



CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

ANNUAL REPORT

for calendar year

2014

submitted by

Nevada Statewide Citizen Review Panel
Northern Citizens Advisory Committee

and

Southern Citizens Advisory Committee

to

The Nevada Division of Child and Family Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Nevada Statewide Citizen Review Panel (CRP) was established in 1999 under Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 432B.396 and has federally mandated responsibilities under Title I, Section 106, of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The Panel has the following primary mission:

To ensure the protection and safety of children through an evaluation of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State Plan by examining State and local agencies' policies and procedures and specific cases where appropriate.

The Statewide Panel consists of members appointed by the Administrator of the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), whose designee also serves on the Panel. The group includes representation from community-based organizations and professionals with backgrounds related to child protective services (CPS), child advocacy, children's mental health, substance abuse treatment, education, and foster parenting.

The Statewide Panel works toward fulfilling the following three primary goals:

1. Reviews the State's implementation of previous CRP recommendations.
2. Participates in ongoing policy and procedure reviews, and targeted case reviews.
3. Considers and implements new areas of subject review within the CAPTA Assurances, Section 106.

In essence, the Statewide Panel's work consists of the review of internal policies and procedures within the CPS system, along with individual CPS case reviews. Each year, the Statewide Panel's findings are summarized in an Annual Report (this document) submitted to the federal government as part of the CAPTA requirements.

Nevada's second and third CRPs have been active since 2007. Two existing oversight groups focused on child welfare were invited into the CRP process in 2006: 1) the Northern Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), and 2) the Southern CAC. These groups have begun to examine specific areas of review defined for CRPs by CAPTA, and contribute to recommendations included in the Annual Report.

Primary Panel goals for 2014 included work in the following areas:

- The disclosure of rights to biological parents who come in contact with the child welfare system
- Monitoring policies, implementation, and practices resulting from the updated Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) safety model
- Staff training changes resulting from the NIA implementation
- Trauma-informed services for children in the child welfare system
- Assessment of caregiver protective capacity in family court cases
- Implementation of visitation policies and procedures across child welfare jurisdictions

Statewide Panel recommendations for 2014 focus specifically on distribution of the updated brochures used by child welfare agencies for the disclosure of rights to biological parents who come in contact with the child welfare system; improvements to policies, implementation, and practices resulting from the

updated Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) safety model; training for the judiciary on caregiver protective capacity (CPC) in CPS cases; and training for caseworkers on community-based resources.

Additionally, the Statewide Panel received responses from DCFS based on its 2013 recommendations, which are summarized in this report. Updates on the activities of the Northern and Southern CACs are also included in this report.

PANEL ACTIVITIES

Statewide Panel

The Statewide Panel engages in regular work to review regional and statewide policies, procedures, and practices to ensure the protection and safety of children within the child welfare system. Areas of focus and specific work are detailed above in the Executive Summary.

Northern CAC

Permanency Innovations Initiative: The Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) is nearing completion of its five-year multi-million dollar research project with the Children's Bureau, the Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) Grant. Randomization into the Control group, receiving Usual Permanency Services (UPS) and the Treatment group, receiving Safe Assessment Family Evaluation – Family Connections (SAFE-FC) ended in October 30, 2014. However, data continues to be collected until April 30, 2014.

It is anticipated that analysis of the research will take approximately six months by the federal contract researcher, WESTAT, post data collection. Agency and community partner stakeholder groups provided input to beliefs about what worked well with either the SAFE-FC or UPS services. There were two informational sessions and four focus groups for agency staff regarding Practice Model or Safety Services to generate feedback and information from user groups. Additionally, contract staff facilitated meetings with the Second Judicial Senior Model Court and Parent Counsel group to solicit input regarding the model and project. The information will be used to form a single practice model to be implemented post data collection. The core components of SAFE will be adopted statewide to include Intake Assessment (IA), Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA), Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA), Protective Capacity Progress Assessment (PCPA), Conditions for Return (CFR), and Confirming Safe Environments (CSE). The PCFA provides the framework from which the parent case plan and service agreement is drafted.

Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI): The QPI committees have been streamlined to provide focus and more tangible outcomes. Two key committees beyond the Steering Committee include the Normalcy and Partnership Plan Committees. The Normalcy Committee communicated with Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) and the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) to develop key principles around normalcy activities for foster youth and caregivers. A policy was implemented and all staff were trained. The policy was distributed for foster and relative caregivers through email and Support Group activities. WCDSS participated and supported a statewide initiative to establish Normalcy legislation during the next Legislative Session.

The Partnership Plan Committee convened a task force and developed language for a draft plan. The tenets of the plan include: 1) Caregivers and agency staff work together as respected partners; 2) nurturance of children and youth; 3) supporting families; and 4) strengthening communities. Agency staff and foster parents are jointly attending a conference in January 2015 during which time a pilot project to implement the Partnership Plan will be developed.

Foster Parent Retention Committee: Surveys from foster parents revealed a gap in communication, support, respect, and encouragement. In an effort to show appreciation for foster and relative caregivers, several activities were promoted during 2014 to include a Wild Waters party day, foster parent appreciation dinner, monthly support groups, and perhaps most exciting, recognition tailgate and football game with the Wolf Pack (University of Nevada, Reno). WCDSS partnered with Wolf Pack sports in a yearlong promotion highlighting foster and adoptive parents to include Head Coach Brian Polian and his wife Laura, who are adoptive parents.

