



COLORADO
Department of Human Services



Family Voice Council Charter

Est. September 2018



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Official Name

- Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), Family Voice Council (FVC)

Background

CDHS provides people with assistance, resources and support for living safely and independently in Colorado. We're the people who help people. The Family Voice Council (FVC) was originally formed in September 2018 under Executive Director Reggie Bicha. Director Bicha requested FVC reside in the Office of Performance Management and Strategic Outcomes as a way for community members to engage in regular dialogue about CDHS's performance management strategy. Since then, both the facilitator and the Family Voice Council have moved to reside in Community Partnerships with the Executive Sponsor being the Deputy Executive Director of Community Partnerships. The facilitator of the Family Voice Council is the Director of Family and Community Engagement. The Family Voice Council was formed in response to CDHS's 2Generation (2Gen) or whole family efforts to listen, engage and partner more with families.

At CDHS we have six main values that influence how we live our mission--which is to empower Coloradans to thrive:

- We believe in a people-first approach
- We believe that balance creates quality of life
- We hold ourselves accountable through our actions, programs, and results
- We know that transparency matters
- We are ethical, and
- We know collaboration helps us rise together

Purpose

The purpose of FVC is to incorporate diverse perspectives and lived experience into CDHS programs, policies, and services. FVC members are the experts on ways to better serve families holistically. The vision of FVC is to help create new opportunities for Colorado families to thrive. The mission of FVC is voices of the family advocating for more equitable and accessible human services for all. See FVC's first strategic plan or our plan for the future.

Strategic Plan/Goals



The FVC strategic plan, or plan for the future, is revisited annually with a new strategic plan created every two years. For the most recent strategic plan, please visit the [CDHS Family Voice Council webpage](#).

Rules of Engagement

During the initial meetings, members worked collectively to draft their rules of engagement all members would agree to follow. Initial rules of engagement were drafted and edited in 2020 to reflect a more virtual environment. Rules of Engagement are reviewed, edited or updated on an annual basis. Current Rules of Engagement are as follows:

- Respect other viewpoints and perspectives.
- Honor members' realities and life experiences.
- We all are human. Focus on other's strengths.
- Respect the process. Practice patience.
- Be aware of bias. Focus on the issue, not the person.
- Provide a safe and positive culture. Always assume positive intent.
- Step back to allow others to step forward.
- Actively contribute to FVC meetings. Try to avoid side conversations in the chat.
- Be on time.
- Two minute speaking limit. Practice self-awareness.
- Practice the raise hand functionality in zoom to be added to the speaker's queue.
- Please mute yourself when you're not speaking.
- Feel free to move and take a body break.
- Please pronounce your name before speaking.
- Review boundaries and triggers as needed. If triggered please send a private message to the facilitator.
- If you are able, and chose to do so, please have your camera on while speaking

Expectations

FVC is committed to advocating for more equitable and human services for all through monthly planning, meetings and work in between meetings. FVC works to follow the objectives set forth in the Plan for the Future and is open to all state agency programs who are interested in gathering feedback on programs and policies. As FVC evolves and expands at CDHS, the feedback given by FVC will also align with current department strategic planning. The CDHS FVC is also open for other state agencies to attend meetings and gather feedback and input at the facilitator's discretion.

Within the scope of FVC, members sign letters of commitment. Letters of commitment will be signed for one-year terms with options to renew for a second term. Once members have

served two, one year terms, members will have the option of joining the FVC Alumni. Current expectations listed within the letter of commitment include:

- I understand that I am committing to one term of service, XX/XX/XXXX to XX/XX/XXXX, with the option of renewing for a second year.
- To the best of my ability, I will attend the monthly meetings, as scheduled by the Family Voice Council.
- To the best of my ability, I will arrive on time and participate until the meeting is adjourned.
- I will respond to email requests, including reviewing documents before the next meeting and attending to council logistics.
- If I have a concern regarding the council, I will share the concern on the meeting feedback form or speak directly to the Director of Family and Community Engagement for Community Partnerships.

