Washington State Court Improvement Program 2017 Annual Self-Assessment Report

This self-assessment is intended as an opportunity for Court Improvement Programs (CIPs) to review progress on required CIP projects, joint program planning and improvement efforts with the child welfare agency, and ability to integrate CQI successfully into practice. Questions are designed to solicit candid responses that help CIPs apply CQI and identify support that may be helpful.

I. **CQI Analyses of Required CIP Projects** (Joint Project with Agency and Hearing Quality Project)

Joint Project with the Child Welfare Agency:

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

Permanency Summits. Using the criteria of counties with longest length of stay of children in out of home care that lack system improvement resources, such as state Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Program (FJCIP) grants and Court Improvement Training Academy (CITA) Tables of Ten stakeholder groups, the Permanency CQI Workgroup determines which counties to focus on. Judicial officers and Children's Administration local management provided leadership and the workgroup co-chairs facilitate discussions with the local stakeholder group to share information and plan for a permanency summit. The summit day includes a data presentation, roles and responsibilities presentation, presentations on identified barriers to permanency, all of which include parent, child and caregiver voices. The day also includes a team building activity, identifying priorities, and individual and group action planning. The goal is to provide two to three summits per year, depending on available resources.

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

Decrease time to permanency.

Approximate date that the project began:

March 2016

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

Phase V: Evaluate and Apply Findings

How was the need for this project identified?

In May of 2015, the Permanency CQI Workgroup was formed with the Children's Administration and CIP Director co-chairing the effort. The workgroup consists of representatives of the judiciary, tribes, parent attorneys, child attorneys, agency attorneys, CASAs, Casey Family Program, the Court Improvement Training Academy (CITA) and several high-level staff from Children's Administration. The goal of the group is to increase the number of children achieving timely reunification/permanency. The workgroup meets monthly to review data provided by Children's Administration (CA) and the courts. The focus of the review is on length of stay for children in out of home care. To focus improvement efforts, information was gathered regarding child welfare stakeholders in areas that had high length of stay as well as low length of stay, to identify commonalities and differences. Through this process, an increase in social worker turnover was observed and root causes were explored. The workgroup identified a need for child welfare system professionals to gather in a forum outside of the courtroom setting to develop an understanding of each other's roles in the child welfare process. The workgroup also wanted to provide an opportunity for local stakeholders to address system issues, share ideas for system improvement, and inspire and build champions for permanency.

What is the theory of change for the project?

If we bring together child welfare stakeholders in a community and show them their data, allow them to make meaning of the data, and provide resources to host a permanency summit addressing issues they find relevant, they will make an action plan and create champions for permanency at a local level, which will ultimately decrease lengths of stay for that jurisdiction.

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

Using the process described above, we plan on providing two to three permanency summits per year.

What has been done to implement the project?

Following the protocols listed above, permanency summits have been held in Clark/Cowlitz Counties in September 2016 and in Grant County in May 2017. We are in the planning stage for a summit to be held in Benton/Franklin Counties in September 2017. Support is also being provided for projects that the local groups identify.

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

A follow-up meeting with the local planning committee is held to discuss whether the permanency summit provided the desired outcome for the local stakeholders. A tracking mechanism has been developed for following up on each county's action plans. A survey will be developed for participants to complete at the end of the summit and a follow up survey to determine if there is an increase in engagement of parties and local collaboration, and if practice has changed. This part of the evaluation process is still being developed. Data will be collected comparing length of stay before and after the permanency summits. The Permanency CQI Workgroup will continue to monitor the progress of the counties that host the permanency summits.

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

Assistance with evaluation tools.

<u>Hearing Quality Project:</u>

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

Facilitate local cross-system stakeholder meetings and trainings to develop community-specific plans for implementing the revised parent-child visitation policy in order to improve the quality of court hearings regarding visitation.

Approximate date that the project began:

November 2016

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?

The Court Improvement Program sponsored a Region 10 (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington) Parent Representation Leadership Forum in November 2016. The forum was convened to improve parent representation and focused on visitation, the Indian Child Welfare Act, and serving parents in rural areas. Each state worked with their stakeholder teams to create an action plan. Washington State determined that, while an improved visitation policy was recently enacted, most dependency court partners are not aware of the new provisions, nor are they implementing the revised visitation policy. It was determined that education and focused work needs to happen at the local level to ensure implementation of the revised visitation policy. The education and local improvement plans should facilitate a more meaningful discussion of parent-child visitation before and during hearings. Judicial officers will be better prepared to ask the right questions during hearings, understanding the requirements of the revised policy, and litigants will be better prepared to answer. By putting these elements in place, it is more likely that a quality court hearing or review will occur, protecting the rights and safety of children and parents to spend quality time together. Higher quality legal representation should result from working with Children's Administration and the court to improve visitation planning and implementation.