Visitation Enhancement with Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up Visitation (ABC-V): WCDSS participated in a small research study with the University of Delaware regarding a visitation program modeled after Dr. Mary Dozier's work with the Attachment and Biobehavioral Catchup (ABC) intervention developed to address the risk of attachment and self-regulation problems for infants in foster care. The material was adapted from ABC to improve visitations between parents and their children who have recently been removed from their care and was called ABC-Visitation (ABC-V). In ABC-V, foster parents were trained to encourage birth parents to follow their child's lead during visitation, i.e., respond to their child sensitively instead of controlling the interaction. Trained staff met with the birth parents prior to each session to prepare them for the visit. Participants included 11 foster children and their birth and foster parents in a randomized control study. Overall, six of the seven intervention families, and one out of four control families, demonstrated significantly more following-the-lead behaviors than not following. In addition, all birth parents in the intervention group attended all sessions, whereas two of the four parents in the control group had missed sessions.

ABC-V was expanded due to the positive results. All initial visits after removal are now scheduled using the ABC-V model. Case workers no longer supervise first visits and 80% of visits are now facilitated by foster or relative caregivers. Almost all visits have moved to "unsupervised" after the first five visits. There has been a 60% decrease in missed visitation by parents, and 90% of parents do not miss a visit during the intervention period, which is the first five visits.

WCDSS staff have presented ABC-V to two QPI conferences and have consulted with nine other child welfare agencies across the nation about the model.

Southern CAC

In 2014, Southern CAC members worked closely with the Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) to achieve several of the goals delineated in the CAC Action Plan:

Family Preservation: The CAC advocated for and collaborated with CCDFS and community stakeholders to improve family and community engagement. CCDFS developed clear messaging points for public outreach and education focused on the importance of family preservation and engagement. The CAC members utilized these messaging points to raise community awareness about the importance of family preservation and engagement. In honor of National Family Reunification Month, DFS hosted its third Annual Reunification Dinner where hundreds of community partners celebrate families that had successfully reunified. The families were honored with a gourmet dinner, professional photography, and hundreds of dollars' worth of generously donated gifts from the community.

Mental Health Services: The CAC advocated for and collaborated with CCDFS and community stakeholders to improve mental health services for families and children. CCDFS developed clear messaging points for public outreach and education focused on the importance of mental health services for families and children. The CAC members utilized these messaging points to raise community awareness. In honor of National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day, CCDFS partnered with Healthy Minds to host its second annual Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day Fair. Foster families enjoyed food, games, prizes and children’s activities in an effort to raise awareness about the importance of children’s mental health.

The CAC has advocated and assisted DFS with improving therapeutic foster care through successful implementation of the Healthy Minds Pilot Program.

Education: The CAC advocated for and collaborated with CCDFS and community stakeholders to improve educational outcomes for foster children. CCDFS developed clear messaging points for public outreach and education focused on the importance of education for foster children. The CAC members utilized these messaging points to raise community awareness. CCDFS established an educational liaison and point of contact between CCDFS and the Clark County School District (CCSD). This CCDFS liaison (a former Juvenile Truancy Court Hearing Master) served as an integral member of the Supreme Court Committee on Juvenile Justice Reform’s Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) with the CCSD and Department of Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS). The SARB has effectively diverted students from having to be issued juvenile delinquency truancy citations.

Foster Care & Adoptive Systems: The CAC advocated for and collaborated with CCDFS and community stakeholders to improve foster care and adoptive systems. Through the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI), CCDFS engaged foster and adoptive parents, former foster youth, recruiters, stakeholders and community partners to discuss foster parent recruitment needs, challenges and opportunities. CCDFS collaborated and partnered with community organizations to create a network of support for foster parents, foster kids and families through the Foster Friend Program. CCDFS advocated for enhanced community awareness of the foster care and adoptive systems through strengthened system partnerships. Throughout 2014, CCDFS increased the community’s awareness of foster care and adoptive systems at various events:

- In January, CCDFS kicked off 2014 by calling on the faith community to raise awareness about the need for more foster and adoptive parents. CCDFS worked closely with the City of Las Vegas Mayor’s Faith Initiative and City Wide Unity Prayer (comprised of 30 churches) to develop partnerships opportunities geared towards raising awareness about foster care and adoptive systems.
- In February, CCDFS hosted the National Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) Conference where nearly 200 foster parents, biological parents, child welfare workers and community partners from California, Florida, Connecticut, Texas, and Nevada shared success stories, barriers, and lessons learned from implementation of QPI in their state. CCDFS – through its six QPI Workgroups: Child Welfare Services, Communications, Recruitment, Retention, Training & Support, and Community Partnerships – incorporated the invaluable feedback from this Conference.
- In April, National Child Abuse Awareness & Prevention Month, CCDFS opened up its Child Haven campus to approximately 1,000 community partners who generously donated their time, tools, talent, and resources to building a playground, benches, picnic table, and mini-amphitheater colorfully adorned with murals, a pinwheel garden, and a refurbished basketball court complete

with hopscotch, four square, and more games... all in one day! This monumental event kicked off a series of many more action-packed, fun-filled events raising awareness about child welfare, foster care, and adoptive systems.

