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## Officials, advocates still fighting fallout from The List

By Julia LYon

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Top managers at the Department of Workforce Services and advocates for the poor on Wednesday discussed how to collectively reach out to the community to better educate Utahns about policies and eligibility requirements for social services.

“We talked about our request [for DWS] to be proactive in the community to mend bridges,” said Melissa Smith, a policy analyst at Utah Community Action Partnership Association. “It should be more clear to the caseworkers when and where they can ask about immigration status.”

DWS will clarify some of their policies for the advocates and community groups, who are often on the front line of questions about state services. Fear skyrocketed about applying for those services after a list of nearly 1,300 alleged undocumented immigrants was distributed to the media and law enforcement earlier this summer. Two DWS workers lost their jobs after being accused of creating the list. The case continues to be reviewed for possible criminal charges.

“We’re asking DWS to provide guidance to us so we can be the bearer of the message: it’s safe,” Smith said.

The meeting, attended by about 16 advocates, was organized after Kristen Cox, the executive director of DWS, was recently unable to attend a monthly meeting of community groups.

“They’ve asked us to work with them,” said Dave Lewis, a DWS spokesman, noting that the agency has an ongoing collaboration with such nonprofits.

“The thing that I think is the most positive out of that meeting is that we all committed together to get this information out,” Smith said. “We all really want the people who are eligible for these services to get them.”

[jlyon@sltrib.com](mailto:jlyon@sltrib.com)

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