

Montgomery County Citizens Review Panel (MCCRP)

July 8, 2025 Meeting

Minutes

Members Present:

Tinu Akinshola

Jane Yamaykin

Stacey McNeely, Chair

Lisa Merkin, CYFS Liaison

Elizabeth Simon

Laura Brown

Ms. Stacey McNeely called the meeting to order.

Review and Approval of the Minutes

The draft minutes of the June 10, 2025 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. Ms. Stacey McNeely made the motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Jane Yamaykin seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Agency Update

Lisa Merkin presented the July 2025 data. A member of the panel noted that there was significant consistency from month to month in the data for the median length of stay for children in foster care. A question was asked if there was any specific reason or policy for how long a child needs to stay in foster care that would explain the consistency of that data. Ms. Merkin indicated that there is no specific reason or policy, but rather just what the data happens to show from month to month.

Ms. Merkin drew attention to the fact that for the latest month's data, more than half of the children in foster care are placed with relatives. A question was asked if data on children moving from one resource home to another is tracked. Ms. Merkin indicated that there is some data, but it is not straightforward due to factors such as hospitalizations, emergency foster homes, etc. The circumstances of a child moving around is a very individualized situation. An example would be a child placed in emergency care while the agency is working on an out-of-state placement.

Ms. Merkin indicated that the agency is still looking for more resource homes. Some of the resource homes were closed because they were no longer available to take new placements. It was pointed out that there were four assigned regular home studies in the most recent month, a notable increase over the previous months. Part of the resource home recruitment process is asking new resource homes what their preference is for how they can be used (potentially as an emergency home or a regular home). The agency needs a variety of resource homes to meet the needs of the children in foster care.

Panel Topic Discussion

The panel began discussing the topic of multi-complex services for youth. This topic involves services provided for children and youth that have multiple needs, such as mental health, substance abuse, behavioral issues, truancy, etc. It may include child welfare, juvenile services, and school supports. In

these situations, not one system can meet all the needs of the child and it often involves teenage children. The agency is particularly interested in research on how other states or jurisdictions coordinate these multi-complex services and if there are any best practices documented.

Ms. Yamaykin mentioned that she reached out to a friend in Detroit, MI as well as a friend in Pittsburgh, PA.

There was a question posed regarding the potential impact of Medicaid funded programs based on the recent federal legislation. It is not immediately clear how those programs may be impacted, but the impact wouldn't likely be felt until the new fiscal year. Panel members wondered whether there are alternative sources for treatment that do not rely on Medicaid. It is not clear what additional funding states are going to be expected to pick up. Ms. Merkin expressed that she does not think foster care will be as impacted by the legislation as other supplemental services, such as those for the aging population.

The panel agreed to continue trying to answer the question of whether there is a state that has achieved some innovative solutions for multi-complex services.

Panel members moved on to the topic of resource home recruitment. Ms. Merkin indicated that she would look to invite the agency manager responsible for resource home work to the September meeting. There could be a discussion on what is being done for resource home retention. A new angle of that topic would be retaining kin providers and the types of services that kin providers need.

When reviewing the work previously done by the panel on resource home recruitment, it was mentioned that the panel gave the agency documentation compiled with links to community groups to reach out to. Ms. Merkin indicated that the agency did reach out but it may be a good time to reach out again. Panel members indicated they may have ideas of new groups to share the flyer to as well. A question was raised regarding the agency reaching out to the interfaith group. Ms. Merkin responded that the agency has reached out to the interfaith group in the past, but it could be revisited again as well.

Panel Vacancies and Interviews

Ms. McNeely advised that there was one candidate put forward to the county but we are awaiting confirmation.

The panel members are also waiting to see which candidates responded to the third vacancy posting.

Panel Availability for August 12, 2025 Meeting

The next meeting will be August 12th.

The meeting adjourned.