

**New York State Child and Family Services Review Round 3
Program Improvement Plan 2018-2020**

State/Territory: New York State

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End of PIP Implementation Period:

End of Non-Overlapping Year:

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Introduction

New York State's (NYS) child welfare system is state-supervised and locally administered¹. The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is responsible for the oversight of the 58 local departments of social services (LDSSs), the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe², and the voluntary agencies (VAs) that contract with LDSSs to provide for child welfare services. Like the first Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), OCFS reached out to our LDSSs, VAs, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, the Office of Court Administration and other key state stakeholders to assist in developing our Statewide Assessment and the Program Improvement Plan (PIP). This collaboration focused on the assessment of the review findings; identification of the factors contributing to our performance or report findings; identification of current initiatives upon which to build; and identification of data by which improved performance is measured.

¹OCFS is directly responsible for juvenile delinquents placed into its care by the Family Court.

² OCFS and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe have a State/Tribal agreement for St. Regis to administer child welfare programs. Hereinafter, St. Regis, unless otherwise referenced, will be included as a "LDSS".

OCFS and our multiple stakeholder partners have already commenced many initiatives that align with the state's overall improvement goals. Not all work done by OCFS or the LDSSs will be captured in this PIP. Rather, this PIP will intentionally focus on improving performance in key areas. Each LDSS will be expected to improve their outcomes; with OCFS providing CFSR data to each county, and working with them on the development of their five-year county plan. Each plan will include strategies that align with the New York State Child Welfare Practice model as well as local strategies for improvement. The county planning process will be detailed in the Continuous Quality Improvement section of this PIP.

Background

The first CFSR was conducted in New York State in 2001, the second was completed in 2008. In the 2016 Round 3 CFSR, New York was found not to be in substantial conformity with six of the seven child and family outcomes, six of the seven systemic factors, and was required to complete a PIP.

Since the first CFSR was conducted, OCFS has implemented a series of strategies aimed at improving outcomes for children and families within the child welfare system. OCFS has shared performance data, policy papers, and tool kits with LDSSs and VAs to improve outcomes. In 2015, OCFS developed and disseminated a Child Welfare Practice Model, that outlined the purpose, vision, outcomes, values, core competencies, practices, strategies and measurement indicators aimed at improving the state's performance on safety, permanency and well-being. This Program Improvement Plan is aligned with the Practice Model.

Partnerships for Program Improvements

Unified Court System

Over the past several years, OCFS has strengthened the working relationship with the Unified Court System (UCS). Through the leadership of Acting Commissioner Sheila Poole and Chief Administrative Judge for Courts Outside of New York City, Michael Coccoma, and Administrative Judge of the New York City Family Courts, Jeanette Ruiz, regularly scheduled calls and in-person meetings are scheduled to discuss topics of interest in promoting the safety, permanency and well-being for the children and families in our respective systems. To further our collaborative efforts, an independent facilitator, Ken Rogers, has assisted OCFS and the UCS in creating a deeper alignment between the courts and the child welfare system.

UCS has identified several noteworthy statewide initiatives anticipated to have a positive impact on timeliness to permanency. These include the Chief Judge's Excellence Initiative, The Project to Enhance the Quality of

Permanency Hearings, and the Statewide Systems Improvement Project (SSIP). Additionally, as identified within this PIP, OCFS and UCS will work jointly on local child welfare and Family Court Lean projects that reduce time to permanency. (see Goal 3).

The Excellence Initiative focuses on timely dispositions for neglect and abuse matters, and petitions to terminate parental rights across the state. Improving the timeliness of dispositions will further improve the NYS permanency outcomes. The Project to Enhance the Quality of Permanency Hearings, which is active in all five boroughs in NYC and seven upstate LDSSs (Albany, Broome, Dutchess, Erie, Monroe, Onondaga, and Westchester) has focused on permanency hearings as a tool to support permanency outcomes. Results of local court observations and file reviews have been shared with each of the courts and multi-disciplinary collaboratives and work has begun to implement strategies for improvement, including strategies with LDSSs. SSIP, funded through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is a joint project between UCS, OCFS, and the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS). This grant enhances early identification, service delivery and court oversight to families who are engaged with child welfare, court and chemical dependency systems. Courts and LDSSs are working jointly to identify and provide necessary services to the growing population of families who are involved in both systems and who have substance abuse disorders. Currently the SSIP project is active in New York County and seven upstate LDSSs (Albany, Chautauqua, Dutchess, Oneida, Onondaga, Rockland and Ulster).

Lean is a management philosophy and a process re-engineering model, developed by Toyota to increase efficiency to better serve their customers. A Lean project involves viewing the process through the eyes of the customer, eliminating steps adding little/no value and improving the process flow. OCFS has adopted Lean to examine business processes, remove unnecessary steps and obstacles, and deliver more efficient and effective results to children, families and communities. OCFS and UCS will be working with LDSSs and Family Courts on processes that could benefit from the Lean process to improve timeliness to permanency.

Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) and Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

OCFS has held meetings with both OASAS and OPWDD central and regional office staff for the purposes of cross-systems education. OASAS and OPWDD each have regional offices that provide guidance and technical assistance to their provider agencies. Joint roundtable discussions inform LDSSs and VAs on the process of obtaining services from each of these agencies, and when necessary help facilitate meetings. OCFS has also partnered with OASAS in providing technical assistance to VAs serving youth with substance abuse disorders. Additionally, OCFS is a partner

with OASAS on the federal grant they received to identify the needs of pregnant women presenting with substance abuse disorders. OCFS will use the lessons learned from this grant to inform future practice in this area.

Process Used to Develop the Current CFSR Program Improvement Plan

In developing New York State's Program Improvement Plan (PIP), OCFS used a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) model. OCFS began by reviewing the Child and Family Services Data Profile received in November 2015, which detailed New York State's performance on the seven national standards. The Profile revealed New York State was not meeting six of the seven national standards, resulting in a "call to action" to the child welfare field to aggressively focus on these outcomes. OCFS's first step was contracting with Public Catalyst (Molly Armstrong) to do a root cause analysis of the State's performance indicators. Ms. Armstrong's work has demonstrably improved OCFS's understanding of data and its value in developing strategies to improve outcomes. This, coupled with the findings from case reviews (the 2016 federal case review, and foster care and child protective case reviews conducted by OCFS) and in consultation with Performance Improvement Consultant, Sherri Levesque, from the Capacity Building Center for States, OCFS has identified several overarching themes:

- Need for improved data accuracy and timely entry
- Need for improved caseworker and supervisor competencies related to key practice areas in both preventive and foster care cases:
 - Casework contacts that support engagement of parents – particularly fathers and youth
 - Ongoing - assessments of risk and safety to all children in the home
 - Assessment of service needs and the individualizing of the services to meet the parent/child's needs
- Need to focus on an urgency to expedite permanency and utilizing relatives as a placement resources
- Need for increased oversight of foster boarding homes to promote consistency in licensing of foster homes, and enhance stability of placement.

As OCFS prepared for the CFSR in June 2016, we identified root causes and possible strategies to address the above noted areas needing improvement. Recognizing that feedback and suggestions were critical to the successful development of the PIP, OCFS engaged large groups of stakeholders. Following receipt of the CFSR report from the Children's Bureau, OCFS held a webinar on February 7, 2017, to share the findings with LDSSs, VAs, leadership from the Unified Court System and Family Court judges, sister state agencies, advocates and stakeholders. Over 285 stakeholders participated and were afforded an opportunity to ask questions. The Power Point was shared with all those who registered. The CFSR final report, published in December 2016, and the Statewide Assessment have been made available to interested parties via the OCFS website.

On February 10, 2017, OCFS invited representatives from LDSSs, VAs, Family Court leadership and judges, sister state agencies and other advocacy groups to participate in a roundtable discussion of the findings and possible strategies for inclusion in the PIP. Participants were asked the following questions:

1. Are these the strategies you think will help improve New York State's outcomes related to safety, permanency and wellbeing?
2. Are there strategies that are missing?
3. Can you see your agency or constituency supporting and implementing these strategies over the next two years?

Feedback from the participants included:

- Ideas for strategies to improve services that would meet the needs of children and families,
- Thoughts on improving communication between caseworkers and the attorneys for the parents,
- Ideas to improve children and parent(s) visitation,
- Challenged the state to better align the LDSS/family court collaboratives and the local county planning process,
- Ideas for improving caseworker practice.

OCFS was also encouraged to develop strategies to reduce the use of congregate care across the state, increase the use of relative placements, and enhance the recruitment and retention of foster homes. OCFS has incorporated many of these recommendations in the PIP. Those not included in the PIP are being implemented through administrative actions during the PIP development process.

OCFS recognizes the value of engaging stakeholders in all efforts to improve the child welfare system, and is committed to seeking input throughout the two years of the PIP using the Statewide Implementation Team created in 2016 as the vehicle for soliciting feedback. This group has representatives from multiple levels of LDSSs and VAs, and is instrumental in our practice improvement efforts.