- In May, National Foster Care Awareness Month, CCDFS raised awareness by hosting its GO BLUE Event at Child Haven where 100 community partners placed finishing touches on the benches, picnic tables, and basketball court as their way of making a difference in the lives of our children.
- In September, National Step Up for Kids Month, CCDFS called on the community to Step Up For Kids by being a Foster Friend. Wynn Las Vegas generously sponsored CCDFS' Step Up for Kids Foster Friend Conference, where over 100 business and faith-based community partners become Foster Friends. As a result of this successful conference, CCDFS has received tremendous partnership opportunities from segments of the community that had not traditionally partnered with CCDFS, namely, the business and faith-based community. In doing so, CCDFS has raised awareness, while building a network of support for foster parents and foster children.
- In November, CCDFS celebrated the adoption of more than 80 children at its annual Adoption Day Celebration, which was jointly sponsored by CASA, Olive Crest, Nevada Youth Care Providers, and The Adoption Exchange. This event raised awareness about the importance of finding permanent adoptive homes for children.
- Throughout the Holiday Season, several community partners stepped up to spear-head Holiday Toy Drives for children in care. CASA Foundation generously sponsored the Angel Tree Celebration in collaboration with several community partners who donated substantial time, resources, and toys so that children in care received a joyous holiday celebration.

As a result of CCDFS' effective community engagement efforts throughout the year, CCDFS has been invited to kick-off 2015 by speaking at the upcoming City of Las Vegas Mayor's Faith Initiative City Wide Unity Celebration (which has grown to over 90 churches) where the focus will be on honoring the children of Las Vegas. CCDFS, along with former foster youth and CAC member Dashun Jackson, will impress upon the faith community the growing need for quality foster parents. CCDFS' Recruitment, Adoptions, Foster Parent Champions, and Community Partnership & Engagement Teams will be at this event, along with former foster youth (through the alumni association) and foster parents. In addition, a mini Heart Gallery through the Adoption Exchange will display professional photographs of children awaiting a permanent adoptive home. Through these strategic community partnerships and engagement opportunities, CCDFS is cultivating effective relationships with leaders in the community who are committed to making our children a priority.

2014 Recommendations

Updated Child Welfare Practice Models

Recommendation 1: The Panel requests that DCFS staff work with the DCFS Decision-Making Group (DMG) to promote distribution of the revised primary and secondary parental rights brochures within the Washoe and Clark child welfare jurisdictions.

Discussion: This is a repeat recommendation from 2013. The Panel is concerned with the delay in DMG review and approval of the secondary parental rights brochure. The Panel understands that DCFS cannot force adoption of the primary and secondary brochures within the Washoe and Clark child welfare jurisdictions. The Panel is pleased that DCFS has already implemented use of the primary parental rights brochure within the rural child welfare jurisdictions. However, DCFS has the ability to adopt use of the secondary brochure within the rural jurisdictions and encourage its use within Washoe and Clark Counties. The development of the secondary brochure was a significant undertaking by the Panel, and involved a variety of external stakeholders including parents, parent advocates, and attorneys.

During the past three years, the Panel has made several recommendations related to the development and use of both the primary and secondary parental rights brochures, emphasizing the importance of uniform, consistent information about parental rights being distributed statewide. Some stakeholder agencies that want to use the secondary brochure are waiting to do so as a courtesy to DCFS until it gets processed through DMG. The goal is to promote consistency in the information presented to parents who have contact with the child welfare system, and these agencies recognize that state and county adoption of the brochure is critical to ensure this consistency.

Recommendation 2: The Panel requests that DCFS supports the completed rollout of the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) and the Protective Capacity Progress Assessment (PCPA) statewide, with a specific focus on the rural child welfare jurisdictions.

Discussion: The Panel understands that the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) establishes a baseline of caregiver protective capacity (CPC) and focuses primarily on safety threats. When cases move to the permanency phase and/or transfer to an ongoing caseworker, the caseworker evaluates CPC within the family and sets related case plan goals. Therefore, the backend of the model focuses on CPC and case planning, with the goal of addressing diminished CPC identified as part of the NIA. The Panel understands that the PCFA and PCPA will be the primary tools and processes by which this occurs.

CPC is already integrated into the Washoe County Safety Assessment Family Evaluation and Family Connections (SAFE-FC) model, and the Panel understands that when the Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) grant project ends, this model will likely continue to be used in Washoe County. Similarly, Clark County is in the early implementation phases of the Safety Intervention Permanency System (SIPS) model, and plans to begin implementing CPC components in 2015. The Panel is concerned whether there is a strategy for consistent rollout of PCFA and PCPA in the rural child welfare jurisdictions, and would like to receive feedback from DCFS staff on this as part of the response to this recommendation.

Recommendation 3: The Panel requests that DCFS continues to work with the Court Improvement Program (CIP) to ensure that Family Court judges, attorneys, and other judicial professionals remain

engaged in training on the updated child welfare practice models, specifically the integration of caregiver protective capacity (CPC) into court-ordered case plans.

Discussion: The Panel has made related recommendations in the past which emphasize the importance of judicial collaboration in the rollout of the updated child welfare practice models across the child welfare jurisdictions. If CPC is intended to be a common set of criteria for both caseworkers and judicial professionals to assess the ability of parents to provide a safe living environment and adequately care for their children, then this is something that needs to be addressed by child welfare and judicial agencies collaboratively as part of case planning and related court orders. The Panel understands that Family Court judges and other stakeholders have received some training to date within each of the three primary jurisdictions, and have adopted the use of bench cards which provide a reference to judges regarding the child safety model. The Panel would like to hear back about plans for future trainings and quality assurance efforts that will be conducted in collaboration with the CIP, which will increase systemic consistency between child welfare and the Family Courts.

Recommendation 4: The Panel requests that DCFS implements additional training for caseworkers to increase their knowledge of community-based resources. The Panel suggests that DCFS partners with the Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) to use its *Nevada Home Visiting Resource Directory*, which is currently updated annually with the support of federal funds.

