

Foster Care System Improvement Task Force—HB1359

Purpose:

The purpose of the Foster Care System Improvement Task Force shall be to:

1. Compare Oklahoma's foster care system outcomes to the Federal Children and Family Services Review standards;
2. Review current practices in the state's foster care system;
3. Study best practices that may assist in improving the system; and
4. Identify specific areas for improvement in the state's foster care system.

The task force shall issue a report to the Legislature and to the Governor by March 15, 2012, that includes:

1. The identified areas of the state's foster care system that require improvement;
2. A delineation of desired outcomes that should occur for children who become a part of the foster care system;
3. A compilation of best practices to assist in achieving the desired outcomes for children and families;
4. The accountability standards that will be used to measure the state's success in meeting the desired outcomes; and
5. A reporting of the estimated cost for implementing the recommendations.

Membership:

The task force shall consist of twenty-three (23) members as follows:

1. The Director of the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth, or designee;
2. The Director of the Department of Human Services, or designee;
3. The Executive Coordinator of the District Attorneys Council, or designee;
4. A child welfare worker employed by the Department of Human Services to be appointed by the Director of the Department of Human Services;
5. Three presiding judges of courts having juvenile law jurisdiction, one from Tulsa County, one from Oklahoma County and one from a district other than Tulsa and Oklahoma Counties to be appointed by the President of the State Judicial Conference;
6. Eight members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives as follows:
 - a. one shall be the president of a state foster parent association,
 - b. one shall be an individual who has recent experience providing foster care for a child placed in the home for more than six (6) months,
 - c. one shall be a representative of a child-advocacy organization,
 - d. one shall be a member of an Oklahoma Indian child welfare association,
 - e. one shall be a court-appointed special advocate for deprived children,
 - f. one shall be a representative of a faith-based organization that is actively involved in working with the foster care system,
 - g. one shall be a member of a local multidisciplinary coalition of children's services providers that works to improve and strengthen the child protection system, and

- h. one shall be a member of the Oklahoma House of Representatives; and
7. Eight members shall be appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate as follows:
- a. one shall represent a statewide association of therapeutic foster care agencies,
 - b. one shall be a former foster youth,
 - c. one shall represent a statewide association of youth services agencies,
 - d. one shall be a child welfare worker employed by the Department of Human Services selected from a list submitted by a statewide public employee association,
 - e. one shall be a public defender with experience representing the interests of deprived children,
 - f. one shall be a member of a statewide association representing psychiatric hospitals,
 - g. one shall be a representative of a nonprofit organization comprised of agencies that provide child care to deprived children, and
 - h. one shall be a member of the Oklahoma State Senate.

Staffing/Support:

Oklahoma House of Representatives, the Oklahoma State Senate and the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth