



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Kansas Citizen Review Panel  
Custody to Transition

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May 31, 2023

## Kansas Citizen Review Panel Overview – Custody to Transition Annual Report

The Custody to Transition Kansas Citizen Review Panel is one of the three Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) in the state of Kansas. CRPs were established under the Child Abuse Treatment and Prevention Act (CAPTA) which was most recently reauthorized in 2010. The work of all three panels in Kansas operates in accordance with CAPTA requirements. This report summarizes the work of the Custody to Transition Kansas Citizen Review Panel for June 1, 2022, through May 31, 2023.

The Custody to Transition Citizen Review Panel, who will be referred to as CTT CRP for the remainder of this report, is pleased to present its Annual Report for 2023. CTT CRP uses their knowledge, values and skills to collaborate and review the policies, procedures and overall function of the Kansas child welfare process. The CTT CRP focuses on the timeframe of when a child enters custody to when they transition out of care. The panel is driven to ensure their recommendations and observations represent the broad and diverse population of Kansas families. This report includes detailed information on the recommendations and observations made by the panel throughout the year to support aging out youth, public outreach and increase panel member engagement.

This past year, the panel has focused on increasing their knowledge of panel functions, as well as enhancing panel membership and partnership. Diversity in membership within the CTT CRP is critical to effectiveness and efficiency within our assessments and recommendations. This panel is charged with reviewing policies, procedures and practices within the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF). The panel is also charged with collaborating and networking within their communities and organizations. This often occurs during the meetings as panel members discuss and evaluate the landscape of our state through information sharing and a collaboration of resources. CTT CRP has a standing goal to ensure the voices of children and the voices of child welfare professionals are being heard within the child welfare system of Kansas through our recommendations. CTT CRP provides opportunity to hear from concerned citizens across the state by advertising the work of the panel and the needed input of citizens through a flyer that has been distributed widely.

Central to the efforts is ensuring that individual and community voices are accessible and can continue to provide guidance on how the state can build on our current successes and continue to improve the child welfare system in Kansas. The panel ensures both the feedback and the knowledge gathered regarding interventions and innovative approaches is readily available to those making policy decisions for youth in care. The panel makes every effort to ensure they are a ready resource of qualitative information for our state and federal partners.)

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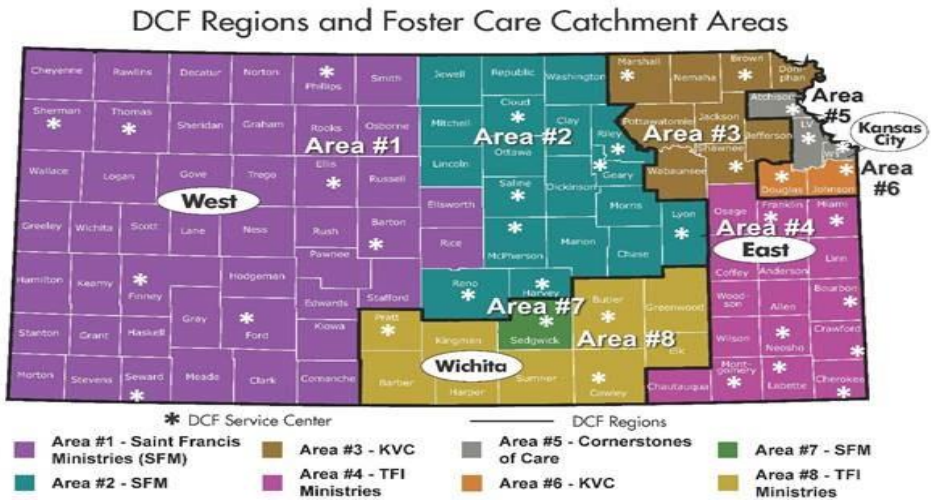
For Kansas, it means we have:

- Opportunities to assess and review relevant data about children in care, and outcomes post care;
- A network of individuals who understand the need of the child protection system;
- An ability to keep focus on the trends and key issues related to supporting and serving Kansas families, children, and older youth;
- A statewide and broad perspective of systems, in part, by ensuring diverse panel membership;

- A diminished sense of isolation among organizations and individuals facing challenges in strengthening families; and
- Networks of panel members who will help educate the public about the child protection system.)

