



# STATE OF NEVADA

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES



## 2015 ANNUAL PROGRESS SERVICES REPORT

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## SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

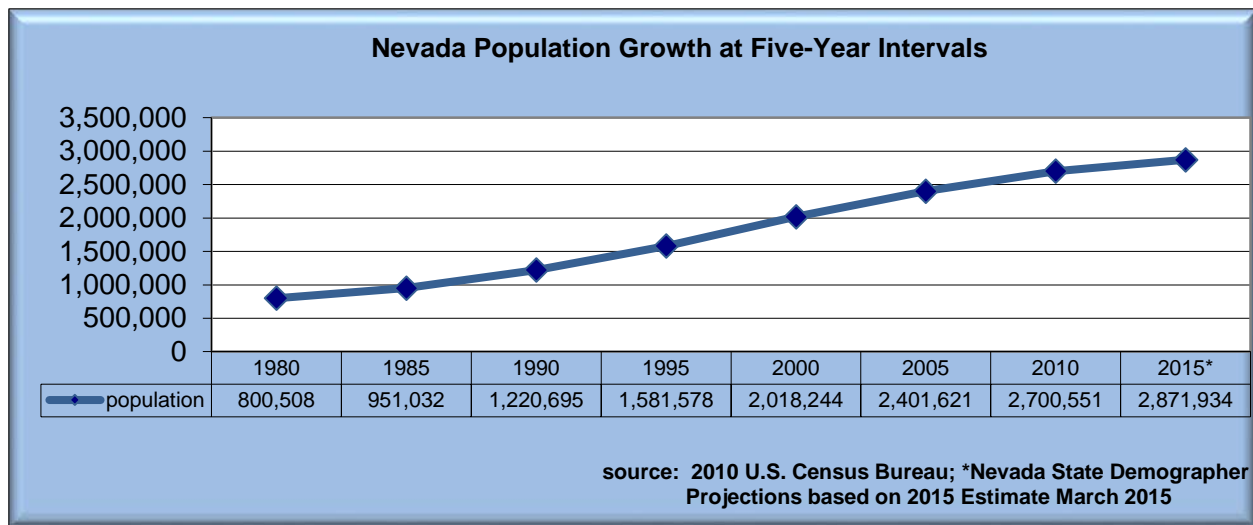
### Nevada Demographics

#### Population and Geography

Nevada is made up of an area of 110,567 square miles, making it the 7th largest state geographically, yet the 35th in terms of population. The land areas of Nevada make up 109,806 square miles, and 761 square miles of Nevada are covered by water. The United States Census Bureau estimated that the population of Nevada was 2,700,551 for the 2010 United States Census.<sup>1</sup> Based on March 2015 estimates, the Nevada State Demographer has projected a population of 2,871,934 for 2015<sup>2</sup> (an increase of 6.3% from the 2010 U.S. Census). Based on the 2010 U.S. census, the majority of Nevada's population is located in southern Nevada in Clark County with a population of 1,951,269 or 72.2%. Washoe County is the next largest populated county, located in northern Nevada, with a population of 421,407 or 15.6%. The remaining population of 327,875 or 12.1% is spread across the 15 rural counties. Nevada's population has a varied racial background that has changed considerably from 2000 to 2010. Data from the 2010 U.S. Census reports that the majority of the population was Caucasian (66.2%), down from 75.2% in 2000, followed by *some other race alone* 12%; African Americans (8.1%); Asian Americans (7.2%); multiracial persons (4.7%); American Indian and Alaska Native persons (1.2%), and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (.6%). The Hispanic/Latino population has increased by 81.6% over the last decade, growing from 19.7 % to 26.5 % of Nevada's total population.

Figure 1.1 illustrates Nevada's Population growth at Five-Year Intervals from 1980 to 2015.

**Figure 1.1 Nevada Population growths from 1980 to 2015**



#### Economy

The following information is from the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), Economy in Brief, January 2015, Economic Summary, on p.1:

Total seasonally adjusted non-farm jobs reached 1.22 million in January, up 3.6 percent relative to the same month last year. This is the 49th consecutive month of year-over-year employment gains that have been recorded in the Silver State and the sixth consecutive month of growth of at least 40,000 jobs. Further, in the 37 months since the beginning of 2012, we have experienced month-over-month employment gains in all but four months. From December to January, Nevada added 6,700 jobs to payrolls, seasonally adjusted.

All three of Nevada's metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) added employment over the year. Payrolls in the Las Vegas-Paradise MSA increased by 28,900, for an annual growth rate of 3.4 percent, the highest in the State this month. Reno/Sparks added 4,600 jobs relative to January 2014 for a growth rate of 2.4 percent. Finally, the Carson City MSA added 500 jobs for a growth rate of 1.8 percent.

<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau. (2010). American Factfinder fact sheet: Nevada, retrieved June 1, 2015

<sup>2</sup> From State Demographer's March 2015 Projections

The following information is from DETR, Economy in Brief, January 2015, Welfare Indicators, p.11:

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides time-limited cash assistance to low-income families with children so they can be cared for in their own home. TANF also seeks to reduce dependency by promoting job preparation, reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. As an economic indicator, TANF reveals information on the relative well-being of Nevada's low-income families. The number of recipients in the program is strongly influenced by the ups and downs of the business cycle.

In January, 30,609 individuals were receiving assistance. Since January of last year, the level of assistance decreased by 8.4 percent, or 2,799 less recipients. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as "food stamps," provides the means to increase food purchasing power to raise the nutritional level among low-income households and is the first line of defense against hunger for thousands of Nevadans. In December, 410,101 Nevadans participated in the program. Over the year, the number of participants receiving assistance increased 10.7 percent, or 39,557 more recipients.

## **Child Welfare Administrative Structure**

Nevada uses a state-administered and county-operated structure for the management of child welfare services, except in the rural counties of the state, where the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services operate child welfare services. The Nevada Division of Child and Family Services, under the umbrella of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, provide oversight to child welfare and direct child welfare services.

### ***State Agency Administering Plans***

The Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) is responsible for Children's Mental Health (in Clark and Washoe, the two largest populated counties), Juvenile Justice Services, and Child Welfare Services. As such, the implementation and administration of the Child and Family Services Plan is the responsibility of DCFS. This includes: Title IV-E, Title IV-B, Subpart I (Child Welfare Services) and Subpart 2 (Promoting Safe and Stable Families), Child Abuse and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).

*Protection and Permanency for Children:* DCFS creates opportunities and programs that prevent and respond to issues of parental/caregiver maltreatment, mental health, and delinquency. DCFS strives to support permanency within the child's biological or primary and extended family so children may grow and develop within stable environments. DCFS also recognizes the responsibility to create and support alternative permanent environments when biological or primary families are unable or incapable of caring for their children. DCFS will collaboratively craft public policies to promote the strength and well-being of families.

*Preservation of Families:* DCFS supports the value that the family is the best structure to assure stability, nurturing, care, and safety of its members and communities. Services are designed to build upon family strengths, honoring the family's traditions, history, and culture.

*Juvenile Justice Services for Youth:* DCFS recognizes that services must balance youth rehabilitation, treatment, and community safety. Many juvenile offenders have been victims of maltreatment and therefore accountability must be balanced by the provision of services addressing trauma, loss, substance abuse, and mental health issues. Juvenile offenders are held accountable through a comprehensive system of graduated sanctions that include commitment to state-operated juvenile facilities.

*Children's Mental Health:* DCFS uses a system of care model that strives to provide creative, individualized, strength-based, and culturally responsive services for families with children that experience severe emotional disturbances. A developing continuum of care focuses on meeting the needs of children and families in the least restrictive environment, including utilization of the wraparound process to coordinate effective service delivery that enables children to reside with families when possible and with the assistance of informal supports rather than dependency on government or paid providers.

## **Mission**

DCFS, together in genuine partnership with families, communities and county governmental agencies, provide support and services to assist Nevada's children and families in reaching their full human potential.

### ***Nevada Initiative Statement for Family Centered Practice***

Child welfare agencies in Nevada believe families are the primary providers for children's needs. The safety and well-being of children is dependent upon the safety and well-being of all family members. Children, youth and families are best served when staff actively listens to them, and invite participation in decision making. We support full implementation of family centered practice by engaging families in child and family teams and offering individualized services to build upon strengths and meet the identified needs of the family.

### ***Vision***

DCFS recognizes that Nevada's families are our future and families thrive when they:

1. Live in safe, permanent settings;
2. Experience a sense of sustainable emotional and physical well-being; and
3. Receive support to consistently make positive choices for family and common good.

## **Guiding Principles**

Service principles guide our work towards achieving this vision and are consistent with children and family services principles specified in federal regulations [45 CFS 1355.25(a) through 1355.25(h)]. These practice model principles are:

- Protection - Children's safety is paramount;
- Development - Children, youth, and families need consistent nurturing in a healthy environment to achieve their full human potential;
- Permanency - All children need and are entitled to enduring relationships that provide a family, stability and belonging, a sense of self that connects children to their past, present and future;
- Cultural Responsiveness - Children and families have the right to be understood within the context of their own family, traditions, history, culture, and community;
- Partnership - The entire community shares accountability for the creation of an environment that helps families raise children to reach their full potential;
- Organizational Competence - Effectively structured and managed organizations with committed, trained, skilled staff are necessary to achieve positive outcomes for children and families.
- Continuous Quality Improvement - Strategic sequencing of continuous quality improvements must occur to reach Nevada's child and family services vision; and
- Professional Competence - Children and families need a relationship with skilled and empathetic case managers who can provide ethical support, confront difficult issues, and effectively assist them towards positive change that reinforces safety, permanency, well-being, and community safety.

### ***Purpose***

DCFS is responsible for accomplishing the following purposes:

- Protecting and promoting the welfare and safety of all children, including individuals with disabilities; homeless, dependent or neglected children;
- Preventing or remedying, or assisting in the solution of problems that may result in the neglect, abuse, exploitation, or delinquency of children;

- Preventing the unnecessary separation of children from their families by identifying family problems and assisting families in resolving their problems and preventing the breakup of the family where the prevention of child removal is desirable and possible;

- Restoring to their families' children, who have been removed and may be safely returned, by the provision of services to the child and the family;

- Assuring adequate care of children away from their homes in cases where the child cannot be returned home or cannot be placed for adoption; and

- Placing children in suitable adoptive homes in cases where restoration to the biological or primary family is not possible or appropriate.



**Figure 1.2: County Map of Nevada**

**Child Welfare Agencies**

The organizational structure of DCFS and program delivery of child welfare services are influenced by the state size and concentration of county population. NRS 432B.325 states that in counties where population is 100,000 or more, that the county shall provide protective services for children in that county and pay the cost of those services in accordance with standards adopted by the state. In 2001, the state legislature expanded the county's responsibility to include all child welfare services of child protection, foster care and adoption (NRS 432B.030 and NRS 432B.044). Figure 1.2 provides a map of the state with each county outlined.

In the 2011 Legislative session NRS 432B.325 and NRS 432B.326 were passed. Prior to this legislation the law required DCFS, in counties whose population is less than

100,000 (currently all counties other than Clark and Washoe counties) to provide directly or arrange for the provision of child welfare services, including protective services, foster care services and adoption services. The new legislation requires each of those counties to pay to DCFS an assessment for the provision of child protective services not to exceed the limit of legislative authorization for spending on child protective services by DCFS in each county. Furthermore, this legislation allows a county to request an exemption from the assessment by submitting a proposal to the Governor for the county to carry out child protective services for the county. If the Governor approves the proposal, the Interim Finance Committee (IFC) must consider whether to approve the exemption. If the exemption is approved, the county is required to carry out child protective services for the county in accordance with standards adopted by DCFS, and pay for the cost of those services. As of the date of this report no county has requested an exemption, although Douglas County expressed interest in the spring of 2013 in fulfilling this role.

**Agency Regional Coverage**

The Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS), located in Las Vegas, provides child welfare services to all children and families in Clark County, in the southernmost part of the State. Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) located in Reno, Nevada provides child welfare services directly to all children and families located in Washoe County, in the northwestern part of the State. DCFS provides child welfare services to the remaining 15 counties in the state through its Rural Region offices.

The DCFS Rural Region is separated into four districts, each providing services to multiple counties each. District 1 covers the northern part of the State with its main office based in Elko. This District provides services to Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, and Lander Counties. District 2 covers the western/central part of the state and is based in Carson City. This District provides services to Carson City, the State's Capitol, Douglas County, and Storey County. District 3 covers the eastern/central part of the state and is based out of Fallon. This office provides services to Churchill, Lyon, Pershing and Mineral Counties. District 4 covers the southern rural part of the state and is based out of Pahrump. This office provides services to Esmeralda, Nye, Lincoln and White Pine Counties. According to the State Demographer over the next 20 years, Carson City, Elko, Douglas, Churchill and Nye counties will show modest growth. The rural counties of Eureka, White Pine, Humboldt, Pershing, Esmeralda and Lander will experience a decrease in population.



**STAFF and WORK LOAD:**

There are approximately 608 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, Licensing and Training filled with 80 vacancies statewide. Additionally, statewide there are approximately 138 Supervisory/Management child welfare positions filled and 8 vacancies.

**Clark County Department of Family Services:** For State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2015 CCDFS reports their agency has approximately 449 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, and Licensing filled with 61 vacancies. Additionally, there are approximately 96 Supervisory/Management positions filled with 5 vacancies. CCDFS reports the following caseload ratios: Investigations 1:19, In-home Case Management 1:5, and Permanency Case Management 1:13. Supervisor ratios are 1:6 in Investigations, 1:5 In-home Case Management and 1:6 in Permanency Case Management. CCDFS reports a turnover rate of approximately 6.9-8.2% annually. Staff separations during this reporting period included 8 retirements and 20 dismissals. There were approximately 64 promotions, 104 reassignments and 42 voluntary resignations.

**Washoe County Department of Social Services:** For SFY 2015 WCDSS reports their agency has approximately 99 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, Case Management, Adoption, Licensing and Training filled with 5 vacancies. Additionally, there are approximately 27 Supervisory/Management positions filled with 1 vacancy. WCDSS reports the following caseload ratios: Assessment 1:12 and In-home and Out-of-home Case Management 1:22. Supervisor ratios are 1:5 in Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) and 1:6 in Usual Permanency Services (UPS)/Assessment (pairs). WCDSS reports a turnover rate of approximately 6.2% annually. Staff separations during this reporting period included, 3 retirements, 1 dismissal, 3 promotions and 3 voluntary resignations.

**DCFS Rural Region:** For SFY 2015 the DCFS Rural Region reports their agency has approximately 60 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, and Licensing filled with 14 vacancies. Additionally, there are approximately 15 Supervisory/Management positions filled with 2 vacancies. The DCFS Rural Region reports caseload ratios: Investigations 1:15, Out-of- Home Case Management 1:24. Case Managers in smaller satellite offices who carry a combined caseload (Investigations and out-of-home cases) have a 1:28 caseload. The average number of cases is between 22 and 24 although some caseloads in frontier offices can routinely be higher due to an increased need and hard to fill vacancies. Although caseworkers may have a specific area of concentration, they are generalist, and as such perform all necessary child welfare functions such as; Emergency on Call Response, CPS Assessment and Substitute Care.

Of the 10 filled Supervisor positions: two (2) have 1:6 ratios; three (3) have a 1:7 ratio; three (3) have a 1:8 ratio and two (2) have a 1:10 ratio. It should be noted that three (3) supervisors have to travel anywhere from 1.5 to 3 hours to reach the offices they supervise. Supervisors do not normally carry a caseload, although currently many are carrying caseloads. Also, with vacancies in many offices some supervisors carry a caseload in addition to their supervisory requirement until new staff can be hired and trained. The DCFS Rural Region reports a turnover rate of approximately 29%. During this reporting period 22 staff retired, resigned or were dismissed from probation. Additionally there have been 13 promotions/hires.

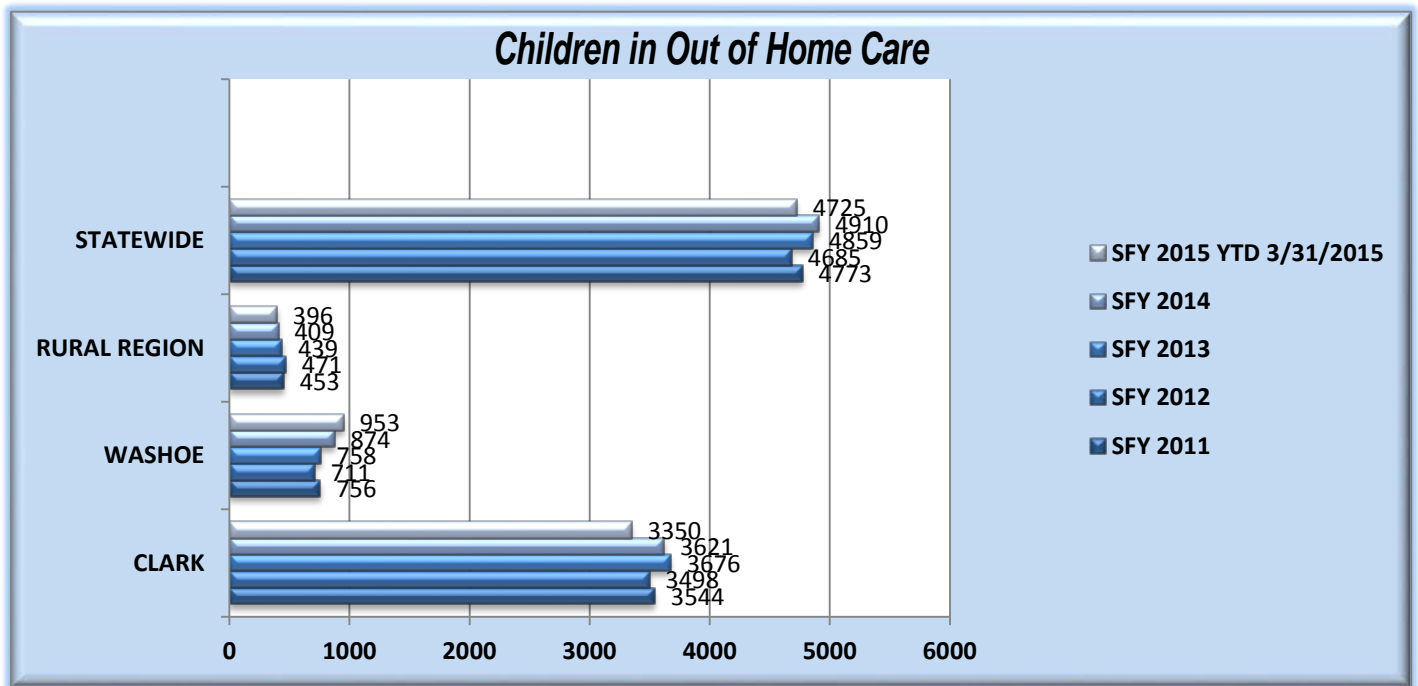
*\* For further information concerning Nevada's Child Protective Services Workforce see Appendix D*

The following Figure 1.3 illustrates the *median* number of children in out of home care placements over the past five SFYs in Nevada. Statewide there was a 2.8% *median* increase of children in out of home care from SFY 2011 to SFY 2014.

For SFY years 2011 through 2014 CCDFS had a 2.2% *increase* of children in out of home care; WCDSS had a 15.6% *increase*, and the DCFS Rural Region had a 9.7% *decrease* of children in out of home care. Additionally, WCDSS is showing an additional *increase* of children in out of home care with numbers exceeding previous years for YTD SFY 2015 ending 3/31/2015.

### Children in Out of Home Care in Nevada

Figure 1.3: Out-of-Home Care Summary Information



Source: UNITY

## Legislative Activities

Nevada's Legislature meets every biennium. Nevada entered its' 78<sup>th</sup> regular session in February, 2015. Table 1.1 lists the Bills that were introduced during this session that will affect child welfare. Some of these will require regulation, policy development and/or revision.

**Table 1.1: Legislative Bills introduced in 2015**

Bill	Requestor/Committee	ID	Subject
AB49	Attorney General	Negligent Treatment	Revises provisions governing crimes
AB8	Legislative Committee on Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice	Rehoming	Revises provisions related to adopted children
AB52	Legislative Committee on Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice	Adds Volunteers to persons Responsible for Child Welfare	Revises provisions relating to child welfare
AB 268	Legislative Committee on Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice	Expands Background Checks	Revises provisions relating to foster homes
AB 107	Legislative Committee on Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice	Categorical Block Grant	Revises provisions relating to children in foster care.
AB167	Assemblywoman Fiore	Guns in Foster Homes	Revises provisions governing the regulation of foster homes for children
SB394	Senators Roberson, Hardy, Farley, Hammond and Harris	Erin's Law	Revises provisions relating to the protection of children
SB88	Child and Family Services, Division of Health and Human Services	CANS Registry	Revises provisions governing the Statewide Central Registry for the Collection of Information Concerning the Abuse or Neglect of a Child.
AB456	Legislative Commission	Rural oversight boards	Abolishes certain inactive boards and committees
SB157	Committee on Government Affairs	Intergovernmental cooperation agreements	Enacts the State and Local Government Cooperation Act
AB151	Assemblyman Araujo	Eliminates step parent wait times	Revises provisions governing adoption
AB324	Assemblyman Sprinkle	PSSF Act requirements	Revises provisions governing children in foster care
SB303	Senator Hammond	CHINS and TPR changes	Revises provisions relating to the protection of children
SB70	Attorney General	Open Meeting Law	Revises provisions governing meetings of public bodies
SB148	Legislative Committee	Summons	Revises provisions relating to child welfare

## Section II: Goals, Objectives and Methods of Measuring Progress

### PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Nevada 2015-2019 CFSP required DCFS to identify several broad goals for progress throughout the child welfare continuum. These goals are expressed in terms of improved outcomes for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families, and in terms of a more comprehensive, coordinated, and effective child and family service delivery system, as is required in 45 CFR 1357.15 (h).

Aligned with the plan's goals are the measurable objectives that DCFS, in collaboration with CCDFS and WCDSS, will continue to undertake in order to achieve these goals. The objectives focus on outcomes for children, youth and families or on elements of service delivery that are linked to these outcomes. DCFS's progress in enhancing services and improving outcomes is measured by its progress in implementing and achieving its measurable objectives.

To the extent that a key requirement of DCFS's CFSP goals and objectives are quantifiable and measurable, this section of the report details the data-driven baselines/benchmarks against which DCFS's progress will be measured over the course of the next four years. For some of the proposed objectives/measures DCFS is not able to produce baseline data either because referenced programs/processes/interventions are still too nascent to produce significant data and/or because DCFS is in the process of developing/correcting reporting mechanisms. This APSR will report progress that has occurred over the course of SFY 2015.

### **SAFETY**

#### **Goal 1: Children and Youth will be Safe in out of home care.**

The rationale for Nevada choosing this goal was due to Nevada's inability to meet the national standard for 'abuse in foster care' for several years. However, Nevada met the negotiated target in the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) during the non-overlapping period ending 03/31/2014. The following information was reported by the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) data from FY 2014 A/B as indicated in Table 2.1. Nevada is now achieving above the National Standard at 99.73

The CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data Indicators Workbook is the most recent data provided by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) using the new federal measurement methodology. The ACF has not provided Nevada with a new Data Profile using the new measure methodology. The workbook uses the FY 2013 NCANDS submission data for this measure. Using this data Nevada did not meet the national standard for FY 2013 as shown in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.1: Nevada Data Profile (using old methodology)**

Federal Performance Measure	National Standard	Direction of Strength	FY2013	FY 2013B/ 2014A PIP target= 99.64	FY 2014 AB
Safety Indicator 2: Absence of CA/N In foster care	99.68	↑	99.53	99.66	99.73

Green Shading = Meets Standard; Red Shading = Below Standard; Yellow Shading=above median below standard

**Table 2.2: CFSR Round Three Statewide data Indicators Workbook (using new methodology)**

Federal Performance Measure	National Standard	Data Source	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI <sup>3</sup>	RSP	Upper CI
Maltreatment in foster care	8.04 <sup>4</sup>	NCANDS FY 2013	↓	7.39	8.74	10.37 <sup>5</sup>	12.31

<sup>3</sup> CI=Confidence Interval

<sup>4</sup> Victimitizations per 100,000 days in care

<sup>5</sup> NCANDS FY 2013 data

Green Shading = Meets Standard; Red Shading = Below Standard;

**OBJECTIVE 1.1**

*Continue to strengthen and reinforce safety practices for children in out of home care to include assessment of children in out-of-home care.*

**Intervention/strategy 1.1.1**

**Continue full statewide implementation of the Nevada Safety Model. The Nevada Safety Model is known as Safety Intervention Permanency System (SIPS) by CCDFS; the Safety Assessment and Family Evaluation (SAFE) by the DCFS Rural Region, and Safety Assessment and Family Evaluation (SAFE) or (SAFE/FC) by WCDSS.**

*\*Intervention/strategy rationale:* The state of Nevada has been working towards improving the assessment of safety since the first Program Improvement Plan (PIP) in 2006, and during the second PIP in 2010. Nevada has historically used ACTION for Child Protection through contractual funds or has received technical assistance from the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services (NRCCPS). Nevada has been working with ACTION for protection for a number of years, and continues working with ACTION on an enhanced safety model. The DCFS Rural Region and WCDSS met and moved forward with implementation of the enhanced safety model beginning in 2010-2011. CCDFS secured a three-year contract with ACTION to assist CCDFS with implementation of the enhanced safety model. The state of Nevada has a great deal of investment in the implementation of this model, and needs several additional years for complete full statewide implementation.

**Intervention/Strategy 1.1.2**

**Utilize the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) to build supports around foster parents to enhance the safety of children and youth in foster care.**

*\*Intervention/strategy rationale:* The Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) is a new approach to strengthening foster care, including kinship care, using branding and marketing principles. It is a process designed to help a site develop new strategies and practices, rather than imposing upon it a predetermined set of “best practices.” The core premise is that the primary goal of the child welfare system is to ensure that children have effective, loving parenting. The best way to achieve this goal is to enable the child’s own parents to care for him or her. If that isn’t possible, the system must ensure that the foster or relative family caring for the child provides the living, committed, skilled care that the child needs, while working effectively with the system to reach the child’s long term goals.

QPI recognizes that the traditional foster care “brand: has negative connotations and this deters families from participating. QPI is an effort to rebrand foster care, not simply by changing a log or an advertisement, but by changing the core elements of underlying the brand. When these changes are accomplished, QPI sites are better able to develop communication materials and to design recruitment training and retention systems for foster parents.

**MEASURES OF PROGRESS PROJECTION TIME TABLE**

**Table 2.3: Measures for Goal 1: Children and Youth will be Safe in out of home care**

Measures/Benchmarks	Benchmark Timetable	Data Baseline	Projected Goal FY 16/17	Goal FY 18/19
Reduce the victimization rate per day of children in foster care. Source: ACF NV Data Profile	7.39 (Observed Performance) NCANDS 2013	TBD <sup>6</sup>	TBD	TBD
Increase the timeliness of Investigations for out-of-home cases. Source: Case Record Reviews	Review Policy during SFY 2016	TBD Baseline determined in CY 2015	Set in CY 2015 and reported in SFY 2016/17 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 and reported in 2018/19 APSR
Increase the frequency and quality percentage of caseworker visits with children in out-of-home care.	83.9% (2014)	TBD Baseline determined	Set in CY 2015 and reported in SFY 2016/17	Set in SFY 2017 and reported in 2018/19 APSR

<sup>6</sup> NV has not received a FY 2014 Data Profile with the new methodology of victimizations per 100,000 days in care.

Source: Case Record Reviews		in CY 2015	APSR	
Develop a UNITY Report for the courts that tracks the number of children on out-of-home care non-judicial safety plans, and once the report is developed provide to the courts quarterly.	SFY 2016 Evidence=report	NA	NA	NA
Out-of- Home Safety Plan discussion will be a standing agenda item for the Community Improvement Council (CIC)	CIC Agenda Agenda =Evidence <b>Completed and on-going</b>	NA	NA	NA

## **Goal 2: Children will be Safe in their own homes.**

The rationale for Nevada choosing this goal is due to the belief that full implementation of the Nevada Safety Model will increase the population of children living in their own homes who may require protective services and or safety planning.

### **OBJECTIVE 2.1**

*Continue to strengthen and reinforce safety practices for children being served in their own homes.*

#### **Intervention/Strategy 2.1.1**

**Continue full statewide implementation of the Nevada Safety Model. The Nevada Safety Model is known as Safety Intervention Permanency System (SIPS) by CCDFS; the Safety Assessment Family Evaluation (SAFE) by the DCFS Rural Region and Safety Assessment Family Evaluation (SAFE) or (SAFE/FC) by WCDSS.**

*\*Intervention/strategy rationale:* As previously mentioned, the state of Nevada has been working towards improving the assessment of safety since the first Program Improvement Plan (PIP) in 2006, and during the second PIP in 2010. Nevada has historically used ACTION for Child Protection through contractual funds or has received technical assistance from the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services (NRCCPS). Nevada has been working with ACTION for protection for a number of years, and continues working with ACTION on an enhanced safety model. The DCFS Rural Region and WCDSS moved forward with implementation of the enhanced safety model beginning in 2010-2011, while CCDFS has just recently secured a three-year contract with ACTION to assist CCDFS with implementation of the enhanced safety model.

### **OBJECTIVE 2.2**

*Provide consistent assessment, prevention, intervention and support services to families to protect children in their own homes and prevent removal.*

#### **Intervention/Strategy 2.2.1**

**Enhance the capacity of Differential Response (DR) to serve children age five and under.**

*\*Intervention/strategy rationale:* DR systems have been established in states as part of an effort to decrease the adversarial nature of child protective investigations, and to increase family engagement in service planning and service delivery. Families served through DR systems are more likely to receive in-home services. Enhancing the capacity of DR in efforts for them to serve more children under the age of five when appropriate provide additional services and supports to young children remaining with their families.

### **OBJECTIVE 2.3**

*Improve the quality of caseworker contacts with children and parents to ensure that visits promote the purpose of the case plan and safety of the child.*

#### **Intervention/Strategy 2.3.1**

**Utilize the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) to continue the monthly monitoring, reporting, and examination of caseworker visits with children (frequency and quality). Identify the casual pathways to poor performance using the methods of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and implement interventions to improve statewide performance.**

\*Intervention/strategy rationale: Evidence has been published identifying the link between quality caseworker visits with children and positive outcomes for children and families engaged in child welfare systems. Nevada has been gradually improving on caseworker visits but needs to continue this focus over the next four years.

**MEASURES OF PROGRESS PROJECTION TIME TABLE**

**Table 2.4: Measures for Goal 2: Children will be Safe in their own homes**

<b>Measure/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Benchmark Timetable</b>	<b>Data Baseline</b>	<b>Projected Goal FY 16/17</b>	<b>Goal FY 18/19</b>
Reduce the Recurrence of Maltreatment Source: ACF NV Data Profile	6.0.8% (Observed Performance)	6.0%	MET at 6.0% and NS is 9.0%	Set in SFY 2016 APSR if not meeting
The annual number of referrals for children served with DR statewide. Source: CLEO Reports	1015	1377 SFY 2014	1391	Set in SFY 2017 APSR
Develop a report that measures the number of children served age five and under by DR.	Develop Report during FFY 2016 Evidence=Report	NA	NA	NA
The annual number/percentage of children served statewide by DR age five and under.	[Data not yet available]	[Data not yet available]	Set in SFY 2016 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 APSR
Increase the timeliness of Investigations for in home cases. Source: Case Record Reviews	Review Policy during SFY 2016	TBD Baseline determined in CY 2015	Set in CY 2015 and reported in SFY 2016/17 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 and reported in 2018/19 APSR
Increase the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children living in their own homes. Source: Case Record Reviews	70% 2014	Set in CY 2015	Set in CY 2015 and reported in SFY 2016/17 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 and reported in 2017 APSR
Develop a statewide report that provides the number of children being served with in-home services by jurisdiction.	Develop Report during SFY 2016 Evidence=report	NA	NA	NA
The number/percentage of children being served with in-home services statewide and by jurisdiction		TBD	Set in SFY 2016 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 APSR
Develop a UNITY Report for the courts that track the number of children on in-home non-judicial safety plans and once developed provide to the courts quarterly.	Develop Report during SFY 2016 Evidence=Report	NA	NA	NA
Out-of- Home Safety Plan discussion will be a standing agenda item for the Community Improvement Council (CIC)	CIC Agenda = Evidence <b>Completed-ongoing</b>	NA	NA	NA

## CHILD and FAMILY WELL-BEING

### Goal 3: Children and Youth will have an improved Well-Being.

The rationale for Nevada choosing this goal is the acknowledgement that Nevada needs to develop a means to better track and monitor this information. Nevada will need to develop reporting mechanisms to determine baselines for monitoring.

#### **OBJECTIVE 3.1**

*Ensure educational needs of children and youth are met.*

#### **Intervention/Strategy 3.1.1**

**Continue a Statewide Collaborative on Education, Child Welfare, and the Courts.**

*\*Intervention/strategy rationale:* A collaborative relationship between the Department of Education, Child Welfare and the Courts is needed to strengthen educational success for children and youth in foster care. This collaborative will identify outcomes and measurable objectives that will target improvement and demonstrate progress.

#### **OBJECTIVE 3.2**

*Ensure youth who exit care are prepared for adult living.*

#### **Intervention/Strategy 3.2.1**

**DCFS will request Technical Assistance (TA) for train the trainer (TOT) and caseworker training on transition planning for youth. This TA will be for training on the planning process and development of youth directed transition plans.**

***NOTE:** The federal grant for the National Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCYD) ended on September 30, 2014. The Child Welfare Capacity Center for States is now responsible for TA. Nevada has recently been contacted by the Child Welfare Capacity Center for States, and is currently working to arrange a capacity building needs assessment. If the assessment identifies caseworker training for transition planning for youth as a need for Nevada then a request will be made for TA. A Nevada state snapshot has recently been completed for submission and an onsite visit to discuss the capacity building needs assessment will be scheduled in August 2015.*

*\*Intervention/strategy rationale:* Transition planning is a process not an event, and must be developed through a strengths/needs based approach that is directed by the youth. This requires skill in the process and development of the written plan. Statewide training is needed to develop the skill of caseworkers to ensure the planning process occurs before the plan is written, and the written plan is self-directed by the youth based on the youths strengths and needs.

#### **OBJECTIVE 3.3**

*Ensure the needs of children and youth with mental or behavioral health issues are met.*

#### **Intervention/Strategy 3.3.1**

**Utilize the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) to build supports around foster parents to enhance the well-being of children and youth.**

#### *\*Intervention/strategy rationale*

The Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) is a new approach to strengthening foster care, including kinship care, using branding and marketing principles. The core premise is that the primary goal of the child welfare system is to ensure that children have effective, loving parenting. There have been major successes reported in several measurable outcomes.

### **MEASURES OF PROGRESS PROJECTION TIME TABLE**

**Table 2.5: Measures for Goal 3: Children and Youth will have improved Well-Being**

Data Measures/Benchmarks	Benchmark Timetable	Data Baseline	Project Goal FY 16/17	Goal FY 18/19
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Increase efforts to assess children's educational needs initially and ongoing. Source: Case Record Reviews	TBD Baseline determined in CY 2015	TBD Baseline determined in CY 2015	Set in CY 2015 and reported in SFY 2016/17 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 and reported in 2018/19 APSR
Redesign the UNITY educational windows.	Convene a workgroup during FFY 2016 Evidence= established workgroup	NA	NA	NA
<b>Courts:</b> Increase the proportion of ASFA hearings during which the child's education is addressed. (Source: Court hearing observation TA from NRCLJI)	<b>DELETED<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>DELETED</b>	<b>DELETED</b>	<b>DELETED</b>
Educational Collaborative: Reduce the barriers for school enrollment when foster youth have to change from school of origin.	Joint letter between school district and child welfare for information sharing during FFY 2015-2016 evidence =letter <b>Completed</b>	NA	NA	NA
Develop a UNITY Report that will measure youth in foster care who graduate from high school or receive a GED	Develop Report during SFY 2016 Evidence=report	NA	NA	NA
Develop a UNITY Report that will measure educational moves of children in foster care.	Develop Report during SFY 2016 Evidence=report	NA	NA	NA
Decrease the educational moves of children/youth in foster care.	[Data not yet available]	[Data not yet available]	Set in SFY 2015 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 APSR
The percentage/number of youth within 90 days of turning 18 who have Transition Plans.	Report modification required SFY 2016	Data not yet available]	Set in SFY 2016 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 APSR
Develop a UNITY Report to measure if children/ youth receive timely EPSTD screenings. (30 days of entry into foster care)	Develop Report during SFY 2016 Evidence=report	[Data not yet available]	Set in SFY 2016 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 APSR
Increase the percentage of children who receive a comprehensive EPSDT assessment within 30 days of entry into foster care.	[Data not yet available]	[Data not yet available]	Set in SFY 2016 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 APSR
Develop a UNITY Report to measure if children and youth in out-of-home care receive on-going annual medical exams.	Develop Report during FFY 2016 Evidence=report	NA	NA	NA
Increase the number/percentage of children and youth who have been in out-of-home care for 30 days or more that receive annual medical exams during a calendar year.	[Data not yet available]	Data not yet available]	Set in SFY 2016 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 APSR
Develop a UNITY Report to measure if children/youth in foster care are receiving	Develop Report during	NA	NA	NA

<sup>7</sup> Court hearing observations have been discontinued due to lack of funding and this measure has been deleted.

on-going annual dental exams.	FFY 2016 Evidence=report			
Increase the percentage of children/youth that are in out-of-home care who receive annual dental exams during a calendar year.	[Data not yet available]	[Data not yet available]	Set in SFY 2016 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 APSR
Increase the global frequency percentage of caseworker visits with children in out-of-home (UNITY report CFS7D7) • Federal target is 95% by FY 2015	87.6% (FY 2013)	91.0% (FY 2014)	95%	95%
Increase efforts to assess the needs and services of children, parents and foster parents. Source: Case Record Reviews	59.7% (2014)	TBD New baseline determined in CY 2015	Set in CY 2015 and reported in SFY 2016/17 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 and reported in 2018/19 APSR
Increase the engagement in case planning for the child if age appropriate, and the parents. Source: Case Record Reviews	59.0% (2014)	TBD New baseline determined in CY 2015	Set in CY 2015 and reported in SFY 2016/17 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 and reported in 2018/19 APSR
Increase the frequency and quality of contacts with parents. Source: Case Record Reviews	54.0% (2014)	TBD New baseline determined in CY 2015	Set in CY 2015 and reported in SFY 2016/17 APSR	Set in SFY 2017 and reported in 2018/19 APSR
Reduce the barriers for school enrollment when foster youth have to change from school of origin	Joint letter between school district and child welfare for information sharing during FFY 2015-2016 Evidence =letter <b>Completed</b>	NA	NA	NA

## CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

### Goal 4: The state will be able to identify the strengths and needs of the child protective service delivery system.

The rationale for Nevada choosing this goal is to ensure development of a continuous quality improvement system (CQI) through the enhancement of the following five functional components: administrative structure to oversee effective CQI system functioning; quality data collection; a method for conducting on-going case reviews; a process for the analysis and dissemination of quality data on all performance measures; and, a process for providing feedback to stakeholders.

#### **OBJECTIVE 4.1**

Eliminate gaps in the overall five functional components of the continuous quality improvement process.

#### **OBJECTIVE 4.2**

Increase the statewide capacity of a dedicated case reviewer pool.

#### **OBJECTIVE 4.3**

Re-design the Quality Improvement Case Review (QICR) process.

#### **Intervention/strategy 4.1.1-4.3.1**

Utilize the existing established Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) to advance practice and improve outcomes for children and families in Nevada. The Committee is charged with prioritizing outcomes and practice standards utilizing sub-committees and or workgroups to accomplish the work of enhancing and developing a statewide CQI system that addresses the gaps in the overall functional components of CQI.

**\*Intervention/strategy rationale:** Several states have convened a statewide Quality Improvement Committee in efforts to implement/enhance a statewide CQI system. This process promotes statewide stakeholder collaboration with representative members from all jurisdictions. It provides a forum for stakeholders to discuss data quality as well as data reporting issues, case review findings, federal outcome data, and overall gaps in functional components of a statewide CQI system. It provides a forum for identification of problems and development and implementation of solutions. The members are responsible to assist in identification and resolution of problems impeding progress towards improved outcomes for children and families.

**OBJECTIVE 4.4**

Develop and expand the Court Centralized Case Index (CCI)

**Intervention/strategy 4.4.1**

**Explore the feasibility of developing a standardized architecture for combining information from court case management systems (CMSs) with information from UNITY to provide a reporting data warehouse and accompanying tools to facilitate near real-time timeliness reporting. Blend information from UNITY and the court CMSs into an integrated dashboard accessible to individual judicial districts across the State.**

**\*Intervention/strategy rationale**

Maintaining near real-time access to court timeliness measures as well as permanency and placement information will enable the court to ensure they contribute to timely permanency for children in the child welfare system.

**MEASURES OF PROGRESS PROJECTION TIME TABLE**

**Table 2.6: Measures for Goal 4: The state will be able to identify the strengths and needs of the child protective service delivery system.**

Measure/Benchmarks	Benchmark Timetable	Data Baseline	Project Goal FY 16/17	Goal FY 18/19
Monitor/Review and Revise work plans in SQIC that reference the gap analysis in the overall five functional components of CQI.	In FFY 2016 Evidence=revised gap analysis	NA	NA	NA
Number of dedicated Case Reviewer Staff	In FFY 2015 Evidence – list of dedicated Reviewers	Current List =38 ( 16 are from CCDFS )	45-50 range	Set in SFY 2016 APSR
Re-design the Case Review Process	In FFY 2016 Evidence=written revised process	NA	NA	NA
Develop a statewide CQI policy	In FFY 2016 Evidence=written policy	NA	NA	NA
Develop/Correct/Increase the number of UNITY performance reports	Review Reports in FFY 2016 Evidence=report index updated with date of development/corrected reports	NA	NA	NA
<b>Courts:</b> Prototype developed and approved for production.	CIP Select Committee approval of prototype. <b>COMPLETE: CIP approved prototype July 18, 2014</b>	NA	NA	NA
<b>Courts:</b> Adjust reporting framework	Selection of a preferred framework that will provide user friendly reports. <b>COMPLETE: Framework Selected in SFY 2015</b>	NA	NA	NA

<b>Courts:</b> Implement ongoing feed from UNTY/COURT	Data flows into CCI without error. To be completed in SFY 2016	NA	NA	NA
<b>Courts:</b> Develop additional reports and data sources	All necessary reports developed and approved by judiciary. To be completed in SFY 2016	NA	NA	NA
<b>Courts:</b> Expand to other judicial districts	Judicial districts who wish to participate are included. To be completed in SFY 2016	NA	NA	NA
<b>Courts:</b> Provide training on how to use the dashboards.	Judiciary trained. To be completed in SFY 2016	NA	NA	NA

## PERMANENCY

### Goal 5: Children and youth will achieve timely permanency through stable and supportive placements.

The rationale for Nevada choosing this goal was due to Nevada's inability to meet the national standard for reunification of children in less than 12 months based on an entry cohort, and on ensuring placement stability in the previous Permanency Composite Measures. The most recent data reflects that Nevada has met the new national standard as reflected by the following Table 2.7 from the CFSR Round 3 Statewide Indicators Workbook. However, placement stability continues to be an area needing improvement.

**Table 2.7: CFSR Round 3 Statewide data Indicators Workbook**

Federal Performance (Permanency)	National Standard	Data Sources	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI <sup>8</sup>	RSP	Upper CI
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.4%	AFCARS 11B & 12A	↑	42.5%	39.9%	41.8%	43.6%
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12-24 months	43.7%	AFCARS 13B & 14A	↑	53.6%	47.3%	49.8%	52.3%
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more	30.3%	AFCARS 13B & 14A	↑	44.3%	35.1%	37.4%	39.7%
Placement Stability	4.12 moves <sup>9</sup>	AFCARS 13B & 14A	↓	5.99	6.11	6.35	6.6

Source: CFSR Round 3 Statewide data Indicators Workbook  
Green Shading = Meets Standard; Red Shading = Below Standard;

#### **OBJECTIVE 5.1**

*Decrease the placement setting disruptions of children in foster care.*

#### **OBJECTIVE 5.2**

*Decrease re-entry to foster care.*

#### **OBJECTIVE 5.3**

<sup>8</sup> CI=Confidence Interval

<sup>9</sup> Moves per 1,000 Days

Increase Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care.

**Intervention/Strategy 5.1.1-5.3.1 Continue to explore opportunities to redesign the specialized foster care system in Nevada, through implementation of evidence based or promising practices in the foster care agencies, and enhancing and/or changing the payment structure.**

\*Intervention/strategy rationale: In each child welfare agency, the current specialized foster care pilot has shown success in ensuring appropriate services are provided to children, children have increased placement stability, and children are moving to permanency. Expanding the foster care pilot will allow this program to reach more children with behavioral and emotional challenges that make it difficult to find traditional family foster homes that can meet their needs. Key components of the pilot include implementation of evidence-based or science based practices, increased oversight by the child welfare agency, and evaluation components. Funding for this program was approved during the 2015 legislative session and the child welfare agencies are all in the process of expanding the pilot to full implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 5.4 (COURTS)**

Decrease median days to termination of parental rights and adoption.

**Intervention/Strategy 5.4.1Continue the Community Improvement Council process of courts identifying barriers and implementing solutions to decreasing median days to termination of parental rights and adoption. CICs will develop plans and processes to share information and work together. District Attorneys will continue to assist the Deputy Attorney General with case processing, if needed. Information will flow through the CICs.**

\*Intervention/strategy rationale

This work group collaborative process is an evidence-based practice that has demonstrated its value throughout Nevada in the CICs. Diverse, collective intelligence improves innovation and problem solving, contributing to systems change, information sharing, and improved practice.

**OBJECTIVE 5.5 (COURTS)**

Achieve timely permanency for children in the child welfare system.

**Intervention/Strategy 5.5.1**

**Decrease filing time of court reports and decrease travel time for caseworkers to attend certain court hearings by utilizing available court resources to electronically submit court reports and allow caseworkers to attend certain, judicially approved court hearings via video-conferencing.**

\*Intervention strategy rationale

Decreasing filing time of court reports and decreasing travel time for caseworkers is an efficient use of time and resources in efforts to achieve timely permanency for children in the child welfare system.

**MEASURES OF PROGRESS PROJECTION TIME TABLE**

**Table 2.8: Measures for Goal 5: Children and youth will achieve timely permanency through stable and supportive placements.**

Measure/Benchmark	Benchmark Timetable	Data Baseline	Projected Goal FY 16/17	Goal FY18/19
Increase placement stability of children in foster care. ( Source: ACF NV Data Profile)	5.99 Observed Performance	5.99	4.12-4.03 need -835 less moves	Set in SFY 2016 APSR
Reduce the re-entry of children into foster care. Source: (ACF NV Data Profile)	6.6%	6.6%	MET NS is 8.3%	Set in SFY 2016 APSR if not meeting
Increase the permanency of children within 12 months of removal. ( Source: ACF NV Data Profile)	42.5% Observed Performance	42.5%	MET NS is 40.4%	Set in SFY 2016 APSR if not meeting
Ensure the most appropriate selection of permanency goals for children and youth in foster care.	71.4% (2014)	TBD New baseline determined in	Set in CY 2015 and reported in	Set in SFY 2017 and reported in 2018/19 APSR

source: case reviews		CY 2015	SFY 2016/17 APSR	
<b>Courts:</b> Decrease the median days to termination of parental rights by 5% .Source: UNITY Report	Decrease the median days to TPR by 5% by FFY 2018	625 Days <i>Achieved 608 Days in CY 2014</i>	610 <i>Achieved 608 Days in CY 2014</i>	594

## Implementation Supports:

Implementation supports have not changed since the last report in the 2015-2019 CFSP. To promote successful implementation of all the goals and objectives there are additional supports needed to carry out the plan. For all goals and objectives staff support is needed to redesign UNITY windows and develop/correct reporting mechanisms over the next four years. Staff support is needed to increase a dedicated reviewer pool for case reviews, and or commitment of stakeholders. Also, skilled staff is needed that have the skills and abilities to analyze data. During the 2015 legislative session several positions were requested and approved by the legislature to build and support the DCFS data enhancement needs. Several positions were added to support report development, UNITY enhancement, and data analysis.

The State does not have a data warehouse; however, CCDFS does have a data warehouse (COGNOS) available to them for management reporting. The State continues to use Chapin Hall for permanency-related reporting, so there is some reporting capability. However, the need for a state data warehouse that can be the main source of information for report generation, analysis, presentation through management reports, and dashboards would benefit the state. While this support is needed there are challenges associated with financing to make this a viable option for the state. At this time the need for staff to make improvements to the SACWIS was determined to be a more critical need, so data quality improvements are currently focused on quality of the UNITY system and creating the ability to support timely and accurate data entry.

## Program Support:

### *Training and Technical Assistance*

In April 2014 the Associate Commissioner of the Children’s Bureau announced the launching of the new Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative and the closure in September 2014 of technical assistance provision by the National Child Welfare Resource Centers (NRCs).

The Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative is a partnership among three centers-the Center for States, Center for Tribes, and the Center for Courts.

However, in Nevada CCDFS reports continued involvement with the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment (NRCDR) in their Targeted Recruitment Utilizing Market Segmentation project known previously as TA 1289 as illustrated in Table 2.9. It is reported that a site visit will occur in July 2015, and the NRCDR will continue to work with them through September 2015. Additionally, CCDFS reports that when the grant ends they will be requesting a continuation of the grant. All other training and technical assistance ended with conclusion of the previously funded NRCs in September 2014.

**Table 2.9: Technical Assistance Received for State Fiscal Year 2015**

<b>TA 1289 Targeted Recruitment Utilizing Market Segmentation</b>	
<b>Status: In progress</b>	
Request/Objective: CCDFS requested T/TA from the NRCDR to help build organizational capacity to use Market Segmentation to inform strategic marketing and develop a targeted recruitment and retention work plan for foster and adoptive families. The county requested consultation on	Date Requested: 1/22/14 Direct Recipients of T/TA: The primary recipient for the T/TA services is Clark County Department of Family Services (DFS) throughout all stages of the work plan development and implementation.

organizational program redesign for recruitment and retention (e.g., staffing ratios, organizational structure, staff roles and responsibilities, policy and procedures, cultural assessments).

Specific programs and services involved in the development process include: 1) Resource Development and Retention; 2) Community Partnership and Engagement; and 3) Special Projects Unit with its Diligent Recruitment Project. DFS employees involved in the T/TA consultation process may include administration, supervisors, and staff. T/TA may expand to key community partners identified during work plan development.

### ***Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Needs***

Nevada has recently been contacted by the Child Welfare Capacity Center for States, and is currently working to arrange a capacity building needs assessment. A Nevada state snapshot has recently been completed for submission, and an onsite visit to discuss the capacity building needs assessment will be scheduled in August 2015.

### ***Evaluation***

Nevada is not currently involved as a state in any national evaluation or research activities. However, WCDSS continues in the federal Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) which is a 5-year, \$100 million, multi-site demonstration project designed to improve permanency outcomes among children in foster care who have the most serious barriers to permanency. WCDSS reports that randomization concluded 10/14/14, and research ended 4/30/15. Additionally, the implementation of Nevada's Safety Model (SAFE) continues to be evaluated through fidelity reviews.

Nevada continues the specialized foster care pilot that is being evaluated by the DCFS Program Evaluation Unit for the pilots in WCDSS and DCFS Rural Region. In WCDSS and DCFS Rural Region the pilot is based on the evidence-based foster parent training "Together Facing the Challenge", along with training in other best practices, such as trauma informed care and medication management. The pilot in CCDFS is being evaluated by the service provider, in collaboration with UNLV. The CCDFS pilot also includes elements of trauma informed care and wraparound services.

Additionally CCDFS was approved by the ACF to conduct a Title IV-E waiver demonstration project. This will provide CCDFS an opportunity to use federal funds more flexibly in order to test innovative approaches to child welfare service delivery and financing, and also includes a rigorous evaluation process.

