



Department for Community
Based Services'
Response to
Citizen Review Panel
Annual Report

September 30, 2022

Division of Protection and Permanency

INTRODUCTION

As required by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Kentucky maintains at least three citizen review panels (CRPs), comprised of volunteers from around the state who review aspects of the state's child welfare system and submit an annual report to the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Their report is also submitted to the Commissioner of the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS/department) and the state's Legislative Research Commission (LRC). The report is due by June 30th each year.

At this time, DCBS is submitting its required response to the LRC. A copy of this response will also be provided to the ACF as part of the next Title IV-B Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR).

PANEL ACTIVITIES FOR SFY 2022

Since 2020, Kentucky's CRPs have maintained five active panels across the state with efforts to continue building into the remaining four DCBS service regions. Unfortunately, COVID-19 impacted participation in membership beginning in 2020, and efforts shifted in the last two years to retainment and rebuilding active CRPs. However, Kentucky should have another active CRP beginning this fall in the Northern Bluegrass Service Region. DCBS leadership continues to support the expansion of CRPs throughout each region to ensure statewide benefits from panel activities.

In previous years, the commissioner met with panel chairs on a quarterly basis to allow opportunity for feedback and dialogue with the panels. The lack of membership participation over the past two years halted progress on recommencing this relationship. As the active CRPs are becoming steadier with greater participation from panel chairs, the program coordinator plans to prioritize these meetings as they once existed in the past. CRPs provide an

invaluable service to the department, their communities, and the children and families served within their regions.

DCBS is committed to fulfilling its obligations set forth in the memorandum of understanding (MOU) and supporting the panels and their mission.

NORTHEASTERN PANEL

In SFY 2021, Northeastern CRP members promoted a naloxone distribution in Greenup County as the HEALing Communities grant would make Narcan more readily accessible in this area. Panel members believed that the promotion and distribution of naloxone would be beneficial to the community. However, barriers were identified within the community as some law enforcement and members of the community are resistant to the use of Narcan.

An event was held on April 29, 2022, at the First United Methodist Church in Greenup County, where panel members were able to distribute Narcan obtained from Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE) while the Greenup County Health Department provided fentanyl testing strips. The Greenup County Syringe Exchange mobile unit was also present for this event. The event was an overall success with many community members present and distribution of 294 doses of naloxone. They were able to assist Kentucky Agency for Substance Abuse Policy (KY-ASAP) in raising \$10,000 to advance the awareness of naloxone via website, video production, billboards, and digital ads.

Moving forward, the panel feels strongly about increasing education regarding the use of naloxone in the Northeastern Region. As indicated in their report, there has been misuse of resources by law enforcement in the community to track possible drug users and arresting them. The panel hopes to participate in upcoming events to attempt to provide better support to the community regarding substance abuse and addiction.

CUMBERLAND PANEL

The Cumberland CRP suffered greatly due to the COVID-19 pandemic in regard to membership. This fiscal year, the panel's focus was recruiting and bringing more awareness to this region's CRP. Due to limited membership participation, this panel believed it was most important to assist and promote for other CRPs. The panel was able to promote for the Narcan distribution event in Northeastern, the Conversation on Collaboration conference by Southern Bluegrass, and the Hope for the Journey conference by Eastern Mountain.

In the next fiscal year, the primary focus will be recruitment of new members that can fully commit to attending meetings regularly.

EASTERN MOUNTAIN PANEL

The Eastern Mountain CRP identified their continued area of focus to be parenting, as the panel saw great response from their Empowered to Connect conference in years past. The past two fiscal years they have partnered with Show Hope to offer their Hope for the Journey conference.

This conference was open to the public in May 2022 and was structured where participants could complete the modules over the course of the month. Thirty-nine (39) people participated in the conference. The panel also offered training credits and certificates for foster and adoptive parents.

The panel plans to continue their efforts around assisting parents throughout Kentucky and to continue the Empowered to Connect conference as they have received positive feedback. Additionally, this CRP will focus on recruitment and retention of panel members.

JEFFERSON PANEL

The Jefferson CRP has seen a decline in membership and participation. However, this last fiscal year, the panel was able to recruit a new member and participation began to increase. Panel members continue to focus on the retention issues of DCBS employees as it is especially challenging in this region. This year, the panel members were able to solicit donations and prizes and offered a social worker recognition through the DCBS newsletter.

This year saw positive change due to an increase in membership and participation, and the panel continues to support the recruitment of additional members in their region.

SOUTHERN BLUEGRASS PANEL

The Southern Bluegrass CRP held their yearly Conversation on Collaboration conference on April 29, 2022. Each year, the panel selects a current topic to center the conference around in hopes of reducing the risk of abuse and neglect. This year, the panel focused on the self-care and strategies for social workers to identify secondary traumatic stress and seek help when needed.

This was a well-attended conference with participants having positive feedback regarding the topics being useful to their careers. The keynote speaker and mindfulness techniques left participants feeling energized. The conference recognized social workers that had been nominated by their peers to have gone above and beyond in their duties. This panel hopes to continue their work with this conference in the upcoming year.

AGENCY RESPONSE

Across the state, Citizen Review Panels provide support to the department and families in each region. The work they put into conferences and projects is valued

greatly by DCBS leadership as it continues to support the mission of the department to reduce abuse and neglect in Kentucky.

As mentioned, COVID-19 has had lasting effects on Kentucky's CRPs regarding membership and participation. However, as the world continues to push into new normals, membership and participation has seen an increase in the last fiscal year. DCBS recognizes the importance that the dedicated professionals provide for our communities and appreciates the continued commitment to our panels.

Leadership applauds the Northeastern Panel for their dedicated work to provide resources to their community, and also for acting on their feelings of injustice being experienced and wanting to provide greater systemic change. The ability to provide resources is valuable, but the drive to make more effective change is even more commendable.

DCBS appreciates the hard work from the Cumberland Panel. They have been affected greatly by the decline in membership. However, DCBS is proud of their ability to promote the other CRPs to ensure the upmost participation by the community. DCBS is eager to see the progress this panel will make with continued increase in membership.

Leadership commends the continued outreach the Eastern Mountain Panel has provided through their parenting conference. The conference has reached numerous families within the community and department leadership recognizes the importance and value of the messages it provides.

DCBS appreciates the work of the Jefferson Panel as they provided worker recognition in a time when retention of employees is so important. The department values the work and efforts of staff, and it is pleasing when members of our community and panels commend staff for their ongoing efforts in these

dire times.

Southern Bluegrass CRP and their continuation of the Conversation on Collaboration is valued immensely by department leadership. DCBS appreciates the outstanding work this panel does to create a current, important topic every year. The department looks forward to the continuation of this conference and the valuable information it brings across the state.

DCBS leadership would like to thank all the CRP members for their outstanding accomplishments in this state fiscal year. As COVID-19 has made a lasting impact in many ways, DCBS hopes efforts to increase membership in established panels, and efforts to expand throughout Kentucky, continue. Expanding valuable resources provided by CRP throughout Kentucky and the ability to reach more of our communities can only enhance our capability to decrease factors of abuse and neglect. DCBS sincerely appreciates the work and dedication the CRPs have provided.