



# **STATE OF NEVADA**

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



## **2016 ANNUAL PROGRESS SERVICES REPORT**

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## SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

### Nevada Demographics

#### *Geography, Climate and Population*

Nevada, also known as The Silver State, is located in the Western, Mountain West and Southwestern region of the United States of America which became the 36<sup>th</sup> state of the union on October 31, 1864. Nevada is made up of an area of 110,567 square miles, making it the 7<sup>th</sup> largest state geographically, the 35<sup>th</sup> most populated and the 9<sup>th</sup> least densely populated of the 50 United States. The land areas of Nevada make up 109,806 square miles and 761 square miles or 0.69% of Nevada is covered by water. Nevada is about 490 miles long and 320 miles wide. The highest point in Nevada is Boundary Peak, part of White Mountains, sitting at 13,147 feet above the sea level. The lowest point in Nevada is 479 feet above sea level at the Colorado River located at the southern end of the state. Major lakes in Nevada are Pyramid Lake, Lake Mead, Lake Mojave, Lake Tahoe and Walker Lake. Major rivers in Nevada are the Colorado River, Columbia River, Humboldt River and Truckee River. The Nevada landscape is represented by sandy deserts, rugged, snow covered mountains, forested mountain slopes, and grassy valleys. Located almost entirely within the Great Basin, Nevada can be divided into three main land regions; the Columbia Plateau, the Sierra Nevada, and the Basin and Range Region. The average temperatures in Nevada range from high of 104.5 degrees Fahrenheit to a low of 19.5 degrees Fahrenheit. The highest temperature recorded in Nevada is 125 degrees Fahrenheit. This record high was recorded on June 29, 1994 in Laughlin. The lowest temperature in Nevada, -50 degrees Fahrenheit, was recorded on January 8th, 1937 at San Jacinto. Nevada is the driest state in the United States. It is made up of mostly desert and semiarid climate regions. The average annual rainfall per year is about 7 inches.

Nevada was made famous by the 1859 discovery of the Comstock Lode, the richest known U.S. silver deposit. Nevada is the largest gold-producing state in the nation. It is second in the world behind South Africa. Nevada is the gambling and entertainment capital of the United States.

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 The United States Census Bureau July 1, 2015 estimates, the Nevada population was projected to be 2,890,845 for 2015<sup>2</sup> (an increase of 7.0% from the 2010 U.S. Census). Based on the July 1, 2015 estimate from the NV State Demographer<sup>3</sup>, the majority of Nevada's population is located in southern Nevada with Clark County at an estimated population of 2,118,353 or 73.1%. Washoe County is the next largest populated county, located in northern Nevada, with a population of 441,946 or 15.3%. The remaining population of 337,285 or 11.6% is spread across the 15 rural counties. Based on the September 30, 2015 Estimate from the NV State Demographer<sup>4</sup> Nevada's population has a varied racial background that has changed considerably from 2010 to 2015. Estimate reports that the majority of the population was White not of Hispanic Origin (53.3%), down from 55.7% in 2010; African Americans not of Hispanic Origin (8.5%) up from 8.1% in 2010; American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut not of Hispanic Origin (1.1%) down from 1.2% in 2010; Asian or Pacific Islander not of Hispanic Origin (8.9%) up from 8.4% in 2010. Hispanic Origin of any race population has increased by 12.9% over the last 5 years, growing from 26.6% in 2010 to 28.2% of Nevada's total population in 2015. Based on the March 2016 Estimate from the NV State Demographer, expected population in Nevada in 2016 is 2,926,703, an increase of 1.0% from 2015.

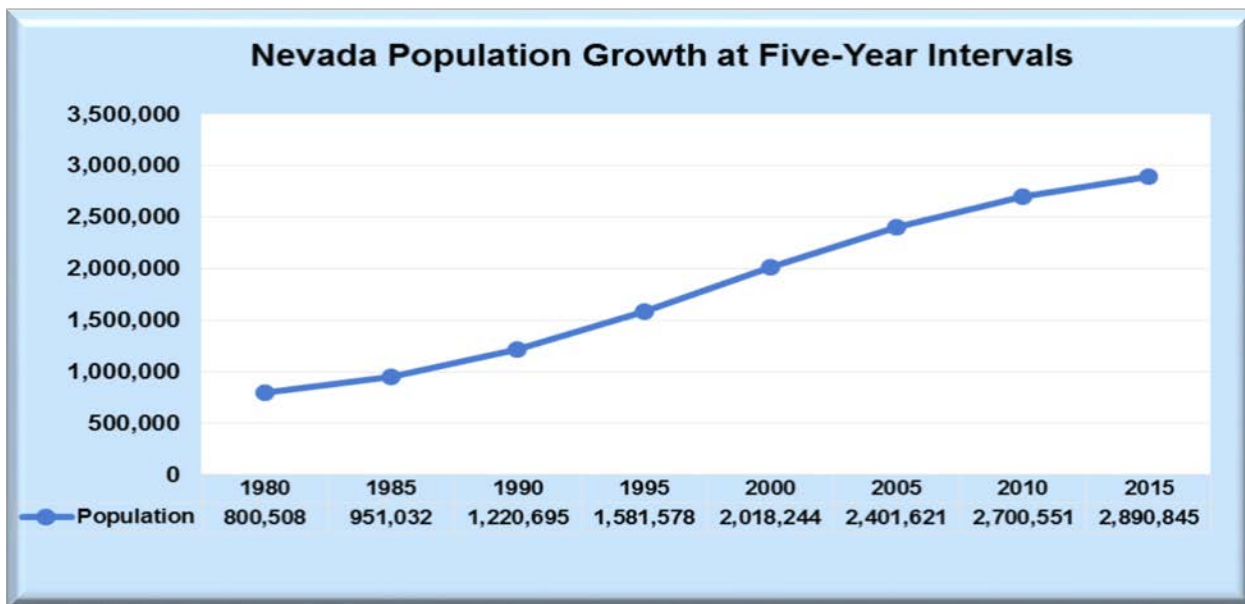
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<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau (2010). [www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/32](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/32) retrieved May 6, 2016

<sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau (2010). [www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/32](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/32) retrieved May 6, 2016

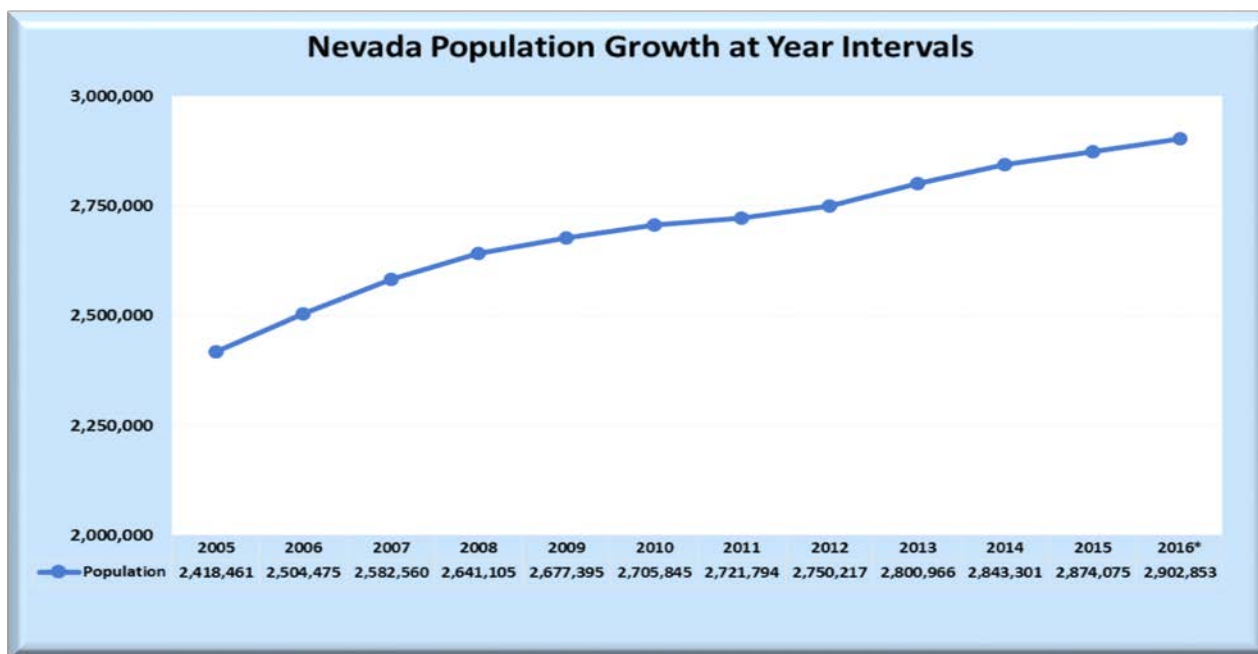
<sup>3</sup> [http://tax.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/taxnvgov/Content/TaxLibrary/Governor\\_Certified\\_Population\\_2015.pdf](http://tax.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/taxnvgov/Content/TaxLibrary/Governor_Certified_Population_2015.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://tax.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/taxnvgov/Content/TaxLibrary/2015\\_ASRHO\\_Estimates\\_and\\_Projections.pdf](http://tax.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/taxnvgov/Content/TaxLibrary/2015_ASRHO_Estimates_and_Projections.pdf)



Source: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

Figure 1.1 Nevada Population growths from 2005 to 2015.



\*Based on State Demographer 2015 Estimate

Figure 1.2 Nevada Population growths at year intervals.



## Economy and Trends

The following information is from the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), Economy in Brief, March 2016, Economic Summary, on p.1, p.10 & p11:

For the 63rd consecutive month, non-farm jobs grew in the Silver State on a year-over-year basis. In March, Nevada payrolls increased by 35,500 jobs, for a growth rate of 2.8 percent, relative to the same month last year. Additionally, this is the 44th month in a row that year over year job growth in the Silver State has outpaced the nation. For the month, there was a seasonally adjusted increase of 6,500 jobs, relative to February. We expected payrolls (not adjusted for seasonality) to increase by 4,400 this month, but 10,900 jobs were actually added, leading to the seasonally adjusted increase. Specifically, the private sector added 5,800 jobs to payrolls, seasonally adjusted, while the public sector added 700 jobs over the month.

The construction super sector continues to have the highest percentage growth rate, up 9.1 percent with the addition of 5,900 jobs year-to-date, relative to the first three months of last year. Trade/transportation/utilities employment experienced the largest nominal growth this month, adding 9,200 jobs to payrolls year-to-date, for a growth rate of 3.9 percent. Mining and logging, the only sector to contract, continued to trend downward through the early months of this year, off 800 jobs from last year.

The job growth figures typically reported in our Overview represent the net effect of thousands of individual labor market “transactions.” In any given quarter, in excess of 100,000 jobs may be gained and/or lost in Nevada. The Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Business Employment Dynamics (BED) series offers insight into these transactions and allows us to examine gross job gains and losses from a variety of different perspectives, albeit on a lagged basis, and provides insight into labor market “churn.”

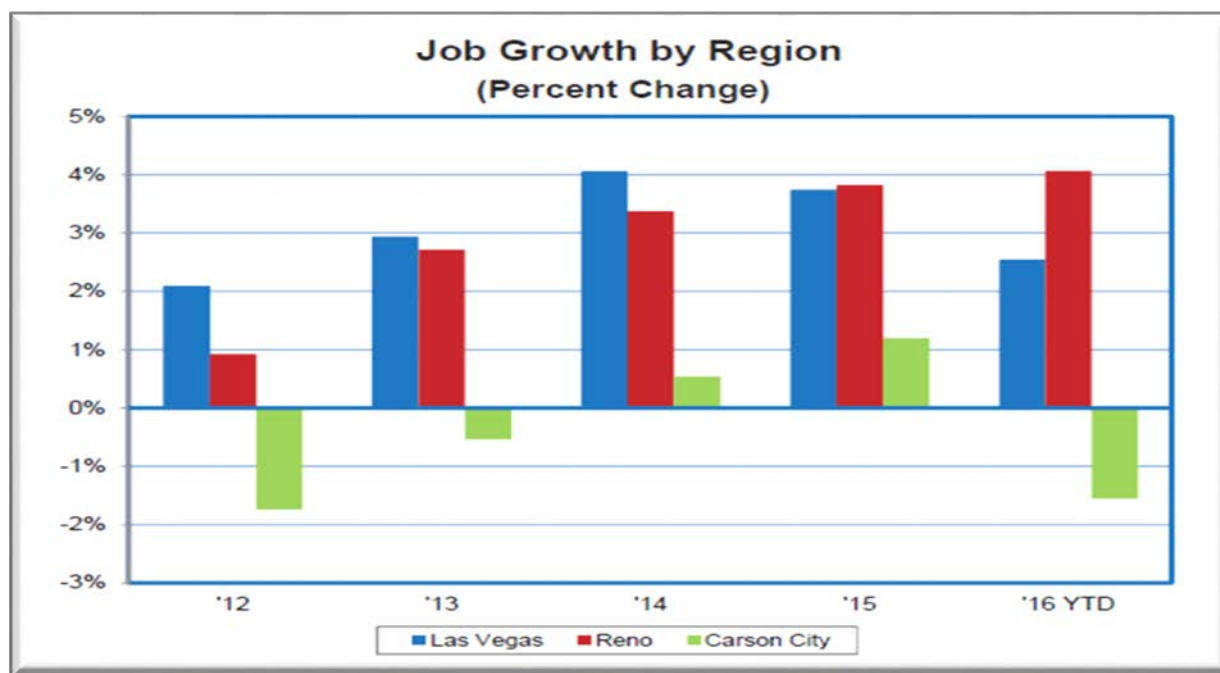


Figure 1.3 Nevada percent change of job growth from 2012 through 2016 YTD.

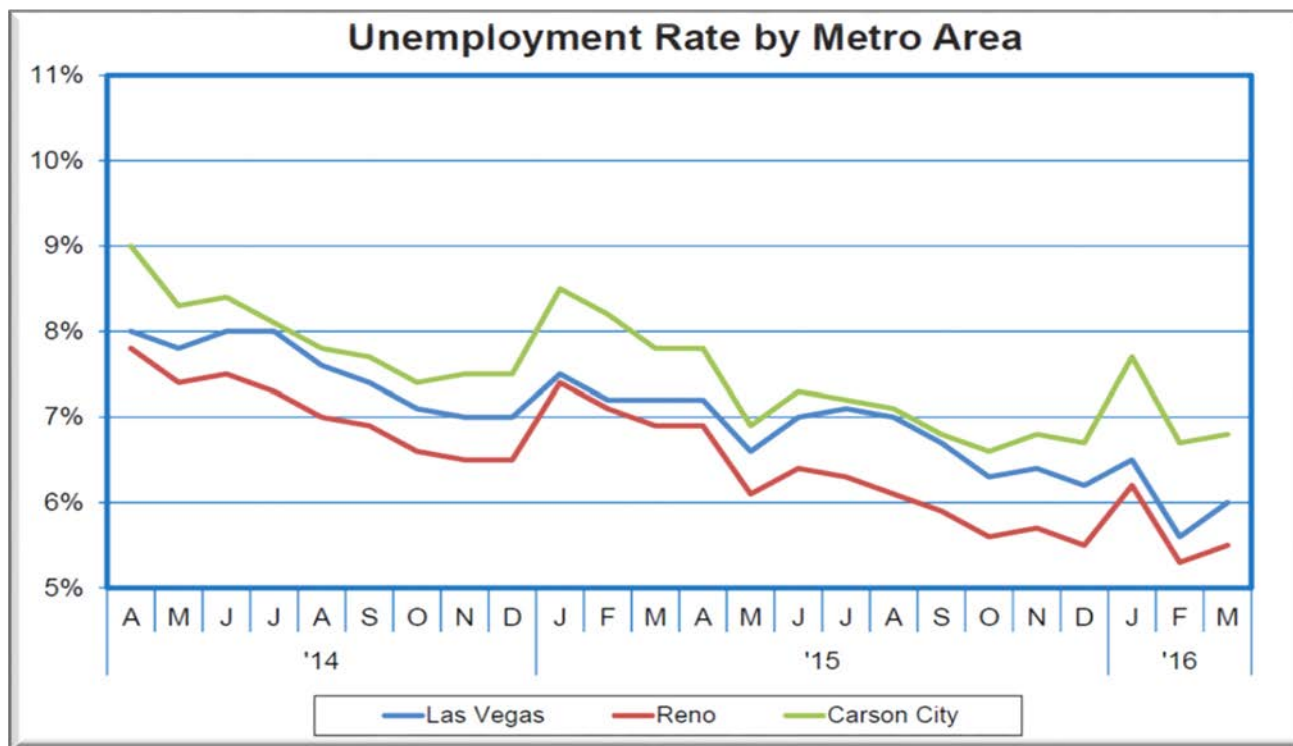


Figure 1.4 Nevada monthly unemployment rate April 2014 through March 2016 YTD.

## Welfare Indicators

The following information is extracted from the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Welfare and Supportive Services [https://dwss.nv.gov/Home/Features/Budget\\_CaseloadStats/](https://dwss.nv.gov/Home/Features/Budget_CaseloadStats/)

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 of 2016, 26,707 individuals were receiving assistance. Since January of last year, the level of assistance decreased by 12.75 percent, or 3,902 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 January of 2016, 439,141 Nevadans participated in the program. Over the year, the number of participants receiving assistance increased 6.57 percent or 27,085 more participants.



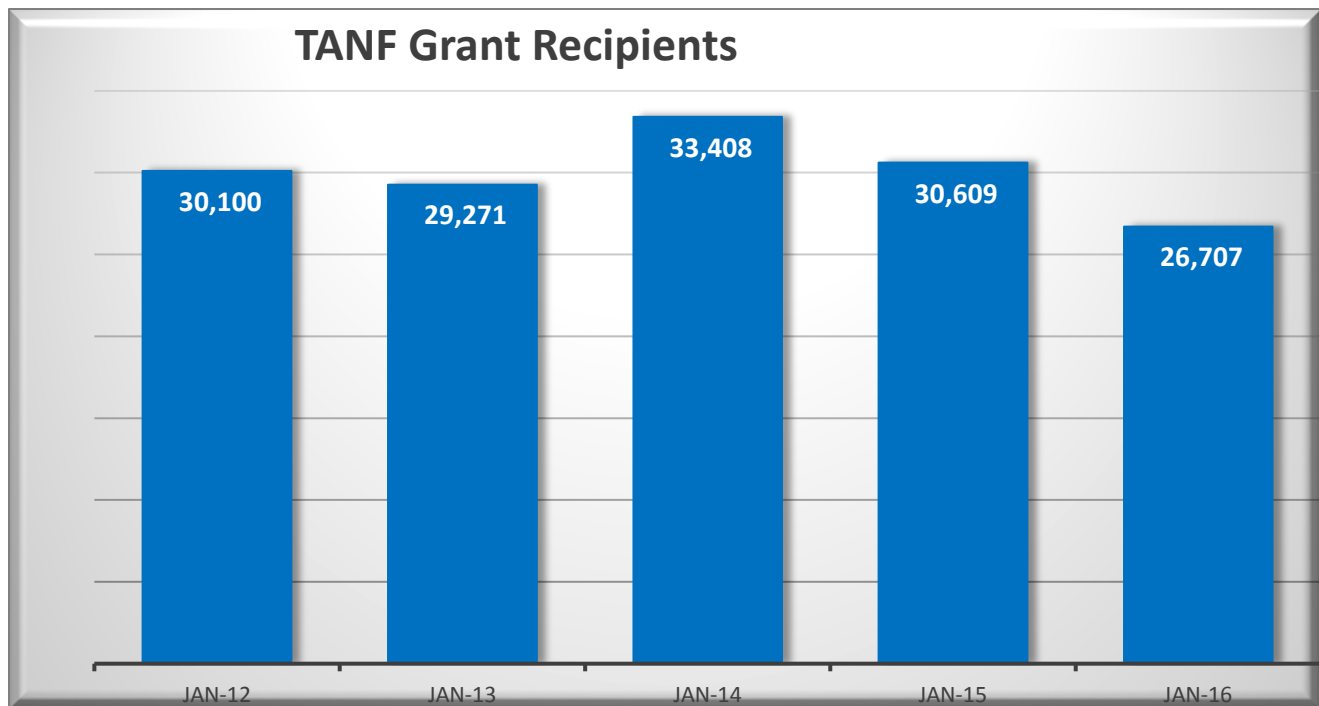


Figure 1.5 Nevada TANF grant recipients each January from January 2012 through January 2016.

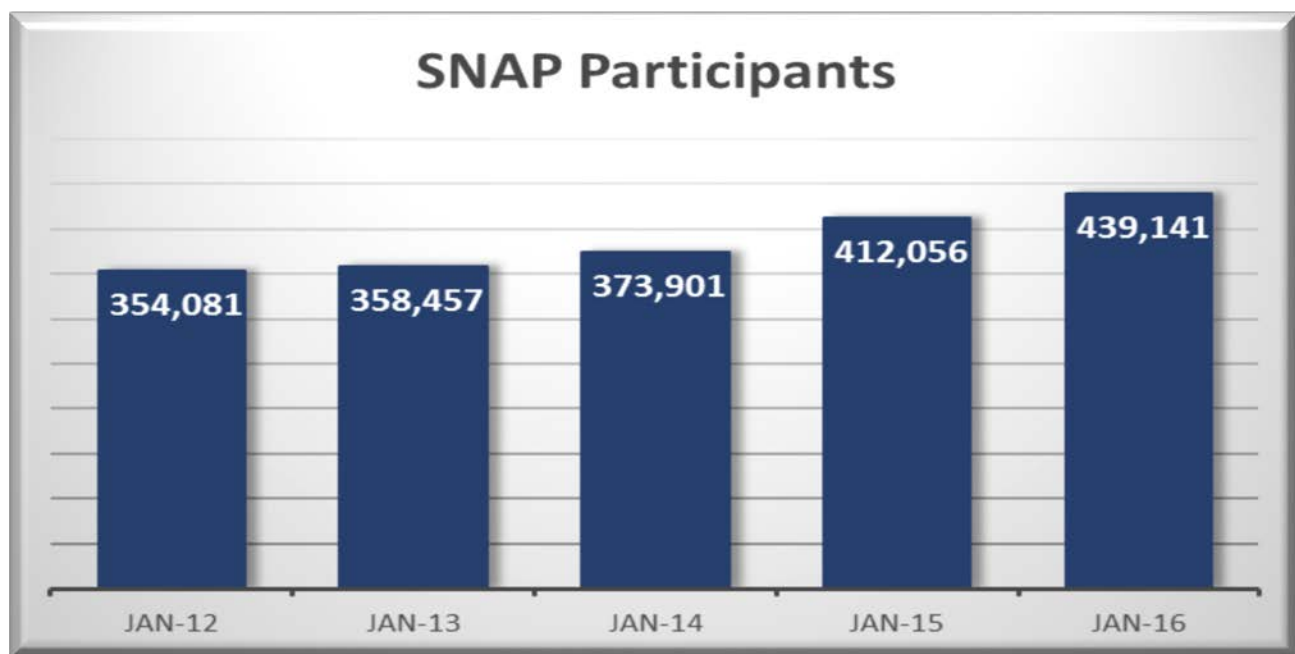


Figure 1.6 Nevada SNAP participants each January from January 2012 through January 2016.

## **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 operates child welfare services. The Nevada Division of Child and Family Services, under the umbrella of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, provides 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 disturbance. 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

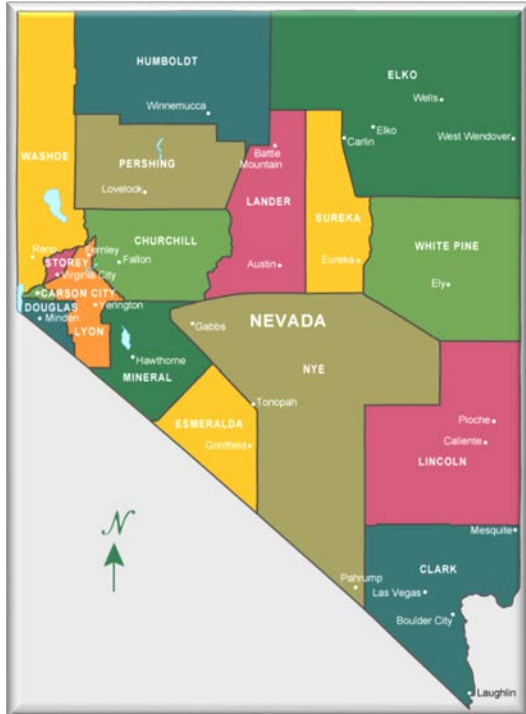
Service principles guide our work towards achieving this vision and are consistent with children and family services principles specified in federal regulations [45 CFS 1355.25(a) through 1355.25(h)]. These practice model principles are:

- 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 solving 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 thereby preventing the breakup of the family where the prevention of child removal is desirable and possible;*

*Restoring families, reunifying' children with their parents, who have been removed and may be safely returned, through 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 1.7 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 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.

### **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. . 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 518 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, and Licensing with 56 vacancies statewide. Additionally, statewide there are approximately 115 Supervisory/Management child welfare positions filled and 14 vacancies.

**Clark County Department of Family Services:** For State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2016 CCDFS reports their agency has approximately 360 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, and Licensing filled with 31 vacancies. Additionally, there are approximately 65 Supervisory/Management positions filled with 11 vacancies. CCDFS reports the following caseload ratios: Investigations 1:15, and Permanency Case Management 1:12. Supervisor ratios to staff are 1:6 in Investigations, and 1:6 in Permanency Case Management. CCDFS reports a turnover rate for SFY 16 as 9.5%. Staff separations during this reporting period included 8 retirements and 21 dismissals. There were approximately 64 promotions, 18 Transfers, and 53 voluntary resignations.

**Washoe County Department of Social Services:** For SFY 2016 WCDSS reports their agency has approximately 91 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, and Licensing filled with 5 vacancies. Additionally, there are approximately 33 Supervisory/Management positions filled with 1 vacancy. WCDSS reports the following caseload ratios: Assessment 1:12 and In-home/ Out-of-home Case Management 1:22. Supervisor ratios to staff are 1:5. WCDSS reports a turnover rate for SFY 16 as 15%. Staff separations during this reporting period included 0 retirements, 0 dismissal, 9 promotions or laterals and 5 voluntary resignations.

**DCFS Rural Region:** For SFY 2016 the DCFS Rural Region reports their agency has approximately 67 child welfare

positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, and Licensing filled with 20 vacancies. Additionally, there are approximately 17 Supervisory/Management positions filled with 2 vacancies. The DCFS Rural Region reports caseload ratios: Investigations 1:15, In-home/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.

Supervisor ratio to staff are as follows: one Supervisor has a 1:3 ratio; seven have a 1:4 ratio; four have a 1:5 ratio and three have a 1:6 ratio. The DCFS Rural Region reports a turnover rate for SFY 16 as approximately 25%. Staff separations during the reporting included 1 retirement, 0 dismissals, 1 transfer, 8 lateral or promotional moves and 7 resignations.

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

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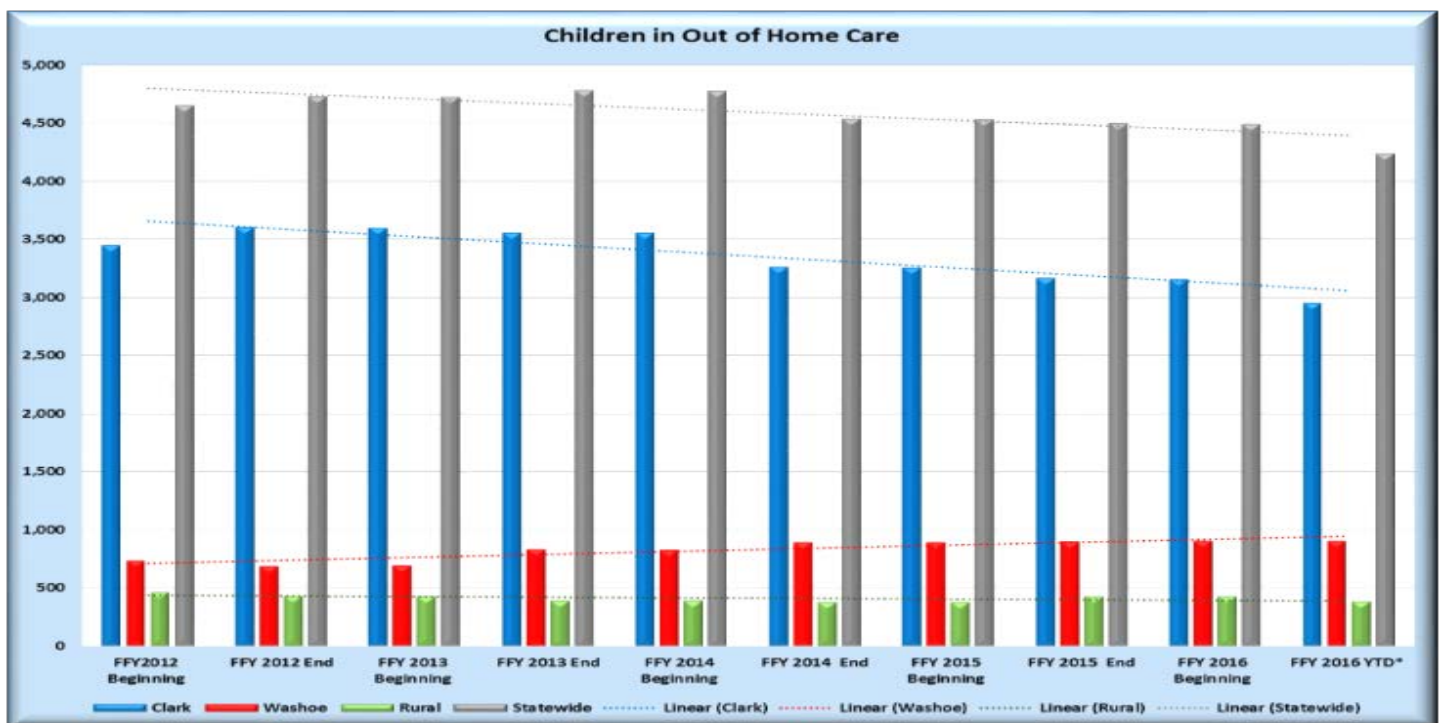
## Children in Out of Home Care in Nevada

The following Table 1.1 illustrates the number of children in out of home placement on 10/1 and 9/30 of each year. Statewide there was a 3.5% **decrease** of children in out of home care from 10/1/2011 until 10/1/2015. From 10/1/2011 and 10/1/2015 CCDFS has experienced an 8.5% **decrease**, WCDSS has experienced a 22.5% **increase**, and the DCFS Rural Region has experienced a 7.7% **decrease**.

**Table 1.1**

**Children in out of home care.**

County	10/1/2011	9/30/2012	10/1/2012	9/30/2013	10/1/2013	9/30/2014	10/1/2014	9/30/2015	10/1/2015	5/31/2016*
Clark	3,451	3,605	3,602	3,558	3,558	3,264	3,257	3,171	3,159	2,952
Washoe	738	693	695	832	827	896	896	900	904	909
Rural	465	432	429	394	394	382	382	429	429	383
Statewide	4,654	4,730	4,726	4,784	4,779	4,542	4,535	4,500	4,492	4,244



Note: The children in out of home care on 5/31/2016 represents 10/1/2015 to 5/31/2016 YTD numbers.

*Figure 1.8 Children in out of home care.*



## Legislative Activities

Nevada's Legislature meets every biennium. The following are a list of Bills in Table 1.1 that were introduced during the 78<sup>th</sup> regular session in February, 2015. Nevada will enter its' 79<sup>th</sup> regular session in February, 2017.

**Table 1.2 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, permanence, 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 three 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 2016.

### **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 CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators Workbook was provided by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) using a new federal measurement methodology. The ACF has not provided Nevada with a new Data Profile using the new measurement methodology. Table 2.1 illustrates the workbook data for FY 11, 12 and 13 and the Observed Performance of 8.12, 9.53 and 7.69 victimizations per 100,000 days in care. While 7.69 was below the national standard in FY 2013 it was indicated in the workbook that Nevada would need to achieve an Observed Performance of 7.21 to have avoided a PIP.

This year Nevada has worked with the Capacity Building Center for States to replicate the Safety measures methodology using Nevada's NCANDS data. Nevada is now able to internally replicate the National Standards. Table 2.1A provides data for FYs 2014 and 2015. This data indicates that Nevada is currently meeting the national standard for abuse in care.

**Table 2.1**

#### ***CFSR Round Three Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators ACF Workbook (using new methodology)***

Federal Performance Measure	National <sup>5</sup> Standard	Data Source	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI <sup>6</sup>	RSP	Upper CI
Maltreatment in foster care	8.50	NCANDS FY 2011	↓	8.12			
Maltreatment in foster care	8.50	NCANDS FY 2012	↓	9.53			
Maltreatment in foster care	8.50	NCANDS FY 2013	↓	7.69	8.74	10.37	12.31

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

<sup>5</sup> National Standard = victimizations per 100,000 days in care

<sup>6</sup> Confidence Interval

**Table 2.1A**

***Nevada Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators DCFS FPO originated (using new methodology)***

<b>Federal Performance Measure</b>	<b>National Standard</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Direction of Strength</b>	<b>Observed Performance FFY 2015</b>
Maltreatment in foster care	8.50	NCANDS FY 2014	↓	6.20
Maltreatment in foster care	8.50	NCANDS FY 2015	↓	4.43

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 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 a negative connotation and this deters families from participating. QPI is an effort to rebrand foster care, not simply by changing a logo 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 2.2**

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

<b>Measures/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 victimization rate per day of children in foster care. Source: ACF NV Data Profile	8.50 National Standard <i>(Reduction is positive)</i>	7.39-FY 2013	MET 6.20 FY 2014 4.43 FY 2015	currently met
Increase the timeliness of Investigations for out-of-home cases. Source: Case Record Reviews	Review Policy during SFY 2016	70%	72%	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. Source: Case Record Reviews	90%	58%	60%	Set in SFY 2017 and reported in 2018/19 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 2017 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 <i>Completed and on-going</i>	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. Capacity enhancement of DR to serve children under the age of five will 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 improved on caseworker visits but needs to continue this focus over the next four years.

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

**Table 2.3**

#### ***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: NV Data Profile	9.1 National Standard <i>(Reduction is positive)</i>	6.0%-FY 2012	MET at 6.0% FY 2013-5.4% FY 2014 4.0%	Currently met
Develop a report that measures the number of children served age five and under by DR.	Develop Report during FFY 2017 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]	[Data not yet available]	Set in SFY 2017 APSR
Increase the timeliness of Investigations for in home cases. Source: Case Record Reviews	90%	71%	73%	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	90%	50%	52%	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 2017 Evidence=report	NA	NA	NA
The number/percentage of children being served with in-home services statewide and by jurisdiction		TBD	Set in SFY 2017 APSR	Set in SFY 2018 APSR
Develop a UNITY Report for the courts that track the number of children on in-home	Develop Report during SFY 2017	NA	NA	NA

non-judicial safety plans and once developed provide to the courts quarterly.	Evidence=Report			
Out-of- Home Safety Plan discussion will be a standing agenda item for the Community Improvement Council (CIC)	CIC Agenda = Evidence <i>Completed-ongoing</i>	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 among 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 Building Center for States is now responsible for TA. Nevada has recently been working with the Capacity Building Center for States; however, this was not targeted for TA as a result of the Capacity Building Center for States Assessment conducted in April 2016 and approved by the Children's Bureau in June 2016.*

*\*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 2.4**

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

<b>Data Measures/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Benchmark Timetable</b>	<b>Data Baseline</b>	<b>Project Goal FY 16/17</b>	<b>Goal FY 18/19</b>
Increase efforts to assess children's educational needs initially and ongoing. Source: Case Record Reviews	90%	76%	78%	Set in SFY 2017 and reported in 2018/19 APSR
Redesign the UNITY educational windows.	Convene a workgroup during FFY 2017 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)	<i>DELETED<sup>7</sup></i>	<i>DELETED</i>	<i>DELETED</i>	<i>DELETED</i>
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 <i>Completed</i>	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 2017 Evidence=report	NA	NA	NA
Develop a UNITY Report that will measure educational moves of children in foster care.	Develop Report during SFY 2017 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 2017 APSR	Set in SFY 2018 APSR
The percentage/number of youth within 90 days of turning 18 who have Transition Plans.	Report modification required SFY 2017	Data not yet available]	Set in SFY 2017 APSR	Set in SFY 2018 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 2017 Evidence=report	[Data not yet available]	Set in SFY 2017 APSR	Set in SFY 2018 APSR
Increase the percentage of children who receive a comprehensive EPSTD assessment within 30 days of entry into foster care.	[Data not yet available]	[Data not yet available]	Set in SFY 2017 APSR	Set in SFY 2018 APSR
Develop a UNITY Report to measure if children and youth in out-of-home care	Develop Report during FFY 2017	NA	NA	NA

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

receive on-going annual medical exams.	Evidence=report			
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 2017 APSR	Set in SFY 2018 APSR
Develop a UNITY Report to measure if children/youth in foster care are receiving on-going annual dental exams.	Develop Report during FFY 2017 Evidence=report	NA	NA	NA
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 2017 APSR	Set in SFY 2018 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	95%	93.62% (FY 2015)	95%	95%
Increase efforts to assess the needs and services of children, parents and foster parents. Source: Case Record Reviews	90%	50%	52%	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	90%	42%	44%	Set in SFY 2017 and reported in 2018/19 APSR
Increase the frequency and quality of contacts with parents. Source: Case Record Reviews	90%	44%	46%	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 <i>Completed</i>	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 2.5**

***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 2017 Evidence= revised gap analysis TA Provided by Capacity Building Center for States	NA	NA	NA
Number of dedicated Case Reviewer Staff	In FFY 2015 Evidence – list of dedicated Reviewers	Current List =38 ( 16 are from CCDFS )	6/2016 46 have CFSR Training Certificates Goal 45-50 range	Goal -50-60
Re-design the Case Review Process	In FFY 2017 Evidence=written revised process	NA	NA	NA
Develop a statewide CQI policy	In FFY 2017 Evidence=written policy	NA	NA	NA
Develop/Correct/Increase the number of UNITY performance reports	Review Reports in FFY 2017	NA	NA	NA

	Evidence=report index updated with date of development/corrected reports			
<b>Courts:</b> Prototype developed and approved for production.	CIP Select Committee approval of prototype. <i>COMPLETE: CIP approved prototype July 18, 2014</i>	NA	NA	NA
<b>Courts:</b> Adjust reporting framework	Selection of a preferred framework that will provide user friendly reports. <i>COMPLETE: Framework Selected in SFY 2015</i>	NA	NA	NA
<b>Courts:</b> Implement ongoing feed from UNITY/COURT	Data flows into CCI without error. To be completed in SFY 2017	NA	Data from pilot court flows into CCI, waiting UNITY	NA
<b>Courts:</b> Develop additional reports and data sources	All necessary reports developed and approved by judiciary. To be completed in SFY 2017	NA	NA	NA
<b>Courts:</b> Expand to other judicial districts	Judicial Districts who wish to participate are included. To be completed in SFY 2017	NA	10 <sup>th</sup> JD is Rural Pilot	NA
<b>Courts:</b> Provide training on how to use the dashboards.	Judiciary trained. To be completed in SFY 2017	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, and Nevada generated data profile in Table 2.7A. However, placement stability continues to be an *area needing improvement* in Table 2.7 and table 2.7A.

