

Washington 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.*

Joint Project with the Child Welfare Agency:

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

Identification of current safety threats and conditions for return home will be articulated in court hearings. Having this information will improve the court's ability to rule on issues including visitation, placement and progress toward case plan goals. Discussing safety threats and conditions for return will also provide clarity for parents about what needs to happen for reunification and dismissal of their case.

Working together, DCYF and CIP will develop a crosswalk between the American Bar Association's Guide to Child Safety and DCYF's safety framework to create agreed-upon language for court parties to use when talking about safety. In court, DCYF staff will provide assessments of safety based on current facts and, if children are placed out-of-home, describe conditions for return; the identification and implementation of services; and the development of individualized case plans in partnership with families. Judicial officers and attorneys will ask questions related to safety threats and conditions for return home and social workers will be able to explain their assessment of safety to families, courts, providers and other key stakeholders and will partner with families to identify services and resources that mitigate safety concerns.

Identify the specific safety, permanency, or well-being outcome(s) this project is intended to address.

Safety Outcome 2 – Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Permanency Outcome 1 – Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Approximate date that the project began:

While some work has been completed during the transition phase, the official start date, according to the Program Improvement Plan is July 1, 2020

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

Phase IV – Plan, prepare, and implement

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

The need was identified through our Hearing Quality Project, which sought to apply the ABA Safety Guide to the context of Family Time (parent/child visit) decisions by courts. When introduced to the ABA framework for assessing safety, judicial officers found it useful and requested additional training for themselves and for court partners. The CFSR findings reflected a need for DCYF staff to improve their understanding and application of the department’s safety framework, utilizing critical thinking and assessment to drive practice. During the last year, CIP, DCYF staff and the court system-focused PIP team reviewed the data and identified that inconsistent application of DCYF’s safety framework impacts permanency decisions.

Root cause analysis of CFSR results determined that caseworkers do not have consistent support and oversight to complete required shared planning meetings and integrate the Safety Framework into practice. This results in an inability to clearly communicate safety threats to children, parents, the court, and court partners and to create individualized case plans that accurately identify needed services to support timely permanency.

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.*

Deliver interdisciplinary safety guide training:

SO THAT a shared understanding and language of safety is created;
SO THAT sufficient information is collected;

SO THAT threats of danger are identified and protective capacities are accurately assessed throughout the life of the case;
SO THAT effective safety plans and case plans are created;
SO THAT a child remains in the home;
OR THAT if a child is placed out-of-home, appropriate family time is ordered and conditions of return home are identified and understood;
SO THAT at all parties are clear as to what strategies and services are necessary to achieve permanency;
SO THAT safe and lasting permanency is achieved in each and every case.

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

CFSR Program Improvement Plan:

Strategy 4.2: DCYF staff and court partners will develop, understand, and articulate consistent language regarding DCYF's Safety Framework and implement changes in caseworker and court practice related to the Safety Framework.

4.2.1 Establish a short-term multi-disciplinary workgroup of IDCC subgroup members, FJCIP coordinators, field AGO, HQ program managers, DCYF field, Court Improvement Training Academy (CITA), the Alliance, and other identified stakeholders to:

- Develop a crosswalk of DCYF Safety Framework, safety principles and existing court safety-related training and guidance.
- Identify impacted/related procedures and forms.
- Identify supportive resources available (i.e. safety framework posters for courtrooms)
- Make revisions (as needed) to current judicial/multi-disciplinary Child Safety Framework training as determined through the crosswalk including guidance for judges on specific questions related to safety threats and conditions for return home to be addressed at every court hearing.

4.2.3 Implement training, post-training supports such as peer exchanges and coaching, and supportive resources (including handouts, tools, and posters) in FJCIP jurisdictions to include:

- Providing information on updates to safety training (as a result of 4.2.1) and schedule of available trainings at the annual dependency training for judicial officers and FJCIP Coordinators
- Providing training to judges, multi-disciplinary partners, AGOs, and DCYF staff in FJCIP jurisdictions that have not completed the training, that identify safety principles that will be discussed at every Court hearing.
- Providing supportive resources to those who have already been trained per any changes or adjustments to the training curriculum.