Compensation and Reimbursement

CDHS will provide Family Voice Council Members with:

- A \$200 (\$40/hr) stipend per meeting for time and participation
- Members will be given options for payment (e.g. check, direct deposit, gift card)
- Reimbursed cost of mileage, RTD bus pass and/or childcare expenses for each meeting if applicable
- Breakfast and lunch if applicable
- Parking costs and validation if applicable
- Professional development opportunities
- An evaluation and conversation with each council member at the end of each one year term to gather the council member experience and options for second year term

Executive Sponsor(s) and Support Staff

By serving as an executive sponsor of FVC, or designated support staff, CDHS's leaders gain an opportunity to engage directly with those we serve across the state. In addition to the responsibilities listed below, the Executive Sponsor of FVC will exercise decision making power on outstanding decisions through consensus with FVC leadership (Community and Family Engagement Director and support staff). The Executive Sponsor, with assistance from the Director of Family and Community Engagement shall:

- Work with co-chairs to develop monthly agendas and prep meetings with presenters
- Maintain responsibility for meeting logistics e.g. room reservations, zoom platform
- Keep monthly minutes and share all meeting materials in advance and in follow-up email

- Send presenter follow-up surveys to capture action steps
- Report to SET regularly and provide opportunities for FVC members to present to leadership
- Communicate and promote any changes that stem from FVC input
- Remove barriers to advancing member's civic engagement
- Support all CDHS staff in presenting to FVC

Governance

As of September 2018, the FVC was an Executive Director's initiative whose operating budget comes from the Executive Director's Office. The FVC budget will align with the state fiscal year and requests for the next year's funding shall be submitted by May 1st each year. Funding for FVC is based on the EDO's budget and requests for funding may change based on FVC needs. Community Partnerships will oversee the FVC and be responsible for the facilitation and implementation of feedback and input received. Communications between the FVC and CDHS will continue to be shared during monthly meetings. FVC agendas will include time for updates from CDHS, past presentations and debriefing opportunities.

Membership

FVC Membership shall not exceed 20 members during any term or year. Members shall have at least two current or past lived human services experiences with self or family members. Services experience includes the following, but is not limited to:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| • TANF | • Mental Health Services |
| • SNAP | • Substance Use Services |
| • Child Care Assistance | • Colorado Crisis Services |
| • Early Intervention | • Youth Services |
| • Child Support Services | • Aging and Adult Services |
| • Child Welfare | • Refugee Services |
| • Veterans Services | |

Interested FVC members shall complete the [online interest form](#) or mail in the flier interest form to the address listed. Once interested members have submitted the form, the Director of Family and Community Engagement shall respond within 24 hours or the next business day. An initial meeting shall be scheduled to learn more about the interested person and to answer any outstanding questions about FVC. The interested person shall be invited to attend a FVC meeting as an observer. After the initial meeting, the interested person shall meet once again with the Director of Family and Community Engagement. If the person is still interested in becoming a member of FVC, interviews will be scheduled.

Interviews

Interview panels will consist of 2-3 current FVC members. Once one interview is complete, FVC members involved in the interview shall record their observations and submit recommendations in writing to the Director of Community and Family Engagement. The Director of Community and Family Engagement will then include the interviewers' responses in a google form which will be used for voting purposes. The google form will be sent to all current members to vote for the interested person and a majority vote is determined. Current members vote for new members with final approval from the Director of Family and Community Engagement and CDHS's Executive Director. Sample interview questions include:

- Please share with us why you would like to be on the Family Voice Council.
- What are your most pressing concerns in your community right now?
- How would you rate your advocacy skills? (Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced) All levels are fine! We just want to hear how you would rate yourself and how you would like to grow in these skills.
- What voices do you represent? (e.g. single parent, SNAP recipient, CCCAP recipient, marginalized community, individual with a disability, etc.)
- What skills and strengths could you bring to the council?
- What type of support would be helpful for you to attend the Family Voice Council?
- What would be a professional or personal goal you'd hope to achieve through your work with the Family Voice Council?
- Do you have any questions for us?

