

Wyoming Citizen Review Panel 2017-2018 Annual Report



**“Children are the World’s Most Valuable Resource and
its Best Hope for the Future” --John F. Kennedy**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel (WYCRP) partners with the Wyoming Department of Family Services (DFS), Wyoming Department of Corrections, law enforcement, mental health and substance abuse professionals, educators, child advocates, attorneys and judges to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of Wyoming's children and families.

This annual report covers the period from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the major activities which have taken place during the past twelve months regarding the child protection and social services system in Wyoming and to identify strengths and opportunities for systemic improvement. Some sections refer to activities, measurement, and assessment between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2017 and are noted as such throughout the report.

The federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) was conducted in 2016. The CFSR revealed strengths and areas for improvement which were reported back to Wyoming from the Children's Bureau in the CFSR Final Report in January 2017. Wyoming DFS began negotiations with the Children's Bureau with the first draft of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) in April of 2017, which identified improving outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being. Wyoming's measurement plan was recently approved and DFS has started to conduct the base-line data reviews as of April 2018. This process will continue through October 2018.

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel is supporting the PIP measurement plan by scheduling stakeholder interviews in each district and providing logistics support during reviews. We will continue in this role in the coming months and look forward to a productive partnership throughout the PIP implementation process.

In addition to support for the PIP measurement plan, the WYCRP has been involved in local service case reviews, ongoing CQI activities, and has collaborated with the Wyoming Children's Trust Fund and other partners in community engagement activities around the state.

The WYCRP also administers the Wyoming Child Death Review and Prevention Team and the Children's Justice Act Task Force. Both teams jointly review cases of child sexual abuse, and cases of child fatalities and serious injuries resulting from abuse and neglect. These teams are comprised of experts from a broad range of disciplines. The groups convene quarterly to review cases and provide recommendations for systemic improvement.

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel participates consistently with state and federal partners through training and collaboration in support of our mission.

These activities over the past 12 months, are part of an on-going partnership between the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel and the Wyoming Department of Family Services, as well as other stakeholders and community partners to monitor, assess, and improve the child welfare system in Wyoming.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Wyoming Residents,

It is my honor to serve the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel as Executive Director. Our Panel is made up of volunteers who represent a broad range of disciplines and, many decades of experience advocating on behalf of Wyoming children and families. With just over six months in this role, I am amazed by the passion and commitment demonstrated by all the professionals I work with every day.

I am grateful to the Panel members, our community partners, and the Wyoming Department of Family Services for their support of me as the new Executive Director. These past few months have provided me with many opportunities to learn and deepen my understanding of the child welfare system. I have been impressed with the quality of the partnership built by my predecessors in this role. I'm excited to continue their work.

It is my hope that working together, we can build on past successes and make meaningful improvement in Wyoming's Child Welfare System.

Our goal has been to create a complete and accurate report of the activities within the child welfare system over the previous 12 months, and to make evidence-based, data-informed, and sensible recommendations for improving outcomes for Wyoming children and families served.

Please feel free to contact me personally by email at rvanausdall@wycrp.org or by phone at (307) 632-0032; or visit our website at www.wycrp.org. We welcome your feedback and participation.

Respectfully,



Robin Van Ausdall, Executive Director

Wyoming Citizen Review Panel

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Wyoming Citizen:

It is my pleasure to release this 2017-2018 Annual Report outlining the activities of the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel (CRP) focusing on the well-being of children and families. As with the past year, CRP has experienced change with staff, programs and membership. CRP continues to grow with change and remains strong in our commitment and advocacy to improve Wyoming's services and systems of care. CRP services and involvement includes:

Community engagement has increased through partnership with the Wyoming Children's Trust Fund. Assisting with facilitating conversations throughout the State provided opportunity to gauge service resources; both for utilization, effectiveness and need. In separate but supportive action, the Prevent Child Abuse program was transferred to the Trust Fund where efficiency can be maximized. The Parents As Teachers (PAT) program remains strong within the designated communities, with number of families/children served increasing for this reporting period. CRP is presently in negotiation with the National Center for program expansion.

Collaboration with the Department of Family Services (DFS) included review of the level of youth involvement in decisions for services provided during their care and Tribal social service audits. DFS has recently initiated establishing baseline measurements for their Program Improvement Plan (PIP) process with the Panel providing assistance. This is an extensive effort involving all Districts with the initial phase covering six months and on-going service reviews at community level planned.

Additional information on these and other CRP services, reviews and recommendations are contained within this Annual Report. The Panel has remained true to our vision focusing on building collaborations for strong, healthy families and communities, child safety and well-being. We welcome your participation, thoughts and suggestions for on-going improvements to Wyoming's human service system. These can be provided via e-mail at rvanausdall@wycrp.org. Working together we can and will make a difference.

Respectfully,



Les Pozsgo, Chair

Wyoming Citizen Review Panel

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 amended on May 29, 2015 by the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-22) and on July 22, 2016, by the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-198). 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).

Child Protective Services in Wyoming

The Department of Family Services (DFS) is Wyoming's Child Protective Services (CPS) agency.

The Department has undergone organizational change over the past several years. On June 1, 2017 the Department was placed under the leadership of Director Tom Forslund, concurrently serving as Director of Wyoming Department of Health. During the 2018 Legislature, proposals to merge the two departments were considered but not passed into law.

As currently constituted, the Department includes five divisions: Economic Security, Social Services, Financial Services, Social Services (Field Office) and Support Services. The Department is also responsible for operation of the Wyoming Girls' School and Wyoming Boys' School.

