



Annual Report

FY 2023-2024

Washington State Citizen Review Panels

Website: [Citizen Review Panels \(CRP\)](#)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Overview _____	3
Children, Youth, and Families Statewide Citizen Review Panel _____	5
CYF CRP Members _____	5
CYF CRP Process _____	5
CYF CRP Work _____	6
CYF CRP Recommendations _____	8
Racial Equity and Impact Citizen Review Panel _____	11
REI CRP Members _____	11
REI CRP Process _____	12
REI CRP Work _____	12
REI CRP Recommendations _____	14
Prevention, Investigation, and Family Services Citizen Review Panel _____	18
PIFS CRP Members _____	18
PIFS CRP Process _____	18
PIFS CRP Work _____	19
PIFS CRP Recommendations _____	20
Critical Incident Review Citizen Review Panel Subcommittee _____	25
CIR CRP Subcommittee Members _____	25
CIR CRP Subcommittee Process _____	26
CIR CRP Subcommittee Work _____	26
CIR CRP Subcommittee Recommendations _____	26

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Washington State Citizen Review Panel (CRPs) Fiscal Year 2023-2024 report provides a comprehensive review of the work completed by the three (3) CRPs and an active subcommittee. It also includes each panel and subcommittee's recommendations. These panels operate in accordance with the federal **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)** and serve as a platform for public engagement in the oversight of the **Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)**. To meet the requirements under CAPTA, each CRP must meet at least quarterly and provide recommendations to the state agency annually. DCYF must respond in writing within six months of receiving the recommendations. Both the recommendations and the response are included in the Title IV-B Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) that DCYF prepares and submits to the federal government.

The CRPs ensure that Washington's child welfare system remains transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of families and communities impacted by DCYF involvement. CRPs prioritize the perspectives of parents, child welfare professionals, family advocates, and individuals with lived experience in the child welfare system. This report provides an overview of the panels' findings during Fiscal Year 2023-2024, emphasizing the importance of family-centered approaches, equitable service delivery, and collaborative reform. Recommendations from the CRPs reflect a commitment to protecting children while also ensuring that families receive the support they need to thrive.

In Washington State, CRPs play a critical role in ensuring that services provided by DCYF are grounded in the experiences and feedback of parents and advocates. By including individuals with firsthand knowledge of DCYF, CRPs help foster a more family-oriented approach to child welfare. Their work focuses on evaluating how DCYF interacts with parents and communities, assessing whether the system supports families effectively while also addressing policies and practices to safeguard children from abuse and neglect. By centering the voices of parents and community advocates, the FY 2023-2024 report provides insight for building a more inclusive, supportive, and effective child protection system in Washington State.

Washington State has three CRPs as mandated under CAPTA. Each CRP has an identified focus, and all CRPs address statewide issues. The following CRPs and CRP Subcommittee will be outlined in this report.

- [Children, Youth, and Families Statewide CRP](#) - CRP focus includes child welfare after removal and includes foster care and the dependency process.
- [Racial Equity and Impact CRP](#) - CRP focus on issues related to racial disparities in the child welfare system and issues of equity in child welfare including those impacting the LGTBQUIA+ community.
- [Prevention, Investigation, and Family Services CRP](#) - CRP focus on prevention and policies and procedures that impact children and families from the origination of an intake through the life of a CPS/FAR/FVS case.
- [Critical Incident Review CRP Subcommittee](#) - CRP Subcommittee is comprised of members from three CRPs with a focus on fatality and near fatality reviews. The subcommittee provides recommendations around identified themes in critical incident case reviews.

For more information on CAPTA and CRPs visit [Children's Bureau: CAPTA, Citizen Review Panels](#)

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES STATEWIDE CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

The Children, Youth, and Families Statewide Citizen Review Panel (CYF CRP) is made up of volunteer representatives with expert knowledge and experience in child welfare. These individuals include those with professional experience and with lived experience who have knowledge and understanding of the child welfare system most notably during court involvement and/or after a removal has occurred.

CYF CRP Members

- Katherine Kameron - Parent Representative Attorney and CYF CRP Co-Chair
- Jacob D'Annunzio - Parents Representation Managing Attorney with Office of Public Defense and CYF Co-Chair
- Ron Murphy - Senior Director of Strategic Consulting at Casey Family Programs
- Ryan Murrey - Executive Director of Washington Association of Child Advocate Programs
- Jason Bragg - Family Resilience Community Consulting and Contracted Social Worker with the Office of Public Defense
- Kelly Warner-King - Family and Youth Justice Program at the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)
- Laurie Lippold - Director of Public Policy at Partners for our Children
- Heather Smith - Lived Expert and Certified Parent Ally
- Anna Marie Dall - Family Case Manager with Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
- Karrina Guilbault - Program Counsel with Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA)
- Jasmine Hodges - Prior DCYF Staff
- Shauna Magee - Child Welfare Consultant and Lived Expert Adoptee

CYF CRP Process

The CYF CRP meets the second Tuesday of every month virtually. Additionally, the CYF CRP meets with the other Washington State CRPs in-person at least once annually for a two-day

general meeting. The CYF CRP Co-Chairs and the CRP Facilitator can schedule additional meetings when appropriate.

