

DSHS - Children's Administration Response to Washington State Citizen Review Panels

The purpose of this report is to respond to the Citizen Review Panels' recommendations to improve the state and local child protection system. To coincide with the Annual Progress and Services reporting period, this report covers the calendar year 2010 reporting period.

Background:

Washington State Citizen Review Panel Program was established in 1999 in response to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act requiring states to develop and establish Citizen Review Panels. Washington State has one regional Panel and two statewide Panels. These include:

1. Children, Youth and Family Services Advisory Committee
2. Oversight Committee
3. Children's Administration and Juvenile Rehabilitation Indian Policy Advisory Subcommittee

More than 40 Panel members, representing a broad spectrum of Washington communities participate on these panels. As required by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Panel members play an integral role in reviewing whether the state is meeting its goals of protecting children from abuse and neglect.

Children's Administration (CA) helps Panels by providing logistical and technical support; assisting with training, recruiting, and strategic planning; and facilitating the exchange of pertinent information. More information on Washington State Citizen Review Panels is located at: [DSHS - Children's Administration - Citizen Review Panels](#)

Washington State Citizen Review Panels' Areas of Focus for 2010

Citizen Review Panel	Area of Focus
<p><i>Children, Youth and Family Services Advisory Committee</i></p>	<p>During the CY 2010 reporting period, the Panel continued work begun in 2007 on racial and ethnic disproportionality related to child protection. The primary focus in 2010 was on the efforts of the department to reduce and eliminate racial disproportionality in the child welfare system. The Panel continued monitoring the department's implementation plans of recommendations made by the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee in December 2008, in response to a 2007 legislative mandate.</p> <p>The Panel focused specifically on the department's efforts to address disproportionality at the decision point of referral. In Washington state disproportionality initially occurs at referral indicating that mandated reporters need training and resources.</p>

Citizen Review Panel	Area of Focus
Oversight Committee	As in previous years, the Oversight Committee Citizen Review Panel invited and included local community members in Committee meetings to discuss the accessibility and effectiveness of CA services, with emphasis on policies, practices and community collaborations that support child safety and well-being. Specific areas of focus in 2010 included: child fatalities, CA Region 2 performance in meeting State and Federal requirements (per current data), foster parents and kinship/relative caregivers support and training opportunities, emergency child placement resources, racial disproportionality in services provided by CA, and staff turnover. The committee also continued to follow the agency's progress in implementing recommendations from prior years.
Children's Administration and Juvenile Rehabilitation Indian Policy Advisory Subcommittee	During the 2010 reporting period, the Panel focused on the following efforts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work on the development of the Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act. • Utilize the second ICW Case Review outcomes to develop regional and statewide implementation plans. • Develop mechanism to allow for tribal access to the CA, DSHS data system. • RA's will work with Tribes in their area to complete Local Tribal/State Agreements.

Citizen Review Panel's Recommendations

Citizen Review Panel	Recommendation
Children, Youth and Family Services Advisory Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CA should ensure mandated reporter training materials and training are widely distributed to mandated reporters and a plan is developed to ensure training and materials reach as many mandated reporters as possible. 2. CA should continue to improve Family Team Decision Making model fidelity. 3. CA should continue to expedite efforts to address data and reporting, including race and ethnicity, of Family Team Decision Making efforts. This will help CA determine whether Family Team Decision Making is impacting racial disproportionality in the Washington state child welfare system.
Oversight Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The agency should place priority on the expansion of emergency placement resources for children and youth in crisis. These resources should be available within reasonable proximity of larger and rural communities. 2. The Citizen Review Panel should continue to hold meetings in small communities in order to increase outreach and establish a presence for CA in its efforts to eliminate child abuse/neglect. 3. The agency at all levels should continue to support the Disproportionality Advisory Committee and commit itself to the remediation plan. A member of

Citizen Review Panel	Recommendation
	Region 2 Oversight Citizen Review Panel should participate on this Committee.
Children's Administration and Juvenile Rehabilitation Indian Policy Advisory Subcommittee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate and track compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and Disproportionality impacts in the implementation of SHB 2106. 2. Children's Administration will engage with CA/JRA- IPAC sub-committee to continue to develop a plan for ICW Quality Assurance in every CA office statewide.

