



Timothy Montoya Task Force | Meeting Four

March 1, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Recording

March 1st, 2023, 8:00 am-11:00 am Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Facilitator: Trace Faust

Welcome & Approval of Minutes	After member welcome, Task Force Chair Stephanie Villafuerte approved minutes from the September 28, 2022, November 2, 2022, and January 3rd, 2023 meetings. Present members approved the minutes as drafted.
Summary of prior meetings	Task Force Chair Stephanie Villafuerte shared her gratitude to Task Force members who participated in one-on-one conversations held during the previous weeks. These conversations were powerful and added nuance to the larger group discussion. Jennifer Superka, Office of Colorado’s Child Protection Ombudsman, named the prospective barriers time may present to the Task Force and suggested the Task Force consider additional standing meetings during the off month with breakout options. Members were supportive of the additional meetings and submitted their conflicts via the chat function. Jennifer provided a summary of previous meetings and also reviewed the meeting’s agenda and goals.
Defining Runaway Missing from Care	<p>Jennifer Superka and Trace Faust, Keystone Policy Center, share a definition for the term, “runaway”. The term “runaway” was presented as “used with respect to a youth, means an individual who is less than 18 years of age and who absents himself or herself from home or a place of legal residence without the permission of a parent or legal guardian.” This definition for some can imply the responsibility is on a child for their own care and can obscure factors of why youth go missing from care. Trace Faust highlights this is rooted in asset-based language and without this distinction, information is missing that could be helpful in preventing and treating missing youth. The term “missing from care” was proposed in Richard’s and Branscum’s presentation, and included in taskforce materials. Trace Faust requested members to provide feedback on the terms “runaway” and “missing from care.”</p> <p>The group discussed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some members expressed that “runaway” is sufficient as the responsibility is on the child or youth due to their decision-making process, despite the outcome. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Those members explained that a child or youth is determined to be a “runaway” based on intent and evidence. If the evidence



	<p>displays the child or youth was taken, law enforcement would act as if it was a kidnapping incident. If the evidence displays the child or youth left on their own accord, law enforcement would act as if it was a runaway incident. There is a focus on choice and intent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few members stated that the term “runaway” allows blame to be placed on the child or youth. Children or youth have no choice in their out-of-home placement options and can not contact family freely. Some members disagree that all youth leaving facilities or homes are bad actors as there are so many variables and things beyond the youth's control. • Members stated that the term “runaway” does create a barrier with outreach as it holds a negative connotation. They also shared that running is not a crime. • A member shared that they felt “runaway” is the correct term and Task Force members are falsely applying a negative connotation to the term. • Trace Faust added that children and youth are a vulnerable population and there is the ability to have both terms exist within the Task Force. • A few members suggested the term “elopement” could serve as an alternative and assert there should be separate terms. • Some members feel a common definition would be helpful as multiple departments and agencies have various terminology for runaway. • A suggested solution is to use the term “runaway” bolded to accurately express the various reasons why youth may be running/missing from care. This would be beneficial and would allow the work of the Task Force to be seen as more reputable
<p>Reporting Requirements</p>	<p>Task Force Chair Stephanie Villafuerte provided Task Force members with a review of federal law that currently guides the response to children or youth who run from out-of-home placement. This review included federal law regarding the protocols for locating and ensuring the safety of missing youth, as well as Colorado laws and regulations for reporting missing youth to law enforcement. She also presented requirements for foster parents and out-of-home placement facilities. Additionally, Stephanie Villafuerte highlighted state regulations on determining factors to run, determining placement suitability and effectively assessing the experiences of youth who run.</p> <p>Members share their questions or comments on the information presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is valuable for members to keep in mind there is nothing left to do when the case has closed. • Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth (SAFY) is currently piloting an AWOL assessment for youth to try and understand the root of running;it may be beneficial to the group to consider. • Are payroll rules dependent on Volume 7? • There may be a competing commitment for child welfare professionals in entering a runaway placement status, due to the inability to pay a placement to hold the bed for seven days at the same time. Often, the