The CRP Facilitator works with the CYF CRP Co-Chairs to determine presenters and speakers that align with the determined area of focus. The CRP Facilitator distributes research deemed important and relevant to the work of the CRPs between regularly scheduled meetings. CYF CRP members can make data requests from DCYF using a designated data request form when the data is relevant to the work of the panel. The CRP Facilitator submits completed data request forms and provides the requested data to the panel members once the request has been completed. The presenters, research, and data are used to inform the work of the panel and improve annual recommendations.

The CYF CRP submits draft recommendations to the CRP Facilitator by September 15th of each year. These draft recommendations are used to build the annual report that is published by October 31st of each year. Once the report is published and distributed DCYF has six months to respond in writing to the annual recommendations. The CRP Annual Report and the DCYF Written Response are included in the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) to the federal government each year.

CYF CRP Work

During the 2023-2024 fiscal year the CYF CRP inquired and learned in depth about the following issues and participated in workshops to help specific program areas.

- Plan of Safe Care (POSC) workgroup with Alissa Copeland, DCYF Early Learning Program Manager.
- Safety Framework Workgroup with Jasmine Hodges, prior DCYF Child Safety Program Manager.
- Human Resources workshop with Marcos Rodriguez, DCYF HR Director, Heather Mellor, DCYF HR Operations Administrator, Natalie Green, DCYF Assistant Secretary of Child Welfare, and Steven Loduah, DCYF HR Talent Acquisition Manager.
- Presentation and discussion on substance use disorder (SUD) work at DCYF with Jimmy Vallembois, DCYF SUD Program Manager.
- CRP discussion with Center for States.

- Critical incident discussion with Paul Smith, DCYF Supervisor of Critical Incident Review Team.
- DCYF budget discussion with Vickie Ybarra, DCYF Interim Assistant Secretary of Partnerships, Prevention, and Services, and Jim Smith, DCYF Budget Director.
- Field practice around concrete goods with Adrienne Franklin, DCYF Director of Child Welfare Programs and Practice, Delton Hauck, DCYF In-Home Services Administrator, and Jesse Stigile, DCYF Community Support Services Program Specialist.
- Fentanyl discussion with Dr. Scott Phillips, Executive and Medical Director for Washington Poison Center.
- Concrete Goods Caseworker Guide and concrete supports continued updates provided in writing and in-person by Jesse Stigile, DCYF Community Support Services Program Specialist.
- Economic and concrete supports presentation by Yasmin Grewal-Kök, Policy Fellow at Chapin Hall.
- California CRP mandatory reporting presentation by Juliet Cox, Child and Family Policy Institute of California.
- Community Resource Guide Tool presentation by Phil Decter and Emerson from Evident Change.
- Discussion on Critical Incident CRP Subcommittee work.
- CYF CRP Co-Chairs and lived experts attended the National Citizen Review Panel Conference in San Diego.
- Data requests that included a request for budget data (specifically around concrete supports, professional and CIHS) and overall costs associated with foster care.
- Review of email resources sent from CRP Facilitator. These included articles and research on current areas of focus. Information was provided to the CYF CRP on the GRIT Program in Tacoma, WA, a Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) pilot program in Washington, DC with welfare involved families, and a GBI pilot program in Sacramento.
- CYF CRP members provided feedback on the updated [Caseworker Concrete Goods Guide](#) and a Prenatal SUD Toolkit.
- Presentation and discussion on supporting education stability for students in foster care with Peggy Carlson, DCYF Education Program Administrator.

- Presentation and discussion on Guaranteed Basic Income and Child Welfare Pilot with Dr. William Schneider, Associate Professor and Faculty Director for the Children and Family Research Center at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign School of Social Work.

CYF CRP Recommendations

Themes for FY 2023-2024

Accountability. Transparency. Equity.

- Transparent and uniform application of policies by DCYF staff and decision makers.
 - Require clear policies designed with partners and vetted with anti-racist tools
 - Alignment with and fidelity to policies and staff actions and decisions
 - Training and implementation with uniformity across the state, between regions, offices, and AGO
 - Regularly reviewing data to assess whether implemented policies are reaching their intended goals, ensuring they are free from discriminatory impacts, and verifying uniform implementation across regions and offices
- Data and records collected, retained, and shared with specific focus on ensuring transparency in decision making, resource provision, and adherence to established policies.

