

## Montgomery County Citizens Review Panel (MCCRP)

January 21, 2020 Meeting

### Minutes

#### Persons Present:

Laura Coyle  
Angela English  
Kay Farley  
George Gabel

Pam Littlewood  
Stacey McNeely  
Marci McCoy-Roth  
Jane Steinberg

#### Welcome

Marci McCoy-Roth called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### Panel Membership

On January 17, 2020, Lisa Merkle was advised that the terms of six panel members had expired effective October 2019 – Jen Carson, Ronna Cook, Pam Littlewood, Marci McCoy Roth, Stacey McNeely, and Michelle Maxberry. In addition, Leslie Shedlin has served 19 years and will be stepping down.

Some of the panel members are eligible to apply for an additional term, but some are not. This complies with the Montgomery County policy on term limits for advisory board members. Under the policy, individuals can serve three terms. The option exists for individuals to apply for a fourth term if no other applications are received.

The panel membership vacancies are being advertised on the Montgomery County website.

***Follow-up Item - The vacancies and committee assignments will be discussed further at the February 4, 2020 meeting.***

#### Review and Approve Minutes

There was consensus to approve the December 10, 2019 minutes as distributed.

#### Agency Report

##### Agency Staffing/Retention

Angela English advised that the agency currently has 23 vacancies and 13 of those vacancies are in her unit. Agency leadership was under the impression that these Social Worker I and Social Worker II positions were being advertised and recruitment was underway by Human Resources. They, however, recently discovered that the positions have not been advertised. Lisa Merkin is following up to determine the source of the problem and get it corrected.

Angela indicated that of the 7 to 8 recent hires, the new people preferred taking positions in the investigations unit rather the units in which they would have responsibility for on-going cases. This is a change. Previously, new staff preferred having on-going caseloads.

***Follow-up Item – Angela will follow-up with Lisa Merkin to see if there is something that the MCCRCP can do to assist.***

Child Welfare Data Report

Angela provided the CRP data for November 2018 and 2019.

<b><i>Data Element</i></b>	<b><i>November 2018</i></b>	<b><i>November 2019</i></b>
Calls to Screening	977	1361
New Alternative Response (A/R) Investigations	78	91
New Information and Referrals (I/R) Investigations	119	110
New Non-CFS [previously New Requests from Other Agencies (ROAs)]	51	50
Children/Youth in Out of Home (OOH) Care	412	428
Families Receiving In-Home Services	87	81
Resource Homes	197	198
Resource Home Applications	6	6

START Program

Angela reported that the START staff person started today.

***Follow-up Item – Angela will ask for information on the new staff person’s background and expertise.***

Children, Juvenile, and Adult Management System (CJAMS)

Angela advised that Anne Arundell County implemented CJAMS today (January 21, 2020). Rumor has it that Montgomery County may begin implementation in March 2020.

***Follow-up Item – Angela check on the details and experience with implementation in the western counties.***

Housing

Angela reported that Lisa has not been able to find anyone yet to handle the Family Unification Program (FUP) for youth in foster care. She continues to work on it.

Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)

There is no new information on the status of Maryland’s implementation of FFPSA.

Child Care

Angela advised that the agency is having an internal meeting regarding delays in processing child care reimbursement to foster parents. The agency has been receiving a lot of complaints from the foster parents.

George Gabel reported that agency staff is trying to get information on costs and rates of child care in Montgomery County.

***Follow-up Item – George will follow-up with the agency for discussion at the February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. Perhaps an agency staff person will be available to attend the MCCRCP meeting.***

### **Transition and Mentoring Committee**

Jane Steinberg distributed a draft proposal to the MCCRCP members prior to the meeting. Pam Littlewood and she presented the concept for the proposal. Under the proposal, foster youth that are in a substance abuse treatment program would be offered an incentive while in the program or upon graduation as a support for future sobriety. The reward would be funding to allow them to explore a new skill or hobby. To finalize the proposal, they need data on the number of foster care youth in treatment and graduating from treatment programs. With that information, they can seek funding from Montgomery County and private sources, such as 4 Montgomery's Kids and/or the Generous Juror Program. Jane pointed out that data shows that these incentive programs do help with recovery and sobriety.

George suggested it might be helpful to narrow the scope of the proposal to just cover youth graduating from treatment, at least initially. Developing good eligibility criteria for youth who are still in treatment is complicated. After some experience, eligibility could possibly be expanded to cover youth in treatment. George also suggested adding a reference to support the statement that incentives have been shown to have an impact on recovery and sobriety.

***Follow-up Items – Angela will secure the needed data on the number of youth in treatment so the budget can be finalized. Jane will revise the proposal based on comments. The final proposal will be forwarded to Lisa Merkin for her review before it is submitted to potential funding sources.***

### **Foster Parent Recruitment Committee**

George and Pam Littlewood reported for the Committee.

The Committee members did attend the agency's January information meeting for persons interested in being foster parents. There were more than 30 people in attendance – some were couples and others were single persons. Committee members thought that the agency did a very good job presenting the information and answering questions.

The Committee is interested in getting a better understanding of the data being collected, where the interested persons are coming from, how they learned about the opportunity, and the various stages of the recruitment, training, and licensing processes.

All people in attendance at the information meeting had to sign in for the session. Interested persons can't get an application packet if they haven't attended an information session.

In the Q&A session, Committee members could see people that might drop out based on the questions that they were asking. Agency staff were very candid with those that were solely interested in adoption.

Leslie Shedlin talked with friends that had recently been licensed as foster parents to get input based on their experience. The friends commented on the long time it took to work through the process. They also found the paperwork and training to be onerous. The friends wondered whether some people might drop out because they just couldn't navigate the process. The inadequate reimbursement for day

care was also an issue for the friends. If their church hadn't given them a discount on the child care costs, they wouldn't be able to be foster parents.

Marci pointed out that the average infant care cost in Maryland is \$15,000/year. Maryland is 7<sup>th</sup> highest in child care costs of the 50 states.

The Committee will also be looking at the training. The agency offers training on both weekends and during the week. Different staff do the weekend and weekday trainings. They will look to see if there are any differences in the responses based on the trainers or dates of training. Training is provided as a combination of classroom and on-line training.

Stacey McNeely also talked about her experience with the training for prospective foster parents. She suggested that it would be helpful to have someone or resources for people to talk to understand the questions and how to answer some of them.

#### Substance Abuse and Mental Health Committee

George reached out to leadership of the Montgomery County **Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Council** (AODAAC) get information about participating in the planning for the 2020 Montgomery County MH/AADOA Spring Forum.

He will share his notes from the debrief session that the planners had after the 2019 MH/AADOA Spring Forum.

No date has been set for the 2020 Forum yet.

***Follow-up Item – There will be further discussion at the February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.***

#### Other Discussion

The next MCCRCP monthly meeting will be held on February 4, 2020 at 7:00 PM in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room.

The meeting adjourned.