

Eastern Citizen Review Panel for Child Protective Services

Meeting Summary March 16, 2023 • 1:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Eastern Panel Members

Eunju Lee, *Chair*

Mary McCarthy, *Vice Chair*

Kellyann Kostyal-Larrier

Kathy Halas

Sharon Chesna

Carrie Jefferson Smith

Welfare Research, Inc.

Darlene Ward

Karri Barglof

Felicia LaClair

Guests

David Haase (OCFS), Brad Hanson (FTNYS),

Daphne (FTNYS)

Welcome – Mary McCarthy, *Vice Chair*

The meeting commenced at 1:03 p.m.

OCFS Presentation

David Haase from OCFS began his presentation, noting that the SCR data requested was currently awaiting sign-offs but should be available in 4-6 weeks, or by the May meeting.

Regarding Family First, Mr. Haase displayed the FFPSA dashboard

(<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/sppd/family-first-dashboard/>) which gives access to all region and county data on non-foster care and institutional-level placements.

The panels debriefed on the information.

Families Together in NYS, Presentation

Brad Hanson from Families Together in New York State provided an overview of their organization and why they signed on to the CRP 2023 Recommendations. He introduced Daphne from the organization, who provided information on their current initiatives with OCFS. She noted a current pilot program through Erie County involving advocates working with parents who are connected to child welfare and in need of various support, legal, or resources. Additionally, they are facilitating the integration of parents within OCFS regional offices to assist with the creation of policies that are in alignment with parent views.

The Panel members were enthusiastic and supportive of the FTNYS initiative and inquired if the work is being evaluated. Daphne informed that it was not. It was agreed that the panel would support FTNYS initiative by writing a letter to Lisa Gharthey Ogundimu at OCFS to make an investment into this model and help it grow and thrive through evaluation to prove effectiveness.

Executive Budget

The members reviewed the SCAA Analysis on the Executive Budget pointing out there is no increase in the Child Tax Credit, no expansion for children under four, and no expansion for non-filers. It was commended that the budget did well in the mental health sector for youth and families. They moved to review upcoming legislation pertaining to child welfare, highlighting a number of child welfare-related bills the panels as individuals could write in support of - <https://scaany.org/child-poverty-action-needed-in-this-years-budget-letter-to-nys-legislators/> Sharon Chesna reported funding for maternal and child health is stable as it's a high priority for the governor.

OCS Audit

As the panel reviewed the OCS Audit, there was a surprised reaction to the high percentage of casework practice deficiencies. The same reaction was reflected in the failure to offer services, which holds over 1/3 of cases. The Panels shared concerns, moving to request for Lisa Ghartey Ogundimu to speak more in-depth about the report and to address and identify concerns at their next regional meeting. Additionally, the Panel would like to review a few (~three) of the audited reports to gather intel on the lack of casework reports, particularly in Oswego and Westchester Counties.

WRI Updates

WRI provided updates on the annual report social media posts and a current update on the Citizen Review Panel's website. They provided a brief on the Western Panel's interest in more information about IV-E dollars. The Eastern Panel had an interest as well and looks forward to OCFS's response.

Sharon Chesna gave a brief on the Safe Baby Court Team program and suggested extending an invitation to them to join an upcoming joint meeting. She will follow up and provide WRI a contact to set that request up.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:55 p.m.

Next CRP Meetings:

- Eastern: Thursday, May 4th | 1:00 p.m.
- Joint Panel: Thursday, June 15th | 2:00 p.m.