



Alaska Citizen Review Panel

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The Alaska Citizen Review Panel evaluates the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies for effectiveness in discharging their child protection responsibilities.

The Panel is mandated through CAPTA 1997 (P.L. 104-235), and enacted through AS 47.14.205.

For more information visit www.crpalaska.org.

Alaska Citizen Review Panel – Site Visit Fact Sheet

The Citizen Review Panel (CRP) is a federally mandated body that operates independently of the Office of Children’s Services (OCS) with the primary purpose of reviewing the policies, procedures, and practices of OCS. As Alaska’s designated child protection agency, OCS provides services through its 21 field offices distributed across the state. Efforts are underway to standardize practices, but they differ in many ways between regions and field offices. The ‘CRP site visit’ evolved as a primary tool to understand and assess local child protection practice in Alaska.

Each year, CRP aims to visit each of OCS’s five regions. Identifying gaps between current practice and stated policy and recommending improvements to help the CPS system be more community focused is a fundamental part of the Panel’s mission. During a site visit, Panel members consult with OCS staff and a broad array of their local partners and stakeholders to collect specific information on child protection practices, institutional relationships, and general public input on child protection in the region.

Definitions and Methods

4X4X4 Model: Each site visit focuses on one of the five regions, lasts no more than 4 days, does not have more than 4 members traveling, and does not cover more than 4 physical locations (communities).

Site: Each field office is a site. A site visit may include multiple field offices, and communities served by each field office. When visiting remote field offices, the Panel contacts the corresponding regional office to consult on relevant functions of the regional office, including regional intake and supervision.

Pre-Site Visit Report: Traveling members receive a report to help prepare for the site visit. Information about the region, major OCS partners, number of children in custody, staffing, organizational structure, and other relevant details are included in this report.

Consultations: All consultations are semi-structured interviews. At least two CRP members must be present at all consultations to ensure reliability of observations and facilitate notetaking. Consultations are structured to collect information on:

1. Status of the broader child protection practice in the region and OCS’s role in it, and
2. Topics related to that year’s CRP work plan goals.

Schedule: Hour-long meetings are scheduled with regional and local OCS staff and various partners and stakeholders for consultations.



Report & Follow-Up:

Site visit report: The Panel Chair and Coordinator will compile the final report with input from the traveling team and submit this to OCS state and regional leadership within 10 days of the site visit. This report includes:

- Consultations: Full list of all agencies consulted during site visit.
- Key observations, themes, and recommendations: Key observations are overall notes on local practice and views of partners, stakeholders, and recipients. Themes are major issues of practice that need closer examination. These are identified based on CRP goals in the year's work plan and other key issues emerging from consultations. Recommendations are focused on the site, and are for immediate action specific to the site.
- Context: A quick summary of the region's characteristics including the population, geography, field and regional offices, number of communities served by each field office, number of employees in the CPS system in each field office, average caseloads, number of out-of-home and in-home cases, Quality Assurance data, vacancy and turnover data, and any other pertinent details.

OCS debriefing: A debriefing session on the site visit report occurs with the OCS Director, Operations Manager, Region's CSM, and the field office supervisors at CRP's next monthly meeting with OCS. This provides an opportunity to ensure a common understanding of the observations and allows for clarifications. Necessary changes will be incorporated into the report within a week after the debriefing.

Follow up: Recommendations from each site visit report are listed in the annual report with any actual or planned action by OCS. Themes from each site visit inform the Annual Report recommendations.

Publishing the site visit report:

The final site visit report is posted on the CRP website and submitted to the Commissioner of the DHSS and the Director of OCS. The report is also submitted to the Chair of the Alaska House Health and Social Services Committee, requesting that it be forwarded to the members of the committee and all legislators of the region visited.