As recognized in the 2008 Legislative Services Office (LSO) Legislative Program Evaluation of Wyoming's CPS program: "An effective child protection system does not rely solely on the efforts of DFS. An incident may involve many parties: other state agencies, professional and non-professional reporters, law enforcement personnel, public and mental health agencies, prosecuting and defense attorneys, judges, guardians ad litem, and court-appointed special advocates, schools and service providers."

Improvement in outcomes cannot happen without all these critical partners working together.

"In serving the best interests of children, we serve the best interests of all humanity."-- Carol Bellamy; Chair of the Board of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund

WYOMING CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL ORGANIZATION

Mission

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel promotes and provides systemic reviews, education, prevention, and early intervention to ensure the safety of children and families.

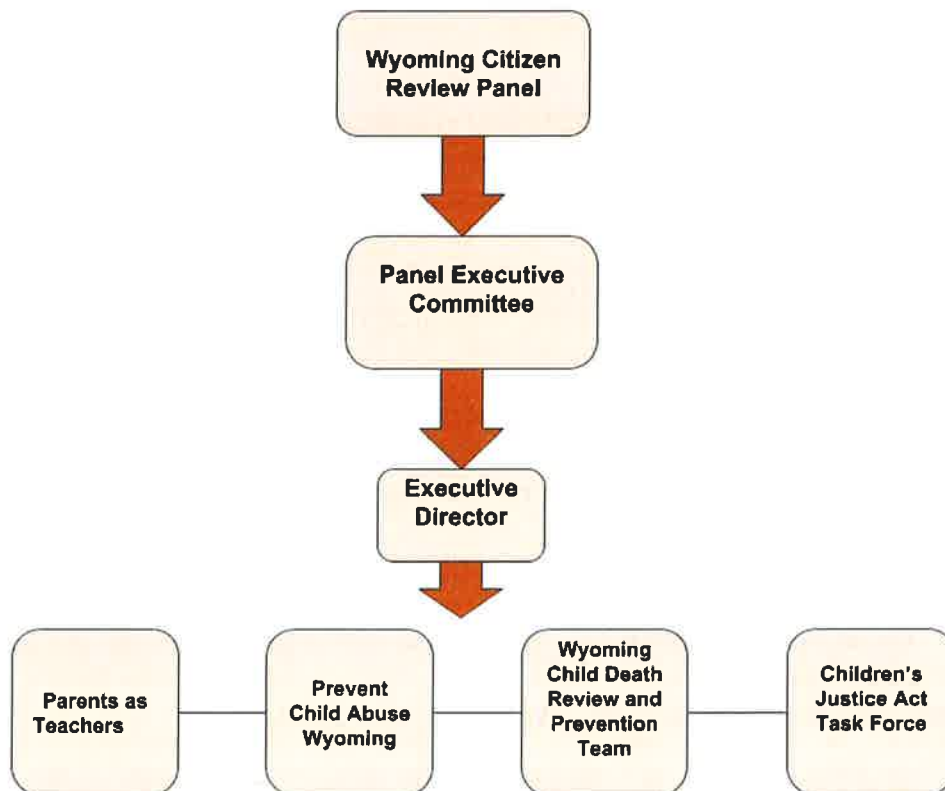
Vision

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel is the statewide leader in building collaborations for strong, healthy families and communities.

Purpose

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 subsequent amendments.

In addition to its work relative to CAPTA, the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel is organized as a 501(c)3 charitable organization and administers several complementary programs. The Executive Committee of the Panel serves as the Board for the charity. The organizational structure is as follows:



Wyoming Citizen Review Panel Membership

Required Membership from WYCRP bylaws: “The Panel shall be composed of volunteer members who are broadly representative of the state, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect and the juvenile justice system.”

The Panel currently consists of eleven (11) Panel members and two (2) Agency Liaisons.

*Les Pozsgyi, Chair --Lander	*Charla Ricciardi, Treasurer-- Cheyenne
*Emily Quarterman-Genoff, Vice-Chair--Casper	Carol Tullio, Cheyenne
*Carissa O’Malley, Secretary, Casper	JoLee Schuler, Cheyenne
Jana Conine, Cheyenne	Carol Nicolarsen, Cheyenne
Sheri England, Gillette	Jo Ann Numoto-Cheyenne
Peter Newell, Cheyenne	Brian DeTavernier, DFS Liaison
Dawn Sides, Corrections Liaison	Stacy Strasser-Lander
Robin Van Ausdall, Executive Director—Cheyenne	

*denotes a member of the Executive Committee

STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

A committee was formed at the October 2017 Panel meeting to review the 2016-2017 Strategic Plan and develop recommendations for our next strategic plan. The committee met in November 2017. The recommendations and strategies from that meeting are as follows:

Summary:

The 2016-17 Wyoming Citizen Review Panel Strategic plan review resulted in the following findings for the 2018 planning process:

- An abbreviated strategic planning process using the 2016-17 Strategic Plan as a launch pad can be accomplished in a half-day, in early 2018
- An annual strategic plan, rather than a two-year plan, can accommodate any changes in staff and panel members
- Panel members’ agreement on the strategic planning process and outcomes will ensure ownership
 - The strategic plan needs to be concise and well-organized, usable and easy to understand
- Any strategic planning process should be engaging and energizing

The reviewers found the Panel has met many 2016-17 Strategic Plan goals and can move to a new level of activity. Recommendations are outlined as follows:

Priority 1

Goal 1: *By September 2016, the WYCRP staff and Board members will have developed an understanding of the budget and funding streams of the WYCRP as a whole, and also at the program level, as exhibited by Board approval of the annual budget for WYCRP and the development, discussion and approval of monthly financial statements.*

Recommendation: Goal met. Something similar to this goal should be included in future strategic plans. A continual assessment of historic funding sources and spending are important while looking for future opportunities for growth or expansion of services.

