

POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL

FOR REGIONAL CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL MEMBERS



OCTOBER 2022



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INTRODUCTION

The Pennsylvania (PA) Policy and Procedures Manual for Regional Citizen Review Panel (CRP) members was established to assist with organizing CRP processes.

The regional CRPs represent a wide array of citizen volunteers who live or work in the region's designated counties. The current regional CRPs can be viewed by clicking on following link: [Regional CRPs](#). In 2020, the Department of Human Services (DHS) determined that regional CRPs should be rotated to ensure representation of all regions of the Commonwealth, over time, while maintaining the same CRP program budget. Each region of PA's six CRP regions will be given the opportunity to maintain a panel for five years, on a rotating basis.

PA also has a statewide CRP, which is the Youth Advisory Board (YAB). Youth and alumni of the child welfare system, ages 16 to 21, are elected from regional boards as officers. Local and Regional YABs funnel into the Statewide YAB. More information about the Statewide YAB and Regional YABs can be found by clicking on the following link: [Statewide and Regional YABs](#). The Local, Regional, and Statewide YABs follow their own bylaws; therefore, the policies and procedures within this document pertain to regional CRPs only.

All CRPs examine statewide issues in child welfare and make recommendations that can be applied at the state level.

Mission and Purpose

The CRPs' mission is to facilitate citizen participation and provide opportunities for citizens to partner with local child protection systems to ensure that these systems provide the best possible service, prevent and protect children from abuse and neglect, meet the permanency needs of children, and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The CRPs' purpose is to examine policies, procedures, and practices of Commonwealth and local agencies to evaluate the extent to which Commonwealth and local child protective services system agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities.

History

In 1996, the United States (U.S.) Congress amended the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). With this amendment to CAPTA, (Public Law 104-235), Congress required that states establish CRPs in order to receive funding for the Child Abuse and Neglect State Grants Programs. CRPs are directed to evaluate state child welfare agencies and make recommendations for improvement in child protective services (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1998).

Legislation

To support compliance with the CAPTA in PA, House Bill 2670, Printer's Number 4849 was signed into law as Act 146 on November 9, 2006, by Governor Edward G. Rendell. Act 146 amended PA's Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) (Title 23 Pa. C.S., Chapter 63) to address the establishment, function, membership, meetings, and reports as they relate to CRPs in PA. Act 146 of 2006 required that DHS establish a minimum of three CRPs and that each CRP examine the following:

1. Policies, procedures, and practices of state and local agencies and, where appropriate, specific cases to evaluate the extent to which state and local child protective system agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities under Section 106 (b) of the CAPTA (Public Law 93-247, 42 U.S.C. § 5106a (b));
2. Other criteria the CRPs consider important to ensure the protection of children, including:
 - i. A review of the extent to which the state and local child protective services system is coordinated with the foster care and adoption programs established under part E of Title IV of the Social Security Act (49 Stat. 620, 42 U.S.C. § 670 et seq.); and
 - ii. A review of child fatalities and near fatalities.

Act 146 of 2006 also outlines the following:

- Membership – The CRPs shall be composed of volunteer members who represent the community, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.
- Meetings – Each CRP shall meet not less than once every three months.
- Reports – DHS shall issue an annual report summarizing the activities and recommendations of the CRPs and summarizing the Department's response to the recommendations.



COMPOSITION OF REGIONAL CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

Membership will be comprised of volunteer members. The CRPs should strive to have at least 8 members with a maximum of 15 members.

Regular CRP membership may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Parents;
- Resource parents;
- Individuals with lived experience of the child welfare system;
- Clergy and representatives from communities of faith;
- Business/corporate representatives;
- Children's/parents' attorneys;
- Child advocates/guardians ad litem;
- Health, drug and alcohol, and mental health professionals;
- Tribal representatives/advocates;
- Law enforcement representatives;
- Teachers and school administrators;
- Child welfare professionals (including those retired from state or county children and youth agencies); and
- Representatives or advocates for individuals with mental or physical disabilities.

