrepo Montoya , Presenter
Simone Clarett , GOYFF	

**Indicates Virtual Attendance*

Call to Order

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, called the Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment (CSFE) meeting to order at 10:08 AM with **14** members and **five** staff/guests present. She reviewed the Council meeting procedures, welcomed all those joining via Zoom, and thanked them for their flexibility.

Approval of Minutes

- With the quorum met, **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, requested a review of the **May 09, 2024**, meeting minutes before requesting a motion to approve the meeting minutes as drafted.
 - **Berisha Black** moved to accept the meeting minutes as drafted.
 - **Pastor Terry Crist** seconded the motion.
- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, asked for a discussion of the minutes.
 - **Claire Louge** requested a revision on page 7. The 2024 Child Abuse Prevention Conference occurred on July 23 and 24, not June.
- With no other amendments requested, **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes as amended.
 - **Richard Yarbough** moved to accept the meeting minutes as amended.
 - **James Molina** seconded the motion.
- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, called a vote, and at **10:15 AM**, the motion to approve the meeting minutes as amended

was approved with no dissenting votes.

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, stated that the Council's 2024 Annual Report is complete; a copy is available for review in the member's provided blue folder and on the Council's [website](#).

Arizona Department of Child Safety Update

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, introduced **Chris Gustafson**, the [Arizona Department of Child Safety \(DCS\)](#)'s Legislative Liaison, to provide an update regarding recent legislative updates impacting Arizona's children and families.
- **Chris Gustafson** explained that these are the most recent legislative updates following the end of the last legislative session.
 - [House Bill \(HB\) 2447](#): Continued the DCS for four years.
 - [HB 2454](#): The Department must demonstrate its due diligence in searching for kinship placements only at permanency reviews and planning meetings.
 - [HB 2479](#): Requires the Department to report more data if a child goes missing.
 - [HB 2486](#): Parent-child restoration bill. If a parent was able to demonstrate their capability and if the child was at risk of aging out with no adoption or permanency plan, the parent could contest for guardianship.
 - [Senate Bill \(SB\) 1067](#): Allows the Department to investigate and substantiate abuse claims against group home workers.
 - [SB 1235](#): Expands the Child-Fatality Review Team to include community members who are content-area experts (e.g., doctors, advocates, etc.).
 - [SB 1664](#): By September 2025, the Department must implement a tiered system relating to persons placed on the central registry of abuse and neglect based on the severity of the abuse or neglect and the risk a person presents to commit further acts of abuse or neglect.
- **Jeff Taylor** asked for clarification regarding how many more years the Department will continue operations and if the [Arizona Auditor General](#) has to complete an audit for every continuation.
 - **Chris Gustafson** responded that it would continue for another four years, and yes, the Auditor General completes an audit every time.
- **Claire Louge** asked about approximately how many children or youth will be impacted by HB 2486.
 - **Chris Gustafson** responded that he is not a lawyer by trade but estimates that approximately 10% of the 1,600 children currently at risk of aging out of the system would be affected.
- **Erin Riggs** asked, regarding HB 2486, whether or not the birth parent will have to hire their attorney to petition the court for guardianship.
 - **Chris Gustafson** answered that the [Arizona Attorney General's Office \(AGO\)](#) and the DCS' attorneys completed this process, but the DCS did not lead.
- **Berisha Black** inquired about including community members in determining the tiered central registry.
 - **Chris Gustafson** answered that involving community members would be implemented after creating an initial proposal.

Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, introduced **Luis De La Cruz** to speak about the [Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation \(AFFAF\)](#).
 - **Luis De La Cruz** joined the AFFAF in July 2022 as its President and Chief Executive Officer. Originally from Arizona, and before leading AFFCF, Luis lived in Chicago and worked for Deloitte Consulting and Deloitte Tax, advising corporations on the strategy and economics of their global operations. Luis was the United States (US) Representative for Deloitte's Executive World Impact Council during his time at Deloitte. Also, he worked closely with Deloitte's US Leadership to develop eminence and insights on global topics and subject matter. Luis is a proud Arizona State University (ASU) alum and earned two business degrees from the W.P. Carey School of Business. He also received a Masters in Public Policy (MPP) from the University of Michigan.
- **Luis De La Cruz** started his presentation by telling his story of being in foster care with his brother as a child.
- **Luis De La Cruz** explained that four Foster Care Review Board members founded the AFFCF, a private foundation dedicated to allocating 87 cents of every dollar toward its impactful programming for children in foster care. AFFCF

also works closely with government and community partners to engage viewpoints on critical issues that impact the population it serves.

- Given their firsthand experience, the founders of AFFCF felt compelled to establish an organization to help bridge the significant funding gap. Over the years, AFFCF has transformed its focus to improve the outcomes for individuals in foster care.
- It creates opportunities to build self-esteem and empower children and youth in foster care by funding services to enrich their life experiences and ensure their successful transition to adulthood.
- They serve around 40-50% of the entire system in Arizona, which adds up to about 4,000-5,000 children.
- **Luis De La Cruz** explained that AFFCF currently has three impact areas:
 - **Childhood & Normalcy Funding (Serves ages 0-20)**: Supports critical basic needs and normalcy experiences for all Arizona foster care children across placements.
 - **Post-Secondary Education (Serves ages 18-26)**: Supports bridging foster care students' high school graduation gap by finding/applying for accessible scholarships, community building through programming, and emergency funding.
 - **Keys to Success (Serves ages 16-26)**: An evidence-based human-centered program focusing on education, employment, housing, financial literacy, and wrap-around services.
- **James Molina** expressed gratitude to AFFCF for aiding children in foster care and inquired about the availability of post-secondary education for children up to the age of 26.
 - **Luis De La Cruz** confirmed that children aging out of the system are eligible until age 26 and do not need to be enrolled in AFFCF programs to take advantage of it.
- **Claire Louge** asked what is AFFCF's biggest challenge and what it needs.
 - **Luis De La Cruz** stated that funding is the most significant need for AFFCF since it is a non-profit. He explained that AFFCF assesses the frequency of aid requests and their ability to assist. A larger budget would help reduce this gap.
- To view **Luis De La Cruz's** presentation, [click here](#).

ALWAYS - Safe and Stable Families Practice

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, introduced **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** to speak about the Safe and Stable Families Practice program at the [Arizona Legal Women and Youth Services \(ALWAYS\)](#).
 - **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** is the executive director of ALWAYS. Before this, she served as a Mental Health Attorney at the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project and as an Assistant Public Defender in Birmingham, Alabama. She started her legal career as a licensed Law Fellow at the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama. Her motivation to pursue this career path stemmed from observing her parents' experiences as Colombian immigrants in the US.
- **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** started her presentation by explaining that ALWAYS is a nonprofit community legal center committed to balancing the scales of justice for Arizona's vulnerable young people. They provide no-cost legal services for vulnerable children and youth under 25 and survivors impacted by crime, homelessness, or foster care. Working through referrals from social service partners, they help clients lift the legal barriers that stand in the way of opportunity, stability, and self-sufficiency.
 - All services are available in fluent English and Spanish. The advocates also use professional interpreters to provide legal and social services to people who speak Farsi, Vietnamese, Senegalese, and more.
 - Staff undergo training to ensure representation is trauma-informed.
- **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** explained that ALWAYS can assist clients with:
 - Family Law:
 - Orders of protection.
 - Divorces and annulments.
 - Legal decision-making and parenting time (aka custody).
 - Child support.
 - Immigration Law:
 - T-Visas for survivors of trafficking.
 - U-Visas for survivors of crime.
 - Protection under the Violence Against Women Act.