Goal 2: *By April 2017, the Board officers and the Executive Director will create a two-year financial plan for the WYCRP. The plan shall include current funding streams if appropriate, possible funding streams, and the development of funding streams for discretionary spending and the development of a reserve account in the amount to be determined as part of the plan.*

Recommendation: Goal met. The 2018 Strategic Plan shall separate fundraising from contracted funding streams to reflect new skill sets and opportunities within the panel's leadership, and the importance of creating a pool of funds that are not earmarked for specific projects.

Goal 3: *By April 2017, the WYCRP will have a community media and marketing plan for public awareness, Board or Panel member/volunteer recruitment, and financial stability.*

- Recommendations: Plan was written but is no longer relevant. Possible broad goal or priority around "increasing public awareness" could incorporate a new focus on individual and community-level awareness building through fundraising activities, community café participation, social/digital media (website, Facebook events, planned sharing, Facebook ad), earned media (editorials, on-record statements), community outreach (presentations to groups, community partnerships), and individual panel and staff members efforts to "spread the word."

Goal 4: *By April 2017, the WYCRP will have a full, engaged, and informed Board with diverse backgrounds.*

Recommendation: Goal met and shall be preserved in the 2018 Strategic Plan. Documentation of appointed/volunteer committees, expectations and job descriptions will prevent loss of Panel focus and momentum. A recruitment and retention plan for the Panel shall be reviewed and updated. Position descriptions for the executive officers shall be reviewed and updated. WYCRP membership is a critical area that should be a priority/goal.

Goal 5: *By April 2017, the WYCRP will have staff, Board members and panel members/volunteers who consistently collaborate and communicate across the state to provide a unified message of WYCRP.*

Recommendation: Goal met with "elevator speech" but may need to be revisited due to staff and Panel turnover. Goal could be a theme or part of the mission used as a basis for the Panel's work.

Goal 6: *By April 2017, the WYCRP will have developed and approved prevention goals for the period of 2017-19.*

Recommendation: Tie to Priority 2, Goal 1, for inclusion in the 2018 Strategic Plan.

Priority 2

Goal 1: *By April 2017, after reviewing data, receiving Board and stakeholder input, and analyzing trends surrounding identified risk factors and outcomes, the WYCRP will create recommendations for organizational action (possible Goals) to impact recommended outcomes (metrics) within the priority/area of prevention. In more simple terms, the WYCRP staff and Board will take the year to research available data, appropriate outcomes/outputs in prevention, and prevention strategies to develop WYCRP goals in prevention for the next strategic planning period 2017-2019. By April 2017, the WYCRP will have developed and approved prevention goals for the period of 2017-2019.*

Recommendation: Work was done, goal was not met. This is a big, complex goal and should continue in 2018. Parents As Teachers, Child Death Review and Prevention Team, Prevent Child Abuse Wyoming; all findings are reported as required by funding streams but not analyzed in terms of being able to share how a difference was made. Are our efforts aligned with the state's move toward outcomes that show people's lives have been measurably improved by the work that's been done? One step toward meeting the goal could be a thorough inventory of data to include data sources we use, data that is publicly available from state/federal/partners, and data we track internally for programs.

2018-2019 Strategic Plan

Resulting from the review process, WYCRP met in April 2018 in Casper and conducted an abbreviated strategic planning process with the following results:

Mission/Vision

Wyoming Citizens for Children builds collaboration for strong, healthy families and communities, child-safety and well-being.

Purpose

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel, doing business as Wyoming Citizens for Children, is a federally mandated group of citizens who promote child safety and permanency through:

- education,
- service provision,
- review of state and local policies and procedures,
- review of child protective service cases,
- communication to build partnerships,
- advocacy for change where needed.

Priorities

1. Strong organization
 - a. Goal: A recognized specialist in public participation and community engagement
 - b. Objectives:
 - i. Name change
 - ii. Budget and Financial Plan
 1. MOUs with state agencies
 2. Umbrella organization for nonprofits
 3. Grants
 4. Major donor, planned giving, monthly recurring gifts
 5. Stanley grant
 6. Fundraising
2. Marketing and Communication
 - a. Goal: Promoting safety and well-being for all children and families through recommendations to state agencies
 - b. Objectives:
 - i. Annual report, containing data driven recommendations and action steps
3. Recruiting Members and Partnerships
 - a. Goal: Providing review of state and local agency policy and procedure implementation at the local level to promote development of laws and service standards that encourage community, child and family health, and safety.
 - b. Objectives:
 - i. Focus on collaboration, relationship building, advocacy
 1. Look for partners who need an umbrella that fits
 2. Build relationships with DFS district managers
 3. Hire staff and stretch PAT to reach Rawlins and other communities where home visiting is needed – telehealth might be a resource
4. Prevention
 - a. Goal: Supporting the development of strong, healthy families and communities, strengthening families and protective factors in communities
 - b. Objectives:
 1. Identify data available from other entities – DFS, WDH, DOC, WYSA
 2. Identify measures for success (process measures, recommendations, policy evaluation, etc.)
 - a. Set goals with baseline measures

FULL PANEL MEETINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Panel Meeting</u>	<u>Number of Attendees</u>
July 2017	In-person—Cheyenne	10
October 2017	In-person—Cheyenne	11
December 2017	In-person—Cheyenne	11
February 2018	Teleconference	8
March 2018	Teleconference	10
April 2018	In-person—Casper	11
June 2018	In-person—Cheyenne	8

SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Panel members and staff participated in many support activities throughout the year, including:

