Wyoming Citizen Review Panel 2021-2022

 Annual Report



**“There is always light. If only we’re brave enough to see it. If only we’re brave enough to be it.”-- *Amanda Gorman***

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***Letter from the Chair***

Thank you for taking the time to review the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel's (WyCRP) 2021-2022 Annual Report. The information presented here is a summary of the Panel's efforts that has been focused on building healthy relationships in regards to families, dads, youth and community. I am grateful that we have a strong Panel and a dedicated staff that has achieved this year’s outcomes.

The Panel's relationship with the Wyoming Department of Family Services (DFS) is a strong collaboration with a variety of efforts. The Panel along with DFS has focused this year on listening sessions with dads and strengthening the Wyoming Youth Advisory Council. It is an exciting endeavor to hear feedback from the fathers of Wyoming and how they can have a positive impact on the future of the children. The youth are active in using their voice to update the Youth Bill of Rights for the Department of Family Service. We hope to continue these efforts and receive feedback to strengthen the system. WyCRP also partnered with DFS to provide gift cards, lock boxes and fire extinguishers to foster parents throughout the state.

Parents As Teachers (PAT) continues to be an extraordinary resource for Laramie, Albany and Sweetwater county families. The staff found creative ways to serve families through the barriers of the last two years to educate parents on raising healthy children.

Kinship Navigator Program is currently located in Cheyenne and Casper, but have expanded their services throughout the State of Wyoming. The program is working with other States to develop a Kinship Collaborative. The Kinship Collaborative will increase the amount of families served and an extensive evaluation of the services offered.

The Panel looks forward to another year of finding ways to bring people together around what needs to be done for the health of children and families. Our 2022 -2023 Strategic Plan is continuing to listen to the voices of foster parents, parents, and youth and support the efforts that come from those sessions. We plan to continue to build relationships with community providers to gain resources for families and youth of Wyoming.

Sincerely,

Stacy Strasser

Chair

# ***Letter from the Executive Director***

Dear Wyoming Residents,

Serving in the capacity of Executive Director of the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel (WyCRP) since July 2019 has been and continues to be the greatest honor of my professional career. Every day I am amazed by the relentless work ethic and passion of our staff. However, even these very dedicated people need support, especially during the Covid-19 Pandemic. We consider ourselves extremely lucky to have the support of our Panel Members and other volunteers. These people are passionate about what we do and actively engaged in our efforts to assist the families of Wyoming. 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. However, the heart of our organization is the citizens who choose to serve with us in order to improve the lives of Wyoming families. The dedication of our staff and Panel Members has resulted in the cultivation of a lasting legacy of advocacy in Wyoming.

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 2021-2022 Program Year.

Only through working together, will we continue making meaningful improvements in Wyoming’s Child Protection System.

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 (DOH), the Wyoming Children’s Trust Fund (WCTF), state and local law enforcement agencies, mental health and substance abuse professionals, child advocates, attorneys, and judges. Together, we 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 members believe the focus of Panel reports should focus on the positive changes and developments happening in our state every single day. This annual report covers the period from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, except where otherwise indicated.

Recommendations generated based on WyCRP activities and have been provided to DFS in order to assist with the development of the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP; also known as the “5-year Plan”), which DFS began crafting in February 2019. The purpose of the CFSP is to support the work being done with the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and establish the strategic priorities of the agency in the coming years. WyCRP supports the development and implementation of the CFSP.

WyCRP staff act as an independent third party to encourage candid feedback from birth fathers, 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 discussed in further detail later in this report.

**2021-2022 Annual Report**

During the 2021-2022 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) program year, WyCRP continues to witness improvement in both DFS agency policy and associated processes initiated through the CFSR and PIP implementation process. Even with ongoing organizational and environmental change, this trajectory culminates with the PIP and the 5-year Plan will reduce or resolve issues challenging our state’s systems of care and justice for decades:

* Timeliness and permanency of placements,
* Consistency of processes between jurisdictions and offices,
* Fidelity to proven models.

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 yearly contract with DFS.

**Programs and Partnerships**

The WyCRP is proud of its hallmark collaboration with community partners, government agencies and community stakeholders. Over the last two years during the COVID-19 pandemic, WyCRP’s partnerships with other agencies have increased in importance. For many reasons, DFS is WyCRP’s primary partner. Collaboration with other partners aids WyCRP in its efforts to minimize system duplication and maximize limited resources. Another benefit of WyCRP’s strong partnerships is access to the expertise of others to achieve our common goals.

WyCRP partnered with the WCTF in 2021-22 to host Community Cafe’ meetings in every Wyoming Judicial District. This work resulted in recognition of our Community Cafe’ as an innovative practice that can be replicated in other jurisdictions. 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. Magellan Healthcare/High Fidelity Wraparound is just one more example of existing partnerships we have forged and maintained. Specifically, Magellan has provided our PAT staff with resources and funding to assist with holding Community Connection Events in our service counties. This has helped our PAT Affiliate reach more families. WCTF has also assisted PAT and other home visiting programs in Wyoming with micro grants in order to bolster service provision for 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 6.5 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 <*/*= 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 2022, WyCRP PAT is on track to meet all essential requirements for the upcoming 2021-2022 review.

Over the past year, PAT navigated through the challenges of the recent pandemic. Safety measures were put in place to allow our program to continue in-home visits, and virtual visits were offered to ensure families were connected to quality visits and received the support they needed. Through an additional funding opportunity, our Parent Educators were able to provide basic essentials, safety materials, and additional materials to support social emotional competence for children and families. Community partnerships played a huge role in our ability to provide comprehensive support, ensuring that all families were connected with the resources necessary to meet basic needs and build a successful foundation for their family.

WyCRP is preparing to transition to DFS oversight; DFS has been awarded the 2022-2023 MIECHV funding. This transition from Parents as Teachers National Center to the Department of Family Services leadership takes place August 1, 2022. Along with this changeover, PAT will implement Plans of Safe Care for families that are experiencing substance use in all counties served.

**Kinship Connections of Wyoming**

Kinship Connections of Wyoming (KCOW) has a clearer vision of the future, as it continues to evolve from pilot to program. We started year three looking forward to the evaluation processes that have been established so we have an effective way to show the outcomes our program is making for the families we serve.

The second year of Kinship Connections of Wyoming (KCOW) was largely focused on building an evidenced-based kinship model. Foundational elements were established that included developing policies and procedures, inventorying available services, creating marketing platforms, and identifying measurable data points. The program’s goal is to provide navigation services that help families access resources, decrease interactions with child welfare programs, and increase child safety, permanency, and wellbeing for caregivers and their children.

Year three’s focus is on statewide recruitment for control and case counties to be used in the evaluation process. Program information and referral packets were sent to every school, DFS office, Guardian ad Litem office, pediatrician, and pediatric dentist office in every Wyoming county. The packets included a letter explaining the program, permission to contact forms, brochures, postcards and support group and education posters. The intake process and assessments used for data collection have been solidified. The process and dates for assessment follow-up have been established and are ready to be implemented.

New opportunities in the coming year are Caregiver Education, Support Groups and Kinship Navigator training programs. These activities will enhance the services we currently provide to caregivers and their families.

**KCOW Cross-site Collaborative**

KCOW participates in cross-site collaboration with Casey Family Programs, Generations United, and the University of Washington. This collaboration includes Wyoming, Montana, Vermont, and Maine. The Casey Family Programs and Generations United, with the guidance of evaluator Angelique Day from the University of Washington, have helped kinship programs produce standardized forms, materials, processes, and tools that have been used in Washington.

WyCRP’s KCOW is working with the Montana Kinship program to develop processes and definitions. This is important because Montana and Wyoming programs are compiling data together for evaluation due to the rural nature of our states. The University of Wyoming and Montana State University evaluation teams are working jointly as well, so the data gathering is done in the same way.

The data gathering period for the evaluation will last 12 months. The evaluation follow-up period will be approximately six months long. Accurate data on the effectiveness of the program will be generated so that findings can be published and submitted to the national Kinship clearinghouse.

