

# Kentucky Citizen Review Panel



**State Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Annual Work Report**

This report has been prepared for:

Cabinet for Health and Family Services  
Department for Community Based Services

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## About Citizen Review Panels

The origins of Citizen Review Panels (CRP) can be traced to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (P.L. 104 - 235), or CAPTA. This seminal piece of child welfare legislation, passed by Congress and then signed into law by President Nixon in 1974, was the first substantive federal response to improve replies to child maltreatment (National Child Abuse and Neglect Training and Publications Project [NCANTP], 2014). CAPTA mandated the creation of the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, offered states financial assistance for maltreatment prevention and identification initiatives, and allocated monies for research and demonstration projects.

In 1996, Congress reauthorized CAPTA (P.L. 104 - 235). During the reauthorization, legislators focused particular attention on the public oversight of child welfare policies and practices. To this end, the amendment mandated that states seeking federal monies under CAPTA create CRPs (Collins, 1998). Citizen Review Panels were created as groups of volunteer citizens who were federally mandated to provide an evaluation of states' public child welfare systems (Cot, Bruner & Scott, 1998). CRPs were to be comprised of a representative sample of individuals from the community, submit annual reports to state and federal governments that document their activities and efforts, meet at least once every three months, and be implemented by July 1999. These Panels were charged with ensuring state compliance with CAPTA, oversee coordination between Title IV-E foster care and adoption programs, review child fatalities, and evaluate other parts of the child welfare system, at the discretion of the Panel (NCANTP, 2014). In discussing the scope of CRPs responsibilities, Jones and Royse (2008a) described that Panels "were envisioned by the US Congress as a way to move state child welfare agencies toward increased accountability and as a way to provide local communities the means by which to comment on and possibly improve child protection policy and practices" (p. 919).

A 2003 congressional reauthorization of CAPTA, under the new name, Keeping Children and Families Safe Act (P.L. 108 – 36), explicated further mandates for CRPs. Specifically, this law mandated that state child welfare agencies respond to the annual report of CRPs within six months of their submission. Further, P.L. 108 – 36 required the

CRPs to engage in public outreach related to child welfare (Buckwalter, 2014). For example, CRPs may host public forums, conduct focus groups, or survey larger community groups such as teachers or judges in order to fulfill this mandate. Today, all states and the District of Columbia have some type of CRP (Administration for Children and Families, 2013; Miller & Jones, 2015).

**For more information on CAPTA, please visit:**

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/capta2003.pdf>

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws-policies/federal-laws/legislation>

## Kentucky Citizen Review Panels

The Kentucky Citizen Review Panels were formed in 1999 as a result of the aforementioned amendment to the Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act. The Kentucky CRPs are structured into three subpanels: Jefferson CRP, Southern Bluegrass CRP (Fayette, Clark, Jessamine, Mercer, Boyle, Lincoln, Garrard, Madison, Estill, and Powell), and the Statewide CRP (at-large covering the remaining counties within the state of Kentucky).

Each of the Panels have faced membership challenges as a result of membership term expirations, conflicts of interest, and unforeseen personal commitments. Citizen Review Panel staff, as well as current members, are in the process of recruiting new members from professional and personal networks. Existing members are searching for additional members who are able to commit to two years of service in the communities in which they reside or are employed.

In Fall 2016, the University of Kentucky Training Resource Center (UK TRC) convened a small Citizen Review Panel Advisory Group to develop a plan for the KY CRP expansion. Per recommendation from this advisory group, the UK TRC conducted an initial feasibility assessment during Winter 2016-2017. Based on that assessment, a proposal has been made to embark on a phased expansion during FY 2017-18. This will include (re)developing CRPs in Jefferson, Southern Bluegrass, Two Rivers, Eastern Mountain, and The Lakes Service Regions.