Continuing the CQI model, OCFS categorized the selection of strategies into four areas:

- Improvement of NYS Continuous Quality Improvement system on both the state and local level,
- Enhancing caseworker and supervisor training that will improve safety and permanency outcomes
- Implementation of practices to expedite permanency and continuity of family relationships

- Implementation of Lean projects
- Support for county/court collaborations
- Implementation of Permanency Roundtables and Rapid Permanency Reviews
- Increase the use of relatives
- Development and Implementation of policy and practice on Parenting Time and Family Visitation
- Updating of Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment and Retention Plans
- Effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources
- Enhancing service array through the expansion of Healthy Family New York home visiting program
- Enhance oversight and monitoring in several key areas:
 - Monitoring of data entered into CONNECTIONS
 - Improve foster and adoptive parent licensing

Improvement of New York State's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system on both the state and local level

Improving the State's CQI is needed on both a state and local level. OCFS participated in the Pilot CQI Assessment in 2013, and from the findings of that review it was determined that OCFS needed to improve our existing CQI system. Improving the State CQI system is foundational to sustaining the improvements made as part of our Program Improvement Plan.

1. State Level CQI System

The findings from the CQI Pilot noted many areas of strength however, several areas for improvement were also identified. While OCFS has worked over the last several years to enhance our CQI system, which will be used to evaluate the implementation of the Child Welfare Practice Model (Practice Model), it was determined that additional guidance was needed. To that end, in December 2016, OCFS partnered with the Capacity Building Center for States.

The first step in the process was the completion a comprehensive internal self-assessment of OCFS's CQI capacity. A CQI Assessment Team was developed including staff from OCFS (Child Welfare and Community Services, Strategic Planning and Policy Development, and the Bureau Research, Evaluation, and Performance Analytics) along with our university training partners. Working with the Capacity Building Center for States, the CQI Assessment Team and Child Welfare and Community Services (CWCS) Senior Team used the information and data collected from the self-assessment to identify which components of a CQI system needed to be prioritized to enhance the OCFS's

CQI system. Those areas included: Leadership Support and Modeling, Staff and Stakeholder Engagement, Communication, and Foundational Administrative Structure.

OCFS has now formalized a CQI Advisement Team that will develop a formal CQI Plan that will develop a structure to formalize the following CQI sub domains: Leadership Support and Modeling, Staff and Stakeholder Engagement, Communication, Foundational Administrative Structure.

Goal 1: Improve New York State’s Continuous Quality improvement (CQI) system and process at the State level (Systemic Factor – Item 25 Quality Assurance)

Strategy 1: *OCFS will implement a plan to develop and enhance the following CQI sub domains within the State’s CQI system: Leadership Support and Modeling, Staff and Stakeholder Engagement, Communication, Foundational Administrative Structure.*

Key Activity 1: OCFS CQI Advisement Team will develop and implement a formal CQI Plan that includes a structure to formalize the following prioritized CQI sub domains: Leadership Support and Modeling, Staff and Stakeholder Engagement, Communication, Foundational Administrative Structure.

Projected Completion Date: CQI Plan for initial subdomains - December 2018 – Ongoing CQI Plan for all subdomains – December 2019

2. Incorporating a CQI Model into the County Planning Process

All LDSSs in New York State are required to submit a single comprehensive five-year county plan for review and approval. The county planning process is designed to support and acknowledge a local collaborative planning process that includes broad stakeholder involvement and support a process that focuses on outcomes for children, youth, families, adults, and communities. Child Welfare program areas in the plan include: child protective services, preventive services, foster care, adoption, and domestic violence.

To assist LDSSs in the development of their county plans and to have those plans aligned with the OCFS Practice Model aimed at improving the child welfare outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being, OCFS required each LDSS to use a CQI approach. OCFS provided the LDSSs with an overview of the CQI model. The overview included the following tenants of the CQI model: Define the Problem, Understand Underlying Factors; Select or Design a Solution; Implement the Solution; Testing the Solution and Revise the Approach as Needed.

On February 21, 2017, a video conference kickoff was held in all six OCFS regional office locations simultaneously with the LDSSs. A formal presentation by Public Catalyst and OCFS staff provided an overview of the new step-by-step planning process that the LDSSs would be required to use in 2017 in developing their county plan. The first step in the development of the county plans was the diagnostic phase.

As part of the diagnostic phase, data reports (listed below) were shared with each LDSS to define the problem, and identify the underlying factors. A Diagnostic Template was provided to each LDSS to assist them in identifying county specific underlying factors. Ongoing county planning support webinars and "Office Hours" were made available to LDSSs to obtain additional technical assistance from Home and Regional Office staff on the CQI process and the use of data.

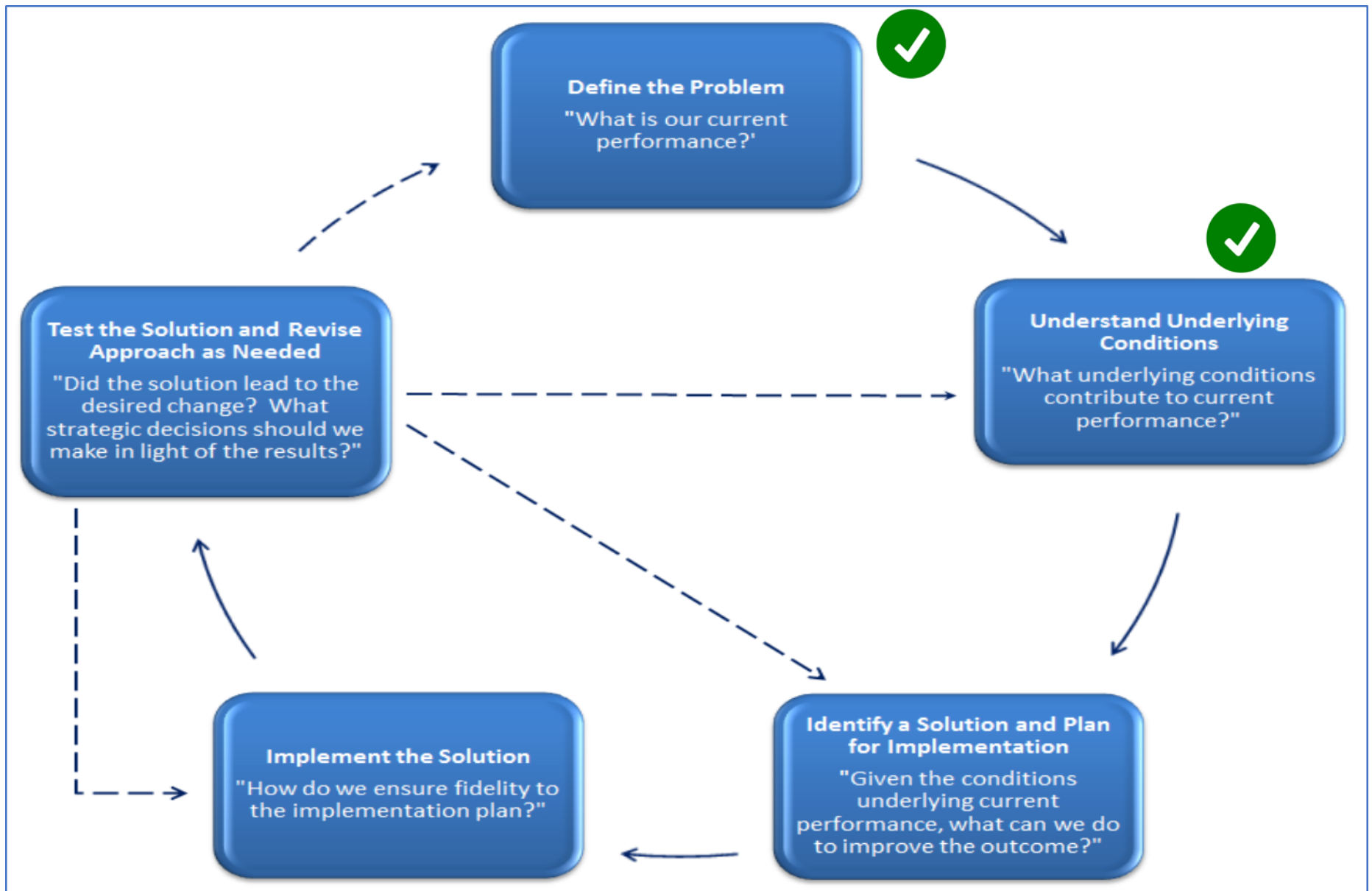
- *Recurrence Data:* Each LDSS received a list of children who experienced an indicated report during the Wave 3 timeframes. Each child's record contained their name and almost 100 additional variables to be considered during the analysis/diagnostic phase. Examples of the variables are child's demographic information (age, zip code, gender, race, etc.), allegations, reporter, perpetrator, risk elements and risk assessment score, case identification information.
- *Permanency Data:* This child-level data included a list of all children in the cohort relative to the CFSR permanency indicator. LDSSs received either a P1/P4 file or a P2/P3 file. Each file contained the names of children in that Cohort and a significant amount of demographic and placement information.
- *Data Quality Report:* This report, which was embedded in the permanency data files, identified children's records that showed data entry discrepancies. Several common data entry issues were identified and the OCFS Data Leaders Team (DLT) members (specifically the CONNECTIONS Liaisons), worked with LDSSs to correct their data entry errors going forward.