The collaborative has worked very diligently on creating and streamlining all the appropriate forms needed to gather the most accurate data. KCOW has started to use all these forms and scales. The new forms, including Pre-Screening Tools, Needs Assessments, and Caregiver Stress Scale have been incorporated into the Vision Link database for accurate collection and easy data tracking.

**KCOW Program Data and Analysis**

Since KCOW started engaging with caregivers, the navigators have assisted 125 families.





**Community Outreach**

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.

**Child Protection Team**

Using a variety of methods during the last program year, WyCRP gathered information from child welfare system stakeholders. WyCRP staff attend Child Protection Team (CPT) meetings throughout the state. This is a great opportunity for networking with service providers regarding needs in their particular communities. These groups are doing amazing work and several report strong relationships with DFS and other state agencies. WyCRP has accumulated valuable lessons by attending these meetings. For example, local public schools also are a valuable hub for services and resources for Wyomingites, especially in the most rural communities. Some schools offer family nights and resource fairs during the summer.

**Dads Advisory Council**

Another lesson learned is that non-custodial fathers are disengaged from the lives of their children. Through its partnership with Wyoming 2-1-1, WyCRP has learned that few human services organizations are meeting the needs of single dads in Wyoming. WyCRP has used this information to support non-custodial and single fathers. In July 2021, WyCRP worked with Panel Member John Wright, the Wyoming GAL Program, and Kids Deserve Dads to form a Dads Advisory Council. It has been important to gather the voices of non-custodial dads to drive our efforts. The decision was made to promote and further the efforts of Kids Deserve Dads (KDD) in Wyoming. CAPTA funding was used to purchase 187 KDD support group curriculum sets. This expenditure totaled $1397.18 and the books were delivered in October 2021. Unfortunately after several requests, WyCRP has not received any data from KDD related to the number of dads served with these books to date. WyCRP believes the lack of data may be due to KDD staff turnover.

This is not the only method WyCRP has used to engage dads. Our advisory group, along with our partners at WCTF, hosted virtual Dads’ specific Community Cafe’ Meetings in all DFS/Judicial districts between November 2021 and February 2022. Thirteen dads attended these meetings, and 12 expressed an interest in being involved in our future efforts. The input provided by the attendees spoke volumes. For instance, several fathers reported feeling that society generally favors moms. Respondents stated that available services are geared toward women, and are difficult for men to access. One dad said he tried to access WIC services to help with his two young daughters, but being informed the service is intended for mothers.

As was mentioned during our previous round of Community Cafes’, availability and accessibility to services remains an issue. Most therapeutic and substance abuse services are only available between 8am-5pm and are cost prohibitive. Most of the responding dads mentioned a general lack of affordable activities to participate in with their children. Two dads mentioned their lack of skills in cooking, money management and providing basic first aid to their children. Several respondents highlighted the fact that as non-custodial fathers, they are not invited to school parent/teacher conferences and not notified of issues their children have in schools. Single and non-custodial fathers also stated they perceive they are at a disadvantage in the Wyoming Court System. Specifically, a lack of qualified family law attorneys was cited as a barrier. Additionally, dads noted the Wyoming Court System default custody arrangements are typically 80% for the mother and 20% for the father. Most respondent dad stated they would like to see this changed to 50%-50%, which is being done in other states.

Bright spots included dads from several different communities mentioning 4-H programs as a place to go with their children for skill building and spending time together. Public libraries and churches continue to be seen as very accessible and inclusive to dads. Dads Making a Difference, through the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, was mentioned as a great resource for skill development. However, at the same time, dads were frustrated it is offered in limited communities. Microsoft has invested millions of dollars in Laramie County, and as part of that investment, they are developing workforce development initiatives. Currently, the Dads Advisory Group is recruiting new members and researching projects in other states that could be useful and replicated in Wyoming. A promising development was our support of the Community Baby Shower held in Natrona County by the NOWCAP PAT affiliate in May. Through that partnership, they partnered with local dads to hold a Dad's Den. This was a way for dads to gather and share their experiences. In May 2022, our Dads Advisory Council began meeting with the organizers of the Dad’s Den in an effort to learn from each other and locate ways to partner together to assist dads.

**Youth Advisory Council**

Another way WyCRP has worked to better stakeholder outreach is through its efforts with Youth Engagement. During the summer of 2021, WyCRP began researching the possibility of developing a statewide youth advisory council. DFS has been interested in this effort for a while, and the GAL Program has also been researching ways to improve the relationships between the GALs and their clients. In fact, they have begun working with people with lived experience to “mentor” youth on their caseloads. WyCRP researched potential youth advisory group models used in Wyoming and other states. WyCRP worked with a Steering Committee composed of DFS, Independent Living Coordinators, and the GAL Program to build our Wyoming program. Our steering committee has drawn on the expertise of professionals in this realm from Nebraska. Through our in state research, promising advisory group practices were found to already exist at the YES House in Gillette.

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 16-21. Our initial meeting was held in August 2021, with three participants. Youth participating are compensated for their attendance by DFS. The initial discussions centered on the group’s hope and purpose. 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 the youths was mixed initially. Several factors seem to have played into this trend. The meetings are currently held virtually, which is not the first preference of the youths or facilitators. The meetings are held on weeknights, and this seemed to conflict with the schedules of some of the participants. The Steering Committee took this into account and modified the meeting schedule. The other concern which came up was that maybe the amount of compensation youth received for attendance was not enough. DFS increased the amount paid and attendance improved. In fact, since December 2021, an average of 10-15 youth have attended the meetings. 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.

WYAC members say they wish to focus their energy and efforts in many directions in coming months. The first major initiative is to assist with rewriting the DFS Youth Bill of Rights for Foster Children. This has been a major undertaking the WYAC has taken on with enthusiasm. As of the writing of this report, this document is close to completion and has been sent to DFS District Managers and other staff for review. The importance of the input from WYAC members in crafting this document cannot be overstated. WYAC members possess the experience needed to make lasting change in foster home practices and training in Wyoming. Currently, planning is underway for a Youth Summit involving WYAC members for July 2022 in Riverton.

**Foster Family Support**

WyCRP continues to support foster families and DFS Foster Care Coordinators in our state. During the 2021-2022 Program Year, WyCRP offered a Facebook group Foster Parent Support Wyoming. The membership totals almost 100 people. 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. The DFS Foster Care Coordinators provide helpful video content shared with WyCRP for the support group, and the WyCRP Facebook page.

At the end of the 2020-2021 year, WyCRP worked with DFS to prioritize expenditure of remaining CAPTA funds, in support of foster families. WyCRP met monthly with the Foster Care Coordinators (FCC). FCCs asked for gift cards to buy supplies for foster families caring for foster children in their homes. It was also mentioned that fire extinguishers are required in foster care homes and many families do not have them. DFS cannot provide the extinguishers to all families needing them, and although they only cost around $20.00, many families cannot afford them. A third need identified was the lock boxes for securing medications, documents, guns, etc., in foster homes WyCRP meet all of the above foster care family needs. It is the hope of WyCRP that although these are small expenditures, they may help in reducing the stresses on foster families, and hopefully help retain them as foster families.

The gift cards, lock boxes and fire extinguishers have been distributed to FCCs in all 9 DFS districts. To date, 100 lock boxes and 155 residential fire extinguishers have been distributed, and the total funding expended on these items is $7,532.95. Gift cards totaling $12,050.00 have been given to the FCCs for distribution. More funding can and will be spent on these materials as the FCCs are inundated with requests for assistance from families. WyCRP still has $9141.58 to spend on the foster families from the 2020-2021 program year. In May 2022, WyCRP will attend the FCC in person meetings and will deliver the remaining gift cards at that time. WyCRP is meeting with DFS regarding further expenditures for foster families utilizing the remainder of the CAPTA 2021-2022 program year funding. In conjunction with PAT in Laramie and Natrona Counties, WyCRP is assisting with the reestablishment of Community Baby Showers. To provide support to families attending the Community Baby Showers, $1000.00 in gift cards has been set aside for them. WyCRP hopes to support similar efforts through the PAT service areas in Wyoming. Finally, Kinship Connections of Wyoming (KCOW) has received requests for assistance with clothing, groceries and fuel expenses for families that WyCRP has been able to fulfill. For example, in November 2021, a family transferred to FE Warren AFB and needed safe sleep accommodation for their 13 month old and 4 year old. WyCRP was able to purchase PacknPlays for this family so the children no longer had to sleep in the same bed with their parents. Early in 2022, a Cheyenne family living in a motel needed help with groceries. WyCRP was able to provide short-term assistance using CAPTA funding. It is important to note that documentation related to all expenditures mentioned in this section is provided to DFS. WyCRP appreciates the opportunity to help families and provide them with the support they 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 within the state, by all stakeholders involved in the child protection system.

