

SEMINAR: FOSTER CARE FOR LEGISLATORS

STUDY PLAN

Study Mandate

- In response to Virginia's increasing focus on the foster care system, and to facilitate the work of Virginia lawmakers in addressing issues affecting foster care, the Virginia Commission on Youth will host a seminar entitled "Foster Care for Legislators" at its May 6, 2019, meeting. The purpose of this seminar is to inform lawmakers about the complexities of the foster care system and to develop recommendations to improve Virginia's foster care system.

Identified Issues

- During December of 2018, the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission (JLARC) released a report entitled "Improving Virginia's Foster Care System." The report generated 34 recommendations, some of which were addressed during the 2019 General Assembly Session. However, the report indicates that many improvements to our current foster care system are still needed.
- In February of 2018, the federal Family First Prevention Services Act was enacted. Family First makes major changes to federal funding for foster care, and supports family permanency by providing funding for services to families who are at risk of entering the child welfare system. Virginia is currently working to implement the law in advance of the effective date of most of its provisions (October 1, 2019).
- To facilitate the work of Virginia's lawmakers in response to JLARC's recommendations and to the requirements of implementing the Family First Prevention Act, the Commission on Youth is hosting an informational seminar on Virginia's foster care system entitled "Foster Care for Legislators" at its May 6, 2019, meeting.
- The purpose of this seminar is to inform lawmakers about the complexities of the foster care system. Presentations will be made by state and local stakeholders on a variety of topics. Legislators will also have an opportunity to talk with invited foster families, foster youth, and former foster youth at a luncheon held immediately after the seminar.
- To supplement information provided at the seminar, Commission staff is preparing a resource binder entitled "Foster Care 101: A Resource for Virginia's Legislators."

Study Activities

- Host an informational seminar entitled "Foster Care for Legislators" at the Commission on Youth's May 6, 2019, meeting. The Seminar will be held at U-Turn Sports Academy, Richmond, Virginia, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Invite all members of the General Assembly, heads of agencies who interact with the foster care system, and other interested parties.
 - Presentations will be made by state and local stakeholders on the following topics:
 - Overview of Virginia's Foster Care System from a State and Local Perspective
 - Funding of Virginia's Foster Care System
 - Foster Care Prevention and the Family First Prevention Act
 - Virginia's Foster Care System in Action – CPS and Foster Care Process

- Foster Families Panel
- Transitional Foster Youth Panel
- Legislators will have an opportunity to talk with invited foster families, foster youth, and former foster youth at a luncheon held immediately after the seminar
- Provide an informational resource binder to legislators entitled “Foster Care 101: A Resource for Virginia’s Legislators.” This resource will include an overview of Virginia’s foster care system, descriptions provided by Virginia agencies about how they interact with the foster care system, and selected articles and reports. This resource will be distributed to legislators at the seminar and will be available on the Commission’s website.
 - Solicit information from Virginia’s agencies that interact with the foster care system.
- Develop recommendations as needed on the following topics related to foster care in Virginia:
 - Child welfare and foster care workforce caseloads
 - Legislative action and resources needed to implement the Family First Prevention Services Act
 - Recruiting and retaining foster families
 - Supporting youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood
- Provide information to the Foster Care Caucus.
- Present findings and recommendations to the Commission on Youth.
- Receive public comment.
- Prepare final report.