



MANAGEMENT TEAM BIOGRAPHIES (May 2016)

GEORGE H. SHELDON **Director**

In February of 2015, George H. Sheldon was selected by Governor Bruce Rauner to serve as the director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

Sheldon was the secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families from 2008-2011. When he began working for the agency, it was referred to as "the troubled Department of Children and Families." Three years later, a gubernatorial transition report called it the best-run agency in the state. Sheldon expertly weathered \$200 million in budget reductions without cutting staff or disrupting services to citizens. He was responsible for a \$3 billion budget and workforce of 13,000 employees. Prior to his work as secretary, he also worked as an assistant secretary for Operations.

Most recently, Sheldon worked for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. President Obama appointed him as the acting assistant secretary for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), a position he held for more than two years until November 2013. At ACF he was responsible for strengthening the agency's focus on early-childhood education and finding better ways to support children in foster care; and led the first nationwide strategic plan for victims of human trafficking.

Sheldon was a practicing attorney before his work with child and family welfare, working in private practice and for the Florida Attorney General as a deputy attorney general for Central Florida. Sheldon was also a member of the Florida House of Representatives from 1974 to 1982. He earned his bachelor's degree and law degree from Florida State University.

CAROLYN K. ROSS **Chief Deputy Director**

Ms. Ross has 30 years of experience working in the field of human services. She has developed and implemented programs including prevention and intervention services for youth and families; prevention and addiction treatment for youth and adults; criminal justice diversion programs and

community capacity building. Her career began with Youth Service Project, Inc. in Chicago, Illinois serving as an outpatient substance abuse counselor, program director and clinical director during her tenure. She relocated to the Illinois Quad Cities community to work with the Center for Alcohol & Drug Services in 1990, where she served as an outpatient counselor, program manager and treatment supervisor before her departure in 1995 to serve as the executive director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center in Rock Island, Illinois. She returned to the Center for Alcohol & Drug Services in 2001 to serve as the chief executive officer. In 2009, Ms. Ross returned to Chicago where she joined TASC, Inc. and served as the vice president of operations for the statewide organization. In January 2014, she joined the Department of Children and Family Services as the chief of staff; and has most recently served as the deputy director of the Division of Policy and Advocacy. Ms. Ross is a graduate of DePaul University.

Alejandro Mateos
Deputy Chief of Staff

Alejandro joins DCFS in the Director's Office and will work with the Administration Hearing Unit in the review of cases as well as other legal matters and special projects. He has a J.D. from Stetson University College of Law and is certified for fluency in Spanish legal document review. His core strengths include compliance, quality control and review as well as legal research. He has served in many capacities including working with the Cook County State Attorney's office and he also served as Chief Financial Officer for a private company. He is a member of the Chicago Bar Association and the Illinois State Bar Association. Alejandro believes in service and making a difference.

ROBERT T. BLACKWELL
Liaison, Office of Racial Equity Practice

Bob re-joined the department in 2004 as the regional administrator for the Central Region. He had previously served the department in various central office executive functions from 1984 to 1992. As a staunch proponent of racially equitable treatment for children and families, Bob led Central Region's service delivery for eight years. In 2012, Bob was tapped to oversee the Office of Racial Equity Practice as the liaison for DCFS. In this role, he is responsible for leading the department's efforts in addressing race-based disparities and disproportionality practices and outcomes experienced by children and families of color in the Illinois child welfare system.

Bob holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in social work from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He serves as the co-chair of Public School District 186's Minority Recruitment Advisory Council, is a member of the Springfield Dominicans Antiracism Team and a member of SCoDR (Springfield Coalition on Dismantling Racism). Bob and wife Carolyn have three daughters and five grandchildren. Bob is a Dominican Associate and worships as a member of Abundant Faith Christian Center.

CHRIS BOYSTER

Deputy Director, Office of Legislative Affairs

Chris Boyster is rejoining the staff of DCFS as the deputy director of Legislative Affairs. He returns to this role after having served at the Department on Aging. Prior to working for the state, he served on the Sangamon County Board. Chris received an Associate of Arts degree from Southwestern Illinois Community College and a BA in political science and journalism from Eastern Illinois University. His experience includes an internship in the office of the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers to the President. Chris feels that his work at the department is both meaningful and personal: he has a grown son who was his foster child; and he and his spouse are adoptive parents of a young son.