- Executive Committee meetings (in-person and by phone)
- APSR/5-Year Plan conference call
- CQI meetings
- Child Welfare Focus Group
- Community Cafes
- Drug Endangered Children
- Human and Sex Trafficking Task Force
- Wyoming After School Alliance
- Chair and Executive Director calls
- National Citizen Review Panel Coordinator calls
- Professional development and learning opportunities provided by the Children’s Bureau and Parents as Teachers National Center
- Community of Practice Webinars provided by the Child Abuse and Neglect Technical Assistance and Strategic Dissemination Center (CANTASD)
- Meetings, trainings, and symposiums with local, state, and federal partners

“We must use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right.” --Nelson Mandela

2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Program Improvement Plan (PIP) Measurement

As previously stated, the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) was conducted in 2016. The CFSR revealed strengths and areas for improvement which was reported back to Wyoming from the Children’s Bureau in the CFSR Final Report in January 2017. Wyoming DFS began negotiations with the Children’s Bureau with the first draft of the PIP in April of 2017, which identified improving outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being. Wyoming’s measurement plan to support the PIP was recently approved and DFS has started to conduct the base-line data reviews as of May 2018. This process will continue through October 2018. Once the baseline is established and the Program Improvement Plan is approved by federal partners, the measurement process will continue for three years, to ensure that intended improvements are being achieved and uniformly implemented throughout the state.

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel is supporting this process by:

- Inviting case participants to give feedback in interviews—cases are randomly selected for a specified period under review (PUR); and
- Confirming the time, date, and location of scheduled interviews for each participant who agrees to be interviewed; and
- Assists with overcoming barriers to participation by offering transportation and arranging alternate means of interviewing using methods approved by federal partners, such as telephone and/or video conference, and
- Providing logistics support to review teams at each review site.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), is an approach to quality management that builds upon traditional quality assurance methods by emphasizing the organization and systems: focuses on “process” rather than the individual; recognizes both internal and external “customers”; promotes the need for objective data to analyze and improve processes. Source: Graham, N.O. *Quality in Health Care* (1995)

Key elements of Continuous Quality Improvement:

- Accountability
- Driven by good management...not crisis
- Driven by input from all levels of staff and stakeholders
- Teamwork
- Continuous review of progress

Goals of Continuous Quality Improvement:

- Guide quality operations
- Ensuring a safe environment and high quality of service
- Meet external standards and regulations
- Assist agency programs and services to meet annual goals and objectives

The Wyoming Department of Family Services quality improvement process involves a consistent CQI team including both state office and field staff as well as the WYCRP Executive Director. The CQI process is multi-faceted. The CQI team participates in reviews and assists in developing plans for improvement based on the results. The Department facilitates focus groups that provide monitoring of the progress of goals, objectives, and interventions in the APSR, which is the annual update to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP)—also known as the Department’s 5-year plan. Although the CQI supervisor oversees both of these functions, the CFSP/APSR is not solely a CQI function. It is a federally required planning document that guides the Social Service Division’s efforts. WYCRP participated in the following reviews of case files during the period covered by this report (July 2017-June 2018) as part of an on-going, annual review process.

- Case Planning
- Youth Involvement

The results of these reviews are as follows:

Case Planning

The WYCRP Executive Director is part of the Department of Family Services (DFS) Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Team. The CQI team convened in July 2017 to conduct a targeted review to assess child and parental involvement in case planning. Below is the summary from that review.

Major findings:

- 86% had a case plan.
- 42% had documentation that all children in the home were involved in case planning.
- 23% had documentation of involvement by one (1) child.
- 83% had documentation of mother involvement.
- 54% had documentation of father involvement.
- 72% of relevant cases had documentation of quarterly review as required by policy

Strengths:

- Children involved in case planning were age and developmentally appropriate.
- Significant efforts to involve mothers and fathers occurred.
- Efforts to involve incarcerated parents.
- Tools and strategies from the Wyoming Practice Model were utilized.

Challenges:

- Child involvement is often limited to the target child to the exclusion of siblings.
- Navigating the system to involve incarcerated parents in case planning.
- Involving father figures in case planning when paternity has not been established.

As a result of this review, the Department is working on policy changes and staff training related to case planning.

Youth Involvement

A review focusing on the level of youth involvement in case planning was conducted in February 2018. This review was conducted to review compliance with Department policy, based on federal requirements as it relates to case planning and case management in the areas of: transitional living plans, provision of child rights, appropriate permanency goals and screening for human and sex trafficking risk. Each case file was reviewed to ensure compliance with federal requirements and DFS policy by determining whether or not documentation for each focus area was included for each file reviewed. Below is a summary from the 100 cases reviewed:

Major findings:

- 90% had a case plan
- 73% documented active youth involvement
- 64% included transitional living plans
- 84% documented provision of child rights
- 86% verified screening for human and sex trafficking

Strengths

- Concerted efforts to actively involve youth in case planning
- Independent and transitional living plan development
- Youth verification of provision of child rights
- Appropriate permanency goals

Challenges

- Data entry into the Wyoming Child Abuse and Protection System (WYCAPS)
- WYCAPS generated action alerts where screening is required

This review has resulted in programming efforts to improve functionality of the data system, which are on-going. Policy and procedure updates are being drafted and will be disseminated and trained.

Local Social Service Case File Reviews

The WYCRP partnered with the District 9 field office to conduct audits of tribal service cases. In December 2017, the review of Northern Arapaho cases occurred. The Eastern Shoshone review happened in April 2018. The results of these two reviews will be included as an addendum to this report and published on our website at www.wycrp.org after the final reports have been shared with tribal stakeholders and approved for release by senior leadership in the Department of Family Services.

