Wisconsin Child and Family Services Review

Round 3 – Program Improvement Plan

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- Schedule: Wisconsin will report progress on PIP activities to the Children's Bureau at 6-month intervals.
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Executive Summary

Structure and Framework for Wisconsin's Child Welfare System

The child welfare system in Wisconsin (WI) is a county-operated, state-supervised system with the exception of Milwaukee County and the statewide public adoption program, which are administered by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). In Wisconsin there are 72 local child welfare agencies composed of 71 non-Milwaukee "balance of state" (BOS) counties that administer child welfare services in their respective jurisdictions and DCF Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS) that administers child welfare services in Milwaukee County. There are also 11 tribes in Wisconsin - Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Forest County Potawatomi, Ho-Chunk Nation, Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Oneida Nation, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Sokaogon Chippewa Community, St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin, and Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians. As sovereign nations, tribes provide child welfare services directly based on their tribal codes, policies, and tribal practices and may also have written agreements with county agencies.

Wisconsin's child welfare system is guided by the Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice, which was developed by the Department in collaboration with counties and other child welfare partners. As stated in the Model for Practice:

- The purpose of the Child Welfare System is to keep children safe and to support families to provide safe, permanent, and nurturing homes for their children. The system does this by safely keeping children and youth in their own home, family, tribe, and community whenever possible.
- When it is not possible to keep children safely in their home, the system engages with the courts and others to provide a safe, stable, and temporary home that nurtures and supports the child's development. The system aims to transition children in out-of-home care (OHC) safely and quickly back with their family, whenever possible, or to another permanent home.
- The system strives to engage with children, youth, and families to expand healthy connections to supports in their community and tribes and bolster resiliency in families to help them thrive.

Interactions and services in the child welfare system are based on the principles of trust, engagement, accountability, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, workforce support, and family-centered practices.

The Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice is the compass that guides our work and decision-making, including the development of this Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP) DCF is in the process of developing a strategic plan focused that will further strengthen the child welfare system and align with the Model for Practice and the Wisconsin PIP approach.

Data-based Development

Consistent with our commitment to data-driven policy and program development, Wisconsin's PIP is based on robust data analysis, including root cause analysis, using a broad range of data sources. Key sources of quantitative and qualitative data used in the development of the PIP include:

- The federal CFSR report for Wisconsin and Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI) data for the 65-case sample in the April 2018 on-site review;
- Wisconsin's statewide annual 2015-16 Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) reviews of Access, Initial Assessment and Ongoing Services; the Ongoing Services CQI reviews are composed of a statistically significant sample of 271 cases using the OSRI tool;
- Administrative data from the eWiSACWIS child welfare information system;
- Cross-system linked data between (a) the eWiSACWIS child welfare information system and the Consolidated Court Automation Program (CCAP) court information system and (b) the eWiSACWIS child welfare information system and the K-12 education information system;
- National AFCARS data
- Input from stakeholders in CFSR and PIP preparatory meetings hosted by DCF in 2016, 2017, and 2018 and in the CFSR stakeholder interviews; and,
- Reinforced through DCF and Child Welfare System strategic planning launched in 2019.

Involvement of Stakeholders

Agency Responsiveness was noted as a strength in Wisconsin's 2018 CFSR. To that end, collaboration was a key component of DCF's PIP development that included a strong collaborative process with stakeholders. As detailed in the Wisconsin Statewide Assessment, DCF held consultations with a wide range of stakeholders during the two years prior to the April 2018 on-site CFSR to solicit stakeholder input on the strengths and areas needing improvement in the state's child welfare system and possible strategies for inclusion in the state's PIP following the CFSR. In January 2018 DCF established the PIP Advisory Group composed of internal and external stakeholders, including judges, legal partners, the Children's Court Improvement Program, counties, tribes, foster youth, foster parents, providers, the Child Abuse and Neglect Board, and the state mental health agency. The PIP Advisory Group that met monthly in 2019 was charged with assisting DCF in developing a comprehensive, effective, trauma-informed PIP that focused on strengthening the child welfare system and improving outcomes for the families and children in the system. A list of PIP Advisory Committee members is included in Appendix B. In September 2018, DCF expanded the PIP planning process to include issue-specific advisory strategy teams in the following areas: Prevention, Practice, Cross-System Process, and Out-of-Home Care Continuum. Each strategy team is composed of a broad range of internal and external stakeholders and is meeting every other month. The analyses and options developed by the issue- specific strategy teams were reviewed by the PIP Advisory Group, consistent with its charge of viewing the PIP in its entirety. These broad-based stakeholder groups and teams also advised DCF on the development of Wisconsin's 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and Wisconsin's planning for implementation of the federal Family First Prevention and Services Act (FFPSA) to ensure these efforts align with the PIP.

In addition to these PIP-specific advisory groups, DCF invited input on the draft PIP from standing stakeholder groups at their regular meetings, including the Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA) Policy Advisory Committee, the Wisconsin Commission on Children, Families, and the Courts and the Indian Child Welfare (ICW) directors of the 11 Tribes.

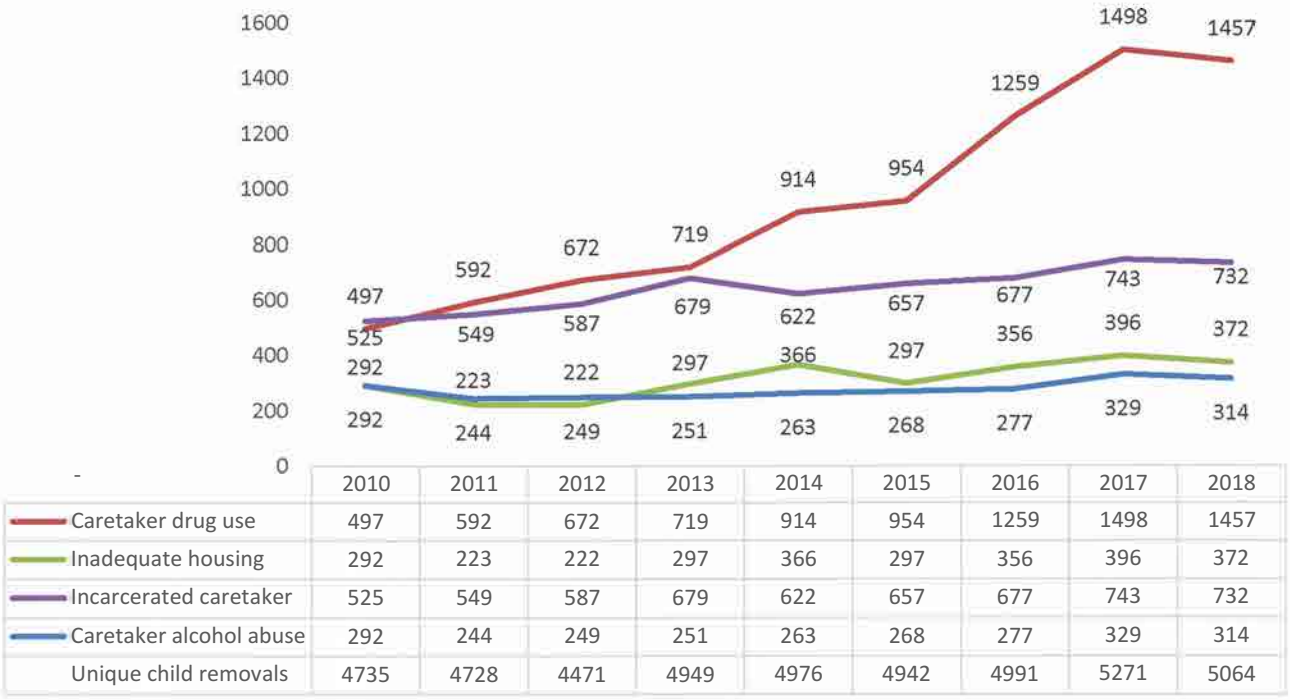
Overall Context

Wisconsin has a comprehensive child welfare policy framework and a strong, dedicated, and competent child welfare workforce. In the last six years, Wisconsin has experienced a significant increase in out-of-home care cases. After falling steadily from 2000 to 2012, the number of children in out-of-home care began increasing sharply after 2012 and has risen from 6,255 in December 2012 to 8,038 in June 2018. The increase has been especially sharp in BOS counties where the out-of-home care caseload grew from 3,977 in December 2012 to 5,514 in June 2018, for an increase of 41%. In Wisconsin, the drug epidemic hit Milwaukee earlier than the balance of the state which partially accounts for the difference in rising caseloads happening later in BOS counties.

