



West Virginia Citizen Review Panel

Annual Summary Report

December 2019

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Citizen Review Panel Focus Areas – 2019

Rebuilding the Panel

The Citizen Review Panel met on December 10, 2019. Some members were unable to make the meeting, but the ones present discussed reaching out across the state to add new members or ask previous members to rejoin. The members discussed their recommendations for members including an attorney, law enforcement officer, a foster care provider agency that also provides therapy services, a member from the Department of Education, a foster/adoptive parent, a representative from Legal Aid, and a member from the WVDHHR Bureau of Behavioral Health. The Panel scheduled the following meetings for 3/17/19, 6/16/19, 9/15/19, and 12/15/19. The CRP Coordinator will be checking for room availability at the Flatwoods, WV DHHR as it is centrally located.

Foster Care

The Citizen Review Panel continues to have concerns about the number of children coming into foster care and the lack of foster homes throughout the state. The Panel believes that several agencies are actively involved in recruitment, so the focus should be shifted to helping potential foster parents and kinship/relatives to navigate the system and become certified in a more efficient manner. The Panel would also like to focus on retention of foster homes and ensure foster families are more aware of “reasonable and prudent parenting” as it appears to be poorly communicated to the certified foster/adoptive families.

CPS Cases Not Involving the Court System

The Citizen Review Panel would like to continue to focus on the periodic review of individual cases and remains committed to reviewing those that are not subject to the oversight of circuit courts. The CRP recognizes that many of these cases do not get as much attention as the court cases and CPS staff rely heavily upon ASO providers. The CRP has the following concerns:

- The CRP would like to know if ASO providers are trained in motivational interviewing;
- Is the training for ASO providers consistent across the state or done by individual agencies? The CRP would recommend consistent trainings be done with providers as they are spending more time with families and may not be as well trained or consistently trained. What sort of foundation training are the providers being given prior to assuming a caseload?
- While the CRP recognizes that CPS workers are receiving some training regarding Human Trafficking, the CRP would recommend more training for CPS workers and field staff.

- Per a case review, the CRP found that WIC is not providing information to CPS workers. The CRP is unsure if there is an issue with releasing the information and encourages BCF to work jointly with the Bureau of Public Health to identify the barriers in communication between WIC field offices and CPS staff who are attempting to gain information from WIC regarding children and their safety.

Children and Family Services Review Performance Improvement Plan

In the Annual Summary Report from October 2016 to December 2017, the Citizen Review Panel had requested a copy of the completed PIP that the CRP could choose areas to focus mirroring those in the subsequent PIP. The CRP is still interested in reviewing the information contained within the PIP so that during 2020, the Panel can proceed with narrowing its focus on specific areas needing improvement.

Recommendations

1. Increase training to foster/adoptive parents in Reasonable and Prudent Parenting.
2. Provide consistent training to ASO providers statewide on Motivational Interviewing.
3. Provide additional training to Child Protective Services workers on Human Trafficking.
4. Improve communication between the WIC program and Child Protective Services workers.
5. Provide the CRP with a copy of the West Virginia approved Program Improvement Plan (PIP).