

State Court Improvement Program 2021 Annual Self-Assessment Report

This self-assessment is intended as an opportunity for Court Improvement Programs (CIPs) to review progress on CIP projects, joint program planning and improvement efforts with the child welfare agency, and the ability to integrate CQI successfully into practice. The self-assessment process is designed to help shape and inform ongoing strategic planning and should include meaningful discussion with the multi-disciplinary task force and candid reflection of key CIP staff. The self-assessment primarily focused on assessing efforts undertaken to date while the strategic plan maps out efforts going forward in more detail. Questions are designed to solicit candid responses that help CIPs apply CQI and identify support that may be helpful.

I. CQI Analyses of Required Projects *It is ok to cut and paste responses from last year, updating according to where you currently are in the process, and, if you do so, highlight text to show anything that is new.*

Provide a concise description of the joint project selected in your jurisdiction.

The CINA Court Improvement Program selected Fairbanks as the pilot site for a multi-agency collaborative project to improve hearing quality and reduce time to permanency for children in Child in Need of Aid cases. A committee of representatives from the Alaska Court System, Office of Children's Services (OCS), Office of the Attorney General, Public Defender Agency, and Office of Public Advocacy are working together to plan and implement the project. Key elements of the project include:

- CINA cases to never go longer than 6 months without a hearing.
- Judges to use national best practices models to encourage parental engagement, identify relatives early, and monitor case progress.
- Judges to use bench cards based on national best practices to improve CINA hearing quality.
- OCS to provide staff training and mentoring on timely filing of petitions, reports, and proposed orders.
- OCS to develop targeted staffing process for Permanency Planning Specialists to track potential barriers to permanency on individual cases, and find ways to remove barriers for cohorts. (See OCS PIP 3.2.2)
- The CIP subcommittee to monitor CINA case data and make recommendations for project improvements as needed.

The goal of the project is to improve permanency outcomes for children by focusing on case progress at regularly scheduled and more frequent intervals. Improved hearing quality and a

focus on timely filing of petitions, reports and orders should lead to fewer continuances and reduce the overall number of hearings, improving time to permanency.

Approximate date that the project began:

Planning began in August 2016 with implementation beginning in the Fall of 2019. The scope of the project was broadened after discussions during CIP's collaboration with OCS on the PIP, and following feedback from the Children's Bureau.

Which stage of the CQI process best describes the current status of project work?

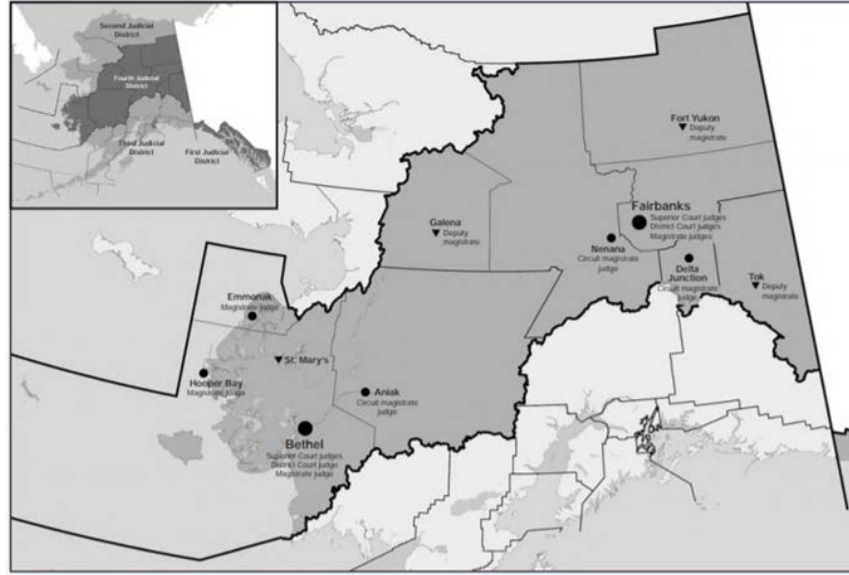
Evaluation/Assessment

What is the theory of change for the project? (Phase II) *If you do not yet have a theory of change and/or would like assistance, please indicate such in the space below.*

Increased judicial leadership and oversight of CINA cases will decrease time to permanency and provide better outcomes for children and families. Increasing judicial urgency regarding permanency and increasing understanding by OCS field staff of the court's role in promoting permanency so that children do not remain in foster care longer than is necessary is the focus. There will also be an increased focus on engaging parents and identifying relatives early on.

Have you identified a solution/intervention that you will implement? If yes, what is it? (Phase III)

We have selected Fairbanks as the pilot site. Factors considered when selecting this court included: the third largest number of CINA cases statewide which is large enough for meaningful data collection, but small enough to implement change more easily, case file and data review, culture of readiness for change, and data quality due to clerical staff knowledge of CINA cases. Additionally, we have a Presiding Judge in our 4th Judicial District who is championing this project, and we are piloting a new Case Management Order for CINA cases. The 4th Judicial District is the largest state trial court district in the U.S., extending from the Canadian border to the Bering Sea. There will be an emphasis on locating fathers and parents' relatives earlier on in cases through increased judicial inquiry into the topic. Judges in the pilot site will also use a modified therapeutic court model in CINA cases to increase parental engagement. In addition, an updated bench card/judicial checklist on permanency was created for judges to utilize in our pilot/test site. Additional training was provided to judges on permanency/timelines.



What has been done to implement the project? (Phase IV)

In August 2019, Casey Family Programs JET provided a multi-disciplinary bench/bar meeting and permanency training and facilitated a youth panel from Facing Foster Care in Alaska to introduce the project to CINA practitioners in Fairbanks. A local Fairbanks multi-disciplinary committee of representatives from the Alaska Court System, Office of Children's Services, Office of the Attorney General, Public Defender Agency, and Office of Public Advocacy was formed and meets regularly, independently and with CIP staff and committee members, to facilitate implementation of the project. Project components include: two new bench cards, one for use in all CINA hearings and one for use during the newly implemented 6 month case review hearings; a new Case Review Findings court order to be completed at the conclusion of the 6 month case review hearings, a hearing quality observation tool was developed with the assistance of CBCC for use in gathering data to evaluate and identify areas to improve the project as it moves forward. Judges were trained on the importance of permanency and use of the updated bench cards. A pre and posttest will be utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. The hearing quality observation tool will help us assess if practices are being adapted through increased judicial oversight, engagement of parents, use of the new Case Management Order, revised bench cards, and the addition of a 6-month review hearing. In addition to the Aug. 2019 Fairbanks multi-disciplinary Casey Families JET training on permanency and the Sept. 2019 statewide training for CINA judges on the NCJFCJ Enhanced Resource Guidelines (which is what the Kenai modified court model follows); all Fairbanks judges and additional 4th Judicial District judges were trained by Judge Peterson on 10/29/20. Judge Peterson's training covered both of the new Hearing Quality Improvement and Case Review Hearing bench cards as well as the importance of permanency and quality hearings in CINA cases. A pretest survey was developed with CBCC assistance from Dr. Sophie Gatowski was given prior to the training. The same survey was given as a posttest and will be given periodically to gauge and encourage continued hearing quality improvement. Case review hearings were successfully scheduled and