LDSSs submitted their completed Diagnostic Templates to Home and Regional Offices for review and feedback at the end of July 2017. Themes identified cross-county included: need for better assessments (safety, risk and services for children and parents) lack of some services, placement with siblings, relative placement, termination of parental rights, diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive parents. The Diagnostic Templates helped inform the next phase of the county planning process – Identifying the Solution and Plan for Implementation by using the Strategies and Measures Form.

OCFS distributed the Strategies and Measurement Form in October 2017, to be used by LDSSs to identify strategies that will impact the underlying conditions for their performance related to safety and permanency outcomes. During the months of October through December, OCFS held a webinar and offered "Office Hours" to LDSSs to assist them on the identification and development of strategies and measures.

In late 2017, LDSSs submitted their draft Strategies and Measures forms to Home and Regional Offices. From January through April, Home and Regional Office staff will review with each LDSS their proposed strategies and measures plans, and provide coaching and technical assistance as needed. These discussions will assist districts in finalizing their County Plans, which are required to be submitted by the end of April 2018.

OCFS Regional Office staff will meet quarterly with LDSSs throughout the two-year PIP to provide oversight, technical assistance. During these visits topics of discussions will include: data and the LDSSs performance on key outcome measures, findings from any case record reviews, progress on strategy implementation to name a few. The diagram below indicates the steps within the CQI process that represents the county planning process. During the PIP, OCFS will continue to work through the steps in this CQI model.



Goal 2: County plans that include cross-county themes, if applicable, will be developed and implemented using a CQI model aimed at improving child welfare outcomes, to safety and permanency indicators. (Safety Outcome 2, Permanency Outcome 1 and 2; Systemic Factor – Item 25 Quality Assurance)

Strategy 1: OCFS Home and Regional Office will provide training and support to LDSSs on using the Strategies and Measures Form to identify strategies and measures that address county specific casework practice gaps, including safety and permanency that align with the NYS Child Welfare Practice Model, where applicable and plan for implementation of their county plans. Based on the analysis of the Strategies and Measures Form, districts will engage Family Courts and other stakeholders as applicable, in strategy development and implementation.

Strategy 2: OCFS Home and Regional Office provide training and support to LDSSs on implementing the strategies outlined in their county plan.

Strategy 3: OCFS Home and Regional Office will provide training and support to LDSS on measuring the implemented strategies

Strategy 4: OCFS Home and Regional Office will monitor, provide technical assistance and guidance to LDSS as they develop their County Plan Annual Update, which will report on individual LDSS strategy progress.

Strategy 1. *Provide training and support to LDSSs on using the Strategies and Measures Form to identify strategies and measures that address county specific casework practice gaps, including safety and permanency that align with the NYS Child Welfare Practice Model, where applicable and plan for implementation of their county plans. Based on the analysis of the Strategies and Measures Form, districts will engage Family Courts and other stakeholders as applicable, in strategy development and implementation.*

Key Activity 1: Submission of completed Strategies and Measurement Form by LDSS to OCFS for review and feedback.

Projected Completion Date: December 2017, with final submission of the entire county plan due April 2018

Key Activity 2: OCFS Regional Office will approve county plans and LDSS will begin implementing strategies and tracking initial outcomes.

Projected Completion Date: June 2018 and ongoing

Strategy 2: *Provide training and support to LDSSs on implementing the strategies outlined in their county plan.*

Key Activity 1: OCFS Home and Regional Office will provide training and support via on-site visits to LDSS

Projected Completion Date: June 2018 and ongoing

Key Activity 2: OCFS, through Regional Office regular quarterly visits, will discuss the status of strategy implementation and address barriers, when necessary.

Projected Completion Date: June 2018 and ongoing

Key Activity 3: OCFS Home Office will disseminate county plan diagnostic and strategy information to every LDSS. This strategy is designed to encourage shared learning across NYS.

Projected Completion Date: June 2018 and ongoing

Strategy 3: *OCFS Home and Regional Office will provide training and support to LDSSs on measuring the implemented strategies*

Key Activity 1: OCFS Home Office will disseminate updated child-level data files to assist LDSSs in measuring the effectiveness of the implemented strategies.

Projected Completion Date: Ongoing

Key Activity 2: OCFS Home Office will conduct a webinar training and provide other technical assistance supports (on-site visits and office hours) on the process of analyzing the data collected during year one related to measuring the implemented strategies.

Projected Completion Date: Ongoing

Strategy 4: *OCFS Home and Regional Office will monitor, provide technical assistance and guidance to LDSSs as they develop their County Plan Annual Update, which will report on individual LDSS strategy progress.*

Key Activity 1: OCFS Home and Regional Office will provide technical assistance to LDSSs as they review and potentially revise their strategies as they prepare for the submission of the County Annual Plan Update (APU) for approval.

Projected Completion Date: 2019 and yearly thereafter

Key Activity 2: LDSS submission of County Annual Plan Update that will include an update on their implementation of their strategies and measurement of their progress. Plans will be reviewed and approved by Regional Offices.

Projected Completion Date: 2019 and yearly thereafter

Goal 3: The following casework practices in foster care and preventive services will be improved through the implementation of competency based training:

- **risk and safety assessments,**
- **caseworker visits with the parents (including locating and engaging fathers) and child(ren),**
- **service need assessments, and**
- **engagement of youth and parents in case and permanency planning**

(Safety Outcome 2 – Item 3; Permanency Outcome 1- Item 4, 5, and 6; Well-being 1 – Items 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18; Systemic Factor – Case Review System – Item 20 Written Case Plan; Item 24 Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers; Item 26 Staff and Provider Training; and Item 27 Ongoing Staff Training)

Strategy 1: Develop and implement a competency based training model for all child welfare caseworkers.

Strategy 2: Enhance supervisor competencies through trainings, practice webinars and resource tools that support improved case practice.

Strategy 1: *Develop and implement a competency based training model for all child welfare caseworkers*

Key Activity 1: Increase offerings of Foundational Training in year one of the PIP. CPS caseworkers will continue be given priority for open slots with preventive and foster care workers participation as capacity allows.

Projected Completion Date: January 2018 - November 2019

Key Activity 2: Increase offerings of Foundational Training in year two of the PIP. CPS caseworkers will be given priority for open slots with LDSS and VA preventive and foster care caseworkers participation as capacity allows.

Projected Completion Date: December 2019

Key Activity 3: Foundations Level 3 Behavioral Checklist Evaluation distributed to trainees and their supervisors will be used to assess impact of Foundations Training on casework practice (the training participants have applied their new knowledge and skills to their work and what effect this has had on casework practice).

Projected Completion Date: December 2017 and on-going

Key Activity 4: Findings from the Foundations Level 3 Behavioral Checklist Evaluation will be analyzed to identify themes of where remedial assistance is needed. Remedial assistance will be provided by Regional Office staff, as warranted.

Projected Completion Date: October 2018 and ongoing

Key Activity 5: OCFS Regional Office will conduct a case review using the OSRI on a sample of preventive and foster care trainees one-year post training to assess the impact of training on case practice related to the case review items noted above and provide feedback to the LDSS.

Projected Completion Date: January 2019

Strategy 2: *Enhance supervisor competencies through trainings, practice webinars and resource tools that support improved case practice*

Key Activity 1: Provide KEYS supervisory training to new LDSS and VA supervisors; the training will be offered five times in various locations and regions each year of the PIP with priority to CPS supervisors.

Projected Completion Date: 2018 and on-going

Key Activity 2: KEYS Essentials (for experienced supervisors) will be offered four times in various locations and regions each year of the PIP. These trainings will be provided to LDSS and voluntary agency supervisors.

Projected Completion Date: 2018 and on-going

Key Activity 3: Distribute KEYS Level 3 Behavioral Checklist Evaluation to supervisory trainees and managers to assess impact of KEYS on supervisor practice (the training participants have applied their new knowledge and skills to their work and what effect this has had on casework practice).

Projected Completion Date: June 2018 and ongoing

Key Activity 4: Findings from the KEYS Level 3 Behavioral Checklist Evaluation will be analyzed and provided to LDSS and remedial assistance will be provided to supervisors by LDSS managers, as warranted.