Contracts and Services Subcommittee

After reviewing the CRP Recommendations and DCYF Response from FY 2022-2023, the CYF CRP would like to continue the work of the Contracts and Services Subcommittee into FY 2024-2025. The CYF CRP is recommending that DCYF develop the DCYF and CRP Joint Workgroup on DCYF Contracting and Services as referenced in the FY 2022-2023 Response.

The Workgroup should include the following:

- CRP Members
- DCYF Staff Knowledgeable in Contracting and Service Delivery (CIHS, Professional, Psychological)
- Service Providers
- Community Partners

Poverty Reduction and Child Welfare Involvement

The CYF CRP is also recommending the following recommendation made by the **Prevention, Investigation, and Family Services CRP**.

- **Problem Statement:** Poverty is a significant contributor to child welfare involvement in the United States and in Washington State. Families experiencing poverty often face stressors that include a lack of access to some basic needs such as stable housing, sufficient food, healthcare, and childcare. Unfortunately, these stressors can impact a family and, in some cases, trigger an intervention from CPS. In many situations, it is the underlying problem of poverty that triggered child welfare involvement and not willful neglect. Families that are experiencing poverty are often over surveilled, subject to additional scrutiny from institutions like schools, healthcare providers, and social services.

Additionally, research on disadvantaged neighborhoods and child maltreatment referrals indicates that families from marginalized racial and ethnic groups, who are disproportionately affected by poverty, are more likely to be involved in the child welfare system. It is this overrepresentation with child welfare involvement that an acknowledgment of the interplay of race, poverty, and structural inequities must be addressed by DCYF.

- **Recommendation:** Research from Chapin Hall (2021 and 2023) indicate that material hardship increases the risk of child welfare involvement and help with housing, utilities, and cash assistance programs reduce child maltreatment and involvement with CPS.

The PIFS CRP recommends that DCYF develop and facilitate a task force composed of DCYF staff, CRP members, community partners, individuals with lived experience, subject matter experts in child maltreatment, poverty, and public policy. The task force would explore the feasibility of sponsoring a program to evaluate the effectiveness of temporary economic support and its

effectiveness in preventing recurrent child maltreatment among Washington families.

Several similar pilot projects are currently underway across the United States, including the largest with 800 families who were referred to Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. These initiatives aim to assess the impact of guaranteed basic income in stabilizing families and reducing child welfare involvement. If DCYF is committed to prioritizing prevention and reducing the recurrence of child welfare cases, addressing economic disparities and the underlying problems of poverty must be a priority.

By exploring the potential of economic support as a preventative measure, DCYF can align its resources with evidence-based practices that target poverty-related stressors contributing to child maltreatment. This approach supports DCYF's mission to enhance family well-being and DCYF's dedication to prevention while also reinforcing DCYF's mission to protect children and strengthen families.

RACIAL EQUITY AND IMPACT CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

The Racial Equity and Impact Citizen Review Panel (REI CRP) is made up of volunteer representatives with expert knowledge and experience of the child welfare system. This panel addresses how race, equity, and inclusion impact the child welfare system and those it serves. The panel members include professionals with experience in child welfare system and those with lived experience.

REI CRP Members

- Dr. Marian Harris - Diversity, Equity and Social Justice Program Officer at Washington Association of Child Advocates and REI CRP Co-Chair
- Dr. Chereese Phillips - Senior Director of Research Services at Casey Family Programs and REI Co-Chair
- Shrounda Selivanoff - Social Services Manager with Office of Public Defense and Lived Expert
- Janelle Hawes - Assistant Professor at University of Washington School of Social Work and Criminal Justice and Lived Expert
- Buffy Via - Dependency Program Manager at Pierce County Juvenile Court
- Keoki Kauanoë - Family Education and Support Services Fatherhood Educator and Lived Expert
- Deborah Purce - Retired from Children's Administration and Previously Served as DSHS Secretary's Designee on WASRDAC
- Kimberly Booker - Contracted Social Worker with Office of Public Defense (OPD) and Prior DCYF Staff
- Kendra Maroney - CASA Volunteer with Kalispel Tribe
- Bernice Morehead - Retired Children's Administration, Participated in WASRDAC, and Lived Expert
- Lisa Russell - GAL and Enrolled Member of the Kalispel Tribe and Enrolled Member of the Colville Confederated Tribes

REI CRP Process

The REI CRP meets the first Monday of every month virtually. Additionally, the REI CRP meets with the other Washington State CRPs in-person at least once annually for a two-day general meeting. The REI CRP Co-Chairs and the CRP Facilitator can schedule additional meetings when appropriate.

