



Citizen Review Panel

District of Columbia

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

Tuesday, January 14, 2025
6:30 to 8:30 PM

MINUTES

Present: Pierrea Wallace, Chair; Shana Bartley, Vice-Chair

Panel members: Patrick Foley, Wanda Thompson, Elizabeth Mohler, Emily Bloomfield, Meghan Schott, Theresa Gibson, Whitney Miller, Andrew Miller, Tyra Moore, Carolyn Woods

CFSA: Roni Seabrook

Facilitation team: Margie Chalofsky and Toni Carr

Welcome/Introductions

Pierrea Wallace, Chairperson, led us through the Welcome and Introductions. The question was asked if we needed to go through introductions as there were no outside participants. We agreed to introduce ourselves for the record.

- Introductions of members, public observers, and presenters
- Determination of quorum -yes
- Satisfaction of Public Notice yes
- Approval of Minutes from September 2024 Approved
- Approval and/or modification of tonight's agenda

We modified the agenda by moving YAO presentation before facilitator report because Theresa Gibson needed to leave early. Margie Chalofsky then asked to do one piece of business before YAO presentation so that Theresa could be there to vote. This was to vote on panel approval for Andy Miller as Treasurer. Margie explained that the panel could approve this internally. Additionally, Elizabeth Mohler has stepped forward to be Vice- Chair; however, this role needs to be approved by the Council and added to her official appointment.

Youth Aging Out (YAO) Workgroup Presentation

Theresa presented a power point of updates of the YAO workgroup since their initial presentation. ([YAO Next Steps](#)). Andy and Margie took over the presentation when Theresa had to leave.

Dr. Meghan Schott commented that there are programs that may be called “best practices” that are not actually researched based, so the group needs to be sure they are looking at true best practices that have positive outcomes. Margie said we are looking at things that have some research basis and themes that have been repeated in multiple reports. One example of a general theme noted is that although DC was one of the first jurisdictions to expand the age of care from

18 to 21, other jurisdictions mention following youth longer which could give more knowledge about how they fare over a longer period.

Dr. Wanda Thompson asked if youth have to leave their placements when they age out and if they can voluntarily go home for reunification at that time. Pierrea and Margie responded that DC was one of the first jurisdictions to increase the age of foster care to age 21 and that although some youth leave earlier, it is not common. When youth age out they can receive six months of after-care services, but no longer have a GAL or Judge, etc. Chafee funds may remain available for vocational and educational purposes. They clarified that although youth leave the system by age 21, it doesn't mean they have to leave the foster home. Although foster homes will no longer receive stipends or benefits, there are many situations in which youth stay and sometimes become permanent members of the family. This may happen in the current home; additionally, some youth may return to the home where they were happiest. The point was made that if an older youth is remaining in a foster home, it could, however, impact other placements into that home. Some youth return to their family of origin, but it isn't referred to as reunification as that is a permanency goal that refers to when the child or youth is in care. Another question asked was whether youth with disabilities also "age out" by 21 and it was clarified that yes, all youth do need to leave the child welfare system at 21 but those with disabilities may be connected to a DDS placement.

Dr. Tyra Moore asked if the group would look at any distinction between what CFSA says they offer and what workers feel they can access for their clients. Margie responded that the survey would compare CFSA's stated offerings with what youth and foster parents know about those offerings. She stated that although the workgroup was not planning to include individual social worker experiences, the workgroup could take that suggestion into consideration.

Tyra also asked if we anticipated any bias if we distributed the surveys through CFSA or GAL's etc. instead of directly. Margie responded that the group agreed about potential bias and the plan was not to ask GAL's or CFSA to administer any of the surveys, just to help us to access youth.

Pierrea offered to broker Children's Law Center's (CLC) assistance and also offered to send out a list to the workgroup of places other than those on the power point. She also mentioned the new SOUL permanency goal that is looking to help youth maintain ties, so they have more support when they age out. Margie clarified that those listed on the power point were just a few examples and that the group plans to reach out to multiple agencies where youth are placed or served. Meghan asked if we would consider reaching out to a placement in Virginia. Margie C. responded that if they serve DC youth that could be an option.

Margie C thanked the panel for the great questions and suggestions.

Pierrea led a formal Vote on Youth Aging Out Project which received unanimous approval. She then expressed excitement about the focus of this work.

Facilitator Report and Updates

Margie gave the facilitator report.

- Elizabeth had agreed to become Vice-Chair, which needs to be added to her appointment by the Council. Margie gave thanks to Elizabeth and also shared that because of Elizabeth's new job she will need to join our meetings at 7 pm instead of 6:30.
- Margie thanked Andy for stepping up as Treasurer. Margie also announced that Meghan and Mattie Cheeks are now officially off the panel. She thanked them both for offering to stay involved as much as they could in their workgroups.

