



Wyoming Citizen Review Panel

SAFETY • PERMANENCY • WELL BEING

2022-2023 Annual Report

“The best way to predict your future is to create it.”-- *Abraham Lincoln*

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Letter from the Chair

It has been an honor to serve as the Chair of the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel (WyCRP) the last two years. As my term ends and we welcome a new Chair to the Panel, I would like to share my thoughts of the importance and strengths of the WyCRP.

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel is comprised of volunteers of Wyoming citizens that are experts in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect along with individuals with lived experience. The federal government mandates that the Panel exists and sets guidelines that the Panel must meet to receive the funds including, but not limited to examining policies, procedures and practices of state and local child protection agencies and evaluate the extent to which the agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities in accordance with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The stated mission of the WyCRP is:

To facilitate public outreach and provide opportunities for citizens to evaluate and make recommendations to state and local child protection systems to ensure that these systems promote safety, well-being and permanency to the children and families of Wyoming.

In order to meet the requirements of our CAPTA contract, as well as our agency mission, WyCRP partners with a variety of agencies including the Department of Family Services, Wyoming Children's Trust Fund, Wyoming Department of Education, Wyoming Department of Health, the Wyoming Children's Justice Project, the Wyoming Guardian Ad Litem program, the Wyoming Governor's office along with other experts in the state.

WyCRP and our partners' successes this last year included Community Cafes, CFSR surveys and youth focus groups, Youth Advisory Council, foster family support, and Parents as Teachers. Youth Advisory Council held their first in person Wyoming Youth Advisory Council Summit with Governor Gordon attending virtually to answer questions. The Youth Advisory Council allows youth that have been touched by the child welfare system to give input and guidance to improve that interaction. The Community Cafes extended to birth parents with feedback for training that would be beneficial. WyCRP and the Wyoming Children's Trust Fund developed training on the top three topics requested from the Community Cafes and offered them virtually.

WyCRP and partners continue to identify the needs within the child welfare system and to offer recommendations for the state and partners. The Wyoming Children's Justice Act Task Force is administered through the WyCRP and reviews major injury and fatality cases defined by Department of Family Services and is a powerful entity that makes recommendations to ensure the safety of Wyoming's children. The Task Force recruited new members and have passionate professionals that are not only making recommendations, but are making improvements to the systems such as national investigator training through the Colorado Kemp Center, ongoing training at the Wyoming Joint Symposium and legislative advocacy to strengthen Wyoming statutes.

Again, it's been an honor to serve as the Chair of the Panel. The individuals that serve are focused on listening to the voices of those touched by the system and to engage in creative solutions to make the system more effective.

Sincerely,

Stacy Strasser

Chair, WyCRP

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Wyoming Residents,

I am very humbled to have served in the capacity of Executive Director of the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel (WyCRP) since July 2019. Guiding the work of this organization and advocating for the families of Wyoming every day for the last 4 years is the greatest honor of my professional career. It is also hard for me to fathom this is the fourth edition of our Annual Report I have prepared. Our small, but mighty staff is relentless in its efforts to meet the needs of Wyoming families. Recent years have been tough nationwide, but especially in Wyoming, due to the lingering effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Wyoming families need our focus and dedication more than ever. During these challenging times, we have stressed the importance of self-care to our employees, because we cannot successfully advocate for our clients without first doing so for ourselves.

WyCRP would not exist without the unwavering support of our Panel Members. Their diverse expertise in Human Services makes my job much easier. The children and families of Wyoming greatly benefit from the many decades of experience these professionals have advocating on their behalf. The Wyoming citizens who choose to serve as Panel Members in order to advocate for families are the lifeblood of our organization.

Together, utilizing the unique expertise of Panel members, as well as that of many dedicated public, private, and not-for-profit partners, WyCRP continues to deploy both recognized best practices, as well as promising new methods to assist in the improvement of the Wyoming Child Protection System. WyCRP exists for the purpose that Wyoming children and families receive the resources and attain the skills they need to thrive in safe and healthy environments. The following report contains data compiled through our work during the 2022-2023 Program Year.

We will continue making meaningful improvements in Wyoming's Child Protection System, as long as we work together to protect our most valuable resource, the children of Wyoming. The dedication of our staff and Panel Members has resulted in the cultivation of a lasting legacy of advocacy in Wyoming.

Respectfully,

Bryan M. Cook

Executive Director, WyCRP

Executive Summary

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel (WyCRP) actively partners with the Wyoming Department of Family Services (DFS), the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH), the Wyoming Children’s Trust Fund (WCTF), the Wyoming Children’s Justice Project, the Wyoming Guardian Ad Litem Program, the Wyoming Governor’s Office, as well as state and local law enforcement agencies, mental health and substance abuse professionals, child advocates, attorneys, and judges. These collaborations afford us the opportunity to promote permanency, well-being and safety for Wyoming children and families.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of substantive activities undertaken by WyCRP during the past 12 months specific to child abuse and neglect in Wyoming. The intended impact of this report is to provide data identifying strengths and opportunities for systemic improvement. WyCRP believes the focus of its Annual Reports should be on the positive developments occurring in our Wyoming Child Welfare/Protection system every single day. From our point of view, amazing strides are being made, but more work needs to be done. This annual report covers the period from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, except where otherwise indicated.

Recommendations and data generated by WyCRP activities related to our CAPTA contract have been provided to DFS in order to assist with the development of the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP); and their various other strategic planning and system improvement efforts. WyCRP supports the work of DFS to improve the Child Welfare System in Wyoming.

WyCRP acts as an independent third party to encourage candid feedback from birth parents, foster parents, foster youth, youth with lived experience, and other stakeholders making up the Wyoming Child Welfare System. These efforts have taken many forms and are outlined in further detail in this report.

Introduction to 2022-2023 Annual Report

During the 2022-2023 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) program year, WyCRP has witnessed improvement in DFS policy and processes initiated through the CFSP and PIP implementation process. During the time period covered by this report, WyCRP staff and Panel members continued to support implementation of the PIP and development of the CFSP. The major activities of WyCRP as outlined in this report, were first outlined in WyCRP’s annual CAPTA contract with DFS, and corresponding Statement of Work. The contract requires that WyCRP establish a Strategic Plan, and for that Plan to be reviewed for changes yearly. The WyCRP Strategic Plan was reviewed by Panel Membership during the Spring of 2023. Due to the nature of the goals established in the Strategic Plan being related to multi-year efforts/initiatives, WyCRP feels the Strategic Plan as written is still relevant and amendments are not needed at this time. The Strategic Plan is located later in this report for reference.

Programs and Partnerships

The WyCRP is proud of its hallmark collaborations with community partners, government agencies and community stakeholders. Spanning the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic over the last three years in Wyoming, WyCRP's partnerships with other agencies have increased in importance. For many reasons, DFS is WyCRP's primary partner. Collaboration with other entities aids WyCRP's efforts to minimize service duplication and maximize limited resources system-wide. Another benefit of WyCRP's strong partnerships is access to the expertise of others to achieve our common goals.

WyCRP partnered with the Wyoming Children's Trust Fund (WCTF) in 2022-23 to host virtual Community Cafe' meetings statewide. In its work to stimulate youth engagement throughout the state, WyCRP has collaborated with DFS, WCTF, Independent Living Coordinators, and the Wyoming Guardian Ad Litem Program (GAL) to develop a Youth Advisory Council. It is hard to believe this group was first started in August 2021. During this program year, WyCRP has also collaborated with DFS on youth stakeholder engagement by co-facilitating virtual focus groups related with DFS' ongoing CFSR efforts. WyCRP continues to proudly support child abuse prevention efforts both locally in Laramie County, as well as statewide through efforts such as assisting with the arrangement of Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation signings.

It should be noted that between 2019 and 2022 WyCRP partnered with Wyoming 2-1-1 in a contractual relationship to develop and host the Kinship Connections of Wyoming (KCOW) program. However, during the summer of 2022, Wyoming 2-1-1 informed WyCRP they no longer wished to contract with WyCRP to formally support this program. Our partnership formally ended in September 2022. Due to this change, no further information regarding KCOW is contained in this report. It should be noted that WyCRP continues to support KCOW and other efforts to assist Kinship families in Wyoming, even if in an unofficial capacity. The Executive Director continues to serve as a member of the KCOW Advisory Council. WyCRP also continues to value Wyoming 2-1-1 as a partner/collaborator, as they provide valuable services to Wyoming families.

Parents As Teachers

The Parents as Teachers (PAT) model is an evidence-based early childhood home visiting model that builds strong communities, thriving families, and children who are healthy, safe and ready to learn. PAT promotes the optimal early development, learning and health of children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers. The WYCRP PAT affiliate receives funding through the federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visitation (MIECHV) program.

WyCRP is one of two affiliates in Wyoming offering evidence-based home visiting services through

the PAT model. The WyCRP PAT program operates in Laramie, Albany, and Sweetwater Counties. PAT provides direct, in-home support to families facing a variety of stressors known to put children and families at risk for crisis. Home visiting in general, and PAT specifically, has been identified as one of the most promising methods for preventing children from coming into DFS custody and also for supporting families during reunification after being in care.

WYCRP-PAT is currently staffed with 5.5 Parent Educators amongst the three counties. The program is contracted to serve a minimum of 113 families within these three communities. Per MIECHV guidelines, one or more of the following criteria must be met to determine eligibility for enrollment of services:

- Income \leq 100% of the Federal Poverty Level for family size
- Prior history with Child Welfare Services, prior history with abuse/neglect (as a child or adult)
- Child with a developmental delay/disability
- History of substance or alcohol abuse
- Tobacco use in the home
- Military service
- Low student achievement/no high school diploma
- Pregnant parent under age 21

Families with children ages prenatal to 36 months meeting any of these criteria can be enrolled and services delivered up to age 60 months, or until the child transitions to an appropriate early development center or Kindergarten.

Central to the PAT model are 21 model fidelity requirements, called Essential Requirements, which cover affiliate leadership, staffing, services to families, and evaluation. To become a PAT affiliate, an organization must be designed to meet these Essential Requirements. Annually, affiliates report implementation and service data that address the Essential Requirements and this data is used to confirm that the affiliate is meeting or exceeding the minimum levels for each Essential Requirement. In addition to the Essential Requirements, Parents as Teachers has 81 Quality Standards that provide a comprehensive blueprint for high quality PAT services.

Along with the Essential Requirements and Quality Standards, MIECHV requires each PAT affiliate to track 19 performance measures. An affiliate is required to demonstrate improvement in five of the six specific areas, which is assessed on an annual basis and compared to national benchmarks across all MIECHV programs. Together, the Essential Requirements and Quality Standards form the basis for the Parents as Teachers Quality Endorsement and Improvement Process (QEIP) which confirms affiliate quality and facilitates continuous quality improvement.

After completing the QEIP process and earning the Blue Ribbon in October 2020, WyCRP's PAT program has maintained this status as demonstrated through our annual APR. This quality

endorsement will be earned for five years, until September 30, 2025, as long as our program remains in good standing. As of April 2023, WyCRP PAT is on track to meet all essential requirements for the upcoming 2023-2024 review.

