



Citizens Review Panel 2020-2021 Annual Workplan Retreat

Meeting Notes

Part 1: August 13, 2020

MEETING ATTENDEES

Sonya Hull - CRP Interim Chair

Cameron Adams - CRP member

Mariah Seater - CRP member

Natalie Norberg - Director, OCS

Tandra Donahue – OCS

Denali Daniels – DDA (Coordinator)

Elizabeth Shea, DDA (Coordinator)

INTRODUCTION

- DDA team will continue coordination of the CRP, Denali will be the main contact for both panel members and OCS.
- Meetings will continue to be held remotely, mainly through Zoom or by phone.
- Regular office hours will continue to be Monday thru Friday from 9-11AM.

OCS DIRECTOR NATALIE NORBERG

- **NEW CRP RULES AND REGULATIONS:**
 - The Lt. Governor has signed off on the new CRP regulations, now is a good time for CRP to think about drafting the panel's new policies and procedures.
- **PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN:**
 - Updated the CRP on details of the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) that OCS is under from the federal government. The PIP is a 2-year obligation, there are numbers that OCS has to meet in order to meet the goals mutually set with the federal government. If improvements are made or targets not reached there are financial consequences and being under the PIP is an administrative burden for OCS staff.

- The PIP goals have been incorporated in to the 5-year statewide strategic plan that OCS developed.
- OCS would like the panel members to understand where their energies are going while they are under the PIP and Natalie hopes the CRP's recommendations and workplan goals can better align with the areas they are focusing on like staff retention, local hire at regional/local offices, and child safety benchmarks.
- **CRP AND OCS ALIGNMENT:**
 - OCS suggested that the panel incorporate some of the PIP concerns into site visits; one specific example would be for the panel to conduct focus groups in the Nome area to ascertain levels of local involvement and how to increase OCS resident hire and retention levels.
 - Hopes that the CRP can have a more targeted focus during their site visits and something that could help OCS with more specific issues, especially ones they are required to address under the PIP. If strategies or activities need to be adapted mid-stream, the feds could work with OCS.
- **CRP BUDGET:**
 - The OCS budget was passed with cuts to specific line items, including to the CRP budget. The budget will be \$75000, down from \$100,000.
- **NEW TASK FORCE:**
 - Shared that there is the new Task Force in the Governor's Office. The Task Force will likely be reaching out to the CRP as a stakeholder group.
 - The Task Force is focusing on foster care, and they have been/will be looking at a more granular level at things like licensing, training, and support for foster families. This wasn't in the PIP so OCS is appreciative that the Task Force can do some work in this area.
- **OCS/CRP MONTHLY MEETINGS:**
 - OCS leadership wants to continue monthly consultations with the CRP; the panel will discuss timing and member calendars and set up time slots for this meeting on a regular basis.

PANEL ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES, LEADERSHIP

- **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**
 - Panel has discussed developing policies and procedures in previous meetings, but they haven't been able to address this because the State's rules and regulations have been in flux. Now is the time to develop a plan for these.
 - This set of policies would discuss what each panel member would do, what the requirements were for each panel member, and what they sign on for when they join the panel.

- The CRP for many years has been led by one person who does all of the work. Could responsibilities be more spread out among panel members? This may cause role ambiguity and things falling through the cracks.
- **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**
 - Panel could develop one-pagers on each of the leadership roles as well as panel member responsibilities; have members who commit to certain requirements and agree to the terms of membership through a signature at the bottom.
 - Could there be a chair and vice-chair position that shared some responsibility? The panel needs to have a work session to discuss in earnest the full responsibilities at the officer level and the decision-making process.
 - Sonya volunteered to develop a draft “roles and responsibilities” document for the panel to review as a starting point.
- **MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS:**
 - There are many things in the new regs that dictate how the panel should be structured and what the membership requirements are; previous discussions about rules and regs were more advisory in nature, not that the “panel must.”
 - One thing that that the panel had pushed back against earlier was that the OCS Director had to approve members and that the panel should consult with Director before approving any members.
 - In terms of site visits, it shouldn’t just fall on the chair and vice-chair to complete site visits. However, these are particularly hard to work into people’s schedules.
 - Other tasks and goals on the workplan may have to be shifted in order to tackle the roles and responsibilities document, this will lead into all other decisions and/or goals.
- **QUESTIONS FOR OCS:**
 - With the term limits that are outlined in the new rules and regs, some existing panel members would not be eligible to continue on the panel; the panel needs to address these questions to OCS; a request should be made that someone from OCS with knowledge of these issues attend the next meeting to answer questions about the new regs.
 - #5 in the policy requirements (RE data access) doesn’t make sense to panel members and needs clarification. Who could panel speak with on OCS staff to clarify the implementation of the new regs?