4.2.4 Once the training is completed, incorporation of the concepts learned and practiced in the training will occur including:

- Judges asking questions related to safety threats and conditions for return home
- Attorneys asking questions within the Safety Framework
- Caseworkers submitting with their Court Report an updated safety assessment with the current active safety threat(s) clearly articulated. The Court Report will include conditions for return home, which clearly delineate what behavioral change, and supports are necessary to achieve reunification.

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

Multidisciplinary training has occurred in a few local jurisdictions, and safety guide training has been incorporated into the annual judicial dependency training conducted by the Court Improvement Training Academy.

The following implementation activities have been completed during this reporting timeframe:

- Conducted a crosswalk of DCYF Safety Framework, safety principles and existing court safety-related training and guidance.
- Identified impacted/related procedures and forms with agreement from DCYF to include the safety assessment and safety plan documents with the court report in the seven PIP counties.
- Identified supportive resources available.
- Made revisions to current judicial/multi-disciplinary Child Safety Framework training curriculum.
- Included safety training in the annual dependency training for judicial officers and FJCIP Coordinators.
- In the process of scheduling multidisciplinary safety training in seven of the PIP counties, plus Mason County.
- Legislation was passed May 2021, establishing a presumption of unsupervised family time and requiring DCYF or another party to present evidence of a safety threat requiring monitoring or supervision of parent/child contact. DCYF developed training and resources that will be integrated into the child safety framework trainings.

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 project will be monitored through the PIP as follows:

4.2.5 AAs and supervisors, with support from HQ and regional QA/CQI staff, PFD1 grant staff, and other designated regional staff, will complete semi-annual, office-based targeted case reviews that will include review of Court Reports and Safety Assessments for documentation of current safety concerns, conditions of return home, and permanency planning. Review results will be presented to all staff and used to identify areas for practice focus and system improvements. Individualized feedback will be provided to the primary caseworker and supervisor regarding strengths and areas of improvement for each case reviewed. Case review results will be included in the Hearing Quality Project evaluation as identified in 4.2.4.

4.2.6

Information obtained from the Hearing Quality Project evaluation will be used to determine improvement in outcomes related to the application of the Safety Framework in the Courts and to develop a plan to follow-up with additional support for areas that are not showing improvement in outcomes or fidelity to the application of the Safety Framework.

The baseline assessment was completed in March 2021 and will be used to assist local teams in developing action plans and goals. The follow up hearing quality evaluation will provide data about the change in practice.

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

N/A

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

~~We may request assistance with developing the crosswalk between the ABA Safety Guide and the department's Safety Framework.~~ N/A

Hearing Quality Project:

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

An evaluation comparing dependency hearings pre and post activities in the joint project described above. It is expected that judicial officers and attorneys will ask questions regarding safety threats and conditions for return home, and that caseworkers will be prepared and able to clearly articulate current active safety threats and the conditions for return home.

Approximate date that the project began:

July 1, 2020

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

Phase IV – Plan, prepare, and implement

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

As part of the CQI process, it is important to know if the training provided in the joint project described above is reflected in the discussions that are happening in court hearings. During PIP planning it was decided to include this hearing quality project as part of the PIP.

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.*

Create a shared understanding and language of safety:

SO THAT sufficient information is collected;

SO THAT threats of danger are identified and protective capacities are accurately assessed throughout the life of the case;

SO THAT effective safety plans and case plans are created;

SO THAT a child remains in the home, or that, if a child is placed out of the home, appropriate family time is ordered and conditions for return home are identified and understood;

SO THAT all parties are clear as to what strategies and services are necessary to achieve permanency;

SO THAT safe and lasting permanency is achieved in each and every case.

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

The following PIP activities have been identified:

4.2.2 With support from the Capacity Building Center for Courts, a multidisciplinary group including CIP, DCYF, AGO, the Court Improvement Training Academy (CITA), and the Office of Public Defense (OPD) will develop an evaluation action plan for a Hearing Quality Project related to the application of the Safety Framework in court hearings including, but not limited to:

- Baseline assessment of current court practice, specific to discussions of safety and family time.

