

Child Protection In New York State: A New Paradigm

From Mandated Reporters to Mandated Supporters

Recommendations supported by:

Children's Rights

The Children's Village and
Harlem Dowling

The Committee for Hispanic
Children and Families

Families Together in
New York State

FPWA (Federation of
Protestant Welfare Agencies)

Hiscock Legal Aid Society
(HLAS)

Justice for Families

NYC Family Policy Project

New York County Lawyers'
Association Committee on
Family Court and Child Welfare

The New York Foundling

NYS Bar Association Committee
on Families and the Law

NYS Kinship Navigator

Northern Rivers Family
of Services

Prevent Child Abuse NY

Redlich Horwitz Foundation

Rise

Schuyler Center for Analysis
and Advocacy



**New York State Citizen Review Panels
for Child Protective Services
2022 Annual Report**

Child Protection in New York State: A New Paradigm

From Mandated Reporters to Mandated Supporters

New York State Citizen Review Panels for Child Protective Services

The New York State (NYS) Citizen Review Panels (the Panels) for Child Protective Services (CPS) are important conduits for informed public input and provide an external perspective on the efficacy of New York State's child protective policies, practices, programs, and fiscal priorities.

Panel members, appointed by the Governor or the NYS Legislature, are volunteers with a breadth of experience and knowledge in child welfare practice, policy, law, social work, education, and technology, among other areas. Each of the three Panels has up to 13 members. Of those members, the Governor appoints seven, and the Senate Temporary President and Speaker of the Assembly appoint three each.

The Western Panel covers the 17 counties in the western region of the state. The New York City Panel covers the five boroughs of New York City. The Eastern Panel covers the remaining 40 counties.

The Panels are authorized by both state and federal law to examine policies, procedures, and practices at both the state and local levels, and, where appropriate, to review the outcomes of specific cases. The Panels are authorized to hold public hearings and to evaluate the extent to which agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities. The Panels have reasonable access to public and private facilities receiving public funds to provide child welfare services within each Panel's jurisdiction.

The Panels also advocate for legislation that can have a positive impact on child welfare services in NYS. The Panels are active on social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter, to raise awareness of the issues surrounding child protective services. See the inside back cover for more information on the Panels' legal role and authority. For summaries of Panel activities and a list of Panel members, refer to the Appendices.

Federal Law and the Citizen Review Panels

The 1996 amendments to the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) require states that receive federal funding under that legislation to create volunteer Citizen Review Panels. The purpose of these Panels is to assess whether state and local agencies are effectively carrying out their child protection responsibilities. The federal statute broadly defines the work of the Citizen Review Panels. The Panels must meet not fewer than once every three months and produce an annual public report containing a summary of their activities and recommendations to improve the child protection system at the state and local levels.

They must evaluate the extent to which the state is fulfilling its child protective responsibilities under its CAPTA state plan by:

- Examining the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local agencies;
- Reviewing specific cases, when warranted; and
- Reviewing other matters the Panel may consider important to child protection, consistent with Section 106(c)(A)(iii) of CAPTA.

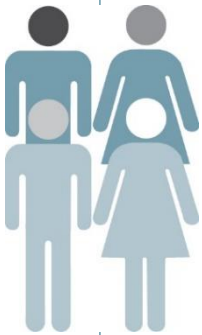
Following the order of federal CAPTA Amendments in 1996, the NYS Legislature passed Chapter 136 of the Laws of 1999, establishing no less than three Citizen Review Panels, with at least one in New York City. The other Panels were established to serve Eastern and Western New York.

Executive Summary

For more than two centuries, advocates in New York State have fought for the health of families and the safety of children. That collective voice has shifted perspectives over the years, and often not been unanimous. At this moment in time, it is a strong voice unified with two messages: resources must be increased to families in order to strengthen them rather than separating them; and eliminate or at least reduce family surveillance. The 17 organizations below join the Citizen Review Panels in issuing their recommendations for 2023, urging a focus on preventing foster care placements and ending the surveillance of families.