Initial Duties for New Members

Once new members are voted in and approved, they are able to receive compensation and reimbursement for meeting expenses. New member responsibilities and completed documents are as follows:

- Submit a W-9 to be entered into the state accounting system
- Submit signed letter of commitment
- Submit headshot photo to be included on the FVC website
- Submit biography to be included on the FVC website

Sample Bio questions:

1. What is your name and where in Colorado do you live?
2. What is/was your connection with human services?
3. As a Family Voice Council member, what community (or communities) do you represent? (For example: SNAP recipients, kinship provider, family with a youth in Youth Services, parent of children with behavioral health needs, etc.)
4. What inspired you to join the Family Voice Council?

5. What do you hope to accomplish on the Family Voice Council?
6. What else would you like to share about yourself?

Sample bio:

Mary S. is a single mother and registered nurse who lives in Denver. She is a former recipient of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) funds. As a member of the Family Voice Council, she speaks for other recipients of financial benefits in Colorado. She was inspired to join the council by her desire to give back and to help make the benefits process smoother for others. Her goal is to advise CDHS on ways to raise awareness about financial benefits and streamline the application process. In her spare time, Mary likes attending Colorado Rockies games and reading to her twin sons.

Co-Chair Responsibilities

Each month a member of FVC can volunteer to be a co-chair and help plan the next month's meeting. At the end of each meeting the facilitator will ask for a volunteer to be co-chair. The Director of Family and Community Engagement will reach out to the following month's co-chair the Monday following the last FVC meeting.

FVC Co-Chair roles include, but are not limited to, the following. The facilitator can also help with several of the items listed below:

Meeting Prep

- Meeting with Director of Family and Community Engagement to discuss co-chair responsibilities (1/2 hour)
 - Discuss the following:
 - How the meeting will be run
 - Which tasks will the facilitator and co-chair do? Facilitators can do breakout rooms, share screen, check chat, look for raised hands, music so co-chair can focus on running the meeting
 - Who will assign breakout room facilitators, participants?
 - Discuss potential topics for meeting
 - Discuss any accommodations needed (ASL, reading presentations for the blind, etc.)
 - Decide if facilitator and/or co-chair will introduce presenters
- Follow and engage in emails between facilitator and presenters (1/2 hour)
- Attend and participate in prep meetings with facilitator and presenters (1-2 hours)
 - Discuss the following when prepping the presenters
 - Ask presenters to be specific about what feedback they need from FVC members

- Remind the presenters that FVC members will be honest and can be passionate about topics
 - Remind presenters to follow rules of engagement in breakout rooms
 - Determine time needed for presentation
- Choose an icebreaker for meeting (5-15 minutes)
- Prior to meeting, review agenda and all linked documents, presentations, so you are familiar with them
- Print Agenda, Rules of Engagement, icebreaker, Inspirational Quote to have on hand during the meeting
- Make a list of FVC members to put on screen so an order is followed for introductions
- Review introductions for presenters

During the Meeting

- Set up ASL interpreters in meeting software so they are prominently displayed
- Welcome new members, observers, CDHS and other department employees; ask CDHS employees to use the Raise Hand function so they can be called on to introduce themselves; ask if everyone has had a chance to introduce themselves
- Rules of Engagement - ask FVC members to share reading the rules of engagement; remind everyone to use Raise Hand function to speak
- Agenda overview (topics and times)
- Be ready for breakout rooms for icebreaker
- For all breakout rooms, consider the following:
 - Assign a facilitator in each room
 - Ask 1 person per breakout room to summarize the takeaways from their discussions to report out to the larger group
 - Make sure interpreters are in the same room as the individual in need of interpretation
- Be aware of the time left during a presentation and how many hands are raised; let everyone know when you're getting close to the allotted time
- Presenter introductions - remind presenters of their allotted time for presentation and feedback; tell FVC members why the presenters are there and what they need from FVC; after presentation remind presenters to fill out their feedback form once they receive it
- Be aware of those who have not spoken. Ask for input from those you have not heard from
- Be thinking about a personal comment to incorporate in the presenter thank you emails
- Lead the FVC Meeting Debrief
- Ask for volunteers for co-chair for next meeting and Inspirational Quote; Ask a prior co-chair to talk about time commitment and top takeaways from being co-chair
- Weigh In - remind everyone to complete the member feedback survey