What is the theory of change for the project?

If local cross-system stakeholder meetings and trainings are held to identify local barriers to effective visitation and develop community-specific plans for implementing the revised parent-child visitation policy, it will improve the quality of court hearings and reviews regarding visitation, which is a key contributor to faster, lasting reunification.

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

The identified solution is to provide training on the revised visitation policy at a local level and facilitate stakeholder meetings to create a shared visitation improvement plan tailored to their community needs and resources.

What has been done to implement the project?

A planning group consisting of key staff from Children's Administration, Office of Public Defense, Attorney General's Office, Court Improvement Training Academy and the Court Improvement Program have met a few times to plan the implementation of this project. Initially this project will be piloted in a rural and an urban county. The stakeholder meetings will include an education component on the revised statewide visitation policy, and each group will work collaboratively to create a shared improvement plan tailored to their community. The planning group is in the process of developing a curriculum for the education component, as well as a plan for facilitating the collaborative portion of the day.

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

Data will be measured before and after communities participate in cross-system training and implement their local plans. The data will help determine if local visitation practice has improved, and if it meets the intent of the revised policy, including the requirement that visits are to be unsupervised unless present danger, risk or safety concerns exist. This data will be reported to the local stakeholder groups, statewide stakeholder leaders, CIP Steering Committee, Permanency CQI Workgroup, the Commission on Children in Foster Care, and the legislature.

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

Assistance with evaluation tools, including any resources or best practices for structuring questions or conducting pre and post-surveys.

II. **Trainings, Projects, and Activities** For questions 1-9, provide a *concise* description of work completed or underway to date in FY 2017 (October 2016-June 2017) in the below topical subcategories.

For question 1, focus on significant training events or initiatives held or developed in FY 2017 and answer the corresponding questions.

1. Trainings

Topical Area	Did you hold or develop a training on this topic?	Who was the target audience?	What were the intended training outcomes?	How did you evaluate this training?
Data	☒Yes ☐No	Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Program Judges, Supervisors and Coordinators	Improved use of the interactive dependency timeliness report for tracking purposes.	Individual feedback from participants and improved use of data in reports.
Hearing quality	☒Yes ☐No	(see CANI below)		
Improving timeliness/ permanency	☒Yes ☐No	Grant County multi-disciplinary	Develop permanency champions to improve timeliness.	Stakeholder planning group debrief after permanency summit.
Quality legal representation	☒Yes ☐No	Parent Attorneys	Improve parent representation especially around visitation.	Region 10 planning committee debrief and quarterly follow up on action plans.
Engagement & participation of parties	☒Yes ☐No	Judicial officers, Assistant Attorneys General, Children's Administration, Court Clerks	Educate stakeholders regarding changes to dependency hearing forms to document caregiver notice of hearings and caregiver reports received by the court.	Tracking court data to see if documentation has improved.
Well-being	☒Yes ☐No	(see CANI and CJC below)		
ICWA	☒Yes ☐No	Multi-disciplinary	Learn about the new ICWA regulations and build relationships between state and tribes.	Written evaluations of each session of the two-day summit.
Sex Trafficking	☒Yes ☐No	(see CANI & CJC below)		

Topical Area	Did you hold or develop a training on this topic?	Who was the target audience?	What were the intended training outcomes?	How did you evaluate this training?
Other: Washington Specific NCJFCJ Child Abuse and Neglect Training (CANI)	☒Yes ☐No	Judicial Officers	Basic Dependency training on all areas listed above, plus judicial leadership.	NCJFCJ conducted evaluations of each session of the three-day event. Two months later the CIP Director sent an email to participants requesting information on how dependency practice had changed for them after the training.
Children's Justice Conference (CJC)	☒Yes ☐No	Multi-disciplinary	Broad range of dependency topics, including legal track.	Written evaluations of each session of the three-day conference.

On average, with ordinary funding levels, how many training events do you hold per year?
Four

What is your best prediction for the number of attorneys and judges that attend a training annually? 50 judges. We don't track attorney attendance, however, since the November training was specific to parent attorneys and was CIP funded, we know that 120 attorneys attended.

2. **Data Projects**. Data projects include any work with administrative data sets (e.g, AFCARS, SACWIS), data dashboards, data reports, fostering court improvement data, case management systems, and data sharing efforts.
   Do you have a data project/activity?   ☒ Yes   ☐ No (skip to #3)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
WA Dependency Data Share Efforts - Child data is extracted from the WA Children's Administration's FAMLINK data system. This data is then used to match back to WA Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) SCOMIS case file data.	Agency Data Sharing Efforts	Evaluation/Assessment

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
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 2016 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.	Data dashboards	Evaluation/Assessment

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

(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 stakeholders.

