

Prevention Investigation and Family Services Panel By-Laws

Article I - Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Prevention, Investigation, and Family Services Citizen Review Panel.

Article II - Purpose

Section 1. The Citizen Review Panel (CRP) will review the practices, procedures, and policies of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) while making recommendations for improvements of the child protection services system.

Section 2. The Statewide Citizen Review Panel is a mandated group of community members that represent the broad diversity of the state and are responsible for determining whether DCYF is effectively discharging its child protective responsibilities pursuant to:

(a) The child protection standards set forth in section Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 5101 et seq.); and

(b) Any other criteria that the panel deems important to ensure the protection of children.

Article III - Membership

Section 1. The panel shall be comprised of at least eight members and no more than 15 members. Panel members will complete an application and before the panel votes on the appointment. An appointment is confirmed after a simple majority vote.

Section 2. Panel shall consist of community members that have a professional or personal understanding of the child welfare system and/or expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

Section 3. Panel membership is voluntary and is expected to represent the diversity of the state and of the communities served by DCYF.

Section 4. New panel members must complete an onboarding process that includes a detailed orientation of the roles and responsibilities of the Citizen Review Panel.

Section 5. The initial term of a CRP member will be two years.

Section 6. A Quorum of the Panel is 51% of the current panel membership.



Section 7. Panel members must submit their resignation in writing via the CRP Facilitator 30 days prior to the effective date of resignation.

Section 8. Panel members can be removed from appointment after a simple majority vote for failing to disclose a conflict of interest that impacts their work on the panel, violating the confidentiality agreement, failure to participate in four consecutive panel meetings or activities without contact with the panel Co-Chair and/or Facilitator, disrespectful action toward panel members, Facilitator, or invited guests after written notice was provided to correct behavior, and any other violation of the Policies and Procedures and By-Laws of the Citizen Review Panel.

Article IV - Officers

Section 1. Officers consist of two Co-Chair positions and a Secretary as deemed necessary by the panel.

Section 2. The Co-Chair positions shall preside at all meetings of the CRP panel, establish other committees as needed and appoint their members, and assume any other duties established by a majority vote of the membership. The Co-Chair shall serve as an ex officio member of all committees.

Section 3. The Secretary, if appointed, shall coordinate with the Facilitator, and perform the duties that may be delegated by the Co-Chair or by a majority vote of the membership. The Secretary shall serve as a scrivener on committees as needed.

Article V - Committees

Section 1. The Panel may establish such committees as may be necessary to carry out its mandate.

Section 2. Members of panel committees shall be appointed by either Co-Chair. Committees shall include members of the panel and shall be chaired by panel members. Committees may employ the expertise or consultation of individuals as needed and on a short-term basis.

Section 4. Committees shall meet as often as necessary to fulfill their particular mandate.

Section 5. The CRP may establish written protocols to guide its work.

Article VI - Duties of Panel Members

Section 1. The panel shall evaluate the extent to which DCYF is effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities in accordance with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). This should include DCYF's work with children at risk of abuse or neglect, children under the care of DCYF, and individuals and families receiving services from DCYF.

Section 2. The panel will conduct outreach and solicit public comment to assess the impact of current policies, practices, and procedures of DCYF on children and families in the State of Washington, as appropriate.

Article VII - Panel Meetings

Section 1. The panel will meet at least four (4) times in a calendar year.

Section 2. The Co-Chair and Facilitator can call special meetings, workgroups, or site work as necessary for the work of the panel.

Section 3. A Quorum consists of 51% of panel members in attendance; in person, by phone, virtual meeting, or email.

Article VIII - Non-Discrimination

Section 1. There shall be no discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, sex, creed, national origin, socioeconomic status, sexual preference, or gender identity. There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified individual by reason of disability or age. There shall be special efforts to identify persons who have disabilities and persons from ethnically, economically, and racially diverse groups to participate in the panel and conduct the panel's business.

The Citizen Review Panels are an inclusive organization with diverse members. The CRPs welcome everyone and will continue to work to promote inclusivity. The CRPs will continue to support efforts to combat prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. All panel members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others.

The Citizen Review Panels commit to creating an equitable and inclusive environment. The CRPs respect the fundamental rights and dignity of all people.

Article IX - Amendments

Section 1. Amendments to the by-laws of the CRP shall be made by a simple majority of the Quorum of the Panel present at any meeting of the panel, but only after notification in writing to the full membership at least two (2) weeks in advance.

Article X - Confidentiality

Section 1. The Citizen Review Panel shall safeguard confidential information (whether acquired through verbal communication, written record, or observation) pertaining to any child, relative, or friend of any family under review of the Citizen Review Panel. In addition, the panel shall safeguard information pertaining to individual staff or panel members and information that may have a detrimental effect on families or the community at large, obtained or shared among members during panel and committee meetings. This clause shall specifically exclude formal reports, media releases, and other information approved by the panel or to meet mandatory reporting guidelines.

Section 2. Panel members shall sign a confidentiality agreement at the start of their term and each year thereafter, which shall apply as relevant in panel matters, meetings, circumstances, and events.

Section 3. Failure to uphold confidentiality will result in the member's termination from the panel.

Article XI - Conflict of Interest

Section 1. Panel members and appointees for membership shall disclose any personal or professional relationships that may represent or may appear to represent a conflict of interest with the panel. These conflicts can include financial and material interests or a potential for financial or material interest.

Article XII - Code of Conduct

The members of the Citizen Review Panel are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that represents their position as leaders and role models for the people of Washington.