Discussion: The Panel has made related recommendations in the past which emphasize the importance of connecting families with services that will address core safety concerns within the home in order to increase safety and permanency for children. When an assessment of CPC is done, resources and funding are required to address certain concrete needs for both parents and their children. The Panel understands that service funding continues to be an ongoing challenge as Nevada recovers from the economic downturn. However, training on current community-based resources can be integrated into the updated Nevada Child Welfare Academy curriculum at little or no cost.

Using an existing resource that is federally-funded removes the barriers of paying for staff research time, information gathering, and document publication. The *Nevada Home Visiting Resource Directory* is a comprehensive resource that is essentially free to the child welfare jurisdictions and can help caseworkers support families as they work toward the higher goal of increased CPC. Caseworkers can use this guide to access information on resources in their communities including mental health and substance abuse counseling, parenting skills classes, medical and dental services, residential treatment, job searching and training, and other supports needed to help families promote safety and retain custody of their children.

Tracking Items

Recommendation 5: The Panel should review the outcomes study from the Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up Visitation (ABC-V) pilot project in Washoe County to consider future recommendations related to statewide implementation of an updated visitation model.

Discussion: This is a tracking item that does not require a response from DCFS. In case of staff and/or membership turnover, the Panel would like to ensure future review of the ABC-V model.

Recommendation 6: The Panel should review both the primary and secondary parental rights brochures for updates and edits after the 2015 legislative session, in order to address possible changes to NRS 432B and ongoing changes to child welfare practices.

Discussion: This is a tracking item that does not require a response from DCFS. In case of staff and/or membership turnover, the Panel would like to ensure future review and revision of the parental rights brochures.

Follow-Up on 2013 CRP Recommendations

Follow-up on the 2013 Panel recommendations was based on formal responses from the DCFS Administrator, as follows:

Disclosure of Rights to Biological Parents

Recommendation 1: The Panel requests that DCFS staff work with the DCFS Decision-Making Group (DMG) to promote distribution of the revised primary and secondary parental rights brochures within the Washoe and Clark child welfare jurisdictions.

DCFS response: The state agrees with the recommendation of providing uniform and consistent information and education about the child welfare system and the family court process to parents who have interaction with any of the three child welfare agencies. The Division of Child and Family Services Rural Region (DCFS-RR) has agreed to use the primary brochure and the secondary brochure (booklet) that has been developed to educate parents. The three child welfare agencies (DCFS-RR, Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS), and the Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)) continue to discuss the most efficient and effective way to share common information across the state. Each agency, however, does provide information to families on parental rights at the time an assessment is initiated.

The potential barrier to this recommendation may be the ability to locate funds for the cost of printing the primary brochure and the secondary brochure (booklet). Also, an additional barrier may be the ability to sustain the ongoing printing cost of both documents. The state will explore funding options in an attempt to meet this recommendation; however, the state cannot commit to implementing the new documents if funding is not available.

Recommendation 2: The Panel requests that DCFS works to review and update the child welfare core training curriculum to ensure that new staff are trained to educate parents who come into contact with the child welfare system regarding their rights and the Family Court process.

DCFS response: The state agrees that the child welfare core training is integral to a strong and competent workforce. The state is currently engaged in conversation with the University of Nevada Reno (UNR) and the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) on key revisions of the training curriculum. A redesign of the entire core curriculum will better address caseworker competencies which include competencies as it relates to family engagement. Additionally, new training content areas are to include motivational interviewing, mock court training, addictions content, trauma informed care and some "specialty core trainings" will now be part of the new revised core curriculum. Also, self-care for workers, worker safety and parents' rights will be added.

Recommendation 3: The Panel requests that DCFS monitors and ensures completion of the UNITY enhancement to auto-generate determination letters to parents regarding the substantiation or unsubstantiation of abuse and neglect allegations, including information about the appeal process.

DCFS response: Regarding automatic generation of letters to parents, the state believes this recommendation will be accomplished in the upcoming year. The Unified Nevada Information

Technology for Youth (UNITY) system is going web-based, and during the redesign this recommendation was discussed. The UNITY system will deploy with this feature built in to the programming. Parents will receive letters if there is a substantiated or unsubstantiated finding of child abuse or neglect. Additionally, these letters include information on a parent's right to appeal.

The state believes the second part of this recommendation, "resending letters that are returned," is being accomplished. As families move and new addresses are reported to each agency, this information is being entered into the UNITY system. When a different address for a parent is identified a new letter regarding the parent's substantiation or unsubstantiation on the case is resent to a parent's new address.

In addition, there are incidences when a family has not been able to be contacted regarding their rights to appeal. If this individual seeks employment where a child abuse and neglect screening must be completed prior to employment, the request is sent to the state Family Programs Office. If an individual's name has positive history in Nevada's Central registry, a letter is generated by the Social Services Program Specialist regarding the individual's possible right to appeal the substantiation history in the Central Registry. This letter also contains information on who to contact about the substantiation.

Recommendation 4: The Panel requests that DCFS provide centralized information resources about child welfare best practices, along with innovative and model programs, to ensure awareness of practice changes statewide.

DCFS response: The state believes this recommendation has been accomplished. Through collaboration with the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health, there is now a link on the state division website home page to a comprehensive resource guide. This resource guide is updated annually through a grant that is received by the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health. This guide has resources for families and staff in all 17 counties in Nevada where resources are available.

Also, posted on the state website are all current policies and procedures for DCFS. Additionally, there are links to WCDSS and CCDFS where local agency policy and procedures are posted. The policies on each of the websites reflect how child welfare is practiced in Nevada.