Projected Completion Date: December 2019

Key Activity 5: OCFS Home Office to conduct four supervisory webinars focusing on CFSR case review items for LDSS and voluntary agency supervisors in year one and in subsequent years, the findings from the analysis of the Foundations and KEYS Level 3 Behavioral Checklist will influence topics.

Projected Completion Date: 2018 and ongoing

Implementation of practices to expedite permanency and continuity of family relationships, and services to keep children in their homes and prevent abuse and neglect

In reviewing the state's performance on the CFSR related to permanency and continuity of family relationships, several areas were identified as underlying conditions that may be contributing to the state's performance, namely,

- reducing the bottlenecks in processes that impact timeliness to permanency,
- the need for further collaboration across systems,
- the need to focus on children who are "long stayers",
- a greater emphasis on the placement of children with relatives and support for parenting time,
- the need to focus on recruitment and retention of foster homes, and
- the provision of services that can help keep children in their home or expedite their return when placed in foster care due to a child service need.

To address the need for further collaboration across systems, OCFS has committed to meeting quarterly with Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Courts Outside of New York City - Judge Michael Coccoma, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives - Judge Edwina Richardson-Mendelson, and Deputy Administrative Judge of New York City Family Court - Judge Jeanette Ruiz, and staff from the Court Improvement Project. These meetings focus on the exchange of data and information to better inform both systems of work being done to expedite permanency and to address areas of concern on a systemic level.

To reduce bottlenecks in permanency related processes, both OCFS and OCA will support LDSS and Family Court Lean projects aimed at expediting permanency through the analysis of LDSS and court processes impacting timely permanency for children in foster care. OCFS has reached out to several of the large counties based on their data, and several smaller counties have also volunteered to participate.

Through the Lean process, a charter is developed which includes a process description, a problem statement, the current metrics, project improvement target, and a listing of the stakeholders, both internal and external. The coming together of all stakeholders in the process affords for a better understanding of how the work is done, the timeframes by which the work is completed and the opportunity to identify and develop agreed upon solutions. Using the Lean principles, each process is reviewed for efficiencies and streamlining, and potential solutions are identified. A target for improvement is set, and subsequently monitored. OCFS's Lean office will monitor each LDSS metrics on a quarterly basis.

OCFS in collaboration with the Unified Court System (UCS), specifically the Office of Court Administration (OCA) will continue to work together with LDSSs and Family Courts to enhance practices aimed at expediting permanency. These efforts include continuing support for existing LDSS and Family Court collaboratives, and encouraging the development of others. Particular attention will be paid to the timely establishment of permanency planning goals for each child, the achievement of reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned living arrangement, the placement of siblings together, and the timely filing of termination of parental rights petitions or documentation of compelling reason not to file and placement with relatives. Using the CQI model with each collaborative, OCFS and OCA will provide child welfare and court metrics to each collaborative, and assist them in the review and analysis of the data, detailing root causes, the development of strategies to address the root causes, and the monitoring of the strategies.

A review of CONNECTIONS data indicates that there are a significant number of children who have been in foster care for two or more years (long stayers). In an effort to expedite their permanency, OCFS will continue to implement Permanency Roundtables in LDSSs and VAs, and begin to implement Rapid Permanency Reviews. Each

of these strategies include a number of sessions which will focus on multiple children and youth and their various permanency planning goals to identify barriers and create action plans that will expedite the child's permanency. Permanency Roundtables focus on extensive consultation and case staffing with caseworkers and supervisors to identify practice barriers. OCFS staff have been trained to facilitate this process. Rapid Permanency Reviews are purposefully designed to be different from Permanency Roundtables. They quickly identify "bottlenecks" and systemic, or court barriers for permanency by reviewing steps along the continuum where the process is slowed or stalled. While the caseworkers and supervisors will need to complete identified action-steps resulting from the review, higher level management and executive leadership of the agency are responsible for "busting barriers" and implementing a "cadence of accountability." OCFS will review data in determining which counties would benefit the greatest from both types of reviews.

A review of CFSR case review data related to the continuity of family relationships and preserving connections indicated that LDSS and VAs are not sufficiently engaging relatives as permanency resources which would help to improve enhancing family relationships and preserving connections. OCFS supports the placement of children with kinship when it is safe to do so. OCFS developed and disseminated educational materials in 2017 to be used by caseworkers and supervisors in promoting the placement of children with kinship. The materials are aimed at informing kinship families of their options related to caring for children. These materials include the Executive Summary of the Kinship Survey, tip sheets, and several publications, such as "Having a Voice and Choice, NYS Handbook for Relatives Raising Children", and "Know Your Options: Kin Caring for Children". To promote a stronger commitment to the use of kinship as permanency resources, OCFS will be requiring LDSSs and VAs to develop a policy on the use of kinship and an action plan detailing the steps they will take to implement their plan.

In reviewing our performance on visits with parents and siblings and preserving connections it was determined that not all LDSSs and agencies have a written policy related to parenting time and visitation. LDSSs and VAs will be asked to develop a written policy. OCFS recognizes it is critical that children in foster care maintain frequent contact with their parents and other family members when it is safe to do so, unless the child is freed for adoption. Contact with family reduces the trauma of separation for children, improves their well-being while separated from their families, provides continuity of family relationships and connections, and helps expedite permanency regardless of the permanency goal. A written policy that is shared with the parents and other family members should be a guide when developing each child's visiting plan with his or her parent(s), guardian(s), sibling(s), half sibling(s) and other significant family member(s), potential permanency resources, and/or any other person of significance to the child. The written policy should also include determining the least restrictive level of supervision needed during visits for foster children with their families.

Although permanency in a child's home community is preferred, it may not always be an option for every child in care. When the search for permanency options geographically expands, so do those child's opportunities for finding a permanent resource. OCFS directly supports cross jurisdictional recruitment through the administration of the Adoption Album and the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). When children are legally freed for adoption and not in an adoptive placement, LDSS/VAs are required to submit a photo and brief narrative to the New York State Adoption Album. To address any delays in photo listing children, regionally located Permanency Specialists track those children freed but not placed using newly developed CONNECTIONS Data Warehouse reports. This will allow for child specific follow-up with LDSSs and VAs to improve the timeliness of photo listings.

Additionally, to enhance the expediency of children placed in and out of New York State through the ICPC process, OCFS joined the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) database. NEICE is a cloud-based electronic system for exchanging the data and documents needed to place children across state lines as outlined by the ICPC. Launched in November 2013 as a pilot project, NEICE significantly shortened the time it takes to place children across state lines. Starting in early 2018, training on the NEICE system will be provided by Tetras, the system developer, to LDSSs/VAs who then will be able to submit placement requests, receive instructions, communications and placement approvals electronically. Information will be transmitted between states and local districts in minutes rather than days or weeks. It is expected that moving from a paper process to an e-business process alone will significantly reduce the request/approval processing time for out of state placements. Additionally, the NIECE will provide a mechanism to track timeliness of ICPC requirements, including the length of time to complete a home study.

As noted in New York's Child and Family Services Plan, children under the age of one are most likely to be involved in a report to the Statewide Central Register, and the allegation within those reports are most likely to be substantiated. Consequently, OCFS supports services that are aimed at keeping infants and young children safe and in their home thereby not coming to the attention of the child welfare system. OCFS invests in Healthy Families New York (HFNY). Modeled after the national Healthy Families America (HFA) initiative, HFNY is a community-based prevention program that seeks to improve the health and well-being of children at risk for abuse and neglect through the provision of home visitation services. HFNY is a program for expectant parents and families with infants that promotes optimal prenatal care, better birth outcomes and positive growth and development in order to improve parent child bonding, maternal and child health and social outcomes for families at high risk of abuse or maltreatment and poor health outcomes. The program provides intensive home visitation services bi-weekly during the prenatal period, weekly when the child is born until the child is at least six months old, and periodically thereafter based on the needs of the family until the child begins school or Head Start. The desired outcomes for the HFNY home visiting program are to:

- Promote positive parenting skills and parent-child interaction;
- Support optimal prenatal care, better birth outcomes, and child health and development;
- Enhance family self-sufficiency; and
- Prevent child abuse and maltreatment.

The program is located in high need areas throughout the state as evidenced by high poverty rates, low birth rates, high infant mortality rates, high rate of Medicaid births, and unwed parents. The program assesses further the family's risk by conducting an assessment interview to determine their appropriateness for the program. Families are assessed for a wide range of social and economic risk factors including single parenthood, teen pregnancy, poverty, low education, unstable housing, substance abuse, mental health problems, understanding of child development, and parent's own childhood experiences. Parents who score above a predetermined cut-off are offered the opportunity to receive home visitation services. Participation in the program is voluntary.