## **PROGRAM AREAS**

### **Section III. SAFETY**

#### **Trends in Child Safety**

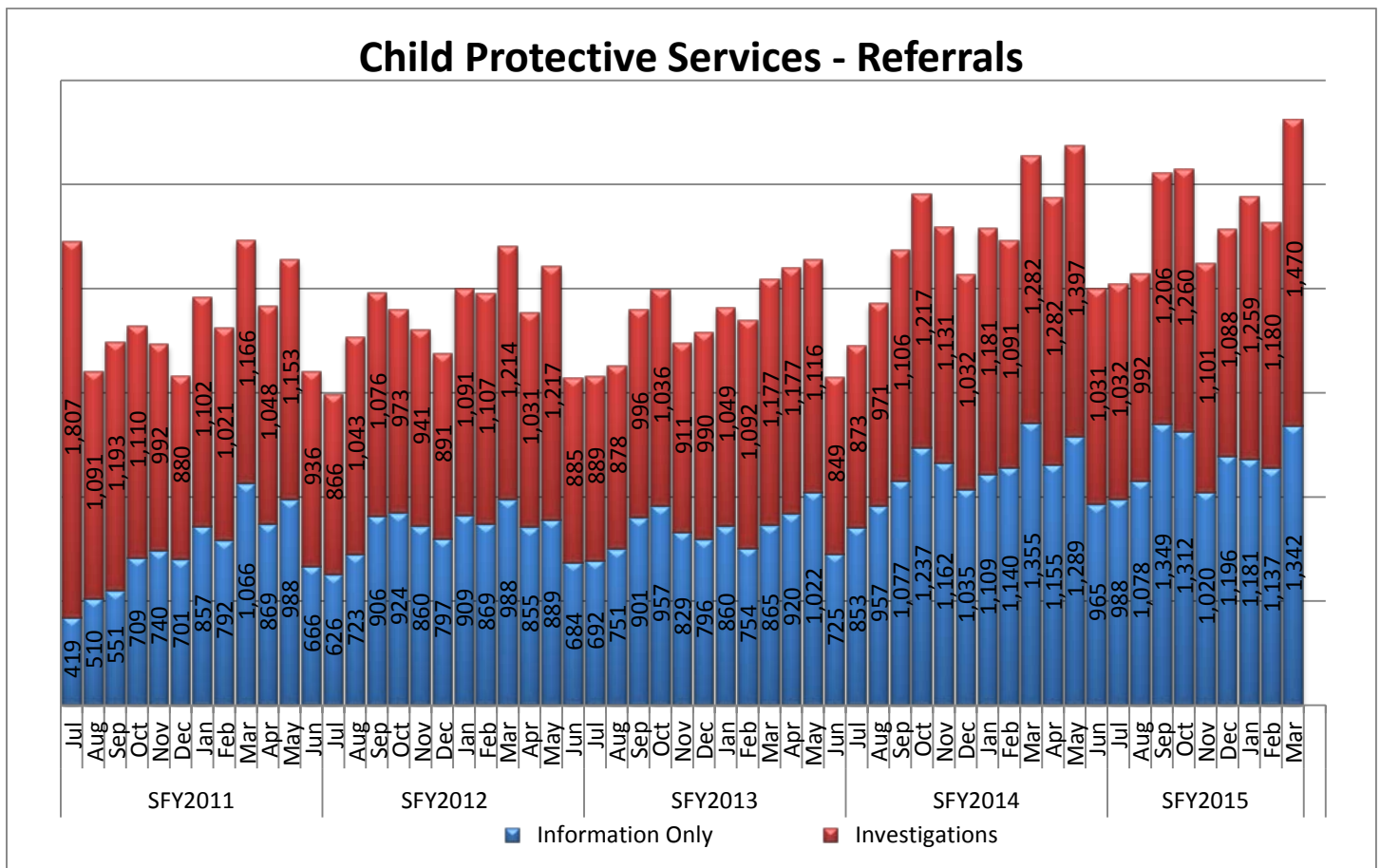
##### **Referrals**

Referrals are all intake calls received across the state to each child welfare agency concerning potential abuse or neglect of a child. These include referrals that are screened in and those that are screened out. Screened out referrals are defined as follows: information only (IO), where the referral does not meet the criteria for child abuse and or neglect, and where the reported information does not indicate that a child is unsafe or has been or is being abused; and or information and referral (IR), where the reported information indicates there is no child abuse or neglect occurring but there is a request or need for services.

Screened in referrals are those that indicate there is an immediate or potential safety threat or issue involving child abuse or neglect. This referral is coded as a report, and is sent to a supervisor for assessment and assignment for investigation or Differential Response (DR).

Figure 3.1 illustrates the number of referrals that have been received since SFY 2011 through March 31, 2015.

**Figure 3.1: Number of New Referrals**



Source: UNITY

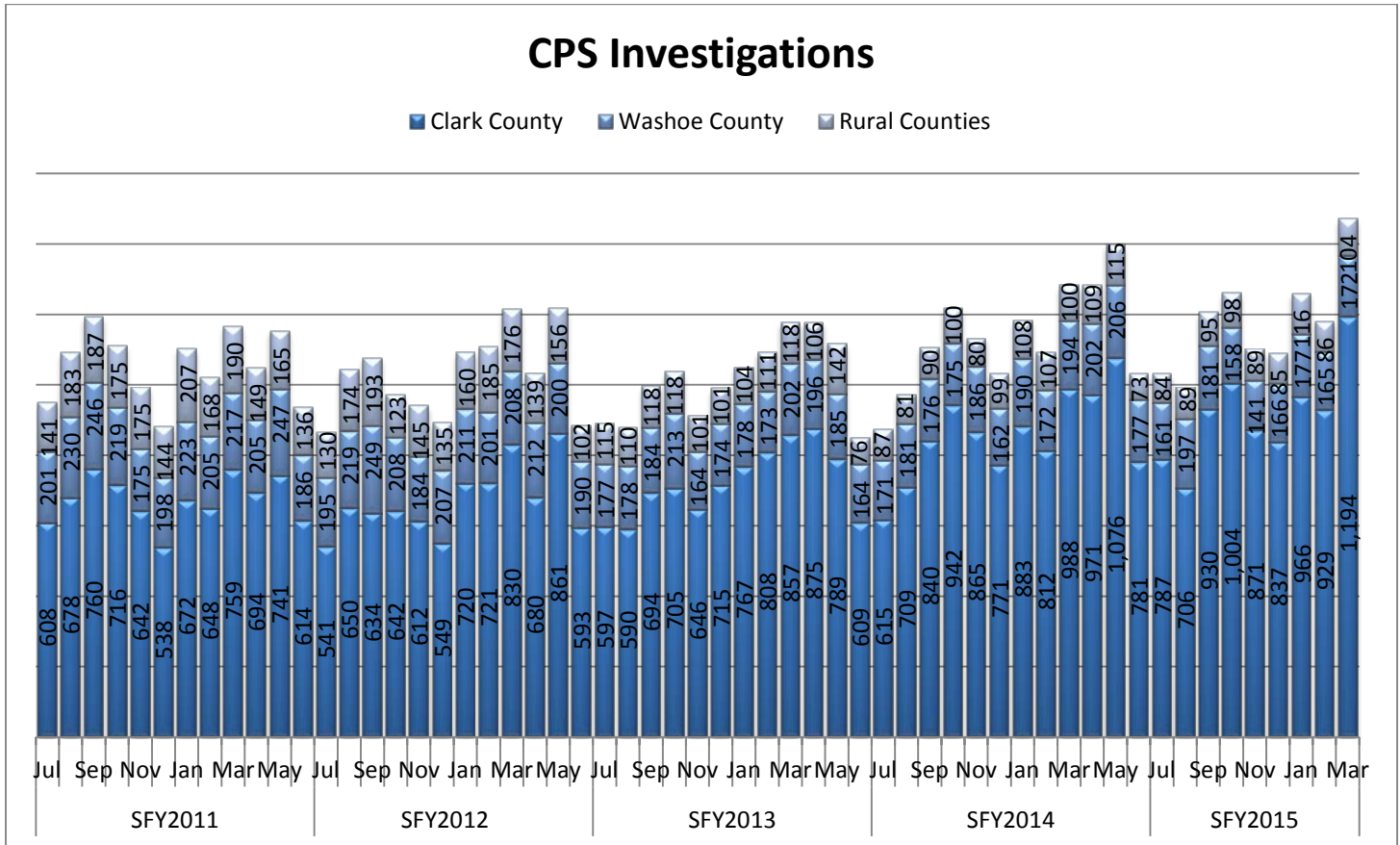


## Investigations

When a report is screened in, it is assigned for Investigation or Differential Response (DR) by a child welfare agency per policy 0506 Intake and Priority Response. The investigation process is outlined in the 0508 and 0509 Nevada initial Assessment (NIA) policies. The NIA policy includes the process for interaction with a family for the purpose of assessing factors or conditions that are known to contribute to the likelihood of child abuse or neglect

Figure 3.2 illustrates the number of investigations since SFY 2011 through March 31, 2015 for all three Child Welfare Agencies.

**Figure 3.2: Number of New Investigations**



Source: UNITY

The Differential Response (DR) program is part of Nevada’s CPS system, and during SFY 2016, nine Family Resource Centers were funded to hire staff to be first responders to CPS screened-in reports of child neglect. The DR program is a public-private partnership involving state and county child welfare agencies and the community-based Family Resource Centers (FRCs).

Reports screened-in for a DR assessment are assigned to the local FRCs where the DR staffs are responsible for initiating contact with the families, conducting family assessments, providing ongoing services as needed, and determining when the case should be closed. If a FRC receives a referral it considers inappropriate for a DR assessment, it returns the case to the county/state child welfare agency for a traditional investigation.

The 2013 Legislature passed Assembly Bill 155 which amended NRS 432B.260 to eliminate the requirement that an investigation must be conducted for a screened-in report that includes a child under six years old who is identified as a possible victim of abuse or neglect. This statute change allows DR staff to work with families with children under age six, especially in reports of environmental neglect and improper supervision where several children are identified as victims and there is a child under age six.

Table 3.1 represents various data and information concerning Nevada's Differential Response Program.

**Table 3.1: Nevada Differential Response Report**

**Nevada Differential Response (DR) Program Report through 3/31/15**

	SFY 07 2/28/07 – 6/30/07	SFY 08 7/1/07– 6/30/08	SFY 09 7/1/08 – 6/30/09	SFY 10 7/1/09 – 6/30/10	SFY 11 & 12 & 13 & 14 & 15 Current Status 7/1/10 – 3/31/15					
Number of DR programs	2 (Las Vegas)	7 (4 Las Vegas, 2 Washoe, 1 Elko)	12 (5 Las Vegas, 2 Washoe, 5 Rural)		12 (5 Las Vegas, 2 Washoe, 5 Rural)					
Number of DR Staff	4	16	23		23					
<b>Total number of Families Served by DR 2/28/07 – 3/31/15:</b>										
	SFY 07 2/28/07- 6/30/07	SFY 08 7/1/07- 6/30/08	SFY 09 7/1/08 – 6/30/09	SFY 10 7/1/09 – 6/30/10	SFY 11 7/1/10 – 6/30/11	SFY 12 7/1/11 – 6/30/12	SFY 13 7/1/12- 6/30/13	SFY 14 7/1/13- 6/30/14	SFY15 7/1/14- 3/31/15	Total 2/28/07- 3/31/15
Cumulative Number of Families Referred to DR from CPS	90	362	912	1,053	1,137	1,234	1,319	1,367	1,066	<b>8,540</b>
Number of Cases returned to CPS	16	66	147	76	44	47	13	32	35	<b>476</b>
Number of cases closed	33	247	665	906	1,135	1,182	1,324	1,333	965	<b>7,790</b>

Cases have been returned to CPS for the following reasons: Unable to locate family or family moved; family refused DR services or did not respond to DR communication; child in home under the age of 5(2/28/07-6/30/13); after 7/1/13 concern for safety of children under 5; new allegation of abuse or neglect; family not in service area

**Current Status by Program – SFY15 July 1, 2014**

Program	DR Case Managers FTE Positions	Number of cases carried forward from FY14 to FY15	Number of cases referred to DR from CPS	Number of cases returned to CPS	Number of cases closed	Number of open DR cases carried over to SFY16
Las Vegas – South HopeLink FRC	2	7	87	3	59	
Las Vegas – East East Valley Family Services FRC	2.5	9	101	0	84	
Las Vegas – Central East Valley Family Services FRC	2	24	112	0	111	
Las Vegas – North Olive Crest FRC	2	32	87	1	81	
Las Vegas – West Boys & Girls Club of So. NV FRC	2	26	157	0	141	
<b>Total Clark</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>476</b>	
Washoe FRC	2	27	64	6	73	
Washoe Children's Cabinet*	3	34	117	0	116	
<b>Total Washoe</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>189</b>	
Elko Family Resource Center of Northeastern NV	2	5	70	8	63	
Lyon, Pershing, Mineral Lyon Co. Human Services FRC	2.5	21	89	6	85	
Churchill FRIENDS FRC	1	5	65	2	58	
Carson City/Douglas Ron Wood FRC	1.5	11	97	9	73	
Pahrump/S. Nye East Valley Family Services FRC	.5	9	20	0	21	
<b>Total Rural</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>300</b>	
<b>Total State</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>1,066</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>965</b>	

\*Children's Cabinet is funded by WCDSS to provide DR services. While they are not being funded by FRC state funding, they are participating in the training and other DR activities and their data is incorporated into the evaluation information.

## **Child Fatality**

Nevada makes every effort to reduce the number of preventable child fatalities and near fatalities through prevention messaging, training and other initiatives. Nevada's child fatality review process includes local multi-disciplinary teams reviewing all deaths of children, ages 0-17 years of age, within their own communities and making recommendations to the Executive Team to Review the Death of Children.

The Administrative Team to Review the Death of Children was combined with the Executive Committee to Review the Death of Children in response to legislation passed during the 2013 State of Nevada Legislative Session. NRS 432B.409 also allows for the local multidisciplinary teams to use aggregate data for research and prevention purposes under certain circumstances.

The Executive Committee is comprised of members from each Regional Multidisciplinary Child Death Review Teams (MDTs) as well as other stakeholders from vital statistics, public health, mental health and public safety. The Executive Committee meets quarterly and reviews reports and recommendations from local multidisciplinary teams and determines the action to be taken or if a prevention initiative is already in place. The Executive Committee makes the funding decisions about the recommended actions for prevention and awareness initiatives, oversees training initiatives, oversees training and development of the MDT's, compiles and distributes a statewide annual child death report, and adopts statewide protocol. Initiatives during SFY 2015 have included:

- Suicide Prevention-Text4Life program-Crisis Call Center
- Water Safety and Drowning Prevention-Southern Nevada Health Department
- Prevent Child Abuse Nevada- Safe Haven outreach and conference
- Teen Driving- "DRIVE" program-Department of Public Safety

Public disclosures concerning a fatality or near fatality of a child who is the subject of a report of abuse or neglect are posted on Nevada's Health and Human Services – DCFS website at the initial 48 hour notice and after appropriate updates in compliance with CAPTA and NRS 432B.175. The public disclosures are submitted from the child welfare agencies and include the following information:

- The cause and circumstance regarding the child fatality or near fatality
- The age and gender of the child
- Previous reports of child abuse or neglect that are pertinent to the abuse or neglect that led to the child fatality or near fatality
- Previous investigations pertinent to the abuse or neglect that led to the child fatality or near fatality and results of investigations
- The services and actions provided by the child welfare agency on behalf of the child that are pertinent to the abuse or neglect that led to the child fatality or near fatality.

Any instance of a child suffering from a fatality or near-fatality, where an investigation is conducted, there had been prior contact with household members, or the child was in the custody of a child welfare agency, is subjected to an internal case review by the child welfare agency and DCFS. In incidences where a child welfare agency had prior contact with the household members or the child was in the custody of a child welfare agency a review is also completed by the State of Nevada Legislative Council Bureau. Trends regarding practice methods, policies and systemic issues are tracked by DCFS.

### **Data Collection**

Data from the National Center for the Review and Prevention of Child Death's database is used by the Executive Committee to Review the Death of Children to complete an annual report which is disseminated statewide to stakeholders and posted on the DCFS website. The Committee had used data from the Nevada State Vital Statistics for the annual report; however, due to delays in obtaining this data the decision was made to rely solely on the National Center for the Review and Prevention of Child's Death for the data compiled and incorporated into the statewide annual report. Data received from the National Center for the Review and Prevention of Child's Death was accurate when compared to Vital Statistics' data. Nevada continues to explore how to obtain information from Vital Statistics timely and how to best use the data in its reporting to NCANDS regarding child fatalities as a result of child abuse or neglect.

Child fatalities as a result of child maltreatment are captured in and reported to NCANDS through the State of Nevada SAWCIS system, UNITY. Child welfare agency staff use a variety of sources to capture and record this data which

includes: information from child death review teams, law enforcement reports and medical examiners or coroner's reports. The number of NCANDS reported fatalities has increased since the last reporting period from 11 in FFY13 to 14 in FFY14. Homicides however have decreased from 10 in FFY13 to 8 in FFY14.

## **Child Welfare Agency Progress towards SAFETY goals identified in the CFSP**

### **CCDFS PROGRESS**

Progress on implementation of The Nevada Safety Model known as Safety Intervention Permanency System (SIPS) by Clark County Department of Family services CCDFS in support of Goal 1: Children will be safe in out of home care and Goal 2: Children will be safe in their own homes.

- CCDFS has continued to work with Action for Child Protection (ACTION) to implement SIPS for CPS staff in all regions in Clark County. Central site staff were trained on the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) between August and October 2014 along with staff from the Emergency Response Team (ERT). Additional trainings were held for staff assigned to specialized units beginning in December 2014, and NIA training concluded in April 2015 with staff assigned to the North Region. The CCDFS Management Team was trained on the Protective Caregiver Family Assessment (PCFA) and Protective Caregiver Progress Assessment (PCPA) in May 2015.

Progress on how the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) implementation is supporting Goal 1: Children and Youth will be Safe in out of home care for your agency.

- In order to further support the goal of ensuring children are safe in out of home care, CCDFS has continued to implement and refine the Foster Parent Champions program. This is a caregiver support program designed to ensure that caregivers receive all of the support they need from CCDFS to ensure the safety of children in out of home care. This program in conjunction with a caregiver survey that was recently administered has helped CCDFS identify ways in which the department can support caregivers in order to ensure they do not become overwhelmed with the child welfare system. Finally, the QPI workgroups have also addressed training issues they believe will help ensure the safety of children in out of home care. The training workgroup has been working state wide to put forth recommendations to change relicensing hours from 4 to 12 with mandatory trainings associated with some of those hours.

Report on how Differential Response (DR) supports your agency on ensuring children will be safe in their own homes.

- DR is able to support CCDFS by conducting assessments on families that are identified as having no safety concerns noted in the initial report. Unfortunately, though, one of the biggest barriers to utilization of DR is that they have capped caseloads of 20. Often times they are at their cap and are unable to evaluate the cases that would be better served by an assessment for services instead of an assessment for present or impending danger. It would be beneficial to CCDFS if DR were able to increase their caseload amount. It would be the desires of the CCDFS to have DR take all P3 reports if they were funded to support the workload.

Additionally, CCDFS have completed the installation of the NIA assessment in all CPS zones as of the end of April 2015. All CPS units are currently up and running on the enhanced safety practice model.

### **CCDFS PLANNED ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR UP-COMING SFY 2016**

CCDFS plans to continue with the SIPS implementation. Ongoing assessments and reviews will be conducted regarding staff progress as it relates to the Intake Assessment (IA) and Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) during SFY 2016. The Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) training and implementation is slated to begin by July 2015 for the South region and will be rolled out to all other geographic zones during SFY 2016. Also, the Protective Capacity Progress Assessment (PCPA) training and implementation will begin in SFY 2016.

Additionally, CCDFS has the following planned activities related to the established QPI workgroups for SFY 2016:

#### **CHILD WELFARE WORKGROUP**

- Development of a Partnership Agreement: A Plan to be signed by CCDFS case managers and individual foster parents which emphasizes a relationship of mutual respect and delineates the roles and expectations of each in promoting the QPI Brand Message.
- The implementation of Normalcy Standards.

- The modification of the Babysitting Policy.
- The development of a Foster Parent Manual.
- The development of 360 Evaluations.
- 

#### COMMUNICATIONS WORKGROUP

- The development of a Communication Strategic Plan
- The development of a Marketing Campaign.

#### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP WORKGROUP

- The implementation of the Foster Friends Program which is a partnership with businesses and other community organizations to provide special discounts, services and offers EXCLUSIVELY to our foster parents. It is a way for businesses and organizations to say “thank you” to our foster parents and give them a little help to provide for their families.

#### RECRUITMENT WORKGROUP

- The modification of the recruitment event processes.
- Market segmentation: Work with National Recourse Center (NRC), through the Diligent Recruitment Grant to identify a plan to recruit quality families and develop goals that will meet those needs.
- Geographic Information Systems Program: To develop maps to use in the recruitment process with market segmentation.
- HUB Homes: Zip code Recruitment strategy.
- 

#### SUPPORT AND RETENTION WORKGROUP

- Bulletin Boards: Placement of message boards at each CCDFS site to encourage awareness and participation in QPI events.
- Grievance/Concern: Development of a grievance/concern policy that will allow caregivers a process to resolve concerns in a proactive and consistent manner.
- Decision Making: Assist administration in developing plans for decision making and enforcing policy that affect the foster care community.
- Retention Activities: Development of retention activities to acknowledge and support quality parenting among caregivers that complement DFS' overall retention plan found in other QPI work groups.
- Attrition: Foster Parent Champion program will receive a list of the closed homes each month. They will conduct a survey and report out any trends or recommended changes based on surveys.
- 

#### TRAINING WORKGROUP

- The development of Caregiver Pre-Service training

Planned activities around support from DR for SFY 2016-

CCDFS will continue to advocate for increased funding for the program through grants and/or increase in the State budget.

Additionally, the CCDFS plans to begin installation of the PCFA and PCPA starting in July 2015. This will be a phased implementation similar to the NIA, and CCDFS will be implementing safety services within each site around July 1st utilizing the IV-E Waiver Demonstration Grant. This, too, will be a phased implementation and will be coordinated with the installation of PCFA and PCPA.

### ***DCFS RURAL REGION PROGRESS***

Progress on implementation of The Nevada Safety Model known as Safety Intervention Permanency System (SIPS) by the DCFS Rural Region in support of Goal 1: Children will be safe in out of home care and Goal 2: Children will be safe in their own homes

- The DCFS Rural Region implemented the Confirming Safe Environment (CSE) safety assessment process for children placed in out of home care in 2013. The CSE method is a practical way to think about and assess a child's safety in kin and foster care placements. Additionally, CSE considers positive attributes in four areas of kin and foster family life to confirm safety: child attributes; kin and foster caregivers; family; and community. CSE also factors in assessment of important placement issues such as acceptance of the placed child in the home; features of the kin placement; and features of the foster care placement. CSE addresses the requirements to evaluate safety in placements contained in the Adoption and Safe Family Act (ASFA). The DCFS Rural Region is

integrating the principles of the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) into how it relates to foster families as well as the entire child welfare system.

Progress on how the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) implementation is supporting Goal 1: Children and Youth will be Safe in out of home care for your agency.

- DCFS has implemented the SAFE practice model, which includes the assessment of Present and Impending Danger of children who are living in the home with their parents. Additionally, safety assessments are conducted at identified milestones throughout the life of an open case to continually reassess safety. In home safety plans are utilized when safety threats are identified and can be managed while parents engage in case plan activities to create second order change.
- QPI is redefining the role of foster parents by acknowledging the foster parent as an expert on the child and embracing their expertise as a team member who has valuable input on the decisions that affect the well-being and safety of foster children. The specific job of the foster parent is to provide high quality parenting consistent with the needs of the child. An important objective of this initiative is to provide much needed support to our foster families, as well as an on-line video training library, so that children and youth placed in foster care will be more likely to stay in the same placement until reunification or permanency is achieved. It is clear that when foster families feel safe in expressing their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their victories and defeats to other families going through like circumstances, the fostering experience takes on a deeper meaning. Also, due to the rural character of this region, it is imperative for foster families to connect with each other in regards to specific resources available to them. The DCFS Rural Region is establishing four foster parent support groups, in the following areas; Carson City, Elko, Fallon and Pahrump.
- With the participation of DCFS throughout the Rural Region and its communities, a QPI network is forming that shares information and ideas about how to improve parenting, recruit and retain excellent foster families. Caregivers receive the support and training through on-line QPI video trainings that they need to work with children and families successfully. Agencies are then able to select and retain enough excellent caregivers to meet the needs, as well as safety, of each child for a home and family.

Report on how Differential Response (DR) supports your agency on ensuring children will be safe in their own homes.

- Nevada's DR program supports the child welfare agency by responding to less severe child abuse and/or neglect reports in several counties throughout rural Nevada. When reports alleging child abuse or neglect are reviewed and a determination has been made by the child welfare agency that the family is likely to benefit from early intervention through an assessment of the family for appropriate services that considers their unique strengths, risks and individual needs, rather than the traditional investigative approach. The DR cases include; education neglect, environmental neglect, inadequate clothing, inadequate food, inadequate supervision, lock out, and medical neglect. Additionally, DR services include assessment, education and linkage to needed services within the given communities, among others. Nevada's DR program has proven to be a valuable service; however, it is not offered in all rural counties. Expansion of DR services into the rural communities of Battle Mountain, Winnemucca, Ely and Tonopah is needed and has been requested. It is yet to be determined how those programs could be funded.

## **DCFS RURAL REGION PLANNED ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR UP-COMING SFY 2016**

Over the next year the DCFS Rural Region will be exploring the feasibility of incorporating the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) and the Protective Capacity Progress Assessment (PCPA) into the child welfare practice model. DCFS recognizes we may not have the infrastructure to roll out the PCFA and the PCPA region wide at this time. A pilot project is planned in one or two units. Data will be gathered and a strategic plan developed about what is needed to successfully roll out region wide.

Through QPI there are several activities that DCFS will be supporting for the betterment of foster children. One activity is to design and implement a "Partnership Plan" with a commitment to shared principles to replace the systemic driven caseworker-parent relationships realizing that the safety and the success of the foster child is better built with teamwork. Another activity is to build a better "transition" process for children moving from their own homes to foster care or to other foster homes, to relatives, or back to their biological families with all child information to ensure that it is in the best interest of the child and the safest. An initiative for greater "normalcy" in the lives of children in foster care is another project that the DCFS Rural Region plans on implementing. QPI assists with balancing the goals of normalcy and safety for the youth

by supporting and promoting the "Prudent Parenting" initiative which will better enable foster youth to participate in normal life experiences while in foster care.

Lastly, information sharing between the DCFS Rural Region and the foster parents is another area identified as needing more collaboration. It was recognized that there was not consistency of what information could be shared with foster parents throughout the Rural Region. It is known that a well-informed caregiver is better able to meet the needs of a child in care and is better prepared to handle challenges particular to the child. Increased participation by foster parents in court proceedings is being strongly encouraged. Resource lists for the foster parents throughout the Rural Region have been developed and will be maintained and updated to provide foster parents with supports needed for a successful placement. Collaboration with other agencies, both public and private, is also paramount to the support of our foster homes in the Rural Region.

## **WCDSS PROGRESS**

Progress on implementation of The Nevada Safety Model known as SAFE or SAFE-FC by WCDSS in support of Goal 1: Children will be safe in out of home care and Goal 2: Children will be safe in their own homes.

- WCDSS continued implementation of SAFE as approved by the Children's Bureau through the Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII). A goal of PII was to reduce long term foster care and WCDSS hypothesized that improved safety and permanency outcomes will be achieved if 1) impending danger is adequately assessed; 2) unsafe children and their families are offered/provided in-home safety services to protect children in their own homes (when caregivers are willing/able to accept safety services at that level of intensity needed); 3) caregivers are successfully engaged to address safety threats and build caregiver capacities; 4) safety is managed through in-home safety services or temporary out-of-home placement; 5) SMART case plans focus intensive, purposeful change focused services; 6) change focused services are provided to support caregivers and children to achieve goals that will change the behaviors and conditions that would otherwise lead to placement in long-term foster care; and 7) the practice protocol involves regular measurement of goal achievement and changes in behaviors and conditions. Because PII was a rigorous research project, WCDSS was required to serve permanency cases through either the SAFE-FC approach or Usually Permanency Services (UPS). Case randomization concluded October 31, 2014, and research officially ended April 30, 2015

Progress on how the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) implementation is supporting Goal 1: Children and Youth will be Safe in out of home care for your agency.

- Implementation of QPI in WCDSS is supporting safety concepts in out-of-home placements through improved information sharing between worker and substitute care provider. For example, as part of SAFE implementation, Confirming Safe Environments is required for all out-of-home placements. The purpose is to explore how the substitute care provider is meeting the unique needs of the child. The improved information sharing and partnership agreement stemming from QPI produces a more specific and purposeful assessment of caregiver ability to provide a safe home for each child.

Report on how Differential Response (DR) supports your agency on ensuring children will be safe in their own homes.

- Differential Response (DR) accepts maltreatment referrals considered less severe than CPS investigations. In WCDSS the DR worker collaboratively works with families to assess needs and to provide direct services or service referrals. Due to the significant financial obligation by WCDSS to DR referrals, capacity is not a concern.

Additionally, WCDSS continues to conduct ongoing fidelity assessments regarding implementation of the SAFE model and is found to be in high compliance.

## WCDSS PLANNED ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR UP-COMING SFY 2016

WCDSS is in full-scale implementation of SAFE for all permanency workers with a completion schedule of December 2015. There are three phases of training for Usual Permanency Services (UPS) including supervisors and managers that begins June 2015. Staff will be trained in the PCFA, PCPA, and Safety Management concepts. Training includes practicums to practice learned methods. Additionally, there is a strong supervisor consultation associated to SAFE and all supervisors will be coached by ACTION for Child Protection on effective supervisory consultation.

There are many activities involved with QPI including a planned statewide webinar for information sharing and learning. Active efforts are underway to install partnership agreements and normalcy expectations. At each monthly division meeting, line staff and a foster parent presents a scenario or situation in which QPI helped improve outcomes for the children and families they worked together to support. Each month there are training updates and new videos recorded.

WCDSS hosted a hugely successful foster parent appreciation dinner on May 16, 2015. Staff suggested and then contributed to making appreciation baskets to be distributed as raffle prizes.

## ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE in SAFETY

Each of the three performance indicators listed in this section mirrors the Federal Statewide Assessment Instrument. The overall structure for each performance outcome/indicator includes the legal requirements for each item and to the extent applicable the most recent Federal data profile, previous CFSR data/information, most recent case review data or relevant state data, and most recent stakeholder survey/focus group data/information.

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

As previously indicated Nevada met the negotiated target in the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for the non-overlapping period ending 03/31/2014 as reported by the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) data from FY 2013B/2014A indicated in Table 3.2. Nevada did not meet the National Standard at 99.68.

Also, as previously indicate the CFSR Round 3 Statewide data Indicators Workbook is the most recent data provided by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) using the new federal measurement methodology. ACF provided a new Data profile on June 23, 2015 using the old methodology and that data is provided in Table 3.2. In Table 3.4 the workbook uses the FY 2013 NCANDS submission data for this measure utilizing the new methodology. Using this data Nevada did not met the national standard for FY 2013.

**Table 3.2: Nevada Data Profile (using old methodology)**

Federal Performance Measure	National Standard	Direction of Strength	FY2013	FY 2013B/ 2014A PIP target= 99.64	FY 2014 AB
Safety Indicator 2: Absence of CA/N In foster care	99.68	↑	99.53	99.66	99.73

Green Shading = Meets Standard; Red Shading = Below Standard; Yellow Shading=above median below standard

**Table 3.4: CFSR Round 3 Statewide data Indicators Workbook (using new methodology)**

Federal Performance Measure	National Standard	Data Source	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI <sup>10</sup>	RSP	Upper CI
Maltreatment in foster care	8.04 <sup>11</sup>	NCANDS FY 2013	↓	7.39	8.74	10.37 <sup>12</sup>	12.31

Green Shading = Meets Standard; Red Shading = Below Standard; Yellow Shading=above median below standard

<sup>10</sup> CI=Confidence Interval

<sup>11</sup> Victimization per 100,000 days in care

<sup>12</sup> NCANDS FY 2013 data



### CPS Response Time:

CPS response time in hours is defined as the time between the receipt of a referral alleging maltreatment to the state or local agency face-to-face contact with the alleged victim (when appropriate) or another person who can provide information on the allegation.

The most recent Nevada data profile information is provided in Table 3.5. Nevada's mean, average and median CPS Response Time in hours has been decreasing over the last several years indicating improvement in the overall time CPS is responding to a report alleging maltreatment of a child as reported in the most recent published (2014) Child Maltreatment Report.

**Table 3.5: CPS Response Time**

	<b>FFY 2010</b>	<b>FFY 2011</b>	<b>FFY 2012</b>	<b>FFY 2013</b>
Median Time to Investigation in Hours (Child file)	>24 but <48	>24 but <48	>24 but <48	<24
Mean Time to Investigation in Hours (Agency file)	18.4	15.7	17.1	14.1
Average time to Investigation in Hours (Agency file)	13.4	13.2	15.1	12.5

Source: Child Maltreatment Report (published 2014)

## **Item 1: Timeliness of initializing investigations of reports of child maltreatment**

### Requirements

The Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) sets forth parameters for developing regulations establishing reasonable and uniform standards for child welfare services across the state to include criteria mandating certain situations be responded to immediately (NRS 432B.260), and that determinations of abuse and/or neglect be made in cases in which an investigation has occurred. NAC requires a process be established when receiving a referral and determining if that referral constitutes a report of abuse or neglect.

When a referral is received by an intake worker alleging possible child maltreatment, a supervisor reviews the information, makes a determination of whether the referral will become a report, and what type of response the report merits. If the referral becomes a report, it is assigned to a CPS caseworker for investigation. Statewide Intake and Response Time Policy 0506 outlines the expected response time for the type of child maltreatment allegation. The timeline begins with the assignment of the referral to an intake worker. The following are child welfare agency response times that are outlined in Intake Policy/table 0506.5.1:

- **Priority 1:** within 3 hours when the identified danger is urgent or of emergency status; there is present danger; and safety factors are identified. This response type requires a face-to-face contact by CPS.
- **Priority 1 Rural:** within 6 hours when the identified danger is urgent or of emergency status; there is present danger; and safety factors are identified. This response type requires a face-to-face contact by CPS. (Rural time includes a distance factor).
- **Priority 2:** within 24 hours with any maltreatment of impending danger; safety factors identified including child fatality. This response type requires a face-to-face contact by CPS or may involve collateral contact by telephone or case review.
- **Priority 3:** within 72 hours when maltreatment is indicated, but no safety factors are identified. This response type requires a face-to-face contact by CPS or may involve collateral contact by telephone or case review. In situations where the initial contact is via telephone call, the agency must make a face to face contact with the alleged child victim within 24 hours following the telephone contact.

Referrals that do not rise to the level of an investigation may be referred to the Differential Response Program. The Differential Response Program has required response timelines in accordance with a Priority Code 3, or 72 hours.

The CFSR item #1 is measured utilizing a state's response time policy and/or regulation, and cases are applicable for an assessment of this item if an accepted child maltreatment report on any child in the family was received during the period under review. This includes reports assigned for an 'Alternative Response' assessment. Reports that are screened out are not considered 'accepted'. Alternative Response in Nevada is referred to as Differential Response and screened in as a Priority 3.

### CFSR 2009

During the CFSR in 2009, this item was applicable for 29 (47 percent) of 62 cases. Cases were not applicable when there were no child maltreatment reports during the period under reviews. Item 1 was rated as strength in 25 cases when the investigation was initiated and face-to face contact was made within the timeframes required by State policy. It was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in four cases when the investigation was not initiated within the required timeframes. Of these four cases, one involved a report assigned priority 1, one involved a report assigned priority 2 and two involved reports assigned priority 3. Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 86 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with required timeframes. The required percentage was 90.

The key issues addressed by stakeholder commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were the availability of hotlines for the reporting of child abuse and neglect, the timeliness of the agencies' responses to accepted reports of abuse and neglect, and coordination between child welfare agencies and law enforcement agencies with regard to responding to accepted reports of abuse and neglect.

With regard to the availability of hotlines for the reporting of child abuse and neglect, stakeholders expressed the opinion that the hotline is available, or calls are forwarded to on-call responders, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, in all areas of the State. Some Carson City stakeholders indicated that the hotline sometimes did not accept reports for investigation appropriately, rejecting some reports that should have been referred for investigation.

With regard to the effectiveness with which agencies respond in a timely manner to accepted reports of abuse and neglect, stakeholder expressed the opinion that the agency generally responds in a timely manner.

With regard to the coordination between child welfare agencies and law enforcement agencies, some Washoe County Stakeholders indicated that there is a Memorandum of Understand (MOU) between the child welfare agency and the law enforcement agency dictating protocols for reporting, investigation, substantiation, and removal.

As a result of the 2009 CFSR Nevada and ACF negotiated a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) that identified nine case review items that would be reviewed over the course of the PIP, and one national indicator. Item 1 was identified as needing improvement in 2009. The target set for item 1 was 80.4%, and over the course of the PIP Nevada met the target for item 1 at 81%.

### Statewide Data:

Nevada has continued to conduct Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) as part of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Table 3.6 provides case review data for 2014.

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**Table 3.6 Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

QICR 2014

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Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.

77.8 %

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In 2015 Nevada began using the Online Management System (OMS) developed by JBS for the Children's Bureau and for States conducting CQI Reviews. Nevada is currently collecting baseline data on all 18 CFSR items during CY 2015. Also, during the SFY 2016 it is anticipated that the current Intake Policy 0506 Statewide Intake and Response Times will be reviewed and modified for clarity.

Data from surveys conducted in 2014 for the CFSP in Table 3.7 provide information on Timeliness of Investigations. Survey Respondents were provided information on priority response times mandated by policy, and were asked how effective is the child welfare agency in initiating investigations based on priority response times. Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community

Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 127 responses to the survey. The effectiveness of the child welfare agency in conducting timely Investigations (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being Very effective) is presented in Table 3.7. The mean rating of 3.90 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that Child Welfare Agencies are usually effective in conducting timely investigations.

Overall, comments indicated that statewide staff have a solid understanding of the response times and policy requirements, and usually meet priority response times. Some of the potential barriers to timely investigations were identified by stakeholders as follows: inadequate staffing levels, high caseloads, distance for the DCFS Rural Region, an ability to locate the family, and inadequate reporter information. Responses during focus groups echoed the survey results in that overall stakeholder sentiment is that child welfare agencies generally respond as required to investigations.

**Table 3.7 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency’s timeliness in initiating investigations of child maltreatment?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
2.36%	5.51%	22.83%	38.38%	30.71%	127	3.90	0.74
(3)	(7)	(29)	(49)	(39)			

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

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

### ***Item 2: Services to families to protect children in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care***

#### Requirements

Pursuant to NRS 432B.340, when an agency which provides child welfare services determines that a child needs protection, but is not in imminent danger from abuse or neglect, the agency may offer the parents a plan for services and inform the parents that the agency has no legal authority to compel the family to accept the plan or file a petition pursuant to NRS 432B.490 and if the child is need of protection, request that the child be removed from the custody of his or her parents. NRS 432B.393 requires that the agency which provides child welfare services makes reasonable efforts to keep the child safely in the home before consideration is made to place the child outside of the home

Policy 0503 Differential Response procedures outlined in the policy are activated when reports alleging child neglect and a determination has been made that the report does not rise above a priority three, however based on the information provided at Intake, it appears that the family is likely to benefit from early intervention through an assessment of the family for appropriate services.

It is the responsibility of the agency which provides child welfare services per NAC 432B.240 to provide a range of services and commit its resources to preserve the family and prevent placement of the child outside his/her home when possible and appropriate. All cases open for service must have a written collaborative case plan (NAC 432B.240 and Policy 0204 Case Planning) which defines the overall goals of the case and the step-by-step proposed actions for all parties to take to reach the goals within a specified time period.

#### CFSR 2009

During the CSFR in 2009, this item was applicable in 41 (66 percent) of 62 cases. Cases were excluded if the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and there were no other children in the home, or if there was no substantiated maltreatment report or identified risk of harm to the children in the home during the period under review. There were 32 cases rated as strengths for this item and 9 cases rated as an area needing improvement. This Item was rated an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 78 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain children safety in their own homes. The required percentage is 90.

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CSFR addressed the effectiveness of the DR program and the belief that the State had improved the ability to prevent foster care placements through the use and coordination of services to support families. There was some discussion with regards to the issue of children returning home after brief

stays in foster indicating that children were either removed from home without the provision of appropriate services or returned home without appropriate support services to prevent re-entry.

Statewide Data

Nevada has continued to conduct Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) on this item. In the following Table 3.8 is the most current case review data as it relates to item 3.

<b>Table 3.8: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	QICR 2014
Item 2: Services to Families to protect children in home and Prevent removal or re-entry into foster care.	91.4 %

Nevada continues to improve on this item. During the 2014 QICRS, reviewers determined that child welfare agencies consistently provided prevention services to help protect children in their homes as well as in their out of home placements. When children were removed without services, it was to ensure child safety as immediate safety threats were present. In several in-home cases the agency made excellent use of weekly face to face contact with the custodial parents, and partnered with supportive services to improve the protective capacities of families. In other cases, the agency provided voluntary services to families to assist with referrals services, preventing future removals. Nevada is currently collecting baseline data on all 18 CFSR items during CY 2015.

Data from surveys conducted for the CFSP in Table 3.9 provide information on Services to Families to protect children. Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 132 responses to the survey.

The effectiveness of the child welfare agency in providing services, when appropriate to protect children in their own homes and prevent removal (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being Very effective) is presented in Table 3.9. The mean rating of 3.25 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that child welfare agencies are sometimes effective in providing services when appropriate to protect children in their own homes and prevent removal.

Overall, comments indicated the implementation of the new Nevada Safety Model is having some effect on decision making by caseworkers as it relates to removal of children from their homes. However, many Stakeholders expressed barriers to service provision i.e. availability of services in rural areas, no continuity of services due to staff turnover, and a lack of funding for in-home services, and in some areas a lack of community resources.

**Table 3.9 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in providing services, when appropriate, to protect children in their own homes and prevent removal?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
7.58% (10)	11.36% (15)	37.88% (50)	34.85% (46)	8.33% (11)	132	3.25	0.58

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

### Item 3: Risk Assessment and Safety Management

#### Requirements

Per NAC 432B.150, when an agency which provides child welfare services receives a report made pursuant to NRS 432B.220, or from law enforcement, an initial evaluation must be conducted to determine if the situation or condition of the child makes child welfare services appropriate.

If an agency assigns the report for investigation, a safety assessment is required to be completed upon the initial face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim pursuant to NAC 432B.185. In addition, NAC 432B.185 requires the development of a safety plan to ensure the immediate protection of a child while safety threats are being addressed. A Safety Assessment is required to be completed at case milestones as outlined in NAC 432B.185. Policies 0508 and 0509 address this information.

#### CFSR 2009

During the 2009 CFSR this item was applicable for all 62 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to address the risk of harm to the children involved in each case. This Item rated as strength in 34 cases when reviewers determined that the risk of harm to children was appropriately addressed by the agency through the following: conducting initial and ongoing assessment of risk and safety either in the children’s home or in the children’s foster home and addressing all safety-related concerns identified through the assessment. This Item was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 55 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to assess and address the risk of harm to the children. The required percentage was 90.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the NIA is completed to assess the safety and risk of children in the home and it identify services needed to prevent placement into foster care. Some stakeholders indicated that risk and safety are assessed initially and periodically at significant milestones during the life of the case. However, some Clark County and Washoe County stakeholders noted that the NIA is not used consistently. Some Carson City and Clark County stakeholders indicated that because of the very high level of risk that is required for children to be removed from their homes; the agency sometimes will leave children in their homes even when there are serious safety concerns.

#### Statewide Data

The CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data Indicators Workbook is the most recent data provided by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) using the new federal measurement methodology. Using this data Nevada met the national standard for “Recurrence of Maltreatment” FY 2012 as shown in Table 3.10.

**Table 3.10: CFSR Round 3 Statewide data Indicators Workbook (using new methodology)**

Federal Performance (SAFETY)	National Standard	Data Sources	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI <sup>13</sup>	RSP	Upper CI
Recurrence of Maltreatment	9.8%	NCANDS FY 2012	↓	6.0%	7.0%	7.8%	8.6

Green Shading = Meets Standard

Statewide Data from UNITY illustrated in Table 3.11 measures the effectiveness of child protective services in reducing the risk of harm for children who have been maltreated. For children with a substantiated report of abuse and/or neglect, it reflects the percentage of children who during each SFY 2014 and 2015 Quarters did not have a substantiated report in the six months prior to a substantiated report.

<sup>13</sup> CI=Confidence Interval

**Table 3.11 Percent of Children with Recurrent Abuse or Neglect**

	SFY 2014				SFY 2015		
	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter
Clark	96.11	96.36	96.53	95.74	96.8	94.83	96.48
Washoe	95.37	97.71	96.71	96.88	94.19	96.77	98.18
Rural	100	100	100	100	98.79	97.87	95.23
Statewide	96.23	96.78	96.78	96.12	96.42	95.43	96.76

Data Source: UNITY Report CFS7L8

Nevada has continued to conduct Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) on this item. In the following Table 3.11 is the most current case review data as it relates to item 3.

**Table 3.11: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data** QICR 2014

Item 3: Risk Assessment and Safety Management 74.2 %

Data from surveys conducted for the CFSP in Table 3.12 provide information on Risk Assessment and Safety Management. Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 113 responses to the survey.

The effectiveness of the child welfare agency in identifying and assessing safety and impending danger to children and youth in their homes or in foster care (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being Very effective) is presented in Table 3.12. The mean rating of 3.33 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that Child Welfare Agencies are sometimes effective in identifying and assessing safety and impending danger to children and youth in their homes or in foster care.

Overall, comments indicated that there is a great deal of focus on training in this area with implementation of the new Nevada SAFE Model. Stakeholders reported that fidelity reviews are on-going and are demonstrating positive results. Also, stakeholders indicate that as caseworkers become more familiar with the SAFE model it will improve decision making surrounding safety and impending dangers to children and youth. However, some stakeholders indicated concern that in some areas of the state the lack of experienced workers and open positions lessens the effectiveness of the model.

**Table 3.12 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in identifying and assessing safety and impending dangers to children and youth including those in foster care?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
4.42% (5)	15.04% (17)	37.17% (42)	30.09% (34)	13.27% (13)	113	3.33	0.50

N=Number of Survey Respondents

SD=Standard Deviation

### Strengths/Concerns (Safety Outcomes 1 & 2)

Nevada has strength in CPS response time in hours as reflected by the decrease in hours as represented in the most recent Federal data profile. Generally, current stakeholder sentiment from the survey conducted in 2014 for the CFSP indicate that CPS staff have a solid understanding of the response times and policy requirements as it relates to timeliness of investigations, and are usually effective in responding to those investigations per policy timeframes. Nevada has been working for many years with ACTION 4 Protection on implementation of the Nevada Safety Model.

Nevada met the PIP target for Absence of Child abuse and Neglect in foster care during the non-overlapping PIP period but did not achieve the national standard. Nevada is awaiting NCANDS data for FY 2014 using the new federal methodology. Nevada is not meeting Timeliness of Investigations as it related to Case Reviews at the 95% target.

Nevada has strength in the ability to ensure that children are not re-abused within six months of a substantiated report of maltreatment as reflected in the achievement of meeting and exceeding the national standard for ‘Absence of Recurrence of maltreatment’ based on the new federal methodology. Generally, Stakeholder sentiment from surveys conducted in 2014 for the 2015-2019 CFSP indicated there were a variety of reasons that cause recurrence of maltreatment in Nevada communities. As Nevada continues to implement the Nevada Safety Model with fidelity there will be better assessment of the needs of families and children by caseworkers. This will contribute to better identification of service needs of families as well as service array needs of communities.

Item 3 is an area needing improvement during case reviews; however, some stakeholders expressed during surveys conducted in 2014 for the 2015-2019 CFSP that the implementation of the Nevada Safety Model is having some effect on decision making by caseworkers as it relates to removal of children. Additionally, stakeholders from the 2014 surveys for the 2015-2019 CFSP expressed some concerns that there are continued barriers to ensuring children are provided appropriate available services indicating a lack of services in some rural areas, no continuity of services due to staff turnover, and in general statewide a lack of funding for in-home services.

Safety Outcome 1 and 2 are areas needing improvement.

## Section IV. PERMANENCY

### Trends in Permanency

The CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data Indicators Workbook is the most recent data provided by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) using the new federal measurement methodology. The ACF has not provided Nevada with a new Data Profile using the new measure methodology. Table 4.1 illustrates Nevada Performance on all new Permanency Measures. As shown below Nevada is meeting standards on all measures except Placement Stability.

**Table 4.1 CFSR Round 3 Statewide data Indicators Workbook**

Federal Performance (Permanency)	National Standard	Data Sources	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI <sup>14</sup>	RSP	Upper CI
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.4%	AFCARS 11B & 12A	↑	42.5%	39.9%	41.8%	43.6%
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12-24 months	43.7%	AFCARS 13B & 14A	↑	53.6%	47.3%	49.8%	52.3%
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more	30.3%	AFCARS 13B & 14A	↑	44.3%	35.1%	37.4%	39.7%
Placement Stability	4.12 moves <sup>15</sup>	AFCARS 13B & 14A	↓	5.99	6.11	6.35	6.6

Green Shading = Meets Standard; Red Shading = Below Standard;

<sup>14</sup> CI=Confidence Interval

<sup>15</sup> Moves per 1,000 Days

## **Child Welfare Agency Progress towards PERMANENCY goals identified in the CFSP**

### ***CCDFS PROGRESS***

Progress on Specialized Foster Care implementation as it relates to a 1. Decrease in placement disruptions; 2. Decrease in re-entry of children into foster care and 3. Progress on how children in the Specialized Foster Care (pilot) are achieving permanency in 12 months.

- CCDFS has seen a 32% decrease in placement disruptions among children receiving services through the Specialist Foster Care Pilot/Implementation. CCDFS indicates that 40% of children in the pilot have achieved permanency through reunification or adoption and there is no indication that children return to care once they exit to permanency.

### **CCDFS PLANNED ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR UP-COMING SFY 2016**

CCDFS plans to continue implementation of Specialized Foster Care in SFY 2016. The goal is to expand services so that the CCDFS can continue to see a decrease in the number of children hospitalized, placement disruptions and use of psychotropic medications.

### ***DCFS RURAL REGION PROGRESS***

Progress on the Specialized Foster Care implementation as it relates to a 1. Decrease in placement disruptions; 2. Decrease in re-entry of children into foster care and 3. Progress on how children in the Specialized Foster Care (pilot) are achieving permanency in 12 months for your Agency.

- The DCFS Rural Region implemented Specialized Foster Care in February, 2013 and has continued to grow the program since that date. Since its inception 12 youth in the custody of DCFS have participated. Due to the small population, data is combined with the WCDSS population. At the 18<sup>th</sup> month duration, 72 youth in the custody of WCDSS and DCFS Rural Region have been served.
- There have been few placement changes for youth in Specialized Foster Care and placement changes have decreased 100% for this population. Youth had an average of four placements in the six months preceding their entry into Specialized Foster Care, with the average dropping to less than one move for the remainder of the 18 months that the pilot had been in place.
- Additionally, 40 youth have discharged from the pilot with 42.5% of these youth achieving permanency through reunification or adoption. Re-entry for this population will be tracked to determine re-entry rates.

### **PLANNED ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR UP-COMING SFY 2016**

During the 2015 Legislature, the DCFS Rural Region was approved to establish a Specialized Foster Care Unit. This unit will consist of a Clinical Program manager, four Mental Health Counselors, two Social Workers and an Administrative Assistant. This unit is anticipated to serve approximately 40 children. It is expected that this unit will continue to have the positive outcomes for the population as are currently being seen in the Pilot, and will assist with decreasing placement disruptions, youth re-entering foster care and youth achieving permanency more timely.

In addition to this new unit, the DCFS Rural Region will continue its efforts with QPI to recruit and retain foster families who will be able to maintain youth in their homes with the added support of the Specialized Foster Care Unit. As part of QPI, these families will also work towards achieving permanency for the youth through working with biological parents and caregivers for reunification or assisting in the adoption process.



## **WCDSS PROGRESS**

Progress on the Specialized Foster Care implementation as it relates to a 1. Decrease in placement disruptions; 2. Decrease in re-entry of children into foster care and 3. Progress on how children in the Specialized Foster Care (pilot) are achieving permanency in 12 months.

- At the 18th month evaluation point, the DCFS Program Evaluation Unit (PEU) identified that WCDSS had a total of 60 children enrolled (i.e., 21 in Specialized Foster Care; 39 in Intensive Foster Care). The mean age of WCDSS' Pilot children was 12.32 years of age. With regards to permanency plans, Reunification was identified for 43 children; Adoption for 10 children; and Long-Term Foster Care for 7 children.
- WCDSS has had 33 children discharge from the Pilot, with 11 from Specialized Foster Care and 22 from Intensive Foster Care. Of the 40 children, 25 children had a permanency status rating of Fair to Achieved, while 15 had a permanency status rating of Marginal to Poor. Considering that 33 of the 40 youth that have discharged from the Pilot Program as tracked by PEU at the 18th month mark, 42.5% were reunified or adopted; 7.5% reached the age of 18; 20% were able to transition to Regular Foster Care; 5% were placed with Relatives; 2.5% transitioned to Independent Living; and 22.5% were classified as other.
- Overall, the 18th month evaluation results that the average number of placement changes for youth in the Pilot decreased by 100%; Runaways decreased by 96%; Hospitalizations decreased by 100%; only one youth spent time in Detention; and children experienced no changes in school placement. Children in the Pilot also experienced fewer therapies (i.e., Individual; Family; and Group); fewer Psychiatry visits; less Psychosocial Rehabilitation; and received fewer Psychotropic Medications.

## **PLANNED ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR UP-COMING SFY 2016**

WCDSS plans to increase implementation activities to include an additional 30 children enrolled during the SFY 2016.. Also, WCDSS will continue to partner with the DCFS Program and Evaluation Unit to evaluate the efficacy of the program.

## **ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE in PERMANENCY**

Each of the eight performance indicators listed in this section mirrors the Federal Statewide Assessment Instrument. The overall structure for each performance outcome/indicator includes the legal requirements for each item and to the extent applicable the most recent Federal data profile, previous CFSR data/information, most recent case review data or relevant state data, and most recent stakeholder survey/focus group data/information.

### **Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations**

#### ***Item 4: Stability of foster care placement***

##### Requirements

Nevada Statute and Administrative Code supports the placement stability of children in foster care by requiring child welfare agencies to assess the individual needs of the child, and to place that child in the least restrictive environment that is consistent with the identified needs. Relatives are the first placement option considered for all children placed in out-of-home care. Child welfare agencies are also required to place siblings together when possible. Policy requires that the agency provides the foster care provider with appropriate information about the child's family, medical, and behavioral history, as well as discussing the child's plan for permanency, and any needs prior to placement. The purpose of sharing such information is to identify and provide for the most appropriate matched foster home (NRS 424.038(1), NAC 424.465).

NAC further requires that information about the child’s situation and needs are to be continually shared by the child welfare agency and the foster care providers in a timely manner; thereby ensuring that the child’s needs are continually addressed with appropriate services. This includes a requirement of the agency to provide a program of respite for the foster providers (NAC 424.810, NAC 424.805). NAC supports placement stability by requiring that a foster care provider provide the child welfare agency with 10 working days’ notice of any request for the removal of the child from that home unless: they have a contrary agreement or if there are immediate and unanticipated safety issues, thus giving the agency time to respond to issues that may have caused the instability (NAC 424.478).

