

# Racial Disproportionality

## Newsletter

W I N T E R 2 0 1 4



### CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION

#### Historical Note:

Centennial Accord was signed August 4, 1989 between the federally recognized Indian tribes of Washington and Washington state to achieve mutual goals through an improved relationship between the sovereign governments.

[www.goia.wa.gov](http://www.goia.wa.gov)

The Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs was created in 1971 to improve public policy development and delivery of Government services to the Hispanic community.

[www.cha.wa.gov](http://www.cha.wa.gov)

The Washington State Commission on African American Affairs was created in 1992 to improve the well-being of African Americans by enabling them to participate fully in all fields of endeavor and by assisting them in obtaining government services.

[www.caa.wa.gov](http://www.caa.wa.gov)

### Message from Jennifer Strus,

### Children's Administration Assistant Secretary

First of all, I would like to say how great it has been to work with the disproportionality staff led by Deborah Purce and Bernice Morehead. I would also like to welcome Shanne Montague, who has just joined Kathy Taylor as part of the disproportionality team at headquarters. Kathy brings extensive experience in the field working in disproportionality and race issues, while Shanne brings expertise in Indian child welfare issues. This year we also have disproportionality leads throughout the entire state.

This collaboration – our work together to protect those in the child welfare system from racial inequities and disparities – has been among the highlights of my first year as Children's Administration Assistant



Secretary.

I know you share my enthusiasm for the continuation of this work to ensure race will not be a factor in how children fare in the child welfare system and to be sure we act in a culturally competent manner in all that we do. We look forward to sharing future information about our Disproportionality Strategic Plan, which will emphasize our prejudice reduction training and coaching in cultural competence to improve social worker practice. In fact,

our mandatory training for first year social workers will include disproportionality. We are also in the process of reviewing the racial equity analysis tool to ensure that as we develop new policies and practice that they are equitable for all children.

As always, and very importantly, we will engage the community in this work. Plans call for us to develop teams of leaders in communities across the state to help develop innovative ideas on eliminating disproportionality. Again, I thank you for your work and welcome any suggestions you may have.

Advisory Committee Language from SHB 1472:

“Not later than June 1, 2008, the advisory committee created in subsection (1) of this section shall report to the secretary of the department of social and health services on the results of the analysis. If the results of the analysis indicate disproportionality or disparity exists for any racial or ethnic group in any region of the state, the committee, in conjunction with the secretary of the department of social and health services, shall develop a plan for remedying the disproportionality or disparity. The remediation plan shall include: (a) Recommendations for administrative and legislative actions related to appropriate programs and services to reduce and eliminate disparities in the system and improve the long-term outcomes for children of color who are served by the system; and (b) performance measures for implementing the remediation plan. To the extent possible and appropriate, the remediation plan shall be developed to integrate the recommendations required in this subsection with the department’s existing compliance plans, training efforts, and other practice improvement and reform initiatives in progress. The advisory committee shall be responsible for ongoing evaluation of current and prospective policies and procedures for their contribution to or effect on racial disproportionality and disparity.

## Washington State Disproportionality Advisory Committee

In 2007, the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee was formed under a legislative mandate to determine whether children of racial and ethnic minorities were over represented in Washington’s child welfare system.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy provided technical assistance to the Committee. Findings published in 2008 indicated that American Indian, Black, and Latino children were more likely to be reported to Child Protective Services (CPS) than white children. Among children referred to CPS, Indian and Black children were more likely to be placed in

foster care and more likely to remain in foster care for more than two years than White children referred to CPS. ([Washington Institute for Public Policy March 2011](#))

Racial disproportionality is defined as the overrepresentation of children of color in the child welfare system compared to their numbers in the general population. Across the country, children of color enter and remain in the child welfare system at rates greater than their proportions in the population. Racial disparity in the child welfare system refers to the treatment and services provided to chil-

dren of color compared to White children. Children of color in the child welfare system do not have equitable access to culturally appropriate services and supports delivered by culturally competent and sensitive staff and service providers.

