



West Virginia Citizen Review Panel

Annual Summary Report

December 2023

For More Information:

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Panel Members

Below is a list of panel members who served on the panel during 2023:

Member Name	
Shanna Gray <i>State Director Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)</i>	Jessica Bender <i>Protective Services Coordinator WV Coalition Against Domestic Violence</i>
Addie Maxwell <i>Chief Practice Management Officer and Clinical Therapist Home Base Inc.</i>	Andrea Brown Riley <i>Protective Services Coordinator WV Coalition Against Domestic Violence</i>
Emily Baumruk <i>Regional Foster Care Ombudsman Office of the Inspector General</i>	Andrea Darr <i>Director of the WV Center for Children's Justice Children's Justice Task Force</i>
Beverly Heldreth <i>Program Manager Bureau for Social Services - WV Department of Human Services</i>	Misty Atkins <i>Director of the WV Center for Children's Justice Children's Justice Task Force</i>
Brittany Dodd <i>State Expansion Manager National Youth Advocate Program</i>	Lisa Carmelia <i>WV Center for Children's Justice</i>
Marissa Sanders <i>Foster Parent Network</i>	Allison Iapalucci <i>Guardian ad Litem</i>
Craig Cline <i>Associate Professor of Social Work Shepherd University</i>	Cindy Largent-Hill <i>Director of the Division of Children's Services Supreme Court of Appeals</i>
Jason Curry, PhD <i>Expert with Lived Experience</i>	Andria Jones <i>Court Improvement Program</i>
Amanda Spencer <i>Social Services Policy Specialist – CRP Liaison Bureau for Social Services - WV Department of Human Services</i>	Dawn Beal <i>Citizen Review Panel Coordinator</i>

Citizen Review Panel Focus Areas – 2023

Rebuilding the Panel

The Citizen Review Panel (CRP) met on:

- January 18, 2023
- February 15, 2023
- March 15, 2023
- April 19, 2023
- May 17, 2023
- June 21, 2023
- July 19, 2023
- August 16, 2023
- October 18, 2023
- December 13, 2023

The meetings were held via Google Meet. Meetings were scheduled from 9:00 am to 11:00 am and did not typically require the entire time slot. The CRP worked together to update the *Structures and Processes* and the *Goals and Objectives*. A CRP Coordinator was not hired until late 2023 and was present for the December 2023 meeting. The CRP has continued recruitment efforts.

During the first few months, the CRP reviewed and discussed the following information:

- Department of Human Services staff hiring and retention;
- West Virginia Child Welfare Dashboard;
- Data on reasons child removal and placed into foster care;
- Families not receiving services they need;
- Quality respite care;
- Mandated reporter/mandated supporter;
- Comparison data from other states on reasons for child removal and placement into foster care;
- Data on supervision and reunification;
- There was a recommendation for software that could assist child welfare with data;
<https://evidentchange.org/analytics/safemeasures/>;
- Data on the number of children who are receiving in-home ongoing child protective services and those cases that result in entry into foster care vs. the completion of treatment and case closure (reduction of risk);
- Data on the number of cases where domestic violence is substantiated;
 - Data on services provided in a domestic violence case; and
- Making referrals in a timely manner, coordinating visits, and visits adequately staffed.

Focus on Data

During the meetings in 2023, the CRP discussed various issues surrounding child welfare and then began to focus on data regarding child welfare cases. The lack of data regarding certain issues affects the transparency of the West Virginia Department of Human Services (DoHS), Bureau for Social Services (BSS). The CRP reviewed the last Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System Data (AFCARS) report that can be found online. The Court Improvement

Program has access to data from the Juvenile Abuse and Neglect Information System (JANIS). Unfortunately, JANIS and BSS's system, People's Access to Help (PATH) do not have interface capability at this point. Data from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) cannot be accessed by the group who would only wish to review data specific to West Virginia.

The CRP also reviewed the [Child Welfare Dashboard](#) found on the BSS's website. This dashboard is a major step toward transparency of child welfare data but is still limited in what information it provides.

In discussing the various data that is available, the CRP would like to propose recommendations of what data it would like to see from BSS. Furthermore, the CRP would like to see that data be gathered and incorporated into the Child Welfare Dashboard.

Recommendations to the West Virginia Department of Human Services:

- The CRP would like to continue to support efforts, but not duplicate existing efforts, of the DoHS. The CRP recommends continued yearly contact with the commissioner or deputy commissioner.
- The CRP recommends that the Bureau for Social Services begin collecting data and making such data available on the Child Welfare Dashboard.
- List of data that the CRP recommends BSS gather and make available to the public on its dashboard include the following:
 - Data on children removed from the home more than once.
 - Data on children returning to foster care after adoption finalization.
 - Data regarding the circumstances as to why children were removed.
 - Data on the number of children in certified foster care vs. kinship/relative care.
 - Data on the number of children who are receiving in-home ongoing child protective services and those cases that result in entry into foster care vs. the completion of treatment and case closure (reduction of risk).
 - Data on what federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) services are available, and where within the state, that kept kids from going to foster care.
 - Data on children removed from the home and then successfully reunified with their caretaker.
 - Data on the successful use of FFPSA services that helped prevent the removal of children from their homes.
 - Data on cases where a family has received FFPSA services but later had contact with the state child welfare agency and needed further services.
 - Data on the number of children receiving supervised visits (court ordered).
 - Data on the number of cases where domestic violence is substantiated.
 - Data on the types of services provided in a child welfare case involving domestic violence.
 - Data regarding the number of removals of children by child protective service worker associates vs child protective service workers (*See House Bill 3261 from the West Virginia Legislature 2023 Regular Session*).
 - Data on the number of people leaving positions as therapists to be a child protective service worker/supervisor because of the pay increases.