Children's Administration CPS Response to Citizen Review Panel Recommendations

Children, Youth and Family Services Advisory Committee

Recommendation 1
CA should ensure mandated reporter training materials and training are widely distributed to mandated reporters and a plan is developed to ensure training and materials reach as many mandated reporters as possible.
<i>Children's Administration Response</i>
<p><i>CA agrees with this recommendation and in the spring of 2011 CA developed resource materials to educate mandated reporters on reporting child maltreatment and increase their awareness about racial disproportionality in the child welfare system and the impact of race and racism on their reporting decisions. Resource materials include a Mandated Reporter video brochure and a PowerPoint to be used in conjunction with the DSHS – Children's Administration's Guide to Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.</i></p>
<p><i>In May 2011, CA sent these resource materials to all CA regional mandated reporter trainers for distribution to all DSHS/CA offices and community partners. Target audiences included Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State school districts, medical personnel, law enforcement, and social service providers. Additionally, information was posted on the DSHS/CA internet and intranet at DSHS - Children's Administration - Report Abuse, Foster Parent website; and incorporated in the CA Newsletter June 30, 2011</i></p>
<p><i>In October 2011 CA recruited and hired a full-time Disproportionality Program Manager to serve as a statewide lead for CA's disproportionality elimination efforts. The Disproportionality Program Manager is responsible for the distribution of resource materials to mandated reporter's per CA's communication plan. To date, CA has distributed these resource materials to field staff, community partners, tribes and tribal organizations, current and prospective foster parents, mental and behavioral health professionals, public school faculty and administration, law enforcement, and medical personnel. Dissemination of the materials is</i></p>

ongoing.

CA developed a tracking system for the distribution of mandated reporter resource materials. This tracking system includes the collection and review of training evaluations completed by mandated reporter participants. Field trainers also submit quarterly reports on the demographics of attendees and participant feedback. Feedback from the training evaluations are closely monitored by CA headquarters staff and incorporated into the design of future trainings led by field staff.

Recommendation 2

CA should continue to improve Family Team Decision Making model fidelity.

Children's Administration Response

CA recognizes Family Team Decision Making is a fundamental approach to early and on-going engagement of parents and their natural supports and is in agreement about the importance of Family Team Decision Making model fidelity.

In October 2011, CA recruited and hired a full-time Family Engagement Program Manager to serve as a statewide lead for CA's Family Team Decision Making efforts. The Family Engagement Program Manager is responsible for evaluating and leading improvement activities to strengthen the Family Team Decision Making to achieve statewide consistency and accountability. These improvement activities include:

- *Development of Family Team Decision Making infrastructure and capacity assessment to determine needed enhancements. Recommendations included:*
 - *Development of a consistent Family Team Decision Making Facilitator supervisory structure. Currently each CA region has Family Team Decision Making Supervisors/Family Team Decision Making trainers in place with on-going efforts to implement a consistent supervisory structure statewide.*
 - *Uniform Family Team Decision Making Facilitator quality assurance observation tool and schedule for all facilitators to be observed and evaluated. The tool (see attached) has been implemented and the observations are on-going. Constructive feedback is given to the facilitator and supervisor after each observation as well as to CA staff when necessary.*
- *Provision of Family Team Decision Making trainings and development of an on-going training plan for case carrying and non-case carrying staff, including intake, program managers, supervisors, CHET workers, and placement desk personnel.*
 - *In March 2011, Mandatory training was implemented to all CA social work staff. The purpose of the training was to increase CA social workers' knowledge of their role, purpose of the Family Team Decision Making, expectations for meeting preparation and participation, and the importance of live decision making.*
 - *Follow up trainings will continue and include local Family Team Decision Making facilitators attending their local office unit meetings to continue to provide assistance and support. The statewide Family Engagement Program Manager will also participate to present statistical data for compliance with Family Team Decision Making and provide technical assistance.*
- *Included Family Team Decision Making Facilitators/Trainers with CA supervisors in the Child Safety Framework trainings occurring August - October 2011.*
- *Continued work on data request for standardized Family Team Decision Making progress reports, including Family Team Decision Making utilization to be distributed regularly. Family Team Decision Making data will be used to monitor family and community engagement, track emergent and imminent risk placements, moves between placements, exits from care, and race/ethnicity on a*

