

WASHINGTON STATE COURT IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN FFY 2022-2027

2023 Revision

State Name: Washington State

Date Strategic Plan Submitted: June 30, 2023

Timeframe Covered by Strategic Plan: July 2023 – June 2024

Overall Goal/Mission of CIP: Mission: Transforming the child welfare court system to promote thriving families and equitable court communities. To achieve our mission, we collaborate with system partners to keep children and families safely together and supported in their communities and to radically reduce inequities within the child welfare court system. We work upstream to help families avoid entry into the system by addressing the impacts of poverty and trauma. For families who require the oversight of the court, we strive to ensure they receive effective, culturally-relevant services in a system that is equitable, accountable and hope-centered.

Priority Area #1: Safety

Copy and paste the portion below the blue line for your activities/projects.

Outcome #1: As a result of cross-system training and strategic planning process ([Safety Summit Project](#)) courts and system partners will use congruent language to clearly and consistently articulate safety-related information, including the harms of removal, in ways that support family and system well-being. Court systems will understand the importance of ensuring that parents understand safety threats, conditions for return, and what they need to do to provide safety for their child(ren). Increased fidelity to safety framework practices is anticipated to occur system wide, including in the following areas:

- Assessment of safety in the home (safety threats, child vulnerability, and protective capacity)
- Assessment of the harm of removal
- Balancing of child safety and harm of removal
- Safety planning that creates immediate safety in the home to prevent removal
- Conditions for return home
- Family time visitation plans
- Case planning
- Developing parental capacity; evaluating progress and compliance

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: *How do you know this is a need in your state?* [2021 Hearing Quality Evaluation](#): In 2021 the Capacity Building Center for Courts (CBCC) conducted a baseline evaluation of safety decision making practices of seven courts in Washington State. The following themes emerged:

- Vulnerabilities, protective capacities, and conditions for return are rarely discussed at hearings;
- Safety analysis and discussions of safety planning rarely occur in court;
- Safety-related justifications for supervised family time were rarely articulated;
- The need for child welfare and court professionals to better understand and be able to articulate how case plan progress relates to safety.

Recommendations for improvement from the researcher and author of the evaluation, Dr. Alicia Summers, included:

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1. Enhance understanding of all stakeholders through multidisciplinary trainings;
2. Engage parents to better understand concepts and language regarding safety considerations;
3. Enhance training of professionals around safety planning, conditions for return home, and case planning;
4. Enhance training to ensure knowledge translates to behavior change, where practice aligns with understanding of safety training concepts.

[2022 Hearing Quality Evaluation](#): Four sites that held Safety Summits in 2021 were evaluated 3-5 months post-training to compare practice to the baseline hearing quality assessment. Results of the evaluation showed statistically significant findings across a number of different measures:

- Increase in discussion all safety assessment factors at Shelter Care Hearings;
- Increase in discussion of safety planning at Shelter Care Hearings;
- Increase in information presented to the court and discussion in court regarding why supervision is needed in relation to a safety threat;
- Increase in number of judicial inquiries into agency efforts to prevent removal, vulnerabilities of the child, and visitation (generally) in Shelter Care hearings;
- Increase in verbal reasonable efforts findings by judicial officers in Shelter Care hearings;
- More documents submitted prior to the Shelter Care hearing that contained a safety analysis, with more documents including a reference to protective capacity, vulnerabilities, and conditions for return;
- More documents submitted prior to Shelter Care Hearings contained contextual safety information about the parent’s overall parenting practices and how the parent manages his/her own life.

The hearing quality evaluation also notes areas or practice where expected change was not seen, indicating where enhanced efforts are needed in future learning opportunities, including:

- Continues to be very little discussion of why the child cannot go home today and little inquiry into conditions for return;
- Judicial officers rarely inquired about safety planning in the Shelter Care hearings;
- Judicial officers rarely made any active inquiry related to contextual factors (e.g., nature and extent of maltreatment; circumstances related to maltreatment; child’s functioning).

The findings of the evaluation were closely reviewed and discussed by the Safety Summit State Advisory Committee. This multidisciplinary group utilized the findings to identify areas of positive practice change and opportunities for enhanced efforts. Specifically, findings will be used to inform revisions to the current Safety Summit training curriculum (Safety Summit 1.0) and creation of new supplemental cross-system trainings that support system practice around safety planning and conditions for return (Safety Summit 2.0).

[Keeping Families Together Act \(HB 1227\)](#): In 2021 the Washington State Legislature passed the Keeping Families Together Act (HB 1227) with the intention of making fundamental change to the front-end of the child dependency court system (i.e., the Shelter Care process) and is aimed at significant reform of how the child dependency system works with impacted families. This historic bill is set to go into effect on July 1, 2023 and was driven by a number of factors, including the continued overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous children in the child welfare system and an acknowledgement that, even in cases of abuse and neglect, forcibly removing a child from their home is inherently traumatic. HB 1227 raises the legal standard for child removal to “imminent physical harm” and requires that the evidence of that harm demonstrate a causal relationship between the threat to child safety and the particular conditions of the home. Historically, courts have made child removal decisions based solely on the need to control the threat to child safety and there has been no required consideration of the many harms that children often experience as a result of being forcibly removed from their primary caregiver(s). HB 1227 will statutorily require judicial officers to weigh the likely harm of removal against the imminent physical harm posed to the child in the home when determining if there is a sufficient basis for child removal at the Shelter Care Hearing. “Imminent physical harm” standard will also be the new legal standard to remove a child placed with a relative/suitable other and place that child into licensed foster care. HB 1227 includes the mandatory consideration of whether there are any prevention services, including housing assistance and other reasonably available services, that the family could participate in that would prevent or eliminate the need for removal. If there are such services, and the parent agrees to participate, the new law specifies that the court shall return the child home. Finally, HB 1227 also creates a presumption that out-of-home placement should be with a relative or suitable other person and expands judicial consideration into proposed licensed foster care placements.

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Since HB 1227 significantly changes the standards and inquiries that govern safety-related decisions, the Safety Summit Project is anticipated to be an important mechanism for continuing to deliver cross-systems safety training to local court communities across the state. The expanded judicial inquiries in child removal decisions will highlight the importance of all players in court systems having a shared understanding and language around child safety, along with the ability to articulate safety threats in relation to the specific conditions of the home. The additional consideration of whether prevention services could prevent or eliminate the need for removal has created the need for more advanced training and skill development opportunities for court communities about how to effectively create safety plans and make quality reasonable/active efforts arguments. How systems can collaborate to utilize professional services, natural supports, and community resources to create robust safety plans that keep children safely in the home while the family remains under court jurisdiction is a priority area of training this fiscal year.

Theory of Change:

Create robust safety framework training for court communities:

- SO THAT a shared understanding and language of safety is created across the system;
- SO THAT sufficient information is collected and shared;
- SO THAT threats of danger are identified, child vulnerabilities and protective capacities are accurately assessed throughout the life of the case;
- AND THAT the likely harms of removal to the child are identified;
- SO THAT child safety and harm of removal are embedded into all facets of system practice;
- SO THAT everyone involved in a case, including parents, can understand and articulate information about child safety and harm of removal;
- SO THAT effective safety plans are created that prevent or eliminate the need for removal;
- SO THAT a child can safely return or remain home while the case continues;
- 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 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.

Reminder: please note if priority area will be supported by Division X supplement with a ‘COVID’ tag.

Activity or Project Description <i>Specific actions or project that will be completed to produce specific outputs and demonstrate progress toward the outcome.</i>	Collaborative Partners <i>Responsible parties and partners involved in implementation of the activity.</i>	Anticipated Outputs of Activity <i>What the CIP intends to produce, provide or accomplish through the activity.</i>	Goals of Activity (short and/or Long-term) <i>Where relevant and practical, provide specific, projected change in data the CIP intends to achieve. Goals should be measurable.</i> Progress toward Outcome	Timeframe <i>Proposed completion date or, if appropriate, “ongoing”.</i>	Resources Needed <i>Where relevant identify the resources needed to complete the activity.</i>	Plans for Evaluating Activity <i>Where relevant, how will you measure or monitor change?</i>
Briefly describe the overall activity or project that should help lead to the outcome identified above.						