HFNY is located throughout the state of New York, however is not currently available in every county that has need. Recognizing that many families can benefit by the support and the education that the programs provides, OCFS has utilized various funding streams to support this program. In 2016, OCFS issued a Request for Proposals and expanded four programs to unserved areas of the state including the severely underserved counties of northern New York. In addition to these expansions a new program started in late 2016 and began operations in 2017. OCFS was able to use additional funding made available and reallocate other funding to support four new programs and expand one program to serve unserved areas of the state beginning late 2017 that will become operational in 2018. We expect that these two expansions in 2016 and 2017 will increase the program's capacity to serve an additional 545 families when fully operational. In 2018 there are plans to expand six high performing programs to serve additional families either within their current service area or in additional areas and to begin a new program in an unserved area. This expansion will increase HFNY's ability to serve up to an additional 215 families. Additionally, OCFS provides some support to locally funded Healthy Families programs who operate on a small scale to meet needs in their community. These programs combined can serve up to an additional 80 families.

OCFS currently uses two mechanisms to evaluate the quality, performance, and effectiveness of HFNY: a comprehensive, ongoing assessment of program quality and service delivery and a longitudinal randomized controlled trial (RCT). HFNY is also participating in various quality improvement efforts related to Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funding. OCFS in collaboration with the Center for Human Services Research, initiated a longitudinal randomized controlled trial of HFNY in 2000. Women who met the assessment criteria for HFNY were randomly assigned to either an intervention group that was offered HFNY services or a control group that was given information and referrals to appropriate services. Baseline and follow-up data were collected for the 1,173 women in the HFNY program and control groups at the time of the child's birth, and first, second, third, and seventh birthdays (with various levels of retention) from in-depth interviews with mothers, child

welfare and public assistance administrative records, the HFNY data management system, and videotaped observations of parent-child interactions. The target children were also interviewed for the first time when they were approximately seven years old and their first-grade school records were requested directly from their schools.

To date, the RCT has demonstrated that HFNY is effective in improving birth outcomes, reducing child abuse and neglect, supporting positive parenting, and improving children's educational outcomes. HFNY strives to enroll families in the program prior to any involvement in the child welfare system, however some participant families have subsequent children and enroll after they have been known to child welfare. For these families HFNY shows a 50% reduction in subsequent confirmed child protective (CPS) reports after seven years for mothers as compared to those families who did not receive the service. Detailed findings from the HFNY RCT can be found at: <http://www.healthyfamiliesnewyork.org/Research/publications.htm>.

A 15-year follow-up study is currently under way. In-depth interviews with mothers and their now-adolescent children will assess outcomes such as maternal life course, child abuse and neglect, parenting practices, family conflict, educational experiences, youth behaviors, delinquent/criminal activity, and health and access to health care. Administrative database searches will be conducted to obtain child maltreatment reports, foster care services use; food stamps and public assistance benefits; birth records; juvenile justice experiences; school records; and criminal justice system involvement. Data collection and preliminary analyses are expected to be completed in 2019. As with prior results, OCFS uses information gained in the RCT to make improvements or provide enhancements to the model to better support families and improve service delivery.

Enhancing caseworker and supervisor training that will improve safety and permanency outcomes

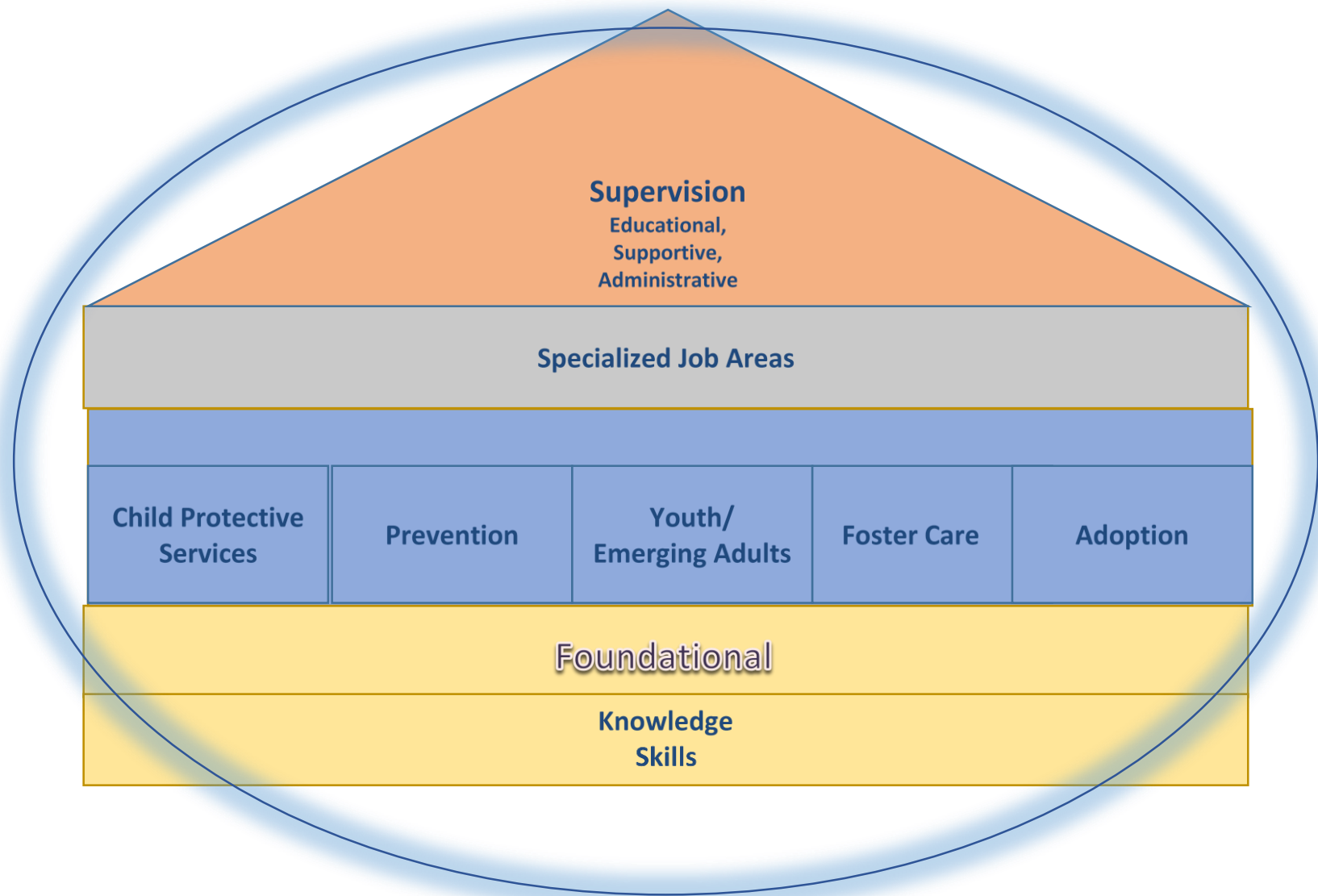
The findings from the CFSR and other case record reviews conducted by OCFS, revealed that the tools provided to the caseworkers in making safety and risk assessments in of themselves were sufficient. However, not assessing all the children in the home in preventive cases, and not identifying, locating and engaging fathers are noted areas needing improvement. Training on the actual tools did not seem to be the issue, but rather the competency skills of the caseworkers and supervisors using the tools needed to be enhanced.

One of the key components to achieving improved outcomes in safety, permanency and systemic factors, is a well-trained and competent workforce. OCFS had received feedback from the LDSSs that the existing CORE training was not focused on developing skills, and was too academic. It also did not allow for flexibility and was only required for Child Protective Services staff. Additionally, it did not include a supervisory support framework once a caseworker completed the training.

In response, OCFS convened a Steering Committee of representatives from small, medium and large LDSSs, including Commissioners, Directors of Services, Supervisors, and Staff Development Coordinators in the fall of 2015. The goal of the Committee was to design a competency-based model for all caseworkers and supervisors. The model needed to allow for improved evaluation of caseworker/supervisor competence, be easily understood by all LDSSs and VAs, to guide staff development plans, and be flexible and nimble to respond to emerging needs. The approach needed to be behaviorally based with capacity to meet the training needs of all staff in child welfare.

The collective efforts resulted in a developmental training framework using adult learning principles to achieve caseworker competency. This approach is expected to result in improvements in casework practice due to greater professional development of staff and supervisory support. It is also expected that this will lead to increased job satisfaction and longer-term retention.

Below is a visual of the revised training plan structure.



NYS OCFS Core Competencies

In developing the content of the training, OCFS started with agreed upon domains, competencies, and the defined related performance outcomes.

All child welfare workers from LDSSs as well as VAs will have available to them training at the Foundational level. CPS caseworkers are required to take training within 90 days of being hired in order to maintain a caseload. It should be noted however, in most LDSSs preventive and foster care workers provide on-call CPS coverage and therefore also receive the Foundational level training. It is NYS’s expectation that all preventive and foster care caseworkers receive the Foundations level training once it is staffed to capacity. OCFS will look to enhance our regulations to include this mandate for all child welfare caseworkers.

