

# CITIZENS REVIEW PANEL ANNUAL REPORT

Calendar Year 2019

## ***Submitted by***

*Child Death Review Executive Committee*

*Children's Justice Act Task Force*

*Clark County Department of Family Services Citizens Advisory  
Committee*

## ***To***

*Nevada Division of Child and Family Services*

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# Executive Summary

Public Law 104-234, 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 Systems (CPS). CAPTA requires that Nevada have at least three (3) Citizen Review Panels (CRP) to receive funding for child protection efforts. Citizen Review Panels are to review various aspects of the child protection system at the state and local levels and make recommendations for improvements. (See Appendix A).

Panels include members with expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect and have diverse membership, including but not limited to, representatives from:

- Community Advocacy and Non-Profit Organizations
- Public Child Serving Agencies
- Law Enforcement
- Parent and Youth Leaders
- Court Systems including Attorneys and Judges
- Mental and Physical Health
- Education
- Public Health

A list of each panel's members and their affiliations are provided in [Appendix B](#).

Nevada has designated three (3) standing committees to serve as CRP's. All Nevada CRP's meet at least quarterly and meetings adhere to Open Meeting Law. Panels may make recommendations for training, policy or system improvements. Nevada CRPs include the:

- Child Death Review Executive Committee (CDR) which provides coordination and oversight of local child death review teams;
- Children's Justice Act Task Force (CJA), which is charged with developing, establishing, and operating programs designed to improve the assessment, investigation and prosecution of suspected child abuse and neglect;
- Clark County Department of Family Services Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) which identifies and communicates perspectives on services provided and how to best meet the needs of families that utilize the Clark County Department of Family Services; and

# Panel Purpose and Activities

## Child Death Review Executive Committee (CDR)

### Purpose

Nevada makes every effort to reduce the number of preventable child fatalities and near fatalities through prevention messaging, training and other initiatives. Nevada's child fatality review process includes local multi-disciplinary teams reviewing all deaths of children, ages 0-17 years of age, within their own communities and making recommendations to the Child Death Review Executive Committee (CDR). The CDR is established through NRS 432B.408 It is a multidisciplinary team, which provides coordination and oversight of local child death review teams. The CDR meets quarterly, adopts statewide protocols for the review of child deaths and distributes a statewide annual report that includes statistics and recommendations to prevent child deaths as well as regulatory and policy changes. The multidisciplinary team is comprised of representatives from local CDR teams, law enforcement, mental health, child welfare, vital statistics and the office of the attorney general. In 2003, Nevada passed a law placing a one-dollar tax on death certificates, which is used to fund child death reviews. The CDR awarded \$100,000 for SFY 2020 targeting prevention activities identified as the leading causes of death in Nevada over the past year. The following projects were funded:

### Activities

- **Babies Bounty:**  
This program provided safe sleep classes along with cribs and safe sleep kits.
- **Support Services of Nevada (aka Crisis Call Center)**  
In 2011, Crisis Cal Center established the Text4life campaign which allows clients to text the crisis call center. This is especially helpful to youth who are more comfortable texting than talking on the phone. This grant allowed expansion of this service.
- **Office of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance for Southern Nevada Health District**  
The Office of Epidemiology and Disease will use the grant to develop internal trainers and provide ongoing training for its employees using the safeTALK curriculum to promote suicide awareness. The long-term goal is to implement a Suicide Prevention Policy requiring all Southern Nevada Health District employees to participate in safeTALK within six months of employment.
- **Desert Rose Counseling and Henderson Fire Department**  
Desert Rose Counseling partnered with the Henderson Fire Department to focus on suicide prevention campaigns and activities in Clark County, NV.
- **Washoe County Human Services Agency**  
Washoe County Human Services Agency was awarded a grant to target suicide awareness and prevention campaigns in Northern Nevada.
- **NICRP/PCA Nevada**

The Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy (NICRP) in partnership with the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (CAN Prevention) and other community organizations received funding to organize a statewide conference to raise awareness regarding maltreatment prevention and safety activities.

- **Renown Children's Health Initiative/SAFE Kids**

This program serves as the SAFE KIDS lead agency in Washoe County. The goal is to increase partnerships and efforts to address teen problems including bullying, suicide, distracted driving, and substance abuse. Through partnership with the Children's Cabinet, a non-profit, and Adolescent Task Force, the group was granted funding the development of a comprehensive communication outreach plan with special emphasis on targeting Latinos populations. The development of culturally competent materials and training is a priority.