Placement stability is further supported by NRS, NAC and statewide policy by encouraging child welfare agencies to attain permanency in a timely fashion. State laws and regulations require that the agencies adopt a plan for the permanent placement of the child. This plan is to be monitored by the court at the time the youth is placed in foster care and annually thereafter. The plan for permanent placement or case plan is to include a statement addressing goals and objectives; a description of the home or institution the child is placed; and a description of the safety and appropriateness of the placement, so to ensure proper care and accomplishment of case plan goals; and that a description of the manner in which the agency ensures services are provided to the child and foster parents, which address the needs of the child. The agencies are further required to document all progress towards permanency; and in the event that a termination of parental rights requires the agency to identify and document the obstacles to permanent placement of the child and specific steps to find a stable and permanent home (NRS 432B.553, NAC 432B.400, NAC 432B.2625, Policy 0204).

Other statewide policies require caseworkers to visit children in foster care once every month and directs a portion of this monthly visit by the caseworkers to assess the child’s adjustment to the placement and the stability of the placement; the case workers are to meet with the foster care provider and discuss the service needs of the child or provider, that may support the placement (Policy 0205).

The CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data Indicators Workbook is the most recent data provided by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) using the new federal measurement methodology. ACF has not provided Nevada with a new Data Profile using the new measure methodology. Table 4.2 illustrates Nevada Performance on Placement Stability using the new Federal methodology. Nevada is not meeting the national standard on this measure.

**Table 4.2 CFSR Round 3 Statewide data Indicators Workbook**

Federal Performance (Permanency)	National Standard	Data Sources	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI <sup>16</sup>	RSP	Upper CI
Placement Stability	4.12 moves <sup>17</sup>	AFCARS 13B & 14A	↓	5.99	6.11	6.35	6.6

Green Shading = Meets Standard; Red Shading = Below Standard;

**CFSR 2009**

In 2009 all 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of placement stability. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement settings during the period under review and, if so whether the changes in placement settings were necessary to achieve the child’s permanency goal or meet the child’s service needs. Reviewers also assessed the stability of the child’s most recent placement setting. Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 65 percent of the cases, reviewer’s determined that children experienced placement stability. The required percentage was 90.

Stakeholders commenting on this item expressed various opinions:

- The CCDFS placement review team meetings help stabilize placements for children in foster care,
- The Child and Family Team (CFT) process helps stabilize placements for children in foster care,
- Children who need therapeutic foster care placement do not always have stable placements; sometimes they are placed in nontherapeutic foster homes due to a lack of therapeutic foster homes,
- There is a lack of transition planning for children when their placements change contribute to instability because there is insufficient preparation for the new placement; and

<sup>16</sup> CI=Confidence Interval

<sup>17</sup> Moves per 1,000 Days

- Children sometimes have needs that the foster family is not equipped to address.

**Statewide Data**

In 2015 Nevada began using the new Online Management System (OMS) developed by JBS for the Children’s Bureau and extended to states for use with their own CQI systems conducting case reviews. Nevada has not been able to collect case review data on this item in the past; however, Nevada will have baseline data at the end of CY 2015 after review of 65 cases statewide using the OMS.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on stability of foster care placements as shown in Table 4.3. Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 168 responses to the survey.

The effectiveness of the child welfare agency in providing placement stability for children and youth in foster (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 4.3. The mean rating of 3.29 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that child welfare agencies are sometimes effective in providing stability for foster children in foster care.

Overall, comments indicated that the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) and the specialized foster care pilot is a good beginning to stabilization of foster care placements. However, many stakeholders indicated concerns that there is a lack of adequate foster care placements and not enough recruitment of quality homes in order to ensure appropriate matching. Also, there were some concern noted that some foster parents are not prepared for placements. Responses during focus groups echoed the survey results in that overall stakeholder sentiment is there is a need for additional foster homes, and youth were particularly adamant of the need for quality homes and adequate support and training to foster parents.

**Table 4.3 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency providing stable placements for children and youth in foster care?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
8.93% (15)	9.52% (16)	38.10% (64)	30.92% (52)	12.50% (21)	168	3.29	0.53

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

***Item 5: Permanency goal for child***

**Requirements**

NRS 432B.393, .540, .553, .580 and .590 require agencies that provide child welfare services to adopt a plan for permanency in accordance with the requirements and timeframes in the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA); including periodic case review by the Courts. NAC 423B.013, .1364, .1366, .160, .180, .185, .190, .200, .210, .240, .261, .2625 and .263 provide the authority and requirements for assessing the child’s safety needs, child and family strengths, needs and risk factors to determine the most appropriate permanency goal(s).

The statewide 0204 Case Planning policy, based upon the existing statutory authority and regulations cited has been revised several times over the past several years to ensure steps are provided to guide caseworkers in determining the most appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care. Furthermore, the policy provides an additional Concurrent Planning Guide to help caseworkers identify indicators suggesting the likelihood of early reunification or suggesting the need for concurrent planning.

The 0508/0509 Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) policies guide the collection of information used to determine the appropriate case plan goal(s) and the services needed to support achievement. The ASFA policy specifically directs development of an appropriate and comprehensive case plan to address the safe return of the child to the family when a child cannot remain safely in their home during crisis period. Diligent Search Process and Relative Placement Decisions

direct the identifying, locating and contacting of relatives regarding their interest in providing a temporary or permanent placement for or adopting a child prior to or when the child is placed in substitute care.

**CFSR 2009**

During the 2009 CSFR all 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of this item. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had established a permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and whether the most current permanency goal was appropriate. Reviewers also were to determine whether the agency had sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of the Adoptions and Safe Families Act (ASFA). This Item was rated a strength in 25 cases when reviewers determined that the child’s permanency goal was appropriate, had been established in a timely manner, and if relevant, that the agency had filed for TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA. This item was rated as an area needing improvement in 15 cases. This item was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 62.5 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and had met ASFA requirements when relevant. The required percentage was 90.

Most stakeholders commenting on this the item during the onsite 2009 CSFR primarily addressed the issue of concurrent planning. While some Clark County stakeholders noted that caseworkers follow agency guidelines for concurrent planning, other stakeholders expressed the opinion that many caseworkers tend to establish concurrent goals, but then pursue them sequentially rather than simultaneously.

**Statewide Data**

Nevada has continued to conduct Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) since implementation of the PIP on this item. In the following Table 4.4 is the most current case review data as it relates to item 5.

**Table 4.4 Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

QICR 2014

Item 5: Permanency goal for child	71.40%
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Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on permanency goal for child in Table 4.5. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 170 responses to the survey.

The effectiveness of the child welfare agency in selecting the most appropriate permanency goal (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 4.5. The mean rating of 3.55 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that Child Welfare Agencies are usually effective in selecting the most appropriate permanency goal for the child/youth.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicate the agency has numerous systems supports that provide additional oversight to permanency goal selections, and that the agency generally identifies the goal of reunification appropriately but fails to coordinate the services timely for achievement of that goal. Additionally, concerns were noted that the agency waits too long to change the permanency plan to adoption and file TPR in some cases, but that overall this has improved greatly over previous years. There was some concern that there is an overuse of the goal OPPLA in some cases.

**Table 4.5 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency selecting the most appropriate permanency goal for children and youth?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
4.12% (7)	6.47% (11)	37.65% (64)	34.12% (58)	17.65% (30)	170	3.55	0.60

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

**Item 6: Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement.**

**Requirements**

NRS 432B.390 specifically mandates that relatives of the child within the fifth degree of consanguinity be given preference for placement, when removal from the parents’ home is necessary for the child’s safety. NRS 432B.393 requires agencies to make reasonable efforts to prevent a child’s removal from the parents’ home, or if removal is necessary, reasonable efforts to make their safe return possible. NRS 432B.540 requires that if the agency believes it is necessary to remove the child from the physical custody of his/her parents, it must submit a plan designed to achieve placement of the child in a safe setting as near to the residence of his/her parent as is possible and consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child. NAC 432B.190, 200, 210 and 220 each place emphasis on the ways in which the agency is to engage the family and their natural, informal supports such as extended family, fictive kin, close friends, members of their faith community, teachers, etc. to keep the child safe while committing to the long-term support of the child and family.

**Guardianship**

Nevada has not currently implemented a Title IV-E Guardianship; however, NRS 432B.466 – 468 requires agencies to make reasonable efforts to find a more permanent placement for a child, and explain why the appointment of a guardian, rather than the adoption of the child or the return of the child to a parent, is in the best interests of the child, when this is permanency goal. NRS also provides the powers, duties and limitations of a guardian. Furthermore, 0204 Case Planning Policy requires that child welfare staffs are following the proper steps to determine appropriate permanency goals. The new quality improvement case review process explicitly states that child welfare agencies should be considering the time it takes for a child to achieve permanency and that for the goal of guardianship, achievement should be made within 18 months.

The CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data Indicators Workbook is the most recent data provided by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) using the new federal measurement methodology. ACF has not provided Nevada with a new Data Profile using the new measure methodology. Table 4.6 illustrates Nevada performance on all new Permanency Measures. As shown below Nevada is meeting standards on all Permanency Measures.

**Table 4.6 CFSR Round 3 Statewide data Indicators Workbook**

Federal Performance (Permanency)	National Standard	Data Sources	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI <sup>18</sup>	RSP	Upper CI
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.4%	AFCARS 11B & 12A	↑	42.5%	39.9%	41.8%	43.6%
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12-24 months	43.7%	AFCARS 13B & 14A	↑	53.6%	47.3%	49.8%	52.3%
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more	30.3%	AFCARS 13B & 14A	↑	44.3%	35.1%	37.4%	39.7%

Green shading =meets Standard:

**CFSR 2009**

During the 2009 CFSR this item was applicable for 21 (52.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had achieved the permanency goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, where the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. This item was rated as Strength

<sup>18</sup> CI=Confidence Interval

in 15 cases when reviewers determined that the goal had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. This item was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 71 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a timely manner. The required percentage was 90.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the child welfare agencies generally support the goal of reunification with services and through maintaining court supervision. However, a few stakeholders noted that the child welfare agencies and/or courts continue reunification efforts for long periods of time without consideration of other permanency options. In addition, some State-level and Clark County stakeholders expressed concern about the high number of children who are returned home after brief stays in foster care without the provision of services.

**Statewide Data**

In 2015 Nevada began using the new Online Management System (OMS) developed by JBS for the Children’s Bureau and extended to states for use with their own CQI systems conducting case reviews. This item has been modified to include all permanency goals. Nevada will have baseline data at the end of CY 2015 after review of 65 cases statewide using the OMS.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on timely achievement of reunification, guardianship or permanent placement with relatives in Table 4.7. Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 153 responses to the survey.

The effectiveness of the child welfare agency in timely achievement of the goals of reunification, guardianship or permanent placement with a relative (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being Very effective) is presented in Table 4.7. The mean rating of 3.16 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that Child Welfare Agencies are sometimes effective in achieving the goals of reunification, guardianship or placement with relatives.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicate the agency supports reunification with service provision but the service provision can sometimes be delayed. Permanent placement options are sometime not begun until almost time for the permanency hearing, and some stakeholders indicated that sometimes not enough work has been done timely to locate relatives who may be considered for adoption or guardianship.

**Table 4.7 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in timely achievement of reunification, guardianship or placement with relatives?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
3.92% (6)	15.69% (24)	41.18% (63)	39.22 (60)	0.00% (0)	153	3.16	0.72

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

**Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement**

**Requirements**

Nevada statute and policy require that a written case plan be developed for children with this permanency goal and that the plan includes programs and services designed to assist older youth to transition out of care. NRS 432B.553 requires a plan for the permanent placement of children. NAC 432B.410 requires child welfare services to ensure that each child in foster care is eligible for services related to independent living has a written plan for his transitional independent living based on the assessment of his skills. Statewide policy 0801 Youth Plan for Independent Living was developed to address the needs of youth who were likely to remain in care until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and prepare them for the transition into adulthood. This policy requires agencies which provide child welfare services to establish self-sufficiency goals for youth beginning at age 15, regardless of their level of functioning or independence. The planning process must be youth

focused and driven with emphasis on the youth's expressed interests, needs and priorities.

### CFSR 2009

Assessment on Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement was applicable for 7 (17.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine if the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to OPPLA. This goal was rated as strength in three cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure a long-term placement for the child and /or to provide the necessary service to prepare the child for independent living. This Item was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 43 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the goal of OPPLA was being addressed in an appropriate way. The required percentage was 90.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CSFR expressed the opinion that IL services are provided for children over the age of 15 and include assessment, financial management training, educational counseling and assistance, job training and housing assistance. However, some stakeholders indicated that, although services are available to children up to the age of 21, information regarding these benefits is not provided to children making the transition from foster care to independence consistently.

### Statewide Data

Using the new CSFR Tool the assessment of OPPLA has been combined into item 6. In 2014 Nevada was conducting Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) assessing OPPLA as a stand-alone item. In the following Table 4.8 are the most current case review data as it relates to an assessment of OPPLA.

<b>Table 4.8: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	<b>QICR 2014</b>
Item 10 (now included in item 6): Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement Permanency goal for child	43.8%

Nevada has had a lot of variation in ratings concerning OPPLA over the past few years. The number of cases that are applicable for this item is small and can present as skewed data. A targeted review would be the best means to identify if this is an area of strength or an area of improvement by increasing the representative sample of the population.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on the permanency goal of OPPLA in Table 4.9 Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 137 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency in preparing youth in foster care with the goal of OPPLA to make a successful transition to living as an adult? (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 4.9. The mean rating of 3.09 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that Child Welfare Agencies are sometimes effective in preparing youth in foster care with the goal of OPPLA for making a successful transition to living as an adult.

Overall, comments from stakeholders varied on how I.L services helped youth transition from care across the state. In some areas of the state stakeholder's felt the I.L program was doing well but there continues to be concern that this is not consistent across the state. Some stakeholders identified turnover of I.L workers and high caseloads as issues that contribute to inconsistent services for youth in some areas.

**Table 4.9 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in preparing youth in foster care with the goal of OPPLA for making a successful transition to living as an adult?**

<b>Not Effective</b>	<b>Rarely Effective</b>	<b>Sometimes Effective</b>	<b>Usually Effective</b>	<b>Very Effective</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
8.03% (11)	21.90% (30)	35.04% (48)	23.36% (32)	11.68% (16)	137	3.09	0.39

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

## **Adoption**

In 2015 Nevada began using the new Online Management System (OMS) developed by JBS for the Children's Bureau and extended to states for use with their own CQI systems for case reviews. Nevada has not been able to collect case review data on this item in the past; however, Nevada will have baseline data at the end of CY 2015 after review of 65 cases statewide using the OMS.

### **Requirements**

NRS 432B.553 requires agencies which provide child welfare services to adopt a plan for the permanent placement of the child for review by the court. NRS 432B.580 and .590 mandate court review of the progress toward achievement of the permanency goal at a minimum of six month intervals. Further, NRS 432B.590 and NAC 432B.261-.262 presume that termination of parental rights for the purpose of adoption is in the best interest of a child who has been in out-of-home placement. Policy requires 14 months of any 20 consecutive months (a more stringent requirement than the federal 15 out of 22 months). NAC 432B.2625 requires the agency to identify and document the obstacles to placement of the child, specify the steps that will be taken to find an appropriate home for the child in a report to the court if a child has not been placed into an adoptive home within 90 days after the termination of parental rights.

Although there is nothing in policy that repeats these requirements, 0204 Case Planning and 0103 Adoption of Children 12 Years and Older policies are explicit that adoption is the preferred permanency goal when it is determined that a child cannot be reunited with his or her birth family. Legal adoption is preferred because it offers the highest level of physical, legal and emotional safety and security for each child within a family relationship. The 1001 Diligent Search Process and Placement Decisions policy directs agencies to begin search activities and identification of family members during the initial contact with the family and requires they be initiated no later than at the time the Safety Plan is completed. Once a non-custodial parent or relative is found, they must be contacted within five working days to discuss interest as a placement option and/or emotional support for the child. The 0514 Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) policy requires the agency to make and finalize permanency plans by no later than 12 months after the child's removal. ASFA requires that adoption proceedings be completed within 24 months of the child's entry into foster care and requires that permanency-planning decisions involving adoption be made timely, are consistent with state and federal time frames, and consider the best interest of the child.

### **CFSR 2009**

During the 2009 CFSR assessment of adoptions was applicable for 18 (45 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether diligent efforts had been, or were being, made to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. Item 9 was rated as Strength in one case when reviewers determined that the State had made diligent efforts to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. The assessment of adoptions was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 6 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. The required percentage was 90.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the child welfare agencies are not effective in finalizing adoptions in a timely manner. Various barriers to adoption were identified that included the following:

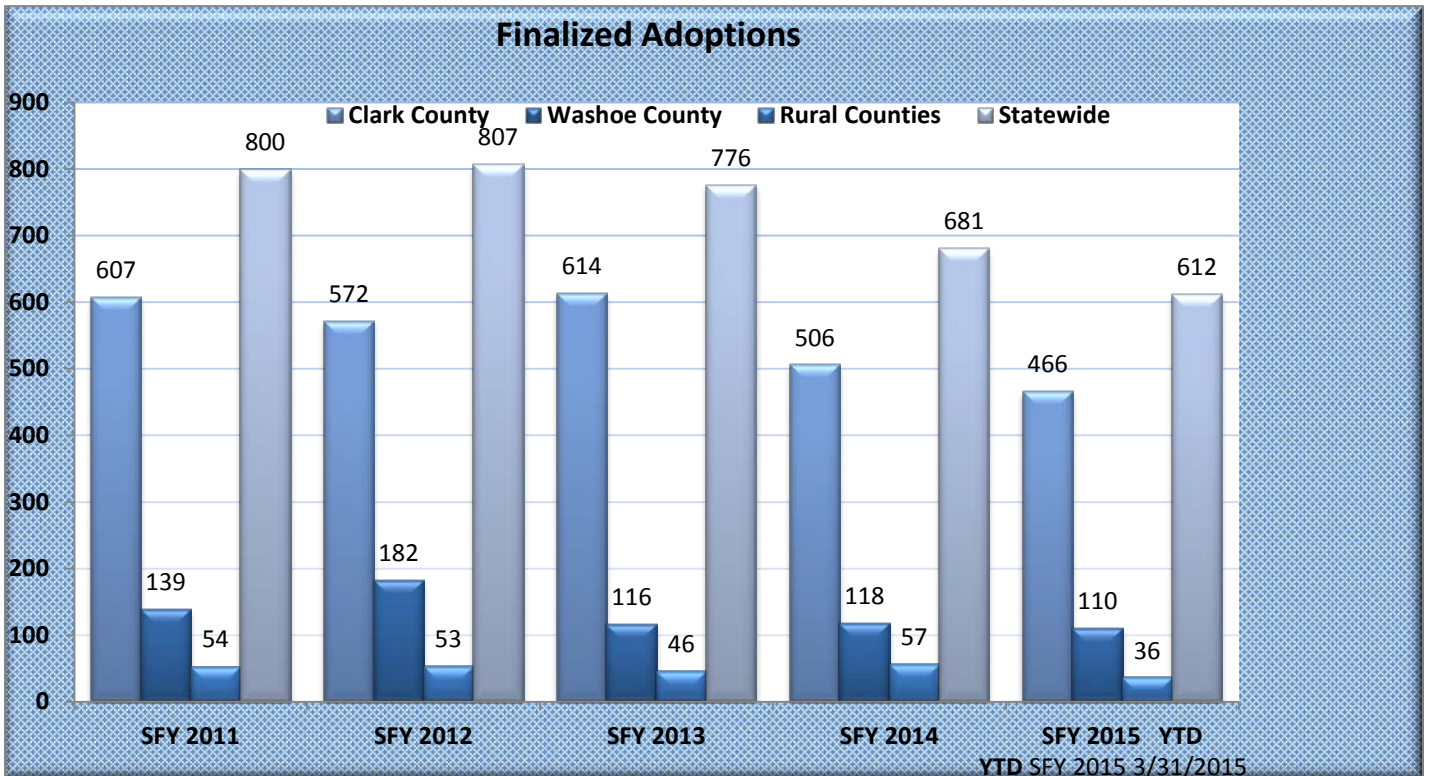
- There are delays in completing adoption paperwork, including documentation of criminal histories and home studies
- Despite the fast track of 180 days implement at the Supreme Court, there are delays in finalizing adoption due to TPR appeals.
- Court continuances and docketing concerns delay finalizing TPR and Adoption.
- There are delays in finalizing adoption due to the practice of transferring the case from a permanency caseworker to an adoption caseworker only after TPR has been achieved.

### **Statewide Data**

*Figure 4.1 Illustrates a 17.5% decrease statewide in finalized Adoptions from SFY 2011 to SFY 2014. The data listed below for SFY 2015 is through 3/31/2015 with 612 Adoptions finalized to date.*

#### **Figure 4.1 Finalized Adoptions**





Source: UNITY

Table 4.10 illustrates that the time to adoption within 24 months has increased from 26% of children being adopted to 33% of children being adoption within 24 months. Please note that Nevada measures the **average** months to adoption from the date of removal on UNITY report CFS732. Overall, this table presents higher average months to adoption.

**Table 4.10 Adoptions in Less than 24 Months**

	Adoptions with a Custody Date in Unity	Custody to Adoption Average Months	Number Adopted in less than 24 Months	Percent Adopted in less than 24 Months
Adoption in Less than 24 Months <i>April 1, 2011 - April 30, 2013</i>	1,610	36	422	26%
Adoption in Less than 24 Months <i>April 1, 2012 -April 30, 2014</i>	1,505	34	445	30%
Adoption in Less than 24 Months <i>April 1, 2013 -April 30, 2015</i>	1,547	32	514	33%

Source: UNITY CFS 732

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-1019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on timely achievement of adoption in Table 4.11. Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 134 responses to the survey.

The effectiveness of the child welfare agency in timely achievement of the goal of adoption (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 4.11. The mean rating of 2.99 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that Child Welfare Agencies are sometimes effective in achieving the goal of adoption.

Overall, comments from Stakeholders indicate that this process has improved over the last two years but there continues to be delays in timely paperwork i.e. TPR petitions, home studies and social summaries.

**Table 4.11 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in timely achievement of adoptions**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
8.96% (12)	20.15% (27)	38.06% (51)	28.36% (38)	4.48% (6)	134	2.99	0.50

N=Number of Survey Respondents

SD=Standard Deviation

**Adoption in Nevada**

The overall goal of Nevada’s adoption program is to continue to provide safe and permanent homes for children whose birth parents cannot care for them. Nevada adoption services continue to provide pre-placement and post-placement counseling to birth parents; preparation for children being placed in adoptive homes, case management; legal service to free children for adoption; recruitment, training, home study preparation for pre-adoptive families; adoption subsidy; Medicaid; and, post legal adoption support. The State ensures the safe adoptive placement of children across state lines per the Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (ICPC). Also, the State continues to be responsible for licensing and administrative oversight of private non-profit child placing agencies in the state. DCFS currently licenses nine private adoption agencies, two of which have full Hague accreditation.

**Inter-Country Adoptions:** The State of Nevada did not have any children adopted from another country who entered state custody in FY 2015 as a result of a disruption of a placement of adoption or the dissolution of an adoption. Children in the custody of state and county child welfare agencies may be placed with relatives in other countries. Placement approval and supervision are arranged by way of a process similar to ICPC through cooperative agreements with social service agencies in the prospective relative’s country of residence and often involve collaboration with the U.S International Social Services office. Most families who adopt from other countries are served by licensed, private child-placing agencies that are Hague accredited. However, state and county child welfare agencies may serve families who adopt internationally, as they are able, contingent upon caseloads and staffing ratios. Home studies, post placement supervision, information and referral and other support services are provided.

**Services of Children Adopted from Other Countries**

Nevada continues to provide services using Adoption Promotion/ Support funds and Adoption Incentive funds to assist children adopted from other countries. This funding is allocated to sub-grantees across the state that provides post-adoption services. They are available for all Adoptive families across the state

Post-adoption services available to children adopted from other counties include but are not limited to:

1. Information and referral.
2. Educational programs (parent training)
3. Support groups
4. Family Preservation
5. Case management
6. Therapeutic intervention/counseling
7. Respite
8. Search registries

**Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments**

In September of 2014, Public Law 113-183 was enacted to include provisions relating to the re-authorization and revision of the previously known Adoption Incentive Program to the “Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments” program. In the previous authorization under Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act of 2008 the baseline above which incentive payments were made doubled the incentive payment for adoption of children with special needs and older children adoptions. The State of Nevada was awarded \$2,116,000 for FFY 2014-FFY2015. The state allocated the \$2,116,000 as follows: Annual membership dues to the Adoption Exchange Association, as well as a separate sub-grant for the Adoption Exchange to act as the state’s Recruitment Response Team (RRT) for the Adopt Us

Kids project. Also, in-state travel expenses for renewal and initial licensing of child placing agencies were paid from these funds as well as travel to facilitate out-of-state placements and payment of court fees. Additionally, funds were used for out of state travel expenses for the central office Adoption Specialist to attend National Adoption Conferences.

Funds awarded from the 2014 Adoption Incentive Grant continued to be spent in FY 2015 to cover above expenses, with the remainder *sub-granted* to the three public child welfare agencies to facilitate inter jurisdictional placements; including travel for pre-placement transitional visits, post-placement supervision, specialized assessments, respite care and privatized delivery of therapeutic services not covered by Medicaid. The grant funds will also support specialized recruitment and adoption finalization activities, including National Adoption Day as well as funding contracts for the completion of social summaries and home studies to remove barriers to timely permanency through adoption.

### States Plan for Expenditure of Adoption Incentive funds

The DCFS Grants Management Unit (GMU) meets monthly with CCDFS, WCDSS and the DCFS Rural Region Management and Adoption Units across the state to discuss each jurisdictions spending plan for AI to ensure it is obligated and liquidated in accordance with 473 A(e) of the Act.

## **CCDFS**

The CCDFS finalized over 500 adoptions in 2014. CCDFS and the 8th Judicial Court – Family Court Division held quarterly adoption assessment hearings on cases assigned to the Adoption unit. Additionally, they collaborated with the Family Court to hold adoption finalization hearings every Thursday throughout the year. In November 2014, CCDFS held its annual Adoption Day in collaboration with the Family Court, CASA and other community partners.

The Adoption Incentive Grant funds six (6) full time positions which include, two (2) District Attorneys, two (2) Adoption Subsidy positions, one (1) Adoption Recruitment positions, and one (1) Legal Secretary, and six (6) PTH positions for Central Imaging and Adoption Subsidy Unit. These funds support the District Attorney and Legal Secretary who review pending TPRs in order to move children toward the completion of adoption. The adoption recruitment positions specialize in the identification of child specific adoptive placements. The two adoption subsidy positions and part time support staff assist with negotiation and dissemination of information regarding adoption and adoption subsidy. Additional part time support staff archive and index adoption files to facilitate the access of information for pre-adopt and ongoing adoption subsidy. Funds are also used for the purchase of safety items for pre-adoptive placements, scanning equipment and computers in support of grant activity, legal fees, adoption recruitment events, social summaries and home studies for children moving to permanency/adoption. CCDFS has had no challenges in FY15 expending funds in a timely manner. These activities will continue without interruption should they receive Adoption Incentive Funds in the next fiscal year.

### CCDFS Planned Activities for 2016:

CCDFS will continue to hold quarterly adoption assessment hearings on cases assigned to the adoption unit. The annual Adoption Day will be held in November 2015 in collaboration with the Family Court, CASA and other local community partners

## **DCFS RURAL REGION**

The DCFS Rural Region continued with Permanency Round Tables (PRTs) throughout this past year. Fourteen children/youth were reviewed as follow up participants during the 2014-2015 reporting period. Of these fourteen, seven exited care; four achieved permanency through adoption, one through guardianship and two exited care upon reaching the age of majority with permanency social/emotional connections identified and supported by DCFS through the Court Jurisdiction (CJ) program. Permanency Round Tables (PRT) were expanded into one more rural region with the addition of seven more participants that were reviewed and rated as either poor or marginal permanency status at the time they entered Permanency Round Tables. As children successfully exit care to permanency additional cases are identified and added to the PRT spreadsheet. The agency continues to assess caseloads for possible additions to Permanency Round Tables as children approach 18 months of being in custody or have multiple barriers to achieving permanency under standard practice and policy.

Additionally, The DCFS Rural Region finalizes approximately 50 adoptions a year. In recent years the DCFS Rural Region has become more diligent in efforts to maximize the use of Adoption Incentive (AI) funds for both recruitment of adoptive families in general and child specific cases and has recently begun using AI funds for pre and post adoption

support services as well. The availability of significant funding through the Adoption Incentive Grant has allowed DCFS to implement numerous projects, all of which directly assist in more timely permanency for children.

The following are examples of projects DCFS has implemented utilizing AI funds:

- Family Finding Pilot program fully implemented by DCFS to utilize the services of a private investigator to ensure that all familial ties/relationships are sought out for children that are awaiting adoption;
- Contracts with Legal Secretaries in three offices to assist caseworkers with tasks formerly identified as barriers to achieving timely permanency, including file mining for relative/fictive kin placement resources, assembling TPR packets for the Attorney Generals office, preparing Full Disclosure documentation for preadoptive parents prior to subsidy negotiation among others;
- Contracts with Olive Crest, Maplestar and independent contractors trained in the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) Homestudy model to assist in the timely completion of homestudies needed for foster care and adoptive placements. The use of these contractors is critical to safe and timely placement for permanency in the rural region. Contractors currently complete approximately 90% of SAFE homestudy requests required for all adoptive placements including Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (ICPC) cases when children from other states are placed with relatives in rural Nevada. The number of homestudy requests has increased in recent years and without homestudy contractors, timeliness to permanency would be negatively affecting children in the DCFS Rural Region. Some contractors also complete social summaries and TPR packets;
- Contracted with a Marketing and Advertising firm to create foster/adoptive parent pamphlets for recruitment events and dissemination by identified local community groups, billboard advertising, radio and television interviews with recruiter to keep the need for adoptive homes in the forefront. This campaign has been ongoing since August of 2014; with an ongoing contract with Adoption Exchange to follow up with inquires for Nevada's children on the AdoptUsKids website;
- Adoption awareness and preparation materials;
- Post placement supervision fees by private agencies in other states;
- Airfare/Ground Transportation/Per Diem/Lodging for agency staff travel to accompany children to out-of-state placements and to bring prospective adoptive families to Nevada during the adoption transition process. AI funding has allowed us more flexibility to select families and facilitate subsequent visits with families in other states who are best suited to meet the needs of children pending;
- Payment of membership fees and conferences to: Adoption Exchange, Adopt Us Kids Recruitment; CWLA; and to send staff to attend National Adoption conferences.
- Adoption related trainings provided over the past year include:
  - Adoption Disruption training provided to Mental Health Counselors and Adoption workers;
  - Fetal Alcohol Syndrome training provided to Adoption staff who have numerous children affected on their caseloads;
  - The 3-5-7 Model (Transition to Permanency) Training was provided throughout the DCFS Rural Region to social workers, supervisors, mental health counselors and family support workers and coaching calls are ongoing;
  - Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) through Southern Florida University's Just in Time online training website, and our contracted Coordinator who sets up live trainings as requested, monitors our QPI website and acts as our Adoptive/Foster Parent Liaison;
  - Adoption and permanency training throughout the rurals focusing on permanency for teens and concurrent planning and family finding from the beginning of a case;
- A photographer was contracted to provide quality photographs of children for recruitment purposes, and to provide families a portrait of their new family at adoption;
- Our Forgotten Child Initiative (formerly One Church One Child) recruiter working across the state with congregations to host events to recruit and support foster and adoptive families in collaboration with our recruiters;
- A Child and Family Team (CFT) Facilitator to ensure permanency cases continue to progress to timely finalization. This facilitator has also developed and provides ongoing CFT Facilitation training to staff which focuses on child specific goal writing for adoption cases;
- Pre and post adoption services and therapy provided by SAFY; and
- The production and airing of a Non-Commercial Sustaining Announcements (NCSA's) library of messages, in English and Spanish, for DCFS's ongoing recruitment efforts statewide, for child specific recruitment in other states, and to publicize QPI; and PRIDE pre-service Adoptive/Foster Parent Training materials.

**DCFS RURAL REGION Planned Activities for 2016:**

Over the next year, DCFS Rural Region will expand its two main initiatives: The Quality Parenting Initiative and the Specialized Foster Care program both which are anticipated to result in increased adoptions for children. DCFS also plans to continue to utilize a contracted private investigator to search for and identify relative placements for children who have been in care longer than 14 months, as well as continuing to use contractors to assist with adoption related case management activities stated above.

DCFS will implement new and innovative techniques for recruitment for foster/adoptive families; including events like Adoption Parties, Foster-ware gatherings; Subcontracted trainers/facilitators to expand pre-service P.R.I.D.E. training for potential foster and adoptive families in more geographic areas to accommodate the vast area over which the Rural Frontier covers and where potential applicants reside. Ongoing provision of PSA statements, commercials, and media stories through radio, television, and print mediums and also ads to be shown on billboards. Also included will be announcements in Spanish over the radio in targeted areas as well as Spanish advertisements through available Spanish media.

A Foster Care Mentor program will be piloted in one district office and will be expanded. The mentor will have experience in fostering and navigating resources specifically in the local community. This position will also assist with day-after placement calls, and provide a Foster 9-1-1 service to answer questions, be a resource and offer support 24/7.

Contracted staff will be used to oversee the Adoption/ Permanency Oversight Tracking System for all cases that meet one of the following criteria; children who are legally free for adoption and children who have been in out of home care for over 14 months. The purpose of this project is to more closely monitor the progress of adoption cases as they move through the system so that internal and/or systemic barriers to timely adoption can be identified and rectified thereby resulting in more timely permanency for all children in DCFS custody.

## **WCDSS**

WCDSS has finalized approximately 149 adoptions between July 1, 2014 and May 11, 2015 of which 99 were foster parent adoptions and 50 were relative adoptions. WCDSS anticipates finalization of another 10-15 children in the next 45 days. WCDSS partnered with the WCDSS Family Court during SFY 2015 and have hosted three quarterly Adoption Days in August, February and May. Also, WCDSS has hosted One National Adoption Day celebrated in November 2014. These celebrations are very popular with families, staff and the court.

WCDSS Adoption Unit used Adoption Incentive funds since July 1, 2014 to pay for placement and supervision fees for children to be placed in non relative adoptive placements outside of the state of Nevada. These are families that were found when recruiting nationally for our harder to place children seeking adoptive placements. Without these funds WCDSS would need to forgo the placement of some children with capable adoptive families in other states.

WCDSS Adoption Unit used Adoption Incentive funds since July 1, 2014 to pay for services to Post Adoptive Families to help support the ongoing placements of children in their homes. These expenses include therapy and evaluations not covered by Medicaid, as well as short term living expenses for families struggling to maintain their housing after unexpected life events. Since July 1, 2014 Post Adoption Services has had contact with 111 families to offer some type of post adoption support.

Additionally, WCDSS spent incentive money on advertising campaigns with a local cab company and trainings for staff and foster parents at the QPI conference.

Furthermore, Adoption Incentive money was used to fund a clinical position to help support and assist families and children with transitioning from foster families to adoptive families. This position will also offer support and training to foster and adoptive families in order to build their skill set in parenting our children in foster care.

The WCDSS has spent AI monies on travel expenses for children and families to transition them into placements. Also, WCDSS has used these funds towards contracting with Licensed Social Workers to complete Social Summaries as this had been identified as a barrier due to case loads of WCDSS Social Workers.

### WCDSS Planned Activities for 2016:

The WCDSS will continue to host four Adoption Day Celebrations per year. Additionally, WCDSS will continue to reach out to our community in recruitment efforts to assist us in supporting our children through adoption. The QPI continues to build momentum in Washoe County and training will be provided to more staff and foster parents. Lastly, WCDSS will continue to develop policy and practice involving the transition of children utilizing clinical staff supported by AI.

## **Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children**

### ***Item 7: Placement with siblings***

#### Requirements

NRS 432B.580, as well as the statewide 1001 Diligent Search Process and Placement Decisions policy, requires that children be placed together unless there is justification for not doing so based on the best interest of the child. NRS 432B.3905 (Effective January 1, 2008 and January 1, 2009), specifies that a child under the age of 3 (2008) and 6 (2009) can be placed in a child care institution only if being placed with a sibling unit, due to medical services being available only in such an institution, or appropriate foster care is not available at the time of placement in the county in which the child resides.

#### CFSR 2009

The Placement with siblings was applicable for 27 (67.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not have a sibling in foster care at any time during the period under review. In assessing placement with siblings, reviewers were to determine whether siblings were currently, or had been, placed together and if separated, whether the separation was necessary to meet the service or safety needs of one or more of the children. Placement with siblings was rated assigned an overall rating of strength. In 100 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care whenever appropriate. The required percentage was 90.

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR noted that the child welfare agencies work diligently to keep siblings placed together. In Clark County stakeholders noted that a targeted recruitment effort to identify foster care provider for sibling groups was successful. A few stakeholders indicated that it can be a challenge to place siblings together in foster care due to a lack of sufficient placement resources.

#### Statewide Data

In 2015 Nevada began using the new Online Management System (OMS) developed by JBS for the Children's Bureau and extended to states for use with their own CQI systems for case reviews. Nevada has not been able to collect case review data on this item in the past; however, Nevada will have baseline data at the end of CY 2015 after review of 65 cases statewide using the OMS.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on placement of siblings in Table 4.12. Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 127 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency in placing siblings together in foster children (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 4.12. The mean rating of 3.59 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that Child Welfare Agencies are usually effective in placing siblings together in foster care.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicated that the child welfare agencies do a good job in keeping siblings together. There were some stakeholders that indicated that a barrier to placing siblings together is a lack of placement resources.

**Table 4.12 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in placing foster children close to their parents and/or in their own communities or counties?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
6.30% (8)	6.30% (8)	31.50% (40)	33.86% (43)	22.05% (28)	127	3.59	0.59

N=Number of Survey Respondents

SD=Standard Deviation

***Item 8: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care***

Requirements

NRS 423B.550(5)(a) provide that a parent of a child that has been removed from the home retains the right to reasonable visitation with the child unless this right has been restricted by the court. NRS 432B.550 (5) (b) was amended by AB 42 in 2005 to create a presumption that it is in the best interest of the child for siblings to be placed together and to require that if siblings are not placed together, there must be report made to the court detailing the agency's efforts in this area, including a visitation plan for approval by the court. NRS 432B.580(2)(b) covers compliance with the visitation plan. Failure to comply with the plan is punishable by contempt. The NAC 432B.400(o) requires that the case plan specifically provide for family visitation, including, without limitation, visiting siblings if the siblings are not residing together. This visitation must be regular and frequent, so as to preserve the family for reunification if possible (NAC 432B.220 (4)).

Statewide policy on case planning requires that a plan for frequent and purposeful visitation with parents and siblings, for the purpose of family preservation, be included in the case planning documentation. Visitation between children and parents, and children and separately placed siblings, must be regular, frequent, and purposeful in order to facilitate family preservation. The caseworker shall not limit visitation as a sanction for the parent's lack of compliance with court orders or as a method to encourage a child to improve his/her behaviors. Visitation is determined by the best interest, health, safety and well-being of the child. Visitation shall only be limited or terminated when the child's best interest, safety, health or well-being is compromised. In addition, recommendations to limit or terminate visitation must be presented to the court.

CFSR 2009

The Assessment of visiting with parents and sibling in foster care was applicable for 27 (67.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for an assessment of this item if the child had no siblings in foster care and if one of the following conditions was met with regard to the parents: TPR was established prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the child's life or were deceased, or visitation with a parent was not considered in the best interests of the child. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate visitation between children in foster care and their parents and between children in foster care and their siblings also in foster care, and whether the visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families. The Assessment of visiting with parents and siblings in foster care was rated as strength in 16 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visitation with parents and siblings met the needs of the children. Visiting with parents and siblings was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 59 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation was of sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the family. The required percent was 90.

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSP expressed the opinion that there are challenges to providing children in foster care with sufficient opportunities for visitation with their parents and siblings due in part to a lack of transportation resources, particularly in the Rural Region. However, some Clark County stakeholders noted that the family visitation center in that county increase opportunities for visitation.

Statewide Data

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on visiting parents and siblings in foster care in Table 4.13. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. The survey question asked about visitation as it relates to mothers, fathers and siblings. There were 154 responses to the survey question concerning the mother, 145 responses to the survey question concerning the father and

138 responses to the survey question concerning the siblings.

How effective is the child welfare agency in ensuring visitation occurs with the mother, father and siblings (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in the following Tables 4.13, 4.14 and 4.15. The mean rating of 3.88 (mother), 3.62 (father) and 3.54 (siblings) indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that child welfare agencies are usually effective on ensuring visitations occurs with the mother, father and siblings.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicated that the child welfare agencies regularly conduct visits with parents and siblings. A few stakeholders expressed that challenges around ensuring sufficient opportunities for visitation occur is due to lack of transportation resources, high caseloads and parent incarceration.

**Table 4.13 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency on ensuring visitation with the mother?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
3.90% (6)	3.90% (6)	22.08% (34)	40.26% (62)	29.87% (46)	154	3.88	0.75

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

**Table 4.14 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency on ensuring visitation with the father?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
4.14% (6)	10.34% (15)	27.59% (40)	35.17% (51)	22.76% (33)	145	3.62	0.59

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

**Table 4.15 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency on ensuring visitation between siblings?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
3.62% (5)	10.34% (15)	26.81% (37)	44.93% (62)	13.77% (19)	138	3.54	0.69

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

**Item 9: Preserving connections**

Requirements

NRS 432B.390 requires that priority be given to family members for placement of children who are removed from their birth families unless doing so would not be in the best interest of the child. DCFS policy (1001 Diligent Search, 1003 Kinship Care, and 1004 Structured Analysis Family Analysis) requires workers to complete a diligent search for any possible adult family members. Once located, those identified family members are assessed for appropriateness in much the same manner as regular family foster care providers Also,, state policy 0504 Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) prioritizes the recognition of a child being an Indian child and assures that the child’s tribe be contacted immediately when an Indian child is taken into custody. The Tribe then becomes an active participant in any further proceedings regarding the child.



## CFSR 2009

The Assessment of Preserving Connections was applicable for 38 (95 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing Preserving Connections, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to preserve the child's connections to neighborhood, community, heritage, extended family, father, and friend while the child was in foster care. This item is not rated on the basis of visits or contact with parents or siblings in foster care. Preserving Connections was rated as strength in 29 cases when reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child's connections with extended family members, religious or cultural heritage, schools, community, and friends. Preserving Connections was rated as an area needing improvement in nine cases. Preserving Connections was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 76 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain the child's connections with extended family, culture, religion, community and school. The required percent was 90. Additionally, there were insufficient substantive comments from stakeholders regarding this item during the onsite CSFR.

## Statewide Data

In 2015 Nevada began using the new Online Management System (OMS) developed by JBS for the Children's Bureau and extended to states for use with their own CQI systems for case reviews. Nevada has not been able to collect case review data on this item in the past; however, Nevada will have baseline data at the end of CY 2015 after review of 65 cases statewide using the OMS.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on preserving connections for children in foster care in Table 4.16. Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 148 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency in preserving connections for children in foster care (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 4.16. The mean rating of 2.99 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that Child Welfare Agencies are sometimes effective in preserving connections for children in foster care.

**Table 4.16 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in preserving connections for children in foster care??**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
5.41% (8)	29.05% (43)	32.43% (4.8)	27.03% (40)	6.08% (9)	148	2.99	0.43

N=Number of Survey Respondents

SD=Standard Deviation

## ***Item 10: Relative placement***

### Requirements

NRS 432B.390 requires that priority be given to family members for placement of children who are removed from their birth families unless doing so would not be in the best interest of the children. The DCFS Policy (1001 Diligent Search, 1003 Kinship Care, and 1004 Structured Analysis Family Analysis) requires workers to complete a diligent search for any possible adult family relatives. Once located, those identified family members are assessed for appropriateness in much the same manner as regular family foster care providers.

## CFSR 2009

The assessment of relative placement was applicable for 36(90 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if relative placement was not an option during the period under review because the child was in an adoptive placement at the start of the time period, or the child entered foster care needing specialized services that could not be provided in a relative placement. In assessing this item reviewers were to determine whether the agency made diligent efforts to locate and assess both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care. Relative Placement was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 64 percent of applicable cases,

reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and access relatives as potential placement resources. The required percentage was 90.

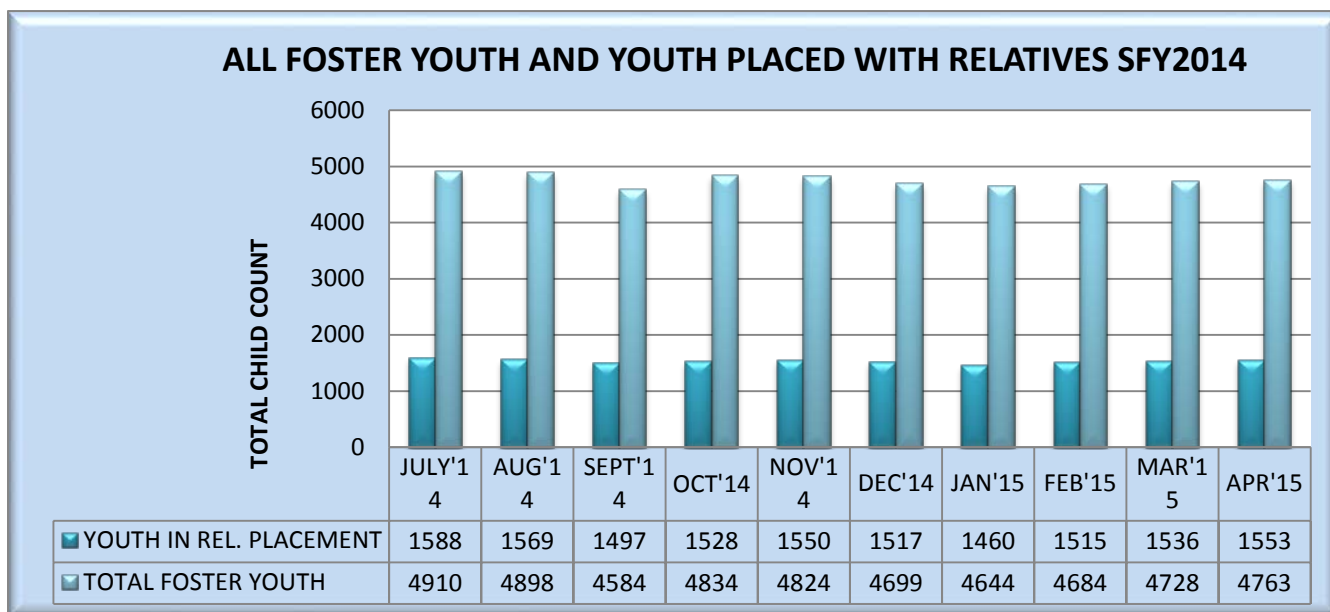
Although some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR in Clark County and Washoe County indicated that caseworker routinely collect information about relatives, these stakeholders noted that relative searches do not continue consistently throughout the life of the case.

**Statewide Data**

In 2015 Nevada began using the new Online Management System (OMS) developed by JBS for the Children’s Bureau and extended to states for use with their own CQI systems for case reviews. Nevada has not been able to collect case review data on this item in the past; however, Nevada will have baseline data at the end of CY 2015 after review of 65 cases statewide using the OMS.

Figure 4.1 below illustrates by month, the total number of children in foster care compared with the total number of those children who were in placement with relatives.

**Figure 4.1: Total foster youth and relative placement comparison SFY2014**



Source: UNITY

During SFY 2014 approximately 32% of youth in foster care, across all child welfare agencies were placed with relatives in any given month, where all foster youth are children in the custody and care of a child welfare agency with any placement type excluding parental placement. Youth placed with relatives can be any youth in the custody and care of a Child Welfare Agency whose placement is relative (excluding parental placement) regardless if the relative placement is licensed or unlicensed and paid or unpaid.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP provides information on relative placement in Table 4.17. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 171 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency in identifying relative placements (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 4.17. The mean rating of 3.63 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that child welfare agencies are usually effective in identifying relatives who could care for children entering foster care and using them as placement resources when appropriate.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicated that the child welfare agencies regularly search for relatives. However, some stakeholders identified challenges to placing children with relatives due to licensing requirements around relative

criminal histories. Also, stakeholders indicated that a barrier to identification in some cases was the parent's unwillingness to provide relative information.

**Table 4.17 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in preserving connections for children in foster care??**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
1.75% (3)	8.19% (14)	31.58% (54)	42.69 (73)	15.79% (27)	171	3.63	0.68

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

***Item 11: Relationship of child in care with parents***

Requirements

While the State does not have a specific statute which addresses the parent-child relationship guidelines, there are several statutes which do imply the importance of maintaining such a relationship. NRS 432.390.7C, .393, .397, and .190(k) require the following: That agencies which provide child welfare services to adopt a plan to give preference to relatives of child in care; that efforts toward preservation and reunification of family of a child to prevent or eliminate the need for removal from home before placement in foster care be made and to make a safe return to home possible; a determination of whether reasonable efforts have been made; to conduct inquiry to determine whether a child is an Indian child; and to plan for the permanent placement of a child. NAC 432B.190 provides requirements for case plans and agreements with parents, provides that when a child welfare case is opened, that the caseworker must assume responsibility for planning the child welfare services to be provided whether the child remains in the home or not. Parents must be encouraged to participate in the development of a written agreement for services, which must be for a specified period to engage in the processes for receiving resources.

State Policy 1001 emphasizes the need to preserve the parent-child relationship by requiring diligent search for non-custodial parents when there is a need for a child to be removed from their home and the 0204 Case Planning policy refers to the structured, solution-based process of considering all of the information gathered through the needs assessment process to develop a strength-based case plan while working towards family reunification at the same time, implementing an alternative permanency plan.

CFSR 2009

An assessment of relationship of child in care with parents was applicable for 23 (57.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if parent rights had been terminated before the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child, a relationship with the parents was not considered in the child's best interest throughout the period under review, or both parents were deceased. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation. Relationship of child in care with parents was rated as strength in nine cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted effort to support and/or strengthen the bond between parents and children through various activities. This item was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 39 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care. Additionally, the number of stakeholder comments on this item during the onsite CFRS was not sufficient to include.

Statewide Data

In 2015 Nevada began using the new Online Management System (OMS) developed by JBS for the Children's Bureau and extended to states for use with their own CQI systems for case reviews. Nevada has not been able to collect case review data on this item in the past; however, Nevada will have baseline data at the end of CY 2015 after review of 65 cases statewide using the OMS.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provide information on relationship of child in care with

parent in Table 4.18. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 154 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency in supporting the relationship of the child in care with the parents (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in table 4.18. The mean rating of 3.75 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that child welfare agencies are usually effective in supporting the relationship of the child in care with his or her parents.

**Table 4.18 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in preserving connections for children in foster care??**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
2.60%	7.14%	24.68%	43.51%	22.08%	154	3.75	0.71
(4)	(11)	(38)	(67)	(34)			

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

## Strengths/Concerns (Permanency Outcomes 1 & 2)

Nevada is showing strength in the new Federal Data Measures as it relates to Permanency with the exception of Placement Stability. Additionally, during stakeholder surveys conducted in 2014 most stakeholders were not aware of a lot of children in Nevada being returned to foster care but of those that had returned stakeholders indicated that the concerns are related to premature reunifications, a lack of behavioral change by the parents prior to reunification and or a lack of post reunification services.

Nevada continues to have strength in the recognition that there needs to be a focus on ensuring placement stability with implementation of QPI and expansion of the focus on redesigning a specialized foster care system through implementation of specialized foster care. These continued initiatives are focused on training and support for foster families. There continues to be concern that Nevada has not met the national standard for Placement Stability for many years.

Nevada has met the overall new national standard for Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care. Also, Nevada has met the overall new national standard for Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12-24 months and the new national standard for Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or longer.

Overall, Nevada has improved in the timeliness of adoptions as represented by current state data. Stakeholders expressed during surveys conducted in 2014 for the 2015-2019 CFSP that there continued to be some concerns over delays in some areas as it relates to timely completion of necessary paperwork i.e. TPR petitions, home studies and social summaries.

While Nevada is meeting the standards for several of the new Federal Performance Measures for Permanency, Nevada continues to struggle with Placement Stability. In 2015 Nevada began using the new Online Management System (OMS) developed by JBS for the Children’s Bureau in conducting case reviews on these items. Nevada has not been able to collect case review data on many of these items in the past. However, Nevada will have baseline data at the end of CY 2015 after review of 65 cases statewide using the OMS. Until such time Nevada is not able to make an accurate assessment of Permanency Outcomes 1 & 2. Therefore, since an accurate assessment cannot be conducted at this time these Outcomes continue to be an area needing improvement.

## Section V. CHILD and FAMILY WELL-BEING

### Trends in Child and Family Well-Being

Ensuring educational needs of children and youth are met is an objective of the 2015-2019 CFSP. Additionally, the intervention to ensure this objective is met is through a collaborative relationship between the Department of Education,

Child Welfare and the Courts in efforts to strengthen educational success for children and youth in foster care. Children that have disruptive placements and move from school to school do not have good outcomes in educational well-being.

The Educational Collaborative among Nevada's Department of Education (NDOE), Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS), Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS), and the courts (the Nevada Education, Child Welfare and the Courts Collaborative) created a statewide committee with the express mission to improve school placement stability and continuity of instruction, specifically reducing the number of school moves and ensuring that if a move is necessary that the transition is eased by making certain that the child's records are readily available to the new school and that the new school is aware that the child is in foster care. This requires information be shared among the child welfare agency, the school district, and the court. To that end, in 2013 the Nevada Legislature enacted Senate Bill 31 (SB 31), which defined children in the legal custody of a child welfare agency as being awaiting foster care placement per the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act unless the child is legally adopted or ordered by the court to a permanent placement. In September 2014, the NDOE and the DCFS wrote and distributed a joint letter to all school superintendents, school staff, and child welfare administrators, managers, and supervisors instructing all parties to immediately implement the Uninterrupted Scholars Act. It specifically identified who has a right to access the child's educational records, how they access the records, and how the child welfare agency proves that it has custody of the student.

