



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

**Pennsylvania Round Three Child and Family Services Review
Program Improvement Plan**

Submitted by the Office of Children, Youth and Families

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Contents

Section I: Child and Family Services Review Overview and Key Findings	1
Child and Family Services Review Overview	1
Pennsylvania Round Three Child and Family Services Review Findings	2
<i>Metropolitan Area Specific Findings</i>	4
Section II: Pennsylvania’s Approach to the Program Improvement Plan	6
Continuous Quality Improvement and the PA Child Welfare Practice Model	6
PA Child Welfare Competencies	7
Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council	8
Collaboration with the Courts	9
Additional Data Sources Utilized in PIP Development	13
Program Improvement Plan Goals	15
Workforce	15
Engagement	16
Investigations/Assessments	16
Planning/Monitoring	17
Program Improvement Plan Strategies and Key Activities	18
Section III. Program Improvement Plan Template	20
Appendix A: PA Child Welfare Practice Model	52
Appendix B: PA Child Welfare Council and Subcommittee Membership	55
PA Child Welfare Council	55
PA Child Welfare Council – Safety Subcommittee	57
PA Child Welfare Council – Permanency Subcommittee	58
PA Child Welfare Council – Well-Being Subcommittee	59
PA Child Welfare Council – Resources/Cross-Categorical Subcommittee	60
Appendix C: Licensing Inspection Summary Data	61
Appendix D: PA CFSR Round 3 Data Profile	63
Appendix E: QSR Overview and Methodology	64

Section I: Child and Family Services Review Overview and Key Findings

Child and Family Services Review Overview

The federal Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) are a collaborative effort between the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and states to help ensure that quality services are provided to children, youth and families served through state child welfare systems. The United States Department of Health and Human Services is required to administer the reviews under Section 1123A of the Social Security Act (the Act), 42 U.S.C. § 1320a-2a, to determine whether state child and family services programs are in substantial conformity with state plan requirements set forth in titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act. The reviews also evaluate implementation of state programs related to child protection, foster care, adoption, family preservation and family support, and independent living services. The CFSR provides an opportunity to examine state program and practices in order to identify strengths and challenges, focusing on outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being.

Through the CFSR, states are assessed on the following safety, permanency and well-being outcomes:

- Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect;
- Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate;
- Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations;
- Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of relationships and connections is preserved for children;
- Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs;
- Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs; and
- Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

In addition to the seven safety, permanency and well-being outcomes, states are also evaluated on seven systematic factors which have the capacity, if well-functioning, to promote positive outcomes for children, youth and families. The seven systemic factors are:

- Statewide information system;
- Case review system;
- Quality assurance system;
- Staff and provider training;
- Service array and resource development;
- Agency responsiveness to the community; and
- Foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment and retention.

The CFSR is conducted utilizing a two-phase process. The first phase involves the submission of a statewide assessment which is developed by the state in collaboration with key stakeholders. Through

the statewide assessment, the state presents available quantitative and qualitative data and information related to state performance on the seven CFSR safety, permanency and well-being outcomes and seven CFSR systemic factors.

The second phase of the review process involves an onsite review, which includes an in-depth look at a sample of cases for the purpose of determining outcome performance related to safety, permanency and well-being. Performance is assessed through both review of case records and interviews with key case participants such as children, parents, caseworkers, foster parents and other team members. In addition, stakeholder interviews are conducted to further inform the assessment of the seven systemic factors. Once both phases of the review are complete, ACF issues a final report to the state detailing the review findings.

If a state does not demonstrate substantial conformity with one or more the seven outcomes or seven systemic factors assessed through the review process, the state must develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) jointly with stakeholders and ACF that addresses the identified areas needing improvement. Once the PIP is approved by ACF, the state then has two years to implement the plan, with ACF and the state working to monitor the plan's implementation and the state's progress towards the plan-specified goals.

Pennsylvania Round Three Child and Family Services Review Findings

Pennsylvania participated in the most recent round of the CFSR in calendar year 2017. As part of the CFSR process, a random sample of 65 cases was selected and reviewed across seven counties (Butler, Centre, Lehigh, Lycoming, Mercer, Northampton and Philadelphia) between April and July 2017. In addition, interviews were conducted with 17 different stakeholder groups. Pennsylvania received the final report on November 2, 2017, and ACF held a final results meeting with the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF), the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council (Council) and other key stakeholders on November 29, 2017.

Several areas of strength at both the system and case practice level were noted among the findings, which include:

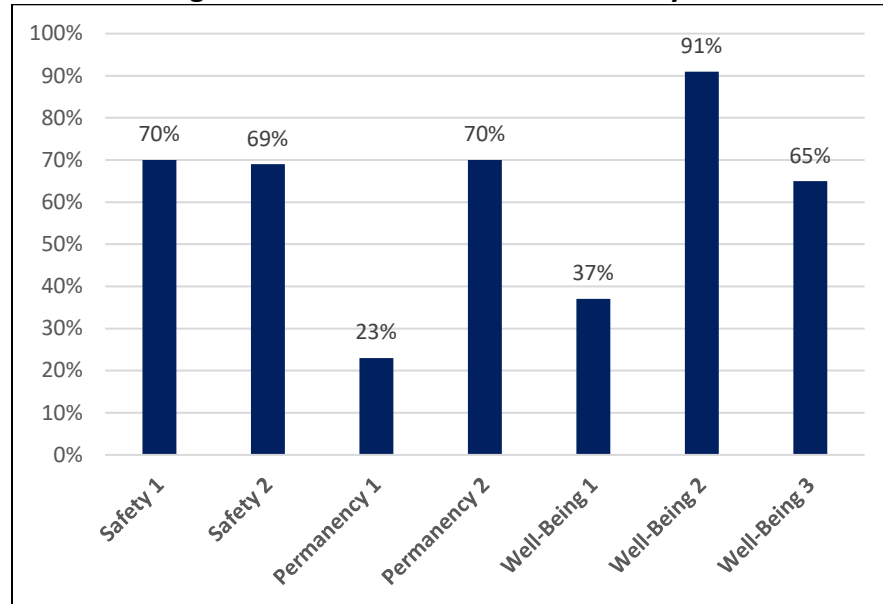
- Commitment to continuous quality improvement;
- Commitment to collaborative relationships with stakeholders;
- State's willingness to share data and information with stakeholders;
- Efforts to ensure that siblings are placed together in foster care;
- Ensuring that children have appropriate services to meet their educational needs;
- Stability of children's placements while in foster care;
- Increased use of relatives and kin as placement options;
- Assessing the needs of relative caregivers and the provision of services to meet identified needs;
- Frequent permanency hearings held; and
- Strong collaborative partnership between the agency and courts.

Opportunities for improvement at both the system and case practice level were also identified and include the following:

- Addressing workforce concerns, including high caseloads and workforce turnover;
- Enhancing safety assessment practices and the provision of services to address identified safety issues;
- Strengthening practice related to the implementation and monitoring of safety plans;
- Improving timely achievement of permanency for children and youth by establishing permanency goals that best meet their needs and implementing those goals through the use of concurrent planning;
- Strengthening efforts to ensure parents, particularly non-custodial and fathers, are consistently and meaningfully engaged in case planning and services;
- Improving upon the frequency and quality of caseworker contacts with parents, quality assessment of parents' needs and provision of effective services to meet parents' needs; and
- Enhancing the current array of services available to families to improve availability and access to substance abuse services.

For a state to meet federal performance standards on the safety, permanency and well-being outcomes, 95 percent of the cases assessed on the outcome must be found to achieve substantial conformity.¹ The percentage of cases from Pennsylvania's onsite review found to be in substantial conformity for each of the seven outcomes is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Percentage of Cases in Substantial Conformity with CFSR Outcomes



Source [Pennsylvania CFSR Final Report 2017, ACF], [November 2017]

¹ Substantial conformity on the safety, permanency and well-being outcomes is determined through assessment of one or more of the 18 items included in the case review, and each item is rated a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on an evaluation of certain child welfare practices and processes in the cases reviewed.

Overall, Pennsylvania was found not to be in substantial conformity with the seven safety, permanency and well-being outcomes. Pennsylvania achieved substantial conformity on five of the seven systemic factors,² with the statewide information system and service array factors found to be areas needing further improvement. Based upon these findings, Pennsylvania has developed this PIP to address the identified areas of non-conformity to strengthen outcomes for children, youth and families who are served through Pennsylvania's child welfare system.

Metropolitan Area Specific Findings

The CFSR requires that the sites reviewed during the case review process include the state's largest metropolitan area. In Pennsylvania, a total of 21 cases were reviewed in Philadelphia during the onsite review in the month of July 2017. The cases reviewed in Philadelphia represented approximately 25 percent of the total 65 cases reviewed during the CFSR and less than one percent of all cases open in Philadelphia at the time of the review.

The findings from Philadelphia were analyzed and compared to findings across the other six counties to determine whether there were any dynamics specific to the metropolitan area which significantly impacted the statewide CFSR findings. Overall, across all counties reviewed during the onsite CFSR, there was occasional variation in performance across individual items from county to county; however, the overall outcome ratings tended to ultimately be comparative. This revealed that while counties experienced overall similar safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes, the factors contributing to each county's overall outcome performance were not identical. Observance of this dynamic, which was reinforced through review of other data sources and stakeholder feedback, significantly shaped the development of Pennsylvania's PIP, which includes a key strategy to provide individualized technical assistance and support to counties based on their specific identified needs related to improving CFSR outcomes.

An analysis of Philadelphia performance on the seven safety, permanency and well-being outcomes did not identify meaningful difference in performance when compared to the performance of the other six counties combined. The exception to this was found in relation to Safety Outcome 1, in which there was a 53-percentage point difference between Philadelphia and the combined performance of the other six counties included in the review. It was acknowledged during the review that the metropolitan area had experienced significant turnover in the staff assigned to Child Protective Services (CPS) investigations and General Protective Services (GPS) assessments during the period under review which contributed to some delay in meeting CPS and GPS response times. This had been addressed by the agency by the time of the actual onsite review. In general, CFSR findings revealed workforce turnover was a significant factor impacting outcomes statewide, therefore a goal was incorporated within this PIP to address turnover and other identified workforce issues. Based on the analysis of the findings from the metropolitan area, no improvement strategies specific to Philadelphia were included in

² Substantial conformity on the seven systemic factors is determined through assessment of 18 different items, with each reflecting key federal program requirements. An item is rated as a Strength or an Area Needing improvement based on how well the item-specific requirement is functioning. A determination of the rating is based on the statewide assessment and, as needed, interviews with key system partners. For a state to be in substantial conformity with a systemic factor, no more than one item associated with the factor can be rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Pennsylvania's PIP. It should be noted, however, that Pennsylvania's PIP contains a strategy designed to identify and address the need for improvement on key CFSR outcomes within any of Pennsylvania's 67 counties.

Pennsylvania's full CFSR final report can be accessed online through the Department of Human Services website at:

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Pages/Child-Youth-and-Family-Service-Plan.aspx>

Section II: Pennsylvania’s Approach to the Program Improvement Plan

OCYF, within the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), is the state agency responsible to lead, plan, direct and coordinate statewide children’s programs including social services provided directly by County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYA) and OCYF’s Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services through the Youth Development Centers and Youth Forestry Camps. OCYF is responsible for the development of the state’s federal Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and any PIP that may be required as a result of the state’s participation in the federal CFSR.

Continuous Quality Improvement and the PA Child Welfare Practice Model

OCYF is committed to utilization of a continuous quality improvement framework and process to help improve the outcomes for children, youth and families served by Pennsylvania’s child welfare system. Continuous quality improvement (CQI) is defined by Casey Family Programs and the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement as “the complete process of identifying, describing and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising, solutions.” To support integration of CQI at the state and local level, Pennsylvania adopted the American Public Human Services’ DAPIM™ model which is structured around a systematic change cycle involving defining, assessing, planning, implementing and monitoring.

OCYF’s utilization of a CQI approach in achieving positive outcomes was identified as an area of strength for the state through the CFSR and provides a framework to drive development, implementation and monitoring of Pennsylvania’s PIP. In developing the PIP, OCYF applied the CQI process to help define key areas needing improvement, identified and reviewed data to assess strengths and gaps, and developed a plan that will address the underlying causes of challenges identified within the child welfare system.

In working to identify the goals, strategies, and interventions which comprise the PIP, efforts were made to connect back to the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice Model (Practice Model) and the core skills identified within the model that must be demonstrated in order to successfully achieve desired outcomes. In 2013, OCYF, in collaboration with system partners, developed the Practice Model, which was established to help guide the work of those involved in the child welfare system in collaborating to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families. The Practice Model helps to provide a consistent basis for decision making; sets forth clear expectations and values for approaching work with children, youth, and families; places a focus on desired outcomes; provides guidance in working with service providers and other child welfare systems; and establishes a way to evaluate practice performance.

The Practice Model asserts that children, youth, families, child welfare representatives and other child and family service partners should participate as team members with shared community responsibility to achieve and maintain the following outcomes, which closely mirror those assessed as part of the CFSR:

- Safety from abuse and neglect;

- Enduring and certain permanence and timely achievement of stability, supports and lifelong connections;
- Enhancement of the family's ability to meet their child/youth's well-being, including physical, educational, behavioral, and educational needs;
- Support families within their own homes and communities through comprehensive and accessible services that build on strengths and address individual trauma, needs and concerns;
- Strengthened families that successfully sustain positive changes that lead to safe, nurturing and healthy environments; and
- Skilled and responsive child welfare professionals, who perform with a shared sense of accountability for assuring child-centered, family focused policy, best practice and positive outcomes.

The full Practice Model can be viewed online through the University of Pittsburgh's, School of Social Work, Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) website at <http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/PracticeModel.htm> and is also provided as Appendix A.

PA Child Welfare Competencies

The goals identified in Pennsylvania's CFSR PIP reflect Pennsylvania's core child welfare competencies. Strategies were also included in the PIP to help further strengthen the mastery of these competencies among front line staff at the local level to enhance the quality of case practice and service delivery to children, youth and families. Competencies are broad statements of knowledge, values and skills that are essential for effective child welfare practice. The goal of competency-based education and preparation for practice is to build child welfare professionals' competence, confidence, and compassion to support the safety, permanency and well-being of children involved in Pennsylvania's child welfare system. In collaboration with county staff, private providers, and various committees representing diverse professional groups, the Competency Rewrite Workgroup revised and updated Pennsylvania's child welfare competencies in 2017. The workgroup cross-walked the competencies with the Practice Model and components of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics leading to the final version of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Competencies. The competencies align with Pennsylvania's Practice Model as well as the DHS and OCYF mission, vision and goals and the Quality Services Review (QSR) indicators. The competencies also align with the *Mission and Guiding Principles for Pennsylvania's Child Dependency System* created by the Supreme Court's State Roundtable in 2009. This full document can be viewed online through the Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC) website at <http://www.ocfcpacourts.us/assets/upload/Resources/Documents/GP%20Document%20to%20printer.pdf>

To support the use of competencies in the education and preparation of child welfare professionals, examples of behavioral indicators were identified at various levels of responsibility within an organization (i.e. caseworker, supervisor or manager, and administrator). Behavioral indicators are observable and measurable practices that individuals employ when they are demonstrating a particular competency and are specific and descriptive for assessment purposes in determining a child welfare professional's progress toward mastering a competency. Examples of activities, which are specific actions performed in support of behavioral indicators, are included in Pennsylvania's Child Welfare

Competency Guide³ to provide additional clarification; however, they are not intended to represent a comprehensive list. Supervisors, managers, and administrators are encouraged to identify activities unique to their agencies and departments and apply them to any one or more competency or behavioral indicator.

Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council

Collaboration is a foundational component of the Practice Model and must be modeled at every level and across all partnerships to improve outcomes for children, youth and families. The Council, which was established in 2016, is the dynamic entity that provides sustained, shared leadership and guidance to support strategic visioning for members of Pennsylvania’s child welfare system. The Council was developed to assist in establishing priorities and expectations, providing necessary support and helping to identify and secure resources to support strategies for improvement. The Council serves to inform this strategic visioning by monitoring and utilizing quantitative and qualitative data, which informs the establishment of priorities related to federal, state and locally driven improvement efforts. This is accomplished through use of a CQI process and framework that considers the utilization of a theory of change as a roadmap to guide planning, implementation and monitoring efforts.

Comprised of over 60 individuals representing a broad range of stakeholder groups, the Council includes voices from various state offices, urban and rural County Children and Youth Agencies, the private provider community, the Courts, foundations, juvenile justice, law enforcement, advocates, consumers, universities and technical assistance providers. In addition, four subcommittees were convened under the Council and continue to meet:

- Safety;
- Permanency;
- Well-Being; and
- Resources/Cross-Categorical.

A listing of the key system partners who are represented on the PA Child Welfare Council and the four subcommittees is provided as Appendix B. By bringing together individuals with diverse expertise, skills and perspectives, the Council and its subcommittees are better able to gain varied perspectives and ensure a greater unity of effort focused on improving outcomes for children and families.

The Council was identified as the key stakeholder group responsible for helping develop, implement, and monitor Pennsylvania’s CFSP and CFSR PIP. The subcommittees met regularly in order to help devise the goals, strategies/interventions, and key activities for Pennsylvania’s PIP and the Council membership and subcommittees continue to meet and be engaged in conversations regarding PIP finalization as well as planning for the CFSP development. Each subcommittee reviewed data, established problem statements, conducted root cause analysis, and identified target populations as part of their work to think critically about their consideration and selection of key strategies for both practice and system change. To best support the dynamic nature of planning for system change, the Council has been purposeful in using a structured communication plan that ensures transparency while also ensuring

³ See also <http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/pcwc/Competencies.htm>

accountability. The Council’s established communication structure (see Figure 2) has been key to the success throughout the process. The subcommittee co-chairs communicated regularly with the Council, as well as one another, to ensure that connections were made as needed between the work of the subcommittees and duplication of efforts avoided.

Figure 2. PA Child Welfare Council Communication Flow



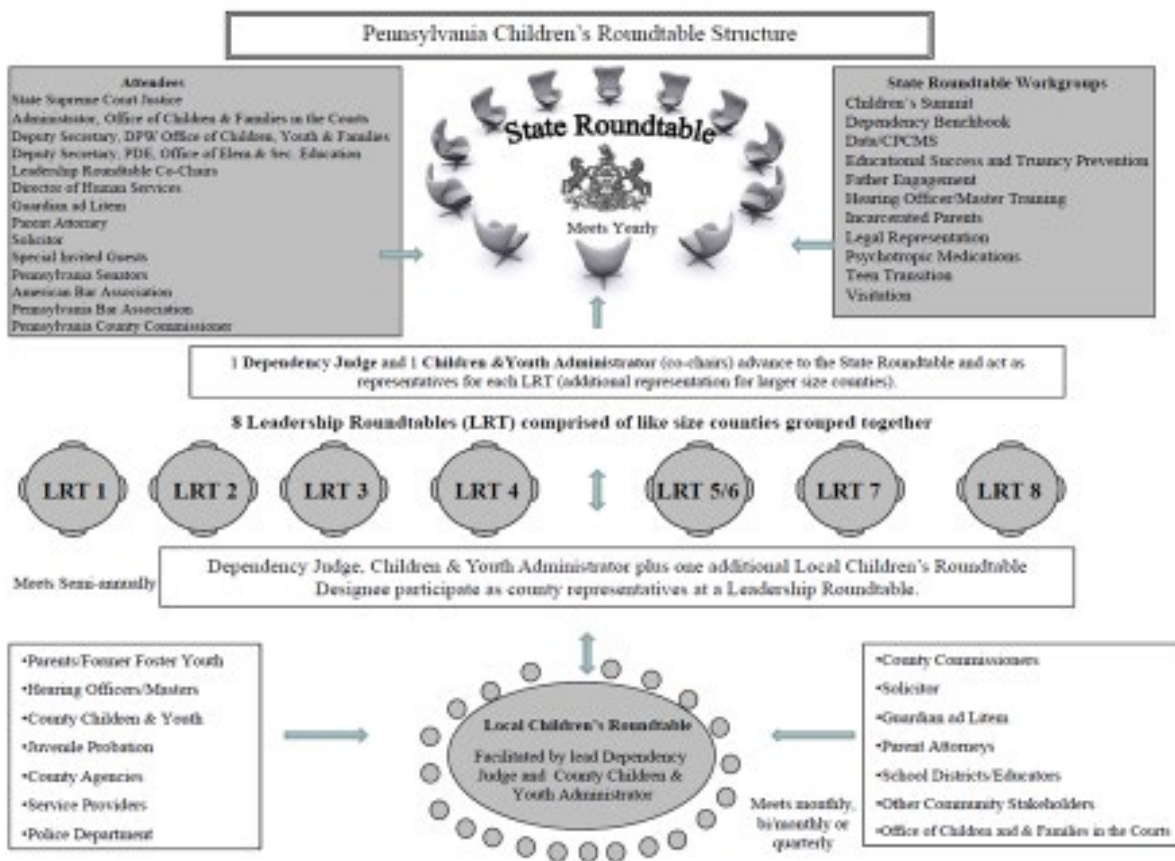
Based upon the recommendations of the subcommittees and Council, the draft PIP was presented to the full Council on January 17, 2018, where the goals and strategies/interventions were reviewed and discussed. Communication about the PIP and CFSP will remain ongoing throughout the phases of PIP and CFSP development, implementation and monitoring.

Collaboration with the Courts

While collaboration between OCYF, CCYA and the judiciary is supported through the Council, there is also a robust structure in place to facilitate ongoing cooperative efforts between the courts and

child welfare system through the Children’s Roundtable Initiative, which was implemented to support the work of Pennsylvania’s Court Improvement Program (CIP). The Children’s Roundtable structure includes three tiers. The three tiers include Local Children's Roundtables (LCR) in each of the state's 60 judicial districts, seven statewide Leadership Roundtables (LR) and one State Roundtable. This three-tiered system of Roundtables provides the overarching structure for Pennsylvania's CIP. Pennsylvania uses the Roundtable model to guide the flow of dependency practice and the collaboration between the Dependency Courts, OCFC, OCYF and other relevant stakeholders.

Figure 3. PA Children’s Round Table Structure



The Roundtable structure enables Pennsylvania to be responsive to the common needs of the state, while at the same time allowing flexibility for each judicial district to function in a way that best meets its individual needs. The flow of information and communication occurs both from the top down and the bottom up. This ensures that a mutual understanding and collaboration of permanency efforts exist for all Pennsylvania agencies and court-involved children.

Overall, the system moves Pennsylvania forward in a consistent, uniform and informed manner as it endeavors to address permanence, safety and well-being for all children in the dependency system.

This organizational structure contributes to a free flow of ideas, challenges and solutions, from Children's Roundtables to Leadership Roundtables to the State Roundtable and back again.

The highest level of the three-tiered structure, the State Roundtable, is convened by the Honorable Max Baer, Supreme Court Justice, and co-chaired with the OCYF Deputy Secretary. Agenda items come from leadership and the LCRs. The final agenda is set by Justice Baer, the OCYF Deputy Secretary and the OCFC Director. The State Roundtable also consists of other pertinent state and national leaders that have specific expertise in dependency matters. Many State Roundtable members are also members of the Council.

During the State Roundtable meeting, accomplishments are shared, LR co-chairs report on themes from the seven LRs, updates on initiatives are presented, statewide issues are discussed, and upcoming events are announced. It is at this annual roundtable that OCFC's priorities for the following year are set and activities are established for the intended use of CIP award dollars.

From the State Roundtable membership, workgroups, and committees are established to research and address statewide areas of concern. All workgroups are co-chaired by a judge and child welfare administrator from different jurisdictions to ensure issues specific to legal practice and issues specific to social work practice are addressed. Current committees and workgroups include: Bench Book Committee, the Hearing Officer Education Committee, Pennsylvania Children's Roundtable Summit Committee, the Child Welfare Retention Workgroup, the Drug & Alcohol Workgroup, the Trauma Workgroup, and the Congregate Care Workgroup. Former Workgroups include: the Pennsylvania Dependency Guiding Principles Workgroup, Father Engagement Workgroup, Visitation Workgroup, Educational Success and Truancy Prevention Workgroup, Psychotropic Medication Workgroup, Transitional Youth Workgroup, Dependent Children of Incarcerated Parents Workgroup, Training for Legal Representation Workgroup, the Current Permanency Practice Initiative Workgroup, and the Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS) Users Group. Reports outlining the efforts of each of the Workgroups is available at <http://www.ocfpcourts.us/childrens-roundtable-initiative/state-roundtable-workgroupscommittees>.

At the foundational level, each judicial district in Pennsylvania convenes a LCR. The LCR is convened by the county dependency judge, co-facilitated with the local child welfare administrator and is comprised of relevant stakeholders in the local dependency system. The second or intermediate level of roundtable infrastructure is known as the LR. There are seven LRs dividing Pennsylvania's 60 judicial districts into groups based on size. The dependency judge, children and youth administrator and one additional designated stakeholder from the LCR join one of the seven LRs. At this level, counties can raise topical areas of interest or concerns from their own LCR and provide each other with support, problem solving techniques and practice awareness. Issues are identified during LR meetings and common themes are brought to the highest roundtable level, the State Roundtable. During this statewide meeting, accomplishments are shared, LR co-chairs report on themes from the seven LRs, updates on initiatives are presented and upcoming events are announced.

Over the years a strong, positive, administrative relationship has formed between courts and child welfare at both a state and local level. Workgroups are typically co-chaired by a judge and a child

welfare administrator; the State Roundtable is tri- chaired by the state child welfare Deputy Secretary, a Supreme Court Justice and the CIP Director; trainings are done in tandem. The State Roundtable, tri-chaired by the state child welfare Deputy Secretary, decides all CIP priorities. The CIP Director is on the Council. CIP is infused into child welfare and child welfare is infused into CIP.

Pennsylvania's courts and CIP staff are extensively involved in the state's CFSR and participate in a multitude of activities, meetings, discussions, projects, trainings and data sharing. Court and child welfare staff have worked hand in hand on an administrative level to examine root causes related to our most recent CFSR and potential strategies to include in our PIP.

More specifically, judges, hearing officers, attorneys and CIP staff were extensively involved in Pennsylvania's most recent CFSR. This involvement included the development of Pennsylvania's Statewide Assessment, interviews and focus groups with judges, attorneys, hearing officers and CIP staff. In addition, CIP staff were CFSR reviewers, attended the exit conference at the close of the CFSR and the CFSR results session. CIP staff were provided CFSR results and assisted in the dissemination of CFSR findings during the 2017 Fall and 2018 Spring Leadership Roundtables. The CFSR findings were shared jointly by OCYF and OCFC staff during the 2017 Fall and 2018 Spring meetings and the 2018 State Roundtable meeting. This sharing of information was done through a presentation of findings and discussion of root causes. All involved agreed that root causes include staff turnover/retention, family engagement, gaps in service array and the need for a statewide child welfare data system.

CIP staff and the courts were involved in the PIP design and development. CIP staff assisted in the writing of the PIP and will assist in the ongoing monitoring. Discussion of needed system changes were conducted at the 2017 Fall and 2018 and 2019 Spring LRT meetings. Priority areas of the State Roundtable, represented by current and past workgroups, are reflected in the PIP. Most significant are the Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) (Phase One and Two, including 13 counties), the newly formed Congregate Care Workgroup, and the Caseworker Retention Workgroup. All three are specifically addressing root causes identified in the PIP and are being jointly led by the Court and child welfare agency.

In addition to the FEI and the aforementioned workgroups, another joint child welfare and court project relevant to the CFSR findings is the Permanency Hearing Review Checklist. The Permanency Review Hearing Checklist Project was implemented in fourteen courtrooms in eleven counties. The "checklist" provided judicial officers, legal advocates and caseworkers a "guide" for hearing discussions as well as evidence presentation. The project began in November 2016 and continues to date. The identification of this joint project came as a result of court observations conducted in 2015, a review of placement data and discussion with OCYF.

The Permanency Review Hearing Checklist (PRHC) theory of change is as follows:

Implementation will:

- Increase thoroughness of the permanency review hearing measured by:
 - Pre-implementation survey and post-implementation survey rating measures

- Comparison of pre-implementation observation data and post-implementation observation data
- Increased hearing thoroughness will lead to better outcomes for children measured by:
 - Increased use of Kinship Care
 - Decreased use of Congregate Care
 - Decreased days in care

Preliminary evaluation results were provided to the 2018 State Roundtable and long-term outcomes will be collected December 2018 to inform ongoing work to improve permanency outcomes.

Finally, new sections of the Pennsylvania Dependency Bench Book and dependency related Juvenile Court Rules of Procedure are jointly discussed during their design so as to ensure consistency between child welfare practice and judicial practice and oversight. Recent examples include the current Dependency Bench Book revisions (i.e. Family Finding, Inter-County Transfers, etc.) and Court Procedural Rules related to family inclusion and the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Additional Data Sources Utilized in PIP Development

In addition to the findings from the onsite CFSR, other state quantitative and qualitative data was analyzed and used by the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council and the subcommittees in assessing Pennsylvania’s performance in relation to safety, permanency and well-being outcomes and the CFSR systemic factors. While the CFSR provided an opportunity to conduct an in-depth review of 65 cases from seven jurisdictions across the state, OCYF, in collaboration with stakeholders, identified that the information obtained through the CFSR alone was not sufficient to support full understanding of child welfare outcomes and practice in Pennsylvania. The additional data sources primarily used to inform root cause analysis leading to the selection of goals and strategies for Pennsylvania’s PIP include the following:

- **Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)**
 - For children who are in foster care, AFCARS captures information related to when and why a child entered foster care, demographics on the child and the individuals from whom the child was removed, characteristics on foster care placements, the child’s most recent case plan goal, and the reason the child exits foster care (for instance, the child was reunified or adopted).
 - AFCARS data reviewed reflected statewide statistics and primarily covered federal fiscal years 2014 through 2016.
- **Annual CCYA Licensing Inspections Summaries**
 - Information regarding citations issued to each county children and youth agency as a result of the county annual licensing inspection is documented in a licensing inspection summary (LIS), which is made available to the public through the DHS website. LIS information on citations related to CFSR items and outcomes was aggregated and analyzed to determine statewide trends.

- The LIS data reviewed reflected information gathered during licensing inspections which occurred during calendar years, 2015, 2016, and 2017. Further information about data captured through the LIS is provided as Appendix C.
- **CFSR Round 3 Data Indicators and National Standards**
 - The CFSR data indicators provide state performance on certain CFSR safety and permanency measures relative to national performance standards determined by ACF.
 - Performance is provided to states in a data profile generated by ACF. A copy of Pennsylvania’s most current data profile is provided as Appendix D.
- **Child Welfare Information Solution Data (CWIS)**
 - CWIS captures information regarding CPS and GPS reports received at ChildLine and the county children and youth agencies.
 - The CWIS data reviewed reflected the information contained in the PA 2016 Annual Child Protective Services Report available on the DHS website at <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Pages/Child-Abuse-Reports.aspx>.
- **Quality Services Review (QSR) Data**
 - The QSR is a state supported case review process in which a volunteer team of reviewers gathers information directly from families, children and service team members so that they can assess the current safety, permanency and well-being of a children while also evaluating the system's ability to implement Pennsylvania's Practice Model. The full QSR Protocol can be viewed online through the CWRC website at <http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Resources/PA%20QSR%20Protocol%20Version%204.0.pdf>.
 - The QSR data reviewed reflected findings from the first six rounds of the QSR, conducted between calendar years 2010 through 2016. Further information regarding information gathered through the QSR process is provided as Appendix E.
- **Stakeholder Interviews**
 - Interviews with a number of key stakeholders were conducted during the onsite CFSR to help inform further understanding of Pennsylvania’s performance on the CFSR systemic factors.
 - The notes from focus groups conducted with caseworkers and supervisors during the QSRs were also analyzed and key themes pulled to provide additional information to inform root cause analysis.