- **Immunize Nevada- Healthy Young Nevada**

Healthy Young NV seeks to improve teen health outcomes by reducing the instances of disease, disorders and disconnection It seeks to empower young adults to be advocates for their own health. The three-tier website, <https://healthyyoungnv.gov> is designed to provide a one-stop, comprehensive health information site designed to engage 11-26 year-olds.

- **Department of Health and Human Services Office of Suicide Prevention**

The Office of Suicide Prevention applied and received money to train all Clark County Department of Family Services staff in safeTALK or Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST) classes to increase staff awareness and responsiveness to foster youth at risk for suicide.

# Children's Justice Act Task Force (CJA)

## Purpose

The Nevada Children's Justice Act Task Force was established in 1994 as a requirement of Section 107(a) of the Child Abuse and Protection Treatment Act (P.L. 111-320) to receive an annual grant to improve child protection services in the State. The CJA is a multidisciplinary team with 14 unique disciplines represented.

The CJA is charged with developing, establishing, and operating programs designed to improve the assessment and investigation of suspected child abuse and neglect cases with a special emphasis on sexual abuse and exploitation, child fatalities, and cases involving children with disabilities or serious health-related problems who are suspected victims of child abuse or neglect. The CJA grant funds multidisciplinary training, policy development, and pilot programs.

## Activities

- **Supported the Implementation of the CSEC Coordinated Response Protocol:**

Nevada's CSEC Protocol was developed to serve as a guiding standard for timely, responsive and effective services. It provides guidance for implementing a coordinated response to identifying and serving child victims of sex trafficking. New Legislature was approved in 2019 that meets requirements of the allows Nevada's child welfare agencies to accept reports of CSEC victims by non-familial traffickers and to provide services to CSEC victims.

- **Supported Child Advocacy Centers and Multidisciplinary Teams (MDT):**

The CJA Task Force supported multiple trainings for staff of Child Advocacy Centers and MDTs throughout Nevada. Trainings included topics of forensic interviewing, responding to and improving the response to child victims of commercial sexual exploitation. A Child Advocacy Center that provides services to multiple rural counties in Nevada has provided training to those rural counties to increase awareness about the center and increase capacity in the number of children the center is serving.

- **New Child Sex Trafficking Legislation for Child Welfare agencies**

New legislation was approved by the 2019 legislature that allows the child welfare agencies to assess and serve CSEC Victims and requires mandated reporters to report to a child welfare agency when they have reasonable cause to believe that a child is a victim of commercial sexual exploitation.

New legislation was approved by the 2019 legislature that requires DCFS to have a coordinator of services for CSEC victims. This position is required to assess the current and anticipated needs of CSEC victims, evaluate any incentives necessary to recruit providers of housing for such children, and develop a plan to establish the infrastructure to provide treatment, housing and services to such children.

- **Sub grant award process.**

Modeled after other States' CJA Task Forces a sub award process and procedures were developed. Sub awards will be approved and monitored by the CJA. Sub awards were given to two child welfare agencies and one Child Advocacy Center with activities that support the implementation of the CSEC Protocol and increase the capacity of the rural Child Advocacy Center.

# Clark County Department of Family Services Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

## **Purpose**

The Citizen Advisory Committee serves as a liaison between the community and Clark County Department of Family Services (DFS). The purpose of the Citizens Advisory Committee is to identify and communicate to the DFS important social service issues and service requirements regarding client services. This committee offers perspective on services provided and how to best meet the needs of families that utilize the DFS. The Advisory Committee examines areas of focus along the full continuum of child welfare and initiates recommendations forwarded to DFS Administration.

## **Activities**

- **Prevention**

The CAC identified Prevention as one of its initiatives, especially as it relates to the new federal Families First Prevention Services Act.

- **Intervention and Accountability**

The CAC identified Intervention and Accountability as it relates to improved communication within DFS as another initiative. The CAC assesses DFS's internal and external communication strategies so as to ensure that the DFS is open, inclusive and transparent. The Clark County Ombudsman has presented to the CAC and provides its monthly reports to the CAC for review and discussion. The CAC expressed particular interest in how DFS is making the Ombudsman accessible as a resource for former and current foster youth.

