

New Volunteers Complete Citizen Review Panel Training



New Panel Member Sara Rytteke (center) serves on her first CRP, along with (left to right) Jodi Hessel, Reginald Richardson, FFCR Review Specialist Yani Sanchez, and Lisa Delasotta.

FFCR congratulates six new volunteers – Shari Lombardi, Pamela Chamberlin, Jennifer Embry, Sara Rytteke, Jacquelyn Kamin and Desiree Fernandez – for completing the 25 hours of pre-service training necessary to begin serving on the [Citizen Review Panel](#) (CRP). These new volunteers have a wide variety of experience including elementary and special education, law, business administration and the arts.

To prepare for service on the CRP, the new volunteers observed and debriefed a CRP review hearing, completed online reading assignments and spent July 14 and 15 participating in experiential learning.

During the two days of training, volunteers were introduced to a wide range of issues

and topics and engaged in hands-on skills building. FFCR's team of expert staff discussed assumptions often made about child welfare-involved families and challenged trainees to focus on objective criteria when making decisions rather than gut feelings or personal experiences. Volunteers paired up to discuss a hypothetical scenario and reflect on the assumptions they made about the case.

FFCR staff familiarized volunteers with the basics of case planning, permanency options/goals, safety and risk, early childhood and special education issues and the volunteer code of conduct. Additional topics that affect youth in foster care, including independent living, transition planning, immigration, and financial support were also covered.

Volunteers participated in several "mini" mock review hearings that covered the specific topics discussed during an actual review hearing: case plan, compliance with previous orders, physical health, mental health, education, visitation, permanency and independent living skills. Volunteers were also exposed to FFCR's proprietary database to gain a deeper understanding of the work and the thinking behind the CRP review process. Finally, the volunteers participated in two full mock review hearings, including the pre-hearing preparation and post-hearing debrief. This simulation allowed the volunteers to put their learning into action and get a feel for the live review process.

The new class now joins FFCR's nearly 70 volunteers who already serve on CRPs. CRPs and the volunteers who compose them are crucial safety nets in the lives of children, youth and young adults in foster care. To join our volunteer team, please [sign up here](#) or contact Ileana Albrecht at 305.679.2746 or ialbrecht@fostercarereview.org.