- Special Immigration Juvenile Status.
- DACA Renewals.
- Employment Authorization Documents.
- Lawful Permanent Residence (aka Green Cards).
- US Citizenship (N400s, N600s).
- Criminal History Repair Services:
 - Good Cause Exceptions for Fingerprint Clearance Cards.
 - Dropping Down Undesignated Felonies to Misdemeanors.
 - Sealing Records.
 - Expunging Records.
- **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** stated that the [Safe and Stable Families Practice](#) offers free representation for youth and young adults impacted by homelessness, trafficking, abuse, or the foster care system. Staff lawyers assist with family safety, parenting, and stability issues. Below is a list of services ALWAYS can provide:
 - Orders of protection.
 - Child custody issues (e.g., parenting time and child support) in Family Court.
 - Safety and health concerns that a landlord has not addressed.
 - Victim representation in criminal court.
- **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** explained that in 2023, ALWAYS provided services to 124 clients. She emphasized that most clients seek and are served multiple services over a long period.
 - Demographics:
 - Seventy-seven percent of clients were women and girls. ALWAYS also provides services to male, non-binary, or gender non-conforming.
 - Approximately 71.3% of clients were Latino/a or Hispanic.
 - Services offered:
 - Immigration Law: 53%
 - Criminal History Law: 17%
 - Family Law: 14%
 - Trafficking victims comprised 43% of the total clients, an increase of 21% from the previous year.
 - Thirty-three percent of clients were victims of sex trafficking.
 - Ten percent of clients were victims of labor trafficking.
 - Eighty-eight percent of clients were victims of crime (including trafficking).
 - Forty-six percent of clients were youths in foster care.
- **Pastor Terry Crist** asked why ALWAYS only serves clients under 25 years old.
 - **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** responded that securing funding is the main challenge. ALWAYS prefers spending time with cases, avoiding long waitlists, and trying to prevent burnout. Unfortunately, this means restricting the number of clients they can serve.
- **Leslie Repogle** stated that she works with the Crisis Pregnancy population and believes most clients could benefit from these services. She recommended engaging with them if they still need to do so.
 - **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** appreciated the suggestion and would be more than willing to present their services to providers and clients.
- **Tonya Hamilton** asked if there is an organization to which they can refer clients older than 25.
 - **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** answered that this demographic has a massive gap in services. Depending on the client's location in Arizona, they have referred cases to the [Defenders of Children](#) and [Southern Arizona Legal Aid](#).
- **Sara MicFlikier** stated that she had referred clients to ALWAYS and received only positive feedback. She expressed gratitude for all that they do.
- To view **Valentina Restrepo Montoya's** presentation, [click here](#).

Arizona Child Abuse Prevention and Advocacy License Plate Grant Program

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, introduced **Amy Peep** to give a presentation about the [Arizona Child Abuse Prevention and Advocacy License Plate Grant Program](#).