This Statewide Collaborative is also responsible for a pilot project to ensure that foster children are identified quickly by the school district and afforded appropriate services. The Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) and the Washoe County School District have initiated a Pilot Electronic Information sharing plan in which all related fields in the school district's case management system (CMS), Infinite Campus, will populate in near-real time as social workers enter data into UNITY.

This means, among others things, that schools will have updated information about foster children, including the fact that these students are in foster care, as soon as the information is entered into UNITY is pushed into Infinite Campus nightly.

First data runs comparing foster care students to the rest of the student population have been pulled and shared with WCDSS and the Washoe County Commission. This data demonstrates that foster care students are:

- o more likely to be suspended,
- o more likely to move schools,
- o more likely to fail the criterion referenced tests and the high school proficiency tests, and
- o less likely to be on pace to graduate high school than the general population of Washoe County students.

Leading research from around the country currently indicates that foster youth are likely to change schools when first entering care. They are twice as likely to be absent from school and 2.5 to 3.5 times more likely to receive special education. Fewer than half of the youth in foster care graduate from high school and only 2 to 9% attain a bachelor's degree. The Washoe County Department of Social Services wants to turn these statistics around for children under their care. It has received a two year grant to provide educational case management and mentoring support for transition-age foster youth, and to evaluate the effectiveness and efficacy of this intervention. The program will use experienced "Educational Champions" to provide educational supports for each foster youth to help guide and motivate them. Data will drive advocacy-related decision making for the students, and will be used to measure intervention outcomes.

- **Purpose:** To be able to improve educational stability and continuity of instruction for foster children, a state must first know how it is doing and where it needs to improve. These data provide definitive information from the second largest county in the state that was only supposition previously. This pilot will be expanded statewide as Infinite Campus becomes the case management system (CMS) for school districts throughout the state. Clark County School District is in the process of implementing Infinite Campus. It takes three to five years for a school district to fully implement this new CMS.
- **Implementation Stage:** Data reports from Infinite Campus in Washoe County School District can now be produced and shared. The reports are being evaluated and assessed and some modifications are being made. SB31 has been implemented. Infinite Campus in Washoe been modified to create to accept data directly from UNITY. Funding for the "Educational Champions" is expected in July 2015 and the program will be launched in time for the 2015/16 school year. Additionally, NDOE is planning to conduct a study similar to California's *Invisible Achievement Gap Report* in fiscal year 2016 providing statewide educational data.

## **Child Welfare Agency Progress towards CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING goals identified in the CFSP**

### **CCDFS PROGRESS**

#### **Progress as it relates to the Statewide Collaborative on Education, Child Welfare and the Courts:**

- CCDFS has recently hired Dr. Leslie Strasser Murdock as its Educational Liaison to oversee all educational efforts of CCDFS. Dr. Murdock has been working closely with CCDFS Management to create supportive educational practices for kids in care and is working closely with the Clark County School District. Dr. Murdock and CCDFS representatives are involved in the Statewide Collaborative on Education, Child Welfare and the Court. They have been participating on conference calls for Statewide Collaborative Planning and Policy Subcommittee. A CCDFS Manager provided information about the Youth at Risk of Homeless Grant (YAHR) progress. The Collaborative offered resources and connections that could help CCDGS with the application of the second phase of the YAHR grant. Dr. Murdock has had several informal phone calls with Collaborative members such as the Coordinator of the Collaborative, Nevada Department of Education's State Coordinator of Education for Homeless Children, and the Washoe County Education Liaison to establish rapport and to gather information and resources to help in the work.
- Independent Living Services are provided to youth 15-18 years old. Independent Living Workers are required to meet with youth face to face to discuss goals for self-sufficiency every 90 days and develop a youth plan and transitional living plan. The Independent Living Worker (ILW) is required to remain in contact with youth via telephone, email, text and Facebook for updates every 30 days. The ILW works closely with the youth's team to provide updates and information on upcoming workshops, event, trainings and classes to assist the youth in obtaining skills to prepare them to live independently as well as assist the youth in accessing Chafee funds to obtain things needed for employment, graduation, education and activities.
- CCDFS continues with several QPI workgroups that are charged with various activities to enhance the well-being of youth transition from Foster Care as reported previously.

#### **PLANNED ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR UP-COMING SFY 2016**

Dr. Murdock and other CCDFS Managers will continue to participate in the Statewide Collaborative Planning and Policy Subcommittee's quarterly phone call. Dr. Murdock, the state Coordinator, and WCDFS Education Liaison are planning to have some regularly scheduled phone calls to support each other at both the state and county levels.

### **DCFS RURAL REGION PROGRESS**

- The State Foster Care Specialist for DCFS participates in the Statewide Collaborative on Education, Child Welfare and the Courts and she represents the work of the DCFS Rural Region.
- The State I.L Specialist for DCFS works with the DCFS Rural Region on issues related to Youth Transition Planning.
- The DCFS Rural Region utilizes QPI to build support around foster parents to enhance the well-being of children and youth. Throughout the DCFS Rural Region a QPI network has been formed that shares information and ideas about how to improve parenting, by connecting foster parents so they receive greater support. Caregivers can receive trainings on important topics available to assist them to meet the needs of their foster children, to learn what behaviors to expect and the best practice to handle behaviors that suddenly arise. The QPI initiative supports greater "normalcy" in the lives of children in foster care. Foster children need to experience life as normally as possible while in foster care. This "normalizing" of children in foster care promotes better partnership with foster parents by trusting their judgements and the prudent parenting of the caregivers; providing the caregivers with as much flexibility as possible to enable the youth to participate safely in normal life experiences.
- A QPI Partnership Plan is in development and includes the valuable input of foster parents. The Plan is intended to promote teamwork and respect between DCFS and foster parents. This will help to support and maintain

nurturing and strong families. The QPI Steering Committee has begun meeting and members will develop an Information Sharing Plan for the Rural Region. Information sharing between DCFS and the foster parents is a much needed collaboration; promoting consistency of what information could be shared with foster parents throughout the Rural Region. Well informed caregivers are better able to meet the needs of a child and are better prepared to handle challenges a child may have. QPI also supports the importance of the “transitioning” of children; from their own homes to foster care, and subsequent transfers to relatives, or back to their biological families; and to mitigate the trauma of change or the feelings of loss and separation.

- The DCFS Rural Region continues to increase a quality foster parent pool of providers to better match child and foster families; this enables children to remain in their communities, and in their schools with their friends and fictive supports; and ensures the stability of placement.
- The DCFS Rural Region also continues to promote and grow the Specialized Foster Home program in which foster parents receive additional training in the areas of trauma, working with children with behavioral issues, and medication use. These homes are able to provide care for children and youth who would more typically be placed in higher level or therapeutic settings which allow for children to remain in their home community and receive additional supportive services. Foster homes also receive additional clinical support in their home weekly using “Together Facing the Challenge” programming.

## **PLANNED ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR UP-COMING SFY 2016**

To date DCFS has not adopted any evidenced based practices regarding Domestic Violence in our child welfare assessment or on-going work with families. Over the next year DCFS plans to research child welfare best practices related to Domestic Violence and hopes to integrate some of those into our practice, policies and/or procedures.

## **WCDSS PROGRESS**

### **Progress as it relates to the Statewide Collaborative on Education, Child Welfare and the Courts:**

- The WCDSS continues to staff and support the Education Subcommittee of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Senior Model Court Team. Goals include training system partners (including child welfare staff) regarding education outcomes for foster youth and approved data information sharing and collection. All child welfare supervisors and Intake staff were provided training and access to the Washoe County School District's student database "infinite Campus". This provides for current information regarding student outcomes including grades, attendance, behaviors, and medical information. The Education Subcommittee meets quarterly and the WCDSS School Liaison provides updates, as an example, this year the School District created a report (BIG reports) for all students' 9-12 grades that evaluates the student's education risk and strength factors. This information is shared with WCDSS and will be incorporated into reports to the Court. Additional success is submission and award of a \$300,000 two year grant from the Walter S. Johnson foundation to address educational outcomes for youth. The grant will provide targeted services to youth at risk of poor educational outcomes. WCDSS Educational Liaison continues to serve on Nevada Supreme Court Chief Justice' task force on Education.
- All youth existing care are assigned a co-case manager through the Children's Cabinet, Inc. to strengthen services to prepare youth for successful adulthood. The Reno Rodeo Association continues to partner with WCDSS to provide employment opportunity and training through the VIPs program, and the significant financial commitment to youth aging out of the system through monthly stipends provides a strong safety net. Additional and more complete information may be found in the section dedicated to ILP youth.
- In the past year there have been two out of state QPI (Quality Parenting Initiative) conferences out of state. WCDSS has sent both agency staff and foster parents to these conferences to increase the awareness of the QPI philosophy in order to make change throughout the department. WCDSS has worked collaboratively with their foster parents and have had many QPI committees in place since July 1, 2014. These committees generally comprise of social workers/caseworkers, foster parents and supervisory staff. The following committees are in place:
  - The Partnership Plan committees purpose was to develop a document that can be used to as a tool to build better relationships between the children's caseworkers and the foster parents. This is close to being finalized and will be implemented during the summer of 2015.
  - The Events Committee is to plan events for foster parents (and employees at times) for retention. Some things in place is the monthly Foster/Adopt Support Group, planned events include Wild Waters, picnics, foster parent appreciation dinner, Christmas Party.

- The Transitions Committee is working to create better outcomes for children and families when transitioning from foster home to foster home, foster home to birth parent home and foster home to adoptive home.
- The Information Sharing committee is creating a formal document that outlines what information can be shared with foster families in order to ensure that the agency is consistent with what information they are providing to the foster parents in order for them to care for the children. Historically, there has not been clear guidelines regarding what information should remain confidential. The goal of this committee is to make foster parents a part of the team and allow them to be updated regarding the case in order for them to meet the needs of the children more effectively.
- The Recruitment for Teens committee is strategize on ways to reach out to current foster parents and potential foster parents regarding the need for our teen youth in foster care.
- The Institutional and Licensing Investigations committee is creating a useable document that can be provided to foster parents when a report has been received on their home. Often times investigations can make a foster parent feel as though they no longer can care for the child in their home, leading to a disruption. The agency recognizes and normalizes that the foster family feels stress during an investigation and is looking at ways to build supports around the foster parent (ie, mentor). The committee will also review current policy and protocol and make recommendations regarding any changes that need to be made to be in line with current practice.
- The Foster Care Placement Stability group meets weekly to discuss placements that are at risk for disruption. This Placement Stability team is a multidisciplinary team comprised of management staff, caseworker and mental health professionals. When a child's team member believes that a placement is becoming unstable and/or may disrupt they make a referral to the team and staff the case. Creative ideas and solutions are presented by the team to stabilize the placements. From July 2014 to current, 143 possible placement disruptions have been staffed.

## **PLANNED ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR UP-COMING SFY 2016**

WCDSS and Washoe County Social Department (WCSD) are working collaboratively to build a page in Infinite Campus to provide current information regarding all students in out of home care to continue to focus on educational outcomes. State SACWIS staff participates in the planning calls and indicate revisions to UNITY could be made to improve communication and information sharing between the School District and child welfare agency that would benefit the entire state.

For the upcoming July 2015-June 2016 the following committee's will be in place in addition to some listed above:

The Solutions Committee was created by a foster parent. It's goal is to help foster families and social workers come up with valuable solutions for both parties. The committee will offer a place for foster families to ask questions and not feel there will be repercussions. The committee is looking towards building better relationships between foster parents and social workers and foster parents to foster parents.

The Caseworker Involvement Committee is to increase the involvement of every social services employee to embrace the QPI philosophy in everyday practice.

## **ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE in CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING**

Each of the seven performance indicators listed in this section mirrors the Federal Statewide Assessment Instrument. The overall structure for each performance outcome/indicator includes the legal requirements for each item and to the extent applicable the most recent Federal data profile, previous CFPSR data/information, most recent case review data or relevant state data, and most recent stakeholder survey/focus group data/information.



## Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs

### ***Item 12: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents***

#### Requirements

NRS 432B.190 and .550 requires child welfare agencies to provide services to preserve families, prevent placement of children if possible, and if not possible provide a plan describing those services that would facilitate safe return of the child. NAC 432B.190, .200, and .240 requires agencies to provide case planning and agreements with parents using strengths and resources in planning, and requires the agency to provide a range of services to preserve the family. NAC 432B.400, .405 and .410 requires the agency to provide case planning and services to children in foster care and their parents. NAC 432B.1362, .1364 and .1366 provide provisions for provider agreements of child welfare services and assurances of conducting timely assessments to ensure adequate provision of services.

Several state policies are applicable to this item. Policy 0203 Case Management Practice Model was developed as a principle based framework for frontline practice. Policy 0509 Nevada Initial Assessment was developed to provide better initial assessments, and 0204 Case Planning Policy and 0205 Caseworker Contacts with Children, Parents and Caregivers were developed to clarify case planning and frequency of contacts required with children, parents and caregivers. Policy 0801 Independent Living Policy was developed to ensure youth age 15 and older in foster care receives adequate case planning and services for transition to adulthood and 0503 Differential Response policy was developed to standardized procedures use of family assessment rather than investigations on certain child abuse cases. Finally, policy 1004 Safety Assessment and Family Evaluation (SAFE) Assessment covers the assessment of the appropriateness of potential foster families, licensed relatives and adoptive families.

#### CFSR 2009

An assessment of needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents was applicable for all 62 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had adequately assessed the needs of children, parents and foster parents and provided the services necessary to meet those needs. This item excludes the assessment of child's (but not parents') needs pertaining to education, physical health, and mental health. These areas are addressed in later items. Needs and services of child, parents and foster parents was rated as a strength in 15 (37.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases and 8 (36 percent of the 22-in-home services cases. This Item was rated as strength in 23 cases when reviewers determined that the needs of children, parents, and foster parents had been adequately assessed and that identified service needs had been met. This item was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 37 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the state had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents. The required percentage was 90.

A few Washoe County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSP expressed the opinion that services are included in case plans based on the results of needs assessments conducted by caseworkers. Carson City stakeholders expressed difference opinion with regard to whether the needs of foster parents are asses and met. Some Carson City stakeholders suggest that the child welfare agency conducts an assessment of the needs of foster parents; however, other said that the agency did not do this routinely.

#### Statewide Data

Nevada has continued to conduct Quality Improvement Case Reviews on this item. In the following Table 5.1 is the most current case review data as it relates to item 12.

**Table 5.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

QICR 2014

Item 12 (previously item 17): Identifying Needs and Services to Child, Parent and Foster Parent

59.7%

This item is an area needing improvement.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provide information on identifying needs and services to child, parent and foster parents in Table 5.2. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child

Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 190 responses to the survey question on child; 71 responses to the survey question on parents; and 171 responses to the survey question on foster parents.

How effective is the child welfare agency in identifying needs and providing services to the child, parent and foster parent (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in the following Tables 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4. The mean rating of 3.64, child, 3.77 parents indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that the Child Welfare Agencies are usually effective in identifying needs and services for children and parents. The mean rating of 3.23 on foster parents indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that Child Welfare Agencies are sometimes effective in identifying needs and services to foster parents.

Overall, comments indicated that child and parent needs are regularly met. However, most comments came from foster parents as it related to needs and services to foster parents. Some of the concerns that foster parents indicated were as follows: better communication with the child welfare agencies, consistent quality of caseworkers, respect, representation and additional training. The comment identified most from foster parents was the need for better communication.

**Table 5.2 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in identifying needs and services to the child?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
2.11% (94)	10.00% (19)	29.47% (56)	38.95% (74)	19.47% (37)	190	3.64	0.62

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

**Table 5.3 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in identifying needs and services to the parents?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
1.41% (1)	5.63% (4)	25.35% (18)	49.30% (35)	18.31% (13)	71	3.77	0.79

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

**Table 5.4 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in identifying needs and services to the foster parents?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
5.85% (10)	18.13% (31)	34.50% (59)	30.41% (52)	11.11% (19)	171	3.23	0.48

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

**Item 13: Child and family involvement in case planning**

Requirements

NAC 432B.190-220 encourages the participation of parents in the case planning process and requires engagement of the child’s family in using its own strengths and resources throughout the process for planning services. This is implemented by fully exploring the needs of the child’s family and alternatives to separation of the family, identifying each family member’s strengths and using those strengths in the process of solving problems, developing individualized goals for services and treatment and time-limited steps to accomplish these goals, and by setting target dates for their evaluation and completion. Emphasis is given to promoting the right of a child to be with his family and fully exploring all alternatives to placement of the child outside his home.

The 0204 Case Planning policy provides the basis for a link that ties the findings of the child and family assessments to identification of the permanency goal(s) and the selection of a set of services including both formal and informal services. It is a collaborative, strength based and solution focused process that empowers and motivates families to identify solutions that will remove barriers, increase functioning and build protective capacity. Policy requires a working partnership between the case manager and the family, which is critical to successful assessment and case planning. The family is to be assisted in identifying its strengths, needs, culture, supports and current resources that will affect its ability to achieve and maintain child safety, child permanency, and child and family well-being through a “strength”-based, family-centered, individualized case plan. In the event a parent is not available or refuses to participate in case planning, the case plan team (foster parents, extended relatives, other providers and child, if appropriate) must still be formed and a plan developed. In all cases, every effort must be made and continue to be made to involve parents and children (if age appropriate) in the case planning process.

**CFSR 2009**

An assessment of child and family involvement in case planning was applicable for 57 (92 percent) of the 62 cases. A case was not applicable if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review, parents were not involved with the child in any way, and/or the child was too young or had cognitive delays or other conditions that were barriers to participation in case planning. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether parents and children (when appropriate) had been involved in the case planning process, and if not, whether their involvement was contrary to the child’s best interest. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent or child actively participated in identifying the services and goals include in the case plan. This Item was rated as a strength in 18 (51 percent) of 35 applicable foster care cases and 7 (32 percent) of the 22 in-home services cases. This Item was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 44 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve parent and/or children in the case planning process. The required percentage was 90.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCFS caseworkers generally are effective in engaging parents and youth in case planning. Several stakeholders indicated that the CFT process facilitates the engagement of families in case planning but that it is not held consistently. In addition, a few stakeholders indicated that older youth generally are not involved in case planning.

**Statewide Data**

Nevada has continued to conduct Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) on this item. In the following Table 5.5 is the most current case review data as it relates to item 13.

<b>Table 5.5: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	<b>QICR 2014</b>
Item 13 (previously item18): Child and Family involvement in Case Planning	59.0%

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in Table 5.6 provides information on child and family involvement in Case Planning. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 166 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency on involvement of children and families in case planning (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 5.6. The mean rating of 3.28 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that child welfare agencies are sometimes effective in involvement of child and parents in case planning.

**Table 5.6 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency on involvement of children and families in case planning?**

<b>Not Effective</b>	<b>Rarely Effective</b>	<b>Sometimes Effective</b>	<b>Usually Effective</b>	<b>Very Effective</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
6.02% (10)	15.06% (25)	34.34% (57)	34.34% (57)	10.24% (17)	166	3.28	0.54

N=Number of Survey Respondents

## ***Item 14: Caseworker visits with child***

### **Requirements**

In accordance with 45 CFR 1355.20, and NRS requiring that children in foster care or children under the placement and care responsibility of a Child Welfare Agency who are placed away from their parents must be visited by their caseworker (or other responsible party) at least once every calendar month. When a child is placed in foster care this visit must occur where the child resides in at least 50% of those months. During caseworker visits with children, the caseworker (or other responsible party) must spend a portion of the visit with the child outside the presence of the care providers and a portion of the time alone with the care providers/foster parents if requested. The NAC 432B.405 and State policy 0205 "Case Worker Contact with Children, Parents, and Caregivers" requires that each child in foster care will be visited by his or her case worker (or other responsible party) at least once every calendar month. A "visit" is defined as a face to face in person contact between the child and the child's case worker (or other responsible party).

### **CFSR 2009**

An assessment of caseworker visits with child was applicable for all 62 cases (40 foster care and 22 in-home) reviewed in 2009. To review this item reviewers were instructed to evaluate if the quality (including the frequency) of visits was sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of child safety, and well-being. Also reviewers evaluated if case worker visits with children focused upon relevant case planning activities, service delivery and case plan goal achievement. In 2009 this item was rated as "area needing improvement" because of the 62 cases reviewed, only 55% of cases found that the frequency and quality of case worker visits with children was sufficient.

### **Statewide Data**

Currently Nevada has two methods for evaluation of progress toward this item. The first measurement is a compliance report extracted from UNITY that counts the number of visit months expected during a period under review, and then determines the number of visit months during the period under review in which at least one qualifying visit occurred. This data report provides administration with an evaluation of compliance toward a projected goal, however questions regarding the quality of visits cannot be answered by this report alone, and the data report only captures case worker visits with foster children. To evaluate the quality of visits between caseworkers and children, including those children served in their homes, Nevada conducts case reviews throughout the State. A randomized stratified sample of 65 cases across all child welfare agencies is reviewed annually.

Caseworker visits with foster children and all children in the family home (of in-home cases) was captured in item 19. Beginning in 2015 this data is included in analysis of item 14.

Nevada has the capability, within the SACWIS to generate a data report that collects caseworker visit data. This data and State performance is calculated using the methodology as outlined in Program Instruction (PI) ACYF-CB-PI-12-01. States are instructed to measure caseworker visit compliance by "taking the number of monthly visits made to children in the reporting population and dividing that number by the number of such visits that would occur during the FFY if each such child were visited once per month while in care." This value is represented as a percentage by multiplying the value by 100 and rounded to the nearest whole number.

In late FFY 2014 Nevada successfully met the expectation of 90% regarding the monthly frequency of case worker visits. In FFY 2015 the expectation was increased to 95%.

Table 5.7 below illustrates case worker visit compliance for FFY2014 (October 01, 2013 to September 30, 2014)

**Table 5.7: Compliance of Monthly Case Worker Visits with Children FFY 2014**

Item 19: Case Worker Visit with Children (FFY2014)	Compliance Rate	NV Goal	Goal Met
Statewide	90.39 %	90 %	Yes
CCDFS	92.45 %	90 %	Yes
WCDSS	84.79 %	90 %	No
DCFS Rural Region	84.99 %	90 %	No

Source: UNITY CFS 7D7

Table 5.8 below illustrates the State's compliance with this expectation during State Fiscal Year 2015. Please note that as of this reporting only 10 months of data for SFY15 is available (July 01, 2014 to April 30, 2015). Nevada continues to improve on this measure, when compared to previous reporting years; however since the increase to a higher performance standard of 95% Nevada has not met this standard to date.

**Table 5.8: Compliance of Monthly Case Worker Visits with Children SFY 2015 (July 01, 2014 to April 30, 2015)**

Case Worker Visit with Children	Compliance Rate	NV Goal	Goal Met
Statewide	91%	95 %	No
CCDFS	93%	95 %	No
WCDSS	89%	95 %	No
DCFS Rural Region	81%	95 %	No

Source: UNITY CFS 7D7

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the quality of case worker visits with children, both in foster care and in their family homes, Nevada continues to conduct case reviews of a sample of cases representing each child welfare agency and accounting for the unique case mix across the State. Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) captured this data in 2014 under item 19. However, unlike the data reports generated from SACWIS, QICR results include an evaluation of quality in addition to one of frequency. To evaluate the quality and frequency of caseworker visits with children reviewers are instructed to consider if the quality and frequency of face to face visits were sufficient to promote child safety, permanency, and achievement of case plan goals. If it is the judgment of the reviewers that even though the case worker visited with the child at least once per calendar month, and that the child needed more frequent visits by the caseworker but the caseworker did not visit more frequently, this item must be rated as an "area needing improvement".

Nevada has continued to conduct Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) on this item. In the following Table 5.9 is the most current case review data as it relates to item 15.

**Table 5.9 Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

QICR 2014

Item 14 (previously item 19): Caseworker Visits with Child

83.9%

Data collected from surveys for the 2015-2019 CFSR in 2014 asked stakeholders to respond to the question, "How effective is the Child Welfare Agency in conducting face to face visits as often as needed and required with children and youth in foster care and those who receive services in their own homes?" Respondents were asked to rate their perceptions on a Likert Scale of 1 to 5 with 5 signifying "very effective" and 1 signifying "not effective". Stakeholders surveyed include: Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Case workers, Agency Management, Educators and other community partners. The most common response was "3" indicating the respondents perceptions of case worker efficacy was "sometimes effective", although only one fewer respondent answered "4" indicating "usually effective".

Table 5.10 below illustrates the survey responses to the question regarding case worker effectiveness of visits with children.

**Table 5.10 Survey Data**

**How effective is the Child Welfare Agency in conducting face to face visits as often as needed and as required with children and youth in foster care and those who receive services in their own homes?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
2.55% (4)	11.46% (18)	29.94% (47)	29.30% (46)	26.75% (42)	157	3.66	0.58

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

Comments from stakeholders indicated that case workers regularly visit with children face to face but may not enter the information into SACWIS in a timely manner. Stakeholders also noted that the quality of visits varied from case worker to case worker, and that additional training may be helpful to enhance the quality of the visits and consistency from worker to worker. Some stakeholders also noted that children placed out of state or at a great distance to the case worker posed a challenge to completing monthly face to face visits.

**Statewide Efforts to Improve**

During SFY 2015 CCDFS has reduced the caseloads caseworkers carry which should have a positive impact upon the quality and frequency of caseworker visits with children. The agency has also implemented new practice guidelines to ensure that adult functioning is adequately assessed during monthly visits. Additionally, every quarter supervisors are required to observe each worker in the field and provide feedback to the worker in efforts to improve case visits. Supervisors and CCDFS management continue to use a range of data reporting tools to monitor progress and improvement on this measure.

DCFS Rural Region provides additional training to both experienced and new workers regarding caseworker contacts and proper documentation. The objective of the training is to stress the importance of meaningful visitation with children and families, and how to properly document case activities around caseworker contact. The training focuses on using visits to enhance understanding of child safety, improve permanency outcomes for children and measuring progress toward case plan goal achievement.

To date 87 DCFS Rural Region staff have been trained and provided with additional job aids, and resource materials to guide practice. To help support timely documentation DCFS has purchased several licenses of “Dragon Naturally Speaking” a dictation program that transcribes the caseworker’s dictation into written text which can then be uploaded into SACWIS.

In WCDSS overtime funds were approved to support additional time to document caseworker visits in SACWIS. Washoe County caseworkers stated they had completed caseworker visits with children in accordance with agency expectations, but were not documented in a timely manner. In addition to overtime the agency was able to purchase tablets to use in the field so workers could quickly document case activity. WCDSS also examined case worker visit data reports and learned that data entry error was the root cause for some of the less than expected performance in this measure. Those data entry errors have since been corrected.

**Item 15: Caseworker visits with parents**

**Requirements**

DCFS policy 0205.0 Caseworker Contact with Children, Parents and Caregivers requires that caseworker contacts focus clearly on case planning, service delivery, safety, strengths and needs of the child and family, family progress and identification of resources and services the family needs in order to achieve case plan goals.

## CFSR 2009

This item was applicable for 50 (81 percent) of the 62 cases. Cases were not applicable for this assessment if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the lives of their children. All cases that were not applicable are foster care cases. Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker's face-to-face contact with the child's mothers and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and ensure the children's safety and well-being. Item 20 was rated as strength in 50 percent (14 cases) of the 28 applicable foster care cases and 36 percent (8 cases) of the 22 in-home services cases. This item was rated as strength in 22 cases when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of parents and children and that visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. Item 20 was assigned an over rating of area needing improvement. In 44 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals. The required percentage was 90.

There were insufficient substantive comments from stakeholders regarding this item during the onsite CSFR.

## Statewide Data

Nevada has continued to conduct Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) on this item. In the following Table 5.11 is the most current case review data as it relates to item 15.

<b>Table 5.11: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	QICR 2014
Item 15 (previously item 20): Caseworker Visits with Parents	54.0%

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on Caseworker Visits with Parents (mothers and fathers) in Table 5.12. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 90 responses to the survey as it related to caseworker visits with mothers and 80 responses to the survey as it related to caseworker visits with fathers.

How effective is the child welfare agency in conducting face to face visits with parents (mothers and fathers) (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Tables 5.12 and 5.13. The mean rating of 3.49 for mothers indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that child welfare agencies are usually effective in conducting face to face visits with mothers. The mean rating of 3.19 for father indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that child welfare agencies are sometimes effective in conducting face to face visits with fathers.

**Table 5.12 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in conducting face to face visits with mothers?**

<b>Not Effective</b>	<b>Rarely Effective</b>	<b>Sometimes Effective</b>	<b>Usually Effective</b>	<b>Very Effective</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
3.33% (3)	13.33% (12)	32.22% (29)	33.33% (30)	17.78% (16)	90	3.49	0.53

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

**Table 5.13 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in conducting face to face visits with fathers?**

<b>Not Effective</b>	<b>Rarely Effective</b>	<b>Sometimes Effective</b>	<b>Usually Effective</b>	<b>Very Effective</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
6.25% (5)	16.25% (13)	41.25% (33)	25.00% (20)	11.25% (9)	80	3.19	0.48

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

## Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

### ***Item 16: Educational needs of child***

#### Requirements

NRS 432B requires that in custody cases a report be made in writing by the child welfare agency concerning the child's record in school. Statute further requires that the agency exercise diligence and care in arranging appropriate and available services for the children (NRS 432B.540). The Program of School Choice for Children in Foster Care authorizes the legal guardians or custodians of certain children who are in foster care to apply to the Department of Education to participate in the program which allows such children to choose the school of their choice or remain at the school they were attending prior to being removed from their caretaker (NRS 392.040).

NAC 432B directs agencies to address the educational needs of children in custody. These codes direct agencies to complete a family assessment which is to include the educational needs of the child (NAC 432B.1364). NAC 432B.400 directs that every case plan for child receiving foster care will include the following: A statement indicating the proximity of the school in which the child is enrolled at the time that they were placed in foster care and if it was considered as a factor in the selection of the placement for foster care; that the case plan include education records, to the extent available, containing the names and addresses of those educational providers; the grade level at which the child performs; and such other educational information concerning the child as the agency determines is necessary. NAC 432B.230 directs the child welfare agencies to establish interagency agreements with related agencies including schools, to ensure that cooperative and mutually facilitative services are provided to children and families.

Policy 0204 Case Planning requires that in custody cases the child's plan is to be developed in collaboration with the family and other members of the Child and Family Team (CFT), within required timeframes and have required elements including the child's educational needs. Finally, policy 0205 Caseworker Contact requires that caseworkers visit the child or youth and caregiver at a minimum of once per month and during those visits discussed the educational progress and needs.

#### CF SR 2009

This item was applicable for 41 (66 percent) of the 62 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if either of the following applied: Children were not of school age, or children in the in-home services cases did not have service needs pertaining to education-related issues. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children's educational needs were appropriately assessed and whether services were provided to meet those needs. This item was rated as strength in 39 cases when reviewers determined that the child's educational needs were appropriately assessed and services were provided, if necessary. This item was assigned an overall rating of strength. In 95 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children. The required percentage was 90.

Clark and Washoe county stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CF SR noted that children in foster care have an educational liaison who manages educational issues with the school. However, various stakeholders identified several barriers to the agencies' ability to meet the educational needs of children in foster care i.e. lack of transportation to continue in the same school when removed from the home, graduation rate is low and dropout rate is high, children fall behind in school and tutoring is not provided routinely.

#### Statewide Data

In 2015 Nevada began using the new Online Management System (OMS) developed by JBS for the Children's Bureau and extended to states for use with their own CQI systems for case reviews. Nevada has not been able to collect case review data on this item in the past; however, Nevada will have baseline data at the end of CY 2015 after review of 65 cases statewide using the OMS.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CF SP in 2014 provides information on educational needs of child in table 5.14. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 173 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency in addressing the educational needs of children and youth in foster? (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 5.14. The mean rating of 3.58 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that child welfare agencies are usually effective in addressing the educational needs of children



and youth in foster care.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicated that the child welfare agencies in some areas have an educational liaison that helps manage educational issues. However, many stakeholders indicated that more attention needs to be given to children who have IEP's and that some challenges continue to be with children/youth that disrupt from foster care placements and change schools.

**Table 5.14 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in addressing the educational needs of children and youth in foster care?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
3.47% (6)	11.56% (20)	26.59% (46)	40.46% (70)	17.92% (31)	173	3.58	0.62

N=Number of Survey Respondents

SD=Standard Deviation

**Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.**

***Item 17: Physical Health of child***

Requirements

In keeping with the federal statutory framework, Nevada statutes state that one of the key purposes for DCFS is to plan and coordinate the provision of services for the support of families, including providing counseling, training, or other services to families. NAC 432B.400 further addresses the requirements of the child welfare agency to have a case plan that includes plans for the coordination and provision of services to children and families who need assistance relating to the care, welfare, mental and physical health of children. DCFS Policy 0207 Health Services supports these mandates by outlining processes to ensure that physical, developmental and mental health needs of custodial children are identified and diagnosed through the use of standardized, periodic screenings. The purpose of these screenings is to ensure that all non-custodial children's caregivers are aware of early preventative, diagnostic screening and treatment services available in their service area. The screenings facilitate the identification of physical, emotional or developmental needs and risks as early as possible and to link children to needed diagnostic and treatment services through the use of Nevada's Healthy Kids Program periodicity schedule as set forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Additionally, policy 0502 requires as part of the CAPTA Part-C Requirement for Custodial and Non-Custodial Children, that all children under the age of three, who are involved in a substantiated case of abuse/neglect, must be referred to an "Early Intervention Program," for a developmental assessment pursuant to CAPTA-IDEA Part C. Documentation of the referral results of the referral and needs identified by any screening conducted by an Early Intervention Program must be entered into UNITY within five working days of receipt of the information.

Lastly, section 422(b) (15) (a) of the Social Security Act requires states to develop a plan for the ongoing oversight and coordination of health care services for children in foster care. (See **ATTACHMENT D: Nevada Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan**).

CFSR 2009

This item was applicable for 51 (82 percent) of 62 cases reviewed. Cases that were not applicable were in-home service cases in which physical health concerns were not an issue. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children's physical health needs (including dental needs) had been appropriately assessed, and the services designed to meet those needs had been, or were being provided. This item was rated a strength in 34 (85 percent) of 40 foster care cases and 8 (73 percent) of 11 applicable in-home services cases. Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 82 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was effective in assessing and meeting children's physical health needs. The required percent was 90.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that medical and dental assessments and services are provided to children appropriately. However, some state-level and Clark County stakeholders indicated that there are delays in the provision of medical and dental services due to the lack of sufficient number of doctors and dentist in the state who will accept Medicaid.

**Statewide Data:**

In 2015 Nevada began using the new Online Management System (OMS) developed by JBS for the Children’s Bureau and extended to states for use with their own CQI systems for case reviews. Nevada has not been able to collect case review data on this item in the past; however, Nevada will have baseline data at the end of CY 2015 after review of 65 cases statewide using the OMS.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on Physical Health of child in Table 5.15. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 176 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency in identifying and addressing the physical and dental needs of children and youth in foster care (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 5.15. The mean rating of 3.93 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that child welfare agencies are usually effective in addressing the physical and dental needs of children and youth in foster care.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicated that the child welfare agencies address the physical and dental needs of children with the foster parents being great partners on ensuring these needs are met. However, some stakeholders indicated that there continues to be challenges with the limited number of dental providers who will accept Medicaid.

**Table 5.15 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in addressing the physical and dental needs of children and youth in foster care?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
2.27% (4)	6.82% (12)	19.32% (34)	39.20% (69)	32.39% (57)	176	3.93	0.77

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

***Item 18: Mental/behavioral health of child***

**Requirements**

In keeping with the federal statutory framework, Nevada statutes state that one of the key purposes for DCFS to plan and coordinate the provision of services for the support of families to maintain the integrity of families and ensure that children are not unnecessarily removed from their home. This includes providing counseling, training, or other services to families, even if a report of abuse or neglect is received, but it is determined that an investigation is not warranted at the time. NRS 432.011 further addresses the coordination and provision of services to children and families who need assistance relating to the care, welfare and mental health of children.

NRS 432B.197 states that each agency which provides child welfare services shall establish appropriate policies to ensure that children in the custody of the agency have timely access to and safe administration of clinically appropriate psychotropic medication. The policies must include, without limitation, policies concerning:

- The use of psychotropic medication in a manner that has not been tested or approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration, including, without limitation, the use of such medication for a child who is of an age that has not been tested or approved or who has a condition for which the use of the medication has not been tested or approved;

- Prescribing any psychotropic medication for use by a child who is less than 4 years of age;
- The concurrent use by a child of three or more classes of psychotropic medication;
- The concurrent use by a child of two psychotropic medications of the same class; and
- The criteria for nominating persons who are legally responsible for the psychiatric care of children in the custody of agencies which provide child welfare services pursuant to NRS 432B.4681 to 432B.469, inclusive, and the policies adopted pursuant to this section.

Statewide policy 0209.0 - Psychiatric Care & Treatment states that the child welfare agency will nominate a “*person legally responsible for the psychiatric care of a child,*” for appointment by the Court, for any child entering custody or currently in custody with a prescription for psychotropic medication or who the child welfare agency determines may be in need of psychiatric care.

### CFSR 2009

This item was applicable for 47 (76 percent) of the 62 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if the child was too young for an assessment of mental health needs or if there were no mental health concerns. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether mental health needs had been appropriately assessed and appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided. This item was rated as a strength in 22 (71 percent) of the 31 applicable foster care cases and 9 (56 percent) of the 16 applicable in-home services cases. This item was assigned an overall rating of area needing improvement. In 66 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted effort to address the mental health needs of children. The required percentage was 90.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency is not consistent in ensuring that children in the child welfare system receive the mental health assessments and services they need. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that insufficient services and waiting lists for services exist statewide in the following areas; mental health assessment and treatment, counseling, inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment, domestic violence treatment, psychiatric treatment for children , and placements for children who need residential treatment.

### Statewide Data

In 2015 Nevada began using the new Online Management System (OMS) developed by JBS for the Children’s Bureau and extended to states for use with their own CQI systems for case reviews. Nevada has not been able to collect case review data on this item in the past; however, Nevada will have baseline data at the end of CY 2015 after review of 65 cases statewide using the OMS.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provide information on Mental/Behavioral Health of child in Table 5.17. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 182 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency in identifying, assessing, and addressing the behavioral, emotional and mental health needs of children and youth in foster care (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being Very effective) is presented in Table 5.17. The mean rating of 3.58 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that child welfare agencies are usually effective in identifying, assessing and addressing the behavioral, emotional and mental health needs of children and youth in foster care.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicated that the child welfare agencies address the Mental/Behavioral Health needs of children. Many stakeholders indicated that the foster parents are great partners in the success of ensuring that these needs are met. Foster parent comments indicated a need for more communication and support around children’s mental health and behavioral issues.

**Table 5.17 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in identifying, assessing, and addressing the behavioral, emotional and mental health needs of children and youth in foster care?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
2.75% (5)	10.44% (19)	26.37% (48)	46.70% (85)	13.74% (25)	182	3.58	0.72

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

### **Strengths/Concerns (Well-being Outcomes 1, 2 & 3)**

While Nevada has been able to collect case review information on Well-being Outcome 1 Nevada has not been able to collect case review data on Well-being Outcomes 2 and 3. Surveys conducted in 2014 indicated the foster parents felt a need for more communication and general support for case workers on ensuring physical and mental health needs of children and youth in care were met.

Additionally, caseworker visits with children (frequency and quality) while improved continues to be an area of needed improvement and also caseworker visits with parents (mothers and fathers) while improved continues to be an area of needed improvement. Specifically, engagement of fathers is a continued area of concern.

Child welfare agencies are usually effective on ensuring educational needs are met for foster children; however, some comments from stakeholders identified a need to ensure that children with IEP's receive additional attention, and there is need to ensure that children are able to remain in their school of origin.

While it is believed that child welfare agencies are usually effective on ensuring physical and dental needs are met Nevada does not have case review data to support this belief. Nevada is collecting baseline data on all 18 case review items this year using the OMS system developed by JBS. Until such time Nevada has a means to analyze performance in the Well-being Outcomes this will continue to be an area needing improvement.

## **Section VI. SYSTEMIC FACTORS**

### **ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE**

Each of the performance indicators listed in this section mirrors the 18 systemic factor items from the Federal Statewide Assessment Instrument. The overall structure for each performance outcome/indicator includes the legal requirements for each item and to the extent applicable the most recent Federal data profile, previous CFSR data/information, most recent case review data or relevant state data, and recent stakeholder survey/focus group data/information.

Also, for future updates to the APSR Nevada is working on establishing members from all stakeholder groups for a Statewide Assessment Committee that will begin meeting quarterly in the Fall of SFY 2016. This Committee will be engaged in assisting in a continuing statewide analysis of the performance measures and specifically the Systemic Factors.

### **Systemic Factor A: Statewide Information System**

#### ***Item 19: Statewide information system***

##### Requirements

UNITY follows the SACWIS requirements set forth by Public Law 103-66, which was authorized by Congress in 1993 to help states meet data collection and reporting requirements of the Social Security Act. UNITY, Nevada's automated system is the statewide system for child welfare data collection. All information regarding foster care is entered into UNITY including basic demographics, placements, addresses of placements, tracking of goals and legal status,

adoptions, ICPC cases, independent living, and IV-E eligibility. In compliance with federal requirements, UNITY collects the data required to submit AFCARS and NCANDS.

### CFSR 2009

During the 2009 CF SR this item was rated as an area needing improvement. It was reported that although Nevada was operating 'UNITY', a statewide information system that contains the required elements, information from stakeholder interviews indicated that the UNITY system does not reflect the current goal, placement or legal status for every child in foster care. Additionally, during the onsite CF SR, reviewers determined that in a few cases identified through UNITY as in-home services cases, children were actually in foster care placements. As a result there was concern that the State does not have the ability to identify the goals and legal status for every child in foster care to ensure some children are not identified accurately in UNTIY as being in foster care.

Several State-level, Carson City and Clark County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CF SR expressed the opinion that information on permanency goals, placement and legal status of children, particularly in adoptions cases, is not entered into UNITY accurately or in a timely manner. These stakeholders also noted that because UNITY is so difficult to navigate, it is difficult to correct data that have been entered incorrectly. Despite these concerns, some stakeholders suggested that UNITY can be used to generate reports on the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals of children in foster care, as well as other types of management reports.

### Statewide Data

Since 2009 UNITY has been revised to promote accurate, complete and timely data entry. UNITY is now able to prompt the user to enter child demographic information and to update and/or validate expired data elements such as custody status, placement location and/or permanency goals. In 2015 it is expected that all users will be using UNITY 2.0 which has enhanced navigation and notification features and incidences of data entry error and incomplete data will decrease.

In addition to user surveys, which provide administration with the users' perceptions of UNITY performance, case reviews (QICR) completed across the state each year confirm that in every case selected the child's permanency goal, current placement, and relevant demographics as identified in SACWIS are accurate and consistent with what actually occurs in the field. Cases that are reviewed are a selected from a randomized stratified sample of all cases within the child welfare agency's jurisdiction. The sample is adjusted to mirror the case mix across the state which allows for a more precise representation of cases. These cases include a mixture of older and newer cases, older and younger children with a variety of permanency goals and includes both in home and out of home cases.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on the Statewide Information System in Table 6.1. Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 193 responses to the survey.

How effective is the state's statewide information system (UNITY) in readily identifying the legal status, demographics, location and goals for the placement or legal status of every child in foster care. (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being Very effective) is presented in Table 6.1. The mean rating of 3.74 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that state's statewide information system (UNITY) is usually effective in readily identifying the legal status, demographics, location and goals placement or legal status of every child in foster care.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicated that UNITY has the capacity to track to child level programs, case management, status, demographics, and current location and permanency goals for children in foster care. However, many stakeholders reported the following challenges with the UNITY system: UNITY is slow, not user friendly, difficult to navigate, difficult to use and is often down. Data is not entered timely to provide better reporting; data is not entered consistently which causes validity of the data extracted to be in question. Many data reports are broken or not designed correctly, and it is difficult to get information or data that is needed because it is not in an accessible format within UNITY.

### **Table 6.1 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the State’s statewide information system (UNITY) in readily identifying the legal status, demographics, location and goals for the placement or legal status of every child in foster care?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
3.11% (6)	4.15% (8)	26.42% (51)	48.70% (94)	17.62% (34)	193	3.74	0.78

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

On March 6-10th, 2006 staff of the Children’s Bureau, ACF Region IX, and the office of Information Services (OIS) conducted an Assessment Review of Nevada’s AFCARS. The AFCARS data used for the review was from the report period April 1-September 30, 2005. At that time the State of Nevada and ACF entered into an AFCARS improvement plan.

Nevada continues to work towards improvement of the AFCARS data and has not completed the AFCARS improvement plan. Once ACF and the state agree that the quality of the data is acceptable the AFCARS improvement plan will be considered complete. Nevada has steadily worked during SFY 2015 towards improving the quality of AFCARS.

**Strengths/Concerns (Information System)**

UNITY has the capacity to track to the child level all programs, case management, status, demographics, current location and permanency goals of children in foster care. Staff has the ability to search for children online, access reports through UNITY by program, area, jurisdiction and location.

In the past year UNITY has begun beta testing and staggered roll-out of UNITY 2.0 which is a web-based version of SACWIS. UNITY 2.0 has improved navigation, and enhanced data entry capabilities to improve user experience, promote timely, accurate, and complete data entry.

Nevada has begun implementing a new practice of evaluation of child safety and family functioning. To support these changes in practice UNITY has been updated including new or revised user screens to capture safety assessment data, assessment of impending danger, safety planning, present danger planning and evaluation of family and care giver capacities to safe guard the children in their homes.

IMS staff continues to revise and generate new data reports to meet the data needs of Agency management, provide data resources for pilot projects across the state and support CQI activities including regular data tracking of key data measures, such as caseworker visits with children.

In the next SFY 2016 IMS plans to:

- complete the implementation of UNITY 2.0
- implement functionality to support foster care provider recruitment
- revise current intake functionality
- revise and update safety model data entry screens as practice changes are implemented
- continue to vet, and validate current data reports to support statewide CQI activities
- implement an interface between UNITY and Clark County Court Case Management System
- generate new data fields to support tracking and monitoring of children whom may be victims of sex trafficking
- generate new data fields to identify and track foster children whom are pregnant and/or parenting
- Continue striving toward SACWIS certification

It is planned over the next SFY 2016 to conduct a review of UNITY data by pulling a sample of cases and reviewing the accuracy of the status, demographics, current location and permanency goals of children in foster care. This analysis will

be reported in the 2016 APSR.

## **Systemic Factor B: Case Review System**

### ***Item 20: Written case plan***

#### Requirements:

In accordance with the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Family Act of 1997 (ASFA) Nevada has adopted the following revised statutes: 432B.540, 553 and 580 which obligate child welfare agencies to create a plan for permanency when a child is placed in foster care. This plan must include a description of the type of placement, safety and appropriateness of the home or institution including without limitation that the home or institution will comply with the provisions of NRS 432B.3905, and plan for ensuring the child's proper care, a description of the child's needs and a description of the services to be provided to meet those identified needs. The plan must also provide a description of the services to be provided to the parents to facilitate the child's return to the parents' custody or to ensure the child's permanent placement. NRS 432B.580 provides for a semiannual review of the child and family's status, progress on the written case plan and the recommendations for future treatment or rehabilitation of the family.

Nevada Administrative Code 432B.190 requires that all children in foster care in Nevada, have a written case plan that identifies barriers to the provision of a safe environment for the child, clarifies responsibilities of the case participants involved to help overcome those barriers and defines the goals of the case including a step-by step actions each participant must take in a designated timeframe covered by the plan. All case plans must be reviewed and approved by the supervisor and caseworker at least once every six months. Each case plan must clearly state the plan's goals, objectives and actions within a period of time including who is responsible for each action item. Case plans must be case specific and related to the family's situation, resources, capacities, and safe guard the child. Case plans should help the parents improve their protective and caregiving faculties while being flexible to allow for changes in circumstance or situation of the family or services availability based upon an on-going evaluation of the best interest of the child. Parents must be encouraged to be active participants in the creation of their case plan and engage in processes for receiving services and assistive resources.

Statewide policy 0204 "Case Planning" requires all cases open for on-going services must have a written case plan, the plan must be developed in cooperation with family and children (when appropriate). This is accomplished by convening a child and family team (CFT) to make decisions regarding the desired outcomes, and then selecting goals, actions and timelines aimed to bring about the desired outcomes. Case planning is a family-centered process that identifies family strengths and resources to assist the family or other caregivers in enhancing protective capacity and improving overall family functioning.

#### CFSR 2009

In 2009, this item was rated as "area needing improvement" because based upon data from UNITY only 53% of children had case plans. The on-site CFPSR also revealed that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve mothers in 62.5% and father in 57% of the 62 cases reviewed. During the CFPSR in 2009, many Stakeholders commented that it was their experience that a case plan was developed for each child and that the child welfare agencies are generally effective in engaging parents and children in the case planning processes. The Stakeholders commented that typically Child Family Teams are convened for this process although some of the Stakeholders reported that Child and Family Team meetings were inconsistent or that parents were not routinely involved in case planning.

#### Statewide Data

Using 2014B AFCARS foster care data file, 97.8% of the 6,027 children identified therein have an established case plan with case plan goal documented in UNITY. The 2015A AFCARS foster care data file indicates that 94.88% of all children listed therein have an established case plan and case plan goal in UNITY.

Nevada has continued to conduct Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) on this item. Table 6.2 illustrates the most recent case review data for 2014.

Child and family involvement in case planning is routinely evaluated during annual case reviews.

Item 13 (previously item18): Child and Family involvement in Case Planning

59.0%

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on child and family involvement in Case Planning in Table 6.3. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 166 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency on involvement of children and families in case planning (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 6.3. The mean rating of 3.28 indicates that an equal number of respondents perceived the agency’s effectiveness of involving children and families in case planning as “sometimes effective” and “usually effective”.

**Table 6.3 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency on involvement of children and families in case planning?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
6.02% (10)	15.06% (25)	34.34% (57)	34.34% (57)	10.24% (17)	166	3.28	0.54

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

**Item 21: Periodic reviews**

Requirement

Nevada Revised Statute 432B.580 mandates the court to conduct a hearing at least semiannually and within 90 days after a request by a party to any of the prior hearings. The court may also enter an order directing that the placement be reviewed by a panel of at least three persons appointed by the judge (NRS 432B.585). The contents of the hearing must include evaluations and assessments of progress in carrying out the case plan goals for the child in care (NAC 432B.420) and address ASFA requirements on reasonable efforts. DCFS Policy 0206, Court Hearing Notification, further ensures that foster parents and other care providers are afforded the right to be heard in review hearings with respect to children in their care and to offer information about the services received by the child and family.

CFSR 2009

In 2009 this item was rated as strength. Information for the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated that the State provides a process for the periodic review by a court of the status of each child in foster care every 6 months, and often more frequently.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that periodic hearing are held in court to review the status of children in foster care at least every 6 months and often more frequently. Some stakeholder indicated that although continuances occur, they are rare and usually delay the hearing for not more than 2 weeks. Some stakeholders also indicated that the period review hearing address issues pertaining to progress in achieving case goals.

Statewide Data

Nevada has requested a modification to the UNITY data report CFS 775 to capture this information; however, currently it is not available.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on Periodic Reviews in Table 6.4. Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and



other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 74 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency in providing a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every six months by the court (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being Very effective) is presented in Table 6.4. The mean rating of 4.16 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that Child Welfare Agencies are usually effective in providing a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every six months by the court.

**Table 6.4 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in providing a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months by the court?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
2.70% (2)	4.05% (3)	2.16 (9)	36.49% (27)	44.59% (33)	74	4.16	0.97

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

***Item 22: Permanency hearings***

*Requirements*

Nevada Revised Statute 432B.590 mandates that the court shall hold a hearing concerning the permanent placement of a child no later than 12 months after the initial removal of the child from his home and annually thereafter, or within 30 days a finding that agency which provides child welfare services is not required to make the reasonable efforts toward reunification pursuant to NRS 432B.393.3. In compliance with ASFA, DCFS Policies 0206 Court Hearing Notification and 0514 Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) require agencies to make and finalize permanency plans by no later than 12 months after the child’s removal and provide notice by certified mail to all the parties to any of the prior proceedings and parents and “any persons planning to adopt the child, relatives of the child or providers of foster care who are currently providing care to the child.”

*CFSR 2009*

In 2009 this item was rated as strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated that the state provides a process to ensure the each child in foster care has a permanency hearing in court no later than 12 months after child’s removal from home and that permanency hearing are held in a timely manner and address the permanent plan for the child.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that permanency hearings are held in a timely manner and that these hearings address the permanent plan for the child. Several stakeholders noted that permanency hearings are held as frequently as every 3 months (every 6 months in rural areas) and that permanency issues are addressed at periodic hearings as well as permanency hearings. Some Carson City and Clark County stakeholders expressed concern that permanency hearings are not effective at moving children toward permanency.

## Statewide Data

Court data drawn from UNITY illustrates for calendar year 2014 the median days statewide to the 1<sup>st</sup> Permanency Hearing was 356 days.

### Court Performance Measures Statewide From: 01-01-2014 to 12-31-2014

Court	Nbr of Children	Median Days to 1st Permanency Hearing	Median Days from 1st to 2nd Permanency Hearing	Median Days from 2nd to 3rd Permanency Hearing	Median Days from 3rd to 4th Permanency Hearing	Median Days from 4th to 5th Permanency Hearing	Median Days for all Subsequent Hearings
TOTAL STATEWIDE	5835	356	182	182	182	182	182
1ST/CARSON	66	358	364	350	349	394	174
1ST/STOREY	3	422	273	21	458	0	0
2ND/WASHOE	1108	356	161	182	238	350	357
3RD/CHURCHILL	61	361	175	182	182	182	182
3RD/LYON	47	334	182	182	189	196	357
4TH/ELKO	53	360	343	371	203	347	325
5TH/MINERAL	17	345	94	301	301	245	301
5TH/NYE	86	360	202	175	175	182	182
6TH/HUMBOLDT	10	343	334	350	326	247	357
6TH/LANDER	14	351	336	196	91	182	347
6TH/PERSHING	12	364	273	77	140	175	161
7TH/EUREKA	1	350	14	0	0	0	0
7TH/LINCOLN	5	336	42	301	21	0	0
7TH/WHITE PINE	32	353	183	245	217	191	267
8TH/CLARK	4293	356	182	182	182	182	182
9TH/DOUGLAS	26	366	343	14	469	0	0

Source: UNITY Report CFS775

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provide information on Permanency Hearings in Table 6.5. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 68 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency in providing a process that ensures each child in foster care under the supervision of the agency has a permanency hearing in a qualified court no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 6.5. The mean rating of 3.90 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that child welfare agencies are usually effective in providing a process that ensures each child in foster care under the supervision of the child welfare agency has a permanency hearing in a qualified court no later than 12 months from the data the child entered foster care.