- Implementation assessment of how judges/multidisciplinary court teams have made changes to practices based on prior safety guide trainings.
- Assessment of how current practice is related to specific CFSR outcomes of interest in a sub sample of sites.
- A structured evaluation process that includes professional services, parent surveys, court observation, court case file review, and administrative data.

4.2.4 Once the training is completed, incorporation of the concepts learned and practiced in the training will occur including:

- Judges asking questions related to safety threats and conditions for return home
- Attorneys asking questions within the Safety Framework
- Caseworkers submitting with their Court Report an updated safety assessment with the current active safety threat(s) clearly articulated. The Court Report will include conditions for return home, which clearly delineate what behavioral change, and supports are necessary to achieve reunification.

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

An evaluation plan was completed by the CBCC in November 2020. CIP assisted CBCC in gathering data for the baseline study from the seven courts being evaluated and the court/child welfare professionals and parents participating in the surveys. The baseline study was completed by CBCC in March 2021, and was used to further inform the safety training project.

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?*

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

The pandemic caused delays in timing of the project, which caused a 3-month delay gathering the data and completing the baseline study. It also had an effect on the ability to engage parents to participate in the survey.

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

Continued support from Dr. Summers, Jennifer Renne, and CBCC liaison.

Quality Legal Representation Project:

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

Review, develop, and update the standards of practice, caseload limits and training guides for the Children’s Representation Program. Assess short and long term impacts of standards-based legal representation on case outcomes for children eight and older. Review available research and best practices and recommend the appropriate model of representation of children under the age of eight.

Approximate date that the project began:

July 2021

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

Phase IV – Plan, prepare, and implement

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

Washington State is one of a few states in the nation that does not provide legal representation for all dependent children and youth. Under current Washington law, the court must appoint an attorney for a child in a dependency proceeding six months after granting a petition to terminate the parent and child relationship when there is no remaining parent with parental rights, if a young person is petitioning for their parent’s parental rights to be reinstated, or if a youth is in extended foster care. The court may appoint an attorney to represent the child’s position at any point in a dependency action on its own initiative, or upon the request of a parent, child, guardian ad litem, caregiver, or DCYF.

The system that Washington has operated under since 2014 has been a bifurcated one, where most of the attorneys who are representing children and youth are not required to engage in any mandatory training, have no caseload limits, do not need to practice consistent with practice standards, and are often not sufficiently compensated for their work. In 2014, RCW 13.34.100(6) was amended to provide for the mandatory representation of children and youth whose parents’ parental rights had been terminated and who had not reached permanency after six months. The legislature appropriated money to be distributed by the Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA). Payment for attorney services under the statute was predicated on compliance with the practice standards that were adopted by the Washington State Supreme Court in 2010. These

practice standards require training, caseload limits, and lay out the best practices when representing children and youth in dependency proceedings.

2SSHB 1219, which was passed in the 2021 legislative session, provides mandatory appointment of counsel for children and youth in dependency proceedings for:

- Children age 7 and younger, upon the filing of a termination petition;
- Children and youth age 8 through 17 when a new dependency petition is filed, with mandatory appointment made at or before the commencement of the shelter care hearing; and
- Any pending or open dependency case where the child is unrepresented and is entitled to the appointment of an attorney, mandatory appointment occurs at or before the next hearing.

Statewide implementation will occur in phases starting July 1, 2022, with full implementation by January 2027. Implementation will be prioritized in counties that have significant racial disproportionality in the number of dependent children (as compared to the general population) and in counties that currently do not appoint counsel for children.

While this legislation makes great strides towards legal representation for children in Washington State, there is still a need for children younger than eight-years-old to receive legal representation.