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 (skip to #4)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Facilitate local cross-system stakeholder meetings and trainings to develop community-specific plans for implementing the revised parent-child visitation policy in order to improve the quality of court hearings regarding visitation.	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 permanency goals other than APPLA, or focus on APPLA and older youth.

   Do you have a Timeliness or permanency project/activity?   ☒ Yes   ☐ No (skip to #5)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Local Permanency Summits designed to increase collaboration, identify barriers to permanency, and create action plans.	General/ASFA	Evaluation/Assessment
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

5. **Quality of Legal Representation.** Quality of legal representation projects may include any activities/efforts related to improvement of representation for parents, youth, or the agency. This might include assessments or analyzing current practice, implementing new practice models, working with law school clinics, or other activities in this area.

   Do you have a quality legal representation project/activity?   ☒ Yes   ☐ No (skip to #6)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Region 10 Parent Representation Leadership Forum	Other	Evaluation/Assessment
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

6. **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)
Implemented change in dependency hearing forms to record whether adequate notice was provided for caregivers and if a caregiver report was provided to the court.	Caregiver Engagement	Implementation
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

7. **Well-Being.** Well-being projects include any efforts related to improving the well-being of youth. Projects could focus on education, early childhood development, psychotropic medication, LGBTQ youth, trauma, racial disproportionality/disparity, immigration, or other well-being related topics.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on well-being? ☒ Yes ☐ No (skip to #8)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Annual Foster Youth and Alumni Leadership Summit – Proposals addressing all topics listed above presented by the youth to the Commission on Children in Foster Care, legislators and other stakeholders.	Other	Evaluation/Assessment
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

8. **ICWA.** ICWA projects could include any efforts to enhance state and tribal collaboration, state and tribal court agreements, data collection and analysis of ICWA compliance, or ICWA notice projects.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on ICWA? ☐ Yes ☒ No (skip to #9)

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.

9. **Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (PSTFSA).** PSTFSA projects could include any work around domestic child sex trafficking, the reasonable and prudent parent standard, a focus on runaway youth, focus on normalcy, collaboration with other agencies around this topic, data collection and analysis, data sharing, or other efforts to fully implement the act into practice.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on PSTSFA? ☒ Yes   ☐ No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Update court forms to address requirements outlined in the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act and provide instruction to judicial officers and court partners.	Other	Selecting Solution
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

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

Please describe how the CIP has been involved with the state's CFSP due June 30, 2017.

Children's Administration informed the CIP that Washington State's CFSP isn't due this year, and they plan to involve the CIP next year when the plan is due.

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 eligibility waiver for Washington State is scheduled for review in 2019. The department will involve the CIP prior to the review date.

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

Washington State is just now entering the third round of the CFSR and PIP. CIP has been informed of progress through the Permanency CQI Workgroup meetings. CIP also assisted with making connections with judicial officers and staff regarding the service array portion. CIP will be involved with PIP planning in 2019.

Are there any strategies or processes in place in your state that you feel are particularly effective in supporting joint child welfare program planning and improvement?

Yes. The Permanency CQI Workgroup, the permanency summits, and the parent-child visitation policy implementation project.

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?

Not at this time. However, we may work together in the future to develop a plan that includes professional partner training as part of the IV-E training plan.

Which category or categories of activity best describe current CIP data efforts with the child welfare agency?
☐ Contributing data ☐Receiving data ☒Jointly using data
☒ Collaborative meetings ☒ Collaborative systems change project(s)
☐ Other:_____

IV. CQI Current Capacity Assessment

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

Yes. The CQI/Change Management Phase tool has been very helpful in understanding and structuring the CQI process. And recently, the assistance at the CIP meeting from the Capacity Building Center for Courts staff. Because quality CQI takes time, it is helpful that we have two main projects to focus our efforts on, rather than several projects.

2. Which of the following CBCC Events/Services have you/your staff engaged in in the 2017 Fiscal Year?
☒ Annual CIP Meeting   ☐ CQI Consult (*Topic*:_____)
☒ Constituency Group – ICWA   ☒ Constituency Group – Anti-Trafficking
☐ Constituency Group – New Directors   ☒ Constituency Group – APPLA/Older Youth
☒ 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 CQI (e.g., data, evaluation) expertise   ☐Consultants with CQI expertise
☒a University partnership   ☐Contracts with external agencies to assist with CQI efforts
☐Other resources:_____

3. Describe the largest challenges your CIP faces with implementing CQI into your work.

The largest challenge in implementing CQI is time. It takes time to focus on reviewing data to identify needs, working as a team to develop a theory of change, researching possible solutions, developing strategies for implementation and evaluation. We have learned that we need to figure out the evaluation process during the planning process, not during or after implementation—that has been a challenge for us.

4. 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 project evaluation into the planning process and best practices for evaluating different types of projects.

APPENDIX A: 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 Work Stages

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.