



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE *of* PROGRAMS *and* PLANNING

**STATUS ON THE COUNCIL OF GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN  
MINUTES**

December 11, 2020  
Via Videoconference

**Members in Attendance:**

Talya Bergeron	Kathleen Richey
Heidi Bourgeois	Lakeisha Robertson
Kathy Coleman	Danna Spayde
Rose Dolittle	Ayn W. Stehr
Tewabetch Negatu	Joanna Tonguis
Mary Norris	James Vidacovich

**Call to Order:**

Talya Bergeron called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

**GRGC Legislation:**

The council discussed how GRGC council will function in 2021. Moving forward the GRGC Council will function as a subcommittee of the Children's Cabinet Advisory Board (CCAB). Currently, CCAB has six subcommittees which provide presentations to the Children's Cabinet at the end of each year. GRGC would either be the seventh subcommittee or would operate in conjunction with the Family Stability subcommittee. Judge Richey also noted that technically, she is not officially on the council due to an oversight. Although CASA was a part of Louisianachildre.org the legislation was never updated to reflect this change.

**Updates on TANF**

James Vidacovich stated that there was a possibility that the kinship care subsidy would be raised to \$450, however this is still in the works. If raised this increase would be double the \$222 amount that is currently being provided to kinship care providers.

**Reflection of 2020 priorities**

Members discussed how curator fees were still an issue among grandparents. Potential solutions discussed included having more attorneys serve pro bono work. This can be achieved through council members recruiting more volunteers to help with this in the January and April meetings of the Access to Justice Committee. Talya mentioned she would bring this up at their next meeting.

**Continued Areas of concern include**

- Addressing concerns of grandparents as it related to COVID
- Extending the mandate to more than a year
- How to address technology barriers for grandparents
- Addressing nutrition of kids and grandparents since many grandparents don't qualify for SNAP
- Mental Health of grandparents and the impacts of isolation
- Loss of social and emotional connections during COVID

### **Nutrition & Mental Health**

Kathy asked if anyone was familiar with Farmers to Family. Judge Richey stated that the program was run through the Department of Agriculture and was supported by state and federal funding. Mary Norris mentioned that Medicaid has relaxed a lot of their requirements as it relates to providing tele-med and many programs have waived restrictions.

### **Recommendations for 2021**

The Council was informed that at the next meeting members will discuss recommendations for 2021.

### **Public Comments**

Andrea Couch from Southwest Louisiana stated she has been raising her two grandchildren for the past four years. She stated she works for the school district in her area and shared some of her experiences. She also expressed wanting to get involved with the work that the council is doing.

### **Closing Remarks**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m.