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.*

Update children's legal representation standards informed by best practice models, rigorous data analysis, race and other equity considerations:

- SO THAT all children's attorneys are trained and held to those standards;
- SO THAT quality legal representation is provided for all children in dependency and termination cases, regardless of age;
- SO THAT all children's legal rights and stated interests are effectively advocated for in the court system;
- SO THAT fewer children are disproportionately impacted by the system and avoid the foster care to prison pipeline;
- SO THAT dependency case outcomes improve for children who experience the child welfare system, including increased family reunification rates, fewer placement changes, educational stability, statutorily required educational advocacy, and reduced time in out-of-home care.

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

Support the Office of Civil Legal Aid in facilitating the Children’s Representation Workgroup to review, develop, and update the standards of practice, caseload limits and training guides for the Children’s Representation Program. Review available research and best practices and recommend to the legislature an appropriate model of representation of children under the age of eight.

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

The Children’s Representation Workgroup is currently being organized to complete the activities listed above.

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 Washington State Center for Court Research will convene stakeholders to identify: relevant outcome measures and data collection methods to effectively assess the number of youth for whom attorneys are appointed by the phase-in schedule; and the short and long term impact of standards-based legal representation on case outcomes. A report will be completed by November 30, 2022.

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

N/A

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

Technical assistance from ABA Center for Children and the Law regarding children’s representation.

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, Family Treatment Court Staff, and FJCIP Coordinators	10	Interactive Webinar	Coordinators/staff know what data is available in the Interactive Dependency Timeliness Report (IDTR) and how to access it.	<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Hearing quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	See Dependency Court Practice Below				<input type="checkbox"/> S <input 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	See Dependency Court Practice Below				<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Quality legal representation	<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
Engagement & participation of parties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Parents for Parents Webinar And See Dependency Court Practice Below	100	Parents for Parents Webinar (Recorded)	Court professionals learn how to engage and empower parents through the Parents for Parents Program.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input 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>
Well-being	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	King County DCYF Caseworkers And See Dependency Court Practice Below	18	Compassion Conversations Interactive Web Training	Caseworkers to see the value in compassion for themselves and the people they work with.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input 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	Dependency Court Professionals	200	Back to School Advocacy for Youth in Care – COVID Edition Webinar	Overview of the law and resources to support education of youth in care during COVID	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Disparity/Disproportionality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	See Dependency Court Practice Below				<input type="checkbox"/> S <input 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	See Dependency Court Practice Below				<input type="checkbox"/> S <input 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					<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Normalcy/Reason. Prudent Parent	<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
Prevention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	See Dependency Court Practice Below				<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	See Dependency Court Practice Below				<input type="checkbox"/> S <input 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>
Other: Dependency Court Practice for Judicial Officers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	State and Tribal Court Judicial Officers, including Appeals and Supreme Court, and FJCIP Coordinators	62	3-day Interactive Online Training	Basic Dependency training on all areas noted above, plus judicial leadership, science of hope, pandemic court recovery, and ABA safety guide training.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Other: Science of Hope	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Spokane Child Welfare/Court System Partners	140	4-hour Interactive Online Training	Learn about science of hope and identify ways to apply to the Spokane dependency system.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" 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? 10

What is your best prediction for the number of attorneys and judges that will participate in a training annually? 550

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...*—

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).

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.

The CIP Director and the Child Welfare Programs Division Director have been in communication regarding FFPSA implementation and have included FFPSA in the work plan for the CIP multidisciplinary task force, the Innovative Dependency Court Collaborative. Previously, Washington State House Bill 1900 regarding FFPSA included changes to statutes regarding the court's oversight of quality residential treatment placement (QRTP). Implementation also included changes in pattern court forms for dependency hearings.

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

If yes, please describe what you have done.

Nothing new this past year. Previously, to help courts implement the QRTP requirements, the Court Improvement Training Academy (CITA) - in partnership with DCYF, the AG's Office, and OCLA - recorded a short, 35 minute training webinar that covers the law, DCYF's process for assessing and treating youth, and the [new court forms](#) and procedures. You can access the webinar here: <http://aoceccl.adobeconnect.com/p3u73nfia1v5/>. September 2019 a dependency practice tip was emailed to all Superior Court judicial officers and administrators, and to dependency court partners that included the links above, as well as the following links:
FFPSA - <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/practice-improvement/ffpsa>
QRTP - <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/practice-improvement/ffpsa/residential/qrtip>
A follow-up FAQ was developed and is available at the QRTP link above.

