



Eric Holcomb, Governor  
State of Indiana

*Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services*

*First Steps*

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**First Steps Interagency Coordinated Council Meeting Minutes**

July 13, 2022

10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. EDT

**ICC members in attendance:** Cory Best, Mariann Frigo, Kristi Linson, Tammy Merritt Mulamba, Tonia Carriger (Proxy for Nicole Norvell), Jennifer Owens, Megan Purcell, Stacy Williams, DeAnna Woodruff, Joan Smith (Proxy for Gina Woodward)

**ICC Members not in attendance:** Karen Carradine, Representative Ed Clere, Mark Guyer, Sarah Sailors, Erica Deathe (Walker)

**First Steps State Staff in Attendance:** Christina Commons, David Brandon-Friedman, Maggie McCall, Sondra Tarter, Connie Young

Welcome and Introductions

Mariann Frigo, ICC Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and attendance was taken. Governor appointments for 2022-2025 members are pending.

The meeting was called to order at 10:08am. The council viewed a testimonial video from the First Steps State website <https://www.in.gov/fssa/firststeps/first-steps-offices/>.

**Approval of May Meeting Minutes**

Mariann Frigo, ICC Chair, asked if there were any corrections or edits to the May meeting minutes. No corrections or edits were reported. Mariann asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes as written. Stacy Williams made a motion to approve the minutes and Jennifer Owens seconded the motion. The council voted to approve as follows:

8 Yes

0 No

2 Abstained

The motion was carried.

**First Steps Update**

Christina Commons, First Steps State Director, shared an update (attached Power Point). She shared that three of her staff had been promoted and she has approval to hire three new positions. First Steps retention grants went out to 58 entities and individuals in the sum of \$2.8 million. The Indiana Early Intervention Virtual Conference, held in June, was a huge success. 815 participants registered for this 1 ½ day event. She thanked the conference partners and hopes next year's conference will be able to be in person with some hybrid options. EI Hub is adjusting the speed enhancements on the platform in service logging and case management. The state office will keep everyone informed as the enhancements go out. John Worth, PCG Project Manager, has resigned from PCG to take on a new opportunity and Chataun Barnett will be the new PCG Project Manager.

**Social Services Workforce Issues**

Mariann Frigo, ICC Chair, asked if people working in other social services programs could speak about the challenging employment issues they are currently running up against in their programs.



**Healthy Families**

Jennifer Owens, ICC council member, oversees a Healthy Families program in southern Indiana. She shared that yes, her program needs personnel. The program can adjust the number of children and families they assess and bring into the program.

**Health Department**

Kristi Linson, CSHCS State Director, shared that the health department is losing staff across programs. They are giving some pay increases and offering some sign-on bonuses as an employee incentive.

**Head Start**

Tonia Carriger, from Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning, (OECOSL), stated that Head Start programs all over Indiana are having staffing issues. The Office of Head Start is working on retention and sign-on bonuses. Local programs are having difficulty getting candidates to interview. This fall, all Head Start programs must be fully enrolled again. Programs are trying to increase staffing in classrooms to help with behavior issues. There is a 27% turnover rate right now in the program. There is a high need for more infant/toddler slots in the Early Head Start program across the state.

**Comments from public**

First Steps agencies are having trouble finding providers to work in the system leaving some families without services. Deanna Woodruff, ICC parent, spoke up and said that one virtual visit to get things started is better than nothing. She stated that she would have strategies to work on with my child while I wait for a provider. Christina Commons, First Steps State Director, asked for any other parents to weigh in on this idea. Two other parents agreed with Deanna. Something is better than nothing. Christina Commons stated that this is an opportunity to expand our knowledge on how to best explain what a virtual visit looks like to families. She also stated that this should be a continued conversation and the council may want to add this item to future agendas.

A few SPOE directors spoke up stating that if you have an open position at your office there are not any applicants to interview. It is hard to cover geographic areas of cluster due to travel distances to family homes. The SPOE office is looking at distributing caseloads differently, streamlining paperwork and completing more virtual visits with families. Another director stated that the job is more stressful for service coordinators because they can't give the families what they need. Mariann Frigo said that from an agency perspective, she sees and feels the stress of the service coordinators in finding a provider for the family.

**Advocacy for Budget Funding**

Stacy Williams and Mariann Frigo have drafted a proposal and sent it to Representative Clere for review along with strategies to advocate to legislators about a budget increase. The 2019 reimbursement rate did not reflect the recommendations of the 2018 study. They will revise the proposal with the new amount discussed today at the meeting and include a cost-of-living increase every budget year and send it out to Representative Clere for review.

**Sub-Committee Summary****Advocacy/Fiscal**

Both committees shared they are working on a budget ask from legislators. The council may want to additionally ask for cost-of-living adjustment. Both sub-committees will work on final numbers. U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website was shared with the council:

[https://data.bls.gov/cew/apps/data\\_views/data\\_views.htm#tab=Tables](https://data.bls.gov/cew/apps/data_views/data_views.htm#tab=Tables)

**Professional Development**

Katie Herron shared that the committee talked about Family Guided Routines Based Intervention (FGRBI) and how to communicate throughout the state to stakeholders on what a typical FGRBI visit looks like. They are working on tweaking a few of the FGRBI resources to share statewide.

**Legislative Update**

Representative Clere was not present at the meeting. Hannah Carlock, from the Indiana ARC, shared that the general assembly will hold a special session from July 25 – August 15, 2022.

**Public Comment**

Mariann Frigo, ICC Chair, asked if the public had any comments to share. No one from the public had any comments.

**Adjourn**

Mariann Frigo, ICC Chair, asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Deanna Woodruff made the motion and Cory Best seconded the motion. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 12:28pm. The next meeting is September 14, 2022, from 10am-12:30pm EST at the same location: Julia Carson Government Center 300 E. Fall Creek Parkway North Drive Indianapolis, IN 46205 (Second Floor).

**Minutes were respectfully submitted by Janet Ballard, ICC Staff Support**