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\*Figure 1



**Membership Status**

The CTT CRP is a multidisciplinary, multidimensional, interagency group of volunteers who are dedicated to the success of family systems in every DCF region. As indicated in Figure 1, DCF has eight regions. The CTT membership includes representatives from all four contracting agencies and six of the eight regions. The diversity and wide-ranging scope of volunteers ensures that every area of the state is being recognized and represented in the later recommendations and observations. The panel utilizes a Joint Strategic Planning Retreat, which is held each August to discuss and decide on goals and objectives for the upcoming year. This year the CTT CRP reflected on past functions and determined that moving forward goals and objectives would have better outcomes with tasks and assignments being handed out at the end of each meeting, rather than assigning the tasks to subcommittees.

The CTT CRP also increased the number of meetings each year, from quarterly to bi-monthly, to increase panel engagement and for the panel to work more efficiently and effectively towards our goals. In efforts to increase panel engagement and knowledge of the purposes and objectives of the CAPTA CRP, the panel determined having a 30-minute orientation at the beginning of each bi-monthly meeting serves as an opportunity to provide general information useful to new panel members or to existing panel members who are seeking a refresher on the purpose of the panel or on CAPTA. Providing the panel with an equal opportunity to gain

knowledge of CAPTA CRP work and to have questions answered as needed has shown some immediate improvements to our ongoing work.

While the immediate threat and risks of COVID-19 has largely receded in Kansas, in early parts of this reporting period the panel membership experienced waves of sickness, which had some effect on the work of the panel. Despite the challenges, the panel voted to keep the majority of the meetings in 2022-2023 virtual in efforts to increase the ability for members to attend in a safe way. Concerted efforts have been implemented throughout the year to facilitate more active engagement. The panel meets in a hybrid format once a year at the Annual Strategic Planning Retreat. Panel continues efforts to increase engagement, as described in further detail later in this report.)

The CRP utilizes recommendations made by panel members in their various organizations to recruit future panel members. Currently, CTT consists of no more than twenty-one members. The panel strives to have a balance in members including diverse child welfare professionals, people with lived experience and people who access services through the system. CTT CRP is currently making efforts to recruit the following positions:

- Child Welfare Contractor (2)
- Guardian Ad Litem
- Formerly In Care (2)
- Substance Abuse Counselor

This year CTT CRP experienced a transition in our DCF appointee and the manager for the DCF CAPTA CRP Grant from Ann Goodall to Jennifer Slagle. Similarly, Justin Thaw has replaced Valerie Leon as a representative for Saint Francis Ministries. *\*Please, find a panel roster below and visit our DCF CAPTA page for updates on roster changes.*

The panel chair, facilitator and members have made great efforts to bring more structure to the panel to improve function and become more effective and efficient. They have instituted new bylaws and adopted approved amendments. Thus far, CTT CRP voted and instituted nine new articles to date and has also chosen new leadership. Last year, Sharilyn Ray was voted in as the CTT CRP Chairperson. This year we have also added two officers, the Chair Elect and the Secretary. Darla Nelson-Metzger was voted as Chair Elect and Brandy Tofel was voted as Secretary. *\*Please see Appendix A for a full list of Bylaws*

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Membership Categories	Name	Title	Organization	Relevant Background/Experience
Parent/ Parent Group Rep.	Deniece Flemming	Family Engagement Supervisor	Klan	** please see bios in the appendix
Child Advocacy Group Rep.	Kelly Durkin	Child Advocate	Lifeshouse Child Advocacy Center, Topeka	
Kansas Child Advocate	Kerrie Lonard	Child Advocate	Kansas office of the Child Advocate	
Child Welfare State Agency	Melinda Kline	Deputy Director of Permanency	DCF, Topeka	
Child Welfare State Agency	Jennifer Slagle	CRP/CJA Program Manager	DCF	
Child welfare contractor	Justin Thaw	Director of Reintegration	St. Francis Ministries	
Child Welfare Contractor	Brandy Tofel	VP of Policy and Research	TFI	
Child Welfare Contractor	Recruiting			
Child Welfare Contractor	Recruiting			
Child Welfare Contractor	Recruiting			
Education Advocate	Malissa Martin	President and CEO	Communities in Schools in Mid America	
Formerly in Care	Recruiting			
Individual Experienced in Working with Children with Disabilities	Darla Nelson-Metzger	Advocate Coordinator	Families Together, Inc.	
Health Care Professional	Emily Killough	Child Abuse Pediatrician	Children's Mercy	
Health Care Professional	Recruiting			
Guardian Ad Litem	Recruiting			
Substance Abuse Counselor	Recruiting			
Community Volunteer	Justine Burton	Child Advocate	Stop Gap, Inc.	
Office of Judicial Administration	Dena Russell-Marino	Kansas Child Advocate	OJA	
Tribal Representative	Sandra Shopteese	Tribal Specialist	DCF	
Works with Children in Care, Chairperson	Sharilyn Ray	Chief Program Officer	Restoration Family Services	
Works with Children in Care	Tara Wallace		Kansas African American Foster/Adoption Coalition	
Advisory Member	Sara Hortenstine		KS Child Death Review Board	
Works with Homeless Youth	Linda Long	Transition Liaison	USD 261	
CRP Coordinator	LynTia Gwess	CRP Coordinator	Mainstream Nonprofit Solutions	
CRP Support	Kara-Kae James	CRP Supporter	Mainstream Nonprofit Solutions	



