



CITIZEN CONNECTIONS

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State information and resources are available at cantasd.acf.hhs.gov/crp

2020 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Ohio is beginning the planning process for the 2020 National CRP Conference in Columbus, and we want your suggestions! We would like to hear from the CRP community about how we can make this conference the most beneficial for CRP members, CRP coordinators, and state child welfare agencies. Please send your suggestions for presentation or workshop topics to Sarah Parmenter at parmenter.10@osu.edu. We look forward to seeing you in Columbus in June.

STATE UPDATES

Arizona

Arizona has two new CRPs that are both up and running. They have scheduled meetings every other month at this time, and have been meeting after attending our strategic planning session earlier in the year. Both panels are looking into youth transition to adulthood. One panel is reviewing the procedures and requirements related to collateral contact between providers, assisting youth age 14+ and to recommend improvements to increase the rate of successful transition to adulthood. The second panel will review the current policy of the Department of Child Safety to determine what improvements can be made to prevent homelessness in youth who leave the agencies care. Our third panel, the Community Advisory Committee, provides a public forum to analyze policy and make recommendations to improve the ability of the department to increase the safety of children, ensure timely permanency of children, and ensure their well-being.



Arkansas

Shiloh Marlar, Child Protective Services Program Manager for the Arkansas Department of Children and Family Services, is the new state coordinator for Citizen Review Panels. She replaces Lindsay McCoy.

California

California has three statewide citizen review panels: one on the prevention of child abuse and neglect, one on children and family services, and one on critical incidents. Each panel is facilitated by Big Picture Research and Consulting. The panels are currently in the process of finalizing their recommendations from this meeting cycle and thinking ahead to membership for the upcoming meeting cycle.



“Being good is commendable, but only when it is combined with doing good is it useful.”

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STEPHEN KING

The Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect CRP wants to highlight the need for prevention services. They are moved by data that tells the story about the importance and impact of meeting families where they are, in the communities, prior to intensive government intervention. The panel plans to build on the fact that county-level collaborative teams are actively engaging in developing prevention plans, that data sources and tools are suggested in Vehicles for Change and other prevention best practice guides, and that the Office of Child Abuse

Prevention is supporting counties in developing their prevention plans. The recommendations from the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect CRP focus on how the California Department of Social Services can report regularly on counties achieving positive outcomes through their prevention planning efforts and share that information with all counties and state-level policy makers. The Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect CRP is also continuing to lift up Family Resource Centers by recommending that a Family Resource Center representative be included on each county team.

The Children and Family Services CRP is considering how removal decisions are made. This panel wants to help ensure that removal decision-making is done in line with guidance that brings together best practices with the legal mandate to make reasonable efforts and the legal mandate to keep or return children home when a parent can provide minimally sufficient parenting. The Children and Family Services CRP also wants to help the California Department of Social Services gather and interpret input from families and youth to better understand the level of engagement current happening pre-removal from the family and youth perspective. To that extent, the panel is recruiting additional members that have had personal system experience.

The Critical Incidents CRP is focused on making recommendations that, if implemented, will result in fewer critical incidents. This panel believes in the importance of elevating the prevention of critical incidents into reunification decision-making. This CRP is also interested in learning whether the completion of tools to help inform reunification, or the practices that help to guide decision-making, have led to fewer critical incidents. They plan to build on the information compiled in the Child Fatality Reports, the National Commission on Child Fatalities recommendations, and other reports that identify risk factors for critical incidents or child fatalities.

California has been going through a restructuring process with our three CRP coordinators. An all-panel meeting was held on July 19, 2019 at our state office. Each CRP is identifying the topics they wish to explore in their area and what people need to be included in order to have a successful CRP. An annual plan is due by September 30, 2019.

Hawaii

The last few months have been exciting for Hawaii's CRP. Hawaii's CRP has a new Child Welfare Services (CWS) Citizen Review Panel Liaison from the department as well as the recruitment of new panel members. Co-Chairs Crystal Chong-Wong and Maylyn Tallett attended the annual CRP conference last June. Child Welfare Services and the Hawaii CRP continue to collaborate on topics of interest for our Keiki (children) involved in the Child Welfare System:

- ▶ Info regarding reporting of sex trafficking
- ▶ Training for CWS staff on sex trafficking
- ▶ CRP video on exposing infants to substance abuse
- ▶ Training for CWS staff on hard of drug exposed infants

Kansas

Kansas has three CAPTA Citizen Review Panels: Intake to Petition, Custody to Transition, and the State Child Death Review Board. All three panels joined together in August 2019 for their annual retreat and strategic planning meeting. An analysis of the most emergent priorities is underway.

