

## **Youth Budget Commission Meeting**

06/11/2020

Minutes

**Commissioners in attendance:** Co-Chair Ford, Co-Chair Shaver, Commissioner Cates, Commissioner Crabb, Commissioner Flores, Commissioner Kazmi, Commissioner Montorio-Archer, Commissioner Vega, Commissioner Villa, Commissioner Zumdahl

**Children's Home and Aid's staff and others in attendance:** Paula Corrigan-Halpern, Kiara Jackson, Eric Mayo, Curt Clemons-Mosby, Kristen Nuyen, Ali Schoon, Kelly Sparks

### **1. Welcome (Co-Chair Shaver)**

Co-Chair Shaver welcomed the commission to the meeting and discussed the compounding challenges that youth are facing today with a pandemic, collapsing of the economy, and the failure of society to resolve racism and equity issues. Shaver commented that the Youth Budget Commission has a responsibility to acknowledge the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color. The commission can bring solutions through its work to improve the lives of youth and their opportunities to succeed by age 25. Shaver quoted a Chicago Tribune article of an interview with a young person in Chicago and her feelings of frustration. Eric Mayo took roll call of Commissioners; a quorum was confirmed. Co-chair Shaver called on Commissioners to introduce themselves for the benefit of those on the call. In response to Co-Chair Shaver's suggestion about youth involvement in the Commission and an idea of a youth as a Commissioner, Commissioner Cates suggested checking in with Chicago Freedom School and/or Mikva Challenge and or Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health and that she could check in with CFS or Mikva to get youth involved for the August meeting.

Co-Chair Shaver introduced Kiara Jackson, Youth Policy Advocate with Children's Home and Aid, as a contributor to the Commission's discussion for this meeting.

Co-Chair Shaver reviewed virtual etiquette during the meeting including how to mute yourself to reduce noise and utilizing the chat function.

### **2. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the February 5, 2020 meeting were provided to the Commissioners for their approval. Hearing no discussion or questions, Commissioner Montorio-Archer motioned to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Crabb seconded the motion, and the minutes were adopted unanimously.

### **3. Discussion: COVID-19, Police brutality and its impact on youth in Illinois**

Co-Chair Shaver re-introduced Kiara Jackson to discuss the Start to Finish Coalition as a coalition with similar goals to the Youth Budget Commission. Jackson discussed the coalition's March webinar that pulled together panelists from across the state to discuss COVID-19 and its impact on youth. The main themes as brought up during this webinar were the digital divide for youth, workforce, violence, mental health, their families, and service providers in addition to the need for innovative systems of support for this population. Jackson highlighted the discussion of how COVID-19 has exacerbated issues that were already present, including lack of access and the disproportionate impact for different socio-economic statuses and races/ethnicities. Co-Chair Shaver inquired about how these panelists were engaging with youth who were working, not working, and/or in school during this pandemic. Jackson mentioned the panelists thinking of new ways to engage with and keep youth motivated and the difficulty of students gaining access to broadband connectivity for their education. Commissioner

Cates brought up the need for a future conversation to be centered on “defund the police,” since it is a major topic driven mainly by young people and she expressed it is directly related to our mission of moving resources from harmful or ineffective practice and to interventions and supports that work. The spirit of this topic is important especially considering the disproportionate impact of law enforcement abuse on young people. In addition, Commissioner Cates brought up the possibility of seeking policy solutions to provide youth with proven asset building opportunities (eg CSAs, "baby bonds", matching savings, etc.) about economic security (assets vs. income) for youth.

#### **4. Discussion: Potential policy solutions acknowledging and addressing current needs of youth**

Co-Chair Shaver called on Representative Villa to discuss how her district was faring during this pandemic. Representative Villa discussed that the schools in her district are focused on meeting the basic needs of their students and families. It was communicated that food pantries need additional resources to distribute the food necessary for their clients and that mental health is a main concern in the district. Representative Villa reiterated the disproportionality of the impacts on communities of color and communities living in poverty. Co-Chair Shaver discussed the need for connectivity to address mental health issues.

Co-Chair Shaver asked other Commissioners to discuss what their areas are experiencing. Commissioner Crabb responded that rural communities are particularly impacted by the pandemic and resulting economic impacts. The southern, rural counties of Illinois are struggling especially to gain access to food, cell phone service, and wifi. Commissioner Crabb communicated that these areas are experiencing issues with food deserts, child care deserts, lack of virtual learning opportunities, lack of accessible COVID-19 testing sites, poorest health outcomes, mental health issues, increases in child abuse reports, and decreases in child routine immunizations. Commissioner Crabb stated that immunizations rates were 80% lower this month compared to June of last year.

Co-Chair Shaver highlighted the themes emerging from the discussion: connecting and engaging youth to the services available across the state; supporting youth who are already struggling to find jobs.

Co-Chair Shaver invited Co-Chair Ford, to comment on the digital divide. Mayo provided background into legislation proposed by Representative Ford that was signed into law to increase broadband access. The legislation will be a study that analyzes the feasibility of low cost to free broadband access for every Illinoisan.

Co-Chair Shaver invited further discussion about contact tracing to engage youth in employment opportunities and in addressing immediate needs of their communities. Mayo reviewed how contact tracing is used to map the spread of COVID-19 and provide appropriate resources and instruction to those impacted. Mayo highlighted that contact tracers are more effective when they can empathize and understand and are within the communities they are tracing. Disconnected youth (of which there are 170,000 from last count in 2017) are a unique hiring opportunity to connect communities and increase the effectiveness of contact tracing.