The CRP Facilitator works with the REI CRP Co-Chairs to determine presenters and speakers that align with the determined area of focus. The CRP Facilitator distributes research deemed important and relevant to the work of the CRPs between regularly scheduled meetings. REI CRP members can make data requests from DCYF using a designated data request form when the data is determined relevant to the work of the panel. The CRP Facilitator submits completed data request forms and provides the requested data to the panel members once the request has been completed. The presenters, research, and data are used to inform the work of the panel and improve annual recommendations.

The REI CRP submits draft recommendations to the CRP Facilitator by September 15th of each year. These draft recommendations are used to build the annual report that is published by October 31st of each year. Once the report is published and distributed DCYF has six months to respond in writing to the annual recommendations. The CRP Annual Report and the DCYF Written Response are included in the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) to the federal government each year.

REI CRP Work

During the 2023-2024 fiscal year the REI CRP inquired and learned in depth about the following issues and participated in workshops to help specific program areas.

- Plan of Safe Care (POSC) workgroup with Alissa Copeland, DCYF Early Learning Program Manager.
- Safety Framework Workgroup with Jasmine Hodges, prior DCYF Child Safety Program Manager.
- Human Resources workshop with Marcos Rodriguez, DCYF HR Director, Heather Mellor, DCYF HR Operations Administrator, Natalie Green, DCYF Assistant Secretary of Child Welfare, and Steven Loduah, DCYF HR Talent Acquisition Manager.

- Presentation and discussion on substance use disorder (SUD) work at DCYF with Jimmy Vallembois, DCYF SUD Program Manager.
- CRP discussion with Center for States.
- Safety framework discussion with Jasmine Hodges, prior DCYF Child Safety Program Manager.
- Service continuum and FFPSA discussion with Maria Zdzieblowski, DCYF Director of Service Continuum, and Phyllis Duncan-Souza, DCYF FFPSA Program Administrator.
- Mandatory Reporting Workgroup - Discussion around project and REI CRP members collaboration.
- DCYF Worker Contact - Subcommittee work including developing and submitting a proposal to DCYF to interview area administrators, regional administrators, and social workers. Proposal was declined.
- Child welfare legislation updates and discussions during legislation session.
- DCYF Human Resource discussion with Marcos Rodrigues, DCYF Director of Human Resources, Heather Mellor, DCYF HR Operations Administrator, Dr. Joel Odimba, DCYF Welfare Workforce Support, and Alice Coil, DCYF Director of Racial Equity and Social Justice. This presentation and discussion included updated data on recruitment and retention of staff through a race and equity lens.
- DCYF involved youth and their intersection with the court system. The Honorable Joseph Evans from Pierce County Superior Court met with the REI CRP to discuss youth and their intersection between child welfare and the court system.
- Economic and concrete supports presentation by Yasmin Grewal-Kök, Policy Fellow at Chapin Hall.
- California CRP mandatory reporting presentation by Juliet Cox, Child and Family Policy Institute of California.
- Community Resource Guide Tool presentation by Phil Decter and Emerson from Evident Change.
- Discussion on Critical Incident CRP Subcommittee work.
- REI CRP Co-Chairs and lived experts attended the National Citizen Review Panel Conference in San Diego.
- Review of email resources sent from CRP Facilitator. These included articles and research on current areas of focus. Information was provided to the GRIT Program in

Tacoma, WA, a Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) pilot program in Washington, DC with welfare involved families, and a GBI pilot program in Sacramento.

- REI CRP members provided feedback on the updated [Caseworker Concrete Goods Guide](#) and a Prenatal SUD Toolkit.
- Data request made by the REI CRP include children in out of home care by race, DCYF field staff information by regions, field staff interview on worker contact (this request was denied by field operations), and data on recruitment and retention of DCYF staff by race.
- Presentation and discussion on supporting education stability for students in foster care with Peggy Carlson, DCYF Education Program Administrator.
- Presentation and discussion on Guaranteed Basic Income and Child Welfare Pilot with Dr. William Schneider, Associate Professor and Faculty Director for the Children and Family Research Center at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign School of Social Work.

REI CRP Recommendations

The REI CRP recommendations for the 2023-2024 fiscal year are as follows:

Modify prevention service plans and include services requested by other panels for culturally responsive care. The REI CRP strongly recommends the following specific programs that have achieved scientific rating from the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse:

- **D.C. Children’s Trust Fund (DCCTF) Effective Black Parenting Program (EBPP;** Authored by CICC) is a parenting skill-building program created specifically for parents of African American children. It was originally designed as a 15-session program to be used with small groups of parents. A one-day seminar version of the program for large numbers of parents has been created.
 - Scientific Rating 3 - Promising Research Evidence. Child Welfare Relevance - High
- **Strong African American Families Program (SAAF)** is a culturally tailored, family-centered intervention program designed to build on the strengths of African American families. The over-goal of SAAF is to prevent substance abuse and other risky

behavior among youth by strengthening positive interactions, enhancing primary caregivers' efforts to help youth reach positive goals, and preparing youth for their teen years. SAFF provides services directly to children/adolescents experiencing or having the potential to experience aggressive behaviors, academic challenges, self-esteem issues, or involvement in risky behaviors. SAFF provides services directly to parents/caregivers and addresses parent/caregiver or preteen or early teen youth experiencing or who have the potential to experience aggressive behaviors, academic challenges, self-esteem issues, or involvement risky behaviors. Weekly 2-hour sessions (ideally for 7 weeks).