The child welfare system in Wisconsin is funded by state, federal, and county funding. State and federal funding is distributed to BOS counties via a block grant called the Children and Family Allocation (CFA). From 2012 to 2018, CFA funding increased 13.2%--a rate lower than the 41% increase in BOS out-of-home caseloads. Due to statutory limits on county property tax levy rates and other fiscal demands, county funding for child welfare services increased approximately 26% since 2012, which is also not at a rate commensurate with the caseload increase.

Based on analysis of eWiSACWIS administrative data shown in the graph on the following page, the factor contributing most significantly to the rise in child welfare cases is parental drug abuse, which reflects the significant rise in opioid and methamphetamine use in the state. Both the number and proportion of removals due to parental/caregiver drug abuse has risen dramatically from 497, accounting for 10% of removals, in December 2010 to 1,457, accounting for 29% of removals, in December 2018. Research has shown that parental drug abuse-related child welfare cases are generally more complex than other child welfare cases, and therefore costlier in terms of caseworker time and services than other child welfare cases. [1]

[1] Ghertner, M, Baldwin, G., Radel, and A. Waters, "The Relationship between Substance Use Indicators and Child Welfare Caseloads", *ASPE Research Brief*, Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, revised March 9, 2019. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/pdf-report/relationship-between-substance-use-indicators-and-child-welfare-caseloads.



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Caretaker drug use	497	592	672	719	914	954	1259	1498	1457
Inadequate housing	292	223	222	297	366	297	356	396	372
Incarcerated caretaker	525	549	587	679	622	657	677	743	732
Caretaker alcohol abuse	292	244	249	251	263	268	277	329	314
Unique child removals	4735	4728	4471	4949	4976	4942	4991	5271	5064

Due to the sharp rise in caseload, workload on child welfare workers has increased significantly. Based on the discussions with stakeholders prior, during and after the CFSR, including county caseworkers and managers, a major root cause of any weaknesses in performance on case practice items, is the increased workload and caseloads on child welfare workers. The Wisconsin County Association (WCA) and Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA) identified increased child welfare funding as one of their top priorities in the 2019-21 state biennial budget and were active in undertaking outreach efforts with legislative and administrative policy makers to highlight the need for this funding. The Governor's 19-21 biennial budget bill introduced in February of 2019 requested $15 million for counties. The final state budget appropriated additional state funding of $18,875 million in calendar year 2020 and an increase of $18.5 million in calendar year 2021. Funding is distributed to BOS counties as part of the Children and Families Allocation.

In addition, DCF has been working with counties since 2017 on caseload and workload issues for Wisconsin child welfare workers. An outside evaluator was selected in 2019 to conduct a caseload and workload study to gain an understanding of the resources needed to complete child welfare functions in Wisconsin. This study is underway with expected findings available in late summer, 2020. This effort will build on the work already done by WCHSA and will inform future funding decisions for the state's child welfare system as well as identify possible efficiencies to streamline workload. Given the increased caseloads and planning to implement that provisions of the Family First Prevention and Services Act (FFPSA), a major consideration in the state's PIP is to streamline the workload faced by caseworkers, wherever possible. DCF will continue working with county staff to ensure that new initiatives do not make it more difficult or challenging to carry out critical ongoing child welfare practices.

Wisconsin's Approach

Wisconsin has a long-standing commitment to quality improvement. We have strengthened the child welfare system in important ways through our last PIP and other policy and program initiatives in recent years and remain committed to pursuing positive, meaningful change. We are aware of and actively addressing many of the cross-cutting issues highlighted in the federal CFSR report as needing improvement. DCF has been concurrently planning for the two-year PIP period as well as the five-year Child and Family Services Plan to comprehensively address findings of the CFSR. This process includes working with stakeholders to clearly identify short- and long-term milestones achievable in two years and in five years. For the PIP we have identified major high impact areas for improvement achievable in two years consistent with and guided by the Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice as a guide. This work has included determining root causes for key challenges, identifying desired changes in performance, using evidence-based or evidence-informed strategies, and incorporating evaluation for monitoring progress, as explained more fully in the following sections of this document.

Wisconsin's PIP Goals

Wisconsin's PIP capitalizes on the efforts already underway to continue improving the quality of services and strengthening the outcomes of children and families touched by the child welfare system. Wisconsin's PIP is focused on improving the quality of safety and permanency services, and more effectively engaging children and families in all aspects of the child welfare system and address the outcomes and systemic factors identified in the Wisconsin CFSR Final Report issued in September of 2018. The specific goals developed are also aligned with the Children's Bureau Vision for Changing Child Welfare Practice:

- Goal 1: Prevent the maltreatment and unnecessary placement of children by improving timely response that supports child and family safety.
- Goal 2: Improve the availability of safety services for children and families.
- Goal 3: Improve the quality and availability of permanency services by engaging children and families in more meaningful ways.
- Goal 4: Serve more children in their homes or home-like settings by addressing the range of emotional, physical, educational and social needs of children and youth.
- Goal 5: Strengthen documentation of worker training through training and information system improvements.

Integral to meeting the Wisconsin PIP goals will be the use of ongoing evaluation, monitoring and quality improvement mechanisms to successfully achieve proposed strategies. This will include working with Wisconsin's Professional Development System and partner agencies to identify and provide appropriate training, coaching and mentoring that prepare the workforce for effective implementation of strategies.

2018 Final Report Findings, Cross-Cutting Issues and Strategies to Address

Wisconsin participated in a traditional CFSR during the week of April 16-20, 2018. The Children's Bureau issued a final report to Wisconsin in September 2018. Wisconsin's PIP responds to cross-cutting issues identified in the CFSR final report including:

- Concerns about assuring safety throughout the life of child welfare cases;
- A need identified to improve the quality of caseworker visits and interactions with families; and,
- A challenge identified to more effectively engage youth and families, particularly fathers.

A chart showing Wisconsin's full performance for the 2018 CFSR can be found in Appendix A. More specific information on Wisconsin's performance in Round 3 follows.

Safety Outcome 1

Both CFSR data and Wisconsin administrative data confirm Wisconsin's strong performance on timeliness of initiating investigations of child maltreatment. Specifically, in the CFSR review, 93% of cases had timely initiation; eWiSACWIS data for the second quarter CY2018 indicates that statewide 91.1% of all cases achieved or attempted timely initial face-to-face contact. Wisconsin's 2015 Initial Assessment CQI report indicates that a total of 77.9% of cases reviewed demonstrated timely face-to-face contact with either all (65.7%) or some (12.2%) of the alleged victims: https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cqi-cfsr/pdf/report/ia-report2015.pdf .