The Intake to Petition panel mainly focuses on policies, procedures and practices of the state system from intake to petition and provides feedback on prevention and treatment strategies; oversight and guidance on activities related to the administrative and judicial handling of cases; and ensures the consumer voice is included in assessing system effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement. Currently, this panel is looking at ways they can increase their legislative advocacy efforts, specifically for the passing of two bills in the Kansas Legislature. Both of these bills will impact communication between the state agency and law enforcement for instances where the reported abuse may be criminal in nature for law enforcement investigation.

This panel has also spent the last twelve months researching and evaluating the need for Kansas school personnel to receive more structured and scheduled mandated reporter training to further assist in the assessment of child abuse and neglect. In February, the Kansas State Board of Education (KSDE) approved recommendations from the School Mental Health Advisory Council to require Kansas schools to conduct

staff training on mandated reporting requirements and procedures with guidance and resources provided by KSDE. These required trainings would help identify signs of abuse and neglect, which would include child sexual abuse, with guidance and resources provided by KSDE. CRP members fully endorse this proposal and will continue to offer recommendations on how to implement effective training for school personnel, including encouraging the Board to implement this requirement for the 2020-2021 school year.

Given positive outcomes from the CJA Task Force's grantee pilot program, Handle with Care in Reno County Kansas, the panel is considering a more statewide approach and exploring ways to do so. As we continue to learn from the work in Reno County Kansas, the CRP wishes to explore conducting training and community dialogue in areas of Kansas that seem well suited for such an initiative.



“If you want to lift yourself up, lift up
someone else.”

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BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

The Custody to Transition panel reviews policies, procedures and practice of the state child welfare system from custody to transition; assists the state in determining if they have met their child protection responsibilities as well as areas for improvement; and ensures the consumer voice is included in assessing system effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement. They continue to focus on the evaluation of data related to the overrepresentation of certain racial and ethnic populations in the child welfare system when compared with their representation in the general population. They acknowledge Diligent Recruitment efforts have indeed provided minority foster families who are well prepared, however anecdotal analysis tends to lead the panel to think these efforts have been limiting considering the disproportional number of minority children being placed in out-of-home-care. The panel has explored potential explanations and strategies to address the concern. They have also positioned themselves in alignment with staff within DCF and other organizations in Kansas working to create action.

Both panels remain interested in the State's efforts to increase intentional child welfare workforce development.

In an effort to better understand the essentials of those working in child welfare, and the training programs and practices required to fully succeed in the field, panel members asked several state higher education institutions to describe their to undergraduate and graduate social work program curriculum, certificates of child welfare, and placement/practicum practices. Following the discussion, the CRP was able to conclude several emergent themes, and make recommendations to the state agency for further development of the State's child welfare workforce.

The State Child Death Review Board will release their annual report of recommendations in October of 2019. This multi-agency, multi-disciplinary volunteer board meets monthly to examine circumstances surrounding the deaths of Kansas children (birth through 17 years old). Members bring a wide variety of experience and perspective on children's health, safety and maltreatment issues, which strengthen the decision-making of this body and by understanding how children are dying, the board is able to propose ways of reducing the number of preventable death.



Kentucky

All Kentucky CRPs have completed tasks for this fiscal year's strategic plans. Specifically, the Southern Bluegrass Panel continues to monitor the Handle with Care project that is being piloted in the Fayette County Public School System. They planned and presented the 2019 Conversation in Collaboration, which was held on Friday, March 22, 2019 at the Success Academy in Lexington, Kentucky. Southern Bluegrass CRP also partnered with community agencies and partners to sponsor a Resource Fair that was held simultaneously with the Conversation on Collaboration. The Panel recognized 15 Cabinet employees for their outstanding performance and service.