Table 2.6

#### CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators Workbook

Federal Performance (Permanency)	National Standard	Data Sources	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI	RSP	Upper CI
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.5%	AFCARS 11B & 12A	↑	42.5%	39.9%	41.8%	43.6%
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12-24	43.7%	AFCARS 13B &	↑	53.6%	47.3%	49.8%	52.3%

months		14A					
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>8</sup>	AFCARS 13B & 14A	↓	5.99	6.11	6.35	6.6

Source: CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators Workbook  
Green Shading = Meets Standard; Red Shading = Below Standard

**Table 2.6.A**

***Nevada Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators DCFS FPO originated (using new methodology)***

Federal Performance (Permanency)	National Standard	Data Sources	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.5%	AFCARS 14B & 15A	↑	45.6%
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12-24 months	43.7%	AFCARS 15B & 16A	↑	53.5%
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more	30.3%	AFCARS 15B & 16A	↑	44.6%
Placement Stability	4.12 moves	AFCARS 15B & 16A	↓	6.23

**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**

*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 that children are receiving 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 5.4.1** Continue 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.

<sup>8</sup> Moves per 1,000 Days

## **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 2.7**

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

<b>Measure/Benchmark</b>	<b>Benchmark Timetable</b>	<b>Data Baseline</b>	<b>Projected Goal FY 16/17</b>	<b>Goal FY18/19</b>
Increase placement stability of children in foster care. ( Source: ACF NV Data Profile)	4.12 moves	5.99	4.12	Set in SFY 2016 APSR if not meeting
Reduce the re-entry of children into foster care. Source: (ACF NV Data Profile)	8.3% <i>(Reduction is positive)</i>	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. source: case reviews	71.4% (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
<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 median days	Goal-610 median days Met-581 median days in FY 2015 and 561 median days in 1 <sup>st</sup> QTR 2016	Goal Met-594

### **Implementation Supports:**

Implementation supports have not changed since the last report in the 2015 APSR. During future TA provided by the Capacity Building Center for States it is anticipated that specific implementation supports will be identified. Currently to promote successful implementation of all the goals and objectives there continues to be a need for 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 three 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 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 and UNITY for permanency related report, 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. During this reporting period there have been discussions around purchasing COGNOS for the northern part of the State. Also, recently there has been some recent discussions around the new federal regulations related to the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) requirements.

## **Program Support:**

### ***Training and Technical Assistance***

Action for Child Protection (ACTION) is under contact with CCDFS and continues training and technical assistance to CCDFS as it relates to implementation of the Nevada Safety Model known as Safety Intervention Permanency System (SIPS) in Clark County. Nevada's Safety model requires Permanency Specialists to be skilled in the use of Motivational Interviewing. The first of these trainings was trained in December 2015 to Permanency Specialists in Clark County.

WCDSS fully implemented the SAFE model during this reporting period through support of the Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII). A sixth year extension of the PII has allowed for additional coaching and consultation with ACTION through September 2016.

DCFS Rural Region plans to continue to build its fidelity to the SAFE model by contracting with ACTION to provide additional consultation training and coaching to supervisor through the region.

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

The Capacity Building Center for States completed Nevada's State Assessment for TA in the spring of this year. The following needs have been identified for TA that is scheduled for implementation on July 1, 2016.

1. Support for the Implementation of Continuous Quality Improvement System.
  - (a) Identify the best practices in a comprehensive CQI system.
  - (b) Form teams to guide the change process, facilitate communication, and perform tasks.
2. Support Expansion of Differential Response.
  - (a) Clarify needs, problems, and/or outcomes that need to be addressed.
3. Support the Development and Implementation of a Comprehensive Training, Coaching, Mentoring System.
  - (a) Identify, research, and select from possible solutions.

The activities to accomplish these were recently approved by the Children's Bureau, and are scheduled for implementation on July 1, 2016.

Additionally, Nevada needs TA from the Children's Bureau on the CAPTA requirements as it relates to the "plan of safe care".

### ***Evaluation***

Nevada is not currently involved as a state in any national evaluation or research activities. WCDSS continued implementation of the SAFE model through support of the Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) under a sixth year extension. The PII was 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.

Nevada continues the Specialized Foster Care program that is being evaluated by DCFS. In WCDSS and the DCFS Rural Region, the program 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 program in CCDFS is being evaluated by a service provider, in collaboration with UNLV. The CCDFS program 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 is providing 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.

## ***Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Activities***

### CFSP Goal 2: Children will be safe in their own homes

#### 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 and Safety Intervention Permanency System (SIPS) by Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)*

In July of 2015, CCDFS implemented the Title IV-E waiver demonstration project, to reduce the historical model of out of home stays for children with the provision of safety intervention services to manage identified safety threats and keep children safe at home. Through the use of the Safety Intervention and Permanency (SIPS) System's family assessments, child welfare workers identify safety threats and determine when it is safe to implement an in-home safety plan. The waiver demonstration project allows Clark County to use flexible IV-E dollars to purchase in-home safety services from contracted community providers. As a systematic intervention, the practice model is connected by six assessments which result in decisions that move families through the intervention process: 1) Intake Assessment (IA) is the decision making method concerned with screening reports of threats to child safety and identifying agency response time; 2) The Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) identifies unsafe children and determines if families are in need of continuing services; the NIA includes 3) the Safety Assessment (SA) and 4) the Safety Plan Determination (SPD) which assesses how to achieve the least intrusive and most effective means for protecting children by "ruling in" or "ruling out" in-home safety management; 5) the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) occurs after a family is transferred to ongoing services and is a structured interactive assessment process that builds partnerships with caregivers in order to identify and seek agreement regarding what needs to change to protect and meet their children's needs; 6) the Protective Capacity Progress Assessment (PCPA) is the final assessment and is documented every 90 days following implementation of the case plan to measure progress related to what must change as identified in the case plan and evaluate the continuing approach to safety management.

The focus for the waiver is families where *Impending Danger* is identified which can be immediately ameliorated through a *Systematic Safety Intervention Process* via the use of in-home safety services. There are two specific target populations that are receiving safety management services. The first are families and children where impending danger is identified via the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) and where the Safety Plan Determination (SPD) justifies the use of an in-home safety plan. The second are children who are currently in out of home care, however, following reassessment of safety, the children's family meet the Conditions for Return (CFR) and the Safety Plan Determination justifies the use of an in-home safety plan.

The goal of the IV-E waiver demonstration is to decrease the number of children in foster care, increase the number of children served in home with intact families and decrease the length of stay, in out of home care.

To date, 88 families are being served in home with safety intervention services through the IV-E waiver and the SIPS model. In those 88 families there are 184 children being successfully and safely maintained at home with their families.

## 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 impending 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).

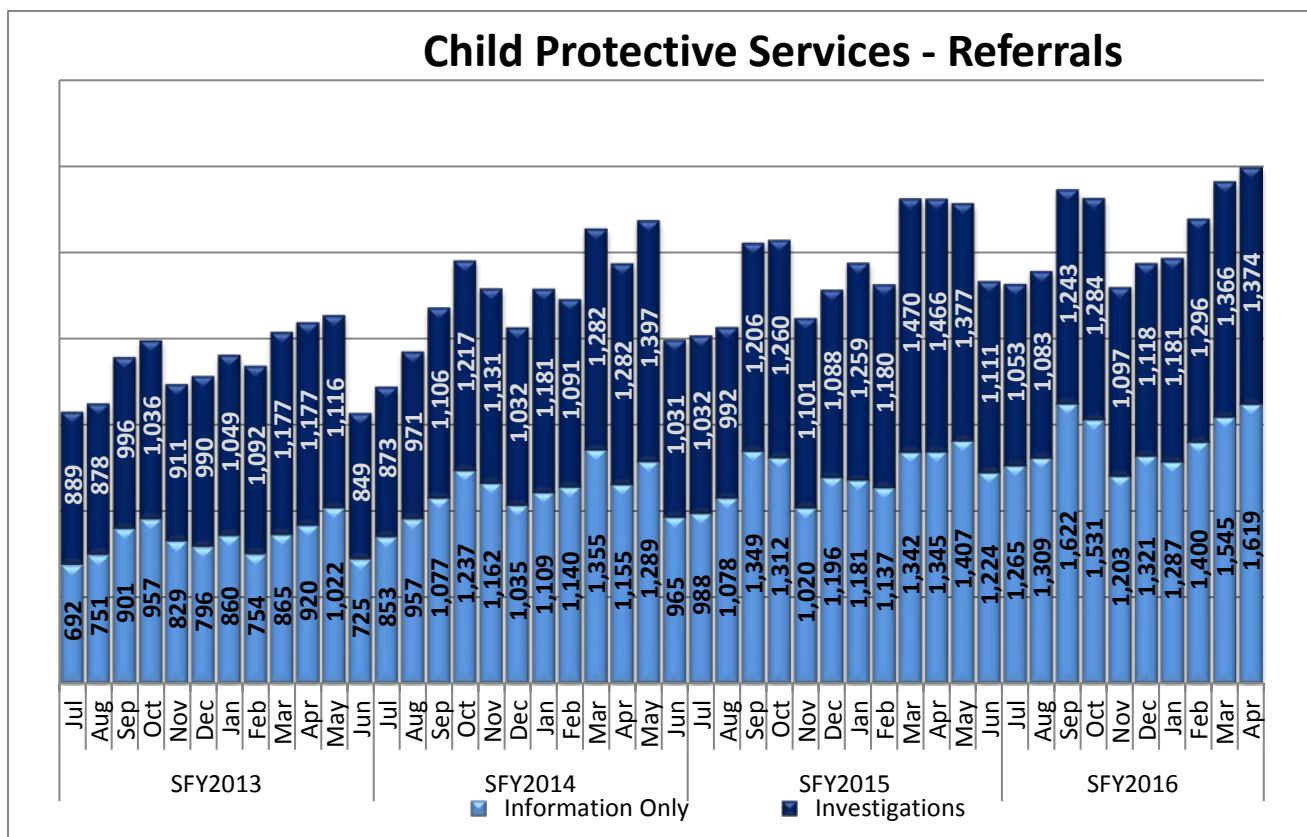


Figure 3.1 Number of new referrals (monthly) that have been received since SFY 2013 through April 30, 2016.

## 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

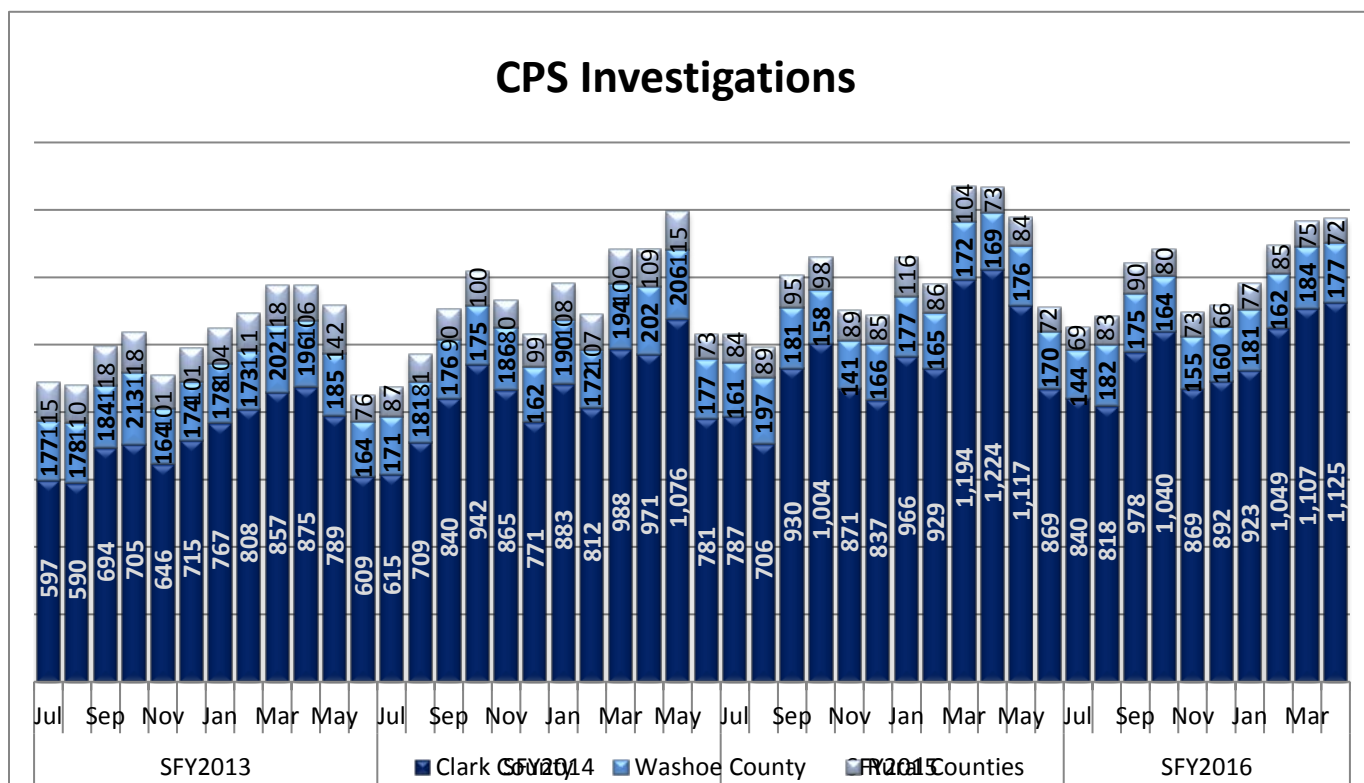


Figure 3.2 is the number of investigations (monthly) since SFY 2013 through April 31, 2016 for all three Child Welfare Agencies.

The Differential Response (DR) program is part of Nevada's CPS system, and during SFY 2016, nine Family Resource Centers (FRCs) 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.

Reports screened-in for a DR assessment are assigned to the local FRCs where the DR staff 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 NRS 432B.260 was amended in 2013 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.  
**Nevada Differential Response (DR) Program Report through 4/30/16**

**Report through 04/30/2016**

*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*

	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 – 4/30/16						
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						
Total number of Families Served by DR 2/28/07 – 4/30/16:											
	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	SFY 15 7/1/14 - 6/30/15	SFY 16 7/1/15 - 4/30/16	TOTAL 2/28/07- 4/30/16
Cumulative Number of Families Referred to DR from CPS	90	362	912	1,053	1,137	1,234	1,319	1,367	1,421	1,249	10,144
Number of Cases returned to CPS	16	66	147	76	44	47	13	32	42	20	503
Number of cases closed	33	247	665	906	1,135	1,182	1,324	1,333	1,403	1,087	9,315

*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 – SFY16 July 1, 2015 – April 30, 2016**

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	19	113	3	96	19
Las Vegas – East East Valley Family Services FRC	2.5	12	110	2	82	12
Las Vegas – Central East Valley Family Services FRC	2	14	124	8	96	14
Las Vegas – North Olive Crest FRC	2	31	124	0	116	31
Las Vegas – West Boys & Girls Club of So. NV FRC	2	15	134	0	115	15
<b>Total Clark</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>91</b>
Washoe FRC	2	11	92	0	77	11
Washoe Children's Cabinet*	3	30	133	0	111	30
<b>Total Washoe</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>41</b>
Elko Family Resource Center of Northeastern NV	2	3	60	6	49	3
Lyon, Pershing, Mineral Lyon Co. Human Services FRC	2.5	22	106	1	90	22
Churchill - FRIENDS FRC**	1	4	10	0	5	4
Carson City/Douglas Ron Wood FRC	1.5	17	219	0	224	17
Pahrump/S. Nye East Valley Family Services FRC	0.5	8	24	0	26	8
<b>Total Rural</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Total State</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>1,249</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1,087</b>	<b>186</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 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 have included:

- Baby's Bounty- Safe sleep baby bundles
- Water Safety and Drowning Prevention-Southern Nevada Health Department
- Prevent Child Abuse Nevada- Outreach and Child Safety Conference
- Crisis Call Center-Text4Life
- Immunize Nevada-Pink Growth Chart
- Washoe County Department of Social Services-Safe Sleep Cribs

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 and data received from the National Center for the Review and Prevention of Child's Death was accurate when compared to Vital Statistics' data, the decision was made to rely solely on the National Center for the Review and Prevention of Child's Death data for the annual reporting. 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 14 in FY 2014 to 20 in FY 2015.

## **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 field staff in all regions in Clark County. South, West, East, and Central staff was trained on the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) and Protective Capacity Progress Assessment (PCPA) between August 2015 and June 2016. CCDFS will also work with ACTION to provide in-depth training to Clark County's judicial partners on the SIPS model starting in July 2016. The judicial partners will attend four training modules to enhance their understanding of the model.

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.

- The Foster Parent Champion program 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 continues to identify/refine ways to support and retain new and existing caregivers (regular, relative (licensed and unlicensed), fictive kin, and ICPC foster parents) to provide quality care to children placed in their homes. Baseline support calls were at 1500 during the previous report period. During this last year, the calls have increased to 2800, these numbers reflect calls placed to caregivers and calls from caregivers. The QPI Training workgroup has just completed the systemic rollout of increasing the required training hours from 4 to 12 in Clark County. Additionally, the QPI Child Welfare Sub-work group is addressing the multiple disruptions that occur for children placed in out of home care.

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

- Differential Response oversight was transferred from the DHHS Director's Office to the DCFS Family Programs Office in January 2016. CCDFS reports looking forward toward working with DCFS Family Programs Office on determining how DR can better service citizens in Clark County.

Additionally, CCDFS have completed the installation of the Parental Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) at four DFS sites and will complete implementation for the entire department by October 2016.

### **CCDFS PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR UP-COMING SFY 2017**

In addition to completing the rollout of PCFA and training for judicial partners, DFS will complete installation of Confirming Safe Environments (CSE) and the Family Functioning Assessment for licensing staff.

QPI sub work group of recruitment is working on communication between placement and licensing to improve the quality of placement matches for children in out of home care. A list of multiple issues were identified and the team brainstormed possible resolutions. One of those resolutions was staffed with leadership, which resulted development of matching search engine program for system of care. A contract was approved and CCDFS is currently working with a company to develop this unique initiative. The recruitment sub work group is partnering with a marketing company to identify and recruit quality families. Targeted recruitment efforts will begin with in September.

QPI Child Welfare Workgroup is working on the issue of decreasing the trauma children experience during transitions. The workgroup also identified dissolution of adoption was a concern and has begun to work on developing

post-adoptions support resources. As a result of the court improvement webinars offered throughout the year- a sub work group has begun to review the visitation process.

QPI training sub work group is working with National Expert Curriculum Writers and a focus group of subject matter experts to personalize the previously identified community competencies into a pre-service training for caregivers. It is the intent of this group to work with UNLV to make the training evidence based.

Policy and Procedure unit identified the need to unify QPI initiatives and the Safety Model. Policy and Procedures staff sit on each workgroup to ensure a consistent message/language is delivered for each workgroup.

Planned activities around support from DR for SFY 2017:

CCDFS will continue to advocate for increased funding for the program through grants and/or increase in the State budget so that DR's caseload cap can be increased to better serve families in Clark County. As stated above, CCDFS looks forward to working with the State to modify the program moving forward.

## ***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 has implemented the SAFE model from the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA), through Conditions for Return (CFR) to include, utilizing both in and out of home safety planning in an effort to ensure reasonable efforts to prevent removal from the home, and to expedite the return of children to the home when in home safety planning is possible. In addition, DCFS implemented the Confirming Safe Environment (CSE) safety assessment process for children placed in out of home care in 2013. The Confirming Safe Environments method is a practical way to think about, assess a child's safety in relative, fictive kin, and foster care placements. 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). Quality assurance targeted reviews are routinely conducted on case note documentation to ensure that CSE is considered and then documented at each monthly child contact. Additional training is provided when case note documentation does not reflect sufficient CSE documentation.

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.

- The DCFS has implemented the SAFE practice model, which includes the assessment of present and impending anger of children who are living in the home with their parents; safety assessments are conducted at identified milestones throughout the life of an open case to continually reassess safety. In home safety plans are utilized prior to removal when safety threats are identified and can be safely managed in the home while parents engage in case plan activities to create second order change. Conversely, in home safety plans are also utilized to return a child to the home before second order change has occurred when parents and/or the agency can create an in home safety plan with sufficient enough safety management providers to manage the threats while parents continue to work towards the second order change necessary for governmental involvement to terminate.
- In partnership with foster parents, a QPI Steering Committee, which meets monthly, was established. This Committee with membership of both DCFS Rural Region staff and foster parents discuss and decide upon QPI activities that should occur to continue the implementation of QPI, one topic always being how to engage foster parents in the initiative. One idea was that foster parents would like business cards to be able to distribute at appointments or even when asked about fostering. Business cards were provided to all foster parents throughout the Region and the response was positive. The QPI Steering Committee, created a Communications Sub-Committee to identify ideas and methods of improving communications between social workers and foster parents. The Subcommittee meets monthly and is in the process of creating a tool for foster parents to use to maximize their visits with social work staff. Additionally, the Subcommittee is creating a document to provide to

both social work staff and foster parents regarding the sharing of information. It will provide clear guidance to social work staff about allowed information permissible to share with foster parents. During the last year, DCFS-Rural Region was able to send foster parents and staff to the Statewide QPI conference. These individuals received information about such things as prudent parenting standards, ABC Visitation and Relationship Building and enjoyed a Youth Panel presentation. Additionally, it was an opportunity for foster parents and staff to network with one another as well as other foster parents and child welfare staff throughout the state.

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

- Differential Response continues to be a valuable service offered within some rural counties. DR is utilized 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. DR cases include; education neglect, environmental neglect, inadequate clothing, inadequate food, inadequate supervision, lock out, and medical neglect. DR services include assessment, education and linkage to needed services within the given communities, among others. Since July 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016 the DCFS Rural Region has referred 378 referrals to its DR partners. Also, the DCFS Rural Region continues to request that DR program be expanded to the smaller and rural communities of Battle Mountain, Winnemucca, Ely and Tonopah.

### **DCFS RURAL REGION PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR UP-COMING SFY 2017**

The DCFS added, *safety management services*, to the Title IV-B Request for Proposal this year so that we could expand our pool of safety management providers throughout rural Nevada. In the past if families did not have people within their network who were qualified to be safety providers we were unable to engage in safety plans and removals from the home were necessary to protect children. By expanding our pool of professionals who can now act as safety providers, we hope to be able to accommodate some families who can now opt to utilize paid safety providers, therefore further reducing the need for removal from the home.

The DCFS Rural Region plans to continue to build its fidelity to the Nevada Safety Model by contracting with the safety model developers, ACTION for Protection, to provide additional consultation training and coaching to supervisors throughout the region. The DCFS Rural Region has had a turnover of supervisors who did not participate in the consultation training and coaching when originally provided. This consultation with ACTION will enhance the supervisor's skills and knowledge while preparing them for the next phase of implementation of the Nevada Safety Model. Following the consultation training and coaching, DCFS Rural Region will be in a better position to explore the implementation of the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) and the Protective Capacity Progress Assessment (PCPA) and develop an implementation plan.

QPI efforts will continue through the Steering Committee and Communications Subcommittee to identifying methods to engage foster parents and social work staff in the process. As well as identifying methods and initiatives to continue to improve communications and to support quality, foster parenting ultimately improving child safety and well-being.

With DR oversight services being transitioned from being overseen by the Department of Health and Human Services to DCFS the Rural Region will continue to support and work with its DR partners. The DCFS Rural Region will continue to explore ways to expand DR services to communities that currently do not have DR programs.

### **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.

- The WCDSS fully implemented the SAFE model during this reporting period. During this reporting period, WCDSS continued implementation of the SAFE model through support of the Permanency Innovations Initiative including detailed installation and implementation activities from November 2014 through March 2015. WCDSS installation tasks included refinement of agency work teams, staff training, organization realignment and utilization of Purveyor for ongoing coaching. A "phased in" approach continued through implementation of SAFE including policy revision, implementation of necessary contracts to support the intervention, stabilization of administrative

and organizational infrastructure, installation of fidelity review processes, and communication with external stakeholders. Evaluation of organizational and system readiness, assessing leadership support and capacity, and observing staff competency were fundamental activities during this period. It is noted that training was sequential in nature and core components of the intervention were installed in phases with ongoing competency evaluation through fidelity assessments.

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.

- A foundation component of Quality Parenting Initiative is that by the very nature of ensuring foster parents are highly effective will result in a positive child safety outcome. WCDSS implemented several committees during this period to facilitate implementation of QPI as a foundational component of case management practice. These committees included: Caseworker Involvement; Partnership Plan; Events; Recruitment for Teens; Foster Parent Mentoring; Information Sharing/Normalcy, INS and Licensing Investigations; and Transitions. A focus of participation included case management staff and the overlap of SAFE and QPI was highlighted including a focus on child needs and caregiver ability to meet identified needs. The emphasis on biological and foster parent relationship building and mentoring is a core concept in promoting healthy relationships to nurture safe visitation in a more normal, less sterile environment.

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

- The WCDSS utilizes two external Family Resource Centers for Differential Response: Washoe County School District FRC funded through a block grant with DCFS and Children's Cabinet FRC funded with Washoe County general funding. Each FRC has a "niche" or specialty enhancing WCDSS ability to serve families. Specifically the Washoe County School District (WCSD) emphasis is towards educational neglect. The Children's Cabinet Inc. focuses on parent child conflict especially with older youth. Differential Response are screened in reports and provide families with an alternative to traditional CPS investigations. There was a slight decrease in number of referrals dispositioned to Differential Response in part due to staff turnover in both agencies. The WCSD long time program manager retired causing a shortage; the Children's Cabinet, Inc. received some priority federal grants requiring some staff to be deployed to other service areas. However, it is anticipated referral dispositions will increase in the future.

## **WCDSS PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR UP-COMING SFY 2017**

The WCDSS will complete full implementation of SAFE for all staff during SFY 2017. In summary, the Permanency Innovations Initiative provided a 6th year extension that allowed for additional coaching and consultation with ACTION for Child Protection through September 20, 2016. With completion of research, WCDSS was able to train all staff in the SAFE model and all components: Nevada Initial Assessment, Conditions for Return and Safety Assessment and Management, Protective Capacity Family Assessment, and Protective Capacity Progress Assessment. Internal capacity for training and fidelity assessment will be developed to reduce dependence on external purveyors. A Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement unit to include Children's Services Coordinator, Case Compliance Reviewer, Program Specialist (Policy) and Management Analyst is planned to promote model fidelity assessment and feedback loops. SAFE "champions" identified as Senior Social Workers in the training unit will receive specific training and consultation regarding SAFE model components and outcomes.

There are significant planning events with QPI including full implementation of the Normalcy and Information Strategies; foster parent mentoring; foster parent/biological parent mentoring; transition planning; and foster parent retention efforts through activities such as problem resolution advisory committees. Additionally, WCDSS will participate in the national convention through robust attendance and panel presentations. It is noteworthy that case carrying staff are targeted to attend conferences to further imbed QPI principles in daily practice.

## **ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE in SAFETY**

Each of the three performance outcomes listed in this section mirrors the Federal Statewide Assessment Instrument. The overall structure for each performance outcome/indicator includes if available the legal requirements for each item, the most recent federal data profile, most recent statewide case review data, relevant state generated data, and most recent stakeholder survey/focus group data.

The CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators workbook was provided by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) using a new federal measurement methodology. The ACF has not provided Nevada with a new data profile using the new measurement methodology. Table 3.2 illustrates the workbook data for FY 11, 12 and 13 and the Observed Performance at 8.12, 9.53 and 7.69 victimizations per 100,000 days in care. While 7.69 was below the national standard in FY 2013 it was indicated in the workbook that Nevada would need to achieve an Observed Performance of 7.21 to have avoided a PIP.

This year Nevada has worked with the Capacity Building Center for States to replicate the methodology using Nevada's NCANDS data. Nevada is now able to internally replicate the National Standards. Table 3.2A provides data for FYs 2014 and 2015. This data indicates that Nevada is currently meeting the national standard for 'abuse in care'.

**Table 3.2**

***CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators Workbook (using new methodology)***

Federal Performance Measure	National Standard	Data Source	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI	RSP	Upper CI
Maltreatment in foster care	8.50	NCANDS FY 2011	↓	8.12			
Maltreatment in foster care	8.50	NCANDS FY 2012	↓	9.53			
Maltreatment in foster care	8.50	NCANDS FY 2013	↓	7.69	8.74	10.37	12.31

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

**Table 3.2A**

***Nevada Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators DCFS FPO originated (using new methodology)***

Federal Performance Measure	National Standard	Data Source	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance FFY 2015
Maltreatment in foster care	8.50	NCANDS FY 2014	↓	6.20
Maltreatment in foster care	8.50	NCANDS FY 2015	↓	4.43

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

**CPS Response Time:**

CPS response time in hours is defined as the time between receipt of a referral alleging maltreatment to the state or local agency face-to-face contact with the alleged victim.

The most recent *Child Maltreatment Report* data published on January 25, 2016 for Nevada CPS Response Time is provided in Table 3.3. Nevada's CPS Response Time in hours for FFY 2014 increased to an average time of 16 hours.

**Table 3.3**

***Nevada CPS Response Time***

	FFY 2011	FFY 2012	FFY 2013	FFY 2014
Average time to Investigation in Hours	13	15	12	16

Source: Child Maltreatment Report (published January 25, 2016)



## **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 receipt of the report to the agency. 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 (three business days).

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.

### Statewide Data (SFY 2016):

Nevada has continued to conduct Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) as part of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Table 3.4 provides case review data for 2015.

**Table 3.4**

#### **Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.	70.0%											
Performance Item Rating	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	21	9	36									

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’s baseline data for CY 2015 statewide is 70%. Also, the current Intake Policy 0506 Statewide Intake and Response Times is currently under revision.

The overall federal performance expectation for Safety Outcome 1 is 95%. Item 1 ‘the timeliness of investigations’ is the only performance indicator for this item. Nevada’s rating for this item was 70% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

## 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 in 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 CFSR 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 CFSR 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 (SFY 2016)**

Nevada has continued to conduct Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) on this item. In the following Table 3.5 is the most current case review data as it relates to item 2.

**Table 3.5**

#### ***Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data***

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 2: Services to Families to protect children in home and Prevent removal or re-entry into foster care.	74.0%											
Performance Item Rating	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	20	7	39									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 2 ‘Services to Family to Protect Children in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry into Foster Care’ is 90%. Nevada’s rating for this item was 74% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

### ***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 2009 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 (SFY 2016)**

The CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data (SFY 2016) 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 3.6. Additionally, in Table 3.6A Nevada continues to meet this Performance for FY 2013 and 2014.

**Table 3.6**

**CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators Workbook (using new methodology)**

Federal Performance (SAFETY)	National Standard	Data Sources	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI	RSP	Upper CI
Recurrence of Maltreatment	9.1%	NCANDS FY 2012	↓	6.0%	7.0%	7.8%	8.6

Green Shading = Meets Standard

Table 3.6A

**CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators DCFS FPO originated (using new methodology)**

Federal Performance (SAFETY)	National Standard	Data Sources	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI	RSP	Upper CI
Recurrence of Maltreatment	9.1%	NCANDS FY 2013	↓	5.4%			
Recurrence of Maltreatment	9.1%	NCANDS FY 2014	↓	4.0%			

Statewide Data (SFY 2016) from UNITY illustrated in Table 3.7 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 2015 and 2016 Quarters did not have a substantiated report in the six months prior to a substantiated report.

**Table 3.7 Percent of Children without Recurrent Abuse or Neglect in Home Settings**

SFY 2015						SFY 2016		
	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	SFY 2015	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter
<b>Clark</b>	96.79%	95.29%	96.83%	95.23%	<b>97.79%</b>	96.40%	96.29%	97.06%
<b>Washoe</b>	94.15%	96.71%	98.26%	96.48%	<b>98.45%</b>	98.91%	95.81%	97.67%
<b>Rural</b>	98.83%	98.11%	95.65%	95.40%	<b>99.45%</b>	98.43%	97.29%	98.36%
<b>Statewide</b>	96.41%	95.75%	97.05%	95.46%	<b>98.01%</b>	96.96%	96.27%	97.26%

Data Source: UNITY Report CFS7L8

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 3.8.

**Table 3.8****Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 3: Risk Assessment and Safety Management	50.0%											
Performance Item Rating	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	33	33	0									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 3 'Risk and Safety Assessment and Management' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 50% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

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

The overall federal performance expectation for Safety Outcome 1 and 2 is 95%. Individual items are considered a strength if rated at 90%. Safety Outcome 1 is rated 70% and Safety outcome 2 is rated 50%; therefore, Safety Outcomes 1 and 2 are an area needing improvement.

Nevada does have strength in the ability to ensure that children do not experience a recurrence of maltreatment within a 12 month period of a substantiated report of maltreatment as reflected in the achievement of meeting and exceeding the national standard for 'Absence of Recurrence of maltreatment'.

## Section IV. PERMANENCY

### Trends in Permanency

The CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data (SFY 2016) 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 and 4.1A 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 (SFY 2016) Indicators Workbook**

Federal Performance (Permanency)	National Standard	Data Sources	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI	RSP	Upper CI
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.5%	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

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

**Table 4.1.A**

**Nevada Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators DCFS FPO originated (using new methodology)**

Federal Performance (Permanency)	National Standard	Data Sources	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.5%	AFCARS 14B & 15A	↑	45.6%
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12-24 months	43.7%	AFCARS 15B & 16A	↑	53.5%
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more	30.3%	AFCARS 15B & 16A	↑	44.6%
Placement Stability	4.12 moves <sup>17</sup>	AFCARS 15B & 16A	↓	6.23

<sup>9</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 finalized implementation plans for both the evaluation of specialized foster care, and creation of an “Advanced Foster Care” (AFC) program, which is essentially a specialized foster care program that will be run through CCDFS, as opposed to the community specialized foster care agencies. Due to the infancy of the project, it is not yet possible to assess its impact on a decrease in placement disruptions, re-entry into foster care, or progress on achieving permanency.

### **CCDFS PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR UP-COMING SFY 2017**

In the coming year CCDFS plans to receive training on the Together Facing the Challenge (TFTC) model, and recruit and retain at least 20 foster homes for the AFC program. These homes will be trained and implement the TFTC model to fidelity. Additionally, CCDFS is working with community specialized foster care providers to implement the TFTC model, and collaborate on data collection for the statewide evaluation. Community specialized foster care agency contracts will also be revamped to incorporate the requirements for best practice program implementation and data collection requirements.

### **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.

- In February 2013, the State of Nevada DCFS Rural Region began a specialized foster care program pilot. Using existing licensed foster homes and providing them with Trauma Informed Care Training and utilizing the Together Facing the Challenge model in these homes. Due to the small population in the Rural Region, data was combined with Washoe County Department of Social Services. Placement disruption decreased for the youth involved in the program by 93%.
- In 2015 the State of Nevada Legislature approved increased funding for the program. The DCFS Rural Region is in the process of increasing the population of youth in the program and will be including youth who are currently placed in specialized foster care placements.
- Improving Timeliness to Permanency is one of DCFS's main objectives over the next few years. Our data in this area needs improvement and we have been working on various systemic changes to move the dial on this outcome for children. Strategies include, but are not limited to; Court Improvement Councils (CICs) continue to be active in seven (7) out of our nine (9) District courts. CIC's review their data quarterly. At CIC meetings, DCFS and the judiciary have opportunities to discuss barriers and brainstorm solutions to timeliness to permanency; DCFS procedural expectations have changed. Caseworkers are now expected to prepare the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) packet and forward to the Attorney General office for TPR petition within 30 days from the date TPR is ordered by the court; 4 of the 5 Adoption caseworker positions that had been vacant in previous years have been filled; DCFS has instituted a complex tracking system of case progression for children who have been out of the home for 14 months and longer. The purpose is to identify systemic barriers to timeliness to permanency and problem solutions to move cases forward.
- During the 2015 Legislative Session, the Specialized Foster Care “pilot” was approved for additional funding and positions to transition it into a program, now called the Advanced Foster Care Program, in the DCFS Rural Region. The program unit is to consist of a Clinical Program Manager, four Mental Health Counselors, two Social Workers and an Administrative Assistant. A start date of October 2015 was projected. DCFS Rural Region has



had a challenges associated with hiring qualified and experienced staff for the program. Efforts to hire staff continue to date. Youth continue to be placed and foster homes have continued to be brought into the program using the existing staff; however, at a slower pace than anticipated due to the staff hiring barrier.

