NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Nevada Child and Family Services Review

Round 3 – Program Improvement Plan

Date Submitted: **4-19-2019**

Date Resubmitted**: 6-21-2019, 8-9-2019, 9-19-2019, 10-22-2019, 10-28-19**

Date Approved:

PIP Effective Date:**11-01-19**

End of PIP Implementation Period:**10-31-21**

Non-Overlapping Period Ends: **3/31/23**

Reporting Schedule and Format:

- Schedule: Nevada will report progress on PIP activities to the Children's Bureau at six-month intervals
- Format for PIP reporting:

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

INTRODUCTION 2

Identified Cross Cutting Performance Themes 3

Process for Performance Improvement Plan Development 4

Initiatives 5

Nevada SAFE Model Initiative 5

Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) 6

Community Improvement Councils (CICs) Initiative 6

Part One: Goals, Strategies, and Key Activities 7

Process for Determining Overarching Goals and Strategies of Goal 1 7

Goal 1: Strengthen Safety for children in Nevada through improved practice regarding response times, persistent efforts, safety planning, and initial and ongoing safety assessment. (Safety Outcome 1 and Safety Outcome 2) 12

Process for Determining Overarching Goals and Strategies of Goal 2 16

Goal 2: Promote effective communication and contact with families (Permanency Outcome 2, Well-Being Outcome 1, Well-Being 2, Well-Being 3, Staff and Provider Training) 18

Process for Determining Overarching Goals and Strategies of Goal 3 25

Goal 3: Nevada children have legal permanency and stability in their home lives and their continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved. (Permanency Outcome 1, and Systemic Factors: Case Review System), Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention.) 33

Process for Determining Overarching Goals and Strategies of Goal 4 39

Goal 4: Improve Statewide Child Welfare Outcomes by developing and strengthening the Statewide Quality Assurance System to ensure the system can identify and respond to the strengths and needs of the child welfare system in an efficient and effective manner. (Systemic Factors: Statewide Information System, Quality Assurance System, sand Service Array) 43

PART Two: CFSR PIP Measurement Plan 50

Statewide Measurement 50

Conflict of Interest: 52

Minimum Qualification for a Case Reviewer: 52

Minimum Qualification for 1ST and 2nd QA Level: 52

Preferred Qualifications for all positions: 52

In-Home Cases: 57

Out-of-Home Cases: 57

Cases are eliminated for the following reasons: 57

Optional Interviews 58
Case-Specific Interviews 59
APPENDIX A: Glossary of Acronyms 63

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 1994 Amendments to the Social Security Act authorize the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to review state child and family service programs to ensure conformity with the requirements in titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The Children's Bureau (CB), part of the Department of Health and Human Services, administers the review system, known as the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR).

In 2000, the Children's Bureau published a final rule in the Federal Register to establish a process for monitoring state child welfare programs. Under the rule, states are assessed for substantial conformity with federal requirements for child welfare services.

All 50 states, the District of Columba, and Puerto Rico completed their first review in 2004 and their second review by 2010. Nevada completed round one in 2004 and round two in 2009. The third round of reviews were conducted from 2015 to 2018 for all 50 states. Nevada competed its third round in September of 2018.

The Child and Family Services Reviews enable the children's Bureau to: (1) ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirement; (2) determine what is happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes.

The reviews are structured to help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement within their agencies and programs. Ultimately, the goal of the reviews is to help states improve child welfare services and achieve the following seven outcomes for families and children who receive services:

Safety

- Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
- Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate

Permanency

- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations
- The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for families

Family and child Well-Being

- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The reviews also measure state performance on seven system factors, including the effectiveness of (1) the statewide child welfare information system; (2) the case review system; (3) the quality assurance system; (4) staff and provider training; (5) the service array and resource development; (6) the agency's responsiveness to the community; and (7) foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention.

The 2018 CFSR found Nevada to be out of substantial conformity with all seven outcomes and six of the seven systemic factors. Nevada is charged with developing a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that addresses all areas rated as not in substantial conformity.

After the review ends, the Children's Bureau is required to issue a final report. The report is accompanied by a cover letter that includes an estimate of the amount of any applicable penalty. Nevada's final report was received on 01/22/2019 with an estimated penalty of $ 1,068,285.00. Nevada must submit the PIP to the Children's Bureau Regional Office for approval within 90 calendar days from the date on which the state receives written notification that Nevada is not operating in substantial conformity with any one of the seven outcomes or seven systemic factors. If the Children's Bureau does not approve the state's initial PIP submission, the Children's Bureau will provide additional information to help the state revise it, and the state has 30 calendar days of receiving written notice to amend the plan.

The PIP must be designed so that its implementation is completed no later than two years from the date on which it is approved by the children's Bureau. If at the end of the PIP, the state has not demonstrated the required amount of improvement on the measurement goals, the state may submit additional data through the end of the 12-month non-overlapping period following the end of the implementation period.

INTRODUCTION

Nevada uses a state-administered and county operated structure for the management of child welfare services, except in the rural counties of the state, where the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) operates child welfare services. The DCFS, under the umbrella of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), provides oversight to child welfare and direct child welfare services.

DCFS is responsible for Children' Mental Health in Clark and Washoe Counties (the two largest populated counties) Juvenile Justice Services, and Child Welfare Services. As such, the implementation and administration of the Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP) is the responsibility of DCFS. This includes: Title IV-E, Title IV-B, Subpart I (Child Welfare Services) and Subpart II (Promoting Safe and Stable Families), Child Abuse and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and the Chafee Program.

Nevada does not have a unified court system, and all dependency matters are handled by the State District Courts. These are courts of general jurisdiction where major civil, criminal, family, and juvenile cases are decided. Appeals of District Court cases go to the Supreme Court. The 11 Judicial Districts (JD), four of which are multi-county districts, are depicted in Figure 1. The District Court boundaries align with the child welfare agency field management structure in only two urban districts, Clark (8th JD) and Washoe (2nd JD) Counties.

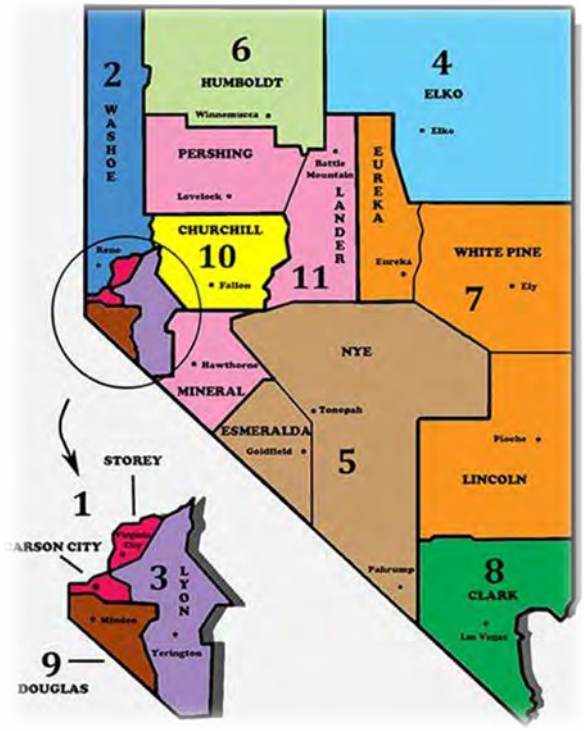


Figure 1 Nevada Judicial Districts

Identified Cross Cutting Performance Themes

During 2018 Nevada utilized a state-conducted review path for Round 3 of the CFSR. States must meet qualifying criteria to be approved by the Children' Bureau (CB) to be allowed to conduct their own case reviews. Nevada collaborated and developed Memorandums of Agreement (MOUs) with Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) and the Washoe County Human Services Agency (WCHSA) to use staff and resources to conduct the CFSR.

The reviews identified Nevada to be out of substantial conformity with all seven outcomes and six of the seven systemic factors. Nevada is charged with developing a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that addresses all areas rated as not in substantial conformity.

The following practice themes were identified as areas of concern during the reviews:

- **Conducting Quality Safety and Risk Assessments**
  - Conducting comprehensive risk and safety assessments
  - Focusing on in-home cases
  - Developing appropriate, realistic, and specific safety plans
  - Formalizing maltreatment reports on open cases
  - Providing safety services

- **Engaging Families**
  - Effective family engagement
  - Conducting high quality caseworker visits and case planning
  - Focusing on in-home cases
  - Effective relative engagement
  - Conducting accurate needs assessment and case planning
- **Achieving Timely Permanency**
  - Effective use of concurrent planning
  - Effective and timely planning for adoption and provision of adoption services
  - Planning for, pursuing, and supporting timely reunification
  - Strengthening court case review processes and communication/partnership with courts
  - Filing timely TPR petitions per ASFA
- **Continuous Quality Improvement**
  - Developing a comprehensive CQI system
  - Building capacity
  - Strengthening data collection, tracking, sharing, and analysis
  - Strengthening the link between data analysis and decision-making
  - Tracking interventions and outcomes

Process for Performance Improvement Plan Development

To develop the PIP, DCFS received technical assistance from the Capacity Building Center for States (CBSC) and the Capacity Building Center for Courts (CBCC). Nevada utilized a teaming approach with internal and external stakeholders in the process of problem exploration. DCFS engaged several key internal and external stakeholders in developing teams that represented each of the four cross-cutting practice themes, i.e. judges and youth. In January 2019, the CBCS and the CBCC provided a statewide training via Adobe Connect on Root Cause Analysis to Stakeholders. In February 2019, over 100 stakeholders convened to review the results of the CFSR with the Children's Bureau in Carson City, Nevada. These stakeholders represented a diverse internal and external group across the state. Teams were assembled around the four cross cutting performance themes of: Team (1) Conducting Quality Safety Assessments, Team (2) Engaging Families, Team (3) Achieving Timely Permanency and Team (4) Continuous Quality Improvement. During this convening, there were team break outs to start the process of problem exploration with each team and to set the course for future meetings. The teams were comprised of county staff, state staff, judges, youth, and other entities that represent child welfare across the state.

Additionally, internally and in collaboration with CCDFS, WCHSA and the DCFS-Rural, a CORE Steering Team was organized to guide each of the four teams throughout the process. A member of the CORE team also chaired or co-chaired the teams. The CORE Team and the practice themed teams developed a charter and communication plan which provided bi-directional communication with the teams, and the Executive Leadership Committee. An Advisory Committee was assembled of internal and external stakeholders i.e. parent advocates, birth parents, CASA, aged out Foster Youth, Providers, CJA task force and foster parents. This committee will also serve as advisory to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP).

The general approach taken by the four teams involved utilizing a period of problem exploration followed by data identification, analysis, developing research questions, analyzing root causes of performance and developing a theory of change for each root cause. Additionally, a data team was convened to assist with providing data for analysis. All teams met weekly or more to explore the problem in as much depth as possible considering the time constraints and created a data plan. During problem exploration and upon development of the data plan it was discovered there was not enough quantitative data to gain enough insight into some of the identified problem areas. The CBSC assisted the teams in conducting focus groups with Foster Parents, Youth, Supervisors, Caseworkers and Parents as a source of qualitative data to fill in the gaps. Teams then identified possible contributing factors and root causes of the identified problems. This process provided for the development of the goals, strategies and action steps for Nevada's PIP.

Initiatives

Nevada SAFE Model Initiative

Nevada has been involved in Nevada's SAFE Model Initiative for more than a decade and has been working towards improving the assessment of safety since Round 1 of the CFSR PIP in 2006. Nevada has historically used ACTION for Child Protection through contractual funds or received technical assistance from the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services (NRCCPS) when they were funded by the Children's Bureau.

The DCFS-Rural and WCHSA met and moved forward with implementation of the ***enhanced*** safety model beginning in 2010-2011. The SAFE Model was fully implemented in 2016 in WCHSA, and the DCFS-Rural has fully implemented six of eight offices but continues working towards full implementation in two of the DCFS-Rural Offices. CCDFS currently has a contract with ACTION that will end in June of 2020. This contract is for continued support in fidelity enhancement, supervisory competence for Initial Assessment (IA), Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA), Parental Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA), Parental Capacity Parent Assessment (PCPA), court collaboration, engagement and internal expertise for sustainability.

Child Safety is the operating concept applied throughout the SAFE Model. All assessments in the SAFE Model are designed to evaluate the presence of danger to children and consider caregiver protective capacities. The initial assessment worker recognizes the importance of knowing and using essential safety concepts and practices that are necessary to perform effective practice and decision making. The essential safety intervention concepts applied during initial assessment are:

- **Safe and unsafe**
- **Present danger**
- **Impending danger**
- **Danger threshold**
- **Allegations of child abuse and neglect**

In March 2019 during statewide focus groups with caseworkers and supervisors it was expressed that the SAFE Model is designed for caseloads of 15-18 children but that the current caseload size is much larger. Higher Caseloads place a strain on Caseworkers and Supervisors ability to adhere to the fidelity of the model, and additionally it affects the quality of safety assessments.

Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI)

Nevada has been involved in the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) since 2013. The Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) is an innovative approach to strengthening foster care, including kinship care, and using branding and marketing principles. It is a process designed to help a site develop new strategies and practices, rather than imposing upon it a predetermined set of "best practices." The core premise is that the primary goal of the child welfare system is to ensure that children have effective, loving parenting. The best way to achieve this goal is to enable the child's own parents to care for him or her. If that isn't possible, the system must ensure that the foster or relative family caring for the child provide the living, committed, skilled care that the child needs, while working effectively with the system to reach the child's long-term goals.

QPI recognizes that the traditional foster care "brand" has a negative connotation and that this deters families from participating. QPI is an effort to rebrand foster care, not simply by changing a logo or an advertisement, but by changing the core elements underlying the brand. When these changes are accomplished, QPI sites are better able to develop communication materials and to design recruitment training and retention systems for foster parents. QPI has been a way to engage foster parents and foster parent surveys have indicated that QPI has been helpful in Nevada.

Community Improvement Councils (CICs) Initiative

In response to the PIP from the 2nd round CFSR (2010), the courts were asked to develop a workgroup to address reducing barriers to adoption and TPR. Rather than create one large workgroup, CIP asked each judicial district to create a platform/forum for ongoing identification of strengths and opportunities as they pertain to child welfare outcomes. As a result, each judicial district created a Community Improvement Council (CIC) of local stakeholders to identify barriers to timely permanency, adoption, and TPR; and develop and implement solutions to these barriers in its locale. These CICs continue to meet and discuss issues relevant to children welfare and court dependency.

CIP produces quarterly and annual data packets containing court timeliness, child welfare, and trend metrics. The timeliness data metrics distributed to the CICs quarterly allow for comparison over time as well as comparison among judicial districts. Because each judicial district is unique, the specific local activities and interventions for that district have been built on a foundation of empirical data and consensus among the key stakeholders and constituency of that district. These data are also used to guide CIP's discussions with the judiciary and their CICs during their regularly meetings so local stakeholders can work to improve timeliness and resolve systemic problems. With help from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, CIP conducts the CIC Summits, targeted annual convenings of CIC stakeholder teams from each of the judicial districts, to reinforce their work and advance new initiatives.

Part One: Goals, Strategies, and Key Activities

Process for Determining Overarching Goals and Strategies of Goal 1

Goal 1: Strengthen Safety for children in Nevada through improved practice regarding response times, persistent efforts, safety planning, and initial and ongoing safety assessments.

Team (1) Conducting Quality Safety Assessments identified the goal and used the following process described below in determining strategies.

The Family Programs Office (FPO) with the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) along with stakeholders from the Child Welfare Agencies in Nevada, to include front end case workers, supervisors, managers/coordinators and leadership, formed a team to examine both quantitative and qualitative data, which led to decisions about strategies and key activities for this Program Improvement Plan (PIP). They met to understand the root cause of the lack of timely, thorough and accurate safety assessments, efforts to implement and monitor sufficient safety plans, and the ability to keep children from entering or re-entering foster care. As applicable, specific data points were examined within each strategy outlined for this cross-cutting theme.

