



Citizen Review Panel
District of Columbia

ANNUAL REPORT

MAY 1, 2025 TO APRIL 30, 2026

GRANT#S

DCRL-2022-U-0092 - FY 2024-2025

DCRL-2022-U-0093 - FY 2025-2026

SUBMITTED BY :

Margie Chalofsky, CRP Facilitator

DATE :

May 29, 2026

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Grant# DCRL-2022-U-0093

Citizen Review Panel Final Annual Report

Period of Report: May 1, 2025 – April 30, 2026

Submitted by Margie Chalofsky, CRP Facilitator

I. Introduction/Overview

DC's Citizen Review Panel was established through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and DC Code: § 4-1303.51 established the DC-CRP. This report serves as the Annual report for the FY 2025-2026 grant year, which will end on June 30, 2026.

The current facilitation team- Margie Chalofsky (Facilitator) and Toni Carr (Administrative Support) - are independent contractors. Grant funds are distributed to Margie Chalofsky who put them into a separate bank account strictly for CRP funds. This account is managed by Toni Carr who provides bi-monthly updates to Andrew Miller, the panel Treasurer.

This report will discuss, among other things,

- Current financial status
- Panel membership and recruitment
- Workgroups
- Meetings
- Relationship with CFSA
- Accomplishments
- Challenges
- Next steps

II. Grant expenditures to date and the remaining budget

For this reporting period, this financial report includes the fourth quarter of the previous grant year (May and June 2025) and the first, second and third quarters, (July, August, September 2025) (October, November, and December 2025) and (January, February March, and April 2026) of our current grant year, DCRL-2022-U0093 - FY 2025-2026.

Previous grant year: DCRL-2022-U-0093 (May, June 2025)

The initial amount of \$50,000 was awarded for this grant year. Full payment has been received. The first invoice in the amount of \$37,192.65 was received on August 19, 2024, and the second and final payment for this period was received on February 5, 2025, in the amount of \$12,807.35. Due to an error, an additional \$37,192.65 was paid, making the total payment on February 5, 2025, \$50,000. The amount of \$37,192.65 was paid early for the FY 25-26. The total expenditures for May through June 30, 2025, were \$7,669.12.

May 2025 - The total cost for personnel salaries: \$3749.99, Supplies/Printing & Technology, \$10.00 and Website/Update and Maintenance expenditures totaling \$131.57. The total expenditure for this period was \$3891.56.

June 2025 - The total cost for personnel salaries: \$37499.99 Supplies/Printing & Technology, \$10.00, and Website/Update and Maintenance expenditures totaled \$17.57. The total cost for the month of June 2025 was \$3,777.56.

The year-to-date expenditure for this contract totaled \$45,952.14.

The remaining balance of \$4,047.86 was approved to purchase gift cards in the amounts of \$1000.00 for Other Working Group Activities, and \$900.00 for Community Forum. An additional amount of \$2,147.86 was approved

to be carried over to FY25-26. This includes \$1,450.00 for the National Conference, \$166.78 for Salaries, \$204.16, Website Maintenance, \$158.28 Meetings/Retreats, \$157.00 for Indirect cost, and \$11.64 Supplies.

Current Grant Year: DCRL-2022-U-0093 - FY 2025-2026

The initial amount of \$50,000 was awarded for this grant year. For this reporting period, this financial report includes the grant period of May 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026. Funds in the amount of \$37,192.65 were received early during previous fiscal year on February 5, 2025, and the second and final funds in the amount of \$12,807.35 were received for this period on December 9, 2025. A balance of \$2,147.86 from FY 24-25 was approved by CFSA to be carried over to FY 25-26.

First Quarter (July, August, September 2025)

During this fiscal quarter, our expenditure was \$11,249.97 for personnel and fringe benefits, \$195.30 for supply costs which include \$164.70 for annual Zoom renewal fee, \$30.90 for Zoom- extra cloud storage. There was \$52.71 for website and maintenance, \$58.52 for meeting and retreat cost (team building event) and \$360.30 for other work group activities (team building event.) The total expenditure for this reporting period was \$11,916.80 with a remaining balance of \$38,083.20 which includes the second drop of \$12,807.35 which has not been invoiced for to date.

