

Kentucky Child Fatality And Near Fatality External Review Panel 2026 Update



**Legislative Oversight and Investigations
Committee**

July 6, 2026

Child Fatality And Near Fatality External Review Panel: KRS 620.055



- Panel conducts "comprehensive reviews of child fatalities and near fatalities...suspected to be a result of abuse or neglect."
- Panel shall publish an annual report "consisting of case reviews, findings, and recommendations for system and process improvements..."



Legislative Oversight And Investigations Annual Reviews

KRS 6.922 and 620.055:

- Legislative Oversight and Investigations Committee (LOIC) is required to conduct annual evaluations of the panel's operations, procedures, and recommendations.

3



LOIC Annual Reviews

- 2026 LOIC evaluation focused on:
 - Implementation of LOIC's 2025 recommendations
 - Statutory compliance and the development of findings and recommendations
 - Development of the new case management system
 - Panel members' experiences serving on the panel
 - Operations and procedures

4



House Bill 778 Takes Effect July 15, 2026

- Expanded panel's access to:
 - Supervisory consult notes and documents
 - Quarterly System Safety Review Reports
 - TWIST and iTWIST

5



Potential Difficulty Accessing TWIST

- Other agencies have experienced difficulties when first receiving TWIST access.
 - Example: Ombudsman access in 2024
- Panel may encounter similar issues.

6



Recommendation 1.1

Staff of the Child Fatality and Near Fatality External Review Panel should request access to TWIST and any necessary training from the Cabinet for Health and Family Services as soon as possible. If panel staff encounter any difficulties, they should consult with other staff in the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet for assistance.



Finding Area 1: 2025 LOIC Recommendations

Summarized LOIC Evaluation Recommendations	Action Taken?
The panel should consult with budget staff at the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet regarding how to use appropriated funds.	Yes
Panel staff should develop written procedures documenting its processes for review and approval by the panel chair and members.	No



Finding Area 2: Statutory Compliance

- KRS 620.055 outlines panel requirements:
 - Membership and appointment process
 - Meeting requirements
 - Reporting and notification requirements
- ✓ Panel has met all requirements

9



Panel Membership

- 5 ex officio nonvoting members
- 17 voting members
 - 13 members are appointed
 - 4 ex officio voting members
- ✓ All panel positions are filled as of May 2026

10

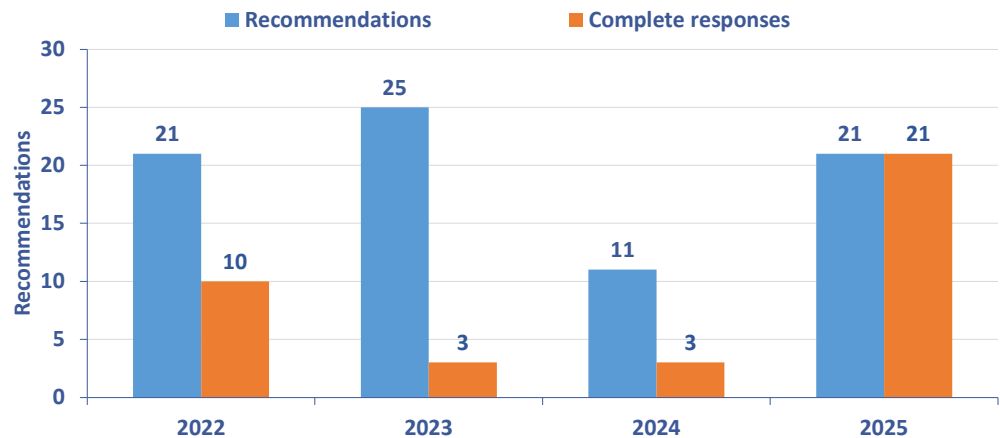


Agency Notification

- KRS 620.055 (1) requires the panel to notify agencies of recommendations.
- Agencies must provide response within 90 days with required elements:
 - Intent to implement, explanation of how, and timeframe; or
 - Explanation for declining to implement



Agency Responses To Panel Recommendations, 2022 - 2025



Source: Staff analysis of information in the Kentucky Child Fatality and Near Fatality External Review Panel's 2025 Annual Report and agency responses.



Agencies Decline Recommendations

- CHFS and its subdivisions declined to implement five recommendations, citing:
 - Shifting federal regulations
 - Lack of legal authority
 - Lack of funding
 - Lack of staff and technology
 - Concern about misuse of data

13



Panel Lacks Enforcement Mechanism

- While responses have improved, future risk remains:
 - Agencies may provide no response, poor responses, or decline to implement recommendations.
- There is currently no mechanism to seek more information from agencies in such cases.

