



## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Anchorage Region Site Visit Report

Appendix 2: Southeast Region Site Visit Report

Appendix 3: Western Region Site Visit Report

Appendix 4: BIA Providers Conference Survey Results

Appendix 5: Legislative Visit Report

Appendix 6: CRP National Conference Report

Appendix 7: OCS Statewide Recruitment and Retention Plan



## **Appendix 1: Anchorage Region Site Visit Report**



## Alaska Citizen Review Panel

### Members

Diwakar K. Vadapalli, Chair  
Dana Hallett, Vice-chair  
Ben Creasy  
Bettyann Steciw  
Margaret McWilliams  
Rodreshia Dunbar

### Coordinator

Sylvan Robb  
Phone 907.450-2456  
sylvan@iialaska.com

### Mailing address

212 Front St., Suite 100  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Fax 907.450-2470

### [www.crpalaska.org](http://www.crpalaska.org)

The Citizen Review Panel is a statewide group of volunteers mandated by federal and state law to provide oversight to the Office of Children's Services.

<b>Dates of visit</b>	October 2-3, 2014
<b>Date of the Report</b>	October 29, 2014
<b>Members of CRP on the visit</b>	The entire Panel (6 members) Sylvan Robb (staff)

### Offices covered in this visit

<b>Regional Office</b>	Anchorage Regional Office
<b>Field Office</b>	Anchorage
<b>Communities served</b>	Anchorage, Tyonek

### Agencies consulted

**Public Safety:** *Alaska State Troopers (AST); Anchorage Police Department (APD)*

**School system:** *Anchorage School District (ASD)*

**Typical parties to a CINA case:** *Attorney General (AG) Office (representing the OCS); Public Defenders Agency (PDA, representing the parents); Office of Public Advocacy (OPA, representing children); Alaska Native Tribes and ICWA workers (representing their community); CASA (volunteer advocates for children in need of aid); Alaska Legal Services*

**Service Providers:** *Child Advocacy Center (Alaska C.A.R.E.S.); Residential Service Providers (North Star Hospital; Covenant House)*

**Acknowledgments:** The CRP would like to thank all staff of the Anchorage Regional Office for taking time to meet with the Panel. The Panel really appreciates Sara Childress, CSM at Anchorage Regional Office, for allowing us to meet with her staff amidst impossible workloads. The Panel would also like to thank all local partners for their time and their honest appraisal of their working relationships with OCS.

---

*Site visits are an important part of the annual work load of Alaska's Citizen Review Panel. Panel members consult with staff at OCS regional or field offices and their local partner agencies to assess various instrumental practice behaviors and institutional relationships. The Panel's consultations cover a broad range of topics, focusing on systemic issues (not on strengths and weaknesses of individuals). Questions are often open-ended, and part of a free-flowing unstructured conversation. All information shared with CRP is confidential and will be de-identified and summarized into a Trip Report. Trip reports are made available to OCS senior leadership, and to all parties that were consulted on that visit.*

This report summarizes the Panel's consultations with supervisors and staff at the ARO and representatives of local partner agencies. This report is organized into three major sections that are relevant to the current focus of the Panel. While the Panel tries to be as comprehensive in their review as possible, large areas of practice may have been omitted from review for various reasons. The Panel encourages all concerned parties to consider this report as part of a constructive dialogue in improving child protection services within ARO and the state, and remains open for a continued conversation.

### **General reflections**

Anchorage Regional Office (ARO) is the largest of the five OCS regions. The region is home to approximately half the state's population and 42% of the state's children. The region has a proportionally high caseload, and thus the largest staff, among all regional offices. Anchorage is also endowed with a variety of available services in contrast to almost all of the rest of the state. Therefore, ARO caseload includes a number of children and families that migrate from other parts of the state, or are moved here for services.

### **Leadership**

The Panel met with the CSM and some of the unit supervisors. Many of them have been in their positions or in this regional office for quite some time (usually more than 4 years). Their longevity certainly is welcoming and explains some of the positive comments gathered during the visit. Additionally, it is very encouraging to note the entrepreneurial approach of the CSM, and the freedom she has in innovating, in trying new ideas such as designating a specific supervisor to be the liaison for several partner agencies so each agency has a named person to whom they can reach out. Another example is how new staff spend several days going around town visiting partner agencies while they wait for SKILLS training sessions.

While high turnover and vacancy rates among OCS Child Protection Specialist positions are debilitating in general, ARO had an unusually high number of positions vacant during the time of this visit. In light of that, the Panel noted some challenges with leadership:

- Lack of training for frontline workers: No formal mechanism exists for on-the-job training that includes coaching, mentoring, and job shadowing especially for new and inexperienced workers in IA and Intake. Specific skills that were mentioned that may not often be part of the worker's previous training or academic program may include drafting petitions and reports for court; managing and meeting the expectations of the attorneys from the AG's office while in court; managing relationships with all different parties involved in a case.
- Some of the frontline workers felt that a formal mechanism to support, encourage, and train some of the supervisors would improve their morale and help with decreasing the current turnover rate.
- Promotion of senior SSAs is hindered by some unwieldy HR requirements. Unit supervisors expressed helplessness in trying to retain some of their most experienced and skilled SSAs due to this barrier.

- While the Panel does not have a means to examine this, inertia of doing things a particular way was mentioned as one of the challenges in devising and implementing innovative management ideas at the ARO.

### OCS staff workload and morale

The Panel met with approximately 20 staff (frontline social workers, SSAs, and admin staff) from intake, IA, family services, in-home, and licensing. Many of these frontline workers had much shorter tenures and stated that their jobs are stressful. A change in OCS intake practice leading to a rise in number of screened-in reports over the last several months seems to have had an impact on the workload of the staff. Both the staff and supervisors expressed many related concerns on high workload, and potential ways to manage it:

- Despite Anchorage being the largest population center in the state with the largest concentration of service providers, workers claimed that the available services are still inadequate. An assessment of unmet needs and available services will be helpful. Such an assessment might be most feasible if done in partnership with other agencies providing similar or complementary services.
- New workers were expected to find someone to shadow on their own; there is no formal mentoring (as mentioned in the previous section). A worker suggested a system similar to residency for medical doctors, where new doctors are required to accrue a certain amount of experience with each type of procedure. In the current case, the new social workers would work through a list ensuring that they shadowed someone doing each of the elements of their position before they were expected to do it on their own. Although workers with a college education would have had a field practicum, the Panel agrees with the idea of more formal on-the-job training mechanism.
- SSAs in Anchorage spend 40-45 percent of their time in transporting children for visitation. While this is an important and required task, it appeared that the opportunity cost of having SSA's do this is very high, especially in light of high workloads. ARO should explore using SSA's skills in better assisting social workers in many other critical tasks.
- A related concern is the lack of adequate number of vehicles. With just a handful of vehicles, waiting for a ride consumes much of SSA's time.
- Anchorage office has just five laptops that could be checked out by social workers. Past attempts at providing workers with mobile technology seem to have been unsuccessful. Availability of mobile technology with access to ORCA can significantly improve the workers' abilities to manage their workload.
- ORCA does not support multiple goals for a case plan. This is a source of confusion, especially when it is statutorily required.

Many workers appreciated the BizHub copy and fax machine. Nearly everyone appreciated the return of dictation, but didn't appreciate it having been taken away for so long with nothing to replace it. Recent efforts in increasing safety were certainly appreciated.

Partner agencies expressed typical frustrations with OCS staff being hard to reach and overworked. Nearly all partner agencies acknowledged that OCS workers have large caseloads

and not enough resources to get their work done. However, the usual complaints were heard as well, primarily around communication. Points below are not universally true. However, they were mentioned by partners as more frequent and avoidable.

- Case planning takes too long, sometimes are not discussed with the clients, and sometimes are not signed.
- ICWA workers did not feel like they were kept in the loop nearly as well as they should have been.
- Supervised visits are being overused.
- Need some streamlining of the number of meetings. While partners realize the purpose and need for each meeting, they wish to see a more streamlined process that would minimize meeting times.
- With clients that need critical care, it is important that OCS workers have access to, and find means to share appropriate information that is necessary to start care.
- While the OCS' Psych Nurses are appreciated, North Star staff suggested that some of their advice is contradictory to the advice from North Star professionals, and this is a severe problem.

Particularly, there appears to be room for improvement and streamlining in relationships with the legal system. The Office of Public Defenders Agency (PDA) and the Attorney General's (AG) office both expressed the need for training social workers in drafting petitions. It was not clear if writing petitions is the responsibility of a social worker who has minimal legal training, or of the attorneys with sophisticated legal training at the AG's office. There seems to be no standard format or clear guidelines on content for the petitions filed by social workers at the initiation of a CINA case. Clarity at this time is critical for all parties to attend to their share of the work in ensuring the child and family involved receives all services necessary. Clarification of roles and responsibilities may be necessary.

### Partner relationships

Overall, relationships between the Anchorage Regional Office and local partner organizations seemed positive. While several partners pointed many limitations to their relationship with OCS workers, there is a general recognition that staff and workers are trying hard to do their best while battling very difficult and stressful situations. Along the same lines the partners also point out that they themselves are working in similarly stressful situations, implying systemic changes within OCS are required to change the status quo. Almost all partners were quick to point out that their opinions do not concern any individual at OCS. The following specific concerns/thoughts were noted by several partners:

- Good and frequent communication is desired. There was some frustration expressed, but often the problem seemed manageable through better communication. For example, one partner expressed frustration that workers didn't show up for court cases estimating that this happened 5-6 times annually out of approximately 200 court dates. Even with the liaison system, there was a desire for more communication. Several people noted that it doesn't feel like a two way street—when OCS wants something they need it now, but when being asked for something they never have time to return the favor.

- The legal community in general (OPA, PDA, AG) expressed the need for better training on legal procedures for social workers. Since the needs of each of these legal agencies are different, it is likely quite challenging to satisfy them all, especially with minimal legal training. It appears important that OCS attempts to clarify the mutual roles and responsibilities and ensure that workers' skills match their responsibilities vis-à-vis the legal community.

The Panel is concerned that local partner relationships have surfaced to be of concern on almost every site visit for last several years. With relatively large amounts of resources at the office's disposal, it is very concerning that Anchorage Regional Office too is suffering from the same problems as the Western Regional Office.

Admission 087 Hearings seem to be a major source of disagreement and contention for at least the medical and mental health professionals at North Star Hospital and the AAG's office. The Panel did not hear any concerns from OCS staff on this issue. The Panel understands this to be an important issue to be resolved, and suggest the concerned parties approach either the Court Improvement Project or the Children's Justice Act Task Force. Both serve broader mandates and are better equipped to address this issue.



## **Appendix 2: Southeast Region Site Visit Report**





## Alaska Citizen Review Panel

### Members

Diwakar K. Vadapalli, Chair  
Dana Hallett, Vice-chair  
Donna M. Aguiniga  
Jen Burkmire  
Margaret McWilliams  
Bettyann Steciw

### Coordinator

Sylvan Robb  
Phone 907.450-2456  
sylvan@iialaska.com

### Mailing address

212 Front St., Suite 100  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Fax 907.450-2470

[www.crpalaska.org](http://www.crpalaska.org)

*Alaska Citizen Review Panel evaluates the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies for effectiveness in discharging their child protection responsibilities. The Panel is mandated through CAPTA 1997 (P.L. 104-235), and enacted through AS 47.14.205*

## SITE VISIT REPORT

<b>Regional Office</b>	Southeast Region
<b>Field Offices visited</b>	Juneau, Ketchikan, Sitka
<b>Other Communities visited</b>	None
<b>Dates of visit</b>	January 21 – 24, 2015
<b>Members of CRP on the visit</b>	Donna Aguiniga, Jen Burkmire, Dana Hallett, Diwakar Vadapalli

### Partner Agencies consulted

#### **Alaska Native governments or entities**

*Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska*

*Douglas Indian Community*

*Ketchikan Indian Community*

#### **Public Safety**

*Juneau Police Department (JPD); Sitka Police Department*

#### **School system**

*Juneau: Auke Bay Elementary School; Glacier Valley Elementary School*

*Ketchikan: Houghtaling Elementary School*

*Sitka: Keet Gooshi Heen (Baranof) Elementary School*

#### **Legal Community**

*Attorney General (AG) Office (representing the OCS)*

*District Attorney's (DA) Office in Sitka*

#### **Service Providers**

*S.A.F.E. Child Advocacy Center, Juneau*

*Juneau Youth Services (Comprehensive behavioral health services provider)*

*WISH Family Services, Ketchikan*

*Two foster parents*

The Panel tried to reach out to several other partner agencies that either could not be reached or were not available for a meeting.

**Acknowledgments:** The CRP would like to thank all staff of the Southeast Regional Office (SRO) for taking time to meet with the Panel. The Panel appreciates Sharon Fleming, SRO's Children Services Manager, for allowing us to meet with her staff amidst difficult workloads. The Panel would also like to thank all local partners for their time and their honest appraisal of their working relationships with OCS.