Recommendation Supporters (To learn more about each organization, please click on these active links):

- [Children's Rights](#)
- [The Children's Village and Harlem Dowling](#)
- [The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families](#)
- [Families Together in New York State](#)
- [FPWA \(Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies\)](#)
- [Hiscock Legal Aid Society \(HLAS\)](#)
- [Justice for Families](#)
- [NYC Family Policy Project](#)
- [New York County Lawyers' Association Committee on Family Court and Child Welfare](#)
- [The New York Foundling](#)
- [NYS Bar Association Committee on Families and the Law](#)
- [NYS Kinship Navigator](#)
- [Northern Rivers Family of Services](#)
- [Prevent Child Abuse NY](#)
- [Redlich Horwitz Foundation](#)
- [Rise](#)
- [Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy](#)



NYS Citizen Review Panels' Recommendations for 2023

Objectives

1. Reduce the incidence of actual cases of child abuse and maltreatment in New York State.
2. Reduce unnecessary investigations of children and families by CPS.
3. Reduce harmful practices in CPS investigations.
4. Reduce unnecessary placements in foster care.

Strategy

CPS has become an investigative policing agency. An alternative system of services and cash to families is needed. It can be funded by the savings from reduction in SCR calls, investigations, court filings, and foster care.

I. Reduce the incidence of child abuse and maltreatment in New York State.

1. CPS cannot reduce child abuse and maltreatment by itself. All organs of local and state government must share in the effort.
2. The Legislature should amend the Family Court act to require all local government agencies to provide services ordered by the Family Court that are needed to keep children out of foster care.
3. The Legislature should create a New York State monthly Child Tax Credit to be provided whenever the federal Credit is not provided.
4. The Legislature should make the Home Visiting Programs universal providing at least two home visits to every newborn child and continuing for up to two years as agreed upon by the parents and the Home Visiting Agency.
5. The Legislature should restore the 75% rate of reimbursement to local government for preventive services.
6. The Legislature and Executive should enlarge the delivery and financing system for preventive services outside of OCFS and the public child welfare agencies. Services should be located in hospitals, schools, and communities, which will be trusted and accepted by families.

II. Reduce unnecessary investigations of children and families by CPS – narrow the front door.

1. The Legislature should amend the mandatory reporting law for medical personnel to require it only in cases of serious physical and sexual abuse.
2. The Legislature should amend the mandatory reporting law to eliminate mandatory reporting for neglect except for cases of imminent serious risk.
3. The Legislature should bar the SCR from accepting reports that it determines to be repetitious or malicious.
4. The Legislature should require OCFS to include in its manuals and training, including training for mandated reporters, that unnecessary CPS investigations are traumatic to families.
5. The Legislature should eliminate anonymous reporting and bar the SCR from accepting reports unless the SCR can confirm the identity and contact information of the caller.

6. Provide equitably funded services outside of CPS, in hospitals, schools, and communities (See I,6, above), so that reporters will not feel the need to make a report to the SCR to get services for a family.
7. OCFS should amend the required training for mandated (and formerly mandated) reporters to educate them about the harms of unnecessary reporting.
8. The Legislature should exempt Home Visiting personnel from being mandated reporters, to encourage parents to welcome them into their homes. (HV personnel could still make reports.)
9. OCFS should eliminate “Inadequate Guardianship” as a ground for indicating a report. The law contains specific acts and omissions which constitute neglect. Terms such as “Inadequate Guardianship” are vague and without meaning. They allow CPS to substitute subjective judgment for facts. Young, inexperienced workers often make errors in judgement, and lack the skills to effectively communicate with families. Too often these errors are a reflection of both overt and implicit racial bias.
10. OCFS should comply with the definition of neglect that specifies the neglect is NOT due to poverty, before accepting a call of neglect to the SCR. The SCR should ensure that services were offered to the family to address the concerns.