## MEETING OVERVIEWS

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### August 3, 2022

**Focus:** This meeting consists of both the Intake to Petition Panel and Custody to Transition Panel coming together in a hybrid setting to strategize and collaborate on 2022-2023 goals and objectives. The meeting focused on best practices for CRPs. Blake Jones, former Kentucky CRP coordinator come and provide a CRP 101 for both panels. The strategic planning focused in on engaging the public and ensuring youth have resources when aging out the system.

**Overview:** On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, a joint meeting was held between the Kansas Citizen Review Panels. The meeting opened with an overview of the panel chairs and positions that are currently being recruited. Jennifer Slagle reported DCF updates and upcoming priorities for the panel and general updates were given by various panel members. Upcoming DCF priorities include the following: Soul Family, State Kansas Model, Family Crisis Response, and shifting from mandated reporter to mandated supporter. Blake Jones presented a CRP 101 and best practices. The panel then separated into strategic planning sessions.

### October 14, 2022

**Focus:** Changes to panel function according to best practice by Blake Jones, PH.D and former faculty member at the UK College of Social Work. Review of goals and objectives and providing tasks and assignments.

**Overview:** Changes to panel function included bi-monthly meetings, increased involvement from panel chairs, update in CRP CTT roles, and review of bylaws at the beginning of each meeting. The panel reviewed Bylaw Article I & II and unanimously voted both in. Sharilyn (CTT Panel Chairperson) facilitated the discussion of goals and objectives and provided tasks and assignments. The meeting ended with updates from panel members and Ann Goodall (DCF appointee) providing DCF and CJA updates including recent grants received, new social programs, and updates on KCSL.

### December 2, 2022

**Focus:** Focused on Bylaw Article III and reviewing task and assignments. Stacy Tidwell and Amy Ervin presented the panel with an overview of independent living resources for youth.

**Overview:** The panel started by updating Bylaw Article III and voted it in. Panel was updated on recent flyer, CAPTA webpage, and adding Facebook page to engage the public. Stacy Tidwell presented on resources provided for youth aging out of foster care. Stacy Tidwell also provided the panel with other programs that support youth aging out. This meeting concluded with general challenges from the panel and DCF updates from Ann Goodall. Melinda Kline also shared the CFSR round 4 structure.

### February 3, 2022

**Focus:** Updating bylaw article IV, V. Updating panel on CAPTA website and final Custody to Transition flyer. Panel discussed next steps for goal one. Discussions of annual report. Panel ended with member updates, as well as DCF updates.

**Overview:** Kara-Kae James was introduced as the new Marketing Director of MNS who will be overseeing the CRP grant. The panel drafted and voted in bylaw article IV and V. The panel updated language to goal one and decided to not move forward with a social media presence. The panel determined they need more information on resources and the process for aging out youth. Executive committee elected to set subcommittees and meet in March to discuss proposed language of future work and recommendations in the Annual Report. Jennifer Slagle updated the panel of CFSR efforts and the partnership with KCSL on family resource centers.

**April 6, 2023**

**Focus:** Updating bylaw article VI, VII. The panel voted in two new members. The Transition Coordinator for the Haysville school district presented on transition planning within schools. Panel adjourned after member updates.