The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) and The Commonwealth of Kentucky Citizen Review Panels have a Memorandum of Understanding. Included therein is the understanding that each Panel will be composed of at least ten (10) volunteers who are broadly representative of the community or area in which the Panel is established, including volunteer members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. In addition, each Panel shall: (a) Meet at least once every three (3) months; (b) Evaluate the extent to which the Cabinet is effectively discharging its responsibilities for child protection in accordance with the state plan submitted under the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act; (c) Review and evaluate other system issues as required by federal law; and (d) Issue an annual report by June 30<sup>th</sup> of

each year to the Governor, the Cabinet, and the Legislative Research Commission which includes, but is not limited to, a summary of the activities of the Panels. This report shall not include any identifying information about any specific child protective services case.

In turn, the Cabinet shall (a) Provide access to all information necessary to complete the federal mandate of the Citizen Review Panels as established by 42 U.S.C.A. Section 5106a(c); (b) Assure the attendance of a regional administrator in the geographic area served by the Panel no less than two (2) meetings of each CRP each year; (c) Give each CRP notice of all Standards of Practice (SOP) issuances relating to child protective services, including, but not limited to, changes in SOP practices, procedures, organizational changes, or new program initiatives; (d) Within ninety (90) days of receipt of the report, respond in writing to the Panels, the Governor, and the Legislative Research Commission on the status of any recommendations made by the Panels in the report. The Cabinet's response shall include a plan of action for improvement and a request for clarification of any issues raised in the report; (e) On an ongoing basis, make the Citizen Review Panels aware of any potential issues which the CRP may wish to address as part of their annual report; and (f) The Cabinet shall also make the Panels aware of issues specifically related to state and federal guidelines. The Cabinet liaison shall provide this information to the Panel at the regional meetings.

## Kentucky Citizen Review Panel Member Representation and Areas of Expertise



### Jefferson Panel

- Social Work
- University Research and Practice
- Former Child Protective Service Workers
- Youth Services
- Domestic Violence
- Public Policy
- Education
- Court Appointed Special Advocate



### Statewide Panel

- Family Therapy
- Domestic Violence
- Community Support
- Behavioral Health
- Human Services
- University Research and Practice
- Social Work
- Family Resource Youth Services
- Former Child Protective Service Workers



### Southern Bluegrass Panel

- Social Work
- Child Custody
- Poverty Law
- Public Benefits for Children
- Youth Development
- Community Outreach
- Crisis Intervention
- Program Development
- Adolescent Mental Health
- Youth Pregnancy
- Sexual Health
- School-based Social Work
- Children and Family Services
- Substance Abuse
- Violence Intervention

For a national perspective on Citizen Review Panels please visit:

<http://cantasd.org/crp.html>



# Report of the Jefferson Panel

## Meetings

The fiscal year began with the Annual CRP Retreat at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in August, 2016. At that time all Panels met and discussed the coming year, possible projects and how the CRP can assist the Cabinet in general. Throughout the year the Jefferson panel held meetings monthly on the third Fridays of September, October, November, December, January, February, March, and May from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at varying locations in Louisville, KY.

## Panel Members

Shannon Moody (Chair) – Louisville, KY	Shari Christoff – Louisville, KY
Kristin Johnson – Louisville, KY	Ria Chandler – Louisville, KY
Linda Handorf – Louisville, KY	Tara Glover – Louisville, KY

## Strategic Planning

Each year the Jefferson Citizen Review Panel (CRP) participates in a strategic planning retreat. During the most recent retreat, CRP members, with input from Cabinet for Health Services (CHFS) regional personnel, identified several potential areas for this year's work. The Jefferson County Panel also discussed the election of a new panel Chair and elected new panel member Shannon Moody.

After a vote the CRP voted on two distinct projects on which to work.