---

*Site visits are an important part of the annual work load of Alaska's Citizen Review Panel. Panel members consult with staff at an OCS regional or field office and their local partner agencies to assess various instrumental practice behaviors and institutional relationships. The Panel's consultations cover a broad range of topics, focusing on systemic issues and not on individual strengths and weaknesses. Questions are often open-ended, and part of a free-flowing unstructured conversation. All information shared with CRP is confidential and will be de-identified and summarized into a Trip Report. Trip reports are posted on the Panel's website.*

## 1. Key observations:

- Relations between Office of Children’s Services (OCS) and its partners seem to be relatively positive in the region. The efforts of all parties are very encouraging. Relationships are generally more positive and constructive in Sitka and Ketchikan than in Juneau.
- Management tools employed by the state office management need to be better contextualized and made applicable to local conditions. Quality Assurance (QA) reviews and the Initial Assessments (IA) backlog tracking mechanism are two tools that the Panel is aware of, and are being examined in the local context.
  - The utility of QA reports to the frontline workers needs to be critically examined. While the precision and periodicity of the reviews is much appreciated, utility of these QA report findings to improve practice behaviors of frontline workers seems uncertain. A more systematic, constructive, and strengths-based follow-up is desired.
  - The backlog of Initial Assessments has been a challenge for OCS for several years. Local workers find that many of the overdue IAs are of the lowest priority, and better screening with local input would reduce the number of egregiously overdue cases, and would reflect well on their QA reports.
- Secondary trauma needs to be systematically addressed. All frontline workers expressed severe concerns about their heavy workload, minimal supervision, and subsequent stress-related secondary trauma. Efforts of the agency to address secondary trauma were limited to a book on the subject handed to each worker. Addressing this need could help improve retention of frontline workers. Turnover appears to be quite high in the Juneau field office during the time of this visit.
- Efforts to recruit of foster families need to be more intensive, systematic, and innovative. While the number of children in foster care and the number of available foster homes seems to match well, the Panel did not have any information on the types of foster homes (emergency, therapeutic, etc.), and many other details necessary to meaningfully assess the adequacy of foster homes. General consensus among those with whom the Panel consulted, expressed the need for more foster homes in the region, especially in the smaller communities, and more native foster homes. Efforts to recruit foster homes seem to have been limited due to lack of coordination between players.
- There seems to be some confusion about the role of OCS workers in forensic interviewing. The CAC in Juneau has staff that conducts forensic interviews, this works very well for the Juneau Field Office. However, it is expensive and logistically challenging for other field offices to utilize these services. It would be more efficient if OCS frontline workers in the other field offices were trained in child forensic interviewing.

## 2. Categories

The Panel examines a specific set of categories on each site visit. Below are observations on three specific categories.

### 2.1 Leadership

The Panel met with the CSM and all unit supervisors. The Southeast Region's (SR) leadership team seems to have had considerable experience working at OCS. It is very encouraging to note the innovative and creative approach to challenges they perceive in their work. While many challenges remain, and resources are never adequate, the SR's initiative to identify and address the issue of repeat maltreatment speaks well of their leadership.

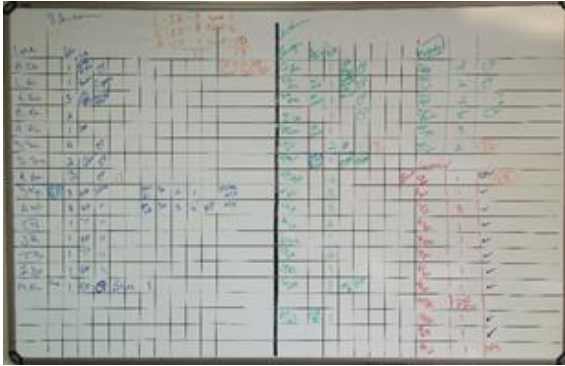
This creative approach is needed in tackling the many challenges clearly evident from the Panel's brief visit to just three of the five field offices:

- **Communication with frontline workers:** Frontline workers clearly expressed their inability to get the guidance and supervision they need in performing their duties. They acknowledged and appreciated the effort of their supervisors in trying to be available at all times by any means possible. However, they were also clear that the current supervision time is insufficient. Lack of supervision can translate to negative outcomes on casework and, decreased worker morale, and is contributes to high turnover. No one among the current group of frontline workers in the Juneau field office have been there for longer than 3 years, and the newest person has been there for just over 6 months. A specific idea, suggested by one of the frontline workers, for the local leadership and OCS senior leadership to consider is a 'field training officer', who focused on training and orienting new workers for an extended period of time. This is akin to "shadowing" that is currently being practiced, except that the training officer would have a reduced number of active cases on his/her workload as workers are guided in managing their caseloads.
- **Employee evaluations:** While several frontline workers reported being evaluated, this seems to differ by the supervisor. Some workers reported they had not been evaluated for several years. Lack of adequate, meaningful, and timely evaluation has been a concern of the Panel on prior site visits.
- **Secondary trauma:** As busy as the supervisors are, frontline workers depend on them for support and guidance on handling secondary trauma. The Panel is aware of the agency's initiatives in addressing secondary trauma of frontline workers. However, this initiative remains nebulous to frontline workers in the SRO. They reported being disillusioned with the discussion and support material supplied to them.
- **Partner relations:** Supervisors and especially senior management of SRO must extend their positive efforts in reaching out to partners. While partner relations are generally positive and constructive across the region, one specific suggestion was an 'open house' for agencies might be beneficial. Relationships in Juneau have relatively more room for improvement compared to the outlying field offices.
- **Physical security and friendly appearance:** The Panel realizes the need for secure work space and the fine balance OCS strives to achieve between functional security and friendly appearance. While the Juneau field office building seems to be highly secure, Sitka field office does not have a working lock on their front door.

- There is a general shortage of foster homes throughout the state, particularly native foster homes. However, the Panel found it intriguing that efforts to recruit foster families have not been approved, and seem to be otherwise discouraged. The Panel could not understand the reasons to not support new recruitment initiatives.

## 2.2 OCS staff workload and morale

Figure 1: Board used to track workload in Sitka field office



The Panel met with most frontline workers in Juneau, Sitka, and Ketchikan, and as many other staff as available. While the vacancies are relatively minimal, it is evident that the staffing is barely adequate to meet the workload demands, and the turnover is quite high. Juneau field office workers in the IA unit are assigned approximately 40-45 cases per person. While caseloads are marginally lower in Ketchikan and Sitka, workers in these field offices are generalists and have multiple responsibilities on each case.

Given the above working conditions, staff morale, especially in Juneau, is uncomfortably near the tipping point. Major issues that the Panel noted are:

- Severe shortage of support staff: There is a severe shortage of SSAs that could handle many case-related functions that do not require time with children and families.
- Individual safety: Several partners expressed their dismay regarding workers' lack of training and awareness of the context on safety matters. They were concerned that workers often cannot spot threats to their own personal safety while deeply involved in case work, and, thus, put themselves in dangerous situations.
- Secondary trauma: OCS claims to be attending to the employees' secondary trauma. However, frontline workers universally expressed disillusionment with these efforts.
- Utility of the QA review process: The QA process is increasingly robust, and is modeled after the federal Children and Family Services Report (CSFR) process. However, frontline staff in all field offices seem to be uncertain how the QA process and its findings can be used to improve their performance. Specifically, workers expressed the need for efforts to connect the findings of 'strengths' and 'practice improvement' under each outcome to the ground reality of their operation. A constructively critical tone in the language of the QA report, and strengths-based follow up were desired.

### 2.3 *Partner relationships*

The Panel has been closely examining partner relationships over the last several visits. While there are positive signs across the state, many relationships remain ad hoc and dependent upon personality of individual workers and supervisors. Positive relationships do not seem to be grounded in OCS' central mission or culture nor do they seem ubiquitous statewide.

The Panel observed a clear distinction in the quality and depth of relationship based on the partner's relative size and role:



- With agencies that have a clear role in a case, and where statute requires OCS to collaborate, relationships tend to be constructive and meaningful. All institutions that have a legal or service provider role that directly is either stipulated by legal statute or necessary due to desired outcomes (such as medical, educational, or behavioral health) fall in this category. However, even in these relationships, it is not uncommon for partners to express disenchantment. Almost all of these non-positive perceptions can be attributed to high turnover. For example, the public safety officers and school personnel all reported the turnover among frontline workers is very challenging and makes it difficult to establish a long-term working relationship. On the other hand, in Sitka, all partners expressed highly positive feelings about their relationship with current local OCS office and acknowledged the longevity of the field supervisor and frontline worker.
- Where the partners' role is not clearly defined, the relationship depended on the relative size and influence of the partner. This is clearly noticeable in relationships with tribal partners in the region. For example, Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, the largest Alaska Native tribal organization in the region, seems to enjoy a constructive relationship with OCS. They serve seven communities, and worked with OCS on several initiatives over the years. This on-going working relationship resulted in multiple working agreements that provide a structure to their relationship. On the other hand, the partnership with smaller tribal governments seems to be less structured and less constructive.

In general, relationships in SR are constructive and there is widespread recognition by all parties to work together. As observed in other regions in the state, the lack of a structured and institutional relationship is also hampering collaboration in SR. Additionally, all partners identified high turnover among OCS frontline staff as a challenge to having sustained positive relationship.

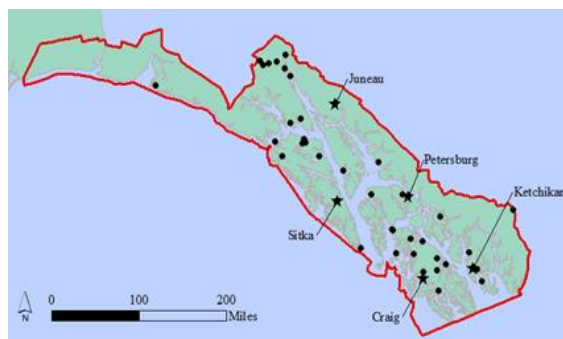
### 3. Southeast Region Overview

This section gives a brief background of the region to help readers understand the context of this report's findings.

#### 3.1 Background

Southeast regional office (SRO) includes ten different boroughs or census areas in southeast Alaska. The region is home to 71,664 people, with 28.06% 21 years or younger (U.S. Census 2010). There were approximately 164 (76 boys and 88 girls) children on an average per month in out-of-home placement situations in the region. Data on in-home services were not available. There are currently 167 (Sitka – 33, Ketchikan – 48, Juneau – 71, Craig – 10, and Petersburg – 5) licensed foster homes in the region (as reported by Alaska Center for Resource Families).

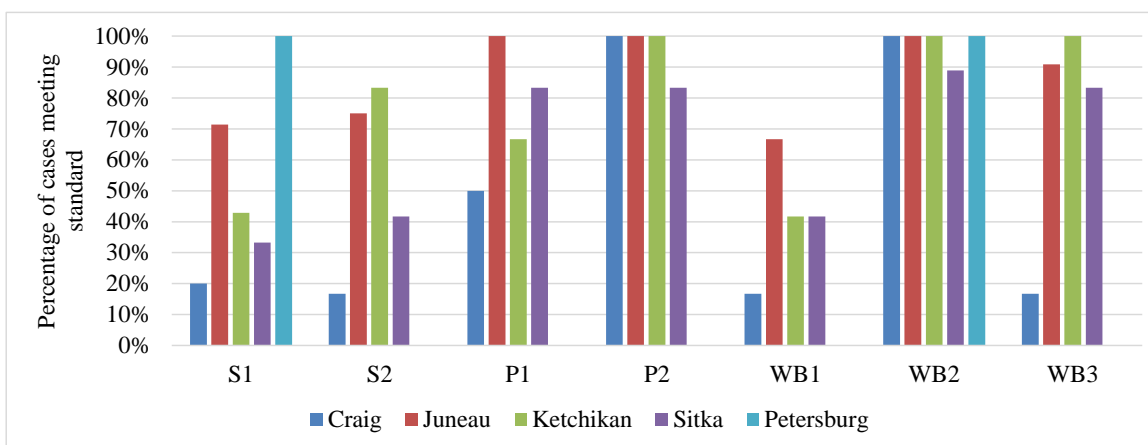
Figure 2: Southeast Region with its five field offices



#### 3.2 Choosing field offices to visit

The Southeast region has its regional office in Juneau, and has five field offices – Juneau, Ketchikan, Craig, Sitka, and Petersburg, serving 42 communities across the region. The Panel compiled performance indicators from the region's Quality Assurance (QA) reviews conducted by the Office of Children Services QA Unit to help focus our review.

Figure 3: Performance on seven quality assurance (QA) outcomes by field office - 2014



QA reviews follow the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), and cover seven outcomes areas – 2 safety (S) outcomes, 2 permanency (P) outcomes, and 3 wellbeing (WB) outcomes (see Table 1). Each review is based on a small sample of cases, and the score on an outcome shows what percentage of the sample of cases met the expected standard on a set of items that represent that outcome. OCS tries to review each of their field and regional offices every year. Given the small sample of cases, these reviews may not always reflect a



comprehensive picture. The Panel tried to use this information to identify field offices to visit, and to understand the challenges that each office faces.

The earliest such QA review in southern region was done in 2007 for Petersburg, and each office was reviewed at least four times since. Figure 3 shows the performance values for all seven QA outcomes for each field office in the southeast region for the year 2014. All offices except Petersburg (last reviewed in August 2013, and was being reviewed during the Panel’s visit) were reviewed in 2014. From Figure 3, field offices in the southern region appear to have had some challenges with five of the seven outcomes. They appear to have done well on permanency 2 and wellbeing 3.