In addition to the data sources listed above specifically utilized by the Council subcommittees, other data and information produced through Pennsylvania’s CQI system also provided important context for understanding performance on CFSR outcomes and informed PIP development. Through the annual county Needs Based Plan and Budget (NBPB) process, counties align their funding requests to reflect the improvement efforts planned by the county. Areas needing improvement are identified through use of state and local data and counties select measures to utilize for monitoring and progress reporting in subsequent NBPB submissions.

Court data is also available for utilization in state and local CQI efforts through the Common Pleas Case Management System Child Dependency Data Dashboards which are available to the public online at <http://www.pacourts.us/news-and-statistics/research-and-statistics/dashboard-table-of-contents/dependency-dashboard-statewide>.

Pennsylvania also benefits from partnerships with technical assistance providers who support statewide CQI efforts from the research and evaluation lens. The CWRC has served as the evaluator for Pennsylvania's participation in the Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project. The evaluation involved testing the hypothesis that the flexible use of title IV-E funds to develop a new case practice model focused on family engagement, assessment, and the expanded use of evidence based practices driven by local needs will lead to improved placement decisions and child and family functioning and result in improved safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families involved in the state's child welfare system. The evaluation consists of three components: a process evaluation, an outcome evaluation, and a cost analysis. Results and lessons learned have been shared throughout the demonstration project and opportunities will continue to be sought moving forward, including the planning of an engagement summit that took place in June of 2019 to share findings related to engagement with county children and youth agency administrators.

Program Improvement Plan Goals

Based upon review of available data and root cause analysis, key themes emerged in the recommendations developed by the four PA Child Welfare Council subcommittees which came to serve as the basis for the overarching goals to be addressed in Pennsylvania's PIP. The four key areas that drove the development of Pennsylvania's PIP include workforce, engagement, assessment, and planning/monitoring. These four key areas were identified as not only crossing multiple CFSR outcomes and systemic factors, but also connecting back to key outcomes and core practice elements outlined Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Practice Model.

Workforce

One of the key outcomes identified in the Practice Model involves achieving and maintaining skilled and responsive child welfare professionals, who perform with a shared sense of accountability for assuring child-centered, family-focused policy, best practice and positive outcomes. Building, supporting, and retaining a qualified, skilled and committed workforce whose own well-being and safety is valued is also one of the key principles and values outlined in the Practice Model.

Workforce related issues were identified by the Council subcommittees as an underlying factor impacting Pennsylvania's achievement of CFSR safety, permanency and well-being outcomes and effective systemic factor functioning. While at the national level it has been broadly recognized that recruitment and retention of staff is a significant challenge in child welfare, Pennsylvania has noted an increase in staff turnover among county children and youth agencies and service providers over the course of the past few years. Within the subcommittee discussions, issues regarding workforce turnover often emerged as key root causes for identified CFSR performance gaps. In addition, large caseload sizes and documentation requirements were identified as barriers to retaining staff as well as ensuring caseworkers have the necessary time to devote to working directly with children, youth and families.

Challenges in recruiting qualified staff were noted throughout subcommittee discussions and by the State Roundtable Caseworker Retention Workgroup. The critical role of the supervisor in the professional development and ongoing retention of staff was frequently acknowledged in these discussions as well.

Engagement

The Practice Model defines engagement as one of the key skills essential across all aspects of the child welfare system. Engagement, as defined within the Practice Model, involves effectively establishing and maintaining a relationship with children, youth, families and all other team members by encouraging their active role and voice and successfully accomplishing sustainable shared goals. As further defined at the case practice level through the QSR protocol, those working with children, youth, and families demonstrate engagement efforts through:

- Finding family members who can provide support and permanency for children and youth;
- Developing and maintaining culturally competent, mutually beneficial trust-based working relationships with the child/youth and family;
- Focusing on the child/youth and family's strengths and needs;
- Being receptive, dynamic and willing to make adjustments in scheduling and meeting locations to accommodate family participation in the service process, including case planning; and
- Offering transportation and child care supports, where necessary, to increase family participation in planning and support efforts.

Engagement was identified by the four subcommittees as a key practice area impacting multiple CFSR outcomes. The ability to effectively engage with children, youth and families was recognized by subcommittees as the necessary foundation for achieving success in all other areas of case practice. Subcommittees critically identified that several engagement strategies are being utilized across Pennsylvania; however, there is currently limited data available to evaluate the implementation of these models and their effectiveness, therefore making it sometimes challenging to determine the root causes of any issues preventing engagement models currently in place from having the intended impact. Subcommittee conversations also identified the importance of improving engagement of kin by the system at large, in terms of both family finding efforts and supports provided to kinship caregivers and other resource families to ensure they have the appropriate skills and knowledge to work with the children and youth placed in their care. The findings of the subcommittee also reflected findings previously identified by the State Roundtable that were instrumental in leading to the creation of the FEI, which will be discussed later in this PIP.

Investigations/Assessments

The process of assessment involves gathering and sharing information so that the team working with the family has a common big picture understanding of the strengths, challenges, needs and underlying issues of the child/youth and family. The Practice Model identifies that assessment includes thinking critically and using information to keep the understanding of the team current and comprehensive. At the case practice level through the QSR Protocol, assessment is further defined as team members working together to:

- Gather and share essential information so that team members have a shared, big-picture understanding of the child/youth's and family's strengths and needs based on their underlying issues, safety threats/factors, risk factors, protective capacities, culture, hopes, and dreams;
- Develop an understanding of what things must change in order for the child/youth and family to live safely together, achieve timely permanence, and improve the well-being and functioning of the child, youth, and family;
- Evolve the assessment and understanding of the child/youth and family situation throughout the family change process; and
- Utilize ongoing assessment and understanding of the child and family situation to modify planning and intervention strategies in order to achieve sustainable, safe case closure.

The Council subcommittees identified assessment practices as another underlying factor impacting the areas of safety, permanency, well-being and the systemic factor related to service array. The subcommittees considered assessment practices across the entire life of the case, from the point a report is made and the investigation takes place, to case closure. The subcommittees noted that when the needs of children, youth and families are not appropriately identified through meaningful assessment, the plans devised to assist the families may be ineffective in linking them to the services that will successfully address underlying issues that are creating challenges for the family. While Pennsylvania does have some formal assessment tools in place that CCYA utilize, the subcommittees noted challenges in ensuring the tools are being completed with fidelity and a lack of alignment or connection between some of the current formal assessment processes.

Planning/Monitoring

The Practice Model defines planning as the application of information gathered through assessment and monitoring to develop an individualized, well-reasoned sequence of strategies and supports to achieve agreed upon goals. Monitoring involves the continuous analysis and evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the plan implementation and modifying accordingly in response to the changing successes and needs until the goals are achieved.

At the case practice level, as defined through the QSR Protocol, planning and monitoring should involve the following:

- Individualizing and matching of the plan to the child/youth's and family's present preferences, near-term needs and long-term view for safe case closure;
- Ensuring the plan for the family provides a combination and sequence of strategies, interventions and supports that are organized into a holistic and coherent services process providing a mix of services that fits the child/youth's and family's evolving situation so as to maximize potential results and minimize conflicts and inconveniences;
- Routinely monitoring the child/youth's and family's status and progress, interventions and results and making necessary adjustments; and
- Evaluating and modifying strategies and services to respond to changing needs of the child/youth and family, with a constant effort made to gather and assess information and apply knowledge gained to update planned strategies to create a self-correcting service process that leads to finding what works for the child/youth and family.

Planning and monitoring emerged as an underlying driver of performance across several CFSR outcomes and systemic factors. While planning and monitoring are defined separately within the Practice Model, Council members identified the two concepts as interdependent. In identifying root causes related to challenges around case planning, subcommittees noted that there are sometimes struggles in making the link between the information gathered through assessment processes to the sequencing of individualized services targeted to meet the needs of children, youth and families. In their work, the subcommittees also often noted gaps in available data to help support informed case planning, service array development and ongoing monitoring at both the systemic and local level. Across subcommittee discussions, stakeholders acknowledged that Pennsylvania has implemented a variety of policies, programs and practices to support achievement of positive child and family outcomes; however, monitoring of the implementation of these efforts at both the county and state level has not always been consistent. In conducting root cause analysis, subcommittees often identified that the factors underlying challenges in some counties may not be the same drivers of challenges found in other counties. Therefore, subcommittees put forth recommendations for strategies and activities linked to individualizing supports to counties in the monitoring of implementation of a variety of policies, programs and practices.

Program Improvement Plan Strategies and Key Activities

Based upon the four key theme areas from which the goals of Pennsylvania's PIP were structured, the subcommittees worked to recommend a series of strategies and key activities necessary to effect positive change and remedy identified gap areas. It should be noted that through the existing CQI framework in place in Pennsylvania, many of the areas identified as needing improvement through the CFSR were already known to OCYF and stakeholders through previous analyses of already existing data and information. Therefore, many strategies to improve safety, permanency and well-being outcomes were already underway or in the process of development prior to creation of the PIP. The review and analysis of CFSR findings and other data sources conducted by the Council subcommittees provided confirmation of the previously identified strengths and challenges. The subcommittees reviewed existing efforts for consideration to address root causes identified through their work in the development of their recommendations for PIP strategies and key activities.

While some existing strategies, as well as those newly proposed, were designed to improve outcomes through work at the systemic level, the dynamics of Pennsylvania's state-supervised, county-administered system led subcommittees towards recommendations that were focused on addressing the county-specific challenges that impact practice at the local level. In particular, many subcommittee recommendations related to improving performance on CFSR outcomes and systemic factors ultimately led back to the provision of technical assistance to individual counties, recognizing that the challenges in each county are unique, with the root causes often coming back to more locally driven dynamics. Just as families need individualized supports to address their unique needs, subcommittee recommendations made a similar connection to the need for individualized supports to counties. Therefore, Pennsylvania's approach to the Round 3 PIP strategies and action steps departs from previous improvement plans by moving away from reliance on the implementation of new statewide initiatives, policies, programs and practices, towards greater focus on strengthening the provision of technical assistance to individual counties to ensure change efforts are targeted towards true needs of jurisdictions. This approach is discussed in most detail under Goal 4, which centers on planning and monitoring but is also woven

throughout other multiple PIP strategies, which often include a systemic component that builds the foundation for efforts that ultimately need to be individualized in implementation at the county level to succeed. Through this individualized, county driven approach, Pennsylvania will be continuing to further the implementation of CQI practices across all levels of the system to promote the achievement of safety, permanency and well-being for children, youth and families.

Section III. Program Improvement Plan Template

State/Territory: Pennsylvania

Date Submitted: February 2018

Date Resubmitted: November 2019

Date Approved: December 1, 2019

PIP Effective Date: December 1, 2019

End of PIP Implementation Period: November 30, 2021

End of Non-Overlapping Year Period: March 31, 2023

Reporting Schedule and Format: Pennsylvania will report to the Children’s Bureau on PIP progress through written bi-annual updates, one of which will be coordinated with the state’s submission Child and Family Services Plan/Annual Progress and Services Report submission.

Goal 1: Pennsylvania will recruit, retain, and support a qualified, skilled, and committed child welfare workforce.

Analysis of the findings from Pennsylvania’s CFSR pointed to workforce issues as a key underlying root cause impacting PA’s performance across the CFSR safety, permanency and well-being outcomes. During the CFSR stakeholder interviews, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), county child welfare agency caseworkers, county child welfare agency supervisors, foster parents and kinship caregivers, service providers, the state child welfare director and older youth all noted the high staff turnover in the county child welfare agencies and private provider agencies and the impact of this turnover on the quality of service provision and the ability to meet the needs of children, youth, and families. Through additional analysis of the cases reviewed during the CFSR and, in particular, the written comments completed by the CFSR reviewers, Pennsylvania was able to identify cases where staff turnover was one of the contributing factors when performance issues were found. Based on this analysis and the broad impact of staff turnover across the child welfare system as a whole, PA selected to focus one PIP goal on recruitment and retention of child welfare staff. Pennsylvania believes focusing on addressing workforce issues is key to setting a foundation that is necessary to ensure other improvement efforts will be successful.

There have been several types of assessments completed within Pennsylvania aside from the CFSR that contribute to understanding of the scope and breadth of the workforce issue within the state. First, through Title-IV-E education programs, current and previous graduates were surveyed to gather feedback about the strengths and challenges they face. The results have aligned with the current academic research citing negative factors such as: workload/stress, organizational climate, advancement opportunities and low salary. In addition to surveys, focus groups with caseworkers and supervisors have also occurred and confirmed these findings. A “stay” survey was conducted through the State

Roundtable Caseworker Retention Workgroup. Over 1,000 child welfare professionals responded and identified similar factors as previously mentioned, as well as positive factors such as; the ability to make a difference with children and families, the importance of a supportive supervisor, and job flexibility. These findings were utilized to inform the selection of strategies designed to enhance these factors directly or indirectly. The interview findings are available online in the [2017 State Roundtable Report of the Caseworker Retention Workgroup](#). Observations from the PA State Auditor General's "[State of the Child Report](#)" were reviewed and also considered in the analysis process.

Through root cause analysis conducted primarily through the work of the PA Child Welfare Council Resources and Cross-Categorical subcommittee, the following root causes were identified:

- The complexity of the work carried out by child welfare professionals has increased, however recruitment and hiring practices, especially those governed by the state Civil Service system, have not been modified in response;
- The current education and experience requirements for county children and youth caseworkers and supervisors set forth by the Civil Service system do not reflect the level of knowledge and skill necessary to succeed in the child welfare profession;
- Excessive documentation and paperwork requirements significantly impact the time caseworkers can spend working with families, which leads to decreased job satisfaction;
- High caseloads caused by lack of adequate staffing create burnout and negatively impact the quality of the work caseworkers do with families and children, which also leads to decreased job satisfaction;
- Supervisors are key supports to caseworkers; however further professional development is needed to equip supervisors with the skills and knowledge necessary to fulfill this critical role;
- The child welfare workforce is often not perceived by the public as having the same level of professionalism as other related fields among the public, with a lack of understanding regarding the value of the work; and
- Pennsylvania does not currently collect consistent data across the state regarding staff turnover within CCYA, therefore full understanding of the scope of the issue is limited and presents difficulties in ongoing monitoring.

Recruitment and retention challenges are faced by many, if not most, child welfare systems across the nation. As such, there is a solid research base which supports a mix of personal (within the individual) and organizational (within the system) factors that negatively or positively impact recruitment and retention. This framework was considered as Pennsylvania developed the strategies and action steps for this goal. The strategies and key activities developed in relation to this goal to address identified root causes reflect both a statewide and local approach, which is key in a state-supervised, county-administered child welfare system, where conditions may vary from one county to the next. PA believes that no single strategy is, in and of itself, sufficient to fully address workforce challenges; rather, there is a need to set forth a more holistic approach with a well-designed, research-informed package of strategies targeted at both personal and organizational factors.

As part of this holistic approach, the CWRC is in the process of carefully and thoroughly integrating the revised child welfare competencies in its training, technical assistance, and transfer of learning initiatives. The redesign of the certification series for child welfare professionals is leading the way in this effort. The certification series is titled *Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice: Building Competence, Confidence, and Compassion* (Foundations). The newly developed competencies will serve as the foundation for the work.

The aim of competency-based education is to ensure that child welfare professionals acquire and apply the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure positive outcomes for Pennsylvania's children and families involved in the child welfare system. Competency-based training promotes experiential learning by providing learning opportunities to apply knowledge and skills to practice situations. (Council on Social Work Education, 2015).