- Student Citizen Review Panel in Jefferson County
  - Purposes: To delineate a model for conceptualizing and developing a student-led CRP AND using that model to foster the development of such a group
  - Key Task(s):
    - Design and disseminate information regarding the “student” initiative
    - Recruit students to participate in the student initiative

- Orient and support students in identifying and carrying out line of inquiry
- Exploration of Court Processes
  - Purpose: To examine caregiver perceptions of court experiences
  - Key Task(s):
    - Explicate protocol for data collection
    - Draft and submit IRB protocol for collecting survey and interview data
    - Collect and analyze data

### **Exploration of Court Processes**

Upon preliminary research the CRP discovered the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) was in the midst of planning a review of the family courts system, with a similar goal of that of the panel. The panel reached out to the Administrative Office of the Courts to inquire how to play a role in the on-going work in an effort to avoid duplicate tasks.

After months of outreach and communication, it was determined that the CRP must wait for instruction from the AOC on timing and how to be more closely involved. Currently the CRP is still awaiting involvement.

### **Student Citizen Review Panel in Jefferson County**

In an effort to foster a commitment to volunteerism and an awareness of the functioning of the child welfare system, the Jefferson County Citizen's Review Panel sought students interested in developing a student-led Citizen's Review Panel.

A student led panel, developed and created by students, would encompass the framework of the existing panels, though the functions and tasks of the panel would be determined by the student members.

In order to conceptualize and develop a student led panel, we sought Bachelors and Masters level students interested in being part of a panel to benefit local and state

systems, but also give them the opportunity to experience panel membership while working with other students and professionals from different fields.

The panel recruited members from Spalding University, the University of Louisville, Indiana University—Southeast, and Bellarmine University. A student identified in the process actively recruited students from the schools of social work, psychology, medicine, and law.

The students were vetted through an application process and then contacted for the introductory meeting. The first meeting of the Student CRP was held March 30, 2017 and was attended by nine students as well as the DCBS liaison, CRP staff, and Jefferson County panel chair.

The students were oriented around Citizen Review Panels and then agreed to meet in April, May, and June of 2017, wherein June they would determine their project(s) for the coming year.

### **Worker Appreciation**

During a quarterly meeting with the Commissioner of the Department for Community Based Services, activities around worker appreciation for frontline workers was discussed. The topic was brought to the attention of the panel members at which point the panel agreed to create a worker appreciation activity for the Jefferson CRP. It was determined by the members that the panel would assemble “goody bags” for workers with different items, limiting it to under \$10 that would help to show frontline workers in Jefferson County that they are appreciated.

The Jefferson County CRP members reached out to local businesses and non-profits to gather materials for the bags. The members will also involve the Student CRP members in assembling the gifts in May 2017. The bags were distributed to workers after assembly.

### **Moving Forward**

Using the work completed during the 2016-2017 year, the panel will continue to build its infrastructure and work products in fiscal year 2017- 2018. In addition, the panel will identify additional ways in which the CRP can enhance the understanding of DCBS

amongst the public as well as determine the appropriate next panel projects. The panel will also continue to focus on recruitment and retention of new panel members.

## Report of the Southern Bluegrass Panel

### Panel Members

This year has been a transformational year for the Southern Bluegrass Citizen Review Panel. The Southern Bluegrass CRP was met at the beginning of the year with its first challenge of recruiting additional members due to expired term limits, conflicting schedules and job changes. Existing members recruited members from their professional and personal networks who would commit to increase their awareness of the department of community based services and the communities in which they serve.

Carla Jordan (Chair) – Lexington, KY

Ronica Whitlock - Lexington, KY

Larry Johnson – Lexington, KY

Brian Defresne – Frankfort, KY

Vanna Armstrong – Lexington, KY

Nanci House – Winchester, KY

Lynn Squicciarini – Lexington, KY

### Meetings

The Panels met separately as well as a group. Throughout the year the Panel held meetings on the first Friday of October, December, January, February, March, and May from 11:30am-1:00pm at the Imani Baptist Church, Lexington, KY. Members attended the Annual Citizen Review Panel retreat to become acclimated to the structure, purpose and history of CRPs. Members completed the registration process, signed memorandum of understandings, confidentiality agreements and were informed of the bylaws. Members also participated in workshops. Mara Hafer of Kentucky Youth Advocates conducted training on the purpose and most effective ways to advocate. Finally, the panels held breakout sessions to complete strategic planning (purpose, goals, and objectives) for the current fiscal year.

