COLORADO
**CDHS**
**Office of Children, Youth & Families**
Division of Child Welfare

# 2018 STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT
## 2015-19 CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

The following appendices are attached as a separate file:

      APPENDIX A:  CQI Logic Models- Re-entry to Foster Care

      APPENDIX B:  CQI Logic Models- Visitation with Parents

      APPENDIX C:  CQI Logic Models- Educational Stability

      APPENDIX D:  CQI Logic Models- Initial and Ongoing Healthcare

**TABLE OF FIGURES**

**TABLE OF TABLES**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Name of State Agency:** Colorado Department of Human Services

### *CFSR Review Period*

**CFSR Sample Period:** 10/1/2016 – 5/15/2017

**Period of AFCARS Data:** 10/1/2015 – 9/30/2016 (FFY 2016)

**Period of NCANDS Data:** 10/1/2015 – 9/30/2016 (FFY 2016)

**Administrative Review Division Data:** 10/1/2015 – 9/30-2016 (FFY 2016)

**Results Oriented Management Data:** 10/1/2015 – 9/30/2016 (FFY 2016)

**Case Review Period Under Review (PUR):** 10/1/2016 – 9/17/2017

### *State Agency Contact*

**Name:** Ann Duenas

**Title:** Federal Performance Data Analyst & Liaison

**Address:** 1575 Sherman St. Denver, CO 80203

**Phone:** 303-866-5174

**Fax:** 303-866-4453

**E-mail:** ann.duenas@state.co.us

***Statewide Assessment Participants***

Robert Werthwein, Director of the Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF), Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS)

Marc Mackert, Administrative Review Director, Office and Performance and Strategic Outcomes (OPSO), CDHS

Ann Rosales, Director, Division of Child Welfare, OCYF, CDHS

Gretchen Russo, Judicial and Legislative Administrator, OCYF, CDHS

Mary Alice Mehaffey, Associate Director of Operations, OCYF, CDHS

Paige Rosemond, Associate Director of Programs, OCYF, CDHS

Deying Zhou, Research, Analysis, and Data Unit Manager, OCYF, CDHS

Lorendia Schmidt, Training Manager, OCYF, CDHS

Lucinda Wayland Connelly, Child Protection Services Manager, OCYF, CDHS

Jason Lester, On-Going Services Unit Manager, OCYF, CDHS

Kristin Melton, Youth Services Unit Manager, OCYF, CDHS

Lindsey Gorzalski Hocking, Manager, Administrative Review Division, OPSO, CDHS

Caire Krol, Manager, Administrative Review Division, OPSO, CDHS

Tara Saya Livington, Manager, Administrative Review Division, OPSO, CDHS

Laurie Burney, Licensing and Monitoring Supervisor and Residential and CPA Services Program Supervisor, OCYF, CDHS

Ann Duenas, Federal Performance Data Analyst & Liaison, OCYF, CDHS

Sylvia Smith, Data Management Supervisor, OCYF, CDHS

Korey Elger, Ongoing Child Protection Administrator, OCYF, CDHS

Mary Griffin, Foster Care and Relative Guardianship Assistance Program Administrator, OCYF, CDHS

Kathy Clark, Training Certification Specialist, OCYF, CDHS

Amanda Regensberg, Workforce Development Specialist, OCYF, CDHS

Beverly Gmerek, Adoption/Foster Care Recruitment and Retention Specialist, OCYF, CDHS

Mary Gerlach, Foster Care and Adoption Recruitment and Retention Communication Specialist, OCYF, CDHS

Lila Mutschelknaus, Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children Specialist, OCYF, CDHS

J.P. Sleeger, Data Quality Assurance Analyst, OCYF, CDHS

Jessica Starr, Hotline Data Analyst, OCYF, CDHS

Stephanie Johnson, Annual Progress and Services Report Specialist, OCYF, CDHS

Kasey Matz, Director, Colorado Child Welfare Training System, Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse & Neglect

Terri Lewis, Associate Professor, Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse & Neglect


**The statewide assessment was provided to the following groups for review and feedback opportunities:**

All county human services directors

Child Welfare Sub-PAC

Colorado Human Services Directors Association (CHSDA)

Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Representatives

Southern Ute Indian Tribal Representatives

Out-of-home Providers (foster parents, kin placements, CPA placements and CPA agencies)

CFSR Oversight Committee Members (county representatives, 2017 CFSR site representatives, CDHS representatives, Colorado Judicial Branch, and Community stakeholders)

## STATE DATA PROFILE

Data profile deleted in its entirety

## INTRODUCTION

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) is pleased to submit the 2018 Assessment of Performance. This Assessment of Performance is presented separately from the 2018 Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) as Colorado is undergoing a Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) in September 2017. This assessment complies with the requirements set forth in the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) most recent program instructions related to the 2018 APSR (ACYF-CB-PI-17-05).

Colorado's Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) outlined a number of measures of progress that CDHS would use to assess the state's performance on federal safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. This section addresses Colorado's performance on the measures of progress, efforts to maintain or improve performance, and in some cases, necessary revisions to better align with the CFSR Round Three statewide data indicators. This section also evaluates the functioning of Colorado's systemic factors pursuant to the CFSP. The data used to assess the state's performance primarily come from two sources: Trails, which is Colorado's state automated child welfare information system (SACWIS), and CDHS' qualitative case reviews.

In September 2016 CDHS hosted a statewide CFSR Kickoff event to provide information to stakeholders regarding the upcoming CFSR; present data related to the federal safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes; and solicit their feedback on Colorado's performance. Stakeholders were broken out into small groups that focused on one of the following four issues:

- reentry to foster care;

- visitation with parents;

- educational stability; and

- initial medical and dental examinations.

Utilizing the Capacity Building Center for Courts' continuous quality improvement framework, CDHS staff worked with the stakeholders to develop theories of change, which were documented in logic models that are included in the appendices of this report. The relevant sections of this report include summaries of the feedback stakeholders provided during the statewide CFSR Kickoff event.

Since April 2014, Trails data have been accessible to state and county staff through Results Oriented Management (ROM) reports, which is a web-based reporting system that was developed by the University Of Kansas School Of Social Work. Additionally, stakeholders and the public at large can access aggregated ROM data through www.cdhsdatamatters.org. ROM utilizes Trails data to produce reports related to the CFSR Round Three statewide data indicators, AFCARS measures, C-Stat measures, and demographics for children, youth, and families involved in Colorado's child welfare system. ROM is a dynamic tool that is updated weekly with updated Trails data. As a result, ROM provides current

performance data to state and county staff which in turn informs child welfare policy and practice improvements.

The second source of data comes from qualitative case reviews, which are conducted by the CDHS' Administrative Review Division (ARD).  All cases where the county department had custody of the child continuously for six months during the review period are reviewed. Review instruments are based on federal and state statute as well as practice expectations outlined in Volume 7 of the Code of Colorado Regulations. The data reflect the opinions expressed by children/youths, their family, foster care providers, county staff, court staff, and others who attend the reviews.  In FFY 2016 the ARD conducted approximately 6,265 reviews of foster care cases. More information about Colorado's case review system can be found in the Case Review System section of the Assessment of Performance (pages 54 - 58).

Trails and qualitative case review data are integral in measuring the quality of services provided by Colorado's human services agencies. The state's quality assurance initiatives and collaborative work groups regularly evaluate the impact of those services on child and family outcomes and the proper functioning and efficacy of processes and systems operating in Colorado. CDHS' C-Stat initiative brings together the department's executive leadership, division leadership, and program staff on a monthly basis to analyze up-to-date data to identify trends and opportunities for improvement. Many of the performance measures in this section are reviewed in C-Stat, and explanations of performance on specific measures align with conversations and analysis that occurred during C-Stat meetings.

In the process of developing this report, CDHS' Division of Child Welfare (DCW) identified systemic factors for which the state does not have sufficient data to adequately assess their functioning.  Through DCW's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) workgroup, these systemic factors are reviewed to find and recommend quantitative and/or qualitative measures that would demonstrate how well the systemic factors are functioning.

# ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE

## A. Safety Outcomes

The federal safety outcomes include the following:

(A) Children are first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

(B) Children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Colorado's CFSP outlines several measures CDHS uses to assess the state's performance in achieving the federal safety outcomes. The measures, as written in the CFSP, include the following:

1. Timeliness of Response to Initial Abuse/Neglect Investigations
2. Absence of Maltreatment Recurrence
3. Absence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care
4. Maintain Children Safely in Their Own Home
5. Risk assessment and safety management operationalized as "Safety Assessment Forms Completed Accurately"

The proceeding sections address each of the safety outcomes measures, any modifications to the measures, and Colorado's efforts to maintain or improve performance.

### Timeliness of Response to Initial Abuse/Neglect Investigations

This measure is now called timeliness of initial response to abuse/neglect assessments. Based on data available in Trails, Colorado tracks the timeliness of caseworkers' face to face contact, or attempted contact, with alleged victims of child abuse or neglect. Referrals that meet the criteria for assessment are assigned an immediate, three day, or five day response time according to rules outlined in Volume 7 of the Code of Colorado Regulations. The figure below shows the percentage of initial and attempted contacts made within the time frame assigned by the county departments.

*Figure 1: Colorado's timeliness of initial response to abuse/neglect assessments for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016*

**Timeliness of Initial Response to Abuse/Neglect Assessments**
**ALL Response Times**
**FFY 2016**
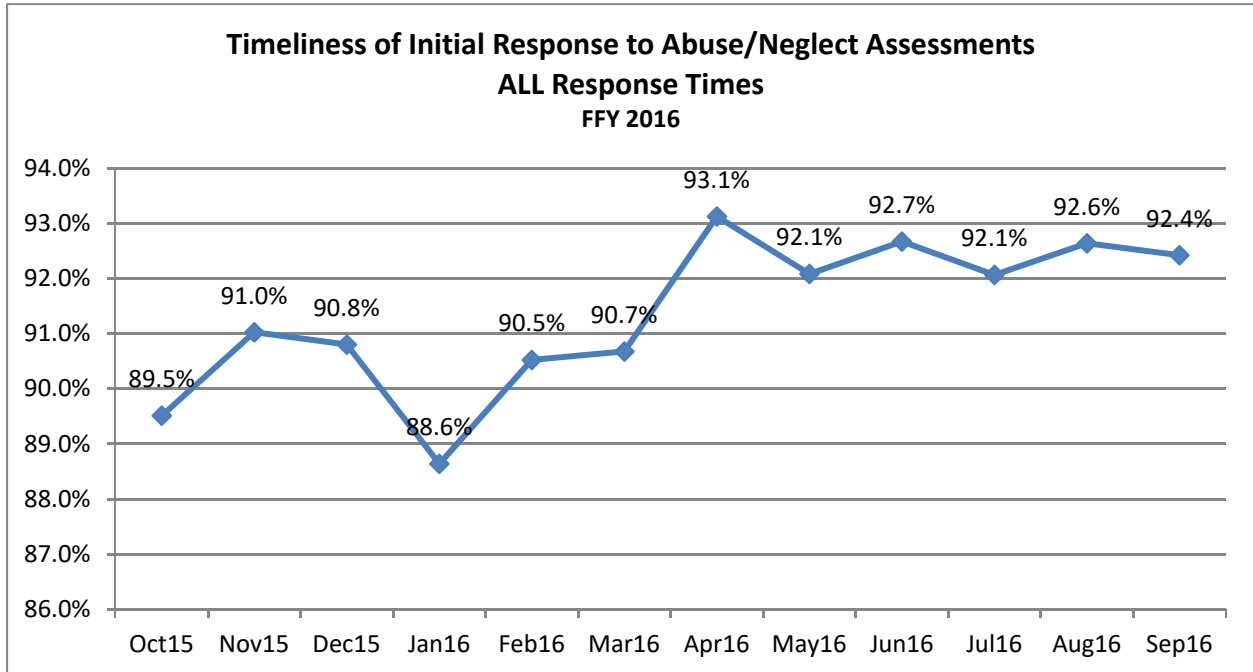


Colorado established a goal that 90% of all initial contacts with the victim in an assessment will occur timely. Since February 2016, Colorado has achieved this statewide goal and has exceeded that goal for the remainder of the federal fiscal year. In fiscal year 2016, Colorado identified timeliness of initial response as an area of intentional focus. CDHS' CQI efforts included promotion of monthly data collection and analysis through C-Stat to help identify areas in practice needing improvement and provided technical assistance to counties to improve processes. Over the past 2 years, the state has seen sustained improvement in the measure as a result of those efforts.

While achievement across all timeliness of initial response has shown improvement, the state continues to focus on assessments assigned an immediate response time (see Figure 2), through monthly performance measure analysis. CDHS focused on documenting practices of counties with consistently high performance in the measure.

*Figure 2: Colorado's timeliness of initial response to abuse/neglect assessments by response times for FFY 2016*

**Timeliness of Initial Response to Abuse/Neglect Assessments**
**By Response Time Category**
**FFY 2016**
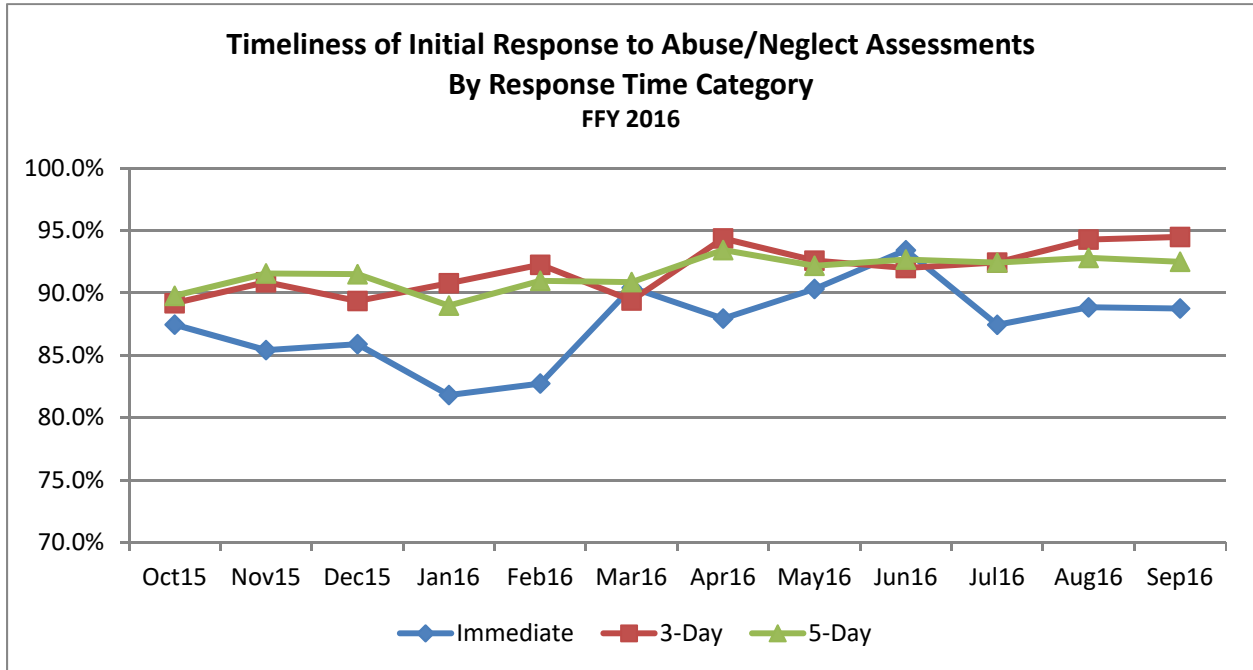


Colorado's CQI work related to this measure has also revealed errors in documentation of contacts and attempted contacts in Trails. In many cases, alleged victims are being seen, but caseworkers are documenting their contacts incorrectly in Trails. DCW has developed a brief webinar that demonstrates the proper method for documenting contacts with alleged victims. This webinar is accessible to all county workers through the Child Welfare Training System's website. CDHS will continue to look at the state's timeliness of initial response as part of its CQI process to identify barriers to making timely contacts and solutions to improve the state's performance on this measure.

### *Absence of Recurrence of Maltreatment*

This measure has been updated to align with the new CFSR Round 3 statewide data indicator Recurrence of Maltreatment.  This measure shows the percent of children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation within 12 months of their initial substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation. In FFY 2016 Colorado's performance on the federal recurrence of maltreatment safety indicator was consistently below the national standard of 9.1% for all twelve months.  The state's strength in this area can be attributed to comprehensive oversight and an array of services aimed at targeting families at risk of involvement; conducting thorough assessments of safety and risk; increased focus on engaging families in developing and administering treatment plans; and investing in more community level support services for families.

*Figure 3:  FFY 2016 Recurrence of Maltreatment*



**Recurrence of Maltreatment**
**% of Children with Substantiated/Indicated Maltx within 12 Months of Their Initial Substantiated/Indicated Maltx, FFY 2016**
**National Standard is <=9.1%**
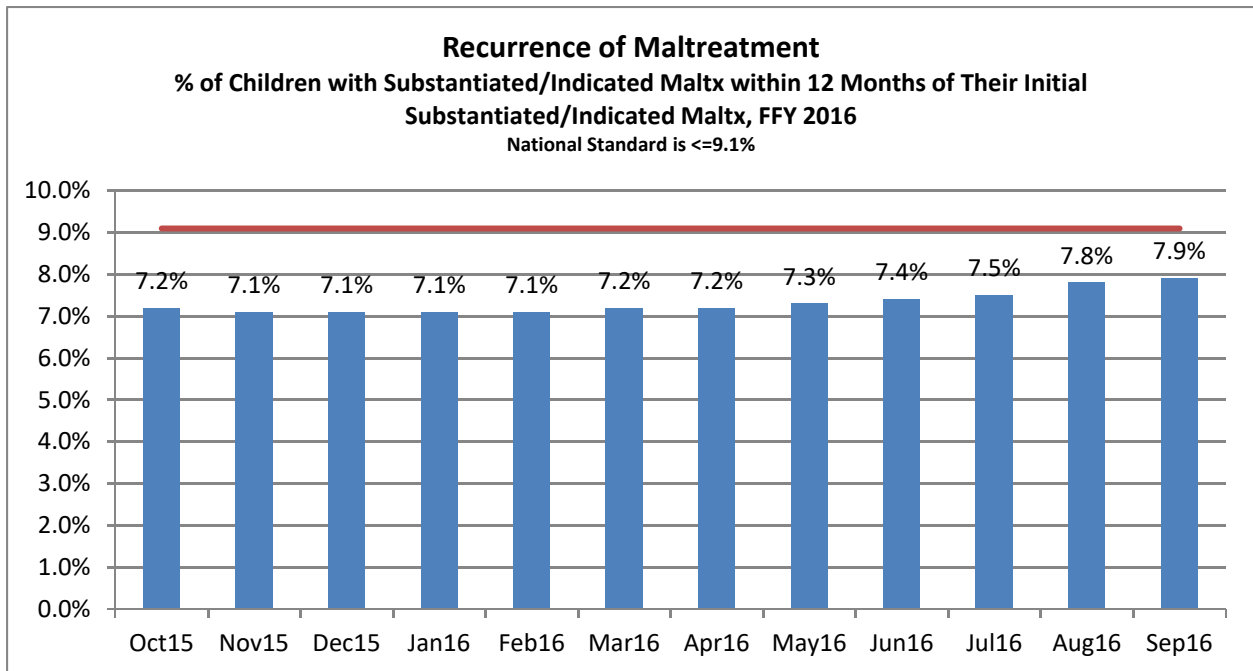
***Absence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care (12 months)***

This measure has been updated to align with the new CFSR Round 3 statewide data indicator Maltreatment in Foster Care.  This measure shows the rate of victimization per 100,000 days in foster care for children in care during a 12 month target period. In FFY 2016 Colorado had a higher rate of maltreatment than the national standard of 8.5, though Colorado was close to meeting that standard in the first few months of FFY 2016. Notably, the rate of maltreatment increased after those initial few months from a low of 8.7 in November 2015 to a peak of 10.5 in August 2016.

*Figure 4:  FFY 2016 Maltreatment in Foster Care*



**Maltreatment in Foster Care**
**Rate of Victimization per 100,000 Days in Foster Care for All Children in Foster Care during a 12-Month Period, FFY 2016**
**National Standard is <=8.5%**

| Oct15 | Nov15 | Dec15 | Jan16 | Feb16 | Mar16 | Apr16 | May16 | Jun16 | Jul16 | Aug16 | Sep16 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9.1 | 8.7 | 8.8 | 9.0 | 9.2 | 9.7 | 10.1 | 10.1 | 10.3 | 10.0 | 10.5 | 10.2 |
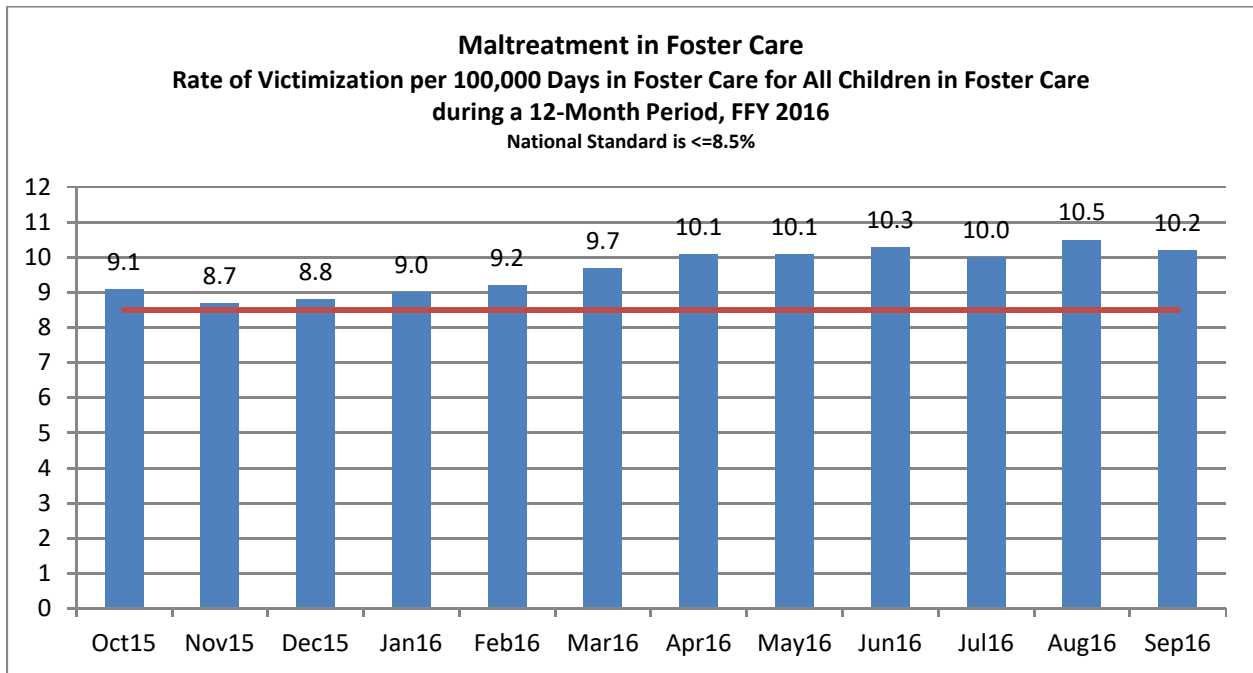
CQI efforts related to this indicator are focused on determining where the maltreatment occurs most frequently so effective interventions can be developed.  This indicator is driven by  the count of substantiated reports during the 12 month target period where the report received date was during the time the child was in a foster care episode lasting 8 or more days.  Reports meeting the following criteria are excluded from the count of substantiated reports:

- The child was the age of 18 or more at the time of the report.
- The incident date of the report occurred outside of the removal episode.
- The report occurred within the first 7 days of removal.

In other words, this indicator seeks to measure substantiated reports received after a child has been in foster care for eight or more days <u>and</u> the incident occurred during the foster care episode.  A qualitative analysis of substantiated reports revealed that many of the reports received involved maltreatment that happened prior to the foster care episode.  The analysis also revealed that caseworkers are not routinely documenting incident dates in Trails, which is partially due to the alleged

victims not knowing the actual incident dates. DCW has since made the incident field a mandatory field in Trails, and in June 2016 issued an informational memo to counties on guidance when a specific incident date is not known. Requiring the incident date will allow for accurate reporting and delineate those abuse or neglect referrals that occurred before the out-of-home episode.

DCW is committed to eliminating abuse and neglect of children who are placed in foster care. Based on the analysis of substantiated reports that occurred during foster care episodes, DCW staff found that maltreatment in congregate care placements is disproportionately high and included incidents such as lack of staff supervision, use of inappropriate restraining methods, and abuse by someone other than the provider. Congregate care placements represent approximately 15.5% of Colorado's foster care placements yet accounted for 46.4% of maltreatment in out-of-home placements. For comparison, kinship placements account for 29.3% of foster care placements, but only 10.7% of maltreatment incidents occur in those placements. The charts below illustrate the approximate distribution of children and youth in foster care by placement type (Figure 5) and the distribution of maltreatment by placement type (Figure 6).