Co-Chair Shaver invited Curt Clemons-Mosby, staff director of the Commission, to provide guidance on how to move forward the concept of hiring disconnected youth as contact tracers through the Governor’s office. Co-Chair Shaver wanted to understand the current vision of the Governor’s Office and work with them on this idea. He suggested that we meet with the Governor’s Office within the next 2-3 weeks to discuss policy ideas. Clemons-Mosby commented that the Commission should identify a list of policy priorities and he can get the individuals necessary for the policy items and we can bring to the table for the discussion.

Co-Chair Shaver provided the idea that the Commission could meet more frequently to develop policy priorities. Co-chair Shaver invited Commissioners to comment or ask questions and email Eric or Kiara. Commissioner Montorio-Archer provided the idea that the Commission meet on a regular basis and should be flexible with their time due to the many topics that need to be discussed. Co-Chair Shaver pointed out that the Commission can meet more regularly while continuing to follow all open meeting act requirements. Co-Chair Shaver inquired if increased meetings are acceptable to the Commission. The consensus of the Commission was to meet more regularly.

Commissioner Villa commented that the Commission must be aware and think critically of historical, current, and future contexts regarding COVID-19, Black Lives Matter, and power structures. Commissioner Villa mentioned the Governor's Office should hear from us and voiced the idea that the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus should be invited to the Commission meetings in addition to youth that the Commission members work with. Multiple Commissioners agreed with the idea of inviting the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus. Commissioner Villa highlighted that structural issues should be the priority of the Commission and we need structural changes. Co-Chair Shaver pointed out that we need to do more with our voice and suggested the Commission draft a statement on equity with input from the Commissioners that can be used to provide guidance moving forward. Commissioner Vega pointed out that any statement should include actionable steps to drive the Commission's recommendations. Commissioner Vega also commented that looking at equity is important especially in regards to health disparities, impact of violence and trauma in communities, and the use of data.

Commissioner Cates mentioned the statement should provide action and provided the following suggestion that we narrow our action to review the budget in depth in regard to how funds can increase or erode racial inequity and that the recommendations are proven to close the racial equity gap. Commissioner Flores mentioned including social determinants of health to be included in the statement and our work. Commissioner Montorio-Archer suggested that a statement on equity should be given appropriate time and consideration with the input of other stakeholders such as the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus prior to its release. The statement should also be a living document that continuously guides the Commission in its work. Commissioner Villa agreed and stated that the Commissioners should ensure they are lifting the voices of their representation in this statement and in the recommendations.

Co-Chair Shaver agreed and referred to Paula Corrigan-Halpern to review the themes of this conversation. Corrigan-Halpern reviewed the following:

- meeting more frequently as a Commission
- including experts and policy makers from the Governor's Office and the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus in the conversation;
- utilizing meetings to capture short-term and long-term policy recommendations with the budget analysis in mind;
- ensuring the voice of youth is included in Commission conversations and decisions;
- and drafting a statement on racial equity that focuses on the actions the Commission will take.

## **5. Presentation of Fiscal Scan for FY 19**

Co-Chair Shaver introduced Kelly Sparks, Consultant from Maple Grove Objective, to present the Fiscal Scan for FY19. Sparks communicated this was the third fiscal scan that has been done and the goal is to have it released by the end of June. Sparks reviewed the fiscal scan slide decks with the Commission. Sparks reiterated that although the Commission wanted to look at operational and

administrative budget items, they were not included in this scan due to their complexity of aligning them with expenditures. Sparks commented that these items can be looked at in a future scan if the Commission chooses.

Commissioner Cates commented that the budget coding for the Department of Corrections as “safe” isn’t necessarily accurate and we should be intentional and while also mentioning that how can we make a budget statement that is being categorized as helping youth but may in fact be harming them, or failing to mitigate the harm caused by racial injustice—in that same vein thinking about how some funding from DCFS actively harms youth. Commissioner Kazmi reiterated the importance of ensuring that our programming/services maintain for the well-being of children, youth, and families in IL.

Sparks responded by explaining that the commission could look at discussing in more detail with agencies how the money from certain budget codes is being spent and how the commission is defining codes in comparison to how the agencies are defining their budget codes. Sparks reminded the Commission that they can look at outside funds which might be helpful in increasing the budget to benefit youth. After reviewing the fiscal scan, Sparks commented that they can review with individual members in more detail if needed. Sparks and Clemons-Mosby will work offline to address some of the questions about developmental goals classification and the classification of the types of programs listed in the goals.

#### **6. Measuring youth success in Illinois: Update**

Co-Chair Shaver inquired about additional comments or questions for the fiscal scan presentation. Hearing none, Co-Chair Shaver asked the commission to table this agenda item, which would be presented by Mayo, for another meeting since the time is limited. The next agenda item was tabled for the next meeting.

#### **7. State budget FY 21: Update**

Co-Chair Shaver invited Clemons-Mosby to review the state budget for FY 21. Clemons-Mosby reviewed portions of the state budget for FY 21 as it pertained to the Commission’s purpose. Clemons-Mosby commented that this budget relies on federal relief funds to help state and local initiatives throughout the upcoming fiscal year and if Illinois doesn’t receive federal funds agencies will be major budget cuts. Reference the FY21 Budget Highlights pdf to view the funding amounts Clemons-Mosby presented.

#### **8. Public Comment**

Co-Chair Shaver invited public comment. There were no public comments.

#### **9. New Business**

Co-Chair Shaver reviewed the themes of this meeting and stated that the Commission will initiate another meeting prior to the currently scheduled August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### **10. Adjournment**

At 2:49 Co-Chair Shaver asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Zumdahl, seconded by (at the same time) Commissioner Villa, and voted on unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.