In addition to regular members, CRPs can consider ad hoc membership, which could include DHS staff or county children and youth agency staff. Ad hoc membership will be:

- Limited in term by the scope of the project; and
- Limited by the topic area.

Ad hoc members will:

- Not share the same rights or responsibilities as full members;
- Not have voting privileges;
- Be restricted from reviewing confidential client or case file information; and
- Be restricted from information specific to a county children and youth agency.



Chairs

Each CRP will elect its own chair, who will preside over all meetings. Each CRP can elect a co-chair if deemed necessary by that CRP's membership.

Elections for chairs and co-chairs will be held in January following the orientation of the new panel. Chairs and co-chairs must receive two nominations each from fellow members and selection must be made by a majority vote. If no nomination initially receives a majority of votes, voting will continue until a nomination is made by a majority vote. The panel will have the option to elect a new chair and/or co-chair midway through the five-year panel term. Responsibilities of the chair include the following:

- One month prior to the CRP meeting, work with the PA Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) CRP Coordinator on the meeting agenda, facilitator's agenda, and handouts for the CRP meetings as well as notifying the CRP of upcoming meetings;
- One week prior to the meeting, meet with the CRP Coordinator either in person or via conference call to review the facilitator's agenda and make any last-minute edits or additions;
- Work with the CRP Coordinator on the recording and distribution of the minutes from the CRP meetings within two weeks following each meeting;
- At the close of each CRP meeting, review action steps and develop key messages to be communicated to key stakeholders;
- Oversee the development of the annual CRP report that contains recommendations and key activities of the CRP; and
- Assist in the planning of All Panel Meetings in person or via conference calls.

Vice-Chairs

If a co-chair is not selected, each CRP will elect its own vice-chair who will preside over meetings in the chair's absence. The vice-chair will automatically take the responsibility of the chair if the chair resigns and a co-chair is not elected.

Members

Membership on the CRP includes a set of responsibilities. Each member who joined in 2023 or later is encouraged to make a commitment to the panel for the full five years it is in operation. The following are required of all members:

- Review agenda and handouts that are sent via email prior to meetings;
- Notify the chair and the CRP Coordinator of additional agenda items at least a month prior to the upcoming meeting;
- Review meeting minutes that are sent as a follow-up to the meeting and provide any edits or additions;
- Approve meeting minutes from the previous meeting at each CRP meeting;

- Review any information or data given to the CRP at meetings or through intersession work;
- Notify the CRP chair and the CRP Coordinator if they are unable to attend a meeting; and
- Attend at least 75 percent of scheduled regional and All Panel Meetings.

*Members who joined prior to 2023 will follow the “Terms of Office” guidelines outlined in the 2019 Policy and Procedures Manual.

Resignation of Members

Chairs of the regional CRPs shall notify the CRP Coordinator of member resignations. The CRP Coordinator will then notify DHS of member resignations.

Members who fail to attend two consecutive meetings, without notice, or who attend less than 75 percent of meetings within a one-year period, will be considered to have resigned.

Rescission of Members

Rescission of a member shall be for cause (such as breach of confidentiality, being named as a perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse or being convicted of any of the crimes listed in [§6344\(c\)](#) of the CPSL (relating to grounds for denying employment or participation in program, activity or service).

The CRP can also vote to remove a member if a conflict of interest is identified or if the actions of the member are in opposition to the CRP mission and objectives. Under such circumstances, rescission of a member requires a quorum vote of the CRP. The chair will have the responsibility of notifying the member of the decision. The CRP Coordinator will notify DHS of the CRP’s decision and the basis for the decision.

DHS reserves the right to remove a member if the member does not meet CRP responsibilities or the actions of the member are in opposition to the mission or purpose of PA’s CRPs.



FULFILLING LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

CRP Meetings

Individual CRP Meetings

Each CRP will meet, at a minimum, quarterly (once every three months). Meeting dates and location(s) will be decided at the start of each year. The date, time, and location of the meeting will be decided based on consensus of the quorum. The CRP Coordinator and funds for approved activities will be provided to support each CRP meeting. If the CRP would like to schedule meetings to occur more frequently than on a quarterly basis, this will be decided and approved by the CWRC and DHS based on capacity, available funds, and need. Virtual meetings may be held in lieu of in-person meetings. CRPs cannot conduct business unless a quorum is present. For the purposes of this manual, a quorum is defined as at least two-thirds of the members.

