



CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING TASK FORCE

SEPTEMBER 12, 2022

Present: Alicia Hanning, Anne Granberg, Sunshine Nelson, Carol Frazey, Escarleth DeLeon, Gregory Hansen, Jamie Desmul, Jen Wright, Keith Montoya, Mary Sewright, Monica Koller, Samya Lutz, Sativa Robertson, Sterling Chick, Vesla Tonnesson, Yarrow Greer
Not Present: Beverly Porter, Kayla Schott-Bressler, Melissa Isenhardt, Mike Ford, Ray Deck, Rosalva Santos-Guzman, Sarah Cook

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
<p>Welcome</p>	<p>Introductions, land acknowledgment, housekeeping, and review of agreements.</p> <p><u>Land Acknowledgement:</u> I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are here today on the ancestral homelands of Indigenous Peoples who have lived in the Salish Sea basin and the North Cascades watershed from time immemorial, in particular, the Lhaq'temish (LOCK-tuh-mish) people who we recognize today to be the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Tribe, and Semiahmoo. May we be mindful of the inherent owners of this land, our children, who are our future. Our future stewards of the land and advocates for the generation to come. May that truth guide our work and efforts to improve the well-being of all families and children, native and non-native, living in this beautiful county. This land acknowledgment is not meant to be a substitute for authentic relationship-building and understanding. It is meant to introduce us to one way we can show respect and honor for the sacrifices of the first people of this land. Please join me in expressing the deepest respect for our indigenous neighbors, and gratitude for the enduring stewardship of our shared lands and waterways. https://www.lhaqtemish.org/ -Lhaq'temish Foundation</p> <p><u>Agreements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and self-care come first. • Be kind and gentle with yourself and others and assume everyone is coming from a positive place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Everyone has the best intentions. ○ Listen with an open mind and heart. • Be mindful of this space. Step-in and step-out/Step-up and step-back. Offer your truth and insights and listen to others' truths and insights. • Treat each other with honor and grace. We are all working under difficult circumstances. • Embrace diversity. Remember that we all come from different backgrounds giving us different perspectives and only when we embrace that diversity can we develop creative solutions to address the child and family well-being needs in Whatcom County. • What is said here stays here. • Have fun. <p>Fist to Five Consensus Tool – Amended 4.25.22</p>
<p>Approve Meeting Minutes</p>	<p>No amendments to discuss. Minutes from July 11, 2022, were approved as presented.</p>
<p>Upcoming events,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chelsea Johnson, new Program Specialist for Early Learning and Care with the Health Department, introduced herself to the group.



<p>community shares, shout outs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keith Montoya provided feedback from the ARPA RFP process meeting. It was nice to learn more about that process. Much of the money early on will be going to larger projects. They are looking to streamline the process for smaller agencies/organizations. • Keith reported that there was a good response to the exploratory meetings for the small groups. • Alicia Hanning reported on the Increasing Family Participation group. The group talked about decreasing barriers to family participation in government. The group is pretty small and would welcome additional participants. They will be looking at ways to make participation more accessible by looking at transportation, childcare, parking, meals and bi-directional flow of communication. Other ideas are always welcome. • Sterling Chick reported on the Improving Access to Family Services and Support (particularly behavioral health services) group. The group has been discussing the following: identifying what we mean by behavioral health supports and which age groups are being served, using social determinants of health, prevention versus intervention, getting a better idea of services that are out there already, and what parts of the system are not represented in the group (and who might be added to have a group with well-rounded expertise). • Monica Koller reported on the Modeling Family Friendly Employment Practices and Policies group. The group explored other organizations that have done work to model family friendly practices in the work place. Group members brought good resources and articles about work places that are modeling this. Judy Ziels shared about a pilot Health Department program allowing employees to bring their infant to work. Allison Williams added that the program had benefits for the colleagues of parents who were bringing their infants to work, in addition to benefitting the parent and child. • The leadership team is in the process of meeting with Healthy Whatcom to try to find places where there is overlap between our work and theirs so we can seek advice from them. They're focused on the community overall, while the task force is mainly focused on creating change in county government itself, but we can still find lots of areas of overlap. • Vesla Tonnessen reported that the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) in Whatcom will be offering a fall session in dual languages.
<p>Proposal to approve member roles and responsibilities</p>	<p>Allison Williams reviewed the proposal to approve member roles and responsibilities. Revisions were made to the document based on discussion at the last meeting and the revised document was sent out to members for review. (As a point of clarification about voting, Allison noted that there were some concerns about taking away the anonymous polling option for first round of voting, but there is not good way to do that with the hybrid meeting format with some members attending in person instead online.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 4b Conflict of Interest, the following sentence was added: "any member with a conflict of interest will withdraw from direct voting on the issue but may offer their insights during the discussion after they have disclosed their potential conflict." • For 5d the group agreed that subcommittee participation should remain voluntary and that language stayed the same. • There was also a small update to 7b. <p>Allison reviewed the Fist to Five voting method (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZiH1bsFwVRuIPX5U6UuDVe7NxrEk-fchWmi3Yxk_ryE/edit), then a vote was held to approve the member roles and responsibilities. The proposal was approved.</p>
<p>Proposal to approve Phase III work groups</p>	<p>Keith introduced the proposal to officially adopt Phase III work groups (1. Modeling family friendly policies and practices, 2. Increasing family participation in government, and 3. Improving access to family services and support). The proposal was approved.</p>

