



**The Timothy Montoya Task Force: To Prevent Children From Running Away From Out-Of-Home Placement | Meeting 7**

*Meeting Minutes*

July 12th, 2023, 8:00 am-11:00 am Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Facilitators: Keystone Policy Center (Trace Faust & Doris Tolliver)

Members: See Appendix A

<p>Welcome &amp; Approval of Minutes</p>	<p>After member welcome, Task Force Chair Stephanie Villafuerte approved minutes from the meeting 6. The motion for approval was provided by Ashley Chase and was seconded by Dennis Desparrois. This motion was supported by 16 present Timothy Montoya Task Force members with 0 abstentions. The motion for approval was provided by Ashley Chase and was seconded by Dennis Desparrois.</p>
<p>Task Force Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Approval of June 14, 2023 Meeting Recap</li> <li>● Review of past work</li> <li>● Review of Task Force Roadmap</li> </ul>	<p>Trace Faust, Keystone Policy Center, reviews the meeting recap, illuminates the future meetings through November in the roadmap, and highlights the directives for discussion. There are currently two addressed directives and 1.5 directives are still in progress out of nine total. The meeting Roadmap 2023 moving forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● August 9, 2023 – Reflection and Discussion</li> <li>● September 6, 2023 – Interim Report Finalization</li> <li>● October 11, 2023; November 1, 2023; December 13, 2023 Prevention: What abilities do we have to stop children and youth from running from care?</li> </ul>
<p>Overview and Member Panel</p>	<p>Doris Tolliver highlights the directives for discussion in hopes to develop statewide standards and discuss Colorado’s capacity for youth with runaway behavior:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify and analyze behaviors that constitute running away from out-of-home placement, analyze differences between runaway behavior and age-appropriate behaviors outside of the home or out-of-home placement, and identify behaviors that should lead to a person or facility filing a missing person report about a child. (See C.R.S. 19-3.3-11(5)(c))</li> <li>● Analyze best practices statewide and nationally for preventing and addressing runaway behavior, including identifying methods to deter children from running away from out-of-home placement. (See C.R.S. 19-3.3-11(5)(f))</li> <li>● Analyze how entities responsible for the care of children who run away from out-of-home placement can coordinate a thorough and consistent response to runaway behaviors. (See C.R.S. 19-3.3-11(5)(g))</li> </ul> <p>Task Force members Dennis Desparrois, Lynette Overmeyer, Brandon Miller, Dr. Renee Marquardt, David Lee and Michelle Bradley served on a member panel. After member introductions, Doris Tolivier inquired, given the member panel’s professional and/or personal experience, what is their opinion regarding the development of a dedicated statewide absconder team in Colorado. All comments are individual and are not attributable to the Task Force.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Naturally, the development of a dedicated statewide absconder team in Colorado would be a benefit for youth who run as it requires the development of a standardized protocol.</li> <li>● The design of the absconder units is of interest. ‘Who is searching?’ is just as valuable as ‘how the search is conducted’. This question led to additional questions concerning policy, custody arrangements, etc.</li> <li>● Absconder unit funding and policy development/implementation will be a challenge.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Absconder units do not prevent/stop youth who run from out-of-home care and would not be a useful tool as it is too reactionary.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A member highlights this is why prevention is paramount.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Absconder units may be difficult to implement statewide as the rural/ urban divide is vast. This member shares difficulty in envisioning an absconded unit creating much change. It is important to evaluate the risk level of youth who run to tailor a response with prevention/intervention options.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A member shares that a regional approach may be the best to equitably support youth across the state.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Absconder units can utilize pre-existing systems like automatic alerting with the Department of Child Welfare, law enforcement, and the school of the youth.</li> <li>● Absconder units would at least maintain searches for youth who have run. This would give loved ones peace of mind that their youth wasn't forgotten.</li> </ul> <p>Doris Toliver inquires, given the member panel's professional and/or personal experience, what is their opinion regarding the development of statewide, standard guidelines for responding to youth who run away. All comments are individual and are not attributable to the Task Force.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We cannot be too loose with the wording in order to have them slip through it is in their best interest to put things in place.</li> <li>● We need prevention measures before a youth runs, intervention while they are gone and invention and prevention when they return.</li> <li>● Momentum and agreement on dedicated resources for youth who run, and proactive statewide protocols that outline who is in need and how to respond appropriately is necessary.</li> <li>● Youth who run while in foster care are unable to stay at runaway shelters due to custody.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This point was disputed by another member.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Regionalization is the best course of action for statewide guidelines.</li> <li>● Running isn't illegal. Trauma-informed responses are the best way to support youth who run.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This would serve the best interest of youth. Some youth who run do so to feel in more control.                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All youth are different and shouldn't be considered a monolith.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Presentation of Member Survey Results</p>	<p>Doris Toliver and Trace Faust share that they have received the results of a pre-meeting member survey. Responses will be presented and feedback will be integrated into the report. Members were asked to respond to questions centering on the development of a dedicated statewide absconder team in Colorado and the development of statewide, standard guidelines for responding to youth who run.</p> <p>Both Doris Toliver and Trace Faust express their gratitude for Task Force members' participation.</p>
<p>Breakout Groups</p>	<p>Trace Faust invites Task Force members to break out into smaller groups to discuss the data presented through the lens of intervention.</p>
<p>Large Group Debrief</p>	<p>Task Force members participated in large group discussions to review and disseminate information heard today. Doris Tolliver invites the two break-out groups to</p>