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<p><i>Action Step 1 – Secure Title IV-E pass-through funding to increase CIP training capacity.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) • CBCC • Region 10 Children’s Bureau Staff 	<p>Executed agreement for CIP to receiving Title IV-E funding that will enable the CIP to hire two additional training positions, with anticipated reimbursement rate of 75% for all training staff.</p>	<p>Enhanced capacity of CIP to effectively respond to the training needs of court and system partners.</p> <p>Increased capacity for CIP to participate in Round 4 of the CFSR and subsequent PIP creation.</p> <p>More court communities can participate in the Safety Summit Project (1.0 and 2.0) annually.</p> <p>Increase in virtual learning content (e.g., e-courses; micro-learning; web-applications).</p> <p>Increased ability of CIP to facilitate existing cross-system efforts to develop guidance for courts on assessing and mitigating harm of removal.</p>	<p>December 2023</p>	<p>Assistance from Region 10 CBCC and Children’s Bureau Staff in working with DCYF.</p>	<p>Track number of training events and attendees held annually.</p> <p>Monitor utilization of virtual content using website analytics.</p>
<p><i>Action Step 2 – Update the Safety Summit 1.0 Training Package</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Summit State Advisory Team • DCYF Headquarters • Casey Family Programs 	<p>Safety Summit 1.0 Training Package.</p> <p>Strategic plan for delivery of Safety Summit 1.0 Training.</p>	<p>Revise the Safety Summit 1.0 training to incorporate HB 1227 changes and 2022 Hearing Quality Evaluation recommendations.</p> <p>Increase capacity of state experts to deliver Safety Summit 1.0 training.</p>	<p>July 2023 - December 2023</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><i>Action Step 3 – Create Safety Summit 2.0 Training Package</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Summit State Advisory Team • DCYF Headquarters 	<p>Safety Summit 2.0 Training Package.</p> <p>Strategic plan for delivery of Safety Summit 2.0 Training.</p>	<p>Create a supplemental “next level” Safety Summit training curriculum focus on skill development in safety planning and establishing conditions for return.</p>	<p>September 2023 - June 2024</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

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<p><i>Action Step 4 – Work with local court systems to hold Safety Summit 1.0 training in 2-3 jurisdictions.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Summit State Advisory Team • DCYF Headquarters • DCYF Region Staff • DCYF Local Staff • Local Court Staff • Local Site Planning Team 	<p>Facilitation of a cross-system training on the basic use of the safety framework in practice and action planning group activities.</p> <p>Strategic Plan produced for every participating jurisdiction.</p>	<p>Improve understanding of key safety principles across the system, including the harm of removal.</p> <p>System partners utilize Strategic Plan to collaboratively change safety practice and improve permanency outcomes.</p>	<p>January 2024 - June 2024</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Hearing Quality Evaluation (HB 1227 Hearing Observation Tool; see Priority Area 2).</p> <p>Satisfaction Survey.</p>
<p><i>Action Step 5 – Work with local court systems to hold Safety Summit 2.0 training in 1-2 jurisdictions</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Summit State Advisory Team • DCYF Headquarters • DCYF Region Staff • DCYF Local Staff • Local Court Staff • Local Site Planning Team 	<p>Facilitation a practical cross-system learning opportunity designed to enhance the skills, abilities, and understanding of system partners in articulating and applying the safety framework to safety planning and conditions for return; particularly for situations with high-risk indicators such as fentanyl usage and domestic violence.</p>	<p>Increased utilization of safety plans during Shelter Care process.</p> <p>Increase in number of children who return/remain home at the Shelter Care Hearing.</p> <p>Increased discussion and inquiry on safety planning at the Shelter Care Hearing.</p> <p>Increased discussion of conditions for return at the Shelter Care Hearing when removal is ordered.</p>	<p>June 2024</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Hearing Quality Evaluation (HB 1227 Hearing Observation Tool; see Priority Area 2).</p> <p>Satisfaction Survey & Program Evaluation.</p>

Priority Area #2: Quality Court Hearings

Outcome #2: Creation of a *Hearing Quality Observation Tool* that accurately captures relevant data points and provides valuable insights into the implementation of new practices during the Shelter Care Hearing. Researchers will use this tool to collect and analyze performance measure data that can be used to evaluate the impacts of the Keeping Families Together Act (HB 1227) on the quality of the Shelter Care Hearing process. Local court systems will have the knowledge and capacity to utilize the *Hearing Quality Observation Tool* in the continuous evaluation and quality improvement of their Shelter Care Hearing process.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: *How do you know this is a need in your state?* [Keeping Families Together Act \(HB 1227\)](#): In 2021 the Washington State Legislature passed the Keeping Families Together Act (HB 1227), which makes fundamental changes to the front-end of the child dependency court system (i.e., the Shelter Care process). A primary objective in passing this law was reducing unnecessary removals of children by keeping families safely together whenever possible. HB 1227 seeks to accomplish this primarily through expanded authority of the court in decision-making. It significantly expands judicial inquiry into whether there is a sufficient basis for ordering a child to be removed from

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the home (“child removal decisions”) and creates multiple required findings. Judicial officers will also need to ask additional questions in order to determine whether prevention services could be put in place that would prevent or eliminate the need for removal. HB 1227 expands judicial authority in placement decisions when removal is ordered, with the overarching intention of ensuring that placement into licensed foster care is being used as the option of last resort to preserve child safety. The new law requires judicial officers to inquire about the location of the proposed placement and creates a clear presumption that placement should be with relative or suitable other. It gives judicial officers the authority to order the Department to provide financial/tangible assistance to relative and suitable other caregivers if that assistance would allow the child to be placed there or remain placed there. When placement with a relative or suitable other is not possible, HB 1227 creates new inquiries to help judicial officers determine the foster care placement option that keeps children safely connected with the people, places, and things most important to them, while working towards the ultimate goal of family reunification. HB 1227 also contains a number of new provisions that directly impact administrative court processes and procedures, including that all discoverable materials be provided prior to the Shelter Care Hearing and the requirement to hold an additional Shelter Care Hearing any time a child is removed during the life of a case. The many statutory changes made by HB 1227 were intended to create a more equitable Shelter Care process that results in better outcomes for all families, with anticipated outcomes including:

- Decrease in overall number of child removals;
- Reduction of racial/ethnic disparities;
- Decrease in number of Dependency Petitions filed;
- Increase in number of children who return/remain home at the Shelter Care Hearing;
- Increase in utilization of prevention services (safety plans) during the Shelter Care process;
- Less time spent in out-of-home care for children who are removed;
- Increase in percentage of kinship placements (relatives and suitable others) at the Shelter Care Hearing.