**Overview:** The Panel welcomed Darla Nelson-Metzger to the panel. They also voted Alexandria Ware and Kristalle Hendrick into the panel. They also voted Darla Nelson-Metzger as the new Chair Elect and Brandy Tofel as the new Secretary. Cindy Sherman, the USD 261 transition coordinator overviewed the transition plan within an IEP and other services that are utilized by children and when children avail themselves to these services. The panel discussed a better way to collaborate between the CMP/DCF and the school system, whether including the transition coordinator or transition liaison or both.

*\*For complete meeting minutes and member attendance, see CAPTA Webpage:*

[Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act \(CAPTA\) - Prevention and Protection Services \(ks.gov\)](https://www.ks.gov/child-abuse-prevention-and-treatment-act-capta-prevention-and-protection-services)

## Work of the CRP- CTT Panel

The following details the work of the panel towards goals that were established in August 2022. This section also includes an outline and explanation of challenges and information gathered by the panel. The intent is that stakeholders will use this information to encourage best practices and collaborate with other organizations to ensure resources are distributed among Kansas' children and families. The CTT CRP has dedicated 2022-2023 to pursuing opportunities to gain information and seek next steps to the following goals:

- Engage the Public
- Ensure Youth have Resources when Aging Out

### Engage the Public

CTT CRP has made efforts to increase panel member education by exploring ways to provide additional training and resources to panel members. At the beginning of each bi-monthly meeting the panel was offered a CAPTA CRP Overview training. The panel has added membership roles to their handbook and has begun adopting bylaws at each meeting. This has resulted in increased engagement with our panel members, and better collaboration between DCF, panel members and other outside support.

CTT CRP has also made great strides in searching for tools to engage the public and connect youth with resources. The panel explored social media platforms, a public forum, developed a flyer for distribution to the general public and updating the CRP DCF webpage. CTT has seen a growing need for easier ways to access resources that are available and work to be a part of that solution. The Panel has a standing goal of engaging the public; they continue to work on their target audience and what kind of feedback they are searching for. CTT pursued public outreach through social media. There were many barriers to this being a successful means of acquiring public comment; the panel will continue discussion around social media and public comment but will not move forward with a social media platform at this time.

The panel is in the process of building relationships by presenting the history and purpose of the panel to different boards and committees. On Feb. 28, 2023, DCF CAPTA/CJA Program Manager Jennifer Slagle gave a presentation to the Interagency and Community Advisory Board (ICAB) which is a Kansas cross-system multi-agency collaboration that was established to support the statewide implementation of Kansas Strong for Children and Families and Family First Prevention Services. The presentation informed ICAB of the history and purpose of Citizen Review Panels (CRPs). The board was educated about the focus and goals of CRPs in Kansas. The board had many questions as many members were not aware of the existence of CRPs. As a result of the presentation, there has been a request of application for membership to the CTT CRP.

### Ensure Youth have Resources when Aging Out

The following is an account of a Kansas youth aging out of foster care. *"Didn't learn about IL until after I aged out and then learned I could have IL apartments, etc. Moved around a lot of homes my senior year of high school. Looking back, I think I would have been eligible to live in those types of apartments. Bucket list of MH stuff. The worker asked when I came, did I need all those meds, no. Not understanding medications and not to be overmedicated. I don't remember a lot of stuff. Always adding meds, but not taking away. Happens to so many people. Medicated not to help me but medicating me into compliance." )*

There were 216 Kansas youth with the permanency goal of Another Planned Permanency Living Arrangement (APPLA) who exited care between 7/1/2022 and 12/31/2022. As of

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December 31, 2022, there were 564 youth who remained in care with the permanency goal of APPLA. They range in age from 9 - 21 years old. This group has remained in care for two months to 21.9 years with the average being 3.8 years. The length of stay in placements ranges from 0 days to 11.6 years with the average stay lasting 15.4 months. Of those, 58 youth had been in their most recent placement less than 30 days. The placement types are listed below and indicate how many youths are placed in each placement by region as of December 31, 2022.