Second Quarter (October, November, December 2025)

During this fiscal quarter, our expenditure was \$11,249.97 for personnel and fringe benefits, \$30.90 for supply costs for Zoom additional cloud storage, and \$52.71 for website and maintenance. The total expenditure for this reporting period was \$11,333.58 with a remaining balance of \$26,749.62, which includes the second drop of \$12,807.35.

Third Quarter (January, February, March 2026)

During this fiscal quarter, our expenditure was \$11,249.97 for personnel and fringe benefits, \$30.90 for supply costs for Zoom- extra cloud storage. There was \$57.71 for website and maintenance, which includes an increase of \$2.50 per month starting February 2026. \$67.62 for meeting and retreat cost, \$1600 for CRP National Conference (Airfare/Travel for two members). The total cost of air travel was \$1692 and \$92.00 was taken from other workgroup activities for travel. The year-to-date expenditure for FY25-26 is \$36,348.56. The total expenditure for this third quarter reporting period is \$13,098.20 with a remaining balance of \$13,651.42.

Fourth Quarter (April 2026)

During the writing of this report, this quarter only includes the month of April 2026. Our expenditure was \$3,749.99 for personnel and fringe benefits, \$10.30 for supply costs for Zoom - extra cloud storage and \$20.07 for website and maintenance, The total expenditure for this reporting period is \$3780.36.

The total expenditure for FY25-26 to date is \$40,128.94 and a remaining balance of \$9871.06.

III. Panel membership and recruitment

This year, panel membership remained stable, and no members transitioned off the panel. Additionally last May we added three new members on the Mayoral side, bringing our panel membership to (13) out of (15) possible members. (This was previously reported on in our last report due to the extension in the 2025 reporting period.)

We are pleased that membership changes have calmed down. The panel members have discussed the specific needs we want to address in recruitment of new members. We would like to recruit a bio parent with lived experience with CFSA. We have also identified that another area we should be looking at are members who have current employment that could be related to CRP work, especially research and data.

Currently, we have two openings on the Mayoral side. We have communicated with MOTA that due to current needs, we are ready to fill these two current vacancies and will hold the next one open for a bio parent.

There are two applicants currently in the Mayoral pipeline and we are interested in them both. It is, however, very challenging how long the MOTA process always takes to move forward. One of the perspective members was referred to MOTA by the Facilitator because she was recommended by a panel member. We were told that in that case a formal interview was not required and we are waiting for MOTA to move forward on her appointment. The other perspective member has not yet been interviewed. We are waiting for MOTA to move forward on this next stage of the process.

CRP maintains an official roster to document and track the demographic status of panel members. Information is available by request on the names, email addresses, city wards, and dates of approval by either MOTA or resolution by the DC City Council.

Panel Leadership consists of:

- Chair- Pierrea Wallace (appointed by Mayor)
- Vice-Chair- Elizabeth Mohler (appointed by Council)
- Treasurer- Andrew Miller (appointed by Council)

Other current panel members are:

- Shana Bartley (appointed by Council)
- Emily Bloomfield (appointed by Mayor)
- Theresa Gibson (appointed by Mayor)
- Deborah Kale (appointed by Mayor)
- Meg Marcelli (appointed by Mayor)
- Whitney Miller (appointed by Council)
- Dr. Tyra Moore (appointed by Council)
- Amanda Quiroz-Guajardo (appointed by Mayor)
- Dr. Wanda Thompson (appointed by Mayor)
- Carolyn Woods (appointed by Council)

Demographic data documents the following:

- Eleven female and two male members.
- Ward membership: One member from Ward (1); Two members from Ward (2); One member from Ward (3); One member from Ward (4); Two members from Ward (5); One member from Ward (6); One member from Ward (7); and Four members from Ward (8).
- There are two members who were former DC foster youth.
- There are three DC foster/adoptive parents
- There is one DC kinship parent
- Other members are professionals in related fields

IV. WORKGROUPS

The panel has three standing work groups as well as a Public Outreach committee that was established last year. We are pleased that, despite a year of many personal challenges for members and the Facilitator team, each work group has made significant progress.

Prevention workgroup

CRP Members: Elizabeth Mohler, Amanda Quiroz-Guajardo, Whitney Miller, Emily Bloomfield

Community members: Patrick Foley, Chrissy Weeks

The purpose of the Prevention workgroup's project is to better understand how mandated reporters in Washington, DC experience the child abuse and neglect reporting process, particularly when their reports are screened out by CFSA. The findings will inform the CRP's evaluation of CFSA screening policies and practices and support prevention strategies for at-risk families who do not enter the formal system.

