



CDSS

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
GOVERNOR

May 27, 2009

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-41-09

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: FUNDING FOR CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS
REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

I am pleased to announce that the California Department of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) is beginning a new round of funding for Citizen Review Panels (CRPs). Currently the OCAP supports three CRPs. Two are county panels in Calaveras and San Mateo. The third is a statewide CRP. The OCAP will select up to five CRPs and provide them with up to \$25,000 per year for the Federal Fiscal Years 2009-10 to 2011-12. The OCAP will provide training and technical assistance to support the development and ongoing operation of the local panels. To accommodate funding parameters, the applicant must be a CRP which meets the requirements set forth in State and Federal Law.

California's CRPs must function with a high level of autonomy. They are to examine the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies; and where appropriate, review client cases, in order to evaluate the extent to which the state and local child protection agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities. The CRPs can utilize an existing committee structure made up of a variety of stakeholders, whose purpose is to facilitate and/or provide oversight to a county's Self Improvement Plan (SIP) activities, the State Program Improvement Plan (PIP) or other program refinement efforts. Activities that could be funded through CRP monies might include the facilitation of focus groups to gather input, hiring a committee coordinator, etc.

The CRPs bring together child welfare services professionals; public and nonprofit health, mental health and substance abuse staff; child advocates and attorneys; representatives from education; former consumers of service-parents, former foster youth; representatives from Tribal governments; and volunteers from the public at large to review aspects of the state and local child protective services system and make

recommendations that enhance the delivery of services to children and families. County child welfare agencies must provide the panel with access to case records as needed and related to CRPs goals when so indicated. Please note the CRP's role is not solely case record review, but rather to evaluate the extent to which the state and local child protection agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities. The County Child Welfare Services will appoint a designated liaison to the panel to facilitate access to these records and other resources needed by the panel to fulfill its mandate. They may provide staff support to the panel or accommodate this need indirectly.

The attached description provides general information about CRPs. For more information please see the National CRPs Virtual Community at the University of Kentucky website: www.uky.edu/socialwork/crp .

Counties interested in supporting the CRP must complete and **submit the attached application by June 15, 2009**. The grant awards will be announced by July 15, 2009. Currently Calaveras and San Mateo counties have CRPs along with a state wide panel. All of them will be receiving a memo inviting them to continue as CRPs in California.

If you have any questions, please contact Tracy Urban in the Office of Child Abuse Prevention at (916) 654-1678 or tracy.urban@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

LINNÉ STOUT, Chief
Child Protection and Family Support Branch

c: CWDA

Attachments

**Citizen Review Panel
Application
State Fiscal Year Funding
2009-10 through 2011-12**

Please complete the following questions and submit the completed application to the California Department of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) on or before June 15, 2009. This application may be e-mailed to tracy.urban@dss.ca.gov, mailed or hand-delivered to:

Tracy Urban, Citizen Review Panel Coordinator
California Department of Social Services
Office of Child Abuse Prevention
744 P Street, MS 8-11-82
Sacramento, CA 95814

If you have any questions, please contact Tracy Urban at (916) 654-1678 or tracy.urban@dss.ca.gov.

The selection process will be based on points as indicated. Please complete the following questions.

1. Applicant Information (15 points)

- a. Name, telephone number, and e-mail address of a county contact person.
- b. Discuss the role that the Citizen Review Panel (CRP) will fulfill.
- c. Attach documentation that addresses the mission, programs, and budget.

2. Composition of the Panel (20 points)

- a. The CRP must be composed of individuals who are broadly representative of the community including members with expertise in prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. Please address how you will recruit members for the panel or describe the existing group you will utilize as a CRP. List the agencies and organizations represented in your existing group or from which you will draw the membership and discuss how you will recruit from the public at large, if you intend to do so.
- b. What do the agencies listed in 2.a. above see as the most pressing child welfare issue(s)?

- c. How will you ensure that the panel is diverse and that it contains representatives from groups that are overrepresented in the child welfare system in your county?
- d. Will your panel be selected and prepared to meet by October 1, 2009? If not, explain.

3. Panel Support (15 points)

It is expected that panels will function with increasing autonomy after the panel is selected, oriented and trained. Valuable information on the role and function of CRPs can be found at the University of Kentucky's National CRP website: www.uky.edu/socialwork/crp. The county is required to ensure that panels are supported in their responsibilities to examine the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies, and if appropriate, review client cases. The county should also be willing to provide the panel with other types of support such as a meeting space and/or training and to assist with the distribution of annual reports.

- a. Please describe the type of support that will be provided to your panel.

4. Panel Work Plan (15 points)

Panels are required to conduct a review of some aspect of the policy, procedures and practices of the state or local CWS agency. For example, the panel may choose to examine how an agency is handling re-entries into foster care, independent living cases and emergency response operations, etc.

- a. How will you assist the panel in determining what aspect of the CWS agency's policies, practices and procedures it will review?
- b. What sources of data will be available to your panel?
- c. How will the panel access case information and information on departmental policies, practices and procedures?

