

**(DRAFT) Washington County Citizen Review Panel for Child Protection
2017 Annual Committee Report**

Submitted by the Following Panel Members (listed in alphabetical order):

Terri Bottum
Jennifer Dailey
Deborah Ekberg
Key C. Green
Jan Hayne (chairperson)
Dawn Hyland
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Mission Statement: Citizens partnering with child protection services, advocating to keep children safe.

Meetings

With the exception of July, the monthly meetings were held on the third Tuesday of the month from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm at the Washington County Service Center in Woodbury. (In December we met on the second Tuesday to accommodate holiday conflicts). Several panel members attended additional meetings to represent the panel.

Overview

In 2017, we added one new younger member to the panel and lost three current members, two of them due to moves out of the county, bringing our total to 10 active panel members. We will be recruiting again in the new year, looking for people with background/experience in: child protection, teacher/educator, and/or sexual health. We'll also try to keep in mind gender and ethnic diversity.

Activities

Reconsiderations

The panel conducted 11 reconsiderations for the county in 2017.

Presentations

1. In April, the panel heard a presentation from John Nalezny, Child Service Supervisor, who explained the upcoming Foster Care Re-Entry file review that some CRP members assisted with. CRP involvement was similar to 2012, except that this was an electronic file review rather than a paper file review.
2. In April, Nissa Knutson and Sarah Amundson gave the CRP members a preview of the presentation they were going to make at the National CRP conference in May, sharing what works well in Minnesota with our CRP team and giving the panel an opportunity to share feedback.
3. In June, Corinne Castro, Director of Enrollment and Matching at Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities, gave an overview of their community based mentoring program that served 2,300 youth in 2016, with 4% of those youth from Washington County. She explained the extensive matching process, volunteer commitment, parental engagement, and focus on safety and college/career readiness. At that time, Washington County had 25 little brothers and 9 little sisters

waiting for a match, illustrating the special challenge in finding Big Brothers. The invite to present was extended to Corinne by a panel member as part of the mentorship/resource list work group.

4. In August, Kathryn Luk, Southeast Metro Regional Navigator/Youth Service Coordinator at Tubman, presented to the panel. She is one of 10 regional navigators created as part of the 2011 Safe Harbor Law that decriminalized youth involved as victims of sex trafficking, utilizing a “no wrong door” to services policy. Kathryn covers a population area of 2 million, including Anoka, Chisago, Isanti, Dakota, and Washington Counties. Trends include homelessness and friends conditioning friends. A sexually exploited youth (SEY) is anyone who trades sex for anything of value or a promise of anything of value, including status or popularity. The law also mandated SEY come into the system as child protection investigations. The CRP had a good discussion on a number of issues.
5. In September, Megan Roy, Permanency Supervisor, explained child protection permanency timelines and how her group works with families with a young child in out of home placement to either reunify the family or move the children into a permanency placement. They work with ideally 5 families, but currently closer to 8 cases, meeting with families weekly and going to court monthly. At that time there were 130+ kids in out of home placement, including those on a trial home visit (a good tool to help reduce reentries). The permanency file review project, which some CRP members assisted with, involved looking for stories behind the numbers: looking at cases that achieved permanency or not in the last year, and what were the differences. In the review there were 19 permanency cases: 4 adoptions finalized, 8 newly available for adoption, 6 transfers to family, and 1 permanent custody to the agency. A tool was created to review cases and provide access to electronic files looking for best practices, system barriers, and needed resources.

Ongoing Training

1. New panel member completed internal, county-specific training.
2. Panel members participated in a number of webinars regarding child protection issues during the year.
3. One panel member attended a presentation titled *Why is Minnesota Removing so Many Children to the Child Protection System*.
4. One panel member attended the *Critical Look at Children Who Sexually Abuse Other Children* workshop at William Mitchell School of Law in March. He shared highlights with the panel, including that the recidivism rate of children who sex offend and are treated is very low at 2.75%.
5. One panel member attended the County Prosecutor’s presentation on *Sex Trafficking* in March. She recommends looking at PolarisProject.org for additional information.
6. The panel reviewed and discussed the trends of a Child Services data sheet provided by Nissa Knutson at the March meeting.
7. A panel member participated in the National Citizen Review Panel webinar, *The Power of Community Awareness: Events and Ideas to Engage Others in CRP Work*, then led other panel members in a discussion using the elevator speech worksheet shared in the webinar.
8. Several panel members attended the State All-Member Annual Meeting held at the Service Center in Cottage Grove in November and heard presentations from parent leaders, child mortality review, children’s justice act, domestic violence, prenatal exposure to substance use, and child/youth sex and labor trafficking. Here is a link to Minnesota’s Best Practice Guide for Responding to Prenatal Exposure to Substance Abuse.
<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-7605-ENG>

9. At our October meeting, the panel watch a 4-minute video titled *What is Addiction* from the Addiction Policy Forum and discussed how addiction affects families in child protection. The video can be found online at <http://www.addictionpolicy.org/what-is-addiction>

Update on 2017 Special Projects

1. Foster care task force - Several panel members served on the task force for foster care recruitment. A logo and branding statement were created.



2. Foster care re-entry project/file review – See attachment 1 for a summary of this project prepared by John Nalezny. Several panel members assisted John with this project.
3. Permanency guidelines file review – Megan Roy will update the panel on the file review results they assisted with in early 2018.
4. Mentorship resource list/framework – A Big Brothers Big Sisters contact was developed and he will serve as a bridge with the county. There may be both individual and couple mentoring opportunities available and panel members may assist with raising community awareness.
5. Safe Harbor workgroup regarding sex trafficked youth – County doesn't have enough numbers to focus solely on sex-trafficked youth and will include them in a crossover youth model. We took this off our project list, but Sarah Amundson will continue to look for ways for panel members to be involved.

Donations

Starbucks/Caribou Gift Cards: Some panel members donated \$5.00 gift cards for the Truancy group to incentivize school attendance.

Planning for 2018

The panel is currently considering the following projects to focus on in 2018:

1. March – Social Worker Appreciation Month, attend staff meetings
2. April – Child Abuse Prevention Month, declaration, community outreach
3. Begin early planning to have a presence at the Washington County Fair by sharing a table with other county resources.
4. Possibly help with recruiting Big Brothers/Big Couples for youth mentoring.
5. Consider whether we can send a representative to the National CRP Conference in June and how the additional CRP monies from the state will be allocated for this or other CRP purposes.
6. CRP recruitment

The panel is currently awaiting information about the scope of each of the above projects so that we can make a decision of how to prioritize them. We will most likely divide into smaller workgroups to tackle as many of these as possible.

Attachment 1: Foster Care Re-entry File Review Charts