



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

**KANSAS CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL -
INTAKE TO PETITION**



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MEMBERSHIP

Officers, Kansas ITP CRP

Judge Doug Jones, Chairperson

District Magistrate Judge

5th Judicial District

Criminal Court Judge

Emily Killough, Chair Elect

Child Abuse Pediatrician

Children's Mercy Hospital

Sara Hortenstine, Secretary

Division Chief

Kansas Child Death Review Board

Office of Kansas Attorney General

Kansas ITP CRP Public Members

Kerrie Lonard

Kansas Child Advocate

Kansas Division of the Child Advocate

Judge Amy Coppola

District Magistrate Judge

8th Judicial District

Civil Court Judge

Brynn Blair

Managing Attorney

Kansas Legal Services

Attorney for Children

Kristin Hines

State Trainer

Kansas CASA Association

Pamela Robbins

Executive Director

KFAPA

Parent/Rep of Parent Group

Amber Jewell

School Based Social Worker

USD 245

Lived Expert

Tate Toedman

State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth

Kansas Department of Education

Individual Experienced in Working with Homeless Children and Youth

Lana Goetz

Court Program Specialist

Office of Judicial Administration (OJA)

Office of Judicial Administration

Kelly Stanford

Chief Program Officer

Communities in Schools

Education Advocate

Jennifer Gassmann

DEC/ Parent Child Assistance Program Supervisor

Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL)

Substance Abuse Counselor

Shelby Ponder

Director of Reintegration

St. Francis Ministries

Child Welfare Contractor

*Please see Appendix A for Task Force member background descriptions

Kansas ITP CRP Public Members, Cont.

Miranda Johnson

Guardian Ad Litem

Defense Attorney

Caffey, Johnson, & Ingels, P.A.

Christine Lucero

Program Specialist

ACF, Region VII

Advisory Voting Members

Docia Small

CJA Program Manager

Department of Children and Family Services

Jennifer Slagle

CAPTA CRP Grant Manager

Department of Children and Family Services

Ariele Erwine

Deputy Director of Prevention Services

Department of Children and Family Services

Staff Members

LynTia Gwess

CRP Coordinator

Mainstream Nonprofit Solutions

TFI

Kara-Kae James

Director of Marketing

CRP Support

TFI

*Please see Appendix A for Task Force member background descriptions

INTRODUCTION

History

The Kansas Citizen Review Panel – Intake to Petition (ITP) stands as one of Kansas's three distinguished Citizen Review Panels (CRPs). They function not only as a CRP but also fulfill the crucial role of the state's Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force in compliance with Section 107(c) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). This Task Force comprises a diverse array of private and public agencies, including attorneys, judges, social workers, health professionals, and dedicated citizens, all united by their commitment to safeguarding the well-being of children in Kansas.

Moreover, as the designated CJA Task Force for Kansas by Section 107 (e) of CAPTA, the panel ensures the state agency's eligibility to receive funding from the Department of Justice – Office of Victims of Crime. The primary focus of this CJA Task Force lies in overseeing grant funds allocated to enhance the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of cases involving child abuse and neglect.

Aligned with CAPTA requirements, the Intake to Petition Citizen's Review Panel, hereafter referred to as ITP CRP, diligently carries out its responsibilities by members actively encouraging citizen input, establishing a network of dedicated community partners, and formulating recommendations to refine the state's child protective services system. The scope of their efforts spans from the initial intake of a child into care to the subsequent filing of a petition.

Membership

Kansas has successfully met the membership requirements for the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force. The ITP CRP has actively pursued member recruitment by leveraging recommendations from panel members within their respective organizations and utilizing new recruitment materials. Notably, an ITP CRP/CJA Task Force Orientation session was organized, drawing interest from nine attendees keen on gaining insights into the background, functions, and future steps of the ITP CRP. This orientation served as an informative platform for participants.

**Please see Appendix B for recruitment material*

In an ongoing endeavor to strengthen its team, Intake to Petition is actively seeking individuals to fill key positions, including roles in:

- Law Enforcement,
- Child Welfare Advocacy,
- Health Professional domains,
- Tribal representative, and
- Individual experience working with children with disabilities.

Highlighting the accomplishments of the past fiscal year, ITP CRP proudly welcomed three notable additions to its roster, including the positions of Civil Court Judge, DCF CAPTA CJA Program Manager, and State Welfare Agency Support. These additions further enrich the diverse perspectives within the ITP CRP membership and reinforce the commitment to maintaining a well-rounded and skilled team dedicated to the objectives of the CJA Task Force in Kansas.

**Please find the membership list above.*

Panel Improvements

To optimize panel member engagement, effectiveness, and efficiency, the ITP CRP initiated bi-monthly meetings after the Annual Strategic Planning Retreat in August 2023. The Strategic Planning Retreat is a collaborative platform, uniting the ITP and Custody to Transition (CTT) panels. This joint gathering fosters opportunities for shared opinions and skills, emphasizing a holistic approach to addressing their common goals.

Throughout the session, the ITP CRP consistently convened through virtual platforms. This virtual approach has proven instrumental in sustaining heightened membership attendance. Recognizing the operational efficiencies achieved through remote collaboration, the panel has expressed a collective interest in maintaining virtual meetings for the majority of its sessions. Furthermore, a hybrid format has been initiated, blending virtual and in-person meetings, with plans to progressively increase the frequency of in-person meetings in the ensuing years.

The ITP CRP is actively engaged in a comprehensive review and implementation of new bylaws, guided by the directives provided by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) legal counsel. This important agenda item is systematically addressed in panel meetings. The panel's collaborative efforts have resulted in the approval of nine new articles, signaling a commitment to aligning with established legal frameworks and enhancing operational efficiency.

***Please see Appendix C for a list of approved Bylaws**

In a significant development, ITP CRP has clarified that panel meetings fall outside the purview of the Kansas Open Meetings Act,

ensuring a streamlined and compliant decision-making process for the panel. Recognizing the importance of maintaining confidentiality and legal compliance, ITP CRP has sought guidance from DCF's legal counsel regarding the implementation of a general confidentiality agreement for panel members. This proactive approach emphasizes the panel's commitment to upholding ethical standards and safeguarding sensitive information.