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)
WA Dependency Data Share Efforts - Child data is extracted from the DCYF FAMLINK data system. This data is then used to match back to WA Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) case file data.	Agency Data Sharing Efforts	Evaluation/Assessment
WA Annual Dependency Timeliness Report to the Legislature – Provides annual analyses of dependency court operations with respect to statutorily mandated timelines. Click here to find the 2020 Annual Report.	Case management systems	Evaluation/Assessment
WA Dependency Data Dashboards/Reports - Interactive reports use Microsoft Excel pivot tables that allow the user to view state and individual county data for broad comparisons or person/case-specific information. A public facing Dependency Dashboard was created in November 2017 using Tableau software. The dashboard is updated monthly with court data and quarterly with agency data. This year we also added tabs for dependency filings and case timeliness measures by race/ethnicity. Click here to access the dashboard.	Data dashboards	Evaluation/Assessment
Created tracking system for COVID-related hearing continuances in IDTR.	Other	Evaluation/Assessment
Created case flow tracking system in IDTR.	Case Management Systems	Evaluation/Assessment
Training family treatment and early childhood court coordinators to use IDTR and incorporate data into local CQI efforts.	Fostering Court Improvement Data Projects	Implementation

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

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
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(b) How are these reports used to support your work?

Reports are used to assist in determining which jurisdictions may need some assistance in focusing their efforts on certain aspects of their dependency practice, as well as observing jurisdictions with high performance measures to determine what is working well that may be shared with others. Reports are shared with child welfare partners. Reports are also used to see the impact of the pandemic on court operations.

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)
An evaluation comparing dependency hearings pre and post activities in the joint project regarding safety assessment. It is expected that judicial officers and attorneys will ask questions regarding safety threats and conditions for return home, and that caseworkers will be able to clearly articulate current active safety threats.	Process Improvements	Implementation
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

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)
Court Recovery – Provided small grants to assist dependency courts with resources to reduce delays due to pandemic restrictions. Worked with stakeholders to develop tools and create guidelines for conducting remote and in-person hearings.	Continuances/Delays	Identifying/Assessing Needs
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

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)
Support development of Family Connections Program – Parents and caregivers work with peer mentors to build a relationship to support child and family wellbeing and increase caregiver and parent engagement.	Parent Engagement Caregiver Engagement	Implementation
Support Parents for Parents (P4P) program implementation statewide.	Parent Engagement	Implementation
Continue to monitor data and educate attorneys and clerks to document whether adequate notice was provided for caregivers and if a caregiver report was provided to the court. Worked with AOC staff on codes and form changes for reporting purposes.	Caregiver Engagement	Evaluation/Assessment

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)
Annual Youth Leadership Summit – Proposals addressing topics listed above presented by the youth to the Commission on Children in Foster Care, legislators and other stakeholders.	Other	Evaluation/Assessment
Providing expert support/technical assistance and facilitating the development of hope-centered mission, vision, and values to guide Spokane County’s cross-system, trauma-responsive court improvement efforts.	Trauma	Implementation
Supporting implementation and statewide oversight of Early Childhood Courts.	Early Childhood Development	Implementation

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)
Participating in Racial Equity & Justice Consortium, in response to Supreme Court’s call to action. Considering using racial equity toolkit.	Race	Identifying/Assessing Needs

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

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)
ICWA Court Summit to raise awareness and support implementation of more ICWA Courts.	Hearing Quality Tribal Collaboration	Selecting Solution
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

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)
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

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)
State Team Plan that was a result of the National Judicial Leadership Summit: Ensuring Justice in Child Welfare in August 2020, includes several prevention strategies that need to go through the QA/CQI planning process.	Primary prevention	Identifying/Assessing Needs

