



SGRG Full Council Meeting Summary September 15, 2020

I. Welcome and Opening Remarks

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary, Alex Azar, opened up the meeting with a video message in which he commended the council members for the hard work they have done to date, to the grandparents and other older adults raising grandchildren for the stability, permanency and a sense of belonging they have provided for the children in their care. Secretary Azar expressed his belief that each member of the Council brings a unique and critical perspective to the work at hand through the experiences and expertise members bring to the table both personally and professionally that will ensure that Congress' expectations for the Act are fulfilled and more importantly, improve the lives of grandparents and Kinship Families especially, the children they care for. He stated that he is looking forward to reviewing the report when it is completed, making sure that the voices of Kinship Families and Grandfamilies are properly and adequately amplified in a way that is clear and compelling before it is submitted to Congress. He thanked members of the public for staying engaged to ensure all viewpoints and suggestions are properly considered in charting a path forward.

The Council Chair, ACL Administrator and Assistant Secretary for Aging, Lance Robertson, provided opening remarks and thanked members for their commitment, expertise, guidance, information and all the resources they bring to work of the council. He also thanked members of the public who tuned in to participate in the discussions and expressed appreciation for their interest. He called the meeting to order and reminded members to check out a recent blog by the meeting co-moderator, Lori Stalbaum, titled "[Led by Love: ACL Recognizes Grandfamilies on Grandparents Day 2020](#)", and calling out the incredible sacrifice and role grandparents play.

II. SGRG Request for Information (RFI) Analysis Findings

In presenting her analysis and findings based on the more than 307 submissions in response to the RFI, Wilma Brockington-Parker's presentation separated the submitted responses by purpose and outcomes of the RFI, an overview of the responses; primary issues; respondent concerns and recommendations. She stated that there were a total of 307 respondents to the RFI who provided 1908 individual responses based on the nine specific items listed in the RFI for possible response.

Among the findings is the fact that some of the grandparents did not know nor were they prepared for the financial pressures/consequences they experienced. The data showed that some type of support or financial assistance was only available to the 60-plus

population while it is well documented that many caregivers are in their 30s, 40s or 50s, and this in addition to other programs that may vary depending on the state where one resides, which can present undue barriers for kinship and grandparent caregivers. A breakdown of responses to the question about whether or not additional legislation is needed to better serve and support grandparents and older relatives raising children which received 77.8% positive responses.

She summarized by stating that the respondents overwhelmingly provided a number of recommended resources totaling 337. This includes 201 programs, 78 publications/suggestions, 39 research articles, 13 books and six videos, which the council will be reviewing before disseminating the information. Members appreciated the format in which the information was provided, which was easy to understand and comprehend. Members were again reminded that the recommendations culled from the RFI and the broader one members have been working on, will serve as the council's contribution to the National Family Caregiving Strategy.

III. Report to Congress Recommendations Discussion

The Moderators led members through a discussion of recommendations that were proposed and reviewed in previous subcommittee meetings for the purpose of reaching consensus so that they can be incorporated into the draft Report to Congress. Members engaged in a focused deliberation of each recommendation, suggested rephrasing of certain language where they deemed necessary, and participated in wordsmithing where applicable. They introduced changes/modifications after discussing each recommendation, gave verbal approval to adopt the recommendation as is or in some cases, suggested new recommendations after a careful step by step discussion of each recommendation.

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

The moderators explained that the next step would include cleaning up the recommendations document and sending it back out to the non-federal members with a doodle poll for them to indicate their agreement with the revised/reworded document. The other part of the follow-up will involve asking for non-federal members to volunteer to work in one or two ad hoc style work groups. One workgroup will draft language for the rationale or background narrative for each of the priority areas and for the recommendations. The other work group will review the resources that were submitted in response to the RFI and provide feedback regarding what should be included in the Report to Congress or held onto for possible inclusion later in a database of model programs. The moderators reminded members to be on the lookout for the above information and activities that will be taking place in the months of October and November before adjourning the meeting.