*Figure 5: FFY 2016 approximate distribution of children and youth in foster care by placement type*
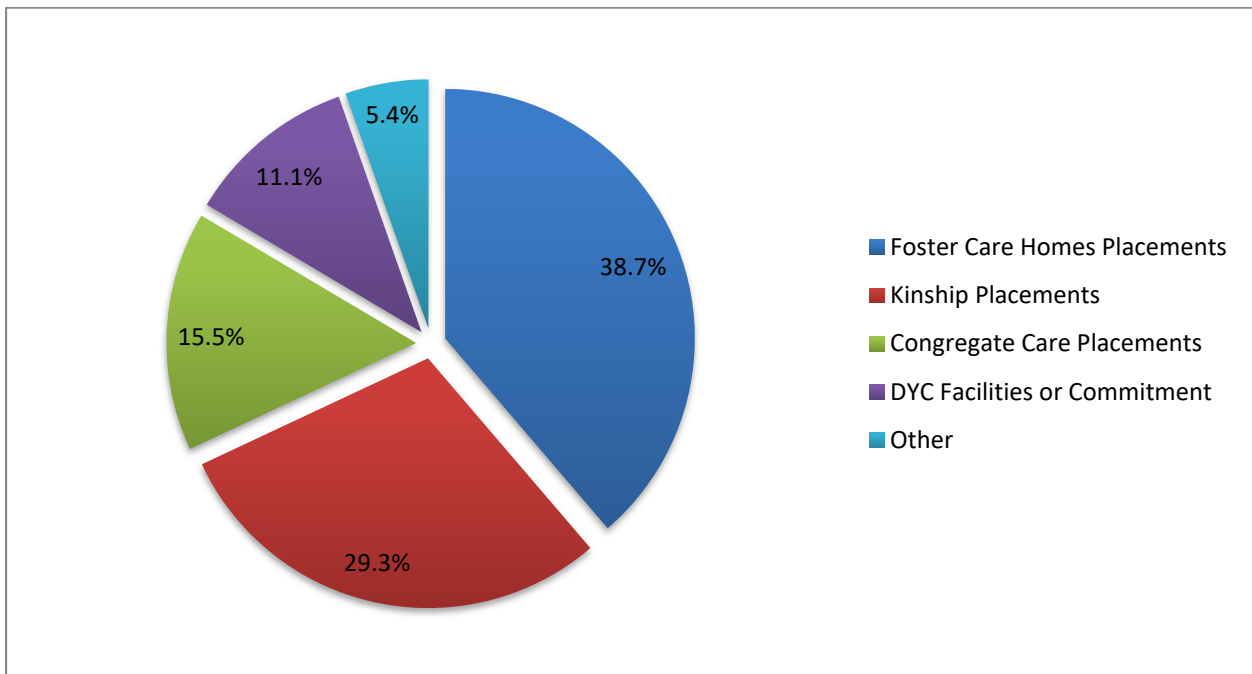
*Figure 6: FFY 2016 maltreatment in foster care by placement type*



Foster Care Home Placements — 30.4%
Kinship Placements — 10.7%
Congregate Care Placements — 46.4%
DYC Facilities — 10.7%
Child Care Center — 1.8%

**Total Substantiated Reports of Maltreatment = 122**
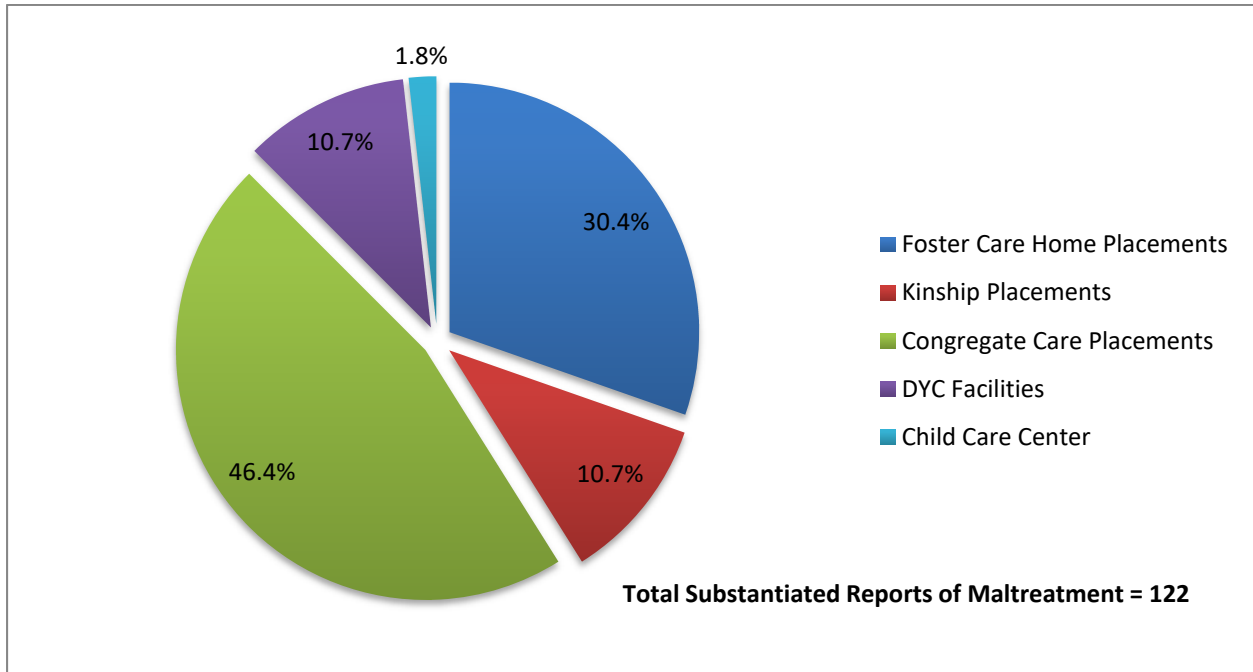
One of Colorado's Citizen Review Panels is the Institutional Assessment Review Team (IART). This group reviews all institutional assessments related to 24-hour care institutions, excluding non-certified Kinship Care. IART reviews and evaluates institutional assessments for adherence to regulatory and statutory requirements.

Training on policy and procedure relating to Institutional Assessments is currently being developed by the Child Welfare Training System (CWTS) in collaboration with members of IART. There is a focus on offering various delivery venues to improve availability to counties who need practice refreshers related to institutional assessments. The goal is to create a consistent institutional assessment practice throughout the state.

Additionally, the Administrative Review Division, in collaboration with DCW, is creating a periodic review of all institutional abuse/neglect referrals that are screened-out (not accepted for assessment). The first review is scheduled for Fall 2017 and the review will include whether the decision to screen-out was appropriate and whether the appropriate notifications were made. The results will be shared with IART to determine if there are opportunities for improvement and/or recommendations for training, policy, or technical assistance.

***Maintain Children Safely in Their Own Home***

This measure was historically tracked monthly as part of CDHS' C-Stat initiative. It measured the number of children exiting child welfare involvement who were not placed in foster care within the first 30 days and did not enter foster care during case involvement. Feedback received from county partners through the CQI Workgroup questioned the measurement methodology and its value to case practice. Because the measure looks at exit cohorts, they argued the measure doesn't capture or reflect current child welfare practice; any practice improvements would not be immediately visible in monthly performance. Moreover, county departments would have limited ability to improve the experience of children who are part of the measure as they have already exited child welfare involvement. In response to the feedback, the CQI Workgroup reviewed the continuum of decision points in case practice to determine which decision point most impacts whether children are placed in foster care. The workgroup favors the development of a measure related to the safety and risk assessment process.

Based on the CQI Workgroup's input, CDHS is currently exploring alternative methods of assessing how well Colorado is maintaining children safely in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate. This measure will be revisited after all counties have successfully implemented the modified Colorado Family Safety and Risk assessment tools. Use of the tool was fully implemented in January 2017. In the meantime, Colorado will continue to prioritize serving children in their own homes whenever it is safe and appropriate to do so. An update to this measure will be provided in the 2019 APSR.

Safely reducing foster care placements is an integral part of DCW practice. Over the past several years, the state has implemented a number of policy changes that facilitate county departments safely maintaining children in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate. In FFY 2016, 83% of all children with new child welfare involvement were served in-home. Two examples of these efforts include the following:

- Statutory changes that allow counties more flexibility in spending to serve children and families who are at risk of involvement with the child welfare system; and,
- Statutory changes that permit implementation of differential response, which allows caseworkers to partner with families to provide services that meet their needs while eliminating the labels of perpetrator and victim and removing "findings" of maltreatment

The chart below compares the percentages of in-home and foster care involvements at the start of FFY 2016 with the percentages of new in-home and foster care involvements during the reporting period.

*Figure 7: FFY 2016 percentage of children in foster care and in-home involvements*
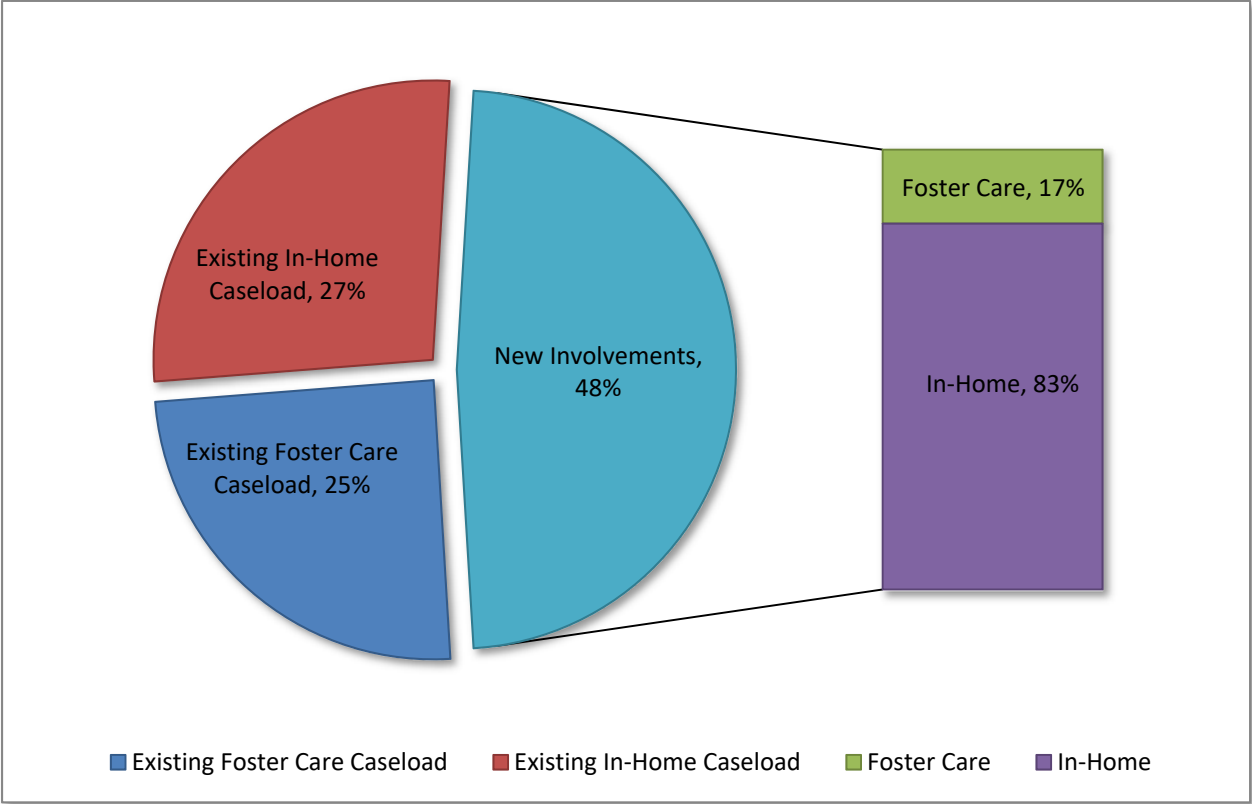


Existing In-Home Caseload, 27%

Existing Foster Care Caseload, 25%

New Involvements, 48%

Foster Care, 17%

In-Home, 83%

■ Existing Foster Care Caseload  ■ Existing In-Home Caseload  ■ Foster Care  ■ In-Home

*Risk assessment and safety management operationalized as "Safety Assessment Forms Completed Accurately"*

With the implementation of the new Colorado Family Safety and Risk Assessments, performance related to the accurate completion of the safety assessments is expected to be lower in FFY17 and FFY18 while child welfare staff adapt to the new tool. As of January 2017, all counties will be using the new tool and the Administrative Review Division (ARD) will begin reviewing level of compliance and accurate use/completion of the tool. The prior safety assessment tool was to be completed within the first 30 days of an assessment. In contrast, the new safety assessment tool is designed as a decision-making tool during the initial phases of the assessment and is to be completed with the family at the time of the first interviews and documented in the state automated case management system within fourteen days of the initial contact with the alleged victim. This change is both a policy and practice shift. CDHS understands that ongoing technical assistance, feedback, and data review are all needed to help facilitate the policy and practice shifts. The decision was made, with input from stakeholders, to temporarily suspend ARD reviews of the new safety assessment tool during calendar year 2016. With no official review, the Child Protective Services (CPS) Unit within CDHS has been providing qualitative feedback to counties in the months after the use of the new tools began. ARD will resume reviewing the safety and risk assessment tools in September 2017 and the CPS Unit will continue to support county workers and supervisors in reviewing performance data and providing ongoing technical assistance to address barriers and steadily improve performance over the next two years. The CPS Unit has identified the importance of providing targeted support to child welfare supervisors so that they may appropriately supervise, coach, and provide technical assistance to their workers and has been targeting support to supervisors and will continue to do so throughout the next calendar year.

*B. Permanency Outcomes*

The federal permanency outcomes include the following:

   (A) Children have permanency and stability in their living situations

   (B) The continuity of family relationships is preserved for children

Colorado's CFSP outlines several measures CDHS uses to assess the state's performance in achieving the federal permanency outcomes. The measures, as written in the CFSP, include the following:

1. Point-in-Time Permanency Profile - Foster Care Population Flow
2. Permanency Composite 1 - Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification
3. Permanency Composite 1 - Component A, Timeliness of Reunification (Measure C1-2): exits to reunification, median stay for all children who had been in foster care for eight days or longer and discharged from foster care to reunification in the year shown
4. Permanency Composite 1 - Component B, Permanency of Reunification (Measure C1-4): reentries to foster care in less than 12 months
5. Permanency Composite 2 - Timeliness of Adoption Component B, Progress Toward Adoption for Children in Foster Care for 17 Months or Longer (Measure C2-4): children in care 17+ months achieving legal freedom within six months
6. Permanency Composite 3 - Permanency for Children and Youth in Foster Care for Long Periods of Time (all measures)
7. Permanency Composite 4 - Placement Stability (Measure C4-1): two or fewer placements settings for children in care for less than 12 months
8. Permanency Composite 4 - Placement Stability (Measure C4-2): two or fewer placements settings for children in care for 12 to 24 months
9. Permanency Composite 4 - Placement Stability (Measure C4-3): two or fewer placements settings for children in care for 24+ months
10. Visiting with Mother: Does the frequency of visitation with the mother/guardian/kin adequately address the needs of the child/youth to maintain or promote continuity of the relationship?
11. Visiting with Father: Does the frequency of visitation with the father/guardian/kin adequately address the needs of the child/youth to maintain or promote continuity of the relationship?
12. Visiting with Siblings: Does the frequency of visitation with sibling(s) adequately address the needs of the child/youth to maintain or promote continuity of the relationship?
13. Preserving Connections: Were the ICWA requirements met?
14. Is the department making concerted efforts to maintain the child/youth's connections during the review period?
15. Did the agency promote and support a positive and nurturing relationship between the child/youth and his/her parents?
16. In the opinion of the reviewer, is the primary court-ordered permanency goal, at the time of the review, appropriate for this child/youth?

17. For a child/youth with a permanency goal of Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA), is it documented that all other more permanent goals have been considered and appropriately ruled out?

All of the composite measures listed above, two through nine, have been replaced with the new CFSR Round 3 statewide data indicators related to permanency. The sections below address each of the permanency outcomes measures, any modifications to the measures, and Colorado's efforts to maintain or improve performance. Data gathered through Colorado's qualitative case reviews are grouped together in one section labeled Continuity of Family Relationships.

***Point-in-Time Permanency Profile - Foster Care Population Flow***

This measure tracks the number of children in foster care on the first day of the federal fiscal year. The CFSP states the goal for this measure is to maintain a consistent rate of reduction. The figure below illustrates a general decline in population since FFY 2012 with slight increases in FFY 2015 and 2017. In January 2017, Volume 7 and the Colorado Code of Regulations were changed to provide clarification on children and youth who are living with kin and when it is considered an out-of-home placement. Children and youth are not considered to be in out-of-home placement if; the child(ren)/youth and their parents are living with kin, the child(ren)/youth are living with kin as a result of arrangements made by the family, or if the child(ren)/youth are living with kin as a result of a safety plan. If during an assessment the child(ren)/youth are in current or impending danger and the family does not agree to a temporary living arrangement with kin through the use of a safety plan and a removal is required, the child(ren)/youth are considered to be in out-of-home placement. Colorado's general decline in its foster care population can be attributed to the state's efforts to safely maintain children in their home whenever possible.

*Figure 8: Number of children in foster care on the first day of FFYs 2012 through 2017*
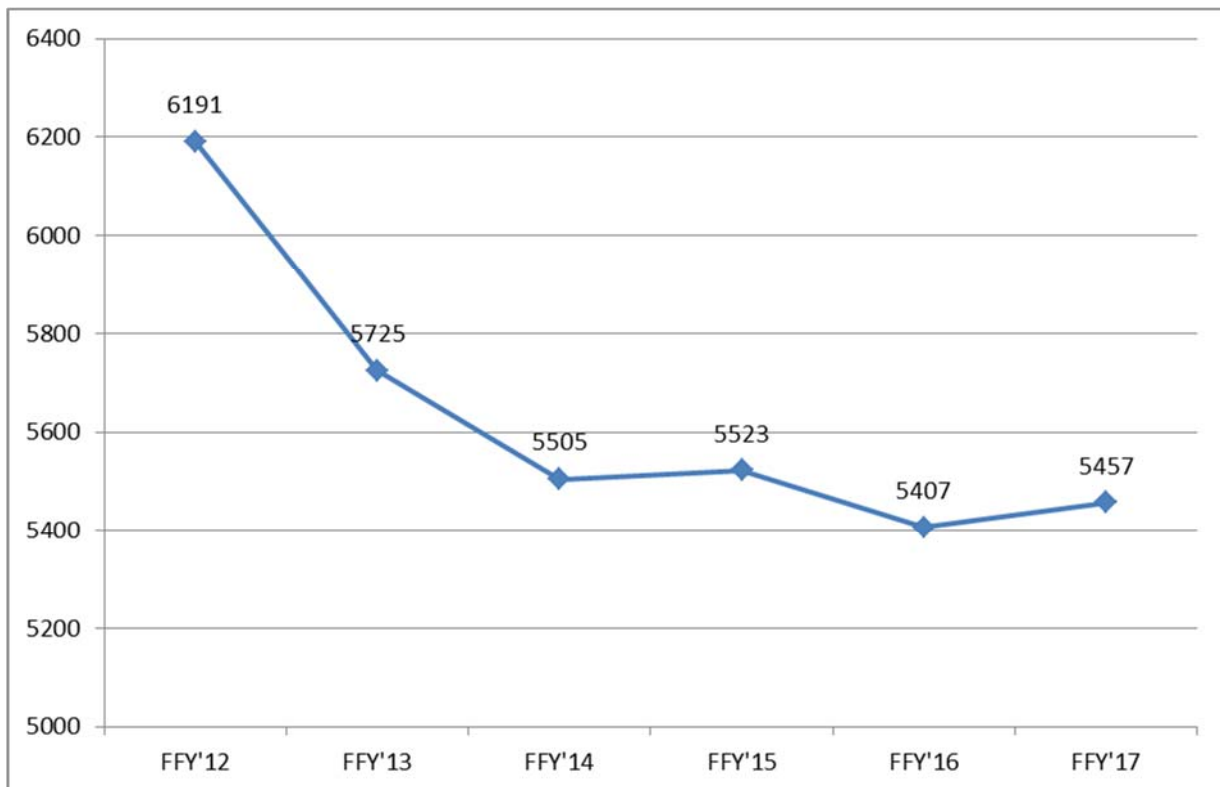


*Data source: Results Oriented Management (ROM)*

***Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care***

This CFSR Round 3 statewide data indicator measures the percent of children who enter foster care during a 12 month period and are discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering care. In FFY 2016 Colorado consistently excelled in this measure by surpassing the 40.5% national standard every month.

*Figure 9: FFY 2016 percentage of children who achieve permanency within 12 months*
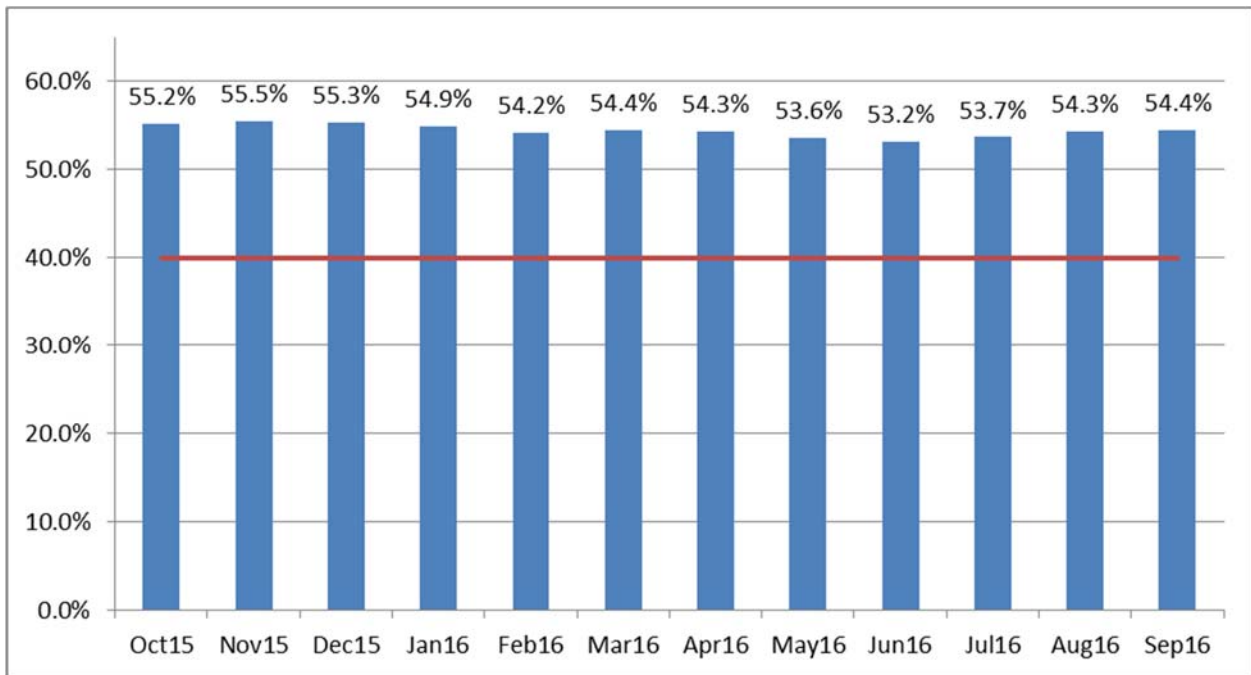


*Data source: Results Oriented Management (ROM)*

***Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12 – 23 months***

This CFSR Round 3 statewide data indicator measures the percent of children who on the first day of a 12 month period have been in foster care between 12 and 23 months and are discharged to permanency within 12 months of the first day of the 12 month period. In FFY 2016 Colorado performed well on this measure and consistently surpassed the 43.6% national standard every month.

*Figure 10: FFY 2016 Permanency in 12 months for children who have been in foster care 12 to 23 months*
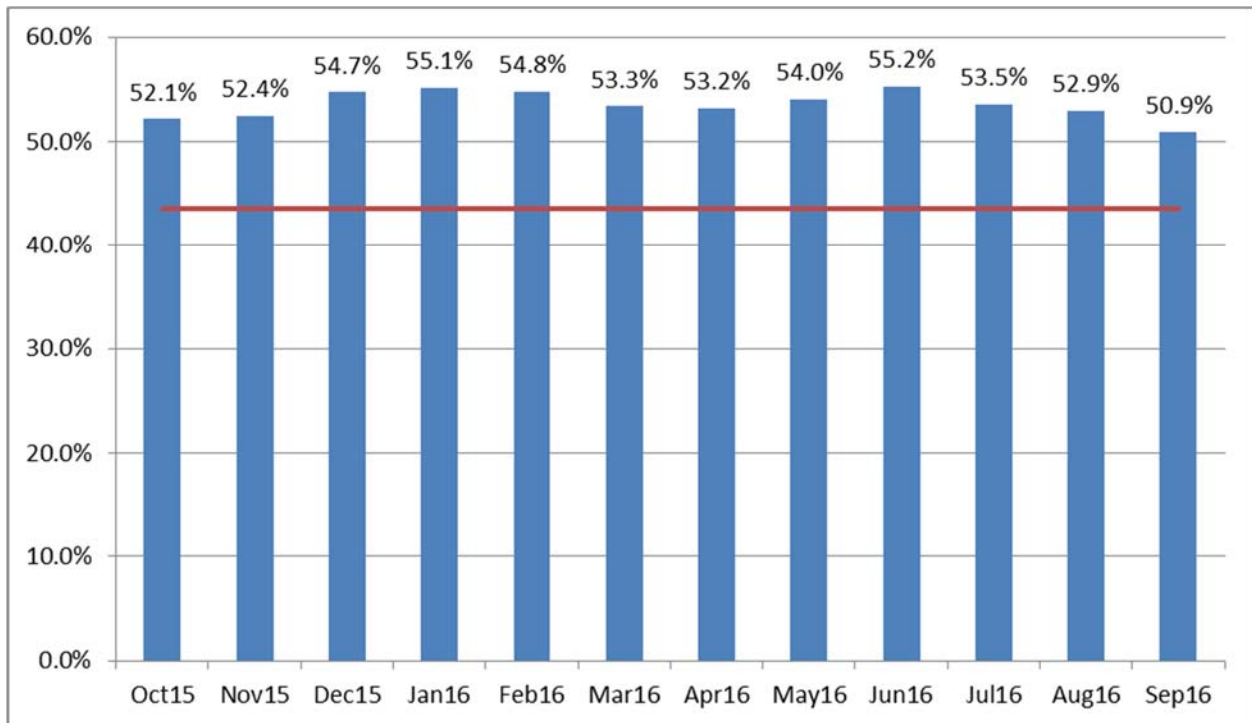


*Data source: Results Oriented Management (ROM)*

***Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more***

This CFSR Round 3 statewide data indicator measures the percent of children who on the first day of a 12 month period have been in care 24 months or more and are discharged to permanency within 12 months of the first day of the 12 month period. For every month in FFY 2016, performance was sustained above the 30.3% national standard.