As a part of the work of the Family Well-Being Community Collaborative (FWCC), CIP staff have partnered with court and cross-system partners to analyze the impacts of HB 1227 on the legal standards, inquiries, findings, and process that apply during the Shelter Care process. The ultimate goal of these efforts was to create practical tools that courts can use to effectively implement the changes of HB 1227. These tools include the following:

- [iDecide](#): The iDecide tool is a web-based application that was originally designed to support judicial officers in understanding and applying HB 1227. The statutory analyses completed by the FWCC workgroups were used to create four interactive decision-making branches that guide users through the statutory inquiries and findings related to child removal, placement, and family time visitation. The decision-making branches strictly adhere to the law and list statutory remedies when present. Relevant statutory citations, legal guidance, and supplemental resources are included throughout the tool to promote quality decision-making. The iDecide tool also contains a Resource Library and Training Library where users can access resources, materials, tools, and recorded trainings that support HB 1227 implementation. The cross-system FWCC workgroups worked diligently over a two-year period to develop iDecide, and this investment has helped expand the use of iDecide by all parties involved in child dependency cases to better understand and fully participate in the Shelter Care process.
- [Court Readiness Toolkit](#): The HB 1227 Court Readiness Toolkit provides a systematic way for local court jurisdictions to assess their current shelter care process, identify changes needed to comply with the new law and implement them. The *Assessment* section of this planning tool is designed for use by cross-system teams to assess their system’s current capacity to implement the major components of HB 1227 and identify areas in need of improvement. Court systems can then use the *Roadmap* to map their local Shelter Care process with tools, resources, and suggestions for how courts can capitalize on existing opportunities to improve process in each respective area.

Strengthening Family Time (HB 1194): In 2021 the Washington State Legislature passed the Strengthening Family Time law (HB 1194), which mandates that a family’s first visit must occur within 72 hours of a child’s placement in DCYF’s custody, unless the court finds that extraordinary circumstances require delay. Visitation throughout the case must be unsupervised “unless the presence of threats of danger to the child requires the constant presence of an adult to ensure the safety of the child.” At each hearing (and a continued shelter care hearing prior to finding of dependency), the presumption requires that visitation reverts to unsupervised, unless a party provides a report to the court including evidence that removing the supervision or monitoring would create a risk to the child’s safety.

Theory of Change:

Create a HB 1227 hearing observation tool for evaluating quality of Shelter Care Hearing practices in local courts:

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SO THAT relevant data points can be collected;

SO THAT any significant changes, patterns, and trends can be assessed;

SO THAT the quality of practice at Shelter Care Hearing can be analyzed;

SO THAT the quality of Shelter Care Hearing practice prior to HB 1227 can be compared to the quality of Shelter Care Hearing practices after HB 1227 goes into effect;

SO THAT any impacts of HB 1227 in improving the quality of practice at Shelter Care Hearings can be determined;

AND THAT the effectiveness of tools and resources created by CIP to support HB 1227 implementation can be assessed;

SO THAT effective tools, resources, and future learning opportunities can be developed to support quality Shelter Care Hearing practice;

AND THAT court communities can accurately assess their policies and practices;

SO THAT court communities have the skills, knowledge and capacity to hold quality Shelter Care Hearings;

SO THAT children are not unnecessarily removed from their homes;

AND THAT when children are removed from the home they do not remain out of the home longer than necessary.

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Briefly describe the overall activity or project that should help lead to the outcome identified above.						
<i>Action Step 1 – Identify what we would like to know about the quality of hearings</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Washington Family & Juvenile Court Improvement Program (FJCIP) Washington State Center for Court Research (WSCCR) 	Prioritized list of research questions/measures.	N/A	March 2023	N/A	N/A

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-system Data & Evaluation Workgroup 					
<i>Action Step 2 – Identify what data already exists to evaluate Shelter Care Hearing practices and what additional data is needed</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Washington • FJCIP • Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) 	N/A	N/A	March 2023	N/A	N/A
<i>Action Step 3 – Develop and test a Hearing Quality Observation Tool</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Washington • FJCIP • Dr. Alicia Summers 	<p>HB 1227 Hearing Quality Observation Tool.</p> <p>JCAMP Community of Practice Presentation.</p>	N/A	September 2023	N/A	N/A
<i>Action Step 4: Develop a plan for data collection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Washington • FJCIP • Local Court staff • DCYF 	<p>Methodology and mechanisms for collecting and storing data.</p> <p>Identified individuals involved in data collection and analyses.</p> <p>Identified sites to participate in the Pilot Project.</p>	N/A	December 2023	N/A	N/A
<i>Action Step 5: Pilot the Hearing Quality Evaluation Tool in three courts (Pierce, King, Thurston)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Washington • FJCIP • Local Court staff 	<p>Orientation for Pilot Project Sites.</p> <p>100 recordings from Shelter Care Hearings prior to HB 1227 and matching case file data.</p> <p>100 recordings from Shelter Care Hearings after HB 1227 and matching case file data.</p>	N/A	June 2024	University of Washington student researcher time and availability	Hearing Quality Evaluation.

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<p><i>Action Step 6: Analyze data and present findings for pilot site review</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Washington FJCIP WSCCR 	<p>Comparative evaluation of the quality of Shelter Care practices before and after implementation of HB 1227.</p> <p>Analysis of how local court practice aligns with the new statutory requirements of HB 1227.</p>	<p>Increased judicial engagement as evidenced by number of inquiries and topics discussed.</p> <p>Increase in attorney advocacy to prevent removal/return home.</p> <p>Increase in attorney advocacy to place with relatives and suitable other when removal is ordered.</p> <p>Increase in court hearing discussion around family visitation orders.</p> <p>Increase in court hearing discussion around reasonable and active efforts.</p> <p>Increase in information collected and shared prior to the Shelter Care Hearing.</p>	<p>December 2024</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Pre-post statistical comparison.</p>
<p><i>Action Step 7: Develop a strategic plan for sustainably expanding utilization of the Hearing Quality Observation tool statewide</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Washington FJCIP 	<p>HB 1227 Hearing Quality Evaluation Pilot Expansion Plan.</p>	<p>Court systems will have increased capacity and ability to actively engage in quality Shelter Care Hearing practices that align with the new statutory requirements of HB 1227.</p>	<p>Depends on availability of researchers</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Priority Area #3: Quality Legal Representation

Outcome #3: As a result of this project, CIP will be able to demonstrate the impacts of having both judicial officers and attorneys within local court systems receive training through a Reasonable & Active Efforts Academy in increasing capacity to engage in quality reasonable and active efforts inquiries and decision-making at the appropriate points in the case, including:

- Reason to Know Inquiry;

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- Indian child status;
- Efforts to prevent removal;
- Efforts to finalize permanent plan.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: *How do you know this is a need in your state?*

Reasonable & Active Efforts Academies: In the spring of 2022, CIP partnered with the CBCC to develop content and co-sponsor the [2022 Washington Judicial Academy on Reasonable and Active Efforts](#). A total of 24 judicial officers from 12 different Washington (WA) counties attended this two-day, highly interactive on-line academy. The training provided instruction in federal and Washington black letter law, the art of making reasonable efforts and active efforts findings, and conducting sufficient “reason to know” inquiries. Judicial officers learned new skills to prevent the unnecessary removal of children from their homes, and to make sure that those who are removed are returned to their parents or achieve permanence as quickly and safely as possible. As a part of the academy, CIP worked with cross-system state experts in relevant areas to develop WA-specific resource tools, including a comprehensive [WA Guide on Reasonable and Active Efforts](#), which was updated in March 2023 in preparation of the [2023 Attorney Academy on Reasonable & Active Efforts](#).