All Panel Meetings

All Panel Meetings typically occur in the spring and fall of each year. This is an opportunity for all CRPs to come together in one meeting at the CWRC in Mechanicsburg, PA. All Panel Meetings are scheduled to take place over two consecutive days and allow time for information sharing among members, strategic planning with DHS, and planning next steps for CRP work. Additionally, DHS shares information regarding the Child and Family Services Plan and updates to the Annual Progress and Family Services Report (APSR) to keep the CRPs connected to this work. DHS also provides information to each CRP that will inform its focus area and invites its own staff or those connected to the Department who are experts on the specific topics chosen by the CRPs. All Panel Meetings will be scheduled based on capacity, available funds, and need. Virtual meetings may be held in lieu of in-person meetings.

Fall All Panel Meeting

On the first day of the Fall All Panel Meeting, members come together and meet within their own CRP to put together a presentation for DHS that outlines their work and recommendations for the year. The second day of the meeting brings CRP members, DHS, and CWRC leadership together to hear about each CRP's work and recommendations, provide the CRPs with updates on their previous recommendations and current efforts in child welfare in PA, and work together on strategic planning efforts for the following year. These meetings provide structured time for the CRPs to seek information from DHS and the stakeholders regarding the child protective services system as a whole as well as the CRPs' identified topic areas.

Spring All Panel Meeting

The first day of the Spring All Panel Meeting involves bringing together the CRPs, DHS, and CWRC leadership to provide structured time for the CRPs to receive information around their focus areas to move their work forward. During this time, DHS may also update the CRPs on the status of their recommendations submitted the previous December as well as provide them updates on current child welfare efforts in the Commonwealth. The second day of the meeting provides the CRPs with an opportunity to meet together to plan their work and activities moving forward through the end of the year.

Additional Opportunities for Members

General Activities

DHS also provides funding to offer members the opportunity to engage in activities designed to assist them in developing their recommendations. Approval is given based on the connection to the CRPs' overall work and is dependent on the availability of funds. Activities may vary but, in general, reimbursement is available for activities such as:

- Meeting with county children and youth agency representatives, legislators, or other stakeholders;
- Participation in Quality Service Reviews and other activities related to county Continuous Quality Improvement efforts;
- Attendance at Commonwealth and national workshops, conferences, and events including:
 - Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network Quarterly Meetings, Winter, and Summer Conferences; and
 - Annual Permanency Conference.
- Participation in conferences not listed above:
 - Members interested in attending other conferences and trainings as part of their work on the CRP must submit a training and conference request form ([Appendix B](#));
 - In making the decision, the CWRC and DHS will consider factors such as the availability of funds, the connection between the event and the mission of CRPs, and the connection between the event and the work of the CRP; and
 - The CWRC will ensure that the appropriate funds are available through CAPTA for reimbursement and/or payment of registration, travel, and meals for the request. DHS will give the final approval for the use of CAPTA funds for the request.
- Presenting at conferences:
 - When members express the desire to submit an abstract to present on CRP work at the National CRP Conference or another event, that member(s) must first submit the abstract to their fellow members and there must be a quorum vote that the member(s) can move forward with submission;

- The abstract must then be sent to the CRP Coordinator who will forward it to DHS;
- DHS must provide approval of the abstract before it can be submitted to be considered for presentation at the conference or event; and
- If a member would like to present on a topic outside the scope of the work within their own CRP, that person must submit an abstract independently from the CRP. (Note: If the abstract is accepted by the conference, the presenter's attendance at the conference is not guaranteed to be paid for by DHS, and they may need to pay out of pocket to attend based on availability of space.)