Figure 4: Performance on seven quality assurance (QA) outcomes – Sitka field office, 2010-2014

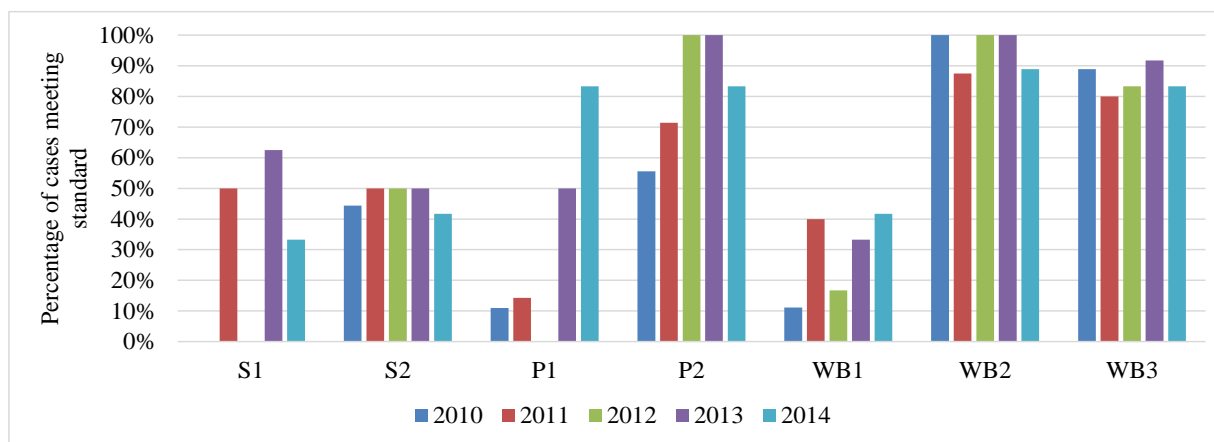
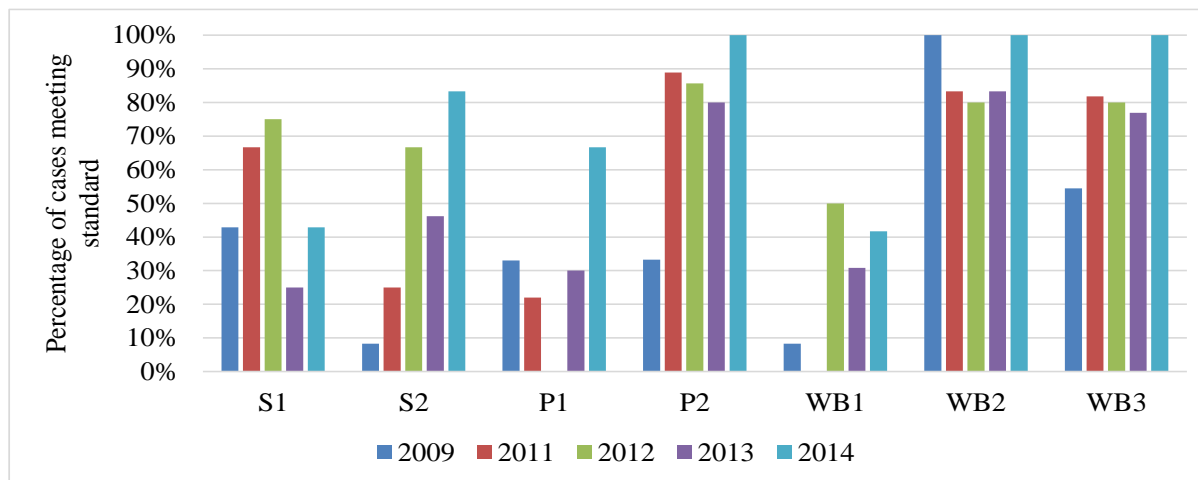


Figure 5: Performance on seven quality assurance (QA) outcomes Ketchikan field office, 2009-2014



The Panel examined data from all available reviews for each field office and identified Sitka and Ketchikan for an in-person visit. In addition to the QA data, travel cost and logistics, and the number of employees in each office also informed this choice. Figure 4 and Figure 5 show the

QA performance values for Sitka and Ketchikan respectively. Each office develops a follow-up Program Improvement Plan (FO-PIP) in response to the QA review. FO-PIP identifies specific goals associated with each area of improvement identified in the QA review. The Panel did not receive the FO-PIP for any of the SRO field offices in time for an in-depth review. The site visit review was focused on the QA outcomes for each field office.

---

Table 1: Outcomes and Items of the Quality Assurance Review

---

<b>Outcome S1:</b> Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment
<b>Outcome S2:</b> Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate
Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal
Item 4: Risk of harm to child(ren)
<b>Outcome P1:</b> Children have permanency and stability in their living situation.
Item 5: Foster care re-entries
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement
Item 7: Permanency goal for child
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives
Item 9: Adoption
Item 10: Permanency goal or other planned permanent living arrangement
<b>Outcome P2:</b> The continuity of family relationships and connection is preserved for children.
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement
Item 12: Placement with siblings
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care
Item 14: Preserving connections
Item 15: Relative placement
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents
<b>Outcome WB1:</b> Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning
Item 19: Worker visits with child
Item 20: Worker visits with parents
<b>Outcome WB2:</b> Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs
Item 21: Educational needs of the child
<b>Outcome WB3:</b> Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.
Item 22: Physical health of the child
Item 23: Mental health of the child

---



### 3.3 *Employee Profile of the SRO (supplied by SRO's Children Services Manager)*

Table 2: Employee profile of Southeast Regional Office at the time of the visit						
Title	SRO	JFO	SFO	KFO	CFO	PFO
Managers	3					
Supervisors		3	1	1		
Protective Services Specialists(PSS)		11	2	5	1	1
Social Service Assistants (SSA)		3	1	2	1	
Administrative professionals	2	2				
Mental Health Clinician	1					
Psychiatric Nurse	1					
Regional Adoption Worker	1					
Independent Living Specialist	1					
Licensing Staff	2					
Intake Staff	3					
ICWA Specialist	1					
Eligibility Technician	1					
<b>Total Employees</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

### 3.4 *Community Partners (supplied by SRO's Children Services Manager)*

*Juneau Field Office (JFO):* (Communities served – Juneau, Angoon, Haines, Hoonah, Skagway, Yakutat)

- Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska,
- Douglas Island Association,
- Juneau Douglas School District,
- Juneau Police Department,
- SEARHC,
- REACH,
- REACH Infant Learning Program,
- AWARE,
- AST,
- Bartlett Regional Hospital,
- Juneau Youth Services,
- Rainforest Recovery Center,
- Adult probation,
- Division of Juvenile Justice,
- Catholic Community Services (including the Child Advocacy Center and MDT),
- Lemon Creek Correctional Center,
- Assistant Attorney General's office.

*Ketchikan Field Office (KFO):* (Communities served - Ketchikan, Metlakatla)

- Ketchikan Indian Community,
- Gateway/Akeela,
- WISH,

- Community Connections,
- Early Learning,
- Public Safety: State troopers; Ketchikan police
- Schools,
- Hospital,
- Adult probation,
- Division of Juvenile Justice,
- Clinics.
- Metlakatla Indian Community, and their service providers through Annette Island Service Unit and the children's mental health.

*Sitka Field Office (SFO):* (Communities served – Sitka)

- Sitka Tribe of Alaska,
- Early Learning program,
- Youth Advocates of Sitka,
- Sitka Counseling Services,
- Sitkans Against Family violence (SAFV Shelter),
- Sitka Police Department,
- Sitka School District,
- SEARHC Clinic 2.

*Craig Field Office (CFO):* (Communities served – Coffman Cove, Edna Bay, Hollis, Hydaburg, Kasaan, Klawock, Naukiti, Thorne Bay, Whale Pass)

- SEARHC,
- Community Connections,
- Early Learning or the agencies providing services for adult and children's mental health and developmental type services,
- Hydaburg tribe,
- Klawock tribe,
- Craig tribe,
- Kasaan tribe.

*Petersburg Field Office (PFO):* (Communities served – Kake, Wrangell)

- Petersburg Indian Association,
- Petersburg School District (head start; high school),
- Petersburg Mental Health, True North Counseling, SEARHC Counseling,
- Petersburg Police Department,
- Petersburg WAVE (Working Against Violence for Everyone),
- Petersburg Medical Center,
- Reach Inc,
- Infant Learning Program,
- Public Health.
- Churches: Lighthouse Assembly; Salvation Army.



### **Appendix 3: Western Region Site Visit Report**



## Alaska Citizen Review Panel

### Members

Diwakar K. Vadapalli, Chair  
Dana Hallett, Vice-chair  
Donna M. Aguiniga  
Jen Burkmire  
Margaret McWilliams  
Bettyann Steciw  
Rebecca Vale

### Coordinator

Sylvan Robb  
sylvan@iialaska.com

### Mailing address

212 Front St., Suite 100  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Fax 907.450-2470

[www.crpalaska.org](http://www.crpalaska.org)

*Alaska Citizen Review Panel evaluates the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies for effectiveness in discharging their child protection responsibilities. The Panel is mandated through CAPTA 1997 (P.L. 104-235), and enacted through AS 47.14.205*

## SITE VISIT REPORT

<b>Regional Office</b>	Western Region
<b>Field Offices visited</b>	Bethel
<b>Communities visited</b>	Bethel
<b>Dates of visit</b>	May 7 – 8, 2015
<b>Members of CRP on the visit</b>	Donna Aguiniga, Jen Burkmire, Bettyann Steciw

### Partner Agencies consulted

#### **Public Safety**

*Alaska State Troopers  
Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) program at Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)*

#### **School system**

*Lower Kuskokwim School District Social Work Department*

#### **Legal Community**

*Attorney General (AG) Office  
Guardians ad Litem*

#### **Service Providers**

*Tundra Women's Coalition Child Advocacy Center  
Foster parents*

#### **Alaska Native entities**

*Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) ICWA Office*

The Panel reached out to several other partner agencies that either could not be reached or were not available for a meeting.

*Acknowledgments:* The CRP would like to thank all staff of the Western Regional Office (WRO) for taking time to meet with the Panel. The Panel appreciates Fennisha Gardner, WRO's Children Services Manager, for allowing us to meet with her staff amidst difficult workloads. The Panel would also like to thank all local partners for their time and their honest appraisal of their working relationships with OCS.

---

*Site visits are an important part of the annual work load of Alaska's Citizen Review Panel. Panel members consult with staff at an OCS regional or field office and their local partner agencies to assess various instrumental practice behaviors and institutional relationships. The Panel's consultations cover a broad range of topics, focusing on systemic issues and not on individual strengths and weaknesses. Questions are often open-ended, and part of a free-flowing unstructured conversation. All information shared with CRP is confidential and will be de-identified and summarized into a Trip Report. Trip reports are posted on the Panel's website.*

## 1 Key observations:

- A silent crisis appears to be brewing in the Western Region. The number of children during any given month of the year who are in in-home custody ballooned from 26 in 2011 to 351 in 2014, a dramatic 1,227% increase in a region where these children are distributed across 45 remote communities. This raises many important and unsettling questions about the abilities of the region's staff in attending to all the cases on their case load, and consequently, the general health and welfare of these children. This increase needs to be understood and explained.
- Lack of formal institutionalized relationships between OCS and other partnering agencies has been a consistent concern over the last several years, and is most acute in WRO. While efforts to improve relations continue, we noted the following during this visit:
  - Most concerning is the lack of a meaningful relationship with local public safety infrastructure. WRO is vast, with 45 villages only reachable by air. Social workers are often alone and isolated while in the field. While the Panel is aware of and appreciates OCS' efforts to improve worker safety across the state, we suggest OCS establish a formal agreement with the Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) program. VPSOs are often the only public safety officers in most villages in the region.
  - OCS should create formal agreements with institutions (e.g., schools, tribal authorities) in villages to provide workers safe accommodations if they need to stay overnight in a community. It is unacceptable that workers are responsible for locating their own accommodations based on their connections in the villages. This is particularly problematic considering the high turnover rate, resulting in new workers unfamiliar with the villages.
  - CRP's previous WRO site visit report (January 2014) noted that the relationship with Bethel PD was an area for growth. It seems that there is still room for improvement in this relationship.
  - Outreach efforts to village ICWA workers, tribal elders, VPSOs, and other community leaders are recommended. Specifically, ICWA workers and VPSOs are trained and equipped to help OCS workers during their visits to villages.
  - "Healthy Families" curriculum is currently structured for families. While attending this training is useful, a more customized curriculum structured for workers (as opposed to families) would better help build competency and strengthen relationships. OCS should also implement shorter or more informal training or relationship-building opportunities to help build cultural awareness and sensitivity of workers.
- WRO has suffered a relatively very high workforce turnover over the last couple of years.
  - OCS should explore creating a workforce development program/partnership to identify and recruit employees from among the residents of the region. Residents are more likely to be familiar with the culture and its unique aspects of life. While intrafamilial and intratribal relationships may pose some challenges, these can also be strengths.
  - Community partners recommended the creation of a specialist position to work with parents with FAS/FAE to facilitate family maintenance and family reunification.
  - Partner with tribes and schools for services and resources for children.



- The most recent review of any of the WRO offices by the OCS QA unit was in May 2014. The QA Unit focused its efforts over the last year on in-home cases in the region. While this was desirable and welcome, the Panel is concerned that none of the field offices or the region was reviewed by the QA unit over more than a year. This is especially concerning given the severe challenges faced by offices in the region.
- Electronic Tablets, which have the potential to improve case worker efficiency and documentation, are not yet functional for caseworkers. There have been delays in implementation and problems with IT providing support. Based on feedback provided during the site visit, the CSM calendared a training session to take place within the next month to teach workers how to use the tablets effectively. Providing assistance for workers, including IT support, will help ensure that technology is useful for them.
  - A related concern is the caseload issue. Caseloads continue to be very high, with an individual worker carrying as many as 79 cases at once. This is well above any known standard recommendation of worker case load, and is humanly impossible to adequately perform on all cases.
- Continue support for in-person foster parent training and recruitment for village families.

