



Ending Child Abuse and Neglect.

# CITIZEN CONNECTIONS

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### STATE UPDATES

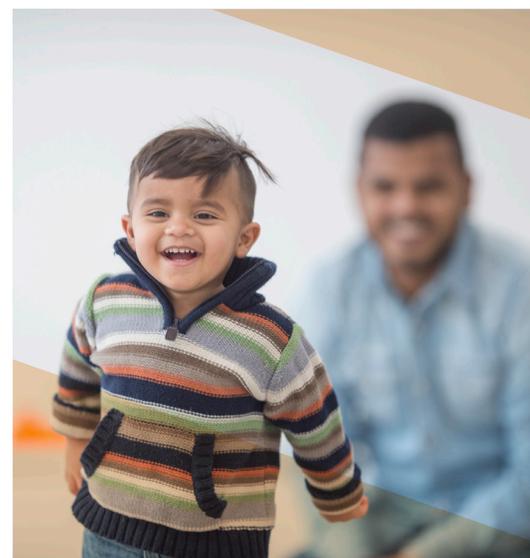
## Alaska

Alaska’s Citizen Review Panel has been continually retooling its operations over the last several years to be responsive to the needs of Alaska’s child protection enterprise and to be true to the federal and state statutes. This article describes some of Alaska CRP’s outreach efforts.

Alaska CRP’s community outreach efforts are many and diverse. Community is defined broadly and includes many stakeholders—children affected by maltreatment, birth parents, foster parents, service providers, agency partners, tribal partners, legal system, and the child protection services (CPS) system. The Panel identifies four broad steps of outreach—collecting, compiling, debriefing, and disseminating.

*Collecting information:* The Panel uses multiple methods to collect information from community stakeholder groups, depending on their availability and accessibility. The Panel periodically receives data from the state Office of Children’s Services on key indicators of agency performance through the year. The Panel conducts annual site visits to each region and interviews leadership and staff. The Panel began interviewing foster parents as part of site visits in 2015 and plans to reach out to older children in the foster care system and birth parents in the coming years. In addition, the Panel has conducted an annual survey of tribal child welfare workers for the last 3 years and is conducting the 2016 annual survey of all CPS employees.

*Compiling reports:* Data collected from the CPS system informs site visits, and each site visit and survey effort results in reports that, in turn, inform the annual report. The Panel strives to ensure that its recommendations are grounded in the information collected through the year and are achievable within the resource constraints of the CPS agency.



“He has a right to criticize, who has a heart to help.”

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN



*Debriefing with CPS:* All of the Panel’s observations and conclusions are shared with the CPS senior leadership in a debriefing session before public dissemination. Monthly debriefing sessions with CPS help the Panel better understand the child protection enterprise in the state and offer meaningful and actionable recommendations. These sessions also help in fostering a constructive relationship while preserving the necessarily critical perspective of the Panel.

*Disseminating findings:* The Panel posts all of its reports publicly on its website and sends them to the Alaska legislature’s House committee on Health and Social Services (HSS), the Office of the Commissioner of the state’s Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and the Governor’s Office. The annual report reaches a much broader contingent of lawmakers, including Alaska’s congressional delegation. Each year, the Panel also presents its findings and recommendations to the House Committee on HSS in a hearing that includes the state CPS’s director’s overview of the agency’s annual work and the agency’s response to

the Panel’s recommendations. In addition, the Panel makes presentations to key professional groups, agency groups, and other task forces, boards, and associations as requested through the year.

Alaska CRP subscribes to a collaborative participatory model, promoting a continuing dialogue among diverse participants, leading to a shared understanding of the opportunities and constraints in providing child protection services at the local, regional, and state level. The Panel maintains a critical but constructive perspective in its work. The Panel is independent of the state CPS system, receives strong support from the CPS agency and the state legislature, and is increasingly relied upon for an unbiased assessment and constructive recommendations.

For more information about the Panel and its activities, please visit <http://www.crpalaska.org>.