	Kansas City	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	Wichita	Total
<b>Foster Family</b>	59	21	50	22	85	58	295
<b>Group Home</b>	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
<b>Independent Living</b>	9	5	12	6	14	18	64
<b>Maternity Home</b>	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
<b>Relative Home</b>	8	12	13	5	22	19	79
<b>Residential Institutional</b>	10	10	15	9	31	17	92
<b>Runaway</b>	5	1	4	3	6	9	28
<b>Total</b>	91	49	95	45	160	124	564

There are approximately 900 Kansas children aging out of the system each year. Children face many challenges within the welfare system, but youth aging out face unique challenges. One identified challenge for aging out youth is access to essential identifying documents, such as birth certificate, social security card and driver's license or state ID. Without these important documents, they are unable to ensure basic needs.. These barriers pose a threat to self-sufficiency. (The panel supports bill HB 2377, which if passed would allow the office of vital statistics to provide birth or death certificates to DCF and exempt the department from fees for such certificates.)

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From 2022-2023 the CTT CRP focused on understanding and supporting SOUL Family as it is in the process of development. The panel is supportive of exploring alternative permanency options for older youth, such as SOUL family. SOUL Family is being proposed as an alternative permanency option for Kansas youth 16 and older. Youth voices and opinions, such as KYAC are at the center of this objective. KYAC, the Kansas Youth Advisory Council is a group of young advocates who are or have been involved in child welfare services in Kansas. KYAC's mission is to "unite youth in care in an empowering way and enable them to speak for themselves concerning issues that affect them directly, while obtaining the life and leadership skills that will be advantageous to each later in life."

There are many resources available to youth ages 14 until 21. These opportunities are explained within the youth's transition planning, though they are not always utilized by our young. Many youth report they do not fully recognize the resources available or know how to advocate for said resources. CTT Chairperson Sharilyn commented that, *"me as a foster mom of many years, do not know all of the resources available and how to connect the youth to those resources for further usage. Not sure if we can maybe have a resource list for not just youth, but the foster families that take teens. Even if they are not Independent Living placements."*

The CTT CRP is looking at ways resources regarding the aging out process can be readily accessible both before and after a youth has transitioned out of care. Some youth see their transition plan as just another case plan, where they are disengaged or completely absent teens in their transition plan. One option proposed involved moving IL resources into an IOS app or providing a handbook of all resources to youth before aging out.

Kansas Kids at GEAR UP through Wichita State University is the only (TRIO) program in the nation geared toward kids that have experienced child welfare and Juvenile Justice. The program is able to serve up to 2,500 children by providing college readiness, career exploration and college access services through their grant. PRE-ETS (Pre-employment transition services) specific to Individualized Education Plan, 504 plans or identified disability, by giving them additional support for employment and/or transition from secondary to post-secondary education and competitive integrated employment. Foster youth to independence (FYI) is a new initiative in (Wichita region) that provides vouchers to assist with housing vouchers for up to three years. Right now, it is only in Wichita county. The Independent Living Program is attempting to implement these programs and resources in other counties across Kansas.

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## RECOMMENDATION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE WORK

As required by Section 106(c)(6) of CAPTA, the Citizen Review Panel must provide recommendations to improve the child protective system at state and local levels. The panel has made great strides in accomplishing this goal. The Kansas CRPs remains strong partners with DCF and are committed to continued collaboration in improving child protective outcomes with the agency on the following recommendations.

### **Recommendations and Observations for Goal One: Engage the Public**

As the CTT CRP increases panel participation through bi-monthly meetings, they also made efforts to engage other panels and youth serving organizations. It was apparent through these outreach efforts that there was little known about the CRP panel and their focus. In efforts to increase awareness of the panel and their function, the panel will draft and send a one-page review of the annual report to specific legislative committees committed to child welfare during the next legislative session. The CRP CTT members recommend DCF partner in sending out the one-page handout and the agency's response to the legislature, stakeholders and partners (listed below). Additionally, CTT recommends DCF post these documents on their public website and other media platforms.

The panel encourages further collaboration with the DCF communications team to maintain and enhance the CRP website as a means for public comment, which is required through the reauthorization of CAPTA. After the website is updated and renovated, the panel suggests that a part of that collaboration should include a means of monitoring the website. Gathering a baseline for the past year will allow the panel to make attainable and measurable goals in the future.

