Welcome and Introductions
The Secretary welcomed everyone to the meeting and recognized that Alternative Response has been implemented in all 24 jurisdictions of Maryland. The Secretary thanked everyone for the work that was completed on the Council to successfully launch Alternative Response (AR).

Carnittra White reviewed the agenda and asked that the Evaluation Workgroup report out first with Tony Loman and Gary Siegel from IAR (Institute for Applied Research) leading the discussion.

Workgroup updates

Evaluation Workgroup
Surveys are going to staff regarding AR. Preliminary results from the staff that have been surveyed (not including Baltimore City) are being compiled. The final report is expected in October 2014. Baltimore City has not been surveyed because they implemented AR July 1, 2014.

Some of the survey preliminary results include that:

- Some workers are investigating cases under the Investigative Response and under the Alternative Response; this dual role is not seen as a negative or a positive.

- There have been increased referrals to other agencies outside the public agencies for families (the increase means an increase as a comparative analysis of Investigative Response (IR) cases to AR cases)
Maryland Department of Human Resources
Advisory Council for Alternative Response

- In comparing IR to AR cases, there is a slight increase in services and referrals that the AR cases have received.

Response to the survey: Approximately 25% of the surveys sent to families have been returned. It was noted that there is a $20 incentive to answer the survey.

The families reported that the Family Engagement during the IR and AR cases are about the same. This may be attributed to the Family Centered Practice Engagement that Maryland has been using.

The survey of workers included questions regarding training. Phases 1-3 have been surveyed regarding training. About 1 in 5 felt that the introduction of AR had not had a great affect their work; some felt it was “some” affect and some felt that there was a great affect on their practice.

Some staff felt that AR has complicated their practice. For example, the caseworkers now see families as a unit and sometimes in the evening; which extends the caseworkers’ work hours.

40% of the workers that participated in the survey asked for more practical case training; i.e., discuss real cases during training sessions, how to explain AR to families, how to deal with a co-mingled family.

The Casey Learning Collaboratives have been helpful for staff. The Learning Collaboratives are held monthly with local departments and include conversations about AR and implementation.

There is additional training available through the Child Welfare Academy and in direct technical assistance from SSA staff that are deployed onsite. Lessons learned from other phases’ implementation; additional training is needed for screening supervisors and standardized screening is needed across jurisdictions.

In summary, the preliminary results are showing a positive reaction from staff, some families are receiving more services and staff feels that additional training is needed.

Paul DiLorenzo from Casey Family Programs offered to stay connected with the staff by sponsoring the Learning Collaboratives for at least another year.

Also planned is an AR Conference to give workers and supervisors statewide the opportunities to attend workshops and hear from other states’ staff that will attend. The conference is planned for September 2014.

It was noted that Casey Family Programs sponsored Maryland staff to shadow staff in Minnesota and Ohio with the understanding that they would share lessons learned in those states. A second immersion with another state is planned for the staff in Phases 3-5.
Policy Workgroup
The Policy group plans to review the written policy and make any detailed changes that are needed to clarify the policy. The workgroup plans to receive input from the DSS Directors and Assistant Directors.

Practice /Community Partners Workgroup
Baltimore City implemented July 1, 2014. Learning Collaboratives are continuing.

Communications
An article on AR in Maryland was featured in the Baltimore Sun. The article for the most part presented AR as a positive change.

Ted Dallas again thanked the Council for working for the last two years to ensure that AR was implemented in a thoughtful manner.

Next Meeting will be a face to face meeting at 311 W. Saratoga St. Room 1044, Baltimore, MD 21201 September 9, 2014 at 1 pm.
• Review Policy
• Ask for a pre-report from IAR.