

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

Name of Panel:	St. Croix County Citizen Review Panel
Contact Person and Title:	Bill Scholz Coordinator, Ben Tomandl Coordinator Sue Lindberg CRP Leader

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; Our CRP met monthly except for August and Dec. of 2018. Our panel meetings follow the open meeting laws for the county so meeting agendas and meeting minutes are posted on the county Website. To review cases we go into closed session.
  - b. The frequency and type of any subcommittee and workgroup meetings. We did not have any subcommittees or separate work groups in 2018.
  - c. Panel members are: Phoenix, Sunshine, Bull, Paula Lugar, Emma Field, Sue Lindberg, Jamie Turner, Marla Butler, Ben Tomandl, Sandy Gordon Nicole Fisher, Bill Scholz and Jill Ross.
  
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.

Child Abuse Prevention Month Displays and materials were set up in the county at 12 locations for the month of April.

We developed and printed a CRP brochure and it was dispersed though out the county.

We purchased 1400 coloring books called Good Touch Bad Touch and also purchased social media safety magnets, and they were dispersed to various sites in the county.

Our CRP had a booth at the county fair staffed by BACA members who are also CRP members for 5 days in July for community outreach and education. The CRP bought books: It's My Body and Your Body Belongs to You and gave to various agencies in the county.

100 Period of Purple Crying DVD were purchased by CRP and given out and education done by Public Health Nurses to county residents with new babies.

We started our own Facebook page.

Our CRP meetings follow the open meetings laws for our county. Our meeting Agendas and meeting Minutes are posted on the County Website. We have a time at each meeting for public comments.

3. Please describe any case reviews conducted by the panel in 2018. We went into closes session and had 4 different CPS social workers attend meetings and share their caseloads with the panel members. Panel members could ask questions and learn what issues CPS social workers are dealing with. We also had the Foster Care Coordinators give us an update on the current foster care situation in our county. In 2018 we did not have to review any egregious injuries or deaths.
4. Please summarize any other panel activities or panel events that took place in 2018.

Two panel members attended the National CRP Conference in Michigan.

One CPS SW left the panel and another one joined.

Two panel members attended the state meeting.

State Coordinator came up to meet with CRP.

Had a booth at the County Fair.

Two new community members joined the panel.

One of the County Foster Care Coordinator presented to the panel on issues with not having enough foster parents/homes.

12 displays in the county on Child Abuse Prevention and Education for the Month of April.

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.

Special Note :

If you wish to review any portion of the State CAPTA Plan in formulating your response, a copy of the Plan, and its most recent update dated June 30, 2018, are attached to this form.

If you wish to access any of the Wisconsin Child Welfare Standards in formulating your response, they are available through the following link: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy?accactive=0>.

We started out the year with a new state coordinator and met with her. Then she left her position, and then we had a temporary coordinator, then a few months without a state coordinator. State conference calls were cancelled. We do not receive any reports or information from the state to know what is happening at the state level. It is impossible for us to evaluate how effective the state is doing its job without receiving communication, data or reports. There is poor communication between the state and our CRP panel.

There are many egregious childhood injuries and deaths that occur in our state and we are uninformed on how they are being followed up on. We would like to know this process. What happens in the counties that do not have CRPs? How are these cases followed up on and evaluated so changes can be made?

- 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.

The St. Croix County HHS Board and the full County Board are very supportive of the CPS department. In 2018 they approved the hiring of 2 new temporary positions for the CPS department due to increased caseloads and increased need. They hired a second Foster Care Coordinator and another Assessment Case Worker. All of our case workers hold a certificate through the state of WI as social workers. The HHS board and HHS Director have also done an excellent job of hiring Supervisors in the CPS Dept. that are highly qualified and easy for staff to work with.

- 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).

There is an increased need for foster care homes in our county. The county added a second foster care coordinator position who has started a recruitment and retention team. St. Croix County planned a foster care summit and invited neighboring counties, Polk and Pierce. They have started a foster parent association to help support and retain foster parents. The panel does not have any further recommendations for the foster care or adoption systems.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

Our panel strongly recommends that the state reach out to county/city judges and recommend that there be the same judge from start to finish for child protection cases. And that the state give us advice on how we reach out to our own county judges to encourage this. Judge consistency is the key to proper case plan and follow up.

We also recommend that there be discussion on this at our state meeting.

We would also like information on the Guardian ad litem study that was done a couple years ago by the state. We would also like this discussed at the state meeting.

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

In our County the CPS supervisors and the Director of HHS is very supportive of the CRP and our mission. They share data with us and encourage staff to participate in our meetings and share information on caseloads with us. We plan to have a case worker come speak to our panel 4 times a year. We also receive a yearly update from a Foster Care Coordinator. Our county also does an excellent job on hiring highly qualified supervisors and staff for the CPS department. Whenever we ask for information they are happy to provide this to us. Our County has a ROWE work environment so staff can work from home or other places in the county. Staff is provided with county laptop and phone. This all helps with staff retention. Being we are closer to the metro area they pay for staff is also higher which also helps with retention of good staff and less staff turnover.

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

We would like better communication from the state and more state data shared with us. We would also like consistent staffing at the state level. The position was vacant for many months this past year. Coordinator calls were not held. It also became a combined job which means they have less time to offer direction and support for our CRP.

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](mailto: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.