

MINUTES

Statewide Citizen's Review Panel

July 29, 2025

9:00am

1. Call to Order – Jane Saint, Chair

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 AM.

Members Present:

Name	Organization
April Stahl	Division of Child and Family Services
Caleb Bay	Children's Cabinet
Devan Bartmus	WCSD
Jane Saint	American Access Institute
Lauren Pow	Children's Cabinet
Laurie Jackson	Division of Child and Family Services
Molly Blanchette	Washoe County
Salli Kerr	Vice-Chair
Wonswayla Mackey	Clark County

Absent:

Name	Organization
Ariana Barbuti	Adult Survivor of Child Abuse and Neglect
Kim Coats	Nevada CASA
Lindsey Marquez	WCSD
Mike Wurm	Boys and Girls Club Truckee Meadows

Staff Support:

Name	Organization
Dylan Nall	Division of Child and Family Services

2. For Information, Roll Call – Jane Saint, Chair

Dylan Nall called the roll. There was a quorum.

3. Initial Public Comment Discussion only: (Action may not be taken on any matter brought up under this agenda item until scheduled for action at a later meeting) – Jane Saint, Chair

There was no comment.

4. For Possible Approval: Consideration, Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Statewide Citizen Review Panel April 29, 2025 Meeting Minutes – Jane Saint, Chair

Jane Saint and Molly Blanchette noted some misspellings. Dylan Nall corrected these. Wonswayla Mackey moved the minutes, as corrected, be approved. Devan Bartmus seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

5. For Information: Presentation and Discussion of the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) Goals and Objectives Progression – Dylan Nall, Division of Child and Family Services

Dylan Nall said that at the last meeting someone asked for updates on how we are doing with the goals and objective progressions. The Division outlines goals and objectives that they want to complete for five years and we submit this to the federal government and then they ask us to give them updates on how we are completing them. That's basically what the CFSP is.

Our Goal 1 was to enhance the amount of capacity to address the needs of children, youth and families and families to prevent maltreatment. To do that, we wanted to develop a prevention data dashboard for planning primary and secondary prevention and then there is a summary of progress that we submit to the federal government yearly to see how we're doing. We have initiated a collaboration with our Office of Analytics and the DCFS Planning and Evaluation Unit (PEU) to develop a preliminary list of child welfare predictive factors. A comprehensive list will be finalized in the next following year. Strategy two is to collaborate with the existing prevention program, and so on this one, to complete strategy two, we have to complete strategy one first. For strategy three, we want to increase our differential response services throughout Nevada. We are currently engaged in a collaborative statewide work group with Nevada's three child welfare agencies to complete this task. Currently, the Division of Child and Family Services Rural Region is the only agency not sending Priority 3 Disposition Reports to differential response. All reports referred to differential response in the 15 rural counties are screened out reports. This is largely due to funding. However, the difference creates a data discrepancy with screened in and screened out reports and the NDR in general. Preliminary discussions have begun regarding how the rural region is going to service this DR population so we can align with our urban counties. Also, DCFS rural region is exploring the potential use of the family checkup model with the DR services in the rural area to enhance the DR program. Dylan is in charge of DR policy and will be meeting this week to go over changes and things that we're trying to hopefully get DR policy updated to our DCFS website by the end of the year.

April Stahl asked if differential response work done with families will at some point be entered into UNITY statewide. Dylan said that's what we're hoping for. She thinks that Clark County does, but the rural region does not have it right now. Wonswayla Mackey asked if there was a work group created for policy development. Dylan said there is and assured Wonswayla that the Clinical Community Services team is part of it.

Dylan Nall went on to strategy four, which is to enhance Nevada's Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) program. Summarizing progress of the strategy: a CSEC coalition meeting was held in July of 2024 and was provided a revised version of the CSEC coalition bylaws to the coalition. For the review, DCFS has collected and reviewed training material from the Nevada Partnership for Training for CSEC training that is provided to child welfare to ensure the trainings provided are following Nevada Revised Statutes requirements for CSEC training for all child welfare. DCFS also started reviewing existing online information for the training of CSEC.