Based on the presence of present or impending danger and whether the alleged maltreatment is occurring in an out-of-home setting, cases are assigned a response time of same day, 24-48 hours, within 3 working days, or within 5 working days. Further analysis of Wisconsin administrative data indicates that timeliness performance is strongest on urgent cases that require a same day or 24-48-hour response time, and slightly less strong on the least urgent cases that require a response within 5 working days. A cross-cutting issue from the CFSR Report reinforced by stakeholder discussions is that caseworkers are appropriately prioritizing urgent cases. However, due to the caseload pressure described above, caseworkers do not consistently have sufficient time to respond to the remaining non-urgent cases within the assigned timeframe.

One of the tools DCF developed to support timely initiation of investigations is a dashboard using eWiSACWIS data for use by caseworkers and supervisors that shows performance on timely initial face-to-face contact by worker, local child welfare agency, region and state for any selected period. DCF has found that making county and caseworker-specific performance data accessible to counties, supervisors, and workers through dashboards and other tools can stimulate improvement in practice. For example, Wisconsin's monthly caseworker contact improved to the FFY2018 level of 97.2% after the Department began several years ago systematically disseminating, monitoring, and putting local improvement plans in place for caseworker contact data to counties, initially manually and later through an automated public facing dashboard. DCF collects information on how frequently the dashboards are used. In 2018, the Initial Assessment performance dashboard, which displays data on timely initiation of investigation, was used 1,395 times. It is evident that these tools are being used and that making this data available at the county level served to inform and focus county attention on areas needing improvement. To strengthen further the use of the Department's data dashboards, DCF developed an ongoing training in 2019 for child welfare supervisors through the Child Welfare Professional Development System on the

use and value of the dashboards as tools in their daily work. For the reasons stated above, **Goal 1, Strategy 1** enhances the initiation of investigation data dashboards.

Safety Outcome 2

Wisconsin child welfare standards and the Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice promote safely keeping children and youth in their own home, family, tribe, and community whenever possible, which is Safety Outcome 2. While the CFSR review resulted in a 35% performance rating on Safety Outcome 2, Wisconsin's 2015-16 and 2017-18 statewide CQI review resulted in higher performance outcomes of 64% and 67%, respectively. Given that Wisconsin's CQI review is based on a statistically significant statewide sample of 271 cases, it is likely that it is more representative of Wisconsin's performance than the smaller CFSR sample.

DCF recognizes a CFSR *cross-cutting issue* of ongoing safety concerns in child welfare cases. Addressing concerns relative to safety throughout the life of the case can be found in addressing service needs through the safety services program (Strategy 2.1 described below), addressing better articulation and attention to safety and permanency considerations in dispositional orders (Strategy 3.2) and in improvements to the quality of caseworker visits (Strategy 3.3). Addressing service needs for families in the child welfare system, using a best practice approach of providing wraparound service delivery model, on a time-limited basis, to maintain children in their home and prevent removal, whenever possible through an in-home Safety Services (Safety Services). This type of program has been in place in Milwaukee County since 1998, when state administration of the Milwaukee County child welfare system began and began in BOS counties in 2011 on a pilot basis in interested counties, expanding every year since that time, based on funding availability.

Theory of Change

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Children and families identified as unsafe in the child welfare system have specific needs that must be met in order to avoid further engagement in the child welfare system. These needs include identification of and access to services to meet a variety of family needs assure child and family safety and well-being.

ROOT CAUSE: Lack of in-home supports and access to key resources are identified as reasons why families come the child welfare system. These conditions lead to stress and sometimes parent inability to meet family needs that may cause further interactions with the child welfare system including the need to remove children from their homes.

PROJECT: The Safety Services program provides funding to local child welfare agencies to serve families whose children are assessed to be unsafe and at-risk of removal from their home. Funding support is provided for intensive and short-term services as identified in the family's Protective Plan or Safety Analysis and Plan that is required by policy when one or more children are identified to be unsafe in the family home to mitigate the threats to the child(ren)'s safety in order to prevent removal from his or her family home. In addition to identifying and providing services, a robust safety assessment and planning model is used that is recorded through the state's SACWIS system, and embedded in Wisconsin's supervisory and caseworker professional

development and training programs and integrated into Children's Court Improvement initiatives. Currently, 44 of the 72 Wisconsin counties and 1 of the 11 tribes are participating in the Safety Services program and this initiative moves funding the program toward statewide expansion.

MEASURABLE FINAL OUTCOME OR GOAL: Program becomes available statewide and counties report an increase in the number of families that are successful with in-home services and avoid future contact with the child welfare system.

PATHWAY TO CHANGE: Children in families that are identified as unsafe out of the child welfare system are assessed for safety needs and services SO THAT needs and services are identified and provided SO THAT families are able to manage personal and family needs SO THAT their children can remain safely in their home and avoid re-entry to the out-of-home care system SO THAT as this program provides more supports and services across the state through statewide expansion, Wisconsin will see less disruption for families and decrease in out-of-home care placements.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE INTERVENTION: Safety Services is not currently an evidence-based practice but counties that have supported families through Safety Services report that families have access to resources that are preventing further engagement in the child welfare system.

Goal 2, Strategy 1 expands the Safety Services program statewide to ensure that all counties and tribes have access to this important resource. The Governor requested and received funding in the 2019-2021 state biennial budget to support statewide Safety Services expansion.

Permanency Outcome 1

The Wisconsin CFSR results, 33%, and Wisconsin CQI results, 34%, are similar for Permanency Outcome 1 regarding the permanency and stability of children in their living situations. To deepen the understanding of this performance outcome, Wisconsin has undertaken further data analysis regarding the different types of permanency.

Wisconsin Performance on Permanency Measures

Measure	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Federal Performance Target
Legal Permanency for children in OHC < 12 months	40.10%	40.70%	39.10%	40.50%
Legal Permanency for children in OHC 12-23 months	44.30%	43.80%	43.70%	43.60%
Legal Permanency for children in OHC 24+ months	39%	39.90%	41.20%	30.30%

As shown in the table, Wisconsin is performing at the federal permanency timeliness benchmarks for children in OHC for less than 12 months and in OHC for 12-23 months and is significantly outperforming the federal benchmark for children in OHC for 24 months and longer. DCF plans to continue the use of Permanency Roundtables (PRTs) as a tool to promote reunification and other forms of permanency, especially for complex cases. These roundtables were initiated in response to the last CFSR and are a comprehensive approach to addressing a range of permanency needs for children that have resulted in improvements in Wisconsin's permanency rates for children in care more than 24 months.

A Wisconsin team composed of representatives from DCF and the Wisconsin Children's Court Improvement Program, judges, legal partners, counties, and tribes participated in a technical assistance workshop in December of 2018 in Chicago administered by the Capacity Building Center (CBC) for Courts. At that workshop, the CBC trained the Wisconsin team on root cause analysis and the Change Management Process. Under the direction of the CBC, the WI team developed a number of root cause analyses. As discussed at the December workshop, consistent with Wisconsin's commitment to a collaborative, inclusive PIP development process, the Wisconsin team discussed the root-cause analyses developed at the CBC workshop with the stakeholder advisory groups established by DCF to advise on PIP development. Based on the discussion with stakeholders, Wisconsin selected for inclusion in its PIP one of the root cause analyses and action steps developed at the December CBC workshop: Child Safety and Tailored Court Orders Project. Following is a refined version of the preliminary root-cause analysis developed at the December 2018 Capacity Building Center for the Courts technical assistance workshop.

Background on Wisconsin's Process

Prior to disposition, the agency caseworker submits a dispositional court report with recommendations for the court-ordered conditions for return, rules of supervision, and services to be provided to the family. These recommendations are based off case planning with the parents to work towards safe reunification with the child, any completed assessments, and other relevant information. The court orders the conditions for return that each parent must complete as part of the dispositional order. This strategy makes changes to the current process so that the conditions around what is required to support safety, necessary behavior changes and steps to promote timely permanency are: (1) tailored to the meet the needs and services of the individual parents, including those required to enhance the parent's protective capacities and control danger threats in the home, (2) written in a sequence of priority to address the most significant issues, and (3) understood by families, legal parties and accurately articulated in the conditions for return. The new process for the court order and conditions for return will shape the permanency plan that is used for establishing safe and timely permanence that will be monitored by the court in an ongoing basis at permanency reviews/hearings and other post-dispositional proceedings.

