

Montgomery County Citizens Review Panel (MCCRP)

February 13, 2024 Meeting

Minutes

Members Present:

Tinuade Akinshola	Laura Erstling, CYFS
Kenneth Beale	Kay Farley, CRBC Representative
Laura Brown, Technical Advisor	Elizabeth Simon
Laura Coyle	Ronald Whalen

Ms. Laura Coyle called the meeting to order.

Review and Approval of the Minutes

The draft minutes of the January 9, 2024 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Ronald Whalen advised that his surname was misspelled in the draft minutes. Mr. Kenneth Beale made the motion to approve the revised minutes. Ms. Tinuade Akinshola seconded the motion. The revised minutes were approved.

Agency Update

Ms. Laura Erstling reviewed the agency’s data for January 2024.

Ms. Erstling advised that there was nothing surprising in the data. An increase in the numbers will likely occur in the Spring based on past experience. The number of children in out-of-home placements generally stay in the low 300s.

Data Element	Sep. 2023	Oct. 2023	Nov. 2023	Dec. 2023	Jan. 2024
Assessment					
Number of calls to Screening Unit	950	1194	1032	902	924
Reports of Child Maltreatment (referrals)	678	790	731	648	693
Number of new Alternative Response (AR) investigations	72	76	89	56	70
Number of new Investigation Response (IR) investigations	61	83	65	51	64
New non-CPS cases	63	81	75	68	57
Number of completed IR investigation findings – allegation indicated	32	44	44	35	47
Number of completed IR investigation findings – allegation unsubstantiated	20	31	20	22	25
Number of completed IR investigation findings – allegation ruled out	16	30	50	31	40
Out of Home					
Number of new out of home placements (entries)	9	7	6	14	13
13Total children who left care (exits)	12	13	14	6	5

Total out-of-home children in care at month's end	331	325	317	325	333
Placement					
Number of children in foster care	214	212	208	218	219
Number of children placed with relatives	69	70	60	58	65
Number of children in residential placement	48	49	49	49	49
Length of Stay					
Average (mean) length of stay in foster care (months)	34	34	34	34	34
Median length of stay in foster care (months)	26	27	28	28	28
Resource Homes					
Number of licensed regular foster homes (does not include restricted/relative homes)	125	124	122	122	121
Number of newly assigned regular home studies	0	0	1	1	0
Number of recruitment inquiries	54	34	33	31	27

MCCRP Committee

Resource Home Recruitment and Retention Sub-Panels

Helping Resource Families to Deal with Grief and Loss at Reunification Subpanel

Ms. Coyle reported for the subpanel. She shared a spreadsheet of potential resources that identifies a variety of types of resources for families and staff. She asked the MCCRP members to review the spreadsheet for discussion at the next meeting.

Ms. Beale inquired whether grief and loss is part of the existing training for new Resource Home families. Ms. Erstling advised that the curriculum exposes the families to every aspect of being a Resource Home parent, including grief and loss. A lot of information, however, is provided at one time. Ms. Laura Brown reported that some specialized training was provided in the past in the county.

Ms. Erstling also advised that the agency has hired a contractor to work with the agency on recruitment and retention of Resource Home families. Recently, the agency has made good strides in increasing its media presence and making connections in the county.

Targeting Untapped Communities and Strategies for Emergency Placement Homes Subpanel

Ms. Brown reported for the subpanel. Subpanel members have been reaching out to organizations on the outreach target list approved by the agency. They have found that the organizations really want to hear from agency personnel. Ms. Brown is compiling the list of organizations with contact information and will provide the information to the agency for follow-up.

Panel Training Requirements

Ms. Coyle called attention to a recent e-mail from Stacey McNeely, MCCRP Chair, reminding MCCRP panel members of Montgomery County's training requirements for boards and commission members.

Spring Forum Planning Committee Participation

Ms. Coyle will follow up with Diane Lininger, staff to the Mental Health Advisory Committee, to determine the status of the planning and whether a date for the 2024 Spring Forum has been set.

Next Meeting

The next MCCRCP meeting will be on March 12, 2024.

Other Business

As work on Resource Home recruitment and retention is near completion, MCCRCP members began brainstorming ideas for possible new priorities. The following ideas were suggested:

- Resources to assist Resource Home families to foster children with special needs;
- Developing a culture of support for agency staff; and
- Supports for transitioning youth.

Related to supports for transitioning youth, there was some discussion about the need for a resource list for youth who are transitioning out of care and the Call 211 system.

The meeting adjourned.