



2019
Wisconsin Citizen Review Panel
Annual Report

For the period of: January 1, 2019-December 31, 2019

NAME OF PANEL:	Marathon County Citizen Review Panel
CONTACT PERSON:	Stacia Burrows, Panel Coordinator

I. REPORT OF 2019 ACTIVITIES:

1. Please describe the panel's 2019 meeting schedule. Please include the following specific information:

- a. The frequency and type of panel meetings;

The full CRP committee met six times or bimonthly throughout 2019. The CRP Executive Committee comprised of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Director of DSS and CRP Coordinator (Child Welfare Manager) also met bimonthly. Subcommittees met as needed throughout the year.

- b. The frequency and type of any subcommittee and workgroup meetings.

Subcommittees met as needed throughout the year to address committee events (i.e.: Hands Around The Courthouse, educational offerings) and foster care recruitment/retention.

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.

Marathon County's CRP participated in several community events in 2019: Hand's Around the Courthouse (Child Abuse Awareness), Children's Fest, CommUnity Fest. The panel displayed a message board providing information about the CRP. Pinwheels were shared with children, and CRP approved written materials about keeping kids safe were shared with families. The CRP continues to partner with the Marathon County Early Years Coalition, which focuses on strengthening children's

experience in early life (health, education, nutrition, safety, and nurturance) to bring a bigger impact to the events. In addition, this opportunity was used to recruit new members to the CRP and provide information about foster parenting opportunities.

3. Please describe any case reviews conducted by the panel in 2019.

Case reviews are not conducted by Marathon County's CRP.

4. Please summarize any other panel activities or panel events that took place in 2019.

- *Attendance of two citizen and two staff members at the National CRP conference*
- *Participation in the Statewide CRP meeting*
- *Member recruitment; assessed membership requirements according to the bi-laws and membership diversity, and recruited accordingly*
- *Evaluation of available funding for Prudent Parenting support for foster parents*
- *Offered in partnership with our local AOD Partnership three community educational events "Ben Is Back" Public Screening, "In Plain Sight" Presentation and "Written Off" Documentary)*
- *Recognition of Marathon County DSS child welfare social workers during Social Work appreciation month with a cake and thank you card*

- 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 **two below listed** child protection responsibilities assigned to it under the State CAPTA Plan, and the Wisconsin Child Welfare Standards (Child Protective Services Safety Intervention Standards, Access and Initial Assessment Standards, and Ongoing Services Standards).

- **Integration of Family Participation in Case Planning into the Ongoing Services Standards and Integrated Case Planning**

DCF recognized the value and importance of ongoing case management services through the extension/continuation of PS funding and the establishment of TSSF funding.

DCF added an element into their PIP submission to include and incorporate a parent voice initiative (involve parents at State and local level to include shared lived experience and parent mentoring).

Completion of In-Home Safety Services (IHSS) funding and the conversion to Targeted Safety Services Fund (TSSF) funding.

DCF has provided several foster home/parent related grants in 2019: Foster Home Recruitment Grant, Act 260 Foster Parent Grant, Foster Home Licensing Subcontract Grant, and Foster Parent Champion Grant (addressing normalcy activities and retention).

- **Cross System Collaboration Between CPS and Domestic Abuse Programs**
Obtained from Sharon Lewandowski, DCF Domestic Abuse Program Coordinator

The Department of Children and Families, in partnership with End Domestic Abuse WI, has provided skilled facilitation to help domestic abuse programs and Child Protective Services agencies develop a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to promote strong collaboration between the two systems. The MOU enhances collaboration and lays a solid foundation for relationship building between domestic abuse programs and CPS agencies. Areas covered in an MOU typically include cross training, referral protocols, relationship tending, confidentiality issues, child abuse and neglect reporting, and others. To date, thirteen counties have received such assistance, with an opportunity for two additional counties in 2020. The DCF website contains resource materials on the development of an MOU.

Also in 2020, DCF will be partnering with the Department of Justice, Office of Crime Victim Services to provide training for victim advocates on the Child Protective Services and Child Advocacy Center systems, including an overview of the CPS system and case process, how it intersects with (and differs from) criminal proceedings, and how victim advocates and the CPS system can enhance collaboration. Multiple trainings will be provided around the state, with dates to be determined.

Promotion of cross-system collaboration is an area that is identified and discussed in the regular Site Visit review process with all DCF-funded domestic abuse programs.

Special Note:

If you wish to review any portion of the State CAPTA Plan and its most recent updates in formulating your response, a copy of the Plan is attached to this report, and the 2019 updates are available through the following link:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cqi-cfsr/pdf/plans/2015-2019-cfs-report-draft.pdf> (see pages 107-113). 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>.

- 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).

The Marathon County CRP recognizes efforts put forth by DCF for recruitment of foster parent champions and providing trauma informed parenting education and resources.