Below is a list of potential legislative committees that the panel seeks to engage with:

- Joint Committee on Child Welfare System Oversight
- House Committee on Child Welfare and Foster Care
- House Committee on Welfare Reform
- House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice
- House Committee on Health and Human Services
- House Judiciary Committee
- House Committee on Social Services Budget
- Senate Judiciary Committee
- Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare
- Robert G Bethell Joint Committee on Home and Community Based Services and KanCare Oversight

Additional examples of child welfare collaborators CTT wishes to engage with:

- DCF main contractors: CMP, Family Preservation, Family First grantees
- Other DCF Prevention Contractors
- Child Placing Agencies and Residential Programs
- Judicial systems and partners (CASA, GALs, judges, KLS)
- Youth Engagement groups (KYAC and RYAC)
- Juvenile/Correction services

- School districts
- Community Mental Health Centers
- Community Developmental Disability Organizations
- Managed Care Organizations
- Law Enforcement
- Statewide Food Banks
- Community Social Service Organizations
- County Health Departments
- Boys and Girls Club
- Youth Horizons
- Tribal Nations

**Recommendations and Observations for Goal Two: Ensure youth have resources when aging out of the system:**

It is difficult to provide recommendations regarding youth and IL when there are not readily available statistics to evaluate the resources' effectiveness to the youth that utilize them. It is recommended that DCF begin exploring ways to assess resources used by youth ages 14-21 and the outcomes for out aging out youth. This will allow accountability and full understanding of how youth are truly impacted by resources in our state. In addition, it can offer insight into what resources may be underutilized and need further strategies to get them in the hands of youth. It is just as important to know how many youths are aging out of foster care, in Kansas, without having any adult connections, resources, or plans as it is to know how many youths are transitioning out of care with a plan, with connections, and with resources. CTT CRP recommends experimenting in different ways to correlate resources given to outcomes of the aging out community.

Success in various areas of the aging out population requires ongoing evaluation and improvement of programs and resources available to them. As DCF regularly assess the effectiveness of their plans to better support aging out youth and help them achieve positive outcomes, CTT recommends DCF share this information bi-annually.

The panel encourages DCF to explore opportunities to collaborate between all the different resources that are used during transition. Having meetings between the school transition coordinator, the DCF transition coordinator, the transition liaison, vocational rehab, the Pre-Employment Transition services, and any other services that a child may be using before aging out. CTT also recommends wholistic meetings ensuring that all the workers in the youth's life are moving towards a common goal.

**ANNUAL REPORT CONCLUSIONS**

The CTT CRP is proud of the work we have accomplished throughout the year to support better outcomes within child welfare. We look forward to continuing to make progress in the coming year. We continuously seek new ways to innovate and improve our processes and are committed to upholding our standards of excellence. For more information on the content of the report, please contact: LynTia Gwess at [lgwess@tfifamily.org](mailto:lgwess@tfifamily.org)

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## Appendix A: CRP CTT Bylaws

### Article I Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Kansas Citizens Review Panel Custody to Transition (hereinafter referred to as CRP CTT).

### Article II Purpose

Section 1. The CRP CTT Panel is a federally mandated group of professionals and private citizens charged with reviewing policies, procedures and practices of the state CPS system from custody to transition and to provide feedback on prevention and treatment strategies; to provide oversight and guidance on activities related to the administrative and judicial handling of cases; to ensure the consumer voice is included in assessing system effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement; pursuant to the 1996 amendments to the Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act and any subsequent amendments.

### Article III Membership

Section 1. Membership shall consist of no less than ten (10) and no more than twenty-one (21) members. Panel membership wishes to be comprised of a balance of 1) providers of services to abused and neglected children and families; including adoption services, and 2) local citizens; including consumers of services of the Child Protective Services system such as foster parents, former foster children, adoptive parents, and parents, as well as interested business and civic representatives and members of the community at large.

Section 2. Members of the "respective" Citizens Review Panel who fail to attend at least three (3) consecutive meetings annually, without prior notice and good cause, will be contacted by the staff coordinator or Chairperson designee for follow-up and may be requested to resign.)

Section 3. Any vacancy on the CRP or in any office may be filled by a vote of simple majority of the CRP at any regular meeting, in a timely manner. The Membership Committee or Chairperson designee shall review the nominee(s) for general membership and shall recommend one (1) nominee to the CRP to fill each vacancy that occurs.

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### Article IV Quorum

Section 1. A quorum shall consist of a majority of current members present.