## 2 Categories

The Panel examines a specific set of categories on each site visit. Below are observations on three specific categories.

### 2.1 Leadership

Western region has had a change in leadership since the last CRP visit. The new Children's Services Manager had some working experience in the Western Region in the past, and was a senior manager with the Agency for several years. It has been a few months since the change in leadership and the supervisors and staff expressed a sense of optimism. The CRP is looking forward to positive changes in the region.

### 2.2 OCS Staff workload, morale, and practice issues

OCS, as most other CPS systems across the nation, has been battling high workloads that are often debilitating and demoralizing to the workers. A worker in the Western Region reported seventy-nine (79) cases. CRP reported almost the same number of cases on the workers' case load during our January 2014 site visit. This translates to approximately 150 children, with each child needing a visit by the worker every month. Given that these children are distributed across 45 villages, it is simply impossible to meet the legal mandate, and unreasonable to expect adequate service provision. Note that this is not the only task assigned to the worker.

Given the high rates of maltreatment, sexual exploitation, suicide rates, truancy, and many other related issues in the region, a single agency with more than 30% staff turnover cannot adequately serve the child protection needs of the population. The following observations are not new, and have been made repeatedly over the last several years. These observations are indicative of a general systemic failure rather than any individual workers' or managers' fault. While the Panel realizes that change is difficult and resources are limited, we hope these observations will galvanize action:

- OCS shared the latest numbers of children in out-of-home care and in-home care prior to this site visit. Table 1 shows the number of monthly average number of cases in both situations in each region, for the years 2011 through 2014. The number of children during



any given month of the year who are deemed to be safe enough to be left at home ballooned from 26 in 2011 to 351 in 2014, a 1,227% increase. Numbers for other regions are presented for comparison. While the number of in-home cases increased in all regions, the increase in Western Region is incomparably high (the next highest increase was 300% in South Central Region). The comparable number for children in out-of-home placement settings (foster care) grew from 161 in 2010 to 174 in 2014, an increase of 8%.

Table 1: Monthly average number of children in out-of-home care and in-home care by OCS region (2011-2014)

Year	Western Region		Anchorage Region		South Central Region		Southeast Region		Northern Region	
	OOH*	IH	OOH	IH	OOH	IH	OOH	IH	OOH	IH
2011	220	26	671	86	508	20	166	38	300	89
2012	206	72	701	114	508	52	167	62	286	113
2013	165	253	805	221	506	74	166	79	327	147
2014	174	351	864	189	548	79	160	72	390	118
Percentage change (2011-2014)	-21%	<b>1,227%</b>	29%	121%	8%	300%	-4%	89%	30%	33%

\* OOH – Out-of-home care; IH – In-home care

- OCS' internal Quality Assurance (QA) Unit reviewed a sample (93) of in-home cases during 2014. A summary of the reviews made available to the CRP prior to this visit indicated that all children involved in these cases were facing impending danger, and none of them had current or adequate safety plans.
- Multiple community partners remarked that calls to OCS, from the agency staff or clients, go unreturned, and that OCS does not initiate contact to the same degree as other agencies.
- Reported by several community partners that assessment of children is inconsistent, with some being left in unsafe situations while others were removed when situations may not have warranted. Of particular concern is the report that 100% of out-of-home placements are ICWA cases.
- Reporters of harm typically do not receive a follow-up letter on the status of a report they make. Reporters, a majority of them being mandated reporters, are often uncertain if a report was acted upon. CRP recommended in 2014 that OCS consider an opt-out option for reporters than the present opt-in option for receiving follow-up letters. This recommendation was accepted and is expected to be implemented.
- Case workers often approach schools, particularly in villages, expecting to speak with or remove children from school without necessary IDs or documentation.
- Schools are often unaware of children's status re: custody and placement. This was also identified by the Panel in our December 2012 site visit.
- Foster parents not receiving necessary information (i.e. Red Packet) upon placement.
- We were informed that Aniak does not currently have assigned caseworkers and the SSA will not travel under most circumstances; this office needs to be staffed and it needs to be determined if cases are being properly served. In addition, the success of St Mary's week





on/week off program needs to be evaluated, with attention given to documentation and case service compliance.

Despite these concerns, the Panel recognizes that staff and management of the Western Region, and the State office, try to respond to critical needs in a swift and affective way.

- In January 2014, the site visit report noted that workers were unable to provide for the needs of children removed from their homes. During this visit, we were informed that food and diapers are now available in the office for children. We encourage the continued development of a resource closet to ensure children have their basic needs met upon removal.

### 2.3 *Partner relations*

The Panel had consistently recommended institutionalizing relationships with local partners, and identifying consistent protocols for collaboration. Several community partners identified lack of consistent and sustained communication is the biggest impediment in their relationship with OCS:

- Communication: Poor communication with community partners has a negative impact on workers' ability to service their cases and OCS' reputation in the community. Prior site visit reports, including the two from 2012, recommended restarting the MDT. The Panel was informed on the last visit (January 2014) that OCS was convening a meeting of all key players to restart the MDT. It is yet to be functional. We learned that a facilitator from the Child Welfare Academy is scheduled for June 11th for an all-day meeting to help bring OCS and community partners together. This is a positive step forward in the reformation of the MDT. A functional MDT will provide OCS with regular communication with community partners and help ensure that families and children are being served. Communication is severely impaired due to absence of MDT.

While great interpersonal relationships can exist in any context, they cannot be a substitute for structured protocols that can ensure accountability. The recent change in senior leadership seems to have infused a sense of hope and optimism among the community partners. The Panel hopes to see development of structured protocols for collaboration with local partner agencies.

'Culture' surfaced as a central theme during our discussions on this visit. A majority of partner agencies interviewed reported that OCS workers do not demonstrate culture awareness and sensitivity:

- Cultural awareness/competency: Lack of cultural competency and awareness of unique issues of villages and the region impedes practice, impacts case disposition, and creates distrust and distance between many organizations and OCS. OCS leadership and staff did not identify any particular concerns with this issue. OCS staff referenced attending trainings, *Knowing Who You Are* and *Undoing Racism*, as evidence of their efforts on this front. While certainly helpful, these trainings are not specific to the Western Region. Several OCS staff also attended *Healthy Families* offered by AVCP. *Healthy Families* includes information specific to the Western Region. Our conversations indicate that not all workers have attended this program. In fact, many workers report never having heard of the *Healthy Families* program.





It is very concerning that comments and feedback from OCS management staff is inconsistent with comments from several partner agencies, specifically with regard to attendance at cultural awareness/sensitivity training and the occurrence of monthly partnership meetings with the school district.

The geography and weather in the region pose several challenges to service provision. Most villages can only be reached by air, and transportation is expensive in the region. Among other things, organizing visits between families and children, and between workers and children, are logistically challenging and expensive. The CRP recommended in March 2012 that specific workers be assigned to villages to improve rapport and maintain consistency in relationships. A program to assign workers to villages is in development stages, and augurs well for improving relationships with remote villages. CRP made further recommendation in March and December 2012 to identify specific individuals in each community as contact persons.

- Through this report, we are recommending that both ICWA workers and VPSOs be formally identified and clear protocols be established to encourage collaboration.

Along these lines, CRP noted in the past two site visit reports that relationships with AVCP needs to be more structured. The recent creation of an office at OCS that allows AVCP ICWA workers to be co-located is a positive and proactive step forward.

### 3 Western Region Overview

This section gives a brief background of the region to help readers understand the context of this report's findings.

#### 3.1 Background

Western regional office (WRO) includes the Bethel Census Area and the Wade Hampton Census Area in southwest Alaska. The regional office is located in Bethel and two field offices are located in Aniak and St. Mary's. The region is home to 26,453 people, with 41.80% 21 years or younger (U.S. Census 2010). There were approximately 174 children in out-of-home placement situations, and 351 children receiving services at their homes, in the region during any given month in 2014. A total of 29 staff were serving in the region and five positions were vacant (Table 2)

Figure 1: Western Region (Regional office in Bethel with two field offices – Aniak and St. Mary's)

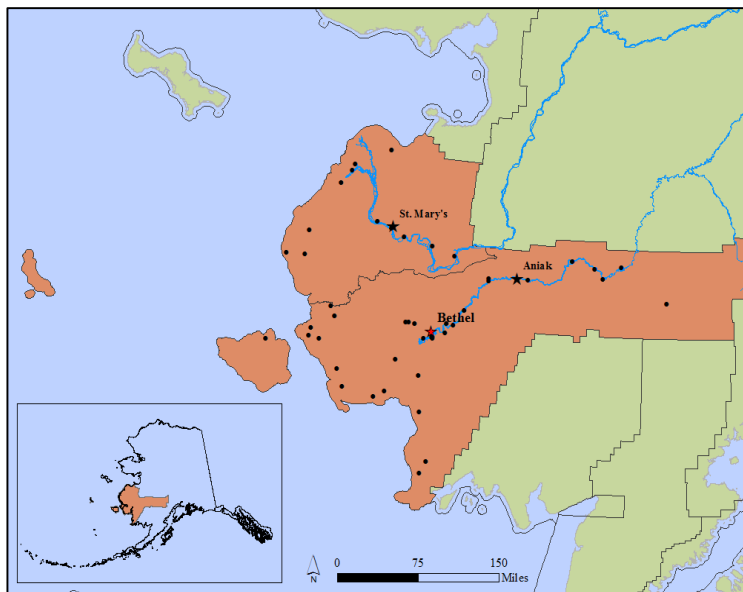


Table 2: Employment profile of Western Region by field office

	Bethel	Aniak	St. Mary's
Number of Communities Served	29	8	8
Total population served (2010)	19,613	1,249	4,563
Staff Counts (as reported during this visit)			
<i>Protective Services Specialist (PSS) IV</i>	4 (1*)		
<i>Protective Services Specialist (PSS) I/II</i>	17 (4*)		2
<i>Social Services Associates (SSA)</i>	3	1	1
<i>Office Assistant (OA)</i>	1		

\* Vacancies

### 3.2 Choosing field offices to visit

WRO has had severe challenges with staff turnover in the last several years since its creation in 2010. Accordingly, the Panel has been focused on the regional office, and limited its last several visits to the regional office in Bethel. While the choice to visit just the Bethel regional office was dictated by various factors, this summary presents performance indicators from the region's most recent Quality Assurance (QA) reviews conducted by the Office of Children Services QA Unit. Please refer to the box for further explanation of the QA review process.

The earliest such QA review for which we have data in the Western region was done in 2009 for Bethel, and each of the three offices were reviewed at least four times since. It is important to note that the latest such review was of St. Mary's in June 2014. The QA Unit reported that QA reviews were not conducted in the Western Region since June 2014, and instead, a sample (93) of in-home cases were reviewed.

Figure 2: Performance on seven key outcomes by field office – 2013-2014

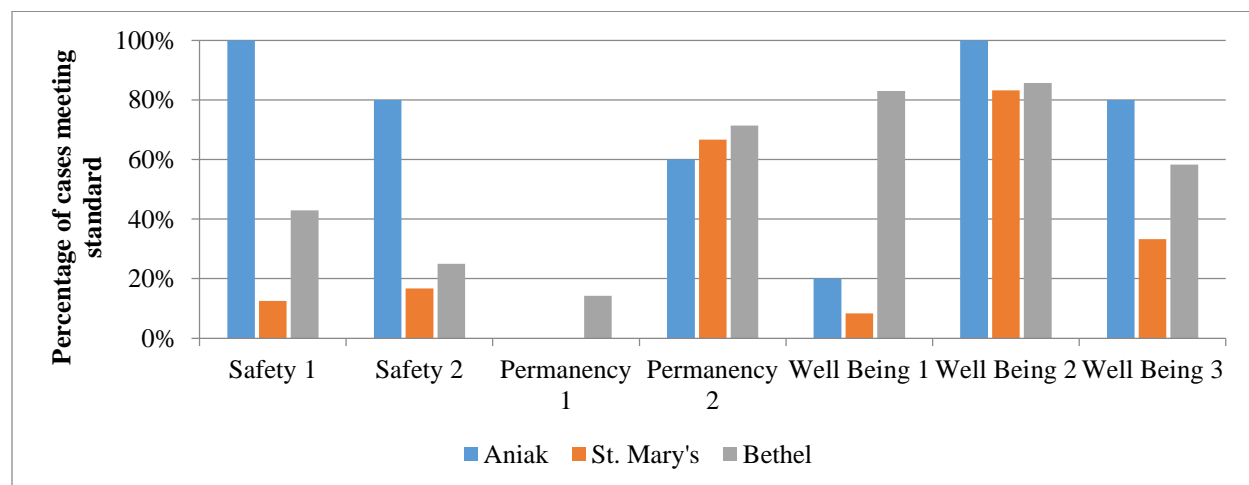


Figure 2 shows the percentage of cases in each field office that substantially achieved an outcome on their respective latest QA review. All seven outcomes are reported. St. Mary's was the only Western region office reviewed in 2014. Field offices in the Western region performed



well on well-being 2, but appear to have had some challenges with the other outcomes. St. Mary's seems to have had the most challenges across all outcomes. OCS had consistent challenges in staffing this field office and is currently experimenting with a one-week-on/one-week-off schedule. Effectiveness of this schedule is yet to be examined.