Research questions posed by this project are:

- What are mandated reporters' perceptions of the reporting process, especially in relation to screened-out calls?
- How confident do they feel in identifying reportable concerns?
- Do they receive adequate feedback after submitting a report?
- What barriers or frustrations do they face when engaging with the system?
- What recommendations do they have to strengthen prevention or support for families that are screened out?

The work group spent significant time working on refining their project to be most effective and gathering information that would be useful to CFSA. As part of the process of refining the project over this past year, workgroup members met with CFSA for input as well as with the DC Ombudsperson's Office for Children to align our work with their research on the screened-out calls. The final survey is at this link:

[Mandated Reporters' Experiences with the CFSA Hotline Screening Process Survey.](#)

As we write this report, the first launch is taking place which is to distribute the survey to CRP panel members to send to one of their networks using any of the varied templates that the group developed. Simultaneously, the revised data request has been sent to CFSA. The group expects that some of the data requested may actually not be captured, which we anticipate will become one of our recommendations.

Anticipated outcomes from this project include:

- Better understanding of front-line reporter experience
- Recommendations for improving communication and training
- Insights into prevention opportunities for families screened out
- Contribution to CRP's policy oversight role and 2026 annual report

Youth Aging Out (YAO) workgroup

CRP Members: Theresa Gibson (Chair), Carolyn Woods, Deborah Kale, Andy Miller, Meg Marcelli.

Community member: Rick Bardach

The Youth Aging Out (YAO) workgroup's project is based upon the premise is that a comprehensive approach to services for Youth Aging Out of foster care must be interdependent and collectively contribute to the overall well-being and stability of the youth. The work group acknowledges that success in one area, such as housing, is often closely tied to success in other areas

like education, mental health, and community integration; however, recognizing the CRP's capacity as a volunteer organization and the need to focus on a manageable project, the YAO work group is specifically studying factors related to homelessness that impact the District's YAO.

Utilizing youth and foster parent surveys, the project is comparing the identification of the programs offered by CFSA with the extent to which these programs are known by the older youth community being served as well as by their resource parents. The group also plans to determine national best practices utilized by other jurisdictions to prevent homelessness among youth aging out of foster care and to examine the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA's) approach to homeless prevention services for YAO as it relates to those best practices.

The work group is aware that data available to them relates only to youth still in care and therefore the study cannot look at longitudinal outcomes regarding homelessness. The work group is also aware that to interview youth under 18 would require parental consent. Thus, research will be focused on youth ages 18-21, still in CFSA's care or recently out of care.

YAO is at an exciting time in implementation. Youth surveys have been distributed to GAL's at Children's Law Center to give to their youth, and members have arranged to hold two events in the summer to administer surveys in person. One event will be with CFSA's Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE) and the other with DC Family and Youth Initiative (DCFYI). Gift cards are given to youth who completed surveys. From these three events, the group hopes to yield 50 completed surveys.

If they do not reach their goal, other avenues such as congregate care settings will be explored for opportunities. [\(Link to Youth Survey Here\)](#)

Members are currently reaching out to foster parent networks to administer those surveys. ([Link to Resource Parent Survey Here](#)) It is the plan to have all surveys administered by the end of the summer.

YAO thanks OYE for their willingness to partner with panel members for this event, and their openness to learning about CRP findings and recommendations from this project.

Family Time: Family Visitation During CFSA Involvement

Panel members: Pierrea Wallace (Chair), Dr. Wanda Thompson, Dr. Tyra Moore

The Family Time Workgroup continues to make steady progress on its research project, with advancements in both the case file review and focus group components of the project.

As part of the case file review process, the workgroup examined an initial case identified and provided by CFSA to ensure that its research tools aligned with the type and scope of information CFSA is able to share. CFSA has since provided additional requested case files for review. The Family Time Workgroup is actively reviewing these materials and refining its methodology for collecting and analyzing data based on the information available and the format in which the records were produced.

Concurrently, the workgroup has finalized its focus group materials. Focus groups will be conducted with five key child welfare stakeholders to gather diverse perspectives on family time for children in out-of-home care: birth parents, guardians *ad litem*, social workers, parents' counsel, and neglect court judges. The workgroup has completed its consent forms, screening tools, and focus group questions and is now scheduling specific dates for sessions with these stakeholder groups.