- CFSR Round Three Final Report
- CFSR Data specific to Items 1, 2, and 3
- Retention data of workers and supervisors, including annual turnover data and average length of time in position or agency.
- Time to completion of initial safety assessment (both Present Danger and Nevada Initial Assessment)
- Time to completion of Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) for cases that have children found to be unsafe and opened for ongoing services.
- Focus Groups with front line staff, supervisors, foster parents, birth parents and youth
- Data reporting availability regarding cases where priority response times are not being met with “face to face” contact with the child.
- Case data regarding Safety Plan Determination (SPD), Safety Plan (SP) and ongoing Safety Assessments (SA) when cases are referred for service (opened for ongoing services)
- Annual Progress and Services Review (APSR) report statewide staffing and turnover data
- Statewide availability of informal and formal safety service providers

An analysis of Item 1 CFSR data (80 cases total) indicated that the state of Nevada was meeting the federal expectation 58.3% of the time (21/36 cases); however, 41% of the time, Nevada is not meeting the performance expectations of Item 1, Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment. Of applicable cases reviewed for Item 1 statewide during the CFSR, 41% (15 cases) were rated as Area Needing Improvement (ANI), while the federal substantial conformity standard is 95% of

reviewed cases rated as a Strength. Themes identified from this analysis show issues with persistent efforts being made, with three being rated ANI for this reason, and in 12 cases children were not seen timely, meaning either all the children were not seen timely or the initial report was not initiated timely. This impacted In-Home, Foster Care and Differential Response (DR) cases. Out of the 15 cases that were identified as areas needing improvement, 12 of these cases were in-home cases and/or in-home DR cases.

To dig deeper, the team evaluated its ability to understand, monitor and track work performance for initiating reports of child maltreatment. The team found there was a lack of clarity and understanding about response times and persistent efforts. Three policies were identified that impacted this lack of understanding, Intake 506, NIA 508 and NIA 509. The Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) also lead to different interpretations and misunderstanding about the requirements. Specifically, the NIA Policies list different requirements for which children need to be seen, in one section it requires face to face contact with the identified child(ren) within response time and in a different section it requires private interviews with all children residing in the home within response time. Nevada Revised Statute requires an assessment of all children in the household but does not specify a timeframe besides immediately when certain criteria are alleged. Nevada Administrative Code requires daily attempts at face to face contact if the case is initiated by telephone or case record review but is not clear as to what to do when attempted face to face contact fails initially. Given current policy, NRS and NAC requirements, there are clarifications that can be made that will better direct the workforce that will be made in Strategy 1. Key activity 1.1.1 will address the lack of clarity and understanding by delivering training and subsequent follow up. Additionally, key activity 1.1.2 will clarify two policies that directly impact this root cause.

UNITY, the statewide data system, was found to have limited ability to record and report out on timeliness. The report detail window captures the response type and allows for one response time and date per report. The report detail window does not allow for a worker to specifically show that they met with all the children in the report, at which times, through which method (face to face, by phone, etc.); therefore, the agencies cannot accurately track and monitor performance. A report was pulled from UNITY in an attempt to show response times, but it could only show cases where "face to face with child" was not chosen in the report detail window and then it was difficult to aggregate any understanding about whether all children were seen timely from the report. Another reporting issue identified with UNITY was the system's inability to report on whether daily face-to-face contact attempts are made on cases where the child was not seen within priority response times. Key Activity 1.1.3 will address the ability to accurately track response timeliness and persistent efforts.

One other contributing factor for response times being deficient is the lack of experienced staff with less than two years of experience working in child welfare across the state, which is discussed in more detail below.

To understand this issue from a qualitative side, the team discussed it in the focus groups. It was believed high workload, turnover in staff, and a large percentage of the workforce having less than two years of experience also impacted the timeliness of investigations (being addressed in Goal 2, Strategy 2). There was question as to whether supervisors and managers fully understood the requirements. Focus groups were asked about their understanding of response time, persistent efforts and barriers to achieving timely investigations.

Caseworkers from across all three jurisdictions indicated these were the barriers bulleted below:

- Conflicting schedules and priorities: court, placements, new reports,
- High caseloads with many demands

- Assigned more than one report in a day, varied type of reports requires more time; e.g. present danger or placement.
- Several children in different locations
- Coordinating with police when required, may have to wait for hours
- Time lapse between report time and assignment time (P2 some wait until next day to assign)
- Transient population and difficulty locating families

Supervisors from across all three jurisdictions indicated these were the barriers bulleted below:

- Time starts when the call is received
- Law enforcement and collateral contacts count as initiation but is not best practice
- Face to face with the victim(s). State policy is face-to-face with every child(ren) regardless if they are the victim within the priority response time
- If no one is at home, document and go back the next day or start calling to see if you can find them
- Depending on nature of report, will try to go again later in day or if needed, will have Emergency Response Team (ERT) try or swing shift, document all attempts or if it is a P1 have ERT or Swing shift initiate first contact. The rural regions do not have an ERT or swing shift unit to initiate contact.
- Continued efforts to see children daily that are identified on the report
- Priority is face-to-face contact, but other options available.
- Concerted Efforts – general practice is one attempt. Either school, home, if not there, waiting until later or the next day unless staffed and high danger then need to try multiple times a day.

Based on ongoing discussion within the team and the data exploration, Safety Outcome 1 was drilled down to one root cause:

- There is a lack of clarity around expectations for response time and persistent efforts, which led to one strategy with multiple key activities.

To address this root cause, the team identified the following strategy:

- Strengthen safety by ensuring all alleged victims of maltreatment identified in the intake assessment are seen by staff within defined timeframes and when unable to do so, appropriate persistent efforts are made.

This strategy will clarify the expectations for response times for reports of maltreatment and persistent efforts. Additionally, workers will be able to accurately record response times and the Agency's will be able to track the data in UNITY to understand if response times are being met. By clarifying policy expectations, training staff and monitoring statewide performance in meeting response times, staff will see more children within priority response times, supervisors will coach and monitor staff *so that* staff are better able to meet clarified timeframes and response time efforts.

An analysis of Item 2 CFSR data indicated the state of Nevada was meeting the federal expectations 71% of the time (23/32 cases), below the standard for substantial conformity of 95%. Item 2 assesses whether the agency is making concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after reunification. Nine of the 32 applicable cases were rated as Areas Needing Improvement. Themes identified from this analysis include child welfare agencies misidentifying safety risks, not making referrals to appropriate safety related services, and not identifying barriers to families receiving safety related services to prevent removal of children or re-entry in foster care. An analysis of Item 3 CFSR data indicated the state of Nevada was meeting the federal expectations 46% of the time (37/80 cases), below the standard for substantial conformity of 95%. Item 3 assesses whether the agency

is making concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child in their own home or while in foster care. Forty-three of the 80 applicable cases were rated as Areas Needing Improvement. A significant trend regarding the cases rated as areas needing improvement is that of the 43 cases marked ANI, 36 cases (84%) had "No" responses for item 3B, which assesses whether the agency conducted ongoing assessments that accurately assessed all of the risk and safety concerns for the target child in foster care or children in the family remaining at home. Themes identified through analysis of Item 3 include: lack of timely and accurate initial assessments; lack of ongoing assessments; child contacts of insufficient quality to be able to informally assess for safety; and a lack of common understanding of safety.

To explore the root cause of why accurate safety assessment is not occurring, the team explored possible contributing factors including agency capacity, staff understanding of safety assessment, staff retention, availability of safety services, and the current frequencies of initial and ongoing safety assessments.

Focus groups with front line staff, supervisors, foster parents, birth parents and youth were held to collect qualitative data regarding why safety assessment is a challenge. Themes were noted including:

- Barriers such as high caseloads and conflicting schedules and priorities.
- Lack of formal safety services providers in 2 of the 3 jurisdictions (Washoe and Rural region).
- Barriers towards safety assessment including: a safety model designed for caseloads of 15-18 children compared to actual average caseloads of 27-30 children; limited resources in the community to assure safety in the home; differences in understanding of the safety model among staff and supervisors; and challenges with safety service providers not meeting expectations.
- Barriers towards effective in-home safety planning included: limited informal and formal safety service resources; time constraints; and court decisions contrary to agency recommendations.
- Redundancy of work including workers duplicating work in UNITY in multiple places.

The qualitative data from the focus groups confirmed many of the concepts that the team had discussed as potential reasons for inadequate safety assessment. With limited safety service providers, high caseload demands combined with a safety model designed for frequent engagement and monitoring, the concerns expressed highlighted underlying issues within Nevada's child welfare system.

A quantitative report examining time frames for completing initial assessment was developed and analyzed by the team. The report showed significant differences between practice and policy expectations. For example, the median time to completion of the initial assessment was found to be 37 days, with more than 32% of assessments completed after 45 days. Through analysis of this data, the team identified significant differences in policy expectations for completion of the initial assessment across the three jurisdictions. The following graph shows how long the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) took to complete for all investigations started during the last quarter of 2018. Note, policy requires NIA's be completed within 10 days if there is Present Danger or 30 days if no Present Danger is identified. This shows that 66% of NIA's are not being completed within policy timeframes.

Days to Completion	Clark		Rural		Washoe		Statewide	
-	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1-10	128	4%	9	4%	3	1%	140	4%
11-20	320	11%	18	8%	31	11%	369	11%
21-30	578	19%	43	20%	48	17%	669	19%
31-45	1,046	35%	71	33%	63	23%	1,180	34%
46+	909	30%	71	33%	132	48%	1,112	32%
Total Days to Completion	**2,981**	**-**	**212**	**-**	**277**	**-**	**3,470**	**-**

The teams' exploration of these data also revealed differences between jurisdictions in the allowable time that present danger plan can be in place, which in turn impacted allowable time for completion of the initial safety assessment. The team also sought to explore data regarding ongoing safety assessments in order to try comparing expected safety assessment with actual practice. While data from January 2018 was obtained, the data did not show whether formal safety assessment are occurring as expected. The data obtained showed differences in safety assessment and safety planning practices between the three jurisdictions. Through analysis and discussion, the team realized that policy expectations for formal safety assessment and safety planning are unclear and that the state policy was written 11 years ago, 5 years before statewide implementation of the Safety Model. By clarifying policy regarding safety assessments, training supervisors and staff, and enhancing the coaching practice of Supervisors with the use of data reports, staff will more regularly and accurately assess and address safety.

Another cause for poor safety assessment is the combined effect of the state employing a complex safety model that takes approximately eighteen months for a new worker to become proficient in while also having relatively inexperienced staff in frontline positions. The team reviewed Annual Progress Services Review (APSR) report for state fiscal year 2018 (7/1/17 through 6/30/18) and found that of the 737 child welfare staff reported, there were 112 staff that left their position during the year due to separation, promotion, or transfers, resulting in a statewide annual turnover rate for state fiscal year 2018 of 15% . The APSR data aggregated staff from different child welfare areas, including Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-of-home Case Management, Adoption and Licensing. The team sought to further explore turnover data for 2018 in order to determine if the statewide turnover rate for the positions responsible for initial and ongoing safety assessment is even higher than the aggregated position data. Washoe identified that 39% of frontline investigations and ongoing staff and supervisors had been with the agency for less than 2 years. In the Rural Region, 60% of frontline investigation and ongoing staff and supervisors had been in their position for less than 2 years. Clark County identified an annual turnover rate for NIA and Ongoing Staff in 2018 of 16.10%, with an average annual turnover rate of 19.65% over the past six years. The turnover data for staff responsible for initial and ongoing assessment helped to illustrate what the team identified as a significant contributing factor for inadequate safety assessment: a relatively high rate of inexperienced staff combined with a safety model that requires significant training and skill development in order to reach an adequate level of proficiency. This turnover data led the team to examine the possible root cause for why the turnover rate is so high throughout the state.

Repeatedly for Safety Outcomes 1 and 2 statewide staffing levels and workload expectation was raised as an issue. This was seen through the data, focus groups and discussed by the team. While the ability to fully address the workload issue during the PIP is limited, the team believed that by focusing strategies on supervisors, they could improve retention and safety assessment. Key Activity 1.2.2 will create a sustainable knowledge base in the practice model to reduce the impact of knowledge-loss and experience-loss related to turnover. Additionally, Nevada's Core Team has agreed to further address workload in Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP).

Based on ongoing discussion within the team and the data exploration, the factors that impair statewide ability to assess and address safety was drilled down to one root cause:

- Child Welfare Supervisors lack sufficient agency support, ongoing training, tools, resources, and skill level to be proficient in application of Safety Model.

To address the root cause impacting safety assessment, the team identified Strategy 2:

- Child Welfare Supervisors will have agency support, ongoing training, tools, and resources that will enhance skill level for proficient application of the Safety Model. This strategy is linked to the quantitative and qualitative data that identified significant gaps in supervisory support and consistency. By providing clarification to statewide policies surrounding safety assessment, creating a certification process for supervisory proficiency in the Safety Model, and providing supervisory training to enhance Safety Model supervisory proficiency, there will be a direct improvement in statewide assessment and addressing of safety. Specifically, key Activity 1.2.1 will create a standard of proficiency in the SAFE/SIPS Model. The standard will include proficiency in utilizing the SAFE/SIPS Model to conduct comprehensive risk and safety assessments; developing appropriate, realistic and specific safety plans; and monitoring safety services. This tool will help proficiency, consistency and performance throughout the agencies on the SAFE/SIPS Model. Key Activity 1.2.2 will create a team of experts who have met the proficiency standard and who become the state's model fidelity mechanism. These experts provide peer to peer coaching and field mentorship on SAFE/SIPS model that will be ongoing through the CFSP years 2020-2024. This will lead to supervisors having an improved ability to coach and mentor staff and improved ability of staff to conduct sufficient safety assessments as measured during CFSR. Ongoing proficiency measurement and management will be completed as part of the CFSP. Key Activity 1.2.3 will create a report that will allow supervisors to understand and monitor whether workers are conducting frequent safety assessments and following up with workers where they see gaps.

Goal 1: Strengthen Safety for children in Nevada through improved practice regarding response times, persistent efforts, safety planning, and initial and ongoing safety assessment. (Safety Outcome 1 and Safety Outcome 2)

Strategy 1: *Strengthen safety by ensuring all alleged victims of maltreatment identified in the intake assessment are seen by staff within defined timeframes and when unable to do so, appropriate persistent efforts are made.* ***This strategy focuses on the practice theme of timeliness of response.***

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
1.1.1	**Develop and Implement Statewide Training for front end supervisors targeting response times, analysis and coaching** • Statewide Committee will develop and deliver a statewide training for front end supervisors (NIA) and managers. Curricula will clarify response times, efforts that meet response times, persistent efforts and reasons why the state is not meeting standards. • Upon supervisors receiving training they will coach and/or train frontend staff (NIA) starting within 30 days. • Supervisors will report back on the progress of staff training to managers who will report to the committee and the committee will monitor the staff training. Report to include the percentage of staff who has completed training, barriers to completing training, and efforts in resolving barriers. • Managers and supervisors will meet to analyze and discuss coaching efforts, barriers, and progress toward timely response.	Q2
1.1.2	**Review and update Intake and NIA Policy, train staff, evaluate progress** A Statewide Committee with representation from all three child welfare agencies in collaboration with FPO CPS Manager/Specialist will clarify and disseminate updated statewide policy for Intake (Q2**)** and NIA Policy (Q3) for responding to reports of maltreatment. • NIA Supervisors will coach staff on new clarified policy expectations not covered during the webinar in 1.1.1. • NIA Supervisors will evaluate improvement through the data reports as identified in data reports 1.1.3 as well as Item 1. • During monthly supervision NIA Supervisors will report back to their Manager/Coordinators any barriers to practice change arising from new policy requirements • Managers/Coordinators will provide this feedback to both agency administration and FPO to be referred back to the statewide committee who will identify and implement strategies to resolve identified barriers/trends. • Statewide Committee will review reports in Key Activity 1.1.3 to monitor change in practice from updated Policy and or IM instruction.	Q2 Intake Q3 NIA

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
1.1.3	**Develop and Track priority response timeliness and persistent efforts data report, educate supervisors on use of report in supervision, evaluation and strategy adjustment.** • DCFS IS will create a process to capture and extract data for measuring persistent efforts statewide. • Statewide Committee will develop a data reporting tool to be used by managers and/or supervisors (NIA). The report will accurately measure priority response timeliness and persistent efforts of individual staff members for each case assigned to the staff member. • Statewide committee will notify Jurisdiction Management of report completion and review report functionality with CQI staff from each child welfare agency identified by Jurisdiction Management. • Child welfare agency CQI staff, with assistance from child welfare agency Management, will educate NIA Supervisors on how and when to generate the new report, how to interpret the data, and how to incorporate the report into regular supervision with staff. • NIA supervisors will generate report for each staff member at least monthly, with the frequency increasing for staff members not meeting benchmarks for priority response timeliness and persistent efforts. • Statewide committee will review statewide aggregated reports to measure statewide priority response timeliness and persistence efforts and to develop further strategies to improve practice.	Q4

Strategy 2: *Child Welfare Supervisors will have agency support, receive ongoing training, tools, and resources that will enhance skill level for proficient application of the Safety Model.* ***This strategy focuses on the practice theme of conducting quality risk and safety assessments.***

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
1.2.1	**Create a standard for and a tool to measure SAFE/SIPS Model Proficiency** • A Statewide Committee with representation from all three child welfare agencies in collaboration with the FPO CPS Manager/Specialist creates a standard for and a tool to measure SAFE/SIPS Model proficiency.	Q2

