



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2026

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OUR WORK TOGETHER

Welcome to the next chapter of our Citizen Review Panel work. Thank you for the time, care, and commitment you bring to this process. As we continue building strong regional panels across North Carolina, this newsletter is designed to keep members informed, connected, and grounded in the work ahead. In this issue, we are sharing key findings from the recent priority areas survey, highlighting what members across regions identified as the most urgent concerns in child welfare, and previewing what's coming up in our next virtual meetings. Our work together matters, and your voice is helping shape recommendations that can improve outcomes for children and families across the state.

North Carolina's Citizen Review Panels are made stronger by the people who serve on them. Our statewide membership includes individuals from the Eastern, Central, and Western regions who bring lived experience, professional knowledge, and community insight to this work. We are grateful for their willingness to lead, listen, and help shape recommendations that support children and families across North Carolina.

Western

Name

Abby Brown

Amy Spangler

Brandi Reagan

Christa Smith

Cynthia Coffey

Doug Gallion

Elizabeth Miller

George Bryan

Karen Darby

Karen Harrington

Kathy Sigmon

Patricia West

Sheridan Wilcox

Stony Blevins

Tracie McMillan

Amanda Tanner-McGee

County

Rowan County

Catawba County

Davie County

Forsyth County

Watauga County

McDowell County

Forsyth County

Forsyth County

Cleveland County

Catawba County

Caldwell County

Rowan County

Wilkes County

Davie County

Ashe County

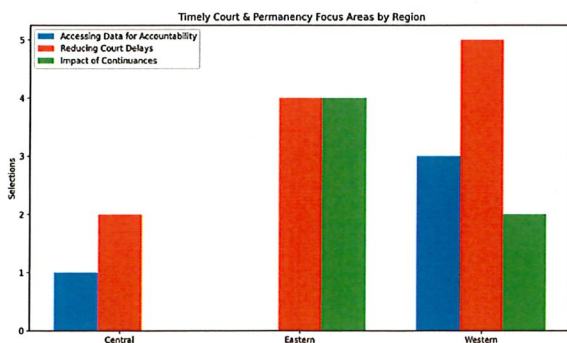
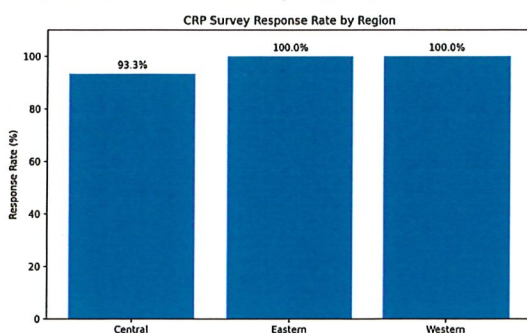
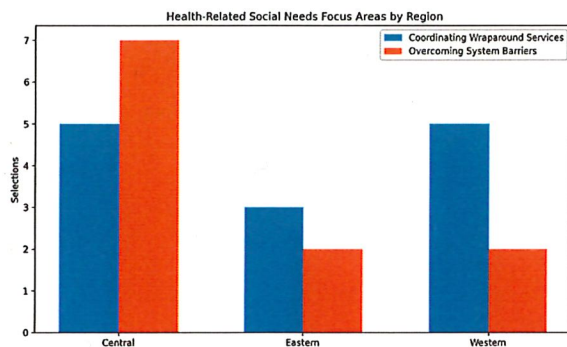
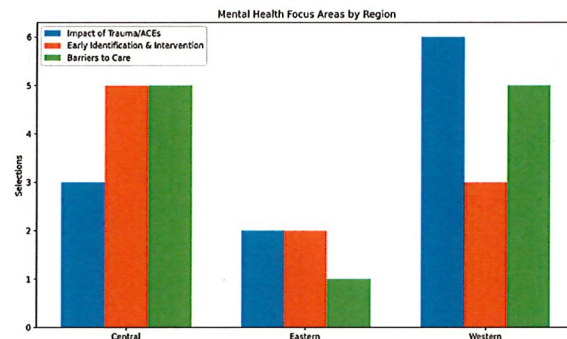
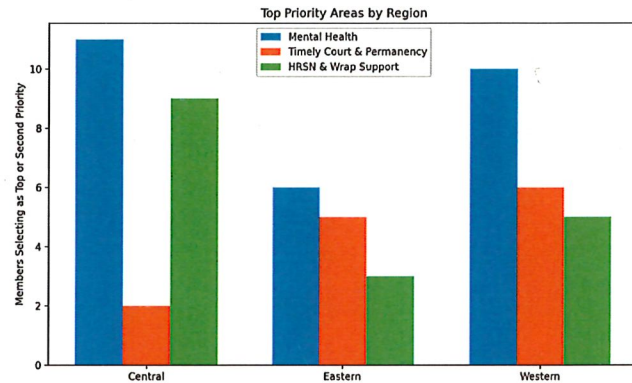
Cherokee County

This report summarizes findings from a member survey examining priority areas within the child welfare system, with a particular focus on mental health, health related social needs (HRSN), and timely court and permanency outcomes. The survey achieved a strong overall response rate of 95.2% (40 of 42 members), with full participation from the Eastern and Western regions and high engagement from the Central region, indicating broad representation and confidence in the results.