Community/Stakeholder Engagement

Through the CAPTA contract WyCRP has with DFS, a responsibility at the core of our duties is community/stakeholder outreach. Over the last two program years, WyCRP has renewed its focus on providing information and data to Wyoming citizens and agencies. Primarily this has been done through updating the information on the WyCRP website, and through increasing our social media presence. WyCRP has exponentially increased the number of posts made, and followers reached. The WyCRP Facebook group, Foster Parent Support Wyoming, has provided Wyoming foster parents with a free information resource and the opportunity to network. WyCRP meets with DFS Foster Care Coordinators to discuss content to share in the group. This collaboration assists WyCRP in planning how to best mobilize its limited resources in order to provide the best possible outcomes to foster families. Another way WyCRP shares information about its work is through participating in the Annual Joint Symposium on Children and Youth, even presenting to attendees in 2022. The presentation covered our work with the CJA Task Force and was geared directly to DFS caseworkers. WyCRP regularly participates in the DFS led Community Support Forums. This is a great avenue for learning about services available throughout the state for families. WyCRP participates yearly with the state and local teams to organize events around the designation of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

CFSR Surveys and Youth Focus Groups

Through our annual CAPTA contract and associated Statement of Work with DFS, stakeholder outreach continues to be a staple of WyCRP's work. This program year has been no exception. DFS is currently conducting a state initiated CFSR review. This work entails administering surveys and focus group discussions involving identified stakeholders. WyCRP is collaborating with WCTF on Youth stakeholder engagement. WyCRP has been asked to assist with collection and recording of survey results from youth in group homes and residential facilities. The second piece of this work, which will be outlined in this section, is the facilitation of virtual focus groups for youth ages 14-21. DFS has worked with Public Knowledge to develop the surveys and questions used during the focus groups. WyCRP and WCTF developed a presentation which incorporated these questions in order to hold the focus groups. The first of these virtual focus groups was held on April 11, 2023. All data gathered from this discussion has been provided to Public Knowledge in order to be included with all other CFSR related data being collected. At the time this report was drafted, the official data gathered through the focus groups had not yet officially been released. However, some of the trends discovered during the focus groups are discussed in this section. The focus group held on April 11

was for youth ages 14-17, and was attended by 27 youth. Attendees appeared to be a mix of males and females. The majority of youth participants were living in group homes or facilities, while the rest lived in foster homes, or other living arrangements.

The questions asked during the focus group were related to how much the youth felt they were included in decisions related to their experiences and time in foster care/ DFS involvement. Youths were asked which part of the state they represented and attendees were spread throughout the state. The next two questions were related to how well DFS caseworkers worked with the youths on their caseloads. Depending on the nature of the youth's involvement with DFS, they either had experience with child protection workers or probation officers. Some youth stated they did not feel they had enough interaction with their caseworkers, but when they did interact, their workers genuinely cared and attempted to be helpful. 29% of respondents stated they were very satisfied with how their caseworkers worked with them, while 14% were not at all satisfied. Some respondents stated they felt their caseworkers met with them regularly. During these interactions, caseworkers reportedly asked youths if they had any safety concerns 86% of the time. 71% of youths were asked about their school attendance and performance, while 57% were asked about the counseling services they received. Others felt they saw their workers enough, but did not feel their workers were engaged and listening to their input and needs. 22% of the respondents felt their caseworkers were very prepared to work with them, while 11% rated their caseworkers as not being prepared. An example given of this was the fact youths did not feel they received timely or accurate information regarding their cases. In fact, lack of communication was cited as a concern throughout the discussion, and not just in relation to DFS caseworkers, but all members of the child protection system. Next the participants were asked if they had been included in the development of their Case Plan. To ensure clarity, the first few pages of the document were included in the presentation, so the youths understood the document being referenced. Of the total number of respondents, 33% had been included in preparing their case plans. Interestingly, 22% stated they weren't sure if they had been included, while others stated they had never seen the case plan document before.

Interestingly, 44% felt they were included in their MDT meetings, while an equal 44% stated they were not included. At this point in the discussion, many of the youths acknowledged they felt decisions regarding their physical placement, education and access to services were largely made by other team members. Access to needed services was discussed at length. Many respondents realized that depending on their placement, the services they need may not exist in close proximity to their physical placement. Family team meetings were also discussed, with 29% stating they weren't sure they had been included, and 71% stating they had not been included. Youths were also specifically asked questions related to their experiences in foster care. Not all of the participants had lived in traditional foster care. However, those with this particular experience provided a lot of input. Many stated their foster families did not have enough background information about their specific needs to properly care for them. They cited information about their birth families, mental health diagnoses and treatment needs, educational history and dietary restrictions as examples of vital information needed by foster parents. One respondent in particular wished his foster family

had asked about triggers for his anger and other behaviors. Several youth stated they lacked a basic understanding of how foster care works, while the majority stated they felt birth children were definitely treated better than foster children. A majority reported feeling safe in their foster homes, but also expressed concern for not being placed together with their siblings.

The last questions were related to the youth's experience with independent living. The respondents reported satisfaction with their IL experience. Particularly, IL Coordinators were stated as being very helpful and accessible. Youths stated their coordinators were understanding of their situations and were not judgemental. Others stated they considered their coordinators to be their friend. An example of the Independent Living Plan currently being used was shared in the presentation. 50% of youth reported being involved in the development of their Independent Living Plans. IL coordinators were said to be very knowledgeable and effective in building relationships with their clients.

The focus group for youths ages 19+ was held on May 9, 2023. This meeting had 5 total attendees, all of which being current members of the WYAC. The same questions were asked of this group as well. The attendees represented Fremont, Teton, Natrona and Laramie Counties. On the question of how effectively DFS caseworkers worked with them, 75% were neutral, while 25% stated they were not satisfied with their caseworker. The majority of 50% stated they were neutral on the preparation of their caseworker, while 25% stated they were satisfied, and another 25% felt their caseworker was slightly prepared. One respondent stated she felt caseworker preparation is likely to be related to the size of the caseworker's caseload. She felt as though her caseworker tried very hard, but she seemed overwhelmed by her large caseload. The current Case Plan document used by DFS was displayed for this group, and no respondents stated they were familiar with the document itself, 40% stated they had been engaged in developing their Case Plan. Additionally 40% stated they had not been engaged in the development of their Case Plan, and 20% was not sure. Multi-Disciplinary Team(MDT) Meetings were the next topic discussed, with 60% of the young adults stating they were invited to and included in their MDT meetings. One respondent in particular stated these meetings seemed to take place before court hearings. 20% of those answering this question stated they were not included in their MDT Meetings.

When services were set up for the young adults, 60% of the respondents stated they had been asked about their school experience, while 40% had been asked about counseling/therapy services. In particular, one attendee answered he had been specifically asked about whether he felt safe in his placement. The respondent had a delinquency petition, so while he felt he had no choice in the nature and location of his placement, he stated he was frequently updated on the services available to him, and new developments related to his case. 3 responses reflected that the young adults felt they had the opportunity to meet privately with their caseworkers. Access to services was the next topic discussed. One young adult stated their county/area of origin would not pay for the type of placement needed. Another respondent stated access to medical care was better for him while in DFS custody than since he aged out of foster care. On the subject of Family Team Meetings, 60%

were not sure they had ever been included in this opportunity, while 20% had been included, and 20% had not been included.

Two attendees commented about their experience living in a foster home setting. One respondent stated she was disappointed her relationship with a foster family did not continue in some form after leaving their home for residential treatment. The other respondent felt one of the foster families she had lived with was very prepared, while the other foster family favored their biological children instead. The final subject discussed in this focus group was independent living, with 40% having been included in developing their IL Plans. All respondents having participated in IL spoke favorably about the IL Coordinators.

Wyoming Youth Advisory Council (WYAC)

Young Adult and Youth Engagement continue to be a specific area of stakeholder outreach that Panel Members and staff alike at WyCRP are very passionate about. In early 2021, WyCRP, DFS, WCTF, and the Wyoming GAL Program began researching ways to increase youth and young adult engagement. One particular area the state group felt a positive impact could be made was through the development of a statewide Youth Advisory Council. Similar efforts in other states were researched, with WyCRP forming a state steering committee along with DFS, WCTF, the GAL Program and Independent Living Coordinators. The decision was made to accept nominations for the group through DFS caseworkers, supervisors and District Managers, as well as through Independent Living Coordinators working with youth. The group is open to youth ages 14-21. Youth participating are compensated for their attendance by DFS. The first virtual meeting was held in August 2021, with three participants, but our efforts have certainly evolved since then. The majority of WYAC members are female. Membership is split between youth currently in foster care, and young adults who have aged out of foster care. Many of the youth still in foster care are in group homes or residential treatment. Youth who have aged out participating in WYAC live across Wyoming on their own, work, and/or attend school.

The vision established for the Wyoming Youth Advisory Council (WYAC) is for the youths to take ownership and control of the group, and for the Steering Committee to exist in merely an advisory role. While this has not quite happened yet, the group is moving in this direction. Attendance by membership has stabilized over the program year, with average attendance ranging from 10-15 participants per meeting. The group held its first in-person WYAC Summit at Central Wyoming College in Riverton Wyoming during July 2022. These meetings were held over parts of three days, and included a virtual question and answer session with Governor Mark Gordon, as well as appearances by both the DFS Director and Deputy Director. The state Steering Committee and young adults shared many conversations, meals, activities and discussions during that time. 26 participants attended the Summit, although some had not been technically admitted to the WYAC at the time of the Summit. Through funds obtained by DFS, the Steering Committee was able to provide many raffle items to participants. Examples of these items are tool sets, kitchen items,

bedding sets, and laundry supplies. No participant left the Summit empty handed. The participants drove the activities and content of the Summit, as well as choosing the items for the raffles/giveaways. Lessons were learned from the Summit, such as only members of the WYAC should attend. Unfortunately some members were invited by their IL Coordinators to attend, without having been admitted to the WYAC, and they just were not truly invested in the efforts of the group. Better vetting will also be done of speakers/presenters in the future, as one of our presenters did not appear to have a clear understanding of the audience, and the subject matter did not match the intent of the Summit. Planning has already begun for the Second Annual in-person Summit to be held during June 2023 in Casper, Wyoming. WYAC members have been highly engaged in the planning of this year's event. First Lady Jennie Gordon is planned to attend in 2023, in hopes input from WYAC members will inform her various advocacy efforts.

Since the last Annual Report, WYAC membership finalized the Wyoming Foster Youth Bill of Rights, and this document has been approved by DFS and is now being circulated and actively used. Membership has also been engaged in the revision of various DFS policies regarding Foster Care and Independent Living during the last year. Their input has escalated rapid change in areas needing improvement. Throughout the existence of the WYAC, members have voiced concerns about their experiences in foster care. Specifically, questions were asked about the certification requirements of foster homes and the accommodations they are required to provide. In January 2023, WYAC members held a roundtable discussion with DFS Foster Care Coordinators (FCCs) throughout the state. This meeting was an excellent way for the members to learn more about how foster families are recruited, trained and maintained. The FCCs also learned the impressions youth have of foster care, as well as their expectations for the foster care experience. Future similar opportunities are already scheduled, such as connecting WYAC members with CASA providers, in order to educate more young adults about the purpose of CASA. It is also hoped this opportunity will drive further efforts for CASA volunteers to advocate for young adults in Wyoming.

Community and Foster Family Support

During the 2022-2023 Program Year, WyCRP continued to support foster families and DFS Foster Care Coordinators in our state. WyCRP offers a forum for foster parents via the Facebook group Foster Parent Support Wyoming. This is a private group where members have to be approved by a group administrator and content is monitored. The purpose of this group is to support families by posting foster care related content. The group has also become a place where the members ask questions and share information and experiences with each other. This group currently totals 90 members. The DFS Foster Care Coordinators provide helpful video content shared with WyCRP for the support group, and the WyCRP Facebook page.

Assisting DFS in supporting certified foster care providers continues to be a passion project for WyCRP. As in the past few program years, WyCRP has collaborated with DFS to determine ways unspent CAPTA funds related to our CAPTA contract could be used to assist families. During this

program year, funds were not expended to purchase personal fire extinguishers or lock boxes for families. Between July 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023, \$14,425.00 worth of gift cards were provided to all DFS Foster Care Coordinators (FCC) in Wyoming to assist the families on their caseloads as needs arise. Some of these cards were purchased with CAPTA spend down funds from the 2021-2022 Program Year, but they weren't dispersed until after July 1, 2022. WyCRP trusts the FCCs to disperse the cards to their foster families as needed, based on the needs expressed by the families and foster youth. WyCRP was also able to assist two young ladies in foster care in Cheyenne with purchasing hair extensions and braiding services to meet their cultural needs. The cost of this service was \$692.00. Bus passes, to the total of \$231.00 were purchased for Cheyenne families at the request of the DFS caseworkers in order for the family to access needed services. WyCRP also assisted families obtain emergency housing while their ERAP assistance was being processed. This was done through providing \$700.00 in Visa gift cards, directly to local hotels so families had a place to stay. 3 different families were assisted and all three were requested by DFS caseworkers. WyCRP also provided \$3,000.00 in gift cards to Parents As Teachers (PAT) Parent Educators in Laramie, Fremont and Natrona counties to support Community Baby Shower efforts in those areas. The Parent Educators in Natrona and Fremont counties are associated with the NOWCAP PAT Affiliate, but WyCRP feels very strongly about supporting their efforts, even though they are not directly affiliated with WyCRP.