2020-2021 ANNUAL WORK PLAN

- **TRACKING PROGRESS:**
 - How would implementation of long-range strategic plan be best tracked? The coordinator is establishing a tracking document that will be used to track progress at quarter CRP meetings. This would allow panel to track progress and to course

correct well before the annual meeting, and updates will already be clearly known by the time the annual report is developed.

- **YEAR ONE GOALS:**

- It was agreed that panel members would look back through year one goals and carry any through to year two; if desired.

- **QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS:**

- Questions about the goals and the process to address in the next meeting:
 - Will these goals/activities guide the site visits, guide what we are going to be doing?
 - Who is the workplan for? Is it for the CRP or is it for OCS – is it what we are doing or is it what we are asking OCS to do?
 - There seems to be a difference between how the workplan is now structured and how it was previously structured, namely the focus on OCS seems less direct.
 - How can we align this with OCS's priorities?
 - Where is the line between OCS and CRP priorities?
 - How much do we want to go along with what OCS is asking?

- **ALIGNMENT WITH OCS:**

- The enduring priorities that we developed were already aligned with OCS's goals, but these were things that nobody wants to talk about when we went out on site visits. There are already a lot of priorities that align with the PIP, we have already tried to incorporate what they are already doing.

- **ANNUAL WORKPLAN DISCUSSION:**

- Moving on to the annual workplan, discussion of the goal areas and what the panel developed in the long-range strategic plan; review these and discuss if these are still panel priorities, and what might be added.

GOAL AREA: *Reciprocal engagement*

- **Share reunified success stories, identify champions who helped families with their journey-**
 - This was around the desire to reflect what OCS was doing well; what did these families have in common, and OCS could then promote these with other families.
 - Identify families engaged with OCS that have successfully reunified, but it has been difficult to find families during site visits to engage with. OCS clients who want to engage is difficult and it is a tall order.

- Recognize challenge of engaging families but continue to include in goals for pre-site visit.
- Some of these will be responsibility of the Coordinator.
- **Expand site visit list to alternative schools, key family services tribal leaders**
 - Definitely want to expand site visits to alternative schools and key family services and tribal leaders
 - add this step to pre-site visit planning process that they consider alternative locations.

GOAL AREA: Collaborative relationship with OCS

- Discussion about reviewing the PIP and attempt to incorporate/align goals.
- Should the CRP participate in the OCS focus groups? In the end this was not added as a task in the workplan, however OCS may request CRP participation.

Part 2: August 27, 2020

MEETING ATTENDEES

Sonya Hull - CRP Interim Chair

Cameron Adams - CRP member

Lucinda Williams – CRP member

Denali Daniels – DDA (Coordinator)

Elizabeth Shea, DDA (Coordinator)

Site Visit Planning –

- Legislative presentation didn't happen this year due to COVID-19; the national CRP convention in Ohio was cancelled and hasn't yet been rescheduled.
- In spring of 2020 site visit meetings through Zoom with Nome and Ketchikan were attempted, however at the time local stakeholders seemed occupied with COVID and scheduling did not come together despite efforts. We would like to continue exploring the use of technology in future site visits, this may allow more panel members to participate.
- There was discussion about how the CRP meets goals of workplan in assessing performance of OCS if there is no travel to communities. How many is the minimum number that would allow for assessment?

2020-21 Site Visits

- There was agreement that two site visits is not enough to form recommendations
- It was agreed that the CRP would not do an Anchorage site visit and this may give them some breathing room with PIP activities.