*Figure 11: FFY 2016 Permanency in 12 months for children who have been in care 24 months or more*
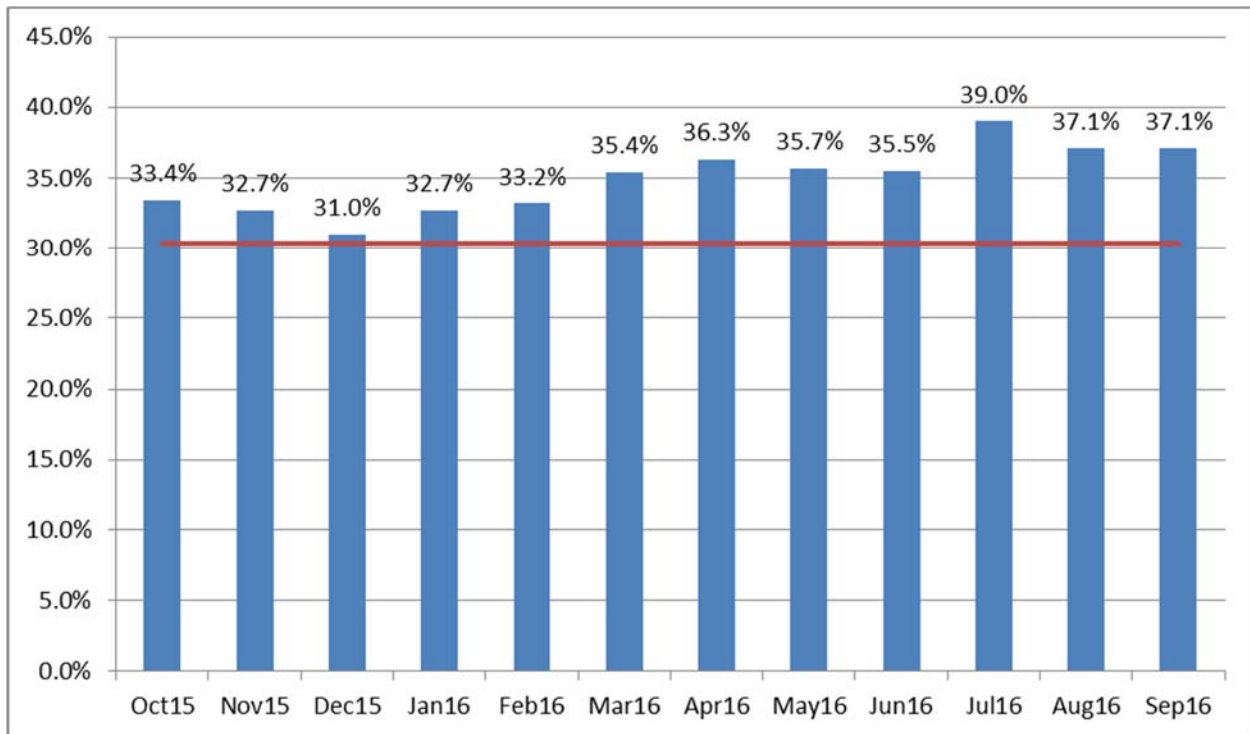


*Data source: Results Oriented Management (ROM)*

Colorado's strength on the above three indicators related to permanency for children in foster care can be attributed to the state's sustained focus on evidence based practices that increase permanency for children in foster care. Many county departments of human services have implemented facilitated family engagement, permanency roundtables, and kinship support interventions through the child welfare waiver demonstration. In the vast majority of foster care cases, county caseworkers are making efforts to engage parents and encourage participation in case planning activities.

Additionally, CDHS is expanding its successful foster and adoptive parent recruitment initiative, Colorado Heart Gallery, to other media platforms thereby increasing its reach to non-metro area communities throughout the state. CDHS has partnered with The Adoption Exchange and Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters to implement proactive and proven child recruitment programs with the goal of achieving permanency for legally free children and youth. CDHS also utilizes The Adoption Exchange's CHOICE

program to pair legally free children and youth in need of permanency with adult mentors to provide life skills-building, guidance and support. CDHS also provides legally free mini-grants, funded through Title IV-E waiver savings, to county departments to use in ways best suited to their communities to maintain permanency or achieve permanency for legally free children and youth. Counties have used the funds to provide financial assistance for families, provide specialized services such as equine therapy, and payment of legal guardianship fees.

CDHS commissioned a predictive analytics study to identify children and youth with the highest risk of emancipation in order to identify policies, practices, and resources that could be put in place to support those youth with a high risk of emancipation to achieve permanency. The study implications establish that while children and youth with a high risk of emancipation are important to focus on, focus also needs to be given to those children with an elevated risk of emancipation in order to leverage policy, practice, and resources as early as possible to help this population of children and youth achieve permanency.

***Re-entry to foster care in 12 months***

This CFSR Round 3 statewide data indicator is a companion measure to the indicator Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care. This indicator measures the population of children and youth who met the following criteria:

- entered care during a 12 month period;
- discharged to reunification, guardianship, or living with a relative within 12 months of entering care; and
- subsequently re-entered care within 12 months of being discharged.

In FFY 2016 Colorado underperformed on this indicator and consistently exceeded the 8.3% national standard every month. While the federally calculated re-entry rate for Colorado is lower than the rate calculated by Results Oriented Management (Figure 12) due to differences in methodology, it's important to note that the most recent federal data from FFY 2014 show Colorado's re-entry rate is 14.6%.

*Figure 12: FFY 2016 Percentage of children who re-enter foster care in 12 months*
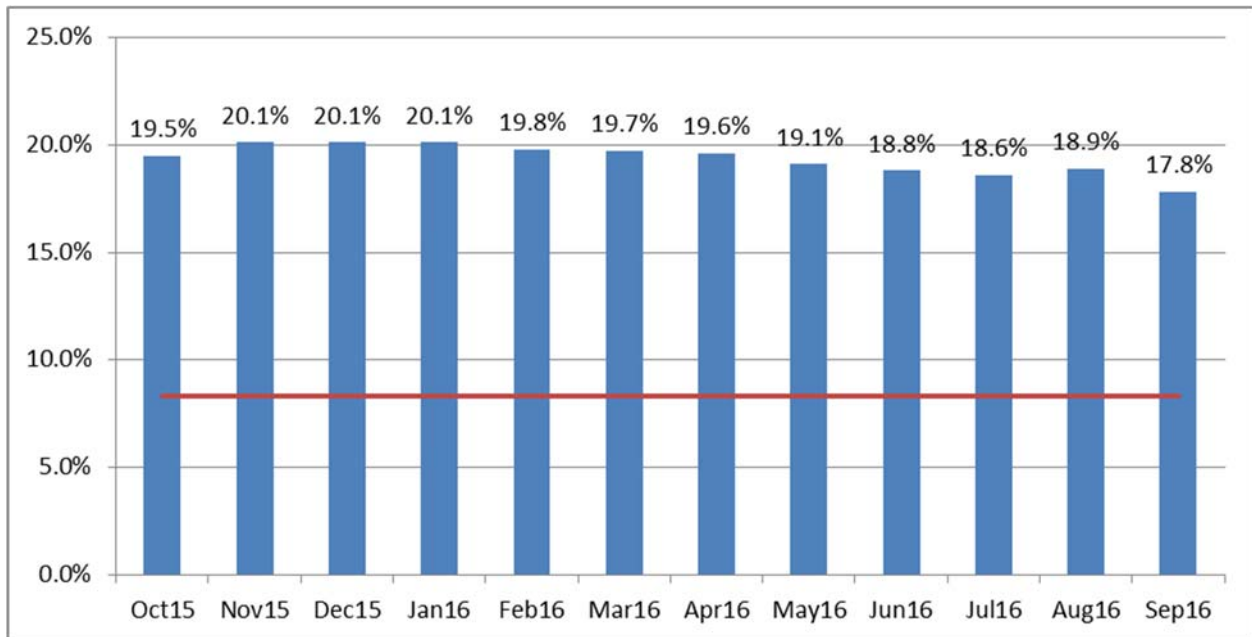


*Data source: Results Oriented Management (ROM)*

DCW is looking into how this indicator is impacted by delinquent children and youth. In Colorado delinquent children and youth may be court ordered to out-of-home placements and placed in the custody of county departments of human services. These children and youth may move in and out of out-of-home placements according to their treatment plan or if they recidivate. DCW is evaluating this

population in order to better understand all of the factors driving the state's relatively high percentage of children and youth who re-enter foster care. In January 2017, DCW began tracking delinquent youth and a report is currently being developed to aggregate demographic information to better understand how delinquent youth move through the system and to analyze youth demographics and their relation to re-entry into foster care.

Based on DCW's analysis, CDHS is working on policy proposals and potential interventions aimed at reducing the high percentage of children and youth who re-enter foster care. The prevalence of reentry within the first few months of reunification suggests the need for continued supports after reunification. DCW is working with county partners to develop practice expectations related to the delivery of services after reunification. DCW is also planning to use Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive payments to fund pilots of post permanency support programs. DCW's permanency team completed a 12-stop "tour" of county departments statewide to garner information and feedback from stakeholders and county staff on the post-permanency service array. Trends identified as a result of the feedback were the need for more respite services, trauma informed training and services for all those involved in a child welfare case, and crisis management support and training. DCW has completed a request for proposal to implement post-permanency services. An update will be provided in the 2019 APSR.

An operational memo was issued in May 2017 providing clarification around children and youth who have an open child welfare case but are subsequently committed to the Department of Youth Services (DYS). DCW has instructed that when county departments have; legal custody or authority to place a child(ren) or youth, an opened removal, and the child welfare case is closing, the removal should remain open in Trails while the child's involvement in the child welfare case is ended. By leaving the removal open when the child transitions to DYS, re-entry does not occur because the child remained in the custody of the county department and then custody transferred to the DYS. DCW is also exploring cross-over youth, youth who move between the child welfare system and Department of Youth Services. Trails enhancements were completed so that when a caseworker is entering an out-of-home service authorization in Trails for a child over the age of 10, they are asked to complete questions to determine if the child has entered the child welfare system as a result of a delinquency, or if a delinquency occurred while the child was already involved in the child welfare system. The goal of obtaining this information is to identify cross-over children/youth sooner to provide targeted services to prevent crossing between both systems.

DCW, in collaboration with the Court Improvement Program (CIP) and the Capacity Building Center for States, have developed a work plan focusing on outreach and engagement of counties, the Office of Respondent Parent Counsel, and the Office of the Child's Representative to ensure the appropriate stakeholders are involved in the development of an action plan to reduce re-entry of children in out-of-home care. The work plan is under review with the Capacity Building Center for States and will be provided to CDHS once the review is complete. An update to this collaborative effort will be provided in the 2019 APSR. In conjunction with the collaboration with CIP and the Capacity Building Center for States, DCW staff has worked closely with county departments conducting outreach with counties

performing well on this measure and counties underperforming on this measure to identify practices and policies that could be implemented around the state to decrease the rate of re-entry into foster care in Colorado.

Colorado is engaged in a number of projects that seek to address the intersections between substance abuse and child abuse and neglect. Colorado's Children's Justice Act Task Force is funding a project by Colorado Drug Endangered Children to develop hospital protocols to better screen and test for maternal substance abuse. A minimum of six hospitals will implement the protocols beginning in late FFY 2016 continuing through FFY 2017. This intervention may help Colorado increase consistency and decrease bias in reports of child abuse and neglect for substance exposed newborns. Additionally, the project includes an ongoing review of state laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, and procedures that need to be updated to best serve substance exposed newborns and their families.

In October 2014 Colorado became one of five states to win an Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Statewide System Reform Program (SSRP) award. Now known as Dependency and Neglect System Reform (DANSR), this federal initiative seeks to influence systemic change to better serve and meet the needs of children and families. A review of Colorado Judicial Department case management system data shows that 60% of expedited permanency placement cases and 30% of non-expedited permanency placement cases allege substance abuse in the petition. CDHS data shows that in SFY 2016, about 53% of clients who had children removed from their home listed a substance-related reason for the removal and 27.5% of all removals were due to a substance-related reason, making substance-related issues the second highest reason for removal. Substance-related reasons for child welfare involvement are pervasive; the DANSR approach necessitates system reform that aligns with the needs of the families served.

The DANSR approach integrates key tenants that have shown positive outcomes for families from Family Treatment Drug Court into the management of dependency and neglect cases involving substance use disorders. DANSR plans to infuse six effective drug court practices into systems that manage dependency and neglect cases across the state. The practices include the following:

1. Each jurisdiction will adopt a protocol to promptly identify a family's treatment needs.
2. Families are promptly placed in accessible, appropriate treatment.
3. Families are given access to a continuum of evidence-based alcohol, drug, and mental health services.
4. Judicial districts will be encouraged to increase judicial oversight through early and frequent interaction in all cases.
5. Institutions will be encouraged to share data to effectively measure the achievement of treatment goals and gauge effectiveness.
6. Cross system teams will coordinate strategy at the case-level and participate in collaborative training.

The DANSR Framework for Performance Measurement incorporates data and research into communications with stakeholders at the state and local level consistent with the four missions of the framework; increasing permanency, increasing safety and reducing recidivism, recovery support, and judicial responsivity. Eight judicial districts and their corresponding counties have been selected as DANSR pilot locations;

- 1st Judicial District: Jefferson County
- 2nd Judicial District: Denver County
- 3rd Judicial District: Huerfano County
- 11th Judicial District: Fremont County
- 15th Judicial District: Prowers, Kiowa, Baca, and Cheyenne Counties
- 18th Judicial District: Arapahoe County
- 20th Judicial District: Boulder County
- 22nd Judicial District: Montezuma County

The DANSR project's timeline encompasses three years of planning, which began in October 2014, with a subsequent three year implementation phase. Strategic implementation of DANSR has begun in the eight judicial districts. Strategies for implementation consider specific court rooms or specific judges interested in the DANSR approach, vulnerable age groups in dependency and neglect cases where substance-related issues are prevalent, etc. A listening session was held in November 2016 with the pilot judicial districts to discuss experiences, challenges, and ways to improve moving forward. The DANSR Core Planning Team will use the information gathered during the listening session to continue refining the program as it moves toward implementation statewide. CDHS is also requesting county-level commitment from county human services directors, providers, judges, GAL's, respondent parent counsel, and any other child welfare stakeholders in the implementation of DANSR. An update will be provided in the 2019 APSR.

Additionally, DCW, along with the Office of Performance and Strategic Outcomes, collaborated to examine the children who re-enter care within 12 months performance measure for data integrity concerns and solutions. Practice observations were done at county locations to educate, understand, and clarify components of county casework practice that would or could impact re-entry numbers. Practice components explored include decision-making around reunification and removals of children/youth, data entry accuracy and timeframes, and kinship documentation. Lessons learned from county practice observations indicate that there is some inconsistency in specific practice areas such as utilization of trial home visits, custody relating to placements with kin, and case closure timelines. An identified strength in county practice was the inclusion of family engagement strategies to increase collaborative decision-making throughout a case. Examination of the data showed some areas for improvement around data entry and consistency, specifically counties documenting post-permanency services into Trails, impacting the ability for deep analysis of how practice and services correlate with positive outcomes.

CDHS has encouraged the use of trial home visits, as allowed by the Colorado Code of Regulations, as a means to permanency while still providing services and support to the family. The Colorado Code of Regulations allows for trial home visits lasting up to 6 months, with custody remaining with the county department, and the provision of services to support the placement. During a trial home visit, the documented removal remains open; if circumstances prohibit a child/youth from remaining in the placement and the trail home visit must end, the child's placement move is not considered a re-entry and does not negatively impact re-entry numbers.

***Placement Stability***

This CFSR Round 3 statewide data indicator measures the rate of placement moves for children who have been in foster care between 0 and 12 months. In FFY 2016 Colorado outperformed on this indicator every month after October 2015 and remained below the 4.1 national standard every month thereafter.

*Figure 13: Rate of placement moves for all children who entered care in FFY 2016*
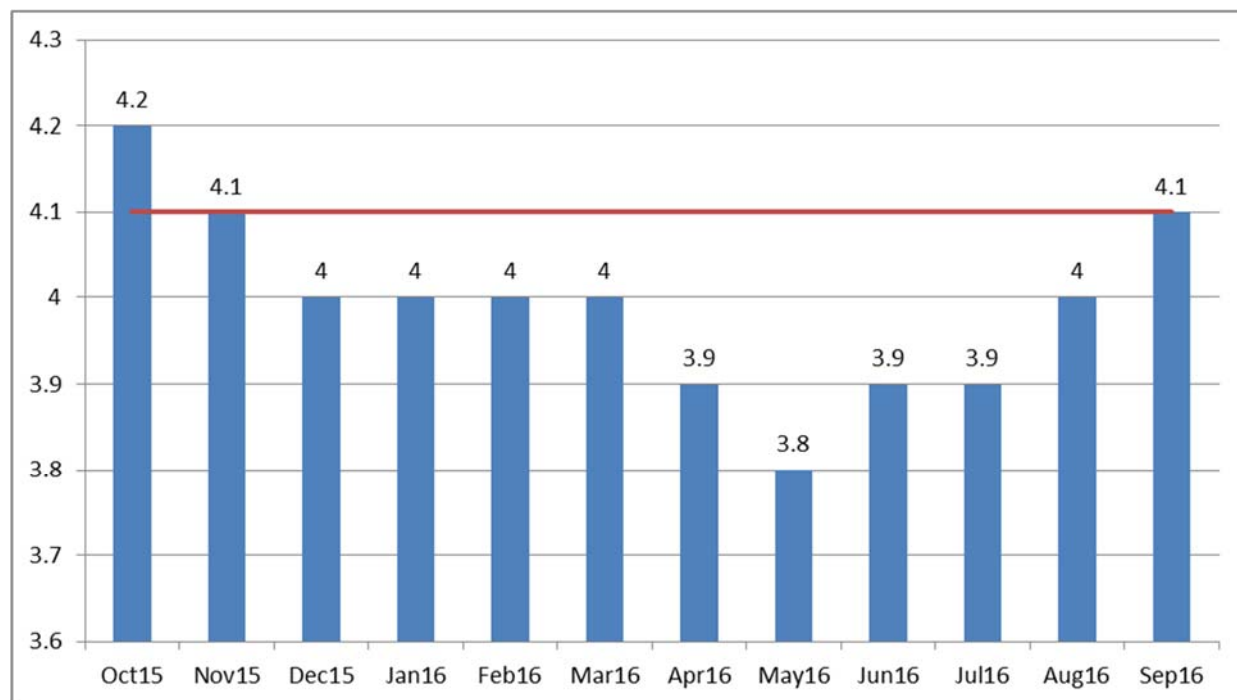


*Data source: Results Oriented Management (ROM)*

As part of Colorado's collaborative CQI efforts related to this indicator, county departments of human services have highlighted positive placement moves in which children and youth are moved from congregate care settings to more family-like settings with foster care parents or kinship providers. Colorado is in the midst of "right-sizing" its use of congregate care placements and is monitoring progress through C-Stat. Approximately 8% of Colorado's average daily population of children and youth

in open child welfare involvements are in congregate care settings. While congregate care placements will remain a part of Colorado's child and family services continuum, CDHS is working with county partners to develop a margin for congregate care usage in the state. Planned placement changes for the purpose of moving children and youth into less restrictive settings, achieving other case goals, or meeting the needs of the child or youth will inevitably contribute to Colorado's rate of placement moves; however, these efforts do not account for all of Colorado's placement moves. FFY 2016 qualitative case review data show that 42% of children and youth who experienced one or more placement changes were moved in an effort to achieve their case goals or meet their individual needs.

Case review data show that the two most frequent reasons for unplanned moves in FFY 2016 were requests by providers (32%) and youth behavior (24%). Many of Colorado's efforts to reduce the states rate of placement moves center on providing more supports to foster care providers. Some counties that are performing well on this indicator cite their use of Core Services funding to provide more supports to foster parents and kinship providers. The Core Services Program provides funding to county departments of human services to provide strength-based resources and support to families when children/youth are at imminent risk of out-of-home placement, in need of services to return home, or to maintain a placement in the least restrictive setting possible.

The IV-E Waiver Oversight Committee is also providing funding through the child welfare waiver demonstration to provide services to ease issues related to being a foster parent. In FFY 2016 Larimer County was approved to implement a two year pilot project to contract with local organizations that will provide in home individualized staff support for foster care, non-certified kinship care, and certified kinship foster care homes in their county. The support will include but is not limited to deescalating youth, assisting youth with chores/homework, engaging youth in activities, being present with the youth so the foster/kin parent can be away from the home for appointments/errands, transportation of youth to appointments, and other needs as they arise. Performance goals for the pilot include the following:

- reduction in number of children and youth in congregate care placements;
- reduction in rate of placement moves;
- reduction of number of children in foster care for 12 to 24 months;
- increase the number of new foster care homes recruited each year; and
- increase the retention of current foster care homes.

The pilot will be evaluated to determine its success in achieving the goals listed above, and if successful, CDHS will seek to replicate this model in other communities throughout the state.

Additionally, Title IV-E waiver savings are being utilized for kinship interventions through providing support and services at the beginning of a placement and throughout to ensure the kin providers have the necessary tools at their disposal to meet the needs of the child(ren). Supports include supplies, financial assistance, and in-home services.

***Continuity of Family Relationships***

The following measures are assessed during CDHS' administrative case reviews. Colorado's performance in FFY 2016 has declined since FFY 2015.  With the exception of one measure, Colorado is underperforming on this permanency outcome. Due to changes in the ARD's administrative case review instruments, FFY 2016 data are incomplete; the question related to agencies' efforts to promote a positive and nurturing relationship between the child/youth and his/her parents is no longer included on the out-of-home review instrument. While 6,265 administrative case reviews were completed in FFY 2016, the data point with an asterisk in the proceeding table represents the 1,642 reviews that were completed in the first quarter of FFY 2016.

*Table 1:  FFY 2015 and 2016 permanency outcome 2 measures*

| Measure | CFSP Goal | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Visiting with Mother:  Does the frequency of visitation with the mother/guardian/kin adequately address the needs of the child/youth to maintain or promote continuity of the relationship? | 95% | **69%** | **64%** |
| Visiting with Father:  Does the frequency of visitation with the father/guardian/kin adequately address the needs of the child/youth to maintain or promote continuity of the relationship? | 95% | **59%** | **54%** |
| Visiting with Siblings:  Does the frequency of visitation with sibling(s) adequately address the needs of the child/youth to maintain or promote continuity of the relationship? | 95% | **90%** | **85%** |
| Visiting with Other Legal Guardian:  Does the frequency of visitation with the other legal guardian adequately address the needs of the child/youth to maintain or promote continuity of the relationship? | 95% | n/a | **85%** |
| Preserving Connections:  Were the ICWA requirements met? | 95% | **30%** | **23%** |
| Is the department making concerted efforts to maintain the child/youth's connections during the review period? | 95% | **100%** | **100%** |
| Did the agency promote and support a positive and nurturing relationship between the child/youth and his/her parents? | 95% | **87%** | **92%*** |
| In the opinion of the reviewer, is the primary court-ordered permanency goal, at the time of the review, appropriate for this child/youth? | 95% | **88%** | **90%** |
| For a child/youth with a permanency goal of Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA), is it documented that all other more permanent goals have been considered and appropriately ruled out? | 95% | **72%** | **73%** |

*Data source: Administrative Review Division (ARD)*

ARD reviewers evaluate information documented in the family service plan, hard case file, and Trails to determine whether the frequency of visitation with parents adequately addresses the needs of the child/youth to maintain or promote continuity of the relationship.  An analysis of the case review data regarding visitation with mothers and fathers shows that parental engagement is a substantial barrier to the frequency of visitation.  In FFY 2016 ARD reviewers found that in 32% of eligible reviews mothers were fully or partially responsible for why visitation was not adequate to address the needs of the child/youth.  During the same time period, fathers were fully or partially responsible in 42% of eligible reviews.

CDHS presented these data to stakeholders during the statewide CFSR Kickoff event in September 2016 and conducted focus groups to discuss available data, identify barriers, and brainstorm possible solutions. In the focus groups, CDHS staff worked with the stakeholders to develop theories of change, which were documented in logic models that are included in the appendices of this report.  Appendix B includes stakeholders' logic models regarding visitation with parents.