heard at six month intervals in the Fairbanks court. OCS assisted in providing the Department of Law all children that were scheduled to have an administrative review so that 6 Month Case Reviews could be scheduled between DOL and the court. External partners observed several court hearings and provided thoughtful feedback in regards to parents empowerment to engage in hearings. Case Review Hearings were being successfully completed by all Fairbanks CINA judges until mid-March when COVID-19 resulted in rescheduling of most court proceedings. OCS agreed to resume conducting telephonic administrative reviews until the court was able to resume conducting Case Review Hearings. The Fairbanks court resumed Case Review Hearings in June 2020 and is utilizing the bench cards and finalized court orders. A bench and practitioner meeting was held in April 2021 confirming all Fairbanks CINA judges were scheduling 6 month Case Review Hearings. Feedback during the meeting indicated judges felt the additional hearings were beneficial and were optimistic the additional hearings will impact timely permanency. Practitioners noted that some judges use the Case Review Hearing Order as a guide for conducting the hearing, which keeps hearings and discussion more focused. Barriers and challenges were also discussed specifically the lack of time to schedule review hearings and need to identify ways to free up calendars to schedule more days to hold review hearings as they are running out of scheduling room on their calendars. Initial committee discussions have taken place to identify the next court location for implementation, once a location has been selected project steps, timelines, and goals will be established for that location.

CINA parent video: courts.alaska.gov/cip/videos/ocs-360p.mp4

The Alaska Court System and the Alaska Office of Children's Services have produced a fifteen-minute informational video for parents in CINA cases. The video explains the stages of a CINA case and introduces the main participants: judge, OCS social worker, assistant attorney general, parent's attorney, guardian ad litem, and ICWA worker. The video also discusses the rights of tribes to participate in CINA cases. It is designed to acquaint parents with the process at the beginning of their case.

How are you or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project? (Phase V). *Be specific in terms of what type of evaluation (e.g., fidelity or outcome, comparison group, etc.) and what results you have, if any. If you have already evaluated your effort, how did you use these data to modify or expand the project?*

The hearing quality observation tool will help us assess if practices are being adapted through increased judicial oversight, engagement of parents, use of the new Case Management Order and Case Review Findings, revised bench cards, and the addition of a 6-month review hearing. Meetings of the project committee and participants, development of court observation and data review tools to compare pre- and post-implementation data are planned. Feedback will also be provided to judges and participants as we track progress. CIP is working on a data sharing agreement with CBCC/Dr. Gatowski to code and compile data for the project. The data sharing

agreement has created some delay in scaling use of the observation tool to assess hearing quality. The data sharing agreement will enable expansion of the limited amount of hearing observation and more robust data collection. A pretest survey was developed with CBCC assistance from Dr. Sophie Gatowski was given to judges prior to training. The same survey was given as a posttest and will be given periodically to gauge and encourage continued hearing quality improvement. A CINA practitioner survey similar to the one given to judges was developed with CBCC assistance from Dr. Sophie Gatowski and was given to CINA practitioners. The same survey will be given periodically to gauge practitioners' assessment of continued hearing quality improvement. The CIP committee meets quarterly and reviews the age of pending cases as a discussion for permanency timeframes. Additional data reports have been created so that judges can now review the time to adjudication and permanency for their assigned cases, in addition to the time to adjudication and permanency for their court location to measure progress on improving timeliness.

Have there been notable factors that delayed or accelerated this effort?

COVID-19 associated delays; technology needs; limited hearing time available on judges' calendars; additional judicial, practitioner, and staff time required have resulted in delays.

What assistance or support would be helpful from the CBCC or the Children's Bureau to help move the project forward?

Assistance from the CBCC and Dr. Gatowski has been extremely helpful and will be appreciated going forward as we continue to implement, collect data, and evaluate the project in Fairbanks and other court locations going forward. Working with CBCC and Dr. Gatowski to create the hearing observation tool and surveys for the project was immensely helpful and continued additional assistance as we go forward with evaluation and adaptation of these tools and the project will be extremely beneficial. Alaska CIP continues to benefit from and appreciate tools, information, and peer discussions in CBCC Constituency Groups and All Calls.

Hearing Quality Project:

Provide a concise description of the hearing quality project selected in your jurisdiction.

The CINA Core Curriculum project complements well with the project to continuously improve the quality of CINA court proceedings, with the concept that high-quality, multi-disciplinary training for all CINA practitioners will assist in ensuring the provision of high-quality CINA hearings and reviews.

In 2011, the CIP's Education Subcommittee formed a work group to develop a multi-disciplinary core training curriculum for CINA attorneys, tribal and child advocates, caseworkers, and judges. The philosophy of the work group was that, in order to understand the child welfare process as a

whole, CINA case participants should have a foundation of core knowledge in a broad array of legal and other subject areas relevant to CINA cases. After some research, the work group discovered Colorado's Training Wheel Curricula, which was very close to what we envisioned. With Colorado CIP's permission, the work group and private contractors adapted or – in many instances – completely rewrote Colorado's training modules to reflect Alaska law, culture and practice. All of Alaska's training modules have been piloted to statewide multi-disciplinary groups and finalized with feedback from the pilot groups. In all, the curriculum project took six years to complete.

Training Modules

Alaska's CINA Curriculum consists of 10 training modules. The legal modules (CINA Laws, Roles & Responsibilities, Practices & Procedures) have been combined into a three-day training; the other modules including the Indian Child Welfare Act, Community & Culture, Family Well-Being, Services & Resources, Creative Advocacy, Information-Sharing, and Education Law & Advocacy are each one-day trainings.

The training modules are a combination of lecture and interactive discussions. A case about a hypothetical family runs through all of the modules so that participants can apply their knowledge to practical case situations. The opportunity for meaningful discussions with CINA participants from different disciplines and from different areas of the state has proved to be one of the most important benefits of this training format.

The modules are regularly modified and updated as CINA law changes, and to incorporate feedback from participants. For example, we recently added sections to the Roles & Responsibilities section of our CINA 101 curriculum to include mediator, youth and parent perspectives.

Approximate date that the project began:

October 2016

Which stage of the CQI process best describes the current status of project work?

Implementation and Evaluation/Assessment

How was the need for this project identified? (Phase I)

CIP CINA Education subcommittee discussions, with input from the CIP steering committee

What is the theory of change for the project? (Phase II) *If you do not yet have a theory of change and/or would like assistance, please indicate such in the space below.*

Increased overall baseline skills, knowledge and competency of all CINA practitioners (including judges) will lead to better quality court hearings and reviews, raising the bar for child protection and advocacy by all professionals in the child welfare system.

**Have you identified a solution/intervention that you will implement? If yes, what is it?
(Phase III)**

Yes, we have provided components of the CINA curriculum to multi-disciplinary practitioners in CINA cases. We will continue to provide trainings on the modules throughout the state going forward.