- The CRP will not proceed with Nome, there has been turnover, a site visit with transient staff may not be as productive.
- Agreed upon three site visits:
 - One on the road system (Kenai)
 - Dillingham (office has a lot of resources, collateral contacts)
 - One in Southeast (Ketchikan). Possibly combine with legislative trip, though legislative presentation could be virtual.
- Other discussion about site visits:
 - Keep the visits to one overnight rather than three.
 - Delay traveling until spring 2021 until things calm down from COVID-19.
 - Combine physical travel with technology, noting that exclusively using technology of phones with villages can be hit or miss.
- In January the CRP will revisit the site visit schedule and list of locations; there will be more information and the panel can do some more detailed planning. The Coordinator can also research travel costs in preparation for this discussion.

New regulations

- There are a lot of questions about the new CRP regulations from OCS.
- While some of the background with past panel members and the regulations isn't clear, what emerged seems very prescriptive. There is a focus on membership that may become a barrier for participation of current members, and recruitment and participation may be a challenge.
- There was discussion that the regulations seem to take more control over the CRP rather than making it a more independent organization.
- There were questions about consequences for not following the regulations, with agreement that the panel will do the best they can to be mindful of the new requirements, there is speculation that implementation may not be possible.
- The panel would like to communicate with someone at OCS who is knowledgeable about how the regs work and to address some of these questions.
- There is a directive that the CRP develop a set of policies and procedures, this is a lot of work and could stretch capacity in relation to other work.
- In terms of recruitment, there are added steps, what does this look like in practice – many of these practical operational questions need to be clarified.
- The coordinator will develop a list of questions, with panel input for discussion at the September OCS teleconference.

Roles & Responsibilities document

- A draft document of policies and procedures was presented and discussed.

- This version doesn't specify instructions around site visits – need to keep it very general so as not to limit the CRP's functioning and ability to be flexible according to location and cultural/geographical considerations.
- Review and discussion about the code of conduct for how the panel conducts itself, both on site visits and public behavior.
- Review and discussion about the 65% attendance requirement – anything lower doesn't encourage the panelists to participate; the panel's expectations aren't high enough right now; we don't expect enough out of our panelists.
- In the past it has been easy to not come to meetings and to not be prepared, this was due to the chair being a strong leader and taking on a majority of the work that was done by the panel. Things need to change, and responsibility needs to be shared.
- If new regs are followed, then CRP needs to do an inventory of membership; there also needs to be a recruitment strategy according to the guidelines. It is important for the current panel to know where it stands and what it needs to do in terms of membership.
- There will be a matrix for the panelists to review and to identify which categories they fit in to, this would lead to a more targeted recruitment strategy.
- Recruitment is a high priority; and should be led by panel members with support from the coordinators.
- Coordinator could put together a recruitment flyer; a short description of membership with a link to the application. Current members could send out to their contacts; try to get membership from specific sectors. Coordinators could handle the application process once the member is recruited and could facilitate interviews and approval process for panel leadership and prepare for approval by OCS.
- The document contains a list of positions; has 3 executive roles: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. CRP hasn't had role of secretary before but having 3 members of executive team would distribute responsibility more evenly.
- Discussion about clarifying the time commitment– especially for the Chair position. Precedent that has been set by the past two chairs has been a huge time commitment and there has been resistance to filling this position.
- Could there be a less formal document that outlines the duties of the chair at meetings, in-between meetings, and beyond? Information that would be helpful in order to know what they Chair is committing to; what is needed to prepare for the role.
- Panel can also redefine this role, they have the ability to describe this role and change the precedent.
- The coordinators will take the draft procedures document, and cross-walk with the regulations, making recommendations on the document and also identifying questions about the regulations that need to be asked.

Site Visit Reporting:

- There was discussion about site visit reports, in practice, often fall to the Chair to complete because the chair has typically participated in all site visits. In the past the coordinator has been instructed not to produce site visit reports, however this role has been inevitable as more panel members participate in site visits without the chair.
- It was suggested that the site visit report function might be a deterrent for panel members to participate in site visits due to the workload. Panelists would be more interested in leadership roles if the coordinator took on more responsibility for writing reports and doing some of the heavy lifting.
- It was also requested that the coordinator could assist in developing a more streamlined format for site visit reports.
- During orientation of new panel members, it should be made clear that writing site visit reports is a responsibility.
- Panelists could adapt a living document each year according to the workplan; the questions each year could be specifically tailored to the outcomes being tracked and would have guiding questions. These would align with the domains that are in the strategic plan.
- Because the site visits are not until the spring, this year these questions will be developed after the work plan is developed. Starting in year three, an outcome of the annual retreat and work plan will be to develop these questions.