Dylan then put up a slide about Goal 2, which is enhanced permanency services to address the needs of child, youth, and families. Strategy one is the implementation of the Extended Youth Adult Support Services Program (EYASSP). To more closely align with the federal requirements, DCFS has completed new policies for the EYASSP eligibility and oversight program, eligibility and enrollment, and case management services. Further policy work for the EYASSP, ICPC (Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children), and Medicaid applications for 18 to 21 year olds, are in progress, with the target completion date of July 1st, 2025. NAC revisions for the EYASSP have been approved by the child welfare agencies and are awaiting final approval by the state. This process involves analyzing effective statutes and regulations and holding stake holder workshops. That is how our data system for child welfare changes are completed and are undergoing continuous testing to verify they meet federal requirements to support the program's roll out. A training plan and curriculum finalized for stakeholders is scheduled to take place May and July of 2025, including virtual options. DCFS Family Programs Office has provided additional information, sessions and technical assistance to the child welfare agencies to answer specific questions or provide information on additional topics. Furthermore, a communication plan has been developed and outreach material incorporating feedback from youth has been provided to all participating agencies.

Salli Kerr said she was having problems trying to understand the difference between this EYASSP and independent living for foster care youth. What are the differences and how alike are they? Dylan Nall said she understood this is 18 to 21 and these kids can stay in foster care until they're 21. Salli said they used to be able to do that under the independent living program, or perhaps not. Dylan asked if Molly Blanchette could help out on this. Molly said for years we had a state funded program; now it is going to bring federal dollars in to pay youth. The program is very similar. They will get the foster care maintenance payment. They have to work 20 hours or volunteer or go to school. It doesn't really change much for the youth. The big change for Nevada is that instead of paying it with the state general fund, the federal government will be paying it with 4-E funds and it was a big undertaking, years of work to get this federal extended foster care off the ground.

Jane Saint asked about the first line of the summary, it says to formerly update the budget development request language in the NRS to more closely align with federal requirements. Does that have to go to the legislature and get the language changed? Dylan Nall answered that she believed it was passed, and it was signed by the governor. It was like this up on the screen because they wrote this prior to the end of legislative session because the annual services progress report takes months to write so some of this was done prior to the legislative session. Jane Saint said she was glad something made it through.

Dylan Nall said the next summary is to understand the scope and needs of the program. DCFS and social change partners conducted a statewide analysis and projected enrollment for young adults aged 18-21. Additionally, this team is creating a program evaluation and continuous program improvement plan to gather data and measure outcomes. Next is to maximize the use of the kinship navigator program across Nevada and increase Nevada's access to use KinGap. The kinship navigator program is now eligible for Title 4-E drawdown funds and steps are underway with the fiscal staff to begin assessing these funds. Nevada anticipates another year of 4B2 Navigator funds, which will be available through a noncompetitive application process opening soon. On the evaluation front, approval has been granted by Clark County Family Services to expand the data set to assess final outcomes 12 months post intervention, with the goal of achieving a well-supported rating. Additionally, Nevada has increased referrals to the Navigator program, particularly from investigative supervisors, contributing to prevention efforts beyond traditional child welfare services. There also is a notable rise in referrals from external partners, and efforts are underway to refine referral pathways and better connect families with the Navigator resources. Lastly, Nevada has utilized the Adoption Call to Action work groups to discuss kinship guardianship assistance programs so they can focus on statewide and agency level processes, successes and barriers over the next month. The Family Programs Office plans to review and compare these internal processes to identify areas of needs. In alignment with this effort, Nevada recently updated the statewide KinGap policy to clarify procedures and enhance the program implementation. Strategy three for our goal 2 is to increase pre and post adoptive services throughout Nevada. Summary of the progress towards this benchmark: DCFS has utilized the Adoption Call to Action meetings to examine the scope of comprehensive pre and post adoption services provided by child welfare agencies. Preadoption services include parent training, trust-based relationship intervention (or TBRI), parent coaching in home therapy and individual support tailored to the needs of each family. Post adoption services continue to build on this foundation offering in home family therapy, ongoing TBRI and parent coaching as well as support for family and youth transitions. Key barriers identified include delays in securing legal representation for families, the need for considering long term family dynamics, and ensuring both staff and families are fully prepared for adoption to address these challenges. Ongoing discussions around Title 4-E funding, training and program development are focused on improving resource allocation and filling service gaps to strengthen support for adopted families both before and after adoption finalization, including those residing out of state. Lastly, efforts will be centered on the key barriers in the adoption process, addressing the shortage of adopted homes through targeted recruitment strategies and expanding access to critical resources. Priority focus areas include enhancing services for teens, improving access to mental health support and ensuring the continuation of services for

