Wyoming Citizen Review Panel

March 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Emily Genoff, Chair, Jo Lee Schuler, Treasurer, Carol Tullio, Stacy Strasser, Ilaine Brown, Lynn Huylar, Carissa O’Malley, Panel Members, Bryan Cook, Director, Laura Dobler, Wyoming Department of Family Services

Absent: Jana Conine, Vice Chair, Sheri England, Secretary, Dawn Sides, Wyoming Department of Corrections, Peter Newell, Carol Nicolarsen, Panel members.

Meeting called to order, 11 a.m.

1. Program Updates
   1. Kinship Navigator update - Gabrielle Rogers (Cheyenne), Jena Monahan (Casper). The Kinship Navigator program is funded through Wyoming 2-1-1 and is a program created to support grandparents raising grandchildren. Gabrielle started Jan. 2. Her office has received 15 referrals. She works with about six clients intensively and makes home visits if desired by clients. She said Cheyenne has responded well to the Kinship Navigator program. Gabrielle said one family hasn’t had any support while raising two children and one child has a lot of behavioral issues. Gabrielle was able to connect the family with local supports. She makes home visits. Jena started at the end of September and laid much of the groundwork for the Kinship Navigator program’s launch. There have been fewer referrals in Casper. Jena met recently with the DFS office in Casper and got one referral soon after. Families dictate what the relationship looks like – whether they just want referrals or more intensive support, similar to case management. Discussion followed regarding how telephone outreach can be extended to other communities. FMLA for Jena was approved for 12 weeks this summer
   2. Wyoming Department of Family Services – Laura Dobler. The Performance Improvement Plan is still being implemented but field staff have been focused on responding to the COVID-19 outbreak and work has slowed down. The Department’s COVID-19 strategy is directed at making sure clients are contacted by telephone or using FaceTime or other electronic conferencing tools while in person visits are not recommended. Comprehensive needs assessment is underway and the plan was to roll out the results in May, now delayed to later in the summer. Monthly family team meeting training is complete and implementation is starting; family team meetings are separate from MDT meetings and some community-level entities are still being brought up to speed. Another group within DFS is working with incarcerated parents to assure they are included in case planning. They are looking applying for a grant to help assure continuity of case planning with parents who are in jail. The next Continuous Quality Improvement session is scheduled in District 5 (Cody, Powell, Lovell, Worland, and Thermopolis) but will be delayed. The third annual Youth Involvement Review was completed in February, looking at whether youth are included in the case planning process, screened for sex trafficking and assessing how well GALs, CASAs and others are working with youth in Wyoming. Bryan participated. One hundred cases were reviewed. Laura will share the results. The most recent foster parent and youth focus groups were held in February in Casper. Bryan, Emily and Carissa facilitated. Three foster families and three youth participated. Focus groups were scheduled to be held next week in Rawlins and Laramie but those will be postponed. Efforts were made to reach some families by telephone to gather information that way. Results gathered are shared every month with DFS leadership. Recommendations are reviewed to determine where DFS can make changes or collaborate with other entities, and to develop timelines. Every quarter, leadership will share their efforts with foster parents by communicating through the foster care coordinators. Discussion followed concerned how to assure foster parents, biological families and youth that the information they are sharing is being put to good use. Laura said she will ask the DFS leadership about ways to communicate what’s resulting from the efforts to gather information. Bryan said WyCRP can help. Carol said it’s important to follow through, reporting to those who have shared their experiences what was done with the information that was captured and perhaps restating it so they are assured their perceptions were shared accurately. The state’s Family Services Plan is in place. The next stakeholder meeting will be May 13 from 1 to 3 p.m. Any stakeholder can participate. Bryan will circulate the invitation to the Panel. The Family Services Plan addresses keeping families together, reunification of separated families, supporting foster parents, and successful transitions. The biggest focus at the state level is keeping families together, preventing kids from coming in to care. The Department will share with stakeholders what is being worked on and will get feedback. An application was submitted to the Annie E. Casey Foundation for participation in a national youth summit, now scheduled for August. Wyoming was among 24 states selected. A delegation of adults and youth have been selected to attend. Laura and Lynn attended the annual CJA Meeting in Washington. Lynn said that the Directors of the Children’s Bureau priorities for when children come in to custody are threefold: what can we do to remove the danger? Is there a way to keep kids safe and live with another family member? If not, what’s the best way to remove the child and keep them safe? The Wyoming CJA meeting was postponed this month – at this time, 10 cases are going to be reviewed by the Child Death Review Team in June.
   3. Parents As Teachers – The WyCRP program affiliate is still covering Cheyenne, Laramie and Rock Springs. Because of the COVID-19 situation, the national PAT office Monday asked that home visiting be suspended for two weeks. Discussion followed regarding how to best keep in touch with families during the time period that in-home visits are suspended, and what information to share about COVID-19.
2. Review of the annual report – DFS hasn’t requested any changes to the annual report format. Lynn noted the report is really lengthy. A one-page summary document might be helpful if the content will be disseminated to legislators. Stacy and Emily will assist with development of a summary.
3. Website and Facebook – Carissa and Ilaine will send photos and bios for the website. Please continue to update Bryan if there are other changes needed to keep the website current. Bryan would like ideas for content on the WyCRP Facebook page. Carissa will help with the Facebook page and will connect with Bryan to find out how to best be of assistance.
4. Strategic Planning – The Mission Statement was reviewed and amended to read, “WyCRP promotes and provides systemic reviews and recommendations, education, prevention, and early intervention to ensure the safety of children and families.” The vision statement was amended to read, “WyCRP is a statewide leader in outreach for strong and healthy families and communities.
   1. The following questions need to be answered by each Panel member, with their submissions emailed to Emily by March 30:
      1. What are the current needs related to the population we serve?
      2. What other partners do we need at the table?
      3. What are our current strengths?
      4. What systems are in place that can address the needs of our populations?
      5. What can we be doing to meet unmet needs?
5. Budget – An accounting error resulted in the overpayment of Parents As Teachers funding in 2019; the funds are being repaid. PAT requested an audit. WyCRP does not have the funding required to complete a full accounting audit; an accounting firm selected by the WyCRP Executive Committee is going to discuss the audit requirements with the national PAT office. A new finance person is being recruited, following the departure of Jenn Woods late last year. There are candidates who will be interviewed. A fundraiser will be needed to help build the reserves WyCRP needs to complete audit expectations moving forward, and to assure payroll is met when there are delays in contract reimbursement. Lynn said a fundraiser can be used to help promote the good work done by Parents As Teachers and Kinship Navigator. WyCRP’s monthly expenses are about $56,000. Bryan is working on a budget.
6. December 2019 meeting minute approval – Carol moved and Lynn seconded approval of the December meeting minutes. Motion passes.
7. Next CJA and WyCRP meetings – June 2020 (TBD)
8. Meeting Adjourned 1:45 p.m.