What has been done to implement the project? (Phase IV)

CINA Interdisciplinary Training Curriculum

<https://public.courts.alaska.gov/web/cip/docs/cina-curriculum.pdf>

We provided a three-day training, "*Forging Relationships to Improve Child Welfare Outcomes for Children and Families in Southeast Alaska*." It was a collaboration between the Alaska Court Improvement Program and the Sitka Tribal Court Improvement Project. It took place in our 1st Judicial District in Sitka in the Fall of 2017. Three of our CINA Curriculum modules were presented: Community & Culture, Family Well-Being, and Services & Resources. We had approximately 60 participants from Southeast Alaska, including state court judges, tribal court judges, ICWA workers, tribal attorneys, Sitka Tribe administration and child protection workers, attorneys general, Child Welfare (OCS) social workers, guardians ad litem (GALs), and parents' attorneys.

We provided a three day training on "*Child in Need of Aid Laws, Roles & Responsibilities, Practices & Procedures*,"

May 30–June 1, 2018. It took place in our 4th Judicial District in Fairbanks. We had approximately 30 participants from interior Alaska including Aniak, Fairbanks, Bethel, Barrow, Golovin, Kotzebue, and Unalakleet. Participants included judges, assistant attorneys general, Office of Children's Services social workers, guardians ad litem, ICWA workers, tribal attorneys, and parents' attorneys.

In collaboration with the Southcentral Regional Tribal-State Group, on Sept. 27-18, 2018, CIP provided a two day training on two of the modules from the CINA Curriculum Project: "*Community and Culture in the Child Welfare System*," and on the "*Indian Child Welfare Act: History, Law & Practice*." The Community and Culture training covered the dynamics of culture in the child welfare system, the building blocks of culturally competent practice, and managing the dynamics of difference and practice strategies. The ICWA training provided an overview of the historical context leading to the passage of ICWA, substantive provisions of the ICWA and

federal regulations, and strategies to ensure ICWA implementation. There were over 80 participants from throughout the Southcentral region of Alaska, including Anchorage, Homer, Kenai, Kodiak, Palmer, Wasilla, and many of the smaller rural areas and villages including: Manokotak, Dillingham, Mentasta Lake, Kokhanok, Egegik, New Stuyahok, Ekwok, Eyak, Ninilchick, King Salmon, St. Paul, Koliganek, Chickaloon, and Copper Center.

Trainings on the CINA Curriculum Project's signature three day training "*Child in Need of Aid Laws, Roles & Responsibilities, Practices & Procedures*," occurred in August of 2019 in Kenai in Southcentral Alaska, in October of 2019 in Bethel in Western Alaska, and in December of 2019 in Juneau in Southeast Alaska. This training is an intensive interdisciplinary training over three days that provides an overview of law and court processes, roles and responsibilities of CINA participants, CINA law – state and federal – including CINA grounds, removal findings, placement preferences, active and reasonable efforts, as well as an overview of all the CINA court proceedings, the CINA case chronology from temporary custody through permanency, and implementing the permanent plan. The training also includes practice sessions in court.

In November of 2020, March of 2020, and May of 2021, the curriculum committee provided three trainings by Zoom on its module the "*Indian Child Welfare Act: History, Law & Practice*." It was the first time that the committee provided training via Zoom. There were a mix of presenters and participants including judges, ICWA workers, state attorneys, social workers, guardians ad litem (GALs) and CASAs. The Committee provided the training to 50, 61, and 47 people each time, and spread the training out over the course of three days.

The curriculum committee worked to convert in-person training to an eLearning format (*see full description in Quality Legal Representation Project Section*). CIP staff met with Region 10 Liaisons Jessica Sucherman and Stacey Obrecht, Jennifer Renne, and Tim Jaasko-Fisher for assistance and recommendations on the conversion to online and/or virtual training.

What is being done or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project? (Phase V)

Be specific in terms of what type of evaluation (e.g., fidelity or outcome, comparison group, etc.) or data efforts you have in place or plan to have in place to assess your efforts. If you have already evaluated your effort, how did you use these data to modify or expand the project?

For all trainings, we use a "**Satisfaction**" evaluation - an in-person paper survey given at the end of each training day. Participants are asked to rank each topic covered on a scale from 1-5 (low-high) as to whether their thinking was stimulated; whether the session was relevant to their work; whether the session increased their knowledge and understanding; and whether the presenter was effective. There are also blank lines for written comments. Participants are also asked about satisfaction with training format, group activities, pace and level of training information, and the facility; and there are several open-ended questions about what they liked most about the training

and what changes they recommend. Although participants do not write their names on the evaluation forms, they are asked their role and the length of time they have been practicing.

After each training, the evaluation forms are reviewed by the multi-disciplinary curriculum work group, including representatives from OCS, as part of our debriefing process. The input from the participants is extremely useful in determining what revisions are necessary to improve the content of the training and the amount of time devoted to each topic. We are using Survey Monkey to compile the data from recent training evaluation forms in a way that will allow us to sort the answers based on the participants' role and length of time practicing. We hope this will assist us in identifying our best target audiences, and/or in determining how to adapt the content to be more effective to a broader audience.

Normally, we also use a "**Learning Acquisition**" evaluation - a content-based pre-test and post-test, either on paper or electronically. We take time at the end of the training day to discuss the correct answers to the tests. The test scores are always much higher on the post-tests than the pre-tests. If a particular question causes problems for participants, we know we need to either rephrase the question or spend more time discussing the topic during the training. We have discussed following up several months after the training to see whether the participants have retained the knowledge they gained during the training, but we have not yet done so.

We do not have a "**Behavior**" evaluation tool. However, we have received many comments from participants or their peers illustrating behavior changes. Some examples include the following: From an Assistant Attorney General, *"Ever since Judge ___ went to the Legal module, he has taken a real interest in CINA cases and has been asking probing substantive questions of the parties and making better decisions."* From a parent attorney, *"Since attending the Information Sharing module, our attorneys have been more proactive in protecting the confidential records of our clients."* From a GAL, *"After attending the Education Law & Advocacy module, Judge ___ always asks GALs to report on the educational status of each child, so we now know we need to be prepared and do a better job of advocating for the child's educational needs."*

Have there been notable factors that delayed or accelerated this effort?

Due to the pandemic and the limits on in-person gatherings, the Curriculum Committee adapted to offer its training curriculum via Zoom. The requests for trainings on our ICWA curriculum were such that multiple trainings had to be offered to accommodate the high interest.

What assistance or support would be helpful from the CBCC or the Children's Bureau to help move the project forward?

Assistance from the CBCC thus far has been extremely helpful and would be very appreciated going forward. Assistance developing additional evaluation tools for our trainings, and moving

portions of our trainings to an online format would be appreciated. Additional meetings with Region 10 Liaisons Jessica Sucherman and Stacey Obrecht, Jennifer Renne, and Tim Jaasko-Fisher for assistance and recommendations on the conversion to online and/or virtual training – have been particularly beneficial. Zoom training tips and one on assistance from Tim Jaasko-Fisher and Andy Yost helped us move trainings from in person to Zoom. CBCC constituency groups have also been extremely helpful.