adopting families. These initiatives are data-driven and implemented in close collaboration with partner agencies and community providers to ensure a coordinated and effective approach.

Goal 3 is to enhance relationships between child welfare agencies and court partners, resulting in an improved court process and increased permanency. Strategy one is collaborate with our CIP (court improvement program). DCFS Family Programs Office will lead the efforts to initially facilitate conversations between the child welfare agencies and legal and judicial partners to determine common goals around increased collaboration. Feedback from partners across the state, along with child welfare data and the JCAMP data, will inform the development of the action plan to improve communication between systems. The state will utilize data reports monitoring and CQI (continuous quality improvement) activities to assess any impact on child and family outcomes, the Family Programs Office report on outcomes during reoccurring workgroups, ad hoc meetings with community partners and the statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) and other interested parties. The state will utilize quality case reviews as well as the mechanisms to assess progress with the strategy. Nevada has prioritized practice and community issues for our extended foster care youth and our families. First, over the past year collaboration with the courts has been and will be prioritized over the next few years as we continue to work on our Child and Family Services Reviews. That's our federal review that we do and our upcoming program improvement plan over the past decade. The court improvement program participated in an onsite meeting with the Children's Bureau and has continued its involvement throughout its participation with our federal review and statewide assessment meetings to review and monitor statewide indicators and supplemental context data. Agency representatives also engaged in the Judicial, Court, and Attorney Measures of Performance (JCAMP) project. For that, the court improvement program is collaborating with the agency to share this JCAMP data. Additionally, the core improvement program is assisting with the dissemination of agency surveys to support data and collection and help identify opportunities for improvement related to the CFSR. Lastly, over the next coming year, the Family Programs Office aims to strengthen communication and engagement between DCFS and child welfare agencies, the court improvement program, traditional legal partners and CASA (court appointed special advocates). This effort is intended to create a clearer picture of the needs and challenges faced by both the child welfare system and the dependency courts. FPO and the CIP will assess existing data collection efforts, including JCAMP, and identify areas for improvement, allowing for opportunities to enhance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Goal 4 is a healthy workforce. Our strategy in Nevada will develop a plan to improve the recruitment and retention of its child welfare workforce. Our summary is currently Nevada has not made any measurable progress for this goal due to recent staff turnover. There is a need to reassess the strategies and approaches for achieving this. The Family Programs Office intends to leverage the existing workforce, innovative, and training (which is our WIT team) to enhance the skills and competencies of the child welfare workforce. This team is already dedicated to supporting and advancing child welfare training across the state. Currently, Nevada utilizes CoachNV and supervisor training programs to strengthen leadership capacity and support professional development. Over the next year, FPO plans to assess and evaluate both supervisor training and CoachNV programs to analyze implementation and fidelity data. The goal is to improve training effectiveness and continue to build a robust community of practice, and additionally it has been confirmed that data on the state workforce demographic is already

available. The FPO office will use this data to evaluate how well the child workforce reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

Lastly, goal #5 is the continuous quality improvement. We do not have any update on strategy one which is enhance the existing DQI. But for strategy two, we want to create a community of collaboration with agency community and system partners. And our summary for that is Nevada has made preliminary progress towards the goal of enhancing its CQI system The Family Programs Office has initiated discussion to revisit and revise the CQI action plan and assess the value of a follow up assessment to measure growth and identify new priorities. Nevada is also taking steps to formalize its CQI related policies and processes. FPO continues to collaborate with the DCFS data team, child welfare agencies and community partners to identify where enhanced data use, particularly through tools like UNITY, which is our statewide database, and JCAMP, can better support decision making and performance improvement. Lastly, Nevada has updated its MOUs between DCFS and County child welfare agencies. These MOUs will facilitate collaboration and coordination throughout the CFSR round full review process, reinforcing the state's commitment to continuous quality improvement.

