



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY
2020 Arizona Citizen Review Panel Report
Agency Response to Recommendations
June 24, 2021

The Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS or the Department) is pleased to receive and respond to the recommendations made by the three Arizona Citizen Review Panels (CRP) in their Annual Reports for 2020.

Citizen participation is vital to achieving successful engagement of children and families by bringing the voice of the community to safeguard and strengthen families to maintain permanency. An engaged citizenry brings vibrant new ideas and fresh perspectives creating an environment that is welcoming of community input for the elimination of child abuse and neglect, and improved child and family well-being. Citizen participation provides for open and honest communication between the citizens and DCS that forge a relationship built on mutual trust and respect.

The Department is committed to the strategic goals and initiatives outlined in the DCS SFY 2021 Strategic Plan and demonstrated daily by our shared values:

- **Safety** - We are safety experts.
- **Compassion** - We are Compassioners.
- **Change** - We are all born to grow.
- **Accountability** - We hold ourselves to the highest levels of professionalism.
- **Advocacy** - When children can't speak for themselves, we can.
- **Family** - Family reaches beyond the home.
- **Engagement** - Engagement means listening and being responsive to earn the trust of all we encounter.
- **Teaming** - The best decisions are made together.

We thank each member of the Citizen Review Panels for their commitment and continued partnership.

The Department's response to each panel's recommendation are as follows:

Outcome Based Collaboration for Youth in Care:

Recommendation #1: Explore systems like HMIS Homeless service portal to see if this can be used for youth documents and services for homeless youth.

DCS Response: The Department supports this recommendation and it will collaborate with the CRP to explore accessibility and usefulness of access to the HMIS Homeless service portal and how it can support efforts to house homeless youth.

Recommendation #2: Explore contracts for youth and the requirements for agencies to be trauma informed that work with youth.

DCS Response: The Department is in agreement with this recommendation.

Successful Transition to Adulthood for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care:

Recommendation #1: Review current DCS practices to provide sexual and reproductive health and healthy intimate relationships for youth in transition to adulthood.

DCS Response: The Department is in agreement with this recommendation.

Recommendation #2: Review current DCS policies intended to encourage youth to practice cultural beliefs and maintain cultural identity.

DCS Response: The Department is in agreement with this recommendation.

Recommendation #3: DCS begin to collect additional data on the disparities and add the information to the monthly reports provided for the public.

DCS Response: The Department is in agreement with this recommendation.

Recommendation #4: Examine and evaluate the process of Age of Majority TDM's to determine their effectiveness to encourage transition-aged foster youth to voluntarily enter into the Extended Foster Care program.

DCS Response: The Department is in agreement with this recommendation.

The Arizona DCS Community Advisory Committee Panel

The DCS Community Advisory Committee produces an annual report in August, after the end of each state fiscal year. The annual report is available to the public on the Department's website at: <https://dcs.az.gov/about/community-advisory-committee>.

Recommendation #1: The Committee recommended that the structure of the 2020 Committee meetings focus on the Family First Prevention Services Act implementation plan and the DCS Strategic Plan. Observations and ideas from the Committee members' sectors around these two plans would help guide meetings and decision-making.

DCS Response: The Department is in agreement with the recommendation.

Recommendation #2: The Committee recommended that the agenda for the Committee meetings would:

- Include a basic yearly plan with pre-determined sector updates and an open opportunity for timely information.
- Allow for public comments after major agenda items were complete but prior to setting the agenda for the next meeting.
- Include the revised statement to the public regarding Call for Public Comments.
- Include an agenda item after the Welcome and Introductions to review recommendations from the previous meeting.

DCS Response: The Department is in agreement with the recommendation.

Recommendation #3: The Committee recommended future agenda items to include:

- Explore the relationship between domestic violence victims and the child welfare system.
- Summary of DCS legislative activity in the past session and plans for going forward. (Potentially in the December meeting)

DCS Response: The Department is in agreement with the recommendation and looks forward to collaborating with the Committee.