Theory of Change

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Reunification, i.e., permanency, is delayed when parents are not successful in completing the conditions for return. The practice of having standard conditions for return for all parents, that are lengthy and not based on safety factors, creates a barrier to the parent's ability to complete the conditions.

ROOT CAUSE: The court report and dispositional order, which contain the conditions for return and rules of supervision, are not tailored, and understandable to parents. Orders are not based on the specific circumstances and behaviors that must occur in order for the child to be returned home safely.

PROJECT: Tailored Dispositional Orders and Conditions for Return Project for timely permanence.

MEASURABLE FINAL OUTCOME OR GOAL: Timelier reunification or another permanence option for children in out-of-home care. (Item 6)

PATHWAY TO CHANGE: Caseworkers utilize the safety plan, which clearly articulates identified threats, areas of protective capacity that must be addressed, including required behavior changes and key services that will help family achieve goals, when developing the case plan and court report with the parents SO THAT conditions for return are clear, measurable, realistic, based on behavior change, and effectively addresses safety SO THAT conditions for return ordered by the court are tailored and understood by the parents and legal partners involved in the case SO THAT parents understand and complete the steps needed to address the most significant issues preventing reunification SO THAT the conditions for return will be updated and integrated into the child's permanency plan SO THAT the parents' efforts and progress are considered and discussed by the court, parents, and attorneys at each subsequent court hearing (including Permanency Hearings, Review Hearings, Extension Hearings, etc.) SO THAT the court and judicial partners work with the parents to understand the next action steps, the timeline for accomplishing these steps, and the consequences if reunification does not occur within the timeframe SO THAT reunification is achieved, or another permanency option is pursued if the parents fail to meet the conditions for return.

INTERVENTION: DCF and CCIP will work with child welfare, court, and legal partners to modify the current process including the court report and conditions for return. To support the modified process guidance and training will be provided to support the child welfare and court systems. The resources, policies, and technical assistance will be piloted in three innovation zones in the state to assess the effectiveness of the project and identify any modifications that may be needed before the project is rolled out statewide.

The Child Safety and Tailored Court Orders Project described above is PIP **Goal 3, Strategy 2.**

MEASURABLE FINAL OUTCOME/GOAL: The final measurable outcome of this strategy is that timelines to permanence will be shorter because families better understand meet goals.
An additional *cross-cutting* issue identified in Wisconsin's CFSR was challenges related to the quality of caseworker visits, particularly assessing safety and quality through the life of the case. DCF has been using the CQI system to identify and more systematically identify how to improve the quality of caseworker visits.

Theory of Change

PROBLEM STATEMENT: An area identified as needing improvement in the CFSR through stakeholder interviews and in case review findings is that workers and families are not engaging in quality contacts consistently.

ROOT CAUSE: Caseworkers are not always aware of the characteristics and goals to achieve when attempting a quality contact due to lack of training and inconsistencies in knowledge and standards around what actually constitutes a quality contact and how to document such a contact.

PROJECT: Use improvement science and rapid-cycle change (e.g., Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycles) to improve the quality of contacts between workers and families. This strategy will build on an existing process led by the Wisconsin CQI Advisory Committee that has already begun testing PDSA cycles in certain counties around the state to improve the quality of visits. These small, rapid-cycle tests have included additional supervision before and after visits, incorporating components of quality visits into the initial training of new child welfare workers, and completing case note reviews to identify any shift in the documentation of quality visits.

MEASURABLE FINAL OUTCOME OR GOAL: Increased percentage of quality contacts as reflected in documentation and child welfare workforce feedback; increased preparedness in child welfare workforce when entering contacts with families; and, increased clarity state-wide around what constitutes a quality contact.

PATHWAY TO CHANGE: Rapid-cycle change projects focused on caseworker visit practice will be implemented SO THAT practices reflect local county needs to improve quality contacts SO THAT counties are able to adapt change projects to meet their specific needs SO THAT child welfare staff gain more knowledge of the characteristics and goals of a quality visit SO THAT workers will feel more prepared going into contacts with children and families SO THAT workers and families will have more clarity around the goals of a contact SO THAT contacts between families will be higher- quality and promote positive family engagement SO THAT families participate fully in addressing the issues resulting in involvement with the child welfare system and therefore experience better outcomes.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE INTERVENTION: Using PDSA cycles as a vehicle for systems-level improvement is an evidence-informed change strategy developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. Their theory and methodology can be found in the book, *The Improvement Guide: A Practical Approach to Understanding Organization Performance* (Norman et al., 1996). Further sources Wisconsin used to develop this strategy include accessing a clearinghouse of information that includes evidence informed and evidence-based strategies developed by the Children's Bureau Capacity Building Center for States, Atif & National Resource Center for Child Protective Services, National Resource Center for Family-Centered and Permanency Planning.

In addition, DCF's caseworker engagement strategy will also address both Permanency 1 and Well-being 1 outcomes through improved engagement resulting in more effective and timely identification and securing of services that address permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families. **Goal 3, Strategy 3** will improve the quality of caseworker visits.

Permanency Outcome 2

The Wisconsin CFSR results, 55%, and Wisconsin CQI results, 56%, are similar for Permanency Outcome 2. Wisconsin has a strong commitment to the goal of Permanency Outcome 2: preserving the continuity of family relationships and connections. *Cross-cutting* themes identified in the CFSR report included a need for additional foster homes and a lack of family engagement, particularly for fathers.

An additional *cross-cutting issue* identified in Wisconsin's CFSR was effective and consistent family engagement, particularly for fathers in the child welfare system. The following root cause analysis was conducted to determine how to most effectively engage families, including fathers and extended family members in case planning, court processes and maintaining connections for children in out-of-home care. Caseworkers understand the importance inclusion of families, however, currently they do not have the tools, resources and knowledge to integrate their knowledge of the importance into actual practice with families to locate, identify, and engage relatives. The Family Find and Engagement Model (FFE) increases the familial connections and the use of relatives for of out-of-home placements, promote permanency, and address the shortage of foster parents[2]. The Family Finding Engagement model, provides caseworkers with explicit tools to use to increase the identification of relatives, access to DCF sponsored resources (State Permanency Consultants and Seneca Searches), and practice with tools to engage with the identified relatives and important adults to integrate the knowledge gained with a specific case throughout the training series. For these reasons, relative connections and placement with family members directly and indirectly improve performance on the items measured in Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2. Currently, 39% of children in out-of-home care in Wisconsin are placed with relatives, which exceeds the national average of 32% (AFCARS data report #25). To promote and achieve this relatively high rate of relative placements DCF has been utilizing Family Find and Engagement (FFE) training.

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Fathers, mothers and extended family are not consistently engaged in case planning, court processes, and maintaining connections for children in out-of-home care. Specifically, mothers were engaged in 67% and 83% of cases in the CFSR and Wisconsin CQI reviews, respectively, and fathers were engaged in 45% and 71% of cases in the CFSR and Wisconsin CQI reviews, respectively. (OSRI outcome 13)

ROOT CAUSE: Lack of knowledge, values and consistent application of family finding and engagement techniques by caseworkers leads to family members and important adults not consistently being informed about or provided the opportunities to remain connected with, be considered placements for, or reviewed as permanent homes for children living in out-of-home care.

PROJECT: Implement statewide the Family Finding and Engagement model.