National Conference

The annual National CRP Conference brings together a diverse group of stakeholders from across the nation to share child welfare best practices and engage in solution-focused discussions to meet CAPTA mandates. The number of members permitted to attend the National Conference will be determined by DHS.

Eligibility

For members to be eligible for participation in the National CRP Conference, they must have participated in at least 75 percent of CRP meetings for the year prior to the conference. Exceptions can be made based on circumstances and will ultimately be decided upon by DHS.

Selection of Attendees

Space may be limited based on the location of the conference and how many members are interested in attending. In the case that more members want to attend than are approved, the following procedures will be followed:

- Members will submit their interest in attending the conference to the chairs;
- The chairs will provide CWRC with a list of interested members;
- The CWRC and DHS will review:
 - Member attendance;
 - Time served on the CRP;
 - Role within the CRP; and
 - Who, if any, members are presenting at the conference on CRP-related work.
- A final decision will be made by DHS regarding which members are approved to attend.



Public Outreach

At certain points, CRPs may be interested in sponsoring an event for the community in order to further their work within their specific focus area and also to promote the CRPs. Examples of public outreach events include:

- Open forums;
- Inviting a keynote speaker to present on a child welfare related topic; and
- An event that brings community awareness to a certain issue or supports observances of child welfare related issues such as National Adoption Month.

When a CRP is proposing a public outreach event, they must identify the purpose of the event, what the event will achieve, how it connects to the CRP mission and vision, an estimate of the cost, any other resources needed, and the timeframe for the event. This will then be submitted to DHS via the CRP Coordinator. DHS will then approve or deny the request based on this information.

No member will speak on behalf of the CRP regarding the work of the CRP, the recommendations of the CRP, or the annual report of the CRP without approval from fellow members. These matters should be discussed and decided upon during CRP meetings. If this is not possible, the member desiring to speak on behalf of the CRP should submit a request to the chair and the CRP Coordinator. The chair will then send the request out to the entire CRP via email and the decision will be voted on via email.



REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The CRPs will collectively prepare an annual report each year. Each CRP is responsible for submitting a summary of the CRPs' activities and work for the year as well as their written recommendations to the CRP Coordinator. The CRP Coordinator collects all CRP reports and submits a combined report to DHS.

The following is a timeline of activities leading up to the public release of the report by DHS:

- September/October: CRPs develop their recommendations and work together on drafting their annual report. This is done at the All Panel Meeting and also through intersession work via email;
- November: CRPs review the draft and make any additions or final edits for submission to the CRP Coordinator by November 15th;
- December: CRP Coordinator submits final draft of combined annual report to DHS by December 1st; and
- June: DHS releases its responses to CRP recommendations by June 1st.*

*Between December 1st and June 1st, DHS may contact the CRP Coordinator with any questions or clarifications needed. The CRP Coordinator will seek clarification from members on any questions asked by DHS.

Six months following the CRPs' submission of their report, DHS will publish the CRP report (past reports, including the most recent report, can be found on the [DHS website](#)). The CRP Coordinator will maintain a tracking document of recommendations and DHS responses.

Availability of Information

Information in the possession of any other agency and acquired by a CRP in the exercise of its duties is protected nonpublic and confidential information but may be disclosed as necessary to carry out the purposes of the CRPs as outlined in § [6340 of the CPSL](#) (relating to release of information in confidential reports).

DHS supports the CRPs by providing them access to data when appropriate and as requested. To obtain data, the CRP must complete a request for information that identifies the reason behind their request (relating to their focus area) and the connection of the request to the overall CRP purpose. The CRP will use the following template when requesting information from DHS:

- Panel requesting information;
- Overview of the panel's topic area;
- Date of next panel meeting;
- Date the request is submitted;
- Type of the information requested (data or information);
- Date range for information requested;
- Detailed information being requested; and
- How the information requested relates to the panel's topic area.

The CRP Coordinator will then submit the request to DHS. Approval or denial will then be provided, and the CRP Coordinator will inform the CRP of the decision.

Disclosure

Section 6343.1 of the CPSL (relating to CRPs) provides that such members shall not disclose to any person or government official any identifying information about any specific child protective services case with respect to which the panel is provided information (§ [6340 \(16\)](#)).



