

Wisconsin Citizen Review Panel Annual Report Information
January 1, 2018-December 31, 2018

Name of Panel:	Citizen Review Panel Serving Outagamie County
Contact Person and Title:	Connie Raether, Co-Chair 920-878-8370, connieraether@gmail.com

I. REPORT OF 2018 ACTIVITIES:

1. Please describe the panel's 2018 meeting schedule. Please include the following specific information:

- a. **The frequency and type of panel meetings;** The panel meets bi-monthly, starting in January. The meetings are 1 ½ hours long. In addition, the panel meets in February and in October to hold case reviews.
- b. **The frequency and type of any subcommittee and workgroup meetings. Workgroups:**
 - Social Worker Support:** Full group met 3 times, workgroup meets monthly
 - Community Outreach:** Met 3 times
 - Shaken Baby/Period of Purple:** Met 3 times
 - Guardian ad litem:** Met twice

2. Please describe how the panel provided for public outreach and comment in order to assess the impact of current procedures and practices upon children and families in the community. The panel has a facebook page and a website and community members are encouraged to utilize those. We also held our 4th annual Hands Around the Courthouse event in April. About 80 people attended and heard from a survivor of sex trafficking. Local tv stations and the local newspaper covered the story.

3. Please describe any case reviews conducted by the panel in 2018.

The first case review was in February.

Issues:

- Multiple issues with mom, including multiple sclerosis, bipolar disorder, PTSD and mild cognitive disabilities.
- Multiple issues with the three children, including behavioral issues, trauma, cognitive disabilities, difficulties with relationships and self image.
- Adoptive resources for foster parents is limited. Need state screening to license foster parents: SAFE: Structured Analysis Family Evaluation.
- GAL not meeting with children.
- Question as to why mom's cognitive delays weren't diagnosed sooner.

- Lack of access to school records.
- Length of time to permanency for the children—impacted by 3 in sibling group, lack of formal diagnosis for one of the children, and time for worker to dedicate to necessary tasks
- One child aged out at 18
- Lack of appropriate supportive services for mom
- Lack of GAL contact
- Multiple placements
- Cost of Anu Family Services

The second case review was held in October. This was a successful Family Find case, and there was an excellent relationship between the foster parents and the relatives.

Issues:

- Family Find is proving to be beneficial. However, it requires a lot of time to make phone calls locating, connecting and prepping relatives to come to meetings.
- Delays in placing the child with a relative due to the relative's criminal background which, even though the offense was years ago, it prevented payment through Kinship Care. Many times kinship providers are barely getting by themselves financially and are below the poverty level. If they do not have money to assist in providing care, they may not take placement of relative children.
- -If a TPR occurs, state statute now allows workers to go back and look at birth family members for placement. However, they do not fall under the definition of relative so if a child is placed with them, they likely need to be licensed as a foster home even though they are a biological relative.

Recommendations:

- Consider having volunteers do some of the leg work, ie. making some calls, facilitating meetings or handling other logistics to save social worker time.
- More trainings on Family Find offered by the state
- More conversation with law enforcement on continuing an investigation.
- Need training for foster parents about sensitivity on how they view and talk about the biological parent
- Changes in the process of birth family relatives needing to be licensed as foster parents rather than as kinship care providers.

4. Please summarize any other panel activities or panel events that took place in 2018.

- 2 panel members presented a workshop at the CRP National Conference on the Family Find program.
- 3 CRP members are part of a county workgroup looking at social work retention: This is led by a consulting firm, Blue Spiral Consulting.

The CRP is funding a portion of the cost of the consulting firm. The county workgroup was initiated in part as a result of focus groups that the CRP held with intake and ongoing social workers. Results of the focus groups led to the conclusion that there were some issues that were leading to workers leaving the county, especially around technology, lack of opportunities for part time work, and staff-supervisor relationships. The county then hired Blue Spiral to lead the group through a two year process to address these issues.