To promote a comprehensive understanding of each member's role and the resources at their disposal, the ITP CRP panel has systematically examined the organizational structures of its members during bi-monthly meetings. This inclusive approach encompasses a thorough review of each member's professional background, agency affiliation, and position within their respective organizations. Through fostering open dialogue and knowledge exchange, the panel endeavors to strengthen collaboration, transparency, and the optimal utilization of available resources for its members' collective benefit and the task force's broader objectives.

Furthermore, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the ITP CRP are committed to bolstering their partnership through various initiatives, including:

- Conducting monthly check-in meetings between the Panel Coordinator and DCF CAPTA Staff.
- Providing regular updates on the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) and the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP).
- Ensuring timely updates on the Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) and subsequent Program Improvement Plan (PIP).
- Providing regular updates on pertinent legislative sessions.

MEETING OVERVIEWS

August 16, 2023

Focus: This meeting consists of the Custody to Transition and Intake to Petition Panels coming together in a hybrid format to strategize and collaborate on 2023-2024 goals and objectives. The meeting focused on a CRP 102 session from the National CRP Committee. The panels focused the remaining time on strategic planning.

Overview: The panel was briefed by the national CRP Committee. They received legislative updates from Children's Alliance of Kansas. CRP CAPTA Program Manager provided DCF and Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) updates. Each panel had time to complete a strategic planning session and report to the other panel. Decided on panel workings, such as meeting frequency, platform, and recruitment needs for the 2024 session

October 20, 2023

Focus: This meeting was focused on understanding KCSL and how the panel can support work being done with KCSL. There was a discussion of the timeline for tasks associated with the goals and objectives. Lastly, attention was given to the standing goals of the panel.

Overview: The panel welcomed a new member, Civil Court Judge. An icebreaker was conducted, followed by an overview of the Joint Retreat, focusing on updates related to the CFSR PIP workgroups and legislative information. Recruitment strategies was discussed, along with the requirement for CRP orientation for all members. The potential for more in-person meetings was also mentioned.

October 20, 2023 (cont.)

Brief announcements included the NCRP Conference and a proposed shift to a hybrid meeting format. The date for the Joint Meeting in February was addressed.

Members shared general updates, including the Child Death Review Board Annual Report, the Child Welfare Summit, and the Family Treatment Court. Bylaw VIII & IX updates were discussed, followed by a presentation of a KCSL initiative was provided. The State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth shared information on his organization. There was a discussion on the timeline for tasks associated with goals and objectives, aiming to review each goal, suggest changes, and establish a loose timeline for each objective.

December 15, 2023

Focus: This meeting was focused on the ITP goal one, which is to identify the cause and effect of why older youth are at a higher percentage of being removed from home and identifying services available prior to older youth entering the system. ITP heard updates and data from DCF. The Crossover Youth Policy and Practice (CYPM) Coordinator came and presented.

Overview: The Chairperson provides an overview of the meeting objectives. Members provided updates, including the National CRP Conference, Spark Wheel's partnership with universities, and the Family Treatment Court. The agenda then shifted to DCF updates and a data presentation on the removal of children and youth. The focus was on youth aged 14-17, covering the age of removal, reasons for removal, and the length of time in custody.

December 15, 2023 (cont.)

A presentation on crossover youth policy and practice was conducted. Information was shared on the Kansas Office of the Child Advocate followed by insights into the Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL).

February 9, 2023

Focus: This was a joint meeting held alongside the Intake to Petition panel. This meeting was used to facilitate collaboration on goals. Overall, the meeting covered significant updates and initiatives pertinent to the panel's collective goals and objectives.

Overview: The panel provided updates on an open position at CASA Association and changes within panel leadership. Panel member provided updates on the performance of the SOUL Family through the House and outlined next steps for the planning team. The DCF CAPTA Program Manager presented updates on the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR). DCF delivered insights on Therapeutic Family Foster Homes, the Mobile Crisis Response Team, and the MRSS Pilot Program. A 5-minute Q&A session followed. The program administrator for Safety and Thriving Families provided an overview of Families in Need of Assessment (FINA) background and highlighted the changes made. The meeting concluded with a review of action steps and closing statements.

February 16, 2024

Focus: This meeting focused on collaboration with other preventive strategies in Kansas. The DCF RFP CJA goals and objectives section was finalized. Panel members provided general updates on service delivery and challenges. ITP members provided an overview of organizations.

February 16, 2024 (cont.)

Overview: Members updated and approved Articles IX & X. A general overview of KU prevention initiatives and collaboratives in Kansas commenced, followed by general updates on KSDE and data on neglected and delinquent children. The DCF CAPTA program Administrator presented DCF updates focusing on Task Force interests translating into CJA fundable activities for the RFP. The meeting continued with an overview of panel member organizations. ITP's Civil Court Judge provided insights into her work and responsibilities, while another member shared about the KS CASA association and her role within it. The meeting ended with closing statements and a review of action steps.

April 19, 2024

Focus: This meeting was focused on ITP goal three, which is to explore the Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative. Briefed on the APSR and CFSP. Members shared general updates, and a discussion of CJA subcommittees was discussed.

Overview: Panel members discussed and approved amendments to Articles IX and X. Discussions commenced on proposed changes to Articles XI and XII. The DCF State Plan Administrator briefed the panel on the purpose and current operations of the APSR and CFSP, followed by a brief Q&A session. Discussions commenced regarding adjustments to subgrantees and action steps to ensure compliance with all CJA categories for the 2023 Fiscal Year. The Executive Director of the Racial Equity Collaborative shared insights into the collaborative's work in Kansas and how the panel could contribute. The CRP Coordinator updated the panel on the timeline for the 3-year assessment, CJA application, and ITP report.

PRIOR YEAR PROJECTS

The CJA Task Force allocates funding to agencies within the State of Kansas through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process facilitated by the Department for Children and Families. Multiple grants were awarded to organizations for the funding period of July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, with optional renewable agreements awarded in fiscal year 2023 and 2024, with all grants ending June 30, 2024.