Figure 3: Performance on 7 quality assurance (QA) outcomes – Aniak field office, 2010-2013

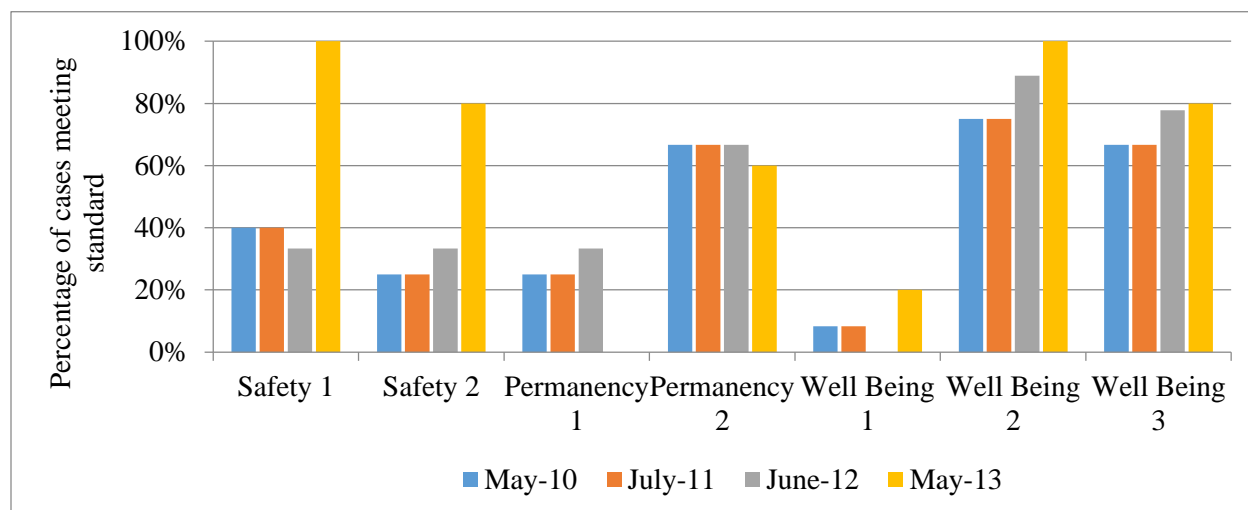


Figure 3 through Figure 5 show the QA performance values for Aniak, Bethel and St. Mary's respectively, for all the years that QA reviews were conducted. Permanency 1 and Well-being 1 seems to be of serious concern in Aniak. Similarly Safety 2 and Wellbeing 1 in Bethel; Safety 1, Permanency 1, and Well Being 1 in St. Mary's are of high concern.

Figure 4: Performance on 7 quality assurance (QA) outcomes Bethel field office, 2009-2012

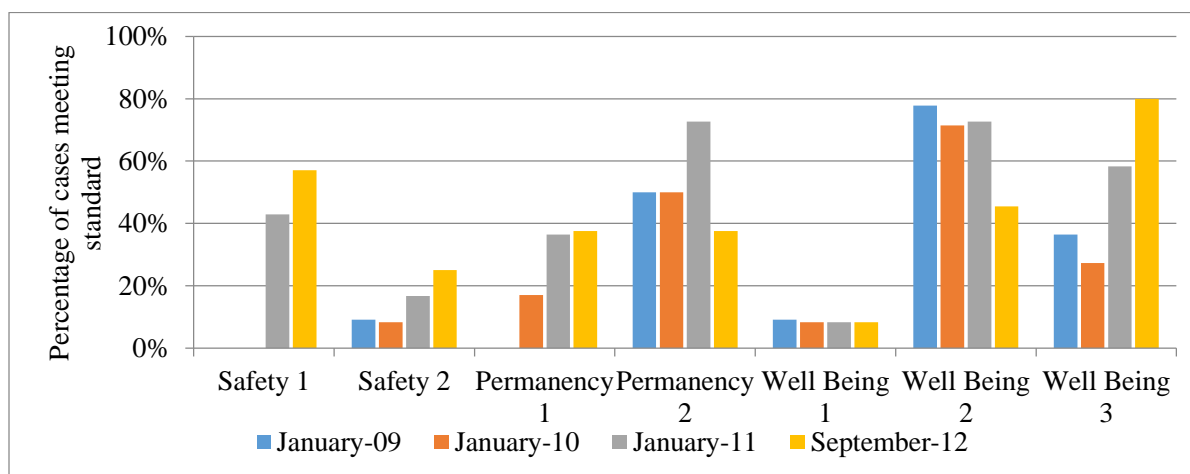
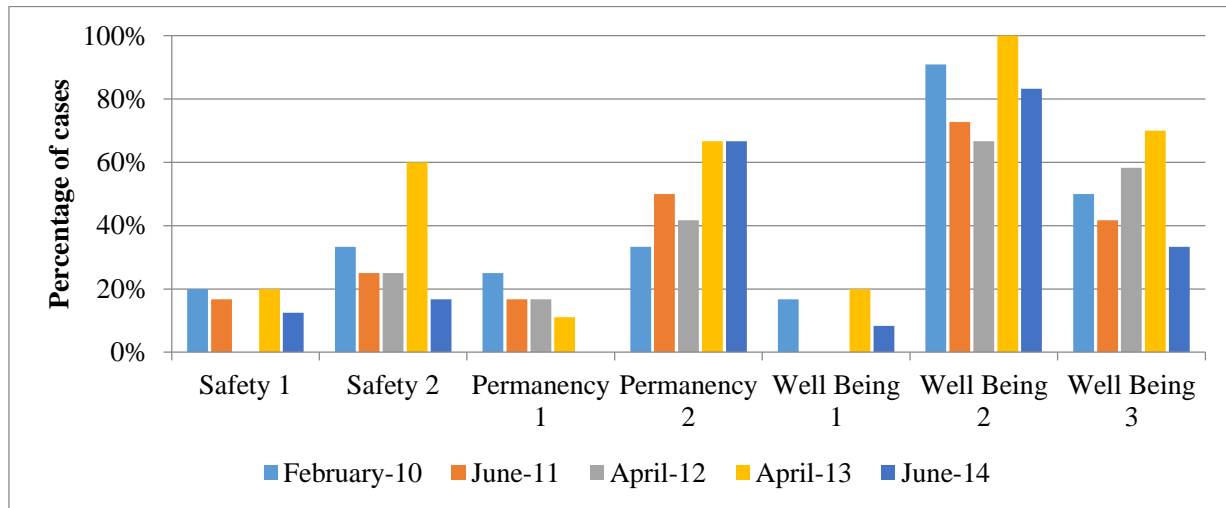


Figure 5: Performance on 7 quality assurance (QA) outcomes St. Mary's field office, 2010-2014



### OCS Quality Assurance Reviews

Alaska OCS Quality Assurance (QA) unit tries to review every field and regional office each year. The review follows the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) method consisting of a complex set of questions covering 23 distinct functional areas (items) classified into seven broad outcomes – 2 safety outcomes, 2 permanency outcomes, and 3 wellbeing outcomes. A small sample of cases served through the office under review are examined and rated on each of the 23 items. Performance on each outcome area is reported in terms of percentage of the sample of cases meeting the expected standard on a subset of items that represent that outcome. Each item is assessed using a set of questions pertaining to various decisions and actions in the case. These QA reviews are used by senior management to identify areas for improvement. Each regional or field office is encouraged to prepare a program improvement plan (PIP) in response to the QA review. Given the small sample of cases, these reviews may not always reflect a comprehensive picture, and may not be representative of the regions' performance in general.

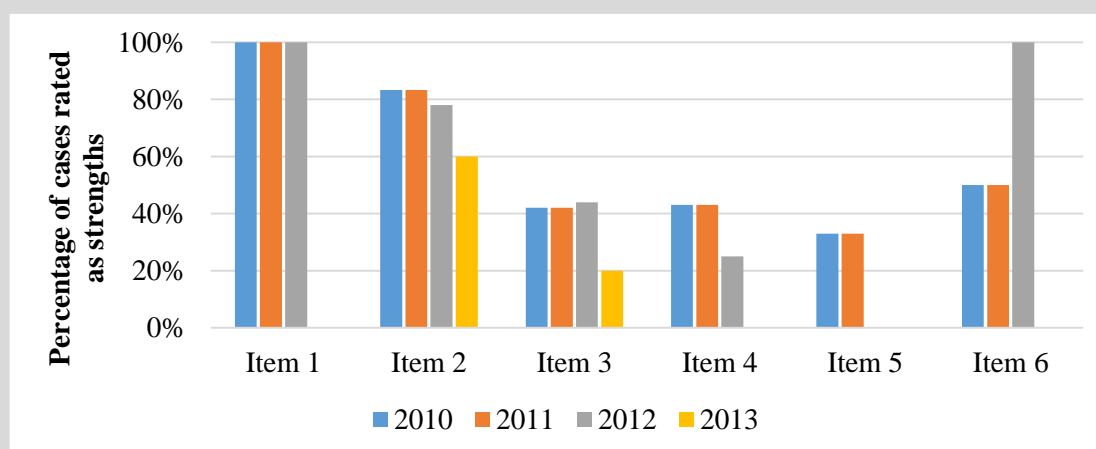
For example, Permanency 1 outcome is determined by performance on six different items:

1. Foster care re-entries
2. Stability of foster care placements
3. Permanency goal for child
4. Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives
5. Adoption
6. Permanency goal or other planned permanent living arrangement

Figure 6 shows the percentage of cases that were strengths on all six items that make up Permanency 1 for the years 2010 through 2013 for Aniak Field office. The most concerning among these items are numbers 3, 4, and 5. For example, Item 3 refers to permanency goal for a child in OCS custody and is assessed using seven different questions:

1. What is (are) the child's current permanency goal(s) (or if the case was closed during the period under review, what was the permanency goal before the case was closed)?
2. Is (are) the child's permanency goal(s) specified in the case file?
3. Were all permanency goals in effect during the period under review established in a timely manner?
4. Were all permanency goals in effect during the period under review appropriate to the child's needs for permanency and to the circumstances of the case?
5. Has the child been in foster care for at least 15 of the most recent 22 months?
6. If the answer to question 5 is No, does the child meet other Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) criteria for termination of parental rights (TPR)?
7. If the answer to either question 5 or 6 is Yes, was a TPR petition filed before the period under review or in a timely manner during the period under review?
8. If the answer to question 7 is No, is an exceptional or compelling reason for not filing for TPR specified in the case file?

Figure 6: Performance on six items of Permanency 1 outcome, Aniak Field Office, 2010-2013



A protocol dictates how a case is rated (Strength, Area Needing Improvement, or Not Applicable) on the item. A little over 40% of the cases were marked as strength in Aniak on permanency goal during the first three reviews. This percentage dipped to 20% in the latest review conducted in 2013.

The above description is based in part on the Round 2 CSFR, a federal process of reviewing state child protection systems (CPS). Alaska OCS was reviewed in 2009 as part of the Round 2 reviews. For further information on Round 2 CSFR instrument and process, please refer to <https://training.cfsrportal.org/resources/1159>. OCS and several other state CPS are using the CSFR instruments to conduct their own internal reviews, a practice encouraged by the federal government. Round 3 reviews are commencing now and Alaska OCS is scheduled to be reviewed in 2017. For Round 3 resources visit: <https://training.cfsrportal.org/resources/3105>.





## **Appendix 4: BIA Providers Conference Survey Results**

# **LOCAL CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM IN ALASKA'S COMMUNITIES: RESULTS FROM A SURVEY**



## **Alaska Citizen Review Panel**

212 Front Street, Suite 100, Fairbanks, AK 99701

January 2015

*Alaska Citizen Review Panel evaluates the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies for effectiveness in discharging their child protection responsibilities. The Panel is mandated through CAPTA 1997 (P.L. 104-235), and enacted through AS 47.14.205.*

## **Acknowledgements**

The Citizen Review Panel thanks all the respondents for their informed opinion on various topics. The Panel thanks Ms. Gloria Gorman, Regional Social Worker with the Division of Human Services of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Alaska Region, for inviting the Panel to present at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual BIA Providers' Conference, and for facilitating the survey. The Panel thanks Mr. Travis Erickson, Field Administrator, Alaska Office of Children Services for his helpful input on the survey instrument.



## **Contents**

## **Acknowledgements i**

### **1. Introduction 1**

#### 1.1. Key findings 1

### **2. Purpose of the survey 1**

### **3. Sample 2**

### **4. Results 3**

#### 4.1. Local child protection system 3

#### 4.2. Working relationship with OCS 5

#### 4.3. Familiarity with the Citizen Review Panel 6

### **5. Conclusions 6**

### **6. Limitations 6**

### **Appendix 7**

## **1. Introduction**

As part of its ‘public outreach’ mandate, Alaska’s Citizen Review Panel (CRP) presented an overview of its activities for the year (2014-2015) at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual BIA Tribal Providers Conference. The Division of Human Services of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Alaska Region organizes the Human Services sessions as part of the annual conference, usually held in Anchorage in the months of November or December each year. This session is attended by more than a hundred representatives of the social services or child welfare services divisions/departments of various Alaska Native communities and/or entities from across the state.