III. Reduce harmful practices in CPS investigations.

1. The Legislature should prohibit caseworkers from conducting strip searches (viewing normally clothed areas) of children.
2. The Legislature should prohibit interviews of children by CPS at public schools without a court order obtained on notice to the parents. Private schools already prohibit such embarrassing practice and there should not be different rules based solely upon the wealth and income of the family.
3. The Legislature should require that at least 60% of caseworkers have a bachelor or master’s degree in social work.
4. The Legislature should require that all interviews by CPS with parents and children be recorded and that statements made by parents and children during CPS interviews should not be admissible at trial except by such recordings.
5. The Legislature should require that parents be given Miranda-type warnings when CPS seeks to interview them.
6. Counsel should be provided to parents as soon as CPS begins an investigation, to advise the parents and to represent parents at ACS conferences. The Office of Court Administration has just promulgated regulations making such attorneys available.

IV. Reduce unnecessary article ten petitions and unnecessary placements in foster care.

1. Eliminate cases that are based solely on poverty. FCA §1012((f)(A) currently states:
 “Neglected child’ means a child less than eighteen years of age whose physical, mental or emotional condition has been impaired or is in imminent danger of becoming impaired as a result of the failure of his parent or other person legally responsible for his care to exercise a minimum degree of care in supplying the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter or education in accordance with the provisions of part one of article sixty-five of the education law, or medical, dental, optometric or surgical care, though financially able to do so or offered financial or other reasonable means to do so”

The Legislature should amend by adding “provided, however, that district shall allege and prove the specific facts regarding financial ability or the offer of financial or other reasonable means to do so.”

2. The Legislature should amend FCA §1012((f)(B) to delete the catch-all term “in providing the child with proper supervision or guardianship” and require the allegation and proof of the specific grounds listed in the definition of neglect.
3. The Legislature should eliminate educational neglect as a grounds for children who are twelve years or older.
4. The Legislature should amend the definition of educational neglect to require that the district allege and prove the specific facts regarding “the efforts of the school district or local educational agency and child protective agency to ameliorate such alleged failure [to provide education] prior to the filing of the petition.”



2022 Annual Report

Child Protection in New York State: A New Paradigm — From Mandated Reporters to Mandated Supporters

The child welfare system was problematic from its beginning, in that it applied racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic biases when determining children’s well-being and best interests (Barth et al., 2021; Dettlaff & Boyd, 2020). Over the years, advocates have successfully driven course corrections in the system, some small and some large. The advocate voice has now become a raging river, demanding that the child welfare system be restructured to eliminate the bias at its core and to provide meaningful support for families in their communities. The Citizen Review Panels of New York State (the Panels) note that again it is time for family advocates in New York State to assume a leadership role in demanding a more just and comprehensive approach to child safety.

Family advocates in New York State are demanding a more just and comprehensive approach to child safety.

One of the problems at the center of the child welfare system is the disparity inherent in who gets to define what constitutes abuse and who gets to decide where a child will best heal from that abuse (Nelson, 2020). For most of its history, primarily White people of means have made those decisions and Black, Native, and Brown children were removed from their families in droves (Cénat et al., 2021).

The trauma of removal was largely ignored by the system and the constitutional rights of parents were neglected (Picker & Dunsmoor, 2013; Wechsler-Zimring et al., 2012). Entire communities became so intertwined with the child welfare system that it has become known as the Family Policing System (Roberts, 2022).

At the peak of removals in 1991, 63,850 children were in foster care in New York State (Green & Parment, 1999). There they languished without permanency for years (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). In 1997, the median length of time in foster care in New York was three years, compared to two years nationally, and double what it was in 1993 (Green & Parment, 1999).

Federal legislation exacerbated the problem. The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) was originally enacted in 1974 to provide some child welfare funding and guidance to the states as well as compelling states to create state central registers. CAPTA has been amended repeatedly. The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) targeted timely permanence. Both pieces of legislation have been widely criticized by advocates as providing paths to racially-motivated surveillance of families and forcing terminations of parental rights (Adoption and Safe Families Act, 1997; White & Person, 2022; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2021).