This grant opportunity provided CJA funding to Kansas-based agencies, encompassing not-for-profit organizations, such as faith-based entities, associations, universities, and colleges, capable of implementing programs or services statewide to enhance the assessment, investigation, and prosecution of suspected child abuse and neglect cases, including those involving child abuse/neglect-related fatalities and children with disabilities or significant health issues. The overarching goal of the program is to enhance the systemic handling of child abuse or neglect cases, with grants awarded to multiple organizations capable of effecting statewide impact.

Program design elements may include:

A. Improved investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect cases, including those involving child sexual abuse and exploitation and suspected child maltreatment-related fatalities, ensuring minimal additional trauma to the child victim and family and procedural fairness to the accused.

B. Experimental, model, and demonstration programs testing innovative approaches to enhance the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings in child abuse and neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, including improvements to the performance of court-appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, while ensuring procedural fairness to the accused.

C. Reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, and procedures to comprehensively protect children from abuse, including sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring fairness to all affected parties

Grantees were encouraged to focus their submissions on training, organizational support, collaboration efforts, tools and protocol development, and coordination with court improvement programs. It's important to note that grant funds are not intended to support child abuse prevention programs or treatment services. Grantees are expected to provide indirect services supporting the implementation of evidence-based strategies resulting in improvements in targeted state or community-level factors, contributing to state and local outcomes, and aligned with CAPTA guidelines.

For the fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024), the CJA Task Force selected the following organizations as sub-grantees of CJA funds:

**see next page*

Fiscal Year 2024 CJA Funds

Children's Advocacy Centers of Kansas	\$58,597
Kansas Children's Service League	\$39,550
Kansas ChildFirst, Inc.	\$91,625
*The Children's Mercy Hospital	*Did not renew \$56,500 in SFY 24

*Children's Mercy Hospital's CJA grant did not renew in SFY 24 as their CARE referral pilot expanded statewide when funding became available from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and Kansas Chapter of American Academy for Pediatrics after new Legislation passed, Chapter 70: House Bill 2024 and was effective June 1, 2023. The remainder of this grant moved to CJA grantees, Kansas ChildFirst, and Children's Advocacy Centers of Kansas for SFY 24. Further details about activities related to this funding are included under Recommendation 1.C. Each grant-funded organization must meet one or more of the four different 2021 Three-Year Assessment (3YA) recommendations, as identified by the CJA Task Force.

The following is a description of the annual activities undertaken by grantees and how they aligned with the 3YA priorities using CJA funds in the 12-month period preceding the date of the previous annual report submission.

CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS OF KANSAS, INC. (CAACKS)

This CJA recommendation aligns with DCF SFY 24 Annual Progress and Services Report, Goal 2: *Strengthen Healthcare Coordination and Create Strong Safety, Resiliency, and Prevention Networks*, gained through various objectives toward this goal.

Since 2021, the Kansas CJA subgrantee Child Advocacy Center has made progress related

to this recommendation. **Children's Advocacy Centers of Kansas, Inc. (CAACKS)** is a statewide membership association representing the 16 children's advocacy centers in the State of Kansas. The mission of the association is to promote excellence in child abuse response and prevention through training, program development, advocacy, and leadership.

Objective 1: (aligning to CJA category A)

The CJA Task Force recommends training and resources for stakeholders, including:

- prosecution; guardian ad litem trainings
- Law enforcement trainings, training creation, and training delivery
- Anti-human trafficking, mandated reporting, death scene investigations
- Train the Trainer models

2024 Annual Summary	Activity / Outcome
Continued training and collaboration between CAACKS and KCSDV on April 9, 2024, for Crime Victim Rights preconference. Topics to include wellness around workplace secondary trauma.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplied investigative tools/ promote use of medical toolkit - PEDS SANE training to 8 participants.
Promoted use of medical toolkit - Pediatric/Adolescent Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (PEDS SANE), training to participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 full participants for the March 25-29, 2024 course.
Collaboration/networking efforts continue between other recipients of DCF CJA grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Scholarships given to attend International Symposium on March 18-21, 2024. 16 applied for attendance but could only send 7 due to budget constraints.

KANSAS CHILDFIRST (KCF)

This CJA recommendation aligns with DCF SFY 24 Annual Progress and Services Report, Goal 2: *Strengthen Healthcare Coordination and Create Strong Safety, Resiliency and Prevention Networks*, gained through various objectives toward this goal. Since 2021, Kansas CJA subgrantee Kansas ChildFirst has made progress related to this recommendation. Kansas Child First, Inc. is focused on healing the trauma of abuse to children and adults

through prevention, support, and services. With funding from the CJA grant, **Kansas Child First, Inc.** sponsors the Kansas Child First Program, which is an intensive five-day course that teaches professionals proper interview techniques when conducting an investigative interview of a potential child abuse victim. It is held in conjunction with the National Child Protection Training Center.

Objective 2: (aligning to CJA category B)

The CJA Task Force recommends training and resources stakeholders focusing on improving the quality of the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases.

2024 Annual Summary	Activity / Outcome
<p>Continued training and programs pertaining to forensic interviewing. The Basic Interviewing courses that will be held during this year will occur in March in Scott City, KS, & in September in Andover, KS. The Advance course will be held in June in Wichita, KS, and the focus is on "Preparing Child Abuse Cases for Court" with Victor Vieth, National Child Protection Training Center, the developer of the National ChildFirst Program that is in 20 states and 2 other countries. It is expected to have 60-80 students in the class, with an emphasis on Prosecutors attending.</p> <p>Diverse trainee group included addition of: International Safety Interviewers from across the world.</p> <p>Collaboration/networking efforts between other recipients of DCF CJA grant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held 5 trainings during the year including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (2) Five-day Basic Forensic Interviewing Courses (2) One day Update & Peer Review classes (1) Advance Forensic Interviewing Courses Total of 89 graduated from the (2) Basic Forensic Interviewing Courses 20 graduates from Child Update & Peer Review class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 from Liberal 10 from Hays 7 Senior observers also attended. 12 registrations scholarships were given to ten different counties.