Orientation and Panel “Handbook:”

- With Zoom, it opens up some tools to use in the interview process; the note-taking role could be designated to Coordinator instead of the panelists. Especially if we are recording meetings, the Coordinator team could leverage the role and take on more of the responsibility during the site visit meetings.
- In the past there has been a panelist handbook – this would be more of an internal document rather than public facing rules and regulations.
- Sections could be included to outline travel, public notices, etc. drawing from past operating documents.
- This should also include coordinator responsibilities, so there is consistency into the future.

Crosswalk/Next Steps for policies and procedures

- Coordinator will do a crosswalk with the regulations; see where there is agreement and where any gaps or disconnects are.
- Coordinator will work on a section for coordinator requirements and duties.
- Don’t get too detailed, don’t regurgitate information that is in the regulations.
- DRAFT policies and procedures document can be vetted for discussion an potential adoption at the October quarterly meeting.

2020 – 2021 Workplan:

- Transition activities and the P&P process could be incorporated in to the workplan – honor the amount of work that this will take and how important it is to address these things.
- Healthy CPS system priority area is where the overall OCS goals are outlined, and starting here may help address some of the confusion about not emphasizing the OCS focus in the workplan.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA - Healthy CPS system:

- What does “open for services” mean, where did this priority or item come from?
- Input is that it refers to families that had cases but didn’t have children removed; how could removal be prevented in these situations. What exactly did “open for services” mean in terms of resources and availability of services; what was the parent responsibility.
- CRP asked that someone from OCS explain what this term means – this could be a question at one of the future meetings with OCS. Could OCS provide training or briefing on “open for services,” follow up with Travis so see where this was left.
- For “OCS and community partner communication” – would need to interview both parties about what the barriers to communication are. Can be asked during site visits; can include this component in site visit questions.
- Merge “Identify models that focus on prevention of removal” with the “open for services” action item; once definition is known there can be more detailed plan to explore models for prevention.
- One action item – that the CRP remain independent from OCS. This might be better under the Collaborative relationship priority.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA: Collaborative Relationship with OCS

- Important that the CRP remain independent from OCS.
- Could transition steps be put here; transition work be documented and included in workplan.
- Document “Lessons Learned” in annual report.
- Be mindful of where OCS is working well with partners – intent behind priority area.
- Maybe add a section in annual report on lessons learned. This could satisfy the requirement.
- What does “document improvements in OCS workspace mean?” How can we talk about the improvements and meet these requirements in the report? Does this mean that the CRP will advocate for OCS workers in improving their workspaces? It was agreed that through site visits there have been physical work space issues identified and later addressed.

- Priority in year 3 is to improve access to CRP through promoting contact from the OCS workers. How can the CRP be more accessible?
- Panelists agreed with goals that are currently in Year two.
- Add an action that “OCS and the CRP will maintain respectful autonomy”

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA: Public Outreach

- It was requested that business cards with the website information and that can be written on—current card stock is difficult to write on.
- All the goals in year two require hands-on panel participation and panel member time. Does this mean that there is attendance at the gatherings, or does it mean something like a table at the events?
- Tribal agencies, ICWA workers don’t have any information on the CRP; what would be helpful in order to increase knowledge about CRP.
- Suggestion that there be a thumbnail on conference pages or websites that deal with child welfare.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA: CRP Education and Development:

- Confirm that OCS will still provide CRP with numbers and data.
- Discussion about what is meant by tribal system training? There have been previous conversations with YKHC worker about cultural trainings that included history, trauma, current realities, traditional medicine, parenting.
- The tasks were agreed upon, however the actual training/events still need to be identified.

Next Steps:

- Coordinator will develop the DRAFT workplan for review, modification and approval via email. For activities that require panel participation, these will be identified once the document is approved.