pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

2023 Annual Progress and Services Report

- **Title IV-B Subparts 1 and 2**
- **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act**
- **Chafee Foster Care Independence Program**
- **Education and Training Voucher**

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2023 APSR Executive Summary

Accomplishments and Challenges

Since the submission of the 2022 Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) in June of 2021, Pennsylvania has continued work towards achieving the goals set forth in the five-year Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP). These efforts have led to notable progress in key areas which will be highlighted in further detail throughout the 2023 APSR. Some of these accomplishments include:

- Implementation of changes to the Child Welfare Information System (CWIS) to promote collection of data regarding substance exposed infants and Plans of Safe Care;
- Issuance of grants to counties to continue support of implementation of Plans of Safe Care;
- Continued Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) implementation, which includes:
    - Submission of Pennsylvania's Five-Year Prevention Plan;
    - Statewide launching of the Family First Title IV-E Prevention Services Program on October 1, 2021;
    - Launching of the Family First Learning Collaboratives;
    - Convening the Building Strong Communities and Healthy Families workgroup;
    - Development of the Family First Implementation Team (FFIT) to provide in-depth and ongoing support to county children and youth agencies (CCYAs)
- Implementation of virtual CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews;
- Drafting of the proposed Pennsylvania Universal Assessment Tool (UAT);
- Achieved the needed benchmarks for progress on nearly all federal CFSR items as required as part of CFSR PIP implementation and monitoring;
- Implementation of Phase IV of the Family Engagement Initiative; and
- Launching of the revised supervisory training series, Foundations of Supervision.

Pennsylvania's current achievements, as well as challenges experienced in successfully implementing the five-year CFSP are best understood in context, taking into consideration factors that have impacted the operations of the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF), the 67 CCYAs and the child welfare system at large since the initial submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP. One of these factors highlighted throughout the 2022 APSR included the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The impact of COVID-19 on staffing at all levels of the child welfare system was a challenge that has contributed to delays in progress across several efforts outlined in the 2020-2024 CFSP.

Despite the broad availability of COVID vaccines and decreasing rates of positive cases in 2021 and 2022, both CCYAs and providers have continued to struggle with recruitment and retention of staff to a much greater degree than prior to and during the pandemic. During the course of the last reporting period, the major challenge facing the child welfare system in Pennsylvania shifted from pandemic response to workforce issues, with several counties experiencing unprecedented vacancy rates within their CCYAs and among their contracted providers. A survey conducted in February 2022 by the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators (PCYA) found that, of the 51 counties who responded, 17 counties (approximately 33%) reported current vacancy rates of 30% or more. On the provider front, a survey conducted by the Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services (PCCYFS) yielded responses from 51 of the 62 provider members. Seventy-five percent of the providers who responded indicated they had multiple vacant positions. At least 25% of the providers surveyed reported that they had more than 30 vacant full-time equivalent direct care positions and more than 80% of the providers indicated they were unable to keep up with their hiring needs for both full-time and part-time staff.[1] OCYF and system partner efforts to address these workforce challenges are outlined later in this report under *Implementation Supports Objective 1.2.*

Another key challenge that has continued to emerge as a priority involves finding appropriate placements for children and youth with complex behavioral health care needs. CCYAs have reported difficulties in finding placements that have the capacity to serve children and youth who are experiencing a constellation of different behavioral health issues that require an intense level of care to ensure child safety and appropriate treatment delivery. OCYF, along with partners at the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), have distributed an in-depth survey to CCYAs and behavioral health managed care organizations to better assess the service needs of local communities in serving this population and to identify any barriers to service delivery. Further information about OCYF and system partner efforts to strengthen services to children and youth with complex behavioral health needs is discussed later in this report under *Well-Being Objective 1.3.*

Key Pennsylvania Priorities

In addition to addressing the challenges previously discussed, there are several additional core areas of focus where OCYF has committed to partnering with stakeholders to help improve the safety, permanency and well-being of children and families across Pennsylvania. While these priority areas are referenced throughout the 2023 APSR, a high-level summary is provided below.

Strengthening Prevention Efforts Through Family First

Family First represents an unprecedented opportunity for states to access federal funding to help enhance the array of community-based prevention services available to

[1] https://pccyfs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Workforce-Shortage-Final-11.17.21.pdf

strengthen and preserve families and prevent placement of children in out-of-home care. Specifically, Family First will allow Pennsylvania to claim federal reimbursement for approved evidence-based prevention programs (EBP) provided to pregnant and parenting youths in foster care and children and youth living at home who are considered at significant risk of entering foster care.

OCYF worked with stakeholders to establish the following vision for Family First and prevention in Pennsylvania:

- We strengthen community-based programs and evidence-based services, so they are trauma-informed, healing-centered, culturally relevant, and responsive to unique child and family strengths and needs. High quality services grow in communities that support families impacted by the effects of stress and behavioral health conditions and address cross-generational trauma.
- We encourage the use of evidence-based services that prevent child abuse and neglect through meaningful family engagement practices and strengths-based teaming that secure positive outcomes for the whole family.
- We value engaging and empowering children, youth, families, system partners, and communities to aid in strengthening the child welfare system while using data to drive decisions and measure success.
- We work to ensure prevention services are accessible to **all** families.
- We ensure basic needs such as food, healthcare, education, and shelter are met by collaborating with other government agencies, private community-based organizations, local leadership, and the court system.
- We prioritize and support safe kinship care when children are unable to safely remain in their primary home. We ensure that if a higher level of care is required, it is safe, trauma-informed, and focused on children safely returning home and attaining permanency and positive outcomes for the whole family.
- We promote and support the child welfare system's values of honesty, cultural awareness and responsiveness, teaming, organizational excellence, respect, and most importantly, believing in children, youth, and families.

OCYF submitted a list of proposed evidence-based programs to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in August 2021 as part of the state's Title IV-E Prevention Plan with the goal of obtaining approval to claim for federal reimbursement starting October 1, 2021. Pennsylvania expects to implement and claim for eight EBPs in the first year of implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Program, with the option to continue to add EBPs at any time as programs are added to the federal Clearinghouse and state and local capacity for effective EBP implementation and monitoring continues to grow. OCYF has been working with partners such as the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) and the Penn State Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Support (EPIS) Center to evaluate statewide research and monitoring capacity and build a sustainable infrastructure that will allow counties to continue to implement additional EBPs successfully over time. A copy of the updated Pennsylvania's Five Year Prevention Plan resubmitted to ACF in April 2022 is available online.

During the reporting period, two groups focused on stakeholder engagement in moving Pennsylvania towards greater prevention efforts were convened and continue to meet. These two groups include the following:

- Family First Learning Collaborative: The purpose of the Learning Collaborative is to create a forum for sharing information, innovations and ideas related to family support and prevention strategies supported by Family First. The Learning Collaborative seeks to highlight and share county and provider accomplishments and build capacity to address challenges. The collaborative is also a setting where counties and providers can have questions answered related to their planning, development and implementation of projects emerging from the Family First Five-Year Prevention Plan, including the opportunity to seek clarification related to regulatory requirements and compliance.

  The Learning Collaborative is open to interested participants from the county and provider agencies and consistency in attendance is strongly encouraged since it is based on a peer education and support model. This forum is facilitated by Paul DiLorenzo, a consultant to OCYF, and Jennie Pettet, Bureau Director for the Bureau of Child and Family Services. Meetings are held virtually monthly for a 60-minute period and are be recorded for use by others. A target topic is selected for every meeting that can be covered in the first 30 minutes and then the remaining 30 minutes are used as an open forum for questions and mini presentations by counties seeking information or sharing accomplishments, challenges, etc.

- Building Strong Communities and Healthy Families Workgroup: The purpose of the Building Strong Communities and Healthy Families Workgroup is to provide input, ideas and a strategic direction to the planning, development and implementation of projects and prevention services presented in Pennsylvania's Five-Year Prevention Plan. The workgroup members selected from across the child welfare system are expected to serve as ambassadors for Pennsylvania's implementation effort and as expert advisors to the process of enhancing prevention services and engaging families at the local level. The workgroup is intended to collectively provide guidance, direction and support to county and community stakeholders who are implementing family support and prevention programming. The workgroup is to advise OCYF on the performance evaluation for the proposed Innovation Zone projects, helping to review and monitor outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of the Innovation Zones in relation to statewide goals. The first convening of the Building Strong Communities and Healthy Families Workgroup occurred in January 2022, with the group meeting for 90 minutes every other month. The workgroup is facilitated by consultant, Paul DiLorenzo and OCYF Deputy Secretary, Jon Rubin.

Further information about Pennsylvania's efforts related to prevention services through Family First is outlined later in this report under *Safety Objective 2.1*.

Through Family First, OCYF has also looked to improve the quality of services to children served in congregate care settings through the implementation of certifications for specialized settings. Congregate care facilities that meet criteria for having advanced trauma-informed care practices, specific youth/resident ratios, enhanced physical site safety for residents, and are willing to maintain a high level of staff competence through trainings may voluntarily apply to become certified as specialized settings. Further information about Pennsylvania's efforts related to specialized settings is outlined later in this report under *Permanency Objective 2.1*.

Improving Oversight of Child Residential Facilities

OCYF is currently engaged in multiple efforts to enhance the oversight of child residential facilities. One of these critical efforts involves identifying opportunities to strengthen the regulations governing child residential facilities. To that end, the current regulatory chapter found at 55 Pa Code 3800 is being rewritten under multiple different regulatory chapters based on the type of residential setting. Draft regulation development started in 2020 and several stakeholder feedback sessions were conducted throughout 2019. It is anticipated that the regulations will be issued as proposed rulemaking in late 2022 or early 2023.

The proposed chapters that have been drafted by OCYF and submitted to the next level of review at the time of the writing of this report include:

- Chapter 3802 – Child Residential Facilities
- Chapter 3830 – Secure Child Residential and Secure Detention Facilities for Youth
- Chapter 3840 – Independent Living Residences for Youth

As noted in the 2022 APSR, OCYF has been working to improve processes for licensing facilities and enhancing the quality of investigations into complaints or allegations of abuse. Examples of achievements that have already occurred include the release the Regulatory Compliance Guide for child residential facilities and updating of the licensing checklists to promote more comprehensive annual licensing inspections of facilities. During the course of the reporting period, OCYF continued to progress in process improvements by developing and piloting a protocol for OCYF to conduct high level monitoring of 3800 facilities and facilitating opportunities for OCYF Regional Office staff to receive forensic interview training. Currently, OCYF is also partnering with the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) to create a simulation training that can be used to help better prepare licensing staff in conducting quality inspections of child residential facilities.

OCYF has also worked very closely with providers to offer further education around reporting requirements for children served in residential care facilities and to

ensure the safety of all children in residential placement settings when an allegation of suspected child abuse is made against a staff member. A bulletin providing guidance on plans of supervision was issued in January 2021 and provides structure and guidance to child residential facilities regarding reasonable suspicion to suspect child abuse, minimal facts interviewing and safety planning. Over the course of the last reporting period, OCYF continued to monitor ongoing implementation of the bulletin and provide technical assistance to child residential providers as needed.

Another strategy aimed at improving oversight of child residential facilities includes the development of different dashboards which will allow OCYF Regional Office staff to have critical data and information available to them to support enhanced monitoring of these facilities. In July 2021, the Home and Community Services Information System (HCSIS) Dashboard was implemented, and all necessary Regional Office staff completed training by November 2021. The HCSIS Dashboard provides information on reportable incidents made to the Department by providers in accordance with regulatory requirements. Another tool, known as the 3800 Dashboard, is currently under development and anticipated to be released in July 2022. The 3800 Dashboard will provide the OCYF Regional Office staff with data that can be used for monitoring child safety such as the number of child protective services (CPS) reports per facility, number and types of alleged abuse per facility, and child abuse substantiation rate per facility.

Further information about Pennsylvania's efforts related to child residential facilities is outlined later in this report under *Permanency Objective 2.1*.

Child Welfare Case Management System (CW CM)

The primary goal of OCYF and the CCYAs is to meet the unique needs of children and families through the provision of quality child welfare services. To provide the most exceptional supports and services, state and county agencies need real-time child and family-specific information, service and financial data, and aggregate program information, across counties, to efficiently and effectively track outcomes, monitor performance and compliance, and make business decisions based on accurate and timely information. Currently, six county-level case management systems are maintained, as well as the state's CWIS. This technology structure results in significant costs, inefficiencies, low data integrity, and difficulty in meeting federal requirements. Most importantly, the structure has led to challenges in achieving a statewide goal of supporting the provision of quality services and best practices designed to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of Pennsylvania's children, youth, and families.

The objective of the CW CM solution will be a statewide case management system that will replace the CWIS, as well as the six county case management systems currently used in Pennsylvania. The project will enable:

- Flexibility in supporting county nuances and responsiveness to diversity of counties, when necessary;

- Identification of child welfare best practices; and
- Implementation support and coordination to incorporate best practices and flexibility to the state and counties.

The proposed system is part of a broader case management solution that is being pursued by DHS, which is called the Enterprise Case Management (ECM) system. ECM will be a standard case management platform that will support human services systems across the enterprise. The solution will support consistency, uniformity, efficiency and effectiveness, when possible. The goal of the CW CM Project is to implement a comprehensive statewide system that provides:

- Improved child safety and well-being;
- Effective case management;
- Increased cost savings;
- Compliance with federal regulations and local reporting requirement;
- Improved data quality and accessibility;
- Enhanced performance measurement and outcomes; and
- Responds to diverse county operations through flexible configuration.

Further information about Pennsylvania's efforts related to implementation of the CW CM is outlined later in this report under *Implementation Supports Objective 2.1*.

Promoting Race Equity

Pennsylvania is committed to addressing racial disparities and promoting race equity in the child welfare system. Understanding the impact of racial disparity in the child welfare system requires recognition of the points at which bias can enter the system and how inequities at each point can impact the trajectory of children and families as they move through the system. Racial disparity can often be found at the very point where families often first come into contact with the child welfare system. In Pennsylvania there are significant racial disparities in the number of suspected child abuse and neglect reports that are received by the CCYAs and ChildLine, Pennsylvania's child abuse hotline. As noted in the DHS Racial Equity Report, 2021, Black children make up 14 percent of the total child population in Pennsylvania but represent 21 percent of potential victims of abuse in child protective service reports.

Once Black children become known to the child welfare system, they are more likely to enter foster care and stay in foster care longer than White children. As outlined in the DHS Racial Equity Report, 35 percent of children in foster care are Black, and Black children represent 42 percent of children who have been in foster care for two years or more. Given the trauma that children can experience when separated from their families and the impact such trauma can have on social, economic and health outcomes, racial disparities in placement rates can have long lasting effects that are detrimental to the well-being of Black children and their families. DHS is committed to reviewing data across the full spectrum of child welfare services to gain a better understanding of racial disparities in outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-

being of children and collaborating with stakeholders to address racial disparities across the system.

OCYF initiated the Strengthening Equity Workgroup in the Fall of 2020. The workgroup is committed to reviewing data across the full spectrum of child welfare services, including juvenile justice services, to gain a better understanding of racial disparities in outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being of children and collaborating with stakeholders to address racial disparities across the system. The primary purpose of the workgroup is to identify areas of child welfare service where changes in policy and/or practice can reduce racial disparities. The secondary purpose of the workgroup is to create meaningful change within the culture of OCYF by incorporating a racial equity lens in all OCYF initiatives and processes.

During Phase 1 (November 2020- August 2021), the workgroup reviewed data across the full spectrum of child welfare services, including juvenile justice services, to gain a better understanding of racial disparities in outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being of children and collaborating with stakeholders to address racial disparities across the system. The workgroup also issued several recommendations which were submitted to OCYF leadership for review. These recommendations include the following:

- Enhance mandated reporter training and increase public awareness of the impact of implicit bias;
- Develop training for staff who receive child abuse reports;
- Develop an OCYF statistician position to improve capacity to use current, specific data to inform decision making;
- Continue to integrate equity work, provide feedback, and make recommendations regarding the trauma-informed care work through collaboration with the HEAL PA Racial and Communal Trauma workgroup;
- Improve data collection and analysis to establish baseline measures for race and equity and improve consistency in child welfare data sources so that similar/same definitions are utilized for each race/ethnicity category.
- Develop training, tools, and technical assistance for CCYAs to improve data collection for race to ensure we are able to use data to learn from counties who are reducing disproportionality and to provide technical assistance and support for those where data reflects an increase; and
- Identify effective strategies to strengthen decision making during CPS and general protective services (GPS) investigations.

Based on the recommendations, the workgroup started moving into Phase 2 with a focus on identifying strategies to enhance mandated reporter training and ChildLine/call screener training. As part of an OCYF effort to promote greater sharing of data on race and ethnicity with the public, the Annual Child Abuse was amended to provide statewide aggregate data on race and ethnicity of victims and perpetrators in substantiated child abuse reports and substantiated child fatality and near fatality

reports for the first time. The 2021 Annual Child Abuse is scheduled to be released in July 2022.

Additional work to promote race equity is highlighted throughout the 2023 APSR in relation to the various programs and services covered in this report.

Organization of This Report

The 2023 APSR builds off the 2020-2024 CFSP, with the core elements and language of the initial plan maintained for historical reference. Updates have been provided in accordance with the directions outlined in the program instructions set forth by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in ACYF-CB-PI-22-01. These updates are denoted throughout the document under the heading “Progress Since Last Report” or “Assessment Since Last Report” in italicized font.

When possible, the most recent data available is utilized. Data reported by state fiscal year (SFY) 2020-21 represents the most recent full year of SFY data available and covers the period July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021. In some instances, data may be suppressed in accordance with DHS standards and best practices for protecting confidentiality of individual child and family information.

For reporting of licensing data throughout the 2023 APSR, it is important to note an anomaly for data provided for SFY 2019-20 and SFY 2021-21. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, beginning in March of 2020, licensing inspections were briefly suspended and then resumed in the summer under an in-person, virtual hybrid format. Due to adjustments made in the scheduling of annual licensing inspections as a result of the suspension of inspections, only 54 counties completed an annual licensing review during SFY 2019-20. Therefore, licensing data for SFY 2019-20 represents only 54 counties versus the traditional 67. As a result of shifting the licensing schedule due to the COVID suspension in licensing, 60 of the 67 counties completed an annual licensing review during the SFY 2020-21.

Finally, no CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews or state-supported Quality Services Reviews (QSR) were conducted in calendar year 2020 due to COVID-19. CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews began again in a virtual format in calendar year 2021 and the available findings are included in this report. Unfortunately, no state supported QSRs were conducted in 2021, but a virtual pilot was implemented within one experienced QSR county. Therefore, the statewide aggregate QSR data included in this report has not been updated since submission of the 2021 APSR. CFSR round 3 PIP case reviews resumed in calendar year 2021 with significant improvement across the majority of the item ratings.

2020-2024 CFSP Introduction

State Agency Administering the Title IV-B Programs

The Pennsylvania DHS, OCYF is the state agency located in the capitol of Harrisburg that is responsible to lead, plan, direct and coordinate statewide children's programs including social services provided directly by CCYAs and OCYF's Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services (BJJS) through the Youth Development Centers (YDC) and Youth Forestry Camps (YFC). OCYF is responsible for the development of Pennsylvania's Title IV-B and Title IV-E state plans in collaboration with key stakeholders.

The CFSP outlines activities related to programs funded under primarily under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act. Title IV-B Part 1 funds for child welfare services are distributed to all 67 CCYAs based on the number of children served in each county. The CCYAs fund child welfare services that are within the state-specified guidelines. The state guidelines direct the CCYAs to use these funds for in-home services (excluding CPS and GPS), community-based and institutional services (excluding secure facilities) that are not funded with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, or Title IV-E funds.

To carry out its various duties, OCYF is organized into four separate bureaus: The Bureau of Children and Family Services (BCFS); the Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Support (BBFS); the Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations (BPPO) and BJJS.

- BCFS is primarily responsible for monitoring the delivery of services by county and private children and youth social service agencies. The four OCYF Regional Offices conduct oversight through monitoring, licensing and providing technical assistance (TA) to the public and private children and youth agencies. The Regional Offices also investigate child abuse when the alleged perpetrator is a county agency employee or one of its agents; and ensure regulatory compliance of agencies by investigating complaints, conducting annual inspections and assisting county and private agencies in the interpretation and implementation of DHS regulations.
- BBFS provides support functions for OCYF including budgeting; personnel; management of federal grants and revenue; fulfillment of Needs-Based Plan and Budget (NBPB) mandates; and administrative, financial and operational support. BBFS increases fiscal accountability through cost reporting, recovery, containment, justification and redistribution.
- BPPO plans, develops and implements new and revised regulations; provides program clarifications; conducts training and orientation on new or revised procedures; provides analysis of, and recommendations for, proposed legislation; develops program reports and publications; and coordinates and provides TA and training materials for OCYF Regional Office staff and service providers. BPPO is also responsible for managing and operating the ChildLine and Abuse Registry and the three Interstate Compacts for

Pennsylvania, which are managed by the Division of Operations. BPPO also houses OCYF's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) unit.

- BJJS is responsible for the management, operation, program planning and oversight of all five YDC/YFC facilities. The youth entrusted to BJJS' care are male and female adolescents who have been adjudicated delinquent by their county judicial system. The BJJS' State Court Liaison Specialists work closely with Pennsylvania's county juvenile court system, the YDC/YFC system, and private provider agencies to ensure residents are placed in the least restrictive and most appropriate setting.

A copy of the most current OCYF organizational chart was provided with the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP. Further information regarding OCYF's four bureaus is available through the DHS website.[2]

Financial Limitations

Expenditures of federal fiscal year (FFY) 2004 and FFY 2005 Title IV-B Subpart 1 funds during FFY 2005 for child care, foster care maintenance or adoption assistance payments was $8,870,138 (FFY 2004-$289,544; FFY 2005 $8,580,594). State expenditures of non-federal funds for foster care maintenance payments was $2,365,328. This amount, $8,870,138, is the baseline amount that the state may not exceed for the corresponding types of payments after FFY 2007.

Beginning in FFY 2008, states could not use more than the amount of non-federal funds spent on foster care maintenance payments in FFY 2005 as match for the Title IV-B, Subpart 1 program. This amount, $2,365,328, serves as a baseline for future years.

The total amount of state, local and donated funds in FFY 2017 for IV-B Subpart 2 was $10,048,304. The State has met the FFY 1992 base year comparison amount for non-supplantation requirements.

Pennsylvania expends the following percentages of Title IV-B, subpart 2 funds on service delivery as follows: 20% on Family Preservation, 20% Family Support, 20% family reunification, or 20% Adoption Promotion Services. Pennsylvania does not exceed 10% in Support expenditures or 10% in Administration expenditures.

Pennsylvania's 2020-2024 Vision for Child Welfare Services

In 2012, OCYF, in collaboration with system partners, developed the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice Model (Practice Model)[3] to serve as a tool that guides children, youth, families, child welfare representatives and other children and family service partners in working together by providing a consistent basis for decision

[2] https://www.dhs.pa.gov/contact/DHS-Offices/Pages/DHS-Offices.aspx

[3] http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Resources/PAChildWelfarePracticeModel.pdf

making; clear expectations of outcomes, shared values and ethics; and a principled way to evaluate skills and performance. The Practice Model helps benchmark achievement and clearly links the abstract ideals of the mission, vision and strategic plans to day-to-day practice.

The Practice Model is comprised of six core outcomes which together frame the vision for Pennsylvania's child welfare system. These outcomes reflect the mission and values of OCYF as well as the mission and guiding principles for Pennsylvania's child dependency system. The 2020-2024 CFSP serves as a mechanism for connecting the various children, youth and family programs, services and activities conducted under Titles IV-B and IV-E, as well as other key federal and state programs, into one comprehensive plan directed towards achieving the following outcomes:

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

Pennsylvania's vision set forth in the 2020-2024 CFSP builds upon the goals and strategies set forth in the state's CFSR PIP which were established to promote the achievement of federal safety, permanency and well-being outcomes.

CFSP Collaboration

Pennsylvania built on experiences learned through the development of the 2015-2019 CFSP to establish a more comprehensive and strategic vision for the child welfare system for the 2020-2024 CFSP. Throughout all phases of CFSP development and planning, stakeholders played a critical role in helping to review and analyze data, define areas needing further improvement and prioritize system initiatives for the coming years.

Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council (Council) served as the core stakeholder group consulted in the development of the 2020-2024 CFSP and will continue to be engaged in the ongoing monitoring and adjustment of the plan. Since the Council's first convening in 2016, OCYF has consulted with the group to identify key

priority areas of focus to improve Pennsylvania's child welfare system. The Council is comprised of internal and external stakeholders who meet on a regular basis to support coordinated, multi-disciplinary, strategic system planning. Ongoing conversations with the Council throughout 2016 and 2017 culminated in formal, facilitated discussions in late 2018 and early 2019 to further narrow the focus of those efforts to be prioritized in the 2020-2024 CFSP. Specific areas identified by the Council which are reflected in the goals and objectives set forth in the 2020-2024 CFSP include:

- A need to focus on primary, secondary and tertiary prevention efforts;
- Evaluating opportunities for implementing a differential or alternative response system in Pennsylvania;
- Working to improve the quality of foster care homes for children and youth in out-of-home care;
- Continuing efforts to ensure children and youth are placed in the most appropriate, least restrictive settings; and
- Further exploring data and information related to adoption dissolutions to understand the scope of this issue across the state.

Pennsylvania plans that the Council will continue to serve as the key body to assist in ongoing assessment and monitoring of child welfare system priorities throughout the course of FFY 2020-24. The Council and the four subcommittees convened through the Council will continue to assist in the implementation of several PIP strategies and ongoing PIP monitoring. The Council has also been identified as a key group in helping to provide recommendations to OCYF related to the implementation of various components of the Family First. A list of the agencies and organizations represented on the Council was provided as part of the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

Over the course of the past year, the Council continued to play a critical role in the ongoing implementation and monitoring of the programs, goals and strategies outlined in Pennsylvania's 2020-2024 CFSP. The Safety Subcommittee remained the most active of the subcommittees and met frequently to continue to advance the work around streamlining of risk and safety assessment practices and use of a statewide universal assessment tool. The Resources/Cross-Categorical Subcommittee reconvened for the first time since the pandemic began and will be focusing its work on the recommendations of the Rate Methodology Task Force and an assessment of the overall fiscal health of Pennsylvania's child welfare system.

The Council was engaged in ongoing monitoring of CFSP activities through regular, bi-monthly updates and discussion on work around key priorities such as Family First, the universal assessment tool, the CW CM, plans of safe care, complex cases and workforce. The Council also served as a venue for communicating updates and obtaining feedback related to responding to COVID-19 and the impacts on the child

welfare system. Examples of other Council activities throughout the reporting period include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Reviewing and providing feedback on the recommendations coming out of the Fatality and Near Fatality Trend Analysis Team;*
- *Reviewing and discussing system impacts related to the recommendations coming out of the Juvenile Justice Task Force;*
- *Reviewing and discussing the workforce recommendations report issued by PCCYFS;*
- *Providing feedback on potential strategies OCYF could explore to support CCYAs with a workforce recruitment;*
- *Reviewing and discussing the findings from the 2021 PIP monitoring case reviews; and*
- *Providing feedback on priorities for child welfare research and evaluations that OCYF can look to support.*

In the winter of 2021, the Council was provided an overview of current strategic initiatives OCYF is actively engaged in and asked for feedback on prioritization and any gaps pertaining to initiatives that should be added. While the Council did not identify any new priorities throughout the year that would require amending the 2020-2024 CFSP goals and objectives, prevention services and Family First implementation, as well as the need to address barriers to effectively serving children and youth with complex mental and behavioral health needs, serve as examples of key CFSP areas that continued to be raised during Council meetings, further underscoring their relevance and need for prioritization. In particular, complex cases and staff recruitment and retention remained salient, ongoing topics of conversation among the Council over the past year.

Since the onset of the pandemic, the Council has met virtually which necessitated abbreviating the length of the meetings. In the coming year, OCYF plans to resume in-person Council meetings when possible. OCYF will also be exploring greater engagement of Council members in joint agenda development, meeting facilitation, and information presentation to better align the work of the Council with the intended purpose set forth in the Council charter.

Court Improvement Plan

Pennsylvania benefits from strong collaboration between the court system, OCYF, and local CCYAs which was leveraged in the development of the 2020-2024 CFSP. While entities such as the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) and the Juvenile Court Judges Commission (JCJC) have representatives, who serve on the Council, the foundational structure that helps support court and child welfare agency collaboration is through the Children's Roundtable Initiative.

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and AOPC developed the Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC) to administer the federal court improvement plan

(CIP). One of the most critical aspects of the CIP in Pennsylvania was the development of the Children's Roundtable Initiative. The highest level of the initiative is the State Roundtable, tri-chaired by a Supreme Court Justice, the OCYF Deputy Secretary and the OCFC Director. These Roundtables created a statewide infrastructure that allows for effective administration and communication through a three-tiered system. The three levels include Local Children's Roundtables (LCR) in each of the 60 judicial districts, seven statewide Leadership Roundtables (LRT) and one State Roundtable. This three-tiered system of Roundtables allows for the flow of dependency practice innovations as well as much needed administrative collaboration between the dependency courts, OCFC, OCYF, local CCYAs and other relevant stakeholders.

Statewide issues are brought to the State Roundtable and most typically result in the formation of a workgroup tasked with examining the issue and recommending possible statewide solutions. Current workgroups are addressing the following issues: substance abuse, caseworker retention, congregate care, dependency benchbook updates and hearing officer education. As new issues are identified, it is expected that the State Roundtable set a course for addressing them in a way that embraces Pennsylvania's collaborative values and recognizes the importance of family and the safety, permanency, and well-being of children.

Areas of priority identified through the roundtable structure helped to inform the selection of goals and objectives for the 2020-2024 CFSP and were also integral in supporting the development of the state's CFSR PIP. Specifically, work related to caseworker retention and congregate care reduction is reflected in the selected improvement efforts outlined in Pennsylvania's 2020-2024 CFSP.

AOPC, through the OCFC, will continue to collaborate with OCYF and other systems partners to utilize strategies that have proven to be successful such as the Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) (which will be discussed in further detail later in this plan) and the Children's Roundtable Initiative. Judicial and legal professional training needs will be met through the continuation of advanced legal training in relevant and needed topic areas. A coordinated training process will be applied via similar training topics being presented across judicial educational sessions, hearing master training and legal representation training. This coordinated effort is expected to have a positive impact on quality court hearings by having all legal systems professionals working from the "same page."

- *Progress Since Last Report*

During the past year, extensive collaborative effort has continued to collectively move forward the progressive work occurring throughout Pennsylvania's dependency courts and CCYAs. This collaborative approach has included the development of educational opportunities for judges, hearing officers, attorneys, child welfare professionals, and other stakeholders; development of tools and resources; administrative collaboration sessions for judicial and child welfare leaders via Fall Leadership Roundtables; and expansion of the FEI to Phase Four Counties. At the

writing of this update there are eighteen (18) counties including Philadelphia, Pennsylvania's largest county. These eighteen counties oversee approximately 44% of children in court ordered out-of-home care.

Educational opportunities included numerous topics such as Family Finding, Quality Legal Representation, Crisis and Rapid Response Family meetings, Reasonable Efforts, Congregate Care, Family Engagement, Calendaring, Resilience, ACEs, Implicit Bias, Autism Spectrum, and Kinship Care. In addition, the Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Conference occurred virtually in late September 2021.

In addition to these educational opportunities, much work was done through the various State Roundtable Workgroups. These include the Congregate Care Workgroup, the Dependency Benchbook Committee, the Hearing Officer Education Committee, and the Kinship Care Taskforce and the newly commissioned Autism and the Dependency Court Taskforce.

This collaboration between the courts, child welfare agencies, and other stakeholders has resulted in fewer children being placed in foster care and congregate care. When children must come into care, due to unresolvable safety threats, the number of children being placed with safe kin caregivers (thereby reducing system-induced trauma) continues to increase.

Congregate Care Workgroup Update

The Congregate Care Workgroup was tasked with examining the use of group facilities for dependent youth and developing alternatives to congregate care. During the past year, the workgroup, led by the Supervising Judge of Philadelphia's Family Court, the lead Judge of Union/Snyder Counties Dependency Courts, and the Lackawanna County Human Services Director, continued to meet and heard from additional congregate care providers, parents, and other stakeholders.

Of special note is the change in congregate care placement numbers overtime. In 2018 when the workgroup began its efforts, there were nearly 2,600 dependent children in congregate care placements at the cost of over $133 million per year.

The workgroup utilized the past year to gather additional information from various perspectives and identify practices that could effectively and safely reduce the reliance on congregate care for dependent youth. In addition, the workgroup created several recommended processes (contracting and oversight) and tools (one focusing on alternatives to congregate care and one focusing on judicial decision-making related to congregate care). These recommended tools and processes significantly increase child welfare agency and court oversight for children in congregate care settings. Because congregate care is the most restrictive of all dependent placement options and dependent children in congregate care settings have the most intensive treatment needs, workgroup members believe enhanced oversight is needed. After review and approval by the State Roundtable, the tools were released to all judicial districts and

counties with strong encouragement for use. As of June 2020, there were 1,639 youth in congregate care settings per the data reviewed by OCFC.

Kinship Care Task Force

At the October 2020 virtual State Roundtable meeting, members commissioned the Kinship Care Task Force under the direct leadership of Chief Justice Max Baer, Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The ten-member Task Force includes trial judges, attorneys, county child welfare administrators, the OCFC Director, a CIP Judicial Analyst, and the OCYF Deputy Secretary. The Task Force is focused on understanding Pennsylvania's use of kinship resources and increasing the safe use of such. To date, the Kinship Care Task Force has gathered baseline kinship care data, surveyed all judicial districts and child welfare agencies as to their use of kinship care, barriers, and possible solutions.

The Task Force has also identified many strategies being used by local judicial districts and child welfare agencies to safely enhance the use of kinship care. The Task Force is currently focused on developing an educational curriculum and process for judicial officers.

Dependency Bench Book/Judicial Education Committee

The Pennsylvania Dependency Benchbook Committee is chaired by the Honorable Craig Miller, President Judge, Clinton County Court of Common Pleas. Judge Miller assumed the Chairperson role from the Honorable Kimberly Clark, President Judge, Allegheny County of Common Pleas, in 2019. During Judge Clark's tenure as Chairperson from 2012 to 2019, she and the Committee successfully created the third edition of the Pennsylvania Dependency Benchbook. This revision incorporated congregate care and family finding in addition to updated laws and rules.

The Benchbook Committee serves as the judicial advisory group tasked with developing and editing content for the Dependency Benchbook and the Dependency Benchbook Resource Companion. The committee also provides feedback on judicial educational sessions, interprets court observation data, and approves the addition of workgroup materials into the Benchbook.

As such, the committee's work is ongoing. The committee is currently revising the Dependency Benchbook Resource Companion, initially released in 2010. It should be noted that while this is the only SRT committee solely comprised of trial and appellate court judges, considerable input is provided by DHS/OCYF.

Graduated Curriculum for Dependency Judges

In Pennsylvania, judicial elections occur in odd years, with new judges assuming their roles in January of even years. New judges are required to attend a one-week school before taking the bench. Justice Baer, Justice Dougherty, and the OCFC

Director present at the new judges' school. The focus of this initial session is the Dependency Court Improvement work being done throughout the state. Six months later (typically June), judges newly assigned to dependency court are gathered for a two-day educational session.

While COVID-19 created challenges, newly assigned judges requested the session be held virtually. As such, in December 2020, the New Judges' Follow-up Session was conducted with 21 new judges in attendance. Faculty for the session included Justice Dougherty (lead CIP Justice), Chief Justice Baer, trial court judges experienced in dependency practice, the OCFC Director, and several OCFC Judicial Analysts.

Hearing Officer Education

Since the last report, two significant Juvenile Court Hearing Officer Education sessions were provided. These sessions included the following topics: Reasonable Efforts, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and the intersect of Dependency Court and Autism, the Revised Pennsylvania Dependency Benchbook, 3rd Edition, Best Practices, Alternatives to Congregate Care, Youth Panel of Former Residents of Congregate Care, and Case Law Update. The Supreme Court now requires education for judges and hearing officers.

Attorney Education

The need for well-educated, skilled dependency attorneys was at the forefront of combined efforts during the past year. This included the release of guidance on using Title IV-E funding for enhanced legal representation, several educational sessions for attorneys, and the development of a 6 ½ hour online educational module for all attorneys involved in dependency proceedings. The online module will replace the current CAPTA pre-service DVD training provided to new Guardians ad Litem. The new online session will also be available to agency and parent attorneys.

CIP staff is supporting the use of Title IV-E funds for enhanced legal representation (child & parent). FEI legal enhancement plans are submitted to CIP. Non-FEI judicial districts submit their legal enhancement plans directly to OCYF.

Family Engagement Initiative

For information regarding FEI, please see Permanency Objective 1.1.

Targeted Outreach

In addition to ongoing collaboration with stakeholders in CFSP planning through the Council and Children's Roundtables, OCYF performed additional outreach activities to engage specific stakeholder groups to promote inclusion of a broad range of perspectives in the consideration of 2020-2024 CFSP priorities. Any relevant ongoing

communication and feedback that has occurred with these entities pertaining to the CFSP since submission in 2019 is highlighted below, along with other core accomplishments of these groups which have furthered progress towards CFSP goals.

Youth Advisory Board (YAB)

The YAB is comprised of youth and alumni of the child welfare system 16 to 21 years of age who meet to educate, advocate and form partnerships to create positive change in the child welfare system. There are six regional YABs who funnel into the Statewide YAB, which meets every other month. Additional information about the YAB is available online at http://www.payab.pitt.edu/default.htm.

In March of 2019, OCYF representatives attended the Statewide YAB meeting to engage with youth in identifying those areas older youth believe should be prioritized for improvement in the coming years. A total of 16 youth attended the meeting and represented 11 counties from across the state. Several independent living (IL) coordinators from the CCYAs attended with the youth, as well. Youth were posed the following questions to generate discussion and feedback:

- If the child welfare system worked the way you believe it should, what would that look like?
- What do you think is the most important change we need to make to the child welfare system so that it is better for all kids and families?
- What would you like to see us work on over the next five years specifically to help older youth?

From the conversation with the YAB, several key themes emerged which were used to help inform CFSP development.

- Youth advocated for quality visitation with their caseworkers and improvement in caseworker skills regarding engagement of children and youth in developmentally appropriate conversations.
    - Many of the youth noted that they desired honest, open communication with their caseworkers to understand why certain decisions may be made regarding their case and wanted to have a relationship with their caseworkers that valued the youth's thoughts, feelings and input.
    - Youth also identified that they want to be seen by their caseworkers as people and "not just a case file."
    - Older youth expressed that they want to have meaningful conversations with their caseworkers about their hopes, dreams, fears and needs during visits and do not want to feel like their caseworker is just stopping by to see them so "they can check off a task."

- The older youth also identified the need for improved recruitment and training of foster parents and improved processes for matching youth with foster families.

    - The youth in attendance shared personal experiences in which they felt they were placed in foster homes that were not prepared to meet their needs or were respectful of their individual cultural preferences.
    - Youth expressed that they desired foster homes where the foster parents serve as active mentors in helping them prepare for transitioning into adulthood.
    - Youth also identified a need for providing opportunities for youth to learn about and assess the fit of prospective foster homes when possible and having an opportunity to provide input into the decision as to the homes in which they should be placed.

- Youth continue to need financial assistance and supportive services in ensuring certain concrete needs are met.

    - Older youth shared the importance of financial support in allowing them to enroll in, and successfully complete, post-secondary education.
    - Youth also advocated for the importance of being able to obtain a driver's license and help in obtaining a vehicle as this makes educational and work opportunities more easily accessible, especially for youth living in rural areas.

The feedback from the YAB members was reviewed by OCYF and shared with the Council. Many of the key concerns voiced by the youth reflected issues that have been raised through other avenues as well, such as CFSR findings, results from the QSR and information gathered through IL site visits. Goals and strategies related to improving engagement practices and enhancing foster and adoptive parent training have been outlined in this CFSP to help address many of the issues raised by the older youth who provided feedback to OCYF.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

Throughout the reporting period, the YAB continued to play a vital role in shaping policy for older youth across the state. Although the YAB experienced a decline in active youth membership due to the pandemic creating limited in person engagement and virtual fatigue, they are experiencing growth at the regional and local levels. Counties, private provider agencies, and stakeholders have been seeking YAB support in providing technical assistance, training and panel presentations around youth engagement in a virtual platform. The YAB continues to be a venue where youth who are in out-of-home placement can discuss and address systemic issues facing older youth while learning self-advocacy.

While the YAB experienced a decline in active membership due to the pandemic, YAB leadership continued to move forward with their project goals, recommendations and collaboration with stakeholders and system partners. The YAB partnered with younger children in care to develop a coloring and activity book that teaches youth about their rights while in care. The books are designed to be a simplified version of the Know Your Rights (KYR) guide for youth under ten years of age, and youth with intellectual disabilities. Additionally, the KYR guide was made available in Spanish for youth whose primary language is not English. The Spanish version can be accessed on the YAB website, which can be found here: KYR Guide Spanish Version

YAB Leadership met with Lynn Johnson, Assistant Secretary of The Administration for Children and Families; Jon Rubin, Deputy Secretary of OCYF; Brian Bornman, Esq., Executive Director of the PA Children and Youth Administrators Association; and other DHS stakeholders for a Youth Leadership Roundtable discussion about the challenges and barriers youth have experienced in the foster care system. YAB leadership also participated in a youth panel press conference with the Department of Human Services (DHS) Acting Secretary Meg Snead, for National Foster Care month to speak on the challenges older youth face and the best way to support older youth in achieving permanency through adoption.

YAB leaders joined in a National Foster Care Month Special Event presented by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and DHS coordinated by the Center for Schools and Communities. The YAB also hosted a virtual college fair. Ten colleges from across the state took part, along with a representative from the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA). Participants were educated on PA ACT 101, a state funded program that distributes funds to Pennsylvania postsecondary institutions to support disadvantaged students academically and financially toward successful completion of their education. Participants were informed about the Dream Certificate program geared towards youth with mental health and intellectual disabilities. In addition, YAB leadership held a panel presentation to discuss transitioning from care to college. Youth also learned about the Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program known as FosterEd, provides a tuition and mandatory fees waiver after all federal and state grant and gift aid has been applied to a student's account.

Additionally, YAB leadership helped guide and facilitate a conversation with OCYF Deputy Secretary Jon Rubin and YAB youth leaders. The Deputy Secretary spoke with youth leaders to help inform the youth about Family First implementation. Youth leaders shared their lived experiences in care with the Deputy Secretary. They provided feedback on how the system could make positive changes that would affect families in the future.

During YAB Statewide Meeting, Teresa Musser, State Independent Living (IL) Coordinator with OCYF, spoke with the YAB about the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Supporting Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic (Division X). The provision provided supplemental Chafee funding and program flexibility to current and former Chafee eligible foster youth. YAB leadership understood the importance of this

valuable resource and therefore embarked on a social media campaign targeting alumni no longer receiving aftercare services. Division X's information and resources were shared via YAB social media platforms, including emails, Facebook, the YAB Blast Newsletter and the YAB website. YAB leadership also shared the information on their own media platforms.

The YAB held its annual Youth Leadership Summit in June 2021. This one-day virtual event allowed youth to connect and engage in life skills learning. The State IL Coordinator with OCYF discussed the availability of Chaffee funding and services through Division X. With additional funding being available to youth and young adults, YAB members felt it was important to lead a money management session to highlight the importance of budgeting, saving, and understanding the importance of a good credit score. Other breakout sessions, led by YAB leaders, included time management and a sacred circle providing a space for youth to discuss how they were navigating through the pandemic.

Although the pandemic created barriers to engagement, the YAB continued its efforts to support older youth by providing them with COVID wellness kits. The kits included masks, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes and crisis prevention hotline numbers for youth needing support. The YAB started to develop ideas to help address the mental health needs of older youth resulting from the pandemic and began providing mental health tips and resources throughout its media platforms on Facebook, through emails and via the YAB Blast Newsletter. The YAB plans to begin developing mental health wellness kits for youth, including stress relievers and national hotline numbers for mental health support.

Regional YAB members helped facilitate Zoom sessions with peers to address the political and racial turmoil across the county. YAB leaders created a space for youth to discuss the plight of black and brown people in the country. Youth Voice Amplified was a facilitated conversation about current racial unrest. The goal was to hear about the concerns and experience from youth of color involved in the foster care system. YAB leadership also wanted to elevate youth voices and concerns to child welfare stakeholders and system partners. An audio recording of Youth Voices Amplified can be found here: http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Youth_Voices_Amplified.htm. Throughout conversations with YAB leadership and regional YAB members regarding the racial unrest, it became apparent the youth did not have enough information about the voting process to make informed decisions and to understand the power of voting. Therefore, YAB embarked on a media marketing campaign designed to educate youth on the voting process, national elections and the importance of voting in their local elections. YAB provided resources about registering to vote, mailing in ballots, election dates and more through the YAB Blast newsletters, emails and Facebook. The YAB continues to play a vital role in shaping practice and policies for older youth services across Pennsylvania.

Citizen Review Panels (CRP)

Pennsylvania's CRPs work to facilitate citizen participation and provide opportunities for citizens to partner with local child protection systems to ensure that these systems provide the best possible service, prevent and protect children from abuse and neglect and meet the permanency needs of children. The CRPs currently consist of three regional panels and the YAB is considered to serve as a fourth panel. Annually, the CRP provides written recommendations to DHS, which are made available to the public through the DHS website.[4]

OCYF staff attend the bi-annual CRP all-panel meetings to provide updates and information on OCYF priorities and to discuss CRP recommendations. During the 2018 fall and 2019 spring all-panel meetings, OCYF engaged in discussions with the CRP specifically regarding CFSP priorities. The individual CRP members were also given the opportunity to complete a survey to provide additional feedback regarding key areas for consideration for CFSP goals and strategies.

The CRP feedback identified those affected by substance use disorders, older youth aging out of the system, young children, and individuals impacted by severe trauma as particular populations to be prioritized when considering areas for improvement. Additionally, the CRP also recommended directing focus towards enhancing the array of services available to help keep families together, expedite permanency, and prevent the placement of children in congregate settings. Suggestions also included improving the overall service array to include increased utilization of EBPs and expansion of post-permanency services. Some CRP members also called attention to the need to provide improved support to the child welfare workforce by looking at paperwork reduction and caseload sizes, especially for permanency staff. Finally, feedback suggested that work continue to ensure all children have access to a high-quality children's advocacy center.

The feedback from the CRP members was reviewed by OCYF and, similar to as seen with the YAB, many of the key concerns voiced represented issues that have been raised through other avenues. Goals and strategies related to improving the child welfare workforce, reducing utilization of congregate care for children in out-of-home placement and implementation of Family First serve as examples of work outlined in the 2020-2024 CFSP intended to help address many of the areas recommended by the CRP.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

OCYF continues to connect with CRP members during the fall and spring all-panel meetings to provide updates on CFSP goals, strategies and progress, as well as other OCYF priorities, with emphasis on those areas related to previous and current CRP recommendations. OCYF also maintains communication with the panels

[4] https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Pages/Child-Abuse-Reports.aspx

throughout the year, including the fulfillment of data and information requests received via the CRP Coordinator.

As part of the 2021 CRP Annual Report, recommendations were put forth to OCYF for consideration and include some of the following areas of focus:

- *Supporting and engaging families affected by substance abuse.*
- *Assessing the need for medical consultation as part of a universal assessment.*
- *Creating a complex case implementation guide as a companion to a DHS Complex Case Planning Bulletin.*
- *Improving access to resources for older youth involved with the child welfare system by providing personal protective equipment, informational materials on the voter registration and the voting process, as well as information regarding rights of children and youth in care.*

The 2021 CRP Annual Report and the OCYF response to the CRP recommendations were shared with the Pennsylvania legislature and posted publicly to the DHS website in the spring of 2022.

OCYF is sending 10 CRP members to participate in the 2022 National Citizen Review Panel Annual Conference in May so that members can continue to build knowledge, skills and networks to inform their work. The DHS CRP Liaison as well as the CWRC CRP Coordinator will also be in attendance.

In alignment with DHS directives to prioritize diversity within stakeholder group membership, OCYF in collaboration with CWRC, continues to expand recruitment efforts to engage more volunteers who are representative of the populations OCYF serves. In order to welcome and provide appropriate support to new members, DHS collaborated with CWRC to provide new member orientation during the fall of 2021 and is currently planning new member orientation for 2022.

In 2021 OCYF worked with CWRC to explore possible rotation of Pennsylvania's Regional CRPs to ensure representation to all regions of the state over time. In the spring of 2022 OCYF began the process of rotating the regional CRPs. The counties to be represented within each region will be the same as those that make up the current Youth Advisory Board Regions.

The rotation will begin by establishing a six-county Southeast regional panel to include representation from members that live and work in our largest and most diverse population center and is home to the Commonwealth's largest African American population and encompasses approximately 35 percent of the total statewide population. More children and families are served by County Children and Youth Agencies (and their extension Community Umbrella Agencies (CUAs)) in the Southeast than in any other region. The Southeast region includes Philadelphia, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties. The Southeast region has never been

represented by a regional CRP. Recruitment for the Southeast panel began in April of 2022. The new Southeast CRP will begin work in January 2023.

As the new Southeast panel is established, the longest operating panel (South Central) will be wrapping up its current work and will disband in December 2022. Over the course of 2023 and 2024, new panels will be established in the North Central and Northwest regions, while work in the Northeast and Southwest panels will adjourn. Each new panel will remain in operation for a period of five years, until the cycle of re-establishing panels in the South Central, Northeast, and Southwest begins again in 2028. The order of establishing and disbanding panels will be determined based on the needs of the state as well as stakeholder input.

Children's Justice Act (CJA) Taskforce

The CJA Taskforce is a multi-disciplinary entity which serves to identify and monitor those activities to be carried out in Pennsylvania through the federal CJA grant. The CJA Taskforce is considered an ad-hoc committee under the Council Safety Subcommittee. While the CJA Taskforce recommendations are communicated to both the Safety Subcommittee and Council at large, OCYF met with the taskforce in January 2019 to help inform safety related priorities for the CFSP. OCYF staff shared relevant data and information to help inform CJA activities and to elicit feedback from the members on safety related CFSP goals and strategies. The taskforce primarily discussed continued focus on serving children and youth who are at risk of or have been victimized through, human trafficking and how these efforts support the vision of the child welfare system in Pennsylvania. While work towards addressing victims of human trafficking was identified as a priority in the 2015-2019 CFSP, the need for continued work in this area identified by the CJA Taskforce, as well as other stakeholders, was considered in the 2020-2024 CFSP development. Therefore, PA's 2020-2024 CFSP will continue to include a strategy dedicated to statewide work in meeting the needs of victims of human trafficking.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Current CJA Taskforce priorities are in alignment with safety strategies outlined in the 2020-2024 CFSP. The Task Force continues to focus on efforts related to the response of child serving systems to child human trafficking and improvements in investigation and assessment practices in child welfare. The Task Force remains committed to building capacity to identify and serve children and youth who are victims of human trafficking by supporting training curriculum tailored to address discipline-specific protocols and procedures for addressing child victims of human trafficking/commercial sexual exploitation of children (CVHT/CSEC). Additionally, the Task Force continues to work towards building and sustaining statewide collaboratives for Specialist Victim Advocates and mental health providers to support growth in specialist responses.

The Task Force also continues to support regional multidisciplinary investigative team (MDIT) training symposiums throughout Pennsylvania. The Task Force has and will continue to support the distribution of mini grants for the establishment, improvement, and support of county MDITs and will gather information about statewide needs regarding the use of medical consultation during child abuse investigations. Lastly, the Task Force remains dedicated to the development of a law enforcement specific child abuse investigation training that is tailored to fit regional and individual department needs, and to the development of a training to support attorneys when interviewing children on the stand, reducing the potential for additional trauma.

In July of 2020, OCYF provided a formal presentation to the Task Force, providing updates from the APSR as it related to the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, and other areas of interest. Focus was placed on five areas that included: Risk and Safety; Assessment; Plans of Safe Care; Child Victims of Human Trafficking; Preventing Child Abuse Maltreatment Fatalities and Near-Fatalities; and the Family First Prevention Services Act. The Task Force provided feedback to the Department in each of these areas and engaged in direct discussions that led to further connections between the APSR and the 2020 CJA Three-Year Assessment. Throughout the remainder of 2020 and during the 2021 Task Force meetings, OCYF provided and continues to provide the Task Force with updates on these specific topics while engaging in conversation, further informing CJA work moving forward.

Tribal Consultation

Pennsylvania does not currently have any federally or state recognized tribes within its jurisdiction. In the development of the 2020-2024 CFSP, OCYF worked with a tribal representative from another state who previously provided consultation regarding Pennsylvania's policies, procedures and practices for implementing the provisions set forth under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). OCYF will continue to contact the following tribal representative to discuss the CFSP and will share the electronic link to Pennsylvania's CFSPs with her. The name of this individual is:

- Michelle Price, Director of the Chickasaw Nation

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

Since the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP, OCYF has not engaged in further consultation with any tribal representatives regarding CFSP goals, strategies, and progress. OCYF attends monthly State ICWA Manager meetings via video conference to stay up to date on the work of other states and progress on ICWA related matters.

CFSR Systemic Factor Assessment – State Engagement and Consultation with Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP

Collaboration is the cornerstone of Pennsylvania's Practice Model and is valued at every level of decision making. Pennsylvania is fortunate to have several structures in place that help promote robust stakeholder engagement of child welfare system partners in the development, implementation and monitoring of the CFSP. The convening of the Council has been instrumental in creating a forum for targeted strategic planning discussions, whereas previously, a multitude of workgroups operated in a siloed manner with no core group of stakeholders identified to help bring all efforts together to set a coordinated vision for the child welfare system. The Children's Roundtable Initiative has continued to allow for strong court and child welfare agency collaboration in identifying and addressing system challenges. Pennsylvania also benefits from long-standing groups which have provided pathways for youth and citizen advocacy to help shape the child welfare system priorities outlined in the CFSP. During the CFSR conducted in 2017, engagement and consultation with stakeholders was identified as an area of strength for the state.

Despite Pennsylvania's numerous areas of strength regarding stakeholder engagement and consultation, OCYF has recognized several opportunities for continued improvement to further strengthen collaborative efforts.

- Further work is needed to help clarify the role of the Council in terms of serving as a deliberative body versus a forum for providing recommendations to OCYF and DHS.
    - There is also a desire on the part of Council members to work to further strengthen how the work of the Council can lead to discernable system change.
    - OCYF and the Council will continue discussions to identify where changes may be needed in the Council structure and functioning to achieve the goals of the Council as outlined in the Council charter.

- Representation of parents and caregivers in child welfare system improvement efforts has been identified as an area where additional work could be focused to strengthen stakeholder engagement and consultation. While opportunities are offered to parents and caregivers involved with the child welfare system to offer specific feedback through processes such as the QSR, there are few other clearly identified pathways by which parent and caregiver feedback is elicited at the state level to guide system improvements.
    - OCYF will evaluate efforts to engage parents at the local county agency level and research models of parent engagement used in other states to identify potential avenues for increasing parent and caregiver engagement in CFSP development and monitoring.

- Tribal consultation in the development, implementation and monitoring of the CFSP remains a challenge for Pennsylvania. As previously noted, Pennsylvania does not currently have any federally or state recognized tribal entities within the state. While OCYF has been able to identify a tribal

representative in another state willing to consult on policies, procedures and practices related to the state's implementation of ICWA, the state has not been able to identify an individual available for ongoing and meaningful engagement in broader statewide strategic planning efforts. OCYF conducted a special analysis in calendar year 2018 of the various federally recognized tribes reported by CCYAs for which children in their care were identified as confirmed members. This analysis was undertaken, in part, to evaluate whether there were any specific tribes commonly represented among Pennsylvania youth involved with the child welfare system who OCYF might potentially focus on engaging. Ultimately, the analysis did not find any specific tribal affiliation common across the children and youth confirmed as American Indian (AI) or Alaskan Native (AN) reported by the CCYAs.

- OCYF is open to any TA or support available through the Children's Bureau to help identify opportunities for improving tribal consultation and engagement in the CFSP.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

OCYF has remained dedicated to the engagement of stakeholders in identifying child welfare system priorities and strategies necessary for moving various initiatives forward. In addition to the Council, which focuses on broader strategic planning, separate collaborative governance structures continue to be convened for significant initiatives such as Family First and the CW CM. These structures allow for those with the greatest expertise and those closest to the work at the local level to have opportunity to inform all aspects of these efforts. Engagement of youth through the YAB and engagement of court partners through the Roundtables continue to be strengths for Pennsylvania and promote strong collaboration and coordination across multiple initiatives.

Based upon feedback from stakeholders and exposure to efforts made by other states, Pennsylvania turned attention during the reporting period on exploring opportunities to further engage the voice of those with diverse, lived experiences to inform system improvements and identification and implementation of strategic priorities. During the past reporting period, OCYF coordinated with the CWRC to engage the Youth Ambassador from the CWRC in participating in the OCYF Strengthening Equity Workgroup. Additionally, both the CWRC Youth Ambassador and Parent Ambassador serve as members of the Building Strong Communities and Healthy Families Workgroup.

Enacting the Vision – Child Maltreatment Prevention and Safety

Pennsylvania's Practice Model focuses on the achievement of outcomes to ensure children and youth are safe from incidents of abuse and neglect and children and their families can be served within their own homes and communities through comprehensive and accessible services that work to keep children and youth safe and

prevent unnecessary removal of them from their homes. The following section of Pennsylvania's plan describes and assesses the current array of prevention and safety services, provides an evaluation of the state's performance on key federal safety outcomes and provides a plan for improving the safety of children and youth over the course of the next five years.

Prevention and Safety Service Continuum and Coordination

Pennsylvania's basic statewide prevention and safety service continuum is comprised of child abuse education and prevention programs, family preservation services, family support services and child protective and general protective services. As Pennsylvania is a county administered child welfare system, it is important to note that CCYAs may offer additional prevention services not referenced within this document as part of their county's local service continuum.

Child Abuse Education and Prevention

Keep Kids Safe Website

The Keep Kids Safe website, www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov, is overseen by OCYF and serves as the hub for information and resources impacting child protection for both professionals and the general public. The website includes information related to mandatory child abuse reporting, training on child abuse recognition, child abuse clearances, the Safe Haven program, fatality and near fatality reports, annual child abuse reports, the Governor's Institute on Plans of Safe Care, as well as current media being used across Pennsylvania. The Keep Kids Safe website is reviewed and updated regularly because it is an avenue to ensure that accurate information and data is being disseminated in a timely manner as it pertains to child protection.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

The Keep Kids Safe website continues to be reorganized and updated to serve as a point of access for information and resources impacting the safety, permanency and well-being of Pennsylvania's children, youth, and families.

The website's platform was streamlined to improve accessibility and enhance user capability. Information and resources related to quality assurance, child abuse appeals, and out-of-state clearances were newly incorporated.

During this reporting period, the running list of approved child abuse recognition and reporting trainings was re-designed/re-formatted to improve user accessibility and capability. Efforts toward revising the existing guidelines for submitting a child abuse recognition and reporting training curriculum for DHS-OCYF review/approval began and are anticipated to be finalized and uploaded to the website by the end of the calendar year. The page related to human trafficking was updated to include ChildLine's telephone number for reporting suspected human trafficking of a child.

Mandated Reporter Training

The Pennsylvania CPSL requires that the state and its counties conduct ongoing training and education programs for local staff persons required to make reports of suspected child abuse and other appropriate persons to familiarize these individuals with child abuse reporting and investigative procedures. OCYF utilizes two entities that provide in-person training for mandated reporters.

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) provides mandated reporter training of suspected child abuse to all persons who are directly responsible for, or are affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, religious organization, or other entity that is directly responsible for, the care, supervision, guidance or training of children. The Educating Physicians in their Community (EPIC) Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) program is an educational program specially targeting mandated reporters in the medical profession to include school nurses, hospital staff and emergency medical service providers. Participants of EPIC-SCAN are instructed in what to look for in suspected child abuse and neglect cases and how to make reports to the proper authorities. In addition to the training, there is a preceptorship program. This program is aimed at growing the pool of physicians, certified registered nurse practitioners and/or others deemed appropriate who are available for consultation, examination and diagnosis of cases of suspected child abuse and neglect.

The University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, CWRC also offers a free online three-hour course titled *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania*. Over 247,000 participants completed the course during SFY 2017-18. Of that number, over 116,000 trainee records were processed and sent to the Department of State for licensure renewal. Additionally,11% (or 26,144) of trainees who completed the course indicated they had previously made a report of child abuse. Feedback continues to be overwhelmingly positive with over 89% of training participants reporting they feel more confident in their skills and that they will be able to use what they learned in the course to recognize and report child abuse.

- *Pro*gress *Since Last Report*

In SFY 2020-21, 593 in-person or live, virtual mandated reporter trainings occurred through OCYFs EPIC-SCAN and PFSA programs. More than 16,500 participants were trained with 3,465 medical professionals through EPIC-SCAN and 13,112 participants trained through PFSA.

Since the last APSR submission, the majority of mandated reporter trainings continued to be delivered through a live, virtual training platform due to pandemic restrictions. However, while it was anticipated that the number of mandated reporter trainings would decline due to the change in training delivery, this did not occur.

In SFY 2021-22, in-person trainings for the EPIC-SCAN and PFSA mandated reporter training programs will continue. The live, virtual training platform will also continue to be used due to the success seen in this delivery method over the past two years. A new solicitation for the mandated reporter training for medical professionals, currently titled EPIC-SCAN, is due to be released.

Additionally, both EPIC-SCAN and PFSA reviewed training curriculums through a racial equity lens. Revisions to the curriculums will occur in SFY 2021-2022. PFSA launched a new curriculum for mandated reporters titled, "Responding to Disclosures of Child Abuse". This new training meets all the requirements for training mandated reporters on recognizing and reporting child abuse, with the added component of helping professionals and volunteers learn how to respond to child disclosures in a way that is sensitive and supportive to the child, but without tainting the child's memory. Recently, PFSA has begun targeted training of identified vulnerable populations – specifically the Amish communities and the deaf and hearing-impaired communities.

In SFY 2020-21, the CWRC continued to offer a free online three-hour course titled Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania. Over 288,600 participants completed the course during SFY 2020-21. Of that number, over 156,000 trainee records were processed and sent to the Department of State for licensure renewal. Additionally, 14% (or 41,489) of trainees who completed the course indicated they had previously made a report of child abuse. Feedback continues to be overwhelmingly positive with over 91% of training participants reporting they feel more confident in their skills and that they will be able to use what they learned in the course to recognize and report child abuse. This training will continue to be offered in SFY 2022-23.

Child Abuse Prevention and Education (CAPE) Grants

The CAPE program promotes the prevention of child abuse and neglect through effective prevention programs that emphasize positive, safe, and healthy family development as its foundation. This is accomplished by the PFSA through the management of a network of subcontractors throughout the state to ensure parent education and support groups are provided to as many families in need as possible. PFSA implements two research-supported, trauma-informed and culturally sensitive parenting curricula. *Families in Recovery: Strengthening Connections One Day at A Time*, is for caregivers living in recovery from substance use disorder. *ACT Raising Safe Kids* (American Psychological Association) provides nine-week violence prevention programming for caregivers of children ages 0 to 8. PFSA provides ongoing training for staff and volunteers who interact with parents, foster parents, extended family and children in prevention programs. Training is available on-site and via webinars or remote learning opportunities. CAPE is also responsible for supporting PFSA in the statewide "Blue Ribbon Campaign" to promote Child Abuse Prevention month in April. This includes developing and distributing press releases announcing child abuse prevention month through print, radio, and television media to promote the protection of Pennsylvania's children during the month of April.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

In SFY 2020-21, the CAPE program served approximately 5,969 families and 5,991 children. The CAPE program continued efforts to improve the collection of program data and outcomes and expand the number of affiliate agencies. Due to pandemic restrictions, all site visits and trainings were offered virtually, and site visit discussions focused on program changes, expectations of CAPE affiliate agencies, and the need and availability of technical assistance and resources.

The ACT Raising Safe Kids curriculum was not offered during much of the year because the program developer restructured program staff and used these resources to begin developing guidance for virtual delivery of the program. The Families in Recovery curriculum continued to be evaluated to be considered as an evidenced-based program. The program also added additional areas of support for new and current facilitators.

To help raise awareness during Child Abuse Prevention Month, the CAPE program offered several online resources, a limited flag planting event at the Harrisburg Capitol, a virtual speaker series, and a virtual recognition of blue-ribbon champions across the state. Additionally, messaging from state leaders was coordinated via social media. Many of these traditional in-person activities and events were moved to virtual settings due to the pandemic restrictions.

In SFY 2021-22, the CAPE program will continue to expand their network of affiliate agencies, provide virtual and in-person trainings and site visits, and plan both in-person and virtual events for Child Abuse Prevention Month in April 2022.

Safe Haven

Safe Haven, also known as Act 201 of 2002, the Pennsylvania Newborn Protection Act, stipulates that a parent of a newborn may leave their child in the care of a hospital without being criminally liable, providing that the parent expresses orally, or through his or her conduct, that they intend for the hospital to accept the child, and that the newborn is not a victim of child abuse or criminal conduct. Act 201 defines a newborn as “a child that is less than 28 days of age as reasonably determined by a physician.” Safe Haven is a primary prevention program specifically intended to prevent newborn death due to unsafe abandonment.

The law was enacted December 9, 2002, and became effective on February 7, 2003, and amended by Act 91 of 2014 and Act 68 of 2017. Act 91 of 2014 permits a police officer at a police station to accept a newborn and Act 68 of 2017 allows newborn relinquishment with emergency services providers on the grounds of an entity employing the emergency services providers. The 2017 amendment also permits Safe Haven locations the option to install an incubator for the care of a newborn accepted under this law.

DHS maintains a statewide toll-free helpline, 1-866-921-7233 (SAFE), and the Safe Haven website, www.secretsafe.org to ensure accurate information and resources for pregnant women and new mothers is available. To increase public awareness about the Safe Haven Program, DHS created educational materials which are available on the website. DHS also runs a statewide online media campaign that directs audiences to the toll-free helpline number and to the secretsafe.org website.

Since the law was enacted in 2002, over 36 newborns have been received as Safe Haven babies. OCYF bulletin, 3490-11-01, Implementation of Act 201 of 2002, outlines the requirements of the PA Safe Haven program and is available on www.secretsafe.org website under *Resources*.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

OCYF is committed to promoting awareness and providing ongoing communication to citizens and stakeholders who want information about the Safe Haven Program with 2020 marking the 18th year of the Safe Haven law's enactment. During SFY 20-21, there were a total of two newborns relinquished from four counties that included Fayette and York.

For individuals inquiring about the Safe Haven program by telephone, OCYF ensures all information on Safe Haven is provided to the CONTACT Helpline staff who manage the toll-free Safe Haven Helpline. The Helpline staff saw a reduction in calls this reporting period. They assisted 13 callers during this reporting period with approximately 72% of callers being female. Most calls are informational in nature where CONTACT Helpline staff provide callers referral information on community resources. During April, May and June 2020, more callers wanted someone to provide listening support.

Promotional materials remain available on the secretsafe.org website under Resources. Since the law was enacted in 2002, 50 newborns have been received as Safe Haven babies.

Family Preservation and Family Support Services

Family Centers (FCs) play a significant role in service delivery in communities, preventing children and families from entering into the formal child welfare system, and achieving outcome goals that have a broad influence in their communities. FC sites are the essence of community-based services in Pennsylvania and are designed to promote the well-being of children and families. FCs are based on the philosophy that the most effective way to ensure the healthy growth and development of children is to support their families and the communities in which they live. Two major components of this philosophy are that parents/families are the child's first and most important teacher and that the integrity of the family must be supported and respected.

FCs provide services in ways that are accessible for families, including direct contact at the FC, evidenced-based home visitation, and referrals to other community organizations. The FCs engage in targeted outreach and innovative, non-traditional, service delivery approaches that enable families to access services that in the past may have been inaccessible due to geographic isolation or other barriers. Once enrolled in the FC, families are supported through a Systems of Care model of least restrictive community supports. This method of service delivery empowers families to become self-sufficient through adult education, training, employment, personal development and cultivation of a network of natural supports. FCs use an evidence-based home visitation model as one of their curriculums for enrolled families. In SFY 2018-19 all FCs selected Parents as Teachers as their evidence-based home visiting model. In SFY 2019-20 and beyond, FCs will be allowed to select any evidence-based home visiting model located on the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE). The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) launched the HomVEE review to conduct a thorough and transparent review of the home visiting research literature. HomVEE provides an assessment of the evidence of effectiveness for home visiting models that target families with pregnant women and children from birth to kindergarten entry.

Family Support

FCs provide Family Support Services and receive Title IV-B funding for Family Support Services. Since the inception of FCs in 1992, services were integrated and provided to help children and families become healthy, safe and self-sufficient in their communities. FC contribute to positive outcomes for children and families influence the broader child welfare outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being as well as community-level outcomes. The vision of the FC is that all Pennsylvania children and their families will be healthy, educated and self-sufficient and will be living in a safe home and community. FC grantees are directly tied to their communities. Of the 32 grantees, 12 are school districts and the remaining grantees are County Human Services Offices, County Commissioner Offices, County Intermediate Units or CCYAs. FCs require the development of a shared vision for families and the communities in which they live.

The Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports within the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) which oversees the FC and Promoting Responsible Fatherhood (PRF) initiatives holds the federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant, Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) dollars, and other state funds to support evidence-based home visiting and family support programs. OCDEL ensures that services do not overlap when awarding funding and provides routine monitoring to all grantees to ensure all grant requirements are met. The Bureau also oversees Early Intervention Part B and Part C and ensures that these services supplement services already received by the families through the evidence-based home visiting and family support programs.

The services provided by the FCs include evidence-based home visiting and positive parenting support classes. These services are provided to families referred to

by the courts, CCYA, and local community members. The FC and PRF grantees do not have any specific requirements set upon them as to who they may enroll beyond those set forth in the chosen model or model(s) they are implementing. This non-restrictive method allows FC and PRF grantees to support families in need of services to ensure the prevention of child maltreatment or the placement of a child/children in an out of home setting.

Fatherhood Initiative

The PRF grant is funded with Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) federal funds. Twenty grants are currently operating in Pennsylvania. Research has demonstrated the importance of engaging fathers in the healthy development of their children. PRF grants vary and include a range of services.

- Case management, which includes partnerships established with Mid-Penn Legal Services, domestic relations and juvenile and adult probation to advocate for fathers and their children.
- Assistance and counseling services, which include transportation, housing assistance, emergency food, clothing, furniture and household items. Partnerships were established with the county assistance office and local community resources.
- Job search training which includes GED, employment assistance and referrals, resume preparation, workforce literacy, job readiness training and the partnership with CareerLink for job searching.

PRF uses evidenced-based, evidence-informed practices and models including the following:

- Parents as Teachers, with a focus on the father as the primary recipient;
- Inside/Out Dads for incarcerated dads; and
- 24/7 Dad.

PRF grantees continue to focus their efforts locally and work collaboratively with community partners to enhance services to the families they served. Statewide discussions regarding father engagement have continued because of the partnership with the AOPC and the trends identified from local QSRs. While engaging fathers continues to be a challenge for some agencies, efforts and practices to improve engagement are being implemented through evidence-based/evidence-informed programs and curriculums.

Pennsylvania intends to continue the use of evidence-based, evidence-informed practices and models and to build stronger and more productive relationships between PRF programs and CCYA.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

OCDEL – Family Support Request for Application (RFA)

In SFY 2021-22 OCDEL released a Request for Application (RFA) for the Evidence-Based Home Visiting (EBHV) services and Family Support programs. The PRF program, which is supported by CBCAP funding until June 30, 2022, is included in this RFA. Family Centers were not included in the RFA as these services were previously renewed.

Through the RFA, OCDELs', Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports, is seeking to award funds to qualified Applicants for the implementation or continuation of Family Support Programs, which consist of community-based, high-quality EBHV services, as well as three categories of enhancements to these services: Evidence-Informed Programs, EBHV Model Enhancements, and Program Enhancements.

Family Support Programs help families access a broad array of supports and services, including formal supports (such as EBHV and parenting classes), informal supports (such as providing resources and connecting families to services in the communities), and a community system of services that promote the well-being of families and their children. Such services can take many different forms depending on the strengths and needs of the family, but their overarching goal is to help parents or caregivers enhance skills and resolve problems to promote optimal child development. For this RFA, applicants must apply to implement at least one EBHV Model, and may apply to implement one or more Enhancements. New awards through this RFA are anticipated to begin July 1st, 2022. Grant award contracts awarded through the RFA are intended to be 3-year contracts with the option of two 1-year renewals for a total award period of up to 5-years.

OCDEL – 2020 Family Support Needs Assessment

A Needs Assessment was conducted in 2020 which was a requirement of OCDEL's MIECHV funding. The Needs Assessment conducted expanded well beyond the requirements specified by the MIECHV program using available data from 2018 to 2020. It is important to note that the Needs Assessment was conducted using pre-Covid-19 pandemic data.

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) PolicyLab in collaboration with OCDEL, conducted a county-level needs assessment of the health of children, mothers, and families, as well as the social and environmental circumstances of families and communities across the state. The needs assessment was conducted over the period of January 2019 to October 2020, utilizing multiple methods of data collection, prioritizing a strengths-based, stakeholder-informed approach and infusing community voices. The assessment categorizes Pennsylvania's counties as having "elevated need," "moderate need," and "low need," across six domains: maternal and child health, socioeconomic

status, substance use, child safety and maltreatment, community environment and childcare. Additionally, the report spotlights several local service providers who are making a difference in addressing the elevated needs of their communities.

The 2020 Family Support Needs Assessment is available at the following link: Family Support Needs Assessment (pa.gov) and webpage: https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Pages/Family-Support-Needs-Assessment.aspx. A one page summary document is also available at the following link: FSNA Summary Document 10.19.20[1].pdf (pa.gov) and webpage: https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Documents/FSNA%20Summary%20Document%2010.19.20[1].pdf

OCDEL – Family Support and EBHV Relationship with PCADV

During the reporting period, OCDEL continued a partnership with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) as part of OCDEL's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) efforts. As part of this partnership, all trainings provided were open to OCDEL funded Family Support programs, which includes the Family Centers and PRF programs. These trainings were also made available to Early Intervention (EI) professionals. OCDEL continues to support adults who have or are currently experiencing domestic violence, referred to also as intimate partner violence (IPV), through its contracted partnership with PCADV. The Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) Portal offers all Family Support programs in Pennsylvania with an interactive map where free Domestic Violence Resources can be accessed, as well as information related to local Sexual Assault Centers. This resource is web-based so that contacts can be updated as needed. Through EITA, OCDEL is also able to offer EI and Family Support programs with free resources on working with young children and their families experiencing homelessness.

OCDEL ensures that subject matter experts are utilized as needed, and continued to work with PCADV, providing ongoing technical assistance and professional development opportunities to professionals in the Commonwealth. A domestic violence awareness toolkit was created to educate EI and Family Support staff on how domestic violence may impact the children and families they serve while screening for IPV. The toolkit also aims to provide domestic violence programs with a deeper understanding of the OCDEL network and the services their programs provide within all communities across the Commonwealth.

Through the partnership with PCADV, OCDEL has worked to ensure that the delivery of services work to strengthen and support families to promote safety. This is accomplished by providing home visiting and family support providers a foundational understanding of the intersection of domestic violence and the risk to families. OCDEL works to help Family Support staff further understand the risk and work with trauma-informed responses to domestic violence to break the abuse cycle that can lead to child abuse and neglect among at-risk Pennsylvania families.

PCADV, through support from OCDEL, continued to provide webinars to all Family Support and Home Visiting agencies. These webinars allow OCDEL to continue to share necessary information and resources related to IPV and referrals. While the webinars touch on domestic violence, or IPV, each webinar also focuses on specific correlating topics.

In SFY 2021-22, new processes were shared with LIAs, in the form of an IPV resource. An IPV palm card was developed to aid staff in safely screening caregivers in a conversational manner and talk with caregivers about domestic violence. The physical palm card folds up to a discrete business card size, and the palm card is also available in a virtual format so that the resource can be shared with caregivers via phone or email if needed when conducting virtual home visits.

The palm card has conversational style screening points, as well as a fillable textbox to add Home Visitor or LIA contact information. In recognition of October's Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the palm card was released on September 29, 2021, during a live introductory webinar. The webinar provided all participants with information and strategies for safely using the palm card with clients. In addition, participants learned how to use the palm card in person, virtually, and over the phone, with time to practice in small breakout rooms. The webinar reviewed the concept of the palm card resource, what the card is and how to use it, safely for both the caregiver and Home Visitor, and conversational methods to use the palm card both virtually and in-person.

OCDEL is proud to report that over 67,000 physical palm cards have been printed and mailed directly to Family Support and Home Visiting agencies, and EI programs, to be used when working with caregivers and families who may be experiencing IPV or DV. Because OCDEL and PCADV recognize that many LIAs are providing caregivers and families with virtual services, the palm card resource is also available to all programs in a PDF format, which can be shared with caregivers in a virtual format.

In a joint effort PCADV and OCDEL created and released a state fiscal year 2021 webinar series focused on serving families who are experiencing Domestic Violence. These trainings consisted of three-hour long webinars on the topics specified below. The webinars offered certificates of attendance, often requested by attendees, and were recorded for staff to revisit as needed. To spread further awareness, Early Intervention staff were also invited to attend all the webinars:

- *Recognizing Domestic Violence and Conversational Screening Virtually: Best practices and strategies provided to adapt conversational screening and supporting survivors virtually. (March 2021)*
- *Trauma, Secondary Trauma, and Self-Care: Focused on the foundation of understanding trauma, secondary trauma, and developing meaningful self-care strategies in the context of COVID-19. (May 2021)*

- *Domestic Violence 101 and Conversational Screening: Provided an overview of domestic violence, recognizing domestic violence, and an overview of conversational screening best practices for both in-person and virtual settings. (July 2021)*
- *Domestic Violence and Children: This webinar discussed understanding how domestic violence impacts children both as witnesses to and experiencing intimate partner violence, the impact of trauma on development, and the parent/caregiver bond with the child. (September 2021)*
- *Human Trafficking Across the Lifespan: Explored human trafficking, how it presents in children, adults, and older adults, as well as best practices for supporting survivors. Note that this webinar was presented by both PCADV and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) (November 2021).*

In a joint effort for SFY 2022 PCADV and OCDEL continue to create additional webinar training to provide EI, family support and home visitors with information and resources on important topics relating to domestic violence and their work:

- *Birthing People and Domestic Violence*
  Will focus on unique forms of pregnancy-related abuse and share strategies to support and empower survivors who have experienced it. (March 2022)

- *Traumatic Brain Injury and Domestic Violence*
  Will share information about this frequent, often unrecognized, reality of survivors' lives and offer methods to support survivors who may have a head injury. (May 2022)

- *Adolescent Relationship Abuse*
  Will learn specific methods to ask about relationships with younger people and to provide an empowering response to survivors rooted in their reality. (July 2022)

- *LGBTQ+ Survivors of Domestic Violence*
  Participants will learn how to provide trauma-informed, survivor-centered support for LGBTQ+ survivors of domestic violence. (September 2022)

- *An Introduction to Domestic Violence and Conversational Screening*
  Attendees will learn about the dynamics of domestic violence and methods to screen clients in both virtual and in-person sessions. (December 2022)

PCADV and OCDEL are also excited to announce that a new Community of Practice has been developed focusing on domestic violence. Community of Practice sessions are open to any OCDEL EI or Family Support professional who wants to share

ideas, ask questions, provide feedback, and receive support related to the crucial role of screening for, responding to, and empowering people affected by domestic violence.

OCDEL - Family Support Stakeholder Committee

The Family Support Stakeholder Committee, which was established in February 2011, continued to meet on a quarterly basis during the reporting period. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the meetings were moved seamlessly to a virtual format. Approximately fifty-five representatives from across various state agencies attended, meeting one of OCDEL's MIECHV objectives of having at least 75% attendance. Local home visiting service providers, EBHV Model representatives, technical assistance agencies, and advocacy groups served on the committee.

The committee continues to work towards its previously developed vision statement: "A statewide system of high-quality home visitation services that will, in partnership with families and communities, strengthen, support, and promote maternal and early childhood health, safety, development and education." Family Support Stakeholder Subcommittees began meeting in August of 2019 to build off lessons learned from the feedback given during stakeholders' meetings, and to work together to find innovative ways for marketing and outreach to increase the positive awareness of Home Visiting and Family Support Programs. The subcommittees are:

a. *Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and Data Committee. Goals: Review data and establish and share best practices for data collection to increase data collection, screening, and referrals; identified needs; and recommend trainings.*
b. *Family Support Communications Committee. Goals: Define Family Support in Pennsylvania including and beyond EBHV. Increase family access and stakeholder awareness through the development of a communications plan for Family Support Programs; and coordinate a referral system with partners to increase family participation.*
c. *Innovations in Family Support Programs Committee. Goals: Consider the implementation of Cross Systems Parenting Groups; and discuss and recommend model enhancements.*
d. *Developing Family Support Community Leaders Committee. Goals: Develop a new leader orientation to FS Programs; Develop professional development and technical assistance for FS Programs leaders in business practices including workforce development, funding/budgeting, grant writing, sustainability of funding and data literacy skills for program improvement;*
e. *Build regional Communities of Practice as a source of support for local leaders; and Develop strategies to share with FS Programs related to the retention and recruitment of staff.*

OCDEL recognizes that to support new or ongoing efforts, fresh perspectives must be brought in. OCDEL is currently working on revitalizing the Family Support Stakeholder Committee group after the eligible applicants are selected via the Family

Support Request for Application (RFA) process to ensure that adequate representation is reflected if there are changes to the currently funded Family Support and Home Visiting programs. OCDEL is in the process of renaming the committee, to the Family Support Advisory Committee. OCDEL will ensure that local home visiting service providers, EBHV Model representatives, technical assistance agencies, and advocacy groups continue to serve on the Committee. In an effort to continuously improve the committee's functions, the Family Support Team released a Family Support Advisory Committee Member Survey to garner feedback and potential methods for improvement.

OCDEL – Family Support Monitoring

Monitoring Tool: The current version of the Family Support Monitoring Tool was implemented July 2021 for all Family Support programs, including Family Centers and the PRF programs. Within the first year, the programs were to develop and produce policies and procedures addressing the following: Confidentiality, Early Intervention, and Community Collaboration. In addition, Family Centers and PRF programs were required to provide MOU/MOA documentation with their local Early Intervention programs and other existing home visiting programs. All the documentation was reviewed by their respective EITA Family Support Consultant (FSC). Feedback was provided by the FSC to ensure that all requirements were met.

OCDEL did not conduct on-site monitoring of the programs in FFY 2021. OCDEL, however, had multiple touch points throughout the year through quarterly narratives, monthly enrollment reports, quarterly phone calls and quarterly Family Support Programs Stakeholders Committee meetings, and state and regional family center network meetings. PRF agencies needing more assistance received additional touch points throughout the reporting time and year. Feedback from programs is also collected during quarterly Family Center Network Steering meetings. Family Center directors, that include PRF programs, from each of the four regions of the state, meet with OCDEL to discuss program updates, successes, and challenges. This is an opportunity to share feedback from families, time to discuss barriers or challenges, as well as problem solve.

Enrollment Monitoring: Through ongoing monthly monitoring, OCDEL ensures that locally funded EBHV and Family Support programs are operating at 85% of their stated capacity or meeting 25% of their goal number of families each quarter. OCDEL works collaboratively with each of the EBHV models' technical assistance (Model TAs) staff to support the local programs in several ways. If a program falls below 85% of enrollment or under 25% of a goal, the designated EITA Family Support Consultant assigned to the local program completes an Enrollment Improvement Plan with the local program staff. The Model TAs can offer additional supports and means to retain families. For example, in NFP the staff can adjust visit schedules and provide visits through video chat and telephone calls.

Local program staff turnover negatively affects enrollment and creates delays in services. In addition, the training costs, and expenses with bringing on new staff

members are increased when there is high turnover in the program. Throughout the pandemic we have seen an increase in staff vacancies and a decrease in qualified applicants. Local programs continuously implement new strategies to recruit staff. Some examples are bus wraps, yard signs, and online job postings. However, the most popular way LIAs share open job positions is through word of mouth, which the COVID-19 pandemic has hindered since the onset of the pandemic. Newly funded local programs awarded through the RFA process will be allowed time to grow the model(s) in their communities to reach the 85% enrollment compliance.

Data Monitoring: In addition to monitoring enrollment, OCDEL along with the EITA Family Support Consultants have started to review data entry and timeliness for performance measures. This has currently only been measured for our MIECHV funded programs but will expand beyond just MIECHV to all programs selected through the RFA process and the continued Family Centers. During FFY 2021, for MIECHV funded families, 84.5% of all 19 Performance Measures due were completed within 90 days of the scheduled due date. This represented a small increase from the prior FFY. To improve the number of measures completed and improve quality of data, OCDEL is working with the data system team to add additional options for LIAs to enter data as not completed. This will provide more information about the circumstances of why a measure was not able to be collected.

To improve data quality, OCDEL conducted the Data Literacy Webinar Series for Family Support and Home Visiting Staff. The webinar series covered several requested topics including the origin of the data collection requirements, reasoning for the established data collection timelines, and the ways that data is used after being collected and reported on. LIAs had requested training on these topics for home visitors and other agency staff as background knowledge to understand the importance of data quality and reporting.

The webinar series then covered upcoming tools available for LIAs to analyze data. First, an export of agency demographic data was created to allow programs to export demographic data in real time over a custom reporting period. OCDEL plans to add another export that displays a summary of upcoming Performance Measure due dates, with the goal of easing the process of monitoring upcoming measures due and reducing missing data.

OCDEL released a revamped version of our web-based Data System Guide that contains guidance for LIAs on data collection, data entry, and general use of the PA Family Support Data System. The data guide contains definitions and FAQs related to all demographic and Performance Measure data points, as well as screenshots guides and short videos of Data System functions and data entry processes. A webinar was also held to introduce the data system guide and inform LIAs of the contents and navigation of the updated website. The website update and webinar took place in October 2021. The data guide is available at the following link: Data System Guide – Pennsylvania Family Support Programs (pa-home-visiting.org) and web address: http://www.pa-home-visiting.org/data-system-guide/

Performance Measure Data Monitoring: Each year OCDEL provides all local programs with a summary of their performance measure data for their OCDEL funded EBHV programs. The percentages in the report are based upon the federal MIECHV definitions for calculating each performance measure. Prior year reports are available at: http://www.pa-home-visiting.org/providers/#Reports. The local agencies report has an additional column which show their data for all EBHV funded by OCDEL in the prior SFY. Family Centers and Fatherhood programs that are utilizing EBHV as defined by HomVEE would be included in the data below:

Table 1. OCDEL Agency and State Performance Measures, SFY 2020-21

2020 21 Agency and State Performance Measures									
			National Benchmark	PA FFY 17 18	PA FFY 18 19	PA FFY 19 20	PA SFY 19 20	PA FFY 20 21	PA SFY 20 21
Measure	Benchmark Area	Performance Measure	All States MIECHV 2018 19	MIECHV Performance	MIECHV Performance	MIECHV Performance	All EBHV Prog. Performance	MIECHV Performance	All EBHV Prog. Performance
1	I	Preterm Birth*	11.0%	15.0%	12.6%	8.8%	9.4%	12.0%	12.3%
2	I	Breastfeeding	42.7%	31.6%	23.2%	32.6%	29.8%	33.4%	30.4%
3	I	Depression Screening	80.7%	75.2%	77.7%	72.2%	73.5%	79.3%	77.2%
4	I	Well Child Visit	66.6%	62.1%	58.0%	72.3%	88.1%	74.4%	81.5%
5	I	Postpartum Care	67.5%	45.8%	59.8%	87.7%	85.9%	89.4%	87.9%
6	I	Tobacco Cessation Referrals	53.7%	26.5%	23.7%	9.1%	31.3%	27.3%	32.3%
7	II	Safe Sleep	54.7%	42.4%	20.1%	48.2%	42.3%	53.9%	52.6%
8	II	Child Injury*	4.0%	4.0%	9.0%	8.1%	6.1%	6.0%	7.1%
9	II	Child Maltreatment*	6.7%	N/A	1.6%	5.2%	4.3%	1.9%	0.6%
10	III	Parent Child Interaction	67.4%	73.3%	80.5%	54.6%	63.7%	54.6%	47.8%
11	III	Early Language and Literacy Activities	74.6%	66.2%	56.5%	67.9%	66.2%	68.3%	61.4%
12	III	Developmental Screening	74.8%	76.4%	58.7%	75.4%	80.4%	73.9%	74.1%
13	III	Behavioral Concerns	91.1%	93.2%	94.5%	96.9%	94.6%	96.6%	95.3%

14	IV	Intimate Partner Violence Screening	80.8%	79.3%	75.9%	69.1%	67.0%	55.4%	58.7%
15	V	Primary Caregiver Education	29.9%	36.2%	54.8%	38.9%	40.0%	32.8%	41.4%
16	V	Continuity of Insurance Coverage	79.0%	62.9%	73.1%	78.0%	81.6%	93.9%	88.4%
17	VI	Completed Depression Referrals	41.4%	30.3%	16.3%	33.1%	39.5%	42.2%	36.0%
18	VI	Completed Developmental Referrals	56.8%	71.8%	100.0%	97.1%	96.5%	93.1%	91.6%
19	VI	Intimate Partner Violence Referrals	55.9%	21.4%	30.0%	60.2%	58.5%	57.6%	61.3%

*Indicates a Performance Measure where the intended direction is a decrease

Measure	Benchmark Area	Performance Measure	PA SFY 20-21 Numerator	PA SFY 20-21 Denominator	PA SFY 20-21 Performance
1	I	Preterm Birth*	259	2109	12.3%
2	I	Breastfeeding	522	1718	30.4%
3	I	Depression Screening	2302	2980	77.2%
4	I	Well Child Visit	6789	8333	81.5%
5	I	Postpartum Care	1550	1764	87.9%
6	I	Tobacco Cessation Referrals	21	65	32.3%
7	II	Safe Sleep	2220	4220	52.6%
8	II	Child Injury*	673	9521	7.1%
9	II	Child Maltreatment*	71	12201	0.6%
10	III	Parent Child Interaction	3520	7366	47.8%

11	*III*	*Early Language and Literacy Activities*	*6096*	*9921*	*61.4%*
12	*III*	*Developmental Screening*	*3230*	*4358*	*74.1%*
13	*III*	*Behavioral Concerns*	*94680*	*99363*	*95.3%*
14	*IV*	*Intimate Partner Violence Screening*	*1884*	*3208*	*58.7%*
15	*V*	*Primary Caregiver Education*	*975*	*2353*	*41.4%*
16	*V*	*Continuity of Insurance Coverage*	*7306*	*8265*	*88.4%*
17	*VI*	*Completed Depression Referrals*	*41*	*114*	*36.0%*
18	*VI*	*Completed Developmental Referrals*	*87*	*95*	*91.6%*
19	*VI*	*Intimate Partner Violence Referrals*	*95*	*155*	*61.3%*

*Indicates a Performance Measure where the intended direction is a decrease

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI): In addition to the Data Webinar Series, a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) webinar series was also released. In February of 2020, the Department of Human Services released a Request for Information (RFI) to assist the Department in the following:

- *Gain awareness of the presence and scope of existing Family Support programs;*
- *Solicit input regarding core components and costs of successful Family Support programs; and*
- *Ascertain local interest in the development of Family Support programs.*

This RFI was seeking information to assist in developing the direction and next procurement for department-funded Family Support programs. For the purpose of this RFI Family Support programs include OCDEL funded; Evidence-Based Home Visiting programs, Family Centers, Parenting Classes, and Fatherhood Programs. The Department, with OCDEL, used the feedback to release the competitive Request for Application (RFA) mentioned above.