The Southern Bluegrass Citizen Review Panel Members also attended a second orientation in which they were again informed of the history and purpose of the Southern Bluegrass Citizen Review Panel. Members were reminded of the key role they play in strengthening the communities in which they serve. Members were asked to generate project ideas and plans that could be implemented throughout the year relative to addressing the health and safety of residents in the Commonwealth. Members agreed to continue to meet for an hour and a half on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month.

Each month, members were updated on current trends and policies regarding the Kentucky Department of Community Based Services. . During this fiscal year, members were kept abreast of issues surrounding Kinship Care, non-relative placement options (also known as fictive kin), and foster care and permanency. Members of the Southern Bluegrass Citizen Review Panel also attended the Kinship Care Workgroup. The workgroup is in process of forming its bylaws and organizational structure. Carla Jordan, Chair of the Southern Bluegrass CRP agreed to participate as a member of that group. She will provide updates as necessary to the CRP. The Southern Bluegrass Citizen Review Panel also participated in the Performance Improvement Plan for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services in which participants provided recommendations of best practices and strategies for areas where improvements are needed. There were four facilitated breakout sessions consisting of:

1. Serving Placement Providers/Caregivers
2. Strategies for Family Engagement
3. Staff Recruitment and Retention
4. Service Array Development and Coordination

### **Conversation on Collaboration**

The year concluded with the Southern Bluegrass Citizen Review Panel hosting the Annual Conversation on Collaboration in which Trauma Informed Care was discussed. This event was multi-purposeful as it allowed the panel to a.) Bridge the gaps between the public and DCBS; b.) Provide an educational component to the community during Child Abuse Prevention month; c.) Improve DCBS employee morale; and d.) Provide a youth engagement component.

Each year the Conversation on Conversation is held in an effort to provide information to the public relative to the child welfare system. It is held during child abuse prevention month. This year's topic was on trauma informed care. The purpose of the conference was not necessarily to qualify participants as experts, but to challenge them to gain more insight into incorporating best practices into their own policies and procedures. Participants networked with other service providers, DCBS workers and the general public, over light snacks. Dr. Shambra Mulder provided a brief explanation on trauma informed care. Neil Heffelbower of the Providence School in Jessamine County,

Kentucky provided practical information on how to incorporate strategies into daily practices. Ms. Glenda Wright, Former Foster Youth, President of Voices of the Commonwealth spoke about her experience growing up in the foster care system. The conversation was highlighted by acknowledging over 25 social workers for their service with the Cabinet of Health and Family Services with a certificate of appreciation. Five social workers each received a certificate of excellence, 2 Chick-Fil-A meal cards and a hanging basket donated by the students in the plant science department of Locust Trace AgriScience Center in Lexington, KY.

### **Worker Appreciation**

The Southern Bluegrass CRP recognizes that social workers are often underappreciated and are often portrayed in a negative light. In order to show appreciation, the Southern Bluegrass CRP awarded multiple social workers from various departments of the Department of Child and Family Services with certificates of appreciation, gift cards and flowers to boost employee morale and act as a token of appreciation for their hard work and dedication.

### **Strategic Planning**

During the previous year, the Southern Bluegrass Citizen Review panel participated in a public perception survey. Data from the survey indicated that the general public had a negative perception of the Department of Community Based Services. This perception was linked to high staff turnover, poor customer service, low employee morale and being unfamiliar with the array of services offered by the Department of Community Based Services. In an effort to improve the public's perception, Panel Chair, Carla Jordan reminded each member that they have a unique task of assisting in the efforts to improving the public's perception through information and education. Members were asked to commit by first assessing their own perception of DCBS. Members were then asked to view the system and the public through an unbiased lens and come up with strategies to create a supportive culture for all parties involved. Finally, panel members agreed to serve both the community and Department of Community Based Services with integrity, compassion and commitment.