Quality Legal Representation Project:

Provide a concise description of the quality legal representation project selected in your jurisdiction.

The Curriculum Committee decided to convert our training modules that are typically delivered in-person, to an eLearning format. We began by converting our ICWA training module, and will next convert our CINA Laws, Roles & Responsibilities, Practices & Procedures [CINA 101] training module. We are converting our training modules to an eLearning format using Adobe Captivate. Three learning paths are being created, including a read path (where learners can read the content of the materials), listen path (where learners can listen to a podcast style narration of the materials), and a watch path (where learners can watch videos of Alaska judges and practitioners presenting the materials). Learners can then test and apply their knowledge in a series of learning interactions following a case study at the end of each subject matter session.

We are using many of the materials we have produced for our in-person training modules, including our power points, handouts, and pre and post-tests as starting points for converting the materials to eLearning.

This is the CIP's first eLearning course, on the *Indian Child Welfare Act: History, Law & Practice*. <https://courts.alaska.gov/cip/icwa-course.htm>

The purpose of this course is to provide an understanding of the historical context of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), the substantive provisions of ICWA, and strategies for ensuring compliance with the letter and spirit of ICWA. The curriculum was developed by an interdisciplinary team representing each discipline involved in ICWA cases. It is designed for judges, tribal representatives, attorneys, child protection workers, and child advocates.

The course is divided into ten sessions, beginning with the historical context session, which sets the stage for the passage of ICWA by talking about the impact of Western colonization on Alaska Native and American people. Historical and policy considerations are weaved in throughout the remaining sessions.

Learning Objectives

- Correlate historical issues and multi-generational oppression to Native families currently involved in the child protection system.

- Name the unique rights of the Tribe, parents, Indian custodian and Native children provided for in ICWA and describe how these rights reflect the importance of cultural practices and values of Native people.
- Explain why expert testimony is required to support a judicial finding that a Native child cannot safely be returned to the parents, and under what circumstances expertise in cultural issues is necessary.
- Describe the importance of ICWA’s “placement preferences” and develop strategies to ensure the placement preferences are followed.
- Explain the “active efforts” requirement, the difference between “active efforts” and “passive efforts,” and the impact of a judicial finding that active efforts have not been made.
- Name the permanency options for Native children and describe how each can be accomplished while maintaining children’s cultural and family connections.

Video

The “Bringing Home Our Children” video establishes an important foundation and context for this training. It includes powerful messages from adults who were removed from their homes as children and perspectives of tribal and state judges from around the country. The video demonstrates why ICWA exists and why compliance with ICWA is so critical. However, we will also be incorporating a new and Alaska-specific historical video into our eLearning curriculum. The video will consist of a series of vignettes of Alaska Native individuals from different regions of the state telling stories of the impact of western colonization on themselves, their families, their communities, and their tribes. In addition to being used as part of the CIP curriculum, the video will be available for use by other agencies in their education efforts.

The “Bringing Our Children Home” video was created by a coalition of groups in Mississippi as an educational resource for judges. While the video is a good introduction into the need for ICWA, but it does not contain anything specific to Alaska. Our ICWA training delves into the historic and current impact of western colonization on Alaska Natives, discussing the issues of disease/famine, religious conversion, boarding schools, and various federal laws and policies. The historical information is provided in a series of power point slides, which can be quite dry. The video vignettes will bring the slides and the stories to life and will be a powerful educational tool.

Approximate date that the project began: July 2020

Which stage of the CQI process best describes the current status of project work?

Develop/Select Solution – Implementation.

How was the need for this project identified? (Phase I)

CIP Curriculum Subcommittee discussions, with input from CIP steering committee.

What is the theory of change for the project? (Phase II) *If you do not yet have a theory of change and/or would like assistance, please indicate such in the space below.*

Increased overall baseline skills, knowledge and competency of all CINA practitioners (including judges) will lead to better quality court hearings and reviews, raising the bar for child protection and advocacy by all professionals in the child welfare system. Making our training curriculum available in an e-Learning format with three paths – watch, listen, read, increases the ability to improve baseline skills even further.

Have you identified a solution/intervention that you will implement? If yes, what is it? (Phase III)

Yes, the eLearning course for our ICWA module and then our CINA 101 module will be available in a listen, read, and watch formats to multi-disciplinary practitioners in CINA cases.

What has been done to implement the project? (Phase IV)

We have completed the conversion of our ICWA curriculum to the three paths of the eLearning format, and are working on the conversion of our CINA 101 curriculum which is even larger and will take more time.

How are you or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project? (Phase V). *Be specific in terms of what type of evaluation (e.g., fidelity or outcome, comparison group, etc.) and what results you have, if any. If you have already evaluated your effort, how did you use these data to modify or expand the project?*

We will use the same monitoring methods we use for our inperson curriculum, but may add some questions on method of eLearning used (i.e. watch, read, or listen).

For all trainings, we use a "**Satisfaction**" evaluation - an in-person paper survey given at the end of each training day. Participants are asked to rank each topic covered on a scale from 1-5 (low-high) as to whether their thinking was stimulated; whether the session was relevant to their work; whether the session increased their knowledge and understanding; and whether the presenter was effective. There are also blank lines for written comments. Participants are also asked about satisfaction with training format, group activities, pace and level of training information, and the facility; and there are several open-ended questions about what they liked most about the training and what changes they recommend. Although participants do not write their names on the evaluation forms, they are asked their role and the length of time they have been practicing.

After each training, the evaluation forms are reviewed by the multi-disciplinary curriculum work group, including representatives from OCS, as part of our debriefing process. The input from the

participants is extremely useful in determining what revisions are necessary to improve the content of the training and the amount of time devoted to each topic. We are using Survey Monkey to compile the data from recent training evaluation forms in a way that will allow us to sort the answers based on the participants' role and length of time practicing. We hope this will assist us in identifying our best target audiences, and/or in determining how to adapt the content to be more effective to a broader audience.

Normally, we also use a "**Learning Acquisition**" evaluation - a content-based pre-test and post-test, either on paper or electronically. We take time at the end of the training day to discuss the correct answers to the tests. The test scores are always much higher on the post-tests than the pre-tests. If a particular question causes problems for participants, we know we need to either rephrase the question or spend more time discussing the topic during the training. We have discussed following up several months after the training to see whether the participants have retained the knowledge they gained during the training, but we have not yet done so.

We do not have a "**Behavior**" evaluation tool. However, we have received many comments from participants or their peers illustrating behavior changes. Some examples include the following: From an Assistant Attorney General, *"Ever since Judge ___ went to the Legal module, he has taken a real interest in CINA cases and has been asking probing substantive questions of the parties and making better decisions."* From a parent attorney, *"Since attending the Information Sharing module, our attorneys have been more proactive in protecting the confidential records of our clients."* From a GAL, *"After attending the Education Law & Advocacy module, Judge ___ always asks GALs to report on the educational status of each child, so we now know we need to be prepared and do a better job of advocating for the child's educational needs."*

Have there been notable factors that delayed or accelerated this effort?