**Table 6.5 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in providing a process that ensures each child in foster care under the supervision of the Agency has a Permanency hearing in a qualified court no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
1.47% (1)	8.82% (6)	20.59% (14)	36.76% (25)	32.35% (22)	68	3.90	0.73

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

***Item 23: Termination of parental rights***

Requirements

NRS 432B.590 mandates that no later than 12 months after the initial removal of the child from his/her home and annually thereafter, a hearing shall be held concerning the permanent placement of the child. At the hearing the court reviews the plan for permanent placement of the child and determines whether the reasonable efforts required have been made. If the child has been placed outside of his home for 14 months of any 20 consecutive months, the best interests of the child must be presumed to be served by the termination of parental rights and documentation of the plan to TPR is included in the permanency plan. The court is required to use its best efforts to ensure that the procedures required in TPR are completed within 6 months from that date. NRS 432B.630 requires action be taken to terminate parental rights on a newborn child who is delivered to a provider of emergency services, absent parent contact with the child welfare agency. The NRS also identifies those circumstances in which the agency is not required to make reasonable efforts for reunification and addresses the issue of compelling reasons when it would not be in the child’s best interest to file for TPR. Compelling reasons must be detailed in the case file and reports to the court. Examples of compelling reasons are outlined in the DCFS 0514 Termination of Parental Rights policy.

NRS Chapter 128 details the process of TPR, specifically who files the petitions, procedures for TPR on ICWA cases, notice of hearings (publication), testimony, appointment of attorneys, specific considerations to various circumstances and restoration of parental rights in certain situations. Pursuant to NRS 128.170, a child (or the legal guardian of the child) who has not been adopted, and whose parental rights have been terminated or relinquished, may petition the Court for restoration of parental rights. The natural parent or parents for whom restoration of parental rights is sought must be fully informed of the legal rights, obligations and consequences of restoration and must consent, in writing, to the petition.

Policy 0514 requires timely permanency planning for children in the care and custody of the child welfare agency, and that planning must therefore begin the day the child enters care. The child welfare agency is required to make and finalize alternate permanency plans no later than 12 months after the child’s removal. Policy states that absent compelling reasons not to file a TPR, the petition must be filed within 60 days of the courts determination that reasonable efforts are not required. Acceptable compelling reasons are outlined in the TPR policy. Referral to terminate parental rights is initiated when adoption is identified as the permanency goal for the child and legal grounds for termination exist. Upon referral for TPR, the worker will concurrently seek a court order to initiate efforts to recruit for, and/or identify, an adoptive family for any child(ren) not already placed in a pre-adoptive home.

CFSR 2009

In 2009 this Item was rated as an areas needing improvement. Although the state had a process for TPR proceedings in accordance with the provisions of ASFA, information from stakeholder’s interviews indicated that TPR petitions are not filed consistently in a timely manner throughout the State. In addition, during the onsite CFSR, case reviewers determined that ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 84 percent of applicable cases.

Various stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR identified the following reasons for delays in timely filing of petitions for TPR:

- A backlog in the District Attorney’s office resulting in delays in filing for TPR (Clark County Stakeholders)

- A reluctance to file TPR before the court has ordered a goal of adoption and ordered the agency to file for TPR (Carson City Stakeholders)

Despite these concerns most Washoe County stakeholders commenting on this item using the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that TPR petitions in that region are filed in a timely manner, and most stakeholders express the opinion that compelling reasons not to file TPR generally are documented in the case file and presented to the court during permanency hearings. Stakeholder's indicated that the extension of reunification efforts when parents are pursuing case plan requirement is considered a compelling reason not to pursue TPR.

### Statewide Data

Court data drawn from UNITY illustrates for calendar year 2014 the median days to Terminate Parental Rights is 612 days.

#### **Court Performance Measures Statewide 01-01-2014 to 12-31-2014**

Court	Nbr of Children	Nbr of Parents with Termination	Median Days to Terminate Parental Rights	Nbr of Parents with Relinquishment	Median Days to Relinquishment of Parental Rights	Nbr of Parents with Termination or Relinquishment	Median Days to Termination or Relinquishment of Parental Rights
TOTAL	5835	2197	612	1125	639	3322	622
1ST/CARSON	66	14	662	12	797	26	699
1ST/STOREY	3	4	513	0	0	4	513
2ND/WASHOE	1108	359	611	289	639	648	627
3RD/CHURCHILL	61	23	732	17	687	40	732
3RD/LYON	47	24	591	23	513	47	591
4TH/ELKO	53	23	596	21	804	44	675
5TH/MINERAL	17	1	863	13	863	14	863
5TH/NYE	86	20	735	26	611	46	711
6TH/HUMBOLDT	10	8	742	1	460	9	734
6TH/LANDER	14	2	1130	2	961	4	1104
6TH/PERSHING	12	4	619	1	851	5	664
7TH/EUREKA	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
7TH/LINCOLN	5	1	766	1	864	2	815
7TH/WHITE PINE	32	8	731	4	856	12	856
8TH/CLARK	4293	1728	608	724	638	2452	617
9TH/DOUGLAS	26	3	326	1	462	4	334

Source: UNITY Report CFS775

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provide information on Termination of Parental Rights in Table 6.6. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 125 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency in filing TPR petitions within 15 to 22 months unless compelling reason exist (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being Very effective) is presented in Table 6.6. The mean rating of 3.39 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that child welfare agencies are sometimes effective in filing TPR petitions within 15 to 22 months unless compelling reason exists.

**Table 6.6 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency in filing TPR petitions within 15 of 22 months unless compelling reasons exist?**

<b>Not Effective</b>	<b>Rarely Effective</b>	<b>Sometimes Effective</b>	<b>Usually Effective</b>	<b>Very Effective</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
3.20% (4)	4.80% (6)	44.80% (56)	44.00% (55)	3.20% (4)	125	3.39	0.81

***Item 24: Notice of hearings and reviews to caregivers***

**Requirements**

NRS 432B, NAC 432B and statewide policy 0206 Court Notification mandate that proper notification of court hearings and court reviews regarding the status of a child in the custody of a child welfare agency must be provided and is necessary to ensure active involvement and participation of parents, foster parents, guardians, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers in the child’s safety, permanency and well-being. While internal policies and procedures regarding court notification requirements and protocols may differ between child welfare agencies, formal written notification to the aforementioned caregivers must be supplied pursuant to NRS 432B.580(6)(a)(b). Notice of the hearing must be given by registered or certified mail to all parties to any of the prior proceedings, and parents and any persons planning to adopt the child, relatives of the child or providers of foster care who are currently providing care to the child. If a child in protective custody is determined to be of Indian descent, the child welfare agency must notify the tribe in writing at the beginning of the proceedings. If the Indian child is eligible for membership in more than one tribe, each tribe must be notified.

**CFSR 2009**

In 2009 this item was rated as an area needing improvement. Although the state provided a process for foster parents and other caregivers to be notified of reviews and hearings, information from the statewide assessment indicated inconsistencies across the state in the degree to which notice is provided to foster parents.

Some Carson City and Washoe County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that notice sometimes is received too late to allow the caregiver to attend the hearing. Despite these comments, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that foster parents receive notice of hearings consistently via certified mail from the agency and that they have the opportunity to be heard.

**Statewide Data**

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on Court Notification to Caregivers in Table 6.7. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 73 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency on ensuring notification to caregivers for hearings.(on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 6.7. The mean rating of 3.89 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that the child welfare agency is usually effective on ensuring notification to caregivers for hearings.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicated that the child welfare agency was usually effective at ensuring notification to caregivers for hearings. However, the comments from foster and adoptive parents indicated some inconsistency as to notification to caregivers. Some foster and adoptive parents indicated they received notice via certified mail and some indicated the caseworker would call or e-mail them. A few foster and adoptive parents indicated that this was not consistent and or the information was not timely.

Additionally, foster and adoptive parents were asked if they recalled receiving notice of the most recent court proceeding for children in their care and 67.27% of the respondents indicated “yes”; 21.82% of the respondents indicated “no” and 10.91% indicated they were unable to answer.

During the 2014 case reviews, several foster parents stated they were not noticed and others stated they were not interested in participating, even when noticed. Child welfare agencies are provided the option of documenting notice to caregivers in Nevada’s SACWIS (UNITY). Nonetheless, there is still concern that this process is not consistent statewide. The State will need to review practice in SFY 2016 to ensure agencies are making efforts to notice caregivers and that those efforts are clearly documented in UNITY.

**Table 6.7 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency on ensuring notification to Caregiver for Hearings??**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
4.11% (3)	9.59% (7)	17.81% (13)	30.14% (22)	38.36% (28)	73	3.89	0.78

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

**Strengths/Concerns (Case Review System)**

Nevada has strength on ensuring timely periodic reviews and permanency hearings. While case plan goals are being input into the SACWIS system at a high rate there have been many occasions during case reviews that the goals have not been updated and were inaccurate. Engagement with children and parents on case planning continues to be an area needing improvement. While case plans are completed regularly by caseworkers there is a continued concern on consistent engagement of parents/children (when age appropriate) in identifying parental strengths and needs for case planning.

Filing of Termination of Parental Rights is within 612 days and state data does indicate that Nevada is improving on timeliness of Adoptions. Furthermore, Stakeholders in 2014 indicated that child welfare agencies are sometimes effective on ensuring termination of parental rights.

Overall, comments from stakeholders in 2014 indicated that the child welfare agencies were usually effective on ensuring notification to caregivers for judicial hearings. However, there is still concern that this process is not consistent statewide and the statewide practice needs to be reviewed. Additionally, in 2014 some foster parents indicated that they do not recall receiving notices for hearings.

**Systemic Factor C: Quality Assurance System**

**Item 25: Quality Assurance System**

Requirements

Nevada has developed and implemented standards in statute, regulation and policy to ensure that children in foster care are placed in appropriately licensed homes or residential facilities, and that qualified service providers are selected for delivery of necessary services to children and their families.

Existing standards, statute, regulations and statewide policy as found in NRS 432B, NAC 432B, NRS 424 and NAC 424 require the state to ensure protection of children in foster care and monitor the placement of children in foster homes or residential facilities. As a collective these statutes and policies ensure quality service delivery including but not limited to: placement preference, adoption of foster child bill of rights, requirements of visitation with family and siblings, requirements surrounding psychotropic medications, and cultural awareness.

Child care facility statutes and regulations (NRS 432A, NAC 432A) establish requirements for the protection of children in facilities (educational, shelter care, and residential), and creates standards for child care including the provision of qualified service providers. These regulations include assurances that no child under the age of six is placed in a congregate care facility.

Nevada Revised Statutes 432B.180(3) requires DCFS to monitor the performance of child welfare agencies through data collection, evaluation of services and the review and approval of agency improvement plans pursuant to NRS 432B.2155. Nevada Administrative Code details the activities required concerning evaluation of services provided by the child welfare agencies and actions upon determination of noncompliance with certain provision.

### CFSR 2009

Nevada Quality Assurance System was rated as strength in the CFSR 2009. It was reported that Nevada was operating an identifiable QA system based on the CFSR tool and methodology and results in an Agency Improvement Plan (AIP) for each child welfare agency that is monitored by the decision making Group (DMG) at the state level. Although the state was operating an identifiable QA system, the finding of the 2009 CFSR raised questions regarding the State's QA process. Specifically, the state's ratings for many individual case review items were considerably higher than the ratings of the Federal 2009 CFSR case review findings. As a result, there was a concern that the state's QICR process may not be effective in identifying the strengths and needs of the service delivery system, and therefore may not result in an accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of program improvement measures.

Various stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR reported the following QA activities:

- The State conducts annual reviews in each jurisdiction that are modeled on the Federal CFSR.
- The State-level reviews result in an AIP developed by each child welfare agency that is reviewed monthly by the State-level DMG.
- Supervisory case reviews are conducted at the local level to monitor casework practice
- Management reports from UNITY are reviewed regularly to monitor key case contacts and milestones.

Despite these positive comments, several stakeholders indicated that UNITY and other data reports were not useful in tracking and improving the quality of services. Some state-level stakeholders indicated that the finding of QA activities do not result in changes to the caseworker training curriculum. In addition, some Carson City, Clark County, and Washoe County stakeholders indicated that, although the results of supervisory case reviews and other data are shared with State-level policymakers, no feedback is provided to the localities on how these reviews are used to inform policy or monitor improvement.

### Statewide Data

On August 27, 2012 the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) published Informational Memorandum (IM) ACYF-CB-IM-12-07 to provide information on the establishment and maintenance of State CQI systems.

Nevada continues to work towards a re-designed CQI system. A goal of the 2015-2019 CFSP is specific to Continuous Quality Improvement and is identified as Goal 4: **The state will be able to identify the strengths and needs of the child protective service delivery system.**

To guide these efforts a Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) continues to meet monthly to address the redesign of a Nevada CQI System. Nevada has conducted the following activities over SFY 2015 in efforts to work towards re-design of the system.

- Nevada continues to convene the SQIC monthly with representation from a variety of stakeholders that include each child welfare jurisdiction, IMS, training partners, Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Court Improvement Project. At this meeting continued efforts are discussed on strategies to broaden CQI efforts, enhance capacity of the case reviewer pool, and increase validity and reliability of data. Standing Agenda items have included data issues i.e. caseworker visits with children, NCANDS, AFCARS, NYTD and federal performance data.
- Nevada is using the Child and Family Services Review Information Portal for Resources, Training and Reviews. Nevada is currently underway utilizing the Online Management System (OMS) tool for Case Reviews for CQI purposes. The Quality Assurance Manager in the Family Programs Office is the designated Administrator for the OMS system. Since Nevada had not previously utilized the entire CFSR Tool in previous years this year Nevada will be collecting baseline data on **ALL** CFSR case review items. This has helped Nevada broaden data collection for internal CQI efforts.
- Statewide Reviews are now established for each jurisdiction from April through September of each year. On a rotating schedule each jurisdiction will be reviewed. Currently Nevada will review 65 cases (40 out of home care

and 25 in-home cases) as Nevada works towards building capacity of our reviewer pool. Additional Reviews may be conducted outside of the April to September timeframe for additional CQI efforts.

- Nevada is currently working on development of a Statewide Assessment Committee that will have a variety of Stakeholders. It is planned that this Committee will begin meeting in the Fall of SFY 2016 and continue meeting on a Quarterly basis. Focus will be concentrated on all performance items but specifically the systemic factors.
- Nevada is working on various policies and efforts towards implementation of the new Federal Sex Trafficking Legislation that is linked to Nevada's Title IV-E Plan.

### Training Evaluation-December, 2014

#### Use of Academy Evaluation Data – Quality Assurance & Quality Improvement (CQI) Efforts

The UNLV NPT team continues to use formative and summative assessments to improve the Academy experience for trainees, and improve their level of skill to perform in the field once they leave the Academy. Formative assessments are conducted in the middle of the Academy where the class is asked to provide feedback regarding the training experience which allows the trainers to immediately rethink instructional strategies, activities, and content based on participants understanding and performance. To date improvements based on this type of assessment include:

- Improved training activity pedagogy where trainers model techniques taught in a mock scenario, then allow participants to practice with each other while getting feedback from the trainers.
- Creation of court components, such as court presentation, different types of hearings, and the writing of court reports.

Summative assessments have taken place in the form of focus groups that have been conducted with Academy graduates once they have been in the field for a few months. These focus groups were conducted by CCDFS on October 23, 2014 and November 3, 2014. Feedback from these lead to the following improvements:

- Bolstering some of the permanency components
- More OJT days
- More immediate feedback to embedded skills activities via the use of rubrics
- Use of more video content
- More training time for SAFE/SIPS documentation
- Better coordination and consistency in training content and information between CCDFS and NPT

The Reno, UNR NPT trainers, WCDSS and DCFS Rural Region are learning from the early experiences and feedback from the UNLV NPT team, and the CCDFS partnership and are applying their evaluative methods to their curriculum development as well.

### Court Improvement Program CQI Efforts

#### CIP Quality Assurance Activities-Court Order Templates

To improve court order language, CIP contracted with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to create court order templates to include case-specific findings of the “contrary to welfare” and “reasonable efforts” factors and to ensure that court orders clearly indicate that the State has the responsibility for placement and care of each child for whom Title IV-E payments are claimed.

The second phase of court order template project culminated in December 2014 with the distribution of the court order template guides. The statewide collaborative worked for an additional six months on these template guides. The templates were subject to review by judges, attorneys, child welfare administrators and eligibility personnel, and other stakeholders throughout the state. The collaborative decided to provide two versions of each template: one version is for cases where the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is applicable, and the other version is for cases where ICWA is not applicable. Note however, that there is only one version of the template for Protective Custody hearings. The guides have been distributed to all dependency court judges, district attorneys, and child welfare agency managers. Although their use



is not mandatory; the court order guides have been greeted with enthusiasm.

Quality Improvement Case Reviews as CQI efforts

Nevada has continued to conduct CFSR style case reviews since the last PIP. However, Nevada has not been able to utilize the entire CFSR tool but had requested modification to Nevada’s SACWIS system. The IMS unit has many priorities and has not been able to complete the project of adding the additional CFSR items. However, Nevada has continued to review nine of the previous 23 items.

Table 6.8 below illustrates the previous case review items and Nevada’s case review performance for 2014..

**Table 6.8 QICR 2014 Performance**

Items	2014 Statewide Performance
Item 1 Timeliness of investigation	77.8%
Item 3 Services to prevent removal/re-entry	91.4%
Item 4 Risk and safety assessment	74.2%
Item 7 Permanency goal	71.4%
Item 10 OPPLA-permanency goal	43.8%
Item 17 Services to child, parents & foster parents	59.7%
Item 18 Child and family involvement in case planning	59.0%
Item 19 Case worker visits with children	83.9%
Item 20 Case worker visits with parents	54.0%

Aggregate case review four quarter rolling data completed statewide January 2014 through December 2014.

*\*NOTE-In SFY 2016 Nevada will have baseline data of all the NEW CFSR Case Review Items.*

Nevada has conducted two case reviews this year (2015) using the new OMS system. In April 2015 the DCFS Rural Region was reviewed and CCDFS was reviewed in May 2015. In August 2015 WCDSS will be reviewed and in September 2015 CCDFS will receive a 2<sup>nd</sup> review. It is anticipated that reporting in the 2016 APSR will include statewide data for all 18 CFSR case review items.

**DATA in Quality Assurance**

- State legislation passed in 2011 requires DCFS to ensure that child welfare agencies carry out corrective actions when the agencies are not in compliance with the law or with statewide plans or policies. Each agency which provides child welfare services is required to submit an improvement plan to DCFS that must cover a period of 2 years that includes specific performance targets for improving the services provided to children in the care of the agency. Each year the agencies are required to submit data to DCFS demonstrating the progress made toward meeting the specific performance targets. DCFS is administering a program that awards incentive payments to an agency which provides child welfare services based on improved performance targets. DCFS prepares and submits a report concerning the improvement plans, and the program for incentive payments to the Governor and the legislature on or before January 31 of each year.
- As previously indicated the SQIC is addressing through several committee’s and workgroups efforts at improving/enhancing many of the functional components of a CQI system. The following is a cross reference of the functional CQI components and the CFSR items that are under review and development:

1. Administrative Structure- CFSR item 26 Quality Assurance
2. Quality Data Collection- CFSR item 19 Statewide Information System (improving accuracy and validity of established data reports.)
3. Case Record Review Data and Process-CFSR item 26 Quality Assurance (the case review process)
4. Analysis and Dissemination of Quality Data- CFSR item 26 Quality Assurance, item 19 Statewide Information System, item 31 State Engagement and consultation with Stakeholders

5. Feedback to Stakeholders and Decision-makers and Adjustment of Programs and Process - Item 31  
State Engagement and consultation with Stakeholders.

Currently, the State provides a link on the DCFS public website that references Nevada performance data, case review results from the past three years, and historical information concerning the CFSR 2009 PIP results. The current information may be found at the following link: <http://dcfs.nv.gov/Tips/Reports/Annual/>

Quality assurance is an area needing improvement until such time capacity has been achieved. However, Nevada is making great strides in meeting the CFSP goal of being able to identify the strengths and needs of the child protective service delivery system.

The SQIC is one way of building capacity by continued discussions between stakeholders to identify and mobilize organizational assets necessary to meet federal standards and requirements. Currently, there will be no changes to the 2015-2019 CFSP goals, objectives or use of funds for the 2016 APSR. However, Nevada will continue to assess and discuss performance in efforts to ensure goals, objectives and interventions are being met, and or if new goals, objectives and or interventions need adjustment for enhanced performance on ensuring increased positive outcomes for children and youth.

### **Strengths/Concerns (Quality Assurance System)**

Nevada has strength in that Nevada has developed and implemented standards in statute, regulation and policy to ensure that children in foster care are placed in appropriately licensed homes or residential facilities, and that qualified service providers are selected for delivery of necessary services to children and their families. Nevada has existing standards, statute, regulations and statewide policy that ensure protection of children in foster care. These statutes and policies ensure quality service delivery.

However, Quality Assurance continues to be an area needing improvement. Nevada is working hard to build capacity when possible in working towards the goals of the CFSP. There continues to be concern over garnering and leveraging the implementation supports necessary to make changes throughout Nevada as it relates to full implementation of a CQI system.

## **Systemic Factor D: Staff and Provider Training**

### ***Item 26: Initial Staff Training***

#### Requirements

NRS 432B.195, 432B.397, and NAC 432B.090 require the state to provide a full staff development and training program which includes a minimum of 40 hours of training related to the principles and practices of child welfare services, including specific training related to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). In SFY 2016 new policies will be developed around Initial Staff Training.

#### CFSR 2009

During the 2009 CFSR initial staff training was rated as an area needing improvement. Although Nevada provided a comprehensive new worker core training program, information from the stakeholder interviews indicated that in some areas of the State this training is not adequate to provide caseworkers with the skills to support the goals and objectives of the CFSP, including conducting investigations, case-level documentation, and ICWA issues.

Among the questions asked to stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were whether initial training is provided for new caseworkers and new supervisors, and whether that training prepares new caseworker for the job.

With regard to whether initial training is provided for new caseworkers, stakeholders expressed the opinion that new worker core training is provided to all new caseworkers on a timely bases. In addition, stakeholders indicated that training

attendance is tracked and monitored at the child welfare agency level. Although Washoe County and Clark County stakeholders indicated that caseworkers are assigned to a training unit initially and must complete training prior to receiving a caseload, Carson City stakeholders indicated that caseworkers in the rural region sometimes are assigned cases prior to the completion of training when there is an office with only one caseworker or when the new caseworker is experienced.

With regard to whether initial training prepares new caseworkers for the job, stakeholder expressed different opinions. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that training prepares caseworkers for the job. However other disagreed and suggested that more training was required in critical areas such as conducting investigations, substantiating, child abuse and neglect allegations, case-level documentation; documentation for the court, the law and court process; and ICWA issues. In addition, some stakeholders indicated that training provided is not of high quality and does not prepare caseworkers to provide services.

**Statewide Data**

The Nevada Safety Model has led to the development of an entirely new Nevada Child Welfare Training Academy which was initially piloted in January, 2014 by the Nevada Partnership for Training (NPT) trainers at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and CCDFS. The Academy begins with the initial call to the Hotline regarding a child abuse or neglect incident and follows that family throughout the life of the case. Each week both the NPT trainers and CCDFS trainers share the training week. Each week presents a specific topic or process within the case and while NPT trainers present the necessary curriculum for the topic, the CCDFS trainers present the agency specific information at the same time thus being more relevant to the actual skills and duties the new worker will be implementing. It is important to note that CCDFS does not require new workers to have a degree in social work. This joint Academy was created to be conducted over a 10 week period which included both classroom, field observations, computer labs and on the job training with mentors from CCDFS. However, due to the need for larger new hire groups the Academy has had to increase to 12 and sometimes 14 week periods.

The NPT Trainers at the University of Nevada, Reno launched their version of the Nevada Child Welfare Training Academy in October, 2014. The WCDSS has 2 levels of workers: Case Managers who have a bachelor degree in something other than social work and social workers who are licensed in the State of Nevada. DCFS Rural Region can only hire social workers who are licensed. Because the majority of new workers who are required to not only have a degree in social work but also be a licensed social worker, both WCDSS and the DCFS Rural Region continue with the original 10 week model where the NPT trainers do a week of classroom training and then the new workers return to their agencies for a week of mentoring and On the Job (OJT) training on their agency specific procedures. This curriculum is also built on the SAFE Model and based on the life of the case but does not stress the basic social work education as is evident within the curriculum offered through UNLV.

Table 6.9 illustrates the number of new workers which have completed the **Nevada New Worker Core Training** from July 1, 2014 to October 5, 2014 when the Nevada Child Welfare Training Academy was available statewide:

**Table 6.9: New Workers Completing Nevada New Worker Core Training in SFY 2015 (7/8/14 – 9/4/14)**

Class Name	CCDFS	DCFS RURAL	WCDSS	Total
Nevada New Worker Core Module 1RE		4	2	6
Nevada New Worker Core Module 2RE		5	4	9
Nevada New Worker Core Module 3RE		7	6	13
Nevada New Worker Core Module 4RE		4	7	11
Nevada New Worker Core Module 5RE		4	7	11
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>50</b>

Table 6.10 illustrates the number of new workers which have completed the **Nevada Child Welfare Training Academy** from July 1, 2014 to May 31, 2015.

**Table 6.10: New Workers Completing Nevada Child Welfare Training Academy**

**Reno: 10/20/14 – 12/19/14 & 3/2/15 – 5/1/15**

**Las Vegas: Week 6: 7/1/14 – 8/1/14, 9/3/14 – 11/20/14 & 1/16/15 -4/17/15**

Class Name	CCDFS	DCFS RURAL	WCDSS	Total
Nevada Child Welfare Academy Reno Week 1		6	8	14
Nevada Child Welfare Academy Reno Week 2		6	6	12
Nevada Child Welfare Academy Reno Week 3		7	4	11
Nevada Child Welfare Academy Reno Week 4		9	3	12
Nevada Child Welfare Academy Reno Week 5		7	3	10
NV Child Welfare Academy LV Week 1	57			57
NV Child Welfare Academy LV Week 2	63			63
NV Child Welfare Academy LV Week 3	61			61
NV Child Welfare Academy LV Week 4	41			41
NV Child Welfare Academy LV Week 5	62			62
NV Child Welfare Academy LV Week 6	83			83
NV Child Welfare Academy LV Week 7	85			85
NV Child Welfare Academy LV Week 8	45			45
NV Child Welfare Academy LV Week 9	89			89
NV Child Welfare Academy LV Week 10	87			87
NV Child Welfare Academy LV 11	42			42
NV Child Welfare Academy LV 12	43			43
NV Child Welfare Academy LV 13	21			21
NV Child Welfare Academy LV 14	22			22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>801</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>860</b>

## Caseworker Survey

Data from a caseworker survey conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on initial staff training in Table 6.11. Respondents were caseworkers, and respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 149 responses to the survey.

How effective is initial training in preparing new caseworkers for the job (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 6.11. The mean rating of 2.99 indicates that the average sentiment among caseworker respondents is that Initial Training is sometimes effective in preparing new caseworkers for the job.

Overall, comments from some caseworkers indicated that training provided basic overall preparation on laws, policies and procedures around child welfare, and was useful but focused on what is taught to social workers in social work school. Many caseworkers indicated what was needed was more on the job training, more field training, training that was realistic to the issues and barriers experienced in the field with a real caseload, more side-by-side training (mentoring), and training that focused on the court process.

Additionally, caseworkers were asked if sufficient training/mentoring was provided before a caseworker receives a caseload and 54.89% indicated “no”; 25.54% indicated “yes” and 19.57% indicated “I don’t know”.

**Table 6.11 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is Initial Training in preparing new caseworker for the job?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
8.22% (12)	21.23% (31)	41.78% (61)	21.23% (31)	7.53% (11)	149	2.99	0.46

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

Initial Training continues to be an area needing improvement.

### ***Item 27: On-going staff training***

#### Requirements:

State statute requires employees to be responsible for their basic professional training needs and must complete a minimum of 30 hours continuing education every two years, which is consistent with the licensure requirements for Social Workers (NRS 432B.195, 432B.397, 432B.175, NAC 284.482, 284.498, 424.270, 432A.680 and 432B.090). The state and local child welfare agencies are required to ensure that child welfare staff receives the specialized training required to be proficient in child welfare practice. In SFY 2016 new policies will be developed around on-going staff training.

#### CF SR 2009:

In 2009 this Item was rated as an area needing improvement. Information from the statewide assessment indicated that, although Nevada requires licensed social workers to complete continuing education requirement and maintain licensure, not all caseworkers are licensed social workers. The state does not have minimal ongoing training requirements for caseworkers who are not licensed social workers. In addition, information for the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that although some ongoing training is available to caseworkers in various parts of the state not all caseworker have the opportunity to access ongoing training.

Most stakeholders' comments on this item during the onsite CF SR reported that child welfare agencies do not require ongoing training, although caseworkers who are licensed social workers are required to complete 30 hours of continuing education every two years to maintain their licenses with the licensing board. Some stakeholders indicated that although all Carson City caseworkers are licensed social workers, not all Washoe County or Clark County caseworkers are licensed social workers.

Some stakeholders indicated that specialty training is available to caseworkers but that caseload concerns reduce the ability of caseworkers to access ongoing training opportunities. In addition, Carson City and Clark County stakeholders indicated that caseworker must arrange for and pay for continuing education.

Some stakeholders reported that there is no requirement for supervisory training; but Carson City and Washoe County stakeholders noted that supervisors have organized “paired” teams of supervisors across units to promote continuous learning.

**Statewide Data:**

The southern NPT team, which includes CCDFS, is required to provide the 10 to 14 week Child Welfare Academy three (3) times per year while revising the curriculum as new components of the SAFE Model are being added statewide. The northern team also provides their 10 week Child Welfare Academy three (3) times per year but is able to provide other trainings during the OJT weeks of the Academy when the Agencies’ training units work with the new staff. However, this past year they have been involved in creating the new curriculum for the DCFS Rural Region and WCDSS Child Welfare Academy which is slightly different than the curriculum in the south due to the educational levels of the new workers. The NPT Training Coordinators in both the north and the south have contracted with an outside trainer to assist in providing some of the ongoing staff training in order to be able to provide some of the trainings listed below. The State’s Training Specialist has taken over the responsibility of facilitating the Mandated Reporter Online class due to the number of students required to take the class by other agencies.

**Table 6.12: Ongoing Staff Trainings Offered from July 1, 2014 through May 31, 2015**

CLASS TITLE	CCDFS	WCDSS	RURAL	TOTAL
	UNLV	UNR		
<b>In Person Classes</b>				
NV Supervisor Mod 1	2			2
NV Supervisor Mod 2	2			2
NV Supervisor Mod 3	2			2
NV Supervisor Mod 4	2			2
NV Supervisor Mod 5	2			2
NV Supervisor Mod 6	2			2
Searching for Heroes: Engaging Families with an Emphasis on Non-Resident Father Engagement			1	1
Addictions 101	4		1	5
Addictions 203			1	1
Domestic Violence 101	4			4
Child Mental Health - Trauma & Neurodevelopment	1			1
Child Sex Abuse Dynamics, Policy and Best Practice			1	1
Child Sexual Development			1	1
Mental Health 101			1	1
Spirit of Motivational Interviewing	2		1	3
Motivational Interviewing Skills Practice			2	2
What to Do? Making Ethical Decisions	4			4
<b>Total in Person Classes</b>	<b>27</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Online Classes</b>				
Child Welfare Ethics Basics				11
ICWA				11
Mandated Reporter				11
<b>Total Online Classes</b>				<b>33</b>

**Table 6.13: Class Attendance by Student's Organization from 07/01/2014 through 05/31/2015**

Class Name	CCDFS	DCFS CMH N	DCFS CMH S	DCFS FPO	DCFS JJ	DCFS RURAL	Other	WCDSS	Total
<b>Online Classes</b>									
Child Welfare Ethics Basics	13		1	4		12	14	3	47
Indian Child Welfare Act Training Course	2			2		2	21	1	28
Mandated Reporter: Recognizing and Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect	29	19	51	9	3	6	331	9	457
<b>Total Online</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>532</b>
<b>In Person Classes</b>									
Addictions 101: Recognizing and Evaluating the Impact of Substance Abuse on Child Welfare Practice and Families	80					3	9	8	100
Addictions 203: An Overview of the Impact of Opioids on Child Welfare Practice and Families							4	6	10
Child Mental Health: Trauma and Neurodevelopment	32						3		35
Child Sexual Abuse Dynamics, Policy & Best Practice						1	10	8	19
Child Sexual Development		1				1	6	12	20
Domestic Violence 101: An Introduction to Domestic Violence Issues	80						10		90
Mental Health 101: An Overview of the Impact of Mental Health on Child Welfare Practice and Families						2	8	3	13
Motivational Interviewing Skills Practice		1				5	6	3	15
Spirit of Motivational Interviewing	28		8	1		5	14	3	59
Searching for Heroes: Engaging Families and Non-Resident Fathers							5	11	16
What to do? Making Ethical Decisions	28		8	1		5	14	3	59
NV Supervisor Training Module 1	8					3			11
NV Supervisor Training Module 2	12					2			14
NV Supervisor Training Module 3	13					3			16
NV Supervisor Training Module 4	10					2			12
NV Supervisor Training Module 5	13					2			15
NV Supervisor Training Module 6	11					2			13
<b>Total In Person</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>517</b>
<b>Total In Person</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>517</b>
<b>Total Online</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>532</b>
<b>Total Students</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1049</b>

Another method Nevada has used to extend training capacity is partnering with the CAPTA/CJA program on training opportunities. Last year the UNLV NPT trainers developed training on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in collaboration with a local therapist who worked with this population. The training was provided in four (4) locations, Carson City, Reno, Las Vegas and Henderson to 120 individuals. This curriculum is currently being revised in order to meet the requirements of the “Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act.”

The State of Nevada Administrative Code 432B.090 general requirements for staff requires all staff engaged in child welfare services to obtain 30 hours biennially of training related to those child welfare services. The DCFS Rural Region requires all their child welfare workers to be licensed by the Board of Examiners for Social Workers which requires Licensed Social Workers and Licensed Associate Social Workers to have 30 hours of approved Continuing Education credit every 2 years, of which, 2 hours must relate to ethics in the practice of social work and 10 hours must be in the field of practice of the licensee. Licensed Clinical Social Workers and Licensed Independent Social Workers must complete at least 36 continuing education hours every 2 years, of which 3 hours must relate to ethics in the practice of social work and 12 must be in the field of practice of the licensee. Therefore, the agency requires a copy of the current Social Work license be in an employee’s personnel file thus verifies that this requirement is being met.

WCDSS requires all staff assigned to intake, screening, assessment and investigation to have a minimum of 30 hours of continuing education every two (2) years. WCDSS has two job series in child welfare workers: social work series and case manager series. The case manager series was created due to difficulty in recruiting enough licensed Social Workers to fill all positions. As in the DCFS Rural Region, those with current social work licenses have demonstrated they have completed the required continuing education for their positions.

The State tracks training data on the Nevada Partnership for Training Website which is a web-based training registration and online child welfare training system specifically for the State of Nevada. This website, <http://www.nvpartnership4training.com>, has provided a mechanism to provide all child welfare staff to locate and register for available child welfare specific training, a mechanism to monitor what trainings are being provided within the state and the attendance to trainings. It also provides for online training courses to be provided at an individual’s own convenience and without taking time away from work or traveling. The following table provides the timeframe for SFY 2015 training.

		<b>Beginning Week</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>Ending Week</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Nevada New Worker Core</b>	Summer SFY 2015	Week 1	7/8/14	Mod 5	9/4/14	Reno
<b>Nevada Child Welfare Academy</b>	Fall SFY 2015	Week 1	10/20/14	Week 5	12/19/14	Reno
<b>Nevada Child Welfare Academy</b>	Spring SFY 2015	Week 1	3/2/15	Week 5	5/1/15	Reno
<b>Nevada Child Welfare Academy</b>	Summer SFY 2014	Week 6	7/1/14	Week 10	8/1/14	Las Vegas
<b>Nevada Child Welfare Academy</b>	Fall SFY 2015	Week 1	9/3/14	Week 12	11/20/14	Las Vegas
<b>Nevada Child Welfare Academy</b>	Winter SFY 2015	Week 1	1/12/15	Week 14	4/17/15	Las Vegas
<b>Nevada Child Welfare Academy</b>	Summer SFY 2015	Week 1	6/9/15	Week 4	7/1/15	Las Vegas

At the time this data was being collected the State was unaware of a process in which to monitor new hires for the other agencies within the state and allowed the child welfare agencies to register all their eligible new hires for the next available new worker initial training. However, the State has become aware of a mechanism within our SACWIS system, UNITY, to monitor new hires and we will be able to provide that data in the future.

During SFY 2015, 15 new staff were hired by DCFS Rural Region. Of those hired, 11 attended the next scheduled new worker training series, two were rehires who had previously completed the New Worker Core series when they were hired previously, and one was a new hire from another child welfare agency within the state. Washoe County DSS hired nine new staff during SFY 2015. Each attended the next Module or Week of new worker training after their date of hire so that two began in Module 2 of Summer SFY 2014 series and completed attending Week 1 of the Fall SFY 2015 series; 2 began with Module 3 of Summer SFY 2014 and completed attending Weeks 1 and 2 of the Fall SFY 2015 series, and 1 began with Module 4 and completed attending Weeks 1 through 3 of the Fall SFY 2015 series. One attended the entire Fall SFY 2015 series, one attended the entire Spring SFY 2015 series and 2 were hired from another child welfare agency within the state and didn’t attend new worker training. Clark County DFS hired 84 new workers during SFY 2015. Of those hired, 32 attended the Winter SFY 2015 series, 15 attended the Fall SFY 2015 series and 17 attended the Summer SFY 2015 series. However 20 new staff did not attend any new worker training provided by the state but may have attended specialized training provided by the agency as determined based on their specialized job titles. These employees are classified as Family Support Workers or Family Services Specialists 1 assigned to Independent Living,



Adoption, Licensing and Training units which the agency determines as not being required to attend the state's new worker initial training.

The Nevada Child Welfare Academy is an entirely new curriculum and is being evaluated and revised on an on-going basis by both State University partners. The SAFE Model was introduced to only half of WCDSS workers in 2011 the other half of the staff has just recently began learning the Model. DCFS Rural Region learned the Model in 2011 but with staff turnover they are still struggling with the concepts and are doing ongoing training with newer staff that were not hired during the initial training. CCDFS has just begun training on the SIPS model this past year and without the benefit of most of them having Social Work degrees, it has been difficult for them to easily grasp the concepts. Our Academy trainers are working diligently to improve the training experience, which now does include the SAFE/SIPS Model in order to give staff a better learning experience. All three (3) agencies have established mentors who work with new hires either throughout the training process or at the end of the training process and for up to six (6) months after. In CCDFS Mentors are assigned to each trainee at Week 2 and work with them throughout the Academy. When the trainee graduates the Academy, the new hire is placed in a Unit and the supervisor then takes over the role of Mentor. However, the original mentor is available to assist during the transition period if necessary.

**Table 6.14: DCFS Rural Region Additional Training for Staff**

Class Name	Class Time	Class Location	Class Date	Multi-day class?
Adoption 101	9 am - 4:30 pm	Carson	9/23/2014	
Adoption 101	9 am - 4:30 pm	Fallon	9/25/2014	
Adoption 101	9 am - 4:30 pm	Elko	10/7/2014	
Adoption 101	9 am - 4:30 pm	Pahrump	10/22/2014	
Caring for Children who have Experienced Trauma Training of Trainers	9 am - 4:30 pm	Carson	9/30/2014	3 DAYS
DCFS Visitation Training	10 am - 12 pm	Video Conference	9/17/2014	
Integrative Case Planning Training	1 pm - 5 pm	Fallon	11/13/2014	
Parent Management Training (PMT)	9 am - 4 pm	Elko	1/15/2015	2 DAYS
Parent Management Training (PMT)	8:30 am - 4:00 pm	Carson	2/11/2015	3 DAYS
Permanent Connections for Teens	9 am - 4:00 pm	Carson	9/24/2014	
Permanent Connections for Teens	9 am - 4 pm	Fallon	9/26/2014	
Permanent Connections for Teens	9 am - 4 pm	Elko	10/8/2014	
Permanent Connections for Teens	9 am - 4 pm	Pahrump	10/23/2014	
SAFE Model Front End Training for Stakeholders	11 am - 3 pm	Elko	12/3/2014	
Together Facing the Challenge Training of Trainers	9 am - 4:30 pm	Carson	9/30/2014	3 DAYS

**Table 6.15: Washoe County Additional Training for Staff**

Class Name	Class Time	Class Location	Class Date
Washoe County Protective Capacity Progress Assessment Training	9 am - 5 pm	Reno	11/12/2014

**TABLE 6.16: CLARK COUNTY ADDITIONAL TRAINING FOR STAFF**

Class Name	Class Time	Class Date	Multi-day class?
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Clark County Achieving Permanency through Roundtables	9:00 am to 5:00 pm	10/27/2014	
Clark County Blood borne Pathogens	5:00 am to 6:00 am	7/22/2014	
Clark County Blood borne Pathogens	5:30 pm to 6:30 pm	7/28/2014	
Clark County Child Sexual Abuse: The Trauma and Impacts	8:30 am to 12:30 pm	8/4/2014	
Clark County Client Engagement and Boundaries	1:00 pm to 4:00 pm	9/4/2014	
Clark County Conflict Resolution	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	9/23/2014	
Clark County Cultural Diversity in the Child Welfare Process	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	3/11/2015	
Clark County Cultural Diversity in the Child Welfare Process	10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	4/15/2015	
Clark County Drug Exposed Babies	1:00 pm to 3:00 pm	9/17/2014	
Clark County Drug Exposed Babies	10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	5/6/2015	
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	7/1/2014	
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	8/5/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	8/12/2014	
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	9/2/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	9/9/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	9/30/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	10/7/2014	
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	10/22/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 am - 4:00 pm	12/2/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	1/13/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	2/3/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	2/10/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	3/3/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	3/10/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	3/31/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 1	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	3/31/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	7/15/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	8/19/2014	3 DAYS

Implementation) Week 2	pm		
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	8/25/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	8/26/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	9/16/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	9/23/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 am too 4:00 pm	10/14/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	10/21/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	12/16/2014	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	1/20/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	1/27/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	2/17/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	2/24/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	3/17/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	3/24/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Nevada Initial Assessment Training (SIPS Implementation) Week 2	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	4/14/2015	3 DAYS
Clark County Permanency Roundtable Skills Training	8:30 am to 4:30 pm	10/28/2014	
Clark County Sexually Exploited Children: Child Prostitution in America	8:00 am to 12:00 pm	9/4/2014	

### Caseworker Surveys

Data from caseworker surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on on-going staff training in Table 6.17. Respondents were caseworkers, and respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 179 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency in providing and ensuing completion of adequate on-going training for caseworkers that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties?(on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 6.17. The mean rating of 3.34 indicates that the average sentiment among caseworker respondents is that on-going training is sometimes effective in addressing the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties.

Overall, comments from caseworkers indicated on-going trainings are offered and informative but caseworkers commented on a variety of challenges around ongoing trainings i.e. time to attend, scheduling conflicts, case load size, notice of trainings, tracking of trainings, and location of trainings for the rural region caseworkers. Also, caseworkers identified needs for ongoing training i.e. refresher trainings, more training options, on-going training specific to program areas such as investigations or adoption, and more hands on training.

**Table 6.17 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is on-going Training in addressing the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out your duties?**

<b>Not Effective</b>	<b>Rarely Effective</b>	<b>Sometimes Effective</b>	<b>Usually Effective</b>	<b>Very Effective</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
5.59% (10)	10.06% (18)	39.66% (71)	34.08% (61)	10.61% (19)	179	3.34	0.58

N=Number of Survey Respondents

SD=Standard Deviation

On-going Training continues to be an area needing improvement.

***Item 28: Foster and adoptive parent training***

**Requirements:**

Unlike the Nevada Partnership for Training, foster and adoptive parent training is a child welfare agency run activity in Nevada. Since the first Nevada CFSR in 2004, the agencies have been responsible for their own foster, adoptive, and kinship parent training programs. Beginning in July 2005, each child welfare agency began using the Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE) Pre-Service Curriculum for all initial Foster/Adoptive Parent training. However, in 2009 CCDFS began the implementation of the Partnering for Safety and Permanency–Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (PS-MAPP) curriculum, while WCDSS and the DCFS-Rural Region still use the PRIDE curriculum. Both trainings are facilitated by agency workers and former foster/adoptive parents and both are provided in both English and Spanish. PRIDE training is covered over 27 hours, whereas PS-MAPP varies depending on the module, but is generally 30 hours.

State statutes and regulations provide for DCFS, in consultation with each agency that provides child welfare services, to regulate the standards for family foster homes, specialized foster homes, independent living foster homes and group foster homes to ensure the training of employees who have direct contact with children. Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 424.0365 requires that anyone who “operates a family foster home, a specialized foster home, an independent living foster home or a group foster home shall ensure that each employee who comes into direct contact with children in the home receives training within 30 days after employment and annual thereafter. Such training must include, without limitation, instruction concerning: (a) Controlling the behavior of children; (b) Policies and Procedures concerning the use of force and restraint on children; (c) The rights of children in the home; (d) Suicide awareness and prevention; (e) The administration of medication to children; (f) Applicable state and federal constitution and statutory rights of children in the home; (g) Policies and procedures concerning other matters affecting the health, welfare, safety and civil and other rights of children in the home; and (h) Such other matters are required by the licensing authority or pursuant to regulations of the Division.”

Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 424.270 states an applicant for a license for a foster home must have at least 8 hours of training in foster parenting provided or approved by the agency which provides child welfare services. If the home has a pool, hot tub or Jacuzzi or other free-standing body of water or sauna, the applicants must also complete training in CPR and pool safety before licensure. Training programs for adoptive parents of a child with special needs requires the adoptive parent to complete a training program regarding the care of children with special needs or a training program designed to address the individual need of a specific child. Annually each foster parent must complete 4 hours training in foster parenting provided or approved by the agency which provides child welfare services. Specialized Foster homes and group foster homes are required to have a minimum of 20 hours of pre-service training at a minimum but agency requirements statewide are for specialized foster homes to have 40 hours pre-service training and 20 hours training annually.

**Quality Parenting Initiative / Just in Time Training:** The statewide initiative which began in 2013 is continues to gain momentum throughout the state.

**CCDFS** leads the state in the success of the program with their 6 active Workgroups which continue to work toward improving the foster parent program in Clark County. New to the QPI Program this year are the following:

- **FOSTER PARENT CHAMPIONS:** The DFS Foster Parent Champion (FPC) Program was developed to be that support system for caregivers with one main goal of Making Caregivers' Lives Easier. This includes calling caregivers upon each and every placement to ensure they have all the resources they need, helping new caregivers navigate the child welfare system, assisting with general parenting strategies, and sharing information on upcoming training and community events. The FPC Program is available for foster parents, relatives and fictive kin caregivers. Foster Parent Champions are currently licensed caregivers that demonstrate quality parenting on a daily basis. They are excited to share their experiences and help you ensure your home remains a positive environment for children. The Foster Parent Champions know the value of quality homes that are safe, nurturing and caring for children. The Foster Parent Champions hold foster care licenses for children ages birth – 18 years. Their licensure experiences include being foster families, relative and fictive kin families as well as an ICPC family.
- **INCREASE IN REQUIRED ANNUAL TRAINING HOURS IMPLEMENTED BY DECEMBER, 2015:** Foster parents will now be required to complete 12 hours of foster parent training each year in order to maintain their foster care license. Of those 12 hours they will be required to complete a 2 hour for each of the following topics: Trauma Informed Care, CPR/First Aid, Car Seat Training, and Effective Discipline and Child Development.
- **TRAINING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT:** Training Workgroup to work with other workgroups to assist with changes in operating procedures by developing new trainings components.
- **DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PRE-SERVICE TRAINING ASSESSMENT AND RESTRUCTURING:** CCDFS has contracted with a curriculum writer to begin analyzing TIPS-MAPP and reworking it to pull out some components which are not in line with the QPI philosophy while adding other points which stress the QPI message and best practices. When completed Foster Parent Competencies will be developed and this will be very important to the process of and development of all training components for the agencies foster care program.

**WCDSS** has created ten committees which are active in the development and operations of the QPI program in Washoe County. These committees are:

Caseworker Involvement	Events
Foster Parent Mentoring	Information Sharing
INS & Licensing Investigations	Partnership Plan
Recruitment for Teens	Steering
Solutions	Transitions

- QPI supports safety concepts in out-of-home placements through improved information sharing between worker and substitute care provider. For example, as part of SAFE implementation, Confirming Safe Environments is required for all out-of-home placements. The purpose is the exploration of how the substitute care provider is meeting the unique needs of the child. The improved information sharing and partnership agreement stemming from QPI produces a more specific and purposeful assessment of caregiver ability to provide a safe home for each child.

**DCFS Rural Region** is in the process of designing and implementing a “Partnership Plan” with a commitment to shared principles to replace the systemic driven caseworker-parent relationships realizing that the safety and the success of the foster child is better built with teamwork. Another activity is to build a better transition process for children moving from their own homes to foster care or to other foster homes, to relatives, or back to their biological families with all child information to ensure that it is in the best interest of the child and the safest. An initiative of greater normalcy in the lives of children in foster care is another project that DCFS is implementing. QPI assists with balancing the goals of normalcy

and safety for the youth by supporting and promoting the “Prudent Parenting” initiative which will better enable foster youth to participate in normal life experiences while in foster care.

## PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

Each of the three child welfare agencies provides their own Foster Parent, Adoptive Parent and Relative Parent Pre-Service Training.

CCDFS provides PS-MAPP to their prospective foster, adoptive and relative foster families since 2009. However, beginning in January 10, 2015 they began providing an expanded version of MAPP which includes components of Trauma Informed Care.

**Table 6.19: CCDFS Pre-Service Training from January 10, 2015 to May 30, 2015**

<u>Training Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date Began</u>	<u>Date Ended</u>	<u>Total hours</u>	<u>Location of training</u>	<u>No of Participants</u>
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	1/10/2015	3/28/2015	30	DFS Central	31
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	1/11/2015	3/29/2015	30	DFS Central	23
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	1/22/2015	3/26/2015	30	DFS Central	29
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	2/2/2015	4/13/2015	30	DFS Central	24
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	2/17/2015	4/21/2015	30	DFS Central	20
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	2/25/2015	4/29/2015	30	DFS Central	28
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	3/7/2015	5/16/2015	30	DFS Central	26
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	3/15/2015	5/31/2015	30	DFS Central	25
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	3/23/2015	6/1/2015	30	DFS Pecos	27
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	3/29/2015	6/14/2015	30	DFS Pecos	24
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	4/11/2015	6/20/2015	30	DFS Central	13
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	4/20/2015	6/29/2015	30	DFS Central	19
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	4/30/2015	7/2/2015	30	DFS Central	18
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	5/19/2015	7/21/2015	30	DFS Central	14
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	5/29/2015	8/7/2015	30	DFS Central	27
TIPS-MAPP	Trauma Informed Pre-service	5/30/2015	8/8/2015	30	DFS Central	25

**Specialized Foster Care:** CCDFS contracts with between 17 and 18 different agencies which provide specialized foster care for CCDFS children and youth in need of more restrictive levels of foster care. Currently these Specialized Foster Homes foster 232 children/youth. These agencies are responsible for providing the initial and annual training to their contracted foster caregivers and require them to have 40 hours of pre-services training using either PRIDE or MAPP including components of Trauma Informed Care along with other additional training for dealing with more serious

behavioral and/or mental health issues of youth and then 20 hours of annual training. Staffs of these agencies are also required to attend the same trainings.

**WCDSS** previously provided PRIDE pre-service training to their prospective foster, adoptive and relative foster parents. However, they too began using a new curriculum titled Trauma Informed Pre-Service (TIPS) which they purchased from San Diego County, CA in January, 2015. However, they continue to use PRIDE for Spanish foster, adoption and relative foster parent training. PRIDE and TIPS both are 27 hours. Relative PRIDE is a total of 8 or 9 hours depending on the size of the group and the trainer. This includes the presentation of Modules 4, 5 and 6 only.