<p>Task Force vacancies – member involvement</p>	<p>Keith reported that the leadership team has been looking into how to fill current vacancies. They have gone through all the existing applications and made recommendations for applicants that would help balance the task force needs for members in key sectors or with lived experience. About ten applicants were put forward. Currently, the team is checking that those we want to recommend are still interested in having their applications move forward (asking for responses by September 30). Then all the applicants still interested will be added to the Council packet and be voted on October 11. Additional outreach is being planned such as setting up tabling events at County public libraries during story times. Let the leadership team know if you are interested in participating in a tabling event at one of the libraries to share your experience on the task force and the kind of work we're doing.</p>
<p>County focus on children and families</p>	<p>Allison Williams presented a review of the 2021-2022 Whatcom County Health Department budget for programmatic work supporting children and families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy children and families (prenatal through age 5) work represents about 5% of the Health Department budget. • Other budget categories also support children and families (like housing programs, mental health, developmental disabilities, etc.), but it can be hard to tease out which part of those budget categories serve pregnant people and families with young children. • Most the Health Department's work supporting children and families is done by partnering with coalitions to focus on systems, policies, and programs that impact young children and families. • There is one direct service program within the Health Department, the Nurse-Family Partnership, which provides home visits to pregnant and parenting families. • Priority areas for systems level support include racial equity, mental health, and early learning and care. • Focus populations for systems level support include children with special needs and their families, pregnant women, children five and under and their families, and groups impacted by racism and stigma. • Allison shared a breakdown on how money was spent for systems work and for the Nurse-Family Partnership. • Task Force spending priorities are resource navigation, task force start-up, and racial equity. Allison shared a breakdown of how money was spent among those priority areas. • The slide presentation will be sent out to members for review. • For 2022, most the money has been allocated and most has gone to the resource navigation work. • About \$50,000 remains to be allocated and Task Force input will be needed on how to spend it. A few ideas have been put forward. Sterling suggested using funds to do a mental health supports gap analysis for pregnancy through age five. Another idea that has been floated is to use the money to explore the infrastructure model for supporting children and families. • For 2023, some money is already committed, for instance for the Help Me Grow expansion. There will be some funds available for the Task Force to provide input on. <p>Questions and discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Health Department have resources to serve everyone who wants to take part in the Nurse-Family Partnership? Families need to meet criteria to participate (income threshold—qualifies for Apple Health or WIC, pregnant with first child, enroll by 28th week of pregnancy), but there is not a waiting list to participate. • For future budget discussions it would be useful to know how much of the Health Department budget is required to be spent in particular areas versus how much is discretionary.
<p>Whatcom Resource Information Collaborative (WRIC)</p>	<p>Vesla Tonnessen presented an update on the Whatcom Resource Information Collaborative (WRIC). The idea is for there to be a one stop shop for all resources for children and families to simplify the process for parents looking for resources. The three big problems that come up with resource navigation are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no good place to find all the information. Resource databases and lists are kept all over the place by many organizations (Opportunity Council, school districts, etc.). This presents problems with maintaining accurate and timely information.

- The resources are not necessarily shared in culturally relevant ways or in ways that are truly equitable. Many families may not know how to connect with where those resources are.
- Not enough resources available to support all the need in the community.