- Due to the small population in the DCFS Rural Region, data has been combined with Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS). Outcomes such as placement stability have continued to improve for youth included in the program. In the six months leading up to program placement alone, the average number of placements was four (range = 1 to 21). At discharge, no youth had any placement changes in the six months prior. The program also reports to have a significant impact on educational stability. Youth in the program missed substantially fewer days of school at discharge vs. admission.

## **DCFS PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR UP-COMING SFY 2017**

The DCFS Rural Region will continue to grow the program during the next year. Skilled staff will be hired to provide services to the youth and families. The DCFS Rural Region will also continue recruitment efforts in identifying quality foster homes as well as working on retaining current foster families. By implementing the Advanced Foster Care Program the expectation is that placement disruption will decrease and that youth will remain in their own communities which will assist with improving timeliness to permanency.

Our expectation is that by continuing to improve the quality of CPS assessments, through use of the NIA, we are improving on identifying the exact nature of safety threats and the deficient caregiver protective capacities contributing to the safety issues. This enables to the agency to prescribe concretely the services needed with a high level of specificity, and empowers caregivers to focus on services needed to mitigate the exact threat in a timely manner, thereby shortening their child's length of time in care.

The DCFS has much work to do to accomplish this goal. Currently our focus is to ensure TPR petitions are filed within 15 months of the out of home placement. Our Quality Assurance (QA) unit is developing a tracking system to monitor this measure. The newly hired adoption unit is finalizing adoptions that had previously languished due to 4 out of 5 adoption unit vacancies.

## **WCDSS PROGRESS**

- The WCDSS evaluated the efficacy of the Specialized Foster Care pilot. At the 18th month evaluation point, DCFS' Program Evaluation Unit (PEU) identified that WCDSS had a total of 60 children enrolled (i.e., 21 in Specialized Foster Care and 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. Considering that 33 of 40 youth that have discharged from the Pilot Program as tracked by PEU at the 18th month evaluation, 42.5% were reunified or adopted; 7.5% reached the age of 18; 20% transitioned to Regular Foster Care; and 5% were placed with relatives. Overall, the 18th month evaluation results included 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. Importantly, from admission to 6 months, 50.9% of the youth experienced a reduction in total CAFAS score of 20 points or ore. This reflects a significant improvement in the youth's day to day functioning in school, at home, and in the community.
- The WCDSS developed strategies to expand the Pilot to a Transformational Foster Care Program. Contracts were revised to include expectations for scopes of work for specialized foster care program providers to include the key components of the program and commitment to compliance. Resources were provided through State and local funding to support expansion through staff infrastructure. These staff will support case management staff in developing plans to meet youth needs to encourage permanency within 12 months. The results of the pilot were very promising and replication of the model is expected to yield similar results. Training was provided to contract

providers consistent with program development and will continue to be monitored and provided as new providers are identified. Data outcomes identified through PEU will continue. Any planned transitions will include a documented transition plan, and SACWIS staff will provide management reports regarding permanency outcomes through the QA/QI unit.

- WCDSS fully implemented SAFE (Safety Assessment Family Evaluation) during this reporting period. All caseload carrying staff are trained in the core components and internal capacity was developed to “onboard” new staff. Emphasis was given during this period to develop internal staff expertise in the SAFE model to ensure fidelity compliance. A core principle of SAFE is that if child welfare agencies are proficient in assessing families then we can be confident we are serving the right ones. Therefore, by properly assessing families and children, we anticipate that all children and especially very young children will spend less time in foster care.

## **WCDSS PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR UP-COMING SFY 2017**

The WCDSS is prepared for full implementation of the Transformational Foster Care program with two targeted treatment levels: Enhanced Foster Care and Specialized Foster Care +. Enhanced Foster Care include experienced foster parents and or foster parents willing to work with children having additional behavior/mental health issues. Identified as Intensive Foster Homes, these are regular family foster homes trained in Trauma Informed Care and Together Facing the Challenge. A contracted service provider provides weekly supervision of the homes or internal staff person s needed and includes a weekly report review, in-home coaching and discussion of behaviors of the child and what was working and not working.

Specialized Foster Care+ include provider agencies using the program model (Trauma Informed Care, Together Facing the Challenge, and weekly supervision). Key components of Transformational Foster Care include: 1) Additional training requirements including Trauma Informed Care and Together Facing the Challenge; 2) Weekly staffing regarding children's behaviors and use of the TFC Foster Parent Report form; 3) Data collection with increased infrastructure to monitor outcomes and conduct quality reviews; and 4) Enhanced/Stabilized Rate.

WCDSS wants to continue to purposefully execute SAFE principles to fidelity. The emphasis for the next reporting period is to continue refinement understanding the model and addressing maltreatment through a safety lens. This will include continued fidelity assessments and oversight of safety assessments. WCDSS will continue to monitor length of time in foster care through monthly management reports. Development of the QA/QI unit will provide a neutral study of practice and necessary improvement recommendations. Therefore, the two primary areas of emphasis for the coming year will be SAFE model refinement and development of a QA/QI process that will provide analysis of key CFSR systemic factors.

## **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 (SFY 2016) 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 and Table 4.2A 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 (SFY 2016) Indicators Workbook***

Federal Performance (Permanency)	National Standard	Data Sources	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance	Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)		
					Lower CI <sup>10</sup>	RSP	Upper CI
Placement Stability	4.12 moves <sup>11</sup>	AFCARS 13B & 14A	↓	5.99	6.11	6.35	6.60

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

**Table 4.2A**

***Nevada Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators DCFS FPO originated (using new methodology)***

Federal Performance (Permanency)	National Standard	Data Sources	Direction of Strength	Observed Performance
Placement Stability	4.12 moves <sup>19</sup>	AFCARS 15B & 16A	↓	6.23

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

<sup>11</sup> Moves per 1,000 Days

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

## Statewide Data (SFY 2016)

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. This data represents first year baseline data

**Table 4.3**

### ***Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data***

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 4 Stability of Foster Care Placement	80.0%											
Performance Item Rating	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	32	8	0									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 4 'Stability of Foster Care Placement' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 80% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

## ***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 CFSR 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 CFSR 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 (SFY 2016)

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***

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 5: Permanency goal for child	42.5%											
Performance Item Rating	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	17	23	0									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 5 'Permanency goal of Child' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 42.5% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

### ***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 is currently working towards implementation of a Title IV-E Guardianship. Nevada Revised Statute 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 (SFY 2016) 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 4.5 and Table 4.5A illustrates Nevada performance on all new Permanency Measures. As shown below Nevada is meeting standards on all Permanency Measures.

**Table 4.5**

### ***CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators Workbook***

<b>Federal Performance (Permanency)</b>	<b>National Standard</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Direction of Strength</b>	<b>Observed Performance</b>	<b>Risk Standardized Performance (RSP)</b>		
					<b>Lower CI<sup>12</sup></b>	<b>RSP</b>	<b>Upper CI</b>
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.5%	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

**Table 4.5A**

### ***Nevada Statewide Data (SFY 2016) Indicators DCFS FPO originated (using new methodology)***

<b>Federal Performance (Permanency)</b>	<b>National Standard</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Direction of Strength</b>	<b>Observed Performance</b>
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.5%	AFCARS 14B & 15A	↑	45.6%
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12-24 months	43.7%	AFCARS 15B & 16A	↑	53.5%

<sup>12</sup> CI=Confidence Interval



Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more	30.3%	AFCARS 15B & 16A	↑	44.6%
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### 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 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.

## **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 14, 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 (OPPLA) 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 CFSR 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 (SFY 2016)

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.

**Table 4.6**

#### **Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 6: Achieving Reunification, guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent living Arrangement	47.5%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	19	21	0									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 5 'Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, and OPPLA' goal of Child' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 47.5% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

## Adoption

### 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.

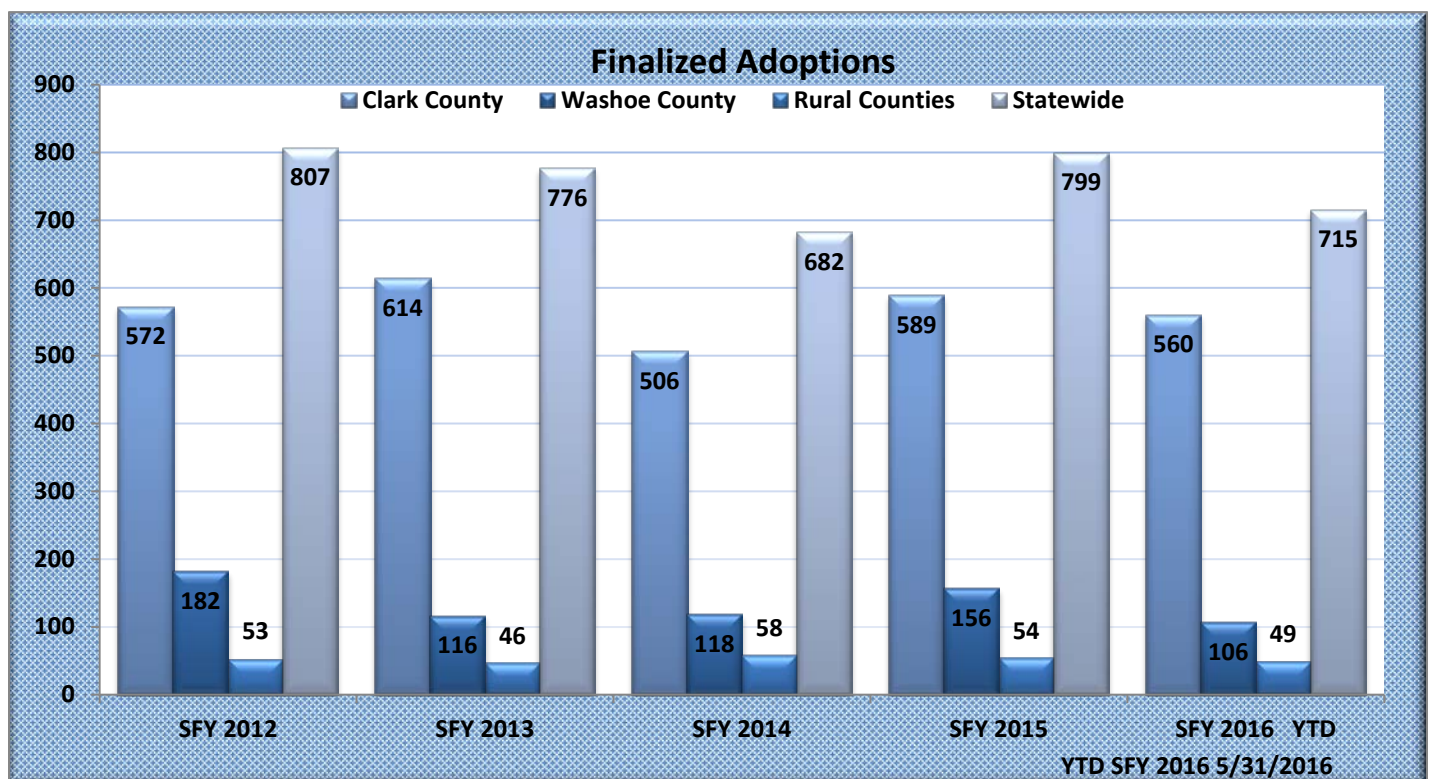
## CFSR 2009

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 (SFY 2016)



Source: CFS794

Figure 4.1 Finalized Adoptions

Figure 4.1 illustrates a -0.1% decrease statewide in finalized Adoptions from SFY 2012 to SFY 2015. The data listed below for SFY 2016 is through 5/31/2015 with 715 Adoptions finalized to date.

Table 4.7 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 4.7**

***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 April 1, 2011 - April 30, 2013	1,610	36	422	26%
Adoption in Less than 24 Months April 1, 2012 - April 30, 2014	1,505	34	445	30%
Adoption in Less than 24 Months April 1, 2013 - April 30, 2015	1,547	32	514	33%
Adoption in Less than 24 Months April 1, 2014 - April 30, 2016	1,577	31	537	34%

Source: UNITY CFS 732

**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 had four children who were adopted from another country that entered into state custody in FY 2015 as a result of a disruption of a placement of adoption or the dissolution of an adoption. The children were adopted at a young age and residing in the United States since their adoptions. Therefore, the Nevada Child Welfare agencies did not pursue relative placement in their originating countries. All four children were placed in temporarily foster care. To date, two of the children remain in state custody; one was assisted with the Independent Living Program and the fourth child aged out as a runaway. The child welfare agencies worked hard at keeping the families together by providing the children and the families in home therapy, out of home therapy and parenting classes. When those services did not work, the children were placed in foster care and the agencies continue to work with the families toward reunification. One of the children is currently in a residential treatment center out of state, due to his behaviors, but communication and visitation is still maintained.

**Services of Children Adopted from Other Countries**

Nevada offers a variety of adoption and post-adoption support services to families who have adopted children from other countries. These support services are funded using the Adoption Promotion/Support funds and the Adoption Incentive funds which are distributed to sub-grantees. Some of the services provided include but are not limited to:

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

### **Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments**

The State of Nevada was awarded \$2,248,000 for the FY 2015. As of April 2016 52% of the grant has been awarded out to various grantees. The grantees include the Adoption Exchange, Nevada Outreach Training Organization, University of South Florida, Community Chest and Nevada Public Health Foundation. Each of these grantees provide a variety of services to adoptive families and adoptees. The Adoption Exchange utilized their grant funds to act as the state's Recruitment Response Team (RRT) for Adopt Us Kids projects. The state also uses the grant money to pay for a state wide membership to the Adoption Exchange. The Nevada Outreach Training Organization concentrates on recruiting Spanish speaking foster parents and assists with adoptive parent applications. University of South Florida provides web-based training through the Quality Parenting Initiative and Just in Time training to foster parents, relative caregivers and birth parents. Community Chest assists potential relative adoptive families' complete home studies for ICPC. The Nevada Public Health Foundation focuses on providing assistance and resources to those families that live in rural areas by completing diligent search for relatives and fictive kin and completing social summaries/home studies.

Adoption Incentive funds are also awarded to Nevada's three public child welfare agencies to assist with interjurisdictional placements, recruitment of adoptive and foster parents, professional development and post adoption services. Each agency provides privatized therapeutic services that are not covered by Medicaid. The grant funds continue to support specialized recruitment and adoption finalization activities, including National Adoption Day.

The State of Nevada has not had any challenges or issues when disbursing the Adoption Incentive funds. Nevada ensures they are being fiscally responsible with the grant money and continues to look for more grantees to reach adoptive parents and promote adoptees. Nevada is ensuring that staff are well educated and trained to assess and address the needs of not only the adoptive population but all Nevadans.

### **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 Adoption Incentive(AI) to ensure it is obligated and liquidated in accordance with 473 A(e) of the Act.

## **CCDFS**

CCDFS finalized 592 adoptions in SFY 2016. DFS and the 8th Judicial Court – Family Court Division held quarterly adoption assessment hearings on cases assigned to the Adoption unit. Additionally, CCDFS collaborated with the Family Court to hold adoption finalization hearings every Thursday throughout the year. In November 2015, CCDFS held its annual Adoption Day in collaboration with the Family Court, CASA and other community partners.

The Adoption Incentive Grant funds several full time positions including: (2) District Attorneys, (4) Adoption Subsidy positions, (1) Adoption Recruitment positions, (2) Legal support staff, (1) Appeals position, (1) Full-time and (3) PTH positions for Central Imaging and Adoption Subsidy Unit. These funds support the District Attorney staff who review and process pending TPRs in order to move children toward the completion of adoption. The Adoption Recruitment position specializes 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. CCDFS has had no challenges in FY16 expending funds in a timely manner. Moving forward, these activities could be impacted by a reduction Adoption Incentive Funds in the next fiscal year.

### **CCDFS Planned Activities for 2017:**

The CCDFS is working to publish digital adoption profiles for legally free children on the County website. In addition, 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 2016 in collaboration with the Family Court, CASA and other local community partners.

## **DCFS RURAL REGION**

For the past several years DCFS has finalized approximately 50 adoptions a year. This year DCFS Rural Region anticipates finalizing upwards of 65. Last year the DCFS Rural Region began regularly staffing permanency cases and tracking the progression of cases for children who have been in out of home care for 14 or more months. This has led to the identification of numerous individual and systemic barriers that the permanency team has worked collaboratively to resolve in an effort to achieve permanency for children.

In recent years DCFS has become more diligent in efforts to maximize the use of Adoption Incentive funds for both recruitment of adoptive families in general and child specific cases. 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 was found to be successful and has continued. A contract Legal Secretary in our largest district office is used 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 General's office, preparing Full Disclosure documentation for preadoptive parents prior to subsidy negotiation among other tasks. Contracts with independent contractors trained in the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) Home Study Model are used 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. Some contractors also complete social summaries and TPR packets. The number of Homestudy requests has increased in recent years and without Homestudy contractors, time to permanency would be impacted negatively in the DCFS rural region.

Adoption Incentive (AI) funding has also been used for the following: 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. Incentive funds are also used to continue our Adoption Exchange Membership and for AdoptUs Kids Recruitment; our CWLA membership and PRIDE pre-service Adoptive/Foster Parent Training materials; 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. AI funding provides DCFS 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.

### **DCFS RURAL REGION Planned Activities for 2017:**

The Permanency Round Table (PRT) initiative has been in existence in two of our eight offices for the past three years. We have recently expanded PRT to all offices who have children who have been in care 14 months or longer. This



children do not have an identified permanent placement. Two PRT facilitators funded by the Casey Foundation are now spearheading this initiative.

DCFS is in the process of updating all the biography's and photos for children in custody who do not yet have an identified permanent home. In addition to updating children's profiles on the Adopt-us-kids website, from July1, 2017- October 1, 2017, each child will be featured on either Wednesday's Child or the equivalent in Vegas and/or Salt Lake City.

## **WCDSS**

WCDSS emphasized transitions during this reporting period. There were multiple training opportunities to explore the importance of transitions and adoption incentive funds were used to support travel and associated costs to ensure transitions were individualized and made sense for the child. Adoption Incentive funds were used to promote foster support either through becoming a foster parent, youth mentor, or volunteer through a partnership with the local University athletic marketing department. Fostering was featured at several sporting events where thousands of citizens were exposed to the campaign. Resource families were hosted to recognition events to demonstrate appreciation including athletic events with special "game day" recognition and celebration party. The events were hugely successful. Adoption Incentive funds were used to hire and train court mediators to pilot mediating TPR petitions or post-adoption agreements to help children obtain quicker permanency.

AI funds were used for post placement supervision specific to interstate placement, travel costs for transitions, and non-Medicaid covered therapeutic costs. AI supported professional development through conference registration and supporting QPI principles as well as contracting with the Youth Law Center to provide expert consultation regarding QPI. Further AI funds were used to purchase non-Medicaid covered medical expenses for children who have finalized adoptions.

### **WCDSS Planned Activities for 2017:**

Due to the success of the collaboration with the local University Athletic Department, WCDSS intends to continue these marketing events. WCDSS is excited to continue to expand QPI related knowledge and skill development for staff and resource families to expedite adoptions. AI funds will always be needed to support post-adoption service needs, as well as ensuring children in out-of-state permanent placements receive necessary supportive services related to non-Medicaid covered expenses, education needs, and any other identified need.

**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 (SFY 2016)

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.

**Table 4.8**

### ***Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data***

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 7: Placement with Siblings	86%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	24	4	12									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 7 'Placement with Siblings' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 86% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

## ***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 CFSR 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 (SFY 2016)

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.

**Table 4.9**

#### ***Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data***

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 8 Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	64%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	21	12	7									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 8 'Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 64% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

### ***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 CFSR.

### Statewide Data (SFY 2016)

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.

**Table 4.10**  
**Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 9 Preserving Connections	82.5%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	33	7	0									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 9 'Preserving Connections' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 82.5% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

### ***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 (SFY 2016)

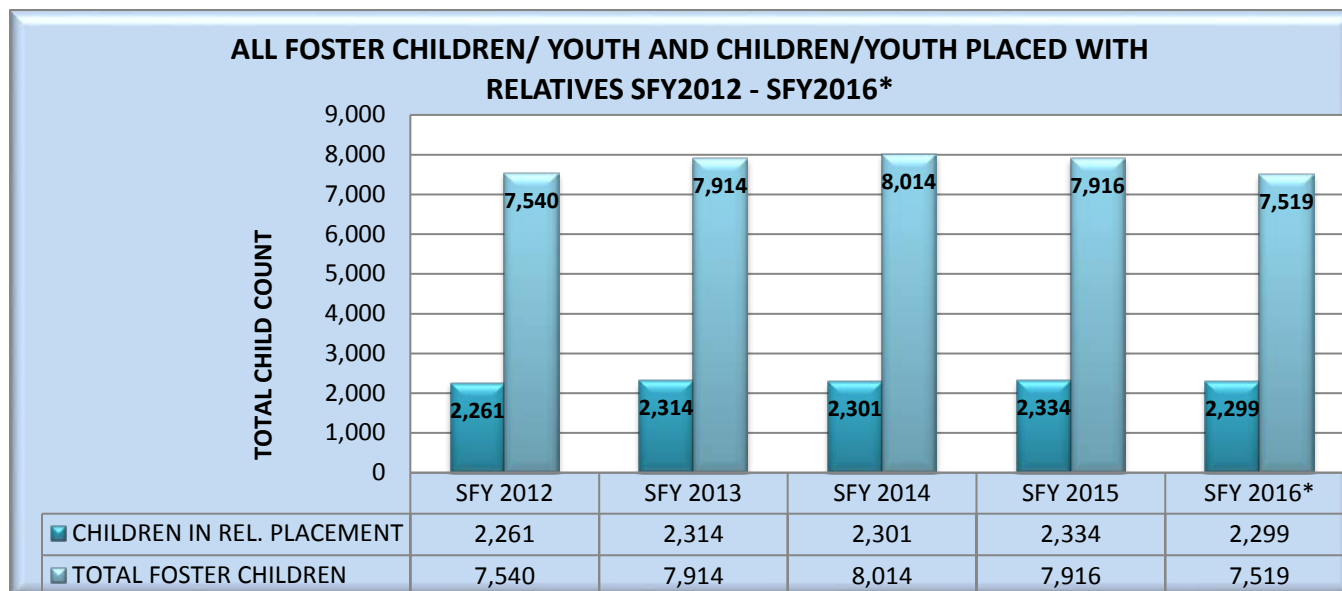


Figure 4.2: Total foster children/youth and relative placement comparison SFY2012 – SFY2016 YTD

Source: CFS723; SFY 2016\* = June 2015 – May 2016

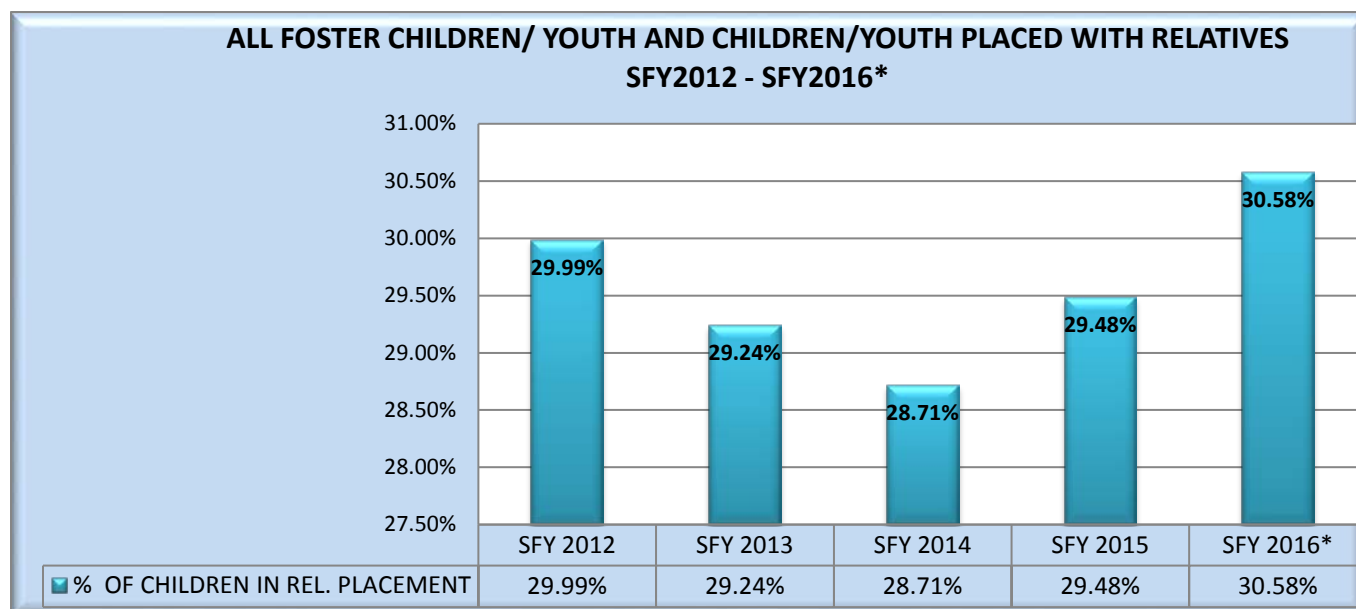


Figure 4.3: Total percentage of foster children/youth and relative placements SFY2012 – SFY2016 YTD

Source: CFS 723; SFY 2016\* = June 2015 – May 2016

During SFY 2016 approximately 30.58% of children/youth in foster care, across all child welfare agencies were placed with relatives from July 1, 2015 through May 2016. This data represents a 3.23% increase in placements with relatives from SFY 2012 through SFY 2015.

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.

**Table 4.11**

***Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data***

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 10 Relative Placement	69%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	25	11	4									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 10 'Relative Placement' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 69% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

***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.

**CF SR 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 CFSR was not sufficient to include.

### Statewide Data (SFY 2016)

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.

**Table 4.12**

#### **Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 11 Relationship of Child in Care with Parents	61%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	19	12	9									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 11 'Relationship of Child in Care with Parents' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 61% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

### **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.

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. Overall, Nevada has improved in the timeliness of adoptions as represented by current state data.

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. Permanency Outcome 1 and 2 are areas 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:

- more likely to be suspended,
- more likely to move schools,
- more likely to fail the criterion referenced tests and the high school proficiency tests, and
- 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.

## **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:**

- During the implementation period, CCDFS has participated in each of the Statewide Collaborative on Education, Child Welfare, and the Court's (Statewide Collaborative) quarterly conference calls. CCDFS has communicated information about its shared efforts with the Clark County School District (CCSD) on each call. The hiring of CCDFS's Educational Liaison and these shared efforts have been well received by the Statewide Collaborative. Recently, CCDFS and CCSD have begun the creation of a possible Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) based on the new federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The ESSA contains provisions for the education of children in the foster care system and will be fully enacted by December of 2017. As the CCDFS Manager over Education and the Educational Liaison have legal backgrounds, CCDFS pushed that the MOU be based off of the ESSA requirements and best practices. The Statewide Collaborative was very excited about this approach. Clark County is the first jurisdiction to tackle the ESSA implementation. The CCDFS/CCSD partnership and MOU was discussed by the Statewide Collaborative as a possible model in Nevada for the joint efforts in the child welfare agency/local education agency partnership as required in the ESSA. The Statewide Collaborative has expressed much interest in finding out more about our future joint endeavors and has asked that any MOU be shared with its members for possible statewide replication. In furtherance of its collaboration with CCSD, CCDFS has asked the Statewide Collaborative to extend an invitation to CCSD. This request was well received by both the Statewide Collaborative and CCSD.

#### **Progress as it relates to QPI:**

### **CHILD WELFARE WORKGROUP**

- Development of a Partnership Agreement: A policy has been written and is being reviewed by leadership at EMG. A soft rollout has been completed through all units and a two day event for passport to partnership was held.
- Implementation of Normalcy Standards: A statewide committee developed a statewide policy that is now being revised to Clark Counties Policies. There will be a statewide webinar, a local training, and a strategic implementation plan for rollout.

### **RECRUITMENT**

- Modify recruitment event processes: The recruiters utilize Nielson Survey results for Clark County when selecting parallel recruitment events to attend.
- Market segmentation: Partnership and contract developed with a local marketing firm, who also utilizes Nielson Survey Results in developing marketing materials and plans and placements for CCDFS to recruit quality caregivers.

### **SUPPORT AND RETENTION:**

- Bulletin Boards: Placement of message boards at each CCDFS site to encourage awareness and participation in QPI events. Foster Parent Champions maintain these boards and put up to date information on them weekly.

- Grievance/Concern: Development of a grievance/concern policy that will allow caregivers a process to resolve concerns in a proactive and consistent manner. The draft is currently with the Policy and Procedure unit to identify cohesiveness for all existing processes.
- 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. A calendar of support and retention events has been developed and implemented.

## **CCDFS PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR UP-COMING SFY 2017**

CCDFS has embarked on designing a placement matching system that will be in full operation by August 2016. PRIME (Placement Referral Intelligent Matching Engine) will assist us in making the best placement the first time. This will assist in stabilizing the youth and ensuring that the child's well-being needs are met. In addition, CCDFS has collaborated with State Children's Mental Health to assist us in providing clinical support to our children currently housed in our shelter. This partnership has helped in ensuring that children in our shelter have access to immediate mental health services in times of acute episodes.

Additionally, CCDFS will maintain participation in all State Collaborative conference calls and efforts. As appropriate, CCDFS will continue to share the progress of its joint endeavors with CCSD and provide the Statewide Collaborative with any information to assist with ESSA implementation. CCDFS will also continue with its strong focus on supporting children in the foster care system educationally, by utilizing the ESSA as its guide; wherein the three primary focus areas will be on: (1) Points of Contact & Collaborative Efforts between CCSD & DFS; (2) Educational Stability of Students in Foster Care; and (3) Required Data Collection & Reporting to Ensure Educational Success. CCDFS's Educational Liaison and Manager over Education have prioritized the creation of an MOU, the implementation of an Information Sharing system between CCDFS and CCSD, and outreach to CCDFS staff and foster parents to support children in care educationally for SFY 2017. Regular joint meetings, joint trainings and several educational projects to foster these goals have been set up during this implementation time

## **DCFS RURAL REGION PROGRESS**

Throughout the Court jurisdictions of Nevada, DCFS-Rural Region staff participate in the Community Improvement Councils (CIC) in partnership with the courts and stakeholders involved in the courts. These partnerships have been successful in identifying barriers and challenges for youth and brainstorming ideas of how to address the barriers. Courts have taken a more active role in ensuring youths identified needs are being met by the agency.

By building quality foster parent placements through QPI, children's well-being will be improved. Youth's placement stability will increase as the partnership between DCFS-Rural staff and foster parents continues to improve through the QPI initiatives. Additionally, the QPI philosophy of foster parents as an active part of the team, involve the foster parent in more case planning activities when appropriate. Contact between foster parents and biological parents is encouraged which could increase reunification efforts and the foster parents can assist in other permanency planning options for the youth as well

The Clinical Program Manager continues to be involved with community partner agencies, including Rural Counseling and Supportive Services, and Rural Regional Centers to participate in the development of plans for coordinating services of minor children, as well as to develop transition plans to adult services for those children reaching the age of majority. The Clinical Program Manager has participated in several regional Court Improvement Council (CIC) projects to provide information related to the availability and use of clinical assessments for children and parents who are involved with the Court. A matrix has been provided to CIC participants to outline assessment types, purpose of assessments and use in monitoring case progress to achieve permanency for children.

## **DCFS PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR UP-COMING SFY 2017**

DCFS continues to expand our pool of providers throughout rural Nevada who provide services for a fee, when Medicaid providers are not available to children and families in rural Nevada. Additionally, we continue to network with local service

provider agencies to communicate unmet needs when they are identified and assist in training rural clinicians in evidenced based therapeutic interventions to build capacity and enhance the infrastructure of available services in rural communities.

## **WCDSS PROGRESS**

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

WCDSS held four Education Advisory Subcommittee meetings (through the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Senior Model Court) during this reporting period focusing on collaboration for individual educational advocacy, training, policy development, and data sharing. Staff representing the local school district, community college, foster parent association, community service provider (The Children's Cabinet, Inc.), Social Services and Dependency Court all participated.

WCDSS is in the second year of a research grant awarded through the Walter S. Johnson Foundation to address educational outcomes for youth. Specifically, this grant identifies youth at risk of poor education outcomes grades 9-12 through a school success risk indicator including test scores, required course completion, attendance and disciplinary actions. Two retired school counselors serve as Individual Education Advocates and meet with identified youth (capacity is 40) to develop an individual academic plan. Home-based tutors are deployed to provide a minimum of one hour tutoring per year. Research is conducted through the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and will be available at the conclusion of the grant. This demonstration project involves a control and research component.

UNITY was updated to include each child's unique school identifier on the person detail window providing WCDSS and WCSD the ability to accurately share data. WCDSS and WCSD staff are jointly working towards developing a page in WCSD student database (Infinite Campus) and it is expected reports will be provided during the next reporting to include academic success, graduation rates, school stability, and any other information requested by the Education Subcommittee.

Youth exiting care have a team meeting six months prior to exit to confirm all needs are identified and planned for. A significant goal of this meeting is to ensure the youth understand the benefits of voluntary participation in the over-18, Court-oversight services offered through State funding.

### **WCDSS PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR UP-COMING SFY 2017**

WCDSS is working through the Education Subcommittee of CIP to develop a prototype for information sharing between the local school district and child welfare agency. The Education Liaison serves on the Committee and consistently provides information to the Committee re: WCDSS activities to include the Research Demonstration Project activities sponsored by the Walter S. Johnson Foundation. WCDSS continues to have a local subcommittee of Senior Model Court that meets quarterly to discuss progress towards identified goals and address education-related concerns.

## **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 CFSR data/information, most recent case review data or relevant state data, and most recent stakeholder survey/focus group data/information.

<b>Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs</b>
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### ***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 2009 CFSR 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 (SFY 2016)

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.

**Table 5.1**

### **Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 12 Identifying Needs and Services to Child, Parent and Foster Parent	50%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	33	33	0									

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 12 A Needs Assessment and Services to	75%											



Children												
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	50	16	0									

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 12 B Needs Assessment and Services to Parents	55%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	33	27	6									

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 12 C Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents	74%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	28	10	28									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 12 and subparts A, B, C 'Needs Assessment and Services to Children' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 50% (overall item 12) statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

### ***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 (SFY 2016)

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.

**Table 5.2**

#### **Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 13 Child and Family involvement in Case Planning	42%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	28	38	0									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 13 'Child and Family involvement in Case Planning' Relationship of Child in Care with Parents' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 42% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

### **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 (SFY 2016)

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.

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.

**Table 5.3**

### ***Compliance of Monthly Case Worker Visits with Children FFY 2015 (October 01, 2014 to September 30, 2015)***

<b>Item 19: Case Worker Visit with Children (FFY2015)</b>	<b>Compliance Rate</b>	<b>NV Goal</b>	<b>Goal Met</b>
Statewide	93.62 %	95.00 %	No
CCDFS	95.22 %	95.00 %	Yes
WCDSS	91.54%	95.00 %	No
DCFS Rural Region	86.05 %	95.00 %	No

Source: UNITY CFS 7D7

Table 5.43 below illustrates the State's compliance with this expectation during State Fiscal Year 2016. Please note that as of this reporting only 10 months of data for SFY16 is available (July 01, 2015 to April 30, 2016). 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 5.4**

### ***Compliance of Monthly Case Worker Visits with Children SFY 2016 (July 01, 2015 to April 30, 2016)***

<b>Case Worker Visit with Children</b>	<b>Compliance Rate</b>	<b>NV Goal</b>	<b>Goal Met</b>
Statewide	93.95%	95.00 %	No
CCDFS	94.89%	95.00 %	No
WCDSS	90.47%	95.00 %	No
DCFS Rural Region	94.78%	95.00 %	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 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”.

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.

**Table 5.5**

***Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data***

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 14 Caseworker Visits with Child	58%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	38	28	0									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 14 'Caseworker Visits with Child' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 58% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

**Statewide Efforts to Improve**

CCDFS QA/QI staff provided data requirements and extensive support to DCFS IMS staff to assist with correcting issues with the State report used to monitor statewide compliance regarding this item. In addition, CCDFS supervisors and managers continue to access data reports in Cognos designed to inform them of the frequency of caseworker visits. In addition, the continued implementation of SIPS will also improve data collection in the areas of child and adult functioning during caseworker visits, which should work to improve frequency. Finally, the supervisory oversight requirements associated with SIPS combined with CCDFS policy; which requires supervisors to observe their staff in the field on a quarterly basis will also work to improve the quality of caseworker visits.

A few years ago, DCFS implemented an incentive program, Jeans Day certificates, for staff who met the 95<sup>th</sup> and the 100% of Caseworker Monthly Visits. The incentive program resulted in improvement for many staff but it was not consistently maintained. Approximately 7 months ago, DCFS implemented a corrective action disciplinary sequence for staff who failed to meet the caseworker monthly visit expectation of 95%. Since this time, DCFS has seen a dramatic improvement in the consistency of caseworkers meeting the monthly visit requirement.

DCFS did not have money in its budget to visit all children placed out of state in RTC's monthly. This past year Caseworker Visit grant monies were utilized to conduct monthly visits with children placed in RTC's out of state.

Over the last year, the DCFS Rural Region Quality Assurance Unit created and facilitated training regarding quality visits and documentation, Titled, *Caseworker Contacts and Documentation Training*. These trainings were available to staff through worker teleconference calls and mandatory monthly in person trainings. The trainings included a template to help staff gather sufficient information during their visits with children and ideas on how to efficiently document this information into UNITY case notes. The DCFS Rural Region Quality Assurance Unit also created a spreadsheet to track each staff required to make monthly visits to children. This spreadsheet was monitored on a weekly basis. Quality Assurance was able to track the quality of case notes being input by staff and immediately provide individual training and mentoring to staff in need improvement. The spreadsheet is also utilized to observe trends so that if corrective action is needed it is identified during the month in question and not after the fact.