**Table 6.20 WCDSS Pre-Service Training SFY 2015**

<u>Training Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date Began</u>	<u>Date Ended</u>	<u>Total hours</u>	<u>No of Participants</u>
PRIDE	Prospective Foster & Adoptive Parents	6/24/2014	7/22/2014	27hr	18
PRIDE	Prospective Foster Parents	8/5/2014	9/2/2014	27hr	13
PRIDE	Prospective Foster Parents	9/6/2014	10/4/2014	27hr	36
Relative PRIDE	Relative Foster Parents	10/11/2014	10/11/2014	8hr	15
PRIDE	Prospective Foster & Adoptive Parents	10/2/2014	11/4/2014	27hrs	23
Spanish PRIDE	Prospective Foster & Adoptive Parents	10/6/2014	11/3/2014	27hrs	6
Relative PRIDE	Relative Foster Parents	11/15/2014	11/15/2014	8hr	12
PRIDE	Prospective Foster & Adoptive Parents	12/6/2014	12/20/2014	27hr	24
Relative PRIDE	Relative Foster Parents	1/23/2015	1/23/2015	8hr	21
TIPs	Prospective Foster & Adoptive Parents	1/13/2015	2/10/2015	27hr	19
Relative PRIDE	Relative Foster Parents	2/24/2015	2/26/2015	9hr	18
TIPs	Prospective Foster & Adoptive Parents	2/21/2015	3/21/2015	27hrs	14
Relative PRIDE	Relative Foster Parents	3/17/2015	3/19/2015	9hrs	18
Relative PRIDE	Relative Foster Parents	4/10/2015	4/10/2015	8hrs	13
Spanish Relative PRIDE	Prospective Foster & Adoptive Parents	4/25/2015	4/25/2015	8hrs	7
TIPs	Prospective Foster & Adoptive Parents	4/28/2015	5/26/2015	27hrs	18
Relative PRIDE	Relative Foster Parents	5/16/2015	5/16/2015	8hrs	26

TIPS is a 9-week series with the following topics: 1. Trauma Effects/Child Development; 2. Child Welfare/Birth Families and Permanency; 3. Medical Unit/Self-Care; 4. Trauma 101/Grief and Loss; 5. Understanding Trauma/Attachment; 6. Building a Safe Place/Foster Home Licensing Complaints; 7. Adoptions Unit; 8. Understanding Feelings and Behaviors/Discipline; and 9. Connections and Healing/Advocacy.

Currently WCDSS has 180 Family Foster homes, 120 Relative foster homes, 37 adoptive foster homes, 1 healthy Infant foster home, 15 Specific foster homes, 45 group foster homes and 1 group family foster home.

**Specialized Foster Care:** WCDSS contracts with between 15 and 17 agencies to provide Specialized Foster homes and those agencies are responsible for providing the 40 hour pre-services and 20 hour annual training to their specialized foster families. WCDSS and the DCFS Children’s Mental Health Program Evaluation Unit (PEU) have partnered in a pilot Specialized Foster Care program during the SFY 2014 – 2015. For this Pilot, 60 specific children were enrolled: 21 in Specialized Foster Care and 9 in Intensive Foster care. To participate in the pilot, the foster home must be a licensed home and is included in the count listed in the paragraph above. All caseworks and Specialized foster parents were

required to complete two (2) specific training programs: Caring for Children who have Experienced Trauma: A Workshop for Resource Parents, a 10 to 12 hour course and Together Facing the Challenge: A Training for Caseworkers and Foster Parents, a 1 hour course. The outcomes of the pilot have been so successful that WCDSS has made it a permanent program and will be adding an additional 30 children during the next fiscal year.

Another program which WCDSS participated in was training for foster parents and staff in caregiver separation on very young children during visitation with parents. The agency participated in a research project with the University of Delaware and Dr. Mary Dozier regarding Attachment and Bio behavioral Catch-up and Visitation (ABC-V). This included foster parents being trained to make comments supporting the parent’s interaction with their child(ren) during visits. The research project was successful in children followed the lead of the caregiver in being positive interaction with their parents and that there were less missed visits and visits moved to unsupervised visits more quickly. Also birth parents expressed increased feelings of satisfaction in both their visits with their child(ren) and relationship with substitute care providers. Thus, WCDSS has expanded the program to all children removed from their parents and agency staff will be facilitating ABC-V training to all foster parents, including relatives in the philosophy and practice.

Finally, WCDSS facilitates a Foster Parent Support Group which is actually led by foster parents but many licensing and other workers attend in support of the foster parent. The group meets on a monthly basis, 10 months out of the year and provides a one hour training each month. Training topics vary from local agency presentations on their programs and resources to WCDSS presentations on various issues such as assessment and permanency or Early Childhood Education Program within DCFS.

**Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) Rural Region:** DCFS Rural Region continues to offer PRIDE Pre-Service training to all prospective foster, adoptive and relative foster parents in 13 of the 15 rural counties in Nevada. In three of the rural counties within the jurisdiction of the Sixth Judicial District including such communities as Battle Mountain and Winnemucca, NV, the Court has contracted trainers to provide PRIDE pre-service training to prospective foster parents as the judge believes having local trainers will improve in the recruitment and retention process. The DCFS Rural Region actually contracts with local agencies or individuals in the other counties to provide the PRIDE Pre-Service training in their community as well. Having local trainer has helped in that it has increased communication between the agency and trainers and foster parents, both by phone and email and has allowed for unique training possibilities when unforeseen barriers, such as inclement weather, road construction, or illness has hampered training opportunities. Trainings have been conducted through the use of Skype and some have been conducted in the prospective foster parent’s home when a family member was disabled and unable to travel at the time. The DCFS Rural Region also is able to provide PRIDE Pre-Service and advanced trainings in both English and Spanish as needed.

**Table 6:21 DCFS Rural Region Foster Parent Trainings**

<u>Training Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date Began</u>	<u>Total hours</u>	<u>Location of training</u>	<u>Total # of Participants</u>	<u># of Fictive Kin/Relative Participants (already part of the total #)</u>
Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Session 3 - 7	7/14/2014	15	Pahrump	3	0
Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Sessions 1 - 9	8/15/2014	27	Pahrump	3	0
Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Sessions 1 - 9	12/5/2014	27	Pahrump	4	1
Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Sessions 1 - 9	9/20/2014	27	Fallon	10	4
Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Sessions 1 - 9	12/6/2014	27	Fallon	11	4
Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Sessions 1 - 9	2/21/2015	27	Fallon	16	7
Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Sessions 4 - 6	7/26/2014	9	Elko	4	4
Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Sessions 1 - 9	12/11/2014	27	Ely	7	0



Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Sessions 4 - 6	12/14/2014	9	Ely	1	1
Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Sessions 1 - 9	3/6/2015	27	Elko	20	6
Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Sessions 1 - 9	7/26/2014	27	Carson City	26	12
Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Sessions 1 - 9	11/8/2014	27	Carson City	21	6
Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Sessions 1 - 9	1/17/2015	27	Carson City	27	3
Foster/Adopt Pre-Service <b>PRIDE</b>	Sessions 1 - 9	3/21/2015	27	Carson City	22	6
<b>Total Trained</b>			<b>330</b>		<b>175</b>	<b>54</b>

PRIDE Pre-Service 9-Week Modules include the following topics: 1. Connecting with PRIDE; 2. Teamwork towards Permanence; 3. Meeting Developmental Needs: Attachment; 4. Meeting Developmental Needs: Loss; 5. Strengthening Family Relationships; 6. Meeting Developmental Needs: Discipline; 7. Continuing Family Relationships; 8. Planning for Change; and 9. Taking PRIDE: Making an Informed Decision.

The DCFS Rural Region has 140 Family Foster homes, 35 Relative Foster Homes, 13 Fictive Kin Foster Homes and a number of Specialized Foster homes.

**Specialized Foster Homes:** DCFS Rural Region also contracts with WCDSS for their Specialized Foster Homes but are in the process of developing their own Specialized Foster Home Unit. The agency also had a Specialized Foster Home Pilot program during SFY 2014 – 2015 with their designated licensed foster families received the Caring for Children who Experienced Trauma: A Workshop for Resource Parents and Together Facing the Challenge: A Training for Caseworkers and Foster Parents. However, their staff and foster parents further participated in training provided by the Adoption Exchanged titled Transition to Permanency: How to Speak to Children about Adoption and Concurrent Planning and Its Merits. These trainings covered issues from the beginning of the case and was provided to frontline staff, supervisors, foster/relative placements and adoption workers region wide with emphasis on the youngest populations of children in care.

**CFSR 2009:**

During the 2009 CSFR this Item was rated as Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated that state licensing regulations require both initial and ongoing training for foster parents; relative caregivers, adoptive parents, and staff of child care facilities and that training must be complete prior to the placement of a child in the home.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CSFR expressed the opinion that there is a requirement for initial and ongoing training for foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of child care facilities. Several stakeholders indicated that the agency provides initial training and foster parent associations provide ongoing training statewide. Some state-level stakeholders indicated that training is provided for foster parents and caseworkers to attend jointly. Some Carson City stakeholders noted that the PRIDE training is complete and prepares foster parents for the challenges of parenting children in foster care. Some Clark County stakeholders noted that in that county a new training protocol, PS-MAPP was being implemented. Some Carson City stakeholders noted that in rural areas the agency offers flexible and condensed training to facilitate the completion of training where transportation is limited

Data from surveys conducted for the CFSP in Table 6.22 provide information on foster parent trainings. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Foster Parents, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 208 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency in providing foster parent training (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 6.22. The mean rating of 3.59 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that the child welfare agency is usually effective in providing foster parent training.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicated that training is very important for foster parents. Some foster parents

indicated that the QPI website is offering more training online which is helpful. However, many foster parents indicated some challenges around foster parent trainings i.e. access to childcare, advanced trainings typically only on weekdays during regular business hours, and better communication about training being offered.

Additionally, foster and adoptive parents were asked in thinking about all the training they had had in the last year, had training adequately prepared them in caring for the needs of foster children or youth placed in their care. Foster and Adoptive parents indicated that 54.72% felt adequately prepared and 32.08% felt somewhat adequately prepared while 7.55% indicated they felt somewhat inadequately prepared and 1.89% felt very inadequately prepared.

**Table 6.22 Survey Question**

**How Effective overall is the Child Welfare Agency on providing Foster Parent Trainings?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
2.88% (6)	10.58% (22)	31.25% (65)	35.10% (73)	20.19% (42)	208	3.59	0.58

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

### **Strengths/Concerns (Staff and Provider Training)**

Nevada has strength in its focus of enhancing the new worker core curriculum, and Nevada continues to analyze curriculum to ensure courses keep up with best practices and meet current needs and requirements of workers. It is anticipated that the new revised core curriculum which has been piloted in the South, will be presented to the Nevada Decision Making Group for approval and will then be used statewide. Participant feedback will be collected and it is anticipated that tribal participation will increase through enhanced collaborative efforts over the next five years. The training curriculum for child welfare staff is a competency-based approach designed to reinforce the basic principles of good case practice and to develop specialized knowledge and skills.

Currently, caseworkers indicate the new worker core curriculum and on-going training is sometimes effective in preparing caseworkers to do their jobs. Caseworkers indicated that training is useful and provides basic overall preparation on laws, policies and procedures. However, there were comments that indicated there needed to be more on the job training and more field training. Caseworkers indicated that more mentoring was needed before they received a caseload.

Nevada has strength in that foster parent training is provided in all three child welfare agencies and initial and on-going training is seen as usually being effective. Foster parent’s indicated that the QPI website is offering more training online which is helpful. However, many foster parents indicated some challenges around foster parent trainings i.e. access to childcare, advanced trainings typically only on weekdays during regular business hours, and better communication about training being offered.

## **Systemic Factor E: Service Array and Resource Development**

### **Item 29: Array of services**

#### Requirements:

NRS 432.011(a) states that the purposes of the Division of Child and Family Services include ensuring that a sufficient range of services is available to provide care and treatment to children and families in the least restrictive setting

appropriate to their needs.

## Service Array

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the lead agency for the community based child abuse prevention programs in Nevada and is leading the child maltreatment prevention activities in Nevada. The Department of Health and Human Services promotes the health and well-being of Nevadans through the delivery and facilitation of essential services to ensure families are strengthened, public health is protected, and individuals achieve their highest level of self-sufficiency. Among the Divisions, Units, and programs that are part of DHHS and that contribute to the leadership of child maltreatment prevention activities in Nevada are the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), the Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH), the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS), the Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD), and the Grants Management Unit.

The Grants Management Unit (GMU) is an administrative unit within the Department of Health and Human Services Director's Office that manages grants to local, regional, and statewide programs serving Nevadans. The GMU is responsible for the following state and federal initiatives:

The Children's Trust Fund (CTF): The fund contains state and federal monies (CBCAP funds) that are reserved for primary and secondary child maltreatment programs. Most of the CTF funds are awarded through competitive applications.

Family Resource Centers (FRC): There are 21 FRCs in Nevada that provides information, referrals, and case management to at-risk families. FRCs collaborates with local and state agencies and organizations to help individuals and families access needed services and support. Some of the FRCs has continued some programs that were provided with Family to Family Connection (F2F) funds to support families with children birth to four years old. Funding for F2F was eliminated in the 2011 Legislature.

Differential Response (DR): The DR program is a partnership between FRCs and the three child welfare agencies in Nevada: Clark County Department of Family Services, Washoe County Department of Social Services, and the Division of Child and Family Services, Rural Region. Dedicated DR staff personal in nine FRCs in north, south, and rural communities are currently first responders to Child Protective Services' screened-in reports of child neglect.

Social Services Block Grant, Title XX programs: Assists persons in achieving or maintaining self-sufficiency and/or prevents or remedies neglect, abuse, or exploitation of children and adults.

Community Services Block Grant: Promotes economic self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization in each of Nevada's 17 counties.

Fund for a Healthy Nevada – Master Tobacco Settlement funds: Grants improve health services and the health and wellbeing for all Nevadans.

Revolving Account for Problem Gambling Treatment and Prevention: Provides funding for problem gambling treatment, prevention, and related services.

Contingency Account for Victims of Human Trafficking: The Contingency Account for Victims of Human Trafficking was created by NRS 217.500 and became effective July 1, 2013. The legislation authorizes the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services to allocate money from the Account to nonprofit corporations and agencies and political subdivisions of this State for the purposes of establishing or providing programs and services to victims of human trafficking.

Additionally, the DCFS is responsible for administration of the CFSP, and as such has a Grants Management Unit (GMU) responsible for management of the majority of the grants that fund the statewide service array system i.e. Title IV-B, CFCIP and ETV.

The primary goals of Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) are to prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families, improve the quality of care and services to children and their families, and ensure permanency for children by reuniting them with their parents, by adoption or by another permanent living arrangement. The four PSSF

Program components include Family Preservation; Family Support; Time-Limited Family Reunification; and, Adoption Promotion and Support. They are intended to provide coordinated services for children and families across the continuum from prevention to treatment through aftercare. Ninety percent of Nevada's PSSF funds are allocated to agencies providing these services and while ten percent of these funds are allowed for administrative costs, Nevada is only spending 4% on these related expenses. Nevada continues to fund these four areas as demonstrated below:

**Family Preservation:** The term "family preservation services" means services for children and families designed to help families (including adoptive and extended families) at risk or in crisis, including service programs designed to help children where safe and appropriate, return to families from which they have been removed; or be placed for adoption, with a legal guardian, or, if adoption or legal guardianship is determined not to be safe and appropriate for a child, in some other planned, permanent living arrangement.

Examples of services that fall under family preservation include preplacement preventive services programs, such as intensive family preservation programs, designed to help children at risk of foster care placement remain safely with their families; service programs designed to provide follow up care to families to whom a child has been returned after a foster care placement; respite care of children to provide temporary relief for parents and other caregivers (including foster parents); services designed to improve parenting skills (by reinforcing parents' confidence in their strengths, and helping them to identify where improvement is needed and to obtain assistance in improving those skills) with respect to matters such as child development, family budgeting, coping with stress, health, and nutrition; and infant safe haven programs to provide a way for a parent to safely relinquish a newborn infant at a safe haven designated pursuant to State law.

Nevada continues to be able to offer family preservation services across the state providing the following services:

- Increasing confidence of sheltered clients through improved life skills involving child development, budgeting, stress management, and family nutrition;
- Providing services to families at-risk or in crisis through home based services through Project Safe Place;
- Providing in-home parenting classes and services to families at the FRIENDS Family Resource Center to prevent further involvement with the child welfare system;
- Providing in-home parenting, budgeting, family dynamics services to families to prevent further involvement with child welfare system;
- Providing parenting support and counseling to clients residing in the agencies emergency shelters and decreasing risk of children being removed from home;
- Providing psychiatric and mental health services on an annual basis, parenting classes, and one-on-one parent education to strengthen families;
- Assisting domestic violence crisis callers, providing individual and group counseling, and providing advocacy services; and,
- Providing therapeutic services, crisis intervention, prevention services, and skills training to families referred by DCFS as well as treatment with Choices Inc.

The goal for the coming year is to assist current recipients of IV-B 2 funding that provide these services to analyze the potential for expanding or realigning services as necessary to continue to meet the needs of children and families.

**Family Support:** The term "family support services" means community-based services designed to promote the safety and well-being of children and families; to increase the strength and stability of families (including adoptive, foster, and extended families); to increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities; to afford children a safe, stable, and supportive family environment; to strengthen parental relationships and promote healthy marriages; and, to enhance child development, including through mentoring.

Service programs currently being funded in Nevada for this area include:

- Providing medical case management wraparound services and respite services to increase family preservation for children with high level medical needs;
- Peer Parent Partner program. The Peer Parent Partner will contact family and may participate in Team Decision Making Team to assist family with bringing child back to family and contact;
- Decreasing risk of child abuse/neglect and crisis through home visits, case management, parenting education, counseling services, medical/dental services; and,
- Training birth and foster parents in improved parenting techniques during reunification visits between foster and birth parents.

The goal for the coming year is to build on the momentum from our family support services and work with current IV-B 2 recipients to revise scopes of work and outcomes to target other service area where maintaining a 20% funding may be more difficult.

**Time-Limited Family Reunification:** The term “time-limited family reunification services” means the services and activities that are provided to a child that is removed from the child’s home and placed in a foster family home or a child care institution and to the parents or primary caregiver of such a child, in order to facilitate the reunification of the child safely and appropriately within a timely fashion, but only during the 15-month period that begins on the date that the child is considered to have entered foster care. The services and activities include individual, group, and family counseling; inpatient, residential, or outpatient substance abuse treatment services; mental health services; assistance to address domestic violence; services designed to provide temporary child care and therapeutic services for families, including crisis nurseries; peer-to-peer mentoring and support groups for parents and primary caregivers; services and activities designed to facilitate access to and visitations of children by parents and siblings; and, transportation to or from any of the services and activities described.

Services currently being provided include:

- Providing priority substance abuse and mental health appointments for clients referred by DCFS to allow for children to be re-united with their family;
- Coordinating and conduct Safety Team Decision Making meetings with families where children were removed due to abuse/neglect and determine if a safety plan may be implemented to return children to family; and,
- Providing a variety of counseling educational programs and evaluations to clients referred by DCFS to assist cases in reunification.

The goal for the coming year is to build on the momentum from our family support and family preservation services and work with current IV-B 2 recipients to revise scopes of work and outcomes to target other areas as needed.

**Adoption Promotion and Support:** The term “adoption promotion and support services” means services and activities designed to encourage more adoptions out of the foster care system, when adoptions promote the best interests of the children, including such activities as pre-and post-adoptive services and activities designated to expedite the adoption process and support adoptive families.

Service programs currently being funded include:

- Providing services for waiting children, assessing community needs, services to strengthen families and provide more adoptions, training for professionals, etc.;
- Completing adoptive home study updates/initial home studies to assist DCFS in processing potential adoptive family’s apps and social summaries for foster children; and,
- Increasing the number of foster and emergency placements by providing PRIDE Trainings and Advanced Foster Parent Trainings as necessary.

Table 6.23 illustrates the number and amount of sub grantees that currently receive IVB 2 and the anticipated number of services that will be provided, by category based on current numbers.

**Table 6.23 Title IVB SUBPART 2.**

TITLE IVB, SUBPART 2 (IVB 2)	# Sub grantees	# Families	#Adults	# Children	Total Hours
Family Support (22.5%)	22	16,516	17,831	8,855	73,742
Family Preservation (22.5%)	14	1173	1,736	2,392	20,105
Family Reunification (22.5%)	7	383	374	490	15,884
Adoption Promotion & Support (22.5%)	6	180	107	320	1,899

**Gaps in Service Provision**

The table below provides information and elaborates on some of the gaps in services per jurisdiction.

CLARK COUNTY	WASHOE COUNTY	RURAL REGION
<p>Clark County Division of Family Services plans to continue their work toward ensuring the array of services and resources are available to children and families; with the four categories of services funded through IVB being equitably and appropriately distributed.</p>	<p>Washoe County Department of Social Services plans to continue their work toward ensuring the array of services and resources are available to children and families; with the four categories of services funded through IVB being equitably and appropriately distributed.</p>	<p>The State Rural Region, Division of Child and Family Services, plans to continue their work toward ensuring the array of services and resources are available to children and families; with the four categories of services funded through IVB being equitably and appropriately distributed.</p>
<p>The gaps that currently exist for Clark County relative to the above service categories are those services that help children in foster and adoptive placements to achieve permanency. Focusing on this area with funded service providers as well as emphasizing those areas such as training and recruitment will contribute to adjusting this gap.</p>	<p>The gaps that currently exist for Washoe County relative to the above service categories are those services that help children in foster and adoptive placements to achieve permanency. Focusing on this area with funded service providers as well as emphasizing those areas such as training and recruitment will contribute to adjusting this gap.</p>	<p>The gaps that currently exist for the State Rural Region relative to the above service categories are those services that help children in foster and adoptive placements to achieve permanency. Focusing on this area with funded service providers as well as emphasizing those areas such as training and recruitment will contribute to adjusting this gap.</p>

**Populations at Greatest Risk of Maltreatment in need of Services**

Statewide all three child welfare agencies continue to report that populations at greatest risk of maltreatment are those families who are familiar with the agency, many living in poverty, those that experience homelessness, have history's with law enforcement, incarceration, substance abuse and domestic violence. Additionally, the use of methamphetamine seems prevalent among much of these populations.

Clark County DFS continues to work with community partners in areas where there are high removal rates. CCDFS is continuing work with East Valley Family Services on the expansion of their Peer Parenting Program; which is a mentoring program for perpetrators who are working to reunite with their children. CCDFS has also reached out to faith-based organizations to assist these families in crisis

Additionally for CCDFS changes to services to target these populations will occur as a result of the implementation of Safety Services through the Title IV-E Waiver. The Title IV-E waiver will enable CCDFS to provide services for families based upon impending dangers indentified in the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA). CCDFS plans to implement Safety Services systematically throughout all geographical zones in the same manner that the SIPS model was implemented.

The DCFS Rural Region continues to utilize the current service array to address these populations but the goal over the coming year is to work with the service providers in revising scopes of work to enhance the effectiveness of those services.


WCDSS focus is to continue compliance and support of a comprehensive intake process that identifies children and families at greatest risk of maltreatment by exploring initial understanding of family functioning, severity of maltreatment, imminence, vulnerability of the child, and the extent the maltreatment appears out of control. This process helps to assess the needed services to these populations in efforts to ensure appropriate services are provided.

**Services for Children under the Age of Five**

**CCDFS Services for children under the Age of Five**

Clark County Department of Family Services is projecting a 15.73% decrease in the number of children in Clark custody from FY 2016 when compared to FY 2015. Table 6.23 illustrates the projected decrease in the number of children in Clark custody.

**Table 6.24 Children under the Age of Five in CCDFS**

FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16 Projected	FY15 vs. FY16
1664	1487	1430	1205	 -15.73%

CCDFS refined requirements for two specialized 5 and under units who are responsible for servicing victims under the age of 5. CCDFS has seen a 15.73% decrease in the number of children in foster care under the age of 5 in FY15 when compared to FY14. In FY 2015 56% were Caucasian, 30% were African American, 10% were Multi-Racial, .84% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 7% were Native American and 2.24% were unknown.

CCDFS provides Medical Wraparound Services, Bridge Counseling Services, uses the Team Decision Making program which is designed to coordinate family team meetings to assess if children can return home safely and completes Home Studies and Social Summaries.

Over the past SFY 2014 CCDFS continued to work in collaboration with Nevada Early Intervention Services, Early Childhood Services and Child Find to assist in recognizing the developmental needs of infants and toddlers and to promote their well-being and assess developmental delays.

**DCFS RURAL REGION Services for children under the Age of Five**

In SFY 2015, 36.70% of children in foster care were between the ages of 0-4. This is the lowest percentage for DCFS in over the past five years. In SFY 2014 the percentage was 38.24. Of the zero to 4 age population, in SFY 2015 30% were Caucasian, 2.53 % were American Indian, 1.9 % were African American, .45 % were Asian and 1.49 % were unknown.

DCFS implemented a trauma screening referral process in April, 2014, to screen every child who enters care for trauma symptoms. This screening is completed by Clinical Program staff to identify children and youth who are experiencing clinically significant symptoms. If trauma symptoms above the clinical cut off range are identified, children and youth are to be referred for further assessment and intervention. Two trauma screenings were developed. One for children age six and under; and another for children age seven to eighteen. The screening tool allows DCFS to identify children and youth who may be experiencing trauma early on in order to refer for further assessment and intervention. Early identification allows for earlier intervention which can help a child or youth stabilize their emotions and behaviors, which leads to fewer placement disruptions. In addition, foster parents are provided with psychoeducation regarding trauma at the time of

screening. From July 1, 2014, a total of 128 trauma screenings were completed. Seventeen children were identified as needing further assessment and/or intervention and were referred for services upon the completion of the trauma screening. Sixty-five trauma screenings were completed on children age six and under and 63 screenings were completed on children age seven and older.

Foster parents are a critical piece to the success of a child's life. To better understand the trauma that the foster child has experienced DCFS has implemented Trauma Informed Care, to reduce problem behavior and support resilience in the lives of the children DCFS serves. DCFS has implemented Together Facing the Challenge which is an evidence-based curriculum of interventions. These two trainings have allowed foster parents to participate in the Specialized Foster Care (Pilot) program.

The Adoption Exchange provided two trainings: Transition to Permanency/ How to Speak to Children about Adoption and Concurrent Planning and it's merits from the beginning of the case, training provided to front line staff, supervisors, foster/relative placements, and adoption workers region wide with emphasis on the youngest populations of children in care. The Specialized Foster Care Pilot program continues to identify qualified homes. These homes often become adoptive placements for some of our high needs difficult to place children in this age group.

Continuation of a contract with Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth (SAFY) to provide pre and post adoption services to families in the rural region; to include family assessments to identify strengths and risk factors; provide education and coaching around the impact of trauma on child development; provide counseling and crisis management as needed.

DCFS engaged in several child-specific recruitments through various means: Radio NCSA's and two half hour segments on the television show 'Observations' were created and aired through partnership with the Nevada Broadcasters Association. Child-specific information to be disseminated by DCFS recruiters and One Church One Child contractor at Kindergarten enrollments at schools and parents at Sunday school.

DCFS contracted with a Marketing and Advertising firm to create Foster/adoptive parent pamphlets for recruitment events and dissemination by identified local community groups, Billboard advertising, radio and television interviews with recruiter to keep the need for adoptive homes in the forefront. This campaign has been ongoing since August of 2014 and most children featured in the ads are five and under.

A Family Finding Pilot program was developed and implemented by DCFS to utilize the services of a private investigator to ensure that all familial ties/relationships are sought out for children that are awaiting adoption.

The Forgotten Initiative (formerly One Church One Child) faith-based recruitment program has been implemented. Created flyers, newsletters, bulletins, etc. to be disseminated by contracted staff to Congregations throughout the region. Forgotten Initiative recruiter and DCFS recruiter attended Faith based Christian Alliance Summit in April and have new ideas to implement in the upcoming year.

Legislative approval given allows DCFS to hire four new Mental Health Counselors for the new Specialized Foster Care unit; they will provide training and supports to Specialized Foster Parents and pre / post adoptive parents to ensure the higher needs of children placed in Specialized Foster Care homes are met, resulting in the reduction of disruptive behaviors more quickly and an increased possibility of achieving timely permanency.

New and innovative techniques for recruitment of foster/adoptive families are in planning stages; to include events like Adoption Parties, Foster-ware gatherings and ongoing recruitment for the Specialized Foster Care Program at various community events. A brochure will be designed and produced to hand out at these events and placed on the DCFS website.

Recruitment efforts are expanding through collaboration with different ethnic groups in some rural communities and removal data specific to rural communities will be compiled and utilized to educate communities on the need for child specific and general recruitment. The business and agricultural community as well as various rural community organizations have been approached to collaborate with DCFS to disseminate recruitment messages/pamphlets to employees and patrons.

Successful Family Finding program developed and implemented by DCFS last year will continue and expand to assist each District Office on a quarterly basis. The services of a private investigator has led to placements with aunts and uncles and older siblings; this program will ensure that all familial ties/relationships are sought out for children that are awaiting adoption.

## ***WCDSS Services for children under the Age of Five***



The number of under the age of five projected to be in foster care is 283 for SFY 2016. Young children entering care and placed at the Kids Kottage Emergency Shelter receive an Early Childhood Clinical Assessment by a contract Psychologist in addition to a review of the Ages and Stage developmental milestone. Very young children suspected of falling within the Autism Spectrum disorder by a clinician are referred for a psychiatric evaluation with a contract psychiatrist. Many young children entering care are part of a sibling group and WCDSS works closely with resource caregivers (foster parents and relative caregivers) to meet the needs of all children in the family constellation.

Northern Nevada is fortunate to have a strong mental health system to provide early intervention assessments through the Northern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services as well as recommended therapeutic interventions. There are available and trained clinical professionals who deliver PCIT services and programs targeted at young children. While the service level is strong, the need for additional "slots" is also great. However, there is sufficiency in service provision and prioritization of child welfare cases. The local State operated Family Learning Homes and incorporates a well-received and effective strategy incorporating parent participation to address youth behavioral issues for children over the age of 6.

WCDSS implemented trauma informed care training in foster parent pre-service training, and has committed to incorporating trauma informed practices. This includes training for foster parents and staff regarding the effects of caregiver separation on very young children during visitation with parents. WCDSS participated in a research project with the University of Delaware and Dr. Mary Dozier regarding Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up and Visitation (ABC-V). The randomized control study, "First Look at Effects of an Intervention to Improve Visitation for Young Children in Foster Care", adapted materials from ABC to improve visitations between parents and their children who had been recently removed from their care. Substitute care providers were trained to make comments supporting the parents interaction with their child(ren) during visits. The study found the intervention group was far more successful in following the child's lead during visitation and that visits moved to "unsupervised" much more quickly than the control group, and there were less missed visits with the intervention group. Additionally, birth parents expressed increased feelings of satisfaction in both their visits with their child(ren) and relationship with substitute careprovider than the control group.

Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up and Visitation was expanded to all children removed from their parents and placed in foster homes with similar success: quicker transition to unsupervised visits, less missed visits, and perceived better relationship between foster and birth parents.

Currently, some agency staff are facilitating ABC-V visits and WCDSS plans to train all substitute caregivers including relatives in the philosophy and practice. WCDSS will also expand mental health screenings at placement similar to what is currently in place for children placed at the Kids Kottage Emergency Shelter. It is intended that substitute caregivers will be trained in the Ages and Stages and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires to screen for mental and behavioral concerns and children will be appropriately referred.

### CFSR 2009:

During the 2009 CSFR Service Array was rated as strength. Although concerns were identified during the onsite CSFR about the accessibility of services and about caseworker practice with regard to assessing and meeting the service needs of children and families), information in the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated that Nevada had an adequate array of key services in the state to meet the needs of children and families and had embarked upon an extensive service array assessment.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CSFR expressed the opinion that there is an adequate array of services available to address the needs of children and families that included prevention, placement, reunification, adoption, mental health, and treatment services. Some Washoe County stakeholders noted that the county had conducted a service array assessment to identify effective services (such as in-home family preservation services, drug court, and Project Wraparound) and to identify opportunities to develop additional services.

### Statewide Data:

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provided information on service array in Table 6.25. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Foster Parents, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 242 responses to the survey.

How effective is the child welfare agency's array of services in meeting the needs of children and families. (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 6.25. The mean rating of 3.43 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that the child welfare agency's array of services is sometimes effective in meeting the needs of

children and families.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicated that this depends on the area of the state. Some communities have more resources than others. Typically the metropolitan areas have more services while the Rural Region areas of the state have fewer services. Many stakeholders indicated that statewide there is a need for more in-home (family preservation) services and some indicated a need for more mental health services and post adopt services.

**Table 6.25 Survey Question**

**How effective is the Child Welfare Agency's array of services in meeting the needs of children and families?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
1.65% (4)	11.57% (28)	43.39% (105)	28.51% (69)	14.88% (36)	242	3.43	0.56

N=Number of Survey Respondents

SD=Standard Deviation

### ***Item 30: Individualizing services***

#### **Requirements:**

NRS 432.011 states that DCFS is to ensure that a sufficient range of services are available to provide care and treatment to children and families in the least restrictive setting appropriate to their needs.

#### **Individualizing Services**

The approach to individualizing services is multi-pronged including collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders as well as funding through federal and state sources. Collaboration continues to be essential when ensuring services for families and children meet individual and specific needs. Examples of relationships include the Regional Partnership Grant project which is in the second five year term. Partnering with the Clark County 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial Court (with a very active judicial involvement), CCDFS, DCFS and a Clark County residential facility, DCFS has been able to fund a project that not only identifies specific mothers and fathers with substance abuse issues, but through comprehensive analysis, therapy and case management is able to address very specific and individual needs of each family member. The goal for the next year is to include more fathers in the program, providing a very specific population these services as well, which will work towards several of our Title IV-B Subpart II service areas.

Collaboration between 35 agencies that support children and families who are victims of domestic violence and victims of crime continues with the second Advocates Academy being held in August of this year. This provides an opportunity for advocates to receive expert training and experience on a variety of issues that enable them to provide individual services based on need. A large component of this academy is also cultural and linguistic awareness and sensitivity. This year has been spent on planning towards the successful of the August academy and following will be discussions of sustainability for future academies.

One of the most significant collaboration and funding is through our Title IV-B Subpart II sub grantees. Through collaboration with sub grantees as well as partner agencies, DCFS' Grants Management Unit (GMU) continues to evaluate services and service needs. This has been accomplished through required annual on-site reviews of funded providers as well as meetings to discuss specific and individual needs of each sub grantee and the population they serve.

Through the use of the online data collection system which allows sub grantees to track client utilization and outcome measures, DCFS GMU is able to view trends across agencies as well as those areas which are not being successful. This system is able to provide program evaluation protocols which include measureable outcomes under the Title IV-B Subpart II grant award. Each sub grantee is required to submit monthly programmatic reports to this system, which maintains the online data reporting system. This serves to expand upon the state and federal accountability requirements.

Current sub grantees under the Title IV-B Subpart II grant award provide services throughout Nevada including all three regions (Clark County, Washoe County, and Rural Region). These monthly programmatic reports provide DCFS with an accurate representation of both need and services being provided. DCFS Grants Management Unit (GMU) in turn reviews monthly programmatic reports to ensure that services are being provided statewide and needs are being addressed by our sub grantees. Sub grantees providing services statewide are also grouped by not only the region in which they are

servicing but also within the four categories of Title IV-B Subpart II as mentioned above in Item 29. It's through this process that we are able to ensure that services may be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families within the State of Nevada. The goal for this year continues to be an evaluation of services and needs, with a focus on the service areas that are most challenging.

Item 29 provided a breakdown of the services within the four categories of Title IV-B Subpart II and addressed certain barriers within several items as well as goals that will address any deficiencies over the next year. Of significance within the provision of individualized services is that within our Title IV-B Subpart II sub grantees, there were 954 self-reports of disabilities which required and received successful services. Over 112,000 service hours were dedicated within the four services areas of Title IV-B Subpart II, providing an array of group and individual services. Through our continued contact and work with our partner agencies as well as our sub grantee, planning for the coming year is continual, to ensure funding and resources are maximized.

**CFSR 2009:**

During the CSFR in 2009 Individuating Services was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although Nevada had the assessment and planning tools to identify individualized service needs to meet the unique needs of children and families, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated that the state does not have the capacity to provide these services consistently to all or most families statewide due to the lack of accessibility of many of the key services in some parts of the State.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CSFR in 2009 expressed the opinion that the state's three child welfare agencies generally have the assessment and planning tools to individualize service plans to meet the unique needs of families. These stakeholders noted that families participate in the design of service plans through the CFT and that these service plans are individualized. Some Carson City and Washoe County stakeholders noted that individualization of services is enhanced in those areas due to the use of Spanish-speaking service providers, but there are not enough Spanish-speaking service providers to meet the needs of the population. In addition, some Washoe County stakeholders noted that in that county, individualization of services is enhanced by the use of flexible funding.

However, some Clark County stakeholders indicated that budgetary restrictions result in case plans that are built based on the services available rather than the needs of the family. A few Clark and Washoe County stakeholders indicated that, although service plans can be tailored to meet the needs of families, case plans reflect similar sets of services provided to all families.

**Statewide Data:**

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on individuating services in Table 6.26. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Foster Parents, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 201 responses to the survey.

How effectively is the child welfare agency in contracting with service providers in order to provide the most appropriate services to families and children (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 6.26. The mean rating of 3.36 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that the child welfare agency is sometimes effective in contracting with service providers in order to provide the most appropriate services to families and children.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicated that limited resources make it a challenge for the agencies to individualize services. The ability to assess the families for the needed services exists but the challenge is having the service available to ensure individualization.

**Table 6.26**

**How effective is the Child Welfare Agency in contracting with service provides in order to provide the most appropriate services to families and children.**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
1.99%	10.95%	44.28%	34.33%	8.46%	201	3.36	0.64

(4)	(22)	(89)	(69)	(17)			
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N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

### Strengths/Concerns (Service Array)

Individualizing Services continues to be an area needing improvement. The State and child welfare agencies continue to contract with a variety of service providers across the state but gaps in service providers continue to exist in some areas of the state. During survey conducted in 2014 Stakeholders commenting on service array, service accessibility and individualizing services for children and families indicated that child welfare agencies are sometimes effective with this systematic factor.

Some communities have more resources than others, and typically the metropolitan areas have more services than the Rural Region. This continues to make it challenging for families and children to access services in certain areas of the state and additionally makes it a challenge to individualize services when services are not available.

## Systemic Factor F: Agency Responsiveness to the Community

### *Item 31: State Engagement in Consultation with Stakeholders*

#### Requirements:

NRS 432.0305 and NRS 432B require the DCFS to observe and study the changing nature and extent of the need for child welfare services and to cooperate with the Federal government in adopting and completing state plans which will assist DCFS to provide services for children and families. This is accomplished through the coordination and collaboration with other public and private agencies and entities in developing the five-year Child and Family Services Plan and ongoing annual updates required by Title IV-B. DCFS collaborates with a variety of entities in this process.

#### CFSR 2009:

In 2009 this item was rated Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated that the State engaged in ongoing consultation with key stakeholders in the development of the goals and objectives of the CFSP.

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CSFR noted that they participate in the development of the CFSP through consortia, committees, and community boards and that DCFS policy-making is a transparent process. Various stakeholders identified the following key stakeholder groups that are represented in the DCFS planning process: CIP, CASA and the court, CRP, CJS, foster parents, Tribes, caseworkers, local agencies, community service providers, and educational institutions.

#### Statewide Data:

The DCFS continues to actively engage and collaborate with external stakeholders through partnering and participation in workgroups, meetings, public presentations, for purposes related to achieving state plan goals and objectives. External stakeholders provide information about program functioning, policy and practice, protocol development, share resources and information that are used in program development and planning. These activities are part of the monitoring process established by the Family Programs Office to monitor specific child welfare programs. Each program area identifies activities and stakeholders as part of its plan and provides reports and data about how the objectives are achieved relative to the overarching State Plan and federal child welfare outcome indicators.

In accordance with the requirements at 45 CFR 1357.15(1) and (m), DCFS continues to collaborate and engage internal and external Stakeholders in monitoring the identified shared goals and objectives of the 2015-2019 CFSP. Stakeholders continue to be involved in review of available data, and or in assessing current performance utilizing participation in workgroups, meetings, and public presentations.

Table 6.27 show the groups of Stakeholders that DCFS partners with directly through their regular meeting formats or presentations and or workgroups. **Currently, the DCFS Family Programs Office will be organizing a Statewide Assessment Committee that will start meeting in the Fall of SFY 2016 and should bolster the efforts in engagement and consultation with all Stakeholders.**

**Table 6.27: Stakeholders**

Stakeholders
Decision Making Group (DMG)
CCDFS Department of Family Services
WCDSS Department of Social Services
DCFS Rural Region
Children’s Justice Act Task Force (CJA)
Citizen’s Review Panel (CRP)
Court Improvement Project (CIP)
Court Improvement Councils (CICs)
Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC)
Nevada Partnership for Training (NPT)
Foster Parents and Adoptive Parents
Youth Advisory Board (YAB) and other Youth in Foster Care
Independent Living Providers and other Service Providers
ICWA Steering Committee
Department of Juvenile Justice
Community Partners i.e. Education

**Consultation and Collaboration with Tribes:**

The State of Nevada has 27 tribal entities that include federally recognized tribes, bands and colonies. These include Battle Mountain Band Council, Carson Colony Community Council, Dresslerville Community Council, Duck Valley Shoshone-Paiute Tribe, Duckwater Shoshone Tribe, Elko Band Council, Ely Shoshone Tribe, Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe, Ft. McDermitt Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, The Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, Lovelock Paiute Tribe, Moapa Band of Paiutes, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, South Fork Band Council, Stewart Community Council, Summit Lake Paiute Tribe, Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone, Timbisha Shoshone Tribe, Walker River Paiute Tribe, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, Wells Band Council, Winnemucca Colony Council, Woodfords Community Council, Yerington Paiute Tribe, and the Yomba Shoshone Tribe. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) has social workers that work in partnership with the State regarding issues with Nevada Tribes.

To gather input from the Nevada tribes the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) conducted bi-monthly Statewide CJA Task Force Indian Child Welfare (CJA ICW) Committee meetings. The CJA ICW Committee is a multidisciplinary advisory committee of the Children’s Justice Act Task Force. The committee membership includes representatives from Nevada Tribes, Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada (ITCN), Nevada Indian Commission, Court Improvement Project (CIP), Bureau of Indian Affairs (Eastern and Western Nevada Agencies), State of Nevada Attorney General’s Office, Washoe County Department of Social Services, Clark County Department of Family Services, and Division of Child and Family Services. Meetings are held bi-monthly and are co-chaired by the ITCN Executive Director and the DCFS Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Specialist at alternate locations between state and tribal offices. Notification is done by a listserv email which includes the agenda and toll-free call in telephone number. The purpose of the committee is to provide an opportunity for consultation and collaboration amongst State, Tribal and County entities. This collaboration provides a forum for discussion and recommendations amongst State, Tribal and County entities for improving the child welfare system. This forum is where policies, procedure and practice interface or relate to Indian children and families and confer on topics of interest to the tribes. CJA ICW Committee meetings were held on July 31, 2014, September 25, 2104, December 10, 2014, January 22, 2015, April 16, 2015, and May 28, 2015 at the annual Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Convention.

Throughout the year, several topics were discussed at the meetings:

- Discussion of the proposed changes to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) section of the DCFS website
- The Indian Child Welfare Resources Guide of Nevada,
- Trainings and status of Memorandums of Understandings.
- Discussion of Medicaid coverage for children placed by tribal social services,
- Status reports for the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California concerning the Washoe Title IV-E Grant
- Discussion involved a presentation of the Tribal Independent Living Program (ILP)
  - The Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe is the designated provider of Chafee Services statewide to Native American Youth. This decision was made after consultations with all Nevada Tribes. Chafee Funds are allocated from the State to the Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe to serve all Native American Youth from all tribes in Nevada. Additionally, the program provides support for higher education beyond high school. Tribal foster youth are qualified for federal Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and education and training vouchers (ETVs) up to \$5,000 per year. The ETVs can be used for things not covered by FASFA, including books, tuition, and other educational expenses. The Program has recently formed a Tribal Youth Advisory Board (TYAB) with participating youth representatives from different tribes. TYAB are contributing ideas for changing the way tribal foster youth cases are handled.
- Continuing work by DCFS on a tribal consultation process
- Discussion on the Statewide Assessment Committee which will begin meeting in the Fall of 2015, and the importance of Tribal Stakeholder Representation.

During the year, a tribal consultation was also conducted following a CJA ICW Committee Meeting. The following Tribes were represented: Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, Fort McDermitt Paiute Shoshone Tribe and Las Vegas Paiute Tribe. The Notice was sent in accordance with consultation guidelines by the DCFS notifying Nevada Tribal Chairmen with copies to Delegates and Tribal Social Services of the "Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act," (H.R. 4980) on April 27, 2015. The Social Services Program Specialist III from the Family Programs office and Social Services Chiefs presented the overview of H.R. 4980, the requirements for identifying, reporting and determining services to victims of sex trafficking, determining factors as to why teens runaway and methods to prevent runaways, reasonable and prudent parent standard in foster care with normalcy, a change of permanency goals in Another Planned Permanency Living Arrangement and incentives for adoptions to IV-E agencies. There were no comments or questions by tribal representatives regarding H.R. 4980.

Additionally, DCFS offered a training track at the ITCN 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention on ICWA and Motivational Interviewing (MI). In attendance along with DCFS and Washoe County staff were the many Social Services members of the following Nevada tribes: Confederated Tribes of the Goshute, Duck Valley Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, Duckwater Shoshone Tribe, Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, Fort McDermitt Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, Moapa Band of Paiutes, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, Reno Sparks Indian Colony, South Fork Band Council, Walker River Paiute Tribe and Yerington Paiute Tribe. At the end of the training tracks, DCFS discussed tribal consultation with the tribes. Several suggestions were made by the tribes which were to provide a calendar for the CJA ICW Committee meetings, call in number for CJA ICW, provide contacts information with the State, Introductory Meeting of State staff to the tribes and the best form of communication was personal contact.

The DCFS ICWA Specialist outlined the tribal initiatives for 2015 which included:

- Training opportunities: Trainings are available from various sources and notification is provided through the NVICWA listserv. DCFS plans to provide a mid-year training during 2015, with the topic to be determined. DCFS has a training source of parenting skills through the Quality Parenting Initiative which can be accessed by Tribes at [www.qpinevada.com](http://www.qpinevada.com).
- Jurisdictional collaboration: At the recent child welfare track at ITCN, an issue was brought up regarding a Reno hospital provider and the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC). The DCFS Indian Child Welfare Act Specialist will address in the near future and DCFS will be facilitating a meeting to help bring resolution. DCFS is willing to take steps to help address specific problems that arise between tribes and service providers.
- State-tribal relations: relationship and partnership building between the tribes and DCFS, this will include compiling contact information for the tribes to be provided to the child welfare jurisdictions.
- Implementation of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs): this has been an important mission for DCFS, and is a complex process which requires various meetings with tribes. DCFS plans to continue working on MOUs in the coming year. In addition to developing MOUs, they also develop protocols for handling of cross-jurisdictional cases.
- ICWA website: The ICWA page has been updated on the DCFS website. Staff is still working to update this. The ICWA Specialist asked for questions, none were set forth.

In the FY 2014 DCFS made the CFSP and the APSR available for public review and inspection through the State's website and provided them through the list-serve. Additionally, the SFY 2014 APSR was exchanged with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California is the only tribal entity that completes an APSR. Furthermore, the SFY 2015 APSR will be made available for public review and inspection through the State's website and through the list-serve as well as exchanged with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California upon approval from ACF. DCFS collaborated with the tribes through quarterly meetings with the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada (ITCN) Executive Board meeting which includes Tribal Leaders, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Tribal Liaison Committee and Statewide CJA Task Force Indian Child Welfare (CJA ICW). Notifications of the meetings are provided through a listserv. The agenda and necessary agenda attachments are sent via a listserv for the CJA ICW meetings. At the CJA ICW Committee meeting on May 28, 2015, discussion occurred with the membership to address the needs of tribes and input regarding the CFSP. The barriers to coordination and collaboration with tribes are that there have been limited meetings with the ITCN Executive Board and lack of proper tribal participants at the DHHS Tribal Liaison Committee. Since the ITCN Executive Board meetings involve an outside entity, follow up contacts are made with the DHHS Tribal Liaison to verify ITCN Executive Board meetings. With the DHHS Tribal Liaison Committee, coordination is through the DHHS Tribal Liaison. In the future to ensure that the human services members from each tribe attend the DHHS Tribal Liaison meetings, contact names have been provided, so that notices can be done. There are no Nevada Indian Tribes that are Title IV-E or have an approved CFSP. At present there is one tribe in Nevada, the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California that is a Title IV-B tribe. In the upcoming year DCFS will be implementing a consultation process.

The Nevada Children's Justice Act Task Force has published the "Indian Child Welfare Resource Guide for Nevada" which was designed to assist State and County child welfare agencies on the law and contacts within Nevada Tribes. The publication is a resource guide and is available on DCFS' website. This Guide has been revised and is awaiting approval before being presented to the ICW Committee in 2015.

The establishment of the Memorandum of Understanding will allow for better provision of services on and off the tribal communities in Nevada between the state, tribe, and counties, which will reduce trauma to American Indian children by placing them within their own communities. DCFS has executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and protocol for the social worker to implement the placement of children onto tribal land with the Yerington Paiute Tribe in 2012, which still remains in effect. In the FY 2015 the Attorney General representing DCFS approved the MOU for the Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe which was sent to the Tribe on January 29, 2015 and still with the Tribe, awaiting approval from the tribal council. The Attorney General representing DCFS approved the MOU with Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. The social worker from Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe advised that the MOU was forwarded to the NICWA for review and is awaiting a response. The attorney for the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation advised on August 2, 2014, that the MOU was on hold due to the foster care standards not being complete. DCFS is in the initial process of finalizing MOUs with Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe and Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California for specific children to be placed on tribal lands and in accordance with ICWA placement preference, ICWA 25 U.S.C. §§ 1915 and NRS 432B. DCFS will follow up with July 2014 MOU letters that were sent to tribal leaders and social service departments.

In the FY 2015 reporting period DCFS established and implemented tribal consultation by inviting all tribal chairmen, delegates and social services agencies of the 25 Nevada tribes. This consultation was conducted on May 28, 2015 regarding the implementation of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, H.R. 4980.

When it is determined that a child is Indian, and the child welfare agency is involved with the family, the local child welfare agency follows the mandates of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) which includes notification to the tribe in accordance with the ICWA, 25 U.S.C. §§ 1912(a), and NRS 432B.425, NRS 128.023 1.(a). Tribes determine their level of intervention in any state court proceedings or may request that proceedings be transferred to the jurisdiction of the tribe. Active efforts are initiated to prevent the breakup of the Indian family when parties seek to place a child in foster care or for adoption. Indian children are placed into foster care, pre-adoptive, and adoptive homes in accordance with ICWA, 25 U.S.C. §§ 1915. Additionally, Tribes are consulted throughout the life of the case. There are no tribes in Nevada that have a Title IV-E agreement. However, the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California has been approved for Title IV-B, Subpart 1 of the Social Security Act, and has applied for the Tribal/Federal IV-E agreement with approval pending.

During FY 2015, DCFS monitored compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act through case compliance/quality assurance review and training and through case reviews with the DCFS' Permanency Roundtable. Once a child was determined to be Indian child in accordance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), 25 U.S.C. §§ 1913(4). Per 25 USC ICWA §§ 1912(a), and NRS 432B.425, NRS 128.023 1.(a), notice is sent by registered mail with return receipt requested of state proceedings involving Indian children and the foster care placement of the child or the termination of parental rights to the child is sought. DCFS uses the standardized Tribal Inquiry and Notification form developed in accordance with ICWA guidelines. State Court Judges are required to ask at each court proceeding if the child has tribal affiliation.

Order of placement preference of Indian children in foster care, pre-adoptive, and adoptive homes was followed in accordance with ICWA 25 U.S.C. §§ 1915 and NRS 432B. DCFS child welfare workers placed children in collaboration with their respective Tribe and followed ICWA 25 U.S.C. §§ 1915 as Indian and Alaska Natives extended families and Indian foster homes were available and so forth. If no Indian families are available; NRS 432B.390 was followed. ICWA 25 U.S.C. §§ 1919 authorizes states to enter into agreements with Indian tribes, with respect to the care, custody of Indian children and concurrent jurisdiction.

DCFS has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Yerington Paiute Tribe for the culturally appropriate placement of children across jurisdictions along with the protocol to implement the MOU for social workers to collaborate and coordinate the placement of foster children into tribally licensed foster homes on tribal land. Currently, DCFS is finalizing MOUs with Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe and Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California for specific children to be placed on tribal lands and in accordance with ICWA placement preference, ICWA 25 U.S.C. §§ 1915 and NRS 432B. Active Efforts are not part of the Nevada statute, however, DCFS ensures that Active Efforts are adhered to by attempting to keep siblings groups together; engaging the age appropriate child, parents, extended family, tribal agencies in case planning and Child and Family Team meetings; identifying appropriate services and helping parents to obtain such services; monitoring progress and participation services; conducting diligent searches for the child's extended family members; supporting regular visitation with parents, siblings and extended family including providing transportation to such visits, and providing post-reunification services and monitoring.

During FY 2015, DCFS continued to strive for compliance with ICWA by following the Guidelines set out by the BIA in 1979. DCFS ensured that state case workers had training and knowledge in the ICWA. The DCFS ICWA Specialist provided technical assistance to State/Tribal/County and private agency Social Workers. The ICWA Specialist coordinated and provided training on ICWA; fostered State/Tribal relationships; facilitated the ICW Committee; and disseminated current information regarding regulations, and federal laws that may impact American Indian children and families in Nevada. The specialist participated in case reviews and case consultations assisting state and tribal partners in the identification of appropriate actions with regard to ICWA. The Specialist was a key participant in the meetings between tribal and state leadership, particularly in the development of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). The specialist has also been called upon to serve as a technical expert in certain judicial proceedings.

DCFS recognizes and endeavors to adhere to ICWA in all proceedings involving an "Indian child." During the FY 2015 to maintain compliance with ICWA, DCFS ensured that inquiry was conducted with the parent, child, custodian or other interested party to determine if a child may be a member of, or eligible for membership in, a Tribe at initial contact with families. Additionally, a regional diligent search for relatives inquiry is made to determine whether a child is an Indian child in accordance with NRS 432B.397. This information is documented in the file using the standardized Tribal Inquiry form. The State of Nevada provides proper written notice to the tribes in question, when a child is identified as an Indian child under ICWA, 25 U.S.C. §§ 1912, NRS 432B.425, and NRS 128.023 1.(a). This notice is sent in a timely manner notifying the tribe of its right to intervene in any State court proceedings seeking an involuntary foster care placement or termination of parental rights. Per ICWA 25 U.S.C. §§ 1911, Tribes have exclusive jurisdiction and are notified of their right to intervene at the time of inquiry and have a right to intervene at any point in the proceeding. The State of Nevada gives full faith and credit to Judicial proceedings of the Indian Tribe pursuant to NRS 432B.465. Proper Notice efforts were further developed by the Division of Child and Family Services Information Management Services (IMS). IMS created the notice template for use by the child welfare workers in Nevada. The notices that are generated meet the requirements in the Nevada Revised Statutes and Public Law 95-608 the Indian Child Welfare Act U.S.C. §§ 1912. DCFS continues to work with the child welfare jurisdictions in utilizing UNITY to generate the notices and continue to work with IMS to address necessary changes and enhancements.