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
1.2.2	**Using the tool developed in 1.2.1, identify a pool of statewide SAFE/SIPS experts who become the state's model fidelity mechanism. These experts provide peer to peer coaching and field mentorship on SAFE/SIPS model.** • Each Agency will nominate staff (Manager/Coordinator, Supervisor, CQI QA, Worker) who have demonstrated a good understanding and practice of the SAFE/SIPS Model to take the proficiency tool which will be administered and confirmed by the statewide committee. • Identified staff will take the proficiency tool, which will assess their skillset. • Staff who pass the proficiency tool will be eligible to join a statewide team of experts for ongoing fidelity to the SAFE/SIPS model who will provide peer-to-peer coaching, field mentorship, collaborate and provide feedback to supervisors for ongoing support. • Child Welfare Agency leadership from each jurisdiction will determine which field supervisors will receive the services of the expert team. • The statewide expert team begins mentoring and coaching staff on the SAFE/SIPS model and assesses progress, providing mentoring to a minimum of 10% of field supervisors. • The statewide committee will meet quarterly with the Expert team to obtain feedback from the experts on the progress of ongoing education, the impact of mentoring, and increased supervisor proficiency in the SAFE/SIPS model.	Q3 launch Q6 report
1.2.3	**Develop Report that measures timeliness of safety assessment completions by individual staff members; Supervisor review of reports; Manager review and oversight of reports.** • A statewide committee with representation from all three child welfare agencies in collaboration with the FPO CPS Manager/Specialist will develop data reports that accurately measure timeframes for completion of initial and ongoing safety assessment that supervisors are able to access. • Each child welfare agency CQI/QA unit will train on the report to NIA and Ongoing Supervisors and provide NIA and Ongoing Supervisors with this UNITY report quarterly (or monthly by request). • Supervisors will review the report, and report to managers about whether workers are conducting timely assessments and follow up with workers where they see gaps. • Each child welfare agency CQI/QA unit will survey a subset of supervisors quarterly to measure effectiveness of practice change of improved timeliness of assessments and provide results of the survey to the State PIP Manager with FPO.	Q3

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
1.2.4	**Generate report from CFSR data regarding quality of safety assessment. Review report and identify areas of practice to improve quality of safety assessments. Report to jurisdiction management.** • FPO CQI generates report using CFSR data from item 3 subsections regarding quality of safety assessment. • A statewide committee with representation from all three child welfare agencies in collaboration with the FPO CPS Manager/Specialist will review report after each Child Welfare Agency's case review, identify trends regarding quality of safety assessment and analysis to Child Welfare Agency management. • Child Welfare Agency management will implement practice changes based on trends identified.	Q3
1.2.5	**Statewide committee oversight** • Reports that measure timeliness and quality will be reported back to the statewide committee for assessment and adjustment of the process • Results shared with managers and coordinators for purposes of oversight	Q4-Q6

Process for Determining Overarching Goals and Strategies of Goal 2

Goal 2: Promote effective communication and contact with families

Team (2) Engaging Families identified the following goal and used the following process described below in determining strategies.

Focus Groups were held statewide to gather stakeholder perspective on Nevada's child welfare system and the most recent focus groups targeted questions associated with family engagement. Questions were explored with front-line staff, supervisors, caregivers, and youth statewide on caseload sizes, level of supervisory oversight on child welfare cases, quality of caseworker contacts, and the common understanding of what family engagement means. The findings are the following;

- "Field staff (Case Workers) have variety of skill and understanding in how to engage parents, foster parents, & children (especially teens). The benefits of engaging with families and successful case outcomes are not always clear to staff."
- "Caseload size is believed to be impacting the ability to properly apply the practice model."
- "Time to complete all requirements, quality assessments, quality visits with all parties in the case and document is not conducive to a forty-hour work week."
- "Quality of Case Workers visits with parents; foster parents & youth was described as occurring with about 50% of staff."

Two strategies with several key activities were developed to address the root causes (as described above), which align with the practice themes concluded from the CFSR outcomes (as described above). Strategy 1 will increase and improve communication and engagement between agency caseworkers, families

(biological, extended, & youth/children) and service providers (service providers and resource families). The child welfare agency will pair with Nevada Partnership for Training (NPT) and each jurisdiction to create a standardized Family Engagement Training statewide to allow a universal understanding of family engagement. The development of the curriculum will align with initial training and provide a better learning opportunity for child welfare staff. Identified child welfare staff will be mandated to participate in standardized Family Engagement Training throughout the PIP. Additionally, the same identified staff will be mandated in the beginning of the PIP and during the CFSP to complete additional family engagement training through existing family engagement training through NPT. Managers and supervisors will support the application of new skills learned by caseworkers. The trainings will improve the quality of family assessments that result in more closely aligned case planning throughout the life of the case and enhance caregiver protective capacities resulting in better outcomes in safety, permanency, and well-being. Behavioral changes expected for this training will be discussed in the CFSP Workforce Development section. Strategy 1 also provides better access for training specifically to workers in Rural areas. The flexibility to attend training will continue to allow caseworkers to serve families effectively while expanding their skillset and knowledge.

Key Activities 2.1.1 through 2.1.5 for Strategy 1 will improve participation in existing Family Engagement Training and develop a standardized statewide trauma focused Family Engagement Training. This training will target judicial stakeholders and increase staff competencies while improving data entries for CFSR Reviews. The learning objectives will ensure staff know how to effectively engage families, collaborate and partner with family members, empower families throughout the life of the case, assess parent's strengths, needs, and current capacity to engage in services, identify supports needed to engage effectively, and learn techniques to communicate when addressing children with trauma. The curriculum/courses will support the reunification process through frequent and early visits/contacts between parents and children to maintain strong relationships through parents being engaged with their children and vice–versa. The new standardized Family Engagement Training will be designed to build trust with families before implementing changes to case plan goals, create less confrontational approaches, improve communication with stakeholders, and enhance parental cooperation and follow-through. Caseworkers will develop the skills for stronger communication and model good communication strategies by informing, reassuring, and engaging to build and sustain relationships with families. Managers and Supervisors will be expected to role model performance and behaviors while providing technical assistance and coaching feedback to ensure skillful engagement with families is occurring through quarterly meetings and use of Job Aids. The Job Aids will be developed to describe current evidence-informed and best practice standards that will guide supervisors and managers on an ongoing basis. These Job Aids will assist leadership in supporting caseworkers in the field and address organizational factors until the new coaching training model is implemented statewide. Quarterly Meetings will assist in the transfer of learning and integration of concepts, for leadership use with staff until the coaching model is fully developed and implemented.

Key Activity 2.1.6 creates opportunity for the jurisdiction caseworker contact and visitation policy to be accessible for stakeholders and internal staff to streamline expectations between families, caseworkers, and stakeholders. Key Activity 2.1.7 develops a direct feedback loop for caseworkers and supervisors to learn from the CFSR Reviews. Awareness to the agency policy and caseworker requirements will assist in building a positive relationship between stakeholders (specifically resource families) and caseworkers improving family engagement. The feedback loop will create a better learning opportunity and increase caseworker competencies, which will directly impact decision making around safety, permanency, well-being, and family engagement. Caseworker competencies targets critical and analytical thinking, adequate knowledge in setting appropriate goals, problem solving skills through communication, professionalism, teamwork, collaboration, and adaptability skills. Quarterly Meetings will assist in the transfer of learning

and integration of concepts, for leadership use with staff until the coaching model is fully developed and implemented. *While still early in development, research on trauma-informed approaches show that conceptually, these may be the most effective ways to work with children and families that creates a healing environment, generating trust from the parents and improving outcomes for cases (Ko et al., 2008; Marsh et al., 2016).*

Strategy 2 will improve the Child Welfare Agency's assessment(s) of resource families, parents, and Youth/children (Youth/children to include children receiving In-Home and Out of Home Services) and frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children and families statewide. Strategy 2 targets the creation of a better learning environment for Rural Region child welfare staff and results in a more intense supervisory oversight process, while increasing the workers capacity in understanding Nevada's Safety Model and acquiring adequate skills to comprehensively assess for safety, permanency, and well-being of children. Strategy 2 also improves the decision-making by all child welfare staff around the needs of parents and children while monitoring the frequency of contacts made by caseworkers with parents and children to determine needed practice changes. Developing and monitoring caseload and workload reports will be addressed in the CFSP as an effective tool for improving decision making around caseload/workload sizes that allow child welfare staff more time with families.

Key Activity 2.2.1 targets improvements to the Rural Region learning environment for reasons described above. Key Activity 2.2.2 to 2.2.5 focus on the frequency and quality of caseworker contact with parents and children who are receiving services through the child welfare agency. The objectives and strategies (identified below) create new reports and modify existing reports to create better opportunity for child welfare staff to understand and improve their level of engagement with families. These Key Activities will also promote achievement of case goals and ensure the well-being of children and youth across the state. By connecting the parent and child reports to the ongoing SQIC meetings will provide accountability and oversight through the Family Program Office and allow jurisdictions to ongoingly monitor and report out on their agency progress. This process will build awareness among other jurisdictions and create opportunity for practice changes within the agencies.

Goal 2: Promote effective communication and contact with families (Permanency Outcome 2, Well-Being Outcome 1, Well-Being 2, Well-Being 3, Staff and Provider Training)

Strategy 1*: Increase and improve communication and engagement between agency caseworkers, families (biological, extended, & youth/children) and service providers (service providers and resource families).* ***This strategy focuses on the practice theme of effective family engagement, including effective engagement with relatives.***

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
2.1.1	**Develop and Issue an Instructional Memorandum requiring all staff listed below to take the Existing Family Engagement Training (excluding staff who have taken this training within 12 months prior to PIP approval)** • Each Child Welfare Agency leadership will issue an Instructional Memorandum requiring designated child welfare staff (as described below) to take existing Family Engagement Training and additionally require child welfare staff who are directly involved in the court process to participate in the new and/or modified Statewide Family Engagement Training that is standardized across the state. ➢ **Staff Identified to be Trained:** ▪ **Rural Region:** Social Workers/Case Managers, Office Managers, and Social Worker Supervisors ▪ **Washoe:** Caseworkers, Supervisors, Coordinators, Human Support Services Specialist (HSS), Family Engagement Workers (regarding visitation), and Foster Care Case Managers around QPI. ▪ **Clark:** Case Managers, Field Supervisors, and Managers.	Q1

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
2.1.2	**Deliver statewide motivational or advanced motivational interviewing training specific to family engagement and Track completion.** • Each child welfare agency leadership will provide Nevada Partnership for Training (NPT) with staff information to set up existing training for staff's NPT profile (Q1). ▪ NPT, DCFS-FPO Training Manager, and each child welfare agency will work in collaboration to ensure training is available through the Learning Management System (LMS) and offered at a frequency that the training can be completed in identified timeframes, and easily accessible to staff in all jurisdictions. • The identified child welfare staff will begin participating in existing Family Engagement Training in Q2. Of those identified 30% will have completed training in Q3, 60% in Q4, and all staff will complete training in Q6. ▪ NPT will report to each jurisdiction any staff who did not complete the entire course. ▪ Each agency will ensure staff will participate and complete the entire training. ▪ FPO QA Specialist will provide each agency a notification at the end of Q2 identifying the percentage (number) of staff remaining to complete training in Q3 to assist with tracking. ▪ FPO QA Specialist will provide each agency a notification the end of Q3 the percentage (number) of staff remaining to complete training in Q4 to assist with tracking. ▪ Practice change is addressed in 2.1.5 through job aides and consultation.	Q2, Q4, Q6
2.1.3	**Develop trauma informed communication training specific to techniques of family engagement for agency staff using the AOC/CIP's dependency stakeholder training and Trauma-Informed Communication Techniques to ensure agency and court staff are similarly trained and engaging parents when discussing parent involvement, conditions for safety plan and transition/return home.** • A workgroup will convene to develop and/or modify a curriculum (see last bullet below), which will be overseen by the State FPO Training Manager. The subject matter experts for consultation will be the CIP Coordinator and Foster Care Specialist. The State Training Manager and/or designee will prioritize trainings and ensure timelines are met for each quarter. • The workgroup will work in a timely fashion to address the forward moving plan of what is needed for goals, competencies, and curriculum.	Q4

	Key Activity	**Projected completion date:**
	• Managers and Supervisors will begin to coach staff based on the Existing Family Engagement Training to reinforce the Transfer of Learning during the monthly or quarterly consultations (Q2-Q3). ▪ NPT and the State Training Manager will provide technical assistance as needed.	
2.1.6	**Align jurisdictional and statewide 205 Caseworker Contact with Children, Parents, and Caregivers Policy and 0213 Visitation Policy (with mother, father, and siblings) and Ensure Accessibility to staff, families, and foster parents to increase clarity and consistency statewide.** • DCFS FPO will begin analyzing the Caseworker Contact and Visitation Policy to ensure the statewide policy is updated and work in collaboration with each jurisdiction if the policies need updating (Q1). • Each child welfare agency will begin analyzing their Caseworker Contact and Visitation Policy to ensure they both align with the statewide policy and determine if both policies are accessible to all child welfare staff, foster parents, courts, parents, and families involved in the case to enhance stakeholder knowledge (Q1). ▪ Each child welfare agency will ensure their current Contact and Visitation Policy is easily accessible to individuals who lack access to electronics or have a disabling condition (ADA Format). ▪ Each child welfare agency will ensure an individual who speaks a language other than English is afforded the same access to the Visitation and Contact policy. • Each jurisdiction will provide their agency's Caseworker Contact and Visitation Policy to the State DCFS Foster Care Manager/Specialist. DCFS FPO will create a link (by jurisdiction/statewide) to the QPI Website specific to the foster care providers jurisdiction (Q3). ▪ Caseworker Contact and Visitation Policy will be accessible to all child welfare staff, foster parents (including those who do not have access to QPI), courts, parents, and families involved in the case to enhance stakeholder knowledge.	Q1-Q3
2.1.7	**Develop a CFSR Newsletter, a transfer of learning and feedback process to improve practice** • Each child welfare agency QA Unit will develop a formal feedback process and disseminate a CFSR Newsletter for caseworkers, supervisors, and managers regarding the most recent CFSR findings for items 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18. ▪ Newsletter to include how to improve practice in the field and will be delivered one time through a jurisdiction specific CFSR Newsletter.	Q3-Q6

	Key Activity	**Projected completion date:**
	▪ The Family Program Office will provide Technical Assistance (TA) upon request. • Each child welfare agency's leadership will issue an instructional memorandum to highlight the importance of using CFSR data and feedback to improve practice and identify staff who are resources for discussing and understanding CFSR feedback discussing the importance of understanding and valuing CFSR feedback. • Leadership (managers and supervisors) will support the transfer of learning process by conducting 1:1 supervision meeting at the rate of bi-monthly at a minimum. • Quarterly meetings will be held starting in Q3 (after the dissemination of CFSR Newsletter) among supervisors and managers, who will assess barriers to improved performance and strengths. QA staff with each jurisdiction and FPO QA staff will provide technical assistance as needed. • During 1:1 supervision, supervisors will discuss CFSR information with line staff, discuss individual performance and provide assistance toward improvement	

Strategy 2: *Improving the Child Welfare Agency's assessment(s) of resource families, parents, and Youth/children (Youth/children to include children receiving In-Home and Out of Home Services) and frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children and families statewide.* ***This strategy focuses on the practice theme of conducting accurate needs assessment, high quality caseworker visits, and adequate case planning (to include in-home cases).***

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
2.2.1	**Develop and Issue an Instructional Memorandum to address required supervision and Improve the Learning Environment for the Rural Region.** • Rural Region Leadership will issue an Instructional Memorandum defining the level of supervision (as described below) for all newly hired social workers/case managers and implement a shared expectation of case assignments across RR offices to allow a learning environment for new hires. ▪ New hires may shadow at any time upon hire, however, a new hire will not be assigned as the primary caseworker or expected to complete caseworker contacts visits for the purpose of assessing families upon hire. ▪ A level of supervision will be defined that will remain in effect, at minimum, until the caseworker completes the Training Academy. ▪ A level of supervision will be defined following the completion of the Training Academy. • Managers will ensure staff who miss Initial Training (Training Academy) will be identified and ensure the missed course is completed in entirety as soon as possible. Rural Region Child Welfare Agency will work in collaboration with the Training Program to determine next available opportunity to complete the course. If the course is not readily available, the Manager and/supervisor will be responsible for developing a plan to ensure staff is adequately prepared and trained in the interim until such course is completed. ▪ NPT will continue to notify the DCFS Rural Region agency of any missed courses or attendance issues during the Training Academy.	Q3