PENNSYLVANIA'S SUPPORT OF CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

DHS supports the CRPs through a variety of means. Although there are no requirements to provide monetary support to the CRPs, PA includes support of the CRPs as part of its use of CAPTA funds. The activities that are funded by CAPTA dollars include: funding for a contracted entity (the CWRC) to provide staff support, expenses for general operating costs (mailing, copying, printing, etc.), and reimbursements related to travel for CRP meetings.

DHS is the recipient of these funds, is accountable for the spending of CAPTA dollars, and ultimately decides how dollars are spent. In addition, DHS is also responsible to:

- Ensure funding is being directed to the activities listed in the report;
- Communicate to the federal government any substantive changes to Commonwealth law that may affect DHS's eligibility for the CAPTA grant; and
- Communicate significant changes related to CAPTA-funded activities.

DHS CRP Liaison

The CRPs are also provided support from a staff member designated as the main contact from DHS. This person, or liaison, is the main line of communication to the CRP Coordinator regarding approval for release of data, coordination of the All Panel Meeting, and communication of CRP requests. The DHS liaison will communicate directly to members, typically via email or at All Panel Meetings, to update them on any developments within child welfare that are pertinent to their work. Throughout the year, specifically during All Panel Meetings, the liaison or another representative from DHS provides the CRPs with information regarding areas of focus within PA's child welfare system. The CRPs can then use this information towards identifying their own focus areas. The liaison may be available to participate in individual CRP meetings when CRPs request this. When CRPs request specific data or information, the CRP Coordinator communicates these requests to the liaison who works with the necessary individuals within DHS to obtain that information and deliver it to the CRP Coordinator and ultimately to the CRP.

CRP Coordinator

Part of the funding that DHS designates to the CWRC provides a CRP Coordinator to support the work of the CRPs. The CRP Coordinator provides support in the following areas:

- Coordination of CRP meetings to include:
 - Scheduling of meetings;
 - Recording meeting minutes that will be submitted to the chair and dispersed to the CRP within two (2) weeks following the meeting;

- Reserving meeting space at the CWRC;
- Drafting of meeting agenda to be submitted to chair for approval within two (2) weeks of the next meeting;
- Gathering of resource information to assist CRPs in targeted work projects;
- Distribution and submission of travel expense and reimbursement forms; and
- Recording and tracking member attendance at meetings.
- Annual recruitment, onboarding, and orientation process for new members to include;
 - Maintenance of membership application packets;
 - Updates to recruitment materials such as the CRP brochures and flyers; and
 - Maintenance of and updates to the annual recruitment plan.
- Coordination of CRP members to draft their annual report;
- Monitoring CRP recommendations;
- Arranging for members' attendance at the annual National CRP Conference, which includes working with the Fiscal and Human Services Departments to book flights and transportation, confirm per diem rates, and create an itinerary; and
- Advocating for member involvement in activities relevant to their work.

Coverage of Approved Expenses

DHS also provides funding or reimbursement for approved expenses. Members are eligible for reimbursement of approved expenses incurred in the performance of their duties on the CRP. Travel reimbursement is in place to reduce obstacles that may prevent members from being able to meet the federal mandate related to the number of meetings required on an annual basis. Arrangements can be made, on a case-by-case basis, to assist members with up-front costs, if needed.

A receipt is necessary for reimbursement when:

- A single purchase exceeds \$75; and
- A member makes a payment for checked bags (when flying), regardless of the price.

When a receipt is required, it must reflect that the payee is the member to be reimbursed.

Note: Reimbursements made to members by the University of Pittsburgh will not affect an individual's taxes.

All members must submit a completed W-9 form at the onset of membership to receive reimbursement for any expenses.