Public Outreach committee

CRP Members: Pierrea Wallace (Chair), Dr. Wanda Thompson, Theresa Gibson, Amanda Quiroz-Guajardo

The Public Outreach Committee continues to meet monthly to plan a community session and develop materials to introduce the CRP to the public.

The committee is focused on three key areas:

- Educating the community about the CRP,
- Creating accessible opportunities for public engagement, and
- Establishing a structured process for collecting and incorporating public feedback.

The CRP has developed a framework for its first community outreach meeting, which will include: an overview of the Citizens Review Panel, updates from workgroups, a public feedback discussion, and an introduction to ongoing ways for community members to collaborate.

This year, two CRP members will be attending the National Conference in June. They will be looking to bring back ideas from other jurisdictions as to how they engage community input to integrate into our planning.

V. Meetings

Meetings have remained virtual per member preference. They are held every other month on the second Tuesday from 7:00 pm -8:30 pm. In order to build teamwork and collaboration on the virtual platform, the facilitators initiated a “member sharing” portion of many of our regular meetings. During this short portion, individual members have the opportunity to share things about themselves that they would like others to know, professional experiences, family life, interests, other activities, etc. In addition, each year we try to plan in-person events with the purpose of bringing members together. This year we held two dinners and one brunch for members to

choose from. Each was very successful and fulfilled their purpose for building connections.

VI. Relationship with CFSA

The programmatic relationship with CFSA has been going very well. Our terrific contract monitor, Roni Seabrook, continues to work closely with us to ensure that we get the information we need. Programmatic staff have worked collaboratively with panel members to help refine projects so that they can be the most relevant and have shown interest in learning about the findings that will come from our research. Additionally, CFSA's Office of Youth Empowerment has agreed to partner with the CRP Youth Aging Out work group to host an event this summer that will give an opportunity for older youth to participate in the YAO survey.

There have been, however, non- programmatic challenges in our relationship that need mention, specifically in the realm of confusion around bureaucratic requirements that are burdensome to volunteers. Last year, we reported on a financial disclosure requirement from BEGA that took tremendous time and energy for the facilitators and panel members to address, only to find out at the last minute that it was a mistaken guidance. Although BEGA is outside of CFSA, the ripple effect needed to be carefully managed by the facilitator and contract monitor to ensure that it didn't impact that working relationship.

This year we went through a related situation. In January, members were suddenly told by CFSA that they needed FBI clearances (at their own cost). This requirement did not correlate with the scope of their work activities; would have caused significant delay in projects; and was out of alignment with the requirements of others in various roles throughout the city. Our CFSA monitor and her supervisor successfully intervened on our behalf. We are very grateful for that successful intervention and the revised guidance; however, repeated misinformed requests to jump through hoops that don't

align with the tasks at hand can leave volunteers questioning whether the District really values their involvement in this work.

As stated above, our CFSA monitor Roni Seabrook continues to be a very strong liaison who understands the importance of the CRP and CFSA being independent from each other, while still maintaining a collaborative partnership.

VII. Accomplishments

Accomplishments this year include:

- Most significantly, workgroups have all moved into the implementation stage and have established timelines for completion
- New panel members oriented and participating in their chosen workgroups
- Panel membership, leadership and facilitator team remain stable
- With newer members on board, workgroups increased their internal capacities and teamwork has been strong
- Panel members met with CFSA Director Tanya Trice and the DC Ombudsperson for Children's Office (OFC)
- Youth Aging Out workgroup partnered with Children's Law Center for survey distribution thanks to CRP Chair Pierrea Wallace. Summer survey distribution events are being planned with CFSA/OYE and DC Family and Youth Initiative (DCFYI)
- Two panel members stepped forward to go to the National conference next month to represent DC CRP! They will be looking to bring back information related to how other panels conduct public outreach and meet the outreach requirements under CAPTA, recruit and sustain membership, structure their approval/application processes for members, strengthen collaboration with their child welfare agencies, and track the impact of their recommendations over time. Additionally, they will look to bring back any information related to our three

current workgroups.

- Panel members have been kept informed on DC legislation, advocacy issues, and other important information through presentations and written communication
- Public/Community Outreach committee has begun planning first stage of community involvement

VIII. Challenges

Some of this section will be a repeat of last year's challenges, as the most significant challenge we face continues to be the cumbersome and bifurcated process of member appointments and the extraordinary time it takes to get someone through the pipeline. Although CRP's across the country use a variety of methods to appoint new members, our research indicates that the District is part of a very small, unique pool with an unusually complex appointment process.