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
2.2.2	**Develop Specifications and Requirements for Frequency Reports for both Child and Parent Contact for each jurisdiction.** • A QA workgroup with participants from each jurisdiction and FPO will initially meet to determine how to track caseworker child and parent contact for both In-Home and Out of Home cases. The workgroup will develop specifications and requirements based on existing data in UNITY, with DCFS IS. ▪ IS staff from each jurisdiction will provide technical assistance by participating in the workgroup as requested by each agency and/or FPO ▪ Logic will align with current field practice statewide and statewide policy. Logic will resolve how to define children out of state, In-Home, and out of home statewide. ➢ For example, current logic for the 7D7 Report indicates if a child is out of state one day the child is out of state for the entire month. Therefore, if the child is not seen on the one day out of state and only seen in state, the report will not capture this as a valid visit. • Existing Reports will be evaluated for use and/or modification based on specifications and requirements, specifically 7D7 Report (Child Contact Report), COGNOS 118 Report (Missing Case note for 7D7 Report), and all jurisdiction specific reports for In-Home and Out of Home caseworker contact with parents and children. • QA workgroup will determine any new reports necessary for Activity 2.2.2 based on the criteria above.	Q1
2.2.3	**Completion of Child and Parent Contact Report for each jurisdiction.** • QA workgroup will set priorities on the completion of the reports and submit a completed work request to DCFS IS, in Q2, with those priorities listed. • DCFS IS will begin resolving the work request beginning in Q2 and complete in Q4.	Q2, Q4
2.2.4	**Monitor Parent and Child Contact Report statewide.** • DCFS IS will begin disseminating completed reports monthly, automatically to each child welfare agency and DCFS FPO QA Manager or specialist (Q4). • Each child welfare agency QA leadership will begin assigning designated staff to monitor the parent and child reports upon completion to ensure monthly progress and resolve data entry errors.	Q4, Q5

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
	• Parent and Child Contact Report and the progress will be discussed at the monthly SQIC meetings with each jurisdiction and each jurisdiction will provide updates on progress toward increased contacts and data quality. • Modifications to refine the reports and address data quality issues after deployment will continue throughout Q4 and original requests for modifications be resolved no later than Q5.	
2.2.5	**Monitor practice change of improved frequency and quality of parent and child contacts.** • During 1:1 supervision, supervisors discuss with staff contact reports and quality of parent and child contacts to resolve barriers and provide guidance to improved performance • Quality and quantity of contacts will be discussed at the monthly SQIC meetings with each jurisdiction to improve practice and resolve barriers	Q4, Q6

Process for Determining Overarching Goals and Strategies of Goal 3

Goal 3: Nevada children have legal permanency and stability in their home lives and their continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved.

Team 3 - Achieving Timely Permanency identified the goal above and used the following process described below in determining strategies.

In February 2019, Nevada received its CFSR final results showing that it was not in substantial conformity with permanency outcome 1 or 2. In particular, only 5% of cases were rated as a strength on the permanency outcome 1 measures. The CFSR identified several practice themes where there are opportunities to improve timely permanency. Specifically, these included (1) effective use of concurrent planning (only present in 35% of cases), (2) effective and timely planning for adoption and provision of adoption services, (3) planning for pursuing and supporting timely reunification, (4) strengthening court case review processes and (5) filing timely TPR petitions per ASFA (66% were filed timely). A team of multidisciplinary stakeholders including judges, attorneys, child welfare agencies staff and supervisors, CQI staff, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and Court Improvement Program (CIP) staff met and discussed the various issues. This stakeholder team reviewed data to gain a better understanding of the issue. These data included:

- CFSR Round Three Final Report
- CFSR Data Profile for Nevada
- Fostering Court Improvement site AFCARS data on:
    - Percent of cases free for adoption or living with family within 15 months of removal
    - Percentage of children discharged within 1 month of removal
    - Number of children achieving permanency within 12 months
    - Children in care more than 24 months
    - Children achieving permanency within 24 months
    - TPRs completed in last 12 months, which were within federal requirement of 15 months
    - Children in care with both parents' TPRs and achieving permanency within 12 months
    - Children's median length of stay in care
    - Children's re-entry within 12-months of exiting care
- Nevada Hearing Quality Study Report of court practice

Over the course of several weeks, Team 3 delved deeper into the data and below are the additional data points used to better understand the issues and population in need.

- Ad Hoc Child Welfare Jurisdictional Reports
    - TPR data tracking – Clark, Washoe, and Rural Region
    - Post adoptive services
    - Breakdown of Washoe foster care children by age
    - Child welfare agencies process studies (various)
    - Foster care episode by jurisdiction ad hoc report
- DCFS Data Team
    - Report on Percentage of Children Discharged by Outcome (by County)
    - Time to traditional foster care licensure
    - Time to licensure for relatives
    - Number of children entering relative placement
- Focus Groups (foster caregivers, CW staff, judges & dependency folks, birth parents/families,)
    - Caregiver Hearing Notification
    - Improved time to permanency
    - Improve court hearings and judicial engagement
    - Concurrent planning
    - Family – engagement
    - Relative search and engagement
    - Use of KinGAP

Discussion during the in-person stakeholder meetings led to a collaborative, in-depth review of the issues. As a result, the team identified the following issues. Nevada's reunification rate is 59% which is 10% higher than the national average, this is likely due in part to a high percentage (19%) of short stayers who are discharged from care within 30 days. If short stayers are removed from the analyses, then there is an opportunity to improve timely permanency. The deeper dive into the data also revealed that Nevada's guardianship rate is only 7% which is lower than the 10% national average and takes a median of 14 months to achieve. The exploration of adoption data showed that average time to adoption is 29 months. Data revealed that there is no difference in relative versus non-relative time to adoption. Data on adoptions indicated that the TPR motion/petition is being filed timely (median of 12.7 months from removal), but it takes almost five months from the motion/petition to a TPR order and then another eight months median

time from the order to achieve adoption. As a result of this in-depth review, the team focused on timely and appropriate achievement of these three permanency goals (timeliness to reunification, adoption, and guardianship).

A root cause discussion was also conducted. All stakeholders participated in identifying contributing factors to the delays in achievement of timely reunification, adoption, and guardianship. While many contributing factors were identified, the Team noticed three cross-cutting factors that were present in each of the root cause discussions including: (1) involvement of parents in the process, (2) effective use of concurrent planning, and (3) early identification and engagement of relatives in the process. An additional root cause analysis was conducted for each of these cross-cutting factors to further understand why they are a challenge. Additionally, the team identified a hearing process concern with the TPR process that did not fit into the three cross-cutting themes, but that could be addressed with some changes to current TPR practice. This is addressed in the strategies section as an additional strategy to help improve timely permanency.

Parent Engagement/Involvement. Root cause discussion identified the primary contributors to lack of parent involvement included:

- Parents see agency and court as adversaries; due to parents not receiving initial and ongoing clear information to be successful, minimal and/or non-supportive contacts by agency, their attorney telling parents not to talk to child welfare; and feeling the "system" wants to take their kids away because they are "bad" parents; a general lack of respectful and compassionate interaction by the child welfare system to the parents
- Poor communication among parents and professionals (child welfare agencies, attorneys, court staff, etc.)
- Lack of requisite time and resources across the dependency system to adequately engage parents

Results from follow-up focus groups of parents support these contributors. Parents said that early in the process is overwhelming and they are uncomfortable at court. While many parents felt that judges were doing a good job interacting with them, they also noted that engagement in court could be better if dependency stakeholders attending would listen, be fair, recognize and acknowledge parent strengths and positive behaviors, and be more open.

Concurrent Planning: Root cause discussion identified the primary contributors as:

- Lack of updated information, understanding, and training about concurrent planning across the dependency and child welfare systems
- Child welfare agencies' inconsistent concurrent planning practices statewide (disconnect between policy and practice, and lack of integration with the statewide safety practice model)
- Differing opinions across child welfare agencies, court, and dependency stakeholders about the use of concurrent planning
- Lack of utilizing concurrent planning as a strategy to engage parents and children in the permanency process

Results from follow-up focus groups with agency supervisors support these primary contributors. The supervisors indicated a lack of understanding of concurrent planning/implementation of the policy and variations in judicial practice as key issues for successful concurrent planning.

Relative Identification and Engagement. Root cause discussion identified the primary contributors to lack of early identification and engagement as:

- Diligent search efforts are done but lack follow-through and ongoing efforts
- Parents may not disclose potential relatives until late in the case or do not grant permission to speak to relatives
- Limited child welfare agencies' staff resources
- Lack of re-contacting relatives who said "no" to placement early on
- Lack of ongoing relative engagement as a support to the family even if they are not a placement option

Time to When the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) is Granted and to Final Adoption Hearing. Root cause discussion identified the primary contributors to lack of timely TPR and adoption as:

- Delays determining that adoption is the goal
- TPR Binder creation and social summary development is time consuming and inconsistent throughout the state; insufficient time to complete requisite paperwork
- Attorney general/district attorney workload bottleneck
- Backlog of TPR motions/petitions; hence TPR motions/petitions not filed timely
- Insufficient time to set reviews
- Inconsistencies in judicial practice across the state related to TPR; some courts do not wish to create "legal orphans" by terminating parental rights if there is no identified adoptive resource; and/or parents may need more time than allowable under ASFA timeframes without compelling reasons.

Theory of Change Development

From the discussion of cross-cutting primary root causes, the team developed four theories of change related to how addressing these underlying root causes would lead to improvements in the goal (Nevada children have legal permanency and stability in their home lives and their continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved).

Parent Engagement/Involvement Theory of Change

The Team believes that addressing this cross-cutting root cause will lead to improved timely permanency. Specifically, child welfare agency and court strategies were identified (using a trauma-focused approach) that will improve parent involvement; *so that* parents feel like they have an opportunity to be heard and are part of the process; *so that* parents are more likely to work cooperatively with their caseworker to develop a case plan; *so that* parents are more likely to have buy-in and comply with their case plan, participate in visitation, identify relatives earlier (which should lead to fewer placement moves), and attend court hearings; *so that* parents are able to remedy the issues that brought them to court more timely; *so that* they can reunify with their children faster; *or that* their early identification of relatives will lead to relative placement and timelier relative adoption or guardianship.

Trauma-focused communication skills can assist child welfare staff and court stakeholders to understand and appreciate a parent's perspective, which leads to increased empathy and a shift in how the parent is perceived which, in turn, alters the way the parent perceives child welfare staff and the court. This is foundational for the change in how parents are treated and included in the court process and for how all professionals working in the dependency process communicate among themselves.

Selected Leadership within each child welfare agency, the courts, and other dependency stakeholders are trained on trauma-focused communication and engagement techniques with parents, relatives, and children in Goal 3 – Strategy 1: Key Activity 1.1.1.

Additional, Trauma-Focused Communication Training will be developed for the child welfare workforce and is supported by Goal 2 – Strategy 1: Key Activities - 2.1.2 thru 2.1.5.Ultimately, judicial stakeholders and caseworkers will exhibit practice changes in their direct interactions with families, in that they use such trauma-focused communication techniques by considering the impact of one's words and attitudes before speaking – no blaming or shaming, but instead active listening, to increase the quality of engagement with parents; thereby improving early and continuing parental engagement through compassion and empathy.

These techniques/skills additionally provide improved communications and collaboration among courts, dependency stakeholders and child welfare staff.
In response to the PIP from the 2nd round CFSR, the courts were asked to develop a workgroup to address the need to reduce barriers to adoption and TPR. Rather than create one large workgroup, CIP asked each judicial district to create a platform/forum for ongoing identification of strengths and opportunities as they pertain to child welfare outcomes. As a result, each judicial district created a *Community Improvement Council* (CIC) of local stakeholders to identify barriers to timely permanency, adoption, and TPR and develop and implement solutions to these barriers in its locale.

The courts and their CICs are regularly informed of their data metrics and how to interpret the data and evidence-based best practices that have demonstrated improvement in specific areas. The members of each CIC agree on the areas in need of improvement and, using expert advice and guidance, select the interventions that best fit their local circumstances and needs. By providing the courts and their CICs data to help them identify areas needing improvement and information about evidence-based and best practices, with CIP support and guidance, the courts have made systemic changes to improve timeliness and hearing quality. Because each judicial district is unique, the specific local activities and interventions for that district have been built on a foundation of empirical data and consensus among the key stakeholders and constituency of that district.

All the CIC's meet together each year at the Annual CIC Summit sponsored by CIP. During this summit the CIC are provided with their administrative data, guidance provided by National experts, to help them assess their systems and develop annual action plans for dependency system improvement.

Last year, 2018, Christopher Church, JD guided the CIC teams through navigating the Fostering Court Improvement Data Project, Nevada webpage and how to use the information, therein. He cast a sharper focus on the short-stayers which correlated with annual action plans including a deeper dive into these data to assess if short-stayers were an issue in their district. A national research expert reviewed the results of the *Nevada Hearing Quality Study* and how to use these data to drive continued improvements in their hearings. Since parental engagement was related to timelier permanency many CICs included improving involvement of parents in the hearing process. FFPSA training was conducted by NCJFCJ, Connie Tanner Hickman, which was so reflected in action planning.

Research has shown (nationally and in Nevada) that engagement of the parents is related to improved timely permanency. Specifically, engagement from the bench and increased parent attendance is related to improved outcomes (Summers, 2017; Summers & Gatowski, 2018; Wood & Russell, 2011). Nevada's Hearing Quality Study linked court engagement strategies with increased reunification rates and timelier permanency for families. Further, theoretical research in the field indicates that having a trauma focus in working with parents and children may lead to better engagement and improved outcomes.

Prior research has shown that mediation is also an empirically supported practice with a demonstrated relationship to engaging parents and improving outcomes in child welfare cases (Gatowski, Dobbin, Litchfield, & Oetjen, 2005; Thoennes, 2008). Nevada's mediation program has promising findings from two early studies of the Washoe County mediation program: better involvement of fathers following mediation and a higher likelihood the case will achieve reunification (Summers, Wood, Bohannan, Gonzalez, & Sicafuse, 2013). A more recent Nevada mediation study showed mediations have higher rates of adoption than non-mediated cases, and that mediations are more likely to result in reunification with both parents (Siegel, Ganasarajah, Gatowski, Sickmund, & Devault, 2017). During state fiscal year 2018, 232 dependency mediations were ordered across the state (106 in Clark, 100 in Washoe, 23 in the rural region, 76% were mediated, 10% of parents did not appear for the ordered mediation, 11% were cancelled. Of those cases mediated, 82% came to agreement, thereby vacating 115 court hearings.

Mediation has been used to enhance the quality of the dependency process by providing the parties an opportunity to enter into a discussion in which the parties voluntarily resolve the issues that brought the family into the dependency system and produce a written agreement in lieu of a contested hearing. Contested hearings tend to be especially painful for children, as they may be required to testify against their parents. Mediations allow children to avoid this trauma, as mediations tend to focus on the family's strengths. Benefits of mediation in child dependency cases include improved outcomes for children from decreased time to permanency to improved well-being, enhanced parental engagement to safely reunify with the child, time and cost savings, and system efficiency.

The purpose of the Statewide Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program (JDMP) is to improve system processing of dependency cases; to better engage families; thereby decreasing time to permanency and termination of parental rights (TPR). In so doing, it helps stabilize children's lives by getting them into safe, stable, and permanent homes in a timely manner consistent with the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.

Strategy 1: Key Activity 3.1.3: The Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program (JDMP) will be utilized anytime in the life of the case; including pre-removal and pre-petition to better engage parents and children in earlier resolution of their case whenever a disagreement arises in the process. AOC*/CIP ensures that the JDMP is fully and adequately funded and administered. All mediations are conducted by mediators trained in dependency mediation and overseen by the JDMP Administrator under the supervision of CIP. JDMP Administrator trains on how to effectively interact to support the mediation process, how the various aspects of mediation work to attain group consensus and resolve the complexities of the case holistically.

**Nevada does not have a unified judiciary meaning that the system is non state-run but rather the local courts retain a certain degree of autonomy, subject to statutes and Supreme Court Rules, and most expenses are funded at the local level. This non-unified system makes interactions between the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and trial courts collaborative rather than dictatorial.*

Concurrent Planning Theory of Change

It is clear from various discussions with child welfare staff and stakeholders, over several weeks, that there is inconsistent use of concurrent planning across the state. There is a not an agreed upon understanding of what concurrent planning is or how it needs to work in practice. Focus group findings from child welfare agency workers and supervisors confirm a lack of clear understanding and implementation into practice. The courts discuss concurrent planning in permanency or review hearings in fewer than half of the hearings, according to the Nevada Hearing Quality Study. There is some evidence that concurrent planning may lead to faster reunification. Aspects of effective concurrent planning, such as clear identification of the

concurrent plan in a case plan that the parent has reviewed, was related to timely permanency (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2012). The literature identifies the common elements of effective concurrent planning which include child welfare agencies support at all levels, institutionalization of an approach, support for caseworkers, integration of child welfare agencies and adoption units, an adequate pool of concurrent caregivers, services available to support families, and support from judges, attorneys and other dependency stakeholders.