Lodging

Members are eligible for coverage of approved lodging expenses if they are required to travel more than 50 miles to participate in a CRP event, training, or conference. The CWRC will make every effort to use direct bill and make hotel reservations for members. When direct bill is used, members will still be expected to present a credit card at the time of check-in to cover incidental expenses not covered through direct bill. In instances when direct bill is not

available, members must make the hotel reservation themselves, incur the expense, and submit a copy of the receipt to the CRP Coordinator for reimbursement. Reimbursement will be made at the approved U.S. General Service Administration (GSA) rate for the destination.

Mileage

Members may submit their mileage for approved travel completed within the scope of CRP work. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Travel to and from meetings;
- Travel to and from Council subcommittee meetings;
- Travel to and from events/activities approved by both the CWRC and DHS;
- Travel related to the National CRP Conference; and
- Travel required for recruitment activities (must be approved by the CWRC and DHS prior to travel).

Meals and Incidental Expenses

Reimbursement rates for meals and incidental expenses will reflect the current U.S. GSA rates found on the [GSA Per Diem](#) website. When members submit per diems for travel related to CRP activities, the following applies:

- The per diem rate of the primary destination must be used when referencing per diems;
- If meals are included in the event registration, members are not entitled to a full day per diem;
- If a meal is provided, but a member declines the meal due to a specific reason, he or she is to consult with the CRP Coordinator for approval of the expense;
- When submitting for meal reimbursement when travel includes an overnight stay, a full day per diem can be claimed for each 24 consecutive hours in travel status (apart from any meals that may be provided at the hotel and/or event);
- Travel status starts at the time of departure; and
 - Breakfast per diem may be claimed for travel beginning **before 6:00 am**;
 - Lunch per diem may be claimed for travel **after 12:00 pm**; and
 - Dinner per diem may be claimed for travel that **extends beyond 6:00 pm**.
- When submitting for meals, members are to use the entire amount allotted per the GSA rates.

Timeframe for Reimbursement

Reimbursement requests shall be made to the CRP Coordinator **within 30 days** of the expense. If an expense occurs during the month of June, all expense forms must be submitted by June 30th which is the last day of the fiscal year. Reimbursement is submitted through the University of Pittsburgh main campus and mailed to the member via the United States Postal Service; therefore, please allow up to four weeks for reimbursements to be paid.

RECRUITMENT

Due to the volunteer nature of the CRPs, recruitment of membership is necessary to ensure their continued success.

New Panel Member Recruitment

Recruitment for new regional panels will be open in the year prior to panel commencement. During this time, DHS and the CRP Coordinator will utilize statewide, regional, and local connections with community stakeholders to share recruitment materials to recruit members for the identified panel(s).

Mid-Term Panel Member Recruitment

Recruitment will be conducted after panel commencement, if needed, to maintain membership between 8 and 15 members on the panel. Current panel members are strongly encouraged to recruit applicants to fill vacancies or topic-specific needs. Members may solicit membership through connections with community stakeholders, or they may identify venues or events at which to conduct outreach. If a member identifies a venue for recruitment or public outreach, they must do the following:

- Obtain a quorum vote from the CRP regarding the recruitment effort/public outreach and venue; and
- Contact the CRP Coordinator at least six weeks prior to the event to get confirmation on funding available for reimbursement of travel expenses and to request materials.

Recruitment Materials

- Materials available to members for recruitment and public outreach include:
- Electronic brochures;
- Recruitment emails;
- Digital copies of annual reports and past recommendations; and
- Links to the digital member application form.

Individuals may also self-nominate and apply for CRP membership during open recruitment. CRP membership application packets may be requested by contacting the CRP Coordinator at pacrp@pitt.edu.