In December 2022, a grandmother working with both PAT and Kinship Connections of Wyoming (KCOW) reached out for assistance with purchasing bunk beds and clothing for her young grandchildren in an effort to maintain the children in her home. It should be noted that DFS staff also advocated strongly for this family through locating carpenters to assist this family in making needed home repairs to improve their quality of life. The cost of gift cards and bunk beds was \$719.99. \$700.00 was provided to kinship families working with KCOW to assist with the purchase of school clothes and supplies at the beginning of the school year. 3 separate families were assisted through these expenditures. Finally, \$200.00 in gift cards were provided to a family who contacted WyCRP through WCTF, for assistance with groceries and a gas card. WyCRP will continue to work with DFS to identify the needs of Wyoming families, and the most appropriate methodology for assisting those families. In February 2023, WyCRP was approached by DFS to assist in the stakeholder outreach efforts associated with their state initiated Children and Families Services Review(CFSR), ahead of a potential federally initiated review later in 2023. DFS has initiated a process to survey specific stakeholder groups, with focus groups for those same stakeholder groups to follow. Specifically, WyCRP will be involved in the engagement with Youth Stakeholders. WyCRP was asked to provide \$5,000.00 in gift cards, purchased with CAPTA funds to DFS in order to be provided to survey and focus group respondents as compensation for their time. WyCRP has also been tasked with recording the survey results received from facilities and group homes throughout the state. WyCRP received 4 survey responses and entered all of these into Google Forms as instructed. Lastly, WyCRP has been asked to co-facilitate virtual focus groups for youth stakeholders in April and May of 2023. This will be a collaboration with WCTF. The youth participating in the focus groups already responded to the survey.

Birth Parent Community Cafe's

WyCRP has partnered with the Wyoming Children's Trust Fund (WCTF) over the past several years to facilitate Community Cafe' Meetings focusing on various stakeholders in the Wyoming child welfare system. In November 2022, WyCRP collaborated with WCTF to develop a survey for birth parents. In years past, the sessions had been structured as listening sessions. During this round of Cafe's, the surveys were used to find out what topics parents wished to learn more information about. The surveys were active in December and January, with 67 total responses received and 17 Wyoming counties represented. The top 4 counties in terms of number of responses were Laramie, Albany, Natrona and Crook counties. These counties accounted for 45 of the total number of responses. 58, or 86.6% of total respondents were mothers. Fathers and grandparents both placed 4 votes, each accounting for 6%. Providers and foster parents both submitted 2 votes, and 1 DFS representative responded to the survey.

Prior to the surveys going active, the decision was made to provide presentations on the 3 pre-determined sample topics from the list provided in the survey. 15 topics were listed, ranging from Car Seat Safety, Development, Boundaries, Parenting Styles, Emotional Well Being, Mental Health, and Discipline. Respondents were asked to pick their top 3 choices. Emotional Well Being received 32 votes and Mental Health received 30 votes. Receiving the third most votes was Discipline, with 24 votes. With the substantial efforts of WCTF interns, powerpoint presentations were developed on these topics. These presentations were approved by a local Psychologist to ensure accuracy and quality of content. 2 days of virtual Cafe' Meetings were scheduled for each topic, and held during the last two weeks of March and the first week of April 2023. It should be noted that additional topics such as Appropriate Development, Discussing Boundaries, and Learning Activities also received substantial interest. The results of this survey appear to suggest that Wyoming families continue to look for ways to learn new skills in order to improve their quality of life. Unfortunately, attendance at the Community Cafe' presentations was rather limited. In spite of this fact, robust conversation was held by the attendees. Specifically, the need for increased school support for students with mental health diagnoses in rural school districts throughout the state was highlighted as a high priority need.

Recommendations for Systemic Improvements in Wyoming's Child Protection System

WyCRP intends to work collaboratively to implement these recommendations, and recognizes Wyoming's Child Protective Services (CPS) system is large and complex, and includes more than just DFS. These recommendations are intended to acknowledge the work currently being done as part of the PIP and development of the CFSP, which addresses building on strengths and acting on opportunities for improvement identified during the CFSR. All recommendations are intended to compliment past and present efforts by all stakeholders involved in the child protection system.

1. Increase support and engagement for foster parents.
 - a. Action Step: Coordinate all of these efforts with DFS to ensure the target population is being reached and in an effort to avoid duplication of services. This can be accomplished by meeting monthly with DFS Foster Care Coordinators to assess their needs, as well as those of their foster families.
 - b. Action Step: Form a Steering Committee to develop an action plan related to assisting current foster parents, as well as recruiting new foster parents. The majority of membership for this Steering Committee should be foster parents.
 - c. Action Step: During the 2022-2023 program year, WyCRP continued to provide tangible support such as gift cards to Foster Care Coordinators for disbursement to their foster families as needed. This Process will be assessed to determine if it should be continued.
 - d. Action Step: Identify additional tangible ways to support foster families. One suggestion would be developing a “rideshare” program for foster youth to ensure they reach appointments adequately. Another suggestion has been to study the development of a “scholarship” fund for foster youth, where the funds are used to increase foster youths having the ability to participate in youth sports and other extracurricular activities.
 - e. Action Step: Identify and pursue funding opportunities available to assist WyCRP in reaching this goal.
 - f. Action Step: Continue partnership with WCTF in holding Community Cafe/Focus Groups for foster families on specific topics, or offering short training sessions on responding to specific behavioral issues.
 - g. Action Step: Continue using social media and other platforms to support foster families.
 - h. Action Step: WyCRP staff will provide regular detailed updates on this work and provide suggestions how Panel Members can assist with completion of the work related to completing this goal.

2. Engage foster youth and identify gaps in communication with them and services for them.
 - a. Action Step: Continue working with the Youth Engagement State Team, which currently includes DFS, the GAL Program, WCTF, and Independent Living Coordinators to enhance the Wyoming Youth Advisory Council (WYAC). This group currently meets monthly. Plans are in place for the Second Annual in-person WYAC Summit in June 2023.
 - b. Action Step: During the Spring of 2023, WyCRP has partnered with WCTF to conduct focus groups of current foster youths and alumni, as part of DFS’ self initiated CFSR efforts. WyCRP intends to use the data gathered through this effort to drive further efforts for youth engagement. One suggestion includes working together with DFS to ensure more foster youth are included in the development of their case plans and the choosing of the services they receive. Another suggestion is to work with DFS

and the GAL Program to increase the number of youths actively participating in their MDT Meetings.

- c. Action Step: Recruit foster youth to support the efforts of the Panel by sharing their experiences and stories, providing feedback, and participating in every activity and effort related to youth engagement.
 - d. Action Step: Continue to partner with the GAL Program in their efforts to mentor youth and improve the relationships between GALs and the youth they serve.
 - e. Action Step: Identify and pursue funding opportunities available to assist WyCRP in reaching these goals.
 - f. Action Step: WyCRP staff will provide regular detailed updates on this work and provide suggestions how Panel members can assist with completion of the work related to completing this goal.
3. Build a stronger community through stakeholder identification and connection.
- a. Action Step: Due to a lack of sustained participation, the Dads Advisory Group was discontinued in the fall of 2022. The group should be reestablished.
 - b. Action Step: Partner with WCTF to host another round of Dads Community Cafes'.
 - c. Action Step: Based on the input gathered through these forums, WyCRP will develop an action plan and engage dads and male caregivers statewide to create positive systemic change specifically related to this population.
 - d. Action Step: WyCRP will partner with WCTF to explore possible prevention/awareness campaigns geared toward dads and male caregivers.
 - e. Action Step: DFS Caseworkers are very important stakeholders for WyCRP and our partners, specifically related to our efforts toward systemic improvement in child protection. WyCRP must work to engage these caseworkers in conversation regarding the trends they are encountering on a daily basis.
 - f. Action Plan: WyCRP, through the CJA Task Force, is committed to sharing the recommendations generated through our quarterly file reviews directly with caseworkers on a regular basis.
 - g. Action Step: WyCRP will actively engage with the Wyoming Court Improvement Project to better engage Legal Professionals regarding child protection trends and barriers in Wyoming.
 - h. Action Step: To assist with the effectiveness of the CJA Task Force, statutory clarification and change may be needed. Along these lines, WyCRP will work with our partners to actively engage state legislators in child protection related discussions.
 - i. Action Step: Identify and pursue funding opportunities available to assist WyCRP in reaching this goal.
 - j. Action Step: WyCRP staff will provide regular detailed updates on this work and provide suggestions how Panel members can assist with completion of the work related to completing this goal.

Children's Justice Act Task Force

As part of the contract between WyCRP and DFS, WyCRP administers the activities of the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force. DFS is the recipient of federal funds for the Children's Justice Act, under section 107 of CAPTA. These funds are intended to improve the investigation, prosecution, administration, and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect cases. The Task Force is mandated as part of the Children's Justice Act, and has specific responsibilities. These responsibilities include conducting a data-driven 3-year assessment, which guides the activities and use of funds for the CJA grant. This document outlines our activities, recommendations, action plan related to the recommendations, and our current membership. During the winter of 2022, the CJA Task Force Coordinator (WyCRP Executive Director), along with CJA Task Force Chair Lynn Huylar and the DFS CJA Liaison completed the most recent 3 year assessment together. It will be submitted to our federal partners, along with the annual CJA Funding Application, by DFS no later than May 30, 2023. WyCRP enjoys being a part of this process.

The Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force has been developing more effective ways to inform caseworkers, attorneys and Judges about the Task Force and the work it does. The CJA Task Force made a presentation regarding our recommendations at the Joint Symposium for Children and Youth in Cheyenne in June 2022. This presentation highlighted the existence and function of the CJA Task Force and recommendations generated from our work. The hope is this presentation assisted in getting the data directly into the hands of the professionals working in child protection on a daily basis. Our federal CJA partners hold annual meetings for all grantees. The last in-person grantee meeting was in March 2020, but in May 2023, grantees will be meeting in person in Baltimore, Maryland.

Child Maltreatment Fatality and Major Injury Review

In Wyoming, one of the primary activities of the Task Force is to conduct file reviews of all cases of fatality and major injury as defined by DFS policy which are the result of substantiated abuse or neglect and those that occur while children are in the protective custody of the state. The Task Force reviews cases quarterly in order to make recommendations as part of the 3-year assessment to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases. The Task Force is a multidisciplinary team and as such, some members focus on primary and secondary prevention professionally. Risk factors and trends identified during reviews are shared with and used by prevention professionals to make decisions about prevention initiatives, though prevention, other than prevention of secondary trauma, is not a focus of the Task Force.

Although not ideal, the CJA Task Force File Review Meetings continued to be held virtually in 2022. In 2022, three (3) Task Force file review meetings were held in June, September and December. It is important to note that these meetings were all conducted virtually. During these meetings, a total of ten (10) cases of child fatality and major injury resulting from child maltreatment were reviewed,

affecting Wyoming children ages 0-17.

***Please note that the data gathered from the Task Force follows the calendar year.*

Each member of the Task Force maintains strict confidentiality regarding the identities and personal information of individuals involved with child maltreatment fatality and major injury cases. Since the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020, maintaining engaged membership for the Task Force has been a struggle. However, significant strides have been made in this area since November 2022, with the addition of 7 new members. The benefit of the renewed optimism has been evident during the last 2 file review meetings. The Task Force has specific required membership, such as law enforcement, judges, defense and prosecuting attorneys, parent representatives, medical and mental health professionals, and child protection professionals.