- The Shaken Baby task group is branching out into an investigation of the Period of Purple Crying, an evidence based shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma prevention program to support parents and caregivers in their understanding of early increased infant crying and to reduce the incidence of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma. The group is doing some research on this project and will contact local clinics to see if one of them would pilot the project here in the Fox Cities.
- The Guardian ad litem task group is updating the survey that was originally sent to foster parents, social workers and support system/advocates to see how GALs are doing. They are also updating the GAL brochure that is made available to parents and foster parents whose children are involved with Outagamie County and developing a survey to send out to GALs. They are working to ensure that the process is updated and evaluated as necessary.
- The CRP hears from the Child Death Review Team at every meeting to see if there are any trends of which we should be aware. There are still co-sleeping deaths occurring in the county. The Death Review Team is moving toward a pre-screen where they focus more on preventable deaths than on those from natural causes. Team meets monthly.
- Melissa Blom, Manager of CYF, will share stats at our meetings re: number of children under protective orders, number of children in foster care, average case length, social worker caseloads, and social worker turnover/retention rates
- Looking at the possibility of starting an advocacy task group.
- Panel continues its work with NOAHH (Neighbors offering a helping hand). NOAHH links social workers with churches whose members fill needs for children when their parents are unable to do so.
- Panel Co-Chair Creamer gave a welcoming address to Outagamie County staff at the March Social Work Appreciation Breakfast and the CRP contributed fruit and pastries.

II. EVALUATION: In completing the evaluation portion of this report, please examine, to the best of your ability, the policies, procedures, and practices of State and local agencies, and where appropriate, specific cases.

1. Please provide an evaluation of the following:

STATE

- a. The extent to which the Department of Children and Families (DCF) is effectively carrying out the child protection responsibilities assigned to it under the State CAPTA Plan, and the Wisconsin Child Welfare Standards, which include the Child Protective Services Safety Intervention Standards, Access and Initial Assessment Standards, and Ongoing Services Standards.**

Wisconsin made changes to eWISACWIS to allow better data collection both to the initial assessment section and to the removal documentation for children in eWISACWIS affected by a parent's substance abuse disorder.

- b. The extent to which the DCF is effectively complying with any other criteria that the panel considers important to ensure the protection of children (e.g., the extent to which the State child protective services system is coordinated with foster care and adoption programs; a review of child fatalities and near fatalities).**

LOCAL

- a. The extent to which local child protection agencies are effectively carrying out the child protection responsibilities assigned to them under the State CAPTA Plan, and the Wisconsin Child Welfare Standards, referenced above.**

(See addendum)

- b. The extent to which local child protection agencies are effectively complying with any other criteria that the panel considers important to ensure the protection of children (e.g., the extent to which the State child protective services system is coordinated with foster care and adoption programs; a review of child fatalities and near fatalities).**

(See addendum)

III. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Please list any panel recommendations to improve child protection services at the State level.**

There has been a recommendation that the budget for child welfare be increased by \$30 million to assure reasonable caseloads. The CRP supports this proposal.

The Panel also recommends state screening of foster parents and more training for social workers by the state.

The Panel recommends funding of family treatment courts.

The Panel recommends that the state do more to address prevention, recognition, assessment, treatment and development of evidence based models to address the opiate crisis.

2. Please list any panel recommendations to improve child protection services at the local level.

The Panel recommends that the county provide more district attorneys so that TPR hearings can be held in a timely fashion.

The Panel also recommends that technology be improved so workers can utilize their time more efficiently.

3. Please list any additional information or comments that the panel wishes to share.

Please submit the **completed Citizen Review Panel Annual Report** and the **panel's current membership list** to the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families by e-mailing to Alicia Breininger at alicia.breininger@wisconsin.gov. The annual report and the DCF response to each report will be posted on the DCF Citizen Review Panel web page at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/prevention/crp>. Thank you.