



CITIZEN CONNECTIONS

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Want to contribute to future issues of *Citizen Connections*? Submit topics to JoShonda Guerrier, CRP Peer Group Lead, at jrguerrier@outlook.com.

LEARN MORE

State information and resources are available at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/administration/partnerships/oversight/citizen/>

Welcome to the Summer/Fall 2023 edition of the National Citizen Review Panel community e-newsletter, *Citizen Connections*. In this issue, we will introduce the newest member of the Citizen Review Panel (CRP) Team, highlight some of the [Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act](#) (CAPTA) requirements for CRPs, share peer communication opportunities, and give other CRP updates!

Through our communication with several jurisdictions, we have learned that many CRP coordinators around the country are new to their roles. To amplify learning, we have shared several CRP resources in this issue, including highlighting some of the key requirements for CRPs under the CAPTA. In partnership with the Children’s Bureau (CB), the Capacity Building Center for States (Center) continues to provide technical assistance (TA) and thought partnership to CRP coordinators, members, and affiliates nationally.

Introducing Our Newest Team Member: Beca Stearns



Beca Stearns (she/her) is the new Lived Experience Engagement Specialist for the Child Protection Services portfolio, which includes CRP. She has a vast background in the child welfare system both personally and professionally. She has been expanding her knowledge and understanding of the child welfare system since 2017. Beca’s lived experience pushed her to get a bachelor’s degree in early education and psychology. After receiving her degree, she worked with youth in care on a local level.

Beca frequently speaks at events to advocate for youth resources and local change. In July 2022, Beca started working as an Oregon Fellow for the Division X TA Project. During this time, she expanded her knowledge and skills in research, development, and youth advocacy. Beca is now continuing her work at the Center as a Lived Experience Engagement Specialist. Beca is also leading lived experience engagement work with the County-Administered State Partnership Peer Group.

New to CRPs? Here Are Some Things You Should Know

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

The authorization for CRPs was originally added to the CAPTA through a 1996 amendment. The best practice is to review details and requirements as presented at the source.

The current language relating to CRPs is detailed in CAPTA Section 106 (c)(1)-(6) for each of the following:

1) Establishment, 2) Membership, 3) Meetings, 4) Functions, 4a) General, 4b) Confidentiality, 4c) Public Outreach, 5) State Assistance, 6) Reports

Specific language can be found in [CAPTA](#), Section 106 (c).

CRP Tips

To support the creation, maintenance, and examination of CRPs, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, CB, and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Technical Assistance and Strategic Dissemination Center collaborated to produce the CRP tip sheet series. The tip sheets by topic are:

[CAPTA Citizen Review Panels 101](#)

Describes the purpose and operations of CRPs, including how these promote positive child welfare outcomes.

[Communicating With External Groups](#)

Presents strategies to support collaboration between CRPs and other key child welfare stakeholders.

[Preparing Your Annual Report](#)

Presents recommendations for the development of informative and visually appealing annual reports, which are a required product for active CRPs.

[Recruitment and Retention of Members](#)

Explains key considerations for the recruitment and retention of diverse and engaged CRPs. Select recommendations include actively managing group dynamics and setting clear expectations for participation.

[Structures That Support CRP Success](#)

Supports the development of organizational systems, including by-laws and membership application, to facilitate the development and maintenance of effective CRPs.

[Using Data to Enhance the Work of Citizen Review Panels](#)

Explains essential considerations in the collection, interpretation, and communication of quantitative information for CRP evaluations.

[Working Successfully with Child Welfare Agencies](#)

Discusses key barriers to creating collaborative CRPs, as well as methods for mitigating these barriers to community involvement in child welfare practice.

The CRP tip sheet series and additional relevant resources can be found [here](#).

Engaging Persons With Lived Experience

As part of the administration's focus on meaningfully engaging persons with lived experience, many resources have been developed in partnership with lived experts. As you think through the practice of panel member recruitment and selection, consider aligning with CB's efforts to focus on meaningful, authentic, ongoing engagement of families and young people with lived experience, as well as other system partners with a vested interest in the child welfare system.

Described in CAPTA Section 106 (c)(2), CRPs should be "composed of volunteer members who are broadly representative of the community in which such panel is established, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect, and may include adult former victims of child abuse or neglect." Other considerations for panel development include:

- ▶ Whether to introduce term limits for panel members
- ▶ The role geography plays in the strategic positioning of panels
- ▶ How recent the lived experience is of those panel members with lived experience
- ▶ The state's ability to support the panel fiscally

Each of these factors individually, and in some instances collectively, will impact applicant screening and selection, member development, and the most beneficial balance between jurisdictional support and panel autonomy. Finding and retaining quality panel members may seem challenging, but it doesn't need to be. Information-sharing, diversity and inclusiveness, authenticity, and intentionality can go a long way in engaging volunteers, which will serve to strengthen panel capacity going forward.

