



Alaska Citizen Review Panel

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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

CRP Quarterly Teleconference, December, 2015

Teleconference Summary

1. **Introductions of CRP Members:** Chair Diwakar K. Vadapalli, Jen Burkmire, Donna Aguiniga, Rebecca Vale, Joshua Stein, Bettyann Steciw.
2. Diwakar welcomed Joshua Stein from Barrow as the newest CRP member
3. **October Minutes** were approved.
4. **Guest Presentation** by Representative Tammy Wilson, District 3, North Pole.
 - Constituents contacted her office about a year ago, feeling unfairly treated by OCS. She and her staff began looking into OCS processes.
 - After a long legal process to access the large case files to better understand the situation, staff looked most closely at information on emergency hearings, safety plans and contact plans. 21 of 31 cases had no signatures. 18 of 22 cases had only one contact plan. 24 of 28 cases were emergency hearings. There were very few times where safety plans were done first. The OCS Manual is about 1000 pages long. There are 102 forms.
 - New case workers usually start over with their cases because they cannot follow the existing information to learn the case history of where the family started, where they are now and what should happen next.
 - Kenai has a model that is worth looking at more closely. Representative Wilson plans to visit Kenai and learn more about it. Judges take on these cases and bring in OCS workers, guardian ad litem, and parents. Everyone gets to speak and all are accountable to the judge. They meet more often, with everyone knowing what will happen next. This area of the state has highest reunification rate and OCS employees have lower turnover. Frontloading the process seems to produce better results.
 - Representative Wilson hopes the CRP will review case files to determine if necessary signatures are in place and if there is a clearly written pathway for additional visitations and reunification. Diwakar stated that CRP has been interested in this but does not have the necessary resources at this time.
 - Representative Wilson is working with Christie Lawton from OCS on these concerns. They are discussing the volume of forms and whether there is a better way for case workers to efficiently learn case histories to reduce transition time. Representative Wilson is also asking OCS if all children can be treated the same without differentiating between Alaska Native and non-native.

5. IRB review next year

The goal to get foster parent perspectives included writing vignettes to capture foster parent experiences. Given the timeline, it is not possible to have these ready before the next site visit. Maybe we consider doing similar things for next year.

6. Website committee

Rebecca and Joshua are willing to go through the website soon to offer feedback, edits and changes. Jess will share analytics and work with Information Insights staff to help prioritize changes that can be done while a past employee with a lower billing rate is available over the holidays. (Diwakar noted that the contact page first asks if someone has a problem with OCS – which isn't the focus of CRP)

7. Potential for CRP to conduct the annual employee survey

Background and request: Diwakar teaches a research class that takes on a community project each year. OCS is interested in the research class tackling the annual employee survey but has not walked through all of the logistics yet. This could be done under the auspice of CRP as the client or OCS could be the client. There are benefits to having a 3rd party as responsible for a survey, however this is only possible as long as Diwakar is on the CRP. Does the CRP want the survey under their auspice?

Discussion summary:

Although two CRP members thought the idea had merit, they asked what the role of CRP would be, and if there is any potential conflict of interest for Diwakar in terms of grading. Diwakar plans to look at these questions more closely, talk with Travis from OCS regarding the requirements and mentioned that this could be done one year to see if it should continue in future years. Diwakar will get back to CRP.

8. Goal updates:

1st Goal: Bettyann reported that lots of issues came up at the last meeting, however the challenge is having someone work on the issues that are raised. For example, in her region, there is lots of talk re: 4E funding and tribal courts. However, smaller tribes will find it nearly impossible because of the staffing demands to work through 4E paperwork. Most don't have title 4 developed to the point of qualifying. The tribal/state group is getting back on their feet again.

2nd goal: Jen and Rebecca are collecting information and will start prioritizing with the work year and calendar and then look at membership and meetings.

3rd goal: Foster care focus: meeting last week with director of the AK Center for Resource Families. Both are very interested in vignettes and see their usefulness in their training materials. CRP needs to discuss how this is done before next site visit.

4th goal: admin reviews: Diwakar, Bettyann will look at OCS member to present to us at our next meeting.

8. Public comment: Travis Erickson, OCS found this session informative and thanked CRP.

9. Other business:

- CRP members like the revised logo. Information Insights will start changing all communication.
- Anchorage site visit is January 14, 15. Diwakar, Rebeca and Bettyann will do this visit.
- Next teleconference with OCS is Tuesday, December 8th. Bettyann will be unable to attend.
- Goal leaders were reminded that Information Insights is available to provide support. Contact Jess.

