

August 2025 OOFY Board Meeting Agenda

08/05/2025 3-5 pm

1. Circle w/ Sage (3-3:30)

2. Board Business (3:30-4)

- Scheduling:

Scheduling Survey Results: Meetings will occur on the first Tuesday of the month with times rotating between morning, afternoon and evening. The board will meet in person twice a year.

Note: For September meeting, Sage will close us with circle at the end of the meeting instead of beginning.

- Board Chair Opening + Election.

Kristy Snyder has been serving as Co-Chair of the OOFY Board since her election in October 2024. Kristy has decided to remain in her seat, but step down as Co-Chair. We now have a vacancy for the Co-Chair position. Our board charter states that Co-Chair terms are on year, begin in January, and that *"in the event a Co-Chair steps down or resigns, the Advisory Board shall elect an Interim Co-Chair to serve out the remainder of the departing Co-Chair's term."* The interim Co-Chair would serve from October-December 2025. The Co-Chair attends one extra meeting a month, which you can be compensated for.

OOFY board member DeShawn Woods resigned from his seat this week. This means that we have an open board seat for Adults Who Were in the Foster Care System as Youths. We are still working with the Governor's Office to understand next steps for appointment.

We thank Kristy and DeShawn for their contributions as founding members to the OOFY board.

• Overview of Performance Review for Ombudsperson Misty Coonce

A subcommittee of the board met in the spring to gather information for Ombudsperson Misty Coonce's annual performance review. Staff, board, and community members were surveyed.

Kristy shared that overall, Misty received outstanding feedback, highlighting among other things her collaboration and strong communication. Other feedback included recommendations to slow down to move sustainably and impactfully and continue to take time for critical reflections of race and class.

3. Report of the Ombudsperson for Foster Youth (4-4:45)

For this Ombudsperson Report, OOFY staff each shared a snapshot of their work:

- Robin (Intake): shared about general intake process and overview of a recent closed case. Young person worked with Robin over a few months to clarify their foster status and what benefits they might be entitled to, and with OOFY's help they were able to advocate for their needs.
- Charie asked about intake materials.
- Robin: We have an intake form that we recommend people use that asks questions like what are your main concerns, what have you tried already, what are your goals? We have an intake call where Robin goes more in depth with questions. No one is ever turned away for not completing the online form.
- Mallory asked how long it takes to respond to a complaint.
- Robin: For a Foster, we return within 2 days, almost always within 1. For adults, especially if they only call and leave a brief or unclear message, it will take 2-4 days currently. We do our best to respond with speed and do encourage adults to submit a complaint online because that is the fastest way to reach us.
- Hannah shared for the Outreach Team around recent outreach visits: Ziigwan and Lexi have been conducting outreach visits to Minnesota PRTFs, to Fosters ages 5-18. Visits generally begin with games and snacks to build comfort and rapport. OOFY shares about our agency and shares age appropriate materials from OOFY and other state programs. Themes from those visits include sibling connection, connecting with support people, concerns about facilities. OOFY provides written recommendations and follow up meetings with facility staff. The Outreach team also presented at the Tomorrow's Leaders Today YLC Conference about foster youth rights and OOFY.
- Kristy asks if we've received pushback from facilities about our visits:
- Hannah: Yes, in a variety of ways. We are strategic about addressing this ahead of time and with the follow up meetings.
- Sasha asked about age appropriate materials for visits.
- Hannah: we have been intentional about creating youth friendly materials and have incorporated community feedback. For middle school and older, our materials work well. For younger ages, we are working on better materials for them (ex: coloring book).
- Vivian asked how do you decide where to visit?
- Proximity and where it's more straightforward to have access to, like facilities in MN. Sometimes we have a concern or suspicion there may be concerns and that leads us to visit.
- Charie asks how OOFY highlights relevant state services like EFC to get ahead of some complaints/situations before they happen.
- Misty and Hannah: we do share about some of those programs, and we also are mindful of our unique role and what we can actually help with. We need to stay within our specific role and unique powers while providing the best education we can.
- Tonia (Investigations): Investigation Process
- Assigned case, review intake, contact with complainant that have received case
- Deep dive into MGA (MN Government Access system) for court documentation on the case history
- Develop an initial interview plan of questions for each party
- Reach out to County and GAL with initial concerns and to schedule interview
- Reach out to youth (if youth was not the original complainant)