Report RPT7D7 is generated monthly from UNITY SACWIS system and is utilized to monitor and track caseworker contact with children. This information is used in bi-weekly management meetings to keep supervisors and managers abreast of staff compliance. Over the last 12 months, the quality of the visits and documentation has dramatically improved. Caseworkers are now documenting information about the child from both the child's perspective as well as the care provider's perspective, addressing key areas such as; safety concerns, health/mental health of the child, milestones of the child, educational needs, social needs, adjustment to placement, stability of placement, and any other specific concerns noted. DCFS will continue to offer *Caseworker Contacts and Documentation Training* to new and current staff.

The Implementation Leadership Team (ILT) continues to brainstorm new ways to present this information to staff on a reoccurring basis.

The WCDSS sought grant funding to support caseworker visits with children by allowing overtime costs to be paid. This allows the worker to visit children after normal hours, or during the day and complete necessary documentation after-hours. A fleet of vehicles is available to staff as well as mileage reimbursement. Monthly reports are distributed to supervisory staff and performance improvement plans have been initiated for some staff not in compliance. Further, caseworker complains is a standing agenda item for the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) and emphasis is placed on compliance. Unit funds are available to staff to purchase meals or activities to promoter enjoyable visits between caseworker and child.

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 overall 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 CFSR.

### **Statewide Data (SFY 2016)**

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.

**Table 5.6**

#### ***Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data***

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 15 Caseworker Visits with Parents	44%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	27	34	5									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 15 'Caseworker Visits with Child' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 44% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

## **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.

#### **CFSR 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 CFSR 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 (SFY 2016)**

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.



**Table 5.7**

**Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 16 Educational Needs of Child	76%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	34	11	21									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 16 'Educational Needs of Child is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 76% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

**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 (SFY 2016):

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.

**Table 5.8**

#### **Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 17 Physical Health of Child	75%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	38	13	15									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 17 'Physical Health of Child' is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 75% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

### **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 (SFY 2016)

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.

**Table 5.9**

#### **Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data**

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 18 Mental/Behavioral Health of Child	71%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	35	14	17									

The overall federal performance expectation for item 18 'Mental/Behavioral health of Child is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 71% statewide for CY 2015; therefore, this is an area needing improvement.

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

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.

Nevada has been able to collect case review information on all Well-being Outcomes 1,2 & 3 during CY 2015 as presented here during the reporting period, and all Outcomes based on Case Review data are 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 if available most recent stakeholder survey/focus group data/information.

#### 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 CFSR 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 CFSR, 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 UNITY as being in foster care.

Several State-level, Carson City and Clark County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR 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 (SFY 2016)

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 is steadily working towards improving the quality of AFCARS.

**Table 6.1**

*In May 2016 Nevada conducted a sampling statewide of 40 cases using UNITY data as it related to the accuracy of the status, demographics characteristics, placement location, and goals of children in foster care. Statewide the sampling results indicated the following:*

<b><u>Agency</u></b>	<b><u>Demographics/Status % Strength</u></b>	<b><u>Placement location %Strength</u></b>	<b><u>Case Plan Goal %Strength</u></b>
<u>CCDFS</u>	<u>100%</u> <u>N=20/20</u>	<u>100%</u> <u>N=20/20</u>	<u>55%</u> <u>N=11/20</u>
<u>WCDSS</u>	<u>100%</u> <u>N=10/10</u>	<u>100%</u> <u>N=10/10</u>	<u>80%</u> <u>N=8/10</u>
<u>DCFS Rural Region</u>	<u>100%</u> <u>N=10/10</u>	<u>100%</u> <u>N=10/10</u>	<u>50%</u> <u>N=5/10</u>
<u>Statewide</u>	<u>100%</u> <u>N=40/40</u>	<u>100%</u> <u>N=40/40</u>	<u>60%</u> <u>N=24/40</u>

### **Sampling Methodology**

On a quarterly basis, 40 child cases are randomly sampled in order to gather data associated with this systemic factor. The parameters of the sampling process are as follows:

- **Sampling Timetable:** 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May sampling month of April, 3<sup>rd</sup> week of August sampling month of July, 3<sup>rd</sup> week of November sampling month of October, 3<sup>rd</sup> week of February sampling month of January.
- **Sampling Process:** The first step is to run a Unity (SACWIS) query of report RPT721 which is the foster care/out of home care report which gives us the population of all children in an out of home care placement for the month sampled. The second step is to identify all children in care 15-17 months, with an open out of home care placement at end of sample month (This length of time in out-of-home care is selected in order to find cases eligible for assessment of case compliance with ASFA component of filing a TPR or entering an allowable compelling reason to not file a TPR petition in the case record). The third step is to separate the cases by jurisdiction (Clark County, Washoe County, and DCFS Rural Region cases). The fourth step is randomize each of the three data sets with an Excel randomizing tool; that is, each child in each data set is assigned a random number. The fourth step is to then rank order each of the three data sets from highest to lowest random number, and choose the sample. In the final step we select the first 10 DCFS Rural, first 10 WCDSS, and first 20 CCDFS cases-this is our quarterly sample. (Note, this ratio is chosen as it approximates our rates of case selection for our annual case review process in which we select 31 Clark County cases, 17 Washoe County cases, and 17 DCFS Rural Region cases.)

### **Data Collection:**

- **Placement entry in Unity & child demographic data:** The county/state child welfare agency is given a spreadsheet with the identified sample children for the quarter. The spreadsheet shows any and all placements the child was in during the sample month. The spreadsheet also shows all child demographic information. The county/state child welfare agency provides validation of accuracy of placement entry in Unity for any and all placements in the month sampled; as well as validating accuracy of child demographic data. For placement entry to be considered compliant, any and all placements the child had during the month under review needed to be accurately entered in Unity. (Note; the placement screen in unity shows the location of the child's placement) For the child demographic data element to be considered compliant, all demographic data on the report must be validated by the agency as accurate. Percentages of compliance are calculated by agency and aggregated state-wide.

- **Permanency goal(s) accuracy:** The county/state child welfare agency is given a spreadsheet with the identified sample children for the quarter. The spreadsheet shows the identified permanency goals for the child at the end of the month sampled. The county/state agency validates whether the permanency goal (s) as entered in Unity at the end of month is/are the same as the permanency goal(s) on the court order in effect at the end of the month. Compliance for this item is that any and all permanency goals entered in the Unity System effective the last day of the sample month correspond with any and all permanency goal as reflected in the child's court order the end of the month. Percentages of compliance are calculated by agency and aggregated state-wide.

Overall, the status, demographic characteristics and placement location were readily identifiable 100% of the time for those foster children sampled; however, the case plan goal was only readily identifiable statewide 60% of the time. Since the case plan goal was not readily identifiable this is considered an area needing improvement.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Focus groups were conducted statewide in SFY 2016 with Caseworkers concerning this item.

- **Placement Entry Accuracy:** Each caseworker focus group cited the tickler system in UNITY that compels workers to ensure that placements in UNITY are updated, and, each jurisdiction cited specific additional oversight strategies, policies and procedures to ensure accurate placement entry in UNITY. While placement entry methods vary across jurisdictions, with some having specialized teams to enter placement data (Clark County) and other's solely relying on the case worker to enter placements (Rural Region), all focus groups expressed confidence that placements in UNITY accurately reflected the current placement of the child, and accurately reported the location of that placement.
- **Permanency Goal Accuracy:** Opinion of the workers across caseworker focus groups indicated was that there were systems in place, in addition to cues available out of UNITY, to ensure that perm goals as recorded in UNITY on the most recent case plan accurately reflect the perm goals as reflected in the most recent court order. However, workers across focus groups also indicated that there were barriers to consistent implementation of these procedures (e.g. case transfer, inconsistent supervisor implementation of monitoring system/lack of supervisor verification, new UNITY functionality requiring workers to navigate to missing data screens rather than receive a 'nag' that data is missing) that serve to compromise implementation of the process that ensures that data for permanency goals in UNITY match the current court order. Data from sampling in May 2016 corroborates worker concerns about consistent implementation. It appears that there is inconsistent performance across the state relative to ensuring consistent application of the requirement to ensure that permanency goals in UNITY accurately reflect the permanency goals as documented in the most recent court order:

### **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.

During this year UNITY 2.0 was completely rolled out statewide. UNITY 2.0 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.

UNITY has been updated to include 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 safeguard the children in their homes.

IMS staff continue 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. IMS plans to purchase COGNOS from IBM in SFY 2017. IBM



COGNAS Business Intelligence is a web-based, integrated business intelligence suite by IBM. It provides a toolset for reporting, analysis, score carding, and monitoring of events and metrics. The software consists of several components to meet different information requirements.

The quality of data continues to be a concern and efforts to improve the quality of AFCARS/ NCANDS and UNITY data is are sited as areas of improvement for SFY 2017.

## **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 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 CFSR 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 CFSR 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 (SFY 2016)**

Nevada has continued to conduct Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) on this item. In the following Table 6.2 is the most current case review data as it relates to item 13.

**Table 6.2**

***Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data***

Performance Item	QICR 2015			QICR 2016			QICR 2017			QICR 2018		
Item 13 Child and Family involvement in Case Planning	42%											
Performance Item Ratings	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA	S	ANI	NA
	28	38	0									

As previous reported in item 13 the overall federal performance expectation for item 13 'Child and Family involvement in Case Planning is 90%. Nevada's rating for this item was 50% statewide for CY 2015. This item is rated based on the frequency and quality of child and family engagement in case planning.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Focus groups were conducted statewide with caseworkers and youth concerning this item. The youth group was comprised of current foster youth, youth who aged out of foster care and adoptive youth. Caseworker's opinions varied across jurisdictions on this item.

- Washoe County case workers** expressed concern that the case planning process, particularly the initial case plan, did not have the level of parent involvement that they believed it should, which they attributed this to primarily two barriers. The first, timing of completion of initial case plan: 45 day's from placement in Out of Home Care (state policy) the case plan must be completed-this does not fit with what the current SAFE model requires in the way of case planning. They further indicated by the time the case is transferred from Investigation to Permanency (1-2 weeks), which only leaves the case worker approximately one month to complete the initial case plan. The SAFE model requires multiple meetings with parents, as well as input with other stakeholders in the case-it is simply unreasonable to expect that all that the model requires workers to do in the way of case planning can be done with fidelity to the model. Second, the agency is in a period of transition from facilitator generated team meetings to case worker generated team meetings. So, the case worker now has a dual role to organize, facilitate and record team meetings, which are in essence case planning meetings. Workers expressed that this change to multiple demands does compromise their ability to give the level of focus they would like to give on parents and children's' involvement in the case planning/team meeting process. The consensus of the Washoe caseworker group was the issues discussed above lead to an initial case plan that is less than highly case and child specific. However, the consensus of the group was that in the long run they do effectively engage children, as developmentally appropriate and parents in the ongoing case planning process. The concerns expressed relate primarily to the initial case plan.
- Clark county case workers** indicated that they believed their implementation of the team meeting process helped ensure that parents had a significant voice in the case planning process. However, some caseworkers understood the new practice model was parent centered, and the process did not encourage participation of children or provide guidance concerning participation of children. Additionally, caseworkers expressed concern about restrictions imposed on modifying case plans when new problems emerged or were identified subsequent to the initial case plan; these restrictions are related to their court processes associated with concerns identified in the original petition.

- **Rural Region case workers** indicated that they were including children as developmentally appropriate, making provisions to have team meetings outside of school hours, and, involving parents in the case planning process on a consistent basis. One of the regional offices spoke to a process that included involving both the Investigation and Permanency worker at the onset of the case working in the initial child and family team meetings with the parents, prior to case transfer. They believed this process of including both workers at the onset of the case made for more consistent involvement by parents.
- **A state wide focus group of foster youth** indicated that they were not involved in the case planning process, that case plans were essentially 'generic' and handed to them. Some youth indicated that the frequency of changes in case workers negatively impacted their involvement in the case planning process to the point that some youth reported refraining from engaging in a relationship with their case worker anticipating that they would not be around long.

## ***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 (SFY 2016)

**Table 6.3**

*In May 2016 Nevada conducted a sampling of 40 foster care cases using UNITY data as it related to the frequency reported in UNITY of periodic reviews conducted no less frequently than 6 months by the court.*

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Periodic Reviews frequency = 6 months</u> <u>% Strength</u>
<u>CCDFS</u>	<u>85%</u> <u>N=17/20</u>
<u>WCDSS</u>	<u>100%</u> <u>N=10/10</u>
<u>DCFS Rural Region</u>	<u>100%</u> <u>N=9/10</u>
<u>Statewide</u>	<u>90%</u> <u>N=36/40</u>

### Sampling Methodology

On a quarterly basis, 40 child cases are randomly sampled in order to gather data associated with this systemic factor. The parameters of the sampling process are as follows:

- **Sampling Timetable:** 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May sampling month of April, 3<sup>rd</sup> week of August sampling month of July, 3<sup>rd</sup> week of November sampling month of October, 3<sup>rd</sup> week of February sampling month of January.
- **Sampling Process:** The first step is to run a Unity (SACWIS) query of report RPT721 which is the foster care/out of home care report which gives us the population of all children in an out of home care placement for the month sampled. The second step is to identify all children in care 15-17 months, with an open out of home care placement at end of sample month (This length of time in out-of-home care is selected in order to find cases eligible for assessment of case compliance with ASFA component of filing a TPR or entering an allowable compelling reason to not file a TPR petition in the case record). The third step is to separate the cases by jurisdiction (Clark County, Washoe County, and DCFS Rural Region cases). The fourth step is randomize each of the three data sets with an Excel randomizing tool; that is, each child in each data set is assigned a random number. The fourth step is to then rank order each of the three data sets from highest to lowest random number, and choose the sample. In the final step we select the first 10 DCFS Rural, first 10 WCDSS, and first 20 CCDFS cases-this is our quarterly sample. (Note, this ratio is chosen as it approximates our rates of case selection for our annual case review process in which we select 31 Clark County cases, 17 Washoe County cases, and 17 DCFS Rural Region cases.)

#### Data Collection:

- **Periodic and Permanency hearings:** For each of the cases, state QA specialists examine Unity (SACWIS) screens indicating hearing occurrence (date of hearing), by hearing type (periodic or permanency), ensuring hearing occurrence within timelines. The specialist will conduct further validating with review of case notes if needed (e.g., multiple dates of hearing entry close in occurrence). If case notes cannot clear up uncertainty, the county agency QA contact is contacted by the state QA specialist and asked to clear up any inconsistency by submitting an explanation in writing to the state QA specialist. Given the length of time in out-of-home care per sample parameters (between 15-17 months) each of these cases should have an initial periodic and one annual review. Percentage of compliance is calculated for each review type for each jurisdiction, and, aggregate state wide percentages are also calculated. For a case to be compliant with periodic review requirements, the case must have had a periodic review within 182 days of placement in foster care. The date of placement in foster care is the date the child was taken into protective custody and placed in an out-of-home care placement. For a

case to be compliant with annual permanency hearing review timeline requirements, the case must have had an annual permanency review hearing within 365 days of placement into out-of-home care. Again, the date of placement in foster care is the date the child was taken into protective custody and placed in an out-of-home care placement.

Overall, Statewide 90% of Periodic Reviews are being held within 182 days of placement in foster care.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Focus groups were conducted statewide with the judiciary on this item. The group was comprised of Judges, District Attorneys, CASA, CIP, and Defense and Child Attorneys.

- All three Judiciary Focus Groups reported that they were confident their scheduling system ensured that they had periodic reviews in excess of the standard. Also, three judges across the three jurisdictions spoke to the need to often schedule periodic reviews more frequently than every 6 months, and, as often as every 3 months to help ensure movement of cases.

## ***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 (SFY 2016)**

#### **Table 6.4**

*In May 2016 Nevada conducted a sampling of 40 foster care cases using UNITY data as it related to the frequency reported in UNITY of Permanency Hearings conducted no less frequently than 12 months by the court.*

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Permanency Hearings =12 months</u> <u>% Strength</u>
<u>CCDFS</u>	<u>90%</u> <u>N=18/20</u>
<u>WCDSS</u>	<u>100%</u> <u>N=10/10</u>
<u>DCFS Rural Region</u>	<u>80%</u> <u>N=8/10</u>
<u>Statewide</u>	<u>90%</u> <u>N=36/40</u>

### Sampling Methodology

On a quarterly basis, 40 child cases are randomly sampled in order to gather data associated with this systemic factor. The parameters of the sampling process are as follows:

- **Sampling Timetable:** 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May sampling month of April, 3<sup>rd</sup> week of August sampling month of July, 3<sup>rd</sup> week of November sampling month of October, 3<sup>rd</sup> week of February sampling month of January.
- **Sampling Process:** The first step is to run a Unity (SACWIS) query of report RPT721 which is the foster care/out of home care report which gives us the population of all children in an out of home care placement for the month sampled. The second step is to identify all children in care 15-17 months, with an open out of home care placement at end of sample month (This length of time in out-of-home care is selected in order to find cases eligible for assessment of case compliance with ASFA component of filing a TPR or entering an allowable compelling reason to not file a TPR petition in the case record). The third step is to separate the cases by jurisdiction (Clark County, Washoe County, and DCFS Rural Region cases). The fourth step is randomize each of the three data sets with an Excel randomizing tool; that is, each child in each data set is assigned a random number. The fourth step is to then rank order each of the three data sets from highest to lowest random number, and choose the sample. In the final step we select the first 10 DCFS Rural, first 10 WCDSS, and first 20 CCDFS cases-this is our quarterly sample. (Note, this ratio is chosen as it approximates our rates of case selection for our annual case review process in which we select 31 Clark County cases, 17 Washoe County cases, and 17 DCFS Rural Region cases.)

### Data Collection:

- **Periodic and Permanency hearings:** For each of the cases, state QA specialists examine Unity (SACWIS) screens indicating hearing occurrence (date of hearing), by hearing type (periodic or permanency), ensuring hearing occurrence within timelines. The specialist will conduct further validating with review of case notes if needed (e.g., multiple dates of hearing entry close in occurrence). If case notes cannot clear up uncertainty, the county agency QA contact is contacted by the state QA specialist and asked to clear up any inconsistency by submitting an explanation in writing to the state QA specialist. Given the length of time in out-of-home care per sample parameters (between 15-17 months) each of these cases should have an initial periodic and one annual review. Percentage of compliance is calculated for each review type for each jurisdiction, and, aggregate state wide percentages are also calculated. For a case to be compliant with periodic review requirements, the case must have had a periodic review within 182 days of placement in foster care. The date of placement in foster care is the date the child was taken into protective custody and placed in an out-of-home care placement. For a case to be compliant with annual permanency hearing review timeline requirements, the case must have had an annual permanency review hearing within 365 days of placement into out-of-home care. Again, the date of placement in foster care is the date the child was taken into protective custody and placed in an out-of-home care placement.

Overall, Statewide 90% of Permanency Reviews are being held within 365 days of placement in foster care.



### Stakeholder Interview Information

Focus groups were conducted statewide with the judiciary on this item. The group was comprised of Judges, District Attorneys, CASA, CIP, and Defense and Child Attorneys.

- All three Judiciary Focus Groups reported that they were confident their scheduling system ensured that they had annual reviews as required by the standard.

### **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 court's 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 children not already placed in a pre-adoptive home.

#### CFSR 2009

In 2009 this Item was rated as an area 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 (SFY 2016)

**Table 6.5**

*In May 2016 Nevada conducted a sampling of 40 children using UNITY data as it related to the compliance with timely filing of TPR's or allowable compelling reason not to file being identified in the case record .*

<u>Agency</u>	<u>TPR filing compliance</u> <u>% Strength</u>
<u>CCDFS</u>	60% N=12/20
<u>WCDSS</u>	80% N=8/10
<u>DCFS Rural Region</u>	30% N=3/10
<u>Statewide</u>	58% N=23/40

### Sampling Methodology

On a quarterly basis, 40 child cases are randomly sampled in order to gather data associated with this systemic factor. The parameters of the sampling process are as follows:

- **Sampling Timetable:** 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May sampling month of April, 3<sup>rd</sup> week of August sampling month of July, 3<sup>rd</sup> week of November sampling month of October, 3<sup>rd</sup> week of February sampling month of January.
- **Sampling Process:** The first step is to run a Unity (SACWIS) query of report RPT721 which is the foster care/out of home care report which gives us the population of all children in an out of home care placement for the month sampled. The second step is to identify all children in care 15-17 months, with an open out of home care placement at end of sample month (This length of time in out-of-home care is selected in order to find cases eligible for assessment of case compliance with ASFA component of filing a TPR or entering an allowable compelling reason to not file a TPR petition in the case record). The third step is to separate the cases by jurisdiction (Clark County, Washoe County, and DCFS Rural Region cases). The fourth step is randomize each of the three data sets with an Excel randomizing tool; that is, each child in each data set is assigned a random number. The fourth step is to then rank order each of the three data sets from highest to lowest random number, and choose the sample. In the final step we select the first 10 DCFS Rural, first 10 WCDSS, and first 20 CCDFS cases-this is our quarterly sample. (Note, this ratio is chosen as it approximates our rates of case selection for our annual case review process in which we select 31 Clark County cases, 17 Washoe County cases, and 17 DCFS Rural Region cases.)

#### **Data Collection:**

- **TPR filing or allowable compelling reason to not file:** The county/state child welfare agency is given a spreadsheet with the identified sample children for the quarter. They are required to enter the TPR file date in an identified field of this spreadsheet; Or, the CPS agency references the unity screen with allowable exception entry

by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> month in care. The state QA specialist reviews the Unity screen to verify that the claimed exception is an allowable exception to the requirement/compelling reason not to file a TPR petition, and, that it was entered by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> month the child was in out-of-home care placement. Compliance with the standard for this item is a TPR file date by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> month in out-of-home care placement; or, allowable compelling reason to not file a TPR is entered in the case record by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> month the child is placed in out-of-home care. Percentages of compliance are calculated by agency and aggregated state-wide.

Overall, Statewide 58% of cases had filed TPR timely or had compelling reasons identified for not filing TPR per ASFA timeframes.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Focus groups were conducted statewide with the Judiciary, Caseworkers, and Foster Parent Caretakers.

All groups in all jurisdictions indicated that their perception was that TPR's were not filed in a timely manner.

- **Judiciary groups in all jurisdictions** indicated that not filing a TPR petition, in a timely manner following a timely submitted request by the CPS Agency, was an issue of workforce resource at the prosecutor's office
  - Other reasons cited included difficulty locating parents in Washoe County (parent locator resource by definition takes a great deal of time).
  - Also, Washoe County cited there was a lack of prospective adoptive parents creating delay as some judges will not issue a court order for a TPR be filed unless there is a prospective adoptive resource.
  - Clark County indicated that some in the judiciary cite compelling reasons in what appears to be compassion for the parents, leading to inappropriate extensions of attempts to reunify only ending up three and six months later filing a TPR petition.
  - Prosecutors in all three jurisdictions spoke to the back log also causing delays, which in turn makes it difficult to manage the backlog.
  - One member of the judiciary indicated that lack of services available, particularly to parents, slowed down the process as well, stating that making the decision to move forward with a TPR was often inappropriate if parents were on waiting lists for services that could perhaps help them rectify the circumstances that led to them being unsafe parents.
- **Caseworkers in all three jurisdictions** indicated that they believed lack of resources at the prosecutors' offices was the main reason for delays in timely filing, but, in Washoe County they believed that there seemed to be longer delays for cases where there was a dual plan.
- **Foster parents in all jurisdictions** indicated they were aware of prosecutorial delays with filing, but also believed the courts were too lenient with parents. Adoptive parents in the group cited children ending up being TPR'd three and five years into care, and after multiple episodes of foster care.
  - Despite the Foster Parent group citing inappropriate delays, they (particularly the very long term foster/adopt parents) they also noted TPR's occurred more frequently and quicker than in years past.
  - The Foster Parent groups across the state agreed that often delays are often related to the indecisiveness by the child welfare agency
  - Two of the Foster Parent groups also indicated that a mother giving birth to another child while she already has a child in protective custody, causes further TPR delays for the child in care.
- Impact of these delays were observed to negatively impact the children's behavioral and emotional stability because:
  - The relationship between the parents and children continue which is not healthy for them. Belongingness needs of the child are not met causing psychological effects, such as stress, depression, behavioral problems, and instability. Children seem to get stuck emotionally and developmentally as a result of lack of permanence and lack of clarity about who their forever parents are.
  - The children were not free for adoption causing the prospective adoptive parents to not move forward in the adoption process.

### **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 caregivers (pre-adoptive, foster parents, relative, fictive-kin, and etc.) 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, for Annual and Semi Annual Court Hearings 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. For some hearings, court notifications may be sent pursuant to Nevada Rules of Civil Procedure: Rule 5 (a, b.). 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. Child welfare agencies are provided the option of documenting notice to caregivers in Nevada's SACWIS (UNITY). It remains a concern that this process is not consistent statewide. Court Notice is the responsibility of caseworkers statewide.

### CFSR 2009

In 2009, this item is an Area Needing Improvement. Although the state provided a process for 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 caregivers. 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 (SFY 2016)

Statewide Data (SFY 2016) was collected from focus groups and surveys. Information was gathered from 1284 caregivers via an online questionnaire for those who had an email address. The respondents included foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, adoptive parents, relative caregivers, fictive kin, and out of state caregivers. The remaining 956 caregivers received a paper questionnaire via mail, which offered the opportunity to access the survey via a web link or via a paper questionnaire (self-stamp envelopes were provide for all surveys sent via mail.) Of the 1284 email invitations, 67% opened their email, 17% of respondents completed the survey, 67% 3% of the emails bounced, and 8% of respondents opted out of receiving further surveys. From all the email invitations, 411 were from Washoe County, 738 Clark County, and 135 DCFS Rural Region. Of the 956 caregivers that received a paper questionnaire, 13% responded either by mail or a web link online, with only 11% being invalid. Logic was included in the survey to disqualify former caregivers, biological parents, and any current foster parents who have not had a child placed in their home yet. From all the paper surveys, 748 were from Clark County, 71 Rural Region, 44 Washoe County, and 93 were out of state caregivers. The questions targeted the time period of SFY 2016. The surveys help determine if Caregivers are receiving court notices and if they were `afforded a right to be heard.

## SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure 6.1 Demographics of Survey

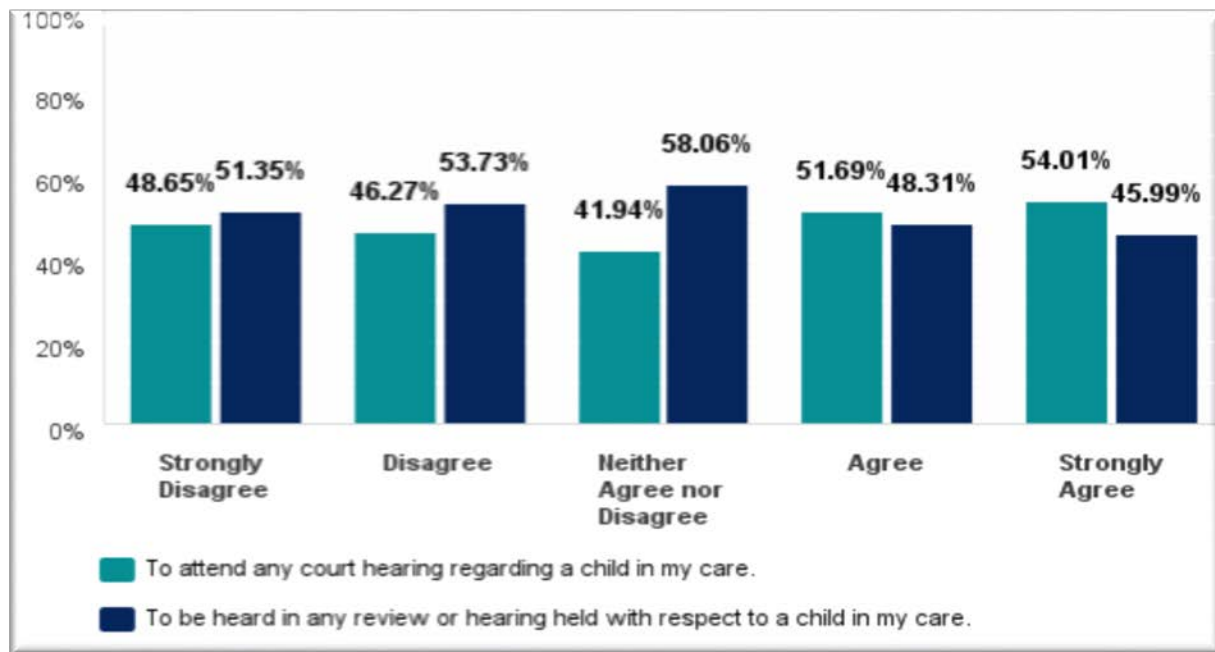


Figure 6.2 Caregivers were asked if they were advised of their right to be heard in any review or hearing and the right to attend any court hearing, on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being Strongly Agree

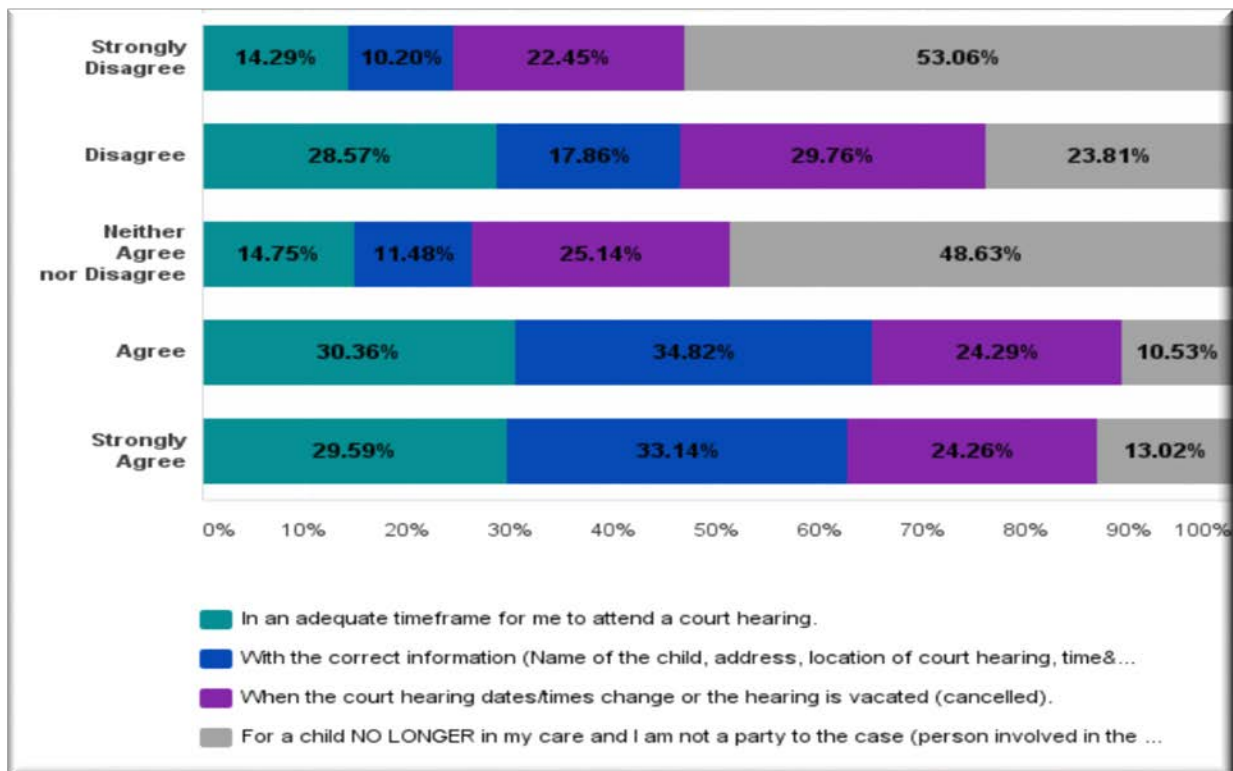
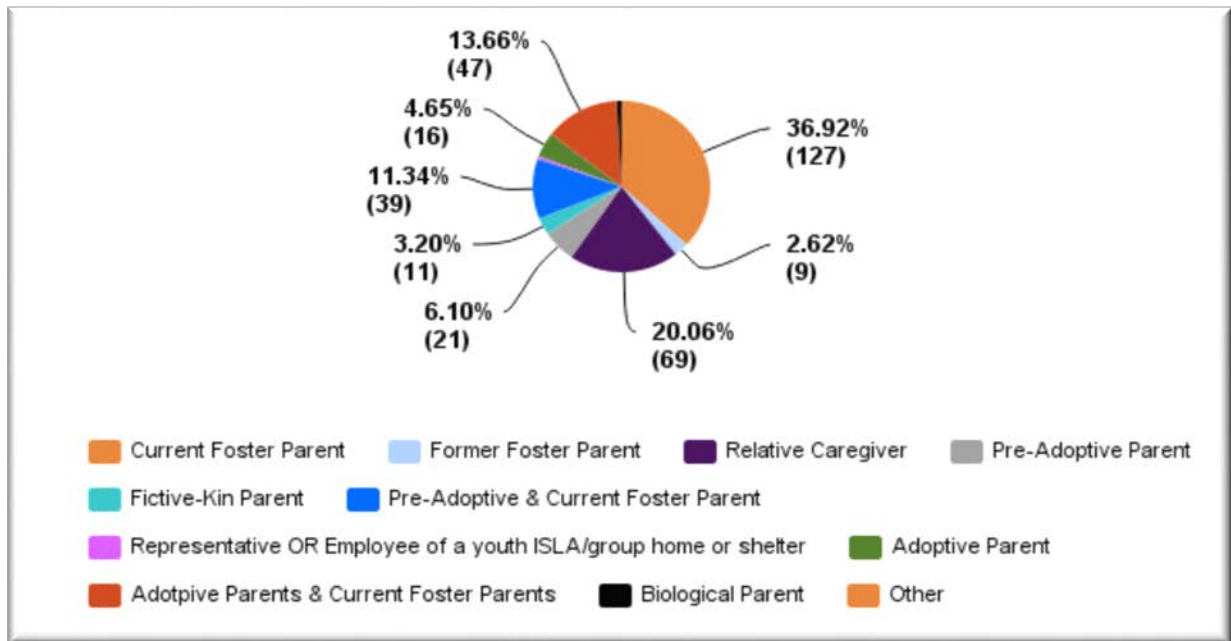


Figure 6.3 There were several questions regarding the accuracy and the timeliness of court notification, on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being Strongly Agree.



Overall, 44.4% of respondents reported they received court notifications all the time and 28% reported sometimes and 28% did not receive any court notifications. The majority of Caregivers are being noticed and the process varies depending on the caseworker. The response for timeliness and accuracy of court notifications are inconsistent. A stakeholder reported “Mail notification sometimes arrives after the court date”, “I have to ask my caseworker for the information”, and “I was recently told the day before a court hearing and I also received a document addressed to another foster parent.” However, 60% of respondents agreed that they received notices in time to attend the court hearing and 68% reported the notices had the correct information (child’s name, court date, location, and etc.). Caregivers are re-notice 49% of the time when the court hearing date and time changes or the court hearing is vacated.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

In June 2016, Statewide Focus groups were held and separated by Judiciary Members, Caseworkers, and Caregivers. The focus group covered several systemic factors including Court Notifications. The questions were to determine how well the case review system is functioning to ensure caregivers are noticed of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to a child.

- In Washoe County, Caregivers were consistently being noticed pursuant to 432B.580 (6) (a) (b). However, some Caregivers were encouraged not attend the hearing, which varied amongst caseworkers. Notices were not arriving in a timely manner and one stakeholder commented a notice was received 1-2 before the court hearing. Opinions varied about Caregivers being heard in court as some judges were more consistent in allowing Caregivers the opportunity to speak. It is noteworthy, that the time allotted for a court hearing is a barrier in the Caregivers being heard during court. Other barriers noted were the inconsistency amongst caseworkers, change of placement after notices have gone out, and Caregivers who were employed during the day were unable to make it to the post office and sign for certified mail. Caseworkers reported high caseloads, which delayed court notices. The process of noticing varied with some notifications coming from the biological families to Caregivers, certified mail, and verbal notifications. The Caregivers were not well informed of their right to be heard in court and uncertain of what court hearings they were allowed to attend. There were some caregivers who reported they “always attend court hearings and always asked my opinion.” One Judge reported “If I have caregivers in the court room I tell them they have a right to be heard.” “Sometimes the caregivers are not present.”



- In the Rural Region, notification was occurring on a consistent basis. A stakeholder reported Caregivers avoid court due to the risk involved and interaction with the biological families. Some jurisdictions have telephonic capabilities to accommodate for this barrier and the agency has a court report template for Caregivers. Stakeholders report the courts will accommodate telephonic attendance and the use of Caregiver court report depends on the caseworker. The Carson Office has more of an advantage at ensuring notices because they contracted a paralegal. There have been times that the courts agenda is busy and caregivers are overlooked in court hearings. The court also notices parties in some cases. The consensus is that there is a strong system in place informally/formally that ensures Caregivers are being notified of the court hearings. However, there is lack of evidence to support that the Caregivers are being notified of their RIGHT to be heard during court hearings. There is confusion that a child welfare hearing having a closed hearing status directly impacts the Caregiver's right to be heard or right to attend the court hearing. Whether a caregiver will be heard varies in each jurisdiction and is inconsistent.
- Clark County has a data system linked to UNITY that alerts a caseworker to send out court notifications. Caregivers are being discouraged from attending the hearings by the caseworkers and the parent's attorneys are not wanting the relatives to attend. It is common practice for caseworkers to notify the Caregivers during home visits. There isn't any confidence that this system (workers notifying the Caregivers) is working. Caregivers do not consistently attend and judges do not consistently inquire if the Caregiver would like to speak. Caregiver has to alert the Marshall that they would like to speak. Caregivers have mixed responses, some indicate they are notified and they ask the worker when the next hearing is. Some caseworkers reported they were not supportive of the Caregivers attending due to them learning too much information about the natural family and attempts to sabotage reunification efforts.

