

Child Support Task Force Minutes

September 27, 2017

12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Crow Wing County Land Service

322 Laurel St. Ste. 15, Brainerd, MN 56401

Members Present: The following task force members were present on Wednesday, August 30, 2017:

<input type="checkbox"/> Jimmy Loyd, Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Senator Mary Kiffmeyer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Representative Laurie Pryor
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melinda Hugdahl	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Representative Peggy Scott	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lisa Kontz
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jodie Metcalf	<input type="checkbox"/> Jeffrey Jorgenson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rachel Sablan
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jason Smith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melissa Rossow	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Julie Erickson, alternate
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Senator Melissa Wiklund	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamela Waggoner	<input type="checkbox"/>

DHS Staff:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sonya Smith
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tara Borton
<input type="checkbox"/> Julie Erickson
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brynn Rhodes

Other Meeting Participants:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jessica Raymond	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charlie Petersen, facilitator
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Sommerfeld	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mark Rogers, economist
<input type="checkbox"/> Bruce Erickson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don Bieniewicz, economist
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Welcome:

Agenda review and introductions of the group.

Updates:

- Foster Care- Department of Human Service staff presented a summary regarding foster care history and calculated rates per child.
- Q&A with Dr. Venohr- Dr. Venohr answered questions from task force members regarding measurement of child-rearing expenditures and guideline models.
- Custodial Parent Positions- Positions have been filled and paperwork is with the Commissioner for approval. New appointed members will attend the October meeting.

Review of August meeting minutes:

Minutes approved: The August meeting minutes were approved and will be posted on the Child Support Task Force website. **Completed 9/29/17**

NorthPoint public comments take-away:

- How much is the court process involved and impacting the setting of child support, from court fees to lack of knowledge? Court may not be the place to be. Could costs be reduced and access increased by not doing this in court? Mediators? Arbitrators? Administrative calculation from Department of Human Service?
- Perception that the system is messing a lot of people's lives up.
- Lack of ease for people to make changes to their orders.

- Parenting expense adjustment disparities between old and new PEA and uncertainty about medication standard. Task force should address it.
- Law is important (referencing the collaborative law lawyers meeting 8/1/18) and creative public input is important (outstate meeting locations).
- Look at 120% of the poverty guidelines not being significant when applying the guidelines to both parents.
- Value in having public meetings, during different times, to obtain different perspectives.
- The task force is doing very important work.

Task Force Refresher:

The task force received a refresher discussing the charge, ground rules and the decision-making-process for the group. The task force agreed to have a standing agenda item for decisions to be made that will be provided two weeks before the meeting, to ensure advance notice to the members that a decision is going to be made at the meeting prior to the meeting date.

Task Force Activities over the Next Two to Three Months:

Beginning February 15, 2018, and biennially thereafter, if the task force is extended by the legislature, the commissioner shall prepare and submit to the chairs and ranking minority members of the committees of the house of representatives and the senate with jurisdiction over child support matter a report that summarizes the activities of the task force, issues identified by the task force, methods taken to address the issues, and recommendations for legislative action, if needed. Minn. Stat. § 518A.79, subd.. 7 (2016).

The report to the legislature from the Department of Human Services (DHS) commissioner is due February 15, 2018. A draft report must be submitted to the commissioner by early December to provide adequate time to review, edit, and approve.

The task force should determine if there are any decisions it wishes to make within the next 3 meetings (September, October, and possibly November) that need to be included in the report as recommendations.

Issues were raised by Dr. Venohr regarding whether to use 2017 Consumer Price Index (CPI) data and changing guidelines models. First, the scope of the current contract (the deliverables) with the economist doesn't include creating a new guidelines model for Minnesota. She reported that, among the states that she has worked with that have changed guidelines models, the process typically took several years. She reported that, those states changed from a percentage of income model to an income shares model.

Second, developing and implementing a new guidelines model will require time for an economist to perform research and, complete other work needed to develop the new model and for the, enactment of new guidelines statutes, and implementation of system changes at the Department of Human Services. The legislature and governor must act on those recommendations, were the task force to make them, and meanwhile, the current guidelines will remain in place and the 2018 Parent Expense Adjustment (PEA) change will take effect.

Third, the PEA to be implemented is based on the income shared model currently used in Minnesota. The Child Support Division has received legislative funding and has dedicated

significant resources to implementing the PEA. That work must continue unless legislation is enacted directing otherwise.

2017 CPI Decision:

Task force members made a decision to move forward using the most current CPI available when we get to the point of the economic model. (Yes: 9 No: 2).

Cost Shares:

Mark Rogers and Don Bieniewicz, economists, presented an overview of cost shares. Cost shares research uses a budget on how child support is shared within two separate households.

Decision on Guidelines Model:

Decision made to use income shares model (Yes: 11 No: 0)

What are the variables?

Amount of high income cap

Economic model

Adjust for very low income

Adjust for “danger zone” cases in grid? Or elsewhere in guidelines

Tax assumptions

Separate household income (part of the economic model)?

Adjustments for more children

What is decided?

PEA: not on the table

There is a high income cap

Self -Support Reserve (SSR)

Exclude child care and medical

Public Comments:

Nine audience members provided public comments.

1. James Dunn, non-custodial parent, representing himself.
2. Devaughn Bergeson, non-custodial parent, representing himself.
3. Colleen Hollingsworth, custodial parent, representing herself.
4. Becky Halite, custodial parent, representing herself.
5. Jenna Fox, custodial parent, representing herself.
6. Robert Hagerman, non-custodial parent, representing himself.
7. Christine Fox, custodial parent, representing herself.
8. John Shanoff, non-custodial parent, representing himself.

New Action Items:

- Department of Human Service (DHS) will add a column to Dr. Vendor’s table outlining general impacts on the DHS systems/programs, statutes, etc.
- October meeting key decision points:
 1. Whether to use an existing economic model
 2. If so, which one?

- a. What adjustment should be made in the calculation of basic support? (self-support reserve, non-joint children).

Meeting Adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, October 25, 2017 from 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. South Central Technical College, Conference Room C, Mankato, MN. *Public comments received 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.*