MEASURABLE FINAL OUTCOME OR GOAL: Increased rates of placements with relative caregivers, increased measures of connections for children in out-of-home care, increased involvement of fathers, mothers and other paternal relatives, and increased rates for permanency for children in out-of-home care.

PATHWAY TO CHANGE: Child welfare staff will have the knowledge and skills to identify, locate, and engage relatives to maintain connections for children in the child welfare system, particularly those in out-of-home care SO THAT child welfare caseworkers better engage relatives in case planning and placement SO THAT more relatives and non-custodial parents are notified and provided an opportunity to build or maintain connections to children

[2] ChildFocus, "Making 'Relative Search' Happen, A Guide to Finding and Involving Relatives at Every Stage of the Child Welfare Process," October 2007 and Generations United, ChildFocus, and ABA Center of Children and the Law, "WikiHow for Kinship Foster Care," http://www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/KinshipCareWikiHow_lowrez.pdf.

who are at high risk of being isolated from family, particularly when they are in out-of-home care SO THAT relatives can provide continued opportunities to engage with child members of their families to avoid permanently disconnecting children from their families SO THAT children experience less trauma when involved in the child welfare system SO THAT more children are placed with relatives, connections between children, family members and important adults and maintained, and more children achieve permanency through reunification or guardianship within their own family system.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE INTERVENTION: Family Finding and Engagement model by Kevin Campbell.

FFE is an evidence-based model that began in Wisconsin as a pilot in six counties in 2014 and is now available in 25 counties. In addition, two tribes have participated in the training. FFE is a holistic approach to family contact and support, while seeking family connections for the child(ren) placed in out-of-home care or to assist the child(ren) to remain in-home. FFE strategies include training child welfare staff to focus on strengthening relationships between siblings and strengthening engagement with fathers and paternal relatives. Data analysis by DCF found a higher, 7%, growth in relative placements in Wisconsin FFE counties compared to 5% growth in non-FFE counties. On a national basis, other outcomes of FFE include a reduced length of stay in foster care, increased placement stability, increased emotional permanence, greater family involvement, increased legal permanence and reduced re-entry into out-of-home care (Making "Relative Search" Happen, Childfocus 2007). Wisconsin will build on this successful approach by expanding Family Find and Engagement statewide as **Goal 3, Strategy 1**, Wisconsin is using funding from its FFY19 Adoptions Incentives Award and FFY19 Kinship Navigator Award to support the statewide expansion of FFE.

Wisconsin will also build on current efforts to more broadly engage relative caregivers. Currently, 39% of children in out-of-home care in Wisconsin are placed with relatives, which exceeds the national average of 32% (AFCARS data report #25). The proportion of children placed with relatives has consistently grown since the Levels of Care initiative from our last PIP when we had 31% of children placed with relatives. With this rise, services and supports for relatives have grown, however coordination and navigation of services and supports has continued to lag. In October 2018, DCF established an advisory group of relative caregivers. Discussions with the new relative caregiver advisory group and research from the Family Connection Discretionary Grants Cross-site evaluation report (James Bell Associates, Inc. 2015) informed our root cause analysis. The root cause identified the unique needs of relative caregivers not being attended to in the coordination and navigation of services and supports for children in their care hampering provision of appropriate services due to the relative's lack of familiarity and experience by relatives with the child welfare and other service systems. With the infusion of the new FFY19 federal Kinship Navigator funding, as **Goal 3, Strategy 5**, DCF will increase support for relative caregivers by developing user-friendly information and referral materials, connecting relatives to services for the children in their care, and supporting relative caregivers through peer support groups and other mechanisms.

Well Being Outcomes 1, 2, and 3

Wisconsin will also work on an identified concern in the CFSR relative to how to better identify the social, emotional and physical needs of children served in their home. This effort will build on Wisconsin's current strategic planning underway to articulate a "home-like" continuum for services that will result in serving more

families in their own homes. The strategic planning aligns with the transformation in child welfare services that is the goal articulated by the Family First Prevention and Services Act. An intensive internal and external process is underway to identify how to best develop a process that better understands and plans for the physical, educational, social and emotional needs of children who are served in their homes. **Goal 3, Strategy 1** will address Well-Being 1, 2 and 3.

Family engagement, particularly in case planning and in court processes, is also a key component of Well Being Outcome 1 and a *cross-cutting* theme cited in the federal report as needing improvement.

Theory of Change

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Birth mothers and birth fathers are not consistently engaged in case planning and court processes leading to inadequate guidance and support services resulting in children not being able to remain safely in the home or are not reunified after being placed out- of-home.

ROOT CAUSE: National research and Wisconsin stakeholder feedback from birth parents identified that birth parents involved in the child welfare system often are distrustful of and intimidated by the child welfare system and not fully aware of the steps in the child welfare process and the expectations and opportunities for participation for them.[3] Stakeholder feedback noted inconsistency in the level of birth parent involvement in case planning and the overall CPS process as well as parent challenges navigating and managing the required activities and mandates, and understanding the legal processes, fees, and language.

PROJECT: Develop and implement a Wisconsin family voice model.

MEASURABLE FINAL OUTCOME OR GOAL: Higher rates of reunification and lower rates of re-entry into the child welfare system

PATHWAY TO CHANGE: Birth parents entering the child welfare system will be provided a trained peer mentor, who is a parent with lived experience of the child welfare system SO THAT a trusting relationship is established with a birth parent SO THAT they become more knowledgeable about and comfortable with the expectations and opportunities for effective involvement in their child's child welfare case and have access to a support person to help navigate the child welfare process at each step SO THAT birth parents actively and effectively participate in case planning and court processes SO THAT appropriate services and timelines are established to address parents' needs SO THAT parents engage in services and court reviews and develop the skills and make the changes needed to provide a safe and stable home for their children SO THAT their children remain safely at home or are more likely to be reunified if they are in out- of-home care and less likely to re-enter the child welfare system.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE INTERVENTION: The Iowa Parent Partners Model is an evidence-based Parent Voice model
Based on this root cause analysis, Wisconsin is including the development and implementation of a Wisconsin

[3] Leake, Robin: Longworth-Reed, Laricia; Williams, Natalie; and Potter, Cathryn, "Exploring the Benefits of a Parent Partner Mentoring Program in Child Welfare," *Journal of Family Strengths:* Vol. 12: Issue 1, Article 6

family voice model as a PIP strategy. Elevating and incorporating parent and youth voice will strengthen parent, including father, and youth engagement in assessing their needs, one of the key measures in Well-Being Outcome 1. Parent voice has been incorporated in other child and family serving systems in Wisconsin, including the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board, the Office of Children's Mental Health, and the Department of Health Services Children with Special Health Care Needs program. These existing family voice initiatives in other systems have successfully engaged families in systems-change work both at the local and state levels. Key learnings from their efforts are:

- Engagement is achieved through critical relationship building to recruit families;
- To best engage birth families, comprehensive supports and coaching are needed to consistently engage them to engage for systems change work, and
- It is critical to embark on agency/system culture change to create necessary and meaningful space for families to be at the decision-making table.

In addition to program experience Wisconsin has researched the Iowa Parent Partners model through an on-site visit to Iowa by a team of judges and court staff and a team from DCF, review of program material, and discussions with Iowa program staff and program participants. Wisconsin intends to use the Iowa program as the starting point for development of the Wisconsin program because the Iowa program is evidence-based. Specifically, an evaluation of the Iowa program by a team of researchers at the University of Nebraska found that children of families who participated. It was found that in the Parent Partner program returned home at a higher rate and were less likely to re-enter the CPS system within 12 months of reunification[4]. In addition, the model was found to positively impact the relationship between the child welfare system and the families it served.[5]

As **Goal 3, Strategy 4** Wisconsin will develop and implement a family voice model that more systematically elevates and incorporates parent, including father, and youth voice in their own case planning and in the development of services, policies, and processes to meet parent and child needs more effectively. Wisconsin will use a portion of its annual federal CAPTA allocation to support this strategy.