Report Summary

- Across all regions, mental health emerged as the most frequently identified priority, followed by health related social needs and timely court and permanency. Members most frequently identified concerns related to the impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on youth mental health, the need for early identification and intervention, and persistent barriers to accessing mental health care, including stigma, transportation challenges, and limited service availability. These issues were consistently reflected across regions, underscoring their statewide relevance.
- In addition to mental health, respondents emphasized the importance of addressing health related social needs, particularly through coordinated wraparound services for parents and reducing systemic barriers that limit access to supports for families involved in child welfare. These priorities highlight the interconnected nature of family stability, access to resources, and child wellbeing.
- Finally, members identified ongoing challenges related to timely court processes and permanency outcomes, including difficulties accessing data for accountability, delays in court proceedings, and the impact of court continuances on families, children, and social workers. While regional patterns varied, these concerns collectively point to opportunities for system level improvements to support timely and equitable outcomes for families statewide.

By the Numbers



Priority 1: Mental Health

- Impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences on youth mental health
- Strategies for early identification and intervention for mental health needs
- Barriers to mental health care: stigma and service availability

Priority 2: HRSN

- Coordinating wraparound services for children and families (e.g. employment, education, transportation, and physical/behavioral healthcare)
- Overcoming systemic barriers to assessing wrap around supports for families who are experiencing child welfare

Priority 3: Timely Court and Permanency

- Impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences on youth mental health
- Strategies for early identification and intervention for mental health needs
- Barriers to mental health care: stigma and service availability

Brandy Reagan - CHAIR

My name is Brandi Reagan, and I currently serve as the Chief Operations Officer for Children's Advocacy Centers of North Carolina (CACNC). Before stepping into this role, I spent fifteen years as the founder and Executive Director of The Dragonfly House Children's Advocacy Center, where I worked closely with DSS, law enforcement, prosecutors, medical providers, and other partners responding to child abuse cases in our community.

Most of my career has been spent working within North Carolina's child protection system and alongside the multidisciplinary partners who make it work. Through my time leading a local CAC and now working statewide, I have seen both the strengths of our system and the areas where we still have opportunities to strengthen coordination and outcomes for children and families.

Citizen Review Panels serve an important role under CAPTA, providing independent community oversight and helping identify opportunities to strengthen the child protection system. With nearly two decades working within the broader child protection system, I believe I can bring a practical, systems-informed perspective to the panel's work.

What most interests me about serving in a leadership role is the opportunity to help guide meaningful discussion, keep the group focused and moving forward, and ensure all perspectives are heard. I believe strong facilitation and collaboration are key to making the panel's work impactful, and I would welcome the opportunity to support that process.

Abby Brown- CO-CHAIR

My name is Abby Brown, and I am a newly hired Permanency Planning Social Worker with Rowan County DSS. I bring both professional and lived experience to this work, as I was in foster care from birth until age 11, when I was adopted. Additionally, my adoptive family continued fostering throughout my childhood, which gave me ongoing, firsthand exposure to the child welfare system from multiple perspectives.

I am interested in serving as Vice Chair. At this stage in my career, I believe this role would allow me to grow into a leadership position while still learning from others with more experience in chair roles. Throughout my college career, I consistently sought out leadership opportunities and have developed strong skills in organization, planning, and follow-through. I am a detail-oriented and systems-focused thinker who values understanding not just what works, but why it works.

While I am early in my professional career, my unique combination of lived experience and formal education—holding a Bachelor of Social Work and beginning my Master of Social Work program this summer—allows me to approach this work with a well-rounded perspective. I strongly believe that lived experience is a critical component in improving systems, especially within child welfare.

I am most excited about the opportunity to serve in this role because it would allow me to contribute meaningfully to conversations around system improvement while connecting with others who are equally committed to this work. I am passionate about using both my personal and professional experiences to advocate for positive change and better outcomes for children and families.

Below are links to additional resources that you may find helpful. As we move into the next phase, your continued participation will help ensure that our recommendations are thoughtful, grounded in real experience, and focused on the changes that can make the greatest difference for children and families.

[Child Welfare Newsletter](#)

[NC Child Fatality Task Force](#)

[Data Request Form](#)

Data requests for meeting III are due by July 24, 2026

Thank you for bringing your perspective, your leadership, and your commitment to this work.

Next Meeting Dates

Western - Wednesday, Sept 16, 2026