During the academy, judicial officers voiced a strong desire to have the attorneys who provide legal representation in child dependency cases trained on reasonable and active efforts practices in a similar way. There was general consensus that providing attorneys with an academy opportunity would result in enhance quality of legal representation that would support judicial officers’ ability to make quality reasonable and active efforts findings. In response to this request, WA CIP partnered with CBCC to bring the Attorney Academy on Reasonable and Active Efforts to Washington. These efforts are part of the broader mission of CIP to improve reasonable and active efforts practice in the WA dependency court system by increasing available learning opportunities and resources. The need for attorney training on the law of reasonable and active efforts and how to make effective arguments to the court was also prompted by a number of other driving forces, which include:

- [Keeping Families Together Act \(HB 1227\)](#): One of the primary objectives of HB 1227 is ensuring that children are not being subjected to the trauma of forcible removal unless it is absolutely necessary to ensure safety. HB 1227 makes significant changes to the considerations that judicial officers be required to make in determining whether there is a sufficient legal basis of child removal (see above). Even when a judicial officer finds that there is sufficient basis of removal HB 1227 creates a final line of inquiry that requires consideration of whether there are any preventions services, including housing assistance and other reasonable available services, that could be put in place that would allow the child to safely return/remain home. If such services are identified and the parent agrees to participate in them, the court is required to order that the child be returned to that parent. In order to determine if a service would be sufficient to prevent or eliminate the need for removal, judicial officers will need to understand what efforts the Department has already made to prevent the breakup of the family. Quality reasonable and active efforts findings will depend on judicial officers and attorneys having a working knowledge of what prevention services are available in their local communities and capacity to argue how these services could or couldn’t be structured to create immediate child safety given any particular family/home situation.
- [Appointment of Counsel for Youth in Dependency Proceedings \(HB 1219\)](#): In 2021, the Washington State Legislature passed the Appointment of Counsel for Youth in Dependency Proceedings (HB 1219) which requires that for children aged 8 and older, courts must appoint counsel for children in the dependency case when a dependency petition is filed or before commencement of the shelter care hearing. For all children, no matter their age, when a termination petition is filed, courts must appoint counsel to the child in their dependency and termination cases. Counsel for children in dependency proceedings are to be appointed on a phased-in county-by-county basis over a six-year period with full statewide implementation by January 1, 2027. The WA Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) is responsible for the development of the phase-in schedule, as well as the recruitment, training, oversight, and payment of attorneys.
- [In re Dependency of J.M.W. \(2022\)](#): Requires the State to prove it made active efforts to prevent the breakup of an Indian family before a child is brought into emergency foster care where the Department had prior contact with the family and reason to believe the child was at risk of physical damage or harm. Additionally, a trial court is required to make a finding on the record at a shelter care hearing that out-of-home placement is necessary to prevent imminent physical damage or harm at an interim shelter care hearing.
- [In re Dependency of L.C.S. \(2022\)](#): In this appeal of a shelter care order, the juvenile court had ordered the child placed in shelter care and found that reasonable efforts as to the father did not need to be made due to the emergent circumstances of the case. The Supreme Court held that there is no exception to the reasonable efforts requirement, instead concluding that reasonable efforts must be made to place with both parents. In deciding whether the Department has made reasonable efforts as to

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the parents, courts should consider the facts and circumstances of each parent; the standard is flexible and entails the Department balancing family stability and child safety, often in a short amount of time. The Supreme Court outlined specific guidelines the court should consider when determining whether the Department has, in fact, made reasonable efforts, including making reasonable efforts findings on the record and individualizing findings for each parent; determining whether services are culturally appropriate, geographically accessible, meeting identified safety threats, and are tailored for any parents with developmental disabilities; and considering the harm of removal. Juvenile courts must make clear on the record what actions were taken to support a finding that the Department has met the reasonable efforts standard.

- *In re Dependency of M.A.S.C. (2022)*: Where the Department has reason to believe that a parent may have an intellectual disability, it must make reasonable efforts to ascertain whether that parent does in fact have a disability and, if so, how the disability could interfere with the parent’s capacity to understand the Department’s offer of services. The court must place itself in the position of an objective observer and the Department must provide evidence of tailoring its offer of services in accordance with the current professional guidelines to ensure that the offer is reasonably understandable to the parent based on the totality of the circumstances. The Department must prove that it satisfied the termination elements; the parent is not required to prove the Department’s offers of services were not understandable.

Theory of Change:

Conduct a hearing quality evaluation:

- SO THAT the quality of court practice in the context of Reasonable Efforts/Active Efforts (RE/AE) findings before and after the judicial academy can be assessed;
- AND THAT participating attorneys in the identified counties are assessed on the quality of their RE/AE arguments, before and after the attorney academy;
- SO THAT the quality of RE/AE system practices at shelter care and permanency planning can be assessed;
- SO THAT the quality of RE/AE system practices prior to academy participation can be compared to the quality of RE/AE system practices after academy participation;
- SO THAT any significant changes in RE/AE system practice can be assessed;
- SO THAT the impacts of participation in the academy by both judicial officers and attorneys in improving the quality of RE/AE arguments and findings can be determined;
- SO THAT effective RE/AE training opportunities and resources can be further developed for judicial officers and attorneys;
- SO THAT judicial officers have the knowledge and skills necessary to make detailed and case specific RE/AE findings;
- AND THAT attorneys representing parties in dependency cases have the knowledge, understanding, and skills necessary to engage in reasonable and active efforts
- SO THAT judicial officers are able to make quality RE/AE findings at the appropriate points in a child welfare case;
- SO THAT the court through the mechanism of the RE/AE findings ensures that the Department follows its statutory duty to make reasonable efforts to avoid removal and achieve timely permanency;
- SO THAT children are not unnecessarily removed from their homes;
- AND THAT children achieve timely permanency when they are removed from their home.

Reminder: please note if priority area will be supported by Division X supplement with a ‘COVID’ tag.

Activity or Project Description	Collaborative Partners	Anticipated Outputs of Activity	Goals of Activity (short and/or Long-term)	Timeframe <i>Proposed completion</i>	Resources Needed <i>Where relevant identify the</i>	Plans for Evaluating Activity
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<i>Specific actions or project that will be completed to produce specific outputs and demonstrate progress toward the outcome.</i>	<i>Responsible parties and partners involved in implementation of the activity.</i>	<i>What the CIP intends to produce, provide or accomplish through the activity.</i>	<i>Where relevant and practical, provide specific, projected change in data the CIP intends to achieve. Goals should be measurable.</i> Progress toward Outcome	<i>date or, if appropriate, "ongoing".</i>	<i>resources needed to complete the activity.</i>	<i>Where relevant, how will you measure or monitor change?</i>
Briefly describe the overall activity or project that should help lead to the outcome identified above.						
<i>Action Step 1 – Identify counties where at least one judicial officer, Assistant Attorney General, parent attorney and youth attorney attended an academy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Alicia Summers • CBCC 	Generate a list of counties, and the individuals (judicial officers and attorneys) within those counties, that will be included in the hearing quality evaluation sample population.	N/A	July 30, 2023	N/A	N/A
<i>Action Step 2 – Facilitate the transfer of hearing observation data from participating courts/judicial officers to researcher</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local courts • Dr. Alicia Summers • Family & Juvenile Court Improvement Program (FJCIP) 	Recordings of hearings and access to case files needed for the evaluation are provided by the court to Dr. Summers.	N/A	December 30, 2023	Evaluation services of Dr. Summers	N/A
<i>Action Step 3 - Data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report generation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Alicia Summers • CBCC • FJCIP 	Evaluation of the pre- and post-academy quality of RE/AE court practices in counties where judicial officers and attorneys have attended one of the RE/AE academies.	N/A	Depends on availability of Dr. Summers	Evaluation services of Dr. Summers	N/A
<i>Action Step 4 – Review evaluation report results in order to identify areas of practice change and notable trends</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Alicia Summers • CBCC • FJCIP • Jurists-in-Residence • Office of Public Defense (OPD) 	Hearing Quality Evaluation Report. Supporting evidence of the impacts of training on practice change.	N/A	Depends on availability of Dr. Summers	Assistance from CBCC and Dr. Summers	N/A

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attorney General’s Office (AGO) • Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) 					
<i>Action Step 5 – Identify and implement additional RE/AE learning opportunities for court communities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FJCIP • Jurists-in-Residence • OPD • AGO • OCLA 	<p>Cross-system RE/AE strategic training plan.</p> <p>Additional, sustainable learning opportunities for judicial officers and attorneys.</p>	<p>Attorneys representing parties in dependency cases will have increased capacity for making RE/AE arguments in court and advocating for their clients on RE/AE issues outside of court.</p> <p>Judicial officers will have increased capacity and ability to actively engage in RE/AE inquiries and make quality findings.</p>	Within 5-6 months of completion of Action Step 4	Examples of similar materials and trainings from other states	N/A