1. Increase support and engagement for foster parents.
	1. 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.
	2. Action Step: Meet monthly with DFS Foster Care Coordinators to assess their needs, as well as those of their foster families.
	3. Action Step: Form a Steering Committee to develop an action plan related to assisting foster parents. Invite foster parents to be members of the Steering Committee.
	4. Action Step: During the 2021-2022 program year, WyCRP has provided tangible support such as Fire Extinguishers, Lock Boxes and gift cards to Foster Care Coordinators for disbursement to their foster families as needed. Continue these efforts, and identify additional tangible ways to support foster families.
	5. 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.
	6. Action Step: Action Step: Continue using social media and other platforms to support foster families.
	7. Action Step: Support DFS efforts in providing education to foster families.
	8. Action Step: Identify and pursue funding opportunities available to assist WyCRP in reaching this goal.
	9. 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.
	1. Action Step: Continue working with the Youth Engagement Steering Committee which currently includes DFS, the GAL Program, WCTF, and Independent Living Coordinators to enhance the recently formed Wyoming Youth Advisory Council (WYAC). This group currently meets monthly. Plans are in place for an in-person Youth Summit of WYAC members in July 2022
	2. 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.
	3. 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.
	4. Action Step: Identify and pursue funding opportunities available to assist WyCRP in reaching this goal.
	5. 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.
	1. Action Step: Continue working with our Dads Advisory Group on developing ways to engage dads.
	2. Action Step: Partner with WCTF to host in-person Dads Community Cafes’.
	3. 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.
	4. Action Step: WyCRP will partner with WCTF to explore possible prevention/awareness campaigns geared toward dads and male caregivers.
	5. Action Step: DFS Caseworkers are a very important stakeholder 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.
	6. 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.
	7. 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.
	8. 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.
	9. Action Step: Identify and pursue funding opportunities available to assist WyCRP in reaching this goal.
	10. 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**

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 will present at the upcoming Joint Symposium for Children and Youth in Cheyenne in June 2022. This presentation will highlight the existence and function of the CJA Task Force and recommendations generated from our work. The hope is this presentation will get the data directly into the hands of the professionals working in child protection on a daily basis.

**Child Maltreatment Fatality and Major Injury Review**

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. WyCRP staff, along with CJA Task Force members and both WyCRP and DFS staff completed the 3 year assessment together and submitted it in May 2020. As this report was written, WyCRP staff and Task Force Members had also assisted DFS staff in completing the CJA funding application due in May 2021. 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, among others.

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.

The COVID-19 Pandemic had an effect on the scheduling of File Review Meetings during 2021 and early 2022. Although not ideal, the CJA Task Force File Review Meetings were held virtually in 2021. In 2021, three (4) 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 (13) 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.

**Recommendations Generated from the 2021 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.**

**Department of family Services Reform:**

* Recommendation: Risk assessments should be completed on every child in the home, not just the child of concern. This may assist law enforcement and DFS identify other risk factors within the home.

**System Reform:**

* Recommendation: All Child victims of a crime should have access to a child forensic interview. As a system, we should follow the best practice model of “Child Forensic Interviews” on all victims and witnesses.
* Recommendation: Sponsor and set up a session at the Joint Symposium regarding the importance of pediatric strangulation. To support this, work with DFS and law enforcement to identify the trends and statistics.
* Recommendation: As a system, we must do a better job of addressing the needs of victims, specifically sexual abuse victims and their need for potential follow up with treatment.
* Recommendation: When Law Enforcement makes contact in a home where Domestic Violence involving Strangulation is alleged/suspected, regardless of whether formal charges could be forthcoming, an automatic referral should be made to DFS for an investigation. This should also be done whether or not the children in the home need to be/are taken into protective custody.
* Recommendation: Specific training needs to be provided to Prosecutors related to identifying the signs of Child Physical Abuse.

**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.**

**Department of family Services Reform:**

* Recommendation: 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.
* Recommendation: Our recommendations and data we are gathering needs to be more effectively shared with frontline workers. Currently it is shared with District Managers and Supervisors and the hope is that it trickles down, but we need a better system to provide it to the workers directly. Could this be done through sessions at the Joint Symposium?
* Recommendation: A specific training related to recognizing the signs of neglect needs to be provided to frontline workers.
* Recommendation: Work with DFS to research the abuse and neglect data related to the diversity of both the victims as well as the perpetrators.
* Recommendation: Work with DFS to ensure the creation of aftercare plans for victims of abuse and neglect prior to case closure.
* Recommendation: Current services available to dads aren't very “dad” friendly. Fatherhood focused training is needed for DFS workers and staff in order to more effectively work with dads.
* Recommendation: 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.

 **System Reform:**

* Recommendation: “Coordination of the System” needs to be done. One central source should be monitoring the overall health of the child. Public health should be involved in this as they are largely Medicaid funded, which would allow for easier sharing of information.
* Recommendation: Are Mandatory Reporters really reporting as often as they should be? Earlier and more frequent reporting means earlier intervention.
* Recommendation: 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?
* Recommendation: Advocate for more trauma informed training for our treatment providers. Trauma care is very dependent on the existence of a cooperative parent.
* Recommendation: 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.

**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.**

**Department of Family Service Reform:**

* Recommendation: Treatment/case plans should be written to include every child in the home.

* Recommendation: 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 is needed.
* Recommendation: Work with DFS to ensure the creation of aftercare plans for victims of abuse and neglect prior to case closure.
* Recommendation: The Task Force suggests that DFS amend agency 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.

**System Reform:**

* Recommendation: The designation of “Failure to Thrive” should be reported to DFS.
* Recommendation: At the legislative level, changes must be made to ensure that circumstances exist for violations of “Failure to Report.”
* Recommendation: The Task Force wishes to begin working to update child welfare statutes in a number of areas. Members of the Task Force should identify a legislator(s) who is/are passionate about child welfare, and would be willing to serve on the Task Force. The hope is that educating legislators first hand will help garner support for impactful statutory updates.
* Recommendation: 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.
* Recommendation: Charges against parents for neglect where or when a homicide occurred.
* Recommendation: Discussion/training needs to be done with members of the Wyoming Legal System regarding the timing of closing a Juvenile Court Case, and Opening a Criminal Court Case, and the consequences for doing so.

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

* Recommendation: Prevention and education must continue to be done on the importance of gun safety and limiting access to alcohol for children. How can families more easily obtain gun locks?
* Recommendation: The opportunity still exists for continued education centered toward mothers regarding the importance of carefully choosing who they leave their children in the care of.
* Recommendation: Educational opportunity exists to speak with parents about the importance of scheduling and regularly attending well-child checks. This was not a recommendation as much as it was a question. Can a Dr. “red flag” a family after a number of missed well child visits, and the information is then provided to DFS and law enforcement for further follow up?
* Recommendation: The Task Force is seeing the trend that some mothers are “failing to protect” their children. Maybe an education/prevention program can be developed to combat this.