The State continued to provide training and work with State and Tribal workers to ensure active efforts are taken to prevent the breakup of the Indian family when a child may be placed in foster care or for adoption. For new State and County Social Workers the mandates of ICWA are included in the mandatory Nevada CORE Training. The Nevada Partnership for Training offers an online ICWA training that is open to all jurisdictions. Available on the DCFS website is the ICWA policy and documents for identifying Indian children and Notice of Court Proceeding. DCFS will be reviewing the new State Guidelines for Courts issued by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in February 2015, Nevada's ICWA policy, Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and training to determine if revision of Policy, NRS and training is necessary. The state held ICWA training in conjunction with the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada (ITCN) at ITCN 49th Annual Convention in Sparks in the FY 2015. The training brought together state, tribal and county social workers through interactive workshops on cross-jurisdictional issues and application of ICWA. DCFS has been invited back to participate in the 50th Annual Convention in the fall of FY 2016. The "Indian Child Welfare Resource Guide for Nevada" that was jointly developed and finalized in 2003 by the members of the Indian Child Welfare Steering Committee. This publication was designed to assist State and county child welfare agencies on the law and contacts within Nevada Tribes. DCFS will update the Resource Guide and submit it for review and approval jointly with the Nevada tribes in 2015.



ICWA 25 U.S.C. §§ 1919 authorizes states to enter into agreements with Indian tribes, with respect to the care, custody of Indian children and concurrent jurisdiction. The establishment of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) allows for greater collaboration between the state, tribe, and counties for better provision of services on and off the reservations in Nevada, and the reduction of trauma to American Indian children by placing them within their own communities. As previously mentioned, in 2012, Nevada established the first MOU with the Yerington Paiute Tribe for the culturally appropriate placement of children across jurisdictions. Yerington Paiute Tribe and DCFS executed the protocol to implement the MOU for social workers to collaborate and coordinate the placement of foster children into tribally licensed foster homes on tribal land. In the FY 2015 the Attorney General representing DCFS approved the MOU for the Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe which was sent to the Tribe on January 29, 2015 and still with the Tribe, awaiting approval from the tribal council. The Attorney General representing DCFS approved the MOU with Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe (PLPT). The social worker from PLPT advised that the MOU was forwarded to the NICWA for review and is awaiting a response. The attorney for the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation advised on August 2, 2014, that their MOU was on hold due to the foster care standards not being complete. DCFS is in the initial process of finalizing MOUs with Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe and Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California for specific children to be placed on tribal lands and in accordance with ICWA placement preference, ICWA 25 U.S.C. §§ 1915 and NRS 432B. DCFS will follow up with MOU letters that were sent to tribal leaders and social service departments. In the coming fiscal year DCFS staff will meet with the Tribes to start the process.

### **Collaboration with the Court Improvement Program**

The Nevada Court Improvement Program (CIP) is a state and federally funded initiative designed to develop and implement data-driven, evidence-based, and outcome-focused best practices that advance meaningful and ongoing collaboration among court, child welfare agency, and other stakeholders to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being encompass a myriad of activities at the state and local level with the primary purpose to assess and improve court processes related to child abuse and neglect, and to ensure improved safety, permanence, and well-being for children. CIP funding has also been used to develop broad-based systemic reform of courts and court processes related to dependency cases.

### ***Collaborating on the CFSP, CFSR, and Child Safety, Permanency and Well-Being***

The Nevada court system has partnered with DCFS on a wide variety of fronts the last year focusing many of its efforts on implementing the CFSP and the upcoming CFSR. The courts assisted in the implementation of various data exchange projects to ensure that the judiciary, the Community Improvement Councils (CICs), and child welfare all have access to significant and accurate data.

Agency representatives regularly attend and contribute to all 10 judicial district Community Improvement Council (CIC) meetings as well as the CIC Annual Summit. In several instances the agency CIC member provides regular data updates to the court concerning permanency issues, child safety decision-making, and adequacy of foster family population. The CICs all include their child welfare partners as they develop their action plan to resolve local issues. The Deputy Administrator attended the 2015 CIP Annual Meeting and was a member of the team Nevada CIP sent to the White House convening on preventing sex trafficking. The CIP Coordinator is an active member of the DCFS Indian Child Welfare Committee.

Since Nevada does not have a unified court system, or a statewide court management system, CIP worked with the Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth (UNITY, the Nevada SACWIS or State Automated Child Welfare Information System) manager to pull the court timeliness statistics quarterly by county for each of the judicial districts. At this point four of the five timeliness measures are available because UNITY does not have a screen into which to enter the TPR petition filing date. This deficit is being addressed by the Centralized Case Index (CCI).

Baseline data reports were first distributed to the 10 District Court Judicial Districts in 2012 during the Community Improvement Council (CIC) Summit where the CICs were taught to read and understand them. During each subsequent CIC annual Summit district by district comparative analyses of current and previous years' data are shared with the CIC teams. The statewide data are also provided to each CIC quarterly.

### **Agency Data Sharing Projects:**

CIP has been working with all three child welfare agencies to ensure that accurate and timely information is shared between the courts and the agencies. In 2010, CIP began assessing data exchange feasibility in Washoe County,

followed by a similar assessment in Clark County in 2011. Electronic data exchange possibilities were identified in both judicial districts. In 2012, CIP obtained a \$45,000 technical assistance grant from the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to implement the Court Event Notification project in Clark County. NRS Chapter 432B mandates that proper notification of court hearings and court reviews regarding the status of a child in custody of a child welfare agency must be provided and that it is necessary to ensure active involvement and participation of parents, foster parents, guardians, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers in the child's safety, permanency, and well-being. However there has been no direct entry of court hearing dates into UNITY. Because entry of this information has been manual following email or paper notification from the courts, it can be delayed, particularly in the case of change of hearing dates; resulting in the potential for improper notification. CIP embarked on the Court Event Notification project in Clark using the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM), the Global Reference Architecture (GRA) and Extensive Markup Language (XML).

The 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court's IT Manager has been actively involved and supportive of this project, immediately allocating resources to proceed. The UNITY case number has been entered into Odyssey, the court's case management system, since October 7, 2013. The 8<sup>th</sup> JD now has the ability to export real-time data from Odyssey per the specifications. Using the format defined within the NIEM-based Court Event Notification IEPD, the District Court developed a process to extract and transmit added, modified or deleted court event notifications to the DCFS. It has made the transformation to the National Information Exchange Model format, and it has examples sitting in the Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) site created for testing this project. They have completed testing and are ready to begin exchanging messages with UNITY. DCFS began software development in September 2014 to consume these messages. It was decided to hook this application to the UNITY web service which ran into a few glitches requiring a modification of how the exception messages are written out. Unexpectedly, Clark County has required an exceptions report, the parameters of which are being defined and the priority status of the report is being determined since it was not part of the original scope of work. However, the project cannot proceed with implementation until the report is available.

### **Centralized Case Index**

With assistance from DCFS, CIP has been providing court performance measure data to the courts quarterly. However, several judicial officers questioned whether this information could be made available in near real-time to help them manage caseload and thereby achieve additional key timeliness milestones and improve outcomes for children. To this end, CIP undertook several technical proofs of concept initiatives. Two POCs were designed to prove that:

- Case and case party information from the child welfare agency (e.g., removal date, permanency goals, placement information) and information provided by the family court (e.g., assigned judicial personnel, hearing dates, petition filing dates, adoption dates) can be combined into a single data store and provide a consolidated view of case information;
- Timeliness reports can be generated on-demand through a browser based system and presented to the user in an easily understandable format.

To accomplish the first POC, cases in UNITY were linked with cases in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District's ASFA System. To identify these links, the CIP developed a custom algorithm that could accurately match 94% of the cases between the two systems.

The second POC created a Centralized Case Index (CCI) which allows authorized users to view this consolidated information and generate a set of standardized reports. In 2014, this capability was implemented using Microsoft Reporting Services. The user can use configurable parameters to refine the report. The user may generate a more detailed report listing the cases contained in that particular grouping simply by clicking on a vertical bar.

Since the POC successfully accomplished both of these objectives; CIP is moving these capabilities into a fully productionalized system which will enable near real-time timeliness reporting through an integrated dashboard. CIP is now developing a productionalized version of the CCI.

- **Purpose:** To provide the judiciary with aggregate data reports into which they may drill down to obtain case specific information helping them manage their caseloads and improve timeliness. Not only will judges eventually be able to obtain aggregate data reports, they will be able to drill down to get case specific information. The intention is to provide a continuous feedback loop to the courts and CICs on how they are doing to help them determine where they may wish to focus additional efforts. Judges and other key partners are already anticipating how the CCI could be expanded to include juvenile justice data (Project One) and education data to help inform and continually improve the quality of other programs and outcomes for children.
- **Implementation Stage:** This project has been planned, the feasibility has been demonstrated and the productionalized version is in the process of being constructed. In Washoe County, the CCI will receive updated case hearing and event information directly from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District Court Case Management System.

In Clark County, case information will be first transmitted from the Clark County Family Court to UNITY using the Court Event Notification data exchange discussed earlier. From UNITY, court case information will be passed to the CCI. Many of Nevada's fifteen other counties do not currently have a court case management system. For those courts, UNITY will be the primary data source for both child welfare and the manually entered court case information.

The approach envisioned for passing information from UNITY into the CCI involves a nightly batch job that identifies data that has been modified in the past 24 hours (using the MOD\_DT\_TM column that is available in all tables) and then transmits that updated case information to the CCI. Note that the design expects raw, unjoined data being transmitted to the CCI – table joins and linkage to the court case information will be accomplished within the CCI. The CCI requires information from thirteen UNITY tables.

### **Collaboration on the CFSP/APSR**

Nevada CIP has been actively involved in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and Annual Program and Services Review (APSR) for many years. The CIP Coordinator attended the Federal briefing in Seattle, Washington on the upcoming Child and Family Services Review as an invited member of the Nevada Team. With this enhanced understanding of the systemic factors and what has replaced the composites, and the use of the newly established portal; CIP will assist the courts and CICs understanding the 2018 CFSP process in Nevada.

CIP is an active member of the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) which meets monthly to discuss all that is relevant to both the CFSP and the CFSP. CIP is also actively involved in the SQIC Data Sub-Group which meets every other week and is part of continual quality improvement and the CFSP/CFSP process to ensure data quality. The CIP Coordinator developed a standard operating procedure to ensure that data distribution is consistent and goes to all requisite stakeholders.

CIP is also part of the team reviewing all the CFSP Case Review reports from the jurisdictions. CIP participates in ongoing review of the resultant data and discussion concerning how improvement can be made in those items leading up to Nevada's Round 3 CFSP in 2018. The CIP Coordinator was trained to assist with case file reviews in Nevada and has been provided access to the CFSP On-Line Monitoring System demonstration site. CIP participated in the DCFS Rural Region Review in April 2015.

The 10 judicially convened Community Improvement Councils (CICs) will be involved in either focus groups or surveys relating to continuous monitoring of the systemic factors. Several of the CICs have initiated supporting several of the systemic factors. The 6<sup>th</sup> Judicial District (JD) signed an MOU with DCFS to train court staff to recruit, train, and support foster and adoptive families. The 7<sup>th</sup> JD recently included in their quality hearing action plan increasing court involvement in foster care recruitment. The 10<sup>th</sup> JD charged each of its CIC members to approach at least one suitable family about fostering children and receives updates from its DCFS representative on the total number of foster homes in the district and how many beds are open.

### ***Item 32: Coordination of CFSP services with other Federal Programs***

#### **Requirements:**

The state is in compliance with the requirements to submit the CFSP, as well as the activities, accomplishments and future initiatives which are submitted annually in the APSR in accordance with the title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2 and Section 477 of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, CAPTA, and Federal regulations at 45 CFR Part 1357. Nevada has remained in compliance each year with these requirements and has received approval on all plans and reports since the requirement was established in 2005. The initial CFSP was implemented in 2005 and was then revised on February 28, 2007 to include ten new action steps and 73 benchmarks targeted at improving child welfare practice and systemic issues within the state. These action steps and benchmarks were incorporated into the PIP with a 90 day completion date remaining under the PIP period. The PIP items that required more than 90 days to formally complete were embedded into the CFSP and then reported in the APSR.

#### **CFSP 2009:**

In the 2009 CFSP Coordination of the CFSP services with other Federal Programs was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated that there are concerns at the state level regarding information sharing and coordination of services among state departments operating Federal or Federally-assisted programs serving the same populations, including programs operated by the Tribes.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSP expressed the opinion that the state generally is

effective in coordinating child welfare services with services supported by other Federal programs. Some state-level, Carson City, and Washoe County stakeholders noted that DCFS and the local child welfare agencies work with the following programs: Medicaid, juvenile justice, behavioral health, mental health, Tribal programs, and education. However, other State-level and Clark County stakeholders indicated that services are not coordinated with services provided by other programs, including Tribal programs that serve the same population.

### Statewide Data:

Collaboration occurs with Federal Programs involved with Medicaid, Juvenile Justice, Mental Health, Child Support Enforcement, Tribal Programs and Education. The DCFS has many contracts with agencies that are funded with federal funding. Since the last CFSR, there is an ongoing collaboration with the Executive Team to Review Child Death Differential Response, the Regional Partnership Grant, the Children's Behavioral Health Consortium, the Youth Advisory Boards, the Citizen's Review Panel (North and South), the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force, and the Court Improvement Project (CIP).

There are current Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) between various agencies and DCFS. The Division of Mental Health (MHDS) and the DCFS have an MOU concerning coordination and provision of services to children and families. Also there is a current MOU between the Federal Nevada Rural Housing Authority and DCFS for targeting youth who have left foster care and lack available housing. Additionally and as previously stated DCFS has executed a MOU and protocols for the social workers to implement the placement of children onto tribal land with the Yerington Paiute Tribe in 2012, which still remains in effect. A series of meetings with Tribal leadership and DCFS have occurred and continue to occur to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, Fallon Paiute Tribe, the Te-Moak Band of Western Shoshone and its Councils of Battle Mountain, Elko, Wells, and South Fork and with the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation. The Te-Moak Band of Western Shoshone was provided with the MOU template, and discussions on MOUs will continue to occur in SFY 2016. The Attorney General representing DCFS approved the MOU for the Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe which was forward to the Tribe in 2012 and is still with the Tribe. MOUs with Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and The Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation are in the negotiation process with the Attorney General of Nevada. Over the next four years the DCFS will be presenting the MOU agreement for collaboration with the remaining Tribes that do not have MOUs in place.

### Juvenile Justice

Nevada continues to have an on-going collaborative partnership with Juvenile Justice Services in efforts to serve cross-over youth. Cross-over youth are under the jurisdiction of the dependency (child welfare) system, placed in out-of-home care, and who come to the attention of the juvenile justice system. A Program Specialist works as a liaison between Child Welfare Services and Juvenile Justice Services in developing and providing the quality compliance protocols to effectively address the SACWIS system requirements; focusing on training and engaged casework strategies. Juvenile Justice Staff have been trained to ensure that these youth receive the same services and benefits. The Program Specialist continues to work with Juvenile Justice staff to improve on AFCARS requirements. As a result positive strides have been taken with respect to the SACWIS system and the regulations set forth by AFCARS and the NYTD Independent Living Programs for all dual jurisdiction youth.

Table 6.27 includes the number of children that were transferred to State juvenile custody (committed to a juvenile correctional facility or youth parole) from child welfare (receiving services or in protective custody). These youth were known to the child welfare system prior to entering the juvenile justice system and these numbers are collected on a monthly basis via UNITY.

Table 6.27: Juvenile Justice Transfers:

AGE	MALE	FEMALE	Total #Committed
14	2	0	2
15	1	0	1
16	0	0	0
17	4	3	7
18	3	1	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>

Source: UNITY Report CFS748 F FY 2015 (7/1/2014 to 5/01/2015)

### Strengths/Concerns (Agency Responsiveness to the Community)

The DCFS continues to have strength in that it continuously and actively engages and collaborates with external stakeholders through a variety of means. DCFS includes stakeholders from the community as well as other agencies at every level of the child welfare delivery continuum. Partnerships are expanded through these means and feedback from stakeholders is provided about programs, policies, procedures and practice that may be incorporated into the state plan. Also, DCFS engages in MOUs with Agencies in efforts to expand partnerships.

There is concern that while DCFS does collaborate with internal/external stakeholders there is a need to provide more structure around this process and develop a communication plan that ensures external Stakeholders are knowledgeable about state performance data. Understanding state child welfare performance data provides foundational information that ensures their participation in identifying shared goals and objectives. To further the understanding and communication among Stakeholders the DCFS Family Programs Office will be organizing a Statewide Assessment Committee that will start meeting in the Fall of SFY 2016 and should bolster the efforts in engagement and consultation with all Stakeholders.

## Systemic Factor G: Foster and Adoptive Home Licensing, Approval and Recruitment

### Item 33: Standards applied equally

#### Requirements:

DCFS monitors compliance with foster home licensing regulations and verifies compliance by foster homes on an annual basis. Compliance is verified through a variety of means; single agency audits, federal reviews, state reviews and through child welfare agency's foster home visits, annual inspections, license renewal and investigations of complaints or concerns relating to the operation of foster homes. Complaints that involve the health or safety of a child are investigated immediately. All other complaints are investigated within 10 working days. April 2014, was the most recent Title IV-E Review conducted by ACF; Nevada was found to be in substantial compliance with federal eligibility requirements.

Revisions made to the **NAC 424 - Foster Homes for Children** licensing regulations over the past couple years, through collaborative efforts by WCDSS, CCDFS and DCFS participation, were approved through the Nevada Legislative

Commission on June 27, 2014. These revisions updated Nevada's licensing regulations to ensure better compliance by the three child welfare agencies with recent Nevada and Federal child welfare laws along with adding language allowing for licensing variances. If an applicant cannot meet a licensing standard, but can demonstrate they have an alternative means to meet the intent of the standard, a variance may be issued to allow for licensure.

Currently, to respond to new federal requirements that have been enacted recently and to draft regulation for new child welfare laws passed during the 2015 Nevada Legislative session (Feb-June 2015), the same statewide NAC 424 Workgroup has re-convened. This workgroup, facilitated by a program specialist within the State's DCFS Family Programs Office, provides significant insight into how each of the three child welfare agencies approaches their responsibilities and duties to ensure compliance with federal law, Nevada law and Nevada licensing regulations within their foster home licensing process. Though each agency may have slightly different procedures within their licensing process, they each work diligently to achieve compliance with the law. Each child welfare agency's *Licensing Authority* takes their regulatory responsibilities very seriously, knowing it is the best way to ensure child safety and wellbeing.

### CFSR 2009:

This item was rated as Strength in 2009. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated that the state has standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are monitored regularly through licensing procedures that have been established in each of the State's three child welfare agencies.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the standards are in place for foster family homes and child care institutions include background checks, home studies, safety checks, licensing, and oversight by caseworkers and licensing staff. Most stakeholders also noted that licenses for foster homes and institutions are renewed annually.

### Statewide Data:

Currently in each child welfare agency, there are only a few foster homes that have been licensed in the past year through the use of a waiver of licensing standards. These waivers are given great consideration prior to approval to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child. Over the past couple of years, Nevada's child welfare agencies have significantly reduced their use of waivers; primarily using waivers for relative foster homes for waiving non-safety licensing standards. Non-relative foster homes that were issued a license through the use of a waiver are not eligible for Federal IV-E funding.

- *Statewide licensing data from the DCFS CLEO Report (and CLEO back-up supporting data) indicate that out of 679 initial foster home licenses issued from May 1, 2014 - April 30, 2015, only 2.9% of foster homes were approved with a waiver of licensing standards. Nevada's current data reporting system does not collect information on the type of licensing standard exception or license type (relative/non-relative) that received the approved waiver.*

Nevada "Child Care" facilities (*facilities over 15 children; not licensed through child welfare*) that provide Shelter/Residential Care for children within Nevada's foster care system are regulated and monitored for compliance, by the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) / Health Care Quality and Compliance Unit, in accordance with Nevada Administrative Codes (NAC, <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/NAC/NAC-432A.html#NAC432A200> ) and the statutes set forth in the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS), <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-432A.html#NRS432A170>) regarding child care facility licensure and operations. These statutes and regulations are also utilized in all inspections and investigations conducted for all licensed facilities to help ensure equitability statewide. Inspections are done prior to licensure and then twice a year (semi-annual and annual) for each facility according to their unique licensing year. DCFS ensures through DPBH that any Nevada child care facility that receives IV-B/IV-E federal funding for the care of a foster child has a current valid Child Care License issued through DPBH.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions in Table 6.28. Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Foster Parents, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 143 responses to the survey.

How effective is the state in implementing licensing or approval standards that ensure the safety and health of children in foster care or foster family homes and child care institutions (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 6.28. The mean rating of 3.73 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that the state is usually effective in implementing licensing or approval standards that ensure the safety and health of children in foster care or foster family homes and child care institutions.

**Table 6.28 Survey Question**

**How effective is the State in implementing licensing or approval standards that ensure the safety and health of children in foster care for foster family homes and child care institutions?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
2.80% (4)	5.59% (8)	27.97% (40)	43.36% (62)	20.28% (29)	143	3.73	0.70

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

Additionally, data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provide information on re-licensing and re-inspections of foster homes and facilities in order to ensure continued conformity with licensing standards in Table 6.29. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Foster Parents, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 162 responses to the survey.

How effective and timely are child welfare agencies in completing re-licensing and re-inspection of foster homes and facilities in order to ensure continued conformity with licensing standards (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 6.29. The mean rating of 4.08 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that the child welfare agencies are very effective in completing re-licensing and re-inspection of foster homes and facilities in order to ensure continued conformity with licensing standards.

**Table 6.29 Survey Question**

**How effective and timely are child welfare agencies in completing re-licensing and re-inspection of foster homes and facilities in order to ensure continued conformity with licensing standards?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
1.23% (2)	6.17% (10)	18.52% (30)	31.48% (51)	42.59% (69)	162	4.08	0.88

N=Number of Survey Respondents  
SD=Standard Deviation

### ***Item 34: Requirements for criminal background checks***

#### **Requirements**

NRS 424.031 states that the licensing authority shall obtain background and personal history for each applicant applying for a foster care license and all prospective employees of that applicant and residents of the foster home who are age 18 years of age or older, other than a resident (age 18 up to age 21) who remains under the jurisdiction of a court pursuant to NRS 432B.594, in order to determine whether the person investigated has been arrested for or convicted of any crime. Full fingerprint criminal background checks must also occur at least every 5 years after the initial investigation. NRS 424.039 states that the licensing authority is authorized to conduct preliminary Federal Bureau of Investigations name-based background checks on adult residents of foster homes in which a child will be placed in an emergency situation. The person investigated is to supply fingerprints for further investigation. NAC 424.680 deals with criminal history verification for anyone employed as staff or a director of a group treatment home or anyone applying to be a foster parent. Nevada law requires child welfare agencies to insure that criminal history investigations are conducted pursuant to requirements under NAC 424 and NAC 127. In addition, the state has approved policy 0515.0 Child Abuse and Neglect (CANS) and NCID Requirements for Prospective Foster and Adoptive Parents in response to the Adam Walsh Act of 2006 and sets forth procedures for conducting and responding to CANS checks; conducting and establishing statewide standards for authorizing placement of children with caregivers who have undergone an NCID and CANS check. No foster home or adoption applicant is issued a foster home license until all criminal background checks have been completed.

## CFSR 2009:

During the 2009 CSFR this item was rated as Strength. Although the state did not provide analysis or evaluation in the Statewide Assessment, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the state completes criminal background records checks for adults in foster homes, relative caregivers, and staff of child care institutions before placing children in a home. In addition, the title IV-E Eligibility Review held in June 2008 found that criminal background clearances were completed for all licensed foster homes

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CSFR expressed the opinion that criminal background checks, child abuse and neglect registry checks, and fingerprinting are conducted routinely for all adults in foster homes, relative caregivers, and staff of child care institutions.

## Statewide Data:

- *In April 2014 the ACF conducted a statewide review of Nevada's Title IV-E foster care program. During this review a computerized statistical sample of 80 cases were reviewed. Nevada was found to be in substantial compliance with federal eligibility requirements. Though two cases were determined to be in error, this finding did not exceed the threshold for substantial compliance in a primary review of four or fewer cases in error. The next primary review will be held within three years.*
- *In January 2015, Eide Bailly LLP, provided a Single Audit for Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility for the DCFS Rural Region. Forty (40) foster care cases were reviewed for licensing and eligibility compliance. There were no findings.*

**Provisions for addressing child safety in foster care and adoptive placements through the case planning process:** All three Nevada child welfare agencies are working directly with *ACTION for Child Protection* to implement the safety intervention model within Nevada's child welfare system. Within this model, caseworkers must assess a child's safety and wellbeing through the use of the *Present Danger Assessment* and *Confirming Safe Environments* (CSE) tools, which provides information that supports the case planning process. The child's initial, assessment caseworker must do the *Present Danger Assessment* upon initial placement of the child. Then the assessment worker has weekly contacts with the caregiver and child over the first 30 days of placement to assess and monitor the child's adjustment, wellbeing and safety; these contacts are documented in UNITY case notes. Once the case transfers to the ongoing caseworker, the ongoing caseworker will continue to monitor for child safety and wellbeing during monthly home visits and will complete the formal CSE Assessment five months into the child's placement and every six months thereafter, prior to the semi-annual and annual court hearings. The ongoing caseworker also completes a formal CSE Assessment when there is a significant change to or in a child's placement or when the child is being discharged back to the care of their parent or guardian.

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on Criminal Background Checks in Table 6.30. Respondents included stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Foster Parents, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 163 responses to the survey.

How effective is the process of criminal background checks on prospective foster and adoptive parents before licensing them or approving them to care for children (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 6.30. The mean rating of 4.47 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that the process is very effective in ensuring criminal background checks are performed on prospective foster and adoptive parents before licensing them or approving them to care for children.

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicated that staff are knowledgeable about this requirement and complete criminal background record checks for adults in foster homes, relative caregivers and staff of child care institutions before placement.



**Table 6.30 Survey Question**

**How effective is the process of criminal background checks on prospective foster and adoptive parents before licensing them or approving them to care for children?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
1.23% (20)	0.61% (1)	7.98% (13)	30.67% (50)	59.51% (97)	163	4.47	1.27

N=Number of Survey Respondents

SD=Standard Deviation

***Item 35: Diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive homes***

Requirements:

The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994 (P.L 103-382) was amended in 1997 by the Removal of Barriers to Interethnic Adoption (P.L 104-188) which requires diligent recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes. This act established a new Title IV-E state plan requirement that prohibits states or private agencies that receive federal funds from delaying placement on the basis of race, color, or national origin of the child or the foster or adoptive parent. NRS 127.010-NRS 127.1895 governs the adoption of children. NRS 424.010-424.220 governs the licensing of foster homes.

In Nevada, the diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive homes fall to each of the three child welfare agencies. Each agency has a very different geographical and demographic area. Therefore, each agency's efforts and activities for diligent recruitment will differ due to the different needs within each community that is served by the agency. Per the CFSP 2015-2019 requirement for a targeted *Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan*, and the corresponding reporting requirement in the APSR on this plan, each Nevada child welfare agency submitted their agency's progress for the past year regarding their diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive homes within their plans. **Please refer to *Nevada Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plans* for additional information on Item 35 for each child welfare agency.**

CFSR 2009:

During the 2009 CFSR this was rated an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that, although one local jurisdiction continuously assesses the demographic data of its resource families, the State does not have a process for the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item and at the state level during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that there is no recruitment strategy or recruitment planning at the State level and that any recruitment efforts are initiated by local child welfare agencies. For example, Clark County stakeholders indicated that there was a significant and successful effort to increase the number of foster care placements in that county. In addition, some stakeholders indicated that child welfare agencies hold recruitment events using media outlets and campaigns. However, none of the efforts focus on the diligent recruitment of a diverse pool of foster and adoptive homes that reflect the demographic characteristics of children in foster care.

Statewide Data:

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provides information on Diligent Recruitment of Foster and adoptive homes in Table Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Foster Parents, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question in Table 6.31.. There were 213 responses to the survey.

How effective is the process of diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive homes (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 6.31. The mean rating of 3.18 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that the State is sometimes effective in the diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive homes

Overall, comments from stakeholders indicated that recruitment is done at the local level and is on-going but foster parents continue to be limited and retention is difficult. Specifically when foster parents were asked "how can the child welfare agency improve retention of foster parents?" many foster parents responded to provide more respite, support,

respect and training.

**Table 6.31 Survey Question**

**How effective is the State in diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive homes?**

Not Effective	Rarely Effective	Sometimes Effective	Usually Effective	Very Effective	N	Mean	SD
7.98% (17)	14.08% (30)	42.25% (90)	23.00% (49)	12.68% (27)	213	3.18	0.48

N=Number of Survey Respondents

SD=Standard Deviation

***Item 36: State use of cross-jurisdictional resources for permanent placements***

**Requirements:**

The state follows the federal requirements in accordance with P.L. 109-239, P.L. 109-248, 42 U.S.C. 670-679(b), the statutory requirements captured in NRS 127.330, NRS 432B.435, NRS 424.033 and the regulatory requirements in NAC 127.235. In addition to federal and state laws, the state's Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) Central Office also has a Safety Assessment and Family Evaluation (SAFE) policy which serves as the primary means of evaluating and assessing the appropriateness of potential family foster care and licensed relative and adoptive families.

**CFSR 2009:**

During the 2009 CFSR this Item was rated as Strength. The state uses a variety of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive and permanent placements for waiting children, including national media, adoption exchanges, photo listings, and the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). This item also was rated as Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the state's three child welfare agencies use adoption exchanges, photo listings, and AdoptUsKids to facilitate timely adoptive placements for waiting children. Some stakeholders indicated that the state has instituted and adheres to strict timelines and procedures for response to ICPC requests from other states, including the electronic transmission of information. A few stakeholders noted that there are delays from other states in responding to ICPC requests from Nevada.

**Statewide Data:**

All three child welfare agencies use a variety of resources to ensure timely cross-jurisdictional foster, relative and adoptive placements that include but are not limited to adoptions exchanges, photo listings and, AdoptUSKids and the use of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children. The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children is an important resource on ensuring children are placed cross jurisdictionally in permanent placements.

The ICPC Central Office has developed and implemented an internal policy related to the processing of referrals out-of-state, including timelines, responsibilities and operating procedures to further ensure that children are placed in safe and suitable homes in a timely manner.

The Central Office ICPC unit continues to develop and revise tools to assist workers while processing ICPC cases as well as scheduling face to face training for all state staff, including the rural region. The use of updated manuals, flow charts, and relevant state and federal legislation ensures that workers are educated and knowledgeable on the placement of children across state lines.

Collaboration with other state agencies is one of the most important resources that the ICPC unit has when successfully placing Nevada children in other states. Only through continual communication and information sharing, can each state be informed of changes, available resources, etc. Through active participation in the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (AAICPC), Nevada has remained a leader in the discussions,

clarification, and decision making for processes and regulations as they apply to ICPC. This year (April, 2015) Nevada was selected to host the annual AAICPC conference which provided, on a national level, the ability for all states to come together to train and share best practices in an effort to ensure the most efficient use of available placement resources.

Collaboration does not end with other states, but begins within Nevada itself through quarterly partners meetings. These continue to be productive as case staffing occur along with discussion of barriers or available resources for the interstate placement of children. Processes continue to be re-evaluated and refined to ensure not only a safe placement but a timely placement as well; ensuring children are not forced to remain in foster homes while clearances, home studies, etc. are being accomplished. The goal for the ICPC unit over the coming year is to continue to expand statewide training, including involving court and other partner agencies to ensure a statewide consistent understanding of the placement process; as well as addressing barriers they may still exist.

Additionally, Nevada was one of only six states nationwide to pilot a new web-based electronic information exchange for processing ICPC cases and streamlining placement of children across state lines. The National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) project is administered by the American Public Human Services Association and the Association of Administrators for the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children It is also supported by Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), the Children's Bureau (CB).

Plans for taking this system nationwide are currently underway, and Nevada continues to assist in the implementation. This system serves and benefits children, families, public and tribal child welfare agencies and multidisciplinary groups (medical, legal, judicial) that work to facilitate foster care and adoptive interstate placements nationwide. The ultimate goal is to decrease the length of time it takes for children to be placed safely across state lines and reduce administrative costs.

Home studies are an important part of ensuring safe placement of children and also a requirement before any child can be placed into a home out of state. Evaluating the home study process internally will continue as well as collaboration with other states that may have barriers in providing a timely home study for placement. Exploring options with these states to ensure Nevada is providing the documents and information needed will be part of an ongoing discussion and policy update.

Placement numbers, both incoming and outgoing, have remained fairly consistent over the years and foster care and adoption workers are working diligently to increase the number of adoptions.

Table 6.32 illustrates Nevada's incoming and outgoing referrals as well as home studies for SFY 2015 year to date.

**Table 6.32 ICPC Referrals and Home Studies**

Total Statewide Annual Incoming Referrals SFY 15 to date	Total Statewide Annual Outgoing Referrals SFY 15 to date	Total Statewide Approved Incoming Home Studies SFY 15 to date	Total Statewide Approved Outgoing Home Studies SFY 15 to date
1322 (average: 110)	1049 (average: 88)	284	568

Data from surveys conducted for the 2015-2019 CFSP in 2014 provide information on the child welfare agencies use of families for placement when they live in other states in Table 6.34. Respondents included Stakeholders from Tribes, the Judicial System, Foster Parents, Child Advocates, Caseworkers, Management and other Community Partners i.e. Education. Respondents were not required to answer the question. There were 161 responses to the survey.

How effective are the child welfare agencies in seeking out and using families for placement when they live in other state jurisdictions (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective) is presented in Table 6.34. The mean rating of 3.60 indicates that the average sentiment among respondents is that the state is usually effective in the seeking out and using families for placement when they live in other states.

**Table 6.34 Survey Question**

**How effective is the Child Welfare Agencies in seeking out and using families for placement when they live in other states?**

<b>Not Effective</b>	<b>Rarely Effective</b>	<b>Sometimes Effective</b>	<b>Usually Effective</b>	<b>Very Effective</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
3.73% (6)	6.83% (11)	32.30% (52)	40.37% (65)	16.77% (27)	161	3.60	0.65

N=Number of Survey Respondents

SD=Standard Deviation

### **Strengths/Concerns (Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention)**

Nevada has strength in that NRS Chapter 424 provides a framework for licensing, license renewal, inspections of foster homes and background investigations for foster care providers and adult residents. Standards are in place for foster family homes and child care institutions including background checks, home studies, safety checks and oversight by caseworkers and licensing staff. Most stakeholders in 2014 indicated that the child welfare agencies are usually effective in implementation of licensing standards.

Also, in 2014 stakeholders indicated that child welfare agencies are very effective on ensuring criminal background checks of foster and adoptive parents. The state is usually effective and has strength in the use of cross-jurisdictional resources for permanent placements utilizing the ICPC as a resource. All three child welfare agencies use a variety of resources to ensure timely cross-jurisdictional adoptive placements.

Additionally, as previously mentioned, in SFY 2014, Nevada was one of only six states nationwide to pilot the NEICE project, a new web-based electronic information exchange for processing ICPC cases and streamlining placement of children across state lines. Plans for taking this system nationwide are currently underway, and Nevada continues to assist in the implementation.

There continues to be a concern on the available number of foster homes statewide and the recruitment and retention activities that ensure homes are available. In 2014 most stakeholders indicated that child welfare agencies are only sometimes effective in the diligent recruitment of homes. Also, in 2014 during focus groups with youth the youth indicated that having quality foster homes was one of their major concerns.

**APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A: Glossary of Acronyms

AAICPC	Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children
AB	Assembly Bill
AFCARS	Adoption Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System
AI	Adoption Incentive
AIP	Agency Improvement Plan
APHSA	American Public Human Services Association
APPLA	Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
APSR	Annual Progress & Service Report
ASFA	Adoption and Safe Families Act
ASPR	Annual Services Progress Report
ATC	Adolescent Treatment Center
BADA	Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse
CADRE	Citizen's Alliance for Disability Rights and Education
CANS	Child Abuse and Neglect
CAPTA	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate
CBCAP	Community Based Child Abuse Prevention
CCDFS	Clark County Department of Family Services
CCFAPA	Clark County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association
CFCIP	Chafee Foster Care Independence Program
CFSP	Child and Family Service Plan
CFSR	Child and Family Services Review
CFT	Child and Family Team
CHINS	Child in Need of Supervision
CIP	Court Improvement Project
CJA – TALCIT	Children's Justice Act Technical Assistance to Local Communities and Indian Tribes
CJA	Children's Justice Act
CMHBG	Community Mental Health Block Grant
CMHS	Community Mental Health Services
CPS	Child Protective Services
CQI	Continuous Quality Improvement
CRB	Children's Resources Bureau
CRP	Citizen Review Panel
CRT	Community Resource Teams
CSY	Collaboratively Served Youth
CTF	Children's Trust Fund
CWAF	Child Welfare Action Form
CWS	Child Welfare System
CYF	Children Youth and Families Interim Legislative Committee
DAWN	Data Warehouse of Nevada
DCFS	Division of Child and Family Services
DCFS-RURAL	Division of Child and Family Services Rural Region
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DHR	Department of Human Resources
DMG	Decision Making Group
DOE	Department of Education
DRS	Differential Response System
DWTC	Desert Willow Treatment Center
EBP	Evidence Based Programs
EIP	Evidence Informed Programs
ETV	Educational Training Voucher
F2F	Family to Family Connection
FASS	Family Assessment and Services System
FCAAN	Foster Care and Adoption Association of Nevada
FLH	Family Learning Homes
FPO	Family Programs Office
FRC	Family Resource Center
FVPSA	Family Violence Prevention and Services Act

GMU	Grants Management Unit
HCFAP	Health Care Finance and Policy
HSSS	Human Services Support Specialist
ICAMA	Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance
ICJ	Interstate Compact for Juveniles
ICPC	Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children
ICWA	Indian Child Welfare Act
IFS	Intensive Family Services
ILP	Independent Living Plan
IMS	Information Management System
IV-B/2	Title IV-B, Subpart 2
IV-E	Title IV-E
JJ Commission	Juvenile Justice Commission
JJWSG	Juvenile Justice Work Study Group
KIN	Kinship in Nevada Project
MDT	Multi-Disciplinary Team
MEPA/IEPA	Multi-Ethnic Placement Act/Inter-Ethnic Placement Act
MH	Mental Health
MHBG	Mental Health Block Grant
MHDS	Mental Health and Developmental Services
MHPAC	Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council
NAC	Nevada Administrative Code
NACo	The National Association of Counties
NCANDS	National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System
NCANS	Nevada Child Abuse and Neglect System
NCC	Neighborhood Care Center
NCCMT	Neighborhood Care Center Management Team
NCFAS	North Carolina Family Assessment Survey
NCWRCOI	National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement
NEATS	Nevada Employee Action and Timekeeping System
NEBS	Nevada Executive Budget
NITC	Nevada Inter-Tribal Council
NNCAS	Northern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services
NPT	Nevada Partnership for Training
NRC	National Resource Center
NRS	Nevada Revised Statutes
NVCC	Nevada Children's Center
NWD	Nevada Welfare Division
NYTC	Nevada Youth Training Center
NYTD	National Youth in Transition Database
ODES	Online Data Entry System
OJJDP	Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
PART	Policy Approval and Review Team
PCFA	Protective Capacity Family Assessment
PCFA	Protective Capacity Progress Assessment
PEP	Parents Encouraging Parents
PINS	Person in Need of Supervision
PIP	Program Improvement Plan
PRIDE	Parent Resources for Information Development and Education
QA	Quality Assurance
QI	Quality Improvement
QICR	Quality Improvement Case Review
QSR	Quality Supervisory Review
SACWIS	Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System
SAFE	Safety Assessment and Family Evaluation
SAFF	Sierra Association of Foster Families
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration
SAPTA	Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
SB	Senate Bill
SED	Severe Emotional Disturbance

SGB	Statewide Governing Board
SIG	State Infrastructure Grant
SMT	System Management Team
SNCAS	Southern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services
SOAR	Systems Online Activity Reporting
SOC	System of Care Principles
SQIC	Statewide Quality Improvement Committee
SWA	Statewide Assessment
TALCIT	Technical Assistance to Local Communities and Indian Tribes
TANF	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
TPR	Termination of Parental Rights
UNITY	Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth
UNLV	University of Nevada, Las Vegas
UNR	University of Nevada, Reno
VOCA	Victims of Crime Act
WCDSS	Washoe County Department of Social Services
WIN	Wrap-Around In Nevada



## **APPENDIX B: Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Plan Report**

FY 2011 Nevada submitted a new CAPTA state plan that will remain in effect as long as the State continues to participate in CAPTA. The following is the required annual reporting on the of CAPTA funds required by Section 108(e) of CAPTA.

### **Substantive Changes**

There are no substantive changes in the state law that effect eligibility. The Nevada Legislature meets bi-annually and met for the 2015 session. The next Legislative session will be in 2017.

Selected Program Areas:

In SFY 2014 Nevada selected new program areas from CAPTA section 106(a) and they are listed as follows:

1. Sec. 106(a)(5) Developing and updating systems of technology that support the program and track reports of child abuse and neglect from intake through final disposition and allow interstate and intrastate information exchange;
2. Sec. 106(a)(6) developing, strengthening and facilitating training including-
  - A. Training regarding research-based strategies, including the use of differential response, to promote collaboration with the families;
  - B. Training regarding the legal duties of such individuals;
  - C. Personal safety training for case workers; and
  - D. Training in early childhood, child, and adolescent development
3. Sec. 106(a)(7) Improving the skills, qualifications, and availability of individuals providing services to children and families, and the supervisors of such individuals, through the child protection system, including improvements in the recruitment and retention of caseworkers.
4. Sec. 106 (a) (10) Developing and delivering information to improve public education relating to the role and responsibilities of the child protection system and the nature and the basis for reporting suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect.
5. Sec. 106 (a) (11) developing and enhancing the capacity community based programs to integrate shared leadership strategies between parents and professionals to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect at the neighborhood level.
6. Sec. 106(a)(13) Supporting and enhancing collaboration among public health agencies, the child protection system ,and agencies carrying out private community-based programs-
  - A. to provide child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment services (including linkages with education systems), and the use of differential response; and
  - B. the provision of services that assist children exposed to domestic violence, and threat also support the caregiving role of their non-abusing parents.

### **UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES AND EXPENDITURES FOR CAPTA FUNDING:**

For this reporting period, CAPTA funds were used alone or in combination with other funds in support of the state's approved CAPTA plan.

1. Sec. 106(a)(5) Developing and updating systems of technology that support the program and track reports of child abuse and neglect from intake through final disposition and allow interstate and intrastate information exchange.

Activity: Nevada continues to update UNITY, the state's SACWIS system, to provide the infrastructure required to support investigative practice changes as it relates to Intake assessments, safety assessments, Present Danger Assessments (PDA) and the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA). The judiciary and child welfare agencies are requesting data on the number and management of in-home and out of home safety plan cases in their jurisdictions. To date that data has had to be hand counted. DCFS contracted with a programmer to create

reports from the SACWIS system that will provide data to the courts and aid in the management of assessments and in home safety plan service cases. Reports are in process of development now.

2. Sec. 106(a) (6) developing, strengthening and facilitating training including-

- A training regarding research-based strategies, including the use of differential response, to promote collaboration with the families;
- B. training regarding the legal duties of such individuals;
- C. personal safety training for case workers; and
- D. The training in early childhood, child and adolescent development.

Activity: DCFS, through the use of CAPTA funds, sponsored personal field safety training for DCFS caseworkers, supervisors, and other support staff who provide in-home services. The training included, but was not limited to; identification of possible signs of danger, taking signals from the family and the environment; identify methods of avoiding or mitigating danger as a means of maintaining personal safety and increasing capacity to focus on the family; describe common family dynamics that can contribute to a crisis; explain when and how to terminate an interview due to safety concerns; describe effective communication skills that can be used to defuse or successfully prevent violent outbursts.

CAPA funds also supported “Abusive Head Trauma: Shaken Baby Syndrome” training which focused on the signs, symptoms and long term effects upon the victim. This multidisciplinary training was offered 4 times in 2014, twice in Las Vegas and twice in Reno, NV.

3. Sec. 106(a)(7) Improving the skills, qualifications, and availability of individuals providing services to children and families, and the supervisors of such individuals, through the child protection system, including improvements in the recruitment and retention of caseworkers.

Activity: CAPTA funds have been used to strengthen the Intake system statewide with improvements to the SACWIS system and specifically for DCFS by contracting with the Crisis Call Center to centralize all Intake calls for the rural region. DCFS has never had designated Intake staff. As a result, caseworkers who carry full caseloads share in the Intake duties. Dedicated Intake staffs now take a bulk of the Rural Region Intake calls by completing the interview, and entering the information into the SCAWIS system. This has allowed caseworkers to focus on providing services to the families they are assigned to work with. Caseworkers report this improvement has been extremely helpful to them given the many other duties they are responsible for.

4. Sec. 106 (a)(10) Developing and delivering information to improve public education relating to the role and responsibilities of the child protection system and the nature and the basis for reporting suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect.

Activity: Through the Nevada Training Partnership, Nevada provided four trainings, throughout the state, on “Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking.”

In a collaborative effort between the Citizen Review Panel and the child welfare agencies, two brochures were created to inform parents of their legal rights with regards to both an investigation of abuse / neglect and in relation to parental rights regarding the removal of the children. The Child Protective Services Brochure and The Parental Rights Secondary Brochure were printed in mass quantities for distribution to parents.

5. Sec. 106 (a) (11) developing and enhancing the capacity of community based programs to integrate shared leadership strategies between parents and professionals to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect at the neighborhood level.

Activity: There were 14 child deaths in Washoe County related to unsafe sleep conditions since 2009. As a result, WCDSS partnered with Safe Kids to provide safe sleeping information, training and equipment to parents of

infants. Sleep Safe brochures were created and disseminated statewide to hospitals, and public health agencies in an initiative to educate the public at large about safe sleep practices. At the neighborhood level, collaboration between the Family Resource Centers, Differential Response programs and child welfare agencies occurred to educate families about safe sleep practices and to provide porta cribs to families when unsafe sleep was occurring due to lack of a crib.

DCFS partnered with Family Support Council of Douglas County to provide rural families access to safety management services. Availability of safety management services enabled DCFS to avoid removing children from their homes and reduced the length of time children stay in out of home care by assisting the child welfare agency to safely manage in-home safety plans in situations where families did not have sufficient natural resources to safety plan. Contractors served as the eyes and ears for the agency to help ensure families' were in compliance with established safety plans, while the agency worked with parents on case plan activities to mitigate safety threats.

6. Sec. 106(a) (13) supporting and enhancing collaboration among public health agencies, the child protection system, and agencies carrying out private community-based programs-
- A. to provide child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment services (including linkages with education systems), and the use of differential response; and
  - B. to address the health needs, including mental health needs, of children identified as victims of child abuse or neglect including supporting prompt, comprehensive health and developmental evaluations for children who are the subject of substantiated child maltreatment reports.

Activity: In 2014 The Safe Haven policy was developed in conjunction with community partners and implemented Statewide. The Safe Haven policy supports the Safe Haven law (NRS 432B.630), which allows for a parent to leave an unwanted infant (under 30 days old) with a provider of emergency services without fear of prosecution. Public Service Announcements are being developed with community partners to ensure the public at large is aware of the law in hopes of reducing the number of infants that are abandoned in unsafe situations. Also, Public Service announcements to be aired in all Nevada counties in cooperation with Nevada Broadcasters Association.

## **Personnel**

Through the use of CAPTA State Grant funds, DCFS employed a full-time Social Services Programs Specialist. This position is necessary in order to support CAPTA objectives. The funds utilized included salary, fringe benefits and travel. The Specialist participates in planning, coordinating and evaluating child protective services provided throughout the state.

The Specialist participates in the following activities: 1) Review of federal/state legislation, development of federal/state regulations, and agency policies; 2) Provision of statewide technical assistance and/or consultation through contract or sub-grant; 3) Coordination of training pursuant to CAPTA requirements; 4) Serves as the State Liaison Officer with the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; 5) Prepares grant applications and progress reports for the CAPTA Basic State Grant program and other related CAPTA funding; 6) Develops, coordinates and monitors CAPTA Projects; 7) Serves on agency or other committees that promote the goals of child protective services; and 8) Monitors the collection of child abuse data for the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).

Additionally, the CAPTA grant assisted in supporting the Grants Management Unit staff time for the purpose of monitoring and management of CAPTA funds, sub-grants and required grant reporting.

## **Operating and Travel Expenses**

Grant funds were used to support travel and per diem for CRP representatives, as well as child welfare services representatives, to participate in child protective services workgroups. Funds were also used to procure consultant/facilitator time, including travel and per diem and materials, which provided technical assistance and staff support to the CRP.

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## **APPENDIX C: Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program (CFCIP) & Education Training Voucher Program (ETV)**

### **Program Description**

Nevada's Division of Child and Family Services is the agency responsible for administration and oversight of Independent Living Programs (ILPs) in Nevada. The oversight responsibility is assigned to the statewide Manager and Independent Living (IL) Specialist in the Family Programs Office. Nevada is a state-supervised and county-administered program in the two major metropolitan counties, Clark and Washoe. The DCFS continues to supervise and administer all child welfare programs in the remaining 15 rural counties, which are managed by the DCFS - Rural Region. Nevada allocates both federal and state funds to the two county-administered I.L. programs, the state administered DCFS - Rural Region, and tribal entities. The state will continue to retain a portion of the federal funds to develop statewide policy, systems and materials to support county and rural implementation efforts as well as monitor program development and implementation. Statewide public and private partnerships are developed to provide I.L. services throughout the state. Each region develops a service array unique to their community.

Funds for the I.L. program are distributed from the state to the counties, the DCFS - Rural Region, and the designated tribal program to support I.L. program development and activities. In CCDFS, Chafee funds are awarded through the CCDFS to Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth (SAFY), a non-profit organization. In WCDSS, all Chafee and state funds are awarded through WCDSS to the Children's Cabinet, a private, non-profit organization, to provide IL services to eligible youth who are in custody and to those youth who have left placement. The DCFS wards both federal and state funds to Family Resource Centers (FRC) and other grantees for all I.L. program activities for youth in care and those youth who have left care in the DCFS- Rural Region. Nevada awards both federal and state I.L. funds to tribal youth through the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribal Stepping Stones Shelter. These funds enable the tribes to develop programming specific to tribal youth's needs. Stepping Stones was designated to be the Chafee recipient by the Nevada tribal entities after lengthy consultation and deliberation.

Nevada currently refers youth to the I.L. program at the age of 15 and continues to work with them until the age of 21 and or 23 if the youth is enrolled in the ETV program. Nevada does not have any state statutory and/or administrative barriers that impede the state's ability to serve a broad range of youth. The most significant barriers to providing I.L. services in Nevada are staffing—hiring, training, and maintaining staff to serve the number of youth who qualify for services.

### ***Accomplishments since the 2015-2019 CFSP submission and planned activities for SFY 2016***

#### **CFCIP PROGRAM PURPOSES 1-8**

##### **1. Help youth likely to remain in foster care until age 18 transition to self-sufficiency by providing services.**

#### **CCDFS**

Over the last SFY 2015 the CCDFS Independent Living program created and implemented various staff led committees that specialized in the development and facilitation of workshops targeted to improve services and outcomes for youth in and aging out of foster care. The focus of programs is skill development and resource options designed to assist youth in care to prepare for self-sufficiency. The areas of focus included 1).Higher Education Committee, 2).Vocational Committee and 3).Aging-out Committee.

As part of the standing case management services provided by the I.L. program every youth in foster care over the age of 15 is assigned a Youth Support Worker (YSW) and with that comes an array of support services to include life skills assessment, IL class referrals and other support programs, transitional living support service, support and participation at Child and Family Team meetings to ensure the team supporting the youth is aware of services available and provided. Also the YSW assists the youth in accessing Chafee funding to support their extra-curricular and school activities expenses and other expenses such as State ID cards, work cards and other needs.

The ILP has implemented activities and workshops to increase involvement and outcomes for youth in foster care and in 2014-2015 implemented a stipend program to engage more youth in attending youth summits and conferences. This program provided youth with a stipend which was used for meals, entertainment and souvenirs. The stipend program was also used to teach youth about budgeting as well as giving them a sense of independence.

Additionally, I.L. continues to utilize the Casey Life Skills Assessment to create a baseline of youth skills and areas where improvement is needed along with identifying goals with each youth. Youth are referred to the Independent Living classes

hosted by a community provider. In 2014-2015 there was an increased focus on the skills building segments of the class series and youth leadership building. The skills building focus was intended to allow youth to not only learn about important topics related to self-sufficiency but also to be able to apply those skills out in the community.

Furthermore, CCDFS ILP contracted with a community program called Project WE-Classroom Without Walls that focuses on encouraging and empowering youth to identify their goals and dreams. This is followed up with a series of workshops where youth can meet with professionals and learn about career options, life paths and be connected to other positive and supportive adults. 25 youth have participated in this program.

### **WCDSS**

Formal class offerings are available to interested youth in the areas of budgeting, personal safety, household management, meal preparation, and basic computer skills. In addition, all foster homes are provided with a binder, outlining 11 categories and related teaching opportunities in those categories. The WCDSS encourages the foster parents of our youth to utilize this resource and document tasks and skills taught to youth in their homes.