Within Foundations, the partnership between the CWRC and the county children and youth agencies is built in to the structure to aid in the application of newly learned skills. The CWRC takes the lead in training with the support of the counties, and the county takes the lead in ensuring that training transfers to practice with CWRC support. Field practice is meant to promote that transfer. Specifically, opportunities are built into the new foundational training that allow supervisors to provide constructive and purposeful feedback and guidance to their staff. These opportunities may be part of prep or field work or through participating in simulation-based training. Supervisors are given training credit for this participation as an additional incentive.

Another key strategy in Pennsylvania's holistic approach to addressing workforce challenges focuses on paperwork reduction. This strategy has both a state, systemic level component as well as a locally driven component. In 2018, OCYF leadership conducted site visits with 13 CCYA across the state to discuss paperwork challenges. From these conversations, some immediate efforts to offer relief to caseworkers were identified. One of these efforts focused upon reducing duplication identified in the risk and safety assessment documentation procedures. Changes to the safety assessment interval policy were implemented to reduce the frequency of required form completion where duplication was identified. At a broader system level, OCYF will continue to support paperwork reduction efforts through revision and issuance of survey and evaluation manuals, which provide interpretation of regulations and establish acceptable documentation to demonstrate regulatory compliance. At the local level, counties seeking to assess their documentation practices will utilize a discussion template which will be designed based on the discussions held with the initial 13 counties. The discussion template will support CCYA in their analysis of county specific paperwork practices, with technical assistance provided by OCYF and the CWRC as needed to address identified county specific issues documentation issues.

Strategy 1: Revise existing recruitment and hiring processes to improve efforts to attract skilled and qualified individuals to the child welfare workforce.

CFSR Outcomes or Systemic Factors: Impacted: Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>1.1: OCYF will collaborate with the Governor’s Office of Administration to develop and implement a child welfare job specification for both caseworkers and supervisors for counties that use the Commonwealth’s merit hiring system.</p>	<p>Quarter 3</p>
<p>1.2: OCYF will collaborate with the Governor’s Office of Administration to utilize a revised Civil Service test for the newly developed child welfare caseworker and supervisor positions for counties using the Commonwealth’s merit hiring system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Job specifications and selection criteria will be revised and implemented statewide for counties that remain within the Commonwealth’s civil service hiring framework. ➤ For counties that have been approved to implement their own merit-based hiring system, the information will be available to support development of job specifications and selection. 	<p>Quarter 3</p>
<p>1.3: OCYF will work with counties and the Governor’s Office of Administration to evaluate the increase in qualified staff recruited and retained as a result of the creation of children and youth job specifications and revised testing.</p>	<p>Quarter 3</p>
<p>1.4: OCYF will collaborate with the Governor’s Office of Administration to evaluate salaries for caseworkers and supervisors based on experience, educational attainment, and equivalent human service positions.</p>	<p>Quarter 3</p>
<p>1.5: The Governor’s Office of Administration will adjust existing policy involving the "rule of 3" which will allow counties to select the number of candidates they wish to interview.</p>	<p>Quarter 1</p>
<p>1.6: The University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, Child Welfare Research and Education Programs will implement efforts to increase Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates and Child Welfare Education for Leadership program admissions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A new school of social work will be added to the existing 14 participating schools. ➤ Information about both educational programs will be shared at quarterly Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators (PCYA) conferences to ensure new administrators are aware of the programs. 	<p>Quarter 1 (and ongoing)</p>

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>1.7: The Pennsylvania National Association of Social Workers Child Welfare Task Force will educate the public and system stakeholders on the mission and purpose of child welfare and efforts to improve outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Media releases focusing on the positive impact that child welfare professionals have on children and families will be developed and disseminated. ➤ The recently revised Pennsylvania child welfare competencies and the existing practice model will be publicized. 	<p>Quarter 1 (and ongoing)</p>

Strategy 2: Improve county children and youth agency caseworker and supervisor retention through regulatory and practice changes that will reduce staff burnout.

CFSR Outcomes or Systemic Factors: Impacted: Safety Outcome 2 and Well-Being Outcome 1

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>2.1: OCYF will initiate regulatory changes to reduce caseworker caseload sizes by drafting revised OCYF regulatory language regarding caseworker to family and supervisor to caseworker ratio requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The ratio requirement revisions will be drafted as part of a larger effort to significantly revise OCYF regulations for the administration of county children and youth agencies. ➤ Revised regulations will be drafted and submitted through the required approval processes, which include, but are not limited to, DHS Secretary’s Office, the Governor’s Office, Attorney General, Legislative Committees and the Independent Regulatory Review Committee. ➤ Revised regulations will be published as proposed rulemaking in the Pennsylvania Bulletin with a comment period provided. ➤ Submitted comments will be reviewed and a draft of the regulations prepared for submission through the final approval processes. ➤ Implementation policies, procedures, interpretive guidelines and licensing inspection instruments will be developed for submission to a statewide external stakeholder groups for review and comment. 	<p>Quarter 6</p>
<p>2.2: OCYF will develop and disseminate a facilitated discussion template to support the local work of county children and youth agencies that select to examine and improve county driven paperwork and documentation practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The facilitated discussion template will be utilized by the county children and youth agencies, OCYF Regional Office staff and CWRC Practice 	<p>Quarter 6</p>

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>Improvement Specialists to help individualize support to counties in their paperwork reduction efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The discussion template will be developed based on experiences during site visits with counties to discuss county specific paperwork reduction. ➤ County specific discussions will be scheduled with caseworkers, supervisors, managers and administrators to determine further strategies to support state and county required documentation. ➤ OCYF, CWRC and PCYA will meet on a quarterly basis to continue to discuss the impact of documentation reduction and to identify future documentation concerns and strategies to address these concerns. 	
<p>2.3: OCYF will revise existing guidance provided to counties regarding standards for documentation needed to meet regulatory requirements, as well as issue new guidance where it did not previously exist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ OCYF will develop a survey and evaluation manual that establishes the documentation required to meet 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3490 (relating to protective services) regulations. ➤ OCYF will revise the survey and evaluation manual that establishes the documentation required to meet 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3130 (relating to administration of county children and youth social service agency) regulations. ➤ The draft survey and evaluation manuals will be issued to CCYA for review and comment prior to issuance and appropriate changes will be made based upon comments received. 	Quarter 6

Strategy 3: Expand leadership and professional development opportunities for public and private child welfare professional supervisors.

CFSR Outcomes or Systemic Factors: Impacted: Safety Outcome 1, Safety Outcome 2 and Well-Being Outcome 1

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>3.1 The CWRC will redesign the certification series for supervisors to align with the recently revised child welfare competencies, the redesigned caseworker certification series, and the Practice Model.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The evaluation design will be tested during the pilot. The design builds from participant reaction, knowledge, skill, to behaviors that transfer to the field. 	Quarter 6

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>3.2: The CWRC will provide an opportunity for private provider managers and directors to participate in the Foundations of Leadership course through expanding the target audience for marketing of the course and increasing the number of sessions offered if needed to meet demand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Foundations of Leadership is a two-day session which provides leaders in Child Welfare, including county administrators and their management teams and private providers, with information on leadership and organizational effectiveness. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Day one of the session introduces the teams to the characteristics of leadership, strength-based leadership, and the leaders as a role model of social work values and practice. - Day two introduces the teams to the Organizational Effectiveness (OE) framework. Using the information from day one, the teams work through the OE process and develop a preliminary CQI plan. The CQI plan includes goals, strategies and action steps identified by the team to address the needs identified from day one. In addition, the plan includes how staff and stakeholders will be engaged in the plan implementation. ➤ The CWRC will contact several private provider associations to request the marketing of Foundations of Leadership to their respective constituencies. 	<p>Quarter 2</p>
<p>3.3. The CWRC will implement the redesigned certification series for caseworkers, which will include guidance and support for county supervisors and other assigned staff to promote the transfer of learning in the field, which includes coaching and mentoring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The redesigned series will consist of three delivery styles; online, in-person (skill practice, including simulation), and field work (with a specific role for supervisors, including the ability for the supervisors to receive training credits). ➤ The evaluation design for the caseworker certification series will be tested during the pilot. The design builds from participant reaction, knowledge, skill, to behaviors that transfer to the field. 	<p>Quarter 1</p>

Goal 2: Pennsylvania will improve engagement of children, youth and their caregivers to ensure public and private child welfare professionals provide meaningful opportunities to involve families in case planning throughout the entire life of the case.

Engagement of children and their families is critical across all stages in the life of a child welfare case. Engagement of families impacts the quality of information gathered during the investigation and assessment stage, the appropriateness of the goals selected for the family, successful participation of the child, youth and family in needed services and the achievement of conditions necessary to ensure permanency for children and safe case closure. Engagement of children and parents in case planning was identified as an area needing improvement in the CFSR findings. In 67% of applicable cases reviewed during the CFSR, the agency was determined to have made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning. With regards to mothers, the agency was determined to have made concerted efforts in 67% of applicable cases reviewed. The agency was found to have made concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning in 48% of applicable cases reviewed. Additionally, through stakeholder interviews with attorneys, OCYF Regional Office staff, child welfare agency supervisors, child welfare agency caseworkers, and judges conducted during the CFSRs, those interviewed acknowledged that efforts to engage parents is not consistent statewide and practice varies from county to county, with challenges in engaging fathers, incarcerated parents, non-custodial parents or those living out of county or state.

Pennsylvania data collected through the QSR process reflects similar findings regarding engagement. During the QSRs conducted between calendar years 2013 and 2017, a total of 506 cases were reviewed. For the indicators *Engagement, Role and Voice, the Child, Youth and Family Planning Process*, these practice areas were consistently rated as higher for children and mothers when compared to fathers. For example, performance on the indicator for *Engagement* across the five-year period reflected that, on average, 85% of cases were rated as acceptable for children and 75% of cases were rated acceptable for mothers. On average, only half of all cases reviewed were rated acceptable for fathers regarding engagement during the same time period. Similar to CFSR findings, foster care cases reviewed during the QSR were consistently more likely to be rated as acceptable on engagement related indicators when compared to in-home cases reviewed during the QSR.

Through the work of the four Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council subcommittees, engagement was identified as underlying factor impacting performance across multiple CFSR measures. Analysis of CFSR findings revealed cases that were rated as a strength on child and parent engagement in case planning were also more likely to be rated as a strength on numerous other CFSR items, including but not limited to, needs assessment and services to children and parents, caseworker visits with parents, and relative placement. Engagement also emerged as a factor underlying performance when conducting analysis of the written rationales for cases reviewed during the CFSR. Among the four subcommittees of the Council, the Permanency and Well-Being subcommittees specifically worked to provide recommendations for strategies to improve engagement efforts.

The Permanency and Well-Being subcommittees met individually at the beginning of their efforts and each identified a need to focus on improving engagement in their initial recommendations for PIP goals and strategies to impact permanency and well-being outcomes. The subcommittees, however,

recognized further work was needed to identify the key barriers to meaningful engagement and therefore came together to jointly review additional data and conduct root cause analysis in order to make data informed recommendations for appropriate PIP strategies. In addition to the CFSR case reviews and stakeholder interview findings, the subcommittees reviewed QSR data related to the *Engagement Efforts* indicator, the *Role and Voice* indicator, the *Assessment and Understanding* indicator and the *Child/Youth and Family Planning Process* indicator, results from CCYA annual licensing inspections related to the child and family's engagement in case planning, data from the Judicial Analysis Court Observation Report (to include data across 62 counties and 415 court hearings), and data and information gathered through the Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) evaluation project conducted by the CWRC. Analysis of QSR County Improvement Plans and engagement strategies which were implemented in counties that showed improved performance were also reviewed and discussed. It should be noted that while the CFSR focuses on engagement of the child and his or her parents, Pennsylvania also considered engagement of resource parents in planning and services as they are also recognized when considering engagement under Pennsylvania's current Practice Model. The subcommittees also considered how children, youth and their caregivers are engaged across the entirety of the child welfare system, recognizing that entities such as private providers and the courts must also effectively engage families to promote the achievement of positive outcomes.

Through data analysis, the subcommittees identified that, while improvement was needed overall in the area of engagement of children and their caregivers, the specific populations least likely to be engaged by child welfare professionals included fathers, incarcerated parents, non-custodial parents, and parents residing out of county or out of state. Data analysis conducted by the subcommittees also revealed that initial efforts to engage parents were often made, but efforts were not always consistently continued to maintain engagement throughout the entire life of the case. While QSR data indicates engagement of resource parents is an overall area of strength for Pennsylvania, analysis of the written rationales from the CFSR case reviews revealed that placement disruptions were often attributed to resource families not being engaged in the appropriate training supports and services to ensure they were equipped with the skills, knowledge and resources to support the child(ren) placed in their care. Subcommittee analysis also identified existing efforts aimed at supporting child and family engagement being implemented across Pennsylvania, such as family finding requirements and the use of various child and family team meeting models, such as FGDM and Family Team Conferencing.

Based upon the subcommittee review of available data and information, root cause analysis was then conducted to further narrow down understanding of the dynamics driving PA performance around engagement. The subcommittees found practices related to engagement varied widely across Pennsylvania's 67 counties, however three overarching themes emerged that, from a systemic level, provided context for understanding challenges related to successful engagement. Key root causes identified through the work of the subcommittees include:

➤ **Culture of engagement - what is valued**

- The subcommittees noted that although engagement is a key component of Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Practice Model, engagement has been integrated into the organizational culture and daily case practice to varying degrees among county children and youth agencies, private providers and the courts. Additionally,

subcommittees determined differing perspectives exist across jurisdictions as to what actions demonstrate meaningful engagement. Subcommittee members identified that in many jurisdictions, engagement efforts are built around specific events, such as FGDM or caseworkers sending letters to try to reach non-custodial parents but are not ingrained into day to day practice as part of the core values of the agency, organization or court.

➤ **Practice of engagement – knowledge and skills**

- The subcommittees identified gaps in the knowledge and skills of child welfare professionals across the system related to the practice of engagement. A need to build opportunities for caseworkers to practice engagement skills and receive modeling and coaching through supervision was noted. Additionally, the subcommittees determined that there are numerous resources developed in Pennsylvania available to child welfare professionals to support knowledge and skill building around engagement, however these resources were found to be either unknown or under-utilized.

➤ **Monitoring of engagement efforts – monitoring not just related to specific engagement activities such as referral for engagement services, but monitoring to ensure that engagement is part of day to day practice by those interacting with children, youth and families**

- The subcommittees identified lack of supports in place to effectively monitor engagement practices, specifically in the day to day interactions between child welfare professionals and children, youth and families. While case review processes such as the CFSR and QSR provide some basis for monitoring of engagement from a county agency and state level, there is limited guidance for public and private child welfare agency staff and supervisors to support monitoring of engagement practices at the micro-level on a regular and on-going basis.

Based on this identification of these root causes, strategies were identified for implementation that address both broader system level challenges as well as county-specific challenges. The first strategy, the FEI, represents a joint effort between OCYF and the courts to strengthen engagement of families at the local level in order to improve safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families. The FEI, created by the State Roundtable is included in the PIP as a primary strategy towards the enhancement of family involvement and family voice in decision making within the child welfare system. This project, selected by the State Roundtable (Pennsylvania's CIP Advisory Board) during the annual convening in May 2017, builds upon the success of the Permanency Practice Initiative.

FEI combines evidence-based practices of Family Finding, Enhanced Legal Representation and Crisis/Rapid Response Family meetings.