Lastly, Nevada has been working with Action for Child Protection (Action) since 2001. Action has provided their services in 45 states and territories, and has been a Children's Bureau national child welfare resource center for the past 16 years. Action continues to work with all the child welfare agencies in Nevada on implementation of an enhanced safety model in efforts to improve practice and ensure the safety, well-being and permanency for all children in Nevada.

Panel Operations

Recommendation 5: The Panel should review both the primary and secondary parental rights brochures for updates and edits after the 2015 legislative session, in order to address possible changes to NRS 432B and ongoing changes to child welfare practices.

DCFS response: This is a tracking item that does not require a response from DCFS. In case of staff and/or membership turnover, the Panel would like to ensure future review and revision of the parental rights brochures.

Meeting Dates and Activities

During 2014, the Statewide Panel members met five times to conduct the business of the group.

<i>Meeting/Activity Date</i>	<i>Topics</i>
February 4, 2014 <i>Policy and Procedure Review Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child welfare practice: Update on Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) grant project implementation at Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) • Child welfare staff training: Presentation on updates to Nevada Child Welfare Academy training for child welfare caseworkers • Parental rights: Update on review and approval of secondary parental rights brochure
April 8, 2014 <i>Policy and Procedure Review Meeting; Working Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma-informed care: Presentation on updates to Nevada Child Welfare Academy training for child welfare caseworkers • CRP: Update on Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) development and stakeholder input • Parental rights: Detailed review of DCFS staff edits to secondary parental rights brochure
July 1, 2014 <i>Policy and Procedure Review Meeting; Panel Business Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child welfare practice: Assessment of parental capacity in family court cases – rural region • Parental rights: Update on review and approval of secondary parental rights brochure • CRP: Update on Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) development and stakeholder input • CRP: Formal review and discussion of DCFS response to CRP 2013 Annual Report recommendations • Roundtable feedback regarding recommendations for 2014 CRP Annual Report
November 4, 2014 <i>Policy and Procedure Review Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child welfare practice: Rollout of Safety Intervention Permanency System (SIPS) practice model in Clark County • Child welfare practice: Visitation policies and practices in Washoe County • Parental rights: Update on review and approval of secondary parental rights brochure • Roundtable feedback regarding recommendations for 2014 CRP Annual Report
December 2, 2014 <i>Panel Business Meeting; Working Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on activities of Northern and Southern Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs) • Review and approve 2014 Annual Report draft • Discuss 2015 workplan

APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF THE NEVADA CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

Federal Requirements

As outlined in Public Law 104-235, Title I, Section 106, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) provides for a state grant program for the support and improvement of state child protective services (CPS) systems. This law sets forth a variety of eligibility requirements, including the establishment of citizen review panels. The purpose of the panels is “to provide new opportunities for citizens to play an integral role in ensuring that states are meeting their goals of protecting children from abuse and neglect.”

The citizen review panel (CRP) system within a given state must meet certain operational requirements and meet a scope of responsibilities within the function of the panel. These are outlined as follows:

Scope of Responsibilities

Each CRP is required to review the compliance of State and local CPS agencies in the fulfillment of their responsibilities with respect to the following:

- Work in accordance with the CAPTA State Plan.
- Examine State and local policies and procedures.
- Review specific cases, when appropriate.
- Review other criteria the panel determines important to the protection of children, including the following:
 1. Review of the extent to which the State CPS system is coordinated with the Title IV-E foster care and adoption assistance programs.
 2. Review of child fatalities and near fatalities.

Although the review of child fatalities and near fatalities falls within the scope of responsibilities for the CRP, the Panel does not review any child death cases because Nevada has a well-established child death review (CDR) process with existing regional CDR teams that review child deaths in accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 432B.403 – 4095.

State Requirements

As part of the CAPTA requirements, states are required to codify CRPs through state law. In Nevada, this was completed with the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 158 during the 1999 legislative session. The relevant text of AB 158 was incorporated into NRS under Chapter 432B.396. This law reads as follows:

The Division of Child and Family Services shall:

1. Establish a panel comprised of volunteer members to evaluate the extent to which agencies which provide protective services are effectively discharging their responsibilities for the protection of children.
2. Adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of subsection 1 which must include, without limitation, the imposition of appropriate restrictions on the disclosure of information obtained by the panel and civil sanctions for the violation of those restrictions.

During 2001, NRS 432B.396 was amended as a result of AB 248 to establish civil sanctions for violations of confidentiality on the part of CRP members. This amendment includes additional language highlighted in subsection two as follows:

1. Establish a panel comprised of volunteer members to evaluate the extent to which agencies which provide protective services are effectively discharging their responsibilities for the protection of children.
2. Adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of subsection 1 which must include, without limitation, the imposition of appropriate restrictions on the disclosure of information obtained by the panel and civil sanctions for the violation of those restrictions. **The civil sanctions may provide for the imposition in appropriate cases of a civil penalty of not more than \$500. The Division may bring an action to recover any civil penalty imposed and shall deposit any money recovered with the State Treasurer for credit to the State General Fund.**

Statewide Citizen Review Panel

The Statewide CRP operates with the following mission:

To ensure the protection and safety of children through an evaluation of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State Plan by examining State and local agencies' policies and procedures and specific cases where appropriate.

Prior to 2004, the Statewide Panel consisted of a maximum of 12 members appointed by the Administrator of the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), whose designee serves on the Statewide Panel. The group included representation from a variety of State and County agencies, community organizations, and professional backgrounds. Membership categories for the Statewide Panel are not federally mandated. However, they were originally based on the membership categories mandated under CAPTA for the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force. The CJA Task Force functions in a complementary manner with the CRP, and therefore the membership was mirrored accordingly.