The domains listed in the chart below are included in the Foundational training. It is expected that through the implementation of the Foundational Training, the safety and permanency case review items and systemic factors will improve. The chart includes what case review items, systemic factors and outcomes that will be impacted through each domain.

Domain and Supervisory Tool	Case Review/Systemic Factor	Outcome
NYS OCFS Child Welfare Practice Model	Item 3 – Risk and Safety Assessment Management Item 4 – Stability of Foster Care Placement Item 5 – Permanency Goal for Child Item 6 - Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption or APPLA Item 12 – Needs and Services of Child, Parent, and Foster Parents Item 13 Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning Item 14 – Caseworker visits with Child Item 15 – Caseworker visits with Parents	Safety, Permanency and Well-being
Critical Thinking	Item 3 – Risk and Safety Assessment Management Item 4 – Stability of Foster Care Placement Item 5 – Permanency Goal for Child Item 6 - Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption or APPLA	Safety, Permanency and Well-being

Domain and Supervisory Tool	Case Review/Systemic Factor	Outcome
Cultural Competence	Item 3 – Risk and Safety Assessment Management Item 4 – Stability of Foster Care Placement Item 12 – Needs and Services of Child, Parent, and Foster Parents Item 13 Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	Safety, Permanency and Well-being
Strength-based Family Engagement	Item 13 - Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning Systemic Factor 20 – Written Case Plan Systemic Factor 24 – Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Safety, Permanency and Well-being
Assessment	Item 3 – Risk and Safety Assessment Item 12 – Needs and Services of Child, Parent, and Foster Parents Item 16 – Educational Needs of Child	Safety, Permanency and Well-being
Interviewing Skills	Item 14 – Caseworker visits with Child Item 15 – Caseworker visits with Parents	Safety, Permanency and Well-being
Self-Management	-	-
Intervention	Item 3 – Risk and Safety Assessment Management Item 12 – Needs and Services of Child, Parent, and Foster Parents	Safety, Permanency and Well-being
Collaboration	Item 12 – Needs and Services of Child, Parent, and Foster Parents Item 13 Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning Systemic Factor 20 – Written Case Plan Systemic Factor 24 – Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Safety, Permanency and Well-being
Service Planning	Item 12 – Needs and Services of Child, Parent, and Foster Parents Item 16 – Educational Needs of Child Item 17- Physical Health of the Child Item 18 – Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child	Safety, Permanency and Well-being

Each of the domains is being taught using differing combinations of the four different modalities:

- Skills clinics – trainee will practice what they learn
- Classroom training – interactive information sharing and learning
- Web-based trainings – comprised of several online learning courses
- On the job learning task – promote growth/ability of what was learned and will rely on supervisory mentoring and coaching

Functional competencies are skills and knowledge specific to a job function including CPS, prevention, youth and emerging adults, foster care and adoption, which will be built as the process develops over the next several years. Overlaying the entire system, will be a supervisory track.

A cornerstone of this transformation is the On-the-Job Learning (OJL) component. OJL is a type of skill development where a worker learns their new job through hands-on experience. OJL allows the trainee to practice the newly acquired skills in their work environment, with supervisory mentoring and coaching. OCFS is developing a process of on-going coaching for LDSSs to enhance their capacity of on-boarding staff to this new program.

To support the OJL, OCFS is providing to supervisors of the participating trainees an overview of the Child Welfare Foundations Program that includes an outline of the domains, tasks, and resources the supervisor can use with the worker to facilitate the skills based practice on the job. Also, included in these sessions are the expectations of and the role of the supervisor in supporting the development of trainees. The supervisor session also includes a demonstration of the Supervisor Toolkit and the accompanying resources supervisors can use in their coaching of new workers. In this online resource, supervisors will have access to consistent learning aides, skill assessment matrixes, and solution focused questions to improve casework critical thinking. It is expected that these resources will also enhance the learning of supervisors while simultaneously benefitting new workers and the rest of their unit.

Evaluations will be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the training program and to identify areas needing improvement. OCFS will use the Kirkpatrick's four level of model training evaluation.

Level 1 – Reaction: This level of evaluation, uses the Participant Response Questionnaire (PRQ), which measures how the participants reacted to the training – i.e., what they thought about the quality of the training program. This is the most basic level of evaluation; it measures participant satisfaction with the training. The PRQ is conducted after every module and summarized quarterly.

Level 2 – Learning: The evaluation of learning uses the Pre- and Post-Test tool to measure the extent to which participants acquired knowledge or improved skills as a result of the training program. The Pre- and Post-Test tool is completed before and after every module either by a cognitive test or a skills checklist. The findings are reported quarterly.

Level 3 – Behavior: The evaluation of behavior examines the extent to which improvement in job performance occurred because the participant attended the training program. This level of evaluation is designed to measure transfer of learning to the workplace. The Foundations Level 3 Behavioral Checklist is being sent to supervisors at 90 and 120 days post training completion. The results of the checklist are entered into the Human Services Learning Center (HSLC) training website and an aggregate report is provided to OCFS. The report will be analyzed quarterly based on the cohort being assessed, and OCFS will use this data to determine the effectiveness of the training and/or modifications needed. Agencies will be expected to use the individual data to identify additional supports a worker may need and provide those supports or send for additional training.

Level 4 – Results: The fourth level of evaluation assesses the organizational outcomes that occurred because of the training program. OCFS expects to see returns on the training investment in our existing case reviews and will look to isolate/review cases of participants in the training program in the future.

The Foundations level training, considered as initial training for caseworkers, was implemented as a pilot in November 2017, with revisions being made throughout December 2017. While this competency based model is evolving, OCFS continues to deliver ongoing trainings. Ongoing training, which includes specialty and advanced training, as well as refresher training for experienced CPS, preventive and foster care caseworkers, supervisors, and administrators will continue. It should also be noted that many LDSSs cross train their caseworkers, so caseworkers with other functional roles are currently participating in the Foundations level training as well.

Supervision

In addition to supporting caseworker professional development, OCFS provides the supervisory professional development through our Keys to Excellence in Your Supervision (KEYS) Training and Foundations Training. Trainings for supervisors include competencies on basic supervision skills, as well as supervising, coaching and supporting the casework practice competencies taught to caseworkers through the Foundations Training.

The KEYS model begins with strategies and tools to move from a caseworker into a supervisory role. The strategies taught are the following:

1. Develop a working agreement with staff (tool provided)- with demonstration and classroom skill practice
2. The role and structure of effective supervision which includes three components- Administrative, Educative and Supportive and encourages participants to include all three in regularly scheduled supervisory sessions.

The KEYS model also focuses on the supervisory process: Communicate Expectations, Monitor Performance, and Provide Feedback. In communicating expectations, the “Discovery Dialogue” is a strategy taught to supervisory trainees to communicate expectations in a way that also fosters the critical thinking skills of staff.

Supervisory trainees are encouraged to monitor not only the quantity outputs (ex. on-time service plan) but also the quality of the work being done with families. The training provides experience in reviewing an actual case, strategies for preparing to meet with a worker, and practice in meeting with a worker about a case they have reviewed. Supervisors also become familiar with the process and tools for conducting a case review to assess casework practice in terms of both content (thoroughness of assessment) and skills (best practice). Several ways to monitor quality are reviewed and include, field visits with staff to conduct direct observations, talking with collaterals about the effectiveness of caseworker with families, and observing caseworker in court.

In providing feedback to caseworkers, supervisors are taught to use the “Reflective Dialogue” which encourages the caseworker to assess their own skills and also discuss how a family may feel about the services being provided. The supervisor then gives feedback on what is observed or known. This strategy can also assist a supervisor in addressing performance challenges. Group case consultations are another strategy taught to supervisors. This format allows staff to work through difficult case concerns, create a learning environment for all, and foster critical thinking among staff.

And as noted above in caseworker training, supervisory toolkits are provided to supervisors as an aide in their supervision of the competencies being taught to caseworkers. In addition to the Supervisor’s toolkit, OCFS will be contracting with training vendors to create four webinars each year of the PIP focused on supervising to specific case practice. These webinars will be targeted to CPS, preventive and foster care supervisors. Based on the findings of the CFSR, webinar topics in the first year will include: Quality of Casework Contacts; Ongoing Safety and Risk and Empowering Families to Protect; Supervising Family Engagement and Achieving Permanency for Youth. Topics for the second year will be identified based on findings from subsequent case reviews and those identified by supervisors. These webinars will build upon the KEYS training and will include topic specific practice tips that supervisors can use with caseworkers. OCFS will continue to offer Keys Core for new supervisors and Keys Essentials for experienced supervisors throughout the PIP timeframe.

It is expected that individual supervisors will gain knowledge, skills and expertise based on the trainings and webinars.