Wisconsin will also work on an identified concern in the CFSR relative to how to identify needs and services through assessments. This effort will build on Wisconsin's current strategic planning underway to articulate a "home-like" continuum for services that will result in serving more families in their own homes, with relatives or in foster families. The strategic planning aligns with the transformation in child welfare services that is the goal articulated by the Family First Prevention and Services Act. An intensive internal and external process is underway to identify how to best develop a process that better understands and plans for the physical educational, social and emotional needs of children who are served in their homes. **Goal 3, Strategy 1** will address Well-Being 1, 2 and 3.

[4] Chambers, J. & Cooper, M., "Iowa Parent Partner Program Report on Child and Family Outcomes." Nebraska Center on Children, Families, and the Law, 2017.

[5] Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center, "Partnering with Parents for Systems Change, The Iowa Parent Partner Approach: Perspectives from Families and Parents," 2013

Systemic Factors

Wisconsin has prioritized focusing on the following systemic factors which were found not in substantial conformity:

- *Case Review-Periodic Review*: See Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2 above (**Goal 3, Strategy 2).** DCF and CCIP will address the CFSR finding related to timeliness. DCF will develop a report to measure the timeliness of six-month Permanency Reviews as well as provide training to improve the quality of Permanency Hearings using an administrative review panel (**Goal 3, strategy 6)**
- *Quality Assurance System*: **Goal 3, Strategy 3** utilizes ongoing work of the CQI system to improve the quality of caseworker visits to address a CFSR *cross-cutting issue* and an overall theme of continuous quality improvement. In addition, more systematic steps that tie back to the CQI system are identified in **Goal 3, Strategy 4**, Parents Supporting Parents. The CQI project is guided by an advisory committee that provides a foundation of collaboration within and across state agencies, county and tribal child welfare agencies, and other key stakeholders such as the Children's Court improvement Program and the University System. Guided by the leadership of the CQI Advisory Committee, local improvement projects that work with counties and tribes to identify and pilot approaches that help improve child welfare practice are overseen and supported. This will be continued through the caseworker engagement strategy. The CQI Advisory Committee will continue to tap local leaders to further engage local child welfare agency participation in the development and implementation of follow up activities based on the state's case review and relevant administrative data to ensure that a feedback loop to individual counties is supported regarding findings in reviews of cases from their local child welfare agency.
- *Service Array* - access to services to meet family needs was identified as a cross-cutting issue in Wisconsin's CFSR. Areas of Wisconsin's PIP that address service array are: **Goal 2, Strategy 1**, the Safety Services Program, and **Goal 3, Strategy 4** Parents Supporting Parents focus on more effective and more timely identification of needs and connection to services to meet family needs. Goal 4, Strategy 1 will also result
- *Training and Management Information System*- **Goal 5, Strategy 1** to strengthen documentation and tracking of worker training through training and information system improvements is focused on addressing issues raised in Wisconsin's final report relative documentation of training requirements in the state's Training system including improvements to the state eWiSACWIS system.

DCF Goals and Strategies

Below are the Goals and Strategies Wisconsin will pursue for its Program Improvement Plan. Please note that since Wisconsin is now submitting revisions to the PIP for the third time, activities that have already taken place are shaded in green if they are complete and shaded in yellow if the activities are underway with respect to the original goals and strategies. Further you will note that some of the timelines have been moved up in the quarters for proposed completion dates. The CFSR item(s) that are addressed by each strategy are listed after the strategy. For reference, Appendix C provides a list of the CFSR items.

Goal 1: Prevent maltreatment and unnecessary placements by improving child and family safety. (Safety Outcome 1)

Strategy 1.1: Enhance use of technology to promote timely initiation of investigations.

DCF will enhance dashboards based on input from internal and external stakeholders and continue quarterly reviews of administrative data with follow up discussions and technical assistance, as appropriate, with counties performing outside of expectations.

Key Activity		Proposed Completion Date
1.1.1	Continue DCF practice of reviewing on a quarterly basis administrative data on initiation of investigations and have DCF regional staff follow up with counties performing outside of expectations.	Q1
1.1.2	Track and report on performance related to timely initiation.	Q1-Q8

Goal 2: Improve the availability of safety services for children and families. (Safety Outcome 2, Service Array)

Strategy 2.1: Improved safety supports for children being served in the home.

DCF will make the Safety Services program available statewide: expanding the program from the current set of 44 local child welfare agencies - including the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services - to the remaining counties in the balance of the state and to all tribes in the state. Under the IHSS program, funding is provided to local child welfare agencies to strategically infuse additional intensive, time-limited case management and direct services - formal and informal - to the child and his/her family to ensure child safety while serving the child(ren) in their home with their family.

	Key Activity	Proposed Completion Date
2.1.1	Support implementation of the in-home Safety Services program funding to the newly participating county and tribal child welfare agencies. as part of the 2020 Annual State/County and State/Tribal contracts.	Q1
2.1.2	• Gather information with and from key stakeholders to assist DCF in the following key deliverables: • Assessing implementation efforts and fidelity to program requirements; • Identifying resource needs, including training and professional development needs, as well as other factors affecting implementation, fidelity, and funding/service implications; and • Developing a Safety Services evaluation plan to better understand program effectiveness and case practice fidelity and service provision factors that affect program outcomes.	Q2-Q4
2.1.3	Incorporate evaluation results into ongoing implementation and contracts associated with the in-home Safety Services program funding.	Q5-Q8

Goal 3: Improve the quality of and availability of permanency services by engaging Children and Families in more meaningful ways. (Permanency 1 and 2, Case Review, Quality Assurance and Foster and Adoptive Recruitment)

Strategy 3.1: Expand Family Find and Engagement (FFE) statewide.

DCF will expand the research based FFE initiative statewide to all local child welfare agencies to increase and strengthen family connections, including strengthening relationships between siblings and strengthening engagement with fathers and paternal relatives. Subject to availability of staff and fiscal resources, DCF will offer FFE training to OHC providers in the second year of the PIP. DCF has established a statewide training schedule, to be held from March-December 2019, for statewide rollout of FFE.

	Key Activity	Proposed Completion Date
3.1.1	• Determine manner for statewide expansion of Family Find and Engagement: • Begin planning for regional trainings, including local child welfare agency composition of each region, taking into account counties already on the waitlist for FFE • Consult with National Institute for Permanent Family Connectedness (NIPFC) to develop trainer schedules • Coordinate and host kick-off meeting for all local child welfare agency directors and supervisors • Partner with Professional Development System (PDS) to enroll agency participants • Above activities completed	QI
3.1.2	Understand and identify systematic barriers to FFE and work with counties to put supports in place and remove barriers.	Q1-Q4
3.1.3	Create and publish Permanency Tools online training, which includes all FFE Tools. Activity completed.	Q1
3.1.4	Incorporate FFE principles in caseworker pre-service trainings: Placement, Permanency, and Ongoing Services. Activity completed.	Q1
3.1.5	Provide full FFE training statewide through Professional Development System (PDS) and Seneca Center.	Q1-Q4
3.1.6	Enhance eWiSACWIS documentation capacity of relative connections and include a genogram. Activity in process.	Q1
3.1.7	Create modified FFE Training for future and ongoing coaching and mentoring of staff, based on the original FFE training (administered Q2-Q4). This training will support FFE efforts of agency staff into the future once the online resources within pre-service trainings and the Permanency Tools online training have been developed and incorporated into worker pre-service and Foundation courses. Activity in process.	Q1
3.1.8	Partner with the Professional Development System to refine and update training for new hires and staff.	Q4 – Q8
3.1.9	DCF will review OSRI data and over time placement data to determine if family engagement is improving.	Q4 – Q8

Strategy 3.2: Implement Tailored Dispositional Orders Project

DCF and CCIP will implement a Tailored Dispositional Order and Conditions for Return Project that was developed at the Capacity Building Center for Courts PIP Strategies Workshop in Chicago. DCF and CCIP will implement a Tailored Dispositional Order and Conditions for Return Project, which will be piloted in three counties before implementing it statewide. As articulated in the theory of change, this strategy promotes the shared responsibility of the parents, child welfare agency, court, and legal partners in achieving timely reunification for the child and makes changes to the current process by tailoring the conditions for return to the child's safety and identifies the parent's behavior changes that are needed to achieve timely permanence.