KANSAS CHILDREN'S SERVICE LEAGUE (KCSL)

This CJA recommendation aligns with DCF SFY 24 Annual Progress and Services Report, Goal 1: *Implement Prevention Practice Approach*, gained through various objectives toward this goal. Since 2021, Kansas CJA subgrantee Kansas Children's Service League has made progress related to this recommendation. ***Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL)*** is a statewide not-for-profit agency that has worked for over

127 years to prevent child abuse, strengthen families, and empower parents and youth. Annually, KCSL, along with other organizations, provides the largest statewide conference in Kansas that focuses on education, networking, recognition and addressing key issues regarding the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Objective 3: (aligning to CJA category B)

The CJA Task Force recommends training and resources for stakeholders at the front-end of the child welfare system to increase their knowledge and understanding of the effects of trauma on child victims of violence, the impact of coexisting and connected trauma experiences, and the importance of including caregivers in the healing process.

2024 Annual Summary	Activity / Outcome
<p>The 47th Annual Governors Conference for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect was held on Oct. 18-20, 2023, at the Hyatt Regency in Wichita, KS.</p> <p>The agenda for the conference is in Appendix B.</p>	<p>497 participants attended including speakers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (5) institute sessions 6 hours on October 18, 2023 • (27) workshops 1.5 hours on October 19-20, 2023 • (2) Keynote presentations - one for 1.5 hours and one for 3 hours on October 19 And October 20, 2023 <p>Excerpts from the evaluation results for conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 94% of Keynote Session participants found presentations were immensely beneficial for their professional growth. • 78% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the conference provided information about exemplary models of intervention services for children & families. • 81% of participants agreed or strongly agreed the conference provided opportunities to network with others interested in the welfare of children. • 81% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that overall information from the conference provided them with a better understanding of the issues surrounding the prevention of child abuse and neglect. • 81% of participants agreed or strongly agreed the conference provided certifiable training opportunities for individuals who work professionally providing services for the benefit of children and families.

CHILDREN’S MERCY HOSPITAL

This CJA recommendation aligns with DCF SFY 24 Annual Progress and Services Report, Goal 2: *Strengthen Healthcare Coordination and Create Strong Safety, Resiliency and Prevention Networks*, gained through various objectives toward this goal. Since 2021, Kansas CJA subgrantee Children’s Mercy Hospital has made progress related to these recommendations.

Children’s Mercy Hospital (CMH) is a non-profit children’s hospital system with a team of Child Abuse Pediatricians who perform medical evaluations for thousands of children and families for whom there are concerns for child maltreatment, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, and/or neglect, and work very closely with multidisciplinary partners who investigate these concerns.

Objective 4: (aligning to CJA category C)

The CJA Task Force recommends training and resources that would enhance the capacity of stakeholders involved in the forensic and medical evaluation of child abuse as well as covers any medical professional, includes mental health aspects, enhancing MDT’s and school counselors.

2024 Annual Summary	Activity / Outcome
<p>This grantee did not renew grant for SFY 2024. The CARE program expanded statewide after receiving funds from KDHE & Kansas Chapter American Academy for Pediatrics (KAAP) through new legislation law: Chapter 70: House Bill 2024 effective June 1, 2023.</p> <p>As mentioned above and in Section IV, \$56,500 was not renewed by Children’s Mercy Hospital in SFY 24. To stay aligned with CJA funding purpose C, the award was divided between two existing CJA grantees. These grantees were able to perform additional work related to Recommendation 1.C. Activities made possible by this funding outlined in the Activity/Outcome section.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kansas ChildFirst received additional \$39,100 • Child Advocacy Center of Kansas received additional \$17,400 	<p>Child Advocacy Center of Kansas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send (17) attendees to National Children’s Alliance Leadership conference taking place in June in Washington DC. Features over 58 workshops. live conference sessions and keynote speakers. • Print extra training, educational and marketing materials related to assist with building awareness and capacity of stakeholders outlined in Recommendation 1.C <p>Kansas ChildFirst</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase new technology for training to replace outdated equipment. • Support 30 additional stakeholders in the fields of medical, mental health, education, and other MDT members to attend upcoming advanced training in June. • Fund the increased supplies/training materials for the additional attendees. • Cover additional expenses related to training logistics.

WORK OF THE PANEL

The subsequent section delineates the efforts of the panel in pursuit of objectives set forth in August 2023. It encompasses an overview of goals identified by panel members, as well as specific challenges encountered, and insights gathered. The aim is to furnish stakeholders with actionable insights to promote optimal practices and foster collaboration with other entities, thereby facilitating equitable distribution and sharing of resources for the betterment of Kansas children and families. The ITP CRP has committed the period of 2023 - 2024 to explore avenues for information acquisition and determine the subsequent steps toward achieving the stated goals.

- **Supporting older petitioned youth** who are removed at a higher percentage from the home. The panel is interested in experimental models or pilots, MDTs, and other means to foster collaboration between the child welfare, legal, and judicial communities to ensure all parties are making reasonable efforts to prevent family disruption and reduce trauma.
- Identifying and exploring the work of **Family Preservation and Family First Services**, with special attention to factors that reduce petitioning into care or reentry into services
- **Advancing equity for families** with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, LGBTQIA+ youth, low-income families, or families with children with disabilities and/or serious health-related problems. The collection and analysis of data through an equity lens to help positively transform the system through activities such as collaboratives, training, presentations, and stakeholder training is of interest to the panel.

Support Older Petitioned Youth

Last session, the ITP CRP identified precarious and unstable behaviors that correlate with adverse outcomes among older youth. Additionally, the panel observed deficiencies in communication among various stakeholders, including social workers, school liaisons, higher education advocates, and other support entities. In 2024, the panel broadened its scope to encompass the examination of models and pilot programs designed to facilitate collaboration between

the child and family wellbeing system and other support networks in the lives of young adults in an effort to reduce unnecessary family disruption. Extensive research conducted by the ITP CRP on trends among older youth, along with data from other states, revealed a significant overlap in Kansas among teenagers experiencing behavioral and mental health challenges who are entering care at disproportionately high rates. Additionally, these individuals encounter difficulties accessing services or have families facing challenges in providing care.

Moving forward, the panel intends to explore trends in the care provided by KVC and various inpatient and residential facilities to better understand trends on intake and encourage front end services to meet the needs before children are taken into care.