Priority Area #4: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility

Outcome #4: Creation and implementation of the *Equity & Engagement Framework* will result in an increased number of diverse lived experts being recruited, trained, and supported to effectively engage in dependency court systems change efforts (e.g., meetings, committees, trainings and events) by providing guidance, recommendations and resources to professionals, courts, and agencies for collaborating with parents, young people, and caregivers with lived expertise. Increasing the number of diverse lived experts participating in court improvement and preparing the system to receive and value their input will result in more equitable and accessible programs, policies, and processes, which will ultimately reduce systemic barriers for children and families of color, including native and black families, who are overrepresented in the child dependency system.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: *How do you know this is a need in your state?* Government agencies and community organizations across the United States, Canada, and globally, are increasingly aware of the benefits of engaging people with lived experience in their systems change work. However, few guidelines exist for court systems about how to prepare, compensate, and support people with lived experience so that their contributions are effectively utilized and the individuals who participate are not re-traumatized. The *Equity & Engagement Framework* represents a commitment to recognizing and understanding that families’ experiences in the child welfare dependency courts are the key to improving the system and ultimately family outcomes. Applying a framework grounded in belonging, along with a shared vision of keeping families together, invites families with lived experience, allies, court staff, and judicial officers to expand their circles of belonging and together examine and dismantle biased perceptions, policies, and practices that keep families apart, particularly families of color. The State Team has shared the framework with other organizations, and showcased it at the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) Child Welfare Summit where it was well received. When shared, the framework has created much excitement among system lived experts, professionals, outside organizations, and various branches of government who have also realized the value of safely engaging lived experts to inform policy and practices, and ultimately, increase equity in our systems. In Washington State, [SB 5793](#) passed in 2022 allowing state agencies to pay lived experts for their work on boards, commissions, tasks forces, committees and

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workgroups. In response, the governor's Office of Equity created [compensation guidelines](#) along with other guidelines for paying and supporting lived experts taking part in systems change work. While the guidelines provided a basis for compensation and support, it did not bridge the barriers that organizations face as they adopt the guidelines. In addition to the barriers to adopting compensation guidelines, the Equity and Engagement co-design team has identified other barriers to engagement of lived experts, including a contracting, orientation, and training process that is accessible by people of varying abilities; access to technology and technology supports to engage in meetings; a consent process for sharing their lived experiences; and the need for supports to reduce the impacts of secondary trauma and increase resilience.

This framework was created in response to a number of driving factors and existing efforts, which include the following:

- **Racial Disproportionality Data:** For the past decade, American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN), Black, and multiracial children are overrepresented in Washington State's dependency court system. In 2020, the rate of dependency filings for AI/AN children was 1.6 times the rate for White children. The same year, the rate for multiracial children was 2.18 times the rate for White children, and for Black children, it was 1.4 the rate for White children. The families who appear in WA dependency courts are primarily low-income, disproportionately people of color, and over one-half struggle with substance use. Across the courts, many barriers to accessing services, providing supports, and promoting engagement were identified. The creation of the Equity & Engagement Framework is driven by the necessity to address racial and ethnic disparities in the dependency system. This framework seeks to promote collaboration and inclusiveness by inviting individuals with lived experiences, allies, court staff, and judicial officers to unite, expand their sense of belonging, and collectively evaluate and enhance policies and practices that contribute to the separation of families, particularly those of color.

Family & Youth Justice Programs (FYJP) continues to partner with the Washington State Center for Court Research (WSCCR) to house and maintain the [Dependency Dashboard](#), which is a publicly available dashboard tool that generates data for the state and by county across a variety of different performance metrics, including case filing and termination numbers, court timeliness measures and system re-entries. In 2023, the Dependency Dashboard was updated to provide additional components that display county-level information for dependency filings, population-based rates and comparisons, and measures by race and ethnicity. The performance metrics in the dashboard are generated from a back-end combination of court and DCYF data, and is updated on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. The Dependency Dashboard provides a critical tool for court systems in understanding and effectively responding to racial disproportionality within local court systems. In addition to the Dependency Dashboard, WSCCR also maintains the **interactive Dependency Timeliness Report (iDTR)** which courts can access to get case-level data that can be used to manage, assess, and improve data accuracy and court system process on a local level. In combination, the Dependency Dashboard and iDTR provide valuable mechanisms for local courts to understand the root causes of disproportionality and disparate outcomes in the child dependency system so that they can undertake measurable change efforts to build and support equitable child welfare practices.

- **Washington's State Team Action Plan:** In 2021, Family & Youth Justice Programs (FYJP) received funding from Casey Family Programs to create a framework to safely engage lived experts to inform workgroups implementing *Washington's State Team Action Plan*. The State Team Action Plan was created to reduce entry into child welfare and racial inequity. In response, FYJP hired lived experts to design the framework. To design the framework, lived experts reviewed existing literature for engaging people with lived experience, held key informant interviews with lived experts in child welfare, met with a race equity consultant, read Dr. Shawn Ginwright's *The Four Pivots: Reimagining Justice, Reimagining Ourselves*, and met with statewide and national programs that engage lived experts for system changes. All of their work to-date has informed the current draft of the framework, while also propelling the framework to accomplish more than it initially was designed. After completing the bulk of key informant interviews, the State Team learned that there is a need for the design process to be more diverse and inclusive. Co-designing the framework with additional lived experts was necessary to truly capture the needs of the various identities/roles and the cultural makeup lived experts. In response to this feedback, the team has since invited two additional lived experts, a youth and a father, to join the co-design process. In addition, the design team increased the number of key informant interviews to better capture the input of the various identities/roles and cross sections of those identities/roles. The framework is also informed by existing research and literature. Much of the existing research is borne out of mental health systems, while only a small portion existed within child welfare. While there is limited research in child welfare, the team was able to find materials and programs created by states and national programs. The team has met with multiple states to learn about their programs, organizations like Casey Family Programs, and statewide organizations like the Department of Child Youth and Families and the Office of Equity.

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- [SB 5793 \(2022\)](#): In 2022, the Washington State Legislature passed [SB 5793](#) which revised existing statute to allow for compensation to lived experts on boards, commissions, councils, committees, and other similar groups. Passage of this legislation allows for government agencies to provide a stipend to individuals who are low-income or have lived experience to support their participation in groups when the agency determines such participation is desirable to implement principles of equity, provided that the individuals are not otherwise compensated for their attendance at meetings.
- *In re Dependency of K.W. (2022)*: In this case, the Department removed a Black dependent legally free youth from his long-term relative placement and placed him in multiple different foster homes within a span of a few weeks. The youth asked the court to return him to his long-term relative placement, or to other relatives, but the court denied these motions, instead waiting to return the child to a relative until a Department adoption home study was complete. The Supreme Court held that for both children whose parental rights are intact and those who are legally free, RCW 13.34.130 governs placement and provides that when the child cannot be returned home, the court and the Department must first look to place the child with family members before looking to nonrelative placements. In determining an appropriate placement, the child’s best interests are paramount. The Legislature has recognized that placement with relatives often serves the child’s best interests, particularly when the child has existing relationships with relatives. However, “the ‘best interests of the child’ standard is susceptible to class- and race-based biases [such as criminal history, immigration status, or prior involvement with child welfare agencies], and it is impermissible for the Department or dependency courts to rely on factors that serve as proxies for race in order to deny placements with bonded relatives.” As a result, courts must give meaningful preference to relative placement options in a dependency proceeding.
- *In re Dependency of Q.S. (2022)*: In this case, a father appealed a finding of dependency and placement of his children out of home. The father, who is Black, had grown up in the foster care system and had suffered significant abuse, including sexual abuse, while in foster care. The Department’s evidence at trial was that the father was physically aggressive toward his children, one of whom is on the autism spectrum and uncooperative with health care providers and Department requests. The father testified that his resistance resulted from his experience as a Black man interacting with a system of authority, as well as from his own experience being raised in foster care. The father also presented expert witness testimony from a representative of the NAACP, who testified that implicit bias had played a role in the Department’s request to remove the children from the father’s care. During this testimony, the trial judge “asked the NAACP representative if she was explicitly biased when she observed racism against African Americans in the system[.]” Ultimately, the court found that the father frequently dysregulates and had not adequately engaged in therapy for his autistic child, as well as that the father “perseverates on racial injustice and is preoccupied with the racial makeup of those around him,” and ultimately granted the dependency petition. The Court of Appeals reversed the dependency order, agreeing with the father’s expert that the State’s concerns regarding the father’s anger catered to the stereotypical perception of a loud, Black man and the trial court never confronted the possible racial bias in the dependency system. The Court held that there was insufficient evidence that the father constituted a danger of substantial damage to his children’s development because the court did not identify the evidence it relied upon in making its finding. The Court cited to the 2020 Washington Supreme Court open letter to the state judiciary and legal community. The Court detailed the overrepresentation of Black children in foster care, the worse outcomes for Black children in the dependency system, and the responsibility of every member of the legal community to “work together to eradicate racism.”

