

Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group Meeting Minutes – 01.30.18

The sixth meeting of the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group (SSWG) was held at the University of North Carolina School of Government (UNC SOG) on January 30, 2018.

Working Group Members and School of Government Staff in Attendance

Sen. Tamara Barringer, co-chair

Rep. Sarah Stevens, co-chair

Michael Becketts, Assistant Secretary for Human Services, DHHS

Lisa Cauley, Chief, Child Welfare Section of the Division of Social Services, DHHS

Hon. Robert Stiehl, Chief District Court Judge, Cumberland County

Hon. Kevin Austin, Commissioner, Yadkin County

Hon. Page Lemel, Commissioner, Transylvania County

Glenn Osborne, Social Services Director, Wilson County

Angie Stephenson, Orange and Chatham Counties

Hon. Brenda Howerton, Commissioner, Durham County

Sen. Joyce Krawiec

Susan Perry-Manning, Deputy Secretary for Human Services, DHHS

Chris Dobbins, Consolidated Human Services Director, Gaston County

Working Group Members Attending Remotely

Sen. Kathy Harrington

Working Group Members Not in Attendance

Rep. Jonathan Jordan

Rep. David Lewis

Susan Osborne, Social Services Director, Alamance County

Hon. Bob Woodard, Commissioner Dare County

Convene

- Welcoming Remarks by SSWG Co-chairs
 - Sen. Barringer convened the Working Group with opening remarks
- Introductions by attendees
- Minutes from the 01.09.18 SSWG were approved without change
 - Rep. Stevens moved to approve minutes, K. Austin seconded, all were in favor
- M. Henderson reviewed the meeting's purposes and agenda; the Working Group adopted these without change

- Updates from SSWG members since last meeting
 - K. Austin noted that reducing child welfare caseloads was highlighted in a recent meeting among DHHS county commissioners. He indicated that there is some interest in having regional offices available to staff cases in counties that are having caseload pressures.
 - A. Stephenson noted that parties are interested in seeing *quality* hires at the regional level over a high quantity

Staffing Models for Regional Offices

- Review of staffing model options by A. Wall. Accompanying PowerPoint Presentation, Staffing Models Worksheet, and DHHS Staffing Summary handout can all be found at <https://www.sog.unc.edu/resources/microsites/social-services/materials>.
- SSWG’s work will soon be presented to the public for comment
- Review of past conversations, interviews, and research that informed the staffing model options being presented for deliberation
- Review of the DHHS Staffing Summary handout
 - Highlights
 - Significant regional presence already
 - Mix of supervisory functions
 - SSWG comments on DHHS Staffing Summary
 - Technical assistance seems “top-heavy”
 - Terms might need to be defined more clearly in order to better capture the current resources and allocation strategy
 - There is an assumption that present staffing levels and resource allocation are the most beneficial to DHHS, and this may not be the case
 - No NC FAST support positions included in the summary
- Review of Staffing Models Worksheet
 - These are not recommendations; instead they are options intended to facilitate and stimulate a conversation on staffing.
 - Brief review of each staffing model included on the Staffing Models Worksheet
- A. Sachs introduced SSWG members to the Staffing Models discussion and exercise
 - SSWG members participated in small group discussions and chose a staffing model to defend in front of the larger group
 - Large group debriefing and discussion following small group discussion
 - Group 1 Staffing Model: Option B
 - Group 1 Additional Comments: Hybrid Option B, add Child Welfare trainers and additional Technical Assistance, training representation at the regions would help get workers into the field and reduce caseload size
 - Group 2 Staffing Model: Option B

- Group 2 Additional Comments: There are some programs that *must* be included in the “some,” and this can vary by region; add technical assistance to staffing model, recognition of specialized populations across the state; personnel at the state level (central) should be re-allocated to the regional offices
- Group 3 Staffing Model: Option B
- Group 3 Additional Comments: Budgetary concerns for both Options C&D, favored flexibility in option B to adjust region to region depending on community needs; regional presence needs to provide support and staffing option B allows for this
 - Sen. Krawiec – It is important to avoid a growing bureaucracy because it is difficult to “roll back” once it’s been introduced
 - C. Dobbins – Lifelong social service staff struggle with a change in resource allocation at the local level; this should be framed as an additional layer of support
- Follow-up comments, questions from SOG and SSWG
 - There is an expectation that personnel and resources at the central state office be reallocated/re-deployed to regional offices to meet the needs of the regions; this expectation already exists at DHHS, but the expertise being sought for regional administrator positions might not currently exist
 - Specifics on staffing re-deployment will not be determined by SSWG
 - SSWG will make recommendations regarding *what* regional staffing should look like, not *how* those positions will be filled
 - Recommendations regarding staffing will also be offered by the national vendor
 - Roll-outs and pilot programs may need to be supported through staffing adjustments within Option B
 - Existing DSS staff are expressing concerns that their responsibilities will increase in response to regional supervision but will not be accompanied by an increase in resources or support
 - Change to the legislation might have caused confusion among current service providers about what they should expect from regional supervision
 - Concerns regarding quality/expertise of regional staff and regional administrator
 - Human Resource support for county departments has not been highlighted in these models; should be included in the more robust Option B
 - The change processes already occurring in North Carolina’s social services system may be causing anxiety

Discussion Maps

- Presentation of the draft maps by A. Wall. Presentation accompanied by PowerPoint Presentation, slides can be found at <https://www.sog.unc.edu/resources/microsites/social-services/materials>
 - Review of previously discussed mapping factors
 - Review of “Starting Point Maps” to be used as a guide by SSWG members as they discuss mapping options
 - Overview of the criteria used to generate the draft maps and the mapping tool facilitating the mapping discussion and exercise

Preliminary Mapping Discussion

- M. Henderson introduced SSWG members to the Mapping discussion and exercise
 - Small table discussions to confirm preferred criteria for grouping counties into regions, the preferred number of regions, and possible changes to one of the draft maps should be considered
 - Large group debriefing on small table discussions of map drafts and mapping criteria
 - Group One: Five Regions, Population, Judicial Districts, Network
 - Travel time considerations
 - DSS Children as a possible mapping criteria
 - Group Two: Seven Regions, Population, Judicial Districts, Network
 - Group Three: Five Regions, Population, Judicial Districts, Network
 - One edit – Moved one judicial district in the North West
 - American Indian communities should be considered
 - Greater likelihood of higher quality staffing with five regions
 - Additional comments:
 - Consider locations of potential operational hubs
 - Judicial redistricting may have an impact on regions
 - Large regions may want to consider sub-districts for designated personnel
 - Military and Tribal populations are more protected (contained within one region) in the five region map than in the seven region map

Wrap Up

- Review next steps
 - Both SSWG members and SOG staff will be responsible for disseminating maps for public comment
 - SSWG members are invited to share the maps with their local or state networks for comment

- Specifically tailor messages to certain partners/outside parties that may be interested in the regional maps
- Small group to finalize Supervisory Functions Table
 - Volunteers: G. Osborne, K. Austin, M. Becketts
- Review of upcoming meetings and agenda items
- Last thoughts on today's meeting
 - Small group discussions were very productive, focused
 - Progress has been continual, steady
 - Consensus across the group regarding maps and staffing is indicative of all the background work that the group has done together
 - Rewarding project with measurable progress
 - The knowledge and dedication of SSWG members has enriched the experience and sharpened the conversation