APPLICATION AND SCREENING PROCESS

Application

Individuals interested in being considered for CRP membership must:

Complete a membership [application](#) that includes references and questions related to their experience with child welfare and their interest in joining the CRPs. Additionally, members will be required to do the following as part of the application process:

- Complete and submit background check forms for the DHS' ChildLine and Abuse Registry, the PA State Police, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Instructions for each clearance will be sent to applicants;
- Sign an affidavit indicating that they have not been convicted of certain crimes listed in Title 18 of the PA Consolidated Statutes and the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device, and Cosmetic Act within the last 5 years ([See Appendix C.](#)); and
- Sign a Statement of Confidentiality. Individuals selected to serve on a CRP will have access to confidential information through interviews, observations, and case record reviews; therefore, members will be required to sign a statement of confidentiality. ([See Appendix B.](#))

Screening

Individuals are not eligible for regular CRP membership if the applicant:

- Has been named as a perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse as defined by the CPSL within the past five (5) years;
- Has been convicted of any of the crimes listed under § 6344 (c) of the CPSL (relating to grounds for denying employment or participation in program, activity or service).
- Has had an open case with a County Children and Youth Agency (CCYA) within one year of submitting the application; or
- Is a current employee of DHS or a CCYA.

CWRC will contact all referred individuals interested in CRP membership regardless of the origin of the referral. The CRP Coordinator will provide the individual with a link to the online application and will follow up with that individual via email and/or telephone to ensure that their questions are adequately answered. Additionally, the CRP Coordinator will contribute to the review of applications, notifying applicants of their acceptance onto the CRP, and assisting new members with completing their clearances.

During the application and screening process, the CRP chair may extend an invitation to the interested applicants to observe CRP meeting(s), if deemed appropriate. During these meetings, the applicant cannot be engaged in the discussion of confidential information or activities that require a background check and clearances.

Appointment

Following successful passing through the screening process, including all clearances and reference checks, membership applications will be reviewed and a final determination will be made by DHS.

When membership is approved for an individual, they will be reminded of the date of orientation and will be given onboarding materials to review prior to orientation.

Onboarding and Orientation

Onboarding and orientation will consist of signing various electronic documents, completion of a series of online training modules, and attending an in-person orientation.

Once new panel members are selected, they will be provided a set of electronic documents to review and sign, which will include:

- Disclosure statement;
- Confidentiality statement;
- Media Release;
- Policy and Procedures Manual acknowledgment and agreement;
- CRP member biography template; and
- W-9 form.

Following the receipt of these signed documents, panel members will be provided a link to a series of online training modules that must be completed prior to attending the in-person orientation. The online training modules will cover the following material:

- Introduction to PA's CRPs;
- Review of the Policy and Procedures Manual;
- Overview of CAPTA;
- Overview of the child welfare system in PA;
- PA's Mandated and Permissive Reporting Training; and
- Implicit bias training and self-assessment.

Prior to the commencement of each regional panel, an in-person orientation will be held to introduce panel members to state and regional OCYF staff as well as area children and youth administrators. Panel members will have the opportunity to learn state, regional, and local priorities. Panel members will then select a topic to research and provide recommendations on, while also developing a five-year strategic plan to complete their work.

STATEMENTS OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

DHS, CWRC, and CRPs shall not discriminate against any volunteer applicant or volunteer panel member based on race, color, religion, creed, ancestry, disability, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Statement of ADA Non-Discrimination

DHS does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, age, gender, national origin, or religion in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs, services, or activities or its hiring or employment practices. If you have a disability and require a reasonable accommodation, please contact the CRP Coordinator at pacrp@pitt.edu or by calling (717) 795-9048 to request an accommodation. Questions, concerns, or complaints regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may be forwarded to the DHS ADA Compliance Coordinator at cstoner@pa.gov or by calling (717) 783-9916.



Appendix A: Activity/Conference Request Form

Citizen Review Panel Activity and Conference Request Form

Please provide the following information:

Requestor's Name: _____ Date _____

Training/Conference Name: _____
(Please attach registration materials or copy link to the training/conference website)

Date(s) of the Training/Conference: _____

Justification for Attendance:(How does this training/conference connect to CRP goals?)

Estimated Cost for this Training/Conference: (Please itemize registration and travel costs.)

| Expense Type | Est. Cost | Expense Type | Est. Cost |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| Conference Registration | | Taxi/Car Service | |
| Hotel | | Bus/Rail Fare | |
| Per Diem | | Airfare | |
| Parking | | Luggage Fee | |
| Mileage | | TOTAL | |

Signature:

By completing this request to attend the above listed training/conference, I agree to report on what I learn to other panel members at the following quarterly meeting or the All Panel Meeting.