Key Activities		Quarters
3.2.1	DCF and CCIP will convene an internal workgroup of subject-matter experts to guide the project.	Q1
3.2.2	Identify examples of well-written conditions for return from counties who have developed tailored and effective dispositional orders, as well as from national organizations.	Q1
3.2.3	CCIP and DCF will Identify 3 innovation zones where the project will take place in consultation with judicial and child welfare stakeholders.	Q1-2
3.2.4	DCF and CCIP will create resources and supports for effectively using tailored conditions for return and disposition orders, including judicial bench cards, sample conditions for return, and modified/supplements to the court report, permanency plan and dispositional order templates.	Q2-Q3
3.2.5	DCF and CCIP will develop multi-disciplinary training curriculum for child welfare workers, attorneys, and judicial officers in each innovation zone. The multi-disciplinary training will include child safety decision-making, examples of tailored conditions for return that address enhancing the parent's protective capacities and controlling danger threats in the home, and drafting conditions for return in a sequence of priority so parents understand the most significant issues that must be addressed prior to reunification.	Q2-Q3
3.2.6	Implement the Tailored Court Orders Project in three innovation zones by providing the training and resource from activities 1.2.3 and 1.2.4, along with a framework and expectations for implementation:	Q4-Q6
3.2.7	Mid-Implementation Evaluation & Feedback to Innovation Zones: CCIP and DCF will monitor the project's implementation by evaluating whether there has been a shift in the county's culture and practice. The evaluation process will include court file review, court observation, meetings with stakeholders, and/or reviewing eWiSACWIS documents. The innovation zone will be provided with a written report regarding their current progress and suggestions for the remainder of the duration of the project.	Q5-Q6
3.2.8	DCF and CCIP will request feedback from stakeholder groups regarding status and implementation updates, including the resources and training curriculum mentioned above, i.e., Judicial Workgroup on Focused and Effective Court Orders, the Wisconsin Commission on Children and the Courts, and the Wisconsin Judicial Committee on Child Welfare.	Q2-Q6

	Key Activities	Quarters
3.2.9	CCIP and DCF will compile data and evaluate county and court practices in the three innovation zones using administrative data, surveys, focus groups, court observations and/or file review to measure the effectiveness of the project.	Q7
3.2.10	Based on the evaluation results and feedback from the stakeholder groups, DCF and CCIP will determine if changes are needed to key policies, processes, resources, or forms that support the desired changes.	Q7-Q8
3.2.11	DCF and CCIP will develop a plan to roll out the project statewide, which will include: • Release of new/modified circuit court forms, Permanency Plan, and Court Report templates on websites and internal case management systems (e.g., eWiSACWIS and CCAP). • Multi-disciplinary district/regional/statewide training. • Publishing online training supports and resources.	Q8

Strategy 3.3: Improve the quality of caseworker engagement with children and families.

DCF will incorporate Capacity Center for States materials on quality contact to create a training for caseworkers and utilize data from our child welfare continuous quality improvement (CQI) program, including results case reviews, to develop and integrate "Plan, Do, Study, Act" models or PDSA's into local agency practice to improve caseworker engagement with children and parents.

	Key Activity	Proposed Completion Date

3.3.1	• Create a Quality Engagement PDSA (plan, do, study act) toolbox for agency staff to choose from to improve caseworker engagement.
	• The PDSA toolbox will consist of the following:
	  • How to conduct a PDSA
	  • Example PDSA's that have shown to be effective from our CQI Committee members
	  • Technical assistance from DSP and WCWPDS in quality improvement PDSA's
		Q1

3.3.2	Create an on-line training with the WCWPDS using materials from the Capacity Center for States, Quality Contacts.	Q3
3.3.3	• Implement Quality Engagement PDSA innovation zones with agency partners chosen through self-selection, semi-annual results of the OSRI, and other performance measures targeting areas for outcome improvement. • Results from the PDSA innovation zones will be shared quarterly with the Child Welfare CQI Committee for PDSA toolbox/training adjustments or enhancements.	Q1 – Q4
3.3.4	Utilize the Child Welfare CQI Advisory Committee to develop and implement a feedback loop with and between DCF and local child welfare agencies. The purpose of this feedback local will be to share learnings about quality of caseworker engagement with local child welfare agencies and to continue to inform system improvements related to quality contacts between local child welfare agency professionals and the children, parents and families they serve.	Q5 - Q8

Strategy 3.4: Establish a Wisconsin Family Voice Model for Wisconsin's child welfare system.

Based on successful programs in other child and family serving systems in Wisconsin and in other states, Wisconsin will develop and implement a family voice program (Parents Supporting Parents: A Wisconsin Parent Partner Model) for Wisconsin's child welfare system that incorporates parent voice in case practice and the development of services, policies and, processes to meet parent and child needs more effectively and strengthen capacity of families to care for their children. Parent Partner models help families navigate the child welfare system in a variety of ways, including answering questions about the child protection and court process. DCF has completed its preliminary research of existing models. The Iowa Parent Partner model has been identified as an effective model for Wisconsin, based on existing evidence of the model's success within a child welfare system. For participating families, this model was found to increase the percentage of children who returned home and reduce rates of re-entry into the child welfare system (Chambers & Cooper, 2017). In addition, the model was found to positively impact the relationship between the child welfare system and the families it served (MCWIC, 2013). While the model will not be fully implemented until Quarter 7, innovation zones will be onboarded beginning in Quarter 3, which will enable cultural shifts in agency practice to incorporate family voice and positively impact relationships between the child welfare system and the families it serves in advance of full implementation. The first five activities specified for this strategy are planning activities that are necessary to implement the specific, pre-identified action step of establishing a Wisconsin Family Voice Model. As such, these steps are part of Phase IV of the Capacity Building Center Change Management Process, i.e., "Plan, Prepare, and Implement" and is not a "plan to plan."

Key Activity		Proposed Completion Date
3.4.1	Develop and distribute application materials to local child welfare agencies to participate in implementation planning, initial training and program implementation. Review applications in a systematic manner, evaluating for agency readiness. Finalize award and notify agencies.	Q1
3.4.2	Provide orientation about project to parent counsel, judicial and legal stakeholders and child welfare professionals at the bi-annual Conference on Child Welfare and the Courts.	Q1
3.4.3	Start-up phase begins with the selected local child welfare agencies ("Innovation Zones") to participate in the Wisconsin family voice program: Parents Supporting Parents; Start-up phase is pre-implementation to allow for staff recruitment and training as well as program development, outreach, and marketing.	Q1
3.4.4	Contracts developed, completed and routed to awarded agencies.	Q1
3.4.5	Form an implementation planning team made up of Innovation Zones to plan for Wisconsin's Parents Supporting Parents. This includes a direct service, family engagement component, as well as pathways to leadership at the local and state levels; and a timeline for final development, startup, and implementation.	Q1
3.4.6	Determine data collection goals and create program evaluation plan.	Q3
3.4.7	Finalize training curriculum.	Q3
3.4.8	Training of Wisconsin's Parents Supporting Parents curriculum begins for Innovation Zone workers and Family Well-Being Specialists (parent partners)	Q3
3.4.9	Implementation of direct service component of model, as Family Well-Being Specialists begin serving families under the Wisconsin Parents Supporting Parents program in awarded agencies.	Q4 - Q8
3.4.10	Develop an advisory group of stakeholders and subject matter experts to develop plans for integration of family voice into statewide systems and articulate a feedback loop to parents, families, children and youth and organizations engaged in system change. Participants include Innovation Zones, parent attorneys, other relevant state and county-level system representatives, and DCF. Engage the advisory group to gather feedback and input around: • Best practices and challenges to consider when including the voice of lived experience. • Opportunities and needs within the child welfare system, where family voice leadership and inclusion will exist and have impact. • How to create relationships along a 'pathway to leadership' for parents to be meaningfully involved in policy and programming decisions at the local and state level of the child welfare system. • Logistical challenges to work through when planning for family voice leadership and inclusion in the child welfare system. • Local level inclusion of parent's lived experience. • State level inclusion of parent's lived experience.	Q4 - Q8

