



# Citizen Review Panel

## District of Columbia

### **CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL**

Tuesday, January 9, 2024

6:30 to 8:30 PM

### **DRAFT MINUTES**

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Present: Pierrea Wallace, Chair; Shana Bartley, Vice- Chair; Patrick Foley, Treasurer  
Panel members: Theresa Gibson, Wanda Thompson, Mattie Cheek, Elizabeth Mohler,  
Absent members: Emily Bloomfield, Meghan Schott  
Facilitation team: Margie Chalofsky and Toni Carr  
Potential new members: Carolyn Woods, Whitney Miller, Andy Miller, Josephine Macyck,  
Community workgroup member: Rick Bardach,  
Public observer: Identified only as Alec

#### **Welcome/Introductions**

Panel members, facilitation team, potential new members and public observers introduced themselves. Patrick Foley announced that we are looking for a new treasurer since he will be moving out of DC. Margie Chalofsky reminded members that this is an open platform and to only share accordingly.

**Quorum** was met, as was **satisfaction of public notice**. Minutes from September 2023 were approved with no edits. Agenda was modified before the meeting to add CFSA's presentation about the Child and Family Services Reviews.

#### **Facilitator update-** Margie C.

- Council Chair had reached out to Children's Law Center regarding recommendations for new members. Names of potential members were submitted, and Council was reminded of reconfirmations needed for Shana B. and Elizabeth M.
- MOTA contact has changed again. New liaison is Tiera Williams
- Margie C. hopes to meet with both Mayoral and Council sides to focus on the recruitment and appointment process more deeply.
- Margie C. shared her six-month report is late and asked if any member wanted to read it before submission to let her know.
- National conference announced again. Elizabeth M. stepped forward. Toni C. will follow up with her.

#### **Social Media update-** Patrick F.

- We currently have a Facebook account and will set up an Instagram account.
- Need more people to join, only a small number. Open to suggestions- targeted ads one idea. Josephine M. suggested we follow groups and organizations we know and then someone will follow us and then increase posting content.
- Patrick F. could use help with posting. Josephine M. and Whitney M. offered.

**CFSA presentation on Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR's)- Maureen Williams James. QSR and CFSR division.**

- This is DC's 4<sup>th</sup> round of CFSR Reviews; first was in 2001.
- CFSA looks at 80 cases and Children's bureau will pick 65 for review. This will include foster care and in-home cases and for the first time, cases managed by the collaboratives.
- Two components to the review- Statewide assessment and on-site. Statewide happening now with record review, focus groups, etc. They are looking at foster parent licensing, recruitment and retention, staff training, and responsiveness to the community.
- Maureen Williams James is the lead on the on-site component. The Feds want community stakeholders to be included on the review team, (including youth.) She is presenting to members to see if anyone might want to join the review to represent CRP. Margie C. and Pierrea W. clarified that in order to represent CRP it would have to be an active member.
- CFSA submits roster of potential reviewers to Children's Bureau, and they will review/approve. Plan to submit by Jan 26,
- Major question to be addressed: Is CFSA making a concerted effort to address safety, permanency, and well-being?
- Training will be in March; each reviewer will be on a few cases starting in April.
- On-site consists of in-person interviews with birth parents, foster parents, age - appropriate children, attorneys, social workers, and record reviews. Community reviewers will sign confidentiality agreements.
- Family interviews in the evenings, mostly 5 pm to 7 pm in person. Families can choose the venue - CFSA, their homes, collaboratives, etc. Social workers mostly during day; and can be virtual, attorneys may be day or evening. Review teams are two reviewers for each case.
- Any member who is interested should contact Maureen Williams-James at [Maureen.williams-james@dc.gov](mailto:Maureen.williams-james@dc.gov) or 202 415 5840.

**Work group reports**

**Youth Aging out and Homelessness**

Theresa G., Chair, made the presentation. Members are Theresa G., Mattie C., Shana B., and Rick B. (community and past CRP member.) The group has submitted abstract to CFSA but has not yet met with them. Theresa presented the major points on their abstract ([Attached here](#)). She also thanked Mattie C. for the great job with the survey for youth and foster parents. They did not share the survey because they wanted to wait to see if there would be any changes after their meeting with CFSA. The group is looking forward to new members. Margie C. reminded them about the stipends available for participation by the youth and families they are interviewing. Margie C. also applauded the group for taking the big topic of Aging out and narrowing the scope into a workable project. Theresa also shared about her book which highlights her experience in DC foster care. Carolyn W. stated interest in this group and shared that she had met someone from HUD who works with Older Youth who might be able to help out with information. Andy M. is also interested in this group but would understand if we wanted to split up new members.

## **Family Time**

Members are Wanda T. and Pierrea W. Both members made the presentation.

This workgroup is looking at how family time is being handled with children in DC foster care, based upon the acknowledgement in both social sciences as well as federal guidance that there is a correlation between family time and reunification as well as between family time and the overall well-being of the family.