Recently, both the Statewide Panel and DCFS Administration have placed more emphasis on recruiting community members who are not directly affiliated with the child welfare service system, but still have a professional interest in the wellbeing of children. This includes recruitment from sectors including school districts, child care providers, nonprofit advocacy and service organizations, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and professional medicine. As a result, Statewide Panel members from

State and County agencies were asked to begin serving in an advisory capacity to the group. This change was made in 2003 prior to the beginning of the case record review process initiated by the Panel, so that members representing other disciplines would be able to provide more objective feedback on cases reviewed at that State and County level.

During 2004, the Statewide Panel underwent a major structural change and was reorganized as a subcommittee of the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force. This was done for two primary reasons: 1) to increase the effectiveness of the Panel's work by joining with a larger advisory group whose work is most directly related to that of the Panel; and 2) to meet the requirements of new statewide advisory board restructuring done by the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) in order to reduce the amount of staff time and resources expended on the business completed by such groups. Prior to this restructuring, DCFS had a considerable number of advisory groups and other statewide committees, and it has become necessary to increase efficiency in the area of stakeholder contribution to the work of the Division.

Concurrent with this change, membership on the Statewide Panel has decreased as a result of member turnover. Some new members will be recruited to offset this turnover, and the participation of existing CJA Task Force members in the work of the Panel subcommittee will be encouraged in order to draw on the expertise of current members of the Task Force.

The Statewide Panel works toward fulfilling the following three primary goals:

1. Reviews the State's implementation of previous CRP recommendations.
2. Participates in ongoing policy and procedure reviews, and targeted case reviews.
3. Considers and implements new areas of subject review within the CAPTA Assurances, Section 106.

In essence, the Statewide Panel's work consists of the review of internal policies and procedures within the CPS system, accomplished through individual CPS case reviews. Each year, the Statewide Panel's findings are summarized in an Annual Report (this document) submitted to the federal government as part of the CAPTA requirements.

Northern and Southern CACs

Background: Required Expansion of Nevada Citizen Review Panels

CAPTA requires each state that receives the Basic State Child Abuse and Neglect State Grant in excess of \$200,000 to have a minimum of three CRPs. Nevada began receiving more than this amount in 2006 through grant adjustments, and will probably continue to receive more than this amount in the future. Therefore, it was necessary that Nevada expand the number of CRPs to three in order to come into compliance with the federal requirements. According to CAPTA, Section 106, CRPs may function as part of other committees already in existence. Nevada's existing group, the Statewide Panel, has been established since 1999 per the above overview.

The CJA Task Force met in December 2005 to review and approve a proposal from DCFS for the expansion of CRPs in 2006. Upon review, the Task Force recommended that DCFS invite the existing Northern and Southern Child Welfare Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs) to serve as the second and third CRPs. The CACs currently operate at the County government level in Washoe and Clark Counties.

During the first half of 2006, staff conducted preliminary discussions with the chairs of these two groups, and a formal letter was issued by the DCFS Administrator in May 2006, inviting each of the CACs to serve as CRPs. A meeting was held between staff and the CAC Chairs in August 2006 to formalize the plan for inclusion of the Northern and Southern CACs in Nevada's CRP process. Approval to join as a CRP was given by the Northern CAC in late 2006, and by the Southern CAC in early 2007.

Each of the CACs has re-focused some of its goals and workplans to begin developing recommendations for system change that can be incorporated into the statewide CRP process. Both CACs currently review areas of focus mandated for CRPs through CAPTA, which is a primary reason the CJA Task Force recommended their inclusion. Because the CACs are more closely tied to the CPS agencies in the north and south, which are the state's two largest population centers, they are ideally positioned to provide additional recommendations for system improvement in Washoe and Clark Counties. The Statewide Panel will maintain its broader focus, continuing to examine CPS across the entire state, while the CACs will be able to provide a deeper look at the CPS system through their respective ties to the county child welfare agencies. This will present new opportunities to make recommendations for more locally-focused system change that will rise up to the State level. This will also increase State and regional collaboration so that necessary changes can be actively addressed.

APPENDIX B: OVERVIEW OF THE STATE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Statewide Integration of Child Welfare

Prior to 2001, the child welfare system in Nevada was bifurcated between State and County agencies as a result of State law. Under Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 432B.325, the law required that counties in which the “population is 100,000 or more shall provide protective services for the children in that county and pay the cost of all those services.” In Nevada there are two counties that meet this criterion: Washoe County in northern Nevada and Clark County in southern Nevada. As a result, there are three separate agencies that provide child welfare and child protective services (CPS):

1. State of Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)
2. Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS)
3. Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)

Originally, these agencies worked together through the CPS Statewide Managers Team, also known as the Nevada Child Protection and Permanency Planning Team. This team collaborated on pertinent law, regulation, and policy issues necessary to maintain statewide consistency for investigative and casework practices. The CPS Statewide Managers Team assisted with the development and oversight of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Basic State Grant.

The child protection agencies conduct child abuse investigations and may take children into protective custody and place them in licensed foster homes. Bifurcation occurred when the County child protection agencies transferred long-term or other foster care or potential adoption cases to the State via DCFS. Children were transferred from their initial CPS placement in the County to the State agency’s licensed foster care home. The transfer included changes in social workers, court process, and service delivery systems.