In response to the findings in 2008, the Committee developed recommendations for remediation and the Department of Social and Health Services Children’s Administration began work to put those recommendations in place.

**“If you can’t fly then Run  
If you can’t run then Walk  
If you can’t walk then Crawl,  
But whatever you do you have to  
KEEP MOVING FORWARD.”  
Martin Luther King, Jr.**



# Racial Disproportionality Initiatives

REMEDIATION INITIATIVES <i>We expect these initiatives to decrease disproportionality.</i>	Completed	Ongoing	Eliminated
Evaluate Structured Decision Making (SDM®)	X		
Evaluate Family Team Decision-Making (FTDM)	X		
Implement kinship care policies	X		
Comply with Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)		X	
Support the enactment of a Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act	X		
Implement cultural competency and anti-racism training (incorporated into supplemental initiative on training)	X		
Implement Council on Accreditation Caseload Standards			X
Implement Mandated Reporter Training	X		
Conduct Assessment of Children's Administration on disproportionality	X		
Recommended implementation of a Racial Equity Impact Analysis Tool	X		
Explore implementation of In-Home, Community Based Services that will keep children safe and reduce the need for out-of-home placement.	x		
Increased recruitment and licensing of families of color	X		
Increased documentation of racial, ethnic, and tribal affiliation data in FamLink	X		
Modification of the use of long-term foster care for children of color 12 and older		X	
Established mandatory disproportionality awareness training for Children's Administration staff	X		

The results of a 2008 study conducted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that racial disproportionality exists for Native American, Black and Hispanic children in the Washington state child welfare system. In response to these findings, the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee developed recommendations for remediation and DSHS' Children's Administration began work to implement remediation activities. Children's Administration monitors the implementation of the remediation plan. The table to the left lists each initiative and its current status, including the four supplemental remediation initiatives that began in 2012. As used in the chart, "completed," means the initiative has been developed and is being implemented. It does not mean implementation is completed, because implementation is often a multi-year process.

**We plan to publish this newsletter four times a year to keep you updated on our strategies and progress. Quarterly newsletters will be published:**

- ◆ Winter
- ◆ Spring
- ◆ Summer
- ◆ Fall

**Regional Disproportionality Leads:**

**Region 1 N:** Charina Carothers 509-363-3319 [charina.carothers@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:charina.carothers@dshs.wa.gov); Cassie Anderson 509-363-3345 [cassie.anderson@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:cassie.anderson@dshs.wa.gov)

**Region 1 S:** Yolanda Quintero 509-836-5775 [yolanda.quinteroalvarez@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:yolanda.quinteroalvarez@dshs.wa.gov) ; Angel Tovar 509-836-5750 [angel.tovar@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:angel.tovar@dshs.wa.gov)

**Region 2:** They are in the process of hiring a full time Disproportionality Program Manager.

**Region 3 N:** Veronica Hinojosa, Tacoma, 253-983-6253 [veronica.hinojosa@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:veronica.hinojosa@dshs.wa.gov)

**Region 3 S:** Nicole Miller, Tumwater, 360-725-6680 [nicole.miller@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:nicole.miller@dshs.wa.gov)

**Headquarters staff:** Kathy Taylor, 360-902-0222 [kathy.taylor@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:kathy.taylor@dshs.wa.gov)

Shanne Montague, 360-902-0251 [shanne.montague@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:shanne.montague@dshs.wa.gov)

**WSRDAC 2014 Meeting Schedule:**

- February 19, 2014, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Lookout Room, OB2, Olympia, WA
- March 19, 2014, 9-11 a.m., conference call: (760) 569-9000 pin: 857185#
- April 16, 2014 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Jamestown S’Klallam Bay Tribe, Sequim, WA



Meet the disproportionality leads

Regional disproportionality leads work with field staff to provide information and training around disproportionality. Most of the leads have this role in addition to their other job duties.