Jefferson CRP planned and presented its first CEU/CLE Conference which was held in Louisville, Kentucky on May 17, 2019. The focus of this conference was Hope and Healing within the Community. Specific topics included Jefferson Recovery Court, SOS for Addiction, Sex Trafficking, and Handle with Care. The Jefferson Panel also recognizes DCBS workers during this event.



“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.”



AESOP

Two Rivers created a video clips highlighting DCBS workers and gratitude of workers. These clips included members of the community, DCBS staff, and Commissioner Clark. This Panel also planned and presented their annual What Works in Child Welfare conference which was held on Friday, April 12, 2019 at the Carol Nicely Convention Center in Bowling Green, Kentucky. They also continued recruitment of more diverse panel members, as well as explored Families First Prevention Services Act and support efforts.

The Eastern Mountain Panel completed their Safe Sleep project, which consisted of a short informational video. The Panel secured spots for this video in the local hospital, a pediatric medicine office as well as on mobile advertisement units located throughout the service region. This panel also continues the recruitment of more diverse panel members.

The Lakes, Northern Bluegrass, Northeastern, Cumberland, and Salt River CRPs are currently in the panel development process. The Program Coordinator continues to work with DCBS Liaisons to recruit diverse members in each of these service regions. Once membership has been established, each panel will begin working on their strategic plan for the fiscal year.

During this quarter, CRP Chairs met with Commissioner Eric Clark on June 5, 2019 to provide an overview of current CRP projects, expansion and recruitment efforts, as well as to obtain feedback regarding ways in which each of the panels can be of more assistance in the community. These meetings are scheduled to occur each quarter.

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Michigan

The first Michigan Prevention Citizen Review Panel held the first of six planned panels at the Central United Methodist Church in downtown Lansing, Michigan on April 25, 2019. Representatives from the CTF Local Councils, many of which attended the Child Abuse Awareness Rally held earlier in the day, composed the majority of the speakers and attendees. Several legislators or their representatives also attended as well as several administrators from the Office of Child Welfare Programs and Policies who work in the area of substance abuse. A stenographer recorded the testimony of the day's speakers.

The transcript from this day and those from all of the future panels will be analyzed using dedoose, an online software program. This analysis will provide the basis

for the Committee's recommendations to MDHHS in 2019-2020 as well as provide direction for advocacy work at the local, regional and state levels in the future.

Two of the remaining five planned panels are scheduled for Thursday, September 26 in Southeast Michigan and Monday, October 7 in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The MI Prevention CRP continues to solicit funds and partners for these and the other remaining panels.

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Minnesota

The five Minnesota county panels are gearing up recruitment activities and subsequent new member training. The new member training was reviewed and redesigned last year with extensive help from an intern from the University of Minnesota's MSW program.

The state sent eight panel and staff members to the National Citizen Review Panel Conference this year. Those members are interested in developing an annual meeting of all five counties to do strategic planning for the panels. This topic will be on all of the county agendas for discussion this fall. Otherwise, despite ongoing changes in county staff and membership, the CRPs continue to do great work selecting topics for research, discussing the findings and the developing recommendations for the five county boards.

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Missouri

The Missouri Children's Justice Act put on the second annual Show Me a Helping Hand Conference on June 27-28 with topics that included sexual abuse victimization, male sexual abuse victims, and trauma-informed care. The next Show Me a Helping Hand conference, highlighting trauma and sexual abuse, will be in March 2020.

The Missouri Child Fatality Review Board released its report regarding recommendations that stemmed from the review of child abuse related fatalities starting in 2014. The report will be posted to the Missouri Department of Social Services website. They will continue to review child abuse related fatalities through June 2020.

Nebraska

Nebraska’s young adult Citizen Review Panel is wrapping up work around this year’s three main priorities. The first is setting up a peer advocate system to help young people navigate the foster care and juvenile both when they enter and exit. In addition, the group is also examining the accountability and training programs for caseworkers and foster parents. The CRP is already preparing for next year and conducted several listening sessions with other young people across the state to learn about what issues are important for their peers. The Family and Caregiver CRP is also wrapping up their work, with their focus on pushing for the state to expand Medicaid availability and supports for low-income caregivers.