14



Matter For Legislative Consideration 3.A

When agencies do not respond to or do not plan to implement recommendations, even with reasonable justification, from the Child Fatality and Near Fatality Review Panel, the General Assembly may wish to consider requesting testimony from the agencies if it believes additional information or further study of a recommendation is required.

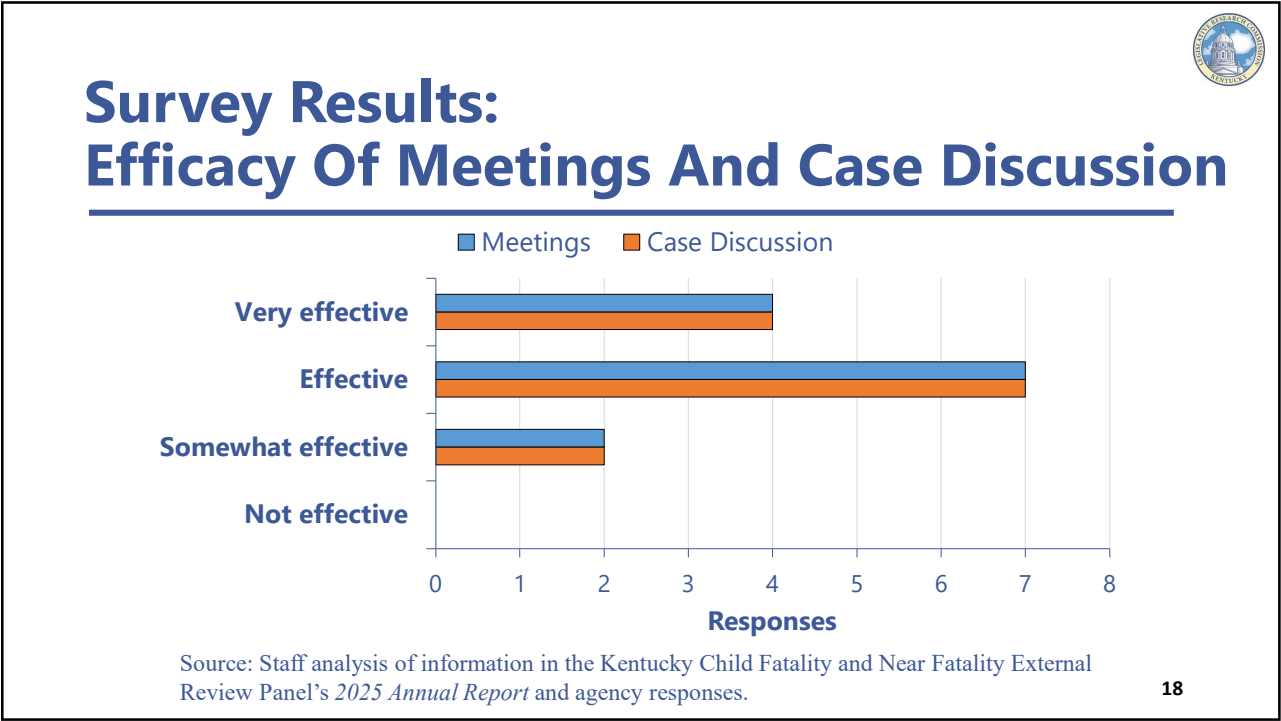
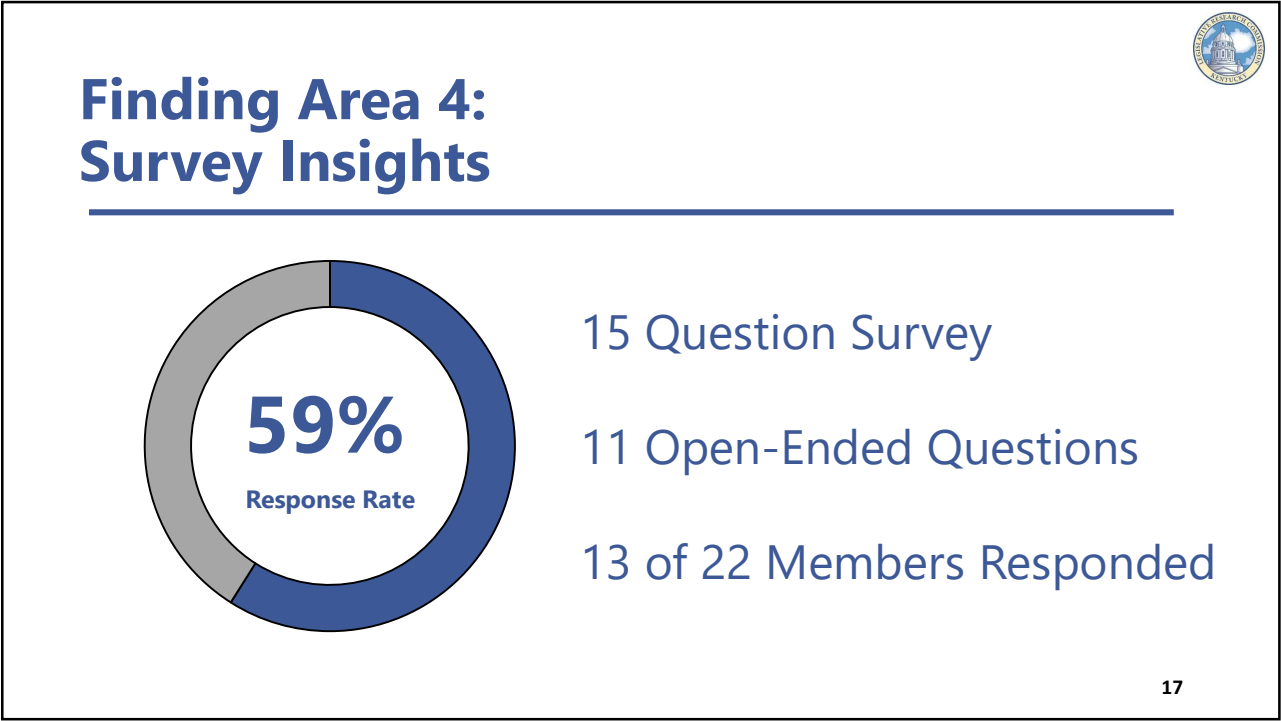
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Finding Area 3: New Case Management System