However, during 2001, the Nevada State Legislature passed Assembly Bill (AB) 1 of the 17th Special Session, which provides for the integration of State and local child welfare services. This bill was intended to end the practice of transferring cases from the Counties to the State, thereby reducing the number of changes in placement for a child in protective custody. Integration means that the two larger Counties will incorporate the previously separate child welfare functions of foster care and adoptions into one continuous system of child protection. The following are directives of AB 1:

- Transfers certain duties of the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), under the Department of Human Resources (DHR), to agencies of Washoe and Clark Counties.
- Establishes a Legislative Committee on Children, Youth, and Families to oversee the system transition.
- Makes appropriations to fund the transition between State and County agencies.

The implementation of this transition was completed in 2004. WCDSS began implementation in April, 2002, and completed its transition in January, 2003. CCDFS began implementation in October, 2003, and completed its transition in October, 2004. DCFS remains responsible for supervising and

administering child protective and child welfare services in the remaining 15 rural counties. The integration of child welfare services in the two urban counties is intended to accomplish the following:

- Begin to eliminate the inefficiencies of the current system by reducing the number of placements of children in foster homes.
- Decrease the length of time that children remain in out-of-home care and ensure that children are placed in permanent homes as soon as possible.
- Establish rates for foster care reimbursement at a level that enables a provider of foster care to care for a child adequately. Rates should be standardized within each county and structured in a manner that avoids any unnecessary interruptions in foster home placements because of changing levels of reimbursements.
- Establish as a priority the fairness to employees affected by the integration of the child welfare system.
- Establish that DCFS and counties whose population is 100,000 or more have a shared fiscal responsibility for the costs of providing child welfare services, must be committed to ensuring through negotiation in good faith future maintenance of their efforts in providing these services, and must equitably share future costs for providing these services.
- Establish that integration of the child welfare system in Nevada will allow the placement of children in a child welfare system that is adequately funded and structured to avoid unnecessary interruptions in placement and will ensure that permanency is achieved for children in accordance with federal and state laws.

Subsequent to the integration of child welfare services within Washoe and Clark Counties, DCFS has moved into a new supervisory role for county-administered child protective and child welfare services. Supervision within the larger counties is being accomplished in a number of ways, including the development of a Decision-Making Group (DMG) comprised of the DCFS Administrator, DCFS Deputy Administrators, and the Counties' Child Welfare Agency Directors. This group was originally formed to address the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), which include the determination that Nevada lacks standardized statewide policies.

Historically, each of the state's three regional service areas (north, south, and rural) operated independently and were allowed to develop and implement regionally-based policies. Additionally, during the integration process, Nevada had not previously clarified the roles of the State and Counties, and so the State has not been viewed as the accountable supervisory authority for child welfare service delivery.

Based on this, a collaborative Policy Development and Approval Process was established under the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), which responded to the CFSR. Collaborative Policy Teams have been established and are comprised of representatives from each regional service area, along with select internal and external stakeholders as needed. Each Policy Team may include subject matter experts, consumers, managers, supervisors, trainers, and community partners. The role of the Policy Team members is to conduct research, provide content expertise, and develop draft policies that are provided to the DMG for final policy approval.

The Policy Teams are assigned specific activities in order to provide structure for the policy development process. Specific activities of the teams typically include the following:

- Review existing policies and procedures, comparing them to applicable federal regulations, Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS), and Nevada Administrative Codes (NAC); identify how the policies can be standardized and reflective of nationally recognized best practices.
- Develop new policies and where appropriate and include practice guidelines (field guides or practice manuals) to accompany each new policy developed. Streamlining documentation will be analyzed with each new policy developed.
- Present each new policy to the Decision-Making Group for approval. The Decision-Making Group will review all drafts submitted by the Policy Teams and will make recommendations for revision, or finalize and approve each new policy. The Decision-Making Group will provide oversight for the direction and implementation of the approved policies, and relevant procedures and practice guidelines linked to new policies.
- The Decision-Making Group will direct the Policy Teams to respond to any policy refinement needs discovered through the continuous quality assurance and improvement process.

Stakeholder involvement in policy development has also been promoted as part of the plan strategies developed through the PIP and the DCFS five-year plan. This includes collaboration with internal and external stakeholders across all program areas in the development of statewide policies, in order to improve safety, permanency, and wellbeing outcomes for children in Nevada.

Substitute Care – Foster Care

The authority for the substitute care program is delegated to the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) by Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 432.020, which establishes the Division’s responsibility to support and maintain children placed in its custody, and NRS 432.032, which provides authority to adopt program regulations. NRS 432B.180 establishes the duties of DCFS including the requirement to plan, coordinate, and monitor the delivery of child welfare services provided throughout the State. NRS 432B.190 requires the Division to adopt regulations for the provision of child welfare services, including the following:

- Protection of the legal rights of parents and children.
- Emergency shelter for a child.
- The prevention, identification, and correction of abuse or neglect of a child in residential institutions.
- Evaluating the development and contents of plans submitted for approval under NRS 432B.395, which pertains to efforts to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of children from their homes, and to facilitate a safe return to homes where removal is necessary.

Substitute care is a family-focused service that provides for the temporary care of children in need of protection. Its services are aimed at changing behaviors in parents that have resulted in child maltreatment leading to out-of-home placement. The Division returns children who have been removed and may be safely restored to their families through the provision of services to the child and family. When reunification is not possible, the Division seeks alternative permanency options which best suit the child’s needs. Specifically, the Division provides assessment and comprehensive case management services that support the child, the parents, and the caregivers.

The continuum of out-of-home care services includes emergency shelter care, foster family care (including placements with relatives), group home care, therapeutic foster care, respite care, residential treatment care both in and out of state, and independent living services. The Division emphasizes the safety and wellbeing of children, recognizes the family as the fundamental foundation of child rearing, and acknowledges the importance of a comprehensive, community-based, child-centered, family-focused, and culturally competent teamwork approach.