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## Kentucky

The three panels in Kentucky have been working on a cross-collaboration study regarding the general public’s perception of the state child welfare services. Jefferson CRP is independently finishing up an agency pay analysis report. Southern Bluegrass and Statewide CRPs are in the beginning stages of planning for upcoming mini-conferences to be held in April 2016.

In November 2015, LaToya Vaughn joined the University of Kentucky Training Resource Center, where she serves as the Program Coordinator for the Children’s Justice Act Task Force and the Citizen Review Panels. She has over 20 years of experience working in the fields of human services and addiction. LaToya obtained a Bachelor of Science in Education from the University of Louisville and a Master of Science in Family Studies with concentration in Marriage & Family Therapy from the University of Kentucky. LaToya can be reached at [latoya.vaughn@uky.edu](mailto:latoya.vaughn@uky.edu).

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## New Jersey

The New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect (NJTFCAN), in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF), will host a statewide multidisciplinary Skill Building



We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude.

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CYNTHIA OZICK

Conference in September 2016. This Conference is designed to enhance the knowledge and development of approximately 250 child protection professionals, including but not limited to professionals in child welfare, law enforcement, social work, mental health, medicine, juvenile justice, and domestic violence; educators and daycare providers; law guardians; and volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates. Building on the work of NJTFCAN's Protection Committee, the conference will focus on human trafficking, sexually exploitative images, and child protection. For more information on the 2016 Skill Building Conference, contact NJTFCAN at [dcf.njtaskforcechildabuse@dcf.state.nj.us](mailto:dcf.njtaskforcechildabuse@dcf.state.nj.us).

## North Carolina

North Carolina is unique in the country in its number of local citizen review panels. They total 101—one for each of the 100 counties and for the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation. Under North Carolina statute, citizen review panels are called “Community Child Protection Teams” (CCPTs). These teams are responsible for reviewing child protection cases, identifying systemic factors that affect service delivery, and figuring out ways to improve child welfare. Annually, the NC CCPT Advisory Board surveys local teams and, on the basis of the findings, makes recommendations to the NC Division of Social Services.

Last year the Advisory Board made three main recommendations:

1. Encourage common child and family team (CFT) practices in order to coordinate service for children, youth, and families.
2. Strengthen the capacity of local CCPTs to work with Social Services in improving child welfare services.
3. Create and maintain a survey to track CCPT reviews of child protection cases.

This year, the Advisory Board is surveying local teams to determine which action steps they would support to carry out the three recommendations. In addition, the survey asks what mentoring they would need to implement these steps. For more information, see <http://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/ccpt/>.



“There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.”

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EDITH WHARTON

## Ohio

In the coming years, Ohio will welcome three new citizen review panels to the state. Faculty and staff at The Ohio State University are collaborating to oversee this process. We are looking forward to learning with all of you and would welcome any lessons learned, comments, or questions from states around the country on making our citizen review panels successful. We are interested in any information regarding things that work or may not work as we start this process! Our Project Coordinator's name is Sarah Yerkey, and she can be reached by email at [yerkey.5@osu.edu](mailto:yerkey.5@osu.edu).

## South Carolina

The South Carolina Citizen Review Panel concluded the year with a fall retreat. Dr. Kim Janha and Diana Cohen received the South Carolina CRP Rising Star Award for their extraordinary work on behalf of South Carolina's children in 2015. Both went far beyond attending regular meetings by working on various workgroups and subcommittees during the course of the year and by presenting at the National CRP Conference in Oregon.



Dr. Kim Janha, CRP  
Coordinator Cheryl  
Worrell, and Diana  
Cohen

Dr. Kim Janha was recently named to South Carolina's Kinship Care Advisory Committee, led by the Sisters of Charity Foundation. Dr. Janha testified, along with her godmother and family friend, about the importance of supporting Kinship families at a public hearing of the SC Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children. Listen here: <http://www.scstatehouse.gov/video/videofeed.php> (See November 17 Public Hearing at 1:47). Efforts are underway in South Carolina to have more supports available to Kinship caregivers.