North Carolina

North Carolina Community Child Protection Team (CCPT) has an established Advisory Board and they have developed bylaws to help govern it. The Advisory Board’s main goal is to serve as the liaison between the 100 counties and one Tribal Territory and North Carolina Department of Social Services (NC DSS). The Advisory Board collaborates with North Carolina State University to send out an annual survey to all 100 county CCPTs. The survey is designed to help local teams identify supports they need to help protect children. The Advisory Board reviews the survey data and writes recommendations that reflect what the data say the counties and the territory needs from NC DSS.

NC DSS has developed a webinar that will help local CCPTs function in a consistent manner to help achieve the most results when reviewing active and fatal child abuse and neglect cases throughout the state.

Oregon

Each year, Oregon selects three counties to host a Citizen Review Panel. These Panels are typically composed of foster youth, parents, citizen foster care review board volunteers and staff, court appointed special advocates, and child welfare managers. The panels select and research a systemic issue within child welfare and make recommendations to improve related child welfare policies and practices.

This year has a new twist in that one of the panels is a statewide panel of citizen foster care review board vol-



“The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers.”

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TERRI GUILLEMETS

unteers and staff from across the state. At their kickoff meeting in July 2019, the panel selected concurrent planning as its area of focus. At their next meeting, the panel will review concurrent planning steps and timelines, state laws, appellate decisions, child welfare rules and procedures, the history of concurrent planning, and what other states are doing to improve concurrent planning. The panel will also review a proposed data collection plan and identify subject matter experts to interview at a future meeting.

The other two panels are located in Marion and Multnomah counties. The Marion County panel will be looking at parenting time, and the Multnomah County panel will likely do some type of paper file review of selected children in foster care.

Pennsylvania

For the past three years, the Pennsylvania Northeast panel has focused its recommendations on supporting older youth in the child welfare system. Earlier this year, the panel, with backing from all Pennsylvania's CRPs, urged state legislators to pass laws to help make college more affordable for youth in foster care. In June a bill establishing college tuition waivers for Pennsylvania foster youth was passed and signed into law. The legislation provides tuition waivers at all PA colleges and universities after all other aid has been applied. The waiver may be used for up to 5 years of college and covers students up to the age of 26. Tuition waivers will begin in the Fall 2020 semester.

All of our panels attended the Fall All-Panel Meeting in September, where they spent two days finalizing their 2019 recommendations. Each panel will have the opportunity to present their recommendations to staff from DHS and receive some preliminary feedback prior to finalizing the annual report by beginning of December.

Regional CRP recruitment is held every year from April 1 to June 15. After receiving 41 applications for membership this year, Pennsylvania is excited to have 15 new members join the regional CRPs in August! New members participated in a one-day orientation, where they had the opportunity to meet one another and discuss their interests, learn about their responsibilities as volunteer members and hear from DHS on Department priorities as well as ways DHS supports the CRPs. The new members joined the existing panels for the All Panel Meeting in September.

Tennessee

Tennessee just completed its annual report for FY 2019. The CRPs' FY 2020 goals are as follows:

- ▶ Continue to interview current and former foster youth about their experiences in care.
- ▶ Review case records involving domestic violence, parental substance abuse, and youth near aging out of care.
- ▶ Partner with state child welfare agency, universities, public schools, and other key stakeholders to connect and provide life skills and educational opportunities and resources to foster youth.
- ▶ Work closely with Tennessee Department of Children's Services (TDCS) training division to offer specialized learning opportunities to child welfare frontline staff and supervisors.

Wyoming

Wyoming is currently working on facilitating focus groups with foster parents and youth foster care alumni in order to assess needs and identify service gaps. We are partnering with Wyoming 2-1-1 on the implementation of a Kinship Navigator Program. We are also currently assisting the state agency with Program Improvement Plan implementation.

UPCOMING

Mark your calendars for a webinar with Michigan's Nicole DeWitt on October 31. Michigan's child welfare system has been influenced by CRP recommendations, and this session will share some of their success stories. Nicole will also share some best practices for how to get the necessary players involved to make the CRP process worthwhile, and how to create reasonable recommendations that lead to actual results. [A registration reminder is coming soon.](#)



Is your state's information up to date? Please visit the CRP web page at <https://cantasd.acf.hhs.gov/crp/> and send any updates to cmatriccino@impaqint.com.