	<p>runaway status isn't entered until that time or at all if the youth or child returns to care. It would be beneficial if there was a way in Trails to show a "runaway" status while still paying the placement to keep the bed. This is especially true when there is a lack of placements.</p>
<p>Data Presentation</p>	<p>Trace Faust grounds members in the first legislative charge of the Task Force, which is to analyze the sufficiency of statewide data that measures the quantitative and qualitative experiences of children who have run away from out-of-home placement. Members listen to a presentation by Jessica Starr of the Colorado Department of Human Services' Division of Child Welfare, and Laurie Burney, Provider Performance Manager, of the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS).</p> <p>The presentation included Volume 7 rules on "runaways", providers and counties as well as supporting data. The data presented included "runaway" critical incidents by calendar year, total children entering "runaway" status, number of unique runs and percentage of children and youth who run from out-of-home placement. Additionally, data shows the number of youth in out-of-home placement has decreased from 9,600 to 6,700 children.</p> <p>Members share their questions or comments on the information and data presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A member inquired about the difficulty of changing a regulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Laurie Burney shared, in her experience, it is a years-long process that requires approval by the State Board of Human Services and must be supported by robust research. ● A member asked if there is data that displays youth with a history of running and abruptly stopping? This may allow the Task Force to discover what is the most effective tool to persuade youth to stop running. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jessica Starr referred to the data set displaying the number of children or youth entering "runaway" status and the number of unique runs as valuable to review. The Trails system does have a notes section to add important information on the child or youth, though it is not easily accessible. ● A member asked what outside effects have impacted this data including the Family First Act? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jessica Starr shares that Family First Act and other programs have impacted placement data, but COVID-19 is the largest variable in the data. ● A member asked if there is a mandate on contacting youth after running? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Laurie Burney shares there is only a monthly contact requirement. This can be done by phone or video chat. ● What is the definition of out-of-home placement used in the data? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jessica Starr shared that if the youth is in county custody, they are deemed as an out-of-home placement.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A member asked if it would be helpful if the reporting mechanism included a N/A selection option as members often select “no” when not enough information is available, thereby altering the data set. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jessica Starr shares gratitude for this comment and will consider it moving forward. ● Members discussed how correlation is not causation, fewer runs are attributable to Family First Act. It is just as likely fewer runs are more attributable to fewer beds. ● As the Task Force continues to be more purposeful and intentional about placement, members should continue to see a decrease in children leaving without permission.
<p>Break Out Groups and Debrief</p>	<p>Trace Faust invited members to break out into smaller groups to discuss the data presented through the lens of the first legislative charge.</p> <p>Members were asked to consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What does the data presented tell us about the experience of children who run away from placement? ● What data is missing for the task force to understand the experience of children who go missing from care? ● Additional comments and questions. <p>Members entered their thoughts into a google document and verbally shared them back to the larger group. Highlights shared from the breakout groups include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group 2, represented by Brian Cotter, shared a desire for additional data, specifically, data that displays why youth are running and data that equitably quantifies volume to be actionable. Group 2 would value a time-based analysis and a more robust dive into TRAILS data fields. ● Group 3, represented by Lynette Overmeyer, shared disappointment with the data as presented and would appreciate more nuanced data that intersects with topics like running history and substance use. There should be an additional requirement to report when a youth runs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trace Faust stated that if the data required isn't available, it would be important to include that in the Task Force's reports. ● Group 4, represented by Co-Chair Beth McNally, shared similar sentiments as Groups 2 and 3 and highlighted Group 4 is aware placement is dependent on availability, but is interested in what has worked in other areas with similar circumstances. ● Group 1, represented by Jenna Coleman, shared a desire to see data separated by county and by placement. ● Trace Faust thanked members for their participation in the breakout groups and for providing their feedback. Chair Stephanie Villafuerte reinforced this and thanked members for having a robust conversation



	<p>on data and what it means. She additionally asks a question back to the Task Force to consider based on break-out group conversations: Does data matter? Would it behoove the Task Force to focus on prevention rather than data of current standing?</p>
<p>Public Comment</p>	<p>Trace Faust opened the discussion for public comment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kristin Myers, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Counselor Education and Supervision (Core) shares with Task Force members that she is currently conducting focus groups for youth 18-22 that are currently in treatment facilities who have a history of running to share their reasons for running. This is rich data that may be beneficial to the Task Force.
<p>Next Steps and Adjourn</p>	<p>Trace Faust highlights the next steps of the Task Force will include a follow-up email with a calendar invite for the off-month meetings and creating a monthly meeting schedule. Chair Stephanie Villafuerte adjourned the meeting at 10:54 am</p>