### Article V Executive Committee

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall be comprised of Officers of the CRP Custody to transition, the immediate past Chairperson (if available), and the Staff Coordinator. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a quarter to supervise the affairs of the CRP Custody to Transition between full panel meetings and shall take any action as appropriate or delegated by the CRP Custody to Transition.

## **Article VI**

### **Officers**

Section 1. Officers shall be Chairperson, Chairperson Elect, and Secretary. Officers shall be elected by the CRP for a two-year term and may not serve more than two consecutive terms of office. Wherever possible, the Chairperson and Chairperson Elect will have alternate representation from the provider and citizen membership.

## **Article VII**

### **Duties of Officers**

Section 1. The Chairperson of the CRP shall preside at all meetings of the Panel, establish other committees as needed, and any other duties established by membership vote. The Chairperson shall serve as a member of all committees with voting privileges.

Section 2. The Chair Elect shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in the event of his/her absence, resignation, or inability to perform duties, and at the end of the Chairperson's term the Chair Elect will assume the role as Chairperson. Additional duties may be delegated by the Chairperson or by membership vote.

Section 3. The Secretary shall review the minutes of the meetings of the CRP and the Executive Committee, as provided by the panel staff. Additionally other duties may be delegated by the Chairperson or by membership vote.

## **Article VIII**

### **Meetings**

Section 1. The Annual meeting shall be held during the course of each State Fiscal Year. The CRP shall meet at least four times per year, upon the call of the Chairperson, or at the request of the majority of panel members.



## **Appendix B: Panel Member and Appointees Background Descriptions**

**Linda Long** - Haysville USD #261- Haysville, Kansas- Linda has worked for the Haysville school district for the past 23 years serving students and families who are in difficult living situations through the McKinney Vento program and as the Foster Care liaison. Linda is also the Clinic Coordinator for the Haysville School Based Clinic partnership with KU Medical Practice Association. Linda's role on the panel is to serve as the representative for homeless youth.

**Melinda Kline** - Deputy Director of Permanency at Department for Children and Families. Kansas Department for Children and Families, Topeka-Melinda has worked with families for 30+ years. She began her career at DCF as an Eligibility worker for EES and later served as a Child Protective Services Social Worker, Family Meeting Facilitator, and CPS Supervisor. She is currently serving in Administration at DCF as Deputy Director of Permanency. Her position covers Foster Care, ICPC, Adoption, Adoption subsidy, Permanent Custodianship, group homes, and Tribal relations.

**Kerrie Lonard** - Child Advocate, joined the Kansas Division of the Child Advocate by Appointment in December 2021. Previously Kerrie spent 14 years with Kansas Legal Services, serving as both Staff Attorney and Managing Attorney. Kerrie provided legal assistance in areas of housing, consumer, public benefits, and child and family law matters. Kerrie has represented children and youth as Guardian ad Litem (GAL), as well as parents, and interested parties in child-in-need-of-care proceedings. Prior to earning a law degree, Kerrie worked as a school social worker for five years, and other foster care and child advocate roles, including as a CASA volunteer. Kerrie has served on the Kansas Supreme Court Taskforce on Permanency Planning as a GAL, as panel member and former Chair for the CAPTA Citizen Review Panel: Intake to Petition/CJA Taskforce, and presently serves as the National Association of Counsel for Children State Coordinator for Kansas.

**Emily Killough** - MD, is a board-certified pediatrician and child abuse pediatrician at Children's Mercy in Kansas City where she has been working for the past 14+ years. She provides medical evaluations for children with concerns for physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. She is also involved in medical education and has recently been working with DCF, KDHE and KAAP to improve the statewide medical response to child maltreatment with the creation of the CARE network.

**Malissa Martin** - Communities In Schools of Mid-America, Lawrence – Working in student support services for 23 years, Malissa leads CIS of Mid-America services in Kansas in partnership with numerous partners, including Kansas Department for Children and Families, the Kansas Legislature, school districts, philanthropic funders, and the business community. Her position as CEO enables her to guide the development of service models that support Kansas children and families from early childhood, through K-12, and into and beyond the post-secondary years. Serving on the CRP allows Malissa and fellow members to engage in a reciprocal thought-partnership regarding important issues that most affect Kansas kids and their families.

