



2020

**Wisconsin Citizen Review Panel
Annual Report**

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

Name of Panel: Langlade County Citizen Review Panel

Panel Contact: Stephanie Fassbender, Panel Coordinator

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Submission Information

Please submit the completed report and a current panel membership list to the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families by emailing both documents to Sarah Hanson at sarah.hanson1@wisconsin.gov by **February 1, 2021**.

Notes:

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 2020 updates are available through the following link: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cqi-cfsr/pdf/report/apsr.pdf> (see page 14). 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>.

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> no later than six months after receipt of each report.

Section 1: Report of 2020 Activities:

1. Please describe the panel's 2020 meeting schedule, including the frequency and type of panel meetings; and the frequency and type of any subcommittee and workgroup meeting.

Langlade County Citizen Review Panel met for in person monthly meetings in January, February, and March. The panel did not meet in April and resumed meeting, virtually, during the months of May, June, August, September, and December.

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.

Due to COVID19 restrictions the panel was not able to provide opportunity for public outreach as planned. Other community events that the panel has historically participated in were also not held again impacting the ability of the panel to connect with community members and provide opportunities for outreach and comment. See question #4 for more details.

3. Please describe any case reviews conducted by the panel in 2020.

The panel did not conduct any case reviews during 2020. The panel planned to continue completing case reviews in 2020 after refining the process that was used in 2019. Due to the disruption of COVID the panel did not have the opportunity to review and revise the current process and therefor did not complete case reviews in 2020. The panel plans to use the information shared at the state meeting to revise our process for conducting case reviews in 2021 to ensure the process we follow is purposeful and thoughtful for all involved.

4. Please summarize any other panel activities or panel events that took place in 2020.

Most events and activities the panel had planned or intended for 2020 were cancelled due to the pandemic. This included NCAP community event, Foster Parent Appreciation event, National Citizen Review Panel Conference, and the DEC Conference.

Prior to the pandemic the panel did coordinate a social worker appreciation event. The panel provided self-care gift packages to each staff member in the department and provided a pizza lunch for the department. We received very positive feedback about this event with staff appreciating the rare opportunity for everyone in the department to spend some time together.

Section 2: State 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:

- 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).

Cross System Collaboration Between CPS and Tribal Child Welfare Agencies:

The panel did not evaluate the extent to which the DCF is effectively carrying out cross system collaboration between CPS and Tribal Child Welfare agencies.

Cross System Collaboration Between CPS and the Judicial System:

The panel did not evaluate the extent to which the DCF is effectively carrying out cross system collaboration between CPS and the Judicial System.

- 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 panel does not have any other comment regarding how the DCF is complying with other criteria the panel considers important to ensuring the protecting of children at the state level.

Section 3: Local 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:

- 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.

Cross System Collaboration Between CPS and Tribal Child Welfare Agencies:

The panel did not conduct a formal evaluation of the extent to which our local child protection agencies are effectively collaborating with Tribal Child Welfare. However, based on information we collected in the past as well as information shared by local child welfare staff we are able to report that there are a relatively low number of cases that local child welfare and tribal child welfare collaborate on. In those few cases local child welfare staff noted that there is a positive working relationship which allows for successful collaboration, there are not any areas of concern that they feel need to be addressed. However they did also note that one area that could be improved is that of communication between agencies which can sometimes be inconsistent.

Cross System Collaboration Between CPS and the Judicial System:

The panel did not conduct a formal evaluation of the extent to which our local child protection agencies are effectively collaborating with the Judicial System. However, based on information we collected in the past as well as information shared by local child welfare staff we are able to report that the challenge of a very full court calendar, which has historically been a challenge, has only been made more challenging due to the impacts of COVID. Local CPS staff also noted the challenges of completing court hearings via Zoom.

- 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).

The Panel did not identify any other criteria the panel considers important to ensuring the protection of children.

Section 4: Recommendations

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

The panel does not have any recommendations to improve child protection services at the state level.

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

The panel identified the following topics or themes to be considered for improving child protection services at the local level:

- Education and information regarding foster parent recruitment
- Invest in prevention. Continue shifting focus towards prevention and inform stakeholders of the importance of this.
- Find ways to improve image of CPS and reduce misconceptions of child welfare, social workers, etc. Possible avenues: participating in health fairs and community events, partner with other community service agencies/organizations.
- Examine access to behavioral health services and identify systemic barriers. Specifically relating to mental health and AODA services available to families in our communities.

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

We recognize that the work of the panel in 2020 was not at the caliber we had hoped or planned for it to be. This is partially due to the challenges of virtual but more so due to the time commitment and the additional responsibilities each panel member acquired in adjusting to the impact of COVID in both their professional roles and personal life. It's also important to note that the panel lost three members in the first part of the year including our chair, treasurer, and an active member. These resignations came as the result of the members moving out of Lantada County.