



ALASKA CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

Cameron Adams, Chair

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

CRP Presentation Outline



- ◆ Purpose & Mandates
- ◆ CRP Structure
- ◆ Primary Functions
- ◆ What the CRP does NOT do
- ◆ CRP 2020-2025 Long Range Plan
- ◆ Annual Activities
- ◆ Retention Project
- ◆ Next Steps



PURPOSE

- Created as part of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)
- Mechanism for public participation in child protection
- Facilitate robust and meaningful participation by citizens to promote a healthy and collaborative child protection system





Mandates



Federal Mandate (42 U.S.C. § 5106a.(c)):

- Examine the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies and evaluate the extent to which these agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities.
- Conduct public outreach both to assess the impact of current policies and procedures, and to solicit public comment on the panel's recommendations.

State Mandate (AS 47.14.205):

- The state panel shall evaluate the extent to which the department is effectively carrying out its child protection responsibilities under (1) the state plan submitted to the United States Department of Health and Human Services under 42 U.S.C. 5106a(b); (2) child protection standards under federal and state laws; and (3) any other criteria that the panel considers important to ensuring the protection of children.

Structure of the CRP

- The Alaska Citizen Review Panel was formed in 2002.
- Per Alaska State Regulation (7 AAC 58), the CRP seats between 5 and 9 members.
- Membership on the Panel is voluntary and is expected to reflect the diversity of the state.
- OCS created a Coordinator contract in 2006 to assist the Panel with coordination and administrative functions.





Primary Functions of the CRP

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.

Public Outreach

The Panel will identify and implement means to gather feedback on procedures and practices in delivering child protection services in Alaska.

Advocacy

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

What the CRP does NOT do



- The CRP does not intervene in individual cases.
- The CRP does not have authority over OCS.
- The CRP does not lobby.

CRP 2020-2025 Long Range Plan

Enduring Priorities

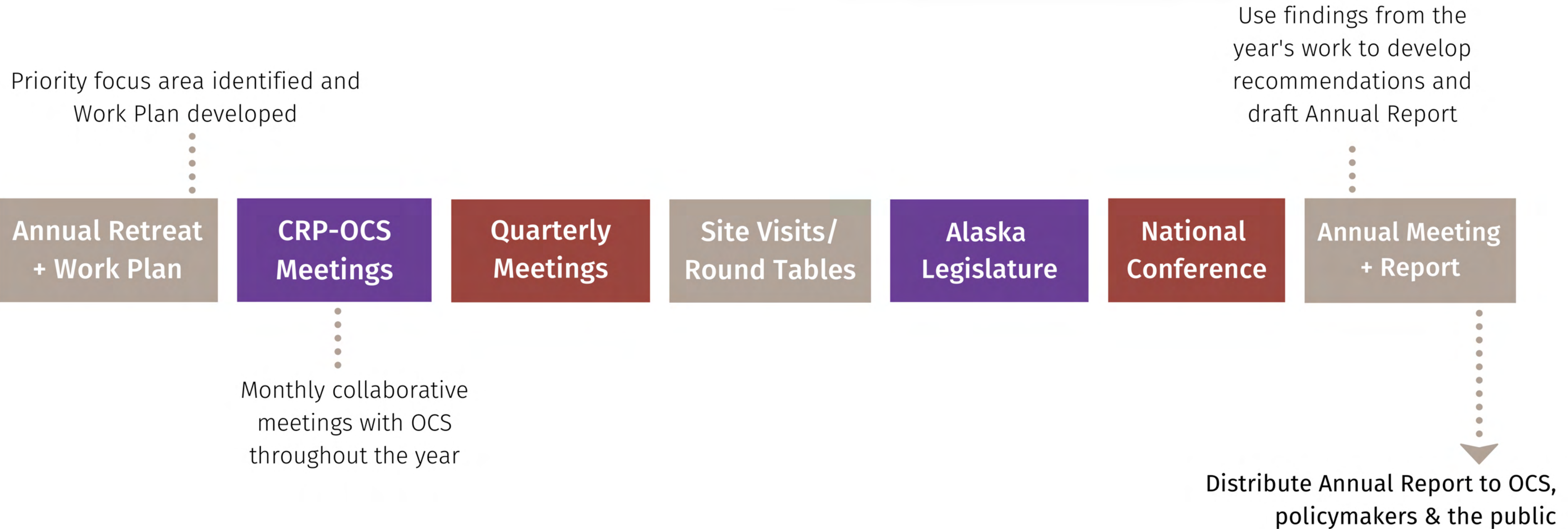


				
Reciprocal Engagement	Public Outreach	Collaborative Relationship with OCS	CRP Education and Development	Healthy CPS System

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. These enduring priorities are used to structure and guide Panel activities.