Partnerships, Collaborations, and Programs

The WYCRP fulfills its mission, in part, through collaborations with partner organizations. The cornerstone of interagency collaboration in systems of care is "the process of agencies and families joining together for the purpose of interdependent problem solving that focuses on improving services to children and families" (Hodges, Nesman, & Hernandez, 1999). With that in mind it is with definitive acknowledgement that WYCRP recognizes the collaboration efforts between DFS and not only WYCRP but additional entities that work in child welfare, particularly around primary prevention and early intervention. The Wyoming Children's Trust Fund (WCTF), Prevent Child Abuse Wyoming, and the Wyoming Child Death Review and Prevention Team, among many others, are entities that DFS continues to build relationships with. The continuing efforts of these collaborators showcase ongoing partnerships in working alongside each other, in the education, awareness and coordination efforts that support prevention. In June 2018, representatives from WYCRP, the WTCF, and DFS presented a workshop entitled "Engaging Community Partners for Prevention Through Collaboration" at the National Citizen Review Coordinators Annual Conference in Michigan.

The WYCRP also collaborates with national organizations and federal partners to gain and share knowledge and best practices. The WYCRP participates regularly with the community of Citizen Review Panels around the country. Robin Van Ausdall, WYCRP Executive Director has been named to the National Citizen Review Panel Advisory WYCRP works closely with the Parents as Teachers National Center, participates in learning opportunities with the Children's Bureau, and follows policy briefings from Prevent Child Abuse America and other federal organizations aligned with our mission.

It is WYCRP's goal for the coming year to take meaningful recommendations and work with partners to identify trends, prioritize, seek input from stakeholders, take an inventory of resources, and work with partners to build a coalition for improving outcomes.

In addition to Panel members serving a role as volunteer citizen who are responsible for determining whether state and local agencies are effectively discharging child protective responsibilities, panel members and staff also serve as the advisors and leaders in state and local organizations committed to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families, such as the Human and Sex Trafficking Task Force. Currently the Panel acts as an advisory committee for the Children's Justice Act (CJA), for which DFS is a grantee. Members are considered experts in child welfare and as such fulfill certain professional roles as determined by the CJA. At present, the Executive Committee of the WCDRPT also serves an advisory role for the CJA Task Force.

Child Welfare Focus Groups

The purpose of the Child Welfare Focus Groups is to determine systemic practice around child welfare issues as established in the Annual Program Service Report (APSR), which is the annual report of progress for the federally required CFSP, often referred to as the 5-year plan. Goals and needs are discussed in a variety of capacities to determine what is happening with children and families as they are engaged in the child welfare process and enhance capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. Based on facilitated discussions led by DFS, several agencies, including WYCRP, Guardians Ad Litum (GAL), Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Independent Living Coordinators, caseworkers, etc., participated in providing feedback regarding child welfare issues. From those discussions, the following information and guidance were gathered:

- DFS caseworkers are active team members for crisis and transition planning of youth in placement facilities.
- DFS caseworkers are very involved in wrap-around service planning with families.
- DFS caseworkers ensure needed documentation is provided to facilities which assists in comprehensive assessments.
- DFS partners with stakeholders, i.e. GALs and Public Health for home visits with families.
- Educational trainings facilitated during the Child Protection Team (CPT) meetings.
- Ongoing Practice Model trainings.

Stakeholders provided the following information regarding barriers:

- Stakeholders may not have the same understanding as DFS of risk and safety.
- Parents not always allowing DFS access to families.
- Knowledge of child development behaviors and milestones to help in assessing risk/safety.
- Stakeholders not understanding caseworkers assessing risk and safety.
- Stakeholders not understanding track assignments for different case types
- Providing clear definitions/expectations to caseworkers of what involving children and family's means.

Stakeholders provided the following information regarding ways stakeholders may support DFS with children and families:

- A common language to discuss risk and safety.
- GALs are building a database to assist with timelines of critical events (MDTs, court hearings, etc.).
- Training on how to support stakeholders in working with risk and safety in relation to the families.
- Partnering more with home visits.
- Stakeholders introducing families to DFS.
- Involving the medical community in assessing safety of families who do not allow access to the children.
- Determining whether DFS has adequate training on educational laws from the Individuals with Disability Education Act.
- Allowing youth and family to speak at MDTs.
- Having Independent Living Coordinators assist with youth involvement in case planning.
- Stakeholders could attend trainings offered by DFS.
- Stakeholders could share their perspective in seeing the family and children to provide increased knowledge of the situation.
- Better understanding and communication on behalf of stakeholders in making children and families the priority.

Training Opportunities

The Department of Family Services continues to make strides in supporting children, families, stakeholders, staff, collaborators, and partners. To this end it is important to note the good work at all levels of Department involvement and to commend staff for the dedication, commitment and ongoing growth that WYCRP has noted throughout the year. To ensure this work continues, DFS has increased efforts in enhancing the skills of caseworkers and supervisors across the state through on-going training and regular technical assistance. The following information includes training opportunities that have been attended by WYCRP staff, caseworkers, stakeholders, collaborators, and partners throughout 2017-2018

- Trainers have hosted monthly training and support webinars for field staff in each district on the Wyoming Practice Model
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) training is provided to all new caseworkers at CORE.
- An ACES train-the-trainer workshop was held in October 2017
- Juvenile court trainings are occurring throughout the State by the Attorney General and Children's Justice Project to DFS staff reviewing state statute and policy.
- Coordinated efforts through Interdiction for the Protection of Children has been designed to make Law Enforcement aware of a variety of resources available to assist them in establishing the status of a child who may be missing, exploited or at-risk of exploitation and what courses of action are immediately available. Law enforcement aims at familiarizing Highway Patrol and other Law Enforcement who conduct traffic stops on the signs of child domestic sex trafficking and the interdiction of child pornography, etc.