Based on this, it is believed that improvements in the use of concurrent planning could lead to timelier permanency in Nevada. Specifically, strategies to improve concurrent planning will lead to a better understanding of what concurrent planning is, how and when it should be used, the benefit to the child; *so that* concurrent planning can be discussed more often at court; *so that* the agency can initiate efforts toward concurrent permanency goals; *so that* if reunification is not possible, an alternative plan has been developed and is already underway; *so that* when the permanency goal of reunification is no longer achievable, the child can reach permanency through adoption or guardianship in a timely manner.

As a result of the trauma-focused communication trainings (Key Activities 2.1.1 and 3.1.1) all stakeholders in a child welfare case (the judiciary, child welfare staff, attorneys and other dependency stakeholders) can interact with empathy and respectful language when speaking with parents about permanency for their children and the possibility of concurrent planning, with a concurrent plan of adoption or KinGAP guardianship; explaining why/when either may be implemented, the benefits to their children to attain permanency more quickly, and the possibility that parents can choose to have a clear and positive impact on the outcome in such circumstances.

Beyond updating the concurrent planning policy, ensuring all the child welfare agencies understand how to implement the new protocols and procedures consistently as well as ensuring the judicial/dependency stakeholders receive training to fully understand the use of concurrent planning to move children to permanency timely. Within the CFSP, to continue to improve consistent practices, the child welfare agencies, the courts, and other dependency stakeholders in the 2nd and 8th judicial districts (JDs) will collaborate to develop specific concurrent planning information 'Scripts' to assist judges, parents' attorneys, and caseworkers to have clear language that supports the use of concurrent planning.

Additionally, identified in the CFSP, the court will discuss at each hearing the child's permanency plan goal, as well as, if there is a need for a concurrent plan goal, if the case plan is current or requires updating. Starting in the 2nd and 8th Judicial Districts (expanding statewide over the course of the CFSP), the court will ask such questions as:

1) What efforts has the child welfare agency taken to achieve the case plan goal?
2) What are the barriers to achieving the current case plan goals?
3) Is the current case plan successfully moving the parent toward reunification?

CIP/AOC will conduct Hearing Quality Studies to ascertain compliance.

Early Identification and Engagement of Relatives Theory of Change

The Fostering Connections and Increasing Success to Adoptions Act requires notification to relatives within 30 days of removal and federal law under title IV-E of the Social Security Act requires consideration of relatives as a preferred placement to maintain connections. Research on the effectiveness of identifying and engaging relatives is limited but theorizes that relatives can provide support for families and improve well-being of youth if they are in a familiar placement as opposed to stranger foster care. Team 3 identified challenges with ongoing relative identification and engagement in the process. Data from the Nevada

Hearing Quality Study shows that relative resources are discussed in more than 90% of 72- hour hearings, indicating it is a key issue brought up early-on at court. Child welfare agency workers also noted that diligent search is routinely conducted early in the case. However, judges and child welfare agencies professionals noted that there could be improvements in how they explained the importance of relative identification and in continuing to ask parents and the child welfare agencies about efforts to identify relatives during all court hearings.

The team believes that early identification of relatives, may provide support for the parents by the relative who may be willing to be a potential placement (and permanent placement) option, which could improve both timely reunification (relatives supporting parents) or timely relative guardianship or adoption and will address improvement in racial diversity and improved pool of foster and adoptive parents. Specifically, it is theorized that strategies to establish trust by the parents with the caseworker will provide more opportunities for ongoing discussions with parents; *so that* parents are more willing to identify relatives; *so that* relatives can be invited as supports for parents during meetings, court hearings and other activities; *and that* relatives can be identified and become placements for the child(ren) early in the process; *so that* there will be fewer placement moves and disruptions for the child; *and that* parents will have better relative support, which may increase overall case plan compliance; *so that* parents can reunify more timely; *or that* when reunification is not possible, the relatives will already be identified and become the permanent placement; *so that* timelier relative guardianship or adoption can occur.

The Length of Time to When the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) Is Granted and to When the Final Adoption Hearing Occurs Resulting in Case Closure Theory of Change

Team 3 identified delays at various stages in the TPR process. The CFSR final report indicated that TPR petitions/motions were not filed timely per ASFA. A deeper dive into the data show definite bottlenecks in the system. Social summary completion and TPR Binder completion are time consuming and inconsistently handled across the agencies. Additionally, the child welfare supervisor focus group reported inconsistencies in judicial practice related to TPR. Some of the judiciary are reluctant to TPR without an identified adoptive resource. There are also delays in determining that adoption is the goal. Research using Nevada's TPR and adoption data reveals that there is a statistically significant relationship between the time to TPR and the time to adoption. As the time to TPR increases, so does the time to adoption. As such, efforts to improve timeliness of that process should improve time to adoption.

The Team believes that examining the decision points in the TPR process and problem solving and modifying the TPR process will improve time to permanency in adoption cases. Specifically, it is theorized that strategies to identify, reduce, and/or remove these various barriers; ; to include identifying adoption as the permanency goal earlier in the case depending upon the circumstances reducing the immense paperwork requirements needed to move children into the adoption unit more quickly, identifying TPR petition paperwork bottlenecks and removing the barriers which create such delays, and any other efficiencies identified to reduce time to adoption; *so that* children are moved from foster care workers to adoption workers more quickly, TPR motions/petitions are filed timelier and paperwork is prepared timelier; *so that* the TPR hearing can take place timelier; *so that* termination of parental rights can occur timelier; *so that* adoptions can occur timelier per ASFA.

Overall Strategy Development

Strategies were identified using a team approach and consensus building, validating ideas based upon the current research, evidence, and data from the field. The Team focused on strategies to enhance parent involvement in the court hearing processes, concurrent planning, relative identification, and TPR process

modification. These strategies were examined to identify where there was evidence or data from the field to support their use and to improve outcomes for children and families. Preference was given to strategies that were evidence-based or empirically supported over those with no known research.

Goal 3: Nevada children have legal permanency and stability in their home lives and their continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved. (Permanency Outcome 1, and Systemic Factors: Case Review System), Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention.)

Strategy 1: *Implement practice initiatives: trauma focused communication, a family's guide to the dependency process, and expand dependency mediation into additional case junctures that improve families' involvement in the court hearing process to achieve timelier permanency outcomes: reunification, guardianship, and adoption.* ***This strategy focuses on the Practice Themes of strengthening court case review and planning for pursuing timely reunification.***

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
3.1.1	**CIC Summit Trauma-Focused Communication Training delivered to all dependency stakeholders; including judges, attorneys, CASAs, child welfare administrators and managers (see 2.1.3 for the agency specific training) to improve parental engagement** • The eleven statewide Community Improvement Council (CIC) Teams, which cover all 11 judicial districts statewide shall receive training on trauma-focused communication and engagement techniques with parents, relatives, and children, as well as, with each other to reduce the level of mistrust created by traumas (past & present), through the annual CIC Summit by the end of 1st year of the PIP. • Additional Trauma Focused Communication Training based on the same curriculum provided to the dependency stakeholders at the CIC Summit will be developed for the wider child welfare workforce (see 2.1.3) • Practice change will be identified through increased parental, relative and caregiver engagement in the court process. The CIC teams will review data from the focus groups and/or surveys to monitor progress of trauma focused engagement.	Q5

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
3.1.2	**Convene Judicial Workgroup; Develop Court Process Guide for Families** • Convening of statewide Judicial Workgroup, comprised of Community Improvement Council (CIC) members (including judiciary, each child welfare agency, DA/DAGs, children's and parents' attorneys, and other stakeholders) • Workgroup develops or revises an existing, guide explaining the dependency court process, timeframes and clarifying expectations for parents and families, • Guide to be distributed statewide to all child welfare agencies and courts by AOC/CIP. DCFS FC Specialist to post to QPI website. • Parents, relatives and caregiver have access to written educational materials explaining the dependency court process, timeframes and clarifying expectations for parents and families.	Q5
3.1.3	**The purpose of the Statewide Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program (JDMP) is to better engage families; thereby, expediting permanency. CIP provides JDPM Mediation Training to educate child welfare staff to effectively participate during court ordered dependency mediation. Such mediations may be ordered when there is unresolvable conflict at any point in the life of the case. Mediation training will occur statewide in all 11 court jurisdictions. Child welfare staff participate in all JDMP mediations. CW staff will be required to attend training. Continuing training of JDMP mediators to ensure quality and fidelity to the mediation model. Data tracking and analysis conducted by CIP and provided to CQI Team.** • AOC/CIP: Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program's (JDPM) Trainings provided statewide to judiciary, legal, child welfare staff, and other dependency stakeholders on how to effectively participate in the mediation process to support decision-making, how the various aspects of mediation work to obtain group consensus and resolve the complexities of the case holistically across the life of the case to support family decision-making prior to child removal, for family case issues/concerns, for relinquishment process, and other key decisions. • DCFS administration to develop and distribute an Instructional Memorandum mandating court-involved child welfare staff to attend JDMP mediation training. It is expected that the child welfare agencies will support the use of JDMP throughout the life of the case by actively participating during the JDMP process. • JDMP surveys stakeholders and participants following every mediation session to measure practice change. Survey analysis will be used to identify any barriers to increased participation by child welfare staff. • Statewide use of JDMP will be tracked quarterly by AOC/CIP on Excel spreadsheets using the information provided on the JDMP Case Data Sheets to evaluate improved outcomes through the use of JDMP.	Q5

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
	• AOC/CIP, through a neutral independent contractor, conducts process and impact evaluation of JDMP and presents findings at CIC Summit to emphasize how to most effectively use the program to improve outcomes for children and families. Outcomes and data from both the evaluation and the data collected on JDMP will be shared with the CQI Team/PIP Core Team. • AOC/CIP builds the JDMP mediation panel by conducting 40-hour mediator trainings. • AOC/CIP ensures quality and fidelity to model by conducting co-mediations with JDMP Administrator, annual advanced trainings, and monthly peer support meetings for current JDMP panel members, after implementation and ongoing through the PIP.	

Strategy 2: *Child welfare agencies in coordination with the courts, district attorneys, deputy attorneys general, children's and parents' attorneys, and other dependency stakeholders improve consistent practices and/or policies for concurrent planning, KinGAP, and hearing notification for foster caregivers to achieve timely permanency: reunification, guardianship, and adoption.* ***This strategy focuses on the Practice Themes of effective use of concurrent planning and strengthening court case review process.***

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
3.2.1	**Updated Concurrent Planning Policy and corresponding practice guide. Training of child welfare caseworkers by supervisors; education of Dependency Stakeholders on policies.** • Statewide Policy Workgroup determines updates to Concurrent Planning policy to reflect current best practices. 1) Workgroup comprised of knowledgeable representatives from child welfare and dependency stakeholders. • Child welfare agencies' staff and AOC/CIP develop protocols and practice guides to ensure child welfare and dependency stakeholders understand the use of concurrent planning to achieve timely permanency. • DCFS Administration to distribute updated Concurrent Planning policy to all child welfare agency directors for policy implementation.	Q3
(3.2.1A)	• Child welfare supervisors will begin to educate caseworkers on proper implementation of concurrent planning and provide ongoing follow-up to ensure adherence to policy. • Caseworkers will work with families to develop concurrent plans as appropriate.	Q4

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
	• AOC/CIP will educate dependency stakeholders on concurrent planning during roundtables, CIC meetings, bench/bar meetings and CIC Summits. The purpose is to work collaboratively between all dependency stakeholders and child welfare staff to help families understand the child welfare process and not become discouraged as the process moves forward. *Practice Change – use of timely concurrent planning based on case circumstances rather than a set timeline, e.g. 12 months.*	
3.2.2	**Updated KinGAP Policy and corresponding practice guide; Training for Dependency Stakeholders on policies.** • Statewide Policy Workgroup determines updates to KinGAP policy to reflect current best practices. 1) Workgroup comprised of knowledgeable representatives from child welfare and dependency stakeholders. • Child welfare agencies' staff and AOC/CIP develop protocols and practice guide to ensure child welfare and dependency stakeholders understand the use of KinGAP as an alternate permanency plan when in the child's or youth's best interest. • DCFS Administration to distribute updated policy to all child welfare agency directors for policy enactment through agency supervisors to their caseworkers for direct implementation.	Q3
3.2.2(A)	• Child welfare supervisors will begin to educate caseworkers on proper implementation of KinGAP and provide ongoing follow-up to ensure adherence to policy. • Caseworkers will work with families to determine when KinGap is in the best interest of the child/family. • AOC/CIP educates dependency stakeholders on KinGAP during roundtables, CIC meetings, bench/bar meetings and CIC Summits. The purpose is to work collaboratively between all dependency stakeholders and child welfare staff to help families understand the child welfare process and not become discouraged as the process moves forward. *Practice Change – when reunification is ruled out, increased use of KinGAP when in the child's or youth's best interest*.	Q4
3.2.3	**Development of Caregiver Notice of Hearing; Template for caregiver to share child information with court; Process for courts to receive child information;** • A collaboration between the CW agency and the already established CIP *Subcommittee on Court Order Templates* develops caregiver notice of hearing document • CIP educates the judiciary on the importance of advanced calendaring of hearings during the CIC Summit and ongoing Judicial Round Table meetings. • CW agency establishes process for direct notification of caregiver for hearings	Q5

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:

	• CW Agency develops template for caregivers to share child's information with court at hearing
	• CW agency will establish process for caregivers to ensure court receives their information at court hearing when caregivers are not able to attend,
	• DCFS CQI will develop foster caregiver survey to determine if caregivers are receiving notice of and attending review and permanency hearings.
	  • To assess effectiveness of these activities, DCFS QA Specialist develops a foster caregiver survey to solicit the following information annually:
	  • Did foster caregiver receive notification of the review and permanency hearings?
	  • Were they provided an opportunity to attend and/or provide information about the child to the court?
	  • Did the percentage of foster caregivers' participation at court hearings increase?
	• DCFS FC Specialist will review the survey results and determine if process is working or identify changes needed. FC Specialist will provide results to agency supervisors who, in turn, will discuss with caseworkers to identify needed changes to support foster caregivers attending these hearings.	

