



FCRB Program Status Report State Board Meeting – March 2021

1. Dashboard and Other Data

a. Number of Reviews Conducted

	Number of Youth Reviewed *	Number of Review Slots
FY 2018	2,055	1,364
FY 2019	1,876	1,243
FY 2020	1,867	1,289
FY 2021, Q1	394	256
FY2021, Q2	423	304

(*) Not a unique number of children as some children have more than one review in a year.

b. IP Participation at Reviews

The Dashboard tracks on overall participation by Interested Parties at the reviews held in a given month. Quarterly reports are generated and provided to DHS SWAs and SAMs and available for ICAB staff.

	DHS			All Other Interested Parties		
	Attendance	Written or Recorded	Total	Attendance	Written or Recorded	Total
July 2020*	NA	96%	96%	NA	29%	29%
Aug 2020**	-	-	92%	-	-	22%
Sep 2020**	48%	40%	88%	15%	11%	26%
Oct 2020**	52%	43%	95%	19%	9%	28%
Nov 2020**	54%	46%	100%	16%	12%	28%
Dec 2020**	76%	19%	95%	28%	7%	35%
Jan 2021**	51%	27%	78%	22%	4%	26%

(*) July boards were paper only;

(**) Some in person, some paper only so only total participation is noted.

c. Timeliness of FCRB Report Distribution

Per the DIA-DHS MOU, Timeliness of review reports: In 90% of the foster care cases reviewed by a LFCRB, LFCRB review reports will be provided to the juvenile court, DHS caseworker and all interested parties within 15 days of the foster care administrative review pursuant to Iowa Code §237.20(2)(a).

- 4FY'21 to date - 100% each month

2. LFCRB Rationale Statements

Rationale statements are prepared by local program coordinators for new and reappointed local board members. For the current fiscal year to date, the State Board has reviewed and approved:



- New local board members – 18
- Reappointments – 32

3. Resuming In Person FCRB Meetings

There are currently 24 local boards reviewing cases of children in foster care in 49 counties.

- a. Local coordinators continue to work with the administrative assistant, facilitator and board members to determine whether a local meeting is held in person or virtually with IP participation.
- b. ICAB continues to have a provision in the Governor's Proclamation suspending in-person meetings; this continues to be monitored and once the provision is lifted, all boards will need to resume in-person meetings.
- c. ICAB staff is assessing technology needs in order to continue offering interested parties the option of participating in a review virtually. Jennifer Slife is working with local coordinators, upon request, to seek out funding opportunities for the identified technology needs.
 - The Cedar Rapids office has been awarded \$3,036 from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, which is the full amount requested for technology equipment for the Linn County Foster Care Review Boards to further the virtual opportunity for interested parties to participate in local reviews.

4. FY21 Program Priorities - still in process

The FCRB Program Committee met on August 26, 2020 to set priority projects for this current fiscal year. Update on the priority projects include:

- a. **Review of Iowa Code 237.15 – 237.20 to identify potential legislative changes, as well as a review of the Child Advocacy Board Administrative Rules.**
 - i. Areas to consider include, but are not limited to:
 1. New - repurpose local foster care review boards to become local child advocacy boards that can review other types of cases in addition to cases of children in foster care.
 2. Consider establishing term limits for local board members
 3. Update training requirements for state and local board members
 4. Update the reporting requirements of [237.18\(2\)\(b\)](#) regarding the accumulation of data for children in foster care.

5. Changing the audience of foster care review to be the Department of Human Services rather than the Courts.
- ii. Meetings with stakeholders will need to occur as part of the process for determining the future direction of FCRB.
1. 2/3/2021 - Steffani Simbric received a forwarded email authored by Judge Mary Timko noting concerns about lack of citizen oversight for children placed with unlicensed relatives or suitable others. Efforts have been made to connect with Judge Timko; however, no direct communication has occurred as of 2/25/2021. Judge Timko's communication was forwarded to Simbric from David Dawson, Woodbury County Attorney.
 2. 2/4/2021 - Simbric and Shirley Hoefer had a phone meeting with David Dawson to discuss the email and reviewed code section 237.15(2)(d) as a means for addressing concerns noted by Judge Timko.
 - [237.15\(2\)\(d\)](#) states the following as part of the definition of a *child receiving foster care*, "The child is at-risk of being placed outside the child's home, the department or court is providing or planning to provide services to the child, and the department or court has requested the involvement of the state or local board."
 - Under this code provision, a judge can request involvement of a local board.

Attorney Dawson noted the Iowa County Attorneys Association as another entity for ICAB to connect with. Simbric has had initial communication with Jessica Reynolds.

3. 2/22/2021 - Simbric and Hoefer met with Judges Tabor and Schumacher to discuss a professional development opportunity for ICAB staff and volunteers on the judicial perspective of Family First Prevention Services Act and its implementation; also opened a conversation related to the impact of FFPSA on ICAB programs and the idea of repurposing the foster care review board program.
 - Training on FFPSA will be provided by Judges Tabor and Schumacher on March 23rd.
4. 4/16/2021 - Simbric, Hoefer and Amy Carpenter scheduled to meet with the DHS Service Business Team to review and update the MOU between DIA-DHS, in particular, Exhibit E for the Iowa Child Advocacy Board.

- b. Revision of the FCRB Pre-Service Training – current training is outdated in terms of applicable laws and changes that have been made to the process. A subcommittee of five staff has been formed to begin this project.**

December 2020 update:

- i. The committee has outlined the curriculum with an increased focus on how to review a case permanency plan and ask questions that elicit information about the progress toward meeting the case plan goals.
- ii. The training will be more interactive for new volunteers.
- iii. The goal is to have the curriculum revised by the end of this current fiscal year.

March 2021 update:

- i. A complete overhaul of the pre-service training curriculum will occur after a decision is made about proposed legislative code changes during the 2022 legislative session.
- ii. Local staff are working to make modifications to the current curriculum and develop a more interactive process by using Google Classroom to deliver the pre-service training.

- c. Starting citizen reviews in Jasper and Floyd county; as well as proceeding with exploration of starting pilot citizen review boards in Polk County to review cases of children with the permanency goal of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA).**

- i. Floyd and Jasper - *Completed; reviews began in January and February 2021.*
- ii. Polk County - There continues to be citizen interest in collaborating and assisting in the development of a pilot FCRB in Polk County. The group has a potential funding source to cover facilitation costs for a year, lead on a meeting location and names of individuals interested in serving.
 - More direction from the State Board is being sought in regards to moving beyond exploring a pilot board to developing and carrying out a pilot board in Polk County for a one year trial during FY2022.