A great deal of responses to the RFI requested in-person and virtual training on Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, no in-person trainings or in-person personal coaching sessions were able to be carried out. However, to support the requested training CQI, the Family Support Team worked to create the Continuous Quality Improvement Learning Initiative Webinar Series for

Family Support and Home Visiting Staff. The CQI Learning Initiative webinar series was designed to help Family Support and Home Visiting staff further understand what CQI entails, and why CQI is a key component of ensuring a high-quality program's success. The webinar series is composed of seven different one-hour webinars. The CQI Learning Initiative Webinar Series consisted of the following webinars:

i. *CQI 101 – What is CQI and Why Is It Important?*
    1. *Orientation, objectives, and expectations for the CQI Learning Initiative*
    2. *MIECHV CQI requirements*
    3. *Key principles of CQI and the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle*
    4. *Writing a SMART Aim statement*
    5. *Basics of designing a Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle*

ii. *CQI 102 – Establishing a CQI Team*
    1. *Mitigating resistance by understanding the psychology of change*
    2. *Identifying who should be at the table: CQI Teams*
    3. *Establishing roles and duties on a CQI Team*
    4. *Implementing and hardwiring changes as a team*

iii. *CQI 103 – Making Informed Decisions Using Data*
    1. *Guidance on selecting CQI projects*
    2. *Using data to make informed decisions and write SMART Aim statements*
    3. *Identifying changes to test*
    4. *Learning from variation and interpreting run charts*
    5. *Analyzing root causes of problems*

iv. *CQI 104 – Strategies For Using CQI Tools*
    1. *Tips for PDSA cycles: What tools and activities are useful? (5 Whys, Fishbone Diagram, etc.)*
    2. *Process Mapping*
    3. *Developing your team's theory for change (Key Driver Diagrams)*

v. *CQI 105 – How To Scale Up and Sustain Improvement Activities*
    1. *Learning about structures to spread changes*
    2. *Running "ramps" of PDSA cycles*
    3. *Ramp planning to detail how to scale-up testing of change ideas*
    4. *Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Change Ideas*

vi. *CQI 106 – Using Program Data to Evaluate Progress*
    1. *Defining your measures of a CQI project*
    2. *Understanding the role of measurement for improvement*
    3. *Types of measures and building a measurement strategy*
    4. *Review of Run Charts*

vii. CQI 107 – How to Communicate Your CQI Results

1. *Learning about structures to spread changes*
2. *Holding onto gains and how to articulate your findings*
3. *Communicating CQI projects to your community or families: The good, the bad and the ugly*
4. *Moving Forward: What resources or assistance is needed?*

The CQI webinar series can be viewed at the follow webpage: http://www.pa-home-visiting.org/cqi-guide/.

In addition to the CQI and Data training and guides, a Fiscal guide is in the process of being developed. Currently fiscal videos are available on budgeting, budget expenditure reporting, and budget revisions as they relate to OCDEL's Family Support Data Collection System. These short videos are available here: http://www.pa-home-visiting.org/fiscal-guide/.

OCDEL – Strengthening Families Leadership Team

OCDEL is continuing work with the Pennsylvania Strengthening Families Leadership Team and assisted in the development of the 2021-2023 Pennsylvania Strengthening Families Leadership Team Strategic Plan. This strategic plan's vision is to ensure that Pennsylvania families will use a seamless network of committed partners who provide strength-based family supports. The mission is that Pennsylvania, through the Strengthening Families Leadership Team, works to sustain and weave the Five Protective Factors, which are social and emotional competence of children, knowledge of parenting and child development, social connections, concrete supports in times of need and parental resilience, into policies, program and practice across child and family service systems. OCDEL, as part of the Pennsylvania Strengthening Families Leadership Team, has developed a work plan which aligns with the following goals and activities:

- *Convene people, programs and systems around understanding and utilization of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors (SFPF) Framework so that systems planning and policy making is influenced to prepare and respond to families in ways that promote healthy homes and communities.*
- *Promote SFPF Framework in multiple systems that serve families so that families experience the opportunity to build protective factors as a foundation for a strong family.*
- *Encourage staff and volunteers in multiple systems to take part in professional development that facilitates the understanding of the SFPF Framework and their power to create environments where families can build protective factors.*
- *Create opportunities for family members served by systems to take part in leadership development activities that introduce and strengthen their voices in shaping the systems that serve and support families.*

- *Determine impact of promotion, professional development and leadership activities.*

In 2015-2016, in an effort to increase family engagement and parent leadership, the Strengthening Families Leadership Team, OCDEL, and Center for Schools and Communities (CSC) formally brought the Be Strong model of Parent Cafés to PA by partnering with Be Strong Families in a certification process for instructors. Parent Cafés are physically and emotionally safe spaces where parents and caregivers talk about the challenges and successes of raising a family. Through individual deep self-reflection and peer-to-peer learning, participants explore their strengths, learn about the Protective Factors, and create strategies from their own knowledge and experiences to help strengthen their families. Cafés are structured discussions that use the principles of adult learning and family support. They are highly sustainable with training reinforcement to an approach that engages and affirms parents as leaders.

Participants leave Parent Cafés feeling inspired, energized, and excited to put into practice what they've learned. This initiative was so successful that Pennsylvania wanted to expand upon this great work and were able to do so with the Preschool Development Planning Grant. These funds allowed for the expansion of teams into new communities and the growth of the Instructor Team to twelve instructors. As a Certified Training Partner with Be Strong, the PA Instructor Team from CSC has certified more than 60 local teams to hold cafes in their community.

In November of 2020 members of the training team were trained in the online format. To date, we have led 9 virtual cafes with families receiving Early Intervention and Family Support Services. Parent Leaders were a part of the planning team and had an active role in each Café. Throughout the series of 9 cafes, there were 100 parent participants and 25 family leaders.

OCDEL – Family, Caregiver, Parent Involvement

OCDEL hosted a virtual conference in April of 2021 with over 800 registrants from Early Intervention, Family Support Programs and Parents. Parents not only attended but presented. Nikki Durler, a parent from Children's Advocacy Center of Lawrence County, presented with the Family Support Consultants in a session titled, "Be Strong Families Parent Cafés and Virtual Cafés Engaging Families and Growing Leadership in a Virtual World." Participants learned how implementing cafes in local programs is a proven way to foster family engagement.

Parents as Partners in Professional Development (P3D) is another way that caregivers are able to meaningfully participate. The program brings together families of children receiving Early Intervention and/or Family Support services. Family members share their experiences to improve training and resources. P3D promotes connections between families. Families are encouraged to link to other families and take part in leadership development. More about this can be viewed here: http://www.eita-pa.org/families/connect-and-get-involved/.

OCDEL – EBHV Family Survey

Accountability and feedback are important components of Pennsylvania's family support and home visiting programs. OCDEL values input from families who participate in our EBHV programs. As we've come to the end of a funding cycle, OCDEL wanted to reach out to families who are currently participating in current EBHV programs. The information received from families will help to improve EBHV programs and practices. The Home Visiting survey is an online satisfaction survey open to all caregivers who participate in a EBHV program. The survey is designed to gather information about family experiences in their home visiting programs.

The results from the survey will be used for federal reporting and to guide local and state program improvements. All information will be kept confidential. Local programs will receive summary information of their results but will not be able to identify the family or any personally identifiable information. The online survey opened on April 1, 2022 and will remain open until June 30, 2022. A recorded webinar describes the survey process and ideas for how local programs can disseminate the QR code to the survey. A flyer is available in both English and Spanish to help with dissemination to families. The recording and materials are available at: http://www.pa-home-visiting.org/family-survey/.

OCDEL – Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Grant

In August 2021, OCDEL was awarded $1.2 million for the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS): Health Integration Prenatal-to-Three project, for a 5-year grant period. OCDEL recognizes that there are a variety of early childhood, maternal child health and human services available to pregnant and parenting families of infants and toddlers across the commonwealth; however the complex needs of these vulnerable young families during the prenatal to three (P-3) critical period is rarely met by one service system and many times each family and child service system is unaware of the other service systems available to support pregnant and parenting families of infants and toddlers or how to access the systems and supports available.

OCDEL's ECCS Project seeks to support a sustainable, integrated, comprehensive system of care accessible to all pregnant and parenting families of infants and toddlers during this critical period. OCDEL's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Early Childhood Lead and ECCS Family Lead were hired in November 2021 and lead cross systems work to increase statewide access to integrated, effective, equitable, culturally appropriate, evidence-based early developmental health and family well-being. Existing initiatives and councils will be leveraged as opportunities to intentionally come together to look at data/trends, gaps in service and vulnerabilities of young families. When managed under one umbrella agency, the office is well-positioned to support the priorities and goals of both grants to serve Pennsylvania's P-3 population, ultimately supporting caregivers and families' positive outcomes.

During SFY 2020-21 programs continued to do well transitioning families when reunification occurred. Programs continued to use specific criteria to identify ways to support families post-reunification, including progress meetings at ninety days and six months (when families continue with services) to determine continued need. Families can opt out of continued services as well once reunification occurs, giving them some control over their circumstances. For most of the programs, however, this was not a significant challenge since many programs had connections to post-reunification support services prior to the change in language.

Programs continued to use creative ways to engage families during part of SFY 2020-21 while restrictions due to the pandemic were still strict. Programs continued to use the virtual platforms as necessary until they could return safely to in-person services. For some programs this was a seamless transition; however, others in more densely populated areas continued to struggle at times throughout the FY. One program struggled with staffing issues and the county opted to allow other programs to use their allotment since the program was unsuccessful in providing services to any families. Several programs got unexpected funds that helped them manage their program needs.

Transportation and housing are two of the biggest barriers for families. Programs across the state discussed the challenges in meeting these needs during a pandemic and continue to work on creative ways to assist families in need in general. Unfortunately, with the pandemic programs that had lined up volunteers to provide transportation were unable to use them because of fear of exposure. Affordable housing continues to be an area of concern. During the pandemic a rent moratorium was offered, which helped those in housing, but once those protections were lifted, many folks could not recover fast enough to maintain their housing, resulting in many more housing issues. Community connections have been a challenge since the pandemic, as agencies are hesitant to offer supports in person, which for many families is what they needed. This is a continued area of focus.

Tracking quarterly outcomes continued to be submitted using the online system. Data provided allows for identification of services being provided, unduplicated numbers of families and children served, and trends in service provision. During SFY 2020-21, approximately 430 families and 639 children were served through the FR programs with reunification occurring for 23% of the children. Of those families and children being reunified, 71% received post-reunification services.

The Annual FR Statewide Event was held during SFY 2020-2021. Again because of the pandemic the event was offered through an online platform for virtual learning and connection. This year's attendance was well over double that usually attend, in part because of not having to travel. This year the event focused on strategies for using family reunification with unhoused and incarcerated parents and the challenges that these populations have. There were two panel discussions; one was staff sharing their strategies for good engagement, and the other was a birth mom and foster mom sharing their stories of reunification. Feedback offered by attendees expressed how amazing the presentations were, and they always appreciate real stories from those with lived

experience. The evaluations from participants indicated that for next year they do want a hybrid event so that more can attend. Plans are in the works for the event to be held June 29, 2022.

Planned activities for SFY 2021-22 include continued movement back to in-person services, ways to use virtual or hybrid platforms to meet the needs of the families and encourage engagement, the annual statewide event, continued building of community connections to enhance service provisions, and exploring housing and transportation options for families.

Child Protective and General Protective Services

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the child welfare system is state supervised, and county administered. DHS is required to provide telephone and internet access to receive reports of child abuse 24 hours a day/seven days a week. The OCYF Regional Offices and CCYAs are the sole civil agencies responsible for receiving and investigating reports of child abuse, as well as receiving and assessing all reports alleging a need for GPS. The regional office and county agencies are required to protect the safety of children regardless of whether the child is in their home or in out-of-home placement. The regional and county agencies also determine the status of suspected child abuse reports.

CPS are those services and activities provided by DHS and each county agency for child abuse cases. If a county agency determines that a child is in danger of further child abuse, the county is required to: (1) accept the case for services (2) provide direct case management, and (3) monitor the provision of services, regardless of whether the services are provided directly from the county or private agencies.

A county agency may request protective custody only if the immediate safety and well-being of the child requires removal from the setting in which the alleged child abuse occurred. When a child is moved to protective custody, it may not be maintained longer than 72 hours without an informal hearing. The outcome of the informal hearing determines if protective custody will continue and what processes need to be followed by the county agency.

The county agency is required to provide, arrange, or otherwise make available the following services for the prevention and treatment of child abuse: emergency medical services; self-help groups to encourage self-treatment of individuals who have abused or at high risk of abusing children; and establish and maintain multidisciplinary teams composed of professionals from a variety of disciplines for the purpose of preventing, educating and treating child abuse.

GPS are those services and activities provided by each county agency for cases requiring protective services, as defined by DHS. Each county agency is responsible for administering a GPS program to children that is consistent with the agency's objectives to:

- Keep children safely in their own homes, whenever possible;
- Prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children;
- Overcome problems that could result in dependency;
- Provide temporary, substitute placement in the home of a relative, another individual who has a significant relationship with the child or the child's family, a foster family home or residential childcare facility for children in need of this care;
- Reunite children safely with their families, whenever possible, when children are in temporary substitute care who cannot be returned to their own home; and
- Provide services and care ordered by the court for children who have been adjudicated dependent.

The county agency is required to use a DHS approved risk assessment process for GPS, and to comply with OCYF policy regarding established response times for reports made to county agencies that are designated as GPS reports.

The county agency is required to develop a family service plan as well as monitor the provision of services and evaluate the effectiveness of the services provided under the plan through the agency or private entity. When a case has been accepted for services, the county agency is required to monitor the safety of the child and assure that contacts are made with the child, parents or service providers. The contact may occur either directly by a county agency worker or through the purchase of service, by phone or in person but face-to-face contacts with the parent and the child must occur as often as necessary for the protection of the child. The county agency is required to aid the child and the family in obtaining benefits and services for which they may qualify under federal, state and local programs.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

During this reporting period, OCYF released policy guidance entitled "Completing Outcome Narratives; the Allegation Outcome Explanation and Investigation (overall) Outcome Explanation portions of the Child Protective Service Investigation Report (CY-48 Form)". Title 23, Pa. C. S., Chapter 63, the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law (CPSL), requires investigative agencies to make status determinations at the conclusion of child abuse investigations, also known as CPS investigations. The purpose of this guidance is to provide information and support to OCYF Regional Offices and CCYAs when completing outcome narratives while making and finalizing status determinations. The guidance also addresses OCYF's belief that outcome narratives serve as critical documents to the Courts when making decisions regarding perpetrators who appeal indicated or founded status determinations.

During this reporting period OCYF also drafted policy guidance entitled, "Act 54 of 2018 Amendments to the Child Protective Services Law Regarding Expungement". Upon its release in June of 2021, county agencies were provided information and support regarding CPSL amendments that require general protective services reports,

determined to be valid by the county agency, be maintained in the statewide database for 10 years (was five years prior to Act 54) or until the youngest child identified in the most recent general protective services report reaches 23 years of age, whichever occurs first. Additionally, this guidance addresses Act 54 amendments to the CPSL that allows for county agencies to indefinitely maintain information regarding protective services reports that have been expunged in the statewide database, for access by the county agency to assist in future risk and safety assessments and research.

In July of 2021, the revised Model Set of Standards for Pennsylvania's MDITs was released. This Model Set of Standards provides guidance on updated best practices and coordination of MDITs, while providing examples and resources. This document was developed in order to provide counties with standardized guidance about the effective development and ongoing operations of the county's MDIT and investigation protocols as required by the CPSL. As before, this document was a collaborative effort by professionals from law enforcement, children and youth services, prosecution/District Attorney's offices, mental health services, substance use disorder services, medical services, disability rights advocacy services, children's advocacy centers, victim services, as well as child and family advocacy services and state government. This Model Set of Standards is intended to generate meaningful dialogue, produce objective assessment of community strengths and challenges, and trigger changes in policy and practice where they are deemed necessary. This update to the Model Set of Standards represents the next, but not final step, in Pennsylvania's long-standing commitment to promoting a child's best interest and justice through multidisciplinary investigations and interventions.

Throughout the reporting period, OCYF leadership continued to engage legislators and stakeholders in discussing potential amendments to the CPSL, resulting in the introduction of Senate Bill 871. The proposed amendments focus on CPS and GPS expungement timeframes, the definition of child abuse, the child abuse fatality and near fatality process, incident notification protocol procedures and drug testing.

In June of 2021 Governor Tom Wolf signed Act 42 of 2021, amending the CPSL and 18 Pa.C.S.(Crimes and Offenses) to further provide for cooperation and information sharing between law enforcement and county agencies relating to child abuse investigations. Another legislative accomplishment enacted in June of 2021 was Act 53 of 2021. Act 53 of 2021 amended the CPSL to create the Task Force on Child Pornography, tasked with reviewing and recommending improvements relating to the recognition, investigation and prosecution of child pornography, including but not limited to necessary changes in State statutes, practices, policies and procedures.

OCYF continues to review, analyze, and support legislation that further protects and better serves children, youth and families across our Commonwealth.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

CAPTA provides federal funding to states in support of child maltreatment prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities. On July 22, 2016, the President signed into law the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) of 2016 which amended Sections 106(b)(2)(B)(ii) and (iii) of CAPTA to remove the term “illegal”, as it refers to substance abuse, and to require states to develop plans of safe care which address the health and substance abuse treatment needs of both the infant and the affected family member or caregiver.

On June 20, 2018, Pennsylvania enacted House Bill 1232, Printer’s Number 3782, now known as Act 54 of 2018, which amended Section 6386 of the CPSL to align with the 2016 changes to CAPTA through CARA. Section 6386 now requires health care providers to immediately give notice or cause notice to be made DHS if the provider is involved in the delivery or care of a child under one year of age and the health care provider determines, based on standards of professional practice, that the child was born affected by substance use or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Act 54 rescinded the changes made in Pennsylvania by Act 15 of 2016 which had exempted health care providers from filing a report when the child’s mother was under the care of a prescribing medical professional and using the drug as directed by the prescribing medical professional. Act 54 also removed the word “illegal” in reference to substance use and added the requirement that Plans of Safe Care include the health and substance use treatment needs of the child’s family/caregiver.

This notification and any transmittal to the county children and youth agency by DHS shall not constitute a report of child abuse, per § 6386(a.1). Further, Act 54 of 2018 requires DHS, in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) and Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), to develop written protocols regarding Plans of Safe Care. The protocols must include, but are not limited to:

- Definitions and evidence-based screening tools to be utilized by health care providers to identify a child born affected by substance use or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure or FASD;
- Notification to the department that a child born affected by substance use or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure or FASD has been born and identified.
    - The ongoing involvement of the county agency after taking into consideration the individual needs of the child and parents may not be required;
- Collection of data to meet federal and state reporting requirements;
- Identification, informed by an assessment of the needs of the child and parents/caregivers, of the most appropriate lead agency for developing, implementing, and monitoring a plan of safe care, informed by a multidisciplinary team meeting that is held prior to the child’s discharge from the health care facility.

    - Team members may include: public health agencies, maternal and child health agencies, home visitation programs, substance use disorder prevention and treatment providers, mental health providers, public and private children and youth agencies, early intervention and developmental service providers, local education agencies, managed care organizations and private insurers and hospitals and medical providers.
- Engagement of the child's parents/caregivers in order to identify the need for access to treatment for any substance use disorder or other physical or behavioral health condition that may impact the safety, early childhood development and well-being of the child.

The state Departments of Health, Human Services and Drug and Alcohol Programs released the *Pennsylvania Plan of Safe Care Guidance* on March 1, 2019. Pennsylvania prioritized ongoing work regarding implementation of Plans of Safe Care in the 2020-2024 CFSP as a key prevention strategy to ensure the safety and well-being of substance exposed infants and their families.

In addition, to support the implementation of Plans of Safe Care, CAPTA funds have also been utilized to support the following activities:

- Continued assistance with the operation of Pennsylvania's three existing CRP, including continued support of the CRP manager position;
- Development and provision of training to mandated reporters under the CPSL;
- Travel for the CAPTA State Liaison Officer and/or designee to attend annual State Liaison Officers Meeting;
- Travel for the CAPTA State Liaison Officer, other program staff and community partner representative to travel to CPS-related conferences and training seminars; and
- Research and evaluation work related to safety assessment.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

Since the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP, implementation of Plans of Safe Care has continued to be a focus of the activities carried out in Pennsylvania under CAPTA. As Plans of Safe Care are considered an integral strategy within the 2020-2024 CFSP, further detail about these activities is outlined later in this document under Safety Objective 2.3.

The ability to capture notifications of substance affected infants was added to the CWIS in October 2020. During calendar year 2021, ChildLine processed 1,014 referrals which contained a notification of a substance affected infant. 710 of these referrals were made GPS reports, and the remaining 304 referrals were made Information Only type referrals.

Child Protective Service Workforce

Pennsylvania allows for varying levels of entry into the county child welfare field as a caseworker and moving into the advanced positions of casework supervisor and casework manager. The education and qualifications for such positions is listed below.

County Caseworker 1 (Local Government)

A bachelor's degree which includes or is supplemented by successful completion of 12 college credits in sociology, social welfare, psychology, gerontology, criminal justice, or other related social sciences; **OR** 2 years of experience as a County Social Services Aide 3 and 2 years of college-level coursework which includes 12 college credits in sociology, social welfare, psychology, gerontology, criminal justice, or other related social sciences; **OR** an equivalent combination of experience and training which includes 12 college credits in sociology, social welfare, psychology, gerontology, criminal justice, or other related social sciences, and one year of experience as a County Social Services Aide 3 or in a similar position performing paraprofessional case management functions.

County Caseworker 2 (Local Government)

Six months of experience as a County Caseworker 1; **OR** successful completion of the County Social Casework Intern program; **OR** A bachelor's degree with a social welfare major; **OR** a bachelor's degree which includes or is supplemented by 12 college credits in sociology, social welfare, psychology, gerontology, criminal justice, or other related social sciences and one year of professional social casework experience in a public or private social services agency; **OR** any equivalent combination of experience and training which includes 12 college credits in sociology, social welfare, psychology, gerontology, criminal justice, or other related social sciences.

County Caseworker 3 (Local Government)

Two years of experience as a County Caseworker 2; **OR** a bachelor's degree in sociology, social welfare, psychology, gerontology, criminal justice, or other related social sciences and three years of professional social casework experience in a public or private social services agency; **OR** any equivalent combination of experience and training which includes 12 college credits in sociology, social welfare, psychology, gerontology, criminal justice, or other related social sciences.

County Casework Supervisor

Two years of professional experience in public or private social work and a bachelor's degree with major coursework in sociology, social welfare, psychology, gerontology, criminal justice, or other related social sciences; **OR** any equivalent combination of experience and education, which includes 12 college credits in

sociology, social welfare, psychology, gerontology, criminal justice, or other related social sciences.

County Casework Manager 1

Three years of experience in public or private social work which included one year in a public welfare program and one year in a supervisory capacity; and a bachelor's degree which includes or is supplemented by 12 college credits in sociology, social welfare, psychology, gerontology, criminal justice, or other related social sciences.

County Casework Manager 2

Four years of experience in public or private social work including two years in a public welfare program and two years in a supervisory capacity; and a bachelor's degree which includes or is supplemented by 12 college credits in sociology, social welfare, psychology, gerontology, criminal justice, or other related social sciences.

Protective Services Workforce Training

Training for the various positions is required by regulation and requires caseworkers to become certified as direct service workers by completing 120 hours of training approved by the Department within 18 months of being hired. The delivery of content is provided through:

- Online courses designed to provide basic knowledge;
- Team-based learning and simulation-type settings; and
- Specific activities to reinforce new knowledge and apply skills to their work.

The 120 hours includes the following courses:

1. Introduction to PA's Child Welfare Practice;
2. Introduction to Engagement;
3. Introduction to Interviewing;
4. Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse;
5. Child Protective Services and General Protective Services;
6. Safety Assessment;
7. Risk Assessment;
8. Permanency and Concurrent Planning;
9. Introduction to Dependency Court Practice;
10. Educational Advocacy;
11. Family Service Planning;
12. Achieving Permanency;
13. Safety and Risk Continuum;
14. Child Development;
15. Personal Safety;

16. Self-Care; and
17. Professional development.

Regulation requires supervisors to be certified as direct service workers, meaning that they have completed the 120 hours of required training as outlined above, but to also complete a Department approved supervisor's training program referred to as the Supervisory Training Series (STS) within 12 months of being promoted to the position of supervisor. The courses in the STS include:

1. The Preparatory and Beginning Phases of Child Welfare Supervision;
2. Living the Mission of Child Welfare;
3. Middle/Work Phase of Supervision;
4. Managing Diversity Through the Employment Process; and
5. Endings and Transitions: Managing Staff Retention, Satisfaction and Separation.

Direct service workers, which include caseworkers and supervisors, are required to complete 20 hours of ongoing training annually.

Pennsylvania does not currently track comprehensive data on the education, qualifications and ongoing training of child protective service professionals at the state level as there is not a statewide information system in place to facilitate ongoing collection and maintenance of the data. OCYF will give consideration to whether elements can be built into the new CW CM to facilitate collection of this data. Currently, this information is maintained at the local county children and youth agency who, per Pennsylvania regulations, is responsible for maintaining personnel files and monitoring of ongoing training requirements. Some information on basic education and qualifications of child welfare workers is captured as part of registration of direct service worker training through the CWRC and is provided annually as part of the state's CAPTA update.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

In August 2021, the redesigned supervisor certification series, Foundations of Supervision (FOS), launched virtually statewide replacing the previous Supervisor Training Series (STS). The FOS series is a total of 65 training hours, including 11 hours of online coursework, 6 hours of field work, and 48 hours of instructor-led Team-Based Learning™ and simulation-based learning sessions. Courses in FOS include:

1. *Introduction*
2. *Supervisory Roles and Professional Boundaries*
3. *Agency Infrastructure and Ecosystem*
4. *Using Child Welfare Data*
5. *Workforce Development*
6. *Coaching and Performance Management*
7. *Supervising in a Dynamic Environment*

8. Professional Development

The CWRC plans to return to many in-person trainings in 2022, including an in-person pilot of FOS starting in July 2022.

Information on child protective service personnel in Pennsylvania's 67 county child welfare agencies for SFY 2020-21 is outlined in the table 2 below.

Table 2. Child Protective Service Personnel, SFY 2020-21

Caseworker 1 (From 20/21 Report)	*Caseworker 2 & 3 (From 20/21 Report)*	*Supervisors (Reflects 20/21 Actuals)*
643	*3,153*	*871*

Source [County Needs-Based Plan and Budget Submissions], [August 2021]

The CWRC coordinates and administers the foundational trainings that establish the basis of knowledge and practice for the Pennsylvania child welfare workforce. As each individual registers for trainings, the CWRC collects basic personnel, demographic, and education data. The data in Tables 3-5. below represents members of the workforce who completed Foundations during SFY 2020-21. These individuals are primarily direct service staff who work in each phase of a child welfare case ranging from screening/intake through in-home services, placement, permanency, and Independent Living services. Participants also include individuals from other staff categories who would benefit from the Foundations training.

Seven hundred and twenty-two individuals completed the Foundations training between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021. Similar demographic data is not available on the full workforce because this information is only updated when an individual accesses the course registration system for further training, and there are many venues through which a worker may satisfy their ongoing education requirements, not just the CWRC offerings.

Table 3. Basic Demographics of CCYA Child Protective Service Personnel, n=722

Age (Mean)	*32*
Age (Median)	*29*
Gender	*83% Female* *17% Male* *<1% Trans male* *<1% Gender queer* *<1% Decline to answer*
Race and Ethnicity **Race total is more than 100% due to selection of multiple races*	*58% White/Caucasian* *33% Black or African American* *11% Decline to Answer* *2% Asian* *88% Not Hispanic or Latino* *5% Hispanic or Latino*

	7% No response

Source [Bridge Database, CWRC], [April 2022]

Table 4. Degree Types for Child Protective Service Personnel, n=722

Bachelor's Degree Other	*63%*
Bachelor's in Social Work	*16%*
Master's Degree Other	*12%*
Master's in Social Work	*5%*
All Other Degree Types	*4%*

Source [Bridge Database, CWRC], [April 2022]

Table 5. Major Types for Child Protective Service Personnel, n=722

Criminology or Criminal Justice/ Corrections	*23%*
Psychology	*16%*
Sociology	*5%*
Education	*4%*
Human Development & Family Studies	*2%*
Other Social Sciences, not listed above	*7%*
Science & Math	*2%*
Communications	*<1%*
All others combined	*20%*
Not reported	*21%*

Source [Bridge Database, CWRC], [April 2022]

During the business process alignment and user story sessions held in 2021 as part of the development of the CW CM, OCYF staff assisted the planning vendor in capturing information that will aid Pennsylvania in reporting more accurate and complete workforce data as requested under CAPTA with the CW CM is implemented.

Through the American Rescue Plan, Pennsylvania received an additional $3.5 million dollars in CAPTA funding. Based on feedback from stakeholders and assessment of needs, OCYF has begun implementation of our plan that will dedicate the additional CAPTA funding toward the following initiatives:

- *Support the development and refinement of a child welfare specific universal assessment tool to streamline the current risk assessment and safety assessment process. This recommendation to shift to a single assessment tool is from the Child Welfare Council and part of Pennsylvania's CFSP and CFSR PIP. Pennsylvania is currently developing a universal assessment based on the Family Advocacy Support Tool (FAST).*
- *Assess and expand mandated reporter curricula to better address reporting biases and racial disparity within the child welfare system. This would be in partnership with the CWRC and the PFSA.*

- *Fund a program for decreasing unsafe sleep deaths in infants. This program has been initiated as a collaboration among multiple agencies in the Allegheny County area and has demonstrated positive results. Funding would be used to expand program statewide.*
- *Utilize funding to build out leadership of youth and families with lived experience with the child welfare system to support bringing the youth and family voice to Child Welfare Council, the YAB, and other tables where child welfare policy and practice are discussed.*
- *Develop and implement a training course similar to mandated reporter training for abuse on how to respond to concerns for neglect. The training would assist reporters in appropriately identifying, reporting, and preventing child neglect.*
- *With remaining funding, support the enhancement of evidence-based prevention programs in communities that lack programs that are identified in Pennsylvania's Family First Title IV-E Prevention Plan.*

Juvenile Justice Transfers

Pennsylvania uses the terms "shared case responsibility" and "non-shared case responsibility" to identify children known to both CCYA and juvenile probation offices (JPO) and those known only to the juvenile justice system, respectively. Children who have shared custody with the juvenile justice system are eligible for Title IV-E reimbursement. These children are individually identified in the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) files and reported in aggregate on a quarterly basis. This reporting is accomplished through submission of a Commonwealth mandated county report that was updated and implemented in July 2008 known as the CY-28. The report contains information on both JPO youth who are in placement but not being reported in AFCARS and JPO youth who are receiving in home services but who are not involved with the CCYA. There is a section dedicated to reporting CCYA to JPO transfers/Involvement to specifically meet CAPTA reporting requirements. This includes a count of children active at the end of the reporting period that are known to both agencies and a count of children known only to juvenile justice. During SFY 2017-2018, 26,556 children were in the care and custody of CCYA; of those, 401 were transferred to the sole custody of the juvenile justice system within that same period.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

During SFY 2020-21, 117 children were transferred from children and youth into JPO custody, a 25% reduction from the 157-youth transferred in SFY 2019-20.

Populations at Greatest Risk of Maltreatment

DHS issues a public report each year which provides information on the operations of the state child abuse hotline, ChildLine, and the protective services provided by the CCYAs. This report is utilized by OCYF and the public to better understand child maltreatment trends in Pennsylvania at both the state and local levels. In development of the 2020-2024 CFSP, analysis of data provided in the *Annual Child*

Protective Services Report[5] from 2018 offered the following insights for identifying the populations at greatest risk for maltreatment:

- Individuals with a parental relationship to the victim child were the most likely to be perpetrators of abuse and most likely to have committed physical abuse or caused bodily injury;
- Female children comprised 61.7% of the victims of substantiated reports with male children representing 38.3%;
- In calendar year 2018, 87.3% of all substantiated child abuse fatality victims and 87.6% of substantiated child abuse near-fatality victims were children under the age of five;
- The most commonly identified determined causes for substantiated child abuse fatalities involved violent acts or lack of supervision; and
- The most commonly identified determined causes for substantiated child abuse near fatalities involved violent acts, ingestion, or a delay or failure to provide medical care.

Children under the age of five comprised approximately a quarter of all reports received at ChildLine and are those children most at risk for becoming victims of the most severe forms of maltreatment. Family support services, the Safe Haven program and work regarding Plans of Safe Care are all efforts currently aimed at working to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect for children under five. Additionally, Pennsylvania's work to reduce child maltreatment deaths outlined later in this document includes a focus on this vulnerable population.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

Children under the age of five continue to represent a population of focus for maltreatment prevention. A review of the data outlined in the 2020 Annual Child Protective Services Report[6] *mirrors findings from the report issued for 2018, and 2019.*

- *Parents continue to be the persons most responsible for the abuse of their children.*
- *Female children continue to represent a higher percentage of victims of substantiated child abuse reports when compared to male children.*
- *With regard to the most severe cases of maltreatment, in calendar year 2020, 87.7% of all substantiated child maltreatment related fatalities involved victims under age five. 87.9% of all child maltreatment near-fatalities involved victims under the age of five.*
- *Violent acts, followed by lack of supervision, continue to remain the top three most commonly identified determined causes for substantiated child abuse*

[5] https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Pages/Child-Abuse-Reports.aspx
[6] *At the time of the writing of this report, the 2021 Annual Child Protective Services Report has not yet been released and therefore more recent data unavailable to include.*

fatalities for three consecutive years. Ingestion, and violent acts were identified as the leading causes of substantiated near fatalities.

- *Caregiver substance abuse continues to be the most commonly reported valid GPS concern. Almost a quarter (23.1%) of valid GPS allegations in 2020 involved caregiver substance abuse. Conduct by a caregiver that places a child at risk, child's behavioral health/intellectual disability concerns, experiencing homelessness/inadequate housing, and truancy/educational neglect were the next most commonly reported valid GPS concerns.*

Updates on key CFSP services and strategies identified as impacting this population, such as family support services, Plans of Safe Care, the Safe Haven Program, and Family First are discussed in further detail in other sections of this document.

Efforts to Track and Prevent Child Maltreatment Deaths

Under Title IV-B of the SSA, states are required to include a description of the steps they are taking to compile complete and accurate information of child maltreatment deaths and a description of the steps the state is taking to develop and implement a comprehensive, statewide plan to prevent child maltreatment fatalities.

Compilation of Complete and Accurate Information

DHS knows that to protect every child in Pennsylvania, there must be a commitment to learning about and from child fatalities and near fatalities which resulted from abuse. As part of this commitment to prevention and promotion of improved outcomes for children, DHS is dedicated to collecting, analyzing and reporting data to inform the public and policymakers about the frequency and circumstances under which child abuse fatalities and near fatalities occur within the state.

Specific data sources and records essential to OCYF's fatality and near fatality process include the CPS Investigation Report, the Data Collection Form, and narrative reports that are prepared by the OCYF Regional Offices in the wake of each incident. The CPS Investigation Reports are generated via the state CWIS and are the main source of demographic data elements (such as date of birth, county and gender) associated with key participants. Incidents are designated an "incident type" corresponding to whether it was a fatality or a near fatality incident. Incidents are identified as a fatality when a child dies and is the subject of the report of abuse. Near fatalities are defined pursuant to 23 Pa.C.S.A. §6303: "A child's serious or critical condition, as certified by a physician, where that child is a subject of the report of abuse." Each incident type is further classified under one of three statuses. Substantiated incidents include incidents defined as "indicated" and "founded." Unsubstantiated incidents include incidents defined as "unfounded." The third status, pending, is utilized for incidents awaiting the outcome of a criminal or juvenile justice investigation.

The Data Collection Form is completed by the CCYA and contains information pertaining to the victim child, the child's family and the alleged perpetrator. Following each fatality and near fatality where abuse is suspected, the OCYF Review Team reviews the incident and develops a report summarizing the events leading up to and immediately following the fatality or near fatality. The OCYF Review Team reports are built upon information from the county review team meeting and the strengths, weaknesses and recommendations identified in the county review team report.

OCYF has specialized staff within BPPO who are dedicated to managing the tracking of child maltreatment fatalities and near fatalities. Within the Division of Programs, an individual is assigned day-to-day responsibilities for the monitoring of processes, public reporting and cross-checking information recorded in CWIS with information reported by the investigating CCYA, OCYF Regional Office and county and state review teams in order to monitor data accuracy and quality. At ChildLine, a supervisor and two staff are assigned to fatalities and near fatalities and regularly generate reports through CWIS to support ongoing tracking and monitoring of fatalities and near fatalities called into ChildLine. The Systems Technology and Data Management Section, which oversees OCYF reporting to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) collaborates with the other assigned staff in BPPO in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of data quality. ChildLine staff, Division of Programs staff and the Systems and Technology and Data Management System staff regularly communicate about potential data quality issues and annually identify data collection, analysis and quality improvements to be implemented for the coming calendar year. OCYF also works closely with data contractor Public Consulting Group (PCG) for additional assistance in reviewing annual data for quality issues and in-depth data analysis.

At the local level, county agencies work closely with law enforcement agencies, medical examiner or coroners' offices, and health providers in the course of their investigation and are encouraged to include a representative from these entities in their county review team meetings. At the state level, representatives from these agencies also sit on the Child Abuse Fatality and Near Fatality Trend Analysis Team to promote multi-disciplinary sharing of data and information regarding child-related maltreatment deaths to help strengthen analysis of statewide level trends. Further information regarding the Trend Analysis Team is outlined in the following section regarding the statewide plan to prevent child maltreatment fatalities.

Statewide Plan to Prevent Child Maltreatment Fatalities

Pennsylvania utilizes a CQI process to support the ongoing analysis of child maltreatment fatalities and near fatalities to inform improvement efforts targeted towards prevention. Beginning in 1996, CAPTA required states to publicly release findings about fatalities and near fatalities resulting from child abuse. In 2006, Pennsylvania enacted Act 146, which requires that DHS produce a quarterly report for the governor and members of the general assembly to provide a non-identifying summary of findings for each report of substantiated child abuse fatality or near fatality. Several years later,

state lawmakers amended the CPSL through the enactment of Act 33 of 2008 which required fatality and near fatality reviews at both the county and state levels.

County reviews are expected to be multidisciplinary, involving a team of at least six individuals who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse, and to reflect a broad representation of the community. The county team is required to be convened in the county where the suspected abuse occurred and, in any county or counties, where the child resided within the preceding 16 months. One coordinated county review team meeting is encouraged. Counties must convene a team no later than 31 days after the date of the report unless the county investigation has been completed prior to day 31 and resulted in a determination that child abuse did not occur. County teams are required to complete a report of their review, findings and recommendations within 90 days of convening the county review team.

DHS reviews a broader array of fatalities and near fatalities by conducting reviews of all incidents where abuse was initially suspected as a possible factor in the child's fatality or near fatality. This means that both substantiated and unsubstantiated incidents are reviewed by DHS. Researchers underscore that there is often as much to learn from the fatalities and near fatalities that are initially suspected as related to child abuse and are later unfounded as there is from those incidents that are later confirmed to have been related to child abuse. DHS' reviews also result in reports of overall findings and recommendations. The DHS review team is referred to as the OCYF Review Team.

While not statutorily required, DHS convened a multidisciplinary Child Abuse Fatality and Near Fatality Trend Analysis Team beginning in 2015 for the purpose of determining the contributing factors and symptoms of abuse and identifying responses that may prevent similar future occurrences. The mission of this team is to collaborate with multidisciplinary partners for the analysis of trends related to child abuse fatalities and near fatalities in Pennsylvania and to implement research-informed recommendations. By completing detailed reviews of child fatalities and near fatalities and conducting an analysis of related trends and county recommendations, the team is able to ascertain the strengths and challenges of public, private and community services, and identify solutions to enhance the service needs of children and families served both within and beyond the child welfare system. The Trend Analysis Team illustrates and underscores that protecting children is a shared community responsibility requiring collaboration between the systems that intersect in the lives of children and families.

In February 2019, the first report generated by the Trend Analysis Team was released. The report provided detailed data analysis regarding child fatalities and near fatalities that occurred across the state during calendar years 2015 and 2016. The report also summarized recommendations from the county and state review teams regarding systemic policy, practice and legislative changes, as well for CCYA and other state and local agencies and systems that impact the safety and well-being of PA's children and families. The conclusion of the report outlines the specific

recommendations set forth by the Trend Analysis Team for ongoing work to prevent child maltreatment deaths. These recommendations were grouped into three broad areas: fatality and near fatality review process improvements; individual, family, organization and community interventions and improvements; and legislative policy change.

Over the course of the next year, the Trend Analysis Team will be focused on the development and implementation of plans for moving the recommendations forward. The team will also continue analysis, building from information added each year and issue a subsequent report. The Trend Analysis Team recommendations were provided as an appendix to the 2020-2024 CFSP and the full report is available to the public through the DHS website[7]. It should also be noted that several of the recommendations set forth under individual, family, organization, and community interventions and improvements will help further the state's vision of focusing further effort on primary prevention.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Over the past year, OCYF continued review of each incident and developed a report summarizing the events leading up to and immediately following a fatality or near fatality. OCYF continued to utilize the CPS Investigation Report as the main source of demographic data elements. Additionally, OCYF, in collaboration with PCG, piloted a new electronic version of the Fatality/Near Fatality Data Collection Form (F/NF DCF) with 15 counties. The electronic version of the F/NF DCF is accessible to CCYAs through an online database and was created to streamline the process and tasks associated with data collection. The pilot ran for three months, January 31 – April 4, 2022. OCYF is currently working with PCG to train the remaining CCYAs and anticipates the new F/NF DCF will be implemented statewide in the summer of 2022.

Specialized staff remained dedicated to managing the tracking of child maltreatment fatalities and near fatalities. The Division of Programs assigned staff person continued to monitor data accuracy and quality and implemented corrective action plans when necessary. On an ongoing basis ChildLine continues to evaluate the need and assign additional staff to the specialized fatality and near fatality project to increase the vigilance of the tracking and monitoring of the fatalities and near fatalities. The Systems Technology and Data Management Section within OCYF has continued the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of data quality and enhanced this process by cross-checking this data from CWIS. The Systems Technology and Data Management Section, the Division of Programs staff person and ChildLine continuously work to improve data quality. OCYF continued to work with PCG to review annual data for quality issues and in-depth data analysis.

State and county reviews continued to occur in adherence to Act 33 of 2008 and quarterly reports continued to be provided to the Governor and members of the General Assembly. During this reporting period, OCYF worked with legislators to advocate for

[7] https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Pages/Child-Fatality-Near-Fatality-Reports.aspx

legislative changes to the fatality and near fatality review process as currently outlined in the CPSL. The proposed legislative changes included adding the Trend Analysis Team as a resource for review of fatality and near fatality incidents and a proposed modification to the quarterly reports from a written format to a data driven report.

The Commonwealth's statewide plan for prevention of child maltreatment related deaths is developed and implemented based upon the work and recommendations of the Trend Analysis Team. An Appendix included with PA's 2020-2024 CFSP submission outlined the Trend Analysis Team recommendations which were categorized under three specific areas of focus that included fatality and near fatality review process improvement; individual, family, organization, and community interventions; and legislative and policy change. Based upon these specific areas, the Trend Analysis Team established three subcommittees. The Appendix included the specific activities that occurred under each subcommittee. During this reporting period, OCYF continued to work with the Trend Analysis team to move the identified activities forward.

Additionally, OCYF decided to not release the Pennsylvania Child Abuse Fatality/Near Fatality Analysis Report for 2017 and 2018 and instead will release a five-year report that will cover 2015 to 2019. The Pennsylvania Child Abuse Fatality/Near Fatality Trend Analysis Report for 2015 to 2019 is anticipated to be released in fall 2022. During this reporting period, the Trend Analysis team reviewed the data from 2015 to 2019. Upon their review, the Trend Analysis Team identified three new areas of focus which included the creation of the following subcommittees: Child Welfare Involvement Subcommittee, Substance Use Subcommittee, and Violent Acts Subcommittee. The new subcommittees convened to make recommendations on programmatic and systemic changes related to child fatalities and near fatalities. The subcommittee work will continue in next SFY.

Other State Efforts Supporting the Vision

At the state level in Pennsylvania, various initiatives and programs exist that, while not directed by the state child welfare agency, support the implementation of services or practices that OCYF has identified as crucial to helping support the overall vision outlined in the 2020-2024 CFSP with regards to child maltreatment prevention and child safety.

DHS Housing Initiative

Many families who come to the attention of the child welfare system face issues related to inadequate housing. In calendar year 2018, homelessness or inadequate shelter was the third most commonly identified valid GPS allegation reported to ChildLine[8]. Housing issues also can contribute to the placement of children in out-of-home care through the child welfare system. Data from the Adoption and Foster Care

[8] 2018 Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Report, PA DHS, 2019.

Reporting and Analysis System (AFCARS) regarding children in placement during FFYs 2015, 2016, and 2017 reveals that approximately 1,700 of children removed from their homes each year have inadequate housing reported as at least one of the reasons for removal.

Ensuring the services and supports to address homelessness are available in communities is an important strategy in working to safely keep families together and preventing the out-of-home placement of children. In addition to providing funding for housing via the annual county NBPB process and through IL services, OCYF is a member of the broader DHS Housing Workgroup. The Housing Workgroup developed a five-year housing strategy designed to connect Pennsylvanians to affordable, integrated and supportive housing. The housing strategy concentrates on individuals who live in institutions but could live in the community with housing services and supports; individuals and families who experience homelessness or are at-risk of homelessness; and individuals who have extremely low incomes and are rent-burdened. To help meet the needs of the identified individuals, DHS leverages internal and external resources and collaborates with all levels of government and private agencies to make housing resources and services more accessible and available to a wide range of individuals served by DHS. The Pennsylvania Housing Strategy can be found online through the DHS website.[9]

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Many families continue to come to the attention of the child welfare system as a result of inadequate housing. In calendar year 2021, a total of 8,053 GPS reports relating to homelessness or inadequate shelter were reported to Childline, which is an increase of 26.5% from 6,364 in calendar year 2020. Housing issues may also contribute to the placement of children in out-of-home care through the child welfare system. Data from AFCARS regarding children in placement during FFY 2021 reveals that out of 7,281 total removals, 1,019 (14%) children had inadequate housing as at least one of the reasons for removal.

An important strategy in working to safely keep families together and preventing the out-of-home placement of children is making sure the services and supports to address homelessness are available in communities and this remains a priority for DHS and OCYF. DHS assumed program administration and leadership for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), with the aim to prevent evictions and homelessness and stabilize families experiencing homelessness. As of April 2022, counties have spent a total of $509,897,741.27 in DHS-allocated ERAP funds to provide 129,397 households with rental assistance and/or housing stability services who have been impacted due to or during the COVID-19 pandemic. DHS partnered with 67 counties to distribute these funds as quickly as possible and conducted extensive outreach to ensure ease of access. DHS provides technical assistance and guidance to counties to provide rent and utility assistance to high needs communities by qualified census tracts and distributing funding to very low-income households with high rent

[9] https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/Housing.aspx

burdens paying more than 50 percent of their income on rent. Due to increased pandemic relief funds, many counties were able to adjust their Pennsylvania Homeless Assistance Program priorities to increase support for bridge housing rental subsidies and innovative programs to address needs and gaps in housing crisis support. Funding for housing continues to be provided to CCYA's through the annual county NBPB process and through IL services.

OCYF continues to be a member of the broader DHS Housing Stakeholders Workgroup. Through the DHS Housing Workgroup, the Commonwealth continues to expand the 811 Project Rental Assistance Program (PRA) housing program to provide affordable supportive housing to Pennsylvanians with disabilities who can live in the community, with support. Youth with disabilities who are exiting foster care continue to be a target population for this program. DHS supports participation in Housing and Urban Development's (HUD), Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program, to bring additional affordable housing resources to youth who need this type of support. DHS also serves on the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) board, where a designee represents the DHS Secretary. The PHFA board has a crucial role in developing and preserving multifamily housing to provide access to affordable housing opportunities to children and families throughout the Commonwealth. Further information about the Pennsylvania Housing Strategy remains available through the DHS website.

In 2020, OCYF proposed a unique housing pilot program that was funded by the legislature and begin in July 2021. The SHIFT (Stabilized Housing in Facilitated Teams) program was designed to reduce the number of children and youth who are forced into out-of-home placements when housing instability is the primary reason for the placement.

During fiscal year 21-22, through a competitive grant process, three counties were provided funding to be used for the hiring of child welfare specific "Housing Innovation Specialists" who were familiar with not only the child welfare system but also the local community resources already dedicated to housing, the local landlords and available housing inventory, and resources to manage barriers families are facing towards achieving stable housing such as transportation, or employment and education services. The role of the Housing Innovation Specialists is to build relationships with landlords and understand the local housing inventory in such a way that they will be able to braid current funding streams (not duplicate services) and use available unrestricted "housing stability" funding provided as part of this pilot to meet individual family needs as they present themselves. While it did take several months to complete the competitive grant process and award contracts, the three counties did successfully launch programs during the fiscal year and are expected to continue the work during 22-23. It will take several months to determine the outcomes of this pilot, but initial indications are that the counties feel the programs are off to a very positive start. We look forward to presenting outcomes in future reports

Centers of Excellence

In response to the opioid addiction epidemic occurring both nationally and in Pennsylvania, Governor Tom Wolf signed a statewide disaster declaration in 2018 to help enhance the state's response to the crisis and increase access to treatment. The child welfare system has felt the impact of the surge in opioid addiction. AFCARS data indicates that parental drug abuse currently serves as the most frequently reported reason for child welfare agency removal of children from their homes. As of March 31, 2019, a little over a quarter of all children who entered care for the period were identified as removed due to drug abuse by a parent.

As part of a multi-pronged strategy to combat the opioid epidemic in Pennsylvania, the array of services available to treat individuals with opioid addictions has been strengthened across the state for some of the most vulnerable populations through the development of Centers of Excellence (COEs), which help coordinate care for people covered through Medicaid who need opioid treatment. COEs help those who seek treatment stay in their communities and involve a treatment team who focuses on serving the individual's behavioral health and primary care needs. Services provided through the centers include comprehensive care management, care coordination, transitional or follow-up care, patient and family support and referrals to community and social support services. COEs serve as an example of coordinated, community-based services which can help parents struggling with opioid addiction access the holistic treatment they need. Additional information about the Centers of Excellence is available through the DHS website [10].

- *Progress Since Last Report*

All 45 COEs across the commonwealth have created community-based care management teams to assist with care coordination and recovery support for their clients. The community-based care management teams consist of a diverse group of providers including Licensed Clinical Social Workers, counselors, Certified Recovery Specialists, nurses, peer navigators, care managers, and physicians. The care management teams work together to ensure that clients' care is coordinated across all domains and that all treatment and non-treatment needs are addressed, either through on-site services or through referrals. The individual also engages with recovery support personnel who walk side-by-side with clients through their recovery journey. Recovery support personnel are integral members of the care management team and often provide support for clients during off hours and weekends. Additional information on COEs remains available through the DHS website. Information regarding Pennsylvania's response to the opioid crisis is also available at https://www.pa.gov/guides/opioid-epidemic/.

[10] https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/Centers-of-Excellence.aspx

CFSR Systemic Factor Assessment – Safety Service Array

A strong network of comprehensive and coordinated services must be in place to promote child maltreatment prevention and ensure child safety. Family Centers have been identified as an example of a strength in Pennsylvania's prevention and safety service array as they serve as a model of community-based services that can be individualized to the particular needs of each family and engage in utilizing evidence-based programs. OCYF has also invested in working with system partners to better utilize data to begin to identify those factors that contribute to the most severe cases of child maltreatment so as to identify any services or practices through which to strengthen preventative measures. Through ongoing assessment of services and stakeholder feedback, OCYF has identified a need to continue efforts to strengthen the overall network of services to promote primary, secondary and tertiary child abuse prevention in Pennsylvania, with a focus on building from a cross-systems, public health approach. Therefore, work to enhance the preventative service array was identified as a priority in the 2020-2024 CFSP goals and strategies. Stakeholders have also advocated for further assessment of Pennsylvania's CPS and GPS system and exploration of opportunities available to strengthen the response to reports of child maltreatment. Based on this feedback, Pennsylvania identified a strategy for evaluating how an alternative or differential response system may be utilized to ensure the most effective system is in place to support families in keeping their children safe.

- *Assessment Since Last Report*

Enhancing the array of preventative services available continues to be a priority for Pennsylvania and remains an important goal within the CFSP. OCYF views the implementation of the Title IV-E Prevention Services Program under Family First as an opportunity to further expand the use of evidence-based prevention services to improve the safety of children so they may remain with in their homes and communities with their family. Further detail on the work related to the specific strategies identified for prevention services are discussed later in this document relative to Safety Goal 2.

As part of ongoing CQI efforts, feedback on strengths and challenges regarding the array of safety related services in Pennsylvania continues to be gathered through ongoing case reviews, such as the QSR and CFSR, review of funding requests for services submitted to OCYF through the annual NBPB process, and annual CCYA licensing inspections. Due to the pandemic, during calendar years 2020 and 2021, no QSRs were conducted, and no CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews were conducted in 2020, therefore limiting qualitative data available for monitoring of the safety service array. As OCYF works with stakeholders to further analyze data, information and recommendations obtained through the child fatality and near-fatality review processes, further opportunities are presented for identification of service gaps and needs both locally and at the state level. OCYF believes the CQI efforts that will be utilized to monitor services provided under the Title IV-E Prevention Services Program will provide an opportunity for Pennsylvania to strengthen the data and information available to support assessment of safety service needs across the state.

CFSR Safety Outcomes Assessment

Pennsylvania utilizes federal CFSR safety measures as part of the ongoing assessment and monitoring of safety outcomes. Baseline performance on these outcomes was established during the onsite CFSR in 2017 through a review of 65 cases from across seven counties in the state, including Philadelphia. The CFSR included information obtained through case reviews and stakeholder interviews. A full report of the 2017 case review findings is available online through the DHS website[11]. Assessment of performance will continue to be conducted throughout implementation of the 2020-2024 CFSP using information gathered through ongoing CFSR case reviews, the state directed QSR and annual CCYA licensing inspections.

Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect

Performance on CFSR Safety Outcome 1 focuses on the timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment. The standard is that all accepted child maltreatment reports should be initiated, and face-to-face contact with the child or children made within the timeframes established by agency policies or state statutes.

Pennsylvania was not found to be in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1 during the 2017 review. In 2017, 70% of the applicable cases reviewed were found to have achieved the outcome, which fell below the federal target of 95%. Analysis of the 2017 CFSR findings and county licensing reports at the time of the 2020-2024 CFSP submission found the following:

- Analysis of annual CCYA licensing inspection summaries (LIS) over a five-year period showed that over 98% of intake records reviewed during the inspection process each year met requirements for timely investigations, meaning children were seen immediately or within 24 hours when CPS concerns are reported.
- Findings from annual CCYA licensing inspections consistently showed that counties performed better in meeting CPS response time requirements compared to GPS response time requirements.
- A content analysis of the 2017 CFSR findings found that the large number of reports received by CCYA for investigation or assessment, coupled with high staff turnover, impacted the ability of CCYAs to meet CPS and GPS response time requirements.
- Content analysis of the 2017 CFSR findings also revealed that CCYA staff did not always make diligent efforts to locate the children who were the target of the investigation or assessment before closing out the case.

➢ *Assessment Since Last Report*

[11] https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Pages/Child-Youth-and-Family-Service-Plan.aspx

Performance on this safety outcome is determined solely based on evaluation of state performance of CFSR Item 1. Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity (95% or higher) on this outcome during the 2019 CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews but did achieve a key target for demonstrating improvement on this measure. Pennsylvania did not conduct CFSR PIP monitoring reviews during calendar year 2020 due to COVID-19. Pennsylvania continued to show improvement on this outcome during the 2021 CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews.

CFSR Item 1: Were the agency's responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports initiated and face-to-face contact with the child(ren), made, within timeframes established by agency policies or state statues?

During Pennsylvania's CFSR in 2017, CFSR Item 1 was found to be a strength in only 70% of the cases reviewed, therefore resulting in the state not substantially achieving Safety Outcome 1. Pennsylvania's resulting PIP Measurement Plan set the improvement target for Item 1 at 80.7% of the cases reviewed being rated as a strength. During the first round of PIP monitoring case reviews conducted in 2019, Pennsylvania achieved an 86.11% thereby not only meeting, but exceeding the target required in the PIP Measurement Plan. Pennsylvania conducted a second round of PIP monitoring case reviews between April and September of 2021. During the 2021 PIP monitoring case reviews, 96.6% of the cases reviewed received a strength rating on CFSR Item 1.

Pennsylvania performance regarding timeliness to reports of child maltreatment has remained fairly consistent over the course of several years and data from annual CCYA licensing inspection and the CFSR PIP monitoring cases reviews has provided evidence of trending improvement in this area of practice in recent years. Review of data from SFY 2019-20, however, shows an increase in the overall number of citations for both CPS and GPS cases, even with the data for only 54 counties represented. As seen in Tables 6 and 7 below, during annual CCYA licensing inspections, most cases reviewed were found to meet CPS and GPS response time requirements as set forth in state regulation and policy; however, more violations are observed in the random sample of GPS cases reviewed when compared to the random sample of CPS cases reviewed.

Table 6. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: CPS Response Times

	SFY 2016-2017	***SFY 2017-2018***	***SFY 2018-2019***	***SFY 2019-2020[12]***	***SFY 2020-2021[13]***
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	*5 counties*	*9 counties*	*7 counties*	*11 counties*	*0 counties*
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	*0 counties*	*0 counties*	*0 counties*	*1 county*	*1 county*

[12] For information on changes to the reporting of licensing data for this reporting period, please refer to the Organization of this Report section found on page 12 of this report.
[13] For information on changes to the reporting of licensing data for this reporting period, please refer to the Organization of this Report section found on page 12 of this report.

Total Cases Cited	9	*12*	*11*	*18*	*2*
Total CPS Cases Reviewed	*662*	*638*	*620*	*584*	*90*
Total Counties Without Citation	***62***	***58***	***60***	***42 (of 54)***	***59 (of 60)***
Rate of Compliance (%)	***98.64%***	***98.12%***	***98.22%***	***96.92%***	***97.77 %***

Source [Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries], [May 2022]

Table 7. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: GPS Response Times

	SFY 2016-2017	***SFY 2017-2018***	***SFY 2018-2019***	***SFY 2019-2020***	***SFY 2020-2021***
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	*14 counties*	*13 counties*	*15 counties*	*24 counties*	*12 counties*
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	*1 county*	*0 counties*	*0 counties*	*1 county*	*1 county*
Total Cases Cited	39	*38*	*31*[14]	*56*	*20*
Total GPS Cases Reviewed	*718*	*676*	*736*	*503*	*99*
Total Counties Without Citation	***52***	***54***	***52***	***29 (of 54)***	***47 (of 60)***
Rate of Compliance (%)	***94.57%***	***94.38%***	***95.79%***	***88.87%***	***79.80 %***

Source [Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries], [May 2022]

Further interpretation of the data shows in the SFYs 2019-20 and 2020-21, there was a significant increase in response time violations for GPS cases. There are numerous factors related to pandemic impact that must be considered when attempting to draw conclusions from the data. On July 31, 2020, OCYF issued a memorandum providing guidance on the reduction of sample sizes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the memorandum called for the implementation of remote license inspections or combination hybrid inspections. Sample sizes were reduced by 50% to aid in the reduction of in person exposure within the counties. The memorandum became obsolete on July 1, 2021, resulting in resumption of traditional sample sizes, and in-person licensures resumed. Based on the significant decrease in sample size in SFY 2020-21, it is difficult to draw conclusions from the licensing data available. Another factor to consider in interpreting the data is the notable reduction in GPS and CPS reports received during the period under review. In the calendar year 2020, there was a decrease of 9,313 child abuse reports. This represents a 22% reduction in child abuse reports between 2019 to 2020. This decline can be attributed to the reduced contact between children and mandated reporters during the pandemic.

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[14] *For one county, the total number of cases cited for a documented GPS response time violation was not provided.*

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible

Performance on CFSR Safety Outcome 2 focuses on efforts to protect children in the home and prevent their entry or re-entry into foster care as well as risk and safety assessment management. The federal standards require that agencies make concerted efforts to provide safety-related services to families that will prevent children's removal from their home and that agencies make concerted efforts to assess and address any risk and safety concerns relating to children in their own homes or while in foster care.

Pennsylvania was not found to be in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2 during the 2017 CFSR. In 2017, 69% of the applicable cases reviewed were found to have achieved the outcome, which falls below the federal target of 95%.

With regards to services to keep children in their homes (CFSR Item 2), analysis of the 2017 CFSR findings and monitoring of AFCARS data available at the time of the 2020-2024 CFSP submission found the following:

- During the CFSR in 2017, 45% of applicable cases rated were determined to demonstrate concerted efforts to prevent children's entry or re-entry into out of home placement.
- Overall, there was no difference observed between foster care and in-home cases when looking at performance;
- Of children entering care during FFY 2018 and who were not in the shared custody of the JPO, 9.6% were discharged to parents or relatives within 30 days of the removal.
- Of children entering care during FFY 2018 and who were not in the shared custody of the JPO, 5.13% entered under a voluntary placement agreement (VPA) with the most commonly reported reason for removal from the home being drug abuse of a parent, followed by neglect and parent's inability to cope.
- During FFY 2018, the overall number of children entering out-of-home care declined to its lowest point since FFY 2014.

With regards to safety and risk assessment management (CFSR Item 3), analysis of the 2017 CFSR findings and monitoring of QSR and AFCARS data available at the time of the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP submission found the following:

- During the CFSR in 2017, 71% of applicable cases rated were determined to demonstrate concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child or children in their own homes or while in foster care. Over a five-year period, approximately half of all counties were consistently found to have violations related to safety and risk assessment during annual CCYA licensing inspections.
- The most common licensing violation noted with regards to safety assessments during annual CCYA licensing inspections involved inaccurate completion of the

safety assessment tool, which often involved failure to assess all appropriate individuals or ratings that were not deemed appropriate given other case information.

- The most common licensing violation noted with regards to risk assessments during annual CCYA licensing inspections involved risk assessments not being completed at appropriate intervals outlined in regulation or when changing case circumstances would warrant the need for risk to be assessed.
- Findings from the 2017 CFSR and QSRs conducted between 2014 and 2018 revealed strong practice in ensuring safety of children and youth in their foster care placements, as no foster care cases reviewed during the CFSR were noted to have concerns for the safety of the child or children in their foster care placement and nearly all cases reviewed for the QSR over a five-year period reflected similar performance.

➢ *Assessment Since Last Report*

Performance on this safety outcome is determined based on evaluation of state performance of CFSR Items 2 and 3. Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity on this outcome during the 2019 and 2021 CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews, however key improvement targets were met for Items 2 and 3.

CFSR Item 2: Did the agency make concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after reunification?

The number of children entering foster care in Pennsylvania has been decreasing since 2017 as seen in Table 8. A high of 6,104 children and youth entered care during the September 30, 2017, AFCARS reporting period, with a low of 3,700 children and youth entering care during the September 30, 2020, AFCARS reporting period. The impact of COVID-19 on foster care placements and discharges is not yet fully understood, however OCYF monitoring of child abuse and neglect reporting during COVID-19 showed a significant decline in CPS and GPS reports in Pennsylvania during the height of the pandemic. The decrease in reports may have subsequently contributed to a noticeable decrease in placements in FFYs 2020 and 2021.

Table 8. Foster Care Population Flow

	2018 31 Mar	2018 30 Sep	2019 31 Mar	2019 30 Sep	2020 31 Mar	2020 30 Sep	2021 31 Mar	2021 30 Sep
Admit During Period	5,493	5,498	5,190	5,136	4,463	3,286	3,700	3,727
Discharges During Period	5,519	5,857	5,563	5,946	4,950	4,199	4,337	4,243
In Care Last Day	17,048	16,674	16,338	15,534	15,122	14,250	13,639	13,123
Total Served	22,066	22,052	21,387	21,025	19,597	18,161	17,659	17,111
Total Child Population	3,041,332	3,041,332	3,041,332	3,041,332	3,041,332	3,041,332	3,041,332	3,041,332
Admissions per 1,000 Population	1.806	1.808	1.706	1.689	1.467	1.080	1.217	1.225
Discharges per 1,000 Population	1.815	1.926	1.829	1.955	1.628	1.381	1.426	1.395

In Care per 1,000 Population	*5.605*	*5.482*	*5.372*	*5.108*	*4.972*	*4.685*	*4.485*	*4.315*
Served per 1,000 Population	*7.255*	*7.251*	*7.032*	*6.913*	*6.444*	*5.971*	*5.806*	*5.626*

Source [AFCARS, PCG Data Packages], [May 2022]

Per AFCARS for the reporting period ending September 30, 2021, children ages 0-4 years continue to represent the age group with the highest rate of placement followed by the age group comprised of children ages 10-14.

During the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews in 2019, 93.75% of the applicable cases reviewed (n=15) were rated as a strength regarding concerted efforts to prevent entries or re-entries into foster care. During the 2017 CFSR onsite review, only 45% of the applicable cases reviewed were rated a strength, which resulted in setting a target for improvement at 64.7% as part of Pennsylvania's PIP Measurement Plan. During the first round of PIP monitoring case reviews in 2019, Pennsylvania not only achieved, but far exceeded, this goal. Pennsylvania conducted a second round of PIP monitoring case reviews between April and September of 2021. During the 2021 review, 55.6% of cases reviewed on Item 2 were rated as a strength. While this represents a decline in performance relative to the findings from the 2019 CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews, Pennsylvania continued to maintain improvement comparative to the 2017 baseline on this item.

CFSR Item 3: Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care?

Data from the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews conducted in 2019, annual CCYA licensing inspections, and QSRs, reveals risk and safety assessment practice is an area continuing to need improvement in Pennsylvania. During the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews in 2019, 69.23% of the applicable cases reviewed (n=45) were rated as needing improvement on this item, which was a slight decrease in performance compared to the initial onsite review in 2017. Pennsylvania conducted a second round of CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews between April and September 2021. During the 2021 review, 80% of cases reviewed on Item 3 were rated as a strength. This represents a vast 11% increase in performance from the 2019 review.

Monitoring of safety and risk assessment practices in Pennsylvania occurs ongoing through annual licensing inspections of the CCYA. Findings from licensing inspections conducted during SFY 2019-20 are outlined in Table 9 (safety assessment) and Table 10 (risk assessment).

Table 9. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Safety Assessment and Management Process (SAMP)

	SFY 2016-2017	***SFY 2017-2018***	***SFY 2018-2019***	***SFY 2019-2020***	***SFY 2020-2021***
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	*36 counties*	*31 counties*	*32 counties*	*20 counties*	***19 counties***

Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	*1 county*	*2 counties*	*0 counties*	*1 county*	***2 counties***
Total Cases Cited	***138***	***124***	***108***[15]	***171***	***28***
Total Counties without Citation	***30***	***34***	***35***	***33 (of 54)***	***46 (of 62)***

Source [Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries], [May 2022]

Table 10. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Risk Assessment

	SFY 2016-2017	***SFY 2017-2018***	***SFY 2018-2019***	***SFY 2019-2020***	***SFY 2020-2021***
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	*30 counties*	*33 counties*	*30 counties*	*27 counties*	*60 counties*
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	*1 county*	*1 county*	*0 counties*	*1 county*	*2 counties*
Total Cases Cited	***167***	***150***	***124***	***207***	***66***
Total Counties without Citation	***36***	***33***	***37***	***26 (of 54)***	***36 (of 60)***

Source [Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries], [May 2022]

As evidenced by the data, there was a noticeable increase in cases cited during SFY 2019-20. In interpreting the data, it should be noted that 60 cases were cited both under safety assessment and risk assessment across two counties due to a systemic issue that was identified in which the two counties were not assigning risk or safety tags at the time of the initial report. Both counties submitted plans of correction to remedy these issues which were subsequently implemented and approved by the OCYF Regional Office.

Further interpretation of the data shows in the SFY 2020-21, there was a significant reduction in cases cited for safety and risk assessment violations. On July 31, 2020, OCYF issued a memorandum providing guidance on the reduction of sample sizes. In addition, the memorandum called for the implementation of remote license inspections due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sample sizes were reduced by 50% to aid in the reduction of in person exposure within the CCYA. The memorandum became obsolete on July 1, 2021, resulting in resumption in the use of traditional sample sizes, and in-person licensures.

A further analysis of citations issued related to safety and risk assessments revealed the following:

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[15] *For one county, the number of total number of cases cited for a documented SAMP violation was not provided.*

- *Issues related to not meeting required timeframes for completion of assessments led to citations in approximately 60% of cases cited related to safety assessments and 30% of cases cited related to risk assessments.*
- *Citations issued due to assessments never being completed or missing from the record were found in 28% of citations related to safety assessments and 9% of citations related to risk assessments. Citations related to missing risk assessments often stemmed from failure to complete a risk assessment when closing out an investigation or case.*
- *Missing or late signatures accounted for approximately 7% of citations issued related to safety assessments and 9% of citations issued related to risk assessments.*
- *Issues related to the actual application of safety and risk assessments and/or quality of assessments accounted for 4% of citations related to safety assessment and 52% of citations related to risk assessment. Common issues that led to licensing violations included failure to assess all appropriate individuals, lack of documentation in the case record to support overall safety or risk rating, documentation in the case record indicating an inappropriate rating of risk or safety was applied given case circumstances and failures in identification of circumstances and conditions that would warrant reassessment of safety or risk outside of the required timeframes.*

Licensing data from SFY 2020-21 appears to demonstrate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on overall licensure citations. A significant reduction in citations for both risk and safety assessments can be attributed to many different factors. During the pandemic, a reduction in case sample size was implemented to reduce the amount of in person contacts between OCYF and the local CCYA personnel. In addition, remote access to CCYA programs allowed for virtual licensures to occur. This allowed for the OCYF Regional offices to focus on the overall safety of staff, while still meeting licensure requirements. Across the four OCYF Regional offices, of the 67 CCYAs, 60 became fully licensed with two receiving a provisional license and five unable to have a license review during SFY 2020-21. Two of those counties had two licensure inspections occur during the period of review.

Figure 1 illustrates findings across all settings for the QSR indicator related to ensuring children/youth are safe from exposure to threats of harm. Figure 2 also provides QSR ratings related to performance regarding ensuring children/youth are also free from posing a risk to themselves or others.

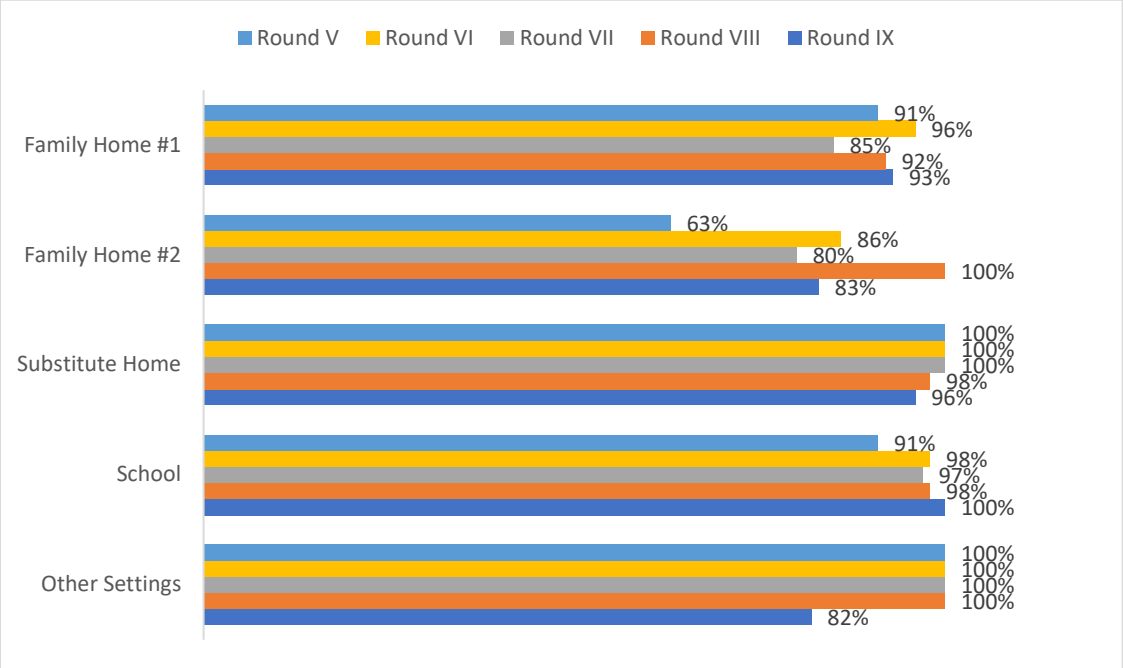
Table 11. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Safety: Exposure to Threats of Harm" for Sub-Indicator Substitute Home

	Round V	***Round VI***	***Round VII***	***Round VIII***	***Round IX***
Percentage of Cases Rated as Acceptable	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*98%*	*96%*

Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

In interpreting Table 11, it is important to note that there was a considerable change in the number of cases reviewed between round nine of the QSRs (61 cases) when compared to round eight (132 cases).

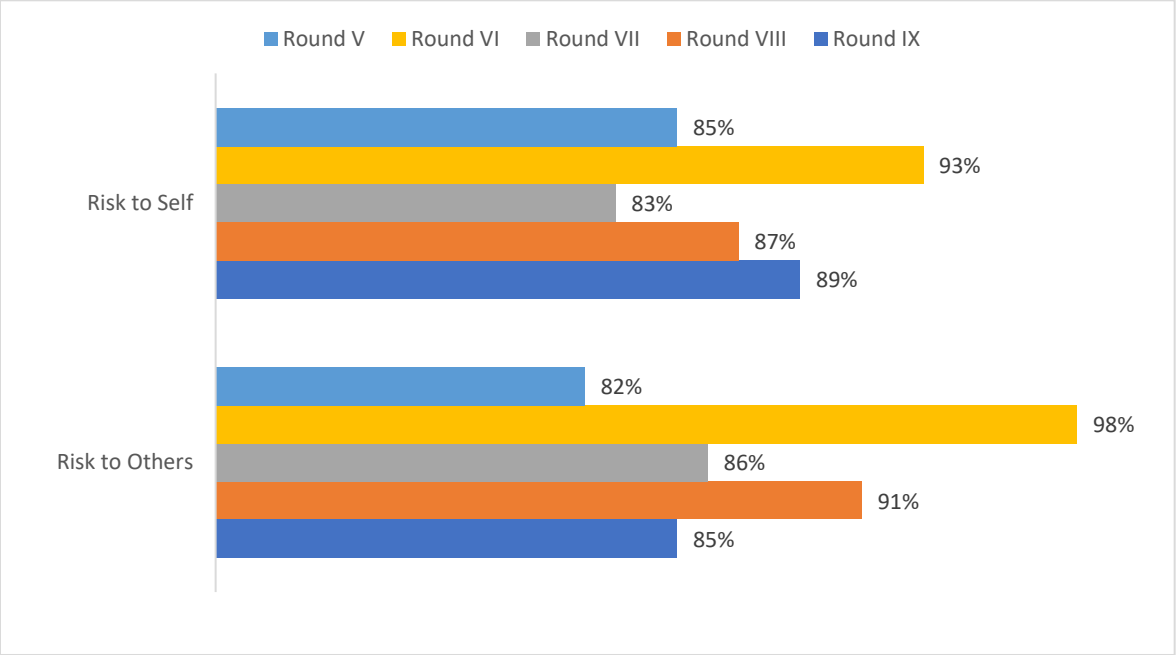
Figure 1[16]. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Safety: Exposure to Threats of Harm"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

[16] *Other settings may include day care or babysitter's home, additional family homes, or any other setting where the child was cared for or resided that is not represented in the other settings evaluated.*

Figure 2. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Safety: Risk to Self/Others"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

Pennsylvania continues working on the identified strategies in the CFSR PIP to support improved practice related to safety and risk assessment. These strategies have are integrated into the 2020-2024 CFSP.

Five-Year Goals and Strategies to Improve Safety

Based on the stakeholder feedback and review of Pennsylvania performance regarding the achievement of key safety outcomes, two core goals were identified as a priority for the five-year period covered by the 2020-2024 CFSP. While the goals and strategies outlined in the following section of the plan are directed primarily towards improving safety, it should be noted that many of the efforts connect to permanency and well-being outcomes as well. Strategies developed as part of Pennsylvania's CFSR PIP that will help achieve the identified goals are included and specifically noted as PIP strategies in this plan. For the 2020-2024 CFSP, some of the key activities included in the strategies identified as originating from the PIP were expanded upon to include additional efforts OCYF plans to undertake to further the work and to capture efforts that may extend beyond the two-year PIP implementation time frame. As the initial goals and strategies set forth in PA's 2020-2024 CFSP are achieved, OCYF will continue to work with stakeholders to identify additional goals and strategies to add to the state Title IV-B plan through ongoing submission of the APSRs.

Safety Goal 1: Improve system capacity to respond to reports of child maltreatment					
Rationale for Goal Selection: A core outcome established in Pennsylvania's Practice Model focuses on ensuring children and youth are safe from abuse and neglect. Data and information utilized as a part of OCYF's ongoing CQI efforts identifies continued need to focus statewide improvement efforts towards strengthening the child welfare system's response to reports of abuse and neglect. The 2018 Pennsylvania Annual Child Protective Services Report indicated that statewide substantiated reports of child abuse increased from 1.8 per thousand children in 2017 to 1.9 per thousand children in 2018. Additionally, between 2014 and 2016, fatalities and near fatalities substantiated as child abuse increased by 35 incidents (n=88 in 2014, n=127 in 2016). Pennsylvania was not found to be in substantial conformity with the CFSR Safety Outcomes regarding timeliness to investigations of child maltreatment.					
5-Year Monitoring Targets:	**Baseline**	2021 APSR	2022 APSR	2023 APSR	2024 APSR
The statewide compliance rate for CPS response time requirements will be maintained at 98.00% or higher (Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspections)	SFY 2017-18 98.12%	SFY 2018-19 98.22%	SFY 2019-20 96.92%	SFY 20-21 97.77%	
The statewide compliance rate for GPS response time requirements will be improved and maintained at 96.00% or higher by the end of FFY 2024 (Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspections)	SFY 2017-18 94.38%	SFY 2018-19 95.79%	SFY 2019-20 88.87%	SFY 20-21 79.80 %	

The percentage of child abuse fatality and near fatality incidents occurring while the family was open with the CCYA will decrease to 1.0% or less by the end of FFY 2024 (Source: Child Fatality and Near Fatality Data Collection Tool) Note: The number is based on a two-year calendar period.	2015-16 N/A[17]	2017-18 5.47%	2019-20 19.12%	2021-22 13.7%	

Safety Objective 1.1 (CFSR PIP Strategy): Strengthen and streamline Pennsylvania's safety assessment, planning, and monitoring process by researching, developing and implementing the use of a comprehensive assessment that encompasses both safety and risk elements.

Rationale for Objective Selection:

- During the CFSR conducted in calendar year 2017, 29% of cases reviewed were rated as needing improvement with regards to safety and risk assessment.
- During SFY 2016-17, 37 counties were cited during annual CCYA licensing inspection for non-compliance with safety assessment and management requirements.
    - 41% of violations identified (n=57) were related to incorrect completion of the safety assessment worksheet or safety actions not deemed appropriate given case circumstances.
- An analysis of substantiated child abuse fatalities and near fatalities that occurred in Pennsylvania during calendar years 2015-2016 found that 26% (58 families) were open with a CCYA at the time of the fatality/near fatality incident.

[17] Due to improvements in the collection of data related to this measure that were implemented in 2017-2018, the methodology used to establish the initial baseline for the CFSP is no longer a valid measurement. The new methodology for calculating this measure is reflected in the 2021 APSR data provided.

Key Activities/Strategies	Benchmarks for Completion
Establish a charter to guide the development of recommendations for streamlining and strengthening the risk and safety assessment process.	September 2019 *Complete*
Explore what other states have done with risk and safety assessments, as well as functional assessment tools through the use of Casey Family Programs consultation services.	March 2020 *Complete*
Develop/identify a streamlined process that encompasses both safety and risk elements, while also assessing the feasibility of incorporating functional assessment tool components to build one comprehensive assessment process to ensure safety, risk and service provision needs are linked throughout the life of a case.	December 2020 *Complete*
Share the revised statewide process with the Council and local child welfare agencies for feedback.	March 2021 *Complete*
Finalize the streamlined/revised tool(s) that encompass both safety and risk assessment elements.	June 2021 *Complete*
Develop a strategic plan which will guide the implementation and monitoring of the streamlined risk and safety assessment process, to include: • Drafting guidance; • Revising 3131 regulations; • Developing training; and • Monitoring through QSRs, licensing inspections and the review of service provision outcomes.	June 2021 *In progress*
Implement and monitor a streamlined risk and safety assessment process	Jan 2022 and ongoing

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

This CFSP strategy is also a CFSR PIP strategy. In the summer of 2021, OCYF was granted a six-month PIP extension to complete the following key activities:

- *Finalize the streamlined/revised tool(s) that encompass both safety and risk assessment elements.*

- *Develop a strategic plan which will guide the implementation and monitoring of the streamlined risk and safety assessment process, to include drafting guidance, revising 3131 regulations; developing training; and monitoring through Quality Service Reviews, licensing inspections and review of service provision outcomes.*

Implementation and monitoring of the streamlined risk and safety assessment process will occur beyond the PIP implementation period and will be completed as part of Pennsylvania's ongoing CFSP work.

During the reporting period, OCYF worked with Allegheny and Crawford counties on their proposed crosswalk of the FAST with current risk and safety assessment tools in preparation for submitting a regulatory waiver request to OCYF to use the FAST in place of the existing risk and safety assessment. Both co-chairs for the Safety Subcommittee were heavily involved in this work and communicated updates on the efforts to the subcommittee. Preliminary meetings were held with Praed Foundation to assess the feasibility of making changes to the FAST tool and to explore the implementation supports that Praed would be able to provide to Pennsylvania for statewide implementation of the FAST.

Information on the work of the Safety Subcommittee in developing a revised process for the streamlining of the safety and risk assessment processes was shared with the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council and local child welfare agencies on two distinct occasions. On June 2, 2021, the co-chairs of the Safety Subcommittee presented information to the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council on the work being conducted in Pennsylvania around the development and initial implementation of a Universal Assessment Tool (UAT) in Crawford and Allegheny counties. This information was presented to provide insight to the Council on work that is ongoing in the development of a Statewide tool and process for safety and risk assessment utilizing the FAST. During that presentation, Council members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the UAT process. On October 14, 2021, OCYF presented information regarding the revised assessment process to PCYA at their quarterly statewide meeting of county child welfare administrators. At that time, OCYF provided child welfare administrators with information as to how the Safety Subcommittee arrived at their recommendation of the selection of the FAST as the UAT for Pennsylvania. The next steps and proposed timeline for implementation of the process statewide were also reviewed during this presentation. At that time, county administrators were afforded the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on information presented. County administrators were invited to engage in the process by offering staff to participate in the ongoing tool development process. On that same date, during a separate session of the PCYA quarterly event, Allegheny and Crawford counties presented information on the work that is being done in their counties around the development of a UAT process utilizing the FAST.

Pennsylvania worked with Casey Family Programs throughout July, August and September to develop a strategic plan for implementation and monitoring of the streamlined risk and safety assessment process. Work was also initiated to develop a governance structure and implementation team for the implementation and monitoring of the streamlined risk and safety assessment process utilizing the UAT. OCYF, through the CWRC, began the contracting process with the Praed Foundation and the University of Kentucky during the fall of 2021 to support the development of the tool, manual and training of the process for statewide implementation. A Tool Development Workgroup was formed consisting of state and county child welfare agency partners to work with Praed in the development of the UAT specific to Pennsylvania utilizing the FAST. The workgroup has statewide representation from all regions, and counties of different class sizes are represented to assure consideration is given to counties with varying challenges and resources. Praed and CWRC worked with the workgroup members to assure they were certified in the use of the FAST tool in order to participate in the tool development work beginning in December.

The Tool Development workgroup continued its work with the Praed Foundation to finalize the UAT and identify the areas of the tool that will inform risk and safety decisions. The Praed Foundation also supported Pennsylvania in the development of a manual following finalization of the tool, which will support the implementation process. Work began in the development of a governance structure to include a sponsor and implementation team to support successful implementation of the UAT process. The sponsor team charter was drafted, and the sponsor team will convene for the first time in July 2022.

Safety Objective 1.2 (CFSR PIP Strategy): OCYF will work with ChildLine and CCYAs to better inform the practice of categorizing child protective and GPS reports, as well as guidelines for due diligence to locate and see children, documentation, supervisory reviews, and GPS screen out protocols to assure child safety during child protective investigations and general protective assessments.
Rationale for Objective Selection: • Pennsylvania did not achieve federal standards for timeliness to investigations during the 2017 CFSR. • Findings from the 2017 CFSR, as well as information gathered through annual CCYA licensing inspections, indicated county staff have less consistency in meeting GPS response times, versus CPS response times. • Analysis of CFSR findings from 2017 revealed that the number of reports coming into ChildLine, combined with high staff turnover at the CCYAs, contributed to delays in meeting GPS and CPS response times. • Through in-depth review of ChildLine policies, a sampling of approximately 1700 GPS referrals and conversations with CCYA administrators and staff, it was identified that due to the current practice of ChildLine not screening out any calls concerning a child, there were some GPS referrals being sent to CCYAs that did not meet the regulatory definition of what constitutes a GPS report.

Key Activities/Strategies	Benchmarks for Completion
OCYF will assess ChildLine and county application of appropriate thresholds when categorizing CPS and GPS reports to identify areas where further clarification and guidance may be needed. ➢ The inaccurate categorization of a referral can lead to an inappropriate response time being determined by the county children and youth agency, or the need for additional processes to re-evaluate the referral to the correct categorization. ➢ Additionally, referrals not meeting the threshold of a GPS or CPS divert limited resources from reports that require child welfare involvement.	September 2019 *Complete*
OCYF will collaborate with stakeholders regarding policy to clarify the notifications to counties when referral information is received that does not meet the threshold for a GPS referral. ➢ If information is reported to ChildLine that alleges a concern for a child but does not constitute a GPS or CPS concern, that information will be sent as an Information Only referral to counties which will be required to be reviewed in the event they already have an open case with the family but will not require an assessment or a finding be sent back to the department. ➢ Examples of an Information Only referral would be a broken zipper on a coat or a parent forgetting supplies for childcare unless those actions were a well-being concern for the child.	September 2019 *Complete*
OCYF will collaborate with stakeholders and counties regarding gaps in practice and/or guidance related to due diligence to locate and see children, documentation, supervisory reviews, and GPS screen out protocols. The research will also be conducted on best practice guidance in these areas to inform the development of the final guidance.	September 2019 *Complete*
OCYF will draft guidance revisions regarding operational definitions and thresholds for GPS and CPS referrals, as well as when it is appropriate to screen out referrals to ensure referrals requiring child welfare investigation or assessment are completed timely. ➢ The guidance will also include details related to due diligence to locate and see children, documentation, supervisory reviews, and GPS screen out protocols. ➢ Ensuring resources are appropriately directed support the workforce since the expansion of laws dramatically increased the number of reports received.	September 2019 *Complete*

➢ This guidance will be shared with the Child Welfare Council, Safety Subcommittee and PCYA for review and feedback prior to issuance.	
OCYF will finalize guidance and work with county partners and the CWRC to identify curricula revisions necessitated by the revised guidance, with the implementation of the training prior to the guidance effective date.	December 2019 *Complete*
OCYF will monitor fidelity of the policy guidance developed through quality assurance efforts at ChildLine to ensure appropriate categorization of reports, re-evaluation requests, and screen out justification. ➢ This will be done through the monitoring of calls, regular data reports, and sampling referrals for review. Additional oversight and monitoring will occur through licensing inspections conducted by OCYF Regional Offices, which will cover the aforementioned areas, as well as due diligence, documentation, and supervisory reviews.	March 2020 and ongoing *Complete (and ongoing)*
OCYF will explore the application of a predictive risk model (PRM) to be utilized at ChildLine to support child welfare call screening decisions.	April 2020 *Complete*

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

All planned activities related to this objective for have been completed as planned.