Post Meeting

- Co-chair debrief with facilitator (if desired) (1/2 hour)

- Send out thank you/feedback survey emails to the presenters with your personal comments added (1/2 hour)

Formal Communications

It is important that FVC members feel connected and a part of the work outside of the monthly meetings. In order to keep communication channels open, a list of ongoing strategies are included below.

- Family Friday Newsletter which will be sent via email every Friday.
- Other email correspondence between meetings
- Phone calls and text messages as needed
- FVC members will be approached to participate in other engagement opportunities by other state agencies, counties, advocacy organizations or nonprofits regarding feedback and input on policies or programs.

Meetings Logistics/Duration

FVC will meet monthly. The established time for meetings is every 4th Tuesday of the month, for 4-5 hours, from 9:00am-1:00pm. This meeting time will be reevaluated during each term to ensure the time is still well-suited to the schedules of the participating members. Agendas for meetings will be provided in the calendar invitation to the meeting by EOD Monday preceding the meeting.

Each quarter meeting offerings:

- Legislative update
- Team building and social capital breakout sessions
- Training/professional development
- Continual program feedback, input and evaluation
- Equity, diversity and inclusion sessions

Community engagement work is a constantly evolving, ongoing process. The duration of this committee will be ongoing so long as there is funding and invested interest from the CDHS leadership, employees and the community to contribute, learn, and lead in this space.

Accommodations

Software

- Zoom Account: This will allow the group to meet a greater number of Council accessibility needs in our virtual meetings. It will also aid conversation, facilitated reviews and training through breakout sessions.

American Disabilities Act

- Closed Caption, Physical Accessibility to meetings, American Sign Language, simultaneous translations services, etc.

Budget

Funding for FVC will be determined based on the prior year's budget, spending and projected expenses.

- Budget categories include:
 - Member stipends
 - Travel and childcare reimbursement
 - Translation/Interpretation services
 - Meeting supplies
 - Alumni expenses
 - Miscellaneous

The FVC facilitator will request additional resources as projects and initiatives are identified. To request a copy of the current FVC budget, reach out to the Director of Family and Community Engagement.

Charter Amendments

This charter, while it serves as the primary governing document for FVC, should be guarded closely to maintain the integrity of the Council. However, as with all governing documents, FVC members may identify elements of the charter that should be modified. The following is the process for amending this charter:

1. Any FVC member may propose an amendment to the charter at the monthly meetings at any time.
2. In order to amend, the member must secure time on the agenda to discuss the amendment with the rest of the members.
3. FVC members must vote on the amendment, and the majority of the members vote in favor of the amendment. In the event of a tie, the Director of Family and Community Engagement will make the final decision.

The ultimate responsibility to update the charter lies with the Director of Family and Community Engagement. All amendments should be included prior to the next FVC meeting.

Feedback, Evaluation and Reporting

In order to gather continuous feedback on monthly meeting logistics and content, FVC will share a feedback survey at the end of every meeting with all members and presenters to complete. A presenter form is also distributed to each presenter to track the number of actions to be taken based on FVC's input.

- [FVC Member Feedback Survey](#)
- [Presenter Feedback Survey](#)

Data will be reviewed monthly with FVC and highlights will be sent to CDHS leadership.

The [FVC Dashboard](#) will also be updated regularly and shared with select audiences.

To date, reports detailing the action and changes due to FVC feedback and input include the following:

- [Full 3-Year Report](#)
- [Report Summary](#)
- [Report Video](#)