6. For Information: Presentation and Discussion of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Information and Data on Items 1-3 – Dylan Nall, Division of Child and Family Services

Dylan Nall said every child welfare agency in Nevada participates in a federal review, and we are rated on 18 different items. She has data on items 1 through 3. Item 1 is the timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment. In the review in 2018 we had a score of 58.3%. So, then we went on a program improvement plan (PIP) that was put through with the federal government. When we completed the PIP in 2022, we had a rating of 83.72%. After our PIP is completed, the federal government kind of gave us a little bit of a break and said, hey, we would like you guys to still do reviews. But they're not mandated by the federal government. So we did those from April 2023, and then we just finished them in March of 2024. We averaged about 77.42% and then from August 2024 until March of 2025, we averaged about 89.29%.

Caleb Bay asked, can you clarify what the percentages are measuring? Dylan said it is measuring response times. When we get a child abuse or neglect report, there's a whole array of what we can assign it. We can assign it as information only, an information referral priority one which is within six hours, a priority two which is within 24 hours, or priority three which is 72 hours. So, this is basically giving us a percentage if we are meeting those priority response times. We are meeting 89.29% of our response times. Molly Blanchette gave some clarification. If we reviewed 65 cases during that time frame, 89% of those were rated as a strength for item 1 percent and the rest as an ANI (area needing improvement). It's really about the case sample and how many cases are rated a strength. How many cases are rated an ANI? Sometimes you'll see that although we did 65 cases, maybe only 42 cases were applicable for that item, so the percentage would be based on however many cases were applicable for the item, whether they were a strength or an area needing improvement. Dylan thanked Molly for that.

Dylan Nall then addressed item 2 – services to the family to prevent the children's entry into foster care or reentry after reunification. We were at 71%, then 84% PIP completion PIP, 85% in our Nevada CQI review, and are now at 71%. Jane Saint asked why we went backwards. Dylan said there's some speculation we may have been rating it incorrectly. We may have been getting a little confused about safety services versus safety planning and so we may have rated them a little bit differently based on that. We have had conversations with the Children's Bureau and they have given us things to work on and improve based on what they've seen in our reviews. So, we are starting to train the workforce on, what's the difference between those two. As a reviewer herself, it's hard sometimes to distinguish the two.

Dylan Nall addressed item 3 on the agencies making concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the children in their own homes or while in foster care. We were at 46%, PIP completion 70%, in our Nevada CQI review 73%, and are currently at 69%.

Dylan Nall spoke about the CFSR process. The goal of the CFSR is to ensure that states are in compliance with federal requirements and help states improve their services to children and families. The CFSR is the federal government's primary mechanism to ensure the state can adhere to federal laws and regulations related to child welfare. It addresses accountability it holds our states accountable for safety, permanency, and well-being of our children, and then our care system improvement. Ultimately, the goal of the CFSR is to improve outcomes for our children and families.

Our statewide assessment gets completed in collaboration with stakeholders and other agencies. We analyze how our system is functioning. We are submitting our statewide assessment on Friday, so that's the first part of our review. Then we do an on-site review, a team of federal and state reviewers examine the state child welfare program, which includes case review and stakeholder interviews. There are the findings and determination - the Children's Bureau will determine the extent to which the state is in substantial conformity with our federal requirements. Finally, our program improvement plan, if a state is not in substantial conformity, it must develop a PIP to address the areas needing improvement.