With the release of the GPS Bulletin in August 2020, OCYF worked to establish collaborative monitoring practices to ensure issues with implementation are identified timely and appropriate adjustments made to promote successful implementation of the bulletin requirements. Representatives from the OCYF Division of Policy and ChildLine, as well as the OCYF Executive Assistant, met on a monthly basis during the reporting period to discuss GPS reporting requirements for substance affected infants (SAI) and Plans of Safe Care implementation.

During the reporting period monitoring activities established to support implementation of the GPS Bulletin continued. These monitoring efforts occur on a number of levels. At the ChildLine level, the daily tracking spreadsheet is used to identify GPS Bulletin relevant processing decisions and is used to aid in quality assurance reviews by supervisory staff. Within the OCYF Regional Offices, implementation of key bulletin provisions continues to be monitored as part of the annual licensing inspection summary process in which a random sample of GPS reports and GPS screen-outs are reviewed. As the GPS Bulletin was first implemented in October 2020, during OCYF was able to access a 12-month span

of administrative data until the fall of 2021 to look at any changes in trends that may reflect impacts to practice as a result of the GPS Bulletin. OCYF also utilizes case review processes such as the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews and Quality Service Reviews (QSR) to monitoring implementation.

The GPS Bulletin was intended to improve practice in a number of areas related to the handling of GPS reports while also helping to reduce the number of GPS reports sent to counties that did not involve true GPS concerns. This approach was taken to help promote CCYAs focusing capacity on addressing true child abuse and neglect concerns by reducing the volume of GPS reports unnecessarily transmitted to the CCYAs where child safety and well-being concerns were not alleged. While limited in scope, the current data and information available through OCYF's data system and through the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews provides some evidence to suggest the GPS Bulletin is achieving its intended impact.

In looking at data from CWIS covering the first day of GPS Bulletin implementation (October 3, 2020) through September of 2021, it was identified that 46.56% of GPS referrals received during the time period were ultimately screened-out. Monthly screen-out rates during the time period ranged from a high of 48.75% in September 2021 to a low of 45.55% in February 2021. This data shows a reversal in a general trend observed between 2015 and 2019 in which the percentage of GPS reports screened-out each year continued to increase. While in 2015, 46.55% of GPS reports were screened-out, this increased each consecutive year until reaching a high of 53.71% of all GPS reports being screened-out in 2019. In calendar year 2020, 50.92% of the GPS reports received were screened out.[18]

Through the GPS Bulletin, OCYF established parameters to better define minimum thresholds for classification of a report as involving GPS concerns. Additionally, the bulletin changed existing policy to allow ChildLine to transmit information only referrals to the CCYAs when there are no allegations meeting the GPS thresholds defined in the bulletin but there is an identifiable child and/or family. These cases were often transmitted to the CCYAs and then screened-out under the previous policy. Recognizing the importance of ensuring this policy change did not result in cases of legitimate GPS concerns being incorrectly classified under the information only designation, ChildLine instituted the policy for supervisory review of all reports to be transmitted to the county under the information only category. Available data shown in Table 12 covering the first day of GPS Bulletin implementation through September 2021 indicates a relatively small number of calls made to ChildLine were ultimately classified as information only referrals.

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[18] 2020 Child Protective Services Annual Report. Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, October 2021. https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Documents/Child%20Abuse%20Reports/2020%20Child%20Protective%20Services%20Report_FINAL.pdf

Table 12. Information Only Referrals

Total Info Only Type Referrals Transmitted to Counties (Received 10/03/2020 through 09/30/2021)	
10/03/2020 - 10/31/2020	*207*
November 2020	*184*
December 2020	*220*
January 2021	*243*
February 2021	*227*
March 2021	*311*
April 2021	*297*
May 2021	*260*
June 2021	*278*
July 2021	*329*
August 2021	*297*
September 2021	*327*
Total	***3,180***

Source [CWIS, OCYF], [December 2021]

As part of ongoing data collection efforts, OCYF continues to monitor licensing data to see if there are any emerging trends related to implementation of the GPS Bulletin provisions.

OCYF decided to pause further exploration into use of predictive risk modeling at a statewide level at ChildLine and is prioritizing completion of several other key priority initiatives OCYF has underway at this time.

Safety Objective 1.3: Implement a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach in the prevention, identification and treatment of child human trafficking.

Rationale for Objective Selection:
Child sex and labor trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery that affects both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. Traffickers thrive by targeting the vulnerabilities of children and youth. Research suggests children involved with the child welfare system are associated with higher risk factors for being trafficked. Human trafficking is a complex web of exploitation potentially affecting every community in Pennsylvania and across the nation. To combat the epidemic of human trafficking, goals and strategies need to be created and implemented which focus on prevention and anti-human trafficking campaigns; identification, screening, and assessments for victims; and appropriate, time sensitive and trauma-based interventions.
• The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 introduced provisions to ensure child welfare agencies identify and provide services to victims of sex trafficking and youth at risk of becoming victims.
  o OCYF worked with stakeholders to develop and implement guidance to assist child welfare agencies in responding to human trafficking.
• In October of 2018, Act 130 established mandates in Pennsylvania for: special relief to restore victim's dignity and autonomy, establishing the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund, imposing penalties for those convicted of human trafficking-related crimes and in juvenile matters, providing for dependency in lieu of delinquency.
• Research suggests youth who run away from foster care are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of sex trafficking.
  o As of September 30, 2021, 136 youth in out-of-home care were reported as having run-away status in AFCARS.

Key Activities/Strategies	Benchmarks for Completion
Development and piloting of the CVHT)/CSEC training through a multidisciplinary committee facilitated through the Pennsylvania Chapters of Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) and Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT).	July 2019 *Complete*
Completion and dissemination of OCYF's guidance regarding child victims of human trafficking.	September 2019 *Complete*
Launch of OCYF's human trafficking screening and assessment training by the University of Pittsburgh, Child Welfare Resource Center.	September 2019 *Complete*

Establishment of the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund.	December 2019 *Complete*
The CVHT/CSEC training will be finalized and provided to the Municipal Police Officers Education and Training and the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) for training appropriate law enforcement officers.	December 2019 *Complete*
Provide guidance and training to the CCYAs and regional OCYF offices to obtain more accurate and detailed data for Pennsylvania regarding CVHT/CSEC.	September 2020 *Complete*
Utilize funding from CJA through the Pennsylvania Coalition on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) to hire a CVHT Victim Advocate/Case Coordinator and CVHT/CSEC Victim Specialist to work as a team member in the CAC/MDT Response Teams.	October 2020 *Complete*
Utilize funding from CJA through PCCD to expand and sustain continuous MDT/Community Response Practice Improvement CVHT/CSEC Training.	October 2020 *Complete*
Utilize funding from CJA through to enhance the annual CVHT/CSEC Subject Matter Expert Forum with promising practices and process strategies.	October 2021

- *Progress Since Last Report*

  There are no current updates to report.

Safety Goal 2: Collaborate with stakeholders and cross-system partners to strengthen the array of services available to promote primary, secondary and tertiary child maltreatment prevention efforts
Rationale for Goal Selection: • Working with child and family service partners to support families within their own homes and communities is another key outcome identified within Pennsylvania's Practice Model. Public health models of prevention and a focus on social determinants of health are increasingly being utilized to help reframe efforts to identify and assist families before they come to the attention of the child welfare system.

- Additionally, the passage of Family First has offered opportunities for states to leverage additional resources to improve the array of services available to help keep families together and prevent the placement of children and youth in out of home care.
- During the CFSR conducted in 2017, only 45% of applicable cases reviewed were identified as providing adequate services to the family to protect children in the home and prevent their removal or re-entry into foster care.
- Children ages 0-4 represent the age group with the highest rate of placement in Pennsylvania.
- In 2018, as in previous years, the most frequently reported GPS allegation reported to ChildLine involved parental substance abuse.

5-Year Monitoring Targets	**Baseline**	2021 APSR	2022 APSR	2023 APSR	2024 APSR
The rate of entry per 1,000 children into out-of-home care for children ages 0-4 will decrease to 2.25 or less by the end of FFY 2024 (AFCARS)	September 30, 2018 2.81 placements per 1,000 children	September 30, 2019 2.67 placements per 1,000 children	September 30, 2020 1.89 placements per 1,000 children	September 30, 2021 2.16 placements per 1,000 children	
The percentage of children and youth under the age of one who are removed from their home due to parental substance abuse (drug or alcohol) will decrease to 46% or less by the end of FFY 2024 (AFCARS)	September 30, 2018 49.26% of children entering out-of-home care	September 30, 2019 49.66% of children entering out-of-home care	September 30, 2020 56.70% of children entering out-of-home care	September 30, 2021 58.18% of children entering out-of-home care	

Safety Objective 2.1: Safely maintain children and youth in their own homes by delivering comprehensive and accessible prevention services through the implementation of provisions under the Family First Prevention Services Act.
Rationale for Objective Selection: • At the time of the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP, Pennsylvania planned to opt into the prevention portion of Family First in October 2020. • Family First provides an opportunity to expand utilization of certain EBPs through federal funding support. • There may be an opportunity to serve children and families who are not eligible for evidence-based programs and services through other means. DHS will explore how Family First could be used to better address unmet needs for populations who could benefit from these specific prevention services. • DHS has incentivized EPBs by offering a higher state participation rate since SFY 2009-10 to support counties in their efforts to provide services with proven outcomes. • Six CCYAs participated in the Child Welfare Demonstration Project (CWDP) that was implemented in SFY 2012-13. The CWDP permitted participating counties to utilize Title IV-E dollars more flexibly to support engagement and assessment activities that led to the selection of EPBs to address the needs of the children and families being served. Over the course of the CWDP, five of the six participating counties reduced the likelihood of a child's first admission being placement in a congregate care setting. The likelihood that a child's first admission would be placement in a kinship care setting increased for all waiver counties.[19] • Of the children and youth entering care during FFY 2018, and who were not in the shared custody of JPO, 9.6% discharged to parents or relatives within 30 days of the removal.   o Placements less than 30 days may involve issues that could have been more easily mitigated through preventative services to avoid the need for removal of the children from the home.

Key Activities/Strategies	Benchmarks for Completion
Convene a workgroup of diverse stakeholders to make key practice decisions and develop implementation strategies.	March 2019 *Complete*
Define "candidate for foster care", "qualified clinician" and "trauma-informed".	August 2019 *Complete*

[19] Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Demonstration Project Final Evaluation Report, University of Pittsburgh and Chapin Hall, January 2019

Complete business requirements to change the Title IV-E Validation System (web-based application used by CCYA to submit Title IV-E claims) to capture child-specific reporting related to Title IV-E Prevention Services.	August 2019 *Complete*
Determine how outcomes will be monitored, how the safety of the child while services are provided is monitored, how candidacy will be documented, how payor of last resort will be monitored, and how the caseload size and type for prevention workers will be managed.	November 2019 *Complete*
Complete System Design Requirements for Title IV-E Validation System changes.	November 2019 *Complete*
Develop policy guidance regarding the Title IV-E Prevention Services Program	April 2020 *Complete*
Amend Act 148 Invoice reporting to collect information related to Title IV-E Prevention Services.	May 2020 *Complete*
Determine how the 50% well-supported criteria will be managed.	May 2020 *Complete*
Amend the Random Moment Time Study process to collect information regarding the time the average caseworker spends on Title IV-E Prevention activities.	May 2020 *Complete*
Train staff to determine and document eligibility for Title IV-E Prevention Services	July 2020 *Complete*
Release policy guidance and train staff on the revised Random Moment Time Study process.	August 2020 *Complete*
Select Title IV-E Prevention Services to be implemented in Pennsylvania	August 2020 *Complete*

Calculate Maintenance-of-Effort based on selected Title IV-E Prevention Services to be implemented in PA	August 2020 *Complete*
Submit a Five-Year Prevention Plan	September 2020 *Complete – pending ACF approval*
Go live date	October 2020 *Delayed – October 1, 2021* *Complete*
Collect information regarding Prevention Workers caseload size and type	September 2021 September 2022 September 2023 September 2024
Review AFCARS data to determine whether fewer children are entering out-of-home care and the reasons associated with placements	May 2021 May 2022 May 2023 May 2024
Review the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse to determine whether changes to the Five-Year Prevention Plan are necessary	Semi-annually

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Since the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP, Pennsylvania has prioritized efforts necessary to move towards implementation of the Family First Title IV-E Prevention Services Program. In conducting a fiscal analysis, OCYF determined full implementation of the Prevention Services Program, coupled with the congregate funding limitation imposed by Family First, would initially result in a significant loss of federal funding. Therefore, Pennsylvania requested and was approved to delay implementation until October 1, 2021. This delay in official implementation of the program was only related to funding as Pennsylvania has already been working diligently to implement evidence-based prevention programs and lower the congregate care placement population. Due to this shift in Pennsylvania's implementation

timeline, nearly all the timeframes for completion of key activities outlined for this objective in Pennsylvania's initial 2020-2024 CFSP submission required adjustment but have since been completed.

The eight EBPs to be included in Pennsylvania's initial implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Program were selected through analysis of existing demographic, programmatic and fiscal data and feedback from stakeholders and system partners. The eight EBPs selected for implementation and presented in our plan include:

- *Functional Family Therapy*
- *Healthy Families America*
- *Homebuilders*
- *Incredible Years*
- *Multi-Systemic Therapy*
- *Nurse Family Partnership*
- *Parents as Teachers*
- *Triple P*

Throughout the reporting period, OCYF engaged in multiple activities to prepare and support CCYAs in implementation of the Prevention Services Program. Activities included the development and issuance of additional resources, such as a desk guide, the convening of several all-county calls focused on addressing county Family First implementation questions and holding regionally based panel and informational sessions. As noted in the executive summary of the 2023 APSR, the FFIT was convened to serve as a forum for bringing together technical assistance providers and OCYF staff to collaborate around developing a continuum of supports to assist CCYAs with Family First. Specifically, the FFIT was developed to:

- *Identify and address challenges associated with the culture shift related to moving from reactive to proactive, preventive services*
- *Incorporate principles and practice that support implementation of prevention services that are trauma-informed care and healing centered programs;*
- *Incorporate principles and practice that strengthens equity and a culturally responsive prevention service array;*
- *Define the responsibilities of the Regional Offices, Child Welfare Resource Center, and other partners with Family First implementation;*
- *Define Continuous Quality Improvement strategies to support implementation;*

- *Identify and provide training, transfer of learning, and technical assistance tools and processes to support implementation; and*
- *Identify themes, resources, and support for county, provider, and statewide needs.*

Additionally, the Family First Learning Collaborative was established to create a forum for sharing information, innovations and ideas related to family support and prevention strategies supported by Family First.

OCYF continued meeting with counties interested in exploring the opportunity to become innovation zones under Pennsylvania's plans for implementing the Family First Prevention Services Program. Innovation zones will allow counties to work with their community partners to develop creative approaches to providing community pathways for preventative evidence-based programming to at-risk children and families to help intervene before more intensive and intrusive child welfare system involvement becomes necessary. As noted in the executive summary of this report, the Building Strong Communities and Healthy Families Workgroup was convened during the reporting period to provide input, ideas and a strategic direction to the planning, development and implementation of projects and prevention services presented in Pennsylvania's Five-Year Prevention Plan which will include advising OCYF on the performance evaluation for the proposed Innovation Zone projects, helping to review and monitor outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of the Innovation Zones in relation to statewide goals.

In August of 2021, OCYF submitted Pennsylvania's Five-Year Prevention Plan to ACF. During the reporting period, OCYF received feedback from ACF on the initial draft and worked to provide additional information and clarification where requested. OCYF resubmitted an updated version of the Five-Year Prevention Plan to ACF in April 2022 and received additional feedback in May. Over the course of the coming year, OCYF will continue to collaborate with ACF to achieve approval of Pennsylvania's Title IV-E Five-Year Prevention Plan and work with stakeholders to continue implementation and monitoring of Pennsylvania's Family First prevention efforts.

Safety Objective 2.2: Pennsylvania will explore opportunities and challenges related to the implementation of an alternative/differential response system.
Rationale for Objective Selection: • Alternative/differential response systems offer child welfare agencies multiple pathways for responding to reports of child maltreatment that are proportionate to the severity of the allegations and the family's needs.   o Alternative/differential response is expected to lead to greater engagement by families in the child welfare system's efforts to promote child safety.

- This increased family engagement with child welfare is expected to lead to increased uptake of services to which families are linked.
- Engagement in services is then expected to lead to increased service effectiveness, and ultimately, improved safety and well-being outcomes for children, youth and families.

- A 2016 study conducted for the United State Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by the University of Colorado found overall, higher rates of alternative response were associated with lower re-reports and re-reports with substantiation (that is, a subsequent confirmation that the child had been victimized).[20]
- In Pennsylvania, GPS reports are generally considered to involve non-serious injury or neglect, such as inadequate shelter, truancy, or inappropriate discipline, but the GPS system does not meet the definition of an alternative/differential response system.
  - Understanding the effectiveness of Pennsylvania's GPS system did not become available until 2015 when statewide data regarding GPS reports became available with the implementation of CWIS.

Key Activities/Strategies	Benchmarks for Completion
The Council will identify the appropriate subcommittee or ad-hoc group who will be tasked with providing recommendations regarding the implementation of an alternative/differential response system in Pennsylvania.	September 2019
The subcommittee or ad-hoc group will develop a charter to define the scope of work and recommendations.	December 2019
The subcommittee or ad-hoc group will conduct a literature review and consult with TA providers to conduct in-depth research on alternative/differential response systems.	February 2020
The subcommittee or ad-hoc group will identify data and information needed to inform recommendations, collect the needed data, and conduct an analysis of the data.	May 2020
The subcommittee or ad-hoc group will identify additional stakeholder groups to engage in discussion regarding alternative/differential response system opportunities/challenges for Pennsylvania, such as front line CCYA staff, representatives from ChildLine, and county administrators.	July 2020
The subcommittee or ad-hoc group will draft recommendations.	August 2020

[20] Differential Response and the Safety of Children Reported to Child Protective Services: A Tale of Six States, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (2016).

The draft recommendations will be reviewed by the Safety Subcommittee and subsequently finalized.	September 2020
The final recommendations developed by the Safety Subcommittee ad-hoc group will be presented to the Council	September 2020
The Council will submit final recommendations to OCYF and DHS for review and determination of next steps	October 2020

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Early in 2020, Pennsylvania began the literature review process and initiated a conversation regarding technical assistance with Casey Family Programs on advancing understanding and developing recommendations regarding differential response. As work advanced into March 2020 and beyond, COVID-19 delayed efforts to form a specific subcommittee and additional steps identified in the 2020-2024 CFSP that were to be completed by a subcommittee were not completed as focus shifted to more immediate needs. Staffing capacity issues due to the Commonwealth staff hiring freeze limited OCYF's ability to fully engage on this project as 2020 continued.

While OCYF has not yet worked with the Council to form a subcommittee to define the scope of work regarding differential response, efforts to develop a defined differential response process through the Family First Steering and Project Team's prevention planning have been ongoing throughout the past year. Pennsylvania included a proposal in the submission of the state's Title IV-E Prevention Plan that outlines a mechanism for counties to develop innovation zones for referral to community-based prevention services outside of the child welfare system. OCYF believes this process can form the basis for future community based diversionary programs and advancement of a differential response model in Pennsylvania.

While this objective initially identified in Pennsylvania's plan likely would have led to recommendations to strengthen community-based prevention efforts that would result in diverting families away from traditional child welfare interventions, it should be noted that those actions are now expected to be acted on and advanced through Pennsylvania's Family First implementation and intentional work with counties on developing prevention programs in their communities.

In June of 2022, OCYF engaged the county children and youth administrators in a discussion around a differential response system during a quarterly administrator's meeting. Specifically, OCYF asked administrators:

- *What does differential response in PA look like to you?*
- *What do you need from OCYF to get there together in your county?*
- *What are the questions/implications for upcoming NBPB process?*
- *Next steps?*

OCYF will review the feedback from the session and identify any next steps to continue moving forward with exploration into a differential response system for Pennsylvania.

Safety Objective 2.3: Pennsylvania DHS, DOH and DDAP will continue collaboration to support the implementation and monitoring of Plans of Safe Care across the Commonwealth.
Rationale for Objective Selection: • On June 28, 2018, Governor Tom Wolf signed Act 54 of 2018 updating Pennsylvania law, consistent with CAPTA, to require health care professionals, involved in the delivery or care of a child under one year of age who the health care provider has determined to be affected by prenatal substance exposure. • In Pennsylvania, the rate of newborns with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) was 15.0 per 1,000 newborn hospitalizations in SFY 2016-17, an increase of 1,096% from SFY 2000-01 at a rate of 1.2. • In 2016, 2017, and 2018, parental substance abuse was the most commonly reported GPS allegation to ChildLine. • Per AFCARS, as of September 30, 2018, 51% of children entering out of home care under the age of one were removed from their parents due to parental substance abuse.

Key Activity/Strategy	Benchmarks for Completion
Update the Plan of Safe Care Guidance document to include additional chapters related to special considerations for Plans of Safe Care, as determined by feedback from the Governor's Institute work sessions and regional listening tours/site visits.	December 2022
Provide TA to CCYAs surrounding policies and procedures related to Plans of Safe Care through regional listening tours and/or site visits.	December 2020 *Completed*
Update the Pennsylvania Plans of Safe Care webinar to reflect updated guidance document.	January 2023

Publish and disseminate a companion document to the Plan of Safe Care Guidance for legislators and policymakers, to educate constituents on the history and context of CAPTA.	December 2022
Publish and disseminate one-page educational flyers tailored to the unique perspectives of various stakeholders who work with infants affected by substance use and their families, including but not limited to the following fields: child welfare, pediatric//family medicine, obstetric/gynecologic medicine, substance abuse treatment, EI and family support programming, mental and behavioral health treatment, housing support, etc.	January 2021-December 2024
Explore the possibility of creating a third category within CWIS to account for Plans of Safe Care notifications, so that all notifications are not treated as GPS reports.	June 2022

- *Progress Since Last Report*

In 2019 DHS, the DOH and the DDAP jointly issued the "Pennsylvania Plan of Safe Care Guidance", which provided practice considerations related to the identification of infants and caregivers affected by prenatal substance exposure, and parameters related to the development of Plans of Safe Care including plan elements and monitoring. Pennsylvania's CAPTA PIP ensured that all legislative changes and policy guidance were consistent with federal requirements. Pennsylvania successfully completed the PIP in December in 2019.

The COVID 19 pandemic and transition in the staff person assigned as the OCYF lead for Plans of Safe created challenges for OCYF to fully meet key activities and strategy benchmarks as initially proposed in the 2020-2024 CFSP. The COVID 19 pandemic caused all state staff to transition to telework, prohibited in-person convenings of workgroups, and diverted staff resources to crisis responses. During the current reporting period the following activities were completed in continued support of implementation of Plans of Safe Care:

- *Updated CWIS to include an 'information only' category, pursuant to OCYF Bulletin 3490-19-02 "Statewide GPS Referrals", for reporting substance affected infants. In accordance with the CPSL, ChildLine is the entity which receives all reports of substance. The update went live on October 3, 2020.*
- *The Multi-Disciplinary Workgroup on Infants with Substance Exposure (MDWISE) was tasked with updating the Plans of Safe Care Guidance Document. This work was delayed due to the workgroup meetings being suspended from March to October 2020. Currently, the Policy and Practice sub-committee of MDWISE is reviewing proposed changes/ updates to the document. The POSC webinar will be updated upon completion of*

the Guidance document up-dates. The Education sub-committee of MDWISE is in the process of developing information materials for families, providers, and policy makers.

- *The need for additional funding was identified in Fall 2019 TA sessions with county implementation teams. OCYF developed an allocation strategy to provide CAPTA funding to county child welfare agencies to support Plans of Safe Care implementation.*
- *In response to a survey of CCYAS regarding TA needs for the on-going implementation of POSC OCYF began offering monthly virtual POSC Support Sessions in January 2022. Sessions alternate between round-table small group discussions to give county POSC teams the opportunity to connect and professional development/ informational sessions on topics identified by the CCYA*

To help build sustainable capacity to support implementation, a position was created within the CWRC with a focus on CAPTA and more specifically, Plans of Safe Care. Integrating this position within the structure of the CWRC has l promoted provision of stronger training and technical assistance to CCYAs.

CCYAs are best able to determine the most effective and efficient way to use CAPTA POSC funds. Given this, OCYF offered two-year (state fiscal years 21-22 and 22-23) CAPTA funding allocations, based on county class size, directly to CCYAs via a grant agreement. These funds are specifically to support POSC efforts at the county level. Examples of allowable costs include but are not limited to:

- *Provision of information, training and/or technical assistance to health care providers who are required to notify CCYAs of substance affected infants (SAI);*
- *Development and implementation of data collection policies and procedures for POSC in which CCYA acts as the lead agency;*
- *Development and implementation of data collection policies and procedures for POSC in which a community-based provider acts as the lead agency;*
- *Development of systems to ensure the safety and well-being of SAI following release from the care of health care providers;*
- *Fill gaps in health and substance use disorder treatment to meet the needs of the infant and affected family or caregiver*

Forty-one counties are participating in the grants. Of the grantee counties:

- *39% are classified as sixth class (population of 45,000 to 89,999)*

- *22% are classified as fourth and fifth class counties (populations of 145,000 to 209,999 & 90,000 to 144,999 respectively)*
- *19.5% are classified as third-class counties (population of 210,000 to 499,999)*
- *OCYF collects data to inform monitoring efforts regarding implementation of Plans of Safe Care. With the necessary changes made to CWIS, which were launched in October 2020, OCYF was provided with improved data tracking and reporting capabilities related to substance affected infants and Plans of Safe Care. In calendar year 2021 there were 1,014 SAI notifications made to ChildLine of those:*
- *710 were made GPS referrals*
- *304 were made Information Only referrals*

Of the 710 GPS referrals with a substance affected infant notification 587 had a Plan of Safe Care developed. It should be noted that GPS referrals may contain additional allegations beyond those relevant to the substance affected infant and therefore, those allegations may have contributed to the overall determination of a valid outcome.

Enacting the Vision – Achieving Timely and Enduring Permanency for Children and Youth

Pennsylvania's Practice Model focuses on the achievement of outcomes to ensure children and youth have enduring and certain permanence and timely achievement of stability, supports and lifelong connections. The Practice Model also identifies a key outcome related to achieving strengthened families that successfully sustain positive changes and lead to safe, nurturing and healthy environments. The following section of this plan describes and assesses Pennsylvania's current array of permanency services, provides an evaluation of the state's performance on key federal permanency outcomes and provides a plan for improving permanence for children and youth over the course of the next five years.

Permanency Service Continuum and Coordination

Pennsylvania's core permanency service continuum is comprised of placement services, services to focus on expediting permanency for children under the age of five, family reunification services, foster and adoptive diligent recruitment services, and adoption promotion and support services.

Placement Services – Kinship Care

Kinship care is the full-time nurturing and protection of a child who is separated from his/her parents and placed in the home of a caregiver who has an existing relationship with the child and/or the child's family. The existing relationship involves one of the following characteristics:

- Relative of the child through blood or marriage;
- Godparent of the child as recognized by an organized church;
- Member of the child's tribe or clan; or
- A significant positive relationship with the child or the child's family.

Pennsylvania's Juvenile Act allows children to be placed with any individual, including any relative, who after study, is found to be qualified to receive the child. Formal kinship care exists when the CCYA has legal custody of the child and out-of-home placement is made with a kinship caregiver who is an approved foster parent by a licensed foster family care agency. Informal kinship care exists when an arrangement is made by the parents for placement of their child with a kinship caregiver. Formal kinship caregivers must be offered, and are eligible to receive, foster care maintenance payments if they meet certain requirements.

DHS fully supports the use of kinship care, as it is designed to promote the following objectives:

- Preserving family connections through placement with “fit and willing” relatives and other individuals with whom the parents or the child have an existing relationship who are providing care for the child who cannot remain with his/her parents.
- Assuring that kinship caregivers are able to make informed decisions regarding their commitment to the child by providing them with information about community services, public benefits, concurrent planning and the foster parent approval process.
- Supporting formal kinship caregivers with placement services, resource parent orientation and training that recognizes the caregiver’s knowledge of the child and family situation, the ability to receive foster care maintenance payments and in cases where they provide permanency to a child through adoption or permanent legal custodianship (PLC), the ability to receive adoption assistance or have the PLC subsidized if eligibility criteria are met.
- Providing post-permanency services to formal kinship caregivers as a unit of service through the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) prime contract.

Act 25 of 2003 (known as the Kinship Care Act) established the Kinship Care Program and provided parameters for who is included in the definition of relative; established a statutory requirement giving relatives first consideration as a placement resource when a child cannot safely remain with his/her legal family and is placed in the legal custody of an agency; required CCYAs to document attempts to place children with a relative; and, where appropriate, reasons why such a placement was not possible. Act 25 also required the promulgation of regulatory requirements establishing that relatives receive the same foster care maintenance payment rate as other non-relative foster parents when they meet all regulatory foster parent approval requirements and that foster care maintenance payments are excluded when calculating eligibility for public assistance.

Act 80 of 2012 amended the Kinship Care Act by codifying the definition of kin (an individual 21 years of age or older who is a godparent of the child as recognized by an organized church; a member of the child’s tribe/nation/tribal organization; or an individual with a significant, positive relationship with the child or family); expanding the definition of relative from the third degree to the fifth degree of consanguinity or affinity to the parent or stepparent of a child; establishing that kin, in addition to relatives, are to be given first consideration as a placement resource when a child must be placed in the legal custody of a CCYA; and codifying the 2008 Fostering Connections requirements for relative notification when a dependent child is removed from the home and legal and physical custody has been transferred to the CCYA. Act 80 permitted formal kinship caregivers who provide permanency through adoption or PLC to children age 13 or older to receive subsidy payments for these children up until the child turns 21 so long as the child is meeting one of the following five criteria: completing secondary education or an equivalent credential; enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education; participating in a program actively designed to promote or remove barriers to employment; employed for at least 80 hours per month; or incapable of doing

any of the activities described above due to a medical or behavioral health condition. Act 80 also codified PLC subsidy eligibility requirements and provided parameters for PLC subsidy amounts.

On July 18, 2018, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania ruled that Act 80 of 2012 violates Article III, section 4 of the Pennsylvania Constitution and Act 80 was stricken in its entirety. At the time of the 2020-2024 CFSP submission, DHS was working to implement any changes needed because of the Supreme Court's decision and received permission from the ACF to continue paying counties until a decision has been made. DHS assisted in the proposal of new legislation to reinstate provisions previously under Act 80. This legislation was introduced during the 2019 legislative session and was enacted.

Act 91 of 2012, amended the definition of child under Pennsylvania's Juvenile Act to permit youth to remain under dependency jurisdiction up until the age of 21 as long as the youth is meeting at least one of the five criteria described in the paragraph above. For such youth, formal kinship caregivers continue to receive foster care maintenance payments and supports through the CCYA.

In 2015, Pennsylvania enacted and implemented Act 92, which amended the Kinship Care and Family Finding Section of the Human Services Code (Article XIII) to include the expansion of relative notification and the definition of a sibling. The Act expanded Pennsylvania's requirements to ensure CCYAs identify and notify all grandparents and other adult relatives to the fifth degree of consanguinity or affinity to the parent or stepparent of a dependent child and each parent who has legal custody of a sibling of a dependent child within 30 days of the children's removal from the child's home when temporary legal and physical custody has been transferred to the county agency, except in situations of family or domestic violence. Act 92 of 2015 defines sibling as "an individual who has at least one parent in common with another individual, whether by blood, marriage or adoption, regardless of whether or not there is a termination of parental rights and parental death. The term includes biological, adoptive, step and half-siblings." Act 92 of 2015 aligns with the previously established Kinship Care Program, which requires county agencies to give first consideration of placement with a relative whenever a child cannot safely remain in his or her own home. Policy guidance was issued by the department related to this Act.

Family First allows Title IV-E agencies to receive federal funding for qualified kinship navigator programs. Pennsylvania received $479,307 in funding in FFY 2018 to begin a statewide kinship navigator program. OCYF has selected a grantee, The Bair Foundation, to administer this newly established program, which will be known as the Kin Connector.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

No updates were made to Pennsylvania's kinship care policies during the reporting period. All information and updates regarding the KinConnector program can be found under Permanency Objective 2.3.

Placement Services – Foster Care

Foster parents, commonly referred to as resource families in Pennsylvania, are individuals who are committed to providing a safe, temporary home for children who were abused and neglected and are unable to safely remain living in their own homes. CCYAs, private foster family care agencies, the Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association (PSRFA) and SWAN recruit resource parents to provide these services for children. CCYAs are responsible for finding resource families for children who were removed from their own homes by the court. Each foster family care agency (FFCA), including CCYAs, accepts applications from individuals interested in becoming resource parents. The minimum requirements that must be met by all applicants include the following:

- Must be at least 21 years of age.
- Must pass a medical examination that states the individual is physically able to care for children and is free from communicable disease.
- Must pass screening requirements related to child abuse and criminal history clearances.

The FFCA must then assess each individual's capability to be a resource parent. The agency will consider the following when assessing each applicant:

- The ability to provide care, and to nurture and supervise the child.
- A demonstrated stable and emotional adjustment.
- Ties with family, friends and community.

The agency will also consider other matters during the assessment such as parent/child relationships, how the applicant can meet the special needs of children placed in the home, and number and characteristics of children best suited for the resource family. The resource family residence must meet certain minimal requirements as detailed in the regulations at Title 55 Pa. Code Chapter 3700 (Foster Family Care Agency). Resource parents must receive an orientation from the foster family care agency as well as annual resource parent training, some of which they can receive from the CWRC. Resource parents cannot use physical discipline with children placed in their homes; children must be directed with praise and encouragement. Individuals age 18 and over in the home of a prospective applicant must comply with screening requirements related to child abuse and criminal history clearances.

Resource parents are encouraged to participate as members of the treatment team for the children in their care. Resource parents work with the agency and the birth

parents to meet the child's needs and work toward permanency for the child. Resource parents may take children for medical care and to school events, and they may facilitate visitation between the child and the birth parents in the resource home or other approved locations. They may also mentor the child's parents so that the child and the parents can be reunified while promoting safety and well-being for the child and the family.

Act 75 of 2015, the Activities and Experiences for Children in Out-of-Home Placement Act, was designed to help children and youth who are in Pennsylvania's foster care system live more "normal" lives. The law ensures that children in foster care are afforded opportunities to engage in age and developmentally appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural or social activities and experiences; empowers the resource parent(s) for the child or a designated staff person in the child's placement setting to make decisions regarding the child's participation in such activities; requires that caregivers receive training on how to use and apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to decisions and ensures appropriate liability for caregivers, CCYAs, and private children and youth agencies, when a child participates in an activity and the trained caregiver acts in accordance with the reasonable and prudent parent standard. The law also ensures that caregivers and children receive notice of their responsibilities, rights, and opportunities under Act 75.

Under Family First, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released model licensing standards for foster family homes. The standards were categorized into eight sections to cover the essential components of licensing to ensure 1) the applicant has the capacity to care for a child in foster care, and 2) the physical home of the family is appropriate and safe for a child in foster care. States were asked to submit a Title IV-E State Plan Amendment (SPA) that: affirms that the state's licensing standards are in accord with the model standards, and if not, why they deviate; and describes whether any of the licensing standards can be waived, the process to do so, and a description of how caseworkers are trained in the process.

DHS submitted a partial SPA that outlined which model standards Pennsylvania currently meets and plans to consider the remaining standards. The partial SPA also addressed current waiver practices and plans to amend those. The Council requested the opportunity to review the model standards and develop recommendations for DHS to consider. Through the Council, the need to ensure foster and adoptive parents are provided with the training and support for the children and youth in their care was identified as a priority area for the 2020-2024 CFSP. At the time of the 2020-2024 CFSP submission, Pennsylvania was working to review the model licensing standards issued under Family First, which included consideration of changes to the minimum training requirements for resource parents currently outlined in state regulations.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Over the past year, OCYF continued to focus efforts on supporting and guiding CCYAs and FFCAs on how to manage the safety and well-being of the children, youth

and families being served, and the workers serving those families, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On May 26, 2020, DHS' Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) issued "Guidance Regarding Suspension of Regulatory Requirements for OCYF Licensees During the COVID-19 Pandemic". DHS suspended certain foster family home regulatory requirements under 55 Pa. Code Chapter 3700 to provide flexibility in allowing foster parents to demonstrate that they meet certain minimum regulatory requirements for initial and ongoing approval as a foster family home. These included: giving a 90 day-grace period from the time of emergency proclamation is lifted to meet the medical appraisal requirement (§ 3700.62(b)); annual microbiological tests did not need to be completed as long as it was documented in the foster family record that Department of Environmental Resources previously deemed the water potable and there were no prior concerns with the water in the foster family home (§ 3700.67(h)); and permitting FFCAs to utilize telecommunications to conduct video tours of homes to ensure the entire foster family home is inspected and deemed safe. FFCAs were required to document the reasoning for utilizing any of the above-mentioned flexibilities. These regulatory suspensions expired on December 6, 2021. For more information and updates regarding foster parent licensing and retention see CFSR Item 33.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan

Pennsylvania's plan for foster and adoptive parent diligent recruitment found below details the state's effort to meet the federal plan requirements so as to ensure a diverse group of families are available across the state to support and care for children and youth who cannot remain safely within their own homes or be reunified with their parents.

A description of the characteristics of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

Pennsylvania relies upon available data to help drive foster and adoptive parent recruitment efforts. Two databases are used, AFCARS and a state specific database, the CY 890, which tracks information on all children in out-of-home care with a goal of adoption. Per AFCARS as of June 30, 2018, Pennsylvania had 16,681 children in out-of-home care, 7,390 (44%) of whom were over the age of 10. Of the total number of children in care, 8,490 (51%) were males and 8,191 (49%) were females.
The race/ethnicity of the 16,681 children in out of home care was as follows (children can have more than one defined race):

- White = 10,025
- Black = 7,671
- Asian = 106
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander = 27
- Indian/Alaskan = 57
- Hispanic = 2,175

In SFY 2017-18 a total 2,452 children were adopted from Pennsylvania's foster care system. Five-hundred and four children, age 10 and older, were adopted; a 25% increase from SFY 2016-17 and 1,948 children under the age of nine were adopted with 1,384 of them under the age of five. Eighty percent of children adopted from the Pennsylvania foster care system every year are under the age of 10. In SFY 2017-18, 1,257 (51%) males and 1,195 (49%) females were adopted from Pennsylvania foster care.

Per the CY 890 as of June 30, 2018:

- 3,415 children had a primary goal of adoption.
- 2,747 (80.4%) had a primary goal of adoption and were in need of an adoptive resource. Of those:
    - 1,097 (39.9%) were 10 years and older;
    - 1,607 (58.5%) were of a minority race; and,
    - 1,465 (53.3%) were male; 1,282 (46.7%) were female.

- 1,692 children had a concurrent goal of adoption.
- 1,667 (99.99%) children who had a concurrent goal of adoption were in need of an adoptive resource. Of those:
    - 633 (37.9%) were 10 years and older;
    - 439 (26.3%) were of a minority race; and,
    - 731 (43.9%) were male; 936 (56.1%) were female.

- 551 children had both a primary and concurrent goal of adoption.
- 463 (84.0%) of the children who had both a primary and concurrent goal of adoption were in need of an adoptive resource. Of those:
    - 140 (30.2%) were 10 years and older;
    - 146 (31.5%) were of a minority race; and,
    - 268 (48.6%) were male; 283 (51.4%) were female.

Specific strategies to reach out to all parts of the community and diverse methods of disseminating both general information about being a foster/adoptive parent and child-specific information.

Resource family recruitment in Pennsylvania is provided through the SWAN Prime Contract; Pennsylvania's Media Contracts, selected through the Commonwealth's procurement process; and by CCYAs, either directly or through private providers with whom they contract for foster and adoption services. Additional recruitment and awareness events are provided by the PSRFA.

Strategies include:

- DHS/OCYF has been recruiting foster and adoptive families through a media campaign since 1999. The media campaign generally consists of television, radio, print, and online advertisements.
- The current campaign, #MeetTheKids, features older youth from the Pennsylvania foster care system who are in need of permanent families. The commercials are targeted to the Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh media markets as this is where the majority of the children are from and are also the areas in which most foster and adoptive families reside.
- DHS/OCYF pays for three Waiting Child segments that air on local television in the Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Scranton-Wilkes Barre markets.
- Philadelphia has a similar Waiting Child segment - Wednesday's Child - that is sponsored by Wendy's Wonderful Kids and the National Adoption Center.
- Radio, Facebook, YouTube and other online media sources are used to both highlight the statewide campaigns for foster and adoptive families and to feature specific children and youth in need of adoptive families.
- DHS has a website, www.adoptpakids.org, that is used to feature all children waiting for a permanent family and as an informational resource for prospective and approved foster and adoptive families and a Facebook page as well: https://www.facebook.com/adoptpa
- DHS/OCYF collaborates with more than 160 professional photographers from across the state. These professional photographers volunteer their time and talent to take photographs of Pennsylvania's children and youth who are registered with the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE). Pennsylvania has photographers in all 67 counties available to take professional photographs of foster youth that can be used for recruitment purposes.
- DHS/OCYF supports local public and private foster and adoptive agencies National Adoption Awareness activities in November and National Foster Care Month Awareness activities in May.
- PSRFA supports annual events held in May during National Foster Parent Month that aide in the recruitment and retention of resource families.
- DHS/OCYF has several other recruitment strategies, including services provided through SWAN, such as the Older Child Matching Initiative (OCMI), which provides intense child-focused services to teens in need of adoptive homes by matching them with approved families who are registered with the Resource Family Registry (RFR) who indicated they will adopt older youth.
- SWAN provides training to prospective adoptive, formal kinship families and PLC families who are interested in providing permanency to children in the Pennsylvania child welfare system. Families interested in providing foster care to children in the system who they do not know are generally trained by their CCYA or by a private provider that is contracted with the county agency.
- All families who complete the SWAN Family Profile Process are provided with approximately 24 hours of training. The training includes information about the children in out-of-home care and the types of on-going supports and services they may need and how to access them.
- The Family Profile process is designed to train families about the reality of becoming an adoptive family; it is not simply a home study. SWAN affiliate

agencies often provide training, informational sessions and hold matching events in the evenings and on weekends. Many of the same agencies that provide adoptive family training offer foster family training and many families are approved to both foster and adopt (which is what OCYF recommends).

- Not all foster family training is provided by private agencies. Some CCYAs prefer to train their own foster families and many use the PSRFA Parents as Tender Healers Training as part of their on-going training effort. Training is often done in the evening or on weekends as that is when families are available to attend.
- The SWAN Helpline responds to questions from the public about foster care and adoption, including assisting OCYF in responding to the SWAN Facebook page and mailing informational packets to prospective foster and adoptive families.
- All foster, adoptive and kinship families must be registered with the RFR, to include information on whether or not they were approved to foster, adopt or provide kinship care. The RFR is a computerized database listing of all foster, adoptive and kinship families who have been studied to provide care to foster children.
- Other services, such as Child-Specific Recruitment, is a targeted effort to find a specific child a family. Matching services utilize computer-generated “matches” between children who are waiting for permanent homes and those families who are registered with the RFR.

Strategies for assuring that all prospective foster/adoptive parents have access to agencies that approve foster/adoptive parents, including location and hours of services so that the agencies can be accessed by all members of the community.

- All prospective foster and adoptive parents have access to any licensed provider in Pennsylvania. SWAN supports and enhances timely permanency services for children who are in the custody of a CCYA and provides post-permanency support services to families. Since the SWAN program began in 1992, DHS has required that the SWAN prime contractor ensure that services are provided to children in foster care regardless of their geographic location, gender, culture or race, and that families not be denied the opportunity to adopt based on age, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, income, marital status, education, employment status, citizenship, or geography. To ensure equality of service delivery, DHS requires all affiliates to abide by the same contract language. There are approximately 80 SWAN affiliate agencies.

Strategies for training staff to work with diverse communities including cultural, racial, and socio-economic variations.

- SWAN provides annual trainings which include four trainings and an annual permanency conference to train staff. These trainings provide CCYAs and private agency staff, workers in adoption and IL, and resource families the opportunity to learn about the services, the importance of each and how to access them. Topics covered include workshops on foster care, adoption, IL, family engagement, secondary trauma, concurrent planning, permanency and

recruitment and retention of resource families with cultural, racial and socio-economic variations.

- PSRFA holds an annual conference to provide training to resource families and child welfare professionals. Training at this event helps resource families meet the state requirements for annual re-certification. PSRFA provides regional resource parent trainings as well.
- CCYA caseworkers and supervisors, through the CWRC, have access to trainings that include topics about working with diverse communities, racial and socio-economic variations.

Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers.

- The SWAN Helpline Information and Referral Specialists answer the Helpline Monday through Friday during the workday. An answering machine takes a call after hours. The Helpline uses Language Line to speak to callers who do not use English as their primary language and are able to answer questions regarding the foster care and adoption process and refer families to a SWAN affiliate in their area who can help them complete the Family Profile process.
- SWAN has a variety of agencies that try to meet multicultural and religious needs, including some where Spanish is the primary language spoken, such as Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha and others that meet the needs of other groups such as Jewish Family Services.

Non-discriminatory fee structures.

- SWAN Family Profiles are provided to all families who wish to adopt a child from the Pennsylvania foster care system at no charge to the family. There are no requirements on what constitutes a family, as DHS/OCYF believes that a family defines themselves. Therefore, there are a variety of families, including single parents, married parents, same-sex couples, even siblings and mothers/daughters who are or have been, through the SWAN Family Profile Process.
- There are no fees charged for families interested in becoming a foster or adoptive family for a CCYA.
- SWAN post-permanency services (case advocacy, support groups and respite care) are available to any Pennsylvania family who has adopted, whether or not they adopted from foster care, and to formal kinship and PLC families who have provided permanency to a Pennsylvania foster child. Families self-refer for services by contacting the SWAN Helpline. There is no charge to families for the services, which are funded with a mixture of Title IV-E, Title IV-B and state funds.

Procedures for the timely search for prospective parents for a child needing an adoptive placement, including the use of exchanges and other interagency efforts, provided that such procedures ensure that placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement.

- Pennsylvania statute requires that Family Finding activities be offered to every family that is accepted for service. Therefore, Family Finding activities, including diligent searches, record digs (case mining), Accurint searches, etc., must be completed for every child in out-of-home care at least once per year, although OCYF recommends that it be done on a regular, on-going basis. To help complete the diligent search process, 66 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties have SWAN Legal Services Initiative (LSI) paralegals. A copy of the PA Diligent Search Manual can be found online at www.diakon-swan.org in the LSI section of the site.
- The PAE provides child-specific and family specific matching services. All children with a goal of adoption are required by Pennsylvania law to be registered with PAE. All families who obtain a SWAN Family Profile are required to be registered with PAE as well. When information is received on either a child or family, the information, including the type of family a child needs and the type of child a family is looking for, is entered into a database. That information is then compared to try to find potential "matches" between a waiting child and an approved prospective adoptive family. The potential match information is then shared with the family, the family's worker and the child's worker to be pursued further. PA's adoptpakids.org also requires that every child eligible for adoption be posted.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

In FFY 2020, Pennsylvania saw a reduction in the number of adoptions with 2,119 children and youth adopted from foster care as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This represents a 22.9% decrease from FFY 2019 when 2,750 children were adopted.

- *1,662 were of children under age 10 (78.43%); while*
- *457 were of children age 10 or older (21.57%).*

Per the Pennsylvania AFCARS database as of June 30, 2021, PA had 13,373 children in out-of-home care, 5,675 (42%) of whom were over the age of 10. Of the total number of children in care, 6,753 (50.501%) were males and 6,619 (49.50%) were females.

The race/ethnicity of the 13,373 children in out-of-home care is as follows (children can have more than one defined race):

- *White = 5,739*
- *Black = 4,392*
- *Asian, Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native = 62*
- *Hispanic = 1,619*

- *Multiracial = 1,069*

In SFY 2020-21 a total 2,134 children were adopted from Pennsylvania's foster care system. Four-hundred and ninety children, age 10 and older, were adopted; and 1,644 children under the age of nine were adopted with 1,123 of them under the age of five. Seventy-seven percent of children adopted from the state's foster care system in SFY 2020-21 were under the age of 10. In SFY 2020-21, 1,114 (52%) males and 1,020 (48%) females were adopted from Pennsylvania foster care.

Per the CY 890 as of June 30, 2021:

- *2,355 children had a primary goal of adoption.*
- *427 (18.1%) children in out of home care with a primary goal of adoption had an identified adoptive resource.*
- *1,928 (81.9%) had a primary goal of adoption and were in need of an adoptive resource. Of those:*
    - *842 (43.7%) were 10 years and older;*
    - *1,075 (55.8%) were of a minority race; and,*
    - *1,012 (52.5%) were male; 912 (47.5%) were female.*
- *1,555 children had a concurrent goal of adoption.*
- *11 (<0.01%) of children in out of home care with a concurrent goal of adoption had an identified adoptive resource.*
- *1,544 (99.8%) children who had a concurrent goal of adoption were in need of an adoptive resource. Of those:*
    - *686(44.4%) were 10 years and older;*
    - *486 (31.5%) were of a minority race; and,*
    - *788 (51%) were male; 758 (49%) were female.*
- *475 children had both a primary and concurrent goal of adoption.*
- *46 (9.7%) children in out of home care with both a primary and concurrent goal of adoption had an identified adoptive resource.*
- *429 (90.3%) of the children who had both a primary and concurrent goal of adoption were in need of an adoptive resource. Of those:*

- *32 (7.5%) were 10 years and older;*
- *14 (3.3%) were of a minority race; and,*
- *138 (29.1%) were male; 337 (70.5%) were female.*

Similar to national trends, Pennsylvania has seen a decrease in the number of available foster families statewide this past year. All foster, adoptive and kinship families must be registered with the RFR. Data from the RFR shows that the number of registered, approved, active foster families statewide has decreased 14 percent over the past year from a total of 1,581 who were registered in SFY 2019-20 to a total of 1,355 who were registered in SFY 2020-21. Of the original number of approvals, 1,190 remained active as of June 30, 2021, and 7,621 foster families are currently active regardless of registration date.

Prior to the pandemic, many CCYAs struggled with recruitment of families. The pandemic has impacted these efforts even more. Both public and private agencies have experienced interruptions in recruitment and training efforts and had to adjust practice to accommodate changes. In general, the pandemic affected all families, including job loss, health issues and availability of childcare. Prospective families were hesitant to step forward to become foster parents. Families were also hesitant to allow people to enter their homes as families perceived this as adding to their own risk to COVID-19 exposure.

The emphasis Pennsylvania has placed on kinship families as a resource for children in out-of-home care has replaced some of the need for foster care families. More and more CCYAs are reliant on kin to fill this need for children. However, while Pennsylvania continues to see the use of kinship increasing across the commonwealth, the state has experienced a decrease from the last SFY. In SFY 2019-20, 1,910 new kinship families were registered with the RFR compared to1,649 new kinship families registered in SFY 2020-21, representing a 13.6 percent decrease in the number of kinship families registered by year. Despite the decrease in the number of approved foster and kinship families, in FFY 2020, 69.89% of children adopted from the Pennsylvania foster care system were adopted by their foster/kinship family whereas in FFY 2019, there was 54.35%.

Approved adoptive families decreased from 984 approved registrations in SFY 2019-20 to 639 new adoptive families in SFY 2020-21, representing a 36 percent decrease. As with foster families, services by agencies were interrupted during the pandemic. Potential adoptive families struggled with basic issues like unemployment, housing and health issues and were less likely to reach out to be a resource. Public and private agencies experienced staffing issues during this time and were called on to re-design the way they delivered their practice, which sometimes limited their abilities around recruitment and retention of families. Pennsylvania will continue to focus on kinship placement, which impacts the number of adoptive families.

DHS is aware that minority children are disproportionately represented in the total number of children in out-of-home placement verses the number of minority families approved as adoptive, foster or kinship families. According to 2020 U.S. Census Data, minorities comprise approximately 22.9% of Pennsylvania's population (includes non-white (race) and Hispanic/Latino (regardless of race)). However, as of March 31, 2021, Pennsylvania had a total of 13,639 children in out-of-home care with 7,497 (55%) of a minority race (non-white and/or Hispanic.) At the same time, Pennsylvania had 3,054 children with a goal of adoption and of those 1,825 (59.76%) were a minority (non-white and/or Hispanic).

Pennsylvania currently has 5,486 minority families in SFY 2020-21, who are registered as foster, adoptive and kinship on active status with the RFR and 9,056 are white. DHS/OCYF will continue to monitor these trends, work cooperatively with public and private partners along with the many initiatives under the SWAN program, including the OCMI, and continue to enhance efforts to recruit families for children of a minority race.

Per the Pennsylvania AFCARS database, as of March 31, 2021, 5,782 children in out-of-home care were age 10 and older. Of those, 1,505 (26%) resided in congregate care settings. This is a decrease from March 31, 2020, AFCARS data. In an effort to reduce the use of congregate care settings, Pennsylvania is committed to recruiting and training foster and adoptive families who are willing to provide loving, caring homes for teenagers.

Pennsylvania will continue to use data to drive plans of action and identify barriers to placing children and youth in permanent families. The identified strategies will support increased foster and adoptive homes necessary for children and youth in Pennsylvania's foster care system and will continue through SFY 2022-23. All services provided through SWAN will continue in SFY 2022-23, including the OCMI initiative, SWAN Direct Services, PAE Services, SWAN Helpline and SWAN LSI services. OCYF will continue media efforts, provide waiting child segments on a variety of local news stations across the state as well as seek additional ways to expand and broaden work to find permanent families for older youth. All recruitment services and contracts will continue without change to their goals or objectives.

Pennsylvania has continued to efforts related to the Children's Bureau Adoption Call to Action challenge. A baseline survey was completed in November 2020 and Pennsylvania chose to focus on youth ages 13-15, who have a primary goal of adoption, termination of parental rights and who have or do not have an identified family. This population represented approximately 250 youth statewide as of March 31, 2020. A team of technical assistants staffed through SWAN reviewed case specific details of each youth's current status and found:

- *42% of identified youth achieved permanency*
- *Most youth identified were known to SWAN and many of youth have been or are being provided SWAN services.*

- *Services include registration with the PAE; SWAN direct services, for example Child Specific Recruitment; Permanency Roundtables, OCMI and customized matching using the RFR.*

Identified barriers to achieving permanency included:

- *Staff turnover*
- *Lack of SWAN referrals for some youth*
- *Unclear diligent search/family finding efforts*
- *Not referring placement and finalization services*

The SWAN TA team will continue to address barriers, the need for additional permanency services and progress toward permanency for this cohort of identified youth.

In Pennsylvania, achieving permanency for older youth with complex medical and behavioral/mental health needs is challenging. The state was selected as one of three states and one tribe that piloted the Critical On-going Resource Family Education (CORE) Teen Curriculum designed to train both prospective and current families who support older youth who have moderate to severe emotional and behavioral challenges. The CORE Teen Curriculum was released nationwide in December 2019 with the curriculum being downloaded more than 180 times. This curriculum is now available online through www.Spaulding.org. The curriculum is used by various public and private agencies

As Pennsylvania is a state supervised, county administered child welfare system, OCYF plans to incorporate this training into the SWAN family profile process to increase the number of families willing to provide stability to teens in hopes that it will lead to increased permanency for older youth. OCYF will meet with system partners including, PCYA, PCCYFS and PSRFA to discuss the curriculum and implementation. SWAN prime contract staff have been trained in the curriculum and to date have participated in and provided the following related to CORE Teen:

- *In August 2019, the SWAN prime contract staff collaborated with Spaulding for Children to develop a roll-out plan for the CORE Teen Curriculum to the SWAN Network*
- *Steps included:*
  - *September 2019 – Overview of CORE Teen provided to SWAN network through SWAN Units of Service meetings.*
  - *October 2019 – Announced arrival of the CORE Teen Curriculum through the SWAN/IL Fall Quarterly Meetings.*

- *December 2019 - The Post-Permanency Units of Service Meeting focused on the use of the CORE Teen curriculum and its varied uses in Case Advocacy and Support Group.*
- *January 2020 – SWAN staff participated in a two-day training-of-trainers on the CORE Teen Curriculum.*
- *February and March 2020 – SWAN staff provided seven, two-day training-of-trainers on the CORE Teen curriculum. Both counties and affiliates from across the state were invited.*
- *August 2019-March 2020 and beyond- SWAN staff available to provide ongoing information and instruction around the curriculum and Right Time Videos.*

- *SWAN staff have continued to promote the curriculum, the value of it, and how it can be used to enhance the family preparation process to affiliate agencies via the Units of Service Meetings.*
- *In recognition of the CORE Teen Curriculum's relevance throughout the family's journey – after finalization and beyond – SWAN staff incorporated this curriculum into the Post-permanency Trainings for professionals.*
- *The CORE Teen Curriculum is now available online and can be accessed through www.Spaulding.org.*

Consultation and Coordination with Tribes in Child Placement

On June 8, 2016, the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) released the Final Rule for the ICWA (25 U.S.C. § 1901 et seq.). The Final Rule, effective December 12, 2016, provided the first legally binding federal guidance on how to implement ICWA. The Final Rule addresses requirements for state courts in ensuring implementation of ICWA in Indian child welfare proceedings and requirements for States to maintain records under ICWA. Pennsylvania revised and reissued Bulletin #3130-18-06 entitled "Revised and Reissued Indian Child Welfare Act" to CCYAs regarding these provisions. This bulletin updated OCYF bulletin #3130-09-01, titled "Implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978" that was issued on March 9, 2009, by incorporating the requirements issued through the ICWA Proceedings Final Rule. Pennsylvania collaborated with a tribe member from Oklahoma to review and consult on policy regarding the ICWA Bulletin.

CCYAs continue to make diligent efforts to assure implementation and compliance with the provisions outlined in ICWA, including at the most basic foundation asking families and children they serve whether they identify as American Indian (AI) or Alaskan Native (AN). If a child is identified at intake as AI or AN, county agencies are encouraged to gather as much information as possible from the child/parent(s) regarding the child's tribal affiliation, such as the child's participation in activities of the tribe, the child's fluency in the language of the tribe and whether or not there has been

previous adjudication of the child by a tribal court. In order to ensure that the parents and tribes are informed of court proceedings and their right to intervene should the agency plan to petition the court for custody, the agency utilizes the BIA list of "Designated Tribal Agents for Service of Notice" to obtain appropriate contact information for tribal representatives. While CCYAs are required to provide notification in all child custody proceedings that may result in placement or loss of parental rights, OCYF supports the practice of providing notification at the earliest possible date, regardless as to whether or not a custody proceeding is being considered, in order to help secure any resources or assistance available from the tribe that may help in avoiding possible placement of the child. The Department continues to monitor adherence to ICWA related requirements through the annual CCYA licensing inspection process, QSRs and CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews and provides ongoing TA as necessary.

As part of required reporting for the CFSP and each APSR, states are required to describe how the state monitors compliance with ICWA. Citing available data and the sources of that data, including input obtained through tribal consultation, states must assess the level of compliance with ICWA. If data is not available, states must provide other information to support the assessment of the state's level of compliance with ICWA and describe how the state intends to obtain any relevant data that may be needed to assess compliance. Components of ICWA that states must address in consultation with tribes include, but are not limited to:

- Notification of Indian parents and tribes of state proceedings involving Indian children and their right to intervene;
- Placement preferences of Indian children in foster care, pre-adoptive, and adoptive homes;
- Active efforts to prevent the breakup of the Indian family when parties seek to place a child in foster care or for adoption; and
- Tribal right to intervene in state proceedings, or transfer proceedings to the jurisdiction of the tribe.

HHS is statutorily required to have a regulated national data collection system that provides comprehensive demographic and case-specific information on all children who are in foster care and adopted with Title IV-E agency involvement. (Section 479 of the Social Security Act). Because the current regulations no longer fully support HHS's current data needs to understand a child's entire experience in foster care, these regulations were being updated to incorporate requirements from the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, and ICWA.

Diakon/Family Design Resources (FDR) has two trainings regarding ICWA requirements, one for SWAN Paralegal staff and the other for CCYA staff. SWAN Legal Services Training Specialists conduct these trainings to provide an overview of key provisions of the ICWA and the new federal regulations. The training covers the purpose underlying the statute, when it applies and how the law affects casework

practice. The training also highlights the ICWA Search Guide, a new tool developed by FDR to help with ICWA compliance.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Over the past year, OCYF along with CCYAs, continued to make diligent efforts to assure compliance with the provisions outlined in ICWA. OCYF continues to implement the provisions of ICWA as outlined in the 2020-2024 CFSP and monitor this implementation through licensing and qualitative case reviews such as the QSR and CFSR. There have been no changes to the plan since the last reporting period as no systemic concerns related to ICWA were identified through monitoring activities or brought to OCYF's attention by stakeholders.

Services to Children Under the Age of Five to Support Permanency

Under Title IV-B of the SSA, states are required to identify activities to reduce the length of time young children under the age of five are in foster care without a permanent family. Per AFCARS data available at the time of the 2020-2024 CFSP submission, 1,451 children age five or younger were waiting for adoption, which represented approximately 42% of all children awaiting adoption. As seen in Table 13, over half of all adoptions in Pennsylvania historically occur among children ages 0 to 5.

Table 13. Age of Children Adopted During the Reporting Period

	2014 31-Mar	2014 30-Sep	2015 31-Mar	2015 30-Sep	2016 31-Mar	2016 30-Sep	2017 31-Mar	2017 30-Sep	2018 31-Mar	2018 30-Sep
0 to 1	13.45%	14.24%	12.19%	10.20%	11.76%	11.52%	12.82%	10.97%	10.74%	11.29%
2 to 5	46.53%	43.14%	44.19%	47.80%	45.19%	44.34%	45.28%	46.29%	45.61%	43.30%
6 to 9	22.27%	24.58%	21.98%	25.56%	25.66%	25.72%	23.20%	24.06%	23.75%	23.99%
10 to 12	9.37%	9.49%	10.93%	8.38%	10.12%	10.17%	10.76%	11.16%	10.89%	12.23%
13 to 15	5.73%	5.49%	6.95%	5.37%	4.70%	5.85%	5.33%	4.62%	6.50%	6.70%
16 to 17	2.09%	2.43%	3.30%	1.93%	2.35%	1.73%	2.43%	2.21%	2.27%	2.02%
18 to 20	0.55%	0.63%	0.46%	0.75%	0.20%	0.67%	0.19%	0.67%	0.24%	0.47%
Unknown	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source [PCG Data Packages, AFCARS] [February 2019]

In order to conduct a comprehensive assessment of statewide services and practices being utilized at the local level to support expediting permanency for children under the age of five, OCYF requested counties provide additional information as part of their 2019-20 NBPB submission (provided to OCYF in August 2018). Counties were asked to reflect over the past fiscal year in developing their responses. The counties were asked to provide responses to the following questions:

1. Has the county experienced any challenges over the course of the past fiscal year related to timely permanency for children under the age of five? If so, please briefly describe these challenges and, if available, provide any supporting data.

2. If the county has experienced challenges, please briefly discuss any strategies the county has put in place to help improve time to permanency for children under the age of five.

The findings, outlined below, represent the information provided by 66 counties; one county did not respond to the questions around this population posed in the NBPB.

Achieving Timely Permanency for Children Under the Age of Five

- Forty-one counties cited issues with achieving timely permanency for this population. Twenty-three counties identified timely permanency for young children as an area of strength. Two counties did not have any children under the age of five in their care during the reporting period.
- Overall, the most commonly cited barrier to achieving timely permanency was related to parents with substance use disorders. Counties were consistent in identifying that the time it takes for parents to recover does not align with current timeframes outlined in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). Parents were noted as often experiencing relapses as part of their recovery, which further lengthens the time their children remain in care.
- Court-related issues were the second most commonly cited issue impacting timeliness to permanency for children under the age of five. Some counties noted struggles with court scheduling, court continuances, parent appeals, and turnover/lack of parents' attorneys and GALs.
- Other factors that were cited as contributing to delays in permanency included issues with lack of available resources and supports such as housing, transportation, and trauma services. Lack of resource homes and parents struggling with obtaining employment were two other barriers noted.

Strategies to Improve Timely Permanency for Children Under the Age of 5

- Several of the strategy's counties identified were related to work around court proceedings and processes. For example, some counties were moving towards holding more frequent court reviews for children under the age of five. Another example includes efforts aimed at alleviating unnecessary court time such as combining the change of goal and termination of parental rights (TPR) court hearings. Court-related strategies also involved work to hire and retain more parents' attorneys, judges, and GALs.
- A second commonly cited category of strategies was related to family engagement practices. Some agencies noted improving efforts to utilize FGDM, family team meetings or other teaming and conferencing models. Some counties also noted further work around Family Finding to locate appropriate kinship resources.
- Increasing visitation between parents and their children in care was a commonly cited strategy identified by counties.
- Several counties also noted efforts to increase utilization of SWAN units of services or request for additional paralegals through the SWAN LSI program.

- Other strategies noted included use of intensive in-home reunification services, housing-related programs or initiatives, and improved use of functional assessments such as the FAST and the CANS assessment.

Through the implementation of Pennsylvania's CFSR PIP strategies, counties will be required to conduct an in-depth review of data and complete root cause analysis to identify where efforts may be needed to improve permanency outcomes. Counties who identify challenges related to permanency specifically for children under age five will be responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring comprehensive plans for addressing needs to improve permanency outcomes for this population.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

As of June 30, 2021, 5,340 or 39% of children in foster care, were age five and under. Of these children, 1,996 were under the age of one. Approximately 53% of all children adopted during SFY 2020-21 were also age 0-5.

Since the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP, efforts at the state and local levels to improve timely permanency for children under the age of five continued. SWAN services were provided for more than 4,580 children under the age of five during SFY 2020-21 to help expedite permanency. OCYF will continue to work with CCYAs who identify barriers to permanency for children under the age of five by utilizing the CFSR PIP driven work focused specifically on improving permanency outcomes through in-depth data analysis and enhanced TA.

Family Reunification Services

As a result of Family First legislation that took effect on October 1, 2018, Time Limited Family Reunification (TLFR) became Family Reunification (FR) Services, ending the time limited post-reunification requirement. Pennsylvania has 13 CCYA FR grantees and 14 programs across the state in various geographic areas. Each of the programs focus on target populations based on county demographics and need. Programs are working closely with other county service agencies to strengthen and support families by providing reunification services to parents and their children while in foster care, and ongoing services upon reunification to assist families in maintaining progress made and prevent re-entry.

FR programs provide services based on family need and create partnerships with community providers in the geographic area. For example, public transportation is an issue in several regions across the state. Tioga County provides gas cards and offers rides to families in need of programming. Bucks and Franklin Counties contract with Lyft and Rabbit Transportation. Team meetings are held with the CCYA and FR providers at referral to discuss the needs of the family, identify and coordinate services and determine collaborations needed to support reunification.

The FR programs are connected to their communities. This helps when serving populations involved in varying services, both state and federally assisted, to prevent

duplication of services and preserve resources. Each program exhibits a strong partnership with the local CCYA as well as other cross-system partners. Services are centrally located in each of the 13 counties offering FR to make them easily accessible. Often FR programs are located within CCYA offices or are connected to other community resources in the same building. Programs offer translation services as needed for families where English is a second language. Programs work to address issues being faced by their families as specifically as possible. For example, Allegheny has expanded connections for LGBTQ youth, as older youth is a focus area for that program.

FR programs use a variety of assessment and diagnostic tools to better understand family dynamics and get to underlying causes. For example, Erie County uses the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale, which is done over a three to four-week period. A major advantage of the FR program is the longer window with which it can work with a family which allows time to develop relationships, better understand the challenges and forge partnerships with community partners. This is even more important to have in place for post-reunification and prevention of re-entry.

Each program identifies a minimum of three outcomes, based on their specific population and feasibility in various geographic regions. FR programs are turning to evidence-based and evidence-informed resources to help them in reunification efforts. For example, Allegheny County uses CANS assessment data to help them set goals for youth and families. These resources offer structured data to support the outcomes each program is working to achieve. Once goals have been identified programs provide services and linkages to community resources to achieve those goals. Referral processes vary in each location, but most have been streamlined so that there is little wait time.

Yearly onsite reviews established in FFY 2017-18 by OCYF and the CWRC continue to provide programs with the opportunity to highlight successes and monitor progress. FR programs continue to provide data on a quarterly basis to OCYF, targeting families involved in FR programs, services being offered to families, and progress or barriers to progress being made. FFYs 2018-19 marked the first year that FR expanded into post-reunification services, and programs are evaluating the best strategies to support this. Programs have developed evaluative processes to determine the length of time a family will receive post-reunification services. Several are holding family meetings at 90 days and again at six months to determine the need for ongoing services. This is an area that will need to be monitored as programs have more families involved in post-reunification services.

As programs move into providing services for families and their children post-reunification, they are looking to expand their services and strengthen their abilities over the course of FFY 2020-24. Programs have grown their capacity to track and measure services and outcomes. Quarterly reporting efforts to capture and better analyze the data will continue. Collaboration with other programs will continue. All programs will continue to receive annual onsite visits from the CWRC. Additional training and TA will

be provided as requested or required. The Statewide FR Annual Event started in 2018 will continue to provide opportunities for FR staff to come together to network and learn from each other. Family First legislation information, including information on EBPs, will be shared with programs and implementation strategies employed to strengthen services and promote better outcomes for children, youth and families.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

During SFY 2020-21, programs continued to do well transitioning families when reunification occurred. Programs continued to use specific criteria to identify ways to support families post-reunification, including progress meetings at ninety days and six months (when families continue with services) to determine continued need. Families can opt out of continued services as well once reunification occurs, giving them some control over their circumstances. For most of the programs, however, this was not a significant challenge since many programs had connections to post-reunification support services prior to the change in language.

Programs continued to use creative ways to engage families during part of SFY 2020-21 while restrictions due to the pandemic were still in place. Programs continued to use the virtual platforms as necessary until they could return safely to in-person services. For some programs this was a seamless transition; however, others in more densely populated areas continued to struggle at times throughout the FY. One program struggled with staffing issues and the county opted to allow other programs to use their allotment since the program was unsuccessful in providing services to any families. Several programs got unexpected funds that helped them manage their program needs.

Transportation and housing are two of the biggest barriers for families. Programs across the state discussed the challenges in meeting these needs during a pandemic and continue to work on creative ways to assist families in need in general. Unfortunately, with the pandemic programs that had lined up volunteers to provide transportation were unable to use them because of fear of exposure. Affordable housing continues to be an area of concern. During the pandemic a rent moratorium was offered, which helped those in housing, but once those protections were lifted, many folks could not recover fast enough to maintain their housing, resulting in many more housing issues. Community connections have been a challenge since the pandemic, as agencies are hesitant to offer supports in person, which for many families is what they needed. This is a continued area of focus.

Tracking quarterly outcomes continued to be submitted using the online system. Data provided allows for identification of services being provided, unduplicated numbers of families and children served, and trends in service provision. During SFY 2020-21, approximately 430 families and 639 children were served through the FR programs with reunification occurring for 23% of the children. Of those families and children being reunified, 71% received post-reunification services.

The Annual FR Statewide Event was held during SFY 2020-2021. Again because of the pandemic the event was offered through an online platform for virtual learning and connection. This year's attendance was well over double that usually attend, in part because of not having to travel. This year the event focused on strategies for using family reunification with unhoused and incarcerated parents and the challenges that these populations have. There were two panel discussions; one was staff sharing their strategies for good engagement, and the other was a birth mom and foster mom sharing their stories of reunification. Feedback offered by attendees expressed how amazing the presentations were, and they always appreciate real stories from those with lived experience. The evaluations from participants indicated that for next year they do want a hybrid event so that more can attend. Plans are in the works for the event to be held June 29, 2022.

Planned activities for SFY 2021-22 include continued movement back to in-person services, ways to use virtual or hybrid platforms to meet the needs of the families and encourage engagement, the annual statewide event, continued building of community connections to enhance service provisions, and exploring housing and transportation options for families.

Adoption Promotion and Support Services

SWAN supports and enhances timely permanency services for children in Pennsylvania who are in the custody of the CCYAs and provides post-permanency support services to adoptive, custodianship and formal kinship families. SWAN is a collaborative of the public and private sectors and includes the 67 CCYAs and more than 80 private agencies, referred to as SWAN affiliate agencies. Services are delivered through a prime contract between DHS and the legal entity. SWAN direct services include child profiles, family profiles, child-specific recruitment (CSR), child preparation, placement, finalization and post-permanency services. Post-permanency services are available to any Pennsylvania family who has adopted, whether or not they adopted from foster care and to formal kinship and PLC families who have provided permanency to a Pennsylvania foster child. Post-permanency services offered include case advocacy, support groups and respite care. (Refer to SWAN's online Permanency Toolkit at www.swantoolkit.org and the SWAN prime contractor website at www.diakon-swan.org for information related to the SWAN program.)

SWAN offers a variety of support services designed to enhance and expedite permanency services for children and families. These support services are listed below:

- PAE – consists of four major components:

    1. The Child and Resource Family Registries - The Child and Family Registries unit responsibilities include registering waiting children and approved adoptive families into the database for computer matching services and making referrals for those potential matches to the child's

and the family's agencies. PAE accepts the registration of waiting children from CCYAs and affiliate agencies.

The Child and Family Registries serve the following children:

- Those legally free for 90 days with no report of intent to adopt filed;
- Those for whom TPR is being pursued; and
- Those for whom a termination decree is under appeal.

The RFR is a computerized database listing of all foster, adoptive and kinship families who have been studied to provide care to foster children. The SWAN prime contractor maintains the RFR. All families must be registered: those that have been approved to provide care, as well as those who have been disapproved as resource families, along with the reason for their disapproval.

The RFR cross-references new information with existing registry information about families; requires resubmission of criminal and child abuse clearances every five years for all household members age 18 and older; requires applicants to submit much more detailed information about their financial and family histories, including protection from abuse orders, divorce and custody proceedings, and any substance abuse or mental health issues; and requires foster parents to report information changes or changes in household composition to the approving agency within 48 hours. The Kinship Care Program and emergency caregivers must also meet all approval requirements.

2. www.adoptpakids.org - DHS owns and operates **www.adoptpakids.org**, which features waiting children as well as information on adoption and foster care. The site is updated daily.

3. Technical Assistance - PAE Data Analysts answer questions, provide guidance and train CCYAs and private agencies on submitting information for inclusion into the registries. Additional TA is provided by the PAE Coordinators who answer questions and provide training on PAE to public and private children and youth agencies. TA is also provided by the SWAN Helpline who assists families who call with questions about the waiting children featured on the website. PAE Coordinators also work directly with CCYAs and private workers to search the databases for potential matches, adjust the search criteria contained in the databases, and answer questions posed by families and the public.

4. Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry (PAIR) - The Pennsylvania Adoption Act requires DHS to maintain a social and medical history registry that collects information on all adoptions finalized or registered in

Pennsylvania so that the information can be shared with the birth family and adoptees upon their request. The registry is known as PAIR. All information is stored electronically, allowing searches of the database and matching requests for information on file to be accomplished.

- SWAN TA is provided to SWAN affiliate agencies and CCYAs upon request during in-person onsite visits, electronically and/or by telephone. SWAN has a team of TAs, each of whom is assigned to specific counties and affiliates across Pennsylvania. SWAN TAs meet with each of their assigned agencies during on-site visits at least once per quarter.

- The SWAN Helpline Information and Referral Specialists assist families who are interested in adoption or foster care by answering their questions, sending SWAN family packets and PSRFA materials, recording pertinent information in the database, generating reports, providing information and referral services and providing follow-up services to families at regular intervals. The SWAN Helpline is also the designated point of intake for SWAN post-permanency services.

- SWAN LSI is designed to expedite permanency for Pennsylvania's waiting children. The SWAN LSI identifies and remedies gaps and barriers between the legal system and the CCYAs. By acting as a liaison between the caseworker, the attorney and the court, the paralegal is able to reduce the delay in processing paperwork, legal filings, diligent searches and other necessary legal steps in achieving permanency. Another major component of the SWAN LSI is the LSI Warm Line. The LSI Warm Line fields all legal inquiries submitted from the network as well as any search and reunion inquiries received from the public.

- The combined SWAN and IL annual quarterly trainings and permanency conference provide CCYA and private agency staff, workers in adoption and IL, and resource families the opportunity to learn about the different SWAN services, the importance of each and how to access them.

- Matching Events, such as Adoption Parties and Matching Receptions, occur across the state several times a year. Such events offer prospective adoptive families the opportunity to meet with county and private providers who work directly with the children in need of permanency as well as with the youth themselves. SWAN collaborates with the National Adoption Center for matching events that bring together older youth in need of an adoptive family with families who are approved to adopt.

- OCMI is designed to provide intensive child-focused services to teens in need of adoptive homes by matching them with approved families who are registered with PAE who indicated they would adopt older youth. Teens are invited to actively engage in recruitment activities and encouraged to participate in selecting a family for themselves. Teens attend numerous matching activities and

read family profiles of approved families who have said they are interested in adopting older youth.

- PRTs are offered through the SWAN program. A PRT consists of an oral case presentation, a rating of the child's current status and brainstorming by members of the team, both internal and external experts and stakeholders, to identify current barriers to the youth achieving permanency. Once the barriers are identified, the team creates a specific action plan to eliminate the identified barriers to help the youth move closer to permanency whether it be through a return home, adoption, legal custodianship or placement with a fit and willing relative.

- The American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law (ABA) Barriers to Permanency Project's goal is to reduce the time children spend in foster care. To achieve this goal, the ABA's staff works diligently with CCYAs, county courts and key stakeholders to develop individualized plans that focus on a county's specific barriers to achieving permanency in the child welfare system. The ABA provides targeted training and TA to CCYAs on various permanency issues. This training and TA focus on resolving specific issues related to permanency and may include helping counties explore options such as including youth in court, conducting local trainings, performing legal research, court observations and developing county specific materials such as protocols, sample petitions, handouts for trainings, desk aids and checklists. The ABA participates on several statewide committees, which focus on issues such as statewide TA, concurrent planning, education, and legal representation.

- PSRFA is a non-profit organization overseen by a board of directors comprised of volunteers from across Pennsylvania, the majority of which must be resource family members. PSRFA members include foster, adoptive, and kinship parents, CCYA and private child welfare agencies, local foster parent associations, and interested citizens. PSRFA holds an annual conference to provide training to resource families and child welfare professionals. Training received by resource families at this annual event helps families to meet state training requirements for annual re-certification.

Over the next five years, to support Pennsylvania's Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan and Adoption Promotion and Support Services, OCYF will:

- Issue a request for proposal for the next SWAN prime contract. All services and supports as outlined in both sections will continue over the course of the next five years. OCYF, the SWAN prime contractor and the CWRC will encourage the use of SWAN services for all older youth in care who are in need of permanency. The SWAN prime contractor will continue to provide TA to CCYAs and affiliates to ensure the effective use of SWAN services. OCYF and the prime contractor will monitor SWAN services for timely completion and will work together to identify, analyze and remedy any barriers affecting

the timely completion of referrals made by CCYA to the SWAN prime contractor.

- Continue the #MeetTheKids and #MeetTheFamilies campaigns.
- Monitor the AFCARS and CY 890 data to help drive the decisions on the type of children to feature in statewide recruitment efforts and where such campaigns should air.
- Continue to update the adoptpakids.org website by refreshing it to be consistent with the media campaign and to ensure it provides helpful information to prospective and approved foster and adoptive families.
- The SWAN prime contract will also do the following:

    - Enhance recruitment and retention of adoptive, PLC and formal kinship families by examining current recruitment methods of CCYA's and affiliates, identifying supports needed in recruitment and retention efforts and make recommendations to DHS on how to improve recruitment and retention efforts statewide and at the local level.
    - Evaluate post-permanency services offered both in Pennsylvania and nationally and make recommendations to the Department on what services, if any, may need to be improved, modified, or added to post-permanency services offered through SWAN. The evaluation must include input from adoptive, PLC and formal kinship families in Pennsylvania.
    - Evaluate the family profile process for ways to enhance and streamline the service to better prepare, support and retain families until adoption or a permanent placement is achieved.
    - Evaluate the family profile process to see if the process can be enhanced to better meet the needs of formal kinship and PLC families and county children and youth agencies.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

All services provided through SWAN will continue during SFY 2020-21 as well as the additional supportive services outlined above. OCYF extended the current SWAN contract to December 31, 2022 and will issue a request for proposals for the next SWAN contract in SFY 2022-23. In SFY 2019-20, Governor Wolf issued a directive that all non pa.gov websites transition under the DHS main site. The directive impacts the adoptpakids.org website and OCYF continues to work through this transition.

SWAN Direct Services

In FFY 2020, 2,119 children were adopted from foster care in Pennsylvania, representing a 22.9% decrease from FFY 2019 when 2,750 children received finalized adoptions. Since SWAN began in 1992, more than 50,000 adoptions have been finalized since the inception of the program.

In SFY 2020-21 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) SWAN provided 20,580 units of service to children and families in Pennsylvania, representing a 25% decrease from SFY 2019-20 when 27,596 units of service were provided. Of those units of service:

- *3,579 were provided to youth over the age of 16. Those services included:*
  - *821 Child Profiles;*
  - *808 Child Preparation Services; and,*
  - *469 CSR Services.*

- *4,589 were provided to children under the age of five. Services provided included:*
  - *1,970 Child Profiles;*
  - *945 Child Preparation Services; and,*
  - *61 CSR Services.*

In SFY 2020-21, Pennsylvania spent more than $4,000,000 on post-permanency services.

- *777 families received services in SFY 2020-21. This represents a 23% decrease from SFY 2019-20. Services received are broken out as follows:*
  - *4,447 Units of Advocacy;*
  - *534 families received SWAN post-permanency assessments;*
  - *312 Units of Support Group; and,*
  - *2,467 Units of Respite.*

All SWAN services will continue through SFY 2021-22.

Table 14. SWAN Direct Service Summary

	SFY 2018 2019	SFY 2019 2020	SFY 2012 2021
Total units of service provided	*26,947*	*27,596*	*20,580*
Total services provided to youth over the age of 16	*3,721*	*4,053*	*3,579*
Number of Child Profiles	*990*	*983*	*821*
Number of Child Preparation Services	*857*	*872*	*808*
Number of CSR services	*382*	*441*	*469*
Total services provided to youth under the age of five	*4,057*	*4,816*	*4,589*

Number of Child Profiles	*2,102*	*2,076*	*1,970*
Number of Child Preparation Services	*971*	*916*	*945*
Number of CSR services	*88*	*101*	*61*
Amount spent on post-permanency services	*$5,055,200.00*	*$5,060,000.00*	*$4,000,000.00*
Number of families who received post-permanency services	*1,039*	*1,012*	*777*
Number of Units of Advocacy	*6,079*	*6,616*	*4,447*
Number of SWAN post-permanency assessments	*804*	*719*	*534*
Number of Units of Support Group	*366*	*224*	*312*
Number of Units of Respite	*3,909*	*3,600*	*2.467*

In SFY 2020-21, OCYF, through the work and recommendation of the SWAN prime contractor, CCYAs and SWAN affiliate agencies, decided to add a new SWAN unit of service, known as Family Matching. The goal is to implement this new unit in SFY 2022-2023.

While this will be a new unit of service offered through the SWAN program, the practice of family matching is not new to the permanency continuum. Currently, family matching work is covered in the SWAN placement unit of service, however, this is the least-referred unit of service. CCYAs are reluctant to refer this unit of service as this unit requires the CCYA to make a referral for work completed before the CCYA is involved. In order to keep families engaged in the permanency process, SWAN affiliate agencies would determine the family matching efforts and activities to provide to families and children.

Families waiting to be matched with a child need extensive engagement and development. The Family Matching unit includes ongoing efforts in these areas as well as activities to identify a child for placement with an eligible SWAN family through implementation of a Family Matching Plan. This new unit will standardize family matching practices across the state, ensuring every family is receiving consistent matching services and will allow more waiting families to be matched, therefore reducing the number of waiting children. This unit will support and enhance the permanency services offered through this program and ultimately strengthen and increase timely permanency for children in Pennsylvania.

Additionally, during SFY 2020-21, SWAN evaluated the Finalization Unit of Service. The finalization unit of service is available for any child or youth in the legal

custody of a county children and youth agency who has a goal of adoption and who is placed into a pre-adoptive home. The intent of the finalization service is for the SWAN affiliate to provide the child and their family with adoption specific support and supervision as they move toward permanency through adoption. This includes supervisory visits, education for the family on what to expect, the development of an Individual Permanency Service Plan, assistance with identifying supportive services, and facilitation of the legal process by working with the attorneys and the courts. This service is critical to support the child and family as they transition into a new family unit.

Three of the intended outcomes of the Finalization Unit of Service in terms of the families are as follows:

- *Increase informed decisions regarding permanency.*
- *Ensure family and child are satisfied with their circumstance/situation.*
- *Help family develop the skills needed to create a sustainable support system.*

In SFY 2020-21 a survey of families and children who were referred for finalization was conducted using questions that were taken from the National Survey of Adoptive Parents (NSAP) and related to these outcomes. The survey was completed by 143 parents who answered questions about themselves and their adoptive children. This represented a response rate of 26 percent.

In terms of the first outcome, "Increase informed decision-making regarding permanency," 82% of the respondents indicated the information they were given was very or somewhat helpful in making the decision to adopt a child.

Thirteen questions were included in the survey in an effort to measure outcome number two, "Ensure family and child are satisfied with their circumstance/situation." As with outcome number one, 82 percent of the families chose a positive response to all 13 questions, suggesting most are satisfied with the outcome of the finalization service.

The list below includes a sample of the 13 questions, specific to those that received a positive response rate of 75 percent or higher:

- *Respondent had a warm and close relationship with adopted child.*
- *Respondent's spouse/partner had a warm and close relationship with adopted child.*
- *The child is affectionate and tender with the respondent.*
- *The respondent felt that they understood the child.*
- *Things are about as I expected with the child.*
- *The respondent would recommend adoption to others.*

The third outcome, "Family has skills to create a sustainable support system," asked the family to comment on their access to resources, both through the community and informally through their family and friends. Seventy-six percent of families indicated they had enough community resources to help their family, while 90 percent stated they had enough informal resources to help their family.

Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE)

The Child and Resource Family Registries

In SFY 2020-21

- *1,228 new children were registered with PAE.*
- *639 new adoptive families were registered with PAE, representing a 35% decrease from SFY 2019-20.*
- *14,542 foster, adoptive and kinship families are registered with RFR. The cause for decrease in registered families is due to an ongoing effort to close inactive family records and merge duplicate data in the single-record system. In SFY 2020-21, 2,924 were registered as an approved adoptive, foster or kinship family, representing an 18% decrease from SFY 2019-20. Of those, 798 families were approved in two or more categories.*
- *220 adoptive, foster and kinship families were registered with a disapproved status with the RFR in SFY 2020-2021, which represents a 14% decrease from SFY 2019-2020.*
- *The table below breaks down the type of family registered with the RFR as approved or disapproved as well as the race of those families for parent 1 and parent 2.*

Table 15. Families Registered on RFR in SFY 2019-2020 by Race and Approval Status

	SFY 2018-2019			SFY 2019-2020			SFY 2020-2021		
Approval Type	**Approved**	**Disapproved**	**Total**	**Approved**	**Disapproved**	**Total**	**Approved**	**Disapproved**	**Total**
Adoption	984	57	1,041	1,507	130	1,642	639	90	729
Foster Care	1,581	84	1,665	2,109	100	2,209	1,355	94	1.449
Kinship	1,910	152	2,062	2,269	192	2,461	1,639	124	1,763
Unduplicated	3,562	261	3,823	4,435	374	4,809	3,181	220	3,401
Parent -1 Race									
Black	985	65	1,050	1,225	102	1,327	713	150	885
White	2,491	181	2,672	3,040	254	3,294	2,386	173	2,559
Other	86	15	101	170	18	188	141	13	154
Hispanic*	262	37	299	364	41	405	192	36	228
Parent -2 Race									
Black	271	19	290	343	39	382	257	24	281
White	1,796	111	1,907	2,277	159	2,436	1,760	93	1,853
Other	55	9	64	99	0	99	55	9	64
Hispanic*	145	15	160	198	21	219	102	14	126

Source [RFR, Diakon-SWAN, LLC, [April 2022]

PAE Coordinators

- *In SFY 2020-21 PAE Coordinators completed 1,012 county site visits, trainings and/or attendance at adoption awareness events.*
- *146,593 matching contacts occurred, which includes outgoing or incoming emails and phone calls that promote permanency for children.*

PAE Data Analysts

- *In SFY 2020-21 PAE Data Analysts made 794 phone calls to agencies.*
- *130 kids were posted on the AdoptUSKids website, and they responded to 6,971 AdoptUSKids family inquiries.*

PAIR

- *In SFY 2020-21 PAIR registered 48 birth families and 23 adoptees. PAIR also received 28 requests for information from birth families and 137 requests for information from adoptees. No matches occurred between adoptees and birth family members in 2020-21.*

SWAN TA

- *In SFY 2020-21 SWAN TAs received 135,842 requests for TA including 62,392 requests from CCYAs and 73,450 requests from affiliate agencies.*

Table 16. SWAN TA Requests by Month

Month	County	Affiliates	Cross Systems Collaboration*
July 2020	4,787	6,417	619
August 2020	5,090	6,568	765
September 2020	5,136	6,591	552
October 2020	6,518	6,427	667
November 2020	5,331	5,598	481
December 2020	4,948	5,579	101
January 2021	5,656	6,545	217
February 2021	4,602	5,881	217
March 2021	5,307	6,247	199
April 2021	3,255	5,584	129
May 2021	6,286	6,034	135
June 2021	5,476	5,979	110
Totals:	**62.392**	**73,450**	**4,192**
GRAND TOTAL:	**135,842**		

Source [DHS/OCYF Monthly Report, Diakon-SWAN, LLC], [April 2022]

**Note: A column for "cross-systems collaboration" reflects additional contacts the TAs make with the counties and affiliates. Cross-systems collaboration includes all contacts with SWAN TA collaborative partners – for example OCYF; CWRC; ABA; AOPC; PCYA; and PCCYFS. These contacts could involve a variety of interactions such as planning and implementation of the Pennsylvania TA Collaborative regional meetings or participation in a workgroup for developing training or some other processes.*

SWAN/IL Collaboration

SWAN and CWRC IL TAs also participated in the TA Collaborative. Both SWAN and IL staff jointly planned trainings. A total of 4,498 participants attended SWAN/IL network trainings in SFY 2020-21. A total of 40 training sessions were offered over the reporting period. The trainings were delivered by a combination of TA providers who worked collaboratively to develop and present training topics. These numbers increased from the previous fiscal year due to the 2020 SWAN/IL Fall Quarterlies, 2021 SWAN/IL Winter Statewide, 2021 SWAN/IL Spring Quarterlies, and 2021 SWAN Summer Statewide and Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference resuming virtually during COVID-19 pandemic.