The ITP CRP was presented with insights by the Crossover Youth Policy and Practice Coordinator, representing the endeavors of the Crossover State Policy Team. Although the primary focus of the Crossover State Policy Team does not center on preventative measures, the panel acknowledged the importance of addressing this demographic within the framework of analyzing the origins and consequences of children entering and remaining in the system. The Crossover Youth Policy and Practice Coordinator elaborated on the vulnerability and intricate needs of crossover youth in Kansas, emphasizing research pointing towards the elevated risk of recidivism of crossover youth compared to their peers solely involved in one system. By addressing the underlying factors contributing to their dual system involvement, Kansas can proactively mitigate future engagement in delinquent behaviors and diminish the likelihood of reoffending.

During the panel session, the Statewide Information and Resource Supervisor provided insights into the Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL) program known as 1-800 Children, which delivers round-the-clock support and resources to children and families. The program offers various channels for connection and features a comprehensive database linking families with necessary resources. Additionally, the Statewide Information and Resource Supervisor introduced the Grow National System,

a new pilot program designed to enhance motivational interviewing techniques. Information was explored regarding training and coaching in motivational interviewing skills undergone by 1-800 Children staff to assist callers better. Furthermore, the panel reviewed regional data illustrating the impact of 1-800 Children across Kansas.

Furthermore, the panel facilitated collaboration with DCF to gain insights into the data pertaining to Family in Need of Assistance (FINA) cases and removal statistics. The CAPTA CJA Program Manager delivered a comprehensive overview of the child abuse and neglect case figures in Kansas, segmented by region.

“Kansas can proactively mitigate future engagement in delinquent behaviors and diminish the likelihood of reoffending”

They also furnished details on the Family First prevention programs, explaining the objectives and targets of these initiatives, along with demographic insights and removal trends. Recognizing the importance of well-informed recommendations, ITP CRP highlights the significance of this data in guiding its deliberations toward providing thorough, constructive, and beneficial recommendations to DCF and other support agencies.

Family Preservation & Family First Services

Early intervention and support play a pivotal role in averting prolonged mental health challenges. Prioritizing children's mental health fosters communities to feel empowered to seek assistance, guiding them towards healthier futures and reinforcing a supportive community. The ITP CRP identified innovative initiatives and partnerships in Kansas aimed at addressing issues upstream, thereby intercepting family crises before they escalate. By bridging informational gaps and facilitating collaboration among diverse organizations, the ITP CRP seeks to assess the efficacy of services in empowering families to become self-sufficient while scrutinizing recurring engagement with the system to uncover potential systemic challenges.

The Deputy Director of Medicaid and Children's Mental Health provided a comprehensive briefing to the ITP CRP regarding the mental health department's initiatives. The overarching objective of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) in delivering physical and mental health services is to dismantle silos between state agencies and Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) and foster collaborative efforts ensuring seamless services.

Discussions centered around the specific needs within the state and examined strategies employed by DCF to develop, enhance, and expand services. These strategies encompass various initiatives, such as:

- Therapeutic Family Foster Homes,
- DCF Family Crisis Helpline,
- Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS)/Quality Learning Collaborative,
- PRTF Initiatives, and
- Children's Behavioral Interventionist programs.

The ITP CRP received a briefing on the ongoing changes within DCF, particularly regarding the transformation of the state's Family in Need of Assistance (FINA) process. The Program Administrator for Safety and Thriving Families shared insights into the initiatives facilitated by DCF and the resultant outcomes and lessons learned. Moreover, the panel was apprised of key initiatives and collaborations in Kansas aligning with the panel's goals and objectives. Specifically, an overview was provided on programs such as Family First (Family First Prevention Service Evaluation), KAN-LINK (Kansas Linking Infrastructure for Nurturing Kids), and Family Strong (Universal Prevention for Strong and Thriving Families). These programs adhere to an equity-focused approach, with solutions centered on systemic enhancements, universality, and targeting policy and infrastructure improvements. The ITP CRP engaged in partnerships, facilitating the sharing of information within their respective communities and organizations, and will continue to foster these collaborations and provide assistance when necessary.

Advancing Equity for Families

The establishment of a racial equity collaborative in Kansas is imperative to address systemic inequalities and disparities faced by marginalized communities across the state. Kansas, like many regions in the United States, grapples with persistent racial disparities. By fostering collaboration among government agencies, community organizations, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders, a racial equity collaborative can work to dismantle institutional barriers, advocate for policy reforms, and promote inclusive practices that ensure equitable access opportunities and resources for all residents. Through collective efforts to confront racial inequities head-on, a racial equity collaborative can strive to create a more just and equitable society regardless of race or ethnicity.

In 2024, the panel members engaged in an enlightening session facilitated by the Executive Director of the Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative (REC), shedding light on the pervasive issues of disproportionality, disparities, and inequities within Kansas. The REC Executive Director delivered a comprehensive presentation, delving into the historical context and empirical data surrounding racial inequality in Kansas. This informative briefing served to deepen the panel's understanding of the systemic challenges facing marginalized communities and underscored the urgency of addressing these issues. Furthermore, as part of their commitment to fostering dialogue and understanding around racial equity, the panel was extended an invitation to participate in "Bravery In Action,"

a virtual event designed to provide a safe and supportive environment for courageous conversations about race equity. This event offered panel members an invaluable opportunity to engage in critical reflection and begin to grapple with the complexities of racial equity in a constructive and empathetic manner.

"Bravery In Action, a virtual event designed to provide a safe and supportive environment for courageous conversations about race equity."

NEXT STEPS

In accordance with Section 106(c)(6) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), it is incumbent upon the Citizen Review Panel to furnish recommendations aimed at enhancing the efficacy of child protective measures both at state and local levels. Significant progress has been achieved by the panel in pursuit of this objective. The collaborative efforts between the Kansas Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) and the Department for Children and Families (DCF) continue as robust partnerships, steadfastly dedicated to fostering ongoing cooperation in endeavors geared towards enhancing outcomes in child protection. These collaborative efforts are particularly focused on addressing the recommendations outlined below.