**Tara D. Wallace** - LLC/Lighthouse TCO Foundation - Working in child welfare for 10 years, Tara works with underserved and low-income communities to provide education, resources, and skills towards building resilience and holistic wellness. As a nationally certified trauma therapist,

Tara specializes in addressing trauma stemming from systemic racism and generational trauma in families connected to the child welfare system, and children experiencing problematic sexualized behavior. She is part of The Art of Yoga National Affiliate Program which responds to pervasive childhood trauma with evidenced-based, somatic interventions.

**Dena Russell-Marino** - State of Kansas – Judicial Branch, Topeka – With more than 15 years of work in child welfare including many years as the program director of the local Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program in Emporia, Dena began her work as a Court Program Specialist for the Office of Judicial Administration (OJA) in early 2021. In this role, Dena oversees certification and compliance of CASA and Citizen Review Board (CRB) programs in Kansas, works on various Court Improvement Plan projects and serves as a liaison to many panels, groups, and committees, such as the Citizen’s Review Panel.

**Jennifer Slagle:** Kansas Department for Children and Families, Topeka – Working in child welfare for 5 years, Jennifer worked in DCF Program Improvement prior to moving to the Prevention Team. Her current position as the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Program Manager places her in a position to help Kansas children and families through National CAPTA connections. Jennifer is able to serve on Citizen Review Panels and represent DCF on several boards focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

**Brandy Tofel:** TFI Family Services, Topeka- Serving youth, families, and communities for over 20 years, Brandy has worked in the child welfare and education fields in quality improvement, data management, licensing, care management, and direct program services. Currently Brandy is the Vice President of Policy and Research, serving the statewide CRP Panel and her local Citizen Review Board.

**Linda Street:** Saint Francis Ministries, Reintegration Area Director over the Emporia and Junction City Offices. Working in child welfare for 23 years, Linda began as a Case Manager in 2000, moving into the Supervisor role in 2001, and the Area Director role in 2007 for the Reintegration program. Concurrently worked as a supervisor for the Foster Care Homes program over the Hays, Kensington, and Colby Offices from 2009 - 2013. Her current position as the Area Director of Reintegration provides administrative leadership and operational oversight for the Reintegration Program. She is responsible for the direct supervision of the Reintegration Supervisors, utilizing resources effectively, and ensuring outcomes are met according to standards.

**Sandra Shopteese:** Department of Children and Families – Sandra is the Tribal Specialist for Kansas. She is an enrolled member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation. Sandra has worked in child welfare for twenty- eight years. Currently her work involves oversight of tribal grants, enhancing communication with the Tribes, coordinate educational training, culture, policies, and services. She has served as a Qualified Expert Witness, ICWA emergency foster home, Native American MAPP Trainer, Legal Guardian (adult), and currently a Positive Indian Parenting facilitator. I volunteer and serve on several Boards: PBPB Social Services Advisory Board, Topeka NAMI, and Peacemaker (mediator).

**Sharilyn Ray:** LMSW-Restoration Family Services- Sharilyn Ray graduated in 2014 with a master’s degree in social work. Sharilyn has been in child welfare for over 10 years. She recognized there was a gap in the services children, biological families and foster families were receiving and founded and licensed Restoration Family Services (RFS) where she is the current CEO. She also provided private therapy services pro bono for those needing help,

during the first couple of years of the agency. Sharilyn not only works within child welfare but is a foster and adoptive parent. She has a heart for advocacy and seeing systemic racism dismantled.

**Justin Thaw:** Saint Francis Ministries, Adoption Supervisor.

**Darla Nelson-Metzger:** Program Director at Families Together, Inc. where she coordinates a federally mandated program to ensure children in state custody are represented in special education processes through a contract with the Kansas State Department of Education. She also provides support to and training for Kansas families that include a child with a disability. Darla is a former foster parent and the adoptive parent of two daughters.

**Kristalle Hendrick:** Vice President of Kansas Programs with FosterAdopt Connect. She holds a bachelor's degree in social work from Pittsburg State University and a master's degree in Social Work from Missouri State University. For the past 17 years Kristalle has dedicated her personal and professional life to supporting children and families in Kansas impacted by the child welfare system. She and her spouse have adopted four children Kitana, Kenzington, Preston, and Lola. In her free time Kristalle enjoys traveling, being outdoors and hosting KC Chiefs football Sundays with her extended family.