- Scientific Rating 1 - Well-Supported by Research Evidence. Child Welfare Relevance - Medium
- **Family Spirit** is a culturally tailored home-visiting program designed to promote optimal health and well-being for parents and children. The program is designed for any at-risk young adult mother (under 25 years) who is pregnant (ideally 28 weeks' gestation or sooner) and/or has a child younger than 3 years old and lives in a Native American community; however, can be used with any pregnant woman and/or woman with a child younger than 3 years old, regardless of ethnicity/race. Family Spirit consists of 63 lessons taught from pregnancy to age 3.
 - Scientific Rating 3 - Promising Research Evidence. Child Welfare Relevance - High
- The following program is also strongly recommended:
 - **Familias Unidas** is a family-centered intervention that aims to prevent substance use and risky behavior among Hispanic adolescents. Familias Unidas aims to empower parents by increasing their support network, teaching them about protective and risk factors, improving parenting skills, enhancing parent-adolescent communication, and facilitating parental involvement and investment in adolescent's' lives. The program was reviewed in October 2021 by the Title-IV E Prevention Services Clearinghouse and is listed as a *Well-Supported Practice* because at least two studies with non-overlapping samples conducted in usual care or practice settings achieved a rating of moderate or high on

design and execution and demonstrated favorable effects in a target outcome domain.

The REI CRP is also supporting the following recommendation made by the **Prevention, Investigation, and Family Services CRP**:

- **Poverty Reduction and Child Welfare Involvement**
 - **Problem Statement:** Poverty is a significant contributor to child welfare involvement in the United States and in Washington State. Families experiencing poverty often face stressors that include a lack of access to some basic needs such as stable housing, sufficient food, healthcare, and childcare. Unfortunately, these stressors can impact a family and, in some cases, trigger an intervention from CPS. In many situations, it is the underlying problem of poverty that triggered child welfare involvement and not willful neglect. Families that are experiencing poverty are often over surveilled, subject to additional scrutiny from institutions like schools, healthcare providers, and social services.

Additionally, research on [disadvantaged neighborhoods and child maltreatment referrals](#) indicates that families from marginalized racial and ethnic groups, who are disproportionately affected by poverty, are more likely to be involved in the child welfare system. It is this overrepresentation with child welfare involvement that an acknowledgment of the interplay of race, poverty, and structural inequities must be addressed by DCYF.

- **Recommendation:** Research from [Chapin Hall \(2021 and 2023\)](#) indicate that material hardship increases the risk of child welfare involvement and help with housing, utilities, and cash assistance programs reduce child maltreatment and involvement with CPS.

The PIFS CRP recommends that DCYF develop and facilitate a task force composed of DCYF staff, CRP members, community partners, individuals with lived experience, subject matter experts in child maltreatment, poverty, and public policy. The task force would explore the feasibility of sponsoring a

program to evaluate the effectiveness of temporary economic support and its effectiveness in preventing recurrent child maltreatment among Washington families.

Several similar pilot projects are currently underway across the United States, including the largest with 800 families who were referred to Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. These initiatives aim to assess the impact of guaranteed basic income in stabilizing families and reducing child welfare involvement. If DCYF is committed to prioritizing prevention and reducing the recurrence of child welfare cases, addressing economic disparities and the underlying problems of poverty must be a priority.

By exploring the potential of economic support as a preventative measure, DCYF can align its resources with evidence-based practices that target poverty-related stressors contributing to child maltreatment. This approach supports DCYF's mission to enhance family well-being and DCYF's dedication to prevention while also reinforcing DCYF's mission to protect children and strengthen families.

PREVENTION, INVESTIGATION, AND FAMILY SERVICES CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

The Prevention, Investigation, and Family Services Citizen Review Panel (PIFS CRP) is made up of volunteer representatives with expert knowledge and experience in preventative services and investigative techniques related to child abuse and neglect. These individuals include those with professional experience and with lived experience. This panel is committed to improving preventative services and investigation outcomes to increase the safety and well-being of children and families.