The Families First Prevention Services Act (Families First) was a step in the right direction at the federal level, highlighting the importance of prevention and incentivizing a reduction in the number of children placed in congregate care (Children’s Bureau, 2022; Redlich Horwitz Foundation, 2020; FosterClub, 2022). Implementation is occurring across the state but is too recent to evaluate successes and gaps in service delivery (OCFS, 2022b).

Removals in New York State have declined steadily since 2006; in 2021, there were 14,358 children in care (OCFS, 2021a). To address the racial and socioeconomic disparities in the system, the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) began releasing relevant data for individual counties and comparing data across counties. OCFS promulgated policies such as blind removal to mitigate systemic bias (OCFS, 2021a), but did not incentivize compliance. Early, multidisciplinary parental legal representation was identified as a key gap in child welfare practice and successful pilots are expected to transform to statewide policy (ILS, 2019). The need to provide support rather than oversight has led to the creation of the OCFS HEARS Family Line (Help, Empower, Advocate, Reassure and Support) (OCFS, 2022a). While an important first step, it is a very small information and referral program and has limited hours of availability.

Despite these inroads, bigger bolder and swifter change is needed. The Panels' 2023 recommendations are designed to achieve this goal. With the election of a new Governor, the appointment of a new acting commissioner for OCFS, a robust federal commitment to child welfare funding, and a tide of advocacy voices clamoring for change, there is an opportunity to recreate a system that truly supports families.

Reduce the incidence of child abuse and maltreatment in New York State.

Programs such as home visiting have been proven to be effective at supporting families thereby reducing reports of maltreatment, and Families First legislation provides an incentive to move resources from foster care and institutional providers to preventive services (Sandstrom et al., 2022).

Reduce unnecessary investigations of children and families by CPS – narrow the front door.

reflect a need for some basic services but are not abuse or neglect, a percentage of calls to the SCR are malicious. A significant number of these calls are still investigated, squandering resources and frightening families unnecessarily.

In 2021, New York's SCR received 145,684 reports of child abuse or maltreatment; 102,452 of these were made by mandated reporters. Just 36,207 of the total number of reports were indicated (OCFS, 2021b). The number of unfounded calls would be greatly diminished by eliminating anonymous reporting and reducing the number of professionals required to report. The Panels also recommend training SCR and county employees in the harmful results of unnecessary reporting while also requiring that mandated reporters first try to engage the family in services to address concerns. Limiting reporting mandates to incidents of serious abuse would also reduce the number of calls that do not involve imminent risk. If the state seeks to engage families with prevention and pre-prevention services, workers in those programs must also be free from mandated reporting requirements – or prevention services become a policing arm.

There are 11.6 million children under the age of 18 living in poverty in the United States (Child Poverty in America - facts, statistics 2022). Advocates, including the Panels, believe that **putting funds into the hands of struggling families** is a must. Family poverty is a known risk factor for child abuse, contributing to parental distress and a decreased ability to provide for children's basic needs (Kovski et al., 2022). A 2022 review of data trends from the 2015 and 2018 tax seasons found that rates of reported child maltreatment declined by 5% in the four weeks following the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) weekly payments (Kovski et al.) More recently, in December 2021, the temporary expansion of the CTC brought 3.7 million children out of poverty. The most common uses of the CTC funds include housing, utilities, more food for the family, and essential items for children (Hamilton et al., 2022). It is clear that when families have the financial resources they need, markers for neglect or maltreatment are reduced. Providing financial support to families helps reduce the prominence of poverty-related neglect and maltreatment reports, but support cannot end there.

The first category of recommendations by the Panels (see page 3) addresses how the state's **fiscal priorities must change** to support local government and community organizations in their efforts to combat poverty and provide meaningful support to families. Savings realized by reducing the number of children in foster care must be funneled into reimbursement for preventive services.