We have outcomes achieved for our children and families and then systemic factors, the infrastructure and systems that support the delivery of the child welfare system. Dylan Nall stated that the primary focus is on safeguarding children from child abuse and neglect is a safety outcome. This outcome emphasizes the fundamental responsibility of child welfare agencies to ensure children's safety but also addresses the agency's actions in response to reports of child maltreatment. It is how fast we're responding to these reports, if we're meeting our deadlines. So, this item measures the agency's ability to protect children from ongoing and escalating abuse and neglect accountability. It holds agencies accountable for responding to the reports of the maltreatment. Lastly, legal compliance. The state is required to have policies and laws that mandate how fast we can respond to maltreatment reports.

For safety outcome 2, which is children are safely maintained in their home whenever is appropriate. This outcome emphasizes the importance of preserving families and preventing unnecessary removal of children from their homes. It also recognizes that children generally

fare better when they remain with their families, provided they are safe. So, did the agency make concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent the children's entry into foster care or reentry after reunification? This item assesses the agency's actions to help families before they are removed or after they have returned home. It examines whether the agency actively works to address the issues that led to child maltreatment, aiming to maintain the child safety within the family. Why is this important; we want to promote families staying together. It helps the prevention of trauma, unnecessary removal from the home can be traumatic for these kiddos.

Then, Effective Intervention. This item encourages agencies to provide services to address the root cause of maltreatment, leading to more sustainable solutions. Then, Resource Allocation: investing in services that can prevent foster care placement, potentially reducing long term costs associated with associated with foster care. What's measured? We had the prevention of initial removal, so making sure we asked our reviewers, did the agency work with the family to prevent the child from entering foster care and then the prevention of reentry. So, after a child has reunified with the family, did the agency provide these services? The conclusion of item 2 is that it's a critical component of the CFSR, focusing on the agencies responsibility to provide these services to these families to prevent again the children's entry or reentry into foster care.

Item 3 is, did the agency make concerted efforts to assess and address the risks and safety concerns relating to the children in their own home or in foster care? So why is this important for maintaining child safety? It measures our agency's success in the most fundamental responsibilities, protecting our kids. All other child welfare goals, the permanency and well-being are predicated on the kiddo being safe as well. So this item three has also has a direct link to the other outcomes. Item 3 is the direct measure for evaluating whether children are protected from abuse and neglect and safely maintained in their homes. Poor performance here directly impacts overall safety outcomes. Un-addressed safety concerns lead to the instability and reentry into foster care and hinder permanency achievement, which is reunification, adoption or guardianship. The well-being of a child, physical health, mental health and education success are severely compromised at their basic safety is not assured as well. A strong rating on item 3 indicates thoughtful decision making, an effective intervention, and due diligence monitoring by case workers and supervisors.

Areas needing improvements in item 3 across the state: these findings mandate development of PIPs to enhance training policy, supervision and service availability, and ultimately strengthening the child welfare system. We measure safety and risk. We also are looking at the completeness of our initial safety assessment and ongoing assessment. We're looking at information gathering. How did we talk to the kid? Did we talk to them alone? Do we talk to them monthly? Things like that. Also, we ask to see if they're safe in their home for visitation and safe in their foster homes.

Item 3 is a critical component of the CFSR, focusing on the agency's responsibility to provide services to families to prevent children from entering or reentering foster care. It underscores the importance of family preservation and the provision of effective interventions.

Jane Saint asked what impact staff turnover had on our ratings. Dylan answered that she doesn't think a lot of states are hitting the benchmarks because there's certain percentages we must be at. For some items it's 90% and then for others it's 95%. Those are unrealistic numbers. She does think staff turnover does play a huge role in it, especially since we have to retrain and retrain. From what she understands, the lifespan of a child welfare worker is 18 months and to even grasp the idea of what child welfare is, it takes three to five years. They're not even really grasping what their job and their role in making an impact until they get into the three to five years and then we have a turnover rate at 18 months. We see awful stuff every day and read about it and it's just a lot of trauma for the workers too.