**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 recommendations based on case file reviews.

The Children’s Justice Act Task Force recommendations contained in this report are geared toward systemic improvements. As a Task Force we will continue to support the Department of Health’s initiative to create a universal mechanism for drug screening for all pregnant and expecting mothers. The Task Force will continue to work with DFS to develop training centered on using a collaborative approach when investigating cases of child abuse and neglect. In fact, this work has already begun. A training has been identified by the Task Force, in collaboration with DFS. The first three communities to receive the training have been identified, with the first of these trainings scheduled to take place during the summer of 2022. Next, the Task Force advocates for policy changes to enable the inclusion of law enforcement, medical, and coroner’s reports in the DFS case files used in the reviews. Inclusion of this comprehensive information is essential to the effectiveness of these file reviews, from which recommendations for systemic improvement are generated. Third, the CJA Task Force recognizes the importance of working with DFS on a standardized working definition of “Major Injury,” and to have this incorporated in the updates to WyCAPS to help ensure all qualifying cases are included in the Major Injury and Child Fatality Case Review. DFS is already engaged in efforts to ensure all eligible cases are included in the reviews.

 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. An example of this support is the Task Force’s current efforts to disseminate its recommendations and trend related data to DFS caseworkers and other Wyoming Child Protection System stakeholders through making a presentation at the Joint Symposium in June 2022.

**2021 Child Maltreatment Statistics**

Child maltreatment is the abuse and neglect that occurs in children under 18 years of age. This 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 1,317 total substantiations of child maltreatment, affecting 807 children, age 18 yrs. and under at the time of allegation during 2021 in Wyoming. Neglect made up 63% of the total substantiated allegations. Abuse totaled 28% of the total number of substantiated allegations. These two categories alone accounted for 91% of the total substantiated allegations for Wyoming in 2021. March 2021 holds the distinction for having the highest monthly total of substantiated allegations. The average age of the affected youth at the time allegations were made was 7 years old. Data Source: DFS WYCAPS data system. See addendums for tables containing these and other child maltreatment statistics. It is also important to note that all statistics reported exclude tribal data (Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone).

2021 Wyoming Child Maltreatment Statistics (Source: DFS)

This report provides maltreatment stats for children 18 years and under during the 2020 calendar year. 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 are 13 maltreatment types in WYCAPS, ranging from neglect, sexual abuse, physical injury, to malnutrition.

In 2021, 807 children (18 years and under) experienced 1,317 substantiated allegations of maltreatment. Neglect made up 63% of the total substantiated allegations, followed by abuse at 28%. Together, Abuse and Neglect accounted for 91% of the total number of allegations. The average age when the allegations were made is 7 years. In 2021, March is the month with the highest number of substantiated allegations of child maltreatment and abuse. Table 1 shows the number of substantiated allegations of child (18 years and under) maltreatment and abuse stats during the 2021 calendar year. The data is sorted by total substantiated allegations from the highest to the lowest.

Table. 1

| Allegation Type | Total Substantiated Allegation | % Total Substantiated Allegation | Number of Child(ren) | % Number of Child(ren) | Average Age at Allegation (Yrs) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| NEGLECT | 829 | 63% | 534 | 66% | 7 |
| ABUSE | 365 | 28% | 195 | 24% | 7 |
| SEXUAL ABUSE | 54 | 4% | 43 | 5% | 11 |
| EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT | 37 | 3% | 20 | 2% | 11 |
| PHYSICAL ABUSE | 12 | 1% | 10 | 1% | 7 |
| DANGEROUS ACT | 7 | 1% | 1 | 0% | 9 |
| PHYSICAL INJURY | 4 | 0% | 2 | 0% | 12 |
| ABANDONMENT | 3 | 0% | 1 | 0% | 6 |
| MEDICAL NEGLECT | 2 | 0% | 1 | 0% | 7 |
| LACK SUPERVISION | 2 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 6 |
| EMOTIONAL ABUSE | 1 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 14 |
| PSYCH ABUSE | 1 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 13 |
| Grand Total | **1317** | **100%** | **807** | **100%** | **7** |

Fig. 1 illustrates the number of substantiated allegations of child (18 years and under) maltreatment and abuse by allegation type during the 2021 calendar year.

Fig. 1



Fig. 2 shows the number of substantiated allegations of child (18 years and under) maltreatment and abuse per county during the 2021 calendar year.

Fig. 2



Fig. 3 further illustrates the number of substantiated allegations of child (18 years and under) maltreatment and abuse by month during the 2021 calendar year.

Fig. 3



**Conclusion**

This report focuses on systemic issues that affect the entire state, per federal mandate. It’s important to emphasize that improved outcomes for children and families involved in the Child Welfare System can only occur when all stakeholders in child welfare work together and take action to make improvements. While many of these recommendations focus on activities and projects currently taking place within DFS, all partners and stakeholders must coordinate resources and efforts to support meaningful, sustainable improvement.

 Children and families stand to benefit most when systemic improvements translate to improvements in the essential functions of child protection in local communities. The WyCRP, WCTF, Prevent Child Abuse (PCA) of Wyoming, Wyoming Children’s Justice Project, Wyoming 2-1-1, and a host of state agencies and local service providers will continue working to support local communities through coordinating efforts to empower families and protect children.

**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.2971-CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2019. 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 15 members, one full time Executive Director, and liaisons from the Wyoming Department of Family Services, Wyoming Department of Education, and Wyoming Department of Health. WyCRP is very proud of the fact that the 4 most recent At-Large Members became interested in serving on the Panel after having attended Community Cafe’ Meetings during the last 18 months.

The WyCRP usually elects new Officers on a yearly basis, but due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, Officer elections were postponed until 2021. Stacy Strasser was elected Panel Chair on June 23, 2021. Emily Genoff has stayed on the Panel as a member at large. Jo Lee Schuler was elected to a full term as Panel Treasurer. There were several changes in the Panel’s general membership in the last 12 months. Member at large Phyllis Sherard resigned due to health concerns. Member at large Rose Fry joined the Panel in September 2021. Parent representatives Avelino Garza and Maria Mendez (married couple) and member at large Lynne Weidel Joined the Panel in December 2021. In March 2022, Danielle Marks was replaced by Angie Van Houten at the Department of Health liaison when Marks entered employment with DFS. Panel Member Chandra Ortiz left the Panel when she accepted employment with Kinship Connections of Wyoming in July 2021. She was replaced by Sarah Urbanek with CASA of Laramie County. Department of Corrections Liaison Dawn Sides was removed from the Panel in March 2022 due to lack of attendance since 2020. Several attempts to contact her were unsuccessful.

Our membership is as follows:

* Stacy Strasser, Chair, Lander
* Jana Conine, Cheyenne, Vice Chair, Cheyenne
* Jo Lee Schuler, Treasurer, Cheyenne
* Sheri England, Secretary, Gillette
* Lynn Huylar, Children’s Justice Act Task Force Chair, Cheyenne
* Carissa O’Malley, Casper
* Emily Genoff, Casper
* Sarah Urbanek, Cheyenne
* Rose Fry, Casper
* Lynne Weidel, Cheyenne
* John Wright, Casper
* Avelino Garza, Casper
* Maria Mendez, Casper
* Elizabeth Ramirez-Ridgeway, Rawlins
* Sara Serelson, Wyoming Children’s Trust Fund, Cheyenne
* Laura Dobler, DFS Liaison, Cheyenne
* Ilaine Brown, WDE Liaison, Cheyenne
* Angie Van Houten, DOH 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 complementary programs such as Parents As Teachers and Kinship Connections of Wyoming. The Panel’s Executive Committee serves as the Board of Directors for the organization. The organizational structure is as follows:



**Full WYCRP Panel meetings for 2021-2022**

**Date Meeting Type Number of Attendees**

6/23/2021 Virtual/Conference Call 17

9/22/2021 Virtual/Conference Call 16

12/1/2021 Virtual/Conference Call 17

3/2/2022 In-person/Virtual 15

It should be noted that funds allotted for Panel meeting expenses have been underspent due to the move toward mostly virtual meetings. The hope is, moving forward the full Panel meetings will return to an in-person format.

**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.

1. 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.

1. 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.

1. 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.

1. 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.

1. 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.

* + 1. 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).
				1. 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.
		2. 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.
		3. 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.
		4. 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.
		5. 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.
1. 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.