CORE Training

At the recommendation of DFS's Federal partners, the services of the Capacity Building Center (CBC) for States has been enlisted for support in training development. Over the past year, the CBC has connected DFS with resources who are experts on training development and process. The training unit, while working with the social services division policy and CQI staff, identified a working list of competencies for social services caseworkers. Those competencies are the foundation for the new core training modules. The new training includes hands-on experience with interviewing families, children, and appearing in court. Attendees are expected to demonstrate skill development with each activity. Additionally, an emphasis in legal process and interviewing skills and been embedded into CORE. The training was altered to three weeks in duration and while there may be a need to extend that time-period, CORE trainers have been able to cover foundational topics which are supported with office assignments between sessions and electronic transfer of learning opportunities. Field supervisors and managers have participated in the onsite training and in the electronic transfer of learning lessons.

As CORE training developed, ongoing training for caseworkers and supervisors using the same model are being developed and implemented. Following each week of training, the training unit makes contact with the field supervisors to provide feedback on the worker's performance and skill development according to the list of competencies.

Drug Endangered Children

Background: In January 2017, the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children, in coordination with DFS, focused Drug Endangered Children (DEC) efforts in Carbon County. With support from the Director of DFS, Carbon County invited key partners, stakeholders and collaborators who are involved in the world of child welfare and juvenile justice to participate in DEC efforts. As Carbon County has seen an increase in the use of methamphetamine and heroin, and the subsequent child maltreatment that often accompanies it, it was imperative to build a better local system to address the safety and wellbeing of children and families.

Since January 2017, Carbon County community stakeholders have met several times, both with support from National DEC coordinators and independently, to form a group dedicated to building a stronger and better coordinated communication system. As of May 16, 2017, the group had defined themselves as Carbon County DEC. A mission statement was developed, education and training needs were defined, outreach efforts were discussed and perhaps most importantly, future meetings were planned to continue the important work. Additionally, a protective custody protocol was developed to provide a consistent guideline for law enforcement and medical personnel.

During the May 16 meeting, Carbon County DEC, which consists of approximately forty (40) key community members such as law enforcement (including PD, SO, DCI), DFS staff, Carbon County School District # 1 staff, emergency medical service personnel, medical providers, mental health providers, early childhood providers, etc., discussed a recently developed protocol for protective custody, what's working well, what needs improvement, who else should attend DEC, completing a community needs assessment and the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding, among other things.

Moving Forward: In October 2017, DFS hosted a National DEC Alliance Trainer. WYCRP has begun the initial stages of working with DFS to determine how we can support DEC efforts not only in Carbon County but throughout Wyoming. Opportunities include participating in DEC Train the Trainer and conducting the community needs assessments, not just in Carbon County, but for other Wyoming counties who are interested in bringing DEC to their communities.

More training opportunities are planned in the coming months.

The work of the DEC initiative is ongoing. WYCRP looks forward to partnering to support this worthwhile endeavor.

Prevent Child Abuse Wyoming

Prevent Child Abuse Wyoming (PCAWY) is currently a program under the umbrella of the WYCRP. The program works to provide primary prevention strategies throughout Wyoming by distributing information and conducting trainings, such as:

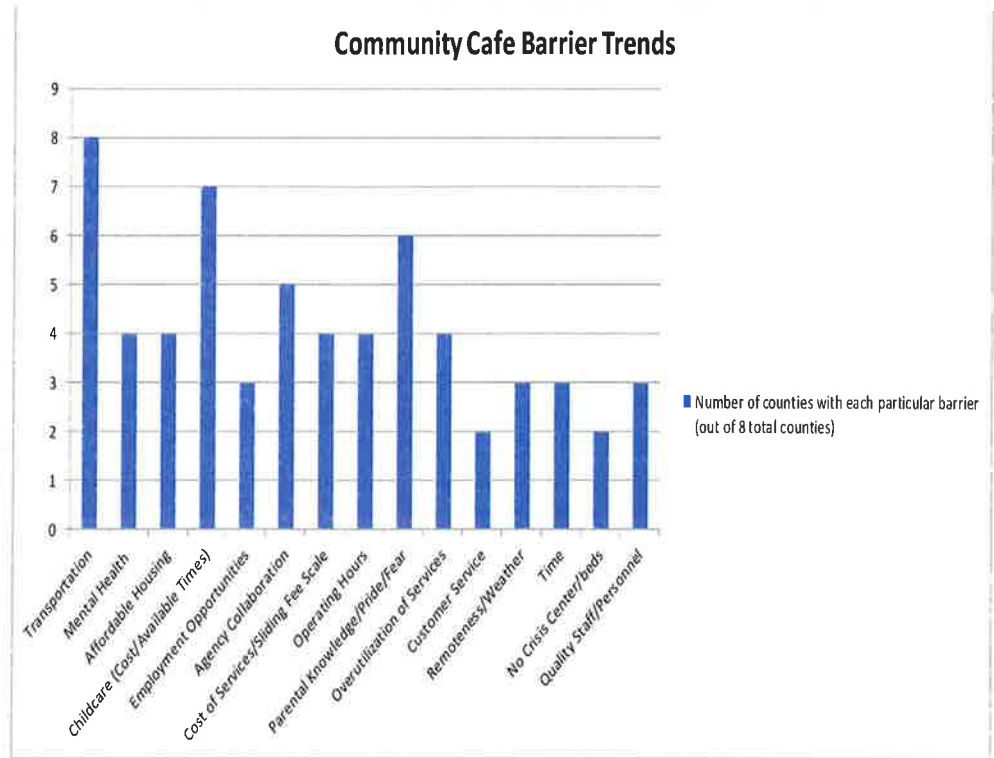
- Mandatory Reporter Training
- ACES Training
- Safe Sleep
- Child Sexual Abuse Awareness and Prevention
- Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention
- Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness and Prevention

Effective July 1, 2018, PCAWY will no longer be under the umbrella of WYCRP, but will be administered by the Wyoming Children's Trust Fund. This transition was recently approved by Prevent Child Abuse America (PCAA).