PIFS CRP Members

- Jennifer Justice - Parent Ally with The FIRST Clinic, Lived Expert and Co-Chair of the PIFS CRP
- Jenny White - Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Co-Chair of the PIFS CRP
- Taila AyAy - Director of The FIRST Clinic
- Tiffani Buck - Nursing Consultation Advisor for Community Health Systems with the Department of Health
- Carol Mitchell - Executive Director of the Institute for Black Justice
- Paula Reed - Director of Child Advocacy Centers of Washington (CACAW)
- Connie Mollerstuen - Director of Positively Linked Prevention and Resilience Support
- Tif Junker - Consultant and Founder of R.I.S.E. Philosophy of Care

PIFS CRP Process

The PIFS CRP meets the third Thursday of every month virtually. Additionally, the PIFS CRP meets with the other Washington State CRPs in-person at least once annually for a two-day general meeting. The PIFS CRP Co-Chairs and the CRP Facilitator schedule additional meetings when appropriate.

The CRP Facilitator works with the PIFS CRP Co-Chairs to determine presenters and speakers that align with the determined area of focus. The CRP Facilitator distributes research deemed important and relevant to the work of the CRPs between regularly scheduled meetings. PIFS CRP members can make data requests from DCYF using a

designated data request form when the data is determined relevant to the work of the panel. The CRP Facilitator submits completed data request forms and provides the requested data to the panel members once the request has been completed. The presenters, research, and data are used to inform the work of the panel and improve annual recommendations.

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PIFS CRP Work

During fiscal year 2023-2024 the PIFS CRP inquired and learned in depth about the following issues and participated in workshops to help specific program areas.

- Plan of Safe Care (POSC) workgroup with Alissa Copeland, DCYF Early Learning Program Manager.
- Safety Framework Workgroup with Jasmine Hodges, prior DCYF Child Safety Program Manager.
- Human Resources workshop with Marcos Rodriquez, DCYF HR Director, Heather Mellor, DCYF HR Operations Administrator, Natalie Green, DCYF Assistant Secretary of Child Welfare, and Steven Loduah, DCYF HR Talent Acquisition Manager.
- Presentation and discussion on substance use disorder (SUD) work at DCYF with Jimmy Vallembois, DCYF SUD Program Manager.
- CRP discussion with Center for States.
- Discussion on implementation of HB 1227 (Keeping Families Together Act) with Julie Watts, DCYF Senior Policy Advisor.
- Discussion on housing and housing resources for DCYF involved families with Greg Williamson, DCYF Adolescent Housing Program Manager.
- Discussion on concrete supports with Jesse Stigile, DCYF Community Support Services Program Specialist.

- Discussion on the Pregnant and Parenting Women (PPW) and Family Preservation Model with Ashley Piña, Health Care Authority (HCA) Pregnant Parenting Family Substance Use Disorder Policy Administrator.
- Discussion on implementation of SB 6109 with Michelle Hetzel, DCYF CFWS Program Manager.
- Economic and concrete supports presentation by Yasmin Grewal-Kök, Policy Fellow at Chapin Hall.
- California CRP mandatory reporting presentation by Juliet Cox, Child and Family Policy Institute of California.
- Community Resource Guide Tool presentation by Phil Decter and Emerson from Evident Change.
- Discussion on Critical Incident CRP Subcommittee work.
- PIFS CRP Co-Chair and lived experts attended the National Citizen Review Panel Conference in San Diego.
- Review of email resources sent from CRP Facilitator. These included articles and research on current areas of focus. Information was provided to the GRIT Program in Tacoma, WA, a Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) pilot program in Washington, DC with welfare involved families, and a GBI pilot program in Sacramento.
- PIFS CRP members provided feedback on the updated [Caseworker Concrete Goods Guide](#) and a Prenatal SUD Toolkit.
- Data request made by the PIFS CRP included data on pandemic funding and the impact it had/did not have on any decline in intakes and details around the type of intakes that were impacted (neglect, sexual abuse, physical abuse).
- Presentation and discussion on supporting education stability for students in foster care with Peggy Carlson, DCYF Education Program Administrator.
- Presentation and discussion on Guaranteed Basic Income and Child Welfare Pilot with Dr. William Schneider, Associate Professor and Faculty Director for the Children and Family Research Center at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign School of Social Work.

PIFS CRP Recommendations

The PIFS CRP recommendations for the 2023-2024 fiscal year are as follows:

- **Plan of Safe Care (POSC)**

- **Problem Statement:** WithinReach WA and Help Me Grow are currently funded through DCYF to provide application support and care coordination to access community services for the Plan of Safe Care at birth. Birthing hospitals received training and resources on the updated mandatory reporting guidance for prenatal substance exposure and WithinReach and Help Me Grow services are now accessible to every region in the state.

