



# Creating a Statewide Form and Process for Police As Mandated Reporters

**The Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advisory Board** is a statewide organization of young people, ages 14-24, who have experienced foster care. The OHIO YAB exists to be the knowledgeable statewide voice that influences policies and practices that impact youth who have or will experience out of home care, including foster care, kinship care, adoption, group homes and residential facilities.

## Ohio Police as Mandated Reporters of Abuse and Neglect:

- **Ohio was the last state in the nation to make police officers mandated reporters of abuse and neglect.** Police officers are often in a position to observe potential indicators of abuse or neglect.
- **The bill that passed to make this happen occurred just before the pandemic.** HB 137 amended Section 2151.42 of the Ohio Revised Code to make municipal and county police officers mandatory reporters of abuse and neglect. But a statewide form and process did not happen.

## Why A Statewide Form and Process is Needed:

- **Without a statewide form and process,** officers might include observations of suspected abuse in police reports, but there is no reliable mechanism to ensure that these reports consistently reach child protective services.
- **This exposes officers and departments to significant legal risk,** due to failing to ensure that documented abuse is reliably transmitted to children's services.
- **This systemic failure has contributed to preventable child deaths,** and has placed law enforcement at risk of litigation, despite good-faith efforts to comply with reporting obligations.

## Without a Statewide Form and Process:

- **Officers document suspected abuse in police reports,** but those reports do not consistently reach child protective services.
- **There is no reliable mechanism** confirming transmission or receipt of mandatory reports.
- **Departments face liability,** for alleged failure to report, due to administrative breakdowns, not officer misconduct.

## The Solution:

- **Adapt and utilize an Ohio form and process,** based on standardized reporting tools which have been successfully used in other states.
- **This form and process will:**
  - Ensure timely and direct transmission of abuse reports to children services
  - Establish a clear record of compliance with mandatory reporting laws
  - Reduce litigation risk by protecting officers and departments acting in good faith.