- Currently using two software platforms:
 - SharePoint
 - REDCap
- Panel has been working with the Commonwealth Office of Technology to develop its new case management system.

16





Survey Results: Time Spent Discussing Cases

12

Indicated
appropriate time
allocated

1

Indicated somewhat
too little time
allocated

0

Indicated too much
time allocated



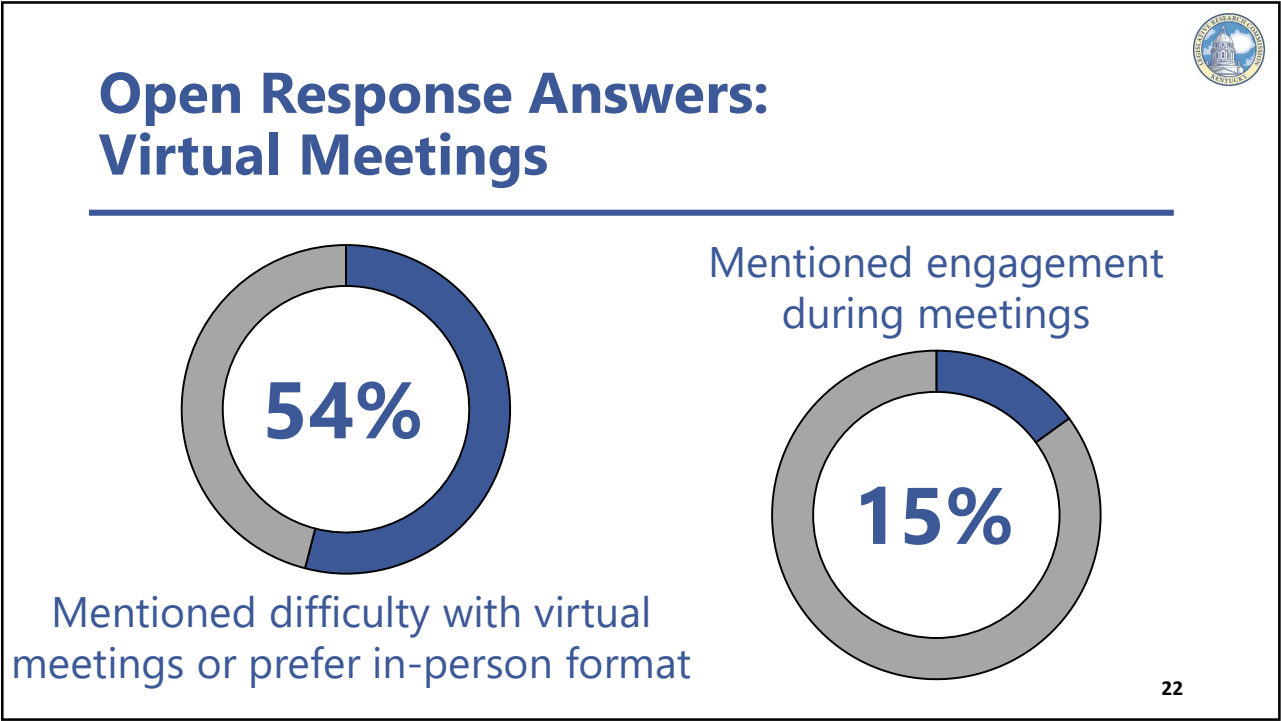
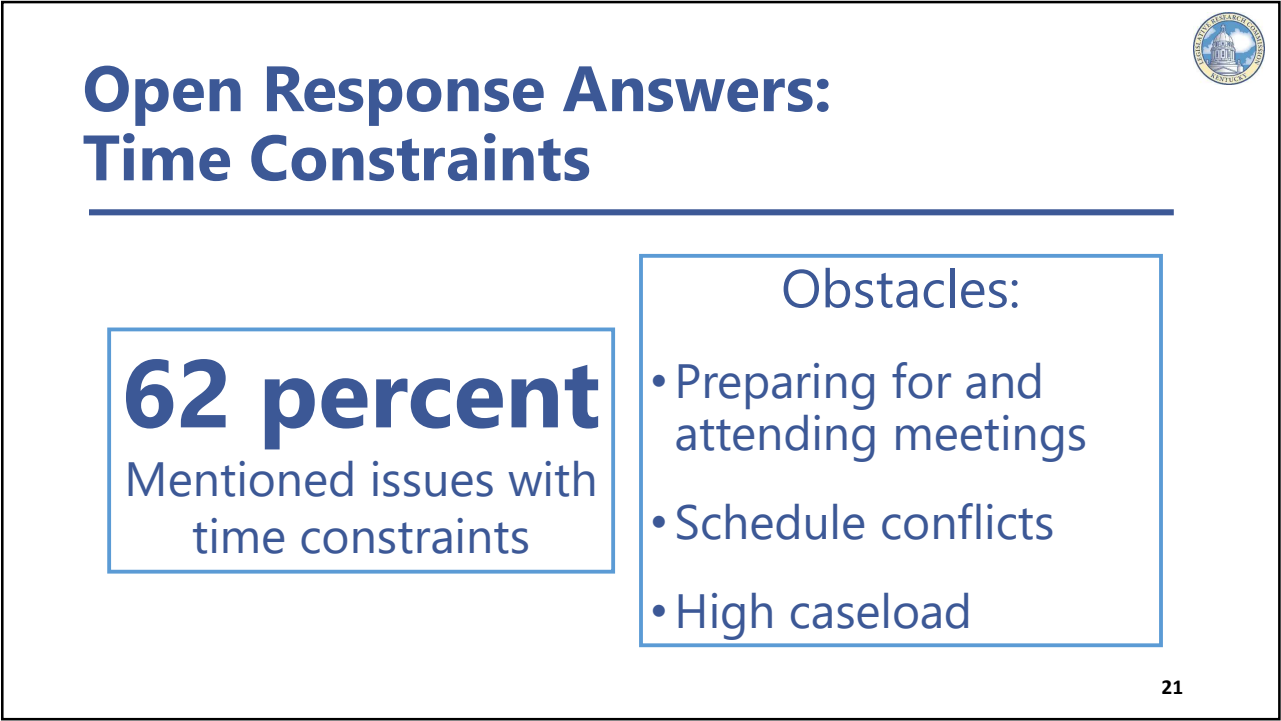
Open Response Answers: Software Frustrations

77 percent

Mentioned issues with
software system

Obstacles:

- Significant issues using SharePoint
- New software is in development and will address these issues





Open Response Answers: Panel Lacks Authority

3 of 13

Respondents suggest
the Panel lacks
enforcement authority

4 of 13

Respondents suggest
the need for legislative
assistance

23



Open Response Answers: Appreciation Of Staff

54 percent

Volunteered positive
feedback

- Dedicated
support
- Communication
- Professional
expertise

24



Finding Area 5: Internal Controls

- Panel's procedures have not been formalized into written standard operating procedures.
- Benefits of implementing written procedures include:
 - Prevents operational errors
 - Ensures critical knowledge remains within the panel
 - Streamlines communication to external parties, new staff, or new panel members

25



Finding Area 5: Internal Controls (Cont.)

- Development of written procedures is still in progress:
 - Panel staff plan to incorporate the new case management system in written procedures
 - New system is in the testing phase of development

26



Recommendation 3.1

Panel staff should develop written procedures for review and approval by the panel chair and members. The written procedures should document the administrative processes by which panel staff obtain, store, review, and analyze cases; assist with developing findings and recommendations; assist with developing annual reports; and comply with the reporting requirements mandated by KRS 620.055(10). Activities of the panel members should be left to the discretion of the panel chair and members.



Questions?