Our Task Force membership is as follows:

- Bryan Cook, WYCRP/CJA Task Force Coordinator
- Lynn Storey-Huylar, Chair, Safe House
- Laura Dobler, DFS Liaison
- Tazia Morgart, DFS Special Investigator
- Sarah Urbanek, CASA of Laramie County and Certified Foster Parent
- Carissa O'Malley-Foster Care Alumni/Adoptive Parent
- James Whipps, Coroner, Natrona County
- Erin Ivie, Coroner, Fremont County
- Rebecca Reid, Coroner, Laramie County
- Honorable Judge Sean Chambers, Circuit Court Judge, Laramie County
- Susan Brock, Forensic Nurse, Cheyenne Regional Medical Center (CRMC)
- Karley Taylor, Forensic Nurse, CRMC
- Julianne Lukassen, Forensic Nurse, CRMC
- Lisa Finkey, Court Improvement Project
- Joseph Belcher, Director, Guardian Ad Litem Project
- Dan Wilde, Parent Attorney/Advocate
- Faith Betz, Guardian Ad Litem
- Cara Chambers, State Division of Victim Services
- Sara Serelson, Wyoming Children's Trust Fund
- Cathy Hoover, Injury and Violence Program, Department of Health
- Jennifer Stone, Carbon County Deputy Prosecutor
- Chris McDonald, Special Agent, Wyoming Division of Criminal Investigation
- Chandra Ortiz, Kinship Connections of Wyoming
- Randi Losalu, Specialty Counseling

Recommendations Generated from the 2022 Child Maltreatment Fatality and Major Injury File Reviews/CJA Task Force

The Children's Justice Act requires the State Task Force to undertake a comprehensive review and evaluation of the investigative, administrative and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect and to make training and policy recommendations in each of the three categories. The Categories and associated recommendations are listed below.

A. Investigative, administrative and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment-related fatalities, and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as interstate, federal-state, and state-tribal, in a manner which reduces additional trauma to the child victim and the victim's family, and which also ensures procedural fairness to the accused.

a. Recommendations for DFS Reform:

1. Risk assessments should be completed on every child in the home, not just the child of concern. This may assist us in catching other issues.
2. Are Mandatory Reporters really reporting as often as they should be? Earlier and more frequent reporting means earlier intervention. At the legislative level, changes must be made to ensure that circumstances exist for violations of "Failure to Report."
3. A specific training related to recognizing the signs of neglect needs to be provided to frontline workers.
4. The Task Force will work together with DFS to identify a "threshold process" for how many repeat contacts are made with a family before an affidavit is submitted. Development of a Matrix or set of guidelines.
5. All members of the child welfare system would benefit from additional and/or renewed training on recognizing the signs of child physical abuse.

b. Recommendations for Systems Reform

1. SANE Exams must be completed on all cases where child sexual abuse is suspected.
2. More thorough physical assessment of child physical abuse victims by licensed medical professionals may assist victims to avoid further serious injuries.
3. The CJA Task Force believes all children in the home should receive a forensic interview as a potential witness, in order to strengthen the criminal investigation.

4. Need for the medical community to be educated on the Child Protection processes and their role in that process—emphasis on the role of the doctors to take protective custody.
5. Research should be done regarding why more infants are not tested for the presence of illegal drugs at birth? What are the reasons this is not more widespread testing? Do constitutional concerns exist with this?

B. Experimental, model and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques which may improve the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings, or enhance the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action in child abuse and neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, including enhancement of performance of court-appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, and which also ensure, procedural fairness to the accused.

a. Recommendations for System Reform:

1. Conduct a needs assessment into Forensic Interviewing and its current application and practice here in Wyoming. Engage with policy makers, at the state level, regarding Forensic Interviewing and the steps necessary for standardization including training and certification. Assess the need for and the available funding possible.
2. Forensic Interviewers should all adhere to national best practice.
3. The state should consider a thorough investigation into whether or not a non-offending parent was neglectful when a child fatality has occurred in the home.
4. Discussion and/or training needs to be done with members of the Wyoming legal system regarding Juvenile Court cases and concurrent Criminal Court case handling.

C. Reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children from abuse, particularly sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring procedural fairness to the accused.

a. DFS System Reform

1. Education of the medical community as it pertains to “Failure to Thrive” and how this circumstance is reportable to the Department of Family Services.
2. Beyond DFS Core Training, more continuing education needs to be done to ensure case workers are staying up on the latest trends. Training in more advanced topics than those typically offered at core should be offered to front line workers.
3. Work with DFS to research the abuse and neglect data related to the diversity of both the victims as well as the perpetrators.

4. Work with DFS to ensure the creation of aftercare plans for victims of abuse and neglect prior to case closure.
 5. Treatment/case plans should be written to include every child in the home.
 6. The statutory definition of “Serious Bodily Injury” and the definition used by DFS are different. In the opinion of the attorneys on the Task Force, this must change and the statutory definition should be used.
 7. The Task Force suggests that DFS change policy to encourage collection of information for the life of the case, not just at the beginning of the case, when the Predisposition Report is being generated. The information should include but is not limited to requesting updated Law Enforcement Records, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Records, Medical Records and School Records.
 8. The Task Force recommends DFS emphasize the importance of comprehensive data and information collection when the Predisposition reports are being developed. This should include but is not limited to Law Enforcement Contact and Background Information. This should also include records from both Juvenile and Criminal Court from all persons of record associated with each case.
 9. Improved communication between coroners and DFS. This communication would provide a more accurate picture of the true statistics and trends in our state.
- b. Recommendations for System Reform:
1. The Task Force recognizes the need for upgrades to Wyoming Criminal statutes regarding sexual abuse toward children in Wyoming as new trends emerge.
 2. As a system, are we doing a good job of providing Trauma-informed care? Is it readily available? Do we need more providers? More Funding? Advocate for more trauma informed training for our treatment providers. Trauma care is very dependent on the existence of a cooperative parent.
 3. Strangulation needs to be added to the Wyoming Child Protection statute. This will likely take an action plan and educational effort in order to get the state legislature to pass this change. Strangulation has very severe effects, whether the results are fatal or not.
 4. As a system, we must do a better job of addressing the needs of victims, specifically sexual abuse victims and their need for follow up with treatment
 5. A specific and comprehensive training regarding ICWA should be developed and provided to MDT Team Members throughout Wyoming. This should be done in partnership with the tribes.

6. The Task Force would like to receive a presentation on the screening tool(s) used by the Wyoming Department of Corrections, to determine what services are provided to adult offenders convicted for the sexual abuse of children.
7. Continue education for community partners and the Department of Family Services around the Wyoming Division of Victim Services Crime Victim Compensation program.

Discussion Points Identified through File Review Process

- School Counselors and Social Workers are vital to the safety of students in Wyoming. Some of the smaller school districts in Wyoming do not have the funding for counselors and social workers? How do these districts fill these gaps in service? The Task Force should engage with the Wyoming Department of Education to get a better understanding of the barriers to providing these services statewide. Possible issues may include lack of funding, and a lack of qualified applicants.
- A difference exists between the types of SANE Exams. Some nurses specialize in Pediatric SANE Exams, while others specialize in Adult Exams. Wyoming also suffers from a general lack of these types of professionals. What is the reason for the lack of Forensic Nurses in Wyoming?

Prevention Recommendations to be forwarded to the Children's Trust Fund for Consideration

- Recommendation-Further education needs to be done with parents regarding the proper uses of "Bumbo" chairs. They should not be used in the bathtub.
- Recommendation-Further education should be done related to the fact that infants should never be left in the bathtub unsupervised under any circumstances.
- Recommendation: Educational opportunities exist for public health personnel to provide additional education to families of infants and toddlers regarding proper care of their children.
- Recommendation-The Task Force continues to witness the trend of co-sleeping in Wyoming. The Task Force supports further education and public outreach efforts regarding the dangers of this.
 - Further public education should also be provided to highlight churches, organizations, etc. where parents can go locate cribs, child beds, etc., if they cannot afford them.

CJA Task Force Action Plan

As part of the on-going partnership with DFS, and in order to utilize CAPTA/CJA funds to accomplish our mission, the WyCRP is required to develop and implement an action plan, based on needs, trends, and risk factors identified by the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force, which is the entity

responsible for conducting child maltreatment fatality and major injury reviews. The CJA Task Force operates as a program of WyCRP and makes case-specific and systemic improvement recommendations based on case file reviews.

The Task Force has several recommendations on which improvement activities/action plans have already been initiated. Also, the Task Force Coordinator continues to engage CJA membership in developing measurable outcomes as it pertains to the recommendations that have been put forth. The Task Force will continue to collaborate with the training manager at DFS in order to implement training recommendations following each review. As it pertains to any recommendations regarding statutory changes, the Task Force will engage stakeholders and decision makers regarding these recommendations. Over the course of the next three year period the CJA Task Force will dedicate at least one meeting to developing and assessing measurable outcomes. The Task Force has also initiated conversations with Technical Assistance through The National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention. This activity will assist in developing goals and activities related to all current and future recommendations. Lastly, the Task Force will survey stakeholders and review other data sources relevant to child abuse and neglect in Wyoming to ensure this information can be incorporated into all recommendations.

Over the last three year period we have utilized the recommendations and funds to support national training for DFS staff and investigators, specifically they have engaged in a national investigative training provided by the University of Colorado Kempe Center as well as Wyoming's Joint Symposium on Children and Youth. The University of Colorado also provides a multidisciplinary review of child abuse and neglect cases and DFS continues to utilize this service for cases involving major injuries and fatalities. We intend on continuing these training opportunities and services to improve our investigations and outcomes from the investigative processes.

The Task Force will continue to advocate that the statutory definitions of "Serious Bodily Injury" and "Strangulation" be augmented if needed, and applied uniformly across the Wyoming Child Welfare System. SANE exams need to be completed in every case where child sexual abuse is suspected. "Identifying Child Abuse" training needs to be provided to all medical providers in Wyoming to ensure that more potential cases involving child abuse are brought to light. The Task Force will work with DFS to ensure that aftercare plans are completed for all victims of abuse and neglect prior to case closure. The question is often asked during file reviews as to whether or not Mandatory Reporters are really reporting as much as they should. Earlier and more frequent reporting means earlier intervention. The Task Force will advocate to state legislators for statutory change to include specific consequences for "Failure to Report." The Task Force will continue to support cost-effective educational opportunities such as the Wyoming Joint Symposium on Child and Youth. Such opportunities are useful in providing education to Judges, Attorneys and other professionals regarding current trends and best practices related to child welfare.

System Improvements in Past Three Years

The following recommendations were made by the CJA Task Force in the previous Three Year Assessment. These recommendations were meant to improve the child protection and criminal justice systems, and to ensure children involved are not re-victimized by these systems under these categories:

- A. Investigative, administrative and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment-related fatalities, and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as interstate, federal-state, and state-tribal, in a manner which reduces additional trauma to the child victim and the victim's family, and which also ensures procedural fairness to the accused.
 - a. Recommendations for System Reform:
 1. We strongly request the Department of Family Services (DFS) conduct a comprehensive assessment of caseload sizes statewide.
 - a. The Department of Family Services, through work with the University of Kansas, has developed a caseload report which accurately captures the average caseloads per district and office to allow for a more effective assessment of resources and resource allocation.
 2. Updates to the WyCAPS system are imperative. To have quality assurance for the Major Injury Case Reviews, standardizing of information is critical.
 - a. The Department of Family Services is currently in the process of designing and developing our new Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System. The system will be implemented on July 1, 2024.
 3. The WyCAPS system intake form should be included in the files to be reviewed by the Major Injury and Child Fatality Case Review.
 - a. The CJA Task Force Coordinator has updated the review process prior to the file review to include assessing if this information is present.
 4. Develop a standard definition of "Major Injury." This would include building a keyword search for WYCAPS, so when a particular term is included in the intake, the case is automatically marked for inclusion in the Major Injury Case Review.