Because these referrals occur through the POSC portal at birth many potential referrals that could benefit from the services are missed.

- **Recommendation:** Invest in expanding WithinReach and Help Me Grow services and access so that:
 - Prenatal providers can refer mothers/birth parents into services.
 - Mothers/birth parents seeking services, and their families can self-refer into services without needing a gatekeeper for access (case worker, social worker, prenatal provider, CPS etc.).

- **Preventative Services and Community-Based Organization (CBO) Funding**

- **Problem Statement:** Barriers in accessing sustainable funding for community-based organizations that support service delivery to families at risk of child welfare involvement are many. These barriers are not limited to but do include the following:
 - Complex funding applications that can negatively impact small organizations.
 - Limited eligibility and restrictive criteria associated with some funding streams.
 - Short-term funding that may impact a smaller organization's ability to maintain funding and can interfere with service delivery.
 - Restrictions on spending of funds limits the CBO's ability to provide tailored services to meet the unique needs of needs of families.

Addressing barriers associated with funding streams can assure CBOs can effectively support families and work to prevent child welfare involvement.

- **Recommendation:** Prevention funding that is more streamlined and includes improved accessibility and flexibility in funding would empower CBOs to provide sustainable high quality preventative services to families in crisis, reducing the need for more intensive child welfare interventions.

The PIFS CRP would like DCYF Budget team to work with Strengthening Families to determine if a reallocation of funding could help to reduce barriers for CBOs that offer preventative services to families with an identified need and/or at risk for CPS interventions. The reallocation and reduction of funding barriers could help diverse communities, including marginalized groups, receive adequate and flexible support. It will enable local providers to implement effective primary and secondary prevention strategies, reducing the entry of at-risk families into the child welfare system while promoting family stability and child well-being.

Ensuring that funding streams are adaptable and effective enhances DCYF's ability to honestly and transparently support CBOs, which are often closest to communities that need services. By revising and optimizing funding programs where appropriate and applicable, DCYF could strengthen the support systems around families but also align with its core values of inclusion, compassion, and transparency.

- **Poverty Reduction and Child Welfare Involvement**

- **Problem Statement:** Poverty is a significant contributor to child welfare involvement in the United States and in Washington State. Families experiencing poverty often face stressors that include a lack of access to some basic needs such as stable housing, sufficient food, healthcare, and childcare. Unfortunately, these stressors can impact a family and, in some cases, trigger an intervention from CPS. In many situations, it is the underlying problem of poverty that triggered child welfare involvement and not willful neglect.

Families that are experiencing poverty are often over surveilled, subject to additional scrutiny from institutions like schools, healthcare providers, and social services.

Additionally, research on [disadvantaged neighborhoods and child maltreatment referrals](#) indicates that families from marginalized racial and ethnic groups, who are disproportionately affected by poverty, are more likely to be involved in the child welfare system. It is this overrepresentation with child welfare involvement that an acknowledgment of the interplay of race, poverty, and structural inequities must be addressed by DCYF.

- **Recommendation:** Research from [Chapin Hall \(2021 and 2023\)](#) indicate that material hardship increases the risk of child welfare involvement and help with housing, utilities, and cash assistance programs reduce child maltreatment and involvement with CPS.

The PIFS CRP recommends that DCYF develop and facilitate a task force composed of DCYF staff, CRP members, community partners, individuals with lived experience, subject matter experts in child maltreatment, poverty, and public policy. The task force would explore the feasibility of sponsoring a program to evaluate the effectiveness of temporary economic support and its effectiveness in preventing recurrent child maltreatment among Washington families.

Several similar pilot projects are currently underway across the United States, including the largest with [800 families who were referred to Illinois Department of Children and Family Services](#). These initiatives aim to assess the impact of guaranteed basic income in stabilizing families and reducing child welfare involvement. If DCYF is committed to prioritizing prevention and reducing the recurrence of child welfare cases, addressing economic disparities and the underlying problems of poverty must be a priority.

By exploring the potential of economic support as a preventative measure, DCYF can align its resources with evidence-based practices that target poverty-related stressors contributing to child maltreatment. This approach supports DCYF's mission to enhance family well-being and DCYF's dedication to prevention while also reinforcing DCYF's mission to protect children and strengthen families.

CRITICAL INCIDENT REVIEW CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL SUBCOMMITTEE

The Critical Incident Review CRP Subcommittee is made up of members from all three CRPs that have an interest and understanding of child fatality and near fatalities, either in a professional or from a lived experience perspective.