* + 1. One video was filmed via Facebook Live in May 2021, and a second, previously recorded video was shared with WYCRP.
		2. Videos were posted on the WYCRP and Foster Parent Support Wyoming Facebook pages.
		3. WYCRP shares Foster Parent College online resources with foster parents.
		4. 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.
1. 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.

1. Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan.
	1. 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.
	2. Youth Advisory Group launched.
2. Leverage online methods (including social media) for stakeholder survey and engagement.

Completed.

* + 1. Website updated
		2. Foster Parent Support Page on Facebook developed.
		3. 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.
1. 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.

1. *Communication:* Based on known gaps, create opportunities to connect people and resources.

Lead: Bryan Cook. Work group: Laura Dobler, Stacy Strasser, Ilaine Brown.

1. *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.

1. *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.

1. *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.

1. *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.

1. *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 Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, June 23, 2021**

In Attendance: Emily Genoff, Sara Serelson, Laura Dobler, Ilaine Brown, Jo Lee Schuler, Jana Conine, John Wright, Sara Serelson, Carissa O’Malley, Lynn Huylar, Stacy Strasser, Sheri England, Elizabeth Ridgeway. This meeting was held virtually.

Absent: Phyllis Sherard & Dawn Sides

Staff: Bryan Cook, Angy Fox, Josie Britain, Catherine Orban

The meeting was called to order by Emily at 1:03pm.

1. **Introductions:** Panel members and staff in attendance were introduced for the meeting.
2. **Agenda Review:** The agenda was reviewed by the panel with no significant changes.
3. **PAT-**
4. Josie introduced Catherine Orban as the new Parent Educator for Laramie County. Catherine replaces Heather Kibler. Catherine comes to PAT highly qualified. It’s great to be meeting in person again and reconnecting. A very nice article was written about PAT in the Casper Star Tribune and the Boomerang and PAT has been asked to be featured more frequently in the editorial in the paper. In October PAT will finally be recognized in Baltimore for the Blue-Ribbon Award in person. There is a site visit coming up and the fiscal year end is June 30th. The numbers of families served look fantastic, and Josie sees no issues in meeting the grant goals. Emily thanked Josie and her staff for making a difference and Jo Lee and Bryan also complimented Josie and her staff for all their accomplishments and hard work.
5. **Kinship Connections**-
6. The 5K fundraiser made $2,400 after expenses. It was well received with 30 participants and was considered successful. Bryan thanked everyone for their hard work in making this a success. Thank you, Jo Lee, Sara, and Gabby, to name a few. Bryan reported that we had various local sponsors who came through for us to cover the costs and the team feels like they would like to do it again next year.
7. Kinship Connections is still recruiting for the Program Manager Position and interviews will begin June 25th with the hope of hiring someone in July. Two subcommittees have been started, and with the monthly support group being a success, an additional group has been added. Kinship Connections continues to work with the University of Wyoming on the evaluation of the program. Sara asked if Bryan could investigate the reasons why the Program Manager resigned. Bryan will evaluate the situation and review what could have been better if anything.
8. **Director’s report:** Bryan reviewed his most recent Director’s report and shared the following information. Bryan has been working with Laura (DFS) on the expectations of the DFS contract with WYCRP and they align with WYCRP Strategic plan goals. The filmed presentation by Dr. Berry regarding the transition of youth into foster care has been posted and it is available to DFS & foster parents based on the survey results from the foster parents. Bryan attended the CJA National Conference virtually and gained some very good information on diversity in hiring, panel members and reviewing cases, etc. Sara (WYCTF) asked Bryan to help present to the CBCAP National Conference regarding the innovative Community Café’ Meetings. Bryan submitted the CJA grant application on time. Bryan attended the Annual CRP National Conference on May 25 & 26 through a virtual format. Bryan will ask Panel Members next time if they want to join in the training.
9. **Financial Report:** Angy and Bryan presented the financials for the previous quarter. The Financial statements were emailed out to all Panel Members prior to the meeting. Angy is moving the WYCRP Financials from cash basis accounting to accrual accounting and during this transition period the numbers may be negative or positive depending on the timing when the revenues and the expenses are recognized. To help clarify, this will be addressed in the reports and by providing more detail, etc. Emily asked if we are meeting expenses and the response was yes, the expenses are being met. If we stay in our established process, we will do OK. There was some discussion on the timing of the Executive Meeting and when Angy can complete the financial reports and present them to the Executive Committee.
10. The Wyo Gives Fundraiser will be held on July 14th was successful for WYCRP and requires less staff intensive hours. It costs only $150 a year and has benefits throughout the entire year. This fundraiser was a great way to raise funds and promote awareness of WYCRP.
11. Volunteers are needed for help with social media.
12. **Executive Committee office Elections-Chair and Treasurer:** Emily is stepping down as Chair, but she will remain a Panel Member.
	1. **Nominations:** Emily nominated Stacy Strasser for Chair and Jo Lee Schuler as Treasurer.
	2. **Vote:** Emily nominated & made a motion to accept Stacy Strasser for Chair and Jo Lee as Treasure. John Wright 2nd the motion and the motion unanimously passed.
	3. **Recruitment of New Members:** Phyllis, Carol & Chandra have resigned as Panel Members. Rose Fry has agreed to be on the Panel. Sara, with Laramie County CASA, has agreed to be on the Panel and can fill the role as CASA Member. Emily made a motion to accept both Rose Fry and Sara as Panel Members for WYCRP. Jo Lee 2nd the motion and the vote passed unanimously.
13. **WYCRP Annual Report:** Thank you Bryan for the excellent report.
	1. **Discussion:** The data is good and it’s very comprehensive, representing all the Panel does. Bryan works well with our DFS partners. Some of the fonts look different and should be all the same. Bryan will change the font if appropriate.
	2. **Acceptance/Approval of Report:** Elizabeth made a motion to accept the 2020 WYCRP Annual Report. John 2nd the motion and the motion passed unanimously. John stated the report looked great.
14. **Strategic Plan:** Chandra had asked if we could have an independent Strategic Planning process. WYCRP received a grant that paid for the strategic plan which turned out very well.
	1. **Vote of Acceptance:** John made a motion to accept the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel’s new Strategic Plan and Jo Lee 2nd the motion. The motion unanimously passed.
	2. **Action Planning:** Bryan askedPanel Members to sign up for 3 Committees. Jo Lee, Carissa, Rose, Elizabeth, and Stacy are on the **Increase Support & Engagement for Foster Parents Committee.** Ilaine, Sara S., Sara B., Laura & Stacy are on the **Engage Foster Youth and Identify gaps in the Communication and Services Committee.** Emily, Jana, Sara, Elizabeth, John, and Stacy are on the **Build a Stronger Community Through Stakeholder Identification and Connection Committee.** John is working with Sara S. and Bryan on parent voices engaging parents, especially dads.
15. **Update from National CRP Conference:** Covered under number 5.
16. **WYCRP Program Updates:**
	1. **DFS Contract:** Bryan has been working with Laura on the new contract between WYCRP and DFS. The contract starts October 1st for the 2021-2022 year. The tasks and goals align with the strategic plan.The contract will be the same amount of money as last year.
		1. **Updates on Youth Involvement and Foster Care Support Efforts:** There has been a lot of work done with the Community Cafés engaging stakeholders, etc. Sara S. and Bryan presented their work on the Community Cafés at the CBCAP National Conference. The presentation was very successful. There is an interest in the Father Engagement Program. The Youth Engagement Work Group is moving forward. Nomination letters have been sent out to DFS, IL Coordinators, and GALs for their review and to gather nominations for the Youth Advisory Council. Participants will be paid for attending the meetings and activities they do. There is a program out of California that is a Youth Engagement Pilot Project. There is funding to apply for, and it sounds like a good opportunity.
	2. **CJA Task Force:**
		1. **Next File Review Meeting is Set for September 2021:** There will be no June File Review, but the Task Force will be refining and changing some processes. The Task Force is also waiting for more information on some cases so they can review them. Requirements are being met. They are working on recruitment and retention of Task Force Members.
		2. **Update on Changes to our Process:** The Task Force is looking for a criminal attorney, a criminal and civil court judge, and a mental health professional. If any Panel Members know of anyone who can fill those roles, please pass them along. They are developing by-laws and updating and changing processes. Work is being done with Laura on getting the information shared electronically and refining processes. There was a discussion on those processes like what type of cases will be reviewed, inviting special experts needed to help with cases, better job of assigning cases, etc.Laura said there are funds to provide Multi-disciplinary Collaborative training. Stacy has a judge who would be interested in being a part of CJA.
17. **Agency Updates:**
	1. **DFS:** Elizabeth remindedeveryone about the ERAP (Emergency Rental Assistance Program) and asked that we spread the word about this funding assistance program.
	2. **CTF:** Sara said that CTF has completed the charter requirements for Child Abuse Wyoming checklist and a site visit is the next step. By October Child Abuse Wyoming will be under the CTF umbrella.
	3. **DOC:** Dawn is not in attendance and there is no report.
	4. **WDE:** Ilaine Brown highlighted a few items such as Legislative Bills that could impact our youth like CTE (Career Technical Education), Gillette College is wanting to be its own college district, Bills that could impact Native American Students, ESSER Funding, Absenteeism.
	5. **WDH:** No report
	6. **Updates from other Panel Members:** Jana said that they were awarded the contracts for Independent Living and labor shortages are making it difficult to conduct business.
18. **Communication:**
	1. **Website/Social Media:** Asking for information on upcoming website changes. Bryan is asking that if any Panel Member would like to update their information on the website, please send him the information. Pictures can be updated also. If you haven’t submitted Bio information or a photo, Bryan will be sending out emails. Panel Members asked if some sections could be in Spanish. Also contact information for PAT & Kinship Connections in Spanish would be helpful.Elizabeth offered help to translate. Social media is requiring a significant amount of time from Bryan, and he is asking for volunteers to help in managing WYCRP social media.He reported that he has 470 followers.
19. **September 2021 Panel/CJA Meeting date:** The meeting dates and times are TBD.

