

Montgomery County Citizens Review Panel (MCCRP)

April 5, 2022 Meeting

Minutes

Persons Present:

Laura Brown, Technical Advisor
Laura Coyle
Katy Dunn
Angela English, CYFS Liaison

Kay Farley, CRBC Representative
Marci McCoy-Roth, 2020-2021 Chair
Stacey McNeely
Ronald Whalen

Welcome

Ms. Marci McCoy-Roth called the meeting to order. She welcomed Mr. Ronald Whalen as a new member of the MCCRP.

Review and Approval of the Minutes

The draft minutes of the March 8, 2022 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. Ms. Stacey McNeely made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Laura Coyle seconded the motion, which was approved.

Agency Report

Ms. Angela English reviewed the agency's data for February 2022 from the Supervisor's Briefing – Data Update report.

Data Element	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22
Assessment					
Number of calls to screening unit	1364	1124	1023	929	1189
Reports of Child Maltreatment	696	698	609	532	687
Number of New Alternative Response (AR) Investigations	95	124	82	83	91
Number of New Investigation Response (IR) Investigations	89	81	77	51	86
New Non-CPS	75	69	71	55	71
In-Home					
Number of Families Receiving In-Home Services	87	77	76	70	70
Out of Home					
Number of new out of home placements (entries)	3	3	18	7	8
Total children who left care (exits)	9	10	12	13	16
Total out-of-home children in care at month's end	349	342	348	342	334
Number of children in foster care	215	207	210	204	204
Number of children placed with relatives	76	76	80	79	71
Number of Voluntary Placement Agreements @ EOM	2	2	2	2	8
Number of Voluntary Placement Agreement Requests	6	8	8	7	1
Number of Resource Homes	179	178	176	166	165
Average length of stay for children in foster care (months)	32	32	31	31	31

The agency is still working to fill staff vacancies and has made some gains. The agency is facing a number of retirements, including some supervisory positions. It generally takes 2-3 months to fill supervisory positions.

The number of resource homes continues to decline. As previously reported, the decline is related to foster parents being unwilling to comply with federal vaccination requirements and unwillingness to take teenagers, particularly teenagers with mental health issues.

The agency is making efforts to reduce the length of stay in foster care. One strategy is training for resource families and biological parents related to the Center for Excellence (CFE) project, which has been previously discussed. The resource families and biological parents receive 16 weeks of trauma-informed training on co-parenting. The theory is that by co-parenting the biological parents' ties to their child won't be broken as they remain a factor in the child's life and decision making and will learn parenting tools through the process.

One of the supervisors that recently resigned was responsible for the unit recruiting resource homes. The members of MCCRP have previously offered to help advertise the opportunity to be resource families through listservs to which the members belong.

Next Steps: Ms. English will try to get a list of the listservs already being utilized by the. Ms. English will also coordinate with the agency's public relations staff on the recruitment message text currently approved by the agency. Once the MCCRP receives the list and the agency-approved text, members can identify additional listservs to which the members have access. MCCRP members will take care to only post the agency-approved text in the listserv messages.

Another strategy for reducing length of stay in foster care involves working with the courts. The agency provides an orientation for new judges and meet periodically with the judges assigned to the child welfare docket. A question was asked about what agency data is provided to judges and whether additional data might be helpful to them. Assisting staff in developing relationships with the court may also be helpful.

Panel Speaker for Staff

Ms. Coyle arranged for Dr. Doretha Williams, Director of the [Center for the Digitization and Curation of African American History | National Museum of African American History and Culture \(si.edu\)](https://si.edu/center-for-the-digitization-and-curation-of-african-american-history), to speak with agency staff in March. Over 50 staff were in attendance. Dr. Williams spoke about the importance of documenting, preserving, and digitizing African American family and community histories.

Ms. McCoy-Roth thanked Ms. Coyle for arranging for the speaker. The agency staff were very interested and appreciative of the program.

Collaborating with the Montgomery County Board of Social Services

Ms. McCoy-Roth advised that the Montgomery County Board of Social Services had reach out to her and was interested in coordinating with the MCCRP on two issues;

- Increasing internships and job opportunities for youth in the foster care system, and

- Increasing mental health support capacity for youth in the foster care system.

Ms. McCoy-Roth asked MCCRCP members to be thinking about collaboration ideas and activities.

Spring Forum

Ms. Kay Farley and Ms. McCoy-Roth advised that the 2022 Spring Forum will be on May 19th from 6:00 – 8:00 pm on the Zoom platform. The theme is helping youth who have mental health issues. The U.S. Surgeon General has been invited to speak about his recently released report on this issue. Representatives from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) have been invited and confirmed their willingness to talk about implementation of that report. Dr. Jennifer Bienstock from the Center for Behavioral Change and Anxiety has agreed to talk about how parents can help their youth with Anxiety and Depression. The forum will end with a panel of youth talking about their needs, what works for them, and what doesn't. The target audience is very broad – the public, service providers, and agency staff.

LGBTQ Subcommittee

The subcommittee is continuing to work toward a draft white paper. Ms. Katy Dunn is developing an executive summary report. She asked for guidance as to the audience for the report. The consensus was that the report would be for Lisa Merkin for internal use. The report will share data gleaned from the survey, report on our understanding of the inconsistencies in the responses, identify potential additional questions that should be asked, and recommendations.

Some of the themes that have been identified relate to the following;

- The delicate balance staff face between HIPAA compliance and the youths' wishes,
- Training of staff, and
- Staff turnover.

Next Steps: Ms. Dunn will prepare a draft document to share with other members of the subcommittee.

Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee

The final survey was sent to Mr. Chris Plummer, President of the Montgomery County Foster Parent Association (MCFPA), for distribution to the MCFPA membership. He has been experiencing computer problems and has not been able to send the survey out. Mr. Plummer will be relocating to another state soon. The Vice President will be stepping up to take over the management of the association.

Next Steps: Ms. English will get the name and contact information for the Vice President so the subcommittee can work with the MCFPA Vice President for distribution of the survey.

MCCRCP Committee New Members

Ms. Lisa Merkin continues to work with the County to readvertise the MCCRCP vacancies.

Recognition of Ms. Angela English

Ms. English advised that this would be her last meeting as she is retiring. Ms. McCoy-Roth thanked Ms. English for her years of service to the children of Montgomery County and for her assistance to the MCCRCP over the years. Members of the MCCRCP wished her well and let her know that she would be missed.

The meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting: May 10, 2022