CIR CRP Subcommittee Members

- Jacob D'Annuzio - Parents Representation Managing Attorney with Office of Public Defense and CYF Co-Chair
- Ron Murphy - Senior Director of Strategic Consulting at Casey Family Programs and CYF CRP member
- Ryan Murrey - Executive Director of Washington Association of Child Advocate Programs and CYF CRP member
- Jason Bragg - Family Resilience Community Consulting and Contracted Social Worker with the Office of Public Defense and CYF CRP member
- Kelly Warner-King - Family and Youth Justice Program at the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and CYF CRP member
- Laurie Lippold - Director of Public Policy at Partners for our Children and CYF CRP member
- Heather Smith - Lived Expert and Certified Parent Ally and CYF CRP member
- Jennifer Justice - Parent Ally with The FIRST Clinic, lived expert and Co-Chair of the PIFS CRP
- Tiffani Buck - Nursing Consultation Advisor for Community Health Systems with the Department of Health and PIFS CRP member
- Carol Mitchell - Executive Director of the Institute for Black Justice and PIFS CRP member
- Paula Reed - Director of Child Advocacy Centers of Washington (CACAW) and PIFS CRP member
- Kimberly Booker - Contracted Social Worker with Office of Public Defense (OPD), prior DCYF Staff, and REI CRP member

- New members that will be included in the next meeting include Jasmine Hodges, Buffy Via, Tif Junker, and Shauna Magee

CIR CRP Subcommittee Process

The CIR CRP Subcommittee has two in-person meetings annually. These meetings include DCYF Critical Incident and Field Operation staff. The meeting participants are divided into groups with assigned cases to review. Themes and trends are identified during the case reviews and those identified trends and themes are discussed as the larger group reconvenes.

The CIR CRP Subcommittee meets virtually to debrief the in-person meeting and determine identified themes and recommendations.

CIR CRP Subcommittee Work

During fiscal year 2023-2024 the CIR CRP Subcommittee met in March of 2024 with DCYF Critical Incident and Field Operation staff.

CIR CRP Subcommittee Recommendations

The CIR CRP Subcommittee identified the theme of *ENGAGEMENT* during their work in fiscal year 2023-2024. The CIR CRP Subcommittee offers the following recommendations for DCYF to explore as a way to improve engagement.

- The subcommittee reviewed many cases, including specific cases involving Black and Native families. Trust in DCYF is difficult for these communities and the subcommittee would like to identify the need for improved engagement and relationship building with Black, Brown, and Native families. DCYF should identify and implement the following:
 - Improved caseworker training that is built on cultural competency. Staff should receive regular and robust training with an emphasis on understanding the historical trauma and systemic inequities affecting marginalized communities, particularly Black, Brown, and Native families. The training should be mandatory and include learning about implicit biases and how these can impact engagement and service delivery.

- Culturally responsive service delivery programs. The Racial Equity and Impact CRP recommended several programs that have achieved scientific rating from the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse that are also culturally responsive. The CIR Subcommittee strongly recommends that DCYF work to implement the use of those programs to improve the service delivery and engagement of Black, Brown, and Native families.
- Incorporate peer navigators or parent allies who have shared cultural and lived experiences with families involved with DCYF. The ability to have someone with a shared culture that has similar experiences can work to build trust, reduce stigma, and improve communication and engagement.
- Leverage the use of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that already serve in the community. These organizations often have established trust and cultural understanding and can facilitate a more meaningful engagement between families and DCYF.
- DCYF should address barriers to engagement that include transportation challenges, employment related barriers, and concrete supports.
 - Transportation and employment barriers can include the inability to secure reliable transportation, no paid time off, and lack of leave. This can result in missed court dates and/or service engagement. These barriers can be viewed as non-compliance with case plans. For parents in low-wage or hourly employment, the fear of losing income may impact their ability to fully engage.
- Father Engagement. DCYF should continue to work to improve father engagement. This could include:
 - Provide DCYF staff with specialized training of the importance of father engagement. This training should address stereotypes or biases that may overlook the role of fathers in caregiving.
 - Continue to partner with and develop fatherhood programs that are also culturally responsive.
 - Peer navigators to engage fathers and provide positive role models.
- Additionally, the CIR Subcommittee identified the following areas of concern during their review of the 2023 Critical Incidents:
 - Need for improved housing and housing stability for families with DCYF involvement.

- DCYF should consider expanding trauma-informed care training, also addressing the unique needs of Black, Brown, and Native families. This could provide staff with a greater understanding of the emotional, psychological, and systemic challenges faced by families with DCYF involvement.
- The CIR Subcommittee identified that challenges existed between systems servicing families with DCYF involvement. DCYF should work with existing systems (courts, attorneys, hospitals, service delivery) to ensure that families have contact and access to necessary services and resources.
- All staff should carry Narcan and provide to any/all families with DCYF involvement.
- Safety Plans - CIR Subcommittee identified a need for staff to revisit safety plans during the life of a case. Review policy and training around addressing needs for safety plan revision.