- a. The Department of Family Services is currently in the process of designing and developing our new Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System. The system will be implemented on July 1, 2024.
5. Update policy to ensure adequate law enforcement and medical information is included in the files on all major injury and sexual abuse cases.
 - a. The CJA Task Force Coordinator has updated the review process prior to the file review to include assessing if this information is present.
6. Educate caseworkers on the availability of funds to be used to pay for the mental health needs of clients.
 - a. Wyoming Division of Victim Services will provide a recorded training as it pertains to their services and funding to all Department of Family Services' staff.
7. Develop a tracking mechanism for cases where abuse and neglect transpired, but no judicial involvement occurred.
 - a. The Department tracks all major injury and fatality related reports. District Managers are required to provide notification of these cases within 24 hours of receipt for tracking and monitoring purposes. This includes reports that are not investigated by law enforcement. These cases are included in the review process.
8. If a forensic interview was completed as part of the investigation, the DVD needs to be in the file and noted in the narrative of the file.
 - a. Additional reviews of the case file information have been implemented prior to dissemination for purposes of the review. The forensic interview information has been better notated in the case file.
9. Update the current Child Protection Team Statute (14-3-212) to include "Investigative Teams."
 - a. There have been discussions regarding adding this language to the statute within the Task Force. Further work is needed in this area.

10. Continue to support the annual Wyoming Joint Symposium on Children & Youth. This training provides comprehensive and cost-effective training in the state for child abuse professionals.
 - a. CJA funds continue to be used to support this effort. Several CJA Task Force members sit on the board for the symposium which allows for particular recommendations and areas to be advocated for each year.
11. Need for the medical community to be educated on the "Child Protection Process" and their role in that process—emphasis on the role of the doctors to take protective custody.
 - a. The Department of Family Services provided a mandatory reporting presentation at the Wyoming Medical Society in the fall of 2022, in addition to discussing the mandatory reporting requirements of medical professionals, the areas of identifying abuse and neglect were presented. In addition, the Department has provided 8 separate trainings specifically to medical staff statewide as it pertains to abuse and neglect.

In addition to the above mentioned activities, the CJA Task Force now also meets with the Department of Family Services training manager following each case file review. Recommendations from each quarterly review are provided to the training manager to ensure the areas specific to the agency can be addressed through training when appropriate.

B. Experimental, model and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques which may improve the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings, or enhance the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action in child abuse and neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, including enhancement of performance of court-appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, and which also ensure, procedural fairness to the accused.

System Reform:

1. Continue to improve the quality of forensic interviewing. With the emergence of forensic interviewing as a best practice, there also came the problem with ensuring high-quality interviews by trained individuals who participate in peer review and ongoing training.
 - a. Wyoming's Child Advocacy Centers of Wyoming are intending to implement a statewide peer review process beginning in 2023.

C. Reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children from abuse, particularly sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring procedural fairness to the accused.

System Reform:

1. Department of Family Services (DFS) and others involved in child abuse investigations develop a "Multi-Disciplinary Approach" to the investigation. The Task Force recommends a review of Title 14-Child Protection Teams. Interpretation of the statute differs among counties. Clarifying language to include, "Investigative Teams" and protocols for the teams as well.
 - a. The Department of Family Services has started providing training specific to major injuries and fatalities, which includes the importance of collaboration of all systems in these cases.
 - b. National Child Advocacy Center trainers will present at the Wyoming Joint Symposium on Children and Youth in 2023 with a focus on collaborative teams.
2. Explore existing states who have the ability of Caseworkers to take protective custody. Engage leadership of the Children's Justice Project (JCP) as well.
 - a. Due to agency staffing and current statutory requirements, this recommendation has not been met.
3. Explore how the CJA Task Force can have direct access to a record to do a comprehensive review of our major injury case reviews. Advocate for medical and law enforcement information to be included with DFS case files. To include EMS reports and autopsy reports.
 - a. The CJA Task Force Coordinator has implemented a process to assess for appropriate information in the case file prior to dissemination to the Task Force members for review. Case information is provided to the CJP representative for purposes of providing additional court information. EMS information was incorporated into the Department of Family Services investigation procedure to increase the documentation in the case files.

About Citizen Review Panels

Citizen Review Panels are mandated by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) - the key federal legislation addressing child abuse and neglect. CAPTA was originally enacted in P.L.

93-247 and was most recently reauthorized by S.1927-CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2021. CAPTA provides Federal funding to States in support of prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities and also provides grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations, including Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations, for demonstration programs and projects. CAPTA includes the following requirements, pertaining to Citizen Review Panels:

- States shall establish a minimum of three citizen review panels except those states receiving the minimum CAPTA allotment, which shall establish one citizen review panel.
- States may use existing panels established under state or federal law, such as child fatality panels or foster care review panels, if the existing panels can meet CAPTA requirements and states ensure the existing panels meet the requirements.
- Panel members shall be volunteers broadly representative of the community in which the panel is established and include members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect, and may include adult former victims of child abuse or neglect.
- Panels shall meet not less than once every three months.
- Panels shall examine the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies and evaluate the extent to which the agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities in accordance with CAPTA.
- Panels may examine specific cases, including child fatalities and near fatalities, and review the extent to which the child protective services system is coordinated with the state's foster care and adoption programs.
- Panels shall provide for public outreach and comment to assess the impact of current procedures and practices upon children and families in the community and to evaluate the extent to which agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities.
- Panels shall prepare an annual report containing a summary of the activities of the panel and make the report available to the public.
- Panels shall include recommendations to improve the child protective services system in the panel's annual report.
- States shall provide panel members access to case information if such information is necessary for the panel to carry out its functions.
- States shall provide staff assistance to a panel if the panel requests assistance with performing its duties.
- The appropriate state agency shall submit a written response, no later than six months after receiving the panel's recommendations, to the citizen review panel that describes whether or how the state will incorporate, where appropriate, panel recommendations.
- States shall submit citizen review panel reports to HHS annually (CAPTA).

Wyoming Citizen Review Panel Organization

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel is a federally mandated group of citizens who are responsible

for determining whether state and local agencies are effectively meeting child protective requirements pursuant to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and its subsequent amendments and reauthorizations.

Membership of the Panel is composed of volunteers who are broadly representative of Wyoming. It includes members having expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse/neglect, the juvenile justice system, and advocacy and service provision to at risk families. The Panel currently consists of 16 members, one full time Executive Director, and liaisons from the Wyoming Department of Family Services, Wyoming Department of Education, Wyoming Department of Corrections and Wyoming Department of Health. The 3 newest members were formally elected at the April 2023 Meeting.

Elections for the Officer positions of Chair and Treasurer are held in odd numbered years. Stacy Strasser has served as Chair since 2021 and will leave that capacity in June. Stacy has expressed she will be leaving the Panel altogether at that time to focus on her family. In June 2023, Jana Conine will transition to the position of Chair, from the position of Vice Chair. Unfortunately, due to this development, the position of Vice Chair remains vacant, as no Panel members wished to be nominated. WyCRP hopes to elect a new Vice Chair by the end of 2023. Jo Lee Schuler has served as Treasurer since December 2019. She is leaving the Panel altogether in June to focus on her family as well. Lynn Huylar was elected to replace her as Treasurer at the April Meeting, and will officially take office in June 2023. There were several changes in the Panel's general membership in the last 12 months. Member at large John Wright resigned in September due to time constraints. Member At Large Elizabeth Ridgeway was removed from the Panel last fall due to a lack of attendance. Members at Large Rachel McKen, Richard Nelson, and Carolyn Yeaman were all admitted to membership in April 2023. DFS DFS Liaison Laura Dobler will be transitioning to another position within the agency, and will leave the Panel as DFS Liaison during the fall of 2023. Either Lisa Bauman-Brown or Jennifer Walker will be taking over as DFS Liaison at that time.

Our membership is as follows:

- Stacy Strasser, Chair, Lander (Transitioning out of leadership in June 2023)
- Jana Conine, Cheyenne, Vice Chair, Cheyenne (Incoming Chair June 2023)
- Jo Lee Schuler, Treasurer, Cheyenne (Transitioning out of leadership in June 2023)
- Sarah Urbanek, Secretary, Cheyenne
- Lynn Huylar, Children's Justice Act Task Force Chair, Cheyenne (Incoming Treasurer in June 2023)
- Carissa O'Malley, Casper
- Emily Genoff, Casper
- Rachel McKen, Cheyenne
- Rose Fry, Casper
- Lynne Weidel, Cheyenne
- Carolyn Yeaman, Cheyenne
- Avelino Garza, Casper

- Maria Mendez, Casper
- Richard Nelson-Torrington
- Sara Serelson, Wyoming Children’s Trust Fund, Cheyenne
- Coltan Harrington, DOC Liaison, Cheyenne
- Laura Dobler DFS Liaison, Cheyenne (Transitioning out Fall 2023)
- Lisa Bauman-Brown, DFS Liaison, Casper (Transitioning in Fall 2023)
- Jennifer Walker, DFS Liaison, (Transitioning in Fall 2023)
- Ilaine Brown, WDE Liaison, Cheyenne
- Angie Van Houten, WDH Liaison, Cheyenne
- Bryan M. Cook, Executive Director, Cheyenne

In addition to its work relative to CAPTA, the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel is organized as a 501(c)3 charitable organization and administers the complementary program Parents As Teachers in 3 counties along the I-80 corridor in southern Wyoming. The Panel’s Executive Committee serves as the Board of Directors for the organization. WyCRP has 10 funded positions, with 9 of these currently being filled. One PAT Parent Educator position is currently open in Laramie County. Our PAT affiliate has 8 positions, The Office Manager and Executive Director occupy the other 2 positions.

Full WYCRP Panel meetings for 2022-2023

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting Type</u>	<u>Number of Attendees</u>
6/10/2022	Virtual/Conference Call	15
9/15/2022	Virtual/Conference Call	16
12/1/2022	Virtual/Conference Call	12
4/6/2023	Virtual/Conference Call	15

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Wyoming Citizen Review Panel 2022-23 Strategic Plan

Wyoming Citizen Review Panel 2022-2023 Strategic Plan Update

Panel Members in Attendance

In-Person Attendees: Stacy Strasser, Emily Genoff, Laura Dobler, Lynne Weidel, JoLee Schuler, Sara Serelson, Lynn Huylar, Ilaine Brown, Bryan Cook, Staff member Angy Fox. Virtual Attendees: Sarah Urbanek, Angie Van Houten, Maria Garza, Lorenza Trevizo, John Wright and Elizabeth Ridgeway, Rose Fry.

Mission

To facilitate public outreach and provide opportunities for citizens to evaluate and make recommendations to state and local child protection systems to ensure that these systems promote safety, well-being and permanency to the children and families of Wyoming.

Vision

WyCRP shall motivate citizen participation to meet the unmet needs of the child welfare system through positive change so Wyoming's children and families have the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

Purpose

The Citizen Review Panel is a federally mandated group of citizens who are responsible for determining whether state and local agencies are effectively meeting child protective responsibilities pursuant to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and subsequent amendments.

Through a review of service networks, policies, procedures, research and reviews of child protective and juvenile service cases the purpose of the Citizen Review Panel is to promote child safety, permanency and well-being for children and families.

Goal Strategies and Action Steps Accomplished (2021-2022)

Goal: Increase support and engagement for foster parents

1. Continue community café conversations
Completed. See page 2.

2. Incorporate foster parents into the committee
Laramie County CASA Director Sarah Urbanek is a licensed foster parent and joined the Panel in 2021. More foster parents will be recruited to the Panel in 2022-23.
3. Develop Social media posts for Foster Care Awareness Month with content promoting DFS activities
Completed. Hour-long foster parent support/recruiting video posted May 2021.
4. Partner foster parents with a mentor
Completed. Foster Parent Support Wyoming Facebook page created, and can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/790998955085155>. The Facebook page connects foster parents and provides resources.

Goal: Engage foster youth and identify gaps in communication and services

1. Recruit youth to support the Panel by sharing their experiences and stories, providing feedback, and participating in every activity and effort
Youth Advisory Group initiated. Goal extended in 2022-23 to increase Panel/youth interaction through appointment of a Youth Advisory Council liaison.
2. Provide a Strategic Plan Progress Review at board meetings to share needs, acknowledge past participation, and encourage continued participation
Completed. See attached 2021-22 Panel meeting minutes.
3. Develop a strategy for Foster Youth communications to modernize and share the effort requirements
Completed. Youth Advisory Group launched.