Much of the work of the Whatcom Early Learning Alliance has been trying to look at all three of those problems at the same time, which is addressed in the Help Me Grow model. Vesla will share more about that at another meeting. The focus for this meeting is on the first problem – lack of an accurate, single source resource list that is maintained regularly. A group called Whatcom Resource Information Collaborative have been working on this problem for the whole population of Whatcom County (not just for children and families). WRIC hired a consultant who runs the Open Referral Initiative. They have identified that often issues with creating an informational resource like this are not technology issues, they are problems with the way groups collaborate with one another.

The model that has come out of the work with that consultant is called the Sunburst Model. The Sunburst Model centers equitable access to information in the public utility to meet needs of beneficiaries with help of trusted messengers who advocate for the needs of populations they serve. The pilot for this model is focusing on children and families. Experience has shown that this is not an issue that can be solved with technology; it really needs to be managed with people. There is free data utility software that will do the job and the focus here will be on the collaboration required to keep the utility up to date and making sure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in updating the utility. This is intended to be a publicly owned resource, much like other utilities (i.e. power and water systems). Organizations can pull data from this public source and share on their own website or in their own printed materials. There will be a steward of this utility that will vet the information and work to keep it up to date and accurate. For a community our size, we anticipate needing two full time staff for this work.

Several months were spent developing the group charter

(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1B84e0lxGmEDBibs9EEjg6abhMEdNBTwkOLrfOrs3xqE/edit>) so that roles, expectations, mission, and vision are clearly defined. This was at the urging of the consultant who pushed that if you want equitable outcomes you need to spend a lot of time working on the governance structure. The Opportunity Council is doing some beta testing on taking the information in the public utility and turning it into a publicly facing website that can be searched by tags (categories of services). This isn't public yet, just being tested.

Current WRIC work includes:

- working on inclusion and exclusion policies about what gets put in the database,
- recommendations for how to pull information from the database and display it (like language access, usability)
- working with groups like SEAS (Single Entry Access to Services) who also do this kind of resource navigation
- figuring out who can be available to help with navigation as this is not just about having a website where folks have to look for their own services themselves

For more information or to get involved with WRIC, contact Kristi Slette, WRIC Secretariat (and WFCN Executive Director) at Kristi.Slette@wcf.org or 360-738-1196. Everyone is also encouraged to attend a WRIC orientation session (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1X8kavZBTlduf0yxJKk3c8zcWsigaf-ad/edit>).

Discussion and questions:

- When does this go public? There will be a soft launch sometime in the next couple of months.
- One thing WRIC is working on right now is comparing data with what is in 211 and seeing if it makes sense to share data. While we tend to think that what is needed is one portal for information, what is really more equitable is to have all the information in one place with lots of different doors to access that information. WRIC can support the community by sharing information to all the places folks are using to find resources.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right now, we are seeking funding to sustain this, roughly \$250,000 a year. County funds could be really useful to support that public utility function of keeping all this data accurate, up to date, and available to the public. • Sterling shared that CCS has 176 programs, so they have internally been working on how to get managers more familiar with all their own programs. They have had two struggles with this: 1) Microsoft SharePoint is their platform and getting folks who are less computer savvy to understand how it works can be tough, and 2) getting everyone to keep information on their programs up to date is always a challenge. There is a data steward to work on this, but more resources might be needed to do it all. • The open source software that WRIC uses is called Airtable. It is essentially a spreadsheet, but more dynamic. • Allison echoed Vesla in encouraging members to attend an orientation. • Monica expressed how exciting it is to see the progress on this, as it has been a concern for years. It seems like it will be really accessible to be able to filter content by categories. • This system won't require agencies to update their own data. Data stewards will actively reach out to organizations on a regular basis to check that data is up to date. Also, users of the data will be able to ping the data stewards if they come across information that is not accurate. • It may also work to break down sections with different data stewards owning different sections/categories of data. • Yarrow noted that this is fabulous work that has been in high demand by our community. • How will the data steward positions be funded? The WRIC budget committee is putting together an ask that can be put out to lots of different possible funders, as well as looking at what part of this the County might be able to support.
Meeting Feedback - Members	<p>This link is a way to capture feedback on the meeting and provide input on agenda items. This will be available through Wednesday.</p> <p>https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf59ubhjlyXFZQJa0pXGgQQ5HhwJ1jamGFzjQLXS6-zZC1hKQ/viewform</p>
Public Comment	No public comment
Closing	Adjourned at 5:20 PM
Next Meeting	<p>Next regular meeting: October 10, 2022 <u>Location: Hybrid</u></p>