LOCAL

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

- Integration of Family Participation in Case Planning into the Ongoing Services Standards and Integrated Case Planning

In 2019, MCDSS Initial Assessment unit implemented holding a meeting two days after placement between the Initial Assessment social worker and parents to discuss and identify what services are needed to initiate working towards reunification and begin to establish services for the family. MCDSS has participated in IHSS since its inception and will also be recipients of TSSF funding in 2020.

Foster Care Recruitment - In July 2019, MCDSS received a foster parent recruitment grant. MCDSS has partnered with Welcomed to present at area churches and our Foster Parent Champions (FPC) have completed follow up meetings with the identified churches. Our Foster Parent Champions have attended training through DCF and the Coalition for recruitment strategies and have also participated in our foster parent panel at foster parent informational meetings at MCDSS 3-5 per year. In addition, our Citizen Review Panel has regular discussions regarding foster parent recruitment strategies. MCDSS plans to complete the following activities in order to recruit and retain ample, qualified foster homes for children entering the foster care system in Marathon County:

- *FPC's will continue to partner with Welcomed to provide presentations and the development of care communities to area churches.*
- *MCDSS will attend various community partnership meetings to articulate the need for quality foster parents.*
- *Develop a consistent presence at community events/host informational tables to assist people in learning more about how prospective foster families can support the children in foster care in Marathon County.*
- *MCDSS will hold at least one foster parent informational meeting per quarter.*
- *More widely disseminate information pertaining to the referral incentive program for foster parents.*
- *Provide ease of access to information to assist the families who are interested in fostering to better understand the process by:*

- *Provide exposure and awareness through radio and other media vehicles such as a MCDSS website and development of a Marathon County foster care Facebook page.*
- *Ensure the MCDSS website outlines how to become a foster parent.*
- *Partner with locally well-known and advertised community events/services, such as Peyton's Promise, Be Amazing, and Blessings in a Backpack for joint advertisement opportunities.*
- *Develop recruitment and retention roundtable to discuss recruitment strategies and marketing ideas; this could be done through the Citizen Review Panel.*
- *Update and improve the contact protocol for individuals interested in doing foster care in order to have a higher conversion rate from inquiry to licensed foster parent.*

In 2019, MCDSS Ongoing unit worked to revamp permanency plans to be more informative and contain less redundant information. Focus has shifted to the parent's level of engagement and compliance with court ordered conditions and prioritizing what is needs to be accomplished over the next six months to establish permanency.

- *All permanency plan reviews are now done judicially.*
- *MCDSS is utilizing the case mapping process to work through cases where permanency is being questioned or has been a struggle to achieve.*
- *MCDSS Ongoing social work unit initiated reunification parties for parents upon reunification of children back into the home.*
- *MCDSS Ongoing social work unit revamped Court Ordered Conditions.*
- *MCDSS Ongoing social work unit initiated meeting with parents prior to Court hearing to review court ordered conditions, to ensure understanding and enhance collaboration.*
- *CCAP notification are being sent to parents regarding court hearings.*

- **Cross System Collaboration Between CPS and Domestic Abuse Programs**

DCF provided statewide an opportunity for DV and DSS agencies to come together for facilitation and relationship building. In 2016, MCDSS and The Women's Community completed a joint application to participate in a grant funded technical assistance program to develop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which provided mediation assistance to allow for

discussion of roles/responsibilities and assistance in the creation of a MOU between our agencies. As a direct outcome to the facilitation that we received, our agencies co-facilitate trainings that all staff are invited to attend and have responded to these opportunities to learn with and from each other to address pertinent topics to Marathon County and the State. The Women's Community is invited to attend all forensic interviews of children to offer support to the family as well as are a member of our multi-disciplinary team meetings. In addition, our Child Welfare Manager and The Women's Community's Executive Director meet on a quarterly basis to ensure a strong collaborative working relationship.

- 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).

- *Marathon County has a well-established Child Death Review team which meets every other month; involved in this team are members of Child Protective Services, Medical Examiner's Office, Health Department, Medical Staff, Law Enforcement and District Attorney's office. Adhoc members are invited to attend when appropriate.*

The state has also provided grant funding that support our foster care programs such as to contract for assistance in licensing kinship and foster homes, foster parent champions, and retention and normalcy of foster parents/children.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

- *Alternative Response should be expanded and mandated for each county in Wisconsin to support family engagement.*
- *The revamping of permanency plans has resulted in less redundancy and more focused compliance with court ordered conditions and what needs to be accomplished to achieve permanency. The revamping of permanency plans should be expanded statewide.*
- *Continued funding and expansion of funding of programs similar to TSSF, so that creative preventive services can be implemented with families to return children to their parental home or help children remain in their parental home.*

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

- *Marathon County's CRP supports the philosophy submitted by the State for the Performance Improvement Plan to mainstream child welfare duties.*
- *Marathon County is a participant in the DCF Workload study and will learn from the results and expects to continue to improve our operations.*

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 both documents to Alicia Breininger at alicia.breininger@wisconsin.gov **no later than January 31, 2020.**

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> not later than six months after receipt of each report. Thank you.