Overall, the Caregivers are receiving notices and the process of noticing a Caregiver is different statewide. Child welfare hearings are considered a "closed hearing", under Nevada statutes, which has created confusion amongst Statewide Stakeholders in determining who is a party to the case. There are no formal processes in place to ensure Caregivers understand their right to be heard and given an opportunity to be heard when they come to court hearings. The Courts statewide have a process for overseeing notifications are sent to all parties. However, the child welfare agencies lack a formal oversight process by upper management to ensure caseworkers are providing notices to Caregivers. The Carson office, in the Rural Region, appears to have the greatest advantage in the state, because they independently contracted with a paralegal to assist with notices. Caseworkers noted concerns about Caregivers attending court hearings due to the risk that the Caregivers pose in interfering with reunifying a child with a parent and/or the negative impact a Caregivers testimony can have on a case that results in more efforts towards stabilizing cases. Data was not conclusive to determine if this concern directly impacted the notices being sent to Caregivers or if the caseworkers lacked the knowledge that the Caregivers had a right to be heard and a right to attend. Stakeholders have commented that the agency needs mandatory Caregiver training regarding notices and court hearings. Stakeholders also believe that the quality of notices needs to improve by indicating their right to attend, the right to be heard, the when, where, and why regarding a court hearing. Data was limited in respect to out of state Caregivers on an ICPC. One Stakeholder out of state identified that the ICPC agency received the notices and there is no data to determine if the ICPC Agencies are notifying the out of state Caregivers. The State needs to improve their process in educating caseworkers about Caregivers rights in court and education to Caregivers. Each child welfare agency statewide would benefit in establishing a formal process by supervisors and/or upper management to ensure notices are sent and being received by Caregivers in a timely and accurate manner.

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

Nevada has strength on ensuring timely periodic reviews and permanency hearings. There is concern that case plan goals are not readily available in UNITY. 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 a concern based on sampling data and Stakeholder Interviews. Many Stakeholders cited resources as an issue as it related to permanency for the child.

Overall, comments from stakeholders 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 continues to not be consistent statewide.

## Systemic Factor C: Quality Assurance System

### *Item 25: Quality Assurance System*

#### Requirements

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 provisions.

#### CFSR 2009

Nevada Quality Assurance System was rated as strength in the CFSR. 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 and 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.

#### Continuous Quality Improvement Efforts:

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 2016 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, 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 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.
- Statewide Reviews are established for each jurisdiction from April through September of each year. On a rotating schedule each jurisdiction is reviewed. Currently, there have been 66 cases reviewed in 2015, and reviews have been conducted in the DCFS Rural Region and Clark County for 2016. A debrief was completed recently of the DCFS Review findings to Management and Supervisory Staff in the DCFS Rural Region.
- Nevada is increasing the Reviewer pool and this year CFSR training requirements included completing the CFSR online training and passing the test. Certificates of completion are kept on file of Reviewers who have taken and passed the online test.
- Nevada has conducted focus groups and surveys this year, and is planning to broaden these efforts in SFY 2017. 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.

### *Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission*

In October 2014, the Nevada Supreme Court Justice convened a Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission to propose a feasible plan of action to expeditiously implement lasting reforms of the child welfare system that will ensure that the welfare of the children under its charge is its highest priority. The DCFS Administrator at the time was named one of seven Commissioners and was a very active contributor to the drafting of the report. The recommendations of the Commission are holistic in that they may be implemented throughout the State. On March 27, 2015 the final recommendations report from the *Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission* were presented to the public. The recommendations include:

1. *Improve Reasonable Efforts and Child Safety and Removal Decision-Making*
  2. *Reform of the Child Welfare Agency Process*
  3. *Reform of the Court Process*
  4. *Ensure Meaningful Representation and Voice in the Process from the Initiation of Proceedings*
  5. *Selection, Retention, Training, and Ongoing Professional Development for all Stakeholders*
  6. *Improve Public Education about the System*
  7. *Collaboration for Systemic Overarching Reforms*
- **Purpose:** To propose a feasible plan of action expeditiously implementing lasting reforms needed in the child welfare system to ensure that the welfare of the children under its charge is its highest priority.
  - **Implementation Stage:** The Commission is in the action planning and implementation phase. The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs' Diagnostic Center is conducting these next steps. The seven subgroups have been working on planning and implementing their assigned recommendation. On June 27, 2016 each of the subgroups will report to the Commission on their progress to date.

### *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.

- **Purpose:** To improve the quality of dependency court orders and respond to the Nevada IV-E Corrective Action Plan by ensuring inclusion of appropriate language for judicial determinations regarding contrary to the welfare of the child, reasonable efforts to prevent removal, and reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan.
- 
- **Implementation Stage:** The Guides have been planned and developed. The initial phase of implementation is in process.

### Statewide Data (SFY 2016)

### Quality Improvement Case Reviews

In 2015, Nevada conducted case reviews using the new Online Management System (OMS) developed by JBS International for the Children's Bureau. Nevada case reviews were conducted between April 2015 and September 2015. A total of 66 cases were reviewed from all jurisdictions using all 18 items of the CFSR instrument. In Table 6.8 are the results with roll-up of all Safety, Permanency and Well-Being Outcomes.

Table 6.6

Table 6.6 illustrates Nevada's case review performance from 2015.

QICR 2015 Performance –Outcome Target =95% and Performance Item Target =90%

Outcomes/Items	Performance Item Ratings			Outcome Ratings			
	S	ANI	NA	SA	PA	NACH	NA
<b>Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect.</b>				70% N=21	0% N=0	30% N=9	N=36
<i>Item 1 Timeliness of investigation</i>	70% N=21	30% N=9	N=36				
<b>Safety Outcome 2: Children are safety maintained in their home whenever possible and appropriate.</b>				50% N=33	12% N=8	38% N=25	N=0
<i>Item 2 Services to prevent removal/re-entry</i>	74% N=20	26% N=7	N=39				
<i>Item 3 Risk and safety assessment</i>	50% N=33	50% N=33	N=0				
<b>Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations</b>				25% N=10	70% N=28	5% N=2	N=0
<i>Item 4 Stability of Placement</i>	80% N=32	20% N=8	N=0				
<i>Item 5 Permanency Goal</i>	42.5% N=17	57.5% N=23	N=0				
<i>Item 6 Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption or OPPLA</i>	47.5% N=19	52.5% N=21	N=0				
<b>Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.</b>				62.5% N=25	30% N=12	7.5% N=3	N=0
<i>Item 7 Placement with Siblings</i>	86% N=24	14% N=4	N=12				
<i>Item 8 Visit with Parents and Sibling in Foster Care</i>	64% N=21	36% N=12	N=7				
<i>Item 9 Preserving Connections</i>	82.5% N=33	17.5% N=7	N=0				
<i>Item 10 Relative Placement</i>	69% N=25	31% N=11	N=4				
<i>Item 11 Relationship of Child in Care with Parents</i>	61% N=19	39% N=12	N=9				
<b>Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.</b>				38% N=25	33% N=22	29% N=19	N=0
<i>Item 12 Services to child, parents &amp; foster parents</i>	50% N=33	50% N=33	N=0				
<i>Item 12A Needs Assessment and Services to Children</i>	76% N=50	24% N=16	N=0				
<i>Item 12B Needs Assessment and Services to Parents</i>	55% N=33	45% N=27	N=6				
<i>Item 12C Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents</i>	74% N=28	26% N=10	N=28				
<i>Item 13 Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning</i>	42% N=28	58% N=38	N=0				
<i>Item 14 Case worker visits with children</i>	58% N=38	42% N=28	N=0				
<i>Item 15 Case worker visits with</i>	44%	56%					

<i>parents</i>	N=27	N=34	N=5				
<b>Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.</b>				76% N=34	7% N=3	18% N=8	N=21
<i>Item 16 Child and family involvement in case planning</i>	76% N=34	24% N=11	N=21				
<b>Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.</b>				67% N=41	11% N=7	21% N=13	N=5
<i>Item 17 Physical Health of Child</i>	75% N=38	25% N=13	N=15				
<i>Item 18 Mental/Behavioral Health of Child</i>	71% N=35	29% N=14	N=17				

**NOTE:** for Performance Rating: S=Strength; ANI=Area Needing Improvement; NA=Not Applicable.

**NOTE:** for Outcome Rating: SA=Substantially Achieved; PA=Partially Achieved; NACH=Not Achieved; A=Not Applicable.

Performance targets are set at 2% increase for improvement in CY 2016.

### 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 two 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. Also, 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 committees 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.)

- Note: Recently, this year Nevada worked with the Capacity Building Center for States and now has a Statistician in the DCFS FPO who can replicate the federal national standards using SSPS. This is an achievement for Nevada in working towards the ability to identify and monitor data for continuous quality improvement efforts. Efforts are underway to examine AFCAR data quality.

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 four years, and historical information concerning the CFSR 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. Additionally, Nevada has been engaged by the Capacity Building Center for States. A recent State Assessment was completed and an area of focus has been identified as supporting Nevada in efforts to build capacity in the area of CQI. The Capacity Building Center for States State Assessment process is complete, and has been approved by the Children's Bureau. Implementation will begin July 1, 2017.

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 6 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 the State 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, and will work with the Capacity Building Center for States towards a better CQI system.

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

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, website <http://www.nvpartnership4training.com/Public/Default.aspx>, 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.

Ridgewood Associates built the system in 2004 for DCFS child welfare. The Nevada Division of Child and Family Services engaged Ridgewood Associates to evaluate options for replacing the Learning Management Systems (LMS) that powers the state's child welfare training enterprise.

The LMS that DCFS uses is 12 years old. The system was built in ASP, .NET 2 through .NET 3 – coding software that was considered state-of-the-art in 2004 and was highly serviceable for many years beyond that.

While the system remains fairly stable, it is old technology in 2016. Its language is no longer taught in universities and finding programmers who can maintain and enhance the code that drives the system is becoming increasingly costly and difficult. It also lacks some of the power and flexibility that more modern systems enjoy.

Beyond that, the state's training processes and expectations have changed in the past decade and the system has been revised many times to adapt. As a result, it contains some functionalities that are no longer useful and is missing some that would be helpful to students and administrators.

As previously stated Ridgewood built the system in 2004, and they have been maintaining the system since that time. Ridgewood has advised DCFS that they believe that continuing to be responsible for maintaining the current system has become a liability. Ridgewood has strongly urged DCFS to replace the system.

## ***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 2017 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, stakeholders expressed different opinions. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that training prepares caseworkers for the job. However others 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 (SFY 2016)**

Initial Pre-Service Training for Nevada Child Welfare Workers is provided under a Title IV-E Partnership with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) in the South and with the University Reno (UNR) in the North.

The State has been exploring a mechanism to track and monitor new hires and completion of Pre-Service and On-going Training but our system does not currently interface with Human Resources in any of the Child Welfare Agencies. Therefore, we can only collect this information manually; however, we continue to explore the ability to collect this information within our SACWIS system.

During SFY 2016, 7 new staff were hired by DCFS Rural Region. Of those hired, 7 or 100% attended the next scheduled new worker training series after hire date. WCDSS hired 15 new staff during SFY 2016 and 100% attended the next module or week of new worker training after date of hire. CCDFS hired 58 new workers during SFY 2016 and 100% attended the next module or week of new worker training after date of hire.

### ***The Academy at UNLV***

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 at UNLV 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 NPT trainers at UNLV 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. 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 been increased to 14 weeks.

**Table 6.7**

Table 6.7 illustrates the Academy Modules/Attendance of Staff delivered by UNLV during the first six months of SFY 2016

	UNLV Academy I						
Week	Module	Topic/Hours	Number of Participants	Office	Total Hours of Missed Time	% Time Missed	Total Number of Hours of Training
1	One	Basic Skills/24 hours	42	CCDFS	16 hours	<2%	992 hours
		Human Development/8 hours	39	CCDFS	0 hours	-	312 hours
2	Two	Basic Documentation/8 hours	39	CCDFS	0 hours	-	312 hours
3		Intake/16 hours	47	CCDFS	0 hours	-	752 hours
4		NIA Part 1/12 hours	48	CCDFS	8 hours	<2%	568 hours
	Three	NIA Part 2/8 hours	48	CCDFS	4 hours	<2%	380 hours
		NIA Part 3/8 hours	44	CCDFS	4 hours	<2%	348 hours
6		NIA Part 4/20 hours	47	CCDFS	12 hours	<2%	928 hours
7	Four	Family Systems/8 hours	41	CCDFS	0 hours	-	328 hours
9		Placement/16 hours	40	CCDFS	0 hours	-	640 hours
		CFT's/8 hours	39	CCDFS	0 hours	-	312 hours
10	Five	Case Planning/8 hours	37	CCDFS	0 hours	-	296 hours
		Case Planning/16 hours (cont.)	39	CCDFS	0 hours	-	624 hours
11		Permanency Values/8 hours	39	CCDFS	0 hours	-	312 hours
	Addl. Training Hours	In-home Safety Planning/4 hours	40	CCDFS	0 hours	-	160 hours
12	Addl. Training Hours – Cont.	Returning Children Home/4 hours	40	CCDFS	0 hours	-	160 hours
		Time & Case Management/4hours	39	CCDFS	0 hours	-	156 hours
13		Adoption & Case Closure/4 hours	39	CCDFS	0 hours	-	156 hours
		Exit interviews/Graduation/12 hours	39	CCDFS	0 hours	-	468 hours

Fifty-one people attended some portion of the Summer Academy; 35 participants attended all of the content, 8 attended specific modules/content, 5 attended all but missed a specific week, 2 attended all but missed 2 weeks, and 1 stopped attending after week 4.

## ***The Academy at UNR***

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 Case Managers attend the UNR training and it continues with the original 10 week model (5 week classroom and 5 week OJT) 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.

UNR provided Academy Training from August 3, 2015 through November 2, 2015 for the first six months of SFY 2016. A modified Academy was trained from November 30, 2015 through December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and included select training modules from the Week 1, Week 2, and Week 3. Attendance, demographics, pre and post-test results, and satisfaction data are reported below. A second Academy began on November 30<sup>th</sup>.

August 3, 2015 through November 2, 2015 Academy:

- Week One –August 3 through August 7, 2015
- Week Two –August 17 through August 21, 2015
- Week Three –August 31 through September 4, 2015
- Week Four –September 14 through September 18, 2015
- Week Five –September 28 through October 2, 2015
- November 30 through December 18, 2015 delivery
  
- Week One –November 30 through December 4, 2015
- Week Two –December 14 through December 18, 2015

**Table: 6.8**

Table 6.8 Table illustrates the Academy Modules/Attendance of Staff delivered by UNR during the first six months of SFY 2016

UNR Academy I						
week	Number of Participants in Attendance	Office		Total Hours of Missed Time	% Time Missed	Total Number of Hours of Training
One	16	WCDSS	3	0	0%	480
		DCFS-Rural	9			
		DCFS-FPO	1			
		WIN	2			
		DR	1			
Two	14	WCDSS	0	0	0%	420
		DCFS-Rural	9			
		DCFS-FPO	0			
		WIN	2			
		DR	3			

Three	18	WCDSS	4	0	0%	675
		DCFS-Rural	8			
		DCFS-FPO	1			
		WIN	1			
		DR	4			
Four	15	WCDSS	3	12.5	3%	437.5
		DCFS-Rural	6			
		DCFS-FPO	1			
		WIN	1			
		DR	4			
Five	13	WCDSS	3	16.25	4%	373.75
		DCFS-Rural	6			
		DCFS-FPO	1			
		WIN	1			
		DR	2			
UNR Academy II						
Week	Number of Participants in Attendance	Office		Total Hours of Missed Time	% Time Missed	Total Number of Hours of Training
One	4	WCDSS	3	0	0%	120
		DCFS-Rural	0			
		DCFS-FPO	0			
		WIN	1			
		DR	0			
Two	5	WCDSS	3	0	0%	187.5
		DCFS-Rural	1			
		DCFS-FPO	0			
		WIN	1			
		DR	0			

There were a total of twenty two (22) individuals who participated in at least one module of Academy 1. Five (5) individuals completed all five modules of Nevada Child Welfare Training Academy.

There were a total of five (5) individuals who participated in at least one module of this Academy 2. Four (4) individuals completed both weeks and will be invited back to Academy to complete the other modules.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Focus groups were conducted statewide with caseworkers concerning this item.

#### WCDSS:

- Concerns centered around academy/partnership training:
  - Too low level (getting very basic information that was offered in introductory courses in undergraduate/graduate programs)
  - Not practical/to theoretical (not offering concrete information and skills associated with doing the case worker job)
  - No formal academy training if you change jobs (e.g., moving from Investigative to Permanency worker, there is no formal training in the academy or in the agency)
  - Week in week out of academy is choppy/not enough integration of academy and field work
- Concerns related to agency practice:

- You leave the training team whether you are ready or not, the sink or swim philosophy (there is not a formal set of competencies that you must demonstrate or you have acquired before you are sent to a permanent team);
- Lack of permanent supervisor being in field with workers to identify strengths and areas for improvement;
- Concerns around lack of consistent supervision when you exit training unit (varies greatly by supervisor)
- Concern about lack of consistency across supervisors relative to quality of work standards.

### **CCDFS:**

- Currently, in the Academy, the new hire know their position/role. During the old Academy, known as Core, case managers did not know their position/role until the last day of core. Previous practice has been to learn Investigations through Permanency, from beginning to end. However, there is no real on the job training. OJT is very beneficial as you learn the timelines, paperwork, etc.
- Sitting in class is boring and you do not use the information.
- Current case managers coming out of academy get 8 to 20 cases total and this seems unmanageable.
- Academy is too theoretical and need more skill based (where are the forms, what do you do when a kid runs, etc.)
- The current training is theoretical, there isn't enough practical "applied" knowledge given in the academy. Example: they can tell me what the definition of impending danger is but not how to write a court report.
- Workers leaving the Academy knowing "what" but not "how to".

### **DCFS Rural Region:**

- The Rural Region allows the opportunity for interns, which sometimes become full time employees. This process has resulted in better trained staff. For example, an Ely worker states "I was intern here before and I had a lot of training." Both the Academy and the intern training "made me feel confident" and better prepared "me to carry a full caseload regarding the clients I interact with." "I have an amazing supervisor as well."
- Some workers in the Rural Region were receiving caseloads and required to be on call during Academy training. This resulted in workers feeling overwhelmed, increased the desire to resign, and left new workers fearful of not making the probation period.
- The Winnemucca Office went for an extended amount of time without an onsite supervisor resulting in a supervisor visiting the office every other week. Currently a supervisor is onsite and it is reported to have improved for the Winnemucca office.
- The group of caseworkers was very seasoned ranging from 1-8 years of experience. Therefore, there was little data to determine initial training. However, it was recognized that the old initial training called Core was not specific to the caseworker's job and the information taught was very broad. From those that entered Academy felt the material was "more specific to their job".
- It was felt shadowing would be very helpful.
- A worker who entered Elko a year ago reports "I felt core did not address the daily needs such as UNITY." It was so broad and it crammed so much into the training. It was not a good focus. It was not relevant to what we needed. Learned more from on job training."

### **Caseworker Surveys for Initial Training**

Statewide surveys were completed to assess the effectiveness of Initial and Ongoing Training. The target population were Caseworkers who provided direct case management to clients and Supervisors who provided direct case management oversight of Caseworkers. Logic was included to disqualify staff who were not providing direct case management and 18% of respondents were disqualified. The surveys were not divided amongst the caseworkers and supervisors to determine how many caseworkers amongst the 634 were sent surveys.



The statewide response was 48% with 82% being caseworkers. Thirteen percent were in the Rural Region, 68.46% in Clark County, and 18.67 in Washoe County. 81% of Caseworker respondents had between 3-10 years of experience. Nearly ninety-nine percent of Caseworker respondents employed in the last two years indicated that Initial Training was sometimes effective, usually effective, or very effective to providing the skills and knowledge necessary to be a caseworker. Eighty-six percent of Caseworker respondents indicated they had not missed any components of Initial Training. Those that had missed some training cited the following reasons; illness, only required to attend part of the training, offered other training, had court for cases assigned, case deadlines that interfered, was on leave, caseload responsibilities, transition with managers, not offered when hired, and death in the family. Statewide, 64% of Caseworker respondents did not receive a caseload while they were attending Initial Training. The caseload assigned to the 36% of respondents varied immensely. It ranged from 1-30+ cases with 64% of the assigned caseloads ranging between 2-10 cases. Those Caseworkers who received a caseload, were asked to provide the immediate level of supervision they received. Fifty-eight percent had received daily or weekly oversight by a supervisor. A series of questions were asked to determine if the Supervisor's oversight was of quality and the data indicates 66%. Ninety percent received Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) training. Caseworkers cited barriers to receiving effective Initial Training, which included; not knowing ones position during the Academy, lack of formal training on court report writing and social summaries, lack of supervision upon receiving a caseload, being assigned a caseload during training, Supervisors lack of patience with new workers, and the training material lacks overview of the Statewide Child Welfare Software Systems.

Overall, 37% of the caseworkers were provided orientation to their new position and the agency. Caseworkers cited caseload size and responsibilities as the leading barrier to attending and acquiring knowledge, during Initial Training. Over half of the caseworkers assigned a caseload was immediately provided with adequate oversight by a supervisor. The employee vacancies and clients' needs apparently drive caseload assignment early in training. Supervisors receive Initial Training upon hire, however, there is not an additional, required Supervisory Training upon accepting a supervisor position. Supervisors commented they would like to see Initial Training related to Child Welfare Supervision.

## ***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.

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. The State of Nevada is working on policy that will require all Child Welfare Agencies to report and track training.

### **CFSR 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 CFSR 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 (SFY 2016)

#### UNLV On-going Staff Training

#### **SUPERVISOR TRAINING**

UNLV delivered all six Supervisor Training modules for the first six months of SFY 2016. The dates of delivery were:

- Module One – August 19-20, 2015
- Module Two – September 9-10, 2015
- Module Three – September 30-October 1, 2015
- Module Four – November 4-5, 2015
- Module Five – December 2-3, 2015
- Module Six – January 6-7, 2016

**Table 6.9**

Table 6.9 illustrates the number of participants attending Supervisors Training at UNLV NPT.

UNLV				
Module	Number of Participants in Attendance	Office	Total Amount of Missed Time	Total Number of Hours of Training
One	5	CCDFS	-	55 hours
Two	4	CCDFS	-	44 hours
Three	4	CCDFS	-	44 hours
Four	5	CCDFS	3 hours	52 hours
Five	4	CCDFS	-	44 hours
Six	4	CCDFS	-	44 hours

#### **On-Going Training Staff Training**

**Table 6.10**

**Table 6.10 illustrates the number of participants** attending On-going Training at UNR NPT from July 1, 2015 until December, 2015.

UNLV				
Training	Delivery Dates	Number of Participants in	Agency	Total Attendance Hours

		Attendance		
<b>Addictions 101:</b> Recognizing and Evaluating the Impact of Substance Abuse on Child Welfare Practice and Families	12/8/2015	35	CCDFS Academy – 37	210 hours
<b>Domestic Violence 101:</b> An Introduction to Domestic Violence Issues in Child Welfare	12/15/2015	31	CCDFS – 31	186 hours
<b>The Spirit and Skills of Motivational Interviewing</b>	12/9-10/2015	23	CCDFS - 23	270 hours
	12/16-17/2015	15	CCDFS - 15	180 hours
<b>Child Welfare Ethics: What to do? Making Ethical Decisions</b>	8/28/2015	41	CCDFS Academy – 39 DJJS - 2	123 hours

## UNR On-going Staff Training

### SUPERVISOR TRAINING

UNR delivered the first three of six Supervisor Training modules for the first six months of SFY 2016. The dates of delivery were:

- Module One – October 13-14, 2015
- Module Two – November 3-4, 2015
- Module Three – December 8-9, 2015

**Table 6.11**

Table 6.11 illustrates the number of participants attending Supervisors Training at UNR NPT from July 1, 2015 until December, 2015.

UNR				
Module	Number of Participants in Attendance	Office	Total Amount of Missed Time	Total Number of Hours of Training
One	5	DCFS – Rural – 5 WCDSS - 1	-	55 hours
Two	4	DCFS – Rural – 3 WCDSS – 1	-	44 hours
Three	6	DCFS-Rural – 5 WCDSS - 1	-	66 hours

## On-Going Training Staff Training

Table 6.12

Table 6.12 illustrates the number of participants attending On-going Training at UNR NPT from July 1, 2015 until December, 2015.

UNR				
Training	Delivery Dates	Number of Participants in Attendance	Agency	Total Attendance Hours
Spirit and Skills of Motivational Interviewing	7/7/15 & 7/8/15	8	WCDSS – 3 DCFS - 4 Other - 1	48 hours
	7/21/15 & 7/2/15	23	WCDSS – 9 DCFS - 9 Other – 5	138 hours
	12/1/15 & 12/2/15*	7	WCDSS – 5 DCFS - 1 Other – 1	42 hours
Child Welfare Ethics	12/21/2015 am	22	WCDSS – 11 DCFS-Rural – 8 Other - 3	66 hours
	12/21/2015 pm	10	WCDSS – 6 DCFS-Rural – 2 Other - 2	30 hours

### Stakeholder Interview Information:

Focus groups were conducted statewide with caseworkers concerning this item.

#### WCDSS

- Concerns around ongoing training centered around:
  - Difficulty finding time to go to ongoing training due to workload was a commonly identified concern
  - Lack of new offerings (this was a very experienced group of staff)
  - Again, looking for training that is more practical (e.g., refining case note writing skills)
  - No formal Training Needs Assessment (informal process at annual reviews that is rarely considered outside of annual reviews)

#### CCDFS:

- Workers are unable to provide insight into on-going training beyond typical risk management types of training (defensive driving, fire extinguisher etc.)
- Workers express there isn't training to help them hone their skills after they leave the academy.
- Senior FSS could/should just work with new hires instead of carrying a full caseload and Senior FSS usually get the harder caseload. Sr. Workers don't have enough time or energy to dedicate to mentoring new workers.
  - Senior workers are not getting a reduced case load, they have to take on the task of mentoring on-top of already managing complex case load
- More field shadowing before the academy, to provide a foundation and a frame of reference for the new training.
- Any additional training is related to implementation of new practice model

#### DCFS Rural Region:

- We don't have too much ongoing training". Most Rural Region caseworkers are self-taught and learn from their peers.
- Some caseworker's feel ongoing training is beneficially when they are able to find the time to attend and are fully

- staffed in their office. One Elko worker states “We get good training but low staff and lack opportunity.
- A Winnemucca worker reports “we go to these meetings and in the back of our head we are thinking what we should be doing in the office.”

## Caseworker and Supervisory Survey/Ongoing Training Surveys

### Caseworker Surveys for Ongoing Training

Of the 86% of Caseworkers respondents who have been with the agency for more than two years, 64% cited they received 30 hours of bi-annual (every two years) of Ongoing Training, as it relates to child welfare services in accordance with requirements specified in Nevada Revised Statutes. Statewide, 48% of Caseworker respondents reported they participated in Ongoing Training via Nevada Partnership Training, 8% via Washoe County, 42% via Clark County, and 2% via the Rural Region. The Caseworkers were asked how effective Ongoing Training was to address the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out duties, on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being Very Effective. Eighty-seven percent indicated that Ongoing Training was sometimes effective, usually effective, or very effective. Caseworkers commented they had difficult time getting away from work to attend training, already completed training to maintain their social work license, or were never informed of upcoming trainings. Twenty-one percent of Caseworkers reported their supervisors declined their request for training due to cost, lack of coverage, told to use the UNITY Help guide instead of going to the training, and were told they did not need the training or the training did not apply to the Caseworker's specific job duties, or the training was not offered by agency. The weaknesses, barriers, and gaps cited by the Caseworkers were the lack of supervisors with previous experience, increase in overtime to attend training, poor communication, misunderstanding of what trainings were required, high turnover, lack of training when transitioned into a new position, lack readily available training, the practice continues to evolve and change, timing of training, caseload size, lack of advance notices for training, “the biggest barrier has been the gap between learning information and the delayed implementation of new models,” supervisors being unavailable for consultations, supervisors lacked the ability to provide direct clear instructions to a new caseworker, supervisors inconsistent interpretation of a Nevada Initial Assessment, difficulty in retaining massive amounts of information, lack of trauma training and more frequent training, lack of policy training, inadequate SAFE module training, “inconsistent application of new ISPS modality from how investigations are initiated, all the way through the documentation of said investigations”, lack of time management skills and prioritizing training, lack of shadowing, lack of interactive learning and hands on, and dedicated intake workers for the offices who pull caseworkers to do intake, which will allow more time to attend training. The Strengths included: “the training is extremely helpful and the training unit/Nevada Partnership for Training are cited by Caseworkers were that the trainers were “knowledgeable and competent”, great deal of peer to peer learning, supportive coworkers, good presentation by training instructors, and good managers.

### Supervisor Surveys for Ongoing Training

Eighty-seven percent of the supervisors identified they did receive Ongoing Training that provided them with the necessary skills and knowledge to do their job. Supervisors were asked if Ongoing Training was adequate to provide the necessary oversight/supervision required for a child welfare employee, on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being Strongly Agree. Sixteen percent of respondents were not applicable and 49% either agreed or strongly agreed that Ongoing Training was adequate. Eighty-three percent received the Marsha Salus Supervisory Training and one Supervisor commented that the Marsha Salus Training “was excellent and provided me skills that I was not able to accrue despite years of supervision experience.” Other Supervisors commented there was more training offered to supervisors implementing the SAFE model than those who were not implementing the model. Ongoing Training was identified as “systematic implementation of policy or new practice” and provided updates on the changes in the Child Welfare system. When Supervisors were asked to comment on recommendations for training for Child Welfare Supervisors they stated the following: continuation of Marsha Salus Training, Ongoing Training that is more specific to Child Welfare Supervision, supervisor training plan prior to being assigned a unit, reports that allow each jurisdiction the ability to track an employees work and interpret case compliance, more supervisor group trainings to share experiences and knowledge, more team building activities, supervisor mentoring program, and trainings offered more often. Supervisors were asked to provide information about how they assessed the Caseworkers to better understand Ongoing Training for Caseworkers. Seventeen percent reported they only used the employee appraisal and development report (employee evaluation form) to assess a worker for their training needs while 4% report a manager and/or the agency determine what type of training caseworker's needs. The majority of supervisors, 79%, used a combination of approaches. Some Supervisors commented they had routine staffing or 1:1 to help with identify caseworker's needs. Supervisors met with the Caseworker respondents, however,

when requested to identify the frequency they met with the Caseworkers they cited the following: 24% daily, 17% weekly, 23% monthly, 17% quarterly, and 19% yearly.

## ***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 continued to use the PRIDE curriculum. CCDFS is currently revising their curriculum to be more in-line with the QPI philosophy and the new training is titled TIPPS-MAPP and is generally 30 hours. WCDSS revised training is titled TIPPS-Pride and is also generally 30 hours. The DCFS Rural Region continue with the PRIDE Training that is covered over 27 hours. Training are provided in both English and Spanish.

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.

Additionally NRS 432A.177 requires a licensee of a child care facility to ensure training of employee who have direct contact with children shall ensure the facility staff receive training within 30 days after employment and annually thereafter. Such training must include, 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 facility; (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.

### **Statewide Data (SFY 2016)**



Each of the three child welfare agencies provides their own Foster Parent, Adoptive Parent and Relative Parent Pre-Service Training. Staff of state licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under Title IV-E are trained under the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) by Child Care Licensing.

CCDFS provides TIPPS-MAPP to their prospective foster, adoptive and relative foster families. In the beginning of January 10, 2015, CCDFS began providing an expanded version of MAPP which includes components of Trauma Informed Care. CCDFS has provided 411 Foster/Adoptive Parents (Regular, Relative, Specialized and Group) with Training for SFY 2016.

The DCFS Rural Region has provided training to 61 Foster Parents (Regular and Relative), and 8 Adoptive Parents for SFY 2016.

WCDSS has provided training to 129 Foster Parents (Regular and Relative) for SFY 2016.

## **FOSTER/ADOPTIVE PARENT TRAINING for Specialized Foster Care**

### **CCDFS**

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. 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**

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 27/30 hours. Relative PRIDE is a total of 8 or 9 hours depending on the size of the group and the trainer.

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.

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 the Specialized Foster Care Program during the SFY 2014 – 2015 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.

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.

### **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 trainers have also 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.

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.

**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 CFSR 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 CFSR 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

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Focus groups were conducted in Washoe and the DCFS Rural Region concerning this item.

### WCDSS

- In general, foster parents indicated that **initial training** was sufficient for an introduction to general fostering
- For ongoing training:
  - Many foster parents identified ongoing trainings that were very helpful (trauma informed class for foster parents)
  - In general, the ongoing training was seen as more substantial than initial training in helping one understand fostering and the needs of foster children
  - Ongoing training was identified as often being very helpful for dealing with and helping children

- High praise for online training, both for content and obviously accessibility

### **DCFS Rural Region**

- In general foster parents indicated that initial training is broad, does not focus on how the Child Welfare Agency system functions, and lacks information regarding Foster Parents rights in court. Stakeholders indicated that verbiage and terminologies used in Child Welfare can initially be overwhelming and confusing. Overtime the process becomes easier.
- Stakeholders report a lack of Ongoing Training and typically Foster Parents have to remain proactive to receive Ongoing Training. Foster Parents will typically participate in support groups to identify ongoing training and information. QPI has been helpful for most Stakeholders and the only complaint identified was technical issues when accessing QPI.

### **Caregiver Surveys**

The Statewide survey included questions with respect to item 24, 27 and 28. Item 24 section provides details regarding the methodology and demographics of the survey.

Information was gathered from 1284 caregivers via an online questionnaire for those who had an email address. The remaining 956 caregivers received a paper questionnaire via mail, which offered the opportunity to access the survey via a web link or via a paper questionnaire (self-stamp envelopes were provide for all surveys sent via mail.) The respondents included foster parents, adoptive parents, pre-adoptive parents, relative caregivers, fictive kin, and out of state caregivers. Of the 1284 email invitations, the response rate was 17%, 411 were from Washoe County, 738 Clark County, and 135 Rural Region. There were 851 email invitations opened, 369 unopened, 43 bounced, and 17 opted out of receiving further surveys. There were an additional 956 surveys sent via a paper questionnaire and only 848 were considered valid. The response rate for the paper questionnaire was 13%, 748 were from Clark County, 71 Rural Region, 44 Washoe County, and 93 were out of state caregivers. The Statewide survey included questions with respect to Item 24, 27, and 28. Item 24 section, of this executive summary, provides details regarding the methodology and demographics of the survey. Out of the total 2240 surveys sent to Caregivers, only 12% (278 Caregivers) were applicable to respond to Foster Care licensing questions. Logic was added to allow respondents the option to choose more than one answer when replying to the type of foster care training they received. Twenty five percent of respondents received training through PRIDE, 54% was ongoing/Advance training, and 24% PS-MAPP training. The survey targets SFY 2016 and indicates less than 2% of respondents missing some components of training by arriving late or leaving early from training and still becoming licensed foster parents. Caregivers indicated they received various other forms of non-mandatory training. These trainings included: QPI Training, TIPS Training, Dr. Karyn Purvis Connected Child material, through the child's therapist, CPR, First-Aide, Relative Kinship Training, Nurturing Parents and Families, Trauma Informed Pre-service Training, Therapeutic Care Training-Together Facing the Challenge, Epilepsy, SIPS through Nevada Partnership for Training, online training classes and seminars, Training for children considered medically fragile, , and self-taught material such as reading books and articles frequently about foster and adoptive parenting.

The chart below describes the Caregivers feedback on Foster Care Training preparing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out duties with regard to foster and/or adopted children. The question was asked on a scale from 1-4 with 4 being didn't learn anything. Logic was added to disqualify those respondents that were not applicable and had not yet taken training. Twenty seven percent learned a lot and 33% learned some new things that prepared them with the knowledge to be successful. Twenty three percent report learning a lot and 33% learned some new things that prepared them with the skills to be successful. The chart provides a comparison.