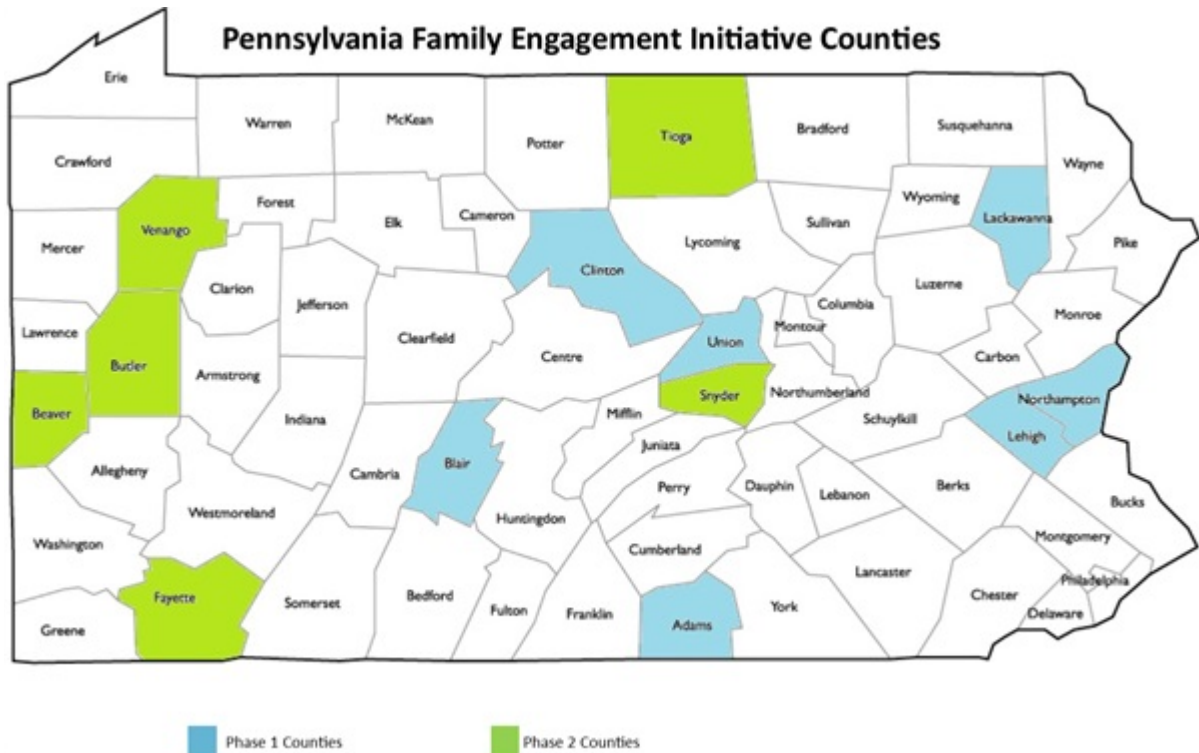
- **Revised Family Finding**: Includes engaging, locating and actively involving family/kin/community to surround the child with a lifelong network of supports. The revised model combines a holistic approach that emphasizes well-being with a focus on healing the whole child. It incorporates requirements of Pennsylvania's family finding legislation ([Act 55 of 2013](#)), calendaring, [Adverse Childhood Experiences](#), [Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child resilience work](#) and,

the use of the Kevin Campbell Family Finding Model. During court reviews, those connections identified through family finding are reviewed and evaluated. Under Pennsylvania's family finding requirements, the courts will continue their role in determining when family finding efforts may be suspended or resumed for those children under the jurisdiction of the court based on case circumstances and the best interest of the child.

- **Enhanced Legal Representation**: The FEI Enhanced Legal Representation component is grounded in the Pennsylvania State Roundtable's approved [Standards of Practice](#). While all standards of practice are important, the FEI focuses on improving the four core identified standards derived from the Pennsylvania State Roundtable's Standards and the American Bar Associations Standards of Practice for Lawyers Representing Child Welfare Agencies. The FEI counties must choose at least two of the four identified standards to address during the first year of the FEI implementation. County's will design their own goals, objectives and strategies based on these standards. The four standards include:
 - Client Relationship and Contact
 - Case Preparation
 - Advocacy
 - Feedback
- **Crisis/Rapid Response Family Team Meetings**: Crisis/Rapid Response Family Meetings involve gathering family, kin and community supports quickly, directly following an emergent event that will likely result in an out-of-home placement for the child. This inclusive, family approach is designed to not only give family a voice, but to actively involve family in decision-making. The goal of the meeting is to address the immediate concern that is leading to the need to remove the child from his/her home. In some instances, the result of the family meeting may eliminate the safety concern and the need for out-of-home placement. In other instances, if the concern remains and the child must be placed out-of-home, the family meeting can help reduce trauma through kinship placement and maintenance of family/community connections.

There are currently thirteen FEI counties, three of which are counties who are participating in the CFSR (Butler, Lehigh and Northampton).

Figure 4: Pennsylvania Family Engagement Initiative Counties



The FEI will impact safety, permanency and well-being. The theory of change developed regarding the FEI proposes that enhanced, early family engagement (Crisis/Rapid Response Family meetings) combined with Enhanced Legal Representation and focused Family Finding will increase permanency and child well-being. The need for stranger care will decrease and healthy child/adult connections will be increased (positively impacting child well-being). Specific measurements include the following:

- Decrease the number of youth entering the dependency system in FEI courts by 10%
- Decrease the number of youth re-entering the dependency system in FEI courts by 10%
- Increase family/kin involvement in the dependency process in FEI courts by 10%
- Increase child well-being (measured in supportive connections) by 10%
- Increase the number of youth safely remaining in their own home or living with kin in FEI courts by 10%
- Increase child well-being (measured by less restrictive placements, decreases in disruptive behavior, and increases in normative activities) by 10%.

The FEI began with the selection of Phase One counties in September 2017. Actual practice implementation began in January 2018. Phase Two counties were selected in September 2018 and began FEI practices January 1, 2019. All counties were invited to apply for inclusion in the FEI. The application process was competitive and not all applications were selected for inclusion. To be

considered in the selection process, counties were required to submit a letter of interest articulating why the county and court was interested in the FEI and what supports each anticipated need. Letters needed signatures from the county's lead dependency judge, president judge, board of commissioners, child welfare administrator and human services director. Letters of Interest were reviewed collectively by the CIP Director, CIP staff, OCYF Deputy Secretary, and OCYF staff. Final approval was provided by the CIP Oversight Supreme Court Justice and State Roundtable Co-Chairperson.

The counties selected for the initial FEI phases were selected based upon demonstrated strong court/child welfare agency collaboration, a desire to enhance family engagement strategies to produce the best possible outcomes for children and families, and a true commitment to system culture change by both the court and agency. Courts were required to have accurate, up-to-date CPCMS data. The FEI counties are required to have an Oversight Team that includes the local lead juvenile court judge, county child welfare administrator, legal representatives and other key leaders. In addition, the judge and child welfare administrator are required to attend training on all three FEI elements. Finally, FEI counties are required to implement a newly created FEI Report to the Court, participate in judicial record reviews and submit quarterly CPCMS data to both OCYF and the OCFC.

The second engagement strategy developed for the PIP focuses at the systemic level and helps set the foundation necessary to further establish and integrate a shared vision for engagement of children, youth and families across the system. In laying this groundwork, the expectations for how the system defines meaningful engagement will be more clearly understood so that public and private child welfare agencies and the courts can engage in work at the county level to assess county engagement practices and identify gaps between expectations and practice. This strategy also focuses at the systemic level to evaluate existing resources to support child welfare professionals in effective engagement practices and identify and remedy gaps where the need for additional resources are identified. This strategy will supply the tools necessary for county children and youth agencies and their technical assistance providers to identify strategies to support improved engagement practices based on individualized county need. These efforts support work in other areas of the PIP, as it is anticipated that as counties work to implement other PIP strategies engagement will emerge as a key root cause that will need to be addressed in some counties in order to improve safety, permanency and well-being outcomes.

It should be noted that enhancement of knowledge and skills related to engagement is addressed under Goal 1, Strategy 3, related to revisions to the training and certification series for caseworkers and supervisors. The revisions involve greater alignment with the Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Competencies, of which engagement is included. The revisions also utilize simulation-based training in which caseworkers are able to practice skills learned in training and receive real-time feedback about their interactions with children, youth and families during the simulation.

Strategy 1: Improve county child welfare agency and court practices related to the engagement of children, youth and families through implementation of the Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) across 13 innovation zone counties.

CFSR Outcomes or Systemic Factors: Impacted: Permanency Outcome 1, Permanency Outcome 2 and Well-Being Outcome 1

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>1.1: Implement all three components of FEI, which includes revised family finding, enhanced legal representation and crisis/rapid response family meetings, in each innovation zone (Phase 1 and Phase 2 FEI counties). Each county will use the following structure and process to drive implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Each FEI County will establish a FEI Oversight Team responsible for local implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the FEI. ➤ Each FEI County Oversight Team will complete a County FEI Practice Assessment (this is a collective, written county self-assessment on each element of the FEI) ➤ From the self-assessment, each FEI County Oversight Team will create a County Implementation Plan which is the guide for ongoing FEI implementation, evaluation and monitoring. ➤ Each county will participate in mandatory supervisor/management FEI training as well as mandatory legal advocate/judicial FEI training. ➤ Initial focus will be on FEI model implementation and fidelity. Court observation, Court record review, Oversight Team involvement, and case specific consultation will be used to ensure fidelity to the FEI model. 	Quarter 1
<p>1.2: Evaluate FEI implementation in Phase 1 and Phase 2 counties through use of court observations, CPCMS and use of crisis/rapid response team meetings data collection tool</p>	Quarter 1 (and ongoing)
<p>1.3: Monitor implementation of FEI through court observation, meetings with FEI County Oversight Teams, providing case consultation, reviewing outcome data and reporting progress to the State Roundtable.</p>	Quarter 1 (and ongoing)
<p>1.4: Present initial outcome findings and system/culture reform strategies at Pennsylvania Children’s Summit.</p>	Quarter 1 (and ongoing)
<p>1.5: Solicit and select FEI Phase 3 counties.</p>	Quarter 5

Strategy 2: OCYF will work with system partners to more clearly define what is meant by meaningful engagement, set consistent expectations for how engagement should be demonstrated in day to day case practice, develop effective supports to improve engagement practices, and communicate this information to child welfare practitioners. Emphasis will be placed on the engagement of fathers and non-custodial, incarcerated and/or out of state parents.

CFSR Outcomes or Systemic Factors: Impacted: Permanency Outcome 1, Permanency Outcome 2 and Well-Being Outcome 1

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>2.1: The Permanency Subcommittee in collaboration with technical assistance providers will develop a toolkit of training and technical assistance resources focused on addressing the root cause areas associated with enhancing the practice of meaningful engagement and tools/resources to be used to successfully monitor engagement efforts throughout the entire life of a case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Examples of existing resources that will be utilized include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handbook for Families and Friends of Pennsylvania Department of Correction Prison Inmates • Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) Legal Services Initiative Incarcerated Resource Manual • Judicial Bench Card • SWAN Units of Service 	Quarter 4
<p>2.2: The Permanency Subcommittee will develop content that summarizes statewide findings from the CFSR and other data sources, as well as outline the root cause analysis that led to identifying the need to improve engagement, what is meant by meaningful engagement, what successful engagement looks like in day to day case practice and technical assistance resources that support meaningful engagement.</p>	Quarter 4
<p>2.3: Through the Technical Assistance (TA) Collaborative Structure, technical assistance providers will be onboarded to integrating the toolkit into their use of a structured continuous quality improvement process to support implementation and monitoring of county specific plans for improving engagement.</p>	Quarter 5
<p>2.4: The Permanency Subcommittee will assist OCYF in identifying forums for sharing summarized content from Key Activity 2.2 and introducing the toolkit. Forums include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A panel discussion held for county child welfare agency administrators involving Child Welfare Demonstration Project counties and their experiences related to working to improve engagement ➤ PCYA Quarterly Meetings ➤ Annual SWAN Conference ➤ Family Group Decision Making Conference 	Quarter 5

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>2.5: The summarized content from Key Activity 2.2 and information about the toolkit will be presented across the identified forums in Key Activity 2.4 by OCYF and/or designated system partners.</p>	<p>Quarter 6 (and ongoing)</p>
<p>2.6: TA providers will implement a structured continuous quality improvement process to assist those counties who identify specific gap areas associated with improving engagement.</p>	<p>Quarter 6 (and ongoing)</p>
<p>2.7: The TA Collaborative Steering Committee will develop and implement a structure for monitoring impact of TA delivery related to engagement and the utilization of the developed toolkit.</p>	<p>Quarter 6</p>
<p>2.8: OCYF will revise the 3131 regulations that govern the administration of county children and youth agencies to ensure regulatory requirements help reinforce expectations for family engagement at the case practice level.</p>	<p>Quarter 6</p>

Goal 3: Pennsylvania’s child welfare system will improve and enhance investigation and assessment practices to ensure quality assessment from first contact through the life of the case.

Thorough and well-informed investigation and assessment practices were identified through Pennsylvania’s analysis of the CFSR findings as necessary to contribute to successful achievement of multiple CFSR outcomes. The connection to the importance of effective engagement of children and families (CFSR PIP Goal 2) in ensuring accurate and complete information is gathered to inform investigation and assessment activities was also noted in Council and subcommittee discussions. Across the four Council subcommittees, assessment practices were identified as critical to ensuring safety, effectively moving children towards permanency, ensuring well-being, and foundational to the development of a service array designed to meet the individualized needs of children and families. Discussions also pointed to the growing number of assessments required of county children and youth workers and the need to identify ways to better streamline and integrate assessment practices to promote the use of tools to aid workers in decision making versus assessments simply viewed as forms to be completed.

Investigation and assessment practices emerged as the primary drivers behind two of the key strategies identified in this PIP to improve child safety outcomes. The Safety Subcommittee of the Council conducted root cause analysis to identify factors impacting performance on all three CFSR safety items, which include timeliness to investigations, services to prevent removal and re-entry, and risk and safety assessment management. To inform their analysis, the subcommittee reviewed a variety of data and informational sources in addition to the CFSR findings, to include annual CCYA licensing inspection findings regarding CPS and GPS response times, as well as risk and safety assessment, QSR findings related to *Safety from Threats of Harm* and *Safety from Risk to Self/Others*, the 2016 Annual Child Protective Services Report, the *State of the Child* report issued by the PA Auditor General in September 2017, and data obtained from the CWIS. In addition, work completed by the former Safety and Risk Review Workgroup and research previously conducted around Pennsylvania’s safety and risk tools was revisited.

Review of the CFSR findings indicated that issues regarding timeliness to investigations were seen more often with GPS reports⁴ than CPS reports⁵. This reflects a similar trend seen in citations related to timely investigations issued to CCYAs during their annual licensing inspection. Additionally, the CFSR found that in some reports where timeliness was not achieved, there were insufficient efforts to locate children and families to ensure contact was made within the timeframes outlined in state policy. Through root cause analysis, the subcommittee ultimately identified the volume of GPS reports being received by CCYAs for assessment and workforce turnover as the most significant factors contributing to the delay in the timeliness of investigations. Through analysis of Pennsylvania child abuse hotline

⁴ GPS reports are those reports that do not rise to the level of suspected child abuse but allege a need for intervention to prevent serious harm to children.

⁵ CPS reports are those reports that allege a child might have been a victim of child abuse.

(ChildLine⁶) policies, a sampling of approximately 1700 GPS referrals, and conversations with CCYA administrators and staff, it was identified that due to ChildLine not screening out any calls concerning a child, there were some GPS referrals being sent to CCYA that did not meet the regulatory definition of a GPS report found at 55 Pa. Code § 3490.233 (relating to definitions).

The number of reports of suspected child abuse called into ChildLine and the CCYAs has substantially increased since 2014 due to changes in mandated reporting laws and increased public awareness regarding child abuse identification and reporting. Through the subcommittee analysis and feedback from CCYA caseworkers, supervisors, and CCYA administrators, challenges in the consistent application of thresholds for determining whether a report should be categorized as CPS report, GPS report, or screened-out were identified. This was in turn noted to contribute to CCYA caseworkers dedicating time and resources to reports that may not fully warrant the need for investigation or assessment, therefore making it difficult for CCYA caseworkers to meet required timeframes given the high volume of reports. It was deemed critical to more clearly define the thresholds for GPS and CPS referrals at the time the referral is received at ChildLine so that CCYAs can focus their limited resources on those cases that may necessitate child welfare involvement. The subcommittee also identified a lack of existing guidance around what constitutes due diligence when attempting to locate children and families to ensure investigation and assessment timeframes are met. The subcommittee therefore developed strategies under Goal 3 to specifically target these identified root causes. The identified workforce issues should be noted as being addressed under Goal 1.