ANDREW BRIDGE

Senior Innovation Advisor, Strategic Planning and Innovation Division

Andrew Bridge began his legal career representing indigent children and adults in Alabama's public mental hospitals. As executive director of The Alliance for Children's Rights, he played a critical role in streamlining adoptions and establishing National Adoption Day; in improving children's access to medical care; in ensuring their right to see a social worker regularly; and in removing restrictions on children's rights to speak publicly about the foster care system. Andrew left The Alliance for Children's Rights to become the managing director of Child Welfare Reform at The Broad Foundation. Andrew's efforts at The Broad Foundation culminated with L.A. County's request for a \$1.4 billion child welfare federal waiver. The waiver remains the largest federal child welfare waiver in the country and is the funding framework under which L.A. County's child welfare and probation systems operate. Andrew grew up in foster care in Los Angeles County, so he has lived the reality of foster care and its impact on children.

DIANE COTTRELL

Deputy Director, Division of Permanency

Diane Cottrell is the acting deputy bureau chief of the Permanency Division and has been employed with Illinois state government for 34 years. She began working for DCFS in 1987 as a case manager. She worked in Quality Assurance for six years as a management operations analyst until she became a quality improvement manager in Administrative Case Review (ACR) in 1999 and worked her way up the career ladder to the associate deputy of ACR. Diane brings a wealth of knowledge and skills in relation to understanding systems, analyzing, developing and implementing policies and enhancing programs to better serve children and families. She was a vital participant in the development of the department's first self-study and provided technical assistance to the field offices seeking accreditation. She also served as a management operations analyst for the Division of Quality Assurance. Diane has a master's degree in the area of management and policy from the University of Illinois-Chicago, Jane Addams School of Social Work. She has been a long-standing vital member of the DCFS African American Advisory Council, which advocates for African American children, families and communities and has chaired several committees, including the annual conference planning committee.

PETER DIGRE**Deputy Director, Division of Placement and Community Services**

Gerald Peter (Pete) Digre has over 40 years of experience in public child welfare and other human services, including deputy director and assistant director for operations for the Florida DCF; consulting services for more than 30 states and large counties as president of the Child Welfare Division and vice president of the Revenue Maximization Division for MAXIMUS and president of QMS: Quality Management Services; director of the Los Angeles County DCFS; director of the Philadelphia County Children and Youth Agency; and executive director of Omni Youth Services, a juvenile justice, substance abuse prevention and child welfare agency in Cook County. Pete has a MPA from Roosevelt University, MSW from George Williams and a D.Mn. from the University of Chicago. He loves Chicago and DCFS and feels like he is coming home.

DEBRA DYER**Deputy Director, Office of the DCFS Guardian**

Prior to her current post, Debra Dyer served for eight years as the chief deputy general counsel of DCFS. In this capacity she directed and supervised the activities of staff attorneys engaged in conducting extensive legal research, writing legal opinions and drafting legislation and department rules and procedures while assisting the general counsel in the development and implementation of legal strategies designed to minimize litigation risks. Ms. Dyer has also served as an assistant state's attorney in the State's Attorney Office of Cook County. As the lead prosecutor in a juvenile justice/child protection courtroom, she was responsible for conducting trials and hearings, training prosecutors and managing the day-to-day prosecutorial activities of the courtroom.

Previously, Dyer served as deputy director of External Affairs for DCFS. In that role, she collaborated with internal and external partners; resolved problems and improved relationships with external constituents; and managed the Communications, African American Services and Latino Services offices. Dyer has also served as supervisory legal counsel, technical advisor, public service administrator, child protective service investigator and child welfare specialist for DCFS. She holds a juris doctorate degree from the Chicago Kent College of Law at the Illinois Institute of Technology, a master's degree from the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago and a master's degree in education and a bachelor's degree in social science from Jackson State University.

DANIEL IBARRA FITZGERALD**Deputy Director, Office of Affirmative Action**

Daniel Ibarra Fitzgerald has had a longstanding career in social services working to ensure brighter futures for children and families. He is currently a deputy director at the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and directs the Office of Affirmative Action. Daniel also led the Office of Community Services, was the deputy director of the Division of Service Intervention and served as deputy director of Programs and Services with the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse. He has more than 25 years of experience in child welfare through his work with Casa Central and Youth Guidance. He also serves as an instructor at the Northeastern Illinois University Undergraduate School of Social Work, where he

has taught for more than 18 years. He holds a bachelor's degree in social work from Southern Illinois University and two master's degrees: one from the School of Business and Management from North Park University and the other from the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago.

MATTHEW A. GRADY, III
Chief Fiscal Officer

Matt Grady is returning to DCFS after serving almost four years with DHS as chief operating officer and a year as director of fiscal services. Matt is a highly respected, decisive leader with 30 years of experience providing fiscal stewardship of local and state government entities complemented by nine years of private industry management experience. Prior to joining the state, Matt served in various finance and accounting leadership roles for two municipalities before his appointment as finance director for the City of Evanston, Illinois. Each year the municipalities received the coveted Government Finance Officers Award for their preparation of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). He also spent nine years at both General Motors and Ford Motor Companies in their financial departments.