Some of the components that contribute to this challenge are:

- Our MOTA liaisons change frequently and have a large number of boards and commissions that they become responsible for. Each change slows down the process of membership applications. Additionally, coordination at MOTA during liaison transitions does not seem to be effective, as it appears that with most new liaisons we start over instead of moving forward. Additionally, it often takes multiple tries to finally get a response back which significantly impacts the work-specifically the appointment of new members.
- According to MOTA, appointments must be approved by the Mayor herself, resulting in too much time between application and appointment/swearing in. As the Mayoral plate is very full, this is certainly something that should be delegated.
- When an interview actually happens, the CRP facilitator has a brief

few minutes to ask questions and then is not permitted to reach out directly to the applicants until the appointment has been approved (which can be a year or even more). Therefore, we cannot reach out to see if an applicant wants to become involved as a community volunteer while they wait for appointment. During this time, we are wasting help and energy that could be valuable to the panel's work. Additionally, some applicants drift away, assuming they are not needed. After conversation earlier this year, one of our previous liaisons offered to us that he would give applicants our information so they could contact us directly if they wanted to get involved. But then he too was reassigned and that dropped off the radar. Therefore, volunteer help that could be very beneficial is not permitted to us; applicants sit out there wondering if they will ever be called; and from what we have been told, communication from MOTA most often does not keep them up to date while they wait.

- The bifurcation of having members appointed from both the Mayoral and Council side leads to confusion both in confirmations and reconfirmations due to different processes of application and appointment. For example, the chair can only be from the Mayor's side, which limits natural leadership progression from Vice to Chair. Most importantly, this leads to long delays, leaving vacancies unfilled longer than necessary and thus depleting the panel's capacity.

The actual terms can be very confusing. Dates may differ depending on whether someone is filling a term vacated by another individual, and it is not always clear what the term dates are. This is especially true on the Council side, where there are multiple steps from the hearing to the vote, to the appointment, and to when the appointment is registered.

Another challenge was mentioned before in the section under relationships with CFSA. Confusing and seemingly arbitrary messages from the DC government regarding requirements cause avoidable confusion and burden to members. Especially now, during this hard time, there are many needs for volunteers and those choosing CRP or other panels should be treated with consideration for their time and energy. Members have continued to participate even when they are having their own medical, job and family challenges, and DC should not be making volunteerism such a burden. Anyone continuing to volunteer in this climate should not be given unnecessary additional stress that can be avoided.

One final challenge worth mentioning speaks to the future of the CRP panel Facilitation role when the current facilitator steps down. Because of how the grant funds are administered, fulfilling this role as Independent Contractors has given both members of the facilitation team much extra work and many headaches. 1099's are sent by DC government that read as if the total grant is income to the facilitator and we have been told this cannot change. Thus, each tax year requires much burdensome extra administrative work. Additionally, this past year, CFSA mistakenly gave funds on a schedule that was not accurate, which increased the amount of taxes the facilitator had to pay. This is not a sustainable model for this facilitator or any future independent contractor. On the other hand, finding someone who can step into the facilitator role who is associated with a community organization that could hold the funds will also be a challenge, as many of those organizations may have conflictual contracts with CFSA.

IX. Recommendations

1. The recommendations of the workgroups will be identified in each report when projects are concluded and will most likely include suggestions of specific data for CFSA to collect that is not currently being tracked.
2. It is recommended that CFSA management actively become involved with the panel in its infrastructure issues surrounding appointments with MOTA and the Council so that the panel can work more effectively at capacity and become more sustainable.
3. It is recommended that in the future, any DC requirement being passed onto the panel members be carefully discussed internally at CFSA to ensure it is necessary before creating stress for members who are volunteering their time for this important work.

X. Summary and Next Steps

The most important priorities for this coming year are for the work groups to complete their data collection and analysis and reports; to build the public/community outreach component of our work; to fill the remaining vacancies and keep membership as stable as possible; and to try to work with MOTA and the Council towards a more efficient appointment process.

In closing, despite stressful times, the progress that the panel has made this year has been considerable, and we can actively look forward to the three workgroup reports that will come out in the months ahead!