In addition to looking at the timeliness of investigations, the Safety Subcommittee also conducted analysis to better understand CFSR findings related to risk and safety assessment practices. Issues related to the accuracy of completion of risk and safety assessments, such as key participants missing from the assessment, as well as issues related to the timeliness of risk and safety assessments, were noted in the CFSR findings. The subcommittee reviewed Pennsylvania's current risk assessment and safety assessment management process (SAMP) and identified multiple root causes impacting the completion of accurate assessment of safety and risk. The quality of assessment in turn impacts the development of effective safety planning and the provision of appropriate safety services, which will be addressed separately under Goal 4.

The root causes identified by the Safety Subcommittee regarding safety and risk assessment were summarized into four main theme areas:

- **Application** – Issues regarding how the risk and safety tools are completed and information used to inform decision making;
- **Training** – Gaps in worker understanding as to how to complete and utilize the tools;
- **Tools** – Issues regarding the structure and function of the risk and safety tools themselves; and
- **Workforce** – Issues such as caseworker to supervisor ratio, staff turnover, and supervisor experience, which all impact the quality of safety and risk assessment practices.

⁶ ChildLine is a division within OCYF that is part of a mandated statewide child protective services program designed to accept child abuse referrals and general child well-being concerns and transmit the information quickly to the appropriate investigating agency.

Root causes were also identified based on information obtained from caseworker and supervisory staff and shared with OCYF during quarterly meetings between PCYA and OCYF regarding areas related to safety assessment, and specifically the SAMP tools and processes. The discussions determined, and have been evidenced through annual inspections, that the identification and analysis of protective capacities and threats which form the keystone of the SAMP process is occurring; however, the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of the SAMP tools (Safety Assessment Worksheet and Safety Plan) remain a challenge. For annual licensing inspections conducted across all 67 counties in state fiscal year 2016-2017, a total of 38 counties received citations related to safety assessments.

- Forty-one percent of violations noted (n=57) were related to incorrect completion of the safety assessment worksheet or appropriate safety actions. The two most common issues cited involved failure to assess all appropriate individuals or ratings that were not deemed appropriate given other case information learned through review of the file.
- Twenty-nine percent of violations noted (n=40) involved issues regarding caseworker or supervisors' signatures that were missing or added to the document late.
- Sixteen percent of violations noted (n=22) involved issues regarding required timeframes for safety assessment completion. In most cases, the safety assessment worksheet was not completed within 72 hours of seeing the child.
- Fourteen percent of violations noted (n=19) were related to missing safety assessments. In most instances, it was determined that safety assessments were not completed when new case circumstances should necessitate a re-assessment of safety.

The process timeframes, intervals and documentation have been areas identified as creating duplication of work and are areas that were shared with the Safety Subcommittee for consideration in their efforts. In addition, these discussions determined the effectiveness of the action steps to mitigate identified safety threats is an area needing further improvement and is addressed in this PIP under Goal 4. Based upon the identified root causes, PA has incorporated a strategy directed towards streamlining statewide safety and risk assessment practices under Goal 3. It should be noted that this strategy builds from work previously undertaken to look more closely at the safety and risk tools used in Pennsylvania.

The Permanency, Well-Being, and Resources/Cross-Categorical Subcommittees also identified a need to strengthen assessment practices through their analysis and set forth recommendations that were ultimately streamlined into a single strategy related to implementation of a functional assessment tool within each CCYA. PA did not achieve substantial conformity with CFSR Well-Being Outcome 1 and was found as needing improvement related to the accurate assessment of needs for children, their parents, and foster parents. PA also did not achieve substantial conformity with CFSR Well-Being Outcomes 2 and 3, which include components related to the accurate assessment of educational, physical and mental health needs of children.

Information gathered through the QSR also identified a need for further focus on improving assessment practices. Across the five-year period from 2013-2017, for the indicator, *Assessment and Understanding*, assessment practices related to children and substitute caregivers were more often rated as acceptable when compared to mothers and fathers. On average, assessment of the child was

rated acceptable in 83% of cases reviewed and assessment of the substitute caregiver was rated acceptable in 91% of cases reviewed. Mothers, however, were rated acceptable in only 70% of cases reviewed for the indicator *Assessment and Understanding*, with fathers rated as acceptable in only 47% of cases rated. These QSR findings parallel similar dynamics seen in the findings from the CFSR. The subcommittees, through root cause analysis, identified workforce and engagement as two underlying factors impacting assessments. Engagement issues are addressed under Goal 2 of this PIP. Improving the accuracy and effectiveness of assessments and safety planning is addressed in Goal 1, Strategy 3 of the PIP related to knowledge and skill building activities, supervisory coaching, and transfer of learning opportunities. Risk and safety assessment practice is also addressed in Goal 4, Strategy 1, which requires counties to develop data-informed and TA-supported plans to address practice improvement opportunities, including safety and risk assessment, planning, and monitoring. Continued monitoring and support of the current risk and safety assessment will occur through annual licensing and ongoing monitoring of county agencies. The review of the county practice extends beyond the completion of the documents with a focus on the critical thinking and analysis of the worker's observations and information gathered leading toward assessments of safety and risk. When findings exist that reflect agency challenges in the process, technical assistance is offered through the regional office and CWRC in the form of Safety Support Sessions and Supervisory Support Sessions.

Through subcommittee discussions, it also was noted that while there are different screening and assessment tools required to be utilized by county children and youth agencies, these tools are often narrowed in scope to specific domains such as safety, risk, child developmental needs, and sex trafficking and not a holistic view of the child, parents, or family. Currently, there are no requirements that CCYA utilize functional assessment tools to inform case planning and services. Prior to the CFSR and development of the PIP, Pennsylvania identified a need to set forth regulatory requirements to require the use of functional assessments by county children and youth agencies. To support this planned change, a strategy was integrated into the PIP to identify comprehensive assessments that will be identified to be utilized by counties to come into compliance with the regulatory change once it takes effect. As part of the work of the Safety Subcommittee, research is being undertaken for consideration of one comprehensive tool for use by CCYAs to include risk and safety identification, as well as functional assessment tool components. Based on root cause analysis, Pennsylvania identified that the workforce can be better supported by streamlining assessment and investigation processes by aligning multiple assessment tools and building one comprehensive process. Pennsylvania determined that in order for safety of children to be enhanced, better family engagement is necessary, assessment processes need to be coordinated and comprehensive, and appropriate services must be aligned. This process must be appropriately monitored by supervisors and supported by management, providers, and the child welfare system as a whole.

Strategy 1: OCYF will work with ChildLine and county children and youth agencies to better inform the practice of categorizing child protective and general protective services reports, as well as guidelines for due diligence to locate and see children, documentation, supervisory reviews, and general protective services screen out protocols to assure child safety during child protective investigations and general protective assessments.

CFSR Outcomes or Systemic Factors: Impacted: Safety Outcome 1 and Safety Outcome 2

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>1.1: OCYF will assess ChildLine and county application of appropriate thresholds when categorizing child protective and general protective services reports to identify areas where further clarification and guidance may be needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The inaccurate categorization of a referral can lead to an inappropriate response time being determined by the county children and youth agency, or the need for additional processes to re-evaluate the referral to the correct categorization. ➤ Additionally, referrals not meeting the threshold of a GPS or CPS divert limited resources from reports that require child welfare involvement. 	Quarter 1
<p>1.2: OCYF will collaborate with stakeholders regarding policy to clarify the notifications to counties when referral information is received that does not meet the threshold for a general protective services referral.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If information is reported to ChildLine that alleges a concern for a child but does not constitute a GPS or CPS concern, that information will be sent as an Information Only referral to counties which will be required to be reviewed in the event they already have an open case with the family but will not require an assessment or a finding be sent back to the department. ➤ Examples of an Information Only referral would be a broken zipper on a coat or a parent forgetting supplies for child care, unless those actions were a well-being concern for the child. 	Quarter 1
<p>1.3: OCYF will collaborate with stakeholders and counties regarding gaps in practice and/or guidance related to due diligence to locate and see children, documentation, supervisory reviews, and general protective services screen out protocols. Research will also be conducted on best practice guidance in these areas to inform the development of the final guidance.</p>	Quarter 1
<p>1.4: OCYF will draft guidance revisions regarding operational definitions and thresholds for GPS and CPS referrals, as well as when it is appropriate to screen out referrals to ensure referrals requiring child welfare investigation or assessment are completed timely.</p>	Quarter 1

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The guidance will also include details related to due diligence to locate and see children, documentation, supervisory reviews, and general protective services screen out protocols. ➤ Ensuring resources are appropriately directed support the workforce since the expansion of laws dramatically increased the number of reports received. ➤ This guidance will be shared with the Child Welfare Council, Safety Subcommittee and Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators (PCYA) for review and feedback prior to issuance. 	
<p>1.5: OCYF will finalize guidance and work with county partners and the Child Welfare Resource Center to identify curricula revisions necessitated by the revised guidance, with implementation of the training prior to the guidance effective date.</p>	Quarter 2
<p>1.6: OCYF will monitor fidelity of the policy guidance developed through quality assurance efforts at ChildLine to ensure appropriate categorization of reports, re-evaluation requests, and screen out justification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This will be done through the monitoring of calls, regular data reports, and sampling referrals for review. ➤ Additional oversight and monitoring will occur through licensing inspections conducted by OCYF Regional Offices, which will cover the aforementioned areas, as well as due diligence, documentation, and supervisory reviews. 	Quarter 3 (and ongoing)

Strategy 2: Strengthen PA’s safety assessment, planning, and monitoring process by researching, developing and implementing the use of a comprehensive assessment that encompasses both safety and risk elements.

CFSR Outcomes or Systemic Factors: Impacted: Safety Outcome 2, Well-Being Outcome 1, Well-Being Outcome 2 and Well-Being Outcome 3.

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>2.1: Establish a charter to guide the development of recommendations for streamlining and strengthening the risk and safety assessment process.</p>	Quarter 1
<p>2.2: Explore what other states have done with risk and safety assessments, as well as functional assessment tools through the use of Casey Family Programs consultation services.</p>	Quarter 3

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>2.3: Develop/identify a streamlined process that encompasses both safety and risk elements, while also assessing the feasibility of incorporating functional assessment tool components to build one comprehensive assessment process to ensure safety, risk and service provision needs are linked throughout the life of a case.</p>	<p>Quarter 6</p>
<p>2.4: Share the revised statewide process with the Child Welfare Council and local child welfare agencies for feedback.</p>	<p>Quarter 7</p>
<p>2.5: Finalize the streamlined/ revised tool(s) that encompass both safety and risk assessment elements.</p>	<p>Quarter 8</p>
<p>2.6: Develop a strategic plan which will guide the implementation and monitoring of the streamlined risk and safety assessment process, to include drafting guidance; revising 3131 regulations; developing training; and monitoring through Quality Service Reviews, licensing inspections and the review of service provision outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The implementation and monitoring of the plan will be carried into Pennsylvania’s ongoing implementation of the 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan. 	<p>Quarter 8</p>

Goal 4: Pennsylvania's child welfare system will improve county specific and statewide collection and analysis of quality data to inform use of a continuous quality improvement cycle when planning and monitoring efforts to improve case practice and systemic factors.

Through the work of the Council subcommittees' analysis of the CFSR findings from 2017, similar root causes emerged across the CFSR safety, permanency and well-being outcomes and systemic factors related to gaps in planning and monitoring processes at the case level, county level, and statewide level. Additionally, root cause analysis related to multiple CFSR outcomes and systemic factors ultimately led to the recognition that county specific dynamics often significantly impact the strengths and areas needing improvement identified in practice. While Pennsylvania's PIP sets forth plans to address many root causes identified at the system level, it was determined that there must also be a county specific counterpart to successfully address many of the areas found needing improvement. The combination of both approaches promotes addressing the root causes identified at the broader system level to strengthen the infrastructures needed to support improvement in outcomes, while also ensuring that practice is improved at the county level where the direct impact is experienced by children, youth and their families in everyday case practice. Therefore, Pennsylvania developed a strategy to promote further strengthening the systematic use of CQI and TA across the state to better help counties identify individual practice strengths and challenges related to key CFSR outcomes, create individualized plans to help address the county specific root causes identified through data driven analysis, and implement county driven solutions that are tailored to allow the county to best improve outcomes for the specific populations of children and families they serve.

Analysis of the CFSR findings revealed that across the seven jurisdictions in which case were reviewed, similar areas of challenge emerged with regards to performance on CFSR outcomes and items. Additionally, examination of results from cases reviewed in the metropolitan area did not appear to differ significantly from the other six jurisdictions. When taking a deeper dive into the written rating rationales, the specific dynamics contributing to gaps in practice tended to vary from county to county, although overall performance results were ultimately similar. For example, while Permanency Outcome 1 was noted as an area needing improvement across Pennsylvania and within each CFSR county, the root causes impacting performance appeared to differ across counties. In one county, it was identified that while concurrent goals were being established for children and youth in foster care, the actual practice of concurrently planning for each goal was not consistently occurring. In another county however, delays in permanency were most significantly linked to gaps in available services, such as housing, to support timely reunification. Based on the CFSR findings, QSR data, licensing data and AFCARS data reviewed as well as the recommendations set forth by the Council subcommittees, the need to strengthen monitoring processes of county level performance on CFSR outcomes and systemic factors while enhancing use of CQI and TA with counties in their planning processes emerged as a key strategy to help impact the following CFSR practice areas:

- Timeliness to investigations;
- Safety and risk assessment;
- Planning, implementation and monitoring of safety plans;
- Timely achievement of permanency;

- Quality assessments to identify individualized needs;
- Engagement of parents and children/youth in case planning;
- Quality of caseworker visits with children and families;
- Quality visits between children in care and their parents/siblings;
- Effective service array development, service provision and service coordination;
- Staff recruitment and retention.

As part of this strategy regarding enhancement of CQI and TA at the county level, efforts will be undertaken to standardize a process to create a consistent framework to be used by the counties, OCYF and TA providers to improve utilization of data to monitor performance strengths and gaps on CFSR outcomes, apply consistent criteria for prioritizing areas needing improvement, and further structure the provision of TA services to ensure the resources and supports necessary exist related to key CFSR practice areas. The provision of TA will no longer be voluntary and initiated by the county but will be driven by identification of need by OCYF in partnership with the county and other TA providers. Entities who comprise the existing TA Collaborative will be utilized to support this effort and include the OCYF Regional Offices, CWRC, SWAN, Public Consulting Group (PCG), the American Bar Association (ABA) and OCFC. Through the TA Collaborative, staff from OCFC, the entity which oversees the CIP, will continue their work in coordinating with the courts and other TA providers to participate in the provision of technical assistance to county agency and judicial systems where need is identified and, in the implementation, and monitoring of any county specific improvement plans that involve the courts.

This strategy will be built upon the NBPB process in which all counties are required to identify strategies toward program improvement after identifying root causes impacting outcomes based on the analysis of their data. The NBPB process builds upon identification of historical and current service levels and outcome measures, directs the need for data analysis toward program improvement, identifies strategies and practice changes needed and requests for resources necessary for implementation. Too often, the focus had become centered upon the resources requested and allocated. Refocusing the NBPB and emphasizing the entire process that builds the county plan as a road map toward improving outcomes for children, youth and families within counties is the key strategy toward enhancing TA and achieving positive results. The messaging of this refocus of the NBPB as a process, not an event, began with the 2019 Spring Leadership Roundtables and the March 2019 PCYA Quarterly Meeting. The FY 2020-2021 NBPB Guidelines and Instructions to be issued in the spring of 2019 and subsequent trainings will provide detailed expectations and directions toward data identification, root cause analysis, identification and implementation of strategies and monitoring of activities and outcomes.