CRP Annual Activities



The CRP's Focus on Child Welfare Workforce Retention

2021-2022



Background

Alaska OCS reported a near 60% turnover rate among frontline staff

CRP worked to understand the root causes of turnover by looking at the current retention related research.



Connection

The CRP connected with case-carrying child welfare workers

Round table discussions were hosted in each of the 5 regions of Alaska in order to hear directly from workers.



Recommendations

Retention-related recommendations made in the 2021-2022 Annual Report

The CRP let the lived experiences of frontline workers inform their recommendations to OCS.



2021-2022 CRP Round Table Discussion Findings

- 27 frontline workers, 5 round table discussions, 1 in each region of Alaska
- Lack of transparency during hiring process
- Organizational culture at OCS described as one that encourages people to overwork themselves
- Mostly unaware of wellness tools offered by OCS or the wellness tools offered are inaccessible or ineffective
- Participants did not feel valued by OCS
- Unreliable technology leads to inefficiencies, increased workload, and decreased wellness
- Lack of support or mistreatment from management results in workers leaving

Broad Overview of Recommendations

2021- 2022 CRP Round Table Discussions with frontline workers



Organizational Culture & Wellness



- Improved access to supportive supervision
- Prioritization of workers physical and psychological safety
- Team building activities
- Improved or increased access to a mental health provider, secondary trauma support groups and mandatory time to debrief or process critical incidents
- Expanding the mentor program or increasing opportunities for peer support

Training & Development



- Evaluation process that is more reflective of worker's efforts and focuses less on data that may not accurately demonstrate efforts
- Training dedicated to personal development like social emotional learning & the skills needed to manage the stresses of the job
- Improved training in working with diverse populations

Benefits



- Review compensation policies for overtime, travel time, on call and comp time
- Worker education on existing time-keeping policies should be improved as workers reported a lack of knowledge or clarity on policies
- Identify alternative ways to help workers feel more valued such as recognition of workers and creation of a Protective Services Specialists (PSS) III position

Technology & Workflow



- Leverage technology to improve efficiency in the field and during reporting
- Develop a strategy to address barriers and challenges in workflow
- Create more SSA positions to support case-carrying workers in their efforts

Preliminary Findings

2022-2023 Round Table with Frontline Workers



- Workers continue to report not feeling valued
- Wellness time is not given, or is worker driven and often worker funded
- Vacancies force workers to work outside their scope and training
- Great need for access to mental health services due to the nature of the work
- Reported discrepancies around how critical incident debriefing is handled
- Perceived lack of follow through on promised changes such as PSS III position, bonuses, a mental health clinician, and changes to on-call

Manager/Supervisor Round Tables

Preliminary Findings



- Lack of staff was reported as their biggest challenge.
- HR delays prevent them from hiring qualified applicants.
- Managers and Supervisors need to be considered when thinking about worker wellness and retention.
- Unreliable technology and a lack of resources add to their already heavy workload.
- Participants feel like decisions are made without input from the people they impact.

Opportunities for Improvement

2022-2023 Manager/Supervisor Round Tables



- Improve HR at the state level to prevent OCS from losing qualified applicants
- Improve technology at OCS
- Prioritize safety in rural Alaska
- Address travel barriers in rural Alaska in order to achieve federally mandated timelines for essential services
- Prioritize and protect worker wellness



Next Steps

- **The CRP is working on future opportunities for collaboration.**
- **Child welfare workforce retention does not start and stop with OCS; this is a statewide, multi-system issue that will require collaboration at all levels to address.**



Questions?

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