Goal: Build a stronger community through stakeholder identification and connection

1. Inventory stakeholder groups to understand what is important to each group (build off of the mission, vision, and purpose)
Completed.
 - i. WYCRP used foster parent survey results and discussions with DFS Foster Care Coordinators to identify foster parent needs.
 1. The following distribution was made: 40 lock boxes costing \$1,804.80, 65 fire extinguishers costing \$1,266.88, \$900 in \$25 gift cards, \$1,400 in \$50 gift cards, and \$1,600 in \$100 cards have been provided for foster families so far (total: \$3,900). In addition, \$450 in gift cards were distributed to Kinship and PAT families in need. Three requests for Pack n' Plays, Pull-ups, and groceries were fulfilled for families independently contacting WCTF/WYCRP (total: \$300.85).
 2. WYCRP partnered with Kids Deserve Dads to purchase curriculum books for the classes they provide to dads. WYCRP purchased 182 books (total: \$1,397.18).
 - a. WYCRP has spent \$9,119.68 to assist families. WYCRP still has \$6536.48 in lock boxes, fire extinguishers and gift card inventory available for distribution. \$9,184.41 remains available to assist families.

- ii. Foster Parent Support Wyoming is a private Facebook group for foster parents created and launched in Spring 2021. Members are approved by group administrators. To date, 92 members are participating.
 - iii. Dads' Engagement efforts began in July 2021 when Panel member John Wright filmed his Parent Voice Story as part of a public awareness campaign through the Wyoming Children's Trust Fund. A Dads' Advisory Group was formed and Dads' Community Cafes were planned.
 - 1. A total of 22 Dads' Community Cafes were held in nine DFS/Judicial Districts and offered to participants statewide December 2021-February 2022. A total of 15 Dads participated. Counties represented and attendees from each are as follows: Albany-2, Sweetwater-1, Johnson-2, Fremont-1, Laramie-4, Natrona-2, Hot Springs-1, Platte-1, Goshen-1. Attendees received incentive gift cards.
 - 2. WYCRP will invite participating Dads to become members of the Dads' Advisory Group.
 - iv. Youth Advisory Group began meeting monthly in August 2021. Youth are expected to own and run the group. Members have redrafted the Wyoming Youth Bill of Rights.
 - 1. 28 youth were recruited and 22 youth have actively participated in seven meetings held to date. Attendees receive \$100/meeting as incentive. The counties represented and members from each are as follows: Goshen-3, Weston-1, Converse-2, Crook-1, Laramie-2, Natrona-5, Teton-2, Fremont-4, Washakie-1 and Hot Springs-1.
 - 2. The advisory group for this effort is made up of representatives from WYCRP, DFS, Goodwill Independent Living, Wyoming Children's Trust Fund and the Wyoming Guardian Ad Litem Program.
 - v. Birth Parent Community Café meetings organized by WYCRP, the Wyoming Children's Trust Fund, and other partners were held in late 2020-early 2021. Participants suggested more work is needed in the state with Spanish speaking community members.
 - 1. Spanish Speaking Parent Community Cafes' were held in Casper and Cheyenne in 2021.
2. Assess what information is accessible, available, and what is needed (gaps, successes, etc.).
 Completed. Dr. Richard Berry collaborated with WYCRP to create social media videos with foster parenting tips.
 - i. One video was filmed via Facebook Live in May 2021, and a second, previously recorded video was shared with WYCRP.
 - ii. Videos were posted on the WYCRP and Foster Parent Support Wyoming Facebook pages.
 - iii. WYCRP shares Foster Parent College online resources with foster parents.
 - iv. The DFS Foster Parent Coordinators collaborate with mental health professionals to produce parenting videos shared on the WYCRP Social media pages. This is a continuing partnership.
3. Review and update the stakeholder assessment survey.

A foster parent stakeholder survey was completed January 2021. The results of this survey guided work with foster parents (described on page 2). Update planned in 2022.

4. Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan.
 - a. Completed. Foster Parent Support Wyoming, a private Facebook Group for foster parents, was launched by WYCRP in Spring 2021. Prospective members ask to join and are reviewed and approved by administrators. As of March 2022, 92 members had joined.
 - b. Youth Advisory Group launched.
5. Leverage online methods (including social media) for stakeholder survey and engagement.

Completed.

 - i. Website updated
 - ii. Foster Parent Support Page on Facebook developed.
 - iii. Facebook Live Foster Parent Discussion held April 7, 2021. Four Foster Parents and two DFS Foster Care Coordinators attended. Event was recorded and remains on the WYCRP social media pages.
6. Engage with stakeholders where they are, based on the best communication for them.

Completed. Community Cafes (see page 2), Foster Parent Support Page on Facebook developed (see page 3), Youth and Dad's Advisory Groups launched (see page 3).

Goals (2022-2023)

The Panel updated the strategic plan goals and identified priority tasks under the existing goals with three primary themes: Communication, Stakeholder Engagement, and Sustainability. Goals will be reviewed quarterly at the 2022-23 Panel meetings.

Each work group will meet monthly and will identify priorities, action plans with implementation steps, timelines, and task assignments. Work group leaders will report quarterly to the Panel at 2022-23 meetings on work group progress. Work group assignments outstanding: Sherilyn England, Elizabeth Ridgeway.

Goal: Increase support and engagement for foster parents

1. Stakeholder engagement: Identify gaps in foster support and engagement (i.e. foster parents with reactive attachment disorder diagnosed children). Recruit foster parents to the Panel.
Lead: Stacy Strasser. Work group: Laura Dobler, Sara Serelson, Bryan Cook, John Wright, Lorenza Trevizo, Carissa O'Malley, Jana Conine, Rose Fry, Jo Lee Schuler.
2. Communication: Based on known gaps, create opportunities to connect people and resources.
Lead: Bryan Cook. Work group: Laura Dobler, Stacy Strasser, Ilaine Brown.
3. Sustainability: Identify resource needs, pursue funding/needs/connections to fulfill identified support gaps.
Lead: Lynn Huylar. Work group members: Emily Genoff, Lynne Weidel, Sara Urbanek.

Goal: Engage foster youth and identify gaps in communication and services

1. *Stakeholder Engagement*: Create a foster youth vacancy on the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel (Panel approval) Recruit a Youth Advisory Group liaison for the Panel.
Lead: Stacy Strasser. Work group: Laura Dobler, Sara Serelson, Bryan Cook, John Wright, Lorenza Trevizo, Carissa O'Malley, Jana Conine, Rose Fry, Jo Lee Schuler.
2. *Communication*: Engage youth in social platform posts to include student-created videos, with relevant messaging on youth task force identified topics.
Lead: Bryan Cook. Work group: Laura Dobler, Stacy Strasser, Ilaine Brown.
3. *Sustainability*: Identify funding opportunities to support stakeholder engagement and communication initiatives.
Lead: Lynn Huylar. Work group members: Emily Genoff, Lynne Weidel, Sara Urbanek.

Goal: Build a stronger community through stakeholder identification and connection

1. *Stakeholder Engagement*: Connect stakeholder groups with fundraising, by offering ticketed events featuring stakeholders (i.e. homeless youth testimonial movie premiere).
Lead: Stacy Strasser. Work group: Laura Dobler, Sara Serelson, Bryan Cook, John Wright, Lorenza Trevizo, Carissa O'Malley, Jana Conine, Rose Fry, Jo Lee Schuler.
2. *Communication*: Develop plan to tie fundraising to increased knowledge of the CRP's mission, vision, purpose and activities not specific to Parents As Teachers and Kinship Advocacy programs.
Lead: Bryan Cook. Work group: Laura Dobler, Stacy Strasser, Ilaine Brown.
3. *Sustainability*: Develop plan to expand CRP's funding base to create opportunities for events and activities not specific to PAT and Kinship programs. Leverage online opportunities for fundraising "events" that cost less, engage all stakeholders and generate funding.
Lead: Lynn Huylar. Work group members: Emily Genoff, Lynne Weidel, Sara Urbanek.

Goal: Children's Justice Act Task Force stakeholder identification and connection

Lead: Lynn Huylar. Work group: Bryan Cook, Laura Dobler, Sara Serelson.

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Attachment 1

Wyoming Citizen Review Panel Quarterly Meeting June 10, 2022

Virtual Meeting

In attendance:

Jana Conine

Emily Genoff

Laura Dobler

Jo Lee Schuler

Sarah Urbanek

Sara Serelson

Bryan Cook

Chandra Ortiz

Lorenza Trevizo

Maria Garza

Angie Van Houten

John Wright

Carissa O'Malley

Angy Fox

Lynne Weidel attended by phone

Motion made to approve March 2022 Panel Meeting Minutes. Motion was approved by unanimous vote. approved

PAT National Conference – Monterey, CA

- 25 states were represented at the conference. Bryan and Emily attended to represent WYCRP. Funded through our CAPTA contract.

- o We were able to network with representatives from other states during the sessions and during the family style meals.
 - We spoke with other states about the structure and functions of their CRPs.
 - Many states have multiple CRPS. Many CRPs are actually overseen and run by the state agencies.
 - Few of the other states represented have their CJA Task Force set up to function under their CRP.
 - Got to Meet Lincoln, from Lincoln Nebraska. He facilitates a nationally recognized Youth Advisory Council. Ours is loosely patterned on their example.

CRP May Financials were presented electronically to members beforehand. No questions were raised. These reports were approved by Panel vote.

Credit Card statements and receipts are sent to Jana and Jo Lee monthly for review. Panel Members have no issues with this process.

WYOGives

- Panel members were challenged to raise/donate \$100 each, emailing me with their pledge, and Angy will give access for them to be able to set their profiles
- Sarah S. suggested upping the donation challenge to \$150 so we employees don't feel as if they need to donate \$50
- Jana has pledged a % of goodwill sales to Wyogives

Directors Report

- Annual Report
 - o Bryan will be getting the first copy of the annual report printed and sent to DFS Administration before the June 30, 2022 deadline.
 - o Panel Membership was presented the final draft of the report and the report was approved by vote.
 - o CAPTA activities
 - o CJA Taskforce-Lynn was absent today. Bryan provided a short update. Next review meeting is June 23. 4 cases to be reviewed.
 - Team is presenting recommendations during a session at the joint symposium.
 - Bylaws are being drafted.
 - New members are currently being recruited.

- 3 counties have been identified to receive training on the “Collaborative Model” to be used when investigating these cases. CJA funds will be used. Bryan, Lynn and Laura are working to set this up.
- Foster Care Coordinators-Bryan continues to purchase fire extinguishers and lock boxes for the foster families. These are shipped directly to the coordinators. In May, Bryan distributed \$7,000.00 in gift cards to the coordinators at their annual in-person meeting.
- Youth Advisory-Continues to meet monthly. In person summit in Riverton on July 19 and 20.
- Dads Group-Continues to meet to discuss ways to work with dads throughout the state.

Sheri England has stepped down as Panel Secretary. Donations for a thank you gift for Sheri – to be sent to Stacy.

Sarah Urbanek was nominated as and approved by vote to be the Panel Secretary – this is a two year term

Kinship

- New Counties and people
- Bighorn didn’t know who they were but had brochures out, Chandra went and met with them to promote the program
 - Giving the program a face
 - The merging with Montana going well
 - Over 250 participants
 - Right time education – 10-minute parenting skills
 - WY joint Symposium presentation
 - Focusing on clientele and getting reporting in, so no 5K this year
 - Biggest areas for referrals have been from the schools
 - Personal appearances have made a huge impact
 - Univ. Of Washington – Angelique stated that Wyoming and Montana are working so well together, they can hopefully teach other states how well it’s been put to
 - Doing their own case managers
 - ICC Meetings and Child Forums on Fridays

PAT Program

- Formally contracting with DFS
 - Plans of Safe Care(POSC)Hours started getting billed in April
 - First of August, all billing will go to DFS
- Site visit in Lander 6/20 – 6/22
 - PAT Collaboration ~ Technical assistance
- Two new staff members
 - Megan – Laramie County – start date 6/27
 - Jennifer- Sweetwater County – start date 6/23
- POSC- what will be expected of PAT educators?
 - New to Wyoming- CAPTA (Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Act)
 - Incorporate partners & Home visiting provider

- o Report if substance abuse/child of user
- o Engage them in education curriculum
- o Making plans for families who fall into the criteria
- o Substance using mothers
 - Laura to share work groups
 - Stacy knowing of 8 families who would fall under the criteria
 - Laura approved purchasing \$1000 of gift cards for Natrona County Community Baby Shower and \$1000 toward a similar function in Laramie County in August 2022.