Nationally, there is a huge emphasis on including people with lived experience in the delivery, analysis, and monitoring of child protection systems across the country. Every opportunity to leverage the expertise of available, willing participants should be considered.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services partnered with lived experts to develop the brief "[Methods and Emerging Strategies to Engage People with Lived Experience](#)." According to the brief, "data suggest that engaging people with lived experience yields benefits or impacts at multiple levels:

individual, program/initiative, and agency” (p. 5). As you brainstorm ways that your state’s CRPs can best partner with people with lived experience, remember to:

- ▶ **Prepare** and plan for engagement
- ▶ **Consider** the duration of the engagement
- ▶ **Dedicate** sufficient resources, including compensation
- ▶ **Ensure** flexibility and accommodation
- ▶ **Provide** ongoing training and support for collaboration and bidirectional learning
- ▶ **Create** supportive policies, procedures, and protocols
- ▶ **Conduct** continuous quality improvement

The entire brief, with a deeper dive into each of the effective engagement strategies above and much more, can be found [here](#).

“[Strategies for National and State Groups to Equitably Identify People with Lived Experience](#)” is another resource, also released by ASPE, that one may consider when contemplating the involvement of individuals with lived experience in the development of health and human services programs, policies, and research that directly impact them.

Collaboration Corner



Collaboration Corner is now live! The [Mural Board for CRP](#) is available for peer connection, collaboration, and resource sharing. Your active engagement will serve to enrich this resource for all! As use of the site expands, it will be a place to exchange best practice information with peers, view states’ annual CRP reports, and access previous issues of *Citizen Connections*, as well as discuss strengths and barriers related to CRP work across jurisdictions. All CRP coordinators, panel members, and professionals engaged in the delivery of CRP services are welcome to access the board and interact with other participants.

Another peer-to-peer communication tool that is now available is Peer Communities, launched by CB in June 2023. This tool replaces the former CRP listservs (crpco-ord-cbcs@lists.childwelfare.gov and crp-cbcs@lists.childwelfare.gov), which are no longer active. If you have not already registered for this new opportunity, please visit <https://go.childwelfare.gov/communities> and complete the following steps:

1. Enter your email address and follow the instruction to “Send Verification Code.”
2. Look for an email from Child Welfare System Manager; once you receive the email, copy the verification number from the email and enter it in the browser. Click “Done.”
3. You will receive a “Password Reset” email. Follow the instructions to reset your password.
4. Click communities.childwelfare.gov to log in.
5. Follow the instructions to enable Multi-Factor Authentication. (See tips on this in the [Guide to Peer Communities](#))

You will only need to complete the registration steps once. If you need additional support, please contact communities@childwelfare.gov.

NCRP Advisory Board Update

2024 National CRP Conference News

The National CRP Advisory Board previously announced that Minnesota would be the host state for our conference in 2024. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Minnesota has requested postponing hosting the conference to a future year. As the Advisory Board is committed to continuing to provide opportunities for in-person learning and peer networking for the CRP community, it is moving forward with the event at a venue in southern California as an alternative for May 2024. The **2024 National Citizen Review Panel Conference: Empowering Communities to Lead Change** will be held at Paradise Point in San Diego, California from May 20 to 22, 2024. If you would like to receive information on the conference as it develops or are interested in joining the Advisory Board, please email cathy@mwmanagementgroup.com.

RECAP: CRP Resources Explored!

If you missed it, you may view the June 14 training webinar, “**CRP Resources Explored!**,” hosted by CB and the Center, here: <https://vimeo.com/839110216/f59d45017f?share=copy>.

During the training, participants increased their awareness of CRP support available from CB, as well as from the Center’s TA teams. Participants learned about the mandates from a federal perspective and discussed the CRP mandates prescribed in the CAPTA. Guest Speaker Deb Farrell, Chair of the National CRP Advisory Board, joined the presentation to share the

Board's purpose, membership, services offered and resources available, status of the Biennial National Conference, challenges most frequently identified by CRPs, and the Board's plans for 2023–2024. The interactive part of the event included the unveiling of the CRP Mural Board.

The following resource links were shared in chat during the presentation:

- ▶ [ACF Strategic Plan](#)
- ▶ [About CAPTA: A Legislative History](#)
- ▶ [Program Instruction for the June 30, 2023, State submission of: \(1\) the fourth Annual Progress and Services Report \(APSR\); \(2\) the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act \(CAPTA\) State Plan update; and \(3\) the CFS-101s](#)