

Joint Citizen Review Panels for Child Protective Services

Meeting Summary February 6, 2024 • 10:00 AM

Attendees:

Eastern Panel Members

Sharon Chesna
Carrie Jefferson Smith
JoAnn Merriman

NYC Panel Members

David Lansner
Jocelyn Brown
Mathea Rubin
Marion White

Western Panel Members

Todd Sage
Ellen Kennedy
Sarlyn Tate

Welfare Research, Inc.

Kerri Barglof
Felicia LaClair
Darlene Ward

Welcome – Todd Sage

The meeting commenced at 10:05 a.m.

2024 Advocacy Efforts

The panel's discussion on the 2024 recommendations explored various critical areas, focusing on their roles and potential actions. Suggestions were made to revisit the panel's origins and refine methods for publicizing recommendations, highlighting a strategic need for greater impact. Previous efforts to disseminate recommendations through press releases were acknowledged but deemed ineffective, prompting a call for a more strategic approach.

There was agreement on the necessity of a legal review to clarify the panel's authority, although some expressed doubts about the potential outcomes. Proposals to learn from other state panels through existing connections hinted at a proactive approach to addressing knowledge gaps.

Emphasis was placed on federal compliance and the need for continued pressure on OCFS to implement the NYSCRP Recommendations. Critiques of the dysfunctional Child Protective Services system underscored a commitment to substantive reform, while proposals for joint case reviews and inquiries into national fatality review processes revealed a desire for broader learning and systemic improvement.

Questions about post-referral support for families dealing with substance abuse highlighted a recognition of the multifaceted challenges faced by vulnerable families, with a commitment to ensuring that interventions lead to tangible outcomes. Overall, the discussion demonstrated the panel's dedication to meaningful action and a nuanced understanding of the complexities within the child welfare system.

WRI Updates

Updates from WRI highlighted a change in staffing, with Kerri Barglof taking on the role of panel coordinator, bringing her expertise in social work to the position. The annual report has been distributed, prompting discussions about issuing a press release for Child Abuse Prevention Month in April, ideally scheduled for March. WRI also mentioned the possibility of an in-person meeting for the panel's June session, which received unanimous agreement for a hybrid format, to be held at the Albany OCFS office. The panel requested WRI to notify OCFS about this arrangement.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:45 a.m.

Next CRP Meetings:

- Western Case Review: February 19th | 10:00 a.m.
- Chairs Meeting: February 20th | 10:30 a.m.
- Joint Panel Meeting: March 20th | 9:00 a.m.