He was recruited by the University of Michigan in Flint while employed as that city's finance director to be an adjunct accounting professor to teach in the evenings in the Master of Public Administration Program. Matt earned his MBA in finance and BSBA in accounting from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. He and his wife Lueida have three children and five grandchildren.

TAMMY GRANT
Deputy Director, Office of Employee Services

Tammy Grant was appointed deputy director of the Office of Employee Services in September 2013. Tammy began her career with the department in 1990 in Licensing. She then served the Central Region in numerous administrative capacities, including nine years of personnel liaison responsibilities. After serving 20 years in the field, she became an HR specialist with the Office of Employee Services working in Labor Relations. She provided technical assistance to management regarding Labor Relations and was also assigned as the DCFS representative for the Illinois Nurses Association contract negotiations. Tammy brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this position. She lives in Central Illinois with her two children.

JODY GRUTZA
Deputy Director, Strategic Planning and Innovation Division

Jody Grutza is originally from Michigan and started her child welfare career as a foster care case manager and supervisor in Detroit. Since that time, she has led policy and advocacy efforts at the local, state and national level through her work with the American Public Human Services Association, National Governors Association and Eckerd – with an everyday focus on ensuring systems of care best support children, families and the front line staff that serve them. Jody has provided expertise, facilitation or strategic planning guidance to nearly half of the child welfare

systems across the country at one point or another in her career. She is joining the department from Eckerd, a national non-profit that provides child welfare, juvenile justice and behavioral health services as well as consultation and system management in 14 states and DC, where she served as the chief external relations officer.

NORA HARMS-PAVELSKI
Deputy Director, Division of Child Protection

Nora Harms-Pavelski began her career in social work as the adolescent services coordinator for a local community mental health agency overseeing services for youth and working closely with DCFS. She joined the Department of Children and Family Services in 1995 as a placement/intact caseworker and has served as a child protection supervisor, site manager, intact manager and assistant regional administrator for the Child Protection Division, working across Central and Southern Regions. Since 2012, she has held the position of administrator of the State Central Register and oversees the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline as part of those duties. Ms. Harms-Pavelski brings many years of child welfare and child protection experience with her. She has participated in the training and implementation of the SACWIS database, state and federal work groups and assisted with the development and updating of agency policy. In addition she is a certified trainer for DCFS and has guest-lectured at local universities for both social work and law specialties. Over the years, Ms. Harms-Pavelski has represented DCFS as a presenter at several regional and statewide conferences and conventions, and has also been a reviewer for the Council on Accreditation, a national organization that assesses child welfare agencies to ensure they meet set standards for accreditation. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and Master of Social Work degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

DEREK A. HOBSON
Chief Accountability Officer

Derek A. Hobson is the chief accountability officer for the Illinois Department of Children Family Services. He has served the department for over 31 years in a number of roles, including regional administrator of the Southern Region, statewide contracts and grants administrator for the Southern Region, administrative services manager, regional contracts administrator, social service program planner and child protection investigator. Derek holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri, and a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He maintains a high level of dedication, efficiency and professionalism to child welfare and a strong commitment to the department's mission and its goal of securing the well-being of children and families.

MICHELLE JACKSON
Deputy Director, Monitoring Division

Prior to becoming general counsel at DCFS, Michelle worked at CMS as a deputy general counsel. In that role, she served as the primary legal counsel for the Business Enterprise and Veteran Small Business programs. Her responsibilities included advising management and procurement professionals on interpretation of and compliance with all applicable statutes, rules, notices and

policies related to government procurement, specifically contracting with businesses owned and operated by minorities, females, persons with disabilities and veterans. She also provided technical advice and legal policy determinations to the Business Enterprise Council.

Prior to joining CMS, Michelle served in the dual role of deputy chief of staff and deputy director of human services at DCFS. In that capacity she directed all personnel and labor relations matters and participated in the long-range planning of major department initiatives. Michelle also previously served as assistant deputy general counsel and general counsel for DCFS. Michelle is a graduate of Jackson State University and DePaul University College of Law.