**Region 1:**

Region 1 North includes the Spokane, Omak, Colville, Colfax, Newport, Clarkston, Moses Lake, Wenatchee, Republic & Lincoln Co., offices. Region 1 South includes the Richland, Ellensburg, Sunnyside, Toppenish, Yakima, Walla Walla, Goldendale and White Salmon offices. Connie Lambert-Eckel is the Regional Administrator for Region 1. Nicole LaBelle is the Region 1N Deputy RA, and Ken Nichols is the Region 1S Deputy RA.

**Region 1 North:**

Charina Carothers has a master’s degree in social work from Eastern Washington University. She has been with Children’s Administration since 2007 in both Child and Family Welfare Services and CPS in the Indian Child Welfare section.



Charina is a Social and Health Program Consultant 3, Family to Family/Family Team Decision Making Facilitator. She is a trainer for Building Bridges and co-lead for the Region 1 North Disproportionality Advisory Committee..

Cassie Anderson has a Master’s degree in Criminology from Portland State University. She has been with Children’s Administration since 2006 and has worked in both the Spokane and Toppenish offices. Cassie has worked as a CPS and CFWS worker. Cassie has supervised



ICW/CFWS and Lincoln County CPS and CFWS. She is currently supervising CPS, FAR, FVS and Tribal payments in the ICW

Section in Spokane. She is a co-lead for the Region 1 North Disproportionality Advisory Committee.

**Region 1 South:**

My name is Angel Tovar. I was born and raised in the Lower Yakima Valley area and graduated from the University of Washington in Seattle. It was there that I discovered my passion for working in the social services field. A position



in the mental health area brought me back to my old stomping grounds and in November of 1999, I came to work for the Division of Child and Family Services as an investigator out of the

Sunnyside office. During my tenure there, I obtained a graduate degree in social services from Eastern Washington University. I subsequently supervised the Intake and investigations units in Richland and then Toppenish. I’m currently a Family Team Decision-Making Specialist and have been the Regional Disproportionality Lead since April 2011.



Yolanda has an MSW from Eastern Washington University. She has been with Children’s Administration since 2000 and has worked in the

Yakima office and most currently in the Sunnyside office. Yolanda has primarily worked in CFWS and since 2007, a Supervisor of all programs in Sunnyside. She is a co-lead for the Region 1 South Disproportionality Advisory

**Region 2:**

Region 2 North consists of the Bellingham, Mount Vernon, Smokey Point, Lynwood, Everett, Sky Valley, and Friday & Oak Harbor offices. Region 2 South consists of King West & White Center, Kent, ICW, King East, and MLK Jr., offices. Natalie Green is the Regional Administrator. Sandy Kinney is Region 2N Deputy RA, and Bolesha Johnson is Region 2S, Deputy RA.

This region is in the process of hiring a full-time, Disproportionality Program Manager.

**Region 3:**

Region 3 North consists of the Bremerton, Pierce East, West, & South offices. Region 3 South consists of Tumwater, Centralia, Vancouver, Stevenson, Long Beach, Aberdeen, Shelton, Port Angeles, Forks, Kelso, Port Townsend, and South Bend offices. Joel Odimba is the Regional Administrator. John March is the Region 3N, Deputy RA, and the region is in the process of hiring a Region 3S Deputy RA.

**Region 3 North:**



My name is Veronica Hinojosa. I have a master's degree in social work from Eastern Washington University and have been an employee of Children's Administration since 1996. I have worked as a social worker, social work supervisor, and Area Administrator. I have worked in rural and urban offices, worked closely with Tribes, and worked in Child and Family Welfare Services and adoptions. For the last four years I have been the Racial Disproportionality Lead.

# Happenings in the Regions

**Region 1 North:**

A Community Summit was held in spring 2013 with members of the African American, Hispanic, and Native American communities to identify obstacles and barriers present in recruiting and maintaining foster homes of color. The Summit revealed a few areas, including one that required immediate attention: the community not trusting the Department. Do You Care is an effort by Children's Administration staff in the Spokane area to repair relationships within the community. Do You Care is giving back and supporting, it is not asking anything in return. Our hope is that in re-building trusting relationships, we will obtain support from others as it pertains to children in our care -- that through our service and effort, people will respond by asking how they can help as foster parents, relative caregivers, mentors, volunteers etc. We have identified four areas for this group to work on: foster parent support; support of children in care; recruiting foster families representing the diversity in our communities; and recruiting volunteers to help with providing support.