The KEYS Level 3 Behavioral Checklist is currently distributed to the trainee supervisors attending KEYS training and their managers to be completed by both at 90 and again at 120 days post training. The results are entered into the Human Services Learning Center (HSLC) training website and an aggregate report is provided to OCFS. OCFS will use this data to determine the effectiveness of the training and/or modifications needed. Agencies will be required to use the supervisor specific data to provide additional staff development plans for the individual trainee supervisor.

Goal 4: Improve timeliness of permanency for children placed in out of home care. (Permanency Outcome 1 – Items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11; Case Review Item – 23 Termination of Parental Rights; Item 35 – Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes; and Item 36 – State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements)

Strategy 1: Leadership from OCFS and the UCS will collaborate quarterly to implement and provide support to LDSS and Family Courts to implement a Lean process aimed at reducing the length of time to permanency for children placed in out-of-home care in up to five LDSS and Family Courts each year. Projects will include time to filing of a TPR petition by LDSS, time from filing to TPR to disposition by the court, and time from TPR to adoption.

Strategy 2: OCFS collaborating with the OCA's Court Improvement Project using a CQI model, will provide support and technical assistance to the 18 LDSS/Family Court collaboratives in reviewing both court and child welfare metrics in a root-cause analysis that will be used to update the logic models that support joint permanency strategies. The local collaborative will be required to look at the following areas of practice: appropriateness and timely setting of the child's permanency goal; achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned living arrangement; placement of child with siblings; the timely filing of termination of parental rights petitions or documentation of compelling reasons not to file; and relative placement.

Strategy 3: Based on Connections data, OCFS Regional Office staff will engage LDSS and VAs in implementing Permanency Roundtables and Rapid Permanency Reviews to expedite permanency and review the appropriateness of permanency goals.

Strategy 4: OCFS will require LDSSs and VAs to develop a policy and a plan on how they will increase the use of kinship as permanency resources.

Strategy 5: OCFS will require LDSSs and VAs to develop a written policy on Parenting Time and Family Visitation.

Strategy 6: Require LDSSs and VAs to update their Foster/Adoptive Parent Recruitment and Retention Plan that was developed in 2017 with an 18-month update to assess their progress.

Strategy 7: Enhance the process for effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources for children waiting for permanency.

Strategy 1: Leadership from OCFS and the UCS will collaborate quarterly to implement and provide support to LDSSs and Family Courts to implement a Lean process aimed at reducing the length of time to permanency for children placed in out-of-home care in up to five LDSS and Family Courts each year. Projects will include time to TPR and time to adoptions post TPR.

Key Activity 1: OCFS Home Office and OCA will identify up to five LDSSs and Family Courts each year to implement a Lean process focused on improving permanency for children placed in out-of-home care.

Projected Completion Date: January 2018 and ongoing

Key Activity 2: OCFS Lean Team will meet with each LDSS and Family Court and begin implementing the Lean process that includes developing a project charter, value stream mapping, data collection, voice of the customer, a Kaizen event and implementation of the solutions.

Projected Completion Date: January 2018- December 2018; January 2019- December 2019

Key Activity 3: OCFS Lean Office will monitor, through the Lean Metrics provided by the LDSSs/Courts, the progress made on the implementation of the local solutions. Information and progress will be shared with OCA leadership.

Projected Completion: Ongoing

Strategy 2: *Collaborating with the OCA's Court Improvement Project using a CQI model, provide support and technical assistance to the 18 LDSS/Family Court collaboratives in reviewing both court and child welfare metrics in a root cause analysis that will be used to update the logic models that support joint permanency strategies.*

Key Activity 1: Provide training to Child Welfare Court Improvement Project staff to increase their knowledge and skills around data diagnostics that will be used in working with the LDSS/Family Court collaboratives.

Projected Completion Date: March 2018

Key Activity 2: OCFS Home Office and the OCA will execute an MOU on data sharing between our respective agencies to be used to identify barriers and successes on the local level to timely permanency for children in foster care.

Projected Completion Date: January 2018- ongoing

Key Activity 3: Provide both court and child welfare metrics to each collaborative and work with each LDSS and Family Court to do a root-cause analysis related to their performance on key permanency outcome measures.

Projected Completion Date: March 2018- ongoing

Key Activity 4: Each collaborative will review their existing logic model and update the strategies based on the analysis of the data to include specific strategies that will improve permanency and enhance family relationships and preserve connections.

Projected Completion Date: April – August 2018

Key Activity 5: Each collaborative will submit an updated logic model that details strategies aimed at improving time to permanency.

Projected Completion Date: August 2018

Key Activity 6: Each collaborative will begin implementing the strategies identified in their logic model

Projected Completion Date: August 2018 and ongoing

Key Activity 7: OCFS with staff from the Court Improvement Project will monitor the impact of the strategies on each of the 19 LDSS/Court collaboratives related to their permanency outcomes.

Projected Completion Date: Ongoing

Strategy 3: *Based on CONNECTIONS data, engage LDSS and voluntary agencies in implementing Permanency Roundtables and/or Rapid Permanency Reviews to expedite permanency and review the appropriateness of permanency goals.*

Key Activity 1: Using CONNECTIONS data, select target populations with various permanency planning goals to and identify which LDSS/voluntary agencies would benefit from a Rapid Permanency Reviews and/or Permanency Roundtable.

Projected Completion Date: January 2018 and ongoing

Key Activity 2: Casey Family Programs will provide training to OCFS regional office staff on conducting Rapid Permanency Reviews.

Projected Completion Date: January 2018

Key Activity 3: OCFS Regional Offices will complete up to five Permanency Roundtables and/or Rapid Permanency Reviews per year that includes reviewing multiple children at each session in selected LDSSs and/or VAs and identify barriers to permanency. Action plans will be created for each child reviewed.

Projected Completion Date: Ongoing

Key Activity 4: LDSS and VA to monitor permanency outcomes for each child reviewed through the process and share aggregate data with OCFS.

Projected Completion Date: Ongoing

Key Activity 5: OCFS Home and Regional Office will assist LDSS in the analysis of the aggregated data to identify barriers, solutions and replicate bright spots that can be used to expedite permanency in the first 12 months of placement.

Projected Completion Date: Ongoing

Strategy 4: *OCFS will require LDSSs and VAs to develop a policy and an implementation plan on how they will increase the use of kinship as permanency resources.*

Key Activity 1: Require LDSSs and VAs to develop a policy and an implementation plan on how they will increase the use of kinship placements.

Projected Completion Date: July 2018

Key Activity 2: OCFS Home Office and Regional Office will review data, monitor and provide feedback to each LDSS and voluntary agency's use of relative foster care every six months.

Projected Completion Date: September 2018 and ongoing

Strategy 5: *OCFS will require LDSSs and VAs to develop a written policy on Parenting Time and Family Visitation.*

Key Activity 1: Require LDSS/VAs to provide a written policy plan within 90 days of the Administrative Directive.

Projected Completion Date: January 2018

Key Activity 2: OCFS Regional Office staff will confirm during quarterly site visits that LDSSs/VAs have written a policy.

Projected Completion Date: March 2018

Key Activity 3: Using case review tools, conduct case reviews to assess impact of policy on case work practice.

Projected Completion Date: ongoing

Strategy 6: *Require LDSSs and VAs to update their Foster/Adoptive Parent Recruitment and Retention Plan that was developed in 2017 with an 18-month update to assess their progress on their recruitment efforts.*

Key Activity 1: Develop and disseminate the 18-month Recruitment and Retention Plan Update template.

Projected Completion Date: May 2018

Key Activity 2: LDSS and VAs to complete the 18-month Recruitment and Retention Plan Update template and submit to the OCFS regional office

Projected Completion Date: July 2018

Key Activity 3: OCFS Regional Office will review 18-month Recruitment and Retention Plan Update with each LDSS/VA during quarterly site visits and provide technical assistance if additional recruitment efforts are needed.

Projected Completion Date: October 2018

Strategy 7: *Enhance the process for effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources for children waiting for permanency.*

Key Activity 1: To promote the increase in the number of eligible children photo listed, OCFS Home and Regional Office staff will use data reports to monitor the photo listing of children freed for adoption, and provide technical assistance as needed to LDSS/VAs.

Projected Completion Date: Ongoing

Key Activity 2: Training and system support will be provided by the NEICE developer Tetrus, to all LDSS/VA NEICE system users.

Projected Completion Date: June 2018 and ongoing

Key Activity 3: Implement the use of NIECE to better monitor the number of home studies for children awaiting placement out of NYS and work with any states that exceed the 60-day timeframe for the home-study.

Projected Completion Date: June 2018 and ongoing

Goal 5: Provide services to families who are at risk of entering the child welfare system that increase knowledge and protective factors that can help keep children in their home that may otherwise be at risk of maltreatment or neglect and placed in foster care. (Case Review Items 6, 17 and 18; Systemic Factor –Service Array and Resource Development: Item 29 Array of Services and Item 30 – Individualized Services)

Strategy 1: *Expand, enhance, support and strengthen the quality of home visiting services to high risk families residing in high need areas of New York through the provision of Healthy Families New York home visiting program*

Key Activity 1: OCFS Home Office in partnership with HFNY Central Administration partners will provide intensive technical assistance and site support for the new programs that began in five new communities in 2017, and support the expansion of services in additional communities as the program expands.

