



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING
United Way of Central Iowa
Leadership Room
April 22, 2026

Voting Members Present: Alicia Chilton, Kevin Abler, Suzanne Cohrs, Sam Early, Megan Schultheis, Shay Scholtes; Jessica Bruning arrived at 11:34 a.m.; Participating via Teams: Tabitha Choquette, Josh Laraby, Crhistian Ramirez; Dave Arens joined at 11:55 a.m.

Voting Members Absent: Jake Al-Mazroa, Gabrielle Brooks, Matthew Klemme, Eric Tubbs, Stephen White

Ex-Officio Members Present: Brook Rosenberg

Ex-Officio Members Absent:

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Alyssa Barton, HFA Service Coordinator, Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) virtually via Teams

Welcome

Board Chair Alicia Chilton welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 11:34 a.m. Quorum was met at this time. Guest introductions were made.

Approval March Minutes

Minutes of board meeting March 25, 2026, were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion to approve the March 2026 minutes was made by Suzanne Cohrs and seconded by Shay Scholtes. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Jessica Bruning arrived at 11:34 a.m.

March FY26 Financial Report

Kevin Abler presented the March FY26 financial report. Expenditures are tracking as expected with no concerns. The quarterly Wage Enhancement payments for the child care centers have been processed and will show up on next month's financial statement.

A motion to approve the March FY26 financials was made by Sam Early and seconded by Suzanne Cohrs. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ECI State board Meeting: Allocations and Service Types (Tool O)

ECI State Board voted April 10th to keep the current funding allocation formula used to distribute funds to ECI areas. The funding category “Community Collaboration” has been eliminated. FY27 funding categories are administration, home visitation, and program discretionary. Draft FY27 Early Childhood Iowa Budget Allocations have been provided by HHS. Funding is essentially status quo.

State Board voted to create a work group to determine funding formula changes for the following year. Work group results will be completed October 2026.

Bremner reviewed a new “Community Planning and Collaboration” service type added to Tool O. This new service type allows ECI area boards to fund staff utilizing program discretionary funds.

Program Review Results & draft FY27 Budget

Bremner presented the Program Review Committee document detailing committee scoring and program ranking by score.

Committee leads, Sam Early, Jessica Bruning, and Alicia Chilton, provided an overview of each program reviewed and member comments and questions.

Josh Laraby departed the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

Dave Arens joined the meeting via Teams at 11:55 a.m.

Committee discussions included:

- EveryStep and LSI Healthy Families America contracts report monthly on the status of capacity and any clients who have not received a visit in the past 30, 30 and 90 days. Both agencies have been below capacity; contractually they need to meet 85% of their capacity goal. Bremner receives monthly reports from the programs and has requested and received a program capacity and improvement plan.
- ISU Small Talks lower funding request is due to the agency applying for funding for a different program. This program funding request would provide for translation of materials into Spanish for a parent education program.
- Early and Bremner visited Shalom and ICOACH to discuss their applications and requests for additional funds.

Dave Arens departed the meeting at 12:04 p.m.

- Both Shalom and ICOACH are requesting additional dollars to expand preschool programming. Shalom would like to add a day of instruction. ICOACH would like to add a classroom. Members are concerned that ECI funding is the primary source of funds for each program. Level funding is recommended for each program by the committee and Bremner.

Dave Arens rejoined the meeting via Teams at 12:09 p.m.

Bremner reviewed a draft FY27 Budget utilizing HHS FY27 Early Childhood Iowa Budget Allocations, program funding requests, and committee recommendations.

The draft FY27 budget will be used by the Executive Director Evaluation and Compensation Committee during the Executive Director's annual evaluation. Members were asked to review the draft budget and reach out to Bremner with any questions. The board will vote on the FY27 budget at the May meeting. Once approved, Bremner will submit to the state by the June 1st deadline. Contracts will be issued to community partners after the budget is approved by HHS.

Legislative update SF2488 (formerly SF2462) /HF2712

Suggested language to amend HF2712 was released April 21, 2026. The Association voted to support the amendment language and will register in support.

The amendment is a strike through of all previous language and establishes a study committee to make recommendations to the governor and legislative body by January 8, 2027.

Bremner will attend the House HHS Appropriations subcommittee meeting on HF2712 tomorrow, Thursday, April 23rd.

Senate bill language remains the HHS amendment language.

The Senate voted yesterday on the appointment of HHS Director Larry Johnson and voted to not confirm him. By law Johnson now has 60 days to vacate the office of director.

Administrative Report

Bremners Administrative Report was included in today's materials.

- Bremner reviewed ECI area mergers and transitions.
- Bremner attended the Healthy Birth Day event April 21st. Impressive fundraising event with 1,000 attendees.

Old Business

Chilton asked for another volunteer to serve on the Executive Director Evaluation and Compensation Committee with herself, Klemme, Cohrs and Scholtes. Early volunteered to serve.

Chilton asked for volunteers to serve on the Governance and Nominating Committee. The committee will identify 4-8 nominees to join the board.. Members were asked to reach out to Bremner if interested in serving on the committee or with any potential board nominees.

Dave Arens, Tabitha Choquette, Matthew Klemme and Eric Tubbs will end second terms June 30, 2026. Potential nominees must reside and/or work in Polk County.

Suzanne Cohrs departed the meeting at 1:01 p.m.

New Business

Chilton requested the June meeting be moved from June 24th to June 17th.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Sam Early made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Shay Scholtes seconded. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chilton adjourned the meeting at 1:02 p.m.