The Pandemic helped jump start this effort to convert our curriculum to e-Learning.

What assistance or support would be helpful from the CBCC or the Children's Bureau to help move the project forward?

We will continue to consult with CBCC as needed. We are utilizing a programmer who has extensive experience working with the Capacity Building Center for State Courts (CBCC) and other state CIPs to create online trainings for judges, attorneys, and advocates. He created an online ICWA training for the CBCC, as well as other E-Learning courses on topics such as safety decision making, improving the adoption court process, and improving the quality of child welfare court hearings. Mr. Rembrandt has also developed online trainings on a variety of topics for other state CIPs, including California, Michigan, North Carolina, and Colorado.

II. Trainings, Projects, and Activities For questions 1-12, provide a *concise* description of work completed or underway to date in FY 2021 (October 2020-June 2021) in the below topical subcategories. For question 1, focus on significant training events or initiatives held or developed in FY 2021.

1. Trainings

<i>Topical Area</i>	<i>Did you hold or develop a training on this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, training curriculum/program, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do? S=Satisfaction, L=Learning, B=Behavior, O=Outcomes</i>
Data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CIP Steering Committee	Approx. 25-30 per meeting	Court System and OCS data are presented at each meeting	Data-driven decision making	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Hearing quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CINA practitioners (incl. judges)	Approx. 30 per training	Curriculum/Program	Improved Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Improving timeliness/permanency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CINA practitioners (incl. judges)	Approx. 30 per training	Curriculum/Program	Improved Advocacy and Time to Permanency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Quality legal representation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CINA practitioners (incl. judges)	Approx. 30 per training	Curriculum /Program NACC Red Book Trainings ABA Parent Rep. Conf.	Improved Advocacy and Time to Permanency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Engagement & participation of parties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CINA practitioners (incl. judges)	Approx. 30 per training	Curriculum/Program	Improved Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Well-being	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CINA practitioners (incl. judges)	Approx. 30 per training	Curriculum/Program	Improved Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

<i>Topical Area</i>	<i>Did you hold or develop a training on this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, training curriculum/program, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do? S=Satisfaction, L=Learning, B=Behavior, O=Outcomes</i>
Disparity/Disproportionality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CINA practitioners (incl. judges)	Approx. 30 per training	Curriculum/Program	Improved Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
ICWA/Tribal collaboration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CINA practitioners (incl. judges)	Approx. 30 per training	Curriculum/Program	Improved Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Sex Trafficking	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No					
Normalcy/Reason. Prudent Parent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Joint Permanency Project Participants	12	Project – Benchcards and Forms	Improved Advocacy and Time to Permanency	<input type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Prevention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CIP Steering Committee	20	Plans of Safe Care Project was presented	Maintaining children safely in their homes	<input type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges at Judicial Conference	All CINA Judges 30+	Jennifer Renne presented at the statewide Judicial Conference all judges provided with a copy of the Child Safety Guide		<input type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No					<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

On average, how many training events do you hold per year? 3-6

What is your best prediction for the number of attorneys and judges that will participate in a training annually? Approximately 100

The Family First Prevention Services Act amended the Social Security Act adding an eligibility criterion for the training of judges and attorneys on the congregate care provisions of the Act. See the highlighted portion below.

(1)¹ IN GENERAL.— In order to be eligible to receive a grant under this section, a highest State court ... *shall provide for the training of judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel in child welfare cases on Federal child welfare policies and payment limitations with respect to children in foster care who are placed in settings that are not a foster family home...*—

Have you been involved in planning with the agency on implementing Family First? Yes No

If yes, please describe how the CIP has been involved.

After review of the requirements of FFPSA, Alaska consulted with Tribal partners and will pause further work on re-submitting the prevention plan until further analysis can be conducted. Due to the lack of evidence based programs and the 1115 Medicaid waiver expanding services and eligibility criteria to populations questions arose regarding the viability of FFPSA. Once the analysis can be conducted on all potential evidence based program services in Alaska, who the funder of the programs are and sample of families meeting candidate for care criteria then Alaska will reconvene with Tribal stakeholders to determine the status of FFPSA submission.

Have you developed/been developing your Family First judicial training plan? Yes No

If yes, please describe what you have done.

Trainings over the last year have targeted the importance of meaningful parental engagement by judges and attorneys in child welfare cases as well as other strategies to enhance and promote timely permanency. CIP's Psychological, Medication, and Residential Subcommittee created a new bench card for Placement Review Hearings for Placements Pursuant to AS 47.10.087, which was approved by the CIP Steering Committee and provided to judges.

¹ Sec. 50741(c) of P.L. 115-123 revised sec. 438(b)(1) to add language regarding training. Effective as if enacted on 1/1/18 (sec. 50746(a)(1) of P.L. 115-123).

2. Data Projects. Data projects include any work with administrative data sets (e.g, AFCARS, CCWIS), data dashboards, data reports, fostering court improvement data, case management systems, and data sharing efforts.

Do you have a data project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Joint Permanency Project	Agency Data Sharing Efforts	Implementation
Court and OCS data presentation at each CIP Steering Committee Meeting	Fostering Court Improvement data projects	Implementation
CIP is working with judges to create additional audit reports. The newly created report for time to adjudication also helps identify cases with missing orders.	Fostering Court Improvement data projects	Identifying/Assessing Needs

(a) Do you have data reports that you consistently view? Yes No

Time to First Permanency Order; Time to Permanent Placement; Time to Termination of Parental Rights; Time to Subsequent Permanency Hearings Held/Continued; Time to First Permanency Hearing Held/Continued; Time to Termination of Parental Rights Petition.

(b) How are these reports used to support your work?

They are used for the Joint Project, to examine and improve hearing quality, and to inform decision-making.

3. Hearing Quality. Hearing quality projects include any efforts you have made to improve the quality of dependency hearings, including court observation/assessment projects, process improvements, specialty/pilot court projects, projects related to court orders or title IV-E determinations, mediation, or appeals.

Do you have a hearing quality project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Complementing CIP's CINA Core Curriculum project, a project to continuously improve the quality of CINA hearings and review by conducting file reviews of CINA cases in the Joint Project and by listening to hearings to better understand what is influencing permanency delays.	Court Observation/Assessment	Implementation
CIP staff facilitated a 90-minute multi-disciplinary interactive moderated panel session at Newer Judges Training to highlight a few of the most difficult areas of CINA cases and to offer tips on what judges can do to manage those sticking points. Panelists included representatives from Office of Children's Services, Office of the Attorney General, Public Defender Agency, Office of Public Advocacy GAL section, and Tribal Attorney Representative.	Process Improvements	Implementation
Joint Permanency Project has a hearing quality component that includes multi-disciplinary training, revised bench cards, and a hearing model based on national best practices.	Specialty/Pilot Courts	Implementation
The Anchorage court held a CINA bench/bar meeting and formed a small working group to address scheduling issues. As a result, the Anchorage court is moving away from mass block scheduling to set hearing times and working to reduce the number of continuances granted. The working group meets regularly and a subsequent CINA bench/bar meeting to discuss outcomes was planned for fall 2020, but delayed until February 2021. This group has also been a vital link to provide feedback on how best to move forward with CINA cases during COVID-19 related court delays.	Process Improvements	Implementation

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
CIP facilitated COVID-19 response related agency meetings to provide feedback and guidance on CINA case related updates to standing orders issued by the Chief Justice and Presiding Judges on court operations, technology, and priority hearings.	Process Improvements	Implementation

4. Improving Timeliness of Hearings or Permanency Outcomes. Timeliness and permanency projects include any activities or projects meant to improve the timeliness of case processing or achievement of timely permanency. This could include general timeliness, focus on continuances or appeals, working on improvement in specific outcomes such as around reunification, guardianship, adoption or a focus on APPLA and older youth.