As previously mentioned, the Southern Bluegrass Citizens Review Panel focused on being the bridge that supports DCBS and the families in region in which we serve. Each

quarter, the Chairs of the Citizens Review Panels met with Commissioner Adria Johnson of the Department of Community Based Services. At the beginning of this fiscal year, Commissioner Johnson informed us of the current priorities for DCBS. Southern Bluegrass CRP formed their strategic plan around addressing the following priorities accordingly:

- Reform - Foster Care and Adoption review
- Kinship Care program- Formal Guardianship Care-Fictive Kin
- Effects substance abuse has on children in care
- Youth Engagement- Voices of the Commonwealth
- Fatherhood Engagement
- Disproportionality
- Developing a supportive culture for DCBS
- Developing realistic measures of performance for DCBS workforce.

### **Moving Forward**

This has been an exciting and eventful year for the Southern Bluegrass Citizen Review Panel. During this year we have gained and lost members, which resulted in concentrating our focus on recruitment and retention of new panel members. Consequently, the Southern Bluegrass was able to recruit a total of 5 new members; three who have worked diligently to support the CRP this year and two that are eagerly waiting to come onboard next month. We look forward to having Karla Jo Hurley, Social Worker, Family Resource Center Coordinator, Fayette County Public Schools and Sabina Massey, Social Worker, Family Resource Center Coordinator; Fayette County Public Schools join us.

Over the past year we have also concentrated our efforts on promoting the Department of Community Based services in a positive light while advocating for both families and the department of community based services. We will continue to do so. It has been said that word of mouth is often the best means of advertisement. Southern Bluegrass Panel Members have been intentional in sharing positive reports of how helpful the Department of Community Based Services has been for families in Kentucky. Members of Southern Bluegrass CRP were instrumental in dispelling myths and promoting positive images about the work of social workers. We have tried to relay the message that DCBS offers



other services besides removal. Families were encouraged to seek help for their situation before the problems become insurmountable.

Throughout the year, panel members advocated for both families and social workers alike. It is our commitment as the Southern Bluegrass Citizen Review Panel to continue to service our designated region by A) fostering existing relationships; B) recruiting foster parents; C) promoting positive image of DCBS; D) recruiting potential social workers for the Cabinet of Family and Health Services; E) volunteering as necessary to assist DCBS in meeting milestones and strategic plans.

### Goals

After thorough discussions the panel members of the Southern Bluegrass CRP decided that it was most feasible to set action items that produced tangible results. Therefore it was decided to focus on the following actions during the 2016-2017 fiscal year:

- Recruit and retain new Southern Bluegrass panel members
- Help promote a supportive culture for the Department of Community Based Services
- Provide an educational opportunity for the public to learn about Child Abuse Prevention
- Stay abreast of current policy changes and trends in the child welfare system.

## Report of the Statewide Panel

### Meetings

Quarterly meetings were held by the Statewide CRP: the annual retreat on August 5, 2016, in Louisville, Kentucky at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and on October 17, 2016, January 21, 2017, and March 27, 2017 in Frankfort at the Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Panel members and leaders also participated in various phone calls and meetings throughout the fiscal year.

### Panel Members

Panel leadership will continue to work to ensure that panel membership is composed of members who are broadly representative of the community, recognizing that this goal has yet to be fully achieved. Currently, the Panel's membership includes those who have expertise in areas such as prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect; domestic violence; university research and practice; social work; education; and child protective services. It also includes adult former victims of child abuse or neglect. Names and cities of residence for members who served this fiscal year are listed below, and the list includes a few members who resigned during the course of the year for personal reasons, as well as new members who have recently joined.