PAULA KIENBERGER JAUDES, MD
Medical Director

Dr. Jaudes is a Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Chicago and a board-certified pediatrician. Since 2005, she has been involved at the national level in policy initiatives on foster care and sits on the Executive Committee of the Council of Foster Care, Adoption and Kinship Care of the American Academy of Pediatrics. She has held the post of medical director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services since 1993. She helps ensure that Illinois' foster children have access to the health services they require. Dr. Jaudes was the first physician in the United States to be named medical director of a state child welfare agency. She has devoted herself to the health and protection of children who are underserved as a hospital administrator, practicing pediatrician and medical researcher, educator and public servant. Dr. Jaudes received her MD from Rush Medical College, Chicago, and was chief resident at the University of Chicago Wyler Children's Hospital. She also performed a fellowship in pediatric ambulatory care at the University of Chicago.

ROYCE KIRKPATRICK
Deputy Director, Contract Administration

Royce Kirkpatrick has 29 years of experience working for DCFS in several positions of increasing responsibility. He earned his master's degree in social work from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is a licensed clinical social worker. Royce was initially hired as a child welfare specialist in 1987. Promotions led to his work as a children's program analyst, downstate quality assurance supervisor and casework supervisor. In 2000 he became an administrative services manager for the Central Region and has most recently served as the department's grant budget officer since 2008. Mr. Kirkpatrick has been called upon frequently throughout the years to testify on behalf of the department's budget and fiscal impact of legislative proposals. He is currently a member of the state's Illinois Single Audit Commission; and he brings a unique skill set to his new position, understanding both the direct service challenges within child welfare and also the intricacies of the department's financial and payment systems.

ROXANNE LIZCANO
Senior Deputy for Administration

Roxanne Lizcano joins DCFS as senior deputy for administration overseeing budget and finance, IT, employee services, licensing, contracts and facilities management. She has a Master of Business Administration and Bachelor of Science in engineering from University of Illinois at Chicago and an Executive Education from Harvard and Duke University. Her core strengths include quality assurance and regulatory compliance, as well as budget implementation and cost control. She has served in many capacities including as project operations manager, consultant and marketing director for AT&T and Women's Initiative for Self Employment in California. She has worked with many Fortune 1,000 companies in leadership roles but her passion has always been service. Roxanne joins DCFS with the hope of positively affecting change and serving the most vulnerable.

DENICE MURRAY
Deputy Director, Licensing Division

Denice Murray holds a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Illinois State University, a master's degree in Social Service Administration from the University of Chicago and is a Fellow of the Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform. Denice brings over 35 years of social service experience to this position having served in both the public and private sectors. She was previously the CEO of Chicago Child Care Society, associate executive director of the Child Care Association of Illinois and executive director of Partners in Community Development. She has served in various administrative positions at DCFS, including ombudsman, administrator of the P.A.L. program, deputy director of the Division of Regulation and Monitoring and chief of staff.

RODRIGO REMOLINA
Deputy Director, Advocacy Office

Rod Remolina has 24 years of experience working with youth in social services. He began his career as a Screening Assessment and Support Services (SASS) worker for DCFS youth in care through Metropolitan Family Services in Chicago. Having covered the south side of Chicago for two years in that role, he moved to Springfield to start a family. Remaining youth-focused, Rod worked with Kemmerer Village Residential Center as a cottage manager and a campus supervisor. Rod was also a certified CPI instructor for non-violent crisis intervention and restraints. He began his career with the Department of Children and Family Services in 1997 as a bilingual call floor worker at the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. He then worked as a child welfare investigator in Bloomington before returning to Springfield and serving in the Advocacy Office as a bilingual advocate. Rod has had the pleasure of serving the department as the administrator of the Advocacy Office since 2014. He holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and an MSW from Illinois State University.

VERONICA RESA**Deputy Director, Office of Communications**

Veronica Resa is deputy director of communications with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and serves as its spokeswoman. She is a media, marketing and public relations professional with 10 years of experience in journalism and 14 years in government. She has worked in radio, television, print and social media. During her tenure with the Chicago Mayor's Office of Special Events, now known as DCASE, she was entrusted with brand management and creating promotional campaigns for corporate sponsors on the local, national and international level. Resa has also served as an executive level community and government relations expert as well as a public affairs liaison for various non-profits. She has substantial experience in multicultural marketing using integrated marketing techniques that include story-telling and placement. She is also an expert in crisis management, research, digital marketing, media buying and planning, speech writing, news writing and strategic communications. Resa also serves on the board of Women in Film Chicago, a 501 C 3.