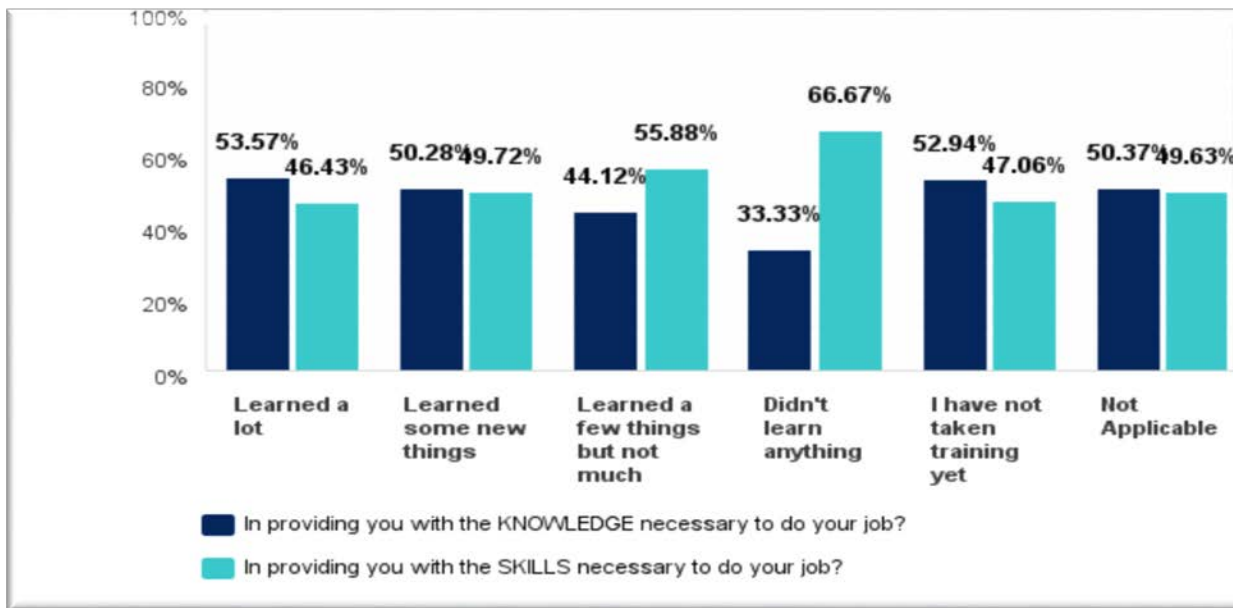


Figure 6.4 Foster Parent Training

Overall, 60% of Caregivers feel very well trained, 16% somewhat trained, and 1% not at all trained to carry out duties with regard to foster and/or adopted children (23% was not applicable).

Stakeholders requested more training about working with birth parents and foster/adoptive parents, the court process, legal definitions, and more opportunity to receive their CPR and First-Aide certification. A need for a translator for those who speak another language primarily was identified and a translator being easily available for questions and additional education. It is noteworthy, that Caregivers acknowledged that therapeutic workers or Intense Family Support Workers provided direct education for Caregivers in the home that was beneficial. There were positive comments about the improvement of Foster Care Training over the years. "Training have improved immensely! There are so many available now, especially on the QPI website!" and "Training offered in Washoe County is amazing." Some stakeholder's feel they learned more than expected. The data collected does not show the timeline to become licensed; however, a Stakeholder reported the timelines to become license was inconsistent and varied. A large number of Stakeholders felt they had to seek out training. "I will usually seek out the training I am looking for and this sometimes brings me to agencies outside of what is available through the county." Stakeholders would like to see more training after hours to accommodate day time employed Caregivers.

## Strengths/Concerns (Staff and Provider Training)

Nevada has strength in its focus of enhancing the Academy curriculum, and Nevada continues to analyze curriculum to ensure courses keep up with best practices and meet current needs and requirements of workers. In SFY 2017 Nevada will need to make decisions concerning a web-based Learning Management System (LMS) and how one can be funded.

Currently, nearly ninety-nine percent of Caseworker respondents employed in the last two years indicated that Initial Training was sometimes effective, usually effective, or very effective to providing the skills and knowledge necessary to be a caseworker. Eighty-seven percent indicated that Ongoing Training was sometimes effective, usually effective, or very effective. Caseworkers commented they had difficult time getting away from work to attend training, already completed training to maintain their social work license, or were never informed of upcoming trainings

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 office of Community Partnerships and Grants (OOC PG), formerly 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 Children Trust Fund (CTF). The Children's Trust 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.

Nevada does not have the resources to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment solely for child abuse prevention. The State relies on its network of 21 Family Resource Center (FRCs), community partners, current Children's Trust Fund (CTF) grantees, and the annual publication of the Nevada Kids' Count Data Book (University of Nevada Las Vegas Center for Business and Economic Research) to provide direction for child abuse prevention services in the urban and rural communities of Nevada. However, in accordance with NRS 439.630(6), the Grants Management Advisory Committee (GMAC) is required to solicit public input regarding community needs in even numbered years, and use the information to recommend future funding priorities.

The following numbers represent the children, parents/caregivers, and families served throughout the state by programs funded by the Nevada Children's Trust Fund (CTF) in SFY 16 (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016). These numbers reflect recipients of direct services by agencies funded by CTF grants (including CBCAP funds and the state match). Agencies receiving CTF grant do receive funds from other sources for their programs, but DHHS/OCPG requires that the agencies report only on how the CTF funds are used and how many individuals are impacted by the CTF funded program.

**Table 6.13*****CBCAP/CTF Participants in SFY 15 (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016)***

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Individuals(includes children and adults)</b>	<b>Families</b>	<b>Parents with Disabilities</b>
Participants who received direct services	3,797 children and adults 133 children with disabilities	2,552	160
Participants who received public awareness/education (optional)	0	0	0
Participants who received training (optional)	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	3,797 children and adults 133 children with disabilities	2,552	160

Note: Programs are requested to collect information on children and parents/caregiver with disabilities, but it is difficult for some programs to capture the true number of participants with disabilities because some are reluctant to disclose the information.

***DCFS Grants Management Unit***

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. CAPTA, Title IV-B Sub Part 2, CFCIP and ETV.

A critical part of service array includes the goals of Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF), which are services 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 program components of PSSF include Family Preservation; Family Support; Time-Limited Family Reunification; and, Adoption Promotion and Support. These four areas are intended to provide coordinated services for children and families across the continuum of care 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 continues to spend about four percent on these related expenses. Currently, Nevada does not expend a percentage of funds on other allowable IV-B 2 services but plans to budget this next year.

**Family Preservation:** Family Preservation services grew out of recognition that children need a safe and stable family and that separating children from their families is traumatic for them, often leaving lasting negative effects. The goals of Family Preservation Services' programs are to reduce the risk of child abuse/neglect and thus eliminate unnecessary out-of-home placement of children and to strengthen the family to better care for the developmental needs of their children.

Family Preservation Services programs are characterized by high intensity, immediately accessible treatment and ancillary services for at-risk children and families. Services that fall under this area 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.

During this past year, in collaboration with 14 community partners, Nevada has provided or has plans to implement the following family preservation services in the following jurisdictional areas:

***CCDFS***



- In home services to families to prevent further involvement with child welfare system, enhancing family functioning, and reducing out of home placement.
- Medical case management wraparound services and respite services to increase family preservation for children with high level medical needs.
- Peer Parent Partner contact and may participate in Team Decision Making Team to assist family with bringing child back to family and contact

#### **WCDSS**

- Project Safe Place which will provide services to families at-risk or in crisis through home based services.
- Decreasing risk of child abuse/neglect and crisis through home visits, case management, parenting education, counseling services, medical/dental services.
- Providing services to referred families to prevent child being removed from home and enhancing family functioning and safety as well as classes for families.
- Training birth and foster parents in improved parenting techniques during reunification visits between foster and birth parents

#### **DCFS Rural Region**

- Providing Parent Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT) Training for IFS and Clinical staff.
- Parent Capacity Training will allow staff to perform an initial assessment of parents or caregivers.
- Providing counseling, parenting classes, and mentoring for individuals and families that have been referred by a child welfare agency.
- Providing case management, counseling, and assessments and parenting education to biological, adoptive, and foster parents.
- Providing Brief Solution Oriented Family Therapy Training to help development and change that empowers people to identify and live their goals.

**Family Support:** Family support services are generally 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.

During this past year, in collaboration with 17 community partners, Nevada has provided or has plans to implement the following family support services in the following jurisdictional areas:

#### **CCDFS**

- Assisting domestic violence crisis callers, providing individual and group counseling, and providing advocacy services.

#### **WCDFS**

- Project Safe Place will provide services to families at-risk or in crisis through home based services, includes group counseling.
- Providing home visiting offering parenting, budgeting, family dynamics, information and referrals, and support to families referred by DCFS.
- Providing psychiatric and mental health services on an annual basis, parenting classes, and one-on-one parent education to strengthen families.

#### **DCFS Rural Region**

- Increasing confidence of sheltered clients through improved life skills involving child development, budgeting, stress management, and family nutrition.
- Providing Parent Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT) Training for IFS and Clinical staff.
- Providing Parent Capacity Training which allows staff to perform an initial assessment of parents or caregivers.
- Will provide in-home parenting classes and services to families at the FRIENDS Family Resource Center to prevent further involvement with the child welfare system.
- Providing counseling, parenting classes, and mentoring for individuals and families that have been referred by a child welfare agency.
- Providing family support to prevent child maltreatment and neglect through in-home services.

- Providing in-home parenting, budgeting, and family dynamics services to families to prevent further involvement with child welfare system.
- Providing in-home family crisis stabilization services to help stabilize the family crisis through counseling, assessment, substance abuse screenings, etc.
- Providing case management, counseling, and assessments and parenting education to biological, adoptive, and foster parents.
- Providing Brief Solution Oriented Family Therapy Training to help development and change that empowers people to identify and live their goals.
- Providing services to referred families to prevent child being removed from home and enhance family functioning and safety as well as classes for families.

**Time-Limited Family Reunification:** Time-limited family reunification services refer to 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. The goal of these services are to facilitate the reunification of the child safely and appropriately within a timely fashion but specifically during the 15-month period that begins on the date that the child is considered to have entered foster care. These services and activities might 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.

During this past year, in partnership with 11 community partners, Nevada has provided or has plans to implement the following family support services in the following jurisdictional areas:

#### **CCDFS**

- 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 conducting 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.

#### **WCDSS**

- Providing Parent Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT) Training for IFS and Clinical staff.
- Providing a variety of counseling educational programs and evaluations to clients referred by DCFS to assist cases in reunification.
- Providing home visiting offering parenting, budgeting, family dynamics, information and referrals, and support to families referred by DCFS.

#### **DCFS Rural Region**

- Providing Parent Capacity Training which will allow staff to perform an initial assessment of parents or caregivers.
- Provide counseling, parenting classes, and mentoring for individuals and families that have been referred by a child welfare agency.
- Reactive Attachment and Adoption Preservation Training to help children develop a more stable and healthy relationship with their caregivers and others and assist adoptive parents in managing children with reactive attachment disorders.
- Brief Solution Oriented Family Therapy Training to create development and change that empowers people to identify and accomplish their goals.

**Adoption Promotion and Support:** Adoption promotion and support services are those services and activities designed to encourage more adoptions of children and youth out of the foster care system, when the adoption promotes the best interest of the children. Activities include pre- and post-adoptive services and activities designed to expedite the adoption process and offer support to the adoptive families.

During this past year, in collaboration with 7 community partners, Nevada has provided or has plans to implement the following family support services in the following jurisdictional areas:

#### **CCDFS**

- Providing services for waiting children, assessing community needs, providing services to strengthen families and providing more adoptions, training for professionals, etc.
- Completing adoptive home study updates/initial home studies to assist DFS in processing potential adoptive family's apps and social summaries for foster children.

#### **WCDSS**

- Providing Parent Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT) Training for IFS and Clinical staff.

#### **DCFS Rural Region**

- Providing PRIDE Trainings, SAFE Home Studies, and other advanced trainings through multiple contractors.
- Providing Reactive Attachment and Adoption Preservation Training to assist adoptive parents and children.

**Table 6.14**

*This Table illustrates the number and amount of sub grantees that currently receive IV-B 2 funding and the number of services provided, by category, through this reporting period. (July 1, 2015-April 30, 2016.*

<b>TITLE IV-B SUBPART 2 (IV-B 2)</b>	<b># Sub grantees</b>	<b># Families</b>	<b># Adults</b>	<b># Children</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>
Family Support	17	25419	26793	9756	119877
Family Preservation	14	1254	1667	2386	21585
Family Reunification	11	380	419	774	11906
Adoption Promotion and Support	7	140	83	269	1173

#### **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT IN IV-B 2 OUTCOMES**

Increasingly efficient and accurate data tracking and analysis has allowed Nevada to determine more precisely the exact percentages of the four IV-B 2 services categories provided across the State. Percentages this year were not equitably divided across the four areas with the largest percentage being in Family Support Services and the smallest percentages in Adoption and Supportive Services. Nevada's demographics, with a large rural region (15 counties) continue to provide challenges for the expansion and delivery of certain services, especially in adoption services. The lack of sufficient numbers of foster parents, service organizations, medical providers and service array in general continue to be a challenge in these remote areas. Services supported by Family Support and Family Preservation funding seem to be more prevalent.

This year, Nevada issued a Request for Proposal for Title VI-B, subpart 2 funds. In an effort to ensure that appropriate services were available in each jurisdiction, Nevada convened the Title IV-B workgroup, comprised of leadership in Clark County, Washoe County and the Rural Region. Participants discussed regional needs and presented GMU a comprehensive outline of needs to include in the RFP which was advertised widely across the state. Applicants were then solicited and ultimately funded based on their ability to provide these services. While those applicants who were able to provide services that have traditionally remained a challenge in Nevada was still low, the percentages are anticipated to be more equitably dispersed. Leadership within each of the three jurisdictions plan to continue to meet with statewide community partners to determine potential growth opportunities and strategies to meet Nevada's continuing needs as outlined below by each jurisdiction.

#### **GAPS in Services**

#### **CCDFS**

In Clark County DFS, the implementation of the Clark County Safety Intervention and Permanency System and Safety Services programs have assisted in assessing the strengths and needs of children and families to determine the services

needed to support families. The services identified assist CCDFS in creating services not offered in the community. Service array challenges that exist for Clark County were identified in part by the Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission (BRK). Gaps include subsidized day care services for intact families and permanent stable housing for families considered intact or reunifying.

Funding for services is another barrier for Clark County. To address this, grant opportunities are explored and collaborations are established with other organizations. Working with these agencies continue to enhance and provide additional services.

### **WCDSS**

WCDSS actively works with local behavioral and mental health providers to maximize services to families served through both Medicaid and a voucher service process (County general funds). Assessment of need is not a barrier; however, there is a gap in services available to families for behavioral and mental health service delivery. There is also a gap in residential substance treatment programs, and juvenile substance abuse assessment and treatment. These service gaps may impede a family's ability to reunify timely or develop in-home safety plans. Further, there are insufficient resources to develop robust safety plans to address the identified threats within a family

### **DCFS RURAL REGION**

Gaps in safety management services exist in the rural region due to the inability to create sufficient safety plans in rural areas when clients do not have enough natural supports.

Therapeutic services for children in rural Nevada have been insufficient in the past, however, that is improving. Private therapist have been established and paid for by DCFS to address the needs of children in custody who are unable to access Medicaid providers in their area. In addition, over the past year, a DCFS have partnered with Rural Mental Health Providers. The two agencies are sharing resources to train Rural Mental Health providers in evidenced based interventions that include: Coping CAT, Parent Management Training and Parent Child Interactional Therapy (PCIT). Because of these efforts and those highlighted in the IV-B 2 areas below, the availability and quality of therapeutic services available to families in rural Nevada is improving.

Over the past year DCFS contracted with one agency in one rural county to provide safety management services. This enabled DCFS to use paid safety providers if a family did not have sufficient natural resources to monitor the in-home safety plan. Safety management services were written into the IV-B 2 Request for Proposal (RFP) so all agencies who are awarded IV-B 2 money in the next grant cycle will be able to provide safety management services in additional rural communities.

### **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.

CCDFS is in the midst of completing a Geographical Information System analysis of the Clark County area to identify communities, which have the highest referral rates. This analysis will include identifying where foster parents live, where removals have occurred, and where children are placed. Also, this will help identify where best to place staff positions and make services available in the appropriate communities.

WCDSS does not identify one population but instead uses the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) to evaluate maltreatment severity, family functioning, and gaps in a caregiver's ability to protect their children. The NIA identified how maltreatment is manifested and considers the child's vulnerability to the identified threats.

In the DCFS Rural Region the NIA is also used to identify maltreatment. The populations at greatest risk of maltreatment have not changed in recent years. There are families who struggle with poverty, domestic violence, substance abuse and often have history with law enforcement. Many have a history of past investigations and assessments of child safety, sometimes for several years.


Additionally, Nevada convened the Title IV-B workgroup comprised of leadership in Clark County, Washoe County and the Rural Region. This group meets quarterly and participants discuss populations at greatest risk of maltreatment. Regional needs are presented to the DCFS Grants Management Unit to ensure Request for Proposals reflect service needs for these populations.

### **Services for Children under the Age of Five**

#### **CCDFS Services for children under the Age of Five**

**Table 6.15**

##### ***Children under the Age of Five in CCDFS***

<b>FY14</b>	<b>FY15</b>	<b>FY16</b>	<b>FY17 Projected</b>	<b>FY16 vs. FY17</b>
1487	1430	1258	1075	 -16.5%

Source: COGNOS

Clark County Department of Family Services is projecting a 16.5% **decrease** in the number of children in Clark custody from FY 2017 when compared to FY 2016. Table 6.15 illustrates the projected decrease in the number of children in Clark custody. (This data has been identified as children under age five with a legal status of Clark Custody which includes children in-home.)

Clark County Department of Family Services completed installation of two specialized 5 and under units who are responsible for servicing victims under the age of 5. In addition, CCDFS has seen a 10% decrease from FY 15 to FY 16 and is projecting a 16.5% decrease in the number of children in foster care under the age of 5 in FY 16 compared to FY 17. In FY 2016 54% were Caucasian, 30% were African American, 8.7% were Multi-Racial, 1.0% were Asian/Pacific Islander, .30% were Native American and 6.0% were unknown.

Over the past SFY 2016 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.

**Table 6.16**

##### **Children under the age of Five in DCFS Rural Region**

<b>Age</b>	<b>State Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Months in Care</b>
0 to 5	SFY 14	473	15.54
0 to 5	SFY 15	446	14.68
0 to 5	SFY 16	445	14.63

Source: UNITY

In the DCFS Rural Region the number of months for children age 0-5 in care has been **decreasing**. From SFY 14 to SFY 16 the average days for this age group decreased by 6.23%. Of the 0 to 5 age population, in SFY 16 approximately 87% were Caucasian, 6 % were American Indian, 6 % were African American, and 1% were Asian.

Since 2014, children who have been removed from their homes are referred to the Clinical Program for a Trauma Screening within 30 days of removal. This Trauma Screening is completed by Clinical Program staff and is designed to identify the presence of trauma symptoms in children and youth in order to refer to additional services/interventions in a timelier manner. There is a specific Trauma Screening completed for children age six (6) and under, as well as for older children, to account for the developmental stage of these children. Earlier identification of trauma symptoms can lead to more timely intervention, psychoeducation to placement resources, provision of services directly to the placement to

stabilize behavioral/emotional issues that lead to placement disruption, thus minimizing the number of placement disruptions experienced by children. Since July 2015, one hundred seventy four (174) Trauma Screenings have been completed. Of those, twenty-three (23) children reported trauma symptoms above the clinical cut off range and were referred for additional assessment/intervention. Additionally, six (6) other children who fell below the clinical cut off range were referred for other services to address presenting concerns noted at the time of the screening.

Children under the age of five (5) are to be referred to Nevada Early Intervention Services and/or Northern Nevada Adolescent and Child Services to receive screening for developmental issues in order to identify any developmental needs. Services offered through the Clinical Program include: Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, Clinical Consultation, Parent Management Therapy, Coping CAT and Taking Action. These services provide in-home family services to parents and children, as well as placement resources to address emotional, behavioral, and attachment issues in a more timely and effective manner. Clinical consultation provides psychoeducation to both placement resources and to parents regarding the developmental needs of children, effective interventions, and understanding and managing children with attachment concerns.. Consultation involves the development of plans that increase contact between parents and children to allow for the development and maintenance of attachment between parents and children. Given the emotional and attachments needs of children in this age group, beginning June 1, 2016, all children under the age of five (5) who are in the legal custody of the Division will be staffed at Placement Review Team (PRT) in each of the respective District Offices. This will assist in ensuring that the child's developmental needs are being met, lead to a discussion of barriers to reunification and/or permanency issues, determine placement resources, review foster parents ability to meet the child's specific needs (i.e. reducing the parent-to child ratio), and further support permanency being established in a timely manner. Additional clinical resources are available to assess the needs of children and family, in this age range, to assess for parenting capabilities, developmental needs of the child, attachment, and behavioral/parenting intervention strategies (i.e. Child Behavior Checklist, Parent Child Relationship Inventory, Attachment Inventory, and specialized assessments/intervention such as DC-03, Parent Child Interaction Therapy, Parent Management Therapy, Taking Action and Coping Cat).

## **WCDSS Services for children under the Age of Five**

**Table 6.17**

### **Children under the age of Five in WCDSS**

<b>Age</b>	<b>State Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Months in Care</b>
0 to 5	SFY 14	354	11.65
0 to 5	SFY 15	372	12.24
0 to 5	SFY 16	409	13.46

Source: UNITY

In WCDSS the number of months for children 0-5 has been **increasing**. From SFY 14 to SFY 16 the average days in care has increased by 9%. Of the 0 to 5 age population, in SFY 16 approximately 89% were Caucasian, 5% were American Indian, 14 % were African American, and 1.97% were Asian.

WCDSS expended considerable efforts in SFY15-16 implementing SAFE, which emphasizes identification of child needs and individualized service plan activities that are age-appropriate. SAFE includes the description of child functioning in the NIA, which must be robust and specific to each child to meet fidelity requirements. The assigned worker then meets with the parent through a series of planned meetings to review the information discovered through the SAFE process and develop appropriate case plan and service agreements. WCDSS further emphasizes a meeting between the substitute care provider and parent within the first few parent/child visits to allow the parent to meet the caregiver and provide the caregiver with specific information about their child such as bedtime routines or favorite activities. This meeting is facilitated by agency staff trained in ABC (Attachment Bio-behavioral Catch-up) methodology. The caseworker is further required to meet with the care provider within 24 hours of placement (or 72 hours if the caseworker visited the home at the time of placement) to review with the care provider child needs and services available to the care provider to meet those needs. Through QPI, emphasis was placed during SFY15 on transitions for young children specifically through Dr. Charles Zenah. A Mental Health Counselor II was identified to "lead" transition planning and practice guidelines were established to focus on transition planning.



Foster care licensing staff continue to work with substitute care providers to ensure compliance with statutory or administrative code regulations. It is noted the number of relative foster homes continues to grow in WCDSS benefitting very young children. In 2011, there were 138 relative foster care providers which have grown to 246 in SFY15. Further, the average length of stay in foster care dropped from 35 months in SFY11 to 27 months in SFY15.

### CFSR 2009

During the 2009 CFSR Service Array was rated as strength. Although concerns were identified during the onsite CFSR 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 CFSR 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 (SFY 2016):

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Focus groups were conducted statewide with caseworkers, the judiciary, foster parents, and youth concerning this item.

- All participants in all groups saw service array as a significant deficiency; in general:
  - In Washoe County and DCFS Rural Region: Services related to assessment of needs are difficult to access for both parents and children and there is no universal comprehensive mental health assessment applied to children entering out of home care;
  - In Clark County, the workforce expressed concern with the quality of services for both assessment and intervention associated with a mandated provider.
  - In general, for all jurisdictions
    - The more specialized the service, the greater lack of availability, and/or longer the waiting list (6-8 month wait for a neuro psych evaluations or parental capacities evaluation);
    - Not uncommon to have to wait two months for a child to have a comprehensive mental health assessment;
    - Lack of reunification and adoption support services;
    - Substance abuse evaluations for parents are quite accessible.
    - **CCDFS:** Services for non-offending fathers were seen as lacking;
    - Due to restrictions in case planning (spoken to above) parents, CCDFS, are unable at times to get needed services;
    - The process of Medicaid approvals cause significant delays or result in inappropriate denials that impacts service delivery.
  - Services available to treat/deal with identified needs:
    - Judiciary groups referred to the lack of services and lack of timeliness with applying available services has reached a crisis level;
    - All groups agreed that long wait lists for even the most basic of services is the norm and, that the more sophisticated the service, the longer the wait list; this applies to children and parents needing behavioral health services,, substance abuse services, and speech therapy or tutoring for children.
  - While there are some safety related services, provider availability is very limited, so the need is much higher than the availability. The resources needed for safety related services to keep children in their homes is insufficient.

- Barriers to acquiring services:
  - Lack of Medicaid providers or unreasonable waiting lists for a Medicaid provider (3-6 months).
  - Insufficient specialized Service providers (particularly for DCFS Rural Region and Washoe County). While CCDFS has more providers, they are not accessible due to the current contract limitations with other providers.
  - Stakeholders felt caseworkers were not proactive in accessing services for children in advance and in some case the child(ren) require a higher level of care causing an unnecessary disruption in the child's current placement.
  - The geographical location is a barrier-lack for in-home services because the driving distances for foster parents is an unreasonable burden.
- Strengths:
  - There are accessible services and availability of services for children ranging 0-3 years of age or children 14 years and older (Independent living age group).
  - The Tribal services for WCDSS has expanded creating better access to services

### ***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), DCFS Rural Regional, and CCDFS residential facility, DCFS Rural Regional 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 services for this 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 cultural and linguistic awareness and sensitivity. This year's efforts will target the August Academy development needs to reach success. Sequential years will focus on discussions and efforts to sustain the August Academy.

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 serving 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 CFSR 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 CFSR 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 County 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 (SFY 2016):

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Focus groups were conducted statewide with caseworkers the judiciary, foster parents and youth concerning this item.

- All groups in all jurisdictions agreed that the systems availability to deal with individualizing services is practically non-existent, with the exception of fairly good availability of Spanish speaking providers in Washoe County
- Examples for lack of services for special needs:
  - Judiciary spoke to a deaf parent not being able to access substance abuse treatment due to their disability
  - Foster parent spoke to having a 12 year old developmentally delayed child that is now receiving specialized day care which he will need when he turns 13, but, no providers/programs available to him once he turns 13

## Strengths/Concerns (Service Array)

All Stakeholders during focus groups identified that Service Array is an area needing improvement. Individualized services are practically non-existent.

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 many areas of the state.

Some communities have more resources than others, and typically the metropolitan areas have more services than the DCFS 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 (SFY 2016):

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. During the up-coming SFY 2017 Nevada will continue to meet with existing Stakeholder groups in the implementation of the goals, objectives and interventions of the CFSP. Existing groups statewide discuss the on-going monitoring and progress of CFSP goals. These groups meet on various dates and throughout the state at various locations. Some group meetings are conducted via conference calling. As Nevada enters the SFY for the CSFR Statewide Assessment year plans are underway to provide CSFR factsheets to the Courts, Governor's Office, Adoptive Parents, Legislatures, Mental Health Professionals, Caregivers, Tribes and various other Stakeholders. 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 6.17: Stakeholders**

Table 6.27 show the groups of Stakeholders that DCFS partners with directly through their regular meeting formats or presentations and or workgroups.

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 Children’s Justice Act 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, Nevada Legal Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Nevada Early Intervention Services, The National Council of Judicial and Family Court Judges, 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) Tribal Liaison at the Western BIA office. A toll-free call in telephone number is always provided for those who cannot attend in person. To encourage statewide participation, notification is done by a listserv email which includes the agenda, minutes from the prior meeting, and an updated matrix on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) status between Nevada Tribes and DCFS. The MOU matrix is a list of Nevada tribal entities and documents meetings, letters/email correspondence, and ongoing face-to-face contacts between DCFS Tribal Liaison and Nevada Tribes. The matrix is updated and distributed through the DCFS Tribal Liaison on a bi-monthly basis.

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 30, 2015, September 24, 2015, November 19, 2015, January 28, 2016, March 30, 2016, and May 25, 2016.

Several topics discussed at the meetings:

- Status of Memorandums of Understandings.
- On-going Trainings surrounding Indian Child Welfare (ICW) and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).
- Discussion of the Tribal Independent Living Program (ILP)
  - o 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 FAFSA, 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.
- The importance of Tribal Stakeholder Representation.

The Tribal Liaison with the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) scheduled consultations with Tribal Chairman and representatives from Tribal Social Services. The Tribal Liaison met with the following Tribes to discuss the process and purpose of the MOU: Battle Mountain Band Council Chairwoman Lydia Johnson; Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe Chairman Len George; Ft. McDermitt Paiute Shoshone Tribe Chairman Bradley Crutcher, Tribal Council Members, and Dee Crutcher (ICWA Specialist for the Tribe); Lovelock Paiute Tribe Chairman Victor Mann, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe Chairman Vinton Hawley, Pyramid Executive Officer Della E. John and Pyramid Lake Tribal Social Services; Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Chairman Arlan Melendez, RSIC Health Director, and RSIC Tribal Social Worker Adrienne Botello; Walker River Paiute Tribe Chairman Bobby Sanchez; Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California Chairman Neil Mortimer, Washoe Health Director Ben Johnson, Washoe Social Service Director Cindy Blacksmith; Dresslerville Community Council Chairwoman Lisa Christensen; Woodfords Community Council Chairman Irvin Jim, Jr; Yerington Paiute Tribe Chairwoman Laurie Thom; Yomba Shoshone Tribe Chairman Wayne K. Dyer and Vice-Chairman Darryl Brady; Duck Valley Shoshone Paiute Tribe Chairman Lindsey Manning, Vice-Chairman Buster Gibson, Tribal Council Member Marlyn Jim, Health Director, and Tribal Social Workers Roberta Hancher and Byron Makeshine; Elko Band Council Vice-Chairman Davis Gonzales and Tribal Social Workers; South Fork Band Council Administrator Virgil Townsend; Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone Vice-Chairman Davis Gonzales; Wells Band Council Social Worker Ashley Macclatchey; Las Vegas Paiute Tribe Chairman Benny Tso, CFO Francine Q. Tran, and LV Paiute Tribe Social Services Case Worker Ruth Fitz-Patrick; and Moapa Band of Paiutes Vice-Chairman Greg Anderson and Moapa Tribal Administrator Anne Oandadan.

In February 2016, DCFS Tribal Liaison attended Ft. McDermitt Paiute-Shoshone Tribal Council to present on the MOU process. All Tribes consulted with agreed that they were aware of ICWA and will contact DCFS Tribal Liaison should questions or concerns arise. There were no current questions in regards to ICWA cases or issues surrounding Indian children on the reservations during the initial consultations. Overall consensus from the tribes was for DCFS Tribal Liaison to continue meeting face-to-face with each tribe on an ongoing basis and working closely with Tribal Social Workers. Tribal elections took place at the end of 2015. New leaders have been elected to several Nevada Tribes. DCFS Tribal Liaison will continue to travel and meet with new and existing tribal leaders regarding the MOU process.

The Tribal Liaison for DCFS outlined the tribal initiatives for 2016 which includes:

- Meeting and consulting with other state agency Tribal Liaisons;
- Attending quarterly Tribal Consultation Meetings and giving updates on ICW per request;
- Participating in The National ICW Manager's calls with other ICWA specialist in other states where ideas from each state are discussed and shared regarding ICWA;
- Attending training on Drug Endangered Children (DEC) for the Statewide Native American Coalition (SNAC);
- Attending and participating in the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada's (ITCN) quarterly Executive Board Meetings;
- Attending monthly Tribal Health Director's Meetings at ITCN and giving updates regarding ICW issues involving the tribes;
- Updating the ICWA page on the DCFS website which is made accessible to tribes;
- Providing training opportunities from various sources through the NVICWA listserv and announcements at meetings and,
- Sharing of contact information between the tribes and DCFS.



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. DCFS is in the initial process of finalizing MOUs with Fort McDermitt Paiute-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 has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Yerington Paiute Tribe and the Elko Band Council 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 sibling 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.

The State continues 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 Academy Training. The Nevada Partnership for Training offers an online ICWA training that is open to all jurisdictions. Available on the DCFS website it shows 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 Casey Family Programs in FY 2016. The guest speaker was Terry L. Cross, the founding executive director and senior advisor to the National Indian Child Welfare Act (NICWA). The training brought together state, tribal and county social workers through interactive work on the following topics: ICWA Basics, Working with Substance Abuse Families in Tribal Systems of Care, and Cultural Competence with American Families. After the presentations, Senior Deputy Attorney General and DCFS Tribal Liaison hosted an interactive discussion with participants on the MOU purpose and process. The Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada holds an annual convention each year in which DCFS has been invited back to participate. Due to budget constraints, ITCN elected to not have an annual convention FY 2016 and is unsure if they will be having an annual convention FY 2017. ITCN will inform DCFS of their budget audit results and the future possibility of annual conventions.

The "Indian Child Welfare Resource Guide for Nevada" was initially 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 continues to update the Resource Guide and make it accessible to Tribes via the DCFS website.

In 2014, DCFS made the CFSP and APSR available for public review and inspection through the State's website and provided through the listserv. Additionally, the SFY 2015 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 2016 APSR will be made available for public review and inspection through the State's website and through the listserv 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. Notifications of the meetings are provided through a listserv. The agenda and attachments are sent via a listserv for the CJA ICW meetings. At the CJA ICW Committee meeting on March 30, 2016, discussion occurred with the review of CJA ICW objectives. A barrier identified in working on the DCFS MOUs has been the high turnover in ICW workers both on the state and tribal side. 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.

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), NRS 432B.425, and 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.

During FY 2016, DCFS monitored compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act through case compliance/quality assurance review and training and through individual case reviews with the Deputy Attorney General who represents DCFS. 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), NRS 432B.425, and NRS 128.023 1.(a), notice is sent by registered mail with return receipt requested state proceedings involving Indian children and the foster care placement of the child or the termination of parental rights to the child. 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. 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.

During SFY 2016, DCFS continued to strive for compliance with ICWA by following the Guidelines set out by the BIA in 1979, and the new ICWA guidelines published in February 2015. The Division of Child and Family Services ensured that state case workers had training and knowledge in the ICWA. The DCFS ICWA Tribal Liaison provided technical assistance to State/Tribal/County and private agency Social Workers. The ICWA Tribal Liaison 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 liaison participated in case reviews and case consultations assisting state and tribal partners in the identification of appropriate actions with regard to ICWA. The liaison was a key participant in the meetings between tribal and state leadership, particularly in the development of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). The liaison 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 2016 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 continues to work with IMS to address necessary changes and enhancements.

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 and Elko council 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 FY 2016, the Attorney General representing DCFS approved the MOU for the Elko Band Council. Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe's social service director advised DCFS that council did not want a general MOU, but rather work to implement MOUs specific for children on a case by case basis. The following Tribes are currently

working on draft MOUs to present to council: Battle Mountain Band Council, Lovelock Paiute Tribe, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Confederated Tribe of Goshute, South Fork Band Council, Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone, and The Moapa Band of Paiutes. 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. In the coming fiscal year, DCFS staff will continue to meet and consult with Tribes to continue to support the MOU 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 for children and families in the child welfare system in a fair and timely manner. Nevada CIP projects 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 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP), Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), and Child Safety, Permanency and Well-Being***

The Nevada court system has partnered with the Division of Child and Family Services (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 11 judicial district 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 annual, action-plans to resolve local dependency 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, the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and several subgroups around data and data report development.

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 (CFS 775 report). At this point four of the five timeliness measures are available because although UNITY does have a screen into which to enter the TPR petition filing date, only one county enters this data element. This deficit is being addressed by the Centralized Case Index (CCI) which will draw data from court case management systems.

Baseline data reports were first distributed to the 11 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 (SFY 2016) are also provided to each CIC quarterly in the form of the CFS 775 report from UNITY.

### **Agency Data Sharing Projects:**

CIP has been working with all three child welfare agencies to ensure that accurate and timely information is shared among 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, fax, 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 Extensible Markup Language (XML).

At the lead judge's request, 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. To facilitate an electronic link between the systems, 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 events to the DCFS. It has made the transformation to the NIEM, has completed testing and is ready to begin exchanging messages with UNITY. In September 2014, DCFS began software development in September 2014 to consume these messages. It was decided to enable integration using a UNITY web service which ran into a few glitches requiring a modification of how the exception messages are written. DCFS has created this report and is waiting testing before going live.

### **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 caseloads and thereby achieve additional key timeliness milestones and improve outcomes for children. To this end, CIP undertook several technical proofs of concept (POC) 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 POCs successfully accomplished both of these objectives; CIP is moving these capabilities into a fully operational system which will enable near real-time timeliness reporting through an integrated dashboard. CIP is now developing a operational 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. The intention is to provide a continuous feedback loop to the courts and CICs on their progress and 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 operational 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. The XML formatted messages will be transmitted through a web service. AOC has installed the Application Servicer on the CCI system. CIP has purchased a domain name, "NevadaCIPDashboard.org" and an SSL certificate to allow for encrypted transmission of data. The XML Database Import software is nearing completion. Eight (8) years of historical data from UNITY will be imported into the CCI to be matched with court case management system data. These data include: UNITY case, court hearings, case parties, case petition, placement history, provider service, and removal information.

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. For Nevada's fifteen other counties who either do not currently have a court case management system for dependency or are waiting to feed data into the CCI, 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. The 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court has offered to be the CCI pilot for rural courts. During the summer of 2016 assessment will begin to evaluate feasibility and approach. Discussions concerning pulling some of their pertinent data into the CCI are also being held with such additional agencies as the Nevada Department of Education, the Washoe County School District, and the Jan Evans Juvenile Justice Center.

In the meantime the UNITY CFS 775 report is being revised to include periodic reviews and the proportion of each measure that meets the statutory requirements. The report will also be divided into two reports. One will provide the entire history of timeliness; the other will calculate recent history to allow courts to see progress being made without being encumbered by historical data not impacted by their improvements.

### **Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)**

Nevada CIP has been actively involved in the CFSP and APSR for many years. The CIP Coordinator attended the Federal briefing in Seattle, Washington on the upcoming Child and Family Services Review (Round 3) as an invited member of the Nevada Team. With this enhanced understanding of the systemic factors, federal data measures, and the use of the newly established CFSR portal; CIP has been able to help the courts and CICs understanding of the 2018 CFSR process in Nevada.

CIP is an active and charter member of the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) which meets monthly to discuss all that is relevant to both the CFSR 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/CFSR 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. The SQIC's purpose is to promote positive outcomes for Nevada's children through continuous oversight and analysis of state and federally identified performance measures and data relevant to continuous quality improvement.