Lisa K. Gabbard, co-chair – Frankfort, KY	Verne Webb, co-chair – Richmond, KY
April Murphy, Ph.D. – Bowling Green, KY	Austin Griffiths – Glasgow, KY
Dana Sullivan, Ph.D. – Bowling Green, KY	Vivian Hurt – Glasgow, KY
Laura Kinney – Edgewood, KY	Janet Stickels – Union, KY
Ryan Smither – Louisville, KY	Tami Blevins – Covington, KY
Jenny Martin – Manchester, KY	Lacey Prouty – Elizabethtown, KY

### Strategic Planning

In recent history, the Panels have coordinated with leadership inside Kentucky's child protection system to select a few topics for examination during the course of the fiscal year. Given the mandate imposed by federal statute – evaluation of a 120-county-wide system that impacts tens of thousands of children every year, by a volunteer Panel with

limited time and resources – one might argue that tackling a few topics each year at any depth would fully expend the Panel’s resources. Meanwhile, Panels have been tasked under law with a broader examination than just a few issues and calling for an evaluation as well. This year the Statewide Panel defined the issue as follows: is the Statewide Citizen Review Panel able to handle the mandate imposed upon it – a more extensive evaluation of the child protection system – or is this task an “unfunded mandate” – a task too big for the Panel to handle? The Panel intends to continue strategic planning on a broader scale, looking across the national CRP landscape to continue studying this issue of how best to conduct an examination and evaluation of the child protection system in Kentucky.

### **Topics for Examination**

Informed by the results of a 2016 statewide electronic survey of Kentucky’s Protection and Permanency workers, the Statewide Citizen’s Review Panel worked to improve the morale of the frontline workforce, with hopes of increasing employee retention. On that note, a priority was made to design the *What Works Conference* around child welfare worker recognition and by showcasing strategies that have been found to improve the safety of communities.

### **Worker Moral and Retention in Child Protection**

A portion of the results from the 2016 statewide survey have been shared with the CRP, where both front line employees and supervisors shared suggestions for improving employee recognition and retention efforts. The CRP plans to use a few ideas from this feedback to inform our future efforts, including: positive press coverage of CHFS to improve community perception; reward programs; pay increases; employee appreciation events; bonuses; recognition awards; and positive feedback from above.

Creating and maintaining a competent workforce is vital to the success of child welfare agencies, and the shortage of quality public child welfare workers is a problem in Kentucky. Families have better outcomes when there is stability with their caseworkers, and research shows that constant staff turnover is a very expensive dilemma.

The Panel is excited about the prospect of these results being used as a springboard for improvements in the public child welfare system and looks forward to working with

DCBS leadership to implement some of the suggestions generated by the workers and supporting efforts to improve recognition and retention.

### **Mini-Conference: “What Works In Child Welfare”**

The Panel again held its annual one-day conference designed to showcase new and successful topics in the child welfare arena across the state and nation. Topics included child welfare worker recognition; the importance of retention and morale within protection and permanency; educational neglect/truancy prevention and family engagement; children exposed to batterers; evidence-based strategies to empower families; and “Handle with Care”, a school/community partnership around children’s trauma exposure. The Panel, with the assistance of the University of Kentucky’s College of Social Work, sought presenters who are experts in their respective fields. For the first time this year, the Panel presented awards to DCBS front-line workers and supervisors from the Service Regions across the state. Employees were nominated by colleagues, and everyone nominated was recognized at the conference. However, seven individuals were chosen by the Panel for a special award. These were presented with the assistance of the DCBS Commissioner, Adria Johnson. The Panel hopes to continue hosting this event in future years, as well as continuing the recognition awards.

### **Conclusion**

Twelve (12) citizens from around the Commonwealth came together over the last year, dedicating their time and talents to the work of the Statewide Citizen Review Panel. The Panel looks forward to again working closely with DCBS leadership and staff to determine needs and look for ways to improve the child welfare system in the Commonwealth.

In addition, as mentioned, the Panel hopes to continue hosting the annual What Works in Child Welfare Mini-Conference while working on broadening its impact on direct advocacy efforts on behalf of Kentucky’s children.

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