The Panels' second category of recommendations seeks to narrow the "front door" of child protection by tackling **substantive reforms in mandatory reporting**. The Panels note that more than two-thirds of the calls made to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) are unfounded: 72% (93,305) in 2021, to be exact (OCFS, 2021b). Along with reports that may

Beyond tax credit funds, some states have seen success in providing community-based services that are separate from the state and federal child protective systems. Advocates believe that creating pathways to organizations that families already trust will help to increase and sustain family retention. Connecticut has created the Careline program, a 24/7 phone hotline that individuals and families can utilize as a first resource when they are unsure if a CPS investigation is necessary. If not, the Careline workers may refer the caller to appropriate service programs in their community (Connecticut Department of Children and Families, 2022). Careline diverts reports that historically would have been made to CPS, reducing the bottleneck of case reviews and family trauma caused by unnecessary CPS investigations. The Panels support implementing a program such as Careline in New York State. New York’s HEARS is a step in the right direction (OCFS, 2022) but issues such as limited operating hours and the sharing of information with local districts must be addressed.

Reduce harmful practices in CPS investigations.

The third category of the Panels’ recommendations focuses on **reducing the harmful practices and damaging effects of child protective services (CPS) investigations**. In order to access services, families currently must become involved with a system they do not trust. Qualitative research has shown that families, especially Black mothers, feel intimidated and judged by workers from the system that supposedly is protecting their children. Through interviews with mothers of color who interacted with the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) in New York City, common themes emerged: judgment based on race or ethnicity and lack of fair treatment on the part of ACS. Additionally, financial barriers to providing adequate childcare is a major challenge for these mothers (Merritt, 2020). Connecting the dots between reports of neglect or maltreatment and poverty is absolutely necessary when assessing the current state of the child welfare system.

The emphasis on steering families toward community-based support services is important because of the known trauma faced by children during a CPS investigation during “strip searches,” when child welfare workers examine children under their clothes when physical abuse is suspected (Children Rights Litigation Committee, 2021). This process is known to occur in NYC and some other areas of the state. The humiliation and confusion a child experiences when going through an improper strip search cannot continue in any area of New York State.

Reduce unnecessary article ten petitions and unnecessary placements in foster care.

The Panels are not alone in demanding broad changes in how the child welfare system operates, as indicated by the list of organizations who have signed on to support this year’s recommendations (page 2). Some organizations have gone farther in addressing other aspects of a “family policing system” that perpetuates bias (The New York City Narrowing the Front Door Work Group, 2022), and the Panels will review additional advocacy positions in the future. At this point, our recommendations are not only vitally needed and overdue: they are essential to fulfilling the true intent of the child welfare system. **A system created to help children simply cannot continue to hurt families.**



To provide feedback on this report, visit the 2022 Report feedback survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SR2S53X>; scan the QR Code to the left; or contact the Panels at www.citizenreviewpanelsny.org/contact-us



Summary of Panel Activities

Welfare Research, Inc., d/b/a WRI Solutions (WRI) provides administrative support to the Panels.

Eastern Panel

March 3, 2022

A senior caseworker from Otsego County and First Deputy Commissioner from Ulster County joined the meeting to provide updates on the current state of the child welfare workforce; The impacts of COVID on child welfare services; and Family First implementation in their counties. Staff from OCFS provided updates on the protocol for screening malicious calls made to the Statewide Central Register (SCR); Trauma-informed practice responses being piloted throughout the state; Recent changes in CPS policy reflected in revisions to the CPS manual, which are covered in a statewide training through WebEx; and Removals from kinship foster homes, stating there are no policies that differentiate between kin and non-kin removal protocols. WRI provided updates on the upcoming Chair elections in May and dissemination of a Panel Member survey to collect updated contact information and feedback about Panel operations. Panel members debriefed and discussed plans for future meetings. Meeting was adjourned.

May 19, 2022

Staff from OCFS provided updates on policies and practices related to removals from kinship foster homes, and child welfare financing. WRI provided updates on survey results related to Panel operations and discussed social media plans. Chair elections were held and a unanimous vote welcomed Eunju Lee as Chair and Mary McCarthy as Vice Chair. Panel members debriefed and discussed plans for future meetings. Meeting was adjourned.