SWAN Helpline

In SFY 2019-20, the SWAN Helpline managed 23,636 calls, the majority of which were with prospective or approved foster or adoptive families seeking information on available waiting children. In addition to those calls, the SWAN Helpline managed an additional 820 requests for the SWAN Family Packets, 735 referrals for SWAN post-permanency services and 4,157 inquiries about SWAN post-permanency services.

In SFY 2019-20 the SWAN Helpline posted 13 comments and "liked" 133 posts on the SWAN Facebook page.

SWAN LSI

In SFY 2020-21, 261.5 LSI paralegals (includes five part-time positions) served Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Every county had at least one part-time paralegal.

The SWAN LSI Warm Line managed 537 calls covering topics that included how to search for birth parents, siblings and medical information. The SWAN LSI Warm Line also responded to 254 legal inquiries from families, covering such topics as adoption, adoption assistance, CPSL, dependency, ICWA, TPR/Voluntary Relinquishment or other general legal information.

Table 17. SWAN LSI Paralegals Activity Completed SFYs 2018, 2019 and 2020

	SFY 2018-2019	SFY 2019-2020	SFY 2020-2021
Diligent searches	21,281	19,777	19,530

Drafted court petitions	48,499	44,903	49,798
Prepared Subpoenas and hearing notices	5,716	13,227	19,854
Worked with CCYA caseworkers to prepare cases for court	54,732	49,682	64,654
Attended court hearings	28,781	27,717	29,572
Drafted other court related documents	9,708	9,687	10,139
Participated in an additional other adoption related activities	1,842	2,100	2,191
Warmline Calls managed	777	764	791

Source: [Diakon-SWAN, LLC], [April 2022]

An analysis of SWAN LSI data suggests that LSI paralegals diligent search activities, attendance at court hearings, drafting other court related documents, and participation in other adoption related activities during SFY 2020-2021 were comparable to activities during SFY 2019-2020.

SWAN LSI paralegal activities increased for the following categories:

- *Drafted court petitions saw a 10% increase overall from SFY 2019-2020 to SFY 2020-2021.*
- *Prepared Subpoenas and hearing notices saw a 33% increase from SFY 2019-2020 to SFY 2020-2021.*
- *Worked with CCYA caseworkers to prepare cases for court saw a 23% increase from SFY 2019-2020 to SFY 2020-2021.*

Overall, these increases appear related to a return to more normal county office and court operations when Covid-19 restrictions began to lift. The increase in work provided by the SWAN LSI paralegals in conjunction with CCYA caseworkers to prepare cases for court is also related in a 100% increase for this activity in Philadelphia County from SFY 2019- 2020 to SFY 2020-2021.

Matching Receptions

In lieu of the in-person 2021 Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network and Independent Living (SWAN/IL) Matching Receptions, a SWAN/IL Virtual Matching Event (VME) was hosted on March 25, 2021. The VME featured 63 agencies from across the state who hosted an interactive and online program for families to learn more about children in Pennsylvania who are in need of permanent homes. In addition, the event featured on demand informational and inspirational videos created in collaboration with

the Child Welfare Resource Center, SWAN Helpline, Department of Human Services – Office of Children Youth and Families, as well as the Philadelphia Department of Human Services to share an adoption success story. There were 369 participants who attended the SWAN/IL VME, including 165 families (151 from Pennsylvania and 14 from other states). The VME generated 248 leads or inquiries regarding potential matches and at a 60-day follow-up to all exhibitors, feedback from 10 agencies indicated those leads resulted in one definite match, five potential matches and one mentor.

Matching Parties

Pennsylvania collaborated with the Adoption Center, who organized and virtually hosted three older youth matching events with multiple Zoom sessions scheduled to enhance interaction and engagement. Virtual sessions were hosted as follows:

- *Two sessions featured youth from Central Pennsylvania on October 24, 2020;*
- *Two sessions highlighting youth from Southeastern Pennsylvania – one on March 10, 2021, and another on April 10, 2021; and*
- *One final session featured youth from Western Pennsylvania on June 5, 2021.*

The combined events featured 58 youth and 40 families in attendance with 78 inquiries submitted regarding the featured youth.

OCMI

In SFY 2020-21, the OCMI continued to serve more youth and 66 CCYAs. Of these 66 counties a minimum of 144 youth are being served per year. Since this initiative began, to date, 1058 youth have been involved in this initiative. Of those, 474 youth were matched with families, 382 youth were placed with families with 64 intents to adopt filed, and 147 youth had their adoptions finalized. Sixty-nine youth received legal permanence through PLC and five youth achieved permanency via reunification. Please note that during this fiscal year, reunifications continued to be included in the tracking of permanency outcomes.

Table 18. Race of OCMI Youth as of June 30, 2020

Race	Overall	Overall
	Number	Percent
Black	264	25.1
White	676	63.8
Other	118	11.1
Total	1058	100

Source [SWAN Portal, Diakon-SWAN, LLC], [April 2022]

Table 19. OCMI SFY 18-19 19-20 and 20-21 Summary Chart

	Counties	Youth Service in FY	Cumulative Participation	Matched	Placed	Intents	Finalized	PLC	Reunification
SFY 18/19	66	173	644	355	307	64	127	52	N/A
SFY 19/20	66	191	835	420	352	64	139	63	2
SFY 20/21	66	201	1058	474	382	64	147	69	5

Source [SWAN Portal, Diakon-SWAN, LLC/], [April 2022]

PRT Update

For the reporting period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, 25 CCYA's had implemented PRTs and 16 of these CCYA's reviewed 90 new youth through PRTs. As of December 31, 2021, 844 youth were reviewed through the PRTs with 297 (35.2%) achieving permanency (171 adoption finalizations, 56 Permanent Legal Custodianships, and 72 youth achieved permanency through reunification). Since June 2021, two additional CCYAs have implemented PRTs.

Adoption and Legal Guardian Incentive Payments

Pennsylvania has never experienced an issue with the timely expenditure of the funds within the 36-month expenditure period. OCYF requests approval to spend and allocate funds based on an approved plan completed through the DHS Executive Review Process. Should Pennsylvania receive any Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Funds they will be used to further enhance recruitment and post-permanency services. Examples of efforts that will potentially be supported by these funds include:

- Hosting Matching Parties for older teens in need of adoptive families. DHS has collaborated with the National Adoption Center for the past five years to host such events for hard to place youth in need of an adoptive family. To date, nine matching parties have been sponsored.
- Supporting the PSRFA National Foster Care Month activities in May and to provide scholarships for resource families to attend the annual PSRFA conference so that they can receive training.
- Purchasing additional air and web time to run the SWAN foster and adoptive parent recruitment advertisements.
- Supporting support local foster and adoptive agencies National Adoption Awareness activities in November.
- Creating additional commercials to add to the existing #MeetTheKids foster and adoptive parent recruitment campaign.
- Supporting Safe Haven Program media campaign to increase awareness.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Pennsylvania earned $5,154,000 in Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Funds for meeting federal standards during FFY 2018 and $5,885,500 for meeting federal standards during federal FFY 2019. During SFYs 2020-21, Pennsylvania used these funds for the following programs and activities:

- *Purchased airtime to run the #MeetTheKids foster and adoptive recruitment campaign.*
- *Funded Matching Parties for older teens in need of adoptive families.*
- *Supported PSRFA.*
- *Supported local foster and adoptive agencies National Adoption Awareness activities in November and National Foster Care Month Awareness activities in May.*

During SFY 2021-22, Pennsylvania plans to use the funds for the following programs and activities:

- *Support post-permanency services.*
- *Purchase airtime to run Pennsylvania's general children abuse and neglect awareness campaign, KeepKidsSafe.*
- *Purchase airtime to run Pennsylvania's Kinship Navigator media campaign.*
- *Scholarships for families to attend 30th Annual Permanency Conference.*

COVID-19 pandemic continued to prevent production of new #MeettheKids commercials, Pennsylvania's foster/adoptive parent media campaign. Pennsylvania plans to use earned funds to support additional commercials and the activities outlined above in SFY 2022-23.

Adoption Savings

Pennsylvania will use any identified Adoption Savings funds to support SWAN post-permanency services. These services include case advocacy, support groups and respite care and are available to any Pennsylvania family who has adopted, whether or not they adopted from foster care, and to formal kinship and PLC families who have provided permanency to a Pennsylvania foster child. Families self-refer for services by contacting the SWAN Helpline. There is no charge to families for the services.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Since the last reporting period, DHS OCYF has received guidance from Children's Bureau on identifying additional ways of utilizing Adoption Savings. Internal OCYF discussion and collaboration is ongoing in the development of a plan to further expend these savings.

Services to Children Adopted from Other Countries

Pennsylvania will continue to use the CY28 database to gather intercountry adoption information from CCYAs regarding the number of children adopted from other countries entering the custody of a local CCYAs because of the disruption of a placement for adoption or the dissolution of an adoption. As CWIS development continues, OCYF will identify opportunities to build capacity within the system to collect this information at the state level. OCYF will continue to record foreign adoptions approved by the Pennsylvania's Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC). Any family who has adopted a child, whether or not they adopted from the foster care system, as well as PLC and formal kinship care families, are eligible to receive SWAN post-permanency services.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

There was one out of country adoption recorded in the FY 20-21. There are no reported intercountry adoptions that dissolved or disrupted in FFY 2019-20 in Pennsylvania.

Permanent Legal Custodian (PLC)/Subsidized Permanent Legal Custodian (SPLC)

State policy on the PLC permanency option (to include subsidization) was originally issued in June 2001. As part of being compliant with the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, Pennsylvania issued a Special Transmittal on February 24, 2009, regarding the implementation of the federal law and submitted its Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) plan amendment necessary for implementation. OCYF submitted a revised Title IV-E state plan to ACF on March 31, 2009, which was accepted and allowed Pennsylvania to add a federally supported tier to its own SPLC effective April 1, 2009. OCYF revised and reissued the PLC Bulletin #3130-09-02/3140-09-01 on March 31, 2009. Original ACF guidance was that the federal funds would apply to new SPLC situations only. OCYF was alerted on January 12, 2010, that ACF revised this position to include certain existing SPLC agreements. On January 4, 2010, OCYF was invited by ACF to revise and resubmit Pennsylvania's Title IV-E plan to include an expanded definition of 'relative' that would encompass categories of caregivers currently defined in state policy as 'kin'. Pennsylvania resubmitted the Title IV-E plan and included in the resubmission, revisions allowed by ACF's reinterpretation that federal funds would apply to both new and certain existing SPLC agreements. Pennsylvania's resubmitted Title IV-E plan was accepted as of October 1, 2009. OCYF revised and reissued the PLC Bulletin #3130-10-02/3140-10-03 on July 30, 2010.

It remains unchanged that children in the state's child welfare system who have been in the custody of a CCYA for more than six months are eligible for placement with a PLC if the court determines that the goals of return home and adoption are not viable options for the child. A PLC must be someone with whom the child has a strong bond and who intends for the custodianship arrangement to be permanent, as once custody

is transferred from the CCYA to the custodian, the PLC is afforded all rights and responsibilities for the child under state law and the child is no longer part of the state's child welfare system. Federal and state funding remains available for those PLC who desire a monthly subsidy in order to help offset the cost of caring for the child. Children under the PLC program are also eligible to receive medical coverage under the state's Medicaid program.

Act 80 of 2012 codified many pre-existing elements of Pennsylvania's PLC and SPLC policies. Act 80 provided that eligible children must have a court-ordered disposition of placement with a PLC; have lived with an eligible PLC for at least six months, which need not be consecutive; and be a citizen or alien lawfully residing in Pennsylvania. Eligible PLCs must be a relative or kin who are an approved foster home with whom an eligible child has resided for at least six months. Act 80 established the SPLC program within DHS and provided parameters for SPLC subsidy amounts. Lastly, Act 80 permitted PLCs who provide permanency through PLC to children age 13 or older to receive subsidy payments for these children up until the child turns 21 so long as the child is meeting one of the following five criteria: completing secondary education or an equivalent credential; enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education; participating in a program actively designed to promote or remove barriers to employment; employed for at least 80 hours per month; or incapable of doing any of the activities described above due to a medical or behavioral health condition.

SPLC cases involving children under the age of 18 undergo an annual re-determination to evaluate the continued need for the subsidy or the need for an increase in the subsidy payment due to changed circumstances with regard to the child/SPLC family. Subsidy cases involving children age 18 or older undergo a re-determination minimally every six months to evaluate whether the child continues to meet, or newly meets, the expanded definition of child required for the PLC to receive subsidy payments as well as to evaluate any adjustments to the subsidy amount received within the parameters set forth by Act 80.

On July 18, 2018, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania ruled that Act 80 of 2012 violated Article III, section 4 of the Pennsylvania Constitution and Act 80 was stricken in its entirety. DHS worked to implement any changes needed because of the Supreme Court's decision. In the meantime, DHS received permission from ACF to continue paying counties until a decision was made. DHS assisted in the proposal of new legislation to reinstate provisions previously under Act 80. This legislation was introduced during the 2019 legislative session and subsequently enacted. DHS plans to revise and reissue Bulletin # 3130-10-02/3140-10-03 "PLC Policy", release additional policy guidance specific to subsidized permanent legal custodians and their named successor guardians and update Pennsylvania's model agreement, following enactment of new legislation.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

No updates were made to Pennsylvania's PLC and SPLC policies during the reporting period. OCYF continues to provide technical assistance regarding policy guidance issued on July 17, 2020, about subsidized permanent legal custodians and their named successor guardians.

Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)

APPLA is a living arrangement that is intended to provide CCYAs with the ability to address the special needs for permanency for a child for whom return home, adoption, PLC or placement with a fit and willing relative are not an option. The case record must document why the permanency options were ruled out. These permanency options must be fully explored, and a compelling reason determined why they would not serve the child's physical, mental or emotional health, safety or morals to be referred for TPR. Examples of this category could be the following:

- An older child who refuses adoption, has bonded with a foster family who will not adopt or agree to become the PLC of the child and the child wants to remain with the family who commits to providing a home for the child; or
- A child 16 years of age or older who refuses adoption and will transition to an IL program.

Eliminating the use of APPLA as a permanency goal for all children and youth in foster care was previously identified as a legislative priority by DHS. DHS asked CCYAs to continue their work to reduce the use of APPLA as a permanency goal and prepare for the potential elimination of APPLA.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Over the past year, OCYF and CCYAs have continued to monitor and limit the use of APPLA for children over 16 years of age. OCYF continues to encourage CCYAs to utilize other permanency goals as appropriate for children in out-of-home placement. DHS has continued to engage stakeholders around the elimination of APPLA and previously recommendations made by the APPA Workgroup. In 2021 House Bill 1866 *of 2021 (HB 1866) proposed an amendment to the Juvenile Act to provide enhanced supports to youth with a permanency goal of APPLA and to increase the age which APPLA can be considered as a permanency goal from 16 to 18. The bill is currently being considered by the legislature.*

As this work continues, DHS intends to ensure that appropriate permanency options are available for older youth who do not wish to be adopted or to have a permanent legal custodian. With this comes a continued emphasis on utilization of family engagement models, such as FGDM and Family Finding.

CFSR Permanency Related Systemic Factor Assessment

As part of ongoing assessment and monitoring of statewide practice and performance in the area of permanency, Pennsylvania reviews data and information regarding CFSR systemic factors connected the permanency.

Permanency Service Array

Pennsylvania has invested in a strong array of adoption promotion and support services that create a coordinated network of services across the state to prepare children and families for permanency, from the point of entry into placement through post-adoption. These services continue to be critical is moving children and youth towards timely adoptions. As reported at the time of the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP, the percentage of children and youth in care for 17 months or more who were adopted by the end of the year increased over a five-year period.

Table 20. Adoptions, Children and Youth in Care 17+ Months

	2013 30-Sep	2014 31-Mar	2014 30-Sep	2015 31-Mar	2015 30-Sep	2016 31-Mar	2016 30-Sep	2017 31-Mar	2017 30-Sep	2018 31-Mar
Total in Care 17+ Months	3,689	3,682	3,720	3,620	3,562	3,454	3,737	3,756	3,854	3,911
Adopted by End of Year	842	865	904	929	892	898	1,052	1,018	1,076	1,199
Percent	22.82%	23.49%	24.30%	25.66%	25.04%	26.00%	28.15%	27.10%	27.92%	30.66%

Source [PCG Data Packages, AFCARS] [February 2019]

OCYF continues to support CCYAs efforts to increase the proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives and kin. Per AFCARS data for the reporting period ending in March of 2014, a little over a quarter of children (28.17%) entering out-of-home care were placed with relatives. Over the past few years, the percentage has increased and since March of 2017, that number has remained at around 37%.

Through ongoing assessment of services and stakeholder feedback, Pennsylvania has identified opportunities to strengthen the services array to better support the placement of children in the least restrictive placement possible and to improve foster and adoptive parent recruitment and retention. Pennsylvania will continue its efforts to reduce the number of children and youth placed in congregate care settings over the course of the next five years.

- *Assessment Since Last Report*

Monitoring the array of available permanency services continues to be a priority for Pennsylvania and efforts to address permanency gaps are imbedded within the 2020-2024 CFSP.

As part of Pennsylvania's ongoing CQI efforts, feedback on strengths and challenges regarding the array of permanency related services in Pennsylvania continues to be gathered through ongoing case reviews, such as the QSR and CFSR,

review of funding requests for services submitted to OCYF through the annual NBPB process, monitoring of SWAN services, review of CFSR Round 3 data indicators and annual CCYA licensing inspections. During the reporting period, due to the impact of COVID-19, limited qualitative case review information was available to support these monitoring efforts.

Based on existing feedback loops, services to support permanency for children who have complex physical and behavioral health needs has been identified as an area of concern by CCYAs and other stakeholders. Efforts to alleviate some of the identified gaps for this population continue to occur and some of the key work in this area is reflected under Permanency Objective 2.1 and Well-Being Objective 1.3 of this report.

CFSR Systemic Factor Assessment – Case Review System

Timely achievement of permanency is best supported through regular, periodic administrative or court review of cases to evaluate the appropriateness of case plan goals and monitor and support efforts to achieve such goals. The CFSR systemic factor related to the state's case review system looks at how well the state and courts are functioning to ensure a child's case is reviewed before a court or administrative body at least every six months and that each child has a permanency hearing within 12 months from the date of entry into out-of-home care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter. Pennsylvania meets and exceeds these requirements through the implementation of regulations that require that placement review hearings be held at least every six months. Several counties have also adopted expedited review hearing processes in which cases are reviewed every three months

During the CFSR in 2017, Pennsylvania's case review system was identified as an area of strength with regards to periodic case reviews and permanency hearings. Stakeholders interviewed as part of the CFSR spoke about efforts to promote the frequency of these reviews and the role of the SWAN LSI program in supporting the agency in the planning and preparations of these reviews. Evaluation of the state's case review system also includes evaluating efforts by the agency to ensure foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard, in any review or hearing held with respect to the child. Ensuring notice to caregivers was identified as an area of strength for Pennsylvania during the 2017 CFSR.

While stakeholder feedback has been strongly positive related to this systemic factor, OCYF also has recognized that there is a lack of reliable, quality administrative data available through OCYF, the CCYAs, and the courts to effectively monitor this factor. OCYF will begin work with the research and evaluation staff at the CWRC and other relevant stakeholders in identifying possible avenues for data collection and reporting related to review hearings and notice of hearings to caregivers to support ongoing assessment and monitoring of performance on this CFSR systemic factor.

- *Assessment Since Last Report*

During the reporting period, OCYF continued to monitor performance on this CFSR systemic factor through annual CCYA licensing inspections. For inspections conducted in SFY 2020-21, a total of 98 placement cases were reviewed across 60 counties. Only two counties were issued a provisional licensure in SFY 2020-21. None of the counties were cited for failure to conduct a permanency review hearing within the 6-month time frame.

Due to COVID-19, in-person court proceedings across the state were impacted in different ways. Various statewide and local jurisdiction orders directed courts on essential hearings and many courts moved to conducting business virtually. Through the SWAN prime contractor LSI managers and paralegals, the status of different court dependency proceedings was tracked and reported approximately every three months to OCYF during the pandemic to monitor whether emergency shelter hearings, dependency hearings, permanency review hearings, goal change hearings, TPR and finalization hearings were occurring and in what format. Review of the information gathered showed that in the initial months of the Governor's emergency declaration proclamation, approximately 28 counties temporarily suspended permanency review hearings and rescheduled for later months, however by the end of July of 2020, all such hearings were noted to have resumed regularly in some form across all 67 counties.

CFSR Systemic Factor Assessment – Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

Having a system in place to ensure foster and adoptive parents and staff of state licensed and approved facilities have the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adoptive children and youth is critical to the achievement of positive permanency outcomes. Pennsylvania has identified a continued need for improvement to the foster and adoptive parent and facility staff training system. Pennsylvania received an overall rating of needing improvement related to this systemic factor during the CFSR in 2017. Through information provided in the statewide assessment and feedback from stakeholder interviews at the time, it was noted that Pennsylvania requires only six hours of pre-service training for foster parents and there is no statewide mandate to ensure that resource parents receive training in the specific skills and knowledge needed to meet their responsibility. Regulations outlining training requirements for the staff of state licensed and approved facilities have very minimal requirements. While many foster care and adoption agencies, as well as state licensed facilities, report that they have their own standards for training which far exceed those outlined in state regulation, Pennsylvania does not currently have a system in place which captures the extent of the training hours and training topics across all providers at the state level.

At the statewide level, the CWRC develops and provides training opportunities for resource parents. Every year, the CWRC is responsible for delivering up to ten courses at the annual PSRFA conference. Those courses and others are then available to be delivered upon county request throughout the state and by request of other

entities such as SWAN. During SFY 2017-18, the CWRC delivered 13 foster and adoptive parent workshops which were attended by 201 participants. The curriculum topics are selected to correspond with prominent legislative, policy, and/or best practices curriculum topics that were identified as training needs. In SFY 2017-18, the CWRC developed, revised and/or launched the courses, "Taking Care of Yourself: Managing Your Exposure to Traumatic Stress" and "Preventing Youth from Experiencing Opioid Use and Addiction."

Looking ahead to the next five years, DHS and stakeholders will work to make improvements to the training of foster and adoptive parents and staff at state-licensed facilities. Part of this work will be supported through efforts already in progress to assess the model licensing standards set forth under Family First. Pennsylvania's 2020-2024 CFSP goals and strategies include efforts directed at improvements to the training of foster and adoptive parents. OCYF will also work with the CWRC research and evaluation team in exploring methods for gathering and tracking training information to inform ongoing assessment and monitoring of performance related to this CFSR systemic factor.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

The CWRC continues to provide training opportunities for resource parents. Every year, the CWRC is responsible for delivering up to ten courses at the annual Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association (PSRFA) conference. The CWRC resource parent courses continued to be available for delivery upon county request throughout the state.

During the SFY 2020-2021 OCYF monitored compliance through annual licensing inspection continued across the 60 counties able to be licensed, 208 resource family records were able to be reviewed. Of the records reviewed, only one county was cited in relation to foster and adoptive parent training. This specific citation was issued due to the resource family needing to take the mandated reporter training every five years, however the family's training had lapsed and entered the sixth year. The mandated reporter training has been provided electronically for many years and the family would be able to rectify this issue promptly.

CFSR Systemic Factor Assessment: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention

The CFSR systemic factor regarding foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment and retention considers the following critical components as necessary to support the achievement of permanency:

- Ensuring state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or childcare institutions;
- Ensuring that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care

placements and a case planning process exists that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster and adoptive placements for children;
- Ensuring the statewide diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed; and
- Ensuring that cross-jurisdictional resources are used effectively to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.

Equal application of state standards to all licensed or approved foster family homes was an area rated as a strength for Pennsylvania during the 2017 CFSR. Performance at that time was based upon stakeholder interviews which confirmed Pennsylvania's use of standardized licensing checklists and supervisory reviews to ensure consistency. OCYF will be working over the next few years to revise existing Survey and Evaluation Manuals and Implementation Guides, which are used to provide further guidance to licensing entities and licensees regarding regulatory interpretation. Monitoring the equal application of state standards is another area where OCYF will work the CWRC research and evaluation staff to identify potential methods for data collection or information gathering to effectively assess practice in this area effectively.

During the 2017 CFSR, the systemic factor component related to compliance with federal requirements for criminal background clearances and a case planning process for addressing the safety of foster and adoptive placements was also rated as an area of strength. Ensuring children are safe in their placement settings is of paramount importance and ensures children can remain in the setting without disruption to ensure placement instability. Pennsylvania's CPSL outlines criminal background check requirements and the RFR requires submission of criminal and child abuse clearances every five years for all householder members 18 years of age or older. OCYF tracks all child abuse clearance requests to ChildLine for employees and volunteers and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) record requests. DHS reports of the number of types of these requests each year in the Annual Child Protective Services Report. During annual CCYA licensing inspections, agency foster home and adoption records are reviewed to monitor compliance with background check requirements. Private provider agency foster homes are also monitored for compliance through the licensing inspection process. OCYF has identified that additional efforts are necessary to collect data and information on an ongoing basis to monitor this systemic factor component. OCYF will work with the CWRC research and evaluation staff in this effort over the coming year.

During the 2017 CFSR, Pennsylvania received an overall rating of strength with regards to the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive parents who reflect the diversity of the children in need of placement across the state. Information regarding the assessment of this systemic factor is outlined in the "Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan" section of the 2020-2024 CFSP.

Utilization of cross-jurisdictional resources was an area identified as needing improvement during the CFSR conducted in 2017. Data reviewed regarding timeframes

for processing interstate requests through the OCYF ICPC Office, as well as interviews with stakeholders, identified that Pennsylvania was not able to process requests in a timely or efficient manner for approximately two-thirds of all requests. Due to the implementation of the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) system in Pennsylvania in November of 2018, OCYF anticipates an increase in the timeliness of placement decisions. NEICE is a national database supported by the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) and the Association of Administrators Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children designed as a case management system for ICPC requests

- *Assessment Since Last Report*

Performance on the CFSR systemic factor for foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment and retention is based upon evaluation of state performance on CFSR items 33 through 36. Pennsylvania was found to be in substantial conformity with this CFSR systemic factor during the 2017 CFSR and therefore was not required to address this area as part of the CFSR PIP.

CFSR Item 33: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or childcare institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds?

Annual CCYA licensing continues to include reviews of resource homes operated by the CCYA's. A total of 208 resource home records were reviewed as part of the CCYA annual licensing inspections conducted during SFY 2020-21. A total of 6 counties (inclusive of one provisionally licensed county) received citations related to requirements for agency resource family homes. Of the 11 violations noted, examples of common citations included missing documentation related to requirements such as medical appraisals, failure to register the family with the RFR within the required timeframe, or ten-year income verification. It should be noted, within the 6 counties who received violations, none of the counties received more than 2 citations and were not deemed to have systemic concerns needing to be addressed.

OCYF continues to also conduct annual inspections of all foster family care and adoption agencies, as well as child residential facilities. A listing of these entities, as well as their licensure status and copies of any LIS issued is available through the human services provider directory on the DHS website.[21] Due to COVID-19, OCYF did temporarily suspend licensing inspections during the period of March-May 2020. The inspections resumed in June 2020 with the OCYF Regional Offices working to make-up any inspections that were originally scheduled to occur during the temporary suspension period.

As previously noted in this report, OCYF, through the Governor's Emergency Disaster Declaration, allowed for temporary suspension of some regulatory

[21] https://www.humanservices.state.pa.us/HUMAN_SERVICE_PROVIDER_DIRECTORY/

requirements for foster homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. These suspensions were lifted September 30, 2021.

CFSR Item 34: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children?

During SFY 2019-20, OCYF Regional Office staff continued to monitor for compliance with background check and clearance requirements for foster care and adoption providers, as well as CCYA operated resources homes. Of the 457 agency resource home records reviewed during annual CCYA licensing, six violations related to clearance and background check requirements were found across 2 fully licensed and 1 provisionally licensed county.

During SFY 2020-21, OCYF Regional Office staff continued to monitor for compliance with background check and clearance requirements for foster care and adoption providers, as well as CCYA operated resource homes. Of the 208 agency resource home records reviewed during annual CCYA licensing, two violations related to clearance and background check requirements were found across 2 fully licensed counties.

In calendar year 2021, DHS processed 13,893 child abuse history clearances for foster families, and 8,917 child abuse history clearances for adoptive families. Additionally, FBI record requests were made for 10,260 foster parents and 5,720 prospective adoptive parents. Compared to trends over previous years, there was a noticeable decrease in child abuse history clearance and FBI record requests for foster and adoptive parents in 2020 which possibly may be rooted in impacts felt from COVID-19, however numbers began to increase more towards pre-COVID levels in 2021.

Additional information about Pennsylvania requirements for criminal background clearances for foster and adoptive parents can be found on www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov. Annual criminal background clearance data is available through the Annual Child Protective Services Report available on the DHS website.[22]

CFSR Item 35: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring statewide?

Please refer to the "Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan" updates provided in a previous section of this document.

[22] https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Pages/Child-Abuse-Reports.aspx

CFSR Item 36: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children occurring statewide?

Data showing estimates for the number of children placed into and out of Pennsylvania through the ICPC is found in Table 21. Regarding placement into and out of Pennsylvania for foster, adoption and residential treatment facilities (RTF) prior to NEICE, these numbers are estimated only and may be artificially low due to the DHS ICPC Unit not consistently receiving the appropriate form to show that a child was confirmed placed in the approved ICPC placement.

Table 21. Estimated Placements Into/Out of Pennsylvania Through ICPC SFYs 2015-2021[23]

	Placement Into PA			Placement Out of PA		
	Public Foster	Adopt	RTF	Public Foster	Adopt	RTF
2013	100	53	474	57	35	91
2014	88	44	351	57	36	89
2015	96	33	300	39	18	8
2016	68	74	145	27	72	42
2017	189	150	256	107	105	77
2018	185	171	314	122	133	85
2019 pre-NEICE implementation	114	96	138	84	66	39
2019 post-NEICE implementation[24]	56	63	173	28	45	65
Totals for July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019	170	159	311	112	111	104
2020	124	82	252	33	84	152
2021	102	87	104	135	80	163

Source [NEICE] [April 2022]

Pennsylvania also tracks the time it takes to facilitate adoptive and foster care placement decisions through ICPC, which includes completion of the home study as seen in Table 22.

[23] *Note on Data Limitations: Data is based upon on actual placements recorded through submission of forms to ICPC unit for input into the database. As the appropriate form is not always submitted, the numbers shown in the chart are artificially low. There is also some overlap between public foster and adoptive placements since a change from a goal of foster care to adoption is considered a new placement within the database.*

[24] *Covers time period November 5, 2018 to June 30, 2019*

Table 22. Time from Receiving Packet to Placement Decision at Pennsylvania ICPC Office, SFYs 2015-2021

Time to Placement Decision	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*	*2018*	*2019 Pre NEICE cases and (NEICE cases)*	*2020*	*2021*
1	*73*	*18*	*24*	*38*	*5+(22)=**27***	*25*	*39*
Month or Less	*13.22%*	*8.70%*	*6.33%*	*8.62%*	*1.21%+(5.31%)=**6.52%***	*6.74%*	*9.95%*
2	*127*	*39*	*50*	*38*	*11+(37)=**48***	*51*	*47*
Months	*23.01%*	*18.84%*	*13.19%*	*8.62%*	*2.66%+(8.94%)=**11.59%***	*13.75%*	*11.99%*
3	*120*	*31*	*80*	*72*	*16+(59) =**75***	*66*	*83*
Months	*21.74%*	*14.98%*	*21.11%*	*16.33%*	*3.86%+(14.25%)=**18.12%***	*17.79%*	*21.17%*
4	*74*	*23*	*49*	*73*	*24+(33)=**57***	*49*	*50*
Months	*13.41%*	*11.11%*	*12.93%*	*16.55%*	*5.80%+(7.97%) =**13.77%***	*13.21%*	*12.76%*
5	*53*	*21*	*50*	*55*	*18+(34)=**52***	*35*	*34*
Months	*9.60%*	*10.14%*	*13.19%*	*12.47%*	*4.35%+(8.21%)=**12.56%***	*9.43%*	*8.67%*
6	*44*	*26*	*41*	*47*	*19+(20)=**39***	*34*	*34*
Months	*7.97%*	*12.56%*	*10.82%*	*10.66%*	*4.59%+(4.83%)=**9.42%***	*9.16%*	*8.67%*
7	*25*	*10*	*27*	*36*	*14 (17) =**31***	*31*	*30*
Months	*4.53%*	*4.83%*	*7.12%*	*8.16%*	*3.38%+(4.11%)=**7.49%***	*8.36%*	*7.65%*
8	*10*	*15*	*19*	*31*	*10+(14)=**24***	*19*	*9*
Months	*1.81%*	*7.25%*	*5.01%*	*7.03%*	*2.42%+(3.38%)=**5.80%***	*5.12%*	*2.30%*
9	*15*	*5*	*8*	*25*	*6+(15)=**21***	*20*	*14*
Months	*2.72%*	*2.42%*	*2.11%*	*5.67%*	*1.45%+(3.62%)=**5.07%***	*5.39%*	*3.57%*
10	*2*	*6*	*9*	*7*	*5+(12) =**17***	*10*	*14*
Months	*0.36%*	*2.90%*	*2.37%*	*1.59%*	*1.21%+(2.90%)=**4.11%***	*2.70%*	*3.57%*
11	*6*	*2*	*2*	*7*	*3+(9)=**12***	*12*	*14*
Months	*1.09%*	*0.97%*	*0.53%*	*1.59%*	*0.72%+(2.17%)=**2.90%***	*3.23%*	*3.57%*
12	*3*	*11*	*20*	*12*	*2+(9)=**11***	*19*	*26*
Months or More	*0.54%*	*5.31%*	*5.28%*	*2.72%*	*0.48%+(2.17%)=**2.66%***	*5.12%*	*6.63%*
Total	***552***	***207***	***379***	***441***	***133+(281) 414***	***371***	***392***

Source [NEICE] [April 2022]

During SFY 2020-21, the OCFC again collaborated with OCYF to assess the state's ICPC laws, policies, and practices to identify any existing barriers in case processing and to implement any necessary changes to improve the quality and timeliness of the interstate process. OCYF facilitated and provided virtual training on interstate processes for local level child welfare agencies (including their legal departments and other supportive service partners). OCYF Regional Office staff utilized annual licensing inspections to assure child welfare agencies' compliance with ICPC

timeframes and requirements were monitored. NEICE was used for all ICPC cases during this reporting period.

CFSR Permanency Data Indicator and Outcomes Assessment

Permanency Data Indicators:

Pennsylvania reviews several measures related to permanency as part of its ongoing monitoring and improvement efforts. OCYF works with data contractor PCG to regularly generate state level and county level data packets which utilize AFCARS data to report on key permanency indicators. The information provided in the data packets is reviewed to identify and prioritize any areas of concern related to permanency and to provide a starting place for further requests for more in-depth analysis of AFCARS data related to measures of interest. The CFSR Round 3 National Data Indicators are one source of information utilized by OCYF in its work with counties and other stakeholders in monitoring permanency outcomes.

The CFSR Round 3 National Data Indicators consist of five permanency measures, three of which are related to timeliness of the achievement of permanency. The other two indicators focus on re-entries of children and youth into out-of-home care within 12 months of discharge from foster care and the stability of foster care placements. At the time of the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP, Pennsylvania's most current CFSR Round 3 data profile was from January of 2019. Overall, the state was determined to meet the national standard for two of the five permanency measures, which are permanency within 12 months for children and youth in out of home care 24 months or longer and placement stability. Pennsylvania identified key strategies to help improve permanency outcomes for children and families in the state's CFSR PIP. Those strategies were integrated into Pennsylvania's 2020-2024 CFSP goals and strategies to help achieve the system vision for permanency.

- *Assessment Since Last Report*

Pennsylvania received the most recent CFSR Round 3 Data Profile from ACF in February 2022. The profile is provided at Appendix A to this report. Pennsylvania continues to exceed the national standard for placement stability. Pennsylvania continues to fall below the national standard on the following indicators:

- *Permanency in 12 months (entries)*
- *Permanency in 12 months (12-23 months)*
- *Re-entry to foster care*

In the March of 2021 data profile, Pennsylvania fell below the national average for permanency in 12 months (24 + months) for the first time since the start of the Round 3 Data Indicators. In the most recent data profile, Pennsylvania began to increase the permanency in 12 months (24 + months) for the first time since the beginning of the Round 3 Indicators. In AFCARS reporting period 2019B/2020A, Pennsylvania exceeded the national standard of 31.8%, with 37.6% of Pennsylvania

children and youth in placement 24 months or more achieving permanency within 12 months. By AFCARS reporting period 2020A/2020B, performance had dropped to 29.7%. Performance continued to drop through reporting periods 2020A/2020B and 2020B/2021A. In the most recent reporting period 2021A/2021B permanency in 12 months (24+ months) began increasing to 32.4 % which has exceeded the national standard of 31.8% once again.

Currently, the cause for this noticeable decline in performance has not been determined. OCYF continues to work with data contractor PCG to conduct in-depth county-level analysis of performance on the data indicators to include observation of trends over the past three years. OCYF also continues to analyze and monitor placement data overall to assess any potential impacts that may be connected to COVID-19.

Observing the implications of the COVID 19 pandemic has revealed county court systems had halted all operations to ensure safety of all those involved. This significantly impacted the timeline of achieving permanency for children who were looking forward to court dates finalizing adoptions and permanent legal custodianship. Across the Commonwealth, some jurisdictions were able to resume operations utilizing a virtual platform, or a significant reduction of in- person attendees. This could potentially explain changes in data indicator performance for the reporting period of 2021A/2021B as court systems resumed operations.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

CFSR Permanency Outcome 1 focuses on ensuring children have timely and enduring permanency and stability during their out-of-home placement episode. While this federal outcome is focused on stability for children in foster care, it is important to note that Pennsylvania also evaluates the stability of living situations for children and youth receiving in-home services through the state supported QSR. CFSR Permanency Outcome 1 is evaluated by assessing agency and court practices related to placement stability, the timely establishment of appropriate permanency goals for children and youth and concerted efforts to achieve case plan goals related to reunification, adoption, guardianship and other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) within timeframes established through the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.

Pennsylvania was not found to be in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1 during the 2017 review. In 2017, only 23% of the applicable cases reviewed were found to have achieved the outcome, which falls below the federal target of 95%. Analysis of the 2017 CFSR findings, AFCARS data, and QSR results related to Permanency Outcome 1 revealed the following:

- Pennsylvania exceeds the national standard for the Round 3 CFSR Data Indicator for stability, however, the CFSR case review findings and QSR

results from the past five years identify that there are still opportunities for improvement in this area;

- During the CFSR in 2017, it was identified that 50% of applicable cases reviewed were rated as a strength with regards to the timely establishment of appropriate permanency goals;
- The identified permanency goals for children in out-of-home placement in Pennsylvania tend to follow the appropriate hierarchy, with the majority of children and youth having a goal of reunification, followed by adoption;
- Further analysis of 2017 CFSR findings related to the appropriateness of permanency goals identified a trend in which the primary goal continued to be reunification despite not being appropriate given case circumstances;
- During the CFSR in 2017, only 38% of applicable cases were rated as a strength with regards to concerted efforts to achieve the child's permanency goal;
- Pennsylvania does not meet the national standard for the CFSR Round 3 Data Indicator regarding the achievement of permanency for children within 12 months; and
- Table 23 provides data from AFCARS identifying timeframes for which children in Pennsylvania achieved reunification over a five-year period.

Table 23. Reunification Analysis

	2012 31 Mar	2012 30 Sep	2013 31 Mar	2013 30 Sep	2014 31 Mar	2014 30 Sep	2015 31 Mar	2015 30 Sep	2016 31 Mar	2016 30 Sep
Total First-Time Entries	3,732	3,640	3,289	3,749	3,818	4,146	4,003	4,345	4,172	4,236
Percent Reunified within 30 Days	12.62%	12.06%	11.86%	10.96%	12.23%	9.86%	9.59%	9.46%	9.83%	8.88%
Percent Reunified within 60 Days	17.66%	17.55%	16.45%	15.02%	17.34%	14.28%	14.64%	14.61%	14.26%	14.02%
Percent Reunified within 6 Months	32.21%	30.19%	28.73%	27.05%	30.41%	25.42%	24.33%	24.12%	25.89%	25.99%
Percent Reunified within 12 Months	45.63%	43.27%	41.41%	39.90%	41.96%	37.65%	36.52%	38.11%	40.20%	39.57%
Percent Reunified within 24 Months	57.05%	55.27%	53.51%	52.01%	53.95%	51.74%	48.39%	49.71%	50.81%	50.76%

Source [PCG Data Packages, AFCARS] [February 2019]

➢ *Assessment Since Last Report*

During the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews conducted in 2019, Pennsylvania did not meet substantial conformity for Permanency Outcome 1 as the state substantially achieved Permanency Outcome 1 in only 33% of the applicable cases reviewed. Performance on this permanency outcome is determined based on evaluation of state performance of CFSR Items 4 through 6. Pennsylvania conducted a second round of CFSR PIP monitoring of case review item 6 for Permanency Outcome 1 between April and September 2021. During this review, the improvement goal set was set at 47 % conformity. Pennsylvania was able to far exceed this expectation reaching 57.5 % strength for reporting period 2.

Table 24 below provides updated data regarding reunification analysis.

Table 24. Updated Reunification Analysis

	2016 31 Mar	2016 30 Sep	2017 31 Mar	2017 30 Sep	2018 31 Mar	2018 30 Sep	2019 31 Mar	2019 30 Sep
Total First-Time Entries	*4,187*	*4,262*	*4,144*	*4,455*	*3,855*	*3,938*	*3,738*	*3,660*
Percent Reunified within 30 Days	*9.77%*	*8.85%*	*7.75%*	*8.04%*	*9.42%*	*8.46%*	*7.92%*	*8.09%*
Percent Reunified within 60 Days	*14.19%*	*13.96%*	*12.52%*	*12.66%*	*13.36%*	*12.70%*	*12.95%*	*11.99%*
Percent Reunified within 6 Months	*25.72%*	*25.79%*	*23.36%*	*24.38%*	*26.15%*	*25.09%*	*26.51%*	*22.54%*
Percent Reunified within 12 Months	*40.03%*	*39.23%*	*37.45%*	*37.49%*	*40.49%*	*37.51%*	*39.35%*	*34.67%*
Percent Reunified within 24 Months	*50.73%*	*50.52%*	*50.24%*	*50.84%*	*52.22%*	*47.94%*	*50.96%*	*48.63%*

Source [PCG Data Packages, AFCARS] [May 2022]

CFSR Item 4: Is the child in foster care in a stable placement and were any changes in the child's placement in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goal(s)?

During the PIP monitoring case reviews in 2019, 80% of the applicable cases reviewed were rated a strength on placement stability. Further analysis of CFSR cases where placement stability was identified as an area needing improvement included one case where the current placement was a temporary shelter or other temporary setting and another case where the foster family and child self-reported that the placement was not a good match. The 2019 PIP monitoring case reviews indicated slight improvement in performance on CFSR Item 4 compared to the baseline 2017 case review where 78% of applicable cases were rated as a strength on placement stability. Pennsylvania conducted a second round of CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews between April and September 2021. During this review, Pennsylvania met the PIP measurement plan goal for Item 4 at 85 % which was an increase in five percentage points from the 2019 case reviews. Additionally, Pennsylvania received an updated CFSR Round 3 Data Profile in February 2022, which indicated 3.33 placement moves per 1,000 days in cases observed during the 21A-21B reporting period which exceeds the national standard.

Pennsylvania also monitors placement stability from a qualitative perspective through the QSRs for both children in foster care and those remaining in their own homes. Both stability of the child/youth's educational setting and the stability of the child/youth's living arrangement are assessed. Placement stability is assessed both retroactively and prospectively. Table 25 highlights findings over the course of the past five rounds of the QSRs. Due to COVID-19, no QSRs were held in Round X or Round XI.

Table 25. Stability: Sub-Indicator Living Arrangement

	Round V	*Round VI*	*Round VII*	*Round VIII*	*Round IX*
Percentage of Cases Rated as Acceptable	***58%***	***61%***	***64%***	***64%***	***49%***

Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

Pennsylvania identified strategies in the Round 3 CFSR PIP to help improve practice to support placement stability for children and youth, along with additional work to strengthen placement prevention efforts through emphasis on improving foster and adoptive parent recruitment and retention.

CFSR Item 5: Did the agency establish appropriate permanency goals for the child in a timely manner?

During the PIP monitoring case reviews in 2019, 58% of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as an overall strength on this item. In breaking down the specific practice components assessed for this item, reviewers determined that permanency goals were established in a timely manner in approximately 88% of cases reviewed. The permanency goals identified for the child, both primary and concurrent, were deemed appropriate to the child /youth's need for permanency and the circumstances of the case in 63% of applicable cases. Concerning TPR, the petition was filed in a timely manner, or an exception applied in 53% of applicable cases. The 2019 PIP monitoring case reviews indicated slight improvement in performance on CFSR Item 5 compared to the baseline 2017 case review where 50% of applicable cases were rated as a strength related to permanency goals. Pennsylvania conducted a second round of CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews between April and September of 2021. During the review, Pennsylvania was found to improve in performance on this item and achieved the improvement goal of 60% or more cases reviewed being rated as a strength on Item 5. The findings from the case reviews showed that 67.5%, or 27 of the 40 cases reviewed on Item 5 were found to be a strength.

Timely and appropriate establishment of permanency goals in compliance with state regulation and policy is monitored through review of a random sample of placement cases during annual licensing inspections conducted across the 67 CCYA. Pennsylvania requires the establishment of both primary and concurrent goals and implementation of concurrent planning to support timely achievement of permanency. In general, licensing inspections find that nearly all counties are establishing concurrent goals in accordance with state requirements. Violations tend to be linked to issues with missing documentation in the case record to verify the primary or concurrent goals. No systemic issues across the state related to the establishment of permanency goals have been noted during the annual licensing inspections.

In SFY 2019-20, there was a slight increase in the number of counties found to have violations related to permanency goals. Five regularly licensed counties and one provisionally licensed county were issued violations regarding permanency goals. Specifically:

- *One county was cited across seven cases for failure to establish the concurrent goal for the child within 90 days of placement.*
- *Three counties were cited across a total of three cases where the agency did not document any of the child's goals.*
- *In five cases across two counties, violations were found specific to concurrent goals not being established for the child.*

Additionally, two counties were cited for violations across a total of 12 cases for lack of documentation as to why the selected goals were the best permanency option for the child.

Timely filing of the TPR petition in accordance with provisions outlined in AFSA is also monitored through the annual CCYA licensing inspections. In SFY 2019-20, only one case in one fully licensed county was specifically cited for not filing a TPR timely, specifically for a child who had been the custody of the agency for three years. Three fully licensed counties and one provisionally licensed county were cited across four cases for failing to petition for aggravated circumstances when it was clear from the review of the case information that to do so would have been appropriate.

During SFY 2020-2021, no counties that had an annual licensing inspection, received a citation pertaining to permanency review hearings or timeliness of TPR filings.

<u>CFSR Item 6: Did the agency make concerted efforts to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption or other planned permanent living arrangement for the child?</u>

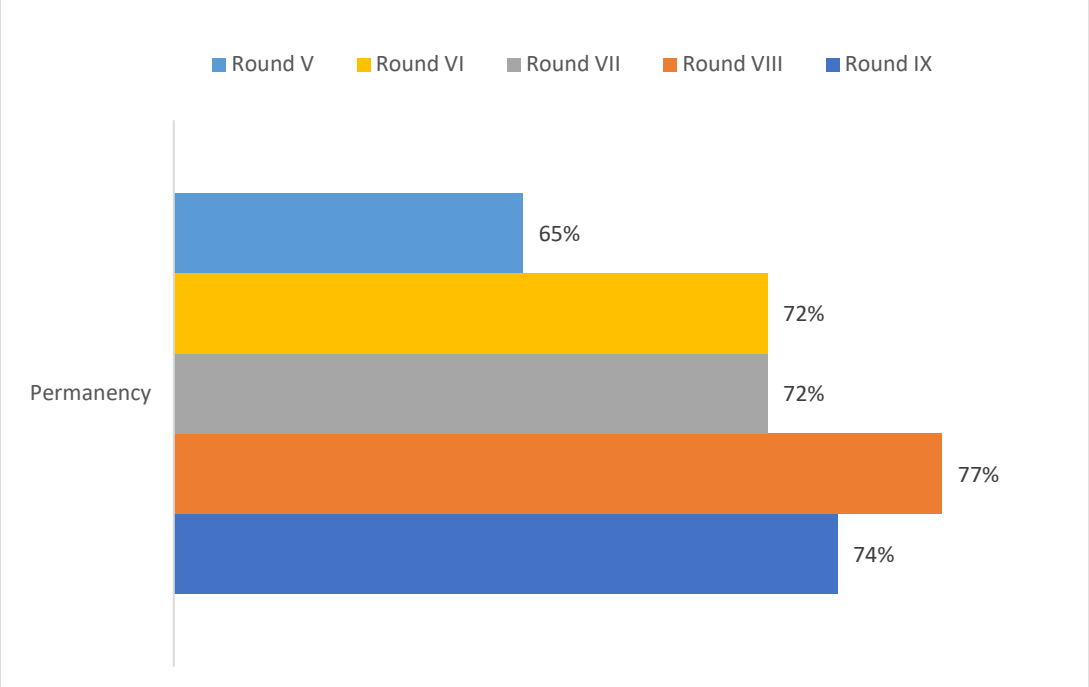
During the 2019 PIP monitoring case reviews, only 40% of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a strength on this item. In further breaking down the elements evaluated for this item, the agency and court were determined to have made concerted efforts to achieve reunification in a timely manner in only 44% of applicable cases reviewed. Concerted efforts to achieve adoption in a timely manner were noted in only 41% of applicable cases. Further analysis suggests there may be some issues related to effective implementation of concurrent planning. Delays in achieving permanency caused by court scheduling issues were also noted in the findings from the case reviews. In some instances, difficulties in securing appropriate housing directly delayed achievement of permanency when the parents had completed all other service plan goals. Concerning the CFSR Round 3 Data Indicators, Pennsylvania consistently has not meet national performance standards over the past five years for achieving permanency in 12 months (for children/youth entering care in a 12-month period) or achieving permanency in 12 months for children/youth in care 12-23 months.

The 2019 PIP monitoring case reviews indicated slight improvement in performance on CFSR Item 6 compared to the baseline 2017 case review where 38% of applicable cases were rated as a strength on concerted efforts to achieve timely permanency.

In addition to AFCARS data and CFSR findings, Pennsylvania also monitors concerted efforts towards the achievement of permanency through the QSRs. All cases reviewed during the QSR, both in-home and foster care, are rated with regards to efforts to permanency. Foster care cases are also rated on timeliness. Findings from the past five most recent years of data available are illustrated in Figure 3. Due to COVID-19, no QSRs were held in Round X or Round XI.

During the second round of CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews that took place between April to September 2021, Pennsylvania made significant strides to improve practices pertaining to concurrent planning. Pennsylvania was able to achieve a 57.5 % strength rating for Item 6. This represents a 17.5 percentage point increase when compared to the findings from the 2019 PIP monitoring case reviews.

Figure 3. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Efforts to Timely Permanence"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationship and connections is preserved for children.

CFSR Permanency Outcome 2 focuses on the preservation and continuity of family relationships for children in out-of-home placement. CFSR Permanency Outcome 2 is evaluated by assessing the following practice areas:

- Placement with siblings;
- Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care;
- Preserving connections;
- Relative placement; and
- Relationship of the child in care with his or her parents.

Pennsylvania was not found to be in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2 during the 2017 on-site review. In 2017, 70% of the applicable cases reviewed were found to have achieved the outcome, which falls below the federal target of 95%. Analysis of the 2017 CFSR findings, AFCARS data, and QSR results related to Permanency Outcome 2 found the following:

- During the 2017 CFSR, 91% of applicable cases reviewed were found to be a strength with regards to sibling placement;
- Findings from the QSR showed improvement in the area of sibling placement over a five-year period, with 82% of cases involving siblings in out-of-home care keeping siblings together;
- Despite strong practice in placing siblings together, the 2017 CFSR found only 50% of applicable cases were rated as a strength related to efforts to ensure visits for siblings who were not placed together;
- Both CFSR and QSR findings suggest further improvement is warranted regarding the frequency and quality of visitation between children in out-of-home placement and their parents;
- During the 2017 CFSR, 68% of cases reviewed were found to be a strength regarding concerted efforts on the part of the agency to preserve children's connections to their neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, tribe, school and friends;
- AFCARS data confirms Pennsylvania has made important strides in increasing the proportion of children in out-of-home care who are placed with relatives;
- Findings from the 2017 CFSR identified that agencies were more likely to make efforts to appropriately identify and locate relatives than fully evaluate relatives as potential placement options; and
- CFSR findings also noted efforts were more likely to be made to locate maternal relatives compared to paternal relatives.

➢ *Assessment Since Last Report*

During the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews conducted in 2019, Pennsylvania did not meet substantial conformity for Permanency Outcome 2 as the state substantially achieved Permanency Outcome 2 in only 62.5% of the applicable cases reviewed. Performance on this permanency outcome is determined based on evaluation of state performance of CFSR Items 7 through 11. Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020. During the 2021 PIP monitoring case reviews 87% of cases were rated as a strength for this item. Cases that were reviewed

that sibling groups were placed together accounted for 43% of the cases, while 77% of the cases had a justifiable reason as to why the siblings were placed in separate homes.

CFSR Item 7: Did the agency make concerted efforts to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings?

During the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews in 2019, 80% of applicable cases reviewed were rated a strength on this item. Of the foster care cases reviewed that involved sibling placements, children/youth were placed with all siblings who were also in foster care in a little over half of all cases (52%). In the twelve cases identified where children/youth were separated from their siblings, a valid reason for separation was noted in 58% of these cases. Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but conducted a second round of PIP monitoring case reviews between April and September of 2021.

During the second round of CFSR PIP monitoring in 2021, 87% of applicable cases were rated a strength on this item. Of the foster care cases reviewed that involved sibling placements, children/youth were placed with all siblings who were also in foster care were rated at 43%. In ten of the thirteen cases reviewed where children/youth were separated from their siblings, a valid reason for separation was noted in 77% of the cases.

For cases reviewed as part of the QSRs, information is gathered regarding the placement of children/youth with their siblings to help inform understanding of how frequently siblings are being placed together. Findings from the past five most recent years of data available are illustrated in Table 26. Due to COVID-19, no QSRs were held in Round X or Round XI.

Table 26. QSR Findings: Placement with Siblings for Children in Out-of-Home Care

	Round 5	Round 6	Round 7	Round 8	Round 9
Cases with Siblings in Care	**29**	**18**	**13**	**28**	**14**
Cases with Siblings (At Least One) Placed Together	15	12	10	23	11
% Siblings Placed Together	52%	67%	77%	82%	79%

Source [QSR Web-Based Roll-Up Sheets, PCG], [May 2020]

CFSR Item 8: Did the agency make concerted efforts to ensure visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father and siblings was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members?

During the 2019 PIP monitoring case reviews, 66% of applicable cases were rated as a strength on this overall indicator. With regards to parents, concerted efforts

to ensure the frequency and quality of visitation between the mother and child/youth was determined to be sufficient in 78% of applicable cases reviewed. Concerning fathers, concerted efforts related to frequency and quality of visitation were noted as a strength in 86% of applicable cases. This represented a notable increase in performance related to fathers compared to the 2017 baseline, which was 67%. When looking at frequency and quality of visitation between the child and siblings, 64% of applicable cases were rated as a strength. Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but conducted reviews between April and September of 2021.

During the 2021 PIP monitoring case reviews, 70% of applicable cases were rated as a strength on this overall indicator. With regards to parents, concerted efforts to ensure the frequency and quality of visitation between the mother and child/youth was determined to be sufficient in 79% of applicable cases reviewed. Concerning fathers, concerted efforts related to frequency and quality of visitation were noted as a strength in 60% of applicable cases. When looking at frequency and quality of visitation between the child and siblings, 85% of applicable cases were rated as a strength. This is a notable 21% increase since 2019.

CCYA compliance with state regulations related to visits between parents and siblings is monitored through annual CCYA licensing inspections conducted across the 67 counties. For SFY 2019-20, 12 violations were noted across 6 fully licensed counties. It should be noted that the licensing inspections focus on documentation of regulatory requirements being met, therefore, violations primarily noted were limited to failure to provide notification to the parents of their right to visits or missing visitation schedules in the record. Three of the violations specifically involved issues with frequency of visitation between children in foster care and their parents. Specifically, in one case there was no contact between the parent and the child and the agency did not establish aggravated circumstances. In two other cases, the agency did not ensure frequent visits with the custodian and/or did not offer assistance to facilitate visitation. There were no violations issued during SFY 2019-20 related to sibling visitation.

For SFY 2020-21, one violation was noted across the 60 fully licensed counties that were inspected. The one citation found was with a provisionally licensed county who did not set up visitation with siblings and parents within the regulatory time frame. Furthermore, the CCYA did not set up visitation to occur within the regulatory intervals for this particular family.

Table 27. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Parent and Sibling Visitation

	SFY 2016-2017	***SFY 2017-2018***	***SFY 2018-2019***	***SFY 2019-2020***	***SFY 2020-2021***
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	*2 counties*	*3 counties*	*4 counties*	*6 counties*	*0 counties*

Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	*0 counties*	*0 counties*	*0 counties*	*0 counties*	*1 county*
Total Cases Cited	***3***	***7***	***13***	***12***	***1***
Total Counties Without Citation	***65***	***64***	***63***	***48 (of 54)***	***59 (of 60)***

Source [Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries], [May 2022]

CFSR Item 9: Did the agency make concerted efforts to preserve the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, tribe, school and friends?

Maintaining key connections for children and youth in foster care is critical to supporting sustainable permanence and ensuring well-being. During the 2019 PIP monitoring case reviews, 69% of applicable cases reviewed were rated as a strength on this overall item. Breaking down the item into the case practice components considered, in 70% of the applicable cases, it was identified that concerted efforts were made to maintain the child's important connections (such as neighborhood, community, faith, language, school, etc.). Sufficient inquiry to determine whether a child/youth may be a member of or eligible for membership in, a federally recognized Indian Tribe occurred in 78% of the applicable foster care cases. Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but conducted reviews between April and September of 2021.

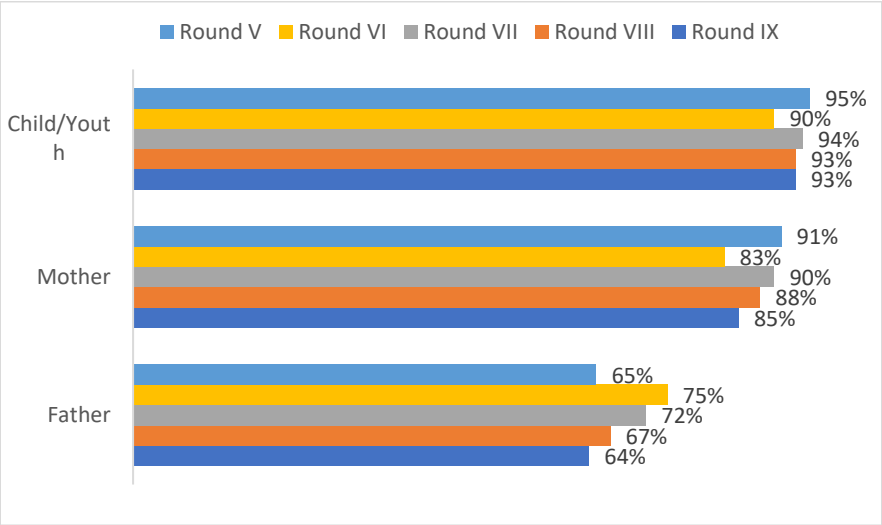
During the 2021 PIP monitoring case reviews, 85% of applicable cases reviewed were rated as a strength on this overall item. Breaking down the item into the case practice components considered, in 85% of the applicable cases, it was identified that concerted efforts were made to maintain the child's important connections (such as neighborhood, community, faith, language, school, etc.). Sufficient inquiry to determine whether a child/youth may be a member of or eligible for membership in, a federally recognized Indian Tribe occurred in 97% of the applicable foster care cases. Notable increases to all practices between 2019-2021 could potentially be attributed to four of the counties, Butler, Northampton, Lehigh, and Philadelphia are involved in PIP CFSR case reviews are also involved in the FEI initiative. This initiative through the AOPC has shown significant data in improving key connections with family, kinship, and community with children in and out of formalized care.

Compliance with ICWA is monitored through the annual CCYA licensing inspection process. During SFY 2019-2020, no counties received a citation relating to compliance with ICWA provisions. No counties received a citation relating to ICWA during the 2020-21 licensing inspection cycle.

During the QSRs, one indicator that is utilized to evaluate agency practice focuses on efforts to maintain a child's important connections. The indicator, "Cultural Awareness and Responsiveness," determines the degree that the child or youth's and family's unique cultural circumstances and preferences are recognized by the agency,

appropriately considered, and supported in case planning. The findings from the past five rounds of QSR for this indicator can be found in Figure 4. Due to COVID-19, no QSRs were held in Round X and Round XI.

Figure 4. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Cultural Awareness and Responsiveness"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

<u>CFSR Item 10: Did the agency make concerted efforts to place the child with relatives when appropriate?</u>

AFCARS data from the past five years has confirmed that Pennsylvania has increased the proportion of children in out-of-home care who are placed with relatives. Between FFYs 2016 and 2020, the percentage of children and youth placed with relatives increased from 34.89% to 41.17%. During Pennsylvania's PIP monitoring case reviews in 2019, 68% of applicable cases were rated as a strength on this item. This item considered efforts to identify, locate, inform, and evaluate relatives as potential placement resources for the child/youth. In 34% of the applicable cases reviewed, the child's current or most recent placement was with a relative. In general, most concerns noted by reviewers were related to appropriate identification of relatives, locating relatives, informing and evaluating relatives. Cases reviewed were evenly matched when comparing efforts to place children with maternal relatives to paternal relatives. A slight improvement was noted in performance on this item during the 2019 case reviews when compared to the 2017 baseline review where 66% of applicable cases were rated a strength on this item. Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but conducted reviews between April and September of 2021.

During Pennsylvania's PIP monitoring case reviews in 2021, 97% of applicable cases were rated as a strength on this item. In 46% of applicable cases reviewed, the child's current or most recent placement was with a relative.

Efforts to locate and place children/youth with relatives when appropriate is also monitored through annual licensing of the CCYAs by the OCYF regional offices. County placement records are reviewed for compliance with provisions outlined in the Fostering Connections and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. Table 28 provides information on the number of counties and cases cited due to lack of evidence/documentation that due diligence was used at the time of placement to locate relatives as potential placement resources.

Table 28. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Fostering Connections

	SFY 2016-2017	***SFY 2018-2019***	***SFY 2018-2019***	***SFY 2019-2020***	***SFY 2020-2021***
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	*9 counties*	*6 counties*	*7 counties*	*4 counties*	*5 counties*
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	*0 counties*	*1 county*	*0 counties*	*1 county*	*0 counties*
Total Cases Cited	***12***	***15***	***30***	***9***	***5***
Total Counties Without Citation	***58***	***60***	***60***	***49 (of 54)***	***55 (of 60)***

Source [Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries], [May 2022]

<u>CFSR Item 11: Did the agency make concerted efforts to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father or other primary caregivers from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation?</u>

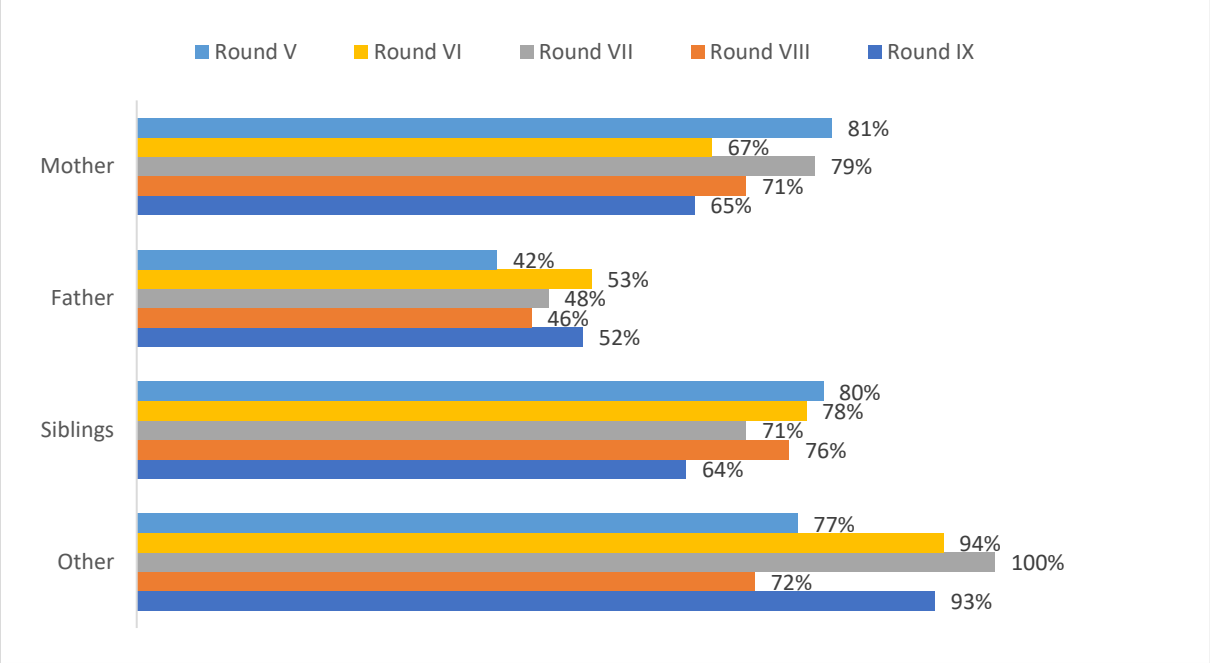
During the 2019 PIP monitoring case reviews, 56% of applicable cases were rated as a strength on this item. Further analysis of the findings indicated that concerted efforts related to promoting, supporting, and maintaining the relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother (58%) were identified in nearly the same percentage of cases as for fathers (55%). Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but conducted reviews between April and September of 2021.

During the 2021 PIP monitoring case reviews, 97% of applicable cases were rated as a strength on this item. Further analysis of the findings indicated that concerted efforts related to promoting, supporting, and maintaining the relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother (66%) were identified in nearly the same percentage of cases as for fathers (70%).

Preserving the relationship of the child in care with parents is also monitored in Pennsylvania through evaluation of performance on the QSR indicator "Maintaining Family Relationships." This indicator evaluates maintenance of the relationship of the child with those who are not residing in the household with the child at the time of the review. It should be noted that the QSR evaluates efforts to maintain key relationships

for the child for in-home and foster care cases. Due to COVID-19, no QSRs were held in Round X or Round XI.

Figure 5. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Maintaining Family Relationships"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

In general, while findings from the CFSR related case reviews and QSRs have shown disparity in case practice between mothers and fathers when looking at areas such as engagement and visitation, there is some evidence to suggest that this gap may be lessening in the CFSR counties who have focused improvements in these areas.

Five-Year Goals and Strategies to Improve Permanency

Based on the stakeholder feedback and review of Pennsylvania performance regarding the achievement of key permanency outcomes, two core goals were identified to improve permanency for children and youth over the course of the 2020-2024 CFSP. While the goals and strategies outlined in this section are primarily directed towards improving permanency, it should be noted that these efforts may also have connections to child safety and well-being. Strategies developed as part of Pennsylvania's CFSR PIP that will help achieve the identified goals are included and specifically noted as PIP strategies in this plan. For the 2020-2024 CFSP, some of the key activities included in the strategies identified as originating from the PIP have been expanded upon to include additional efforts OCYF plans to undertake to further the work and to capture efforts that may extend beyond the two-year PIP implementation time frame. As the initial goals and strategies set forth in the 2020-2024 CFSP are achieved, OCYF will

continue to work with stakeholders to identify additional goals and strategies to add to the state Title IV-B plan through submission of the APSR.

Permanency Goal 1: Children and youth will achieve timely, enduring and certain permanence that promotes stability and lifelong connections.					
Rationale for Goal Selection: Pennsylvania's Practice Model prioritizes timely, sustainable achievement of permanency for children and youth. During the CFSR conducted in 2017, Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity with CFSR Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2. Additionally, only 38% of applicable cases reviewed during the CFSR were found to be a strength regarding concerted efforts made to achieve timely reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement. Pennsylvania did not achieve the national standard for three of the five CFSR Round 3 Permanency Indicators related to timeliness to permanency and re-entries into out of home placement.					
5-Year Monitoring Targets:	**Baseline**	2021 APSR	2022 APSR	2023 APSR	2024 APSR
The percentage of children and youth who are reunified within 12 months of entering out-of-home placement will increase to 73% or higher by the end of FFY 2024 (AFCARS).	September 30, 2018 70.08%	September 30, 2019 67.38%	September 30, 2020 64.57%	September 30, 2021 58.99%	
The percentage of children and youth reunified with the previous year who re-enter out of home care within 12 months of discharge to reunification, living with relatives, or guardianship will decrease to 18% or lower by the end of FFY 2024 (AFCARS).	September 30, 2018 21.59%	September 30, 2019 25.51%	September 30, 2020 20.63%	September 30, 2021 18.27%	

Permanency Objective 1.1 (PIP Strategy): Improve county child welfare agency and court practices related to the engagement of children, youth and families through the implementation of the FEI across 13 innovation zone counties.
Rationale for Objective Selection: • Research has provided evidence linking family engagement to improved permanency outcomes.[25] • Review of data and root cause analysis conducted as part of the development of Pennsylvania's CFSR PIP identified child, youth and family engagement as an underlying factor impacting the permanency outcomes observed during the review. • During the CFSR conducted in 2017, family involvement in case planning was rated a strength in only 43% of applicable cases reviewed. • Findings from QSRs conducted in Pennsylvania between 2011 and 2018 consistently found counties experience many challenges with the engagement of biological parents, particularly fathers, and forming teams to support the family that function effectively. • FEI represents a joint effort between OCYF and the courts to strengthen the engagement of families at the local level to improve safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families. • The theory of change developed regarding FEI proposes that enhanced, early family engagement (Crisis/Rapid Response Family meetings) combined with enhanced legal representation and focused family finding will increase permanency and child well-being. The need for non-family foster care will decrease and healthy child/adult connections will be increased.

Key Activity/Strategy	Benchmarks for Completion
Implement the three components of FEI in each innovation zone (Phase 1 and Phase 2 FEI counties) ➢ Each FEI County will establish a FEI Oversight Team responsible for local implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the FEI ➢ Each FEI County Oversight Team will complete a County FEI Practice Assessment (this is a collective, written county self-assessment on each element of the FEI)	September 2019 *Complete*

[25]Identifying effective interventions for promoting parent engagement and family reunification for children in out of home care: A series of meta-analyses https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0145213418304538

➢ From the self-assessment, each FEI County Oversight Team will create a County Implementation Plan which is the guide for ongoing FEI implementation, evaluation and monitoring ➢ Each county will participate in mandatory supervisor/management FEI training as well as mandatory legal advocate/judicial FEI training ➢ The initial focus will be on FEI model implementation and fidelity. Court observation, Court record review, Oversight Team involvement, and case-specific consultation will be used to ensure fidelity to the FEI model	
Evaluate FEI implementation in Phase 1 and Phase 2 counties through use of court observations, Common Pleas Court Management System (CPCMS) data and use of Crisis and Rapid Response Team Meetings data collection tool	September 2019 and ongoing *Complete (and ongoing)*
Monitor implementation of FEI through court observation, meetings with FEI County Oversight Teams, providing case consultation, reviewing outcome data and reporting progress to the State Roundtable	September 2019 and ongoing *Complete (and ongoing)*
Present initial outcome findings and system/culture reform strategies at PA Children's Summit	September 2019 and ongoing *Complete (and ongoing)*
Solicit and select FEI Phase 3 counties	September 2020 *Complete*
Implement the three components of FEI in Phase 3 counties	March 2021 *Complete*

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

Pennsylvania considers this strategy complete for the purposes of satisfying the CFSR PIP requirements and planned CFSP activities. It is important to note that five of Pennsylvania's seven CFSR counties joined the FEI at some point prior to or during the PIP implementation period. During an after-action review held with the CFSR counties post the 2021 PIP monitoring case reviews, when asked if the counties could identify any specific strategies or efforts that they

believed contributed to improvement in county permanency outcomes, several counties anecdotally noted they believe FEI was a contributing factor. While much of the focus of this strategy is on improved family engagement, the results of the FEI effort show the connection between strong engagement efforts and improved outcomes for permanency and well-being of children.

Part of FEI involved significant data collection to ensure monitoring of implementation and to assess effectiveness. Some key highlights from monitoring efforts shared at the State Leadership Roundtable in the fall of 2021 include the following:

- *Data shows that over the past three years (2018-2020), the majority of children who were at home at the time of a crisis-rapid response meeting remained at home or were placed with a familiar adult.*
- *The percentage of children in kinship care increased in FEI counties by 6% between 2018 and 2020.*
- *During the same time period, the percentage of children in foster care decreased by 2% and the percentage of children in congregate care decreased by 4% in FEI counties (see graphic below).*
- *Children in FEI counties were found to be under court supervision for a shorter period of time on average in comparison to children in non-FEI counties.*

Implementation of FEI in Philadelphia started in 2020 with phased in addition of new courtrooms and community umbrella agencies (CUAs) every three months. All Philadelphia CUAs and courtrooms were officially live for implementation in December 2021.

While a full picture of the impact of FEI in Philadelphia will not be able to be gleaned from a data perspective until all CUAs have fully implemented, an analysis of available Philadelphia data during 2020 compared to the year before starting FEI shows the following:

- *Since starting implementation of FEI, Philadelphia decreased their overall number of children in out-of-home care by 860 children;*
- *Kinship care usage increased from 48% pre-FEI implementation to 52% in 2020;*
- *Foster care usage decreased from 41% to 39%;*
- *Congregate care numbers decreased from 11% to 9%.*

During the reporting period, Phase IV of the FEI was opened up for interested counties to apply for consideration. Six counties submitted letters of interest and ultimately three counties were selected: Bradford, Lycoming and Washington. The Phase IV FEI counties officially began implementation in the winter of 2022.

Permanency Objective 1.2 (PIP Strategy): Enhance CQI efforts to utilize data to inform analysis when evaluating county practice related to permanency to support the development and implementation of TA strategies.

Rationale for Objective Selection:
• Review and content analysis of findings from Pennsylvania's 2017 CFSR found that, while Permanency Outcome 1 was noted as an area needing improvement across the state and within each CFSR county, the root causes impacting performance appeared to differ across counties.
• Pennsylvania does not currently meet the national standard for the following CFSR Round 3 Data Indicators:
  o Permanency in 12 months
  o Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12-23 months
  o Re-entry into foster care in 12 months
• OCYF, in collaboration with stakeholders, determined that given the difference in root causes impacting permanency outcomes across counties, a "one size fits all" system-wide intervention would not improve outcomes.
• An individualized county approach to addressing permanency outcomes will include further strengthening the systematic use of CQI practices and TA across the state to better help counties identify individual strengths and challenges related to key CFSR permanency outcomes. This will involve the creation of individualized plans to help address the county-specific root causes identified through data-driven analysis, and implementation of county-driven solutions that are tailored to allow the county to best improve outcomes for the specific populations of children and families they serve.
• Beyond the conclusion of the two-year CFSR PIP implementation timeframe, Pennsylvania will evaluate the success of the approach and determine whether to identify additional safety, permanency and well-being outcomes to which to expand the application of the enhanced TA model.

Key Activity/Strategy	Benchmarks for Completion
Identify key data elements through county case management systems and other available data sources that can be utilized by counties and their TA providers in beginning their root cause analysis related to the identified performance measures.	September 2019 *Complete*

➢ Through this analysis, identify other data elements and data sources (e.g., AFCARS, CPCMS, CWIS, statewide licensure reviews, case reviews) that will provide counties and TA providers with the information needed to ascertain identified challenges with core practice areas that impact permanency measures to include, but not limited to: •Safety and risk assessment/planning/monitoring; •Engagement; •Timely achievement of permanency goals; •Concurrent planning; •Quality assessments to identify individualized needs; •Effective service provision and coordination; •Quality caseworker visits with children and families; •Quality visits between children in care and their parents/siblings; •Supervision; and •Staff recruitment and retention.	
Work with PCG to revise the data packages that are provided to the counties on a semi-annual basis to additionally include the five permanency outcomes of the CFSR national data indicators, utilization of congregate care, and children and youth reunified within 30 days of placement. ➢ In addition to the updated data package content, engage PCG to assist in data training and TA.	September 2019 *Complete*
Review the strategies toward practice improvement that counties submitted in their SFY 2019-20 Needs-Based Plan and Budget. ➢ Work with counties to assess their current level of performance utilizing the updated data packages. ➢ Identify any enhancements or modifications to the previously identified strategies and areas of TA needed to assist in implementation during SFY 2019-20.	September 2019 *Complete*
Utilize the SFY 2020-21 NBPB process as the mechanism through which to focus the enhancement of CQI efforts. ➢ Counties will be required to assess their performance in meeting the national standards of the CFSR Indicator measures related to timeliness to permanence, re-entry and stability.	September 2019 *Complete*

➢ Counties that do not meet or exceed a standard must complete an analysis related to their practices and the impact on meeting the performance measure and develop improvement strategies toward achieving the desired outcome.	
Work collaboratively with counties to identify TA resources based on the identified needs through the root cause analysis. ➢ TA can be available, at a minimum, through the existing TA Collaborative partners (Regional Offices, CWRC, SWAN, ABA Barriers to Permanence, AOPC) and other resources, including PCG and Casey Family Programs. ➢ The identified TA resources will support the county in the development and implementation of the county data-driven plan toward improved outcomes.	December 2019 *Complete*
Develop and implement a monitoring process that supports the change efforts at the county level and identifies themes for further review and analysis on a statewide level.	March 2020 and ongoing *Complete*
Monitor the implementation of the TA process built upon the SFY 2020-21 NBPB to determine modification necessary to improve upon the process in the upcoming fiscal years, including extending beyond the targeted permanency outcomes.	October 2020 and ongoing

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

This strategy was included as part of Pennsylvania CFSR PIP and Pennsylvania was approved a six-month extension for completion of some key activities as part of the PIP renegotiation process. The key activities covered under the six-month renegotiation include:

- *Review the strategies toward practice improvement that counties submitted in their FY 2019-2020 NBPB.*
- *Utilize the FY 2020-2021 NBPB process as the mechanism through which to focus the enhancement of CQI efforts.*
- *Work collaboratively with counties to identify TA resources based on the identified needs through root cause analysis.*
- *Develop a monitoring process that supports the change efforts at the county level and identifies themes for further review and analysis on a statewide level through the Council and Leadership Roundtables. Examples of systemic changes that may be considered based on the identified themes may include, but are not limited to, changes to*

existing state policies, practices, or trainings for county agencies, updates to the judicial bench book or additional trainings for judges, parents' attorneys or guardian ad litems.

Pennsylvania will continue to complete the following activity initially covered under the PIP as part of continuing 2020-2024 CFSP implementation. This activity is:

- *Monitor the implementation of the technical assistance process built upon the FY 2020-21 NBPB to determine modification necessary to improve upon the process in the upcoming fiscal years, including extending beyond the targeted permanency outcomes.*

During the reporting period, the CCYAs submitted updated information on county specific strategies to improve performance on the CFSR Round 3 Permanency Data indicators through the NBPB process. With the submission of the NBPB made by CCYAs in the summer of 2021, OCYF has been able to collect information regarding county performance analysis and improvement strategy planning and implementation over the course of three full NBPB cycles. The NBPB submissions in August 2019 served as a general baseline and initial proposal of improvement strategies by counties. The second round of NBPB submissions in August 2020 served to provide updates on progress, and the third NBPB submission in August 2021 provided further opportunity to identify what strategies have been implemented and potential impact. The most recent NBPB submission in August of 2021 is particularly critical as OCYF identified many of the planned improvement strategies set forth in the 2019 submission were not implemented in 2020 as planned due to the onset of COVID-19 beginning in March 2020.

In the fall of 2021, OCYF began analysis of the most recent NBPB data submitted in August 2021. Results from the analysis identified some of the key technical assistance and resource needs requested by counties to support their continued permanency improvement efforts. While specific requests for technical assistance were limited, examples of some requests identified include the following:

- *Support from OCYF, CWRC, AOPC and/or SWAN specific to training*
    - *Training for staff on root cause analysis*
    - *Training on safety plan implementation*
    - *Family Finding training*
    - *Court preparation training for caseworkers through SWAN*
    - *Training on family engagement*
    - *Training on how to conduct critical case reviews*

- *Technical assistance from OCYF and CWRC to improve agency policies and practices related to kinship care home approvals;*
- *Technical assistance in identifying community-based mental health resources for adolescents with severe mental and behavioral health issues; and*
- *Technical assistance in ongoing data collection and analysis.*

Examples of concrete resource needs request by CCYAs to support implementation of permanency improvement strategies include the following:

- *Funding to support competitive reimbursement rates for foster families;*
- *Funding for additional staffing to complete relative home studies to support increased use in kinship care;*
- *Funding to expand use of Family Group Decision Making to more families; and*
- *Funding to support hiring of full-time solicitor.*

During after action reviews conducted with the CFSR counties post the 2021 PIP monitoring case reviews, the CCYAs were asked to identify any practices, polices or strategies they believe may have had an impact on the observed improvement in permanency items rated during the case reviews. As previously noted, many of the counties identified implementation of FEI within their county as contributing to improved permanency outcomes for children.

Permanency Objective 1.3: Identify data and information that can be utilized to understand the prevalence of adoption dissolutions statewide and evaluate the effectiveness of the current array of post-permanency services
Rationale for Objective Selection: • CCYAs have anecdotally reported seeing an increase in the number of children and youth coming back into agency care as a result of adoption dissolution, however, there is limited data currently available in Pennsylvania that can be utilized to better understand the true scope and nature of this issue being reported. • Nationally, there is still limited understanding regarding the prevalence of public and private adoption dissolutions and factors contributing to dissolutions. • The data packages regularly provided to CCYAs through OCYF's data contractor will be updated to begin to include AFCARS data regarding the number of children entering foster care for the first time who were known to have previously been adopted through the public adoption system.

- Through SWAN, Pennsylvania currently offers post-permanency services to help ensure that families are provided the support they need for the long term to encourage a positive life-long experience for both adoption and foster care programs.
    - The services available include case assessment, case advocacy, support groups and respite.
    - SWAN will be undertaking efforts to evaluate post-permanency services offered both in Pennsylvania and nationally and will make recommendations to DHS concerning what services, if any, may need to be improved, modified, or added to post-permanency services offered through SWAN.

Key Activity/Strategy	Benchmarks for Completion
Data contractor PCG will begin to provide information on adoption dissolutions to CCYAs as part of their regular data package release.	July 2019 *Complete*
The Permanency Subcommittee of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council will be assigned to take the initial lead in this work and will draft a charter outlining the scope of the subcommittee's work.	May 2020
The Permanency Subcommittee will work with TA providers to conduct a literature review of information on adoption dissolutions nationally and review any relevant Pennsylvania data currently available regarding adoption dissolutions.	December 2020
The Permanency Subcommittee will report to the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council any gaps in data and information needs and develop strategies for the collection of any additional data and information needed.	February 2020
OCYF will work with counties, data contractor PCG, SWAN and the CWRC in the collection of any additional Pennsylvania specific data and information needed as identified by the Permanency Subcommittee ➢ The Permanency Subcommittee will consult with SWAN regarding any findings from the workgroup related to post-permanency services in its work	September 2020
The Permanency Subcommittee will review the data and information gathered to identify whether the data reveals any issues and conduct root causes analysis to further understand contributing factors. Additionally, the subcommittee will consider any racial inequities or institutional biases that may have resulted in adoption dissolutions.	January 2021

The Permanency Subcommittee will draft a report regarding their findings related to adoption dissolutions and recommendations for next steps at the state and county level to address any issues identified by the subcommittee.	March 2021
The Permanency Subcommittee will present recommendations to the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council and OCYF for discussion and decisions regarding next steps.	June 2021

- *Progress Since Last Report*

As reported in the last APSR, the issue of ensuring children and youth who are adopted have lasting permanent homes emerged in relation to interest in addressing the re-homing of children at the state legislative level. House Bill (HB) 1867 was introduced in January 2020 and was passed in the House in late June 2020. The legislation was introduced in response to public cases of re-homing of previously adopted children that involved advertisement of a child or children for placement without the oversight of a court or agency. HB 1867 seeks to make this practice illegal to ensure children who cannot remain with their adoptive families are safe and well cared-for in any new placement. During the reporting period, however, no further action was taken in the legislature to advance this bill.

Due to COVID-19, planned discussions with the Council around next steps related to this strategy were placed on hold during 2020. Some of the discussion around adoption disruptions and dissolutions has turned towards Family First. With the goal of implementing the Family First Title IV-E Prevention Program in Pennsylvania, OCYF has worked to highlight how the program supports preventing adoption and guardianship disruptions in discussions with counties and has been encouraging counties to think creatively about evidence-based programs can be used to maintain permanency for this population. During the upcoming year, OCYF will be working with the Council to determine if this still remains a priority area for Council and any next steps that should be taken to advance the work.

Permanency Goal 2: Strengthen the array of resources available to support the placement of children and youth in settings that are most appropriate to meet their needs and are maintained for the most appropriate length of time					
Rationale for Goal Selection: Pennsylvania's Practice Model identifies supporting children and youth in their own homes and communities through the provision of comprehensive and accessible services that address individual trauma, needs and concerns as a key outcome. Additionally, the Practice Model places a focus on supporting stability for children and youth. To achieve these outcomes, it is critical that when children or youth are removed from their homes, they are placed in the settings that are most appropriate to meet their needs. As of September 30, 2018, 14.04% of children and youth in out-of-home care were placed in a group home or institutional setting. Per AFCARS, the median length of stay for children and youth in institutions has increased over the course of the past five years. The median length of stay for children and youth placed in group homes has varied over the last five years, with a low of 4.4 months in 2014, to a high of 6.5 in 2017. Stakeholder feedback has identified a need for a comprehensive, cross-systems collaborative approach to serving children and youth in their own communities that must involve the child welfare agency, courts, physical and mental health providers, facilities, state agencies and private provider agencies who provide foster and adoptive homes working together to coordinate a holistic array of quality, trauma-informed, community-based placement services.					
5-Year Monitoring Targets:	**Baseline**	2021 APSR	2022 APSR	2023 APSR	2024 APSR
The percentage of children placed in relative foster care settings will increase to 39.75% or higher by the end of FFY 2024 (AFCARS).	September 30, 2018 37.93%	September 30, 2019 39.47%	September 30, 2020 41.17%	September 30, 2021 42.64%	

The number of children and youth placed in congregate care settings (group home and institutional) will decrease to 1,500 or less by the end of FFY 2024 (AFCARS).	September 30, 2018 2,314 children and youth	September 30, 2019 1,972 children and youth	September 30, 2020 1,615 children and youth	September 30, 2021 1,445 children and youth	
The median length of stay for children and youth placed in group homes will decrease to 9.0 months or lower by the end of FFY 2024 (AFCARS).	September 30, 2018 10.32 months	September 30, 2019 11.5 months	September 30, 2020 14.05 months	September 30, 2021 14.05 months	

Permanency Objective 2.1: Reduce utilization of congregate care settings for children and youth served through the child welfare system while improving the quality of care for those children and youth for whom congregate placement remains most appropriate.

Rationale for Objective Selection:

- OCYF and child welfare system partners have placed a priority on congregate care reduction over the past several years and continue to identify a need for further efforts to ensure children are placed in the least restrictive placement setting to meet their needs for the appropriate length of time.
- Through the passage of the Family First, states were encouraged to reduce placement of children in congregate facilities for long periods of time, with opportunities to explore the use of Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP) as models for quality service delivery in a congregate setting.
- The Congregate Care Workgroup, convened through the court State Roundtable, brought stakeholders together to develop recommendations for reducing congregate care utilization and improving quality of services provided in these settings.
    - To support its work, the Congregate Care Workgroup met with behavioral health managed care organizations (BH-MCOs), community-based providers, congregate care providers, residential treatment facilities, representatives from county CCYA, the OCFC, OCYF, OMHSAS and PDE.
- DHS has convened a workgroup to bring program offices together to coordinate in working to serve children with the most complex of medical needs in their communities.

o AFCARS data from FFYs 2014-2018 revealed that children entering out-of-home placement with the child's disability identified as one of the removal reasons, generally had the highest median length of stay in care when compared to children entering out-of-home placement due to other removal reasons.