New SC Department of Social Services (DSS) Director Susan Alford invited Carolyn Dorrell to participate as a member of the DSS Advisory Board. Carolyn will

serve as one of South Carolina's ambassadors supporting the department's mission to provide safety, permanency and well-being for children, while promoting stability for vulnerable adults and families. The SC CRP members are proud and pleased to have Carolyn represent them on this committee.



Kayla Mallett

Kayla Mallett leads the South Carolina CRP's Public Outreach and Social Media Committee, which was formed last year. The goal of this committee is to increase public awareness, gain support, and recruit new panel members. The group uses social media and grassroots community events to accomplish its goal. We are looking forward to a robust year that includes opportunities to network and collaborate with other child welfare professionals and advocates. Like us on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/sccitizenreviewpanel/>

## ACYF Has a New Commissioner!



Rafael López

On Aug. 5, the Senate confirmed Rafael López as the commissioner of ACF's Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF). Commissioner López brings a strong record of accomplishments and experiences, both inside and outside of government, to his work at ACYF. He was recently a senior policy advisor in the Office of Science and Technology Policy within the Executive Office of the President and with the Domestic Policy Council. Prior to his federal service, López held numerous positions in the human services field. From 2010 to 2013, he was an associate director at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and from 2009 to 2010, he served as the president and CEO of The Family League of Baltimore City, Inc.

Before moving to the East Coast in 2009, López held positions in city and county government, including Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families; Deputy Director of the City and County of San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families; and Senior Deputy for Health and Human Services for Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina.

From 1999 to 2004, he served as the founding executive director of First 5 Santa Cruz County. He received his B.A. from the University of California, Santa Cruz and an M.P.A. from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. We encourage you to read Commissioner López's written testimony to the Senate Finance Committee as a part of the confirmation hearing (<http://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Rafael%20Lopez%20WrittenTestimony%20042215.pdf>). He has a very interesting life story, one that emphasizes the importance of a community-based approach to strengthening families and keeping children safe.

## New Research on Citizen Review Panels

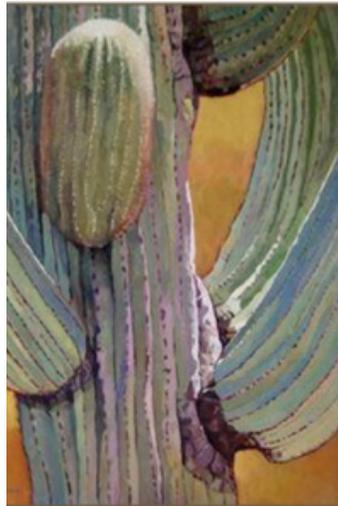
A study by Drs. Crystal Collins Camargo, Neal Buckwalter, and Blake Jones will appear in an upcoming issue of the journal *Children and Youth Services Review*. The authors surveyed state child welfare administrators around the country regarding their perceptions of Citizen Review Panels. The qualitative analysis yielded a significant degree of agreement across administrators in 31 states and the District of Columbia and provided a number of insights for how agencies and citizen review panels can work more collaboratively. These include the need for agencies to assist in the training of CRP participants and for administrators to more deliberately foster an environment conducive to effective engagement by supporting ongoing dialogue, integrating CRP recommendations into agency work, and meeting regularly with the groups.

The authors will present their findings at the annual [National Citizen Review Panel Conference](#) in Phoenix.

### Registration is now open for the 2016 National CRP Conference in Arizona!

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us June 6–9, 2016, at the Renaissance Resort and Spa.

Register online at: <https://sites.google.com/site/arizonacitizenreviewpanels/2016-Conference>



## 2016 NATIONAL CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL CONFERENCE

*Hosted by: ASU Center for Child Well-Being*

*June 6 – June 9, 2016*

*Renaissance Resort and Spa, Glendale AZ*

“I’ve seen and met angels wearing the disguise of ordinary people living ordinary lives.”

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TRACY CHAPMAN