September 15, 2022

Staff from OCFS provided updates on OCFS personnel changes, updated Family First initiatives, including motivational interviewing for staff and new Centers for Excellence, changes to the laws regarding the determination of a child's abuse and maltreatment, and the implementation of a FAR indicator on county reports. Next,

representatives from two Eastern region counties joined to discuss child welfare funding and reimbursements. The counties noted they make their best attempts to maximize state services and provided data on the matter. They requested further guidance and support on how to implement FAR. Panel members debriefed and discussed plans for future meetings. Meeting was adjourned.

Western Panel

March 11, 2022

The Commissioner and First Deputy Commissioner of Erie County DSS joined the meeting to provide updates on the status of Erie County's Family First implementation; The child welfare workforce; and the Commissioner also provided line-by-line responses to the 2021 Annual Report and recommendations. Staff from OCFS provided updates on the protocol for screening malicious calls made to the Statewide Central Register (SCR); Recent changes in CPS policy reflected in revisions to the CPS manual, which are covered in a statewide training through WebEx; and removals from kinship foster homes, stating there are no policies that differentiate between kin and non-kin removal protocols. WRI provided updates on the dissemination of a Panel Member survey to collect updated contact information and feedback about Panel operations. Panel members debriefed and discussed plans for future meetings. Meeting was adjourned.

May 13, 2022

Staff from OCFS provided updates on fatality reports in the Western region, policies and practices related to removals from kinship foster homes, and child welfare financing. WRI provided updates on survey results related to Panel operations and discussed social media plans. Panel members debriefed and discussed plans for future meetings. Meeting was adjourned.

September 23, 2022

Staff from OCFS did not attend this meeting. Updates shared during the previous regional

meetings were relayed verbally by WRI. Panel members held a guided discussion exploring the current state of child welfare and next steps towards change. Much of the discussion helped to steer the assembly of recommendations for the next Annual Report. The topic of garnering support from statewide advocacy groups to sign-on to the recommendations was also discussed. It was determined that voting for the Chair elections would take place on a virtual ballot. Todd Sage was elected Chair; a Vice Chair has yet to be identified. Panel members debriefed and discussed plans for future meetings. Meeting was adjourned.

New York City Panel

March 1, 2022

Staff from the New York City Administration for Children's Services, including the new Commissioner Jess Dannhauser, joined the meeting to provide updates on the Commissioner's vision for NYC families, including a focus on family-centered work; How they are handling workforce issues, including fair compensation and organizational support; and Plans to continue collaboration with the NYC Panel. Staff from OCFS provided updates on: the protocol for screening malicious calls made to the Statewide Central Register (SCR); recent changes in CPS policy reflected in revisions to the CPS manual, which are covered in a statewide training through WebEx; and removals from kinship foster homes, stating there are no policies that differentiate between kin and non-kin removal protocols. WRI provided updates on the upcoming Chair elections in May and dissemination of a Panel Member survey to collect updated contact information and feedback about Panel operations. Panel members debriefed and discussed plans for future meetings. Meeting was adjourned.

May 3, 2022

Staff from OCFS provided updates on policies and practices related to removals from kinship foster homes, and child welfare financing. WRI provided updates on survey results related to Panel operations and discussed social media plans. Panel members moved to hold their chair elections via remote polling, and WRI followed up with surveys for the elections. David Lansner was elected as Chair and Dr. Jocelyn Brown was elected as Vice Chair. Panel members debriefed

and discussed plans for future meetings. Meeting was adjourned.

September 13, 2022

Staff from OCFS provided updates on OCFS personnel changes, changes to the laws regarding the determination of a child's abuse and maltreatment, and the implementation of a FAR indicator on county reports. Panel members discussed the addition of Associate Panel Members. Associate Panel members may attend meetings but cannot vote; those present supported this proposition. The first Associate member was appointed during this meeting. Panel members debriefed and discussed plans for future meetings. Meeting was adjourned.