The group raised the concern that if family time does not increase during the child's time in care (from the typical one hour per week), the attachment to the foster family grows while the attachment to the birth family lessens, which can impact permanency outcomes.

The group will review cases of children who entered care between November 2022 and April 2023. The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) timeline for permanency is between 11-15 months and DC typically files to change the goal from reunification to adoption at the 12 -month mark. This timeframe would give the group a snapshot of the number of families who entered the system between 11 and 16 months ago (one month shorter than when families are expected to successfully reunify, and one month longer than ASFA's timeline). There are 67 cases that fit into this window.

Pierrea W. shared that she has learned that DC has the second to lowest reunification rate. Most children (nationally as well as locally) come into care because of neglect (not abuse), and some of the determinants of neglect can be the result of substance abuse and poverty. The workgroup wants to understand what family time looks like over the life of the child's time in care and if by the six -month mark there has been a significant increase in time spent with birth family. As safety concerns should be the only barrier to increasing the visits, the group is interested in examining what those safety concerns might be and what DC is doing to ameliorate them.

Questions the group will ask include - how many cases were opened during this time? How many had reunification as a goal? How many permanency goals changed during this time and how many cases did the government file to change the goal from reunification to adoption?

They will conduct on-site interviews as well as case reviews and will be trained in accessing FACES.

The group shared that the meeting with CFSA went very well, and that CFSA was open to feedback and collaboration. Margie C. stated that they were a good group to go first to forge that path. Data collection will begin in February.

## **Prevention**

Elizabeth M. made the presentation.

Members are Elizabeth M., Patrick F., Emily B., and Meghan S.

Elizabeth M. credited Wanda T. with clarifying during their last presentation that this focus is on secondary prevention, not primary.

This workgroup is interested in what steps CFSA takes when there has been a call to the Hotline, but a decision has been made not to investigate or open a case. As some of the children connected to these calls being screened out may still remain vulnerable, they are interested in what percentage have repeat calls, as well as who qualifies for services and supports, what these services and supports include, and if they are actually preventative of future abuse or neglect and

the relationship between the services and increased family protective factors. The group has gotten information from CFSA about the triage process to help them narrow and refine their scope. They also explored studying the new Warm Line, but there hasn't been a broad enough rollout to have enough data to study at this time.

This group could use some new members, ideas, and energy, especially since Patrick can't be a panel member after he leaves DC (but will continue to work on the workgroup.) Meghan may also be unable in the future to stay on the panel. Whitney is interested in this group and stated he is fully committed even if not appointed yet.

Margie C. and Patrick F. gave kudos to Elizabeth M. for pushing this work forward Elizabeth M. reiterated that Prevention is a big topic, and they are still refining and narrowing.

[Click here for power point.](#)

### **Member Sharing:**

Mattie C. did the **Member Sharing** portion of this agenda. She shared about her family farm in South Carolina and showed some photos of the land. Members were deeply touched by the history of the farm in that her grandfather had been enslaved until age 12, purchased this farm at about age 20, and it is still in her family. Currently, the farm has two components, one educational/agritourism and the other as an event and resort space run by her brother.

### **Fiscal Report:**

Patrick F, Treasurer gave the Fiscal report and informed panel members that it is also posted on the board portal. He stated again that we are looking for a new Treasurer. He and Margie C. agreed that Toni C. makes this job easy - all the Treasurer needs to do is understand and report, not figure the numbers out.

### **New Business:**

There was no new business discussed during this time on the agenda.

### **Public Comments:**

Whitney M. said that he is looking forward to working with the panel and excited about the diversity in professional backgrounds of members. He is interested in learning stories about how people got involved in the panel.

### **Closing and Adjournment:**

Margie C. said she will reach out to new members and reiterated that it is totally appropriate to work before appointment, that the only thing you can't do until "official" is to vote.

Pierrea W. said that if any new member wants to help with the research of the Family Time group, they will welcome the help. Josephine M. and Andy M. said they would be glad to help anywhere they are needed.

Margie C. said that she and Toni C. really enjoy working with this panel, and although they are not large in numbers, they are large in interest and scope. She also said that they would plan another Meet and Greet when it gets warm out, and hopefully around Mattie C.'s schedule so she can join this time.

Wanda T. brought up that it might soon be time to talk again about having a community activity that solicits feedback from the community. Margie C. responded that we had tabled this until we got the workgroups going and it was good to be reminded that we need to start discussing it again. Pierrea W. also supported Wanda T. on flagging this now, and suggested we hold space to have that conversation on public engagement soon.

Pierrea W. concluded the evening by stating that she felt it was an exciting meeting and that she was happy to meet new people with good energy coming into the group. She also acknowledged Mattie C.'s powerful story about her family farm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 pm.

<b>Future CRP Meetings</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>*Location</b>
March 12, 2024	Zoom
May 14, 2024	Zoom
July 9, 2024	Zoom

\*Location subject to change

Questions: Pierrea Wallace, Chairperson [pierreanaketa@gmail.com](mailto:pierreanaketa@gmail.com)