

Town Hall Discussions Regarding Providing Services and Supports to Young People

The *Child and Youth Advocate Act (CYAA)* provides the Child and Youth Advocate (the “Advocate”) with the authority to complete a mandatory review of death of any young person involved with Child Intervention Services as a child in need of intervention at the time of their death, or within two years of their death.

The Advocate is required to release a public report within one year of notification of a young person’s passing. The purpose of the report to review the young person’s experiences with government systems, identify whether services and supports were appropriate, provide public assurance, and identify systemic issues that may have been present. The Advocate comments on findings, makes observations, and may identify recommendations that could prevent similar issues from occurring in the future. The Advocate has decided that these mandatory reviews will be released twice a year (in March and September).

The investigation process includes reviewing records from child-serving ministries; informing and involving family members, caregivers, and professionals; and consulting with experts and Elders as required.

Our review process is comprehensive and independent of government. Information is gathered from a broad number of sources, most importantly those close to the young person.

The Advocate’s investigative reviews are focused on learning lessons, rather than placing blame. Standing apart from other processes that might take place (such as criminal investigations or public inquiries), the reviews identify services and supports that are working well, while also examining how systems and processes should be enhanced to better help young people succeed in their lives and communities. In this way, the Advocate’s reviews play important roles in:

- ensuring the accountability of government systems,
- providing assurance to Albertans about the effectiveness of these systems; and
- identifying ways, we can all work to help prevent young people in similar circumstances from experiencing similar outcomes.

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) is currently completing investigative reviews into the circumstances of 15 young people who met the criteria for a mandatory review between April 1, 2021, and September 30, 2021.

The OCYA will hold 2 virtual Town Halls to explore common issues noted throughout our reviews of the 15 young people’s experiences. We would like to hear from service providers from across the province, including rural and urban service delivery areas, as well as service providers on First

Nations and in Métis communities. We look forward to the opportunity to come together to hear from multi-disciplinary service delivery partners from:

- 1) Children's Services: Front-line service delivery staff (assessors, caseworkers, high-risk youth workers, permanency caseworkers, casework supervisors from child intervention regions and Delegated First Nation Agencies)
- 2) Alberta Health Services: Hospital social workers, community health service workers, mental health and addictions workers, Indigenous Health Liaisons from both rural and urban service delivery areas, as well as service providers on First Nation and Métis communities
- 3) Justice and Solicitor General: Probation officers, youth justice centre staff
- 4) Education: Family School Liaison Workers, teachers, administration, those involved with student support services, school personnel from school and alternative education settings from both rural and urban service delivery areas, as well as service providers on First Nation and Métis communities
- 5) Community and Social Services: Family Support for Children with Disabilities caseworkers, community-based family support workers, community-based family wellness program staff, and any other relevant staff

We will hold the virtual Town Halls with open enrollment but ask that participants register in advance so that if the numbers are too high, the conversations can be split into manageable group sizes. While we are seeking open dialogue and looking to learn from service delivery staff, facilitators will be on hand to help guide discussions and take notes from the conversations. The information will be synthesized, analyzed, and themed and will be emailed to the participants. The information will also be used in a non-identifying, non-fault-finding manner to inform areas for further exploration, as well as highlighting promising practices. These discussions may help to inform recommendations to government for systems improvement.

The topics for each session will be sent to participants closer to the date, as well as options to refine registration details. If participants are unable to attend the Town Halls, they can provide feedback on the topics electronically.

Please register for one of the following sessions:

Monday, December 6, 2021

PM Session

Monday, December 6, 2021, 1:30-3:30 PM, Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlodOyqqj8pHdcVgYMTm6WTuDAPP1F8Xsjn>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

AM Session

Tuesday, December 7, 2021, 9:30-11:30 AM, Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0lcu6qpzggHdxft-Bqs2Xlty9Og9k-IQVc>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

PM Session

Tuesday, December 7, 2021, 1:30-3:30 PM, Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYvcuigpi0qGdBbw_CYn0FpcbUYhs4Z8vPy

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Registration for all sessions closes on December 3, 2021. If you have any questions regarding the Town Hall, please reply to investigations@ocya.alberta.ca