### ***1.1. Key findings***

All participants at the session were surveyed for their opinions and perceptions on various things. This document reports the results of that survey conducted during the CRP presentation on December 3, 2015. Primary findings of the survey are:

- Most communities rate their local child protection system as being above average on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the best.
- Child protection system in most Alaska’s communities is a multiple-entity system heavily dependent upon interagency relationships and communication. These relationships currently seem to lack any institutional/organizational framework or structure, and are dependent on individual workers’ ability and desire to partner.
- Most respondents and communities they represent are unaware of the CRP and expressed a desire to participate after they heard the presentation.

## **2. Purpose of the survey**

The CRP is interested in understanding the child protection needs and available services in communities across the state. This knowledge will inform the Panel’s review and evaluation of the policies, procedures, and practice of the child protective services (CPS) in Alaska. This survey was designed to collect information and opinions from social service leaders, administrators, and workers of various Alaska Native tribes and tribal entities in the state on three primary topics:

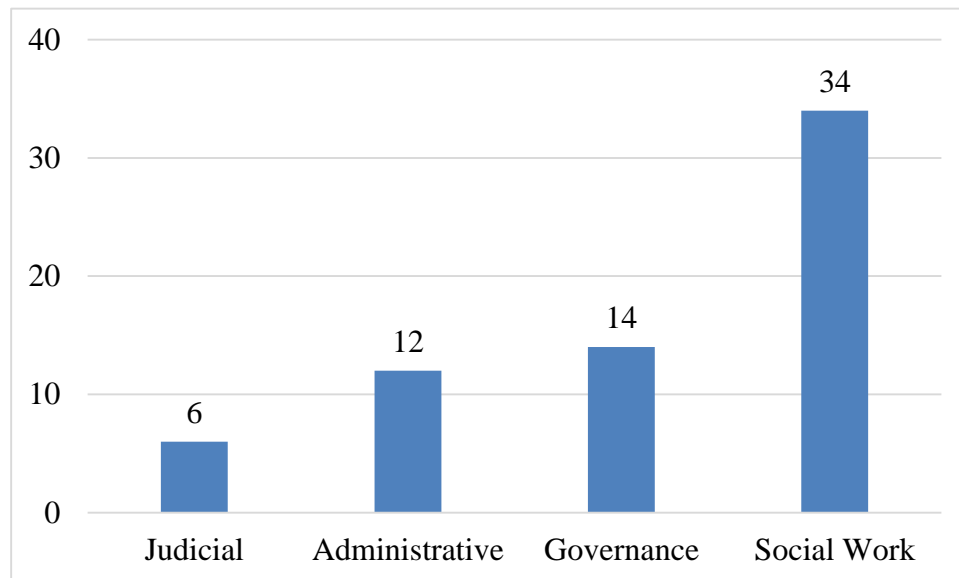
1. Components of child protection systems in their community, and their effectiveness
2. Working relationships between their local child protection service system (as identified in 1 above) and Alaska’s designated state-wide agency for child protection – Office of Children Services (OCS)
3. Awareness regarding the Citizen Review Panel

### 3. Sample

One hundred surveys were distributed at the conference session and seventy three completed surveys were received. Respondents represented 56 communities, distributed across the state from all OCS regions (Figure 1).

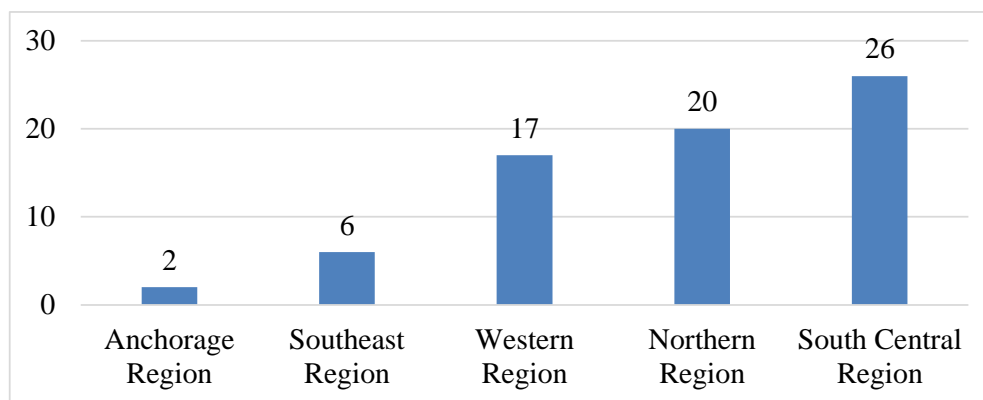
---

Figure 1: Number of respondents by professional affiliation



---

Figure 2: Number of respondents by OCS region



---

Respondents' professional affiliations are broadly classified into four distinct categories (Figure 2) – administration, governance, judicial, and social work.

- *Judicial* positions included tribal court judges or tribal justice program staff

- *Administrative* positions included: ‘tribal administrator’, ‘CEO’, ‘admin assistant’, ‘TANF supervisor’, ‘ICWA director’, project coordinator’, ‘self-governance director’, ‘human services director’, ‘tribal administrator’, and ‘director’.
- *Governance* positions included local governing council members.
- *Social work* positions included 21 different titles such as ‘ICWA worker’, ‘case worker’, family services worker’, etc.

#### 4. Results

Child protection is a complex enterprise and requires collaborative working relationships between various agencies responsible for child safety. The Office of Children Services (OCS) is the designated state child protection service agency in Alaska. Federally recognized tribes and tribal entities also provide child protection services in most communities.

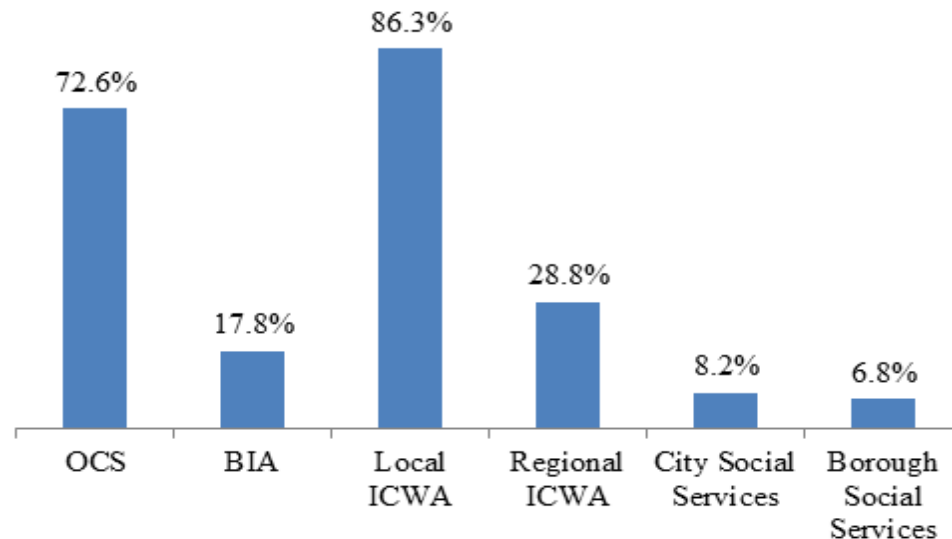
##### 4.1. Local child protection system

Respondents were asked to identify what might constitute child protection system in their community. Among the first six choices offered (Figure 3), ‘Local Tribal ICWA Program’ was chosen by more than 86% (63 out of 73) of the respondents. OCS is the second most identified option. This is expected since the respondents are attendees at an ICWA conference session.

A majority of the respondents (52 out of 71 valid responses, 73.2%) chose more than one agency as constituting their local child protection system. Forty five (45) respondents identified both the ‘Local Tribal ICWA Program’ and OCS, the most frequently identified pairing of entities.

---

Figure 3: Percentage of respondents that chose each agency as being part of their local child protection system.



In addition to these six choices, respondents also identified a diverse array of entities, individuals, and/or activities that are helping or could help in protecting children from abuse and neglect. These included

- public safety (local, regional, and state)
- school
- courts (tribal and state)
- local child protection teams
- Child Advocacy Centers
- clinic
- elders
- healthy activities for children after school
- regular and meaningful communication between various entities

With so many agencies, individuals, and activities identified, respondents rated child protection in their communities to be above the average. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being best and 1 being poor), the overall average score was 6.1, with about half the respondents ranking child protection below 6 and half of them ranking it above 6.

Among the OCS regions, respondents from the Western Region ranked child protection to be poorest with an average ranking of 5.44. In comparison, respondents from Southcentral Region ranked at 6.22 and those from Northern Region ranked at 6.00. There were too few respondents from Anchorage and Southeast regions for a meaningful comparison. It is also interesting to note that those that identified just one of the six entities as comprising the local child protection system had the highest average rating of the system. These numbers are shown in Table 1.

It is interesting to note that those respondents that identified only one entity as part of the local child protection system ranked their child protection system highest. This may mean that the one component is highly effective in their view, which may minimize the need for other possible entities as part of the local child protection system. It may also mean that other possible components may either be inaccessible or ineffective, and these communities may be focused on making the one available component most effective. Thirteen of these nineteen respondents chose ‘Local Tribal ICWA Program’ as the child protection system. Their mean rating of their child protection system is slightly higher (6.42) than the rest (6.14).

Table 1: Mean rating (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being worst and 10 being best) of local child protection system (categories with less than 5 respondents are not reported)

		<i>Mean rating</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>
<i>Number of entities identified as part of the local child protection system</i>	One	6.32	19
	Two	6.19	26
	Three	5.67	15
<i>OCS Region</i>	South Central Region (SCR)	6.22	23
	Northern Region (NR)	6.00	20
	Western Region (WR)	5.44	16

## 4.2. Working relationship with OCS

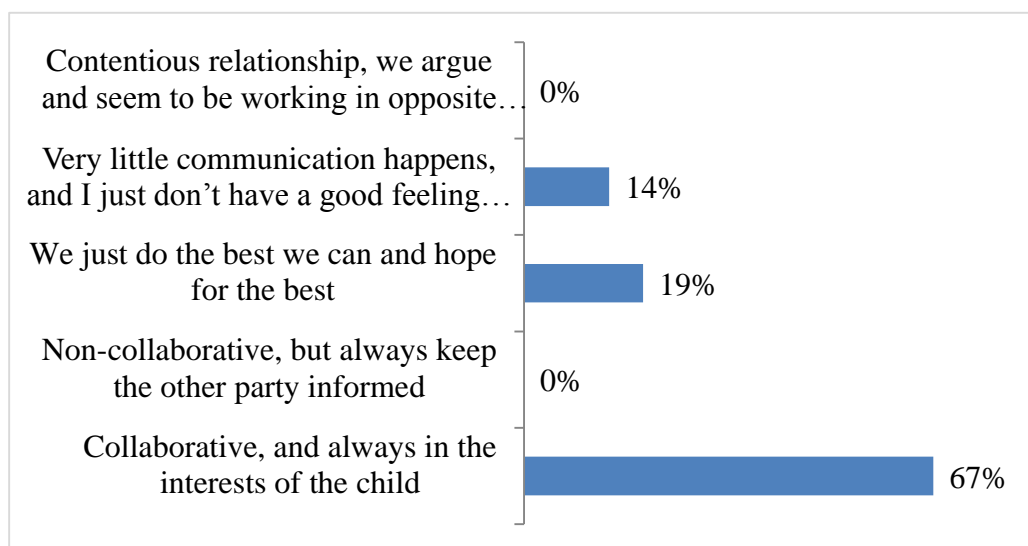
The CRP is most interested in the working relationships between various local agencies concerned with child protection, and Alaska’s Office of Children Services (OCS). This relationship has been consistently identified by the Panel as needing improvement over the last several years.

About half (36 out of 68 valid responses, 49.3%) of the respondents reported to be working with OCS in an official capacity. Among those who work with OCS in an official capacity, only 15 reported to be working on individual cases. Remaining respondents reported that they interact with OCS workers, but do not work on any specific cases. Overall, out of 39 valid responses, respondents’ interaction with OCS staff seems random – occasional contact (9 respondents, 23%), sometimes a lot, and sometimes very little (20 respondents, 51.2%), and regular contact (10 respondents, 25.6%). A good majority (23 out of 39 valid responses, 59%) reported that they collaborate with OCS on case planning. A good majority (24 out of 36 valid responses, 67%) also reported that they “collaborate, and always in the interests of the child.”

When asked of the most important thing they do to maintain or improve their good working relationship with OCS workers, most respondents identified communication as key. This ranged from being available to OCS workers when they are visiting the community for a family visit or in response to a protective service report (PSR), to constantly keeping in touch with OCS workers either through email or phone to ensure good communication despite high turnover on both sides.

---

Figure 4: Nature of the working relationship with OCS workers



---

The above patterns could mean that the relationship is functional when necessary. But, it can also mean that it can be just as dysfunctional in the absence of any mutually agreed upon, or desired collaboration. The Panel’s own observations during site visits over the last several years support the second scenario. In other words, the reported collaboration may be more an artifact of

individual attributes and desires of people in respective positions than an institutional or organizational relationship.

#### ***4.3. Familiarity with the Citizen Review Panel***

Respondents were also asked about their familiarity with the CRP. Very few (10 out of 71) respondents were familiar with CRP or served on the Panel. Another 22 respondents heard about the panel but knew very little. A good majority (39 out of 71, 54.9%) never heard of CRP. This is an indication of how little individual communities may know about the opportunity that the Panel presents them to participate in the efforts to improve child protection system in their communities. A majority of the respondents found the presentation to the session useful, and indicated that they are more inclined to work with CRP.