Strategy 3: *Implement practice initiatives for updated diligent search procedures as well as courts asking parents about relatives and encouraging parents to disclose relatives/fictive kin who could be potential placements for their children or supports for the parents or children.* ***This strategy focuses on the Practice Themes of timely reunification (as relatives support parents) or planning for permanency through adoption or KinGAP.***

	Key Activity	Projected completion date
3.3.1	**Ensure that staff conducts and documents diligent search of potential relative caregivers of all children removed from home. Develop Diligent Search *Contact Tracking Sheet*; DCFS Instructional Memorandum requiring Child Welfare use of tracking sheet.** To improve the caseworker(s) use of the already existing statewide diligent search policy the FPO Foster Care Specialist will develop diligent search 'contact tracking sheet.' • DCFS Administration, through an Instructional Memorandum (IM) to all child welfare agencies, requires use of contact tracking sheet by workers for all diligent search activities in all jurisdictions for all courts. Contact tracking sheet to be attached to court reports. This information must be disseminated to all caseworkers.	Q4

	Key Activity	Projected completion date
	▪ Practice Change- Increase diligent search efforts, across the entire life of the case, to support relatives being more involved with the family, whether through placement of child or providing support to parent(s) for best interest of child. ▪ Practice Change- Increase in identified and involved relatives.	
3.3.2	**All dependency courts statewide ask parents about potential relatives at ALL hearings; Disseminate National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Bench Cards regarding relative inquiries to all dependency courts; Develop form for parent to list potential relatives; ongoing educational opportunities for dependency stakeholders;** • At all dependency court hearings throughout the state, until permanency has been achieved, the court asks parents about potential relatives and fictive kin who could potentially provide support to their children • AOC/CIP ensures that all Nevada dependency courts have available the NCJFCJ *Enhanced Resource Guideline Hearing Bench Card* (ERG) which includes information regarding inquiries that need to be made to and about relatives/fictive kin. Given Nevada dependency courts' historical use of the ERG, the judiciary is familiar with the use and importance of these bench cards. The intention is to elicit relative/fictive kin information from parents timely. • AOC/CIP and DCFS FC Specialist to create form for parents to complete regarding potential relatives/fictive kin, to be distributed through the court and/or caseworker. • The end result is AOC/CIP provides ongoing educational opportunities through the local CIC meetings, CIC Judges' Round Table meetings and/or CIC Summit regarding the importance of parents disclosing relatives who could be supportive of their children.	Q6

Strategy 4: Initiate practice changes to streamline and expedite the termination of parental rights (TPR) process; thereby reducing the time to permanency in adoption cases. ***This strategy focuses on the Practice Themes that include strengthening the court case review process, filing timely TPR, and timely planning for adoption.***

	Key Activity	Projected completion date:
3.4.1	**Timely Permanency Workgroup (TPW) Analyzes barriers in TPR process, identifies solutions & implements; Statewide CIC teams to identify solutions to TPR barriers in their locales; Identify & Implement solutions in annual action plan; Develop practice guideline for child welfare staff and courts; Quarterly data sharing with CIC teams.** • Convene statewide TPW, to include AOC/CIP, Clark, Washoe, and Rural Region representatives from DA/DAG, judges, child welfare supervisors, data team members and any other needed stakeholders to identify barriers with the various judicial district regarding the TPR petition process. • The Timely Permanency Workgroup (TPW), with technical assistance support as available and needed; conducts a timeline analysis of the TPR and Adoption processes to determine any unnecessary delays in moving forward with TPR; with whom and where the delays are occurring; what specific barriers are causing the delays and what compelling reasons are being given by the court when deciding not to TPR per ASFA timeline. • The TPW analyzes timeline data for TPR to determine unnecessary delays, and a predictive analysis on long stayers, develop solutions and implement solutions. • CICs across the State, either in local CIC meetings and/or during the CIC Summit, analyze permanency timeliness data to identify other potential barriers to permanency. During CIC meetings and the CIC Summit the CICs identify solutions to these barriers that are specific to their locale, then included in their annual CIC action plans, which are to be implemented during the upcoming year. • CW agency staff and AOC/CIP develop specific practice guidelines to align with the courts to understand federal timelines for TPR, explanations of compelling reasons, concurrent planning and reasonable efforts. Guideline to be distributed through a requirement in a DCFS Informational Memorandum. • AOC/CIP shares current permanency timeliness data, with all 11 judicial districts' CICs on a quarterly basis to help identify additional areas needing improvement.	Q5

Process for Determining Overarching Goals and Strategies of Goal 4

Goal 4: Improve Statewide Child Welfare Outcomes by developing and strengthening the Statewide Quality Assurance System to ensure the system can identify and respond to the strengths and needs of the child welfare system in an efficient and effective manner.

Team (4) Continuous Quality Improvement identified the goal and used the following process described below in determining strategies.

In determining how to develop and strengthen the Statewide Quality Assurance System, Team 4 discussed overall the practice themes identified during the 2018 CFSR which are as follows:

- Developing a comprehensive CQI system
- Building Capacity
- Strengthening data collection, tracking, sharing, and analysis
- Strengthening the link between data analysis and decision-making
- Tracking interventions and outcomes

The team met to discuss the information/data available to address strategies for this goal which were the following:

- Children's Bureau (CB) IM- ACYF-CB-IM-12-07 Subject: Establishing and Maintaining Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Systems in State Child Welfare Agencies
- Nevada CFSR Round Three Final Report
- Children and Family Services Report 2015-2019
- Annual Progress Services Report 2018 and 2019
- 2018 State Sampling Data for Item 19 "How well is the statewide information system functioning to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care?
- Focus Groups conducted March 2018

Team 4 reviewed the Capacity Building Center for States standardized Self-Assessment, and it was decided that the comprehensiveness of the tool would help Nevada understand how to build and develop a comprehensive CQI System. Continuous Quality Improvement processes contribute to system change and improved outcomes for children and families. Specifically, CQI processes inform and impact agency decisions around service array. One of the systemic factors the CFSR evaluates is the ability to provide a comprehensive array of accessible, individualized services to meet the unique needs of children and families. Information gathered during focus groups for Nevada's CFSR identified service array gaps in substance abuse services, behavioral/mental health services delivery, housing and transportation. Additionally, stakeholders identified a lack of capacity to report service delivery numbers and a lack of capacity to individualize services. Specifically, in Nevada there has been an identified need for the expansion and sustainability of comprehensive community mental health services for children with serious emotional disturbances. Also, the Nevada CFSR results identified service array needs for children and families receiving in-home services. For in-home services a service array assessment using a data-driven approach would inform the entire system design by determining the specific array of services needed and provide a measurement of the system's performance in supporting individual families with targeted services that improve safety and well-being outcomes.

The CB considers the following five components as essential to a state having a functioning CQI system in child welfare: an administrative structure to oversee effective CQI system functioning; quality data collection; a method for conducting ongoing case review; a process for the analysis and dissemination of

quality data on all performance measures; and, a process for providing feedback to stakeholders and decision makers and as needed, adjusting state programs and process.

For each component to be considered functional there are several practices, processes or policies that need to be operational. Many of the practice themes identified in the 2018 CFSR are directly linked to the functional components of CQI.

Additionally, CFSR systemic items focus on the practice themes related to strengthening data collection, tracking and linking data analysis to decision-making. Team 4 reviewed state sampling data that indicated that processes are not in place to ensure permanency case plan goals are readily identifiable in the state information system known as UNITY. Additionally, this data supported that placement (location of the child) was readily identifiable.

In addition to reviewing information and quantitative data, focus groups with staff were held statewide to further explore reasons around data (permanency case plan goals) not being entered timely in UNITY. The overall themes that surfaced surrounding the difficulties that staff face related to timely data entry including entry of case plan goals are as follows:

- Lack of time due to high caseloads/SAFE Model intensity
- UNITY issues i.e. UNITY 3 is not user friendly, too many windows and has time out issues.
- No process/policy around entering permanency goals in UNITY

Strategy 1- *Conduct a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Self-Assessment developed by the Capacity Building Center for States (CBCS) to identify the strengths and challenges of Nevada and implement Actions based on that Assessment.* ***This Strategy focuses on the Practice Theme of developing a comprehensive CQI system, and incorporates strengthening data collection, tracking, sharing and analysis, strengthening the link between data analysis and decisions and tracking interventions and outcomes.***

Strategy 1 involves Nevada completing a comprehensive CQI assessment (CBCS-Standardized tool). The root cause of not having a comprehensive CQI system is that Nevada does not have a comprehensive understanding of the CQI needs of the State. The theory of change identified was that by completing a CQI Self-Assessment (CBCS Standardized Tool) *and* using the findings of that assessment *so that* action planning can be conducted *so that* steps can be developed based on key consideration to build and implement CQI capacity. The long-term goal would be that Nevada will understand the strengths and weaknesses of developing a comprehensive CQI system.

The CBCS tool is a research-informed tool that helps agencies explore and identify CQI strengths and challenges, as well as inform action planning. Through technical assistance with the CBCS Nevada can collaborate with a team from Nevada to complete the CQI Self-Assessment. The tool helps agencies explore their CQI system across seven areas:

- Leadership Support and Modeling
- Staff and Stakeholder Engagement
- Communication
- Foundational Administrative Structure to Oversee and Implement CQI
- Quality Data Collection, Infrastructure, Extraction, Analysis, and Dissemination
- Case Record Review Process

- Application of CQI Findings

The CBCS CQI Self-Assessment Instrument can be found at the following location:

https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/self-assessment/

Case record reviews are only one important component of CQI, and Nevada will need to understand the gaps that exist as it relates to many of the other functional components of CQI in order to identify what will be needed to build a successful action plan. The results from the assessment will assist Nevada in identifying CQI strengths and challenges as part of the critical ongoing work to develop a comprehensive CQI system. *After the Assessment is completed and gaps are identified in Nevada's CQI system an Action Plan will be developed and those corrective activities will be continued into Nevada's five-year Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP).*

Strategy 2**: Improve and maintain the Case Review Process.* ***This Strategy focuses on the Practice Theme of Building Capacity in the CFSR Case Review Process.

Strategy 2 involves building capacity to improve and maintain the case review process. Case record reviews is a functional component of a comprehensive CQI system. Nevada has been conducting case record reviews for several years and has trained statewide county/state staff who have the necessary direct service experience to conduct them. However, the capacity to conduct these reviews are not within the state office, and the state has been conducting these reviews in collaboration with the Child Welfare Agencies utilizing their staff and resources. To be approved to conduct a Federal CFSR state-conducted review, a state must show capacity to conduct those reviews. Only through memorandums of agreements (MOUs) was Nevada able to be considered for approval to conduct a state review. To build capacity, Nevada will need to hire additional staff and train them to achieve sustainability. Dedicated staff are not only needed to conduct the reviews during a federal review year, but annually as a part of the larger state CQI system.

Strategy 3:** Ensure the accuracy of Permanency Case Plan Goal Data in UNITY for children in out-of-home placement.* ***This Strategy focuses on the Practice Theme of strengthening data collection, tracking, sharing and analysis.

Strategy 3 requires changing policy to reflect data input standards related to timely entry of permanency case plan goals, training on that policy and developing a CQI process to ensure permanency case plan goals are readily identifiable in UNITY. The root cause was determined to be that current policy does not reflect when case plans should be updated in UNITY i.e. when the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA), the Protective Capacity Progress Assessment (PCPA) are completed and/or after court hearings and court orders.

Systemic Factor 19 (Statewide Information System) determines how well the state information system, known as UNITY for Nevada, is functioning statewide. To be considered a functioning system it should at a minimum be able to readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

Nevada has used sampling data to review this item and as seen in *figure 2* it was identified that approximately 20% of permanency case plan goals are not readily identifiable in UNITY.

Using sampling data and data collected from focus groups Nevada identified lack of policy requirements to ensure this information is accurate or inaccurate. A theory of change was developed that proposed that by identifying a workgroup to amend policy and writing policy that reflected staff responsibility and timeframes that could be approved and distributed statewide *so that* CQI oversight of the policy would be conducted *so that* Nevada would have an effective policy and procedure that clearly outlined worker and supervisor responsibility on timeframes for updating permanency case plan goals would achieve the long term goal that Permanency Plan Goals and Case Plan Goals would be accurate in UNITY.

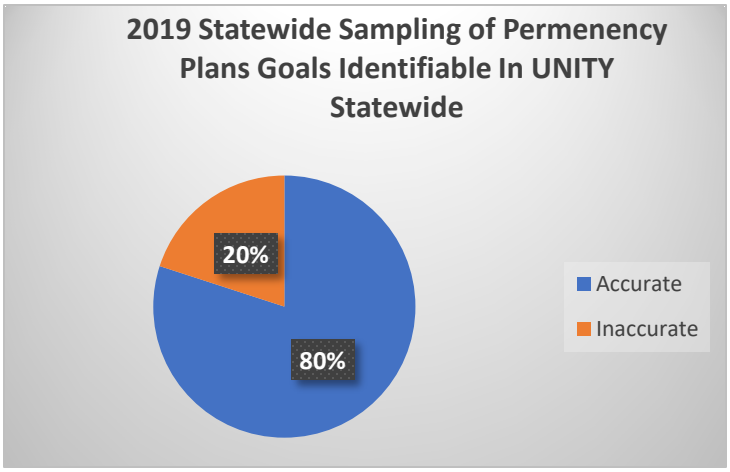


Figure 2 Permanency Goals

In order to inform the workgroup, focus groups and or surveys will generate input from supervisors and caseworkers on needed policy changes to identify statewide the data entry standards related to the timely entry of permanency case plan goals. Policy will be amended using this information and approved through Leadership. Training on the policy will occur at each child welfare agency and a CQI process will be instituted as a method to assess and inform if the change in policy is successful. This process will involve checking the permanency case plan goal as compared to the court order during case reviews which will be tracked and recorded as well as semi-annual sampling data that will be provided by each child welfare agency. When inaccuracies are discovered during this process technical assistance will be provided to determine if policy is being effective and/or if other problems are presenting i.e. UNITY issues or training issues.

Strategy 4: *The existing identified PIP Core Team led by the State Family Programs Office will ensure that all Nevada Child Welfare Agencies are making satisfactory progress toward completing all required PIP activities in accordance with the relative timelines.* ***This Strategy focuses on the Practice Theme of developing a comprehensive CQI system by incorporating a feedback loop for monitoring and oversight of PIP activities.*** Strategy 4 involves the use of the current identified PIP Core Team led by the State Family Programs Office as a feedback loop for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). Each Team Chair of the current PIP Core Team will meet regularly, report on and monitor the PIP. In order to ensure the system can identify and respond to strengths and needs of the child welfare system a feedback loop is necessary.

Goal 4: Improve Statewide Child Welfare Outcomes by developing and strengthening the Statewide Quality Assurance System to ensure the system can identify and respond to the strengths and needs of the child welfare system in an efficient and effective manner. (Systemic Factors: Statewide Information System, Quality Assurance System, sand Service Array)

Strategy 1: *Conduct a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Self-Assessment developed by the Capacity Building Center for States (CBCS) to identify the strengths and challenges of Nevada and implement Actions based on that Assessment.* ***This Strategy focuses on the Practice Theme of developing a comprehensive CQI system, and incorporates strengthening data collection, tracking, sharing and***

analysis, strengthening the link between data analysis and decisions and tracking interventions and outcomes.

	KEY ACTIVITY	Projected Completion Date:
4.1.1	**Convene Statewide CQI Assessment and Implementation Team, Request Technical Assessment (TA) from Capacity Building Center for States (CBCS) and develop Team Charter and Communication Plan.** • The State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager will Request membership from Executive Leadership for a Statewide CQI Assessment and Implementation Team that represents all jurisdictions and includes IT Staff from all jurisdictions	Q1
	a) The State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager will Request Technical Assistance (TA) from the Capacity Center for States to collaborate and consult on implementation of a CQI (Self-Assessment) Assessment	Q1
	b) The State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager will convene the identified Statewide CQI Assessment and Implementation Team. c) The State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager in collaboration with the Team will develop a Charter and Communication Plan.	Q2
4.1.2	**Complete the CQI Self-Assessment** The CQI Assessment and Implementation Team overseen by the State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager and in consultation with the Capacity Center for States completes the CQI (Self-Assessment) a) CQI Assessment Activity in Domain of Culture and Climate (Q3) • Leadership Support and Modeling • Staff and Stakeholder Engagement • Communication b) CQI Assessment Activity in Domain of Essential CQI Functional Components (Q4) • Foundational Administrative Structure • Quality data Collection, Infrastructure, Extraction, Analysis and Dissemination c) CQI Assessment Activity continues in Domain of Essential CQI Functional Components (Q5) • Case Record Review Process • Application of CQI findings	Q3, Q4, Q5
4.1.3	**Review and Analyze CQI Self-Assessment** • The CQI Assessment and Implementation Team overseen by the State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager and in consultation with the Capacity Building Center for States reviews the CQI Assessment results and identifies Nevada's strengths and challenges.	Q6

	KEY ACTIVITY	Projected Completion Date:

4.1.4	**Develop a CQI Action Plan and begin implementation**
	• The CQI Assessment and Implementation Team overseen by the State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager and in consultation with the Capacity Building Center for States develops an Action Plan that addresses gaps in Nevada's CQI System that includes but is not limited to:
	  • Leadership Support and Modeling
	  • Staff and Stakeholder Engagement
	  • Communication
	  • Foundational Administrative Structure
	  • Quality Data Collection, Infrastructure, Extraction, Analysis and Dissemination
	  • Case Record Review Process
	  • Application of CQI Findings
		Q6

Strategy 2: *Improve and maintain the Case Review Process.* ***This Strategy focuses on the Practice Theme of Building Capacity in the CFSR Case Review Process.***

	KEY ACTIVITY	*Projected Completion Date:*

4.2.1	**Conduct an analysis, Concept Paper, Submission of Concept Paper to Leadership and Complete Budget Request for additional positions.**
	• The State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager will complete the required information to increase the capacity and ability of the Family Programs Office (FPO) to conduct Nevada's Child and Family Services (CFSR) case reviews
	  a. Conduct an Analysis of the number of positions needed in the Family Programs Office (FPO) to adequately monitor child welfare programs.
	  b. Complete a Concept Paper that addresses the goals and justification for additional positions.
	  c. Submit the Concept Paper to Leadership for approval.
	  d. Complete the Budget Request for Budget Cycle FY22-23. *This budget request must be made between 2/2020 and 6/2020 during the Fiscal Department Budget Planning for FY 22-23.*
		Q4

Strategy 3: *Ensure the accuracy of Permanency Case Plan Goal Data in UNITY for children in out-of-home placement by developing policy and conducting reviews (spot checks) to ensure accuracy of the permanency goals.* ***This Strategy focuses on the Practice Theme of strengthening data collection, tracking, sharing and analysis.***