Counties need to engage a wide range of stakeholders in their planning. Counties will be required to develop a team that will assist in data identification, root cause analysis, identification of and selection of strategies based on data analysis, and continuous monitoring of the implementation activities and outcomes. The team participants shall be a representation of key external stakeholders. The county team should include county commissioners and court participation. Statewide monitoring of the work of the county teams will identify needs across counties and determine issues that may need to be directed to the subcommittees of the Council for input or the LR to explore further joint systemic work with the courts.

With regards to performance on the CFSR Well-Being Outcomes and Systemic Factors, service array and service delivery were identified as areas needing improvement. In examining these findings, a key theme that emerged across multiple subcommittees was the need to strengthen planning and monitoring practices in order to improve the existing service array to ensure children, youth and families receive individualized services to meet their needs. While discussed across all subcommittees, the Resources/Cross-Categorical and Well-Being Subcommittees identified in their analysis of CFSR findings that the that lack of quality assessments negatively impacted the ability to accurately identify the service needs of children, youth and families. Lack of appropriate identification of service needs in turn impacts what services are ultimately developed within the local and state level service array. As part of Pennsylvania's PIP, engagement and assessment are viewed as necessary to promote successful service planning and monitoring. Within this specific goal targeted towards planning and monitoring, state and/or broader system level strategies were set forth to help strengthen the existing service array through better identification of needs.

One strategy devised that builds upon this premise focuses upon revising the existing Complex Case Review process to ensure that children/youth with multiple complex needs receive individualized, coordinated services that are provided in settings that are the most appropriate and natural for the child and family and are the least restrictive and intrusive available to meet the needs of the child and family. CFSR case review findings and stakeholder interviews identified children and youth with complex physical and/or behavioral health needs as those individuals more likely to experience placement disruptions or to be placed in congregate care settings. Practices, services and supports that currently exist to meet the needs of this population of children and youth were reviewed in PIP development discussions with recognition that strengthening some existing practices at the county and system level was warranted. At the broader state level, the need to revisit the Complex Case Planning process was identified as an important strategy to help better meet the needs of children and youth. As outlined in the [Complex Case Planning Bulletin, 00-10-02](#), the Department of Human Services established a process in 2010 to implement the convening of a Complex Case Team comprised of representatives from various DHS program offices to address any case of an individual being served through DHS where:

- a clinically appropriate solution requires support from multiple program offices/agencies or stakeholders at the county level who together cannot agree on a solution;
- the funding solution comes from multiple sources, which may include external entities; or
- the case involves complexities that render it un-resolvable through the established county or OCYF Regional Office process.

Stakeholder feedback, including county CCYAs and service providers, suggested the Complex Case Planning process as it currently exists has not been fully effective in achieving its intended purpose. Therefore, work will be undertaken to identify the Complex Case Planning strengths and challenges and implement changes to the process to ensure the complex needs of individuals served through DHS can be successfully met. Through this improved process, gaps in the existing array of services to meet the complex needs of children, youth and families will be more readily identified so that efforts can be made to ensure that needed services are available and accessible.

Regional meetings were convened with county children and youth, juvenile probation, behavioral health and Managed Care Organization representatives to discuss experiences of the counties in identifying services to meet the complex needs of these identified children. The convenings have resulted in regionalized workgroups being established with the focus on identification and characteristics of the needs of this population; the service array currently available and identification of additional services needed; the recruitment, retention, qualifications and training of staff in treatment facilities; and collaboration of efforts across all system partners. The recommendations that will be generated from the workgroups will be reviewed with a statewide lens that will assist the PIP strategy related to service needs and gaps.

Through the Resources/Cross-Categorical Subcommittee, another strategy was developed to support identification of service needs and gaps as well as improve utilization of existing services. Through the use of service mapping at the county level, counties will be able to better evaluate how current services match to the current needs of the populations being served so as to more critically evaluate the service array available within their local systems. Service mapping will also be implemented to serve as a resource for child welfare professionals by helping them understand the full breadth of services available to match to the identified needs of the children, youth and families they are serving. Service mapping will also serve the purpose of identifying gaps in services at the local and statewide level. In addition, due to turnover levels, the tool will help raise awareness about available services to a new workforce.

As part of the analysis of CFSR case review findings and stakeholder interviews related to the service array systemic factor, two specific service areas emerged repeatedly as gap areas across multiple jurisdictions. Housing was noted as a specific concern across a number of counties and lack of housing was specifically seen as contributing to delays in permanency for children and youth in some of the CFSR cases reviewed. Additionally, lack of reliable, affordable transportation, particularly in rural areas, was identified as a barrier to ensuring quality child and family visits as well as participation of parents in the other services necessary to achieve safe case closure. While root cause analysis led to the recognition that county level dynamics play a large determinant in the strengths and challenges related to implementing both services, it was also recognized that county requests for funding in the annual county NBPB requests did not necessarily reflect the level of need evidenced through case review data and stakeholder feedback. Therefore, a systems level strategy was identified to better educate counties on the funding opportunities available through the NBPB process to support implementation of programs or practices to improve in these specific service areas.

Finally, throughout discussion across the Council subcommittees regarding planning and monitoring, the need to capture reliable accurate data about key child welfare program and practice areas surfaced as a critical component in successfully improving outcomes. The collection, analysis and utilization of data is a theme across Pennsylvania's PIP and is referenced across multiple strategies and key activities. During the CFSR, Pennsylvania was found to not be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor requirement for a Statewide Information System that can readily identify certain key information about children in foster care in real time. Therefore, Pennsylvania has incorporated a strategy within its PIP related to implementation of an information system that will strengthen access to statewide data to inform CQI efforts. Pennsylvania will be moving to a statewide child welfare case

management system that will replace the intake/investigation functionality in the current CWIS system and will include full case management functionality to support county children and youth agencies. The current federated approach to developing and maintaining a state level application and six county case management systems has become costly and inefficient and new technology platforms are being considered as an alternative. In late 2018, DHS issued a Request for Information to explore available options. Additional analysis of costs and benefits determined that the best approach would be to move to one statewide child welfare system.

Strategy 1: Enhance continuous quality improvement efforts to utilize data to inform analysis when evaluating county practice to support the development and implementation of technical assistance strategies.

CFSR Outcomes or Systemic Factors: Impacted: Safety Outcome 2, Permanency Outcome 1, Well-Being Outcome 1

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>1.1: Identify key data elements through county case management systems and other available data sources that can be utilized by counties and their TA providers in beginning their root cause analysis related to the identified performance measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Through this analysis, identify other data elements and data sources (e.g., AFCARS, CPCMS, CWIS, statewide licensure reviews, case reviews) that will provide counties and TA providers with the information needed to ascertain identified challenges with core practice areas that impact permanency measures to include, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety and risk assessment/planning/monitoring; - Engagement; - Permanency hearings; - Concurrent planning; - Quality assessments to identify individualized needs; - Effective service provision and coordination; - Quality caseworker visits with children and families; - Quality visits between children in care and their parents/siblings; - Supervision; and - Staff recruitment and retention. 	<p>Quarter 1</p>
<p>1.2 Work with PCG to revise the data packages that are provided to the counties on a semi-annual basis to additionally include the five permanency outcomes of the CFSR national data indicators, utilization of congregate care, and children and youth reunified within 30 days of placement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In addition to the updated data package content, engage PCG to assist in data training and technical assistance. 	<p>Quarter 1</p>

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>1.3 Review the strategies toward practice improvement that counties submitted in their FY 2019-2020 NBPB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work with counties to assess their current level of performance utilizing the updated data packages. ➤ Identify any enhancements or modifications to the previously identified strategies and areas of TA needed to assist in implementation during FY 2019-2020. 	Quarter 3
<p>1.4: Utilize the FY 2020-2021 NBPB process as the mechanism through which to focus the enhancement of CQI efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Counties will be required to work with their local system partners, including the courts, to assess their performance in meeting the national standards of the CFSR Indicator measures related to timeliness to permanence, re-entry and placement stability. ➤ Counties that do not meet or exceed a standard must complete an analysis in collaboration with their local system partners, including the courts, related to their practices and the impact on meeting the performance measure and develop improvement strategies toward achieving the desired outcome. 	Quarter 5
<p>1.5: Work collaboratively with counties to identify TA resources based on the identified needs through the root cause analysis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ TA can be available, at a minimum, through the existing TA Collaborative partners (OCYF Regional Offices, CWRC, SWAN, ABA Barriers to Permanence Project, OCFC) and other resources, including PCG and Casey Family Programs. ➤ The specific TA partners who will assist in working with the county will be individualized based upon the identified needs of the root cause analysis. ➤ The identified TA resources will support the county in the development and implementation of the county data-driven plan toward improved outcomes. 	Quarter 6
<p>1.6: Develop and implement a monitoring process that supports the change efforts at the county level and identifies themes for further review and analysis on a statewide level through the Council and LR. Examples of systemic changes that may be considered based on the identified themes may include, but are not limited to, changes to existing state policies, practices, or trainings for county agencies, updates to the judicial bench book or additional trainings for judges, parents’ attorneys or guardian ad litem.</p>	Quarter 7
<p>1.7: Monitor the implementation of the technical assistance process built upon the FY 2020-21 NBPB to determine modification necessary to improve upon the process in the upcoming fiscal years, including extending beyond the targeted permanency outcomes.</p>	Quarter 8 (and ongoing)

Strategy 2: Enhance collaboration with system partners to improve the behavioral health, intellectual/developmental disability and substance use disorder services array and facilitate access to services across the state.

CFSR Outcomes or Systemic Factors: Impacted: Well-Being Outcome 3 and Service Array

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
2.1: Work with system partners to review complex cases to identify process strengths/challenges and make necessary changes.	Quarter 2
2.2: Pilot and implement changes to the complex case review process.	Quarter 4
2.3: Analyze information gathered during reviews to determine gaps in available services.	Quarter 6

Strategy 3: Enhance the utilization of service mapping at the county level to improve service coordination.

CFSR Outcomes or Systemic Factors: Impacted: Well-Being Outcome 1 and Service Array

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>3.1: OCYF will market PA 2-1-1 to child welfare audience and probation offices through the annual NBPB bulletin.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ PA 2-1-1 is a free, accessible, 3-digit telephone number available to everyone in Pennsylvania. All residents have easy access to customized health, housing and human services information in one place. Trained information specialists are available 24 hours to answer questions and connect residents to thousands of health and human service programs. http://www.pa211.org/ ➤ The Pennsylvania CWRC will send quarterly reminders via social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter). 	Quarter 1
3.2: The Council Resources Subcommittee will obtain and analyze service mapping/matrices used by CCYA, juvenile probation offices and other child serving systems.	Quarter 1
3.3: The Resources Subcommittee will develop a service mapping/matrix template to assist counties who select to utilize it in mapping services to child and family needs. Initial focus would be on county provided/contracted services.	Quarter 2
3.4: The Resources Subcommittee will share a draft template with all CCYA and providers for feedback.	Quarter 3

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
<p>3.5: The Resources Subcommittee will finalize the matrix based on the feedback received.</p>	Quarter 4
<p>3.6: The Resources Subcommittee will deliver presentations on the matrix to county child welfare agency administrators at PCYA quarterly meetings and providers at the Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services conferences.</p>	Quarter 5 (and ongoing)
<p>3.7: The Council will identify innovation zone counties to implement the matrix. Criteria for selection will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commitment from agency leadership ➤ Representation of counties of different class sizes and regions <p>With the support of the TA Collaborative county team, implement and monitor the use of the service mapping template.</p>	Quarter 5
<p>3.8: The TA Collaborative Steering Committee will develop and implement a strategic plan to support all the innovation zone counties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ With the support of the TA Collaborative county level team, implement and monitor the use of the service mapping template in each innovation zone county according to the individualized plan developed by the county and TA providers. 	Quarter 5
<p>3.9: County child welfare agencies and providers will provide county level education/learning opportunities to support implementation made available to non-participating county child welfare agencies and providers.</p>	Quarter 6
<p>3.10: The Resources Subcommittee will monitor the implementation/effectiveness of service matrix, which includes identification of gaps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monitoring will occur from the TA Collaborative, through feedback directly received from the participating counties. If participating counties are involved in the CFSR or QSR, data from those reviews will be analyzed. Feedback will be shared by TA Collaborative partners with the TA Collaborative Steering Committee who will forward any needed feedback to the Resources Subcommittee. ➤ The service mapping template will provide a forum to reveal service gaps. The annual NBPB process will provide an opportunity for counties to request additional funding to address these service gaps. As statewide gaps are identified by the Resources Subcommittee through analysis of NBPB requests, action plans will be developed to address them. ➤ Statewide expansion will be dependent upon findings from the monitoring. Expansion will only be considered if the matrix is found to be an effective tool for caseworkers to connect families with available services 	Quarter 6 (and ongoing)

Strategy 4: Enhance continuous quality improvement efforts to inform evaluation of local and systemic gaps related to housing, transportation, and service coordination as part of each counties’ submission and OCYF review of the Needs Based Plan and Budget.

CFSR Outcomes or Systemic Factors: Impacted: Well-Being Outcome 1 and Service Array

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
4.1: Identify housing and transportation as key planning areas in the NBPB instructions and provide education to counties during regional NBPB trainings related to available funding in these areas.	Quarter 1
4.2: Identify innovative practices and opportunities to share these with counties.	Quarter 1
4.3: Provide TA as requested to CCYA to conduct root cause analysis and address gap areas related to transportation and housing.	Quarter 2 (and ongoing)

Strategy 5: Implement a statewide information system to readily report on the status, demographics, locations, and goal of every child in foster care.

CFSR Outcomes or Systemic Factors: Impacted: Statewide Information System

Key Activities	Projected Completion Date
5.1: Finalize child welfare system capabilities for statewide case management system platform	Quarter 1
5.2: Implement a Governance Structure for a development and implementation of a statewide case management.	Quarter 1
5.3: Procurement of a platform to support a statewide case management system	Quarter 2
5.4: Standardize business processes and complete business requirements	Quarter 3
5.5: Procurement of information technology services for statewide case management system	Quarter 7
5.6: Design and develop a statewide case management system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The implementation of the statewide case management system will extend beyond the completion of the PIP and will be carried into Pennsylvania’s 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan. 	Quarter 8 (and ongoing)

Appendix A: PA Child Welfare Practice Model

PENNSYLVANIA'S CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE MODEL February 2013

Outcomes: Children, youth, families, child welfare representatives and other child and family service partners participate as team members with shared community responsibility to achieve and maintain the following:

- Safety from abuse and neglect.
- Enduring and certain permanence and timely achievement of stability, supports and lifelong connections.
- Enhancement of the family's ability to meet their child/youth's wellbeing, including physical, emotional, behavioral and educational needs.
- Support families within their own homes and communities through comprehensive and accessible services that build on strengths and address individual trauma, needs and concerns.
- Strengthened families that successfully sustain positive changes that lead to safe, nurturing and healthy environments.
- Skilled and responsive child welfare professionals, who perform with a shared sense of accountability for assuring child-centered, family-focused policy, best practice and positive outcomes.

Values and Principles: Our values and principles will be consistently modeled at every level and across partnerships. We believe in...