CYNTHIA RICHTER-JACKSON**Deputy Director, Division of Quality Assurance and Research**

Cynthia Richter-Jackson began her career in child welfare as a foster care/relative licensing worker for Catholic Social Services in Canton, Illinois. Upon completion of two years as a direct service caseworker, she was recruited to join DCFS as a child welfare specialist. She then served as a child protection investigator before advancing to the Division of Quality Assurance. During her tenure with Quality Assurance, Ms. Richter-Jackson served as a leader in Council on Accreditation activities, as a COA peer reviewer to other states and as a site leader in Federal Child and Family Service Reviews. She was also an active participant in the CQI working meeting for the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement in Washington DC. She has received intensive training in racial justice, dismantling racism and building social justice institutions, through Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training workshops, and was a leader in the development of the first DCFS Anti-Racism Transformation Team. She is known as an innovative leader with a vision for Statewide Quality Assurance and Improvement efforts. Ms. Richter-Jackson holds a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She resides in Bloomington, Illinois with her husband, the Reverend Dr. Donald Jackson. Together they are the parents of seven adult children and six beautiful grandchildren.

MICHAEL RUPPE**Senior Deputy Director, Operations**

Michael Ruppe brings 28 years of direct service and supervisory experience with the department to his role as bureau chief of Operations, including two months as acting chief. Prior to his appointment, he served as the deputy chief for child protection. He joined DCFS in 1986 as a caseworker, moving up to supervisor positions in child welfare and child protection, as manager of field services, assistant regional administrator and regional administrator in regions across the state. Mr. Ruppe, a licensed clinical social worker, has served as a peer reviewer and team leader for the Council on Accreditation for Children and Families. He has an MSW from the University of Illinois

at Chicago, a Bachelor of Science in law enforcement administration from Western Illinois University and an Associate of Arts in general studies from Kaskaskia Junior College.

KEITH SCHOONOVER
Chief Information Officer

Keith Schoonover has nearly 20 years of experience in information technology in both the public and private sectors. His focus has largely been in the healthcare industry, providing innovative solutions to bring value to the business. He is a blended professional who has held both technology and business positions. Prior to joining DCFS, he served as the vice president of business solutions and services at H. D. Smith, the largest privately-held pharmaceutical wholesaler in the United States. Prior to that, he held a variety of leadership roles at the Illinois Department of Human Services, leading different areas of the technology team. Mr. Schoonover holds a bachelor's degree in management information systems from Millikin University's Tabor School of Business. He lives in the Springfield area with his wife and two kids. He enjoys singing, playing guitar, golf and volleyball.

LARRY SMALL
Deputy Director, Division of Clinical Practice and Development

Dr. Larry Small, a licensed clinical psychologist (Psy.D), serves as deputy director for the Division of Clinical Practice and Professional Development. Larry began his tenure with the department in 1997 as the program administrator of the statewide Psychological Assessment and Consultation Program. Over the years, Larry has played an integral role in the creation and development of the department's front-end Integrated Assessment and multi-disciplinary Child and Youth Investment Teams. In 2003, Dr. Small drafted the first national child welfare practice guide and policy for department staff and community professionals serving our gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning (GLBTQ) youth. As associate deputy director for the Office of Behavioral Health, Larry led programmatic responsibility for infusing the department's Family-Centered, Trauma-Informed, Strength-based Practice Model to all placement and intact child welfare staff through implementation of the Learning Collaborative and Field Support Programs.

LISE SPACAPAN
General Counsel

Lise T. Spacapan is the general counsel for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. She oversees a law department with nearly 100 members throughout the state. Over the past 30 years, she has been a litigation partner in the Chicago offices of three major law firms: Husch Blackwell, Jenner & Block and Kirkland & Ellis. She handled cases throughout the country focused on Complex Commercial Litigation and Products Liability. Ms. Spacapan received her L.L.M. in Health Law in 2014 and serves on the DePaul College of Law Health Law Institute. She served as a national director on the Board of DRI, chair of the DRI Publications Board and chair of DRI's Toxic Tort and Environmental Law Committee. She has authored numerous articles and book chapters on litigation issues. Ms. Spacapan is AV Peer Review Rated, Martindale-Hubbell's highest peer recognition for ethical standards and legal ability.

CYNTHIA L. TATE

Senior Deputy Director, Program Practice

Cynthia Tate has more than 20 years of experience as a clinician, administrator, educator and consultant. Dr. Tate has served as a consultant to the Illinois Department of Human Services, where she was the co-developer and professor of the Leadership Development Institute and to major case management initiatives for the city of Chicago and the state of Illinois, and was a consultant to the Governor's Task Force on Human Service Reform. She was also the co-founder of a behavioral health managed care company, developing and managing its professional operations and has served on the faculty of the Illinois School of Professional Psychology. Dr. Tate most recently served DCFS as the deputy director of the Office of Child Well-Being. Prior to joining the department she served as a special assistant to the commissioner for the Georgia Department of Human Services. Dr. Tate holds a bachelor's degree from Fisk University and a doctorate degree in clinical-community psychology from the State University of New York at Albany.