Theory of Change:

Co-Design and implement an Equity and Engagement framework:

SO THAT people with lived expertise in child welfare are prepared and supported to engage in system change efforts;

AND THAT courts develop policies and practices that successfully engage and collaborate with lived experts;

SO THAT professionals understand and actively create spaces of belonging;

SO THAT more lived experts with diverse perspectives will take part in system change efforts;

SO THAT the perspectives of lived experts are incorporated into changes in system processes, policies and practices;

SO THAT the dependency court system processes are more equitable and accessible to families;

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SO THAT families receive services and support that are culturally appropriate, trauma-informed, and tailored to meet the individualized needs of the family;
 SO THAT the impacts of racial disproportionality in the child dependency system are reduced;
 SO THAT that families of color can effectively navigate and engage with the child dependency system;
 SO THAT outcomes for families of color in the child dependency system are improved.

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Activity or Project Description <i>Specific actions or project that will be completed to produce specific outputs and demonstrate progress toward the outcome.</i>	Collaborative Partners <i>Responsible parties and partners involved in implementation of the activity.</i>	Anticipated Outputs of Activity <i>What the CIP intends to produce, provide or accomplish through the activity.</i>	Goals of Activity (short and/or Long-term) <i>Where relevant and practical, provide specific, projected change in data the CIP intends to achieve. Goals should be measurable. Progress toward Outcome</i>	Timeframe <i>Proposed completion date or, if appropriate, "ongoing".</i>	Resources Needed <i>Where relevant identify the resources needed to complete the activity.</i>	Plans for Evaluating Activity <i>Where relevant, how will you measure or monitor change?</i>
Briefly describe the overall activity or project that should help lead to the outcome identified above.						
<i>Action Step 1 – Complete co-designed Equity and Engagement framework</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lived Expert co-design team that includes parent, youth, and caregivers with lived expertise Casey Family Programs Dr. Gina Veloni, Reflective Practice Consultant AOC Equity and Access Program Heather Slee, Instructional Designer 	Completed Equity and Engagement Framework. Drafted guidance for changing policies and practices to better support engagement of lived experts in systems change work. Dependency 101 trainings for lived experts. Resources and practices to support the professional growth of lived experts taking part in systems change work.	Court systems have the increased capacity to effectively work with lived experts. The tangible resources created will be utilized by court systems to support ability of lived experts to engage in system change work, such as: -Contracting and payment -Equitable recruitment -Training -Consent agreements. Increase in number of lived experts who participate in systems change work.	March 2024	Contracts with experts in reflective practice and instructional design	Track number of lived experts involved in local court system change work.

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<p><i>Action Step 3- Create Equity and Engagement webpage</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lived Expert co-design team that includes parent, youth, and caregivers with lived expertise Casey Family Programs Web designer 	<p>Develop key content areas that need to be included on webpage.</p> <p>Develop structure, navigation, and organization of the content.</p> <p>Resource compilation (create a list relevant resources, such as guides, toolkits, video training materials, interest forms, resources for lived experts).</p> <p>Develop a plan for maintenance.</p>	<p>Have increased (20%) in the numbers of webpage visitors within the first years.</p> <p>Have increased (20%) in the number of downloaded resources.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Qualified subject matter expert (Web designer)</p>	<p>Track the number of webpage visitors and downloads using website analytics.</p>
<p><i>Action Step 3- Dependency Plain Language Glossary and Acronym Generator</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lived Experts Casey Family Programs Office of Parents Defense Department of Children Youth and Families National Center for State Courts (NCSC) Heather Slee, Instructional Designer 	<p>Comprehensive list commonly used dependency acronyms and their associated terms from the dependency system partners and lived experts.</p> <p>Provide updates for the NCSC's dependency plain language glossary.</p> <p>Acronym generator that can be interfaced with the FYJP webpage, with accompanying web link/QR code and downloadable acronym and plain language glossary for use offline.</p>	<p>System partners, system involved persons, and lived experts will have increased access to terms associated with commonly used dependency acronyms.</p> <p>More awareness will be created and there will be increased use of NCSC's dependency language glossary.</p> <p>System partners will use NCSC's language glossary when creating forms for dependency.</p>	<p>December 2023</p>	<p>Contract with Instructional designer</p>	<p>Satisfaction Survey and Program Evaluation.</p> <p>Track the number of webpage visitors and downloads using website analytics.</p>

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		Plan for ongoing maintenance and updating of tool.				
<i>Action Step 3 – Develop Belonging training modules and videos</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lived Expert co-design team that includes parent, youth, and caregivers with lived expertise AOC Office of Court Innovation 	<p>Three Belonging training modules.</p> <p>Belonging video that educates system partners and local courts on the value of creating spaces of belonging.</p> <p>Guide for facilitating meetings that create spaces of belonging.</p> <p>Implementation plan.</p>	<p>Increase belonging in meetings, committees, events, and court cultures.</p> <p>Increase capacity of court communities to form better working relationships with lived experts.</p>	June 2024	<p>Qualified subject matter experts</p> <p>Video recording/editing software</p> <p>Funding for compensating lived experts</p>	Monitor utilization of modules through website analytics.

Priority Area #5: ICWA/Tribal Collaboration

Outcome #5: As a result of enhanced efforts, dependency court systems will demonstrate alignment with quality ICWA practices and increased capacity to effectively collaborate with local tribal court systems, including, operating ICWA courts/dockets.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: *How do you know this is a need in your state?* CIP staff consistently participate in several cross-system efforts that focus on increasing tribal-State court collaboration and provide access to valuable partnerships for facilitating future change efforts:

- Tribal State Court Consortium (TSCC):** The TSCC is a joint effort between state and tribal court judicial officers and other judicial branch members to expand communication and collaboration. The TSCC provides an open, transparent forum where state and tribal court judicial officers can come together and discuss jurisdictional issues, gaps in services, and ways to develop lasting partnerships. The TSCC is focusing its efforts on domestic violence and sexual assault issues, dependency cases involving Indian children, and the disproportionate number of Indian youths in the juvenile justice system. CIP staff will continue to attend the [Tribal State Court Consortium Roundtable](#) meetings to share trainings and resources created by Washington Court Improvement to better support native families involved in state dependency actions, including recent race/ethnicity data additions to the [Washington State Dependency Timeliness Dashboard](#).
- DCYF ICWA and Tribal Relations Workgroups:** Indian Child Welfare Sub-committee, Tribal Policy Advisory, and Roundtable meetings between the Department of Children Youth and Families, Tribes, and other system partners. These inter-agency committees provide an opportunity to learn more about the needs of tribal families and to share promising court practices. These meetings also provide a preview of any upcoming DCYF and Tribal Court policy changes.