An additional ad hoc NYC Panel meeting was held October 4th to continue to discuss the Annual Report recommendations.

Joint Panels

June 9, 2022

Staff from OCFS provided updates on their response to the ABA report on body scans (the examination of children's bodies), their response to the racial justice element of the ABA report, and their support of the expansion of FAR. WRI provided reflections from the National Citizen Review Panels conference, which Coordinator Elizabeth Roberts attended. WRI also updated the Panels on the Panel member appointment process, which is ongoing with multiple nominees outstanding. Panel members requested subgroups to be formed to discuss the topics of: legislative advocacy, race equity, and recommendation drafting. Panel members debriefed and discussed plans for future meetings. Meeting was adjourned.

October 13, 2022

Panel members viewed a presentation with a draft of recommendations assembled by the Recommendations Drafting Subcommittee and Panel Chairs. The Panels took an online vote (yes, no, need more information) on the title, main points, and sub-bullets to narrow down what they agreed on, what needs more work, and to address questions members may have. A virtual ballot was distributed after the meeting for final votes once edits were made. The recommendations have now been finalized and WRI continues to work with the subcommittee and Chairs on drafting the Annual Report.

Citizen Review Panel Members 2022

Eastern Panel

Eunju Lee, Panel Chair

Associate Professor
School of Social Welfare,
SUNY Albany

Appointed by the Assembly

Mary McCarthy, Panel Vice Chair

Director, Social Work
Education Consortium, School of
Social Welfare, SUNY Albany

Appointed by the Senate

Sharon M. Chesna

Executive Director
Mothers & Babies Perinatal
Network of South Central
New York, Inc.

Appointed by the Governor's Office

Kathleen Thornton Halas

Executive Director
Child Care Council of
Westchester, Inc.

Appointed by the Assembly

Maureen McLoughlin, Esq.

Attorney
Adjunct Professor,
Hofstra University

Appointed by the Governor's Office

JoAnn Merriman, MS, PA-C

Physician Assistant
CapitalCare Developmental,
Behavioral Pediatrics

Appointed by the Governor's Office

Erin Christopher-Sisk, PhD

Clinical Director
ECS Psychological Services

Appointed by the Senate

Carrie Jefferson Smith

Professor and Director
School of Social Work,
Syracuse University

Appointed by the Governor's Office

Kellyann Kostyal-Larrier

Executive Director
Fearless! Hudson Valley, Inc.

Appointed by the Senate

New York City Panel

David J. Lansner, Esq., Panel Chair

Partner
Lansner & Kubitschek

Appointed by the Assembly

Dr. Jocelyn Brown, Panel Vice Chair

Director, Child Advocacy Center
Columbia University
Medical Center

Appointed by the Governor's Office

Stanley Capela, Resigned effective May 15, 2022

Corporate Compliance Officer
Vice President for Quality
Management
HeartShare Human Services
of New York

Appointed by the Senate

Wayne Ho

President/CEO
Chinese-American Planning
Council

Appointed by the Governor's Office

Sania Andrea Metzger, Esq.

Director of Policy
Casey Family Services

Appointed by the Assembly

Carole Levy, Esq.

Attorney-At-Law

Appointed by the Assembly

Mathea C. Rubin

Parent
New York City

Appointed by the Senate

Jorge Saenz de Viteri

Chief Executive Officer
ECE Management NY, Inc.

Appointed by the Governor's Office

Karen Steinberg, Esq.

Attorney-At-Law,
Steinberg & Ross

Appointed by the Senate

Marion White

Senior Program Director
New York Foundling Child Abuse
Prevention Program (CAPP)

Appointed by the Governor's Office

Joyce McMillan, Associate Panel Member

Executive Director
JMac For Families

*Nominated by David Lansner;
elected by NYC Panel Members*

Western Panel

Todd Sage, Panel Chair

Clinical Associate Professor
University of Buffalo School
of Social Work

Appointed by the Assembly

Sarlyn Tate, Panel Co-Chair

Social Worker
Buffalo Psychiatric Center

Appointed by the Governor's Office

Linda C. Brown, CSW (retired)

Former Assistant Commissioner
New York State Office of Children
and Family Services

Appointed by the Assembly

Melissa A. Cavagnaro, Esq.