Stakeholders emphasized the need for child welfare agencies to understand the barriers and issues impacting parents.  They identified access to transportation, inconvenient scheduling, and location of visits as possible barriers to parents' participation.  In addition to efforts to better understand barriers for parents, stakeholders proposed flexible and creative solutions to better support parents.  Highlights include the following:

- training and utilizing relatives, foster parents, and kinship caregivers to supervise visits after hours and during weekends
- providing transportation for parents to participate in visits; and
- promoting use of technology to allow for more contact.

Several Colorado counties are experimenting with the use of relatives, foster parents, and kinship caregivers in supervising visits; however, these visits are unlikely to be documented in Trails. In January 2017 CDHS staff and the Permanency Task Group discussed the case review data for visitations and concluded that case review data does not represent all types of visitation that are occurring.

In Colorado's child welfare practice, there are three types of visits: supervised, therapeutic, and unsupervised.  Supervised visits are typically conducted by county staff; however, some counties contract with providers who conduct and supervise family visits. Supervised and therapeutic visits conducted by county staff are more likely to be documented in Trails.  Visits that are supervised by contracted providers are documented either in hard copy or external information systems. Unsupervised visits are unlikely to be documented anywhere in the case record.  Accordingly, the Permanency Task Group suggested there are more visits occurring than those that are being captured in the case review data.

CDHS staff also consulted with the Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel (ORPC) in March 2017 to discuss these issues.  Similar to stakeholders' feedback at the statewide CFSR Kickoff event, ORPC staff reported inconveniences to parents as a barrier to visitation including access to transportation, reliance on public transportation, time frames for visitation and conflicts with work schedules, and distance from

physical location where visits take place.  They also highlighted county specific policies which require parents to meet certain requirements to be eligible for visitation.  An example that was mentioned during the January 2017 meeting with the Permanency Task Group includes a metro area county's policy stating parents who arrive late will not be able to participate in scheduled supervised visits.

More research needs to be conducted to understand the root causes impacting visits between parents and their children and youth in foster care.  Stakeholders have suggested issues that CDHS can begin investigating.  Pending the findings from the upcoming CFSR, CDHS will select and finalize improvement strategies so as to address any additional concerns that may arise during the review.

### C. Well-Being Outcomes

The federal well-being outcomes include the following:

(A) Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

(B) Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

(C) Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Colorado's CFSP outlines several measures CDHS uses to assess the state's performance in achieving the federal well-being outcomes. The measures, as written in the CFSP, include the following:

1. Worker Visits with Child (Frequency of Visits): In what percent of cases did agency personnel have contact with the child every month?
2. Worker Visits with Child (Quality of Visits): Was the quality of contacts with the child/youth sufficient to address issues pertaining to the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child/youth and to promote achievement of case goals?
3. Child/Family Involvement in Case Planning (contains 4 separate measures):
    a. Was the out-of-home (OOH) provider engaged in case planning during the review period?
    b. Was the child/youth engaged in case planning during the review period?
    c. Was the mother/guardian/kin engaged in case planning during the review period?
    d. Was the father/guardian/kin engaged in case planning during the review period?
4. Was educational stability provided for the child during the review period?
5. For youth aged 16 and older, is the youth on track to graduate and/or complete high school?
6. For children aged 3 to 5, is the child enrolled in Head Start or another early childhood education program?
7. Did the child/youth receive a medical exam or medical screening, or was a medical exam scheduled within two weeks of initial placement?
8. Did the child/youth receive a full dental examination or was a dental exam scheduled within eight weeks of the initial placement?
9. Has the child/youth received regular health care, including immunizations, and/or treatment for identified health needs?
10. Were the child/youth's mental health needs (including the need for psychotropic medications) assessed?
11. Were mental health services provided to meet the child/youth's needs during the review period?

Colorado's qualitative case reviews assess counties' performance on the measures listed above, and the data are aggregated to reflect statewide performance. The sections below address the measures for each well-being outcome, any modifications to the measures, and Colorado's efforts to maintain or improve performance.

### Families Have Enhanced Capacity to Provide for Their Children's Needs

In FFY 2016 Colorado did not meet all of its performance goals for federal well-being outcome A. FFY 2016 shows a decline in performance in certain areas from previous years. The table below shows Colorado's performance for each of the measures.

*Table 2:  FFY 2015 well-being outcome 1 measures*

| Measure | CFSP Goal | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Face to Face Contacts:  % of visits completed timely | 95% | 95.2% | **95.2%** |
| Face to Face Contacts:  % of visits completed in child's residence | 50% | 86.5% | **85.0%** |
| Worker Visits with Child (Frequency of Visits):  In what percent of cases did agency personnel have contact with the child every month? | 95% | 87% | **88.1%** |
| Worker Visits with Child (Quality of Visits):  Was the quality of contacts with the child/youth sufficient to address issues pertaining to the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child/youth and to promote achievement of case goals? | 95% | 78.5% | **75.8%** |
| Was the OOH provider engaged in case planning during the review period? | 95% | 99.7% | **99.5%** |
| Was the child/youth engaged in case planning during the review period? | 99.9% | 99.7% | **99.6%** |
| Was the mother/guardian/kin engaged in case planning during the review period? | 96.4%* | 95.8% | **93.6%** |
| Was the father/guardian/kin engaged in case planning during the review period? | 85.8%* | 89.8% | **82.9%** |
| Was the other legal guardian engaged in case planning during the review period? | | | **90.0%** |

*\* The CFSP says the goal for engagement of parents will increase by 5% every year.  These reflect the goals for FFY 2016.*

While caseworkers completed 95.2% of monthly visits associated with the population of children and youth in foster care who are reported in Colorado's AFCARS submissions, caseworkers completed only 88.1% of monthly visits associated with Colorado's population of children and youth who have been in custody of county departments for six months or more.  DCW staff monitors quarterly monthly caseworker visit data reports and shares this information with county departments of human services.

An important factor that impacts the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with the child is insufficient staffing and caseworker turnover throughout the state.  A workload study focused on county child welfare workers was conducted in 2014 as part of Governor Hickenlooper's child welfare plan, Keeping Kids Safe and Families Healthy 2.0.  The study found that Colorado needs approximately 574 additional full-time caseworker positions and 122 related supervisory positions to handle the state's caseloads.

Based on the study's findings, the Colorado General Assembly approved and allocated funding to hire 184 new county child welfare caseworker positions:  100 in state fiscal year (SFY) 2015-16 and 84 in SFY 2016-17.  In SFY 2017-18 the Colorado General Assembly approved an additional 64 caseworker positions. These positions are allocated to counties by a state and county collaborative workgroup, the Child Welfare Allocation Committee (CWAC).  Additionally, since the 2014 study, many counties have increased their number of caseworkers and other case management staff by authorizing additional positions out of their county funding.  These efforts have helped to close the staffing gaps identified in 2014; however, there are still staffing needs in counties across Colorado.  As the new caseworkers are hired, trained, and begin casework, Colorado anticipates improved performance in the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children and youth in open child welfare involvements.

The goals for engagement of children/youth, mothers, and fathers need to be adjusted to align with the CFSP's Plan for Improvement.  The goals for engagement of family members, on page 46 of the CFSP, read as follows:

> Engagement of family members in case planning is enhanced as follows:
>
> - Youth:  99.9% engagement rate is maintained for nine out of twelve months for each year of the five-year period.
> - Mother:  Engagement rate is base lined for SFY 2015–16, increased 5% per year for SFY 2017–18, and re-evaluated in SFY 2019.
> - Father:  Engagement rate is base lined for SFY 2015–16, increased 5% per year for SFY 2017–18, and re-evaluated in SFY 2019.

Last year's APSR reported baselines for parental engagement rates: 91.4% for mothers and 80.8% for fathers.  In order to align with federal fiscal year time frames and the way qualitative case review data are reported, CDHS proposes the following revision:

> Engagement of family members in case planning is enhanced as follows:
>
> - Youth:  The engagement rate will be maintained at 99.9% for three out of four quarters each year of the five year period.
> - Mother:  The engagement rate's baseline, 91.4%, will be maintained for FFY 2015. Colorado will increase engagement by 5% every year through FFY 2018.  The goal will be re-evaluated in FFY 2019.
> - Father:  The engagement rate's baseline, 80.8%, will be maintained for FFY 2015. Colorado will increase engagement by 5% every year through FFY 2018.  The goal will be re-evaluated in FFY 2019.

Colorado is currently underperforming in its goals associated with engagement in case planning.  In FFY 2016 caseworkers engaged 93.6% of mothers and 85.7% of them participated in case planning. Caseworkers engaged 82.9% of fathers in case planning and 69.7% of them actually participated. Colorado did not meet the goal for youth engagement.  Caseworkers engaged youth to participate in case planning in 99.6% of cases, and overall, youth participated in 98.8% of cases.  The ARD began

tracking case planning engagement with other legal guardians in SFY 2016 to ensure the adoptive parent(s) or other legal guardians with legal responsibility are involved in case activities. Caseworkers engaged 90% of other legal guardians in case planning activities and 60% of them participated.

CDHS and county departments' of human services are continually focusing on implementation of facilitated family engagement through the child welfare waiver demonstration. DCW is working with county departments through the Child Welfare Sub-PAC to clarify practice expectations and rules related to family engagement. CDHS believes this collaborative work will help Colorado to continue to strengthen families' ability to provide for their children's needs. CDHS also has issued guidance in two memos to county partners regarding family engagement meetings and when these shall be completed throughout the life of a case in accordance with Volume 7. CDHS is also working to create a web page that directs best practices regarding family engagement meetings for facilitators and case workers in Colorado.

### *Children Receive Appropriate Services to Meet Their Educational Needs*

Colorado has not met the CFSP's 95% goal for any of the measures associated with this federal well-being outcome. The table below shows Colorado's performance in FFY 2015 and 2016 for each of the measures. Due to changes in the ARD's administrative case review instruments, FFY 2016 data are incomplete; the questions related to high school graduation and Head Start enrollment are no longer included on the instruments. While 6,265 administrative case reviews were completed in FFY 2016, data points with asterisks represent the 1,642 reviews that were completed in the first quarter of FFY 2016. CDHS will identify replacement measures for those that are no longer being tracked, and the new measures will be reported in the 2019 APSR.

*Table 3: FFY 2015 and 2016 well-being outcome (B) measures*

| Measure | CFSP Goal | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Was educational stability provided for the child during the review period? | 95% | **63%** | **58%** |
| For youth aged 16 and older, is the youth on track to graduate and/or complete high school? | 95% | **77%** | **77%\*** |
| For children aged 3 to 5, is the child enrolled in Head Start or another early childhood education program? | 95% | **83%** | **91%\*** |

Of the total number of reviews completed in FFY 2016, the educational stability question was relevant for 4,030 of those case reviews. An analysis of the case review responses shows that in 18% of the reviews children and youth changed schools following their initial placement in foster care. The analysis also shows that in 30% of the reviews children and youth changed schools during the review period. As part of the review of the ARD's case review data related to educational stability, CDHS staff also

revisited the case review instrument's language and instructions to ensure alignment between what the administrative case reviews are measuring and federal guidance on educational stability.

CDHS presented these data to stakeholders during the statewide CFSR Kickoff event in September 2016 and conducted focus groups to discuss available data, identify barriers, and brainstorm possible solutions. In the focus groups, CDHS staff worked with the stakeholders to develop theories of change, which were documented in logic models that are included in the appendices of this report. Appendix C includes stakeholders' logic models regarding educational stability. Stakeholders identified transportation as a key barrier for maintaining children and youth in their schools of origin, and they proposed various activities to decrease the likelihood that transportation drives school changes, including the following:

- initiate a research project using geographic information system (GIS) software to map removals and placement resources;
- target recruitment of foster homes within communities with greatest number of removals;
- conduct a transportation needs assessment to understand gaps in transportation services; and
- develop interagency agreements between county departments and local school districts that clearly define transportation responsibilities.

Upon reviewing available data, a group of stakeholders suggested the high percentage of school changes during FFY 2016 may be driven by difficult behavioral issues of children and youth that are the result of child maltreatment, poverty, and/or placement in out-of-home care. The stakeholders questioned whether schools' staff are equipped with the skills necessary to address the social emotional needs of children and youth who are experiencing trauma. Accordingly, they proposed trauma-informed training for child welfare agencies' education partners.

Since FFY 2015, CDHS has been working with its education partners to address systemic barriers that impact the educational outcomes of children and youth in foster care. Efforts to improve outcomes are underway and include the adoption of the Blueprint for Change: Education Success for Children in Foster Care and ongoing implementation of pilot programs to test strategies that will improve educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care. In addition to systemic barriers, these efforts address case specific barriers that impact the educational attainment of students in foster care.

In September 2014 the University of Northern Colorado submitted a trend study to CDHS and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) that showed on-time graduation rates for foster youth were far below their peers without foster care involvement. This study prompted CDHS and CDE to adopt the Blueprint for Change, which is a framework for direct case advocacy and system reform to improve educational outcomes for children in foster care. It was developed by the American Bar Association with support from Casey Family Programs and is being utilized by six other states and the District of Columbia. In FFY 2015 CDHS, CDE, and the Child Welfare Executive Leadership Council convened an advisory committee, the Educational Outcomes Steering Committee (EOSC), to oversee the development and implementation of the Blueprint for Change ("Blueprint") in Colorado. The EOSC is

comprised of representatives from several state agencies, county departments, school districts, post-secondary institutions, community agencies, and local and national foundations.

The committee is in the process of developing recommendations for phased implementation of specific Blueprint benchmarks.  In February 2016 the EOSC finalized its recommendations related to two benchmarks under Goal 1:

> Goal 1: Youth are entitled to remain in their same school when feasible.

>> 1-C:  When in their best interests, youth have a legal right to remain in the same school (school of origin) even when they move outside the school district, and schools that retain children are not financially penalized.

>> 1-D:  Youth are entitled to necessary transportation to their school of origin, with responsibilities clearly designated for transportation costs.

One of the EOSC's recommendations related to benchmark 1-C calls for the establishment of a process to determine whether it is in a child's best interest to remain in their school despite changes in placements, including reunification.  In FFY 2016 DCW and the Child Welfare Sub-PAC formed a work group to explore whether rule or legislative changes are necessary to implement this EOSC recommendation. The work group's membership included staff from the DCW and the ARD, CDE, various sized county departments of human services, school districts, and the University of Northern Colorado. Highlights from the work group's proposal include:

- requirements for county departments to conduct a formal best interest determination process prior to any school move that is being considered as a result of a change in child welfare placements; and
- requirements for increased collaboration with local educational agencies, including collaboration to develop systems-level plans for how transportation to the school of origin will be arranged, provided, and funded (paralleling education agencies' obligations under the Every Child Succeeds Act).

The proposed rule revisions were vetted through the Child Welfare Sub-PAC and subsequently presented to the State Board of Human Services in December 2016.  The State Board approved the rule revisions, and the changes were effective as of February 2017.  CDHS anticipates these revisions will lead to more effective implementation of the school stability provisions of the federal Fostering Connections Act and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

In response to EOSC's recommendations related to benchmark 1-D, DCW released a competitive procurement solicitation for a statewide transportation needs assessment.  The study will help DCW and the EOSC understand the potential costs of education-related transportation services throughout the state. The final report is due June 30, 2017, and CDHS and its partners will utilize the reports' findings and recommendations to improve access to transportation services. The report uses the best available data on student mobility patterns to estimate the costs of needed transportation. The report also

underscored the lack of public transportation options outside of Colorado's metro areas; it recommends utilizing caregivers with mileage reimbursement whenever possible and hiring private drivers when this is not an option.

CDHS is in its third year of piloting specific strategies to improve educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care. In calendar year 2015 CDHS, in partnership with Casey Family Programs, released a Request for Applications to fund local collaborative efforts to improve educational stability and attainment for students in foster care. Requirements included collaboration between the county departments of human services, local school districts, and local judicial districts. Three counties were awarded funding in the form of mini-grants: Douglas, Larimer, and Jefferson counties. Douglas and Jefferson counties piloted projects that provided individualized services to specific students in foster care; Larimer County developed and piloted an educational needs and stability assessment process through their Family Assessment and Planning Team, which is a multi-disciplinary team that assists families with youth who are at risk of out-of-home placement or who need individualized supports to return home.

Casey Family Programs provided additional funding in Calendar Year 2016 to expand the pilot to additional sites.  The 2016 pilot required participating counties to implement a "standard and deliberate process," per federal guidance (program instruction log no. ACYF-CB-PI-10-11), to determine if it is in a child or youth's best interests to stay in the same school upon a change in child welfare placements. Three counties were awarded funding:  Jefferson, Morgan, and Pueblo counties.  Jefferson County provided individualized services to a targeted caseload of students in foster care and completed work to enhance collaboration and communication between the county's Division of Children, Youth, and Families and the local school district.  Morgan County provided transportation services for students in foster care to allow them to remain in their school of origin, developed a best interest determination process, and developed procedures to enhance communication and coordination between schools of origin and receiving school districts in the event school changes are necessary. Pueblo County conducted a multi-year longitudinal study of current and former students in foster care to better understand the reasons contributing to disparities in educational attainment.  The study found three components related to educational success or difficulties among youth in out-of-home placement; struggles with school unique to youth in out-of-home care separate from their out-of-home status, systems involved with foster youth educational success operating in silos and with limited knowledge regarding needs and issues of youth in out-of-home care, and inconsistent processes related to coordination and collaboration *across* systems and inconsistent policies for biological parents to help their children succeed in school. Study recommendations to support educational attainment of youth in out-of-home care included the development of interagency agreements outlining the notification process and timeliness for school transitions, holding staffing's for each child that focuses on their educational needs, and providing caseworkers and placement provider's tools and skills to better advocate for a youth's educational needs. Additionally, the study outlines methods to track outcomes and a collaborative process to determine students' best interests when school change is an option.

Participation in the pilot requires counties to submit final reports at the end of the calendar year.  The reports must address the following:

- a detailed description of the implementation of their pilot projects;
- assessment of outcomes of the children and youth served;
- assessment of the system's capacity to support educational stability and outcomes;
- challenges that arose during implementation and the process for overcoming them; and
- lessons learned and identification of any practice or policy changes.

CDHS and Casey Family Programs will review the final reports to inform statewide efforts to improve educational outcomes for students in foster care and support dissemination of successful strategies to other jurisdictions.

Preliminary data from the Jefferson County project has been promising. The project created an educational liaison position which provided individualized services to a caseload of 20 elementary school students. Through this project and other examples, CDHS staff found that employing education liaisons is an important strategy for improving educational outcomes.  In order to facilitate improved communication at the local level, CDHS and CDE are currently finishing a series of regional education convenings focused on building relationships between county child welfare and education agencies. At these events, CDHS and CDE are providing joint technical assistance so all stakeholders have the same information and a shared understanding of each agency's respective obligations.

CDHS is also using these events, as well as other methods, to encourage counties to utilize a toolkit it created for implementing school stability provisions (Fostering Connections, ESSA, and CDHS rule). The toolkit consists of a model of key documents: 1) a best interest determination tool, 2) form letters to the school district of origin and receiving school district to provide notice of a child's foster care status and to make relevant requests, and 3) a template intergovernmental agreement on school stability and transportation.

In addition to planning for students' transportation needs, CDHS is working with counties to keep students in their communities so they aren't moving away from their school as a result of an out-of-home placement. With support from Casey Family Programs, CDHS is providing mini-grants to counties with high incidence of school mobility. The counties will utilize existing data to identify the zip codes from where these students are moving. They will use the grant funds to target foster care recruitment in those areas.

Similar to the feedback received from stakeholders during the statewide CFSR Kickoff event, CDHS recognizes the need to ensure children and youth in foster care have adequate supports in their schools. In order to build capacity of schools to serve students who are involved in child welfare, DCW has partnered with the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH), the University of Colorado in Boulder (CU), and Casey Family Programs to pilot a model for implementing trauma-informed practices in schools. In FFY 2016 two schools were selected to participate in the pilot. The pilot was split into two-parts that spanned summer 2016 through the end of the first semester of the 2016-17 school year. The first part was a high-level training on how trauma affects learning and behavior in the classroom. This training was offered to the entire staff of each school. For the second part, each school was assigned a coach to work individually with teachers and staff over the fall semester to help them develop their skills in

interacting with students in conflict or emotionally-charged situations. The coaches utilized the "Let's Connect" approach, which was developed by CU and has been recognized as a promising practice by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Data from the pilots showed that the coaching helped teachers feel better equipped to connect with their students and to create effective learning environments. DCW, OBH, and CU are currently drafting an interagency agreement to develop training and implementation materials to expand this program statewide and identify resources for ongoing sustainability. An update will be provided in the 2019 APSR.

***Children Receive Adequate Services to Meet Their Physical and Mental Health Needs***

In FFY 2016 Colorado did not meet all of its performance goals for federal well-being outcome 3; however, there was notable increase in children and youth who received ongoing healthcare. The table below shows Colorado's performance for each of the measures, all of which come from CDHS' administrative case review process.

Previously, there were five measures related to this outcome. As part of a review of the administrative case review instruments, recent local statute and rule changes, and the CFSR Round 3 onsite review instrument, ARD and its collaborative advisory committee modified the review instruments, which resulted in additions and removals of some review questions. The review question *"Were the child/youth's mental health needs (including the need for psychotropic medications) assessed?"* is no longer being measured as part of administrative case review process, and DCW believes the remaining question regarding the provision of mental health services is sufficient to assess Colorado's performance for this outcome.

*Table 4:  FFY 2016 well-being outcome (3) measures*

| Measure | CFSP Goal | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Did the child/youth receive a medical exam or medical screening, or was a medical exam scheduled within two weeks of initial placement? | 69.2% | 64.2% | **61.7%** |
| Did the child/youth receive a full dental examination or was a dental exam scheduled within eight weeks of the initial placement? | 73.8% | 68.8% | **65.4%** |
| Has the child/youth received regular health care, including immunizations, and/or treatment for identified health needs? | 95% | 75.3% | **81.3%** |
| Were mental health services provided to meet the child/youth's needs during the review period? | 95% | 73.1% | **66.3%** |

*Physical Health*

The goals for medical and dental examinations following initial placement have been revised to align with the CFSP's Plan for Improvement. On page 44 of the CFSP, the seventh measure of progress for goal 1 states, "The rate of medical and dental examinations following placements will improve by 5% by 2018." Using FFY 2015 as the baseline, the FFY 2018 goals for medical and dental examinations following initial placement will be 69.2% and 73.8% respectively.

The Code of Colorado Regulations requires the following:

- A general medical examination for each foster child must be completed or scheduled with a physician or nurse practitioner within 14 calendar days following placement at the foster home.
- Dental examinations, appropriate to the age of the foster child, must be completed or scheduled within 8 weeks following placement at the foster home.
- Subsequent physical and other examinations must be held annually or as directed, in writing, by the physician or other qualified health professional.

Rules in the Code of Colorado Regulations are grouped into sections that outline the responsibilities of county departments, foster care homes, child placement agencies, and 24 hour child care facilities. An internal review of rules related to the provision of health care services revealed some inconsistencies across all of the sections. Accordingly, DCW staff, in collaboration with the Child Welfare Sub-PAC, is working on rule revisions to clarify health care expectations and ensure consistency across all foster care providers. A draft of the revised rules will be completed and vetted with stakeholders during FFY 2017. The rules will be presented to the Colorado State Board of Human Services for promulgation in early FFY 2018.

During administrative case reviews, ARD staff look for documentation of appointments that comply with the Code of Colorado Regulations in the following locations:

- Trails,
- the hard case file,
- the family services plan,
- the health record, and
- provider reports.

Additionally, the requirement is considered fulfilled if the child or youth's foster care provider brings documentation to the review that confirms the appointment was scheduled or held within the required timeframes. Based on data reported in Table 4, Colorado is performing better in ensuring children and youth already in foster care are receiving regular medical care; however, medical and dental examinations upon entry into foster care remain a challenge.

In FFY 2016 ARD reviewed 2,475 cases that required medical exams following initial placement. Case review data show that medical exams occurred within 2 weeks of initial placement in approximately 52% of reviewed cases. Medical exams were scheduled or held outside of the required timeframes in

approximately 29% of cases, and there's no evidence that any medical exams occurred in approximately 10% of the cases.

With regard to dental examinations, ARD reviewed 1,785 cases in FFY 2016 that required dental exams following initial placement. Case review data show that dental exams occurred within 8 weeks of initial placement in 62% of reviewed cases. Dental exams were scheduled or held outside of the required timeframes in approximately 18% of cases, and there's no evidence that any dental exams occurred in 16% of cases.

In an effort to better understand possible causes for the state's performance, DCW staff engaged stakeholders in various forums and collaborative committees. The CQI Workgroup has spent several months assessing the issue and identifying problem areas and possible solutions. A survey was distributed to county foster care coordinators in May 2016. During the statewide CFSR Kickoff event in September 2016, stakeholders were presented with relevant data and asked to assess the problem and develop theories of change that they believe would improve Colorado's performance. Lastly, DCW conducted a focus group with county foster care coordinators and child placement agencies' staff in December 2016 to present available data, solicit their feedback, and better understand barriers they experience in their daily work.

All of the feedback DCW received can be group into three broad themes:

- county staffing and processes;
- access to medical and dental providers; and
- usability of the Trails' Health Passport.