	<p>share their findings. Task Force members entered their thoughts into a <a href="#">note catcher</a> and verbally shared them back to the larger group. Highlights shared from the breakout groups are as follows:</p> <p>Group 1, represented by Dennis Desparrois, prefaces the information is based on needing more information. Also, Lynette Overmeyer speaks more to Group 1's Location and Intervention Program Teams. Members of the team specialized in different areas -therapy, social work, law enforcement background, etc to ensure safety. This unit would be notified of all runaways and provide assistance to develop a runaway prevention plan and provider support all in an effort to prevent future occurrences housed in the Department of Human Services. Group 1 does not agree with the term "abconconder". Jenelle Goodrich highlights the difficulty in answering breakout questions without considering barriers, for example, the Family First Prevention Services Act. She additionally shares the idea of a response tool to aid youth who run and support providers to be successful. Trace Faust shares the possibility of a working group within the Task Force. Regarding the second question, Group 1 shares that meeting the needs of youth who run can shorten running concerns and serve as an assessment of risk.</p> <p>Group 2, represented by Dr. Renee Marquardt, highlights discussed options like co-responders, contracted work for youth support, and the need to evaluate the needs of the youth. Immediate response should be illuminated and stay at the top of mind. Regarding the second question, Group 2 centers on the need of youth and values a trauma-informed response. As a statewide approach, it can not be rigid and must be youth-centered.</p> <p>Group 3, represented by Michelle Bradley, shares concerns on funding, where youth are placed, and what happens when youth don't want to be at placement. Becky Miller Updike shares the notion of a multidisciplinary team outside the Department of Human Services. Ashley Chase highlights that an "investigator" does not have to be explicitly a law enforcement officer. Vice-Chair Beth McNalley speaks to the importance of building relationships with law enforcement and child advocacy centers. Regarding the second question, Group 3 highlights the question about cell phones and youth autonomy. Possibly this phone comes pre-loaded with information necessary to receive care.</p> <p>Group 4, represented by Task Force Chair Stephanie Villafuerte, share their thought on the process of a state-governed regional approach that is multidisciplinary in nature. When the youth are recovered, Group 4 inquires where the youth will go after assessments are complete. Lastly, Group 4 envisions a preventive coordinated effort with a screening tool. Regarding the second question, Group 4 illuminates that protocol should match all youth who run to maximize the operation and coordination of a state-governed group.</p>
Public Comment	There was no public comment at this meeting.
Next Steps and Adjourn	Task Force Chair Stephanie Villafuerte shared her appreciation for the continued dedication of the Task Force and adjourned the meeting at 11:00 am



**Appendix A:**

Norma Aguilar-Dave  
Michelle Bradley  
Ashley Chase  
Anna Cole - Joined late  
Dennis Desparrois  
Jenelle Goodrich  
Chelsea Hill  
David E. Lee  
Chase Leonard  
Gina Lopez  
Dr. Renée Marquardt  
Beth McNalley  
Brandon Miller  
Becky Miller Updike  
Elizabeth Montoya  
Lynette Overmeyer  
Sergeant Timothy Smelser  
Stephanie Villafuerte  
Jana Zinser

**Appendix B:**

Lauren Showers  
Micheal W. Teague  
Pam Treloar