Recommendation for Goal One: Supporting Older Petitioned Youth

- The ITP CRP recommends that DCF prioritize authentic and consistent communication among child welfare stakeholders, encompassing entities such as law enforcement, individuals with lived expertise, the judicial community, educational advocates, and health professionals. This collaborative effort aims to precisely delineate safety and risk factors pertinent to the decision-making process regarding the removal of older petition youth, ultimately guiding toward a streamlined and uniform procedure.
- The ITP CRP is committed to maintaining collaborative endeavors with DCF in the upcoming years, with a specific focus on scrutinizing independent living models and exploring avenues for resource allocation to benefit youth before any potential removal from their current environments

Recommendation for Goal Two: Family Preservation & Family First Services

- The ITP CRP recommends that DCF engage with the community, federal partners and stakeholders through various avenues, including but not limited to forums, focus groups, and campaigns, aimed towards exploring barriers to Family First and Family Preservation service accessibility, including geographical location, referral process, and provider capacity.
- The ITP CRP aims to continue the exploration of new and existing opportunities for training and resources that support families, strengthen protective factors, and reduce child abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and child fatalities.

Recommendation for Goal Three: Advancing Equity for Families

- The ITP CRP recommends that the DCF engage in internal discussions with both its leadership and front-line staff regarding the concept of racial equity and its practical implications within the State of Kansas. The CRP ITP acknowledges the complexity and inherent challenges in addressing this issue, emphasizing the need for sustained efforts to overcome barriers and recognizing that effective solutions may take time to develop.
- The ITP CRP aims to continue open and thoughtful dialogue regarding Racial Equity. The Panel will continue to collaborate with the Racial Equity Collaborative and bring about those conversations within our own organizations and affiliations.

CONCLUSION

The Kansas Citizen Review Panel—Intake to Petition reaffirms its unwavering commitment to incorporating citizen and community input into the ongoing refinement of our state's child and family wellbeing system. Through continued collaboration with DCF, the ITP CRP remains a source of information essential for informing policy development and enhancing practices. Looking ahead, the panel remains steadfast in its pursuit of opportunities to elevate the impact of its work. For more information on the content of the 2024 report, contact LynTia Gwess at lgwess@tfifamily.org

APPENDICES

Appendix A: CJA Task Force Member Backgrounds Descriptions

Kerrie Lonard – Kansas Division of the Child Advocate, Topeka – Kerrie is the Child Advocate/Director of the Kansas Division of the Child Advocate. The Division was established by Executive Order in October 2021, with Kerrie’s appointment announced in December. Kerrie is also the current state coordinator for the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC). Kerrie spent 14 years with Kansas Legal Services serving as both Staff Attorney and Managing Attorney. 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. She has facilitated and presented at statewide GAL and Child Welfare practitioner continuing legal education trainings and served as a member on the Kansas Supreme Court Taskforce on Permanency Planning. During law school she interned as a CINC prosecutor and volunteered as a CASA. Kerrie holds BSW and MSW degrees and worked as a school social worker for several years, as well as in positions within foster care and mental health.

Judge Douglas Jones – Cottonwood Falls – As District Magistrate Judge, Judge Jones is interested in helping to improve the system. Judge Jones believes the most critical decisions made regarding a child are whether or not to remove a child from the home. He offers perspectives and ideas to formulate policies that ensure safety as well as what is involved in the decision to remove or not remove a child from the family. Judge Douglas Jones – Cottonwood Falls –

As District Magistrate Judge, Judge Jones is interested in helping to improve the system. Judge Jones believes the most critical decisions made regarding a child are whether or not to remove a child from the home. He offers perspectives and ideas to formulate policies that ensure safety as well as what is involved in the decision to remove or not remove a child from the family. While in private practice, he served as a Guardian Ad Litem in numerous child in need of care cases. He handles most of the temporary custody hearings in child in need of care cases in the Fifth Judicial District.

Amber Jewell - School Social Worker K-12, USD 245—With the Kansas Child Welfare System, I have had a three-prong experience. Initially, I was a youth in foster care that was reliant on the parts of the foster care system. Next, I became a LMSW and a case manager within the foster care reintegration system that worked with families and youth who had experienced an out of home placement. Now, I function as a trainer, foster parent and advocate for people impacted by the foster care system with the hope to better the foster care system and those it serves. I am a K-12 school social worker and collaborate with many providers to train professionals as needed within and for the foster care system. I also participate in CPS groups and boards and maintain a foster care home license.

Dr. Emily Killough - Child Abuse Pediatrician, CMH—I am a child abuse pediatrician and specialize in the forensic medical evaluation of children who may have been abused or neglected.

APPENDICES

Appendix A (cont.):

I work closely with other professionals in the child welfare field including DCF and law enforcement and help explain the medical significance of injuries and other findings. I am considered a regional expert in the medical evaluation of child maltreatment.

Pamela Robbins - Serves as the Executive Director of the Kansas Foster and Adoptive Parent Association. KFAPA provides education, advocacy, and support for foster, adoptive, and kinship families throughout the state. Pamela has worked in the child welfare system for twenty years as a trainer as well as experience in licensing and placement. Pamela and her husband also have lived experience, having served as foster parents for 22 years. Three of their five children are adopted. Pamela holds a Master of Public Administration. Pamela is a parent advocacy volunteer for North American Council on Adoptable Children and also serves on the National Foster Parent Council of States.

Tate Toedman - Kansas Department of Education, Topeka - As Assistant Director of the Special Education and Title Services team, he works with programs that assist at-risk students and families. Tate has a deep understanding of how these students need advocates and a system that is respectful to their unique needs. He oversees at-risk programs in school districts throughout the state, having served as the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth for the State of Kansas. As a past teacher, Tate has taught and been a school counselor in high-poverty schools in the

Topeka school district, as well as serving as a mentor in the Big Brother Big Sister program. He has previously served as a community action board member for Brown and Nemaha Counties in the Big Brother Big Sister program. Tate also has served on the Governor's Subcommittee on Housing and Homelessness and the Kansas Statewide Coalition for Homelessness and Housing.

Kelly Stanford - Chief Program Officer for CIS of Mid-America, and has been with the organization since 2013. She holds a B.A. in English and history from Texas A & I University, along with a M.Ed. in Education Administration from Angelo State University. She brings many layers of experience to CIS of Mid-America, including teaching at alternative schools in Texas, school and district leadership at both the director and assistant superintendent level in Texas and Colorado and, most recently, five years as the Executive Director of Routt County United Way in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. She is a 2017 graduate of the Allstate Foundation's Greater Good Non-profit Leader's Program in conjunction with the Kellogg School of Management's Center for Non-profit Management at Northwestern University and serves on the Kansas Department of Education's ESSA Advisory Council.