Projected Completion Date: Ongoing

Key Activity 2: OCFS Home Office will provide funding for up to eight programs to expand services to high need families in high risk communities in New York.

Projected Completion Date: September 2018

Key Activity 3: Complete an on-site monitoring and technical assistance visit annually to each of the 43 funded programs

Projected Completion Date: Ongoing

Key Activity 4: OCFS Home Office will monitor program enrollment and service delivery quarterly and identify trends and provide technical assistance on an as needed basis.

Projected Completion Date: February 2018 and ongoing

Key Activity 5: Programs in partnership with OCFS Home Office will conduct data analysis annually to determine barriers to engagement and enrollment and develop a plan to overcome identified barriers.

Projected Completion Date: Ongoing following program's contract cycle.

Key Activity 6: OCFS in partnership with Prevent Child Abuse New York will provide training for role specific work with families for all new providers that hired by HFNY programs.

Projected Completion Date: Ongoing

Key Activity 7: OCFS Home Office will provide support and technical assistance to programs as they complete the Model Developer's accreditation process.

Projected Completion Date: September 2018

Enhance oversight and monitoring in several key areas

A reliable and accurate Statewide Information System is critical when utilizing a CQI model. OCFS recognizes the need to provide oversight and monitoring of the accuracy and timeliness of the data entered into the state's CONNECTIONS system. OCFS will monitor LDSS and VA data accuracy and compliance by using the Statewide Information System Tool for Accuracy, which will be used in all case record reviews. OCFS will also develop management reports that will be available in the Data Warehouse, to be used by LDSS and VAs managers in monitoring their performance. OCFS will utilize Data Leaders in the Regional Offices to provide technical assistance to the LDSSs and VAs in access the reports.

Another area that will be addressed through our oversight and monitoring will be the licensing of foster and adoptive parents. Recruitment and retention of qualified foster and adoptive homes is critical to the foster care system. Home Finders need to have the knowledge and skills to help them recruit, license and retain families. OCFS recognized that the tools and templates used for licensing of foster/adoptive parents varied across the state and that little guidance was available to support turning regulation into skilled practice.

OCFS will develop and disseminate standardized templates to be used for the application, home study and reauthorization process. A licensing guide for Home Finders will also be developed and disseminated that will detail best practices in recruitment and retention, the requirements in licensing of homes, their role in supporting foster/adoptive parents, their role in keeping children safe in the foster homes, and communicating with foster/adoptive caseworkers.

Understanding that Home Finders are the field experts, OCFS convened a summit in August 2017, designed specifically for LDSS and VA staff who fulfill the role of foster parent recruiter and home certifier (for purposes here, we will refer to this individual as the Home Finder). At the two-day event, OCFS shared best practice and guidance on recruitment, retention and support of relative and non-relative foster parents. Participants were asked to provide feedback on the draft foster/adoptive parent application, home study and reauthorization forms and proposed Home

Finders Guide that are to be developed to promote more consistency in the licensing of foster home process. OCFS gathered and analyzed the responses, and will incorporate the input as practicable.

Another step OCFS took to promote consistency in the licensing of foster and adoptive homes, was disseminating a directive on June 7, 2017, requiring LDSSs and VAs to record vital information regarding the initial certification or approval, and the annual renewal or reauthorization of foster homes in specific sections of the Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD) stage in CONNECTIONS. Included in the vital information is the criminal history background check.

The directive also required at the time of the initial application for certification or approval a review of information available in CONNECTIONS by the LDSS and VA to determine whether prospective foster parents have previously held a certificate or letter of approval as a foster parent and whether such certificate or letter of approval was revoked, not renewed, or a foster child was removed from the foster home for health or safety reasons. The information about previous certification or approval must be taken into consideration by LDSS or VA when determining whether a new certificate or approval should be issued to a prospective foster parent. These efforts are aimed at certifying and approving qualified foster and adoptive parents with the goal of reducing abuse and maltreatment in foster care.

Once the templates have been finalized, the FAD stage in CONNECTIONS will be amended to align with the standardized data collection required in the licensing process. OCFS will routinely perform desk audits on a sample of newly certified/approved foster/adoptive homes to review the FAD of LDSS or VA documentation of previous certifications/history, SCR database checks, SEL and CHC responses and documentation of safety assessments when necessary. A FAD checklist has been developed to assess compliance in documenting the CHC, SEL and SCR responses. FADs found to be deficient will be referred to the OCFS Regional Offices for follow-up and technical assistance with LDSS and VAs.

Goal 6: Increase the accuracy and timeliness of the data entered into the CONNECTIONS system.
(Systemic Factor – Item 19 - Statewide Information System)

Strategy 1: Review the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is in foster care during each case record review to promote that the information in Connections is accurate based on the information in the case record.

Strategy 2: Develop and disseminate via the Data Warehouse LDSS/VA specific data reports that indicate the timeliness of completing the data entry of key case milestones (timeliness of data entry into care, timeliness of setting PPG, timeliness of discharge from care), and reports that detail cases missing key demographic characteristics.

Strategy 1: Review the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is foster care during each case record review to promote that the information in CONNECTIONS is accurate based on the information in the case record.

Key Activity 1: Implement the Statewide Information System Tool for Accuracy as part of each case record review and provide feedback on accuracy of the data to the LDSS/voluntary agency as part of the case findings.

Projected Completion Date: Ongoing

Key Activity 2: Deficiencies in the accuracy of the data noted in the findings from the case review will require LDSS/VA to submit a Program Improvement Plan to the Regional Office, who will monitor until the cases are accurately updated.

Projected Completion Date: Ongoing

Strategy 2: Develop and disseminate via the Data Warehouse LDSS/VA specific data reports that indicate the timeliness of completing the data entry of key case milestones (timeliness of data entry into care, timeliness of setting PPG, timeliness of discharge from care), and reports that detail cases missing key demographic characteristics.

Key Activity 1: Develop reports in the Data Warehouse that will be used by LDSSs and VAs on a monthly basis that list missing data elements (sex, ethnicity, date of birth, PPG) in CONNECTIONS and record the timeliness of completing data entry of key milestones.

Projected Completion Date: January 2018

Key Activity 2: Create and disseminate tip sheets through the local data leaders and ITS CONNECTIONS

Implementation Team that will be used by LDSS/VA caseworkers and supervisors on how to access and use the reports in the Data Warehouse in monitoring local data accuracy and compliance.

Projected Completion Date: February 2018

Key Activity 3: OCFS Home Office will monitor LDSS performance on data entry of key milestones and reduction of missing data elements on a quarterly basis and provide feedback to LDSS/VA.

Projected Completion Date: March 2018 and ongoing

Goal 7: Improve the statewide consistency of foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment and retention through oversight, monitoring and technical assistance to LDSS and VAs. (Systemic Factor - Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention Item 33 - Standards Applied Equally, Item 34 - Requirements for Criminal Background Checks)

Strategy 1: Revise and re-issue the foster/adoptive parent application, home study and reauthorization templates that will be mandated for use by LDSS/VAs to aid in promoting consistency in the licensing process.

Strategy 2: Revise and re-issue the foster boarding home licensing guide that will aid in promoting consistency in the licensing process and provide practice guidance to Home Finders.

Strategy 1: *Revise and re-issue the foster/adoptive parent application, and home study templates that will be mandated for use by LDSS/VAs to aid in promoting consistency in the licensing process.*

Key Activity 1: Home Office will develop a standardized an application, and home study forms utilizing the input from the Home Finders Summit, and provide guidance to Home Finders on their use.

Projected Completion Date: February 2018

Key Activity 2: Issue an Administrative Directive to LDSS/VAs requiring the use of the new templates and providing instructions.

Projected Completion Date: March 2018

Key Activity 3: Provide training via webinar or computer based training regarding use of standardized licensing templates in the FAD.

Projected Completion Date: August 2018

Key Activity 4: OCFS Home Office will monitor the consistent application of foster care licensing state standards, including criminal background checks, through LDSS/VA quarterly desk reviews using the desk review instrument. OCFS Regional Offices will share findings with respective LDSS/VAs and require and monitor corrective action when necessary.

Projected Completion Date: September 2018 and ongoing

Strategy 2: *Revise and re-issue the foster boarding home licensing guide that will aid in promoting consistency in the licensing process and provide practice guidance to Home Finders.*

Key Activity 1: The foster boarding home licensing guide will be revised using input gathered from the Home Finding Summit and distributed to LDSS and VA Home Finders that will include best practice guidance in addition to regulations.

Projected Completion Date: December 2018