

Wisconsin Citizen Review Panel Annual Report 2019

January 1, 2019-December 31, 2019

Name of Panel: Citizen Review Panel Serving St. Croix County

Contact Person: Emma Field, CRP 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 panel currently meets every month on the 3rd Tuesday. At the beginning of the year, the group was taking turns hosting at the Family Resource Center and Turningpoint's New Richmond Office. The group now solely meetings in New Richmond at Turningpoint's St. Croix County Outreach Office.
 - b. The frequency and type of subcommittee and workgroup meetings: We currently do not have subcommittees or workgroups. The panel meets as needed for case reviews. The panel reviews all egregious events within the county. These meetings are open to all panel members. Case review groups have met 1 time in 2019.
 - c. County representatives transitioned from Ben Tomandl and Bill Scholz to Nicole Fischer (initial assessment caseworker) and Aubrey McAlear (ongoing caseworker). Addition of Betsy Byker (United Way). CRP Coordinator transitioned from Sue Lindberg to Emma Field.
2. Public Outreach
 - a. During the 2019 calendar year, the St. Croix County CRP participated in a few community outreach events. The largest one was the first annual Hands Around the Courthouse event in April during Child Abuse Prevention Month. It was held at the St. Croix County courthouse where there were food trucks and speakers regarding services and statistics about abuse within the county. Over 100 people were able to make it to this event. There was a press release in the newspaper, a letter to the editor on the topic of how you can help prevent child abuse in your community, and flyers were posted around the county at various locations. In addition, the panel put out Child Abuse Awareness displays at 14 locations around the county including the local libraries.
3. Case Reviews
 - a. The panel did a case review during the August meeting. Nicole Fischer presented the cases during this case review. Nicole was working with a family that was transitioned to ongoing services due to the child being found unsafe. The group

and Nicole discussed the initial report received, steps she had taken throughout the investigation, barriers and challenges for the family, and her determination upon completion of the investigation. After the CRP State Meeting, there was a discussion between multiple CRPs around the state who have case review protocols put into place. During the Fall, the CRP was able to create a Case Review Protocol for members to use during case reviews. This protocol was used in January and it made the process more clear and concise for everyone. It gave the group guided questions to analyze if there were any systematic or individual issues that came up during the case.

4. Panel Activities and Events

- a. Within the 2019 calendar year, the CRP participated in multiple different activities and events. One of our biggest expenses was the attendance at the National CRP Conference. Three of the members, Sunshine, Phoenix, and Emma attended the conference for its entirety. During the summer, Turningpoint (local domestic and sexual violence advocacy program), the St. Croix county CRP, and Bikers Against Child Abuse partnered together in sending kids to camp at YMCA Camp St. Croix. The CRP was able to pay for the registration fees for all of the children. In addition, Turningpoint was able to partner with St. Croix County Foster Care in order to send kids from foster care to camp. There were a total of 40 kids who were able to go to camp because of the Kids 2 Camp program and with the help of the CRP paying the registration fees (\$25 per child). In addition, the CRP was able to buy gift cards to local restaurants so that the Foster Care program was able to hold foster care parent recruitment dinners. We had a member, Emma Field, attend the state meeting and provide an update and were able to bring back the updates from the various CRP's across the state. Also, the panel provided the funds for a member to go to a Trauma-Informed Action: A Community Perspective in Green Bay. A Shaken Baby Syndrome doll was purchased from the panel and given to CESA 11/ Headstart in New Richmond for staff to use for parent education. The panel also created a new Case Review Protocol to be used. In addition, two-panel members spoke at the Health and Human Services Board to present what the Citizen Review Panel has been doing and the goals of the group.