Partner, Mattingly Cavagnaro LLP
Matrimonial & Family Law

Appointed by the Senate

Ellen T. Kennedy (retired)

Associate Professor of Social
Work Emerita

Buffalo State College

Appointed by the Governor's Office

John Treahy

President

Treahy Consultation Services

Appointed by the Senate



Panel Membership

Panel members are listed at the end of this report. One new member joined the Panels in 2022:

→ John Treahy, President of Treahy Consultation Services (Western Panel)

All new members participate in a virtual orientation session and receive orientation materials.

Efforts were made during 2021 to reach out to Legislative and Executive Branch leaders and staff to raise awareness of the Panels and the process for appointment. Vacancies remain on all three panels, however, and the Panels continue to seek new candidates to apply for appointment.

For an up-to-date list of vacancies, visit the Panels' membership lists at

<http://www.citizenreviewpanelsny.org/members/>

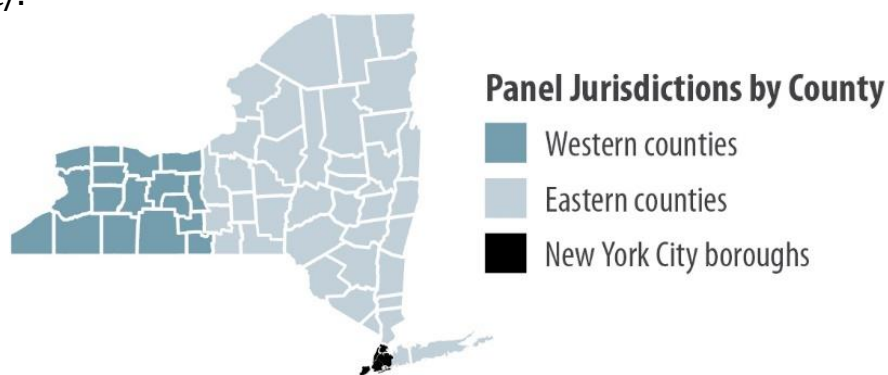
Potential members may self-nominate; be recommended by a current Panel member or other community leader; or be nominated directly by the NYS Senate, NYS Assembly, or the Office of the Governor. A letter of interest and resume must be submitted to a State Senator, State Assemblymember, or the Office of Governor. When an individual seeks appointment by the New York State Legislature, the appointment must be approved by the Temporary President of the Senate or the Speaker of the Assembly.

While the Panels strive for volunteer members who broadly represent the communities in which the Panels are established, no person currently employed by federal, state, county or municipal agencies that directly deliver child welfare services may be a Panel member.

The Panels continually strive for diversity in their membership in these areas:

- The Panels continually strive for diversity in their membership in these areas:
- Race and ethnicity, age, gender/gender identification, disability, and sexual orientation;
- Geographic location within New York State including rural, suburban, and urban areas;
- Experience related to the child welfare system including professional experience or lived experience (birth parent, foster parent, relative, or former youth in care); and
- Knowledge base such as advocacy, technology, education, law, and program development and evaluation.

For more detailed information on the appointment process, a sample letter of interest, and description of member responsibilities, visit <http://www.citizenreviewpanelsny.org/recruitment/>.



Western: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates; **Eastern:** Albany, Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Clinton, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Dutchess, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Montgomery, Nassau, Oneida, Onondaga, Orange, Oswego, Otsego, Putnam, Rensselaer, Rockland, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, St. Lawrence, Suffolk, Sullivan, Tioga, Tompkins, Ulster, Warren, Washington, Westchester; **New York City:** Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn (Kings County), Queens, Staten Island (Richmond County)

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