Sub-committee Updates

- Stakeholders Meeting/ committee for July?
- Social media/outreach-set for July?
- Fundraising-Lynn will set up a meeting.

Recruitment for new panel members

- DOC Liaison
- WDH representative
- DOC representative
- Sara Serelson mentioned a policy of 3 missed meetings and you're dismissed from the Panel by vote. This is included in the Panel By-Laws and these will again be circulated to all members as a refresher.

Agency Updates

- Laura – DFS
 - o Flyers, building into practice
 - o Bryan and Laura have begun work on CAPTA Contract and Statement of Work for 2022-2023 Contract.
 - o Lots of work implementing Families First is currently being done.
 - o Prevention Services
 - Laura is making 5 presentations at Symposium
 - o 4th round of CFSR – big federal review
 - Panel involvement with Bryan and Laura
 - Talking to families
 - Professional stakeholders
 - o New data collection system is finally being developed to replace WyCAPS.
- Sarah - Children's Trust Fund
 - o Pediatric, mental care grant
 - Coordinator – new position needing filled
 - Three other positions are looking to be filled
 - \$440K per year for 5 years
 - Infant covid vaccinations in the works – hopefully by end of June

- Infant formula shortage
 - Huge impact on WIC who has a contract with Abbott
 - Looking to allow different options to mothers for different brands and sizes
 - Maternal and child health unit applied for granting
 - Safe Sleep
 - Sleep sacks from WDH to CTF

Bryan

- Social media updates
- Next meeting September 15, 2022.

Meeting Adjourned.



**Wyoming Citizens Review
Panel
Quarterly Meeting
September 15, 2022**

Call to Order:

Present: Stacy Strasser, John Wright, Lynn Huylar, Sarah Urbanek, Lynne Weidel, Jo Lee Schuler, Emily Genoff, Lorenza Trevizo, Maria Garza, Angie Van Houten, John Wright, Carissa O’Malley

Non voting Panel Members Present: Laura Dobler (agency representative), Bryan Cook (staff), Angy Fox (staff), Chandra Ortiz, KCOW.

Introduction of Panel Members: Everybody introduced themselves and their role with the WCRP.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Bryan mentioned that he likes the new layout of the minutes and informed the panel that he and Sarah U. will be working on improving the meeting agenda as well.

ACTION: John made the motion to approve the meeting minutes from June. Lynn Huylar seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

Financial Reports:

Bryan raised the question as to whether the whole panel needed to see every month of the financial statements or if they would prefer to see a quarterly summary of the finances. John suggested, and Lynn Huylar agreed that the panel, as a whole, should receive quarterly summaries and that the executive committee should do monthly reviews. Bryan asked Stacy to engage with Jana to ask her opinion on what should go into the quarterly summary. Lynne Weidel questioned what all would be included in the summary report. Stacy stated that she will work with Angy Fox to make those decisions and that they will share with the panel before the next meeting. Lynne Weidel also asked if WCRP has a finance committee, to which the answer was that the executive committee acts in this role. Additionally, Bryan shared with the panel about the process of sending everything over to Jolee and Jana for their review on a monthly basis and that the executive committee then reviews everything as well.

ACTION: Jolee made the motion to approve the August financials. Lynne Weidel seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Sub-committee Updates

- Stakeholders Meeting: Stacy has not been able to set a meeting yet but will be working on getting one scheduled.
- Marketing- Bryan shared that he has been doing the day to day of these items
- Fundraising Committee- had a meeting and has a fundraising plan and goal coming up.
 - Upcoming Fundraiser
 - Goal is to raise \$2,000 by the end of the year
 - Lynn Huylar shared that as panel members, we are fiscally responsible for WCRP and we have to help in the fundraising efforts.
 - Bryan shared that the goal is to eventually earn enough money to have 1 month of expenses in reserves.
 - The upcoming fundraiser will be to sell raffle tickets for 2 baskets. One will be a basket that is geared towards men while the other will be geared towards women.
 - If any panel members have something that they would be willing to donate, please reach out to us. You can also contribute money.
 - The panel will assemble the baskets and create raffle tickets.
 - Each panel member will be responsible for selling \$100 worth of raffle tickets
 - Tickets are \$5/ticket or 5 for \$20.
 - WyoGives Update
 - Last year WCRP raised \$2,565
 - This year WCRP raised \$6,375
 - Bryan and Angy thanked the panel members for their help and contributions during WyoGives
 - Angy is already brainstorming ideas to make next year even more successful.
 - Other Fundraising Updates

- Bryan and Sarah U. will meet with Alf to discuss when WCRP can expect to have a Thankful Thursday.
- Bryan also brought up wanting to explore different grant opportunities.

Program Updates

- PAT Program
 - PAT is fully staffed now that they have hired Jennifer in Sweetwater County and Ellie in Laramie County. Both are working to be ready to completely take on current and new clients. Jennifer is expected to be ready in November and Ellie soon after.
 - PAT program's recruitment efforts have been paying off. They are seeing growing waitlists in all counties, and they are getting more referrals from other agencies.
 - PAT program has finalized the spend down money through the Children's Trust Fund.
 - PAT program has identified a need for many families, which is cleaning supplies and basic cleaning skills. They are partnering with the PAT National Center for funds to pay for these items.
- Kinship
 - Received another year of funding from the federal government.
 - Chandra made a presentation to the Ways and Means committee on Capitol Hill to talk about the importance of continued funding for the Kinship Navigator programs.
 - 128 families served
 - 208 kinship children in care
 - Grandparents make up the largest group for kinship caregivers
 - Most people are learning about the program through social service agencies, DFS, and schools
 - The annual income of caregivers is between \$12,000 and \$30,000 and the average age of kinship caregivers is 50-69
 - This will be the last meeting that Gabby and Chandra will be involved in as the program is moving under Wyoming 211. However, we are all sure that we will continue to have collaborative relationships with them as we move forward.

Agency Updates

- Laura – DFS
 - WyCaps will become WySafe. This is a 2-year project to make this transition and should be implemented by 2024.
 - The new program will allow for various stakeholders, caseworkers, parents, foster parents, etc. to access this platform to find information related to the case. Things like MDTs and court hearings will likely be uploaded into the platform for easy access by all parties.
 - Laura asked if anybody has any suggestions for this project, to please reach out to her to share your ideas.
 - Bryan also shared that the panel will have an opportunity to share feedback for this new project.
 - Federal Review

- Last one was in 2016.
 - DFS in contracting with another agency for the review
 - There will be a state level review and then a statewide case review
 - Laura shared that there will be lots of activities that can involve may panel members for engagement opportunities and that she will let Bryan know when those opportunities arise.
 - During the case review, 72 cases from DFS offices around the state will be reviewed.
- o Job Openings: There are lots of openings throughout DFS.
- Sarah - Children's Trust Fund- No update at this time.

Executive Director's Report:

- Annual Report
 - o The annual report has been submitted, and we are now just waiting for the AG approval. One that is done, Bryan and Stacy will sign it.
 - Bryan also emailed out the response letter from DFS about the annual report. It contained very positive feedback from DFS. Laura also expressed gratitude for the youth leadership council.
- CAPTA Spenddown Activities from 2021-2022 Contract Year.
 - o We will continue to use these funds for gift cards, fire extinguishers, and lock boxes to help families out.
 - o Some of the monies will also be used for an in person "Dad's Den" on October 4th @ LCCC
 - We have partnered with Cen\$ible Nutrition to hold a cooking class for dads.
 - o Some of the monies have also helped with groceries, bus passes, and helped kids with ethnic hair get it styled.
 - o Stacy asked if it is possible to help spread the money around to all counties throughout the state.
 - Bryan responded that he is meeting with all of the foster care coordinators across the state in October. He will be taking some of the CAPTA money items with him to disperse to those coordinators and also will share with them how to get in touch with him. Specifically, gift cards will be distributed.
 - o Bryan also shared that he has had lots of requests from Laramie County because the flex funds ran out in this county and many caseworkers contacted him directly to help with needed items.
- Youth Advisory Council
 - o Did not meet in August due to the In-Person meeting for the entire WYAC body in Riverton in July. Bryan continues to work with the group to establish their framework.
- CJA Task Force
 - o The quarterly review will be on 9/22/2022 and they will be reviewing 3 cases.

- o New Task Force Members are needed. Below is a list of specific fields of expertise where active/engaged members are needed:
 - Forensic nursing
 - Pediatrics
 - Mental health
 - Law enforcement
 - Judges
 - Defense attorneys

Meeting Wrap-up:

We are looking for more panel members. If you have anybody who might be interested, reach out to Bryan. John also mentioned a lady at Natrona County Interfaith, named Lindsay, who he believes would be helpful for the panel. John shared her contact information with Bryan.

Next Meeting: December 1, 2022, from 1-5pm

Adjournment: There was no further discussion.

ACTION: A motion was made to end the meeting. **Motion carries.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Urbanek
WYCRP Secretary



**Wyoming Citizens Review
Panel
Quarterly Meeting
December 1, 2022**

Call to Order:

Present: Stacy Strasser, Lynn Huylar, Sarah Urbanek, JoLee Schuler, Jana Conine, Emily Genoff, Angie Van Houten, Carissa O'Malley, Rose Fry

Non voting Panel Members Present: Laura Dobler (agency representative), Bryan Cook (staff), Angy Fox (staff).

Agenda Updates: none

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

No conversation was had about the minutes

ACTION: Rose made the motion to approve the meeting minutes from September. JoLee seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

Financial Reports:

Bryan and Angy Fox created a new summary report from Quick books. The panel reviewed financials from July through October. Angy explained that there appears to be a profit, however, this is DFS spend down money that has been or will be spent. Bryan shared that he spent some of the DFS spend down money buying gift cards for foster parents, however, these purchases have not shown on the credit card statements. Lynn Huylar asked if WCRP utilizes a debit card or credit cards. Bryan shared that WCRP has several credit cards and no debit card. Conversation was had regarding whether there was a benefit to having a debit card. Due to the delay regarding reimbursements, it was decided that credit cards are a safer option to utilize.

Lynn Huylar also commented that it is okay for the panel to have a profit. Angy expressed that when there is real profit, it is transferred to the savings account for reserves. Angy also shared that for most financial statements, she wants to have it zeroed out.

Bryan continues to send monthly financial statements to JoLee and Jana, as well as the monthly credit card statements. They review and approve these on a monthly basis.

ACTION: Sarah made the motion to approve the July, August, September, and October financials. Rose seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Sub-committee Updates

- Fundraising
 - Stacy shared the citizens review panel is largely in charge of reviewing DFS Practices and making recommendations on those practices. When the McVee funding came along, it brought the opportunity for programming such as P.A.T. Stacey posed the panel a question on how they would like to move forward. If the panel decided to take a more traditional approach, fundraising would not be necessary. However, if the panel would like to run programs, fundraising would be essential. Stacey also clarified the difference between the panel and a traditional board of a nonprofit. Lynn Huylar appreciated the differential. Laura expressed that there will be a lot of upcoming partnership opportunities for the panel with DFS. Angy raised concerns regarding the delay in payment of invoices and believes that the panel still needs some fundraising efforts to build reserves. Bryan echoed both Angy's and Laura's positions stating that it is hard with the delayed payment of invoices and that there will be lots of work in the coming months with DFS. More discussion was had with

several panel members regarding the expectations surrounding fundraising and that it needs to be more specific about the expectations. Emily also shared that it is important to curtail monetary needs with the strategic plan and that she believes grants would be more beneficial for the strategic goals. Additional conversation was had with several panel members discussing what it would mean for WCRP if we did not run the PAT program. Bryan and Angy shared that McVee funding, which pays for some of PAT, covers many of our monthly expenses such as rent, most of Angy's position, copier, Spectrum, Office Supplies, and Insurance. The conversation was tabled for the remainder of the meeting, with Stacey asking panel members to think of what the panel should do moving forward, and it will be discussed at the next quarterly panel meeting.

