

Wisconsin Citizen Review Panel Annual Report
January 1-December 31, 2015

Name of Panel:	Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council
Contact Person & Title:	Ashley Stokes (President) Desiree Parker (Treasurer)

Briefly describe the panel's meeting schedule and number/types of meetings, including subcommittee and workgroup meetings, held in 2015.

Within 2015, Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council (YAC) has had meetings at least once a month with their residing counties and once every three months with the statewide council. YAC had the honor of participating in the National Citizen Review Panel Conference in Portland, Oregon and the Daniel Memorial Conference in Orlando, Florida. Local YACs have worked on their own initiatives as well. Jefferson County has worked on raising awareness of Badger Care + for former foster youth insurance and working with the Jefferson Big Brothers Big Sisters initiating a mentoring program that would include foster youth. Jefferson County has continued to advocate for increased sibling visitation through meeting with local county child protection workers and other stakeholders. Milwaukee County worked on sibling visitations and housing as their initiatives. Milwaukee County has been a part of panel presentations put on by children's court in Milwaukee and spoke to some judges on the importance of sibling visitations. YAC representatives formed a panel at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee where representatives spoke about social workers utilizing transitional living placement (ILP) to guide and help youth that are aging out of foster care. La Crosse County sold bratwurst to promote awareness of youth in care with the proceeds going towards needs of youth exiting care and the recruitment of more foster parents in La Crosse County. La Crosse County YAC members spoke with the La Crosse chapter of the American Association of University Women about the aging out process for youth in care. Topics discussed were housing, health care, the need for mentor programs and sibling visitations.

Please provide a summary of the panel's activities in regards to:

1. Evaluating the extent to which the State and the local child protection agencies are fulfilling their child protection responsibilities.
 - YAC has conducted activities and panels that are held in front of county executives, former and current foster youth, social workers, Guardian Ad Litem and foster parents. Data concluded that many youth in care are unaware of their representation in court by a GAL.
2. Evaluating local and State progress under the State CAPTA Plan.
 - Two Representatives participated in Guardian Ad Litem workgroups.
 - Representatives agree to bring information that was received from workgroups and conferences back to statewide council

3. Activities related to public outreach and comment to assess the impact of current child protection procedures and practices on children and families in the community.

- Business cards were created with YAC logo.
- Milwaukee chapter met with judges on sibling visitations on what should take place and what shouldn't.
- Jefferson County met with Big Brothers Big Sisters to be mentors for foster youth.
- Members spoke to state legislators on bill 406 prudent parenting
- Members from Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council participated in the National Citizen Review Panel Conference in Portland, Oregon.
- Creation of a webinar for May's foster care awareness month. Former and current youth watched, as well as social workers and foster parents. The webinar touched on past experiences in care, where youth are currently in their lives and the plans to advocate for foster youth.
- Members were ambassadors for the 2015 Office of Youth Services conference held in Wisconsin Dells. Youth also hosted breakout sessions on how to start a council and ways to advocate.
- Members attended the Daniel Memorial Youth Conference held in Orlando, Florida.

Did the panel conduct any reviews of CPS cases, child fatalities and near fatalities? If yes, please describe.

- YAC did not conduct review of any CPS cases, child fatalities or near fatalities.

Please describe any other panel activities or issues addressed in 2015.

- La Crosse County YAC members spoke with the La Crosse chapter of the American Association of University Women about the aging out process for youth in care. Topics discussed were housing, health care, and the need for mentor programs; raising awareness with the La Crosse community.
- Three Representatives presented at a youth leadership conference in the Dells discussing the needs of foster youth. Members presented on strategic sharing, outreach strategies, and the use of social media to reach varying populations.

Please describe activities planned or held to date in 2016.

- National Citizen Review Panel Conference
- Daniel Memorial Conference
- Adoption Conference

Panel recommendations to improve child protection services at the local level:

- Agencies should advocate for and support development of transitional housing programs in their communities.

Panel recommendations to improve child protection services at the State level:

- The YAC recommends state funding for postsecondary education to be expanded beyond the DCF Scholarship and beyond current eligibility, up to age 26.
- The YAC recommends DCF develop transitional housing programs throughout the state of Wisconsin to help all youth who leave out of home care transition to successful independence.

Optional/additional information or comments:

- Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council would like to express gratitude for the opportunities to have voice for those who are currently in care and who are afraid to speak. We're thankful for being a part of the CRP.
- YAC is looking forward to taking part in the 2016 National CRP conference and other opportunities to continue advocating for child welfare.

Please submit the **completed CRP Annual Report** and the **panel's current membership list** to the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families by e-mailing copies to Paula Brown at PaulaL.Brown@wisconsin.gov. The annual report and the DCF response to each report will be posted on the DCF Citizen Review Panel web page at http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/children/citizen_review/default.htm. Thank you.