The Division believes families offer children and young adults opportunities for permanency and family relationships that are intended to last a lifetime. Permanency affords the stability and security that children must have for building competency and self-reliance and for maximizing their cultural and spiritual growth. The Division supports collaborative efforts in every community to help assure permanence in the lives of all children.

DCFS began major child welfare reform in 1992 with the commitment to move from a protective authority to a family-centered approach in casework. The first phase was the adoption of a training series for social workers that incorporates the philosophy and principles of family-centered practice in the four major casework areas:

1. Child protective services (CPS)
2. Adoption
3. Foster care
4. Child welfare

In 1994, the second phase of this initiative included the creation of the Foster Care Statewide Steering Committee to address professionalization, training, and retention of foster caregivers. The goal was to improve the quality of foster care by means of a family-centered approach with foster caregivers. The yearlong efforts of this task force and its three subcommittees resulted in a number of improvements within foster care. These included the following:

- Implementation of a 36-hour pre-service foster parent training curriculum
- Involvement of foster care providers in case planning
- Promotion of the development of a Foster Parent Bill of Rights

To continue the efforts of this initiative and to address the quality of care standards required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), DCFS formed a Quality of Care Standards (QCS) Statewide Task Force. The Task Force reviewed current standards and suggested additional standards to improve services and practices. The QCS Task Force was composed of child welfare managers, supervisors, social workers, specialists, foster care providers, and representatives from County social services. The Task Force represented Nevada's three geographic regions: north, south, and rural. Five areas were addressed by the Task Force:

1. Foster care licensing
2. Training
3. Retention and support
4. Quality of care for foster children
5. Professionalization of foster caregivers

After an initial review and recommendation report was developed, the QCS Task Force membership was dissolved into other groups that continue to evaluate the five areas outlined above and to recommend ways to improve the delivery of services and quality of care for children in foster care.

Specific to the training implemented by the Task Force, Nevada adopted a 36-hour pre-service training curriculum in 1997, which is required of all potential foster and adoptive families. The training is designed to provide families with knowledge and skills that can greatly contribute to their success. Some families will decide that foster care and/or adoption is not for them, while others will begin to gain an understanding of the role of their family and how additional children can enhance their family life.

The northern and southern regions have trainers on staff who provide the 36-hour pre-service training. The rural region contracts out to a local provider to recruit and train foster homes, using the same pre-service curriculum. This is an established curriculum developed by the Institute for Human Services in Columbus, Ohio, which is widely considered to be state-of-the-art training.

Beginning in 2002, since the implementation of the integration of child welfare services in Washoe and Clark Counties, the training now varies by region in terms of hours required and curriculum content, ranging from approximately 22 to 36 hours. However, since only eight hours are required by law, the regional training requirements significantly exceed the minimum established requirements.

APPENDIX C: PANEL MEMBERS

Statewide CRP Members

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation/Region</i>
Chris Bayer	CASA of Carson City	CASA – Rural Region
Retta Dermody	Nevada PEP	Parents and Parent Advocates – Northern Region
Jeanne Marsh	Northern Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)	Child Protective Services – Northern Region
Mari Parlade	Southern Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)	Child Protective Services – Southern Region
Rota Rosaschi	Nevada Public Health Foundation	Children’s Health Care– Rural Region
Donna Smith	Southern Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)	Child Protective Services – Southern Region
Suzanne Wright	Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)	Designated Representative for Division Administrator – Statewide, DCFS Central Office

Advisory Staff

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation</i>
Jan Fragale	DCFS – Family Programs Office	Child Protective Services – Statewide, DCFS Central Office
Paula Hammack	Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)	Child Protective Services – Southern Region
Kevin Schiller	Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS)	Child Protective Services – Northern Region
Andrew Zeiser	CRP Coordinator	DCFS Central Office

Northern CAC Members

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation</i>
Eric Beye	Washoe County School District	School District
Frank Cervantes	Washoe County Department of Juvenile Services	Juvenile Probation
Denise Everett	Quest Counseling and Consulting, Inc.	Substance Abuse Service Agency
Pam Fine	Washoe County Department of Social Services	Child Welfare
Stuart Gordon	Family Counseling Services of Northern Nevada	Agency Serving Low Income Individuals
Mary Herzik	CASA of Washoe County	Court-Appointed Special Advocates
Jennifer Lunt	Washoe County Alternative Public Defender's Office	Attorneys Representing Parents
Jeanne Marsh	Washoe County Department of Social Services	Child Welfare
Ken Retterath	Washoe County Department of Social Services	Child Welfare
Sherri Rice	Access to Healthcare Network	Advocates for Health Care for Low Income Families
Karen Sabo	Washoe Legal Services	Attorneys Representing Children
Kevin Schiller	Washoe County Manager's Office	Washoe County

Southern CAC Members

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation</i>
André Bailey	New Visions Behavioral Health	General public
Constance Brooks	College of Southern Nevada	Education
Joelyne Gold	Eagle Quest	Child welfare advocate
Vicki Herman	Clark County School District	Education
Dashun Jackson		Former foster youth
Lisa Morris-Hibbler	City of Las Vegas	Parent Advocate
Bree Mullin	Desert Psychological Services	Mental health
Sheila Parks	Clark County CASA	CASA
Detrick Sanford		General public
Donna Smith		Foster parent
Judge Frank Sullivan	Clark County Family District Court	Local Juvenile Dependency Services
Willie Stewart	Desert Regional Center	Child welfare advocate
VACANT		General public