Community Cafes

The WYCRP and PCAWY partnered with the Wyoming Children's Trust Fund, Wyoming 211, Parent Information Center, and Magellan to gather data from Wyoming Communities about barriers, trends and available resources. The process used for data gathering is called a "Community Café" model. This model prompts participants to give feedback through a lively engagement process. The participants in Community Cafes are the families and service providers within each community. Though this project is ongoing, valuable data has been gathered from the communities:

Transportation	8
Mental Health	4
Affordable Housing	4
Childcare (Cost/Available Times)	7
Employment Opportunities	3
Agency Collaboration	5
Cost of Services/Sliding Fee Scale	4
Operating Hours	4
Parental Knowledge/Pride/Fear	6
Overutilization of Services	4
Customer Service	2
Remoteness/Weather	3
Time	3
No Crisis Center/beds	2
Quality Staff/Personnel	3



This data will inform the prioritization of needs identified not only through Community Cafes, but will also guide the work of implementing recommendations from the Children’s Justice Act Task Force and the Wyoming Child Death Review and Prevention Team.

Parents as Teachers

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an evidenced-based home visiting program, under the umbrella of the WYCRP. The WYCRP Parents As Teachers affiliate operates in Laramie, Albany, and Sweetwater counties and provided direct support to 70 at-risk families through highly trained parent educators. These parent educators facilitate parent-child interaction, and encourages awareness of developmentally appropriate play. In addition to the PAT affiliate associated with WYCRP, two other affiliates provide similar services in Natrona county and at Fort Washakie.

In addition to the services provided to individual families, PAT is active in local communities through:

- Community activities
- Resource and Referral Networks
- The Wyoming Home Visiting Network

The WYCRP Parents as Teachers affiliate is planning to expand home visiting services in Albany and Sweetwater counties, increasing the number of at-risk families served from 70 to 110, with the addition of two (2) new Parent Educators by the end of 2018.

Wyoming Child Death Review and Prevention Team and Children's Justice Act Task Force

The Wyoming Child Death Review and Prevention Team (WCDRPT) and the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force seeks to improve Wyoming's prevention of and response to major injuries and fatalities in cases of child maltreatment. The teams review cases and make recommendations for systemic improvement focused on prevention, intervention, training, awareness, investigation, enforcement, and public policy.

The WCDRPT holds meetings quarterly each year. The team reviews and evaluates trends in child deaths, or near-death incidents, using specific guidelines and a strategic group of people involved in child advocacy, legal and law enforcement, population health, prevention work and medical professionals, as well as those who have interacted directly with the child protection system.

Through the collaborative process the team uses the findings to provide community education and promote awareness and advocacy for issues that affect the health and safety of Wyoming Children.

In calendar year 2017, the WCDRPT convened in March, June, September and December and reviewed a total of 26 cases of child fatality and serious injury related to child maltreatment affecting Wyoming children ages 0-17. Please note that the data gathered from the WCDRPT reviews is specific to WYCAPS (the DFS data system) and follows the calendar year.

2017 Child Fatalities Reviewed—Child Maltreatment; 2

2017 Child Serious/Near Death Injuries Reviewed—Child Maltreatment; 11

2017 Child Sexual Abuse Reviewed; 13

During each case review the team addressed the following questions. This information, along with other demographic facts, are entered into a database known as the National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention.

- *Could this injury/death have been prevented?*
- *Was the investigation complete?*
- *Are there services that could be provided to family members, other children and other persons in the community as a result of this incident?*
- *What changes in behaviors, technologies, agency systems and/or laws could minimize these risk factors and prevent another incident?*
- *What are our best recommendations for making change?*
- *Who should take the lead in implementing our recommendations?*
- *Does this case need additional follow-up or later discussion?*

Identified Trends in Risk Factors from Cases Reviewed

- Multiple Reports of Child Abuse/Neglect prior to fatality/near fatality
- Substance Abuse by Caregivers
- Young, Unrelated Males in Household
- Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence
- Poverty
- Mental Health Issues of Caregivers

Team Recommendations for Systemic Improvement

- Changes in how cases are handled when there have been multiple reports of abuse/neglect on a family
- More resources available for substance abuse treatment in communities
- More resources available for mental health treatment in communities
- Public awareness and education regarding sexual abuse/sexual predators
- Increase primary and secondary abuse/neglect prevention efforts
- Increase community level support for at-risk families

During the last eighteen (18) months, the WCDRPT has taken on the additional task of developing a plan to address recommendations from case reviews. The action plan is designed to help the team determine specific strategies, timelines and responsible parties for implementing recommendations. In the course of the last six (6) meetings, the team has begun to analyze trends and data to incorporate them into an action plan. Next steps for the WCDRPT include improving recommendations, identifying outcome and interim measures, and tracking progress.

After each meeting, strengths of the case and recommendations are shared by the WCDRPT/CJA Task Force to state program staff and DFS district managers, so that field staff in each district can respond to specific trends within their community. The WCDRPT is currently working to improve the process by which recommendations are made, as well as creating an action team, consisting of team members and community partners, so that recommendations can be prioritized and implemented. The intended outcome of which is to positively impact the lives of children involved in the child welfare system. Moreover, as acting members of the CJA task force, we will be able to identify areas where improvement is needed in the statewide response to child maltreatment. Ultimately, the goal of a CJA Task Force, as noted by the Children's Bureau is "to make policy and training recommendations regarding methods to better handle child maltreatment cases, with the expectation that it will result in reduced trauma to the child victim".