- **Children, Youth and Families**
 - Children and youth have the right to live in a safe, nurturing and stable family.
 - Families are the best place for children and youth to grow up.
 - Family connections are maintained whenever possible.
 - All families have strengths.
 - Families come in all shapes and sizes and family defines family.
 - Families are experts on themselves, are involved in decision making, and are willing to drive change.
- **Community**
 - Community is broadly defined. This includes, but is not limited to, families, neighbors, volunteers, spiritual, educational, medical, behavioral health and legal partners.
 - Natural partnerships must exist within a community to promote prevention, protection, well-being and lifelong connections.
- **Honesty**
 - Honesty serves as the basis for building trusting relationships.
 - Honesty is not only telling the truth, but also sharing information, clarifying roles and responsibilities and transparent decision making.
 - Honesty is an open and consistent exchange of communication in a way that everyone can understand.
- **Cultural awareness and responsiveness**

- Culture is respected, valued and celebrated.
- Culture is broadly defined. This includes but is not limited to families' beliefs, values, race, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, history, tribe, religion/spirituality/affiliations, sexual orientation and language.
- Cultural identity is explored with the family. Each child, youth and family is served with sensitivity within their unique context.
- **Respect**
 - Everyone has their own unique perspective, the right to be heard and contribute to their success.
 - Every individual is treated with dignity and consideration.
- **Teaming**
 - Children, youth and families are best served through a team approach with shared responsibilities. All team members have a role and voice. Involving the child, youth, family and extended support networks as active members of the team empowers the family.
 - Teams are strength-based and collaborate toward common goals.
 - Teams change as needed to include all formal and informal supports and resources.
 - Team members are accountable for their actions, keeping commitments and following through with agreed upon responsibilities.
- **Organizational excellence:**
 - Engaging children, youth and families, as an involved part of an accepting and empathetic team who can confront difficult issues, will effectively assist in the process toward positive change.
 - Advocating for and empowering children, youth, families and communities strengthen the organization.
 - Building, supporting and retaining a qualified, skilled and committed workforce whose own well-being and safety are valued is essential.
 - Responsible allocation and management of resources demonstrates accountability.
 - Quality practice is assured by consistently monitoring and improving performance through critical self-reflection and accountability.

Skills: To achieve our desired outcomes and commitment to these values and principles, demonstration of the following skills is essential across all aspects of the child welfare system.

- **Engaging:** Effectively establishing and maintaining a relationship with children, youth, families and all other team members by encouraging their active role and voice and successfully accomplishing sustainable shared goals.
- **Teaming:** Engaging and assembling the members of the team, including the family, throughout all phases of the change process and based on current needs and goals. Teaming is defining and demonstrating a unified effort, common purpose and clear roles and responsibilities that support positive change.
- **Assessing and Understanding:** Gathering and sharing information so the team has a common big picture of the strengths, challenges, needs and underlying issues. Assessing includes thinking critically and using information to keep the team's understanding current and comprehensive.

- **Planning:** Applying information gathered through assessment and monitoring to develop an individualized well-reasoned sequence of strategies and supports to achieve the agreed upon goals.
- **Implementing:** Actively performing roles to ensure the formal and informal resources, supports and services, identified in the plan, occur in a timely manner and with sufficient intensity, frequency and sequence to produce sustainable and beneficial results.
- **Monitoring and Adjusting:** Continuously analyzing and evaluating the impact and effectiveness of the plan implementation and modifying accordingly in response to the changing successes and needs until goals are achieved.

Appendix B: PA Child Welfare Council and Subcommittee Membership

PA Child Welfare Council

Adelphoi
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts
Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Allegheny County Courts
Bucks County Children and Youth Social Services Agency
Carbon County Children and Youth Services
Casey Family Programs
Center for Children's Justice
Child Advocacy Center at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh
Children's Home of Easton
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Community Legal Services of Philadelphia
Dauphin County Children and Youth
Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs
Department of Health
Department of Health, Bureau of Family and Health
Department of Human Services - Office of Children, Youth and Families - Bureau of Children and Family Services
Department of Human Services - Office of Children, Youth and Families - Deputy Secretary's Office
Department of Human Services - Office of Children, Youth and Families - Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Support
Department of Human Services - Office of Children, Youth and Families - Bureau of Juvenile Justice

Department of Human Services- Office of Children, Youth and Families - Bureau of Policy and Quality Management
Department of Human Services- Office of Children, Youth and Families – Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations
Department of Human Services - Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Department of Human Services - Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
Disability Rights Network
Educational Law Center
Equality Pennsylvania
Family Design Resources
Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice, and Research- University of Penn State
George Junior Republic
Hoffman Homes for Youth
Hornby Zeller Associates
Juvenile Court Judges' Commission
Juvenile Law Center
Lancaster County Children and Youth
Lycoming County Children and Youth Services
McKean County Children and Youth Services Agency
McKean County Juvenile Probation Office
Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth
National Alliance of Model State Drug Laws (NAMSDL)
Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center

Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Families
Pennsylvania Department of Education - Secretary's Office
Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
Penn State University, Network on Child Protection and Well-Being
Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators
Pennsylvania Community Providers

Philadelphia Department of Human Services
Support Center for Child Advocates
The Impact Project
Tioga County Department of Family Services
University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work
York County Children and Youth Services
York County Juvenile Probation

PA Child Welfare Council – Safety Subcommittee

Allegheny Children and Youth
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts
Bucks County Children and Youth
Cambria County Children and Youth
Casey Family Programs
Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
Centre County Youth Service Bureau
Child Advocacy Center of the Central Susquehanna Valley/Geisinger Medical Center- Pediatrics
Community Legal Services
Child Welfare Resource Center
Dauphin County Children and Youth
Department of Human Services - Office of Children, Youth and Families - Bureau of Juvenile Justice
Department of Human Services - Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Department of Human Services- Office of Children, Youth and Families – Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations
Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health
Erie County Department of Human Services
Family Intervention Crisis Services
First Choice
Hoffman Homes
Maternity Care Coalition

Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center
Montgomery County Children and Youth
Northeast Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
Norristown Family Center
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators
Penn State University, Network on Child Protection and Well-Being
Pennsylvania Community Providers
Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth, and Family Services
Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
Southeast Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
Susquehanna Police Department
Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (Diakon/Family Design Resources)
Tabor
The IMPACT Project
University of Pennsylvania
Western Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
York County Children and Youth

PA Child Welfare Council – Permanency Subcommittee

Allegheny Children and Youth
Allegheny Department of Human Services
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts
Bucks County Children and Youth
Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
Centre County Youth Service Bureau
Children's Home of Easton
Christ's Home
Community Legal Services
Child Welfare Resource Center
Dauphin Children and Youth
Delta Community Supports
Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs
Department of Human Services- Office of Children, Youth and Families – Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations
Department of Human Services - Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
Family Intervention Crisis Services
First Choice
Haven Foster Care
Juvenile Law Center
Lancaster Children and Youth

Lancaster County Court Appointed Special Advocates
Montgomery County Children and Youth
Montgomery Child Advocacy Project - (MCAP)
Northeast Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
Norristown Family Center
Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators
Pennsylvania Court Appointed Special Advocates Association
Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth, and Family Services
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
Southeast Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network - (Diakon/Family Design Resources)
Tabor Children's Services
University of Pennsylvania Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research
Western Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
York County Children and Youth

PA Child Welfare Council – Well-Being Subcommittee

Allegheny Children and Youth
Allegheny Department of Human Services
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts
Bucks County Children and Youth
Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
Center for Schools and Communities
Child and Family Focus
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Policy Lab
Christ Home
CONCERN Professional Services
Child Welfare Resource Center
Dauphin County Drug and Alcohol Services
Department of Human Services - Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Department of Human Services- Office of Children, Youth and Families – Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations
Department of Human Services- Office of Developmental Programs
Department of Human Services - Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
Families United Network
First Choice
Lakeside Educational Network
Lancaster Children and Youth

Montgomery County Behavioral Health
Montgomery County Children and Youth
Montgomery County Family Center
Northeast Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators
Pennsylvania Academic Career and Technical Training
Pennsylvania Court Appointed Special Advocates Association
Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth, and Family Services
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
Southeast Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
Second Haven
Silver Springs- Martin Luther School
Support Center for Child Advocates
Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (Diakon/Family Design Resources)
The Bradley Center
The Impact Project, Inc.
Western Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
York County Children and Youth

PA Child Welfare Council – Resources/Cross-Categorical Subcommittee

Adelphoi
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts
Bucks Children and Youth
Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
Child Welfare Resource Center
Delta Community Supports
Department of Human Services - Office of Children, Youth and Families - Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Support
Department of Human Services- Office of Children, Youth and Families – Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations
Department of Human Services - Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
Department of Human Services – Office of Medical Assistance Programs
George Junior Republic
Info Matrix
Juvenile Court Judges' Commission
Lancaster Court Appointed Special Advocates

Lancaster Children and Youth
Lycoming Children and Youth
Montgomery County Children and Youth
Northeastern Office of Children, Youth, and Families
Norristown Area School District
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators
Penn State University
Pennsylvania Community Providers
Pennsylvania Council for Children, Youth, and Family Services
Southeast Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (Diakon/Family Design Resources)
Western Region Office of Children, Youth and Families
York County Probation Services

Appendix C: Licensing Inspection Summary Data

Annual CCYA Licensing Overview and Methodology

OCYF conducts annual licensing of all 67 CCYAs. The OCYF Regional Office staff conduct the annual licensing inspection by means of a random sample record review, interviews with administrative, supervisory, and casework staff, internal policy and procedures review, personnel record review and agency fiscal documentation review. A case sample is drawn from cases assigned to all program units and casework functions within the agency which includes:

- CPS Intake records
- GPS Intake records
- Screen-Outs
- Ongoing/In-Home Services Records
- Placement Records
- Adoption Records
- Agency Resource Home Records
- Personnel Records

For each case record reviewed, the OCYF Regional Office staff refers to a variety of documents contained in the record, including but not limited to:

- Case notes and correspondence
- Family Service Plans
- Safety Assessment Worksheets
- Safety Plans
- Risk Assessments
- Child Permanency Plans
- Court orders
- Educational Records
- Medical Records

In addition, the following administrative items are reviewed:

- Current organizational chart with caseload count for each person carrying cases
- Completed copy of the agency's policy and procedure manual
- Current list of Advisory Committee members and addresses
- Copy of the Advisory Committee By-Laws and minutes of meetings the past year
- 10-day supervisory logs
- Multidisciplinary Team meeting minutes
- Training records for all staff

The final county agency sample size is determined as follows:

- 10% or no more than ten cases for each life of case area are to be reviewed during licensure
- Cases should be inclusive of a sampling of the following:
 - One of the in-home or placement cases reviewed should be a shared responsibility case.
 - Sample size should include youth in care of discharged from care after the age of 16 and one resumption of jurisdiction case.
 - County operated foster homes records (including kinship)-
 - All new homes are reviewed during the Period Under Review;
 - 10% or no more than 10 tenured foster homes
 - Personnel Records
 - All new employee personnel files hired during the Period Under Review
 - Training records for all staff

The Period Under Review is defined as the day after the completion of the previous year's review until the day prior to the current year's review.

Counties placed on a provisional license are subject to a licensing inspection every six months until which time the county achieves full licensure status. A maximum of four consecutive provisional licenses may be issued to an agency, at which point failure to implement a plan of correction will result in the loss of the agency's Certificate of Compliance.

Appendix D: PA CFSS Round 3 Data Profile

Pennsylvania

January 2019

Child and Family Services Review (CFSS 3) Data Profile

Calculations based on revised syntax (pending verification)

Submissions as of 12-10-18 (AFCARS) and 10-12-18 (NCANDS)

Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)

Risk standardized performance (RSP) is the percent or rate of children experiencing the outcome of interest, with risk adjustment. To see how your state is performing relative to the national performance (NP), compare the RSP interval to the NP for the indicator. See the footnotes for more information on interpreting performance.

¹ State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically better than national performance

² State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically no different than national performance

³ State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically worse than national performance

DQ = Performance was not calculated due to failing one or more data quality (DQ) checks for this indicator. See the data quality table for details.

		National Performance	13B14A	14A14B	14B15A	15A15B	15B16A	16A16B	16B17A	17A17B	17B18A	18A18B
Permanency in 12 months (entries)	42.7%▲	RSP	38.9%	37.9%	35.1%	34.6%	35.9%	37.7%				
		RSP interval	37.9%-39.9% ³	36.9%-38.9% ³	34.1%-36.0% ³	33.7%-35.6% ³	34.9%-36.8% ³	36.7%-38.6% ³				
		Data used	13B-16A	14A-16B	14B-17A	15A-17B	15B-18A	16A-18B				
Permanency in 12 months (12 - 23 mos)	45.9%▲	RSP					39.7%	37.7%	39.6%	38.5%	37.7%	38.7%
		RSP interval					38.1%-41.2% ³	36.3%-39.2% ³	38.1%-41.0% ³	37.1%-39.9% ³	36.3%-39.1% ³	37.3%-40.1% ³
		Data used					15B-16A	16A-16B	16B-17A	17A-17B	17B-18A	18A-18B
Permanency in 12 months (24+ mos)	31.8%▲	RSP				31.5%	32.2%	34.2%	32.7%	34.0%	36.2%	
		RSP interval				30.2%-32.8% ²	30.9%-33.4% ²	32.9%-35.4% ¹	31.5%-33.9% ²	32.8%-35.2% ¹	35.1%-37.3% ¹	
		Data used				15B-16A	16A-16B	16B-17A	17A-17B	17B-18A	18A-18B	
Re-entry to foster care	8.1%▼	RSP	15.0%	14.4%	14.8%	13.4%	12.0%	12.9%				
		RSP interval	13.8%-16.4% ³	13.2%-15.7% ³	13.5%-16.1% ³	12.2%-14.7% ³	10.9%-13.2% ³	11.8%-14.1% ³				
		Data used	13B-16A	14A-16B	14B-17A	15A-17B	15B-18A	16A-18B				
Placement stability (moves/1,000 days in care)	4.44▼	RSP				3.84	3.88	3.77	3.77	3.49	3.62	
		RSP interval				3.75-3.94 ¹	3.78-3.98 ¹	3.67-3.87 ¹	3.67-3.86 ¹	3.4-3.59 ¹	3.52-3.71 ¹	
		Data used				15B-16A	16A-16B	16B-17A	17A-17B	17B-18A	18A-18B	
Maltreatment in care (victimizations/100,000 days in care)	9.67▼	RSP	14AB,FY14	15AB,FY15	16AB,FY16	FY14-15	FY15-16	FY16-17				
		RSP interval	DQ	DQ	DQ							
		Data used	14AB,FY14	15AB,FY15	16AB,FY16							
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.5%▼	RSP				DQ	DQ	DQ				
		RSP interval										
		Data used				FY14 - 15	FY15 - 16	FY16 - 17				

▲ For this indicator, a higher RSP value is desirable. ▼ For this indicator, a lower RSP value is desirable.

Appendix E: QSR Overview and Methodology

The QSR protocol uses an in-depth case review method and practice appraisal process to find out how children, youth and families are benefiting from services received and how well locally coordinated services are working for children, youth and families. The QSR uses a combination of record reviews, interviews, observations and deductions made from fact patterns gathered and interpreted by trained reviewers regarding children, youth and families receiving services. The QSR Protocol contains qualitative indicators that measure the current status of the focus child and the child's parents or caregivers.

QSR Indicators

The QSR Protocol provides reviewers with a specific set of indicators to use when examining the status of the child and parent or caregiver and analyzing the responsiveness and effectiveness of the core practice functions prompted in the Practice Model. Indicators are divided into two distinct domains: child, youth and family status and practice performance.

Child, youth and family status indicators measure the extent to which certain desired conditions are present in the life the focus child and the child's parents or caregivers as seen over the past 30 days. Status indicators measure constructs related to safety, permanency and well-being. Changes in status over time may be considered the near-term outcomes at a given point in the life of a case.

Practice indicators measure the extent to which core practice functions are applied successfully by practitioners and others who serve as members of the child and family team. The core practice functions measured are taken from the child and family team and provide useful case-based tests of performance achievement. The number of core practice functions and level of detail used in their measurement may evolve over time as advances are made in the state-of-the-art practice.

Rating Scales Used in the QSR

The QSR protocol uses a six-point rating scale as a yardstick for measuring the situation observed for each indicator. The general timeframes for rating indicators are:

- For child/youth and parent/caregiver status indicators, the reviewer focuses on the past 30 days.
- For system performance indicators, the reviewer focuses on the past 90 days.

These time parameters help reviewers clearly and consistently define conditions necessary for a particular rating value. Greater clarity in rating values increases inter-rater reliability. Most QSR indicators follow these time parameters exactly. Exceptions to the general rules are found within specific indicators but are clearly spelled out within each indicator.