- **Amy Peep** is the Human Trafficking Specialist at the [Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family \(GOYFF\)](#). She facilitates the [Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment \(CSFE\)](#) and the [Governor's Council to Combat Human Trafficking in Arizona \(HTC\)](#). She supports the [STOP Violence Against Women](#) grant and is the program administrator for the Arizona Child Abuse and Advocacy License Plate Grant Program (CAPA).
- **Amy Peep** started her presentation by explaining that the GOYFF supports Governor Katie Hobbs' vision and mission. Governor Hobbs' [six priorities](#) include Education, Housing and Human Services, Health and Reproductive Rights, Resilience, Water and the Environment, Public Safety, Border Security and Corrections, and an Affordable and Thriving Economy.
 - The GOYFF's primary goal is to support the Governor's priorities and her mission to create an Arizona for Everyone. Through a Trauma-informed lens, the GOYFF develops programs, coalitions, strategies, and initiatives related to juvenile justice, child well-being, substance abuse prevention, human trafficking, domestic and sexual violence, service and volunteerism, workforce development, and aging.
 - The GOYFF administers nine of the Governor's [Councils and Commissions](#) focused on the abovementioned areas.
 - All grants distributed by the GOYFF undergo a competitive grant application process. Applications are reviewed and scored by volunteer grant reviewers, and awarded funds support Arizona organizations whose programming aligns with the Request for Grant Application (RFGA) requirements.
- **Amy Peep** explained that the specialty license plates for child abuse prevention have been available for purchase by the public since November 1999. The revenue generated from the sale of these license plates supports primary prevention efforts for child abuse and neglect, as well as child and family advocacy centers.
 - Plates are available for \$25 each. \$17 from each sale goes to the grant fund, with \$8 covering administrative fees. [Click here](#) to view the plate.
- **Amy Peep** stated that the GOYFF began administering this grant in May 2019 when the [Arizona Legislature](#) passed [SB1533](#). Since the GOYFF acquired the program, the fund has decreased by 75%, and the GOYFF is brainstorming ways to reinvigorate the program.
- **Amy Peep** explained that the most recent RFGA closed in March 2024. The GOYFF awarded four organizations \$100,000, and their programming began on July 1, 2024.
 - [Childhelp](#) provides support and education to caregivers of children/youth who have been victims (or are at risk) of abuse/neglect, the first and secondary responders to child abuse/neglect notification, and childcare workers/educators who regularly come into contact with children.
 - [Hushabye Nursery's](#) mission is to provide compassionate, evidence-based care to substance-exposed babies and their families, with a focus on Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS).
 - [Improving Chandler Area Neighborhood \(ICAN\)](#) takes a two-pronged, primary prevention approach to combating child abuse and neglect. It offers free, high-quality after-school programs that engage youth while alleviating stress for parents and caregivers. These programs equip young people with valuable skills, fostering their development in five key areas known as the 5 C's: Connection, Competence, Character, Contribution, and Confidence.
 - The [Southern Arizona Children's Advocacy Center \(SACAC\)](#) works with organizations involved in child abuse prevention efforts and with families who have experienced abuse. The collaborative efforts provide caregiver training in Protective Factors and professional training in Psychological First Aid (PFA), Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and Trauma-Informed Care.
- **Berisha Black** inquired whether the total award was \$100,000 or if each grantee received that amount.
 - **Amy Peep** answered that each organization received \$25,000, totaling \$100,000.
- To view **Amy Peep's** presentation, [click here](#).

Family Reunification Day Event Recap

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, explained that the 10th annual virtual Family Reunification Day celebration was on June 15, 2024. The planning committee invited ten families to share their stories. Governor Hobbs and the DCS Cabinet Executive Officer (CEO) David Lujan spoke and congratulated the families. She mentioned that one takeaway from the event was that at least four parents had experienced the foster care system themselves as children.
 - She encouraged Council members to watch the 10th annual virtual celebration recording [here](#).

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, also mentioned that the committee will host an in-person event on October 12, 2024. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.

Council Member Updates

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, invited members to give any updates to the Council.
 - **Berisha Black** announced that [Pilgrims Rest Baptist Church](#) will host a kinship celebration on September 14, 2024. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.
 - **Claire Louge** stated that [Prevent Child Abuse Arizona \(PCAAZ\)](#) has developed a plan to identify Family Resource Centers (FACs) in the state following the project. She would like to present the information to the Council at a future meeting.
 - **James Molina** mentioned that many group home providers have closed due to the behavior of the children placed there. After the meeting, he asked the Council for any ideas or guidance.

Upcoming Meeting

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, reminded members that the next meeting will be on **October 10, 2024, at 10:00 AM** in the Executive Tower, offered in a hybrid format, and members can attend in person or virtually.

Adjournment

- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, thanked everyone for being part of the meeting and asked for a motion to adjourn.
 - **Tonya Hamilton** moved to adjourn.
 - **Pastor Terry Crist** seconded the motion.
- **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, asked if any further discussion was needed.
- With no other discussion needed, **Colleen McNally, Co-Chair**, called for a vote. At **11:48 AM**, the motion to adjourn the meeting passed with no dissenting votes.

Dated 09 of August 2024
Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment
Respectfully Submitted By:
Amy Peep
GOYFF