Key Activity/Strategy	Benchmarks for Completion
OCYF, through the State Roundtable, will collaborate with stakeholders in the selection and implementation of efforts to be implemented based on recommendations set forth by the Congregate Care Workgroup. ➢ Recommendations include: o Identifying community-based, in-home and placement alternatives to congregate care; o Identifying an evidence-based level-of-care assessment tool; o Creating an oversight process for any initial or ongoing congregate care placement request (agency and court); o Creating of a "Report to the Court," prepared by the child welfare agency, for any initial or ongoing congregate care placement request; and o Identifying a common set of contract expectations for any future use of congregate care. ➢ The full 2020 report of the Congregate Care Workgroup's activities and recommendations is available through the OCFC website	December 2019 and ongoing *Complete (and ongoing)*
OCYF/DHS will work with an independent contractor to review and evaluate all services provided by congregate care and residential providers licensed under Chapter 3800 regulations. ➢ The contractor will evaluate current practice, identify areas of improvement and provide recommendations for establishing a standard trauma assessment tool and trauma-informed practice.	April 2020
OCYF/DHS will implement licensing best practices to strengthen accountability for congregate providers in meeting standards for care.	December 2020 *Complete*

OCYF will continue to collaborate with other DHS offices to ensure children with complex medical needs are placed in the least restrictive environment through the Children with Medical Complexities (CMC) Workgroup. Priority areas for the workgroup related to congregate care reduction that will serve to promote the use of community-based services include, but are not limited to: • Developing a plan for transitioning children and youth from residential facilities into a family-like setting; • Establishing a DHS and/or DOH wide policy for service to children with a focus on permanency and an anticipatory life course approach; and • Identifying and implementing federal waiver services if/as needed.	January 2021 *In progress*
OCYF/DHS will revise the regulations governing child residential and day treatment facilities under Chapter 3800 to promote higher standards for care.	December 2023

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

Over the course of the reporting period, several activities were undertaken to move forward implementation of the strategies identified to ensure appropriate use of congregate care placement and to enhance the quality of services offered by congregate care providers. One of the most significant accomplishments involved work around establishing specialized settings as permitted by the passage of Family First.

While Pennsylvania decided not to pursue the classification of placement settings known as QRTPs at this time, guidelines were issued by OCYF in February 2020 to provide the option for congregate care placement service providers to voluntarily request certification as a specialized setting serving:

- *Youth who are, or may become, victims of sex trafficking;*
- *Pregnant, expecting and parenting youth; or*
- *Youth transitioning to adulthood*.

For SFY 2021-22, there are 19 legal entities, representing 105 separate licenses certified as specialized settings. These 105 licenses are comprised of 71 settings serving youth who are, or may become, victims of sex trafficking, 30 specialized settings serving youth transitioning to adulthood and four pregnant, expecting and parenting youth programs. OCYF has established periodic opportunities for providers to request certification as a specialized setting in alignment with the state fiscal cycle. For SFY 2022-23, OCYF is reviewing applications from 17 legal entities, representing 44

separate licensures, requesting certification for 33 settings serving youth who are, or may become, victims of sex trafficking; 10 for youth transitioning to adulthood; and one setting for pregnant, expecting and parenting youth.

Work also continued to initiate the process for revising the state regulation (Title 55 Pa Code 3800) which provides minimum requirements for the operation of child residential facilities in Pennsylvania. Through stakeholder meetings that were held during the summer of 2019 and fall of 2020, DHS has identified areas that will be addressed in this regulatory change process, which include an expansion of program description content, family and youth engagement, staffing ratios, and the inclusion of qualifications and required training components that will lead to the development of a trauma-informed culture in which services are delivered. In review and consideration of stakeholder feedback and the opportunity through Family First to develop enhanced program standards for specialized settings serving youth who are, or may become, victims of sex trafficking; pregnant, expecting and parenting youth; or youth transitioning to adulthood, the Department is drafting a regulatory package consisting for three regulatory chapters to encompass residential care. Additionally, Day Treatment services will be separated into its own regulatory chapter.

The new regulatory chapters under draft and review are:

- *Chapter 3802: Child Residential Facilities*
- *Chapter 3820: Day Treatment*
- *Chapter 3830: Secure Care and Secure Detention Facilities for Youth*
- *Chapter 3840: Transitional Living Sites for Youth*
- *Chapters 3802 and 3830 are currently under review within the Governor's Office. Chapter 3840 is under review with the DHS Executive Review Process and Chapter 3820 is currently being drafted.*

Over the course of the next year, OCYF will continue to work through submission of draft regulations for review and completion of all steps required for regulatory change. Additionally, OCYF will complete a Survey and Evaluation Manual for each new set of regulations as they are promulgated. These manuals will provide additional guidance on regulatory interpretation to assist providers in meeting requirements.

Finally, OCYF representatives continued to serve as active participants on the CMC workgroup and will be working with other DHS program offices over the course next year to develop recommendations for building a robust medical foster care program in Pennsylvania. Further information regarding the CMC workgroup is outlined in the Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan section of this report

Permanency Objective 2.2: Enhance practice regarding foster and adoptive parent training to ensure those who have children placed in their care have the skills and knowledge necessary to ensure children's safety and well-being.

Rationale for Objective Selection:
• Feedback from stakeholders during interviews conducted as part of the onsite CFSR in 2017, discussions across multiple Council meetings, and feedback from the YAB identified that finding foster and adoptive homes with the skills, knowledge and capacity to meet children and youth's individual needs remains a challenge across the state.
  o Through analysis of the 2017 CFSR onsite review findings, changes in placements that were not planned by the agency were often traced to a lack of skill, knowledge and/or supportive services to the foster parents to assist them in meeting the needs of the child or youth in their care.
• During the CFSR in 2017, foster and adoptive parent training was identified as an area needing improvement.
• To support Pennsylvania's efforts to reduce the length of time children and youth spend in congregate care and to increase utilization of family-based placement settings, there must be a strong network of quality foster and adoptive homes available.
  o These homes must be equipped with the capacity to meet the needs of children and youth with complex behavioral and mental health problems.
• Stakeholders identified a gap in the availability of programs that effectively train and equip foster and adoptive parents in dealing with the impact of trauma on children and youth placed in out of home care.

Key Activity/Strategy	Benchmarks for Completion
OCYF will assess the federal model licensing standards related to foster parent training under FFPSA and consult with the Child Welfare Council in consideration adaptation of training standards for Pennsylvania.	October 2019 *Complete*
OCYF will research and assess current trainings offered across the state through the PSRFA, Spaulding (via a federal contract) and SWAN.	November 2019
OCYF will work with the CWRC Research and Evaluation Team to identify and implement methods for ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of foster and adoptive parent training practices across the state.	April 2020
OCYF will evaluate options for contracting for a statewide training that will be accessible to all foster and adoptive parents and agencies.	July 2020

Through the CWRC, trainings offered will be expanded upon to include all private children and youth agencies.	July 2021
OCYF/DHS will revise regulations governing foster family care agencies to strengthen expectations for the frequency, content and quality of foster care parent trainings.	December 2023

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Since the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP, the Permanency Subcommittee of the Council completed an analysis of the model licensing standards established through Family First and submitted recommendations for review by the Council and OCYF. The subcommittee expressed interest in further work to examine training requirements and training delivery for foster and adoptive parents in Pennsylvania. OCYF will continue to work with the Council to review and prioritize subcommittee areas of focus and determine whether any next steps are warranted on the part the Council and/or subcommittees related to foster and adoptive parent training.

Pennsylvania was selected as one of three states and one tribe that piloted the Critical On-going Resource Family Education (CORE) Teen Curriculum designed to train both prospective and current families who support older youth who have moderate to severe emotional and behavioral challenges. The CORE Teen Curriculum was released nationwide in December 2019. In Pennsylvania, the curriculum has been downloaded more than 180 times by various public and private agencies. Further information about Pennsylvania's activities related to the CORE Teen Curriculum is outlined in the "Foster and Adoptive Diligent Recruitment Plan" section of this report.

Plans for revisions to the regulations governing foster family care agencies has been put on hold until completion of the Chapter 3131 and Chapter 3800 regulations is complete.

Permanency Objective 2.3: Implementation of a kinship navigator program in Pennsylvania to support relative caregivers of children across the state.

Rationale for Objective Selection:
• Kinship caregivers are used both formally and informally in Pennsylvania to help ensure child safety, support placement prevention, and ensure when children must be placed, they are placed the most family-like setting possible.
  o Data from AFCARS shows that use of formal kinship care as a placement option for children and youth increased over the course of a five-year period.
  o Kinship caregivers may informally help assist in the monitoring of safety plans or provide alternative living arrangements for children, however, data on their utilization is county-based and limited in nature.

- Pennsylvania received $479,307 in funding in federal fiscal year 2018 to begin a statewide program to support kinship caregivers across the state. OCYF selected a grantee, The Bair Foundation, to administer this newly established program, which will be known as the Kin Connector.

Key Activity/Strategy	Benchmarks for Completion
The Kin Connector will establish a Kinship Navigator Program Advisory Committee which will consist of kinship caregivers and the organizations representing them; youth raised by kinship caregivers; relevant government agencies; and relevant community-based or faith-based organizations.	September 2019 *Complete*
The Kin Connector will manage quarterly Advisory Committee meetings.	September 2019 *Complete (and ongoing)*
The Kin Connector will establish a toll-free helpline that will serve as an information and referral system for kinship caregivers, support group facilitators and kinship service providers.	September 2019 *Complete*
The Kin Connector will hire and train Kinship Navigators who will monitor the toll-free helpline.	September 2019 *Complete*
The Kin Connector will partner with DHS to develop and implement a Facebook page and a website that will provide information for kinship caregivers such as: how to access benefits and services; printable materials that provide information; a map that shows state and local resources and an online discussion group.	September 2020 *Complete*
The Kin Connector will partner with DHS to develop and conduct an outreach campaign to let the public know about the program through the website, social media and distribution of informational materials.	September 2020 *Complete*
The Pennsylvania Kinship Navigator Program will be fully implemented.	September 2020 *Complete*

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Pennsylvania considers this strategy complete as all activities planned as part of the 2020-2024 CFSP have been implemented. In SFY 2020-2021, the KinConnector program successfully completed the following activities:

- *Continued to provide topnotch support to kinship families. KinConnectors work the toll-free help line and are responsible for answering incoming calls and speaking to the callers about the issues they experience. This year, the survey completion rate tripled from 6% per month to 25%, which is well above standard survey satisfaction completion rates that are 2%.*

- *KinConnectors continue to be responsible for providing referral and information services as needed to assist in accessing federal, state, and local services and supports; conducting outreach and promotion efforts; and attending kinship-related events.*

- *Provided services, resources and referral information to all kinship families, formal or informal, who contact KinConnector. From October 2020 to September 2021, PA KinConnector served 58 professionals and 997 kinship families, with an overwhelming majority of those served being informal caregivers. The three main topic areas that kinship caregivers requested information or resources for continue to be: financial assistance; legal services assistance; and program information.*

- *Continued to manage www.kinconnector.org, which provides information for kinship caregivers including how to access benefits and services; printable materials that provide information that kinship caregivers will find helpful, including laws and regulations pertaining to kinship caregivers; a map that shows the state and local resources and services available in each county; on-line training for kinship families and family care professionals, permission to contact forms, and a calendar of events and activities targeted to kinship families.*

- *Continued the successful social media advertising campaign via Facebook/Instagram, Google, and PulsePoint. The campaign continues as it drove 15,000-17,000 website visitors per month, and 100-150 support-line callers each month.*

- *Expanded advertising campaign to include radio targeted to rural counties. The radio campaign doubled the average number of rural callers to the PA KinConnector support line.*

- *Launched a support group, Kindred Spirits which serves as a space for kinship caregivers to share, learn and grow. In addition to the discussion sessions, Kindred Spirits also showcased guest speakers on relevant topics such as legal and financial assistance. Additionally, debuted the Parenting a Second Time Around training with the support group.*

- *Introduced Kinship Family Dynamics webinar training program for family care professionals. The monthly program ran from January – June and achieved an average attendance of 50 family care professionals each month.*

- *Launched PA KinConnector's first Kinship Month Event which was a weekly forum for the month of September which featured professionals who assist kinship families in the areas of financial, legal, education, and mental/physical healthcare. Each weekly forum was attended by over 100 families and family care professionals.*

- *Added 10 new interviews to the Kindred Voices library, a monthly podcast show that provides information and inspiration to kinship families. New interviews featured Ana Beltran of Generates United, Bob Johnson of R.E.S.T, Shaun Turner of Milton Hershey School, and more.*

- *Continue to execute our daily outreach process designed to let the public know about the program through a combination of emails, phone calls, social media, the KNAC members, and distribution of informational materials.*

- *KinConnectors have attended several conferences including the annual Area on Aging quarterly meeting. KinConnectors have also met with numerous CYS teams and other organizations such as Generations United, Senior Law, and Creating A Family.*

- *Partnered with Backpacks of Hope to distribute backpacks filled with age- appropriate toys/supplies for kinship children.*

For 2022-2023, the KinConnector program will continue to serve kinship families as described above but also plans to:

- *Release a self-advocacy pamphlet entitled, I CAN, which is designed to help kinship caregivers effectively advocate from themselves and the children in their care.*

- *Expand radio campaign to target black and Hispanic communities in order to increase awareness of program.*

- *Work with local food banks to establish cooperative and positive relationships with local foodbanks in each county to serve as resource and as awareness generators for kinship families to use their services.*

- *Continue to collaborate and identify ways to partner with legal experts to provide legal supports to kinship families.*

Well-Being Vision

Pennsylvania's Practice Model focuses on the achievement of outcomes to enhance families' ability to meet their children's well-being, including physical, emotional, behavioral and educational needs. The Practice Model also focuses on the provision of comprehensive and accessible services that build on strengths and address individual trauma, needs and concerns. The following section of Pennsylvania's 2020-2024 CFSP describes and assesses the current array of well-being services, provides an evaluation of the state's performance on key federal well-being outcomes and provides a plan for improving the well-being of children and youth over the course of the next five years.

Well-Being Service Continuum and Coordination

Pennsylvania's core continuum of services to support well-being at the statewide level include services to support family engagement, promote educational stability, ensure physical and mental/behavioral health needs of children are met, and that a variety of EBPs are available to counties to improve child and family well-being.

Family Engagement Models

OCYF promotes county utilization of family engagement models by making funding available to CCYAs through the NBPB process. Examples of models implemented by counties include Family Team Conferencing (FTC) and FGDM. At the time of the 2020-2024 CFSP submission, 64 out of PA's 67 counties were implementing FGDM with a focus on implementing with different populations across the CCYAs based on assessment of local needs.

The FGDM process is a strengths-based empowerment model designed to join the wider family group, including relatives, friends, community members, and others, to collectively make decisions to resolve an identified concern. For example, some counties select to utilize FGDM to facilitate transition planning for older youth, while others may elect to require all families with children in out-of-home placement be offered the opportunity to have a FGDM conference. Due to the prevalence of the use of FGDM in Pennsylvania, the FGDM Leadership Team was convened to support and guide efforts in implementing and sustaining quality FGDM practice across the state. This is primarily accomplished statewide through the use of educational resources, evaluating practice, and providing opportunities for counties to learn from one another as well as state stakeholders. The FGDM Leadership Team is a collaborative partnership representing state and county stakeholders. This collaboration includes CWRC, DHS, AOPC, SWAN, as well as counties and private providers. The FGDM Leadership Team utilizes committees to further carry out their mission and vision in providing FGDM practice to families throughout the state.

The CWRC manages the FGDM Evaluation which measures fidelity to the FGDM model by asking each conference participant to complete a survey that contains various questions measuring cultural safety, community partnerships, and family leadership. The conference surveys consistently show that families and professionals alike view the conferences positively and find them to be beneficial. During calendar years 2017 and 2018, the CWRC introduced the FGDM Evaluation Portal which allows users to submit information using online forms and access evaluation data via interactive dashboards. Counties participating in the FGDM Evaluation can complete and submit baseline and outcome forms online and participants can complete the survey online, simplifying the data collection process and improving the quality of data. The FGDM Evaluation Dashboards present data for conferences held after July 1, 2015, in charts, graphs and tables to allow for easier interpretation of evaluation results. Users may also view and filter statewide and county data specific to their interests and needs. In addition to information about participants' conference experiences, the dashboards report data that have not been previously shared, including information about the status of the child/youth at the time of the conference and the plan developed during the conference. Throughout the next five years, the CWRC will continue to add data to the dashboards, including information about the impact that the conference/plan had on the child/youth. The CWRC will also support the DHS and county stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating family engagement more broadly by expanding existing strategies to include additional family engagement models. In addition, the CWRC will explore opportunities to conduct an evaluation study of outcomes associated with family engagement models. Evaluation data and resources, including the Dashboards and online forms, can be found at the CWRC FGDM webpage.[26]

FGDM statewide events are offered biannually, with semi-annual statewide meetings and biennial conferences. Themes of the events are chosen based on identified statewide needs for further enhancement and skill building. Identified statewide needs are determined utilizing information from surveys completed at the prior statewide event, family engagement regional network meetings, and through information gathered from stakeholders represented on the FGDM Leadership Team. Workshops are delivered through a variety of approaches, including lectures, facilitated discussions, participant activities, and panel presentations. Participants in the semi-annual statewide meetings are primarily county staff and private provider staff who provide direct FGDM practice, as well as those supervising these efforts.
FGDM training continues to be offered through four courses offered by the CWRC: *Introduction to FGDM Part 1*; *Introduction to FGDM Part 2*; *Solutions to Engaging Families in the FGDM Process*; and *FGDM: Strategies to Empower Families Experiencing Domestic Violence*.

Family Finding focuses on kin being identified, notified and engaged, as well as teaming with kin support in service delivery throughout the child welfare case process. Statewide implementation and training provide greater focus on teaming with kin to meet the needs of children and families. State and county stakeholders have partnered together to support and guide efforts in implementing family finding across the state.

[26] http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/FGDM.htm

This is primarily accomplished through statewide educational resources and providing opportunities for counties to learn from one another as well as state stakeholders. Additionally, a statewide meeting of TA providers and counties focused on the area of family finding come together to familiarize themselves with the guiding law and principles, hear the services provided by each provider, and develop clear messaging to counties.

Family Finding statewide events continue to be offered semi-annually. The focus of statewide events is comprised of cultural change, leadership, implementation and continuous quality improvement. Themes of these events are determined based on statewide needs to further enhance skill building. Statewide needs are identified utilizing information from surveys completed at the prior statewide event, family engagement regional network meetings, and through state and county stakeholders. Workshops are delivered through a variety of approaches. Participants in the semi-annual statewide events are primarily county and private provider administrators, managers, supervisors, court professionals, and TA providers, as well as child welfare professional staff that directly provide Family Finding practice.

Family Finding training continues to be offered by the CWRC through three courses: *Family Finding: Overview, Enhanced Family Finding Model: Building and Sustaining Lifetime Networks*, and *Family Finding: Application*. To support the engagement of children, youth, and their caregivers, the CWRC significantly revised its Family Finding series which now consists of two online modules, *Family Finding Practice: Overview and Enhanced Family Finding Model: Building and Sustaining Lifetime Networks*. The second online module is based on Kevin Campbell's revised Family Finding model and its implementation in Pennsylvania and serves as a prerequisite for the in-person module, *Family Finding: Application*, where participants develop skills in engaging, locating and actively involving family/kin/community to surround the child with a lifelong network of supports. The revised family finding model combines a holistic approach that emphasizes well-being with a focus on healing the whole child. It incorporates requirements of Pennsylvania's family finding legislation (Act 55 of 2013), calendaring, ACEs, and Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child resilience work. During SFY 2017-18, 109 participants completed the online modules and 13 attended the one delivery of the in-person application module. In SFY 2018-19, seven in-person application modules were held, and four more sessions have been scheduled.

In addition to FGDM and Family Finding trainings, other family engagement trainings continue to be offered through the CWRC, including *Engaging Clients from a Strength-Based Solution-Focused Perspective*; *Building and Sustaining Father Engagement*; *Engaging Incarcerated Parents*; and *Engaging Latino Families*. The CWRC offers family engagement TA and transfer of learning sessions to counties upon request. The TA and transfer of learning provided are specific to the area of need within family engagement identified by the county.

Central, Eastern, and Western Regional Network Meetings occur each year on a quarterly basis across the state. The regions will continue to be provided support by the statewide family engagement project manager. Requests typically come from the regional network leads and originate from needs identified by the participating counties. Support provided by the project manager includes participating in the regional meetings, assistance in meeting planning, and providing resources relevant to the needs and topics being discussed. Communication between the regional networks and the FGDM Leadership Team continues to increase, which allows greater transparency in identifying the strengths and needs statewide related to FGDM and family engagement practice.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

The FGDM Leadership Team continued to provide support efforts to the existing FGDM subcommittees and practitioners across the state. The focus of these efforts was placed on recruiting leadership team members of color, developing statewide events for CCYA staff and private providers, and supporting the FGDM data collection and evaluation efforts.

When beginning to explore and discuss race equity in relationship to the FGDM process, the FGDM Leadership Team identified the need for racial diversity amongst the team. The FGDM Leadership Team identified that they did not have any members who were people of color and therefore did not accurately reflect the diversity of children and families being served. Targeted recruitment efforts resulted in two new members joining the leadership team in July 2021 that are leaders of FGDM practice and persons of color.

The FGDM Leadership Team supported three virtual statewide events.

- *On April 30, 2021, the Spring FGDM Statewide Meeting, "Engaging Families in Recovery: Using FGDM in the Recovery Process", was held with 170 participants. The purpose of this event was to explore how Family Group Decision Making can be used to help families experiencing substance use issues. This included a presentation from a parent who experienced the FGDM process while pursuing recovery, facilitated group discussions regarding substance use and FGDM, and presentations on county and private provider innovative strategies using FGDM as part of the recovery process.*

- *On September 29 and September 30, 2021, the Biennial FGDM Conference, "Adjusting Our Lens: Gaining Perspective by Challenging Perceptions," was held with 325 participants on the first day and 289 participants on the second day of the conference. The purpose of the event was to focus on the critical role leaders have in examining how to better engage, communicate and identify FGDM opportunities for children and families served by the child welfare and dependency systems. The conference offered two keynote presentations and seven unique workshop sessions. The keynote presentations included "The*

Urgency of Awareness" provided by Jodi Pfarr and "Knowing Me, Knowing You: Diversity Works!" provided by Mary Montague.

- *On April 14, 2022, the Spring FGDM Statewide Meeting, "Exploring Race Equity and the FGDM Process", was held with 119 participants. The purpose of this event was to collaboratively begin to develop an understanding of how FGDM practice can support race equity in Pennsylvania. This included information about the role of cultural awareness and responsiveness in FGDM practice, systemic racism and disproportionality in the child welfare system, and Pennsylvania FGDM Statewide Evaluation data regarding race. Participants had the opportunity to share and explore through facilitated discussion how to address racial inequities using the FGDM process to influence change to improve outcomes for children and families of color.*

Plans for the upcoming year include supporting two additional FGDM statewide events. Planning has not yet begun for these events.

Throughout the year, the FGDM Leadership Team supported data collection and evaluation efforts in a variety of ways.

- *In April 2021, a summary of findings from the 2020 Family Engagement Survey was shared with counties and the FGDM Leadership Team to support making connections between FGDM and other engagement practices. Sixty-two counties participated resulting in a 93% response rate. The high response rate suggests a strong commitment to strengthening family engagement initiatives across the state from all four regions of varying class sizes. The full summary of findings report is available on the FGDM Statewide Evaluation website.*

- *Also in April 2021, a data brief was developed for distribution at the Spring FGDM Statewide Meeting, "Engaging Families in Recovery: Using FGDM in the Recovery Process." This data brief examined FGDM conferences held where substance use services were reported in the plan. Practice reflection questions were also included to spark discussion.*

- *In September 2021, a data brief was developed for distribution at the Biennial FGDM Conference, "Adjusting Our Lens: Gaining Perspective by Challenging Perceptions." The brief included data from conferences held pre-COVID-19 and during the COVID-19 pandemic to compare differences in coordination times, parental engagement, natural and professional supports, and participants' overall satisfaction in the FGDM process.*

- *In April 2022, a data brief was developed for distribution at the "Exploring Race Equity and the FGDM Process" Webinar that included data regarding race and ethnicity of focus children at FGDM conferences, as well as practice reflection questions to spark discussion around this topic.*

In addition to the data collection and analysis identified above, the FGDM Leadership Team continued to support the voluntary county FGDM Statewide Evaluation process. Although not all FGDM meetings are evaluated, counties have continuously provided information pertaining to family engagement and teaming efforts. During SFY 2020-21, 34 out of 67 counties (51%) participated in the evaluation and provided data on 1,073 unique FGDM conferences.

The FGDM Statewide Evaluation has 16 possible conference primary purposes, and the top three reported primary purposes of the conferences were:

- *21.5% Plan to assist in reunification (231/1,073);*
- *21.3% Develop a plan to keep the child in a safe and stable home (229/1,073); and*
- *11.3% Identify supports for caregivers (121/1,073).*

Of the 1,073 conferences, 942 (87.8%) involved a focus child with an open CYS case (CYS only or Shared Case). Of these CYS involved children, the cases were reported as:

- *44.7% open in-home cases (421/942);*
- *40.9% open out-of-home cases (385/942);*
- *10.0% investigations/assessments (94/942);*
- *0.3% aftercare cases (3/942); and*
- *1.7% other/unknown (16/942).*

The Evaluation collects demographic information of the focus children being served by FGDM. Of the 1,073 focus children, 534 (49.8%) were male and 525 (48.9%) were female, with 14 (1.3%) of conferences not reporting the gender of the focus child. At the time of conference, 482 (44.9%) focus children were reported as five years of age or younger, 313 (29.2%) were reported as 6 to 13 years old, and 256 (23.9%) were 14 years of age or older. Twenty-two (2.1%) of conferences did not report the age of the focus child.

On average, six participants attended FGDM conferences, and the maximum number of participants was 15 (these figures include the focus child). Across all 1,073 conferences, 6,340 support persons were present, with 4,028 of those being natural supports (63.5%) and 2,312 professional supports (36.5%).

Overall, participants' perception of the family group experience was positive. Participants tended to agree or strongly agree with the 17 survey questions (with a four-point Likert scale) related to their perceptions of cultural safety, community partnerships, and family leadership. Also, 93.8% of participants who submitted surveys agreed or strongly agreed they would recommend FGDM to other families, and 89.0% felt the children would be safer as a result of the plan.

For a more in-depth report of the FGDM Statewide Evaluation, please visit the dashboard (http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/FGDM_EvaluationPage.htm). Planned activities for future work include enhancements to the dashboard to increase usability, utility, and dissemination of monitoring data on a quarterly basis.

The Family Finding Statewide Planning Committee continued to support county and private provider child welfare professionals in engagement and teaming skill development by providing opportunities for transfer of learning and technical assistance. The statewide opportunities included converting a recorded webinar to an online course and delivering virtual statewide support sessions.

The 2020 Family Finding Statewide Webinar: "Family Finding in Pennsylvania" became an online course offering on May 17, 2021. The purpose of the new credit course is to continue providing counties and their respective private providers with clarification of Pennsylvania's definition of family finding, discussion of how leadership enhances family finding, how systemic strategies connect and what technical assistance is provided through the CWRC, AOPC, SWAN and OCYF regional offices. The Family Finding Statewide Support Session: "The Importance and Methods of Intentional Engagement" was offered two times, November 6, 2021 and December 1, 2021. Each session had 60 registered participants. The purpose of the support session was to learn micro-engagement techniques and explore how these techniques can be used to engage with families as part of family finding.

The Family Finding Statewide Planning Committee has not determined the statewide activities for the upcoming year. There have been initial discussions about providing additional statewide support sessions.

Due to the impacts of COVID 19, not all CWRC family engagement courses developed for in-person delivery were able to be offered from April 15, 2021 to April 15, 2022. The in-person FGDM Part 1 and 2 courses began being offered to participants statewide using a virtual platform in August 2020. The first two courses of the Family Finding training series, Family Finding: Overview and Enhanced Family Finding Model: Building and Sustaining Lifetime Networks, continued to be offered as online courses. The in-person Family Finding: Application course was not offered during this time period. To address this gap in training opportunities, technical assistance was provided on an as-needed basis to develop skills in engaging, locating and actively involving family/kin/community to surround the child with a lifelong network of support.

Table 29. FGDM and Family Finding Training Summary

Training Course SFY 2020-21	*Number of Trainings*	*Number of Participants*
Introduction to FGDM Part 1	*16*	*278*
Introduction to FGDM Part 2	*18*	*408*
Family Finding: Overview	*online*	*365*
Enhanced Family Finding Model: Building and Sustaining Lifetime Networks	*online*	*46*

Source [Bridge Database, CWRC], [April 2022]

The Western, Eastern and Central regional family engagement network meetings occurred on a quarterly basis, and all meetings were virtual in response to COVID-19. Network meetings were supported by a statewide Family Engagement Project Manager and Parent Ambassador to offer meeting facilitation, sharing of resources and technical assistance. The meetings focused on practice areas to strengthen family engagement service delivery. During the 12 meetings, county and private provider engagement specialists addressed the following focus areas:

- *Offering FGDM and other engagement meetings in virtual, in-person and hybrid settings;*
- *Collaborating with referring agencies to improve delivery and provide families with timely approval of their plans;*
- *Addressing staffing turnover with opportunities of onboarding of new county and private provider staff to provide engagement/ teaming service delivery;*
- *Ensuring engagement/teaming meetings are not isolated events by promoting a family engagement continuum of service;*
- *Supporting families and youth through truancy and academic challenges with the use of FGDM, including the transition back to in-person school attendance;*
- *Supporting families who are experiencing custody disputes and co-parenting needs with engagement and teaming models ;*
- *Tracking and evaluating of engagement and teaming activities being provided to families;*
- *Using a trauma informed approach in coordination and facilitation by critically thinking about safety of all individuals and adapting practices to meet their needs; and*
- *Adhering to FGDM model fidelity regarding coordination and facilitation of private family time, purpose development, widening the circle, bottom-line concerns, and ground rules to ensure family leadership, cultural safety, and community partnership.*

Caseworker Visitation

Monthly visits to children in placement have been a regulatory requirement in Pennsylvania since 1985. A policy clarification was issued by OCYF in 2001 reiterating that face-to-face contact is to occur as often as necessary, but no less than once per month and that timely submission of documentation tracking the visits, no less than once per month, must be completed. The OCYF policy issued in 2008 established the following: who qualifies as the “qualifying caseworker” responsible for monthly face-to-face visits, further definition of “caseworker visitation responsibilities,” definition of what constitutes a quality contact, further definition of what qualifies as a placement, working

with children under shared case responsibility, encouraging counties to differentiate between reporting requirements and best practice guidelines, and assistance in gathering and inputting data into AFCARS. OCYF currently monitors caseworker visitation via county data submission three times per year, including the required submission at the end of each calendar year. OCYF believes that continued awareness at the local level of the strong correlation between frequent caseworker visits with children and positive outcomes has helped Pennsylvania exceed the federal standard which requires the total number of monthly caseworker visits to not be less than 95% of the total visits that would be made if each child were visited once per month.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

On March 13, 2020, President Trump issued a Proclamation on Declaring a National Emergency Concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the pandemic, ACF issued guidance on April 15, 2020, that allowed flexibility to the federal requirement that 50 percent of monthly caseworker visits be in the child's residence pursuant to § 424(f)(2)(A) of the Social Security Act. During the period that the National Emergency Proclamation was in effect, Title IV-E agencies were able to use video conferencing to meet the monthly caseworker visitation requirement of seeing a child in their residence. Based on guidance provided by ACF, visitation has been accomplished in part through the use of videoconferencing. The use of videoconferencing has and will continue to be used to assess the safety of the child during the federal public health emergency and be in accordance with the timeframes established in the Social Security Act.

During the past year, OCYF continued to monitor visitation data three times per year which has led CCYAs to focus on assuring that quality visitation occurs with children in foster care. OCYF believes that continued awareness at the local level related to the strong correlation between frequent caseworker visits with children and positive outcomes has helped to exceed the federal measure of 95% and will continue to guide us in maintaining such a high standard. The county and private children and youth agency staff have worked collaboratively with other system partners to assure that children in foster care received quality visits on a regular basis and will continue this work moving forward. Additional evaluation of agency practice related to caseworker visitation is addressed later in this report in the assessment of Pennsylvania performance on CFSR Item 14.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

On December 10, 2015, President Obama signed the ESSA (P.L. 114-95), the first federal education law to require state and local education agencies (LEA) to support school stability for students in foster care. ESSA outlines specific provision for children and youth involved with the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system. ESSA aims to enhance collaboration and align education, child welfare and juvenile justice systems to improve services and outcomes for children and youth involved in these systems. This law, paired with Fostering Connections, envisions dual-

agency responsibility for supporting educational success for students in foster care. Some of the key provisions related to youth in foster care include:

- Allowing youth in foster care to remain in the same school even when their foster care placements are changed;
- Requiring schools to immediately enroll children and youth in foster care after a school move;
- Requiring points of contact in every state education agency as well as many school districts;
- Requiring plans for school transportation for youth in care;
- Tracking achievement data for youth in care; and
- Removing the term “awaiting foster care placement” from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act’s definition of homeless.

Since the enactment of the ESSA, DHS and PDE issued joint guidance to clarify the role of school districts and the collaboration needed between LEAs and CCYAs to effectuate school stability. This guidance provides that best interest determinations (BID) for school placement and school transportation arrangements should be coordinated by the LEA’s Foster Care Liaison in conjunction with the CCYA staff, and other relevant team members who support the child, taking into consideration the child’s attachment and engagement in their current school, placement of siblings, school environment, quality of services, history of school transfers, and the impact of commuting on the child.

Transportation costs are not to be considered when making BID, which should also reflect, where applicable, a child’s need for, and entitlement to, special services, including special education and/or English learner supports. LEAs must also collaborate with CCYAs to develop and implement clear written procedures for how transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of a child’s time in foster care. To support LEAs in meeting this requirement, PDE and DHS developed a Transportation Plan Guide, Transportation Agreement MOU and Transportation Plan Template. An LEA’s plan must also address how transportation costs will be covered if additional costs are incurred. DHS and PDE also developed new resources for the field by creating infographics equipping professionals with a “cheat sheet” for best practices on BIDs. The website, pafostercare.org, was established in Pennsylvania to serve as a hub for professionals, parents, and youth to access information and resources related to educational stability for children in foster care. Contents of the website include, but are not limited to, joint guidance released by DHS and PDE, tools and resources, and directories for CCYA and LEA points of contact. The directory contains contact information for each individual designated as the LEA foster care point of contact and the CCYA education liaison.

Additionally, ESSA requires that states report on the graduation rates and academic achievement of students in foster care. Collaborative discussions continue between DHS, AOPC, and PDE regarding data collection points to support this initiative. A MOU for data sharing was signed by all parties. Phase 1 of this initiative allowed for the transfer and match of the data elements to occur. In Phase 1, DHS identified the chosen data elements from the March 2017 AFCARS data and shared this information with PDE. DHS continues to collaborate with PDE on the most recent AFCARS data elements for ongoing matching and retrieval of outcomes for students in foster care.

Collaboratively, DHS and PDE provided child welfare and education professionals a venue to obtain information related to ESSA and education-related issues. Held yearly, the regional "Educational Stability for Youth in Foster Care: Because You Were There" trainings give professionals the opportunity to engage with key partners and to hear from state, regional, local education and child welfare agency points of contact and special guest presenters. DHS and PDE conduct ongoing ESSA related webinars regarding ESSA basics and best practices.

Pennsylvania intends to continue promoting and supporting the practice of children remaining in their same school whenever possible and when it is in their best interest and to facilitate a seamless education transition for youth who enter care.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Over the past year, OCYF collaborated with PDE to continue the provision of guidance to local agencies and school districts regarding children in foster care and to review and resolve educational concerns related to students in foster care.
In October, DHS, once again, joined with PDE to coordinate, in conjunction with the Center for Schools and Communities, a 3-day conference called "Paving the Way to Educational Success". The conference, which was held virtually, had over 900 attendees and provided professional development opportunities to child welfare and school professionals working with students in foster care as well as students experiencing homelessness statewide. This event provided many opportunities for professionals to learn best practices to promote school stability and academic success. OCYF staff are currently collaborating with representatives at the Center for Schools and Communities and PDE to hold a similar statewide conference that provides options for in-person and virtual attendance in the fall of 2022.

OCYF in collaboration with PDE and the Center for Schools and Communities is currently planning two virtual statewide events in May of 2022 to celebrate National Foster Care Month. OCYF will participate with SWAN legal services staff to provide a 101-style training about the child welfare system and foster care for school district staff. OCYF will also participate in a motivational presentation for CCYA education liaisons and school district points of contact.

DHS first joined with the ABA to conduct an Education Barriers to Permanency Project Pilot in Westmoreland County in 2018. The Education Barriers to Permanency Project continues to focus on improving education outcomes for students in foster care in Westmoreland County. The team on this project has produced toolkits for school districts and caseworkers and provided training opportunities for school districts and CCYA staff on the use of the toolkits. The toolkits include guidance on topics such as BID best practices, roles and responsibilities for all parties involved in BIDs and educational decision making. The toolkits also include a glossary to facilitate building a shared vocabulary amongst child welfare, school and court staff. The ABA Education Barriers to Permanency Project also worked with Westmoreland CCYA to develop a list of roles and responsibilities for the Westmoreland CCYA education liaison, provided training to caseworkers on educational advocacy, and worked with the Independent Living unit to ensure that guidance on school stability and supporting academic success was implemented throughout the CCYA. Since work in Westmoreland County will be coming to a close in 2022, the ABA Education Barriers to Permanency Project is recruiting additional counties to participate in the project, and to participate in short term county specific professional development and technical assistance. DHS is working with the ABA to monitor improvements to practice and resulting changes to education outcomes.

DHS continues to foster communication regarding school stability and success between the agency, CCYAs, and education points of contact. DHS continues to maintain a web page to provide information on the education of children served by CCYAs and to maintain a resource account for education stability related issues. In 2021, DHS began to facilitate virtual community of practice calls for CCYA education liaisons where DHS can provide updates and education liaisons can meet to problem solve and share best practices from the field. Over the course of the year, DHS, in collaboration with PDE and the Center for Schools and Communities, has also issued several online newsletters regarding school stability and academic success of students in foster care. These jointly issued online newsletters highlight resources and provide updates, reminders, and training invites to CCYA education liaisons and school district points of contact in an easily accessible format.

During 2021, OCYF collaborated with PDE and local school district staff to develop a form to be provided by CCYA caseworkers to the school district point of contact when a child enters foster care or changes foster care placements. The form was created to ensure that school districts receive all of the information that they need to best serve the child, while also maintaining confidentiality. In the spring of 2022, OCYF issued a memo to CCYAs regarding information sharing with schools and the identification of children in foster care to school districts. The memo included an advisement to utilize the form. Messaging regarding implementation of directives within the memo was provided to CCYA education liaisons. Training and additional technical assistance supports to CCYA and school staff are currently being planned.
In the summer of 2021 OCYF representatives participated in conversations with PDE as well as PDE stakeholders on the use of American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER) to benefit students in foster

care and provided feedback on the PDE State Plan for ARP ESSER funds usage. Since, in PA, the majority of the spending of ARP ESSER funds is by school district discretion, OCYF urged CCYA education liaisons, Administrators and others in the child welfare field, through a number of outlets, to advocate for spending to meet the educational needs of students in foster care.

Act 1 of 2022, known as "Assisting Students Experiencing Education Instability" was signed by Governor Wolf in January of 2022. The Act strengthens school supports and increases education equity to foster academic achievement and graduation for students experiencing one or more changes in school entity enrollment during a single school year. This includes children and youth in foster care. PDE in consultation with the DHS will issue guidance for local education agencies prior to the 2022-2023 school year. Guidance and corresponding training and technical assistance to CCYAs are also being planned.

Collaborative work continues between DHS, AOPC and PDE regarding data collection and reporting. DHS continues to share the most recent AFCARS data elements with PDE for ongoing matching and retrieval of outcomes for students in foster care. DHS continues to explore whether updates to the AFCARS data collection system in alignment with the AFCARS Final Rule (85 FR 28410) may warrant additional data sharing and is currently in the midst of negotiations with PDE regarding several data sharing MOUs.

OCYF continues to develop a statewide Child Welfare Case Management System and continues to explore the capability for bidirectional data exchanges and an educational records portal with LEAs. This is an effort to build capacity to collect and use data to ensure that children in foster care are properly supported throughout their education in a way that respects privacy and complies with applicable state and federal laws.

Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan

The components of Pennsylvania's Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan for the 2020-2024 CFSP were developed by OCYF in conjunction with other DHS offices, a wide variety of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, pediatric physicians; child psychiatrists; representatives from both physical and behavioral health managed care organizations; foster and adoptive parents; and former foster youth; all who contributed their expertise in either child welfare or health care services or both. Information detailing state policies, practices and programs to meet the federal Health Care Oversight and Coordination plan requirements can be found below.

Schedule for initial and follow-up health screenings that meet reasonable standards of medical practice

Current DHS regulations require the health care needs of children in foster care to be addressed as follows:

- Pa. Code, Title 55, Chapter 3700 (Foster Family Care Agency) regulates health care requirements and states that a child must receive a medical appraisal by a licensed physician within 60 days of the child's admission to foster family care. The appraisal includes a review of the child's health history, physical examination and laboratory or diagnostic tests as indicated by the examining physician, including those required to detect communicable disease. The physician considers all the information and determines the most appropriate medical treatment, if needed.
- Pa. Code, Title 55, Chapter 3800 (Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities) requires that a child shall have a written health and safety assessment within 24 hours of admission; have a health examination within 15 days of admission and annually thereafter, or more frequently as specified in the periodicity schedule recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Additionally, on April 1, 1994, DHS issued OCYF Bulletin 99-94-03 "EPSDT Protocol for Children in Placement" to outline the federal Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) requirements for MA-eligible children and youth and to encourage the county agency to assure that children in foster care receive a comprehensive health exam and/or screening at the intervals established under the EPSDT periodicity schedule.

DHS continues to recognize EPSDT as a unique opportunity to perform a comprehensive evaluation of a child's health and provide appropriate and timely follow-up diagnostic and treatment services. DHS continues to emphasize the importance of the EPSDT screening program and covers screening services at intervals that are based on the recommendations of the AAP, American Dental Association (ADA) and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD).

On February 7, 2017, the AAP issued its updated schedule for well-child screening and health assessments. These recommendations are explained in detail in the fourth edition of the *Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children and Adolescents*.[27]

On August 7, 2017, DHS released MA Bulletin 99-17-10 *Revisions to the EPSDT Program Periodicity Schedule* to ensure MA-eligible children and youth received comprehensive health evaluations and appropriate and timely follow-up treatment as recommended by the AAP. DHS received significant feedback from providers, which resulted in additional updates to Pennsylvania's EPSDT periodicity schedule.

On January 3, 2018, DHS released MA Bulletin 99-18-02 *Updates to the 2017 EPSDT Program Periodicity Schedule*. DHS received additional feedback from providers, which resulted in additional updates to the periodicity schedule. On August 1,

[27] https://brightfutures.aap.org/Bright%20Futures%20Documents/BF4_Evidence_Rationale.pdf

2018, DHS issued MA Bulletin 99-18-03 *Updates to PA's EPSDT Program Periodicity Schedule*.

MA Bulletin 99-18-03 also informed providers that, starting in 2019, DHS will release an annual EPSDT Periodicity Schedule in mid to late summer to reflect current practice and trends in pediatric care and provide clear guidance to MA providers rendering EPSDT services. The new EPSDT bulletin is being drafted and expected to be released in August 2019. DHS continues its efforts to ensure Pennsylvania's children and youth receive the health evaluations, screenings, and services necessary to meet their needs.

In addition, on July 3, 2018, DHS released its updated Dental Periodicity Schedule under MA Bulletin 27-18-09 *Updates to the Pediatric Dental Periodicity Schedule*. The Pediatric Dental Periodicity Schedule was also updated to align with recommendations from the AAPD. This bulletin recommends that a child have the first examination by a dental provider at the eruption of the first tooth and no later than 12 months of age with follow up visits every six months, or as indicated by the child's risk status/susceptibility to disease. It also recommends that a dental home be established for a child no later than 12 months of age.

Given the complex needs of children in foster care, it is important that every child in foster care receive a comprehensive health assessment to assist in the early identification and treatment of his or her medical needs. CCYA are required to ensure children in foster care receive health exams within the timeframes outlined in DHS regulations and bulletins and based on intervals outlined in Pennsylvania's periodicity schedule.

DHS will continue its efforts to assure MA-eligible children and youth receive a comprehensive examination and necessary follow-up treatment and services to ensure their health and well-being. Starting in 2019, DHS will start issuing an annual EPSDT Periodicity Schedule to ensure MA providers are providing comprehensive health examinations and making appropriate referrals for follow-up care.

Over the next five years, DHS will review and update OCYF Bulletin 99-94-03 entitled *EPSDT Protocol for Children in Placement* to remind CCYAs about the important benefits and services available under the EPSDT Program and encourage the agencies to assure children in foster care receive health and dental examinations based on intervals outlined in Pennsylvania's recommended periodicity schedules. DHS will also review and update OCYF Bulletin 99-94-04 entitled *Consent to EPSDT Screening* to outline procedures for obtaining consent for EPSDT services and collaborating with providers and MCOs to monitor initial and follow-up health and dental exams and remind agencies about the requirements under Maher v. White Civil Action No. 90-4674 related to educating children and their families about EPSDT benefits.

How health needs identified through screenings will be monitored and treated, including emotional trauma associated with a child's maltreatment and removal from the home

Children and youth in foster care are likely to have experienced some form of maltreatment and may also be exposed to other forms of trauma, such as poverty, interpersonal or community violence and loss. These adverse experiences are stressful and may cause children and youth to respond in different ways. Some develop significant trauma-related symptoms, while others develop more limited adjustment reactions, while others can manage with ongoing support. At the same time, children and youth in foster care are also at risk for other mental health disorders, which vary in severity and level of impairment. Thus, it is essential that children and youth in foster care receive comprehensive health exams which include trauma screening and a comprehensive mental health assessment.

Pennsylvania's EPSDT Periodicity Schedule includes a variety of behavioral and developmental screenings and assessments based on recommendations from the AAP. DHS encourages MA providers to provide the appropriate behavioral and developmental screenings and assessments at the intervals recommended in the periodicity schedule. Pennsylvania's Periodicity Schedule recommends that a provider perform developmental surveillance and psychosocial/behavioral assessment at each examination starting at birth and continuing until age 21. The psychosocial/behavioral assessment is family-centered and may include an assessment of the child's social-emotional health, caregiver depression and social determinants of health including both risk factors and strengths/protective factors. The periodicity schedule also provides a recommended schedule for depression, and tobacco, alcohol or drug use screenings.

The health needs of children and youth in foster care are monitored at the local level by CCYAs. County and private child welfare agencies are required to follow DHS's health and well-being standards for children in foster care. Oversight and support of those efforts are done at the state level. Over the past five years, DHS has taken several steps to improve healthcare services and outcomes for children in foster care. In 2019, DHS convened a workgroup to develop a healthcare system which addresses the overall health and well-being of children and youth across the state. Initially, this group was focused on improving health and permanency outcomes for children with medically complex needs in residential settings. The workgroup met several times to discuss current policies, procedure and processes. After further review and evaluation, the workgroup recommended that DHS expand the scope of work to include all MA eligible children and youth. DHS agreed with the workgroup's recommendation and has instructed the workgroup to evaluate the state's current healthcare systems and services for children and youth, identify areas of improvement, develop recommendations for improvement and submit a timeline for implementation.

Currently, all children under the age of three who have had a substantiated abuse report are required to have a developmental screening using the Ages and Stages assessment. Additionally, CCYAs are encouraged to provide Ages and Stages

assessments on all children under age five. The CCYAs conduct the Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ™) and Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE™) screenings themselves or they contract with private providers to do the assessments. Although the ASQ and ASQ-SE are required for all children under the age of three, some counties use it to assess the needs of children up to five years of age. Follow-up ASQ™ and ASQ-SE™ screenings are conducted based on the schedule listed in OCYF Bulletin 3490-10-01 until the child's case is closed, the child starts receiving early intervention EI, or until the child no longer meets the age requirements for screening.

OCYF continues to encourage CCYAs to screen children under age five for developmental delays. Over the next five years, DHS plans to revise OCYF Bulletin 3490-10-01 *Developmental Evaluation and Early Intervention Referral Policy*. The revised bulletin will require CCYA to use the updated versions of ASQ™ and ASQ: SE™ to screen children under age three, who are involved in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect, for developmental delays. The new bulletin will require CCYAs to use the updated ASQ 3™and ASQ: SE 2™ tools which require developmental screening to begin at one month of age for both ASQ 3™and ASQ: SE 2™ and extends the screening requirement until 66 months for ASQ3™ and 72 months for ASQ:SE2™. The new tools should allow for earlier identification of developmental delays and may result in earlier referrals for treatment.

Finally, DHS continues its efforts to promulgate its Chapter 3131 regulations, which will replace the current Chapter 3130 regulations related to Administration of County Children and Youth Social Service Programs. The new regulations will establish requirements for screening tools and assessments which include a trauma component.

How medical information will be updated and appropriately shared, which may include developing and implementing an electronic health record

Currently, DHS has two bulletins related to the sharing medical information for children in foster care. On June 1, 2002, DHS issued Bulletin 00-02-03, entitled *Protocol for Sharing Drug and Alcohol Information*, which establishes the procedures and protocols that CCYA, Single County Authorities (SCA), licensed drug and alcohol treatment providers, and JPO must follow when sharing drug and alcohol information. In addition, on May 23, 2014, DHS issued the OCYF Bulletin 00-14-01, entitled *Information Sharing Policies and Procedures for Communication Between Agencies and Individuals Who Supervise and Care for Children and Youth in Out-of-Home Placement and the Physical Health and Behavioral Health Managed Care Organizations*. This bulletin established procedures and protocols that individuals who supervise and care for children in foster care and the Physical Health (PH) MCO must follow to share private health information.

In July 2016, Governor Wolf signed Act 78 to provide policies for interagency sharing of information. OCYF is currently reviewing the impact Act 78 may have on the information sharing bulletins listed above. OCYF will evaluate the identified impacts and

develop a plan to implement an updated information sharing bulletin to ensure CCYAs receive the medical information necessary to ensure the health and well-being of children in their care and ensure compliance with all federal and state information sharing requirements.

DHS continues to require MA providers to follow the continuity of care requirements established under MA Bulletin 99-96-01 entitled *Continuity of Prior Authorized Services Between Fee-for-Service and Managed Care Plans and Between Managed Care Plans for Individuals Under Age 21*. This bulletin outlines procedures to ensure continuity of prior-authorized services whenever a MA eligible individual under age 21 transfers between managed care plans, from a managed care plan to the fee-for-service program, or from the fee-for-service program to managed care. This bulletin was established to ensure all MA eligible children under age 21 receive an uninterrupted continuation of services and treatment.

CCYA are also required to follow requirements under OCYF Bulletin 3130-11-01, entitled *Basic Health Information Form (CY980)*, issued on April 21, 2011. This bulletin requires that CCYAs complete a basic health information form on the first day of placement to gather important medical information needed by foster parents or providers. This form is to be maintained in the child's case record. It also allows PH-MCO Special Needs Units and EPSDT Units to exchange information. Both the bulletin and the information document are precursors to DHS's efforts to develop an electronic health record.

Finally, OCYF recently announced its plans to develop a statewide child welfare reporting system which is planned to be implemented in 2022. The new system will have the capacity to collect demographic and medical information for each child and allow the CCYA to retrieve that information in real-time. More information regarding this initiative will be provided in future updates to the 2020-2024 CFSP through the submission of the APSR.

Oversight of prescription medicines, including protocols for the appropriate use and monitoring of psychotropic medications

Children in foster care may display aggressive behavior that can compromise their school and foster care placement and may prompt consideration of psychotropic medication. If an assessment determines that the child or youth needs mental or behavioral health treatment, a comprehensive biopsychosocial treatment plan will be developed. Psychosocial, psychotherapeutic, and behavioral treatments will be considered whenever possible and when indicated, pharmacotherapy. Some children and youth may benefit from psychotropic medications as one component of a comprehensive treatment plan. Best practices and clinical practice guidelines should inform the sequencing of interventions.

To address federal and state concerns surrounding the safety and efficacy of psychotropic medications prescribed to Medicaid-enrolled foster children, DHS asked

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's (CHOP) Policy Lab to conduct an in-depth data analysis to identify trends and areas needing improvement in Pennsylvania. With emerging themes identified from PolicyLab's research and analysis, AOPC convened the Psychotropic Medication Subcommittee. The subcommittee reviewed research findings, current policies, and procedures and developed recommendations regarding the appropriate use and monitoring of psychotropic medications for children in foster care.

In Pennsylvania, PH-MCOs serve nearly 98% of the children in the foster care system. In 2016, DHS implemented a psychotropic medication prior authorization process for the HealthChoices (HC) PH-MCOs. The new prior authorization policies mirror the requirements under the MA fee-for-service (FFS) program which were instrumental in reducing the use of psychotropic drugs in the MA FFS program by 93.2% over seven years. DHS continues to monitor prescribing patterns of psychotropic medications by PH-MCOs every six months and continues to work with all the HC MCOs to ensure consistent policies related to the authorization and reauthorization of antipsychotic medications.

DHS also developed and issued best practice guidelines for primary care physicians and psychiatrists. Working in partnership with the Pennsylvania Chapter of the AAP and the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Society, DHS created best practice guidelines regarding comprehensive assessments of behavior and treatment interventions. The guidelines are as follows:

- Guidance for Informed Consent for Children and Youth in CCYA Related to Psychotropic Medication Treatment
- Guidelines for Psychotropic Medication Prescribing in Primary Care for Children and Adolescents in Foster Care
- Psychotropic Medication Categories
- Psychotropic Medication Resources

DHS continues to monitor and send the Psychotropic Medication Dashboard Report (PMDR) to CCYAs on a quarterly basis. The CCYA are encouraged to review the "red flag" alerts to drive their discussion and care coordination efforts with the child's prescribing physician and/or PH and BH-MCOs. CCYAs may also use the report as a tool to educate themselves and the child or youth and birth and/or resource parents about the psychotropic medications prescribed to the child. DHS plans to host a conference call with the CCYA and MCOs near the end of 2019 to provide education about the report and how it can be used to improve the health outcomes of children in foster care. In addition, OMAP engaged MCOs, at their Special Needs Unit Training Day on June 12, 2019, in discussion about their successes, challenges and recommendations for the PMDR.

DHS will also continue its efforts to support and promote providers through the HC Telephonic-Psychiatric Consultation Service (TiPS) to improve psychotropic medication prescribing practices. TiPS is a statewide child psychiatry consultation

service which consists of child psychiatric consultation teams who provide peer-to-peer consultation services to primary care providers (PCPs), and other providers who are able to prescribe psychotropic medications to Medicaid-eligible children and youth, up to age 21, with BH concerns. TiPS consultative teams consist of child psychiatrists, licensed therapists, care coordinators, and administrative support staff who are required to respond to provider requests for consultation within 30 minutes and, in some instances immediately. DHS plans to utilize TiPS encounter data to improve its services, policies and practices.

Steps to ensure that the components of the transition plan development process required under section 475(5) (H) of the Act that relate to the health care needs of youth aging out of foster care, including the requirements to include options for health insurance, information about a health care power of attorney, health care proxy, or other similar document recognized under state law, and to provide the child with the option to execute such a document, are met.

On December 8, 2014, DHS issued OCYF Bulletin 3130-14-01, entitled *Youth IL Services Guidelines* to establish policies for ensuring transition age youth are aware of their right to a health care proxy, power of attorney, and extended MA benefits.

To comply with requirements under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) related to extended MA benefits for former foster youth, the Department implemented an online shortened application form and automatic renewal process for MA benefits in August 2017. The shortened online application makes it easier for former foster youth to apply for and receive MA benefits. DHS also implemented an automatic renewal process to eliminate the annual renewal process for former foster youth, who do not have a disability or dependents, until age 26. OCYF continues to monitor a monthly report from OIM to identify all former foster youth who have lost, or at risk of losing, their MA coverage. OCYF then works with OIM to reopen benefits for those former foster youth whose benefits were terminated in error. In some cases, OIM is unable to reopen the former foster youth's MA benefits. When this occurs, OCYF will send the youth a letter and shortened application form and encourage them to apply for benefits.

In addition, DHS applied to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for a Section 1115 Demonstration Waiver to continue to provide MA coverage to former foster youth who moved to Pennsylvania from a different state. On September 29, 2017, CMS approved the waiver to allow Pennsylvania to provide MA benefits to out-of-state former foster youth. It is important to note that Pennsylvania continues to provide MA benefits to ACA eligible out-of-state former foster youth who provide proof of their foster care status.

Steps the Department takes to actively consult with and involves physicians or other appropriate medical or non-medical professionals in assessing the health and well-being of children in foster care and in determining appropriate medical treatment for children.

Collaboration, engagement and teaming are key components of Pennsylvania's Practice Model. Involving stakeholders, children, youth and families in decision making is necessary in achieving positive outcomes in a state-supervised, county-administered system and should be modeled at every level. In November 2016, OCYF convened the Council to increase collaboration, engagement and teaming efforts aimed at improving outcomes for children, youth and families involved in the child welfare system.

The Council provides shared leadership and guidance to support the achievement of the vision outlined in the Practice Model. The Council will assist OCYF in developing a framework for improving and streamlining processes and achieving goals related to ensuring the safety, permanency and well-being of children and families. The Council uses quantitative and qualitative data to guide the establishment of priorities related to federal, state and locally-driven improvement efforts. The Well-Being Subcommittee convened through the Council has been tasked with assisting in the monitoring of the Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan, which is outlined in the subcommittee's charter.

Aside from the Council, OCYF also participates in a variety of stakeholder groups related to improving the health and well-being of Pennsylvania children and youth which includes, but is not limited to, the Medical Assistance Advisory Committee (MAAC), Systems of Care (SOC) State Leadership Team, Mental Health Planning Council, FASD Task Force and State Interagency and Community on Transition Workgroup. Child and family engagement in identifying improvement efforts is also encouraged through ongoing partnerships with the state resource family association (PSRFA), the YAB, the SWAN Advisory Board and SOC State Leadership Team.

OCYF also participates in, and plays a major role in, the Multi-Disciplinary Workgroup on Infants with Substance Exposure (MDWISE), which was convened in 2016, following the passage of CARA. MDWISE was convened to develop an action plan to support improved outcomes for infants, children and families identified as being affected by substance use. Further information about these efforts is outlined in the CAPTA section of the 2020-2024 CFSP.

On February 9, 2018, the Family First Prevention Services Act was signed into law as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act. This act reforms the federal child welfare financing landscape; specifically, Titles IV-E and IV-B of the Social Security Act. Under the Family First, states may choose to utilize Title IV-E dollars to provide specific prevention services to families whose children are at risk of entering the child welfare system. The allowable services include 12 months of trauma-informed and evidence-based mental health services, substance use treatment, and in-home parenting skill training. The law also seeks to improve the well-being of children already in foster care by incentivizing states to reduce the placement of children in congregate care. Family First further supports the appropriate placement of children in congregate care, by requiring states to outline in its Title IV-B Child Welfare State plan, the protocols and procedures it has in place to prevent an inappropriate diagnosis of mental illness or other disorders that lead to placement in congregate care.

In March 2018, OCYF began meeting with other DHS program offices to discuss the possible impacts of Family First. In April 2018, DHS convened a few larger stakeholder groups to identify current policies and procedures related to prevention services and reducing congregate care. Based on recommendations from these groups, DHS decided to opt into the Title IV-E prevention services provision of Family First. DHS continues to work with stakeholders to develop the plan for implementing prevention services.

Procedures and protocols the Department has established to ensure that children in foster care placements are not inappropriately diagnosed with mental illness, other emotional or behavioral disorders, medically fragile conditions or developmental disabilities, and placed in settings that are not foster family homes as a result of the inappropriate diagnosis.

A key value in the Practice Model holds that all children and youth have the right to live in a safe, nurturing, and stable family. OCYF is committed to ensuring that when circumstances prevent children from remaining safely in their own homes, children are provided the opportunity to reside in the least restrictive and most appropriate setting to meet their needs. While congregate care placement may be beneficial for children who require short-term supervision and structure because their behavior may be dangerous or because of complex physical or behavioral health care needs, Pennsylvania continues to support efforts to further enhance the usage of other placement options by reinvesting funds into family-based prevention services and implementing policies that promote family placements.

During the past five years, Pennsylvania continued its efforts to reduce the use of congregate care settings and to build upon and implement initiatives and practices that have been shown to reduce placement in these settings. OCYF continues to support CCYAs in reducing congregate care placements by encouraging and supporting the implementation of the core concurrent planning components related to engagement, teaming, full disclosure and collaboration. Reducing reliance on congregate care placement has been an OCYF priority over the past five years and will continue to be the focus of improvement efforts over the course of the 2020-2024 CFSP. Pennsylvania will continue to build upon the progress made thus far through the implementation of interventions designed to successfully build supports and practices that will allow children to remain safely in family-based settings.

Under the Family First, states are now required to outline in their Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan the procedures and protocols the state has established to ensure that children in foster care are not inappropriately diagnosed with mental illness, or other emotional or behavioral disorders, medically fragile conditions, or developmental disabilities, and placed in settings that are not foster family homes as a result of the inappropriate diagnosis.

OCYF met with internal agency partners, such as OMAP, OMHSAS, the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) and OCDEL, as well as licensed physicians and

psychologists working for the DHS, to evaluate existing procedures and protocols to determine whether legislation would be necessary so as to achieve full compliance with this Family First requirement. Based on the information gathered, it was determined that a legislative delay would not be necessary for ensuring the appropriate placement of children in foster care.

On July 24, 2018, OCYF convened internal agency partners to discuss requirements related to inappropriate diagnosis and placement of foster children and to review the current Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan and provide recommendations for improvement. The group met two times and identified that DHS has several policies, procedures, and practices in place to ensure appropriate diagnosis and placement of children in Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF), Residential Treatment Facilities (RTF) and pediatric specialty care settings. The array of preventive and community-based services, which allow children to remain in a family-like setting, were also acknowledged in these discussions. Over the next year, the group agreed to review existing policies to ensure their alignment with best practice and to review data to identify gaps in service and areas of improvement.

The group identified that DHS has the following policies and procedures to ensure the appropriate diagnosis of children:

- Existing physical examination requirements for children placed in foster care and policies that require private and public CCYA to ensure children in substitute care receive health examinations based on the EPSDT periodicity schedule.
- A policy which requires child welfare agencies to perform ASQ™ and ASQ: SE™ questionnaires to assess developmental delays in children under five and referrals for EI Services when necessary.
- Additionally, the HC Agreement1, Exhibit J, related to EPSDT Guidelines, outlines the process providers must follow if they suspect a child has a developmental delay and it does not appear the child is connected to services.
- Language in Exhibit H of the HC Physical Health Agreement and Appendix T, Part B (1) of the Behavioral HC Agreement which outlines protocols for prior and re-authorization for placement of a child in an RTF or PRTF.
- Process for monitoring antipsychotic medications for children in foster care and other important clinical indicators that could impact the health and well-being of the child.
- Reimbursement for Telepsychiatry services to provide or support clinical psychiatric and psychological care at a distance and enable individuals to receive services in their community, as well as other community-based services and supports which include, but are not limited to: Behavioral Health Rehabilitative Services (BHRS), Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST), and Peer Support Services (PSS).
- The TiPS program provides consultative services to PCP, medical specialists, and other prescribers of psychotropic medications who need assistance determining the appropriate course of treatment for MA-eligible children and

youth, up to age 21, with behavioral health concerns. The TiPS teams are comprised of child psychiatrists, licensed therapists, care coordinators and administrative supports who work together to provide telephonic or face-to-face consultation, care coordination, and training to providers.

DHS plans to build upon and improve these processes after reviewing data related to existing services to identify gaps in service and/or service delivery and areas of improvement. DHS will also review prior authorization requirements for MA recipients under the HC Agreement and Fee-for-Service models to ensure placement in a congregate care setting is most appropriate to meet the physical and behavioral health needs of the child. One of the strategies in Pennsylvania's CFSR PIP that was integrated into the 2020-2024 CFSP involves review of the DHS Complex Case Bulletin and process and develop recommendations for improvement. This activity will inform any changes to the procedures and protocols in existence. Finally, DHS will also assess the responsibilities of the Resource Facilitation Team to determine whether their role could be expanded to include a review of children with medically complex needs and not just youth transitioning to adult services.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

DHS released the MA Bulletin 99-21-02 entitled EPSDT Program Periodicity Schedule on June 24, 2021, updating portions of the MA Bulletin 99-20-04 of the same title. This bulletin was updated to reflect the recently expanded screening recommendation by The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to include at least one screening for Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) for individuals between the ages of 18 and 79. The Periodicity Schedule was updated to add a risk assessment for HCV for youth between 18 and 20 years of age. It also includes annual testing for HCV infection for those at increased risk of HCV, such as individuals with past or current injection drug use.

DHS released OMAP Bulletin 31-20-03 entitled Updates to Childhood Nutrition and Weight Management Services (CNWMS) on May 26, 2020, to address childhood nutrition. CNWMS consist of the following services: initial assessment, re-assessment, individual weight management counseling, family weight management counseling, group weight management counseling and nutritional counseling in conjunction with EPSDT for the assessment of medical necessity. These services are offered to promote child wellness.

The Children with Medical Complexities (CMC) Workgroup's current goals are to improve health and permanency outcomes for children with medically complex needs who reside in residential settings and develop a plan of care that includes children transitioning to live in family settings. CMC Workgroup meetings occur monthly to discuss progress of individual plans of care for children with medical complexities, and to monitor support the child and family need to receive for the child's transition to a home setting.

To help support this process and have children become eligible for inclusion in services provided through ODP, the CMC workgroup drafted a joint bulletin entitled Referring Children with the County Mental Health/Intellectual Disability and Autism Programs outlining the referral process for early intervention services to the OCDEL and waiver programs and supports through ODP. This process is intended to identify and eliminate gaps in referrals being made for services to both OCDEL and ODP to allow children to receive ongoing support throughout their childhood and into adulthood. The bulletin is anticipated to be released in June 2022.

The Family Facilitator hired by ODP continues to assist in the transfer of children with medical complexities who are cared for in residential settings, to a family setting with enhanced supports or reunification with the parent or kin, whenever appropriate. Additionally, the Family Facilitator collaborates with both the child and family to help provide needed services to support the child's transition to a home setting. As this work continues, the CMC Workgroup also continues to discuss redesigning the current Medical Foster Care system.

On July 31st, 2019 Governor Tom Wolf signed an executive order to protect the most vulnerable Pennsylvanians. A key directive from the executive order was to establish Pennsylvania as a trauma informed, healing centered state, to better respond to the needs of people who have had adverse childhood or other serious, traumatic experiences. This initiative is known as HEAL PA. In August 2020, an OCYF Trauma Team was established to support the movement towards becoming a healing centered state. The Trauma Team continues to meet regularly to support this ongoing work. In December 2020, OCYF staff became certified as trainers of Trauma-Informed Care curricula and as of December 28, 2021, all OCYF state and regional staff received four hours of trauma training and may be designated as trauma aware.

In 2021, the OCYF Trauma Team, in collaboration with Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, developed a Trauma-Informed Care Audit tool. This tool is utilized for the assessment of trauma skills development. The audit tool was utilized to evaluate the residential treatment facilities moving through the HEAL PA continuum with an end goal of being healing centered. All residential treatment facilities have met or are working towards becoming trauma aware by June 2022.

OCYF will begin to assess the trauma awareness of the CCYA, foster care and adoption providers licensed by OCYF in 2022, with the expected completion date of December 2023. The Trauma-Informed Care Audit Tool will be utilized in the assessment to maintain consistency throughout Pennsylvania's child welfare system, with technical assistance provided through the OCYF Regional Offices to ensure that CCYAs, and foster care and adoption providers licensed by OCYF achieve trauma awareness by the end of 2023.

OCYF, in collaboration with the CWRC, is developing on-going trauma informed curricula to meet the designations of trauma-aware, trauma-sensitive, trauma-informed, and healing centered. The OCYF Trauma Team and other subject matter experts have

begun to review a proposed curriculum. This curriculum is expected to be introduced to the CCYAs and private foster care and adoption providers licensed by OCYF in 2022, with additional curricula proposed as OCYF moves through the HEAL PA continuum. This effort is designed to educate staff on the long-lasting effects of trauma, including emotional trauma on children and ways to mitigate those effects when addressed timely through supports and when appropriate, medical intervention.

OCYF has released Bulletin 3409-21-01 entitled Developmental Evaluation and Early Intervention Referral Policy to rescind and replace OCYF Bulletin 3490-10-01, of the same title. OCYF Bulletin 3409-21-01 requires the CCYAs to use the updated ASQ 3™and ASQ: SE 2™ tools with improved developmental screenings beginning at one month of age and extending the screening requirement until 66 months for ASQ3™ and 72 months for ASQ:SE2™. The updated ASQ 3™and ASQ: SE 2™ are expected to result in earlier identification of developmental delays and earlier referrals for intervention through the Early Intervention program.

In October 2020, DHS Bulletin 14-Bul-109 entitled DHS Complex Case Planning Bulletin was disseminated. Implementation of the Bulletin has been continuously evaluated through a complex case planning workgroup to increase consistency and quality of planning in coordination with program offices and the Complex Behavioral Health Steering Team. The Complex Case Planning Bulletin was updated in April 2021 after evaluation by the Complex Behavioral Health Steering Team lead to revisions based off of stakeholder feedback, including the feedback of the Southwest Citizen Review Panel. The updated Bulletin included new referral process requirements, allowing for consistent data collection and tracking. DHS continues to collect stakeholder input, as well as data and analyses to inform future efforts to address systemic barriers to service provision.

DHS convened a Complex Behavioral Health Transition Planning Group in 2021 to discuss, in collaboration with other agencies, the continuity of medical care through transition planning. This group has identified points of contact within each agency and began working on the development of strategies related to earlier detection of services geared towards populations with complex medical needs.

It remains the goal of DHS to make the Psychotropic Medication Dashboard (PMDR) available to all CCYA in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The PMDR Update form was disseminated to the CCYAs to allow for updates through the designated resource account maintained by OCYF and to be reflected within the PMDR file on an ongoing basis, ensuring that data is only shared as appropriate and per the User Agreement.

DHS has seen a decline in the use of anti-psychotic medication since the inception of the PMDR in 2016. During the year 2016, 9.1% of the children in OCYF custody were prescribed a first or second generation anti-psychotic medication. Throughout the following five years the numbers have been 7.6%, 7.2%, 7.2%, 6.8% and 7.64% respectively. This information was collected from the Office of Medical

Assistance Programs and OCYF data. The data has shown that the emphasis DHS has placed on the monitoring of children prescribed anti-psychotic drugs under the supervision of OCYF has increased their appropriate diagnosis, leading to lower numbers of anti-psychotic medications being used in their treatment.

Youth formerly in foster care, under the ACA, are eligible for MA coverage up to the age of 26, if the child was in foster care at the age of 18. The Commonwealth currently offers MA coverage to former foster youth who were in out-of-state foster care at the age of 18, through the Pennsylvania Section 1115 Medicaid Demonstration Waiver implemented in 2017. OCYF continues to monitor the eligibility of former youth in foster care within the Commonwealth through monthly reporting, addressing all questionable ineligible determinations, and eliminating lapses of MA coverage for the youth whenever possible. Additionally, OCYF addresses questions about MA eligibility from youth who move out of state and are in need of documentation showing former foster care involvement, by linking the youth to their county children and youth office for additional assistance.

Services to Children Under the Age of Five to Address Developmental Needs

As children under the age of five represent one of the populations at greatest risk for maltreatment, OCYF is committed to ensuring the developmental needs of young children served by the child welfare system are appropriately assessed and addressed. Pennsylvania benefits from the rich investment of public funding to support an array of programs designed to ensure the developmental needs of children are met. Since its inception in 2007, OCDEL, which is overseen by both DHS and PDE, has focused on creating opportunities for the state's youngest children to develop and learn to their fullest potential. This goal is accomplished through a framework of supports and systems that help ensure that children and their families have access to high-quality services. Many of the services and supports coordinated by OCDEL are utilized by CCYAs in meeting the developmental needs of children under the age of five.

Ensuring the developmental needs of young children are addressed begins with a comprehensive assessment. As referenced in Pennsylvania's Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan, OCYF requires CCYA to utilize the ASQ™ and ASQ-SE™ to screen the following populations:

- All children under the age of three who are subjects of a substantiated report of maltreatment until they turn five;
- All children under the age of three who are placed by the county children and youth agency in a residential treatment facility which specialized in children with developmental delays, disabilities, or other serious health conditions; and
- All children under the age of three who are homeless and whose family is receiving county child welfare services.

Follow-up ASQ™ and ASQ-SE™ screenings are conducted based on the schedule listed in OCYF Bulletin 3490-10-01 until the child's case is closed, the child

starts receiving EI Services, or until the child no longer meets the age requirements for screening.

The PA EI Program, offered through OCDEL, provides support and services to families with children, from prenatally to age five, with developmental delays and disabilities. The EI Program:

- Offers support services and resources for children that enhance daily opportunities for learning provided in settings where a child would be if he/she did not have a developmental delay or disability;
- Provides families with independence and competencies; and
- Respects families' strengths, values, and diversity.

EI supports and services are designed to meet the developmental needs of children with a disability as well as the needs of the family, building upon the natural learning opportunities that occur within the daily routines of a child and their family. EI enhances the child's development in one or more of the following areas:

- Physical development, including vision and hearing;
- Cognitive development;
- Communication development;
- Social or emotional development; and
- Adaptive development.

The services provided to children and their families differ based upon the individual needs and strengths of each child and the child's family. Services such as parent education, support services, developmental therapies and other family-centered services that assist in child development may be included in a family's EI program.

EI promotes collaboration among parents, service providers and other important people in the child's life to enhance the child's development and support the needs of the family. Services may be provided in the child's home, childcare center, nursery school, playgroup, Head Start program, early childhood special education classroom or other settings familiar to the family. EI supports and services are embedded in typical routines and activities, within the family, community and/or early care and education settings. This approach provides frequent, meaningful practice and skill building opportunities.

EI services, which are provided at no cost to the family, are used by the CCYA to improve parental education and provide the support needed to help the family maintain the young child in their home or provide support to the family once the child has returned to the home from foster care. Varieties of services are available, depending upon the need of the child and the family. Numerous services are available that address a variety of physical, educational and behavioral needs.

Home visiting programs represent a key component in the array of services utilized to meet the developmental needs of vulnerable young children. In 2009, OCDEL was awarded MIECHV funding for Pennsylvania. OCDEL used these funds to expand the evidence-based home visiting (EBHV) program using a competitive request for application process in local communities. The application process allowed for Local Implementing Agencies (LIAs) to implement the following EBHV programs: Early Head Start, Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnerships (NFP) and PAT. LIAs implement and provide services to children and families from inception through age five. A community-based local needs assessment is used to determine which counties were at risk to receive funding. Over time, families and home visitors build partnerships and work together to:

- Improve a child's health and development;
- Prevent child injuries, child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment, and reduce emergency department visits;
- Improve school readiness and achievement;
- Reduce crime, including domestic violence;
- Improve family economic self-sufficiency; and
- Improve the coordination and referrals for other community resources and supports.

In SFY 2017-18, funding was appropriated in the state budget to expand evidence-based home visiting to an additional 800 families. Many local models are coordinating with the CCYAs for referral and resources to support families. An additional evidence-based home visiting model was added through this funding: Family Check-Up for Children (FCU). In SFY 2018-19, funding was appropriated in the state budget to expand evidence-based home visiting to an additional 600 families experiencing substance use disorders and an additional 700 families through positive parenting support services such as evidence-informed parenting classes. An additional evidence-based home visiting model was added through this funding: SafeCare Augmented.

To assess the array of services most commonly being utilized by CCYAs in meeting the developmental needs of children under the age of five, OCYF requested counties provide information about their local activities through their SFY 2019-20 NBPB submission (provided to OCYF in September 2018). The counties were asked to provide responses to identify and provide a brief description of any specific services/programs the county is utilizing (or plans to utilize) to help address the developmental needs of children under the age of five who receive in-home or out-of-home child welfare services. The findings outlined below represent the information provided by 66 counties; one county did not respond to the questions around this population posed in the NBPB. Counties were asked to reflect over the past fiscal year in developing their responses.

Nearly every county identified the following services/programs as utilized to serve children under the age of five receiving in-home or out-of-home services:

- Use of the ASQ™ and ASQ-SE™
- EI Services
- Early Head Start
- Head Start

Counties also often cited the use of Family Preservation Services, FR Programs, and Family Centers. Commonly cited EBPs utilized by the counties included:

- PAT
- Nurturing Parents
- NFP
- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)
- Incredible Years
- Healthy Families

Additional, less frequently cited programs/services included:

- Triple P
- Safe Care
- STOPP
- Maternal Assistance Program
- Recovery Coaching
- Visitation Coaching
- Strengthening Families
- Family Support Daycare
- In-house county developed parenting programs

Over the next five years, OCYF will continue to monitor and adjust requirements for developmental screening practices as needed. To aid in this work, OCYF has requested CCYAS provide additional information about their developmental screening practices through their SFY 2020-21 NBPB. The information requested will help OCYF identify the number of counties who extended developmental screening using the ASQ™ and ASQ-SE™ to all children under the age of five and to assess how counties who have not expanded the use of the screening tools are otherwise appropriately assessing the developmental needs of young children.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

In SFY 2020-21 OCDEL received two Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) American Rescue Plan (ARP) awards in the following amounts:

*MIECHV ARP 1**:** $1,368,786 which was used in the following allowable categories per the MIECHV portion of the ARP legislation:*

- *Technology: $152,713;*
- *Emergency Supplies for Families: $275,114;*

- *Grocery Cards: $218,121; and*
- *Home Visitor Training: 60,763.*

Total: $931,263 to be expended by June 30th, 2022. Remaining: $437,523 will be distributed after the RFA award process has been concluded to new Grantees selected and eligible to receive MIECHV funding.

MIECHV ARP 2: $2,780,955 - below is an estimation on how OCDEL will award these funds to new MIECHV LIAs after the RFA process has concluded:

	Technology	***Emergency Supplies for Families***	***Grocery Cards***	***Hazzard Pay and Other Staff Costs***	***Home Visitor Training***	***All Categories***
Total Estimated Amount Per Category	*$ 456,034*	*$ 821,549*	*$ 651,356*	*$ 670,564*	*$ 181,452*	*$ 2,780,955*
Total Percentage Per Category	*16%*	*30%*	*23%*	*24%*	*7%*	*100%*

Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) ARP Funding: $8,787,486 - OCDEL plans to use the CBCAP ARP funds for enhancement awarded through the RFA. These funds will be used for the first three years of the new grants.

In SFY 2020-21, a total of 42,360 infants and toddlers and 57,347 preschoolers received Early Intervention (EI) supports and services. Statewide technical assistance efforts to support eligible children and their families through coaching and consultation continues to be the focus to ensure children are fully included and make meaningful progress.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, EBHV and EI supports and services shifted to virtual home visiting and tele-intervention strategies. To support programs supporting families during this time, the Family Support team worked to create and share weekly emails to EI and Family Support/Home Visiting programs entitled Motivational Mondays during Child Abuse Prevention Month in April 2020 which became Thriving Thursday emails during Child Abuse Prevention Month in April 2021. The Thriving Thursday emails have continued into April 2022. These emails highlight ways in which the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework® plays a role in the mitigation of child abuse and neglect during a time when children are home with their families.

Family engagement activities expanded in 2021-22. EI and Family Support staff provided four three-day virtual events to train over 25 teams of 4-6 family and professionals to provide virtual Parent Cafes in their own programs. A team of exclusively EI family leaders were included in these trainings. The trained family leaders provided a series of six Parent Cafes addressing all the Protective Factors. Close to 50 participants attended these Cafes. EI and Family Support staff continue to provide technical assistance to over 20 organizations offering Parent Cafes to families in their programs and communities.

During this reporting period, the Children with Medical Complexities (CMC) workgroup drafted guidance on the referral process for early intervention services to OCDEL and waiver programs and supports through ODP, to identify and eliminate gaps in referrals being made for services to both OCDEL and ODP. This bulletin entitled "Referring Children with the County Mental Health/Intellectual Disability and Autism Programs" is planned to be released in June of 2022. Early intervention and enrollment for services will allow for children to receive ongoing support throughout their childhood and into adulthood. The CMC workgroup is exploring options for children in medical congregate care facilities to return home or be placed in a home like setting with the addition of supports and services from all human service agencies, where applicable. A family facilitator position was created at ODP and filled to assist with supports and to help ease the transition for the child and family when the child with medically complex issues is returning to a home setting.

OCYF released Bulletin 3490-21-01 entitled Developmental Evaluation and Early Intervention Referral Policy in June of 2021, which rescinded and replaced OCYF Bulletin 3490-10-01, of the same title. OCYF Bulletin 3490-21-01 increased the maximum age for evaluations in response to a PA School Code amendment which changed the compulsory school age to six-years of age. This update supports efforts to eliminate gaps of care and evaluation. CCYAs are now encouraged to utilize the ASQ 3™to screen children up to 66 months of age and to utilize the ASQ: SE 2™ to screen children up to 72 months of age. The bulletin update was also completed to recommend CCYAs use the newest version of the ASQ™ tools. The ASQ™ tools were expanded to:

- *Increase the frequency of evaluations;*
- *Include a questionnaire for a two-month-old child;*
- *Add monitoring zone ratings;*
- *Include parental engagement materials;*
- *Add a new standardized sample;*
- *Update cut-off scores; and*
- *Include an improved Spanish translation.*

Chafee Foster Care Program (Independent Living Services)

DHS/OCYF is the identified state agency designated to administer and supervise the Chaffee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee Program) in Pennsylvania. Chafee services are provided either directly by the CCYA or by their identified service provider. Pennsylvania's IL Program is funded with Title IV-E, state and local funds. CCYAs apply to OCYF to receive state and Chafee funds based on their assessment of local needs and an acceptable application. Approximately 90% of the overall budget for IL services in Pennsylvania is funded by state and local dollars. A local match of 15% is required for the state funds awarded. CCYAs are not required to meet the state's federal funds match requirement. The four OCYF Regional Offices and CWRC staff conduct onsite reviews to assess IL services and provide TA to the CCYA.

Pennsylvania's IL program is supported through the CWRC IL Project. The IL Project has the responsibility to monitor the implementation of the IL program and provide TA to IL programs as needed. CWRC employs Practice Improvement Specialists (PI) who conduct IL site visits with CCYA, OCYF Regional Offices and other stakeholders to identify strengths and challenges in county practice. CWRC supports research and evaluation activities related to IL services to improve outcomes for older youth in Pennsylvania's child welfare system. This responsibility includes onsite visits to review IL programs and reporting. Site visits include a review of program records and interviews with the CCYA director, fiscal staff, IL coordinator, private providers, and program participants.

A report containing the findings and recommendations from the visit is prepared by the PI and submitted to the state IL coordinator at OCYF for approval. Upon approval, the report is released to the CCYA, SWAN TA staff, the OCYF Regional Office, and others who attended the site visit. CCYAs that participate in the IL grant program are required, as a condition of the grant, to cooperate with the CWRC PI in the IL site visits. CCYAs are encouraged to contact their PI to answer any questions about completing the grant application, to discuss program ideas, and/or to arrange for a TA visit. Further information regarding IL sit visits in outlined in the "Quality Assurance/CQI System" section of the 2020-2024 CFSP.

Description of Program Design or Delivery

Pennsylvania is committed to providing youth making the transition from placement to self-sufficiency with the skills and resources necessary to make them independent and productive members of society. This state-supervised, county-administered program prepares youth in foster care, ages 14-21, for their transition from foster care to independence. IL services are provided to youth to support successful transitions to adulthood and to reduce or eliminate the instances of homelessness, poverty, and delinquent or criminal behavior through increased employability, high school graduation rates and enrollment in post-secondary or vocational institutions. The design and delivery of services to this population must be responsive to the individualized needs and goals of youth in transition.

Pennsylvania's IL program is operated statewide and all CCYAs are required to identify youth who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18 and to:

- Help them make the transition to self-sufficiency by providing services such as assistance in obtaining a high school diploma, career exploration, vocational training, job placement and retention, training in daily living skills, training in budgeting and financial management, substance abuse prevention, and preventive health activities (including smoking avoidance, nutrition education, and pregnancy prevention);
- Help them receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment;

- Help them prepare for and enter post-secondary training and education institutions;
- Provide personal and emotional support to youth aging out of foster care, through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults;
- Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and then making the transition from adolescence to adulthood;
- Inform youth about the Chafee Employment and Training Grant (ETG) program which offers financial assistance for post-secondary education;
- Provide services to youth who, after attaining 16 years of age, have left foster care for kinship care, guardianship or adoption; and
- Ensure children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age are afforded opportunities to engage in age and developmentally appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural or social activities and experiences.

In addition to the above, Pennsylvania, over the next five years plans to:

- Use National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) data to identify areas where services need strengthened for assisting youth to become successful adults; and
- Incorporate the recommendations from the YAB, now a recognized CRP, into the state's Chafee program.

CCYAs may provide IL services to subgroups of youth who are under age 21, including youth who are returned home, youth placed with relatives and to delinquent youth. State and local funds may be used to pay for IL services for youth excluded from Chafee eligibility. OCYF Bulletin, 3130-14-01, *Youth IL Services Guidelines* details the guidelines and requirements associated with PA IL services and can be accessed online through the DHS website.[28]

Pennsylvania currently engages youth in care, or formerly in care, in planning, educating, advocating, and forming partnerships to create positive change within the child welfare system. The YAB, a recognized CRP, is an example of a strong collaboration between youth, service providers, CCYAs, OCYF, CWRC, JLC, Kids Voice, PPC and communities where youth are provided a platform to have their voice heard.

OCYF has encouraged the formation and ongoing development of the YAB, which is managed by the CWRC. OCYF management participates in YAB meetings and events to share updates and new information and to solicit valuable youth

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28 https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Documents/FORMS%20AND%20PUBS%20OCYF/OCYF%203130-14-01.pdf

feedback, which can influence policy and programmatic decisions. The YAB continues to operate on Statewide, Regional, and local levels and is comprised of current and former foster care youth ages 14-21. Local and Regional YAB members address pertinent issues related to their communities, complete community service projects, and participate in peer focus groups. Representatives from the six regional YAB boards meet quarterly during statewide meetings and discuss ongoing activities, legislation, and YAB website and policy recommendations. During YAB meetings, youth members lead discussions, formulate agenda topics and provide feedback on relevant initiatives. There are several statewide youth engagement efforts ongoing in Pennsylvania. These efforts include the following:

- YAB, both regionally and statewide;
- YAB Leadership Summit;
- Older Youth Retreat and the planning committee process;
- Youth Ambassador Program;
- Youth Quality Improvement Specialist (YQIS) Positions;
- Participation of youth in a variety of state-level workgroups; and
- Youth engagement at the local level.

Youth engagement occurs regularly at the local level through IL programs. Youth are engaged through participation in CRP meetings, IL Site Visits, community groups, and other cross-system committees. Having the youth voice represented in discussions of quality is an important step forward for this work.

NYTD will continue to be a topic addressed at regional IL networking sessions, as well as annual IL program visits where CCYAs can discuss what has worked well and what challenges they continue to face with regard to their NYTD survey completion rates. As part of the IL Review, all CCYAs are asked to identify their established process for connecting with older youth as part of the NYTD follow-up population.

NYTD data collected and analyzed from survey information from each cohort of former foster youth indicated that in FFY 2018, 5,780 youth statewide received at least one IL service. The three IL service areas that youth participated in most frequently besides assessment were career preparation, budgeting/financial and health education. Survey information is used to inform and enhance department policy to better support youth 16 and older in out-of-home care. Statewide data is shared with YAB members, CRPs, Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council, CWRC and CCYAs.

OCYF developed a NYTD team to implement NYTD. The team consists of program staff from OCYF and the CWRC and information management system staff from OCYF, SWAN and PCG. The NYTD team has focused much of its efforts on assisting CCYAs with surveying youth, managing data collection, TA and training for CCYAs on. Currently, work is being done to support youth engagement efforts around NYTD. As needed, YQIS from CWRC can provide youth perspective, based on focus group discussions held across the state, to the group as well as filter relevant information to the YAB and from the YAB to the workgroup.

Over the next five years, OCYF will undertake the following to collect high-quality data through NYTD:

- Strengthen training to CCYAs on the use of the Accurint Search Engine to locate youth. Each CCYA has at least one identified Accurint user.
- Continue collecting baseline data on an annual basis to provide more frequent identification of youth outcomes at age 17.
- Train NYTD users and CCYA prior to each reportable period.
- Develop a NYTD data package for CWRC and OCYF to use when doing on-site reviews.
- Develop a NYTD Statewide Report on information gathered during the 19 and 21-year-old survey cohorts to be shared with YAB, CCYAs and CWRC.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

Pennsylvania's Chafee Program, IL description and delivery of services remains the same. IL services are provided to youth through county IL programs or purchased through private provider agencies. During FFY 2021, there were 5,112 youth served in out-of-home care statewide who were 14 years of age or older.

Over the past year, the pandemic has continued to impact how services are provided to older youth. Despite the ongoing challenges, IL workers remain invested in engaging and re-engaging youth in services. One of the most notable impacts of the pandemic youth and workers across the state expressed is the effect the pandemic has had on the mental health and overall wellness of youth. Staff and youth identified early in the pandemic youth felt isolated from their supports (friends, family, IL staff and youth) and their daily interactions through school or work.

Through county site visits, it has been reported that the pandemic has increased the stress level of older youth, many of whom were already struggling with mental health issues before the pandemic. The CCYAs were able to identify these needs early on through ongoing informal assessments, visits and calls to youth. Staff worked to ensure that the overall wellness and mental health of youth remained a priority, particularly for youth who reported (through formal and informal outreach) that they felt lonely and at times isolated. This feeling of isolation was especially hard for those youth living alone or in placement facilities that could not allow visitors due to the spread of the virus.

The CCYAs took active steps to ensure that youth could participate in groups, visitation with family, life skills and one on one sessions via Zoom or other virtual platforms. Overall, IL staff were able to continue ongoing contact with youth during the pandemic, and in some cases had more contact with certain youth than they did pre-pandemic. These meetings allowed staff to continually assess youths' needs and ensure they were connected to the appropriate services. The IL workers made concerted efforts to check-in on those youth whom they identified as most vulnerable. The IL staff have worked hard to reduce feelings of isolation by interacting with youth

virtually, through phone calls, texting and socially distant visits when appropriate. The CCYAs continued to provide supplies to youth to engage in life skills activities such as cooking, books for reading, activities, crafts and hygiene items. The CCYAs also made sure youth were still able to participate virtually in YAB meetings, holiday parties and other statewide events, such as the YAB Leadership Summit and the Older Youth Retreat. The goal over the next year is to host these events in-person to allow youth to interact with their peers.

