



Citizen Review Panel

STATE OF ALASKA

2023 - 2024 Work Plan

About the Panel

AUTHORITY

The Alaska Citizen Review Panel can be referenced either as the “CRP” or the “Panel.” The CRP is federally mandated through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAP-TA); Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003. The CRP is also mandated through Alaska Statute Sec. 47.14.205.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership on the Panel is voluntary and is expected to represent the diversity of the state. The Panel selects its own members through a formal recruitment and application process. Members elect a Chair and Vice Chair from the membership. Terms for members are for a period of three years, with a limit of two consecutive terms. Terms for CRP officers are for a period of two years, with a limit of two consecutive officer terms.

MISSION

The Alaska Citizen Review Panel will review the practices, procedures, and policies of the Office of Children’s Services (OCS) and evaluate the same for compliance with federal and state laws, and the State Plan. The Panel will make recommendations based on its findings to ensure the safety and the well-being of Alaska’s children.

Principal Functions of the Panel

The Panel has three principal functions: evaluation, public outreach and advocacy.

EVALUATION

The Panel will evaluate OCS compliance with federal and state laws, examining policies and procedures for consistent statewide implementation while still being responsive to the diversity of needs across the state. The CRP shall evaluate the extent to which OCS is effectively discharging its child protection responsibilities under: The State Plan submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under 42 U.S.C. 5106a(b); Child Protection Standards under federal and state laws. The Panel may identify other criteria important to ensuring the protection of children, including the level and efficiency of coordination of foster care and adoption programs in the state. The Panel focuses on systemic issues. Unique situations will not be reviewed as individual cases by the Panel; however, they may be reviewed to identify and address systemic issues.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Panel will identify and implement means to gather feedback on procedures and practices in delivering child protection services in Alaska. Information thus collected will be utilized in its evaluation function as specified above.

ADVOCACY

The Panel will conduct appropriate actions that will help improve the child protection services system in Alaska.

2023-2024 Panel Members

Retchenda George-Bettisworth (Chair) - Fairbanks
Colin Underwood (Vice-Chair) - Anchorage
Cameron Adams - Anchorage
Lucinda Alexie - Bethel
Kimberlee Saunders - Kodiak
Sharon Sparks - Nome
Trevor Storrs - Anchorage

Contact

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2023 -2024 Priority Focus Areas

The CRP identified the issue of workforce retention as a priority focus area for the previous two work plan years, FY22 and FY23. They hosted round table discussions with frontline child welfare workers, supervisors, and managers in each of the five regions of Alaska. The insight gained from those discussions helped shape the retention-related recommendations made to Alaska policymakers in their Annual Reports.

During 2023-2024, the CRP will expand its focus into recruitment practices and prevention efforts. The CRP plans to identify advocacy opportunities around retention, recruitment, and staff well-being by utilizing OCS staff surveys. The CRP will focus on prevention by exploring the policies and data related to screened-out practices at OCS, in addition to practices around how families are referred to support services.

The CRP is committed to applying an equity lens to its work by having an intentional focus on reducing disproportionality and disparities in Alaska's child welfare system and improving equitable outcomes for all families.

2020-2025 Strategic Plan Enduring Priorities

The following enduring priorities are established by the Alaska Citizen Review Panel:

				
Reciprocal Engagement	Public Outreach	Collaborative Relationship with OCS	CRP Education and Development	Healthy CPS System

These priorities were identified by reflecting on past and current work of the CRP, the history and role of the CRP in Alaska's child welfare system, and what initiatives should be incorporated into CRP activities to best support Alaska's families. The 2023-2024 CRP work plan activities are structured around the enduring priorities from the long-range plan and are detailed below.

Enduring Priority	Actions	FY 2024				FY 25
		Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	
Healthy CPS System	Assess policies and procedures related to OCS screened-out reports and how families are referred to	X	X	X	X	X
	Receive a presentation from OCS about the newly implemented HR hiring process		X			
	Assess policies and procedures re: mandated reporting training.					X
	Assess foster parent practices and policies with a focus on compensation, support, and training					X
Reciprocal Engagement	Increase awareness of the CRP through connection with the Child Welfare Academy		X			
	Identify advocacy opportunities around retention, recruitment, and staff well-being by utilizing OCS staff surveys		X	X		
	Request OCS distribute 2022-2023 Round Table report to all OCS staff		X			
	Engage with OCS staff newsletter through readership and contributions		X	X	X	X
Public Outreach	Ensure diversity in membership recruitment	X	X	X	X	X
	Present to Alaska legislators on the CRP			X		
	Engage with relevant parties in the Alaska child welfare system	X	X	X	X	X
	Annual review of CRP website		X	X		
Collaborative Relationship with OCS	Receive update from OCS on the status of the new HR hiring process				X	
	Monthly meetings with OCS to assist in implementing the Annual Work Plan	X	X	X	X	X
CRP Education & Development	Revisit CRP 2020-2025 Long-Range Plan, begin updating, and include consideration of the annual planning schedule		X	X	X	X
	Request OCS data and policies regarding the screened-out process and referral system	X	X			
	Receive quarterly updates from OCS on State and Tribal compact agreements and use to inform future planning	X	X	X	X	X
	Annual review of CRP Policies and Procedures		X	X		
	Attend the CRP National Conference				X	

CRP Acronym List

CAPTA - Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act

CRP - Citizen Review Panel

CPS - Child Protective Services

FY - Fiscal Year

HR - Human Resources

OCS - Office of Children's Services



2023-2024 WORK PLAN