Case review data show that the largest barrier to improved performance is medical and dental exams scheduled, or held, outside of the required timeframes. The majority of county child welfare agencies rely upon their foster care providers to coordinate health care for children and youth in their care. The Code of Colorado Regulations requires foster care providers to maintain and update information regarding children's and youth's health care. They are also required to regularly submit this information to county caseworkers. Based on feedback received from county stakeholders, this arrangement requires significant coordination and follow-up between caseworkers and foster care providers, and this work takes place within the context of a large volume of competing priorities, high caseloads, and insufficient staffing in county child welfare agencies.

Systemic barriers within Colorado's health care system also contribute to these difficulties. County stakeholders from rural areas note the shortage of medical and dental providers who accept Medicaid within their jurisdictions. Moreover, some medical providers are not taking new patients. In some cases, there's confusion about Medicaid's coverage of multiple examinations within a 12-month time frame.

With regard to documentation requirements, DCW received overwhelming feedback about the poor usability of Trails' Health Passport; county staff reported a number of challenges they experience when attempting to document information in the Health Passport. In summer of 2016, DCW designed a Trails ad-hoc report that looked for medical appointments associated with all foster care entries in FFY 2015.

The report found that there was no documentation of medical appointments for 61% of the entries and no confirmation that scheduled appointments were actually held in 18% of the entries. It's evident that county child welfare staff are not using the Health Passport functionality in Trails, and county stakeholders report using other areas of the information system including the record of contact and resource sections to document information.

Based on available data and feedback, DCW and its partners collaborated to identify and select solutions that address the root causes of Colorado's performance. The overarching strategy includes three main objectives:

- clarify expectations;
- provide more supports to county child welfare staff and foster care providers; and
- improve documentation by redesigning the Trails' Health Passport and automating data sharing between Trails and HCPF's Medicaid management information system, Colorado interChange.

As stated above, DCW staff will review all relevant sections of the Code of Colorado Regulations to ensure:

- clarity of expectations regarding health care for children and youth in foster care, and
- consistency of requirements across all foster care providers.

An operational memorandum, which clarified expectations and provided detailed Trails' documentation instructions, was distributed to all counties in December 2016. For counties that are performing poorly in this area, the DCW is evaluating a proposal to request that those counties develop county specific procedures that specifies (1) the staff who will be responsible for following up with foster care providers and documenting health information received from providers; (2) the minimum amount of information that needs to be documented in the Trails' Health Passport; and (3) time frames to complete and update documentation in the system.

Recognizing that many child welfare agencies are struggling due to insufficient staffing, CDHS continues to advocate for more staff resources for counties. In the past two state fiscal years, the Colorado General Assembly has approved and allocated funding for 184 new county child welfare caseworker positions. Another 67 new caseworker positions were approved by the Colorado General Assembly for SFY 2017-18, and the Child Welfare Allocation Committee (CWAC) allocated those positions to 15 counties with the highest need.

In addition to more staff resources, DCW is leveraging its collaborative relationship with Colorado's Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) to improve coordination between county child welfare staff, foster care, and health care providers. The 2015-19 Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan outlines collaboration with HCPF's Healthy Communities Program to ensure all children in foster care have access to needed physical and mental health services. As described on page 145 of Colorado's current Child and Family Services Plan, the Healthy Communities Program works with caregivers of eligible children to:

- encourage their participation in HCPF's Accountable Care Collaboratives and Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Testing Program;
- inform them of benefits and availability of health care services;
- provide assistance with scheduling appointments and transportation; and
- monitor and evaluate the quality of services provided to eligible children.

CQI efforts in FFY 2017 highlighted an area where there can be improved coordination between Colorado's child welfare agencies and the Healthy Communities Program. The program is not receiving timely updated information about children placed in foster care. A subcommittee of the CQI Workgroup is looking into the interoperability between Trails and Colorado interChange to identify the specific information Healthy Communities needs to identify newly placed children and contact information for their foster care providers. Once this information has been identified, DCW will issue guidance to counties regarding the required information, method of sharing this information with the Healthy Communities Program, and time frames. Once these improvements are implemented, this collaboration will support county caseworkers in their work to coordinate with foster care providers and will support foster care providers in finding health care providers within their communities.

With regard to documentation issues, the Trails' Health Passport will be redesigned as part of the Trails Modernization Project. The CQI Workgroup will collaborate with the Colorado Trails User Group (CTUG) to develop recommendations and business requirements for the Health Passport redesign. Additionally, DCW will explore improved interoperability between Trails and Colorado interChange. Appointments with health care providers are documented in Colorado interChange to facilitate Medicaid payments; therefore, it may be possible to automatically push this information to Trails so as to alleviate the documentation requirements on county staff. The efforts are anticipated to be completed in FFY 2018.

Lastly, DCW is enlisting the support of judicial officers to improve compliance with the state's health care requirements for children and youth in foster care. Colorado's Court Improvement Program is developing a series of bench cards that would provide guidance to judicial officers regarding specific child welfare issues; and the federal well-being outcomes are areas of interest. DCW will work with the Court Improvement Program to incorporate information about Colorado's health care requirements into the bench card project. Bench cards are anticipated to be completed by the summer of 2018.


*Mental Health*

The administrative case review data in Table 4 show decreased performance in the provision of mental health services since FFY 2015. Colorado's work to assess the problem areas, identify root causes, and develop solutions is occurring primarily through the child welfare waiver demonstration project. Colorado's demonstration project includes trauma-informed interventions that connect children and families with needed mental health services. In FFY 2017, 20 counties are implementing these interventions, and 7 of the counties are implementing an expansion of the interventions called the Resiliency Center Project.

The Resiliency Center Project was approved by the IV-E Waiver Oversight Committee in FFY 2015. The project's objective is to enhance the impact of the trauma-informed interventions. Children, youth, and families served by the project will receive more comprehensive trauma-informed assessments and well-coordinated intensive trauma services. Participating counties will also regularly administer well-being assessments. A collaborative workgroup has been convened to develop a plan to blend disparate funding streams to provide trauma services to children and youth. Membership includes staff from county departments of human services, HCPF, Behavioral Health Organizations, and local mental health providers. The project will be independently evaluated to assess its efficacy.

Implementation of the trauma-informed interventions has highlighted opportunities for improved collaboration across systems. In the original design of the interventions, the target population included all children who are eligible for Medicaid. Staff of child welfare agencies would screen children and youth for trauma, and when appropriate, refer them to community mental health centers (CMHC) where they would receive trauma-informed assessments and services. During implementation, participating counties and mental health agencies encountered some larger systemic barriers that include capacity of local CMHCs, clearly defined assessment responsibilities by agency, and funding logistics.

DCW is collaborating with stakeholders to address each of these systemic barriers. In FFY 2017 efforts include the following:

- IV-E Waiver Oversight Committee discusses and advises on systemic barriers between participating child welfare agencies and behavioral health organizations on a quarterly basis
- The Resiliency Center Project employs a dedicated staff person who is working with agencies and stakeholders to identify assessment process responsibilities by agency and appropriate funding streams to pay for services.
- DCW and HCPF are exploring a possible data sharing agreement that will facilitate the development of a management report to improve timeliness of assessments and highlight geographic regions where more Medicaid providers are needed.
- So as not to delay the provision of mental health services, participating counties are given latitude to use the demonstration project funding to pay for trauma-informed assessment and services through local, private mental health providers.

DCW is continually exploring efforts and reviewing barriers identified by stakeholders to not only facilitate improved implementation of the trauma-informed interventions, but also access to mental health services for the majority of children and families served by Colorado's child welfare system.

In addition to efforts through the child welfare waiver demonstration, Colorado continues its work to adapt the Economic, Clinical, and Humanistic Outcomes (ECHO) model to reducing psychiatric polypharmacy in the state. The ECHO model is a collaborative learning model that connects expert specialist teams with local primary care clinicians through interactive technology to facilitate case-based learning and disseminate best practices. CDHS is collaborating with the Kempe Center, the Colorado

chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the University of Colorado to develop an ECHO teaching series regarding psychiatric care for youth.

Based on feedback received from medical providers, the Medical Oversight Unit has found that local primary care clinicians are often uncertain how to handle complex mental health concerns among children and youth in foster care, and this can lead to clinicians being unwilling to see these patients, thereby delaying children and youth's access to needed care. The series will improve the ability of primary care clinicians to address mental health concerns in foster youth. The University of Colorado is seeking grant funding for a pilot, and contingent upon the outcome of the grant requests, the first series may go live in 2017.

# ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEMIC FACTORS

## A. Statewide Information System

Trails is Colorado's certified state automated child welfare information system (SACWIS).  The system is a database of the children, youth, and families that are currently receiving services or have done so in the past.  Trails is used statewide by all applicable child welfare personnel and is functional throughout the state to readily provide information on any case management and case planning activities. Trails is designed so that appropriate child welfare personnel can conduct a client or case search to determine the status of any child with current county child welfare involvement. While applicable child welfare personnel can access the information in Trails, only those assigned to the case as a primary or secondary caseworker, supervisor, or another appropriate security profile can modify the information. Information documented in Trails is used to produce approximately 1,000 structured and ad-hoc reports to satisfy federal reporting requirements and also supports CDHS' efforts to assess the performance and effectiveness of Colorado's child welfare services.

The Code of Colorado Regulations requires caseworkers to use the statewide information system to document information regarding status, demographic characteristics, location, and placement goals for every child in foster care.  While CDHS has a robust quality assurance and case review process that looks at case documentation at varying decision points throughout child welfare case practice, the data are not currently captured in a way that allows reporting on the accuracy of the information entered into Trails. Currently supervisors and caseworkers are responsible for ensuring all relevant and required assessment and case information is entered into Trails. Each open case undergoes a 90 day review process in which the assigned caseworker and supervisor review data entry for completeness and accuracy and case progress and goals for appropriateness. Supervisor approval is necessary for assessment or case closure; this process helps hold caseworkers accountable for timely and accurate data entry.

When a referral of abuse or neglect is called into the statewide child abuse and neglect hotline reporting system, a referral is created in Trails. Hotline workers (call takers) interview the reporter to gather demographics of the alleged victim, alleged person responsible for abuse or neglect (PRAN), and the situation that precipitated the call and additional information regarding the family. Hotline workers complete initial job specific training and ongoing professional development to enhance and sharpen their interview and documentation skills. Training includes skill development to enhance caller engagement, referral procedures, and fundamentals of the Trails system.

The information gathered through the hotline process is then used to create a referral in Trails.  Existing information in Trails regarding the alleged victim, family, or PRAN, is cross-referenced and added to any new information to update the data base information, and to avoid duplication of client entries.  The referral screen includes information relating to status of the referral, demographics, and location of alleged victim child. In the Referral toolbar (Figure 14), staff can view the referral narrative, reporter

information and view any demographic and relational information in the system. After the initial report a worker can add in additional referral notes reflecting action taken. All referrals are reviewed by a supervisor to determine next steps. Next steps may include an immediate response indicating current danger/harm or the referral may be sent to a group decision-making process to review evaluate and direct (RED team) the referral appropriately.  The RED team utilizes a framework in Trails to capture and organize information and is accessible in the referral toolbar. The RED team framework captures family strengths and guides decision making in referral disposition track assignment (if applicable), and the response time. Per Volume 7 rules, referrals must meet certain criteria to be assigned as an assessment; specific allegation of known or suspected abuse and/or neglect as defined in rule, demographic information to locate the alleged victim(s), and an alleged victim under the age of 18.

*Figure 14: Screenshot of referral toolbar in Trails*
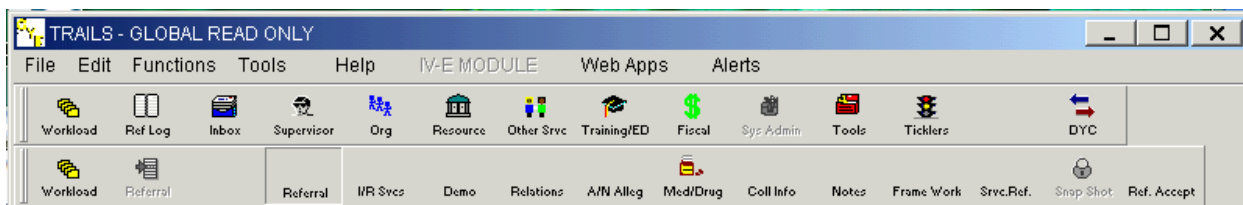


When a referral is assigned for assessment, either immediately or after RED Team screening, an assessment is opened in Trails and all further documentation related to the assessment occurs in that screen. Status, demographic characteristics, location, and placement information can be found on the Assessment toolbar (Figure 15) by selecting the Client tab. Demographic information is stored under the General Info tab for each person identified as "in household." The physical location of the child can be found by selecting the Summary tab.

*Figure 15: Screenshot of assessment toolbar in Trails.*
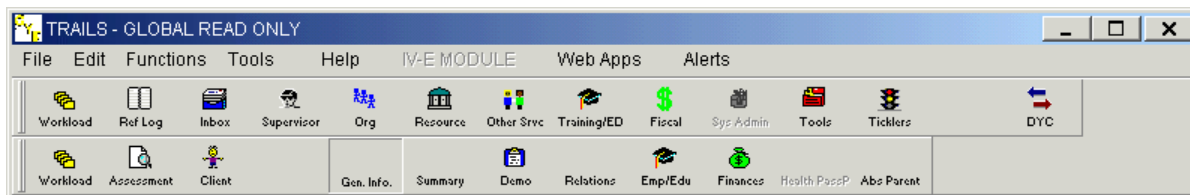


The General Information tab (Figure 16) also contains a field for Legal Custody Status for each child involved on the assessment or case. Legal custody is a required field in the General Information tab necessitating caseworkers and supervisors to enter relevant data before saving the screen. Legal custody selections include: allocation of parental rights (APR) with non-relative thru juvenile/district court; APR with relative thru juvenile/district court; child placement agency (CPA) legal custody; guardianship with consent to adopt; custody with kin and county consent to adopt; custody with non-kin and county consent to adopt; DHS authority for care/placement through petition for the review of the need for placement (PRNP); DHS legal custody; DHS legal custody/guardianship with consent to adopt; DYC commitment; emancipation; guardianship with kin thru dependency and neglect (D&N) action; guardianship with non-kin thru D&N action; guardianship with non-kin thru probate court; guardianship

with non-relative thru probate court; guardianship with relative thru probate court; kinship custody; non-Trails CPA legal custody/guardianship; non-DHS custody/protective custody orders; other state's custody; parental custody; parental rights reinstatement; permanent custody with kin thru D&N action; permanent custody with non-kin thru D&N action; PRNP filed; tribal custodian; and, voluntary placement agreement with parent or legal guardian.

*Figure 16: Screenshot of General Information tab containing Legal Custody Status in Trails.*



When a child or youth is removed from their home and placed in out-of-home care, a removal must be documented in Trails and at that point, a case is opened.  Documentation of the removal can be found under the Service Provision (Srvc Prov) toolbar (Figure 17), under Removal. The Removal Detail field will include tabs for information on the removal start date and reason, demographic information on caretakers, and legal custody status. The Legal Custody Status tab in this screen includes an option to view the Legal Custody Status History of each child with a documented removal in Trails. If a child or youth has not been removed from their home, legal custody status can be found in the General Information tab under each client as outlined above. Additionally, the Services Authorized (Srvc Auth) tab will provide further detail on placement services including provider ID numbers and service type, while the History tab will detail placement history including start and end dates for each placement. The Trial Visits tab will include information on whether the child(ren) or youth is currently on a trial home visit. This is important to consider when ascertaining the physical location of a child. If a child is on a trial home visit it is documented under the Trial Visits tab that includes the start date of the trial home visit and when completed, the outcome. While on the trial home visit the physical location of the child can be found on the Summary tab, as outlined above, in the Current Location field.

*Figure 17: Screenshot of Service Provision toolbar in Trails.*
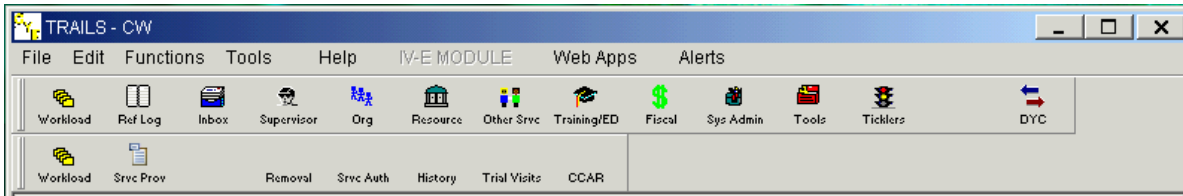


Each child or youth is required to have a Family Services Plan (Figure 18) completed within 60 days of the referral date, whether the child or youth is remaining in the home or in out-of-home placement. The permanency goals for each child or youth involved in an assessment or case is documented in the Family Services Plan (FSP) toolbar under the Family Information tab. Current permanency goals for each child or youth involved in the case can be viewed from this screen in the Current Permanency Goal field. If applicable and appropriate, an alternative permanency goal is also listed. Additionally, the Family Information tab includes an option to view the Permanency Goal History. Current Permanency Goal is a required field for each child on the case including the date the permanency goal was set and the target date for goal completion.

*Figure 18: Screenshot of Family Service Plan toolbar with Permanency Goal fields in Trails.*
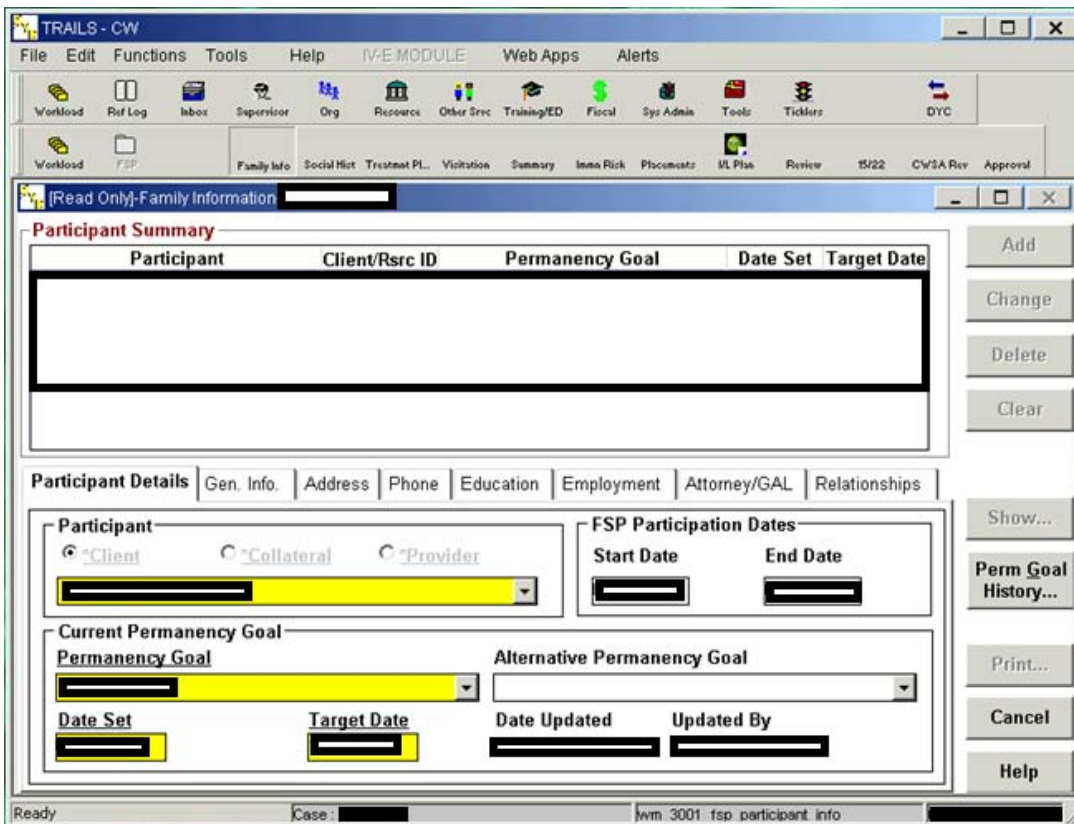
The physical location of any child or youth in out-of-home placement can also be determined by reviewing the placement information and looking up the provider ID in the Resources tab on Trails. The Resources tab includes a directory of all providers in the Trails database. Cross-referencing information from the General Info and/or Service Authorization tab with provider information can also provide the physical location of a child in out-of-home care.

Colorado continues to make progress in modernizing Trails. The modernization effort was prompted by feedback from county partners, the 2014 child welfare workload study, and an independent evaluation of the system. In FFY 2015 CDHS convened an advisory committee of state and county staff to oversee the modernization efforts, the goals of which include:

- improved usability for supervisors and caseworkers;
- improved county case management;
- integrated data to improve overall case management;
- improved reporting; and
- alignment of CDHS' public facing educational website and data center, the CDHS Community Performance Center, which shares frequently updated data about the children, youth, and families involved in Colorado's child welfare system.

In February 2016 the Trails modernization project's implementation plan was approved by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). CDHS has procured CGI Technologies and Solutions Inc. to execute the project. Trails modernization will take several years to complete in order to address updates and changes needed to the system. Ultimately, it is up to the caseworker and supervisor to ensure data entry is accurate and timely. Some Trails screens and toolbars require certain information to be entered and saved in order to progress through the toolbar, thus ensuring data entry on relevant pieces of information. Through Trails modernization information relating to the status, demographic characteristics, location, and placement goals will all come from one source and will be reviewed through the 90 day review process to ensure all information is accurate. This inclusion to the 90 day review process is expected to occur in FFY 2019.

## B. Case Review System

A well-functioning case review system ensures the following federal requirements are being met statewide:

- Each child has a case plan that is developed jointly with parents and includes the required provisions;
- Periodic reviews are conducted once every six months by court or administrative reviews;
- Permanency hearings are held every 12 months;
- Filings of Termination of Parental Rights proceedings, or the compelling reasons for not filing, occur in accordance with the required provisions; and
- Notices of hearings and reviews are provided to caretakers.

Colorado's case review system is administered by the Administrative Review Division (ARD), which serves as an independent third party review system under the auspices of CDHS. Located within the Office of Performance and Strategic Outcomes, the ARD is part of the quality assurance system for the DCW and the Division of Youth Services (DYS). To support the achievement of safety, permanency and well-being for Colorado's children, the ARD works closely with Colorado's counties to train, measure, and assess their adherence to state and federal regulations.

The ARD has review processes designed to allow for a quality assurance process at every level and every decision point of case practice –referral, assessment, in-home services, and out-of-home services – within the child welfare system. Eighteen ARD staff are responsible for conducting reviews. The ARD staff are located and work across the various geographical regions of the state and are assigned to conduct reviews in counties within that geographical region. Within this structure, reviewers have the ability to quickly identify trends within counties, regions, and program areas through their thorough understanding of the functioning of each agency they review.

Review instruments specific to each population guide the reviews. The instruments are developed collaboratively with staff from DCW and county departments of human services. Final items included on the instrument are based on the federal CFSR Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI) or other federal requirements, requirements from Colorado's Office of the State Auditor, and areas of interest identified by the DCW and county departments. Response sets and instructions are based on federal and state statute as well as practice expectations outlined in Volume 7 of the Code of Colorado Regulations.

Review results are provided to county staff through several processes. Immediately after each review, ARD review staff meet with county staff (e.g., the caseworker, supervisor, or administrator) to discuss the results of the review. This provides immediate feedback to county staff most directly responsible for the delivery of services to the specific child and family, and also allows the reviewer to provide training and technical assistance specific to the review.

Additionally, the ARD creates formal quality assurance reports that are provided back to each county. These reports are compiled after the conclusion of each quality assurance review, where the ARD

reviews a random sample of assessments and in-home services cases.  These reports highlight the aggregate results from the Administrative Reviews (six-month periodic reviews of children in out-of-home care), the In-home Services Reviews, and the Assessment Reviews. The ARD also meets with staff from the county to review and discuss the county's performance scores across the measures. While each county determines who they want to participate in the discussion, the ARD encourages the attendance of administrators and supervisors.

ARD's staff conducts case reviews of out-of-home cases in county departments of human services and the Division of Youth Corrections daily.  The Code of Colorado Regulations requires counties to invite the following individuals to the reviews:  parents, out-of-home providers, pre-adoptive parents, kin who are providing care for the child, and the guardian ad litem.  Other stakeholders may be invited to participate if these individuals approve of their participation.

Cases in county departments and cases in the Division of Youth Services (DYS) have their respective review populations and instruments. The review population for county department cases includes all cases where the county department had custody of the child continuously for six months during the review period, and DYS's include all cases where children committed to DYS were in a IV-E eligible placement for six months during the review period.  In FFY 2016 the ARD conducted 6,253 reviews of child welfare cases and 461 reviews of Division of Youth Services cases.  The data reported in the sections below reflect aggregated statewide performance on the ARD's review of child welfare cases.

*Written Case Plans*

Colorado requires the development of family service plans with the parent and child (if age appropriate), which outline services to be provided to address the areas of need identified during assessment, to ensure that the child receives safe and proper care, and which are culturally and ethnically appropriate. In FFY 2016, 95.2% of all reviewed cases had written family service plans which addressed the areas of need identified through assessment, and 78.4% of those cases had family service plans which:

- documented services that addressed the areas of need identified through assessment;
- were designed to assure that the child receives safe and proper care; and
- were culturally and ethnically appropriate.