Some barriers related to mental health services during the pandemic have included extensive waitlists for services, youth not keeping their appointments, frustration in attempting to schedule these appointments with providers and youth not feeling comfortable participating in these services virtually. As a result, a promising practice out of Bucks County called the "SWAT" Program was developed for mental health needs, including therapeutic services designed for rapid response to crises. SWAT stands for Stabilizing While Assessing Trauma and was developed in conjunction with the mental health programming through a provider in their county in response to the long wait times for accessing services. The program is a short-term crisis management process that focuses on older youth in foster care. Since this is not long-term, there is more buy-in from the youth and it has opened the door for other continued opportunities once the crisis has passed. The program is viewed as supportive to the youth, and the agency is reporting success.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Pennsylvania has continued providing services to youth that are individualized and specific to the youth's needs to promote their successful transition to adulthood. Pennsylvania's IL programs continued to partner with many community-based resources for wellness and prevention services. These services range from drug and alcohol and mental health services to services for pregnant and parenting youth. While many of these programs had shut down or modified services during the pandemic, most are now open and providing the full range of services available to older youth. This is another noted area of re-engagement that will occur over the next year.

OCYF values youth engagement and encourages the youth to have a voice in all aspects of the child welfare system. The youth voice is also included in system improvement efforts such as the IL site visit process, Quality Service Reviews (QSR) and Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR). Feedback from the youth is critical to understanding if the services and supports offered through Pennsylvania's IL programs are helping youth successfully prepare for and transition into adulthood. On the county level, programs report through IL site visits that they use polls to gauge interest from the youth as to what they want to see in programming or activities. Some CCYAs have also incorporated pre- and post-tests to monitor how youth are absorbing the content presented and growing in their skills. This has been especially important to monitor due to the shift to virtual delivery of resources and services

To best meet the needs of youth, IL programs continue to collaborate with community resources, both public and private, to supplement the work IL staff do. This

often includes guest speakers for life skills groups focusing on hard and soft skills. Some of the collaborative partners most used statewide include but are not limited to the Center for Community Action, CareerLink, Planned Parenthood, Goodwill, and colleges and universities. While the pandemic did impact these agencies at its onset, most were able to continue to work with IL programs via virtual platforms and through the practice of social distancing. With the support of Division X funds, CCYAs were also able to provide additional support to youth, including purchasing computers, printers, desks and chairs to set up a computer lab. The funding also helped youth with barriers to online access and increased the online access to practice driver permit tests, employment opportunities and participation in virtual schooling.

CCYAs are required to inform youth who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age about the Chafee ETG program and the Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program (FosterEd). FosterEd waives tuition and mandatory fees for eligible youth in Pennsylvania for post-secondary education (see additional information about ETG and FosterEd under Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program section.)

Pennsylvania was found to be in compliance with the NYTD requirements for the FFY 2021A but failed to meet the minimum threshold of 21-year-old survey data for the 2021B reporting period. NYTD data collected and analyzed from survey information from each cohort of former foster youth indicated that in FFY 2021, 12,322 youth statewide received at least one IL service, which represents a 14% increase from FFY 2020. The three IL service areas that youth participated in most frequently besides an assessment were other financial assistance, health education and budget and financial management, in that order. CCYAs reported direct financial assistance provided to youth and young people using Division X funding in the other financial assistance category. NYTD survey information is used to inform and enhance department policy to better support youth 14 years of age or older in out-of-home care.

In an effort to inform youth and young adults of the provisions to re-enter care provided by Division X, Pennsylvania added the following statement to the surveys for 21-year-old: "If you were previously in foster care and left care due to age between January 27, 2020 and September 30, 2021, new policy related to the COVID-19 public health emergency permits you to voluntarily re-enter foster care without meeting the education and employment requirements. Contact your county children and youth agency to determine eligibility for re-entry and other assistance."

NYTD efforts in Pennsylvania continue to be supported by the CWRC and PCG across the state, including providing TA to counties, onboarding new staff responsible for NYTD, and increasing youth engagement efforts and youth friendly resources through the PA Youth Advisory Board (YAB). These agencies meet monthly to discuss NYTD surveys, reporting by CCYAs, messaging, resource development and preparation for future NYTD reviews.

PCG continues to work with CCYAs to ensure they are successful in locating youth to complete NYTD surveys. Over the past year, CWRC Practice Improvement Specialists received increased county specific information related to youth in the follow-up survey population. This process allowed them to better support counties when they had questions, check-in with counties to see if they needed help or support and ensure the appropriate people within the CCYA were receiving statewide messaging related to NYTD. This additional level of assistance and oversight has proven successful in identifying issues early on and working with the CCYAs and PCG to rectify them.

Serving Youth Across the State

Each of the 67 CCYAs receive Chafee Program funds to provide required IL services to youth in foster care or who have discharged from foster care. CCYAs provide descriptions of their IL programs as part of their annual NBPB submission and may use the NBPB process to request state funds to meet any increased need or expand services. CCYAs and their service providers may tailor services to meet a youth's assessed needs and may provide services individually, in a group setting or a combination of both.

OCYF and the CWRC monitor IL programming through on-site visits and annual licensing. CCYAs must complete a pre-site visit assessment prior to the visit, which includes some AFCARS data. CCYAs participating in the QSR collect information through case record reviews and key informant interviews, which provides insight into the quality of IL services being provided within that county. Specific Indicators measuring outcomes for older youth include safety, stability, living arrangement, well-being, academic status, and pathways to independence. QSR status indicators also measure local practice related to youth engagement, role and voice of the youth, teaming, assessment and understanding, long-term view, planning for transitions and life adjustments. Pennsylvania continues to explore further analysis of this QSR data pertaining to older youth.

Pennsylvania does not currently have a statewide data system that tracks Chafee services, therefore OCYF currently relies upon NYTD served data. According to NYTD, in 2018, PA had 5,780 youth between the ages of 14-21 who received at least one IL service. The top three service areas broken down by region are as follows:

- Southeast: Career Prep, Budgeting and Health Education
- Northeast: Career Prep, Budgeting and Health Education
- Central: Academic Support, Budgeting and Health Education
- Western: Career Prep, Budgeting and Health Education

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

Since the last reporting period, based on Pennsylvania's monitoring of IL programs through the CWRC, the following areas highlight ongoing progress toward serving the needs of older youth across the state. CCYAs have recognized the

importance of ensuring youth have access to services in the community in which they live. This allows youth to become familiar with services they can continue to access as they transition into adulthood. The CCYAs also work to ensure the services are easily accessible, taking into consideration transportation needs and hours of operation, as well as if the services are culturally appropriate.

Through the IL site visit process and feedback from youth, the need has been identified to provide resources and services for youth whose primary language is not English. For example, one CCYA identified the need for language interpretation services for a youth who had difficulty expressing herself during a focus group. The PA YAB also recognized the need to have support and resources available for youth whose primary language is not English and had begun to offer resources in both English and Spanish to accommodate that population of youth. The YAB also collaborated with the CWRC and JLC to have the KYR manual translated to Spanish.

CCYAs have also identified barriers to engaging certain populations through information reported in IL site visits. These populations include youth with disabilities, severe mental health issues or an IDD diagnosis. Regionally there have been gaps related to services and resources to assist those youth who identify as LGBTQIA+ in addressing issues of racial equity. These issues are often found in more rural areas of Pennsylvania, as many of our larger cities have abundant resources and services. Through the IL site visit process, counties have been asked to report on how they are meeting the needs of the vulnerable populations of youth. Pennsylvania is working to gauge where we are as a state in providing services, identifying the barriers to services, and determining how we can support counties and ensure older youth are connected to these crucial supports. The goal is to reduce disparities in outcomes for all vulnerable youth in Pennsylvania, including Black and brown youth, those who identify as LGBTQIA+, pregnant or parenting youth and youth with disabilities.

While there have been barriers identified, there have also been promising practices shared across Pennsylvania. The site visit process highlighted connecting youth with disabilities to case managers at county mental health agencies to ensure a smooth transition from youth serving to adult serving systems. There are also county-wide workgroups to support transition age youth and their diverse needs, and life skills material has been developed with specific curriculum to assist developmentally disabled youth in learning skills at their own pace. These accommodations allow them to earn stipends just as their peers do.

Resources for Youth Identifying as LGBTQIA+

CCYAs continue to ensure that youth who identify as LGBTQIA+ are connected to the most appropriate supports and resources. Counties with a wealth of resources continue to build on that strength. Counties who lack resources have worked hard to connect to services in neighboring counties or even virtually. Some CCYAs utilized national resources, while others have been able to identify local resources to support this population. Programs within schools, campus events, existing support groups and

therapists who specialize in working with this population are examples of resources utilized to address this gap in services. Additionally, the utilization of resources such as The Gender Quest Workbook: A Guide for Teens and Young Adults Exploring Gender Identity has also been used to support this population of youth.

IL staff have also assisted youth in finding medical providers specializing in gender reassignment procedures and connected youth to hospital-based gender clinics. Over the past year, some of the promising practices in this area include using the Intersections Program in Cumberland County, which offers Child Preparation (permanency services) for older youth in the LGBTQIA+ community. The program is specific to youth at the intersectionality of being in foster care while experiencing life as someone who identifies as LGBTQIA+.

The CWRC continues to monitor the registration process for youth events to ensure they are inclusive to all participants. They also continue to provide training related to this population and connect counties with experts in the field when necessary to assist them in supporting and affirming LGBTQIA+ youth and addressing their needs. CCYAs have also, in some cases, updated their referral forms and electronic system to include "preferred pronouns." This system change is an area of continued resource and training development over the next year.

Mentoring

In addition to formal mentoring services, the past year has demonstrated other unique opportunities for mentorship to occur informally. CCYAs report this occurs through connections made at IL groups and life skills classes where older youth are talking to younger youth about how they benefitted from participating in IL services. Another area noted through IL site visits is older parenting youth mentoring the younger parenting youth, providing them encouragement and support.

Housing

Housing in Pennsylvania remains an ongoing challenge due to the lack of access to safe, affordable, and age-appropriate housing for older youth. This challenge has been exacerbated in many areas due to the pandemic and eviction moratoriums. As a result, waiting lists for housing that youth qualify for are extremely long, and landlords have increased rent to unfeasible amounts.

CCYAs and providers continue to explore creative ways to provide housing to youth by utilizing various options, including federal, state, and local programs. The most commonly used housing resources reported in site visits are resource family homes, transitional living programs, and supervised independent living programs (SIL). Counties have also routinely used unlicensed supervised independent living (U-SIL) which is most commonly used to support youth in host homes or college campuses. Tenant Protection Vouchers have also been used successfully for older youth who have aged out of care and are under 24 years of age. These vouchers cover the majority of

monthly housing costs. CCYAs continue to report success in using the Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers.

The CCYAs are also working to establish relationships with local landlords to ease their apprehension about renting to young people without a credit or rental history. Some CCYAs report providing youth with a list of landlords who will rent to them. Another approach to working with landlords has been teaming to help youth find apartments, and discussions with landlords about the rental assistance provided by CCYAs to encourage landlords to rent to young adults.

Feedback received through site visit reports, IL networking sessions, and training requests have described many barriers counties face when it comes to using the Fostering Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers. As a state, we continue to navigate the FYI voucher process, as it has been implemented very differently from county to county. While many CCYAs have reported interest and attempts at obtaining the vouchers, they report having faced many barriers. Finding a landlord willing to accept the voucher, the amount of time allotted to submit the appropriate paperwork, and confusion within the housing authority regarding eligibility are just a few of the challenges experienced. Counties with existing relationships with their housing authorities seemed to fair better than those CCYAs that did not. A formal survey of county agencies also revealed they felt they had no identified support in addressing these challenges when they were encountered.

Additionally, a CCYA reported through their site visit that they are exploring a partnership with a local college to provide apartments for older youth. The college would be providing two or three suites for youth who may or may not be enrolled in college but would like the experience of living on campus and need assistance with housing. Each suite holds four youth with a shared area and separate bedrooms. The building has a meal plan they can access, a Starbucks, parking for those with a car and access to the college gym. This housing option allows youth to remain in their community in a safe location where they also have access to services.

Stipends

CCYAs continue to monitor how to best support youth financially. They have been forced to be more flexible, especially considering the challenges youth continue to face because of the pandemic. CCYAs continue to offer youth stipends for participation in virtual life skills, completion of worksheets and in-person activities. CCYAs also continue to provide financial incentives for goal achievement that appeal to youth while catering to their individual needs.

Many CCYAs continue to offer savings or car match policies to support youth in obtaining and maintaining a vehicle, which is often necessary for youth to work. These stipends assist youth with obtaining the necessary registration documents and tags, gas money, money for repairs/maintenance and car insurance. CCYAs in some counties work with local mechanics to ensure youth are purchasing cars that are safe and run

well to alleviate the purchase of a "lemon" and exhausting all their savings. Another CCYA offered youth a microloan through their IL funding for up to $1,500 following the completion of a financial literacy class. The loan is low interest, and youth who have taken advantage of it often use it to purchase a car. Using Division X dollars, CCYAs were able to assist youth with transportation, including purchasing emergency car kits, gas cards, AAA, the purchase of vehicles, up to six months of car insurance coverage and driving lessons.

Normalcy

During the IL site visit process CCYAs are asked to look at normalcy beyond the scope of a youth's involvement in IL services. In general, CCYAs ensure normalcy for older youth in care by allowing them to obtain a driver's license, assisting them in behind the wheel driving instruction, and in some cases helping resource families with the financial burden of high insurance deductibles for young drivers. Other areas CCYAs support normalcy is through the language they include in all contracts as an expectation for providers working with older youth.

Driving is an important part of normalcy for older youth. To teach them about the responsibilities associated with driving, one CCYA utilized Impact Teen Drivers, an organization based out of California, to provide a webinar to youth free-of-charge. The webinar focused on Pennsylvania youth and educated the youth about distracted driving, both when operating the vehicle and when they are passengers. Youth who attended were provided with gift cards for their participation.

With an increased focus on wellness, CCYAs have been creative in providing age-appropriate access to activities such as collaborating with local YMCAs to get passes for the youth to utilize their facilities. Other activities include forming walking groups with the youth to get them outside and away from "screens." Some programs have frequently incorporated yoga and mindfulness activities in their life skills sessions to help youth with coping mechanisms.

Permanency

Permanency for all older youth remains a priority for Pennsylvania. In PA, a wealth of resources and initiatives are utilized to help youth obtain legal permanency and assist youth in developing permanent connections with trusted adults. These include The Permanency Round Tables, Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange, Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) units of service, Family Finding, and the Older Child Matching Initiative (OCMI).

A promising practice reported by a county through site visits included a media campaign to identify more resource families for older youth. Two older youth were featured in a commercial to promote the need for more families willing to accept older youth into their homes. The commercial will be aired at local baseball games and on television. The CCYA also invested in developing and launching a new website that is

specific to foster parent needs, recruitment, training, and resources. They also paid to have one of the public transportation buses wrapped with an advertisement highlighting the need and the rewards of fostering older youth.

Over the past year, the PA Youth Advisory Board created a permanency game with the purpose to educate youth and help them understand their permanency options. This was based on feedback from youth who expressed that they often feel misinformed due to a lack of communication or explanation regarding permanency goals and their hierarchy. The permanency game gives youth a hands-on experience demonstrating the challenges and benefits of finding permanency. The game was designed for in person play. However, it has since been created for virtual engagement and is available on the YAB website (http://www.payab.pitt.edu/game/). CCYAs also continue to utilize the YAB Introductory Questionnaire (http://forms.cwrc.pitt.edu/youthquestionnaire/) as well as the Top Ten Tips developed by youth (http://www.payab.pitt.edu/Top10Tips.htm) as resources to help youth find permanency.

Education

CCYAs report through site visits that much of the past year has been spent engaging or re-engaging youth in their academic endeavors. This work includes high school students transitioning back into in-person learning and students whose post-secondary education was disrupted by the pandemic. One CCYA example includes the development of a weekly educational support group. This group includes presentations on education related topics, group study sessions and individualized tutoring.

CCYAs encourage youth to utilize campus support programs at post-secondary institutions. While the goal of these programs is to increase student enrollment, retention and graduation, they have been instrumental in meeting the basic needs of students as well as providing support during the pandemic. The Foster Care to College Program is an excellent resource for staff working with older youth in Pennsylvania and supporting them in post-secondary education. The list of campus support programs continues to grow each year (https://fieldcenteratpenn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Campus-Programming-Directory-2021-1.pdf).

CCYAs receive resources regarding financial aid options, the tuition waiver program, SAT waivers, and post-secondary education institutions offering campus support to current and/or former foster youth from the CWRC via the Older Youth Weekly Resource Email. The CWRC also continues to promote the use of the Pennsylvania Student Aid Guide provided through Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA). Financial aid information is also shared at statewide events, including the annual Older Youth Retreat.

The CWRC continues to process SAT waivers for youth across the state. Table 30 provides a breakdown of the waivers processed for SFY 2020-21.

Table 30. SAT Waivers – Statewide, SFY 2020-21

Month	Reasoning Waivers	Subject Waivers
July 2020	*0*	*0*
August 2020	*1*	*0*
September 2020	*2*	*1*
October 2020	*1*	*5*
November 2020	*1*	*1*
December 2020	*0*	*0*
January 2021	*4*	*1*
February 2021	*1*	*1*
March 2021	*2*	*0*
April 2021	*1*	*1*
May 2021	*1*	*1*
June 2021	*0*	*0*
Total	***14***	***11***

Employment

Pennsylvania CCYAs work hard to assist youth in obtaining and maintaining employment. Employment is another area that CCYAs partner with agencies in the community to help support their youth. This support often includes interview preparation, job searches, job placement programs, enrollment in certification courses and on the job training opportunities. CareerLink remains one of the most commonly used employment services across the state. This collaboration is a great example of how both the public and private sectors assist youth in becoming more independent through obtaining and maintaining employment.

Several CCYAs reported through site visits that they utilize career assessments with youth when assisting them in obtaining employment. In Beaver County youth 21 year of age or older and under 23 years of age in aftercare participate in career assessments and receive ongoing mentoring as they work on clearly defined goals for their career and their life. Centre County utilizes Career Cruising which assists youth in grades K-12 to achieve college, career and future readiness results. They also utilized Career Clusters, which group occupations with similar features, knowledge or skill sets with older youth. If a youth is interested in a job in a particular cluster, they are more likely to enjoy related occupations in the group. Career Key, which is also utilized, helps

older youth identify and plan for the best "fit" careers and education programs where they will thrive.

Erie County's approach to addressing gaps in the workforce for their youth was extremely innovative. The youth were proud to share their youth driven business (a food truck) operationalized and run by them with staff support (https://www.ilpsnackshack.org/). This business has been the agency's visions for years and has taken many hours to achieve. Since its opening, the program has successfully provided employment opportunities for youth while allowing them to also experience the business end of the project. The food truck transitions to a catering business in the winter and reopens for travel once the weather improves. Youth involved in the project provided an overview to other youth and staff at a statewide YAB meeting to encourage others to explore this type of business adventure.

Another unique opportunity shared through IL site visits was a Youth Media Development Project. This project seeks to produce podcasts, applications and electronic calendars to engage youth and share successes and resources with the public. The program is working closely with Community Access Media to educate youth on the use of technical equipment. All these experiences will be beneficial to youth as they explore potential job opportunities.

In many rural counties, public transportation does not exist. Therefore, youth need to drive or have another form of reliable transportation to maintain employment. One CCYA is combatting this challenge by partnering with a program called "YAP Works," which focuses on future economic opportunities for older youth. YAP Works has 26 modules that build skills such as making connections, advocating, job skills, community components, interviewing, resume building and skills on how to maintain a job. Youth receive these services as YAP provides transportation to and from work.

Another way CCYAs have supported youth employment over the last year is to establish relationships with businesses in their local community. One CCYA partnered with several local businesses to help youth gain experience in employment areas that interest them. For example, they have a youth interested in nursing, so the CCYA worked with a nursing home to assist the youth in being hired as a personal care aide. This experience allowed the youth to have a job that matched their future career interests. This youth was able to see what it is like to work around the nursing staff and residents. In another situation, the CCYA was able to connect youth with the Human Resources Department at the nursing home that is willing to assist the county in the future if they have a youth interested in a similar career choice. They also have a connection at a local mechanic shop for youth interested in a career in auto mechanics where youth can shadow mechanics to get experience and hands on training. Finally, they have access to a program through a local ski resort, where youth can get hired into an employment program with the resort. Youth are also provided housing while they are working there.

Additional examples of employment shared through site visits were five to six older youth who worked with a local painting agency after a gentleman in the community reached out with the opportunity. Youth assisted in painting homes and apartments. Networking with other older youth was a bonus to the summer employment opportunity. The youth who worked with the painting company wrote thank you cards to the owner after the summer employment opportunity. This endeavor help youth understand the importance of networking and maintaining connections.

According to NYTD, in FFY 2021, PA had 12,322 youth and young adults between the ages of 14 to 23 who received at least one IL service. The top three service areas broken down by region are as follows:

- *Southeast: Other Financial Assistance, Academic Support and Health Education*
- *Northeast: Other Financial Assistance, Budgeting/Financial Management and Health Education*
- *Central: Budgeting/Financial Management, Health Education and Housing Education*
- *Western: Health Education, Housing Education and Budgeting/Financial Management*

Serving Youth of Various Ages and Stages of Achieving Independence

Pennsylvania does not have any statutory or administrative barriers to serving a broad range of youth, which is evidenced by the policies in place to serve youth not meeting Chafee Program eligibility using state and local funds. Pennsylvania does not currently have a statewide data system to track Chafee services. CCYAs report on the number of youths being served during their annual NBPB process. Many CCYAs report during the NBPB process and their annual IL review that they are serving youth younger than 14, delinquent-only youth, and youth receiving in-home services.

Act 91 of 2012 amended various provisions of the Juvenile Act by expanding the criteria to allow youth to stay in care past age 18 and by allowing youth to request the courts to resume dependency jurisdiction and re-enter care before turning 21 if they discharged within 90 days of attaining age 18 or left care any time after reaching the age of 18. State policy requires that for every youth in foster care age 14 and older, an assessment of needs is administered, and services are provided to meet those identified needs. CCYAs are also able to use state funds to provide IL services to delinquent youth, youth under age 14 or non-foster youth who may benefit from IL Services.

Service delivery approaches vary by county to allow for the best possible approach based on the size, provider network, staff resources, distance, and caregiver support. CCYAs provide services in both group and individual settings to best meet the

needs of the youth. It is common for agencies to use a combination of individual and group service delivery to youth. CCYAs are required to create a transition plan during the 90-day period immediately prior to the date the youth will be discharged from substitute care between the ages 18 and 21, CCYAs must **"**provide the child with assistance and support in developing a Transition Plan that is personalized at the direction of the youth, includes specific options on housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentors and continuing support services, and workforce supports and employment services, and is as detailed as the child may elect" (P.L. 110-351, Section 475 (5)(H)).

Per OCYF Bulletin 3130-14-01, *Youth IL Services Guidelines,* transition planning with youth should include the following elements or activities:

- A coordinated set of activities oriented toward producing results;
- Engagement, assistance and support to youth to create and nurture their full participation and ownership, from the planning process through the plan implementation;
- An ongoing, thoughtful and coordinated process which involves collaboration between the youth, service providers, family or non-family members, and other key resource providers;
- A youth-driven or directed planning process that serves the youth's best interest and promotes safety, permanence, and well-being; and
- Results in a Transition Plan that is personalized at the direction of the youth through staff/agency support and assistance and includes specific options on housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentors and continuing support services, workforce supports and employment services.

CCYAs are also utilizing methods such as FGDM, Family Finding, teaming, and transition conferences to ensure that plans are thorough and that supports are in place to help achieve the plan. These practices are also beneficial in identifying permanent connections for youth.

Aftercare (AC) services are defined as IL services available to any youth who exited substitute care on or after his or her 14th birthday and prior to his or her 21st birthday. The former resource family, group home or residential childcare provider, CCYA or a contracted provider may provide AC services. AC services may include the full range of services available to IL participants, including any service areas addressed in the assessment, counseling and/or stipends. The provision of AC services is mandatory, and the AC services provided to an individual youth must be described in the youth's plan. Youth electing to discontinue participation with voluntary services are eligible to re-request services up to age 21. Room and board services may be provided to those youth who are discharged on or after age 18 up to age 21.

OCYF does not prescribe the use of a tool or assessment to determine which youth are likely to remain in foster care because all youth must have their needs assessed within 45 days of attaining age 14. The majority of CCYAs and their private

providers use either the Ansell-Casey or Daniel Memorial life skills assessment tools. Many CCYAs develop supplemental assessment tools for foster parents and other caregivers to complete with youth in their care. Multiple assessment tools contribute to more effectively identifying the needs of youth and helping to measure their progress towards self-sufficiency. County programs implement a myriad of programs and services because of the needs identified through the assessment processes.

Pennsylvania redefines Chafee funded IL Room and Board services as financial aid and casework support to include payment or reimbursements for shelter, food, rent, security deposits, utilities, furniture, household items and other start-up expenses that may be incurred for youth who have exited substitute care on or after age 18. Chafee Room and Board funds may also be used to meet one-time or startup expenses for youth ages 18-21 who opt to remain in, or re-enter, foster care and for whom the court resumes dependency jurisdiction. These funds may not be used to supplement costs of a supervised IL setting or current foster family care per diem rate, extend substitute care beyond age 18, or resume dependency jurisdiction, up to age 21. IL Room and Board services are fundable through the IL Services Grant Chafee funds and the OCYF Special Grant Housing Initiative with state and local funds only. The CCYA may use allocated and available Housing Initiative funds for Chafee Program eligible youth after Chafee funds have been exhausted.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Pennsylvania continues to support former foster youth in aftercare services and provide supports up to their 23rd birthday. CCYAs can use federal, state and local dollars to support this expansion.

Through site visit reports CCYAs reported that many older youth opted to remain in care over the last year. This can be attributed to the level of engagement programs are offering youth as well as the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. Youth reported through focus groups that they value the support CCYAs continue to offer them until they reach 23 years of age. This allows CCYAs extra time to plan with youth for their eventual discharge and supports a greater likelihood of success. Youth are also made aware of their ability to re-enter care and the process to request re-entry.

Young adults receiving aftercare services are afforded the same support they received when they were in care. However, there are specific supports that older youth are accessing through aftercare, including money management, assistance with becoming involved in adult or community resources/services, career-oriented assistance, access to post-secondary education and housing assistance. These young adults typically have a good knowledge base and need support during unexpected life changes or circumstances. The primary goal of the CCYAs remains to support youth when they make mistakes and be there to help them learn and grow from life's challenges.

Some CCYAs have also reported increased housing supports that can help prepare youth to buy a house instead of renting, including a more in-depth understanding of financial responsibilities and credit. In Westmoreland County, they began utilizing a new credit building program for older youth in which the youth can open a line of credit, use the credit card and make payments on it. The CCYA provides the youth with education regarding making smart decisions, including what to look for when applying for a credit card. The staff also check in with the youth, review the statements from the card and assist the youth with checking their credit scores. Additionally, the youth also attend a life skills group focusing on credit and money management.

Collaboration with Other Private and Public Agencies

Collaboration sets the foundation for best practice as defined within the Practice Model. Collaboration with public and private sectors that occurs at both the state and local level is of critical importance in efforts to achieve positive outcomes for older youth. TA representatives from SWAN, CWRC, AOPC, ABA, and OCYF Regional Offices continue to form strong collaborative relationships to better assist CCYA as they plan for increased SWAN utilization, NYTD, and IL services. All IL site visits continue to include invitations to SWAN TAs, OCYF Regional office staff, and youth to attend in partnership with CWRC, to coordinate services and ensure positive youth outcomes. The goal is that increased knowledge and skills among CCYA and SWAN affiliate agencies will result in more services being provided to older youth.
The success of IL services is dependent upon collaboration, involvement and support of statewide and community agencies, programs and schools as well as birth families, resource families and other placement provider staff where IL youth reside. Education and training, substance abuse and other prevention services, job readiness and the ability to access employment and housing are critical to the successful transition of youth from placement to independence. The development of cooperative and collaborative relationships between the CCYAs and other service providing systems and agencies is vital to the success of these services. Examples of collaborative efforts:

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) MOU was established by the Governor's Executive Order in 1998 titled Interagency Committee to Coordinate Services Provided to Individuals with Disabilities.

- The Pennsylvania Community on Transition (PACT) is a partnership with youth, young adults, family members, higher education, employers and other stakeholders to build and support sustainable community partnerships to create opportunities for youth and young adults with disabilities to transition smoothly from secondary education to the post-secondary outcomes of competitive employment; education, training and lifelong learning; community participation and healthy lifestyles.

- PACT State Leadership Team (SLT) plans the annual Pennsylvania Transition Conference. The primary purpose of this conference is to expand the capacity of

community partners to promote the successful transition of youth/young adults with disabilities to post-school outcomes of employment, post-secondary education and training, community participation and healthy lifestyles.

- Local Transition Coordinating Councils (LTCC) are a collaborative effort at the local level where services are delivered. There are currently over 70 LTCCs operating across PA with teams that are either school or county based.

- The JLC, CWRC, and OCYF collaborate on multiple projects affecting youth, including the Know Your Rights Manual, YAB and the Youth Retreat.

- AOPC workgroups which are comprised of representatives from OCYF, JLC, Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, CWRC, and county staff (including administrators, solicitors, IL staff, and judges/masters).

- CCYA collaborate at the local level with multiple community agencies to provide services to youth. These include local transition councils, WIA, colleges and universities, Career Link, PHEAA, juvenile courts, mental health/IDD offices, unemployment offices, JPO, family planning programs, vocational trainings, schools and universities.

- The YAB is an example of a strong collaboration between youth, service providers, CCYA, OCYF, CWRC, JLC, and communities. (See also previous section on Description of Program Design and Delivery).

- Youth Ambassadors and YQIS are integral in evaluating the effectiveness of IL programs, educating other youth in foster care, and participating in leadership positions for child welfare initiatives. Many trainings and TA activities are led or co-led by youth leaders across PA. In addition to these extended employment opportunities, CWRC continued to coordinate and financially support youth involvement in statewide and local trainings, committee participation and leadership, cross-systems focus groups, conferences, and short-term activities or events.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

Overall, CCYAs in Pennsylvania embrace cross system collaborations in their efforts to support youth in successfully transitioning into adulthood. Most notably, CCYAs have worked hard over the past several years to ensure that youth are connected to adult serving systems before leaving the child serving system. Lackawanna County offers a model for improving collaboration across multiple systems for professionals working with older youth to help ensure better outcomes. The collaboration allows for increased communication and effective service delivery across multiple systems working with youth in transition.

The ongoing collaboration between OCYF, the CWRC, SWAN and other stakeholders to support older youth in Pennsylvania continues. These groups support

staff and youth in various ways, including resource sharing, training regarding best practices and ongoing technical assistance. These groups work to ensure training is provided to child welfare workers and stakeholders working with older youth to help them understand their role in assisting youth in a successful transition to adulthood.

SWAN and the Pennsylvania IL project have partnered more intentionally over the past year to focus on the collaboration between permanency services providers and independent living providers. Because the same older youth access both services, these entities are working to ensure that challenges and barriers to collaboration are identified and addressed. This focus has included training on the SWAN services for older youth, panels of older youth speaking to their peers about their permanency journey and webinars. Other additional partnering included an overview of Post Adoption Contact Agreements (PACA), as connections to biological family and kin are essential to many youths. The permanency service providers and independent living networks were surveyed over the past year to identify success in collaboration, barriers or challenges they face in collaboration and training needs. Over the next year, SWAN and the IL Project will work to address these challenges through facilitated discussions, training and technical assistance.

Determining Eligibility for Benefits and Services

OCYF instruction to CCYAs is very comprehensive regarding eligibility criteria for services and benefits. Every youth, including youth known to the agency but not in foster care, with an assessed need should be afforded IL services and supports. This broad eligibility criterion is made possible by approving county requested state funds that require a local match. CCYAs are also instructed to serve former foster youth who may now reside in a different county or state. Finally, as per federal requirements, services are available for youth moving into Pennsylvania.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

Requirements for determining eligibility for benefits and services remains the same. Pennsylvania currently has no federally or state recognized tribes within its jurisdiction. All CCYA's are required to assess and provide IL services to youth 14-23 years of age and provide information as it relates to the Chafee ETG program. OCYF Bulletin, 3130-14-01, Youth Independent Living Services Guidelines details the guidelines and requirements associated with PA IL services. Information regarding ETG program is made public at https://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml.

Cooperation in National Evaluations

Pennsylvania will cooperate in any national evaluations of the effects of the programs in achieving the purposes of the Chafee Program.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

Pennsylvania was not involved in any national evaluations related to the Chafee Program during this reporting period. The state will cooperate in any national evaluations of its Chafee Program upon request.

Chafee Training

CWRC maintains trainings specific to Chafee on its main website, which include:

- Engaging Older Youth (Caseworker)
- Engaging Older Youth (Supervisor)
- Foundations of Independent Living: An Overview
- Engaging Older Youth: Caseworker Preparation
- Engaging Older Youth: Supervisor Preparation
- Independent Living Services, An Overview: Module 1 Purpose and Policy
- Independent Living Services, An Overview: Module 2 Adolescent Issues-Risk and Resiliency

The CWRC provides trainings specific to CCYAs upon request. Chafee trainings are provided during the four SWAN/IL quarterly trainings, and an annual permanency conference. These trainings provide CCYAs and private agency staff, workers in adoption and IL, and resource families the opportunity to learn about the services, the importance of each and how to access them.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

CCYAs are asked to report their training and technical assistance needs through the IL site visit process. The responses are compiled annually, reviewed by the Older Youth Continuous Improvement Team, prioritized and shared with the CWRC Curriculum Department for training updates and development. Over the past year, requests have included training topics related to youth engagement/re-engagement (post pandemic), helping youth develop healthy permanent connections, housing assistance specifically as it relates to FYI vouchers and how to support youth with significant MH/IDD needs. There have also been requests for racial equity training for youth and staff, how to best support youth who identify as LGBTQIA+ and engaging families of older youth.

In an effort to educate staff working with older youth and share best practices, the CWRC offers ongoing webinars which are free of charge and available to CCYAs, providers, stakeholders and system partners. The CWRC continues to develop and maintain trainings specific to older youth on both the YAB and the CWRC websites. The collaboration between the IL project and SWAN continues to be strong and focused on delivering regional and statewide training across the state.

Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program

In Pennsylvania, the ETV is known as the Chafee ETG program. DHS maintains an Interagency Agreement with PHEAA to implement the program and distribute the federal funds to the educational institutions that youth attend. PHEAA maintains all grant and scholarship information on all eligible students and provides OCYF with an annual list of all award recipients and amounts given per student. PHEAA works in collaboration with other federal educational assistance programs and higher educational institutions to avoid duplication and to ensure that there is no duplication of benefits and the amount the youth receives does not exceed the total cost of attendance.

Eligible current and former foster youth may receive up to $5,000 per year to help with college or post-secondary education costs. To apply, an individual must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form and the ETG Program Application form. Funds are awarded on a first-come, first served basis as determined by the receipt date of the completed application for Pennsylvania undergraduate students who are attending a post-secondary institution approved for the federal Title IV student financial assistance programs. ETG awards are based on the youth's actual cost of attendance and the amount of funds awarded to the state. ETG in Pennsylvania is considered after all other gift aid and scholarships are applied to a student's balance as to meet the requirement that ETG funds do not exceed the cost of attendance. ETG differs from a scholarship that is awarded based on the funder's criteria and shorter application period, determined in advance of an academic period, and awarded early. If a student does not attend the school, the award amount is not redistributed to other students.

Approved institutions include those that: admit only students with a high school diploma or equivalent; award a bachelor's degree or offer not less than a two-year program that provides credit toward a degree; are public or non-profit; are accredited or pre-accredited; provide not less than one year of training toward gainful employment; and admit only students beyond the age of compulsory school attendance. Awards for out-of-state institutions are contingent upon the cooperation between the institution and PHEAA. ETG funds are used to pay tuition costs and other school-related expenses such as textbooks, supplies, computers, and living expenses.

ETG funds may be used to cover expenses including, but not limited to, tuition, books and supplies, computers (if required by the course) and living expenses. ETG grant money may not be used for costs associated with school preparation, such as completion of the SAT. However, funding is available for these activities through the existing county Chafee allocation for IL services and SAT waivers through the College Board. SAT waivers are managed by CWRC with letters sent out annually to all CCYAs and IL providers with information on how to obtain one for eligible students.

PHEAA and their regional offices provide financial aid assistance to county caseworkers and IL providers for youth desiring to attend college or a trade school. DHS/OCYF and the CWRC partner with PHEAA on an annual basis to provide training

and resources to CCYAs. PHEAA has 13 Regional Managers that are assigned specific counties to manage throughout the state. Regional Managers not only provide educational material and assistance during local high school college fairs but hold 40 counselor workshops annually. Additionally, Regional Managers are available to answer questions on an individual basis if an IL Coordinator/Worker would require assistance with the financial aid process for a youth they support.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

In Pennsylvania, ETG eligibility includes youth who are or were in foster care or discharged from foster care on or after attaining age 16 or exited foster care on or after age 16 to adoption or permanent legal guardianship to age 26. OCYF opted into the provisions of Family First to extend eligibly to youth until their 26th birthday on July 1, 2020. Youth are eligible to participate in the program for 5 years, whether or not consecutive. A complete list of ETG eligibility requirements can be found by visiting https://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml.

Act 16 of 2019, The Fostering Independence Through Education Act (Act 16 of 2019), established the Fostering Independence Through Education Waiver Program, known as FosterEd. FosterEd provides a tuition waiver program for eligible students in the foster care system. FosterEd requires Pennsylvania postsecondary institutions to award a waiver of tuition and to waive mandatory fees for Pennsylvania resident youth who meet federal Chafee ETG eligibility requirements and who have applied for all available federal and state grants. Specifically:

- *The tuition waiver is applied to the balance of tuition and mandatory fees after all federal and state grants and other scholarships for which they qualify have been subtracted;*
- *Tuition waivers apply to both public (state) colleges and universities, community colleges, private post-secondary schools and other schools;*
- *Eligible youth may receive the tuition waiver for five years, which need not be consecutive, or until age 26; and*
- *Each school must establish a Point of Contact who will serve as the primary contact for eligible youth, and provide support related to eligibility for the program including accessing federal and state financial aid and information and referrals to off-campus support services, including housing and medical insurance and services.*

The FosterEd program began the fall semester of 2020. As this program is still in its infancy, DHS/OCYF continues to collaborate with PDE, Labor and Industry and PHEAA to ensure the success of the program. Pennsylvania also saw a 25% increase in students by implementing the FosterEd program. Information about the FosterEd program can be found at https://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/foster-education.shtml.

Pennsylvania worked with our CCYA partners, the CWRC, PHEAA, PDE and The Center for Schools and Communities to provide instruction on how to support youth and young adults whose postsecondary education was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency. Our CCYA partners were able to connect youth and young adults with housing and technology services and supports, as needed. CCYAs reached out to offer financial assistance to ensure food and transportation needs were met so they could continue to focus on their education. Additionally, OCYF provided CCYAs with a list of 173 students who had unenrolled during the onset of COVID – 19 so they could reach out to them to provide assistance as needed.

On December 27, 2020, the President signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Public Law (P.L.) 116-260. The law provides additional appropriations for specified federal agencies and provides flexibilities and assistance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency. The law also contains House Resolution 7947, the Supporting Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic Act, known as Division X.

Section 3 of Division X provides an increase in funding and in program flexibilities related to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee) and the Education and Training Grant (ETG). As it relates to ETG, Division X, expanded the age to include eligible youth through age 26 or until their 27th birthday through September 30, 2021, and increases the maximum ETG award amount from $5,000 to $12,000 for the period of October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2022. ETG program flexibilities are effective only during the COVID-19 public health emergency period and they include:

- *Allows states to waive the enrollment in a postsecondary education or training program or making satisfactory academic progress (SAP) toward completion of that program requirement.*
- *Allows states to use ETG to help support youth to remain enrolled in a post-secondary education or training program, including expenses that are not part of the cost of attendance.*

Based upon the provisions and program flexibilities, Pennsylvania decided to waive the making satisfactory progress toward completing an education or training program criteria and allow youth to be enrolled under part time status. Pennsylvania did not waive the enrollment requirement.

Pennsylvania divided the supplemental ETG allotment over the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years. The supplemental ETG allotment for academic year 2020-2021 will bring the total population of students to receive the full maximum award amount of $5,000, regardless of need.

By implementing these new flexibilities, an analysis of the number of youth and young adults that could be impacted by the implementation of the flexibilities, Pennsylvania did not increase the maximum award amount based upon the number of

students currently enrolled and an additional 85 students now eligible. All students received the full ETG award amount of $5,000.

At the end of the 2020-2021 academic year, PHEAA conducted an analysis and provided OCYF with a recommendation to raise the ETG award amount to $6,000 for academic year 2021-2022. OCYF concurred and postsecondary institutions were notified of the change. The website for ETG was updated to provide applicants with the updated grant award. The State IL Coordinator provided guidance to youth and IL Coordinators across the state during IL networking session, YAB meetings and communication sent via the IL listserv.

The number of grants awarded for the past two school years is provided in Table 31 below and in Appendix B.

Table 31. ETV Grant Awards, School Years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021

	Total ETVs Awarded	Number of New ETVs
Final Number: **2020-2021 School Year** (July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021)	496 - $2,079,910	269 - $1,096,578
2021-2022 School Year (July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022)	502 - $2,530,981	206 - $1,033,990

Source [PHEAA] [April 2022]

Programs to Support Well-Being through the Special Grants Initiative (SGI)

Through the SGI, CCYAs can request funding through the annual NBPB process to support programs in their community designed to best meet the needs of the children and families they serve. SGI funds are available to cover EBPs, promising practices, truancy prevention, and housing and serve as a key mechanism for building a strong service array at the county level to address the well-being needs of children and youth. The SGI is funded through a combination of state and matching county funds. The required county match percentage varies depending on the SGI and ranges from five percent to 15 percent.

A CCYA may select as many EBPs as needed if each EBP meets a designated need of the population being served. OCYF sets the expectation that monitoring of the EBPs by CCYAs should occur to ensure fidelity and integrity to the EBP model is being met and to assess the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of the EBP. Results of the monitoring plan should provide CCYAs with data to assist in making informed decisions regarding continuation, expansion, or elimination of EBP. CCYAs who wish to implement EBPs must identify the website registry used to select the program when making their funding requests.

One of the most commonly requested and implemented EBPs in Pennsylvania is MST and can be found operating in 57 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. According to the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC), MST is an intensive family and community-based treatment for serious juvenile offenders with possible substance abuse issues and their families. Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) is an example of another EBP that promotes child well-being that is being utilized by CCYAs. The CEBEC describes TF-CBT as a joint child and parent psychotherapy model for children who are experiencing significant emotional and behavioral difficulties related to traumatic events. TF-CBT is currently being utilized in 16 counties. Examples of other EBPs requested by CCYAs that impact child well-being include Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Aggression Replacement Training (ART) and Healthy Families America.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

The CCYAs continue to request funding for all types of SGI programs based on the needs of the children and families they serve, with EBPs being the highest number of SGI programs requested. The most recent finalized data from SFY 19-20 based on final allocations shows statewide counties were funded for approximately 350 EBPs. Through a number of statewide initiatives, such as the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Program and the Complex Case Steering Committee, there is a strong focus on continuing to support counties in growing the array of EBPs available in their local communities to child safety and child and family well-being.

CFSR Well-Being Related Systemic Factor Assessment

Well-Being Service Array

The array of services to support the achievement of positive well-being outcomes for children who are involved with the child welfare system in Pennsylvania has continued to expand over the past several years. Strengths in the service array include well-established practice for identifying developmental needs of children and connecting them with EI services to address any concerns. Flexible funding streams also allow OCYF to support counties in implementing an array of EBPs that can be individualized to the specific needs of the local community through the SGI. In nearly every Pennsylvania county, FGDM or other models of family engagement are being leveraged to help families take a greater role in advocating for and identifying the resources, supports and services they need to ensure child safety and well-being. Pennsylvania also has made significant strides over the past five years in ensuring children's well-being through targeted monitoring of psychotropic medication usage among children in out-of-home placement.

During the CFSR in 2017, Pennsylvania was not found to be in substantial conformity with the CFSR service array systemic factor. Through stakeholder interviews that were conducted at the time, services to address child and parent trauma were noted as lacking, as well as substance abuse treatment options in some areas of

the state. As part of the efforts to reduce congregate care utilization, Pennsylvania will work to build the appropriate area of trauma-based services and treatment modalities needed to support children and youth with severe mental and behavioral health issues. Root cause analysis of the 2017 CFSR findings identified that challenges in ensuring the appropriate array of services are available can be traced back to lack of appropriate assessment practices, especially with regards to mental and behavioral health. Without proper identification of needs, services cannot be put in place to effectively help children and their families. When needs are not appropriately identified, it becomes difficult at both the state and county level to understand what services are truly needed and where gaps may exist. Pennsylvania's CFSR PIP contains strategies that have been integrated into the 2020-2024 CFSP and are targeted at improving assessment practices and how counties use identification of needs to drive the selection of services.

- *Assessment Since Last Report*

Monitoring the array of available well-being related services continues to be a priority for Pennsylvania and efforts to address permanency gaps are imbedded within the 2020-2024 CFSP.

As part of Pennsylvania's ongoing CQI efforts, feedback on strengths and challenges regarding the array of well-being supportive services in Pennsylvania continues to be gathered through ongoing case reviews, such as the QSR and CFSR, review of funding requests for services submitted to OCYF through the annual NBPB process, and annual CCYA licensing inspections. During the reporting period, due to the impact of COVID-19, limited qualitative case review information was available to support these monitoring efforts.

Based on existing feedback loops, services to support well-being for children who have complex physical and behavioral health needs has been identified as an area of concern by CCYAs and other stakeholders. Efforts to alleviate some of the identified gaps for this population continue to occur and some of the key work in this area is reflected under Permanency Objective 2.1 and Well-Being Objective 1.3 of this report.

Written Case Planning

One CFSR systemic factor that has been identified as critical to the achievement of positive safety, permanency and well-being outcomes focuses on ensuring all children have a written case plan that is developed in collaboration with the child (when developmentally appropriate) and his or her parents. A review of violations issued to counties as a result of annual CCYA licensing inspections confirms that agencies do consistently ensure children and youth have written case plans. During the CFSR in 2017, written case planning was identified as an area needing improvement for Pennsylvania due specifically to challenges in parental involvement. Further evaluation of parental engagement in case planning is outlined below in the assessment of Pennsylvania's performance related to CFSR Well-Being Outcome 1.

- *Assessment of Progress*

Information on written case plans obtained through annual licensing of CCYAs reveals that while case plans are generally completed for children and families, ongoing issues continue to emerge during licensing inspections related to timeliness of completion of plans, incomplete or missing information on plans, or plans lacking required signatures or evidence that parents were engaged in plan development.

Table 32. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Written Case Planning Requirements

	SFY 2016-2017	***SFY 2017-2018***	***SFY 2018-2019***	***SFY 2019-2020***	***SFY 2020-2021***
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	*37 counties*	*35 counties*	*45 counties*	*26 counties*	*21 counties*
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	*1 county*	*1 county*	*0 counties*	*1 county*	*2 counties*
Total Cases Cited	***266***	***212***	***287***	***216***	***77***
Total FSP Citations	***249***	***180***	***218***	***169***	***48***
Total CPP Citations	***17***	***32***	***69***	***47***	***22***
Total Counties Without Citation	***29***	***31***	***22***	***28 (of 54)***	***39 (of 60)***

Source [Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries], [May 2022]

A further analysis of citations issued related to case plans in SFY 2020-21, specifical family service plans (FSPs) and child permanency plans (CPPs, revealed the following:

- *Issues related to not meeting required timeframes for completion of case plans led to citations in approximately 25% of cases cited related to FSPs and 27% of cases cited related to CPPs.*
- *Citations issued due to plans never being completed or missing from the record were found in no cases related to FSPs and four cases related to CPPs.*
- *Missing or late signatures accounted for approximately 8% of citations issued related to FSPs and 5% of citations issued related to CPPs.*
- *Other issues commonly cited related to providing opportunities for parents and/or children to engage in plan development, documentation that parents were provided the opportunity to sign the plan and incorrect completion of plans (ex. missing required information). These types of citations were found in 67% of cases cited for FSP violations and 50% of cases cited for CPP violations.*

CFSR Well-Being Outcomes Assessment

OCYF utilizes the CFSR Well-Being Outcomes in the ongoing assessment and monitoring of performance related to ensuring the well-being of children and youth. Pennsylvania's performance on the three CFSR Well-Being Outcomes is discussed in detail below.

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

CFSR Well-Being Outcome 1 focuses on efforts made by the agency to work with families in identifying and addressing needs. Pennsylvania was not found to be in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1 during the 2017 CFSR as only 37% of the 65 cases reviewed were found to meet the federal practice standard of 95%. Well-Being Outcome 1 performance is determined through evaluation of agency practice related to the assessment of needs and services to children, parents and foster parents; engagement of the child and parents in case planning; and the quality of caseworker visits with children and parents.

With regards to Well-Being Outcome 1, CFSR results, as well as QSR findings and annual CCYA licensing inspections, revealed the following:

- During the 2017 CFSR, agency practice in assessing needs and providing services was found to be a strength more often for children and foster parents than for mothers and fathers;
- The CFSR also found that agency practice in assessing needs and providing services was more often a strength for agencies in working with mothers than when working with fathers;
- QSR data also found that the percentage of cases rated as acceptable regarding agency practices for assessment and understanding reflected similar patterns when comparing assessment of mothers to assessment of fathers;
- During the CFSR in 2017, engagement of non-custodial parents, fathers, incarcerated parents and parents residing out-of-state in case planning was a particular challenge for agencies.
- Nearly half of all counties were found to have violations related to written case planning during annual CCYA licensing inspections, with over half of all violations involving concerns with lack of parental involvement in the development of the family service plan and/or child permanency plan;
- The 2017 CFSR identified that the frequency of caseworker visits with children is generally sufficient, however, the quality of visits was not always such as to promote continued monitoring and support to children and families in achieving case plan goals; and
- The CFSR also found that agency practice regarding the frequency and quality of caseworker visits was often stronger when looking at practice with mothers than compared to fathers.

To address identified gaps areas revealed through this analysis, Pennsylvania incorporated strategies in the state's CFSR PIP to improve engagement practices with parents and strengthen the assessment of needs for children and parents. These strategies have been integrated into the strategies contained in the 2020-2024 CFSP.

- *Assessment Since Last Report*

During the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews conducted in 2019, Pennsylvania substantially achieved Well-Being Outcome 1 in 43% of applicable cases reviewed, which represents a slight improvement in performance compared to the 2017 baseline review. Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but conducted reviews between April and September of 2021. During the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews conducted between April and September of 2021, Pennsylvania was found to significantly improve in performance on Well- Being Outcome 1 by 55% of applicable cases reviewed. This is a 12% increase from the 2017 baseline data.

Performance on this permanency outcome is determined based on evaluation of state performance of CFSR Items 12 through 15.

<u>CFSR Item 12: Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess the needs of and provide services to children, parents, and foster parents and to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family?</u>

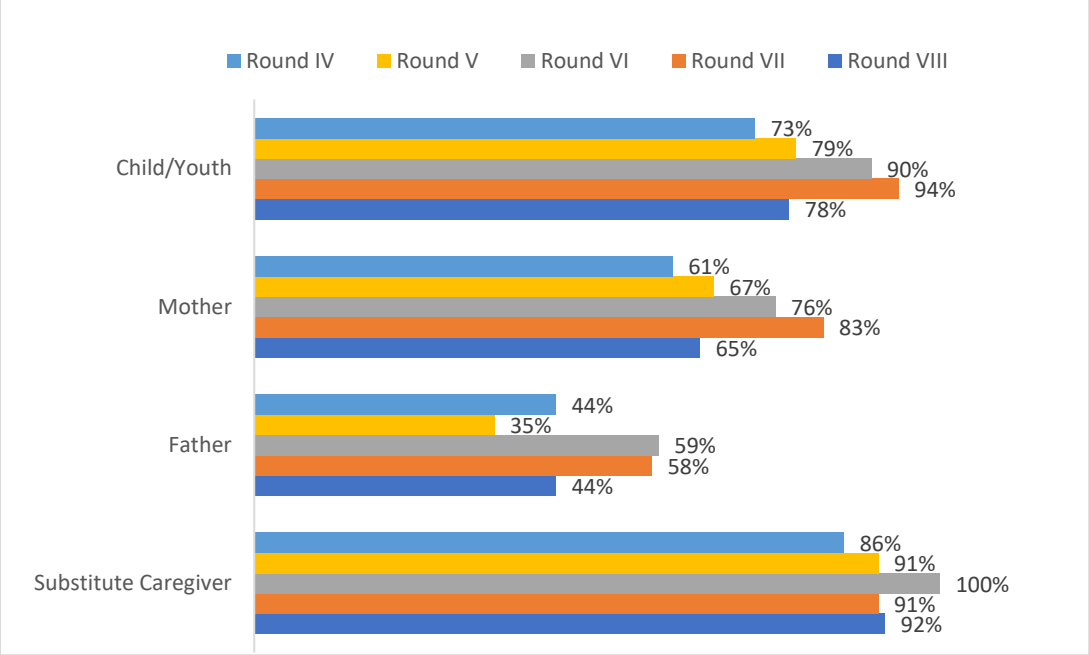
During the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews in 2019, 49% of all applicable cases reviewed were rated a strength on CFSR Item 12. Item 12 is the only CFSR item that is comprised of sub-items, which each looks at needs assessment and services specifically provided to children, parents, and foster parents. Concerning children, 78% of cases reviewed were rated as a strength on Item 12. When looking at Pennsylvania performance related to needs assessment and services to parents, 46% of applicable cases were rated a strength. Concerning mothers, the needs of mothers were found to be accurately assessed in 61% of cases, with appropriate services found to be provided in 61% of cases. The needs of fathers were determined to be accurately assessed in only 42% of cases, with appropriate services provided in 43% of cases. The agency was found to adequately assess the needs of foster/pre-adoptive parents in 84% of applicable cases, with appropriate services provided foster/pre-adoptive parents in 79% of applicable cases. Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but did conduct reviews between April and September of 2021.

During the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews in 2021, 58.5% of all applicable cases reviewed were rated a strength on CFSR Item 12. Concerning children, 80% of cases reviewed were rated as a strength on Item 12 A. Pennsylvania did also show improvement in its performance on Item 12B during 2021 PIP monitoring case reviews. Concerning mothers, the needs of mother were found to be accurately assessed at 58.9% which has surpassed Pennsylvania's target improvement goal of 54%. When

looking at meeting the needs of mothers, Pennsylvania accurately assessed their needs in 65% of the applicable cases. The needs of fathers were determined to be accurately assessed in 55% of applicable cases, and appropriate services were provided to meet both the mother and the father's needs in 59% of the cases respectfully.

During the QSRs, two different practice performance indicators are monitored to evaluate case practice related to assessment and understanding of the needs of children, parents, and foster parents as well as the adequacy of the services available to families served by the agency. Figure 6 provides findings from the past five rounds of the QSRs for the indicator "Assessment and Understanding." Similar to CFSR findings, performance related to assessment and understanding of needs for children and foster parents or substitute caregivers tended to be rated acceptable in a higher percentage of cases than seen for mothers and fathers during the QSRs. In addition, similar to the CFSR findings, practice related to assessing mothers was often rated acceptable in a higher percentage of cases than for fathers in the QSR. Table 33 depicts finding related to service adequacy from the QSRs conducted over the past five years. Due to COVID-19, no QSRs were conducted during Round X and Round XI.

Figure 6. Percentage of Cases rated Acceptable on "Assessment and Understanding"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

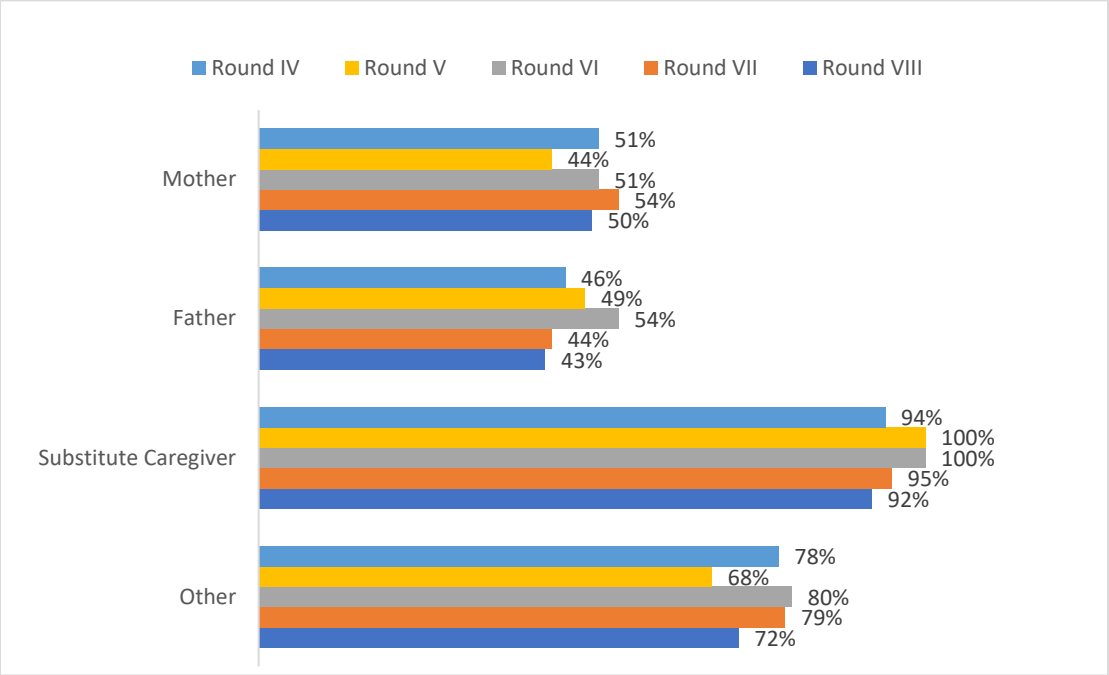
Table 33. Intervention: Sub-Indicator Adequacy

	Round V	Round VI	Round VII	Round VIII	Round IX
Percentage of Cases Rated as Acceptable	81%	80%	85%	77%	79%

Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

During the QSRs, aside from practice performance measures related to assessment and service array, overall understanding of the current functioning of the child/youth's parents and/or caregivers is captured in the child/youth and family status indicator "Parent/Caregiver Functioning." This indicator helps identify how services provided are strengthening the caregiver's capacity to care for their children/youth. Figure 7 shows the percentage of cases rated acceptable with regards to "Parent/Caregiver Functioning" over the course of the past five rounds of the QSRs. Due to COVID-19, no QSRs were conducted in Round X or Round XI. It should be noted that similar to CFSR findings where assessment of needs and services to foster parents tended to be more often rated a strength than for mothers and fathers, the QSR also finds substitute caregivers are often rated acceptable in a higher percentage of cases than mothers and fathers when looking at parent and/or caregiver functioning.

Figure 7. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Parent/Caregiver Functioning"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

A final additional source of data for monitoring appropriate assessment of needs and provision of services to youth includes information captured through NYTD. Table

34 outlines the total NYTD foster care population served in comparison to the total number of children in foster care 14 years or older.

Table 34. Comparison of NYTD Served Foster Care Population to the Overall AFCARS Population of Children Ages 14+.

	FFY 2017		FFY 2018		FFY 2019		FFY 2020		FFY 2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total AFCARS Served	26,603		26,453		25,288		22,186		20,927	
AFCARS Population 14+ Years Old	9,108		8,583		7,544		6,497		5,112	
Total Served NYTD Foster Care Population	3,040	33%	3,041	35%	1,645	22%	1,825	28%	1,358	27%
Independent Living	2,296	25%	2,263	26%	1,297	17%	1,411	22%	1,111	22%
Academic Support	1,652	18%	1,553	18%	912	12%	1,053	16%	717	14%
Post-Secondary	1,119	12%	1,016	12%	638	8%	694	11%	625	12%
Career Preparation	1,755	19%	1,706	20%	1,038	14%	1,106	17%	841	16%
Employment Programs	959	11%	839	10%	431	6%	413	6%	284	6%
Budget Financial	1,797	20%	1,705	20%	1,062	14%	1,068	16%	944	18%
Housing Education	1,682	18%	1,519	18%	928	12%	1,049	16%	912	18%
Health Education	2,018	22%	1,884	22%	1,129	15%	1,246	19%	968	19%
Family Support	1,443	16%	1,351	16%	857	11%	1,032	16%	821	16%
Mentoring	490	5%	490	6%	267	4%	491	8%	199	4%
Supervised Independent	318	3%	333	4%	215	3%	211	3%	150	3%
Room/Board	191	2%	209	2%	110	1%	98	2%	103	2%
Education Financial	381	4%	384	4%	209	3%	202	3%	129	3%
Other Financial	996	11%	1,176	14%	867	11%	769	12%	843	16%

Source [AFCARS and NYTD, PCG] [May 2022]

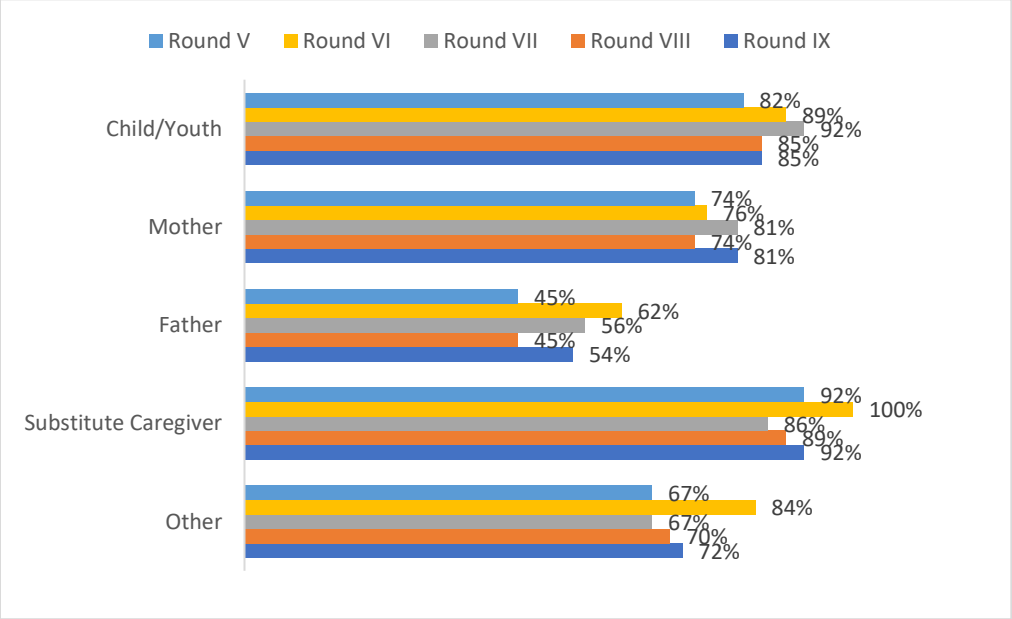
<u>CFSR Item 13: Did the agency make concerted efforts to involve the parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis?</u>

During the PIP monitoring case reviews held in 2019, 50% of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a strength for child and family involvement in case planning. A further breakdown of the findings revealed that the agency made concerted efforts to actively engage the child in 59% of applicable cases reviewed. Concerning mothers, concerted efforts were identified in 67% of applicable cases reviewed. Concerted efforts to actively engage the father were found in a lower percentage of applicable cases reviewed, with efforts identified in 52% of cases. Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but did conduct reviews between April and September of 2021.

During the PIP monitoring case reviews held in 2021, 59.7% of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a strength for child and family involvement in case planning. A further breakdown of the findings revealed that the agency made concerted efforts to actively engage the child in 69% of applicable cases reviewed. Concerning mothers, concerted efforts were identified in 65% of applicable cases reviewed. Concerted efforts to actively engage the father were found in a lower percentage of applicable cases reviewed, with efforts identified in 56% of cases.

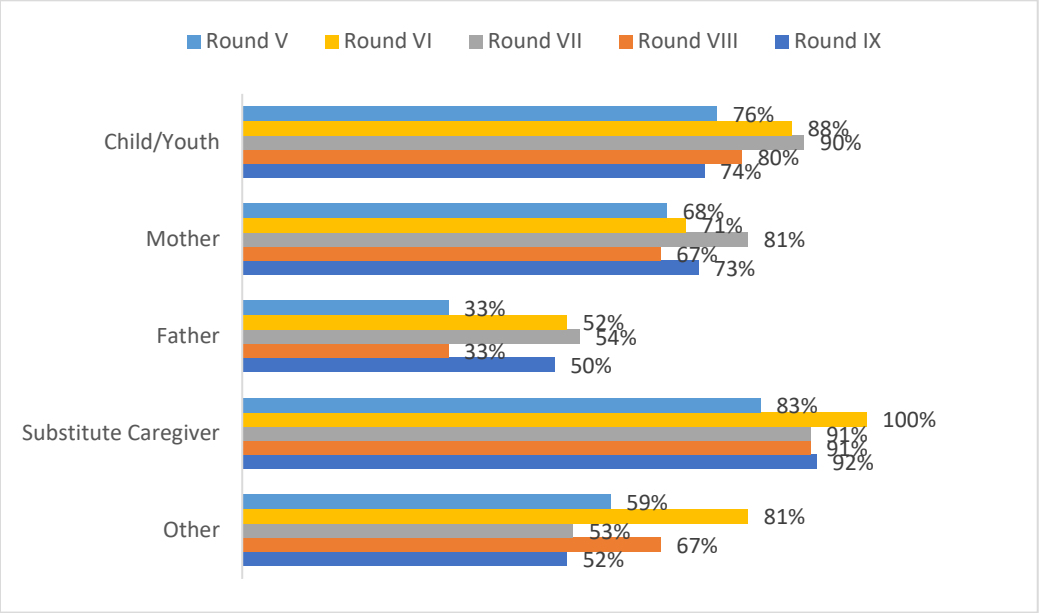
Agency efforts to engage with the child/youth, parents, substitute caregivers, and other key caregivers is also monitored through the state supported QSRs. The practice performance indicators "Engagement Efforts" and "Role and Voice" both capture aspects of involvement of the child/youth and mother and father in the case planning process. Both Figure 8 and Figure 9 show that engagement of mothers and their role and voice were rated as acceptable in a higher percentage of cases when compared to fathers. This mirrors a similar dynamic seen in the CFSR findings. Due to COVID-19, no QSRs were conducted in Round X and XI.

Figure 8. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Engagement Efforts"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

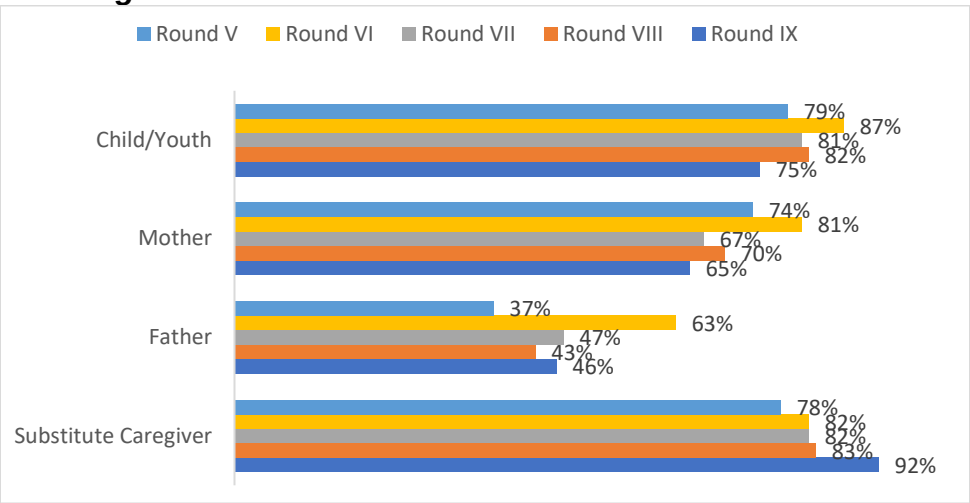
Figure 9. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Role and Voice"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

The QSR practice performance indicator "Child/Youth and Family Planning Process" provides a third QSR measure that assists in monitoring child/youth and family involvement in case planning. While this indicator focuses on the individualization of services and successful development of a plan that will meet the family's needs, reviewers also must take into consideration whether the plan reflects the views and preferences of the child/youth and parents. Again, as seen in both the CFSR results and other QSR findings related to the area of engagement in case planning, Figure10 shows that agency practice related to mothers was found to be acceptable more often than agency practice related to fathers with regards to the case planning process.

Figure 10. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Child/Youth and Family Planning Process"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

<u>CFSR Item 14: Were the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and children sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of the children and promote achievement of case goals?</u>

PIP monitoring case reviews in 2019 found that 66% of applicable cases reviewed were rated as a strength CFSR Item 14. Further analysis of the findings revealed that the typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and child(ren) was sufficient in 93% of the cases reviewed, however he quality of the visits were determined to be sufficient in only 65% of the applicable cases reviewed. Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but did conduct reviews between April and September of 2021.

PIP monitoring case reviews in 2021 found that 80% of applicable cases reviewed were rated as a strength CFSR Item 14. Further analysis of the findings revealed that the typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and child(ren) was sufficient in 94% of the cases reviewed, however the quality of the visits were determined to be sufficient in only 82% of the applicable cases reviewed.

CCYA compliance with state regulations and policies related to caseworker visits with children receiving both in-home services and in foster care are monitored through the annual licensing inspection process. As seen in Table 35, 47 cases were cited for issues related to caseworker visits with children during SFY 2020-21. Issues were more commonly identified for in-home and CPS/GPS records reviewed during annual inspection versus placement records reviewed. This data exemplifies the effects the pandemic had on casework staff's ability to see children and families within their homes. CCYAs became very creative in discovering ways to ensure safety of children while meeting regulatory requirements and avoiding contracting the Coronavirus. Often, counties issued directives to frontline staff on performing visitation through virtual platforms due to placement facilities not allowing in person visitation. In addition, guidance for ensuring safety of families within their home was issued to address exposure concerns. This would explain the increase in citations of seeing children and families. It is important to note, due to the emergency nature of the pandemic, a significant increase would seem likely to occur, however did not according to the SFY 2020-2021 inspections. This could possibly be attributed to quick implementation of county practice changes to promote the ability to see children and families through virtual platforms or altered safety protocols enacted ensuring safety of staff and families.

Looking further into the effects of the pandemic, staffing within CCYA's has become scarce, with fears of contracting the virus, and the demands of the profession. Most CCYA's continue to struggle to hire and maintain staff. In addition, caseworker visits often had to be moved to a virtual platform. A large reduction in face-to-face visits were a necessity to reduce the number of individuals contracting the virus. As a result, more licensure citations occurred within the 3130 regulations due to children and families not being seen within their homes or placements.

The majority of licensing violations found in SFY 2020-2021 were attributed to caseworker visits with children and families. A profound impact of the pandemic was the ability to see children and families in their residences to meet regulatory requirements. Ensuring safety of families and staff was the number one priority in developing a new standard of practice to perform daily CCYA activities. A pandemic protocol was developed within each CCYA with directives on meeting with families who potentially had exposure to COVID-19. Counties became creative in delivering services to families, most utilizing virtual platforms such as Duo, Teams, or Zoom. This would allow for caseworkers to see children and families to complete compliance visitations and completing essential investigations.

Table 35. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Caseworker Visits with Children

	SFY 2016-2017	***SFY 2017-2018***	***SFY 2018-2019***	***SFY 2019-2020***	***SFY 2020-2021***
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	*15 counties*	*14 counties*	*19 counties*	*17 counties*	*15 counties*
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	*1 county*	*1 county*	*0 counties*	*1 county*	*2 counties*
Total Cases Cited	***41***	***26***	***36***	***35***[29]	***47***
Total Counties Without Citation	***51***	***52***	***48***	***36 (of 54)***	***43 (of 60)***

Source [Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries], [May 2022]

Outside of the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews, Pennsylvania continued to meet federal benchmarks for caseworker visitation tracking for the number of monthly caseworker visits with children and percentage of visits in the child's home for FFY 2020.

<u>CFSR Item 15: Were the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers of the child(ren) sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of the child(ren) and promote the achievement of case goals?</u>

During PIP monitoring case reviews conducted in 2019, 34% of applicable cases were rated as a strength for caseworker visits with parents. Further analysis indicates that the frequency of visits between caseworkers and mothers was determined to be sufficient in 59% of the applicable cases reviewed, with the quality of visits deemed appropriate in 44% of cases. The typical pattern of visits between caseworkers and fathers was determined to be sufficient in 65% of cases. The quality of caseworker visits with fathers was found to be appropriate in 48% of applicable cases reviewed. Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but conducted reviews between April and September of 2021.

[29] *One county was identified as having systemic issues, however information on the number of cases impacted was not provided as part of the LIS.*

During PIP monitoring case reviews conducted in 2021, 53% of applicable cases were rated as a strength for caseworker visits with parents. Further analysis indicates that the frequency of visits between caseworkers and mothers was determined to be sufficient in 72% of the applicable cases reviewed, with the quality of visits deemed appropriate in 59% of cases. The typical pattern of visits between caseworkers and fathers was determined to be sufficient in 51% of cases. The quality of caseworker visits with fathers was found to be appropriate in 54% of applicable cases reviewed.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Well-Being Outcome 2 focuses on agency efforts to assess the educational needs of children and youth, both initially and ongoing. This outcome also assesses whether the services provided match identified needs and are effective in helping children and youth attain positive educational outcomes. Pennsylvania was not found to be in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2 during the 2017 onsite CFSR as 91% of applicable cases reviewed were rated as a strength, which falls below the federal performance target of 95%. A review of the 2017 CFSR findings found that educational needs were appropriately assessed in 91% of applicable cases and efforts were made to provide appropriate educational services in 89% of applicable cases. Services provided were often related to ensuring children had individualized education plans (IEP), truancy prevention plans, or tutoring. Findings from the QSRs conducted across the state over the past five years suggests practice is more successful in meeting the educational needs of young children when compared to older youth.

- *Assessment Since Last Report*

During the 2019 PIP monitoring case reviews, Pennsylvania substantially achieved Well-Being Outcome 2 in 85% of applicable cases reviewed. Performance on Well-Being Outcome 2 is determined based on performance on CFSR Item 16. Pennsylvania was unable to conduct PIP reviews in 2020 due to the ongoing effects of the pandemic. However, during the 2021 PIP monitoring case reviews, Pennsylvania was found to be in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2 at 96% of children were receiving appropriate services to meet their educational needs. This is more than a 10% increase in performance from the 2019 PIP monitoring case reviews.

CFSR Item 16: Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs at the initial contact with the child or on an ongoing basis, and were the identified needs appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities?

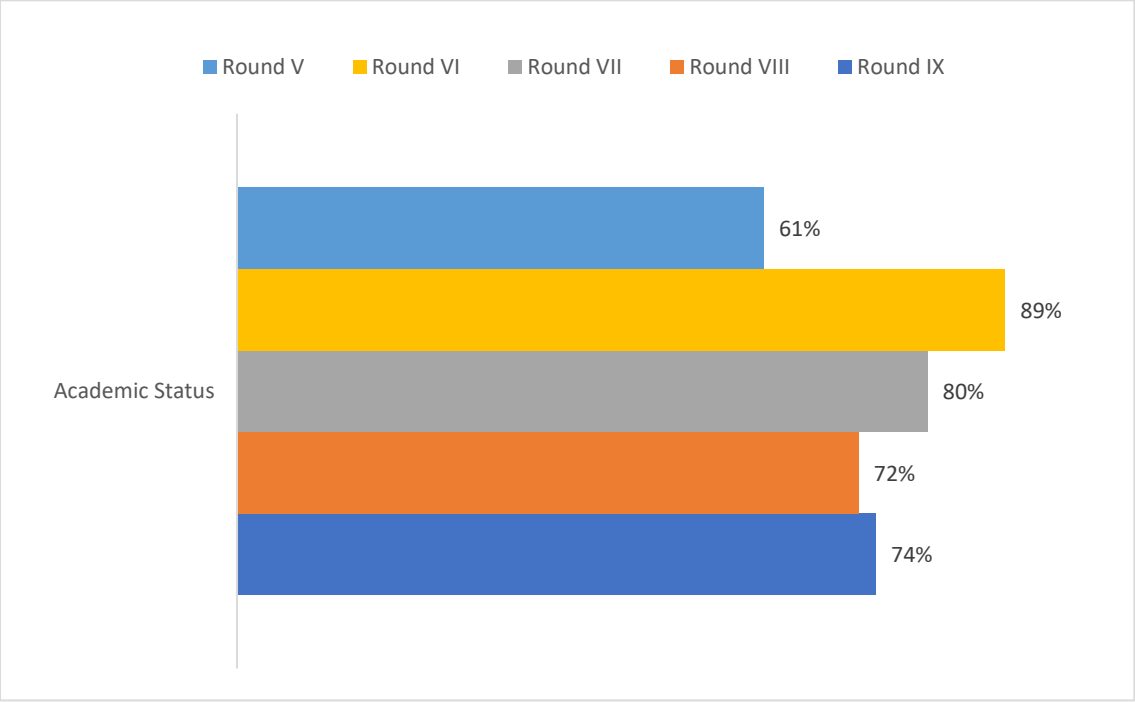
During the PIP monitoring case reviews, 85% of applicable cases reviewed were rated as a strength related to addressing the educational needs of the child/youth. Concerted efforts to accurately assess the child/youth's educational needs were determined to occur in 89% of the cases reviewed. Appropriate educational services were identified as being provided in 85% of the cases reviewed. Pennsylvania did not

conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but did conduct reviews between April and September of 2021.

During the PIP monitoring case reviews, 96% of applicable cases reviewed were rated as a strength related to addressing the educational needs of the child/youth. Concerted efforts to accurately assess the child/youth's educational needs were determined to occur in 95% of the cases reviewed. Appropriate educational services were identified as being provided in 96% of the cases reviewed.

Efforts to ensure the educational needs of the child/youth are met is also monitored in Pennsylvania through the QSRs. The QSR offers two child/youth and family status indicators that evaluate agency performance related to identifying and addressing educational needs. The first indicator, "Academic Status," is focused on children/youth who are of compulsory school age. The second indicator, "Early Learning and Development," considers learning and development of children who are not yet old enough to meet requirements for compulsory school attendance but may be involved in programs such as Head Start or are EI services to address developmental needs. Figure 11 depicts finding related to the indicator "Academic Status" for the past five rounds of the QSR. Table 36 breaks out the data further to identify the percentage of cases rated as unacceptable for "Academic Status" by age group. Figure 12 provides findings related to the status indicator "Early Learning and Development." Due to COVID-19, no QSRs were conducted in Round X and XI.

Figure 11. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Academic Status"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

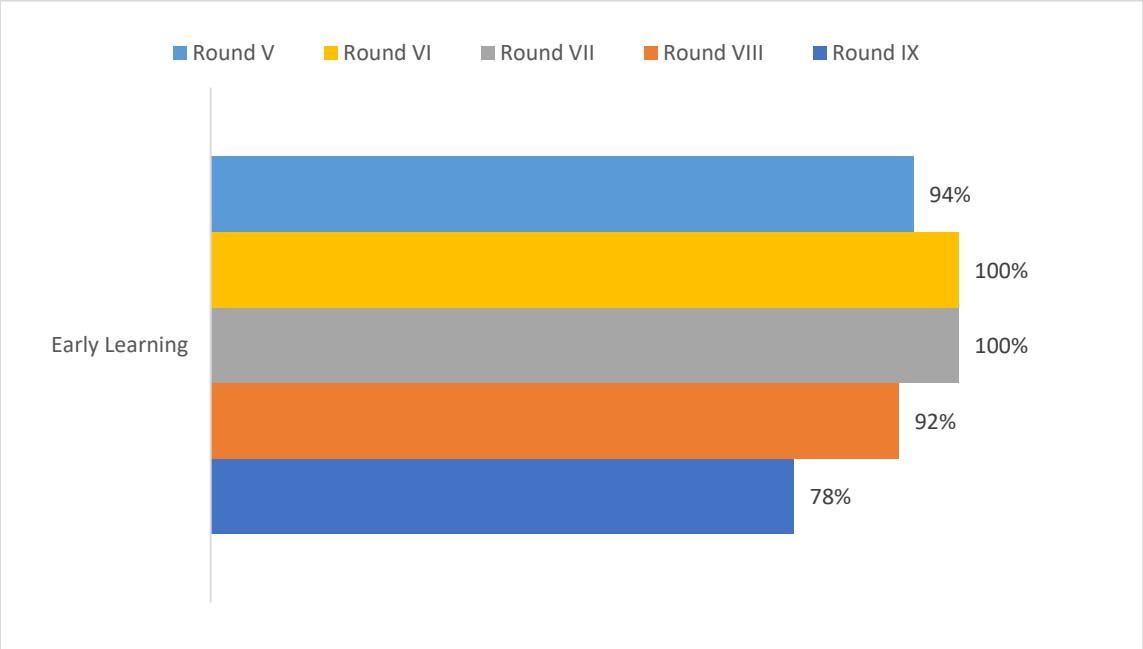
Table 36. Percentage of Cases Rated Unacceptable on QSR Indicator "Academic Status" Per Age Group by Round[30]

Age Group	*Round V*	*Round VI*	*Round VII*	*Round VIII*	*Round IX*
6-9	*20.00%*	*30.77%*	*27.27%*	*15.00%*	*0.00%*
10-12	*16.67%*	*0.00%*	*12.5%*	*0.00%*	*18.18%*
13-15	*58.33%*	*5.88%*	*16.67%*	*52.63%*	*28.57%*
16-17	*63.64%*	*0.00%*	*25.00%*	*47.06%*	*46.15%*
18+	*0.00%*	*0.00%*	*0.00%*	*0.00%*	*0.00%*

Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

[30] *Percentages may vary greatly from round to round given the small number of cases which fall within each of the age groups.*

Figure 12. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Early Learning and Development"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health

CFSR Well Being Outcome 3 focuses on agency efforts to appropriately assess the physical and mental/behavioral health needs of children and ensure services are provided to effectively address identified needs. Pennsylvania was not found to be in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3 during the 2017 CFSR as only 65% of applicable cases were found to meet federal performance standards, which does not meet the federal target of 95%. Analysis of findings from the CFSR, QSRs and annual CCYA licensing inspections revealed the following:

- During the 2017 CFSR, 71% of applicable cases reviewed were rated as a strength with regards to physical health;
- The CFSR findings identified that agencies were generally more successful in assessing and providing services related to physical health needs than compared to dental health needs;
- Violations issued during annual CCYA licensing inspections were more likely to involve failure to ensure children received periodic dental screenings and treatment than failure to ensure children receive periodic health screenings and treatment;
- During the 2017 CFSR, 74% of applicable cases were rated as a strength with regards to agency efforts to provide services to mental/behavioral health needs; and

- The CFSR revealed that, in all applicable cases reviewed, the agency provided appropriate oversight of prescription medications used to treat children's mental or behavioral health issues.

Pennsylvania prioritized the efforts the state will take over the next five years to improve services to meet the complex physical and mental health needs of children and youth, which is reflected in the goals and objectives for the 2020-2024 CFSP and in the state's Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan.

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

During the 2019 CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews, Pennsylvania substantially achieved Well-Being Outcome 3 in 66% of the applicable cases reviewed. Overall performance on Well-Being Outcome 3 is determined based on combined performance on CFSR Indicators 17 and 18. Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but conducted reviews between April and September of 2021. During the 2021 PIP monitoring case reviews, children were determined to have their physical health, dental health, and medication needs appropriately assessed and met in 100% of the applicable cases reviewed.

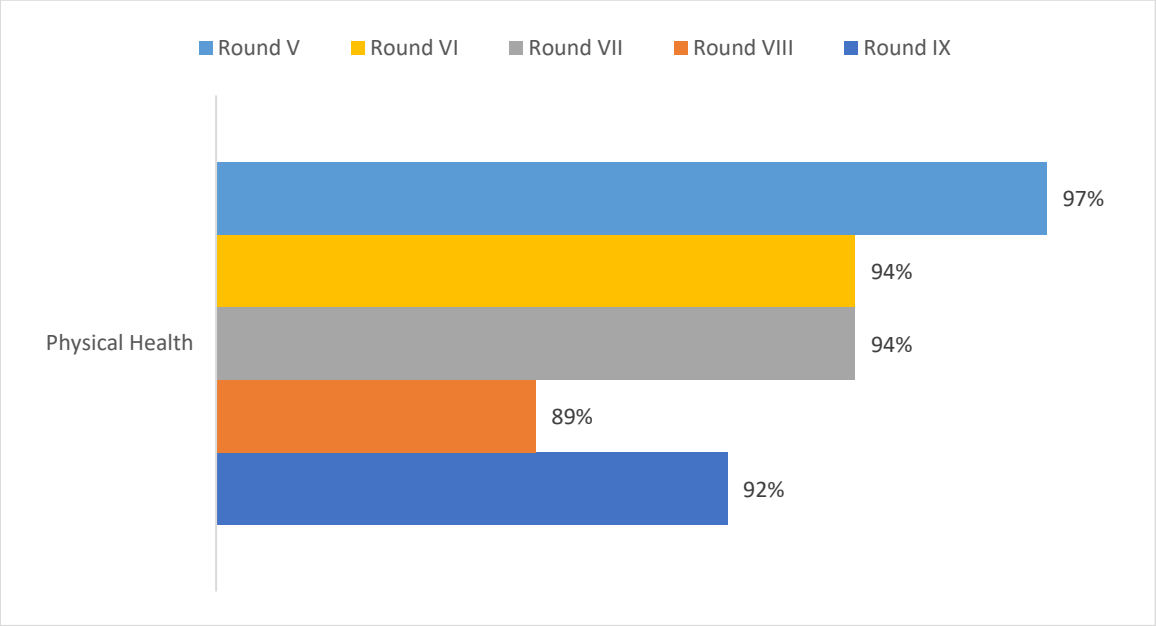
<u>CFSR Item 17: Did the agency address the physical health needs of children, including dental health needs?</u>

During the PIP monitoring case reviews conducted in 2019, children were determined have their physical health needs appropriately assessed and met in 78% of the applicable cases reviewed, which represented improvement in performance relative to the baseline established during the 2017 onsite review (71%). Most issues noted in relation to performance on this indicator concerned dental health versus physical health. In 95% of cases reviewed, the agency was determined to have accurately assessed the child's physical health needs. In 90% of the cases reviewed, the agency ensured appropriate services were provided to address all identified health needs. When looking at the assessment of dental health care needs, however, the agency was found to accurately assess these needs in only 87% of the cases reviewed. Provision of appropriate services to meet dental health needs occurred in only 83% of cases reviewed. Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but conducted reviews between April and September of 2021.

During the PIP monitoring case reviews conducted in 2021 children were determined to have their physical health needs appropriately assessed and met in 100% of the applicable cases reviewed, which represented significant improvement in performance by 29 % from the baseline performance in 2017. Additionally, under Well-Being Outcome 3, children's dental, prescription medication, and service needs were accurately assessed and met in 100% of the cases reviewed. This is a significant increase in performance by 13% from the 2017 onsite review.

The physical health of children is also monitored through the state-supported QSRs. Figure13 depicts findings from the last five rounds of the QSRs related to child/youth and family status indicator "Physical Health." Due to COVID-19, no QSRs were conducted in Round X and Round XI.

Figure 13. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Physical Health"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

Monitoring to ensure children/youth are receiving appropriate assessments to identify medical and dental needs occurs through annual licensing inspections conducted across all 67 CCYAs. During the licensing process, placement cases are reviewed to ensure children/youth are receiving medical and dental examinations in accordance with timeframes set forth in state regulation and that the appropriate medical and dental information in maintained in the case record. Fifteen of the citations noted in SFY 2020-21 were related to medical requirements; five of the citations noted were related to dental requirements.

Table 37. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Medical and Dental Requirements

	SFY 2016-2017	***SFY 2017-2018***	***SFY 2018-2019***	***SFY 2019-2020***	***SFY 2020-2021***
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	*15 counties*	*14 counties*	*18 counties*	*14 counties*	*11 counties*
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	*1 county*	*1 county*	*0 counties*	*1 county*	*1 county*
Total Cases Cited	***41***	***26***	***24***	***45***	***25***

Total Counties Without Citation	***51***	***52***	***49***	***39 (of 54)***	***48 (of 60)***

Source [Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries], [May 2022]

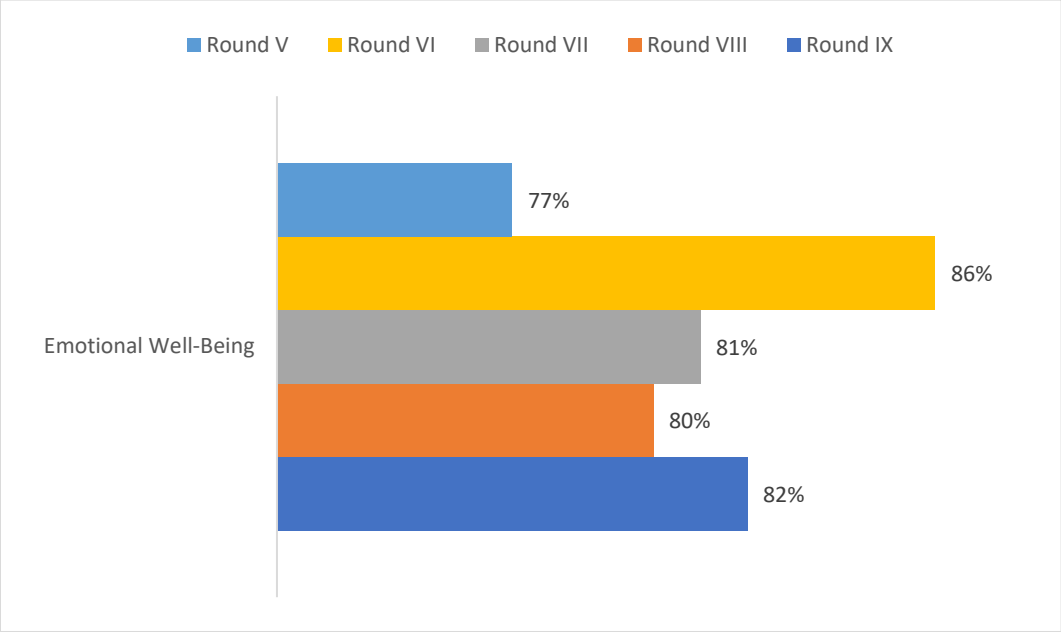
<u>CFSR Item 18: Did the agency address the mental/behavioral health (BH) needs of children?</u>

During the CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews held in 2019, 64% of applicable cases reviewed were rated a strength regarding assessment of needs and provision of services to address the mental/BH of the child. Further analysis determined that the agency accurately assessed the children's mental/BH needs of children in 86% of cases reviewed, however appropriate services were provided to address all identified mental/BH needs in only 68% of applicable cases reviewed. As noted in the Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan, Pennsylvania has worked to improve the monitoring of psychotropic medications prescribed to children and youth in the care of the CCYA. During the 2019 case reviews, the agency was determined to have provided appropriate oversight of prescription medications for the mental/BH issues of children in foster care in 80% of the applicable cases reviewed. Pennsylvania did not conduct any PIP monitoring case reviews in 2020 but did conduct reviews between April and September of 2021.