7. For Information: Presentation and Discussion of Foster Care Data – Dylan Nall, Division of Child and Family Services

Dylan Nall said she believed Caleb Bay was the one who requested this. He had asked for an exit interview for foster care. She didn't have that as each agency has something different, but she had gathered numbers as of 06/22/2025. We have 5170 total in the entire state. Clark has 4080. Washoe has 681, the rural counties have 409. Then if we move down, we have the actual homes. Clark County has 1103 homes. Washoe County has 252 homes The rural counties have 121 homes. We have roughly 1476 foster care homes.

Caleb Bay said this was definitely a start and it was shocking to see how much more Clark County has compared to the rest of the state. He was curious how that compares to the number of kids in care in the county and the rest of the state proportionally how many homes there are in each jurisdiction. Similar to how we're talking about staff turnover rates, he was curious about what the turnover rates of foster homes are because it seems like the recruitment, at least in Washoe County, is outpacing retention and that a big part of the problem is retaining foster homes.

Laurie Jackson said that is quite true for the rurals. Actual recruitment is down. They looked at a five-month period January to May of last year. The number of referrals that they got or inquiries for foster care and then the number of inquiries this year from January to May and it went down from like 47 to like 6. This has been a downward trajectory for six years, probably a little longer than that because it always starts a little slow and you don't quite notice it. Then, they are having a very hard time retaining foster homes. We're all looking at customer service training and doing some very specific training with workers on how to work with foster homes and how to retain them and how to be effective communicators with them. One of the things we do see historically is we see decreased foster homes whenever there is economic downturns or uncertainty. We saw it in the 2008 recession, when there was just a big downturn and people were kind of trying to figure out exactly what was happening. It's always been difficult here in this state.

Jane Saint said that down there in Clark County, she has heard a lot of advertising for becoming foster parents. Don't know if it's working. When she was with CASA and they started advertising, it definitely helped get the numbers up. But then again, people go through the training and

retaining them is hard because there's these kids are facing so much more trauma and it's very emotional. It's emotionally draining to do this, and that's across the country. When she was state director for Nevada CASA, nationally they had trained 24,000 new CASAs, but at the same time, they lost about 16,000. So, the retention is very low.

Salli Kerr said her experience has also been that once the foster parents became trained in that initial training period, there was a lack of any other kind of group support. When she brought that up and said, why are we not doing things like parents coming together and what was she told? It just turns into a bashing session. There was such a lack of good facilitation then, but those parents need one another and having been a foster parent herself and recognized the support of another group of foster parents, when you can sit down and just talk about challenges you're having and how things are working. That's another reason there's a retention problem because there's just no peer support or rarely offered peer support.

Jane Saint said when she went through her CASA training, they had foster parents who were not going to continue as foster parents. They are moving into being a CASA, and as they were presenting the different resources that were available to the CASAs, the foster parents were saying, wait a minute, how come we didn't know about this when we were fostering? That information would have been invaluable for them.

Laurie Jackson said an unintended consequence of the entire state doing the model now is that it tightened up what CPS is intervening on. But these kids have much more severe behaviors, there are much more severe disabilities, there are neurodivergent impacts that are coming from parental drug use and alcohol use that is making it difficult when we are taking kids to be able to place them because we don't have the resources here within our state for highly autistic children who are maybe nonverbal perhaps or children with severe physical disabilities. So that's another impact also is that some of these kids are incredibly difficult to place, whether in Washoe or Clark, regardless of what how much you're working with, we don't have the services that are specific to their needs.

8. For Possible Action: Consideration, Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Future Agenda Items – Jane Saint, Chair

This item was tabled as there was no longer a quorum present.

9. For Information: Member Announcements Regarding Their Agencies – Jane Saint, Chair

There were no announcements.

10. Final Public Comment Discussion Only: (Action may not be taken on any matter brought up under this agenda item until scheduled on an agenda for action at a later meeting) - Jane Saint, Chair

There were no comments.

11. Adjournment – Jane Saint, Chair

Meeting adjourned at 10:12 AM.