5. Public Input (10 points)

Federal law requires each CRP to provide for public outreach and comment to assess the impact of current procedures and practices (of the state or local CWS agency) upon the children and families in the community. Some examples of how public outreach and comment may be obtained are through community meetings and by posting documents and/or questions to the web and then inviting comment.

- a. Please describe the ways by which the panel can obtain public input.

6. Recommendations (15 points)

Each panel is required by federal law to prepare an annual report that summarizes its activities and contains its recommendations on improving the CWS system. The annual report containing these recommendations must be sent to OCAP by October 31st of each year. The state or local CWS agency must respond to the recommendations within six months of receipt of the report.

- a. What will be the process of the state or local CWS agency in responding to these recommendations?
- b. How will the state or local CWS agency keep the panel apprised of the progress that it is making in implementing those recommendations that it agrees to implement?

7. Panel Performance (10 points)

- a. How will the panel evaluate its progress throughout the funding period?

I certify that the above statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

The County Welfare Agency (CWA) _____ assures CDSS that it will comply with all of the CAPTA and state requirements.

County Welfare Agency Director

Director, Nonprofit Agency
(If applicable)

Date _____

Date _____

**California Department of Social Services
Office of Child Abuse Prevention
Citizen Review Panel
Program Description**

In order to receive funding under the Child Abuse and Neglect State Grants Program through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), California must establish a minimum of three Citizen Review Panels (CRPs). The California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) has oversight of these panels. The panels are responsible for determining the extent to which state and local child protection agencies are discharging their child protection responsibilities under federal statutes. They are to examine the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies; and if appropriate, review client cases. Panels may examine linkages that exist between this primary agency and other governmental agencies, and community based organizations that deliver child protection, child welfare, and family support services. More specifically, a CRP reviews the activities of the Child Protective Services (CPS) system in light of the responsibilities under the state's CAPTA Plan, Title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and the Title IV-E Plan (Child Welfare Services, Foster Care and Adoptions). The CRPs may also examine any other criteria they consider important to ensure the protection of children.

Within the past decade the priority has shifted to having Child Welfare Services (CWS) systems become more goal and outcome oriented. This means that the processes and activities of CWS systems (i.e. court hearings, social worker visits, case planning, etc.), are not ends in themselves, but a means to achieve specific goals that result in positive outcomes for children and their families. While CWS agencies have always been driven by the goal of child safety, the menu of goals with which they must concern themselves has expanded.

The Title IV-B Plan is the state's primary planning document for child protection, child welfare services, foster care, adoptions and child abuse prevention. In the Title IV-B Plan, the state has given the following outcomes priority among those the state has chosen for CWS:

- Ensure the safety of children.
- Ensure permanence for children.
- Promote the well-being of children and families.
- Facilitate quality services for children and families.
- Ensure safe, stable and nurturing families for children.

The state's Title IV-B, IV-E Plans, the state's Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) detailing the state's performance review and PIP are available at www.childsworld.ca.gov.

Panel membership brings together:

- Volunteers
- Former consumers of services – parents/former foster youth
- Foster parents
- Court-appointed special advocates
- Children’s attorneys
- Law enforcement personnel
- Health and mental health professionals
- Substance abuse professionals
- Representatives from all areas of education
- Mandated reporters
- Representatives from Tribal Governments
- Other persons with an interest in CWS

The CRPs are to:

- Meet a minimum of four times per year. We recommend meeting at least eight times during the initial year of operation while the panel gets organized and prepares a work plan.
- Identify a panel member as CRP Chair who will be the liaison to the CDSS/OCAP.
- Send panel representation to any meetings pertaining to the CRP process facilitated by CDSS/OCAP.
- Conduct a review of some function of the local CWS agency in terms of its policies, procedures and practices.
- Submit to OCAP the minute notes of each meeting and a quarterly budget update.
- Submit a Scope of Work/Work Plan and budget annually.
- Submit an annual report to OCAP that describes the panel’s activities and contains the panel’s findings and recommendations for improving the local and state child welfare system within reporting timelines.
- Provide for public outreach and comment in order to assess the impact of current policies, procedures and practices upon children and families in the community and to carry out its review function.

The OCAP is committed to supporting the CRPs in becoming creative problem solving bodies. The OCAP has retained a consultant who is available to provide training and technical assistance. More specifically, the consultant can facilitate the start up of panels; provide training that can address team building, the structure and function of the CPS/CWS system, the organizational structure of the panels, panel work plans, assistance with budgets and reports and other topics identified by local panels.

The CDSS/OCAP will fund three to five CRPs in state fiscal years 2009-10 through

2011-12. The CRPs may apply for up to \$25,000 for each fiscal year. To be considered for funding, candidates must complete the attached application and submit to:

Tracy Urban, Citizen Review Panels (CRP) Coordinator
California Department of Social Services
Office of Child Abuse Prevention
744 P Street, MS 8-11-82
Sacramento, CA 95814

E-mail submissions must be sent to Tracy Urban at tracy.urban@dss.ca.gov. All submissions must be received on or before June 15, 2009.