Colorado also requires county departments to involve parent(s) or legal guardians in the development of the family services plan and other service planning activities.  During FFY 2016, in cases where a mother(s)/guardian(s)/kin(s) was identified, counties made efforts in 93.6% of cases to involve the mother(s)/guardian(s)/kin(s) in case planning, and in 85.7% of cases, the mother(s)/guardian(s)/kin(s) participated.  In cases where a father(s)/guardian(s)/kin(s) was identified, counties made efforts in 82.9% of cases to involve the father(s)/guardian(s)/kin(s) in case planning, and in 69.7% of cases, the father(s)/guardian(s)/kin(s) participated.

*Periodic Reviews*

In FFY 2016 there were 10,658 children who experienced foster care placements for 24 hours or more. The ARD conducts an initial periodic review for each child who is in out-of-home care for at least six months, and then conducts a review no less frequently than once every additional six months. Currently, 9.1% of children in out-of-home care did not have a periodic review at least once every 6 months, either by a court or the ARD. The ARD uses Trails to identify, schedule, and track reviews. Trails has a report that identifies children due for review each month based on a child's open out-of-home removal status. ARD staff then partner with county staff to identify and schedule reviews at least two months in advance. The Trails report of children due for review is routinely monitored to identify any children who may still be due for a review (i.e., if a prior scheduled review had to be canceled), and staffing is adjusted across counties as needed to ensure the timeliness of these reviews.

Prior to the AFCARS B Fall 2016 file submission, DCW tested an AFCARS file and found compliance issues around Element 5, the date of the most recent periodic review. An analysis of the out-of-home compliance records found that children in foster care who discharged to adoption were not given credit for their most recent periodic review. DCW worked closely with the Governor's Office of Information and Technology (OIT) and found that if a youth had an adoption discharge, the end date for the AFCARS period was used as a point of measurement instead of the youth's removal end date. DCW discussed the need to change the coding with its Federal partners and an agreement was made to implement the updated coding without Federal review for the Fall 2016 submission. As of the time of this report, the State of Colorado was still awaiting Federal review.

*Permanency Hearings*

The Supreme Court of Colorado issued a Chief Justice Directive (CJD) in 1998 that adopted policies to expedite permanent planning and placement for all children subject to dependency and neglect actions. It reads, "It is the responsibility of judges handling these cases to ensure that the issue of permanent placement for dependent and neglected children is addressed within (12) months of a judicial finding of abuse and neglect or sixty days after the child's removal from home." The CJD requires Colorado's judicial districts to develop case processing procedures that will enable Colorado's courts to reach the 12 month goal and provides a Memorandum of Procedures (MOP) that serves as a model for the desired local procedures. The purpose of the Permanency Planning Hearing, as stated in the MOP, is to adopt a specific permanency plan for the child and to take significant steps toward implementing the permanency plan. The MOP goes on to lay out a process for the hearing and specific requirements according to the suggested permanency goal.

Based on the ARD's case review data, the permanency of children in foster care is being addressed every 12 months in the vast majority of reviewed cases. If a child has been in care for 12 months or longer, the ARD looks to ensure that there is a court order in the case file that contains language demonstrating reasonable efforts to achieve permanency. Data from reviews conducted during FFY 2016 for this item are shown below.

| Measure | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|
| If a child has been in care for 12 months or longer, is there a court order in the case file that was signed and dated within the last 12 months that contains reasonable efforts to achieve permanency language, and does not contain "nunc pro tunc" language? | 96.3% | 96.2% |

*Termination of Parental Rights*

If the child has been in out-of-home care for 15 of the last 22 months, ARD staff reviews the case file to determine if a motion for the termination of parental rights (TPR) has been filed. If a motion for TPR has not been filed, then the ARD reviews to whether or not there was a compelling reason for not filing a motion for TPR. Data from reviews conducted during FFY 2016 for this item are shown below.

| Measure | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|
| If a petition/motion to terminate parental rights has not been filed, and a compelling reason has been identified, in the reviewer's opinion, is the compelling reason appropriate? | 70% | 66.5% |

*Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers*

Trails includes functionality to schedule case reviews, indicate individuals to be invited to the review, and generate invitation letters. Invitations are required to be sent out at least two weeks in advance of the review, and the ARD assesses whether all required parties were invited to the administrative case review. The Code of Colorado Regulations states foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, or relatives have the right to be heard at such hearings and reviews, and Volume 7 requires that county departments shall invite parents, the child (if age appropriate as determined by the caseworker), out-of-home care providers, pre-adoptive parents, relatives/kin who are providing out-of-home care for the child, and the guardian ad litem to the Administrative Review in order that these individuals will have a right to be heard. At the conclusion of the review, ARD staff also documents which invitees attended the review. Data from reviews conducted during FFY 2016 for this item are shown below.

| Measure | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|
| Were all required parties invited to the review and given at least two-weeks' notice? | 89% | 85.9% |

In summary, Colorado operates a robust case review system that identifies strengths and areas needing improvement for every county in the state. These reviews have a direct impact on practice at the case level and are critical to assessing safety, well-being, and progress toward permanency for each child in out-of-home care. Areas of concerns identified through CDHS' case reviews are addressed in collaborative committees such as the ARD Steering Committee and the Child Welfare Sub-PAC. The ARD

Steering Committee is a forum where CQI of the case review process occurs while the Child Welfare Sub-PAC is a forum where policy around the case review process is discussed. Based on their feedback, policies and practices may be reviewed to assess whether rule revisions are necessary.

### C. Quality Assurance System

Colorado's quality assurance system operates on every level of the state's child welfare system. It includes child welfare practice improvement efforts such as; certification, licensing, and monitoring activities of the DCW, county departments of human services, and other approved certifying agencies; quality assurance and case reviews performed by the ARD; and systemic continuous quality improvement (CQI) efforts through CDHS' C-Stat initiative. All of these efforts lie along a quality assurance continuum between practice-specific to systemic, work units within county departments to state level interagency collaborations. The CFSP provides a detailed overview of Colorado's quality assurance system and its components. The state's quality assurance system operates in all jurisdictions where the services outlined in the CFSP are provided. Standards, developed collaboratively with stakeholders through various official advisory committees, are codified in the Code of Colorado Regulations and are used to evaluate the quality of the services. The staff, workgroups, and CQI processes that constitute Colorado's quality assurance system regularly identify strengths and areas of improvement in the service delivery system. Identification of strengths and needs is also performed by independent third party reviewers who are contracted to do formal evaluations of specific CDHS initiatives, such as the Core Services Program, SafeCare Colorado, and the child welfare waiver demonstration. Relevant reports are produced and shared with county departments of human services, interagency and community partners, and the public at large. When necessary, program improvement measures are developed, and CDHS staff monitors and evaluates their implementation.

Timeliness of initial response to abuse/neglect assessments, maltreatment in foster care, and re-entry to foster care are areas that have received substantial attention through CDHS' C-Stat process. The *Safety Outcomes* and *Permanency Outcomes* sections of this report detail specific program improvement efforts related to these performance measures.

Case review data detailed in the *Permanency Outcomes* and *Well-Being Outcomes* sections of this report highlight areas where programmatic changes are required to improve permanency and well-being outcomes. CDHS and its partners are employing the quality assurance processes described in the preceding paragraphs to address the case review findings. The sections referenced above detail current efforts. Colorado's 2018 APSR and CFSR Statewide Assessment will include updates on the state's efforts.

As described in the *Systemic Factors - Case Review System* section, CDHS' ARD conducts case reviews to assess counties' compliance with state and federal rules and regulations. In addition to statewide and county specific reports with aggregate performance data, the ARD produces county specific reports that summarize its case review findings. Since June 2010, the Code of Colorado Regulations (7.304.65 J2) empowers the ARD to request specific changes in county's case practice in situations where their reviews identify unresolved issues that directly impacts a child's safety, permanency, or well-being. For all findings that contain "Issues for County Administration- Response Required," counties are required to provide timely and sufficient response to the ARD within a designated time frame.

During the CFSR Round 2, federal reviewers indicated that the narrative findings in the review report contained important information regarding Issues for County Administration found during the review that counties were not always addressing. The Quality Assurance sub-committee recommended the ARD require county departments of human/social services and the Department of Youth Services regions to respond to certain issues identified during the review. Subsequently, the ARD and the Child Welfare Sub-PAC formed a sub-committee to first provide guidance around any Issues for County Administration requiring further action. An Issue for County Administration was operationally defined as "any unresolved issue directly impacting a child's safety, permanency, or well-being." Additionally, Volume 7 was revised to include time frames for county response to identified issues and if issues remain unresolved, a corrective action process. In FFY 2016, the ARD review staff indicated 189 total Issues for Administration, with 39 requiring a response, all of which have been resolved.

Evidence that the federal quality assurance requirements are occurring statewide can be found on the public websites associated with each component of Colorado's quality assurance system.  The CDHS Community Performance Center is an educational website and data center that shares regularly updated data related to C-Stat performance measures, AFCARS measures, and demographic reports regarding the children, youth, and families served by Colorado's child welfare system.   The website enables community partners and the public to browse reports, which in some cases include ten years' worth of data.

CDHS' Division of Performance Management produces quarterly reports that summarize the state's performance and improvement efforts related to each C-Stat measure.  Also included are data that show performance over time.  Quarterly reports from 2012 to the present are available on the C-Stat section of the CDHS Division of Performance Management website.

CDHS' ARD also produces quarterly reports, as described in the *Systemic Factors- Case Review System* section, that track counties' progress towards compliance with state and federal rules and regulations for children in out-of-home care at least 6 months.   These reports present aggregate performance data, and at times, are modified to include specific information such as progress related to performance improvement measures.  The Publications & Reports section of the Colorado Department of Human Services website has the ARD quarterly reports for the most current quarter of the state fiscal year and the preceding three quarters.

### D. Staff and Provider Training

Colorado's Child Welfare Training System (CWTS) provides engaging, high quality training for various target audiences that include CDHS staff, county human services agencies' staff, State of Colorado interagency partners, staff of human service agencies affiliated with federally recognized tribes, foster parents, and community partners.  Since 2013 the CWTS has embraced a competency-based training model, the goal of which is for learners to gain the knowledge necessary to understand their jobs and the skills needed to perform their jobs with competence.  CDHS, in collaboration with an advisory committee comprised of diverse stakeholders, reviewed and revised 2,657 job competencies for caseworkers, supervisors, and foster and adoptive parents.  The CWTS utilizes these job competencies as a foundation upon which all new and existing course content is built.  As a result, everything from course titles and descriptions to learning objectives and skills-based classroom activities are aligned with building a more competent child welfare work force.

The CWTS' Curriculum Development Team (CDT) is comprised of experts in the area of development and delivery of competency based curricula and works with a number of leaders in the fields of child welfare, instructional design, and other applicable subject areas.  Curricula are designed around the adult learner in a way that is culturally responsive and maximizes the use of technology.  The CDT has established a CQI process to ensure all curricula are up to date, relevant, and reflect best practice.  Part of this process involves the CDT using research on additional training methods such as: micro-burst learning videos, virtual expert consultations, facilitated online learning labs, webinars, podcasts, and TED talks to inform the way in which curricula is developed.  The ability of the CDT to incorporate multiple modes of training delivery into future curricula will allow learners to engage in a way that best aligns with their individual needs, while maximizing the use of technology.

The CWTS' curriculum aligns with the training requirements outlined in Volume 7 of the Code of Colorado Regulations.  A robust evaluation process helps to ensure the training system addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out duties with regard to learners' respective roles.  Pre and post tests are administered to assess the training's impact on learner's knowledge; and at the conclusion of each course, learners also complete course evaluations that assess trainers' performance and the quality and value of the training's subject matter.  Learners provide assessment ratings on a 4-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree) for seven items that are listed in the proceeding sections. The CWTS received 8,965 evaluation surveys during FFY 2016, and 97% of respondents provided ratings of 'agree' or 'strongly agree' for all seven survey items.

In the future, data from the CWTS' information system, the Child Welfare Learning Management System (LMS), will also be used to assess the performance of Colorado's training system. The CWTS is in the process of improving the LMS to better track workers who complete their initial and ongoing training. The LMS includes an automated training log for all child welfare caseworkers and supervisors who wish to become and remain certified.  Learners automatically receive credit for all CWTS classes completed. For classes taken outside of the CWTS, learners may request credit for those classes, and training

certification specialists review and approve the requests to ensure training completed outside of the CWTS meets Colorado's training requirements.

Once workers have completed the required training hours, they are automatically certified or re-certified for the following year. The LMS improvements will allow Colorado to report the percent of child welfare workers who complete training within the required time frames, and to facilitate that capability, CWTS added learners' Trails IDs to the learners' profiles in FFY 2017. Through the Trails Modernization Project, information about Trails' users training certifications has been incorporated into the Trails' profiles for each user. As the project progresses, CDHS will add functionality that will prevent any staff from carrying a caseload if they do not have the requisite training certifications. The 2019 APSR will include updates on CDHS' progress to improve data collection regarding Colorado's child welfare workers' compliance with training requirements.

In addition to implementation of the LMS, the CWTS is incorporating more qualitative tools to assess how well its training addresses the basic skills and knowledge needed by staff and foster parents to carry out their duties.  In FFY 2017 the CWTS will launch an individualized learning needs assessment (ILNA) framework. This framework is designed to serve as an assessment of competence and to foster and enhance learning experiences—initially with caseworkers, but ultimately with each of the CWTS's learning audiences (caseworkers; supervisors; foster, kin, and adoptive parents; and other children-, youth-, and family-serving personnel).

Each learner's profile in the LMS will include an individualized competency assessment instrument. The assessment instrument compares all of the learner's job competencies with all of the training competencies addressed by CWTS' learning experiences. Learners will complete a self-assessment of their own competency to identify strengths and areas for growth with regard to their individual knowledge, skills, and abilities. Leaders subsequently review and verify the learner's completed self-assessment; facilitate colleague conversations and practice observations; and ultimately utilize the compiled results of these active efforts to determine the individual learner's annual learning plan (ILP). Supervisors and coaches may also use the ILNA and ILP to guide skill building and reflection in the field. Upon completion of these planned activities, learners will be equipped to systematically and purposefully work toward increasing their competence and confidence in all areas.

This competency driven framework will inform a more systematic and strategic approach to learning and staff development. For example, information obtained through the ILNA framework depicts competency informed content areas where the CWTS has gaps to fill with certain learning experiences. These data also convey content areas the CWTS has over-saturated. This information will be instrumental in ensuring the CWTS provides learning experiences that address the learning needs of its constituents with both breadth and depth.  The ILNA framework will be piloted in the summer of 2017, and updates about the outcomes of the pilot and post pilot implementation will be provided in the 2019 APSR.

*Initial Staff Training*

CWTS provides pre-service training for new caseworkers and new supervisors. New caseworkers are required to attend the Fundamentals of Colorado Child Welfare course series, which takes approximately seven weeks to complete with an additional 1 – 4 weeks needed to complete the Transfer of Learning (TOL) experiences. New supervisors are required to complete a series of six courses through CWTS' New Supervisor Academy, which also takes seven weeks to complete. TOL experiences for new supervisors are integrated into the seven weeks of the CWTS' New Supervisor Academy.

As part of their initial training, both new caseworkers and supervisors must complete practice simulations. For new caseworkers, the simulation experience begins with the opportunity for learners to apply the knowledge and skills they developed during the Fundamentals. Learners conduct a home visit, engaging with a family (portrayed by professional actors) to assess safety, and their experiences are recorded and reviewed to inform their learning experience. Following the simulation experience with the family, learners spend time back in their counties, with their supervisor, reviewing and reflecting on the experience, documenting their visit in Trails, and completing a safety assessment. The final day of the simulation course includes a facilitated peer review experience. CWTS facilitators are committed to setting learners up for success throughout this course and beyond. A transfer of learning activity is provided to encourage a conversation between learners and their supervisors about where and how learners will continue to grow in their child welfare practices.

The simulation experience for new supervisors provides an opportunity to apply their freshly attained competencies in a "real-life" supervision session with a worker. Utilizing a web-based meeting platform, learners practice their new skills with a worker in their office while a coach provides real-time support, observation, and feedback. Caseworkers and supervisors are fully certified upon completion of their respective pre-service training requirements including completion of all TOL activities. In FFY 2016, 470 caseworkers and 99 supervisors completed one or more pre-service training courses. During this timeframe, 368 caseworkers and 75 supervisors received initial certifications.

Course evaluation data below show that caseworkers and supervisors believed CWTS' pre-service training provided them with specific job-related knowledge and skills. Further, they believed they would do their jobs better as a result of the training.

*Table 5: Aggregated class evaluation data for new **caseworkers'** pre-service training*

| Item | FFY 2015 Average Rating | FFY 2016 Average Rating |
|---|---|---|
| The subject matter was at the right level of difficulty. | 3.58 | 3.49 |
| The course content was compatible with my agency's philosophy and policies. | 3.62 | 3.61 |
| My agency will support me in applying this content on the job. | 3.67 | 3.65 |
| I acquired specific job-related knowledge and/or skills. | 3.67 | 3.62 |
| I will use knowledge and/or skills from this course on the job. | 3.70 | 3.65 |
| I will be able to do my job better because I attended this course. | 3.67 | 3.63 |
| Families will benefit from my having attended this course. | 3.66 | 3.61 |

*Table 6: Aggregated class evaluation data for new **supervisors'** pre-service training*

| Item | FFY 2015 Average Rating | FFY 2016 Average Rating |
|---|---|---|
| The subject matter was at the right level of difficulty. | 3.47 | 3.52 |
| The course content was compatible with my agency's philosophy and policies. | 3.54 | 3.55 |
| My agency will support me in applying this content on the job. | 3.59 | 3.62 |
| I acquired specific job-related knowledge and/or skills. | 3.52 | 3.63 |
| I will use knowledge and/or skills from this course on the job. | 3.57 | 3.63 |
| I will be able to do my job better because I attended this course. | 3.56 | 3.57 |
| Families will benefit from my having attended this course. | 3.56 | 3.57 |

***Ongoing Staff Training***

Full-time child welfare personnel maintain certification by completing 40 hours of in-service training every state fiscal year. Part-time child welfare employees need to complete the same percentage of in-service training hours as the percentage of hours they are employed in child welfare. For example, a half-time caseworker or supervisor would need to complete 50% of the required 40 in-service training hours.

At a minimum, 16 of the required 40 in-service training hours need to align with the caseworker's or supervisor's primary job responsibilities. For caseworkers, some content areas for in-service training include the following:

- assessment of safety and risk;
- family strengths and needs;
- interviewing children and youth;
- engaging with families;
- legal and policy basis for child welfare practices;
- implications and considerations of foster care and adoption;
- child and adolescent development;
- the effects of abuse/neglect on development;
- the impact of trauma and trauma informed practices;
- sexual abuse;
- sex trafficking issues and implications;
- mental health factors and considerations;
- domestic violence factors and implications;
- substance abuse factors and implications;
- practices that influence permanency; and
- cultural inclusivity and disparity, including but not limited to the Indian Child Welfare Act.

In addition to the preceding content areas, supervisors' in-service training includes data-driven leadership and management, worker safety, and building a resilient workforce.

CWTS has more than 140 courses in its in-service library and actively offers approximately 60 of those at any given time. These courses are offered at the regional training centers and are often delivered within county and community locations to best serve local learning needs. Colorado's child welfare personnel also have the opportunity to earn training hours through training and activities completed outside of the CWTS; however, staff must submit specific documentation for CDHS' evaluation and approval. Guidelines for obtaining in-service training hours are available to all child welfare staff via the CWTS website.

In FFY 2016, 3,643 learners across various target audiences completed one or more in-service training courses through CWTS. On July 1, 2016, 825 caseworkers and 252 supervisors were recertified. Course

evaluation data below show that learners believed CWTS' in-service training provided them with knowledge and skills relevant to their jobs.

*Table 7: Aggregated course evaluation data for CWTS in-service training*

| Item | FFY 2015 Average Rating | FFY 2016 Average Rating |
|------|:---:|:---:|
| The subject matter was at the right level of difficulty. | **3.56** | **3.37** |
| The course content was compatible with my agency's philosophy and policies. | **3.62** | **3.44** |
| My agency will support me in applying this content on the job. | **3.65** | **3.47** |
| I acquired specific job-related knowledge and/or skills. | **3.66** | **3.44** |
| I will use knowledge and/or skills from this course on the job. | **3.68** | **3.46** |
| I will be able to do my job better because I attended this course. | **3.62** | **3.42** |
| Families will benefit from my having attended this course. | **3.62** | **3.44** |

**Foster and Adoptive Parent Training**

The Code of Colorado Regulations requires prospective foster parents and staff of state-licensed facilities to complete trainings relevant to their respective roles. Prior to the placement of a child and/or youth, foster parents must complete 27 hours of initial training, 12 of which must be a core training that addresses the following topic areas:

- general overview of foster care;
- administrative and legal issues;
- why children and youth get placed in out-of-home care;
- parenting and family dynamics;
- key concepts of child growth and development;
- importance of the team approach;
- individual differences, such as ethnicity and culture;
- discipline;
- effects of fostering on the foster family; and
- working with the biological family.

In addition to the 27 hours of initial training, each foster parent must be certified in First Aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and trained in the reasonable and prudent parent standard. Ongoing training requirements include completion of 20 hours of ongoing training every year, and training must be relevant to fostering children and youth. Foster parents can complete the required training through the CWTS, county departments of human services, and/or child placement agencies (CPA).

Compliance with foster parent training requirements is assessed through CDHS' quality assurance and licensing reviews of foster care home certifications, but data regarding statewide compliance are incomplete. The ARD reviews certifications issued by county departments through its foster home certification review process, and the DCW reviews certifications issued by CPAs through its licensing process. While the ARD is able to report statewide aggregate data for its reviews, data related to CPA-issued certifications are not captured in a way that would facilitate statewide aggregate reporting. More information about both of these processes and related improvement efforts is included in the *Systemic Factors – Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention* section of this report (pages 79 - 93).

The proceeding tables provide data for certifications that were issued by county departments. These data were collected through the ARD's foster home certification review process. Please be advised that the FFY 2016 data are incomplete due to a continuous quality improvement (CQI) effort related to the Code of Colorado Regulations and the ARD's quality assurance review instruments. While the ARD conducted 558 foster care home reviews in FFY 2016, data with asterisks reflect only the 73 reviews that were conducted in the first quarter of the federal fiscal year. More information about the CQI effort is discussed in the *Systemic Factors – Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention* section of this report (pages 79 - 93).

*Table 8: Highlights from the ARD's foster home certification review data regarding county-issued certifications' compliance with training requirements*

| Measure | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|
| Did the provider(s) complete 12 hours of initial foster parent training prior to placement? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: did the provider(s) complete 12 hours of Foster Parent Core Training in accordance with Volume 7 requirements?)* | 96% | 100%* |
| Did the provider(s) complete 15 additional hours of training? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: did the provider(s) complete 15 additional hours of training in accordance with Volume 7 requirements?)* | 84% | 97%* |
| Was/were the provider(s) trained in the application of the reasonable and prudent parent standard? | | n/a |
| Was/were the provider(s) certified in First Aid? | 88% | 93%* |
| Was/were the provider(s) certified in CPR? | 92% | 93%* |
| Is there a current annual training development plan created for the provider(s) to document strengths and competencies of the provider(s) and to identify additional training needs? | 52% | 82%* |

*These data only reflect the 73 reviews that occurred during the first quarter of FFY 2016*

*Table 9:  Highlights from the ARD's foster home certification review data regarding county-issued recertfications' compliance with training requirements*

| Measure | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|
| Did the provider(s) complete the required number of competency-based ongoing training hours? | 89% | 96%* |
| For the previous certification year, did the completed training align with the topics outlined on the training development plan for provider one? | 86% | 85%** |
| For the previous certification year, did the completed training align with the topics outlined on the training development plan for provider two? | 85% | 88%** |
| Was/were the provider(s) trained in the application of the reasonable and prudent parent standard? | | n/a |
| Was/were the provider(s) certified in First Aid? | 83% | 82%* |
| Was/were the provider(s) certified in CPR? | 83% | 81%* |
| Has/have the provider(s) received emergency/safety training on a semi-annual basis? | 58% | 61% |
| Is there an annual training development plan for the current certification year for the provider(s)?<br><br>(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: Is there a current annual training development plan created for the provider(s) to document strengths and competencies of the provider(s)) and to identify additional training needs? | 71% | 92% |

*\*These data only reflect the 73 reviews that occurred during the first quarter of FFY 2016*

*\*\*These data only reflect the 73 reviews that occurred during the first quarter of FFY 2016.  As of January 1, 2016, these questions are no longer part of the foster care home review instruments.*

Rule requires state-licensed facilities to provide an introductory training and orientation program for their staff that covers emergency and safety procedures and the general and specific duties and responsibilities of the job. All staff of state-licensed facilities must complete a minimum of 20 hours of ongoing job specific training annually. Content areas may include the following:

- the facility's emergency and safety procedures;
- principles and practices of child care including developmentally appropriate practices;
- the facility's and, where appropriate, certifying authority's administrative procedures and overall program goals;
- acceptable behavior management techniques, appropriate discipline and physical management, and restraint and seclusion of children in accordance with facility policies and the Code of Colorado Regulations;
- appropriate professional boundaries (both physical and emotional) between staff and children while in placement at the facility and after discharge; and
- annual review of relevant sections of the Code of Colorado Regulations by all appropriate staff members of the facility.

Facilities' compliance with training requirements are assessed during the DCW's licensing process, which is described in the *Systemic Factors – Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention* section of this report (pages 79 - 93). Similar to CPA-issued foster care home certifications, data related to facilities' licensing are not captured in a way that would facilitate reporting of statewide aggregate data. CDHS plans to resolve this data reporting issue through the Trails Modernization Project; please see the section referenced earlier in this paragraph for more information.