- Four new members are working their way through the Mayor side. It was hoped that they would be presented tonight but still not ready. Margie interviewed them as well as a few others who were eliminated because they worked for the DC government. When these are completed, our vacancies would be full except for one slot that we are holding for a birth parent with lived experience as decided in a prior meeting. Margie expressed concern with how slowly this process with MOTA has been.
- Margie wants to wait to work on trying to revise the CRP appointment structure until we get the new members onboarded who are currently in the pipeline.
- April 1-3 there is a free conference: 24th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) Sponsored by the Children's Bureau, April 1–3, 2025, at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel Information will go into board portal.
- The meet and greet didn't work in November so we will try again when our new members join, and it is better weather.
- Margie acknowledged and thanked Shana Bartley for being the glue holding things together on the panel for many years (as Vice- Chair and Interim Chair). Shana replied that she appreciates Elizabeth and also acknowledged/ thanked Pierrea for stepping up to become Chair. She shared that she was grateful to have had the chance to serve as Vice- Chair, that she feels the panel has a special role and is thrilled to see its capacity building.
- Margie acknowledged Roni Seabrook for all her help

Member Sharing

Whitney Miller provided the Member Sharing for this meeting. Whitney. is an adoptive parent of two boys through CFSA. He shared that he is glad the Patrick Foley reached out to him to join CRP, and he is glad to be part of the panel. Whitney that his interest in child welfare came from his childhood experiences in Louisiana and that he is committed to wanting the best outcomes for children in care. Whitney shared about his career path and his current interests. Other panel members had things in common related to his background from Michigan as well as his interest in fine dining as a "foodie." Whitney and his husband are very involved in the DC community, and (as a newer member), he looks forward to partnering with the rest of the panel.

Pierrea shared that she loves the member sharing and this way of getting to know each other in the virtual setting. Margie responded that she is glad people like it.

Fiscal report

Toni Carr presented the fiscal report in the interim between Patrick and Andy's tenures. She reported on the 2nd quarter of this grant year. She shared that there was a lot of back and forth with CFSA because of the \$50,000 that we were told to invoice for in our second drop instead of the \$12,807.35 as we had expected to do. After many conversations we clarified that the \$50,000 was to include the \$12,807.35?? owed plus \$37,192.65 ahead of time for the next grant period. We wanted to be completely clear about what we would do with that money should we or CFSA not exercise the next contract period after June 30. CFSA responded that at that point we would return the money by check. Margie and Toni were very careful to get this all in writing. As of this point the money is invoiced for but we have not yet received payment. Toni thanked Roni for helping to connect us to the right people at CFSA. Margie reminded people that we have gift cards for incentives as well as money put away for an evaluator consultant if needed. Margie also reported that there are new BEGA requirements for panel members regarding financial

disclosure as well as attending virtual Ethics training session. We haven't yet followed up to get detailed information but will delve into it and let everyone know. The full fiscal report is on the board portal.

Margie thanked Patrick for continuing in this role for so long and noted that we have had a lot of people to thank tonight!

Community Outreach

Pierrea led the discussion and announced she had sent out a doodle poll for a Community Outreach committee meeting. She is looking at a Tuesday or Thursday at this time slot. She then asked for any comments members have about public outreach at this time.

Wanda suggested we all look at our networks when we want to put together town halls etc. She also suggested that we work on a survey as to what we want to find out or share and that we include gathering feedback on our working group topics, ie. letting people know what we are working on as well as what our goals are regarding best outcomes. She also said that we may get volunteers to work on a town hall through that process.

Margie suggested that the group to look realistically as to what its capacity is and how this can be done in a way that is realistic to members' capacities. She suggested that it might be good to start by going to other sites where people meet/gather such as the Collaboratives instead of doing one big forum which is a lot of work. Pierrea suggested that imbedding into the community could lead to the community building that would help when we want to do our own. Carolyn Woods suggested going into churches as many people in the churches are into foster care and adoption. Pierrea also stated how important it is to do public outreach to understand how those who are most impacted are experiencing the system.

Meghan expressed seeing what families perceive as what CPS does and what they actually do. Tyra asked about birth parent support groups and if they exist. Pierrea shared about the PEERS, (the birth parent advocates that were originally housed externally but have now been at CFSA for many years) and that although they are not independent it could be helpful to pull them in. Tyra suggested perhaps the PEERS could be a conduit to more informal groups and asked if this committee will be doing recruitment for another member as well as information sharing? Margie said that she supported Wanda's suggestion during the last discussion that in the process of doing public outreach we may find people who want to be volunteers or a member but since we only have one vacancy (because of those in the pipeline) right now, it didn't seem to require a separate focus on recruitment. The question was then asked if there is a precedent for people to volunteer. Margie responded that there is and that they would have to go through a confidentiality process if they would be looking at any individual data. Toni has already devised a non-member confidentiality form. Patrick said that when they had community members in his last CRP group, CFSA said only members could see the files. Margie added that in the YAO group only panel members are meeting with CFSA. Pierrea asked if requirements are fluid depending upon experiences or skills of the volunteers. It was agreed that the panel needs to address this. Wanda suggested that if someone approaches to become a volunteer, the members could meet and come up with limitations and boundaries and then do an orientation with volunteers about what they can do or not.

Public Comments

Since there was no public present, Margie asked members if there were any personal updates they would like to share. Members shared about new jobs and other updates.

Closing and Adjournment

Pierrea closed the meeting. We finished 16 minutes early, at 8:14pm

Future CRP Meetings	
Date	*Location
March 11, 2025	Zoom
May 13, 2025	Zoom
July 8, 2025	Zoom
September 9, 2025	Zoom

*Location subject to change

Questions: Pierrea Wallace, Chairperson, pierreanaketa@gmail.com