During the 2021 CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews, 93% of applicable cases reviewed were rated a strength regarding assessment of needs and provision of services to address the mental/BH of the child. The data indicates the agency accurately assessed the children's mental/BH needs of children in 86% of the cases reviewed.

Ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of CCYAs to meet the emotional well-being of children, to include their mental and BH occurs through the QSRs. Figure 14 provides the findings from the past five rounds of the QSRs with regards to the performance on the child/youth and family status indicator "Emotional Well-Being." Due to COVID-19, no QSRs were conducted in Round X and Round XI.

Figure 14. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on "Emotional Well-Being"



Source [QSR Interactive Data Dashboard, PCG], [May 2020]

Five-Year Goals and Strategies to Improve Well-Being

Based on the stakeholder feedback and review of Pennsylvania performance regarding the achievement of key well-being outcomes, goals and strategies were prioritized to strengthen efforts to ensure the well-being of children and youth. Strategies developed as part of PA's CFSR PIP that will help achieve the identified goals are included and specifically noted as PIP strategies in this plan. For the 2020-2024 CFSP, some of the key activities included in the strategies identified as originating from the PIP were expanded upon to include additional efforts OCYF plans to undertake to further the work and to capture efforts that may extend beyond the two-year PIP implementation time frame. As the initial goals and strategies set forth in PA's 2020-2024 CFSP are achieved, OCYF will continue to work with stakeholders to identify additional goals and strategies to add to the state Title IV-B plan through submission of the APSR.

It should be noted that a number of strategies outlined under the safety and permanency sections of the 2020-2024 CFSP are anticipated to also play a critical role in improving well-being outcomes. For example, work to identify a functional assessment tool that includes components of risk and safety outlined earlier in this plan to support the state's vision for child safety will also impact child well-being by ensuring comprehensive assessment practices are being utilized to identify all child safety and well-being needs. FEI, discussed earlier in this plan with regards to permanency, also has a focus on implementing practices that will strengthen child well-being. Finally, work to reduce congregate care placements in Pennsylvania and improve the quality of care provided to children and youth in congregate care facilities includes efforts to

provide more trauma-focused services and ensure the appropriate supports and services to meet children's complex physical and mental health needs are in place to promote serving children in their own homes and communities. Additional efforts that impact child well-being are also outlined in the Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan.

Well-Being Goal 1: Support families in achieving the ability to meet their child/youth's well-being needs, including physical, emotional, behavioral and educational needs through improved agency efforts to engage families and service array enhancement.					
Rationale for Goal Selection: The Practice Model prioritizes supporting families through comprehensive and accessible services that build on strengths and address individual trauma, needs and concerns. During the CFSR in 2017, Pennsylvania was not found to meet federal standards related to needs assessment and services to children and parents set forth under Well-Being Outcome 1. With regards specifically to children, Pennsylvania also did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2, appropriate services to meet educational needs or Well-Being Outcome 3, adequate services to meet physical and mental health needs. QSR data has also consistently shown room for improvement across the state in ensuring children and youth involved with the child welfare system have all physical and mental health needs fully assessed and met.					
5-Year Monitoring Targets:	**Baseline**	2021 APSR	2022 APSR	2023 APSR	2024 APSR
The percentage of cases rated as a strength during CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews related to the physical health of the child will increase to 76% or higher by the conclusion of the PIP monitoring period.	2017 CFSR 71%	2019 PIP Monitoring 78%	No data available	2021 PIP Monitoring 100%	
The percentage of cases rated as a strength during CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews related to the mental/behavioral health of the child will increase to	2017 CFSR 74%	2019 PIP Monitoring 64%	No data available	2021 PIP Monitoring 86%	

79% or higher by the conclusion of the PIP monitoring period.					
The percentage of cases rated as a strength during CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews related to assessment of needs and services to children (other than related to education, physical health or mental/behavioral health) will increase to 88% or higher by the conclusion of the PIP monitoring period.	2017 CFSR 83%	2019 PIP Monitoring 78%	No data available.	2021 PIP Monitoring 83%	
The percentage of cases rated as a strength during CFSR PIP monitoring case reviewed related to engagement of children and parents in case planning will increase to 54% or higher by the conclusion of the PIP monitoring period.	2017 CFSR 46%	2019 PIP Monitoring 50%	No data available.	2021 PIP Monitoring 60%	

Well-Being Objective 1.1 (CFSR PIP Strategy): OCYF will work with system partners to more clearly define what is meant by meaningful engagement, set consistent expectations for how engagement should be demonstrated in day to day case practice, develop effective supports to improve engagement practices and communicate this information to child welfare practitioners.
Rationale for Objective Selection: • During the CFSR in 2017, agencies were found to make concerted efforts to engage mothers in case planning in 67% of the applicable cases reviewed. • During the CFSR in 2017, agencies were found to make concerted efforts to engage fathers in case planning in 48% of applicable cases reviewed. • Through data analysis, the specific populations least likely to be engaged by child welfare professionals included fathers, incarcerated parents, non-custodial parents, and parents residing out of county or out of state. • Data analysis also revealed that initial efforts to engage parents were often made, but efforts were not always consistently continued to maintain engagement throughout the entire life of the case. • Root causes analysis of engagement findings from the CFSR and QSRs identified a need for additional work at the state level to establish expectations for how meaningful engagement should be defined so that CCYA can assess gaps between expectations and actual agency practice.

Key Activities/Strategies	Benchmarks for Completion
The Permanency Subcommittee, in collaboration with TA providers, will develop a toolkit of training and TA resources focused on addressing the root cause areas associated with enhancing the practice of meaningful engagement and tools/resources to be used to successfully monitor engagement efforts throughout the entire life of a case. ➢ Examples of existing resources that will be utilized include, but are not limited to: • Handbook for Families and Friends of PA Department of Correction Prison Inmates • SWAN LSI Incarcerated Resource Manual • Judicial Bench Card • SWAN Units of Service	June 2020 *In progress*

The Permanency Subcommittee will develop content that summarizes statewide findings from the CFSR and other data sources as well as outline the root cause analysis that led to identifying the need to improve engagement, what is meant by meaningful engagement, what successful engagement looks like in day-to-day case practice and TA resources that support meaningful engagement.	June 2020 *Complete*
Through the TA Collaborative Structure, TA providers will be onboarded to integrating the toolkit into their use of a structured CQI process to support implementation and monitoring of county-specific plans for improving engagement.	September 2020
The Permanency Subcommittee will assist OCYF in identifying forums for sharing summarized content from previous key activities above and introducing the toolkit. Forums include, but are not limited to: ➢ A panel discussion held for county child welfare agency administrators involving CWDP counties and their experiences related to working to improve engagement ➢ PCYA Quarterly Meetings ➢ Annual SWAN Conference ➢ Family Group Decision Making Conference	September 2020
The summarized content from previous key activities above and information about the toolkit will be presented across the identified forums by OCYF and/or designated system partners.	December 2020 and ongoing
TA providers will implement a structured CQI process to assist those counties who identify specific gap areas associated with improving engagement.	December 2020 and ongoing
The TA Collaborative Steering Committee will develop and implement a structure for monitoring impact of TA delivery related to engagement and the utilization of the developed toolkit.	December 2020
OCYF will revise the Chapter 3131 regulations that govern the administration of CCYA to ensure regulatory requirements help reinforce expectations for family engagement at the case practice level.	December 2020

- *Progress Since Last Report*

This CFSP strategy is also a key strategy included in Pennsylvania's Round 3 CFSR PIP. Through the PIP renegotiation process, Pennsylvania was approved a six-month extension for the completion of the following key activity:

- *The Ad-Hoc Engagement Committee in collaboration with technical assistance providers will develop a toolkit of training and technical assistance resources focused on addressing the root cause areas associated with enhancing the practice of meaningful engagement and tools/resources to be used to successfully monitor engagement efforts throughout the entire life of a case.*

As part of the PIP renegotiation, Pennsylvania further broke down the sub-activities needed for completion of this activity as follows:

- *Charter and convene an ad-hoc engagement committee to provide recommendations to OCYF regarding toolkit structure and high-level content. The committee will:*
    - *Research existing toolkits and potential content*
    - *Survey additional stakeholders regarding recommendations for toolkit structure and content.*
- *Submission of committee recommendations to OCYF.*
- *OCYF review, feedback and approval of recommendations.*
- *Identification and procurement of a platform to house the toolkit.*
- *Charter and convene working group with necessary skills and expertise to participate in detailed toolkit development.*
- *Research and gathering/developing content for the toolkit by working group.*
- *Finalization and approval of toolkit content by OCYF.*
- *Toolkit technical development, testing, revision and deployment.*

Under the renegotiation, during the PIP six-month extension, OCYF worked to complete all sub-activities up through research and gathering/development of content for the toolkit.

On March 10, 2021, an Ad-Hoc Engagement Committee was chartered with the primary objective to support defining meaningful engagement, advise on the development of an online engagement toolkit, and inform the development and implementation of a structure for monitoring the impact of technical assistance delivery related to

engagement. In addition, the recommendations of the Ad-Hoc Engagement Committee are to inform how to best integrate this strategy as part of statewide practice and technical assistance around engagement.

On June 4, 2021, the Ad-Hoc Engagement Committee provided recommendations to support defining meaningful engagement and sharing statewide findings from the CFSR case reviews and other data sources, as well as outline the root cause analysis that led to identifying the need to improve engagement. The drafted meaningful engagement definition was reviewed by OCYF, and feedback was provided. This information was provided to technical assistance writers, who drafted a revised definition. The revised definition is currently under OCYF review.

On June 4, 2021 and August 13, 2021, the Ad-Hoc Engagement Committee provided recommendations to OCYF regarding the toolkit structure and content. In addition, recommendations to inform the toolkit framing, purpose, content, resources and platform, as well as incorporation of statewide findings, were provided. The recommendations were reviewed by OCYF, and feedback was provided.

Resources within the engagement toolkit will concentrate on professional development and leadership needs, based on root cause analysis and stakeholder feedback. The toolkit will be a statewide, collaborative, online and interactive tool comprised of up-to-date and publicly available resources, tools, training and technical assistance. This toolkit will be a dynamic online resource that will be targeted to the audience of all child welfare professionals and private providers throughout Pennsylvania. Sources of information will include national, state and county technical assistance and training materials that will support and provide connections between statewide and local continuous quality improvement efforts around meaningful engagement.

On December 9, 2021, a summary of statewide findings and root cause analysis regarding the need to improve engagement was developed. OCYF reviewed the summary and provided feedback. This information supports introducing the toolkit and outlines the connection between statewide findings and the development of the resources within the toolkit to support workforce development on engagement. Content outlining the continuous quality improvement (CQI) activities and derived from qualitative analysis of CFSR data as well as day-to-day practice implications to improve meaningful engagement are being finalized.

On January 4, 2022, the Ad-Hoc Engagement Committee provided recommendations to inform the development and implementation of a structure for monitoring impact of technical assistance delivery related to engagement. The structure for monitoring the impact of technical assistance delivery recommendations is currently under review by OCYF.

On February 11, 2022, the Ad-Hoc Engagement Committee was requested to continue under a new charter with the primary objective of gathering, researching and developing content for the engagement toolkit. Resources and content focus on meaningful engagement through key categories. Designated categories include, but are not limited to:

- *Father engagement;*
- *Engagement of incarcerated parents;*
- *Engagement of out of state parents;*
- *Engaging youth (developmental and age appropriate);*
- *Teaming with extended family and kin (paternal and maternal);*
- *Cultural awareness and responsiveness;*
- *Engagement models and strategies;*
- *Navigating custodial relationships;*
- *Cross-systems collaboration;*
- *Professional development; and*
- *Leadership.*

During the upcoming year, the Ad-Hoc Engagement Committee will support technical development, testing, revision, and deployment of the toolkit.

Well-Being Objective 1.2 (CFSR PIP Strategy): Enhance the utilization of service mapping at the county level to improve service coordination.
Rationale for Objective Selection: • Pennsylvania was found to not be in substantial conformity with the CFSR systemic factor regarding service array during the 2017 CFSR. • Analysis of CFSR findings from 2017 identified that that lack of quality assessments negatively impacted the ability of agencies to accurately identify the service needs of children, youth and families.   o Lack of appropriate identification of service needs, in turn, impacts what services are ultimately developed within the local and state level service array. • Pennsylvania has limited data that is readily accessible at the statewide level to understand the full array of services available at the local level.

- Through stakeholder interviews during the CFSR and feedback from TA partners working with CCYAs, it was identified that staff in many counties sometimes lack full awareness of all services available to support families and appropriate steps for referring or linking family to these services.
    - Stakeholders acknowledged that staff turnover likely plays a role in service awareness.
- Counties request numerous services, including EBPs, through the NBPB process, however, OCYF has observed inconsistent assessment by counties in their level of analysis completed in order to identify gaps in their service continuum and evaluation of the ongoing fit of existing programs in meeting the needs of children and families served by the CCYAs.

Key Activities/Strategies	Benchmarks for Completion
OCYF will market PA 2-1-1 to child welfare audience and probation offices through the annual NBPB bulletin. ➢ PA 2-1-1 is a free, accessible, 3-digit telephone number available to everyone in the Commonwealth. All residents have easy access to customized health, housing and human services information in one place. Trained information specialists are available 24 hours a day to answer questions and connect residents to thousands of health and human service programs. http://www.pa211.org/ ➢ The PA CWRC will send quarterly reminders via social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter).	September 2019 *Complete*
The PA Child Welfare Council Resources Subcommittee will obtain and analyze service mapping/matrices used by county children and youth agencies, juvenile probation offices and other child-serving systems.	September 2019 *Complete*
The Resources Subcommittee will develop a service mapping/matrix template to assist counties who select to utilize it in mapping services to child and family needs. The initial focus would be on county-provided/contracted services.	December 2019
The Resources Subcommittee will share a draft template with all county child welfare agencies and providers for feedback.	March 2020
The Resources Subcommittee will finalize the matrix based on the feedback received.	June 2020
The Resources Subcommittee will deliver presentations on the matrix to county child welfare agency administrators at PCYA quarterly meetings and providers at the PA Council of Children, Youth and Family Services (PCCYFS) conferences.	September 2020 and ongoing

The PA Child Welfare Council will identify innovation zone counties to implement the matrix. Criteria for selection will include: ➢ Commitment from agency leadership ➢ Representation of counties of different class sizes and regions With the support of the TA Collaborative county team, implement and monitor the use of the service mapping template.	September 2020
The TA Collaborative Steering Committee will develop and implement a strategic plan to support all the innovation zone counties. ➢ With the support of the TA Collaborative county level team, implement and monitor the use of the service mapping template in each innovation zone county according to the individualized plan developed by the county and TA providers.	September 2020
County child welfare agencies and providers will provide county-level education/learning opportunities to support implementation made available to non-participating county child welfare agencies and providers.	December 2020
The Resources Subcommittee will monitor the implementation/effectiveness of the service matrix, which includes identification of gaps. ➢ Monitoring will occur from the TA Collaborative, through feedback directly received from the participating counties. If participating counties are involved in the CFSR or QSR, data from those reviews will be analyzed. Feedback will be shared by TA Collaborative partners with the TA Collaborative Steering Committee who will forward any needed feedback to the Resources Subcommittee. ➢ The service mapping template will provide a forum to reveal service gaps. The annual NBPB process will provide an opportunity for counties to request additional funding to address these service gaps. As statewide gaps are identified by the Resources subcommittee through analysis of NBPB requests, action plans will be developed to address them. ➢ The statewide expansion will be dependent upon findings from the monitoring. The expansion will only be considered if the matrix is found to be an effective tool for caseworkers to connect families with available services	December 2020 and ongoing

- *Progress Since Last Report*

This strategy was included as part of Pennsylvania's CFSR Round 3 PIP. As a result of the PIP renegotiation which occurred in 2021, this strategy is considered complete. Pennsylvania was approved to discontinue and remove the following key activities from the PIP:

- *The Resources Subcommittee will share a draft template with all CCYA and providers for feedback.*
- *The Resources Subcommittee will finalize the matrix based on the feedback received.*
- *The Resources Subcommittee will deliver presentations on the matrix to county child welfare agency administrators at PCYA quarterly meetings and providers at the Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services conferences*
- *The Council will identify innovation zone counties to implement the matrix.*
- *The TA Collaborative Steering Committee will develop and implement a strategic plan to support all the innovation zone counties.*
- *County child welfare agencies and providers will provide county level education/learning opportunities to support implementation made available to non-participating county child welfare agencies and providers.*
- *The Resources Subcommittee will monitor the implementation/effectiveness of service matrix, which includes identification of gaps.*

The Council Resources Subcommittee surveyed the counties in early 2019 to gather information about existing need identification and matching to available services. Based on the results, the subcommittee confirmed a tool to assist each county to match services to needs would be beneficial. As such, the group worked to develop a template that could be used to receive feedback from a county as they use it with a small number of their caseworkers. The workgroup worked with a county to test the draft template. This led to multiple enhancements to the draft to help improve its usefulness in the field. A central region county was identified as the first county to help formally test the tool.

Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the plans for initiating implementation with the test county was put on hold over the course of approximately 10-months as the OCYF staff, the CWRC and county agencies were limited in capacity due to focusing on the COVID response. PCYA provided a staffing resource to assist the test county by inputting the county's provider information into the matrix template.

While COVID-19 resulted in a delay with launching the testing of the draft matrix with the selected county, during this time, the work around the development of a universal assessment tool that streamlines risk and safety, continued to make progress towards identifying the FAST as the likely tool Pennsylvania will look to implement statewide. Allegheny County, who currently is implementing the FAST, also began efforts to look at service mapping to needs connected with the FAST and met with the Resources Subcommittee co-chairs to discuss their work.

In learning about the work of the Safety Subcommittee and Allegheny County around the FAST, the Resources Subcommittee and OCYF evaluated whether pushing for statewide implementation of the service mapping matrix template would be appropriate versus offering a current version to interested counties. Feedback on the initial matrix and feedback from the Resources Subcommittee indicated stakeholders believe a useful matrix should be rooted in connecting clearly to the results of known assessments used by the county children and youth agency caseworkers in their day-to-day work. Therefore, rather than continue with testing and dissemination of the current matrix, the plan is that this work will be halted until the elements of the FAST are finalized. At that point, part of the implementation plan for the FAST should include developing a service mapping process to accompany the roll-out of the tool and potentially integration into the building of the statewide information system that is currently in development. Ultimately, OCYF and impacted stakeholders believe implementing a service mapping process that is tailored to the statewide universal assessment tool and information system will be much more powerful than the general tool as it currently exists.

Pennsylvania is proceeding as outlined in the preceding paragraphs. The Universal Assessment tool and process will be the vehicle for service mapping. The Universal Assessment tool and process will be piloted in 2022/2023 with a full rollout planned thereafter.

Well-Being Objective 1.3 (CFSR PIP Strategy): Revise the DHS Complex Case Review Process

Rationale for Objective Selection:
• DHS established a process in 2010 to implement the convening of a Complex Case Team comprised of representatives from various DHS program offices to address any case of an individual being served through DHS where:
  o A clinically appropriate solution requires support from multiple program offices/agencies or stakeholders at the county level who together cannot agree on a solution;
  o The funding solution comes from multiple sources, which may include external entities; or
  o The case involves complexities that render it un-resolvable through the established county or OCYF Regional Office process.
• Stakeholder feedback, including county CCYAs and service providers, gathered in 2017 suggested the Complex Case Planning process as it currently exists has not been fully effective in achieving its intended purpose.

Key Activities/Strategies	Benchmarks for Completion
Work with system partners to review complex cases to identify process strengths/challenges and make necessary changes.	December 2019 *Complete*
Pilot and implement changes to the complex case review process.	June 2020 *Complete*
Analyze information gathered during reviews to determine available gaps in services.	December 2020 *In progress*

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

On October 5, 2020, DHS issued 14-Bul-109 titled Complex Case Planning for Children and Youth Under Age 21. The purpose of this bulletin is to provide guidance to all child-serving state and county agencies, family and youth advocacy organizations, and both physical and behavioral managed care organizations that are involved in case planning for children and youth with complex needs up to age 21. This bulletin further established the process by which counties

could request state level assistance and coordination of services. This enhanced state process created a mechanism for gathering of data related to the identifying need and level of service begin sought for these children and youth to help inform service array need. Upon implementation of the updated process, DHS identified the need to expand the data collection capacity by also formalizing the complex case processes that occur on the regional level. It was recognized that many times the comprehensive work that occurs between the counties and the regional program offices in meeting the complex needs of children and youth were not captured with the new process. DHS released 14-Bul-110 under the same title on April 7, 2021, to further define all level of complex case reviews.

An analysis of the first 52 referrals to the Complex Case process was completed to assist in identifying gaps in service delivery. The demographic review as well as the system approach review identified strategies that exist that can promote practice in meeting the complex needs of these children. Promotion of the system of care approach with cross trained staff, early identification and county integrated planning and supports are key. Enhanced training and ongoing supports for foster and adoptive families serving children with complex medical and behavioral needs is critical. When family home settings are not an option, smaller group settings with person-centered approaches offered in a trauma informed environment that has staff who have the capacity to provide treatment most effective for children with developmental trauma and cognitive disabilities.

Over the next year, DHS will continue the service array analysis, as well as continued monitoring and updating of the complex case process as developed which will assist in identifying provider capacity and available treatment options. The complex case bulletin is in the process of being revised. Specifically, the revisions planned for the updated bulletin are intended to clarify the process for complex case planning and submitting referrals, roles and responsibilities, and provide tools to the agencies that are supporting these children, youth, and young adults. Additional training and materials are in development to supplement the information contained in this bulletin to include accessible trainings and resources for counties in cross system teaming and collaboration, and comprehensive assessments.

Implementation Supports for Achieving the Vision

In order to achieve the vision set forth in Pennsylvania's 2020-2024 CFSP, a number of support structures must be in place and function effectively to achieve improvement in safety, permanency and well-being outcomes. These key structures include a skilled and knowledgeable child welfare workforce, a robust data infrastructure, an effective quality assurance system and a comprehensive disaster and recovery plan.

Workforce

Pennsylvania's practice model prioritizes ensuring the child welfare system is comprised of skilled and responsive child welfare professionals who perform with a shared sense of accountability for assuring child-centered, family-focused policy, best practice and positive outcomes. Part of the overall vision for Pennsylvania's child welfare system over the next five years will involve a variety of efforts to strengthen both the public and private child welfare workforce, which in turn will help to strengthen capacity of child welfare agencies to effectively address the safety, permanency and well-being needs of children, youth and families.

Training Plan

Training CCYA staff is completed through several methods since Pennsylvania is a county-administered and state-supervised child welfare system. The CWRC functions as the coordinator of training courses that are offered through their program. Additionally, OCYF, ABA, SWAN, PSRFA, CCYA and other entities provide specific training courses approved by ACF.

In some counties, CCYAs and JPOs provide their own training to foster parents and staff using either the curriculum developed by the CWRC and approved by ACF or curriculum either the CWRC or another provider created/developed. If they use the CWRC curriculum, the content of the training cannot be changed because as it was approved by ACF as Title IV-E reimbursable. If training other than the CWRC training is provided, CCYAs and JPOs must submit the curriculum to OCYF to be approved by ACF. In addition, DHS provides training to CCYAs and JPOs using the CWRC curricula as well as other specific training approved by the ACF. Many agency partners provide training, transfer of learning, and TA including the CWRC, OCYF, SWAN, and the CCYAs for caseworkers, supervisors, managers, public agency childcare staff, support staff, and other child welfare-related staff working in Pennsylvania's child welfare agencies.

The CWRC, in partnership with the OCYF and PCYA, provides competency-based training, TA and transfer of learning activities designed to facilitate and sustain positive change in the child welfare system and to support a qualified, skilled and committed child welfare workforce. The CWRC's continuum of products and services, including curriculum, are developed and revised to align with the CFSP goals, CFSR

findings and PIP goals, QSR and licensing findings and subsequent county improvement plan and/or corrective action plans, the Practice Model and Competencies, as well as new laws, regulations and bulletins. In SFY 2017-2018, a cross-systems workgroup significantly revised the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Competencies by better aligning them with the Practice Model and components of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics leading to the final version of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Competencies which can be accessed through the CWRC website.[31] Curriculum and related training materials over the next five years and beyond will be continuously reviewed and updated as needed, as laws and regulations are enacted, workforce training needs arise, and as best practices evolve.

All new child welfare professionals must complete a 126-hour training series, Charting the Course (CTC), which leads to the certification of direct service workers, within 18 months of hire in addition to a requirement of receiving 20 hours of ongoing training annually thereafter. In SFY 2018-2019, the CWRC dedicated a substantial amount of time and resources to its planned revision and redesign of CTC. The new series, *Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice: Building Competence, Confidence, and Compassion* (Foundations), was developed and piloted during 2018-2019 and launched in July of 2019. The new Foundations series, like CTC, will take approximately two to three months for a participant to complete.

The Foundations series consists of 124 hours, including 72 hours of in-person training sessions, 40 hours of online modules and 12 hours of field work. The core content related to safety, permanency and well-being outcomes and services remains, with additional topics such as personal safety, workforce retention and self-care. The delivery of content in an online format supports the learners in gaining factual knowledge at their own pace, with the ability to reference the materials throughout their career. As a result of the online required prerequisites and curriculum enhancements, there will be fewer in-person sessions, but those in-person sessions will now be dedicated to application and skill practice using Team-Based Learning™ (TBL™) and simulation training sessions. The development and practice of engagement skills is emphasized in the simulation sessions. This is done through the use of Standardized Clients (SC) who are recruited and trained to deliver realistic portrayals of clients, providing the participants the opportunity to practice and reflect on their use of engagement skills. In addition, attorneys have been recruited to conduct realistic direct and cross-examination of the participants in a mock court hearing. A video depicting the use of team-based learning and simulation sessions can be viewed online through the CWRC website.[32] Field experiences are built into the new series and are designed to meaningfully involve county supervisors in supporting county staff in applying transfer of the new knowledge and skills into everyday practice. The requirement to receive 20 hours of training annually following certification will continue for all public child welfare workers.

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[31] http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/pcwc/Competencies.htm
[32] http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Videos/TBLSimVideo2018.mp4

The CWRC is committed to evaluating the effectiveness of training, using data to improve training program products, and contributing to the field of child welfare. Data collected throughout the five-year period will inform ongoing revisions of Foundations and form the basis for answering more comprehensive research and evaluation questions.

Foundations includes assessments of learning objectives related to the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Competencies, including engagement, assessment, planning and monitoring. Participants' knowledge, comprehension and application of skills are assessed through online knowledge checks, the Readiness Assurance Tests, application activities, field work, and simulation ratings. In addition, the CWRC captures participants' reflections on their intent and ability to transfer their learning to the field. Throughout the five-year period, the CWRC will continue to develop, test and refine Foundations assessments. Assessment data will be used to assess and monitor the effectiveness of the training/curriculum as part of CQI efforts. In addition, assessment data may help to identify opportunities to support CCYA to improve engagement, assessment, and planning and monitoring practices through TA.

The CWRC has embarked on a similar revision and redesign of its *Supervisor Training Series* (STS). Currently, this series offers a 60-hour certification series for new supervisors, followed by 20 hours of training annually. This extensive revision and redesign of the supervisor training series will align with the caseworker certification series, Foundations, described above. The new STS series will also align with CFSP goals, the CFSR findings and PIP goals, the Practice Model and Child Welfare Competencies, as well as any relevant laws, regulations and bulletins. The new STS will also employ a blended delivery model including online, in-person skills practice, field work and assessments and is expected to pilot early 2020. The CWRC's support of child welfare supervisors will expand and evolve over the next five years, to include:

- A comprehensive and coordinated continuum of supervisor preparation and support services;
- The development and implementation of in-depth topic-specific training courses for new and experienced supervisors that will align with and build upon the revised STS while also providing opportunities for specialized certifications to support the professional development of all of Pennsylvania's child welfare supervisors;
- The development and implementation of individualized and organizational TA specific to child welfare supervisors; and
- The development and implementation of a supervisor support networking plan designed to promote peer support for supervisors regionally and across the state.

Throughout this five-year project, research and evaluation will inform the development of each of these components and their corresponding success criteria and evaluation will be incorporated into the implementation and monitoring of each component.

The CWRC offers a variety of courses for administrators to include foundational training as well as Leadership Academy courses and a Leadership Academy certificate. Courses range from a few hours to up to four days in length. The Leadership Academy includes a two-day course, *Foundations of Leadership*, for county administrators, their management, and supervisors which will be marketed and offered to private provider managers and directors in 2019-2020 and beyond. All courses are continuously reviewed and updated, as needed.

In addition to these series, the Resource Center offers many other courses. With a few exceptions, due to copyright restrictions, all Resource Center curricula are located at the Resource Center's Curriculum Page.[33]

Child welfare professionals from 391 agencies across Pennsylvania attended over 1,400 workshops delivered by the Resource Center as of SFY 2017-18. The primary audience continues to be public child welfare workers with private providers and resource parents attending, as space is available.

Training sessions continue to be offered at over ten different CWRC regional locations across the state. Locations are being converted for multipurpose use to support simulation training and training delivery enhancements. During SFY 2017-18, the CWRC, in partnership with SAM, Inc. provided 26 counties with 72 personal safety simulation training sessions. These interactive trainings are held in hotel suites and provided realistic learning experiences for child welfare professionals to practice their engagement and assessment skills. Over 800 participants, including caseworkers and supervisors, participated in these sessions. In addition, the CWRC has expanded its online library of courses providing opportunities for distance/remote learning.

Over the course SFY 2018-2019, the CWRC also completed the development of 22 new curricula and revisions to 23 existing curricula and offered over 60 online courses. As part of the development and revision of tools, materials and curricula that will achieve the professional development needs of the child welfare professionals, assigned staff from the CWRC engage in multiple activities and strategies, including, but not limited to:

- Partnering with CWRC's key stakeholders, DHS and PCYA collaborated in the identification of tools, materials, and curricula to be developed or revised.
- Collaborating with the AOPC to support both the improved functioning of the child welfare system and dependency courts.
- Convening meetings and quality assurance committees consisting of subject matter experts and multidisciplinary professionals who have expertise in topics related to the development of the tools, materials, and curricula for the purpose of conducting curriculum needs assessment.

[33] http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Curriculum/default.htm

- Consulting with subject matter experts and established advisory committees such as the Diversity Task Force.
- Incorporating empirically-based literature and best practices.
- Incorporating the role and voice of youth and parent consumers.
- Analyzing training assessment data and CFSR and QSR data to identify knowledge and skill gaps to strengthen those concepts in tools, materials, and curricula.
- Participating in QSRs and CFSR case reviews to facilitate understanding of practice improvement initiatives and the front-line experience.
- Intentionally incorporating and reinforcing values and themes from the Practice Model in the curricula.
- Developing transfer-of-learning components and activities to support the curricula and strategies to assess learning transfer.
- Employing decision guides to support the determination of the format of the tools, materials and curricula to be developed, such as in-classroom, online or blended.
- Using stories to engage e-Learners by enhancing skills in scenario development.

In addition to training and transfer of learning activities, TA will continue to be offered to CCYAs to support organizational change and the implementation of best practice across PA. As outlined in the CFSR PIP, Pennsylvania has a renewed commitment to refining its TA processes and collaborative efforts. TA partners, including the Child Welfare Council, OCYF, CWRC, AOPC, SWAN, ABA, and others will be working together over the next five years to address the four key areas identified in the PIP; workforce, engagement, assessment, and planning and monitoring. Specific activities will include facilitating county paperwork and documentation reduction efforts; supporting family engagement practices; development, implementing and monitoring a toolkit to address meaningful engagement; supporting the implementation and monitoring of a streamlined risk and safety assessment process; identifying and utilizing of data; strengthening collaboration to provide quality service to complex families; developing and implementing of service mapping to improve service coordination; and assessing and addressing barriers to transportation and housing.

Organizational Effectiveness services continue to be one of the main TA interventions provided by the CWRC. These services include organizational assessments, the formation of sponsor teams and continuous improvement teams, development of processes and procedures, and continuous improvement plan implementation and monitoring. Support is also provided to strengthen leadership teams, including meetings with supervisors, managers and administrators. The CWRC is working to further define and assess services provided to better support county improvement efforts.

The CWRC is also making some significant technology advancements to aid in the development, delivery, tracking and monitoring of products and services. Most recently, the CWRC upgraded its online course Learning Management System to a

newer, more robust platform, which allows third-party integration of software such as Intedashboard. Intedashboard is a TBL™ software, which will be used in a variety of workshops to allow participants to complete TBL™ assessments both individually, and as a team. Training attendance and evaluation forms have been converted from paper to electronic which results in cleaner data and less staff time for data entry. A revised Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA), to align with the Practice Model and Child Welfare Competencies, will be developed and launched electronically. In the Fall of 2019, the CWRC will release “Bridge”, a new training management system to replace the old legacy system, “Encompass”. Bridge will allow much more flexibility and reporting, in that supervisors and trainees will have information readily available to them related to their training record, training needs, and available courses to address their identified needs.

The use of electronic data collection throughout the curriculum promotes efficiency, improves data quality and allows for greater and timelier access to data for evaluation and CQI purposes. Throughout the five-year period, the CWRC will support the use of workforce data to inform county and statewide planning and workforce development efforts. This work will include reviewing workforce data submitted through the NBPB process to identify opportunities to strengthen the submission process and quality of data. In addition, the CWRC will develop processes to share workforce data with state and county stakeholders in a usable format that will allow for ongoing monitoring.

Planned activities to support the 2020-2024 CFSP:

- Activities to support the implementation of PIP strategies covered under Goal 1: Workforce.
    - Designed to recruit and prepare students for a career in the public child welfare field, the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) Program is offered at 15 schools of social work throughout Pennsylvania. Undergraduate students who are official social work majors in any of the 15 approved, participating undergraduate schools are eligible to apply for the CWEB program. Qualified students receive substantial financial support during their senior year in return for a legal commitment to work in one of Pennsylvania’s county public child welfare agencies following graduation. Students must satisfactorily complete child welfare course work and an internship at a public child welfare agency. During the course of the internship, most students are able to complete some or the entire competency-based training required for public child welfare caseworkers. Upon graduation, students also receive assistance with their employment search.
    - The Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) Program provides substantial financial support for graduate-level social work education for current employees of public child welfare agencies. Caseworkers, supervisors, managers, and administrators of any county children and youth agency are eligible to apply to participate in the CWEL program.

All persons enrolled meet participation criteria as determined by their CWEL applications, résumés, personal statements, agency approvals, notifications of admission from one of the approved schools, and signed agreements. The CWEL program has funded students from 66 counties, OCYF, and 12 PA Schools of Social Work on both a full and part-time basis. The CWEL program reimburses salary and benefits for full-time CWEL students and covers tuition, fees, and other expenses for both full and part-time students in return for a legal work commitment to the employing county child welfare agency upon graduation.

  - Over the course of the next five years, opportunities to grow both of these programs will be pursued.

- Activities to support the implementation of PIP strategies covered under Goal 2: Engagement:

  - TA Collaborative Steering Committee structure will have regular agenda items to support the development of a toolkit and add to it as appropriate. The Statewide and Regional TA groups will onboard the local TA providers to integrating the toolkit into their use of a structured CQI process to support implementation and monitoring of county-specific plans for improving engagement.

- Activities to support the implementation of PIP strategies covered under Goal 4: Planning and Monitoring:

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

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

To support continued training of direct service workers, the CWRC retained approximately 90 contracted instructors to deliver curricula and advanced delivery methods, including Team Based Learning™ and simulation-based learning. CWRC

retained 27 Standardized Clients and 25 Standardized Attorneys to support the delivery of the simulation sessions.

During SFY 2021-22, CWRC launched the redesign of the Supervisor Training Series (STS). The new series, Foundations of Supervision (FOS), launched virtually in August 2021 due to ongoing health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. FOS is delivered in a Team Based Learning™ and simulation-based learning format. To support the virtual launch of FOS, the CWRC trained and prepared 29 contracted instructors to deliver FOS modules. FOS will pilot in-person during SFY 2022-23 in preparation for statewide, in-person launch.

Over the course of SFY 2020-21, the CWRC also completed the development of 22 new curricula and revisions to 11 existing curricula and offered over 60 online courses. The CWRC is continuing work to redesign the CAST series to include instructor-led sessions delivered using Team Based Learning™ and simulation-based learning. Finally, statewide rollout of the redesigned Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA), is in progress and will launch electronically in 2022. The redesigned ITNA, called the Individual Needs Assessment (INA), aligns with Pennsylvania's Practice Model and Child Welfare Competencies.

All 67 counties in Pennsylvania participated in at least one TA session with a Practice Improvement Specialist, and many counties received multiple sessions. Workplans are developed with county teams engaging in ongoing TA services to identify goals and timelines for the projects. Progress reports are completed on a quarterly basis and shared with the county team and OCYF Central Management Office and Regional Directors.

During SFY 2020-21, some of the requests for consultation and support services were workforce strategies including hiring, onboarding, remote work, and retention of staff; leadership and supervisor development; safety and risk assessment support sessions; policy and procedures development including implementation of FFPSA; and communication and collaboration.

There was an increase in safety and risk assessment technical assistance as risk assessment support sessions were held 42 times in 14 different counties and safety assessments were held 47 times in 10 different counties (last fiscal year approximately 40 Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment Support Sessions were held). Safety support sessions continue to be co-facilitated with OCYF Regional Office representatives and focus on identifying strategies to assist the county staff in gathering and analyzing information to inform the safety assessment tool and decisions. The goal of the support sessions is to model the process so that supervisors can use it in their supervision and support with their staff.

Organization Effectiveness (OE) services were primarily delivered virtually in SFY 2020-21, with some services provided in-person. TA also included support for IL programs and services, CFSR/QSR, FR, and transfer of learning from trainings, all

covered in other sections of this report. Parent and youth ambassadors are used in many technical assistance services to elevate the voice of those with lived experiences to assess and impact change. SFY 2021-22 will continue some of the traditional technical assistance and expand to include support for the implementation of the Family First Prevention and Services Act, racial equity and inclusion, and increasing the use of data to measuring the impact of services. Collaboration with OCYF and other service providers is critical to support positive change for CCYA and Pennsylvania's child welfare system. For more information about OE services go to: http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/OE-Department.htm. There are no new updates from the TA Collaborative Steering Committee since last report, but their efforts toward using a more structured CQI approach for TA is ongoing and regional and county specific technical assistance teams continue to support counties and practice changes.

In early 2019, the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work in partnership with Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) was selected as a project site for the National Child Welfare Workforce Initiative (NCWWI). This national project supports jurisdiction in assessing their organization, creating educational stipend programs to strengthen the child welfare workforce, and using evidence-informed strategies to build leadership skills. The goal of the project is for systemic change and improved outcomes for children and families. Organizational Effectiveness staff are members of the Implementation Team and facilitators of two Action Teams focused on enhancing supervision at Allegheny County DHS. Additionally, the CWRC attended leadership and coaching training as part of the project and had staff assigned to provide one-to-one coaching to members of Allegheny County's leadership team. A race equity lens is used within the project to address goals related to disproportionality, child welfare practice, supervision, and human resource processes. The School of Social Work also has child welfare workforce fellows enrolled in the MSW program on main campus, participating in seminars, and placed in Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth, and Families regional offices. For more information, please refer to the NCWWI website at: Workforce Sites – National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (ncwwi.org).

Efforts continue to recruit and retain a qualified workforce. The University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work education programs provide opportunities at the undergraduate and graduate level at Universities across the Commonwealth. Designed to recruit and prepare students for a career in the public child welfare field, the CWEB Program is offered at 15 schools of social work throughout the state. Undergraduate students who are official social work majors in any of the 15 participating, approved undergraduate schools are eligible to apply for the CWEB program. Qualified students receive substantial financial support during their senior year in return for a legal commitment to work in one of Pennsylvania county public child welfare agencies following graduation. The CWEL Program provides substantial financial support for graduate-level social work education for current employees of public child welfare agencies. The CWEL program has funded students from 66 counties, DHS Office of Children, Youth, and Families, through 12 Pennsylvania Schools of Social Work on both a full- and part-time basis. Caseworkers, supervisors, managers and administrators of any Pennsylvania county children and youth agency are eligible to apply to participate in

the CWEL program. At present time, CWEL graduates hold 39% of county agency management/administration positions across the Commonwealth.

Active efforts continue to be made to recruit participants for both programs. Onsite meetings have been held at all participating undergraduate schools of social work to promote the CWEB program. County children and youth agency participation at these meetings has been introduced to increase student interest in child welfare work. Most recently, a Youth Quality Improvement Specialist has joined these efforts in order to enhance engagement with child welfare work. Webinars have been held regarding the county hiring process. CWEL participation is promoted at PCYA meetings and through contact with county administrators. On-campus meetings with current CWEL students are also used to promote interest among casework staff.

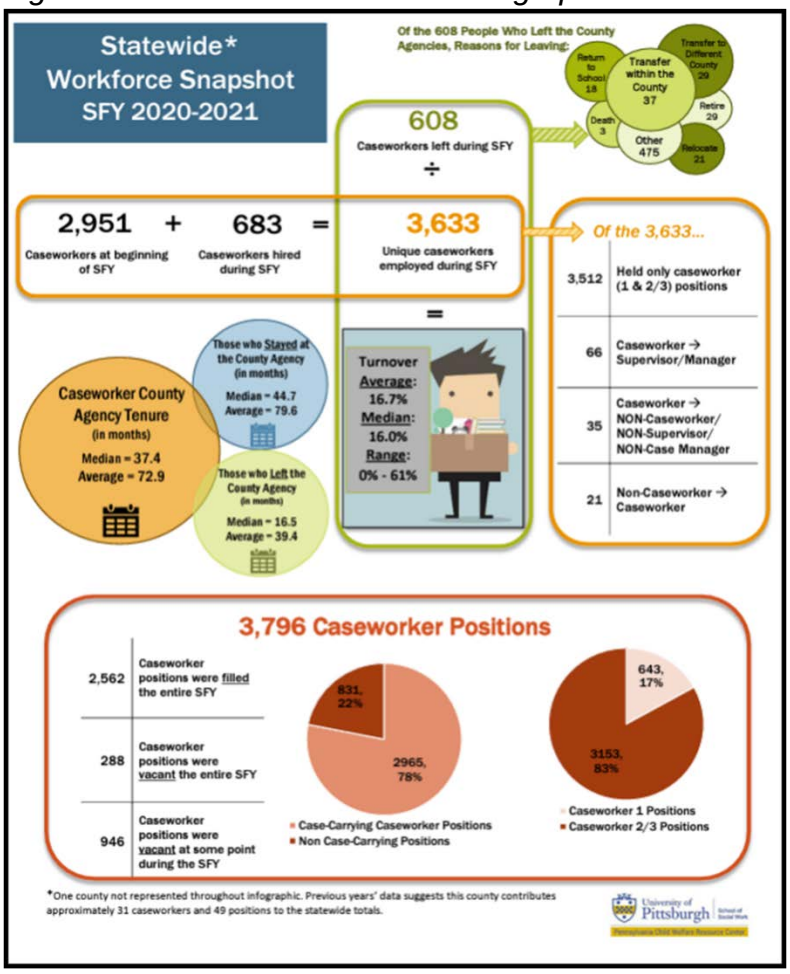
The CWRC continues to analyze and present the workforce data submitted by counties in the NBPB process. A new component this year included a four-year trend analysis, highlighting various shifts in the PA workforce. The CWRC carried out the following tasks in support of this goal:

- *Cleaned data, conducted quality assurance checks, and conducted follow-up outreach to counties for missing information and clarification*
- *Analyzed data*
- *Developed statewide and county-specific infographics; the statewide infographic is presented below (Figure 15).*
- *Developed trend analysis on selected data points: total individuals employed, total new hires, proportion of workforce that is a new hire, turnover rate, workforce employment tenure, positions vacant for one day or more*
- *Presented infographics at PCYA in March 2022*
- *Distributed infographics to county administrators and state partners*

Work is beginning in Summer 2022 to develop an interactive web-based dashboard for counties to access this workforce data. Transitioning to this platform will provide opportunities for administrators to filter and explore their data in different ways and provide one location they can always access to see their information. New metrics being considered for implementation in the dashboard include:

- *Vacancy metrics (metrics of days positions are vacant, filterable by type of position and/or unit)*
- *Retention rate (metrics of employees that stay to selected milestones, such as 12 months and 24 months)*
- *Proportion of direct service staff to support staff*
- *County-specific four-year trend analysis*

Figure 15. Statewide Workforce Infographic



Source [County Needs-Based Plan and Budget Submissions], [August 2021]

Data Infrastructure

Statewide Information System

In December 2014, Pennsylvania implemented Phase I of a four-phase project to develop a statewide CWIS. Phase I focused on the intake, investigation and assessment of CPS and GPS reports that come to the attention of the state child abuse hotline, ChildLine, and CCYAs. The state-level system went live on December 31, 2014 and began exchanging information with eight county case management systems. In addition, a public facing child welfare portal went live on December 31, 2014, allowing child abuse clearance applications to be submitted and paid for online; and allowing mandated reporters to submit child abuse referrals online.

Phase II of CWIS was to focus on children and build the functionality to provide a complete view of a child's case management data. Phase II was to initially be

completed by 2020. Needed enhancements to Phase I and the operational impacts as a result of the massive changes to the CPSL delayed these efforts. Business and system requirements were completed in 2017-2018; however, DHS decided to issue a Request for Information (RFI) in 2018 to identify technology solutions in the marketplace that could meet the state's needs for a case management system. Multiple vendors responded to the RFI and provided demonstrations of potential technology platforms. At the time of the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP, DHS was in the process of determining next steps for Phase II.

Until AFCARS functionality is incorporated into CWIS, Pennsylvania will continue to rely on AFCARS data submitted quarterly by the 67 CCYAs to identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in placement. The information is limited to the data elements within the AFCARS file and is point in time as of each quarter. OCYF coordinates with each CCYA to obtain any additional information needed on the location of a child or any other information needs. Each CCYA is required to know and document the location and placement status of each child in placement.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

In the summer of 2019, DHS announced the decision to move forward with a single statewide CW CM system. This decision was made after evaluating the costs and benefits of continuing with the current federated model versus moving to a statewide system. The decision was further supported by an Executive Order issued by Governor Tom Wolf on July 31, 2019. The CW CM System will replace the statewide CWIS and the six county-level case management systems. Functionality from OCYF legacy applications, such as IVE-QA and AFCARS will also be included in the CW CM System. A decision has not yet been made regarding inclusion of the public facing CWIS Child Welfare Portal, which allows child abuse history clearance applications to be submitted and paid for online; and allows mandated reporters to submit child abuse referrals online.

The CW CM will be a component of a larger DHS initiative to implement an Enterprise Case Management (ECM) system that will include case management functionality for other PA DHS program offices.

The CW CM project vision is to have a comprehensive, state-of-the-art, child welfare system that:

- *Improves outcomes for our children and families.*
- *Provides a statewide view of the child.*
- *Supports improved collaboration and partnerships.*
- *Enhances decision making and program improvements.*
- *Provides a tool for child welfare professionals that is viewed as indispensable to their practice.*
- *Responds to diverse county operations through flexible configuration.*

Since the announcement in May 2019, OCYF and county representatives have worked together on planning and implementation activities associated with the CW CM. OCYF held an extensive "lessons learned" session with counties before moving forward with the project to ensure concerns from prior IT initiatives were identified and addressed in a collaborative way. A project charter was developed by OCYF and county members of the CW CM Steering Team and approved by both the Steering Team and the Advisory Board, which have been meeting on a bi-weekly and monthly basis respectively. The project governance structure is included as part of the charter. Business Process Alignment (BPA) and User Stories sessions have been held for Eligibility and Financial Management, and for Provider Management. In addition to the CW CM activities, OCYF and county representatives have participated in several ECM level workgroups to provide input into the user stories for functionality that may be shared across ECM, such as Person Management.

CW CM System development is anticipated to begin in 2023. In light of this, OCYF also identified a need to develop a new AFCARS reporting system. This system will enable OCYF to not only collect the data needed to support the AFCARS 2.0 requirements and will serve to correct issues which are currently identified in the final 2014 AFCARS Review Report. The current AFCARS submission process involves the generation of the AFCARS files at the county level. The counties then submit their AFCARS six-month files to OCYF, for OCYF to use to compile the master statewide file. This process has proven problematic for a number of reasons, all of which are noted in the findings from the 2014 AFCARS Review. The AFCARS System being developed to support AFCARS 2.0 will seek to achieve the following;

- *Lay the foundation for reporting and advanced analytics to provide OCYF with access to county data.*
- *Leverage the raw data from the county systems to apply consistent rules to generate the statewide AFCARS file.*
- *Ensure that AFCARS data is more readily available on a closer to real-time basis.*
- *Streamline the AFCARS process to reduce manual preparation and validation activities required by County and OCYF Staff.*
- *Improve data quality and error handling through the creation of an AFCARS error dashboard.*
- *Consolidate information across each of the six county case management Systems to improve analysis and insight.*
- *Promote the user of science and data to drive fact based decision making.*
- *Maximize solution reuse and minimize changes to the existing CWIS application.*
- *Allow for visibility as it pertains to children who move across multiple counties. This will also ensure complete removal history which is currently limited by the fact each county maintains its own database and records of the children served.*

- *Increase transparency surrounding the accuracy and timeliness of data entry into the county case management systems.*
- *Ensure that historical information is appropriately retained for all data fields.*
- *Allow OCYF staff direct access to the information in the individual county systems. This will also allow OCYF to incorporate a review and analysis of the data as part of the quality assurance process.*

2019-2021 Accomplishments

- *Developed Vision Statement: The CW CM Steering Team developed the CW CM Vision Statement, outlining the desired future state of child welfare across Pennsylvania.*
- *Created Project Charter: The CW CM Steering Team created a Project Charter, which outlines the project and includes project overview, scope, assumptions, constraints, timeline, and governance structure. This team also focused on establishing the decision-making process for the project.*
- *Reviewed Capability Matrix: The CW CM Steering Team reviewed the high-level ECM capability matrix, which supported the inclusion of child welfare requirements in the ECM platform review and selection process.*
- *Participated in the review of three ECM platform options.*
- *Completed Discovery Sessions: The state visited with county system representatives to review and document the current high-level county business processes.*
- *BPA and User Story Sessions: The state and counties began BPA and User Story sessions to streamline and standardize varying business processes across the state and to document high-level business requirements. These BPA and User Story sessions continue to occur at present time and are anticipated to be completed in October of 2022. Epics for Eligibility, Financial Management, Provider Management, Person Management, Worker Management, Intake, GPS Assessment/CPS Investigation, Case Management, Assessments, and Plans have been completed. Participated in ECM workgroups including Person Management, Case Types, and Master Client Index Management.*

2022-2023 Planned Activities

- *Continue and complete BPA and User Story Sessions: The state and counties will continue and complete BPA and User Story sessions.*
- *Support Systems Integration (SI) Vendor Procurement: High-level requirements (from the BPA and User Story sessions) will be provided to support the SI Vendor procurement.*
- *Continue to participate in ECM workgroups including Person Management, Case Types, and Master Client Index Management.*

- *Evaluation of SI Vendor RFP Proposals will occur, and a final selection of an SI vendor is anticipated to occur in 2022.*

Implementation of the CW CM System will address the CFSR system factor regarding the requirement for a statewide information system that identifies the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in placement. Until the system is implemented, Pennsylvania will continue to rely on AFCARS data submitted quarterly by the 67 CCYAs. The information is limited to the data elements within the AFCARS file and is point in time as of each quarter. OCYF coordinates with each CCYA to obtain any additional information needed on the location of a child or any other information needs. Each CCYA is required to know and document the location and placement status of each child in placement.

Data Quality Plan

ACF requires Title IV-E agencies to implement and maintain automated functions in the state's Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) to regularly monitor data quality, develop and implement a CCWIS data quality plan, conduct biennial data quality reviews and report the status of compliance with Section 1355.52(d)(1).

The CCWIS Data Quality Plan will support the improvement of data for on-going federal and state reports, including those listed below:

- AFCARS
- NYTD
- NCANDS
- Annual Child Protective Services Report
- Caseworker Visit Tracking
- CFSR
- CFSP

CCWIS regulations require the development and implementation of a comprehensive data quality plan that:

- Ensures that complete, timely, accurate, and consistent data is maintained and exchanged in accordance with confidentiality laws and requirements; validated to ensure that it supports child welfare policies, goals and practices; and not created by default.
- Supports data quality with CCWIS automation that monitors data quality; provides data quality alerts; prompts child welfare contributing agencies for needed data; does not require duplicate data entry; and reports data quality problems.
- Provides for the annual review of data quality to confirm required data are collected; data meets quality standards; CCWIS supports data quality and data exchanges work as required and are standardized.

Pennsylvania's current information system CWIS, is a network of integrated systems that follows a federated model allowing county functions to be supported by their own case management systems and enables data exchange with CWIS. CWIS uses a service-oriented architecture that interoperates with county case management systems and other data systems that collect child welfare information.

OCYF has existing data quality measures in place to ensure data within CWIS and data exchanged with the counties are complete, accurate and timely. Many of the current quality processes are targeted at data fields required for state and federal reporting. As OCYF completes the activities outlined in the CCWIS Data Quality Plan, OCYF will re-visit existing data quality standards and protocols to identify tools and processes that should continue or be enhanced, as well as identify new tools and processes for implementation. Establishing a robust set of tools and processes for assessing and addressing data quality issues is vital to OCYF's effort to increase county system participation in the collection and reporting of data that will translate into actionable information. The data quality plan is an opportunity for OCYF to expand its existing data integrity practices and implement strategies to satisfy CCWIS data requirements by:

- Providing a 360º view of a child and their family;
- Addressing safety, permanency, and well-being;
- Assessing service needs and effectiveness for individuals, families, and communities;
- Accurately forecasting financial and resource needs;
- Managing by data and adjusting as needed; and
- Efficiently, effectively and economically managing operations amongst individuals, teams, and agencies.

Data Governance is a key component of any data quality plan in that it provides a structure for data creation, data exchange and reporting. Child welfare data may be created by the child welfare system; however, it may originate in another health or human services system. The data governance structure must account for and, at times, adapt to data requirements that fall outside the control of the child welfare agency. Data Governance provides the mechanism for oversight of other contributing data and reporting units to ensure adherence to quality protocols and accountability. Data Governance is integral to any data quality plan since it defines relationships of who must be responsible, accountable, consulted and/or informed about data activities.

OCYF will establish a Data Governance Committee and develop a Data Governance Plan to support a process that uses a hierarchy based on federal, state, or other requirements to define data and its handling. For example, AFCARS data is for the most part defined by ACF, Children's Bureau, and necessitates a state to adhere to AFCARS requirements. While variation may occur from state to state based on their own laws or policies, the data reported must be consistent with how ACF defines it. In contrast, data that is not defined in federal or state regulations may be governed by an agreement between two parties. The Data Governance Committee will work with key

stakeholders to develop guidelines to manage data within IT systems, data exchanges, documents, processes and operations. Data policies, standards and processes shall be defined and implemented from this level.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

OCYF is addressing data quality on a continuous basis and through a multi-faceted approach. As a result of the decision to implement a statewide CW CM system rather than continue with the next phase of CWIS, OCYF will continue efforts to improve data quality within existing state and county systems while planning for data conversion to the new system.

Pennsylvania's CWIS is a network of integrated systems that follows a federated model allowing CCYA functions to be supported by their own case management systems and enables data exchange with CWIS. CWIS uses a service-oriented architecture that interoperates with county case management systems and other data systems that collect child welfare information. OCYF has several legacy applications that receive data from CCYAs through secure file transfer protocols and our data quality plan addresses that data as well.

OCYF received federal approval for CCWIS funding in 2017 and continues to submit a Data Quality Plan as part of the annual Advance Implementation Planning Document (AIPD).

Approach

OCYF views the CCWIS Data Quality Plan as a living document that will be used in conjunction with its ongoing quality assurance and CQI activities. Iterative changes will be made to the plan to address the findings from quality reviews. The goal of improving data quality is to provide meaningful information to understand, inform and support effective Child Welfare service-delivery in the Commonwealth.

The CCWIS Data Quality Plan supports improvements of current data sources used for federal and state reports, planning and budgeting for service-delivery, and measuring improvements in outcomes for children and families. Data sets include, but are not limited to, those listed below:

- *AFCARS*
- *NYTD*
- *NCANDS*
- *Annual Child Protective Services Report*
- *Caseworker Visit Tracking*
- *CFSR*
- *CFSP*
- *NBPB data*

2019-2021 Accomplishments

- *Data Governance Committee: In April 2019, OCYF initiated the formation of a Data Governance Committee. The committee met monthly through October 2019 and was temporarily put on hold to determine how to best align the group with the CW CM project. Committee membership includes OCYF, CCYAs, CWRC, and private providers. During the time the group met a charter was approved and a survey was completed by counties to identify areas for data quality improvement.*
- *Data Quality Survey: A data quality survey was completed in September 2019 by 43 counties. The survey focused on data sets that are sent to OCYF by the counties as well as identifying if counties had any concerns with their internal systems. The top three data quality challenges identified were lack of resources and time to address data quality, difficulty aligning data with other counties and the state, and the need for training.*
- *AFCARS Improvement Plan: OCYF and the six county systems continued to address the findings of the 2014 AFCARS Review. OCYF submitted updated state and county plans in January 2019 and January 2020. Statewide AIP items which are not already completed or dismissed for lack of relevance to AFCARS 2020 will continue to be monitored and will be addressed in the CW CM system as well as in the AFCARS 2.0 solution.*
- *Ongoing data quality checks:*
- *Quarterly reviews of county AFCARS files using existing and new data quality checks.*
- *Continued monitoring of CWIS data to identify areas for improvement.*
- *Quarterly review of legacy systems data used for federal or state reports including the CY28, Caseworker Visitation, and NYTD.*
- *Periodic review of data needed for NCANDS.*
- *Communication: Enhanced communication to users for CWIS data quality issues by adding a data quality section to the bi-monthly CWIS all-county calls and the CWIS monthly update (newsletter).*
- *Child Fatality and Near Fatality Reports: OCYF focused on improving data consistency and completeness for these reports in CWIS. Data quality reports were developed to assist ChildLine and program staff to more efficiently track these reports on a regular basis to ensure CWIS data aligned with other sources of this data.*

2022 - 2023 Planned Activities

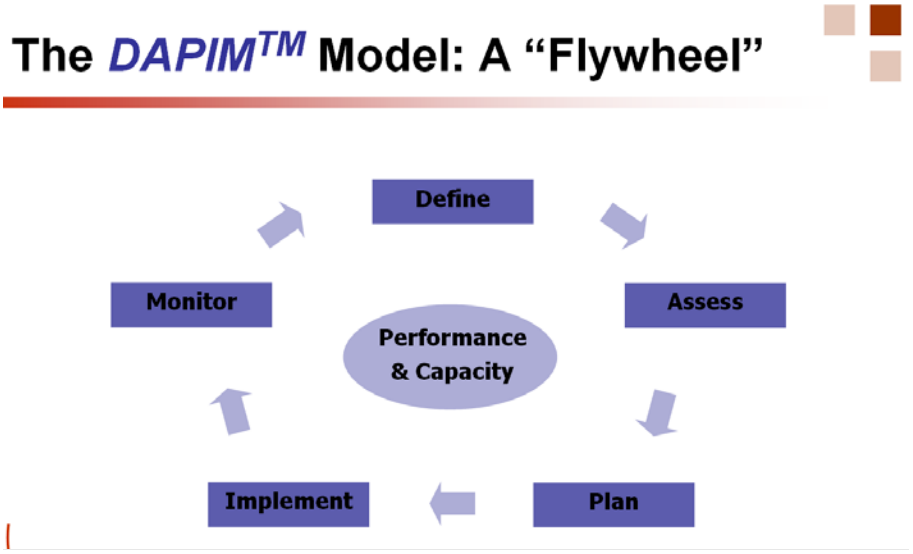
- *Data Governance Committee: OCYF plans on having this committee begin meeting again to assist with the CW CM project. The meetings are planned to begin again once the additional staffing resources deemed necessary for the support of the CW CM effort are secured. Planning for data clean-up and pre-conversion activities will start to occur in coordination with the ECM project. This group will also assist in data standardization across counties and look at ways to address challenges in data quality improvement.*

- *AFCARS Improvement Plan:. In April of 2022, OCYF received notice of the closing out of Pennsylvania's AIP. Part of this process involved identifying items which were being dismissed and flagged for Children's Bureau's review during the assessment phase for AFCARS 2020. OCYF is committed to focusing on those AFCARS fields and logic which can be improved at the county level prior to implementation of a statewide case management system.*
- *Ongoing data quality checks as detailed in accomplishments.*
- *Communication: Continue communication to users for CWIS data quality issues through existing channels.*

Quality Assurance/Continuous Quality Improvement System

The core components of Pennsylvania's current quality assurance/CQI system include the QSR, annual CCYA licensing inspections, the NBPB process, the child fatality and near fatality review process and IL site visits. Further description of these components is outlined below.

Over the past ten years, Pennsylvania's CQI effort has been used to reshape the system at the local and state level to support the achievement of positive outcomes. Through the CQI process, staff are supported in improving their practice, which will ultimately lead to improved outcomes for children, youth and families. Pennsylvania's CQI process utilizes the APHSA DAPIM™ model of quality improvement. APHSA's DAPIM™ model outlines five main steps: Define; Assess; Plan; Implement and Monitor to facilitate and sustain change.



During the onsite CFSR in 2017, PA was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor for Quality Assurance System. Assessment of state performance related to the Quality Assurance System is determined through evaluation of CFSR Item 25.

CFSR Item 25: How well is the quality assurance system functioning statewide to ensure that it is (1) operating in all jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services, (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures?

QSR

As each county joins the statewide CQI effort, they participate in a state supported QSR. The QSR is an in-depth case review and practice appraisal process utilized to find out how children, youth, and families are benefiting from services received. The QSR uses a combination of record reviews, interviews, observations, and deductions made from fact patterns gathered and interpreted by trained reviewers regarding children, youth, and families receiving services. The QSR Protocol contains qualitative indicators that measure the status of the focus child/youth's safety, permanency and well-being as well as the child/youth's parents' and/or caregivers' functioning. In a sense, the measures indicate the status of what is working and not working. The QSR Protocol also provides a set of qualitative indicators for measuring the quality and consistency of the implementation of core practice functions outlined in the Practice Model. QSR findings are used for providing safe, positive feedback to frontline staff, supervisors, and program managers while also identifying systemic strengths and barriers. The QSR is not a tool used for compliance enforcement. Rather, QSR feedback is used to stimulate and support practice development and capacity-building efforts leading to better practice and results for the children, youth and families receiving services.

The QSR results provide a rich array of learning for affirming good practice already in place and for identifying next step actions for practice development and capacity-building efforts. QSR results reveal:

- Detailed stories of practice performance and the impact of that performance on outcomes to greater understand strengths and challenges affecting daily frontline practice in the agencies being reviewed;
- A deeper understanding of contextual factors that are affecting daily frontline practice in the agencies being reviewed;
- Qualitative information that informs potential patterns of themes that impact child/youth and family status and performance results based on key measures;
- Noteworthy accomplishments and success stories that affirm good practice and results found during the review;
- Emerging problems, issues and challenges identified at the local level;
- A way to monitor whether practice improvement efforts are having an impact on outcomes; and
- Opportunities to think critically and learn how to better address CQI efforts for improving program design, practice models, and working conditions for frontline practitioners and for the statewide child welfare system as a whole.

Upon completion of the on-site QSR, counties are provided with a final report, which outlines the findings from the QSR as well as other additional analysis requested by the county. Counties use these findings, in conjunction with other data sources, to identify areas for improvement and then work collaboratively to develop County Improvement Plans (CIPs) which are reviewed and approved by the OCYF Regional Office. All QSR County Final Reports and CIPs are made available to the public online through the DHS website.[34] A statewide report is generated after each round to provide a picture of the findings from the aggregate data. These final reports are made available online through the CQI webpage on the CWRC website.[35]

QSR rounds generally last 12 months, running from January through December. Counties may elect to participate in a state-supported QSR annually, bi-annually or at a minimum, every three years. At the time of the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP, eight rounds of QSRs had been completed, with the ninth round beginning in January 2019 and concluding in December 2019. Thirty counties, or a little over a third of all Pennsylvania counties, are currently participating in a state supported QSR.

The day-to-day planning, development, and evaluation of Pennsylvania's statewide and local CQI process has continued to be the charge of the Sustaining Change Workgroup that was originally convened in August 2009. The workgroup activities include continued sharing of lessons learned and celebrations of success associated with each of the CQI counties' work; QSR training; finalization of tools, forms and templates to be utilized to support the CQI process; recruitment/retention of certified QSR reviewers; enhancements and distribution of the QSR Manual; dissemination of statewide QSR data to stakeholders; implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Practice Model and brainstorming regarding the capacity for continued rollout of CQI efforts across the state. The Sustaining Change Workgroup also provides support to Pennsylvania's development and ongoing implementation of the CFSP and Pennsylvania's CFSR process.

Over the next five years, OCYF will work with system partners regarding the following priorities to improve statewide CQI implementation and the QSR process:

- Ensure a sustainable structure is in place to support the ongoing implementation of the QSR, with a focus on building capacity at the county level to move from fully state-supported QSR to greater utilization of county-led internal QSR;
- Revise the existing QSR Protocol 4.0.;
- Continue to look for opportunities to improve of the QSR process and QSR protocol application in rating cases;
- Revising the current QSR reviewer curriculum to include practice for reviewers in working in the web based QSR system used during the onsite reviews; and

[34] https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Pages/OCYF-Reports.aspx
[35] http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/CQI.htm

- Looking to improve the QSR focus group process and explore opportunities to integrate the use of surveys to further engage staff, parents and youth in providing feedback regarding system level improvements.

➢ *Assessment Since Last Report*

Pennsylvania has not added any new counties to the CQI effort through the QSRs since the submission of the 2020-2024 CFSP. Due to COVID-19, OCYF made the decision to not conduct any QSRs during calendar year 2020 (Round X). Two new counties who were scheduled to go in calendar year 2020 deferred to future rounds based on county capacity and unknown trajectory of the pandemic. OCYF determined that due to the pandemic, any QSRs conducted during calendar year 2021 (Round XI) would be required to be completed virtually. Having never implemented virtual QSRs in Pennsylvania, staff at the CWRC supported efforts to make necessary adjustments to the process to support a shift from in-person to virtual reviews. During the reporting period, OCYF worked with one Northeast region county to conduct a QSR using an entirely virtual format during Round XI.

Feedback garnered from the virtual QSR case review revealed that the virtual experience was positive overall. The shared responsibility between the county, OCYF, the CWRC and other stakeholders and contingency planning was key to the successful implementation of the virtual case review. Virtual interviews were conducted via the county's preferred platform, which ensured the children and families' familiarity with the technology and further ensured technical support, by county staff, as needed. Following the completion of the case review, there was consensus that virtual interviews should be required for the child(ren) and family members, but that other interviews with caseworkers, supervisors and other key case participants could effectively be done via telephone. This practice of required video conferences for children and families, but not other key case participants was adopted as part of virtual CFSR case reviews in an attempt lessen a burden of technical coordination on the counties while not detracting from the information gathering required as part of case review activities.

While there were approximately five repeat counties initially interested in conducting a QSR during calendar year 2021 (Round XI) and 17 counites (10 repeat and 7 new) counties initially interested in conducting a QSR during 2022 (Round XII), at the time of this reporting these counties retracted and selected to defer to future rounds due to agency leadership or staff turnover, staffing capacity, unknowns related to the pandemic and/or desire to hold an in-person QSR versus virtual.

Pennsylvania began successful implementation of virtual PIP monitoring case reviews in April 2021. From April to September 2021, OCYF and its stakeholders supported the successful implementation of virtual PIP Monitoring case reviews. The implementation of a virtual case review included record reviews and interviews with key case participants. A total of 65 cases were reviewed in the 7 counties actively involved in PIP monitoring – Butler, Mercer, Centre, Lycoming, Lehigh, Northampton and Philadelphia counties. A total of 56 child welfare professionals fulfilling the roles of

Reviewer, Quality Assurance Specialist, Quality Assurance Coordinator and State Site Coordinator supported the implementation of the virtual CFSR case reviews. A total of 371 interviews were conducted as part of the case reviews. Interviews were conducted with children, biological parents, paramours/stepparents, kinship providers, resource parents, caseworkers and supervisors. Pennsylvania's performance on the PIP items is outlined below in Table 38.

Table 38. Percentage of Cases Rated Strength in 2017, 2019 and 2021 CFSR Case Reviews

CFSR Items Requiring Measurement	Item Description	PIP Baseline (2017)	PIP Goal	2019 Case Reviews	2021 Case Reviews
Item 1	Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment	70.00% n=30	**80%**	**86.11%** n=36	96.55% n=29
Item 2	Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry Into Foster Care	45.45% n=11	**64%**	**93.75%** n=16	55.56% n=18
Item 3	Risk and Safety Assessment and Management	70.77% n=65	**77%**	69.23% n=65	**80%** n=65
Item 4	Stability of Foster Care Placement	77.5% n=40	**85%**	80% n=40	**85%** n=40
Item 5	Permanency Goal for Child	50.0% n=38	**60%**	57.89% n=38	**67.5%** n=40
Item 6	Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	37.5% n=40	**47%**	40% n=40	**57.5%** n=40
Item 12	Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents	46.15% n=65	**54%**	49.23% n=65	**58.46%** n=65
Item 13	Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	45.76% n=59	**54%**	50% n=62	**59.68%** n=62
Item 14	Caseworker Visits With Child	78.46% n=65	**84%**	66.15% n=65	80% n=65
Item 15	Caseworker Visits With Parents	40.74% n=54	**49%**	33.96% n=53	**52.63%** n=57

Source [CFSR Online Monitoring System, JBS International], [September 2021]

Pennsylvania continues to utilize the federal Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI) as the 2022 PIP Monitoring case reviews are being implemented from April 2022 – August 2022. The 2022 PIP Monitoring case reviews are a modified review, focusing on the completion of the Face Sheet and Item 14 – Caseworker Visits with Children. CQI staff

continue to access OMS reports and data extracts, as part of the state's ongoing QA/CQI process. While implementing the modified PIP Monitoring case reviews, Pennsylvania has remained apprised of the CFSR Round 4 communications and participated in national calls regarding and is planning to proceed with a state-led review process for Round 4.

Case review and other data sources are continually used to inform CQI efforts. CQI staff are working to consider how data can be collected and used to support diversity, inclusion and equity efforts in alignment with what is outlined in the 2021 DHS Racial Equity Report.

During the reporting period, activities related to CQI also shifted to focus on preparations for Pennsylvania's planning and implementation of the Family First Title IV-E Prevention Program which began on October 1, 2021. OCYF worked with partners at the CWRC in the Statewide Improvement Department and Research and Evaluation Department to outline Pennsylvania's strategy for meeting CQI requirements related to Family First and the Title IV-E Prevention Program. Family First IV-E Prevention Program implementation and monitoring efforts continue to occur. Current activities include discussions about data elements to include in the QSR data collection sheet with the hopes of using data collected from QSRs to inform CQI activities as well as discussions regarding further enhancements to trainings focused on CQI activities.

Pennsylvania will continue to leverage many long established CQI feedback channels to support implementation and monitor statewide policy related to prevention services in alignment with Family First implementation. As a county-administered, state-supervised system, Pennsylvania has an existing infrastructure that supports necessary communications and feedback loops integral to any CQI system's sharing of data/information learned through CQI processes. Both statewide (Child Welfare Council and others) and regionally based groups are forums for sharing insights and ideas of how to best support successful implementation as part of CQI monitoring efforts. The FFIT Team, outlined in the section entitled Pennsylvania's Collaborative Structure, is working closely with county partners in identifying strategies that are working well and those that may benefit from further improvement. In addition to defining CQI strategies to support implementation, the FFIT will be working in collaboration with partners and stakeholders to identify training needs, transfer of learning opportunities, and technical assistance tools and processes to support implementation.

Statewide meetings with CCYAs occur quarterly as part of the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators (PCYA) forums and provide opportunities to exercise feedback loops between OCYF, CCYAs and other entities. The mission of PCYA is to enhance the quality of service delivery for children, youth and their families by providing its members:

- *A forum for the exchange of information*
- *Assistance in educating the general public and its constituencies*
- *An environment of support for the PCYA membership.*

Several regional structures (based on the four OCYF designated regions) also provide multiple forums to connect with key stakeholders regarding various CQI activities, including Southeast, Northeast, Central and Western regions. The membership, purpose, and focus of these regional groups varies by region and as a result, CQI activities will be shared via the most relevant group associated with region. Regional groups include:

- *CQI, Quality Assurance (QA), Sustaining Change workgroups*
- *All County Meetings*
- *Technical Assistance Collaborative regional workgroups*

Stakeholders from these groups have been engaged in both the planning for Family First implementation, including input on the vision for prevention services, review of key elements of statewide policy to support implementation of prevention services, and review of Family First planning documents, including input on workforce training considerations and discussion about EBPs being considered. These forums will continue to provide critical stakeholder feedback loops for prevention services implementation along the continuum of services focused on Family First implementation. These groups will continue to focus on data-driven and data-informed discussions. Information shared and learned via these feedback loops will continue to inform training, policy, practice, community partnerships, service array (service gaps, quality, etc.), automated system development and other supportive systems for the ongoing purpose of improving outcomes for children and families served by the system.

Annual CCYA Licensing Inspections

Pennsylvania has a statewide licensing system that evaluates all 67 CCYA, private service providers, and childcare facilities for compliance with the law, regulations and policy. When county and private agencies are not in substantial compliance, OCYF regional staff representatives conduct case reviews and interviews with stakeholders to identify strengths and needs for improvement. This process occurs through the annual licensing process, handling of complaints, and child death investigations. For QSR counties, the cases reviewed as part of the QSR are also included in the in-home and placement cases reviewed during the annual licensing inspection to promote the integration of the QSR and annual licensing processes.

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

- CPS Intake records
- GPS Intake records
- Screen-Outs

- Ongoing/In-Home Services Records
- Placement Records
- Adoption Records
- Agency Resource Home Records
- Personnel Records

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

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

In addition, the following administrative items are reviewed:

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

The Period Under Review is defined as the day after the completion of the previous year's review until the day prior to the current year's review. Findings from the licensing inspection conducted in each county is document and is available through human services provider directory on the DHS website.

Over the next five years, OCYF will prioritize the following efforts to improve licensing practices:

- Work with stakeholders in reviewing the federal model licensing standards established through Family First and monitor the implementation of any regulatory changes that result from the adaptation of federal standards;
- Update the annual Survey and Evaluation manuals, which serve to provide regulatory interpretation guidelines, for both private and public children and youth agencies, adoption services and foster care services; and

- Collaborate with other DHS program offices in establishing licensing best practices to strengthen accountability for congregate providers in meeting standards for care.

➢ *Assessment Since Last Report*

During FFY 2019-2020, annual licensing inspections continued to occur across the 67 counties with some changes occurring as a result of COVID-19. Licensing was temporarily suspended during the spring of 2020 due to COVID-19 but was reinstated with appropriate procedures for social distancing in effect during the summer of 2020. For a period of time, a modified, reduced sample of cases was reviewed in each county during the annual licensing inspections. Due to the periodic suspension during March through May, not all 67 CCYAs completed an annual licensing inspection during the timeframe covered by SFY 2019-20.

Over the past year The Bureau of Children and Family Services (BCFS) has issued six provisional licenses to CCYAs and increased monitoring activity with these CCYAs to ensure the Plans of Correction are effective in improving the noted deficiencies. This monitoring activity includes weekly on-site case reviews, the provision of technical assistance, meeting with leadership teams and staff to develop effective quality assurance processes and the review of policies and procedures.

In all instances of a provisional license, a key component of deficient practice and compliance with regulatory requirements has resulted from workforce challenges including retention and recruitment of qualified caseworkers, supervisors and management staff. To support CCYA efforts to enhance retention and recruitment, OCYF has partnered with Casey Family Program consultants to provide consultation services to CCYA leadership to assess the existing barriers to maintaining a qualified, experience workforce.

As part of ongoing continuous quality improvement efforts, The BCFS has identified the need to increase monitoring activity with CCYAs where complaints, review of child fatalities/near fatalities or verification of Plans of Correction demonstrate areas of practice concern or regulatory non-compliance. During FY 2021/2022 The BCFS initiated work to develop a High-Level Monitoring (HLM) Protocol to include establishing criteria for when Regional Offices transition from regular monthly monitoring to HLM. While this effort is a work in progress, a draft protocol is scheduled for October 1, 2022.

Another area of improvement for licensing activity identified during this past year is the establishment of protocols for licensing activity to ensure consistent licensing practices and the provision of technical assistance is available across all 67 counties. A work plan is under way and a draft protocol is scheduled for January 2023.

Lastly, to increase transparency and clarity on the how OCYF provides oversight for CCYAs, on November 18, 2021, OCYF issued a Special Transmittal, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Bureau of Children and Family Services Oversight and

Annual Licensing Responsibilities for County Child and Youth Agencies. This special transmittal outlines the methodology utilized by the OCYF Bureau of Children and Family Services' four Regional Offices during the licensing process and regular oversight of CCYAs.

Needs-Based Plan and Budget Process

CCYA funds are allocated through the annual NBPB process. Through the NBPB process, counties are asked to identify strategies toward program improvement after identifying root causes based on the analysis of their data. The NBPB process builds upon identification of historical and current service levels and outcome measures, directs the need for data analysis toward program improvement, identify strategies and practice changes needed and request the resources necessary for implementation. The NBPB is a road map toward improving outcomes for children, youth and families within Counties. Counties engage a wide range of stakeholders in their planning through the development of a team that will assist in data identification, root cause analysis, identification of and selection of strategies based on data analysis, and continuous monitoring of the implementation activities and outcomes. The team participants represent key external stakeholders as well as County Commissioners and Courts.

While each county currently has its own case management system that allows the county to review and analyze data regularly, CCYAs are also provided data packets twice a year by PCG to support their county efforts in analyzing their progress in improving outcomes. Each CCYA determines measures to focus on improving within their plan. The data packets are provided to the regional OCYF staff for use during consultation with individual CCYAs. The data will assist in planning and monitoring efforts. The data packets include data that looks at the following areas:

- Population Flow
- Reunification Survival Analysis
- Adoption Rate, 17 Months
- Permanency, 24 Months
- Placement Stability, Less than 12 months
- Placement Stability, 12 to 24 months
- Placement Stability, Longer than 24 months
- Reentry

CQI counties may use their CIP to outline improvement efforts in order to satisfy the requirements of NBPB development. Through the NBPB process, counties also draw upon county-managed data and results from the annual licensing process to identify areas of need.

In requesting special grant funds to support evidence-based or evidence-informed programs in the NBPB, counties are also asked to describe the assessment or data used to indicate the need for the program and explain how the selected EBP will

improve their outcomes and key milestones that will be met one year after implementation.

- *Assessment Since Last Report*

  No notable changes to the NBPB process have occurred since the last report.

Child Fatality/Near Fatality Review Process

Act 33 of 2008 requires that child fatalities and near fatalities where abuse is suspected be reviewed at both the state and county levels. By completing detailed reviews of child fatalities and near fatalities and conducting an analysis of related trends, Pennsylvania is better able to ascertain the strengths and challenges of child-serving systems and to identify solutions to address the service needs of the children and families served within, but also beyond, the child welfare system. These reviews and subsequent analyses become the foundation for determining the contributing factors and symptoms of abuse and responses that may prevent similar future occurrences. These reviews seek to identify areas that require systemic change in order to improve the delivery of services to children and families, which will ultimately enhance Pennsylvania's ability to protect children.

For additional information and updates regarding Pennsylvania's child fatality and near fatality review process, please refer to the section of this plan regarding "Efforts to Track Child Maltreatment Deaths."

IL Site Visits

IL site visits are conducted annually with all 67 CCYA operating IL programs in Pennsylvania. These visits include a facilitated discussion with CCYA, private provider agencies, stakeholders, older youth who are currently receiving services and system partners providing services to older youth. Prior to the onsite visit, the CCYA complete a pre-site visit questionnaire that aligns with the State's NBPB. In addition to the pre-site visit questionnaire, the practice improvement specialist conducting the visit utilizes the previous year's IL report, pre-site visit questionnaire, the county's NBPB, AFCARS data, IL funds allocation, and youth feedback to prepare for the visit and evaluate the quality of IL services.

The CWRC staff, along with OCYF staff, have worked to align the pre-site visit questionnaire with the information requested through CCYA's NBPB. The goal is to reduce the collection of redundant information and to improve the quality of the data CCYA are reporting as it relates to services for older youth. The CWRC will continue to work closely with OCYF to monitor the information collected through the site visit process and review and update the pre-site visit form and onsite meeting tool as necessary each year.

The IL site visit process encourages the continuous evaluation and improvement of services offered to older youth through county and provider IL programs. The review allows CCYA to self-report data, engage in discussion related to strengths and challenges with partner agencies at the onsite review as well as hear from youth regarding their experience with the program and what they see as strengths and challenges related to the services they have received. The visit also allows CCYA the opportunity to participate in TA discussions with collaborative partners, to better coordinate services and ensure positive youth outcomes.

CCYA's strengths and challenges related to the provision of IL services are identified through the review of data collected in the pre-site visit questionnaire, information gathered during the onsite visit discussion, and through youth feedback. Identifying and addressing strengths and gaps are a large part of the IL site visit discussion. The onsite review looks specifically at strengths and challenges related to overall program administration, needs assessment and planning, life skills, transition/permanency planning, education, supportive services (SWAN, stipends, mentoring, etc.), employment, housing, prevention/wellness, youth engagement, and AC services.

The expectation is that each IL report covers the strengths and challenges of each practice area identified in the report template and that recommendations are provided for all areas identified for improvement. Recommendations addressing the CCYA's challenges and gaps in services are addressed during the visit and documented in the IL report. TA support is offered during the site visit as well as discussion around next steps to address noted challenges. Additionally, follow-up visits are conducted with the CCYA to present the approved IL report and to formally share findings, provide recommendations and offer TA to address those areas of need identified during the IL site visit.

The information gathered through the pre-site visit questionnaire and the onsite meeting are collected by the practice improvement specialist and put into a written report. This report is shared with the Older Youth (OY) Project Manager at the CWRC who reviews the report and identifies statewide themes and promising practices. The reports are then sent to the State IL Coordinator within OCYF for final approval. The approved report is then shared with all of those invited to the visit. All IL site visits include invitations to SWAN Regional TAs, OCYF Regional office staff, provider staff, systems partners and youth to attend in partnership with the CWRC, to coordinate services and ensure positive youth outcomes. The goal is to identify gaps in services and develop and provide resources, tools and TA, as needed. Providing these tools will increase knowledge and skills among CCYAs and SWAN affiliate agencies and result in improved services provided to older youth.

Data collected through the IL site visits is used in a variety of ways. Data helps identify training needs locally, regionally and statewide through the CWRC trainings as well as other training venues including SWAN/IL quarterly and statewide events. Site visit data also provides qualitative and quantitative information that is used for state and

federal reporting purposes. Site visit data has also informed statewide older youth needs assessment work, as well as the work of the Older Youth Continuous Improvement Team. As a result of the feedback received during visits, Older Youth Collaborative webinars have been developed and offered to highlight promising practice for staff. Counties can utilize this information to identify trends within their own program each fiscal year or look at their program over an extended amount of time to identify gaps and strengths as well as overall increases or decreases in quantitative data related to the program.

IL site visit data has also been shared with statewide workgroups including the Chaffee Ad Hoc workgroup, a subcommittee of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council, when evaluating extending Chafee AC services until age 23. It is used to support decisions at the state level, such as decisions regarding the implementation of federal legislation. Data from IL site visits was also shared with the APPLA workgroup convened by OCYF to evaluate the elimination of the APPLA goal.

The IL site visit process encourages the continuous evaluation and improvement of IL services offered to older youth through the county and private provider IL programs. Each year, the Older Youth Continuous Improvement Team, along with OCYF, continues to monitor the IL site visit process to ensure that relevant information related to practice is captured and that support is being provided to counties in their TA needs related to serving older youth. This includes a review of the site visit forms, an After-Action Review of the most recent site visit cycle and evaluating the best way to collect, analyze, utilize and share the data. Any identified needs or gaps are addressed at the end of each cycle, with necessary changes to the process being implemented prior to the start of the next cycle of visits.

Following the 2017-2018 IL site visit cycle, the site visit process was revised based on feedback from CWRC staff, the Older Youth Continuous Improvement Team and OCYF. The first step was to align the pre-site visit questionnaire form with the information necessary for NBPB reporting. This reduced the duplication of information counties had to collect and report. This also provided OCYF with a narrative to support the counties' request for older youth funds.

Another component of the revised process included an enhanced Training on Content (TOC) for practice improvement specialists, along with the development of an IL Site Visit Guideline document for new staff. This document focused on ensuring that all the appropriate stakeholders were invited to the onsite reviews and that information gathered through visits is shared appropriately through reports. The final component of the revision involved implementing a follow-up visit with counties after the IL report is approved. The goal for next year is to conduct these follow-up visits within 90 days of the initial onsite visit with the county.

Along with OCYF, the CWRC will continue to monitor the changes implemented to ensure appropriate staff are being invited and attending visits, follow-up visits are being conducted, TA sessions are being offered and that any licensing issues to be

addressed by the Regional Offices are reported to the Statewide IL Coordinator immediately.

Over the next five years, the plan is to continue to focus on the IL site visit data, both how it is collected as well as how the data is utilized. The first step will be to transfer the pre-site visit questionnaire into an online format. From there, data can be collected in a dashboard format that will allow reports to be run by the county, region and statewide. This will allow for more accurate, real-time, data collection as well as the ability to share data in a variety of formats. Over the next five years, this information will be used to identify statewide strengths, gaps and themes as it relates to providing services to older youth, help prioritize older youth work/projects and inform training needs across the state. Ultimately, the data will help the state evaluate overall practice and permanency efforts for older youth.

- *Assessment Since Last Report*

The IL site visit process has allowed not only professionals providing IL services but also youth to provide feedback on the services they are receiving. This feedback is solicited in various ways including focus groups, facilitated discussion during the site visit and through one-on-one contact via phone or email. Youth are asked to express their experiences with the program, their needs and desired outcomes which are documented in the IL report. This feedback is then shared with the Older Youth Project Manager and the Statewide IL Coordinator. They work with the CWRC Practice Improvement Specialist in supporting CCYAs to implement the youth's feedback and recommendations. This feedback is often related to service delivery, communication, life skill provision and timeliness of referrals for service. Some examples of youth feedback over the last year include additional requests for information on the different types of insurance. In response to the request/recommendation, a CCYA implemented a life skills session addressing the importance of having health, renters' and car insurances.

The IL programs continue to be monitored through the IL site visit process conducted with CWRC Practice Improvement Specialists (PIS), CCYAs, OCYF Regional Offices and other stakeholders to identify strengths and challenges in county practice related to older youth. Over the past year, these reviews have occurred virtually, in person and in hybrid formats. Technical assistance (TA) to CCYAs was not interrupted during this time. CCYAs were regularly informed of training and pandemic related support through the independent living listserv. This information sharing included regional support through IL networking sessions and national level support through agencies, including Check for Us and town hall meetings led by ACF. The virtual platform allows for a broader audience to join many of the meetings and TA sessions, often increasing the number of stakeholders available to provide support to counties.

Beyond the state mandated IL site visit process, some CCYAs have implemented their own internal CQI efforts specifically related to IL services and older youth over the

past year. One CCYA reported that the IL supervisor had created a new IL caseworker visitation evaluation process. This new process includes accompanying the IL caseworkers twice a year on visits, evaluating the services they are providing to their youth and providing them with feedback on how to improve services and service provision.

One of the benefits of the IL site visit process is the ability of the state to tweak the areas of focus each year to gather information currently impacting service providers and older youth. Over the last year, we have heard from youth and staff alike about an increased interest in social justice and racial equity work. As a result, all CCYAs were asked if they currently provide education around racial equity to youth and staff. This question aims to gauge where we are as a state so TA providers can assist CCYAs in accessing resources to further educate both youth and staff. These efforts will continue over the next year.

Through this process, there have been promising practices shared from across the state related to education for youth and staff. Some CCYAs have utilized life skills groups to provide youth the opportunity to discuss social unrest and injustices. Others have encouraged youth to advocate and peacefully protest when necessary to express their voices around social justice. During a recent panel presentation one staff expressed that the current social unrest in our country has allowed a unique opportunity for staff to learn along with the youth while acknowledging that staff do not have all the answers.