Strategy 3.5: Provide more robust support for relative caregivers.

Wisconsin will increase support for relative caregivers by establishing a more robust information and referral system for relative caregivers with the aim of better connecting relatives to services and strengthening supports for relative caregivers through peer support and other mechanisms. (Items 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11)

Key Activity		Proposed Completion Date
3.5.1	Develop and issue application materials to relative caregivers to develop a Relative Caregiver Workgroup to advise development of the Wisconsin Kinship Navigator Program. Activity completed.	Q1
3.5.2	Conduct regular meetings with Relative Caregiver Workgroup established in fall 2018 and State Strategy Team to better understand the needs of relative caregivers and the services and resources available to meet those needs.	Ongoing
3.5.3	Analyze available evidence-based practices that could be utilized as supports for relative caregivers in Wisconsin to enhance the Kinship Navigator resources available in Wisconsin. Based on results of analysis, practices would be continued or adjusted. Activity completed.	Q1
3.5.4	Award applications and allocate funding to agencies to support implementation of new relative caregiver support groups, and to maintain already established support groups throughout the state. Activity completed.	Q1
3.5.5	Use information gathered in 3.5.2 to develop and disseminate at least three 1-2 age tip sheets that focus on questions and issues relative caregivers often face; these tip sheets may include information specific to: • Accessing health care for children, • Educational advocacy, and • Parenting children with severe behaviors.	Q2
3.5.6	Contract to develop two web-based curricula, which are available on an ongoing basis: • For relative caregivers, accessing supports and services, and • For caseworkers, supporting the needs of relative caregivers.	Q2
3.5.7	Use information gathered in 3.5.2 and 3.5.3 to develop and distribute a print-based guide for relative caregivers, outlining processes to obtain various services, such as Medicaid, childcare assistance, educational assistance, etc.	Q1
3.5.8	Use information gathered in 3.5.2 and 3.5.3 to develop a web-based portal that will be available to relative caregivers, outlining processes to obtain various services such as Medicaid, childcare assistance, educational assistance, etc.	Q1

Strategy 3.6: Assess the timeliness of six-month Permanency Reviews and improve the quality of administrative review panels conducting Permanency Reviews.

DCF will enhance the use of reporting and dashboard monitoring to include information on the timeliness of Permanency Plans and Permanency Reviews. Data will be used for follow-up discussions and technical assistance, as appropriate, with counties performing outside of expectations.

Key Activity		Proposed Completion Date
3.6.1	Assess current data and reporting process to determine how to update current reports so that information on timeliness of the 60-day Permanency Plan and 6-month Permanency Review/Hearing are available on a regular basis statewide and by county.	Q1-Q2
3.6.2	Design new reporting mechanism to monitor 60-day Permanency Plan and 6-month Permanency Review/Hearing. Collect feedback from stakeholders regarding design and revise as necessary.	Q3-Q4
3.6.3	Finalize and publish reporting mechanism.	Q5
3.6.4	Create an on-line training with WCPDS for Administrative Review panel members to ensure the consistency of the panel member role.	Q5
3.6.5	Create technical materials for counties or agencies to use with Administrative Review panel members for the periodic reviews of the permanency plan.	Q5
3.6.6	Continue DCF practice of reviewing, on a quarterly basis, administrative data on timeliness of reviews and have DCF regional staff follow up with counties performing outside of expectations.	Q5 -Q8

Goal 4: Serve More Children in Their Homes or Home-Like Settings By Addressing The Range Of Emotional, Physical, Educational And Social Needs Of Children And Youth. (Well-Being 1, 2 And 3)

Strategy 4.1: Strengthen Assessment And Service Planning Practices To Better Serve The Needs Of Children And Families So That They Can Be Served Safely In Their Homes.

A DCF strategic objective in alignment with goals established for implementation of Family First in October 2021 is improve our understanding and approach to better address the social, emotional, physical and mental health needs of children who are served in their homes. A workgroup formed to articulate DCF's vision and approach to effectively serving children in their home will help inform DCF about the range of practices that best identify, and address needs of children and youth served in their family homes.

	Key Activity	Proposed Completion Date
4.1.1	DCF workgroup will analyze the range of characteristics and service needs to better address the physical, social and emotional needs of the population of children that are or could be served in their homes.	Q1-Q2
4.1.2	DCF will request and consider research from the Capacity Building Center for the States, Casey Family Programs and other research entities about best practices related to assessment and planning practices.	Q1
4.1.3	Based on the information gathered, DCF will identify and assess feasibility of different approaches to strengthen assessment and service planning practices to prevent a child or youth's removal from their family home.	Q3-Q4
4.1.4	DCF will share information gathered in 4.1.3 and 4.1.2 with key stakeholders to gather feedback and prioritize those approaches that are considered most optimal to improve current assessment and service planning practices.	Q5
4.1.5	DCF will develop an implementation plan related to assessment and service planning approaches as identified in 4.1.4.	Q6
4.1.6	DCF will begin implementation of the plan developed in 4.1.5.	Q7
4.1.7	DCF will begin to monitor impact of the plan's implementation as initiated per 4.1.6, including the provision and solicitation of feedback from local child welfare agencies, Tribes and other key stakeholder groups.	Q8

Goal 5: Strengthen Documentation and Tracking of Worker Training Through Training and Information System Improvements. (Training and Management Information Systemic Factors).

Strategy 5.1: Assure Child Welfare Staff Are Prepared Through Improved Training Monitoring System

DCF will improve the current monitoring system for worker training through improvements to the Professional Development System (PDS) and the state's eWiSACWIS to assure the system is documenting required initial and ongoing training and that workers are completing training within the required timeframes.

	Key Activity	Proposed Completion Date
5.1.1	DCF will modify information system to track data on worker training more accurately to assure that workers are completing their required training under DCF Rule 43 for pre-service and foundation training. This information will be tracked via the PDS system and that system will monitor whether worker trainings are consistent with DCF 43 rule requirements including primary and secondary required training.	Q1
5.1.2	Compliance will be reviewed and discussed at quarterly Training Steering Committee meetings with stakeholders.	Q1, Ongoing Monitoring
5.1.3	In addition to technical assistance in tracking compliance, PDS is working with DCF and child welfare agencies to assure that counties and child welfare agencies are familiar with and adhering to new and evolving training requirements.	Q1
5.1.4	Enhance the interface between eWiSACWIS and PDS so that nightly data transfers occur through a more secure interface.	Q1
5.1.5	Develop and implement a process and protocol for agencies to enter training not received through PDS into the PDS Information system.	Q4

[The PIP measurement plan and related documents have been deleted in their entirety at the request of the Children's Bureau.]