#### **5. Conclusions**

This survey was conducted to gain the perspective of tribal representatives on child protection in their communities, and their relationships with the state's Office of Children Services (OCS). A majority of the respondents identified more than one institution/organization as constituting their local child protection system (CPS). As is known, local tribal ICWA program and the state OCS are the primary components of the local CPS in most communities represented in this survey.

Relationships between the staff of the community's local child protection system and OCS seems generally positive, but depends heavily on individual initiative. No structural mechanism seems to exist, at least to the extent the respondents of this survey are aware.

#### **6. Limitations**

The survey is limited in several ways. This is not a representative sample, and is limited to those who attended the BIA Human Services conference session on December 3, 2014. The sample is small and valid responses on several questions did not exceed 35 responses. Thus, analysis is limited in several ways.

## Appendix

### Survey Form

---

This is a survey to gather opinions on child protection system in your community. The Citizen Review Panel (CRP) is a federal and state mandated voluntary body to evaluate child protection systems in Alaska. This information will be used by CRP to better understand the context and circumstances of relationships that OCS has with communities and local child protection personnel. Results will be reported to you through the BIA Social Services office.

Your Professional title \_\_\_\_\_ Your Community \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**The following questions are about your community and your relationship with OCS.**

1. In your opinion, what constitutes child protection system in your community? (Check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Office of Children Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Regional ICWA program
<input type="checkbox"/> BIA Social Services	<input type="checkbox"/> City social services
<input type="checkbox"/> Local Tribal ICWA program	<input type="checkbox"/> Borough social services
2. In addition to the official child protection system, what else do you notice in your community that you think helps in protecting children from abuse and neglect?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
3. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being best and 1 being poor) how would you rate child protection in your community? (Pick one number)

Poor	_____	Best
1	2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9	10
4. Do you work with (not for) OCS in any official capacity?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes. Official role (if different from your title above): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> No ( <b>SKIP TO QUESTION 10</b> )
5. What is the nature of your contact with OCS?

<input type="checkbox"/> I work on cases with OCS social workers and supervisors
<input type="checkbox"/> I interact with them but do not work on any cases

Page 2



6. How frequently do you interact with OCS personnel:
- ☐ Occasional contact,
  - ☐ Contact as needed, sometimes a lot, and sometimes very little
  - ☐ Regular contact
7. If you have a case load in your official capacity, would you describe your work with OCS social workers as:
- ☐ Collaborative, and always in the interests of the child
  - ☐ Non-collaborative, but, always keep the other party informed
  - ☐ We just do the best we can and hope for the best
  - ☐ Very little communication happens, and I just don't have a good feeling about it
  - ☐ Contentious relationship, we argue and seem to be working in opposite directions
8. What is the most important thing that you do to make your relationship with OCS as strong as it is?
- 
9. Do you collaborate with OCS social workers in any case planning?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No

\*\*\*\*\*

**The following questions are about the Citizen Review Panel.**

10. Did you know about Alaska Citizen Review Panel (check only one):
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never heard of the CRP before       | <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar with CRP                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heard about it but know very little | <input type="checkbox"/> Served on CRP/know a lot about it. |
11. Was this presentation useful?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No
12. After learning more today, do you think you would be likely to work with the CRP?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No
13. Are there any additional topics that we should have covered that might benefit you?
- 

14. After listening to the presentation today, do you have suggestions for CRP?

**THANK YOU!**



## **Appendix 5: Legislative Visit Report**



## Alaska Citizen Review Panel

### Members

Diwakar K. Vadapalli, Chair  
Dana Hallett, Vice-chair  
Donna M. Aguiniga  
Jen Burkmire  
Margaret McWilliams  
Bettyann Steciw

### Coordinator

Sylvan Robb  
Phone 907.450-2456  
sylvan@iialaska.com

### Mailing address

212 Front St., Suite 100  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Fax 907.450-2470

[www.crpalaska.org](http://www.crpalaska.org)

*Alaska Citizen Review Panel evaluates the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies for effectiveness in discharging their child protection responsibilities. The Panel is mandated through CAPTA 1997 (P.L. 104-235), and enacted through AS 47.14.205*

## LEGISLATIVE VISIT – REPORT

<b>Dates of visit</b>	February 11 – 13, 2015
<b>Members of CRP on the visit</b>	Dana Hallett, Diwakar Vadapalli

### Presentation:

Annual overview of the Panel's work to the House Committee on Health and Social Services

### Meetings:

**Rep. Les Gara** (*D – Anchorage*)

*Member, House Finance Committee; House Finance Subcommittee on HSS*

**Rep. Paul Seaton** (*R – Homer*)

*Chair, House HSS Committee*

**Rep. Tarr** (*D – Anchorage*)

*Member, House HSS Committee*

**Rep. Wilson** (*R – North Pole*)

*Member, House Finance Subcommittee on HSS*

**Rep. Saddler** (*R – Eagle River*)

*Member, House Finance Subcommittee on HSS*

**Rep. Herron** (*D – Bethel*)

*House Majority Whip*

**Sen. Olson** (*D – Nome*). *Due to scheduling conflict, we could only meet with his staffer.*

*Member, Senate Finance Subcommittee on HSS*

**Sen. Coghill** (*R – North Pole*)

*Senate Majority Leader*

*Member, Senate Finance Subcommittee on HSS*

**Sen. Giessel** (*R – Anchorage*)

*Vice Chair, Senate HSS committee*

*Member, Senate Finance Subcommittee on HSS*

**Deputy Commissioner Ree Sailors**

*Department of Health and Social Services*

**Director Christy Lawton**

*Office of Children Services*

The Panel tried to reach out to several other legislators that either could not be reached or were not available for a meeting due to scheduling conflicts.

**Acknowledgments:** The CRP would like to thank the House Committee on Health and Social Services, and Rep. Paul Seaton for accommodating our request for a hearing. The Panel would also like to thank all the legislators and their staff for meeting with us and discussing various issues related to child protection in Alaska.

---

*As part of its public outreach responsibilities, each year during the legislative session, the Panel presents an overview of its work from the previous year to the State's Standing Committees on Health and Social Services (HSS) of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. In addition, the Panel also meets with various legislators, the Governor's office, and the Commissioner's office during and beyond the legislative session to discuss various issues of importance.*

## **1. Presentation**

This year, the Panel presented its overview to the House HSS Committee on February 12. The Committee is chaired by Rep. Paul Season (R-Homer), and includes Rep. Foster (D-Nome), Rep. Stutes (R-Kodiak), Rep. Talerico (R-Healy), Rep. Tarr (D-Anchorage), and Rep. Wool (D-Fairbanks). A recording of the entire presentation and discussion are available on the Panel's website at: <http://crpalaska.org/reports/presentations/>

The Panel had consistent challenges over the last several years in scheduling a hearing with the Senate HSS Committee.

## **2. Highlights from other meetings**

Many issues were discussed, including:

- Supporting a budget request to add positions to the current OCS workforce.
- Improving CRP's oversight responsibilities and OCS responsiveness
- Improving CRP's public outreach responsibilities by reaching out to legislators when the legislature is not in session
- Exploring case reviews as part of the CRP's mandate
- Issues and concerns in OCS' Western Region
- Availability and accessibility of data and information from OCS

The Governor's Office redirected us to meet with the Commissioner of DHSS. Commissioner Davidson was unavailable due to scheduling conflicts. However, the Panel met with Ree Sailors, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and Christy Lawton, Director of the Office of Children Services (OCS). We discussed various opportunities and challenges in enhancing CRP's functioning.



## **Appendix 6: CRP National Conference Report**



## Alaska Citizen Review Panel

### Members

Diwakar K. Vadapalli, Chair  
Dana Hallett, Vice-chair  
Donna M. Aguiniga  
Jen Burkmire  
Margaret McWilliams  
Bettyann Steciw  
Rebecca Vale

### Coordinator

Sylvan Robb  
sylvan@iialaska.com

### Mailing address

212 Front St., Suite 100  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Fax 907.450-2470

[www.crpalaska.org](http://www.crpalaska.org)

*Alaska Citizen Review Panel evaluates the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies for effectiveness in discharging their child protection responsibilities. The Panel is mandated through CAPTA 1997 (P.L. 104-235), and enacted through AS 47.14.205*

## TRIP REPORT

### Observations from the 2015 CRP National Conference

**Dates of the conference:** May 18-20, 2015

**Location of the conference:** Portland, OR

**Attendees:** Diwakar K. Vadapalli (Chair), Dana Hallett (Vice Chair)

---

### Purpose of the trip

Alaska CRP has been critically examining its structure and functions for the last two years. Many key components of the Panel's operations are being significantly changed to improve the Panel's relevance and effectiveness. The CRP National Conference was identified as a meaningful resource in this process of critical reflection. The Conference offers an opportunity to learn various methods and means available to the Panels, successes and challenges of other Panels, and various pertinent legislative, regulatory, and legal developments. For several years, Alaska CRP has not attended the conference and felt necessary to reconnect with the resources available at the national level. While it was impossible to be methodical and precise in our observations, we tried to accomplish the following:

- Identify and connect with available national resources
- Examine the work of other Panels from across the nation

This brief report describes our observations and lessons learned. We also note some suggested changes in our operations.

### Brief description of the conference

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) amendments of 1996 required that each state have three Citizen Review Panels, with the exception that the states receiving the minimum allocation under the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention grant program (Title II of CAPTA) have at least one such panel. The Panels were expected to be operational by 1999.

It was recognized early that in order to fulfil their mandate, Panels need support and technical assistance to identify their roles and responsibilities. In the absence of a national network and community of practice, the first annual conference for CRP coordinators and members was held at the University of Kentucky in 2001. The conference has since evolved and is now attended by close to 200 people involved with CRPs in various capacities. The CRP National Conference 2015 was held in Portland, OR from May 18-20, hosted by the Oregon Citizen Review Panels. Most states were represented, and attendees primarily included CRP coordinators, Panel members, and CPS agency staff from across the nation. Sessions included presentations by nationally recognized experts and resource persons on broad topics (see attached agenda).

---

## **Key observations from the conference**

The National conference is a useful resource and should be on Alaska CRP's annual calendar. Many Panels have been regular participants of the conference over the last decade, and their current activities reflect the benefits derived from their continued participation. A network of coordinators, long-time panel members, CPS staff, and other interested professionals has developed over the years. These individuals form a community of practice, identifying and resolving several challenges facing CRPs. Alaska CRP can both learn and benefit from this network, and also contribute to the discussion.

Participation in the conference is very diverse. Some Panels are represented by their coordinator and at least one Panel member. Many Panels were represented by either just the Panel member(s) or just their coordinator. Each Panel seem to have their own method of identifying who may attend the conference and the specific purpose of their attendance. There were CPS staff from several states.

Location of the conference varies each year, allowing participants to know the local CRP activities. Most presenters at the conference were from Oregon. There was an extended discussion on how Oregon Panels are organized, how they perform their work, and how they interact with their CPS system. It was instructive to note the differences and similarities with the Alaska CRP.

## **What we learned about other Panels**

Panels across the nation are organized in very different ways. While Alaska has always had one Panel, and appoints its own members, many states have multiple panels and appointment structure varies. Many states have three panels, the minimum number required by CAPTA for states receiving more than the minimum allocation under Title II of CAPTA. States with county-administered CPS often have regional panels covering multiple counties. Panels in some states are appointed by either the Governor's office or individual legislators. Some state's CRP coordinators are staff from the state or local CPS. Some Panels are coordinated by staff of a local university.

Panel's relationships with their state or local CPS varies. Unlike Alaska's panel where members are selected and appointed by the panel, members of panels in some states are appointed by the governor's office or individual state legislators. While appointments and patterns of staffing determined by an external authority ensures representation and full membership, panels often find themselves subject to political influences of these external authorities. Consequently, panels vary greatly in their relationship with CPS agencies and their legislatures. Few panels have a working relationship with their state legislature. Many participants admired Alaska CRP's appointment structure, and its independence, and our continued constructive relationship with both the OCS and the legislature.

Individual presentations were informative. Several nationally recognized experts spoke on a variety of issues. Topics included CPS system; legal developments in child protection; importance of diversity; CRP's role; evaluation of CRPs; importance of CFSR and the need for CRPs to be involved; connections between CRPs, CIP, CJA taskforce, and foster care reviews; relationships with CPS (agenda attached).

Structure and functions of the panels vary. The Conference offers an opportunity to learn various methods and means available to the Panels, as well as successes and challenges of other Panels.



Preliminary assessment of mandated, structural, and functional components Alaska CRP in comparison to other CRPs in the nation

Component	Other states				Alaska
	None	Few	Many	All	
Mandated - Review/Evaluate					
Conducts system-wide annual evaluation	X				
Reviews child deaths or near deaths from maltreatment		X			
Identifies and utilizes following data sources:					
Surveys			X		X
Interviews			X		X
Focus group discussions		X			X
CPS agency			X		X
Case reviews		X			
Mandated - Public Outreach					
Presenting to the legislature		X			X
Communicating with the media			X		X
Maintaining an active website with regular updates		X			X
Conducting open meetings with public participation			X		X
Publishes an annual report				X	X
MOA with CPS agency		X			
Regular communication/meetings with the following:					
CPS agency			X		X
Parents of children being served by CPS agency		X			
Children being served by CPS agency		X			
CPS Partner agencies		X			X
Structure and functioning					
Operating guidelines/bylaws/policies are in place			X		X
Regular meetings are held			X		X
Diversity in panel membership is a goal			X		X
Annual workplan			X		X
Adequately autonomous		X			X
Active membership			X		X

While it is widely recognized that CRPs serve an important function, panels across the nation seem to vary greatly on their perceptions of their central purpose. A framework to guide the panels in establishing their internal structure and functions, and their role and responsibilities was proposed very early in the history of the Conference. While many panels perform many of these functions, we did not have an opportunity to assess this for each panel. Table above provides a crude assessment of how Alaska's panel compares to others.





