

## FFCR Presents on Judicial Reviews at DCF's 2016 Child Protection Summit



A team of Florida Foster Care Review staff shared their knowledge on September 8th as part of the [Department of Children and Families 2016 Child Protection Summit](#). The 75-minute workshop, presented by FFCR Executive Director [Candice Maze](#), Citizen Review Panel Program Manager [Marissa Leichter](#) and Program Director [Vanessa Muñoz](#) engaged the audience of approximately 50 child welfare professionals in practical learning that they could put to use immediately.

Titled "Harnessing the Power of the Judicial Review Process to Influence Positive Outcomes," the interactive presentation broke down the essential components of the Judicial Review Hearings required by Florida Statute at least every six months. Either judges or Citizen Review Panels, which are comprised of trained and supported volunteers, may conduct these hearings. Workshop attendees were provided

with concrete tools to organize and streamline preparation for the hearings as well as to ensure that the review hearings are thorough and take a holistic approach to promoting positive, timely outcomes for children and youth.

"Although Citizen Review Panels are authorized by Florida law, only Miami and Naples have active CRPs. This was a great opportunity to connect with child welfare professionals and administrators from around the state and to showcase the impact of Citizen Review Panels," said Candice Maze.

Vanessa Muñoz added, "Judicial Review Hearings are critical to the well-being of children and youth but are often underutilized by attorneys and case workers. Our goal was to provide a structured approach to preparing for and engaging in the review process, making it more effective for the children involved."

The Florida Department of Children and Families hosts the summit, which is the largest child welfare event in Florida with more than 2,500 in attendance. Presentation of the statewide William E. Gladstone Award is a highly anticipated component. The 2016 award went to [Judge Kelly J. McKibben](#), who in her remarks asked, "Why not demand perfection when you are dealing with children?"

We share Judge McKibben's sentiment as we strive daily to improve the lives of abused and neglected children and youth.