	KEY ACTIVITY	*Projected Completion Date:*
4.3.1	**Develop a statewide policy to indicate when permanency goals are required to be input into UNITY after collaboration with jurisdictions, convene CQI Workgroup, develop focus group or survey questions, conduct focus groups, administer surveys, analyze results, and develop policy recommendations.** • The State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager will oversee the Family Programs Office (FPO) Quality Assurance Staff who will work in collaboration with all three child welfare agencies to conduct focus groups and/or surveys from statewide supervisory and caseworkers. The surveys will inform needed changes to statewide policy regarding how and when permanency goals are updated in UNITY. The goals will align will with court orders. a. The State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager will ask Leadership to identify and convene a Statewide CQI Workgroup with all jurisdictions represented b. The CQI Workgroup, overseen by the State FPO CFSR /PIP Manager, will develop focus group and or survey questions to inform policy development/amendment c. The CQI Workgroup overseen by the State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager will use the developed questions to conduct Focus Groups or surveys d. The CQI Workgroup overseen by the State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager will hold Focus Groups or send Surveys e. The CQI Workgroup overseen by the State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager will gather the Information from the Focus Groups or Surveys and identify and analyze common themes f. The CQI Workgroup overseen by the State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager will use the information to inform the development/amendment to policy	Q1
4.3.2	**Identify Statewide Policy Workgroup** • The State FPO CFSR/PIP Manger will ask Leadership to Identify a Statewide Policy Workgroup, with all child welfare agencies represented, to amend/develop policy based on feedback from the focus groups and or surveys.	Q2
4.3.3	**Develop/Amend Policy and disseminate policy statewide** • The identified Statewide Policy group overseen by the State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager will develop/amend policy to reflect data input standards related to timely entry and accuracy of permanency goals in UNITY.	QA

	KEY ACTIVITY	*Projected Completion Date:*
	a. The State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager will submit the Statewide Policy to Executive Leadership for Statewide Approval b. If changes are recommended, the State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager will reconvene the workgroup to address recommended changes. c. The workgroup overseen by the State FPOCFSR/PIP Manager will finalize the policy for Leadership approval d. The State Leadership will distribute the Finalized Policy to Statewide Leadership who will distribute to Staff. e. Post Statewide Policy on DCFS Website. 1. Statewide Child Welfare Agency Leadership is responsible for ensuring statewide staff have received and reviewed the policy requirements 2. Statewide Child Welfare Agency Leadership will report to State Leadership that all staff have received and reviewed the policy requirements	

	KEY ACTIVITY	*Projected Completion Date:*
4.3.4	**Develop Informational Memorandum (IM) and Conduct Semi-Annual Spot Checks** • The State Leadership will institute a CQI process (overseen by the State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager) to assess if the permanency goal that is readily identifiable in UNITY is consistent with the filed court orders. a. The State Leadership will develop an Informational Memorandum (IM) outlining the process for assessing the accuracy of the permanency goal being readily identifiable in UNITY) (Q1) b. Each Child Welfare Agency (overseen by the State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager) will conduct semi-annual spot checks to ensure permanency goals in UNITY match the filed court order. (Q2) 1. The Family Programs Office (FPO) QA staff will pull a sample of cases semi-annually for review and provide to the Child Welfare Agencies (Q2) 2. The Child Welfare Agency Staff will verify permanency goals in UNITY are accurate as reflected in the court order. (Q2) 3. Each Child Welfare Agency will provide results of semi-annual spot checks to the Family Programs office during the months of January and July (annually) to the State FPO QA Manager	Q8
4.3.5	**Provide TA to the Child Welfare Agencies for correction of data inaccuracies** The State FPO CFSP/PIP Manager will address identified issues and provide technical assistance/resources to Child Welfare Agencies who have permanency case plan data inaccuracies. Depending on identified errors, assistance may include, but not limited to: 1. Review of Policy to ensure data standards are in line with current practice. 2. Review of existing UNITY training. 3. Development of specific training/job aids by UNITY trainers. 4. Identify "Super Users" within the jurisdictions to support staff with technical issues.	Q8

Strategy 4: *The existing identified PIP Core Team led by the State Family Programs Office will ensure that all Nevada Child Welfare Agencies are making satisfactory progress toward completing all required*

PIP activities in accordance with the relative timelines. ***This Strategy focuses on the Practice Theme of developing a comprehensive CQI system by incorporating a feedback loop for monitoring and oversight of PIP activities.***

	KEY ACTIVITY	*Projected Completion Date:*
4.4.1	**PIP CORE Team Meetings for PIP oversight, Work Plan, Data Collection and Report Development, Data Report Tracking and Monitoring, Focus Groups, Surveys, Training Monitoring, Policy Documents, and PIP Activity Monitoring.** • The PIP CORE Team, led by the State FPO CFSR/PIP Manager, will meet monthly to provide oversight and monitor the status of PIP activities/CQI activities. The PIP CORE Team will include participants who serve as leads and co-leads of the various subgroups and represent all Child Welfare Agencies, CIP, the State Family Programs Office, and the State IS will develop a Work Plan Template to track the quarterly progress of the PIP Activities to be discussed at each meeting. • There will be quarterly meetings to update directors and managers on the status of implementation of strategies and measurement plan, evaluate barriers and opportunities to improve performance.	Q2, Q4, Q6

Strategy 5: Modify Service Delivery to maintain children and youth in-home with their families and enhance comprehensive community mental health services for children with serious emotional disturbances (SED).

4.5.1	**Convene a Statewide Workgroup to solicit input from child-serving agencies, providers and family organizations**	Q1
4.5.2	**Assess Current Service Array Strengths/Gaps**	Q2
	a) Determine priority populations	Q2
	b) Identify services and expansion possibilities provided by Nevada Department of Public and Behavioral Health c) Identify services and expansion possibilities provided by Nevada Medicaid d) Identify services and expansion possibilities provided by DCFS Rural health clinics e) Identify services and expansion possibilities provided by DCFS mental health programs f) Identify services and expansion possibilities provided by juvenile justice, including Nevada Center for Juvenile Justice Innovation g) Identify services and expansion possibilities provide by child welfare providers	Q2
4.5.3	**Develop a Comprehensive Financing Strategy**	Q3
	a) Evaluate funding streams and requirements to realign funding distribution to meet funding needs	Q3

	b) Develop a collaborative statewide plan to implement braided funding and resources to create a continuum of services for children, parents and caregivers	Q3
4.5.4	**Address Contracting & IT System Implications**	Q4
	a) Determine how services will be documented in UNITY	Q4
	b) Evaluate current Request for Applications (RFA) c) Develop new Request for Applications to meet the community needs.	Q4
4.5.5	**Establish Service Array Tracking and Reporting mechanisms for Continuous Quality Improvement processes**	Q5
	a) Determine how and what data providers will report to Child Welfare b) Determine how Nevada will capture the information and data necessary to report and track services c) Determine needed UNITY updates	Q5
	d) Develop a plan to collect and report information at the child level on services provided	Q5
4.5.6	**Enhance mental health for children and youth with serious emotional disturbances (SED) through expansion of comprehensive community mental health services**	Q5
	a) Post Request for Applications (RFA) to community mental health providers for funding	Q4
	b) Review Request for Applications (RFA) for funding for Service Provision and Strategic Plans	Q5
	c) Award Service Providers funding to expand the provision of community mental health services for youth with SED.	Q5
	d) Develop a plan to collect and report information on services provided.	Q5
	e) Design a continuous quality improvement process that includes collecting, analyzing and reporting on provider data at least quarterly in conjunction with quarterly reconciliation of costs.	Q5

PART Two: CFSR PIP Measurement Plan

Statewide Measurement

Case review Items: Items 1,2,3,4,5,6,12,13,14 and 15

Instrument: Onsite review Instrument (OSRI); documented in Online Monitoring system (OMS)

PIP Measurement Approach: Method 1- State Retrospective Approach using 2018 State-Conducted CFSR Results.

- The State will conduct case review activities quarterly during the eight quarters of the PIP starting on October 1, 2019 through September of 2021 and throughout the non-overlapping year if necessary.

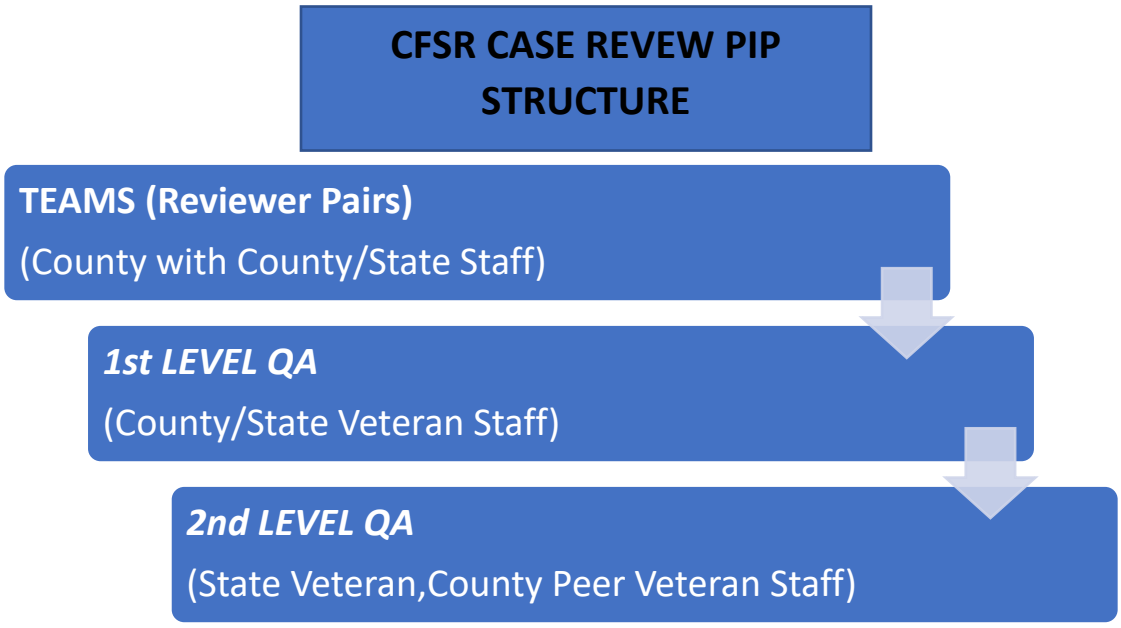
- The measurement periods will begin after the first year of reviews and roll quarterly from that point until the end of the PIP non-overlapping year, as needed.
- The state's performance will be assessed as indicated above to measure whether it exceeds the original baseline proportion plus the sampling error. MASC will provide the goals for each item according to the Children's Bureau formulas and confirm achievement of the goals and PIP measurement criteria met.

Conducting Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) Monitored Case Reviews:

Nevada will be reviewing Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS), Washoe County Human Services Agency (WCHSA), and the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) Rural Region. Clark County is the State's largest metropolitan area and is therefore a required case review site, and Washoe County is the State's second largest metropolitan area. Foster care (out-of-home) and in-home cases will be reviewed from the three jurisdictions. The sampling frame will include all eligible out-of-home children and in-home cases served in these areas.

Nevada proposes to use the 2018 state conducted CFSR findings to establish baselines and goals for PIP measurement. Improvement on systemic factors will be measured through completion of strategies and key activities as outlined in Part I of this plan.

The DCFS will use the following case review structure for the state conducted CFSR Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) in assessing each jurisdiction, and the Children's Bureau staff will also be involved in QA activities as described in this procedure.



The CFSR PIP structure consists of reviewer pairs (teams). The reviewer pairs (teams) may be a county, state or contractor pair (team). Initial or 1st level QA will be conducted by county or state QA trained staff. The 2nd level QA Staff will be conducted by a small QA trained team of state/county peer staff. During the PIP monitoring process, secondary oversight will be the final stage of review and will be conducted by the Children's Bureau federal team on a percentage of cases to be determined by the Children's Bureau.

Conflict of Interest:

Definition: For the CFSR a conflict of interest exists when a situation occurs where a person in a decision-making capacity is or has been involved or has knowledge of the circumstances of a case. This involvement *or knowledge of the case could possibly compromise the motivation or decision-making of that individual which creates the conflict.*

To ensure no conflict of interest occurs, DCFS and County CFSR Staff will be provided the sample in advance to review the UNITY case assignments and the current organizational structure to verify no case reviewer or QA Staff has ever been assigned to the case or under the supervision of a supervisor or manager who might have been in that chain of assignment of that case. Additionally, if a reviewer, supervisor or QA staff has personal knowledge of a family or believes for some other reason there may be a conflict the case will be reassigned.

Training and On-going Training for Reviewer Pool :

Maintaining a well-trained qualified case reviewer pool for CFSR PIP monitoring reviews is critical to on-going consistency of data and inter-rater reliabiltiy. Nevada utlizes state/county case reviewer staff who must be qualified to conduct reviews. The minimum qualifications of Reviewer Staff and QA staff is as follows:

Minimum Qualification for a Case Reviewer:

- Bachelor's Degree with one year of child welfare or protective services experience and or 5 years of child welfare experience or case management experience; OR
- Master's Degree with one year of child welfare or protective services experience; OR
- A minimum of one year of experience working in collaboration with the agency and demonstrates the knowledge required to complete the case review process.

Minimum Qualification for 1ST and 2nd QA Level:

- Minimum of 2 years of experience consistently reviewing multiple cases using OSRI.

Preferred Qualifications for all positions:

- At least two years of experience with Nevada child welfare agency in a supervisory capacity;
- Program knowledge in child placement services and child protective services;
- Ability to proficiently use OSRI; and
- Ability to proficiently navigate the statewide UNITY System.

To assure reviews and subsequent data collection is consistent, and to foster inter-rater reliability, training for conducting the reviews consist of two separate activities. All staff who conduct reviews or QA on reviews must receive an online certificate of training. This requires case reviewers and QA Staff to participate in the online CFSR portal training, completing all modules and completing a competency assessment that is administered following the training. Certificates are kept on file by the Nevada CFSR Lead. Additionally, face to face training specific to conduct CFSR Case Reviews is provided to new/experienced staff by DCFS.

For the CFSR PIP monitoring reviews training for any new staff will be conducted as listed above. Refresher training will be provided for experienced staff and will be conducted the month prior to any on-site CFSR

PIP monitoring review. The CFSR State Lead is responsible to ensure that all staff conducting reviews have completed training or refresher training.

Case sampling:

A rolling quarterly sampling approach will be used to select cases randomly from the entire state universe and stratified by jurisdictions. An additional 45 days will be added to the sample period for in-home case samples.

The following is a brief description of each In-Home case type and the start dates used to calculate cases open for at least 45 days.

- In-home Service Cases are cases that have been screened in for investigation, and the disposition of the investigation results in impending danger concerns. Impending danger is determined when a family situation or household member's behavior is out-of-control and will likely result in serious harm to the child. The case is opened to service provision to mitigate the impending danger concerns. (45 days starts with case opening)
- Differential Response (DR) is an early intervention and child abuse prevention program; it is a partnership between the Nevada Child Protective Service Agencies (CPS) and Family Resource Center (FRC) to respond to screened-in Priority 3 child abuse/neglect cases and links families to services in their communities. (45 days starts with case opening)

For the Out-of-Home sample since Juvenile Justice Cases comprise 2% (currently 139 cases of 5973 in the overall AFCARS population or 2% of cases in the foster care sample frame file for the 17A period), the state will select a maximum 2% of the 85 cases reviewed or a maximum of 2 cases (2% of 85 cases = 1.7 cases; rounding 1.7 to a maximum of 2 cases) will be reviewed.

Clark County, which represents 72.2% of the total child welfare population reviewed 50 Cases during the 2018 State conducted CFSR. The DCFS RR, which represent 8.5% of the population reviewed 15 Cases and Washoe County, which represents 19.3% of the population also reviewed 15 total cases. A total of 80 cases were reviewed statewide with 25 being in-home cases and 55 being out-of-home cases. During the PIP measurement period 85 cases will be reviewed annually increasing the DCFS RR cases by 1 FC/1 IH case and increasing Washoe cases by 2 FC/1 IH case as follows:

- CCDSS: 35 OHC, 15 IH (IH=12; Differential Response =3) (Oct 2019, and April 2020 Review)
- DCFS Rural Region: 11 OHC, 6 IH (IH=5, Differential Response 1, (February 2020 Review)
- WCHSA: 12 OHC, 6 IH (IH=5, Differential Response 1) (August 2020 Review)

The total eligible case population, which has not been removed by segment of the elimination criteria, that can be applied to the sample frame is subdivided by in-home and out-of-home population and then by jurisdiction (CCDFS, WCHSA, and DCFS Rural Region). This creates distinct case pools from which to draw the relevant part of the sample; the size of each is as stated above. Within each pool, a sample case will be drawn and removed from the pool, one at a time, until the desired number of sample cases has been reached. Each eligible case has an equal chance to be drawn into a given sample, and the randomization is independent of any other sample.

