



## MEETING NOTES

### Region 1 Action Council Meeting

Location: 608 E. State St., Jacksonville, IL 62650

Date & Time: December 12, 2022 3:00pm – 5:00pm

Council Members present: Brooke Walker, Rosemary Grace, April Darringer, Kathy Fellhauer, Sarah Farha, Brittney Brokaw, Meyonna Minner,  
Council Members Absent: Vianey Torres, Julie Stratman, Erica Maynard, Shanna Edison, Cassie Delaney

#### **3:00pm: Welcome & Introductions**

Notes: The Birth to Five Illinois staff were introduced to the group, and the individuals (and their roles).

Council is still short on some targeted membership, and Anita Hanke of AOK Network has stepped down from Council due to resignation from her position. We wish Anita well!

Council members were asked to encourage anyone who holds elected office, those from the faith-based community, second family member representatives, rural PFA's, home based care providers, and residents from Scott County to Bridget English for possible recruitment. Family Council recruitment is ongoing.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Continue to target demographics listed above

#### **3:10pm: Icebreaker Activity**

Notes: Icebreaker question: What is the biggest issue for your organization that either remains unresolved going into 2023 or will present a new challenge in 2023?

Discussion included the following remarks/comments:

- Not enough child care openings to meet demand
- Employees not allowed in buildings until fingerprinting is complete (can take up to four weeks) - disincentivizes workers from waiting point of hire to fingerprint completion because child care centers cannot train or pay people during the wait time
- Child care centers not able to compete with increase in wages in other sectors
- EI services delayed/non-existent
- Public funding percentages in child care centers increasing from 60% to 80% post

## COVID

- SPED services in smaller districts and mental health resources are lacking - is it possible to explore co-ops for increased access?

### 3:30pm: Demographic Data by Region Discussion

Notes: Regional boundaries and school districts were examined for accuracy. One district (Mendon Unity) appears to be missing.

- **Regional population counts** prompted discussion of what council members assume to be a sharp increase in birth rates in 2020-2021. Current data for these years are unavailable, but at least two council members do not feel that historical trend data will accurately predict what these numbers are. This prompted an observation/question among council members; does the increase in demand for EI correlate to the assumed/observed uptick in pregnancies combined with the lack of socialization/developmental monitoring and emergent delays post COVID?
- **Race and ethnicity discussion** highlights: Quote from member: "Region is whiter than I thought." Trends indicate largest growth in multiracial category - is this due to the recent addition of this as an option? Hispanic/Latino children and black children make up the majority of the non white population. Regional maps show concentrations of these children in Beardstown (Hispanic), Jacksonville (Black), and Quincy (Black). Are immigrant/refugee populations being undercounted?
- **Federal poverty guidelines** were introduced with data observed as not being current to this fiscal year. Council members could not quote exact amounts of current guidelines, but agreed they had increased and were expecting another adjustment in January. All agreed that these numbers are artificially low, and don't represent the reality for families. If numbers aren't adjusted this will impact HS and CCAP numbers significantly.
- **Household Language:** Concentration of Spanish speaking families/children in Cass County correlates to Beardstown, IL. One board member reminded the group that there is a significant African immigrant population in Beardstown and an emergent population in Brown County, as well. Question from council member: What languages were counted in this data set? Was ASL included? Morgan County (Jacksonville) is home to Illinois School for the Deaf - what considerations need to be made for this group?

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Circle Back: What languages were counted in this data set? Is ASL included? Are immigrant/refugee populations being undercounted? What are the 2021 birth rates?

### 4:00pm: Demographic Data by County Discussion

- **Early Childhood Population Under 5 :** Observed that growth in Cass County exceeds all other counties; Council members questioned access to women's healthcare, teen pregnancies, religious, and other cultural considerations among a large immigrant population. Observed that even rural, smaller counties (by population) are keeping pace of counties with higher populations.
- **Child Poverty Rates:** Observed that the middle of the region is very poor (Barry area), as

well as a pocket in the Northern part of region (Mendon Unity). Looking at rural areas with less poverty led to discussion of Camp Point (outside of Quincy). This is a shrinking community by population, but growing in terms of small businesses and commerce. This is due to the school district attracting a number of people from Quincy and the surrounding area. Highest concentration of poverty in Quincy, northeast Jacksonville, and Beardstown.

- **Race/Ethnicity:** Discussion about a pocket of Asian population in Adams County - council members attributed this to the medical system and 4 year college located there. There was no correlation to this population and an Asian speaking population in the region, so it is thought that these folks are likely ethnic Asians with a high degree of English language fluency. This discussion raised questions about similar considerations for Morgan County, home to Illinois College. However, diversity among Illinois College staff is declining in recent years, which might explain why Morgan County doesn't have the same ethnic representation. Further discussion about lack of overall diversity led to conversation of heightened need for diverse representation in curriculum and workforce in order to both provide representation for nonwhite children and to expose/normalize diversity for the white children of the region. Cass, Morgan, and Adams counties are most diverse (in that order). Cass County numbers significantly exceed Hispanic population state average with observation that this is likely undercounted. Question posed: How were African immigrants counted on the census?
- **Under Grandparents Care:** Observed that Pike County numbers are very high? Question about drug (meth) use in the county? One council member shared a story of a pre-service education student that was performing observations in a Pike County classroom where only one student was not in foster care. What could be driving these very high rates of children in foster care - is this indicative of social issues or an issue with DCFS in the region? Some council members commented that this also could be an issue of access to women's healthcare and teen pregnancies.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Circle Back: Teen pregnancy rates? Drug use rates/data? Foster care/DCFS data for Pike Co?

#### **4:30pm: Meeting Schedules/Cadence and Exit Ticket:**

Notes: Discussion of group availability and best times of day to meet. Several need late afternoon to accommodate child care center/pre-k schedules. Effort to limit meetings to between 60-90 minutes.

Exit ticket - Jamboard activity for sharing out areas of data that most impacts council members in their jobs. Among those referenced, "working families" and "poverty rates" were the most common.

Decisions made: Determined that 2n and 4th Tuesdays of each month would be meeting cadence. Late afternoon works for most, with some members qualifying availability during certain months/seasons

Next Steps:

Circle Back:

**4:40pm: Additional Questions - no questions raised**

**4:45pm - Meeting adjourned**