WCDSS has a dedicated unit that serves youth age 14 and over. In addition, youth over 15 receive a co-case manager to further support their goals toward achieving independence. Through those two case managers youth are informed and offered the host of services this county has to offer.

Specifically, at age 17 both case managers (WCDSS case manager and the Children's Cabinet case manager) begin preparing them for the transition to adulthood. Discussions including the youth and their child and family team occurring monthly and the topic of transition is the main focus of those meetings. A more formal CFT is held upon the youth turning age 17.5. This meeting is facilitated by our agency Transition Specialist and includes the youth, their support team, and both case managers. This meeting attempts to pin down the actual details, including dates of all the transition activities.

### **DCFS Rural Region**

IL Youth are given the opportunity to participate in educational, life skills and employability training. The youth attend workshops provided by their local IL service provider in their areas. The workshop topics include employment, resume building, interviewing, dress for success, how to fill out applications, how to locate jobs, budgeting, banking, credit and credit reports, apartment hunting, grocery shopping, cooking, living on their own, transportation and any other topics requested by the youth.

Through the help of the DCFS IL Specialist, communication between DCFS rural offices and the IL service providers has improved and more effective partnerships have developed. IL Youth in-care are now being engaged at an earlier age to offer ease of transition to other identified services and funding to support IL Youth more effectively. IL Youth in outlying areas are receiving services in a more cohesive manner. Continuity in better communication has resulted in a more timely delivery to IL Youth.

### **Tribes:**

Tribal youth are helped to obtain education or job training to allow them to be more competitive in the market place. The youth are notified of employment opportunities when such information is received. As possible youth are given opportunities to practice interview skills and learn how to fill out applications.

Statewide SFY 2016 the I.L. program will continue to:

- Expand the workshops while ensuring that the information provided is of assistance to youth.
- Identify other topic areas of interest to youth and facilitate quality workshops and training opportunities for youth engagement.
- Identify appropriate ways to engage with youth age 14 based on new law requirements as of September 2015.
- Further refine the services offered to youth that are electing to remain under the Court Jurisdiction Program and those that are exiting care.
- Implementation of a "Ready For the World" quarterly mixer for CCDFS youth to allow them to come together in order to support each other and learn about opportunities.
- Increase the frequency of individual and group interaction by constant communication and responsiveness to IL Youth needs.

## **2. Help youth likely to remain in foster care until age 18 receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment.**

### **CCDFS**

The Independent Living Program implemented a specific workshop related to employment. As a result many youth participated in this event which included access to a computer and training on how to apply for positions online, resume building and pre-employment information. The IL vocational committee assisted youth in applying for seasonal jobs in 2014-2015.

Additionally, over 50 youth attended the annual Clark County Youth Leadership Conference where there many community partners were present to answer questions regarding employment, the National Guard and Job Corps.

ILP partnered with a local non-profit Olive Crest to offer Project Independence which is a Workforce Investment Act grant that supports job readiness and placement of youth in worksites throughout the community. This has been successful with many youth acquiring full-time employment after successful internships.

Additionally, as part of the Youth at Risk of Homelessness planning grant, the subcommittee for education and employment focused on several key strategies that would assist youth in foster care with academic success. The group has established some key intervention strategies that will be part of the Phase 2 application process as well as implemented into the I.L. program.

### **WCDSS**

Juniors and Seniors have the opportunity to participate in a 10 week career and coaching program. This program incorporates informative sessions on obtaining employment as well as provides site visits to potential employers. Graduates earn a stipend of \$1000 and can join the alumni program to on-going support and mentoring in helping them achieve their career and/or educational goals. Various employment programs are available to all of our youth through the Children's Cabinet's wide service array, that includes everything from brief classes on how to complete an application, to funded "internships" with local businesses.

### **DCFS Rural Region**

IL Youth are engaged in one-on-one training, summer weekly workshops and ongoing monthly workshops and Youth Advisory Board Meetings (YAB). The workshop topics are developed at the suggestion and desire of the youth.

Workshops topics in 2015 included:

Educational Preparation: Casey Life Skills Assessments, HSE Preparation, secondary educational preparation for HS Diploma, FAFSA, ETV, Otto Huth, Accuplacer preparation for entrance into college, college selection assistance, tutoring, study habit awareness, budgeting, financial aid applications and associated individual needs.

Employment Preparation: Employability training, resume building, interview skills, job search, work tryout or work experience including on-the-job training in a selected occupation, field trips to explore occupations and educational opportunities.

Other: Peer mentoring programs to utilize older IL Youth to mentor younger IL Youth, mental health fitness, sex trafficking education, sex education, physical wellness education, innovative life skills such as; Cooking on a Budget, Credit Fitness, Banking, and Tax Preparation.

Beginning in the spring of 2015, the Rural Region is piloting a program in the Carson District Office where a contracted staff (IL Case Manager) will help the social workers accomplish the policy requirements for the I.L. program. This contractor will provide individualized case management to all youth ages 14 and older and attend all Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings. This IL Case Manger will oversee the day to day tasks and youth requests and will provide the youth with a supportive adult role as one of the biggest barriers of IL is staff turnover. This position will ensure that:

- IL Youth are supported through referrals from the Division of Child and Family Services and joint CFT Meetings are arranged as soon as possible (15 yrs of age) to insure the development of a nurturing relationship between the IL Worker and the IL Youth.
- IL Youth are supported by IL Worker on choice of continuation of education and/or employment preparation.
- IL Youth participate in goal setting to address individual education and employment options.
- IL Youth receiving ongoing support and coaching through Independent Living Plan educational/employment goals to assist youth in seamless services.

**Tribes:**

Services are provided through Stepping Stones in Fallon in filling out applications for school, FAFSA, ETV and other scholarships.

Statewide SFY 2016 the I.L. program will continue to:

- Focus on assisting youth with employment preparation to include specific focus on getting a job and keeping a job as well as vocational training.
- Expand educational workshops offered to youth with a focus on high school diploma attainment; with involvement with local schools and other higher education options for youth.
- Partner with the Clark County School District/CCDFS Educational Liaison to assist and advocate when youth are in need of school support.
- Work with and expand the pool of community partners such as: Dress for Success, Project Independence, Standard of Excellence; Adult Education (Work Readiness Certification), Armed Services, Cosmetology schools, Airline industry to introduce youth to various employment opportunities, vocational and certification programs.

**3. Help Youth likely to remain in foster care until age 18 prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions.****CCDFS**

The ILP provided a scholarship workshop series designed to prepare and educate youth on applying for college, registering for college, college tours, FAFSA eligibility, ETV eligibility, CASA scholarships and other scholarships that benefited youth in foster care. Over 35 youth attended the workshop series.

The ILP also hosted a specialized FAFSA workshop to assist youth with applying for their FAFSA. Each youth was provided a jump drive with scholarship applications, FAFSA guidelines and information on preparing for college. All youth received a college prep guide to assist them with preparing for college. I. L. PROGRAM collaborated with the UNLV Trio Program and participating youth were awarded incentives via raffle prizes.

The ILP was instrumental in assisting over 25 youth in obtaining ETV and CASA resources that resulted in \$102,250 of scholarship monies to further their educational attainment and goals.

Additionally, as part of the Youth at Risk of Homelessness planning grant, the subcommittee for education and employment focused on several key strategies that would assist youth in foster care with academic success. The group has established some key intervention strategies that will be part of the Phase two application process as well as implemented into the I.L. program.

**WCDSS**

Education is a strong focus in preparing a youth to transition to self-sufficiency. WCDSS partners with a tutoring program to increase a youth's GPA and likelihood of graduation. We also contract with a former school district counselor who is available to analyze a youth's education record, collect missing credits, meet with the youth and their current school counselor and develop an action plan that will hopefully lead to graduation with the correct number of credits and correct class enrollment. This process helps students who are excelling, better prepare for their college future, as well as students who have fallen behind, get caught up quickly. All youth aging out of foster care are assigned a co-case manager from our community partners the Children's Cabinet. They are available to assist in completing FAFSA applications, ETV applications and various other scholarships applications. Youth who attend the life and career coaching program also have the opportunity to receive on-going mentoring support through college. In addition, WCDSS is involved in a joint partnership with the local Community College and the Children's Cabinet to provide on-site (at the college) mentoring and educational guidance. The contracted mentor reaches out to former foster youth and helps them navigate the community college system, ensure they are enrolled in the correct classes to reach their goal and further educates them about financial aid and the requirements to maintain good standing. The mentor is available to provide various referrals for the youth and a release is signed by the youth so a struggling youth can be discussed and routed to the best person to assist them. As part of this partnership a youth summit is held in the Spring and in the Fall to further educate and assist incoming freshman and/or answer questions for youth already enrolled. Priority registration is available to youth that take advantage of the on-site mentor at the local community college.

**DCFS Rural Region**

DCFS Rural Region service providers help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational programs by ensuring that the youth are given a yearly Casey Life Skills Assessments to help assess what areas a youth needs



some additional help and guidance in. GED Preparation, secondary educational preparation for HS Diploma, completion of FAFSA, ETV application, Otto Huth Scholarship application, Accuplacer preparation for entrance into college, college selection assistance, tutoring, study habit awareness, budgeting, financial aid applications and other associated individual needs.

### **Tribes**

The provider talks about the educational path the youth would like to take and together they research enrollment requirements, cost of attendance and degree requirements helping youth plan their post-secondary education and training. It is preferred to do this early in their high school years but this is not always possible as not all tribal youth are referred timely.

Statewide SFY 2016 the I.L. program will continue to:

- Develop the College Bound Workshops to include additional community partners such as; College of Southern Nevada, Nevada State College, Cooperative Extension and University of Nevada Reno.
- Work with the local community college in Reno to continue the mentoring program for aged out foster youth who attend TMCC.
- Host specialized workshops to assist youth with FAFSA and out of state college tours.
- Focus on early preparation for youth 15-16 years old to ensure that youth are prepared and college-bound.

## **4. Provide personal and emotional support to youth aging out of foster care through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults.**

### **CCDFS**

The ILP program contracted with PROJECT WE-Classroom Without Walls to provide mentorship, life skills and entrepreneurship services over a 3 year period to program participants. Project WE services 25 youth 14-16 years old. These youth are provided with mentorship and lasting connections with dedicated adults.

Through the Project Independence and DREAMR projects, multiple community partners provided mentors and dedicated adults to meet with the youth.

As part of a demonstration grant/research in partnership with UNLV, the DREAMR program offered mentors for the treatment group of 35 participants through Big Brothers and Big Sisters. The mentoring relationships have appeared to enhance youth outcomes in well-being domains and have been successful.

The ILP provided an opportunity for eight youth to attend a Youth Leadership surf camp, called Urban Surf, in San Diego California. Two youth who attended obtained paid internships as facilitators as a result of that camp.

Additionally, as part of the Youth at Risk of Homelessness planning grant, the subcommittee for Permanency and Well-being focused on development of a matrix of well-being domains and ways in which youth can be emotionally supported and how that affects their overall well-being. The group has established some key intervention strategies that will be part of the Phase two application process as well as implemented into Clark County's IL program.

### **WCDSS**

Young adults in the Washoe County child welfare system are assigned to a child welfare worker with specialized training in the area of Independent Living, and are co-case managed by an IL case manager from our community partners, The Children's Cabinet. This assignment occurs around a youth's 15th birthday and is designed to maintain stable agency adults through the youth's transition to after care services. New this year is a pilot project partnership offering group mentoring to young people. There are interactive sessions offered twice a month that are staffed with approved and trained mentors. The desire is for a youth to develop a natural relationship with one of the adults during this fun event and have that relationship grow into a longer term positive role model. This program is called Cliff Climbers and was revamped to begin April 1, 2015. This project will continue through the next fiscal year.

### **DCFS Rural Region**

The IL Youth are faced with many challenges that are addressed with the assigned IL Worker and their team. In-Care IL Youth are encouraged (through the Child and Family Team model) to build a network of mentors and dedicated adults, that include community mentors, CASA volunteers, IL service providers and their own family members to help advocate for the youth. IL Workers meet with all the IL Youth at a minimum of one time per month to receive updates, work on issues and provide monetary support as needed through Chafee Requests. The new program being piloted in the Carson District Office, will add another layer of personal and emotional support for IL aged youth in that this staff person will work with the youth beginning at age 14 and follow them through until their case is closed or the youth ages out of care. Having one person be the point of contact for the youth will ensure that the case manager and the youth create a stable relationship that will help provide the consistency that the IL youth need.

Rural IL Youth are encourage to participate in Youth Advisory Board (YAB) activities, community service projects and IL outings to promote wellness, socialization, charitable giving and peer mentoring components toward growth

## **Tribes**

The IL worker serves as a personal and emotional support for the tribal youth. The worker is usually very connected with the youth and their needs and having a relationship like this helps youth become comfortable with and interact more with the worker. With all youth in the Tribal IL program, adults that are healthy and appropriate are identified and suggested for on-going emotional support. These adults are community and tribal members who have an interest in helping the youth. A majority of youth have a relative they can contact but they also frequently contact the IL worker for support.

Statewide SFY 2016 the I.L. program will continue to:

- Work with Project WE to recruit additional youth and recommend revisions to program based on program review outcomes.
- Work with Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) to develop improve and targeted enhanced relationships with foster parents who may be interested in mentoring/fostering teens with an increased focus on youth success.
- Partner with My Brother's Keeper for male youth in foster care.
- Utilize a framework within all I. L. Program services that has a focus on developing healthy mindsets and skillsets for youth that support leadership, confidence and mentorship.
- Provide opportunities for Foster Care Alumni to become peer mentors for the youth in care.
- Include youth in programs and activities that may introduce them to dedicated adults who could become mentors for them.
- Pilot the new IL Case Manager position in the Rural Region to provide a consistant worker to youth from the age of 14 until 18 and beyond as they will continue to work with the local IL service providers in the area.

## **5. Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18-21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for perparing for and then making the transition into adulthood.**

Statewide youth at the age 18 youth have the option to sign in to after care services with their child welfare agency. This program, called AB350/Court Jurisdiction/Voluntary Jurisdiction was passed by the Nevada Legislature in 2011 and statewide approximately 375 young people are currently accessing the program. After care support, financial assistance up to the state foster care rate, and case management is available to any youth aging out of foster care that is engaged in post-secondary education, vocational programming or is employed 20 hours a week. This program is available through the age of 21, as long as the youth continues to maintain eligibility. Should a youth not meet eligibility requirements, they are still eligible for FAFFY (Funds to Assistance Former Foster Youth). This program is administered through the local service provider and requires a youth to meet and develop a goal plan and they provide a smaller amount of financial assistance and access to case management if the youth is interested. The youth must be making progress toward their self-sufficiency goals in order to remain in good standing with the program.

Young adults ages 18 to 21 are also served throughout the state with Chafee funds and ETV. The three child welfare agencies in the state use an outside contracted provider to provide the services to the youth as requested and identified. Classes to aid young people in the areas of financial services, counseling, employment, education are offered throughout the year and the youth are invited to attend. The IL service providers seek additional community providers that will provide work experience to our young people. For youth interested in post secondary education, the youth may access ETV funds which helps provide additional financial help to assist the youth in meeting their educational goals.

The service provider IL Workers assess the youth's needs and work with them in budgeting and pre-planning for additional and unexpected issues. The workers understand many issues are unforeseen and working with the IL Youth on their personal and emotional concerns constitute an opportunity for learning and becoming more self-sufficient. The Youth are expected to make mistakes and work out solutions as a necessary life skill. The IL Workers use these opportunities as growth in the IL Youth's life skill set.

Statewide SFY 2016 the I.L. program will continue to:

- Provide oversight and technical assistance to the young adult after care programs.
- Focus on developing an enhanced framework for all I. L. Program services that has an emphasis on healthy mindsets and skillsets for youth that support a healthy and productive life for young people.
- Work with community providers to allow youth to participate in work experience activities.

- Make available Chafee, FAFFY and ETV funds to all youth ages 18-21 who have aged out of foster care and meet eligibility.

## **6. Make available vouchers for education and training, including postsecondary education, to youth who have aged out of foster care.**

Youth are strongly encouraged to continue education. All youth are informed as to the financial options available through ETV, Otto Huth, FAFSA as well as Chafee support. Youth that access Nevada's after care programs are encouraged and supported in attaining a high school diploma or their high school equivalency as well as pursuing higher education as a means to self-sufficiency.

The ETV "Education and Training Voucher" program is available through the Children's Cabinet in Reno. All youth aging out of the foster care system have access to a Children's Cabinet ETV worker who is able to assist them with the application. The ETV staff provided an overview of the program at the 2014 Youth Leadership Conferences in Reno and Las Vegas which allowed for youth to be made aware of the program and to ask questions to the staff

At anytime, youth can ask for help from their Child Welfare case workers and outside IL service providers who are also available to assist with their postsecondary education questions.

Statewide SFY 2016 the I.L. program will continue to:

- Provide the youth information about the ETV program at the 2015 Youth Leadership Conferences
- Provide youth with information about resources available to them for their postsecondary education.
- Host specialized workshops and training on receiving ETV and assisting youth one-on-one in completing applications.
- Provide specialized workshops on educating youth about other post secondary financial resources and scholarships available to them and how to complete those applications.

## **7. Provide services to youth who, after attaining 16 years of age, have left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption**

Youth who, after attaining 16 years of age, have left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption who are interested in service provision, would only need to contact the local IL service provider or child welfare agency who will confirm their eligibility and develop an assistance plan. These youth are provided services through the state's Chafee funds and are also referred to the ETV program for educational assistance. Youth are engaged and provided seamless services individually and in a group setting after the referral has been received by the local service provider.

The statewide IL specialist ensures that all staff are informed about the services available to these youth so that they are not refused services at any time prior to turning 21 years old.

Statewide SFY 2016 the I.L. program will continue to:

Educate staff on the services that are available to the youth

Ensure that all youth are provided an opportunity to ask for additional service provision after they have left care for kinship guardianship or adoption.

Help youth achieve permanency by educating families on the availability of this resource to them after guardianship or adoption is achieved.

## **8. Ensure children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age have regular, on-going opportunities to engage in age or development-appropriate activities as defined in section 475(11) of the Act.**

Nevada has been working on updating the statewide IL policy where it will explicitly direct staff to provide age and developmental appropriate activities to youth ages 14-18. These activities can include extra curricular activities, and activities that help the youth explore their interests. The policy will also speak to the foster parents ability to use the reasonable and prudent parenting standard when giving the youth permission to participate in activities. The statewide foster parent Quality Parenting Initiative will also provide our foster parents with additional training on the prudent parenting standard.

### **CCDFS**

The Clark County IL program implemented specialized workshops and committees to bridge the gap in services and to meet the needs of youth in a Child Welfare System.

ILP works closely with:

- SAFY (local non-profit child serving agency) who is contracted to provide IL classes, ensure there is good attendance, youth engagement, appropriate learning environment for youth, a review of the curriculum and implementation of field activities so youth have an opportunity to practice skills learned.

- Olive Crest/Project Independence program to recruit youth who were 17 years of age to participate in this program which provides services in the following areas: education, employment, mentorship, life skills and financial support.
- Olive Crest/DREAMR program to recruit young people for mentorship opportunities and life skills training as well as sexual health education and STP/pregnancy prevention.

## **WCDSS**

Effective September 25, 2014 a “Normalcy” policy was created and disseminated to all staff and family foster homes. This policy outlines examples of the application of the reasonable and prudent parenting standard. It addresses such activities as allowing overnights with peers, obtaining driver’s licenses, participating in overnight school functions and babysitting that can be approved at the discretion of the foster parent using the reasonable and prudent parenting standard. For SSFY 2016, WCDSS hope to have a modified version of the above policy in place for treatment level foster parents as well. In addition to the policy guidance, allowing for some more flexibility for youth to participate in “normal” childhood activities. Our Chafee budget allows for a pool of money to support the costs associated with drivers training, extra-curricular activities and some travel funds.

## **DCFS Rural Region and Tribes**

The Rural Region and Tribal IL programs have historically provided youth in the IL program opportunities to participate in age and developmentally appropriate activities by helping fund those activities with Chafee funding. With the new policy updates and the authorization of the prudent parenting standard the program can continue to serve the youth and allow them to participate in more activities that will help them feel like “normal” teens.

## **Planned use of Funds in Support of the New CFCIP Purpose #8.**

Nevada will continue to expend funds available to support this population through existing programs and new ones identified. The youth will be able to continue to identify activities that they would like to participate in and as a state the IL programs will ensure that the youth are allowed to participate as long as the activity is appropriate and safe for them.

## **National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)**

The state has always shared NYTD findings with stakeholders involved in the IL program, including our Tribal IL Provider, and has expanded this to include more of Nevada’s stakeholders and the courts. Nevada has created a successful process when surveying youth in the NYTD cohorts. The statewide IL specialist monitors the program and sends out weekly updated reports to the agencies and staff directly working with the identified youth. Guidance, support and training on the best ways to survey the youth is provided by the statewide IL Specialist. Since the 2015-2019 CFSP submission, Nevada has informed partners, tribes, courts and other stakeholders about NYTD the data collected and involved them in the analysis of the results of the NYTD data collection by sharing this information in statewide stakeholder meetings. NYTD data is a standing agenda item on the monthly Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) meetings which has attendees from many different stakeholder groups. NYTD statewide snapshots are shared with the groups and the data is explained to the stakeholders. NYTD is also a standing agenda item on the monthly statewide IL workgroup meetings where IL staff from the three child welfare agencies come together to discuss the I.L. program. NYTD will continue to stay on the agenda for this meeting as it serves as a reminder to staff on which youth are to be surveyed as well as how the state is doing with getting the surveys completed timely. To date, Nevada has been successful in meeting the NYTD submission requirements and participation rates and has not incurred a penalty.

The NYTD data continues to be integrated into the I.L. program and other efforts within the child welfare agency in order to utilize the data obtained for system and service improvements. Youth throughout the state are informed about NYTD and the results of the data gathered from the surveys at the Youth Advisory Board meetings. In Clark County, this data has also been included as part of their Youth at Risk of Homelessness planning grant and evaluations and shared with the planning partners.

Nevada would like to duplicate the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology (NRCCWDT) NYTD snapshot and incorporate Nevada data to identify outcomes for young people by child welfare agency. A work request has been submitted to our IMS department so that the Nevada NYTD snapshot can be a report pulled from our SACWIS system. Every six months the state pulls the NYTD data snapshot from the portal to share with our I.L. program staff as well as the stakeholders who work with this population of youth, and those who attend the SQIC. The outcomes identified from the survey collection drives the agencies to provide better services for the youth.

## **NYTD data collection Improvement:**

The State of Nevada has passed the NYTD data submission since the initial federal submission of the data in FY 2011. As a part of Continuous Quality Improvement efforts the Family Programs Office (FPO) I.L Specialist monitors submission of the surveys and services data. Fosterclub continues to host the NYTD surveys for the state. Nevada ensures a minimal error rate due to the surveys requiring a response for specific questions when youth are answering their surveys. Discussion and information sharing occurs during the statewide I.L conference calls. The FPO I.L. Specialist makes sure the state is compliant utilizing e-mails and phone calls to the I.L. managers at the three child welfare agencies. Youth identified to be surveyed are reported to each of the managers and their staff so that they are aware of deadlines. These weekly emails have helped so that Nevada meets their NYTD requirements.

The CCDFS I.L. program has identified a specific IL staff to complete NYTD surveys and conduct diligent searches to locate youth to complete surveys. The IL unit will continue to use various methods in locating youth such as; face book, phone, email, phone, contacting family members, diligent search, CAP attorneys, CASA, friends and certified letters.

WCDSS has also identified one assigned staff member that is responsible for contacting youth and having them complete their survey. WCDSS has a high rate of success at each age group, and WCDSS will continue this practice with one point of contact to ensure continued compliance. Additionally, WCDSS have utilized diligent search resources to locate youth that have failed to keep in contact with the Agency.

## **Collaboration with other Private and Public Agencies in Helping Youth in Foster Care Achieve Independence:**

Statewide private and public partnerships are developed to provide IL services throughout the state. Each region develops a service array unique to their community.

The I.L. program has developed partnerships with outside organizations, businesses, and agencies to address the needs of youth aging out of the system to include the following:

- Agencies use the Quality Parenting Initiative to identify needs of young adults and encourage everyone to work together to help youth achieve self-sufficiency
- Faith based community who provided our youth with Startup Kits to live independently,
- UNLV collaborated with the IL higher education committee to provide support to youth who were interested in attending college,
- Capriotti's fast food restaurant offered and employed youth in the child welfare system,
- Titan Roofing offered and employed youth in the IL program,
- Chipotle fast food has offered and employed youth in the IL program,
- Project Independence has helped youth with employment, internships, resume writing and obtaining HISET (former GED) and High School diplomas as well as helped with college expenses.
- PROJECT WE has helped youth to gain knowledge on entrepreneurship who have partnered with ZAPPOS for trainings and workshops.
- Southwest airlines to provide trainings and workshops for the airline industry.
- IL has established relationships with community transitional housing programs that serve youth 18 and over.
- HER SHE group who provides young ladies with opportunities to attend banquets and receive scholarships for activities in the community.
- Expertise Beauty school to offer youth information on cosmetology and discount packages for haircuts and hair designs.
- IL unit participated in the Spring Fling and Spring Egg Hunt with the County Commissioner to raise awareness
- IL has partnered with UNLV during Child Abuse Prevention Month and participated in forums.
- IL staff and youth traveled to the State of Nevada Legislature to share their experiences in foster care and ways in which the system can be improved. This was a wonderful learning experience for them and very empowering.
- WCDSS was an important partner with the development and opening of the YOU- a youth homeless drop in center in Reno.
- Collaboration between WCDSS and juvenile services continues to go well with a published list of shared clients and a schedule of child and family team meetings to include juvenile service partners on a regular basis,
- Foster Care Awareness Month,
- State of Nevada Legislature - Children's Week,
- Foster Youth and Sibling Bill of Rights legislation,
- LGBTQ training and awareness,
- Court Improvement Project for the Supreme Court's Foster Youth Panel to educate our supreme court justices as to the inadequacies in the foster care system.

- Tribal youth have become involved in helping to develop a tribal youth advisory board (One Nation Youth Advisory Board)
- Information about the Tribal I.L. services is shared at the ICW committee meetings
- Youth have also been asked to educate new social workers graduating from UNR with a panel discussion,
- Two young ladies have been identified to participate as stakeholders in the Children's Justice Act (CJA) meetings.

### **Collaboration with other Private and Public Agencies in coordinating the CFCIP with other Federal and State Programs for Youth.**

The I.L. programs have partnered with several organizations and agencies during 2014-2015 year to benefit the youth served. As previously identified there are many agencies committed to serving youth in foster care. In addition to those services the following are other ways in which the needs of youth are tracked, supported and improved:

- Mental health services: ILP supports youth mental health needs by communicating with Permanency worker when youth appear to be in need of additional services
- Education needs: ILP provides support to youth regarding their education by providing information about educational options, preparation and value of an education as it relates to self-sufficiency. Also the ILP will work with the DFS educational liaison to provide targeted supports and advocacy as needed.
- Employment and higher education: ILP believes all youth have the potential to achieve a high school diploma as well a higher education whether that be college or vocational training. The ILP works with Goodwill in Clark County to assist youth with disabilities.
- "Crossover" youth between CCDFS and Juvenile Justice has been an area of focus due to increased concern for youth in both systems. As part of the Youth at Risk of Homelessness planning grant tracking youth in both systems and corresponding data has not been simple due to different data and case management systems that are used however this has been an area of focus as part of the planning process. Additionally a model is being explored which would assist with role and responsibility definitions regarding the child welfare case manager as well as the probation officer with a focus on coordination of case management and services offered to the youth and family.
- WCDSS and Washoe County Juvenile Services established a team to address potential human trafficking victims and all identified cases are jointly staffed for appropriate service referrals.
- WCDSS has actively worked with a local non-profit establishing a drop-in center for youth.
- Staff participate in workgroups and serve on advisory boards, as well as generate referrals and resource acquisition.
- State and county sex education programs, such as Planned Parenthood,
- HUD and SSA programs for disabled youth and/or homeless youth,
- Juvenile justice partnerships to coordinate criminal and truancy prevention,
- SAPTA prevention of drug and alcohol abuse programming,
- JOIN - Workforce Investment Act programs available to foster youth,
- Work-Study programs through the community and university,
- Paid and unpaid work experiences,
- Field trips,
- Community service projects,
- Foster Care Awareness Month,
- The local court-system to insure that criminal behavior is addressed and youth with criminal convictions receive coordination of services to reduce recidivism,
- St. Jude's Independent Living Program and Crossings (supportive housing program),
- Seeds to Succeed (transitional living program),
- Southern Nevada Children First (transitional living program),
- HER SHE (transitional living program),
- Let's Move Forward (transitional living program)
- Southern Nevada Regional Housing,
- Job Corps
- Nevada Hand which provides subsidized housing
- There are three local transitional living/local housing programs in Washoe County that are able to house transition age youth. WCDSS maintains a close working relationship with each of those programs and is supportive of their mission and goals.
- The Children's Cabinet has several school to work programs that are available to the community as well as foster youth and referrals are received on a flow basis.
- Programs and services specifically for disabled youth are limited in our community but WCDSS maintains a great working relationship with our local regional center as well as Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Investment Act Youth Programming,

- Ventana Sierra Independent Living Group Home,
- Vocational Rehabilitation services,
- Social Security for disabled youth,
- technology programming through the high school,
- Internships through the community college and
- vocational training from industry-specific partners.

**Collaborate with governmental or other community entities to promote a safe transition to independence by reducing the risk that youth and young adults in the child welfare systems will be victims of human trafficking**

With the passing of the new legislation on Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act Nevada’s IL program has spearheaded three subcommittees to make changes to the current policies and process to address the need of system implementation to help reduce the risk of our youth and young adults becoming victims of human trafficking. CCDFS, WCDSS, DCFS Rural Region and the IL service providers have all been involved in the subcommittee meetings and collaboratives have been working to ensure that the state is meeting the requirements of the new legislation. The three subcommittees have analyzed the legislation into specific program areas addressing updates to the current IL policy, the creation of a new statewide Missing and Exploited Child policy and the changes needed to Nevada’s SACWIS system.

Research as to what programs currently work with this population of youth has been done and staff is working to come together with these programs to help serve youth identified as victims. As we are in the beginning stages of implementation, our first order of business is to update and create the policies, request the changes to the statewide SACWIS system and train staff on how to identify youth as victims.

CCDFS as part of the Youth at Risk of Homelessness grant has identified a service provider in Clark County that will help their staff with tracking of these youth, how to develop prevention approaches, response from runaway episodes and other training and education for youth, caregivers and staff. The ILP unit is planning the 2015 Youth Leadership Conference that will provide a session on Human Trafficking/Sex Trafficking prevention. ILP has also engaged with Toe Tag Monologue to address human trafficking concerns and prevention techniques and the negative outcomes of that lifestyle. IL will be working with other organizations to provide information to the youth on prevention

WCDSS has partnerships with their local juvenile services program. New partnerships are being developed with AWAKEN a local resource for victims of human trafficking

The DCFS Rural Region and Tribal IL Workers are committed to continuing education on this matter of importance. The IL Youth workshops bring awareness to this issue and will be upgraded and ongoing to offer IL Youth current information and prevention education serving IL Youth from ages 15 - 21.

**Provide specific training in support of the goals and objectives of the states’ CFCIP and to help foster parents, relative guardians, adoptive parents, workers in group homes, and case managers understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living**

A goal of the CFSP is that youth will have an improved well-being, and an objective for this item is to ensure that youth who exit care are prepared for adult living. An important component of this includes all the adults involved in the youth’s life. Involving the foster parents, relative guardians, adoptive parents, workers in group homes, and case managers understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living is key for the transitional planning of the youth. Transition planning is a process not an event, and must be developed through a strength/needs based approach that is directed by the youth.

- Nevada has incorporated the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) focused on improving the system by empowering, training and supporting caregivers to support youth transitioning to adulthood. Some of the achievements and goals are posting specific training videos for caregivers on the Just in Time website and youth participating in a youth panel at the national QPI conference with all the States implementing QPI.
- Clark County has partnered with Foster Alumni Association to do presentations to the NPT Academy on the importance of working with youth to achieve independence.
- The local youth advisory board in Clark County, FAAYT, leaders have provided presentations during events and forums.
- CCDFS IL unit provide submissions to the caregiver courier to update foster parents on IL activities and workshops.

- WCDSS' main focus this past year was on how to increase educational outcomes for youth as well as Trauma informed trainings for caregivers. A trauma informed training for the child welfare worker is scheduled to occur in the next fiscal year.
- The youth who participate in the statewide youth advisory board, Nevada LIFE, have worked on a flyer that can be given to caregivers and youth in care to educate and inform them of the IL program and what the program can do to help them achieve self-sufficiency.

**How Youth are involved in the CFCIP, CFSR, NYTD and other related Agency Efforts.**

Involving the youth in the planning process will help strengthen IL in Nevada as it is recognized that the youth are the best resource to inform the child welfare agencies about what is and is not working. Youth input has helped Nevada develop the CFSP for 2015-2019, and Nevada will continue to request their involvement in the future. In the last year youth have been asked to participate in the stakeholder groups that occur i.e. CIP, CJA, the Washoe County Mental Health Consortium, as trainers for new staff and in panel discussions. Feedback from the local youth advisory committees and statewide youth advisory board is sought when developing new programs or procedures.

Nevada LIFE has been asked to attend the First Lady's Summit on Children's Mental Health the past two years. Youth have been able to listen to issues that the state is working on to address the mental health of youth in care and provide feedback to those agencies when requested.

Recently there was a training for the NYTD state review process and one of our Nevada Foster Care Alumni was selected to participate. Nevada will begin working with this youth to assess the current NYTD process and make updates as necessary.

**Medicaid Coverage**

Nevada Revised Statute 422.2717 requires the Medicaid State Plan to include and serve foster youth who have aged out of the foster care system. In 2014 Nevada extended the Medicaid eligibility allowing children in the state or county foster care who after reaching the age of 18 continue to receive Medicaid assistance until the age of 26. And for young adults who after reaching the age of 18 in another state moved to and reside in Nevada, they may apply for the Aged Out Medicaid Program and be eligible until the age of 21. The Aging-Out of Foster Care Medicaid Program has been in effect since 2005. Eligibility rules were simplified to include the following: one page application for Medicaid assistance; provide verification of aging out in any U.S. state or territory; be a citizen or qualified alien; provide verification showing age; meet Nevada resident requirements; and, fully cooperate with the annual case eligibility re-determination.

**CONSULTATION WITH TRIBES**

Nevada continues to award IL funds, both federal and state funds, to tribal youth through the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribal Stepping Stones Shelter, enabling the tribes to develop programming specific to tribal youth's needs. Stepping Stones was designated to be the Chafee recipient by the Nevada tribal entities after lengthy consultation and deliberation. DCFS has consulted and educated the tribes about the IL program and what is available to Indian youth via continued presentations at the Indian Child Welfare Act meeting. Stepping Stones also coordinates outreach efforts with Nevada's 27 Tribes. Tribal youth are eligible for IL services if they meet all the same requirements as non-Tribal youth in the state: they must be 15-21 years old and in the custody of a Nevada Tribe. (Please see item 31 for additional information on consultation with tribes).

**Annual Reporting of Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) Awarded**

	<b>Total ETVs Awarded</b>	<b>Number of New ETVs</b>
<b>Final Number: 2013-2014 School Year</b> (July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014)	2013 - 2014 School Year July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014 = Total 103 served	2013 – 2014 School Year July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014 = Total 52 New
<b>2014-2015 School Year*</b> (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015)	2014 – 2015 School Year* July 1, 2014 – May 22, 2015 = 108 total served *Estimate 112 for year	2014 – 2015 School Year* July 1, 2014 – May 22, 2015 = 60 total new students



\* **Instructions:** Identify the number of youth (unduplicated) who receive ETV from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014 (the 2013-2014 school years) and July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015 (the 2014-2015 school years). States may estimate a total if they do not have the total number from the 2014-2015 year.

Comments: Please note the 2014/2015 number is from July 1, 2013 – May 22, 2015. We still have 5 more weeks left and there is currently no waiting list.

**Specific accomplishments and progress to establish, expand, or strengthen the state’s postsecondary educational assistance program to achieve the purpose of the ETV program based on the plan outlined in the 2015-2019 CFSP.**

1. In the summer of 2014 the State of Nevada expanded ETV to include youth who are in the custody of Parole and meet the AFCARS definition, 90 days before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. ETV currently has two youth who have been awarded funds for school and a handful more considering either college or vocational school as an option.
  2. The Children's Cabinet continues to collaborate with WCDSS and TMCC. This year's Foster youth Summit was held in November of 2014 and March of 2015. This summit is a staple to introduce High School Seniors and other first time college students to the campus of TMCC, explain the overall process of financial aid, accuplacer test scoring, orientations, the TMCC "to do" list, and to introduce the students to the people at TMCC who are there to help, while providing needed support to ongoing students.
  3. The Children's Cabinet continues to utilize the "TMCC Foster Youth Consent Form". This enables sharing of information regarding foster care status, college enrollment, financial aid and academic standing to better serve any/all Foster youth as a team. TMCC is the primary holder of the release which remains valid until the youth turns 23 years of age unless revoked in writing. This collaboration includes a TMCC staff mentor. By utilizing this mentor the youth receives early registration, 1:1 college support services from what classes to choose to financial aid status and another adult to provide encouragement along the educational path. A continued side goals is to expand the sharing of information throughout the higher education system within the State of Nevada.
  4. ETV continues to track the appropriate release of information and funds between the youth and school of attendance, FAFFY providers, Court Jurisdiction provider, and/or possible Chafee providers to avoid duplication of benefits under this and any other federal or federally assisted benefit program.
  5. ETV continues outreach at the state and local youth advisory boards and/or councils.
  6. ETV continues outreach at the state youth conferences.
  7. The Children's Cabinet and Northern Nevada Mental health is continuing their collaboration to increase guided access to needed mental health services for youth.
  8. ETV continues to accept applications throughout the current school year to ensure any/all eligible youth may be served. ETV is currently working on development and implementation of an electronic application process with roll out during the 2015/2016 school year.
  9. ETV applications may be found online in both the State website at: and, <http://dcfs.nv.gov/Programs/CWS/IL/ETV/> the Children's Cabinet website at: <http://www.childrencabinet.org/family-youth/youth-programs/foster-youth-support>
  10. ETV offers direct deposit for monthly stipends and/or allowable reimbursements.
  11. ETV continues to survey their clients anonymously to ensure program accountability.
- Change in how the ETV program is administered, whether by the state child welfare agency in collaboration with another state agency or another contracted ETV provider.
    1. Summer of 2014 the State of Nevada expanded ETV to include youth who are in the custody of parole and meet the AFCARS definition, 90 days before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. ETV currently has 2 youth who have been awarded funds for school and a handful more considering either college or vocational school as an option.

## APPENDIX D: Nevada Child Welfare Protective Services Workforce

Nevada's Child Welfare Workforce is influenced by the organizational structure of DCFS and program delivery of child welfare. NRS 432B.325 states that in counties where population is 100,000 or more, that the county shall provide protective services for children in that county and pay the cost of those services in accordance with standards adopted by the state. CCDFS provides child welfare services to all children and families in Clark County in the southernmost part of the State. WCDSS located in Reno Nevada provides child welfare services directly to all children and families located in Washoe County in the northwestern part of the State, and DCFS provides child welfare services to the remaining 15 counties in the state through its Rural Region Offices. As such each child welfare agency has a Human Resource Department (Personnel) that has policies, standards and procedures for the hiring of such personnel.

As previously reported there are approximately 608 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, Licensing and Training filled with 80 vacancies statewide. Additionally, statewide there are approximately 138 Supervisory/Management child welfare positions filled and 8 vacancies.

### CCDFS Child Welfare Protective Services Workforce:

For SFY 2015 CCDFS reports their agency has approximately 449 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, and Licensing filled with 61 vacancies. Additionally, there are approximately 96 Supervisory/Management positions filled with 5 vacancies. CCDFS reports the following caseload ratios: Investigations 1:19, In-home Case Management 1:5, and Permanency Case Management 1:13. Supervisor ratios are 1:6 in Investigations, 1:5 In-home Case Management and 1:6 in Permanency Case Management. CCDFS reports a turnover rate of approximately 6.9-8.2% annually. Staff separations during this reporting period included 8 retirements and 20 dismissals. There were approximately 64 promotions, 104 reassignments and 42 voluntary resignations.

#### ***Additional CCDFS Workforce Information:***

- **How staff are recruited and selected:**

CCDFS Staff are recruited through CCDFS Human Resources website at [www.accessclarkcountynv.gov](http://www.accessclarkcountynv.gov). CCDFS Staff are recruited through CCDFS Central Human Resources Department. Their information can be viewed at [www.clarkcountynv.gov](http://www.clarkcountynv.gov)

- **Degrees and certifications required for your agency child welfare workers and professionals responsible for the management of cases and child welfare staff:**

Agency child welfare workers and professionals responsible for the management of cases are required to possess a 4 year college degree.

**EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS:** Family Services Specialist I - Bachelor's Degree in one of the following areas: Social Work, Criminal Justice, Psychology, Human or Social Services, Sociology, Education or Special Education, Public or Business Administration, Behavioral Science, Counseling, Early Childhood, Health Science, Child Development, Nursing, Communications, Marketing or a related field.

Family Services Specialist II - In addition to the above: Two (2) years of full-time professional level experience providing protective casework/counseling services, assessments or treatment services, or performing administrative, organizational analysis or budgetary experience in a child welfare, social service, juvenile justice and/or residential setting.

Family Services Supervisor- Bachelor's Degree in one of the following areas: Social Work, Criminal Justice, Psychology, Human or Social Services, Sociology, Education or Special Education, Public or Business Administration, Behavioral Science, Counseling, Early Childhood, Health Science, Child Development, Nursing, Communications, Marketing or a related field AND four (4) years of full-time professional level experience providing protective casework/counseling services, assessments or treatment services or performing administrative, organizational analysis or budgetary experience in a child welfare, social service, juvenile justice and/or residential setting; Two (2) years of which were lead or supervisory in one or more elements

of a comprehensive child welfare, social service, juvenile justice and/or residential system. Possession of an advanced degree in a related field may be substituted for one of the years of experience outlined above.

TRAINING: Each new child welfare case manager is required to attend extensive training to fulfill the requirement outlined by NAC 432B.090. Each full-time field case manager participates in a ten to twelve week Child Welfare Training Academy facilitated in collaboration with DFS and Nevada Partnership for Training which is an extension of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

- **Demographic information on current staff and recent hires.**

CCDFS presently does not track the above information. The hiring process is instituted by CCDFS Central Human Resources Department. CCDFS planned to develop a new survey tool that could be administered to all existing and newly arriving staff in FY 14, but was unable to implement the survey due to staffing challenges. CCJFS plans to revisit implementation of the survey during FY 16.

- **Training provided to new child welfare workers to ensure competencies identified:**

NRS 432B.195, 432B.397, and NAC 432B.090 require the state to provide a full staff development and training program which includes a minimum of 40 hours of training related to the principles and practices of child welfare services, including specific training related to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

- **Salaries.**

Salaries for CCDFS Family Services Specialists, Senior Family Services Specialists and Family Services Specialist Supervisors range from \$45,000 to \$87,000

- **Caseload size depending on the child welfare program (i.e. intake, reunification)** Investigations: 19 cases per investigator; In-Home: 5 cases per In-Home Specialist and Permanency: 13 cases per Permanency specialist.

- **How ongoing training is selected and provided to ensure the competencies of caseworker, supervisors, managers and administrators:**

Executive Management selects trainings that will increase staff's knowledge of safety, permanency and well-being.

- **How skill development of new and experienced staff is measured;**

Skill development of new staff is assessed throughout their attendance in the Child Welfare Training Academy through the use of post-tests and fidelity assessments. New staff is also issued a performance evaluation at the conclusion of their probationary or qualifying period. Skill development and performance of existing staff is also measured annually through performance evaluations.

## **WCDSS Child Welfare Protective Services Workforce:**

For SFY 2015 WCDSS reports their agency has approximately 99 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, Case Management, Adoption, Licensing and Training filled with 5 vacancies. Additionally, there are approximately 27 Supervisory/Management positions filled with 1 vacancy. WCDSS reports the following caseload ratios: Assessment 1:12 and in-home and out-of-home Case Management 1:22. Supervisor ratios are 1:5 in Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) and 1:6 in Usual Permanency Services (UPS)/Assessment (pairs). WCDSS reports a turnover rate of approximately 6.2% annually. Staff separations during this reporting period included, 3 retirements, 1 dismissal, 3 promotions and 3 voluntary resignations.

### ***Additional WCDSS Workforce Information:***

- **How staff are recruited and selected :**

The most successful recruiting tool is hiring child welfare interns from the University of Nevada, Reno. Other

successful recruitment strategies include staff recommendations. WCDSS partners with the County Human Resources department regarding vacancy recruitment and the County utilizes web-based postings. The selection process includes a pre-selection interview requiring candidates to complete two activities: 1) watch a video clip of a parent/child interaction and documenting as if it was a home visit; and 2) candidates are presented a placement scenario and are required to draft a letter to the Department Director regarding their recommendation for or against placement. Candidates who pass the screening interview are asked to watch a video developed by Maricopa County, AZ regarding the "day in a life" of a CPS worker. Candidates then are interviewed by a panel of 3-4 supervisory staff that have been trained on proper interview techniques. Candidates are required to complete a self-assessment of their competency in functional areas critical to the position. Candidates are then force-ranked by the panel and recommendations for hire are presented to the Division Director who then checks references to include a recent supervisor. Interview questions are behavior-based and include real life scenarios including viewing dirty home pictures and making assessment observations.

- **Degrees and certifications required for your agency child welfare workers and professionals responsible for the management of cases and child welfare staff**

- All case management staff are required to have a bachelor's degree, Social Work preferred or related to Social Work.

- **Demographic information on current staff and recent hires.**

- Bachelor of Social Work (BSW): **42 not including supervisors**

- Title IV-E supported BSW: **9**

- Master of Social Work (MSW): **13**

- Title IV-E supported MSW: **2**

- Other Degree: **14**

- **Years of child welfare experience or other related experience working with children and families.**

Unavailable

- **Race/Ethnicity**

Asian/Pacific Islander - 5%

Hispanic - 9.3%

White/Not Hispanic Origin - 81.4%

American Indian/Alaskan - 1.4%

Black/Not Hispanic Origin - 2.9%

- **Salaries:**

Case Manager I \$48,380 - 62,961.60

Case Manager II \$ 51,771.20 - 67,246.40

Social Services Director \$116,064.00 - 150,820.80

Social Services Supervisor \$64,500.80 - 83,824.00

Social Worker I \$48,380.80 - 62,961.60

Social Worker II \$51,771.20 - 67,246.40

Social Worker III \$57,366.40 - 74,588.80

- **Position Types:** Social Worker, Case Manager

- **Training provided to new child welfare workers to ensure competencies identified:**

NRS 432B.195, 432B.397, and NAC 432B.090 require the state to provide a full staff development and training program which includes a minimum of 40 hours of training related to the principles and practices of child welfare services, including specific training related to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). All newly hired staff must attend at a minimum the 10 week Core Competency training through the Nevada Training Partnership. All newly hired staff are assigned to a specialized training unit for generally six months and are assigned to one of three Senior Social Workers trainers.

### **Caseload size depending on the child welfare program (i.e. intake, reunification)**

1:12 Assessment 1:22 out of home/in home.

- Information related to tracking staff turnover and vacancy rates.
  - Retirements; **3**
  - Dismissals: **1**
  - Lateral or promotional moves: **2**
  - Voluntary resignation: **3**
- Supervisor-to-Worker Ratios:1:5 PII, 1:6 UPS/Assessment (paired units)

### **DCFS Rural Region Child Welfare Protection Workforce:**

For SFY 2015 the DCFS Rural Region reports their agency has approximately 60 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, and Licensing filled with 14 vacancies. Additionally, there are approximately 15 Supervisory/Management positions filled with 2 vacancies. The DCFS Rural Region reports caseload ratios: Investigations 1:15, Out-of- Home Case Management 1:24. Case Managers in smaller satellite offices who carry a combined caseload (Investigations and out-of-home cases) have a 1:28 caseload. The average number of cases is between 22 and 24 although some caseloads in frontier offices can routinely be higher, due to an increased need and hard to fill vacancies. Although caseworkers may have a specific area of concentration, they are generalist, and as such perform all necessary child welfare functions such as; Emergency on Call Response, CPS assessment and Substitute Care.

Of the 10 filled Supervisor positions: two (2) have 1:6 ratios; three (3) have a 1:7 ratio; three (3) have a 1:8 ratio and two (2) have a 1:10 ratio. It should be noted that three (3) supervisors have to travel anywhere from 1.5 to 3 hours to reach the offices they supervise. Supervisors do not normally carry a caseload, although currently many are carrying caseloads. Also, with vacancies in many offices some supervisors carry a caseload in addition to their supervisory requirement until new staff can be hired and trained. DCFS Rural Region reports a turnover rate of approximately 29%. During this reporting period 22 staff retired, resigned or were dismissed from probation. Additionally there have been 13 promotions/hires.

### ***Additional DCFS Rural Region Child Welfare Protection Workforce Information:***

- **How staff are recruited and selected:**

Staff are recruited on the State of Nevada Personnel website on an ongoing basis and social work positions are posted nationally at all Universities with a Social Work Program, on Craig's List and regionally at the University of Nevada-Reno and Las Vegas Campuses. Staff is selected through an interview process, verification of references and ability to obtain and maintain Nevada Social Work Licensure

- **Degrees and certifications required for your agency child welfare workers and professionals responsible for the management of cases and child welfare staff:**

All DCFS child welfare staff are required to have a BSW or an MSW and are required to hold current licensure by the Nevada Social Worker Board of Examiners.

- **Demographic information on current staff and recent hires. For example:**

- Educational Degrees, such as the number of child welfare workers with a:

- Bachelor of Social Work (BSW): **48**
- Title IV-E supported BSW **14**
- Master of Social Work (MSW): **9**
- Title IV-E supported MSW; or **2**
- Other Degree: **1** BS in Psychology

- **Years of child welfare experience or other related experience working with children and**

## **families**

Twenty eight (28) staff have between 1-5 years of experience; twelve (12) staff have between 6-10 years' experience, twelve (12) staff have between 11-20 years' experience and six (6) staff have 20 or more years' experience.

## **Race/Ethnicity**

We do not ask for/collect this information at hire.

## **Salaries:**

- It should be noted that due to the state's salary freezes staff hired in the last five years were hired at the entry level and have remained at the entry level. For Social Worker 1's -\$39,108.24 to \$57,712.32; Social Worker 2's - \$42,553.44 to \$63,099.36; Social Worker 3's -\$ 44,411.76 to \$66,001.68; Social Work Supervisors -\$48,462.48 to \$72,223.92; Social Service Managers -\$52,847.28 to \$79,114.32

- **Position Types:**

Social Workers: Intake, CPS in home and out of home, Permanency, Independent Living, ICPC, Adoption, Foster Care Licensing, Quality Assurance, Quality Assurance Supervisor, Social Work Supervisors, Social Service Managers

- **Training provided to new child welfare workers to ensure competencies identified:**

NRS 432B.195, 432B.397, and NAC 432B.090 require the state to provide a full staff development and training program which includes a minimum of 40 hours of training related to the principles and practices of child welfare services, including specific training related to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

Nevada Partnership for Training (NPT) Academy curriculum, a 10-week course that consists of five weeks of in-class instruction, complete with pre-reading assignments and homework with alternating weeks (5) of on-the-job training. Child Welfare supervisors must attend the Nevada New Worker CORE Orientation and are in communication with Nevada Partnership staff to discuss new workers understanding of concepts and proficiency of translating concepts to fieldwork

- **Caseload size depending on the child welfare program (i.e. intake, reunification)**

The DCFS Rural Region reports caseload ratios: Investigations 1:15, Out-of- Home Case Management 1:24. Case Managers in smaller satellite offices who carry a combined caseload (Investigations and out-of-home cases) have a 1:28 caseload. The average number of cases is between 22 and 24 although some caseloads in frontier offices can routinely be higher, due to an increased need and hard to fill vacancies. Although caseworkers may have a specific area of concentration, they are generalist, and as such perform all necessary child welfare functions such as; Emergency on Call Response, CPS assessment and Substitute Care.

### **How ongoing training is selected and provided to ensure the competencies of caseworker, supervisors, managers and administrators:**

The implementation of the SAFE Practice Model has been driving many of our training needs. The agency training needs were identified through The Nevada Partnership for Training (NPT); a partnership between the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and the Universities of Nevada Reno and Las Vegas provides training to the child welfare workforce and annually surveys caseworkers, supervisors and managers regarding potential training needs/topics to be developed and delivered. The findings of this survey serve as recommendations to leadership at the county and state level for future training.

- **How skill development of new and experienced staff is measured**

In their probationary year new workers are assessed by their supervisor at the three month, seven and eleven months and the Nevada Partnership for Training (NPT) trainers provide feedback to DCFS management when they believe concepts or competencies are not understood in the New Worker CORE training modules and in the on the job assignments. Experienced staff is evaluated on an annual basis by their supervisor or manager; periodic case reviews are completed by the Quality Assurance Unit to address staff competency and compliance.

### **Information related to tracking staff turnover and vacancy rates.**

- Retirements: 4
- Dismissals: 1

- Lateral or promotional moves: **6** lateral or promotional moves
- Voluntary resignation; **11** resignations

- **Supervisor-to-Worker Ratios:**

Of the 10 filled Supervisory positions; two have a 1:6 ratio; three (3) have a 1:7 ratio, three (3) have a 1:8 ratio and two (2) have a 1:10 ratio. It should also be noted that three (3) supervisors have to travel anywhere from 1.5 to 3 hours to reach the offices they supervise.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Citizens Review Panel Report

ATTACHMENT B: DCFS Response to Citizens Review Panel Report

ATTACHMENT C: Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan

ATTACHMENT D: Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan

ATTACHMENT E: Disaster Plan

ATTACHMENT F: Training Plan

ATTACHMENT G: Financial Information