CDHS has limited ability to provide quantitative or qualitative data about how well the initial and ongoing training provided by county departments, CPAs, and facilities addresses the skills and knowledge base needed by foster parents and facilities' staff to carry out their duties with regard to children in foster care. CDHS is working to better track the quality of training provided outside of the CWTS. Efforts include the following:

- modifications to the ARD's foster home certification review instruments to include questions about the quality of training provided to foster parents, and
- revisions to the DCW's licensing visits' documentation to track compliance with specific requirements and better report statewide aggregate data.

Modifications to the ARD's foster home certification review instruments will be completed and implemented in reviews effective July 1, 2017. Pending the findings from the upcoming CFSR, CDHS will work with its stakeholders to select and finalize improvement strategies so as to address any additional concerns that may arise during the review.

Course evaluation data from CWTS' pre-service and in-service training attest the quality of CWTS' training for foster parents. In FFY 2016, 575 prospective foster parents completed pre-service training through CWTS, and 201 learners completed one or more foster parent in-service courses. Course evaluation data show that learners believed CWTS' pre-service and in-service training provided them with knowledge and skills relevant to their foster parent responsibilities.

*Table 10: Aggregated class evaluation data for foster parents' pre-service training*

| Item | FFY 2015 Average Rating | FFY 2016 Average Rating |
|---|---|---|
| The subject matter was at the right level of difficulty. | **3.67** | **3.54** |
| The course content was compatible with my agency's philosophy and policies. | **3.64** | **3.57** |
| My agency will support me in applying this content on the job. *(In FFY 2015, this statement was worded as follows: My agency will support me in using this training as a foster parent)* | **3.75** | **3.62** |
| This class helped me with making my decision about being a foster parent. | **3.67** | n/a |
| I acquired specific job-related knowledge and/or skills. *(In FFY 2015, this statement was worded as follows: I have more knowledge of what is required of me as a foster parent)* | **3.79** | **3.58** |
| I will use knowledge and/or skills from this course on the job. *(In FFY 2015, this statement was worded as follows: I will use what I learned from this training as a foster parent)* | **3.79** | **3.71** |
| I will be able to do my job better because I attended this course. *(In FFY 2015, this statement was worded as follows: I will be a better foster parent because of this training.)* | **3.79** | **3.71** |
| Families will benefit from my having attended this course. *(In FFY 2015, this statement was worded as follows: Children will benefit from my taking this course)* | **3.74** | **3.77** |

*Table 11:  Aggregated class evaluation data for in-service foster parents' training*

| Item | FFY 2015 Average Rating | FFY 2016 Average Rating |
|---|---|---|
| The subject matter was at the right level of difficulty. | 3.69 | 3.63 |
| The course content was compatible with my agency's philosophy and policies. | 3.67 | 3.62 |
| My agency will support me in applying this content on the job.  *(In FFY 2015, this statement was worded as follows:  My agency will support me in using this training as a foster parent)* | 3.60 | 3.64 |
| This class helped me with making my decision about being a foster parent. | 3.69 | n/a |
| I acquired specific job-related knowledge and/or skills.  *(In FFY 2015, this statement was worded as follows: I have more knowledge of what is required of me as a foster parent)* | 3.72 | 3.74 |
| I will use knowledge and/or skills from this course on the job.  *(In FFY 2015, this statement was worded as follows:  I will use what I learned from this training as a foster parent)* | 3.77 | 3.77 |
| I will be able to do my job better because I attended this course.  *(In FFY 2015, this statement was worded as follows: I will be a better foster parent because of this training.)* | 3.73 | 3.78 |
| Families will benefit from my having attended this course.  *(In FFY 2015, this statement was worded as follows:  Children will benefit from my taking this course)* | 3.67 | 3.73 |

More information about CWTS, its training methodologies, and curriculum is included in the *Program Support* section of the 2018 APSR.

### E. Service Array and Resource Development

Colorado offers a broad child and family services continuum that includes the following:

- services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs;
- services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment;
- services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable; and
- services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

Colorado has worked diligently to build flexibility into its services continuum so as to increase access to services for families who are not part of open involvements within the child welfare system and also to ensure services are tailored to the specific needs of the children, youth, and families served by its human services agencies.  In addition to baseline services available in every county, CDHS has implemented a number of initiatives that build upon and improve Colorado's services continuum.  Some of these initiatives are being piloted in select counties, and some have been or are in the process of being expanded to more counties.  The table below illustrates the state's services continuum and where those services are available.  More detailed descriptions of the services are included in the CFSP and the *Update on Service Description* section of this report.

*Table 12:  FFY 2017 Colorado's services, programs, and initiatives*

|  | Every County | Some Counties | Pilots & New Initiatives |
|---|---|---|---|
| No Involvement | • Core services<br>• PA3 - Community based prevention services<br>• Medicaid services, when eligible<br>• Nurse Family Partnership | • Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program<br>• Collaborative Management Program<br>• Tony Grampsas Youth Services Program<br>• Trauma-Informed System of Care<br>• SafeCare Colorado<br>• Healthy Steps for Young Children<br>• Family Resource Center Program<br>• Incredible Years Program<br>• Parents as Teachers Program<br>• Nurturing Parenting Program |  |

| Referral and Assessment | • Information gathering for referrals<br>• Review, Evaluate, & Direct (RED) teams<br>• CO Family Safety and Risk Assessments<br>• Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Child Welfare Education Liaisons | • Trauma-Informed System of Care<br>• Differential response<br>• Kinship supports<br>• Trauma-informed screening & assessment<br>• SafeCare Colorado<br>• Colorado Community Response<br>• Forensic interviewing<br>• Services for Unaccompanied Refugee Minors | • Level of need assessment (formerly known as Level of care assessment) |
|---|---|---|---|
| In-home Open Involvement | • Core services<br>• Medicaid services, when eligible<br>• CO Family Safety and Risk Assessments<br>• CDE Child Welfare Education Liaisons<br>• Family services planning<br>• Family engagement strategies | • Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program<br>• Tony Grampsas Youth Services Program<br>• Trauma-Informed System of Care<br>• SafeCare Colorado<br>• Differential response<br>• Kinship supports | • Level of need assessment (formerly known as Level of care assessment)<br>• Trauma-informed services |
| Out-of-home Open Involvement | • Medicaid services, when eligible<br>• CO Family Safety and Risk Assessments<br>• CDE Child Welfare Education Liaisons<br>• Family services planning<br>• Family engagement strategies<br>• Out of home placement services<br>• Relative Guardianship Assistance Program<br>• Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children<br>• Reunification services<br>• Adoption services<br>• Chafee Foster Care Independence Program<br>• Children's Habilitation Residential Program Waivers | • Tony Grampsas Youth Services Program<br>• Trauma-Informed System of Care<br>• Kinship supports<br>• Trauma-informed screening & assessment<br>• Services for unaccompanied refugee minors<br>• Therapeutic foster care services<br>• Respite care services<br>• Permanency roundtables<br>• Youth advisory boards and youth leadership development | • Level of need assessment (formerly known as Level of care assessment)<br>• Trauma-informed services<br>• Treatment foster care services<br>• Pathways to Success Initiative: enhanced permanency services<br>• Casey Family Programs educational stability pilot<br>• Services for youth at risk of homelessness |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | • Reinstatement of Parent Rights | | |
| Post Involvement | • Core services<br>• PA3 - Community based prevention services<br>• Medicaid services, when eligible<br>• Relative Guardianship Assistance Program<br>• Chafee Foster Care Independence Program<br>• Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance | • Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program<br>• Tony Grampsas Youth Services Program<br>• SafeCare Colorado<br>• Services for unaccompanied refugee minors<br>• Youth advisory boards and youth leadership development<br>• Post permanency supports<br>• Family Unification Program vouchers | |

As referenced in the introduction to this report, CDHS convened a focus group of stakeholders to discuss sections of the APSR in depth. The stakeholders who reviewed Colorado's service array expressed concern about the availability of resources to meet the needs of communities throughout the state, especially in rural counties. For example, while eligible children throughout the state have health coverage through Medicaid, some counties do not have any local providers that accept Medicaid.

Stakeholders also challenged that not all counties have Child Welfare Education Liaisons (CWEL). Colorado statute requires every school district to designate a person to act as the CWEL for the district. CDE maintains a statewide directory of CWELs that is posted on their website: www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/fostercare_index. Moreover, CDE staff conduct trainings around the state to educate school districts about CWEL responsibilities and also coordinate monthly meetings with CWELs to share updates regarding foster care education and facilitate peer learning. Nevertheless, stakeholders perceive inconsistency throughout the state with regard to access to CWELs.

CDHS is working with its partners to address the concerns raised by the focus group participants. In the remainder of FFY 2017, these issues will be delegated to relevant workgroups to investigate, identify barriers, and recommend solutions. Updates related to this work and ongoing efforts to improve access to Colorado's service array will be included in Colorado's 2018 APSR.

*F. Agency Responsiveness to the Community*

Collaboration with stakeholders is critical to promoting positive outcomes for the children and families served by Colorado's child welfare system.   CDHS has created many collaborative committees and work groups to solicit community feedback about its programs and initiatives; identify gaps in services; and assist in crafting solutions to improve the lives of Colorado's children and families.  Intra- and interagency collaborations ensure coordination with other federally assisted programs serving the same population.  These collaborations also facilitate removal of systemic barriers and promote unified treatment approaches.

The department's major collaborations were summarized in the CFSP.  Additional information about program specific collaborations is documented in relevant sections throughout this report.  The following list highlights a few relatively new initiatives that are not addressed in the CFSP:

- **Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action:**  The Office of Early Childhood, together with the Walton Family Foundation, the Children's Bureau Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, and the Administration for Children and Families, with numerous local and state partners, launched the Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action in April 2017. The framework is designed as a tool to inform strategic thinking in the investment of resources to mobilize community engagement and action that promotes the protection of children.  The integration of community ownership and engagement with state agency guidance and support fosters environments where children are valued and child well-being is promoted. The framework contains six foundational principles that inform channels for change to achieve four overarching outcomes. The six foundational principles include: monitoring program implementation, strengthening the work force, fostering data integration, incentivizing continuous quality improvement, honoring family and participant voice, and driving policy integration. Channels for change include focus on individualized services, organizational and practice change, agency collaboration and community capacity building, and policy reforms. Monitoring systems are in place to track implementation and measurable progress. Ten Colorado communities will receive financial support and technical assistance to implement the framework and additional tools are available online to aid communities in creating strategies to support families.

- **Colorado Opportunity Project**:  CDHS, the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF), and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) are aligning efforts to deliver evidenced-based programs to Coloradans to help move them up the economic ladder and towards self-sufficiency.  The alignment of government programs eliminates fragmentation among state agencies and reduces duplication of services.  The project's framework is a model for creating a pathway to the middle class at every critical point in an individual's life cycle.  The model includes indicators that show whether people are getting closer to economic independence, or losing ground.  Interventions are applied to provide

opportunities for people to reach milestones at each life stage. The project may impact educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care. Early childhood through transition to adulthood life stages include education related indicators such as school readiness, math/reading skills, on time high school graduation, and completion of post-secondary education. Examples of education related interventions include early literacy programs in early childhood, tutoring and literacy support in middle childhood, mentoring programs for students at-risk for dropping out of school, and math and writing remediation programs at high schools and community colleges.

- **Dependency and Neglect System Reform Program (DANSR):** DANSR is working to infuse effective drug court practices into Colorado's dependency and neglect cases throughout the state. The Colorado Judicial Branch and CDHS' Office of Behavioral Health and Office of Children, Youth & Families are collaborating to implement the program. DANSR incorporates key elements of Family Treatment Drug Court proven to generate positive outcomes for families into dependency and neglect cases involving substance use disorders (SUD) and co-occurring mental health disorders. The DANSR approach incorporates six principles that focus on enhanced and timely screening and assessment, multi-disciplinary collaboration, and data sharing on treatment availability and outcomes. Prompt screening and assessment of SUD to quickly identify a family's treatment needs helps to ensure parents are placed in appropriate levels of treatment with increased access to a continuum of evidenced-based services. Judicial oversight and cross-system coordination early on in the management of the case works to ensure continued evaluation for appropriate level of care while institutional data sharing effectively measures treatment outcomes and effectiveness. The DANSR Framework for Performance Measurement incorporates data and research into communications with stakeholders at the state and local level consistent with the four missions of the framework; increasing permanency, increasing safety and reducing recidivism, recovery support, and judicial responsivity. More information about DANSR is included in the Assessment of Performance section of this report (pages 27 - 28).

- **Pathways to Success Initiative (Pathways):** Colorado's Pathways to Success (Pathways) Initiative is a collaborative effort that's focused on improving well-being outcomes for youth in foster care. The Pathways project has developed a system of care that will support youth in developing skills and supports for long-term success in five "pathways": housing, health/well-being, education, job skills, and permanency. A navigator works with each youth enrolled in the program on developing and implementing an individualized plan that will cover each of the five "pathways." The model intervention within Colorado's Pathways program includes four key components:
  - strengths-based, targeted case management provided by a Pathways systems navigator;
  - permanency strategies using the Enhanced Permanency Roundtables Practice Model;

- the Enhanced Road Map to Independence model, which builds skills and supports needed for emancipation; and
- an individualized services array which may include mentoring, transitional living/housing, sexual and relationship health training, and other supports tailored to each youth's needs and strengths.

The initiative is comprised of two interconnected efforts focused on aligning services and systems for transition age youth and young adults in order to improve the following core outcomes among Colorado youth and young adults with current or prior foster care involvement: permanent connections, safe and stable housing, health and wellness, education, and career development.  The overall goal is to decrease experiences of homelessness, crime, and human trafficking.

- **Two Generation Approach**:  In addition to coordinating with services of other federally assisted programs, CDHS is working to coordinate services within the agency to better serve Colorado's children and families.  The Department has developed a comprehensive Two-Generation approach.  Two-Generation approaches work with children and their parents simultaneously to harness the family's full potential and put the entire family on a path to permanent economic security.  When programs and policies are designed with the whole family's educational and economic future in mind, and they are assisted to access the social networks needed to be successful in life, opportunity becomes a family tradition.  Approaches that address the needs of children and their parents separately leave either the child or parent behind, therefore reducing the likelihood of each family's chance at success.  A two-generation approach brings all family members along together, assesses all family members together, and provides all family members with opportunities, together, to be successful.  The specific approaches being implemented by the Department are designed to improve outcomes for low-income families, in particular, and are shaped by the following tenets: 1) families achieve self-sufficiency through work, 2) wealth is achieved through financial literacy, and 3) children succeed through early learning.  Some of the participating programs include the following:
  o Colorado Child Care Assistance Program;
  o Colorado Parent Employment Project;
  o Colorado Works;
  o Colorado Employment First;
  o Colorado Program Eligibility and Application Kit (PEAK);
  o Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) System of Care Grant;
  o Colorado Nurse Home Visitor Program; and
  o Colorado Community Response.

## G. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

A vast network of certifying agencies and community partners support Colorado's foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system. CDHS provides regulatory oversight of certification and licensing activities, which are administered by the DCW, county departments of human services, and child placement agencies (CPAs). DCW staff also provides guidance and support to county departments and community partners in their efforts to recruit and retain foster and adoptive parents. The sections below address the system's functioning with regard to the following systemic factor components:

- Standards Applied Equally;
- Requirements for Criminal Background Checks;
- Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes; and
- State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements.

### Standards Applied Equally

Volume 7 of the Code of Colorado Regulations includes standards that apply to all certified foster families and licensed child care institutions across the state regardless of certifying agency. Protocols are in place to standardize certification and licensure, and they include periodic reviews of certifications and licenses to ensure compliance with requirements outlined in the state's code of regulations. In Colorado foster care homes are certified annually by county departments of human services or CPAs. The DCW issues licenses to CPAs and 24-hour out-of-home care facilities including residential child care facilities and specialized group facilities.

All certified foster care homes and licensed providers are required to follow regulations specific to their license type; all of which are documented in the Code of Colorado Regulations. In total, there were approximately 1,799 certified foster care homes and 249 certified kinship foster care homes in FFY 2016. During the same time period, there were approximately 137 facilities providing out-of-home care and approximately 71 CPAs that oversaw 1,210 of Colorado's certified foster care homes.

The ARD reviews foster care home certifications issued by county departments of human services and assesses the fidelity of certifications to the requirements in Volume 7 of the Code of Colorado Regulations. The ARD utilizes two review instruments, one for initial certifications and another for recertifications, which are mapped to relevant regulations. Every year, every county that certified, or recertified, foster care homes is reviewed. Random samples of certifications and recertifications are pulled in each county to provide results with a minimum confidence level of 90%. At the conclusion of the review, ARD reviewers share findings and action items with county staff that must be resolved within an assigned time frame. In FFY 2015 the ARD conducted 390 reviews (173 initial certifications and 217 recertifications), and in FFY 2016, 558 reviews were conducted (276 initial certifications and 282 recertifications).

The tables below show aggregated statewide data that report how well county-issued foster care home certifications and recertifications complied with specific requirements in the Code of Colorado Regulations. Data related to federal background check requirements and safety provisions are included in the proceeding *Requirements for Criminal Background Checks* section. Data related to compliance with foster parent training requirements were included in the preceding *Foster and Adoptive Parent Training* section (pages 66 - 72).

In some areas, FFY 2016 data are incomplete due to a continuous quality improvement effort related to the Code of Colorado Regulations and the ARD's quality assurance review instruments. As reported in the 2017 APSR, the ARD, county departments, and a Child Welfare Sub-PAC approved task group collaborated to develop new review instruments and instructions (page 55). The new instruments were piloted during the first quarter of FFY 2016, and early in the implementation, county departments and other stakeholders expressed concerns about ambiguities in rule and lack of clarity in practice expectations. Due to the need for policy and practice clarification, the ARD determined certain review questions would no longer be answered until additional clarification was issued. This decision started with reviews conducted in January 2016; therefore, FFY 2016 foster home certification review data are incomplete. Data points with asterisks in the proceeding tables indicate incomplete data.

CDHS and the Child Welfare Sub-PAC worked throughout FFY 2016 and early FFY 2017 to clarify rule interpretations and practice expectations. On April 5, 2017, CDHS issued an operation memo that clarified interpretation of requirements for foster home certifications. As of July 1, 2017, all questions on the foster home certification review instruments are being asked during ARD reviews of county-issued certifications and recertifications.

*Table 13:  Highlights from the ARD's foster home certification review data regarding initial certification requirements*

| Measure | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|
| Was the original application completed timely according to placement type?  *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: was the original application completed prior to or at the time of placement?)* | 86% | 91% |
| Was there a valid contract/facility agreement (CWS-7A) throughout the certification period? | 74% | 80% |
| Was a hard copy certificate issued accurately for the correct certificate type?  *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: was a certificate issued in compliance with Volume 7?)* | 68% | 87% |
| During the review period, was the foster home in compliance with age/capacity regulations as documented on the hard copy certificate? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows:* during the review period, was the foster home in compliance with age/capacity regulations?) | 98% | 99% |
| Was an onsite home inspection conducted?  *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: was an evaluation conducted in the foster home in accordance with Volume 7 requirements?)* | 92% | 97% |
| Were all of the identified onsite inspection non-compliance issues corrected? | 77% | 88% |
| Have health assessments been completed? | 85% | 97% |
| Have/has the provider(s) signed a mandatory reporting statement? | 93% | 96% |
| Of all the months requiring contact, in what percent did agency personnel have contact with the provider(s)? | 93.7% | 96%* |
| Was the quality of contacts with the provider(s) sufficient to address provider questions, department concerns, and observations of child care? | 95% | 98%* |

*\*These data only reflect the 73 reviews that occurred during the first quarter of FFY 2016.*

*Table 14: Highlights from the ARD's foster home certification review data regarding recertification requirements*

| Measure | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|
| Was the renewal notice (CWS-10) completed and returned to the county prior to the expiration of the certificate? | 94% | 96% |
| Was there a valid contract/facility agreement (CWS-7A) throughout the certification period? | 84% | 87% |
| Was a hard copy certificate issued accurately for the correct certificate type? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: was a certificate issued in compliance with Volume 7?)* | 72% | 84% |
| During the review period, was the foster home in compliance with age/capacity regulations? | 97% | 96% |
| Was an annual onsite home inspection conducted? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: was an evaluation conducted in the foster home in accordance with Volume 7 requirements?)* | 91% | 96% |
| Were all of the identified onsite inspection non-compliance issues corrected? | 89% | 93% |
| Have health assessments been completed? | 74% | 91% |
| Was an annual review of the Volume 7 foster care regulations completed with each provider? | 89% | 94% |
| Of all the months requiring contact, in what percent did agency personnel have contact with the provider(s)? | 95% | 98%* |
| How many face-to-face contacts in the foster home contained documentation that the quality of contacts with the provider(s) was/were sufficient to address provider questions, department concerns, and observations of child care? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: was the quality of contacts with the provider(s) sufficient to address provider questions, department concerns, and observations of child care?)* | 95% | 98%* |

*\*These data only reflect the 73 reviews that occurred during the first quarter of FFY 2016.*

As previously mentioned, DCW staff issues licenses to 24-hour out-of-home care facilities and CPAs that certify and recertify foster care homes. Licenses are issued when all requirements have been met, including successful completion of onsite visits. CDHS' protocols ensure managerial oversight of each staff's licenses and onsite visits to confirm consistency in the application of standards across all providers.

Renewals are granted pending the results of unannounced, onsite supervisory visits, in which licensing staff pull a minimum of 10% of the provider's records to review for background checks and other licensing requirements. There is a standardized instrument that is mapped to the regulations for each license type and is used by DCW's licensing staff during onsite visits. In the past, onsite supervisory visits occurred annually or biennially at the discretion of licensing staff; however, observations from staff found the two-year rotation allowed issues with facilities' processes and procedures to go undetected

for too long. As a result, the supervisory visit schedule was modified in June 2016 to ensure facilities are visited annually. In FFY 2015 DCW's licensing staff completed 151 licensing visits, and in FFY 2016, 290 licensing visits were completed.

While data related to county-issued foster care home certifications and recertifications are available, data related to CPA-issued foster care home certifications and DCW-issued licenses are not captured in a way that would facilitate an assessment of how well the agency is applying standards equally to all certified foster care homes and licensed facilities. Currently, licensing staff's reports of inspection are documented in narrative format and are scanned into an information system that houses information about out-of-home care providers. As stated above, protocols are in place to promote the equal application of standards to all facilities, but data cannot be parsed to identify statewide performance for specific certification or licensing requirements.

CDHS plans to resolve this data reporting issue through the Trails Modernization Project. DCW licensing staff's review instruments and reports of investigation will be integrated into Trails, which will facilitate the reporting of statewide aggregate data for each review question. This method is similar to the ARD's quality assurance reviews, and DCW staff have consulted with ARD staff to understand the ARD's review documentation, data collection, and reporting capabilities. In FFY 2017 CDHS staff are identifying requirements and drafting requirements documentation that will inform the modifications to Trails. An update on CDHS' progress on this effort will be included in the 2019 APSR.

Given certifications are issued by county departments of human services and CPAs, licenses are issued by DCW, and two different CDHS divisions conduct quality assurance reviews of certifications, CDHS has been proactive in identifying opportunities to promote more consistency in the state's certification and licensing process. Since January 2016 CDHS staff have been reviewing rule in the Code of Colorado Regulations to ensure clarity, and as appropriate, consistency of rule across license types. In May 2016 CDHS conducted a focus group with stakeholders who highlighted discrepancies in rule between foster care homes that are certified by county departments and those that are certified by child placement agencies. Staff proposed rule revisions to reconcile the discrepancies, and the State Board of Human Services approved the revisions with an effective date of October 2017. As mentioned previously, CDHS also issued rule interpretation and practice expectation guidance to county departments in April 2017 regarding foster care home certifications.

In addition to clear and consistent rule, CDHS is working to align the relevant quality assurance reviews that are conducted by the ARD and the DCW. Proposed areas of alignment include the following:

- use of the same review instruments wherever possible;
- implement the same frequency of reviews; and
- employ the same sampling methodology wherever possible.

Staff also proposed joint consistency training for ARD reviewers and DCW licensing staff. Pending the findings from the upcoming CFSR, CDHS will select and finalize improvement strategies so as to address any additional concerns that arise during the review.

***Requirements for Criminal Background Checks***

Colorado Revised Statutes and Code of Colorado Regulations require the following background checks for prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, relatives seeking kinship certification, and staff who work in child care institutions:

- Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI);
- national criminal histories (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI]);
- child abuse and/or neglect checks in Trails;
- out-of-state checks for confirmed child abuse and/or neglect for all adults living in the foster home that have not resided in Colorado for five years;
- comparison search in the court case management system with the CBI check; and
- state and national sex offender checks.

Documentation of all of these checks is mandatory in Colorado's SACWIS. ARD reviews of county-issued certification and recertifications include an assessment of whether the required background checks were completed. In FFY 2015 the ARD found that 86% of county issued certifications met CBI and FBI background check requirements, and 95% of the reviews conducted in the first quarter of FFY 2016 complied with the requirements. If a certification is found to be out of compliance, ARD reviewers require county staff to resolve compliance issues within 30 days following the review. Any safety related compliance issues, which include lack of appropriate background checks, require the county to develop a plan within 24 hours addressing how they will alleviate the issue.