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Support further development of Family Intervention Response to Stop Trauma (F.I.R.S.T.) Clinic in Snohomish County. This is a medical-legal partnership that provides pregnant women with legal advocacy and connection to services to prevent not only a removal now and future involvement with CPS as well. The team includes volunteer attorney, parent ally, community resource navigator and hospital staff. This project evolved out of the Snohomish County Permanency Summit workgroup on young children and recently received funding from the State legislature.	Primary prevention	Implementation
	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)
<p>Joint Project with DCYF. Identification of safety threats and conditions for return home will be emphasized in court hearings. A crosswalk between the American Bar Association Safety Guide and the child welfare safety framework to develop common language. Child welfare staff will provide accurate assessments of safety; identification and implementation of services and the development of individualized case plans in partnership with families. Judicial officers and attorneys will ask questions related to safety threats and conditions for return home and social workers will be able to articulate safety threats and risks to families, courts, providers and other key stakeholders and will partner with families to identify services and resources that mitigate safety concerns.</p>	<p>Removal/Return Family Time/Visitation</p>	<p>Implementation</p>
	<p>Choose an item.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
	<p>Choose an item.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

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

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

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.

The CIP/Agency Joint Project and Hearing Quality Project are described on pages 180-181.

Other judicial strategies:

- Court providing accountability for completion of home studies to improve timely permanency (pages 168-169).
- Collaborative efforts through IDCC to address permanency timelines (pages 170-171).

Other attorney strategies:

- Attorney General's Office participation to improve timeliness of termination of parental rights (pages 173-174).
- Parents for Parents strategies to better engage parents (pages 174-175).

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 CIP has not participated to date in this review.

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

CIP was involved in the development of the PIP and collaboration on strategies. CIP is involved in workgroups and implementation of court-related PIP strategies, which includes utilization of our Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Programs.

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?

The Innovative Dependency Court Collaborative (IDCC), co-chaired by the CIP Director and Child Welfare Director, has a very diverse multi-disciplinary membership, to encourage, generate and support innovation with dependency court stakeholders and communities to empower and achieve justice for families.

Also, the CIP Director is more involved in the Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care, which is co-chaired by a Supreme Court Justice and the Child Welfare Director. The Commission has been more involved in joint planning, especially addressing issues that have arisen due to COVID, and also will provide oversight of the IDCC and the State Team efforts. The COVID Rapid Response workgroup formed to address issues and share COVID-related information impacting the child welfare and court systems. The work group continues to meet monthly, convened by CIP and DCYF leadership, to address pandemic recovery issues and promote the dissemination of accurate information across disciplines in the child welfare system. The group has worked collaboratively to develop processes and share information on topics such as: family time, delaying unnecessary termination of parental rights trials and the mental health needs of children and youth. The efforts of the Supreme Court Justice, CIP Director, and workgroup recently received the [Innovating Justice Award](#) by the Washington State Board of Judicial Administration. The award recognizes leadership during the COVID crisis that promotes judicial branch innovation as well as responsiveness to racial equity and access to justice issues.

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

While we have improved in our efforts to communicate between the agency and court partners, we still we lack effective mechanisms for communicating across disciplines in a way that informs practice and provides consistent and accurate information. This has become especially apparent during the pandemic, when rapid changes to policies and practice have occurred and need to be conveyed to all participants in the system. The IDCC has been working on this and is continuing to address the effective dissemination of information. CITA redesigned its website to include the [Good Ideas Library](#) and a [COVID-19 information hub](#). The strategies listed above should improve communication, which will also improve planning and implementation of improvement efforts.

Another barrier is limited CIP staff resources necessary for follow up and lack of ability to reach and work with all local jurisdictions on improving their dependency system. We get stretched too thin and have difficulty with follow up. The extra CIP COVID funding will assist with assessing needs of our local courts and providing resources. Our hope is that the request for increased CIP funding currently before Congress will be approved so that we can have additional resources necessary to provide more support at the local level, which should improve practice.

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?

