

# By-Laws Racial Equity & Impact Citizen Review Panel

WASHINGTON STATEWIDE CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

Original Date: June 22, 2022  
Revised: February 25, 2023  
Revised: March 10, 2023

## **Article I**

### **Name**

Section 1. The name of this Panel shall be Racial Equity & Impact Citizen Review Panel.

## **Article II**

### **Purpose**

Section 1. The Racial Equity & Impact (REI) Citizen Review Panel will review the practices, procedures, and policies of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and will make develop and recommend transformative actions for systemic change to protect children and youth and preserve families.

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

- (a) The child protection standards set forth in section Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 5101 et seq.); and
- (b) The development and implementation of culturally relevant programs and services to preserve families and/or facilitate family reunification when children are removed from their families and placed in out-of-home care.
- (c) The documentation that preference has been given when making placement decisions to adult relatives over nonrelatives when relative caregivers meet all relevant child protection standards.
- (d) The documentation of placement in non-relative homes with caregivers who respect, acknowledge, value and know the importance of cultural and ethnic identity and are able to help children continue to develop and their cultural and ethnic identity.
- (e) The documentation of placement in non-relative homes with caregivers who respect birth parents and the parent-child relationship and who work to promote and encourage this relationship when family reunification is the permanency goal.
- (f) The documentation of nondiscriminatory practices in every step of case planning and review processes and the provision of equitable services to all children under the care of DCYF.

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## **Article III Membership**

Section 1. Panel shall be comprised of at least 8 members and no more than 12 members. Panel members will complete an application and background check before the panel votes on appointment. Appointment is confirmed after simple majority vote.

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

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

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

Section 5. The initial term of a Racial Equity & Impact Citizen Review Panel member will be two-years. At the end of the initial two years of service, a Panel member can volunteer an additional two years. No Panel member is eligible to serve more than four consecutive years,

Section 6. A Quorum of the Racial Equity & Impact Committee is a majority of the members present at any in-person or virtual meeting.

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

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

## **Article IV Officers**

Section 1. Officers consist of two Co-Chairs and a Secretary.

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Section 2. The Co-Chairs shall plan the agenda/order of business for all meetings, showing in their exact order, under their correct headings, all matters known in advance that are due to come up and if applicable – the times for which they are set, open the meeting at the appointed time by taking the chair and calling the meeting to order, announce in proper sequence the business that comes before the Panel and seek Consent to the Agenda, to state and put to vote all legitimate questions that come before the Panel as motions or otherwise arise in the course of proceedings, to expedite the business of the Panel in every way compatible with the rights of members, to declare the meeting adjourned at the time prescribed in the agenda, and appoint an ad hoc/special committee to carry out a specified task as needed, at the completion of which – that is, on presentation of its final report to the REI – it ceases to exist. The Co-Chairs shall serve as an *ex officio* member of all ad hoc/special committees. The Co-Chairs can call special meetings, appoint workgroups, and schedule site visits as needed to facilitate the work of this panel.

Section 3. The Secretary is the recording officer of the Racial Equity & Impact Citizen Review Panel. The duties of the Secretary are as follows: to record the proceedings of the REI i.e., minutes, to keep on file all ad hoc/special committee reports, to keep the REI membership roll and to call the roll when required, to make the minutes and records available to any members and the Facilitator upon request, to work with the Facilitator to ensure that all minutes and other REI documents are posted on the REI website, to disseminate to the membership a notice of each meeting and the agenda for each meeting, and to maintain a record book/file in which the bylaws, with any amendments, minutes, and ad hoc/special committee reports are entered, and to have the current record book/file on hand at every meeting, and to perform any other duties as assigned by the Co-Chairs. In the absence of the Co-Chairs, to call the meeting to order and preside until the election of a chairperson pro tem.

## Article V Committees

Section 1. The REI Citizen Review Panel will have no standing committees.

Section 2. The Co-Chairs shall appoint an ad hoc/special committee as needed to facilitate the work of the REI Citizen Review Panel. Upon completion of the work of any ad hoc/special committee, the committee will develop a written report that will be presented to the entire REI Citizen Review Panel and subsequently submitted to the Secretary for placement in the record book and posting on the website.

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

Section 5. The REI Citizen Review Panel may develop a written protocol to guide the work of any ad hoc/special committee.

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## **Article VI**

### **Duties of REI Panel Members**

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

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

Section 3. The REI Panel will submit an annual report to DCYF in May of the calendar year.

## **Article VII**

### **Panel Meetings**

Section 1. The Racial Equity & Impact Citizen Review Panel shall meet at least once every two months during the calendar year.

Section 2. The Co-Chairs and Facilitator can call special meetings, workgroups, site work or visits as necessary to facilitate any facet of its work.

Section 3. A Quorum consists of a majority of members present at any in-person or virtual meeting.

Section 4. Meetings of the Racial Equity & Impact Citizen Review Panel are open to the public. However, only Panel members can attend meetings when confidential information is on the agenda for discussion i.e. individual client cases, personnel issues regarding DCYF staff, case reviews by Panel, etc.

Section 5. Panel members are expected to attend all meetings and to be fully engaged during meetings i.e. in-person or virtual. Engagement during virtual meetings requires being fully present and keeping Panel member's video camera on throughout the meetings and demonstrating respect for all Panel members.

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## **Article VIII Non-Discrimination**

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

The Racial Equity & Impact Citizen Review Panel is an inclusive group with diverse members. The REI Citizen Panel welcomes everyone and continuously works to promote inclusivity. The REI Citizen Review Panel continuously works and supports all efforts to combat prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. All panel members are required to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others.

The Racial Equity & Impact Citizen Review Panel has a strong commitment to creating an equitable and inclusive environment. The REI Citizen Review Panel respects the fundamental rights and dignity of all people.

## **Article IX Amendments**

Section 1. Amendments to the by-laws of the REI CRP shall be submitted to the Co-Chairs in writing by any member, disseminated via email for review to all Panel members by the Secretary at least two (2) weeks prior to any REI regularly scheduled meeting, presented at the next regularly scheduled meeting for discussion, vote, and adopted by majority vote of members present i.e., Quorum.

## **Article X Confidentiality**

Section 1. The Racial Equity & Inclusion Citizen Review Panel shall safeguard confidential information (whether acquired through verbal communication, written record or observation) pertaining to any child, relative or friend of any family under review of the Racial Equity & Citizen Review Panel. In addition, the panel shall safeguard information pertaining to individual staff or panel members, and information which may have a detrimental effect on families or the

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community at large, obtained or shared among members during panel and committee meetings. This clause shall specifically exclude formal reports, media releases, and other information approved by the panel or to meet mandatory reporting guidelines.

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

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

## **Article XI Conflict of Interest**

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

## **Article XII Code of Conduct**

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