CIP is also part of the reviewer pool assisting with case reviews throughout the state in preparation for Nevada's 2018 CFSR. CIP participates in on-going review of the resultant data and discussion concerning how improvement can be made in those items leading up to Nevada's Round 3 CFSR in 2018. The CIP Coordinator was trained to assist with quality improvement case file reviews in Nevada, and has been certified to conduct case file reviews on the CFSR On-Line Monitoring System. CIP participated in the DCFS Rural Region Reviews in April 2015 and 2016.

The 11 judicially convened Community Improvement Councils (CICs) will be involved in either focus groups or surveys relating to continuous monitoring of the systemic factors. Additionally, the CICs have initiated supporting several of the outcomes and systemic factors as a result of their action planning around timeliness, child safety, and hearing quality. All the courts have focused on implementing child safety decision making (Safety Outcome 2, Item 3). Most courts are asking about placement with relatives and maintaining relationships, if there has not been placement with, siblings (Permanency Outcome 2, Items 7, 8, and 10). As result of the 2015 CIC Summit training on enhancing hearing quality, the courts are making inquiries concerning appropriate permanency goals (Permanency Outcome 1, Item 5).

Regarding the Case Review System systemic factor Item 22, a column for the proportion of permanency hearings meeting the mandatory time requirement has been added to the Court Performance Measure report sent to the courts quarterly. A review of court timeliness data shows that for all children who were in foster care between 2012 and 2015, the median days to permanency hearing were within the 12 month requirement. The proportion of permanency hearings conducted timely improved from 67% in 2012 to 78% in 2015. Additionally, time to permanency and termination of parental rights has been consistently trending downward (28% and 27% decrease, respectively) and the proportion of permanency hearings meeting statutory requirement upward (23.2% increase).

In terms of Item 23 (Termination of Parental Rights), CIP has been informing the courts quarterly of their timeliness using the same Court Performance Measure report and during the annual CIC Summit annual. Trend data is also presented to the courts for improvement. The data collected regarding the time around termination of parental rights, has reduced by 27% Statewide, from 764 to 561 median days, between the time periods of 2011 through the first quarter of 2016.

Data regarding Item 21 (Periodic Reviews) is being added to the quarterly court performance measures report to ensure that the courts focus their attention on this important measure, as well.

Several courts have included in their CIC action plans activities to assist with Item 35 (Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention). The 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District (JD) celebrated National Adoption Month by engaging the entire community of Elko to highlight the need for adoptive and foster homes. The 5<sup>th</sup> JD of DCFS successfully pulled the community together to recruit additional foster families, especially in remote areas. The 6<sup>th</sup> 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 included in their quality hearing action plan increasing court involvement in foster care recruitment. The 8<sup>th</sup> JD's judges participate in foster family trainings. The 10<sup>th</sup> JD charged each of its CIC members to approach at least one suitable family about fostering children and the judge plans to contact each of those families.

### **Education Data Sharing and Educational Stability**

The Educational Collaborative among Nevada's Department of Education (NDE), 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 NDE and 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.

The Educational Collaborative is now actively assisting the Nevada Department of Education with cooperative implementation of ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act). It is writing a Bill Draft Request to modify the Nevada Revised Statutes to comply with ESSA and define foster care, school of origin, and immediate enrollment similar to other federal definitions in either Fostering Connections or McKinney-Vento.

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 project in which all related fields in the school district's case management system, and 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 and is pushed into Infinite Campus nightly. CIP is exploring pulling these Infinite Campus data into its Centralized Case Index, as well.

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. These data demonstrate that foster care students are:

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

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 and is nearing the end of the first year of providing educational case management and mentoring support for transition-age foster youth, and evaluating the effectiveness and efficacy of this intervention. The program is using experienced "Educational Champions" to provide educational supports for each foster youth to help guide and motivate them. Data is driving advocacy-related decision making for the students, and is being 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 can 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. By July 2016, Infinite Campus will be in all schools districts and at the Nevada Department of Education.

- **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 and will be modified to comply with ESSA when the Nevada Legislature comes into session in 2017. Infinite Campus in Washoe been modified to create to accept data directly from UNITY. Testing is taking place before going live with the project. Funding for the “Educational Champions” was received in July 2015 and the program was successfully launched in the 2015-2016 school year.

### **The Coalition to Prevent Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children**

Two teams from Nevada attended trainings during 2015 concerning sex trafficking of children. During the 2015 CIP Annual Meeting, a team from child welfare, law enforcement, and the courts attended a sex trafficking convening at the White House where a statewide strategic plan to prevent commercial sexual exploitation of children was started. The team worked throughout the summer of 2015 on this plan.

In October 2015 the Nevada Supreme Court Chief Justice sent a team of judges, law enforcement and public defenders to New York City for training. Because a judge from this team is also a member of the CIP Select Committee, he was aware of the statewide strategic plan being drafted and took this document to build upon during the New York City training. As a result, the statewide strategic plan was informed by two national convening. By the end of October 2015, Nevada Supreme Court Justice Nancy M. Saitta (Chair of the CIP Select Committee) convened the organizational meeting of the Coalition to Prevent Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children at which the Coalition’s draft structure and mission, and strategic plan were shared. This meeting was facilitated by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Coalition members self-assigned to the six focus groups created in the draft strategic plan: Consultation/Coordination/Collaboration; Engagement/Identification/Assessment of Sex Trafficking Victims; Data Collection, Analysis, and Sharing; Care Coordination; Training; and Prevention.

Nevada’s Governor issued an Executive Order officially creating the Coalition to Prevent CSEC naming Justice Saitta as chair and Kelly Wooldridge, Administrator of DCFS as co-chair.

CIP has worked diligently with DCFS since the 2015 CIP Annual Meeting to finalize the strategic plan, plan and host the organizational meeting, draft language for the executive order, and identify co-chairs and members for the five focus groups. CIP spearheaded a multi-agency request for help addressing the child sex trafficking problem in Nevada. CIP along with the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and the Department of Education submitted a successful application to request technical assistance with the implementation of the commercial sexual exploitation of children portion of P.L. 113-183.

The State of Nevada is one of six jurisdictions in the country selected to participate in a new federal initiative to help states serve at-risk youth who are involved in multiple systems. The Center for Coordinated Assistance to States within Georgetown University will assist Nevada’s multi-disciplinary team to develop stronger formal relationships and structural alignments to improve system processes and outcomes for child victims of sex trafficking.

### ***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.

## CFSR 2009

In the 2009 CFSR 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 CFSR 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 (SFY 2016):

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 the Death of Children, 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. Memorandum of Understandings with Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and The Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation are in the negotiation process with the Attorney General of Nevada. Additionally, we have child specific MOUs with the Washoe Tribe and in Elko. Over the next three 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 6.18 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 6.18:**

### ***Juvenile Justice Transfers:***

:

AGE	MALE	FEMALE	Total #Committed
13	1	0	1
14	2	0	2
15	1	0	1
16	1	3	4
17	4	0	4
18	9	5	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26</b>

Source: UNITY Report CFS748 SFY 2016 (7/1/2015 to 5/31/2016)

### 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.

The Division of Child and Family Services conducted focus groups and surveys for SFY 2016 in attempts to further engage stakeholders around many of the systemic factors. For SFY 2017 DCFS plans to conduct more focus groups and engage with stakeholders further on understanding state child welfare performance data, and the purpose of the CFSP and CFSR.

### Systemic Factor G: Foster and Adoptive Home Licensing, Approval and Recruitment

#### ***Item 33: Standards applied equally***

##### ***Requirements:***

##### **Requirements:**

The Division of Child and Family Services is responsible for the receipt and distribution of all federal IV-E or IV-B funds in the State of Nevada. It is a statutory duty of DCFS to administer any money granted by the Federal government under title IV-E or IV-B.

The Division of Child and Family Services monitors compliance with foster home licensing regulations of foster homes through, at minimum, the annual licensing home inspection. In addition, compliance may be verified through a variety of other means; single agency audits, federal reviews, state CFSR reviews and through the child welfare agency caseworker's monthly foster home visits, home 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. The most recent Nevada Title IV-E Review was conducted by ACF in April 2014; Nevada was found to be in substantial compliance with federal eligibility requirements.

Currently, the DCFS Foster Care Program Specialist is facilitating a statewide workgroup to revise Nevada's licensing regulations in response to Federal and State laws recently enacted and to complete a mandatory regulation review (every 10 years per NV law). The statewide workgroup, comprised of licensing representatives from each of the three child welfare agencies, provides the facilitator with a bird's eye view into how each child welfare agency approaches their responsibilities and duties to ensure compliance with federal/state foster home licensing laws. The *Licensing Authority* within each child welfare agency undertakes their regulatory responsibility with the significance and importance it deserves, understanding compliance with the law is the best way to support a child's safety and wellbeing in the foster care system.

In the past year, there have been only a few foster homes that have been licensed through the use of a waiver of licensing standards. These waivers are given great consideration by the agency's administration prior to approval to ensure the use of a waiver will still support 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.

Nevada "Child Care" facilities (*congregate care/institutional-like settings that provide residential care for 16 or more children; are licensed through the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH)*) these licensees can provide emergency shelter care or other residential care for children within Nevada's foster care system. They are regulated and monitored for compliance by the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health's Health Care Quality and Compliance Unit, in accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and Nevada Administrative Codes (NAC), CHAPTER 432A - SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR CARE OF CHILDREN.

These statutes and regulations are utilized in inspections and investigations conducted licensed child care institutions to ensure equitability and consistency 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 institution that receives IV-E funding for the care of a foster child has a current, valid Child Care License issued through DPBH. DPBH ensures through the actual licensing process that all Child Care licenses and renewals meet the requirements identified within NRS 432A and NAC 432A.

### 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 (SFY 2016):

#### SACWIS Licensing Waiver Report

Recently, new licensing windows were deployed within Nevada's SACWIS system. These new window will assist in providing more details regarding the licensing process, e.g., specific waiver types / need. DCFS will provide improved licensing information/data in future APSRs with the rollout and use of the new SACWIS windows.

*Statewide licensing data received from the DCFS Data Team: May 1, 2015 - April 30, 2016, indicates that only 21 foster homes were approved statewide with a waiver of licensing standards. Nevada's data reporting system did not collect information on the type of licensing standard exception or license type (relative/non-relative) that received the approved waiver.*

*There are only six child care institutions in Nevada that are used by child welfare agencies to provide temporary housing either for shelter care or treatment care for children within the foster care system. Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health provided data for the time period, July 1, 2015 to present, for these six institutions. 100% of these institutions were issued standard licenses with no exceptions or waivers.*

### **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 CFSR item 34 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 CFSR 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 (SFY 2016):

- *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 in March, 2017.*
- *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 have implemented *ACTION for Child Protection's* safety intervention



model within their 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.

Currently, DCFS does not have an internal process for reviewing compliance with the statewide licensing requirement for criminal background check reviews. Starting SFY 2017, the following procedures will be implemented.

#### Sampling and Data Collection for Systemic Factor #34: requirements for criminal background checks

**General Sampling Parameters:** On a quarterly basis, 10% of newly licensed foster homes licensed during the quarter under review will be reviewed for compliance with the requirement for criminal background checks as part of the foster home licensing process. Note: due to variations in the number of newly licensed foster homes per quarter, the number of new homes reviewed will vary from quarter to quarter. No fewer than 10 newly licensed foster homes and no greater than 20 newly licensed foster homes per quarter will be reviewed. The ratio of cases reviewed will be 50% Clark County, 25% Washoe County, and 25% DCFS Rural Region. This ratio was chosen as it reflects the same ratio of QICR cases reviewed annually in the state's QICR review process.

**Sampling Timetable:** During the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October sampling will be done for the quarter ending at the end of September; during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of January sampling will be done for the quarter ending at the end of December; during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April sampling will be done for the quarter ending at the end of December; during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of July sampling will be done for the quarter ending at the end of June.

**Sampling Process:** The first step is to run a Unity (SACWIS) report 720 which will identify all newly licensed foster homes for the quarter under review. The second step is to separate the report by jurisdiction. The third step is to apply random numbers to each of the newly licensed homes and rank order the random numbers. The final step is to select a 10% state wide sample, with 50% of that sample represented by Clark County, 25% represented by Washoe County, and 25% represented by DCFS Rural Region. Total number of newly licensed foster homes for each quarter will be reported, aggregated to annual totals, by jurisdiction and state wide.

**Data Collection:** The following data elements will be requested by the state, supplied by each of the three jurisdictions, for each newly licensed home identified in the sample:

- Date the completed foster home application was received by the licensing agency
- Date the criminal records check was submitted
- Date the agency received final clearings as a result of the check
- Effective date of the license

Compliance with the standard in this instance will be date of agency receipt of clearing occurring prior to or same day of effective date of the license. Percentage (and number) of cases compliant with the standard will be reported, by jurisdiction and state wide, reporting quarterly and annual totals.

In addition, inquiry will be made with the licensing agency for each case, indicating whether the case included plans for safety concerns. This data will be reported, raw numbers and percentages, quarterly and annually, by jurisdiction and state wide totals.

### ***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 (CCDFS, WCDSS, DCFS Rural Region). Each agency has a different geographical and demographic area. Therefore, each agency's efforts and activities for diligent recruitment will differ due to the different needs within the communities served by the particular 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.

CCDFS has the most diverse population, being the largest urban area in Nevada. They use a market segmentation approach within diverse community locations, which are reflective of the children in child welfare custody. A recent analysis by AdoptUSkids, through a CCDFS recruitment grant, identified this strategy as effective in meeting the racial and ethnic needs of their child population.

WCDSS targets recruitment within the same local neighborhoods/communities where children originally came into child welfare custody. Additionally, WCDSS targets specific schools, community organizations, and local religious entities, along with Spanish language radio advertising and distribution of Spanish-language brochures and posters to assist with their recruitment efforts to meet the racial and ethnic needs of these children.

In the DCFS Rural Region, diligent recruitment is often based upon targeting the specific zip codes and schools where children have been removed. DCFS also contracts with a representative of The Forgotten Initiative Nevada (TFI) to make personal contact with many churches within the Rural Region. Efforts are also made by DCFS to engage other religious entities and ethnic communities within the Rural Region.

*(Full narrative information for CCDFS, WCDSS, and DCFS Rural Region below)*

### CFSR 2009

During the 2009 CFSR item 35 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 (SFY 2016):

**Table 6.19**

Nevada AFCARS data that reflects the current ethnic and racial diversity of both current foster children and foster/adoptive caregivers. Over the next SFY 2017 Nevada will use this 2016 data to begin future diligent recruitment efforts based upon actual data.

Statewide	American Indian	Asian	Black	NHPI	White	Unknown	Hispanic (Yes)	Hispanic (NO)	Hispanic (UNK)
Children	<b>3.06%</b> 186	<b>2.07%</b> 126	<b>32.57%</b> 1982	<b>1.56%</b> 95	<b>68.61%</b> 4175	<b>5.31%</b> 323	<b>23.13%</b> 1406	<b>63.83%</b> 3880	<b>13.04%</b> 793

Foster Parents	<b>0.85%</b> 37	<b>3.60%</b> 156	<b>26.41%</b> 1145	<b>1.41%</b> 61	<b>64.05%</b> 2777	<b>3.69%</b> 160	<b>16.78%</b> 712	<b>75.52%</b> 3205	<b>7.70%</b> 327
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### **DCFS Rural Region**

To ensure children in foster care are placed in homes that meet their ethnic and racial needs, it is crucial for the agency to be informed by reliable data. Monthly reports from the agency through the SACWIS, e.g. Foster Care Summary and Removals by Zip Code, are received by the recruiter to assist with diligent recruitment efforts across the DCFS Rural Region. The data in these reports reflects the percentage of children taken into care, their race and ethnicity, as well as age and primary language spoken in the home. A report is completed on a monthly basis as to the race and ethnicity of children taken into custody, by zip code.

Due to the large expanse of land mass within the DCFS Rural Region (95,000 sq. miles), distance between communities is definitely a barrier. DCFS only has one foster/adoptive parent recruiter position that is responsible for all 15 rural counties.

This year, a Justice of the Peace (JOP) and a judge from two different rural districts made it their personal mission to help recruit foster/adoptive families. The JOP recruited three families within her remote, small town; while the judge challenged each member of his Court Improvement Council to bring the name of one family who would make a good foster family to the next Court Improvement Committee (CIC) meeting, at which time he personally called each family to inquire about the willingness and interest in becoming licensed. Four (4) additional families were licensed through these efforts.

It is a priority of DCFS's Rural Child Welfare Services to reach out within the 15 rural counties, to all ethnic groups, organizations and the individuals that work, or are involved, with diverse populations. Over the years, it has become evident that recruitment efforts must be supported by the specific population that the agency is trying to recruit. By DCFS working with and through these various entities, partnerships are formed and it becomes better understood as a population's issue, and not just a DCFS issue. DCFS works to partner collaboratively with many entities, such as: Nevada Urban Indians, Nevada Hispanic Services, the United Latino Community, area school districts and groups within, as well as NAACP's Northern Nevada office. In order to bolster efforts to reach Nevada's rural Hispanic communities, DCFS continues working to create Spanish-Speaking Public Service Announcements as well as attending booth events that target primarily Spanish-Speaking people. Bilingual social workers assist to provide communication with Hispanic people interested in learning more about foster care. In addition to recruitment efforts, bilingual DCFS staff will also be conducting foster parent inquiries when needed. We continue having the objective for DCFS to host bilingual training in the various rural areas to accommodate Hispanic foster care applicants.

### **CCDFS**

Clark County Department of Family Services worked with Market segmentation from the diligent recruitment grant to identify the community recruitment needs and the geo zones to recruit from. We are working with a local marketing firm in the placement of the recruitment campaign within diverse locations that are reflective of the children we care for. Data sources: Nielsen data, COGNOS, FITT, GIS, previous recruitment plans/events, existing foster parent surveys.

Clark County Department of Family Services completed working with the NRCDR through a diligent recruitment grant this year to develop a marketing segmentation strategy. Data as it relates to children in foster care and their race/ethnicity was analyzed, as well as, the profiles of licensed caregivers. This process determined that CCDFS has a diverse population of foster caregivers able to meet the needs of foster children placed in out-of-home care.

### **WCDSS**

- The Have a Heart campaign is used as the foundation for our recruitment efforts. It has successfully been used as an aspect of targeted recruitment around homes in specific school zones.
- The child specific adoption recruitment program is a permanent aspect of the unit's duties matching children at a higher rate than in the past.
- The Forgotten Initiative, faith based recruitment program has gained momentum with Gloria Torma. Several large churches have held orientations, allowed time during the service and allowed for informational tables on weekend services. Over twenty Washoe County churches are actively involved in recruitment efforts and this continues to grow and yield families.

- School Zone targeted recruitment for foster homes with an emphasis of keeping children in their home school is ongoing. Quarterly community based recruitment events have taken place in areas where there is a high need for foster homes with advertisement focused in the schools in those surrounding zones.
- Extreme Recruitment, a method of recruitment in which efforts are made to locate family connections for children and youth who tend to be in long-term foster care in an effort to secure permanency or at least additional support. This has been a result of Permanency Review Teams.
- The PPP match process has strengthened in order to consistently ensure that families being considered for flexible placement have an opportunity to speak with the recruiter, the child's worker and foster parent, if appropriate, to ensure exchange of information and to allow workers to have informed input regarding their perception of potential match.
- Quality Parenting Initiative has been implemented in the past year and focuses on recruitment, retention and quality parenting. This continues to grow and focus on specific issues to meet these main goals.
- Continued services provided by The Adoption Exchange, including a part-time Wendy's Wonderful Recruiter carries a caseload of 5 children who are identified as the most difficult to locate an adoptive family for. This recruiter uses an intensive, extreme recruitment method and follow up for success of adoptive placement.

Beyond just offering recruitment in areas of removal, WCDSS also provides all recruitment medias through utilizing bi-lingual information.; orientations are offered in Spanish and English; Trauma-Informed Pre-Service (TIPS) Training is in Spanish and English; contract for radio and newspaper advertisements within the Hispanic community in Reno and in the Hispanic newspaper, **AHORA**. In addition, WCDSS does individual recruitment efforts for specific children and/or sibling groups, if race/ ethnicity is a factor, it is taken into consideration and addressed within our recruitment efforts.

### Stakeholder Interviews:

Focus Groups were held with Foster Parents in the DCFS Rural Region that focused on this item:

- Foster Parents report training is set up for non-working parents.
- Effort varies depending on the social worker. Consensus is that the efforts are not aggressive for recruitment.
- There is some advertising on the radio.
- One Foster Parent reported eight couples went to the training and only one became Foster Parent.
- When asked if they would be willing to help with recruitment efforts, there was an overwhelming response for Foster Parents to help with recruiting, however, there experience is that they are not asked to help with recruiting efforts

### ***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 item 36 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 (SFY 2016)

All three child welfare agencies continue to explore and utilize methods and resources to ensure timely cross-jurisdictional foster relative and adoptive placements that include adoption exchanges, photo listings, media events, and AdoptUSKids. One of the most significant resources for cross jurisdictional placement continues to be the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC). ICPC remains critical to the successful and safe placement of children across state lines due to the collaboration of all states and territories.

The purpose and policy of ICPC is to ensure that each child requiring placement in another state will be placed in a suitable environment and with persons or institutions having the qualifications and facilities to provide for the care of the child. To this end, a child's safety, permanency and well-being are assured through the process of home study, licensing, if requested, and ongoing supervision of the placement.

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is administered by DCFS. Nevada adopted ICPC in 1985, and every state in the US, as well as the District of Columbia and the US Virgin Islands, are members of this Compact. They work in concert with one another when placing children across state lines for the following types of placements:

- Preliminary to adoption,
- Placements into foster care, group homes, residential treatment facilities and institutions,
- Placements with parents and relatives when a parent or relative is not making the placement or
- Placements of adjudicated delinquents in institutions in other states.

After forty years of operation, a new national compact is nearing completion. DCFS is participating in this process by providing feedback to the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), the agency charged with this task. The new Compact will ensure accountability among the member states and better serve the needs of children.

The Central Office ICPC unit continues to develop and revise tools, policies and trainings to ensure that local state offices are kept aware of requirements. Recognizing that staff turnover often results in critical knowledge of ICPC processes being lost, the ICPC team has plans to schedule regular, regional trainings. The Nevada Deputy Compact Administrator (DCA) serves on several executive committees within APHSA which has continued to bring Nevada into the forefront of decision making and affords the State to have the most recent changes and potential policy revisions.

In August, 2014, Nevada was selected as one of six states to pilot the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) project. This is a web-based electronic information exchange for processing ICPC cases and streamlining placement of children across state lines with a goal of decreasing the length of time it takes for children to be placed safely across state lines and reduce administrative costs. 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 pilot was successful and now nearly a third of the States have begun to utilize the system. Nevada continues to be a leader in the continued rollout and training of NEICE. Gaining support and recognition nationally, congressional leaders have proposed legislation to mandate the system nationally and Nevada was recognized in this draft legislation as well as within several publications outlining the critical components of the process.

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 other states to ensure Nevada is providing the documents and information needed will be part of an ongoing discussion and policy update. The NEICE project has and will continue to provide more accurate and timely data reports around referrals and home studies.

**Table 6.20**

*Placement numbers, both incoming and outgoing, have remained fairly consistent over the years. The below numbers reflect incoming and outgoing referrals as well as home studies for the year to date and are taken from the NEICE system.*

Total Statewide Annual	Total Statewide Annual	Total Statewide	Total Statewide Approved
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Incoming Referrals SFY 16 to date	Outgoing Referrals SFY 16 to date	Approved Incoming Home Studies SFY 16 to date	Outgoing Home Studies SFY 16 to date
1812	1093	737	975

**Table 6.21**

*During SFY 2015 from July 1, 2015 until June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 there were a total of 778 Home Study Request from other states and the total number completed in 60 days or less was 294 Home Studies which represents that 37.8% of home studies were completed in 60 Days.*

Total Statewide Incoming Home Study Referrals SFY 16 (July 1, 2015 to June 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2016)	Total Number of Incoming Home Studies Completed in 60 Days	Statewide Completion percentage in 60 Days
778	294	37.8%

Clark County Department of Family Services continues to use resource families from other Nevada counties as well as resource families from other states. Data and information used includes profiles of families who inquire through the Adoption Exchange and/or AdoptUsKids; approved home studies submitted by agencies and resource families; approved foster care license of families (if applicable) so payments can be made to support placements; and, approved ICPC reports so placements can be made and monitored until adoption is finalized. In SFY 2016 294 requests were received and 71 completed. Of these 24% were completed and approved, and 3% were completed in 60 Days.

Washoe County Department of Social Services continues to use resource families from other Nevada counties as well as resource families from other states. Barriers that affect their ability to ensure the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placement for children after are waiting in care a black log of TPR petitions; however, WCDSS funded an additional Deputy District Attorney during this reporting period to address the backlog. An additional barrier may include a separation between the dependency and TPR matters so that a judge unfamiliar with the dependency case hears the TPR petition. Lastly, judicial officers are requiring diligent search efforts that are incompatible with county general policies creating delays in TPR trials.

In the DCFS Rural Region, for the last SFY 2016 period twelve requests were received from another state for licensed foster home studies. Five (5) home studies were completed within the 60 days required, making the percentage 41.66%.

It is noteworthy, that the aforementioned date is only the number of licensed foster homes. Since July 1, 2015, DCFS has received approximately 43 ICPC requests for Parent/ Relative Home Studies total. Twelve (12) of those were received in the past 45 days so are not counted in this percentage, because they are not yet due. Of the 31 home studies that are more than 60 days old, six (6) were completed within the 60 day timeframe for a total of 19%.

In SFY 2016 a spreadsheet of all incoming home studies for foster care licensure and a separate spreadsheet for all parent and relative Home studies were implemented. The spreadsheets include the date of receipt, expected date of completion; name of person(s) the home study was conducted on and date of licensure.

The Division of Child and Family Services struggles to complete parent and relative home studies from other states. These studies are the responsibility of child welfare caseworker staff, who are already burdened with high caseloads due to consistently high caseworker vacancy rates. Contractors are utilized to complete approximately 80% of those requests.

### **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. The Revision of NAC 424 has been on-going for several years but should be finalized in SFY 2017.

That child welfare agencies are very effective on ensuring criminal background checks of foster and adoptive parents.

Also, the state is usually effective and has strength in the use of cross-jurisdictional resources for permanent placements utilizing the ICPC as a resource; however, lack of resources are affecting the timeliness of required 60 day home studies. 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 continue to be underway for an implementation of this system nationwide.

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.



## 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
CMHGB	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**

In FY 2011, Nevada submitted a CAPTA state plan that will remain in effect as long as the State continues to participate in the CAPTA State Program grant. Section 108(e) of CAPTA requires annual reporting on the use of the grant via the APSR.

### **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES**

There are no substantive changes in the state law that effect eligibility. The Nevada Legislature meets every two years and last met in 2015. Nevada's next legislative session will be in 2017.

### **SELECTED PROGRAM AREAS**

In SFY 2015, Nevada selected the following program areas from CAPTA section 106(a):

- Section 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;
- Section 106(a)(6) developing, strengthening and facilitating training including--
  - training regarding research-based strategies, including the use of differential response, to promote collaboration with the families;
  - training regarding the legal duties of such individuals;
  - personal safety training for case workers; and
  - training in early childhood, child, and adolescent development;
- Section 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;
- Section 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;
- Section 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; and
- Section 106(a)(13) supporting and enhancing collaboration among public health agencies, the agencies in the child protection service system, and agencies carrying out private community-based programs--
  - to provide child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment services (including linkages with education systems), and the use of differential response; and
  - 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.

### **CHANGES TO PROGRAM AREAS**

Nevada will have changes to the CAPTA state plan. The new programs areas are:

- Section 106(a)(1) the intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of child abuse and neglect;
- Section 106(a)(3) case management, including ongoing case monitoring, and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families;
- Section 106(a)(4) enhancing the general child protective system by developing, improving, and implementing risk and safety assessment tools and protocols, including the use of differential response;

- 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; and
- Section 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.

#### **ACTIVITIES AND USE OF FUNDS FOR CAPTA STATE GRANT**

For the reporting period, CAPTA funds were used alone or in combination with other funds in support of the state's approved CAPTA plan.

##### **Activities:**

Nevada continues to update and improve UNITY, the state SACWIS system, to provide the infrastructure required to support practice changes as it relates to Intake Assessment, Safety Assessment, Safety Plan, Safety Plan Determination and Conditions for Safe Return, Present Danger Assessment, Nevada Initial Assessment, Protective Capacity Family Assessment, Protective Capacity Assessment, Protective Capacity Progress Assessment, New Caregiver Initial Assessment, Case Plan and Confirming Safe Environments. The programmer continues to work collaboratively with the Statewide Intake Policy Team and QA staff to review and refine intake, safety and investigative screens, policies and procedures.

Beginning in January, 2016, Differential Response programming moved under the umbrella of DCFS from the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services. Nevada is unique in that Differential Response is a collaboration between the child welfare agencies and community providers housed within Family Resource Centers. The Differential Response Steering Committee helps guide practice and makes programming decisions statewide. Currently, the team is developing MOUs to be used between the providers and the child welfare agencies. Additionally, through a collaborative process, training needs identification and policy review and development is commencing to ensure child safety statewide.

CAPTA funds are used to strengthen the Centralized Intake System for DCFS Rural Region through a partnership with Crisis Call Center. As DCFS does not have designated intake workers, this partnership improves responsiveness to statewide communities as dedicated intake staff process intake calls while allowing social workers to focus on caseload and direct service duties. Intake staff have been trained on the SAFE/SIPS model intake assessment process to improve information collection and report assignment.

Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) enhanced and improved its investigative appeals unit to ensure substantiated caregivers have an opportunity to have their case reviewed timely when appealing investigative findings. The objective of CCDFS' appeal unit is to make a determination of whether the totality of the evidence gathered from its investigation supports the finding of substantiation of abuse or neglect under Nevada laws and administrative regulations.

The Division of Child And Family Services Rural Region contracted with a community provider to assist with safety management services to include visitation facilitation between siblings and parents, Child and Family Team meetings, parenting interventions and home safety checks.

Washoe County families residing in shelter facilities were able to access child care for non-school aged children allowing parents the opportunity to access treatment services such as substance abuse and mental health treatment while providing a safe environment for the children. The goal was to facilitate coordination of treatment services with public health entities to strengthen caregiver capacities while preventing placement into foster care.

Washoe County and Clark County received supervisory consultative training for the SAFE/SIPS model which is used statewide. DCFS Rural Region continues to work with ACTION for Child Protection to provide this same training to rural supervisors.

Through the Nevada Training Partnership, mandated reporter training is available, free of charge to any community member. Additionally, CCDFS has a training team that collaborates with its community and provides this training upon request and on an ongoing basis. In fact, CCDFS recently provided mandated reporter training to Differential Response providers.

A two day training, "Coaching Fundamentals for Child Welfare Leaders," designed to provide foundational coaching knowledge and skills for child welfare leaders is being offered. Consultants with recent child welfare practice and leadership experience, adult learning theory and workforce development expertise, and experience delivering and implementing coaching in counties across California designed the training curriculum and will provide the training delivery. The training provides an overview of the use and value of coaching to develop skills in child welfare practitioners and it includes skill practice activities that allow trainees to leave the training with the capacity to begin using coaching immediately.

Washoe County has successfully implemented the Attachment and Bio-behavioral Catch-Up Visitation (ABC-V) program. Parents are encouraged to allow their children to direct playtime activities during visitation. Target ages include children ages six months to six years. Mentors work with biological parents 20 minutes prior to the visit to discuss follow-the-leader concepts. The foster parent remains in the room during visitation and encourages the follow-the-leader behaviors exhibited by the biological parent. In Washoe, the mentors are Human Services Support Specialists (HSSS), para-professional positions. ABC-V increases the likelihood that the birth parent will feel supported by the foster parent, will have pleasant interactions with the child, and will learn how to follow the child's lead. In addition, the birth parents become more comfortable relying on the foster parent for support and the child feels more comfortable because both care providers are in the room and children don't feel like they have to "choose." ABC-V has contributed to increased reunification.

#### **Personnel:**

A portion of the funds are used to support the following personnel needed to support CAPTA objectives:

- A CRP coordinator to facilitate and coordinate the activities and meetings of the Citizens Review Panel;
- A Social Services Program Specialist III serves as the SLO and participates in the planning, coordination, evaluation and policy development statewide;
- A Grants Management Unit specialist to monitor and manage CAPTA funds, sub-grants and required grant reporting; and
- An Administrative Assistant to responds to central registry requests statewide.

#### **Operating and Travel Expenses:**

Grant funds are used to support travel and per diem for CRP representatives, as well as child welfare services representatives, to participate in child protection collaborative workgroups. Funds are also used to procure consultant/facilitator time, including travel, per diem and materials for the purpose of supporting and providing technical assistance to the CRP.

#### **UPDATE ON SERVICES TO SUBSTANCE-EXPOSED NEWBORNS**

Nevada statute specifically requires medical personnel to notify the child welfare agency if the person has knowledge that the infant was parentally exposed to illegal substances or is exhibiting withdrawal symptoms from prenatal drug exposure. The treating physician may hold a child for 24 hours if there is concern the child will be harmed if released and requires notification of the child welfare agency. The purpose of the reporting is not to pursue prosecution. Additionally, state law does not allow for a substantiated finding of abuse or neglect in these circumstances unless the abuse or neglect occurred after the child was born. State law also allows for the exchange of information between agencies for the purpose of the development of the plan for the care, treatment or supervision of a child that has been prenatally exposed to illegal substance or is exhibiting withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure. Statute allows for referral of these same newborns to be referred to or participate in social or health services offered within the family's community in lieu of an investigation. Relevant Nevada statutes are as follows: [NRS 432B.170](#); [NRS 432B.220](#); [NRS 432B.230](#); [NRS 432B.260](#); [NRS 432B.310](#); [NRS 432B.330](#); and [432B.400](#).

Current statewide policy requires that child welfare agencies refer all children under the age of three (3) who are involved in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect, or who have a positive drug screen at birth, to Early Intervention Services within two (2) working days of identifying the child.

A statewide collaborative policy on the Plan of Safe Care was developed and pending the approval process. The state would be interested in receiving technical assistance to:



- Identify gaps in data collection to identify population (both child and parent) as well as ongoing data collection strategies and tools;
- Identify service needs and service delivery gaps based upon regional differences
- Identify different service and intervention models based upon drug exposure types i.e., marijuana, amphetamine, opiates;
- Collaboration and coordination with community partners to achieve a multi-system approach to address family needs utilizing existing community resources and/or develop new resources; and
- Develop and provide any additional training that might be needed for staff and community partners.

#### **ACTIVITIES FOR THE PREVENTION OF THE COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN (CSEC)**

The Nevada DCFS, in collaboration with the Court Improvement Program, met with multiple agencies and disciplines to begin the formation of a statewide Coalition for the Prevention of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). To support the formation of the CSEC, Nevada applied for and was accepted to participate in the Center for Coordinated Assistance to States, Multi-System Collaboration Training and Technical Assistance Program (MSC-TTA). This technical assistance is supporting the development of the Coalition through bi-weekly webinars to be conducted from April 20, 2016 through October 31, 2016. Webinar topics and accompanying assignments address: Understanding the Systems Change Process, Gap Analysis and Systems Mapping, Development of an MOA between Coalition Members, Utilizing Data to Inform Cross-System Collaboration, Addressing Youth and Family Engagement and Development of a Strategic Plan. Twelve (12) members of the CSEC Steering Committee are attending the “Just First Response” Summit which focuses on the identification, prosecution and treatment with the lens of trauma informed response to victims.

The Coalition has been formalized through a Governor’s Executive Order. The Chief Magistrate of the Supreme Court and the Administrator of DCFS serve as co-chairs. The CSEC has a Steering Committee and four subcommittees focused on: Engagement, Identification, and Assessment of Victims; Care Coordination; Training; and Data Collection and Sharing. CSEC members and co-chairs of the subcommittees are participating in the MSC-TTA. Policy and training requirements of TVPA will be achieved through the CSEC Coalition sub-committees in conjunction with child welfare policy workgroups.

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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. 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 awards 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 14 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 PROGRESS SINCE CFSP 2015-2019 implementation July 2015 through July 30, 2016 and PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE UPCOMING SFY 2017.***

### **CFCIP Eight Program Purposes:**

#### ***Accomplishments since the 2015-2019 CFSP submission and planned activities for SFY 2017*** **CFCIP PROGRAM PURPOSES 1-8**

#### **1. Help youth transition to self-sufficiency by providing services in the following areas:**

##### **CCDFS**

During the 2015-2016 year, the CCDFS Independent Living program (ILP) 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). Expanded Higher Education College bound workshops, 2). Vocational workshops such as; Cosmetology and Fire Science3) Self-Sufficiency Workshop to DMV.

Additionally, ILP 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 2015-2016 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. Independent

Living(IL) Youth Leadership Conference was geared towards educating youth on various topics on etiquette, employment, entrepreneurship and an experiential activity on preventing homelessness and how to navigate resources in the community. IL also partnered with Vision Theatrical Foundation, who provided a performance “Toe Tag Monologue” that focused on bullying and suicide prevention.

Furthermore, 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. IL has also partnered with a local organization HERSHE who provides Self-esteem camps and a lifelong mentorship program for teen girls 13-17 years old.

SFY 2017 ILP will continue to:

- Expand the workshops we are hosting 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.
- ILP will identify appropriate ways to engage with youth age 14 based on new law requirements as of September 2015.
- ILP will seek community partners to build a mentorship program or a pool of candidates for youth to select from.
- Further refine the services to prepare youth who have electing to remain under the Voluntary Jurisdiction of the court and those that are exiting care and will access STEP UP services; and
- Expand the “Ready for the World” quarterly mixer to include employment opportunities, additional transitional housing programs, affordable phone plans, and certification programs. This will allow youth to come together in order to support each other, learn about opportunities.

