



TO: The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services, Children and Families

FROM: Emily Coddington, Associate Director

DATE: October 14, 2021

RE: **SB 294 – Pre-adoption Training Formats**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 294, which seeks to allow for live virtual training of those completing the pre-adoption training requirements. We appreciate the bill author's acknowledgement that requiring in-person attendance can be a barrier to participation and/or create unnecessary burdens to those seeking to adopt a child.

WAFCA is a statewide association that represents nearly fifty child and family serving agencies and advocates for the more than 200,000 individuals and families that they impact each year. Our members' services include foster care and adoption programs; group care for children and youth through residential care centers, group homes, and shelter care facilities; family preservation services; and behavioral health treatment. Many of our member agencies license foster homes and facilitate both public and private adoptions, so ensuring those they serve are supported is of utmost importance.

Individuals and couples interested in adoption are often overwhelmed by the application process and training requirements, both of which can be rather time-consuming and costly. Allowing training to be provided via a live videoconference session rather than requiring in-person attendance will eliminate the need for travel, thereby reducing costs and decreasing the amount of time adoptive parents have to expend in order to welcome a child into their home. SB 294 also provides an opportunity for agencies to more easily provide training, which may enable them to offer additional sessions and reach more individuals/couples. Finally, we see SB 294 as a way to increase access to working and/or already parenting individuals and couples, as well as those in rural Wisconsin communities, who may have otherwise been discouraged by the time and travel associated with in-person attendance.

As always, we appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts with the Committee and value the ongoing commitment of the legislature to lift up issues related to adoption. We look forward to passage and enactment of this practical and technical update to Wisconsin adoption law.