Sara Hortenstine - Kansas Child Death Review Board, Topeka - Sara Hortenstine is Executive Director of the State Child Death Review Board, housed in the Office of Kansas Attorney General. The CDRB is the third of the three Citizen Review Panels in Kansas.

APPENDICES

Appendix A (cont.):

Sara attends the meetings of the other two panels, acting as a liaison and sharer of information and resources. The CDRB examines trends and patterns that identify risk factors in the deaths of children, from birth through 17 years of age, that occur in the state of Kansas.

Kristin Hines - Kansas CASA Association, Topeka – Kristin has worked in social service nonprofits for 18 years. She served as the Executive Director of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program serving all six of the rural and frontier counties of the 16th Judicial District in Southwest Kansas for 15 of those years. She holds an MBA and scored in the top 10% of students on the National Field Test for MBAs in 2015. Kristin is well-known as a professional willing to help those within and outside the CASA network. In 2021, she moved into the position of State Trainer for the Kansas CASA Association. In this role she is able to support children and families through building the capacity of all CASA programs and their volunteers across the state of Kansas.

Jennifer Gassmann - KCSL Jennifer Gassmann is the supervisor of the Parent Child Assistance Program in Shawnee County with Kansas Children's Service League. She has worked as a social worker for twenty-six years and has a variety of experience in providing services to families, including foster care, adoption, family preservation, and substance use. She received her bachelor's in social work Degree at Kansas State University, and also has certification in substance use case management. Jennifer is the board chair of the state Kansas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children.

She is a licensed foster parent and also volunteers as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for children in the court system.

Jenny Broyles - Single licensed foster parent for 6 years to troubled teens and special needs kiddos. I have also been in the Army National Guard for the past 11.5 years and really enjoy it. It has been a privilege to be a part of this committee and learn from the amazing professionals. I also work a full-time job as a Targeted Case Manager for individuals on the IDD waiver. I enjoy being outdoors and having fun with my kiddos.

Brynn Blair - A licensed Kansas Attorney and worked as a Staff Attorney at Kansas Legal Services-Topeka from May 2018 until February 2023. As of March 1, 2023, Brynn became the managing attorney for the KLS Topeka office. While Brynn practices a variety of law at Kansas Legal Services, about 50% of her cases consist of Child In Need of Care (CINC) work. Brynn receives CINC cases through Kansas Legal Services' participation in the Douglas County Child in Need of Care Appointment panel. Through the Douglas County panel, KLS attorneys are appointed as either Guardian Ad Litem or parent attorneys.

Lana Goetz - Office of Judicial Administration Appointee

Shelby Ponder - Saint Francis Ministries, Wichita- Shelby has been providing hope and healing to children and families for eight years. During her time at Saint Francis Ministries, she has worked as an In-home Family Preservation Therapist and later provided leadership to the Family Preservation Program as supervisor for Wichita.

APPENDICES

All Approved Bylaws will go through DCF legal for approval

Appendix A (cont.):

Shelby transitioned to Reintegration where she began to supervise in the Aftercare program. In her role as Reintegration Director, Shelby continues to advocate for children and families in the child welfare system along with staff working in this field. Shelby is excited to continue in her current role providing support to children, families, and staff.

Docia Small - The Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act, Child Justice Act Grant Administrator for the Kansas Department of Children and Families, Topeka KS. She has expertise and previous appointments within social & juvenile field services. While serving within the child welfare system & juvenile services for the past 12 years, Docia has cultivated the needed interpersonal skills to build rapport with referred families for service and effectively develop fraternization with community stakeholders, court personnel & law enforcement that fosters engagement within the community to strengthen and support parental capacity as well as build stronger families with a coalition of supports.

Miranda Johnson, Caffey, Johnson & Ingels, P.A.- As a Guardian Ad Litem and defense attorney in Kansas for more than 15 years, Miranda has witnessed a need to ensure the safety of the child prior to court involvement. On this panel, she works to review and improve the policies not only from intake to petition, but before, to help keep families intact and children safe. Her knowledge of the court system as it relates to CINC cases is extensive.

APPENDICES

Appendix B: Recruitment Material

KANSAS CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

INTAKE TO PETITION

Do you like collaborating with others to help make a difference? Do you care about children and families? A Citizen Review Panel might be the perfect fit for you!



We are looking for individuals with lived experience and professionals to bring their unique experiences to the table to help us create change. If interested, please email the CRP Coordinator listed below.

The CRP-ITP, consisting of multiple stakeholders, professionals and volunteers, serves the entire state of Kansas. Please visit the website to view members.

What are Citizen Review Panels?

Citizen review panels are a group of volunteers charged with reviewing the state child protective service system and making recommendations for improvement. CRPs were established by federal statute in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) re-authorization (1996) as a requirement for state grants, to examine the extent to which states are discharging their child protection obligations. There are three CRPs in the State of Kansas: Intake to Petition; Custody to Transition; and the Child Death Review Board.



What does the Intake to Petition panel do?

Intake to Petition's focus is to review policies, procedures and practices of the state child protective service system from intake to petition; to assist the state in determining if they have met their child protection responsibilities; to ensure the consumer voice is included in assessing system effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement.



The CRP-ITP also serves as the Children's Justice Act (CJA) task force for the state of Kansas. The CJA Task Force provides grants to States to improve the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child victim. CJA funding provides assistance for states and territories to improve their approach and response to child abuse and neglect. The focus of the funding is to create systemic changes that prevent additional trauma to child victims, and to more effectively protect their rights.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

CRP Staff Coordinator:
LynTia Gwess
Phone: 620-794-7317
Email: lgwess@tfifamily.org

Custody to Transition Chairperson:
Judge Doug Jones
Cell: 620-273-6319
Email: M1@5thjd.org

You can also visit us online by scanning the QR code below.



The Kansas Intake to Petition Citizen Review Panel is dedicated to working alongside DCF and other child welfare partners ensuring the safety and well-being of Kansas children and families.



<https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Pages/CitizenReviewPanel.aspx>

APPENDICES

Appendix B: Recruitment Material (cont.)