**Thank you, Emily, for being the Chair and providing a lot of support and insight. Thank you for giving your time and staying on as a member at large.**

1. **Adjourn:** 3:30pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Sheri England

Secretary

**Wyoming Citizen Review Panel Meeting**

**Wednesday, September 22, 2021**

In Attendance: Emily Genoff, Sara Serelson, Laura Dobler, Ilaine Brown, Laura Dobler, Jana Conine, John Wright, Rose Fry, Carissa O’Malley, Lynn Huylar, Stacy Strasser, Sheri England, Carissa O’Malley, Danielle Marks, John Wright, Judith Luque-Children’s Trust Fund Intern, Sarah Urbanek & Lynne Weidel-potential new members.

Absent: Dawn Sides, Jo Lee Schuler & Elizabeth Ridgeway

Staff: Bryan Cook, Angy Fox, Josie Brittain, Gabby Rodgers

The meeting was called to order by Stacy at 1:01pm.

1. **Introductions:** Panel members and staff in attendance were introduced for the meeting. Lynne Weidel introduced herself and has a wealth of knowledge that would be very beneficial to WYCRP. Phyllis Sherard had recommended Lynne to the WYCRP. Sarah Urbanek is also wanting to be a new member and would fill the role of a CASA representative and comes with a lot of experience as well.
2. **Agenda Review:** The agenda was reviewed by the panel and Bryan is requesting that Angy be allowed to go first. No other changes.
3. **Approve the June 23 Minutes:** Emily made a motion to approve the June 23, 2021, Minutes and John Wright seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed.
4. **Financial Report:**
	1. Angy and Bryan presented the financials ending August 31, 2021. The Financial statements were emailed out to all Panel Members prior to the meeting. Angy is moving the WYCRP Financials from cash basis accounting to accrual accounting. August Financials are much improved. Angy reported a .44 cent discrepancy There was an issue when $1,380 was transferred from savings where QuickBooks is not recognizing this transaction. Angy is looking into this.
	2. Credit cards and receipts are reviewed monthly by Jana and Jo Lee and then their report is brought to the Executive Committee, voted on, and recorded in the minutes. If other Panel Members wish to see the credit card statements and receipts just ask Bryan.
	3. Renewal of BCBS Plan and the financial impacts for the agency and employees: We renewed the BCBS insurance with a 6% increase. WYCRP pays for 70% of the insurance and the employee pays for 30%. The plan we have now is not being offered anymore except as long as we continue with BCBS we can receive this “Grandfathered Plan”. AFLAC is also something that the employees can choose to buy on their own.
5. **PAT**- Josie Brittain:
	1. Josie said PAT is a home visiting program that works with children from pre-natal up to age 5 years old. PAT serves 110 families across Wyoming, and they use virtual and in-person visits. They are updating COVID-19 Protocol including a signed permission form denoting the risks as they relate to COVID-19. The groups are being provided outdoors but when it’s too cold, around October, they will have to be virtual. Recently an employee was hired in Laramie County, and she has already enrolled families. PAT is doing work with the Mother and Babies Curriculum which works on mental health and postpartum depression. Danielle offered to collaborate with PAT in this project. PAT is exceeding all 21 essential requirements for the grant even through this Pandemic. Josie says she has an amazing team. This is a great opportunity to help families until they can get an appointment to visit a Mental Health Provider. There will be 5 employees going to the National Conference in Baltimore to physically receive the Blue-Ribbon Award. The employees worked very hard and deserve the recognition. Great work!
6. **Kinship Connections-Gabby Rodgers:**
7. Recently Kinship Connections had an information booth at the Casper Kids Fest and from that event they now have 3 clients. They have seen a lot of growth with 6 families being served in Natrona County and Gabby is serving 5. Employees from the program are headed to Virginia in October for a Family Engagement Summit. This summit will provide the employees with tools and the documentation tools or training for conducting evaluations. They are working with other Kinship Programs and have elected to partner with Montana’s Kinship Program in working with collecting data together since both states are rural and need the data in working on being incorporated into the Clearing House so they can be recognized as a best practice. The Governor and the Mayor are recognizing September as Kinship Care Awareness Month and will be read by a Commissioner on September 30th. Thank you, Gabby for working very hard and doing such a great job including your hard work with the 5K fundraiser. Excellent Job!
8. **Director’s report:** Bryan reviewed his most recent Director’s report and shared the following information. Bryan and Stacy reviewed and signed the finalized DFS Contract which has been sent back to DFS for their signatures. The expectations of the DFS contract with WYCRP align with WYCRP Strategic plan goals. DFS will be receiving the MIECHV grant and will be funding WYCRP to continue providing the PAT program.
9. **Recruitment of New Members:**
	1. Lynne is here at the meeting as a prospective new member and comes highly recommended by Phyllis Sherard. Sarah Urbanek has agreed to be on the Panel but has been having trouble printing out the application Bryan sent to her. She is very passionate about being on the Panel and will make a great Panel Member. John Wright and Bryan have been working on supporting dads and through this project they have been working with Nick who they will be asking if he wants to be a Panel Member.
	2. Bryan will email out an application to Sarah Urbanek, Lynne Weidel and Ryan Anderson. Ryan Anderson is the new Executive Director of the Y.E.S. House. Rose Fry is retired from DFS and is one of the newest members. Sara Serelson asked that we recruit more youth to our Panel and individuals with lived experience. We also need to expand our diversity and reach out to Spanish speaking individuals regarding their potential interest in serving as members of the Panel. Bryan says he welcomes more diversity and is open to increasing our diversity.
10. **WYCRP Program Report:**
	1. **Funding spend down from 2020-2021 contract:** Laura Dobler reported that there is $20,000 left over from the 20-21 contract that needs to be spent by September 30, 2021. The feedback she received from Foster Parents and Foster Youth indicated that Gift Cards would be the best to buy to assist the parents and youth to be successful.Each foster parent and child may have different needs. Items such as fire extinguishers, locked medication boxes, etc.Discussion ensued regarding how to pay for $20,000 worth of items. Laura will need to meet with Bryan to determine the best way to purchase these items and have DFS reimburse WYCRP. Thank you, Jana, for offering to help in this process. There was discussion about how the process would work to receive the funding and if this funding could be used for prevention, pregnant youth, and older youth. Rose Fry said a need for some foster parents are security measures and/or systems to protect and assist the foster parents. Sara Serelson requested 120 more books for the “Kids Deserve Dads” Program. Laura & Bryan said that was an appropriate purchase. Bryan will work with Laura on this funding and Panel Members reiterated that we do not want to turn the money back.
	2. **DFS Contract – Bryan and Laura:** This was covered previously in our meeting.The contract is awaiting a signature and will be ready to go on time.
		1. Was discussed earlier & no other comments.
		2. Was discussed earlier & no other comments.
		3. Was discussed earlier & no other comments.
11. **CJA Task Force – Lynn/Bryan/Laura:**
	* 1. The CJA Meeting will occur tomorrow, September 23, 2021, with 5 case file reviews. There were no case reviews in June, but we are still fulfilling requirements by having 3 meetings in a year. A 3-year assessment will occur in 2022 and Laura Dobler will be transitioning into the role as contact person. She will contact the Federal Contact person for assistance.
		2. New Member Recruitment: Laura, Lynn and Bryan met to recruit new members. Members needed are active criminal and civil Judges, criminal defense attorney, and a S.A.N.E. Nurse. Also Dr. Gilmartin is moving to Colorado but would like to remain on the Panel.
		3. Bryan is developing Bylaws for the CJA Task Force and will present them to CJA in December.
12. **Agency Updates:**
	1. **DFS:** Laura is excited about moving into Families First and implementing requirements. Applications went out for anyone wanting to be a QRTP on September 1st. Updated case plans to include in-home cases.
	2. **CTF:** Sara said that CTF has completed the charter requirements for Child Abuse Wyoming checklist and a site visit has been set for October 19-21, 2021. Sara said she may be meeting with a variety of stakeholders about collaboration. Sara has linked WYCRP to her website. A project they have been working on is Parent Storytelling Prevention Awareness and has recorded stories for social media. They will be released during Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. Sara appreciates her partnership with WYCRP.
	3. **DOC:** Dawn is not in attendance and there is no report.
	4. **WDE:** No report.
	5. **WDH:** Danielle Marks stated they have received 2 new grants. The first grant is the Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Grant that will be funded at $500,000 each year. If anyone needs more information, please contact Danielle. The second grant is a Childhood Bloodwork Screening Grant that will screen youth appropriately for issues like Lead in the blood. Screenings will be done at 12 and 24 months. A third grant that they have received would work on statistics on the mortality rate on maternal deaths during pregnancy and up to 1 year later. Looking at postpartum death and the prevention of those deaths. Please get the word out about the My 307 Wellness app for phones. This is a great app and has valuable information about services and every Public Health Office in Wyoming can be contacted.
	6. **Updates from other Panel Members:** The Youth Homeless Demonstration Program through the Y.E.S. House has leased an entire apartment building to lease to youth ages 18 up to age 25. WBI – Emily reported that they have their Telehealth Outpatient Program for youth throughout Wyoming up and running. Please contact Emily for more information.
13. **Communication:**
	1. **Website/social media:** Bryan is making changes to the website and is also using the media platform to support Foster Parents and Dads. There is a specific Facebook page for Foster Parents. Bryan will look at linking other resources/agencies/programs to the website.
14. **December 1st and 2nd 2021 will be the next Panel/CJA Meeting date. The December 1st Panel Meeting will start at 1:00p.m.**
15. **Adjourn:** 3:02p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sheri England