statewide, regional, and office/unit/individual level. This information can be compared to cases in which an Family Team Decision Making did not occur to provide further information on quality assurance.

- Re-instated Family Team Decision Making quarterly meetings statewide in November 2011. These meetings utilize a training segment targeted to areas specifically identified by facilitators, i.e., domestic violence, home study process, and documentation.
 - Completion of a Family Team Decision Making facilitator's survey to identify needs in November, 2011 with identified training topics, including integration of the Safety Framework into Family Team Decision Making Practice and Domestic Violence.
 - Completion of statewide training for all Family Team Decision Making facilitators in December 2011 on the Integration of the Safety Framework.
 - Domestic Violence training for all facilitators scheduled for April, 2012.
 - In December 2011, identified Family Team Decision Making trainings for CA management to address:
 - Importance of supervisor Family Team Decision Making meeting attendance.
 - CA Policies and Procedures for Family Team Decision Making.
 - Importance of family engagement as a part of the work.
 - Consistent practice
 - CA social worker bias
- Training will be provided to all CA supervisors throughout 2012.

During the last quarter of calendar year 2011, CA accessed the Stuart Grant to provide:

- Statewide meeting for Family Team Decision Making facilitators which included Family Team Decision Making training curriculum.
- Travel for the Statewide Program manager to observe Family Team Decision Making facilitators.

Beginning in January 2012, four separate back-up facilitator trainings were provided to 24 CA staff and will be provided on an on-going basis.

Recommendation 3

CA should continue to expedite efforts to address data and reporting, including race and ethnicity, of Family Team Decision Making efforts. This will help CA determine whether Family Team Decision Making is impacting racial disproportionality in the Washington state child welfare system.

Children's Administration Response

CA agrees data should be available to monitor family and community engagement, and the impact Family Team Decision Making has on disproportionality. During the spring of 2011, CA requested a data report to manage and evaluate Shared Planning meetings including Family Team Decision Making and Child Protection Team Staffings. FamLink design sessions and testing occurred throughout 2011, with final changes made to the FamLink meetings pages in the fall.

The data from the FamLink meetings pages will be available in 2012 to all field staff, supervisors, area and regional administrators, and executive staff in the following two meeting formats.

1. All Placements With Meeting: Will capture meeting information for all open placements to evaluate the use of meetings for youth in placement.
 - Evaluation of placement population requiring a meeting (Family Team Decision Making &

Child Health and Education Tracking (CHET) compliance;

- *Estimation of CHET Shared Planning Meeting time-frame compliance for placed youth requiring a meeting, and;*
- *Evaluation of Family Team Decision Making & Child Protection (CPT) Team meeting effectiveness for youth in placement*

2. All Meeting: *Will capture information for all documented meetings along with related placement information to evaluate the frequency of use for all meetings as well as the impact of meetings on placement decisions.*

- *Operational report on who received any meeting by time, meeting and child characteristics.*
- *Evaluation of Family Team Decision Making & CPT meeting effectiveness for all youth with a meeting*

The reports will enable staff to track statewide Family Team Decision Making utilization and vital measures, such as emergent and imminent placements, moves between placements, exits from care, and race/ethnicity on a statewide, regional, and office/unit/individual level. This information can be compared to cases in which an Family Team Decision Making did not occur to provide further information on quality assurance.

