

Wisconsin Citizen Review Panel Annual Report
January 1-December 31, 2020

Name of Panel:	Wisconsin State Youth Advisory Council
Contact Person & Title:	ShawnaRae Bruch (President)
Panel Chairperson(s):	ShawnaRae Bruch (President) Isabelle Jean (Secretary)

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.

During the year of 2020, the Wisconsin State Youth Advisory Council (YAC) has worked hard to maintain regular meetings throughout the entire year amongst the local YAC regions. This was a challenge due to the pandemic impacting the ability to meet in person. State YAC members hold the goal of meeting on a quarterly basis at the statewide council. YAC was unable to attend the Daniel Memorial Conference as well as the National Citizen Review Panel Conference due to the pandemic.

In absence of these annual conferences; we created a main initiative for the year. The State Youth Advisory Council’s main initiative was to work on extending Independent Living services to the age of 23. Currently the State and local YACs are working together to create a video expressing their reasons behind advocating for such an extension and will share this during the month of May in 2021. Other initiatives are held in high regard for the Youth Advisory Council. Due to the pandemic, we understand the need for delaying these initiatives until a later time.

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.

State YAC members participated in an Implicit Bias training given by Nadia Perez- Reyes. State YAC members also participated in a Micro- Aggression Training in August given by Jeremy Triplett. Local YAC Region 3 created snack bags to deliver to local group homes. This was paired with educating the individuals on Transitioning to Adulthood and the local YAC meetings in which they could partake in if they choose. Region 6 has been working on expanding YAC into a neighboring county to reach more foster youth in their communities.

Below, the State YAC created “letter squares” that represented a word close to them and their experience in foster care. These letters will be displayed in the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. The purpose is to



remind them of all the reasons behind the policies and practices they are implementing throughout the state.

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

- The State and Local YAC Councils do not conduct case reviews.

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

- YAC members participated in their Annual Hands Around the Capitol event. This event focuses on the difficulties experienced by foster youth. This event also brings overall awareness to foster care and the youth. The event was changed to all virtual this year which allowed for a month-long event to take place. Local YAC regions took on individual initiatives. Those included a youth mentorship program being created, a winter jacket drive to provide jackets amongst the homeless community, and a virtual cooking class which various regions participated in.

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 one 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).

- The Family First Act established by the Department of Children and Families want to keep families together. They believe in strengthening Wisconsin families to support their children because these children belong to their families. DCF continues to strive for this goal and continues their hard work in implementing it.

Safety and Stability of Children Placed in Relative or Foster Care:

- The State Youth Advisory Councils have worked on implementing ways to improve the safety and stability of youth placed into Relative or Foster Care. One way that the state addressed this topic was to pass the “Call to Action - Doshia Joi Immediate Coverage for Former Foster Youth Act” to ensure youth had health insurance without any gaps in services or coverage. This was in honor of Doshia Joi’s passing. The State YAC also partook in the Foster Youth in Action Listening Session where input was given on questions addressing youth in foster care, supports and services.

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):

- DCF has agreed to work with the state YAC on their main initiative of extending independent living services to 23. Even though during the 2020 year there wasn't much progress on the state level due to the current pandemic, but this goal will still be worked on in 2021 with Secretary Edmundson and the many staff at DCF.

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 one below listed child protection responsibilities assigned to them under the State CAPTA Plan, and the Wisconsin Child Welfare Standards, referenced above.

Safety and Stability of Children Placed in Relative or Foster Care:

- Like stated previously in the 2017 CRP report many social workers and Independent Living Coordinators are knowledgeable in safety and stability of children placed in relative or foster care. In this 2020 report the same people had reported they identify food, clothes and shelter with no drugs in the vicinity are considered safe.

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).

- One of our local YACs participated in an Aftercare Survey for Youth in Out of Home Care for extending Independent living services to 23. This is just one of many examples of our local YAC regions working together to express and implement this goal at the state level but also in their local counties.

Section 4: Recommendations

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

- The YAC recommends for the state to implement Independent Living Services through the age of 23. This would guarantee continued care for the young adults who receive an Independent Living Worker before and after the age of 21.

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

- The YAC recommends local agencies to continue to advocate for Independent Living Resources to be increased from the age of 21 to the age of 23. This would help with college expenses, housing, food security and more.

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

- Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council would like to express gratitude for the opportunities to have a voice for those who are currently in care and who are afraid to speak out. We are thankful for the opportunity to be a part of the CRP as well
- YAC is eager to get things back on track for the 2021 year and start looking towards the future to help youth in and out of home care all around Wisconsin