If you have any questions you can talk to Rick Holcomb, Charina Carothers, Laurie Palmquist, Shannon Boniface, Lyn Andrews or Cassie Anderson.

**Region 1 South:**

As is the case in most state offices, you'll likely hear about a lack of service providers in local areas, especially contracted, evidence-based providers. Region 1 South long has lacked service providers due to its large geographical area. However, with the ever-expanding Latino demographics in this part of the state, we have always recognized the need for culturally sensitive providers and those who speak the same language as a large portion of the community members. After many efforts by Division of Child and Family Services staff and members of the local disproportionality committee, the Department established a working relationship with Aracelia Sanchez, evidence-based provider. We look forward to working with her and adding other Spanish-speaking evidence-based providers our list.

**Region 3 South:**

My name is Nicole Miller, and I am the Indian Child Welfare Program Consultant. I have worked for DSHS for 18 years, the last 12 at Children's Administration. I have worked as a CPS investigator, a Child and Family Services Social Worker and as a facilitator for Family Team Decision Making meetings. I also am a Prejudice Reduction Trainer. My friends, family, and coworkers would tell you I am very passionate about issues of social justice. I am committed to reducing the

disproportionate number of children of color in our State systems. I am a married mother of three children and we are a Seahawk Family!



## Happenings in the Regions

### Region 2 North and South:

The Everett office dedicates 30-45 minutes at every monthly all staff to the topic of Disproportionality. Topics are identified by the Disproportionality Regional Committee.

- The workshop “Spotlight on Disproportionality” was held 10/23/13-10/24/13 with Joyce James, Associate Deputy Executive Commissioner, Texas Center for Elimination of Disproportionality & Disparity, and Julie Nelson, Director of Seattle Office of Civil Rights. The workshop focused on discussion and action planning on how to stimulate work towards racial equality and equity.
- Participants reviewed the historical views that led to disproportionality
- Thinking outside the box on change
- Common language used to describe disproportionality issues and how it at times inhibits change

There was cross systems participation and training including CA, JRA, Health Care, Education in dealing with disproportionality, which is a common theme amongst them. There was a focus on core principals to achieve racial equity. There was discussion around the utilization of a Race Equity Tool to utilize in policy development.

- The Office of Indian Child Welfare, Seattle, celebrated Native American month in November 2013. A gathering that included a silent auction, potluck and Indian tacos occurred. Hiram Calflooming facilitated the event as well as invited one of our former foster children. There was traditional drumming to open the event and traditional songs to close the event. Staff and community had the opportunity to experience Native American culture and tradition. It provided the opportunity for staff, local tribal partners and the community to interact.

### Region 3 North:

On October 24, 2013 over 100 people attended Haboo, cultural immersion training for CA staff and community partners, jointly hosted jointly by Children’s Administration and the Suquamish and Port Gamble Tribes. The intent of Haboo (which refers to storytelling in the Suquamish language) was to weave information about ICW policy and practice through a day filled with cultural spiritual practices, personal stories and traditional foods to teach the WHY we do WHAT we do for Native American children. The gathering took place in the inspirational Suquamish Tribal Community House located on land that holds great meaning for the Tribe. Participants were moved on a deeply emotional level and inspired to improve the quality of our practice for tribal families. Eddie Screechowl and Casey Family Programs sponsored the luncheon.

### Region 3 South:

A recent luncheon was held for Local Indian Child Welfare (LICWAC) members to show appreciation and provide them with an opportunity to provide constructive feedback on local office ICWA practice. This resulted in the local office AA’s and LICWAC members planning All-Staff presentations for the purpose of increasing LICWAC staffings and soliciting ideas for how to improve the quality of the LICWAC staffing.

**“If you don’t like the way the world is, you change it. You have an obligation to change it. You just do it one step at a time.”**

**Marian Wright Edleman**