Oversight Committee

Recommendation 1

The agency should place priority on the expansion of emergency placement resources for children and youth in crisis. These resources should be available within reasonable proximity of larger and rural communities.

Children's Administration Response

CA HQ and Region 1 agree that expansion of emergency placement resources for children and youth in crisis in Region 1 continues to be a priority.

Region 1 South Area Administrators are working closely with the Oversight Committee and their community partners, particularly law enforcement, mental health and the tribes to expand resources, particularly in areas where resources have been significantly reduced or eliminated due to budget reductions.

In Yakima, CA is partnering with Casey Family and the Yakima Indian Nation for the purpose of building relationships and returning Indian children to the tribal nation social services in a timely manner. This "Bringing Our Children Home" efforts of the tribe recently resulted in the reunification of twenty Indian children.

In Ellensburg, CA is working closely with two dynamic foster parents; Sara O'Brien of Fostering Hope and Angie Wilson who are natural community organizers. Together, CA and Sara O'Brien have recruited 12 foster families care as well developed much needed services such as parent visitations, Family Preservation Services and transportation.

In November 2011, CA implemented the Child Safety Framework statewide. The Child Safety Framework supports and enhances CA's practice model Solution Based Casework and focuses on assessing child safety throughout the life of a case. This primary and essential focus on child safety informs and guides ALL decisions made from Intake through case closure including removal and reunification decisions. In addition to keeping children safe, goals of this safety planning approach is to prevent unnecessary removals through a least intrusive approach and justify removals only when absolutely necessary. Other states implementing similar child safety models have reported a reduction in disproportionality. CA will monitor this to determine if WA will experience a similar impact.

In summary, DSHS/CA remains committed in these times of decreased revenues to closely collaborate with impacted provider groups to:

- Maintain services to ensure child safety.
- Redesign service needs to improve outcomes for children and families involved with the child welfare system while meeting CA business needs.
- Plan for services that are community-based, leverage natural supports, reduce placement moves for children and improve consistency of practice statewide.
- Optimize efficiencies by maintaining service reductions, ensuring payment integrity, and maximizing federal funding.

Recommendation 2

The Citizen Review Panel should continue to hold meetings in small communities in order to increase outreach and establish a presence for CA in its efforts to eliminate child abuse/neglect. Currently, Citizen Review Panel meetings occur in-person every other month.

Children's Administration Response

CA HQ and Region 1 agree with this recommendation and are committed to holding meetings in small communities whenever possible.

Recommendation 3

The agency at all levels should continue to support the Disproportionality Advisory Committee and commit itself to the remediation plan. A member of Region 2 Oversight Citizen Review Panel should participate on this Committee.

Children's Administration Response

CA is committed to remedying racial disproportionality and racial disparity in the child welfare system. The following current and on-going efforts in support of the Disproportionality Committee and remediation plan include, but are not limited to:

- The NAPCWA Agency Assessment survey was completed in January 2011 by field staff and Headquarters staff who had not previously taken the survey. Susan Barkan of Partners for Our Children and University of Washington intern Lindsey Lanham compiled and analyzed the results. A draft report is under review by CA.
- Casey Family Programs provided funding for Children's Administration and Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration to engage youth, families and staff in a series of focus group discussions to obtain perception data from birth parents, foster youth alumni and stakeholders. The final report was received in May 2011. CA is reviewing recommendations and developing next steps to address concerns.

