

**Montgomery County Citizen’s Review Panel for Children (MCCRP)**

**January 13, 2026 Meeting**

**Minutes**

**Members Present:**

|                                     |                     |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Tinu Akinshola                      | Elizabeth Simon     |
| Miu Lin Edson                       | Kristen Webb        |
| Kay Farley, CRBC Representative     | Jacqueline Williams |
| Daniel LaManga                      | Lisa Winer          |
| Lisa Merkin, DHHS/CWS Staff Liaison | Christopher Yard    |

Ms. Lisa Merkin called the meeting to order.

**New Member Welcome/Introductions**

Ms. Merkin welcomed 5 new members to the MCCRP - Miu Lin Edson, Daniel LaManga, Kristen Webb, Jacqueline Williams, and Christopher Yard. All members introduced themselves to other MCCRP members.

**Action Item: Ms. Merkin will circulate an updated membership list with the new members that includes terms of appointment and voting status of the members.**

**Review of the December 2025 Meeting Minutes**

The draft minutes of the December 9, 2025 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. Ms. Elizabeth Simon made the motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Lisa Winer seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

**Agency Updates**

Ms. Merkin presented the December 2025 data.

| <b>Data Element</b>                                       | <b>July 2025</b> | <b>Aug 2025</b> | <b>Sep 2025</b> | <b>Oct 2025</b> | <b>Nov 2025</b> | <b>Dec 2025</b> |
|---|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Screening &amp; Assessment</b>                         |                  |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Number of Calls to Screening Unit (incl. walk-in reports) | 675              | 571             | 1107            | 1172            | 917             | 1007            |
| Reports of Child Maltreatment (Referrals)                 | 458              | 435             | 776             | 816             | 713             | 771             |
| Number of New Alternative Response (AR) Cases             | 41               | 46              | 78              | 88              | 69              | 69              |
| Number of New Investigation Response (IR) Cases           | 54               | 37              | 82              | 65              | 68              | 73              |
| New Non-CPS Cases   | 56               | 50              | 71              | 70              | 48              | 69              |
| Number of Completed IR Cases Indicated Findings           | 62               | 39              | 24              | 42              | 48              | 50              |
| Number of Completed IR Cases Unsubstantiated Findings     | 48               | 33              | 30              | 22              | 11              | 25              |

|  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Number of Completed IR investigation Ruled Out Findings        | 52   | 30   | 29   | 40   | 33   | 40   |
| <b>Foster Care Entries &amp; Exits</b>                         |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Number of Out of Home (OOH) Care Entries                       | 9    | 3    | 7    | 11   | 9    | 11   |
| Number of Out of Home (OOH) Care Exits                         | 12   | 7    | 6    | 12   | 18   | 6    |
| Total Children in Out of Home OOH at Month's End               | 334* | 330* | 331* | 330* | 321* | 326* |
| <b>Out of Home</b>   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Number of Children in Foster Care                              | 190  | 189  | 190  | 189  | 183  | 186  |
| Number of Children Placed with Kin                             | 101  | 100  | 99   | 99   | 99   | 99   |
| Number of Children in Residential Placement (group homes, RTC) | 43   | 41   | 42   | 42   | 39   | 41   |
| Average Length of Stay in Foster Care (months)                 | 33.5 | 34   | 34   | 34   | 34   | 34.5 |
| Median Length of Stay in Foster Care (months)                  | 24   | 25   | 24   | 24.5 | 23   | 24   |
| <b>Resource Homes</b>  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Number of Regular Foster Homes                                 | 96*  | 95*  | 94*  | 92*  | 94*  | 95*  |
| Number of Kinship Homes  | 72*  | 65*  | 68*  | 62*  | 59*  | 60*  |
| Number of Regular Home Study Assignments                       | 2    | 4    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 3    |
| Number of recruitment inquiries                                | 18   | 26   | 33   | 38   | 27   | 29   |

\* Average

Ms. Merkin advised that the high number of exits from foster care in November was, in part, a result of 8 adoptions that were completed in conjunction with National Adoption Day. The agency continues to prioritize placing children with kin if possible. Currently, more than half of the children in foster care are placed with kin. Although kin placements are a priority, the agency continues to actively recruit new resource homes.

### **MCCRP Sub-Committees**

For the new members, Ms. Merkin advised that the MCCRP generally adopts an issue or 2 that is of interest to the agency. The current issues are (1) recruitment of new resource homes and (2) models/strategies/protocols to deliver services to youth and families with multi-complex needs.

### **Resource Home Recruitment**

Ms. Merkin advised that Hilary Laskey, who is the lead for resource home recruitment for the agency, will be distributing a survey to current resource home parents in the next 2 weeks to seek their input on recruitment and retention. The survey results will be shared with the MCCRP.

**Action Item: Invite Hilary Laskey to meet with the MCCRP in March or April 2026 to discuss the survey results and current recruitment efforts.**

Ms. Simon noted that the MCCRP previously discussed prioritizing recruitment of resource homes willing to take short-term emergency placements as this a particular need for the agency, especially for teenagers coming into care. Ms. Merkin advised that the State (SSA) is looking at the development of a new respite

policy related to emergency and short-term placements. The timeframe for release of the new policy is uncertain.

Ms. Simon also noted that the MCCRCP previously looked at the grief that resource home families feel when a child is removed from their care (e.g. reunified with a biological parent) and how to support the families. This could be related to a retention issue. For some resource home families, the grief has resulted in the closure of the resource home.

In September 2023, MCCRCP members put together a list of untapped communities for resource home recruitment. The initial concept was to identify organizations with which MCCRCP members had a personal connection. In the end, the list was broader than that. Standard outreach language was developed for MCCRCP members to make an initial contact to the identified organizations. Organizations interested in additional information were referred to the agency recruiter. Because the final list included organizations with which there were no personal contacts, a question was raised about MCCRCP members using Montgomery County letterhead for the initial outreach contact. The decision was that it was not possible for MCCRCP members to use Montgomery County letterhead. The MCCRCP may want to review the September 2023 list for additions and deletions and the previous standard outreach language for recruitment. Ms. Simon offered to translate any agreed upon recruitment language to Spanish if needed. Ms. Tinu Akinshola suggested that it might be helpful to develop a recruitment calendar based on when the identified untapped community organizations meet so the outreach efforts could be staggered.

**Action Item: Ms. Kay Farley will send the previous standard outreach language to Ms. Merkin.**

#### Multi-Complex Services for Youth and Families

The agency is increasingly seeing cases of children coming into care with multiple issues, including drug use, mental health issues, criminal activity, etc. The parents of the child may have already sought and used the available services in community. The agency is interested in learning about models/strategies/protocols in other states on how they manage these complex cases. Ms. Jacqueline Williams suggested that it might be helpful to look at Delaware. It is her understanding that parent/child conflict is a reason, in Delaware, for a child to enter the foster care system.

#### CRP Meeting Responsibilities

Until a new chairperson is selected, the MCCRCP members will rotate responsibility for developing the agenda and chairing the monthly meetings. Ms. Jane Yamaykin volunteered to chair the February 2026 meeting. Ms. Akinshola agreed to work with Ms. Merkin to develop the February 2026 meeting agenda.

#### Panel Availability for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the MCCRCP will be February 10<sup>th</sup>. Members present indicated they were available on that date.

The meeting adjourned.