### Funding and membership structure vary.

Levels of annual funding for individual panels vary, and are a mixture of direct funding and staff time. Many panels are staffed by their state CPS personnel, while few other panels have no staff support. Some panels operate with little to no funding, severely affecting their abilities to perform any functions.

Panels across the nation struggle with recruitment and retention of members. Volunteer engagement and management is intensive work and requires dedicated staff time. It is one of the more challenging responsibilities of panel coordinators.

### **Need for self-evaluation**

Alaska's CRP is well ahead on many components listed in the table above. However, the Panel's effectiveness was never evaluated. Gray colored boxes in the table above identify areas that the Panel currently recognizes as needing improvement. A more systematic evaluation of the Panel's work and its effectiveness is necessary.

### **Conclusion**

Alaska's CRP is one of the most active panels in the nation. The Panel enjoys healthy independence and support from OCS, and has a constructive relationship with the legislature. While there are several areas for improvement, Alaska CRP has a lot to offer other CRPs. CRPs are relatively new and very little oversight is provided from any authority. While technical assistance is available from the Children's Bureau, it seems minimal. Essentially, CRPs are left to fend for themselves and the National Conference grew out of the need to fill this gap in oversight and assistance. Panels exchange important tools and techniques, challenges and opportunities, and latest developments in legislative and legal developments. It is important that Alaska CRP is represented at the national conference every year.

### **The little panel that could...**

Among the best sessions at the conference was a presentation by South Carolina Citizen Review Panel on their work reviewing the case of a child fatality.

Reviewing CPS cases with fatalities or near fatalities is one of the suggested responsibilities of a CRP. South Carolina has three panels, but had not reviewed child fatality cases. Summer of 2012 was particularly hard in the state with several child deaths resulting from child abuse and neglect, several of them preventable. A particularly painful death of a four-year old boy who was returned to his father despite high concerns for the boy's safety made the news. The boy died of severe physical injuries. Before his death, the case bounced between the state CPS and a community non-profit agency that provided services to low-risk cases as part of the state's differential response system. The Panel's subcommittee conducted an extensive review of the entire case file, interviewed several staff and supervisors of various agencies involved in the case, reviewed the state's differential response system, and recommended several changes to practice.

The journey from never reviewing a case to thoroughly reviewing a very complex case and associated policies was very inspiring. The perseverance of the subcommittee members in getting the required case files and statistics is illustrative of the challenges CRPs face in establishing their legitimacy and purpose vis-à-vis the state's child protection system. Their pride in their success is reflected in the title of their presentation, "The Little Panel That Could..."



# People, Programs & Performance: Piecing Together Successful Citizen Review Panel

## DRAFT AGENDA

2015 National Citizen Review Panel Conference  
May 18-20, 2015



### Monday, May 18, 2015

11:30 am – 5:00 pm	Registration
1:00 pm – 1:30 pm	<b>Welcome and Announcements</b> The Honorable Thomas Balmer, Chief Justice, Oregon Supreme Court
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm	<b>Taking ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences Study) to Scale – A Move from Program Thinking to System Change</b> Susan Dreyfus, President & CEO, Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Informal Networking
3:30pm – 4:45pm	<b>Increasing Diversity in Public Processes</b> Emmett Wheatfall, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Director, Clackamas County Oregon
5:30 pm – 8:30 pm	<b>Portland Spirit Dinner Cruise</b>

### Tuesday, May 19, 2015

7:30 am	<b>Breakfast Buffet and Registration</b>		
8:00 am – 8:15 am	<b>Announcements</b>		
8:15 am – 8:45 am	<b>Welcome</b> Lois Day, Child Welfare Director, Department of Human Services		
8:45 am – 10:00 am	<b>Youth Panel</b> Facilitated by Darin Mancuso, Foster Care Ombudsman, Governor's Advocacy Office		
10:00 am – 10:30 am	Informal Networking		
	<b>PEOPLE</b>	<b>PROGRAMS</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE</b>
10:30 am – 11:45 am	<b>Believing the Change is Always Possible – Parent Mentor Panel</b> Facilitated by Ruth Taylor, Director, Parent Mentor Program, Morrison Child & Family Services	<b>Trauma Informed Child Welfare Practices</b> Mandy Davis, Senior Research Assistant, Portland State University	<b>File Reviews, Surveys, and Focus Groups: How to Gather Information to Inform Your CRP</b> Conor Wall, Data Analyst, Juvenile Court Improvement Program, Oregon Judicial Department.
11:45 am – 1:15 pm	<b>Lunch &amp; Plenary - Engaging the Courts in Child Welfare Efforts,</b> The Honorable Nan Waller, Presiding Judge, Multnomah County Circuit Court		
1:30 pm – 2:45 pm	<b>You Can't See What You Don't Know: Addressing the Revolving Door in Foster Homes when Children in Care have Developmental and Mental Health Needs</b> Donnie Winokur, Executive Director, FASDempowered	<b>Oregon's Trail to the Foster Children's Bill of Rights</b> Darin Mancuso, Foster Care Ombudsman, Governor's Advocacy Office	<b>Using Concept Mapping as a Planning and Evaluation Tool for Citizen Review Panels</b> J. Jay Miller, Chair Jefferson County CRP & Blake Jones, Program Coordinator, Kentucky CRP
2:45 pm – 3:15 pm	Informal Networking		
3:15 pm – 4:30 pm	<b>Native American Culture and Historical Trauma</b> Jillene Joseph, Executive Director, Native Wellness Institute	<b>CRPs Working Toward More Timely Permanency for Children and Youth in Interstate Placements</b> Pennsylvania Northeast CRP	<b>It IS a Matter of Life and Death</b> Child Fatality ACTION Subcommittee South Carolina
4:30 pm – 7:00 pm	<b>Dinner Options Around Portland</b>		

For more information, contact: Amy Church, [amy.m.church@ojd.state.or.us](mailto:amy.m.church@ojd.state.or.us) or 503.986.4535

**People, Programs & Performance:  
Piecing Together Successful Citizen Review Panel**

**DRAFT AGENDA**

**2015 National Citizen Review Panel Conference  
May 18-20, 2015**



**Wednesday, May 20, 2015**

7:30 am	<b>Breakfast Buffet</b>
8:00 am – 8:30 am	<b>Welcome and Announcements</b>
8:30 am – 9:15 am	<b>Federal Updates</b> Howard Davidson, Director, ABA Center for Children and the Law
9:15 am – 10:00 am	<b>The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Process - How to Engage CRPs in CFSR efforts</b> Tina Naugler, Child Welfare Program Manager, Children's Bureau, Region 10
10:00 am – 10:15 am	<b>Break</b>
10:15 am – 11:30 am	<b>World Cafe</b>
11:30 am – 1:00 pm	<b>Lunch &amp; Plenary</b> <b>If Not You, Who? Never Settle - Never Stop!</b> Nancy Miller Systems are institutions. People can become institutionalized. Have you? This presentation will challenge your assumptions and help you find ways to keep the passion alive, never settling for anything less than safety, permanency, and well-being for every child in foster care!
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	<b>Closing Plenary – Putting The Pieces Together</b> Leola McKenzie, Director of Juvenile & Family Court Programs Division Oregon Judicial Department

## Conference Scholarship Opportunity

The National Citizen Review Panel Advisory Board is pleased to offer a limited number of scholarships to attend the 2015 National Citizen Review Panel conference in Portland, Oregon, May 18-20, 2015.

Proceeds from the silent auction held at the previous conference are used to support these conference scholarships. The \$275.00 scholarship covers registration costs only. Applicants will be responsible for paying their own travel, hotel and meals (not provided at the conference).

You will be notified of the Advisory Board's decision by March 6, 2015. If you are selected, a check for your registration fee will be sent directly to the organizers of the conference.

### Scholarship Application Process:

Please email your request for scholarship consideration to Blake Jones via email ([Bljone00@uky.edu](mailto:Bljone00@uky.edu)). Include the following information:

1. Name
2. State you represent
3. Contact information (phone, email, address)
4. Citizen Review Panel you represent, and your role
5. Have you ever attended a National CRP conference and, if so, when?
6. How would attending this conference help you in your work as a CRP member or coordinator?

**Scholarship Application Deadline: February 27, 2015**

**For more information, contact: Amy Church, [amy.m.church@ojd.state.or.us](mailto:amy.m.church@ojd.state.or.us) or 503.986.4535**



## **Appendix 7: OCS Statewide Recruitment and Retention Plan**



## SFY 14 Statewide Recruitment and Retention of Resource Families (updated April 2014)

ACTIVITY		Start	Finish	Percent Complete	Staff Responsible	Comments/Notes
<b>1</b>	<b>Support to the Regional and Field Offices</b>					
	Regional R&R plans will be received, reviewed.	June	July	100%	CCLS III's and SSPO	All regional recruitment and retention plans and budgets reviewed & to State Office on 7/24/13.
	Regional R&R budgets will be received, reviewed, and requested through State Office	June	July	100%	CCLS III's and SSPO	Regional Budgets (food and non-food) approved on August 14, 2013
	Documents or protocols will be established to track the effectiveness of R&R efforts.	8/15/2013		20%	CCLS III's and SSPO	Meeting with ORCA Project Staff to discuss how to best utilize existing template in ORCA for R/R or change to meet needs during upcoming build. SERO Licensing currently entering R/R events in ORCA as pilot.
<b>2</b>	<b>Statewide Efforts for R&amp;R</b>					
	Develop slogan	8/15/2013	11/1/2013	100%	NRO CCLS III	Slogan Chose: Make a difference, one child at a time.
	Tangible items	8/15/2013	1/15/2014	100%	NRO CCLS III	Tangibles chosen for Fiscal Year 14: Ice scrapers, tote bags, key-chain lights and pens. Items purchased from Stellar Designs and distributed to all Regional Offices March 2014.
	Recruit for Medical homes through collaboration with AK medical facilities	8/15/2013		50%	CCLS III & CCLS II	Presentations by CCLS at local clinics to include: Tanana Valley Clinic and Mat-Su Medical Center. Recruitment tables held at Willow Health Fair and Talkeetna Health Fair. SERO and ARO approached local hospitals to complete on-site Orientation; not allowed to present to staff on site.

ACTIVITY		Start	Finish	Percent Complete	Staff Responsible	Comments/Notes
	Work with regional staff to explore identification of homes who can serve larger sibling groups.	6/1/2013		20%	CCLS III & CCLS II	Quarterly Meetings being established with Foster Care Manager and Regional Management staff to identify areas of need for foster care.
	Recruit for Native Alaskan homes through collaboration with AK tribal organizations and corporations	6/1/2013		40%	CCLS III & CCLS II	During fiscal year 14, OCS collaborated with tribal partners to host provider conferences in both Bethel and Kotzebue. NRO Recruitment event held in conjunction with Tanana Chiefs at Spring 2014 Conference hosted by TCC.
	Emergency Shelter Foster Home recruitment in each regional hub.	6/1/2013		25%	CCLS III & CCLS II	Emergency Shelter Care Workshop Agenda developed and implemented in ARO, SCRO, NRO, WRO. NRO signed contracts with two resource families to provide Emergency Shelter Care.
	Assist staff in inclusion of adoption staff for R&R efforts	6/1/2013		75%	CCLS III & CCLS II, Regional Adoption Specialist and Adoption SSPC	Regional Recruitment and Retention Teams met during June 2013 to develop R/R plans and budgets. Regional Adoption Specialists participated in planning and budgetary process. On March 2014, Yurii presented a training on R/R to Statewide Regional Adoption Specialists.
	Identify new and innovative recruitment strategies.	6/1/2013		80%	CCLS III & CCLS II	Newly implemented recruitment and retention strategies included: Super Hero theme on flyers, brochures, pizza boxes, bookmarks. Informational flyers in employee paystubs at local businesses. Announcements at local sporting events such as hockey games and local running races.
<b>3</b>	<b>Foster Wear Program</b>					
	Recognize current providers	9/1/2013	11/1/2013	100%	Yurii	Thank you letters mailed to all current FosterWear Vendors. Letter are signed by OCS Director. Certificates of Appreciation mailed to all vendors.
	Recruit new providers	9/1/2013		75%	Yurii	Three new vendors were approved this year to include: Beaver Sports in Fairbanks, The Fox Hole in Ketchikan and the return of JCPenney in Anchorage.
	Inform families, staff, and partners of the program	9/1/2013		75%	Yurii	Updates provided in Frontline and Pipeline articles as well as presentations made at regional all staff meetings. OCS and ACRF Websites updated with new vendors.

ACTIVITY		Start	Finish	Percent Complete	Staff Responsible	Comments/Notes
4	Resource Family Advisory Board					
	Ensure OCS participation on board	9/1/2013		75%	SSPO	During this fiscal year the following OCS staff participated in monthly RFAB meetings and one face to face meeting: KariLee Pietz, Yurii Miller, Susan Frisby and Alana Ballam-Schwan.
	Plan annual face to face meeting	9/1/2013	3/25/2014	100%	Board / SSPO and CCLS III	Face to face meeting held in ANC on 3/25/14. Next face to face meeting tentatively scheduled for October 27-29, 2014.