- CA developed tip sheets for staff to use the 5 questions from the Racial Equity Impact Analysis tool. CA will pilot the tip sheets in one region and incorporate changes if needed. Once the tip sheet is updated, it will be shared with CA leadership for final review and statewide implementation.
- CA is integrating the four new initiatives developed by the WA State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee into its remediation plan. Workgroups are currently being developed for each initiative and include:
 1. Increased recruitment of foster caregivers of color.
 2. Increased documentation of racial, ethnic, and tribal affiliation data.
 3. Elimination of long-term foster care as a permanent plan.
 4. Mandatory disproportionality awareness training for all CA staff.

Workgroup members will include WSRDAC, Regional Administrators and other CA staff, community partners, and Indian Child Welfare representatives.
- On October 13, 2011 Casey Family Programs funded a day long retreat for CA, tribes and Recognized American Indian Organization's to develop implementation plans for the former six regions based on the 2009 ICW Case Review.
- Children's Administration newly revised mandated reporter training materials was distributed to field staff and community partners, and published on the CA internet and intranet in June 2011. Field trainers will report quarterly on demographics of attendees and on a training survey filled out by the trainees. CA headquarters staff received the first reports in October 2011. After receiving the second quarterly reports they will compile the results and analyze to determine if the training needs refining.
- In January 2012, CA headquarters disproportionality staff and Division of Licensed Resources staff worked together to ensure the Request for Proposal for the new Recruitment and Retention Contract for foster parents had a focus on recruiting Native American and African American caregivers by providing performance-based incentives for potential contractors. This is a strategy for one of the four new initiatives from the WSRDAC.
- The CY2011 Remediation Plan status update is expected to be complete in February 2012.

SHB 1472 limits Washington State Racial Disproportionality Committee membership to 15 members representing various disciplines. However, individuals from the community are invited to attend the meetings. Information about CA's work on disproportionality, including the 2011 meeting schedule, is located at: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/about/disproportionMeetings.asp>

Children's Administration and Juvenile Rehabilitation Indian Policy Advisory Subcommittee

Recommendation 1

Participate and track compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and Disproportionality impacts in the implementation of SHB 2106.

Children's Administration Response

CA agrees with this recommendation and is actively pursuing Indian Child Welfare Act compliance and practice improvements designed to eliminate disproportionality in the child welfare system. At this time, the implementation of phase II of SHB 2106 has been delayed due to a court order, therefore it is not possible to

track the compliance of ICWA and disproportionality impacts. Children's Administration is committed to tracking compliance with ICWA and Disproportionality.

Recommendation 2

Children's Administration will engage with CA JRA IPAC sub-committee to continue to develop a plan for ICW Quality Assurance in every CA office statewide.

Children's Administration Response

A new case review tool has been completed and will be piloted at a few different state and tribal locations and then used at the next ICW state and local case reviews. This new tool is essential to ensuring compliance with the new ICW state and federal requirements as well as the new CA policies and procedures. This tool was created with partnership between CA and CA-IPAC representatives. The next statewide case review will be in the fall of 2012.

Each Region has developed their own plan for implementing the local ICW case review process:

Region 1

- *Area Administrators will begin implementing the local ICW case review process.*

Region 2:

- *ICW practice will continue to be discussed during case reviews. Office of Indian Child Welfare Supervisors will begin reviewing at least two new cases each month using the new ICW Review tool.*

Region 3:

- *Stevenson, Vancouver, Kelso, Centralia, South Bend, Long Beach, Aberdeen, Tumwater and Shelton complete monthly local ICW case reviews. The rest of the offices in the Region will develop a plan to implement these reviews in 2012.*
- *The Regional offices will conduct ongoing Indian Child Welfare case reviews every two years.*

Other strategies for improvement include:

- *CA has committed that all local offices begin local ICW case reviews to continue to monitor quality assurance and compliance with ICWA.*
- *Commitment to Administrative Policy 7.01 and effective partnership with Federally Recognized Tribes of Washington State, Recognized American Indian Organizations and individual American Indians and Alaska Natives in the planning of DSHS service programs, to ensure quality and comprehensive service delivery to all American Indians and Alaska Natives in Washington state.*