



**2020**

**Wisconsin Citizen Review Panel  
Annual Report**

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

**Name of Panel: St. Croix County Citizen Review Panel  
Panel Contacts: Emma Field, 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](mailto:sarah.hanson1@wisconsin.gov) by **February 1, 2021**.

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#### 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.

The CRP of St. Croix County has always met on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month for 1.5 hours. This continued consistently from January – June. The group took a break during July. For the second half of the year, meetings proved to be difficult due to COVID-19 and busy schedules. Meetings took place in August and October with a break in December. Due to a small group, the CRP of St. Croix County does not currently have separate workgroups or subcommittees. The group met in person at Turningpoint's New Richmond location for January - March and then moved to a virtual setting for the remainder of the year

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.

During the beginning of the year, the group planned and coordinated an event for Child Abuse Awareness Month with Olga Trujillo as the speaker. Due to COVID-19 the event was cancelled and no events planned by the CRP occurred during the 2020 year.

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

The group completed two case review for 2020 in which both happened in January. They were both egregious events that occurred in the county in the prior 30 days. There were two CPS social workers that came to present the case review. Prior to that, Emma had spoken to Outagamie County regarding their case review procedure. The group had adapted a similar case review procedure based on Outagamie County and it was used successfully during the two case reviews in January 2020.

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

Most of the year was spent responding to the needs of community members during COVID-19. When the pandemic first hit, the CRP partnered with St. Croix county foster care/CPS and United Way to get families things they may need. Each family got one box of food, toys/activities, and a gift card to put towards items they needed at that time. After it was decided that things would not be going back to normal, the remainder of the money was spent on Target gift cards to give to organizations that work with children and families. They were distributed to organizations like Headstart, Family Resource Center, Turningpoint, Friends Helping Friends, Operation Help, SART, BACA, the CPS workers/foster care, etc. The organizations got either \$300 or \$500 and most of the organizations spent money on diapers, wipes, formula, winter clothing, activities, toys, breastfeeding supplies, and developmental toys.

**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).

**Training for CPS Supervisors:**

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

**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. In addition, the new coordinator, Sarah Hanson has also been very helpful and supportive during her short time so far with CRP. The group did comment that both on the state and local level it is difficult to keep a consistent group of people.

- 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):

### **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.

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.

#### **Citizen Review Panels 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 will continue to be the fiscal agent of the CRP.

- 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).

#### **Section 4: Recommendations**

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

Due to COVID-19 there are limited recommendations at the state level but one will remain the same from 2019.

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).

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

Due to COVID-19 the panel recommends the same recommendations as 2019.

- 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.
- 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).

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