## **WCDSS**

All IL youth have a specific IL case plan beginning at age 14 to address skills necessary for self-sufficiency. Additionally, IL staff must have a multi-disciplinary transition meeting scheduled when the youth turns 17.5 to provide very specific information and service identification individual to each youth. Note: youth with an OPPLA plan are served by one unit of workers under one supervisor. These staff receive focused training and guidance regarding working with older youth. There was no staff turnover during this reporting period.

The IL Youth are offered the opportunity to remain under the jurisdiction of the court beyond age 18 and up until age 21 while they continue to work on their plan to transition to self-sufficiency. Youth are eligible to remain on the court jurisdiction program as long as there are continually enrolled and engaged in obtaining a high school diploma, are working at least 20 hours a week, are enrolled in post-secondary education or vocational program, or are otherwise completing activities designed to achieve independence that is appropriate for the youth’s developmental needs.

## **DCFS Rural Region**

The IL Youth are given the opportunity to participate in a wide range of classes, workshops, and are provided with case management to assist in obtaining self-sufficiency. The youth attend workshops provided by their local IL service provider in their areas. Youth are provided individualized case management, workshops, funding to address completing secondary and post-secondary education, obtaining and maintaining employment, training in daily living skills, understanding money management and budgeting, and supporting healthy life styles to support self-sufficiency. As well as education on the proper use of credit, renting property and maintaining a household, preparing food and household management skills, i.e. proper cleaning techniques and safe use of cleaning products.

The DCFS IL Specialist continues to assist in the communication between DCFS rural offices and the IL service providers to ensure more effective partnerships. 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 IL youth are helped to transition by providing services in how to look for employment, managing their finances, looking for apartments, filling out necessary forms, higher education, and transportation. We also provide clients with cell phones so that they have a way to contact potential employers, emotional support adults, and in case of emergency.

## **2. Help youth receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment:**

### **CCDFS**

In 2015-2016 ILP partnered with Chipotle, a local fast food restaurant. As a result, many youth were able to practice interview skills and obtain employment. ILP hosted a workshop on applying for Summer Business Institute which assisted youth with completing their employment application and resume.

Additionally, over 75 youth attended the annual Clark County Youth Leadership Conference where 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.

FY 2017- ILP 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 and seek resources offered to youth with a focus on high school diploma attainment; with involvement with UNLV, CSN and other higher education options for youth as well as out of state college tours.
- Partner with the Clark County School District/CCDFS Educational Liaison to assist and advocate when youth are in need of school support and help to develop a Virtual High School to obtain credit retrieval.
- Develop relationships with community partners such as: Dress for Success, Project Independence, Armed Services, Cosmetology schools, Airline industry to introduce youth to various employment opportunities, vocational and certification programs.

### **WCDSS**

WCDSS employs a full-time education advocate who works closely with the local School District to help improve educational outcomes for youth including minimizing school moves, arranging for tutoring when needed, and assisting caseworkers in navigating special education and general education graduation requirements. The liaison is co-located with the child welfare agency and serves on a statewide sub-committee of the Court Improvement Project specific to education. Further, the liaison facilitates local quarterly education sub-committee meetings that include Community College, Foster Parent Association, and School District key staff.

There are several local community based agencies that provide job-readiness training: The Children's Cabinet has two programs whose focus is on job-readiness and employment, The Northern Nevada Literacy council in partnership with JOIN has a Learn and Earn program that helps provide career training to achieve full time sustainable employment. Washoe County Department of Social Services regularly accesses services for our youth through Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and Community Services Agency. Each program provides a unique opportunity to connect youth with job-readiness skills that includes job-shadowing and career exposure. Referrals are made to these community services to best meet the individual needs of the youth.

## **DCFS Rural Region**

A variety of workshops are available for youth to assist them in obtaining the necessary skills for acquiring employment. Youth are engaged in one-on-one training, summer weekly workshops, ongoing monthly workshops and Youth Advisory Board Meetings (YAB).

**WORKSHOPS:** The IL Youth brainstorm and decide on topic areas of their choice. Workshops include:

- 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

### **CHILD AND FAMILY TEAM MEETINGS/INDIVIDUALIZED CASE MANAGEMENT**

- The IL Youth are supported through referrals from the Division of Child and Family Services and joint CFT Meetings are arranged as soon as possible (14 years of age) to insure the development of a nurturing relationship between the IL Worker and the IL Youth.
- The IL Youth are supported by IL Worker on choice of continuation of education and/or employment preparation.
- The IL Youth participate in goal setting to address individual education and employment options.
- The IL Youth receiving ongoing support and coaching through Independent Living Plan educational/employment goals to assist youth in seamless services.

Partnerships have also been developed with Workforce and Youth W.E.R.K.S programs at the Nye Communities Coalition for youth jobs and skills for obtaining employment. These programs help youth develop knowledge of available careers and the kinds of education necessary for careers of their choosing. Tour campuses or other programs to provide the youth with direct knowledge of types of education and other programs, i.e., Junior College, University, Job Corp and other opportunities.

## **Tribes**

Tribal IL youth are provided assistance with transportation, completing employment applications, and education on applying for appropriate jobs, as well as provide funds to assist with purchasing interview clothes.

### **3. Help youth 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 30 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 college. All youth received a college prep guide to assist them with preparing for college. ILP collaborated with the UNLV Trio Program and participating youth were awarded incentives via raffle prizes.

The ILP was instrumental in assisting over 30 youth in obtaining ETV, CASA and Otto Huth and other grant resources that resulted in \$175,000 of scholarship monies to further their educational attainment and goals.

For the SFY 2017- ILP will continue to develop the College Bound Workshops to include additional community partners such as; Gear Up, Upward Bound, College of Southern Nevada, Nevada State College, Cooperative Extension and University of Nevada Reno. The ILP will continue to host specialized workshops to assist youth with FAFSA and out of state college tours. Also there will be a focus on early preparation for youth 15-16 years old to ensure that youth are prepared and college-bound.

## **WCDSS**

An innovative program was developed with the local Community College to provide support and guidance for youth enrolled in the College because it was found that some youth dropped out because they did not have the necessary supports to navigate the system. Each semester there are at least seven youth that chose to enroll in the local community college. Information sharing barriers have been removed to allow for open communication about any barriers to enrollment, funding, or academic success.

A summit is held twice a year for youth that are seniors in high school or older and are thinking of starting the community college journey as well as a summit to address the needs of new students on campus. A faculty mentor has been identified to meet monthly with any former foster youth on campus and help provide support and educational guidance while enrolled at the community college. This project has been a success in helping students enroll in the correct classes, drop classes without penalty and connect struggling students to other on campus support activities.

Washoe County Department of Social Services entered into a two-year research project with the Walter S. Johnson foundation to help promote foster youth positive educational outcomes. The project will serve up to 45 youth utilizing retired School Counselors to review education reports and develop education plans for the youth. Sierra Association of Foster Families is a partner in the grant and provides individualized, home-based tutoring services to the IL youth.

## **DCFS Rural Region**

A variety of workshops were developed and are available for youth to assist them in obtaining the necessary information and preparation to continue on to post-secondary education. Youth are engaged in one-on-one training, summer weekly workshops, ongoing monthly workshops and Youth Advisory Board Meetings (YAB).

**WORKSHOPS:** IL Youth brainstorm and decide on topic areas of their choice. Workshops include:

- 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.

### **CHILD AND FAMILY TEAM MEETINGS/INDIVIDUALIZED CASE MANAGEMENT**

- The IL Youth are supported through referrals from the Division of Child and Family Services and joint CFT Meetings are arranged as soon as possible (14 years of age) to insure the development of a nurturing relationship between the IL Worker and the IL Youth.
- The IL Youth are supported by IL Worker on choice of continuation of education and/or employment preparation.
- The IL Youth participate in goal setting to address individual education and employment options.
- The IL Youth receiving ongoing support and coaching through Independent Living Plan educational/employment goals to assist youth in seamless services.

## **Tribes**

An IL youth identified as a tribe member is also provided assistance with identifying their needs for education and independent living skills to be successfully upon aging out of care. The agencies provide further assistance with how to fill out applications for financial aid and scholarships and in some case complete the application process for the IL youth.

## **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 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.

The ILP partnered with the HERSHE Organization who provided a mini camp for teen girls 14-17 years old. The camp focused on self-esteem, self image and mentorship.

The ILP worked with multiple community partners that provided mentors and dedicated adults to include through the Project Independence and DREAMR projects.

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.

For the SFY 2017, the ILP will continue to work with the following partners to establish improved means to provide youth with emotional support:

- Project WE to recruit additional youth and recommend revisions to program based on program review outcomes.
- Continue to partner with HERSHE organization to provide mentoring to teen girls 14-17 years old.
- ILP will 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 ILP services that has a focus on developing healthy mindsets and skillsets for youth that support leadership, confidence and mentorship.

## **WCDSS**

Youth aging out of care are assigned a case manager through the Children's Cabinet as well as provided contact information for the Senior Social Worker assigned to the IL program. Efforts through QPI highlight the importance of lasting relationships between caregiver and youth and many caregivers are maintaining long-term connections. Referrals are made to local mentoring programs as the youth identifies an interest in participating in such a relationship.

## **DCFS Rural Region**

Assist youth in determining if there are appropriate dedicated adults in their life that can act as mentors and help the youth and adult make the commitment to provide for long-term interaction. Help the youth find a dedicated and devoted person to take on that role that can help in their long-term transition to self-sufficiency as an adult.

IL Youth are engaged in one-on-one training, summer weekly workshops and ongoing monthly workshops and Youth Advisory Board Meetings (YAB).

WORKSHOPS: The IL Youth brainstorm and decide on topic areas of their choice. Workshops include:

- 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, and innovative life skills such as; cooking on a Budget, Credit Fitness, Banking, Tax Preparation and other IL Youth perceived needs

## **CHILD AND FAMILY TEAM MEETINGS/INDIVIDUALIZED CASE MANAGEMENT**

- The IL Youth are supported through referrals from the Division of Child and Family Services and joint CFT Meetings are arranged as soon as possible (14 years of age) to insure the development of a nurturing relationship between the IL Worker and the IL Youth.
- The IL Youth are supported by IL Worker on choice of continuation of education and/or employment preparation.
- The IL Youth participate in goal setting to address individual education and employment options.
- The IL Youth receiving ongoing support and coaching through Independent Living Plan educational/employment goals to assist youth in seamless services.

## ***Tribes***

The Independent living worker (IL) worker assists youth to establish a positive healthy support system in their lives. Tribal youth are assisted in looking at family, friends, foster parents and others in the community that may help them, and most importantly establish a healthy and lasting relationship with.

- 5. Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 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 preparing for and then making the transition into adulthood:**

## **CCDFS**

The ILP unit provided services to over 300 young adults participating in the Clark County Voluntary Jurisdiction program. These recipients were invited to participate in many workshops to include the youth leadership conference, College tours and Ready for the World Mixer all youth were provided support to ensure their housing stability and an array of other services.

For the SFY 2017, IL Youth accessing voluntary jurisdiction services will be transitioning to a specialized young adult program with Social Services which will be integrated in the STEP UP program. The targeted date is set for 7/2016. ILP will then provide oversight and technical assistance to the young adult program.

Also there will be a focus on developing an enhanced framework for all ILP services that has a focus on healthy mindsets and skillsets for youth that support a healthy and productive life for young

## **WCDSS**

The State of Nevada established a court jurisdiction program that allows for funding equal to a foster care payment be provided to aged-out youth provided they are engaged in volunteer work, employment, or attending vocational or post-secondary education. The Court maintains jurisdiction over the youth and participation is voluntary. However, most youth participate in the program not only for the financial incentive but also for the supportive services provided by both the WCDSS Senior Social Worker and Children's Cabinet case manager. Since this program's inception in May 2011, the program has served 128 youth. In addition to the court jurisdiction program the State of Nevada has a fund developed to assist former foster youth, aka: FAFFY. Access to this program is also through the Children's Cabinet and youth are able to meet with a case manager, receive assistance in creating a plan for self-sufficiency, have access to not only skill building classes and job training but also a small monthly stipend to help support their housing, employment, education, and basic needs.

## **DCFS Rural Region**

The IL Youth receive monetary assistance in a responsible and accountable manner. The IL Youth are required to budget, attend appointments with IL Worker and communicate needs. The IL Workers assess needs and work with youth in budgeting and pre-planning for additional and unexpected needs. The IL Workers understand many issues are unforeseen and working with the IL Youth on their personal and emotional issues constitute an opportunity for learning and becoming self-sufficient. The IL Youth are expected to make mistakes and work out solutions as a necessary life skill. The IL Youth are expected to have emergent issues that need immediate attention. The IL Workers use these opportunities as growth in the IL Youth's life skill set.

## ***Tribes***

This is accomplished through one on one meetings, text, social media, and contracts. The IL worker assists youth in developing achievable goals and helps teach them to be responsible for achieving those goals.

### **6. Make available vouchers for education and training including postsecondary education, to youth who have aged out of foster care.**

## ***CCDFS***

ILP was successful in assisting over 30 youth in obtaining Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) and other needs based scholarships and grants that resulted in receiving \$175,000 in financial assistance to support their higher education. ETV provided an overview of the program at the 2015 Youth Leadership Conference which contributed to the utilization rate.

Also the youth that access the Voluntary Jurisdiction and Step Up program are encouraged and supported in attaining a high school diploma as well as pursuing high education as a means to self-sufficiency.

SFY 2017- ILP will continue to work with the following partners to establish improved means to support youth with educational goals:

- At the 2016 Youth Leadership Conference youth will learn about resources available to them and be introduced to specialized trainings and different social issues.
- ILP will continue to host specialized workshops and training on receiving ETV and other scholarship and grant opportunities and assisting youth one on one in completing applications.
- ILP will continue to host specialized workshop on completing ETV applications, CASA/Otto Huth and other scholarships to ensure all youth are provided the support.

## ***WCDSS***

The ETV "Education and Training Voucher" program is available through the Children's Cabinet. All youth aging out of foster care have an assigned Children's Cabinet case manager who is trained to assist with the ETV application. Additionally, WCDSS IL staff are equally trained to provide support in accessing this program.

## ***DCFS Rural Region***

The IL youth are strongly encouraged to continue education. All IL Youth are informed as to the financial options available through ETV, Otto Huth, FAFSA as well as John B. Chafee support. IL Youth on Court Jurisdiction funding have mandates to go to school and/or enter employment. All options are discussed and offered to IL eligible youth.

Appropriate referrals and support is offered to youth applying for the Education and Training Voucher (ETV). Also, program funding is set aside to assist the youth in educational costs outside of scholarships and vouchers which cover any additional academic costs, summer school, classroom material and any necessary books.

## ***Tribes***

The IL worker provides support to tribal youth to apply for the ETV program, FAFSA, as well as any other education assistance program they may be eligible for.

### **7. Provide services to youth who after attaining 16 years of age, have left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption.**

## **CCDFS**

The ILP recruited additional FAAYT members who had been adopted and have transitioned to kinship guardianship. These youth currently hold offices with FAAYT and has an opportunity to travel to Youth Summits to represent Clark County. IL continues to support youth who have entered in guardianship and adoption.

For SFY 2017 the ILP will continue to recruit new FAAYT members and work with caseworkers, CASA and adoption to ensure that youth who are at the age of 16 and over are provided with information about FAAYT. FAAYT will host additional recruitment events and seminars throughout the year to recruit new members.

ILP will be working on creating a process and protocol on providing Chafee funding to youth who meet the criteria to receive funds and IL support after guardianship and adoption.

## **WCDSS**

The IL youth, which qualified for IL services, may contact the Children's Cabinet to be assigned a case manager or may contact their former child welfare worker to receive a referral to Children's Cabinet for services. This will be made either through that worker or Senior Social Worker. Access to Chafee funding is available to this population upon request and identification of need.

## **DCFS Rural Region**

The IL youth that have attained 14 years of age are eligible for John B. Chafee funding and ongoing IL services. These youth are identified through the Division of Child and Family Services and referred to the program as any other IL Youth. These youth are engaged and provided seamless services individually and in a group setting.

To maintain appropriate levels of communication with DCFS as the referring agency to make certain that referrals of youth leaving foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption have met with the IL worker and are aware of the Independent Living services available to them. Also, build relationships with the youth and their kinship guardians or adoptive parents that will allow continued services to be provided to the youth.

## **Tribes**

For youth that have attained 16 years of age, the IL worker will establish an IL plan and work on life skill training.

- 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 developmentally-appropriate activities as defined in section 475(11) of the Act.**

## **CCDFS**

The ILP implemented specialized workshops and committees to bridge the gap in services and to meet the needs of youth in a Child Welfare System. These workshops were geared to higher education, employment and events/activities.

Additionally:

- The ILP worked 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.
- The ILP worked closely with 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.
- The ILP worked closely with 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.

- The ILP worked with PROJECT WE to recruit additional youth to have an opportunity to participate in ongoing activities that would help with preparing for transitioning out of care.
- The ILP will continue to reach out to youth who remain care to encourage them to participate in ongoing workshops that will help them with transitioning into self-sufficiency and prepare for college.

During the SFY 2017the ILP will continue to work with the following programs Project Independence, WIA programs,PROJECT WE, HERSHE, SAFY and other community partners to engage youth in developmentally appropriate activities.

- The ILP will work with the organization who obtains the IL classes to ensure all youth have a comprehensive curriculum to support all youth.

### **WCDSS**

During this reporting period, WCDSS through coordination with DCFS and QPI emphasized "normalcy" for foster youth and encouraged prudent parenting allowing foster parents to make appropriate decisions for youth in their care. The purpose of the normalcy policy is to provide guidance to caseworkers to consider opportunities to allow for a more normal childhood experience including sleepovers, participation in athletic events, obtaining driver's licenses, and opening bank accounts. The John Chaffee federal grant dollars is instrumental in supporting older youth in age-appropriate related activities.

### **DCFS Rural Region**

All IL youth (both in and out of care) are offered IL services and transition services through the IL programming. Partnering with these youth as well as in-care youth 14-18 are priority in developing an ongoing relationship with the IL Team. Youth receive individualized case management for on-going support and services to engage them in developmentally-appropriate activities.

To provide age or developmentally appropriate activities for youth, especially with use of the Youth Advisory Board to engage youth in activities that are interesting for them to attend and that allow the youth involved to be engaged and excited about being included in those events.

### **Tribes**

The IL tribal youth will have monthly meetings with the IL Coordinatorto work on their IL plan, life skills, setting achievable goals and task to achieve these goals.

### **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.

### **Developmentally-Appropriate Activities and LGBTQ Youth:**

The activities identified in new purpose #8 are primarily funding through CFCIP funding. There are a variety of community providers involved as to ensure gender appropriate and developmentally appropriate options. For example, Project Independence offers different levels for programming based on a young person's abilities, and 'HerShe' offers gender specific mentoring and enrichment opportunities. Clark County Department of Family Services has also recently entered into conversation with the LGBTQ Center in Las Vegas to identify services and resources, and referral processes for programming offered in the Center.

The IL program activities are growing to meet the new and unaddressed needs of IL Youth. New programming include areas such as; work tryout or work experience including on-the-job training in a selected occupation, field trips to explore occupations and educational opportunities, 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, Tax Preparation and other IL Youth perceived needs.

When choosing workshop topics and activities, IL Workers ask the youth for their input. The topics and activities are guided by what is important to the youth along with skills necessary for self-sufficiency.

### **National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD):**

The State of Nevada continues to share NYTD findings with stakeholders involved in the ILP, including our Tribal IL Provider, representatives from all jurisdictions, service providers and the courts. Nevada has created a successful process when surveying youth in the NYTD cohorts. The statewide IL specialist continues to monitor 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 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 and information on the current cohort are shared with the groups. 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 ILP program and other efforts within the child welfare agency in order to utilize the data obtained for system and service improvements. The data obtained from the NYTD survey and consultation with stakeholders is continuously utilized to update and/or develop policies and procedures to better accommodate and meet the needs of youth in Nevada. Every six months the state pulls the NYTD data snapshot from the portal to share with our ILP 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), the IL Specialist continues to monitor submission of each survey 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 continues to occur during the statewide IL conference calls. The FPO I.L. Specialist makes sure the state is compliant by utilizing e-mails and phone calls to the IL 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 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; Facebook, phone, email, phone, contacting family members, diligent search, CAP attorneys, CASA, friends and certified letters.

The 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.

### **Involving Youth/Young Adults:**

Clark County Department of Family Services infused the goals of the CFCIP and CFSR through stakeholder groups and community engagement processes. The CFSR and CFCIP are routinely discussed at the statewide level in meetings such as the Court Improvement Project, and the local Independent Living Board. Youth voice is routinely included in these meetings. Additionally, due to the requirements and nature of NYTD, youth are routinely engaged, as their feedback as to how to support completion of the surveys is integral to the high completion rate in Nevada, and Clark County in particular.



The WCDSS passes funding to the Children's Cabinet, Inc., and encourages youth participation in the Foster Youth Advisory board. Also, much support is offered in the efforts to collect data on this population for NYTD.

Communication and collaboration between the Rural Region and the State's IL Specialist, and more effective partnerships have occurred with the Division of Child and Family Services Social Worker and district office. The IL youth in-care are now being engaged at an earlier age to offer ease of transitional other identified services and funding to support IL Youth more effectively. The 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. The IL Workers facilitate goal setting to address individual education and employment options for IL Youth while keeping continuous communication and providing services. These services include:

- 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, and innovative life skills such as; cooking on a Budget, Credit Fitness, Banking, Tax Preparation and other IL youth perceived needs.

Also, recruitment for new youth to join the Youth Advisory Board (YAB), and begin to develop a curriculum with the board that will build skills while providing age and developmentally appropriate activities for the youth to attend. The board is vital in building leadership skills in those that serve on the board while developing younger youth to someday move in to leadership positions.

#### **Collaboration with Other Private and Public Agencies:**

While media campaigns at CCDFS have primarily focused on recruitment needs, recruitment has been geared towards older youth, as CCDFS struggles with having an adequate number of foster homes for older youth. The previously mentioned programs such as HerShe, Project We, Project Independence, and SAFY, to name a few, have all been the result of public and private partnerships to help increase youth self-sufficiency. Additionally, CCDFS is in the process of creating a strong collaboration with the local social services agency, through their StepUp program, which provides state and county funded programming and services to aged out youth.

The WCDSS maintains close working relationships and information sharing with a variety of public and private agencies. The school district and juvenile services is regularly involved in helping to create programming that would assist foster youth in achieving independence. WCDSS participates in many local community action groups that are composed of various community agencies. Opportunities exist to raise awareness with our public partners through community forums lead by the Community Foundation, public forums to discuss homelessness led by Renown behavioral health, a forum of mental health service delivery providers through the Mental Health Consortium, to name just a few.

The DCFS Rural Region agencies educate foster parents and youth as to the IL service array. Public and private sector partnerships are utilized in; paid and unpaid work experiences, field trips, community service projects, 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. Partnerships with many agencies within Nye County to build awareness of the agency and its IL program. Twice a month, IL Life Skills Classes are held with specialized guest speakers to discuss key topics that will help prepare youth for successful independence from both the public and private sectors of the community. The IL program uses National Foster Care Month as a time to provide backpacks to the DCFS agency that have basic needs for all youth entering foster care. Those backpacks are age and gender specific and allow the foster youth to develop and use empathy by engaging in an activity that greatly effects them.

**Collaboration with other Federal and State Programs:**

As previously described, Project Independence and the WIA programs, are federally funded programs designed to provide supports to transitional aged youth. The DREAMR program grant in effect in Clark County also focused on pregnant and parenting youth who had aged out of the foster care system. This program was linked through Olive Crest with Project Independence.

The WCDSS has developed working relationships with the Learn and Earn program through the Northern Nevada Literacy Council and JOIN, funded through DETR. Referrals for Vocational Rehabilitation services that helps disabled youth as well as 2 school to work programs offered by the children's Cabinet (Face Forward and OSY). The Northern Nevada community only has 2 operating transitional living programs. We have relationships with both of those programs and support them through client referral and supportive case management practices.

***State Funds to Assist Former Foster Youth (FAFFY)***

Youth can receive support and funding through this State funded program which has been in place since 2004. This State generated account is available to youth that have "aged out" of the foster care system, regardless of additional supports, resources, or ability to meet goals. This service is available through a WCDSS contract with the Children's Cabinet, Inc. and offers on-going case management, help with goal development, resource referrals and can access approximately \$250 or more a month toward expenses needed to achieve independence. FAFFY funds can be utilized in the following ways:

- Room and board
- Housing assistance
- Job training
- Vocational services, including without limitation job placement assistance
- Educational assistance
- Medical insurance
- Services to reduce high-risk behaviors in the former foster youth
- Mental health services

Rural Region IL youth receive education from many community partners; State and county sex education programs, 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, Educational Training Voucher program for educational opportunities, JOIN - Workforce Investment Act programs available to foster youth, Work-Study programs through the community and university, the local court-system to insure that criminal behavior is addressed and youth with criminal convictions receive coordination of services to reduce recidivism. There are also collaborations with school districts, the McKinney-Vento Program for homeless youth, and Nye Communities Coalition to provide services for workforce readiness, dress for success, resume building and other services. The ILP worker stays in close contact with the school district to provide the youth with support services and to help the youth navigate all the programs and services available at the school district.

**Homelessness and Pregnancy Prevention:**

Clark County ILP has worked closely with St. Jude's Independent Living Program and Crossings (supportive housing program), Graduate House (Transitional Living Program), Busy Bee (Transitional Living for Disabled), 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) and most recently Olive Crest Supportive Housing transitional living program as well as a array of other housing programs. Additionally, the ILP continues to work directly with Southern Nevada Regional Housing, Job Corps and Nevada Hand which provides subsidized housing. ILP continues to meet quarterly at the IL committee meeting to discuss options for youth and tour properties of incoming organizations and agencies and highlight affordable housing programs and apartments at the Ready for the World Workshop. The ILP program also participates in Southern Nevada Regional Quarterly Program Coordinating Committee Meeting to obtain housing resources and additional resources to assist youth in preventing homelessness and adolescent pregnancy.

The ILP entered in a Memorandum of Understanding with Southern Nevada Health District to be trained on Be Proud Be Smart and Families Talking Together sex education curriculum. Furthermore the ILP partners with youth serving agencies that support educational success and work readiness programs.

The WCDSS participated in the past year on collaboration with the Community Foundation to assess and respond to issues of youth homelessness. Out of the collaborative that held several public forums to include youth voice, the EDDY house was created. This local entity offers a drop in center. WCDSS is supportive of this program and provides collaboration for the sharing of resources and support to their program goals.

All youth in foster care are asked about their sexual health and relationships. Birth control is addressed with youth through their Independent Living Plans. Planned Parenthood provides a yearly educational class about the options for birth control and partner safety. WCDSS has a working relationship with a local pregnancy support program that offers housing and parenting education. Referrals are made to this program for any of our pregnant or parenting moms.

The DCFS Rural Region IL youth receive education and support through workshops and individualized case management to prevent youth homelessness and adolescent pregnancy. Agencies such as Health and Human Services provide presentations to educate youth and case management is provided to determine eligibility for programs such as Family Unification Program and Nevada Rural Housing Programs. There are also coordinated efforts with the Nye County School District, the McKinney-Vento Program for homeless youth, and Nye Communities Coalition to address the problem of homelessness among youth. Additionally the ILP has provided sexual education programming and will continue to provide both education and services to prevent adolescent pregnancy.

### **Human Trafficking:**

The ILP unit is aware of recent legislation requiring a focus on tracking and supporting victims of sexual exploitation. As such the ILP is participating in the State of Nevada DCFS policies and procedures work group to develop policies around the safety of children in the Child Welfare System and those that runaway. Once the policies are established the ILP will further develop the protocols for youth in DFS.

The ILP hosted a 2015 Youth Leadership Conference that provided 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. The upcoming Youth Leadership Conference 2016 will be addressing Human Trafficking and expanding on the information that was received at the conference in 2015.

The WCDSS is working on identifying high-risk youth and making appropriate referrals to a local counseling agency with a specialty in addressing sex trafficking victims and their unique therapeutic needs. We have developed a partnership with the Children's Cabinet who conducts a training that educates youth to the dangers and tactics of traffickers. It helps youth identify who traffickers approach and how they engage potential victims in the trade. WCDSS has a working relationship and specific points of contact with the FBI division assigned to the sex trafficking investigation and protection, as well as local law enforcements' SET team to investigate suspected sex trafficking.

The DCFS-Rural Region is participating in the statewide activities around Commercially Sexual Exploited Children (CSEC). DCFS-Rural Region will participate in the subcommittees of the CSEC Commission that is in the process of being established by the State of Nevada Governor. The DCFS has contracted with an outside entity to assist with the work that needs to be accomplished for CSEC. This contractor will work with the child welfare agencies throughout the

state on identification and assessment tools, statewide policies and training. The contractor will also be guiding the work of the established CSEC Commission that will encompass governmental and other community entities throughout the state so that there is a statewide response to CSEC. DCFS-Rural Region along with community partners throughout the state participates in the MSC-TTA where CSEC has been the identified project.

### **Training:**

- The CCDFS has incorporated the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI), focused on improving the system by empowering, training and supporting caregivers to support youth transitioning healthy 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 DFS Academy on the importance of working with youth to achieve independence. FAAYT leaders have provided presentations during events and forums.
- The IL unit provide submissions to the caregiver courier to update foster parents on IL activities and workshops.
- The IL is currently providing CEU trainings for foster parents, caregivers, community partners and caseworkers on Independent Living Services to prepare families and community partners on how to work with teens and providing life skills and preparing for transitioning out of foster care.

In partnership with SAFY (Specialized Foster Care Agency), our IL youth participate in training and support groups to enhance independence and prepare for future goals. The SAFY sends training materials to foster parents of these youth that are participating in the programs. The SAFY is developing a curriculum/training information for foster parents who have IL youth in their home. During pre-service re-write for DFS training of initial applicants, curriculum for IL and normalcy will be included. Currently in PRIDE and TIPS-MAPP (curriculums utilized in Clark County to train potential applicants, IL is only a small introduction).

In partnership with the Specialized Foster Care Agencies and The Center, DFS provides information and support groups for youth who identify as LGBTQ. Training programs have been offered to all staff and currently being offered to groups of families. The Center is developing a training in partnership with SAFY that will be offered to all families and youth. This currently a brief topic covered in the initial pre-service training, but members of The Center are part of the focus workgroup to re-write the curriculum and to ensure this topic is covered.

The Nevada Partnership for Training (NPT) offers a course titled, '*Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning/Queer (LGBTQ) Youth & Child Welfare*'. This training has been held in various rural locations including Elko and Pahrump. The purpose of this training is to provide an overview of issues faced by LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care and LGBTQ related to cultural competence. Additionally, participants will identify the unique issues and challenges facing LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care, and their parents, other caregivers and service providers and settings. Participants will learn how to assist child welfare workers and service providers in addressing these issues with children and youth, their parents, other caregivers and colleagues.

Foster parents, adoptive parents, workers in group homes, IL staff, IL service providers, and staff are all encouraged to attend this LGBTQ course.

### **Consultation with the 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 14-21 years old and in the custody of a Nevada Tribe.

## Annual Reporting of Education and Training Vouchers Awarded

	Total ETVs Awarded	Number of New ETVs
<b>Final Number: 2014-2015 School Year</b> (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015)	2014 – 2015 School Year* July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015 = 112 total served	2014 – 2015 School Year* July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015 = 64 total new students
<b>2015-2016 School Year*</b> (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016)	2015-2016 School Year* July 1, 2015 – May 19, 2016 = 118 total served *Estimate 124	2015 – 2016 School Year* July 1, 2015 – May 19, 2016 = total new students 70

Comments: Please note the 2015/2016 number is from July 1, 2015 – May 19, 2016. We still have 7 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 1 youth who has 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 Summits were held in October of 2015 and February of 2016. This summit is a staple to introduce HighSchool 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 youth turns 23 years of age unless revoked in writing. This collaboration includes a TMCC staff mentor (Precious Hall, Ph.D.). By utilizing this mentor the youth receive early registration, 1 on 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 2016/2017 school year.
9. ETV applications may be found online in both the State website <http://dcfs.nv.gov/Programs/CWS/IL/ETV/> and The Children's Cabinet website <http://www.childrenscabinet.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.
12. ETV is currently working on developing a survey that allows our students to speak out about why students drop out that will possibly help us identify struggles previously none disclosed.



13. ETV is currently working on developing a data collection spread sheet that will allow us to easily track (Name, Age, Credits Taken, Credits Earned, GPA, Jurisdiction, and if student is CJ/AB350/or FAFFY only) we've been working with our ODES system and client files to gather this data.

## **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 518 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, and Licensing with 56 vacancies statewide. Additionally, statewide there are approximately 115 Supervisory/Management child welfare positions filled and 14 vacancies.

### **CCDFS Child Welfare Protective Services Workforce:**

For State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2016 CCDFS reports their agency has approximately 360 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, and Licensing filled with 31 vacancies. Additionally, there are approximately 65 Supervisory/Management positions filled with 11 vacancies. CCDFS reports the following caseload ratios: Investigations 1:15, and Permanency Case Management 1:12. Supervisor ratios to staff are 1:6 in Investigations, and 1:6 in Permanency Case Management. CCDFS reports a turnover rate for SFY 16 as 9.5%. Staff separations during this reporting period included 8 retirements and 21 dismissals. There were approximately 64 promotions, 18 Transfers, and 53 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 initiated by Clark County Central Human Resources Department. There is currently no mechanism in place via the county's central onboarding process to capture the requested information. CCDFS indicated they will continue to work with their Central Human Resources to explore options for tracking. **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 \$46,670 to \$91,104.

- **Caseload size depending on the child welfare program (i.e. intake, reunification)** Investigations: 15 cases per Investigator and 12 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 2016 WCDSS reports their agency has approximately 91 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, and Licensing filled with 5 vacancies. Additionally, there are approximately 33 Supervisory/Management positions filled with 1 vacancy. WCDSS reports the following caseload ratios: Assessment 1:12 and In-home/ Out-of-home Case Management 1:22. Supervisor ratios to staff are 1:5. WCDSS reports a turnover rate for SFY 16 as 15%. Staff separations during this reporting period included 0 retirements, 0 dismissal, 9 promotions or laterals and 5 voluntary resignations.

### ***Additional WCDSS Workforce Information:***

- **How staff are recruited and selected :**

Staff are recruited through local and statewide outreach efforts through the Human Resources Department. Selection includes a two-part process: 1) candidates watch a video clip of a parent/child interaction and document a case note, and review a case scenario and write a letter to the department director. Candidates who successfully pass this process are invited to an interview. Prior to the interview, candidates are encouraged to watch a video clip on a Day in the Life of a Social Worker filmed in Maricopa County, AZ. Candidates then are interviewed with a behavior-based approach and include a self-assessment. Finally, reference checks are completed as part of the hiring process. Additionally, interns through the local University are screened and interviewed prior to being offered an internship. Interns are generally offered employment through the stipend program. Staff are recruited through local and statewide outreach

- **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): 75
- Title IV-E supported BSW: **12 (of 75)**
- Master of Social Work (MSW): 19
- Title IV-E supported MSW: **4 (of 19)**
- Other Degree: **15**

- **Years of child welfare experience or other related experience working with children and families.**

Unavailable

- **Race/Ethnicity**

Asian/Pacific Islander - 5%  
Hispanic – 12.1%  
White/Not Hispanic Origin – 79.2%  
American Indian/Alaskan - 1.4%  
Black/Not Hispanic Origin - 2.9%

- **Salaries:**

Case Worker 49,275.20 - 68,494.40  
Social Worker 49,275.20 – 75,961.60

- **Position Types:** Case Worker I and II, Social Worker I, II, III and Intake Screener. **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 and 1:22 Permanency

- Information related to tracking staff turnover and vacancy rates.

- Retirements; **0**
- Dismissals: **0**
- Lateral or promotional moves: **9**
- Voluntary resignation: **5**

Supervisor-to-Worker Ratios: 1:5

## **DCFS Rural Region Child Welfare Protection Workforce:**

For SFY 2016 the DCFS Rural Region reports their agency has approximately 67 child welfare positions in Intake, Investigations, In-home/Out-home Case Management, Adoption, and Licensing filled with 20 vacancies. Additionally, there are approximately 17 Supervisory/Management positions filled with 2 vacancies. The DCFS Rural Region reports caseload ratios: Investigations 1:15, In-home/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.

Supervisor ratio to staff are as follows: one Supervisor has a 1:3 ratio; seven have a 1:4 ratio; four have a 1:5 ratio and three have a 1:6 ratio. The DCFS Rural Region reports a turnover rate for SFY 16 as approximately 25%. Staff separations during the reporting included 1 retirement, 0 dismissals, 1 transfer, 8 lateral or promotional moves and 7 resignations.

## ***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): **52**
- Title IV-E supported BSW **16**
- Master of Social Work (MSW): **8**
- 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**

Thirty staff have between 1-5 years of experience; 12 staff have between 6-10 years of experience, 12 staff have between 11-20 years' experience and six staff have 20 or more years of 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
- Depending on experience the entry pay range begins at step four as follows: Social Worker 1's - \$45,560.16 to \$57,712.32; Social Worker 2's -\$49,694.40 to \$63,099.36; Social Worker 3's -\$51,865.92 to \$66,001.68; Social Work Supervisors -\$56,626.56 to \$72,223.92; Social Service Managers -\$54,204.48 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 Academy 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: 1
- Dismissals/Transfer: 1
- Lateral or promotional moves: 8 lateral or promotional moves
- Voluntary resignation; 7 resignations

**■ Supervisor-to-Worker Ratios:**

Supervisor ratio to staff are as follows: one Supervisor has a 1:3 ratio; seven have a 1:4 ratio; four have a 1:5 ratio and three have a 1:6 ratio.

## 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