

## **Foster Care Review Office Local Review Board Member Responsibilities**

A Foster Care Review Office Local Review Board Member is a citizen volunteer who after completing the required background checks and training program serves with 5-7 other local board members to review the cases of children and youth in out-of-home care. The FCRO reviews the cases of children/youth that have been placed out-of-home care in the child welfare (NDHHS) due to having been abused or neglected, are uncontrollable, or for some other reason. The FCRO also reviews cases of children who have returned home on a Trial Home Visit, and youth involved in the Probation system that are placed in out-of-home care. The role of the local board member is to ensure that the best interests of these children and youth are being met. There are currently over 325 persons serving in this capacity on 54 local review boards across the state.

The Foster Care Review Office is an independent state agency given legislative authority to review cases of children in out-of-home care, whether through NDHHS or Probation or THV, as well as track, monitor and report on issues. The FCRO assigns cases to the local review boards across the state. The local boards review the materials provided to them for their assigned cases. They meet to discuss the case, interview participants that attend the review board meeting, and then make findings and recommendations for each case. The recommendations made by the local review board are then included in a final report provided to all legal parties to the case. The court and other legal parties to the case use the local review board report to help them decide what is in the best interest of the child and to ensure children are not in out-of-home care longer than necessary.

### **Requirements for being a Foster Care Review Office, Local Board Member**

- Make a commitment to serve as a FCRO local board member for 3 years or for the remainder of the 3 year term if the applicant is replacing another board member.
- Be willing to donate 6 - 8 hours a month. (*3-4 hours of case review at home and approximately 3-4 hours at the review board meeting each month.*)
- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Have transportation to and from local review board meetings.
- Have critical thinking skills and able to communicate clearly.
- Complete an application form and provide two acceptable references.
- Allow for and successfully pass a thorough background check.
- Prior to serving on a local board, potential board members must participate in an in-depth training program, consisting of:
  - Successful completion of the training sessions,
  - Read the board training manual / watch training videos,
  - Observing one local board meeting,
- Come fully prepared to each board meeting, *e.g., having **fully** read each case, prepared questions for participants, developed recommendations and made preliminary findings for each case.*
- Be mature, respectful, objective, honest, professional, non-bias, and non-judgmental.
- Be committed to respecting cultural and economic diversity.
- Respect the confidentiality of all parties.
- Attend the assigned review board meeting once per month.
- Notify the FCRO System Oversight Specialist prior to the meeting as far in advance as possible if unable to attend. (The expectation is that board members attend every board meeting, but would be excused with good cause no more than 3 meetings in a calendar year.) NEVER NO SHOW
- Complete 6 hours of on-going training every two years.
- When resigning – give 1 month notice so a new member can be trained.