Secretary

**December 2021 WYCRP Quarterly Panel Meeting**

**Wednesday, December 1, 2021**

Meeting was called to order at 1:03pm

1. Introductions -

Maria and Lorenza are new. Lorenza is with PAT and Maria is a mother who participates in the program. Lorenza is not a Panel Member, but works with Maria’s family as their Parent Educator and is their interpreter.

1. Also in attendance(Virtual Meeting):

 Angy Fox, Danielle Marks, John Wright, Jana Conine, Lynn Huylar, Rose Fry, Sara Urbanek, Stacey Strasser, Bryan Cook, Laura Dobler, Elizabeth Ridgeway, Emily Genoff,

Chandra Ortiz, Sara Serelson, Avelino Garza, Maria Mendez, Lorenza Trevizo.

1. Bryan motioned to move agenda item 8 to item 5.
	1. Approved by panel.
2. Financial Update - Financial looked the best for the first time since Angy has come onboard. Kinship and DFS are zeroed out. The PAT funding is showing a profit, but that is incorrect. Angy is meeting with the WYCRP accountant tomorrow morning to address the $46.10 PAT profit. These funds should go toward insurance, but it is not showing correctly on the report. WYCRP received a $5,000 grant from the Wyoming Community Foundation. These funds were used to send Kinship staff to training as well as towards Halloween spending. The remaining funds will be used to certify Angy as a Notary.
	1. Financial report was approved by the panel.
3. Meeting Minutes
	1. Approved by the panel.
4. New member applications
	1. Lynne Weidel - Voted in by the panel.
	2. Avelino and Maria Gorza - Voted in by the panel.
5. Other Membership and Attendance
	1. Illaine Brown is not present due to travel for a professional training.
	2. Dawn Sides with DOC has not attended in the last year.
		1. Stacy will reach out to Dawn to discuss her membership. Stacy will explore alternate members from DOC with Dawn. If she does not respond or is no longer interested in participation, Stacy will send a letter indicating that her membership has been revoked.
	3. The panel is interested in getting additional people with lived experience (youth, parents, foster parents, ect.)
6. Kinship Connections of Wyoming (KCOW) Update
	1. Kinship Connections of Wyoming - Moving into the 3rd year with the collaboration with other states (Vermont, Maine, Pennsylvania, Washington, Montana etc.) through Generations United. This collaboration is through the Casey Family Programs. The aim is to standardize all forms and services. Laramie, Converse, Natrona, and Albany are currently piloting all of the new forms and procedures. The project will be completed by 2023-24. Once it is completed it will be submitted through the clearinghouse to be utilized for prevention services under FFPSA. KCOW is utilizing Comfort Cases, which is a backpack for children and families. Each backpack comes with a book, blanket, tshirt, pajamas, socks, femine hygiene products,etc. NOWCAP is currently developing an advisory council. They are looking for people with lived experiences, youth, and other professionals.
	2. Staff is beginning to talk about the 5K again. Considering holding one in Casper and one in Cheyenne, both in September 2022, a few weeks apart from one another. September is Kinship Caregiver Awareness Month.
7. Parents As Teachers (PAT) Update
	1. PAT and Kinship in Cheyenne - Attended the National PAT conference in October in Baltimore, MD. Received TA and ongoing education. Wyoming affiliates were recognized for their Blue Ribbon Affiliation with the National PAT organization. One parent educator attended in person. During the conference they started discussing advocating to members of congress for additional MIECHV funding. The contract with DFS will be in place by April 2021. Laramie County currently has several openings for families in the community.
8. Director’s Report
	1. Bryan did not send the September director’s report as we met in September. He will send those all out moving forward so the panel has a whole synopsis.
	2. Bryan discussed the majority of the report in our other sections of the meeting, so not a lot of time was spent on this. .
9. CRP Program Reports
	1. New DFS contract began on 10/1/2021. The Statement of Work is based on the Strategic Plan completed in May of 2021.
	2. Youth Engagement - Making gains at this time. Collaborating with DFS, Children’s Trust Fund, GALs, and Independent Living Coordinators. Our last meeting in November we had 8 youth attend. We expanded to ages 16-20 years old. We are still receiving nominations. Overall we have increased spreading the word about the council. We have adjusted the times of meetings as well as the date to accommodate the youth better. We have made contact with a representative from Nebraska and oversees their Citizen Review Panel. They are providing some assistance in developing and organizing this initiative. Also, DFS has offered $100 per meeting.
		1. Danielle Marks offered that Health also has an Youth and Young Adult Health Council that may align with some of the work that the Youth Advisory Council is doing. Their website is https://yayawy.com/
	3. Father Engagement -
		1. Father engagement sessions are planned for one in each judicial district. Two additional sessions are scheduled at the end for parents who were unable to attend. This will be in collaboration with Jon Wright as well as the Children’s Trust Fund. Jon is also working with another father from Natrona County who will also be leading the meetings.
		2. John and Bryan are developing a Dad’s Skills Day. The idea is to provide dads in the community skill building opportunities in the community. Ideas such as mechanic work, CDL work, etc. Jon and Bryan will continue to plan around this idea and provide additional updates
		3. Kids Deserve Dads - Already providing a program to father’s in Wyoming. WYCRP utilized some additional funding at the end of the last contract year and purchased 200 books for their program. WYCRP and Children’s Trust Fund are supporting their efforts and partnering with them for Community Cafe’s.
		4. Stacy discussed that Dads Making a Difference will be in Wyoming in the next year providing training. Stacy is going to provide a contact person to Bryan. Bryan will follow up and see if the opportunity exists for partnership.