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

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

Yes and No. Child Advocate (voluntary guardian ad litem) training is included in the Title IV-E Training Plan and DCYF has a contract with Washington Association of Child Advocates to reimburse training expenses. Several judicial officers attend the annual child advocate training conference. We are exploring options to expand beyond child advocate training and incorporate more holistic, multidisciplinary trainings into the Title IV-E Training Plan that include judicial officers, attorneys and court personnel to support initiatives addressed in the PIP and CFSP. Again, if we had additional personnel, we would have the capacity to do this type of planning.

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.

Yes. In January 2019, the CIP Director facilitated a meeting with the DCYF Budget Director, Office of Public Defense Director (parent representation program), and Office of Civil Legal Aid (child representation program), and the Co-Chair of the CIP Steering Committee, to talk about funding for legal representation for parents and children. The DCYF Budget Director brought the issue to DCYF leadership for their approval to move forward. OPD and OCLA have each negotiated a memorandum of understanding with DCYF and the IV-E reimbursements are occurring. Recently expenses for OPD social workers were added to the MOU. The next step is to begin discussions regarding reimbursement of expenses for parent allies, as part of the parent defense team, and look at how to incorporate preventative representation for candidates of child welfare, which is part of our State Team Plan.

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. As we work more closely with the agency and are tied more directly with their CQI staff, we are integrating CQI into more of the work that we do—more stakeholder work on issues, including root cause analysis, theory of change, and evaluation. Also, the CIP constituency groups and assistance from CBCC has provided assistance, resulting in improved CQI practice.

2. Which of the following CBCC Events/Services have you/your staff engaged in this past year?
- Judicial Academy
 - CQI Consult (*Topic: Hearing Quality*)

- 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?* 100%

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 (CBCC)
- a University partnership
- a statewide court case management system
- Contracts with external individuals or organizations to assist with CQI efforts
- Other resources: Almost statewide court case management system

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:

Odyssey, statewide with the exception of King and Pierce Counties

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

___ The use of Tableau software for our dependency data dashboard. The use of Zoom for meetings and trainings. _____

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.

At the beginning of the pandemic, in order to provide for statewide consistency of practice in dependency and termination cases, a workgroup of the Commission on Children in Foster Care drafted emergency orders regarding dependency and termination cases. These orders covered procedures for shelter care hearings and other emergency matters, appointment of counsel for children, visitation motions, and overall due process requirements, among other matters. In May-June 2020 a stakeholder group created comprehensive guidelines for implementing the orders and reestablishing court proceedings, entitled [Resuming Dependency Fact Finding and Termination of Parental Rights Trials in Washington State](#).

Starting in March 2020, the multidisciplinary COVID Rapid Response Work Group was created and met weekly to address issues and share COVID-related information impacting the child welfare and court systems. The work group continues to meet monthly, convened by CIP and DCYF leadership, to address pandemic recovery issues and promote the dissemination of accurate information across disciplines in the child welfare system. The group has worked collaboratively to develop processes and share information on topics such as: family time, delaying unnecessary termination of parental rights trials and the mental health needs of children and youth.

CIP conducted a survey in May 2020 to assess pandemic-related needs of dependency courts throughout the state to determine how best to provide support, technology and supplies. Mini-grants for \$1,000 for each county were provided to reimburse counties for such things as plexi-glass, TV monitors, cameras, personal protective equipment, sanitizer, etc.

The Board for Judicial Administration formed a Court Recovery Task Force in June 2020 to assess court impacts from COVID-19; develop and implement strategies to ensure that every court can provide fair, timely, and accessible justice; and provide recommendations for ongoing court operations and recovery after the public health emergency subsides. The multidisciplinary Child Welfare Committee is one of nine committees that reports to the Task Force, and CIP provides staff support. The Child Welfare Committee created sample documents to support local court practice, which have been distributed statewide. These include:

- Pre-Trial Order for Remote/Virtual Dependency Fact Finding or Termination of Parental Rights;
- discovery agreement
- witness list for virtual hearings.

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?

Phase V – evaluation (getting better, but appreciate assistance)

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.)

We can always use more information and practice on how to incorporate project evaluation into the planning process and best practices for evaluating different types of projects. Data collection is challenging due to staffing issues and limited access to child welfare and well-being outcome measures.

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