As part of our ongoing effort to improve internal processes and data quality, beginning in July 2018, WYCRP will make some subtle changes to the way findings from each team are captured. These changes will mainly consist of separating prevention recommendations and intervention recommendations in our reporting. We are also continuing to recruit members—especially legal, judicial, and medical professionals. We hope these recruitment efforts will support the action plan by having more ties to experts across multiple disciplines in each community.

2017 Child Maltreatment Statistics

Child maltreatment is the abuse and neglect that occurs in children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

There were 2174 total substantiations of child maltreatment (children 18 and under at the time of allegation) in 2017. All 23 counties and the Wind River Reservation having at least one substantiated incident of child maltreatment.

Breakdown by Type (approximate percentages)

61.0%	Neglect	1327
26.4%	Abuse	574
5.5%	Sexual Abuse	119
2.7%	Educational Neglect	59
0.2%	Physical Abuse	5
4.2 %	Miscellaneous*	90

**Consists of abandonment, dangerous acts, emotional abuse, lack of supervision, malnutrition, medical neglect, mental injury, physical injury, psychological abuse*

Of the substantiated cases of child maltreatment, 171 (7.87%) of victims were listed as disabled.

Source: Child Maltreatment Data provided by the Wyoming Department of Family Services, WYCAPS data system

Recommendations

These recommendations for improvement to Wyoming's Child Protection System are offered understanding that the Child Protection System is large and complex and includes more than the Department of Family Services. As previously stated, it is the intent of the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel to work collaboratively to implement these recommendations. Further, these recommendations acknowledge the work currently being done as part of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP); which addresses building on strengths and acting on opportunities for improvement identified during the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).

A 2018 National Conference of Death Review Teams offered the following guidelines (courtesy of the New Hampshire Fatality Review Team) for creating recommendations:

- Recommendations should be specific.
- Recommendations should be based on sound science and/or best practices.
- Recommendations should be feasible and take into consideration the resources necessary for implementation.
- Recommendations should be sustainable and identify sponsors, champions, allies, and responsible parties.
- Political issues should be considered.
- Risks and unintended consequences should be considered.

The following recommendations are offered with these guidelines in mind:

- 1) Ensure consistency in case management throughout the state, including but not limited to: safety and risk assessments, and child/family involvement in case planning, multidisciplinary teams (MDT), and transitional living plans.
 - a) Action Step: consider including Wyoming Practice Model in policy
 - b) Action Step: continue with implementation and training for the Wyoming Practice Model; including measuring model fidelity
 - c) Action Step: consider centralized and standardized intake for the entire state
 - d) Action Step: continue with Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) activities and act on findings from longitudinal data to address concerns and reinforce strengths identified
 - e) Action Step: in cooperation with Wyoming Courts, continue with training and support for Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) coordinators
 - f) Action Step: gather data on outcomes from MDT activities and act to address concerns and reinforce strengths consistently throughout the state
 - g) Action Step: continue with Program Improvement Plan (PIP) implementation and measurement
 - i) Responsible parties include: Department of Family Services, Wyoming Citizen Review Panel, MDT participants and coordinators, Wyoming Courts, Law Enforcement, WCDRPT and CJA Task Force

- 2) Improve outcomes for children in the Child Protection System when multiple reports occur for individual families
 - a) Action Step: consider changes to policy and/or procedure when there are multiple reports of child maltreatment for a family
- 3) Increase Capacity in the Foster Care System, especially for hard-to-place youth
 - a) Action Step: continue with implementation of Together Facing the Challenge” (TFTC)
 - b) Action Step: continue providing training and support to foster care coordinators, existing and newly recruited foster parents, and biological parents
 - i) Responsible parties include: Wyoming Department of Family Services state office and foster care coordinators in the field, with support from the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel
- 4) Ensure data consistency, quality and completeness in child and adult protection, and juvenile services systems
 - a) Action Step: create a “data dictionary” of standards for key metrics such as timeliness and completeness for case plans, safety plans, transitional living plans, MDT reports, and juvenile services data
 - b) Action Step: provide training and support to staff in collecting, analyzing, and reporting data to ensure consistency and accuracy throughout the state
 - c) Action Step: WYCAPS is approaching the end of its useful life and must be replaced with a comprehensive data system capable of capturing needed data, producing reports, generating action alerts to assure timely provision of services, and tracking longitudinal trends and crossover data from courts, law enforcement, and child and adult protective services. The new system will require training for users and planning for continuity during transition and in the future
 - d) Action Step: employ best practices and standards for the collection, reporting, and analysis of data to support data-driven and data-informed decision-making at all levels
 - e) Action Step: seek input and expertise from stakeholders including staff, state and community partners and other end users in the process of developing and implementing data and technology systems
 - i) Responsible Parties: Wyoming Courts, Wyoming Department of Family Services, Law Enforcement, MDT participants and stakeholders, data and technology providers, state and community partners (WYCRP, WCTF, CASA, and GALs) and service providers (mental health, substance abuse, housing, domestic violence)
- 5) Increase collaboration and cooperation with partners and stakeholders
 - a) Action Step: meet regularly with partners and stakeholders to identify trends and barriers and create action plans and accountability to address them
 - b) Action Step: share information and resources openly to leverage opportunities for federal funding, efficient resource allocation, data quality, and improved outcomes
 - i) Responsible Parties: Wyoming Citizen Review Panel, Wyoming Department of Family Services, Wyoming Courts, Guardians Ad Litum, Legal and Law Enforcement Professionals, other state and community partners