The following tables provide quality assurance review data relevant to this systemic factor. Unfortunately, background check requirements were identified as areas needing further clarification; therefore, FFY 2016 data are incomplete for the reasons discussed in the preceding section. As of July 1, 2017, the ARD's foster home certification reviews have resumed assessing county department's compliance with Colorado's background check requirements.

*Table 15: Highlights from the ARD's foster home certification review data regarding county-issued initial certifications' compliance with federal background checks requirements and safety provisions*

| Measure | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|
| Were the CBI and FBI fingerprint results received in accordance with Volume 7 requirements? | 86% | 95%* |
| Were CBI fingerprint based background checks completed? | | n/a |
| Were FBI fingerprint based background checks completed? | | n/a |
| Have Trails searches been completed on all adults living in the household? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: has a TRAILS search been completed in accordance with Volume 7 requirements?)* | 86% | 94%* |
| Did the county review the child abuse and neglect records from every state where the provider(s) and all adult(s) living in the home have resided within the preceding 5 years? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: Did the county review the child abuse and neglect records from every state in accordance with Volume 7 requirements?)* | 85% | 83%* |
| If new adults moved into the home or turned 18 years of age after the issuance of a one year certificate, were the required background clearance checks conducted on each adult? | | n/a |
| Was a SAFE home study located in the provider case file with all of the required signatures and completed prior to certification? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: Was a full SAFE home study completed in accordance with Volume 7 requirements?)* | 75% | 83% |

*These data only reflect the 73 reviews that occurred during the first quarter of FFY 2016.*

*Table 16: Highlights from the ARD's foster home certification review data regarding county-issued recertfications' compliance with federal background checks requirements and safety provisions*

| Measure | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|
| Did the county review arrest or conviction records for the previous certification year in accordance with Volume 7 requirements? | 75% | 75%* |
| Did the county review CBI flags for all adults living in the household for the previous certification year? | | n/a |
| Were new FBI fingerprint based background checks completed for all adults living in the household for the previous certification year when those adults were out of the state for 3 consecutive months? | | n/a |
| Have Trails searches been completed on all adults living in the household? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: Has a TRAILS search been completed in accordance with Volume 7 requirements?)* | 81% | 89%* |
| Did the county review child abuse allegations or investigations for the previous certification year in accordance with Volume 7 requirements? | 94% | 100%** |
| Was a SAFE home study update located in the provider case file with all of the required signatures and completed prior to recertification? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: was a SAFE home study update completed prior to recertification?)* | 86% | 76% |
| Does the SAFE home study update contain the required content? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: does the SAFE home study update contain information regarding any changes in the foster home status as required by Volume 7?)* | 90% | 99% |
| If a SAFE home study addendum was needed during the review period, was one completed? | | n/a |

*These data only reflect the 73 reviews that occurred during the first quarter of FFY 2016.*

**These data only reflect the reviews that occurred during the first quarter of FFY 2016. As of January 1, 2016, these questions are no longer part of the foster care home review instruments.*

With regard to 24-hour facilities, DCW does not issue any licenses unless the required background checks are completed according to requirements in Volume 7 of the Code of Colorado Regulations. CDHS' Background Investigations Unit (BIU) completes background checks for certified and licensed providers including CPAs, CPA-certified foster care homes, specialized group facilities, and residential child care facilities. Currently, the BIU executes all federal background check requirements with the exception of child abuse and neglect registry checks in all states where CPA-certified foster parents and facilities' staff have resided in the preceding five years. Beginning in September 2017, the BIU will complete the out-of-state registry checks for CPA-certified foster parents and facilities' staff, and Colorado will be in full compliance with the federal requirements for background checks.

During the licensing renewal process, DCW's licensing staff audit providers' files for appropriate background checks. If providers are found to be out of compliance, providers are required to resolve all

background check issues within the 72 hours following the supervisory visit. Violations that are not related to background checks or other safety issues must be resolved within 30 days.  Any compliance issues not resolved within the designated time frame trigger a progressive disciplinary process, which may include fines, probationary status with monthly supervisory visits, or disciplinary action through the Colorado Attorney General's office.

Licensing data collected by the Division of Child Welfare cannot be parsed to identify compliance issues specifically related to background checks. FFY 2016 data show that approximately 3% of licensed facilities and agencies required progressive discipline, which may or may not have been triggered by noncompliance with background check requirements. The data show that approximately 97% of facilities and agencies were able to resolve all compliance issues, including any issues related to background checks, within the designated time frames.

Colorado's case planning process includes home studies that assess the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.  The home study, Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE), is required for all foster care certifications and adoption approvals.  It is completed by staff of the certifying county department or CPA, and documentation of the home studies are included in the case files, which are subjected to quality assurance or licensing reviews.

SAFE home studies are updated annually during the foster care recertification process to ensure the safety of children and youth in the foster care home.  Updates also assess the strengths and needs of the foster care parents.  Addendums to the SAFE home study must be completed whenever there is a significant change during the year for foster families and adoptive families who are awaiting an adoption. Both the ARD's and the DCW's reviews of foster care home certifications and recertifications include an assessment of whether SAFE home studies were completed according to Colorado's requirements.

The proceeding tables provide FFY 2015 and 2016 data regarding completion of required SAFE home studies for county-issued certifications; data for CPA-issued certifications are not captured in a way that would facilitate statewide aggregate reporting. For the reasons cited in the preceding sections, the ARD's foster home certification review data for FFY 2016 are incomplete. Data with asterisks reflect only the 73 reviews that were conducted in the first quarter of the federal fiscal year.

*Table 17: Highlights from the ARD's foster home certification review data regarding county-issued initial certifications' compliance with federal background checks requirements and safety provisions*

| Measure | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|
| Were the CBI and FBI fingerprint results received in accordance with Volume 7 requirements? | 86% | 95%* |
| Were CBI fingerprint based background checks completed? |  | n/a |
| Were FBI fingerprint based background checks completed? |  | n/a |
| Have Trails searches been completed on all adults living in the household? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: has a TRAILS search been completed in accordance with Volume 7 requirements?)* | 86% | 94%* |
| Did the county review the child abuse and neglect records from every state where the provider(s) and all adult(s) living in the home have resided within the preceding 5 years? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: Did the county review the child abuse and neglect records from every state in accordance with Volume 7 requirements?)* | 85% | 83%* |
| If new adults moved into the home or turned 18 years of age after the issuance of a one year certificate, were the required background clearance checks conducted on each adult? |  | n/a |
| Was a SAFE home study located in the provider case file with all of the required signatures and completed prior to certification? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: Was a full SAFE home study completed in accordance with Volume 7 requirements?)* | 75% | 83.3% |

*These data only reflect the 73 reviews that occurred during the first quarter of FFY 2016.*

*Table 18: Highlights from the ARD's foster home certification review data regarding recertifications' compliance with federal background checks requirements and safety provisions*

| Measure | FFY 2015 Performance | FFY 2016 Performance |
|---|---|---|
| Did the county review arrest or conviction records for the previous certification year in accordance with Volume 7 requirements? | 75% | 75%* |
| Did the county review CBI flags for all adults living in the household for the previous certification year? | | n/a |
| Were new FBI fingerprint based background checks completed for all adults living in the household for the previous certification year when those adults were out of the state for 3 consecutive months? | | n/a |
| Have Trails searches been completed on all adults living in the household? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: Has a TRAILS search been completed in accordance with Volume 7 requirements?)* | 81% | 89%* |
| Did the county review child abuse allegations or investigations for the previous certification year in accordance with Volume 7 requirements? | 94% | 100%** |
| Was a SAFE home study update located in the provider case file with all of the required signatures and completed prior to recertification? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: was a SAFE home study update completed prior to recertification?)* | 86% | 75.7% |
| Does the SAFE home study update contain the required content? *(In FFY 2015 the question was worded as follows: does the SAFE home study update contain information regarding any changes in the foster home status as required by Volume 7?)* | 90% | 98.5% |
| If a SAFE home study addendum was needed during the review period, was one completed? | | n/a |

*These data only reflect the 73 reviews that occurred during the first quarter of FFY 2016.*

**These data only reflect the reviews that occurred during the first quarter of FFY 2016. As of January 1, 2016, these questions are no longer part of the foster care home review instruments.*

In lieu of the SAFE home study, the safety of 24-hour facilities licensed by DCW is assessed according to requirements outlined in Volume 7 of the Code of Colorado Regulations. Facilities require annual fire and health inspections; a zoning inspection is completed prior to initial licensing. Licensed facilities' staff must be trained in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, medication administration, and emergency care and safety. DCW licensing staff check for documentation proving completion of such training during unannounced, onsite facility visits. The visits also include facility walkthroughs where licensing staff assess facilities' compliance with safety requirements. Again, data related to specific safety requirements are not available, but data related to CDHS' progressive discipline for facilities and CPAs suggest that approximately 97% of facilities and CPAs were able to resolve all compliance issues within the designated time frames. As discussed in the preceding section, CDHS is working to improve data

collection related to the DCW's licensing activities through the Trails Modernization Project. An update on CDHS' progress on this effort will be included in the 2019 APSR.

### *Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes*

CDHS recognizes that successful diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive parents occurs at the local level. Thus our county and child placement agencies are subject matter experts regarding the need for families in their own communities; DCW staff in the Ongoing, Communications, and Placement Services Teams began focused partnership on the development of Diligent Recruitment Plans by county departments and CPAs. According to Federal law, any entity using Title IV-E funds for foster care and adoption must have Diligent Recruitment Plans. An operational memo was issued in December 2016, requiring data-informed Diligent Recruitment Plans so that recruitment plans/activities by counties and CPAs reflect the children and youth in out-of-home care in their respective communities. DCW developed a suggested template to incorporate the required data and information, and has developed a monitoring tool and process to ensure adherence by counties and CPAs to developed plans.

Training and technical assistance for Diligent Recruitment Plans were held on:

- ROM Data Training (2 hours):
    - January 6: Denver
    - February 2: Denver
    - March 20: El Paso (2 sessions, AM and PM)
- Recruitment & Retention Training:
    - February 7: Larimer
    - March 8: Denver
- Casey Diligent Recruitment TA Webinars
    - Part 1 (1 hour): January 10
    - Part 2 (1 hour): January 31
    - In-person support (2 hours): January 31
- CPA-Specific Webinars:
    - December 20 (1.5 hours)
    - January 5 (1 hour)
- Quarterly Meetings
    - Collaborative Recruitment & Retention Meeting: December 6
    - Foster Care Supervisors Meeting: December 9
    - Adoption Supervisors Meeting: January 20
    - Collaborative Recruitment & Retention Meeting: March 9
    - Foster Care Supervisors Meeting: March 17
- Other Meetings
    - Fostering Colorado: January 12
    - El Paso County CPA Meeting: February 15

- o Southeast County Directors Meeting: March 14
- o Northeastern Supervisors Meeting: March 29
- o Fostering Colorado: May 4
- Statewide multi-county technical assistance trainings (3-4 hours)
  - o December 12: Morgan
  - o January 17: La Junta
  - o January 18: Pueblo
  - o February 1: Summit
  - o February 3: Adams
  - o February 7: Maplestar CPA
  - o February 8: El Paso
  - o February 13: Montrose
  - o February 14: Montezuma
  - o February 15: La Plata
  - o February 16: Alamosa
  - o February 22: Cheyenne
  - o February 28: Mesa
  - o March 6: Weld
  - o March 7: Larimer
  - o March 13: Park
  - o March 23: Chaffee
  - o March 28: Garfield
  - o April 27: CGL CPA
  - o May 4: Aurora Community Mental Health
  - o May 11: New Horizon's CPA
  - o May 11: Family Resource Network CPA
  - o May 15: Douglas
  - o May 17: Adams
  - o May 22: A New World CPA
  - o May 23: Sample Supports CPA
  - o May 24: Hope & Home CPA

One-on-one training was provided to those unable to attend the larger trainings.

As of June 1 2017, CDHS received Diligent Recruitment plans from 57 counties with 5 more still in process and 22 CPAs with 3 more still in process. All plans are reviewed upon receipt to determine if all the requested data and recruitment strategies are in place to recruit families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children and youth in out of home care.  In addition to the reviews and revisions of the plans, additional technical assistance is being provided to counties and CPAs to continue to refine and improve their recruitment strategies.

In addition, translation of the Original Application to Provide Care to Children and Youth was completed and the application is now available in Chinese, English, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese, the five most

prevalent non-English languages spoken in Colorado. The application is used for foster care, adoption, kinship foster care, and non-certified kinship (for counties that have not developed a non-certified kinship application).

In order to further the understanding of diverse cultural, racial and economic communities, CDHS will continue to provide training for staff, counties and child placement agencies through use of *The Invisible Conversation,* available through CDHS's Child Welfare Training System. Additionally, in March 2017 a member of the Denver Indian Family Resource Center provided guidance on culturally appropriate recruitment strategies for staff, counties and CPAs in support of targeted recruitment efforts for American Indian foster and adoptive families.  CDHS will continue to invite subject matter experts to train staff and recruiters in various aspects related to diligent recruitment.

CDHS partners with the counties and The Adoption Exchange to coordinate the Colorado Heart Gallery photo listing to assure procedures for a timely search for prospective parents for a waiting child. Those images are also used on the Adopt US Kids national photo listing. Other child specific recruitment efforts include supporting permanency round tables and additional Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters.

A statewide vendor list of home study providers is available for counties and CPA's to assure all parents in all communities have access to the home study process.

*Figure 19:  Race and ethnicity of children who entered foster care in FFY 2016 compared with race and ethnicity of Colorado's foster parent population*
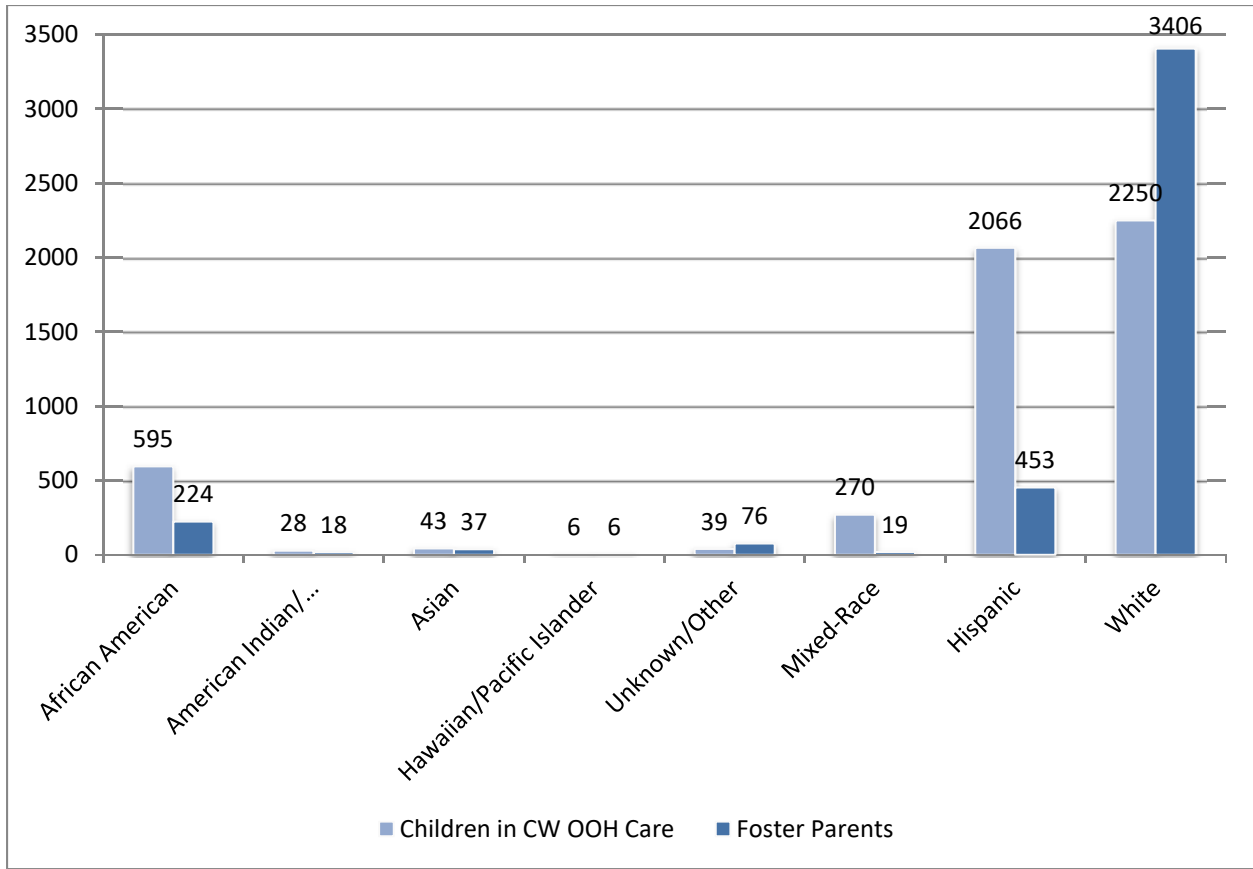
CDHS took actionable steps in FFY 2016 to address the discrepancy between Hispanic children and youth in care and Hispanic foster parents, and will continue to address this discrepancy in FF 2017 and FFY 2018 with the following efforts:

**FFY 2016**

- In collaboration with county departments of human services, CPAs, and community partners, CDHS participated in collaborative community outreach at large events and events that cater to targeted populations.
- Various media outlets were engaged to target Hispanic and Latino communities. Stories related to exemplary foster and adoptive parents were shared with local television stations. Telemundo profiled Latino foster and adoptive families who were recognized as part of Colorado's National Adoption Month recognition event (November 2015) and the National Foster Care Month recognition event (May 2016).

**FFY 2017**

- Developed Spanish foster parent recruitment posters and promotional bookmarks for counties, child placement agencies, and partners to utilize in efforts to raise awareness.
- Invested in Spanish language advertising in a predominately Hispanic neighborhood with a high rate of removals.

- Recognized a Hispanic foster-to-adopt family during the CDHS celebration of National Adoption Month. The family was profiled in a recruitment video and their photos were used to create new marketing materials. The family was also interviewed by two local news stations.
- Recognized three Hispanic foster families during the CDHS celebration of National Foster Care month. The families were profiled in recruitment videos and their photos were used to create new marketing materials. CDHS was able to produce a Spanish-language foster care recruitment video featuring one of these families. Univision interviewed OCYF Deputy Director Luis Guzman and a member of one of these families for a segment, which aired twice, profiling one of these families as well as the need for Latino foster families.
- Invested in social media advertising featuring Hispanic families involved in foster care.
- Make marketing materials and images available at no cost to support county and child placement agency recruitment efforts.

Pending budget approval, CDHS plans to accomplish the following activities in FFY 2018:

- In collaboration with county departments of human services, CPAs, and community partners, OCYF will have a booth at Cinco de Mayo in Denver and the Pueblo Chile & Frijoles Festival to recruit foster parents at these two community events that both attract a large Hispanic audience.
- CDHS will work with counties and child placement agencies to honor Hispanic families during National Adoption Month and National Foster Care Month. New recruitment videos and marketing materials will be developed featuring these families.
- Continued translation of marketing materials into Spanish for use by county departments of human services and child placements agencies that serve Colorado's Hispanic and Latino communities. Materials will be made available at no cost.
- Continued engagement with media outlets to share the stories of Hispanic and Latino foster and foster-to-adopt families.
- Continued investment in paid social media advertising targeting Hispanic and Latino individuals.
- Continue to make marketing materials and images available at no cost to support county and child placement agency recruitment efforts.

In addition, CDHS recognizes the discrepancy between African American children and youth in care and African American foster parents.  Actions taken to address this issue include:

- Participation with counties and CPA's in African American cultural community events such as Juneteenth.
- Invested in social media advertising featuring African American families involved in foster care.
- Recognized a African American foster family during the CDHS celebration of National Foster Month. The family was profiled in a recruitment video and their photos were used to create new marketing materials.

These efforts will be in addition to those listed in the Foster and Adoptive Diligent Recruitment Plan, Appendix E in the Annual Progress and Services Report.

***State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements***

Colorado's engagement in the Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (ICPC) ensures county departments of human services have access to cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements of waiting children and youth.  A review of Trails data shows that 37 Colorado counties requested out-of-state home studies in FFY 2016.  Colorado submitted 869 home study requests to other states.  The following bullet points highlight the results of home study requests where Colorado was sending state:

- number of requested home studies completed:  471
- number of approved requests:  267
- number of out of state placements:  222

In FFY 2016 Trails shows that Colorado received 341 home study requests from other states primarily Arizona, California, Florida, Kansas, and Texas.  Colorado completed 205 home studies, 43.9% of which were completed within 60 days.  Common reasons for delays include lack of cooperation from the provider, lack of employee resources, difficulty coordinating provider schedule, and provider not responding timely, and other.  Caseworkers have the ability to free type into Trails "other" reasons why a home study was not completed timely; the majority of "other" reasons were due to delays in obtaining background checks on the potential provider(s). The remaining 136 incoming home study requests were not completed in the FFY 2016 reporting period.  The requests may have been received near the end of the reporting period, and county departments may have completed the studies in FFY 2017; alternatively, some of these requests may have been withdrawn.

The timeliness of home study requests received from other states has been identified as an area for improvement.  In February 2017 the CDHS ICPC Specialist began conducting two-day trainings across the state with a focus on methods and processes to ensure home studies are completed timely, accurate data entry and ICPC processing in Trails, and strategies for communicating between the sending and receiving state on all ICPC requests. The trainings can vary slightly between management/supervisors and those actually processing the ICPC. The management /supervisor training provides guidance on key decision making points throughout the ICPC process, while the other training is a detailed step-by-step instruction for accurately processing an ICPC in Trails. Training in residential facilities is also occurring to ensure timeliness of ICPC approvals if Colorado is the receiving state.

Additionally, the Child Welfare Training System includes a web-based training on ICPC's that has been enhanced to include detailed information on how to accurately process and input ICPC information into Trails. The web-based training includes visuals of Trails screens as well as the required ICPC documents necessary for processing to increase understanding of how to accurately complete an ICPC request. The web-based training is not a state requirement; however some counties have chosen to require staff who

are involved in the ICPC process to complete the training. CDHS provides technical assistance to counties as needed throughout the ICPC process.

DCW evaluates Colorado's ICPC system through county program reviews and relevant Trails reports. Data integrity and data entry errors have been identified as areas for improvement in order to accurately track efforts to improve timeliness of completed home studies. Trails modification has been utilized to augment reports that can track the number of ICPC requests Colorado receives and sends, as well as the number of children involved in those ICPC requests. Other Trails modification efforts include tracking of placement information (changes in family dynamics, placement changes, or type of placement i.e. from a foster to adoptive ICPC placement), inclusion of an indicator for ICPC reviews by supervisors, and provide more options in a drop-down menu for why timely home studies did not occur to better capture data and address barriers to timely home study completion. CDHS anticipated Trails modernization coupled with enhanced training on ICPC processing and data entry will lead to a more effective cross-jurisdictional facilitation of timely placements.

## GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACF | Administration for Children and Families |
| AFCARS | Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System |
| APR | Allocation of Parental Rights |
| APSR | Annual Progress and Services Report |
| ARD | Administrative Review Division |
| CBI | Colorado Bureau of Investigation |
| CDE | Colorado Department of Education |
| CDHS | Colorado Department of Human Services |
| CDPHE | Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment |
| CDT | Curriculum Development Team |
| CFSP | Child and Family Services Plan |
| CFSR | Child and Family Services Review |
| CJD | Chief Justice Directive |
| CMHC | Community Mental Health Center |
| CPA | Child Placement Agency |
| CPR | Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation |
| CPS | Child Protective Services |
| CQI | Continuous Quality Improvement |
| CTUG | Colorado Trails User Group |
| CU | University of Colorado Boulder |
| CWAC | Child Welfare Allocation Committee |
| CWEL | Child Welfare Education Liaisons |
| CWTS | Child Welfare Training System |
| DANSR | Dependency and Neglect System Reform Program |
| DCW | Division of Child Welfare |
| DHS | Department of Human Services |
| D&N | Dependency and Neglect |
| DYS | Division of Youth Services |
| ECHO | Economic, Clinical, and Humanistic Outcomes |
| EOSC | Educational Outcomes Steering Committee |
| ESSA | Every Student Succeeds Act |
| FBI | Federal Bureau of Investigation |
| FFY | Federal Fiscal Year |
| FSP | Family Service Plan |
| GIS | Geographic Information System |
| HCPF | Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing |
| IART | Institutional Abuse Review Team |
| ICPC | Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children |
| ILP | Individual Learning Plan |
| LMS | Learning Management System |
| MOP | Memorandum of Procedures |
| OBH | Office of Behavioral Health |
| OIT | Governor's Office of Information Technology |
| OOH | Out-of-home |
| OPPLA | Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement |

| | |
|---|---|
| OSRI | Onsite Review Instrument |
| PAC | Policy Advisory Committee |
| PEAK | Program Eligibility and Application Kit |
| PRAN | Person Responsible for Abuse or Neglect |
| PRNP | Placement Through Petition for the Review of the Need for Placement |
| RED | Review, Evaluate, Direct |
| ROM | Results Oriented Management |
| SACWIS | State Automated Child Welfare Information System |
| SAFE | Structured Analysis Family Evaluation |
| SAMHSA | Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration |
| SFY | State Fiscal Year |
| SSRP | Statewide System Reform Program |
| SUD | Substance Use Disorders |
| TOL | Transfer of Learning |
| TPR | Termination of Parental Rights |