- Conduct Interviews
- Request records from County if needed for further investigation
- Request County take steps to correct what the concern is
- Write Informational Memo to the County for guidance on better practices at the close of case if needed
- Provide Information/Resources/Guidance to Foster and/or complainant
- Many cases thus far are around sibling connections and the Sibling Bill of Rights being provided to youth in foster care. We have been able to ensure that through our involvement that Counties in most cases are paying attention to sibling connections and ensuring these visits are happening when they were not before our involvement.
- We have had a case where children were being mistreated for over a year in a foster home, with it being documented in county records with no action taken to move them to another available family foster placement until we intervened asking questions about this situation. These siblings were moved after our involvement and according to MGA and are happy in their new placement.
- A couple of my cases were fosters who were anxious due to what their foster parents were telling them about the case and needed some reassurance and someone to listen to them and guide them on who to talk to on their case.
- Mallory: have you ever attended court hearings, how often?
- Tonia: Hasn't attended any because it hasn't been necessary as part of the investigation, she would be happy to.
- Hannah: we've been weighing how to exercise our powers, so far we have focused on supporting the current team (GaL, worker) to advocate for themselves in court.
- Nia: if you need to, how would you do it?
- Tonia: court hearings are public so we would show up according to the schedule.
- Vivian asked a question about kinship placement and how that is implemented.
- Tonia: it is supposed to be implemented according to statute and policy but can depend on the worker and county. We are monitoring issues like this.
- Elena: what follow ups or learning happen after the counties make the changes? What is the process for learning and adjustment. Suggests we connect with Hennepin (or others) that use safety science. Collaborative safety team at the state.
 - Misty: Many counties receive our informational memos at the end of a case, which includes recommendations. We're still trying to figure out what our ongoing "check ups" are. These individual situations also inform our systemic priorities (we can do an issue report). We are still learning and figuring it out. We see the importance of the no blame approach and there are sometimes limitations to that.
- Lexi (Foster Youth Rights): we continue to work on a Foster-facing handbook, then looking into more materials like a coloring book, pass out pamphlet. Putting current statute into plain language. Once FYBOR passes we will use the similar format and language.
- Sasha asked about translations into other languages.
- We are exploring that option.
- Misty explains about the [OOFY videos](#).
- Hannah: once we have the handbook we will seek input from community, including YLCs.
- Hannah: explains the quarterly report (attached to email, available on website).
- Kristy: questions about the geography of foster placements on the report.

- Hannah: we're trying to make sure we hear from non-population dense areas, and counties we haven't been contacted about. We know that doesn't mean they are free of issues.
- Hannah: Annual Report: we're required to do this every biennium, we decided to do annually. It should be out in 08/2025. It will be an ntro to the office, report our activities, spread the word.
- Kristy: will this go to legislators? HP: Yes.

4. Discussion and Public Comment (4:45-5)

- Nick Vogel speaks to an earlier question about EFC. DCYF proposed legislation that passed, meaning agencies are going to have to do a court review specifying eligibility for EFC before a youth turns 18. After that review they have to state why or why not the person is doing EFC, the young person can request a hearing if they don't agree with the determination. They are hiring a FY Outreach with lived experience to be on the team for two youth.
- Kirsten Anderson with Aspire MN: expresses support for the work of OOFY.
- Kristy shared an update on ETV from Youthprise. In the past Fosters received ETV based on how fast their college processed the financial aid. The EFC Advisory Board from Youthprise developed a plan to address this and prioritize underrepresented groups.

5. Meeting Close.

Guests: Nicholas Vogel DCYF; Marvin Davis DCYF; Kristen Anderson; Angela Sonsalla.

Present: Sage Desai, Melinda Doms, Vivian Dudley, Nia Dyer, Charie Gill-Baptist, Elena Leomi, Kristy Snyder, Mallory Stole, Marqueishia Jackson, Sasha Jakovich.

Staff: Misty Coonce, Hannah Planalp, Robin Purman, Alexis Borgesen, Tonia Lofton.