The need for enhanced collaboration among State Courts and Tribes has also been prompted by several recent case law decisions issued by the Washington State Supreme Court related to issues of tribal heritage determinations, reason know, and active efforts, which include the following:

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- *In re Dependency of Z.J.G. (2020)*: “[A] court has ‘reason to know’ that a child is an Indian child when any participant in the proceeding indicates that the child has tribal heritage.” An indication of tribal heritage is sufficient to satisfy the standard. “State courts cannot and should not attempt to determine tribal membership or eligibility. This is the province of each tribe, and we respect it.”
- *In re Dependency of G.J.A. (2021)*: When a child is removed, the Department must demonstrate that it made active efforts to reunite the family, which must be, at a minimum, thorough, timely, consistent, culturally appropriate, and documented. It must prove that active efforts were in fact unsuccessful; the futility doctrine does not apply. At every hearing when the child is placed out of home, the dependency court must evaluate the Department’s provision of active efforts and ensure this standard is met. The Department must meaningfully engage with the family; the nature of DCYF’s required actions will vary from case to case. A tribe’s lack of response or involvement does not relieve DCYF of its responsibilities.
- *In re Dependency of J.M.W. (2022)*: Requires the State to prove it made active efforts to prevent the breakup of an Indian family before a child is brought into emergency foster care where the Department had prior contact with the family and reason to believe the child was at risk of physical damage or harm. Additionally, a trial court is required to make a finding on the record at a shelter care hearing that out-of-home placement is necessary to prevent imminent physical damage or harm and at an interim shelter care hearing.

Theory of Change: Promote communication, coordination, cultural awareness, and mutual respect among tribes, tribal courts and state court systems presiding over child welfare cases:

SO THAT collaboration among state and tribal court systems is improved;

SO THAT cooperative efforts are utilized to enhance relations and resolve jurisdictional issues;

SO THAT cross-utilization of facilities, programs, and personnel by state and tribal court systems is possible;

AND THAT cross-jurisdictional sharing of information can occur timely and efficiently;

SO THAT ICWA cases can be identified in the state data and utilized to assess and improve practice;

SO THAT culturally appropriate services and support can be provided to Native children and families;

SO THAT effective safety plans are created that prevent or eliminate the need to break up Native families;

SO THAT more Native children can safely remain home under court jurisdiction;

AND THAT effective case plans are created when a Native child is placed out-of-home;

SO THAT Native children placed out-of-home can safely return home faster;

SO THAT case outcomes for Native families are improved.

Activity or Project Description	Collaborative Partners	Anticipated Outputs of Activity	Goals of Activity (short and/or Long-term)	Timeframe <i>Proposed completion</i>	Resources Needed <i>Where relevant identify the</i>	Plans for Evaluating Activity
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<i>Specific actions or project that will be completed to produce specific outputs and demonstrate progress toward the outcome.</i>	<i>Responsible parties and partners involved in implementation of the activity.</i>	<i>What the CIP intends to produce, provide or accomplish through the activity.</i>	<i>Where relevant and practical, provide specific, projected change in data the CIP intends to achieve. Goals should be measurable.</i> Progress toward Outcome	<i>date or, if appropriate, "ongoing".</i>	<i>resources needed to complete the activity.</i>	<i>Where relevant, how will you measure or monitor change?</i>
Briefly describe the overall activity or project that should help lead to the outcome identified above.						
<i>Action Step 1- Create an ICWA advisory group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Washington School of Law • Judicial Officers • Jurist-in-Residence • Tribal State Court Consortium • Office of Public Defense • Attorney General's Office (AGO) • Washington Association of Child Advocacy Programs • Lived experts • Office of Civil Legal Aid 	<p>Identify and prioritize goals for CIP's ICWA projects.</p> <p>Dedicated group of subject matter experts available to assist in the creation of materials, products and trainings.</p>	<p>CIP ICWA related projects are meaningful and addresses current practice needs.</p> <p>CIP ICWA related materials, products, and trainings created are relevant to the current practice needs.</p>	September 2023	Stipends for advisory group members	Evaluations and user feedback.
<i>Action Step 2 –Develop an ICWA benchcard that provides quick and easy access to hearing-specific information.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICWA Advisory Group members • Jurist in Residence 	<p>Formation of cross system ICWA benchcard workgroup.</p> <p>ICWA Benchcard for Washington State.</p> <p>Dissemination of benchcard to judicial officers and court systems.</p>	<p>Judicial officers utilize the ICWA benchcard.</p> <p>Judicial officers who use the benchcard will demonstrate an increased alignment with quality ICWA practices.</p>	September 2024	ICWA benchcard examples from other states	Utilize HB 1227 Hearing Observation Tool to evaluate alignment with quality ICWA judicial practice during shelter care hearings.

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		Create evaluation tool.				
<i>Action Step 3- Develop a Tribal Collaboration & ICWA webpage on the FYJP website.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICWA Advisory Group members Web designer 	Design, publish, and maintain a <i>Tribal Collaboration & ICWA</i> webpage on the FYJP website (https://www.wacita.org/).	Provide a virtual platform for court and system partners, including Tribes, to learn more about tribal collaboration/ICWA and be able to access relevant resources. Increased number of people accessing the tribal collaboration/ICWA webpage.	December 2023	ICWA website examples from other CIP programs	Use website analytics to monitor the number of visits to the webpage.
<i>Action Step 4- Host ICWA Court Gathering</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICWA Advisory Group members Washington tribes Local county ICWA specialty courts Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF), Office of Tribal Relations Sheldon Spotted Elk, Casey Family Programs Lived Experts NICWA 	<p>Co-design the curriculum for a cross system ICWA court gathering.</p> <p>Host a cross system ICWA court gathering to purposefully build relationships between tribes, and state and tribal courts.</p> <p>Provide information, training, and examples of effective ICWA specialized courts and practices.</p> <p>Share county level race and ethnicity data for American Indian and Native American children in the state court dependency system.</p>	<p>Expand and improve relationships between tribes, and tribal and state courts.</p> <p>Participating courts implement changes to improve ICWA practice.</p> <p>Additional courts implement ICWA specialty courts/dockets.</p> <p>Courts and tribal partners better understand the data for American Indian and Native American children in the state dependency system.</p> <p>Participating courts will improve quality of shelter care hearing practice in existing ICWA cases.</p>	May 2024	<p>Court and tribal partners who will co-host the event with CIP</p> <p>Funding to host the event</p> <p>ICWA specialty court speakers and resources to share</p> <p>Stipends to pay lived experts</p>	<p>Evaluations and follow up with participating courts.</p> <p>Utilize HB 1227 Hearing Observation Tool to evaluate alignment with quality ICWA judicial practice during shelter care hearings.</p>

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<p><i>Action Step 5</i> – Create a process to identify data needed to track Reason to Know the child is or may be an Indian child and IWCA determinations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICWA Advisory Group members • Washington State Center for Court Research • DCYF CQI/QA Staff • Local Court Administrators and Clerks’ Offices • Parent attorneys • Youth attorneys • AGO • Family Juvenile Court Improvement Program Coordinators (FJCIP) 	<p>Collaborative process to gather Reason to Know and the ICWA determination data.</p> <p>Recommendations regarding the feasibility of creating a new court code(s) to identify ICWA related cases.</p>	<p>Increased capacity of to capture and track the number of children in dependency courts where there is reason to know the child is, or may be an Indian child and cases where it has been determined that ICWA applies.</p>	<p>June 2024</p>	<p>Examples from other states that are collecting Reason to Know and ICWA status in their state data</p>	<p>Identifying the source of the data.</p>
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Priority Area #6: Engagement

Outcome #6:

Educate system leaders, partners, youth, and lived experts in the basics of the science of hope and the benefits of implementing the science. Engage system partners committed to integrating the science of hope into policies, programs, and practices by utilizing hope navigators to create hope-centered projects. Leverage the Hope Community of Practice to gather lessons learned to inform the larger hope-centered system reform.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: *How do you know this is a need in your state?*

The child welfare court process is a reactive and deficit-based system with many system professionals utilizing various practices, processes, and policies to achieve the similar goals for child safety, timely permanency, and overall well-being for children, families, and staff. Families who encounter the child welfare system are faced with multiple requirements, and often lack clarity in the process and the support to achieve the goals set by the court and the child welfare agency. In addition to the child welfare court process being reactive and lacking clarity, many parents and professionals feel increased stress due to additional factors like trauma, secondary trauma, lack of resources, and the high-stake nature of dependency court which can reduce their ability to achieve the goals of their work. The science of hope provides a framework with a shared language for court systems to utilize which benefits families and system professionals.