Program Updates

- PAT Program
 - PAT is doing well and is in Sweetwater, Albany, and Laramie County. They have been providing gift cards for groceries for families in need. All counties now have a waiting list. However, families on the wait lists are invited for group meetings, which PAT has seen an increase in attendance at these meetings.
 - Gracie Brown is leaving PAT at the end of December and moving. PAT is actively recruiting a full-time entry-level parent educator. Bryan will share the job posting when it is available.
- Kinship
 - Has officially transitioned completely under Wyoming 211 and is no longer under the WCRP.
 - Bryan will continue to volunteer on their panel.
- CJA Task Force
 - Has meet to talk about bylaws and recruitment of new members. The team seems to really be coming together.
 - Will meet in January for the next case review
 - The taskforce is due for a 3-year assessment in May, the taskforce will also start this process after the first of the year.
 - Angie Van Houten offered a rep. from the WDH to join CJA

Agency Updates

- Laura – DFS
 - Currently in the refinement process on the data collection software.
 - The positions are open: Data Manager, CQI Manager, Clinical Position
 - Federal Review- again echoed the opportunities that will be available for the panel during this process
- Sarah - Children's Trust Fund- No update at this time.
- Angie Van Houten- WDH
 - Recently released a Young Adult survey that is open until the end of December
 - Increasing focus on the Bright Futures Guideline
 - WIC is developing a campaign to increase participation

Executive Director's Report: Bryan emailed his reports prior to the meeting, these were not discussed in great length. A summary of his reports was shared with the panel and no questions were raised.

- CAPTA Contract is signed
- Youth Advisory meeting on 11/30
 - Membership and buy in seem to be waning (on average 5-7 kids are participating)
 - Despite the wane in membership and buy in, the group did a lot of work this year.
 - The advisory group meet and discussed some of the issues the kids had shared
 - Contact w/ DFS worker
 - Sibling Visits
 - Privacy during GAL meetings
 - Respite- not having bed or clothes or appointments that aren't kept during that time.
 - Starting in January, foster care coordinators will attend a meeting with youth and hear feedback
 - Youth have expressed that they would like to meet in person
- Child and Family Service Review
 - WCRP will have more involvement in this process
 - Laura and Bryan are working on a survey for youth, which they believe will get better input if it is sent to WCRP instead of DFS.
 - There will be more focus on outreach with birth families and foster families.
- DFS Spend Down
 - Bryan delivered \$8,800 in gift cards to the foster care coordinators.
- Foster Parent Support Group
 - Bryan and Sarah will be meeting to discuss creating a foster parent support group/a process to engage foster families to identify needs so that can be shared with DFS. Sarah shared that she had some people reach out needing support services for foster families. Sarah shared some of the experiences have been had by foster families lately and that it is causing foster parents to want to quit. Rose echoes the sentiment of the importance of helping foster parents.
- Dads
 - Bryan shared that he is working with Joe Belcher (GAL) to find ways to engage single dads.
 - Bryan is still working with Censible Nutrition to create an event for parents in Laramie County. The kitchens and the LCCC Pathfinder building would be used to help teach families how to cook a meal.

Meeting Wrap-up:

Stacey shared her 2-year term is up and will be stepping down. JoLee also shared that she will be stepping down as well. Nominations for these executive panel members are due by the end of February, and a vote will be held at the March meeting.

Bryan also shared that we need to recruit more non-professional panel members, specifically, would love to have youth voices and foster parent voices.

Next Meeting: March 2, 2023.

Adjournment: There was no further discussion.

ACTION: A motion was made to end the meeting. **Motion carries.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Urbanek
WYCRP Secretary



Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 1:04pm by Stacey. Bryan noted a change to the agenda under agenda item #11. Bryan wanted to add information about the 3 year CJA assessment.

Present: Jana Conine, Angie Van Houten, Rose Fry, Bryan Cook, Jennifer Walker, Lynne Weidel, Lisa Bauman-Brown, Sarah Urbanek, Emily Genoff, Illaine Brown, Angy Fox, Laura Dobler, Lynn Huylar, Stacy Strauser, Sara Serelson

Introductions: With potentially new panel members in attendance, each person took turns introducing themselves to the group.

Minutes:

The December Panel Meeting Minutes were reviewed prior to the meeting by all panel members.

Action: Rose made a motion to approve the December Panel Meeting Minutes. Lynne W. seconded the motion. No further discussion was had. **Motion was carried.**

Financial Report:

- Jo Lee and Jana have been provided with credit card statements and receipts since the last meeting, and no concerns have been noted.
- The profit and loss reports for December, January, and February were sent out to the panel prior to the meeting for review. The March statement has not been finalized and will be reviewed at the next panel meeting.

- Angy Fox mentioned that the small amount of cents that are on the statements were accrued from interest.
- Lynne W. asked if there was a YTD statement that the panel could review. Bryan stated that those reports are available and he and Angy will send them out early next week.
- Bryan stated that he and Angy continue to work the internal processes regarding financials. Bryan continues to work with Jana and Angie Van Houten to refine those processes.
- Angy F. stated that they have applied or intend to apply for several grants.
 - 3/15/2023- Submitted an application for the Wyoming Community Foundation Grant
 - 3/28/2023- Submitted an application for Francis R. Doing Grant
 - Upcoming Grant Opportunities:
 - 1st Interstate Bank: they have requested a password so they can apply for this grant
 - Gutherie Family Foundation
 - Corretta Lynn Scott- Free Books

Action: Sarah U. made a motion to approve the December, January, and February statements. Lynne W. seconded the motion. No further discussion was had. **Motion was carried.**

- Lisa Libraries- Free Books

Parents as Teachers (PAT)

- Bryan shared that Josie was unavailable for today’s meeting as it had to be rescheduled.
- Bryan shared that PAT is in Laramie, Albany, and Sweetwater Counties. The program numbers are looking great.
- There is an open position in Laramie County, and recruitment efforts for this position have begun.
- Bryan will send out Josie’s March updates once he has them.
- Sweetwater’s PAT program will be moving to a new office in late May or early June.
- National PAT conference will be in October in New Orleans. Funding has already been allocated for the conference.
- Josie is using ARPA funds to help families with cleaning supplies.
- There is a community baby shower in the works for Laramie County this fall. Lynn H. shared that the Child Protection Team (CPT) would like to partner for the baby shower and may have funds available to help.
- Illaine stated that WDE has a literacy program that could be a partnership for PAT. Bryan will make sure that Josie gets connected to this resource.

Nominations and Elections

- Currently, Stacy and JoLee have reached the end of their terms and are looking to step away from the panel, opening up the Chair and Treasurers seats on the panel.
- Sara S. asked for clarification on who is eligible for the positions. Bryan stated that there was nothing in the By-Laws that prohibits the partner agencies from holding this positions, but there is also nothing that specifically allows for it and suggested that this be something that is reviewed in the future.
- Stacy asked if anybody is interested in the chair position. Jana offered to move from co-chair to chair.
- Illaine suggested that new members coming on might be interested in the treasurer position. Lynn H. offered to act as interim treasurer until the position could be filled.

Action: Lynne w. made a motion to move Jana into the chair position. Sarah U. seconded the motion. No further discussion was had. **Motion was carried.**

Action: Jana made a motion to have Lynn H. act as interim treasurer. Rose seconded the motion. No further discussion was had. **Motion was carried.**

New Panel Member Applications:

- Bryan gave a brief explanation of each of the applicants. Applications were emailed to the panel for review prior to the meeting. The three new applicants are Rachel, Caroline, and

Action: Lynn W. made the motion to approve Rachel as a new panel member. Emily seconded the motion. No further discussion was had. **Motion was carried.**

Action: Lynn H. made the motion to approve Caroline as a new panel member. Sarah U. seconded the motion. No further discussion was had. **Motion was carried.**

Action: Emily made the motion to approve Richard as a new panel member. Jana seconded the motion. No further discussion was had. **Motion was carried.**

Richard.

Youth Advisory Council

- In May, the Youth Advisory Council will be meeting with CASA across the state to work collaboratively to improve CASA services for youth.

CAPTA Funding:

- The Capta report is due in June. Bryan will provide the draft of the report by the end of April for edits. Then in May, Bryan will send it to DFS for their review. The final submission deadline is June 30th.

CJA Taskforce:

- The CJA Task Force met in March and is officially fully staffed.
- Lynn H. described the taskforce and their role for the panel.

- There is a 3-year assessment coming due. This assessment must report on recommendations, meetings, action plans, how money is spent, and whether the required members have been obtained. Bryan stated the assessment is basically complete. DFS is reviewing it now before the final submission.
- Additionally, the annual application is coming due. Annually, Bryan works with DFS to complete the application that is due May 30th.
- The annual National CJA task force meeting is in May and Bryan will be attending that this year.

Strategic Plan:

- The CAPTA agreement requires the strategic plan be reviewed and updated by June 30th.
- Stacy suggested that all plane members review it and offer suggestions via email. Bryan stated that this review would need to be completed by April 28th. Additionally, Bryan will resend the Strategic Plan so that everybody has easy access to it for review.

The Future of the Panel

- Stacy posed the question to the panel about whether the panel should continue as is or should we expand by fundraising and hosting programs.
- Bryan shared the historical context of this conversation and suggested that here should be a taskforce to have this conversation. Jana suggested a new taskforce to be created and a further conversation be had in June.
- Sara S. asked if there were any concerns that the panel is not meeting statute requirements. Bryan shared that he is not aware of a problem and Laura also echoed that sentiment.
- Emily shared that it is beneficial for us to revisit this topic periodically.
- Bryan stated that if anybody is interested in joining the taskforce, to please email him.

Parent Surveys and Community Cafés

- 67 responses were received from the parent survey that was sent out. These surveys identified the top 3 topics that parents were most interested in learning about. These areas included: mental health, emotional wellbeing, and discipline.
- After receiving the survey's Bryan and Sara S. worked closely to develop training for these topics. They then shared the training with Dr. Barry, who approved them.
- The trainings were held, however, they were not well attended. That being said, the training has been recorded and emailed out to the people who participated in the survey.
- Stacy asked if the recordings could be accessed by others and Bryan stated he will make them available via email.
- Sara S. also shared that they partnered with Uplift and were able to make connections through them.

Directors Report

- Bryan stated that most topics have already been covered in the meeting and asked if anybody had any questions. No questions arose.

- Bryan highlighted the fact that he continues to meet with the Youth Advisory Council on a monthly basis. And that they are planning the 2nd annual in-person meeting in June in Casper.

DFS Update:

- Laura recently transitioned to the data management team and is very excited for this new role. Lisa has taken over the CQI/CSR position. There is an assessment coming up in June.
- Mock case reviews will occur in April, May, and June, in preparation for the review in June.
- The June review will determine whether it is a state or federally led review.

Children's Trust Fund:

- Sara S. shared that 2.75 million ARPA fund dollars have been allocated to implement and expand Family Resource Centers in Wyoming.
- Sara S. also shared the efforts she and her team have undertaken for Prevent Child Abuse Awareness Month. There is a toolkit that anybody can access at pcawy.org/cap-month-toolkit1
- One big thing that people are doing is wearing blue on Wednesdays during the month of April.
- The Children's Trust fund is also offering several kinds of webinars/training in the month. Safe Sleep Training and Protective Factor training are upcoming.

WDE

- Shared that the new SuperIntendent of Public Instruction has been in office for about three months.
- Shared that the legislative session was able to pass many things through, so they will have a larger update in June.

Wyoming Department of Health

- Angie will send the update to Bryan and will send out to the rest of the panel.

Meeting Wrap-up:

Next meeting: TBD

Action: Emily made a motion to end the meeting. The motion was seconded. No further discussion was had. **Motion was carried.**

Meeting was adjourned at 2:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Urbanek
WYCRP Secretary