

Western Citizen Review Panel for Child Protective Services

Meeting Summary September 24, 2021 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Attendees:

Eastern Panel Members

Western Panel Members

Linda Brown
Todd Sage
Ellen Kennedy
Sarlyn Tate

NYC Panel Members

Welfare Research, Inc.

Jennifer Goldman
Jason Tessolecki
Marissa Italiano

Guests

David Haase, OCFS
David Bach, OCFS
Dean Keith Alford, SUNY Buffalo

Handouts

Western CRP Meeting Agenda 9.24.21
Western CRP Meeting Minutes 5.14.21
Reporting During COVID-19/Journal of Race & Law
Illinois Caseworker Stipend Program

Welcome – Linda Brown, Panel Chair

Updates from NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)

Malicious Reporting:

Mr. Haase explained the State Central Register (SCR)'s process for suspected malicious calls. The SCR takes calls from concerned individuals, if there is enough evidence to suspect a child is at risk, they recommend an investigation. If that same individual then continues calling about the same person/family, and a report continues being unfounded, those calls are suspected of being malicious. The SCR places that caller's number on the malicious caller list. When that number comes up, it automatically is routed to supervisor. The supervisor identifies themselves as a supervisor, reminds the caller they are being recorded, and that false claims are misdemeanors, which may be investigated by the District Attorney (DA). Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) are also made aware of repetitive allegations/callers. The LDSS and DA can seek criminal investigations for malicious calls. The LDSS cannot refuse to take a report. The LDSS has jurisdiction and can reach out to an OCFS regional office for assistance. The regional office can review and move to the SCR to see if the caller meets the criteria to be placed on the malicious caller list.

Workforce Workgroup:

The Workforce Workgroup presented at the NYPWA summer conference and gave an overview of their purpose and next steps. The Department of Civil Service (DCS) discussed the importance of cooperation

between the LDSS and DCS. Counties expressed that continuous recruitment has been very helpful, and subject matter experts are being hired to identify if current testing refers to current job qualifications. A video has been created to recruit workers, and OCFS has also released an interactive map to help with recruitment, as well as a media toolkit. OCFS sent a survey to counties regarding recruitment efforts.

Home Visiting Funding:

OCFS did not know if additional funding being requested for Home Visiting. During the course of the meeting, Mr. Bach sent an email to appropriate executive staff to inquire about additional funding. CRP Annual Reports over the past 20 years have indicated that the State needs more funding for this program.

OCFS Staffing:

A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director is being hired by OCFS; this is a high-level position and should be filled shortly. There have been no changes to Governor's Social Services staff.

Title IV-E Funding:

There was a discussion regarding Title IV-E funds. The Panel feels it would be beneficial for the State to invest in a Title IV-E expert, who can demonstrate how other States utilize these funds.

Discussion with Dean Keith A. Alford, PhD., SUNY Buffalo

Panel Chair Linda Brown introduced Dean Keith A. Alford, PhD., SUNY Buffalo. Panel member Ellen Kennedy provided a historical perspective of the Western CRP and the Panels in general. Ms. Kennedy reviewed concerns/initiatives that the Panels have discussed and moved forward for years (home visiting, educational neglect, anonymous reporting, systemic changes in child welfare, poverty-related neglect, increasing preventive dollars, etc.).

Dean Alford thanked the Panel for the overview and hopes there can collaborative opportunities for the School of Social Work at SUNY Buffalo and the Panels. Dean Alford and the panel members discussed potential benefits of creating Title IV-E offices at universities to help enhance the funding for the education of the future child welfare workforce. The Dean and panel members also discussed strategies to strengthen relationships between the School and the community through groups/panels/boards.

Panel Chair Linda Brown thanked the Dean for participating in the meeting and hoped there will be other opportunities for collaboration in the near future.

Debrief

Jennifer Goldman, CRP Coordinator, provided an update on collaboration with Prevent Child Abuse NY and Assemblymember Hevesi to support the statewide expansion of Family Assessment Response. Assemblymember Hevesi is still interested in pursuing the expansion, and additional meetings will be scheduled in the future.

The Panel Members discussed possible topics for the upcoming Joint Meeting and 2021 Annual Report.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:30 a.m.

Next meetings: Joint CRP on October 14, 2021