* 1. Foster Parent Engagement -
		1. WYCRP purchased gift cards for groceries, gas, clothing, etc. Several families have already utilized the gift cards.
		2. WYCRP purchased fire extinguishers and lock boxes for foster parents.
1. CJA
	1. CJA meeting was scheduled for 12/2, however the files were not read and the meeting was moved to 12/14. There will be 3 files reviewed. CJA Task Force is still working on the bylaws, especially around membership. There is a need for new members in the areas of judicial and medical.
2. DFS
	1. Aside from the updates given, plans of safe care will be implemented through PAT as well as Public Health Nursing.
3. Children's Trust Fund
	1. Majority covered with Bryan’s updates.
4. Department of Education
	1. Illaine Brown is not here, but she provided an email stating there were no updates.
5. Department of Health
	1. Title V (Maternal and Child Health Services) Partnering with the OMNI group in Denver, CO for focus groups. One is parents and the other is for providers. The topics will be safe sleep, well women visits, child well visits, systems of care for children with special healthcare needs. Danielle will provide the flyers and information to Bryan.
	2. Maternal death review update. They are already seeing some recommendations coming out around maternal mental health and maternal substance use. Danielle will provide their data and recommendations to WYCRP and the CJA task force.
6. WyoHelp
	1. ERAP - Assistance for emergency rental situations. They are partnering with DFS to run this program.

1. CASA
	1. They are providing Christmas presents for children in Cheyenne as well as coats for the community.
2. Strategic Plan
	1. Last year we applied for and received a grant to support the formal strategic plan process. Emily is unsure if the Tate Foundation would support a whole new planning process, but they may support us in bringing Public Knowledge back to update our planning. Bryan will continue discussion around what this will look like.

Next Meeting Date is Wednesday March 2, 2021 at 1pm. This meeting will likely be a hybrid meeting, of both virtual and in-person. Bryan and Stacy will work to develop the location for the in-person meeting option.

Meeting adjourned at 3:25pm

Wyoming Citizen Review Panel Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Meeting Notes:

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

Not in Attendance-Jana Conine, Sheri England, Carissa O’Malley.

Approval of Minutes from December 2021 Panel meeting.

The Meeting was called to order by Stacy Strasser at 1pm.

Review of Agenda by Bryan and Stacy.

Financial Review provided by Bryan and Angy. These materials were provided to Panel Members electronically before the meeting.

Parents As Teachers Update-Bryan Cook, for Josie Brittain.

Kinship Connection – Chandra Ortiz:

 Chandra stated that Kinship Connections has sent out information statewide looking for referrals. Packets of information were sent out. They had acquired 12 new families with 20 children. Chandra also informed the panel that the University of Wyoming is going to be running a survey and evaluation. This is related to their efforts on the Kinship Collaborative. Kinship is going to combine their numbers with Montana. She stated that schools are big referral sources. Stacey suggested reaching out to Fremont County. Stacey also asked for any reports on this for future meetings.

Directors Report – Bryan Cook

 DFS Contract – Bryan and Laura

Bryan gave an update on the DFS spend down regarding lock boxes, fire extinguishers and gift cards to Foster Care coordinators. The tracking and disbursement of the gift cards.

* All cards are tracked via the last four numbers on card, and are numbered when they are purchased, these and all boxes and extinguishers are put on a spreadsheet that is sent to Laura monthly (along with receipts of purchase)
* All cards, boxes and extinguishers are signed for, these signature forms are also sent to Laura.

Suggestions from the panel for any future spend downs:

* Support for parents and kids prior to removal
* What else are foster parents needing?

National Citizen Review Panel Directors Conference in California in May 2022

* Bryan is attending and there is funding for a panel member to attend. Laura will be attending as the DFS representative. Please send questions or interests to Bryan Cook at Bcook@wycrp.org

CJA Task Force – Lynn. She provided a CJA overview for those Panel Members who do not know about CJA.

* Collaborative Approach Training-Lynn has identified a facilitator for this. Laura has identified three communities where this training can be provided. The funding for this training is available through our current CJA Funds.
* Bryan and Laura will be working on the new CJA Grant application.
* Looking at ways to collect more data
	+ Surveys
* New Task Force Members are needed in the following areas:
	+ Judge
	+ Defense Attorney
	+ Nurses
	+ Pediatrician
* Major Injury and Fatality Review Meetings. No file review was held in March due to lack of files. This group makes recommendations regarding child abuse & neglect
	+ Prevention
	+ Judicial
	+ Administration

 DFS Annual Report. Bryan gave an overview of this report and the information contained. Final draft of this report is due to the DFS no later than May 30th. They will review for any needed changes, and provide this information to Bryan. The final report is due to DFS no later than June 30. Generally, this report will cover:

* CAPTA Contract Related Activities.
* CJA Task Force Activities.

Strategic Plan Update Exercise – Emily and Stacey

* Emily will be doing a revised version of Strategic Plan with updates on goals, timelines, and planning.
* CJA
	+ Task force will develop goals for annual report
* Themes
	+ Communication Online (including Facebook, Tiktok, Instagram)
		- Committee
			* Laura
			* Bryan/Angy
			* Emily
			* Ilaine
		- Looking at goals to get more followers
		- Breaking up the month by committee each taking one week to post.
		- Websites/Facebook for Foster Care Support Groups and Dad’s Initiative
	+ Stakeholders Connections
		- Committee
			* Emily – Point
			* Sarah
			* Bryan
			* Laura
			* Rose
			* Jana
			* Lorenza
			* Carissa
			* Jo Lee
		- Committee is for support, not to make suggestions but to say “What can we do to help”
			* Community Café
			* Dad’s Café
			* Youth Advisory
			* Spanish Speaking Community Café
			* Foster Care Parents Café
			* Foster Care Committee Advisory Group
	+ Café’s
		- Foster Parent Café
		- Dad’s Café
			* Making outreach more effective
			* Resource books
			* Auto Skill Buildings
			* Cooking
			* First Aid
		- How can we work better together, with Community Partners
* Fundraising Committee
	+ Lynn - Point
	+ Sarah U
	+ Emily
	+ Lynn W
		- Angy is more than willing to help in any way that is needed.

Vision Statement and Mission Statement

* Videos on social media
* Reading it at the beginning of Panel Meetings
* Get it out to the public, so the community knows and understands what we do, what we are and what we can do for them.

Dept. of Health – Bryan and Angie Van Houten

* List of goals and objectives
* Get with the most appropriate person

Department of Education – Ilaine

* Educational Legislature Update
	+ Absenteeism and Truancy
		- School board can give a say in absenteeism and truancy
	+ Critical Race Committees
	+ Hathaway Scholarships
		- When to sped, changing amount of time to spend
	+ K3 Reading Intervention
	+ Adult Training
		- Specialty trades

DFS- Laura

* 2023 will undergo round 4 of CFSR – Fall
	+ Doing reviews by themselves

Next Meeting will be held June 9th, via Zoom from 1 pm – 5 pm

Meeting was Adjourned.

Minutes prepared by WYCRP Office Manager Angy Fox.