

Summary of Conference Call

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Advisory Committee on Family Residential Centers
Subcommittee on Education
April 20, 2016

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Advisory Committee on Family Residential Centers (ACFRC), Subcommittee on Education convened for its inaugural meeting on Wednesday, April 20, 2016, via teleconference from 11:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. The purpose of the meeting was for subcommittee members to get more information from ICE on how subcommittees work and to begin the process of thinking about how they want to craft recommendations.

Attendance:

Subcommittee Members Present for the Teleconference:

- BethAnn Berliner
- Anadora Moss
- Michelle Brané

Others Present:

- John Amaya, Deputy Chief of Staff, ICE; Designated Federal Officer (DFO), ACFRC
- Andrea Washington, Special Assistant, ICE
- Maryam Ali, Special Assistant, ICE

Opening Remarks:

Subcommittee Chair BethAnn Berliner conducted the roll call and thanked everyone for joining the teleconference, including the ICE staffers on the line. She outlined that the meeting was a chance for the ICE team to further describe the parameters under which subcommittees operate. It was also an opportunity for subcommittee members to decide on their meeting schedule as well as start the conversation about developing recommendations, she said.

General Meeting:

Chair Berliner then gave the floor to ACFRC DFO John Amaya to discuss subcommittee rules and expectations. DFO Amaya briefly dropped off the line, but was able to rejoin the conversation a few minutes later and asked Special Assistants Andrea Washington and Maryam Ali to talk about the rules.

Ms. Ali explained that all subcommittee work must be done on the subcommittee teleconferences and over email, with Ms. Washington looped in. If there is a need for calls outside of the designated teleconference, members have to check in with Ms. Washington to work out a time that fits DFO Amaya's schedule.

Ms. Washington clarified that she and/or DFO Amaya only need to be included in phone conversations and email chains about substantive work related to the subcommittee. Ms. Ali

continued that anything that needs to be pushed up to DFO Amaya or Alternate DFO Elizabeth Cedillo-Pereira will be handled by her and Ms. Washington.

Ms. Ali also stated that Chair Berliner will be leading the meeting and that Ms. Washington is responsible for the meeting minutes. Ms. Washington said subcommittee members can expect meeting minutes prior to the next teleconference. She further stated that her sending out meeting minutes does not preclude Chair Berliner from sending out her own notes or meeting highlights to the subcommittee.

Chair Berliner asked about guidelines for sharing meeting minutes between subcommittees. Ms. Washington answered that she does not believe there is anything that prohibits subcommittees from sharing meeting minutes. She advised that ICE staff should be copied on emails where minutes are shared.

Chair Berliner said she thought it would be helpful for the subcommittee to have its own running record of what members have agreed to, and she stated that she would be happy to own the responsibility of sending out the highlights and do-outs email. She also said that she would bring up the idea of circulating meeting minutes with the other subcommittee Chairs because it would be very useful for the group to see what other conversations are taking place. Vice Chair Anadora Moss and Michelle Brané agreed with the idea and the approach.

DFO Amaya then reminded the subcommittee that ICE Director Sarah R. Saldaña would like to meet with the full Committee in the summer. He again asked everyone to let ICE staff know what dates they are unavailable during the last week of June and the month of July, minus the week of July 4.

Turning the conversation to recommendations, Chair Berliner asked Ms. Brané and Vice Chair Moss if they had a chance to look through the examples of recommendations from other advisory committees, which Ms. Ali emailed to the Committee the previous week. They both said they had not. Chair Berliner encouraged them to do so, stating that she found it helpful to see the variety of structures, tones, presentations, and levels of granularity from other committees. She said she would pull four or five examples from the larger batch and send them around for review.

Chair Berliner then asked everyone to discuss why they were interested in the education subcommittee.

Vice Chair Moss stated that her interest stems from the work she has done in studying correctional education and in understanding the context under which educational services are provided. She said she believes safety, both physical and emotional, is a key area to explore. She added that her firm has done some training on a trauma-informed approach for educators in the correctional setting, which is in line with a concern Chair Berliner touched on during the full Committee public meeting on March 16. Vice Chair Moss said she thinks the educational setting at the family residential centers (FRCs) should focus on what people need to know when they walk in a classroom, what they need to know to get the most out of what is going on at the FRCs, and what they can expect when they leave.

Ms. Brané said she views education as a very broad issue that covers nearly all aspects of what goes on at the FRCs. Her organization has been studying what happens to children in schools after they move to their new community, and she said there are some insights gained that could be useful to the subcommittee recommendations. She also noted the need to explore the resources available to children before they leave a facility and discussed her interest in how educators and counselors interacting with children in the school setting can impact the spotting of problems and issues that need intervention.

Ms. Brané continued that adult education is a really critical piece, particularly as it pertains to ensuring that mothers have the schooling that will help them understand their situation, know their rights, and prepare them for their responsibilities after release. She also stated that adult education could extend to staff at the FRCs in terms of what they need to know about the population they are serving.

Vice Chair Moss asked if looking at the staff issue was within the scope of the subcommittee's work. Chair Berliner asked DFO Amaya to confirm if this was within the purview, noting that she thinks education can cover a few different buckets: Pre-K, K-12, adult learning for mothers, and adult learning for facility staff.

DFO Amaya said that the focus on children and education is what resonated with him and that by necessity this focus could extend to the mothers. He stated that educating staff was not something that was contemplated, but told members they should feel free to draft whatever recommendations they believe would be helpful.

Ms. Moss said in the education space, the value around what the subcommittee recommends would have to be shared and integrated with staff and educators who are involved with students in the classroom. This has to be taken into account when making recommendations, she said.

DFO Amaya said he agreed, and he again stated that members have the discretion to make these kinds of recommendations. He noted, however, that there might not be as much flexibility when it comes to recommendations that involve contract staff due to current agreements; it is possible that current contracts might have to expire before recommendations could be implemented.

Ms. Brané said DFO Amaya's explanation was really helpful in that it gave the subcommittee the realities in which to frame its recommendations. She also said that she believes some level of staff education has to be a piece of their work, given that employees at the FRCs will play a big part in making the process run better.

Ms. Brané then questioned the timeframe that should be kept in mind when formulating recommendations. She stated that many of the families at the FRCs in Texas are there for about 17 days, but there are also families at the FRC in Pennsylvania that are in detention for longer periods of time. She added that the Government's argument in the *Flores* case suggests the shorter length of stay might not always be the policy under which ICE and the Department of Homeland Security operate. She asked if it would be helpful for the subcommittee to think about recommendations for both short and extended lengths of stay.

DFO Amaya said he thought it would be helpful to have recommendations for both timeframes.

Chair Berliner moved the conversation along, pointing out that the subcommittee Chairs have been in discussion about how to categorize potential recommendation topics and the level of information they believe they currently have on a subject. The three categories subcommittee Chairs outlined are:

1. Issues where there is strong evidence/information and a recommendation can be made;
2. Issues where there is little evidence/information, but a recommendation can still be made;
and
3. Issues where there is no evidence/information, but a recommendation can be made based on members' expertise and knowledge of best practices.

Based on these categories, subcommittee Chairs created a worksheet for members to use to help organize their thoughts. Chair Berliner said she would email the worksheet to subcommittee members after the call.

As the call came to a close, subcommittee members agreed to meet weekly on Tuesdays at 12:00 P.M.

Adjournment:

The subcommittee adjourned at 12:00 P.M.