Do you have a timeliness or permanency project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
(See #2 above re: Data Project and Joint Project)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
(See #3 above re: Anchorage CINA bench/bar) Anchorage court held a CINA Bench/Bar and formed a multi-disciplinary small work group to address CINA hearing scheduling issues and continuances. The group identified improving time to adjudication as a critical step to improving time to permanency. The groups' review of data on time to adjudication resulted in an additional report being created for judges to review time to adjudication for their assigned cases rather than just by court location. Another report was created to find cases where adjudication hearings had been held, but adjudication orders were missing and skewing time to adjudication data. These reports are also used in connection with our Fairbanks Joint Permanency Project and statewide.	Continuances	Identifying/Assessing Needs

5. Engagement & Participation of Parties. Engagement and participation of parties includes any efforts centered around youth, parent, foster family, or caregiver engagement, as well as projects related to notice to relatives, limited English proficiency, or other efforts to increase presence and engagement at the hearing.

Do you have an engagement or participation of parties project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Youth engagement in court and Youth Bill of Rights.	Youth Engagement	Implementation

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Youth Handbook including such topics as: Independent living services, financial assistance with college or vocational school, exiting foster care, extending or re-entering foster care, rights and responsibilities of 18-21 year old youth in care, Medicaid, mentoring programs, Alaska Native resources and cultural connections.	Youth Engagement	Evaluation/Assessment
Court provides interpreters at hearings for those with limited English proficiency (111 requests for interpreters in CINA cases were received during SFY July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)	Limited English proficiency	Evaluation/Assessment
<p>Training for judicial officers presented by CIP in collaboration with Facing Foster Care in Alaska (foster youth) and Alaska Behavioral Health</p> <p><i>Youth in Court: How to Ask Questions and Ensure Youth Have a Positive Experience in Court</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why youth participation in court is important and does and don'ts. • Understanding child development and impacts of the system. • Tips for how to interview youth and speak to them about difficult situations. 	Youth Engagement	Implementation

6. Well-Being. Well-being projects include any efforts related to improving the well-being of children and youth. Projects could focus on education, early childhood development, psychotropic medication, trauma, social network support, cultural connections, or other well-being related topics.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on well-being? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
The Psychotropic Medications Subcommittee comprised of CINA practitioners and Behavioral Health experts has been meeting to address issues related to psychotropic medications including possible CINA Rule updates and changes. They also developed an updated bench card for the AS 47.10.087 hearing reviews for children placed in residential treatment.	Psychotropic Medication	Selecting Solution
The ESSA subcommittee of CIP comprised of CINA practitioners and education leaders has been meeting during the reporting period and working in partnership to maintain children in their “home” schools. The subcommittee revised their referral process, clarified expectations of best interest meetings, continued monthly meetings to problem solve issues, and ensured that more students in foster care remained in their same schools. Anchorage School District communicates with OCS daily to resolve smaller issues.	Education	Selecting Solution
An updated judicial checklist was created for judges conducting hearings for Youth 16 and Older including permanency hearings, post-permanency review hearings, extension of custody hearings, and requests to release custody. Also created was a Reference Guide of the relevant laws for older foster youth in Alaska. https://public.courts.alaska.gov/web/cip/docs/youth16.pdf	Other	Implementation
NCJFCJ conducted trauma audits at two of Alaska’s largest court locations.	Trauma	Identifying/Assessing Needs
A training session for attorneys on LGBTQ issues in court with Currey Cook was planned for April 2020, but had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.	LGBTQ Youth	Identifying/Assessing Needs

7. Disparities/Disproportionalities. These projects include any efforts related to improving equity in child welfare systems whether around race, sexual orientation or gender identity, national origin or immigration status, persons with disabilities, geographic or otherwise.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on disparities/disproportionalities? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Currey Cook with Lambda Legal presented a training session at the statewide judicial conference in Fall 2020 on best practices for having youth participate in CINA cases, including considerations for different populations.	Other	Implementation
Judges received mandatory training on systemic racism, structural racism, and racial justice in Fall 2020.	Race	Implementation
Judges received training on understanding gender identity in Fall 2020	LGBTQ+	Implementation
OCS data that includes regional and racial information is reviewed at each CIP Steering Committee Meeting	Geographic Race	Implementation

8. ICWA/Tribal collaboration. These projects could include any efforts to enhance state and tribal collaboration, state and tribal court agreements, data collection and analysis including of ICWA practice.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on ICWA or tribal collaboration? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
The ICWA module of the CINA Core Curriculum has been converted to an eLearning format with a read path, listen path, and watch path to accommodate all learning styles. The CIP curriculum and ICWA subcommittees collaborated on the content and presentation format of the information.	Tribal Collaboration	Implementation

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Sheldon Spotted Elk with Casey Family Programs and Judge Rodney Souza, Yellowstone County, MT, presented on ICWA courts at the Fall 2020 CIP Steering Committee Meeting.	Other	Implementation
The CIP ICWA subcommittee reviewed and provided suggested revisions to the CIP curriculum subcommittee to update the entire ICWA training curriculum.	Tribal Collaboration	Implementation
CIP reached out to the Alaska BIA Human Services Director for assistance in notifying all ICWA workers statewide about the availability of a 3-day multi-disciplinary ICWA Zoom training in March 2021. There was such an overwhelming response that an additional training was added in May 2021. Over 100 CINA practitioners attended these two trainings. Post training surveys were very positive.	Tribal Collaboration	Evaluation/Assessment
Tribal representatives from each region of the state are members of the CIP Steering Committee. The appointed representatives are selected by Tribal Caucus to serve a 3-year term.	Tribal Collaboration	Implementation

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
<p>Reformulation of ICWA Subcommittee of CIP comprised of judges, CINA practitioners (attorneys, CASA, ICWA specialists) and Alaska Native Leaders. The Subcommittee is working on generating new bench cards for CINA hearings. There has been a large influx of new judges in the Alaska Court System and the Subcommittee aims to improve the bench cards so that they are more user-friendly to judges and practitioners throughout the child welfare system. The subcommittee revised a permanency hearing bench card and will next complete a disposition hearing bench card and also will be working on a checklist for registering tribal court orders.</p> <p>The Subcommittee is identifying inconsistencies in court processes from one judicial district to another and aims to work with presiding judges of each judicial district on efforts to standardize court processes. This will help to alleviate confusion for practitioners, specifically tribal ICWA workers.</p>	Other	Implementation
<p>Alaska Tribal Welfare Compact – a government –to-government agreement between the State and Tribes and Tribal Organizations establishing a framework for Tribes to provide child welfare services on behalf of the state. Tribes will provide intakes, screenings, investigations, relative searches; developing and managing safety and case plans, foster care licensing and support, supervised visitation and transportation; and adoption and guardianship home studies.</p>	State/Tribal Court Agreements	Planning