- **Transitional and Aging Out Youth (TAY) Supports**

The CAC identified TAY supports as an initiative especially as it relates to what DFS is doing to support youth transitioning out of care. An education campaign was recommended to be developed to ensure youth and staff were aware of a Tuition Waiver for youth who had been in care since the age of 14.

- **Ombudsman's Report:** Regularly review monthly reports to get an overview of the types of complaints that are being received to determine if there are systematic and ongoing issues, that may need to be addressed by management staff. The reporting will also encompass complaints that are received internally by DFS Supervisors/Managers as well as complaints that are made directly to the Ombudsman.

- **Policies and Procedures**

DFS has been updating their policies and procedures, making them available on their website. DFS has been creating policy videos which can be viewed by staff and stakeholders, when applicable. Sibling Separation and Preservation Policy was first collaborative video developed with external stakeholders (DFS/CASA and CAP attorney).

# CRP Recommendations

1. It is recommended that DCFS identifies ways in which the Children's Justice Act can support the implementation of updated policies 0506 Intake and Priority Response Times and 0508 Nevada Initial Assessment which are a result of the Program Improvement Plan.
2. It is recommended that DCFS identify ways in which there can be more guidance about domestic violence and its impact on families, including but not limited to workforce training.
3. It is recommended that DCFS continue to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) and support substance exposed infants.



# APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF 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; and
- Review other criteria the panel determines important to the protection of children, including the extent to which the state CPS system is coordinated with the Title IV-E foster care and adoption assistance programs and the review of child fatalities and near fatalities.

- **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. 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 the CRP members. This amendment includes additional language highlighted in subsection two as follows:

- Establish a panel comprise of volunteer members to evaluate the extent to which agencies which provide child welfare services are effectively discharging their responsibilities for the protection of children.
- Adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of subsection1, 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.

# APPENDIX B: PANEL MEMBERS

## Child Death Review Executive Committee

MEMBER NAME	AFFLIATION
Michelle Sandoval	Division of Public and Behavioral Health
Misty Vaughan Allen	Office of Suicide Prevention
Sharon Benson	State Attorney General's Office
Hayley Jarolimek	Division of Child and Family Services
Natalie Guesman, Co-chair	Clark County Department of Family Services
Michael Cason	Division of Child and Family Services
Kelli Weishaupt	Division of Child and Family Services
Sherri Cline	Washoe County Human Services Agency
Stephanie Morgan	Department of Health and Human Services
Vickie Ives, Co-chair	Division of Public and Behavioral Health
Brandy Holbrook	Division of Child and Family Services
Jill Marano	Clark County Department of Family Services
Desiree Mattice	Department of Public Safety
Ryan Gustafson	Washoe County Human Services Agency

## Children's Justice Act Task Force

MEMBER NAME	MEMBERSHIP DESIGNATION
Desiree Mattice	Law Enforcement
Gabrielle Carr, Chair	Criminal Court Judge
David Gibson	Civil Court Judge
Sharon Benson	Prosecuting Attorney
Jennifer Rains	Defense Attorney
Janice Wolf	Child Advocate/Attorney for Children
Sheila Parks	Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
Rebecca Gebhardt	Health Professional
Jennifer McCombs / Jamie Wong	Mental Health Professional
Mari Parlade	Child Protective Services
Fran Maldonado	Individual Experienced in Working with Children with Disabilities
Allison Stephens	Parent/Representative of Parent Group
Kimberly Mull	Adult Former Victim of Child Abuse and Neglect
Salli Kerr	Individual Experienced in Working with Homeless Children and Youth

## Clark County Citizens Advisory Committee

<b>MEMBER NAME</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>
Donna Smith, (Co-Chair)	Foster and Adoptive Parents
Brian Adams	Clark County School District
Denise Tanata	Child Welfare Advocates
Matthew Cox	Child Welfare Advocates
Andre Bailey	General Public
Judge Frank Sullivan	Local Juvenile Probation Services
Dashun Jackson	Youth with Foster Care Experience
Crystal Bomar (Deputy Chair)	General Public
Sheila Parks (Chair)	Court Appointed Special Advocate
Rhiannon Foreman	Parent Advocates
Carly Aldis	Private Providers of Mental Health