**YOUR FUNCTION
AS A CRP MEMBER**

A PLACE WHERE YOUR VOICE IS USED TO
ASSESS AND RECOMMEND CHANGE WITHIN
THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

- 1 MEETING FREQUENCY**
 - BI-monthly
 - 1-2-hour meetings
- 2 PARTICIPATION**
 - Attend majority of meetings
 - Carry out tasks associated with the development of recommendations
- 3 COLLABORATE**
 - Work alongside other panel members that are passionate and committed
- 4 PERFORM**
 - Serve on time-limited committees or task teams or take on special assignments
- 5 ASSIST**
 - Assist with panel recruitment when vacancies occur
- 6 SERVE**
 - Members are voted in by simple majority vote
 - Termination at any time with written notification

*"IF NOT YOU,
THEN WHO?"*

APPENDICES

Appendix C: Approved Bylaws,

Article I Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Kansas Citizens Review Panel Intake to Petition (hereinafter referred to as CRP ITP).

Article II Purpose

Section 1. The Citizens Review Panel Intake to Petition is a federally mandated group of professionals and private citizens charged with reviewing policies, procedures and practices of the state CPS system from intake to petition 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. The CRP ITP also serves as the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force. The purpose of the CRP ITP is to promote child safety and quality services to children and families

Article III Membership

Section 1. Membership of CRP ITP must consist of no less than ten (10) and no more than twenty-one (21) members. As required by CJA the CRP ITP membership will be comprised of the following members:

- Law Enforcement Officer,
- Criminal Court Judge(s),
- Civil Court Judge(s),
- Prosecuting Attorney(s),
- Defense Attorney(s),
- Child Advocate (Attorney(s) for Children),
- Health Professional(s),
- Mental Health Professional(s),
- Child Protective Service Agencies,
- Court Appointed Special Advocate, Representative(s), where such programs are in operation,

Article III (Cont.)

- Individual(s) experienced in working with children with disabilities,
- Parents and Representative of Parent Groups,
- Adult former victims of child abuse and/or neglect,
- Individuals experienced in working with homeless children and youths.

Membership may also include:

- Providers of Services to abused and gram Committee is non-existent.
- Local Citizens; including consumers of services of the Child Protective Services system. Such as,
 - Foster Parents
 - Former Foster Children
 - Adoptive Parents
 - Birth Parents
 - Interested Business and Civic Representatives and Members of the Community at Large.

Section 2. Members shall be eligible for two four-year terms. Upon completion of the first term, members may be re-elected or invited to continue a second term. At the end of completing two terms, panel member maybe appointed to continue their function in the panel through a simple majority vote. The member may terminate membership at any time with written notification to the CRP ITP. Former members are encouraged to serve as consultants or participants in ad-hoc committees or focus groups without voting privileges.

Section 3. Members of the CRP ITP who fail to attend at least three (3) consecutive meetings annually, without prior notice and good cause, will be contacted by the Coordinator or Chairperson designee for follow-up and may be requested to resign.

APPENDICES

Appendix C: Approved Bylaws, Cont.

Section 4. Any vacancy on the CRP ITP or in any office may be filled by a vote of simple majority of the CRP ITP at any regular meeting. The Coordinator or Chairperson designee shall review the nominee(s) for general membership and shall recommend one (1) nominee to the CRP ITP to fill each vacancy that occurs. Vacancies shall be filled in accordance with Section 1 of Article III, maintaining a balance of provider and citizen membership. Nominees for positions filled due to attrition shall complete the term of the predecessor of the open position.

Article IV

Executive Committee

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall be comprised of CRP officers, the immediate Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Staff Coordinator. The Executive Committee shall meet as necessary to supervise the CRP's affairs between full panel meetings and shall take any action as appropriate or delegated by the CRP.

Article V

Officers

Section 1. Officers shall be the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, 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 Vice-Chairperson will have alternate representation from the provider and citizen membership.

Article VI

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 VII

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, at the request of the majority of panel members, or the Panel Coordinator.

Article VIII

Standing and Other Committees

Section 1. The CRP ITP may establish standing Committees. These committees may include, but are not limited to, the Membership Committee and Program Committee.

Section 2. The Membership Committee's duties may include contacting interested parties, processing applications, making decisions regarding nominations, providing orientation to new members, and other duties that may be delegated by the Chairperson or by membership vote. The panel or Staff Coordinator may fill these duties in such cases that a Membership Committee is non-existent. The Nominating Committee, or panel as a whole, may be called upon to submit nominees for vacancies and establish new members, which may occur throughout the year.

APPENDICES

Appendix C: Approved Bylaws, Cont.

Article IX

Non-Discrimination

Section 1. The CRP ITP is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members and participants. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law. Special efforts shall be made to recruit persons from underutilized ethnically, economically, and racially diverse groups.

Section 2. The organization prohibits harassment or discrimination of any kind, including but not limited to verbal, physical, or written conduct, that creates a hostile or offensive environment based on the characteristics listed in Section 1.

Article X

Amendments

Section 1. Any member may propose amendments to these bylaws by submitting a written proposal to the Panel leadership or Staff Coordinator. The proposal must include the exact wording of the proposed amendment and a brief rationale for the change.

Section 2. The panel shall review all proposed amendments at its next regularly scheduled meeting following receipt of the proposal. The panel may accept, reject, or modify proposed amendments before a vote is cast.

Section 3. Voting on proposed amendments shall take place at a regularly scheduled meeting with a majority of members. If approved by the majority of members, amendments shall be adopted.

Section 4. In exigent circumstances necessitating prompt action, a special meeting may be convened at the behest of any member upon request to the Staff Coordinator or panel leadership to amend the bylaws temporarily. These temporary amendments will be presented to the full panel at the next regularly scheduled meeting to be accepted, rejected, or modified by majority vote.

Article XI

Conflict of Interest

Section 1. Panel members and nominees for membership shall disclose possible conflicts of interest to the ITP CRP. Panel members who have declared a conflict of interest shall abstain from voting on matters directly affecting their personal interest. If a conflict of interest that may compromise an individual or the work of the ITP CRP is put forth for consideration by any member, the panel may vote to revoke or deny the individual membership on the panel or ask the member to abstain from voting.