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At the individual level, hope can be a coping resource among parents involved with the child welfare system or at risk for child maltreatment. Hopeful parents report higher well-being, and these parents are emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally better equipped to respond adaptively to the burden of stress. High-hope individuals are able to identify productive paths toward their identified goals, manage and overcome stress easier, and report overall lower levels of daily stress (Chang, 1998; Irving, Snyder, & Crowson, 1998; Ong, Edwards, & Bergeman, 2006; Snyder, 2002).

Like other states nationally, Washington state dependency courts have also been negatively impacted by high rates of turnover among court staff and system partners. Some local DCYF offices have reported as much as a 60% staff turnover rate in the last year. The Office of Public Defense has experienced increased challenges finding and retaining qualified parent representation attorneys in multiple counties. Similarly, dependency courts report that they are struggling to fill staff vacancies.

In addition to high rates of turnover, court professionals and system partners report increased concerns about a lack of civility among court participants. Incivility has long been an issue in our adversarial system, but with the impact of the pandemic and high rates of turnover among professionals, problems with civility have increased. The science of hope can buffer the impacts of change and increase resilience in a workforce that regularly deals with a lack of resources, high stress, and secondary trauma, and it has been shown to [lower burnout](#) among child welfare workers.

Theory of Change: Build systemwide understanding and utilization of the science of hope:

SO THAT system leaders, partners, lived experts, providers, and staff are educated about the benefits of the science of hope;

SO THAT a shared understanding and language of hope is created across the system;

SO THAT system leaders, partners, lived experts, providers, and staff integrate the science of hope into their policies and practices;

SO THAT hope navigators will be trained and coordinated to create cross system, hope-centered projects;

SO THAT child welfare court systems have increased capacity to apply hope science in working with families;

AND THAT the child welfare court systems have increased capacity to utilize hope science to support the workforce;

SO THAT the child welfare court system policies, practices, and language will become more hope centered;

SO THAT an increased hope within the system can be measured;

SO THAT the child welfare court system processes are more accessible and engaging for families;

AND THAT system professionals report improvements in court culture and staff retention.

Reminder: please note if priority area will be supported by Division X supplement with a 'COVID' tag.

Activity or Project Description	Collaborative Partners	Anticipated Outputs of Activity	Goals of Activity (short and/or Long-term)	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Plans for Evaluating Activity
<i>Specific actions or project that will be completed to produce specific outputs</i>	<i>Responsible parties and partners involved in</i>	<i>What the CIP intends to produce, provide or</i>	<i>Where relevant and practical, provide specific, projected change in data</i>	<i>Proposed completion date or, if</i>	<i>Where relevant identify the resources needed</i>	<i>Where relevant, how will you</i>

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<i>and demonstrate progress toward the outcome.</i>	<i>implementation of the activity.</i>	<i>accomplish through the activity.</i>	<i>the CIP intends to achieve. Goals should be measurable.</i> <i>Progress toward Outcome</i>	<i>appropriate, "ongoing".</i>	<i>to complete the activity.</i>	<i>measure or monitor change?</i>
Briefly describe the overall activity or project that should help lead to the outcome identified above.						
<i>Action Step 1 – Hope Week 2023</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Chan Hellman • Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) • Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) • Hope Community of Practice (CoP) 	<p>Develop and host in-person with virtual option, science of hope training workshop for system leaders.</p> <p>Develop and host virtual science of hope training for youth and providers.</p>	<p>System leaders will increase understanding of, and support for integrating the science of hope into their organization/system.</p> <p>Youth and providers will increase understanding of, and support for integrating the science of hope into their organization/system.</p>	September 2023	National and local leaders who have implemented hope work in their state and/or organization	<p>Evaluations.</p> <p>Track number of courts and agencies that want to implement hope work.</p> <p>Track number of attendees at each event.</p>
<i>Action Step 2 – Hope Navigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Chan Hellman • OSPI • DCYF • Washington State Center for Court Research (WSCCR) 	<p>Host an in-person workshop to train a cohort of Hope Navigators.</p> <p>Develop an infrastructure to coordinate hope navigator projects and provide technical assistance.</p> <p>Develop measures and process to track system changes resulting from hope navigation projects.</p>	<p>Hope Navigators will obtain in-depth knowledge of the science of hope, how to nurture hope, building hope centered organizations, and implementing hope for systems change.</p> <p>Hope navigators will choose a system project to develop and implement.</p> <p>Data from hope project implementation will be gathered, analyzed, and shared.</p>	September 2023	Funding to train hope navigators	<p>Track number of attendees at event.</p> <p>Evaluations.</p> <p>Track and analyze data from hope projects being implemented.</p>
<i>Action 3- Hope Navigator Community of Practice and email listserv</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Chan Hellman • WSCCR • Court hope navigators 	Develop a hope navigation community of practice.	Hope navigators will continue to increase their knowledge of the science of hope, learn from other organizations implementing	October 2023	Contract with Dr. Hellman	Track membership and participation in Community of Practice sessions.

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			hope projects, and continue to develop and improve their organization's hope projects.			
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Child and Family Services Review / Program Improvement Plan (CFSR/PIP) - Overall Infrastructure & Supports

For states that will be participating in round 4 of the CFSR and PIP in your state this reporting year, please briefly describe overall infrastructure or similar supports for the CFSR/PIP process that may have been needed based on your Self-Assessment. As described in the PI, this may include engaging a broad representation of legal and judicial stakeholders, working with other leadership, collaborating with other partners, use of data in the process, staging, and feedback loops. For CFSR/PIP related efforts that are farther along and have focused data or outcomes identified, those can be completed on the usual project template above. Copy and paste the portion below the blue line if there are additional CFSR/PIP overall infrastructure and support items.

CFSR/PIP Outcome #1: *The change the CIP seeks to support for the CFSR/PIP process*

Activity Description <i>Specific actions that will be completed to produce specific outputs and demonstrate progress toward the outcome.</i>	Collaborative Partners <i>Responsible parties and partners involved in implementation of the activity.</i>	Anticipated Outputs of Activity <i>What the CIP intends to produce, provide or accomplish through the activity.</i>	Goals of Activity (short and/or Long-term) <i>Where relevant and practical, provide specific, projected measurable change the CIP intends to achieve.</i> Progress toward Outcome	Timeframe <i>Proposed completion date or, if appropriate, "ongoing".</i>	Resources Needed <i>Where relevant identify the resources needed to complete the activity.</i>	Plans for Evaluating Activity <i>Where relevant, how will you measure or monitor change?</i>
Briefly describe the overall activity that should help lead to the outcome identified above.						
<i>Action Step 1 – Briefly identify the activities/action steps needed to implement activity 1</i>						
<i>Action Step 2 -</i>						[tab to add rows]

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