



August 12, 2020

Stacia Burrows, Coordinator  
Marathon County Citizen Review Panel  
Marathon County Department of Social Services  
400 East Thomas Street  
Wausau, WI 54403

Dear Ms. Burrows:

Thank you for your timely submission of Marathon County Citizen Review Panel's annual report. This letter responds to the citizen review panel annual report response requirements set forth in the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).

The Citizen Review Panel submitted one recommendation to improve child protection services at the state level. A brief summarized statement of this recommendation and the Department of Children and Families Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) response follows:

***1. Alternative Response should be expanded and mandated for each county in Wisconsin to support family engagement.***

The DCF is proud to have supported a ten-year pilot of Alternative Response (AR) and has learned several key takeaways that will be used to advance our state's approach to child welfare and the services received by children and families across the state. Based as a thorough review of AR pilot experience and the results of a formal evaluation, DCF believes core philosophical underpinnings of AR, which are integral to our state's Child Welfare Model for Practice, and key practices AR approaches can be accomplished within a single pathway of our state's Initial Assessment process, thereby elevating the quality of our child protective services intervention and minimizing inequities or inconsistencies across all families. As your panel highlights in your recommendation, family engagement is crucial to the relationship between local child welfare professionals and families. The DCF appreciates the intent of this recommendation and is committed to elevating family engagement as a critical function of the child welfare system.

- 2. *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.***

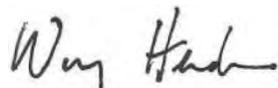
At the request of the DCF, Marathon County shared their local agency initiative to renovate permanency plans to achieve the recommended results of less redundancy and increased alignment with court ordered conditions as it relates to achieving permanency. In Fall 2020, DCF and WCHSA will embark on a joint project focused on permanency plan improvements.

- 3. *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.***

The DCF is proud to support Targeted Safety Support Funding (TSSF); 63 counties and 2 federally recognized tribes applied and were awarded TSSF funds in 2020. This is a significant expansion, with further expansion currently planned for 2021. TSSF accomplishes precisely what this recommendation addresses: supporting children's return to their parental home and/or preventing removal of children from their parental home. The DCF facilitates bi-monthly calls to provide technical assistance to local child welfare agencies, and more importantly, to promote shared learning opportunities between local agencies regarding creative case planning and services.

Thank you for your panel's continued dedication and efforts on behalf of Wisconsin children and their families.

Sincerely,



Wendy Henderson  
Division Administrator