II. Evaluation

1. State Evaluation:

- a. Training for CPS Supervisor: The CRP was tasked to look at Training for CPS Supervisors at the State Level. After discussions with Amy Smith and Tammy Snortum of DCF, they gave a resource to look at for the required trainings for supervisors. This website includes all of the trainings for all CPS workers and supervisors. It is the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System

(WCWPDS). Listed on the Wisconsin Legislature Website, “DCF 43.05 Child protective services supervisor training. (1) Pre-service training requirements. (a) Unless granted an exemption under s. DCF 43.06 (1), each individual who is employed as a child protective services supervisor shall complete pre-service training under s. DCF 43.04 (1) (a) before providing direct supervision to a child protective services caseworker.” In addition, “Administrative rule, Ch. DCF 43, The Training for Child Protective Services Caseworkers and Supervisors, took effect on February 1, 2008. This training rule outlines training requirements for pre-service, foundation and ongoing training. Newly hired child welfare staff members have 2 years from the date of hire to complete 15 days of Foundation Training and newly hired child welfare supervisors have 1 year from the date of hire to complete 15 days of Foundation Training (unless exempt).” In reviewing these documents, the CRP finds that they are required to go through the same trainings as the caseworkers. They are required to complete 30 hours of in-service training in each 2 year period.

- b. Citizen Review Panels Support: The panel collectively agrees that support at the state level has improved since the new coordinators stepped into place. Alicia Breininger has provided better communication with the panel. Questions are answered in a timely manner with a clear understanding of how the CRP’s are intended to function, She has been flexible with it being a transition year in regards to the annual report and has provided a lot of space for questions and feedback. Alicia Breininger and Kim Edwards (DCF), both attended a meeting to provide an update from the state and meet panel members. This was helpful for panel members to meet the people who are communicating with the panel often.
2. Local Evaluation:
- a. Training for CPS Supervisors: Through discussions with the local CPS system, there was discussion that supervisors are required to do the same trainings that the CPS caseworkers go through. Supervisors in St. Croix County have shared that they have taken the Supervising Safety for Present Dangers and Impending Dangers. That training also gives supervisors the eligibility to attend a training called Assessing Impending Dangers. According to the evaluation at the local level, we feel that the trainings that are required by the state are occurring at the local level. There are some recommendations in regard to trainings that the CRP believes that CPS supervisors and caseworkers should attend.
 - b. Citizen Review Panel Support: The St. Croix County Citizen Review Panel has received good support from the county. There is a good relationship between the CRP and the CPS workers and supervisors. We receive support from Fred Johnson, Director of Health and Human Services in order to continue to do the work within the county. The county is currently the fiscal agent of the CRP as

well but it will be soon changing to a different nonprofit. The county is on board with this and has no issues with the change.

III. Recommendations:

1. State Level:

- a. The CRP would like to recommend that the State implement guidelines for Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) and that the receiving state would handle the transitions, approvals, background checks and housing visits rather than the state sending.
- b. The CRP would like to recommend that the State require all CPS supervisors and caseworkers to be required to attend trainings on the topic of Domestic Violence within the Foundations Training. Topics should include: how secondary trauma of domestic violence affects children, dynamics of domestic violence within the family system, how to write victim-centered recommendations in CPS reports, trauma-informed training on interacting with victims (body language, demeanor, voice).
- c. The CRP recommends to the State that there be a State Task Force to improve Guardian Ad Litem requirements and increase the required legal continuing education.

2. Local Level:

- a. According to discussions with CPS employees, the Family Find training was discussed. A recommendation made by the CPS workers would be to shorten this training. Some felt that the information could have been relayed in 1-2 days rather than 5-6. They felt that they could have gone to other trainings or worked with clients during the time spent at the training.
- b. The CRP would like to recommend, for the second year, that the courts require the same judge to be used throughout all CPS proceedings and CHIPS cases.
- c. The CRP would like to recommend that all CPS supervisors and caseworkers be required to attend trainings on the topic of Domestic Violence. Topics should include: how secondary trauma of domestic violence affects children, dynamics of domestic violence within the family system, how to write victim-centered recommendations in CPS reports, trauma-informed training on interacting with victims (body language, demeanor, voice).
 - i. In addition, the CRP would recommend that there is an increase in trauma-informed care training.
- d. The CRP would like to recommend that the county implement the ability for the county to license treatment foster care home options. The county used to be able to assess and license treatment foster care homes but they are not able anymore. With the implementation of this back into the state, the families would be more localized rather than spread out over the western side of Wisconsin.

- e. The CRP would like to make a recommendation that, if there is a Guardian ad Litem involved in the case, they be required to meet the child/ren outside of the courthouse. It creates a stressful environment for the child/ren and should be done in a space where they feel most comfortable, where ever that may be.