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix B: Confidentiality Statement

The Pennsylvania Citizen Review Panel STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The PA Citizen Review Panel (CRP) is established to evaluate the extent to which State and local agencies are effectively discharging their child welfare responsibilities and may assist in reviews of specific cases. Designation of the CRP by the PA Department of Human Services' Office of Children, Youth and Families (DHS), enables the CRP to receive confidential information about specific child abuse or neglect cases under the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) at § 6340 (a) (16) (relating to release of information in confidential reports).

Members and staff may discuss case information among themselves, as needed, in order to discharge their official duties. Other discussions regarding these cases should be held only with agency and court representatives who are bound to comparable standards of confidentiality and who are directly involved with the specific case. Under the CPSL at § 6349 (b) (relating to unauthorized release of information), a person who willingly releases confidential information commits a misdemeanor of the second degree.

PURPOSE

Members shall examine policies, procedures, and practices of state and local agencies and, where appropriate, specific cases to evaluate the extent to which State and local child welfare services system agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities and make recommendations for needed improvements in child welfare services.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

I understand that as a CRP member I may have access to confidential information through interviews, observations, and case record reviews; therefore, it is necessary to assure that members maintain confidentiality.

I, (print name) _____
understand that CRP members are bound to the same standard of confidentiality as any staff member of DHS or a county agency. I understand that I may discuss case information during CRP sessions with staff and with other members in order to discharge my official duties. I also understand that other discussions regarding confidential information should be held only with agency and court representatives who are bound to comparable standards of confidentiality. It is intended that this Confidentiality Statement will serve the purposes of all CRP members.

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix C: Child Protection Disclosure Statement

CHILD PROTECTION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

*Child Protective Services Law, 23 Pa. C.S. Section 6344
(relating to information relating to prospective child-care personnel)*

The Child Welfare Resource Center requires that all individuals have ChildLine, Pennsylvania State Police, and Federal Bureau of Investigation Clearances.

I hereby swear/affirm that I have not been convicted of any of the following offenses under PA law or an offense similar in nature under Federal law, the law of another state, or the law of any other foreign or domestic jurisdiction:

1. An offense under one or more of the following provisions of Title 18 of the PA Consolidated Statutes:

| | |
|---|--|
| Chapter 25 | (relating to criminal homicide) |
| Section 2702 | (relating to aggravated assault) |
| Section 2709.1 | (relating to stalking) |
| Section 2901 | (relating to kidnapping) |
| Section 2902 | (relating to unlawful restraint) |
| Section 3121 | (relating to rape) |
| Section 3122.1 | (relating to statutory sexual assault) |
| Section 3123 | (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse) |
| Section 3124.1 | (relating to sexual assault) |
| Section 3125 | (relating to aggravated indecent assault) |
| Section 3126 | (relating to indecent assault) |
| Section 3127 | (relating to indecent exposure) |
| Section 4302 | (relating to incest) |
| Section 4303 | (relating to concealing death of child) |
| Section 4304 | (relating to endangering welfare of children) |
| Section 4305 | (relating to dealing in infant children) |
| A felony offense under Section 5902(b) (relating to prostitution and related offenses) | |
| Section 5903(c) or (d) (relating to obscene and other sexual material and performances) | |
| Section 6301 | (relating to corruption of minors) |
| Section 6312 | (relating to sexual abuse of children) |
| The attempt, solicitation, or conspiracy to commit any of the offenses set forth above. | |

2. A felony offense under the act of April 14, 1972 (P.L. 233, No. 64), known as “The Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act” (35 P.S. 780-101 et seq.), committed within the past five years.

I also further swear/affirm I am not named in the Statewide database as the perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse committed within the past five years.

By signing below, I swear/affirm that I have read and understand the above, and the statements as set forth above are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that the penalty for false swearing is a misdemeanor of the second degree pursuant to Section 4903(b) of the Crimes Code.

Name: _____ (please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ (please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____



<http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/CRP>