9. Preventing Sex Trafficking. These projects could include work around domestic child sex trafficking, a focus on runaway youth, collaboration with other agencies around this topic, data collection and analysis, data sharing, or other efforts to fully implement these sections of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act into practice.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on preventing sex trafficking/runaways? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

10. Normalcy/Reasonable and Prudent Parent. These projects could include any work around normalcy or the reasonable and prudent parent standard or practices, collaboration with other agencies around this topic, data collection and analysis, data sharing, or other efforts to fully implement these sections of the Preventing Sex and Strengthening Families Act into practice.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on normalcy/reasonable prudent parenting? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
The ESSA subcommittee of CIP comprised of CINA practitioners and education leaders has been meeting during the reporting period and working in partnership to maintain children in their “home” schools. The subcommittee revised their referral process, clarified expectations of best interest meetings, continued monthly meetings to problem solve issues, and ensured that more students in foster care remained in their same schools. Anchorage School District communicates with OCS daily to resolve smaller issues.	Collaboration with other agencies	Evaluation/Assessment

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
A component of the bench cards and forms for the Joint Permanency Project.	judicial oversight	Implementation

11. Prevention. Prevention projects include work around preventing child maltreatment including primary prevention (preventing maltreatment from occurring in the first place), secondary, and tertiary prevention.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on prevention? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Plans of Safe Care is being piloted through a hospital in Juneau to conduct a process and outcome evaluation to assess mitigation of potential maltreatment of babies born affected by substances. CIP has been involved in the design of the proposed intervention and will participate in future planning if Plans of Safe Care administered through hospitals will be scaled out further.	Primary prevention	Selecting Solution
Alaska has paused its submission of FFPSA due to a need to further evaluate the viability of implementation and use of evidence based programs in Alaska. Data and collaboration with CIP assisted in determining the candidates for care criteria and will be re-evaluated if Alaska determines it will re-submit a prevention plan.	Collaboration with other agencies	Identifying/Assessing Needs
Upcoming Alaska Impact Alliance Kick-Off Meeting	Primary prevention	Identifying/Assessing Needs
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

12. Safety. Safety projects are those that focus on decision-making around safety including decision-making practices in substantiation, removal, family time/visitation, and decisions about safety in out of home placements.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on safety? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
CIP formed a Family Contact Subcommittee chaired by a superior court judge who is a member of the CIP Steering Committee. The subcommittee is working on ways to improve family contact and revising the CIP Family Contact training.	Family time/visitation	Identifying/Assessing Needs
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

III. CIP Collaboration in Child Welfare Program Planning and Improvement Efforts

1. Please describe how the CIP was involved with the state’s CFSP due June 30, 2021.

Alaska’s CFSP was submitted in 2019 and is not currently due. The APSR is due in June 2021.

CIP was involved in Alaska’s CFSP by participating in the State Team meeting in D.C. where the primary focus was how to use federal tools for bold changes. We worked with OCS on the design challenge for bold thinking and the CFSP, and contributed ideas for projects to be included in the CFSP, including enhanced quality legal representation. We worked together to create vision toward “*Empowering Communities to Strengthen Families to Prevent Child Abuse.*” CIP participated in several Web-Ex and teleconference meetings to further partner with OCS on the finalization of the State’s Program Improvement Plan (PIP). The Children’s Bureau recommends significant CIP involvement with the strategies for improving outcomes for children. Several strategies from the PIP cross over into the CFSP.

CIP has provided updates to strategies on the hearing quality improvement project pilot and implementation of additional hearings in the pilot site. Collaboration on the evaluation of the pilot has assisted in informing scaling out the pilot to other judicial districts and reporting in the Annual Progress Services Report (APSR).

a. Does the CFSP include any of the following:

- the CIP/Agency Joint Project
- the Hearing Quality Project
- the Legal Representation Project
- other judicial strategies
- other attorney strategies

If *yes*, please describe.

Joint court and OCS strategies facilitated with the support of CIP, which is comprised of judges, agency leads from the Public Defender Agency, Office of the Attorney General, Office of Public Advocacy Guardian ad Litem section, OCS Deputy Director, and other court personnel, focus on increased attention to data tracking, increased parental engagement from the first court hearing; and increased court oversight for cases with children in care.

Judicial and legal stakeholders on CIP have reviewed, and are supportive of this pilot project.

Alaska judges currently utilize bench cards as a tool for ensuring required State and Federal findings are made for each hearing. Bench cards were updated for use in the Fairbanks pilot to include tools for parent engagement and permanency timeframes. The addition of the 6 month hearing holds all parties accountable to timely permanency and ensures no case goes longer than 6 months between hearings.

Attorneys involved with the pilot participated in the kick off, review permanency data, and provide stakeholder feedback.

OCS will develop a targeted staffing process for Permanency Planning Specialists to track potential barriers to permanency on individual cases, and find ways to remove barriers for the following cohorts: children in care > 12 months that continue to have a primary goal of reunification, children in care > 24 months that have been placed with a relative for 6 months or longer, legally free children who are not placed in a permanent home, and children on THV longer than 180 days as this is a cohort that was found to be languishing in custody past 180 days due to lack of court order to dismiss. The addition of the 6 month hearing will provide an opportunity for judges to inquire about barriers and how they can assist in removing them. The number of cases lacking a court order to dismiss should be reduced.

Should the employed strategies demonstrate improved outcomes; the new innovations will be rolled out based on a schedule that takes regional stability and court receptivity into consideration.

While the CIP Hearing Quality Project does not specifically appear in the CFSP, there are joint activities aimed at hearing quality improvement. There is a hearing quality component included in the CIP/Agency Joint Project and the agency is also very involved in the CINA Core Curriculum project to

continuously improve the quality of CINA court proceedings, with the concept that high-quality, multi-disciplinary training for all CINA practitioners will assist in ensuring the provision of high-quality CINA hearings and reviews.

2. Please describe how the CIP was or will be involved in the most recent/upcoming title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review in your state.

The prior CIP Coordinator was a case reviewer for the Title IV-E reviews which occur every three years. The CIP was asked to participate as a case reviewer for the 2018 review but the state had to finalize their audit team before we were able to finalize which court personnel could participate. The state has expressed their commitment to always invite a CIP staff member to participate as a case reviewer for Title IV-E federal audits. The 2021 review was postponed by the federal Children's Bureau due to the COVID health emergency and has not yet been rescheduled. The state and CIP will coordinate when a new date is determined in an effort to secure a CIP staff member on the review team.

3. Please describe how the CIP was or will be involved in preparing and completing round 3 of the CFSR and PIP, if required, in your state.