CCYAs have utilized the many different resources and approaches to provide education to staff, including mandatory training time related to racism, inclusion and equity and documentaries with facilitated follow-up discussions. The staff have also received emails with resources from the CWRC, including information from the Diversity Task Force around racial equity and the IL project, weekly emails focused on older youth. Solidarity circles, inviting experts to talk to the staff, focus groups and ground water analysis, monthly check ins, and chat and chews facilitated by a professor from a local university have also been shared with staff.

CCYAs also created new programs in response to social unrest, including LV STAR (Lehigh Valley Staff and Teens Against Racism), a staff led, youth driven social justice group. The youth have had opportunities to advocate for themselves and others, developed community events, including an annual George Floyd Walk, and participated in education on topics around racism and social injustice. Additionally, CCYAs have also encouraged placement settings, resource parents and staff involved with older youth to engage in supportive conversation regarding social justice issues impacting youth. Some staff did individual outreach to youth following the George Floyd tragedy to help youth process what they were seeing in the media and what they were feeling. Another approach has been to celebrate culture amongst youth. One CCYA explained during their site visit how they hold cultural groups to share the values, beliefs, customs, language, ceremonies and practices of a particular group of people. Race equity and social justice will also be incorporated into statewide events over the next year.

Disaster Plan

A Disaster Recovery (DR) Plan or Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) identifies how an agency plans to continue business operations during a potential disaster. A DR or COOP includes the precautions taken so that the effects of a disaster will be minimized, and the agency will be able to maintain service delivery or quickly resume mission-critical functions. Typically, DR planning involves an analysis of associated business processes and continuity needs.

All Commonwealth agencies are required to have a COOP, which is annually reviewed and updated. The DHS COOP is annually reviewed and updated by its program offices, and one of its elements includes the orders of succession to key positions critical to the implementation of the COOP. OCYF meets with the DHS Office of Administration (OA) staff to discuss further refinement of OCYF's COOP, regarding critical functions, key contacts, and delegation of authority, alternate work sites, vital systems and essential records.

The Commonwealth of PA COOP System

The Commonwealth initiated a statewide comprehensive project for developing COOP for each of its state government agencies to ensure Continuity of Government. For this project, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania selected BOLD Database, a web-based Continuity of Operations Planning system designed to assist government organizations in the COOP development process. The BOLD Database system guides users through each step of the COOP planning process and helps develop a continuity planning strategy. This strategy outlines an organization's roles and responsibilities required to ensure their ability to transition and continue essential operations during times of disruption. The BOLD Database system has been customized to meet the specific COOP planning needs of Pennsylvania.

The COOP database allows each agency, including DHS, to enter its COOP details including the following critical areas:

- Locations (PRIMARY and ALTERNATE FACILITIES);
- People (CONTACTS DATABASE);
- TEAMS that you will need to be called on in case the agency ever needs to utilize its COOP plan;
- Information (VITAL RECORDS/RESOURCES);
- Activities (MISSION ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS); and
- Responsibilities (ORDERS of SUCCESSION, DELEGATIONS of AUTHORITY) that the organization depends on to perform its mission.

State Emergency Response System

The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) Act of 1978 (35 Pa. C. S. Sections 7101-7707) replaced the State Council of Civil Defense Act of 1951,

consolidated existing state laws and updated the role of emergency management within the Commonwealth. Amendments to this Act in 1988 and 1989 further focused on the role of emergency management personnel, organizations and responsibilities. Per Executive Order 2006-1, all agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction are required to have in place continuity of essential operations plans. These agency plans are to ensure continuity of essential government operations in the event of a short or long-term emergency, sometimes with little to no warning.

The Emergency Management Services Act of 1978 authorizes the Governor to manage all Departments under his or her jurisdiction for emergency-related purposes. PEMA writes and updates the Commonwealth Emergency Operations Plan (CEOP), which is approved by the Governor. The CEOP establishes the policies, plans, guidelines and procedures that will allow PA's emergency resources to function effectively as a team when disaster strikes. The CEOP provides for performing Emergency Support Functions (ESF) across the full spectrum of hazards. ESF's are the grouping of governmental and certain private sector capabilities into an organizational structure to provide support, resources, program implementation, and services that are most likely needed to save lives, protect property and the environment, restore essential services and critical infrastructure, and help victims and communities return to normal following domestic incidents. The Governor assigns ESF responsibilities.

According to PEMA, the 10 potential emergencies Pennsylvania residents should be informed about include:

- Floods,
- Fires,
- Terrorism,
- Winter Storms,
- Dam Failures,
- Influenza Pandemic,
- Hazardous Materials Incidents,
- Earthquake and Landslides,
- Nuclear Facility Accidents, and
- Tropical Storms, Tornadoes and Thunderstorms.

DHS is the assigned coordinating agency for ESF #6 of Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Emergency Operations Plan (CEOP): *Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing and Human Services*; and as a Support Agency for ESF #5: *Emergency Management Information and Planning*, ESF #7: *Logistical and Facilities Support*, ESF #8: *Public Health and Medical Services Support*, ESF #12: *Energy Assistance*, and ESF #14: *Long Term Community Recovery and Mitigation*.

Mass care shelters are temporary public living quarters that provide physical shelter, feeding, and first aid, but not specialized medical care. ESF #6 includes the reunification of children with their parent(s)/legal guardians and adults with their

families/caregivers. Reunification services may be needed during any circumstance associated with a disaster or planned event that results in the temporary separation of a person dependent upon care from their usual caregiver(s). This includes the safe and timely reunification of children with their parent(s)/legal guardians and adults with their families/caregivers. This Pennsylvania Family Reunification Plan was drafted in consultation with OCYF and OCDEL staff, to set forth the process that will be used when DHS is asked to stand up a Family Reunification Center, whether standalone or as part of a shelter.

Reunification services may be needed during any circumstance associated with a disaster or planned event that results in the temporary separation of a person dependent upon care from their usual caregiver(s). This includes the temporary separation of children from a parent, guardian, or relative.

If requested by the local Emergency Management Agency, or by order of the Governor and, as available, DHS may activate this plan, which includes a Family Reunification Task Force (Task Force) for the purpose of collecting information on unaccompanied minors and missing children and working to reunify parents/guardians with their children. The Task Force is comprised of DHS staff and volunteers in the following roles:

- PA DHS Family Reunification Lead: Responsible for all oversight of the reunification process and staff including communicating with DHS Headquarters for any situation reports.
- Match Lead: Provides direct supervision to Intake Workers and actively searches databases for potential parent/child matches.
- Intake Worker: Responsible to assist parents in completing DHS Missing Child Form.
- Data Entry: Responsible to enter missing child and unaccompanied minor forms into Excel database.
- Child Care Coordinator: Responsible for temporary supervision of unaccompanied minors. A Child Care Coordinator will monitor children under the temporary supervision of DHS. The Brethren Churches' Children's Disaster Services will provide the direct care of children under the temporary supervision of DHS.
- Security/local law enforcement: Responsible to provide security at the moment of reunification.
- Greeter/Runner: Responsible to greet parents and carry forms to data entry.

If assistance in family reunification efforts is needed, DHS may also request support from the NCMEC, the Unaccompanied Minors Registry, Team Adam, Project ALERT and the National Emergency Child Locator Center.
PA DHS participated in a FEMA Virtual Tabletop Exercise on November 12, 2019. The exercise focused on Family Reunification, which OCYF has a critical role in facilitating during a disaster response.

Organization

OCYF collaborates with the DHS Division of Emergency Planning and Safety Operations and the Health and Human Services Information Technology Delivery Center to identify methods of state and local information sharing and collaboration regarding disaster planning and recovery. OCYF currently does not have a statewide IT system, and therefore, lacks statewide information to track the location of children placed in out-of-home care as required by the federal Child and Family Services Improvement Act (Public Law 109-288). OCYF also lacks the statewide information needed to report on children who were located or those still missing in the event of a disaster. Currently, in order to gather this information, it would involve a manual process of the regional offices contacting each county.

Strategic Initiatives

OCYF, DHS OA, OMHSAS, the PDE, PEMA, the Red Cross, as well as representatives of the District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, are members of the Region III Regional Children and Disasters Work Group, led by the ACF Region III Regional Office and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The initial focus of this workgroup was to discuss methods to ensure the evacuation and sheltering of youth from juvenile detention facilities across state lines during disasters. This workgroup now brings together federal and state partners to discuss ways to address children's issues in disasters from a preparedness, response and recovery perspective. These calls often include presenters such as Save the Children, the NCMEC, the United State Marshals Service, and the National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health.

OCYF and other DHS program offices are also represented on DHS Emergency Planning Advisory Council (EPAC), which was convened to advise DHS on the planning and implementation for its ESF responsibilities. The goals of the EPAC include improving coordination among DHS program offices and partners, educating staff on the Incident Command Structure, reducing duplication of services, distributing the load of individual program offices, improving documentation needed for reimbursement, and increasing training and planning.

As part of the DHS EPAC, OCYF and OCDEL were charged to develop best practice recommendations relating to caring for unaccompanied minors and helping to reunify family members separated by a disaster. These recommendations are being used to inform DHS policies and procedures for setting up mass care shelter(s) and/or a statewide family reunification hotline upon the request of a local jurisdiction undergoing a disaster.

When DHS is requested to stand up a mass care shelter, DHS staff will have oversight of the childcare area, care for unaccompanied minors, and help to reunify families. When DHS operates a family reunification hotline, DHS staff will work in

partnership with the Red Cross. Reunification services are offered by local, state, federal, or non-governmental agencies to locate, provide communication, transport, or provide temporary care in order to reconnect family members separated by a disaster incident or event. Reunification services may be needed during any disaster or planned event that results in the temporary separation of a person dependent upon care from their usual caregiver(s). This includes:

- temporary separation of children from a parent, guardian, or relative;
- adults 65 years or older dependent on assistance to carry out major life functions; and,
- persons with a developmental disability and others with access or functional needs temporarily separated from assistants that routinely provide such care.

For example, the missing family member can be a minor who evacuated from the disaster and is believed to be in the care of a trusted friend or relative, a medically vulnerable adult who was evacuated from an assisted living center, someone transported within the emergency medical system, or a runaway from a child residential program.

The DHS Family Reunification Plan provides that DHS will utilize all systems under its control which collect data on citizens and may assist in identifying a child or their parent/guardian, or vulnerable adult. Those systems include, but are not limited:

- MCI
- CIS
- CWIS
- PA Automated Child Support Enforcement System
- Unified Case Management System – OCYF's BJJS
- PA's Enterprise to Link Information for Children Across Networks

While DHS staff could be cross-trained to conduct searches in each of these systems, the searches would be time and labor-intensive, depending on the number of searches that need to be conducted. DHS is exploring the possibility of establishing a simultaneous data search of everyone's information against these databases, all at one time, such as through a Data Warehouse query or some other technical method that meets the same objectives. Setting up this simultaneous search function would streamline and expedite the DHS data search process, eliminate the need to have points of contact in each of these systems conducting searches for the same individuals during a disaster event or incident, and streamline the work of DHS staff at the DHS mass care shelter or family reunification hotline who are already multi-tasking.

Policy and Procedures

On October 9, 2009, OCYF issued guidance to CCYA and private children and youth agencies, and child residential and day treatment facilities, regarding the federal requirements for disaster response plans under the Child and Family Services

Improvement Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-288) and mandated the submission of updated disaster response plans to the appropriate OCYF regional office. The Child and Family Services Improvement Act mandated agencies and programs funded by Titles IV-B and IV-E to have a disaster response plan. OCYF reiterated the requirements for disaster response plans in OCYF Bulletin #3140-11-01, Fiscal Year 2012-13 Children, Youth and Families' Needs-Based Plan and Fiscal Year 2011-12 Implementation Plan Instructions, effective July 1, 2011. Since the issuance of OCYF Bulletin #3140-12-03, Revised Fiscal Year 2013-14 Children, Youth and Families' Needs-Based Plan and Fiscal Year 2012-13 Implementation Plan Instructions, effective July 1, 2012, and subsequent annual bulletins on this topic, OCYF reiterated that CCYA can request monies to support the costs associated with upgrading or maintaining their DR plan, and that requested costs will be reviewed against the CCYA DR Plan submitted to their OCYF regional office.

Agencies and programs funded by Titles IV-B and IV-E are required to have a disaster plan under the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-288). Agencies and programs having contracts for services with other agencies whose programs are funded by Titles IV-B and IV-E must be certain that these contracted agencies also have a disaster response plan. When revising existing emergency or disaster response plans or developing emergency or disaster response plans, these plans must be coordinated with the County Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) or other appropriate local planning authorities, and updated to address the five federal requirements listed below:

- Identify, locate, and assure the continuity of services for children receiving services in their own home, under State care or supervision in child residential and day treatment facilities and resource family homes - who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster or outbreak of disease;
- Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster or other emergency situations, and provide services in those cases;
- Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are temporarily displaced or debilitated because of a disaster or other emergency;
- Preserve essential program records; and
- Coordinate services and share information with other agencies, programs, and/or States.

OCYF and PEMA began to co-facilitate a stakeholder workgroup to develop disaster/emergency planning templates, to assist providers and counties in developing comprehensive emergency plans that address shelter-in-place, evacuation, relocation, staff training, continuity of operations, and accommodation of children with disabilities and chronic health needs. These templates will include the basics of what should be included in disaster/emergency plans to assist counties and providers in refining their plans, as needed. To date, the workgroup developed a draft template for child residential and day treatment facilities, is near completion on the draft template for

foster care agencies and will next begin to develop a draft template for CCYA. These templates will yield an emergency plan that enhances the safety of both the children and youth being served, as well as the staff of the facility or agency. OCYF also developed a draft bulletin entitled *Disaster Plans for Title IV-B and IV-E Programs* regarding the disaster planning requirements under the Child and Family Services Improvement Act. The draft bulletin will need to be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes in federal and state law and to reflect emergency planning pertaining to pandemics.

OCYF also developed a Family Reunification Plan to be used when DHS is requested to stand up a temporary shelter and/or family reunification hotline in the event of a disaster. OCYF partnered with PEMA, PSP, the American Red Cross, and local emergency management agencies. The responsibility to reunify families as safely and timely as possible during a disaster lies with multiple agencies including state and local jurisdictions and the American Red Cross. During typical day-to-day operations, unaccompanied minors are placed under the care and control of local law enforcement, which may be the PSP. However, during a disaster, with or without an active threat, law enforcement and emergency management agencies may be overwhelmed and unable to provide timely reunification services if faced with a large surge of unaccompanied minors. Under Pennsylvania's Emergency Support Function 6 (ESF-6), one of the four primary functions, DHS is responsible for "Mass Care: Congregate sheltering, feeding, distribution of emergency supplies, and reunification of unaccompanied minors with their parent(s)/legal guardians."

DHS is the state lead for ESF-6 and is, therefore, the coordinating agency to assist local reunification efforts should they be overwhelmed. Reunification services may be needed during any circumstance associated with a disaster or planned event that results in the temporary separation of a person dependent upon care from their usual caregiver(s), including the temporary separation of children from a parent or legal guardian. Additionally, OCYF is updating its regulations for the administration of county children and youth agencies to include requirements related to emergency preparedness.

On March 16, 2020, all staff in the Division of Policy, Programs and IT and Data Management began teleworking at home. Staff all had the necessary equipment to transition to a teleworking status including laptops and Wi-Fi. A lot of the staff were issued VPN in order to utilize IT systems that are not accessible without access to the Commonwealth network. All BPPO Supervisory staff maintain regular contact with their employees via conference and video calls.

COOP/DR Key Planning Elements

In addition to the state and federal requirements, the overall OCYF state level and individual CCYA COOP/DR Plans will do the following:

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- Identify a command structure to include roles and responsibilities for response and recovery of business operations at all levels of child welfare;
- Include executive and management signatures and dates annually;
- Include a process for review, testing and updates to the plan on a regular basis;
- Include methods used to advise employees and service providers, including foster parents, of such plans and provide training, as applicable;
- Include a glossary of terms;
- Establish off-site backup for information systems and/or coordination of case and client records;
- Identify methods to protect paper records, data and equipment from environmental factors (for example, use of fireproof file cabinets, covering/bagging computers and office equipment, and installing surge protectors);
- Include detailed requirements for DR, COOP and specific child identification processes within the scope of the future statewide CWIS;
- Identify the role of the ICPC and any applicable waivers;
- Be applicable to the variety of natural or man-made disasters possible;
- Address possible issues that may affect employees (e.g. collective bargaining agreements, own family responsibilities at times of crisis);
- Address coordination of applicable Tribes and Tribal Authorities; and
- Include processes for recovery to normal business activities.

Ongoing Service Delivery Management

In addition to the state and federal requirements, the overall OCYF state level and individual CCYA COOP/DR Plans will do the following:

-
- Identify and prioritize the essential functions and procedures that the agency will accomplish during a crisis;
- Identify mechanisms for accomplishing mission-essential functions if staff is displaced from the primary operating facility;
- Address issues of emergency child care and supervision;
- Include details in regard to additional assistance/supports for foster families, children in care and those children recently returned home and those on trial home visits;
- Include additional details regarding assistance/supports for children and families receiving in-home services;
- Identify mechanisms for delivery of staff assignments for those who may also be affected by the disaster;
- Identify how case recording will be captured and maintained during the emergency;
- Address issues of custody and/or safety and protection of older children and those in IL supervision;

- Address issues of custody and/or safety and protection of orphaned, unaccompanied and dependent children in shelters;
- Outline process for safety and risk assessments of displaced/lost children and reunification with parents or guardians; and
- Identify basic guidelines for the continuation of visits with children and families.

Coordination

In addition to the state and federal requirements, the overall OCYF state level and individual CCYA COOP/DR Plans will do the following:

- Identify coordination with local emergency management plans and first responders such as police and fire departments;
- Identify agreements with courts for the provision of ongoing services;
- Identify staff and or volunteers with additional skills and experience who can be used during an emergency;
- Address procedures for service delivery by providers during emergencies;
- Plan with service providers for the provision of possible additional services for children, youth and families affected by a disaster;
- Identify agreements with other states for information and service coordination;
- Require and assist CCYA's own foster families to develop and update their own plan, update it on a regular basis, and store it in a safe and easily accessible location;
- Request that families receiving in-home services, including families of children in out-of-home placement, develop and update family specific disaster plans;
- Coordinate with medical/mental health providers for emergency services; and
- Identify how clients/employees with special needs/disabilities will be addressed.

Communication Flow

In addition to the state and federal requirements, the overall OCYF state level and individual CCYA COOP/DR Plans will do the following:

- Identify methods and locations to activate and post toll-free telephone numbers;
- Identify the process to post information for staff, families, providers and youth on a designated website, and update it regularly;
- Provide processes to ensure that hard copies of the plans are kept in accessible locations and updated on a regular basis, in the event that web services are down;
- Include procedures for contacting and maintaining links with OCYF staff, CCYA staff, local and/or PEMA officials;

- Identify the use of text message communications as backup for phone service during an emergency event;
- Include procedures for contacting and maintaining links between children in placement and their siblings/family members and parents/caretakers, especially if the child is moved/displaced;
- Include a process for maintenance and easy access to client personal phone numbers and emergency contact information for individuals who may know where they currently are (for example, relatives or friends living out of the immediate area);
- Include details of how the agency will prepare for and maintain communication with children and youth in out-of-home care (for example, foster care, group home, alternative placement); and
- Identify mechanisms for the safeguarding of personal information and protocols for the release and protection of sensitive personal information.

State Level Essential Operations Plans

ChildLine Disaster Plan

The ChildLine and Abuse Registry has a detailed emergency plan to not only preserve essential program records but also to coordinate services, remain in communication with counties and share critical information with counties and other states. The ChildLine Disaster Plan was developed in coordination with the Health and Human Services Information Technology Delivery Center. In the event of on-site emergencies that require relocation to a secondary site, operations will resume within approximately two to three hours.

The plan is to be used as an operations guide to the disaster contingency plans for emergencies that have the potential to halt or otherwise impact operations. The use of an alternative site is designed to restore ChildLine operations quickly and seamlessly to the public. Operations at the alternative sites can be functional at a limited capacity for a limited time. The Emergency Disaster Coordinator ensures that the plan has the most up-to-date contact information. An evacuation and bomb safety plan and accompanying communication plan is included and kept in a central location.

The 2018 refresh of laptop computers provided ChildLine the ability to remotely connect to any secured internet router. As a result of the Covid19 Pandemic ChildLine developed and implemented an emergency telework agreement allowing ChildLine caseworkers and supervisors to work remotely from home provided staff had access to a secure internet connection. Staff who did not have access were provided temporary WIFI hotspots until the employee gained access to a homebased internet service solution. ChildLine and Office of Administration Network Administrators implemented a two-prong approach to receive calls. First, the Network Administrators provided the Verizon OneTalk solution cellphones as a temporary means for ChildLine Caseworkers and Supervisors to continue to receive calls from PA. Stockholders. The department then transitioned to the use of Skype for Business and ultimately Microsoft Teams as a

means of continuing to receive calls from Mandated and Nonmandated reporters. The Verizon OneTalk solution was them used as a redundant system in the event Microsoft Teams became unusable or was in maintenance due to security updates. Further enhancements with call routing, call recording and statical data collection were implemented in 2021 with the introduction of the GENESYS Cloud Worker Portal. The GENESYS Cloud system ensured that calls were answered in the order they were received, provided historical call recording and statistical data collection that was suspended during the initial phases of the Pandemic.

Department of Human Services

The CPSL (Title 23 Pa. C.S.A. Chapter 63) mandates the ChildLine and Abuse Registry as part of the Commonwealth's plan to protect children from abuse. The mission of ChildLine is to accept calls from the public and professional sources 24 hours per day, seven days per week. ChildLine provides information and referral services for families and children to ensure the safety and well-being of the children of PA. Professionals who encounter children are required to report to ChildLine when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is an abused child. Therefore, the ChildLine call center and data system must be available at all times.

Prior to the Pandemic the Division of Operations ChildLine Leadership team was already working on developing an alternative work environment which included the use of teleworking from home.

As a result of the 2020 Pandemic Pennsylvania Childline Services have transitioned from a designated Disaster Site to the capability of teleworking from employee's home. Therefore, the need to develop or explore transportation needs of critical and essential staff to a specific Disaster Relief site no longer exists. As a result of teleworking from home ChildLine operations can quickly resume upon staff arrival at home and set of the required laptop and connection to an internet network. Staff who currently do not have home access to a personal internet at home were provided with a cellular hotspot for connection to their laptop. Additionally, all staff working within ChildLine were issued VPN access to allow required service needing network access to continue.

The Child Abuse Hotline which is responsible for answering calls of abuse and neglect from mandated and permissive reporters in all 67 counties in Pennsylvania is currently functioning 100% in a teleworking, paperless environment. Childline transitioned from the use of Skype for Business to Microsoft Teams working in conjunction with the Genesys Worker Portal cloud-based call routing system. Verizon OneTalk phones remained as a backup communication system in the event of any failures occurred with Microsoft Teams. With the addition of GENESYS ChildLine can record hotline calls and statistical collection of data for the purposed of quality assurance, streamlining processes and increasing proficiency.

Since the ChildLine Appeals Unit has transitioned into a teleworking environment, they have increased their proficiency where 95% of the work is now conducted electronically. The remaining service that are not conducted online are done so on a limited basis in the office. When work dictates the need to be in the office staff stagger their schedule to allow certain processes to continue as normal. All appeals are communicated, transmitted, and dealt with virtually. All current documentation used are in a PDF format. Special software allows correction, redaction and saving of updated appeal documents and court orders. Additionally, all old paper appeals documents continuing to be electronically scanned as PDF files into DocuShare which is a secure encrypted virtual system for safeguard.

Since the last report the Clearance Verification Unit (CVU) has transition into a fully teleworking unit with only minimal staffing needs within the building. Supervisors continue to rotate two days per week in the building to process information coming to the building via physical mail services. A standard clerk rotation of 3 clerks per week work two days within the home office to address any clerical needs that can only be completed in the office. CVU staff have transition from the use of Verizon OneTalk phones and are now using the Genesys Call Management System in conjunction with Microsoft Teams to answer calls and process requests from the public.

The Interstate Compact Unit is responsible for 3 separate state compacts. The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), The Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ) and The Interstate Compat on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA). As a result of the pandemic staff were issued VPN connectivity for their assigned laptops which allowed the continuation of services to be conducted 100% virtually. Interstate Compact Specialist are currently using Microsoft Teams as means to answer any calls coming into the unit. However, two barriers existed. The first being processing of pre-November 5, 2018, ICPC paper cases. To address this, staff annuitants scanned, named, and uploaded files electronically in DocuShare. Completion of this task occurred in July 2021. Physical mail rarely arrives at the Interstate Compacts physical location; staff from other units within the Division scan any physical mail to the Interstate unit supervisor for distribution by email to the appropriate Interstate Specialists.

The Quality Assurance Administrative Support Unit's (QAASU) main function is the guardian of the Pennsylvania Child Abuse Registry. QAASU ensures the processing of all letters going out regarding reports. As with the other units, QAASU has transitioned 75% of its workload to a virtual format. This includes not only case communications with counties, but also includes redacting reports, reconciling reports, updates to reports, change of status, public subject requests, minor perpetrator expunctions, mail and phone coverage. Special software was purchased to allow PDF documentation to be edited, redacted and saved. Phone communications are limited with this unit. As a result, this unit was not included in the rollout of the Genesys Call Routing system. However, staff are now set up to answer phone calls through Microsoft Teams. Due to the limited number of phone calls experienced by the unit when a staff member is not in the building any calls coming in are routed to an RA-account where

consumers can leave a message for call back. Messages are then received via email by QAASU staff allowing for follow up. Additionally, QAASU continues to work on digitizing the physical registry for all reports prior to 2015 that currently are not located in the Child Welfare Information Solution. Since the last report QAASU has scanned approximately 1/3 of the registry per 2015 into a digital format. As stated in the previous report once accomplished 95% of the work can be conducted virtually. This has required staff to rotate days in the physical worksite to accomplish this task. The expected date of completion for this project is approximately one year. Due to the size of the of this project it became apparent QAASU needed additional assistance to continue course with the scanning project in addition to the normal unit functions. As a result, QAASU has hired 3 Annuitant Staff to assist with this the completion of the scanning project.

Since the Division of Operations is an essential function within the Department of Human Services and Child Welfare the hiring process continued during the pandemic. Now Interviews are conducted via Microsoft Teams video calls. Once staff are hired training of new employees has occurred both on-site and through the use of Microsoft Teams. Since the last reporting period the Division of Operations has expanded the training depart from one trainer, to include one Training Supervisor, two Trainers and one Quality Assurance person.

As a result of moving to a telework environment the Division of Operations ChildLine has not experienced any natural disaster that has interrupted our services.

Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services (BJJS)

OCYF's BJJS has Emergency Operations Plans (EOP) in place for the five YDC/YFC under its jurisdiction. These facilities have a total capacity of approximately 246 youth. All five facilities are operated by DHS. The EOPs include preparedness efforts, response and recovery efforts including natural, technological and human-related events such as bomb threats, tornados, severe winter weather, hurricanes, mass casualty, hostage situations and utility failure. All facilities have emergency generators to provide backup power in the event of failure. These generators are connected to emergency lighting, emergency power supply, and fire alarm and telephone systems and are powered by alternate fuel sources other than electricity.

All facilities have Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) with other state facilities to temporarily accommodate the youth in the YDC/YFC should the need arise to evacuate an entire facility. DHS and the contracted provider would utilize whatever means available to transport affected youth and facility staff. A Unified Command Structure, in which all involved agencies contribute to the command process by sharing management responsibilities, will control any incident occurring at a YDC/YFC. However, even with a Unified Command Structure, one person will oversee the event. This person will be the Incident Commander. If the incident is a police matter, the Incident Commander will be the highest-ranking Pennsylvania State Police Official at

the scene. If the incident is not a police matter, the Director/Designee of the YDC/YFC will be the Incident Commander.

All facilities have several different means of communication should one system or another fail. Every facility is equipped with landline telephones, computers with external e-mail capabilities, cellular telephones and two-way radios. All facilities have plans for alternate water supply should their present water supply be interrupted or contaminated. Each facility will utilize an alternate water source, whether it is an on-grounds water source, a contracted water source, or through their local CEMA or PEMA.

On April 22, 2020, BJJS put interim protocols for COVID-19 in place at all facilities. Many steps to protect the BJJS staff, resident and communities has been taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19. First, the Medical Isolation/Segregation policy was updated to reflect guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. In order to ensure the ongoing safety of youth, staff, and communities, BJJS has implemented guidance pertaining to all visitors at the YDCs and YFCs, as well as measures to provide potential visitors with opportunities to communicate with youth in ways that avoid in person contact.

After closing its special quarantine intake units last year, BJJS began taking direct referrals into the YDC/YFC facilities once again starting the week of June 14th, 2021. staff are no longer screened or asked Covid-19 related questions before entering the workplace. All staff are provided personal protective equipment to wear while on shift if they chose to do so. Finally, management teams are continually given guidance regarding how to manage employee illness, as well as direction on employees returning to work.

OCYF Regional Offices

OCYF's regional offices are located in four areas of the commonwealth: Central Region (Harrisburg/Johnstown), Northeast Region (Scranton), Southeast Region (Philadelphia) and Western Region (Pittsburgh). The Governor's OA, in coordination with DGS, is charged with notifying the regional offices regarding emergency evacuation and disaster response with regard to DHS operations at the four regional offices. OCYF has expanded its COOP plan to include all of its regional offices.

Should a disaster affect the operations of DHS's regional offices, several essential functions must continue. ChildLine will communicate referrals and reports relative to these essential functions to the regional offices. Essential functions conducted by the regional offices for a one to two-day disaster include the following:

- Assuring Child Safety. Investigations of reports of suspected child abuse when the suspected abuse has been committed by the county agency or any of its agents or employees. An agent of the county agency is anyone who provides children and youth social service for, or on behalf of, the county agency, such as foster parents, residential child care staff, staff and volunteers of other agencies

providing service for children and families, staff and volunteers at child care centers, staff of social service agencies, and pre-adoptive parents; regional staff are available 24 hours per day/7 days a week.

- Assuring the Location of Children in Placement. Regional offices provide TA to county and private agencies as needed.
- Other essential functions of DHS regional offices, which may sustain a short-term disruption of service (48 hours or more) but should be available as soon as possible, include the following:
- Assuring Child Safety. In addition to conducting child abuse investigations and assuring the location of children in placement, regional offices will also be doing the following:

    - Conducting child fatality and near fatality reviews;
    - Investigating complaints about the quality or actual delivery of services within the region;
    - Investigating complaints that involve health or safety concerns
    - Monitoring the provision of services plans of corrections pertaining to health and safety concerns by county and private child welfare agencies; and
    - Enforcing appropriate standards with these agencies.

Being available, accessible, and providing technical assistance to both public and private child welfare agencies in Pennsylvania is the role of DHS's regional offices when a disaster or emergency affects these agencies. Bureau staff is also assigned to assist regional staff, as needed.

COOP Workgroup

OCYF has an internal COOP workgroup to review and update the COOP annually based on lessons learned and gaps identified in debriefing meetings following each test of the COOP. This workgroup is also charged with planning future tests of the COOP, planning for alternate relocation sites and the expansion of COOP testing to include all OCYF regional offices.

The COOP workgroup is charged with coordinating alternate workspace for its four regional offices (located in Harrisburg/Johnstown, Philadelphia, Scranton and Pittsburgh) to ensure continuity of operations during a disaster emergency, as well as to train staff and test disaster plans and procedures at least annually. The alternate workspace would be used whenever a disaster has the potential to halt or otherwise affect our regional operations. The use of alternative sites will assist OCYF in restoring regional operations quickly and seamlessly to the public. Working remotely from home is the first option for our regional offices. In addition, several state facilities have indicated that they have available space. Meetings between the regional offices, state facilities and COOP workgroup representatives are in the process of being scheduled for further discussion. While our regional staff are a mobile workforce, they may need an alternate work site in the event of an extended emergency.

The COOP workgroup also worked with the regional offices, to identify what assistance they might need from other OCYF staff in the event of a disaster. The regional offices identified that their primary need would be for support in making calls or other communication to CCYA and private providers to locate children, assisting in on-site activities at public/private agencies. A list of possible questions was developed, which can be tailored to the individual emergent needs and given to support staff making phone calls.

DHS Division of Emergency Planning and Safety Operations continues to work with external partners to provide ongoing access to training for OCYF staff and other DHS staff on disaster-related topics such as incident command, shelter fundamentals, psychological first aid and simulation exercises on various scenarios.

CCYA and Private Agencies

Due to the county-administered, state-supervised structure of Pennsylvania's child welfare system, CCYA are responsible for working with county partners and the CEMA to develop COOP and DR plans. Plans must be operational and should include coordination with the local JPOs. Most service provider agencies must have plans in place, particularly those that are responsible for the care and supervision of children. Agencies that do have an existing emergency or disaster response plan must be certain that these plans address the five federal requirements of the Child and Family Services Improvement Act, at a minimum, and will be provided with ongoing guidance and access to information on best practices, linkages to the CFSP strategies and direction on how they can ensure connections to overall child welfare goals and outcomes.

PA's child welfare regulations at Title 55 Pa Code §3130.21 require county executive officers to immediately notify the regional offices of DHS (OCYF) of an event which will significantly affect the ability of the county agency to carry out its duties and responsibilities, such as a natural disaster. In addition, DHS regulations (Title 55 Pa Code §3130.68 and §3680.44) require agencies changing the physical location of a child in placement in a foster family home or adoptive home, to inform the child's parents within 15 days of the change. Agencies must provide to the parents the address of the physical location and the name of the person or agency responsible for the care of the child. For children and youth receiving care in DHS licensed child residential and day treatment facilities, DHS regulations (Title 55 Pa Code §3800.16) require these facilities to notify DHS and any contracting agency within 24 hours when any condition results in the closure of a facility. Facilities are required to notify the DHS and any contracting agency within 12 hours if a fire occurs requiring the relocation of children. OCYF is responsible for the 3800 licensing of child residential and day treatment facilities in 2017. OCYF is drafting a new Chapter 3131 regulation to replace the current Chapter 3130 regulations. The draft regulations, which will be published for public comment later this year, have a section on emergency preparedness.

Each of Pennsylvania's 67 counties is required, in accordance with PEMA, to prepare, maintain and keep current an emergency operation plan for the prevention and

minimization of injury and damage caused by a disaster, prompt and effective response to disaster and disaster emergency relief and recovery in consonance with the Commonwealth Emergency Operations Plan.

The county's EOP defines the organization, concept of operations and responsibilities of the departments and agencies of county governments and their municipalities in mitigation of, preparedness for, response to, and recovery from disasters. PEMA provides direction and assistance for plan format and content via the Generic County EOP. New information or changes to current plans are distributed as amendments to the generic plan. The generic plan represents the minimum required policies and procedures. Counties are encouraged to tailor the information in the generic plan to meet their own unique requirements, e.g., additional appendices and county-specific data and procedures. PEMA Regions review the county plans to ensure two-year currency.

The Governor, based upon the recommendation of the county, appoints an emergency management coordinator. The emergency management coordinator or municipal elected officials administer each county and municipal program. The coordinator is an employee of the county or municipality and is responsible for implementing the program.

Agencies and programs funded by Titles IV-B and IV-E are required to have a disaster plan under the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-288). Agencies and programs having contracts for services with other agencies whose programs are funded by Titles IV-B and IV-E must also be certain that contracted agencies also have a disaster response plan. Agencies revising existing emergency or disaster response plans or developing emergency or disaster response plans must ensure that these plans are coordinated with the CEMA or other appropriate local planning authorities and are updated to address the requirements of the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (see Policy and Procedures on page 6 for more information).

In October 2010, OCYF and the PEMA began to co-facilitate a stakeholder workgroup to develop disaster/emergency planning templates, to assist providers and counties in developing comprehensive emergency plans that address shelter-in-place, evacuation, relocation, staff training, continuity of operations, and accommodation of children with disabilities and chronic health needs. These templates will include the basics of what should be included in disaster/emergency plans to assist counties and providers in refining their plans as needed. We also seek to identify any gaps, service and resource needs and barriers that need to be resolved. To date, the workgroup has developed emergency planning toolkits for child residential and day treatment programs, foster care agencies and resource family homes. Each toolkit includes a Planning Guide and three components – a Basic Plan, a series of Checklists, and a set of suggested Supporting Documents. Used together, these will yield an emergency plan that enhances the safety of the children and youth being served, as well as the staff of the facility or agency. Following the development of the last emergency

planning toolkit, for CCYA, OCYF will be issuing additional policy guidance to require that disaster/emergency plans be shared with both the local CEMA and the OCYF Regional Office.

DHS, county and private child welfare agencies developing disaster plans, and agencies that have existing disaster response plans in place must address the following five federal requirements.

- Identify, locate and continue the availability of services for children under State care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster:
    - Pennsylvania's child welfare regulations at Title 55 Pa Code §3130.21 require county executive officers to immediately notify the regional offices of DHS (OCYF) of an event which will significantly affect the ability of the county agency to carry out its duties and responsibilities, such as a natural disaster.
    - OCYF may also be notified directly by PEMA.
    - CCYA will call upon the DHS and its regional offices when a disaster strikes their county and renders the CCYA unable to perform its duties of protecting children from abuse and neglect and providing services to those children already in out-of-home care. CCYA maintain the most up-to-date information on each child and family that they serve for both in-home services and out-of-home services. DHS also maintains up-to-date child abuse information and information on children in out-of-home care. Should the CCYA request assistance identifying, locating or continuing child welfare services for children under state care or supervision during a disaster, the CCYA would specify in their request which children require DHS assistance. DHS will utilize both sources of information relayed by the CCYA and information maintained by DHS to complete this task.
    - DHS will designate OCYF's Deputy Secretary to authorize the Bureau Director for Children and Family Services to oversee an emergency response involving any or all the four OCYF Regional Offices.
    - During a disaster, the directors of any of the four OCYF Regional Offices will assist and support the affected counties through the appropriate CCYA and JPO, as necessary and directed by the Bureau Director for Children and Family Services. Other OCYF management staff may also be deployed to assist, as necessary.
    - Each CCYA and JPO will support its CEMA Coordinator, if necessary.
    - The need to quickly and effectively identify and locate children under State supervision during a disaster is one of the most critical business drivers for a statewide information system for PA. In the interim, OCYF has planned to identify children under state care and supervision for child welfare and juvenile justice in the following ways:
        - Receive the county-specific lists of children currently receiving in-home services from county child welfare and juvenile justice agencies as well as those children and youth in county custody

(child welfare and juvenile justice) from the county data system/CWIS at the time of disaster.
    - The lists of children receiving in-home services as well as those in county custody (child welfare and juvenile justice) may be manual or electronic.
    - The electronic and/or manual lists that counties will generate will be emailed or faxed to the County EMA Coordinator, the local chapter of the American Red Cross, as necessary, as well as the affected OCYF Regional Director to initiate the emergency location process to identify the location of the children affected by the disaster.
    - The OCYF Regional Director, upon receiving the list(s), shall forward this information onto OCYF regional staff in the field, the Bureau Director for Children and Family Services and the Bureau Director for Policy, Programs and Operations who oversees and shall forward the information to ChildLine.
    - OCYF will load the lists of affected children onto an OCYF shared folder for OCYF Headquarters staff and other OCYF regional offices to access the information.
    - The OCYF Regional Directors will continue to forward updates to these lists as they are received.
- OCYF will locate children receiving in-home services as well as those in county custody in the following ways:
    - The Bureau Director for Children and Family Services and the Director of the OCYF Regional Office will receive the lists of affected children and youth from the CCYA and JPO and contact the Director of the CCYA and the Chief JPO in the specific affected county.
    - These two individuals at the county level will advise management staff within their respective organizations to:
        - (1) make telephone contact with the directors of the agencies where the children in county custody are placed to verify their location, immediate condition and safety of the children; and (2) advise county agency staff to make efforts to contact parents or caretakers of those children and youth receiving in-home services from the county agency. Telephone contact efforts shall begin with those families and agencies that are believed to be most affected by the disaster per the information received from the CEMA.
    - OCYF will also work closely with the local chapters of the American Red Cross to locate children receiving in-home services and those in county custody.
    - Children residing in out-of-home care who are affected by a disaster must be accounted for by the public or private agency responsible for their care within 24 hours of the disaster's occurrence.

- Verification of the whereabouts of every child affected by a disaster must be maintained by the CCYA and JPO with assistance from the OCYF Regional Office when requested by the CCYA or JPO.
- Within 24 hours of the CCYA and JPO receiving updated information on the child's verified location, this information shall be forwarded to the OCYF Regional Director and the CEMA Coordinator. The OCYF Regional Director must also forward this information to the OCYF regional office staff in the field, the Bureau Director for Children and Family Services, and the Bureau Director for Policy, Programs and Operations for forwarding on to ChildLine.
- Resource families who report to the CCYA or a private agency, and directors of child residential facilities must notify the Director of the CCYA and Chief of JPO whose children are placed in his/her care of the whereabouts of the children who have been affected by the disaster. Should the children's placement location need to be changed due to the disaster, this relocation information must also be relayed to the CCYA and JPO within 24 hours of the disaster as well as the anticipated length of stay at this new location.
- The OCYF regional office will assist the CCYA, JPO and private agencies licensed by the DHS in locating alternative placement sites for those children in county custody who are affected by the disaster and require relocation to a safe place. OCYF will coordinate the relocation of youth who are adjudicated delinquent with the JPO and local juvenile courts.
- OCYF regional offices, OCYF Headquarters, and ChildLine/ICPC operations will utilize the up-to-date information received from the CCYA and JPO regarding those children affected by the disaster to field calls and answer questions from concerned parents/families regarding the whereabouts and status of their children.
- OCYF will assure continuity of services for children receiving in-home services and those in county custody:
    - The Director of the CCYA, Chief of JPO and the Director of the OCYF Regional Office will collaborate with other Commonwealth child-serving Agencies such as the Departments of Health and Education, as well as PEMA's CEMA Coordinators to assess the most effective method of providing referrals and connections to services for those children who are displaced by a disaster. DHS shall also initiate emergency access to DHS-related benefits such as MA, general assistance, food stamps and mental health services.
    - Each county has an EOP that details the provision of services for county agencies.
    - The Director of the OCYF Regional Offices will monitor the CCYA and private agencies regarding the implementation of their disaster plans. As mentioned, OCYF Regional Office

staff will respond to the CCYA as needed, as well as provide technical assistance as requested.
        - The Director of the OCYF Regional Offices will ensure that county agencies and providers continue to provide child welfare and juvenile justice services at the secondary location, should relocation have occurred.
    - If a CCYA or JPO needs assistance in continuing to provide services for the children affected by a disaster, the CCYA, JPO and OCYF have the option to contact another CCYA, JPO or the OCYF regional offices for assistance.
    - It is reasonable to expect that the CCYA and JPO may need assistance with caseworker visits, transportation to/from appointments, family visits, or court hearings, during a time of disaster and returning the children to their original placement setting after the disaster has passed. In these situations, the CCYA and JPO may request support from OCYF, which has the authority to request assistance from other OCYF regional offices, CCYA, JPO and the local juvenile courts. Counties should adhere to providing timely notification to the juvenile court for those children under the court's supervision regarding changes in the child's placement location due to a disaster.
    - During the disaster, children affected will need to maintain contact with their parents, siblings, and family members. Parents, siblings and family members will likely contact several different offices in an effort to learn more regarding the status and location of children – these offices will most likely include the CCYA or JPO, the CEMA, the OCYF Regional Office, the OCYF Headquarters Office, and ChildLine/ICPC. Since each of these offices will have up-to-date information on the status of children affected by the disaster, each office should be able to offer certain information as permitted by law and regulation.
    - For those callers requesting information on children affected by the disaster who are not under state supervision, these callers should be referred to the CEMA.
    - Should the CCYA and JPO not be able to maintain telephone service during the disaster, the County EOP will provide the agency with guidance in addressing this issue. As a potential resource, the CCYA may elect to forward their calls to another CCYA or JPO through an existing agreement or to the OCYF regional office until the CCYA or JPO can achieve relocation and again begin its operations.

- OCYF will respond to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster:
    - During a disaster, reports of new child welfare cases will need to be investigated by the CCYA. Certain reports involving alleged abuse

of children by agents of the county must be investigated by DHS regional offices per Departmental regulation. Should the CCYA not be able to perform its duties of responding to new reports, the CCYA will notify the OCYF regional office and ask for assistance.
    - CCYA, JPO, and OCYF Regional Offices will utilize established departmental policy and regulation regarding prioritization of services and response to new child welfare cases.
    - Responses will utilize a combination of resources from the county and state levels, roles will be updated and assigned if needed, and resources will be mobilized.
    - New reports may consist of GPS investigations and/or CPS investigations. Departmental regulations and policies detail how quickly a response must occur when a new report is received. When responding to new cases, CCYA staff may utilize county agency municipal vehicles or personal vehicles, and OCYF staff may use state government issued vehicles or personal vehicles. In extreme circumstances, the CCYA and/or OCYF may need to seek the assistance of local or PA State Police in order to respond to new child welfare cases.
    - CCYA and OCYF regional offices will have included in their detailed disaster plans prioritized listings of mandatory services to children and families and will be ready to triage new referrals and cases as they are reported.
    - ChildLine's Disaster Plan provides for the forwarding of reports of SCAN calls to the CCYA and/or OCYF regional office for investigation.
    - The Director of the OCYF Regional Office will collaborate with the Director of the CCYA and the CEMA Coordinators to receive any reports of abuse or neglect that may not have been made directly to ChildLine and will reinforce the ChildLine contact number for all child abuse and neglect reports.
    - The communication plan will be established to identify lines of communication between private providers and volunteer organizations.

- Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster:
    - A comprehensive communication plan will be an integral part of each disaster plan. Communication plans will be tested and updated with each testing of the overall disaster plan.
    - OCYF Headquarters and Regional Offices will maintain up-to-date lists of all Directors of CCYA and Chiefs of JPO.
    - OCYF, county and private agencies will maintain current lists of all of their staff so that they can be located and called upon to assist during a disaster.

- CCYA and JPO will maintain updated lists of families receiving in-home services, and all foster parents and private agencies contracted with the agency. These lists may be manual or electronic and will be maintained by the CCYA and JPO.
- CCYA, JPO and OCYF regional offices will use this information to maintain communication with emergency contacts and caregivers.
- OCYF Headquarters staff has access to the Government Emergency Telephone System, which allows telephone access in extreme disaster situations.
- CCYA, JPO and OCYF regional offices must maintain contact with their essential child welfare staff via telephone or electronic mail during a disaster.
- CCYA, JPO and private agencies must maintain up-to-date emergency evacuation plans for out-of-home placement locations so that agencies can anticipate where resource families or agency staff will be relocating the children during a disaster, thereby attempting to make contact at the new location as soon as possible. In addition, CCYA and JPOs are recommended to maintain secondary contact information for those families receiving in-home services so that contact can be attempted via the secondary contact during a disaster.
- As agency communication, tools and methods are updated, associated updates and changes will be made to the plans and posted at regularly scheduled meetings.
- The OCYF Regional Offices outlined a contingency plan for COVID-19 response with defined actions needed to support the workforce in regional offices to maintain critical functions should COVID-19 impact result in an estimated reduction of 1/3 of the workforce.
- The OCYF Regional Offices Contingency Plan developed the protocol that will allow the Regional Offices (RO) to maintain situational awareness for workforce capacity, identify resources needed to maintain critical functions and outline steps needed to mobilize staff with the skills, training and certification to complete critical functions.
    - These activities will be outlined in the sections below and include:
        - Ongoing assessment of regional office workforce;
        - Communication systems to ensure regional office leadership and second in command designees receive updates and information to prompt/set in motion phases of the plan and that providers, counties and key partners have updates and information about operational changes;
        - Identification of phases that set-in motion components of the plan;

- Identification of critical functions (first tier) and responsibilities that must continue should a reduction in the workforce occur;
- Identification of support activities (second tier) that could be done by OCYF or DHS staff to support those staff with the education, certification and skills to conduct critical duties (first tier);
- Identification and location of tools, training and resources that will support quick transition for the staff completing the duties above;
- Step by step directions for initiating phases of the contingency plan that allows for flexibility to adjust for key roles to shift (e.g. supervisory staff or regional directors to respond to the field);
- Defined points of assessing and revising plan; and
- Roles, responsibilities and succession planning.

- Preserve essential program records:
    - OCYF works in coordination with the Health and Human Services Information Technology Delivery Center to ensure continuity of business operations for the ChildLine and Abuse Registry, and other data and information systems pertinent to OCYF operations. This requirement will be included in CWIS information technology planning and as our business tools and databases are updated, our plans will concurrently be expanded and updated and will include the various levels of activities and testing necessary to ensure that we follow DHS and Commonwealth standards and processes to ensure the safety of our data. Data residing on OCYF servers is backed up on a regular basis and stored on and off-site through coordinated efforts within DHS. Data pertinent to OCYF operations includes the AFCARS, the Interstate Compact agreements, child abuse reports, child abuse history clearance application, data and limited data regarding the provision of services to children in their own homes. An explanation of our planning and access testing for critical OCYF data was addressed earlier in this document. The testing of the off-site data storage and information system access will be continued on a yearly basis. It is important to note that most essential program records for children being served by the child welfare system are kept and stored locally within the 67 CCYA.
    - DHS DR Plan includes specific backups of data on a regular basis, as well as the offsite storage of that data to a location outside of the area.
    - County AFCARS files are backed up by the state to the server and are stored in a variety of locations. Due to the lack of a Statewide Child Welfare System, the legacy application supplies only point-in-

time data, but the server files will contain a record of the last AFCARS submission.
    - The Data Warehouse stores and has available off-site the historical point-in-time AFCARS submission files.
    - CCYA have been directed to back up their AFCARS and all agency child records, if automated, and keep copies in a secure location. They have also been directed to periodically verify that the records are being backed up properly and to include testing to ensure that the data is viable.
    - Representatives from the Disaster Planning Section of the Health and Human Services Information Technology Delivery Center have provided guidance and continue to offer support through regular testing of the ChildLine DR plan and associated follow up.
    - The DHS DR Planning Team includes ChildLine and the OCYF/Health and Human Services Information Technology Delivery Center DR team in its yearly planning for department-wide web systems and mainframe recovery and batch testing process. OCYF is working with this team, as well as the DGS to fully test the ChildLine server and batch processes from the DHS remote site to ensure that not only the ChildLine hotline, but other critical OCYF functions can continue to operate fully and uninterrupted access to critical documentation will be available even if the DHS web and mainframe applications must operate from a remote site.
    - CCAP has been working with all the 67 counties on security and disaster planning and will continue to offer guidance and support.
    - OCYF regional offices and DHS maintain duplicative information (paper and electronic) regarding licensed foster care agencies. DHS and the Bureau of Human Services Licensing maintain duplicative information (paper and electronic) regarding licensed child residential and day treatment programs. Information can easily be forwarded to a CCYA or private agency when appropriate following a disaster.

- Coordinate services and share information with other States:
    - Requests for information regarding children affected by a disaster may come from out-of-state agencies or concerned parents or families of children placed in Pennsylvania through the ICPC.
    - These requests for information may be made directly to the CCYA, the JPO, the DHS Regional Office or the ICPC office, which is overseen by the Division Director of the Division of Operations. Since all these agencies will have up-to-date information on the children affected by the disaster, any one of these agencies will be able to provide the requested information to the out-of-state agency or concerned parent or family member.
    - Per ICPC requirements, children who were placed in Pennsylvania through the ICPC who must be moved to a different placement

location during a time of disaster to protect the child's health and safety must be documented and shared with the ICPC office. The ChildLine/ICPC office shall receive and maintain up-to-date information on these children and will share this information with other states, as requested.

- Concerned callers from outside of Pennsylvania may contact the CCYA, JPO, OCYF regional office, and/or ChildLine during a time of disaster.
- Callers requesting information on a child who was not under state supervision at the time that the disaster occurred will be referred to the CEMA applicable to the child's most recent recorded home address and the local chapter of the American Red Cross.
- Pertinent data will be shared via email and fax transmission, as well as direct telephone contact.
- ICPC data is backed up and stored offsite by the HHS Information Technology Delivery Center. Data files are available within several hours of a disaster and/or application failure.
- OCYF Regional Offices have their data backed up on the server.
- OCYF continues to explore the provision of a dedicated telephone line (800 number) to be activated during times of disaster to manage incoming calls from concerned parents or families.

OCYF will also pursue the appropriate use of volunteers to make optimum use of all resources during a disaster. OCYF shall make certain that all volunteer organizations involved in the DR efforts have adequate and up-to-date information regarding where to refer concerned persons, parents or family members of children who have been or may have been affected by the disaster.

Over the next five years, OCYF will continue to collaborate with the DHS Division of Emergency Planning and Safety Operations and the HHS Information Technology Delivery Center to identify methods of state and local information sharing and collaboration regarding disaster planning and recovery. OCYF will also update its regulations for the administration of CCYA to include requirements related to emergency preparedness.

- *Progress Since Last Report*

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic required OCYF and CCYAs to activate continuity of operation plans to ensure essential functions related to child safety could be maintained without interruption. In response to COVID-19, Governor Tom Wolf issued an Emergency Disaster Proclamation on March 6, 2020. The following week, all Commonwealth agencies moved staff to teleworking status where feasible.

Many state office buildings across the Commonwealth closed. Staff in the Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations and Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Support located at the OCYF main office in Harrisburg moved to teleworking from home. Staff obtained

the necessary equipment to transition to a teleworking status, including laptops. Many staff were issued access to the Commonwealth's virtual private network (VPN) to utilize IT systems otherwise not accessible without access to the Commonwealth network. This was a critical step in ensuring key applications necessary to OCYF operations could be accessed ongoing and prevent disruption of key functions.

OCYF has revised telework policies for staff whose job descriptions and job performance allow for working remotely. Three options including full-time, part-time, and non-telework were made available to eligible employees. The ability of OCYF staff to work remotely will allow essential functions to remain in operation more easily in the face of future challenges.

Over the past year, OCYF reviewed and made necessary revisions to existing Disaster Recovery/COOP plans considering changes implemented and lessons learned as a result of COVID-19.

Since the last report and as a result the Division of Operations ChildLine response to Covid-19, ChildLine and its various departments have transitioned to a nearly complete teleworking environment. The ChildLine Hotline and Interstate Compact are completely 100% functioning in this environment with Staff working safely from home. Hotline continues to answer Child Abuse and Neglect calls 24/7. The other units who function under ChildLine, Clearance Verification Unit, Appeals and Quality Assurance Administrative Support Unit are functioning at 75% or greater from home. Initially staff used the Verizon OneTalk Solution then Skype for business however, the Division of Operations moved to Microsoft teams in March of 2021. The Verizon OneTalk Solution was kept as a redundant back up system in the event Microsoft Teams would become unusable. One area that was lost during the initial phrases of the transition to a teleworking environment was the collection of call recording, data and statistics. While staff were trained to turn in call sheets of the number of calls completed other vital statistics were lost. The Division of Operations Leadership team worked with the Telecommunications Division of the HR Service Delivery Center and Network Administrators to find a Cloud Based Phone Routing System. As a result, the Genesys Workspace was obtained and implemented for the Childline Hotline and Clearance Verification Unit. Genesys now allowed the collection of call statistics which include call length, abandoned calls, call recordings, login/out of system and various other useful tools. Additionally, staff continue the use of VPN for mission critical programs that require to be behind a secure environment.

In assessing the current DR/COOP protocols, the OCYF Regional Offices identified a need to outline a more detailed contingency plan with defined actions necessary to supporting the workforce in regional offices and maintaining critical functions should COVID-19 result in an estimated reduction of up to1/3 of the regional office workforce.

The OCYF Regional Office Contingency Plan was developed by building off the existing COOP plan. TA from Casey Family Programs was also provided to support this

work. The contingency plan provides a protocol that will allow the regional offices to maintain situational awareness for workforce capacity, identify resources needed to maintain critical functions and outline steps needed to mobilize staff with the skills, training and certification to complete critical functions.

The components outlined in the contingency plan include:

- *Ongoing assessment of the regional office workforce;*
- *Implementation of communication systems to ensure regional office leadership and second in command designees receive updates and information to prompt/set in motion phases of the plan and that providers, counties and key partners have updates and information about operational changes;*
- *Identification of phases that set-in motion components of the plan;*
- *Identification of critical functions (first tier) and responsibilities that must continue should a reduction in the workforce occur;*
- *Identification of support activities (second tier) that could be done by OCYF or DHS staff to support those staff with the education, certification and skills to conduct critical duties (first tier);*
- *Identification and location of tools, training and resources that will support quick transition for the staff completing the duties above;*
- *Step by step directions for initiating phases of the contingency plan that allows for flexibility to adjust for key roles to shift (e.g. supervisory staff or regional directors to respond to the field);*
- *Defined points for assessing and the revising plan; and*
- *Roles, responsibilities and succession planning.*

In addition to contingency planning for OCYF operations, the regional offices also ensured constant flow of communication occurred with CCYAs, providers and facilities licensed by OCYF to ensure OCYF Regional Office staff could review and consult on contingency plans for COVID-19 prepared by licensees and provide TA as needed. The regional offices also developed processes for gathering data on positive cases of COVID-19 reported among provider staff and/or children and youth in foster care placement. The data was reviewed regularly and used at the broader DHS level to support department wide monitoring efforts.

During the onset of the pandemic, OCYF also worked with a contractor to develop a situational awareness dashboard. The dashboard aggregates data from periodic surveys sent to CCYAs to help assess the impact of COVID-19 on staffing and CCYA operations. OCYF also instituted weekly calls with CCYA directors and chief JPOs to provide regular updates related to COVID-19 and to provide a forum for issues at the local level to be brought to OCYF's attention.

OCYF also instituted several changes to the COOP protocols for the YDCs and YFCs to ensure the safety of all staff and residents. On April 22, 2020, BJJS put interim protocols for COVID-19 in place at all BJJS operated facilities. First, the existing

Medical Isolation/Segregation policy was updated to reflect guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Pennsylvania DOH.

OCYF will review and make any necessary revisions to existing DR/COOP plans in light of changes implemented and lessons learned as a result of COVID-19. At this time, the draft bulletin that was planned for release regarding CCYA and provider level disaster response planning has been put on hold until additional updates can be made to address changes in state and federal law and reflect further clarification around emergency planning related to pandemics.

CFSR Systemic Factor Assessment

OCYF utilizes the federal systemic factors regarding staff and training and the statewide information system as part of its ongoing assessment and monitoring of key CFSP implementation supports. Assessment of performance on these two systemic factors is outlined below.

Initial and Ongoing Staff Training

The CFSR systemic factor regarding staff and provider training considers whether the state has in place a training system to ensure that initial and ongoing training is provided to all staff that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regards to services included in the CFSP. During the CFSR in 2017, Pennsylvania's initial and ongoing training system for staff and providers was identified as a strength for the state.

Under DHS regulations, all new caseworkers are required to complete 120 hours of initial training within 18 months of hire. Data collected by the CWRC shows that the average new caseworker completes their new hire training within 107 days of their effective hire date. Caseworkers are also required to complete 20 hours of additional training on an annual basis. Supervisors must also have completed the 120 hours of certification training as well as 60 hours of training designed to prepare them for their supervisory role. The use of an individual training needs assessment is required by CCYAs to monitor the ongoing training needs of caseworkers and to ensure the individual training needs of staff are met. Monitoring of agency compliance with staff training requirements outlined in DHS regulation occurs through annual CCYA licensing inspections. Over the past several years, results of licensing inspections show very few counties are found to be in violation of the requirements. The most common violations of the few that are identified include missing individual training needs assessments and documentation missing in the personnel file to confirm completion of training. The CWRC works with OCYF in utilizing a CQI process to monitor and adjust training for the child welfare workforce. CWRC utilizes a comprehensive training evaluation process which collects information to inform adjustments to the curriculum.

- *Assessment Since Last Report*

The Individual Needs Assessment (INA), formerly the individual training needs assessment (ITNA), is now part of the final online module of Foundations and Foundations of Supervision rather than a separate form and process and is completed by the new direct service workers and supervisors. In 2022, the CWRC will launch the INA for existing direct service workers and existing supervisors who are required to complete an INA every three years after completing their certification series.

The implementation of the Bridge system may support counties in their documentation of training requirements. Additionally, county staff can log in to E-Learn at any time to access, save and print training certificates for any online courses they have completed. Finally, in the Bridge system, county staff and county training liaisons can access training certificates for all instructor-led and online courses to review, save or print for their records and licensing requirements.

The evaluation plan is outlined in three phases; we are currently in Phase One. This initial phase examines the validity and psychometric properties of the measurement instruments, short term learning gains made by the participants, perceptions of the curriculum, and the fidelity of implementation. Subsequent phases will examine transfer of learning, career outcomes, and the effect that training has on the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in the child welfare system.

Planned evaluation activities in Phase One include both qualitative and quantitative methods to determine how satisfied participants and instructors are with the training, how well the assessment instruments measure student learning, how performance differs based on educational background or experience in child welfare or social work, and whether the training is being delivered with fidelity.

Participant Feedback ratings continue to be positive for Foundations training. Further, ratings have been consistent from the transition from in-person to remote training that occurred in June 2020. Additionally, simulation ratings indicate that participants are demonstrating the appropriate level of skill during simulation sessions. This has also held true over the transition from in-person to remote. Self-ratings continue to be comparable to peer ratings, as well as those by standardized clients, demonstrating strong inter-rater reliability of those behavioral indicators. Consistent ratings across the two settings (in-person and remote) also suggests that the learner experience was not negatively affected by the transition to remote delivery.

Analyses are currently underway examining the psychometric properties of both IRAT and Check Your Understanding questions that are part of Foundations modules. These analyses will help us better understand how well the questions are assessing learning, how well they are differentiating between learners, content areas where learners may be struggling, and if any of the questions are biased against certain groups of trainees. Findings from these analyses will be utilized to inform revisions to test items and/or pieces of curricula.

No systemic issues were identified related to staff training during annual licensing inspections with the CCYAs. In SYF 2019-20, one fully licensed county received citations related to caseworker training. Two staff records reviewed were cited for not having record of completed training and one staff record reviewed was cited for not having an individual training needs assessment completed.

Statewide Information System

The CFSR systemic factor regarding the statewide information system sets the standard requirement that states must have an information system in place that 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. Pennsylvania was found to not be in substantial conformity with this systemic factor during the 2017 CFSR as the current statewide information system only collected child maltreatment investigation and assessment information. OCYF will work to bring Pennsylvania in compliance with these systemic factor standards over the next five years through the implementation of the next phase of CWIS.

- *Assessment of Progress*

Pennsylvania remains without a fully operational statewide information system at this time but continues to move forward with critical work to implement a statewide CW CM. Updates on key activities related to the CW CM were referenced previously in this report.

Five-Year Goals and Strategies for Implementation Supports

Based on the stakeholder feedback and review of Pennsylvania performance regarding staff and provider training, multiple strategies were identified to support improving Pennsylvania's child welfare workforce in the CFSR PIP and have been incorporated into the 2020-2024 CFSP. As Pennsylvania does not currently have a statewide information system that fully meets the federal CFSR requirements, OCYF's strategies for development and implementation of this system are included as a priority in the 2020-2024 CFSP. For the 2020-2024 CFSP, some of the key activities included in the strategies identified as originating from the PIP may be expanded upon to include additional efforts OCYF plans to undertake to further the work and to capture efforts that may extend beyond the two-year PIP implementation time frame. As the initial goals and strategies set forth in PA's 2020-2024 CFSP are achieved, OCYF will continue to work with stakeholders to identify additional goals and strategies to add to the state Title IV-B plan through submission of the APSR.

Implementation Supports Goal 1: Pennsylvania will recruit, retain and support a qualified, skills and committed child welfare workforce.					
Rationale for Goal Selection: Analysis of the findings from PA's CFSR pointed to workforce issues as a key underlying root cause impacting Pennsylvania's performance across the CFSR safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. Through additional analysis of the cases reviewed during the CFSR and the written comments completed by the reviewers, Pennsylvania was able to identify cases where staff turnover was one of the contributing factors when performance issues were found. A "stay" survey was conducted through the AOPC State Roundtable Caseworker Retention Workgroup. Over 1,000 child welfare professionals responded and identified similar factors as previously mentioned, as well as positive factors such as; the ability to make a difference with children and families, the importance of a supportive supervisor, and job flexibility. There is a solid research base which supports a mix of personal (within the individual) and organizational (within the system) factors that negatively or positively impact recruitment and retention. Pennsylvania believes that no single strategy is, in and of itself, sufficient to fully address workforce challenges; rather, there is a need to set forth a more holistic approach with a well-designed, research-informed package of strategies targeted at both personal and organizational factors.					
5-Year Monitoring Targets:	**Baseline**	2021 APSR	2022 APSR	2023 APSR	2024 APSR
The revised Chapter 3131 regulations which reduce caseload size requirements will be fully implemented by the end of FFY 2024.	June 2019 Regulation language revisions are in the process of being finalized for public comment	June 2020 Regulation language revisions are in the process of being finalized for public comment	June 2021 Regulation language revisions drafted final version reviewed by OCYF executive leadership	June 2022 All regulations drafted in collaboration with DHS Policy and Legal and the preamble and regulatory analysis form are being completed	

OCYF will establish a reliable method for collecting CCYA workforce data and utilize the information to conduct regular analysis of workforce trends.	June 2019 The NBPB Bulletin for SFY 2020-21 was released and includes detailed request for CCYA workforce data	June 2020 CWRC analyzed and issued preliminary data to CCYAs on workforce trends	June 2021 CWRC analyzed and issued data to OCYF and CCYAs for SFY 2019-20	June 2022 CWRC analyzed and issued data to OCYF and CCYAs for SFY 2020-22	

Implementation Supports Objective 1.1 (CFSR PIP Strategy): Revise existing recruitment and hiring processes to improve efforts to attract skilled and qualified individuals to the child welfare workforce.
Rationale for Objective Selection: • The complexity of the work carried out by child welfare professionals has increased, however, recruitment and hiring practices, especially those governed by the state Civil Service system, have not been modified in response. • The current education and experience requirements for county children and youth caseworkers and supervisors set forth by the Civil Service system do not reflect the level of knowledge and skill necessary to succeed in the child welfare profession; • The child welfare workforce is often not perceived by the public as having the same level of professionalism as other related fields among the public, with a lack of understanding regarding the value of the work.

Key Activities/Strategies	Benchmarks for Completion
OCYF will collaborate with the Governor's Office of Administration to develop and implement a child welfare job specification for both caseworkers and supervisors for counties that use the Commonwealth's merit hiring system	March 2020 *Complete*
OCYF will collaborate with the Governor's Office of Administration to utilize a revised Civil Service test for the newly developed child welfare caseworker and supervisor positions for counties using the Commonwealth's merit hiring system.	March 2020

➢ Job specifications and selection criteria will be revised and implemented statewide for counties that remain within the Commonwealth's civil service hiring framework. ➢ For counties that have been approved to implement their own merit-based hiring system, the information will be available to support the development of job specifications and selection.	
OCYF will work with counties and the Governor's Office of Administration to evaluate the increase in qualified staff recruited and retained as a result of the creation of children and youth job specifications and revised testing.	March 2020 *Complete*
OCYF will collaborate with the Governor's Office of Administration to evaluate salaries for caseworkers and supervisors based on experience, educational attainment, and equivalent human service positions.	March 2020
The Governor's Office of Administration will adjust existing policy involving the "rule of 3" which will allow counties to select the number of candidates they wish to interview.	September 2019 *Complete*
The University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, Child Welfare Research and Education Programs will implement efforts to increase CWEB and CWEL admissions. ➢ A new School of Social Work will be added to the existing 14 participating schools. ➢ Information about both educational programs will be shared at quarterly PCYA conferences to ensure new administrators are aware of the programs.	September 2019 and ongoing *Complete and Ongoing*
The Pennsylvania NASW Child Welfare Task Force will educate the public and system stakeholders on the mission and purpose of child welfare and efforts to improve outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being. ➢ Media releases focusing on the positive impact that child welfare professionals have on children and families will be developed and disseminated. ➢ The recently revised Pennsylvania child welfare practices competencies and the existing practice model will be publicized.	September 2019 and ongoing *Complete and Ongoing*

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

The strategy was included in Pennsylvania's CFSR Round 3 PIP. Based on the approved PIP renegotiation request which was finalized in 2021, Pennsylvania considers the following key activities related to this strategy complete:

- *OCYF will collaborate with the Governor's Office of Administration to develop and explore implementation of a child welfare job specification for both caseworkers and supervisors for counties that use the Commonwealth's merit hiring system*
- *OCYF will collaborate with the Governor's Office of Administration to utilize a revised Civil Service test for the newly developed child welfare caseworker and supervisor positions for counties using the Commonwealth's merit hiring system.*
- *OCYF will work with counties and the Governor's Office of Administration to evaluate the increase in qualified staff recruited and retained as a result of the revised testing.*

There will not be any further work undertaken related to key at this time, however OCYF will continue to work on collection and analysis of workforce data obtained both through the Governor's Office of Administration (OA) and county annual NBPB submissions to inform any future activities aimed at improving recruitment and retention.

Overall, with the implementation of new workforce data collection measures, Pennsylvania was able to identify some reduction in staff turnover rates between state fiscal year (SFY) 2018-2019 (17.2% turnover) and SFY 2019-2020 (15.7% turnover). Analysis of the most recent data collected through the NBPB process is underway and will provide an important look into how turnover rates may have changed in SFY 2020-2021 beginning with the onset of the pandemic. OCYF is also working with the CWRC to look at how data and information on turnover rates available through the Governor's Office of Administration can be integrated with data collected as part of the NBPB process to further improve workforce data quality, accuracy and utility.

Information on any activities to address workforce issues will continue to be reported on in Pennsylvania's APSR submissions as focus on building a skilled and responsive child welfare workforce is part of Pennsylvania's practice model and a specific strategy outlined in Pennsylvania's 2020-2024 CFSP.

Information regarding the efforts to increase the number of admissions to the CWEB and CWEL programs can be found in the Training Plan section of this report.

The CWRC continues to share positive media coverage of the child welfare system. During the reporting period, the CWRC participated and highlighted the National Child Welfare Workforce Appreciation events sponsored by the Children's Bureau. During this period, the CWRC presented at the National Staff Development and Training Association's Annual Conference on the certification series for new child welfare professionals, which is framed in Pennsylvania's child welfare competencies.

Unfortunately, significant coverage by the news media tends to be more critical in nature, but continued efforts will be made to present a more comprehensive view of the child welfare system. During the reporting period, through discussions initiated at the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council meetings, OCYF began to explore how state resources could be further leveraged to support CCYAs and providers in staff recruitment, which in turn led to discussions about public perceptions of the child welfare. OCYF met with the DHS Communications Office to explore potential avenues for improving visibility and access to information about open positions in Pennsylvania's child welfare system as well as continued positive messaging around the child welfare profession. In the month of November 2021, the DHS Facebook page made several posts honoring adoption awareness month and highlighted positive stories of children who achieved permanency through the work of the child welfare system.

Implementation Supports Objective 1.2 (CFSR PIP Strategy): Improve county children and youth agency caseworker and supervisor retention through regulatory and practice changes that will reduce staff burnout.
Rationale for Objective Selection: • Positive factors such as; the ability to make a difference with children and families, the importance of a supportive supervisor and job flexibility were identified as reasons caseworkers stay in their job per a survey conducted by the AOPC State Roundtable Caseworker Retention Workgroup. • High caseloads caused by lack of adequate staffing create burnout and negatively impact the quality of the work caseworkers do with families and children, which leads to decreased job satisfaction. • Excessive documentation and paperwork requirements significantly impact the time caseworkers can spend working with families, which also leads to decreased job satisfaction. • Pennsylvania does not currently collect consistent data across the state regarding staff turnover within county children and youth agencies, therefore making it challenging for the state and counties to have a full understanding of the scope of turnover, which presents difficulties in ongoing monitoring.

Key Activities/Strategies	Benchmarks for Completion
OCYF will initiate regulatory changes to reduce caseworker caseload sizes by drafting revised OCYF regulatory language regarding caseworker-to-family and supervisor-to-caseworker ratio requirements. ➢ The ratio requirement revisions will be drafted as part of a larger effort to significantly revise OCYF regulations for the administration of county children and youth agencies.	December 2020 *In progress*

➢ Revised regulations will be drafted and submitted through the required approval processes, which include, but are not limited to, DHS Secretary's Office, the Governor's Office, Attorney General, Legislative Committees and the Independent Regulatory Review Committee. ➢ Revised regulations will be published as proposed rulemaking in the Pennsylvania Bulletin with a comment period provided. ➢ Submitted comments will be reviewed and a draft of the regulations prepared for submission through the final approval processes. ➢ Implementation policies, procedures, interpretive guidelines and licensing inspection instruments will be developed for submission to statewide external stakeholder group for review and comment.	
OCYF will develop and disseminate a facilitated discussion template to support the local work of CCYA that select to examine and improve county driven paperwork and documentation practices. ➢ The facilitated discussion template will be utilized by the county children and youth agencies, OCYF Regional Office staff and CWRC Practice Improvement Specialists to help individualize support to counties in their paperwork reduction efforts. ➢ The discussion template will be developed based on experiences during site visits with counties to discuss county specific paperwork reduction. ➢ County-specific discussions will be scheduled with caseworkers, supervisors, managers and administrators to determine further strategies to support state and county required documentation. ➢ OCYF, CWRC and PCYA will meet on a quarterly basis to continue to discuss the impact of documentation reduction and to identify future documentation concerns and strategies to address these concerns.	December 2020
OCYF will revise existing guidance provided to counties regarding standards for documentation needed to meet regulatory requirements, as well as issue new guidance where it did not previously exist. ➢ OCYF will develop a survey and evaluation manual that establishes the documentation required to meet 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3490 (relating to protective services) regulations.	December 2020 *In progress*

➢ OCYF will revise the Survey and Evaluation Manual that establishes the documentation required to meet 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3130 (relating to administration of county children and youth social service agency) regulations. ➢ The draft survey and evaluation manuals will be issued to county CYA for review and comment prior to issuance and appropriate changes will be made based upon comments received.	
Develop a data collection method to support ongoing analysis of information regarding Pennsylvania's child welfare workforce. ➢ OCYF will request and collect position level data (start/end dates, salary, reasons for separation) from counties every year as part of the annual NBPB, which began in August of 2018. ➢ The annual data request will be completed by counties and returned. ➢ The annual data will be analyzed, and a summary report issued to OCYF and the counties. ➢ Counties will be expected to use the data to inform the development of strategies to address retention issues, if applicable. OCYF will request counties to report on their analysis and identification of strategies in the subsequent NBPB. ➢ TA will be provided to counties, as requested, and prioritized by level of need and organizational readiness.	June 2021 *Complete*

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

During the reporting period, work continued in moving forward with finalizing the draft of regulatory Chapter 3131, which contains the necessary provisions to decrease caseload sizes for caseworkers. For much of the summer and fall of 2021, the OCYF 3131 Team assigned to the drafting of the regulations was reduced to one person due to other team members leaving for other jobs outside of OCYF and one team member going out for several months on maternity leave. Despite this reduction in staffing capacity, collaborative review of the draft regulations occurred with the DHS Office of Policy Development (OPD) and Office of General Council (OGC) to work through any concerns or need for substantive changes in advance of formal submission of the regulatory package through the multi-tiered approval process. All updates suggested by the OPD and OGC review thus far have been completed and all sections of the regulatory annex drafted.

This strategy is also a strategy included in Pennsylvania's CFSR Round 3 PIP. Through the PIP renegotiation process, Pennsylvania was approved to remove the following activity and all associated sub-activities from the PIP and will not be moving forward with implementing as part of the 2020-2024 CFSP.

- *OCYF will develop and disseminate a facilitated discussion template to support the local work of CCYA that select to examine and improve county driven paperwork and documentation practices.*

Through the PIP renegotiation process, Pennsylvania was approved to remove the following activity from the PIP and will not be moving forward with implementing as part of the 2020-2024 CFSP.

- *OCYF will revise the Survey and Evaluation Manual that establishes the documentation required to meet 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3130 (relating to administration of county children and youth social service agency) regulations.*

During the reporting period, the drafting of the survey and evaluation manual pertaining to Chapter 3490 was completed and the manual is currently in the process of completing OCYF Regional Office director collaborative review.

During the reporting period, the CWRC continued to support analysis of workforce data gathered through the annual NBPB submissions and provide statewide and county level snapshots to OCYF and CCYAs.

Implementation Supports Objective 1.3 (CFSR PIP Strategy): Expand leadership and professional development opportunities for public and private child welfare professional supervisors.
Rationale for Objective Selection: • The Pennsylvania State Auditor General's *State of the Child Report,* which included assessment of the child welfare workforce in the state recommended changes to caseworker training to involve a simulation-based approach so to better prepare staff for work in the field. • CWRC is in the process of carefully and thoroughly integrating the revised child welfare competencies in its training, TA, and transfer-of-learning initiatives.   o The aim of competency-based education is to ensure that child welfare professionals acquire and apply the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure positive outcomes for' PA's children and families involved in the child welfare system. • Supervisors are key supports to caseworkers; however, further professional development is needed to equip supervisors with the skills and knowledge necessary to fulfill this critical role.

Key Activities/Strategies	Benchmarks for Completion
The CWRC will implement the redesigned certification series for caseworkers, which will include guidance and support for county supervisors and other assigned staff to promote the transfer of learning in the field, which includes coaching and mentoring. ➢ The redesigned series will consist of three delivery styles; online, in-person (skill practice, including simulation), and field work (with a specific role for supervisors, including the ability for the supervisors to receive training credits). ➢ The evaluation design for the caseworker certification series will be tested during the pilot. The design builds from participant reaction, knowledge, and skill, to behaviors that transfer to the field.	September 2019 *Complete*
The CWRC will provide an opportunity for private provider managers and directors to participate in the Foundations of Leadership course through expanding the target audience for the marketing of the course and increasing the number of sessions offered, if needed, to meet demand. ➢ Foundations of Leadership is a two-day session which provides leaders in Child Welfare, including county administrators and their management teams and private providers, with information on leadership and organizational effectiveness. o Day one of the session introduces the teams to the characteristics of leadership, strength-based leadership, and the leaders as a role model of social work values and practice. o Day two introduces the teams to the Organizational Effectiveness (OE) framework. Using the information from day one, the teams work through the OE process and develop a preliminary CQI plan. The CQI plan includes goals, strategies and action steps identified by the team to address the needs identified from day one. In addition, the plan includes how staff and stakeholders will be engaged in the plan implementation. ➢ The CWRC will contact several private provider associations to request the marketing of Foundations of Leadership to their respective constituencies.	December 2019 *Complete*
The CWRC will redesign the certification series for supervisors to align with the recently revised child welfare competencies, the redesigned caseworker certification series, and the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice Model.	December 2020 *Complete*

➢ The evaluation design will be tested during the pilot. The design builds from participant reaction, knowledge, skill, to behaviors that transfer to the field.	

➢ *Progress Since Last Report*

Please refer to the "Training Plan" section of this report for updates on the certification series for caseworkers and supervisors.

Implementation Supports Goal 2: PA will ensure collection of quality statewide data to inform quality assurance processes to support the achievement of safety, permanency and well-being outcomes.					
Rationale for Goal Selection: PA was found not to be in substantial conformity with the CFSR systemic factor regarding statewide information system requirements during the 2017 CFSR.					
5-Year Monitoring Targets:	**Baseline**	2021 APSR	2022 APSR	2023 APSR	2024 APSR
CWIS Phase II will be fully operational by the end of FFY 2024.	May 2019 DHS announced OCYF will be moving to a statewide child welfare case management system that will replace the intake/investigation functionality in our current CWIS system and will include full case management	May 2020 User stories and BPA sessions are underway to support system design	May 2021 Procurement of a platform completed; user story and BPA sessions underway to support system design	May 2022 Several BPA and user story sessions completed and RFP for a system integrator issued	

	functionality to support county children and youth agencies				

Implementation Supports Objective 2.1 (CFSR PIP Strategy): Implement a statewide information system to readily report on the status, demographics, locations, and goal of every child in foster care.

Rationale for Objective Selection:

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

Key Activities/Strategies	Benchmarks for Completion
Finalize Child Welfare System Capabilities for statewide Child Welfare Case Management (CW CM) system platform	September 2019 *Complete*
Implement a Governance Structure for development and implementation of a statewide child welfare case management system.	September 2019 *Complete*
Procurement of a platform to support a statewide child welfare case management system	December 2019 *Complete*
Standardize Business Processes & Complete Business Requirements	March 2020 *In progress*

Procurement of IT services for statewide child welfare case management system	January 2023
Design and develop a statewide child welfare case management system	December 2023
Go live with a statewide child welfare case management system	January 2024

- *Progress Since Last Report*

  - *Child Welfare System Capabilities: The CW CM capabilities matrix was finalized by the CW CM Steering Team in September 2019.*
  - *Governance Structure: The CW CM governance structure received final approval, along with the project charter, in January 2020.* The *Steering and Advisory Teams met on a bi-weekly and monthly basis respectively since August 2019.*
  - *BPA/User Stories: Cycle 1 (Eligibility and Financial Management) and Cycle 2 (Provider Management) of the BPA/User Stories were held beginning the week of January 7, 2020, through the week of March 7, 2020. Cycle 3 was planned; however, due to the COVID-19 situation the sessions had to be placed on hold. In April of 2021, the sessions resumed virtually, and the Provider Management and Person Management epics were completed. Works Management sessions are currently in progress.*
  - *Procurement of a platform: OCYF and CCYA representatives participated in a review of three potential platforms being considered for ECM in November 2019. Pegasystems (Pega) was selected for the ECM platform, and negotiation meetings are currently in process.*
  - *Procurement of a Systems Integrator (SI) Vendor: Following the efforts to select the platform, DHS initiated the process of procuring an SR vendor. A draft RFP was sent for federal review on 05/03/2021, and feedback is anticipated to be received by 07/03/2021, making July 2021 the targeted release date for the SI vendor RFP. Once the contract is in place, an amendment will be done to accommodate work related to the child welfare case management system.*

Appendix A: CFSR Round 3 Data Profile

Pennsylvania
Child and Family Services Review (CFSR 3) Data Profile

February 2022

Children's Bureau

Submissions as of 01-12-2022 (AFCARS) and 01-12-2022 (NCANDS)

Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)

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

[1] State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically better than national performance
[2] State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically no different than national performance
[3] State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically worse than national performance

DQ = Performance was not calculated due to exceeding the data quality limit on one or more data quality (DQ) checks done for the indicator. Exceeding a limit on a DQ check will result in performance not being calculated on the associated indicator(s) that require the affected submission(s) to calculate performance. A DQ flag will likely impact multiple reporting periods. See the data quality table for details.

	National Performance		16B17A	17A17B	17B18A	18A18B	18B19A	19A19B	19B20A	20A20B	20B21A	21A21B
Permanency in 12 months (entries)	42.7%▲	RSP	37.4%	36.4%	37.0%	37.2%	36.9%	35.6%				
		RSP interval	36.5%-38.4%[3]	35.5%-37.4%[3]	36.1%-38.0%[3]	36.2%-38.2%[3]	35.9%-37.9%[3]	34.6%-36.6%[3]				
		Data used	16B-19A	17A-19B	17B-20A	18A-20B	18B-21A	19A-21B				
Permanency in 12 months (12 - 23 mos)	45.9%▲	RSP					40.4%	41.8%	41.9%	36.5%	37.6%	38.0%
		RSP interval					39.0%-41.8%[3]	40.4%-43.2%[3]	40.5%-43.4%[3]	35.1%-37.9%[3]	36.2%-39.0%[3]	36.6%-39.5%[3]
		Data used					18B-19A	19A-19B	19B-20A	20A-20B	20B-21A	21A-21B
Permanency in 12 months (24+ mos)	31.8%▲	RSP					37.9%	39.5%	37.6%	29.7%	29.0%	32.4%
		RSP interval					36.7%-39.0%[1]	38.4%-40.6%[1]	36.4%-38.7%[1]	28.6%-30.8%[3]	27.8%-30.1%[3]	31.3%-33.4%[2]
		Data used					18B-19A	19A-19B	19B-20A	20A-20B	20B-21A	21A-21B
Reentry to foster care	8.1%▼	RSP	12.0%	11.8%	13.2%	13.2%	12.0%	11.9%				
		RSP interval	10.9%-13.2%[3]	10.8%-13.0%[3]	12.0%-14.4%[3]	12.0%-14.5%[3]	10.9%-13.3%[3]	10.7%-13.2%[3]				
		Data used	16B-19A	17A-19B	17B-20A	18A-20B	18B-21A	19A-21B				
Placement stability (moves/1,000 days in care)	4.44▼	RSP					3.54	3.69	3.47	3.10	3.31	3.33
		RSP interval					3.44-3.63[1]	3.59-3.79[1]	3.37-3.57[1]	3-3.2[1]	3.2-3.44[1]	3.22-3.44[1]
		Data used					18B-19A	19A-19B	19B-20A	20A-20B	20B-21A	21A-21B

			17AB,FY17	18AB,FY18	19AB,FY19	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20
Maltreatment in care (victimizations / 100,000 days in care)	9.67▼	RSP	DQ	DQ	1.88			
		RSP interval			1.51-2.35[1]			
		Data used	17A-17B, FY17-18	18A-18B, FY18-19	19A-19B, FY19-20			
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.5%▼	RSP				DQ	DQ	DQ
		RSP interval						
		Data used				FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20

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

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Appendix B: Annual Reporting of Education and Training Vouchers Awarded

Name of State/ Tribe: Pennsylvania

	Total ETVs Awarded	Number of New ETVs
Final Number: **2020-2021 School Year** (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021)	496 - $2,079,910	269 - $1,096,578
2021-2022 School Year* (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022)	502 - $2,530,981	206 - $1,033,990

PHEAA 4/2022

Comments:

Appendix C: Supplemental Reporting for CARES Act and FFPSA Transition Act Funding

CARES ACT

OCYF selected to allocate the CARES Act Title IV-B funding directly to the 67 Pennsylvania CCYAs with counties required to submit to OCYF information regarding the use of these funds as part of the annual NBPB process. The funds were directed to the CCYAs to maximize flexibility in allowing counties to utilize funds to address specific local needs. The CCYAs were notified of their county allocation in June of 2020. OCYF provided written guidance to CCYAs around allowable use of funds and further educated CCYAs on the funding during scheduled all-county calls with county administrators and fiscal staff. As CCYAs were notified of their allocations in June 2020 counties began to report any CARES Act spending in their SFY 2021-22 NBPB submissions as well as in their SFY 2022-23 NBPB submissions. For those counties that have spent CARES Act funds, the following represents examples of reported expenditures and shows the range of need addressed by the funding:

- Purchase of supplies such as hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, gloves, body fluid spill kits, various disinfecting cleaners, spray bottles for sanitizer, face masks, face shields, thermometers and alcohol wipes;
- Purchase of supplies such as hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, gloves, body fluid spill kits, various disinfecting cleaners, spray bottles for sanitizer, face masks, face shields, thermometers and alcohol wipes;
- Protective barriers for front office staff to receive visitors safely;
- Storage boxes for separating and cleaning toys in the visitation room;
- Technology needed to support remote meetings with children and families, virtual visitation and parent educators, such as iPads and accessories and webcams;
- Purchase of Zoom licenses;
- Gas cards and pre-paid cell phone cards for families;
- Training for specialized services with focus on COVID-19. Course examples included:
    - “Tips and Techniques for Online Therapy for Children”
    - “Unchartered Territory: Counseling During a Pandemic”
    - “Addressing and Treating Our Client’s Perpetual State of Overwhelm”

- Hazard pay for respite foster home that took in a youth whose foster parents were both hospitalized with COVID-19; and
- Coverage of increased incidental costs such as a childcare and food to county operated foster care home providers.

OCYF will continue to collect information on CARE Act expenditures for future reporting purposes as part of the SFY 2023 NBPB which counties will submit in August 2022.

Family First Transition Act Funds

OCYF selected to allocate the majority of Pennsylvania's Family First Transition Act funding to the 67 Pennsylvania CCYAs with counties required to submit to OCYF information regarding the use of these funds as part of the annual NBPB process. The funds were directed to the CCYAs to maximize flexibility in allowing counties to utilize funds to address specific local needs. The CCYAs were notified of their county allocation in June of 2020. OCYF provided written guidance to CCYAs around allowable use of funds and further educated CCYA on the funding during scheduled all-county calls with county administrators and fiscal staff. As CCYAs were notified of their funding allocations in June 2020 and county NBPB submissions for SFY 2021-22 were made in August 2020, there was limited information submitted regarding Family First Transition Act expenditures submitted at that time. While counties are permitted to utilize the funds for allowable expenditures provided under the Family First Transition Act as they see fit, OCYF strongly encouraged counties to consider utilizing the funding to support the following activities:

- Increase the availability of evidence-based programs and services in the community;
- Support residential placement providers in meeting the enhanced program standards to be certified as a Specialized Setting as defined in Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) Bulletin 3680-20-02 and 3800-20-03;
- Increase activities to recruit and retain resource families, including increasing community-based supports available to resource families; and
- Support efforts of the CCYA and community-based and residential placement providers to become trauma-informed.

To gather additional qualitative information about the use of the Family First Transition Act funds, OCYF added specific questions to the SFY 2022-23 NBPB narrative template that counties were required to respond to. The narrative questions added include the following:

- Please provide a description of how the county has used Transition Act funds to support implementation of Family First
    - Briefly describe the programs, services and/or operational costs for which the grant has been used
    - Briefly describe the characteristics of any families and children served through use of the grant
- If the county has not yet used any Transition Act funds, please provide information on the planned use of funds

CCYAs have started utilizing the funding as part of their preparations for and implementation of Pennsylvania opting into the Family First Title IV-E Prevention Services Act on October 1, 2021. For those counties that have reported Transition Act funds spent to date, the following represents examples of reported expenditures and shows the range of need addressed by the funding:

- Recruitment efforts related to expanding the availability of foster family homes;
- Training for foster parents and community partners to become Trauma Informed;
- Staff Development/Training efforts to support agency becoming Trauma Informed;
- Consulting services to support county efforts in implementing Family First Prevention Services;
- Start up costs for expanding foster family homes;
- Supporting start up costs for new kinship homes; and
- Support to congregate care providers in becoming a Specialized Setting.