[This page intentionally left partially blank]

PIP Reviews: Rolling *Quarterly* Sample Periods and Periods under Review: Case review activities will take place during the 12 months indicated below on an annual basis.

QTRs	Review Months	Review Site	Rolling Quarterly Sample Periods*	Number of Cases to be Reviewed	Periods Under Review
QTR 1 Oct, Nov, Dec 2019	October 7, 2019 until October 23th, 2019	Clark	10/1/2018 to 3/31/2019	25	10/1/2018 to date of completed review and submission of OSRI to QA.
QTR 2 Jan, Feb, Mar 2020	February 3, 2020 until February 14, 2020	DCFS RR	1/1/2019 to 6/30/2019	17	1/1/2019 to date of completed review and submission of OSRI to QA.
QTR 3 Apr, May, June 2020	April 27, 2020 until May 13th, 2020	Clark	4/1/2019 to 9/30/2019	25	04/01/2019 to date of completed review and submission of OSRI to QA
QTR 4 July, Aug, Sept 2020	August 17, 2020 until August 28, 2020	Washoe	07/1/2019 to 12/31/2019	18	07/01/2019 to date of completed review and submission of OSRI to QA
QTR 5 Oct, Nov, Dec 2020	October 5, 2020 until October 21, 2020	Clark	10/1/2019 to 3/31/2020	25	10/1/2019 to date of completed review and submission of OSRI to QA.
QTR 6 Jan, Feb, Mar 2021	February 1, 2021 until February 12, 2021	DCFS RR	1/1/2020 to 6/30/2020	17	1/1/2020 to date of completed review and submission of OSRI to QA.

QTRs	Review Months	Review Site	Rolling Quarterly Sample Periods*	Number of Cases to be Reviewed	Periods Under Review
QTR 7 Apr, May, June 2021	April 26, 2021 until May 12th, 2021	Clark	04/1/2020 to 9/30/2020	25	04/01/2020 to date of completed review and submission of OSRI to QA
QTR 8 July, Aug, Sept 2021	August 16th, 2021 until August 27th, 2021	Washoe	07/1/2020 to 12/31/2020	18	07/01/2020 to date of completed review and submission of OSRI to QA

*Add 45 Days for in-home services sample periods

The Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) will ensure the minimum number of applicable PIP-monitored case reviews completed annually is consistent with the State Conducted 2018 CFSR sample. To meet minimum applicable case requirements, each region will ensure they review the minimum applicable cases by item and case type reviewed for the baseline period. Half-way through the random sample for each regional review, the state will monitor applicable case counts and as needed complete a preliminary review of the record and use the case elimination process to select cases in random order that are applicable to the item(s) of concern. The required minimum applicable cases are as follows:

Item Number/Cases		Item Number/Cases
Item 1: 36		Item 6: 55
Item 2: 32		Item 12: 80
Item 3: 80		Item 13: 75
Item 4: 55		Item 14: 80
Item 5: 55		Item 15: 54

Case Selection, Assignment and Case elimination Criteria

The sample will be generated by the DCFS's Information Systems (IS) in consultation with the DCFS NV CFSR Lead. The DCFS Quality Assurance Specialists will review the sample and identify cases that are eligible for review, applying the following elimination rules, keeping record of all elimination/eligibility decisions and reviewing the UNITY case assignment historical record to ensure there are no conflict of interest. The state will ensure that measurement periods contain the same number of applicable cases foreach item as in the baseline. If applicable numbers for any item are not achieved in a measurement period, the state will prioritize cases applicable for that item in the subsequent measurement period. The state will maintain a balanced number of reviews each quarter within a 10% margin of error. The following are valid reasons for case elimination during the sample selection process:

In-Home Cases:

- In-home services case open for fewer than 45 consecutive days during the period under review.
- In-home services case in which any child in the family was in foster care for more than 24 hours during the period under review (from the start of the sampling period to the date the case is rated by the initial reviewer using the OSRI).

Out-of-Home Cases:

- Out-of- home case in which the target child was in out-of-home care for less than 24 hours during the sampling period.

Cases are eliminated for the following reasons:

- A child is on a trial home visit (placement at home) during the entire period under review
  - Nevada trial home visit is a short-term option in preparation for a child that has been in foster care to return home permanently. A trial home visit refers to when a child is returned to the home from which the child was removed for a limited period of no more than 6 months for determining the appropriateness of permanent reunification and the state maintains care, custody and control.
- Out-of-home case that was closed per the agency's procedure before the sample period.
- The adoption or guardianship of a child was finalized before the period under review and the child is no longer under the care of the child welfare agency.
- The case is opened for subsidized adoption payment and/or subsidized guardianship and not open to other services.
- A case in which the target child reached the age of 18 years before the period under review.
- A case in which the selected child is or was in the care and responsibility of another State, Nevada is providing supervision through an Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) agreement.
- A case appearing multiple times in the sample, such as a case that involves siblings in foster care in separate cases or an in-home services case that was opened more than one time during a sampling period.
- A case in which the child was placed for the entire period under review in a locked juvenile facility or other placement that does not meet the Federal definition of foster care.
- Situations in which case selection results in overrepresentation by worker. No more than 3 cases per worker.
- Due to lack of key participant interviews after making concerted efforts to arrange an interview in consultation with state QA leadership and/or CB.

Cases will not be eliminated because of the family's race, language, culture, or need for special accommodation. The DCFS NV CFSR Lead in consultation with the Leads in each child welfare jurisdiction will assign each case to a reviewer who speaks the participants' language or will conduct interviews with the assistance of another employee or a professional translator fluent in the participants' language. Cases for review will be assigned to case reviewers by collaboration efforts between each jurisdiction and the State based on several considerations, such as amount of case review experience and type of child welfare experience.

Additionally, case elimination will proceed in collaboration with the CB. The State will track the proposed eliminations on the worksheet and submit to the CB for acceptance or denial of the eliminations at a frequency determined by the CB.

Case elimination must include the process whereby each case elimination proposed is submitted and approved by CB and the state must track the eliminations and submit the case elimination worksheet to CB at defined times (weekly typically.)

Preparing for and Conducting Case-Related Interviews

The review process is designed to gain a full understanding of what occurred that affected child and family outcomes in a case. It is critical to obtain information from a variety of sources before making initial determinations about outcomes. Case-related interviews with key individuals involved in the case serve as an opportunity to determine what has occurred in the case, confirm case record documentation, collect information that might be missing from the record, and obtain input about case participants' experiences. The interview information is gathered, and the reviewers use best judgment when making the case rating.

Concerted efforts will be made to conduct the maximum number of interviews with necessary case participants. Efforts to contact participants and determine their willingness to be interviewed will occur in the case preparation period. If there is no involved family member (child, parent, or relative caregiver) who is able and willing to be interviewed, Nevada's CFSR Lead will consult with the Children's Bureau to determine if the case should be eliminated and replaced. This determination will be made on a case-by-case basis. Case reviewers will make concerted efforts to interview all key participants on every case to inform the ratings. Interviews may be conducted by phone or in-person, based on the needs and wishes of the person being interviewed. In-person interviews will be offered to all biological parents, out-of-home caregivers, and children.

When interviewing case participants, reviewers are responsible for asking questions relevant to the items in the OSRI. Sometimes, information obtained during an interview may conflict with the documentation contained within the case record or obtained from another interview. In these cases, reviewers have a responsibility to pursue the issue across multiple interviews until they can resolve the discrepancy to determine the most accurate response to the relevant item/questions.

The following individuals related to a case will be interviewed unless they are unavailable or unwilling to participate following efforts to locate and engage:

- The child for all case types (if school age and developmentally capable of participating). For foster care cases, the target child will be interviewed. For in-home cases, all children in the home will be interviewed.
- Biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed.
- The child's most recent foster parent(s), pre-adoptive parent(s), or other caregiver(s), such as a relative caregiver or group home houseparent, if the child is in out-of-home care; and any multiple foster parents during the PUR prior out-of-home caregivers who cared for the child during a large portion of the period under review and are expected to have information necessary for accurate case rating.
- Adoptive parents, if the adoption has been finalized during the period under review.
- The family's caseworker (or the supervisor when the caseworker has left the agency or is no longer available for interview)

Optional Interviews

- Interviews with other professionals knowledgeable about the case may be arranged but are not required as part of the case review process. When numerous service providers are involved with a child or family, it is suggested that interviews be scheduled only with those most recently involved, those most knowledgeable about the family, or those who provide the primary services the family is receiving.

- Other individuals who have relevant information about the case also may be interviewed, such as the child's guardian ad litem or advocate other family members or juvenile probation officer.

Case-Specific Interviews

During these initial QA activities, the DCFS Nevada CFSR Lead will support the County/State Lead in planning for case-specific interviews, including:

- Verifying as early as possible who should be interviewed and who will be available for interviews and when;
- Identifying information, using the Onsite Review Instrument, that needs to be gathered through interviews;
- Discussing the reviewer's approach to the interviews and adjustments that may be necessary based upon the interviewee's needs; and
- Integrating the results of the interviews into decision making concerning case findings and ratings.

Together, first level quality assurance team leads, and reviewers should consult this manual and the Children's Bureau's ""*Case-Related Interview Guides and Instructions*" for specific guidance and information regarding case-specific interviews. This guidance provides suggestions about basic approaches to case-specific interviews to help the interviewee feel comfortable with and understand the interview process. In summary, reviewers need to introduce themselves, explain the purpose of the reviews, clarify their neutrality, and reassure the interviewee that anything they say during the interview remains confidential except for information indicating current safety concerns.

Concerted efforts will be made to conduct the maximum number of interviews with required case participants. All efforts to contact, engage, and interview the case participants will be documented in Case Elimination Worksheet. The jurisdiction will submit the case elimination worksheet to the state weekly, and the state then submits to the RO for approval. Concerted efforts will include the following:

Parents/legal guardians:

- Three phone calls at various times of the day and week to all known or possible phone numbers;
- Letter sent to the last known address;
- Discussion with a designated staff regarding other possible means to contact the parent or legal guardian, and follow-up on any such information; AND
- Efforts to encourage the parent/legal guardian to participate in the interview if he or she initially refuses to do so.

Children:

- Three phone calls at separate times of the day and week to the placement or youth, depending on the age of the youth;
- Discussion with the assigned staff on the case to schedule an appointment with the child; AND
- Efforts to encourage the child to participate in the interview if he or she initially refuses to do so.

Target child's out-of-home caregiver:

- Three phone calls at various times of the day and week;
- Letter to current address; AND

- Efforts to encourage the out-of-home caregiver to participate in the interview if he or she initially refuses to do so.

Any exception to the requirement to interview a case participant will be documented in the Case Elimination Worksheet. The following are acceptable exceptions to conducting interviews:

- The child is not yet school age, the child is nonverbal, or the child is cognitively impaired and unable to understand any form of questions. Cases involving preschool-age children may be reviewed but do not require an interview with the child. Instead, the reviewers might observe the child in the home while interviewing the birth or foster parent(s)
- Any party cannot be located despite concerted efforts or is outside of the U.S. and cannot be interviewed by telephone.
- There is a safety or risk concern in contacting any party for interview.
- Any party is unable to consent to an interview due to physical or mental health incapacity.
- Any party refuses to participate in an interview and the agency can document attempts to engage them.
- Any party is advised by an attorney not to participate due to a pending criminal or civil matter.

The following are <u>not</u> acceptable exceptions to conducting an interview:

- An age cut-off that does not consider a child's developmental capacity, e.g. a policy of not interviewing children under age 12
- A party refuses to participate in an interview and the agency did not attempt to encourage them beyond a letter or telephone message.
- A party has a pending criminal, civil, or procedural matter before the agency, e.g. appealing a TPR.
- The agency has not made concerted efforts to locate a party for an interview.
- A party speaks a language other than English.

When required interviews cannot be obtained, after sufficient efforts to locate/engage, the state will consult with CB to determine whether sufficient information exists to accurately rate the case or whether the case needs to be eliminated.

[This page intentionally left partially blank]

Case Review PIP-Measurement Goals using 2018 State-Conducted CFSR Results to Establish Baselines

CFSR Items Requiring Measurement	Item Description	Z value for 80% Confidence Level[1]	Number of Applicable Cases[2]	Number of cases rated a Strength	PIP Baseline[3]	Baseline Sampling Error[4]	PIP Goal[5]
Item 1	Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment	1.28	36	21	58.3%	0.105174752	**68.9%**
Item 2	Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry into Foster Care	1.28	32	23	71.9%	0.10173495	**82.0%**
Item 3	Risk and Safety Assessment and Management	1.28	80	37	46.3%	0.071352645	**53.4%**
Item 4	Stability of Foster Care Placement	1.28	55	40	72.7%	0.076867288	**80.4%**
Item 5	Permanency Goal for Child	1.28	55	23	41.8%	0.085134354	**50.3%**
Item 6	Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	1.28	55	10	18.2%	0.066569024	**24.8%**
Item 12	Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents	1.28	80	30	37.5%	0.069282032	**44.4%**
Item 13	Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	1.28	75	36	48.0%	0.07384169	**55.4%**
Item 14	Caseworker Visits with Child	1.28	80	44	55.0%	0.071195505	**62.1%**
Item 15	Caseworker Visits with Parents	1.28	54	25	46.3%	0.086853702	**55.0%**

Explanatory Data Notes:

[1]Z-values: Represents the standard normal (Z) distribution of a data set and measures the number of standard errors to be added and subtracted in order to achieve our desired confidence level (the percentage of confidence we want in the results). In order to have 80% confidence in the results of the sample data, a Z-value of 1.28 is used to calculate the margin of error.

[2]Minimum Number of Applicable Cases: Identifies the minimum number of applicable cases reviewed for the baseline period. Measurement samples must be equal to or greater than the number of applicable cases used to establish the baseline for each item. A two percent (2%) tolerance is applied to the number of cases reviewed to measure goal achievement compared to the number of cases reviewed to establish the baseline.

[3]PIP Baseline: Percentage of applicable cases reviewed rated a strength for the specified baseline period.

[4]Baseline Sampling Error: Represents the margin of error that arises in a data collection process as a result of using a sample rather than the entire universe of cases.

[5]PIP Goal: Calculated by adding the sampling error to the baseline percentage. Percentages computed from at least 12 months of practice findings are used to determine whether the state satisfied its improvement goal. To determine a PIP measurement goal using case review data is met, CB will also confirm CB has confidence in accuracy of results, significant changes were not made to the review schedule, the minimum number of required applicable cases for each item were reviewed, the ratio of metropolitan area cases to cases from the rest of the state was maintained, and the distribution and ratio of case types was maintained for the measurement period. A five percent (5%) tolerance is applied to the distribution of metropolitan area cases and case types between the baseline and subsequent measurement periods.

APPENDIX A: Glossary of Acronyms

ACF	Administration for Children and Families
AFCARS	Adoption Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System
AOC	Administrative Office of the Courts
APSR	Annual Progress & Service Report
ASFA	Adoption and Safe Families Act
CAPTA	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate
CB	Children's Bureau
CBCS	Capacity Building Center for States
CBCC	Capacity Building Center for Courts
CCDFS	Clark County Department of Family Services
CCWIS	Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System
CFSP	Child and Family Service Plan
CFSR	Child and Family Services Review
CIC	Community Improvement Council
CIP	Court Improvement Program
CJA	Children's Justice Act
CQI	Continuous Quality Improvement
DA	District Attorney
DCFS	Division of Child and Family Services
DCFS-RURAL	Division of Child and Family Services Rural Region
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
ERT	Emergency Response Team
FPO	Family Programs Office
IA	Initial Assessment
ICPC	Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children
JDMP	Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program
LMS	Learning Management System
IS	Information Services
IV-B	Title IV-B of the Social Security Act
IV-E	Title IV-E of the Social Security Act
LMS	Learning Management System
MH	Mental Health
NAC	Nevada Administrative Code
NCANDS	National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System
NIA	Nevada Initial Assessment
NPT	Nevada Partnership for Training
NRS	Nevada Revised Statutes
PCFA	Protective Capacity Family Assessment
PCPA	Protective Capacity Progress Assessment
PIP	Program Improvement Plan
QA	Quality Assurance
QI	Quality Improvement
QPI	Quality Parenting Initiative
SACWIS	Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System
SAFE	Safety Assessment and Family Evaluation
SIPS	Safety Intervention Permanency System
SWA	Statewide Assessment
TPR	Termination of Parental Rights
UNITY	Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth
UNLV	University of Nevada, Las Vegas
UNR	University of Nevada, Reno
WCHSA	Washoe County Human Services Agency