The current version of the PIP includes (check all that apply):

- the CIP/Agency Joint Project
- the Hearing Quality Project
- the Legal Representation Project
- other judicial strategies
- other attorney strategies

4. What strategies or processes are in place in your state that you feel are particularly effective in supporting joint child welfare program planning and improvement?

Regional CIP meeting, with CBCC technical assistance.

CINA bench/bar and CINA agency meetings to inform and facilitate program and process improvements

CIP Steering Committee and numerous very active topic focused CIP subcommittees

CIP facilitation of open lines of communication between CINA stakeholder agencies

National Judicial Leadership Summit

State Team Meetings

5. What barriers exist in your state that make effective joint child welfare program planning and improvement challenging?

Geographic size, travel time and costs to and from remote areas only accessible by plane or boat; scheduling training time, staffing levels, internet bandwidth, access to technology, COVID-19 associated closures/delays.

6. Does the state child welfare agency currently offer professional partner training to judges, attorneys, and court personnel as part of its Title IV-E Training Plan? Yes

If yes, please provide a brief description of what is provided and how.

Training is offered to Assistant Attorneys General who represent the agency. They are invited to attend OCS new worker (SKILS) training.

If no, have you met with child welfare agency leadership to discuss and explore utilizing professional partner training for judges, attorneys and court personnel?

7. Have you talked with your agency about accessing Title IV-E funding for legal representation for parents or for children? Is your state currently planning to seek or currently receiving reimbursement? If yes, describe any plans, approaches, or models that are under consideration or underway.

CIP Director coordinated communication between the Child Welfare Agency and the agencies that represent parents and children in Alaska. The Office of Children's Services, Public Defender Agency, and Office of Public Advocacy were able to implement a MOU that went into effect July 1, 2020. It covers the cost of representation for the parents and children they represent if appointed. It also includes paralegal work on the cases and reimbursement is processed on a quarterly basis. Each agency provides their costs by month and a list of parents/children served in that quarter. Each agency maintains detailed tracking information for audit purposes and to protect attorney client privilege.

IV. CQI Current Capacity Assessment

1. Has your ability to integrate CQI into practice changed this year? If yes, what do you attribute the change to?

Yes, attending CBCC virtual trainings, meetings, and teleconferences. CBCC on-line resources, including CIP Share.

2. Which of the following CBCC Events/Services have you/your staff engaged in this past year?

- Judicial Academy
- CQI Consult (*Topic: Dr. Sophie Gatowski re: Joint Permanency Project bench card evaluations*)
- Virtual Evidence-Building Workshop

- Constituency Group - Data/Evaluation
- Constituency Group - Family First Prevention Services Act
- Constituency Group - Hearing Quality
- Constituency Group - ICWA
- Constituency Group - New Directors
- Constituency Group - Virtual Hearings/Court Processes
- Constituency Group - Other _____

CIP All Call -- *What % of All Calls does your CIP participate in?* 90 %

3. Do you have any of the following resources to help you integrate CQI into practice?

- CIP staff with data expertise
- CIP staff with evaluation expertise
- Consultants with CQI expertise
- a University partnership
- a statewide court case management system
- Contracts with external individuals or organizations to assist with CQI efforts
- Other resources: CBCC State Liaisons

3a. Do you record your child welfare court hearings? Yes No

If yes, are they audio video

3b. Can you remotely access your court case management system? *For example, Odyssey systems often allow remote access to case files.*

Yes No

3c. What court case management software does your state use? If multiple, please indicate the most common:

Equivant CourtView

3d. Have you employed any new technology or applications to strengthen your work?

Yes, additional reports to assist in catching and correcting data entry errors.

4. Please describe any continuity planning the CIP has led or has been involved in if not noted above. Continuity planning includes prevention and recovery planning for threats such as public health crises, natural disasters, or cyber-attacks. This may include, for example, technology support for remote hearings or legal representation, developing guidance, coordinating with other agencies, or otherwise ensuring back-up approaches are in place to ensure needed services are able to continue.

Coordinated purchase of HIPAA compliant Zoom licenses and webcams with Office of the Attorney General and Office of Children's Services for all CINA judicial officers statewide to facilitate continuing CINA hearings during COVID restrictions.

Court management has and continues to meet weekly to discuss vaccination rates, review regional and statewide orders, HR issues, communications, IS, and recovery phase planning.

CIP formed a small multi-disciplinary work group to provide feedback to court management and presiding judges on CINA related court operations during COVID restrictions.

A summary and discussion regarding court COVID related orders/policies is provided at each CIP Steering Committee meeting since the start of the pandemic.

5. Considering the phases of change management and how you integrate these into practice, are there phases of the process (e.g., Phase I-need assessment, Phase II-theory of change) that you struggle with integrating more than others?

Yes, evaluation/assessment.

6. Is there a topic or practice area that you would find useful from the Capacity Building Center for Courts? Be as specific as possible (e.g., data analysis, how to evaluate trainings, more information on research about quality legal representation, how to facilitate group meetings, etc.)

How to incorporate innovations learned during the pandemic into post-pandemic operations.

Continuation of the CBCC constituency groups, these are a great forum to bring up and receive feedback on issues as they arise.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions of Evidence

Evidence-based practice – evidence-based practices are practice that have been empirically tested in a rigorous way (involving random assignment to groups), have demonstrated effectiveness related to specific outcomes, have been replicated in practice at least one, and have findings published in peer reviewed journal articles.

Empirically-supported- less rigorous than evidence-based practices are empirically-supported practices. To be empirically supported, a program must have been evaluated in some way and have demonstrated some relationship to a positive outcome. This may not meet the rigor of evidence-base, but still has some support for effectiveness.

Best-practices – best practices are often those widely accepted in the field as good practice. They may or may not have empirical support as to effectiveness, but are often derived from teams of experts in the field.

Definitions for CQI Phases

Identifying and Assessing Needs – This phase is the earliest phase in the process, where you are identifying a need to be addressed. The assessing needs phase includes identifying the need, determining if there is available data demonstrating that this a problem, forming teams to address the issue.

Develop theory of change—This phase focuses on the theorizing the causes of a problem. In this phase you would identify what you think might be causing the problem and develop a “theory of change”. The theory of change is essentially how you think your activities (or intervention) will improve outcomes.

Develop/select solution—This phase includes developing or selecting a solution. In this phase, you might be exploring potential best-practices or evidence-based practices that you may want to implement as a solution to the identified need. You might also be developing a specific training, program, or practice that you want to implement.

Implementation – the implementation phase of work is when an intervention is being piloted or tested. This includes adapting programs or practices to meet your needs, and developing implementation supports.

Evaluation/assessment – the evaluation and assessment phase includes any efforts to collect data about the fidelity (process measures: was it implemented as planned?) or effectiveness (outcome measures: is the intervention making a difference?) of the project. The evaluation assessment phase also includes post-evaluation efforts to apply findings, such as making changes to the program/practice and using the data to inform next steps.

Paperwork Reduction Act

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-13), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Control Number. The OMB control number for this collection is 0970-0307 and it expires 11/30/2022. The estimated time to complete the CIP Complete Application is 92 hours